

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



U.S. Department of Education

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Paperwork Burden Statement 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. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 1810-0754. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 100 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 under Section 2001 of the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARP Act). If you have any comments concerning the accuracy of the time estimate, suggestions for improving this individual collection, or if you have comments or concerns regarding the status of your individual form, application or survey, please contact Britt Jung, Office of State and Grantee Relations, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20202-6450, email: SGR@ed.gov directly.

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):

SEA Contact: Krish Mohip

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Email address: Kmohip@isbe.net

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) Krish Mohip	
Signature of Authorized SEA Representative <div style="border: 1px solid red; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;">(b)(6)</div>	Date: 8/13/21

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.

Strategy 1 – Digital Equity: The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) has been primarily focused on helping districts provide all students with technological resources so they could access digital remote learning, especially during the earliest days of the pandemic. An additional 721,584 computing devices were needed to meet the remote learning needs of students, according to a March 2020 survey of Illinois public school districts. Based on enrollment figures for the responding districts, we calculate that at the start of the pandemic these districts had enough devices to provide 51 percent of their students with an instructional device. Illinois leveraged ESSER and Governor's Emergency Education Relief (GEER) funding to address this need by purchasing more than 600,000 additional computing devices for students. Survey data from fall 2020 indicate that public school districts now have enough devices to provide 87.8 percent of students with an instructional device to take home.

Strategy 2 – Educator Support: ISBE has provided Illinois educators and leaders with comprehensive and timely resources in support of maximizing quality instruction throughout the pandemic. The agency released [Remote Learning Recommendations](#) in March 2020 to support continuity of learning despite the suspension of in-person instruction. ISBE released [Priority Learning Standards](#) and [Fall 2020 Learning Recommendations in summer 2020](#). Simultaneously, ISBE collaborated closely with the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) to provide Revised [Public Health Guidance for Schools](#) to support safe reopening. These resources and aligned supports, such as webinars and professional learning opportunities, have provided a balance of clear expectations and resources to assist school districts in supporting the needs of students and ensuring their success during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Strategy 3 – Social Emotional Health: The pandemic has highlighted the importance of and the need for ongoing support and resources for adult and student wellness. ISBE partnered with our Regional Offices of Education, Nita M. Lowey 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC), and the Center for Childhood Resilience (CCR) at Ann and Robert H. Lurie Children's

Hospital to provide all Illinois educators with virtual training on the impact of trauma on children and adolescents. This training addressed the intersection between race and trauma, crisis response strategies, and schoolwide trauma-responsive policies and classroom practices to build resilience among students. Critically, the virtual training provided by CCR supports educators' own personal and professional well-being and self-care during COVID-19 and beyond. In addition to the universally available virtual training, 50 Comprehensive and Targeted schools that receive federal 21st CCLC grants have the opportunity to create Resilience Education to Advance Community Healing (REACH) teams. Each team will include teachers, administrators, social workers, and 21st CCLC project personnel and parent mentors. CCR will support the REACH teams in developing and implementing data-driven strategic plans to support students' social-emotional learning and mental health. Furthermore, the ISBE Wellness Department is collaborating with partners statewide to align all of its programs to provide for and support statewide multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS).

The Illinois State Board of Education has worked tirelessly to support school districts by supplying information about best practices throughout the ongoing pandemic. Technical assistance documents, webinars, and a resource page, all dedicated to COVID-19 support, are on the ISBE website. These are just a few of the ways we have sought to provide assistance to the educational entities, practitioners, students, and families across the state.

In addition, several documents have been released and are readily available on our website's [COVID-19 page](#). [The work completed to assist our LEA's has been well received. Many of the documents found on our website have been shared with the Council of Chief State School Officers](#)

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.

Challenge 1 - Teacher Shortage: Illinois' educator shortage exacerbates the negative impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic in thousands of classrooms every day. Illinois currently has 1,704 unfilled teaching positions, 1,243 unfilled paraprofessional positions, and 1,085 unfilled school support personnel positions. Moreover, 65 percent of Illinois school districts report that the shortage has gotten worse during the pandemic, and 77 percent of districts report that there were fewer or significantly fewer qualified applicants during the hiring season preceding the 2020-21 school year compared to past years. An adequate supply of effective educators is a prerequisite that would enable all other COVID recovery measures to succeed.

Challenge 2 - Digital Equity: Illinois has made significant progress in terms of providing

students with devices in support of digital remote learning, but barriers to full digital equity persist. In particular, data suggest that more than 100,000 students still lack a digital device, and 97 percent of school districts report one or more barriers to home connectivity (e.g., ongoing expenses, limited bandwidth, limited broadband availability) for the students they serve. Although the shift back to in-person learning is well underway, digital equity is still important. Technology-enabled supplemental remote learning activities should be available to all students so we can maximize and accelerate learning and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Challenge 3 - Comprehensive Student Supports: We recognize that we have made great strides in providing educators and students tertiary supports pertaining to social-emotional learning (SEL) and mental health. However, immediate access to such services as we return to in-person learning will be critical for the well-being of students and staff. We must ensure that all students—from rural, suburban, and urban areas -- have access to interventions and supports beyond the universal level. We must dedicate funding to building out school-centric systems of care models that ensure that students and adults have ready access to social-emotional/mental health supports and services. This includes finding ways to mitigate access problems, such as school support personnel shortages and the geographic proximities of care. Furthermore, research on trauma indicates that problems experienced during the pandemic have prolonged impacts; therefore, it will be essential to build a wellness infrastructure that is responsive and sustainable.

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

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

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

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

Table A1.

Student group	Highest priority needs
Students from low-income families	<p>Students from low-income families were particularly negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. More affluent students had access to tools and resources to make remote learning effective and accessible (e.g., reliable and sufficient internet bandwidth, learning pods, nannies/tutors); students from lower-income families did not have these tools and often had additional responsibilities, such as providing supervision to siblings and/or working outside of the home to supplement the family income. Therefore, students from low-income families now require maximum high-quality, in-person instructional opportunities and supplemental supports, such as high-impact tutoring, to facilitate accelerated academic growth and achievement.</p> <p>Students from low-income families are also most significantly impacted by the educator shortage; teacher retention in schools that serve low-income families lags the state average by more than 10 percentage points. Students from low-income families are therefore more likely to experience greater rates of teacher</p>

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

Student group	Highest priority needs
	<p>turnover and educator vacancies, both of which are expected to get worse due to the COVID-19 pandemic. These factors will negatively impact student ability to recover from the pandemic.</p> <p>Finally, students from low-income families are more likely than their higher-income peers to have experienced trauma both before and during the COVID-19 pandemic. Recent reports by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) indicate that one in every five (22 percent) of children living below 100 percent of the federal poverty level had a mental, behavioral, or developmental disorder. Additionally, children living in poverty, including those experiencing homelessness, are more likely to carry high Adverse Childhood Experience scores (ACEs), increasing their risk of developmental challenges and poor health and functioning. Children living below the federal poverty level are five times more likely to experience higher ACEs than children living in financially secure environments. Poverty levels not only increase the likelihood that a child will experience trauma, they also affect the likelihood of children getting access to or receiving treatment for anxiety, depression, or behavior problems.</p>
<p>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</p>	<p>Regarding learning renewal/making up for lost in-person instructional time, attendance data suggests that need may be greatest among Hispanic, Black, and Asian students</p>

Student group	Highest priority needs
underserved student groups by race/ethnicity)	<p>who together account for more than 48% of the student body in Illinois, but had lower rates of in-person attendance than their peers who are White and represent 47.5% of the student body. Based on March 2021 student attendance data, Hispanic students were marked as present, in-person approximately 8% of the time and Black and Asian students were marked present, in-person approximately 9% of the time while White students were marked present in-person approximately 29% of the time. The decreased access to in-person instruction for students who are Asian, Black, or Hispanic suggests that they could have greater need for learning recovery strategies in the coming school years.</p> <p>Related to the educator shortage, Illinois experiences significant disproportionality with regard to the racial demographics of the teacher workforce relative to those of the student body. The Illinois teacher workforce is 82.3% white, while 52.5% of students are Hispanic (26.6%), Black (16.6%), Asian (5.2%), Two or More Races (3.8%), American Indian (0.3%) or Pacific Islander (0.1%). ISBE recognizes that a robust and diverse teacher workforce will benefit all students, but particularly students of color and is therefore implementing several initiatives aimed at diversifying and strengthening the educator pipeline and addressing the teacher’s shortage.</p> <p>The CDC reported that overall access to full-time in-person learning increased for all K–12 students. However, disparities in access to full-</p>

Student group	Highest priority needs
	<p>time in-person learning were apparent by race/ethnicity, geography, and school level. Reduced access to in-person learning is associated with poorer learning outcomes and adverse mental health and behavioral effects in children. Specifically, in Illinois, Hispanic, Black and Asian students who together account for more than 48% of the student body but had lower rates of in-person attendance than their peers who are White and represent 47.5% of the student body. Based on March 2021 student attendance data collected as of May 2021, Hispanic students were marked as present, in-person approximately 8% of the time and Black and Asian students were marked present, in-person approximately 9% of the time while White students were marked present in-person approximately 29% of the time. The decreased access to in-person instruction for students who are Asian, Black, or Hispanic will result in students needing greater access to mental and behavioral health supports. Additionally, compared with 2019, the proportion of mental health-related visits for children aged 5–11 and 12–17 years increased approximately 24% and 31%, respectively. Furthermore, a survey done among 8,054 K-12 educators in 11 states showed that while teachers believe that professional development and implementing trauma-informed practices is important, only half felt prepared to recognize signs of trauma in their students. Therefore, ISBE has launched a statewide trauma and SEL initiative focused on student and educator well-being. Each district will be provided coaching on how to</p>

Student group	Highest priority needs
	<p>assess trauma and SEL needs and develop action plans to address accordingly. Further, ISBE will support the development or extension of community partnerships through funding opportunities. These opportunities will seek to prioritize funding to applicants that serve students located in counties, most directly impacted by COVID and those that serve students from districts demonstrating greatest needs as identified by ISBE’s evidenced-based funding model. Understanding that students of color and those demographics that have been traditionally disadvantaged have experienced disproportionately negative impacts, ISBE will ensure that the that outcomes in this programming meet the needs of all students.</p>
<p>Students by gender – please add a row for each gender (e.g., identifying disparities and focusing on underserved student groups by gender)</p>	<p>Students who do not identify as male or female have greater need for social-emotional learning and supports. Prior to the pandemic, 40 percent of LGBTQ youth had contemplated suicide within a year of being surveyed by the Trevor Project. Over 60 percent of trans-binary youth had reported incidents of self-harm/injury. We recognize that these numbers are troubling and only continue to grow; therefore, we are partnering with the Inclusionary Task Force to develop resource materials and provide guidance on SEL and universal mental health/trauma supports.</p>
<p>English learners</p>	<p>Instruction and Resources:</p>

Student group	Highest priority needs
	<p>We will ensure equity and mitigate learning loss by allocating appropriate resources to EL and immigrant students, especially in high-poverty areas.</p> <p>Els will need appropriate language supports for in-school and extended day instruction. It is imperative that we understand that ELs may have had more difficulty learning during remote instruction due to limited access to technology or language barriers. We must conduct outreach to EL and/or migrant students who may not return to school in-person. This includes high school-aged youth who may not intend to return to school.</p> <p>Staffing: We must highlight the need for more multilingual social workers/school counselors. It is important that we address the needs of immigrant and refugee students who have experienced trauma in their home country or during their immigration experience.</p> <p>We are looking into possible incentives for teachers with English as a second language (ESL)/bilingual endorsements who are willing to teach in bilingual programs.</p> <p>We need more opportunities for teachers to receive ESL/bilingual endorsements and for districts to “grow your own” with Educator License with Stipulations (ELS)-Transitional Bilingual Educator (TBE) teachers getting Professional Educator Licenses (PELs) and paraprofessionals working toward becoming licensed teachers.</p> <p>Mental Health / Socio-Emotional Learning:</p> <p>EL/bilingual teachers are experiencing fatigue since there are fewer teachers willing to provide extended school year services. As a result, more EL/bilingual teachers seem to be moving to general education positions because there are fewer demands – exacerbating the teacher shortage.</p>

Student group	Highest priority needs
	<p>Culturally and linguistically appropriate counseling/social work and communication for students and families are necessary. We must understand the disproportionately heavy impact of COVID-19 and job loss on many EL/migrant communities.</p>
<p>Children with disabilities</p>	<p>Students with disabilities were impacted academically and emotionally by the pandemic. A priority is to allow students to remain in their least restrictive environment despite the significant impacts faced. It is anticipated that some students may require an increase in special education services due to the possible need for more intensive interventions to mitigate learning loss. Placements in separate facilities (e.g., public/private therapeutic day schools, residential placements) to meet the needs of students with disabilities where impacts of the pandemic have significantly impacted students' social and emotional functioning may likely increase.</p> <p>An increase in referrals for special education evaluations may occur. Issues pertaining to the completion of evaluations will arise since the exclusionary factor of "lack of instruction" has been ruled out, as required by regulations. It is anticipated that more referrals for services under the category of emotional disability may occur due to the increased mental health needs.</p> <p>Students with disabilities will be impacted by the shortage of special education personnel. The teacher shortage and fatigue may impact the capability and willingness to work during extended school year, for example. Shortages among social workers, psychologists, and counselors may impact the ability to complete evaluations, as indicated above. We must understand that these personnel have potentially experienced secondary trauma and from the increased demand to focus on SEL needs of students. There could be increases in special education complaints, mediations, and due process issues due to students not</p>

Student group	Highest priority needs
	being served by appropriately trained personnel.
Students experiencing homelessness	<p>Our most recent data indicates that we have seen a decline in the number of students being identified as McKinney Vento eligible. This is consistent with what we have heard from other State Coordinators. We attribute this decline to the closure of school buildings. As we begin to collectively reopen, we anticipate a surge in the number of students being identified as McKinney Vento eligible, requiring immediate services. We expect such students to have profound unmet needs, including but not limited to academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs. Additionally, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), people experiencing homelessness are particularly vulnerable to COVID19 and may be at increased risk for severe illness.</p>
Children and youth in foster care	<p>Extended school and community closures during school years 2020 and 2021 due to COVID-19 greatly limited the opportunity for youth in care to access supportive resources. The full impact of quarantine, social isolation, and the pandemic on youth mental health is yet to be known. However, we anticipate a surge in the behavioral, emotional and mental health needs of youth, especially youth from vulnerable and historically marginalized communities. Recognizing there could potentially be a shortage of counselors or social workers accessible, we will work closely with the Department of Children and Family Services and HFS to find community service providers to meet the immediate needs of students. Additionally we will work with local education agencies to ensure that youth in</p>

Student group	Highest priority needs
	care have immediate access to wrap around services.
Migratory students	<p>We will ensure equity and mitigate learning loss by allocating appropriate resources to EL and immigrant students, especially in high-poverty areas.</p> <p>We will reach out to EL and/or migrant students who may not return to school in person, including high school aged youth who may not intend to return to school.</p> <p>We intend to investigate possible incentives for teachers with bilingual/ESL endorsements who are willing to teach in bilingual programs.</p> <p>We need more opportunities for teachers to receive ESL/bilingual endorsements and for districts to “grow your own” with ELS-TBE teachers getting PELs and paraprofessionals working toward becoming licensed teachers</p> <p>Culturally and linguistically appropriate counseling/social work and communication for students and families are necessary.</p> <p>We must understand the disproportionately heavy impact of COVID-19 and job loss on many EL/migrant communities.</p> <p>It is important that we address the needs of immigrant and refugee students who have experienced trauma in their home country or during their immigration experience.</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>Regular school attendance is essential for student success. Research has shown a clear connection between chronic absenteeism/truancy and delinquent behavior in youths and adults. For example, a 2007 study of graduation patterns in Chicago Public Schools found that course attendance in eighth grade was eight times more predictive of freshman year course failure than eighth-grade test scores; the study further found that freshman year absences were almost as predictive of graduation within four years as grade point average and course failures. [Allensworth, Elaine M. & John Q. Easton. <i>What Matters for Staying On-Track and Graduating in Chicago Public High Schools: A Close Look at Course Grades, Failures, and Attendance in</i></p>

Student group	Highest priority needs
	<p data-bbox="928 233 1416 401"><i>the Freshman Year</i>. Consortium on Chicago School Research, July 2007, available at https://consortium.uchicago.edu/sites/default/files/2018-10/07%20What%20Matters%20Final.pdf.]</p> <p data-bbox="928 436 1416 743">Unfortunately, extended school and community closures during school years 2020 and 2021 due to COVID-19 greatly reduced students' connection to supportive resources that were, in some cases, integral for student engagement. Consequently, the pandemic has exacerbated student disconnection, enrollment decline, and educational inequities.</p> <p data-bbox="928 779 1416 1766">As Illinois transitions back to full in-person instruction, we have dedicated resources to student and family reengagement, especially for those students who missed the most in-person instruction or did not consistently participate in remote learning. ISBE's fiscal year 2022 budget includes \$11.5 million for funding Truants Alternative and Optional Education Programs (TAOEPs), which include modified instructional programming and services, truancy prevention and intervention services, and part-time or full-time enrollment options to regular school enrollment. TAOEPs are available for students from elementary through high school, up to the age of 21. ISBE's FY 2020 TAOEP grant served 22,359 students, including students classified as truants, chronic truants, dropouts, and potential dropouts. Final numbers are not yet available for FY 2021, but this year's program is expected to serve up to 26,000 students.</p> <p data-bbox="928 1801 1416 1858">In terms of learning renewal, the TAOEP grant will fund a statewide subscription for</p>

Student group	Highest priority needs
	<p>TAOEP students to have free access to Edgenuity, an online curriculum for credit recovery and intervention to close learning gaps. A Regional Office of Education manages the program for ISBE, assists with signing up students, and provides professional development to TAOEP grantees to administer the online curriculum as part of their programs.</p> <p>In addition, Illinois law permits districts to submit applications to open Alternative Learning Opportunities Programs (ALOPs) for students who are not succeeding in a traditional education environment. ALOPs offer a broader range of academic, behavioral, and social/emotional interventions designed to increase achievement levels of these students so they are able to meet the Illinois Learning Standards and complete their education in a safe learning environment. There are 45 ALOPs currently operating in Illinois, and we are now in the process of accepting new applications for school year 2021-22.</p>

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

The COVID-19 Student Learning Study is/will be a source of information regarding student learning during the pandemic. The statewide report will be available this fall. Education Systems Center at Northern Illinois University has produced a [resource](#) on student well-being. In addition, we have also learned that 70% of districts utilize interim assessments and that the remaining 30% will

be provided with the opportunity to use these. Data resulting from these assessments will be shared in order to gauge areas of learning impact and to align appropriate resources to those areas.

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.

Enrollment and attendance are collected at the individual student level and can be aggregated into various student groups. Attendance is collected monthly, by student, and is finalized at the end of the school year for the school's Illinois Report Card. Currently, various modes of instruction are captured as percentages of monthly attendance using the present data codes -- in-person, e-learning, and remote. Mode of instruction is not captured within enrollment data collection. This [link](#) portrays the latest in operating modes.

- 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.

The agency does not currently publicly post a report regarding the mode of instruction offered in schools or districts at the student level. The data in the appendices of this document are based on

current/not final student attendance data. This is a different data element than what is “offered” at the student level in schools and districts

- 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.

Illinois is focused on a safe return to in-person instruction as the operational status and mode of instruction for summer 2021 and the 2021-22 school year. We do not yet know what the guidelines will be when school year 2021-22 starts later this year. The content of this application reflects what the current public health guidelines are, according to the CDC and IDPH. [Revised Public Health Guidance for Schools](#) released by ISBE and IDPH on March 9, 2021, specifically supports the return to in-person instruction as soon as practicable in every Illinois community. ISBE has continued to strongly encourage districts to return as many students as possible to safe in-person learning through written and spoken communication efforts since the release of the guidance in March. At present, 47 percent of Illinois public school districts are offering full in-person learning, 50% of districts are offering a hybrid model consisting of some in-person and some remote learning, and only 3 percent of districts remain fully remote.

On May 19, 2021, the Illinois State Board of Education unanimously adopted a Resolution Supporting In-Person Learning that supports the Illinois State Superintendent of Education Dr. Carmen I. Ayala in making the following declaration after the conclusion of the current academic school year, subject to favorable public health conditions at that time: Beginning with the 2021-22 school year, all schools must resume fully in-person learning for all student attendance days, provided that, pursuant to [105 ILCS 5/10-30](#) and [105 ILCS 5/34-18.66](#), remote instruction be made available for students who are not eligible for a COVID-19 vaccine and are under a quarantine order by a local public health department or the Illinois Department of Public Health. Districts are encouraged to review the [Resolution Supporting In-Person Instruction Questions and Answers](#) document for more detailed information and alternate options and eligibilities for remote programming.

B. Safely Reopening Schools and Sustaining their Safe Operations

The Department recognizes that safely reopening schools and sustaining their safe operations to maximize in-person instruction is essential for student learning and student well-being, and especially for being able to address the educational inequities that have been worsened

by the COVID-19 pandemic. In this section, SEAs will describe how they will support their LEAs in this vital area.

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

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

Table B1.

Mitigation strategy	SEA response
Universal and correct wearing of masks	It is anticipated that universal masking will continue to be a recommendation of the CDC and the IDPH for the foreseeable future. ISBE and IDPH intend to require the use of masks until it is no longer recommended. This is currently a required component of in-person instruction in Illinois.
Physical distancing (e.g., including use of cohorts/podding)	Current physical distancing requirements while at school in Illinois is a minimum of 3 feet. We will continue to follow the guidelines prescribed by IDPH as we move into the summer and the next school year. This is currently a required component of in-person instruction in Illinois.
Handwashing and respiratory etiquette	This is currently a required component of in-person instruction in Illinois.
Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation	This is currently a required component of in-person instruction in Illinois.
Contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantine, in collaboration	This is currently a required component of in-person instruction in Illinois.

Mitigation strategy	SEA response
with the State, local, territorial, or Tribal health departments	
Diagnostic and screening testing	<p>Illinois currently offers BinaxNOW testing free of charge to majority low-income districts. Further, Illinois offers covidSHIELD testing to high schools in the following manner:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Evidence-Based Funding (EBF) Tier 1 and 2 Districts: Free of charge, including a complete waiver of start-up costs and test fees. B. EBF Tier 3 and 4 Districts: Reduced rate per test fee. <p>Illinois also is seeking to expand its use of both tests under federal funds received by IDPH from the CDC to increase access and availability into next school year.</p> <p>Finally, Illinois has one district in the federal Increased Access to Testing in Schools program.</p>
Efforts to provide vaccinations to educators, other staff, and students, if eligible	Efforts are underway in earnest to vaccinate entire school communities, including teachers, staff and eligible students. Communications on vaccinations, accessibility, and efficacy have been released and will continue to be

Mitigation strategy	SEA response
	updated and provided to schools into next school year.
Appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to the health and safety policies	<p data-bbox="1057 296 1421 1094">Our Revised Public Health Guidance (March 9 2021) and the current IDPH Frequently Asked Questions for Schools document (March 16, 2021) outline that “students with Individual Education Programs or 504 Plans who are unable to wear a face mask or face shield due to a medical contraindication may not be denied access to an in-person education if the school is offering in-person education to other students.” In such cases, the individual is required to provide documentation from their health care provider.</p> <p data-bbox="1057 1136 1421 1820">Accommodations outlined in these documents may include wearing a face shield in lieu of a face covering while strictly maintaining social distancing, using additional appropriate personal protective equipment based on job specific duties for staff working with students with a medical contraindication to the wearing of a face covering, adherence to social distancing by other staff and students, and consulting with local</p>

Mitigation strategy	SEA response
	public health departments.

- 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;

On May 19, 2021, the Illinois State Board of Education unanimously adopted a Resolution Supporting In-Person Learning that supports Illinois State Superintendent of Education Dr. Carmen I. Ayala in making the following declaration after the conclusion of the current academic school year, subject to favorable public health conditions at that time: Beginning with the 2021-22 school year, all schools must resume fully in-person learning for all student attendance days, provided that, pursuant to 105 ILCS 5/10-30 and 105 ILCS 5/34-18.66, remote instruction be made available for students who are not eligible for a COVID-19 vaccine and are under a quarantine order by a local public health department or the Illinois Department of Public Health.

- 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

ISBE has worked closely with IDPH on all topics related to COVID-19. This includes the development of public health requirements for schools for in-person instruction, testing availability, and vaccinations. Our partnership with IDPH has allowed all Illinois districts that have high school enrollment to now have access to SHIELD Illinois — the University of Illinois’ innovative polymerase chain reaction saliva test. The test has a U.S. Food and Drug Administration emergency use authorization for both asymptomatic and symptomatic individuals and, therefore, can be used for surveillance, screening, and diagnostic purposes. The Illinois Department of Public Health is providing the test — along with a trained third party to collect the test — at no cost to high schools in EBF Tiers 1 and 2 and at a subsidized rate to high schools in Tiers 3 and 4. School districts also have free access to

Abbott’s BinaxNOW rapid test through the state and/or local public health departments. This test, which is authorized for emergency use, is performed on site with results available in 15 minutes. Many school districts have found success using these tests for symptomatic students and for surveilling the overall health of the school community. We are also working with IDPH to utilize CDC funds to expand the existing testing program on a weekly basis.

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

ISBE has consistently posted [guidance, requirements, best practices and resource documents](#) and will continue to do so.

- 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),² 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

² 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.

the most up-to-date CDC guidance listed in table B1 and its LEAs' needs for support and technical assistance to implement strategies consistent, to the greatest extent practicable, with relevant CDC guidance.

The Illinois State Board of Education will require, in accordance with the requirements in Section 2001(i) of the ARP Act and the requirements relating to the ARP ESSER funds published in the Federal Register, that all Local Education Agencies will within 30 days of accepting an ARP ESSER award make publicly available their reopening plan. LEAs will agree to this as part of their assurances when applying for ARP ESSER funds. ISBE will inform them, in writing, of all required information that must be included in the Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Service Plans. LEAs will provide the URL of their plan to ISBE within 30 days. ISBE will inform them, in writing, of all required information that must be included in the Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Service Plans

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.

ISBE has engaged in extensive meaningful consultation with stakeholders throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. That interaction has informed – and will continue to inform -- our ARP ESSER plan. Our consultation is built on existing outreach and planning efforts the agency undertook throughout 2019 and 2020. This outreach included stakeholders and organizations representing charter school leadership, stakeholders representing the interests of children with disabilities, English learners, homeless children, children in foster care, migratory children, incarcerated youth, and underserved students.

First, ISBE adopted a new Strategic Plan in 2020 that serves as a roadmap for Illinois public schools through school year 2022-23. The plan is focused on three areas -- student learning, learning conditions, and elevating educators. These goals are held together by four principles that guide our work at ISBE – equity, quality, collaboration, and community – and our responsibility to tirelessly pursue educational equity for all of our students in all of our classrooms, schools, and districts.

ISBE led seven in-person stakeholder engagement sessions across the state that were open to the public during the development of the Strategic Plan in 2019. These sessions were held at the St. Clair County Regional Office of Education, Regional Office of Education #11 in Charleston, Carbondale Middle School, DuPage Regional Office of Education, Governors State University, Springfield School District 186, and the Rodolfo Lozano Bilingual and International Center in Chicago. The Lozano engagement session was offered in Spanish, the first time ISBE has ever done such an event in that fashion. More than 200 stakeholders, including teachers, administrators, families, students, policymakers, and community members attended these sessions shared feedback on the Strategic Plan.

ISBE also designed and shared a stakeholder survey on its website to gather feedback pertaining to the Strategic Plan. ISBE received nearly 190 survey responses from a number of stakeholders. The survey was open to a wide population which included stakeholders and organizations representing charter school leadership, stakeholders representing the interests of children with disabilities, English learners, homeless children, children in foster care, migratory children, incarcerated youth, and underserved students. ISBE staff led four internal focus groups and conducted numerous external focus groups with stakeholders during the process. Stakeholder groups included, but were not limited to, the Management Alliance, the Illinois Education Association, the Illinois Federation of Teachers, regional superintendents, other advocates for education in Illinois.

The final Strategic Plan includes several strategies that respond directly to the impacts COVID-19. The specific strategies include: supporting best practices and continuous quality improvement, including an emphasis on equity and diversity in order to support student learning while also addressing remote and blended

learning; assisting districts in addressing COVID-19’s impact on learning by providing supports around Priority Learning Standards; expanding literacy on the utilization of assessment and on assessment data to accurately identify learning gains, achievement gaps, and COVID-19’s impact on learning; supporting schools to address the social and emotional needs of students, educators, and staff impacted by COVID-19 by providing them with high-quality professional development; and supporting educator retention by leveraging partnerships that will provide access to coaching, mentoring, and teacher leadership opportunities, which include remote and blended pedagogy, as well as culturally responsive teaching practices.

Additionally, the Illinois P-20 Council, a body composed of members appointed by the Governor representing business leaders, local government, university administrators, school boards, unions, nonprofits, teachers, faculty, independent colleges, and parents, released the [Learning Renewal Resource Guide](#) in early 2021. The guide highlights a set of opportunities to invest in learning renewal and support our students, educators, and broader community in these unprecedented times.

The content of the P20- Council Learning Renewal Resource Guide reflects evidence-based research grounded in an Illinois context, insights from focus groups, and information gleaned from the many impactful steps that have already been taken to support students. It includes voices and perspectives from 300-plus educators, students, and administrators, in addition to a whole host of other stakeholders. Pages [10 and 11](#) of the guide further detail our deep collaboration with the field. The P-20 Council is continuing to accept feedback and insights via an email address and a survey.

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

Complete the table below or provide a narrative description.

Table C1.

Funding source	Prior/current SEA and LEA uses (including funding amounts, if applicable)	Planned SEA and LEA uses (including funding amounts, if applicable)
ESSER I (CARES Act)	<p>The Elementary and Secondary Act (ESEA) of 1965 consolidated grant application (Title I, II, and IV) currently allows for pseudo- blending (funds lose specific identity) and braiding (maintain the award-specific identity) of Title I, II, and IV. The district and grant reviewer view the blended funds in the application; however, the funds maintain their identity in the Financial Reimbursement Information System (FRIS). The district can braid other funding streams in the comprehensive, depending on the activity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grants to LEA (\$513,573,040) • SEA Activities (\$555,919,900): (Digital Equity Formula [\$40,050,29 	<p>Continue to allow braiding (maintain the award-specific identity) of federal funds. In order to braid (maintain the award-specific identity) other funds, the current grant application could be changed to add other federal funding sources. To braid a comprehensive plan, the LEA would need to focus on describing the activity and specific activity points of when funding starts/ends.</p>

Funding source	Prior/current SEA and LEA uses (including funding amounts, if applicable)	Planned SEA and LEA uses (including funding amounts, if applicable)
	<p>8]; Virtual Coaching [6,500,000]; DoIT IGA [5,000,000]; Learning Technology Center/ROE #9 [225,827]; Profession Development [1,296,439]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administration (\$2,847,336); ISBE Administration [2,498,595]; Early Childhood [348,741] 	
GEER I (CARES Act)	<p>GEER I funds were utilized to support PK-12 educational recovery from COVID-19 through the following initiatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early Childhood Grants (\$10 million) • Digital Divide 	<p>Programs funded by GEER I are largely complete at this time.</p>

Funding source	Prior/current SEA and LEA uses (including funding amounts, if applicable)	Planned SEA and LEA uses (including funding amounts, if applicable)
	<p style="text-align: center;">Grants (\$40 million)</p> <p>Student Care Department (\$2.5 million)</p>	
<p>ESSER II (CRRSA Act)</p>	<p>The ESEA of 1965 consolidated grant application (Title I, II, and IV) currently allows for pseudo- blending (funds lose specific identity) and braiding (maintain the award-specific identity) of Title I, II, and IV. The district and grant reviewer view the blended funds in the application; however, the funds maintain their identity in FRIS. The district can braid other funding streams in the comprehensive plan, depending on the activity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grants to LEA (\$2,025,724, 402) <p>SEA Activities</p>	<p>Continue allowing braiding (maintain the award-specific identity) of federal funds. In order to braid (maintain the award-specific identity) other funds, the current grant application could be changed to add other federal funding sources. To braid a comprehensive plan, the LEA would need to focus on describing the activity and specific activity points of when funding starts/ends.</p> <p>SEA Activities (\$213,826,465): Student Learning [\$7.3]; Learning Condition [\$11.5]; Elevating Educators [\$7.3]; Non-Title I Allocations [\$2.5]; Digital Divide [\$52.2M]; Interim Assessment [\$35M]; Mental Health Professional</p>

Funding source	Prior/current SEA and LEA uses (including funding amounts, if applicable)	Planned SEA and LEA uses (including funding amounts, if applicable)
		Development [\$58M]; High-Impact Tutoring [\$25M]; Bridge Programs [\$15M]
GEER II (CRRSA Act)	<p>GEER II funding was utilized to support PK-12 educational recovery from COVID-19 through the following initiatives:</p> <p>Learning Renewal Office (\$736,332)</p> <p>Longitudinal Data System 2.0 (\$500,000)</p> <p>Early Childhood Grants (\$23,167,906)</p>	Programs funded by GEER II are in implementation phase.

- 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.

Awarded to LEAs (90%)	
Funding Source	Amount
ESSER I	\$513,547,318

ESSER II	\$2,025,724,402
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*all funds have been made available to the LEAs

Funding Source	Sum of Award Amount	Available
ESSER I	\$569,467,218	\$0
ESSER II	\$2,250,804,891	\$776,385,636

* The above funding chart as of 6/10/2021 – this includes total award includes LEA and SEA set aside. The SEA can track LEA obligation through the FRIS 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.³

ISBE is working with its existing McKinney-Vento subgrantees and community partners to bolster efforts to meet the needs of homeless students as we plan a return to in-person instruction.

Additionally, ISBE is engaged in ongoing, collaborative cross-departmental discussions regarding the best ways to blend and braid federal funds to maximize impact. Title IV Part B funds have been used to provide social and emotional support to 21st CCLC grantees.

³ 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.