

Wolf Administration Applies for \$523 Million in Emergency Funds to Support Schools

Harrisburg, PA – The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) today submitted its Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Fund application to the U.S. Department of Education (USDE) to obtain approximately \$523.8 million in emergency, one-time funds to help schools respond to COVID-19 impacts.

“Pennsylvania’s educators have been working under extraordinary conditions from the onset of the coronavirus, first helping students and families to receive food and then setting up systems to provide continued education,” said Secretary of Education Pedro A. Rivera. “Unfortunately, this crisis has also placed tremendous financial pressures on our schools. These funds will provide an initial measure of relief, and we appreciate the quick action by Congress. At the same time, emergency educational needs require Congress to pass another significant appropriation for states and schools.”

PDE expects USDE to approve the state’s ESSER application within one week and is finalizing a streamlined application to ensure that funds are available to schools in an expedited manner.

Under the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act, at least 90%, or \$471 million, of the funds must flow through to traditional public schools and charter schools. Each entity will receive an amount proportional to federal Title I-A funds received in 2019 under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).

LEAs may use ESSER funding for a wide range of purposes, including food service; professional training; technology purchases; sanitization and cleaning supplies; summer and after-school programs; and mental health supports. Funds must be used by September 2022. PDE has urged school entities to prioritize investments for vulnerable students and families, including those living in the deepest poverty, students with disabilities, English learners, migrant students, students experiencing homelessness, and children in foster care.

The remaining 10% of ESSER funds will be used for state-level activities to address issues caused by COVID-19. PDE plans to use the funds to support initiatives, including remote learning, that can be designed and implemented with greater economy of scale at the state level than would be possible or practical for LEAs to pursue individually.

Pursuant to CARES requirements, school districts and charter schools must apply to PDE to obtain their allocated funds. Once the USDE approves the state application, PDE will post the LEA application process on its website and notify LEAs.

For more information about Pennsylvania’s education policies and programs, please visit the [Department of Education’s website](#) or follow PDE on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), or [Pinterest](#).