

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



OMB Number: 1810-0754
Expiration Date: October 31, 2021

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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).

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 (e.g., S425U2100XX): S425U210037

SEA Contact: Alex Charles

Telephone: 984-236-2796

Email address: alex.charles@dpi.nc.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.

Chief State School Officer or Authorized Representative (Printed Name)

Alex Charles

Signature of Authorized SEA Representative

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alex Charles', written over a light blue grid background.

Date:

06/16/2023

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.

The North Carolina State Board of Education (SBE) and NC Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI), in consultation with the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS), developed *Lighting Our Way Forward: North Carolina's Guidebook for Reopening Public Schools*¹ in response to the COVID-19 public health crisis. The purpose of this guidance document was to support NC public schools and communities in developing their plans and strategies for reopening schools in the 2020-2021 school year. *Lighting Our Way Forward: NC's Guidebook for Reopening Public Schools* provides considerations, recommendations, and best practices to ensure a safe and successful 2020-2021 school year.

Except for requirements designated by executive orders issued by the Governor's Office, North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, North Carolina General Statutes, and North Carolina State Board of Education Policy, the guidance and recommendations provided in the *Lighting Our Way Forward* were not mandated. Public School Units (PSUs) have the authority and the flexibility to meet their local needs and be responsive to their communities. As impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic evolve, the SBE and NCDPI will continue to provide updated guidance and recommendations to PSUs and schools on navigating the academic, social, and emotional effects on students and employees.

Per North Carolina state law² (SL2020-3), each PSU was required to develop a Remote Instruction Plan³ (Plan) for the 2020-2021 school year and submit its Plan to the SBE no later than July 20, 2020. The Plan was to provide a framework for delivering remote instruction to all students within a PSU. Utilizing these frameworks PSUs in North Carolina quickly prepared for and shifted to one of three phases of learning throughout the state, Plan A (minimal physical distancing), Plan B (moderate physical distancing), or Plan C (remote learning). To effectively ensure student access to learning opportunities PSUs developed their Plan and where needed delivered computers and devices to students and/or provided mobile WiFi for homes, communities, or via school buses. Additionally, PSUs, regardless of plan, focused on the social and emotional well-being for all students. PSUs provided mental health support and counseling,

¹ <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1z5Mp2XzOOPkBYN4YvROz4YOyNIF2UoWq9EZfrjvN4x8/edit#heading=h.34h588posesy>

² <https://www.ncleg.gov/Sessions/2019/Bills/Senate/PDF/S704v6.pdf>

³ <https://www.dpi.nc.gov/districts-schools/districts-schools-support/digital-teaching-and-learning/remote-instruction-plan>

intentional SEL activities, and family learning sessions. NCDPI supported PSUs by developing SEL resources including an [SEL Crisis Response website](#)⁴.

Operating under federal waivers approved by the US Department of Agriculture, NC transitioned school-based nutrition programs to community-based programs. The flexibility not only reduced the administrative burden on PSUs but increased access to meals for all children in need. On average, NC's School Nutrition Programs provided 250,000 meals per day for students/children across the state.

Despite the large number of PSUs and students engaged in remote learning, less than 1% of students were unaccounted for in NC's public schools⁵.

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.

The NC Department of Public Instruction, through the Office of Learning Recovery and Acceleration (OLR), will conduct a systematic assessment of the various initiatives undertaken throughout the state and funded through ESSER. The ESSER allocations have provided North Carolina and states throughout the nation with an opportunity to directly address the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic with targeted interventions. In looking broadly at the impact of the pandemic, we recognize that the impact extends beyond academic learning recovery and includes the social and emotional well-being of children throughout our state. PSU and state-level initiatives seek to address not only the broad array of impacts, but the disproportionate nature of the impact on students. As NCDPI identifies "promising practices" in our state, we will first seek to scale and replicate those programs in a proof-of-concept fashion. With additional testing and analysis, we intend to identify programs and practices with the greatest potential and impact and subsequently highlight those programs on our searchable dashboard of Promising Practices in North Carolina. As the Office of Learning Recovery and Acceleration identifies programs and practices for inclusion on our dashboard, we will encourage and support LEAs as they submit their programs to the Department's Safer Schools and Campuses Best Practices Clearinghouse.

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.

⁴ <https://sites.google.com/dpi.nc.gov/ncdpiiselremotlearning/home>

⁵ <https://www.ncleg.gov/documents/sites/committees/JLEOC/Committee%20Meetings/2019-2020%20Committee%20Meetings/December%201,%202020/Remote%20Teaching%20and%20Learning.pdf>

The Office of Learning Recovery is working with units inside NCDPI and external stakeholders to determine the top issues currently facing students and schools across North Carolina. Based on our initial work, we have identified three primary issues, some of which are long-standing but exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. These top issues include:

1. Academic recovery in reading and math⁶
2. Addressing the social, emotional health and well-being of children throughout the state
3. Accountability reform

As a state North Carolina, through the State Board of Education and Superintendent of Public Instruction, have developed the following strategic goals and focus areas:

Strategic Goals

1. Eliminate opportunity gaps by 2025
 - a. Literacy
 - b. Student Services
2. Improve school and district performance by 2025
 - a. Accountability Reform
3. Increase educator preparedness to meet the needs of every student by 2025
 - a. Human Capital

Guided by our strategic goals and focus areas North Carolina will address our top issues as they are currently identified. Additional issues will be included and addressed as they are identified.

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

⁶ https://simbli.eboardsolutions.com/SB_Meetings/ViewMeeting.aspx?S=10399&MID=8681

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,⁷ chronic absenteeism, student engagement, and social-emotional well-being.

i. Students from low-income families,

Students from low-income families were disproportionately impacted by COVID-19, including access to high quality remote learning due to a lack of “last mile” broadband access. As a result, the two highest priorities are:

- Recovery from lost instructional time
- Addressing the social-emotional needs due to social isolation.

ii. Students from each racial or ethnic group (e.g., identifying disparities and focusing on underserved student groups by race or ethnicity),

Students from racial and ethnic groups in North Carolina have historically underperformed their white peers. These academic opportunity gaps have only widened due to the pandemic. As a result, the two highest priorities are:

- Recovery from lost instructional time
- Academic acceleration in math and reading

iii. Gender (e.g., identifying disparities and focusing on underserved student groups by gender),

The Office of Learning Recovery is currently working with the Accountability Division at NCDPI to determine the specific impact on student groups by gender. All students throughout North Carolina have been negatively impacted by COVID-19 and thus the two highest priorities for underserved student groups by gender are:

- Addressing the social-emotional needs due to social isolation
- Recovery from lost instructional time

iv. English learners,

⁷ 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.

Emerging data suggests greater academic losses for English language learners. Additionally, initial data suggests English language learners are returning to live instruction at greater percentages than all students as a whole. Based on this initial data, the three highest priorities for English language learners are:

- Recovery from lost instructional time
- Acceleration in core academic areas
- **Acceleration in English Language proficiency development**

v. Children with disabilities (including infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities eligible under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (“IDEA”)),

Initial data suggest children with disabilities have seen decreasing rates of proficiency in mathematics and since the resumption of in-person learning, have returned to live instruction at rates greater than the population as a whole. At this time, the two highest priorities for children with disabilities are:

- Academic recovery and acceleration in math
- Addressing the social-emotional needs due to social isolation

vi. Students experiencing homelessness,

Students experiencing homelessness were disproportionately impacted by COVID-19, the impact included a lack of access to high quality remote learning due to limited broadband access. Additionally, these students experienced increased social isolation due remote instruction, pandemic quarantine, and limited access to their classmates and teachers. As a result, the two highest priorities are:

- Recovery from lost instructional time
- Addressing the social-emotional needs due to social isolation.

vii. Children and youth in foster care,

Like many students throughout North Carolina were subject to primarily remote-based instruction for the majority of the academic year. Additionally, these students experienced the same levels of social isolation as their peers. As a result, the two highest priorities for children and youth in foster care are:

- Recovery from lost instructional time

- Addressing the social-emotional needs due to social isolation

viii. Migratory students, and

Migratory students suffered from disruptions in the academic year, losing instructional time, and managing the social emotional impacts of isolation. Emerging data suggests migratory students have returned to in-person learning at rates greater than the population as a whole. The two highest priorities for migratory students are:

- Recovery from lost instructional time
- Addressing the social-emotional needs due to social isolation

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).

North Carolina designates “at-risk” in its general statutes⁸. Current estimates suggest roughly 23% of the total population of students fall into the “at risk” category. These students are at-risk of academic failure, not successfully progressing, or in danger of not graduating. As a result, the three highest priorities for these students are:

- Recovery from lost instructional time
- Acceleration in core academic areas
- Addressing the social-emotional needs due to social isolation

Table A1.

Data Sources are derived from the following statewide assessment administered: Reading – 3rd Grade Beginning of Year, English II, Math I and Math III

Student group	Highest priority needs
Students from low-income families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SEL • Fall Tested NC Math 1 – 17 percentage point decrease in proficiency • Fall Tested NC Math 3 – 11 percentage point decrease in proficiency • Attendance

⁸ General Statue that defines at risk students:

https://www.ncleg.net/enactedlegislation/statutes/html/bysection/chapter_115c/gs_115c-105.41.html

Student group	Highest priority needs	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discipline data • Youth Risk Behavior Survey⁹ 	
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)	American Indian	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SEL • Fall Tested NC Math 1 – 22 percentage point decrease in proficiency • Fall Tested NC Math 3 – 12 percentage point decrease in proficiency • Fall Tested English II – 11 percentage point decrease in proficiency • Attendance • Discipline data • Youth Risk Behavior Survey
	Asian	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SEL • Fall Tested NC Math 1 – 15 percentage point decrease in proficiency • Fall Tested NC Math 3 – 7 percentage point decrease in proficiency • Attendance • Discipline Data • Youth Risk Behavior Survey
	Black	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SEL • Fall Tested NC Math 1 – 16 percentage point decrease in proficiency • Fall Tested NC Math 3 – 10 percentage point decrease in proficiency • Attendance • Discipline Data • Youth Risk Behavior Survey
	Hispanic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SEL • Fall Tested NC Math 1 – 20 percentage point decrease in proficiency • Fall Tested NC Math 3 – 12 percentage point decrease in proficiency • Attendance • Discipline Data • Youth Risk Behavior Survey
	Two or More Races	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SEL • Fall Tested NC Math 1 – 18 percentage point decrease in proficiency

⁹ Youth Behavior Risk Survey Link: <https://sites.google.com/dpi.nc.gov/nchealthyschools/nc-healthy-schools-data/yrbs>

Student group	Highest priority needs	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fall Tested NC Math 3 – 13 percentage point decrease in proficiency • Attendance • Discipline Data • Youth Risk Behavior Survey
Students by gender – please add a row for each gender (e.g., identifying disparities and focusing on underserved student groups by gender)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SEL • Attendance • Academic Data is forthcoming • Discipline Data • Youth Risk Behavior Survey 	
English learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SEL • ACCESS Assessment • Fall Tested NC Math 1 – 10 percentage point decrease in proficiency • Fall Tested NC Math 3 – 8 percentage point decrease in proficiency • Attendance • Discipline Data • Youth Risk Behavior Survey 	
Children with disabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SEL • Fall Tested NC Math 1 – 7 percentage point decrease in proficiency (Include EXTEND Assessment) • Fall Tested NC Math 3 – 6 percentage point decrease in proficiency (Include EXTEND Assessment) • Attendance • Discipline Data • Youth Risk Behavior Survey 	
Students experiencing homelessness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SEL • Attendance • Academic Data is forthcoming • Discipline Data • Youth Risk Behavior Survey 	
Children and youth in foster care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SEL • Attendance • Academic Data is forthcoming • Discipline Data • Youth Risk Behavior Survey 	
Migratory students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SEL • Attendance • Academic Data is forthcoming • Discipline Data • Youth Risk Behavior Survey 	

Student group	Highest priority needs
<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>Incarcerated Students</p>	<p>Students identified as “<u>at-risk</u>” for academic failure and who are not successfully progressing toward grade promotion and graduation, beginning in kindergarten. 2021 estimates provided by PSUs indicated roughly 23% of students in North Carolina were “at-risk”.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SEL • Attendance • Academic Data is forthcoming • Discipline Data • Youth Risk Behavior Survey

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.

To assist PSUs in identifying the extent of the impact of COVID-19 on student learning and wellbeing, NCDPI is currently working with a third-party contractor who will provide an impact analysis of COVID-19 on public school units, students and families of the State (“Impact Analysis”). The Impact Analysis will include a baseline analysis that leverages analytics provided as part of the current contract for district/school/teacher value-added reporting and student projections. The baseline analysis will assess student performance and learning loss by comparing students’ pre-pandemic expected performance with their post pandemic actual performance in the 2020-21 school year. More specifically, the baseline analysis uses student projections to the 2020-21 school year, which represents their pre-pandemic expected performance based on the average schooling experience, and then compares these projections to students’ actual performance on the 2020-21 statewide assessments. A negative difference indicates that students did not perform as expected based on their pre-pandemic learning trajectories, and this information will be aggregated by subject, grade, district, school and/or different student groups to identify whether certain student groups experienced bigger changes in expected performance than other student groups. The Impact Analysis will incorporate additional

data variables to investigate student performance and learning loss by geographic region, urbanicity and education delivery based on what is captured and provided by the State (in person, virtual, device access, internet connectivity, etc.). The Impact Analysis will also analyze group-level achievement trends over time to assess COVID's impact on student learning. More specifically, student-level reports will be updated so that it is easier for educators to see how students' trajectories changed since COVID-19 disrupted student learning and how students' recovery has progressed over time in future years. There will also be reports that summarize information about the extent to which students exceed or fall short of their pre-pandemic expectations and the proportion of students in different categories of learning loss. The SBE and NCDPI will invest in a competency-based education platform to support accountability reform, track student performance over time and develop remediation and acceleration strategies for students. The implemented tool must address the individual needs of each learner and be capable of presenting a path towards gap-closure or recovery. Additionally, the tool must provide sufficient data and informational awareness for PSUs and NCDPI to satisfy reporting requirements.

The North Carolina General Assembly has appropriated \$9,000,000 of the state reserve to fulfill this requirement in the following manner:

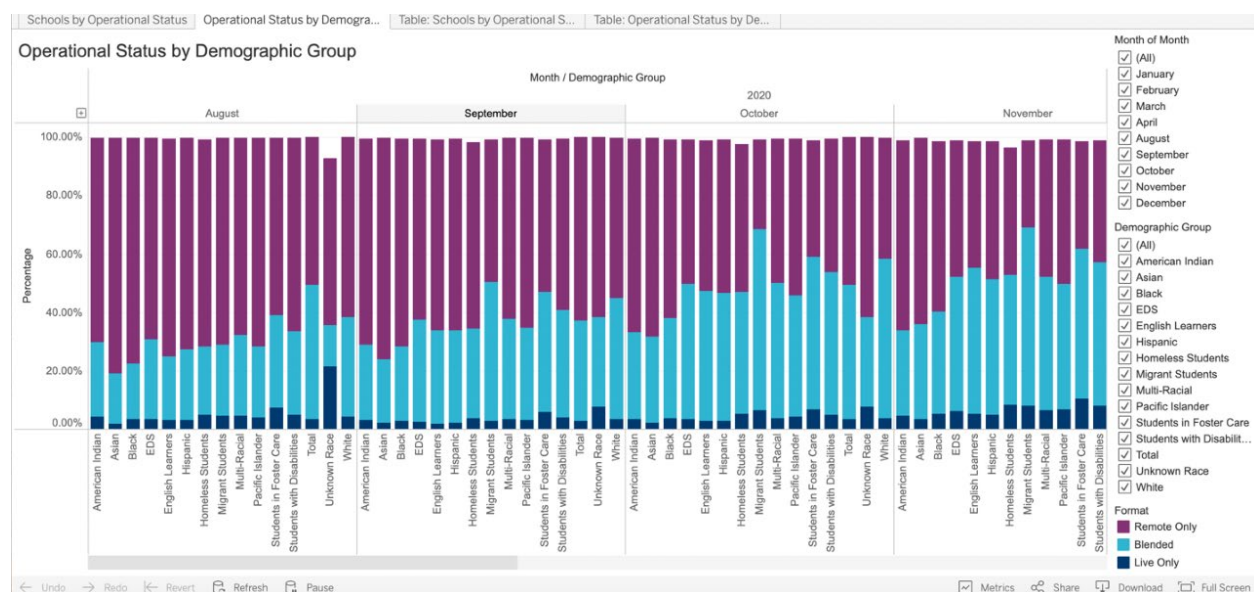
(\$9,000,000 to contract with a third-party entity for a period of up to three years for a new software platform, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, to evaluate and improve student learning and performance and to provide students with an individualized roadmap for improving learning and performance.

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.
 - 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.

- 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 June 2021, NCDPI provides disaggregated student enrollment data for each mode of instruction on its website. This data dates back to August 2020 and will be updated on a monthly basis until all PSUs return to full-time, in-person instruction or June 21, 2022, whichever date comes later.



Based on existing NC law, enacted on March 11, 2021, PSUs in North Carolina are required to offer in-person instruction.

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;

To support PSUs in safely returning to in-person instruction and sustaining safe operation, the NCDPI developed *Lighting Our Way Forward: North Carolina’s Guidebook for Reopening Public Schools*¹⁰. This guide is regularly updated as changes are made to the *Strong Schools NC Public Health Toolkit*¹¹. The guide includes each of the following mitigation strategies:

1. Universal and correct wearing of masks (p.29)
2. Physical Distancing (p.24)
3. Handwashing and respiratory etiquette (p.32)
4. Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation (p.63)
5. Contact tracing (Strong Schools NC Toolkit)
6. Diagnostic and screening testing (p.35; Strong Schools NC Toolkit)
7. Appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to the health and safety policies (p.167)

- 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;

North Carolina law¹² enacted on May 4, 2020 required all PSUs to develop Remote Instruction Plans¹³ with the intended purpose of providing a detailed framework for quality remote learning.

North Carolina law¹⁴ enacted on March 11, 2021 required all PSUs to provide access to in-person learning for all students.

- 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 North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services provides regular and ongoing updates to the NC State Board of Education.

¹⁰ <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1z5Mp2XzOOPkBYN4YvROz4YOyNIF2UoWq9EZfrjvN4x8/edit#heading=h.e4zxnmaabnlya>

¹¹ <https://covid19.ncdhhs.gov/media/164/open>

¹² <https://www.ncleg.gov/Sessions/2019/Bills/Senate/PDF/S704v6.pdf>

¹³ <https://www.dpi.nc.gov/districts-schools/districts-schools-support/digital-teaching-and-learning/remote-instruction-plan>

¹⁴ <https://www.ncleg.gov/Sessions/2021/Bills/Senate/PDF/S220v4.pdf>

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

Due to the ongoing and evolving nature of the COVID-19 pandemic, NCDPI will continue provide guidance, professional learning and technical assistance to PSUs as needed.

- 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),¹⁵ 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.

Each PSU must complete an assurance statement in their ARP ESSER application that they 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

¹⁵ 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.

<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. The application and the appropriate notification must be completed no later than September 30, 2021. Also, PSUs must identify adopted policies and a description of any such policies; 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; periodically review the PSU plan, no less frequently than every six months for the duration of the ARP ESSER grant period (i.e., through September 30, 2023),¹⁶ and revises as appropriate after seeking public input; and information about LEA implementation, to the greatest extent practicable, of each element of the most up-to-date CDC guidance listed in the narrative from B1.

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 are 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.

¹⁶ 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.

NCDPI developed and presented the ARP ESSER draft template to the North Carolina State Board of Education, the body which represents North Carolina public education stakeholders. The draft template was posted for public comment for 30 days prior to the submission to the US Department of Education. Over the course of the 30-day period, we received 230 comments categorized as follows with the relative percentages of each:

1. Technical Correction (<1%)
2. Support (<1%)
3. Question (<1%)
4. Rejection of Funding (1%)
5. Third Party Solicitation (1%)
6. Social Emotional Learning (1.7%)
7. General Commentary (6.5%)
8. Critical Race Theory (88%)*

*It is important to note that Critical Race Theory is not mentioned in the ARP ESSER State Plan Template.

Those comments were reviewed and taken into consideration prior to the presentation of the final draft version of the ARP ESSER plan to the NC State Board of Education. The posting of draft plan to the NCDPI website was advertised via press release. In addition to the public posting of the plan, the opportunity to comment on the plan was offered to the following groups the ESSA - required Committee of Practitioners (COP) which contains a wide range of stakeholders from across the state (parents, teachers, school-, and district-level administrators), NC LEA Federal Programs Directors, NC Superintendents, the NC Accountability Advisory Group, and State Advisory Council on American Indian Education.

A series of stakeholder engagement sessions were held in July and August to gather insights and suggestions to ensure the needs of all students were being met. Most of the suggestions will be able to be addressed during the implementation phase. Information from each of stakeholder listening sessions is provided by group:

- **Students experiencing homelessness** [Session attendees were in agreement with the priorities set forth in the plan. The group is working to create and vet the ARP Homeless Plan for ARP HCY-I and II which will provide much needed support these students.]
- **Students in foster care** [Session attendees highlight SEL support as the top priority. During implementation, a focus must be on intentionally ensuring these students have access to credit recovery and credit by demonstrated mastery. There was also a request to explore data systems as it relates DHHS and County DSS agencies to allow for more concise tracking.]

- **Incarcerated students** [Session attendees highlighted their disappointment with students from this category not receiving ESSER I and II as they only receive Title I, D. Consultation with NC State Board of Education will ensue to determine if unbudgeted SEA reserve funds can be used to ensure students within this population have a share of the funds. Stakeholders suggested support for technology, professional development for staff for academic and social-emotional support, remediation, competency-based assessment tool, and additional personnel to support the socio-emotional well-being of students.]
- **Exceptional Children** [This stakeholder group raised the fact that some of our EC students who are served on the EXTENDED Curriculum often cannot access academic or SEL content because of their cognitive abilities. We will need to ensure that remediation and acceleration support offered from the state level accommodates EC children with varying needs. The final point raised was about the focus on literacy and not on math. The group recommends exploring the use of Math Foundations.]
- **English Language Learners** [This group suggested the addition of a priority area—Acceleration in English Language Development and the use of the ACCESS assessment be paired with other statewide assessment to measure progress. Additionally, there should be consideration in the development of credit recovery and credit by demonstrated mastery options. They recommended a series of best practices such as clear barrier methods (sneeze guards, clear masks) so that students can see mouth formation during language instruction, high dosage tutoring, and increasing the number of staff supporting students.]
- **Migratory Students** [Those supporting Migrant Education suggested the addition of resources for transportation, tutoring, SEL modules, internet connectivity, and additional compensation to staff. Additionally, it was suggested that support be provided for older migratory students in the area of college applications and FAFSA completion as well as job and life-skill development for those in the Out-of-School Youth (OSY) category.]
- **Students** (NC Superintendent’s Advisory Council Representative) [The student representative highlighted the need to have SEL support and an adequate number of teachers for face-to-face and online instruction so that both students and teachers feel supported.]
- **Civil Rights: NC National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)** [The representative for the NC NAACP suggested resources and supports be provided to parents to assist students’ learning and socio-emotional recovery, support for students and staff who must quarantine due to Covid-19, and hiring additional staff (e.g., teachers, social workers, psychologists, school nurses, and community liaisons). The organization provided a written resolution that outlined a series of suggestions including ensuring all students would be provided with digital tools (e.g., devices and hotspots for broadband connectivity) in the event virtual learning becomes necessary in the future.]

- **Teacher Advocacy Group: North Carolina Association for Educators (NCAE)** [The stakeholders in this session were in support of focusing on academic recovery due to loss instructional time and increased support for mental health services. They strongly suggested gathering additional feedback during the implementation phase of ARP ESSER. They provided a model of how sessions can be conducted.]

Information from the sessions is included as an attachment and has been used to update this plan. Some suggestions will be used in the development of a wider Learning Recovery Plan mentioned below. Going forward, additional sessions will be held to garner information about ARP implementation progress from a wider audience during a series of Town Hall meetings as recommend by NCAE and NAACP.

Additionally, the development of a formal ARP ESSER Advisory Group ¹⁷was recommended and approved by the NC State Board of Education on November 11, 2021. The ARP ESSER Advisory Group will convene on regular intervals and provide suggestions to improve to the implementation and further development of the ARP ESSER State Plan. Members will be appointed and will represent each of the aforementioned stakeholder groups.

ARP Advisory Committee Membership:

Stakeholders that include advocates/stakeholders for children with disabilities, English learners, homeless children, children in foster care, migratory children, incarcerated children, or other underserved children (x9):

- Dr. Sheronda Fleming, Director, North Carolina Center for Afterschool Programs,
 - Term: 3 years
- John L. S. Simpkins, JD LLM, President, MDC (Manpower Development Corporation)
 - Term: 2 years
- Ginny Fogg, Supervising Attorney of the Education Team, Disability Rights of NC
 - Term: 3 years
- Crystal M. Grant, JD, MSW, Clinical Professor of Law, Director, Duke Children’s Law Clinic
 - Term: 2 years
- Lisa E. Phillips, State Coordinator for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth, The SERVE Center at the University of North Carolina Greensboro
 - Term: 3 years
- Charlotte ‘Nadja’ Trez, Executive Director of Learning and Language Acquisition, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools
 - Term: 2 years
- Sara E. Bigley, State Coordinator State Education Agency (SEA) Foster Care Point of Contact (POC)
 - Term: 3 years
- LuAnne Llewellyn, Federal Program Director, Surry County Schools

¹⁷ https://simbli.eboardsolutions.com/SB_Meetings/ViewMeeting.aspx?S=10399&MID=9855

- Term: 3 years
- Adam R. Johnson, Director of Education, NC Juvenile Justice Schools
 - Term: 2 years

Teachers selected from traditional public schools, charter schools, or career and technical educators (x4):

- Maureen Stover, M. A., Ed., Cumberland International Early College High School, Teacher of the Year 2020
 - Term: 2 years
- Eugenia M. Floyd, Mary Scroggs Elementary School in Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools, Teacher of the Year 2021
 - Term: 3 years
- Jenny L. Watson, CFCS, CFLE, Family and Consumer Sciences Teacher & FCCLA Advisor, Southeast Middle School
 - Term: 2 years
- Margaret McLaughlin-Howard, Kindergarten Teacher, Healthy Start Academy
 - Term: 3 years

Principals or other school leaders (x2):

- Dr. Denise A. Tillery, Principal, Heritage Elementary School, Wake County Public School System
 - Term: 2 years
- Dr. Michelle D. White, Principal, Chowan Middle School, Edenton-Chowan Schools Principal of the Year
 - Term: 3 years

Superintendents (x2):

- Dr. Andrew G. Houlihan, Ed.D., Superintendent, Union County Schools
 - Term: 2 years
- Dr. Valerie Bridges, Ed.D., Superintendent, Edgecombe County Schools
 - Term: 3 years

Parents, including one parent of a child with disabilities (x4):

- Jeremy C. Wallace, Parent, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools
 - Term: 2 Years
- Tenita Philyaw-Rogers, Parent, Durham Public Schools
 - Term: 2 years
- Lucia Riley, Parent, Wake County Public School System
 - Term: 3 years
- David L. N. Dean, Parent, Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools
 - Term: 3 years

Students (x2):

- Catherine Oxendine, President, North Carolina Association of Student Councils (NCASC)
 - Term: 2 years
- Simran Fitzpatrick, Founder, President, Triangle Writers Studio
 - Term: 2 years

Members of local school boards (x2):

- Brenda Stephens, Local Board Advisor to the North Carolina School Board Association (NCSBA)
 - Term: 3 years
- Lucy M. Edwards, Northampton County Board of Education
 - Term: 2 years

Members from Civil Rights and educational unions or organizations (x4):

- Tamika Walker Kelly, President of NCAE
 - Term: 2 years
- Amy E. Marshall, Executive Director, President Founder, K-12 Educator & College Adjunct, Carolina Teachers Alliance
 - Term: 2 years
- Billy S. Medlin, Executive Director, Professional Educators of North Carolina (PENC)
 - Term: 3 years
- Dr. Terrance Ruth, M.S., Ph.D., NC NAACP
 - Term: 3 years

Representative of the Charter Schools Advisory Board (x1):

- Dr. Terry Stoops, Ph.D., Director of the Center for Effective Education, John Locke Foundation
 - Term: 2 years

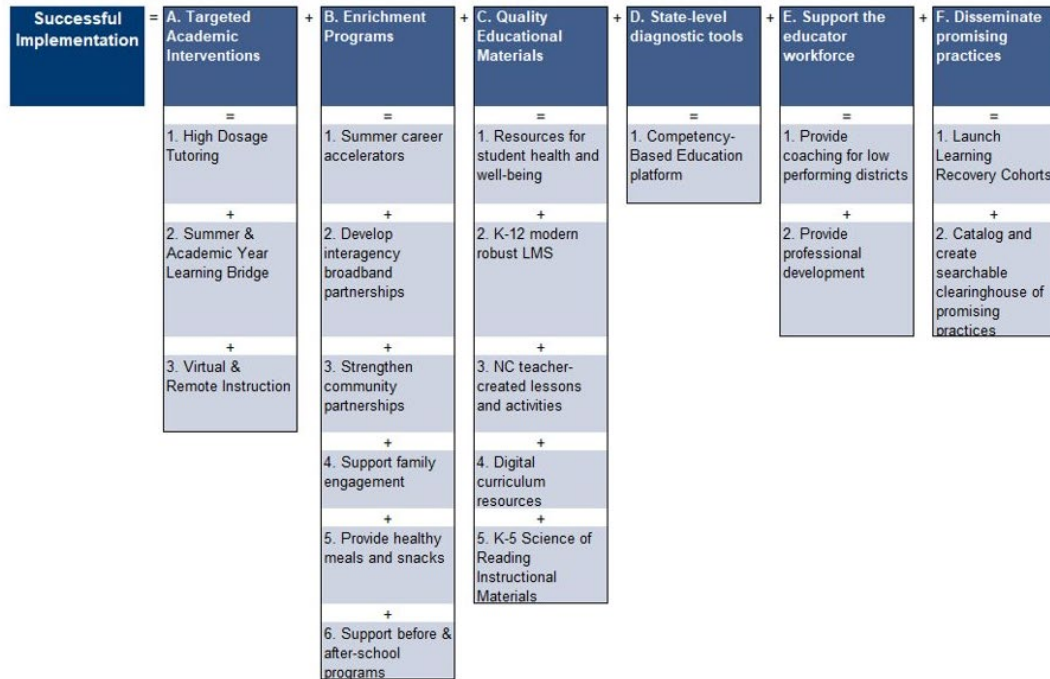
Charter school leaders (x2):

- Stephen Gay, Executive Director, Bradford Preparatory School
 - Term: 3 years
- Sandeep Aggarwal, Assistant Director and Dean of Business, Technology, and Cultural Affairs, Sallie B. Howard School
 - Term: 2 years

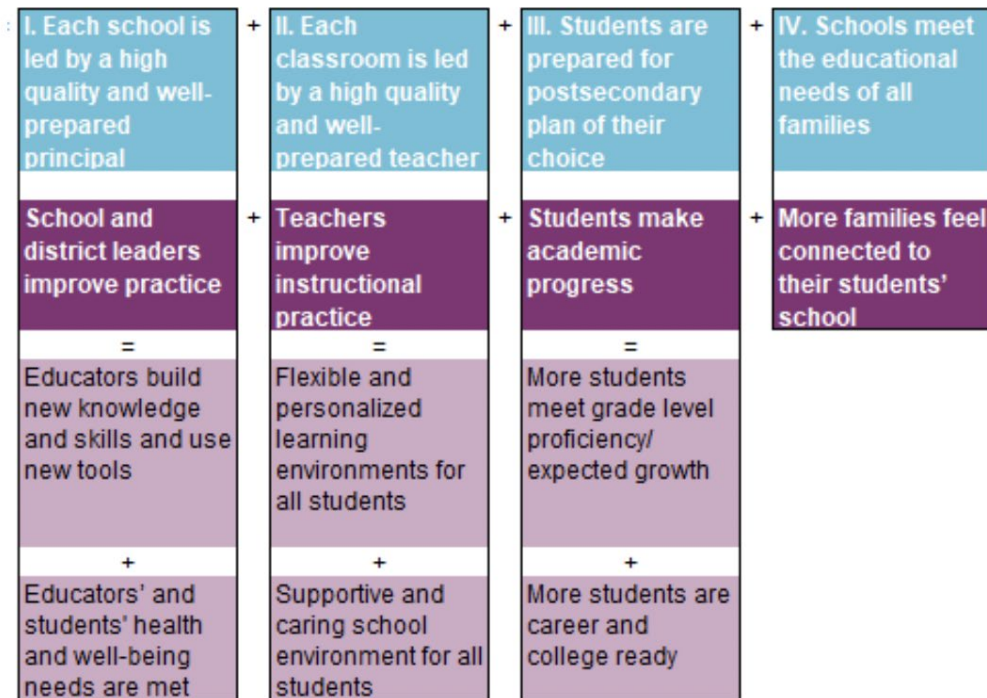
Member of the State Advisory Council on Indian Education (SAICE) (x1):

- Tina Lance, Sappony Tribe, Sappony Youth Camp, Homecoming and Annual Sappony Stew, Sappony Youth with Financial Aid for Higher Education

OLR Logic Model: Major Strategies



OLR Logic Model: Outcomes



Additionally, the Office of Learning Recovery hired an ARP Program Administrator to serve as an agency resource on planning for, and implementing, ARP-funded interventions. The ARP Program Administrator is responsible for connecting with, collaborating, and supporting PSUs state-wide as they build and modify their ESSER III plans. This position provides data-backed guidance and recommendations on programs and resources that align to the ESSER III mandatory 20% Learning Loss set-aside. This position assists PSUs with program design, implementation, and technical assistance.

This position manages, in partnership with OLR staff, ARP Learning Cohorts. Learning Cohorts are assigned based on multiple variables, one of which is ESSER III allocations, and provide opportunities for PSUs to collaborate with similar PSUs across the state. These cohorts will focus on the development of initiatives aimed at learning recovery and acceleration. The ARP Program Administrator will host quarterly learning modules with learning outcomes connected to recovery and acceleration. This position will also host, in partnership with SEA staff, the annual one-day ARP Convenings: Using Data to Drive Local Recovery Practices and Plans for school and district leadership.

Module 1

- Continuing convening conversations around Triage, Transition, and Transformation
 - Use of PATHS Tool
 - Use of ESSER Half-time tool

Module 1 Learning Objectives

- Participants will utilize evidence-based strategies to make informed decisions to address ESSER use appropriately, and equitably.
- Participants will data mine to identify disparities amongst various populations and address solutions to remove barriers.
- Participants will identify evidence-based strategies to support the unique needs of their district(s).

Module 2

- ~~Remediation?~~ Nope, ACCELERATION!!!
 - Guest subject matter expert / speaker on the topic of accelerated learning
 - Think, Pair, Share dialogue among PSUs

Module 2 Learning Objectives

- Participants will have the ability to identify a plan that supports the needs of various populations of their students by using data that reflects the picture of learning loss in their district.
- Participants will be able to assess and evaluate their approach(es) to addressing learning loss in their districts with flexibility and support.
- Participants will diagnose their current practices and design an action plan that addresses various populations of students with an equity mindset.

Module 3

- How do you monitor progress and keep moving forward?
 - Guest speaker on the topic of progress monitoring
 - Think, Pair, Share dialogue among PSUs

Module 3 Learning Objectives

- Participants will be able to assess their PSU internal practices and process(es) to determine if they are inclusive, equitable and culturally responsive.
- Participants will be able to provide feedback to PSUs about their outreach efforts that enhance access for their various populations of students (or students with the highest need).
- Participants will be able to design processes through feedback from their thought partners to gain a deeper understanding of the needs of their various student populations.

Module 4

- Reflection of 2022-23 and the path into Summer
 - Think, Pair, Share dialogue among PSUs

Module 4 Learning Objectives

- Participants will be able to identify and assess various populations of students who need to be re-engaged with their school community and need SEL support.
- Participants will be able to develop an action plan that addresses barriers to student learning with an equity mindset.

- Participants will be able to use data to determine evidence-based practices that support populations with the highest needs so that they can eliminate barriers to their success.

Each module will begin with a brief pre-quiz on current level of understanding and a post quiz to check for understanding of topic as well as feedback on the event.

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);

ESSER I (CARES Act)

- ***District and Regional Support Leadership/Instructional Coaches (LC/IC)*** Coaches will provide support to school leaders and teachers as they implement remote learning. ICs will provide support regionally as part of the Regional Support Structure and focus on teachers at the 64 low- performing schools that are located in the 8 low-performing districts and also assist in the development of regional professional development. These coaches will partner with the Curriculum & Instruction division to aid in the implementation of the North Carolina Standard Course of Study at NCDPI.
- ***Learning Management Platform Standardization*** NCDPI will provide infrastructure support for digital content delivery by assisting districts with the cost of attaining a Learning Management System (LMS). (\$3,500,000)
- ***Instructional Support Partnership*** Expand partnerships to provide broadcast/passive educational content for home consumption and to provide non-digital instructional support. DPI and UNC-TV, the local affiliate of Public Broadcast Service (PBS) piloted a partnership beginning March 30, with positive response. Funds would be needed to continue the programming. (\$1,000,000)

- ***Connectivity Exploration*** This pilot will explore how to expand internet connectivity in remote areas of the state. This will enable digital remote learning in the future to areas that do not have the necessary broadband access. This "proof of concept" project will be led in the hopes of finding innovative ways to close the connectivity gap. (\$250,000)
- ***Video Lessons*** NCDPI will contract with regional/state teachers of the year, English language learner (ELL) teacher representatives, and exceptional children (EC) teacher representatives to record video lessons for use by other schools/teachers and for possible inclusion into digital curricula platforms. (\$100,000)
- ***Blended Learning Support*** The Friday Institute will provide online teacher professional development that addresses research-based approaches to blended learning. (\$75,000)
- ***External Evaluation*** An external evaluation will be conducted to provide an overview of the implementation and impact of the NC CARES Act Funding. A contract will be put in place with one of our external partners from NC State Friday Institute or UNC Greensboro SERVE Center. (\$200,000)
- ***Digital Curriculum Resources*** Funding will be used to improve access to quality K-8 packaged curricula to enhance the ability of schools to offer blended learning. Funding to PSUs to purchase a 1-year subscription to high quality, standards aligned digital curriculum packages selected by PSUs. (\$10,800,000)
- ***Instructional Support Reserve Funding for Exceptional Children*** Funding will provide instructional support to students and provide ongoing growth toward learning targets. A standards aligned diagnostic tool which is adaptive with individualized learning pathways to promote growth for K-12 grade students will be created. (\$10,000,000)
- ***Grant Program for Childcare During Remote Instruction*** Public school units may partner with community organizations to provide supervised care for K-8 students without at-home supervision available on remote learning days. (\$4,471,200)
- ***Funds for Charter Schools*** Allotments will be made to the ineligible, waived, and underfunded charter schools to ensure all PSUs in NC have access to CARES Act funds. (\$2,226,662)
- ***Professional Development for K-12 Teachers*** Funding will provide professional development for NC Educators as they build their capacity for high-quality culturally relevant virtual and remote teaching and learning. Specifically, a four-week

asynchronous, facilitated course focused on teaching online and creating content for online instruction. (\$325,000)

- ***Professional Development for K-12 school Leaders*** Funding will provide professional development for NC leaders as they build their capacity for high-quality culturally relevant instruction to navigate remote instruction and teacher support. Specifically, a series of professional development opportunities (four weeks total) will be created to provide leader-specific training on supporting teachers in remote instruction. (\$322,941)

GEERI (CARES Act)

- ***Specialized Instructional Support Personnel for COVID-19 Response for Student Health*** Funding will allow for employing or contracting with specialized instructional support personnel to provide physical and mental health support services for students in response to COVID-19, including remote and in-person services. For this allotment, the term “specialized instructional support personnel” shall refer to school counselors, school nurses, school psychologists, school social workers, and “school nurse extenders,” such as a licensed practical nurse (LPN) or certified nurse assistant (CNA) working under the direction of a registered nurse (RN), as defined by the NC Department of Health and Human Services. (\$40,000,000)
- ***Supplemental Instructional Services for Academic Needs*** Funds will be provide to allow supplemental instructional services to support the academic needs of at-risk students, students in poverty and students with disabilities through additional in-school instructional support. Services may include employing or contracting with instructional personnel, such as certified teachers or teacher assistants; paying stipends for NC Education Corps members; providing tutoring services or after school programming; or purchasing instructional resources, curriculum materials, or devices. No more than 10 percent of allotted funds may be used for purchasing instructional resources, curriculum materials, or devices. (\$20,000,000)

ESSER II (CRRSA Act)

- ***Funds for Charter Schools*** To provide a minimum allocation of \$180 to each PSU in the State Aid. (\$10,000,000)
- ***School Health Support Personnel*** Funding for contracted services for school health support personnel to provide additional physical and mental health support services for students. school counselors, school nurses, school psychologists, and school social workers. (\$10,000,000)
- ***Child Nutrition Grants*** Funding to provide grants to PSUs to expand child nutrition services. (\$10,000,000)

- ***Extended Learning and Integrated Student Supports (ELISS)*** Funding for high-quality, independently validated extended learning and integrated student support service programs for at-risk students whose learning has been negatively affected by COVID-19 impacts. (\$15,000,000)
- ***In-Person Summer Instructional Programming*** Funding to support in-person instructional programs to address learning loss and provide enrichment activities in the summer. (\$66,046,144)
- ***Summer Competency Based Assessment (CBA)*** Funding for Competency Based Assessments for Pre and Post Summer Extension programs. (\$8,200,000)
- ***North Carolina New Teacher Support Program*** Funding will be used to expand the North Carolina New Teacher Support Program administered by the UNC Board of Governors (1,000,000)
- ***NC Kids Digital Library Project*** Funding will support the NC State Library for the Children through the NC Department of Natural and Cultural Resources (\$500,000)
- ***Support for the NC School of the Deaf and Blind*** Funding will provide expanded opportunities to support school nutrition, cleaning and sanitizing, learning resources for students in these residential schools. (\$500,000)
- ***COVID-19 Impacts Research*** NCDPI will contract with a third-party research group to collect, analyze, and report data related to the overall impacts of COVID-19. (\$500,000)
- ***Analysis of COVID-19 Infection Metrics*** NCDPI will contract with Duke University to collect and analyze data related to COVID-19 spread among students and staff participating in in-person learning. (\$500,000)
- ***Go Outside Grant*** NCDPI will partner with the NC Wildlife Resources Commission to expand the Outdoor Heritage Advisory Council's NC Schools Go Outside grant program to expand experiential learning opportunities. Field trips and outdoor experiences will enable students the opportunity to explore and learn in hands-on environments. (\$1,200,000)
- ***Cybersecurity Enhancement for PSUs*** Funding will be used to contract with a third-party entity to implement a statewide cybersecurity program to improve the cybersecurity infrastructure of the public schools. (\$9,000,00)
- ***Statewide Assessment System Cybersecurity Improvement*** NCDPI will contract with Accenture to expand the cybersecurity capabilities within the state's assessment system. (\$1,000,000)

- ***Expanding the Teacher Literacy Instruction Capacity*** Funding will be used to contract with Voyager Sopris Learning to provide Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling (LETRS) training for teachers (\$12,000,000)

GEER II (CRRSA Act)

- Emergency Assistance to Non-public Schools (EANS) Program (Governor’s Office) (\$84,000,000)
 - 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 funds have been awarded to LEAs. ESSER II LEA applications are being processed at this time with all applications and awards to occur prior to September 30, 2021. The SEA will track all obligated expenditures through the SEA’s financial reporting system.

- 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.²²

Funds from ESSER I and II SEA reserve were earmarked to support all students’ SEL needs. The special fund source allows PSUs to secure contracted services for school health support personnel to provide additional physical and mental health support services for students. Allowable personnel include school counselors, school nurses, school psychologists, and school social workers.

Additionally, McKinney-Vento funds have been disseminated to PSUs through a Summer 2021 Mini Grant program.

²² 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.

Mandatory summer in-person learning opportunities will be provided for students who are at-risk academically. ESSER II funding was made available to each LEA to purchase competency-based assessment tools to gauge students' initial skill level and track their progress.

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;

In North Carolina, all funds are appropriated by the NC General Assembly. NCDP maintained its ARP ESSER plan as a draft. On November 18, 2021 the NC General Assembly passed the state budget which included the ESSER III state reserve²³.

Descriptions of the funds distributed to Public School Units is detailed in the [Covid Allotment Policy Manual](#)²⁴ (PRC 181-206).

Within the NC General Assembly appropriation of the state reserve, the following initiatives have been funded as evidenced-based interventions. The Office of Learning Recovery and Acceleration has hired a research director and two additional researchers in order to establish an overall research and analysis program as well as evaluate the impact of [particular initiatives](#)²⁵. Additionally, the OLR will partner with external researchers and evaluators to

²³ <https://www.ncleg.gov/Sessions/2021/Bills/Senate/PDF/S105v8.pdf>

²⁴ <https://www.dpi.nc.gov/media/15787/download?attachment>

²⁵ <https://collaboratory.unc.edu/news/2022/10/13/dpi-and-nc-collaboratory-address-covids-impact-on-student-learning/>

assess the implementation and impact of each funded initiative by weaving research and evaluation requirements throughout the grant and contract process.

Initiative	Amount	Description
North Carolina Education Corps [Section 7.27.(a)(7)]	\$13,500,000	Support for high-dosage and other evidence-based tutoring initiatives
Gaggle 7.27(a)(22): Gaggle.net (PRC 193)	\$5,000,000	Gaggle.Net, Inc., for technology to mitigate cyberbullying, monitor student internet activity, and assist with suicide prevention services.
Competency Based Education Platform 7.27(a)(10): CBE Platform	\$9,000,000	A new software platform, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, to evaluate and improve student learning and performance and to provide students with an individualized roadmap for improving learning and performance. (11) \$200,000 to est
Social - Emotional Support Cyberbullying Mitigation 7.27(a)(21): Program to mitigate cyberbullying, monitor student internet activity and classroom educational devices, assist	\$16,000,000	To mitigate cyberbullying, monitor student internet activity and classroom educational devices, assist with suicide prevention services

with suicide prevention services (PRC 192)			
The Innovation Project [7.27(a)(12): The Innovation Project]	\$8,000,000	The Innovation Project to create the North Carolina High-Tech Learning Accelerator, an initiative to provide a network of place-based learning hubs for students with rigorous and experiential pathways for jobs in the technology industry. The initiative shall offer summer immersion and out-of-school options, in addition to other student supports in a core program.	
NC Preschool Pyramid Model [7.27(a)(8): Support for NC Preschool Pyramid Model (PRC 190)]	\$500,000	<p>Training, consultation, and ongoing support for NC Preschool Pyramid Model</p> <p>Competitive grant with priority given to low-performing schools and public school units affected by COVID-19 that receive low-wealth supplemental funding</p> <p>The competitive grant process opened on April 1, 2022 and closed on April 29, 2022. LEAs were provided with a memo announcement, a project introduction, and assurances as well as the opportunity to participate in two office hours sessions. Individual technical assistance was provided upon request. Six LEAs submitted an application. A review team comprised of Office of Early Learning (OEL), Integrated Academic and Behavior Systems, (IABS) and Exceptional Children Division (EC) staff reviewed and scored the applications based on the competitive priorities set forth in legislation (LEAs with low performing schools and LEAs receiving low-wealth supplemental funding), a DPI established priority of Preschool Pyramid Model implementation as well as LEA readiness factors. All funds must be expended by September 30, 2024. Based on application scores, LEA input and state implementation capacity the review team proposes that all six LEAs receive an award based on the following plan:</p>	
		Cohort 1 Implementation 2022-2023	Cohort 2 Exploration 2022-2023

			Implementation 2023-2024
		Region 7: Caldwell County Schools ¹²³	Region 3: Chatham County Schools ^{1R}
		Region 3: Johnston County Schools ¹²³	Region 3: Vance County Schools ^{12R}
		Region 1: Pitt County Schools ^{12R}	Region 3: Wake County Schools ¹³
		¹ LEA has low performing schools ² Receives low-wealth funding ³ Preschool Pyramid Model implementation site ^R Preschool Pyramid Model readiness planning	
Beginnings for Parents of Children Who Are Deaf or Hard of Hearing, Inc. [7.27(a)(17): Beginnings for Parents of Children who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing, Inc]	\$1,000,000	Outreach to and support of North Carolina families affected by COVID-19	
Voyager Sopris Learning [7.27(a)(5): Voyager Sopris Learning]	\$37,500,000	Teacher and principal professional development for implementing the Science of Reading	
Schools that Lead	\$970,000	To develop or purchase a statewide, online platform that allows teachers to (i) share student performance improvement methods across the State in response to	

[7.27(a)(10): Schools that Lead]		learning loss resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic and (ii) support the Schools That Lead Program
[7.27(a)(19): Schools that Lead evaluation]		
Communities in Schools [7.27(a)(20): Communities in Schools]	\$3,900,000	To expand services and provide for the extension of nine-month contracts for its employees for the purpose of providing assistance and enrichment activities over the summers for students in kindergarten through grade 12 experiencing learning loss and negative impacts from COVID-19.
Hospitality Sector career development PRC 194 [7.27(a)(23) Hospitality CTE programs]	\$400,000	For career and technical education (CTE) programs to provide options for students outside traditional classroom instruction during the COVID-19 pandemic. Awarded as grants to nationally certified programs in CTE with a focus on developing critical skills necessary for students to succeed in the hospitality sector. Grant recipients shall use the funds to support instructor and student training and testing in public school units and increase the State's skilled workforce in the hospitality sectors.
Failure Free Reading PRC 197 [7.27(a)(26): Establish a program called “failure free reading”]	\$2,500,000	To establish a program entitled "Failure Free Reading" to support middle school students in authorized public schools who read below grade level. The program shall use rigorous data assessment of student success to support middle school students who continue to struggle with reading, including students who suffered learning loss due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Department shall create an application for funds and make the application available to authorized public schools prior to January 15, 2022. Local superintendents in public school units with authorized public schools may apply for a portion of the funds at a rate of two hundred fifty dollars (\$250.00) per student. The following public schools are authorized to participate in the program: a. Alpha Academy. b. Catawba Rosenwald Education Center in Catawba County Schools. c. Coats-Erwin Middle in Harnett County Schools. d. Community Public Charter. e. Community School of Davidson. f. Conway Middle in Northampton County Schools. g. Dunn Middle in Harnett County Schools. h. Enfield Middle S.T.E.A.M. Academy in Halifax County

		<p>Schools. i. Grandview Middle in Hickory City Schools. j. Harnett Central Middle in Harnett County Schools. k. Harry M. Arndt Middle School in Catawba County Schools. l. Jacobs Fork Middle in Catawba County Schools. m. Lake Norman Charter. n. Maiden Middle School in Catawba County Schools. o. Mill Creek Middle School in Catawba County Schools. p. Newton-Conover Middle in Newton-Conover City Schools. q. Reaching All Minds Academy. r. River Bend Middle in Catawba County Schools. s. Rocky Mount Prep. t. Success Institute Charter. u. United Community. v. VERITAS Community. w. Weldon Middle in Weldon City Schools. x. William R. Davie Middle S.T.E.M. Academy in Halifax County Schools.</p> <p>The schools listed were selected by the NC General Assembly and specified as eligible to administer this program in their schools to combat literacy concerns among middle school students. School Report Cards for most schools listed reflect a school grade of C-F with a few school scoring higher.</p>
<p>NC Museum of Art</p> <p>[7.27(a)(27): NC Museum of Art, NCMA Kids Program]</p>	\$500,000	<p>Transfer to the North Carolina Museum of Art to establish NCMAKids to mitigate learning loss by providing digital learning experiences</p>
<p>Afterschool Robotics program</p> <p>[7.27(a)(31): After-School Robotics Grant Program (PRC 201)]</p>	\$1,600,000	<p>To establish the Educational and Competitive After-School Robotics Grant Program (Program) during the 2021-2023 fiscal biennium. The purpose of the Program shall be to (i) promote evidence-based, after-school programs for robotics education and competition, (ii) motivate students to pursue education and career opportunities in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics while building critical life and work-related skills, and (iii) reengage students and remediate learning loss resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.</p>
<p>Betabox</p> <p>[7.27(a)(33): Betabox]</p>	\$2,042,000	<p>To mitigate learning loss in the areas of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics by providing students in public school units with experiences,</p>

		curriculum, instructional coaching, hands-on equipment, and other needed resources.
Plasma Games [7.27(a)(25): Plasma Games (PRC 196)]	\$2,500,000	To promote access to innovative digital and personalized learning solutions for high school students that bridge the gap between chemistry and physical science curricula and career and technical education (CTE) career pathways.
Office of Learning Recovery Staff [7.27(a)(15): OLR staff]	\$2,500,000	Provide support for Learning Recovery Across NC
Locate Missing Students to ensure they attend/reenroll [7.27(a)(13): Identify and locate missing students (PRC 191)]	\$13,500,000	<p>Establish a grant program, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, to allocate funds to public school units to identify and locate missing students.</p> <p>PSUs participating in this initiative will be able to use third-party entities to provide technology or outside personnel to identify and locate missing students. Information about the program can be found in the allotment policy for the program.</p> <p>https://www.dpi.nc.gov/documents/fbs/allotments/covid-apm-manual-october-2022pdf/download?attachment</p>
Professional Development Participation (PRC 203) [7.27(a)(34): \$1,000 bonus for qualifying state-funded teachers]	\$100,000,000	Teachers and instructional support personnel who participate in one or more trainings between March 12, 2020, and January 1, 2022, that address the mitigation of COVID-19 in public schools, learning loss resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, or virtual instruction needed because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

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- 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

As grant programs are developed NCDPI will establish priorities for inclusion including the expectation that interventions be utilized for students identified as having been most significantly impacted by COVID-19. Data sources will include annual value-added achievement data as well as locally sourced data.

- 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.

To assist PSUs in identifying the extent of the impact of COVID-19 on student learning and wellbeing, NCDPI is currently working with a third-party contractor who will provide an impact analysis of COVID-19 on public school units, students and families of the State (“Impact Analysis”).

The Impact Analysis includes a baseline analysis that leverages analytics provided as part of the current contract for district/school/teacher value-added reporting and student projections. The baseline analysis assesses student performance and learning loss by comparing students’ pre-pandemic expected performance with their post pandemic actual performance in the 2020-21 school year. More specifically, the baseline analysis uses student projections to the 2020-21 school year, which represents their pre-pandemic expected performance based on the average schooling experience, and then compares these projections to students’ actual performance on the 2020-21 statewide assessments. A negative difference indicates that students did not perform as expected based on their pre-pandemic learning trajectories, and this information will be aggregated by subject, grade, district, school and/or different student groups to identify whether certain student groups experienced bigger changes in expected performance than other student groups. The Impact Analysis incorporates additional data variables to investigate student performance and learning loss by geographic region, urbanicity and education delivery based on what is captured and provided by the State (in person, virtual, device access, internet connectivity, etc.).

The Impact Analysis also analyzes group-level achievement trends over time to assess COVID's impact on student learning. More specifically, student-level reports will be updated so that it is easier for educators to see how students' trajectories changed since COVID-19 disrupted student learning and how students' recovery has progressed over time in future years. There are reports that summarize information about the extent to which students exceed or fall short of their pre-pandemic expectations and the proportion of students in different categories of learning loss.

Deliverables:

State-Level Technical Report:

- The Impact Analysis includes a technical report, which provides a description of the methods used to assess student performance and learning loss.
- SAS provided student-level and aggregated files to the NCDPI.
- SAS delivered results in electronic format via a secure file transfer protocol account to individual LEAs.
- As needed, SAS will contribute content to State Board of Education presentation and summary, as well as Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee presentation and reports.

School and District-Level Dashboards:

- The Impact Analysis also includes enhancements to the EVAAS web application so that educators with authorized access can view reports that highlight learning loss and recovery trends. More specifically, student-level reports will be updated so that it is easier for educators to see how students' trajectories changed since COVID-19 disrupted student learning and how students' recovery has progressed over time in future years.
- There also be additional reports that summarize information about the extent to which students exceed or fall short of their pre-pandemic expectations and the proportion of students in different categories of learning loss.

Research Questions:

Assuming sufficient data exists and is available for analysis, the research questions include for the following assessments, student characteristics and contextual factors:

1. To what extent do actual and pre-pandemic projected student performance results vary by subgroup and contextual factors?
2. How do any observed differences compare to historical trends?

Administration Window	Student Performance Outcome Variables*	Grades	Student characteristics of interest	Contextual factors
Actual performance for 2020-21 compared to	End-of-grade math, reading and science	3 rd -8 th	Race/Ethnicity: White	District: SBE Region Low Wealth Designation

predicted performance based on all previous years of performance	End-of-course Biology, English II, Math 1, and Math 3 ACT, AP, PSAT and SAT	9 th -12 th 9 th -12 th	American Indian/Alaskan Native Asian Black Hispanic/Latino Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander Two or More Races Sex: Female Male Other: Academically or Intellectually Gifted Chronically absent English Learners Students with Disabilities Economically Disadvantaged Justice-involved students Military connected Students Experiencing Homelessness Students in Foster Care At-risk as defined by general statute	Urbanicity ARP Funding Level Low Performing Tier Designation School: School Grade (A-F) Predominately White/Minority Predominately EDS/non-EDS Rural/Urban Mode: In-person; Blended; Remote Device Access Internet connectivity
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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;

- 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
- 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

On April 29, 2021, the North Carolina General Assembly passed SL2021-7²⁶ School Extension and Recovery. The law required LEAs to implement a school extension and enrichment program for at-risk students as defined in NC General Statute²⁷. The law requires the NC DPI to develop a report on the outcomes of the program to be presented to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee. The Office of Learning Recovery and Acceleration will develop and deliver the report in January 2022. In addition to the student performance outcomes, the OLR will also identify best practices and programs implemented that address academic, social, emotional and mental health needs of students. These practices and programs will be included in a set of recommended guidelines to direct future school extension and enrichment programs. NCDPI will also develop a grant program to expand and/or scale initiatives developed as part of the school extension program.

Description	Amount	Initiative
Summer Learning PRC 188 [7.27(a)(3): Summer Enrichment]	\$36,017,804	Held in a reserve by the Department to be allocated to public school units as grants to support COVID-19 related needs during the summer, including in-person instruction to address learning loss and provide enrichment activities. Update Fall 2022: These funds were allotted via PRC 188. The Summer Career Accelerator grant program is a continuation of PRC 177 (funded in ESSER II) and will help to continue to fund high-quality, evidence-based learning and workforce aligned summer programs for students deemed “at-risk” or those the PSU identify as having been disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The program will respond to the academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs of students in grades 6-12. The Office of Learning Recovery and Acceleration developed a policy, approved by the NC State Board of Education at their March 2022 meeting, for workforce-aligned programs for grades 6-12. The programs

²⁶ <https://ncleg.gov/EnactedLegislation/SessionLaws/HTML/2021-2022/SL2021-7.html>

²⁷ https://www.ncleg.net/enactedlegislation/statutes/html/bysection/chapter_115c/gs_115c-105.41.html

		<p>are required to include at least two industry partners, academically align to the community’s workforce demands. The Office of Learning Recovery and Acceleration reviewed grant proposals to ensure alignment to State Board Policy and workforce demands.</p> <p>As seen in the grant documents, school districts must determine which students to serve based on school-level data available to ensure those most disproportionately impacted by COVID-19. Grant information is below:</p> <p>https://www.dpi.nc.gov/districts-schools/operation-polaris/office-learning-recovery-acceleration/summer-career-accelerator-2-prc-188</p> <p>Allotment Policy: https://www.dpi.nc.gov/media/14179/download?attachment</p> <p>State Reserve Summary: https://www.dpi.nc.gov/media/15356/download?attachment</p>
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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;
 - 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
 - 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.

NCDPI used data from the lost instructional time impact analysis to determine that middle grades math was the most impacted. The Office of Learning Recovery and Acceleration developed a policy, approved by the NC State Board of Education at their March 2022 meeting, for middle grades math enrichment. This program will focus on the math standards for grades 4-8. hasThe Office of Learning Recovery and Acceleration reviewed grant proposals to ensure the use of evidence-based programs.

Data has been made available to PSUs, including student performance and lost instructional time as it becomes available to ensure programs are directed at students most in need of additional programming.

Initiative	Amount	Description
Before and After school enrichment PRC 189 [7.27(a)(4): Instructional year programs including before and after school]	\$36,017,804	<p>Held in a reserve by the Department to be allocated to public school units as grants to support COVID-19 related needs during the instructional year, including after-school and before-school programs that incorporate supplemental in-person instruction to address learning loss and provide enrichment activities.</p> <p>Update Fall 2022: This grant program was administered via PRC 189. Funds are provided to school districts based on an ADM formula. The Math Enrichment grant program will help fund high-quality, evidence-based in-person math enrichment, tutoring and interventions for students deemed “at-risk” or those the PSU identify as having been disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic in grades 4-8. These academic-year programs will take place before school or after school and will respond to the academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs of students.</p> <p>As seen in the grant documents, school districts must determine which students to serve based on school-level data available to ensure those most disproportionately impacted by COVID-19. Grant information is below: https://www.dpi.nc.gov/districts-schools/operation-polaris/office-learning-recovery-acceleration/math-enrichment-programs-prc-189</p> <p>Allotment Policy:</p>

		https://www.dpi.nc.gov/media/14179/download?attachment State Reserve Summary: https://www.dpi.nc.gov/media/15356/download?attachment
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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.

Two broad categories for emergency needs were student support and educator workforce support. In the category of student support, the NC General Assembly allocated funds to ensure that students needing to complete Drivers Education training could be serviced.

Initiative	Amount	Description
7.27 (a)(30): Driver Education (PRC 205)	\$400, 000	<p>Support for driver education programs and aid in reducing a backlog of student applicants due to the COVID-19 pandemic.</p> <p>PSUs could apply to participate in the initiative as specified in the allotment policy.</p> <p>https://www.dpi.nc.gov/documents/fbs/allotments/covid-apm-manual-october-2022pdf/download?attachment</p>

In the category of educator workforce support, the following initiatives were funded:

Initiative	Amount	Description
Coaching and Professional Development [7.27 (a)(24): Design and implementation]	\$18,000,000	<p>Provide coaching support and professional development for principals and school improvement leadership teams in local school administrative units. Funds shall be used</p> <p>(i) to design and implement a leadership institute for principals employed in qualifying public schools and</p> <p>(ii) to provide grants to local school administrative</p>

of a leadership institute for principals and grants to PSUs for implementation (PRC 195)]		<p>units in which a majority of the public schools are qualifying public schools for flexible improvement and intervention options approved by the Department to address negative impacts of COVID-19. Up to two million dollars (\$2,000,000) of these funds may be used for 20 time-limited or full-time equivalent positions for the Department to support the activities set forth in this subdivision. For the purposes of this subdivision, a qualifying public school is a school meeting the following criteria:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> For the most recent year for which data are available, has a school performance score in the lowest-performing five percent (5%) of all schools. Receives funds under Part A of Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended. Is governed by a local board of education. Is not one of the following types of schools: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> An alternative school. A cooperative innovative high school. A school that was in its first or second year of operation in the previous school year. A newcomers school. <p>For the purposes of this subdivision, a newcomers school is a school in which at least ninety percent (90%) of its students are enrolled for no more than one year on the basis of their status as recently arrived English language learners.</p>
Support for National Board Certification [7.27(a)(28): Reimburse teachers for NBPTS certification (PRC 198)]	\$1,200,000	Establish a grant program during the 2021-2023 fiscal biennium for qualifying public school units to improve teacher quality and mitigate learning loss, by reimbursing teachers for the cost of the participation fee for National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) certification
School Psychologists [7.27(a)(29): School Psychologists Grant Program]	\$1,700,000	Establish the School Psychologists Grant Program (Program) in response to the COVID-19 pandemic to improve the safety, mental health, and well-being of students by providing grants to public school units to recruit school psychologists.

(PRC 204)]		
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Lastly, the NC General Assembly included the following stipulation regarding funds not encumbered by the various fund sources that comprise the state reserve.

If, on March 15, 2022, there are any funds that are unencumbered from the reserve of funds pursuant to subsection (f) of section 2001 of ARPA, those funds shall be reallocated as follows, in order of priority: a. To offset any shortfall in the funds allocated pursuant to subdivision (34) of this subsection for bonuses related to COVID-19 training for teachers and instructional support personnel in public schools. b. To be used for expenditures on or after March 15, 2022, to meet additional needs of the elementary and secondary schools of the State within federal law and guidelines, as determined by the State Board of Education

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.

5. 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.

The NCDPI application process requires PSUs to complete a needs assessment (Part A) and data (Part B) analysis to determine the potential areas to which funds from ARP ESSER should be directed. After the completion of the required needs assessment, PSUs outline the appropriate strategies to implement and determine outcome measures. PSUs indicate how they will utilize funds in accordance to allowable uses including COVID-19 prevention strategies as well as academic and socio-emotional support. The ARP ESSER application was configured to require PSUs to allocate a minimum of 20% to learning recovery efforts. Using funds in this manner continues initiatives begun with ESSER II aimed at addressing learning loss. A NC legislative mandate required LEAs (charter school participation was optional) to provide a 2021 summer learning program to address learning loss. The ESSER II application captured basic information about the summer program to be implemented and was further elaborated upon in a required summer learning plan provided to the Office of Early Learning for approval before the implementation of programming in summer 2021.

For ARP ESSER, PSUs must provide information about how will implement strategies to mitigate learning loss (Part C). Subgrantees must detail how they will meet the needs of students who have been disproportionately impacted due to COVID-19 including low-income students, children with disabilities, English Learners, racial and ethnic minorities, students experiencing homelessness, and children and youth in foster care.

NCDPI staff members evaluate plans provided in applications as part of the official review process and offer feedback to strengthen plans as necessary. As part of the application process, one of the assurances that LEAs must sign is that they will provide their plan to public by posting it on their website within 30 days of receiving funds. All applications must be received no later than September 30, 2021. Fiscal and programmatic monitoring conducted by NCDPI will ensure LEAs meet the timeline for posting their plans, spend according to allowable use categories, implement specified strategies for all students especially those disproportionately impacted by COVID-19, and meet or exceed LEA-determined outcomes as specified in their plans. The SEA will also provide technical assistance as needed.

6. 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.

PSUs were required to post their ESSER II plans for a minimum 30-day comment period. PSUs will be provided Technical Assistance as requested about best practices for seeking public engagement.

Technical Assistance was provided to LEAs during the application process to ensure there was a clear understanding about the need to solicit and allow feedback on the ARP ESSER LEA Plan. During LEA programmatic monitoring, evidence for compliance with the requirement of a feedback loop with stakeholders will be assessed.

7. 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;
 - 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
 - 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 Office of Learning Recovery will work with District and Regional Support Teams²⁸ to support and monitor implementation of evidence-based interventions. The OLR will be responsible for data collection and analysis of PSU-based interventions and in conjunction with the Associate Superintendent of Innovation at NCDPI will identify the most effective interventions employed. The OLR research team will work with existing data collection and analysis units within NCDPI support and monitor PSUs as they work to mitigate the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on students. Data collection and analysis will include academic indicators, social-emotional indicators, and instructional time indicators including chronic absenteeism.

8. 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.

NCDPI and the SBE are committed to educational equity in North Carolina²⁹. The North Carolina SBE has defined educational equity as follows:

“Educational Equity” is the belief and practice of ensuring that every student is treated in a fair and just manner, providing the necessary allocation of resources for the success of every student, and eliminating discriminatory barriers to full participation and opportunities for every student.

The OLR will work directly with the Deputy Superintendent of Equity at NCDPI and the SBE to ensure initiatives funded with ARP ESSER funds are allocated based on student need. Additionally, ESSER funds will be included as we address equitable and inclusive return to in-person instruction. These strategies and initiatives are directly linked to the SBE Strategic Plan Goal I³⁰.

²⁸ <https://www.dpi.nc.gov/districts-schools/districts-schools-support/district-and-regional-support>

²⁹ <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1sZISKF0AkOtY1WJDDJJHuNJ61h4pa1It>

³⁰ <https://simbli.eboardsolutions.com/StrategicPlan/PlanDetail.aspx?S=10399&PID=487%20>

E. 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.

NCDPI provides an annual report on the “State of the Teaching Profession in North Carolina”³¹. The report provides attrition and mobility data to the SBE and PSUs. Some of the key findings of the report are as follows:

- Generally, NC teachers remain in the classroom, the overall state attrition rate for 2019-2020 was 7.53%
- Prior year reports have consistently shown, those who remain teaching in NC public schools demonstrate greater effectiveness (as measured by EVAAS index scores) than those who leave
- Hard to staff subjects (teacher shortages) include:
 - K-5 – Core Subjects
 - 6-8 – Math, Exceptional Children, Science
 - 9-12 – Exceptional Children, Math, CTE

- 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.

Each PSU completed a local needs assessment identifying the most urgent shortages. PSUs have the flexibility to identify and add positions as necessary. NCDPI will continue to provide an analysis of the shortage and potential shortage areas in the annual state of the profession report.

³¹ <https://www.dpi.nc.gov/media/10536/download>

NCDPI provides regular and ongoing professional development to PSUs including online options such as research-based approaches to blended learning, provided by The Friday Institute. Additionally, NCDPI will offer coaching support and professional development to Districts, Principals and School Improvement Leadership Teams. This initiative is described above in D.4. To design and implement a leadership institute for current principals in LPS. To support a grant opportunity for Low Performing Districts to apply for funding for creative and flexible improvement options (much like the Renewal District).

- 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).

There are several initiatives in North Carolina to address gaps in certified teachers statewide. These initiatives include the work of the North Carolina Human Capital Roundtable, the Drive Task Force, NC Stride Task Force and a new recruitment website.

In 2018 the North Carolina Human Capital Roundtable was established³². The purpose of the Roundtable is “to develop recommendations to help increase the quality, quantity and diversity of teacher candidates and prepare them to be licensed, hired, supported and retained as highly effective educators in North Carolina schools”. In 2021, the vision and principals were sent from the SBE to the Professional Educator Preparation and Standards Commission (PEPSC) for review and the establishment of a formal recommendation³³

The Drive Task Force was established in 2019 by executive order and is focused on recruitment, retention, development and support of educators of color in NC³⁴. The NC Stride Task Force brought together a wide-ranging group of stakeholders to address recruitment and retention of educators through a series of policy recommendations³⁵.

Finally, North Carolina developed a new teacher recruitment website <https://northcarolina.teach.org/> and a proposal is in place to coordinate recruitment efforts within the NCDPI.

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

³² <https://www.sreb.org/north-carolina-education-human-capital-roundtable>

³³ <https://www.dpi.nc.gov/educators/educator-preparation/professional-educator-preparation-and-standards-commission>

³⁴ <https://governor.nc.gov/issues/education/drive-task-force>

³⁵ <http://www.bestnc.org/ncstride/>

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).

Several PSU – local health agency partnerships exist throughout North Carolina. In these programs health care institutions are providing nursing and mental health support to students in schools via telemedicine. NCDPI will assist with coordinating services, assisting in the development of a statewide model and assessment of the impact on students and families.

F. 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).

vii.

Data will be collected from existing data sources where possible. Academic achievement will be measured through our statewide assessment system. Additional information will be garnered through ESSER-funded competency-based assessment tools. Where metrics do not exist, we plan to create systems to collect the necessary data. Funding has been earmarked to contract with a research firm to collect and analyze data about COVID-19 impacts. Fiscal data will be pulled from our existing financial systems. Data will be analyzed by fund source and use. Maintenance of Employment and Equity metrics will be provided through the NC Office of Budget Management. Lastly, student outcomes (e.g., attendance, behavior, achievement, etc.) will be tracked for students who participate in extended learning opportunities (e.g., summer and afterschool).

- 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 monitoring and internal controls processes outlined in the ESSER I Monitoring and Internal Controls Plan created for ESSER I will be updated to reflect ESSER as a whole (I, II, and III). Our Federal Program Monitoring and Support is tasked with conducting programmatic monitoring; while the Monitoring and Compliance Section is tasked with completing fiscal monitoring. NCDPI has incorporated ESSER monitoring into its existing structures and is in the process of hiring additional staff to support monitoring efforts.

Appendix A: School Operating Status and Instructional Mode Data Template

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

NCDPI has prepared a data dashboard to offer metrics about school operating status and mode of instruction. This information may be found at:

<https://www.dpi.nc.gov/districts-schools/federal-program-monitoring/elementary-and-secondary-schools-emergency-relief-esser#esser-compliance>

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.

NCDPI LEA ESSER grant application contains an assurance about General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) Section 427 compliance. Applicants must attest that they will adhere to the requirement outlined in GEPA. The assurance reads, "Comply with the requirements of section 442 (20 U.S.C. 1232e) and section 427 (20 U.S.C. 1228a) of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA)."

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 and reference the OMB Control Number 1894-0005.