



Background on ESSER

The American Rescue Plan Act (ARP) signed into law on March 11, 2021, provided nearly \$122 billion for the Elementary and Secondary School Relief Fund (ESSER). ARP ESSER funds are provided to State educational agencies in the same proportion as each State received under Title I-A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) in fiscal year (FY) 2020. An SEA must allocate at least 90 percent of its ARP ESSER grant funds to its local educational agencies (LEAs) in the same proportion that the LEAs received under Title I-A of ESEA in FY 2020. LEAs must reserve at least 20 percent of their total ARP ESSER allocation to address the academic impact of lost instructional time on all students, through the implementation of evidence-based interventions.

The U.S. Department of Education (ED) published Interim Final Requirements (IFR) on April 22, 2021, requiring LEAs receiving ARP ESSER funds to submit an LEA ARP ESSER Plan and an LEA Plan for the Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services. If an LEA had already developed a plan for safe return to in-person instruction and continuity of services prior to the enactment of ARP that meets the statutory requirements of section 2001(i) but did not address all of the requirements in the IFR, the LEA must revise and post its plan no later than six months after receiving its ARP ESSER funds. This applies even if an LEA has been operating full-time in-person instruction but does not apply to virtual schools and LEAs.

The IFR issued by ED outlines several requirements for all Districts to ensure that funds under ARP (ESSER III), specifically, are spent in a manner consistent with the new statutory set aside and that key stakeholders have been consulted in this process. The ARP also requires that LEAs have in place a plan for ensuring safety during in-person instruction (either in-progress or planned) as well as ensuring continuity of services should the LEA or one or more of its schools be required to close temporarily for COVID-19-related public health reasons in the future.

The following requirements and assurances pertain to both the statutory requirements and the IFR published by ED. Plans are required for all districts, regardless of operating status, unless a district is fully virtual with no physical location.

The Illinois State Board of Education Agency (ISBE) may create a single plan that includes all the required elements or may add in additional requirements, as it deems appropriate. Districts may provide any additional information they believe are helpful in assessing their plan. LEAs are required to make these plans publicly available on the LEA's website.

According to ISBE's guidance, local boards are not required to approve these plans; however, the local board is required to discuss the uses of funds.

LEA ESSER Use of Funds Plan



1. ARP ESSER funds will be used to implement prevention and mitigation strategies that are, to the greatest extent practicable, consistent with the most recent CDC guidance on reopening schools, in order to continuously and safely open and operate schools for in-person learning. Palos 118 recognizes that safe reopening schools and sustaining safe operations to maximize in-person instruction is essential for student learning and student well-being. The District will maintain the health and safety of students, educators, and other district staff. To support the safe return to in-person instruction and sustain safe operation, the district developed the “Reopening Plan.” The plan is available at: [Return to In-Person Instruction 2020 - Palos Community Consolidated School District 118 \(palos118.org\)](https://www.palos118.org/return-to-in-person-instruction-2020)

2. The District will address the academic impact of lost instructional time through the implementation of evidence-based interventions, such as summer learning, summer enrichment, and comprehensive after-school programs. The district will use the ESSER funds to identify, re-engage, 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 majority of 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;

c. Students disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic

3. Palos 118 will use 20% of its ESSER III funds to address the academic impact of lost instructional time (learning loss) through the implementation of evidence-based interventions. The District will spend its remaining ARP ESSER funds consistent with section 2001(e)(2) of the ARP Act. Section 2001(e) of the ARP Act permits school districts to use the ARP Act ESSER III funding not reserved for learning loss to address the impacts of COVID-19 in a variety of ways. The use of funds includes but are not limited to the following:

1. Evidence-Based Interventions

- a. Summer School
- b. Summer Enrichment
- c. After/Before School Program
- d. Remote Learning

2. Instructional Resources and Curriculum Materials

3. Professional Development

4. Technology



5. Social-Emotional Student Intervention

6. Increased learning/disinfection

4. The District will ensure that any implemented interventions, including those implemented under ARP section 2002(e)(1) 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. The Curriculum Department will work collaboratively with the building administrators to support and monitor the implementation of evidence-based interventions. The Curriculum Department in conjunction with the building administrators will be responsible for data collection and analysis of the interventions. They will help in identifying the most effective interventions employed. District data collection and analysis will include academic indicators, social-emotional indicators, and instructional time indicators including excessive absenteeism. In addition, the curriculum team and the building administrators will work closely with the school counselors and the community liaisons to reduce and/or remove barriers to learning. This will ensure that families have the needed resources to support the needs of students disproportionately impacted by COVID-19. 5. The District made its plan available to the public and provided an opportunity for feedback that was collected and incorporated into the plan. Consistent with the ARP ESSER requirements, LPCA engaged in meaningful consultation with stakeholders.