



Maryland American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ARP ESSER) Fund Application Stakeholder Engagement Report

July 30, 2021

Updated October 4, 2021



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**MARYLAND AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EMERGENCY RELIEF
(ARP ESSER) FUND
STATE PLAN APPLICATION:
STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT REPORT**

Maryland's ARP ESSER State Plan application is the result of an extensive consultation process with stakeholders from across the State.

Initial Draft

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) determined that the most effective approach in developing the ARP ESSER State Plan application was to create an initial draft plan involving the input of multiple MSDE divisions and drawing upon the knowledge that MSDE staff had accrued through their engagements with stakeholders over the entire duration of the pandemic. For example, MSDE staff held regular webinars with groups representing homeless and migratory children, created a survey that asked stakeholders to identify the highest priority academic, social-emotional, and/or mental health needs for these student populations, and consulted with Youth REACH Maryland (an organization that advocates for homeless youth) for assistance with identifying the number, characteristics, and unique needs of youth and young adults experiencing housing instability in the State. Another example of SEA engagement with external interest groups is the MSDE's Juvenile Services Education System Executive Director, who sits on Maryland's Department of Juvenile Services State Advisory Board, a body which consults and advises the State's Secretary of Juvenile Services regarding policies and programs to improve juvenile justice and educational system services across the State, and which comprises representatives from State agencies, the judiciary, and community stakeholders.

MSDE staff members were actively engaged in consultation with various stakeholder groups following the release of the ARP ESSER State Plan application template in April 2021, and the input and feedback gathered through these interactions helped inform the development of initial draft of the plan in May and early June 2021.

First Review Stage - ESSA External Stakeholder Committee

On June 7, 2021, this initial draft was shared with the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) External Stakeholder Committee. This group has previously served the MSDE in an advisory role on other significant Statewide educational issues, for example in developing Maryland's ESSA Consolidated State Plan. The membership of the stakeholder committee represents a broad cross-section of educational



interests drawn from across Maryland, including (but not limited to) representatives for parents/families, LEAs, teachers, principals, and advocates for civil rights, children with disabilities, etc. (see Attachment A for ESSA External Stakeholder Committee Membership).

While Maryland does not have any federally recognized tribes, a representative of the Governor's Office of Community Initiatives who serves as the Director of Ethnic Commissions, a role which includes responsibility for the State's Commission on Indian Affairs, sits on the stakeholder committee.

The ESSA External Stakeholder Committee was afforded the opportunity to provide input both through a virtual meeting (held on June 10, 2021) and by submitting comments directly to MSDE staff subsequent to the meeting.

Second Draft

The initial draft plan was substantially revised based on the feedback received from the ESSA External Stakeholder Committee. Among the most significant revisions made following the first review stage was a comprehensive re-writing of the State's proposed priorities in section A.2 of the draft plan to reflect the following ESSA External Stakeholder Committee recommendations:

- 1) Positioning the ARP ESSER State Plan application in the context of the broader initiative to reform education in the State through the Blueprint for Maryland's Future;
- 2) Highlighting the importance of technology investments and supports, the need to engage parents/families, and the provision of support (particularly SEL/mental health supports) on an ongoing basis to students and their families as all being crucial elements underpinning the State's priority to re-open schools; and
- 3) Providing more details on the new Statewide mental health program currently being implemented.

Second Review Stage - Maryland State Board of Education

Following the incorporation of feedback from the ESSA External Stakeholder Committee, an updated draft of the plan was then shared with the [Maryland State Board of Education](#) (State Board) for review at its [meeting on June 22, 2021](#). Among its responsibilities, the State Board sets educational policy and standards for Maryland for pre-kindergarten through high school and passes regulations that have the force of law. It is customary for the State Board to review and approve Statewide plans of the magnitude of the ARP ESSER State Plan application. The [membership of the State Board](#), which is appointed by the Governor, comprises both educators and non-educators, as well as one student member, and is geographically representative of Maryland. Following review and discussion, including providing members of the public an opportunity to comment on the draft plan at the start of the meeting, the State Board voted to publish the updated second draft of the plan on the MSDE website and invite public feedback on the plan.

Third Review Stage – Public Comment

The complete second draft of the plan was posted on the MSDE website and, in accordance with the MSDE's customary practice when seeking public input, the public was invited to comment on the draft plan over a two-week period (from June 25 through July 9, 2021). In addition to posting an announcement on the SEA website (including the homepage) inviting public comment (Attachment B), the MSDE also promoted review of the draft plan via a press

release (Attachment C) and social media postings. An online survey (Attachment D) was created to capture public input, which also collected data on the respondents.



A final total of 736 respondents completed the online public survey, with representation from all 24 Maryland local school systems. Approximately 58 percent of survey respondents reported having children currently enrolled in a Maryland public school, with circa 63 percent of those respondents reporting having children in elementary school grades (preK-5), 40 percent of those respondents reporting having children in middle school grades (6-8), 42 percent of

those respondents reporting having children in high school grades (9-12), and one percent of respondents selecting the “other grade level” option. *[Note that the grade level response percentages do not add up to 100 percent because respondents can have children enrolled in multiple grade levels.]*

Approximately 43 percent of survey respondents identified as educators employed in a Maryland public school system, with circa 57 percent of those respondents associated with elementary school grades, 21 percent of those respondents associated with middle school grades (6-8), 25 percent of those respondents associated with high school grades (9-12), and 11 percent of respondents selecting the “other/not affiliated with a specific grade band” option. *[Note that the grade level response percentages do not add up to 100 percent because respondents can identify with multiple grade levels.]*

The survey asked respondents to rate the importance of various elements included in the draft plan on a one to four scale, with one not being a priority and four being a high priority.

- The three issues identified as being priorities for Maryland in section A.2 of the draft plan all received high levels of support:
 - Approximately 87 percent of respondents classified “accelerating student re-engagement” as a medium or high priority; the weighted mean score for this element was 3.4.
 - Approximately 94 percent of respondents classified “supporting mental and social-emotional health” as a medium or high priority; the weighted mean score for this element was 3.7.
 - Approximately 91 percent of respondents classified “addressing the impact of disrupted instruction” as a medium or high priority; the weighted mean score for this element was 3.5.
- With one exception, all the proposed strategies/interventions identified in the draft plan as ways to address the academic impact of lost instructional time received high levels of support:
 - For nine out of the 10 strategies/interventions listed, the level of respondent support for these being either a medium or high priority use of funds ranged from approximately 60 percent to 90 percent. The weighted mean scores for these strategies/interventions ranged from 2.7 to 3.4.

- The only strategy/intervention that the majority (approximately 54 percent) of respondents classified as either being a low priority use of funds or which should not be a priority use of funds was formative assessments. The weighted mean score for this strategy/intervention was 2.4.
- All the proposed strategies/interventions identified in the draft plan relating summer learning and enrichment programs received high levels of support. For all nine strategies/ interventions listed, the level of respondent support for these being either a medium or high priority use of funds ranged from approximately 70 percent to 90 percent. The weighted mean scores for these strategies/interventions ranged from 3 to 3.5.
- A substantial majority (approximately 86 percent) of respondents classified the proposed strategy/intervention relating to after-school programming in the draft plan as being a medium or high priority use of funds. The weighted mean score for this strategy/intervention was 3.4.

As well as posting the second draft of the plan on the MSDE website and inviting public comment, an announcement (Attachment E) was also sent to local superintendents on June 25, 2021, inviting their feedback on the draft plan by July 9, 2021. Furthermore, during the week of June 28, 2021, the second draft of the plan was sent to two members of the Superintendent's Parent Advisory Council to share with the entire council for comment. The Superintendent's Parent Advisory Council is a stakeholder group that advises and gives input to the State Superintendent of Schools and the MSDE on educational matters that impact student achievement and academic success, and the role of parents/family members. Membership comprises 13 parents from diverse backgrounds and geographic locations, and three State partners: the Mid-Atlantic Equity Consortium, the Maryland PTA, and the Maryland Resource Parent Association (formerly known as the Maryland Foster Care Association). The second draft of the plan was also shared with the student representative from the Maryland Association of Student Councils and re-sent to the ESSA External Stakeholder Committee. The members of these various stakeholder bodies were asked to submit their feedback by the July 9 deadline.

In addition to the responses captured via the online public survey, the MSDE received four separate emails/letters commenting on the plan: from a parent of a child in a Maryland public school, from the Maryland Out of School Time Network, from the Maryland State Education Association, and from a local superintendent (see Attachments F-I)

Third Draft

Based on the comments received from the various stakeholders during this third review stage, the MSDE once again revised the draft plan. For example, additional language recognizing the importance of providing professional development and social-emotional/mental health supports to educators, in particular as a staff retention strategy, was added to the plan, and many minor textual edits were made for the purposes of clarification in response to comments received.

Fourth (Final) Review Stage - Maryland State Board of Education

An updated third (and final) draft of the plan was presented to the State Board at its [July 27, 2021, meeting](#). As with the previous State Board meeting, members of the public were provided an opportunity to comment on the draft plan at the start of the meeting. Following review and discussion, the State Board voted to approve the final draft of the Maryland ARP ESSER State Plan application, without requesting any further edits, and submit it to the U.S. Department of Education on July 30, 2021.

Enclosed:

- Attachment A – Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) External Stakeholder Committee
- Attachment B – ARP ESSER State Plan Application Website Announcement Screenshots
- Attachment C – ARP ESSER State Plan Application Press Release, June 29, 2021
- Attachment D – Public Comments Survey Template
- Attachment E – Memo to Local Superintendents, June 25, 2021
- Attachment F – Cline Email, July 4, 2021, and Understanding the Role of Technology Interventions in the Classroom
- Attachment G – Maryland Out of School Time Network Letter, July 7, 2021
- Attachment H – Montgomery County Public Schools Letter, July 8, 2021
- Attachment I – Maryland State Education Association Letter, July 9, 2021
- Attachment J – Maryland American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary Emergency Relief (ARP ESSER) Fund Presentation to the State Board July 27, 2021

Attachment A – Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) External Stakeholder Committee

Every Student Succeeds Act External Stakeholder Committee Membership

Member	Organization	Position
Theresa Alban, Ph.D.	Frederick County Public Schools	Superintendent
Terry Ball	Maryland Association of Elementary School Principals (MAESP)	Executive Director
Teresa Beilstein	2020 Maryland Teacher of the Year	Teacher – South Shore Elementary - AACPS
Barbara Dezman	NAACP	Original Member of ESSA representing NAACP
Emily Dow, Ph.D.	Maryland Higher Education Commission	Assistant Secretary of Academic Affairs
McKenzie Allen	Maryland Alliance of Public Charter Schools	Executive Director
Caroline Boice	Department of Legislative Services	
Cheryl Bost	Maryland State Education Association	President
Kenya Campbell	AFT-Maryland	Secretary-Treasurer
Keith Colston	Governor’s Office of Community Initiatives	Director, Ethnic Commissions (including Commission on Indian Affairs)
Lynn Cullins	Superintendent’s Parent Advisory Council	Parent Member
Brian Dulay	Maryland Business Roundtable for Education	Executive Director
Cristina Duncan-Evans	Baltimore Teachers Union (BTU)	Teacher Chapter Chair
Drew Fagan, Ed.D.	College of Education – University of Maryland	Associate Clinical Professor, Applied Linguistics and Language Education
Stephanie Farmer	Baltimore City Public Schools; Maryland Association of Secondary School Principals (MASSP)	Principal – Vivien T. Thomas Medical Arts Academy; Past President MASSP
Frances Glendening	Maryland Association of Board of Education	Executive Director
Kelly Griffith, Ed.D.	Talbot County Public Schools; Public School Superintendents’ Association of Maryland (PSSAM)	Superintendent; PSSAM President-Elect
Rachel Hise	Department of Legislative Services	
Ryan Kaiser	Baltimore City Public Schools	Teacher; Maryland Teacher of the Year 2015-2016
Addie Kaufman	Maryland Association of Secondary School Principals (MASSP)	Executive Director
Athanasia H. Kyriakakos	Former Maryland Teacher of the Year	Art Teacher – Baltimore City Public Schools
Rachel London	Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council	Executive Director
Leslie Margolis	Disability Rights Maryland	Managing Attorney

Member	Organization	Position
Afie Mirshah-Nayar	Montgomery County Public Schools; Maryland Association of Secondary School Principals (MASSP)	Principal, Paint Branch High School; President
Lori Morrow	Maryland State Board of Education	Parent Member
Judy Nguyen	Student Member of the St. Mary's County Board of Education	Member of the Maryland Association of Student Council
Dianne O'Grady-Cunniff	University System of Maryland	Maryland Center for Computing Education
Nicole Parr	Cecil County Public Schools	Program Coordinator for Career and Technical Education
Christina Peusch	Maryland State Childcare Association	Executive Director
Peggy Pugh	Local Assistant Superintendents of Instruction	Local Assistant Superintendents of Instruction – Washington County
Rene Averitt-Sanzone	Parents' Place of Maryland	Executive Director
Nancy Shapiro, Ph.D.	University System of Maryland	Associate Vice Chancellor for Education and Outreach
Sharelle Stagg	Prince George's County Public Schools	Assistant Principal, Greenbelt Elementary School, Former Teacher of the Year 2012-2013
Darryl Williams, Ed.D.	Baltimore County Public Schools; Public School Superintendents' Association of Maryland (PSSAM)	Superintendent
Janet Wilson, Ph.D.	Montgomery County Public Schools; Original member representing PSSAM	Associate Superintendent, Office of Shared Accountability
John Woolums	Maryland Association of Board of Education	Director of Government Relations
Emory Young	Superintendent's Parent Advisory Council	Parent Member
Estelle Young	Greater Baltimore Urban League	Director for New Initiatives
Representative	Maryland PTA	

Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) Invitees to June 10, 2021, Meeting

Name	Office	Position
Haleemat Adekoya	Governor's Summer Intern	Student at University of Maryland Baltimore County
Tiara Booker-Dwyer	Division of Career and College Readiness & Office of Leadership Development and School Improvement	Assistant State Superintendent
Rhodri Evans	Division of Student Support, Academic Enrichment, and Educational Policy	Lead Academic Policy Specialist

Name	Office	Position
Marcella Franczkowski	Division of Early Intervention and Special Education Services	Assistant State Superintendent
Mary Gable	Division of Student Support, Academic Enrichment, and Educational Policy	Assistant State Superintendent
Deborah Grinnage-Pulley	Juvenile Services Education System	Executive Director
Donna Gunning	Office of Policy and Fiscal Analysis	Executive Director
Chandra Haislet	Office of Performance Reporting and Accountability	Executive Director
Steven Hicks	Division of Early Childhood	Assistant State Superintendent
Lily Klam	Governor's Summer Intern	Student at University of Maryland College Park
Sylvia Lawson, Ph.D.	Office of the Deputy for School Effectiveness	Deputy Superintendent
Kelly Meadows	Division of Educator Certification and Program Approval	Assistant State Superintendent
Lora Rakowski	Communications	Director
Dara Shaw, Ph.D.	Office of Research	Executive Director
Susan Spinnato	Division of Curriculum, Instructional Improvement, and Professional Learning	Director of Instructional Programs
Marcia Sprankle, Ed.D.	Division of Curriculum, Instructional Improvement and Professional Learning	Assistant State Superintendent
Carol Williamson, Ed.D.	Office of the Deputy for Teaching and Learning	Deputy Superintendent

Attachment B – ARP ESSER State Plan
Application Website Announcement
Screenshots

Posted on the Maryland State Department of Education's home webpage (<http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/Pages/default.aspx>), June 25-July 9, 2021 (see announcement in right-hand column)

The screenshot shows the homepage of the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) website. The browser address bar displays "marylandpublicschools.org/Pages/default.aspx". The page features a search bar at the top with the placeholder text "Enter search term". To the right of the search bar is a yellow banner for "COVID-19 HEALTH RESOURCES" with a link to "Learn more from MD Department of Health". Below the search bar is a blue navigation menu with links for HOME, DIVISIONS/PROGRAMS, STATE BOARD, NEWSROOM, and ABOUT US. The main content area is divided into three columns. The left column features a circular portrait of Mohammed Choudhury, the Maryland State Superintendent of Schools, with the heading "A MESSAGE FROM MOHAMMED CHOUDHURY" and the subheading "Building Bridges Together". Below this is a message from the Dear Team MSDE, stating: "Today, we begin a new journey together. Passionate about education equity and innovation, I am thrilled to serve as your Maryland State Superintendent of Schools. With Maryland is a national leader in education excellence, our collective". The middle column features a graphic titled "Building Bridges for a Better Future" with the subtitle "Together, We Move Forward". Below the graphic is a link to "New! View 2021 Top Accomplishments: Building Bridges for a Better Future". The right column features a link to "COVID-19 Guidance, Resources and Updates for Maryland Schools and Communities" with the subtext "Recovery. Resilience. Reopening Maryland Schools." and a paragraph stating: "The Maryland State Department of Education and multiple State agencies are collaborating on and are committed to". The rightmost column features a link to "MSDE Seeks Input for American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary Schools Emergency Relief Plan" with the subtext "Draft Plan Posted for Review; Survey Now Open Through July 9, 2021 to Solicit Public Comment". Below this is a paragraph stating: "The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) seeks public input for its draft of the State plan for American Rescue Plan (ARP) Elementary and Secondary Schools Emergency Relief (ESSER) funding. The draft, along with a public comment survey, can be found at: <http://marylandpublicschools.org/about/Pages/ARP-ESSER/index.aspx>. The survey will be open for input through July 9, and MSDE will consider all feedback when finalizing the plan." and a link to "More...".

Posted on newly created ARP ESSER webpage on Maryland State Department of Education's website (<http://marylandpublicschools.org/about/Pages/ARP-ESSER/index.aspx>), June 25-July 9, 2021

The screenshot displays the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) website. The header features the MSDE logo, a search bar, and navigation links for Maryland.gov, State Directory, State Agencies, Online Services, and Translate. The main navigation bar includes links for HOME, DIVISIONS/PROGRAMS, STATE BOARD, NEWSROOM, and ABOUT US.

The left sidebar contains the following links:

- ABOUT US
 - Directory
 - MSDE Org Chart (PDF)
 - MSDE Privacy Statement
 - Offices & Divisions
 - School Systems
 - Regulations
- Division of Student Support, Academic Enrichment & Educational Policy
 - Division of Student Support, Academic Enrichment & Educational Policy
 - Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)
 - Student Services & Strategic Planning
 - Grant Administration and Resource Development
 - Equitable Services State Ombudsman
- Emergency Planning and School Safety
 - Emergency Planning and School Safety
 - Emergency Planning Guidelines for Local School Systems and Schools - Updated October 2017

The main content area is titled "American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ARP ESSER) Fund". It includes a search bar and social media icons.

American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ARP ESSER) Fund

Under the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Fund, established via the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act (March 27, 2020), and further funded under the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations (CRRSA) Act, 2021 (December 27, 2020) and the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act of 2021 (March 11, 2021), the U.S. Department of Education (USED) awarded grants to states for the purpose of providing local school systems (LSSs) that receive funds under Title I, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) with emergency relief funds to address the impact that the COVID-19 pandemic has had, and continues to have, on elementary and secondary schools across the nation.

The ARP ESSER funds provides nearly \$122 billion to states and LSSs (of which approximately \$1.95 billion has been allocated to Maryland) to meet the urgent needs of schools and students. In March 2021, USED made available to each state the first two-thirds of its ARP ESSER allocation, or about \$81 billion in immediate support nationwide (of which Maryland received approximately \$1.3 billion). The remaining one-third of each state's ARP ESSER allocation – totaling another \$41 billion in funding nationwide (of which Maryland is allocated approximately \$600 million) – will be released upon USED's approval of each state's ARP ESSER plan.

The purpose of this [state plan](#) is to promote comprehensive planning by states and LSSs for the effective use of ARP ESSER funds to reopen schools safely beginning in spring 2021; support sustained access to in-person instruction throughout the spring, summer, and into next school year; and to address the academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs of students.

Maryland State Plan for the American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ARP ESSER) Fund

[Invitation to Comment on Maryland's ARP ESSER Plan](#)
June 25, 2021

As required by USED, the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) has developed a draft [Maryland State Plan for the American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief \(ARP ESSER\) Fund](#). This draft state plan is based on input received through multiple meetings and communications with stakeholders over the course of the COVID-19 pandemic, dating back to March 2020. Additionally, under the stipulations of ARP ESSER, in developing the state's plan the MSDE is also providing the public with the opportunity to submit feedback and to incorporate this input, where appropriate, into the final plan.

Accordingly, the MSDE invites members of the public to review the draft state plan and submit comments by **July 9, 2021**. To facilitate this public input, the MSDE is asking all respondents to complete the [online survey](#) through which respondents can submit comments both generally and on specific areas of the draft state plan. All comments received from the public will be considered by the MSDE when finalizing the state plan. A final draft of the state plan will be presented to the Maryland State Board of Education for review and approval at its next meeting on July 27, 2021. If approved by the State Board, Maryland intends to submit its final, complete ARP ESSER state plan to USED on July 30, 2021.

Publication of School Operating Status and Instructional Mode Data Under the Requirements of ARP ESSER
June 21, 2021

In accordance with the requirements promulgated by USED for the allocation of federal funds under the ARP ESSER Fund, the MSDE, as part of its state plan application, is posting enrollment, attendance, and mode of instruction data for the most recent time period available.

American Rescue Plan Element

marylandpublicschools.org/about/Pages/ARP-ESSER/index.aspx

MSDE when finalizing the state plan. A final draft of the state plan will be presented to the Maryland State Board of Education for review and approval at its next meeting on July 27, 2021. If approved by the State Board, Maryland intends to submit its final, complete ARP ESSER state plan to USED on July 30, 2021.


Publication of School Operating Status and Instructional Mode Data

Under the Requirements of ARP ESSER

June 21, 2021

In accordance with the requirements promulgated by USED for the allocation of federal funds under the ARP ESSER Fund, the MSDE, as part of its state plan application, is posting enrollment, attendance, and mode of instruction data for the most recent time period available.

Contact Information



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Attachment C – ARP ESSER State Plan
Application Press Release, June 29, 2021



Karen B. Salmon, Ph.D.
State Superintendent of Schools

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

CONTACT: lora.rakowski@maryland.gov

MSDE SEEKS INPUT FOR AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS EMERGENCY RELIEF PLAN

*Draft Plan Posted for Review; Survey Now Open Through July 9, 2021 to Solicit
Public Comment*

BALTIMORE, MD (June 29, 2021) - The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) seeks public input for its draft of the State plan for American Rescue Plan (ARP) Elementary and Secondary Schools Emergency Relief (ESSER) funding. The draft, along with a public comment survey, can be found at: <http://marylandpublicschools.org/about/Pages/ARP-ESSER/index.aspx>. The survey will be open for input through July 9, and MSDE will consider all feedback when finalizing the plan.

Through the ARP, the U.S. Department of Education will allocate approximately \$1.95 billion to Maryland and local school systems to meet the urgent needs of schools and students in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. Earlier this month, MSDE hosted a stakeholder meeting to renew and provide input on the plan, which addresses:

- **Accelerating student re-engagement:** speeding up the return to in-person instruction for all students in the 2021-2022 school year, while also providing the necessary supports, especially in the areas of technology/broadband access and outreach, to ensure that students and parents/families remain engaged;
- **Supporting mental and social-emotional health:** addressing the mental health and social-emotional learning (SEL) needs of students, particularly among underserved students most affected by the switch to remote learning, and parents/families and educators; and
- **Addressing the impact of disrupted instruction:** using evidence-based strategies to lessen the impact of disrupted instruction on student learning that has occurred over the past 15 months, and supporting local school systems as they do the same.

The final plan will be presented to the Maryland State Board of Education for approval on July 27, before submission to the U.S. Department of Education on July 30.

###

Attachment D – Public Comments Survey Template



Feedback: State Plan for the American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ARP ESSER)

The Maryland State Board of Education is seeking the community's input on the "State Plan for the American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund." This plan is also known as Maryland's plan to use ARP ESSER funds.

BACKGROUND:

The ARP ESSER funds are provided to states and local school systems to meet the urgent needs as a result of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Each state must complete and submit a state plan to the US Department of Education demonstrating comprehensive planning by the state and support to the local school systems for the effective use of ARP ESSER funds to reopen schools safely; support sustained access to in-person instruction throughout the summer and into the next school year; and to address the academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs of students.

This survey is requesting your feedback on Maryland's plan to use ARP ESSER funds. The full plan can be found here: <http://marylandpublicschools.org/about/Pages/ARP-ESSER/index.aspx>.

Thank you for completing this short survey and providing your feedback.

1. In what county do you live?

2. Do you currently have children enrolled in a public school in Maryland?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Feedback: State Plan for the American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ARP ESSER)

3. In which grade levels do you have children enrolled in a public school in Maryland? (select all that apply)

☐ Elementary (Pre-K to grade 5)

☐ Middle (Grades 6 to 8)

☐ High (Grades 9 to 12)

☐ Other grade level

Feedback: State Plan for the American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ARP ESSER)

4. Are you an educator in a public school system in Maryland?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Feedback: State Plan for the American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ARP ESSER)

5. What grade level are you associated with?

- ☐ Elementary (Pre-K to grade 5)
- ☐ Middle (Grades 6 to 8)
- ☐ High (Grades 9 to 12)
- ☐ Other/Not affiliated with a specific grade band

Feedback: State Plan for the American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ARP ESSER)

Section A(2) of the Maryland State Plan for ARP ESSER identifies three issues currently facing students and schools across the State as a result of or in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The following is a brief summary of the three issues that Maryland has identified.

- 1) **Accelerating student re-engagement:** speeding up the return to in-person instruction for all students in the 2021-2022 school year, while also providing the necessary supports, especially in the areas of technology/broadband access and outreach, to ensure that students and parents/families remain engaged;
- 2) **Supporting mental and social-emotional health:** addressing the mental health and social-emotional learning (SEL) needs of students, particularly among underserved students most affected by the switch to remote learning, and parents/families and educators; and
- 3) **Addressing the impact of disrupted instruction:** using evidence-based strategies to lessen the impact of disrupted instruction on student learning that has occurred over the past 15 months, and supporting local school systems as they do the same.

6. Please enter the degree to which you feel these issues reflect the issues currently facing Maryland students and schools as a result of or in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

You may select the same or different level for all three issues.

	Issue should not be a priority	Issue should be a low priority	Issue should be a medium priority	Issue should be a high priority
Accelerating student re-engagement	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Supporting mental and social-emotional health	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Addressing the impact of disrupted instruction	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

7. Please enter any additional issues that you believe should be identified as high priorities in Maryland's ARP ESSER plan.

These should be issues currently facing students and schools as a result of or in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Feedback: State Plan for the American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ARP ESSER)

Section D of the Maryland ARP ESSER Plan describes how Maryland will meet the federal requirement that State set-aside funding:

- (1) addresses the academic impact of lost instructional time;
- (2) provides summer learning and enrichment programs; and
- (3) provides comprehensive afterschool programs.

Federal law requires that Maryland funds be used in these three areas. Maryland's plan defines strategies to use our funds to meet these three requirements. In some areas, the plan describes multiple uses of funds; for others, there may be fewer options.

8. Maryland is required to use ARP ESSER funds on evidence-based interventions to **address the academic impact of lost instructional time** by supporting the implementation of evidence-based interventions, and to ensure that such interventions respond to students' academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs.

Per the requirement, interventions may include summer learning or summer enrichment, extended day, comprehensive afterschool programs, or extended school year programs.

Maryland plans to use its funds on the following strategies or interventions. Please rank the degree to which you agree that these strategies should or should not be a priority use of State set-aside funding.

	Strategy should not be a priority use of funds	Strategy should be a low priority use of funds	Strategy should be a medium priority use of funds	Strategy should be a high priority use of funds
High-intensity structured tutoring during the school year	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Extended day or "extra time" programs during the school year	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Extended year programs to continue instruction begun during the school year	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Summer school programs (see next question for more information)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Acceleration academics to support grade-level learning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Formative assessments	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	Strategy should not be a priority use of funds	Strategy should be a low priority use of funds	Strategy should be a medium priority use of funds	Strategy should be a high priority use of funds
Early childhood programs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Expanded hands-on instruction time and/or work-based learning time for students in Career and Technical Education programs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Compensatory education and/or recovery services to address the loss of free and appropriate public education for students with disabilities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Regional Crisis Response and Technical Support teams to support student social- emotional and mental health	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Other (please describe strategy and whether it should be low, medium, or high priority)

9. Maryland is required to use APR ESSER funds for evidence-based **summer learning and enrichment programs** and to ensure such programs respond to students' academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs.

Maryland plans to use its funds on the following strategies or interventions during the summer. (Note that some of these strategies may be the same as those proposed to take place during the school year.)

Please rank the degree to which you agree that these strategies should or should not be a priority use of State set-aside funding.

	Strategy should not be a priority use of funds	Strategy should be a low priority use of funds	Strategy should be a medium priority use of funds	Strategy should be a high priority use of funds
Intensive resident tutoring and acceleration programs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Acceleration programs to scaffold upcoming content and prerequisites for the next grade level	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	Strategy should not be a priority use of funds	Strategy should be a low priority use of funds	Strategy should be a medium priority use of funds	Strategy should be a high priority use of funds
Credit recovery for students who did not pass courses during the school year	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Enrichment/teaching of elective skills or content	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Summer bridge or transition programs, for students transitioning between school levels (ex: middle to high school)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Compensatory education and/or recovery services to address the loss of free and appropriate public education for students with disabilities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
English language instruction and/or language skills for students who are English learners and/or migrant students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Expanded hands-on instructional time and/or work-based learning time for students in Career and Technical Education programs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Summer programs to support mental health and well-being	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Other (please describe strategy and whether it should be low, medium, or high priority)

10. Maryland is required to use ARP ESSER funds for evidence-based **comprehensive afterschool programs** (including, for example, before-school programming), and ensure such programs respond to students' academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs.

Maryland plans to use its funds on the following strategies or interventions.

Please rank the degree to which you agree that these strategies should or should not be a priority use of State set-aside funding.

	Strategy should not be a priority use of funds	Strategy should be a low priority use of funds	Strategy should be a medium priority use of funds	Strategy should be a high priority use of funds
<p>So c t grant app cat ons from oca schoo systems and commun ty-based agenc es to deve op or enhance afterschoo programs. Grantees w use funds to support the creat on of after schoo earn ng centers to prov de academ c enr chment opportun tes dur ng after schoo hours for ch dren, part cu ar y students who attend h gh-poverty and ow-perform ng schoo s.</p>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Other (p ease descr be strategy and whether t shou d be ow, med um, or h gh pr or ty)

11. Please enter any additional comments or feedback on Maryland s ARP ESSER plan.

12. Please enter your email (OPTIONAL)

Your ema

Attachment E – Memo to Local
Superintendents, June 25, 2021



Karen B. Salmon, Ph.D.
State Superintendent of Schools

TO: Local School Superintendents

FROM: Karen B. Salmon, Ph.D. (b) (6)

DATE: June 25, 2021

RE: State Plan for the American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ARP ESSER) Fund

Under the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Fund, established via the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act (March 27, 2020), and further funded under the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations (CRRSA) Act, 2021 (December 27, 2020) and the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act of 2021 (March 11, 2021), the U.S. Department of Education (USED) awarded grants to states for the purpose of providing local school systems (LSSs) that receive funds under Title I, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) with emergency relief funds to address the impact the COVID-19 pandemic has had, and continues to have, on elementary and secondary schools across the nation.

On April 21, 2021, Dr. Miguel A. Cardona, Secretary of Education, sent a letter to all Chief State School Officers describing the ARP ESSER Fund, which provides nearly \$122 billion to states and LSSs (of which approximately \$1.95 billion has been allocated to Maryland) to meet the urgent needs of schools and students. In March, USED made available to each state the first two-thirds of its ARP ESSER allocation, or about \$81 billion in immediate support nationwide (of which Maryland received approximately \$1.3 billion). With the distribution of these funds, USED released a state plan template for the ARP ESSER Fund, which is designed to promote comprehensive planning by states and LSSs for the effective use of ARP ESSER funds to reopen schools safely this spring; support sustained access to in-person instruction throughout the spring, summer, and into next school year; and to address the academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs of students. Each state is required to submit its own ARP ESSER plan to USED. Upon approval, USED will make each state's remaining ARP ESSER allocation available for use, totaling another \$41 billion in funding nationwide (of which Maryland is allocated approximately \$600 million).

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) has developed a draft ARP ESSER state plan. This draft state plan is based on input received through multiple meetings and communications with stakeholders over the course of the COVID-19 pandemic, dating back to March 2020. The draft state plan also reflects updated content based on input from the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) External Stakeholder Committee (meeting held on June 10, 2021).

Under the stipulations of ARP ESSER, in developing the state's plan the MSDE is required to: 1) engage in meaningful consultation with various stakeholder groups, including local school superintendents, as well as providing the public with the opportunity to submit feedback, and 2) incorporate this input, where appropriate, into the plan. On June 22, 2021, the Maryland State Board of Education (State Board) voted to publish the draft ARP ESSER state plan on the MSDE website and invite public comment. The draft state plan will be posted on the MSDE website and open to public comment for two weeks (from June 25, 2021, through July 9, 2021). To help facilitate this public input, the MSDE has developed an online survey that will be posted on the MSDE

website, alongside the draft state plan, allowing members of the public to comment both generally and on specific areas of the draft state plan.

This communication serves as an invitation for local school superintendents to provide feedback on Maryland's draft ARP ESSER state plan. The draft ARP ESSER Plan can be found at <http://marylandpublicschools.org/about/Pages/ARP-ESSER/index.aspx>. Please submit comments on behalf of your LSS by **July 9, 2021**, via email to rhodri.evans@maryland.gov. Please note that certain evidential artifacts referenced in the draft state plan are not web accessible; they only exist as electronic attachments. If you would like to review these non-web accessible artifacts, please submit a request to rhodri.evans@maryland.gov. Copies of all comments received from local school superintendents will be shared with the State Board and will be included as artifacts as part of the ARP ESSER state plan submission to USED.

Following the July 9, 2021, response deadline, the MSDE will review all the comments submitted by local superintendents, members of the public, and other applicable stakeholders and revise the draft state plan, as appropriate, based on this input. A final draft of the state plan will be presented for the State Board's review and approval at its meeting on July 27, 2021. If approved by the State Board, Maryland intends to submit its final, complete ARP ESSER state plan to USED on July 30, 2021.

If you have any questions regarding this request, please contact Mary L. Gable, Assistant State Superintendent, Division of Student Support, Academic Enrichment, and Educational Policy, by email at mary.gable@maryland.gov or by telephone at 410-767-0472.

Attachment F – Cline Email, July 4, 2021, and
Understanding the Role of Technology
Interventions in the Classroom

Sun, Jul 4, 2021 at 5:39 AM Lisa Cline (b) (6)@rp3agency.com> wrote:
Good morning, Ms. Gable.

I was pleased that find your survey online and answer it based on my knowledge about what I've observed here in our school district (Montgomery County Public Schools).

In short, a great many effects of pandemic learning on our children could have been mitigated to a certain degree by powering down the online learning and directing children to read, write and create.

Last spring, when the switch was flipped into Zoom Autopilot, I saw an immediate disintegration of curriculum delivery. (b) (6) called it "torture" to sit at a computer for 6 hours a day — and that didn't include the hours doing homework and sorting out the message platforms that MCPS insisted on retaining (i.e., Synergy, which was incompatible with MyMCPS, so students and parents never knew what grade was being given until the last day of the quarter).

Early education experts called the sedentary learning style with not breaks and no offline alternatives (as per MSDE Digital Best Practices) — believe me, I tried and tried and tried to obtain both — called MCPS's handling of our children child restraint and sensory deprivation.

Kids absolutely crumbled. Those who didn't pretty much hate school now.

The antidote is to go into Fall with a clean slate (not screen!). Invest in books that kids can bring outdoors and in the car and hold onto and share with family and friends. Books invite discussion from those around you. Books are real. Books don't serve pop-up screens and distractions and harm to eyes.

In short, please do not use any of this relief fund money to line the pockets of EdTech vendors. Buy books. If we want our children to succeed, we must give them age-appropriate tools that have demonstrated, time and again, to expand their minds and foster a love of learning.

All the very best,

Lisa Cline
Gaithersburg, MD

Understanding the Role of Technology Interventions in the Classroom
Review Essay from MCCPTA Safe Technology Subcommittee
NOT OFFICIALLY ADOPTED BY MCCPTA. FOR DISCUSSION.

For more information and queries, contact:

Lisa Cline, (b) (6) [@aol.com](#), Co-Chair MCCPTA Safe Technology Subcommittee
Dr. Assya Pascalev, (b) (6) [gmail.com](#), Co-Chair MCCPTA Safe Technology Subcommittee
Dr. Sunil Dasgupta, (b) (6) [@hotmail.com](#), Chair, MCCPTA Health and Safety Committee

For nearly three decades, public educators, technology entrepreneurs, and corporate philanthropists in the United States have sought education reform through technology interventions and standardized testing.¹ Based on our survey of the research, we see a persistent disconnect between deductive expectations of technology interventions and self-reporting survey results, on the one hand, and available empirical evidence of actual student performance, on the other. Large public school systems such as MCPS face the enormous challenge of finding the right balance between continued optimism about the role of technology and the reality of the learning process. To do this right, we must explore the relative merits of digital and non-digital learning. We propose three steps toward this end.

First, determine age, subject-matter, and student appropriateness of digital content and technology interventions in the classroom. Some material is better delivered online while others using books—right now we do not know which materials are in fact better delivered digital and which are better delivered non-digitally. We also do not know how the digital-non-digital balance ought to shift with age. It is also the case that some students with IEPs need greater access to technology, which should be accommodated. Second, make a distinction between access to materials and learning. While making content available online for teachers, students, and parents is valuable, especially when the curriculum is continually updated, actually learning on screens is problematic as the literature review below shows. Third, develop mechanisms for regularly monitoring digital and screen-use by MCPS students, teachers, and parents so that the digital-non-digital balance may be adjusted over time.

The Johns Hopkins Report

In 2017, Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) commissioned The Johns Hopkins Institute of Education Policy (Johns Hopkins) to conduct a review of its Curriculum 2.0. John Hopkins reported its findings in March 2018. The central recommendation was that MCPS adopt *an externally-developed curriculum including software platforms* for the delivery of English Language Arts and Math content.² In April, MCPS opened a Request for Proposal (RFP) to solicit a new curriculum and this process is expected to be completed by December 2018.

The Johns Hopkins Report is a much-awaited investigation of the MCPS elementary and middle school curriculum in language arts and math. While the report addressed wide-ranging issues of alignment and appropriateness of materials and curriculum, based on the publicly-released Executive Summary, it did not address the relative differences in learning outcomes of digital/software platforms and non-digital tools such as books, which it has nevertheless recommended to MCPS.

Through the summer of 2018, MCPS curriculum review team members have made presentations to MCCPTA area meetings on the Johns Hopkins Report and the RFP process.

These presentations confirmed that neither the Johns Hopkins Study Report nor MCPS itself has systematically considered the relative merits of digital and non-digital learning. MCPS officials have emphasized the RFP required the new curriculum to use both digital and non-digital delivery; a purely digital or a purely non-digital curriculum would be rejected. This requirement means that curriculum with a 90-10 digital-non-digital balance would qualify for the RFP as would a curriculum that was 30-70 digital-non-digital. However, without systematic study of the relative merits of digital and non-digital curriculum, including age and subject-matter appropriateness, we do not know how to evaluate the different content mixes that will be offered by different vendors.

While MCPS officials said they would look into this issue now, it is important to develop a transparent and inclusive mechanism of assessment. The Executive Summary of the Johns Hopkins report describes the community input received by the study group as “survey data of the views of stakeholders.” The nature and details of what information this survey data included is not shared. In contrast, the report notes that, “the research team conducted 52 focus groups and interviews at 20 MCPS elementary and middle schools with 324 educators – including both teachers and central staff – collecting 2,441 comments.” The seeming exclusion of systematic community input from parents and, notably, teachers in a setting outside the school where they may be able to respond more freely exposes the study to deficiencies stemming from inadequate stakeholder voices.

State law is pushing in the direction of more discovery on this issue as well. In 2018, the Maryland General Assembly passed HB1110 in, a bill which asks the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) to investigate the effectiveness and safety of technology interventions in classrooms across the state. HB1110 became law in April 2018.³

Does Technology Improve Learning Outcomes?

The central question here is how technology interventions improve learning outcomes. The promise of technology is widely held. As Thomas Friedman famously argued more than a decade ago, access to technology was making the World Flat, which implied that technology removed social and economic barriers to economic and social mobility. Teachers, schools, and society in general have largely accepted this promise. Legislators in California and Florida, two of the largest states in the U.S., have passed laws requiring digital textbooks.⁴ Technology access has been pushed as an instrument of education equity.⁵

In the face of this technological optimism, actual empirical research on the impact of technology on learning in the classroom is actually sparse and sobering. Part of the problem appears to be the multicausal nature of the learning process, which makes it hard to disentangle the impact of technology from the quality of the curriculum and teachers, and the effects of a difficult home environment. The largest study to look at the problem is a multinational OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development) report published in 2015. The OECD report correlates computer availability and use in classrooms a number of countries with performance on standardized testing to arrive at this stark observation:

“In 2012, 96% of 15-year-old students in OECD countries reported that they have a computer at home, but only 72% reported that they use a desktop, laptop or tablet computer at school. Only 42% of students in Korea and 38% of students in Shanghai-China reported that they use computers at school – and Korea and Shanghai-China were among the top performers in the digital reading and computer-based mathematics tests in the OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) in 2012. By contrast, in countries

where it is more common for students to use the Internet at school for schoolwork, students' performance in reading declined between 2000 and 2012, on average."⁶

In a 2017 review essay, University of Maryland researchers Patricia A. Alexander and Lauren M. Singer examine existing research since 1992 on the narrower question of reading comprehension differences between print and digital texts. They found that when reading texts longer than one page, the research showed better comprehension outcomes with print rather than with digital texts.⁷ The research attributes this to the disruptive effect of scrolling on screens. Their own research shows a paradox in the students self-reporting better comprehension with and clear preference for digital texts but performed better in actual tests of comprehension when using printed matter.⁸

The paradox between the technological optimism of advocates and the reality of contradictory and undiscernible results provided by empirical studies of technological interventions in education goes beyond students alone. A 2014 survey of 400 educators and administrators and 1,000 middle and high-school students sponsored by CompTIA, an IT trade association, found "75 percent of educators think that technology has a positive impact in the education process."⁹ This finding stands in contrast to the studies such as the 2015 OECD report that do not support a positive correlation between technological intervention and learning outcomes. It is worth noting that 2015 OECD report, showed modest gains from technology interventions in some classrooms (with low to moderate use).

The prevalence and persistence of this paradox is puzzling. Potentially, two factors are at play in the MCPS deliberations over choosing its new curriculum. First, we believe there is significant industry pressure on the purchase and possibly continued maintenance of the curriculum contract. In this context, it is worth noting that Discovery Education, which has been at the center of the conflict of interest concerns, offers almost all-screen-based curriculum. Second, years of professional development extolling the importance of "innovation" in learning has predisposed teachers to viewing input as output, access as equity, and many teachers appear to be in a race to be cutting edge, often ignoring MCPS Technology Office's prohibitions on certain apps and programs.

While California and Florida are pressing forth on digital learning, the State of Maine, the first state to adopt a one-to-one laptop program, has discontinued the program after a decade of data showing no impact on learning outcomes.¹⁰ Recent newspaper articles report that early leaders in the technology industry now insist on a no- or low-tech learning environment for their own children.¹¹ In higher education, professors are increasingly banning laptops from the classroom.¹²

Does Technology Reduce the Achievement Gap?

On equity, school-based technology was one hope for leveling the playing field for minorities and poor families. The actions of the California and Florida state legislatures reflect in part an intent to bring down the cost and improve access to curriculum. Technology firms have backed initiatives like the Khan Academy to deliver material where teachers are either unavailable or unable. In developing countries, access to education through handheld devices is believed to enable leapfrogging over absent infrastructure such as school buildings.

However, empirical evidence of success is hard to find. Arguments in favor of increased technology interventions for equity reasons, typically, mistake input for outcome or add variables so that the impact of technology becomes impossible to discern. Moreover, as the paradox of

expectations of learning among students and teachers show, there can be significant differences between self-reported survey results and actual performance.

A widely-cited 2014 Stanford study, for example, identified relatively lesser access to computers among poorer and minority students as the crux of the learning problem, thereby making access to computers the preferred solution.¹³ One of the few empirical examples of success in the study comes from Talladega County, Alabama, which is described as “a district where 73 percent of students qualify for free or reduced-price lunch, dropout rates were high, and college-going was low” which, “over the course of just two years...led to an increase in graduation rates from 63 percent to 87 percent and a climb in college acceptance rates from 33 percent to 78 percent. During the same period, the high school had significant decreases in suspensions, alternative school referrals, and dropout rates, preventing failures that had previously routinely occurred.”¹⁴

On closer examination, rather than evaluating the impact of technology on learning, the report finds that increased teacher interaction is necessary to make technology interventions work. This raises the obvious question whether increased teacher interaction *without* the technology intervention might have had similar results. The study speaks to technology interventions without changes in teacher engagement here:

“Results from these efforts have been largely disappointing. In some cases, students demonstrated improved outcomes on tests of similar information tested in a similar format; in most, they performed about the same as students taught by teachers during the same time period. One recent study, for example, used rigorous methods of random assignment to evaluate the impact of a variety of math and reading software products across 132 schools in 33 school districts, with a sample of more than 9,400 students, and found no significant difference on student test scores in classrooms using the software as compared to classrooms not using the software. Another large study using random assignment methods to evaluate the effectiveness of students’ exposure to a phonics-based computer program also found no effect in terms of gains on reading comprehension tests.”¹⁵

If anything, the conclusions suggest that technology without adequate one-on-one teaching can be counterproductive. The OECD’s director of the Office of Education Research, Andreas Schleicher, stated that, “One of the most disappointing findings of the [2015] report is that the socioeconomic divide between students is not narrowed by technology, perhaps even amplified.”¹⁶

What are the Dangers of Increased Screen and Computer Time?

There is little doubt that the introduction of smartboards and Google Chromebooks in school have marked a dramatic shift in content delivery in classrooms. In 2012, Florida state legislature reflected this shift when it passed a law requiring 50 percent of all classroom instruction to be digital by 2015.¹⁷ A 2016 Children and Screen Time advisory report from the Office of Education for Santa Clara County, CA, similarly highlights the importance of technology in enhancing learning opportunities.¹⁸

Neither Florida nor Santa Clara County are known to have conducted audits of their claims about the impact of technology, but a 2016 study reported in the *Journal of Pediatric Health* reported strong correlation between screen time and sleep health.¹⁹ Research on screen time is problematic because the making of control and experimental groups of human child subjects would violate most research board reviews.²⁰ Still, the medical research community has decided that there is sufficient cause to take notice.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that “parents and caregivers develop a family media plan that takes into account the health, education and entertainment needs of each child as well as the whole family...proactively think about their children’s media use and talk with children about it, because too much media use can mean that children don’t have enough time during the day to play, study, talk, or sleep.”²¹ Furthermore, Common Sense Media, an organization devoted to balance in screen time, reports that 59 percent of parents say their kids are “addicted” to their screens, while 66 percent say their kids spend too much time on screens.²²

The use of medical authority in this debate presents contradictions. The Santa Clara screen time advisory references an American Academy of Ophthalmology report stating, “there is no convincing scientific evidence that computer video display terminals (VDTs) are harmful to the eyes,” but the reference to the assertion links to the Health Physics Society Journal, which thereafter does not identify a source from the American Academy of Ophthalmology. Meanwhile, the American Academy of Ophthalmology website displays the organization’s recommendation to limit screen time to prevent eye strain and damage. In short, the Santa Clara advisory from 2016 does not factor in the American Academy of Ophthalmology’s warnings, but the organization is cited as a source.

Finally, student screen and internet usage has raised questions about privacy. A number of states and school districts are cracking down on child privacy laws. Baltimore County Public Schools has taken extra steps to ensure privacy of student data²³ and the state of Texas is considered a pioneer of child privacy laws and efforts with the passage of HB2087, which provides strong privacy protections for student data within Texas public schools.²⁴ MCPS itself has been trying to lock-down servers and examine its custodial responsibilities with respect to student data, but this remains an early work in progress. Anecdotally, parent reports to the MCCPTA Safe Technology Subcommittee suggest a race among teachers to introduce more technology, some of which may violate the Children’s Online Privacy and Protection Act (COPPA) and are not vetted by the MCPS Technology Office. This leaves the MCPS CTO and team to play catch-up with actual practice inside schools.

Finding the Balance

HB-1110 instructed the Maryland State Department of Education to evaluate the effectiveness and safety of technology interventions in classrooms across the state. The Johns Hopkins study did not anticipate this coming state requirement and seemingly did not address the issue of digital learning effectiveness.

Based on the study and other official MCPS reporting of the study, we do not know how much time Montgomery County school students spend on the computer at school or at home. Further, we do not understand what the impact of technology interventions has been on learning outcomes in MCPS classrooms. Specifically, what ages or what subject matter benefit most from screen-based learning and where screens can be detrimental. The study does not provide evidence of learning measures to determine where we stand on these questions. Nevertheless, it recommends externally-developed digital platforms for delivery of the new curriculum despite current research calling into question the effectiveness of curriculum significantly delivered via screens.

It would be worthwhile to draw a distinction between how MCPS (and other adults, including parents) access the new curriculum and how students access and learn the material. Online access can be a big convenience, especially when the curriculum needs to be continually updated and more resources are added and printed text books are expensive and many are

outdated before they make it to the shelf. However, actual on-screen learning outcomes or how screens might distract students is a different analytical problem as the literature review above demonstrates. Separating access and learning challenges would help us develop and adjust the right balance between digital and non-digital content.

Finally, there is a strong argument to be made for regular monitoring of digital use within MCPS by teachers, students, and parents. We do not even know how much time students of various ages spend on screens. Anecdotally that teachers in middle and high schools direct students to use apps that are not approved by MCPS Central Technology Office. Equally, we know that even elementary school children are sometimes able to access inappropriate content when they use their own devices on school property, including the school bus. A straightforward correlational analysis of student login duration (probably available within MCPS) and test scores, for example, can be a starting point. Over time, the analysis should reveal how we should adjust the digital-non-digital balance. We can further improve our understanding of challenges with periodic survey of teachers, students, and parents.

¹ Andrea Gabor, *After the Education Wars: How Smart Schools Upend the Business of Reform* (New York: The New Press, 2018).

² Johns Hopkins University School of Education, "Montgomery County Public Schools: Curriculum Review and Analysis," Summary and Recommendations submitted to Montgomery County Board of Education. March 2018, p 9. Lead author: David Steiner, Executive Director, Johns Hopkins Institute for Education Policy.

<http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/uploadedFiles/curriculum/integrated/ExecutiveSummaryMCPS.PDF>

³ Public Schools – Health and Safety Best Practices – Digital Devices

<http://mgaleg.maryland.gov/webmga/fmMain.aspx?id=HB1110&stab=01&pid=billpage&tab=subject3&ys=2018RS>

⁴ Patricia A. Alexander and Lauren M. Singer, "A new study shows that students learn way more effectively from print textbooks and screens," *Business Insider*, Oct. 15, 2017.

http://www.businessinsider.com/students-learning-education-print-textbooks-screens-study-2017-10?utm_source=facebook&utm_content=bottom-bar&utm_term=mobile

⁵ Linda Darling-Hammond, Molly B. Zieleszinski, and Shelley Goldman, "Using Technology to Support At-Risk Students' Learning," Stanford Center for Opportunity in Education. September 2014

<https://edpolicy.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/scope-pub-using-technology-report.pdf>

⁶ OECD, *Students, Computers and Learning Making the Connection*, 2015, p 15. https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/education/students-computers-and-learning_9789264239555-en#page21. See also, John O'Connor, "Study Finds More Classroom Technology Doesn't Mean More Learning,"

<https://stateimpact.npr.org/florida/2015/09/15/study-finds-more-classroom-technology-doesnt-mean-more-learning/>

⁷ Lauren M. Singer, Patricia A. Alexander, "Reading on Paper and Digitally: What the Past Decades of Empirical Research Reveal," *Review of Educational Research* Volume: 87 issue: 6, page(s): 1007-1041. Article first published online: July 21, 2017; Issue published: December 1, 2017.

<https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654317722961>

⁸ Patricia A. Alexander and Lauren M. Singer, "A new study shows that students learn way more effectively from print textbooks and screens," *Business Insider*, Oct. 15, 2017.

http://www.businessinsider.com/students-learning-education-print-textbooks-screens-study-2017-10?utm_source=facebook&utm_content=bottom-bar&utm_term=mobile

⁹ Anna Matthai, "Students and Teachers Agree: Let's Bring In More Tech," CompTIA Website.

<https://www.comptia.org/about-us/newsroom/blog/comptia-blog/2014/12/10/students-and-teachers-agree-let-s-bring-in-more-tech>

¹⁰ Robbie Feinberg, "Do Laptops Help Learning? A Look At The Only Statewide School Laptop Program," National Public Radio, August 18, 2017. <https://www.npr.org/sections/ed/2017/08/18/536875865/15-years-later-how-did-it-go-with-maines-school-laptop-program>

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Attachment G – Maryland Out of School
Time Network Letter, July 7, 2021

Statement From MOST Network on MSDE’S State Plan for the ARP ESSER Fund
July 7th, 2021



The Maryland Out of School Time Network (MOST) commends MSDE’s State Plan for the ARP ESSER Fund for its focus on equity and students’ social and emotional well-being. Addressing opportunity gaps and keeping young people’s needs at the center of our work should underpin efforts to re-open and schools and facilitate learning. Our organization remains committed to gathering feedback from youth development professionals across the state and providing comments to MSDE based on our findings. We have shared the ARP Plan with our networks and encouraged youth development professionals to complete the state’s feedback survey.

Last summer, MOST convened a series of roundtable discussions to gather input from stakeholders on ways community-based, youth-serving organizations could collaborate with schools and school districts in response to the pandemic. This spring, we convened similar conversations to develop recommendations for recovery fund spending. MOST generated two documents from these discussions ([Leveraging Recovery Funds](#) and [The Case For Partnership](#)), both of which have considerable alignment with MSDE’s articulated priorities. The following recommendations for MSDE’s ARP Plan are derived from these feedback sessions.

To strengthen the ARP Plan, we recommend more closely aligning ARP spending with the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future to sustain newly created programming with the phase-in of additional per-pupil funding through the Concentration of Poverty (CoP) Grants.

This approach would more fully integrate Community Schools into the ARP Plan as well. Specifically, we recommend:

- 1) Prioritizing Community Schools for the state set-aside afterschool and summer investment.
- 2) Investing in training, professional development and technical assistance for the expansion of community schools and integration of expanded learning.

An open RFP which distributes the investment over three years is an efficient way to expend the funds; however, it creates a funding cliff at the end of that period. Community Schools will be receiving increased per-pupil funding for which afterschool and summer learning opportunities are an allowed and encouraged use. Once ARP funds are expended, they can be replaced with CoP investments and sustained over time. With expanded learning as one of the four Community School Pillars, all of Maryland’s more than 300 Community Schools should have a high-quality afterschool and summer learning plan. When a new RFP is released, we encourage extensive outreach and

additional grant applicant technical assistance in order to increase the equitable distribution of funds.

The Blueprint for Maryland's Future created a Director of Community Schools position which has been successful in providing support for Community Schools at the state level. With so many new schools and counties being introduced to Community School Model for the first time, investing in additional infrastructure for training and technical assistance will be critical to support quality of implementation.

We also encourage MSDE to provide guidance to local school districts on making partnership opportunities with ARP funds more transparent and accessible. For example, Baltimore City Schools recently offered a multi-part series entitled "Doing Business with City Schools" which covered topics around contract, procurement policies, data sharing, and applying for ESSA level designation.

We look forward to continuing to track and share with our networks this historic investment in our schools.

Attachment H – Montgomery County Public Schools Letter, July 8, 2021

July 8, 2021

Ms. Rhodri Evans
Maryland State Department of Education
200 West Baltimore Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21201

Dear Ms. Evans:

Montgomery County Public Schools appreciates the opportunity to review and submit comments regarding the State Plan for the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Fund. Enclosed is a chart indicating our feedback on the draft plan.

If you need additional information, please email Dr. Deann M. Collins, director, Division of CARES Act, Early Childhood, and Title I, at Deann_M_Collins@mcpsmd.org.

Sincerely,

(b) (6)

Monifa B. McKnight, Ed.D.
Interim Superintendent of Schools

MBM:mec

Enclosure

Copy to:
Dr. Collins
Mr. Reilly
Mr. Klausing

MCPS ARP ESSER III Feedback for MSDE's State Plan
[MSDE American Rescue Plan, ESSER III State Plan](#)

Page of the State Plan	What resonates with MCPS?	What questions remain? What was missing? Other?
4	Provides a good summary of technology-related funding from the federal government in support of the technology needs of the LEAs.	It is not clear whether the \$118.7M cited includes ESSER I funding statewide.
5		Were the results of the survey conducted by MSDE and PSSAM to identify and quantify technology gaps ever shared with the LEAs or did it just "inform MSDE"? Can we make sure the results of the follow up survey are widely distributed?
8	Appreciate that the MSDE calls out the provision for the State and local education agencies to use ESSER and other federal funds to address the commitments identified in House Bill 1300 of 2020—Blueprint for Maryland's Future and House Bill 1372 of 2021— Blueprint for Maryland's Future— Revisions. This provision will allow MCPS to strategically look at how to utilize ESSER funding to implement priorities in the Blueprint.	
9		This page references a significant weather event as being something for which LEAs need to be prepared. The benefit of the pandemic has shown that districts can offer regular school days of instruction when buildings are closed for a snow event. This should be highlighted on this page.

MCPS ARP ESSER III Feedback for MSDE's State Plan
MSDE American Rescue Plan, ESSER III State Plan

10	The development and implementation of a statewide strategic approach to addressing mental health is critical; and will serve as a comprehensive structure and approach to addressing the mental health and social-emotional needs of students, parents/guardians, families, and educators.	<p>How will the regional teams coordinate with and support, and not conflict with LEA professional staff? How will families be made aware of the services that are available to them? Will families be connected back to their LEA professionals?</p> <p>Will the mental health interns also be able to work in the LEAs, or only on the MSDE regional teams?</p> <p>How will the mental health project provide mental health support to noncritical shortage areas in the state? How will HBCUs support LEA's not located in the county where they reside?</p>
12		<p>In addition to MSDE's guidance document shared with LEAs outlining the State's monitoring plan, clarify specific technical support LEAs will receive for meeting the expectations outlined in the Monitoring Plan. For example, host a webinar with LEAs to review and discuss the expectations noted in the monitoring plan; and then host ongoing webinars with LEAs prior to the initiation of each phase. Also, identify how the MSDE will ensure that LEAs are not burdened with documentation and paperwork as part of the monitoring process.</p>
14		<p>In Table A1, the plan describes the continued implementation of community schools to address the needs of low-income families; however, this does not address those families of students who are not enrolled in the designated community schools. For instance, MCPS will have 16 community schools, all of which are elementary schools, but there are many low-income families in other elementary and secondary schools. Will funds be allocated for additional support and community needs in other schools?</p> <p>Table A1—How is MSDE uplifting family engagement, as required through ESSA, to address many of the issues that have been prioritized in this report? Will training be offered to teachers and administrators on how to engage or re-engage with families, particularly those listed in this table, which were not being fully engaged pre-pandemic?</p>

MCPS ARP ESSER III Feedback for MSDE's State Plan
MSDE American Rescue Plan, ESSER III State Plan

18		This page addresses the impact of the pandemic on migrant children and their families. Another issue that should be addressed in the State plan is the increase of unaccompanied minors, now and in the months ahead.
21		Social-emotional health Further clarify the roles and responsibilities of the Family Navigators beyond connecting families to local community providers and supports. Curious to know if these will be state funded positions. Are these Family Navigators part of the Regional teams? It mentions keeping "informal records" of students receiving support—what does that mean, and are these supposed to be submitted to a particular office?
28		This page suggests monitoring is occurring in 20 percent of the schools and that outcomes are shared. Isn't this just starting so instead of present tense, it should be written in future tense? The same applies for duplicate text on page 34.
32		Identify when LEAs will receive guidance on using data to identify evidence-based interventions since we already received the grant application; and provide examples of "customized support."
47		It indicates MSDE funding set aside for ARP ESSER II and III. Technically, ESSER II came from CRRSAA and ESSER III comes from ARP.
48		This page talks again about migrant children as part of families. It should be noted that there also are unaccompanied minors that LEAs must support. The description of summer programs does not address all of the student population listed as priorities, including students from low-income families or from Black and Brown communities.

MCPS ARP ESSER III Feedback for MSDE's State Plan
MSDE American Rescue Plan, ESSER III State Plan

57		"Monitoring occurs in at least 20 percent of all schools." Shouldn't these paragraphs about the monitoring plan be future tense in most instances?
76		The top of the page indicates MSDE will develop a monitoring system. Previous discussion of the monitoring was present tense.
76-77		References ARP use of ESSER funds. We assume this is in reference to ESSER III funds.

Attachment I – Maryland State Education
Association Letter, July 9, 2021



140 Main Street
Annapolis, MD 21401
800 448 6782
410 263 6600

July 9, 2021

Sent via email

Mr. Mohammed Choudhury, state superintendent
Maryland State Department of Education
200 West Baltimore Street
Baltimore, MD 21201

Dear Superintendent Choudhury:

I am writing to you on behalf of the Maryland State Education Association (MSEA), which represents 75,000 educators and school employees who work in Maryland's public schools. In this capacity, we seek to provide input and guidance relative to MSDE's plan for the allocation of American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ARP ESSER) funds.

CHERYL BOST
President

DOUG PROUTY
Vice President

JOSEPH COUGHLIN
Treasurer

SEAN JOHNSON
Executive Director

The United States Department of Education requires a State Education Agency (SEA) to create a publicly available plan for the use of ARP ESSER funds, which is reached through meaningful consultation with stakeholders, including educators, school staff, and their unions. Collaboration with and reliance upon the expertise and invaluable perspective of the educators who serve our students day in and day out is essential to effective planning, as was reflected in the [Department's guidance to state commissioners](#) and grant guidance stating that *"educators and their unions should be an essential component of the process."*

In an effort to protect and enhance educator voices, we are identifying a series of topic areas that we hope you will consider and will improve equity, increase stakeholder engagement, and ensure clarity with reopening and planning for the 2021-2022 school year.

Topic Area 1: General Feedback on ARP ESSER Plans and the State's Current Status and Needs

It is not evident that MSDE underwent thoroughness in soliciting feedback and engaging stakeholders on its proposed evidence-based strategies. We believe that meaningful engagement and participation in planning by teachers and staff is essential to building trust and ensuring the best possible allocation and use of resources and the highest degree of support for students. For example, MSDE's plan indicates it will allocate approximately \$188 million to high-quality tutoring programs but excludes the mention of LEA engagement in determining best practices for the implementation of such programs. This concerns us because such programming, without the consideration of current stakeholders, leaves the opportunity for external entities to operate in schools where they are likely disconnected from the community, students, families, and most importantly, the school systems and educators who instruct those same students. At a time where students are returning to an in-person learning environment after a year of virtual learning, it is vitally important that students have as much predictability and familiarity with school staff as possible. MSDE should reconsider its methods for soliciting input and ensure staff currently operating in school buildings are offered first rights to providing tutoring services.

Relative to surveys that were conducted, MSDE would benefit from considering the following questions: How was this survey advertised to the public? How many surveys were administered? How much time was given to the public to take the survey? What follow-up was

given to survey respondents? The approach MSDE took to engage LEAs should be utilized in the future when engaging with external-facing stakeholders/the public, particularly rank and file, classroom-based teachers, and staff.

Topic Area 2: Safely Reopening Schools and Sustaining their Safe Operations

The ARP ESSER plan outlines the importance of consulting with diverse stakeholders to help address how funding and resources will be accessed by LEAs. While the latter is somewhat addressed in terms of other state and federal programs, the only stakeholders mentioned throughout MSDE's plan are the SEA and LEAs. There is no discussion of how or when feedback from educators, parents, students, or other groups will be considered in applying or assessing the use of ARP ESSER funds relative to addressing academic learning loss, reopening safely per the CDC and MDH guidelines, or implementing the MSDE Monitoring Program. More specifically, Section C.1.viii. identifies educators and their unions as stakeholders from whom input must be sought, yet the term "union" is not used once by MSDE in its plan, nor is there any mention of how bargaining units or their representatives will be involved in such regional monitoring.

It is of utmost importance that MSDE and MDH continue to coordinate with LEAs to ensure efficient and effective social distancing, contracting tracing, and facility upgrades, especially in communities where vaccine hesitancy is prevalent and the COVID-19 infection rate is high. Any future plans should address accountability for systems that are not complying with MSDE and MDH health and safety guidance, including a reporting system that may be utilized by school employees, students, and/or parents. Additionally, that guidance should be clear enough that all members of the school community will adhere to it to ensure the health and safety of all school employees, students, and surrounding communities.

Finally, decisions that affect how and when schools are open should always consider the health and safety of students as well as educators and how the educational program will be affected by that decision. Too often, changes are made that overlook the considerable concerns of educators at all levels. In the past, this has created intense stress, anxiety, and exponential work to accommodate last-minute transitions.

Topic Area 3: Planning for the Use and Coordination of ARP ESSER Funds

MSEA supports the need for structures around the usage of funds, including the development of processes providing for broader and more relevant stakeholder input, but setting aside \$16 million of ESSER funds to establish a Compliance and Monitoring Branch is an overreach and extension of unnecessary bureaucracy. The creation of this Branch is also duplicative of the role the Blueprint for Maryland's Future (Blueprint) Accountability and Implementation Board (AIB) is designed to serve. The AIB is charged with developing a Comprehensive Implementation Plan for the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, evaluating plans and data submitted by LEAs, and monitoring school system compliance with the Blueprint and school-level expenditures. MSDE should instead coordinate its efforts by monitoring the actual use of funds, working in tandem with the AIB and its regional teams. This would require only a fraction of the \$16 million initially set aside for this Compliance and Monitoring Branch. It is crucial that MSDE maximizes its funds to areas of urgent needs identified by LEAs, rather than create parallel systems. Alternatively, MSDE could consider utilizing some of the funds it intends to create the Compliance and Monitoring Branch to create a reserve fund for emergencies. Presently, MSDE does not have plans to create such an emergency fund and with the variability of the past year and a half, it is an avenue of predictability worth pursuing.

Topic Area 4: Maximizing State-Level Funds to Support Students

The COVID-19 pandemic brought about unprecedented disruption in student learning and a significant impact on students' mental and social-emotional health. This disruption impacted subgroups of students who, even before the pandemic, were performing below their peers and not receiving access to the great education we know Maryland provides. While the learning of both English learners (EL) and children with disabilities suffered disproportionately, there is no acknowledgment of the other marginalized groups of students whose learning was also severely impacted, including, but not limited to, students who identify as members of the BIPOC and LGBTQ+ community. As such, all evidence-based programmatic support should target all historically marginalized groups and MSDE should seek advice from groups leading this work such as PFLAG and FreeState Justice.

Additionally, MSDE should communicate to the public the standards it intends to apply when selecting partners to administer evidence-based summer/enrichment programs as well as supplemental tutoring programs. The use of a competitive grant competition among LEAs and community-based agencies to develop or enhance afterschool programs when faced with prescriptive requirements of the Blueprint to increase instructional effectiveness through professional learning and peer collaboration time during the school day is misaligned. Instead, the Blueprint requires more teachers to permit collaboration in order to continuously improve instruction through regular review of individual student needs and the development of plans to address those needs, including tutoring or working with the most challenging students. While LEAs should receive information and guidance about tutoring programs MSDE partners with to support its evidence-based work, it should be able to develop supplemental tutoring programs provided through existing school employees, hire tutors as bargaining unit members, and add permanent tutoring positions, wherever possible. The use of ARP ESSER funds to accelerate the implementation of the Blueprint and career ladders would result in a significantly greater impact than a competitive grant program that would last over a period of three years.

Topic Area 5: Supporting LEAs in Planning for and Meeting Students' Needs

A core focus is the need to ensure that all students and educators are equipped with the necessary resources to address the learning loss due to remote learning. All educators, including ESPs, need access to extensive professional development and pedagogical resources to address student learning loss with a focus on students who experienced the most detrimental learning loss, like children with disabilities who also identify as members of the BIPOC and LGBTQ+ community. This also includes the additional programs that have been created to address the social-emotional needs of students through the regional crisis response and clinical support teams. The creation of the Crisis Response and Clinical Support Teams and the Afterschool Grant Programs are among the new programs that MSDE has proposed to address academic learning loss and the social-emotional needs of students. However, the following remains unclear: Who will staff the Crisis Response and Clinical Support Teams?; How will it ensure this program does not adversely affect the retention and recruitment of counselors, social workers, and therapists needed in our schools? How will MSDE coordinate services of students with the Crisis Response Teams and students who receive services at their school? Additionally, how does MSDE plan to equitably use ARP ESSER to recruit staff for afterschool and extended day programs? How will MSDE use the LEAs to hire within bargaining units first, and not make partnerships with private entities who often operate and profit with other motivations not aligned with the goals of ARP ESSER recovery?

Topic Area 6: Supporting the Educator Workforce

Supporting the educator workforce is a multi-tiered issue. From addressing the need to hire more educators and other professional positions to addressing the mental health needs of educators, we need to consider all school member communities that were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, from administrators to ESPs. How will special educators be expected to address the backlog of hours and support for students with IEPs, 504s, or other out-of-classroom services? Additionally, how will MSDE assist LEAs to address the need for recruiting more school counselors, psychologists, and social workers to support students this upcoming 2021-2022 school year? To this end, MSDE's plan must prospectively address current and future sources of stress and trauma and how educators themselves will be involved in finding ways to cope and deal with them. There must be a concerted effort by MSDE to find ways to reduce workload and not add to it by creating new requirements.

It is imperative that as Maryland looks to reopen schools, we anticipate the gaps that exist and the needs of LEAs. Overall, there is a great need for educators to participate in professional development (PD) to be fully prepared for the 2021-2022 school year. Yet, statewide participation in PD has been extremely low; and clear steps have not been outlined to identify dedicated time for PD that is meaningful and relevant as educators prepare for the fall. We also advocate that these PD experiences be job-embedded opportunities. Furthermore, there is still a digital divide for educators and students, especially Education Support Professionals (ESPs), and food insecurity issues that are prevalent all over the state.

Topic Area 7: Monitoring and Measuring Progress

There is no doubt that educators, school personnel, and families alike want a full return to in-person learning next school year. While some students benefited from distance learning, we know students generally learn best in the classroom. As LEAs plan for a full return to school, they must have adequate resources and guidance to do so. To date, the ARP ESSER planning document for LEAs has yet to be released, leaving LEAs needing to allocate funds with little oversight, guidance, or accountability. This, in turn, has delayed exclusive bargaining representatives (unions) from gaining access to critical information, which may result in the inability of LEAs to bargain in good faith over funds that are largely subject to collective bargaining.

The monitoring and measuring plan seem to lack detail concerning how LEAs will incorporate stakeholders in its planning. How will they meet the requirement for stakeholder feedback in the curation of this plan? MSDE's omission of these details leaves no assurance for the inclusion of critical stakeholders. As MSDE continues to refine its plan, we ask that it include unions and other professional organizations as experts for both monitoring and measuring progress.

MSDE suggests LEAs consider using or developing a Family Advisory Council for ARP ESSER funds use, but again, neglects to provide any guidance about Family Advisory Councils, who they can and should be composed of (e.g., educators, union representation), and what role, outside of monitoring federal funding, they can and should serve. It would be essential for MSDE to provide clarification on such a Council if it is advising LEAs to consider them in their planning.

Finally, the MSDE should communicate to LEAs when early fall assessments will begin and work with LEAs to determine the best start date. The timing of assessments can truly alter



results, and MSDE should ensure it can receive useful data. We specifically request that assessments begin no earlier than October to allow for students to adjust to returning to school and for educators to establish safe learning environments inside the physical classroom. Premature testing will likely only add to the trauma and stressors students have felt throughout this pandemic. As MSDE evaluates the timing of testing, it should also consider excluding data from the assessments from the MD Report Card. If there are no reporting requirements from the U.S. Department of Education (USDE) or ESSA, we believe it will best serve students by not publicly displaying the data. MSEA recognizes the importance of data and monitoring and measuring progress as a means to assessing gaps in learning but believes hasty testing and unnecessary reporting do little to address this concern.

As an organization representing the 75,000 educators who have been on the frontlines throughout this crisis, and on behalf of the students they serve, we will continue to push for accountability and transparency in the allocation of funds. We look forward to working with you to ensure prudent, effective allocation of these funds to provide safe and equitable schools for all students.

Sincerely,

(b) (6)

Cheryl Bost
MSEA President

C: Clarence Crawford, State Board
Mary Gable, MSDE
Mary Pat Fannon, PSSAM
Francie Glendening, MABE
Sean Johnson, MSEA

Attachment J - Maryland American Rescue Plan
Elementary and Secondary Emergency Relief
(ARP ESSER) Fund Presentation to the State
Board July 27, 2021

Maryland Plan for the American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ARP ESSER) Fund



State Board of Education

July 27, 2021

Purpose of the ARP ESSER Plan

Promote comprehensive planning by states and local school systems (LSSs) for the effective use of ARP ESSER funds to:

- reopen schools safely;
- support sustained access to in-person instruction throughout the spring, summer, and into next school year; and
- address the academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs of students.

ARP ESSER Funding

- In March 2021, the U.S. Department of Education (USDE) made available to each state the first two-thirds of its ARP ESSER allocation (Maryland received \$1.3 billion of the total \$1.95 billion).
- USDE will send the remaining balance upon approval of the State Plan.
- LSSs will receive 90 percent of the \$1.3 billion (\$1.1 billion) upon approval of their plans by MSDE. Additional funds will come after the approval of Maryland's plan.

ARP ESSER Funding - Requirements

- Maryland must complete the *State ARP ESSER Plan and submit to USDE by July 30, 2021, requesting approval.
 - In addition to the State Plan, MSDE will submit an explanation of the outreach to the community and a report on the feedback received.
- LSSs must complete two plans:
 - *Local School System ARP ESSER Application for Funds (Application must be submitted to MSDE by July 30, 2021 – MSDE will review plans for approval; funding distributed upon approval).
 - *Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan (Reopening Plan – must be posted on school system website and submitted to MSDE by August 13, 2021; will be reviewed by MSDE according to 13 requirements).

*All plans require stakeholder engagement

Timeline and Actions to Complete the Plan

- **June 10** – Met with Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) External Stakeholder Committee to review ARP ESSER draft plan and seek input
- **June 22** – Presented draft plan which included revisions based on stakeholder feedback to the State Board
- **June 25** – Shared draft plan with the public and Local School Superintendents and collected feedback from the public via an online survey (Comment period was June 25 through July 9)
- **Week of June 28** – Further shared the draft and survey with the ESSA External Stakeholder Committee and members of the Superintendent's Family Engagement Committee
- **July 27** – Requesting approval from the State Board to submit
- **July 30** – Submit plan to USDE

On-going consultation

- Every division at MSDE consulted with its LSS counterparts regularly (weekly, biweekly, monthly meetings in addition to individual support).
- Surveys were administered to parents regarding instructional delivery and technology.
- Between March 2020 and May 2021, the MSDE received 12,138 pieces of correspondence (letters/emails from parents, educators, and other members of the public, averaging 809 pieces per month (four times the average pre-pandemic volume of correspondence received by the MSDE)).

Membership of the ESSA Stakeholder Committee

Utilized the team that worked on the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) State Plan and the Recovery Plan. Included representation from:

- Maryland Association of Student Councils (MASC)
- Teachers and teacher associations
- Parents
- Higher education
- Special education and English learner advocates
- Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE)
- Local Superintendents (PSSAM)
- Local School System Assistant Superintendents for Instruction
- Elementary and secondary principal associations
- Charter schools
- Community organizations
- State Board
- Legislative services

Survey Questions and Responses

Survey was designed to gather input. The survey was posted on the website from June 25 through July 9; a press release and social media were used to encourage participation.

The survey asked:

- Demographics
- Questions on the degree to which individuals agreed with specific parts of the plan
 - Scale of 1 to 4
 - An individual response of “4” meant high priority, “3” a moderate priority, “2” a low priority, and “1” not a priority.
- Open ended questions

Survey Questions and Responses

Demographics

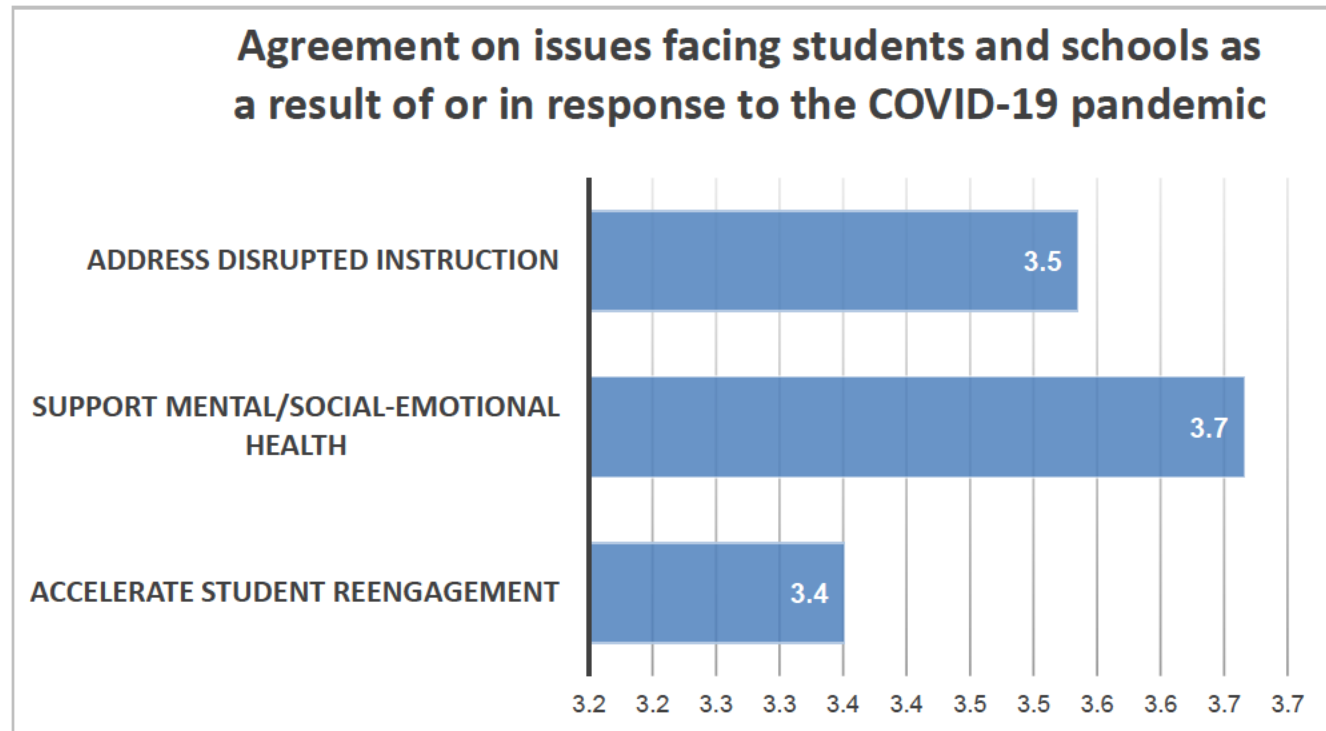
- 712 total responses
- At least one response from each LSS
- 40% of responses came from one LSS
- 58% of respondents had a child enrolled in a public school in Maryland. Of these respondents:
 - 62% of respondents had an elementary school child
 - 40% of respondents had a middle school child
 - 43% of respondents had a high school child
- 44% of respondents were educators in a Maryland public school
- 57% of educators were associated with elementary school grades

Survey Questions and Responses

Degree to which the stakeholder agreed that the following three issues are the priority issues facing students and schools as a result of or in response to the COVID-19 pandemic

- **Accelerate Student Engagement:** Speeding up the return to in-person instruction for all students in the 2021-2022 school year, while also providing the necessary supports, especially in the areas of technology/broadband access and outreach, to ensure that students and parents/families remain engaged;
- **Support Mental/Social-emotional Health:** Addressing the mental health and social-emotional learning (SEL) needs of students, particularly among underserved students most affected by the switch to remote learning, and parents/families and educators; and
- **Address Disrupted Education:** Using evidence-based strategies to lessen the impact of disrupted instruction on student learning that has occurred over the past 15 months, and supporting local school systems as they do the same.

Survey Questions and Responses



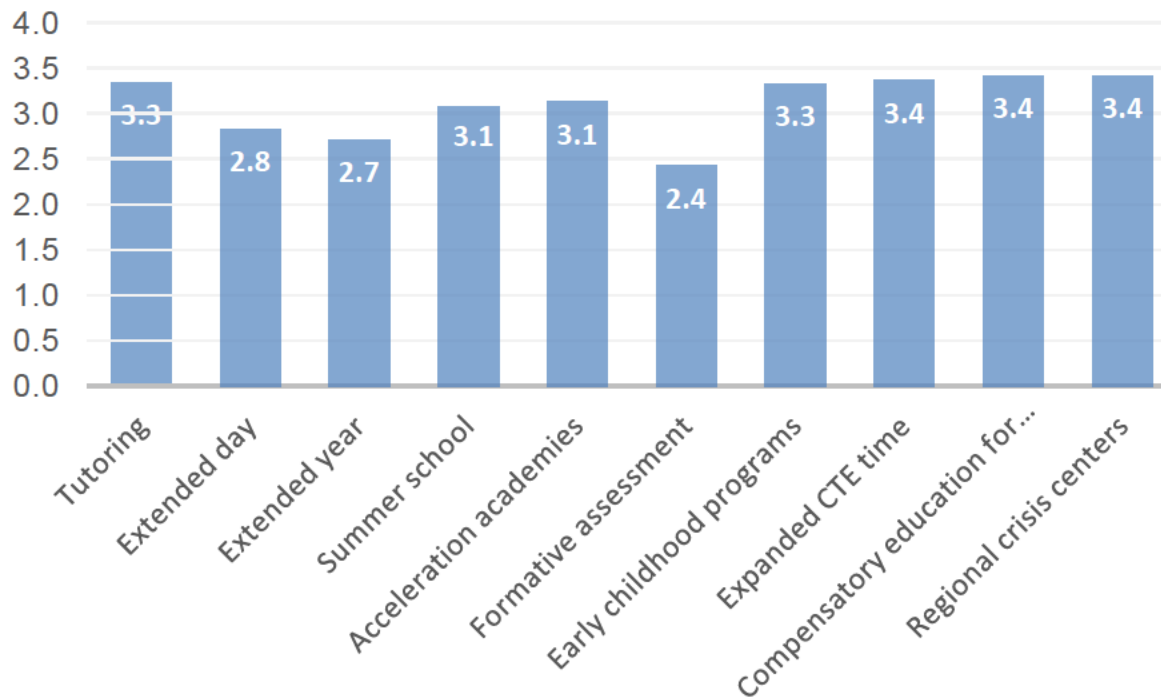
Survey Questions and Responses

Maryland is required to use APR ESSER funds to **address the academic impact of lost instructional time** by supporting the implementation of evidence-based interventions, and to ensure that such interventions respond to students' academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs. Maryland plans to use its funds on the following strategies or interventions:

- High-intensity structured tutoring during the school year
- Extended day or "extra time" programs during the school year
- Extended year programs to continue instruction begun during the school year
- Summer school programs
- Acceleration academies to support grade-level learning
- Formative assessments
- Early childhood programs
- Expanded hands-on instructional time and/or work-based learning time for students in Career and Technical Education programs
- Compensatory education and/or recovery services to address the loss of free and appropriate public education for students with disabilities
- Regional Crisis Response and Clinical Support teams to support student social-emotional and mental health

Survey Questions and Responses

Strategies to address lost instructional time

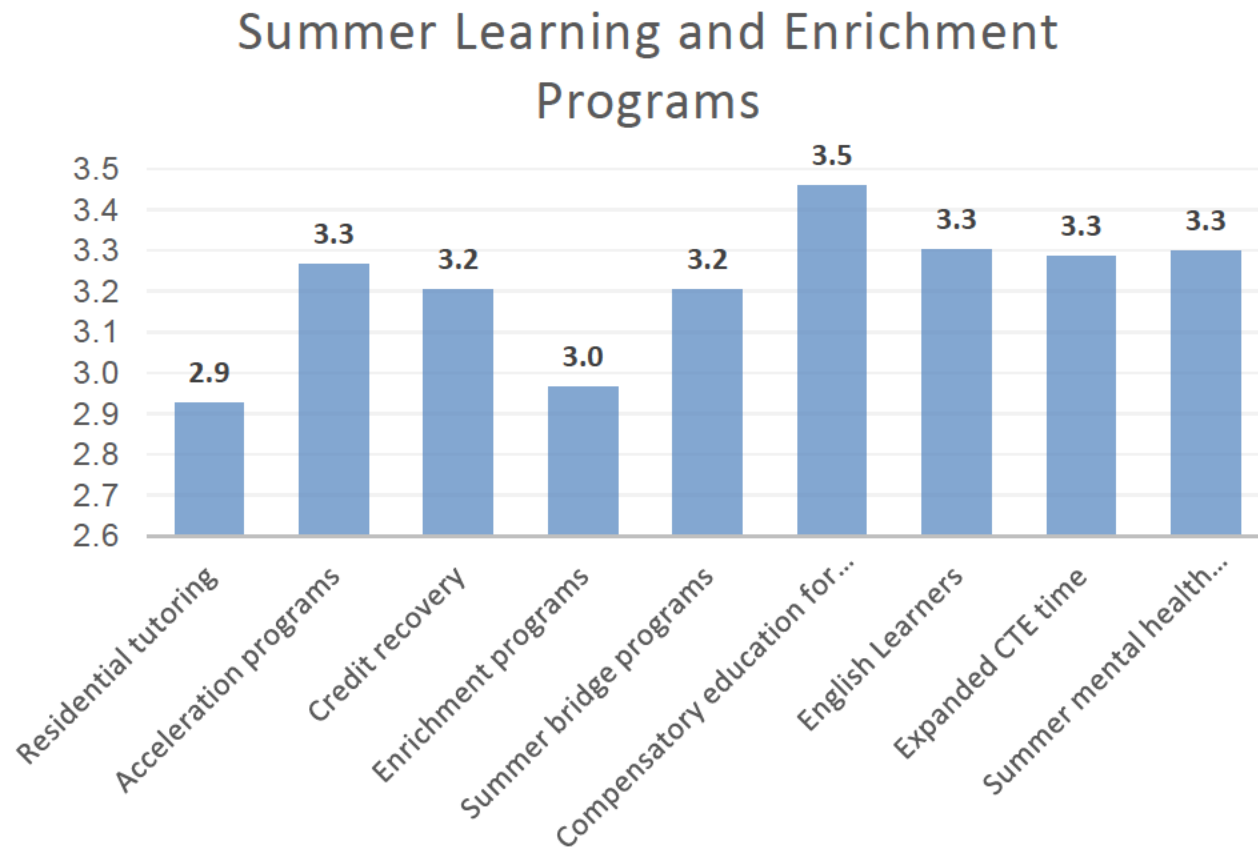


Survey Questions and Responses

Maryland is required to use APR ESSER funds for evidence-based **summer learning and enrichment programs** and to ensure such programs respond to students' academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs. Maryland plans to use its funds on the following strategies or interventions during the summer.

- Intensive residential tutoring and acceleration programs
- Acceleration programs to scaffold upcoming content and prerequisite skills for the next grade level
- Credit recovery for students who did not pass courses during the school year
- Enrichment/teaching of elective skills or content
- Summer bridge or transition programs, for students transitioning between school levels (ex: middle to high school)
- Compensatory education and/or recovery services to address the loss of free and appropriate public education for students with disabilities
- English language instruction and/or language skills for students who are English learners and/or migrant students
- Expanded hands-on instructional time and/or work-based learning time for students in Career and Technical Education programs
- Summer programs to support mental health and well-being

Survey Questions and Responses



Feedback from Open-Ended Responses

Educator Related	Student Related	Additional Feedback
Want more educators (teachers, counselors, psychologists, support staff, etc.)	Re-engage with and support the social-emotional well being/mental health of parents/families	Use more technology in the classroom
Want salary increases for educators, bonuses for work during COVID, incentives for after-school/summer learning	Reduce class size	Invest in broadband supports
Focus on social-emotional well-being/mental health of educators; professional development for educators	Provide additional supports for special education and English learner students	Focus on vaccinations, cleaning, and safety measures
Work with and provide guidance to community partners in relation to afterschool/Out of School Time/summer learning programs	Address inequities about student groups, schools, and school systems	Scale back assessments for 2021-2022
Provide equal access and opportunities to charter schools	Support arts education, sports and physical/outdoor activities, field trips and other enrichment program; Allow children to engage in hands-on learning and have unstructured time	Invest in facility upgrades, including improving HVAC/ventilation systems

Separate Letters/Emails

**Highlights of
the four
letters
received
(complete
copies are
provided)**

	Support	Recommendations
Parent	Online survey to gather feedback	For 2021-2022 school year, school systems should invest in books and not use funds for more technology;
Maryland Out of School Network	Focus on social and emotional well-being and education equity	Invest in Community Schools; promote competition for the ARP ESSER After-school grants; encourage local school systems to increase transparency and partnering
Local School System	State recommendation to use ESSER funds to support Blueprint; Mental health initiative	Clarify technical support in monitoring plan; letter includes specific clarifying questions and suggestions that will appear in guidance
MD State Education Association	Teams to “address academic learning loss and the social-emotional needs of students.”	Increase engagement with educators, specifically on tutoring, safety for educators in schools, monitoring teams; professional development needed; hiring more educators; meeting IEP needs; Questions regarding mental health team positions, requirements/guidance for local ESSER plans, groups for consultation have been provided

Funding Allocated to Address Priorities

American Rescue Plan ESSER Funding	Amount	Purpose
Interventions to Address Learning Loss	97,556,840	Grant Program for Local School Systems for interventions to address learning loss
Summer Enrichment Programs	19,511,368	Programming for Summer Enrichment Programs
Afterschool Programs	19,511,368	Programming for Afterschool Programs
Maryland Regional Crisis Response and Clinical Support Teams	10,000,000	Additional Support for the Maryland Regional Crisis Response and Clinical Support Teams
Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)	3,159,316	Grant to support the Governor's Office of Crime Control, Youth and Victim Services program to provide mental health services and extracurricular activities for children with adverse childhood experiences (ACEs)
Initiatives	2,000,000	Grants to Local School Systems for implementation of recommendations from the Achieving Academic Equity and Excellence for Black Boys Task Force
Hold Future Use	33,752,322	To be determined
Administration	9,762,695	To be determined
Formula Grants to Local School Systems	1,757,285,178	MSDE must subgrant not less than 90 percent of its total ARP ESSER allocation to local school systems to help meet a wide range of needs arising from the coronavirus pandemic, including reopening schools safely, sustaining their safe operation, and addressing students' social, emotional, mental health, and academic needs resulting from the pandemic.
Total	1,952,539,087	