

ESSER/GEER Extra, Volume 6

This week's volume of [ESSER/GEER Extra](#) includes the following: a recap of PDE guidance on social emotional learning and reading support and improvement; a link to recent learning loss guidance from the U.S. Department of Education (USDE); a guide for using ARP ESSER funds to grow and diversify the educator workforce; new revenue and funding source codes for ARP IDEA; and more information about the timeline for ARP ESSER application approvals.

As a reminder, all editions of [ESSER/GEER Extra](#) are archived on PDE's website.

PDE Releases Social Emotional Learning and Reading Support Guidance

To assist schools in determining how to improve learning environments through social emotional learning and mental health supports, as well as needed reading supports for students, PDE has developed [ARP ESSER Guidance on Social Emotional Learning](#) and [ARP ESSER Guidance on Reading Improvement for Students](#), both of which connect to the concepts, strategies, and processes in the [Accelerated Learning Toolkit](#).

These new resources feature a decision-making process to assist schools in developing teams, assessing student and staff needs, and establishing goals in the implementation of social emotional learning, mental health, and reading supports.

USDE Releases Guidance on Using ARP ESSER Funds to Address Learning Loss

Last week, USDE released guidance on using ARP ESSER funds to address learning loss and other academic harms stemming from the pandemic. The guidance focuses on how to use these funds to respond to the needs of students, particularly those most disproportionately impacted by the pandemic, to address gaps in educational opportunity, and to build and ensure sustainable programming and support for students. [Access USDE's Strategies for Using American Rescue Plan Funding to Address the Impact of Lost Instructional Time](#).

New Guide for LEAs to Grow and Diversify their Teacher Workforce

The [Pennsylvania Educator Diversity Consortium](#) and [Teach Plus Pennsylvania](#) have created a [guide](#) on how school entities can invest ARP ESSER funds to grow and diversify their teacher workforce. USDE allows ARP ESSER funds to be used for these purposes - supporting, growing, and diversifying Pennsylvania's educator workforce is one of the central themes in [PDE's ARP ESSER State Plan](#).

The guide, which features examples from Pennsylvania and offers resources for implementation, outlines five specific strategies:

- Develop or expand teacher residency programs and other high-retention preparation pathways in partnership with educator preparation programs.
- Develop or expand dual enrollment opportunities for high school students to begin coursework in education and teacher preparation.
- Invest in direct-to-candidate incentives with a particular focus on diversifying the workforce and reducing barriers to entry and retention.

- Invest in Grow Your Own pathways for paraprofessionals, out-of-school-time staff, and other staff to become certified to teach.
- Invest in supports for in-service teachers to promote their retention and help them develop as culturally relevant and sustaining educators.

New Revenue and Funding Source Codes for ARP IDEA

The [Chart of Accounts for PA Local Education Agencies](#) for the 2021-22 fiscal year is now available. While the Chart of Accounts contains the federal revenue and source codes for all COVID-related federal funds, as included in the release from last fiscal year, it also includes the revenue code and funding source code for the additional IDEA funding for 2021-22 as allocated by the ARP Act.

What is the timeline for reviewing and approving my ARP ESSER application?

While it usually takes about six to eight weeks to move a submitted application through the process to formal approval, the unprecedented volume of applications due to the many categories of ARP ESSER funding, all of which must be tracked separately, on top of the routine 2021-22 consolidated applications, will slow down this timeline.

Further, the prior approval forms for construction-related expenditures require additional time to ensure that school entities are compliant with federal requirements. Time spent requesting additional detail on applications certainly slows the approval process; however, this step is important to mitigate risk to both school entities and PDE.

We recommend reviewing the [USDE's three-part test](#) for determining allowable expenditures prior to submitting applications, and that your application provide as much detail as possible about proposed expenditures. We also recommend submitting applications as soon as possible to accommodate a longer than normal timeline for review.

Finally, please remember that school districts and charter schools must submit their ARP ESSER set-aside applications for learning loss, summer enrichment, and afterschool activities by November 29, 2021.

ARP Homeless Children and Youth II Grant Allocations and Applications to be Posted Next Week

The ARP Act contained funds to support the specific needs of homeless children and youth. The funds must be used to identify homeless children and youth, to provide homeless children and youth with wrap-around services to address the challenges of COVID-19, and to enable homeless children and youth to attend school and fully participate in school activities. Allocations for eligible LEAs along with an application will be posted on [PDE's website](#) on Thursday, September 23.

Have an ARP ESSER construction-related question?

We recognize the timing constraints associated with the use of ARP ESSER funds for construction or renovation, as well as the complexity of the federal requirements that apply. If you have a construction-related question, please email it to: ra-edarpesser@pa.gov so that we can provide answers as quickly as possible.