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

U.S. Department of Education

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Executive summary

Throughout the pandemic, the Ohio Department of Education has been working closely with stakeholders to understand districts' and students' needs and provide relevant supports. The following strategies have been particularly effective at supporting students:

1. Engaging in partnerships;
2. Whole child supports; and
3. High-quality instructional practices and systems.

The initial funding provided by Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act/Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER I) supported these key strategies. This work will continue and improve with support from Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSS, aka "ESSER II") and the American Rescue Plan (ARP, aka "ESSER III").

The pandemic ushered in a set of challenging learning conditions across Ohio, the nation and the world. These circumstances created unique needs for educators and students, while exacerbating existing inequalities. Ohio has identified key priorities based on feedback from stakeholders:

1. **Supporting the academic, social and emotional needs of students and educators; and**
2. **Investing in the future of education including academic resources, connectivity and enhancing in-person, remote, hybrid and blended education opportunities.**

This application details Ohio's approach to these key priorities. The Department considers this application to be a living document as needs and priorities may evolve over the lifespan of the ARP.

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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):

SEA Contact: Chris Woolard

Telephone: 614-387-7574

Email address: Christopher.woolard@education.ohio.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) **Paolo DeMaria**	
Signature of Authorized SEA Representative 	Date: 6/7/21

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.

   Top strategies. *Each Child, Our Future* is Ohio's shared strategic plan for ensuring that each student is challenged, prepared and empowered for his or her future by way of an excellent prekindergarten through grade 12 (preK-12) education. The three core principles of that plan are equity, partnerships and quality schools. These principles served as critical foundations for Ohio's educators and students as they rose to the challenges faced during the 2020-2021 school year and will only increase in importance as the state shifts to recovery. In Ohio, the following strategies have been particularly effective at supporting students:

   1) **Engaging in Partnerships**. At both the state and district level, there was a clear recognition that the education community's response to the pandemic would be stronger if done together. The Ohio Department of Education (the Department), for example, worked with numerous partners, including Educational Service Centers (ESCs), Information Technology Centers (ITCs), Ohio's major educational associations and district administrators to respond to the evolving situation in the field. These partners advised and supported the state on activities such as:
      - Data collection and needs assessments;
      - Communication strategies;
      - Dissemination of material support (e.g., PPE and COVID-19 tests, increased internet access, access to trainings); and
      - Identification of lessons learned and best practices.

      LEAs also engaged in partnerships designed to maximize resources and knowledge about best practices. For example, in the spring of 2020, several ESCs came together to create the Remote Learning Alliance, a collaboration designed to provide collective, coordinated support to districts in remote learning. Members of the Remote Learning Alliance are key partners in Ohio's RemotEDx Coordinating Council, a state level effort to maximize knowledge and resources about remote learning, as well as ensure coherent messaging and resource development in Ohio.

2) **Whole Child Supports**. In alignment with Ohio's strategic plan for education, Ohio released its Whole Child Framework in fall 2020, which is an acknowledgement that when students are healthy, feel safe, have strong supportive relationships, are challenged and experience success, and are engaged in learning that is relevant and meaningful, they are more likely to enjoy learning, develop positive social skills and achieve greater academic success. Students experienced unprecedented challenges throughout this pandemic. Data shared within this document shows that Ohio's most vulnerable students have been most impacted.

   In response, the state and districts have increased the focus on whole child supports. The state increased its use of non-education data to inform needs assessments and supports, including district-level data on neglect and abuse reporting, unemployment claims and physical and mental health. The state produced new resources such as Promoting a Positive and Equitable School Climate During the Pandemic.

   Districts ramped up their focus on whole child supports, including an increased awareness of students' opportunity to learn. One urban district dedicated a team of five staff to identifying students with no internet connectivity and ensuring that need was met. Rural districts engaging in Harvard University's Proving Ground program expanded their focus on attendance to include family and student engagement, implementing and testing new strategies for engagement.

3) **High quality instructional practices and systems.** The educational landscape shifted when schools closed in March 2020. Schools quickly adapted to remote, and later hybrid, models of learning. Ohio's stakeholders quickly mobilized to support that work and to find ways to share best practices. For example, in spring of 2020, the state began coordinating peer-to-peer opportunities to discuss shared challenges and solutions. A network of ESC personnel created Reframing Education to support districts as they consider best practices, have authentic conversations about instructional expectations and make plans to reframe education. Additionally, the state developed Student Readiness Toolkits to help districts understand gaps in instruction and use data to identify where students were in their learning process.

While the goal is to safely reopen schools in person, Ohio's districts and students will continue to benefit from the work noted above. The initial funding support provided by Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act/Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER I) supported these key strategies. This work will continue and improve with support from

Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSS, aka "ESSER II") and the American Rescue Plan (ARP, aka "ESSER III").

Specific details of these top strategies, the state's priorities and related initiatives will be detailed throughout relevant sections of this application.

Lessons learned and best practices. Throughout the pandemic, the Department has been working closely with stakeholders to understand districts' and students' needs and provide relevant supports. Ohio is a diverse state with diverse schools. While not all schools have the same needs, many similar themes arise. These key priorities are outlined below in Section A.2.

At the same time, the Department will continue to work with partners to understand needs and best practices. For example, through Ohio's RemotEDx initiative, the Department is working with the PAST Foundation to collect qualitative information from educators, students and families on both the challenges of 2020-2021, as well as the practices that worked well and should be carried into the future.

The state will combine information about what districts are doing and where they are experiencing success with its commitment to the implementation of evidence-based practices. Together, and along with evaluation of resource investments, this information will help shape the future of education in Ohio. Specifically, Ohio will:

- Provide general communications and guidance to encourage LEAs to visit and engage with the *Safer Schools and Campuses Best Practices Clearinghouse*;
- Build on the evaluation processes started with projects funded by ESSER I state activities,
- Expand the state's learning agendas and leverage ARP ESSER state activities for external evaluation(s) of related projects so that learnings can inform future work and be disseminated to public audiences; and
- Develop and incentivize opportunities for Ohio's districts to collaborate with the state in networked improvement communities that inform state guidance and policies, as well as local decision-making about interventions.

Many of these details are embedded throughout this narrative.

The Ohio Department of Education considers this application to be a living document as needs and priorities may evolve over the lifespan of the American Rescue Plan.

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.

Key priorities. The pandemic ushered in a set of challenging learning conditions across Ohio, the nation and the world. These circumstances created unique needs for educators and students, while exacerbating existing inequalities. Ohio has identified key priorities based on feedback from stakeholders:

1. **Supporting the academic, social and emotional needs of students and educators; and**
2. **Investing in the future of education including academic resources, connectivity and enhancing in-person, remote, hybrid and blended education opportunities.**

The state built supports around these needs using ESSER I state activities funds by:

- **Working with stakeholders to identify needs** of students, teachers, schools and districts;
- **Engaging partners** in a co-design approach to strategy and initiative development; and
- **Collaboratively implementing** state activities through key partnerships.

Ohio intends to expand on these critical supports with additional rounds of federal funding. Many of these crucial activities are described in this plan. Ohio recognizes that as needs continue to evolve, some of the activities will be more fully developed in the coming year.

State-level data insights. The Ohio Department of Education recently published "Data Insights: How the Pandemic is Affecting the 2020-2021 School Year." This webpage includes fall 2020 student enrollment and assessment data, as well as multiple resources educators and families can use to support students. The following information highlights state-level data points. Several key themes emerge from early data about the 2020-2021 school year:

- **Education delivery models.** From early September through early November, more school districts offered in-person learning than remote or hybrid learning. That changed in mid-November when more districts began relying on remote or hybrid learning. By May, the majority of districts had returned to five-day, in-person learning.
- **Internet connectivity and technology needs.** In some cases, a student's opportunity to learn has been hampered by limited access to internet connectivity and technology devices. Persistent gaps in Ohio students'

connectivity are documented in the Department's report on Data Insights; Ohio Students' Connectivity and Technology Access.

- **Student enrollment.** Total enrollment in preK-12 public schools decreased by 53,000 students—or 3%—between fall 2019 and fall 2020. By comparison, decreases in the prior three years ranged from 0.03% to 0.4%.
    - Community school e-school enrollment grew by just more than 50% (approximately 13,000 *more* students).
- **Student attendance.** Ohio does not yet have statewide data on attendance, although local data indicates that, in some cases, chronic absenteeism is a continuing concern.
- **Fall assessments.**
    - *Test taking.* The vast majority of eligible students took the fall 2020 Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) and third grade English language arts tests, but many of the state's most vulnerable students did not.
    - *Lower scores*. Scores generally are lower than past years, especially for Black, Hispanic and economically disadvantaged students.
    - *Remote education models.* The decrease in the rate of fall third grade proficiency generally was more marked among students learning in districts using a fully remote education delivery model.
    - *Equity Implications.* These preliminary data suggest the state's most vulnerable students generally also have been the most affected. Local data should help tell a more nuanced story about these impacts and inform decisions about addressing the needs of each child.

Mental health, youth behavior and abuse and neglect. As children are exposed to risk factors and potential increases in adverse childhood experiences, the risk of developing behavioral health concerns and risk behaviors are likely to follow suit. Children depend on others to have basic needs met. When all are in a vulnerable situation like a pandemic, risks of not meeting these needs are heightened. Additionally, mental health concerns can put children at higher risk for risky behaviors. In surveys conducted prior to the pandemic, between 12% and 14% of adolescents aged 12 to 17 were estimated to have anxiety and depression or to use illicit drugs, putting them at higher risk for negative impacts related to pandemic.

- **Ohio Healthy Youth Environments Survey (OHYES!).** This annual survey was most recently completed in 2019-2020. There were 35,123 Ohio students ages 12 years or older in the sample.
    - Among these, 26.9% reported anxiety issues, 19.2% reported depression issues and 19.4% reported mental health issues

warranting further exploration by a mental health professional.
    - The report indicates that 25.9% indicated that they felt sad or hopeless almost every day for two weeks or more in a row during the past year.
    - In response to whether they seriously considered attempting suicide during the past 12 months, 13.1% of respondents indicated “yes.”
    - Among those who seriously considered attempting suicide in the past 12 months, 24.8% attempted suicide one time over the past 12 months, 14.5% attempted suicide two to three times.

  The 2021 OHYES! is currently being administered in Ohio’s schools and is likely to discover increased mental health concerns.

- **OHYES! survey.** The 2019-2020 OHYES! survey identified mental health concerns for male, female and transgender and gender-nonconforming students, especially when compared to prior data from 2015-2016. Key findings include:
    - More transgender and gender-nonconforming students reported “feeling depressed and sad or hopeless” than in previous years.
    - Transgender and gender-nonconforming students (61.6%) and female students (35.8%) were more likely to report “feeling anxious” than male students (16.6%).
    - Transgender and gender-nonconforming (55.9%) and female students (23.9%) were much more likely to indicate “feeling depressed in the last two weeks” than male students (13.1%).
    - Transgender and gender-nonconforming (62.9%) and female students (33%) were much more likely than male students (17.5%) to report “feeling sad or hopeless in the last two weeks.
    - Transgender and gender-nonconforming (46.4%) and female students (16.4%) were also more likely to have reported “seriously considered attempting suicide” than male students (8.6%).

- **Suicide awareness and prevention.** Suicide is the 11th leading cause of death in Ohio and the second leading cause of death for those ages 10-34. Every 34 hours one person ages 10-24 dies by suicide. Sixteen of the 17 counties with the highest suicide rates were in rural areas. In the spring of 2019, 1,263 students responded to the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) from 36 public and private high schools across Ohio. The

survey results show 33% of students reported in the 12 months prior feeling so sad or hopeless, almost every day, for two weeks or more in a row and that they stopped doing some usual activities. Roughly one in seven Ohio students has seriously considered suicide and one in 15 attempt it. Although 2020 YRBS data is not yet available, it is possible that needs for student supports around suicide awareness and prevention have increased due to increased risk factors during the pandemic.

- **YRBS gender data.** The 2019 YRBS indicates that 43.8% of high school female students and 22.4% of high school male students felt so sad or hopeless almost every day, for two or more weeks in a row, that they stopped doing some usual activities during the 12 months before the survey. The prevalence is significantly higher for female students than male students. 11.6% of male high school students and 19.7% of female high school students seriously considered attempting suicide during the 12 months before the survey.

  The 2019 YRBS indicates that 36% of middle school female students and 18.9% of middle school male students felt sad or hopeless during the 12 months before the survey. The prevalence is significantly higher for female students than male students. 11.1% of male middle school students and 20.2% of female middle school students seriously considered attempting suicide during the 12 months before the survey.

- **Student abuse and neglect safety.** At the onset of the pandemic, the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services had a 50% reduction in child abuse and neglect reports, and subsequently partnered with the Department of Education to provide resources to help educators and school personnel identify safety concerns through remote learning. Information and best practices were shared on modifying school safety protocols to remote learning. The Department engaged ESCs in identifying ways to support their districts' student safety needs. In February 2021, the decrease in abuse reports was close to 20%. The need to provide related supports will continue in the coming months and years.

Plans for additional Data Insights analyses. The Department intends to continue studying the impact and recovery from the pandemic. This includes, but is not limited to, the following planned studies:

- *Healthy Students.* The "Healthy Students" Data Insights report will look at the impact of the pandemic on Ohio students' health. The analyses will use statewide data from Ohio's Healthy Student Profiles project, as well as additional data from the Ohio Department of Medicaid, the Ohio

Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, the Ohio Department of Health and Nationwide Children's Hospital.

- *Spring Assessments.* The Department will have preliminary (i.e., vendor) results from Ohio's Spring 2021 assessments in late June. Partnering with researchers at Ohio State University, analyses will explore changes in participation and performance between the Spring 2019 assessments and Spring 2021 assessments, as well as changes between the Fall 2020 and Spring 2021 third grade English language arts assessment. As was the case with the original Data Insights report, one goal will be to isolate the impact of the pandemic on student outcomes.
- *Workforce shortages*. Additional analysis of workforce shortages, including the impact of retirements, will be conducted as new data is collected.
- Additional studies may focus on aspects of students' educational experience such as attendance, post-secondary readiness and course-taking patterns, including, for example, the use of Ohio's Arts Education Data Dashboard to look at changes in students' access to arts education. Information on additional analyses, including evaluations in Section D, are discussed throughout this plan.

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.***

Data themes. The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted all students. The Data Insights themes above highlight the broad, state-level concerns. At the same time, the pandemic's impact has been different for different students, with some experiencing greater challenges based on existing and exacerbated vulnerabilities.

- **Enrollment.** Statewide, total enrollment in preK-grade 12 public schools *decreased* by 53,000 students, or 3%, between fall 2019 and fall 2020. By comparison, decreases in the prior three years ranged from 0.03% to 0.4%. Ohio's underserved student subgroups are concentrated within urban and major urban districts and these districts saw the greatest *percentage change* in enrollment (4.8% and 4.3% respectively). This translates to roughly 9,800 *fewer* students in urban districts and 8,000 *fewer* students in major urban districts. Although white students account for the largest percentage share of the state's overall enrollment decrease, changes in enrollment disproportionately impacted underserved subgroups. For example, between fall 2019 and fall 2020, preschool enrollment decreased significantly more for Asian/Pacific Islander, Black and Multiracial students than it did for white students (42%, 32%, 31% and 25% respectively). This disparity in early childhood education enrollment has important implications for students' readiness for kindergarten.
- **Chronic Absence.** Even before the pandemic, Ohio's vulnerable students were more likely to be chronically absent, a key risk factor in shaping students' opportunity to learn. For example, Ohio's 2019-2020 "All Students" absenteeism rate was 5.1%. Absenteeism rates for Black, Hispanic, Students with Disabilities and Economically Disadvantaged subgroups were higher (7.4%, 6.1%, 6.6.% and 6.6% respectively). Absenteeism rates from 2019-2020 are likely underestimated because of the challenges in tracking attendance during remote learning in spring 2020. Data from a sample of Ohio districts participating in Proving Ground, a Harvard University program supporting districts' efforts to reduce absenteeism, suggests **absenteeism gaps are only growing wider during the pandemic**. For example, among Proving Ground districts, white students' chronic absenteeism rates increased from 24% to 30%

[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.

between 2019-2020 and 2020-2021. During the same time period, Black students' rates increased from 31% to 47% and Hispanic students' rates increased from 25% to 35%.

- **Assessment participation.** Ohio encourages districts, schools and educators to use assessment data to understand where students are in their learning and individualize instruction to meet students' needs. **For Ohio's underserved students, educators are likely to have *less* information about students' specific needs**:
    - Seventy-eight percent of enrolled kindergarten students completed the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA), compared to 93% last year. **The students who did not complete the KRA were more likely to be students with disabilities, English learners, economically disadvantaged or non-white.** For example, economically disadvantaged students' KRA participation rate was 71% and Black students' participation rate was 58%.
    - Eighty-one percent of third-grade students took the third grade English language arts test (compared to 95% last year). **The students who did not were more likely to be historically underserved racial subgroups, economically disadvantaged and/or reside in districts with low average achievement levels.** For example, Black, Hispanic and Asian students' participation decreased by approximately 29, 18, 14 percentage points compared to white students, whose participation decreased by 10 percentage points. Participation rates for economically disadvantaged students decreased by 19 percentage points, compared to 8 percentage points for non-economically disadvantaged students.
- **Lower scores**. Students' lost opportunity to learn is reflected in Ohio's state assessment results and, again, Ohio's historically underserved student subgroups were disproportionately impacted. For example:
    - Compared to the "All Students" subgroup, there were larger declines in performance on the fall third grade English language arts assessment between 2019 and 2020 for Black, Hispanic and Economically Disadvantaged students. Specifically:
        - Overall, fall third grade proficiency rates went from 45.1% in fall 2019 to 37.1% in fall 2020.
        - For Black students, fall third grade proficiency rates went from 25% in fall 2019 to 15% in fall 2020.
        - For Hispanic students, fall third grade proficiency rates went from 31% in fall 2019 to 23% in fall 2020.
        - For Economically Disadvantaged students, fall third grade proficiency rates went from 31% in fall 2019 to 22% in fall 2020.

Student group priorities. The following narrative describes the needs and priorities of underserved students in the state. Priorities are identified for various groups of students as relevant, but many strategies (such as trauma-informed practices) may apply to all students. The state recognizes that needs may evolve and priorities may need revised accordingly.

Students from low-income families. Students from low-income families were disproportionately impacted by the pandemic both economically and academically. Students from low-income families had less access to high-speed broadband and other technology required to engage in remote learning opportunities. Low-income families were less likely to work from home during the pandemic, thus creating additional barriers to remote learning for students who needed to care for siblings as their parents worked. Prior to the pandemic, these students may have relied on school to be a consistent environment where they could count on consistency and stability in nutrition services, relationships, academic support and transportation services. Accordingly, the state has identified the following key priorities:

- **Individualized instructional and social and emotional support.** Economic instability and lack of connectivity during a school year may lead students from low-income families to experience lapses in educational attainment and consistent school attendance. Students from low-income families may have increased learning disruptions and a need for social and emotional supports upon re-entry to the learning environment. Ohio will prioritize students from low-income families for learning-disruption recovery programs and summer learning initiatives.
- **Professional development on trauma-informed and culturally responsive practices.** Ohio will prioritize trauma-informed and culturally responsive practices to meet students' academic, social and emotional needs when they reengage in learning during the summer months and the 2021-2022 school year.

Students by gender. Some data sources have indicated different impact on students by gender. For example,

- More girls (46.4%) demonstrated readiness at kindergarten entry than boys (38.1%) – which is consistent with pre-pandemic trends.
- Behavioral survey data also reports some differences as high school (43.8%) and middle school (36%) girls were more likely than high school (22.4%) and middle school (18.9%) boys to report feeling so sad and hopeless almost every day, two weeks or more in a row, that they stopped doing some usual activities.
- More high school (19.7%) and middle school (20.2%) girls seriously considered attempting suicide than high school (11.6%) and middle school (11.1%) boys.

- More high school boys (7.4%) than girls (6.2%) attempted suicide one or more times; while middle school girls (11.3%) were more likely than middle school boys (7.9%) to have attempted suicide during the 12 months before the survey.

Relevant supports are listed throughout this plan. Data differences by gender will inform implementation of these programs.

English learners. The pandemic has had a disproportionate impact upon English learners and their families, especially those that are economically disadvantaged and students with disabilities. Accordingly, the Department will prioritize the following supports and resources:

- **Systemwide supports to ensure the delivery of effective language instruction educational programs.** The Department will promote the use of Ohio's English Language Proficiency Standards and effective language instruction as part of Tier 1 Multi-tiered Systems of Supports. Partnerships with regional networks will promote localized professional learning that supports students' access to equitable academic experiences and effective English language programming. This includes expanding with partners such as the English Language Proficiency Assessment for the 21st Century (ELPA21) and Ohio Teachers of English to Speaker of Other Languages (Ohio TESOL) to include training on the use of formative assessments and differentiation strategies. The Department also may expand current programs initially funded by Title III state-level activity funds to make professional development and coaching available to all general education teachers and instructional staff. These offerings will support educators including those who work in pre-kindergarten through grade 3, secondary and career technical education and intervention programs that address the whole child.

- **Focus on kindergarten and early learning.** Nearly 50% of Ohio's English learners are in grades kindergarten through grade 3 and initial analysis has indicated that enrollment was significantly affected by the pandemic. Approximately 36% fewer English language proficiency screeners were administered in 2020-2021 than in the previous year – most notably in kindergarten. The Department expects that English learner enrollment, especially in kindergarten, will rebound in 2021-2022, which will require an intensive response from schools. Accordingly, guidance will be developed to encourage districts to bolster their capacity to serve English learners in kindergarten through grade 3, with a focus upon literacy development and family engagement. The Department will coordinate professional learning for early learning educators, as well as promoting successful student and

family transition from preschool to the first years of schooling.

- **Partnerships, guidance and resources for English learners with disabilities.** English learners with disabilities and their families face multiple challenges navigating both the English learner and individualized education program (IEP) processes. The Department will lead a statewide effort with stakeholders to unify guidance for schools, students and families to ensure students receive the services they need and are entitled to. For example, the Department will develop guidance and resources on language-based learning disabilities, including resources for families in the students' native languages to complement the release of Ohio's new English Language Proficiency Standards-Extended for students with significant cognitive disabilities. The intensive, direct instruction that English learners need will be emphasized through guidance developed collaboratively by intervention and language development specialists. The Department's effort will aim to prevent the over-identification of English learners for special education services.

- **Language assistance and communication supports to multilingual families**. English learners are at a disadvantage due to their families not having equitable access to information such as school recovery plans, revised student scheduling and school-based health programs. The Department will work with educators to identify information that can be prioritized for translation and will explore long-term language assistance solutions to expand on existing supports. The Department will provide guidance that identifies resources on improving communication with multilingual families including the obligation to provide translated print materials, access to interpretation services and the integration of multilingual family liaisons. Stakeholders have emphasized the need for the Department to translate important education documents for families of English learners. The Department currently contracts with a company for translation of materials and will increase translation of key documents and resources.

- **Supporting multilingual educational programs.** The Department will promote the language and literacy development of English learners and provide information on multilingual instructional and assessment practices for schools that are ready to begin, expand or improve multilingual programming. This support will build on the existing linguistic assets such as the Ohio Seal of Biliteracy. Guidance will emphasize the value of having multilingual student learning materials,

qualified multilingual teachers and instructional support staff and robust professional learning on multilingual education.

Children with disabilities. The pandemic and ordered building closures immediately impacted the ability to serve students with disabilities – especially for students with the most complex needs. Since then, districts and teachers have worked to focus instructional time to support each student where he or she is academically including additional assessments to determine progress. Accordingly, the state has identified key priorities to support the needs of students with disabilities.

- ***Each Child Means Each Child.*** This plan offers stakeholder-driven recommendations, tactics and action steps to ensure Ohio's 270,000 students currently enrolled in public schools who have been identified with disabilities benefit from the vision and core principles heralded in Ohio's strategic plan for education. *Each Child Means Each Child* was under development before the pandemic. The disruption of the past year has magnified the need for these supports. This plan will be the basis of the Department's priorities.

  Each Child Means Each Child uses data to illustrate what education looks like for Ohio's students with disabilities. Additionally, it organizes recommendations, tactics and actions to improve these educational experiences into three major focus areas. These include:
  - Getting to the Problem Early — Multi-Tiered System of Support
  - Building Educators' and Systemwide Capacity — Professional Learning
  - Educating for Living a Good Life — Postsecondary Readiness and Planning

  The plan also contains stories that demonstrate how student outcomes might improve when the recommendations of the plan are implemented.

- **Early childhood focus.** Young children (Preschool – grade 3) need extra learning opportunities to make up for lost or disrupted instruction, services and supports toward IEP goals. Infants, toddlers and preschool-age children with disabilities engaged with early intervention and preschool special education at less frequent rates during the pandemic. As detailed in the Data Insights analysis, the state's Early Intervention program had a cumulative 6% decrease while preschool special education reported 10% fewer children enrolled between 2019 and 2020. Children with disabilities were also less likely to be enrolled in

kindergarten or complete Ohio's Kindergarten Readiness Assessment in fall 2020, when compared to the previous year.

Families of children with disabilities have shared positive feedback from initial implementation of federal recovery funds, including Learning Aid Ohio that provides tutoring support for students on Individualized Education Plans. The Department will review this input in collaboration with its partners at the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities to consider possible expansion in future rounds of funding.

A few important procedural issues have also been identified. The Department will work to support districts and families in the following areas:

- **Completion of Evaluation Team Reports.** Statewide completion of Evaluation Team Reports declined compared to previous years. These reports are used to determine eligibility for special education services, which led to a slight decline in the number of eligible students identified. The immediate closure of buildings may have impacted the ability to complete Evaluation Team Reports at the end of the 2019-2020 school year. Districts have been working to catch up and complete reports during the 2020-2021 school year, which requires many hours of evaluation outside of the classroom and observation in the classroom.

- **Dispute resolution.** The Department's Dispute Resolution team has received a high volume of parent complaints indicating allegations ranging from no service, to limited support and service. Additionally, the number of Free Appropriate Public Education Violations has increased which cover a range of service delivery issues.

Students experiencing homelessness. Prior to the pandemic, students relied on schools to be an environment where they could count on consistency and stability in nutrition services, relationships, academic support and transportation services. Ohio has seen an increase in homelessness due to the economic impact on families, but expects a decrease in homeless *identification* during remote learning for the 2020-2021 school year. Students experiencing homelessness have incurred significant learning disruption and trauma. Many students and families lived in "doubled up" situations or relied on shelters for housing. Students living in shelters may have experienced lack of internet connectivity. Some students may have been diverted to local hotels, due to the health risks of being in a congregate setting. These barriers caused challenges to maintaining connections to school as well as mental and emotional issues

caused from the isolated nature of such living. Accordingly, the state has identified key priorities to support these students:

- **Find, identify, enroll and reengage**. Many students and families experiencing housing instability have not been identified as homeless. The Ohio Homeless Education Coordinator will support local homeless liaisons to relocate, identify, determine eligibility and reenroll students. Technical assistance and professional development opportunities for the local liaisons will include training on connecting with community partners to provide resources and expertise. The coordinator will provide information to local liaisons about partnering with neighboring districts to locate students and ensure homeless students are identified and are receiving services.
- **Professional development on trauma-informed and culturally responsive practices.** Ohio will prioritize trauma-informed and culturally responsive practices to meet students' academic, social and emotional needs when they reengage in learning during the summer and the 2021-2022 school year. Prioritizing the success of students experiencing homelessness, including the disproportionately impacted populations (Black, Latinx, Native American and Pacific Islander, LGBTQ), will contribute to transformative practices that will support educational equity.

  Students experiencing homelessness often lack basic physiological and psychological necessities. These must be met before students can fully engage in learning and social activities. This priority focuses on the whole child and ensures the five tenets are met. Students that are safe, healthy, supported, engaged and challenged, have the optimal conditions for success in life and learning. The state coordinator and colleagues from the Office of Integrated Student Supports, who specialize in positive behavior supports, school culture and climate and adverse childhood effects, will provide regional trainings for local liaisons and the current McKinney-Vento subgrantees that will ensure this priority is met.

Children and youth in foster care. The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) emphasizes the educational stability of vulnerable students, including those in foster care. Children in foster care face many educational barriers, including high mobility, increased incidences of trauma, and mental, behavioral and physical health conditions. During Ohio's ordered school-building closures and subsequent disruptions, students in foster care experienced decreased access to peers and trusted adults associated with in-person instruction. Accordingly, Ohio will prioritize the following three areas:

- **Transportation services to and from the school of origin.** ESSA requires transportation services for students in foster care to and from the school of origin, should it be determined in the student's best interest to remain there. Many students in foster care utilized remote education options, rendering their short-term transportation needs void. Further, local school districts implemented the Center for Disease Control's (CDC) transportation guidelines for social distancing, thus the capacity of school busing was often limited. As more students return to 5-day in-person instruction, the state will prioritize supports to ensure students in foster care have access to transportation to and from their school of origin. This will ensure educational stability and consistency, as well as regular school attendance. Supports will include professional development and updating guidance on intra-agency transportation agreements.

- **Family engagement and foster caregiver support.** Ohio has a shortage of foster families and foster care placements. During the pandemic, many caregivers experienced the unexpected responsibility of supporting children and youth in foster care with remote learning, while some navigated connectivity and device shortage. It became essential that school officials were checking to ensure students had access to devices and internet, as well as ensuring that families and caregivers had the support they need to communicate with their student's teachers and school staff. The Department will provide regional and local supports and professional development so that schools and districts can conduct individualized outreach to foster families and caregivers, as well as congregate care foster placements.

Migratory students. Migrant students, their families and entire school systems are experiencing unprecedented changes as a result of the pandemic. Ohio has identified the following priorities to meet the needs of these students:

- **Addressing academic needs.** Due to limited access to online services and resources, migratory students did not consistently connect remotely with their summer migrant program teachers. However, all five regional summer program sites are expected to address these disruptions by teaching students in-person this summer while still offering remote learning for those students who cannot attend a summer school-building program.
- **Addressing health needs including social emotional needs.** Previous comprehensive needs assessments have identified health and social service needs as critical for migratory students. Dental and vision services will become a higher priority in Ohio as LEAs may not have been able to coordinate dental and vision care. Additionally,

coordinating with mental health agencies for services and ensuring that families have access to such services will be vital in 2021-2022.

Justice-Involved Youth. Ohio's justice-involved youth are possibly the state's most vulnerable population. Over 60% of these students have school performance challenges not related to learning disabilities. These students, who are already behind educationally, were further delayed because staff members were unable to provide face-to-face instruction as a result of pandemic protocols at juvenile detention centers. The lack of direct contact through meetings with family or counselors over an extended period of time increased already elevated stress levels. Many justice-involved youth were released back to their communities with no educational plan or goals in place. Ohio has identified the following priorities to meet the needs of justice-involved youth.

- **Whole child transition planning.** The Department will work with juvenile detention facilities and school districts to develop best practices for whole child transition plans. Sending juveniles back into the community with no plan in place for success may lead to higher recidivism rates. The Department will support districts and detention facilities through guidance, professional development and sharing of best practices.
- **Collaboration for Student Success.** Many justice-involved youth had difficulty accessing their assignments. Facilities with students from multiple school districts had to deal with varying protocols from the students' home districts, making the education process at the facilities challenging. The Department will assist in developing collaboration efforts between the juvenile detention facilities and the school districts with the goal of creating working relationships. This will make records procurement timelier and increase relevant data sharing.
- **Community partnership for additional services and supports.** Whole child supports are equally important to meeting the needs of these students. Some may be provided by professionals who specialize in mental health, alcohol or drug addiction or other related needs. As juveniles were released early, many were unable to continue the services they had received during detention. The Department will work to inform community organizations about the state's justice-involved youth and the services they require. Ohio conducted a survey in the fall of 2020 that indicated agencies would like to collaborate with detention facilities and school districts, however, they do not know who to contact to start the process or how their services could be utilized. The Department will act as a conduit for the process.

Military-connected youth. Military service often results in the frequent absence of a parent or caregiver, directly impacting academic outcomes and the social, emotional and mental health of military-connected students. Research by the Department of Defense shows that 54% of adolescents (ages 14-18) and 41% of school-age children (ages 6 to 13) demonstrated decreased academic performance while a parent is deployed. The decline results from family relationship changes, the disruption of routines important to young children and increased responsibilities for teenagers. Students can experience trauma due to parental separation. During the pandemic, the formal and informal supports that military-connected students rely upon may have been interrupted or become difficult to access. Teenage students could count on face-to-face time with peers and school personal for support. At the same time, younger students could look forward to similar support and the routines and schedules of the school day. The Department has identified the following priorities to meet the needs of military-connected students:

- **Social-emotional learning.** Support such as professional development that aids LEAs in understanding the social emotional needs of military-connected students is a key priority. The Department will encourage districts to identify a staff person focused on helping schools identify, assess and provide supports to military-connected youth.
- **Access to mental health care services.** Many National Guard and Reserve families, particularly those in rural areas, must also overcome limited access to mental health care services. Ohio has the seventh largest National Guard and Reserve population in the United States, and many families live far from any significant installation. The distance from military health care providers combined with a lack of specialty care providers has led to a nearly three-month waitlist for some students to see a therapist or counselor.

  One strategy to address this need is a project in rural Southeast Ohio to address student access to mental health services. In October 2020, the Department received the School-Based Mental Health Services Grant from the U.S. Department of Education to increase the number of school-based mental health professionals providing services to students and families in seven Appalachian counties (Belmont, Guernsey, Harrison, Morgan, Muskingum, Noble and Tuscarawas). Many students in this rural area, including military students, will have increased access to mental health services as a result.

Table A1.

Student group	Highest priority needs
Students from low-income families	*See narrative above.*

Student group	Highest priority needs
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)	*See narrative above.*
Students by gender – please add a row for each gender (e.g., identifying disparities and focusing on underserved student groups by gender)	*See narrative above.*
English learners	*See narrative above.*
Children with disabilities	*See narrative above.*
Students experiencing homelessness	*See narrative above.*
Children and youth in foster care	*See narrative above.*
Migratory students	*See narrative above.*
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)	*See narrative above.*

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.

   As is best practice in continuous improvement science, the Department encourages schools and districts to constantly consider effective ways to collect, analyze and make sense of their data and use it to set goals and drive improvement.

   Student learning. While most state assessments were canceled in 2019-2020, schools and districts have several sources of data on student learning. Locally developed and vendor-based formative and interim assessments have been utilized through the year. The Department has worked to build additional resources and supports. State summative assessments will provide data for most students at the end of the 2020-2021 school year.

- **Local assessments.** During times of change and pandemic-related uncertainties, reliable information and quality supports are more important than ever. Districts and schools are using their own district-level data and information to act on student-centric decisions to drive continuous improvement. Districts determine the local assessments that will best meet their needs, particularly in areas not covered by state assessments.
- **Restart readiness assessments**. The Department recognizes the unprecedented effects on learning necessitate additional assessment supports. In summer 2020, the Department released student readiness toolkits that include curriculum and assessment materials that may help identify instructional gaps and determine instructional priorities.

  Additionally, the Department utilized ESSER I state activities resources to provide a suite of optional online assessments for educators to use in grades 3 through high school. The Restart Readiness Assessments, available for English language arts, mathematics, science and social studies, are designed to help schools and districts identify student progress early and receive actionable performance data. These online assessments, which may also be offered remotely, are machine-scored, allowing for immediate scoring including student-constructed responses, and providing teachers rapid access to results.

  As of May 11, districts have administered approximately 265,000 Restart Readiness Assessments: around 107,000 Benchmark Tests and 158,000 Checkpoint Assessments. The Benchmark Tests mirror the live state tests in terms of difficulty and structure and therefore are predictive in nature. Checkpoint Assessments are brief "testlets" that allow teachers to drill down to the domain or reporting category to inform instruction. Ohio is utilizing ESSER I funds to build training and support through the Regional Data Leads. Ohio intends to extend and enhance these supports with ESSER II and ARP ESSER state activities resources. More information on the Restart Readiness Assessments is available on the Reset and Restart website.

- **State assessments.** The Department and Ohio's state legislature extended spring test administration windows to allow as many students as possible to be tested. As of May 11, districts have administered approximately 2.2 million assessments online. The Department has emphasized the diagnostic value of student data while working with legislative partners to temporarily remove most accountability requirements for the 2020-2021 school year. Based on state legislation, Ohio sought and received a federal waiver from ESSA accountability and

school improvement identification requirements for the 2020-2021 school year.

- **Regional Data Leads (RDLs).** The Department utilized ESSER I funds to work with the state's regional ESCs to develop training and credentials for RDLs to assist districts with gauging student readiness. This project aims to build educators' capacity to use multiple data points to assess student readiness, including but not limited to instructional gaps, state assessments, locally administered vendor assessments, locally developed formative assessments, and other state and local data that can help educators understand their students' needs.
- **Arts education data project.** The arts are important to the development and future success of Ohio's children. The Department has teamed Ohio Alliance for Arts Education, Ohio Arts Council and Ohio Department of Education have developed an Arts Education Dashboard that enables parents, educators, school administrators and policymakers to see what arts education is being offered in the schools and districts in Ohio. The arts support the academic, social and emotional needs of students. Data in this dashboard and trends over time will be important in understanding the impact of the pandemic.

Student well-being. The Department will support schools in identifying and understanding the impact of the pandemic on student well-being by providing information, guidance and tools to utilize state, regional and local data. This aligns with Ohio's Improvement Process which includes the initial step of *identifying critical needs* by collecting and analyzing data, which encourages impartial, nonjudgmental, decision making. Teams can pinpoint the areas of greatest concern. Ohio's One Needs Assessment launches the process and can be expanded to include other district, school and classroom data. LEAs can work with community partners to collect and analyze community and student data to identify critical needs of students and families. There are several data sources districts can examine including, but not limited to:

- Attendance, including chronic absenteeism;
- Course performance;
- School climate surveys;
- Discipline data;
- Internal and external health, mental and behavioral health referrals;
- Social, emotional, behavior and mental health screening and assessment data; and
- Additional data sources collected by community partners (for example Youth Risk Behavior Surveys; OHYES!; community trauma rates; rates of homelessness among the student population; poverty rates; child abuse and neglect rates; and the number of well-child visits).

Once data sources have been analyzed and critical needs are identified, LEAs can complete a districtwide environmental scan. Through this process, LEAs compare the prioritized needs with the support services currently offered. This allows for identification of any potential gaps, barriers or repetitions in services. Working together, LEAs and community partners can then build comprehensive plans to address the needs of the students most impacted by the pandemic. It is important for teams to share data with staff, students, families and community partners and actively seek feedback and input from these parties.

Multiple data sources, resources and initiatives will support this work.

- **Family and community partnership liaisons.** The Department allocated ESSER I funding to 51 regional ESCs to hire a Family and Community Partnership Liaison. This regional staff member began in the role in January 2020 and will stay through at least June 2022. The purpose is to identify vulnerable youth populations most highly impacted, build a regional coalition of professionals and identify supports to address the emergent needs through the lens of effective family engagement. The 51 Family and Community Partnership Liaisons identified key staff members in districts and community agencies to disseminate a needs assessment regarding the needs and capacity of current staff to serve vulnerable student populations. The liaisons then used the results to prioritize the student population group to address in their regional coalition of supports.
- **Student attendance.** The Department is committed to prepare each child by ensuring equity and supporting quality schools through partnerships that maximize strengths to achieve collective impact. This vision will only become a reality if Ohio's students are active and engaged learners, and active and engaged learning starts with regular school attendance. The Cleveland Browns Foundation, Ohio Department of Education and Harvard's Proving Ground are deeply committed to this mission and formed the *Stay in the Game! Network* to reduce chronic absenteeism in Ohio by 50% in the next 10 years. The mission of the Stay in the Game! Network is to prioritize attendance by connecting families, schools and community partners to resources aimed at tackling chronic absenteeism. This team of unique partners has a singular aim: student success, which begins with engaged learners who attend school every day, if possible, and fully participate and engage in remote education. The more students attend school or fully engage in remote education experiences, the more prepared they are for success beyond school. The Network will accomplish its goal by working with school districts and partners to prioritize attendance and engagement and build capacity to address chronic absenteeism through a peer-to-peer learning and action network. All Ohio school districts are invited to

join the Network at no cost. Network members will receive access to attendance-related supports, tools and campaign materials.

Ten districts have been identified as Action Districts in the Network to receive additional supports and resources to:

- Launch comprehensive community campaigns to raise awareness of the importance of school attendance and engagement;
- Use data to target specific, attendance-related intervention efforts for maximum impact;
- Analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of specific, attendance-related interventions to determine impact and success; and
- Implement and refine attendance-related solutions across these school districts.

OHYES! In March 2021, Ohio's Departments of Education, Health and Mental Health and Addiction Services partnered together to promote use of the previously mentioned OHYES! This web-based survey can be used with grades levels seven through 12 and takes approximately 30 minutes for students to complete in school. The resulting data will be valuable in guiding LEAs in identifying the social, emotional and behavioral health needs of students.

Student assistance program. The state is utilizing Governor Emergency Education Funds (GEER) to partner with Miami University to develop and train a statewide model for a Student Assistance Program. The state needs assessment includes two components: a supports and services questionnaire and a staff well-being questionnaire. The supports and services questionnaire will collect data and information about the mental health, behavioral health and substance use needs of students following the pandemic and the resources and supports available to students as well as the LEA's ability to implement such services. The staff well-being questionnaire will collect data on the impacts on staff wellness. Miami University will subsequently plan and provide training and resources to schools. Regional reports from the questionnaire will be shared with LEAs and can be used as an additional data source.

The Student Assistance Program model will guide LEAs through the valuable process of completing a needs assessment to identify critical student needs, an environmental scan to identify existing resources and supports and gaps in services and development of a plan for supports and services. Schools may collect this through their own data systems and may already be reviewing for improvement plans and positive behavioral interventions and supports.

School-Based Health Services. The Department is partnering with the Governor's Office and Ohio Departments of Medicaid, Health and Mental Health and Addiction Services to increase behavioral and physical health supports by expanding school-based services in Appalachian areas. The pandemic has increased the need for schools to have physical and behavioral health supports in schools to ensure that the most vulnerable students have equitable access to critical services. The Department will develop guidance on districts using their local ARP funds to include establishing school-based health centers and hiring additional school nurses.

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.

    Since the beginning of the 2020-2021 school year, the Department has surveyed the state's 51 ESCs on a weekly basis about their client districts' instructional mode, referred to as "education delivery models." ESCs code their districts as 5-day in-person, fully remote or hybrid (no information is gathered regarding individual student options for fully remote learning, such as online academies). School and student-level data (retrospective for the entire school year) are presently in process through the administrative reporting system and will result in new information to be released in October 2021.

    Tables 1 and 2 in Appendix A have been adjusted to reflect the pertinent data currently collected. Table 1 refers to the instructional mode as of the week of May 12, 2021 for all traditional public districts. Table 2 refers

to fall headcount by student subgroup, aggregated by the instructional mode of districts on May 12.

Mode of instruction. Among Ohio's 609 traditional public districts, 530 (87.0%) are operating as fully in-person, 78 (12.8%) are hybrid and one (0.2%) is fully remote. Additional data, including a map of Ohio districts, is in Section B.

Enrollment. With less than 0.1% of traditional district students enrolled in a district operating as fully remote, nearly all students have access to some in-person learning each week. However, as displayed in more detail in Table 2, some differences exist for student subgroups in the relative percentage of student enrollment reported within fully in-person districts versus hybrid districts. For instance, only 12.5% of white student enrollment is within hybrid districts, compared to 46.4% of Black students and 31.7% of English learners.

Attendance. Student attendance data will not be finalized by the state for the 2020-2021 school year until early October.

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 weekly statuses for all traditional public school districts are updated in spreadsheet and map form on the Department's Reset and Restart Education webpage.

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.

LEAs retain the discretion to use the mode of instruction deemed appropriate by their leadership and community. With the vast majority of districts closing out the 2020-2021 school year as fully in-person, and many others announcing their intention to go fully in-person in the fall or for summer enrichment opportunities, the Department anticipates continued innovation and efforts from the

state's LEAs toward offering safe, fully in-person learning to all students who desire it.

Planning for blended or remote learning. Multiple stakeholders emphasized the importance of ongoing innovation and options for students such as blended or remote learning approaches. While this application describes Ohio's plans to support in-person learning to all students who desire it, the Department has received a significant amount of interest in remote learning approaches (including blended learning) and the compliance requirements for using such approaches. Accordingly, the Department published guidance on Planning for Blended or Remote Learning. Additional supports available through the RemotEDx initiative are described throughout this application.

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.

    Collaboration and guidance. The Ohio Department of Education has collaborated with the Ohio Department of Health to provide resources for the safe operations of schools across the state. This includes communications and guidance, utilizing the Reset and Restart web page. Some key examples include:

    - Information on mitigation strategies including updated guidance specific to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommendations.

- The K-12 School Staff Vaccination Program prioritized teacher access to vaccines.

Critical supplies. Eight ESCs received ESSER I funding ($21,998.55) to distribute masks, cleaning supplies, hand sanitizers and the BinaxNOW home tests to schools and districts.

Vaccines. Ohio is focused on vaccinating children ages 12 to 18 through several key channels including pediatricians, school partnerships and summer food service program sites. Schools will be encouraged to offer vaccine opportunities to children through vaccine providers during their extended or summer learning opportunities, as well as during the fall. Ohio has approximately 750 summer food service program sponsors with over 3,000 sites that will be encouraged to partner with vaccine providers to ensure children have access to both nutritious meals, as well to vaccines. Ohio is also offering incentives by providing eligible Ohioans under the age of 18 to enter a drawing for a four-year full scholarship to any of Ohio's state colleges and universities.

Child nutrition. Since March 2020, the Ohio Department of Education has accepted all offered U.S. Department of Agriculture waivers for the child nutrition programs. The waivers have allowed schools and districts to offer no cost breakfasts and lunches to all students regardless of income and to meals to students in the school buildings and in a non-congregate manner and with parental authorization for meal pick up for students in remote education. Schools and districts can provide daily meal pick up or multiple meal distribution depending on the model best suiting their students. Schools and districts may continue no cost breakfasts and lunches for students both in in-person learning and in remote education during 2021-2022. Additionally, the U.S. Department of Agriculture authorized all school sites the opportunity to offer afterschool snacks and supper meals through the Child and Adult Care Food Program, waiving the traditional poverty level requirements. This waiver allows schools and districts to provide nutritious meals afterschool to complement planned afterschool enrichment activities.

Students with disabilities. Ohio schools may consider alternative delivery models to safely meet the needs of students with disabilities, such as remote learning, in-building learning with safety protocols in place or a blended approach. Regardless of where the

learning is happening, supports and services identified within a student's IEP or 504 Plan must be provided to the extent practicable without putting the health and safety of students or staff at risk. This might consist of phone calls or virtual conferences for direct one-on-one interaction with a student. School teams also consider the delivery of the related services that students with disabilities receive, such as audiological services, orientation and mobility services, school nursing services, speech-language pathology, occupational and physical therapy and counseling services. For health and safety reasons, related service providers may need to serve students via telehealth. Service providers received guidance on delivering telehealth services at Ohio Department of Education's Telehealth Guidelines for Service Providers.

Additionally, the state worked with partners to provide other related supports to safely reopen schools. These efforts encompass all the mitigation strategies included in Table B1 below.

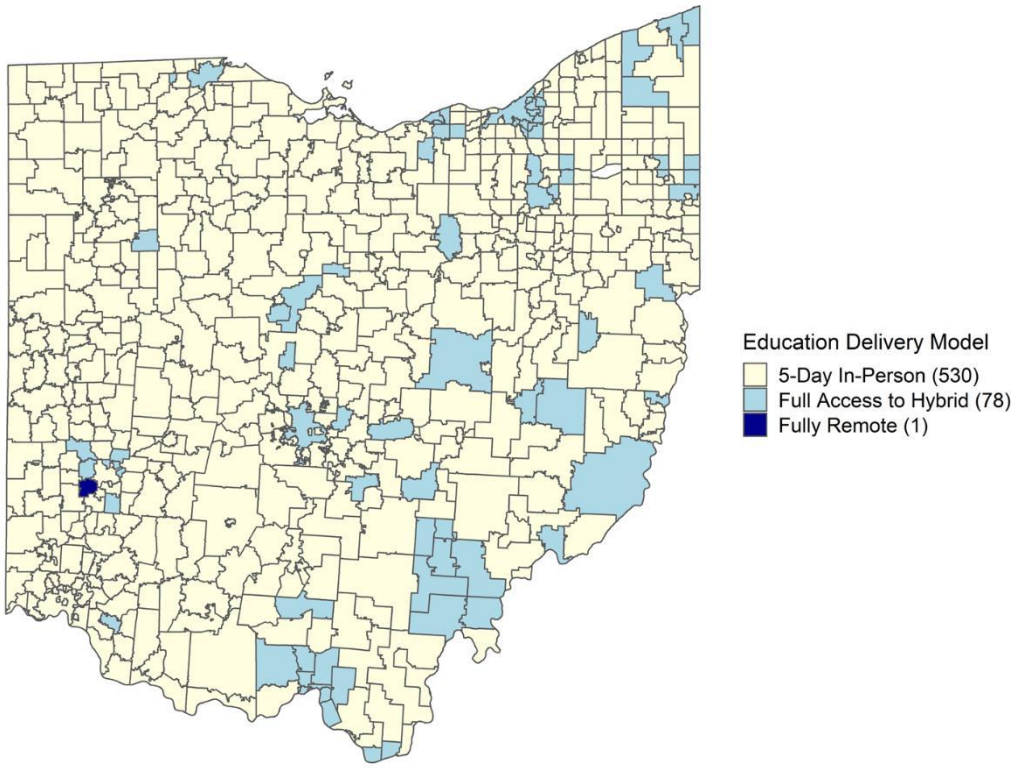
Table B1.

Mitigation strategy	SEA response
Universal and correct wearing of masks	*See narrative above*
Physical distancing (e.g., including use of cohorts/podding)	*See narrative above*
Handwashing and respiratory etiquette	*See narrative above*
Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation	*See narrative above*
Contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantine, in collaboration with the State, local, territorial, or Tribal health departments	*See narrative above*
Diagnostic and screening testing	*See narrative above*
Efforts to provide vaccinations to educators, other staff, and students, if eligible	*See narrative above*
Appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to the health and safety policies	*See narrative above*

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

The Department, in partnership with Ohio's ESCs, collected data on the status of districts through weekly updates. In the fall of 2020, schools operated in three modes: 5-day in-person, full access to hybrid or fully remote. These modes fluctuated weekly. Governor Mike DeWine announced that vaccinations will be available for personnel in Ohio schools starting the week of Feb. 1. For school staff members to be prioritized to receive the COVID-19 vaccine at that time, districts or schools must have alerted the Ohio Department of Health of a commitment to return to 5-day in-person or full access to hybrid education delivery models by March 1, 2021.

By May 5, 2021, most districts had returned to 5-day in-person status (see map below). The Department will continue to collect and report data on building status.



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 Ohio Department of Education collaborates with the Ohio Department of Health, and where appropriate with local health agencies, regarding mitigation strategies, vaccinations and school safety. In April 2021, the Department provided support and resources for the Ohio Department of Health, the Department of Insurance and the Educational Service Center Association in the distribution of the BinaxNOW Home Test kits to schools and districts participating in the program.

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

Support and resources are located on the Ohio Department of Education website. Documents and materials for guidance, considerations, professional learning and technical assistance are located on the Reset and Restart webpage. Updates to these materials are communicated and posted in an ongoing basis.

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

[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.

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

Districts were notified of the Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plans requirement plan in the May 7, 2021 Comprehensive Continuous Improvement Plan (CCIP) note. Additional guidance and practical advice on completion of the plans was posted to the Reset and Restart webpage.

Districts likely have existing plans that address many of the elements of the federal requirements. This may include health and safety plans developed in collaboration with local departments of health. Districts may have existing remote learning plans, continuous improvement plans, strategic plans or other similar plans that encompass aspects of these requirements. Governor DeWine requested that districts submit extended learning plans to the state by April 1. The state leveraged federal funding for ESCs to support the development of those plans, which are posted on the Department's Reset and Restart website. Districts should consider using those previously developed plans to meet relevant requirements of the federal assurances and add additional elements as necessary to meet the federal expectations.

The interim final rule clarifies that:
The requirement does not mandate that an LEA adopt the CDC guidance, but only requires that the LEA describe in its plan the extent to which it has adopted the key prevention and mitigation strategies identified in the guidance.

The Department includes in the Local Education Association ARP ESSER application an assurance that the LEA will have a Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan posted on its local website by June 24, 2021. The application assurance also requires the LEA to periodically review such a plan with its stakeholders. There is a Local Education Agency ARP ESSER Application and CCIP Note 472 with steps and instructions for addressing the plan requirements.

The Department will collect the website address for each LEA plan and post links on the Department website.

Stakeholder feedback also emphasized the importance of contingency plans for future learning disruptions. Districts should consider lessons learned that could guide planning for future crises should they arise.

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.

As mentioned in sections above, the Ohio Department of Education collects some opportunity to learn data. However, the Department does not collect data on most mitigation strategies as that is largely the responsibility of local districts in collaboration with their local health departments. The Ohio Department of Health is also pursuing data based-mitigation strategies.

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.

    Each Child, Our Future is Ohio's strategic plan for education. This stakeholder-driven plan includes three core principles, specifically emphasizing the importance of partnerships. That foundational value is key to the state's approach to stakeholder engagement. Accordingly, the Ohio Department of

Education approached its plan for ESSER state activities (including ESSER I, ESSER II and ARP ESSER) in a collaborative, stakeholder-driven process by:

- **Working with stakeholders to identify needs** of students, teachers, schools and districts;
- **Engaging partners** by in a co-design approach to strategy and initiative development; and
- **Collaboratively implementing** state activities through key partnerships.

American Rescue Plan State Plan Development Stakeholder Engagement. The Department engaged with stakeholders on the development of this state plan, in its entirety, after the release of the template and before submission to the U.S. Department of Education. This included engagements and discussions at the following:

- 5/3: Major education associations monthly stakeholder meeting
- 5/7: Ohio Education Data Professionals Network Spring Convening (Regional Data Leads)
- 5/10: State Board of Education Emerging Issues Committee discussion
- 5/12: Buckeye Association of School Administrators (BASA) State Leadership Committee
- 5/13: State Education Stakeholders Committee
- 5/14: Wood County superintendents' monthly meeting
- 5/20: State Support Team monthly meeting
- 5/20: Community school sponsors bi-weekly meeting
- 5/26: Committee of Practitioners special convening to discuss ARP

Public comment period. The draft state plan was posted for public comment from May 25-June 1 and communicated through multiple channels including a statewide GovDelivery message and on the Department's social media feeds.

Multiple revisions were made based on stakeholder input and public comment. These revisions are reflected as redlined text in this draft. Additionally, feedback addressed ongoing implementation and guidance suggestions which will inform ongoing work of this plan.

Student voice. Student voice is a crucial component to understand and address the needs of the state education system. As part of the RemotEDx initiative, the Department partnered with the PAST Foundation to conduct a series of virtual Listening Sessions and surveys in community gathering places. These sessions were designed to get feedback from students and families on their needs regarding teaching and learning during the pandemic.

Stakeholders also have expressed the importance of engaging students beyond the 2020-2021 school year to ensure student voice informs the work of recovery. Accordingly, the Department plans to partner with the Ohio Association of Student Leaders to create a Student Advisory Council. This council will be an important conduit for student voice including informing the design and implementation of extended learning supports in Section D.

Project specific stakeholder engagement and co-design. Additionally, significant stakeholder engagement has occurred during the development of individual aspects of this plan, many of which have been under development before the release of the template. Brief summaries of these project-specific engagements are below.

*RemotEDx***.** RemotEDx is the state's initiative to assist stakeholders in numerous aspects of connectivity, technology and support for remote and hybrid learning. This initiative was co-designed by education stakeholders and its ongoing work is guided by that broad partnership. RemotEDx consists of four interlocked components co-designed by its Coordinating Council. Members include representatives from schools, districts, the State Board of Education, the Governor's Office, BroadbandOhio, ESCs, the Management Council, Information Technology Centers, philanthropy, business, higher education, PBS stations and libraries.

Each Child Means Each Child. *Each Child Means Each Child* is Ohio's stakeholder-driven plan aimed at improving learning experiences and outcomes for students with disabilities. Targeted stakeholder engagement was accomplished through a statewide survey, focus groups and family town hall meetings. The survey reached over 7,000 educators across all 88 counties. Focus groups included 430 teachers representing pre-kindergarten-grade 12 and all county types (urban, rural, small town, Appalachian). Thirteen family town hall meetings, with more than 150 participants, were held to gain insights regarding their positive and negative experiences during their time in school. Student voice meetings were held with 33 students from across the state. This feedback directly informed the plan to improve learning experiences and outcomes for students with disabilities.

Ohio has subsequently engaged educational leaders in the formation of a guiding coalition to assist the state in implementing the recommendations in *Each Child Means Each Child.* These meetings are held quarterly and address the establishment of an integrated statewide multi-tiered system of supports; promotion of job-embedded professional learning for educators; and advancement of postsecondary learning experiences and outcomes for students with disabilities.

Ohio's Plan to Raise Literacy Achievement. In 2017, Ohio convened a State Literacy Team comprised of stakeholders involved with birth through grade 12 literacy. Its members, who have unique expertise in language and literacy content, assessment, instruction, intervention, district and state professional learning design and program evaluation, developed an updated state literacy plan. The team recommended expanding the existing State Systemic Improvement Plan (Ohio's Early Literacy Plan) and capitalizing on Ohio's regional support system. The group's recommendation to align state, regional and local efforts for language and literacy development for all learners led to Ohio's *Plan to Raise Literacy Achievement* published in January 2018. The State Literacy Team reconvened in June 2019 to reflect on the initial implementation, analyze updated state data and offer revisions including:

- Focus on the need for differentiated core instruction across a multi-tiered system of supports that aligns to the science of reading;
- Integrate Ohio's K-12 Social and Emotional Learning Standards;
- Promote collaboration among educators, such as content area teachers and intervention specialists; and
- Enhance the graphics and visualizations used throughout the document to help bridge the gap between research, education jargon and instructional practice.

The team will continue meeting to review and analyze state, regional and local progress and revise the plan as needed to meet the needs of Ohio's diverse learners. The team will reconvene again in 2021 to discuss continued implementation and connections to Ohio's recently passed Dyslexia Supports Laws.

Stay in the Game! attendance network. The Stay in the Game! network is Ohio's initiative to prioritize student attendance by connecting families, schools and community resources to decrease chronic absenteeism (more information above). This initiative was co-designed by the network partners – Ohio Department of Education, Harvard University's Proving Ground and the Cleveland Browns Foundation. The work of the network is ongoing and is guided by a broad group of state and national stakeholders, including Ohio Governor Mike DeWine, Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, the Supreme Court of Ohio and Attendance Works.

Whole Child Advisory Group and Whole Child Framework. The Whole Child Advisory Group met quarterly during 2020-2021 to develop Ohio's Whole Child Framework implementation plan. Educators, families and child-serving community and state agencies and organizations identified district needs including specific needs due to the pandemic. The advisory group developed

strategies to build regional, district, school and community capacity to increase whole child supports.

Prevention/Mental Health. The Department meets with the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services bi-weekly to discuss cross-agency prevention initiatives and determine needs and resources to support districts and schools in meeting student mental and behavioral health needs.

Job and Family Services Safety Group. In response to a report of a 50% reduction in child abuse and neglect reports at the onset of the pandemic, the Department of Education and the Department of Job and Family Services partnered to co-design resources to help educators and school personnel identify safety concerns through remote learning. Information and best practices were shared on modifying school safety protocols. The Department later engaged ESCs to support their districts' student safety needs. The Department encouraged partnerships and highlighted best practices among local agencies that collaborated to meet the safety needs of children. In February of 2021, the decrease in abuse reports was close to 20%. Although the data improved, it is likely the that needs around providing supports to educators and families to prevent abuse and neglect and respond to trauma will continue. The Department is currently working with local agencies in the Southwest region to share how they collaborated to protect students, strengthen families and equip educators during the pandemic.

Groundwork. The Department engaged Groundwork, an Ohio childcare advocacy group, to collaborate on supports needed during the recovery. Center, home and school-based providers offered ideas that would allow programs to fully reopen and serve children at pre-pandemic levels.

Stakeholder engagement will continue. This section provided a summary of some key stakeholder driven initiatives that are key to Ohio's recovery. While this list is not inclusive, engaging stakeholders is a key priority for Ohio, will inform ongoing work to support the education system and will continue throughout the cycle of the American Rescue Plan.

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.

State Activities. The American Rescue Plan provides parameters on how states must use state activities funding. Accordingly, and consistent with ARP requirements, Ohio will reserve 10% for state-level activities. More specifically, at least 5% will be utilized for evidence-based interventions to address learning loss, 1% for evidence-based summer enrichment programs, 1% for evidence-based comprehensive after-school programs, .5% for state administrative costs and 2.5% for other relevant activities as permitted under law.

As identified in Section A above, Ohio has identified two broad categories of priorities to address the needs of the education system. The following section will identify the specific projects that have already been implemented (through ESSER I), general plans to expand and enhance those projects (through ESSER II and ARP) and identify additional needs that may need addressed, but have not been fully developed (through ARP).

Ohio received an ESSER I allocation $489,205,200 to support schools and districts. Of that amount, 90% ($440,284,680) was allocated by formula to traditional districts and community schools. The remaining 10% is available for the state education agency. States may reserve 0.5% for administrative costs and the remainder for emergency needs as determined by the state educational agency to address issues responding to COVID-19, which may be addressed through the use of grants or contracts. Summaries of the key ESSER I initiatives are included in this section. These stakeholder-driven initiatives will be key building blocks for ESSER II and ARP ESSER supports.

Priority Area: Supporting the academic, social and emotional needs of students and educators.

ESSER I is supporting several key initiatives related to the academic, social and emotional needs of students and educators. This section

will provide summaries of those projects, which will be the focus of continued investment.

Family and Community Engagement Partnership. Approximately $4.6 million of ESSER I funding is being utilized to staff each of the state's 51 ESCs with a Family and Community Partnership Liaison from January 2021 through June 2022. These positions were created to meet the increased needs of districts to address family engagement of vulnerable youth (defined as students in foster care, youth experiencing homelessness, justice-involved youth, English Learners, military-connected students and students with disabilities). The Department is building the capacity of the liaisons through a grant to the Ohio State University, which will facilitate a monthly community of practice and provide on-going technical assistance and support in school-community planning and coalition building. This work will continue through ESSER II and ARP ESSER funding.

ESC-directed supports for extended learning and learning recovery plans. Schools need support in developing and implementing strategies to help students overcome pandemic-related learning disruptions. Approximately $8.9 million of ESSER I funds were provided to ESCs in supporting districts for planning for extended learning plans. Supplemental funding in ESSER II and ARP will extend these efforts. The Department provided guidance to LEAs that these extended learning plans should inform the ARP continuity of service plans.

Restart Readiness assessments. As described above in Section A.4, Benchmark Tests and Checkpoint Assessments comprise the Restart Readiness Assessments. These assessments, funded by approximately $806,000 in ESSER I state funds, are provided to districts and schools free of charge. They complement a balanced system of local and formative assessments, and most importantly, are fully aligned with Ohio's Learning Standards. Benchmark Tests are full-length assessments utilizing released test items that mirror content and test characteristics of Ohio's State Tests in terms of length, test specifications, blueprints and tools available to students. The Checkpoint Assessments consist of 150 brief assessments and provide actionable information for gauging students' knowledge and performance within each reporting category assessed on the state's operational tests. Items offer varying levels of difficulty or complexity, as well as breadth and

depth of the state-adopted Learning Standards for the reporting category.

Student results for the Restart Readiness Assessments are reported in an innovative reporting system – the Centralized Reporting System. This system provides familiar metrics such as performance levels and item-level data but also employs new features that include a view of students' actual work and responses to each test item, the ability to score items and access to data to pinpoint improvement areas throughout the school year.

The Department plans to continue providing the Restart Readiness Assessments. In addition, the system will be augmented with another round of released test items and accessibility accommodations features such as Text to Speech and Spanish bilingual (toggle) functionality.

Regional Data Leads (RDLs). ESCs received $680,000 in ESSER I funds to develop a training and credential for RDLs to assist districts with gauging student readiness. This project aims to build educators' capacity to use multiple data points to assess student readiness, including but not limited to Instructional gaps, state assessments, locally administered vendor assessments, formative assessments and other state and local data that can help educators understand their students' needs.

Additional supports. The following supports are also funded by ESSER I state activities:

- *Ohio High School Athletic Association.* The Ohio High School Athletic Association received $2.5 million in ESSER I funds to support its health and safety efforts.
- *Early Childhood Mental Health*. The Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services received $1.5 million in ESSER I funds to help expand its capacity to support the early childhood program consultants in each of the 16 State Support Teams.
- *School Age Remote Learning Support.* The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services received $5.3 million in ESSER I funds to support its shortfall in funding for school-age childcare during remote learning.
- *Pandemic Support Payment.* The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services received $500,000 in ESSER I funds to provide grants to preschool and school-age childcare

programs made available between June and October 2020 for personal protective equipment, classroom needs and extra personnel for smaller class sizes.

- *Growth measure modeling.* $890K in ESSER I funds was used to enhanced and address student growth models. Measuring growth is a key component of an equitable accountability and improvement system. Ongoing conversations about Report Card reform require simulations and modeling for impact of missing spring 2020 assessment results. This data will also be an important component of ongoing efforts to support data-informed continuous improvements for schools and districts through the State Support Teams and RDLs.
- *Project Evident.* Project Evident ($675,000) provides technical assistance focused on the strategic use of funds, braiding of funding streams in order to know where to target resources, how to align resources, monitor implementation and make course corrections to evaluate the effective use of the resources. The lessons learned from the five pilot districts will allow for an expanded future focus in more districts.

Future supports. A broad array of stakeholders and partnerships exist to address educational needs in Ohio. Many of the needs identified by stakeholders did not begin with the pandemic, but rather were magnified by the recent events and circumstances. Ohio intends to continue to build on these supports with ARP ESSER resources. These services will be delivered through partnerships with regional service providers. These efforts include, but are not limited to:

- *Dyslexia supports.* The widening academic achievement gap, exacerbated by the pandemic, largely affects struggling readers, especially those who have dyslexia. The state will provide professional learning opportunities for educators aligned with Strategy 8 of *Each Child, Our Future* and recently enacted dyslexia legislation so they can adequately and appropriately support struggling readers.
- *Literacy.* ARP resources will be utilized to expand professional learning and implementation of Ohio's Plan to Raise Literacy Achievement to enhance educators' ability to address learning expectations.

- *High Quality Instructional Materials.* Professional learning opportunities and resources will support educators with how to meet the individual student needs without sacrificing the rigor and grade level content all students should be engaged in with their learning. The state will expand professional learning to support districts and educators in the selection and implementation of high-quality instructional materials. A priority focus will be on K-12 mathematics.
- *Teacher clarity to identify critical areas of learning standards.* Students achieve more when learning progressions and success criteria are clear. This indicates teachers are intentional and students know both the why and the how behind every instructional target. Teacher Clarity is professional learning focused on identifying critical areas of learning standards, supporting teacher understanding in those areas and thus improving student outcomes.

Priority Area: Investing in the future of education including academic resources, connectivity and enhancing in-person, remote, hybrid and blended education opportunities for students.

ESSER I state activities funding is supporting several key initiatives to invest in the future of education based on needs deriving from the pandemic. This section will provide summaries of those projects, which will be the focus of continued investment.

RemotEDx. RemotEDx is a state-level initiative that brings together a unique mix of remote, hybrid and blended learning partners from across the state to help schools and districts enhance, expand and more effectively scale high-quality remote, hybrid and blended education models. RemotEDx was supported by approximately $20 million in ESSER I state activities funding.

RemotEDx consists of four interlocked components co-designed by its Coordinating Council. Members include representatives from schools, districts, the state Board of Education, the Governor's Office, BroadbandOhio, ESCs, the Management Council, Information Technology Centers, philanthropy, business, higher education, PBIS stations and libraries. The four interlocked components co-designed by the Coordinating Council are:

1. **Connectivity Champions** provide the boots-on-the-ground assistance to help schools overcome internet connectivity and device barriers that limit remote, hybrid and blended education experiences. The primary partners are the Management Council and Ohio's Information Technology Centers.
2. **The Exchange** showcases high-quality remote education platforms; standards-aligned instructional materials and curricula; and use-case scenarios and professional learning supports for remote, hybrid and blended education. The primary partner is INFOhio, with input from ESCs.
3. The **Support Squad** is solutions-focused educational support and high-quality, job-embedded professional learning opportunities for remote, hybrid and blended education approaches. The primary partners are Ohio's ESCs.
4. The **Networked Learning Community** is a professional learning community aiming to transform education opportunities for students by harnessing the power of its partners to innovate and apply best practices. Primary partners include Information Technology Centers, ESCs, INFOhio and remote education partners/grantees.

In addition to co-designing these four components, the Council's work includes:

- Development and approval of criteria for high-quality remote education models included in the RemotEDx Exchange;
- Facilitating discussion to better align and coordinate remote education activity in Ohio;
- Through an external facilitator, conducting virtual listening sessions with students, parents and educators to capture their voices about experiences specific to remote learning; and
- Reviewing project status updates, outcomes, feedback and proposed improvements to project activities.

Building on the RemotEDx initiative, the Department will continue to prioritize and expand personalized learning for students. This includes STEM/STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics) education, numerous high school graduation options and the earning of industry recognized credentials.

*Learning Aid Ohio***.** Over 1,200 families with children on IEPs accessed a virtual, personalized tutoring service of education

professionals. Using GEER funds, the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities launched the online program in fall 2020 and will continue it through fall 2021. Data collected from family members and educators show that participation has resulted in a 237% increase in perceived level of student educational success.

Future supports. A broad array of stakeholders and partnerships exists to address educational needs in Ohio. Many of the needs identified by stakeholders did not begin with the pandemic, but rather were magnified by these events and circumstances. Ohio intends to continue to build on these supports with ARP ESSER resources including, but not limited to:

- *Enhance educator learning management system to deliver professional learning to educators.* Programs and tools to support enhanced course development in the educator learning management system will be developed and disseminated.
- *Work-Based Learning Incentive Grant.* This program will focus on awarding grants to local Workforce Development Boards to incentivize employers to develop high school on-the-job internship, pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship opportunities for students. This grant will use the High School Tech Internship Pilot structure to co-design an employer incentive approach with other agency partners.
- *Diversifying business-education partnerships and optimizing equitable opportunities for historically underserved students.* The purpose of this three-phase initiative is to provide more diverse representation on school advisory boards and equitable post-high school opportunities through increased earnings of industry-recognized credentials, college credit attainment and high-quality mentorship participation for historically underserved students.
- *Career counseling and advising partnership.* This project will be focused on awarding grants to local OhioMeansJobs Centers to develop their career counselors and build partnerships with local schools to expand services and opportunities for in-school youth. This project will by co-designed with other agency partners.
- *World Languages and Cultures Professional Learning. World* Languages and Cultures Professional Development

will be provided to address the needs of world language educators in Ohio.

- *Fine Arts Professional Learning.* Funds will support collaboration with external experts, contributors and facilitators to create and conduct innovative professional learning opportunities for fine arts educators in order to overall foster student success.

GEER funding. Additional supports have been provided through GEER funds for both K-12 and higher education including:

- *Learning Aid Ohio ($2.2 million).* As described (above).
- *Center of Science and Industry (COSI) ($1.2 million).* COSI partnered with museums, science centers and cultural institutions across the state to create and distribute "Learning Lunchboxes," which provided engaging and informative educational material for students to access in remote learning environments.
- *Pandemic-related support for other education organizations ($26.6 million).* ESCs, County Boards of Development Disabilities, Joint Vocational Schools Districts, the Ohio School for the Blind, and the Ohio School for the Deaf are not LEAs and did not receive ESSER funding. These educational entities received GEER funds to support student needs and pandemic-related expenses.
- *Ohio History Connection* ($1.2 million). Funding was used to create and deliver virtual field trips for Ohio students and families to enrich history education.
- *K-12 Mental Health Supports ($6 million).* A portion of the GEER funding was used to support K-12 Mental Health (see Section D). Funding supported capacity development, connection to community resources and implementation. Funds were provided in response to the rise in demand for mental health and counseling support services as students and families continue to be impacted by the pandemic.
- *Publicly funded childcare supports ($9 million).* As a result of hybrid or remote learning, more families relied on the publicly funded childcare system in Ohio. Funding was used to cover the increased costs associated with children spending additional time in publicly funded childcare programs as a result of remote or hybrid learning.

This section provides a broad overview of the key, stakeholder-driven initiatives supported by ESSER I, which is the foundation for ESSER II and ARP. The Ohio Department of Education considers this a living document

as needs evolve during the pandemic and specific projects are developed and/or supported to meet the needs of students and educators.

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)	*See narrative above.*	*See narrative above.*
GEER I (CARES Act)	*See narrative above.*	*See narrative above.*
ESSER II (CRRSA Act)	*See narrative above.*	*See narrative above.*
GEER II (CRRSA Act)	*See narrative above.*	*See narrative above.*

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.

Extent of ESSER I and ESSER II awards. The Department took an aggressive approach to provide the emergency funds as quickly as possible. The state provided draft application templates to LEAs while hard-coded the application into the state's e-grant system called the CCIP and provided regular guidance and trainings to districts. All eligible LEAs are assigned an education program specialist from the Office of Federal Programs to support, review and approve the LEA funding applications and plans for using the COVID-19 relief resources. All ESSER I and II funds have been obligated to LEAs and the LEA applications are approved as they are submitted with the required information. The ARP ESSER funds will be obligated to LEAs on or before May 24, 2021.

LEA funds that have been obligated but not expended. The LEAs regularly submit project cash requests (PCRs) for claims against the ESSER I and II funds. The Office of Federal Programs can run reports on the rates of spending and encourages the LEAs to spend their ESSER I and II funds prior to requests for ARP ESSER. Federal

Programs specialists work closely with the LEAs on allowable uses and provide support on appropriate ways to spend their COVID-19 relief funds in an expeditious and appropriate manner.

As of May 12, 2021, LEAs have claimed approximately $240 million of the $440 million available of ESSER funds. Only approximately $1 million of Ohio's ESSER II allocations has been claimed by LEAs, however since the period of availability is through Sept. 30, 2023 for ESSER II funds, the Department encourages LEAs to spend their ESSER I funds prior to ESSER II.

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]

Federal programs support. The Department houses all pertinent COVID-19 relief information, planning and guidance documentation in the e-grant system library. Department staff provide trainings and support to LEAs on the uses of funds and planning. The ED STEPS project also supports LEAs in leveraging their resources to support the whole child and the entire school, including using the emergency COVID-19 relief funds.

The CCIP Document Library contains folders with important guidance and training materials. Both the ESSER I and ESSER II grants were hard-coded into the CCIP e-grant system and part of the consolidated application process for LEAs to plan and request other federal education funds.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). IDEA funding sources supported expansion of statewide family and community engagement activities in support of the academic, social, emotional

[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.

and mental health needs of students resulting from the pandemic. Six urban LEAs will hire Parent Mentors to support parents and families of students with disabilities, and current LEAs with Parent Mentors were provided the opportunity to apply for additional funds to directly support students and families. The InspirED Virtual Learning Series offered information and resources for professionals, administrators and families with topics including Positive Behavior Support Interventions, Universal Design for Learning and Wellness and Self-Care. IDEA funds also support the Ohio School for the Deaf and School for the Blind in development of resources and advocacy opportunities for families of students with disabilities.

McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act. The Department's McKinney-Vento Homeless Children and Youth Program guides Ohio's work to prioritize the needs of students experiencing homelessness. The Department works with districts and schools to meet the requirements of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, which ensures all students who lack fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residences receive access to the same free and appropriate public education as provided to other students. The purpose of the McKinney-Vento subgrant is to facilitate the identification, enrollment, consistent attendance, social-emotional and academic success for students experiencing homelessness. Under ESSA, McKinney-Vento subgrantees must include supports for public preschool students and unaccompanied youth. Ohio will award $3,787,527.00 in McKinney Vento funds to schools, districts and ESCs to meet the academic, social, emotional and mental health needs of students experiencing homelessness by aligning Ohio's grant application to Ohio's Whole Child Framework.

American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Homeless Children and Youth (ARP-HCY). Ohio received notice of funds to support the needs of students experiencing homelessness. The disbursement of funds will occur in two phases. The first phase allocation is $7,323,606. The state may reserve up to 25% ($1,830,901) of the allocation for state level activities and 75% ($5,492,705) will be awarded to local educational agencies. State education agency funds will be used to support training, technical assistance, capacity-building and engagement. Ohio will distribute funds to districts and ESCs to current and previous McKinney-Vento subgrants to reduce the amount of training and technical assistance required to use the funds. Ohio will use the first round of funding to target the immediate needs of homeless students, including identification and

summer supports. Ohio will reserve 25% to increase the Department's capacity to provide technical assistance and training to local homeless liaisons and community partners. Ohio will also support vulnerable populations of students who are at-risk of being or becoming homeless. These populations include rural children and youth, Tribal children and youth, students of color, children and youth with disabilities, English learners, LGBTQ+ youth and pregnant, parenting or caregiving students experiencing homelessness. Further, Ohio will continue to provide whole child supports, including summer programming, with the state reservation funds.

Title III. In response to the pandemic, Title III consortium members were provided with an additional one-time allocation of funds to increase family engagement activities for English learners and their families ($117,188 of Title III state activities funds). Twenty Title III consortia each were awarded a Family Engagement Support Activities grant.

Ohio utilized $416,000 of Title III funding to build capacity of educational service centers to increase quality instruction for English learners. Two educational service centers were awarded a grant to provide support and coaching around evidence-based instructional practices to educators. The project aims to support English learners with quality instruction in the general education classroom and to address the transition of English learners from remote to face-to-face and hybrid learning. The project provides funds to build the capacity of district and building-level coaches and select staff to implement evidence-based practices that help ensure systemic responses to English learner education.

School-based Mental Health Services Grant. In October 2020, the Department received the School-Based Mental Health Services Grant from the U.S. Department of Education to increase the number of school-based mental health professionals providing services to students and families in seven of Ohio's Appalachian counties (Belmont, Guernsey, Harrison, Morgan, Muskingum, Noble and Tuscarawas). Ohio will implement key recruitment and retention strategies.

- The *recruitment* strategies include providing hiring bonuses for community behavioral health agencies to hire school-based mental health providers, one-time hiring supports for local education agencies to hire a mental

health provider directly and stipends for social work and counseling graduate students that commit to a school-based internship placement.

- The *retention* strategies include providing annual retention bonuses for new staff, providing annual retention bonuses for existing staff and establishing commitments from interns to work for one year in the project area following graduation. Through this initiative Ohio will increase the number of school-based mental health professionals and increase student access to mental health services.

GEER Funds. As mentioned above, GEER funds have provided additional supports for students and educators. One specific example is $6 million to boost mental health supports for K-12 students through the Ohio School Wellness Initiative. The intent is to develop a statewide model for a Student Assistance Program to include resources and tools to enhance multi-tiered systems of support for mental health and substance use and build a staff wellness model. Ohio's Student Assistance Program will build off the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA) guidance, align with the Ohio's existing school frameworks and include the following components:

- Education;
- Prevention;
- early identification;
- evidence-based intervention;
- referral processes; and
- guided support services for students in kindergarten through grade 12 who are exhibiting a range of risk factors that interfere with their educational success.

Student Assistance Programs integrate trained personnel into schools to support and enhance the work of school faculty, as well as provide direct intervention services to students. The initiative will support LEAs with enhancing their multi-tiered systems of support to include Tier II and Tier III mental health and substance use interventions and supports.

The Ohio School Wellness Initiative will develop a staff wellness model based on a needs assessment from staff. The model will build off Ohio's ABCs of Mental Health, a social media campaign guiding school staff in the process of: **A**sk Yourself How You're

Feeling; **B**e Aware of Mental Health Signs and Symptoms; and **C**are for Yourself and Others.

Based on the rich history of collaboration between the Department of Education and the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, the two agencies will jointly lead and guide this effort.

School Climate Transformation Grant. In 2019, the Department was awarded the U.S. Department of Education School Climate Transformation Grant. Ohio's "Conditions for Student Learning: Supporting School Climate Transformation in Ohio Through Effective Statewide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) Implementation" includes five overarching goals focused on building state and local capacity for PBIS incorporating opioid abuse prevention and mitigation strategies (including trauma informed practices) into the PBIS framework and increasing integration of culturally responsive practices into PBIS implementation.

This grant put Ohio in a position to respond to school and district needs through a multi-tiered system of support lens. The four grant-funded regional field coordinators have created training and coaching plans for the trainers within ESCs and state support teams. The training and coaching supports shifted to virtual modes in response to the pandemic. Resources were provided to trainers around trauma practices and responding to Tier III needs.

The Department produced resources that include information about trauma, staff self-care and behavioral implications of the pandemic and updated these as the year progressed. National PBIS resources were shared. Regional field coordinators will offer PBIS Effective Classroom Practices training early in the 2021-2022 school year as a preventative measure to support districts returning to school in person as well as a menu of other trainings to respond to their individual area needs. Additionally, resources are being targeted to produce a series of training videos on expanding PBIS to meet the needs of the whole child (including trauma informed practices), using the Tiered Fidelity Inventory (TFI) and data collection and analysis.

The Department worked with the U.S. Department of Education and reallocated $11,000 of the state's School Climate Transformation Grant travel funds for the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Service's Trauma Informed Care Summit in May 2021.

Child nutrition. Since March 2020, the Department has accepted all offered U.S. Department of Agriculture waivers for child nutrition programs. The waivers have allowed schools and districts to offer no cost breakfasts and lunches to all students regardless of income and provide meals to students in the school buildings and in a non-congregate manner and with parental authorization for meal pick up for students in remote education. Schools and districts can provide daily meal pick up or multiple meal distribution depending on the model best suiting their students. For 2021-2022, schools and districts may continue no cost breakfasts and lunches for students both in in-person learning and in remote education. Additionally, the U.S. Department of Agriculture authorized all school sites the opportunity to offer afterschool snacks and supper meals through the Child and Adult Care Food Program, waiving the traditional poverty level requirements. This waiver allows schools and districts to provide nutritious meals after school to complement planned afterschool enrichment activities.

Ohio's Plan to Raise Literacy Achievement and related federal grants. Ohio's Plan to Raise Literacy Achievement emphasizes the need for professional learning and resources that deepen educators' understanding of how children learn to read, diagnose why some children struggle to read and sharpen educators' abilities to implement reading instruction and intervention that is aligned to the science of reading and is culturally responsive. Ohio is committed to building educator capacity through embedded, sustained professional development and coaching that focuses on evidence-based language and literacy practices and interventions. The state's commitment to literacy has benefitted from multiple grants. The work of these initiatives is even more critical as educators work to address learning disruptions from the pandemic.

Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy grant. Ohio received a competitive, three-year Striving Readers grant from the U.S. Department of Education in October 2017. The program awarded competitive subgrants to advance literacy skills and development including pre-literacy skills, reading and writing for all children from birth through grade 12. The grant specifically emphasized a focus on disadvantaged children, including children living in poverty, English learners, children with disabilities and those identified as having reading difficulties. The Department was required to allocate no less than 95% of funds received to eligible subgrantees. At least 15%of the grant funds served children from birth through age 5;

40% served students in kindergarten through grade 5; and 40% served students in middle and high schools. This grant allowed 46 subgrantees to build foundational language and literacy practices across these age bands. Lessons learned from these efforts continue to build Ohio's language and literacy improvement efforts across all districts.

Comprehensive Literacy State Development grant. In 2019, the Department received a five-year Comprehensive Literacy State Development grant from the U.S. Department of Education to build on ongoing work to improve language and literacy development. Approximately 95% of the award was distributed directly to local districts, community schools and early childhood education programs to improve literacy outcomes for children from birth through grade 12. Forty subgrants are focused on developing model comprehensive literacy sites in early childhood education programs and district preschools as well as elementary, middle and high schools across the state. The partnership between the model sites and the Department will allow early childhood education programs, districts, schools and families to improve student literacy and increase educational options available to students who have been traditionally underserved.

Model Demonstration Projects for Early Identification of Students with Dyslexia in Elementary Schools. The dyslexia project is designed to address the literacy needs of students in three schools (preschool through grade 1) by creating model demonstration sites and building the capacity of teachers, coaches, principals and regional supports to implement and support evidence-based literacy instruction for all children. The purpose of this grant is to build collaboration between Institutions of higher education and the Ohio Department of Education to:

1. Support all students effectively through an understanding of the science of reading and effective instructional strategies within a Multi-Tiered System of Supports framework, and
2. Accurately and efficiently identify students with dyslexia through a combination of measures including indicators of reading performance and progress over time within the context of effective instruction and intervention.

Ohio will use this grant, in conjunction with newly passed Dyslexia Supports laws, to build educator knowledge to ensure positive

outcomes for students and more accurately and effectively identify students at risk for dyslexia.

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;

    Ohio's students and educators have been greatly impacted by the pandemic and related events which have exacerbated existing inequalities. This has been demonstrated by the data and needs identified in previous sections of this plan. As Ohio turns to address these issues, buttressed by support from the American Rescue Plan, there is both a need for urgent action while also considering multi-year plans and well-thought out approaches. Interventions should be informed by data, based on evidence and evaluated for impact. Accordingly, the plans described in Sections D.1, D.2 and D.3 include current work, but also identify the need for coherent and evolving approaches over the life of the ARP ESSER support (and beyond). Accordingly, Ohio intends to:

    - Reserve at least the respective amount of funding for each intervention in the section including at least 5% of the state's total allocation of American Rescue Plan ESSER funds for evidence-based interventions to address the academic impact of lost instructional time;

- Target services for vulnerable students most impacted by the pandemic;
- Develop coherent plans that build on existing work;
- Build coherence through partnerships as the work evolves;
- Work with ESCs and State Support Teams to develop and implement related supports;
- Dedicate portions of state-activities funds to evaluate the impact of the work; and
- Ensure the plans in this section will evolve and become more detailed as the work progresses. Ohio views this application, particularly this section, as a living document.

Current initiatives. The Department prioritized the work on evidence-based interventions to support the academic impact of lost instructional time over this last year. Current work focuses on professional learning highlighting evidence-based strategies to support high-quality instruction in Ohio's Learning Standards. The Department commits to strong collaboration with business and community organizations to support students. Some examples of this collaboration are evident in the partnership with COSI, www.schoolhouse.world and RemotEDx.

Using these strong examples to support student learning, the Department commits to working with two national collaborative networks to ensure evidence-based practices are prioritized in this work:

- The Council of Chief State School Officers – State Summer Learning Network which is a multi-state network focusing on summer learning opportunities; and
- Results for America State Education Fellowship which is a multi-state network focusing on the use and evaluation of evidence-based educational practices.

Building a multi-year plan. Through both collaborative networks, the Department will develop a coherent plan which focuses on evidence-based interventions and extended learning opportunities as a critical component of mitigating the negative impact of the pandemic on students' opportunities to learn. The Department seeks to help ensure interventions and extended learning is evidence-based; adequately supported (e.g., prioritized in funding decision-making) and implemented with fidelity; and designed for sustainability and long-term impact.

The Department will take both a short- and long-term approach to build up the state's capacity to support evidence-based extended learning opportunities. Potential activities *may* include, but may not be limited to:

- Identifying and communicating what "evidence-based extended learning" looks like both internally and externally;
- Building supports for the use of evidence-based extended learning opportunities into the Ohio Improvement Process and State Systems of Support; and
- Creating coherence between work on extended learning opportunities and other state initiatives (e.g., Student Engagement and Attendance; High-Quality Instruction).

Evaluation. The Department will take a two-pronged approach to evaluating the use of evidence-based interventions to support recovery. First, the Department will use state activities resources to support state-level evaluation of the impact of activities, programs or interventions supported by state activity funds. This work will build on processes developed to evaluate the use of ESSER I funds. Through this effort, all programs using ESSER funds will develop tailored evaluation plans at the outset of their projects. Using standardized tools and with support from the Department's Office of Research and Evaluation, programs will develop scopes of work, identify internal and/or external evaluation teams, execute formative and summative evaluation plans and report on the impact of projects.

Second, all districts receiving ARP ESSER funds must use 20% of those funds to measure and address the impact of lost instructional time and *ensure that their evidence-based interventions respond to students' academic, social, emotional and mental health needs*. The Department interprets this to mean that districts must engage in evaluation to understand interventions' ongoing impact. The Department will facilitate these evaluation activities by using state activity funds to create and support networked improvement communities which districts can opt to participate in, thereby meeting their evaluation expectations. Districts that opt into networked improvement communities will work with an evaluation partner identified by the state to support the effective implementation and evaluation of shared evidence-based interventions. Stakeholder feedback

emphasized the importance of input from educators in this evaluation work, as well as transparency of results.

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 noted in previous sections of this application, the Department has already started using data to support and encourage the use of evidence-based interventions in addressing the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on certain groups of students. Data from Ohio's Data Insights reports are intended to draw attention to the pandemic's disparate impact on certain student subgroups. Doing so enables the state and districts alike to strategically target professional learning resources and supports for academic, social, emotional and mental health needs of students most adversely affected by the pandemic.

Ohio will use state-level, disaggregated data on enrollment, absenteeism, engagement in remote learning, access to internet and technology resources, performance on state assessments and other key opportunity to learn measures to continue assessing the pandemic's impact. These same data will serve as valuable measures of the impact of evidence-based interventions on students' recovery. Additionally, Ohio has strong cross-agency data collaborations, which means the state will continue to use non-education data resources to inform state- and district-level discussions about students' needs. This data includes district-level information on unemployment rates, physical and mental health for Medicaid-participating students and data on neglect and abuse reports. While these non-education data points are not available at the subgroup level, they will inform robust Whole Child needs assessments.

While analyzing state-level data to target support for evidence-based interventions, the Department will continue to encourage districts to use local data to understand their students' needs so that they can select evidence-based interventions designed to support the students disproportionately impacted by the pandemic in their districts.

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

As discussed throughout this document, extended learning strategies and interventions will be targeted to student needs and informed by data with expectations of evaluation of impact. As Ohio works with stakeholders to fully develops specifics, these priorities will guide investments of SEA funds.

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;

As discussed in Section D.1.i, Ohio intends to:

- Reserve at least 1% of the state's total allocation of ARP funds for evidence-based summer learning and enrichment programs;
- Target services for vulnerable students most impacted by the pandemic;
- Develop coherent plans that build on existing work;
- Build coherence through partnerships as the work evolves;
- Work with ESCs and State Support Teams to develop and implement related supports;
- Dedicate portions of state-activities funds to evaluate the impact of the work; and
- Ensure the plans in the section will evolve and become more detailed as the work progresses. Ohio views this application, particularly this section, as a living document.

Evidence-based summer learning and enrichment programs are critical to addressing learning loss due to the pandemic. Over the

last year, the Department has worked to support LEAs with summer learning and enrichment programs. There is a committed focus on literacy, math, career and college readiness, STEAM and community partnerships to respond to students' academic, social, emotional and mental health needs.

CCSSO Summer Learning Network. The Department is working with nine other State Education Agencies, the National Summer Learning Association and Council of Chief State School Officers in a collaborative network. The goal of work is to:

- Use strong data to develop community system-wide strategies for summer learning;
- Elevate exemplars of teaching practices in summer and leverage summer for positive, effective teacher education and induction experiences;
- Identify and disseminate guidance to districts and schools that showcases instructional practices which supports the academic, social, emotional and mental health needs of students; and
- Advance summer quality program standards and positive youth development practices that can be applied across districts and integrated into the school year.

Outcomes from this network and related activities will help guide Ohio's targeted priorities for use of ARP funding for summer enrichment activities.

Evaluation. As described above in section D.1.i, the Department will use a two-pronged approach to engage in both state- and district-level evaluation activities.

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

As described above in section D.1.ii, the Department will use a range of state-level, disaggregated data points to target summer learning and enrichment supports to those students most adversely impacted by the pandemic. Additionally, the Department will continue to support districts' local use of data to identify students in greatest need of support.

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

As discussed throughout this document, extended learning strategies and interventions will be targeted to student needs and informed by data with expectations of evaluation of impact. As Ohio works with stakeholders to fully develop specifics, these priorities will guide investments of SEA funds.

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;

As discussed in Section D.1.i, Ohio intends to:

- Reserve at least 1% of the state's total allocation of ARP ESSER funds for evidence-based comprehensive afterschool programs;
- Target services for vulnerable students most impacted by the pandemic;
- Develop coherent plans that build on existing work;
- Build coherence through partnerships as the work evolves;
- Work with Education Service Centers and State Support Teams to develop and implement related supports;
- Dedicate portions of state-activities funds to evaluate the impact of the work; and
- Ensure the plans in the section will evolve and become more detailed as the work progresses. Ohio views this application, particularly this section, as a living document.

21st Century Community Learning Center grant program. The Department has established a collaborative network to support evidence-based comprehensive afterschool programs and ensure

such programs respond to students' academic, social, emotional and mental health needs. The Nita M. Lowey 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) grant program provides opportunities for children who come from economically disadvantaged families and attend low-performing schools to receive academic supports. In addition to this model program, the Department proposes co-design of afterschool programs with community partners. These efforts prioritize the use of high-quality instructional materials for math and literacy; integration of career and college readiness; STEAM related instructional practices; and a focus on social, emotional and mental health.

Stakeholders emphasized the importance of coordination between existing local 21st Century Community Learning Center grant programs and plans for local use of ARP ESSER funds for afterschool programs. The Department will share guidance with LEAs to encourage expansion of existing programs when relevant to leverage existing partnerships and avoiding duplicative services.

Ohio Afterschool Network (OAN) partnership. Community partnerships are key to the success of expanded learning and out-of-school time. The OAN is an invaluable partner providing ongoing leadership, support and advocacy to help address the educational and social emotional needs of students. This network serves on the 21st Century Community Stakeholder Committee and offers professional development in expanded learning and out-of-school time.

Evaluation. A long-term evaluation of Ohio's 21st Century Learning Centers has been ongoing since 2003. This external evaluation examines the impact of the grant program on student outcomes and identifies continuous improvement opportunities. The evaluation design will be updated to include research questions and analytical methods to address student performance and pandemic-related impacts during the most recent school years.

ARP ESSER funding may be used to support additional evaluation activities and continuous improvement approaches as relevant.

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

As described above in section D(1)(ii), the Department will use a range of state-level, disaggregated data points to target afterschool programming supports to those students most adversely impacted by the pandemic. Additionally, the Department will continue to support districts' local use of data to identify students in greatest need of support.

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

As discussed throughout this document, extended learning strategies and interventions will be targeted to student needs and informed by data with expectations of evaluation of impact. As Ohio works with stakeholders to fully develop specifics, these priorities will guide investments of SEA funds.

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.

As described above, state activity funds to support emergency needs have been used in ESSER I and II and will continue to be used to support student needs based on stakeholder feedback and identified needs. Ohio plans to reserve the full amount for emergency needs. Ohio will continue to enhance, amplify and expand on the work started with the state activity funds described above. In many cases, investments will allow for an extension of services through 2024.

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

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

1. LEA Plans for the Use of ARP ESSER Funds: Describe what the SEA will require its LEAs to include in LEA plans consistent with the ARP ESSER requirements for the use of ARP ESSER funds, how the SEA will require such plans to be made available to the public, and the deadline by which the LEA must submit its ARP ESSER plan (which must be a reasonable timeline and should be within no later than 90 days after receiving its ARP ESSER allocation). The LEA plans must include, at a minimum:
    i. The extent to which and how the funds will be used to implement prevention and mitigation strategies that are, to the greatest extent practicable, in line with the most recent CDC guidance, in order to continuously and safely operate schools for in-person learning;
    ii. How the LEA will use the funds it reserves under section 2001(e)(1) of the ARP Act (totaling not less than 20 percent of the LEA's total allocation of ARP ESSER funds) to address the academic impact of lost instructional time through the implementation of evidence-based interventions, such as summer learning or summer enrichment, extended day, comprehensive afterschool programs, or extended school year programs;
    iii. How the LEA will spend its remaining ARP ESSER funds consistent with section 2001(e)(2) of the ARP Act; and
    iv. How the LEA will ensure that the interventions it implements, including but not limited to the interventions under section 2001(e)(1) of the ARP Act to address the academic impact of lost instructional time, will respond to the academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs of all students, and particularly those students disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, including students from low-income families, students of color, English learners, children with disabilities, students experiencing homelessness, children and youth in foster care, and migratory students.

    Local plan submission and assurances. The Department has taken the necessary actions to ensure the LEAs meet all the ARP ESSER requirements, including developing an application, hard coding the application into its existing e-grant system, requiring the LEAs certify the ARP ESSER assurances and meet required deadlines and timelines. The LEA ARP ESSER Application, CCIP Note 470 and CCIP Note 472 provide helpful information and instructions on the allocation process and required set aside amounts. The CCIP system will automatically require the LEA allocation to budget for those set aside purposes.

    Networked improvement communities. As discussed in Section D, all districts receiving ARP ESSER have specific requirements to use

relevant funds for extended learning opportunities to address learning disruptions. The Department interprets those requirements to mean that districts must engage in evaluation to understand the interventions' ongoing impact. The Department will facilitate these evaluation activities by using state activity funds to create and support networked improvement communities which districts can opt to participate in, thereby meeting their evaluation expectations. Districts that opt into networked improvement communities will work with an evaluation partner identified by the state to support the effective implementation and evaluation of shared evidence-based interventions.

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

   The LEA must also engage in meaningful consultation with each of the following to the extent present in or served by the LEA:
   i. Tribes;
   ii. civil rights organizations (including disability rights organizations); and
   iii. stakeholders representing the interests of children with disabilities, English learners, children experiencing homelessness, children and youth in foster care, migratory students, children who are incarcerated, and other underserved students.

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

   The Department has taken the necessary actions to ensure the LEAs meet all the ARP ESSER requirements, including requiring meaningful consultation with all stakeholders identified in this section. These requirements are part of the LEA application assurances, part of the internal application review process and back-end monitoring and compliance process. The Office of Federal Programs provides trainings and guidance messages to LEAs throughout this process. The Local Education Agency ARP ESSER Application, CCIP Note 470 and CCIP Note 472 provide helpful information and instructions on the required stakeholder engagement.

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

Support and monitoring. The Department's process of supporting and monitoring LEAs is described in more detail in Section G below. The Department provides LEAs with front-end supports, progress support and back-end reviews to ensure all relevant requirements of programs are met. As part of this support process, the Department relies on cross offices to address relevant focus areas. The Department will add specific questions requesting the LEAs provide evidence of implementation of evidence-based strategies.

Evidence-based interventions. The Department is committed to supporting the implementation of evidenced-based interventions, as well as contributing to the growing evidence base for interventions designed to respond to students' academic, social, emotional and mental health needs. The Department provides resource on the meaning and use of evidence-based strategies on its website here. Additionally, the Ohio Evidence-Based Clearinghouse serves as a resource for educators seeking more information about evidence-based strategies and their role in the cycle of continuous improvement. The Department is currently partnering with the Ohio Education Research Center to expand Ohio's Evidence-Based Clearinghouse to include additional evidence-based strategies related to whole child supports. Based on feedback from Ohio's Whole Child Advisory council, this work will include an emphasis on strategies that support students' physical and mental health, as well as strategies for family engagement. Through the RemotEDx initiative, Ohio is collaborating with InfOhio to curate evidence-based and best practices for high-quality instruction in remote and in-person settings in the RemotEDX Exchange. In addition, the Department's Ideas for Innovation include a collection of best practices and a webpage to showcase districts' implementation of whole child supports.

Networked improvement communities. as described in Section D.1.i, the Department will develop and support networked improvement communities to encourage districts implementing similar interventions to engage collaboratively in evaluation activities. By supporting these networked improvement communities, the state will have the opportunity to give visibility to the effectiveness of interventions that districts employ. The Department will share learnings from these collaborative evaluation efforts publicly to benefit the broader educational community.

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

Support and monitoring. The Department's process of supporting and monitoring LEAs is described in more detail in Section G below. The Department provides LEAs with front-end supports, progress support and back-end reviews to ensure all relevant requirements of programs are met. As part of this support process, the Department relies on cross offices to address relevant focus areas.

Disproportionate impact. As it relates to addressing the disproportionate impact of the pandemic on certain groups of students, the Department is approaching this from two vantage points. First, state-level data can provide significant insights. The Department is proactively analyzing state data and reporting on trends through mechanisms such as its recent Data Insights series. Second, the Department encourages schools and districts to constantly consider effective ways to collect, analyze and make sense of their data and use it to set goals and drive improvement. The Ohio Improvement Process is Ohio's structured improvement process that goes beyond the traditional plan-do-study-act (PDSA) cycle. This process is driven by data with support from Ohio's regional partners and is the foundation for Ohio's Every Student Succeeds Act Improvement activities. The disproportionate impact on groups of students will be addressed through this continuous improvement process.

In addition, the Department requires each LEA provide a description of how it is addressing the impact of the pandemic on certain groups of students in the application to for ARP ESSER funds. These applications are reviewed by the Office of Federal Programs for completeness. For the compliance monitoring process on LEAs, the

Department will add a specific question requesting the LEAs provide evidence that they addressed this purpose.

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.

Support and monitoring. The Department's process of supporting and monitoring LEAs is described in more detail in Section G below. The Department provides LEAs with front-end supports, progress support and back-end reviews to ensure all relevant requirements of programs are met. As part of this support process, the Department relies on cross offices to address relevant focus areas.

The Department requires each LEA to provide a description of how it is using ARP ESSER funds to identify, reengage and support students in the application for ARP ESSER funds. These applications are reviewed by the Office of Federal Programs for completeness. For the compliance monitoring process, the Department will add a specific question requesting the LEAs provide evidence that they addressed this purpose.

Identify, reengage and support. As it relates to the use of funds to identify, reengage and support students most likely to have experienced the impact of lost instructional time on student learning, the Department will be in a strong position to help districts use data to target evidence-based interventions. The Department will use existing and new data and data tools to accomplish this goal, including the following:

- **Data on students' experiences**. The Department is collecting statewide data on districts' and schools' education delivery models, as well as data on which students opted for remote learning regardless of their district's model. The Department will analyze this data at the state level. Additionally, the Department has the capacity to securely provide districts with analyses that identify their students who missed the most in-person instruction during 2019-2020 and 2020-2021.

- **State partnerships**. Prior to the pandemic, Ohio created the Ohio Attendance Network, which includes the Cleveland Browns Foundation and Harvard University's Proving Ground program and is advised by AttendanceWorks. The Network's efforts to encourage student attendance, as well as efforts to encourage and equip districts to look at and use data on their students' attendance ramped up in 2020-2021. The Cleveland Browns Foundation is creating a Digital Playbook which will provide districts with guidance on how to analyze their data to understand which student were not fully engaged in learning. Through a supplemental Statewide Longitudinal Data System grant, the Department will partner with a research institution to learn more about how engagement was measured during 2020-2021 and disseminate best practices for future attendance and engagement measurement. Finally, the Department is encouraging a focus on attendance and engagement through new resources and webinars aimed at LEAs, State Support Teams and other education partners.
- **Early warning system**. Through Ohio's 2019 Statewide Longitudinal Data System (SLDS) grant, the Department will release a new Early Warning System in Fall 2021. The Early Warning System will be available to all districts at no cost and will identify students most at-risk of dropping out of school. Ohio is also using SLDS funds to train the state's RDLs on the new Early Warning System, to ensure districts have support in using the new data tool.

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

Support and monitoring. The Department'sprocess of supporting and monitoring LEAs is described in more detail in Section G below. The Department provides LEAs with front-end supports, progress support and back-end reviews

to ensure all relevant requirements of programs are met. As part of this support process, the Department relies on cross offices to address relevant focus areas.

LEA budget applications. The Department requires the LEA to provide a budget and description of how the district plans to use ARP ESSER funds. in the application that is reviewed and approved. This description should include the specific purpose as it relates to student needs at the school level. For the compliance monitoring process, the Department will add a specific question requesting the LEAs provide evidence that they are implementing strategies for taking education equity into account including equitable and inclusive return to in-person instruction and establishing policies and practices that avoid the over-use of exclusionary discipline measures and creating a positive and supportive learning environment for all students.

Spending guidance. The Department is drafting guidance for LEAs on spending considerations for ARP ESSER funds that maximize supports for underserved students to address their academic social, emotional and/or mental health needs. This will include guidance to use funds for extended learning opportunities, family supports, nutrition needs, professional development for their staff, mental health partnerships, school-based health centers, transportation for foster care and homeless youth and supporting the needs of early learners transitioning from preschool to kindergarten. LEAs will benefit from receiving concrete examples and resources available from a variety of national organizations.

Reset/Restart Guidance. The Department released extensive Reset and Restart guidance in fall 2020. Specific examples are referenced throughout this document. This guidance includes considerations for underserved and vulnerable student populations to address the academic, social, emotional, mental and physical health needs of students. The Department will continue to update these resources.

F. Supporting the Educator Workforce

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

1. Supporting and Stabilizing the Educator Workforce:
    i. Describe the extent to which the State is facing shortages of educators, education administration personnel, and other school personnel involved in safely reopening schools, and the extent to which they vary by region/type of school district and/or groups of

educators (e.g., special educators and related services personnel and paraprofessionals; bilingual or English as a second language educators; science, technology, engineering, and math ("STEM") educators; career and technical education ("CTE") educators; early childhood educators). Cite specific data on shortages and needs where available.

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

Shortage areas. Ohio has identified multiple areas of shortages in the educator workforce (teaching and student support) which are identified in Table F1. For this analysis, shortage of full-time equivalent (FTE) is defined as the number of educators whose credentials are not aligned with their current placement.

To determine shortage areas, teaching areas are ranked by the percentage of courses with teachers lacking aligned credentials to the relevant subject area, grade level or student population. Student support areas are ranked by the percent of the statewide full-time equivalent positions currently filled without the appropriate credential. In most cases, that person holds a substitute or temporary license in the area such as a Temporary Intern School Psychologist license that Ohio issues to trainees who can work under the supervision of a fully licensed school psychologist.

The U.S. Department of Education allows states to identify shortage areas where the combined shortage FTE adds up to no more than 5% of the total FTE for those positions in the state. The following areas meet that threshold.

Table F1.

Subject Area	Percent courses or positions filled by out-of-field educators	Shortage FTE	Note
*Registered Nurses	39.6	505.9	
*Occupational Therapists	27.2	241.8	*See narrative below*
*Physical Therapists	11.2	32.0	*See narrative below*
Information Literacy	9.9	8.7	
Computer Science	8.0	517.7	
Technology Education	7.7	343.0	
Theater	7.0	68.5	
*School Counselors	6.5	258.7	*See narrative below*
*School Psychologists	6.5	125.2	*See narrative below*

TESOL	6.0	18.0	
*Speech Pathologists	5.2	133.8	
ROTC	5.1	1.5	
Engineering & Science Technology	3.8	384.2	
Health Science	3.8	224.8	
Family & Consumer Science	3.4	265.3	
Business Education	3.4	240.3	
Information Technology	3.0	347.3	
Dance	2.7	9.0	
Health Education	2.7	424.2	
Law Enforcement	2.6	40.0	
Construction Technologies	2.0	69.5	
Arts & Communication	1.8	40.2	
Education & Training	1.6	34.6	
World Languages	1.5	136.5	
Transportation Systems	1.5	66.1	
Physical Education	1.4	312.9	

* Student support area

The table above provides data on identified shortage areas. Additional information on special educators and related personnel, and non-teaching areas is described below to provide more context on workforce needs and ongoing efforts to address those concerns.

Special educators and related service personnel and paraprofessionals. Local education agencies have hired additional special educators and related service personnel to address multiple educational models. Some highly trained paraprofessionals were laid off and sought other employment during building closures. Some LEAs found other employment tasks for paraprofessionals such as making materials and other administrative work. Now that school buildings are open, LEAs some must hire and train new paraprofessionals.

School psychologists. Many LEAs in rural areas faced a shortage of school psychologists prior to the pandemic. Some school psychologists resigned or retired early during the pandemic. Ohio has an innovative program in which interns are placed for a year in LEAs that have difficulty recruiting and retaining school psychologists. Completions of intern requirements was more difficult when buildings were closed. Universities had difficulty

placing school psychology students in schools for field experiences. These all contribute to an ongoing shortage of school psychologists.

Mental health professionals. In October 2020, the Department was awarded the School-based Mental Health Services grant from the U.S. Department of Education to increase the number of school-based mental health professionals in seven of Ohio's Appalachian counties. A needs assessment demonstrated high mental and behavioral health needs but a low proportion of school-based mental health professionals for the student population.

- In the seven counties, school-based mental health professional ratios ranged from 0.35 providers per 1,000 enrolled students to 4.14 providers per 1,000 enrolled students.
- Four of the 27 districts located within the seven counties had less than 1.0 mental health professional per 1,000 enrolled students.
- An additional six districts had between 1.0 and 1.5 mental health professionals per 1,000 enrolled students.
- Within the 27 districts, there are 65 school counselors and 5 school social workers for the 43,286 enrolled students.

Accordingly, the Department and local partners will implement key recruitment and retainment strategies.

- The recruitment strategies include providing hiring bonuses for community behavioral health agencies to hire providers, one-time supports for local education agencies to hire a mental health provider directly and stipends for social work and counseling graduate students that commit to a school-based internship placement.
- The retainment strategies include providing annual retention bonuses for new staff, retention bonuses for existing staff and establishing commitments from interns to work for one year following graduation.

Through this initiative the Department hopes to recruit 110 new mental health providers in the 27 districts.

Related Services Workgroup report and recommendations. In 2019, the Department established a stakeholder workgroup to review and make recommendations about the causes and solutions of related services personnel shortages. Data showed a continuing need for more practitioners including school psychologists. The workgroup issued a report that established goals to address the

shortages and monitor progress. The workgroup identified various reasons for the shortages:

- Difficulty attracting individuals to the field including because of lower salaries;
- People leaving the profession or education settings;
- Intense competition between private and public settings; and
- Limited pipeline and geographic constraints, including isolation and long travel distances.

The workgroup provided the Department with recruitment and retainment recommendations to address the shortages.

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.

The Department worked diligently to provides LEAs with as much support and flexibility as possible. Several examples are below.

Licensure flexibility. To address staffing concerns and prevent further educator shortages, the Office of Educator Licensure provided the following flexibilities:

- *Temporary Licenses*. The pandemic forced the closure of licensure testing sites and therefore the ability of educators and administrators to sit for initial licensure exams. The temporary license allowed educators and administrators to serve in these roles on a temporary basis until the exams can be completed safely.
- *Grade band and subject flexibility*. Licensure flexibility was provided for teachers around approved grade band and subject areas to reflect the unique learning environment during 2020-2021 school year.
- *Temporary substitute licenses*. The temporary substitute license allowed districts to meet increased demand for substitute teachers.
- *Extension of expiration dates.* Expiration dates were extended for credentials from July 1, 2020 to July 1, 2021.

This extension granted additional time to meet renewal requirements to ensure licenses did not expire as a result of the pandemic.

- *Career-Technical Substitute License.* This license allows career-technical educators to substitute outside of their licensure area.
- *Temporary Military Duty License*. This license allowed active duty military members and their spouses to receive licenses quickly upon moving to Ohio while they work to complete licensure requirements.
- *Pupil Services Registration*. This allows for an increase in the pool of available pupil service personnel (audiologists, speech language pathologists, social workers, school nurses, occupational therapists and occupational therapy assistants, and physical therapists and physical therapy assistants.)

The Department also seeks to add the following types of licenses:

- *Student Teacher License*. This license for student teachers will continue to address the substitute teacher shortage.
- *Reinstatement license.* This license will help to ease the transition to full licensure for individuals with lapsed licenses.

Staff wellness. As discussed in Section A.4, the Department is utilizing GEER funds to work with Miami University to develop and train a statewide model for a Student Assistance Program and a staff wellness model. As part of the development phase of this project, Miami University is completing a needs assessment that includes two components: a supports and services questionnaire and a staff well-being questionnaire. The staff-well-being questionnaire will collect data on the impacts on staff wellness and areas of need. Miami University will subsequently plan and provide training and resources to schools across Ohio. Regional reports from the questionnaire will be shared with LEAs and can be used as an additional data source.

Avoiding layoffs. The Department provides supports to LEAs on the available uses of funds for all the COVID-19 relief funds. Each LEA is assigned a federal programs consultant to address questions and needs. The Department provides frequently asked questions and guidance to LEAs on issues regarding using funds for preparing and responding to the impact of COVID-19, including avoiding layoffs. An example of the guidance for ESSER I is here. Similar guidance

documents for other COVID-19 programs is found in the CCIP document library.

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).

Diversifying the Educator Workforce. To support strategy one of *Each Child, Our Future*, the Department issued several grants to districts to create or expand existing "grow-your-own" programs to address locally determined teacher shortage areas. Local education agencies also may receive funds to partner with institutions of higher education to offer scholarships to students to encourage completion of educator preparation programs. The state will also provide funding for projects to support minority candidates who wish to enter the teaching profession. Funding will support programs that identify and support local academic paraprofessionals or teacher aides who wish to complete educator preparation programs either through traditional or alternative pathways. For educators who wish to transition to administrative roles, institutions of higher education, in partnership with districts, will be provided funds to create an Aspiring Administrator Program.

Educators Rising. The Department will significantly expand the number of Educators Rising Ohio chapters in middle schools, high schools and career centers to promote teaching as a professional pathway. Educators Rising Ohio chapters will be encouraged to work collaboratively with local colleges and universities to support, promote and encourage students of color and students in high needs schools and districts to enter the teaching profession.

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

School-based telehealth services pilot. The School-Based Telehealth Services in Rural Ohio Project addresses the lack of high-speed internet across the Switzerland of Ohio District by improving broadband connectivity and presenting additional ways for students to utilize telehealth services. The project team consists of representatives from the Ohio Department of Education, Ohio Department of Medicaid, Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services and the Governor's Office along with district staff and consultants from the Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center. As more students can be reached through telehealth, more behavioral health services can be delivered.

School-based mental health services. As previously described in Section F.1.i, the number of school-based mental health professionals will be increased in seven Appalachian counties through the federally funded School-Based Mental Health Services Grant. Ohio will implement key recruitment and retainment strategies to address staff shortages and increase the ratio of mental health staff to students.

Telehealth guidelines for service providers. In April 2020, the Department launched the Telehealth Guidelines for Service Providers web resource. This resource was developed to support personnel such as speech-language pathologists, occupational and physical therapists, school psychologists, school nurses, behavioral health specialists, school counselors and school social workers. It offers answers to frequently asked questions, provides links to resources and important information concerning compliance with Medicaid, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), the Health Insurance Portability Accountability Act (HIPAA) and state laws. In addition, the Department has provided information and resources to specialized instructional support personnel for professional development in formal individual assessment of students via telehealth. These resources and supports have increased the capacity of LEAs to deliver telehealth services to students.

Remote learning for students with disabilities who have complex needs. The Office for Exceptional Children in collaboration with the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities and the Ohio Department of Medicaid, launched the Remote Learning for Students with Disabilities Who Have Complex Needs web resource. This website provides resources and guidance for personnel who are providing services to students who may have difficulty using some types of technology. Guidance is provided on innovative strategies for using technology, efficiently coaching caregivers and using creative strategies for providing services.

G. Monitoring and Measuring Progress

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

1. Capacity for Data Collection and Reporting: It is important for an SEA to continuously monitor progress and make adjustments to its strategies, as well as to support its LEAs in making adjustments to LEA strategies, based on impact. Describe how the SEA will ensure its capacity and the capacity of its LEAs to collect data on reporting requirements, including but not limited to the examples of reporting requirements described in the SEA's Grant Award Notification (listed in Appendix B). Describe the SEA's capacity and strategy to collect data from its LEAs (disaggregated by student group, where applicable), to the greatest extent practicable, including any steps the SEA will take to build its capacity in the future (which may include the use of ARP ESSER and other Federal COVID-19 pandemic funds at the SEA and LEA levels), on issues that may include the following:
    i. Student learning, including the academic impact of lost instructional time during the COVID-19 pandemic;
    ii. Opportunity to learn measures (e.g., chronic absenteeism; student engagement; use of exclusionary discipline; access to and participation in advanced coursework; access to technology, including educator access to professional development on the effective use of technology; access to high-quality educators; access to school counselors, social workers, nurses, and school psychologists; and results from student, parent, and/or educator surveys);
    iii. Fiscal data that is comparable across the State (e.g., per-pupil expenditures at the LEA and school levels);
    iv. Jobs created and retained (by position type);
    v. Participation in programs funded by ARP ESSER resources (e.g., summer and afterschool programs); and
    vi. Other reporting requirements reasonably required by the Secretary (please refer to Appendix B of this template; final requirements will be issued separately).

Ohio's state and education leaders recognize the importance of supporting a high-functioning system for data collection and data use. As the result of a long history of data infrastructure development, the state is well-positioned to work with schools and districts to collect statewide data and encourage LEAs to use data locally. The state's strategy is multi-faceted:

Statewide data collection. Through the Education Management Information System (EMIS), Ohio's LEAs report a wide range of student, educator and

organizational data that can support the state's resource prioritization, monitoring and evaluation efforts. EMIS is robust and allows districts and schools to submit data on:

- Student enrollment, attendance and absences;
- Performance on state assessments;
- Course-taking patterns;
- Discipline;
- District- and building-level per-pupil expenditures;
- Student demographics;
- Intervention or enrichment services or special programs in which each student participated, including extended-day and summer programs;
- Student graduation;
- Staff elements such as education levels, professional qualifications and experience levels;
- The number and type of support staff (e.g., counselors, school nurses, social workers, etc.) available to work with and support students.

In the cases of the student-level data above, the Department can disaggregate the elements by student subgroup (e.g., race/ethnicity, economic disadvantage, English learner, students with disabilities, homeless status, foster-care status, mobility) to help address equity issues. Moreover, the reporting system includes many years of data for most elements, which allows the Department to analyze trends across time when supporting LEAs.

New data elements. In 2020-2021, Ohio added several new elements to its statewide EMIS data collection in response to the COVID-19 pandemic:

- *Education delivery model.* Beginning this year, districts will report the education delivery model used by each LEA to report how students were receiving their education (e.g., 5-day, in-person; hybrid; fully remote). Districts also can report data at the student level for cases where a student is under a different model than the rest of the LEA (e.g., the LEA is offering a 5-day, in-person model, but a student is fully remote).
- *Student-level connectivity and hardware access.* LEAs also will report student-level internet connectivity (e.g., Broadband/DSL, hotspot/data plan, no access) and student-level hardware access (e.g., tablet, desktop, laptop, smartphone, no access).

Program data. Finally, Ohio has several mechanisms through which it can and does collect participation in specific programs, which can include programs funded by ARP ESSER (e.g., summer and afterschool programs). In cases where the state anticipates the long-term and widespread implementation of programs, it can expand upon existing EMIS program records to capture student participation. Alternatively, the state may collect individual program

participation through the Ohio District Data Exchange (ODDEX), a system especially suited for collecting data on limited subsets of students and/or for a limited number of districts.

Building a culture of data literacy. Ohio has a long commitment to building a culture of data literacy that has been bolstered by multiple State Longitudinal Data System (SLDS) grants. The pandemic has only served to increase the urgency of that work.

Regional Data Leads. To assist LEAs in using these data to support all students, Ohio collaborated with data leaders across the state to create the Ohio Education Data Professionals Network. The network includes over 200 general members, with nearly half serving as officially trained Regional Data Leads. RDLs are education professionals who are trained to promote the use of student performance data among other educators regionally, both to strengthen professional practice and improve learning for all students. RDLs have extensive experience with Ohio's student growth data, as well as a broad range of other data topics and reports resulting from Ohio's accountability system and educator effectiveness program. They foster a culture of data reliance by promoting a consistent understanding of education data. Moreover, they offer technical assistance to school administrators and teachers to help them use data to drive decisions on school improvement and instructional programming for individual students or for groups of students.

Ohio currently has approximately 80 RDLs who are located at ESCs and State Support Teams. At the State Support Team level, services from RDLs are available primarily for schools labeled in need of comprehensive support (priority schools). At ESCs, services from RDLs are available to all districts and community schools based on partnerships between ESCs and local districts or schools.

State Support Teams. Ohio's Statewide System of Support includes the Ohio Department of Education, State Support Teams, ESCs, Information Technology Centers and professional associations and organizations. The State Support Teams collaborate with schools, families, regional partners and the Department through a continuous improvement process to ensure each child in Ohio has access to a high-quality education.

State Support Team consultants assist districts and schools in improving outcomes for each child with a focus on leadership, team development and inclusive instructional practices.

State Support Team consultants are educators with expertise in Ohio's Improvement Process (OIP), Early Literacy, Early Learning and School Readiness, PBIS Supports and Special Education. State Support Teams provide guidance to

build capacity in district personnel to support students with disabilities. Direct supports include but are not limited to Universal Design for Learning, co-planning to co-serve and the requirements of the IDEA.

The Department coordinates 16 regional teams to be agile and respond to a district's needs. There is no cost to use their services.

Long-term support to ensure equity for all students. In early 2020, Ohio received a Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems grant through the U.S. Department of Education to accelerate four projects focused on equity. Project Outcome 4 calls for an ESC to create a formalized training program for RDLs covering each of the topics listed below and that will become part of a credentialing system created by the Department in partnership with the selected contractor.

- Local Equitable Access to Excellent Educators and Analysis Tool
- Early Warning System;
- Progress Toward Graduation;
- Value-Added (EVAAS tool);
- Online Reporting System (ORS) & Assessment Data Usage;
- Data to Serve Exceptional Children; and
- Teacher Evaluation Data and Reporting (including High Quality Student Data)

These credentials will build an even larger and more diverse group of RDLs who will be able to provide technical assistance and support districts.

Cross-agency collaboration. In addition to education data, the Department has fostered relationships with multiple state agencies to increase Ohio's state and LEA-level picture of students' needs. As a result of these relationships, Ohio now has district-level information on non-education factors such as mental and physical health, unemployment and neglect and abuse reporting. The Department uses these data resources to create supports for LEAs, including data tools such as the Ohio Healthy Students Profiles.

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.

General statement. The Department will follow established internal controls and monitoring procedures in accordance with the 2 CFR 200-Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards for its process of monitoring all related COVID-19 relief programs, including the ARP ESSER programs.

All documents, materials and guidance information on the Department's implementation of the programs under the CARES, CRRSA and ARP are housed in the Department's CCIP. The CCIP is a unified grants application and verification system that consists of several applications including a planning tool, funding application, payment request system, final expenditure reports and document repository (library). The CCIP Document Library may be found at the following link: https://ccip.ode.state.oh.us/documentlibrary/default.aspx?ccipSessionKey=637315366534518305.

The CCIP Document Library contains important documents outlining the Department's internal controls, compliance monitoring process and general assurances. The General Assurances may be found at the following link: https://ccip.ode.state.oh.us/documentlibrary/ViewDocument.aspx?DocumentKey=83791

The LEA applications are hard coded into the CCIP. Blank copies of the applications are also found in the CCIP Document Library. The Department makes regular updates to guidance information related to the CARES and CRRSA Acts and will be doing the same for the ARP ESSER. The Department provides webinars and training materials specific to the related programs.

The Department also has a dedicated website for grants management that provide key information on established quality controls and effective fiscal management. The website may be found at the following link: http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Finance-and-Funding/Grants-Administration

Internal controls and grant management process. Over the years, the Department has developed and implemented an internal control structure to ensure all grants meet federal and state grant requirements. These controls include both application and monitoring controls processes and extend into the grant management process. As noted above, these general internal controls are applicable to Department's administration and implementation of CARES, CRRSA and ARP ESSER.

Risk Identification and Mitigation. The Department understands that an important part of implementing new grants requires significant planning and risk identification. Since 2013, the Department began utilizing a risk assessment process to identify high-risk grantees for each federal grant. The CARES Act and ESSER Fund grant will be added to this process. With any new grant, there are inherent challenges that the Department must address such as communication and collaboration (both internally and externally) especially when information is not available as quickly as subrecipients would like. The Department identified known and potential risks associated with the ESSER below:

- The desire to provide emergency funds quickly to subrecipients while ensuring compliance;
- Understanding all aspects of the law and regulations associated with a broad-based grant;
- Receiving guidance from the U.S. Department of Education and interpreting such guidance in a timely manner;
- Communicating internally and externally on a large and broad-based grant;
- Building and developing necessary enhancements with the existing CCIP e-grant system to support grant implementation;
- Different timelines and deadlines for parts of the CARES Act/ESSER Fund;
- Applying the New and Significant Expanded LEAs provisions to the new grant;
- Process for determining LEAs that have closed or are suspended while balancing the need to ensure funding is allocated and spent appropriately and in a reasonable and necessary manner; and
- Nonpublic Equitable Services indecision.

The key to risk mitigation includes a sound internal controls process which the Department has developed for all programming. The Department's utilizes existing systems such as the CCIP, Nonpublic Data System and Compliance System to mitigate risks in administering and operating the ESSER programs. Annually, these systems and the validations are tested by the Ohio Auditor of State's office to ensure they are performing as described. Parts of the Department's risk mitigation summary is below.

- Program Staff work closely with subgrantees with application questions and submission;
- Applications (with budget) submitted into the CCIP, by LEA Executive leadership, go through a series of validations before submitted by the LEA (also establishes Substantially Approved date);
- Applications received by the CCIP go through a two-tier review process (consultant and manager review and approvals)

- LEAs submit cash requests, document total expenses by fund and object code, through the CCIP, which validates the expenses to the approved budget;
- Final Expenditure Reports (FERs) are submitted at the end of the grant period to close out the grant;
- Periodically during the fiscal year cash requests are selected for review;
- A sample of the FERs are selected for review; and
- Subrecipient Monitoring, both fiscal and programmatic, selects a sample of grantees based on risk assessment.

General grants workflow. When implementing grant programs, the Department utilizes a comprehensive process that involves collaboration across centers and offices. These centers and offices are supported by grants administration and management teams, communications and an implementation team. The general steps that were undertaken with the ESSER programs, including the ARP ESSER, are as follows:

1. Systems and Process for Administering Grants
2. Developing guidance
3. Process for responding to questions
4. Developing and submitting application to U.S. Department of Education
5. Receiving award from U.S. Department of Education
6. Developing Application to LEAs
7. Communicating to LEAs
8. Providing trainings to Subrecipients
9. Reviewing and Approving LEA Applications
10. Developing award letter and submission to LEAs
11. Review invoices received and processing payment
12. Developing monitoring protocols embedded into annual comprehensive reviews
13. Establishing monitoring schedule
14. Document and inventory management
15. Reporting
16. Returning Unclaimed Funds to US Treasury

The Department has check points and validations throughout the grant process, including staff responsibilities and enhancements made to the technology systems used. The Department staff and subrecipients must address these validations within the CCIP prior to any approval of an application or request for and release of federal resources.

Records to support fiscal reviews and audits. The Department maintains records and documentation consistent with record retention requirements. The CARES Act and ESSER Fund documentation necessary to support fiscal reviews, including audits and improper payment assessments is captured in various systems and formats depending on the subject. For instance, the CCIP captures all subrecipient application and payment information such as project cash requests (PCRs) and FERs. In the comprehensive compliance and monitoring system, documentation and evidence to support appropriate uses of funds is maintained. Furthermore, appropriate documentation to support the Department's management decisions and policies supporting the grant program are maintained electronically.

Monitoring process. LEAs receive an ARP ESSER allocation based on the prescribed Title I formula. Prior to any LEA receiving an award and receiving access to the federal resources, the Department ensures that the LEA has submitted a completed application including a detailed budget, connections to allowable uses and providing written verification that they will comply with all assurances and grant conditions. In addition, as noted in risk factors on the internal controls description, the Department ensures the closed and suspended charter (community) schools do not have access to the full amounts of funds until appropriate justification is rendered.

The Department has a consolidated monitoring process involving significant cross-office coordination and collaboration. Ohio's consolidated compliance monitoring format ranks and prioritizes LEAs and provides tiered supports based on the grant program and those with the greatest need. For State Fiscal Year 2022, the Department's Office of Federal Programs will update and revise the risk factors used to prioritize LEAs for compliance desk reviews and on-site monitoring to address the ARP ESSER plan requirements.

Revised monitoring protocols. Point values from the revised risk assessment will be aggregated for each LEA receiving ARP ESSER Funds. The Office of Federal Programs Operations Team will compile the data into a prioritized list of LEAs. Those with the highest level of risk will receive onsite reviews, while those with a moderate level of risk will receive desk reviews. LEAs at a lower level of risk will receive self-surveys.

Onsite reviews consist of an onsite visit to an LEA from a team of Department program specialists. The team reviews all supporting fiscal and programmatic documentation, interviews LEA administrators and other relevant staff members and reports to the LEA on its findings. The onsite review process also involves a system of progressive sanctions and ongoing support for LEAs that are not found to be in compliance.

Desk reviews consist of over-the-phone interviews and comprehensive document review of supporting fiscal and programmatic ESSER documentation. Desk reviews also involve progressive sanctions and ongoing support for LEAs that are not found to be in compliance.

Self-surveys involve an online survey completed by the LEA. The LEA must review a set of questions specific to the ESSER activities it conducted and certify that the funds were used according to all grant assurances and conditions.

In addition to the review from the Department's Office of Federal Programs, additional offices will conduct an ESSER Compliance Review if the allowable activities chosen are typically reviewed by that office within the compliance system. For example, if an LEA chose a use of funds allowable under the IDEA, the Department's Office for Exceptional Children would conduct a compliance review of the ESSER activities allowable under that act.

Schedule for subrecipient monitoring, including both programmatic and fiscal issues, based upon the grantee's revised risk assessment. The Department conducts consolidated monitoring each state fiscal year. ESSER programs, including ARP ESSER will be reviewed as a part of the state fiscal year consolidated monitoring process. ESSER programs will subsequently be reviewed each state fiscal year for the duration of the period of availability of the ESSER programs. The Office of Federal Programs and other relevant offices will conduct a review of both programmatic and fiscal issues in the process described above.

Appendix A: School Operating Status and Instructional Mode Data Template

NOTE: Adjustments to the structure of Tables 1 and 2 have been made to reflect the pertinent data currently collected in Ohio.

Table 1 refers to the instructional mode as of the week of May 12, 2021 for all traditional public school districts. Table 2 refers to fall headcount by student subgroup, aggregated by the instructional mode of districts on May 12. Ohio has not collected data on instructional mode by school building or grade level; however, school and student-level data (retrospective for the entire school year) are presently incoming through Ohio's Education Management Information System (EMIS) and will result in new information to be released in October 2021.

Since the beginning of the 2020-2021 school year, the Ohio Department of Education has surveyed the state's 51 Educational Service Centers (ESCs) on a weekly basis about their client districts' instructional mode, referred to as "education delivery models." ESCs code their districts as 5-day in-person, fully remote, or hybrid. No information is gathered regarding individual student options for fully remote learning, such as online academies, though this information *will* be collected through the statewide EMIS collection described above. These statuses are presented in spreadsheet and map form each week on the Department's Reset and Restart Education webpage.

As in many parts of the nation, Ohio's 2020-2021 school year has been characterized by multiple trend periods in response to COVID-19 case patterns, local adaptability and state priorities. The Data Insights webpage includes a detailed analysis of these distinct trends. Of note, while Ohio currently enjoys a high percentage of districts offering fully in-person learning, it was a different picture in early January when 36% of districts were fully remote and another 24% were hybrid.

Table 1

Instructional mode	Number of districts
Remote or online only	1
School districts open with both remote/online and in-person instruction (hybrid)	78
School districts open with full-time in-person instruction	530

Table 2

Student subgroup	Total enrollment*	Enrollment in district that is remote or online only	Enrollment in district that is both remote/online and in-person instruction (hybrid)	Enrollment in district that is full-time in-person instruction
Students from low-income families	678,532	102	213,730	464,700

Student subgroup	Total enrollment*	Enrollment in district that is remote or online only	Enrollment in district that is both remote/online and in-person instruction (hybrid)	Enrollment in district that is full-time in-person instruction
White, not Hispanic	1,064,366	38	133,061	931,267
Black or African American, not Hispanic	222,107	203	103,070	118,834
Hispanic, of any race	98,281	18	26,560	71,703
Asian, not Hispanic	42,403	0	7,193	35,210
American Indian or Alaskan Native, not Hispanic	1,716	<10	377	1,339
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, not Hispanic	1,401	0	216	1,185
Two or more races, not Hispanic	86,983	11	19,368	67,604
Race/Ethnicity information not available	-	-	-	-
English learners	53,221	<10	16,864	36,357
Children with disabilities	224,361	62	50,190	174,109
Students experiencing homelessness	14,460	<10	4,323	10,137
Children and youth in foster care	17,294	14	3,969	13,311
Migratory students**	NA	NA	NA	NA

*Since only one district remains fully remote, the statewide total enrollment excludes that district's subgroup count if fewer than 10 students.

**Data on students who are dependents of migrant workers are not collected until a later reporting window in the school year.

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.

General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) Section 427

In compliance with section 427 of the U.S. Department of Education's General Education Provisions Act (GEPA), the plan for identifying, selecting, retaining and providing services to participants will ensure equitable access to and participation in the ARP ESSER. The barriers of gender, race, national origin, color and disability and age will be overcome through a comprehensive plan for informing applicants for subgrants under the ARP ESSER of the equitable access to, and participation in, this federally assisted program for students, teachers and other program beneficiaries. Recipients awarded subgrants under ARP ESSER also must sign a list of assurances in the application, including complying with section 427 of General Education Provisions Act.

All documents, tools and resources used by the State, Ohio Department of Education, LEAs, subgrantees and other involved participants will comply with all accessibility requirements. In addition, projects will be evaluated to identify any potential barriers that may impede equitable access and steps will be taken to overcome these barriers.

The Ohio Department of Education is committed to ensuring equitable access to, and participation in, the COVID Relief programs, including ARP ESSER, for students, teachers, and other program beneficiaries with special needs. The Department is focused on meeting the needs of the whole child to ensure that each child is healthy, safe, engaged, supported and challenged. Integral to this commitment in Ohio's Strategic Plan for Education is equity so that each child has access to the relevant and challenging academic experiences and resources needed for success, regardless of barriers such as gender, ethnicity, disability, etc. Ohio is committed to creating learning conditions that ensure each child acquires the knowledge and skills across all learning domains in order to be successful.

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.