



Washington Office of Superintendent of
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION
Chris Reykdal, State Superintendent

Good afternoon,

On December 27, 2020, President Trump signed into law the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2021, Public Law 116-260, which provided additional Elementary and Secondary Schools Emergency Relief (ESSER II) funding. This funding is intended to help safely reopen schools, measure and effectively address learning loss, and take other actions to mitigate the impacts of COVID-19 on our students, educators, and families.

As required by the state constitution, the Legislature must provide OSPI with the authority to spend these dollars before we are able to provide the funds to school districts. Unlike the last round of ESSER funds when we received spending authority through the unanticipated receipts (UAR) process, we have been informed that the authority to spend this round of ESSER funds will be provided through the state budget and appropriations process. This authority may come through early action of the Legislature, or could occur later on in the legislative process. At this time, we cannot reasonably project when these funds will be available to reimburse districts for allowable expenditures.

We strongly believe that the approval of these funds by the Legislature will be contingent on reimbursing expenditures that directly align with reopening schools for in-person instruction and addressing learning loss resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. The ESSER II funds can reimburse districts for the same allowable costs as the original ESSER funds, plus the following **new** allowable purposes, as defined by Congress, which emphasize the intent that these funds focus on school building reopening.

- Addressing learning loss;
- Preparing schools for reopening, testing; and
- Repairing, upgrading projects to improve air quality.

Districts need to finalize their plans to reopen for in-person instruction. Below are some other high-level details regarding the ESSER II allocation.

Total Funding Available

- \$824,852,000 will be provided to Washington for K–12 purposes.
- \$ 82,485,200 (10%) can be reserved at the state level for targeted purposes.
- \$742,366,800 (90%) will be provided to school districts through the Title I methodology, subject to legislative appropriation.

Equitable Share

- School districts will not be required to have equitable share consultations with private schools to allow those schools to access these funds.
- Private schools will be receiving a separate allocation of these funds through the Governor's Office.

Funding Availability and Accounting

- Because these funds can be used for an expanded set of purposes, and can be spent during a different timeframe, they must be accounted for separately from the first round of ESSER funds.
- Districts will be required to apply for this round of ESSER funds separately from the first. These applications serve more as attestations, and will not be approved or denied based on funds availability. The form package will be available after we receive approval to spend the funds from the Legislature.
- The first round of ESSER funds must be spent prior to September 30, 2022. The second round of ESSER funds must be spent prior to September 30, 2023.

We will be certain to keep you informed on news regarding these funds as we work with budget writers.

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