

Dear Colleagues,

On behalf of our ARP ESSER Sustainability and Support Team, we would like to thank you for participating in our conference calls, the purpose of which was to gather information about each LEA, the programs they had implemented with the ARP ESSER III funds, and the plans they had developed to sustain them after the ensuing fiscal cliff on September 30, 2024.

The focus of our team is to assist LEAs in identifying alternate sources of funding for ARP ESSER III programming. From reviewing over 700 applications, and from our conversations with a number of LEAs from across the state, we have gathered some data and best practices that we wish to share with you as a follow up to our discussion.

I. Statistics

As of the initial submission of ARP ESSER applications, here is the breakdown of average fund usage by category:

<u>Category</u>	<u>Avg % of Funds Used Public School Districts*</u>	<u>Avg % of Funds Used All LEAs**</u>
Professional Salaries	42%	45%
Purchased Services	19%	20%
Supplies and Materials	11%	12%
Employee Benefits	10%	8%
Equipment	6%	4%
Support Staff Salaries	6%	6%
BOCES Services	2%	2%
Minor Remodeling	2%	2%
Travel Expenses	1%	<1%
Indirect Cost	1%	<1%

*Data in this column represents all public school district LEAs in the Rest of State category; it excludes NYC public schools and all charter schools.

**Data in this column represents all LEAs in receipt of ARP ESSER funding: public school districts and charter schools, including NYC

The data above shows that, on average, LEAs had 59% of funds in professional salaries, support staff salaries, and employee benefits. In reviewing anticipated expenditures, many of the items in these categories appear to be recurring expenses that would need to be sustained after the grant funds expire in Fall 2024. We continue to encourage LEAs to consider moving these expenses into their general funds over the next two years and utilizing ARP ESSER funds for non-recurring expenses. LEAs should also continue to measure the effectiveness of ARP ESSER funded activities and consider how you will prioritize these expenditures, specifically salaries and benefits, especially if you are unable to continue all positions and activities once the funds expire.

II. Suggested One-Time Expenses

The following is a list of one-time expenses that districts have pursued. LEAs should consider one-time expenses that include (but are not limited to):

- Construction and facilities costs for improvements and enhancements
- Safety equipment upgrades
- Professional development
- Supplies and Materials
- Substitute costs
- Purchase of maintenance vehicles
- Stipends
- Retention and recruitment incentives
- Digitization of records

III. Considerations

In the following sections, you will find information relating to various options that our colleagues in LEAs across the state are considering to sustain ARP ESSER activities.

1. NYSED Grant Opportunities

LEA officials should continue to monitor the NYSED page for information about upcoming grant opportunities. This information can be found at <https://www.p12.nysed.gov/funding>. Some of the grants being utilized by LEAs to sustain ARP ESSER activities include: Community Schools Grant, 21st Century Community Learning Centers Grant, School Improvement Grants, and the Extended School Day Grant.

2. Other Grant Opportunities

Several LEAs have alluded to the use of grants through several state agencies, including the Office of Mental Health and the Office of Children and Family Services. Links to both sites are included below:

<https://omh.ny.gov/omhweb/rfp/2022/support-grants-school-LEA/index.html>

<https://www.ocfs.ny.gov/main/contracts/funding/>

3. Other Funds

LEAs are making use of the increases in NYS Foundation Aid to sustain ARP ESSER activities. LEAs are also looking at Title funds to potentially shift salaries from the ARP ESSER application.

4. Attrition

Some LEAs are utilizing anticipated retirements as a means to keep positions. The retiring teacher is replaced by a new hire at a lower step. In some cases, LEAs anticipate being able to replace and fill multiple positions from one retirement. In other cases, attrition is being used to eliminate positions

without having to cut staff. On the other hand, for LEAs that may be struggling to replace retiring staff or cover newly open positions, there are some LEAs that are bringing back retired teachers and administrators to serve in instructional coaching and other part-time or temporary roles.

5. Reduction of Program

LEAs can examine ways to keep existing programs, such as extended day or summer programs. Options might include a reduction of the frequency of the program, the number of attendees, or the number of staff in the program. These decisions should be data-driven and based on both the needs of students and the resources of the district.

6. BOCES

The BOCES is a great option for LEAs looking to continue programs. In particular, programs like extended day and summer programs, as well as mental health and tech support positions, can all be contracted through the BOCES. Some BOCES offer virtual options for summer programs, credit recovery programs, and extended day programs.

7. Local Organizations

LEAs can examine partnerships with local organizations. A number of LEAs are currently partnering with local organizations to provide extended day programming. We have also seen a number of LEAs working with local institutions of higher education, specifically local colleges and universities, to create teacher pipelines or to utilize interns to help in areas such as mental health.

8. Aidable Expenses

As LEAs consider amendments to their ARP ESSER applications, a number of LEAs are shifting grant funds out of areas that can be aidable, instead utilizing funds for one-time expenses. If the LEA has the cash flow to support it, moving expenditures out of ARP ESSER funds and using LEA funds instead for transportation, BOCES, building, and special education costs will allow LEAs to get aid on these expenses the following year. LEAs doing this are mainly shifting the ARP ESSER funds to one-time expenses within Purchased Services, Supplies and Materials, or Minor Remodeling.

9. Gradually Absorbing Recurring Costs into General Fund

If able to do so, LEAs should begin to move portions of their Professional Salaries, Support Staff Salaries, and Employee Benefits categories to begin utilizing LEA funds now. This will allow for an easier transition over the next two years in absorbing any anticipated recurring costs in these areas, and at the same time will free up ARP ESSER funding to be used for one-time expenditures in the next two years.

10. Educational Foundation

Some LEAs have stakeholders within their LEAs that have formed educational foundations. These can receive donations from the community, and then can take proposals from the LEA for grants. LEAs that spoke with us in this area mentioned grants for STEAM and outdoor classroom spaces.

11. Exceeding Tax Cap

LEAs may need to consider exceeding the tax cap for the 2024-2025 budget. If you plan to do so, the messaging will be important to the community. Consider the following:

- Hold forums leading up to the budget cycle to talk about ARP ESSER funded programs, and gauge community feedback on programs they would like the district to sustain
- Present data to the community about the effectiveness of the programs funded under ARP ESSER
- Messaging during the budget cycle should reflect the value of these programs and the need for a one-time exceeding of the tax cap
- Some LEAs have marketed this by keeping the tax rate the same from one year to the next, but utilizing the increase in home values to exceed the tax levy. The messaging is, “Your tax rate will not go up.”

12. Additional Resources

Additional resources can be found at <http://www.nysed.gov/federal-education-covid-response-funding/additional-resources>

This page is a subpage of NYSED’s ARP ESSER page which can be found at <http://www.nysed.gov/federal-education-covid-response-funding/american-rescue-plan-elementary-and-secondary-school>

REMINDERS

- Upcoming Dates
 - o LEAs must have all funds encumbered (obligated) by September 30, 2024
 - o LEAs must have all funds liquidated by October 30, 2024
 - o The FS-10F is due on October 30, 2024
 - Note: LEAs do not need to wait until the end of the grant period to submit your FS-10F. You can submit the FS-10F as soon as the LEA has liquidated all allotted funds.
- A large number of LEAs have received the first payment for their ARP ESSER funds but have yet to submit an FS-25 for reimbursement. We recommend that LEAs submit FS-25s periodically over the course of the grant cycle to help with cash flow and to ensure timely reimbursement on your expenses.
- Please note that FS-10As must be approved by the ESSA Office before the LEA acts on the proposed adjusted expenditures.
- We encourage all LEAs to work closely with your ESSA Lead Monitor and your application reviewers as you consider and submit amendments.



- Construction Projects Using CRRSA or ARP
 - o Construction projects for CRRSA or ARP **first** require the FS-10 approval through the NYSED Office of ESSA-Funded Programs **AND then** project submission and approval through the NYSED Office of Facilities Planning (OFP) before moving forward.
 - o Please be aware that NYSED has set deadlines for the submission of these projects. Projects using CRRSA funds must be submitted to OFP by March 1, 2023 and projects using ARP funds must be submitted to OFP by October 1, 2023.
 - o To view the memo from NYSED containing these deadlines, please visit <http://www.nysed.gov/common/nysed/files/programs/federal-education-covid-response-funding/construction-deadlines-1-23-23.pdf>

Closing

Upon review of the above funding sources, if you wish to share additional resources you may have knowledge of, that could be beneficial to other LEAs, please note them in your response to this email. One of the keys to sustainability, and overall success for our students, needs to be a willingness to share our information as colleagues.

Our team stands ready to work through these funding sources with your LEA and to offer any additional assistance you might need regarding the sustainability of ARP ESSER III programs and interventions.

We look forward to continued collaboration with you in the coming months. Please do not hesitate to reach out to us if we can be of assistance to you.

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