

## Rhode Island ARP ESSER State Plan Highlights

Total ARP ESSER allocation for Rhode Island: \$415,145,839

ARP ESSER funding released to Rhode Island on March 24, 2021: \$276,677,073

ARP ESSER funding released to Rhode Island on July 7, 2021: \$138,468,766

2020-2021 Preliminary Statewide Enrollment: 139,184

### **Top Priorities Within Rhode Island's Plan:**

- Addressing and improving enrollment and attendance
- Improving academic achievement, particularly by addressing existing equity gaps

### **Highlights of Rhode Island's Plan:**

- **Returning to In Person Learning in 2021:** Rhode Island was able to reopen schools at full capacity based on CDC guidance the past year, achieved through continued collaboration, robust testing, layered mitigation, and flexibility from school leaders, teachers, students, and families. All Local Education Agencies (LEAs) will be expected to provide full in-person learning for all students during summer 2021 and for the 2021-2022 school year.
- **Safely Reopening Schools and Sustaining Safe Operations:** The Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) worked directly with the Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH) and local municipalities to establish vaccine clinics for all educational staff and eligible students. Student vaccine clinics were held in schools during the 2020-2021 school year and Rhode Island expects these to continue this summer and fall.
- **Supporting Students Most Impacted by the Pandemic:** RIDE expects all LEAs to ensure equity is the guiding lens for assessing local data and identifying the most pressing student needs. RIDE has allocated a portion of its state set-aside dollars from the American Rescue Plan to support the lowest performing schools and LEAs.
- **Addressing the Academic Impact of Lost Instructional Time:** Using American Rescue Plan funding, RIDE will provide specific curriculum supports in math to students in elementary grades. RIDE will also address foundational literacy across the state through online classes or modules that support the awareness of the science of reading. RIDE will also launch an effort to expand high-dosage tutoring programs for LEAs across state, focusing on LEAs with student groups that are in high need of the program to help accelerate learning.
- **Investing in Summer Learning:** All LEAs will be expected to provide full in-person learning for all students during Summer 2021. With American Rescue Plan ESSER funds, RIDE will significantly expand summer learning options statewide through its All-Course Network (ACN), a platform that provides free courses administered by colleges, community-based organizations (CBOs), and municipalities. RIDE has made 6,154 seats and 345 courses offered by 66 providers available for students- over 2,800 of these course seats are for summer learning. Courses range from academic learning, such as AP courses, to enrichment, such as animation classes, and an “adventure camp” at a local park, and provide opportunities for students to connect positively and address their social and emotional needs.

- **Expanding Afterschool Programs:** Using the state’s successful 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Center (RI 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC) grant model as a guide, RIDE will use ARP ESSER funds to support partnerships between LEA and CBOs to provide comprehensive afterschool programming to Rhode Island students. Applicants for funding must provide evidence of a strong partnership between the LEA and one or more CBO(s) and must include evidence of the program addressing: family engagement; mental health referrals; and social-emotional learning. Applicants will also need to propose effective outreach strategies to engage and re-enroll students who have been disconnected from their school communities as a result of the pandemic.
- **Re-Engaging Students Disengaged From Their Communities:** Rhode Island explicitly noted in their ARP State Plan that afterschool program funding provided to districts from the ARP ESSER funds should be used to find, engage, and re-enroll students who were likely to not be engaged with instruction during the previous year. In addition, LEAs and their partner CBOs are expected to identify those students who were enrolled in their schools during the COVID-19 pandemic but who missed the most in-person instruction and or did not consistently participate in remote instruction and encourage them to enroll and participate in in-person learning and enrichment this summer and fall.
- **Staffing to Support Students’ Mental Health Needs:** RIDE has encouraged allocation of ARP funds towards human capital and staffing, particularly focused on expanding capacity to support students’ social-emotional wellness, including additional social workers or guidance counselors, or partnerships with community mental health providers.

**Community Engagement and Consultation:**

- RIDE convened the Learning, Equity & Accelerated Pathways (LEAP) Task Force consisting of 36 parents, state and local leaders, education experts, and community members representing a variety of stakeholder groups. The Task Force met for over two months and identified priorities and recommendations for meeting diverse needs of students and school communities, and developed critical recommendations for a path forward for education with feedback from members of the Rhode Island Student Advisory Council, and members of the Rhode Island Educators of Color Committee.

**When Rhode Island’s LEA Use of Funds Plans will be due:** Beginning August 2021

