



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

April 23, 2024

Dr. Ronald Wilcox
Superintendent
Hampton County School District
372 East Pine Street
Varnville, SC 29944

Dear Superintendent Wilcox:

Thank you for submitting to the U.S. Department of Education (Department) Hampton County School District's request for an exception to local maintenance of equity requirements under the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARP Act) in FY 2023.

Section 2004(c)(2) of the ARP Act specifies that a local educational agency (LEA) may be excepted from maintenance of equity requirements if the LEA "demonstrates an exceptional or uncontrollable circumstance, such as unpredictable changes in student enrollment or a precipitous decline in the financial resources of [the LEA], as determined by the Secretary." Examples of an "exceptional or uncontrollable circumstance" include increased one-time expenditures in the baseline year (school year 2021-2022) due to the pandemic, a very small school where maintenance of equity calculations do not result in meaningful information about resource availability, or a significant change in the expenses of a school due to that school no longer serving a student with high-cost educational and support needs. Each request for an exception to the ARP Act requirement involves a case-by-case review by the Department.

According to the materials provided on April 3, 2024, you requested an exception to the maintenance of equity requirement for Hampton County School District. According to the materials you provided, six high-poverty schools experienced a decline in State and local per-pupil funding in FY 2023 because of one-time funding they received in FY 2022 to assist with a district-wide consolidation that began on July 1, 2021. After reviewing your request, we concur that the one-time expenditure in the baseline year due to school district consolidation constitutes a circumstance that meets the criteria for an exception to the maintenance of equity requirement in FY 2023. As a result, Hampton County School District is excepted from the local maintenance of equity requirements for FY 2023.

Thank you again for reaching out to the Department and for your ongoing commitment to maintaining equity. If you have any questions, please contact the South Carolina State mailbox at: SouthCarolina.OESE@ed.gov.

Sincerely,

Laura Jimenez

Laura Jimenez
Director, Office of State and Grantee Relations

CC: The Honorable Ellen Weaver
State Superintendent of Education
South Carolina Department of Education