

Vermont ARP ESSER State Plan Highlights

Total ARP ESSER allocation for Vermont: \$285,223,414

ARP ESSER funding released to Vermont on March 24, 2021: \$190,109,425

ARP ESSER funding released to Vermont on December 29, 2021: \$95,113,989

2020-2021 Preliminary Statewide Enrollment: 82,582

Top Priorities:

- Improving student engagement and attendance by reconnecting students to school
- Addressing the rise in anxiety and stress through mental health supports for students
- Addressing the academic impact of lost instructional time
- Improving the overall health and safety of the state's school facilities

Highlights of Vermont's Plan:

- **Sustaining In-Person Learning in 2021:** With only a few isolated, short-term exceptions, Vermont's schools have remained open for in-person instruction during the 2021-22 school year, consistently supporting the academic and social emotional growth of Vermont students
- **Safely Reopening Schools and Sustaining Safe Operations:** The Vermont Agency of Education (AOE) is partnering with other statewide agencies to vaccinate all Vermonters, including eligible students. AOE will use \$1 million in ARP ESSER funds to support a Vaccine Incentive Program that will make awards to schools that achieve a student vaccination rate of 85 percent or higher. Vermont has achieved a high rate of vaccination for eligible student populations by targeting vaccine clinics to school sites, a sustained interagency public information campaign and through the leadership and support of school administrators and staff. To build on this success, beginning in 2022 additional funds through the Vaccine Incentive Program will further encourage vaccination for all Vermont students.
- **Addressing the Academic Impact of Lost Instructional Time:** AOE is prioritizing early literacy with the use of ARP ESSER funds. Vermont is using \$3 million to support teachers in delivering evidence-based practices for literacy instruction, with a focus on students in kindergarten through third grade.
- **Expanding Access to Community Schools:** AOE is using ARP ESSER funds to launch a multi-year program to implement Community Schools across the state. Vermont's Community Schools will embed medical, mental health, social services, and other supports within the school setting, especially to meet the needs of rural communities. AOE used ARP ESSER funds to award five grants for Community Schools this fall.
- **Staffing to Support Students' Needs:** The AOE will use \$1 million in ARP ESSER funds to launch an educator workforce initiative. This initiative will focus on continuing to improve student access to key support staff by exploring online access to support staff such as social workers and clinicians, supporting community-based and interdisciplinary regional teams, exploring regional support staff shared between schools and districts as state level hires, pursuing "grow your own" options to incentivize leadership growth from within the school and district including expansion of the nurse leadership model, and developing a statewide platform to attract and recruit educators and staff for key shortage areas.

- **Access to Safe School Buildings:** AOE is using \$4 million in ARP ESSER funds to address the safety needs of students and educators in response to the pandemic by supporting Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC) and other projects to address health needs in school facilities. AOE has already completed a school facilities inventory that includes information related to indoor air quality and worked to support districts in their use of ESSER funds to support safe and health schools.
- **When Vermont's LEA Use of Funds Plans will be due:** Within 90 days of LEAs receiving the final one third of ARP ESSER funds.