



STATE OF NEW JERSEY  
**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

A Memo from the New Jersey Department of Education

Date: April 28, 2021  
To: Chief School Administrators, Charter School and Renaissance School Project Leads  
Route to: School Business Administrators, Staff Involved with ESSER Funds  
From: Kathy Ehling, Acting Assistant Commissioner  
Division of Student Services  
Kevin Dehmer, Assistant Commissioner/Chief Financial Officer  
Division of Finance

### **American Rescue Plan Act Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ARP ESSER) Funds**

On March 11, 2021, President Biden signed the Federal American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ARP ESSER) Fund, Public Law 117-2, into law. ARP ESSER provides an additional \$122 billion to States and school districts to help safely reopen, sustain the safe operation of schools, and address the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the nation's students. As with the previous ESSER funds available under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act, and the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSA), the purpose of the additional funding is to support local educational agencies (LEAs) in preparing for and responding to the impact of COVID-19 on educators, students, and families. To provide guidance for school districts on the allowable uses and the differences between the three ESSER funds, the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) has created an [ESSER Fact Sheet](#).

Although the allowable uses of funds are similar across the three ESSER funds, there are important distinctions between the three programs, including the period of fund availability, equitable services to nonpublic schools, and required LEA reservations. The [ESSER Fact Sheet](#) provides additional details regarding the differences between the ESSER program requirements.

Additional information on how LEAs can apply for and utilize the ARP ESSER funding and the State set-aside priorities will be forthcoming. Particularly, the NJDOE would note that as described in the [interim final requirements](#) published by the U.S. Department of Education (USDE) on April 22, 2021, "each LEA that receives ARP ESSER funds must develop, submit to the SEA... and make publicly available on the LEA's website, a plan for the LEA's use of ARP ESSER funds... [u]nder this requirement, an LEA must engage in meaningful consultation with stakeholders and give the public an opportunity to provide input in the development of its plan. Specifically, an LEA must engage in meaningful consultation with students; families; school and district administrators (including special education administrators); and teachers, principals, school leaders, other educators, school staff, and their unions. Additionally, an LEA must engage in meaningful consultation with each of the following, to the extent present in or served by the LEA: Tribes; civil rights organizations (including disability rights organizations); and stakeholders representing the interests of children with disabilities, English learners, children experiencing homelessness, children in foster care, migratory students, children who are incarcerated, and other underserved students."

As required by the USDE, in the coming weeks the NJDOE will be conducting stakeholder engagement regarding its plan for the use of ARP ESSER funds.

The USDE has indicated that additional guidance regarding implementation of ARP ESSER is forthcoming. The NJDOE will share additional information as it becomes available. Questions regarding ESSER funding should be directed to [ESSER@doe.nj.gov](mailto:ESSER@doe.nj.gov).

c: Members, State Board of Education  
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NJDOE Staff  
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