Thank you for joining us this afternoon.
The purpose of the information today is to talk about how LEAs can maximize ESSER funds amidst declining state and local revenue. We’ll look at the timeline for ESSER funds; flexibility in the use of funds; the role reporting requirements play in expending and drawing down the funds; the State Department’s role in ensuring the allowable uses of funds; and then we will look at the LEA application process for applying for the ESSER funds.

Before we get started though, I want to address the equitable services requirement for which LEAs with non-public schools within their boundaries have a responsibility to consult and provide services. The CARES Act requires LEAs that receive ESSER funds to provide equitable services in the same manner as provided under section 1117 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. Under ESEA, the LEA calculates equitable participation based on the number of low-income children in each participating non-public school in the LEA. Information from the U.S. Department of Education provided to States on April 30, bases the non-public share on total enrollments rather than on the number of low-income children living in the LEA’s boundaries and attending non-public schools. These are two very different ways to calculate services to non-public schools, and States, including Idaho are waiting for clarification. For this reason, we are not able to answer any questions today around equitable services. We will, however,
immediately communicate with you as soon as we receive more information. In the meantime, the 34 LEAs with non-public schools within their boundaries can use this time to communicate an Intent to Participate form to the non-public schools to identify which of these schools may be interested in services and which schools are not, and in that way, be ready to proceed as soon as Idaho has the calculation clarification it needs. Michelle CT has an ESSER Fund Intent to Participate form, which will be sent out soon to FP directors for the districts with non-public schools, and this ESSERF Intent to Participate form will also be posted on the SDE Equitable Services website as well as the coronavirus website under the Federal Programs section.
Superintendent Ybarra’s K-12 Goals

1. All Idaho students persevere in life and are ready for college and careers.
2. All education stakeholders in Idaho are mutually responsible for accountability and student progress.
3. Idaho attracts and retains great teachers and leaders.

Superintendent Ybarra’s three strategic plan goals drive our work. We support the idea that it’s important for students to persevere in life and be ready for college and career; that all education stakeholders are mutually responsible for student progress; and that Idaho must attract and retain great teachers and leaders in Idaho.
On March 13, 2020, the president identified the nation in a state of emergency as a result of the COVID-19 crises. Congress wrote the CARES Act legislation, which became law when the president signed the legislation on March 27th. Close to a month later, the USED provided states with a certification and agreement application. Idaho completed that application and submitted it to the USED on May 15th (Friday). By Monday, May 18th, Idaho received its grant award notification. The link to the LEA JotForm application was released today and as those applications are submitted back to us, LEAs will receive an acknowledgement email from Lisa English identifying the application as received and complete. A couple of our amazing IT staff are revising code in the GRA specific to the ESSER fund requirements. This process is not complete, but as soon as it is, LEAs will be notified to begin drawdowns. September 30, 2022 is the last day to obligate the ESSER funds.

The U.S. Department of Education is responsible for providing guidance to States on how to implement the law. You will hear me make several references to the U.S. Department of Education’s May 8th FAQ guidance. This document gives critical guidance in the two areas we are focused today: the use of funds and the LEA application. May 8th is the first time States have received clarity from the USED in these two areas since the CARES Act was signed into law on March 27th.
Before we look at the allowable activities, it's important to note that the ESSER funds do not have a supplement not supplant provision. This means these funds may be used to replace state or local funds under two conditions: 1) the funds are used for allowable activities and 2) maintenance-of-effort requirements are met. In fact, the USED cautions states and LEAs to carefully consider maintenance of effort requirements in spending ESSER funds.

For example, replacing local funds with ESSER Funds to support the delivery of special education activities could result in an LEA becoming out of compliance with the maintenance of effort requirements with IDEA. LEAs may use ESSER Funds to support the delivery of special education but should do so in addition to the state and local funds already allocated to the program. When planning for the use of ESSER funds, it's important for LEAs to consider similar implications to other programs, as well, such as the ESEA federal programs.

So, let's take a look at the allowable activities...
ESSER Use of Funds

LEAs may spend their funds on a wide variety of activities (Sec. 18003(d)):

1. Any activity authorized by the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA), the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act (Perkins), or the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act.

2. Coordination of LEA preparedness and response efforts to improve coordinated responses with other agencies to prevent, prepare for, and respond to coronavirus.

3. Providing principals and other school leaders with the resources necessary to address school needs.

4. Activities to address the unique needs of low-income children or students, children with disabilities, English learners, racial and ethnic minorities, students experiencing homelessness, and foster care youth.

5. Developing and implementing procedures and systems to improve LEA preparedness and response efforts.

6. Training and professional development for LEA staff on sanitation and minimizing the spread of infectious diseases.

7. Purchasing supplies to sanitize and clean LEA facilities.

8. Planning for and coordinating during long-term closures, including how to provide meals, technology for online learning, guidance on IDEA requirements, and ensuring other educational services continue to be provided consistent with all applicable requirements.

9. Purchasing educational technology (including hardware, software, and connectivity) for students served by the LEA that aids in regular and substantive educational interactions between students and their classroom teachers, including assistance technology or adaptive equipment.

10. Providing mental health services and supports.

11. Planning and implementing activities related to summer learning and supplemental after-school programs and addressing the needs of low-income students, students with disabilities, English learners, migrant students, students experiencing homelessness, and children in foster care, and

12. Other activities that are necessary to maintain operations and continuity of services and continuing to employ existing staff.

The allowable uses of ESSER funds are outlined in Section 18003(d) of the CARES Act. Expenditures incurred beginning March 13, 2020 are eligible for reimbursement and these funds do not expire until Sept 30, 2022. This list of allowable activities has been widely referenced in webinars and email updates from Federal Programs, published on the Coronavirus.Idaho.gov webpage under the Schools link and the Federal Programs section, and this list of allowable activities is also referenced in the Governor’s 5.20.2020 Updated FAQ – 5% Reduction Plan document.

I want to spend a couple minutes on this list of allowable activities by addressing what these activities have in common with each other.

**Equitable access and participation** is a theme throughout the list of allowable activities. School closures have increased challenges and barriers to equitable access for students in low-income families, as well as for homeless students, students in foster care, English learners, migratory children, and for students with disabilities. Students who were already behind and not meeting standards before the pandemic are at risk of falling further behind and of becoming disconnected from school altogether.

The first allowable use of ESSER funds on this list authorizes any activity allowable under the programs that protect these subgroups of children: for example, the ESEA programs, IDEA, McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, and it also includes the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, and the Perkins CTE Act. The fourth activity on this list addresses the unique needs of these subgroup populations; the third activity on this list focuses on providing principals the resources necessary to address needs of individual schools recognizing that schools with students who experience challenges to learning require more resources; the 11th activity on this list includes using funds for summer learning as a way to address the needs of low-income students, students with disabilities, English learners, migratory students, students experiencing homelessness, and children in foster care.
Another theme in this list of Fund Uses focuses around **building systems and learning from each other** by coordinating response efforts as identified in this list as #2 and #5 both within the LEA and across agencies, the #8 activity on this list provides for the coordination of meal planning, preparation and delivery to students, and #12 captures the Other activities necessary to maintain the operation of and continuity of services in the LEA and to continue to employ existing staff;

the **Wellness theme** is called out in #7 through the purchase of supplies to sanitize and clean facilities; to provide professional development for staff in #6 around minimizing the spread of infectious diseases, and to provide mental health services and support as stated in the #10 activity on this list.

The last theme from this list of allowable activities centers around **distance learning** in #8 and #9 – providing hardware, software, and connectivity for all students, which may include assistive technology or adaptive equipment for students with disabilities.

The Use of Funds activities are closely tied to the reporting requirements which we will look at in a minute.
Flexibility with ESSER Funds

How much flexibility does an LEA have in determining the activities to support with ESSER funds?

The ESSER Fund provides LEAs considerable flexibility in determining how best to use ESSER funds (see Section 18003(d)). For example, LEAs may use ESSER funds for personal protective equipment (PPE), cleaning and sanitizing materials, and similar supplies necessary to maintain school operations during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. Since learning can and should continue, the Department encourages LEAs to target ESSER funding on activities that will support remote learning for all students, especially disadvantaged or at-risk students, and their teachers (USED May 8, 2020 FAQs, #15).

https://coronavirus.idaho.gov/resources-for-schools/ under Federal Programs section

The US Dept. of Education acknowledges the flexibility of the ESSER funds and then identifies in this May 8th Q & A examples of this flexibility by specifically calling out two areas of focus where an LEA may use ESSER funds. 1) for materials and supplies necessary to maintain school operations during the pandemic such as PPE and cleaning and sanitizing materials, and 2) activities to support distance learning for all students, especially disadvantaged or at-risk students and their teachers. This question and response from the Department of Education is significant because of all the flexibility examples that could be provided, ED chooses the purchase of supplies and expenditures for implementing distance learning as priorities. Let’s take a look at how the fund activities are tied to the reporting requirements.
First we’ll look at the 55 LEAs with an allocation of more than $150,000. These LEAs have different reporting requirements than the other LEAs. Expenditures for LEAs with an allocation of more than $150,000 are tied to projects or activities. Funds will be drawn down at a project level. In the GRA, these LEAs will be asked to tie the draw-down amount to a project. This includes giving the project a title, a brief description, identifying the amount of the project for that draw-down period, and tying the expenditure to one or more object codes. The GRA for the expenditure will also include a section on creating or retaining jobs, and information tied to any subcontractors, if appropriate, will also be requested. So let’s look at several Project EXAMPLES that an LEA with an allocation of more than $150,000 might use for GRA Drawdowns.
Project EXAMPLES (for reporting purposes)

**Distance Learning Technology** – purchase of computers, mobile devices, hot spots, cable and Wi-Fi connections, distance learning software, online tools for students, especially those who have barriers in accessing remote learning.

**Professional Development** – training for teachers and administrators regarding:
- remote learning concepts and practice
- behavioral and emotional issues for children in remote learning environments,
- training on remote learning software and general online tools
- sanitation and minimizing the spread of infectious diseases

**Facility** – cleaning and sanitizing school facilities – supplies and labor, redesign and conversion of spaces for social distancing, furniture changes, signs and posters, and floor distance markers

These project ideas are suggested as examples only, and they do not represent a comprehensive list of possible ways to spend the ESSER funds, nor are they intended to be interpreted as limiters to the acceptable uses of allowable activities. Project examples are closely aligned to the allowable uses of funds. For example, an LEA with an allocation of more than $150,000 might submit a GRA request for a “Distance Learning Technology” project that includes expenditures for hardware, software, and connectivity. Another project might be called “Facilities” and include expenditures for cleaning supplies and salary and benefit expenditures for custodial staff to sanitize LEA facilities. Another project example could be titled “Professional Development” and include purchased services expenditures for the presenter, salaries and benefits for the staff attending the training, and supplies and materials related to the PD.
Another example an LEA with an allocation of more than $150,000 might submit in a GRA request could be a “Wellness” project that includes expenditures for health supplies such as wipes, thermometers, masks, etc., as well as purchased services expenditures specifically for mental health services.

A Serving Meals” project might include expenditures for the costs of food, salaries and benefits for preparing the meals (which could include food service staff when other funding sources are not sufficient), and salaries and benefits for the bus drivers who are delivering the meals to specific drop-off locations.

A “Community Collaboration” project might include expenses related to bringing together multiple people from within the LEA and across several agencies to plan and prepare for public health emergencies.
Project EXAMPLES (for reporting purposes) - 3

Employing Existing Staff – Continue to pay paraprofessionals for different duties that are related to COVID-19, such as to check-in with students, prepare materials for learning

Summer Learning - planning and implementing activities for summer learning including summer supplemental after school programs

Systems and procedures development and implementation – costs related to improving preparedness and response efforts and to plan for and coordinate long-term closures

Other Project/Activities – other activities necessary to maintain operations and continuity of services and to continue to employ existing LEA staff. For example, paying the salaries of food-service staff when other funding sources are not sufficient or paying school bus drivers who are delivering food and materials.

Another example an LEA with an allocation of more than $150,000 might submit a GRA request for could be an “Employing Existing Staff” project that continues to pay salaries for paraprofessionals for duties related to COVID-19, such as to check-in with students virtually or through “front porch” visits. Salaries for paraprofessionals might also include time spent preparing materials for learning as directed by the certified teacher. A “Summer Learning” project could fund supplies, materials, and meals for the students, salaries and benefits for the teacher(s), and transportation costs related to getting the students to and from the summer learning location, if that is appropriate and if there is not another funding source for transportation.
LEAs with an allocation of $150,000 or less do not have to tie their expenditures to a project or activity, but rather tie the expenditures to an object code. Please use Fund Number 252 and Revenue Code 445900 for ESSER funds.
Another idea:
Reexamine your 2019-2020 expenses paid with general funds. If any of these expenditures are allowable under Title I-A or under any other Federal program, consider a journal entry to code these general fund expenditures to Title I-A or another Federal fund.

If your LEA will have a larger than normal carryover for Title I-A or for any of the other ESEA programs this year, another idea is to take a look at your expenses paid with general funds from the beginning of the 2019-2020 school year. If any of those expenditures are allowable under Title I-A or any of the other ESEA federal programs, then consider a journal entry to move the general fund expenditures to the appropriate ESEA grant. This may be a way to free up some general funds.
QUESTIONS TO ASK TO DETERMINE THE APPROPRIATENESS OF CODING AN EXPENDITURE TO ESSERF:

1. Does this expenditure prevent, prepare for, and respond to coronavirus?
2. Consider MOE. Will coding this expenditure to Coronavirus in 2019-2020 still allow the LEA to meet MOE requirements?
3. Did this expenditure occur on or after March 13, 2020?

If you are not sure about the allowability of an expenditure, ask these three questions...
LEA spending options are broad and flexible consistent with the CARES Act goal of preventing, preparing for, and responding to coronavirus.

Federal cost principles apply to these funds, including the requirement that spending be necessary and reasonable.

Idaho ensured in its State Certification and Agreement application that it will provide technical assistance to LEAs on the use of ESSER funds for remote learning, including distance education and distance learning so that students can continue to learn during closures.

States have a role and a requirement to oversee ESSER spending. According to the US Dept of Ed, States award subgrants to LEAs to address the impact COVID-19 has had and continues to have on schools.

Federal cost principles apply to ESSER funds including that expenditures be necessary and reasonable.

Idaho assured in its State application that technical assistance to LEAs on the use of ESSER funds for remote learning will be provided so that students can continue to learn when schools are closed. This webinar is one example of that technical assistance.
Should SEAs and LEAs anticipate monitoring or auditing of ESSER funds?

Yes. The Department will monitor the use of ESSER funds. In addition, ESSER funds are subject to audit requirements under the Single Audit Act and to review by the Government Accountability Office. The Department’s Office of the Inspector General may audit program implementation, as may any other federal agency, commission, or department in the lawful exercise of its jurisdiction and authority.

Within 60 days of receiving the ESSER funds, States are required to submit a report to USED on its monitoring plan for ensuring funds are used for allowable purposes. So states can expect to be monitored by ED on the use of ESSER funds and LEAs can be expected to be monitored on the use of ESSER funds.
LEA ESSER fund allocations were revised after States received guidance from USED on May 8th stating that New and significantly expanding LEA charters in 2020-2021 are eligible for CARES Act ESSER funds. The revised LEA allocation list is dated 5.13.2020 and replaces the 4.23.2020 list. Idaho’s application was submitted, as mentioned earlier, and Idaho has received the state portion of ESSER funds. The most recent update is ...
To access the application, go to:
https://form.jotform.com/201274345987160

This link is emailed to superintendents, federal program directors and business managers from LEAs receiving an ESSERF allocation.

Once the application is submitted, a confirmation email from Lisa English will be sent to the LEA stating the application is received and reviewed for completeness. The email will include information on drawing down funds from the GRA.

...that LEAs receiving an ESSER fund allocation were emailed earlier today and now have the link to the JotForm application. An email with this link was sent to superintendents, federal program directors, and business managers, but please only submit ONE application per LEA.
Let’s take a quick look at the application...
There are four sections to the LEA application. Three of the sections require the signature of the superintendent or authorized representative. Let’s take a look at these sections.

CERTIFICATION AND AGREEMENT APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

To receive an ESSER Fund allocation, LEAs must submit to the Idaho State Department of Education the following information:

- A completed cover sheet that includes the signature of the Chief State School Officer or authorized representative. (Part A of the Application)
- Programmatic, fiscal, and reporting assurances. (Part B of the Application)
- Information on the uses of ESSER funds. (Part C of the Application)
- Other assurances and certifications. (Part D of the Application)
Part A of the LEA ESSERF Application

Part A is the cover sheet and includes:

- LEA # and name
- LEA mailing address and phone
- Superintendent name, email
- Federal Programs Director name, email
- Business Manager name, email
- Name, phone, date, and signature box for the superintendent or authorized representative

This section requires the signature of the superintendent or authorized representative.

Part A is the cover sheet and requires the signature of the superintendent or authorized representative.
Part B of the LEA ESSERF Application

Part B – Assurances
1. Expenditures not allowed: a) subsidizing or offsetting executive salaries and benefits of persons not employed by the LEA, b) expenditures related to state or local teacher or faculty unions or associations;
2. Equitable services provided in same manner as Sec. 1117 of ESEA;
3. Maintenance of effort compliance;
4. Provision to compensate employees and contractors during COVID-19 to the “greatest extent practicable”;
5. Reporting requirements compliance;
6. Cooperation with authorized individuals to examine expenditure records.

This section requires the signature of the superintendent or authorized representative.

Part B of the application includes several assurances and also requires the superintendent’s signature or that of an authorized representative. These assurances include important information. First, expenditures that are not allowed, are identified as executive salaries and benefits for people not employed by the LEA and expenditures related to state or local teacher or faculty unions or associations; there are two sections in Part B on equitable services, which includes LEAs’ consultation responsibilities to non-public schools within the LEA’s boundaries; a maintenance of effort compliance section; a provision to compensate employees and contractors during COVID-19 to the “greatest extent practicable”; reporting requirements compliance; and a section assuring cooperation related to the examination of expenditure records.
Part C – Questions with check-box options
1. How will the LEA determine its most important educational needs as a result of COVID-19?
2. The LEA’s proposed timeline for providing services and assistance to students and staff in both public and non-public schools – this section is in two sections.
3. Extent to which the LEA intends to use ESSER funds to promote remote learning.
4. How the LEA intends to assess and address student learning gaps resulting from the disruption in educational services.
5. The ESSER use of funds options the LEA is considering – 12 allowable activities.

Part C includes two sections with check-off box responses on:
1. How the LEA will determine its most important educational needs as a result of COVID-19
2. The LEA’s timeline for providing services to both public schools and to non-public schools, if appropriate
3. The extent to which the LEA intends to use ESSER funds to promote distance learning
4. How the LEA intends to assess and address student learning gaps in the fall
5. Identification of the 12 activity options for which the LEA is considering using its ESSER funds
Part D of the LEA ESSERF Application

Part D: Additional Assurances specific to the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA)

1. Sec. 442 includes general application assurances required for any federal award
2. Sec. 427 includes assurances around equity for students, teachers, and other program beneficiaries
3. Compliance with the Uniform Administrative Requirements, cost principles, and audit requirements
4. Compliance with OMB guidelines

This section requires the signature of the superintendent or authorized representative.

Part D includes the GEPA or General Education Provisions Act requirements. These include general assurances required for any federal award, assurances related to equity for students and teachers, compliance with the Uniform Administrative Requirements, cost principles, and audit requirements, and compliance with the Office of Management and Budget guidelines. This section requires a signature by the superintendent or authorized representative.
The Appendices are included for your information and do not require any action.
Appendix A: includes the ESSERF law 18003 which is specific to LEAs and is where the 12 allowable activities are identified; section on maintenance of effort requirements; and a section on the reporting requirements;.
Appendix B: includes the LEA ESSER fund allocation list.
If you want to Print the application, it must be printed before hitting the Submit button. The Submit button sends the application to Lisa English who will respond with an email acknowledging receipt of the application.
Our objective today was to provide information you can use to apply for funds and to spend the funds. We look forward to your questions and will do our best to answer them. Thank you for joining us today.