

Massachusetts ARP ESSER State Plan Highlights

Total ARP ESSER allocation for Massachusetts: \$1,831,416,990

ARP ESSER funding released to Massachusetts on March 24, 2021: \$1,220,085,382

ARP ESSER funding released to Massachusetts on July 7, 2021: \$611,331,608

2020-2021 Preliminary Statewide Enrollment: 921,712

Top Priorities Within Massachusetts' Plan:

- Fostering a sense of belonging and partnership among students and families
- Providing culturally responsive support and expert instruction to all students
- Continuing to keep students and educators healthy and safe

Highlights of Massachusetts' Plan:

- **Returning to In Person Learning in 2021:** The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) provided specific guidance on requirements related to the reopening and operation of school facilities. In the 2020-2021 school year, elementary schools returned to full-time, in-person learning in the spring. For the 2021-22 school year, all districts and schools will be required to be in-person, full-time, five days a week. Summer programming in 2021 will also operate in-person.
- **Safely Reopening Schools and Sustaining Safe Operations:** DESE has collaborated with the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) to expand opportunities for vaccinations for faculty and students. Their joint effort led to prioritizing educators for vaccines during March and April with specific days set aside solely for them at mass vaccination sites. Most recently, the Department and DPH have launched an effort to provide on campus vaccination clinics for students, faculty, and family members. Such efforts will continue in the months ahead as vaccines become readily available for younger children and the state will encourage the use of American Rescue Plan ESSER funds for these efforts.
- **Assessing the Impact of Lost Instructional Time:** DESE plans to use assessment results to better understand the impact of COVID-19 on student learning. In addition to assessment results, DESE will review data on chronic absenteeism, student enrollment and attendance, advanced course completion, student discipline, student and educator surveys, and data from the Early Warning Indicator System. DESE intends to use this reporting to facilitate conversations with the public across the State to identify the groups of students most impacted by the pandemic and use ARP funds to target resources to support the accelerated academic achievement of these students and communities.
- **Accelerating Learning for Students Impacted by the Pandemic:** DESE has developed an Acceleration Roadmap designed to provide a focused and phased approach to supporting students as they begin the 2021-22 school year. The state is also considering using ARP ESSER funds for programs like Acceleration Academies, which will create small, hands-on learning environments for Early Literacy and Math.
- **Investing in Summer Learning and Expanding Afterschool Programs:** With a portion ARP ESSER funds, Massachusetts will expand evidence-based programming that builds on existing

summer programming this year and in future years. New opportunities could include partnerships between districts and community-based organizations (CBOs), partnerships with the state's Early Learning initiatives, and expanding family engagement initiatives. One such program is the Summer School Matching grant program, which would offer grants with ARP ESSER funds to school districts to offer 4 to 6 week in-person programs to enhance or expand existing summer programs. Another is Summer Step Up, a program designed to engage young learners and accelerate learning for students entering school in the fall, particularly pre-school and kindergarten students.

- **Re-Engaging Students:** DESE has partnered with The New Teacher Project (TNTP) to create a resource targeted specifically at evidence-based strategies for reengaging students called The Academic Excellence Roadmap (Roadmap). The Roadmap is a tool created for the coming 2021-2022 school year for LEA and school leaders to provide focused and phased supports for students, especially those experiencing the greatest impact from the pandemic as they return to school. In addition to the immediate supports provided to students, the Roadmap contains materials and strategies that will promote accelerated learning over the next 3-5 years for these students.

Community Engagement and Consultation:

- In developing its plan, DESE met with over 50 stakeholder groups. It plans to continue to obtain stakeholder feedback to ensure opportunity for all to participate. The state also conducted an online interest survey for stakeholders (in six different languages) to aggregate recommendations on how to target resources and prioritize investments.

When Massachusetts's LEA Use of Funds Plans will be due: October 4, 2021