

Draft for APR ESSER III State Set-Aside RFGA

Reviewer Guidance Document

This document is to be used by the Request for Grant Application (RFGA) review committee to help guide and inform reviewers on each ARP ESSER III State Set-Aside grants.

Overview of Funding Source

The US Congress passed the American Rescue Plan (ARP) in March 2021, making a third major investment in funding for K-12 education to support COVID recovery efforts. Under the legislation, funding was allocated to states by formula under the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Fund. Arizona received a total of over \$2.5 billion, including over \$258 million, or 9.5%, as "SEA set-aside or reserve", allocated to the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) for state-level relief and recovery initiatives. ADE, as the State Education Agency (SEA), is granted authority or discretion over \$64.5 million of these funds, or 2.5%, for state-level relief and recovery initiatives. ADE allocated \$32.8M of these funds to non-Title I LEAs for emergency purposes through the ESSER III LEA grant program. Under ARP, Arizona along with all states is required to dedicate the remainder of its SEA reserve (7%) as follows: 5% to address learning loss (\$129.1M), 1% for summer enrichment programs (\$25.8M), and 1% for comprehensive afterschool (\$25.8M).

In April 2021, the US Department of Education released additional guidance and proposed rules for ARP funds under the ESSER program. This required ADE to complete a *state plan* using a designated template, and to engage stakeholders in that process, to access the remaining portion of appropriated ESSER funds for Arizona. Over 100 stakeholders took part in a taskforce that met over early summer 2021 to inform this process and to help ADE identify goals and key priorities for state-wide COVID-recovery. These priorities include:

- **Enrichment and reinforcement to learning**
- **Mental, behavioral, social, emotional, and physical health supports**
- **Student and family re-engagement and support for critical transition periods**
 - Early Childhood
 - Middle School/9th Grade
 - 12th Grade/Post-Secondary

Within these locally identified priority areas, ADE must also follow federal requirement and award funding to programs and interventions that are:

1) evidence-based

2) target services to historically underrepresented subgroups

3) fall within the lanes of addressing learning loss, comprehensive afterschool, and summer enrichment.

ADE submitted its [State Plan](#) on July 22, 2021 with a clearly defined goal for its work and the use of these funds: **Accelerate Academic Success**. USED approved the plan on October 7, 2021. These funds must be obligated by September 2023 and expended by September 2024. ARP ESSER also involves annual data reporting on use and impact of funds by recipients.

Evidence-Based Guidance

ARP ESSER involves similar funding requirements as found in the federal education law for K-12 education, *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA). Evidence-based "means an activity, strategy, or intervention that demonstrates a statistically significant effect on improving student outcomes or other relevant outcomes". Evidence-based

interventions are “practices or programs that have evidence to show that they are effective at producing results and improving outcomes when implemented”. ESSA established tiers for programs or interventions used in schools and the education field more broadly. The following factors determine an intervention's evidence rating: study design, results of study, findings from related studies, sample size and setting, and how the students and setting in the study overlap with those in the district or school considering the intervention. All grantees of statewide ARP ESSER funds must, at a minimum, fall within Tier 4, and this should be reflected in their applications.

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Tiers:

1. **Tier 1 – Strong Evidence:** supported by one or more well-designed and well-implemented randomized control experimental studies.
2. **Tier 2 – Moderate Evidence:** supported by one or more well-designed and well-implemented quasi-experimental studies.
3. **Tier 3 – Promising Evidence:** supported by one or more well-designed and well-implemented correlational studies (with statistical controls for selection bias).
4. **Tier 4 – Demonstrates a Rationale:** practices that have a well-defined logic model or theory of action, are supported by research, and have some effort underway by an SEA, LEA, or outside research organization to determine their effectiveness.

For more detail, please reference the charts and information in this additional guidance:

- [Evidence-Based Strategies for ESSER Funds](#)
- [ESSA and evidence-based strategies, practices, programs, and interventions for school improvement](#)

Priority Area Guidance

As mentioned above, under a federal interim rule, ADE engaged stakeholders to identify key priority areas for the use of ARP ESSER funds, layered into the other three main requirements outlined in the overview section. This table is intended to support reviewers in broadly identifying high-quality practices. To also be evidence-based, there are more distinct parameters to be considered using the above resources. This list is not exhaustive of all practices for the priority areas.

Priority Funding Areas	Characteristics of High-Quality Practice	Indicators/Measures of Success	Examples of High-Quality Practices
Enrichment and reinforcement to learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborative culture that supports educator development and student learning • A culture of accessing and using research to improve practice and student learning • Promotion of professional learning and continuous improvement • Data-driven decision making • Culturally responsive classrooms, programs, projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standardized test (local, district, and national) • Rates of proficiency on state assessments • Rates of performing at/on grade level by subject area • Grades/academics • Attendance, absenteeism • Dropout Rate • On-time Graduation Rate • Student mastery of standards-based curriculum demonstrated by assignments and assessments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High-dosage tutoring • Differenced instruction using technology • Whole-school/program focusing on mastery of student-friendly learning objectives and cooperative learning • Online tool that provides students with feedback and hints as they do homework • Benchmark assessments to predict state test scores • A multi-tiered classroom management program • Extended day programs

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educators building positive relationships with students, families, community • Educators and students connecting and embedding prior learning • Students draw on interests and word connections • Building student agency through inquiry, voice, and choice 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early childhood program focused on cooperative learning • Summer enrichment programs for young children and families • An early literacy intervention that integrates family literacy
<p>Mental, behavioral, social, emotional, and physical health supports</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotion of SEL professional development/learning for educators, counselors, social workers, and health professionals • Promotion of SEL programming for students • Modeling of social, emotional, and mental well-being from staff members to students • A systemwide approach to fostering knowledge, skills, and attitudes, across, the five areas of social emotional competencies • A program that establishes and promotes equitable learning environments • Hiring of certified mental health staff • Programs that are focused on student and educator strength-based approaches • Building positive relationships with staff, students, families, and community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grades/academics • Attendance • Pre/post surveys of teachers, students, families & community partners • Completion of trauma-informed training • SEL training hours • Chronic absenteeism • Dropout rate • On-time graduation rate • Lateness/tardiness • Disconnected youth rate • Suicide rate • Teacher retention • Teacher wellness • Enrollment numbers • Measures of community health 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrated student supports for academic needs, mental and physical health, nutrition, and social services • A multi-tiered approach to improving school attendance • A comprehensive approach for 9th graders in both urban and rural schools • A comprehensive restorative practice program • A violence prevention program • Whole-school reform emphasizing climate and social-emotional skills • A monitoring system intended to keep at-risk students on track and on-time for graduation • Absence-reduction program that delivers notices to families on attendance • Program using cooperative learning to improve SEL • Bullying prevention by teaching social skills • Mobile food pantry program • Mobile health clinic program • Afterschool and/or summer sports and nutrition program • Youth mentoring program • Educator peer mentoring program

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counselor or mental health peer mentoring program
<p>Student and family re-engagement and support for critical transition periods -Early Childhood -Middle School/9th Grade -12th grade/Post-Secondary</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborative culture that supports educator development and student learning • A culture of accessing and using research to improve practice and student learning • Promotion of professional learning and continuous improvement • Data-driven decision making • Connecting prior learning • Draw on interests and word connections • Embedding prior learning • Building student agency through inquiry, voice, and choice <p>Early Childhood</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early outreach and communication between educators, schools, and families <p>Middle School/9th Grade</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration across Middle School to High School • Connection and backwards planning between Middle School to High School educators within core curriculum (math, English, science, Social Studies) • Exposure to post-secondary and career opportunities <p>12th Grade/Post-Secondary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration across K-12 to Post-secondary to high-demand industry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grades/Academics • Grade-Level Enrollment Numbers • State Assessment Passage and Grade-Level Percentage by on- grade level <p>Early Childhood</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kindergarten readiness measures <p>Middle School/9th Grade</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Algebra proficiency <p>12th grade/Post-Secondary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On-time Graduation Rate • FAFSA Completion Rate • Post-Secondary Enrollment Rate • Post-Secondary Matriculation Rate • Post-Secondary Entrance Exam and Passing Rate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summer bridge programming for PreK to Kinder, Middle School to High School, and High School to Post-Secondary • High-dosage tutoring • Differenced instruction using technology • Whole school/program reform focusing on mastery of student-friendly learning objectives • Online tool that provides students with feedback and hints as they do homework • Benchmark assessments to predict state test scores • A multi-tiered classroom management program • Extended day programs <p>Early Childhood</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An early literacy intervention that integrates family literacy • Early childhood program focused on cooperative learning • Summer enrichment programs for young children and families <p>High School</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early College Programing • Dual Enrollment • Test Preparation programs • Financial literacy programs • Youth Mentoring programs • Field trips to college campuses

Glossary of Terms

Culturally Responsive: requires individuals to be culturally competent thus having an awareness of one's own culture and identity, while also fostering a learning environment that is open and respectful of others' cultures and identity.¹

Five Areas of Social Emotional Competencies: there are lifelong skills that are essential to everyone. The ability for one to manage and regulate their emotions, have respect for themselves and others, be able to focus their attention, make responsive decisions, and engage with communities are all essential skills that prepare students for college and career.

1. **Self-Awareness:** the ability to recognize and name emotions.
2. **Self-Management:** the ability to regulate emotions and behaviors so that goals are achieved.
3. **Social Awareness:** the ability to understand what others are feeling and have the understanding to take their perspective.
4. **Relationship Skills:** the ability to form positive social relationships, work together, and deal effectively with conflict.
5. **Responsible Decision-Making:** the ability to make positive choices about one's personal and social behavior, one is making responsible decisions.²

Equitable Learning Environments: ensuring every student, educator, family, school and/or district has the resources and support they need to be successful. In this environment, the assurance and focus are on everyone having what they need, when they need it, for as long as they need it, as opposed to everyone having the same thing.

Whole-School Approach: a partnership that involves all parts of the school, systematically working together and being committed to the end goal.

High-Dosage Tutoring: involves tutoring that happens at least three to four times per week for a duration of at least 45 minutes and involves one-to-one or small groups of students, no more than six, with one tutor. This tutoring is sustained over the course of the school year; is provided by a trained tutor; and is aligned with and connected to classroom instruction.³

Multi-Tiered Approach: is a proactive, holistic tiered system of support designed so that all students have equitable access to high-quality instruction and interventions to meet all students' needs.

Comprehensive Restorative Practice Program: a whole-school approach to building positive relationships and providing opportunities for school community members (students and adults) to take responsibility and be accountable for their actions; and provide opportunities to repair harm and restore relationships while remaining connected to the community.

Violence Prevention Program: a program committed to stopping or deterring violence before it's committed. A program designed to work with participants to decrease interpersonal violence through a process of changed thinking and behaviors.⁴

Cooperative Learning: activities that help students learn to work in groups together and ensure positive learning and interaction in order to achieve or accomplish a certain goal or outcome.

¹ doe.mass.edu/instruction/culturally-responsive/

² casel.org

³ osse.dc.gov

⁴ <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/index.html>

Early College Programs: a combining of traditional high school classes with college courses through a local public school or university to give students knowledge and exposure to an area of study, while earning college credits.

Dual Enrollment: courses offered on a high school campus or joint technical education district campus through an agreement or contract between a school district/charter school and a community college district governing board.

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