

**Utah State Plan for the  
American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund**



**U.S. Department of Education**

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June 3, 2021

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*Cover Page*

**Grantee and Contact Information**

**ARP ESSER PR Award Number (e.g., S425U2100XX):** S425U210032

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<p>By signing this document, I agree to each of the assurances listed in Appendix C and further assure that: To the best of my knowledge and belief, all information and data included in this plan are true and correct.</p>	
<p><b>Chief State School Officer or Authorized Representative (Printed Name)</b></p> <p>Dr. Sydnee Dickson</p>	
<p><b>Signature of Authorized SEA Representative</b></p>	<p>Date: June 3, 2021</p>

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## Overview

The Utah State Board of Education (USBE) staff from Student Achievement, Student Supports, Financial Operations, Data/Statistics, Policy, Law and Professional Practices, and Superintendency collaborated with Utah stakeholders and community members to draft the comprehensive response to this Utah ARP ESSER State Plan Template as required by the U.S. Department of Education. The response was created in May 2021 based on the current data, policies, and information available at that time. All text that is noted in *italics* comes from the U.S. Department of Education [SEA application template](#). Additional information about the agency's response to COVID-19 can be found on our website:

<https://schools.utah.gov/coronavirus>

Additionally, the Utah State Board of Education is provided notice to the U.S. Department of Education that the agency was unable to allocate ARP ESSER funds to our LEAs within 60 days of receiving the funds because it was not practicable.

Utah State Code [63J-5-204](#) defines our Utah ARP ESSER funds as a “high impact federal request” meaning a new federal funds request that will or could result in the state receiving total payments of \$10,000,000 or more per year from the federal government. Due to this designation, the following action steps must be taken:

*(3) (a)(i) Before obligating the state to accept or receive new federal funds or to participate in a new federal program under a high impact federal funds request that was not authorized during a legislative session as provided in Section 63J-5-201, an agency shall:*

*(A) submit the federal funds request summary to the governor, the Judicial Council, or the State Board of Education, as appropriate, for approval or rejection; and*

*(B) if the governor, the Judicial Council, or the State Board of Education approves the new federal funds request, submit the federal funds request summary to the Legislature for its approval or rejection in an annual general session or a special session.*

*(ii) The procedures required under Subsection (3)(a)(i) shall be performed, if possible, before the date that the high impact funds request is formally submitted, but not later than three months after the date of formal submission.*

*(b) (i) If the Legislature approves the new federal funds request, the agency may accept the new federal funds or participate in the new federal program.*

*(ii) If the Legislature fails to approve the new federal funds request, the agency may not accept the new federal funds or participate in the new federal program.*

As this award was received after the conclusion of our state general legislative session, we are currently awaiting a special session to be convened to follow the process outlined above. Upon the action of the Utah State Legislature to approve and appropriate the Utah ARP ESSER award,

the Utah State Board of Education will take action to release the LEA allocations, and LEA application template. Our current projection for the release of the LEA application and associated resources for Utah ARP ESSER is June 15, 2021.

The Utah State Board of Education has taken action to create the LEA allocations with our financial operations team. Additionally, agency staff are in the process of creating the LEA application template in alignment with federal requirements, as well as an LEA technical support for LEAs in planning and applying for the ARP ESSER funds as required by the recent ARP ESSER SEA Application template from the U.S. Department of Education. The agency is committed to providing these funds to our LEAs as soon as possible.

This plan was approved by the Utah State Board of Education on June 3, 2021 in an open public board meeting.

### *A. Describing the State’s Current Status and Needs*

*The Department recognizes the extraordinary efforts made by States, LEAs, and educators to support students during the COVID-19 pandemic. In this section, SEAs will describe the progress they have made, the priorities and student needs guiding their ARP ESSER funding decisions, and their current and projected operating status.*

1. *Progress and Promising Practices: Provide your assessment of the top 2-3 strategies that have been most effective in supporting the needs of students in your State during the COVID-19 pandemic, especially for students most impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Please include, if applicable, how your State will submit and encourage its LEAs to submit lessons learned and best practices to the Department’s [Safer Schools and Campuses Best Practices Clearinghouse](#) so that they can be shared with other States and LEAs.*

The Utah State Board of Education (USBE) has identified the following effective strategies in supporting the needs of students in Utah during the COVID-19 pandemic, especially for students most impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic include:

- **Supported school reopening in fall 2020:** In addition, the USBE has worked collaboratively with the Utah Department of Health, the Governor’s office, and others to establish health and safety protocols that supported most Utah students continuing with in-person learning through the year. In addition to supporting in-person learning, to the greatest extent possible, LEAs took systematic steps to find and engage “missing” students through home visits and other evidence-based engagement strategies.
- **Expanded access to broadband and educational devices:** One example of successfully expanding broadband access to support remote learning can be found in the Murray School District and their Power Play LTE initiative, which was leveraged through COVID-19 relief funding and a collaborative partnership with the Utah Education Network.
- **Empowering LEAs to make local decisions about the best practices and allocation of COVID-19 relief funding to meet the needs of their specific student population, including those most impacted by COVID-19:** This includes USBE continued emphasis on high quality instructional practices, student competency, and individual needs to focus on addressing opportunity to learn for each student. For example, the USBE waived some of the requirements related to the number of days and hours required for school funding formulas. These changes resulted in innovative and creative scheduling solutions that realized increased effectiveness of Tier II and Tier III interventions, specifically designed instruction for students with disabilities, and general circumstances of students lacking skill/knowledge competencies.

The USBE will encourage LEAs to submit lessons learned to the Safer Schools and Campuses Best Practices Clearinghouse through communications to various professional listservs. In addition, the USBE will submit lessons learned through the established Utah Leading through Effective Actionable and Dynamic (ULEAD) Education clearinghouse as staff are able to

validate the positive outcomes through investigative analysis. This will allow us to share lessons learned with Utah LEAs and other states.

2. *Overall Priorities: Provide your assessment of the top 2-3 issues currently facing students and schools across your State as a result of or in response to the COVID-19 pandemic including, to the extent possible, data illustrating why these are the most critical and/or most widespread issues facing schools and students.*

1. **Student mental health and social emotional needs including student health foundations and protective factors.**

- Increased frequency and severity of behavioral incidences (LEA Superintendent Advisory Council)
- Students experiencing loneliness and isolation (USBE Advisory Committee on Equity of Educational Services for Students - ACEESS, USBE Student Needs Survey Spring 2020 and Fall 2020)
- Utah LEAs and stakeholders have articulated needs at all grade levels throughout the pandemic.
- The articulated lack of having mental health practitioners on-site consistently to address student needs. (USBE Advisory Committee on Equity of Educational Services for Students - ACEESS, USBE Student Needs Survey Spring 2020 and Fall 2020, Multicultural Advisory Committee)
- Access to culturally responsive, youth-based mental health supports that are therapeutically-based and not just programmatic (Multicultural Advisory Committee), such as professional learning for teachers on evidence-based interventions.
- **Data:** USBE has used feedback from the multiple stakeholder engagement forums to be able to gather qualitative data to support the prioritization of this need. USBE just concluded the administration of the school climate survey to all students, parents, teachers, administrations, and school resource officers in Spring 2021, as required by USBE [Board Rule R277-623](#). This data is in the process of being analyzed through the StatsIQ function of our state Qualtrics dashboard to be able to provide additional quantitative data to inform the state's response.

2. **Missing or disengaged students in K-12**

- Students who have not returned to the classroom or engaged in digital instructional opportunities since March 2020.
- The retention rate from online learning/hybrid models is lower than in-person, according to in-class assessments being done by individual educators. (USBE Advisory Committee on Equity of Educational Services for Students - ACEESS, USBE Student Needs Survey Spring 2020 and Fall 2020)

- There is not a consistent system that tracks students who are not attending school. Additionally, there is not a consistent set of policies or response strategies amongst schools, LEAs, or grade levels. (Common across all advisory groups)
- Secondary students have taken jobs/secondary school students who may be credit deficient may also need to be working summer jobs to support their families. (COVID-19 Advisory Council, LEA Superintendent Advisory Council)
- **Data:** Course completion percentages demonstrate that course completion rates in December 2020 decreased significantly this year as compared to December 2019 (pre-pandemic)

**Table A1. Course completion percentages by student subgroup for December 2019 and December 2020.**

	December 2019	December 2020
All students (12th Grade English Language Arts and mathematics)	54%	31%
12 Grade English Language Arts (ELA)	62%	41%
12th Grade mathematics	55%	35%
Students with disabilities (12th grade ELA)	63%	49%
Students with disabilities (12th grade mathematics)	63%	49%
Students learning English (12th grade ELA)	51%	32%
Students learning English (12th grade mathematics)	48%	31%
Students from low-income	62%	41%

families (12th grade ELA)		
Students from low-income families (12th grade mathematics)	55%	35%

- **Data:** USBE noted a drop in overall student enrollment in the 2020-21 school year that contrasts the trends in enrollment since 2013-14 as represented below:

**Table A2. Total Student Enrollment for Utah K-12 from 2013-2021**

School Year	Data Level	Total K-12	Diff from Previous Year	Pct Change from Previous Year
2020-2021	State Total	665,306	(1,552)	-0.2%
2019-2020	State Total	666,858	7,906	1.2%
2018-2019	State Total	658,952	7,156	1.1%
2017-2018	State Total	651,796	7,792	1.2%
2016-2017	State Total	644,004	10,543	1.7%
2015-2016	State Total	633,461	11,713	1.9%
2014-2015	State Total	621,748	9,660	1.6%
2013-2014	State Total	612,088		

### 3. Literacy

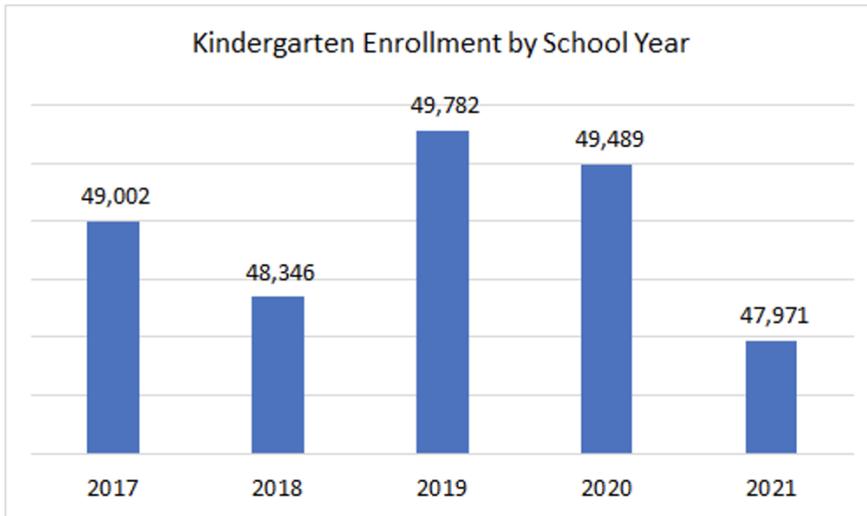
- Literacy outcomes are a concern for educators across the state. Student performance in literacy is slipping. Educators are concerned about only being provided one-time professional learning opportunities without the necessary follow up that has been shown to be most effective. There is an interest in more sustainable plans to improve access and outcomes. (USBE Advisory Committee on Equity of Educational Services for Students - ACEESS)
- The state beginning and middle of year performance, as shown with Acadience data, are showing a disruption in learning due to COVID-19 in kindergarten through third grade.

**Table A3. Early Literacy Student Performance Data from 2019-2021 from Acadience Data from Middle of Year (MOY) and student subgroup performance data**

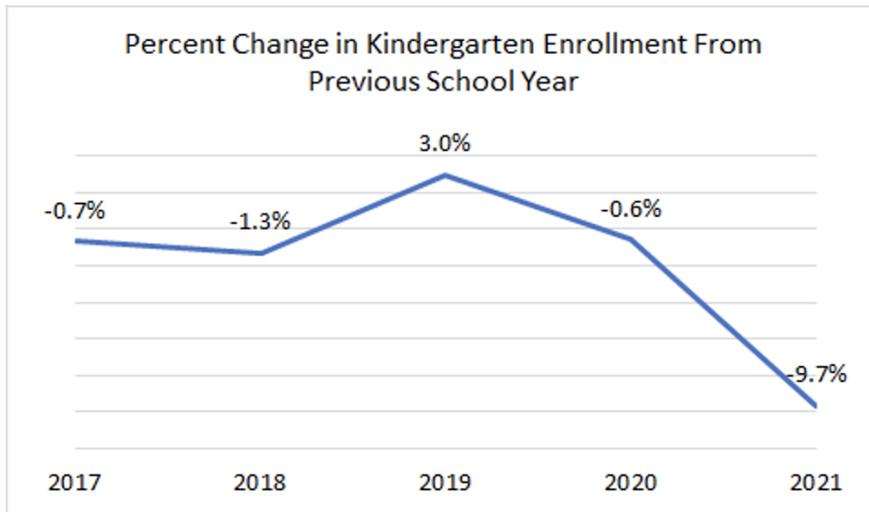


- Local assessment data indicate circumstances resulting from the pandemic had a greater impact on kindergarten and first grade as compared to other grades (LEA Superintendent Advisory Council)
- Kindergarten enrollment was down across the state in the 2020-2021 school year; locals report 1st grade enrollment is high (LEA Superintendent Advisory Council)
- **Data:** Increased number of first grade students who did not attend Kindergarten

**Table A4. Kindergarten Enrollment by School Year 2017 - 2021 for Utah**



**Table A5. Percent Change in Kindergarten Enrollment From 2017-2021**



3. Identifying Needs of Underserved Students: Describe your State’s 2-3 highest priority academic, social, emotional, and/or mental health needs for the remainder of the 2020-2021 school year (if applicable) and

*for the 2021-2022 school year related to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on each of the following student groups:*

- i. Students from low-income families,*
- ii. Students from each racial or ethnic group (e.g., identifying disparities and focusing on underserved student groups by race or ethnicity),*
- iii. Gender (e.g., identifying disparities and focusing on underserved student groups by gender),*
- iv. English learners,*
- v. Children with disabilities (including infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities eligible under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (“IDEA”)),*
- vi. Students experiencing homelessness,*
- vii. Children and youth in foster care,*
- viii. Migratory students, and*
- ix. Other groups disproportionately impacted by the pandemic that have been identified by the SEA (e.g., youth involved in the criminal justice system, students who have missed the most in-person instruction during the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 school years, students who did not consistently participate in remote instruction when offered during school building closures, and LGBTQ+ students).*

*To the extent possible, this description should include data on indicators such as estimates of the academic impact of lost instructional time,<sup>1</sup> chronic absenteeism, student engagement, and social-emotional well-being.*

In addition to the top 2-3 issues currently facing students and schools across Utah as a result of or in response to the COVID-19 pandemic as described in Part A, Section 2, USBE has identified three additional overarching highest priority needs related to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on underserved student populations:

- 1) Access to food and nutrition services
- 2) Access to broadband, hardware and technology support
- 3) Broader social and economic issues impacting students’ opportunity to learn (e.g., health care, employment, childcare)

These highest priority needs were selected in partnership with other state agencies, community organizations and non-profit organizations including local education agencies (LEAs), the Utah Department of Health, Juvenile Justice Services, the Division of Child and Family Services, the Division of Services for Individuals with Disabilities, the Utah Parent Teacher Organization, the Utah Parent Center, Prevent Child Abuse Utah, the Utah Pride Center, the Huntsman Neuropsychiatric Institute, Encircle of Utah, the Department of Workforce Services (DWS), the Office of Child Care, the Governor’s office, the Office of Rehabilitative Services, Native American Tribal Leaders, the United Way Committee on Homelessness, the Utah Homeless

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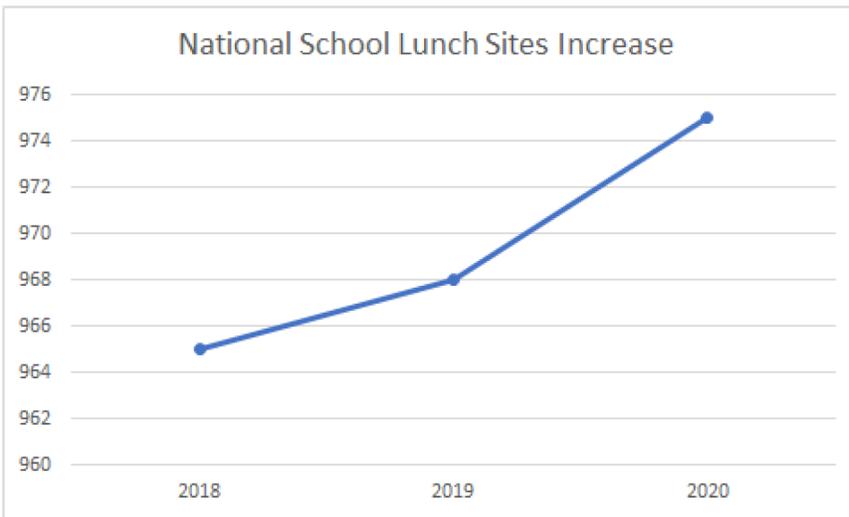
<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of the plan, “academic impact of lost instructional time” refers to “learning loss” experienced by students as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, as referenced in the ARP Act and the CRRSA Act.

Coordinating Council, the Mexican Consulate Committee on Migrant Farmworkers, and the DWS Migrant Seasonal Farmworker Outreach, etc. Additionally, USBE has gathered, analyzed, and responded to prevalence and usage data, survey data, focus group data, and anecdotal data regarding the highest priority academic, social, emotional, and/or mental health needs for the remainder of the 2020-2021 school year and for the 2021-2022 school year related to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

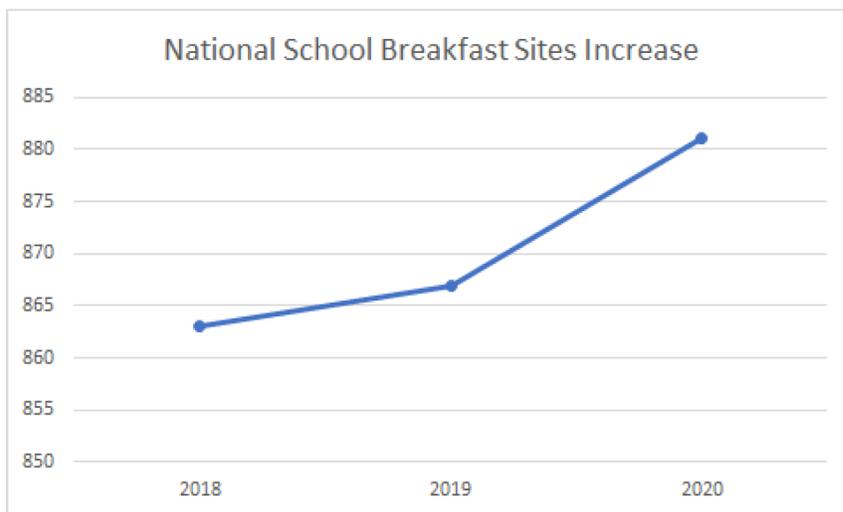
### 1) Access to Food and Nutrition Services

The importance of access to food and nutrition services has been vital to our community during the pandemic. USBE Child Nutrition Programs staff approved and distributed 70 waivers, provided support, updates and encouragement with monthly town hall meetings and emails, and worked with the Department of Workforce Services to roll-out the P-EBT program all in a concerted effort to ease the burden of providing meals to students in various ways during the pandemic. The tables below demonstrate the trend in increased sites for the National School Lunch program and National School Breakfast program to demonstrate needs for access to food and nutrition services.

**Table A5. National School Lunch Total Site Numbers from 2018-2020 reported in the [Utah Child Nutrition Programs 2020 annual report](#).**



**Table A6. National School Breakfast Site Numbers from 2018-2020 reported in the [Utah Child Nutrition Programs 2020 annual report](#).**



## 2) Access to Broadband, Hardware and Technology Support

Additionally, USBE found that access to broadband, hardware and technology support are required for K-12 community members to achieve meaningful connection to the digital and remote learning opportunities that have been necessary throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. The components of connection that comprise “Broadband Access,”<sup>2</sup> include:

- 1) Affordable, robust broadband infrastructure
- 2) Affordable, robust broadband internet service subscriptions
- 3) Internet-enabled devices that meet the needs of the user
- 4) Access to digital literacy training<sup>3</sup>
- 5) Quality technical support
- 6) Applications and online content designed to enable and encourage self-sufficiency, participation, and collaboration

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<sup>2</sup> These components of connection are adopted from the National Digital Inclusion Alliance’s (NDIA) definition of “Digital Inclusion.” Digital Inclusion is a primary desired outcome of the Utah Broadband Adoption Initiative. <https://www.digitalinclusion.org/definitions/>

<sup>3</sup> The standard international definition for ‘digital literacy’ is as follows: “*Digital literacy is the ability to access, manage, understand, integrate, communicate, evaluate and create information safely and appropriately through digital technologies for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship. It includes competences that are variously referred to as computer literacy, ICT literacy, information literacy and media literacy.*” <http://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/ip51-global-framework-reference-digital-literacy-skills-2018-en.pdf>

To ensure investments in infrastructure yield their desired results, all components of connection must be addressed.

**Broadband Availability Statistics:** Utah has traditionally been a leader in broadband availability and subscription rates. Broadband availability refers to the level of service available to an individual or household and is typically measured by a maximum advertised speed. Subscription rates indicate if households have purchased services. Although many Utahns have access to internet services, there are still individuals who have been left behind and are unable to fully participate in education and workforce opportunities as well as telehealth, online services, and civic engagement processes. Barriers to essential internet access include infrastructure, subscription cost, device access, and digital literacy education. Beyond benefiting K-12 students, robust broadband adoption efforts ensure all Utahns--urban or rural, old or young, northern or southern, indigenous or refugee--are able to continue to contribute across the state.

Broadband availability rates are collected twice a year from broadband providers by the Utah Governor’s Office of Economic Development (GOED) for the [Residential Broadband Availability Map](#) and subscription rates are collected by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics through the American Community Survey. The following chart highlights these statistics.

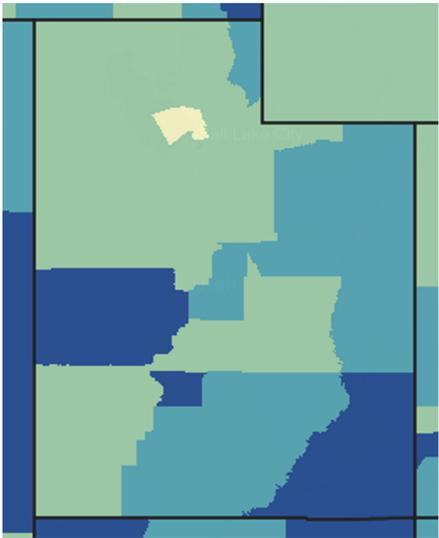
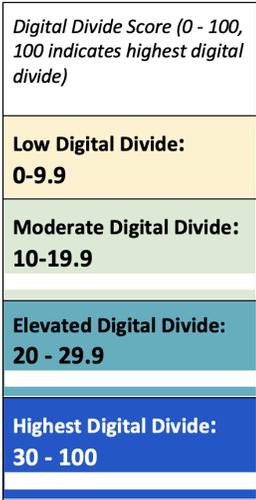
The data gathered is at the aggregate county level, and as a state it is recognized that there will be specific pockets and households within specific zip codes that may have additional needs related to broadband availability and access (potentially in collaboration with the existing Household Travel Survey).

AVAILABILITY:	25 Mbps or greater (GOED 2020)	50 Mbps or greater (GOED 2020)	100Mbps or greater (GOED 2020)	1 Gbps or greater (GOED 2020)	Homes that Subscribe to Broadband (American Community Survey 2018)
<b>STATEWIDE</b>	99.9	99.5	93.3	50.4	89.19%
BEAVER COUNTY	100	90.1	49.3	48	79.80%
BOX ELDER COUNTY	100	86.9	86.8	59.1	87.40%
CACHE COUNTY	100	93.6	93.2	38.5	89.50%
CARBON COUNTY	100	94.1	90.2	89.9	85.10%
DAGGETT COUNTY	99.2	64.1	64.1	0	96.90%
DAVIS COUNTY	99.9	99.8	99.2	53.6	93.30%

DUCHESNE COUNTY	99.9	28.3	16.2	15.5	87.70%
EMERY COUNTY	99.3	93.9	93.9	93.9	84.20%
GARFIELD COUNTY	98.1	55.3	47	43.5	83.00%
GRAND COUNTY	99.9	71.5	71.5	63.5	90.70%
IRON COUNTY	100	93.6	92.5	68.3	87.30%
JUAB COUNTY	99.7	83.9	76	0.2	82.40%
KANE COUNTY	100	55	31.6	31.6	80.20%
MILLARD COUNTY	100	65	59.1	0	86.60%
MORGAN COUNTY	100	84.9	84.5	82.6	96.10%
PIUTE COUNTY	99.9	60.4	2	1.7	70.00%
RICH COUNTY	100	88.7	6.2	3.4	77.80%
SALT LAKE COUNTY	99.9	99.4	98.7	64.5	88.90%
SAN JUAN COUNTY	91.2	36.5	36.5	18.4	52.90%
SANPETE COUNTY	100	97.4	93.9	34.9	84.20%
SEVIER COUNTY	97.6	91.7	76.6	0	86.30%
SUMMIT COUNTY	99.7	90.8	84.6	21.3	93.40%
TOOELE COUNTY	100	96.1	94.1	30.7	92.80%
UINTAH COUNTY	100	75.4	73	19.9	87.30%
UTAH COUNTY	99.9	96.1	95.2	46.7	89.70%
WASATCH COUNTY	99.8	78.4	76.2	15.8	93.10%
WASHINGTON COUNTY	100	99.5	98.7	33.9	87.40%

WAYNE COUNTY	99.7	69.6	53.3	51.7	79.70%
WEBER COUNTY	99.1	96.5	93.9	37.1	88.40%

**Digital Divide:** In addition to the internet connection speeds and home subscription, there are other factors that inform the state of the “digital divide”. Experts with the Purdue Center for Regional Development have created a comprehensive data set to assess the Digital Divide Index or DDI range<sup>4</sup>. It is composed of two scores, the infrastructure/adoption (INFA score) and the socioeconomic (SE) score. These variables considered in these scores include percent of homes without computing devices, percent of homes with no internet access, and individual poverty rate. Data for the digital divide index (DDI) was obtained from the 5-year American Community Survey (ACS) and FCC Form 477. The full set of variables is described in the appendix. The DDI ranges in value from 0 to 100, where 100 indicates the highest digital divide.



**Specific Needs for San Juan School District:** San Juan School District serves approximately 1,200 scholars in the River Region, to include Montezuma Creek Elementary, Whitehorse High School, Bluff Elementary, Tse’bii’nidzsigai Elementary, Monument Valley High School, and Navajo Mountain High School. Due to COVID-19 prevention efforts and high case numbers on the Navajo Nation in this region, students have been required to remain in remote learning. This has been challenging due to the lack of broadband infrastructure available at the individual household level. To properly provide equitable access to the regular curriculum while scholars are learning remotely, San Juan School District (SJSJSD) needs to extend the schools’ Local Area Network (LAN) to scholar homes. This represents a specific need related to broadband

<sup>4</sup> Gallardo, R. (2020). Digital Divide Index. Purdue Center for Regional Development. Retrieved from Digital Divide Index (DDI): <http://pcrd.purdue.edu/ddi> - <https://arcg.is/0TjWLM0>

connectivity for Utah K-12 and has been a high priority for the state to address with resources such as \$3.9M from the state Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF). With the growing infrastructure over the 2020-21 school year, this district will continue to need support to address student learning needs as they transition to being online and potentially back in school in the future.

### **Student Subgroup Needs Data Analysis**

When available later this year, USBE staff will disaggregate data from the following sources to identify any disproportionate impacts on the student groups identified in QA.3(i-ix):

- Statewide assessment data (grades 3-10)
- School climate survey (grades K-12)
- Acadience assessment data (grades K-3)
- Graduation rates
- WIDA ACCESS Assessment (students learning English)

Agency staff will use outcomes from this analysis to identify highest priority needs through focus groups and advisory councils.

For students in state care/custody, the Division of Child and Family Services reported that for the 2020 calendar year, there were decreases in child protective services referrals from schools during the first few months of the pandemic and the soft closure of schools with a slight increase in the number of child protective services referrals that came in from law enforcement officers. Children exiting state care/custody decreased significantly during those months as well but picked back up when school resumed in the fall. Placement stability of children in care was stable as children and youth didn't move around as much as in previous quarters. All of these slight changes have in subsequent quarters normalized. These data sets align with information that in the first month of the soft closure of the pandemic, students weren't in school, and some spent more time at home unsupervised.

In addition, stakeholder groups identified the following specific student group needs:

- Children with disabilities: access to appropriate accommodations for remote learning; access to remote specially designed instruction and related services; access to meaningful remote speech language services or meaningful in-person speech language services while adhering to mask wearing requirements; access to meaningful interaction with nondisabled peers
- English learners: Practicing English language with peers and access to grade-level appropriate content with appropriate supports; parent/family access to school/educational information in home language; social language models and practice (wearing masks has been reported to inhibit language learning)

- Migratory: Identification for school/social services connections (as recruiters were not allowed to go visits farms and plants, and families hid from political and racial equity disputes)
- Students Experiencing Homelessness: Access to public services
- LGBTQ+: Access to therapeutic intervention and supports

4. *Understanding the Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic: Describe how the SEA will support its LEAs in identifying the extent of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on student learning and student well-being, including identifying the groups of students most impacted by the pandemic. Where possible, please identify the data sources the SEA will suggest its LEAs use in thoughtfully diagnosing areas of need, including data on the academic, social, emotional, and mental health impacts of lost instructional time.*

The Utah State Board of Education has been and will continue to support LEAs in identifying the extent of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on both student learning and student well-being, by identifying groups of students most impacted by the pandemic. Our primary mechanism for LEA support will be through the process of collecting, analyzing, and reporting data sets that are collected at the state level to inform local planning for COVID-19 response strategies and resources. The Utah State Board of Education (USBE) has developed a comprehensive plan for determining the effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic on student learning (available through the [USBE Data Gateway](#)), including the identification of relevant data sources and the addition of [opportunity to learn questions](#) to the grades 3-10 state assessments. It is important to note the administration of state assessments has proceeded in Utah schools with a relatively small reduction in participation.

In addition to these efforts, USBE will continue to assist LEAs in determining the extent of the impact of the pandemic on student learning. The USBE administered a School Climate Survey to Utah students, parents, teachers, administrators, and school resource officers in the Spring of 2021, which will make visible the sense of safety, connectedness, and positive relationships our students are experiencing through the pandemic. The results of the School Climate Survey will be available through a public dashboard that is in the final stages of development. Student's mental health has been of the utmost importance to the Utah State Board of Education and other Utah policy makers as evidence of the establishment of the SafeUT program in 2014. This program provides 24/7 real-time crisis intervention services by licensed clinicians to our children and works closely with school leaders and counselors to understand and improve the mental health conditions of their students. The student achievement, social, emotional, and mental health data sources support disaggregation by student groups to support the goal of identifying not only which student groups have been most significantly impacted but how each student group has been impacted.

An example of how the USBE is examining and reporting this level of data can be found in the executive summary of the Fall 2020 administration of the beginning of year (BOY) reading benchmark assessment. Finally, the USBE is collecting school level data regarding educational

settings and lost instructional time through a variety of methods, one example is a report provided to the public on February 4, 2021, where the results of a CARES survey, depicting how many students were in remote vs. in-person learning was shared.

These examples demonstrate types of USBE supports that are and will continue to be provided to Utah LEAs in identifying the extent of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on student learning and student well-being. Additional examples are provided throughout the state plan.

5. *School Operating Status: It is essential to have data on how students are learning in order to support the goals of access and equity, especially for student groups that have been disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Describe the current status of data collection on operational status and mode of instruction of all schools in your State. This description must include:*

i.i. *A description of to what extent, and how frequently, the State collects now and will collect in the future data for all schools in your State on:*

a. *Mode of instruction: The number of schools in your State that are offering fully remote or online-only instruction; both remote/online and in-person instruction (hybrid model); and/or full-time in-person instruction;*

In planning for the Summer 2020 and the 2020-2021 school year, the USBE collected data on the modes of instruction from all Utah schools. Throughout the school year, additional data was collected in February and April, and will be collected at the end of the school year to track how the modes have changed throughout Utah's 1,055 schools.

Planning for the 2021-2022 school year, the USBE anticipates collecting data on school operating status three times: the start of the year, a midway point, and the end of the school year.

b. *Enrollment: Student enrollment for all students and disaggregated for each of the student groups described in A.3.i-viii for each mode of instruction; and*

Data on student enrollment was collected alongside the above data set on school operating status, in February and April, and will be collected at the end of the 2020-2021 school year. For the detailed enrollment data for all students, which has been disaggregated for each of the student groups requested, please see [Appendix A: School Operating Status and Instructional Mode Data Template](#) in this state plan.

For the 2021-2022 school year, the USBE anticipates collecting data on student enrollment three times: the start of the year, a midway point, and the end of the school year. LEA attendance and enrollment data submission requirements can be found in Board Rules [R277-419](#) and [R277-607](#).

c. *Attendance: Student attendance for all students and disaggregated for each of the student groups described in A.3.i-viii for each mode of instruction.*

The USBE does not currently, nor intends to, collect attendance data. LEA attendance and enrollment data submission requirements can be found in Board Rules [R277-419](#) and [R277-607](#).

d. *The data described in A.5.i.a. and b. using the template in Appendix A (and to the extent available, the data described in A.5.i.c.) for the most recent time period available. Please note that this*

*data can be submitted separately within 14 calendar days after a State submits this plan. The SEA must also make this data publicly available on its website as soon as possible but no later than June 21, 2021, and regularly provide updated available information on its website. The Department will periodically review data listed in A.5.i on SEA websites.*

For all USBE-collected data mentioned above, please see [Appendix A: School Operating Status and Instructional Mode Data Template](#).

*e. To the extent available, a description of the planned operational status and mode of instruction for the State and its LEAs for Summer 2021 and for the 2021-2022 school year.*

For the 2021-2022 school year, except for an online-only charter school, LEAs are required to provide at least 4 days of in-person instruction (see Utah Code Section [53G-9-210](#)). For Summer 2021, various modes of instruction, remote/hybrid/in-person, will exist based on school capabilities/offerings.

### ***B. Safely Reopening Schools and Sustaining their Safe Operations***

*The Department recognizes that safely reopening schools and sustaining their safe operations to maximize in-person instruction is essential for student learning and student well-being, and especially for being able to address the educational inequities that have been worsened by the COVID-19 pandemic. In this section, SEAs will describe how they will support their LEAs in this vital area.*

*1. Support for LEAs: Describe how the SEA will support its LEAs in safely returning to in-person instruction and sustaining the safe operation of schools. This description must include:*

*i.i. How the SEA will support its LEAs implementing, to the greatest extent practicable, prevention and mitigation policies in line with the most up-to-date guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (“CDC”) for the reopening and operation of school facilities to effectively maintain the health and safety of students, educators, and other staff;*

The Utah State Board of Education (USBE) will continue to support LEAs in implementing prevention and mitigation policies for the reopening and operation of school facilities to effectively maintain the health and safety of students, educators, and other staff.

As many Utah LEAs have already returned to in-person instruction, the USBE has partnered with the Utah Department of Health and other State officials to provide resources to LEAs for their safe reopening and continuity of services. These resources include the utilization of federal funds, such as the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief fund, the Governor’s Emergency Education Relief fund, as well as the State’s Coronavirus Relief Fund grant, Personal Protective Equipment grant, High School COVID-19 Testing grant, and testing strategies for extracurricular activities and preventing school outbreaks. The USBE and state partners plan to continue to provide these resources for the prevention and mitigation of COVID-19.

Last summer (2020), USBE worked with a panel of experts—educators, administrators, public health experts, physicians, epidemiologists, teacher representatives—to establish [minimum elements and requirements](#) that LEAs must address in local school reopening plans. USBE

developed a template to gather assurances and a [Planning Handbook](#) containing recommendations. USBE hosted a webinar for district superintendents, charter school directors, and their teams to orient participants to a problem-solving framework that can be applied to assess and mitigate risk due to COVID-19 across various school settings.

Additionally, to achieve the goal of providing a safe learning environment for students and a safe workplace for teachers and employees, the Utah Department of Health (UDOH) created and distributed a COVID-19 School Manual for K-12 public, private, and charter schools that outlines best practices, recommendations, and resources available for schools. This can be found at [https://coronavirus-download.utah.gov/School/COVID-19\\_School\\_Manual\\_FINAL.pdf](https://coronavirus-download.utah.gov/School/COVID-19_School_Manual_FINAL.pdf).

**Table B1. Mitigation Strategies and Supports for LEAs**

Mitigation strategy	USBE response
Universal and correct wearing of masks	<p><a href="https://coronavirus.utah.gov/mask/">https://coronavirus.utah.gov/mask/</a></p> <p><a href="https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover-guidance.html">https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover-guidance.html</a></p> <p><a href="https://coronavirus-download.utah.gov/School/COVID-19_School_Manual_FINAL.pdf">https://coronavirus-download.utah.gov/School/COVID-19_School_Manual_FINAL.pdf</a> -page 105-109</p> <p>USBE School Reopening Planning Handbook: <a href="https://schools.utah.gov/file/5997f53e-85ca-4186-83fe-932385ea760a">https://schools.utah.gov/file/5997f53e-85ca-4186-83fe-932385ea760a</a></p>
Physical distancing (e.g., including use of cohorts/podding)	<p><a href="https://coronavirus-download.utah.gov/School/COVID-19_School_Manual_FINAL.pdf">https://coronavirus-download.utah.gov/School/COVID-19_School_Manual_FINAL.pdf</a> -page 101-102</p> <p>USBE School Reopening Planning Handbook: <a href="https://schools.utah.gov/file/5997f53e-85ca-4186-83fe-932385ea760a">https://schools.utah.gov/file/5997f53e-85ca-4186-83fe-932385ea760a</a></p>
Handwashing and respiratory etiquette	<p><a href="https://coronavirus-download.utah.gov/School/COVID-19_School_Manual_FINAL.pdf">https://coronavirus-download.utah.gov/School/COVID-19_School_Manual_FINAL.pdf</a> -page 109-111</p>

	<p><i>USBE School Reopening Planning Handbook:</i>  <a href="https://schools.utah.gov/file/5997f53e-85ca-4186-83fe-932385ea760a">https://schools.utah.gov/file/5997f53e-85ca-4186-83fe-932385ea760a</a></p>
Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation	<p><a href="https://coronavirus-download.utah.gov/School/COVID-19_School_Manual_FINAL.pdf">https://coronavirus-download.utah.gov/School/COVID-19_School_Manual_FINAL.pdf</a> -page 75-84</p> <p><i>USBE School Reopening Planning Handbook:</i>  <a href="https://schools.utah.gov/file/5997f53e-85ca-4186-83fe-932385ea760a">https://schools.utah.gov/file/5997f53e-85ca-4186-83fe-932385ea760a</a></p>
Contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantine, in collaboration with the State, local, territorial, or Tribal health departments	<p><a href="https://coronavirus-download.utah.gov/School/COVID-19_School_Manual_FINAL.pdf">https://coronavirus-download.utah.gov/School/COVID-19_School_Manual_FINAL.pdf</a> - page 27-35</p> <p><i>USBE School Reopening Planning Handbook:</i>  <a href="https://schools.utah.gov/file/5997f53e-85ca-4186-83fe-932385ea760a">https://schools.utah.gov/file/5997f53e-85ca-4186-83fe-932385ea760a</a></p>
Diagnostic and screening testing	<p><a href="https://coronavirus-download.utah.gov/School/COVID-19_School_Manual_FINAL.pdf">https://coronavirus-download.utah.gov/School/COVID-19_School_Manual_FINAL.pdf</a> -page 37-43; 46-51; 52-56</p> <p><i>USBE School Reopening Planning Handbook:</i>  <a href="https://schools.utah.gov/file/5997f53e-85ca-4186-83fe-932385ea760a">https://schools.utah.gov/file/5997f53e-85ca-4186-83fe-932385ea760a</a></p>
Efforts to provide vaccinations to educators, other staff, and students, if eligible	<p><a href="https://coronavirus-download.utah.gov/School/COVID-19_School_Manual_FINAL.pdf">https://coronavirus-download.utah.gov/School/COVID-19_School_Manual_FINAL.pdf</a> -page 57-59</p> <p><i>USBE School Reopening Planning Handbook:</i>  <a href="https://schools.utah.gov/file/5997f53e-85ca-4186-83fe-932385ea760a">https://schools.utah.gov/file/5997f53e-85ca-4186-83fe-932385ea760a</a></p>
Appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to the health and safety policies	<p><a href="https://coronavirus-download.utah.gov/School/COVID-19_School_Manual_FINAL.pdf">https://coronavirus-download.utah.gov/School/COVID-19_School_Manual_FINAL.pdf</a></p>

[19\\_School\\_Manual\\_FINAL.pdf](#) -page 106, 109, 114

USBE School Reopening Planning Handbook:  
<https://schools.utah.gov/file/5997f53e-85ca-4186-83fe-932385ea760a>

ii.ii. Any Statewide plans, policies, estimated timelines, and specific milestones related to reopening and operation of school facilities, including any mechanisms the SEA will use to track, monitor, or enforce their implementation;

See response to Q.B (1)(i) detailing the statewide requirements and guidance USBE, and the Utah Department of Health provided to LEAs related to reopening and operation of school facilities.

For the 2021-2022 school year, except for an online-only charter school, LEAs are required to provide at least 4 days of in-person instruction (see Utah Code Section [53G-9-210](#)).

iii.iii. To what extent the SEA and its LEAs consult with Federal, State, and local health officials. This description should include, if available, whether the SEA and its LEAs have received support for screening testing from their State or local health department based on funding awarded by the CDC; and

Consultation among USBE and LEAs with Federal, State, and local health officials occurs regularly on multiple levels. LEAs were required to consult with local health officials in development and implementation of school reopening plans. USBE and UDOH host regular, ongoing advisory groups and coordination calls among the following representatives:

- Education: Superintendents, principals, teachers, school nurses, counselors
- Health: Utah Department of Health, Local Departments of Health, medical experts, including infectious disease pediatricians
- Other: Governor’s Office, athletic coordinators and associations, Legislature

The Utah State Board of Education (USBE) and the Utah Department of Health (UDOH) partnered to support LEAs by providing screening testing through two programs and personal protective equipment for those testing opportunities.

The goals of “Test to Stay” are to allow students and staff to participate in in-person learning as safely as possible while lessening the burden of quarantine and multiple soft closures on students and their families, teachers, and school administrators. It was officially implemented January 4, 2021.

The “Test to Play” testing requirements apply only to high schools. The goal of “Test to Play” is to allow students and staff to participate in extracurricular activities as safely as possible.

Regular testing can find students and staff who are infectious with COVID-19 quickly and help

prevent further spread of the virus in the school and community. Extracurricular activities may be higher risk environments than a school classroom if masks are not worn during the activity. Students who participate in these activities may also be in close contact with each other during participation. Some activities, such as indoor sports, may pose a greater risk for COVID-19 transmission if precautions are not taken.

**Future Support:** The UDOH has been awarded ~\$96 million in funding through the Epidemiology and Laboratory Capacity (ELC) “Reopening Schools” grant to support ongoing COVID-19 screening testing efforts through July of 2022. This funding was provided as part of the federal American Rescue Act Plan and a portion of the overall funding was awarded to all states based on student population estimates. UDOH is working closely with LEAs and local health departments to provide testing support (including personnel, testing supplies, PPE, etc.) moving forward.

- iv. *iv. Any guidance, professional learning, and technical assistance opportunities the SEA will make available to its LEAs.*

USBE will continue to support its LEAs in implementing prevention and mitigation policies for the reopening and operation of school facilities to effectively maintain the health and safety of students, educators, and other staff.

2. *Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plans: Describe how the SEA will ensure that its LEAs that receive ARP ESSER funds meet the requirements in section 2001(i) of the ARP Act and the requirements relating to the ARP ESSER funds published in the Federal Register and available at <https://oese.ed.gov/offices/american-rescue-plan/american-rescue-plan-elementary-and-secondary-school-emergency-relief/> (ARP ESSER requirements) to either: (a) within 30 days of receipt of the funds, develop and make publicly available on the LEA’s website a plan for the safe return to in-person instruction and continuity of services, or (b) have developed and made publicly available on the LEA’s website such a plan that meets statutory requirements before the enactment of the ARP Act, including:*

- i.i. *How the SEA will ensure that each LEA plan includes, or will be modified to include, the extent to which it has adopted policies and a description of any such policies on each of the strategies listed in table B1;*

The Utah State Board of Education will be ensuring that each LEA plan includes adoption or the extent of adoption of the policies and strategies that are listed in table B1 by including this as a requirement in the LEA ARP ESSER plan template. This is in alignment with the federal requirement and creates a mechanism for certification and assurance by the LEA’s authorized official. Additionally, the LEA will be posting their complete plan for the safe return to in-person instruction and continuity of services on their website and providing the hyperlink to that post to USBE. This will allow the agency to monitor and ensure the plans have all the required elements as stated above.

ii.ii. *How the SEA will ensure that each LEA plan describes how it will ensure continuity of services including but not limited to services to address the students' academic needs, and students' and staff social, emotional, mental health, and other needs, which may include student health and food services;*

The Utah State Board of Education will be ensuring that each LEA plan includes adoption or the extent of adoption of the policies and strategies that provide continuity of services including but not limited to services to address the students' academic needs, and students' and staff social, emotional, mental health, and other needs, which may include student health and food services in the LEA ARP ESSER plan template. This is in alignment with the federal requirement and creates a mechanism for certification and assurance by the LEA's authorized official.

Additionally, in accordance with its previous LEA applications for ESSER I and ESSER II funds, USBE has developed an LEA ARP application template that LEAs must complete and upload in the agency's electronic grants management system [Utah Grants](#). The template includes required assurances, allowable uses of funds, a plan narrative that directly addresses required elements based on individual LEA needs, and a budget that supports the effective implementation of the LEA's plan. LEA plans must be signed and dated by the LEA superintendent/charter executive director.

Upon receipt of the LEA applications in Utah Grants, a team of two federal program leads and two financial compliance managers reviews each LEA plan and budget. Applications deemed incomplete or do not align with the requirements are returned to LEAs for revision and resubmission. Ongoing technical assistance is provided to LEAs via video conferencing, phone calls, and email communication. Applications considered complete are reviewed by two members of the internal accounting team prior to final application approval.

iii.iii. *How the SEA will ensure that the LEA periodically reviews, no less frequently than every six months for the duration of the ARP ESSER grant period (i.e., through September 30, 2023),<sup>5</sup> and revises as appropriate, its plan, and how the SEA will ensure that the LEA seeks public input, and takes such input into account on (1) whether revisions are necessary and, if so, (2) the revisions to the plan; and*

The Utah State Board of Education will ensure that the LEA periodically reviews and revises their plan for the safe return to in-person instruction and continuity of services, no less frequently than every six months for the duration of the ARP ESSER grant (through September 30, 2023) as part of the grant administration and monitoring process. Each LEA will be required to submit an assurance that this step has been completed through our reporting platform for the COVID-19 relief funding that is conducted twice a year. This step will be required, and LEA reimbursements will be placed on hold until the assurance and submission of updated link has been provided to USBE.

USBE is requiring that all posted LEA plans have a point of contact and/or survey form included on the website where the plan for the safe return to in-person instruction and continuity of

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<sup>5</sup> ARP ESSER funds are subject to the Tydings amendment in section 421(b) of the General Education Provisions Act, 20 U.S.C. 1225(b), and are therefore available to SEAs and LEAs for obligation through September 30, 2024. Review and revisions of these plans, if necessary, are not required during the Tydings period.

services is published to allow for public input and feedback throughout the calendar year. The assurance will contain a statement that all public feedback has been considered in reviewing and making any revisions to the plan. The plan and any subsequent and substantive changes will be required to be approved by the local LEA school board in a public meeting.

iv.iv. Describe, to the extent the SEA collects it, information about LEA implementation, to the greatest extent practicable, of each element of the most up-to-date CDC guidance listed in table B1 and its LEAs' needs for support and technical assistance to implement strategies consistent, to the greatest extent practicable, with relevant CDC guidance.

Information about LEA implementation of the mitigation strategies listed in table B1 and LEAs' needs for support to implement the strategies was/is collected through:

- [A Reopening Requirements Planning Template](#) (collected from all LEAs in August 2020); and
- Regular, ongoing advisory groups and coordination calls among the following representatives:
  - Education: Superintendents, principals, teachers, school nurses, counselors
  - Health: Utah Department of Health, Local Departments of Health, medical experts, including infectious disease pediatricians
  - Other: Governor's Office, athletic coordinators and associations, Legislature

While quantitative data on LEAs' implementation of the mitigation strategies is generally not available, most of the mitigation strategies listed in table B1 are required and implemented statewide. A brief description of those requirements is provided below.

Mitigation strategy	SEA response
Universal and correct wearing of masks	Required for 2020-2021 school year by <a href="#">State Public Health Order #2021-2</a>
Physical distancing (e.g., including use of cohorts/podding)	Common strategies to maximize physical distancing reported through the Reopening Requirements Template include: staggering arrivals, lunch times, recess, transitions; utilizing outdoor spaces when possible; removal of large furniture in classrooms; discontinuing use of lockers to avoid congestion
Handwashing and respiratory etiquette	USBE's Planning Requirements for Reopening required that LEAs: Develop protocols for implementing an increased cleaning and hygiene regimen; and make hand sanitizer, disinfecting wipes, soap and water, or similar disinfectant

	readily available to staff/students/visitors in controlled environments to ensure safe use
Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation	USBE’s Planning Requirements for Reopening required that LEAs develop protocols for implementing an increased cleaning and hygiene regimen
Contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantine, in collaboration with the State, local, territorial, or Tribal health departments	USBE’s Planning Requirements for Reopening required that LEAs engage in contact tracing
Diagnostic and screening testing	As of March 2021, LEAs are required to implement testing as a strategy in response to an outbreak as opposed to soft closure.
Efforts to provide vaccinations to educators, other staff, and students, if eligible	Educators were among the first to be prioritized for vaccination
Appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to the health and safety policies	USBE’s Planning Requirements for Reopening required that LEAs provide plexiglass, face shields, and/or auxiliary aids for one-on-one close contact to ensure students with disabilities have equal access to information. Further, the State Public Health Order provided for exceptions based on individual circumstances.

The Utah Department of Health maintains a [COVID-19 School Manual](#) with up-to-date health recommendations and guidance to schools on the mitigation strategies listed in table B1.

***C. Planning for the Use and Coordination of ARP ESSER Funds***

*The Department recognizes that seeking input from diverse stakeholders is essential to developing plans for the use of ARP ESSER funds that are responsive to the needs of students, families, and educators. In this section, SEAs will describe their plans for consultation and for coordinating the use of ARP ESSER funds with other resources to meet the needs of students.*

1. SEA Consultation: Consistent with the ARP ESSER requirements, describe how the SEA engaged in meaningful consultation with stakeholders, and incorporated input into its plan, including, but not limited to:

- *students;*
- *families;*
- *Tribes (if applicable);*
- *civil rights organizations (including disability rights organizations);*

- *school and district administrators (including special education administrators);*
- *superintendents;*
- *charter school leaders (if applicable);*
- *teachers, principals, school leaders, other educators, school staff, and their unions; and*
- *stakeholders representing the interests of children with disabilities, English learners, students experiencing homelessness, children and youth in foster care, migratory students, children who are incarcerated, and other underserved students.*

*The description must include how the SEA provided the public the opportunity to provide input in the development of the plan, a summary of the input (including any letters of support), and how the SEA took such input into account.*

To inform the development of the plan, USBE sought input on several key template questions from advisory councils with individuals representing each of the stakeholders listed in Q.C (1)(i)-(ix), including:

- USBE’s Advisory Committee on the Equity of Educational Services for Students (ACEESS)
- State Superintendent’s COVID-19 Council
- Multicultural Advisory Committee of the State’s COVID-19 Response
- LEA Superintendents Advisory Council

Additional stakeholder engagement specific to individual questions is detailed throughout this document.

On May 17, 2021, USBE released draft documents for our state ARP ESSER funding from the U.S. Department of Education to provide an opportunity for the public to comment on the drafts:

- Utah ARP ESSER Draft State Application for U.S. Department of Education
- Utah ARP ESSER Draft LEA Certification and Application Template
- Utah ARP ESSER Draft Afterschool and Summer Learning Application Template

The survey was open through May 31, 2021, at midnight and public feedback was considered at the Utah State Board of Education meeting on June 3, 2021, in a public meeting.

2. ***Coordinating Funds:*** *Describe to what extent the SEA has and will coordinate Federal COVID-19 pandemic funding and other Federal funding. This description must include:*

- i. *How the SEA and its LEAs 1) are using or have used prior to the submission of this plan and 2) plan to use following submission of this plan, Federal COVID-19 funding under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (“CARES”) Act and the CRRSA Act to support a safe return to and safely maximize in-person instruction, sustain these operations safely, and address the disproportionate impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on individual student groups (including students from low-income families, children*

*with disabilities, English learners, racial or ethnic minorities, students experiencing homelessness, children and youth in foster care, and migratory students);*

**Table C1.**

Funding source	Prior/current SEA and LEA uses (including funding amounts, if applicable)	Planned SEA and LEA uses (including funding amounts, if applicable)
<p>ESSER I (CARES Act)</p>	<p>All funding awards were determined in alignment with federal requirements for distributing ESSER I, or for the state reserve funds were use cases that were specifically approved in a public Utah State Board of Education meeting as action items.</p> <p><b>ESSER I 90% LEA Subawards using Title I, Part A Distribution:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ESSER I 90% LEA Awards (\$61,039,608.00)</li> </ul> <p><b>SEA Reserve Awards from ESSER I:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ESSER I LEA Base Award to bring all LEAs to \$21,194 in total ESSER I Awards (\$801,915.09)</li> <li>- Expansion costs for increased students in online public charter schools (\$3,900,000.00)</li> <li>- K-3 Early Literacy Software expanded licenses for remote/blended learning (\$535,868.00)</li> <li>- K-12 Scribe Digital Tool to support ELA and Social Studies learning for all Utah K-12 schools (\$452,000.00)</li> <li>- External Evaluator for Emergency K-12 Broadband Grant (\$75,000.00)</li> <li>- Personalized Summer Targeted Support and Improvement Schools (TSI) Planning Teams (\$678,286.91)</li> </ul> <p><b>State Administrative Fund:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- State Administrative costs (\$339,109.00)</li> </ul>	<p>All funds for ESSER I have been awarded for Utah K-12.</p> <p>Most common reported uses include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)</li> <li>- Remote Learning Connectivity (broadband access, hardware, and software)</li> <li>- Professional learning for educators about remote instruction delivery</li> <li>- Student/family engagement strategies (hiring family/student engagement liaisons, training current staff)</li> </ul>
<p>GEER I (CARES Act)</p>	<p>Under the Governor’s Emergency Education Relief (GEER) Fund, Governor Herbert has authority to award emergency assistance as a result of the Novel Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) to local education agencies (LEAs).</p> <p>The Utah State Board of Education has determined that COVID-19 most significantly impacted those LEAs that</p>	<p>All funds for GEER I have been awarded for Utah K-12 to ensure that special education and students at risk of academic failure receive support to mitigate the unintended consequences of the emergency statewide</p>

	<p>were required to pivot from face-to-face instruction to remote learning in March 2020 when schools were closed statewide. Governor Herbert intends to award funding to ensure that special education students and students at risk of academic failure receive support as soon as practicable to mitigate the unintended negative academic consequences of that emergency statewide transition to remote learning. (\$29,189,663.00)</p>	<p>transition to remote learning in March 2020.</p>
<p>ESSER II (CRRSA Act)</p>	<p>All funding awards were determined in alignment with federal requirements for distributing ESSER II, or for the state reserve were use cases that were specifically approved in a public Utah State Board of Education meeting as action items.</p> <p><b>ESSER II 90% LEA Subawards using Title I, Part A Distribution:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ESSER I 90% LEA Awards (\$246,664,516.00)</li> </ul> <p><b>SEA Reserve Awards from ESSER II:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>ESSER II LEA Base Award</i> to bring all LEAs to \$84,777 in total ESSER II Awards (\$2,942,744.22)</li> <li>- <i>K-3 Early Professional Literacy Project</i> to train Utah K-3 teachers, administrators, literacy coaches and school psychologists in the science of literacy. LEAs were included based on statewide Acadience reading assessment outcomes from 2020 and 2021. (\$11,900,000.00)</li> <li>- <i>Demonstrated Competency Assessment: Next Generation Project</i> to expand and enhance the resources we have available related to demonstrated competency assessments. Given the credits <a href="#">attempted vs. earned data</a> after 2nd semester of the 2020-2021 school year, it is clearly evident that we have an increasing number of students who are at risk of not having adequate credits to graduate on time due to COVID-19. By adapting the competency assessment route, we can provide additional opportunities for students to earn credits that align to their personalized needs. (\$250,000)</li> <li>- <i>Transforming Accountability to Support Personalized Competency Based Learning</i> is to be more inclusive of criteria that measures the overall performance of schools, supports, and incentivizes Personalized, Competency-Based Learning, Utah’s Portrait of a Graduate, and is aligned with the Utah</li> </ul>	<p>LEAs plan to spend majority of ESSER II fund on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Addressing accelerated learning for students</li> <li>● Purchasing educational technology</li> <li>● Implementing summer learning and supplemental afterschool activities</li> </ul> <p>Utah State Law requires the State Board of Education to reduce state funding allocations to an LEA if the LEA expends Coronavirus Relief funds for capital improvement projects (2021 General Session SB 1 and HB 2).</p> <p><b>Current remaining SEA Reserve (including state administrative fund):</b> <b>\$8,983,261.78</b></p> <p>USBE is gathering input and collecting data to inform opportunities for state support to facilitate prioritization of use cases for the remaining SEA reserve.</p>

	<p>State School Board’s primary goals as articulated in the Strategic Direction. It is likely the traditional school accountability system will be impacted by this pandemic for several years to come, given the prominence of student growth metrics in our existing system. Included in this work, a consideration of an accountability system that is balanced and holistic to the nature of learning, supports real and sustained change by supporting ownership of the need to change as well as the methods necessary to drive improvements and stimulate local accountability initiatives. (\$300,000)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Early Learning Coaches for Rural Utah</i> is to expand and enhance resources we have available to support PreK-3 teachers in rural school districts and charters in Utah. This proposal would add an additional seven early learning coaches to support educators in the four regional educational service agency regions. (\$2,400,000.00)</li> </ul> <p><b>State Administrative Fund:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- State Administrative costs (\$339,162.00)</li> <li>- <i>Digital Access and Education Program Coordinator</i> is to provide a position in partnership with the Utah State Libraries Division to coordinate the broadband access and education opportunities for students and parents in K-12 through our state library system to support blended and remote learning needs due to COVID-19. (\$300,000)</li> </ul>	
GEER II (CRRSA Act)	<i>Has not been awarded by Utah Governor Spencer Cox at the time of this application.</i>	<i>Has not been awarded by Utah Governor Spencer Cox at the time of this application.</i>

ii.ii. *To what extent ESSER I and ESSER II funds have been awarded to LEAs and, if funds have not yet been made available to LEAs, when they will be. In addition, please provide any available information on the total dollar amounts of ESSER I and ESSER II funds that have been obligated but not expended by the SEA and its LEAs, including whether the SEA is able to track LEA obligations.*

iii. The Utah State Board of Education has successfully awarded the LEA funding for ESSER I and ESSER II in alignment with the federal requirements for distribution based on Title I, Part A funding. All LEA funds have been awarded through the Utah Grants Management system, which allow USBE to track obligations, awards, and reimbursements for both awards.

iv. As of April 21, 2021, the Utah Grants Management System has shown the following obligations and reimbursement values by ESSER award.

<b>Award Title</b>	<b>Total Award Value</b>	<b>Amount Reimbursed* (May 11, 2021)</b>	<b>% Of Total Award Requested for Reimbursement</b>
<b>ESSER 90%</b>	\$61,039,608	\$38,891,001	<b>63.7%</b>
<b>ESSER SEA Reserve LEA Base</b>	\$801,915	\$780,721	<b>97.3%</b>
<b>GEER I</b>	\$29,189,663	\$6,165,778	<b>21.1%</b>
<b>ESSER II 90%</b>	\$246,664,516	\$0	<b>0%</b>
<b>ESSER II SEA Reserve Base</b>	\$2,942,744	\$0	<b>0%</b>

*iii. In supporting LEAs as they plan for the safe return to and continuity of in-person instruction and for meeting the academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs of students resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, the extent to which the SEA is also using other Federal funding sources including but not limited to under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (“ESEA”), IDEA, Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (“WIOA”), funding for child nutrition services, and McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, and the funds to support the needs of students experiencing homelessness provided by section 2001(b)(1) of the ARP Act.<sup>6</sup>*

<sup>6</sup> Please note that the needs of students experiencing homelessness must be addressed (along with the other groups disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic) through the use of the ARP ESSER SEA reservations and the required LEA reservation for the academic impact of lost instructional time; the funding provided to support the needs of students experiencing homelessness by section 2001(b)(1) of the ARP Act is in addition to the supports and services provided with ARP ESSER funds.

In supporting LEAs as they plan for the safe return to and continuity of in-person instruction and for meeting the academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs of students resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, the Utah State Board of Education (USBE) is using other Federal funding sources including but not limited to under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (“ESSA”), IDEA, Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (“WIOA”), funding for child nutrition services, and McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, and the funds to support the needs of students experiencing homelessness provide by section 2001(b)(1) of the ARP Act. USBE is using these federal funds, primarily the administrative portion, to develop resources, provide services to support LEAs. In addition, USBE partners with other state agencies and community organizations to develop resources and provide services and supports.

To address the needs of students experiencing poverty, in FY22 a cross-department USBE team will be working with the Region 15 Comprehensive Center (R15CC) to develop a process to facilitate and support LEAs in braiding and consolidating funds in the electronic Utah Grants Management system. A comprehensive LEA-level needs assessment (CNA) that meets the needs of both federal and state programs has been developed with the participation of LEA staff and a cross-department USBE team. It will be piloted by five LEAs in summer 2021, refined based on stakeholder feedback, and eventually rolled out to additional LEAs. Training is being provided to staff members in the participating LEAs in May-June 2021. USBE’s school-level needs assessment aligns with and complements the LEA-level CNA.

USBE ESSA and Related State Initiatives staff meets regularly with Superintendents, charter directors, business administrators, and other LEA staff responsible for Title I, Title III, early literacy, Title VI, curriculum, technology, STEM, etc., to provide information, resources, evidence-based practices, and technical assistance.

To address the needs to students with disabilities, the USBE is developing and disseminating resources, professional learning modules, providing technical assistance to individual and groups of LEAs, disseminating a monthly newsletter with compliance and evidence-based practices information to LEA special education directors, and a separate monthly newsletter to subscribing special education professionals, meeting regulating with LEA special education directors, providing grants to Institutes of Higher Education Special Education and Related Services Educator Preparation Programs to support tuition waiver for licensure candidates, and providing tuition waiver stipends to special education paraprofessionals to seek licensure.

To address the needs of students needing and or/desiring to enter the workforce and/or receive pre-employment transition services, the USBE staff in the Career and Technical Education, School Counseling and Special Education teams collaborate with the Department of Workforce Services to ensure LEA staff have the knowledge and information necessary to refer students to the services and supports afforded them through the WIOA.

To address the nutrition needs of children, the USBE Child Nutrition Program (CNP) is working with community partners: Utah Against Hunger, Get Healthy Utah, No Kid Hungry, the

Department of Workforce Services (DWS), and the Utah Department of Health (UDOH) to meet the needs of families that are food insecure and at risk.

- LEAs are asked to provide data on the type of learning model, school start date, school closure, children that qualify for Free and Reduced meals through applications or Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits to help determine student benefits for Pandemic-Electronic Funds Transfer (P-EBT). This is then passed onto DWS to disperse the benefit <https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/state-guidance-coronavirus-pandemic-ebt-pebt>.
- P-EBT administration cost plan has been sent to our Southwest Regional Office; this funding will help alleviate financial burden put on LEAs to gather information <https://www.fns.usda.gov/tefap/fiscal-year-2021-funding>.
- Utah Child Nutrition Emergency Cost Reimbursement Plan is currently waiting on approval from SWRO. These funds are determined by meals lost due to COVID 19 during the months March 2020 - June 2022. <https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/emergency-operating-costs-during-covid-19-implementation-guidance>
- The USBE CNP team meets with LEAs through virtual Town Hall meetings once to twice a month; sends COVID-19 emails with USDA waivers and latest updates as information is received; provides ongoing technical assistance to individual and groups of LEAs; provides training modules through Canvas; disseminates a monthly newsletter with updated information and a message of support from the USBE CNP team to the LEAs; and developed videos to help LEAs understand waivers in a simple matter.

To address the needs of students and families experiencing homelessness, LEAs are tasked with identifying as many students as possible who meet the eligibility definition of McKinney-Vento. While school registration is a valuable tool for this identification, the reality is that many students are found during the academic year and are referred because of in class behavior, self-identification, and peer referral. When schools moved to remote learning, it removed several of the ways that staff find students throughout the year.

- With students experiencing homelessness coming together to form protective clusters during the pandemic, local and state staff now know where these areas are and how to best approach them. Allowing school personnel to travel to such locations (where travel has been restricted) would allow for the means to identify and keep track of students experiencing homelessness.
- Communication between other agencies will help support students experiencing homelessness. The USBE since FY21 has an agreement with the Utah Homeless information system to be able to allow liaisons to see client records and help ensure that students in need have both educational as well as community support.

- The USBE works with community partners at every level of local government to meet the needs of students experiencing homelessness. From the Governor’s homeless Interagency Coordinating Council to various city and community-based organizations, as well as early education and post k-12 organizations and institutions of higher education.
- LEAs are asked to:
  - Review data from multiple sources and assess needs
  - Develop a specific plan to address those needs, including the needs of each student group
  - Braid funds as appropriate to meet the needs of all students.

The Title VI coordinator meets regularly with Tribal leaders to discuss the needs of students and families on our reservations and to discuss the needs of educators who support the Tribes. The USBE will have completed and have final board approval of the ARP-HCY (homeless children and youth) plan by September 6, 2021.

#### ***D. Maximizing State-Level Funds to Support Students***

*The Department recognizes that States have an extraordinary opportunity to address the disproportionate impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on underserved students through the ARP Act’s required State set-asides to address the academic impact of lost instructional time, provide summer learning and enrichment programs, and provide comprehensive afterschool programs. In this section, SEAs will describe their evidence-based strategies for these resources.*

*1. Academic Impact of Lost Instructional Time: Describe how the SEA will use the funds it reserves under section 2001(f)(1) of the ARP Act (totaling not less than 5 percent of the State’s total allocation of ARP ESSER funds) on evidence-based interventions to address the academic impact of lost instructional time by supporting the implementation of evidence-based interventions, such as summer learning or summer enrichment, extended day, comprehensive afterschool programs, or extended school year programs, and ensure that such interventions respond to students’ academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs. The description must include:*

*i.i. A description of the evidence-based interventions (e.g., providing intensive or high-dosage tutoring, accelerating learning) the SEA has selected, and the extent to which the SEA will evaluate the impact of those interventions on an ongoing basis to understand if they are working;*

USBE has not yet determined how it will use the funds it reserves under section 2001(f)(1) of the ARP Act to address the academic impact of lost instructional time. Student performance data from this school year, available in late fall, will be used to determine the academic impact of lost instructional time. These data will inform the selection of evidence-based interventions to address that impact.

USBE will utilize evidence-based practices meeting Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) criteria for evidence-based interventions listed below. Specifically, “evidence-based,” when used with respect to a State, LEA, or school activity, means an activity, strategy, or intervention that

demonstrates a statistically significant effect on improving student outcomes or other relevant outcomes based on –

1. Strong evidence from at least one well-designed and well-implemented experimental study (“tier 1”);
2. Moderate evidence from at least one well-designed and well-implemented quasi-experimental study (“tier 2”); or
3. Promising evidence from at least one well-designed and well-implemented correlational study with statistical controls for selection bias (“tier 3”); or
  
4. Demonstrates a rationale based on high-quality research findings or positive evaluation that such activity, strategy, or intervention is likely to improve student outcomes or other relevant outcomes and includes ongoing efforts to examine the effects of such activity, strategy, or intervention (“tier 4”).

USBE will collect data to inform evaluation of the interventions through the ESSER-ARP LEA reporting requirements to be released by the U.S. Department of Education. Upon release of those reporting guidelines, USBE staff will determine next steps related to impact evaluation.

All projects will be considered by the Utah State Board of Education in a public meeting for approval.

ii.ii *How the evidence-based interventions will specifically address the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on certain groups of students, including each of the student groups listed in question A.3.i.-viii. When possible, please indicate which data sources the SEA will use to determine the impact of lost instructional time; and*

When available in early fall, USBE will disaggregate data from the following sources to identify any disproportionate impacts of COVID-19 on the student groups identified in QA.3 (i-viii):

- Statewide assessment data (grades 3-10)
- School climate survey (grades K-12)
- SHARP data (grades 6, 8, 10, 12)
- Acadience assessment data (grades K-3)
- Graduation rates
- WIDA ACCESS Assessment (students learning English)

USBE will use outcomes from this analysis to identify highest priority needs that USBE is uniquely positioned to address, through focus groups and advisory councils.

iii. *iii. The extent to which the SEA will use funds it reserves to identify and engage 1) students who have missed the most in-person instruction during the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 school years; and 2) students who did not consistently participate in remote instruction when offered during school building closures.*

USBE has not yet determined how it will use the funds it reserves under section 2001(f)(1) of the ARP Act to address the academic impact of lost instructional time. If reserve funding is made available through a competitive grant opportunity to be awarded to LEAs with the highest needs, LEAs could be required to describe how they will identify and serve students who missed the most in-person instruction during the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 school years and students who did not consistently participate in remote instruction when offered during school building closures. Applicants could utilize LEA attendance data from the local student information systems (SIS), local benchmarks assessments, and students in need of credit recovery to identify students.

2. *Evidence-Based Summer Learning and Enrichment Programs: Describe how the SEA will use the funds it reserves under section 2001(f)(2) of the ARP Act (totaling not less than 1 percent of the State's total allocation of ARP ESSER funds) for evidence-based summer learning and enrichment programs, including those that begin in Summer 2021, and ensure such programs respond to students' academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs.*

The Utah State Board of Education (USBE) is working to align the two funding streams for evidence-based summer learning and evidenced-based afterschool programming into a competitive grant application process. This decision was made with input from community leaders, who noted that the foundational partnerships between Local Education Agencies (LEAs) and Community Based Organizations (CBOs) were strongest if it was a year-round effort to support students and families. By aligning these two efforts, USBE is creating the conditions to build more sustainable and long-term collaborations beyond the timeframe of the ARP ESSER awards. This will ultimately better serve students and families with services and supports that align school and enrichment programs. This is why the USBE's response to section D, part 2 and part 3 mirror each other.

*The description must include:*

- i. *A description of the evidence-based programs that address the academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs of students (e.g., providing intensive or high-dosage tutoring, accelerating learning) the SEA has selected, and the extent to which the SEA will evaluate the impact of those programs;*

The application will include the LEA's or CBO's plan to implement evidence-based activities to serve students targeted for support (listed in Part D, 2ii.), the specific needs of the community, and alignment with other federal and state funds. Applicants must include a description of the academic, social, emotional, and mental health activities utilizing evidence-based curriculum or practices meeting Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) criteria for evidence-based interventions listed below:

- Has research from studies using a well-implemented experimental or quasi-experimental design (meets ESSA Tier1 or 2 evidence)
- Has research showing promising evidence from a well-implemented, correlational study that statistically controls for selection bias (meets ESSA Tier 3 evidence)

- Has rationale demonstrating the intervention is likely to improve student outcomes, and an effort to study the effects of the intervention is underway (meets ESSA Tier 4 evidence)

All projects must include consultation and alignment with the LEA(s) and local school(s) attended by most students.

USBE will provide applicants a list of evidence-based resources and information and hold information meeting(s) reviewing the grant application process. All funded programs must operate a minimum of six weeks (can be non-consecutive) during the summer months and a total of 20 hours per week to support academic and social emotional learning needs of students impacted by the pandemic. All applicants must describe how they will meet both organization and state outcomes listed below:

State Required Outcomes:

- Expansion of operations (additional hours and weeks) supported by this funding
- Number of targeted students in need who were served with additional funding (*unduplicated/distinct students served count*)
- [Quality Self-Assessment Tool](#) from the Utah Afterschool Network (UAN)
- End of grant award [observation](#) for quality summer and afterschool programs from the UAN (at the conclusion of the program)

Organization Specific Outcomes:

- A measure for reducing learning loss related to coronavirus pandemic for students served (including list above)
- A measure to build relationships between LEAs and CBOs through the [School Alignment Rubric](#) from the UAN

In April 2021, USBE consulted with the state’s afterschool network, [UAN](#), a resource hub for quality afterschool and summer resources and professional development and training. Additionally, USBE consulted with the Department of Workforce Services (DWS), Office of Child Care (OCC). DWS OCC provides afterschool and summer grant funding and works closely with USBE and UAN to align the afterschool system of support in Utah. USBE will hold virtual public comment meetings in May 2021 for any interested applicants to provide feedback on the application. Meetings will be recorded, and recordings and meeting summaries will be posted on the USBE webpage.

All applications will be reviewed by a group of subject matter experts and scored based on need and scoring rubric (available to all applicants). Funds will be distributed through the electronic [Utah Grants](#) management system. USBE will monitor progress of funded programs through mid-year and annual reports focusing on the requirements and outcomes during the length of the grant and utilize current afterschool monitoring processes for grantees. UAN will provide technical

assistance and professional development and training and use of evidence-based practices to awarded programs. USBE, UAN and DWS OCC will meet regularly to discuss support provided and any needs of the funded programs.

- ii. *ii. How the evidence-based programs will specifically address the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on certain groups of students, including each of the student groups listed in question A.3. i.--viii. When possible, please indicate which data sources the SEA will use to identify students most in need of summer learning and enrichment programs; and*

To address the disproportionate impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on underserved students, USBE will hold a competitive grant process for ARP ESSER's required State set-aside funds, with programming to begin in Summer 2021. The grant will be open to both LEAs and CBOs to implement accessible summer enrichment programs focusing on evidence-based practices (utilizing ESSA evidence criteria) to support students' academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs to address unfinished learning and a targeted plan to serve students listed below:

- Students from economically disadvantaged households;
- Students from traditionally underserved communities;
- Students with disabilities;
- Students identified as needing academic support;
- Students experiencing homelessness;
- Students in foster care;
- Students who are English Learners;
- Students who have been impacted by COVID-19;
- Students who missed the most in person instruction for 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 school years;
- Students who did not consistently participate in remote instruction when offered during school building closures;
- Students with families engaged in migratory agricultural work; and
- Students from refugee backgrounds.

USBE will provide technical support to applicants to utilize data available on the [USBE Data Gateway](#) to identify students most in need of summer learning and enrichment programs. In addition to the USBE technical support, LEAs and CBOs will be empowered to work with their LEA and school level data, and the community needs data to further identify students in need of programming. This may include LEA attendance data from the local student information systems (SIS), local benchmarks assessments, and students in need of credit recovery. If applicants need additional support with data analysis related to serving the intended population, USBE Data and Statistics can support these data requests through our [data request form](#).

iii. *The extent to which the SEA will use funds it reserves to identify and engage 1) students who have missed the most in-person instruction during the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 school years; and 2) students who did not consistently participate in remote instruction when offered during school building closures.*

In their application, LEAs and CBOs must describe how they will identify and serve students who missed the most in-person instruction during the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 school years and students who did not consistently participate in remote instruction when offered during school building closures will be identified and served in the program(s). Applicants could utilize LEA attendance data from the local student information systems (SIS), local benchmarks assessments, and students in need of credit recovery to identify students. Applicants must also identify and detail the evidence-based practices and curriculum to be used to serve these students to best meet their academic enrichment and social emotional learning needs due to limited in-person and remote instruction during the COVID-19 pandemic. As described in Part D, 2ii., LEAs and CBOs will be provided any needed technical support to utilize data to identify students in need of programming.

3. *Evidence-Based Comprehensive Afterschool Programs: Describe how the SEA will use the funds it reserves under section 2001(f)(3) of the ARP Act (totaling not less than 1 percent of the State's total allocation of ARP ESSER funds) for evidence-based comprehensive afterschool programs (including, for example, before-school programming), and ensure such programs respond to students' academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs. The description must include:*

The Utah State Board of Education (USBE) is working to align the two funding streams for evidence-based summer learning and evidenced-based afterschool programming into a competitive grant application process. This decision was made with input from community leaders, who noted that the foundational partnerships between Local Education Agencies (LEAs) and Community Based Organizations (CBOs) were strongest if it was a year-round effort to support students and families. By aligning these two efforts, USBE is creating the conditions to build more sustainable and long-term collaborations beyond the timeframe of the ARP ESSER awards. This will ultimately better serve students and families with services and supports that align school and enrichment programs. Therefore, the USBE's response to section D, part 2 and part 3 mirror each other.

- i. *A description of the evidence-based programs (e.g., including partnerships with community-based organizations) the SEA has selected, and the extent to which the SEA will evaluate the impact of those programs;*

The set-aside application will include the LEA or CBO's plan to implement evidence-based activities to serve students targeted for support (listed in Part D, 2ii.), the specific needs of the community, and alignment with other federal and state funds. Applicants must include a description of the academic, social, emotional, and mental health activities utilizing evidence-based curriculum or practices meeting Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) criteria for evidence-based interventions listed below:

- Has research from studies using a well-implemented experimental or quasi-experimental design (meets ESSA Tier1 or 2 evidence)
- Has research showing promising evidence from a well-implemented, correlational study that statistically controls for selection bias (meets ESSA Tier 3 evidence)
- Has rationale demonstrating the intervention is likely to improve student outcomes, and an effort to study the effects of the intervention is underway (meets ESSA Tier 4 evidence.

All projects must include consultation and alignment with the LEA(s) and local school(s) attended by most students.

USBE will provide applicants a resource list of evidence-based resources and information and hold information meeting(s) reviewing the grant application process. All funded programs must operate a minimum of 32 weeks during the school year and a total of 10 hours per week to support academic and social emotional learning needs of students impacted by the pandemic. All applicants must describe how they will meet both organization and state outcomes listed below:

#### State Required Outcomes:

- Expansion of operations (additional hours and weeks) supported by this funding
- Number of targeted students in need who were served with additional funding (*unduplicated/distinct students served count*)
- [Quality Self-Assessment Tool](#) from the UAN
- End of grant award [observation](#) for quality summer and afterschool programs from the UAN (at the conclusion of the program)

#### Organization Specific Outcomes:

- A measure for reducing learning loss related to coronavirus pandemic for students served (including list above)
- A measure to build relationships between LEAs and CBOs through the [School Alignment Rubric](#) from the UAN

In April 2021, USBE consulted with the state’s afterschool network, [UAN](#), a resource hub for quality afterschool and summer resources and professional development and training. Additionally, USBE consulted with the Department of Workforce Services (DWS), Office of Child Care (OCC). DWS OCC provides afterschool and summer grant funding and works closely with USBE and UAN to align the afterschool system of support in Utah. USBE will hold virtual public comment meetings in May 2021 for any interested applicants to provide feedback on the application. Meetings will be recorded, and recordings and meeting summaries will be posted on the USBE webpage.

All applications will be reviewed by a group of subject matter experts and scored based on need and scoring rubric (available to all applicants). Funds will be distributed through the electronic [Utah Grants](#) management system. USBE will monitor progress of funded programs through mid-year and annual reports focusing on the requirements and outcomes during the length of the grant and utilize current afterschool monitoring processes for grantees. UAN will provide technical assistance and professional development and training and use of evidence-based practices to funded programs. USBE, UAN and DWS OCC will meet regularly to discuss support provided and any needs of the funded programs.

- ii. *ii. How the evidence-based programs will specifically address the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on certain groups of students, including each of the student groups listed in question A.3.i.-viii. When possible, please indicate which data sources the SEA will use to identify students most in need of comprehensive afterschool programming; and*

To address the disproportionate impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on underserved students, USBE will hold a competitive grant process for ARP ESSER's required State set-aside funds, with programming to begin in Summer 2021. The grant will be open to both LEAs and CBOs to implement accessible comprehensive afterschool programs focusing on evidence-based practices (utilizing ESSA evidence criteria) to support students' academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs to address unfinished learning and a targeted plan to serve students listed below:

- Students from economically disadvantaged households;
- Students from traditionally underserved communities;
- Students with disabilities;
- Students identified as needing academic support;
- Students experiencing homelessness;
- Students in foster care;
- Students who are English Learners;
- Students who have been impacted by COVID-19;
- Students who missed the most in person instruction for 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 school years;
- Students who did not consistently participate in remote instruction when offered during school building closures;
- Students with families engaged in migratory agricultural work; and
- Students from refugee backgrounds.

USBE will provide technical support to applicants to utilize data available on the [USBE Data Gateway](#) to identify students most in need of afterschool enrichment programs. In addition to the USBE technical support, LEAs and CBOs will be empowered to work with their LEA and school

level data, and the community needs data to further identify students in need of programming. This may include LEA attendance data from the local student information systems (SIS), local benchmarks assessments, and students in need of credit recovery. If applicants need additional support with data analysis related to serving the intended population, USBE Data and Statistics can support these data requests through our [data request form](#).

- iii. *iii. the extent to which the SEA will use funds it reserves to identify and engage 1) students who have missed the most in-person instruction during the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 school years; and 2) students who did not consistently participate in remote instruction when offered during school building closures.*

In their set-aside funds application, LEAs and CBOs must describe how they will identify and serve students who missed the most in-person instruction during the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 school years and students who did not consistently participate in remote instruction when offered during school building closures will be identified and served in the program(s). Applicants could utilize LEA attendance data from the local student information systems (SIS), local benchmarks assessments, and students in need of credit recovery to identify students. Applicants must also identify and detail the evidence-based practices and curriculum to be used to serve these students to best meet their academic enrichment and social emotional learning needs due to limited in-person and remote instruction during the COVID-19 pandemic. As described in Part D, 2ii., LEAs and CBOs will be provided any needed technical support to utilize data to identify students in need of programming.

4. *Emergency Needs: If the SEA plans to reserve funds for emergency needs under section 2001(f)(4) of the ARP Act to address issues responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, describe the anticipated use of those funds, including the extent to which these funds will build SEA and LEA capacity to ensure students' and staff's health and safety; to meet students' academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs; and to use ARP ESSER funds to implement evidence-based interventions.*

USBE does not have plans to reserve funds for emergency needs under section 2001(f)(4) of the ARP Act to address issues responding to the COVID-19 pandemic at this time.

#### ***E. Supporting LEAs in Planning for and Meeting Students' Needs***

*The Department recognizes that the safe return to in-person instruction must be accompanied by a focus on meeting students' academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs, and by addressing the opportunity gaps that existed before – and were exacerbated by – the pandemic. In this section, SEAs will describe how they will support their LEAs in developing high-quality plans for LEAs' use of ARP ESSER funds to achieve these objectives.*

1. *LEA Plans for the Use of ARP ESSER Funds: Describe what the SEA will require its LEAs to include in LEA plans consistent with the ARP ESSER requirements for the use of ARP ESSER funds, how the SEA will require such plans to be made available to the public, and the deadline by which the LEA must submit its ARP ESSER plan (which must be a reasonable timeline and should be within no later than 90 days after receiving its ARP ESSER allocation). The LEA plans must include, at a minimum:*

- i. *The extent to which and how the funds will be used to implement prevention and mitigation strategies that are, to the greatest extent practicable, in line with the most recent CDC guidance, in order to continuously and safely operate schools for in-person learning.*

The USBE ARP ESSER LEA application will include the extent to which and how the funds will be used to implement prevention and mitigation strategies, to the greatest extent practicable, in order to continuously and safely operate schools for in-person learning.

- ii. *How the LEA will use the funds it reserves under section 2001(e)(1) of the ARP Act (totaling not less than 20 percent of the LEA’s total allocation of ARP ESSER funds) to address the academic impact of lost instructional time through the implementation of evidence-based interventions, such as summer learning or summer enrichment, extended day, comprehensive afterschool programs, or extended school year programs;*

The USBE ARP ESSER LEA application will include how the LEA will use the funds it reserves under section 2001(e)(1) of the ARP Act (totaling not less than 20 percent of the LEA’s total allocation of ARP ESSER funds) to address the academic impact of lost instructional time through the implementation of evidence-based interventions, such as summer learning or summer enrichment, extended day, comprehensive afterschool programs, or extended school year programs. The current draft template includes a narrative and table as represented below:

Evidenced-based Activity Description	Timeframe for Implementation	Estimated Total Budget for Activity	Data Source for Measuring Effect (ex. Attendance, Acadience, RISE, ACT Aspire, local measure, etc.)  - Disaggregated by specific student subgroups	Baseline Measure from 2018-2019 or 2019-2020 (as applicable)	Target for measured effect at conclusion of activity
<LEA Response>					

- iii. *How the LEA will spend its remaining ARP ESSER funds consistent with section 2001(e)(2) of the ARP Act; and*

The USBE ARP ESSER LEA application will include how the LEA will spend its remaining ARP ESSER funds consistent with section 2001(e)(2) of the ARP Act. USBE will include a

recommendation that the LEA call out the federal use case language and category number in the narrative response, as well as including the budget narrative from the Utah Grants Management System.

- *iv. How the LEA will ensure that the interventions it implements, including but not limited to the interventions under section 2001(e)(1) of the ARP Act to address the academic impact of lost instructional time, will respond to the academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs of all students, and particularly those students disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, including students from low-income families, students of color, English learners, children with disabilities, students experiencing homelessness, children and youth in foster care, and migratory students.*

The USBE ARP ESSER LEA application will require LEAs to describe how the LEA will ensure that the interventions it implements address the academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs of all students, and particularly those students disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, including students from low-income families, students of color, English learners, children with disabilities, students experiencing homelessness, children and youth in foster care, and migratory students.

USBE encourages LEAs to complete a needs assessment before determining how their portion of ESSER funds will be used. LEAs should follow existing needs assessment protocols to determine the most valuable and targeted use of ESSER funds. A needs assessment should include a review of the current state as compared to the desired state, the identification of barriers to reaching the desired state, and an analysis of the potential sources of the identified barriers. This encouragement is included in the USBE LEA ARP ESSER template. Resources to support LEAs in the completion of a needs assessment can be found here: [Utah System of Support for School Improvement Handbook](#)

Additionally, the table, shown in response E,1, ii requires that the actions are evidenced-based, the data source is disaggregated by student subgroups, and there is a clear target of measured effect.

2. *LEA Consultation: Describe how the SEA will, in planning for the use of ARP ESSER funds, ensure that, consistent with the ARP ESSER requirements], its LEAs engage in meaningful consultation with stakeholders, including, but not limited to:*
  - *students;*
  - *families;*
  - *school and district administrators (including special education administrators); and*
  - *teachers, principals, school leaders, other educators, school staff, and their unions.*

*The LEA must also engage in meaningful consultation with each of the following to the extent present in or served by the LEA:*

- *Tribes;*

- *civil rights organizations (including disability rights organizations); and*
- *stakeholders representing the interests of children with disabilities, English learners, children experiencing homelessness, children and youth in foster care, migratory students, children who are incarcerated, and other underserved students.*

*The description must also include how the SEA will ensure that LEAs provide the public the opportunity to provide input in the development of the LEA’s plan for the use of ARP ESSER funds and take such input into account.*

USBE will ensure that LEAs engage in meaningful consultation with the listed stakeholder groups by requiring LEAs to submit an assurance that such consultation has occurred.

USBE will ensure that LEAs provide the public the opportunity to provide input in the development of the LEA’s plan for the use of ARP ESSER funds and take such input into account by requiring LEAs to submit an assurance that: 1) the public has been provided the opportunity to provide input; 2) the LEA has taken the input into account; and 3) the local school board has adopted the LEA’s plan for the use of ARP ESSER funds in an open and public meeting.

3. *Describe how the SEA will support and monitor its LEAs in using ARP ESSER funds. The description must include:*

*i.i. How the SEA will support and monitor its LEAs’ implementation of evidence-based interventions that respond to students’ academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs, such as through summer learning or summer enrichment, extended day, comprehensive afterschool programs, or extended school year programs – including the extent to which the SEA will collect evidence of the effectiveness of interventions employed;*

USBE will collect data to inform evaluation of the interventions through the ESSER-ARP LEA reporting requirements to be released by the U.S. Department of Education. Upon release of those reporting guidelines, USBE staff will determine next steps related to impact evaluation.

Additionally, the USBE has included outcome measures as a requirement for the LEA ARP ESSER template, as well as in the state ARP ESSER application for evidence-based afterschool and evidence-based summer learning competitive grant program from the SEA reserve. These outcome measures provide indicators related to the support and monitoring of the LEAs’ effectiveness.

*ii.ii. How the SEA will support and monitor its LEAs in specifically addressing the disproportionate impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on certain groups of students, including each of the student groups listed in question A.3.i.-viii; and*

*iii.*

USBE encourages LEAs to complete a needs assessment before determining how their portion of ESSER funds will be used. LEAs should follow existing needs assessment protocols to determine the most valuable and targeted use of ESSER funds. A needs assessment should include a review of the current state as compared to the desired state, the identification of barriers to reaching the desired state, and an analysis of the potential sources of the identified

barriers. This encouragement is included in the USBE LEA ARP ESSER template. Resources to support LEAs in the completion of a needs assessment can be found here: [Utah System of Support for School Improvement Handbook](#)

USBE will collect data to inform evaluation of the interventions through the ESSER-ARP LEA reporting requirements to be released by the U.S. Department of Education, including disaggregating data by subgroup as required. Upon release of those reporting guidelines, USBE staff will determine next steps related to impact evaluation.

Additionally, the USBE has included outcome measures disaggregating data by subgroup as a requirement for the LEA ARP ESSER template, as well as in the state ARP ESSER application for evidence-based afterschool and evidence-based summer learning competitive grant program from the SEA reserve. These outcome measures provide indicators related to the support and monitoring of the LEAs' effectiveness.

ii.iii. *How the SEA will support and monitor its LEAs in using ARP ESSER funds to identify, reengage, and support students most likely to have experienced the impact of lost instructional time on student learning, such as:*

- a. *Students who have missed the most in-person instruction during the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 school years;*
- b. *Students who did not consistently participate in remote instruction when offered during school building closures; and*
- c. *Students most at-risk of dropping out of school.*

Most efforts since March 2020 have been driven at the LEA level to support students who likely experienced the impact of lost instructional time on student learning. These efforts have included:

- Reviewing previous student enrollment records and comparing to the current school year,
- Offering diverse learning environments such as new online or hybrid learning programs, and
- Reaching out to families throughout the school year using digital or home visits to reconnect learners.

The success of these activities has varied depending on the LEA and the systemic nature of their approach.

In September 2020, USBE conducted an additional comprehensive student count to estimate impacts of the pandemic on student enrollment patterns. The agency measured the number of students exiting to homeschool, private and online schools and shared these data with LEAs. This has assisted LEAs in better understanding the impacts of the pandemic on students and how these impacts affect student enrollment trends.

From May through December 2021, USBE will conduct a comprehensive set of studies to help understand the effects of pandemic-related disruptions on students' academic performance. The purpose of these studies is to:

- Document overall trends in participation and achievement,
- Identify LEAs, schools, and student groups most affected by the disruptions,
- Document the influence of the pandemic on already-existing achievement gaps, and
- Explore how opportunity-to-learn and other related information interact with the academic outcomes indicated above.

After these research findings are published, USBE will disseminate the information to LEAs and encourage them to determine how to implement the findings locally within their plans to use ARP ESSER funds to support their students most impacted by the pandemic.

To monitor the use of ARP ESSER funds to support impacted students, USBE will:

- Work with schools identified for comprehensive and targeted school improvement to help them focus ARP ESSER funds on supporting highly impacted students,
- Require afterschool and summer program recipients receiving state set-aside ARP ESSER funds to identify impacted student groups and their plans to support these students,
- Leverage USBE's newly created fiscal monitoring group to provide technical assistance to LEAs in the effective use of these funds, and
- Consider expanding access to the [USBE Early Warning Program](#), currently being piloted within five LEAs, to others interested in participating in the program.
- USBE will collect data to inform evaluation of the interventions through the ESSER-ARP LEA reporting requirements to be released by the U.S. Department of Education. Upon release of those reporting guidelines, USBE staff will determine next steps related to impact evaluation.

6. *Describe the extent to which the SEA will support its LEAs in implementing additional strategies for taking educational equity into account in expending ARP ESSER funds, including but not limited to:*

The USBE will support its LEAs in implementing additional strategies for taking educational equity into account in expending ARP ESSER funds. These supports include, but are not limited to the following efforts as described below:

### **USBE Progress in this Area**

- USBE recently approved educational equity definition: "Acknowledging that all students are capable of learning, educational equity is the distribution of resources to provide equal opportunities based upon the needs of each individual student. Equitable resources include funding, programs, policies, initiatives and supports

that recognize each student's unique background and school context to guarantee that all students have access to high-quality education."

- Culturally Responsive and Equitable Workplace Steering Committee - This is an internal USBE working group focusing on improving practices through reviewing agency structures, professional learning opportunities, hiring practices, as well as conducting assessments.
- Quarterly Equity Leader Meetings - Allows educators who work to improve equitable practices to convene quarterly to provide feedback, receive updates, and share experiences.
- Equity Labs and Equity Lab Follow ups in June- provides an opportunity for school teams to review school data to determine how to decrease opportunities gaps within their communities.
- Connecting with LEA educational equity leaders throughout the state - ongoing outreach to schools to identify educators who are involved with increasing access within their respective schools.
- Equity Lead Needs Assessment - Evaluating areas in need of improvement and additional technical assistance from the Utah State Board of Education.
- Ongoing technical assistance for LEAs - Responding to professional learning opportunity requests, effective implementation support, consultation, as well as policy guidance.
- Professional learning opportunities - Providing current best-practice to remove barriers and increase access for all students.
- Advisory Committee on the Equity of Educational Services for Students (ACEESS) - Advises the board on improving accessing and increasing opportunities for all learners.

*i.i. Allocating funding both to schools and for districtwide activities based on student need, and*

The Utah State Board of Education will be following the required federal distribution guidelines by awarding 90% of the state ARP ESSER funds based on the Title I, Part A allocation. This distribution considers the distribution of resources based on student needs and is in alignment with the federal requirements for ARP ESSER.

Additionally, the USBE LEA ARP ESSER application includes the Local Educational Agency Maintenance of Equity for High-Poverty Schools as a required assurance, as is required by the federal legislation.

*ii.ii. Implementing an equitable and inclusive return to in-person instruction. An inclusive return to in-person instruction includes, but is not limited to, establishing policies and practices that avoid the over-*

*use of exclusionary discipline measures (including in- and out-of-school suspensions) and creating a positive and supportive learning environment for all students.*

The Utah State Board of Education will continue to provide the technical supports to LEAs that were described above to be able to support an inclusive return to in-person instruction that includes, but is not limited to, establishing policies and practices that avoid the overuse of exclusionary discipline measures (including in- and out-of-school suspensions) and creating a positive supporting environment for all students. Such as:

- Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support (PBIS) and social and emotional learning (SEL) integration with equity professional learning opportunity - multidisciplinary panelists discussed effective strategies to successfully embed equity into social and emotional learning and behavioral support for students across the general education and special education settings.
- Updating Least Restrictive Behavioral Interventions Technical Assistance Manual (LRBI) to become a Social and Emotional Learning Manual - The LRBI is undergoing revision to include current best-practice to effectively develop social and emotional learning skills as part of a Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) Framework.

#### ***F. Supporting the Educator Workforce***

*The Department recognizes the toll that the COVID-19 pandemic has taken on the Nation's educators as well as students. In this section, SEAs will describe strategies for supporting and stabilizing the educator workforce and for making staffing decisions that will support students' academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs.*

##### ***1. Supporting and Stabilizing the Educator Workforce:***

- i. *Describe the extent to which the State is facing shortages of educators, education administration personnel, and other school personnel involved in safely reopening schools, and the extent to which they vary by region/type of school district and/or groups of educators (e.g., special educators and related services personnel and paraprofessionals; bilingual or English as a second language educators; science, technology, engineering, and math ("STEM") educators; career and technical education ("CTE") educators; early childhood educators). Cite specific data on shortages and needs where available.*

The current state of educator retention and status of shortages is generally stable. Looking at the trend over the past five years, Utah experienced a slight increase in the number of educators returning to the classroom between 2020 and 2021 (see Table F1 below).

**Table F1: Retention Rates for Utah Educators, 2017-2021**

School Year	Percentage of all Educators who returned to Education from the Previous Year	Percentage of Educators with a Professional License who returned from the Previous Year
2017	90.3%	91.4%
2018	90.3%	91.3%
2019	91.1%	92.2%
2020	90.3%	92.0%
2021	92.6%	93.3%

Utah is not anticipating a major disruption to our retention rates based on feedback from LEAs and current data available related to retirements and other reasons for leaving the profession. Additionally, five-year retention rates stand at 70%, whereas three-year retention rates have increased to 83%. This trend is encouraging as it indicates that Utah’s efforts to provide mentoring and other support to early career educators is working.

Although our retention data is strong, Utah does have specific areas of shortages. Despite strong retention data, five percent of the educator workforce do not hold the required credentials to qualify them for their teaching assignment(s). Table F2 represents the current data on these areas of shortages.

**Table F2. Current Utah Data Teacher Shortages and Needs for May 2021**

Area	Data on shortages and needs	Narrative description
Special educators, including preschool	6.5% of special education educators are not qualified.	*Special education has been an area with historical shortages in Utah.

STEM educators	4.6% of STEM educators are not qualified.	*The percentage of STEM educators not qualified has decreased by more than 5% since 2016-17.
CTE educators	9.6% of CTE Educators are not qualified.	
School Counselors	3.5% of school counselors are not qualified.	
Social Workers	24% of social workers lack the proper credentials.	
School psychologists	12% of School Psychologists are not qualified.	
Elementary School Educators	4% of elementary teachers are not qualified.	* This percentage of unqualified educators may reflect LEAS consciously trying to decrease class size and adding virtual options during COVID.
Fine Arts, World Languages and Health/Physical Education	These areas all have between 5-8% of the total educators not qualified.	

*i.i. Describe how the SEA will assist its LEAs in identifying the most urgent areas of shortages or potential shortages, with particular plans for individual LEAs facing the most significant needs (e.g., by avoiding layoffs, providing high-quality professional learning opportunities, and addressing the impact of stress or trauma on educators). Include a description of how other Federal COVID-19 funding (e.g., ESSER and GEER funds under the CARES Act and CRRSA Act) have already been used to avoid layoffs during the COVID-19 pandemic.*

The Utah State Board of Education will assist LEAs in identifying the most urgent areas of shortages or potential shortages in two ways: 1) sharing reports available for them to analyze their local trends and 2) sharing statewide shortages data with LEAs for a more global

understanding. Given our shortage data and the minimal variation to our usual shortage trends in areas of shortage, USBE will continue to support LEAs by providing alternative ways for supporting potential and unqualified educators to earn the licensure mechanisms. This strategy enables LEAs to fill vacant positions in shortage areas while providing the hired personnel the time to complete the coursework, assessments, etc. required to earn a professional license in Utah.

Additionally, USBE has several current resources available to support LEAs in addressing shortages, professional learning needs, and addressing the impact of stress or trauma on educators such as:

### **SHORTAGES STRATEGIES**

- Supporting paid endorsement coursework for educators in STEM fields
- Providing teacher incentives in our greatest shortage areas (e.g., Math, Special Education, Science)
- Providing grants for tuition waivers to educator preparation programs for eligible students earning their license in special education, school psychology, and speech pathology
- Partnering with the Utah Education Policy Center (UEPC) to do a series of five studies, including focus groups and surveys, to understand best practices for recruiting and retaining special education educators
- Administering a “Grow Your Own Teacher and School Counselor” program to increase the educator and school counselor pipeline

### **PROFESSIONAL LEARNING NEEDS**

- Providing targeted professional learning opportunities as demonstrated by high need by state based on state assessment data (e.g., LETRS professional learning for K-3 educators, instructional coaches, school psychologists, and elementary principals in early literacy)
- Providing professional learning pathway options for shortages area educators (e.g., summer endorsement courses for physical education teachers)
- Provide training through Utah’s Equity Labs to encourage LEAs to consider their current practices and their effect on ensuring equitable access to effective educators

### **IMPACT OF STRESS OR TRAUMA ON EDUCATORS**

- Connecting LEAs with local providers (e.g., community hospitals) in which they can build partnerships to address community health needs

- Creating and sharing SEA resources and supports for social emotional needs such as learning modules and webinars
- Administering a qualifying grant program for school-based mental health
- Creating and sharing trauma-informed modules with information on self-care and impacts of secondary trauma on adults
- Providing training on compassion fatigue and burnout
- Sharing strategies that many LEAs have leveraged to provide increased SEL training and wellness activities for staff, including wellness training rooms and mindfulness

USB E included the opportunity for the use of other Federal COVID-19 funding (e.g., ESSER and GEER funds under the CARES Act and CRRSA Act) to be used to avoid layoffs during the COVID-19 pandemic under the allowable use case of “Other activities that are necessary to maintain the operation of and continuity of services in local educational agencies and continuing to employ existing staff of the local educational agency” as described in the federal legislation. This opportunity was included in the ESSER I and ESSER II LEA certification and application template.

- ii. *Describe the actions the SEA will take to fill anticipated gaps in certified teachers for the start of the 2021-2022 school year and to what extent the SEA will further support its LEAs in expanding the educator pipeline and educator diversity while addressing the immediate needs of students disproportionately impacted by the pandemic (e.g., recruiting teaching candidates to provide high-dosage tutoring or implementing residencies for teacher candidates).*

The actions the Utah State Board of Education will take to fill anticipated gaps in certified teachers for the start of 2021-2022 school year include:

- Supporting our LEAs to leverage flexibility in licensing pathways to ensure each student has appropriate access to an educator or other education professional (e.g., LEA specific license, associate licenses, Alternate Pathway to Professional Educator Licensure)
- Requiring the removal of prerequisite requirements in educator preparation programs for future educators and school counselors involved in the Grow Your Own Program
- Providing guidance and resources related to summer school design and implementation
- Continuing to provide training through Utah’s Equity Labs to encourage LEAs to consider their current practices and their effect on ensuring equitable access to effective educators

- Providing training and supports for strategies that encourage diversifying the workforce

2. *Staffing to Support Student Needs: Describe the extent to which the SEA has developed or will develop strategies and will support its LEAs in increasing student access to key support staff within school buildings, including school counselors, special education personnel, nurses, social workers, and psychologists (e.g., hiring additional personnel or freeing up these staff to focus on providing services to students).*

The Utah State Board of Education (USBE) has developed (and will continue to develop) strategies to support local education agencies (LEAs) in increasing student access to key specialized instructional support personnel within school buildings, including school counselors, nurses, social workers, and school psychologists as well as special education personnel (e.g., hiring additional personnel or freeing up these staff to focus on providing services to students). This commitment existed prior to the COVID-19 pandemic through legislation, state funding, and technical assistance to the field. USBE continues to work collaboratively with LEAs to further improve strategies to stabilize students' academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs and increase the availability of services through qualified personnel.

As a state commitment to this need, the Utah State Legislature has passed several pieces of legislation to address gaps in services to students. These statutes and associated funding allocations total \$38.3 million and have greatly increased the number of hired and contracted professionals. In 2019, House Bill (H.B.) 373 *Student Health and Counseling Support* ([53F-2-415](#), [R277-622](#)) provided \$26 million dollars in ongoing funding to increase an LEA's ability to hire or contract for services provided by qualifying personnel which include: school counselors, school psychologists, school nurses, school social workers, and other licensed school-based mental health professionals. Previously, there was an approximate \$1 million allocation in 2008 to target the need to increase school nurses, through the *Appropriations for School Nurses* ([53F-2-519](#), [R277-415](#)). The increase of funding in 2019 with H.B. 373 led to another rise in school nurse FTEs from 170 in 2018-2019 to 203 FTEs in the 2019-2020 school year. Funding for school counselors has been specifically addressed through two funding sources, the *Grow Your Own Teacher and School Counselor Pipeline Program Grant* ([53F-5-218](#), [Draft - R277-320](#)) and the *Elementary School Counselor Grant Program* ([53F-5-209](#), [R277-461](#)). The *Grow Your Own Teacher and School Counselor Pipeline Program Grant* (2021) allocated \$9.2 million dollars to LEAs to provide scholarships to paraprofessionals, school counselor assistants, and school counselor interns for education and training to become licensed teachers or licensed school counselors. In 2018, the *Elementary School Counselor Grant Program* was created to award \$2.1 million in grants to LEAs to provide targeted school-based mental health support in elementary school, including trauma-informed care, through the employment of qualifying personnel. There are yearly accountability reports required for each of these grants, which provide information on the targeted supports that are provided for under-served and under-represented populations. For example, the statute for the *Elementary School Counselor Grant* requires that intergenerational poverty is prioritized in the funding applications, and two of the grants require that all staff

participate in [Trauma-Informed Training](#). School nurses and school counselors must also complete yearly accountability reports to demonstrate how their time is spent and how they are prioritizing services to students.

These funding sources have made provisions to increase equitable supports for each student, allowing LEAs to direct how key specialized instructional support personnel allocate time and resources. To ensure LEAs could meet needs of students with disabilities, some have repurposed general education funding and/or paraeducators to specifically target the needs of students with disabilities so that they can access the services and supports required by their IEPs.

The USBE has increased capacity to administer funding, provide technical assistance, and give oversight to student support programs. In 2019 the Safe and Healthy Schools Team (<https://www.schools.utah.gov/safehealthyschools>) was created at USBE as a part of the Student Support Department. This team consists of a School Nurse Specialist, Behavior Specialist, Project AWARE Grant Manager, School Nursing/Wellness Specialist, two School Counseling Program Specialists (elementary and secondary), and a School and Student Safety Specialist. This team also increases state agency alignment through four liaisons who are hired by the partnering organizations and housed at USBE. These liaisons include School Nurse Consultant (Utah Department of Health), School Based Mental Health Specialist (Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health), School Safety Liaison (Department of Public Safety), and SafeUT Project Administrator (University of Utah Huntsman Mental Health Institute).

The integration of [SafeUT<sup>7</sup>](#) into state and local mental health and safety intervention procedures has been a great benefit to students. SafeUT is an anonymous, 24/7, reporting tip line and chat app that allows all stakeholders to receive assistance during a concerning situation or a mental health crisis, or alert school staff of an issue through the tip line reporting function. Additionally, USBE is working collaboratively with the Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health to update *Utah's School Behavioral Health Toolkit: Partnering to Address Mental and Emotional Wellness for School-Aged Children*. This toolkit provides information needed by LEAs to increase the processes and cohesion of their tiered systems of interventions and support improved utilization of support personnel in their educational settings. These tools have provided an increase of professional, licensed support to students across the state, and by strengthening state-level technical support, USBE has been able to strengthen the system of interventions overall.

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<sup>7</sup> Brent Kious asked one of our colleagues in Geography if he could see if there is any spatial association between poverty and SafeUT use and between percent non-White and SafeUT use. In short, when census block groups were divided into quartiles based on percent below the poverty line and percent of teens who are non-White, based on census data, there was no association between quartiles and SafeUT use. There may be a slight trend toward higher use in opportunity zones areas, but, again, they are not statistically significant. So, based on this very limited assessment of the impact of SafeUT, it looks like it is probably reaching the community pretty well.

Utah LEAs have communicated that there is an increased need for all these key personnel in response to COVID-19. USBE conducted a survey of school leaders in spring 2020 asking for school leadership perspective of impacts on student needs to be able to gauge community needs for technical assistance from our agency. Additionally, USBE issued a second survey in fall 2020 to LEA Superintendents and Directors to be able to update student needs as the school buildings reopened. These data sets, and the intention to continue to survey Utah K-12 education community members, are playing a key role in informing the next steps for the agency related to LEA supports and technical assistance related to both the services and the resources available to support this need.

USBE will continue to provide technical support to our LEAs to leverage both state and federal resources to be able to provide increased student access to key specialized instructional support personnel within school buildings, including school counselors, nurses, social workers, and school psychologists as well as special education personnel (e.g., hiring additional personnel or freeing up these staff to focus on providing services to students).

### **G. Monitoring and Measuring Progress**

*The Department recognizes that transparency on how ARP ESSER funds are used and their impact on the Nation's education system is a fundamental responsibility of Federal, State, and local government. In this section, SEAs will describe how they are building capacity at the SEA and LEA levels to ensure high-quality data collection and reporting and to safeguard funds for their intended purposes.*

- *Capacity for Data Collection and Reporting: It is important for an SEA to continuously monitor progress and make adjustments to its strategies, as well as to support its LEAs in making adjustments to LEA strategies, based on impact. Describe how the SEA will ensure its capacity and the capacity of its LEAs to collect data on reporting requirements, including but not limited to the examples of reporting requirements described in the SEA's Grant Award Notification (listed in Appendix B). Describe the SEA's capacity and strategy to collect data from its LEAs (disaggregated by student group, where applicable), to the greatest extent practicable, including any steps the SEA will take to build its capacity in the future (which may include the use of ARP ESSER and other Federal COVID-19 pandemic funds at the SEA and LEA levels), on issues that may include the following:*
  - *Student learning, including the academic impact of lost instructional time during the COVID-19 pandemic;*
  - *Opportunity to learn measures (e.g., chronic absenteeism; student engagement; use of exclusionary discipline; access to and participation in advanced coursework; access to technology, including educator access to professional development on the effective use of technology; access to high-quality educators; access to school counselors, social workers, nurses, and school psychologists; and results from student, parent, and/or educator surveys);*
  - *Fiscal data that is comparable across the State (e.g., per-pupil expenditures at the LEA and school levels);*
  - *Jobs created and retained (by position type);*

- *Participation in programs funded by ARP ESSER resources (e.g., summer and afterschool programs); and*
- *Other reporting requirements reasonably required by the Secretary (please refer to Appendix B of this template; final requirements will be issued separately).*

A key priority for the Utah State Board of Education (USBE) is student data privacy. The agency employs a team of experts for student data privacy that work with our Data/Statistics, Financial Operations, Program Teams, and policy team members to ensure that Utah is safeguarding all student data as required by both federal and state laws. This is imperative for our work related to ARP ESSER.

USBE is working to build capacity at the state and local level to ensure high-quality data collection and reporting around the impact of the pandemic on student learning. The USBE has developed a [comprehensive plan](#) for collecting and analyzing (operational and investigative) student achievement and growth data from the 2020-2021 school year (SY). USBE will be employing strategies recommended by Harvard Professor, Dr. Andrew Ho, called [Fair Trend and Equity Check](#) which are designed to promote accurate interpretations of the aggregate data collected from the 2020-2021 SY. Additionally, USBE's comprehensive plan includes analysis of student learning data disaggregated by grade and student group including economic status, special education, English learner status, and race/ethnicity. Along with data on student learning, in collaboration with its Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and LEA assessment leaders, the USBE developed and is delivering opportunity to learn ([OTL](#)) questions to students who participate in the grades 3-10 state assessments. This information will be used to add context to the achievement results, and as part of the investigative analysis. In addition to the student-level OTL questions, USBE staff will collect school-level OTL information (i.e., school schedules, soft-closures, student enrollment) to provide additional context to the individual student learning experience during the 2020-2021 SY. Other data that help capture students' opportunity to learn include a digital teaching and learning educational technology device inventory from the Utah Education and Telehealth Network and broadband data by county from the Utah Governor's Office of Economic Development.

The Utah State Board of Education, with support from the Utah legislature, has made significant investments in the Utah Schools Information Management System, which will modernize our legacy data systems and enable real-time access to data to inform decision making at all levels of the education system, while also safeguarding against data breaches. This is essential for our work related to ARP ESSER.

For fiscal data, the Utah Grants Management System has the status for all our awards, reimbursements, and documentation for each grant award. Utah LEAs reported on spending in specific categories for ESSER I and GEER I as required by the U.S. Department of Education which enables comparable fiscal data. USBE is distributing funds through the required Title I,

Part A formula for 90% of our ESSER Awards. Additionally, the Utah State Board of Education voted to use ESSER state reserve funding from CARES, CRRSA, and ARP ESSER to support LEAs that would not receive any funding through the federal 90% allocation using Title I, Part A (vote occurred in public meeting on June 25, 2020). This distribution considers that all schools experienced impacts due to COVID-19 and provides resources for their students to be served. Participation in programs funded by ARP ESSER resources will be accessible on our COVID-19 dashboard that will be available here: <https://schools.utah.gov/coronavirus>. Our intent is to continue to build out this dashboard to include all future awards from ARP ESSER as defined by the federal required use cases.

In the next year, the USBE will be continuing to enhance data and financial systems to support LEAs and students as the state collaborates with LEAs to address the academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs of students resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. The USBE will:

- Continue to upgrade the electronic Utah Grants Management System (UGMS) which includes processes and capability to monitor LEAs' applications, reimbursement requests, etc. The UGMT team will continue to provide training for program staff in fully utilizing these tools to schedule desktop and onsite monitoring visits and housing documentation of all fiscal transactions. The USBE will also continue to use a multi-step internal control process which requires multiple program and fiscal reviewers to approve LEA applications and reimbursement requests in the UGMS.
- Continue to work with R15CC to develop a Resource Allocation Review (RAR) process to support LEAs in the equitable distribution of human, fiscal, and other resources to meet student needs.
- Continue to update the Utah eTranscript and Record Exchange (UTREx) to include the required data fields for future P-EBT and USDA grants and then analyze the data that LEAs submit to guide the provision of future LEA supports and services.

The USBE is taking several steps to ensure high-quality data collection and reporting at both the state and local level. To mitigate threats to the administration of state assessments, USBE has extended test administration windows to allow for the maximum opportunity for LEAs to provide access to each assessment. As much as possible, USBE has supported remote test administration. In assessment, USBE staff provide regular and ongoing support to LEA education leaders through weekly memos, monthly meetings, and other tools/resources (i.e., Why Assess, Summative Assessment FAQ, Email from the state superintendent, etc.). The USBE has an [Assessment and Accountability Policy Advisory Committee](#) which represents stakeholder groups in advising the Board on assessments. The USBE Financial Operations team has conducted regular meetings with and trainings for the Utah Association of School Business

Officials and LEA business administrators. The USBE Data and Statistics staff host regular data meetings for LEAs to address any issues of data entry or reporting. Regarding COVID-19 relief funding specifically, USBE provided financial training to business administrators, Title directors, curriculum directors, charter directors, and the Utah Superintendents Association. To further support high-quality fiscal data, USBE program and financial operations personnel review all reimbursement expenditures submitted by LEAs and provide personalized and specific feedback. In addition, USBE has released draft applications for specific ARP ESSER resources like the LEA plan template and summer school learning application for community feedback prior to finalizing. This consistent engagement with stakeholders promotes high-quality data collection and reporting. It enables the USBE to continuously monitor progress and adjust our strategies based on impact.

2. *Monitoring and Internal Controls: Describe how the SEA will implement appropriate fiscal monitoring of and internal controls for the ARP ESSER funds (e.g., by updating the SEA's plan for monitoring funds and internal controls under the CARES and CRRSA Acts; addressing potential sources of waste, fraud, and abuse; conducting random audits; or other tools). In this response, please describe the SEA's current capacity to monitor ARP ESSER; steps, if needed, to increase capacity; and any foreseeable gaps in capacity, including how the SEA will provide its LEAs with technical assistance in the anticipated areas of greatest need.*

The Utah State Board of Education will implement appropriate fiscal monitoring of and internal controls for the ARP ESSER funds (e.g., by updating the SEA's plan for monitoring funds and internal controls under the CARES and CRRSA Acts; addressing potential sources of waste, fraud, and abuse; conducting random audits; or other tools). Our response below describes the USBE's current capacity to monitor ARP ESSER using the Utah Grants Management system and USBE fiscal monitoring team including how the USBE will provide our LEAs with technical assistance in the anticipated areas of greatest need. This response was crafted by the Utah State Board of Education Grants Compliance Officer in coordination with Financial Operations experts including the leaders from the USBE fiscal monitoring team.

USBE is committed to accountability and transparency related to the use of ARP ESSER funds by its subrecipients. The fundamental responsibility of USBE Financial Operations is to establish processes and systems which ensure compliance with federal and state regulations and to safeguard awarded funds to ensure that targeted populations receive intended program benefits. USBE Financial Operations utilizes a comprehensive grants management system (Utah Grants / <https://utahgrants.utah.gov>) for subrecipients. The system tracks LEA Assurances, award applications, award budgeting, reimbursement requests, expenditure tracking, indirect cost rates, progress reports, LEA fiscal monitoring activities and ongoing risk assessments.

USBE Financial Operations has a team of ten fiscal monitors to provide program oversight, evaluate and approve allowable expenditures, and provide guidance to LEAs to ensure accounting methods comply with Uniform Grant Guidance (UGG). LEA internal controls, financial policies and procedures are reviewed frequently to ensure that federal funds are being spent and reported in compliance with all relevant rules and regulations. Additionally, USBE

Financial Operations provides regularly scheduled trainings, special events and educational outreach resources for USBE staff and LEAs to further promote a culture of compliance.

USBE Financial Operations attempts to ensure that all expenditures are made in the performance of the award and expenditures are necessary, allowable, allocable, and reasonable. Each reimbursement request must include supporting documentation that provides sufficient information to evaluate for these factors. A detailed general ledger which sufficiently lists and explains each expenditure is required for all reimbursement requests submitted to the USBE. The following information must also be included or made available upon request:

- Detailed description of specific items procured (e.g., Amazon \$500 should be broken down and detailed to what items make up that amount in total).
- Relevant supporting documentation including but not limited to the following items: invoices, receipts, payroll journals, etc.
- Time and effort documentation for any individual being paid for services in line items specific to project funding and allowances.

Recognizing that ARP ESSER funds will be highly scrutinized, the USBE may require additional information or supporting documentation specific to the program if further clarification is needed to approve a reimbursement request. All program financial records must be maintained by the LEA and provided upon request for auditing and monitoring purposes.

Currently, the USBE does not note any additional needs to increase capacity at this time or any foreseeable gaps in capacity related to the monitoring and internal controls for ARP ESSER. If the field requires additional monitoring beyond the current set of experiences with ESSER I and ESSER II, staff will need to seek Utah State Board of Education authorization to expend some of the ESSER state administrative set-aside to be able to expand the capacity to meet the needs of the field.

USBE will provide our LEAs with technical assistance in the anticipated areas of greatest need. Our primary mechanism of assistance is through the Utah Grants Management system. The system allows for USBE experts to provide feedback on budget revisions and reimbursement submissions related to the ARP ESSER funds. The personalized technical support is our primary mechanism for addressing individual LEA needs. In addition, the Utah State Board of Education proactively provides training to the field through the following mechanisms:

- USBE Biannual Financial Training for LEA Business Administrators: This is a meeting that takes place twice a year, where the USBE coordinates training and updates related to both state and federal funding administration.
- Monthly Compliance Administrative Training Series (CATS) meetings and special events: A broad array of timely training topics including federal

uniform guidance and regulations, state statutes, administrative board rules, internal policies & procedures, and related compliance matters

- Utah Association of School Business Officers (UASBO) Trainings
- Training at regional conferences such as the Utah Rural Schools Association, Utah Charter School Directors Meetings, Title Directors, and the Utah School Superintendents Association: USBE staff will continue to work with these existing administrative groups to be able to train leaders from the field on ARP ESSER monitoring and controls.
- Ad hoc technical assistance on specific program training, such as indirect cost rate training, as identified by USBE experts or the field by School Finance Specialists.

**Appendix A: School Operating Status and Instructional Mode Data Template**

*Indicate the date or time period represented by the following data.*

This data was reported for April 2021 by the Utah State Board of Education using data from the Child Nutrition Program reporting.

**Appendix Table 1. Utah School Reporting for Instructional Models**

*In the most recent time period available, how many schools in your State offered each mode of instruction or learning model described below? Each row should account for all schools in your State, so that, for each row, the sum of the numbers in the “offered to all students,” “offered to some students,” and “not offered” columns is equal to the number in the “all schools” column.*

<b>Number of schools</b>	<b>All schools</b>	<b>Offered to all students</b>	<b>Offered to some students</b>	<b>Not offered</b>
Remote or online only	1055	70	0	985
School buildings open with both remote/online and in-person instruction (hybrid)	1055	650	0	405
School buildings open with full-time in-person instruction	1055	335	0	720

**Appendix Table 2: Utah Student Subgroup Reporting for Instructional Model**

*In the most recent time period available, what was the enrollment and mode of instruction for the schools in your State?*

<b>Number of students</b>	<b>Total enrollment</b>	<b>Remote or online only</b>	<b>Both remote/online and in-person instruction (hybrid)</b>	<b>Full-time in-person instruction</b>
Students from low-income families	194,658	18,644	121,409	54,605
White, not Hispanic	487,529	29,224	335,395	122,910
Black or African American, not Hispanic	9,314	1,578	6,275	1,461
Hispanic, of any race	119,922	12,850	79,999	27,073
Asian, not Hispanic	11,373	1,483	7,682	2,208
American Indian or Alaskan Native, not Hispanic	6,682	1,841	3,512	1,329
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, not Hispanic	10,746	1,637	7,660	1,449

Two or more races, not Hispanic	20,795	1,691	15,158	3,946
English learners	59,626	7,734	39,965	11,927
Children with disabilities	82,287	5,897	54,985	21,405
Students experiencing homelessness	9,263	1,230	6,538	1,495
Children and youth in foster care	1,227	27	877	323
Migratory students	<i>Information not available at time of reporting.</i>			

## ***Appendix B: Reporting Language Included in the Grant Award Notification (“GAN”)***

*As described in the Grant Award Notification (“GAN”), the SEA will comply with, and ensure that its LEAs comply with, all reporting requirements at such time and in such manner and containing such information as the Secretary may reasonably require, including on matters such as:*

- *How the State is developing strategies and implementing public health protocols including, to the greatest extent practicable, policies and plans in line with the CDC guidance related to mitigating COVID-19 in schools;*
- *Overall plans and policies related to State support for return to in-person instruction and maximizing in-person instruction time, including how funds will support a return to and maximize in-person instruction time, and advance equity and inclusivity in participation in in-person instruction;*
- *Data on each school’s mode of instruction (fully in-person, hybrid, and fully remote) and conditions;*
- *SEA and LEA uses of funds to meet students’ social, emotional, and academic needs, including through summer enrichment programming and other evidence-based interventions, and how they advance equity for underserved students;*
- *SEA and LEA uses of funds to sustain and support access to early childhood education programs;*
- *Impacts and outcomes (disaggregated by student subgroup) through use of ARP ESSER funding (e.g., quantitative and qualitative results of ARP ESSER funding, including on personnel, student learning, and budgeting at the school and district level);*
- *Student data (disaggregated by student subgroup) related to how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected instruction and learning;*
- *Requirements under the Federal Financial Accountability Transparency Act (“FFATA”); and*
- *Additional reporting requirements as may be necessary to ensure accountability and transparency of ARP ESSER funds.*

## ***Appendix C: Assurances***

*By signing this document, the SEA assures all of the following:*

- *The SEA will conduct all its operations so that no person shall be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under the ARP ESSER program or activity based on race, color, national origin, which includes a person's limited English proficiency or English learner status and a person's actual or perceived shared ancestry or ethnic characteristics; sex; age; or disability. These non-discrimination obligations arise under Federal civil rights laws, including but not limited to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972, section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Age Discrimination Act of 1975. In addition, the SEA must comply with all regulations, guidelines, and standards issued by the Department under any of these statutes;*
- *The SEA will comply with all ARP Act and other ARP ESSER requirements and all requirements of its Grant Award Notification, including but not limited to:*
  - *Complying with the maintenance of effort provision in section 2004(a)(1) of the ARP Act, absent a waiver by the Secretary pursuant to section 2004(a)(2) of the ARP Act; and*
  - *Complying with the maintenance of equity provisions in section 2004(b) of the ARP Act, and ensuring its LEAs comply with the maintenance of equity provision in section 2004(c) of the ARP Act (please note that the Department will provide additional guidance on maintenance of equity shortly);*
- *The SEA will allocate ARP ESSER funds to LEAs in an expedited and timely manner and, to the extent practicable, not later than 60 days after the SEA receives ARP ESSER funds (i.e., 60 days from the date the SEA receives each portion of its ARP ESSER funds). An SEA that is not able to allocate such funds within 60 days because it is not practicable (e.g., because of pre-existing State board approval requirements) will provide an explanation to the Department within 30 days of receiving each portion of its ARP ESSER funds (submitted via email to your Program Officer at [State].OESE@ed.gov (e.g., Alabama.OESE@ed.gov)), including a description of specific actions the SEA is taking to provide ARP ESSER funds to LEAs in an expedited and timely manner and the SEA's expected timeline for doing so;*
- *The SEA will implement evidence-based interventions as required under section 2001(f) of the ARP Act and ensure its LEAs implement evidence-based interventions, as required by section 2001(e)(1) of the ARP Act;*
- *The SEA will address the disproportionate impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on underserved students (i.e., students from low-income families, students from racial or ethnic groups (e.g., identifying disparities and focusing on underserved student groups by race or ethnicity), gender (e.g., identifying disparities and focusing on underserved student groups by gender), English learners, children with disabilities, students experiencing homelessness, children and youth in foster care, and migratory students), as required under section 2001(f) of the ARP Act, and ensure its LEAs address the disproportionate impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on underserved students (i.e., students from low-income families, students from racial or ethnic groups, gender, English learners, children with disabilities, students experiencing homelessness, children and*

*youth in foster care, and migratory students), as required by section 2001(e)(1) of the ARP Act; and*

- *The SEA will provide to the Department: (1) the URL(s) where the public can readily find data on school operating status and (2) the URL(s) for the SEA and/or LEA websites where the public can find the LEA plans for a) the safe return to in-person instruction and continuity of services required under section 2001(i) of the ARP Act, and b) use of ARP ESSER funds. SEAs should consider ensuring a standardized URL format in all cases (e.g., xxx.gov/COVIDplan).*

**NOTICE TO ALL APPLICANTS**

*The purpose of this enclosure is to inform you about a new provision in the Department of Education's General Education Provisions Act ("GEPA") that applies to applicants for new grant awards under Department programs. This provision is Section 427 of GEPA, enacted as part of the Improving America's Schools Act of 1994 (Public Law (P.L.) 103-382).*

**To Whom Does This Provision Apply?**

*Section 427 of GEPA affects applicants for new grant awards under this program. **ALL APPLICANTS FOR NEW AWARDS MUST INCLUDE INFORMATION IN THEIR APPLICATIONS TO ADDRESS THIS NEW PROVISION IN ORDER TO RECEIVE FUNDING UNDER THIS PROGRAM.***

*(If this program is a State-formula grant program, a State needs to provide this description only for projects or activities that it carries out with funds reserved for State-level uses. In addition, local school districts or other eligible applicants that apply to the State for funding need to provide this description in their applications to the State for funding. The State would be responsible for ensuring that the school district or other local entity has submitted a sufficient section 427 statement as described below.)*

**What Does This Provision Require?**

*Section 427 requires each applicant for funds (other than an individual person) to include in its application a description of the steps the applicant proposes to take to ensure equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally-assisted program for students, teachers, and other program beneficiaries with special needs. This provision allows applicants discretion in*

*developing the required description. The statute highlights six types of barriers that can impede equitable access or participation: gender, race, national origin, color, disability, or age. Based on local circumstances, you should determine whether these or other barriers may prevent your students, teachers, etc. from such access to, or participation in, the Federally-funded project or activity. The description in your application of steps to be taken to overcome these barriers need not be lengthy; you may provide a clear and succinct description of how you plan to address those barriers that are applicable to your circumstances. In addition, the information may be provided in a single narrative, or, if appropriate, may be discussed in connection with related topics in the application.*

*Section 427 is not intended to duplicate the requirements of civil rights statutes, but rather to ensure that, in designing their projects, applicants for Federal funds address equity concerns that may affect the ability of certain potential beneficiaries to fully participate in the project and to achieve high standards. Consistent with program requirements and its approved application, an applicant may use the Federal funds awarded to it to eliminate barriers it identifies.*

**What are Examples of How an Applicant Might Satisfy the Requirement of This Provision?**

*The following examples may help illustrate how an applicant may comply with Section 427.*

*(1) An applicant that proposes to carry out an adult literacy project serving, among others, adults with limited English proficiency, might describe in its application how it intends to*

*distribute a brochure about the proposed project to such potential participants in their native language.*

*(2) An applicant that proposes to develop instructional materials for classroom use might describe how it will make the materials available on audio tape or in braille for students who are blind.*

*(3) An applicant that proposes to carry out a model science program for secondary students and is concerned that girls may be less likely than boys to enroll in the course, might indicate how it intends to conduct "outreach" efforts to girls, to encourage their enrollment.*

*(4) An applicant that proposes a project to increase school safety might describe the special efforts it will take to address concerns of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender students, and efforts to reach out to and involve the families of LGBT students.*

*We recognize that many applicants may already be implementing effective steps to ensure equity of access and participation in their grant programs, and we appreciate your cooperation in responding to the requirements of this provision.*

*[Click here to enter text.](#)*

***Estimated Burden Statement for GEPA Requirements***

***According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless such collection displays a valid OMB control number. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 3 hours per response, including time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. The obligation to respond to this collection is required to obtain or retain benefit (Public Law 103-382). Send comments regarding the burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to the U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20210-4537 or email [ICDocketMgr@ed.gov](mailto:ICDocketMgr@ed.gov) and reference the OMB Control Number 1894-0005.***