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U.S. Department of Education Approves Idaho's Plan for Use of American Rescue Plan Funds to Support K-12 Schools and Students, Distributes Remaining \$146 Million to State

Today, U.S. Department of Education (Department) announced the approval of Idaho's American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ARP ESSER) plan and distributed remaining ARP ESSER funds to them. Idaho's plan details how the state is using and plans to use ARP ESSER funds to safely reopen and sustain the safe operation of schools and equitably expand opportunity for students who need it most, particularly those most impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

As schools and states begin the new school year, the Department released the [Return to School Roadmap](#), which provides key resources and supports for students, parents, educators, and school communities to build excitement around returning to classrooms this school year and outlines how federal funding can support the safe and sustained return to in-person learning. ARP funds can be used to support the Roadmap's efforts.

Earlier this year, the Department distributed two-thirds of the ARP ESSER funds, totaling \$81 billion, to 50 states and the District of Columbia. The remaining third of the funding to states will be made available once state plans are approved. Idaho is receiving \$440 million total in ARP ESSER funds, and today's approval of their plan will result in the release of the final \$146 million. Additionally, the Department approved plans for Maine, Nevada, and North Carolina. Today's approvals mean a total of 37 ARP ESSER state plans have been approved since June. The Department has approved plans supporting more than 50 percent of students nationwide.

"I am excited to announce approval of Idaho's plan," said U.S. Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona. "It is heartening to see, reflected in these state plans, the ways in which states are thinking deeply about how to use American Rescue Plan funds to continue to provide critical support to schools and communities, particularly as we look ahead to the upcoming academic year. The approval of these plans enables states to receive vital, additional American Rescue Plan funds to quickly and safely reopen schools for full-time, in-person learning; meet students' academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs; and address disparities in access to educational opportunity that were exacerbated by the coronavirus pandemic. The state plans that have been submitted to the Department lay the groundwork for the ways in which an unprecedented infusion of federal resources will be used to address the urgent needs of America's children and build back better."

“I am pleased that Idaho’s plan has been approved by the U.S. Department of Education. The plan will ensure that our schools and districts receive the funding they need to address unfinished learning, behavioral health challenges and other impacts from the pandemic,” Superintendent of Public Instruction Sherri Ybarra said. “Throughout this process, we’ve placed high priority on giving districts and schools both the resources and flexibility to address local needs, as well as assistance identifying and engaging the students most impacted by the pandemic so that we can get them back on track.”

“We are very pleased that the U.S. Department of Education has approved our ARP ESSER plan, freeing up an additional \$146 million to help Idaho address the statewide problem of unfinished learning as a result of the pandemic,” said Kurt Liebich, president, Idaho State Board of Education. “I’d like to thank Superintendent Ybarra and the teams both at the State Department of Education and the State Board of Education for their work and collaboration on developing the Idaho plan that meets requirements set forth by the U.S. Department of Education. Idaho joins 36 other states with approved plans. The Board and the State Department are focused on three priorities: K-4 literacy, grades 5-9 math, and credit recovery for high school students. We look forward to working with school districts and charter schools as they work to develop their local plans and put them into action. These federal resources will go a long way in helping our students recover what they lost because of the massive disruption the pandemic caused to our education system.”

The ARP ESSER state plans approved by the Department today, including Idaho, show how states are using federal pandemic resources to support safe in-person instruction and meet the social, emotional, mental health, and academic needs of students—with a focus on the students most impacted by the pandemic. For example:

- **Supporting Students Most Impacted by the Pandemic:** Idaho will provide school districts and charter schools with professional development resources on using attendance and absenteeism data, as well as other student achievement indicators, to identify students who missed the most instruction during the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 school years. Idaho will support school districts in using a tiered system of support to improve student attendance and engagement.
- **Addressing the Academic Impact of Lost Instructional Time:** Idaho will use statewide data to identify evidence-based interventions for districts, which could include high-dosage tutoring, extended learning time interventions (during or before and after school), and acceleration academies (focused instruction in one subject during vacation breaks), and instructional techniques, beginning the summer of 2021 and carrying through the next few years.
- **Use of State Emergency Funds:** Idaho will use a portion of state reserve funds from the Emergency Fund to support rural districts and the Bureau of Educational Services for the Deaf and the Blind to implement accelerated learning strategies.

A total of 49 states, and the District of Columbia, have submitted their ARP ESSER state plans to the Department. The Department is reviewing the plans expeditiously and is in contact with

states to ensure their plans meet all necessary requirements in order to access the remaining funds, as outlined in the ARP.

The distribution of ARP ESSER funds is part of the Department's broader effort to support students and districts as they work to reengage students impacted by the pandemic, address inequities exacerbated by COVID-19, and build our education system back better than before. In addition to providing \$130 billion for K-12 education in the American Rescue Plan to support the safe reopening of K-12 schools and meet the needs of all students, the Biden-Harris Administration also has:

- Launched the [Return to School Roadmap](#) to provide key resources and supports for students, parents, educators, and school communities to build excitement around returning to classrooms this school year and outline how federal funding can support the safe and sustained return to in-person learning
- Released three [volumes of the COVID-19 Handbook](#)
- Held a [National Safe School Reopening Summit](#)
- Prioritized the vaccination of educators, school staff and child care workers. As of the end of May an estimated 84% of teachers and school staff were fully vaccinated.
- Provided \$10 billion in funding for COVID-19 testing for pre-K-12 educators, staff, and students
- Launched a series of Equity Summits focused on addressing inequities that existed before, but were made worse by the pandemic
- Released a [report](#) on the disparate impacts of COVID-19 on underserved communities
- Developed a [Safer Schools and Campuses Best Practices Clearinghouse](#) elevating hundreds of best practices to support schools' efforts to reopen safely and address the impacts of COVID-19 on students, educators, and communities.

In addition to the actions the Biden Administration has taken to reopen schools, the President has proposed critical investments through his Build Back Better Agenda that will enable schools to rebuild stronger than they were before the pandemic, such as investing billions to build a diverse educator workforce, expand access to pre-K to all families, and invest in school infrastructure, among other provisions.

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