

**State Plan for the  
American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund**



**U.S. Department of Education**

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## Introduction

The American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (“ARP ESSER”) Fund, authorized under the American Rescue Plan (“ARP”) Act of 2021, provides nearly \$122 billion to States to support the Nation’s schools in safely reopening and sustaining safe operations of schools while meeting the academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs of students resulting from the coronavirus disease 2019 (“COVID-19”) pandemic. It is particularly important that ARP ESSER funding will enable States and local educational agencies (“LEAs”), and more directly schools, to support students who have been most severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and are likely to have suffered the most because of longstanding inequities in our communities and schools that have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The U.S. Department of Education (“Department”) is committed to working in partnership with States so that these unprecedented resources are quickly put to work to ensure students have sustained access to in-person instruction and that the resources are used to provide the effective support students need as they persist through and recover from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. The thoughtful and timely use of these funds will have a lasting impact on our Nation’s schools and help to address the inequities in resources, services, and opportunities available to our students.

This template presents an opportunity for States to share their plans for the use of ARP ESSER funds with the public. The Department must approve a State educational agency’s (“SEA’s”) plan in order to make the State’s remaining ARP ESSER allocation available for use. Please note that the Department intends to issue ARP ESSER reporting requirements separately.

## Instructions

Each SEA must provide descriptions and other information that address each requirement listed below. An SEA may use this template or another format as long as every item and element is addressed in the SEA’s response. Throughout this document, questions that refer to an SEA’s ARP ESSER funding are referencing the total allocation to be received by the SEA, including that which it allocates to its LEAs.

Each SEA must submit to the Department by **June 7, 2021**, either: (1) its ARP ESSER plan or (2) the State requirements that preclude submission of the plan by that date and a date by which it will be able to submit its complete ARP ESSER plan.

To submit the SEA’s plan, please email the plan to your Program Officer at [State].OESE@ed.gov (e.g., [Alabama.OESE@ed.gov](mailto:Alabama.OESE@ed.gov)).

In order to ensure transparency, the Department will post each plan on the Department’s website when it is received and will indicate each plan’s approval status.

This template also allows States to fulfill the requirement of the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations (“CRRSA”) Act ESSER II 6-month reporting requirement in section 313(f) of the CRRSA Act.

**Cover Page**


**Grantee and Contact Information**

**ARP ESSER PR Award Number: S425U210025**

**SEA Contact: *William Bell***

**Telephone: 781-338-6528**

**Email address: *william.bell@mass.gov***

By signing this document, I agree to each of the assurances listed in Appendix C and further assure that: To the best of my knowledge and belief, all information and data included in this plan are true and correct.	
<b>Chief State School Officer or Authorized Representative (Printed Name)</b> <i>Jeffrey C. Riley</i>	
<b>Signature of Authorized SEA Representative</b> 	Date: <i>June 25, 2021</i>

## A. Describing the State's Current Status and Needs

The Department recognizes the extraordinary efforts made by States, LEAs, and educators to support students during the COVID-19 pandemic. In this section, SEAs will describe the progress they have made, the priorities and student needs guiding their ARP ESSER funding decisions, and their current and projected operating status.

1. Progress and Promising Practices: Provide your assessment of the top 2-3 strategies that have been most effective in supporting the needs of students in your State during the COVID-19 pandemic, especially for students most impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Please include, if applicable, how your State will submit and encourage its LEAs to submit lessons learned and best practices to the Department's [Safer Schools and Campuses Best Practices Clearinghouse](#) so that they can be shared with other States and LEAs.

We knew as we headed into this school year that it would present unique and unprecedented challenges. We knew we would need to maintain a dual focus throughout the year – attend first and foremost to the crisis at hand, but also maintain the momentum we had built over the years on critical agency priorities. Thanks to the tireless work of our team at the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (Department or DESE) and the exceptional commitment of educators, health professionals, and countless others around the Commonwealth, we have been able to fulfill both sets of responsibilities during an incredibly challenging year. The Department found that prioritizing the following strategies have been critical to supporting our students:

1. **Vanguard for Health & Safety.** Key DESE leaders and staff stepped outside of their traditional roles to support the urgent work at all levels of the organization. We established more frequent communication channels with districts and schools. We also developed new ways of working with the medical community and other executive branch entities, including the Governor's COVID-19 Command Center, the Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS), and the Department of Public Health (DPH), as we collaborated on health and safety policies, COVID-19 testing programs, and reopening plans. Specifically, we launched the [DESE COVID-19 Help Center](#) at the start of the 2020-2021 school year. The Help Center provided and continues to provide a central hub through which districts and schools report COVID-19 positive cases in schools to DESE and receive guidance and support from DESE. In addition, implementing a [robust COVID-19 pooled testing program](#) has been a key part of our expanded health and safety support. On January 8, 2021, DESE and EOHHS introduced surveillance testing using a [pooled testing](#) approach in the school setting as an additional mitigation strategy, **the first program of its kind nationwide**. As of late May of 2021, participating schools have tested 31,518 pools with a pool positivity rate of 0.77 percent. To date, 229 districts and schools are participating in the COVID-19 pooled testing initiative, which includes more than 1,000 schools, and more than 343,000 students, educators, and staff, all of which are eligible to be tested weekly. Finally, we brought in experts on ventilation and healthy buildings, and worked with district leaders and facilities administrators to ensure a safe environment for our students and educators.

2. **Focus on academics AND equity**, especially for our most vulnerable students. Core DESE functions and priority initiatives have continued throughout the year, at times in a modified form. This included work in refining and preparing to release the updated Individualized Education Program (IEP) template, launching the [Mass Literacy Guide](#), continuing deeper learning professional development through the

Kaleidoscope Collective for Learning, building our innovative science assessment, and engaging in robust agency-wide anti-racism training and development of an equity planning tool, as part of inclusive practice. Most recently, MA DESE has partnered with TNTTP to create an academic acceleration roadmap for district and school leaders and teachers; we are happy to share this tool with the Clearinghouse for distribution to other SEAs and LEAs across the United States.

**3. Increased in-person instruction to support students' learning and mental health.** Early in the spring, DESE promoted student learning time requirements, recognizing that instructional time is an essential resource for students. With support from the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, DESE monitored and made adjustments to student learning time (SLT) requirements at multiple points during the pandemic. We collected detailed student learning time data across all districts at four grade levels (1, 4, 7, and 10) and ultimately published a user-friendly online dashboard to ensure transparency across the state.

In reviewing the SLT data, we noted that the majority of districts were offering an appropriate amount of “live” instruction (defined as in-person or remote synchronous instruction), while the levels offered to students in some districts were far lower. At the same time, we heard concerns from mental health experts about a growing mental health crisis among students: disengagement, anxiety, depression. To ensure more frequent and healthy contact with teachers and peers, we determined that it was critical to establish minimum guidelines for live instruction. We brought new emergency regulations to the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education in December 2020, which voted to amend the SLT regulations to include these minimum thresholds. For remote models, the new regulations require some synchronous instruction each day and 40 hours of synchronous instruction over a two-week period. For hybrid models, the new regulations required a live check-in every day and 35 hours of live instruction (in-person or remote synchronous) over a two-week period. These regulations went into effect on January 19, 2021 and were validated through another SLT data collection in February with updated data posted on the dashboard in early March.

The Department then published related guidance, including a required return to in-person timeline for elementary and middle school students – April 5 and April 28, respectively – with the high school population fully back on May 17, 2021. As of late May, 99 percent of schools were back offering access to full-time, in-person instruction five days a week.

2. **Overall Priorities:** Provide your assessment of the top 2-3 issues currently facing students and schools across your State as a result of or in response to the COVID-19 pandemic including, to the extent possible, data illustrating why these are the most critical and/or most widespread issues facing schools and students.

***Foster a sense of belonging and partnership among students and families.*** Over the past several months, DESE has consulted with countless stakeholders in the education community. Almost without exception, when asked about priorities and issues facing students, people will lead with the importance of re-engaging with students and families, and re-establishing strong, consistent, trusting relationships that are the product of healthy, in-person interactions. While almost 100% of schools are now back to in-person operation, the process of re-connecting, especially with those students who experienced significant

trauma, loss, and disengagement during the pandemic. We do not yet have specific educational data on our students' emotional and cognitive health yet, but a number of [high quality studies](#) make clear that emotional health deteriorated during the pandemic, especially among at-risk student groups.

***Unfinished learning.*** Despite the herculean efforts of educators and families, many of our students are facing unfinished learning heading into the summer and the next school year. We know this based on various data we collected throughout the year, from the aforementioned learning time surveys, to individual student attendance data, to a school year that was shortened by two weeks. While it is not a new challenge for educators to serve students with varied academic needs, the pandemic made this challenge significantly more pronounced and widespread. To effectively meet the needs of our students – particularly those most impacted by the pandemic – a major challenge before us is making sure all of our students receive the culturally responsive support and expert instruction they need to be successful in their grade level.

***Continuing to keep students and educators healthy and safe.*** From implementing the latest health guidance from CDC and other leading health experts, to continuously improving school buildings themselves, keeping our students and educators healthy and safe is a clear priority for Massachusetts.

3. **Identifying Needs of Underserved Students:** Describe your State's 2-3 highest priority academic, social, emotional, and/or mental health needs for the remainder of the 2020-2021 school year (if applicable) and for the 2021-2022 school year related to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on each of the following student groups:
  - i. Students from low-income families,
  - ii. Students from each racial or ethnic group (e.g., identifying disparities and focusing on underserved student groups by race or ethnicity),
  - iii. Gender (e.g., identifying disparities and focusing on underserved student groups by gender),
  - iv. English learners,
  - v. Children with disabilities (including infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities eligible under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act ("IDEA")),
  - vi. Students experiencing homelessness,
  - vii. Children and youth in foster care,
  - viii. Migratory students, and
  - ix. Other groups disproportionately impacted by the pandemic that have been identified by the SEA (e.g., youth involved in the criminal justice system, students who have missed the most in-person instruction during the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 school years, students who did not consistently participate in remote instruction

when offered during school building closures, and LGBTQ+ students).

To the extent possible, this description should include data on indicators such as estimates of the academic impact of lost instructional time,<sup>1</sup> chronic absenteeism, student engagement, and social-emotional well-being.

*Complete the table below, adding rows as necessary, or provide a narrative description.*

**Table A1.**

DESE’s overall priorities naturally extend to all students. We are concerned about each student in the system and want to ensure that they receive the socio-emotional support they need and the academic programming they need. Equity being the main goal of our work, we must differentiate our supports, and therefore in the table below we offer a list of priority needs for many of our student groups, trends that we saw during the pandemic, and ways in which we are working to respond to those needs.

<b>Student group</b>	<b>Highest priority needs</b>
Students from low-income families	<i>Lost instructional time and reengagement.</i> Students from low income families were more likely to be chronically absent, learn remotely, and struggle to find reliable internet access during the pandemic than their non-low-income peers. DESE’s goal is to therefore target our response, one example of which is to expand Acceleration Academies programming into the summer months with a large-scale Summer Academy in 2021 that will offer 3-4 consecutive weeks of high-quality instruction in mathematics and English language arts, targeted to students’ specific educational needs. We will use diagnostic assessment data to identify students who need this acceleration opportunity to support them to master grade-level content and support readiness for the next grade level.
Students from each racial or ethnic background used by the State for reporting purposes – please add a row for each racial or ethnic group (e.g., identifying disparities and focusing on underserved student groups by race/ethnicity)	<i>Lost instructional time and reengagement.</i> Students across lines of racial difference need to see themselves in the educator workforce and build trusting relationships with those educators, ultimately reengaging with their school communities and becoming

<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of the plan, “academic impact of lost instructional time” refers to “learning loss” experienced by students as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, as referenced in the ARP Act and the CRRSA Act.

Student group	Highest priority needs
	<p>open to learning. One way in which DESE is addressing this is to refine and continue the educator diversification grant program to provide further assistance for districts and schools to enhance diversification efforts. This would mean continuing programs to support diversification of the administrator and educator workforce and promote culturally responsive teaching like Influence 100 and InSPIRED fellowships and professional development through the Diversity Network – a cross-section of school districts, educator preparation programs, and non-profit organizations focused on educator diversification.</p>
<p>Students by gender – please add a row for each gender (e.g., identifying disparities and focusing on underserved student groups by gender)</p>	<p><b>Girls.</b> To support girls’ <i>ongoing development in STEM careers</i>, we plan to launch a multi-year initiative to support more students to participate and succeed in rigorous courses, pursue postsecondary education, and be well prepared to enter STEM (science, engineering, technology and mathematics) professions. DESE will identify high schools where low numbers of students engage in AP STEM courses and begin to develop these statewide offerings so students can engage in the coursework at no additional cost to the student, family, or school district.</p> <p><b>Boys.</b> Continue the Kaleidoscope Collective for Learning network, which is designed to foster and expand <i>deeper learning instructional models</i>. This includes the development of the first 25–50 engaging, high-quality student performance tasks aligned to the Massachusetts curriculum frameworks, including a subset of tasks for remote learning. Boys will benefit from educators using evidence-based strategies that increase engagement and provide additional monthly statewide trainings accessible to all educators who support them.</p>



Student group	Highest priority needs
	<p><b>Non-binary.</b> In addition to the Deeper Learning strategies noted above, educators using evidence-based strategies that increase engagement and provide more <i>inclusive practices</i> in Tier 1 instruction. The Kaleidoscope Collective for Learning network is designed to foster and expand deeper learning models for all students.</p>
English learners	<p><i>Lost instructional time and reengagement.</i> English learners were more likely to be chronically absent, learn remotely, and struggle to find reliable internet access during the pandemic than their English speaking peers. DESE is therefore working to support ELs through meeting the goals stated in the four pillars of the <a href="#">Blueprint for English Learner Success</a>. We created <a href="#">guidance on how families can support children during remote learning</a>. We set up online <a href="#">English Learner Parent Advisory Council (ELPAC) training modules</a>. The online training modules provide guidance for both parents and educators to develop and sustain effective ELPACs that promote the academic success of all English learners and former English learners. In 2021-2022, these trainings will include two modules for districts and schools and three for English learner parents/guardians. The parent/guardian modules are available in English, Spanish, and Portuguese.</p>
Children with disabilities	<p><i>Lost instructional time and reengagement.</i> Students with disabilities were prioritized for in-person learning during the pandemic (where and when it was feasible and safe). Despite this, we know many struggled, and that therefore it is absolutely critical over the next several years to promote effective service delivery and better results for students with disabilities. Additionally, DESE continues to develop all aspects of a new IEP to provide robust guidance on the full IEP process, including identification, referral, eligibility, and</p>

<b>Student group</b>	<b>Highest priority needs</b>
	IEP development. Thirty-five schools representing 19 districts are participating in this process as part of the early adopter cohort. The experiences of the early adopters will help inform further expansion of the new IEP and to assist in finalizing the guidance and tools during the 2021-2022 school year.
Students experiencing homelessness	<i>Re-engagement and continuity.</i> DESE is committed to improving its own resources and working with districts to strengthen and provide supports to students and families experiencing homelessness both pre-COVID and due to the pandemic. DESE will provide guidance on maintaining enrollment, connecting with families to build strong solid relationships, and further supporting and providing mental health and social emotional resources to reengage students who have been disengaged during the pandemic.
Children and youth in foster care	<i>Re-engagement and continuity.</i> DESE is likewise committed to strengthening its own resources and working with districts to provide supports to children and youth in foster care. We have heard through stakeholder engagement the need to make sure students feel comfortable in school, so that they can build trusting relationships and be open to learning. DESE will continue to provide training, technical assistance, and other resources to address the often-disproportionate impacts of the pandemic on this group of students. For example, DESE has provided resources and training to make sure districts and schools work with the foster parent(s) to ensure their educational needs are met, strengthen communication and collaboration with foster care points of contact, and address barriers that may impede student's education.
Migratory students	<i>Re-engagement and continuity.</i> Our migratory students often fall into additional, overlapping categories, such as students with disabilities, and students

Student group	Highest priority needs
	<p>who are experiencing homelessness. A particular emphasis will be placed on developing a deeper connection with migratory students and families and reducing dropout rates. This will be done by further supporting guidance and check-in points to ensure schools are collaborating with the MA Migrant Education Program to identify students in migrant families and to promote student engagement; ensure schools work directly with parents or out-of-school migrant youth to promote student engagement; address any inequitable access that students in migrant families may have to the internet (i.e. adequate data plans or phone minutes). We'll also support districts to ensure full access to educational opportunities for migratory students by promoting opportunities for educators to continue to receive professional development such as multilingual and cultural responsiveness training.</p>
<p>Other groups of students identified by the State (e.g., youth involved in the criminal justice system, students who have missed the most in-person instruction during the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 school years, students who did not consistently participate in remote instruction when offered during school building closures, LGBTQ+ students)</p>	<p><i>Wraparound support.</i> All educators must pay close attention and provide increasing support to students returning to school with increased behavioral challenges due to pandemic. Therefore, resources will be directed to support social emotional and mental health initiatives and conflict resolution rather than punitive discipline. Further, there will be an increased emphasis on building relationships and partnerships with community organizations, wraparound supports, and meaningful teacher, student, and family engagement.</p>

4. Understanding the Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic: Describe how the SEA will support its LEAs in identifying the extent of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on student learning and student well-being, including identifying the groups of students most impacted by the pandemic. Where possible, please identify the data sources the SEA will suggest its LEAs use in thoughtfully diagnosing areas of need, including data on the academic, social, emotional, and mental health impacts of lost instructional time.

The Department itself will use MCAS results, and it highly encourages districts to utilize MCAS results in order to better understand the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on student learning. Because of its diagnostic value, the results of this exam are vital for identifying groups of students in need of increased academic support. In addition to MCAS, the Department collects and reports data on the following requirements related to the impact of COVID-19 on student learning and well-being: chronic absenteeism; student enrollment and attendance; advanced course completion; student discipline; student and educator surveys; data compiled in the Early Warning Indicator System; and other factors. The vast majority of the data listed above can and will be disaggregated by district, student, and staff group. Accurate data, transparently presented to the public and to our stakeholders, is the beginning of a conversation about needs, challenges, goals for the future, and action. DESE intends to use all of these data points to catalyze such rich conversations across the Commonwealth, homing in on the groups of students most impacted by the pandemic.

5. School Operating Status: It is essential to have data on how students are learning in order to support the goals of access and equity, especially for student groups that have been disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Describe the current status of data collection on operational status and mode of instruction of all schools in your State. This description must include:
  - i. A description of to what extent, and how frequently, the State collects now and will collect in the future data for all schools in your State on:
    - a. Mode of instruction: The number of schools in your State that are offering fully remote or online-only instruction; both remote/online and in-person instruction (hybrid model); and/or full-time in-person instruction;
    - b. Enrollment: Student enrollment for all students and disaggregated for each of the student groups described in A.3.i-viii for each mode of instruction; and
    - c. Attendance: Student attendance for all students and disaggregated for each of the student groups described in A.3.i-viii for each mode of instruction.

#### *Mode of Instruction*

The Department conducted multiple statewide Student Learning Time data collections throughout the 2020-2021 school year to better understand the number of hours students were spending learning remote synchronously, remote asynchronously, and in-person. This information was requested at multiple grade levels from all public school districts, including charter districts. At the outset of the 2020-2021 school year, DESE added elements to its robust Student Information Management System (SIMS), so that we would be able to collect attendance by mode of instruction at the *individual student level*. Going forward, DESE will continue to collect and monitor data on the mode of instruction to support the goals of access and equity, especially for those student groups most impacted by the pandemic as part of its ongoing student data collection system at least three times per year.

### *Enrollment*

The Department has the capacity to ensure regular and high-quality data collection and reporting on student-level enrollment data that is disaggregated by district and student group, and indicates enrollment in each instructional model. The collection of enrollment data, by student group and mode of instruction, will continue to be collected three times per year, at a minimum.

### *Attendance*

The Department has the capacity to ensure regular and high-quality data collection and reporting on student-level attendance data that is disaggregated by district and student group, and indicates attendance in each instructional model. Again, similar to the other data points described here, the Department will continue to collect daily attendance data on a regular basis, and we will have the ability to disaggregate by all student groups.

- ii. The data described in A.5.i.a. and b. using the template in Appendix A (and to the extent available, the data described in A.5.i.c.) for the most recent time period available. Please note that this data can be submitted separately within 14 calendar days after a State submits this plan. The SEA must also make this data publicly available on its website as soon as possible but no later than June 21, 2021, and regularly provide updated available information on its website. The Department will periodically review data listed in A.5.i on SEA websites.

See Appendix A. See updates on <https://profiles.doe.mass.edu/> and/or <https://www.doe.mass.edu/DataAccountability.html>.

- iii. To the extent available, a description of the planned operational status and mode of instruction for the State and its LEAs for Summer 2021 and for the 2021-2022 school year.

As of late May 2021, nearly all of Massachusetts schools and districts are open fully to any student wishing to access in-person learning. With the State of Emergency in Massachusetts ending June 15, 2021, and as COVID-19 cases, hospitalizations, and deaths continue to fall as vaccination rates increase, for the beginning of the 2021-2022 school year, all districts and schools will be required to be in-person, full-time, five days a week. Summer programming in 2021 will also operate in-person.

## **B. Safely Reopening Schools and Sustaining their Safe Operations**

The Department recognizes that safely reopening schools and sustaining their safe operations to maximize in-person instruction is essential for student learning and student well-being, and especially for being able to address the educational inequities that have been worsened by the COVID-19 pandemic. In this section, SEAs will describe how they will support their LEAs in this vital area.

1. Support for LEAs: Describe how the SEA will support its LEAs in safely returning to in-person instruction and sustaining the safe operation of schools. This description must include:
  - i. How the SEA will support its LEAs implementing, to the greatest extent practicable, prevention and mitigation policies in line with the most up-to-date guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (“CDC”) for the reopening and operation of school facilities to effectively maintain the health and safety of students, educators, and other staff;

*Complete the table below, adding rows as necessary, or provide a narrative description.*

**Table B1.**

<b>Mitigation strategy</b>	<b>SEA response</b>
Universal and correct wearing of masks	The Department <a href="#">issued specific guidance</a> on core mitigation strategies (e.g., mask wearing, physical distancing and handwashing) on July 17, 2020 and has updated that guidance on four occasions since then, most recently on April 20, 2021. These updates have been informed by the newest guidance from the CDC and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health. The Department will continue to update this guidance whenever necessary to provide updates on these core mitigation strategies. Furthermore, DESE purchased masks and provided them to districts in need toward the beginning of the pandemic. And just this spring, DESE partnered with the MA Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) to provide free PPE, cleaning supplies, and other COVID-related materials to districts, collaborative programs, and approved special education schools.
Physical distancing (e.g., including use of cohorts/podding)	
Handwashing and respiratory etiquette	
Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation	The Department provided <a href="#">guidance on facilities</a> , including cleaning procedures and improving ventilation on July 22, 2021. Subsequently, the Department has provided updated information regarding this topic through a series of <a href="#">FAQs</a> . The Department will continue to update its facilities guidance and FAQ documents as necessary for the 2021-22 school year. Furthermore, DESE purchased and provided over 11,000 portable HEPA air purifiers to districts to improve classroom safety to allow for more in-person learning across the state.
Contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantine, in	DESE provided guidance on contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantine in its

Mitigation strategy	SEA response
collaboration with the State, local, territorial, or Tribal health departments	<a href="#">COVID-19 protocols document</a> , most recently updated on April 20, 2021. The Department will update this guidance as necessary in alignment with CDC and DPH advice.
Diagnostic and screening testing	See question ii below for detailed information about the state’s pooled testing program.
Efforts to provide vaccinations to educators, other staff, and students, if eligible	The Department has collaborated with the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) to expand opportunities for vaccinations for faculty and students. Their joint effort led to prioritizing educators for vaccines during March and April with specific days set aside solely for them at mass vaccination sites. Most recently, the Department and DPH have launched an effort to provide <a href="#">on campus vaccination clinics</a> for students, faculty and family members. Such efforts will continue in the months ahead as vaccines become readily available for younger children.
Appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to the health and safety policies	The Department collaborated with DPH to develop specific guidance on accommodations for children with disabilities. Initially, the Department published their joint guidance in <a href="#">June 2020</a> , and then DPH expanded upon it in <a href="#">September 2020</a> . Both agencies will update that guidance as necessary for the start of the new school year.

- ii. Any Statewide plans, policies, estimated timelines, and specific milestones related to reopening and operation of school facilities, including any mechanisms the SEA will use to track, monitor, or enforce their implementation;

The Department has provided specific guidance on and requirements, including timelines and milestones related to reopening and operation of school facilities. Through its regulatory authority, the Department [required all districts](#) to return elementary students to full-time, in-person learning by April 5, 2020, with middle school students following on April 28 and high school students on May 17. The Department issued a small number of time limited waivers to districts that encountered circumstances preventing them from opening by those key dates, and all schools in Massachusetts are open for in-person learning at this time. For the entirety of the 2020-21 school year, parents were allowed to select a remote learning option for their children. This option expires at the end of this school year, and the Department has notified districts that summer instructional services must be offered in person.

The Department has tracked and monitored districts' reopening efforts in a variety of ways. First, in [November](#) and [February](#), the Department published detailed information about the instructional model employed by each district for tracking and public reporting purposes. Additionally, the Department published [mid-year student attendance data](#) to raise awareness about student participation and engagement. As part of its monitoring responsibility, the Department notified districts that were not implementing in-person instruction when public health metrics clearly indicated otherwise, and then conducted audits of districts that did not respond to this initial feedback and redirection. Department staff and facilities experts were also organized into facilities support teams, visiting school districts this spring to help solve problems and support the districts in providing safe learning environments for their returning students.

Finally, the Department's Problem Resolution System, which in most states is reserved for special education complaints, accepts complaints about general education matters, and this office investigated numerous parent complaints about districts' decisions related to remote and in-person learning models.

The Department will continue to use such data reporting, tracking and monitoring strategies to promote effective decisions related to school reopening.

As noted earlier, for the beginning of the 2021-2022 school year, all districts and schools will be required to be in-person, full-time, five days a week.

- iii. To what extent the SEA and its LEAs consult with Federal, State, and local health officials. This description should include, if available, whether the SEA and its LEAs have received support for screening testing from their State or local health department based on funding awarded by the CDC; and

The Department has consulted extensively with state and local health officials on various key initiatives. Providing COVID-19 testing to schools is one clear example. At the beginning of the school year, the Department collaborated with the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) and the Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS) to establish a [mobile rapid testing unit](#) that could be deployed to any school in the state that had indications of in-school transmission of the virus. The mobile unit provides onsite polymerase chain reaction (PCR) tests to any individuals deemed at-risk for in-school transmission, up to the entire faculty and student body. That same collaboration yielded the deployment of [BinaxNOW rapid antigen tests](#) to schools for symptomatic individuals. Finally, the Department, DPH and EOHHS launched a full-scale screening testing program beginning on February 8 for all schools and districts in the state. Using a pooled testing approach, the Department offered no-cost weekly screening testing to all schools using partners and laboratories approved by DPH. At this time, more than half of the schools in the state have signed up for this service, and they have completed approximately 100,000 pooled tests since the



inception of this program. The Department publishes [pooled testing data](#) on a weekly basis, and they review these data with their partners at DPH and EOHHS to inform their collective policy decisions. Initially funded through state sources, the pooled testing initiative is now funded through the CDC award, and the Department, DPH and EOHHS will extend testing services for summer programming and the 2021-22 school year.

In addition to the collaboration on COVID-19 screening testing, the Department consults with DPH and EOHHS on all of its health and safety guidance prior to release, and all three organizations meet weekly to ensure consistency in responding to questions regarding the Department's guidance. Finally, the Department joins DPH twice weekly meetings with local board of health leaders to answer their questions and hear their feedback and ideas.

- iv. Any guidance, professional learning, and technical assistance opportunities the SEA will make available to its LEAs.

The Department has continually provided guidance to LEAs throughout the course of the pandemic with such topics as teaching and learning, special education, school meals and health and safety protocols. All guidance materials can be found on the Department's COVID-19 [webpage](#). The Department will continue to use this webpage as a resource hub for all of the guidance that it continues to produce on all school reopening matters. In addition, the Department holds multiple meetings each month with district leaders to provide further information on its guidance and to answer their questions. Finally, the Department has assembled a technical assistance team that provides onsite support to schools and districts that face particular challenges related to school reopening.

The Massachusetts DPH contracts with Boston University to provide [training and professional learning opportunities for school health professionals](#). The Department coordinates with DPH on the topics Boston University will address in its forums and workshops.

- 2. Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plans: Describe how the SEA will ensure that its LEAs that receive ARP ESSER funds meet the requirements in section 2001(i) of the ARP Act and the requirements relating to the ARP ESSER funds published in the Federal Register and available at <https://oese.ed.gov/offices/american-rescue-plan/american-rescue-plan-elementary-and-secondary-school-emergency-relief/> (ARP ESSER requirements) to either: (a) within 30 days of receipt of the funds, develop and make publicly available on the LEA's website a plan for the safe return to in-person instruction and continuity of services, or (b) have developed and made publicly available on the LEA's website such a plan that meets statutory requirements before the enactment of the ARP Act, including:
  - i. How the SEA will ensure that each LEA plan includes, or will be modified to include, the extent to which it has adopted policies and a description of any such policies on each of the strategies listed in table B1;

- ii. How the SEA will ensure that each LEA plan describes how it will ensure continuity of services including but not limited to services to address the students' academic needs, and students' and staff social, emotional, mental health, and other needs, which may include student health and food services;
- iii. How the SEA will ensure that the LEA periodically reviews, no less frequently than every six months for the duration of the ARP ESSER grant period (i.e., through September 30, 2023),<sup>2</sup> and revises as appropriate, its plan, and how the SEA will ensure that the LEA seeks public input, and takes such input into account on (1) whether revisions are necessary and, if so, (2) the revisions to the plan; and
- iv. Describe, to the extent the SEA collects it, information about LEA implementation, to the greatest extent practicable, of each element of the most up-to-date CDC guidance listed in table B1 and its LEAs' needs for support and technical assistance to implement strategies consistent, to the greatest extent practicable, with relevant CDC guidance.

The Department will systematically ensure that its LEAs that receive ARP ESSER funds meet the requirements in section 2001(i) of the ARP Act and the requirements relating to the ARP ESSER funds. First, the Department will review each LEA's plan upon submission to ensure that it includes a description of the policies related to the strategies in table B1. If an LEA's plan does not include a required element, the Department will return the plan for required revisions. In addition, the Department will require that each LEA plan describes how it will ensure continuity of services, including but not limited to services to address the students' academic needs, and students' and staff social, emotional, mental health, and other needs, which may include student health and food services. This requirement will be evident in the directions the Department provides to LEAs for completing their ARP ESSER grant application. Additionally, by way of our monitoring processes, the Department will require reporting from LEAs no less frequently than every six months for the duration of the ARP ESSER grant period and ensure the LEA has provided us with its plan's URL (that can in turn be shared with US Dept of Ed), and that it has periodically reviewed and has made revisions to its plan, as appropriate.

Each element of the latest CDC guidance is also included in the grant application, and is required to be updated at least every 6 months as conditions change. To determine LEAs' needs for support and technical assistance to implement strategies as consistent as possible with relevant CDC guidance, the Department will continue to consult with the School Health Services Division of the Massachusetts DPH and regional school health professional consultants and work with districts to implement the appropriate health and safety strategies. Moreover, the Department's Problem Resolution Office will be available to receive any concerns or complaints about LEA implementation of health and safety protocols in schools and districts.

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<sup>2</sup> ARP ESSER funds are subject to the Tydings amendment in section 421(b) of the General Education Provisions Act, 20 U.S.C. 1225(b), and are therefore available to SEAs and LEAs for obligation through September 30, 2024. Review and revisions of these plans, if necessary, are not required during the Tydings period.

### **C. Planning for the Use and Coordination of ARP ESSER Funds**

The Department recognizes that seeking input from diverse stakeholders is essential to developing plans for the use of ARP ESSER funds that are responsive to the needs of students, families, and educators. In this section, SEAs will describe their plans for consultation and for coordinating the use of ARP ESSER funds with other resources to meet the needs of students.

1. SEA Consultation: Consistent with the ARP ESSER requirements, describe how the SEA engaged in meaningful consultation with stakeholders, and incorporated input into its plan, including, but not limited to:
  - i. students;
  - ii. families;
  - iii. Tribes (if applicable);
  - iv. civil rights organizations (including disability rights organizations);
  - v. school and district administrators (including special education administrators);
  - vi. superintendents;
  - vii. charter school leaders (if applicable);
  - viii. teachers, principals, school leaders, other educators, school staff, and their unions; and
  - ix. stakeholders representing the interests of children with disabilities, English learners, children experiencing homelessness, children and youth in foster care, migratory students, children who incarcerated, and other underserved students.

The description must include how the SEA provided the public the opportunity to provide input in the development of the plan, a summary of the input (including any letters of support), and how the SEA took such input into account.

In the development of its ARP ESSER plan, the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) implemented several outreach approaches over the course of several weeks. Video-conferencing technology allowed DESE staff to connect with a wide range of stakeholders in this short period of time, many of whom we had been in frequent contact with throughout the pandemic, but it also opened the doors to many new stakeholders. And while DESE is submitting its plan by June 7, 2021, we will continue to obtain stakeholder feedback beyond this date to ensure a reasonable opportunity for all to maximize stakeholder participation, and to acknowledge that planning for the pandemic recovery is not a one-time exercise, but a series of conversations over time.

Over the course of the month of May and into June, we gathered feedback from over 50 stakeholder groups (advocacy organizations, civil rights organizations, affinity organizations, American Indian tribes, policy organizations, professional associations, special education organizations, English learner organizations, migratory students, teachers unions, charter schools, teachers, principals, superintendents, school committees, guidance counselors, students, parents/caregivers, the Governor's education secretariat, the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education), and many more. While it may not be an exhaustive list of the groups we met with,

the stakeholder groups we did meet with over the course of May and June of 2021 represent all of the interests listed above, oftentimes overlapping with the required stakeholder groups. They are, in no particular order:

MA School Counselors Association, American Federation of Teachers MA, He Is Me Institute, Teach Western MA, National Parents Union, MA School Administrators Association, MA Interscholastic Athletic Association, Higher Ground, SchoolFacts Boston, MA Education Equity Partnership, MA Association of Vocational Administrators, Immigrant Family Institute, Parent Villages, MA Association of School Committees, DESE's Teacher Advisory Council and Principal Advisory Council, Latinos for Education, MA Organization of Educational Collaboratives, Urban League, Lawrence Community Works, MA Administrators of Special Education, Center for Education Services, March Forward MA, MA Association of School Superintendents, EL Bilingual Advisory Council, Ed Trust, Massachusetts Advocates for Children, MA Teachers Association, Amplify Latinx, Boston Schools Fund, MA Community Action Network, MA Charter Public School Association, MA Parents United, Massachusetts Association for Bilingual Education, Parent and Community Education & Involvement Advisory Council, Special Education Advisory Council, Arts Education Advisory Council, OneGoal, MA Association of School Business Officials, Teacher Collaborative, TeachPlus, Teacher's Lounge, Education Law Task Force, Citizen Schools, Worcester Education Collaborative, uAspire, State Student Advisory Council, Racial Imbalance Advisory Council, the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, and the Massachusetts Parent/Teacher Association.

With respect to children experiencing homelessness and children who are incarcerated, consultation took place with stakeholders representing the interests of children experiencing homelessness and of children who are incarcerated. These specific groups include:

- Higher Ground (housing and homelessness nonprofit)
- Massachusetts Advocates for Children
- Educational Stability Steering Committee
- Special Education Advisory Council
- Education Law Task Force
- Massachusetts Department of Youth Services

It's worth noting that Commissioner Riley himself toured a DYS facility this spring, learning about the safety and wellbeing of those students, and the ongoing efforts to support these students amid and after the pandemic.

Many other stakeholder groups, and the work that they do, represent both these students' interests as well as many other populations of students.

The stakeholder input does not stop here: Massachusetts has several other stakeholder engagement sessions scheduled in the coming days and weeks, and has standing meetings with dozens of these organizations.

We also conducted an online survey that has been distributed widely and is offered in 6 different languages, allowing anyone in the public to submit their thoughts. As of June 24, we had received 502

survey responses. The public also gave testimony at the May 25, 2021 state Board of Elementary and Secondary Education meeting, which included many parents voicing their visions for the use of these funds.

In addition, DESE has consulted the results of a [Statewide Education Issues survey](#) of over 1,549 K-12 parents in Massachusetts charged by the Barr Foundation and conducted by the MassInc Polling Group. This survey describes challenges of education during the pandemic. DESE has and will continue to rely on the feedback received from stakeholders.

The voices of our valued stakeholders are widely reflected throughout the various sections of this plan, Stakeholders often stressed equity, and concentrated on three main buckets: the human side of education (engagement, building relationships and community, meeting social-emotional needs of students and staff), the academic side of education (mitigating lost instructional time, providing high quality services), and the health and safety of school buildings themselves. This plan was shaped by all of these interactions; those main themes are reflected throughout this document and in our daily work. It should be noted that there are too many amazing ideas that we’ve heard from our stakeholders to list in the narrative of this plan. DESE remains hard at work on these ideas, with an open ear, and looks forward to more rich conversations over the coming months and years.

2. **Coordinating Funds:** Describe to what extent the SEA has and will coordinate Federal COVID-19 pandemic funding and other Federal funding. This description must include:
  - i. How the SEA and its LEAs 1) are using or have used prior to the submission of this plan and 2) plan to use following submission of this plan, Federal COVID-19 funding under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (“CARES”) Act and the CRRSA Act to support a safe return to and safely maximize in-person instruction, sustain these operations safely, and address the disproportionate impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on individual student groups (including students from low-income families, children with disabilities, English learners, racial or ethnic minorities, students experiencing homelessness, children and youth in foster care, and migratory students);

*Complete the table below or provide a narrative description.*

**Table C1.**

<b>Funding source</b>	<b>Prior/current SEA and LEA uses (including funding amounts, if applicable)</b>	<b>Planned SEA and LEA uses (including funding amounts, if applicable)</b>
ESSER I (CARES Act)	<i>SEA:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Safe Return to Schools</i> <i>\$2,730,309</i></li> </ul>	<i>SEA (planned): N/A</i>

Funding source	Prior/current SEA and LEA uses (including funding amounts, if applicable)	Planned SEA and LEA uses (including funding amounts, if applicable)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Address COVID Impact on Student Learning \$16,674,620</li> <li>• Administrative Support \$1,074,472</li> </ul> <p>LEA: Amount expended as of 5/24/21 \$86,037,818. Also, DESE is currently developing a survey to collect actual uses data from each district. The data we have right now collected from the completed district application reflects planned uses.</p> <p>Also, DESE is developing a data collection system to collect actual expenditure data from each district.</p>	<p>LEA (planned):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safe Return to Schools \$48,656,238</li> <li>• Address COVID Impact on Student Learning \$85,637,851.42</li> <li>• Technology \$47,154,802.24</li> </ul>
GEER I (CARES Act)	<p>SEA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Address COVID Impact on Student Learning \$20,659,712</li> <li>• Administrative Support \$208,792</li> </ul>	NA
ESSER II (CRRSA Act)	<p>SEA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safe Return to Schools \$10,000,000</li> <li>• Address COVID Impact on Student Learning \$59,459,567</li> <li>• Administrative Support \$1,920,113</li> </ul> <p>LEA: amount expended as of 5/24/21 \$12,632,199. Also, DESE is developing a survey currently to collect actual uses data from each district. The data we have right now collected from the completed district application reflects planned uses.</p>	<p>SEA (planned):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Address COVID Impact on Student Learning 4,553,153</li> </ul> <p>LEA (planned)*:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safe Return to Schools \$43,059,792.25</li> <li>• Address COVID Impact on Student Learning \$64,051,616.40</li> <li>• Technology \$7,161,151.27</li> </ul> <p>*ESSER II planned LEA spending data is as of 5/26/21, where only 117 LEAs have applied this funding. The application deadline for ESSER II funds is 7/30/21.</p>
GEER II (CRRSA Act)	<p>SEA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Address COVID Impact on Student Learning \$2,900,000</li> </ul>	NA

- ii. To what extent ESSER I and ESSER II funds have been awarded to LEAs and, if funds have not yet been made available to LEAs, when they will be. In addition, please provide any available information on the total dollar amounts of ESSER I and ESSER II funds that have been obligated but not expended by the SEA and its LEAs, including whether the SEA is able to track LEA obligations.

All ESSER I and ESSER II funds have been made available to our Massachusetts school districts. The application for ESSER I funds was made available on May 8,

2020 with an August 14, 2020 deadline. The application for ESSER II funds was made available on February 5, 2021 with a July 30, 2021 application deadline. District applications go through a programmatic review process by DESE’s Federal Grants Programs office. District grant applications contain multiple sections that cover state and federal fiscal compliance requirements (e.g., signature page, budget page that shows how districts intend to allocate grant funds by state budget categories) to ARP ESSER and state priorities and prerequisites (e.g., uses of funds and assurances). A completed and approved application allows us to capture and ensure the allowability and reasonableness of the district’s requested uses of funds.

	ESSER I District Grants	ESSER II District Grants
Obligated Grants	\$194,414,916	\$738,957,563
Expended as of 5/24/21	\$86,037,818	\$12,632,199
Grant Balance	\$108,377,098	\$726,325,364

- iii. In supporting LEAs as they plan for the safe return to and continuity of in-person instruction and for meeting the academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs of students resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, the extent to which the SEA is also using other Federal funding sources including but not limited to under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (“ESEA”), IDEA, Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (“WIOA”), funding for child nutrition services, and McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, and the funds to support the needs of students experiencing homelessness provided by section 2001(b)(1) of the ARP Act.<sup>3</sup>

**Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (“ESEA”)**

Massachusetts has and will continue to leverage other stand and federal funding sources to support schools and districts plan and implement a safe return to and continuity of in-person instruction and for meeting the academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs of students resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. Specifically, DESE has used ESEA, Title I, Part A and state funding to provide Targeted assistance grants to districts and schools that offer increased flexibility in how funds may be used to address the challenges presented by COVID-19. This flexibility allows districts to direct funds toward remote-learning integration strategies and COVID-related infrastructure and student wellness supports for the state’s lowest-performing schools. In addition, DESE staff developed guidance and implemented professional learning opportunities and support for districts and educators and educator preparation programs across the state to meet student’s academic, social, emotional and mental health needs, for example: Guidance on Remote Learning; Talent Guide to support school staffing during the pandemic, developed materials and promoting Mass Literacy, an initiative to support teachers to reach students with evidence-based early literacy; Curriculum Ratings by Teachers (CURATE) is a process by which MA teachers review the evidence and produce ratings on commercially available curricula; OPTIC, an online calibration platform that supports educators to review and rate teaching practice and calibrate and discuss

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<sup>3</sup> Please note that the needs of students experiencing homelessness must be addressed (along with the other groups disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic) through the use of the ARP ESSER SEA reservations and the required LEA reservation for the academic impact of lost instructional time; the funding provided to support the needs of students experiencing homelessness by section 2001(b)(1) of the ARP Act is in addition to the supports and services provided with ARP ESSER funds.

together their feedback to improve the quality of instruction. Through Title IV, Part A, among other sources, DESE has developed mental health and behavioral health resources to support districts in meeting the social emotional and mental health needs of students during this time. DESE has leveraged the CDC support in conducting a Youth Risk Behavior Survey to include several questions related to students' mental health experiences with violence during the pandemic. DESE also continues to use Title IV, Part A funds to provide evidence-based strategies like professional development and support for building safe, supportive, and equitable schools, developing multi-tiered systems of student support, for social and emotional learning, mental and behavioral health, and implementing culturally responsive and engaging instructional strategies. Title IV, Part B supports the Massachusetts 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers (21CCLC) Program, which supports the implementation of academically enriching programming during Out-of-School Time (OST) and during Expanded Learning Time (ELT) that helps to close proficiency and opportunity gaps, increases student engagement, and contributes to a well-rounded education. Title IVB support training, planning and professional development for educators to make better use of time with students and maximize student outcomes. Additionally, MA 21CCLC has developed the Family Institute for Student Success, a nine-week institute designed to provide families with the knowledge and skills to partner effectively with schools to support student achievement. Training is also provided to school administrators, educators, and community-based organizations on how to engage families more effectively as partners.

### **Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)**

The Special Education Planning and Policy Development office (SEPP) of the Department's Center of District Support has utilized its state-level IDEA funding to support students with disabilities to safely return in-person learning. SEPP has continuously published guidance, technical assistance tools & materials, conducted webinars, and provided consultation with individual districts on specific questions to address the most urgent needs for students with IEPs, teachers, and other special education staff to prepare and support schools and districts grappling with the reopening of school facilities. Some of the activities that were supported through IDEA funding are as follows:

- Providing technical assistance advisories on summer special ed services, compensatory services, and recovery support for students with IEPs;
- Writing transportation guidance for special needs students;
- Providing information on remote assessment tools and tele-assessment webinars;
- Conducting specific webinars on family engagement, learning recovery, and equity & inclusion;
- Publishing procedures for temporary waiver for early childhood; and
- Publishing guidance to districts related to facilities, equipment, and health and safety protocols.

Further, in response to the special education community voicing a need for additional financial support in response to the impacts of COVID-19, DESE created two Targeted Special Education Program Improvement Grants administered in FY2021 to support districts with their special education services that comply with IDEA fiscal requirements:

- ❖ Fund Code 274: to improve high quality programs that provide services documented on students' IEPs through in-person instruction, remote instruction, or a combination of both, with a strong emphasis on providing in-person instruction to the greatest extent possible
- ❖ Fund Code 298: is to support early childhood special education (ECSE) activities for eligible children ages 3–5 with disabilities, and to support districts to improve high quality programs that provide services documented on students' IEPs through in-person instruction, remote instruction, or a combination of both, with a strong emphasis on providing in-person instruction to the greatest extent possible.

SEPP has a dedicated COVID-19 [Information and Resources webpage for Special Educators](#).



### **Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)**

Massachusetts maintained its strong commitment to adult education and appropriated over \$46 million in state funds in FY21, which, when combined with the \$12 million WIOA Title II grant, enabled the adult education system to provide a shift to remote instruction. These funds supported additional professional development and investments in technology. Many Massachusetts adult education programs reside in community colleges and local school districts and follow their parent organizations' plans to return to in-person instruction.

### **Child Nutrition**

USDA child nutrition funds throughout COVID-19 to assure continuous, safe meal service throughout the pandemic. In addition to the standard, annual grant funding for school meals USDA has also provided new COVID-19 grants authorized through numerous stimulus bills. New USDA funding this past year included funds for child nutrition emergency operational costs and targeted reimbursements for local administrative costs for P-EBT. Additionally, districts received funds from the Coronavirus Relief Fund (CvRF) to support COVID-19 related school meal costs including a grant opportunity for food security related infrastructure improvements.

The DESE child nutrition and school finance and federal grants offices have worked side-by-side during to ensure consistent messaging and coordination at the state level. In support of districts, DESE has held numerous virtual webinars/town halls with school business officials and school nutrition directors on child nutrition funding and, importantly, how they relate to other federal grant funds (either from USED or FEMA). Monthly newsletters from the DESE child nutrition office also provides additional follow up guidance to help support districts with their decision making. Lastly, as necessary, detailed DESE written guidance have and will continue to be disseminated for each new USDA funding stream to explain in full detail step-by-step instructions including a question-and-answer resource. Each guidance document was followed up with a virtual town hall to answer questions.

### **McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act**

The Massachusetts McKinney-Vento (MKV) Homeless Education program collaborates with other state agencies and community providers to offer technical assistance, guidance and support to homeless families, students, and districts to ensure that homeless children and youth can enroll, attend, and succeed in school. To support a *safe return to school and educational stability* for students experiencing homelessness and their families, MKV programming has and will continue to provide training, technical assistance, and other resources to address the often-disproportionate impacts of the pandemic on this group of students. For example, the [Educational Stability Tip Sheet](#) was developed to provide guidance on maintaining enrollment, connecting with families, and ensuring access to remote learning opportunities for students who are homeless, in foster care, and in migrant or military families during school closures due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Department will issue grants to districts through both MKV and the additional ARP – Homeless Children and Youth allocation to support districts in addressing the needs of students who are homeless, including addressing their academic, social emotional, and mental health needs.

### **D. Maximizing State-Level Funds to Support Students**

The Department recognizes that States have an extraordinary opportunity to address the disproportionate impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on underserved students through the ARP Act's required State set-asides to address the academic impact of lost instructional time, provide summer learning and enrichment programs, and provide comprehensive afterschool programs. In this section, SEAs will describe their evidence-based strategies for these resources.

1. Academic Impact of Lost Instructional Time: Describe how the SEA will use the funds it reserves under section 2001(f)(1) of the ARP Act (totaling not less than 5 percent of the State’s total allocation of ARP ESSER funds) on evidence-based interventions to address the academic impact of lost instructional time by supporting the implementation of evidence-based interventions, such as summer learning or summer enrichment, extended day, comprehensive afterschool programs, or extended school year programs, and ensure that such interventions respond to students’ academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs. The description must include:

- i. A description of the evidence-based interventions (e.g., providing intensive or high-dosage tutoring, accelerating learning) the SEA has selected, and the extent to which the SEA will evaluate the impact of those interventions on an ongoing basis to understand if they are working;

DESE has developed an Acceleration Roadmap, which is a tool for teachers and school/building administrators, designed to provide a focused and phased approach to supporting students as they begin the 2021-2022 academic year, and it will lay the foundation for accelerated learning over the next several years. The Acceleration Roadmap is organized around three overarching priorities, which are firmly grounded in research and were developed through extensive stakeholder feedback. They are: (1) foster a sense of belonging and partnership among students and families, (2) continuously monitor students’ understanding, and (3) ensure strong grade-appropriate instruction with just-in-time scaffolds when they are needed. Within each priority, our approaches are designed to create equitable experiences and outcomes for all our students in a manner that is affirming of their race, identity, home language, and unique abilities. DESE is supporting:

In our efforts to continue to address learning loss, the **Kaleidoscope Collective for Learning (KCL)** is a DESE program designed to nurture Deeper Learning in Massachusetts. KCL builds partnerships with educators and leaders through professional development, coaching, guidance, tools, and resources, all built on a foundation of educational equity. Through Deeper Learning, every student, every day, gets the opportunity to build mastery, develop identity, and cultivate creativity. These activities are centered around learning acceleration, which is comprised of three main components: establishing a sense of belonging in school communities, frequently diagnosing student learning and academic needs, and providing grade-appropriate instruction with just-in-time scaffolds. The KCL initiative involves various components:

- **KCL Spring Leadership Institute** – After receiving professional development on the components of learning acceleration, district teams will receive coaching and support to 1) identify priorities and goals for learning acceleration for the 2022-2023 school year and 2) create an action plan with concrete strategies for their school teams.

The impact of this program will be measured by evaluating the quality of the priorities and action plans participating districts have at the end of the

training. We review the quality by specifically looking for use of evidence-based practices included in their priorities, as well as a system-based strategy they will leverage to support the practice. In addition, leadership coaches will monitor and report on 1) the extent to which districts implement their plans, and 2) if there are observable changes in student experience and outcomes.

- **KCL Learning Acceleration Network, Coaching, and Workshops** - Various levels of support will be available to schools and districts throughout the 2022-2023 school year. Monthly workshops focused on specific learning acceleration-related practices are available to all school leaders, and provide direct training on content, opportunities for peer-to-peer collaboration, and individualized expert coaching. Between 20-30 districts will receive more personalized cohort-based support through a network model that includes a formal scope and sequence of training over the course of the year, focused content on capacity-building across the district and its schools, and individualized feedback on goal setting, progress monitoring, and measuring impact of strategies deployed. A subset of the districts participating in the network will also receive job-embedded coaching, which includes monthly individualized planning, implementation, and coaching calls to focus on specific goals and challenges in each district.

The monthly workshops will be evaluated by survey responses and the cohort-based network and coaching model, we will monitor each participating district and report on 1) the extent to which districts implement the learning acceleration-related practices they identify as their focus area in the cohort, and 2) if there are observable changes in student experience and outcomes related to those practices. We also plan to collect survey responses from participants to determine the extent to which they believe the cohort and coaching were helpful supports for making progress on their learning acceleration goals.

- **KCL Specialized learning acceleration utilizing ed-tech professional development** - Technology leaders in districts that are prioritizing learning acceleration for the 2022-2023 school year will receive specialized training in how to select, implement, and evaluate their use of educational technology in service of learning acceleration goals.

Prior to starting the training, participating districts will identify their learning acceleration-related priority and goals for the 2022-23 school year and take a self-assessment to determine the extent to which their technology systems are strategically aligned to serve those goals. Throughout the year, we will monitor each participating district and report on 1) technology strategies they implement to support learning acceleration goals and 2) if there are observable changes in student experience and outcomes related to those practices. We will also collect survey response from participants to determine the extent to which they believe the training was helpful for making progress on their learning acceleration and technology goals.

**Rethinking Grading** – The experimentation with hybrid and remote learning models that occurred throughout the pandemic has provided an opportunity to closely examine and reconsider the way that we measure and report on student learning. Underserved student groups have been disproportionately impacted by traditional grading practices and policies, particularly during the pandemic. This project will support participating schools in transforming grading practices and policies to directly support their students in recovering from the pandemic and will produce guidance and supports for schools across the state to give students the feedback they need in order to mitigate the negative impacts of lost instructional time. At the same time, there is a heightened need to attend to student health and wellness, particularly at the secondary level, as they navigate the transition into life after high school. This pilot, therefore, will focus on those students at the secondary level.

Consistent with DESEs efforts to shift teaching practice to support Deeper Learning, there is an appetite in many communities to reconsider the way they assess and report on student learning on a day-to-day and summative basis, and how this information is communicated to students and families. This includes consideration of transforming the way educators and schools utilize and assign grades for assignments and courses, if/how to calculate GPAs, alternative methods to develop transcripts. The **Rethinking Grading** pilot project will create a small, diverse professional learning community of high schools to provide Massachusetts exemplars of transformed grading systems including transcripts, teacher grading practices, feedback to students, grading transparency, etc. All of these innovations will contribute to improvements in the feedback that students receive, thereby further helping them mitigate the negative impacts of lost instructional time. In addition:

1. Reduce barriers to student engagement and motivation (e.g., the disproportionate impact of a getting a 0 on a missing homework assignment) while ensuring strong alignment with local and state graduation requirements;
2. Promote transparency and empower students to monitor and improve their own learning experiences and performance; and
3. Support deeper learning experiences and rigorous course taking while minimizing incentives for “game-playing” behavior and anxiety and avoiding harm to students’ post-secondary opportunities (college admissions and scholarships).

The criteria used to determine which high schools will be selected for the professional learning community is based on the degree to which the grant components have been addressed. Proposals are assessed using a scale of absent to excellent include:

- The reason for the application and analysis of the current system.
- Position of district to support change efforts
- Professional culture and ability to support change
- Consultation with key stakeholders, and
- The proposed approach to support and Budget Narrative.

We will work with an experienced technical assistance partner on this project, who will support ongoing documentation of project activities and impact.

**The Biggest Winner Math Challenge** - Is a culturally affirming, engaging, rigorous online learning community for students with advanced ability or interest in mathematics. The projects are designed to build math mastery, explore SEL competencies, encourage self-expression, and enhance financial literacy while working in peer groups that are leveraging the latest digital platforms to solve real world life issues. The program serves students from districts within gateway cities in Massachusetts, which tend to be racially and ethnically diverse and have large immigrant populations. DESE is working with its vendor, Ed Inquiry, to develop the program evaluation.

**Teacher Diversification Program** – This program is designed to support local school districts to strengthen and diversify existing teacher recruitment and retention programs to support student groups that been traditionally underserved. Participating districts will engage in thoughtful approaches intended to increase the number of effective and diverse teachers in their schools. These approaches include high school education pathway, financial incentives, and assistance.

DESE has started an evaluative research study to learn more about the impact of the pandemic on the educator workforce, specifically including the extent to which the state is diversifying its educator workforce. Results from this study are helping the state plan for the ramifications of COVID-19 for the teacher pipeline in Massachusetts. Furthermore, these research results are helping inform future recruitment and retention efforts by examining the extent to which the DESE teacher workforce has experienced significant teacher departures, changes in the diversity of their educators, and/or changes to the supply of licensed individuals. The results will help to identify districts and/or schools that are disproportionately impacted by changes in the composition of the teacher workforce as well at particularly vulnerable populations within the teacher workforce. Given that the pandemic has been shown to disproportionately impact Black and Latinx communities, the results are informative for teacher workforce policies for districts and schools serving a high concentration of Black and Latinx students. Finally, by comparing trends in MA to national trends in teacher workforce changes, we can estimate the extent to which the MA teacher workforce was disproportionately impacted by COVID-19.

- ii. How the evidence-based interventions will specifically address the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on certain groups of students, including each of the student groups listed in question A.3.i.-viii. When possible, please indicate which data sources the SEA will use to determine the impact of lost instructional time; and

DESE sees many of these initiatives as multi-year commitments to help mitigate the effects of lost instructional time from the pandemic.

Learning acceleration is based on research that shows that students who have access to grade-appropriate materials with effective instructional scaffolding and just-in-time supports grow significantly more than their peers who receive remediation (previous grade level content). This is particularly true for students who enter the year behind grade level. Further, students of color, those from low-income families, English learners, and students with disabilities are more likely to receive remediation than their white peers, even when controlling for grade level “readiness”. By supporting districts to adopt acceleration-based instructional priorities, this program will increase the number of students from historically underserved communities who access grade-appropriate instruction (The Opportunity Myth, TNTP, 2018, and Accelerate, Don’t Remediate, TNTP, 2021).

The learning acceleration approach referenced above, asserts that every student is capable of accessing grade-appropriate work, it requires\ collecting ongoing data on what students know and are able to do, incorporating the scaffolding of evidence-based strategies students need in the context of a school-wide multi-tiered system of support, and simultaneously developing a culture of belonging and inclusivity. Therefore, district and school data will guide decisions for the interventions outlined in this plan. These data include: MCAS data, ACCESS data, attendance data and other factors. All interventions outlined in the State Plan will meet the needs of all groups. Also, please see section i. above, where this information is captured for each project.

- iii. The extent to which the SEA will use funds it reserves to identify and engage 1) students who have missed the most in-person instruction during the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 school years; and 2) students who did not consistently participate in remote instruction when offered during school building closures.

DESE will continue to review data on chronic absenteeism and student enrollment and attendance data to support schools and districts in engaging students who have missed the most-in-person instruction during the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 school years; in addition, students who did not consistently participate in remote instruction when offered during school building closures.

- 2. Evidence-Based Summer Learning and Enrichment Programs: Describe how the SEA will use the funds it reserves under section 2001(f)(2) of the ARP Act (totaling not less than 1 percent of the State’s total allocation of ARP ESSER funds) for evidence-based summer learning and enrichment programs, including those that begin in Summer 2021, and ensure such programs respond to students’ academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs. The description must include:

- i. A description of the evidence-based programs that address the academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs of students (e.g., providing intensive or high-dosage tutoring, accelerating learning) the SEA has selected, and the extent to which the SEA will evaluate the impact of those programs;

*Note: The Department is utilizing the same strategies for ARP ESSER funding for summer learning enrichment programs, expanded learning time and comprehensive afterschool programs (noted as out-of-school time) and as a result the responses to D.2i-iii and D.3i-iii are repeated in both sections.*

**Stakeholder Engagement:** The ARP ESSER funding opportunities for the evidence-based programming described below have been and will continue to be informed by existing grantees as well as other out-of-school time (before and after school, summer, etc.) programs, the Massachusetts Afterschool Network, other state agencies (such as the Departments of Early Education and Care, Mental Health, Public Health, Children and Families, etc.), and the state’s Early Childhood and Out-of-School Time (ECOST) workgroup, which is made up of early learning and out-of-school time practitioners and coordinators in both public school and community-based organization (CBO) settings. Feedback from family and youth as well as district/CBO staff will all be important and considered.

**Afterschool and Out-of-School Time Rebound (ASOST-R)** program provides funding to statewide non-profit entities to provide wraparound support to afterschool and out-of-school programs. ASOST-R is inclusive of after-school and summer programming hours beyond school time. Subgrants awarded last year (SFY2022) and to be awarded this year (SFY2023) are dedicated specifically to afterschool during the school year and another portion specifically to summer programs. The goal is to help these programs rebound and strengthen the quality of services to students that were greatly impacted by the impacts of COVID-19 and thereby improve learning and social-emotional outcomes and access to enrichment opportunities for impacted youth. That is:

- Programs that are operated by community-based organizations (CBOs);
- Programs in communities where at least 25% of students served are considered economically disadvantaged and/or are in schools in chronically underperforming status;
- Programs that specifically aim to support historically marginalized students, including but are not limited to, English learners, students on Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), students who are Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC), students experiencing homelessness, in foster care and/or who are migratory;
- Programs that offer engaging and interactive programming that supports deeper learning and access to enrichment opportunities;
- Programs that offer mental health services and a focus on social and emotional learning outcomes;
- Programs that incorporate applicable elements of the DESE's Acceleration Roadmap;
- Programs that promote culturally responsive and anti-racist practices that contribute to creating a welcoming environment;

- Programs that engage and leverage knowledge and strengths of students, families, staff, and community to inform programming design and decisions;
- Programs that offer comprehensive programming at least 3–5 days a week; and
- Programs that have or want to strengthen partnerships with local schools and/or other community-based organizations.

Since this program provides after-school and summer programming, we have a system that accounts for each set-aside. As with all federal awards that have required set-aside totals, our internal spending plan is loaded with the amount of required spending for each set-aside. Within each Federal set-aside, we have listed the amount available for each (Summer and After-School) to track spending and establish a spending ceiling in our accounting system. All grants coded to the ARP ESSER award receive a unit code that distinguishes whether it is funded from either the Summer Enrichment or the After-School funds. Further, each grant program is assigned a separate grant fund code that further enables us to distinguish which grant expenses they belong to.

Evaluation of the Afterschool and Out-of-School Time Rebound (ASOST-R) program will be done by the **National Institute on Out-of-School Time (NIOST)/Wellesley College**.

**High School Senior Internship Education Project (HSSIEP):** Based on the valuable feedback DESE received through ongoing stakeholder outreach, districts have shown tremendous interest in the High School Senior Internship Project (HSSIEP), which adds capacity to our Summer Enrichment and After School Programs. HSSIEP is designed for senior high school students to support K-8 students during the day, afterschool programs, school vacations, and summer months. These high school seniors work in academic acceleration and other camps made available for working caregivers. Included is professional development delivered to educators to provide to their participating high school senior students.

At the beginning of the program, students work with a teacher or advisor to create a work-based learning plan, including goals for employability/professional skills, on the MA Career Ready Database. These skills are measured, tracked, and reflected upon by the student and teacher/advisor on a regular basis. Reported skill gain will be the primary quantified measure of success of impact. Additional measure of impact will be wages earned by students, and number of hours supporting K-8 learning environments.

HSSIEP provides students in the High School Class of 2022 with an opportunity to accelerate their learning and preparedness for post-graduation life. This student population has been disproportionately affected by the COVID 19 pandemic as they progressed through High School, beginning with the interruption of their sophomore year in March 2020. This program creates new opportunities for these students to participate in an immersive work-based learning experience to develop critical employability skills for college and career success. This student population was not able to engage in programs with similar objectives that otherwise would have been available to them due to the pandemic. Additionally, in summer 2022, this opportunity will be available to members of the Class of 2023, who have also had significantly interrupted post-graduation preparedness learning opportunities. As the program places students in K-8 classrooms for their internships, there's an additional intention to impact the learning of K-8 students by providing additional supports in the form of tutoring and other academic and social



supports for young students to accelerate learning.

Since this program takes place afterschool, during the schoolyear and in the summer, we have a system that accounts for each set-aside. As with all federal awards that have required set-aside totals, our internal spending plan is loaded with the amount of required spending for each set-aside. Within each Federal set-aside, we have listed the amount available for each (Summer and After-School) to track spending and establish a spending ceiling in our accounting system. All grants coded to the ARP ESSER award receive a unit code that distinguishes whether it is funded from either the Summer Enrichment or the After-School funds. Further, each grant program is assigned a separate grant fund code that further enables us to distinguish which grant expenses they belong to.

**Summer Acceleration Academy** – A week-long academic program designed to accelerate student learning through engaging, standards-aligned lessons. The purpose of this targeted program is to fund the implementation of a specific strategic initiative to help accelerate the learning of students most affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, districts can determine which students to invite based on their districts internal data and context, many districts choose to invite students who were struggling academically based on MCAS data and/or district benchmark assessments. This grant opportunity is available to all districts within Massachusetts. The focus areas are as follows:

- Early Literacy Academy for rising kindergartners, rising 1<sup>st</sup> graders, and rising 2<sup>nd</sup> graders
- Math Academy for rising 3<sup>rd</sup> graders, rising 4<sup>th</sup> graders, rising 8<sup>th</sup> graders, and rising 10<sup>th</sup> graders

Student rosters and attendance data are collected from all districts that run summer academies so that we can analyze available MCAS data for students who attended the program vs. those who did not. In addition, districts running this program are encouraged to use existing benchmark assessments that took place prior to and after the Academies to analyze student achievement.

**Math Acceleration Academies** – A week-long academic program designed to accelerate student learning through engaging, standards-aligned lessons. The purpose of this targeted program is to support the implementation of math focused acceleration academies for students in grades 3 through 10 most affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Districts can determine which students to invite based on their districts internal data and context, many districts chose to invite students who were struggling academically based on MCAS data and/or district benchmark assessments. This grant opportunity was available to all districts within Massachusetts.

Student rosters and attendance data are collected from all districts that run math academies so that we can analyze available MCAS data for students who attended the program vs. those who did not. In addition, districts running this program are encouraged to use existing benchmark assessments that took place prior to and after the Academies to analyze student achievement.

- ii. How the evidence-based programs will specifically address the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on certain groups of students, including each of the student groups listed in question A.3. i.--viii.

When possible, please indicate which data sources the SEA will use to identify students most in need of summer learning and enrichment programs; and

The Department will include language to either strongly encourage and/or give priority to competitive applications that reach out to certain groups of students disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 in the funding opportunities for ASOST-R. This may include but not be limited to students who were chronically absent; students designated economically disadvantaged; English learners; students on individualized education programs (IEPs); students who are Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC); LGBTQ students, and students experiencing homelessness, foster care and/or who are migratory. In addition, various funding opportunities may encourage and/or prioritize targeting students needing additional support academically and social-emotionally as measured by grades and teacher/guidance/administration (and other) referrals. The Department will also prioritize or limit eligibility of funding opportunities to communities disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 by considering geographic representation and those with higher percentages of economically disadvantaged students.

- iii. The extent to which the SEA will use funds it reserves to identify and engage 1) students who have missed the most in-person instruction during the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 school years; and 2) students who did not consistently participate in remote instruction when offered during school building closures.

As noted above, the Department will strongly encourage and include priority for applicants in the various out-of-school time opportunities that especially outreach to and enroll students who have missed the most in-person instruction during the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 school years, including students who have been chronically absent from both in-person and/or remote instruction. In addition to the [Family Engagement Framework](#) and [The Acceleration Roadmap: Pathway to an Equitable Recovery](#), the Department has also designed systems of support and professional development for our out-of-school time programs. This system of support includes resources on how to get back into an educational routine; reengage students; help students feel connected to their peers, schools, and educators; and provide academically enriching and engaging opportunities. Moreover, to reengage and fully meet the needs of students who have missed the most in-person and remote instruction, we will continue to support out-of-school time programs on how to engage families as partners – aligned with the state’s aforementioned Family Engagement Framework.

3. **Evidence-Based Comprehensive Afterschool Programs:** Describe how the SEA will use the funds it reserves under section 2001(f)(3) of the ARP Act (totaling not less than 1 percent of the State’s total allocation of 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. The description must include:
- i. A description of the evidence-based programs (e.g., including partnerships with community-based organizations) the SEA has selected, and the extent to which the SEA will evaluate the impact of those programs;

**Stakeholder Engagement:** The ARP ESSER funding opportunities for the evidence-based programming described below have been and will continue to be informed by existing grantees as well as other out-of-school time (before and after school, summer, etc.) programs, the Massachusetts Afterschool Network, other state agencies (such as the Departments of Early Education and Care, Mental Health, Public Health, Children and Families, etc.), and the state’s Early Childhood and Out-of-School Time (ECOST) workgroup, which is made up of early learning and out-of-school time practitioners and coordinators in both public school and community-based organization (CBO) settings. Feedback from family and youth as well as district/CBO staff will all be important and considered.

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- Programs that are operated by community-based organizations (CBOs);
- Programs in communities where at least 25% of students served are considered economically disadvantaged and/or are in schools in chronically underperforming status;
- Programs that specifically aim to support historically marginalized students, including but are not limited to, English learners, students on Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), students who are Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC), students experiencing homelessness, in foster care and/or who are migratory;
- Programs that offer engaging and interactive programming that supports deeper learning and access to enrichment opportunities;
- Programs that offer mental health services and a focus on social and emotional learning outcomes;
- Programs that incorporate applicable elements of the DESE’s Acceleration Roadmap;

- Programs that promote culturally responsive and anti-racist practices that contribute to creating a welcoming environment;
- Programs that engage and leverage knowledge and strengths of students, families, staff, and community to inform programming design and decisions;
- Programs that offer comprehensive programming at least 3–5 days a week; and
- Programs that have or want to strengthen partnerships with local schools and/or other community-based organizations.

Evaluation of the Afterschool and Out-of-School Time Rebound (ASOST-R) program will be done by the **National Institute on Out-of-School Time (NIOST)/Wellesley College**.

Since this program provides after-school and summer programming, we have a system that accounts for each set-aside. As with all federal awards that have required set-aside totals, our internal spending plan is loaded with the amount of required spending for each set-aside. Within each Federal set-aside, we have listed the amount available for each (Summer and After-School) to track spending and establish a spending ceiling in our accounting system. All grants coded to the ARP ESSER award receive a unit code that distinguishes whether it is funded from either the Summer Enrichment or the After-School funds. Further, each grant program is assigned a separate grant fund code that further enables us to distinguish which grant expenses they belong to.

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At the beginning of the program, students work with a teacher or advisor to create a work-based learning plan, including goals for employability/professional skills, on the MA Career Ready Database. These skills are measured, tracked, and reflected upon by the student and teacher/advisor on a regular basis. Reported skill gain will be the primary quantified measure of success of impact. Additional measure of impact will be wages earned by students, and number of hours supporting K-8 learning environments.

HSSIEP provides students in the High School Class of 2022 with an opportunity to accelerate their learning and preparedness for post-graduation life. This student population has been disproportionately affected by the COVID 19 pandemic as they progressed through High School, beginning with the interruption of their sophomore year in March 2020. This program creates new opportunities for these students to participate in an immersive work-based learning experience to develop critical employability skills for college and career success. This student population was not able to engage in programs with similar objectives that otherwise would have been available to them due to the pandemic. Additionally, in summer 2022, this opportunity will be available to members of the Class of 2023, who have also had significantly interrupted post-graduation preparedness learning opportunities. As the program places students in K-8 classrooms for their internships, there's an additional intention to impact the learning of K-8 students

by providing additional supports in the form of tutoring and other academic and social supports for young students to accelerate learning.

Since this program takes place afterschool, during the schoolyear and in the summer, we have a system that accounts for each set-aside. As with all federal awards that have required set-aside totals, our internal spending plan is loaded with the amount of required spending for each set-aside. Within each Federal set-aside, we have listed the amount available for each (Summer and After-School) to track spending and establish a spending ceiling in our accounting system. All grants coded to the ARP ESSER award receive a unit code that distinguishes whether it is funded from either the Summer Enrichment or the After-School funds. Further, each grant program is assigned a separate grant fund code that further enables us to distinguish which grant expenses they belong to.

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- Early Literacy Academy for rising kindergartners, rising 1<sup>st</sup> graders, and rising 2<sup>nd</sup> graders
- Math Academy for rising 3<sup>rd</sup> graders, rising 4<sup>th</sup> graders, rising 8<sup>th</sup> graders, and rising 10<sup>th</sup> graders

Student rosters and attendance data are collected from all districts that run summer academies, so that we can analyze available MCAS data for students who attended the program vs. those who did not. In addition, districts running this program are encouraged to use existing benchmark assessments that took place prior to and after the Academies to analyze student achievement.

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Student rosters and attendance data are collected from all districts that run Math Academies, so that we can analyze available MCAS data for students who attended the program vs. those who did not. In addition, districts running this program are encouraged to use existing benchmark assessments that took place prior to and after the Academies to analyze student achievement.

- ii. How the evidence-based programs will specifically address the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on certain groups of students, including each of the student groups listed in question A.3.i.-viii.

When possible, please indicate which data sources the SEA will use to identify students most in need of comprehensive afterschool programming; and

The Department will include language to either strongly encourage and/or give priority to competitive applications that reach out to certain groups of students disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 in the funding opportunities for ASOST-R. This may include but not be limited to students who were chronically absent; students designated economically disadvantaged; English learners; students on individualized education programs (IEPs); students who are Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC); LGBTQ students, and students experiencing homelessness, foster care and/or who are migratory. In addition, various funding opportunities may encourage and/or prioritize targeting students needing additional support academically and social-emotionally as measured by grades and teacher/guidance/administration (and other) referrals. The Department will also prioritize or limit eligibility of funding opportunities to communities disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 by considering geographic representation and those with higher percentages of economically disadvantaged students.

- iii. the extent to which the SEA will use funds it reserves to identify and engage 1) students who have missed the most in-person instruction during the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 school years; and 2) students who did not consistently participate in remote instruction when offered during school building closures.

As noted above, the Department will strongly encourage and include priority for applicants in the various out-of-school time opportunities that especially outreach to and enroll students who have missed the most in-person instruction during the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 school years, including students who have been chronically absent from both in-person and/or remote instruction. In addition to the [Family Engagement Framework](#) and [The Acceleration Roadmap: Pathway to an Equitable Recovery](#), the Department has also designed systems of support and professional development for our out-of-school time programs. This system of support includes resources on how to get back into an educational routine; reengage students; help students feel connected to their peers, schools, and educators; and provide academically enriching and engaging opportunities. Moreover, to reengage and fully meet the needs of students who have missed the most in-person and remote instruction, we will continue to support out-of-school time programs on how to engage families as partners – aligned with the state’s aforementioned Family Engagement Framework.

- 4. **Emergency Needs:** If the SEA plans to reserve funds for emergency needs under section 2001(f)(4) of the ARP Act to address issues responding to the COVID-19

pandemic, describe the anticipated use of those funds, including the extent to which these funds will build SEA and LEA capacity to ensure students' and staff's health and safety; to meet students' academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs; and to use ARP ESSER funds to implement evidence-based interventions.

DESE is evaluating the education needs to be addressed with its state reservation. This process will take place over the summer and into the next school year. Ensuring the students' academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs will be paramount with our SEA funds.

### **E. Supporting LEAs in Planning for and Meeting Students' Needs**

The Department recognizes that the safe return to in-person instruction must be accompanied by a focus on meeting students' academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs, and by addressing the opportunity gaps that existed before – and were exacerbated by – the pandemic. In this section, SEAs will describe how they will support their LEAs in developing high-quality plans for LEAs' use of ARP ESSER funds to achieve these objectives.

1. LEA Plans for the Use of ARP ESSER Funds: Describe what the SEA will require its LEAs to include in LEA plans consistent with the ARP ESSER requirements for the use of ARP ESSER funds, how the SEA will require such plans to be made available to the public, and the deadline by which the LEA must submit its ARP ESSER plan (which must be a reasonable timeline and should be within no later than 90 days after receiving its ARP ESSER allocation). The LEA plans must include, at a minimum:
  - i. The extent to which and how the funds will be used to implement prevention and mitigation strategies that are, to the greatest extent practicable, in line with the most recent CDC guidance, in order to continuously and safely operate schools for in-person learning;
  - ii. How the LEA will use the funds it reserves under section 2001(e)(1) of the ARP Act (totaling not less than 20 percent of the LEA's total allocation of ARP ESSER funds) to address the academic impact of lost instructional time through the implementation of evidence-based interventions, such as summer learning or summer enrichment, extended day, comprehensive afterschool programs, or extended school year programs;
  - iii. How the LEA will spend its remaining ARP ESSER funds consistent with section 2001(e)(2) of the ARP Act; and
  - iv. How the LEA will ensure that the interventions it implements, including but not limited to the interventions under section 2001(e)(1) of the ARP Act to address the academic impact of lost instructional time, will respond to the academic, social, emotional,

and mental health needs of all students, and particularly those students disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, including students from low-income families, students of color, English learners, children with disabilities, students experiencing homelessness, children and youth in foster care, and migratory students.

Massachusetts has developed an application (LEA application) that will collect the LEAs' plans for ARP ESSER activities and uses of funds, including the requirements listed in the Interim Final Requirement (IFR). Through a series of questions (with narrative or multiple-choice options for response), assurances, and budgeting information, LEAs will provide, at a minimum, the information required for the ARP ESSER return-to-in-person-learning and ARP ESSER use-of-funds plans

LEA applications were made available on May 24, 2021 for submission by districts. Every LEA receiving an allocation of ARP ESSER funds must file an application. The application is an Excel-based workbook with nine (9) tabs covering requirements for state and federal fiscal compliance (e.g., signature page and budget tab allocating grant funds by state budget categories) to ARP ESSER and state priorities, evidence-based practices, and prerequisites (e.g. uses of funds and assurance tabs).

The LEA's ARP ESSER Use of Funds plan (also known as the ARP ESSER Implementation Plan) is included in the LEA application for funds. Once fully completed and submitted by each district and approved by DESE, the application will reflect the district's Use of Funds Plan. This application/plan deadline is 10/4/2021.

DESE requires that districts post their planned use for ARP ESSER funds on their websites within 30 days of application/plan approval. Upon approval of the district's ARP ESSER application/plan, DESE will remind districts about the requirement to publicly post their plans within 30 days, and follow up as necessary to verify plans have been made public.

- i. The extent to which and how the funds will be used to implement prevention and mitigation strategies.

The Department has already collected District Reopening Plans for the 2021 school year from all of its LEAs. As part of those plans, LEAs were required to certify that they had read and would comply with comprehensive Department guidance, including extensive guidance on health and safety with respect to operations, facilities, and school transportation. See, e.g., [Fall Reopening Facilities and Operations Guidance](#).

To the extent these plans have been published on the LEA's website (as required by the Department) and provided an opportunity for public comment, most LEAs will point to these plans as satisfying the ARP requirement found at § 2001(i), through an assurance on the LEA application. If not using their District Reopening Plan, the LEA is required to assure that they will provide a plan within 30 days of receiving ARP ESSER funds. The in-person instruction plan assurance on the LEA application also alerts LEAs that they must revisit and as necessary, revise



their plans at least every six months for the life of their ARP ESSER grant. This information is also explained in the request for proposals that provides notice of the grant opportunity and is published on the Department’s Grants webpages.

In addition, the LEA application contains a section where LEAs are required to indicate the extent to which each has adopted a policy based on the CDC recommendation listed in the Interim Final Requirements at 3(a)(i). The application asks whether each policy has been adopted, and if yes, whether it is contained in the LEA’s District Reopening Plan, and, if not, the LEA is asked to describe their policy briefly in narrative form.

- ii. How the LEA will use the funds it reserves to address the academic impact of lost instructional time through the implementation of evidence-based interventions

The LEA application asks about evidence-based interventions that each LEA is planning to implement with ARP ESSER funds, with a reminder that at least 20% of the ARP ESSER allocation must be used to address lost instructional time and disproportionate impact on student subgroups through evidence-based practices.

The application supplies a list of 21 evidence-based practices, categorized into four areas: Enhanced Core Instruction, Targeted Students Supports, Talent Development and Staffing, and Conditions for Student Success. For each practice it selects, the LEA is asked what data will be used to measure progress and whether the strategy is targeted for the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on student subgroups, which groups are being served, what impact is being addressed, and how the strategy/intervention will provide support.

If an LEA is implementing an evidence-based strategy not listed in the LEA application, it is asked to describe the strategy and provide the same information about how and for whom it is being used.

- iii. How the LEA will spend its remaining ARP ESSER funds consistent with section 2001(e)(2) of the ARP Act

The LEA application has a “Uses of Funds” tab that lists all allowable uses of funds in section 2001(e)(2) of the ARP Act and provides a check box that allows LEAs to select those categories for which they intend to use their ARP ESSER allocation. In addition, on the Budget tab of the LEA Application, LEAs indicate individual budgeted expenditures among 11 object codes. Each expenditure also requires the LEA to select, from a dropdown menu, a primary function for the expense, which mirrors the allowable uses on the Uses of Funds tab (and therefore, section 2001(e)(2)), as well as a space to provide additional details in narrative form.

Allowable uses of ARP ESSER funds are also explained in the request for proposals that provides notice of the grant opportunity and is published on the Department’s Grants webpages. In addition, the Department has developed Quick Reference Guides and Frequently Asked Questions for all ESSER programs (CARES Act, CRRSSA, and will do so for the ARP Act) to provide more detailed guidance on allowable expenditures and respond directly to common questions that arise from LEAs about uses of funds.

- iv. How the LEA will ensure that the interventions it implements will respond to the academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs of all students, and particularly those students disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic

See the answer to subsection ii., above. LEAs are asked to describe how and why the evidence-based practices that they implement will serve those students most impacted by COVID-19 on the LEA application. The Department has also been deliberate in choosing the 21 evidence-based practices it affirmatively lists in the application to suggest and promote a comprehensive set of strategies that have proven track records of success for highest need students on all levels – academic, social, emotional, and mental health.

In addition to the sections of the LEA application asking about evidence-based practices, the Department has asked for assurances that districts will meet maintenance of equity requirements for their highest need schools (the LEA application provides a list of the top quartile of the LEA applicant’s schools based on economic data provided to the Department), as well as requiring a description of how the LEA will ensure that ESSER funds are used to promote educational equity for its students.

The Department will also provide technical assistance in writing (e.g., quick reference guides) and virtually (e.g., webinars) to ensure LEAs understand requirements of the ARP Act for ESSER funds. The Department will continue to support LEAs in content areas related to evidence-based practices, as well as building capacity at the LEA level to meaningfully evaluate the success of the practices they implement, as well as to make mid-course corrections, through tools being developed by our Office of Research and Planning.

2. **LEA Consultation**: Describe how the SEA will, in planning for the use of ARP ESSER funds, ensure that, consistent with the ARP ESSER requirements], its LEAs engage in meaningful consultation with stakeholders, including, but not limited to:
  - i. students;
  - ii. families;
  - iii. school and district administrators (including special education administrators); and
  - iv. teachers, principals, school leaders, other educators, school staff, and their unions.

The LEA must also engage in meaningful consultation with each of the following to the extent present in or served by the LEA:

- i. Tribes;
- ii. civil rights organizations (including disability rights organizations); and
- iii. stakeholders representing the interests of children with disabilities, English learners, children experiencing homelessness, children and youth in foster care, migratory students, children who are incarcerated, and other underserved students.

The description must also include how the SEA will ensure that LEAs provide the public the opportunity to provide input in the development of the LEA’s plan for the use of ARP ESSER funds and take such input into account.

The Department’s Federal Grants unit published a quick reference guide (QRG) entitled, ARP ESSER Preparation, for LEAs at the beginning of May. A substantial portion of the guide is dedicated to requisite LEA stakeholder outreach – both the topics and the groups

that must be consulted for the LEA ARP ESSER implementation plan. A link to that QRG was sent to all LEA grant liaisons, business officers, and LEA superintendents on May 5, 2021 to ensure they began stakeholder outreach as soon as was feasible to allow them to plan inclusively for the use of funds. DESE also held two major statewide webinars on ARP ESSER funds (May 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>), detailing all of the requirements that LEAs must meet, and providing resources for them on effective strategies for meaningful [stakeholder engagement](#).

In addition, LEAs are required to indicate which of the stakeholder groups they have consulted on the LEA application, which are listed and require an affirmative indication that each has been consulted or when they will be consulted. LEAs will be required to make these plans public, ensuring transparency and the ability to discern the extent to which the plans reflected the stakeholder feedback.

3. Describe how the SEA will support and monitor its LEAs in using ARP ESSER funds. The description must include:
  - i. How the SEA will support and monitor its LEAs' implementation of evidence-based interventions that respond to students' academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs, such as through summer learning or summer enrichment, extended day, comprehensive afterschool programs, or extended school year programs – including the extent to which the SEA will collect evidence of the effectiveness of interventions employed;

The Department collects data from LEAs disaggregated by many of the subgroups mentioned in ARP ESSER, including data from statewide assessments, attendance, discipline, student surveys, and educator leader surveys. We have also piloted and will be imminently posting an evaluation toolkit that will help districts and schools build systems to track data appropriate to their interventions to measure progress and success.

However, in order to report on programming funded by ARP ESSER, we will need to set up a new system to collect data and information relevant to those interventions. Since our grant system does not have functionality to allow data collection of this type, we are creating our collection vehicle (likely surveys). We have asked LEAs to identify for us both their ARP-ESSER-funded, evidence-based interventions, and the data they will use to measure progress and success on their application/plans submitted to the Department. Requiring this data not only signals to LEAs that data will be collected (in fact, they are expressly alerted on the applications), but also gives the Department information that can be used for monitoring.

- ii. How the SEA will support and monitor its LEAs in specifically addressing the disproportionate impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on certain groups of students, including each of the student groups listed in question A.3.i.-viii; and

See the answer to 3(i), above. In addition, we are conducting wide-ranging stakeholder outreach sessions in conjunction with creating Massachusetts' ARP ESSER plan, during which we are not only asking about impact, but taking suggestions for supports and responsive programming for student groups experiencing highest needs, as many of these stakeholder groups have first-hand knowledge and educational expertise. We expect that this outreach will help shape the Department's supports as well as inform how the state reservations funds will be targeted.

- iii. How the SEA will support and monitor its LEAs in using ARP ESSER funds to identify, reengage, and support students most likely to have experienced the impact of lost instructional time on student learning, such as:
  - a. Students who have missed the most in-person instruction during the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 school years;
  - b. Students who did not consistently participate in remote instruction when offered during school building closures; and
  - c. Students most at-risk of dropping out of school.

The Department has been actively working to support LEAs in supporting and engaging students at every stage of the pandemic (as well as before) but realizes the critical need to reengage students as students return to in-person learning. In addition to the tools described in 3(i & ii) to monitor the use of ARP ESSER funds, Massachusetts has partnered with The New Teacher Project (TNP) to create a resource targeted specifically at evidence-based strategies for reengaging students called The Academic Excellence Roadmap (Roadmap). The Roadmap is a tool created for the coming school year (21-22) for LEA and school leaders to provide focused and phased support students, especially those experiencing highest impact from the pandemic, as they return to school, but has materials and strategies that will promote accelerated learning over the next 3-5 year. Massachusetts expects and expressly suggests that districts invest ARP ESSER, as well as ESSER I and II funding in the evidence-based activities and practices contained in the Roadmap.

- 4. Describe the extent to which the SEA will support its LEAs in implementing additional strategies for taking educational equity into account in expending ARP ESSER funds, including but not limited to:
  - i. Allocating funding both to schools and for districtwide activities based on student need, and
  - ii. Implementing an equitable and inclusive return to in-person instruction. An inclusive return to in-person instruction includes, but is not limited to, establishing policies and practices that avoid the over-use of exclusionary discipline measures (including in- and out-of-school suspensions) and creating a positive and supportive learning environment for all students.

Massachusetts has promoted greater transparency in the use of state educational aid to ensure adoption of evidence-based strategies in communities and for students with the greatest needs. The Department has carried forward this notion in the design of its LEA application – listing the same categories of interventions and supports for students that have been promoted for the past year using state aid -- Enhanced Core Instruction, Targeted Students Supports, Talent Development and Staffing, and

Conditions for Student Success. The premise is that targeted and equitable use of resources is a significant component of closing gaps in student success among highest needs student groups.

The Department has developed tools to allow districts to see how their resources are being used and compare them to other districts of their choice (based on criteria such as demographics or wealth)

## F. Supporting the Educator Workforce

The Department recognizes the toll that the COVID-19 pandemic has taken on the Nation’s educators as well as students. In this section, SEAs will describe strategies for supporting and stabilizing the educator workforce and for making staffing decisions that will support students’ academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs.

### 1. Supporting and Stabilizing the Educator Workforce:

- i. Describe the extent to which the State is facing shortages of educators, education administration personnel, and other school personnel involved in safely reopening schools, and the extent to which they vary by region/type of school district and/or groups of educators (e.g., special educators and related services personnel and paraprofessionals; bilingual or English as a second language educators; science, technology, engineering, and math (“STEM”) educators; career and technical education (“CTE”) educators; early childhood educators). Cite specific data on shortages and needs where available.

See the table below. Regarding supporting special education staff, DESE has provided information and resources to help existing special education staff provide high quality services in remote, hybrid and in-person settings. Please see our [guidance](#) from last July. We also issued the [274](#) and [298 grants](#) to improve special education services during this school year.

*Complete the table below, changing or adding additional rows as needed, or provide a narrative description.*

Designated Teacher Shortages for 2021-22 School Year

In accordance with 34 CFR 682.210(q)(6)(iii)

Submitted to the USDOE Office of Postsecondary Education November 24, 2020

Based on FTE of 75,152 and organized by academic discipline in order of priority

Academic Discipline	FTE Short	% Short
Digital Literacy and Computer Science	477	.63
Special Education	275	.37
Moderate Disabilities	253	
Severe Disabilities	22	
English Language Arts/Reading	266	.35
English Language Arts	250	
Reading	16	
Mathematics	245	.33

English as a Second Language	212	.28
Sciences	186	.25
Biology	23	
Physics	22	
Chemistry	19	
Earth Science	8	
General Science	106	
Technology/Engineering	8	
History/Social Sciences	165	.22
Modern Foreign Languages	129	.17
Spanish	85	
French	16	
Chinese	17	
Arabic	3	
Portuguese	6	
Latin and/or Classical Humanities	12	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,955</b>	<b>2.6</b>

*[Original table below provided by USED in this application. We responded in the table above, submitted to USED in November 2020. We do not have additional data since November.]*

<b>Area</b>	<b>Data on shortages and needs</b>	<b>Narrative description</b>
Special educators and related service personnel and paraprofessionals		
Bilingual educators		
English as a second language educators		
STEM educators		
CTE educators		
Early childhood educators		
School counselors		
Social workers		
Nurses		
School psychologists		

- ii. Describe how the SEA will assist its LEAs in identifying the most urgent areas of shortages or potential shortages, with particular plans for individual LEAs facing the most significant needs (e.g., by avoiding layoffs, providing high-quality professional learning opportunities, and addressing the impact of stress or trauma on educators). Include a description of how other Federal COVID-19 funding (e.g., ESSER and

GEER funds under the CARES Act and CRRSA Act) have already been used to avoid layoffs during the COVID-19 pandemic.

- To assist LEAs in identifying urgent areas of shortage, the Department produces annual data the Department makes publicly available on the program completers from educator preparation programs allows analysis of the supply of educators in the state; that data is reported by Educator Preparation Programs in June.
- Each fall, districts report to the SEA in the Educator Personnel Information Management System (EPIMS) on their workforce. We will analyze these data in the fall and respond accordingly.
- The Student Learning Experience Report: This Department-created report encourages districts and schools to closely examine student assignment and the characteristics of the teachers to whom they are assigned. The SLE Report compares the rates at which groups of students have been assigned to different types of teachers. Risk ratios show the difference in the rate at which a historically disadvantaged group was assigned to a teacher with the given characteristic, compared to students not in that group. The report supports districts to consider the risk factors for students in assigning them to teachers (e.g., did the student have a less experienced teacher the year prior? Was the student assigned a teacher who was rated as needs improvement in the educator evaluation system?).
- Throughout 2020-2021 and planning for 2020-2021, we will implement Professional Learning Networks called Instructional Support Networks to support educators in their roles. We will issue the 2021-2022 catalogue in mid-June.

- iii. Describe the actions the SEA will take to fill anticipated gaps in certified teachers for the start of the 2021-2022 school year and to what extent the SEA will further support its LEAs in expanding the educator pipeline and educator diversity while addressing the immediate needs of students disproportionately impacted by the pandemic (e.g., recruiting teaching candidates to provide high-dosage tutoring or implementing residencies for teacher candidates).

*Actions to fill anticipated gaps:*

- Emergency license: Worked with the Governor and state legislature to pass a law that would allow the SEA to issue emergency licenses to fill anticipated gaps. This license will help aspiring educators looking to join the profession, people who hold a license in one category (teacher, administrator, specialist teacher, or professional support personnel) who have been prevented by COVID-19 from qualifying for a license in another category, and school districts looking to bring on new hires. The emergency license will be valid for employment in the 2020-21 school year and 2021-2022 school year; we anticipate it will expire June 30, 2022. The license is designed to assist candidates who are impacted by the COVID-19 state of emergency and unable to

satisfy certain aspects of the licensure requirements, such as a passing score on the Massachusetts Tests for Educator Licensure (MTEL) or Performance Assessment for Leaders (PAL). The requirements for obtaining an emergency license will depend on the specific license(s) an applicant pursues. For example, most "academic" teacher licenses will require a bachelor's degree, while an administrator license will typically require a bachelor's degree and at least three years of experience in executive management/leadership or in a supervisory, teaching, or administrative role in a school. A vocational teacher, currently, will also need a bachelor's degree and, where necessary, a professional trade license for that field. An emergency license will also be available to those seeking their first vocational administrator license.

- Produced [The Talent Guide](#): guidance on staffing focused on hiring, student teaching, supporting new teachers, and professional development. The guide includes a focus on COVID-19 Considerations, which highlights practices and MA policies specific to the context of the public health emergency; Best Practices elevates research-based strategies that are relevant in all circumstances, and may be particularly useful in the context of the pandemic and a Spotlight on Racial Equity, which highlights specific strategies and resources to consider in efforts to disrupt racism and racial inequity.
- [Flexible Staffing Guidance](#): Encourages districts to tap into candidates in educator preparation programs as a source of talent and expanded capacity. We will continue to support district-educator preparation connections in service of an expanded and effective educator workforce in 2021-2022.
- Induction and Mentoring Support 2021-2022: We anticipate providing support for induction and mentoring of new teachers, especially those teachers who are employed on an emergency license. We have found these teachers have been hired and assigned to teach in some of our districts with the highest percentages of students living in poverty and those disproportionately hit by the pandemic. We are finalizing the details, though anticipate funding regionally-based partners to implement induction and mentoring that is specific to that region and will customize some of the induction and mentoring support to the needs of the districts within which the teachers teach (e.g., include a strand of induction and mentoring in districts with higher percentages of English Learners to support educators to better serve multi-lingual learners).

*Expanding the educator pipeline and educator diversity, especially for students disproportionately impacted by the pandemic:*

- In fall 2020, DESE released "[Promising Recruitment, Selection, and Retention Practices for a Diverse Massachusetts Workforce.](#)" The Guidebook is intended to support school and district leaders as they design and



implement teacher diversification strategies in service of student achievement and equitable outcomes for students. The Guidebook proposes four key steps to build and implement a talent diversification strategy.

- The Department has partnered with TNTP since the beginning of the Teacher Diversification Pilot Program Grant. Through this partnership, TNTP has supported school districts as they design and implement teacher diversification strategies ranging from facilitating training around identity and bias to collaborating on updated recruitment and selection models. The Guidebook reflects the collective lessons that have emerged from the work of these districts, guided by national experts, research, and best practices.
- Refine and continue the educator diversification grant program: Since FY19, DESE has issued approximately \$6 million in grant funds to support local school district efforts to strengthen and diversify existing teacher recruitment and retention programs. The grant has provided financial support and incentives such as tuition for approved educator preparation programs, Massachusetts Tests of Educator Licensure (MTEL) preparation, signing bonuses, relocation assistance, and loan reimbursement. Additionally, the grant has supported the development of education-specific pathways for high school students. The Department will issue another RFP in FY22 which will have an enhanced focus on the high school pipeline.
- Continue programs to support diversification of the administrator and educator workforce and promote culturally responsive teaching to improve outcomes for students
  - Influence 100: Cohort II of the Influence 100 program launched in fall 2019 with 21 fellows. In total, the program currently supports 41 fellows in cohorts I and II.
  - InSPIRED Initiative: We launched the third cohort of the InSPIRED Initiative this fall. The program connects current educators with DESE to help cultivate, support, and retain a culturally responsive and diverse educator workforce in Massachusetts schools. The Initiative features two components:
    - The Statewide Affinity Network, which helps educators of color to network, engage in dialogue about their experiences, and explore professional development opportunities and/or action that makes for a more equitable experience in their schools.
- Pilot alternative assessments of educators' content knowledge, to evaluate possible alternatives to the Massachusetts Tests for Educator Licensure (MTEL). In October 2020, the Board approved a pilot (through June 2024) for alternative assessments for licensure, and there are currently three pilot alternative assessments underway. We have also allocated funding to support an evaluation of the pilot. The three approved alternatives are moving forward and are at different phases of implementation, including:
  - Communication and Literacy Skills (CLST) MTEL Alternative: In February 2021, DESE solicited bids from providers who offer assessments aligned to the CLST. As a result, we have selected two vendors that will offer seven different alternatives to the CLST. The Department will determine Massachusetts' cut scores for the assessments from the

selected providers. We expect to accept results from these new providers in the late spring.

- Subject Matter MTEL Alternative: We approved a pilot for Massachusetts-approved sponsoring organizations (educator preparation programs) to attest to educator preparation candidates' subject matter knowledge in alignment with the required subject matter MTEs. We released guidelines in February to support sponsoring organizations in this work.
- We also approved a pilot for an alternative to the [Performance Review Program for Initial Licensure \(PRPIL\)](#) that is focused on the assessment of subject matter knowledge. The Department released an RFR in February to solicit bids from providers who already offer, or who will design, rigorous alternative assessments aligned to the subject matter knowledge MTEs. We received proposals from two vendors that included several different alternative assessments to the subject matter MTEL. The Department expects to begin accepting results from approved providers in the late spring.

2. Staffing to Support Student Needs: Describe the extent to which the SEA has developed or will develop strategies and will support its LEAs in increasing student access to key support staff within school buildings, including school counselors, special education personnel, nurses, social workers, and psychologists (e.g. hiring additional personnel or freeing up these staff to focus on providing services to students).

See section immediately above for detailed explanation regarding increasing diversity and effectiveness in the educator workforce and increasing access to support students' needs.

## **G. Monitoring and Measuring Progress**

The Department recognizes that transparency on how ARP ESSER funds are used and their impact on the Nation's education system is a fundamental responsibility of Federal, State, and local government. In this section, SEAs will describe how they are building capacity at the SEA and LEA levels to ensure high-quality data collection and reporting and to safeguard funds for their intended purposes.

1. Capacity for Data Collection and Reporting: It is important for an SEA to continuously monitor progress and make adjustments to its strategies, as well as to support its LEAs in making adjustments to LEA strategies, based on impact. Describe how the SEA will ensure its capacity and the capacity of its LEAs to collect data on reporting requirements, including but not limited to the examples of reporting requirements described in the SEA's Grant Award Notification (listed in Appendix B). Describe the SEA's capacity and strategy to collect data from its LEAs (disaggregated by student group, where applicable), to the greatest extent practicable, including any steps the SEA will take to build its capacity in the future (which may include the use of ARP ESSER and other Federal COVID-19

pandemic funds at the SEA and LEA levels), on issues that may include the following:

- i. Student learning, including the academic impact of lost instructional time during the COVID-19 pandemic;
- ii. Opportunity to learn measures (e.g., chronic absenteeism; student engagement; use of exclusionary discipline; access to and participation in advanced coursework; access to technology, including educator access to professional development on the effective use of technology; access to high-quality educators; access to school counselors, social workers, nurses, and school psychologists; and results from student, parent, and/or educator surveys);
- iii. Fiscal data that is comparable across the State (e.g., per-pupil expenditures at the LEA and school levels);
- iv. Jobs created and retained (by position type);
- v. Participation in programs funded by ARP ESSER resources (e.g., summer and afterschool programs); and
- vi. Other reporting requirements reasonably required by the Secretary (please refer to Appendix B of this template; final requirements will be issued separately).
  - a. How the State is developing strategies and implementing public health protocols including, to the greatest extent practicable, policies and plans in line with the CDC guidance related to mitigating COVID-19 in schools;
  - b. Overall plans and policies related to State support for return to in-person instruction and maximizing in-person instruction time, including how funds will support a return to and maximize in-person instruction time, and advance equity and inclusivity in participation in in-person instruction;
  - c. Data on each school's mode of instruction (fully in-person, hybrid, and fully remote) and conditions;
  - d. SEA and LEA uses of funds to meet students' social, emotional, and academic needs, including through summer enrichment programming and other evidence-based interventions, and how they advance equity for underserved students;
  - e. SEA and LEA uses of funds to sustain and support access to early childhood education programs;
  - f. Impacts and outcomes (disaggregated by student subgroup) through use of ARP ESSER funding (e.g., quantitative and qualitative results of ARP ESSER funding, including on personnel, student learning, and budgeting at the school and district level);
  - g. Student data (disaggregated by student subgroup) related to how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected instruction and learning;
  - h. Requirements under the Federal Financial Accountability Transparency Act ("FFATA"); and

- i. Additional reporting requirements as may be necessary to ensure accountability and transparency of ARP ESSER funds.

#### *Capacity for Data Collection and Reporting*

The Department has capacity to ensure high-quality data collection and reporting strategies to better understand the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on instruction and student learning in the 2020-2021 school year. These data collection and reporting strategies are also utilized to safeguard ESSER funds for their intended purposes, and to understand how these funds have impacted instruction and student learning. The Department collects and reports data on the following requirements: student learning through MCAS, chronic absenteeism; student enrollment and attendance; advanced course completion; student discipline; licensed, experienced, and in-field educators; educators by job classification; student and educator surveys; per pupil expenditure at the LEA and school levels; monthly submission of the data requirements under the Federal Financial Accountability Transparency Act (“FFATA”) to FSRS; staffing by position; staff retention rates for superintendents, principals, and teachers; and other accountability factors. The majority of the above reports can be disaggregated by district, student, and staff group.

- DESE Data reports: <https://profiles.doe.mass.edu/>.
- Student Surveys: <https://www.doe.mass.edu/research/vocal/>
- Fiscal Data: LEA level <https://www.doe.mass.edu/finance/statistics/per-pupil-exp.html> ; school level <https://www.doe.mass.edu/finance/statistics/>

#### *COVID-19 Protocols and maximizing in-person learning*

The Department has developed strategies for implementing public health protocols that are in line with the CDC guidance related to mitigating COVID-19 in schools. These strategies include releasing regular guidance to LEAs, maintaining a COVID hotline reporting requirement for LEAs, and the assignment of “risk color” to each LEA based on MA Department of Public Health guidelines and CDC categories. Furthermore, the Department regularly monitors the primary mode of instruction at schools in each LEA through Student Learning Time data collections, instructional model surveys, and state-required return to in-person learning regulations. Data on LEA's instructional model can be found in Appendix A Table 1.

DESE Guidance: <https://www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/on-desktop.html>

#### *LEA Use of Funds*

LEAs will submit budget proposals in their ARP ESSER grant applications that are reviewed by the Department to ensure that funds will be utilized in a manner that meets the requirements of the grant. This process may include consideration of how districts are utilizing funds to maximize and equitable return to in-person instruction time, to meet students’ social, emotional, and academic needs, to sustain and support access to early childhood education programs, and other factors necessary to ensure accountability and transparency of ARP ESSER funds.

2. Monitoring and Internal Controls: Describe how the SEA will implement appropriate fiscal monitoring of and internal controls for the ARP ESSER funds (e.g., by updating the

SEA's plan for monitoring funds and internal controls under the CARES and CRRSA Acts; addressing potential sources of waste, fraud, and abuse; conducting random audits; or other tools). In this response, please describe the SEA's current capacity to monitor ARP ESSER; steps, if needed, to increase capacity; and any foreseeable gaps in capacity, including how the SEA will provide its LEAs with technical assistance in the anticipated areas of greatest need.

The Department will implement appropriate fiscal monitoring of the ARP ESSER funds by conducting an initial risk assessment to determine the LEAs at highest risk for misuse of funds. The LEAs that are found to be of highest risk will be required to submit financial reports and may be subject to other various monitoring tools, such as audits, etc. Because of the use of a risk assessment, the Department currently has the capacity to manage the monitoring process. This strategy allows for a manageable selected scope of reviews.

## Appendix A: School Operating Status and Instructional Mode Data Template

Indicate the date or time period represented by the following data.

Data represents Massachusetts' status as of Monday, May 10, 2021. All elementary and middle schools were required to offer full-time, in-person learning by April 5, 2021, and April 28, 2021, respectively. Furthermore, while all high schools were required to offer full-time, in-person learning by May 17, 2021, that data is not reflected in the tables below because the analysis was completed on May 10. Therefore, the number of students learning remotely is certainly much smaller as of the submission (June 7<sup>th</sup>) and review of this plan. It is worth noting that, for the remainder of this 2020-2021 school year, families in Massachusetts have had the option to have their students learn remotely.

**Table 1**

In the most recent time period available, how many schools in your State offered each mode of instruction or learning model described below? Each row should account for all schools in your State, so that, for each row, the sum of the numbers in the “offered to all students,” “offered to some students,” and “not offered” columns is equal to the number in the “all schools” column.

*Add or change rows as needed*

<b>Number of schools*</b>	<b>All schools</b>
Remote or online only	47
School buildings open with both remote/online and in-person instruction (hybrid)	108
School buildings open with full-time in-person instruction	1,624

\*Count only includes schools that serve Grades K-12 (excludes schools serving only PK)

<b>Number of schools serving K-5</b>	<b>All schools</b>
Remote or online only	0*
School buildings open with both remote/online and in-person instruction (hybrid)	0
School buildings open with full-time in-person instruction	1,153

<b>Number of schools serving 6-8</b>	<b>All schools</b>
--------------------------------------	--------------------

Remote or online only	0*
School buildings open with both remote/online and in-person instruction (hybrid)	0
School buildings open with full-time in-person instruction	688

<b>Number of schools serving 9-12</b>	<b>All schools</b>
Remote or online only	47
School buildings open with both remote/online and in-person instruction (hybrid)	108
School buildings open with full-time in-person instruction	247

\* Families in Massachusetts have had the option to learn remotely for the remainder of the school year, even if the predominant school model is in-person.

To the extent data are available, please complete the above table for 1) all schools in the State, and 2) separately for each instructional level (e.g., pre-kindergarten/elementary schools, middle schools, high schools).

## Table 2

In the most recent time period available, what was the enrollment and mode of instruction for the schools in your State?

*Add or change rows as needed*

<b>Number of students</b>	<b>Total enrollment</b>	<b>Remote or online only</b>	<b>Both remote/online and in-person instruction (hybrid)</b>	<b>Full-time in-person instruction</b>
Students from low-income families	334,713	113,816	24,002	196,895
White, not Hispanic	517,476	78,329	36,779	402,368
Black or African American, not Hispanic	86,214	29,920	8,321	47,973
Hispanic, of any race	206,341	78,289	15,076	112,976
Asian, not Hispanic	66,166	28,670	3,443	34,053

American Indian or Alaskan Native, not Hispanic	2,025	576	153	1,296
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, not Hispanic	794	247	62	485
Two or more races, not Hispanic	37,814	9,160	2,396	26,258
Race/Ethnicity information not available	775	90	9	676
English learners	84,254	28,004	2,879	51,371
Children with disabilities	175,543	39,467	13,743	122,333
Students experiencing homelessness	18,399	6,665	1,515	10,219
Children and youth in foster care	6,650	1,646	586	4,418
Migratory students	340	153	11	176

## Appendix B: Reporting Language Included in the Grant Award Notification (“GAN”)

As described in the Grant Award Notification (“GAN”), the SEA will comply with, and ensure that its LEAs comply with, all reporting requirements at such time and in such manner and containing such information as the Secretary may reasonably require, including on matters such as:

- How the State is developing strategies and implementing public health protocols including, to the greatest extent practicable, policies and plans in line with the CDC guidance related to mitigating COVID-19 in schools;
- Overall plans and policies related to State support for return to in-person instruction and maximizing in-person instruction time, including how funds will support a return to and maximize in-person instruction time, and advance equity and inclusivity in participation in in-person instruction;
- Data on each school’s mode of instruction (fully in-person, hybrid, and fully remote) and conditions;
- SEA and LEA uses of funds to meet students’ social, emotional, and academic needs, including through summer enrichment programming and other evidence-based interventions, and how they advance equity for underserved students;
- SEA and LEA uses of funds to sustain and support access to early childhood education programs;
- Impacts and outcomes (disaggregated by student subgroup) through use of ARP ESSER funding (e.g., quantitative and qualitative results of ARP ESSER funding, including on personnel, student learning, and budgeting at the school and district level);



- Student data (disaggregated by student subgroup) related to how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected instruction and learning;
- Requirements under the Federal Financial Accountability Transparency Act (“FFATA”); and
- Additional reporting requirements as may be necessary to ensure accountability and transparency of ARP ESSER funds.

## Appendix C: Assurances

By signing this document, the SEA assures all of the following:

- The SEA will conduct all its operations so that no person shall be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under the ARP ESSER program or activity based on race, color, national origin, which includes a person's limited English proficiency or English learner status and a person's actual or perceived shared ancestry or ethnic characteristics; sex; age; or disability. These non-discrimination obligations arise under Federal civil rights laws, including but not limited to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972, section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Age Discrimination Act of 1975. In addition, the SEA must comply with all regulations, guidelines, and standards issued by the Department under any of these statutes;
- The SEA will comply with all ARP Act and other ARP ESSER requirements and all requirements of its Grant Award Notification, including but not limited to:
  - Complying with the maintenance of effort provision in section 2004(a)(1) of the ARP Act, absent a waiver by the Secretary pursuant to section 2004(a)(2) of the ARP Act; and
  - Complying with the maintenance of equity provisions in section 2004(b) of the ARP Act, and ensuring its LEAs comply with the maintenance of equity provision in section 2004(c) of the ARP Act (please note that the Department will provide additional guidance on maintenance of equity shortly);
- The SEA will allocate ARP ESSER funds to LEAs in an expedited and timely manner and, to the extent practicable, not later than 60 days after the SEA receives ARP ESSER funds (i.e., 60 days from the date the SEA receives each portion of its ARP ESSER funds). An SEA that is not able to allocate such funds within 60 days because it is not practicable (e.g., because of pre-existing State board approval requirements) will provide an explanation to the Department within 30 days of receiving each portion of its ARP ESSER funds (submitted via email to your Program Officer at [State].OESE@ed.gov (e.g., Alabama.OESE@ed.gov)), including a description of specific actions the SEA is taking to provide ARP ESSER funds to LEAs in an expedited and timely manner and the SEA's expected timeline for doing so;
- The SEA will implement evidence-based interventions as required under section 2001(f) of the ARP Act and ensure its LEAs implement evidence-based interventions, as required by section 2001(e)(1) of the ARP Act;
- The SEA will address the disproportionate impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on underserved students (i.e., students from low-income families, students from racial or ethnic groups (e.g., identifying disparities and focusing on underserved student groups by race or ethnicity), gender (e.g., identifying disparities and focusing on underserved student groups by gender), English learners, children with disabilities, students experiencing homelessness, children and youth in foster care, and migratory students), as required under section 2001(f) of the ARP Act, and ensure its LEAs address the disproportionate impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on underserved students (i.e., students from low-income families, students from racial or ethnic groups, gender, English learners, children with disabilities, students experiencing homelessness, children and

youth in foster care, and migratory students), as required by section 2001(e)(1) of the ARP Act; and

- The SEA will provide to the Department: (1) the URL(s) where the public can readily find data on school operating status and (2) the URL(s) for the SEA and/or LEA websites where the public can find the LEA plans for a) the safe return to in-person instruction and continuity of services required under section 2001(i) of the ARP Act, and b) use of ARP ESSER funds. SEAs should consider ensuring a standardized URL format in all cases (e.g., xxx.gov/COVIDplan).

## Appendix D

OMB Control No. 1894-0005 (Exp. 06/30/2023)

### NOTICE TO ALL APPLICANTS

The purpose of this enclosure is to inform you about a new provision in the Department of Education's General Education Provisions Act ("GEPA") that applies to applicants for new grant awards under Department programs. This provision is Section 427 of GEPA, enacted as part of the Improving America's Schools Act of 1994 (Public Law (P.L.) 103-382).

#### **To Whom Does This Provision Apply?**

Section 427 of GEPA affects applicants for new grant awards under this program. **ALL APPLICANTS FOR NEW AWARDS MUST INCLUDE INFORMATION IN THEIR APPLICATIONS TO ADDRESS THIS NEW PROVISION IN ORDER TO RECEIVE FUNDING UNDER THIS PROGRAM.**

(If this program is a State-formula grant program, a State needs to provide this description only for projects or activities that it carries out with funds reserved for State-level uses. In addition, local school districts or other eligible applicants that apply to the State for funding need to provide this description in their applications to the State for funding. The State would be responsible for ensuring that the school district or other local entity has submitted a sufficient section 427 statement as described below.)

#### **What Does This Provision Require?**

Section 427 requires each applicant for funds (other than an individual person) to include in

its application a description of the steps the applicant proposes to take to ensure equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally-assisted program for students, teachers, and other program beneficiaries with special needs. This provision allows applicants discretion in developing the required description. The statute highlights six types of barriers that can impede equitable access or participation: gender, race, national origin, color, disability, or age. Based on local circumstances, you should determine whether these or other barriers may prevent your students, teachers, etc. from such access to, or participation in, the Federally-funded project or activity. The description in your application of steps to be taken to overcome these barriers need not be lengthy; you may provide a clear and succinct description of how you plan to address those barriers that are applicable to your circumstances. In addition, the information may be provided in a single narrative, or, if appropriate, may be discussed in connection with related topics in the application.

Section 427 is not intended to duplicate the requirements of civil rights statutes, but rather to ensure that, in designing their projects, applicants for Federal funds address equity concerns that may affect the ability of certain potential beneficiaries to fully participate in the project and to achieve high standards. Consistent with program requirements and its approved application, an applicant may use the Federal funds awarded to it to eliminate barriers it identifies.

## **What are Examples of How an Applicant Might Satisfy the Requirement of This Provision?**

The following examples may help illustrate how an applicant may comply with Section 427.

- (1) An applicant that proposes to carry out an adult literacy project serving, among others, adults with limited English proficiency, might describe in its application how it intends to distribute a brochure about the proposed project to such potential participants in their native language.
- (2) An applicant that proposes to develop instructional materials for classroom use might describe how it will make the materials available on audio tape or in braille for students who are blind.
- (3) An applicant that proposes to carry out a model science program for secondary students and is concerned that girls may be less likely than boys to enroll in the course, might indicate how it intends to conduct "outreach" efforts to girls, to encourage their enrollment.
- (4) An applicant that proposes a project to increase school safety might describe the special efforts it will take to address concerns of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender students, and efforts to reach out to and involve the families of LGBT students.

We recognize that many applicants may already be implementing effective steps to ensure equity of access and participation in their grant programs, and we appreciate your cooperation in responding to the requirements of this provision.

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education adheres to Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA). In carrying out its educational mission, the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) will ensure to the fullest extent possible equitable access to, participation in, and appropriate educational opportunities for individuals served. Federally funded activities, programs, and services will be accessible to all teachers, students and program beneficiaries. DESE ensures equal access and participation to all persons regardless of their race, color, ethnicity, religion, national origin, age, citizenship status, disability, gender or sexual orientation in its education programs, services, and/or activities.

For state-level activities as well as all other activities supported by federal assistance through our grant applications for LEAs, DESE will fully enforce all federal and state laws and regulations designed to ensure equitable access to all program beneficiaries and overcome barriers to equitable participation. Steps taken to ensure equitable access may include, but are not limited to;

- collecting information on potential special accommodation needs (e.g., assistive technology, wheelchair access, translation) as a standard component of meeting/conference registrations;
- printing materials in multiple languages;
- offering multi-lingual services for participants and others as needed and appropriate;
- responsiveness to cultural differences;
- fostering a positive school climate through restorative practices;
- conducting outreach efforts and target marketing to those not likely to participate;

- providing assistive technology devices to translate/make accessible grant and program materials for participants requiring such accommodations;
- using technology to convey content of program materials;
- using materials that include strategies for addressing the needs of all participants;
- pre-program gender and cultural awareness training for participants;
- development and/or acquisition and dissemination of culturally relevant and sensitive curriculum and informational materials; and
- use of transportation services that include accommodations for individuals with disabilities.

Further, DESE will hold LEAs accountable for ensuring equal access and providing reasonable and appropriate accommodations to meet the needs of a diverse group of students, staff, community members and other participants. As part of the ARP ESSER LEA grant application, districts are required to include a description of how they are taking education equity into account when planning for expending its ARP ESSER funds.

### **Estimated Burden Statement for GEPA Requirements**

**According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless such collection displays a valid OMB control number. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 3 hours per response, including time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. The obligation to respond to this collection is required to obtain or retain benefit (Public Law 103-382). Send comments regarding the burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to the U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20210-4537 or email [ICDocketMgr@ed.gov](mailto:ICDocketMgr@ed.gov) and reference the OMB Control Number 1894-0005.**