

South Dakota ARP ESSER State Plan Highlights

Total ARP ESSER allocation for South Dakota: \$382,019,236

ARP ESSER funding released to South Dakota on March 24, 2021: \$254,679,491

ARP ESSER funding released to South Dakota on July 7, 2021: \$127,339,745

2020-2021 Preliminary Statewide Enrollment: 139,566

Top Priorities Within South Dakota's Plan:

- Supporting strong pedagogy and educational opportunities
- Addressing students' social-emotional and mental health needs
- Continuing to address issues of educator recruitment and retention

Highlights of South Dakota's Plan:

- **Returning to In Person Learning in 2021 Safely Reopening Schools and Sustaining Safe Operations:** South Dakota Department of Education (DOE) supported the return to in-person learning in fall 2020 by providing local leaders with the data, resources, and technical assistance they needed to make sound decisions based on the needs of their students, local conditions, and the most up to date science. As most schools have been open the entire previous school year, DOE expects this to continue in school year 2021-22.
- **Supporting Students Most Impacted by the Pandemic:** DOE's plan explains that reopening schools for in-person instruction in August 2020 was the most effective strategy for addressing students' needs. DOE notes that some of its most underserved students, including students in tribal communities, did not have access to in-person instruction. Past supports included: a Starting Well guide created in summer 2020 created in conjunction with educators from across the state providing guiding principles for the reopening and safe operation of school facilities at the start of the 2020-21 school year; calls with administrators regarding participation and student discipline; calls with administrators on summer programming and enhanced learning; and supporting programs that create positive learning environments. DOE also uses comprehensive needs assessment tools to help districts diagnose root causes of equity issues and identify solutions.
- **Re-Engaging Students:** South Dakota is exploring means to assist LEAs in identifying disengaged students through additional tools and programming to support these students' academic progress and overall well-being. State level spending of ARP ESSER funds will focus on strategies designed to engage and re-engage students that may have missed out on instruction and educational opportunities and provide strong instruction for academic attainment for all students based on their individual needs.
- **Hiring School Nurses, Counselors, and Paraprofessionals:** In the 2020-21 school year, DOE supported district-led initiatives to add school nurses, counselors and special education paraprofessionals using federal ESSER funding.

Community Engagement and Consultation:

- DOE conducted robust community engagement to develop its state plan and identify the top needs of schools and communities across the state. Through a variety of engagement strategies, stakeholders identified several common priorities for South Dakota students and schools: student mental health, student disengagement and lost instructional time, and the impact of COVID-19 on the educator workforce. DOE plans to continue its stakeholder engagement and plans to hold an August summit to dive into further topics of the state plan and allow the community to provide input as DOE makes decisions about evidence-based interventions.

When South Dakota's LEA Use of Funds Plans will be due: August 20, 2021