



STATE OF NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Guidance on the Allowable Uses of Funds Under the Education Stabilization Fund Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER Fund)

The purpose of this document is to support local educational agencies (LEAs) in effectively utilizing ESSER Funds to meet the needs of New Jersey public school and nonpublic school students. As authorized under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act), these funds may be used for any activity authorized by the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, the Carl D. Perkins Careers and Technical Education Act, and the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act. In addition to those authorized activities, the Act provides for additional allowable uses.

The information below is intended to provide guidance on how an LEA may choose to spend the funds to meet the needs of its students, including students with disabilities, English language learners (ELLs), students experiencing homelessness, and foster care youth. It should be noted that the supplement not supplant requirement does not apply to ESSER funds. ESSER is its own, separate, flexible program intended to assist with the COVID-19 response. The allowable uses, taken directly from the Act, are listed below followed by specific examples. This guidance is not meant to be exhaustive.

Allowable Uses:

- Coordination of preparedness and response efforts of local educational agencies with State, local, Tribal, and territorial public health departments, and other relevant agencies, to improve coordinated responses among such entities to prevent, prepare for, and respond to coronavirus.
- Providing principals and other school leaders with the resources necessary to address the needs of their individual schools.
- Developing and implementing procedures and systems to improve the preparedness and response efforts of local educational agencies.
- Other activities that are necessary to maintain the operation of and continuity of services in local educational agencies and continuing to employ existing staff of the local educational agency.

Funds may be used to:

- Convene district leadership teams to review and revise, as necessary, remote learning plans and emergency preparedness plans to ensure the needs of all students.
- Work with community-based organizations to identify needs and provide support for students experiencing homelessness during coronavirus including, but not limited to, immunizations, food, medical and dental services (as appropriate), eyeglasses and hearing aids, counseling services to address anxiety, and mental health issues.
- Provide professional development to teachers and staff members on the use of technology and delivering virtual instruction and services to support students, including students with disabilities and/or language needs.
- Offer training to parents and families on how to provide and/or support instruction in the home.
- Survey the technology needs for students to ensure access to virtual instruction as appropriate.

- Provide professional development for teachers on using universal screening or benchmark assessments, differentiating core instruction and the delivery of skill specific interventions.
- Provide experienced coaches to guide teachers in the delivery of content.
- Provide alternate means of engagement such as game-based instruction, virtual tours, dance.
- Delivering specialized or rigorous courses of instruction.
- Partner with the community and global experts to provide access to college and career options via virtual tours, discussions and other means.
- Establish mentoring and/or tutoring program for students.
- Train teachers to prepare themselves and students for re-entry to the classroom after an extended absence.
- Provide virtual externships for CTE teachers.
- Provide virtual supports to enhance career exploration (via career information systems such as Naviance) for students and their parents/guardians.
- Develop employability skill development tutorials for students.
- Hire consultants to transform/upgrade CTE programs to meet industry standards.
- Support the development of sector partnerships for CTE programs.
- Support evaluations of local CTE programs.

Allowable Uses:

- Activities to address the unique needs of low-income children or students, children with disabilities, English learners, racial and ethnic minorities, students experiencing homelessness, and foster care youth, including how outreach and services delivery will meet the needs of each population.
- Planning for and coordinating during long-term closures, including for how to provide meals to eligible students, how to provide technology for online learning to all students, how to provide guidance for carrying out requirements under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1401 *et seq.*) and how to ensure other educational services can continue to be provided consistent with all Federal, State, and local requirements.

Funds may be used to:

- Develop district action plans to address the district-identified priority issues impacting all students including specific activities that may meet the needs of a specific demographic group.
- Implement district level plans that include the following components for all students:
 - Ensuring students have access to full-functioning technology and assistive technology;
 - Providing consultation, coaching, and support to parents and families of students, including students with disabilities, English learners, racial and ethnic minorities, students experiencing homelessness, and children in foster care;
 - Adopting best practices in instruction, academic, and behavioral support of students with disabilities;
 - Adopting best practices in remote/virtual instructional practices;
 - Coordinating the delivery of instruction and services throughout the district; and
 - Ensuring Child Study Teams and case managers fulfill responsibilities during the period of school closures.
 - Timely notifications to parents such as a change in policy, when school will resume and with what restrictions
- Review district level plans to ensure issues facing students experiencing homelessness are addressed such as access to virtual instructional, internet access, and technology.
- Purchase supplies such as backpacks and school supplies necessary for remote instruction such as notebooks, pens/pencils, paper for students experiencing homelessness.
- Provide compensatory education services and compensatory related services through contracts with related service providers.
- Increase budgets beyond contractual obligations for related service providers employed by the LEA.
- Provide additional instructional and academic opportunities, such as summer academies, tutoring, enrichment programs, online intervention programs, or extension activities offered to students in addition to the services included in a student's IEP.

- Purchase assistive technology devices to ensure student access to content and instruction.
- Provide training for parents/families and staff on the use of technology devices during periods of virtual instruction.
- Ensure access to technology during periods of virtual learning by contracting with internet service providers.
- Deliver ongoing professional development for teachers and staff on effective instructional practices, including implementation of student IEPs during periods of virtual learning.
- Offer after-school hours or summer programs to provide supplemental instruction.
- Provide parent training and ongoing consultation to facilitate effective support of students in the home during periods of virtual and remote learning.
- Establish a collaborative team of district personnel and stakeholders to create, implement, and review action plans around system preparedness.
- Provide professional development for district staff on the unique needs of students experiencing homelessness.
- Provide additional instructional services to address gaps in learning.
- Provide professional development on coordinating resources to accommodate high needs interventions.
- Increase the number of contracted staff members to provide services to students.
- Deliver training and professional development on best practices in delivering instruction, academic, and behavioral supports.
- Provide increased outreach through community-based organizations and district personnel to address issues such as food insecurity and medical needs.
- Contract additional staff or outside vendors to provide counseling to address anxiety and mental health for at-risk students.
- Work directly with homeless shelters to provide extended learning opportunities.
- Provide professional development for teachers to explain to parents, guardians and students good work habits (e.g., independent work, self-motivation, organizational skills, self-care, educational and health-related resources, etc.)
- Support mentors for students, especially from special populations.
- Invest in technology and partner with industry partners that may be able to allow work-based learning coordinators to conduct virtual/remote observations of students.

Allowable Uses:

- Training and professional development for staff of the local educational agency on sanitation and minimizing the spread of infectious diseases.
- Purchasing supplies to sanitize and clean the facilities of a local educational agency, including buildings operated by such agency.

Funds may be used to:

- Purchase cleaning supplies, and/or sanitizing stations and supplies for schools and administrative buildings, as well as for staff.
- Provide linguistically appropriate brochures or pamphlets to be sent home to parents/families of students with disabilities that include personal hygiene and social distancing best practices.
- Provide brochures and/or training for families on best practices for social distancing and limiting the spread of the virus in multiple languages.
- Provide training to paraprofessionals and classroom/teacher aides on how to support students with hygiene best practices.
- Contract with agencies and/or hire staff to assist with training students to utilize and maintain hygiene best practices.
- Provide professional development for staff in developing tiered interventions and supports for students to maintain best hygiene practices and social distancing recommendations.
- Provide items of clothing or hygiene products for students in need; e.g. students experiencing homelessness.
- Hire staff to clean and sanitize buildings, grounds, and classrooms.
- Install sanitization stations in the schools.

- Training for educators, students, parents and guardians on the need for good nutrition, clean water, extended food planning/rationing, participation in healthy activities such as school, yoga, board games, and other healthy social diversions while in quarantine.
- Purchase disinfectant materials needed specifically for CTE lab equipment and supplies.
- Train Middle School and High School Guidance Counselors on career pathway clusters that are relevant to the interest of students and needs of the industry/region.

Allowable Use:

- Purchasing educational technology (including hardware, software, and connectivity) for students who are served by the local educational agency that aids in regular and substantive educational interaction between students and their classroom instructors, including low-income students and students with disabilities, which may include assistive technology or adaptive equipment.

Funds may be used to:

- Ensure access to technology and the internet during periods of virtual learning by contracting with internet service providers; e.g. mobile hotspots and chrome books.
- Deliver ongoing professional development for teachers and staff on effective instructional practices, including implementation of student IEPs during periods of virtual learning.
- Offer after-school hours or summer programs to provide supplemental instruction for at-risk students.
- Provide parent training and ongoing consultation to facilitate effective support of students in the home during periods of virtual and remote learning.
- Establish a collaborative team of district personnel and stakeholders to create, implement, and review action plans around system preparedness.
- Purchase assistive technology devices (AT) and/or related components to ensure student devices can be provided, repaired, and replaced.
- Deliver training and technical assistance to teachers, staff, students, and parents/families on the use of assistive technology devices (AT).
- Purchase licenses for online programs or downloadable content for use by students with disabilities, at-risk students, and English language learners.
- Purchase software applications that support academic instruction, licenses for online learning platforms, subscriptions, or downloadable content for use by students with disabilities or at-risk students.
- Outfit buses with WIFI.
- Ensure accessibility of all programs, devices, and content for instruction for students.
- Review district level plans to ensure issues facing students experiencing homelessness are addressed such as access to virtual instructional, internet access, and technology.
- Contract directly with internet providers to ensure internet access for students.
- Provide professional development to all staff on delivering intervention services remotely.
- Deliver ongoing professional development for teachers and staff on effective instructional practices, including implementation of student IEPs during periods of virtual learning.
- Offer after-school hours or summer programs to provide supplemental instruction.
- Review district level plans to ensure issues facing students experiencing homelessness are addressed such as access to virtual instructional, internet access, and technology.
- Purchase supplies necessary for remote instruction in the home, such as flash drives, ink, notebooks, pens/pencils, paper, and binders, as well as postage to mail these materials when necessary.
- Purchase learning management systems (LMS) necessary for the delivery of instruction.
- Evaluate the needs of individual courses for specific needs such as printers, microscopes, health monitoring equipment and determine appropriate ways to share or access the equipment.
- Purchase online learning simulations to support CTE Career Pathway.

Allowable Use:

- Providing mental health services and supports.

Funds may be used to:

- Provide professional development for staff regarding mental health impacts of COVID 19 and aggressive social distancing on students.
- Hire contracted staff to provide direct mental health or support services to students.
- Acquire licenses for online or downloadable content that supports the mental health needs of students.
- Acquire HIPAA/FERPA compliant virtual and remote platforms for the delivery of counseling services.
- Contract with community mental partners and agencies to provide assessment and evaluation services to determine mental health needs of students and their families. -
- Provide counseling, telehealth, mentoring, and therapeutic services and supports, to address non-academic skills that impact learning, such as anxiety, behavioral supports, drug abuse, suicide prevention, and bullying strategies.
- Provide professional development for staff on providing tiered mental health supports to students.
- Contract with community partners to enhance tiered mental health supports and interventions for students.
- Hire counseling staff to implement tiered mental health supports and interventions for students.
- Provide training and resources to parents, students, community members on the recognition and prevention of coercion, violence, abuse, human trafficking and abuse.

Allowable Use:

- Planning and implementing activities related to summer learning and supplemental afterschool programs, including providing classroom instruction or online learning during the summer months and addressing the needs of low-income students, students with disabilities, English learners, migrant students, students experiencing homelessness, and children in foster care.

Funds may be used to:

- Deliver services during extended school year programs and/or summer enrichment programs for all students.
- Provide tutoring programs outside normal school hours to address student needs,
- Provide compensatory educational services to students with disabilities.
- Deliver extension activities outside normal school hours to support a successful return to school.
- Provide extra supports aligned to the district's regular education program, which may include services to assist preschool children in the transition from early childhood education programs to elementary school programs (also, the transition from elementary to middle school and middle school to high school).
- Offer career and technical education services to prepare all students for postsecondary education and the workforce (e.g., virtual job-shadowing, resume writing, interview skills, etc.).
- Provide basic instruction on troubleshooting and the maintenance of technology, connectivity, file-sharing, remote tech support, etc.
- Create CTE summer bridge program for students who are transitioning from Middle School to High School.