

**STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
AUGUST 17, 2020**

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SUBJECT

Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund

REFERENCE

March – April 2020	The Board has received weekly updates on the federal response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and the availability of funding through the CARES Act.
April 27, 2020	The Board received an update on the allowable uses and amount of funds available to Idaho through the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund and Governor’s Emergency Education Relief Fund.
May 4, 2020	The Board directed staff to move forward with data analysis for the discussed proposals and to identify sources of funds for those proposals.
June 10, 2020	The Board approved the use of the ESSER 10% SEA reserve funds for grants to local education agencies for devices, connectivity, infrastructure, adaptive technology, learning management system and PD around remote instruction and a request to the Coronavirus Financial Advisory Committee for \$30M that could be used for the same purpose.
July 15, 2020	The Board approved a methodology and grant application for \$30,000,000 from Idaho’s relief funds through the Governor’s Coronavirus Financial Advisory Committee

BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION

The CARES Act allowed the SEA to reserve up to 10 percent of the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Fund for grants to LEAs to be used for emergency needs as determined by the SEA to address issues responding to COVID-19. These funds must be awarded by May 18, 2021, and expended by September 30, 2022. At its July 15, 2020, meeting, the Board adopted the funding distributions, which included \$3.785 million for distance/blended learning with a priority for a Learning Management System (LMS). On August 14, 2020, the Department announced that five LMS providers had been selected as options for school districts needing an LMS: PowerSchool/Schoology, D2L, Instructure/Canvas, Its Learning and Otus. At the July 15 meeting, the Board also approved a methodology and grant application for \$30 million in funding from Idaho’s relief funds through the Governor’s Coronavirus Financial Advisory Committee to close the digital divide. A review committee was formed, which includes co-chairs Rep. Melissa Wintrow and Will Goodman, Board member David Hill, Rod Gramer with IBE, Terry Ryan with Bluum, Sherawn

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Reberry with the West Ada School District, Peter McPherson, Chief Deputy at the SDE and Karen Seay, Federal Programs Director at the SDE. The soft deadline for grant application was Friday, August 14, 2020. An update will be provided on the status of both funding opportunities for blended learning.

IMPACT

This agenda item will provide the Board with an update on how the distribution of the ESSER SEA Reserve Funds are being implemented based on the Boards action at the July 15, 2020 Special Board.

STAFF COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The CARES Act establishes multiple funds dedicated to addressing impacts to education due to the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, two of these funds provide allocations at the state level, while a third fund, the Higher Education Relief Act is disrupted directly to the postsecondary institutions. The Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Fund allocates funds to the state education agencies based on the same proportion as states receive funds under Part A of Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act in fiscal year 2019. Idaho's share of this fund is \$47,854,695. From this amount a minimum of \$43,069,226 (90%) must be distributed to the local education agencies (LEA) based on the LEA's proportional share of the state's Part A, Title I funds. These funds are distributed based on each LEA's propositional share of Part A, Title I funds received in 2019. Not all LEA's receive Part A, Title I funds. Part A, Title I funds are distributed based on an LEA's share of eligible Title I students. Up to 10 percent (10%) of these funds, \$4,785,470, may be reserved by the SEA "to be used for emergency needs as determined by the SEA to address issues responding to COVID-19."

Pursuant to the federal ESSER Fund Notice, SEA reserve funds may be used to award sub grants or enter into contract for emergency needs that address issues related to COVID-19. An SEA must ensure that an "LEA that receives an ESSER Fund sub-grant provides equitable services to students and teachers in non-public schools located within the LEA in the same manner as provided under section 1117 (Providing Equitable Services to Eligible Private School Children, Teachers, and Families) of the Elementary Secondary Education Act (ESEA), as determined through timely and meaningful consultation with representatives of non-public schools. In providing services or assistance to students and teachers in non-public schools, the LEA or another public agency must maintain control of the funds, and title to materials, equipment, and property purchased with such funds must be in a public agency." States have one year from date of the federal award to award the funds. ESSER Funds may only be used for elementary and secondary education relief.

At the June 10, 2020 Regular Board meeting the Board approved use of the ESSER 10% SEA reserve funds towards grants to local education agencies for funding for professional development to provide social emotional and behavioral

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health supports remotely; to request from the Coronavirus Financial Advisory Committee funding for grants to local education agencies and creation of a public postsecondary digital campus totaling \$34 million; and to forward an additional recommendation to the Governor for Governor's Emergency Education Relief (GEER) funding use as identified in Handout 1. The handout identified six areas the grants to the school districts could be used for, devices, connectivity, infrastructure, adaptive technology, learning management system, and professional development around remote instruction or the use of a learning management system. From the ESSER 10% SEA reserve funds, \$1M was set aside for professional development for providing social emotional/behavioral health

At the July 15, 2020 Special Board meeting the Board approved the methodology for determining amounts each LEA is eligible to receive from the ESSER 10% SEA Reserve funds and CFAC funds as identified in Attachment 2 of the agenda material with priority for ESSER 10% SEA Reserve funding for the purchase or enhancement of a learning management system, while not limiting the use of these funds to a learning management system. The use of funds from the ESSER 10% SEA Reserve funds and CFAC funds was established at the June 10, 2020 Regular Board meeting.

BOARD ACTION

This item is for informational purposes only.