

## EDUCATION

# How are Maury County schools using ESSER funds?



**Mike Christen**

The Daily Herald

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The Maury County Board of Education has unanimously approved a spending plan for its third wave of federal relief funds for the coronavirus pandemic, a move that will offer households assistance in purchasing school supplies and a new team of teachers and staff dedicated to making up the time lost to the virus.

During a special-called meeting Tuesday evening, the school board approved the allocation plan of \$18.1 million given to the school district in the third wave of distributions for the Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund.

"This is a unique opportunity that we have been given," said Michael Fulbright, chairman of the Maury County School Board. "We have put lot of thought and a lot of oversight into it. The school central office staff has put an incredible amount of work into it. We are just trying to put it to its best use to help overcome some of that learning loss that has happened."

Recent scores released by the Tennessee Department of Education show the school district's students continue to lag behind their peers.

TNReady scores showed that 12% of Maury County's students surpassed or achieved proficiency in seventh-grade math remaining behind the state average of 22.9%.

In English language arts, just 28% of all MCPS students achieved proficiency on the third-grade level, while 32% of all students across the state achieved the standard.

**More:** 'Unprecedented disruptions': Scores indicate Maury County students are struggling to keep up

**More:** Porch Talk: What do Maury County's schools need to succeed?

The approved spending plan includes efforts to bring relief to both educators and their students.

Across all faculty and staff, full-time employees will receive a \$1,500 bonus and part-time employees will receive a \$750 bonus.

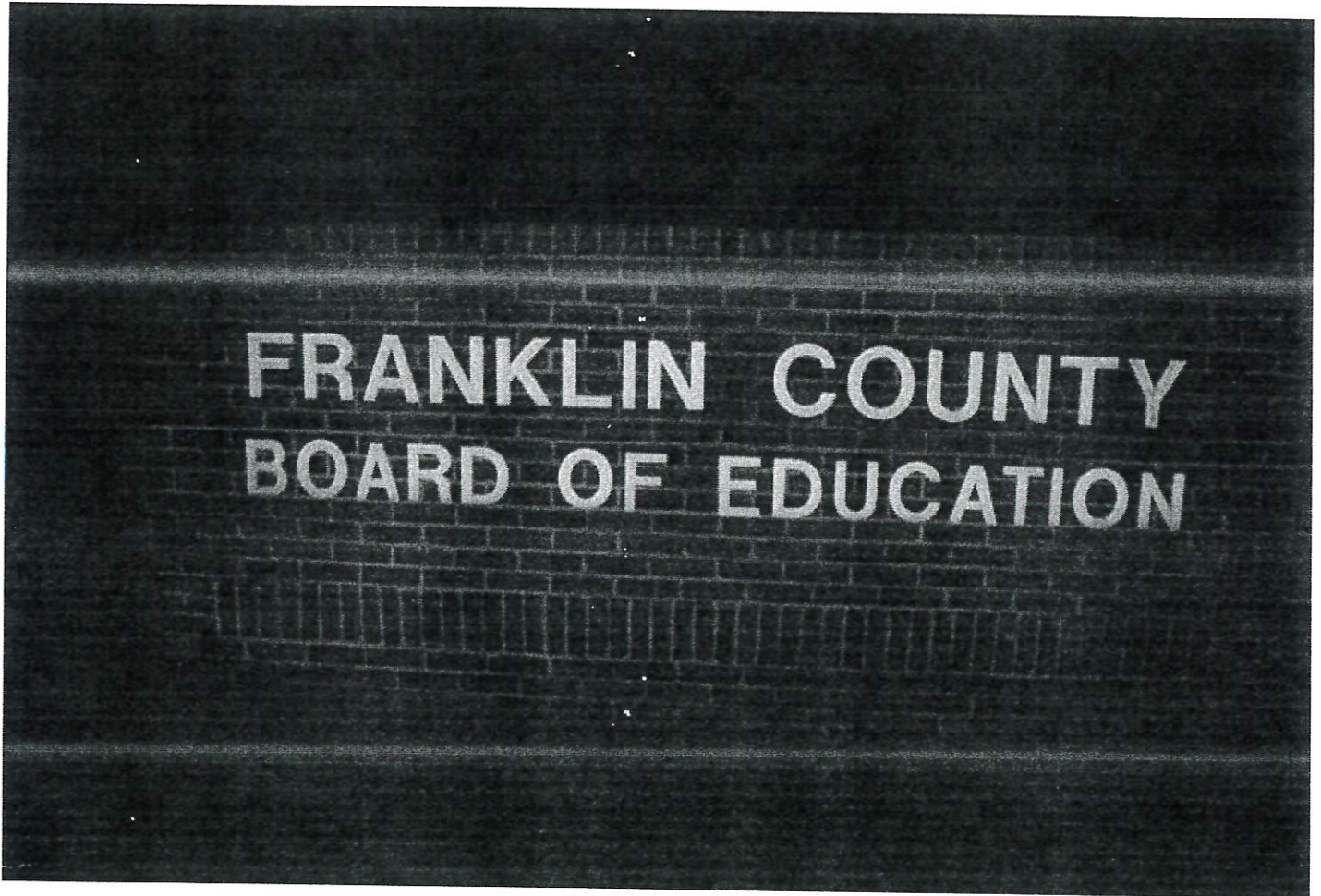
FEATURED

TOP STORY

## School Board approves employee bonuses

EDITOR Brian Justice

Apr 4, 2021



The School Board approved on March 8 to give full-time employees a one-time \$430 bonus, expected to be paid in June.

The school system has about 400 certified employees with another 300 in classified support positions, according to Linda Foster, Human Resources supervisor.

The board also agreed to provide the bonus money to bus contractors to distribute to their employees.

Questions were raised about part-time employees getting bonus money.



Those working part time will get half the approved amount — about \$215 — with those working less than 45 days getting one-fourth of the amount — about \$107.

The General Assembly and Gov. Bill Lee recently approved legislation to provide additional funding for teachers and certified personnel, effective for the second half of the current fiscal year — January to June 30.

Franklin County's district allocation was \$215,500.

Director of Schools Stanley Bean recommended at the Feb. 8 meeting to give a one-time bonus to certified employees from the \$215,500 in state funds and also recommended using \$150,000 from Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief funds to give all classified employees a one-time bonus.

Congress set aside about \$13.2 billion of the \$30.75 billion allotted to the education stabilization fund for the ESSER fund to be used as reimbursement for expenses stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The School System has been allotted about \$4.39 million in ESSER funds.

The board agreed on March 8 to include the bus contractors in the bonus schedule.

Questions surfaced about how they would be paid because buses are a contracted service and those employees don't work directly for the School System.

The board agreed it would be fair to include the bus drivers in the bonus appropriations.

The board also began discussing the fiscal year 2021-22 budget with the first workshop scheduled at 6 p.m. on April 5 at the School System's administration building, 215 S. College St. in Winchester.

The School System's budget last year totaled \$45.39 million, including \$26.73 million in salaries and \$9.4 million in benefits.

## **New teachers hired**

In a separate item, the board also unanimously approved the creation of 10 new teacher positions to remain in compliance with the state requirements for student-teacher ratios.

"Depending on how the growth goes, that will determine what we will do next," Fulbright said.

Despite voting in approval of the plan, board member David Moore shared that he remained skeptical of some aspects of the roadmap drafted by the school district's central office staff.

"I don't clearly agree with all the parts of this," Moore said. I'll give you guys the benefit of the doubt. I hope we get the benefits of it."

## **What are teachers and students getting with ESSER 3.0?**

The school district's roadmap includes a \$2.1 million plan to hire 20 additional licensed teachers for the 2021-22 academic year and 15 positions the following year to reduce class sizes across the district in an effort to mitigate learning loss caused by extended periods outside the classroom due to the pandemic.

An additional \$6.9 million will be used to replace HVAC units at Spring Hill Elementary School, Mt. Pleasant Middle School, Mt. Pleasant Elementary School and Riverside Elementary School.

Each student will also receive \$25 to purchase additional materials and school supplies for this and the coming school year.

A total of \$180,000 will be used to hire three contracted teachers devoted entirely to teaching students out of the classroom due to having either been diagnosed or exposed to COVID-19.

The school system will use \$359,000 to fund additional summer learning sessions in 2023 and 2024.

It will spend \$1 million to establish a "Grow Your Own" program to support professionals working at the school district as they pursue college degrees and their teaching licenses.

The program will cover tuition, salary, benefits, test fees, books and materials.

An additional \$3.9 million will be used to purchase materials for students across all grades in need of supplemental material for ACT test preparation.

The school district will also expand its English as a Second Language curriculum, investing \$75,000 for students learning the language as they attend school.

It will allocate \$160,000 to hire a responsive to intervention coordinator that will work to address learning loss caused by the pandemic, including leading a team of interventionists.

An additional two counselors will be hired at a cost of \$120,000 to address the needs of students and their families.

At a cost of \$220,000, a coordinator and secretary will be hired to manage more than \$28 million in combined ESSER funds distributed to the school district.

"It is a lot of money and with that comes a lot of responsibly," Fulbright said.

"A lot of these things are going to be a benefit to our children. It is going to hopefully benefit teacher morale as well as student morale. We will hopefully be able to see some results at the end of this year when the test scores start to come out again."

## **Plan includes remaining funds**

The the newly approved plan also includes the use of funds from the previous two distributions.

The school system previously received \$2.1 million as part of the federal program's first wave of relief funds, followed by another \$8 million for the program's second dispensation.

A remaining \$256,000 for the initial \$2.1 million ESSER contribution will be re-budgeted to support after school tutoring and additional classroom materials and supplies.

The funds are set to expire on Sept. 30, 2022.

About \$4.7 million remain from the \$8 million distributed during the second wave of relief funding.

Of the remaining funds, \$2.1 million are budgeted to support a team of contracted interventionists currently being hired across the school district. A total of \$2.5 million is being budgeted to support the 2022's summer learning camps required by the state.

An additional \$200,000 will be used purchase a math intervention program and \$30,000 will be budgeted for professional development for special education teachers on student intervention.

Funds from the second distribution will expire on Sept. 30, 2023.

*Reach Mike Christen at [mchristen@c-dh.net](mailto:mchristen@c-dh.net). Follow him on Twitter at @MikeChristenCDH and on Instagram @michaelmarco. Please consider supporting his work and that of other Daily Herald journalists by subscribing to the publication.*

## **Blount County Board of Education gives bonus to classified employees**

By Amy Beth Miller amy.miller@thedailytimes.com  
Jan 10, 2022

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Blount County Schools' non-teaching employees will see a bump in their paychecks, but not until the district recovers from a ransomware attack on its payroll software vendor last month.

The Blount County Board of Education approved a \$750 bonus for full-time classified workers and \$400 for part-time employees in classified jobs, which don't require teaching certification, during its meeting Monday, Jan. 10.

But employees still haven't seen a raise that brought the minimum pay for those jobs to \$12.73 an hour, which the board approved Dec. 2, 2021, to start Jan. 1.

An attack hit the Kronos Private Cloud on Dec. 11, 2021, and BCS Fiscal Administrator Troy Logan told the school board that Monday, Jan. 10, was the first day he was able to access the system in the past month.



Logan credited BCS staff members John Herron, the technology supervisor; Brad Roberts, payroll manager; and Deena Finley, assistant chief financial officer, with processing payroll for about 1,700 employees on Dec. 27 and Jan. 10. "You'll never understand or know what they did to get payroll done the last two paychecks," Logan said.

Herron performed a "miracle" to recreate the district's old payroll system, Logan said, also crediting the work of Blount County government Human Resources and Payroll Director Jaclyn Johnson and her staff to work through the issues created by the Kronos outage.

Monday night Logan was reluctant to say when the raise and bonus would make it into paychecks but assured the board that the raise will be applied retroactively.

BCS is using \$330,000 from ESSER 3.0, the third round of federal funding under the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund, for the bonuses. A document prepared for the board meeting said the bonus would be for all classified employees, but Logan said afterward it would go only to classified employees who didn't see a raise from increasing the minimum pay.

About 350 employees received the raise, estimated to cost nearly \$285,000 through the end of the fiscal year, June 30, and funded through sales tax revenue coming in higher than expected.

## Finding new director

During Monday's meeting Chairman Robby Kirkland told school board members to plan for several Monday meetings as the board prepares to hire a successor to Director Rob Britt, who announced last week that he will retire in June.

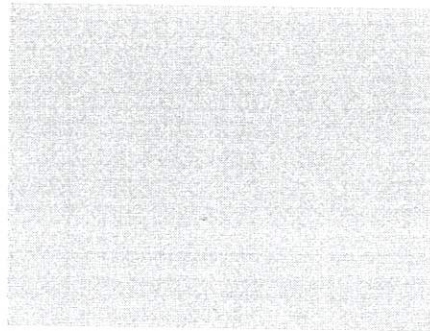
The first meeting will be Jan. 24, and Kirkland asked the board members to think about the criteria they want to set for applicants and whether they want to hire the Tennessee School Boards Association or another consultant to advertise the opening and screen candidates.

TOP STORY

## School board approves ESSER bonuses for employees

SHARON ALICE LURIE SLurie@mainstreetmediatn.com

Feb 13, 2022



Arnold

The Cheatham County School Board approved a \$750 bonus for all fulltime employees and a \$375 bonus for all part-time employees at its monthly meeting last week.

The vote to approve the bonuses was 4-0-2. Board members John Louallen and James Gupton were not present.

The bonuses are part of the ESSER (Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund) 3.0 funding the school district received from the federal government. The funds were created to assist with economic challenges public schools are facing from the pandemic.

According to Cheatham County Schools Communications Director and Grant Writer Tim Adkins, the bonuses were discussed with the ESSER Committee and approved by both the school board and the Tennessee Department of Education. The bonuses are a one-time allotment from the ESSER 3.0 funding.

The district is one of 68 state school districts recognized last Friday by the Tennessee Department of Education as a "Best for All" district.

According to a press release from the Tennessee Department of Education, the Best for All designation is for districts that "spent an amount equal to or more than 50% of its ESSER 3.0 award amount on strategies to raise student academic achievement, as well as opted to participate in the





# Teacher Pay

## 2020-21 Teacher Pay FAQs

On January 22, 2021, during the 1st Extraordinary Session of the 112th General Assembly, the Tennessee General Assembly passed an **Appropriations Bill** (SB7009/HB7020), which included critical pay increases for Tennessee teachers during an unprecedented school year impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

### General Questions:

**1. Why are these funds listed as “non-recurring” in the appropriations legislation?**

Any additional appropriations added within a fiscal year are always listed as non-recurring. Funds with recurring purposes will be added during the regular budget cycle for the following fiscal year.

**2. Does the current appropriations legislation actually change the unit cost of the instructional positions component?**

No. However, the calculation is based on the equivalent to a 2% increase to the unit cost of the instructional positions component in the BEP formula. The reason the actual unit cost is not formally changed from this increase is because the state is covering both the state and local share for this increase in FY21.

**3. Can you explain what the 2% covers?**

The 2% is based on the funding available for the instructional salaries component of the BEP. This does not necessarily equal 2% of what districts are spending on educator salaries, as many districts hire additional staff beyond what the BEP covers. The additional funding provided should not be described as a “2% salary increase.”

**4. Does dating the funds back to Jan 1. mean we only get half the funds?**

No. Funds provided to districts will reflect this increase for the period of January 1 to June 30, and full funding for that period is being provided.


**5. Am I required to change my salary and compensation schedule at this time?**

This is a district decision. Districts are required to document how funds are being distributed and share this information along with their salary and compensation schedule. This may or may not be a change to a district's standard salary schedule.

**6. How does this impact charter schools?**

Charter schools will continue to be funded following the average per pupil funding provided to the district (per TCA 49-13-112(a)). As these funds will





increase that average funding, charters will experience increased funding as a result.

**7. If we gave an increase at the beginning of this school year, even though the state did not, can we use these funds to offset those increases?**

No. These funds are intended to provide new increases for teachers and certified personnel.

**8. How does this impact teachers funded outside of the BEP formula?**

Districts have discretion in determining how to distribute these funds to teachers. The allocations support increased funding to teachers, regardless of whether those teachers are funded within or outside the BEP. Districts may opt to distribute a share of what they receive to all teachers within the district or develop other strategies for disbursement.

**9. How can I use my BEP summary spreadsheet to explain how funds are awarded?**

In general, the increase will equate to an increase to the instructional salaries component of the BEP and the relevant benefits (social security, Medicare, and retirement) in the instructional benefits categories. However, due to other components within the BEP being tied to these values, districts will likely see increases in other categories as well. It is important to note that these funds are being awarded outside of the BEP formula. While the BEP summary spreadsheet may assist in understanding the allocations, it does not dictate spending requirements on these funds. Districts may want to share the total amount of funding provided to the district and then transparently post how those funds were allocated.

**10. Will this become recurring next year?**

The Governor has signaled he will propose a 4% increase in recurring funding for the instructional salaries component of the BEP in his FY22 budget. This will be released in mid-February.

**11. NEW 2/17 Can we use the funds to also give bonus to classified personnel?**

No. The increase in state funds may only be used for salary increases to teachers and other certified personnel. ESSER funds may be used to provide increases to classified personnel provided the increases are tied to COVID-19 related responsibilities.

**12. NEW 2/17 Are nurses included in the 2% increase?**

Yes.

**13. NEW 2/17 Can ESSER funds be used to provide bonuses to non-certified personnel?**

Yes. ESSER funds may be used to provide increases to certified or non-certified personnel provided the increases are tied to COVID-19 related responsibilities.

**14. NEW 2/17 Can these funds be used to pay federally funded teachers?**

Yes. The additional salary funds may be used to pay federally funded teachers.

**15. NEW 2/17 For federally funded teachers, if we pay the bonus out of federal funds, how do handle that in our accounting?**

**25. NEW 2/17 If a teacher is on paid leave and there is an interim teacher in the classroom, do we pay both or just the one that is scheduled to work?**

Districts have discretion to determine how to handle teachers on paid leave and interim teachers.

**26. NEW 2/17 Can we provide a bonus to support staff that have gone above and beyond using ESSER 2.0 funds?**

Yes. ESSER 2.0 funds may be used to pay bonuses if the bonus is directly tied to a COVID-related activity.

**27. NEW 2/17 Can we use ESSER 2.0 funds to enable bonuses/stipends to be paid to above BEP funded and classified?**

Yes. ESSER 2.0 funds may provide for bonuses/stipends to any staff provided they are tied to COVID-related response efforts.

**28. NEW 2/17 Which positions are included in teachers and other certified personnel?**

All positions funded in the instructional component of the BEP are included, as well as nurses. The full list of the positions in the BEP may be accessed [here](#).

**29. NEW 2/17 Do we include LPN's?**

Yes. All positions funded in the instructional component of the BEP are included, as well as nurses.

**30. NEW 2/17 Are directors of schools included?**

No. These funds are intended for positions funded in the instructional component of the BEP. Directors of schools are not funded in this component.

**31. NEW 2/17 Should we include Coordinated School Health and Pre-K positions?**

This is a local decision. These positions are correlated to positions funded in the instructional component of the BEP or as a nursing position and are therefore eligible for the funds.

**32. NEW 2/17 Do we record the revenue in the BEP revenue code - 46511?**

Yes. Payments should be coded so that they are easily identifiable for the salary transparency survey reporting at year-end.

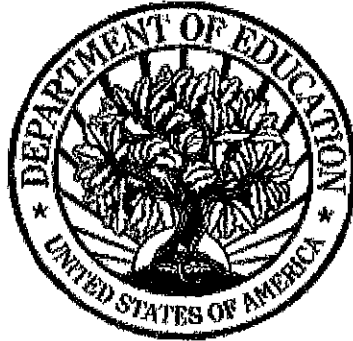


## ESSER 3.0 Allocations

Local Educational Agency	ESSER 3.0 Allocation
SEVIER COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT	\$27,523,341.79
SHELBY COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT	\$503,145,852.64
SMITH COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT	\$4,919,156.22
SOUTH CARROLL SPECIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT	\$865,882.05
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION	\$3,844,150.89
STEWART COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT	\$3,648,494.74
SULLIVAN COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT	\$20,610,150.34
SUMNER COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT	\$31,463,481.60
SWEETWATER CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT	\$3,034,329.31
TENNESSEE SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND	\$1,196,524.73
TENNESSEE SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF	\$1,781,091.02
TIPTON COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT	\$17,841,500.22
TRENTON SPECIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT	\$2,882,182.33
TROUSDALE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT	\$2,156,721.70
TULLAHOMA CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT	\$7,077,371.76
UNICOI SCHOOL DISTRICT	\$4,691,566.32
UNION CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT	\$5,047,859.59
UNION COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT	\$7,923,593.62
VAN BUREN COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT	\$2,059,494.16
WARREN COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT	\$18,725,991.53
WASHINGTON COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT	\$11,963,190.47
WAYNE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT	\$4,803,019.16
WEAKLEY COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT	\$8,694,049.76
WEST CARROLL SPECIAL DISTRICT	\$2,331,749.28
WEST TENNESSEE SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF	\$344,665.30
WHITE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT	\$8,746,589.56
WILLIAMSON COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT	\$5,222,354.19
WILSON COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT	\$12,554,039.91
YORK INSTITUTE	\$1,338,852.87
<b>Total Flowthrough to Districts</b>	<b>\$2,238,874,272.90</b>

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Programs Governor's Emergency Education Relief Programs**



**U.S. Department of Education  
Washington, D.C. 20202**

**May 2021**



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requirements related to documentation for personnel expenses in the Uniform Guidance (2 CFR § 200.430(i)).

**D-4. May an LEA use ESSER and GEER funds to pay overtime to its salaried custodians and other staff in order to prepare for a safe reopening of schools and sustain safe school operations?**

Yes. Paying custodians or other staff overtime to safely reopen schools and to keep the schools safely open is allowable under ESSER and GEER.

**D-5. May an LEA use ESSER and GEER funds to provide childcare services or instructional supervision to the children of teachers and other staff in order to enable them to return to their teaching or other school responsibilities?**

Yes. An LEA may use ESSER and GEER funds for the costs associated with providing childcare and instructional supervision to children of teachers and staff, so long as certain conditions are met. For example, an LEA might contract with a daycare provider to make spaces available for teachers with young children whose regular daycare services are unavailable due to the COVID-19 pandemic so that those teachers can continue to provide educational services to students. An LEA might also provide a retention incentive to teachers with young children that could offset the cost for childcare in order to retain those teachers, which is an allowable use of funds under part A of title II of the ESEA, if teacher retention is a challenge due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

**D-6. May an LEA use ESSER and GEER funds to provide “premium pay” or other additional compensation for teachers, principals, and other school personnel, including school nutrition staff and custodians?**

Yes. Premium pay must be reasonable and necessary and consistent with 2 CFR § 200.430(f), and given pursuant to an established plan (which could be established in response to the COVID-19 pandemic), consistent with applicable collective bargaining agreements and other relevant policies and requirements.

**D-7. May an LEA that has experienced significant, unbudgeted increases in unemployment costs use ESSER and GEER funds to pay for those costs?**

Yes. An LEA may use ESSER or GEER funds to pay for unemployment costs if necessary. However, an LEA may want to consider alternate sources of funding for the unemployment expenses, and use ESSER and GEER funds for more traditional education uses to prevent, prepare for, or respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, as with all grant activities, the use of funds must meet all applicable Uniform Guidance requirements, and be reasonable and necessary to meet the purpose of the programs.



Displaying the eCFR in effect on 3/31/2021.

## Title 2 - Grants and Agreements

### Subtitle A - Office of Management and Budget Guidance for Grants and Agreements

#### Chapter II - Office of Management and Budget Guidance

#### Part 200 - Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards

#### Subpart E - Cost Principles

#### General Provisions for Selected Items of Cost General Provisions...

#### § 200.430 Compensation - personal services.

- (a) **General.** Compensation for personal services includes all remuneration, paid currently or accrued, for services of employees rendered during the period of performance under the Federal award, including but not necessarily limited to wages and salaries. Compensation for personal services may also include fringe benefits which are addressed in § 200.431. Costs of compensation are allowable to the extent that they satisfy the specific requirements of this part, and that the total compensation for individual employees:
- (1) Is reasonable for the services rendered and conforms to the established written policy of the non-Federal entity consistently applied to both Federal and non-Federal activities;
  - (2) Follows an appointment made in accordance with a non-Federal entity's laws and/or rules or written policies and meets the requirements of Federal statute, where applicable; and
  - (3) Is determined and supported as provided in paragraph (i) of this section, when applicable.
- (b) **Reasonableness.** Compensation for employees engaged in work on Federal awards will be considered reasonable to the extent that it is consistent with that paid for similar work in other activities of the non-Federal entity. In cases where the kinds of employees required for Federal awards are not found in the other activities of the non-Federal entity, compensation will be considered reasonable to the extent that it is comparable to that paid for similar work in the labor market in which the non-Federal entity competes for the kind of employees involved.
- (c) **Professional activities outside the non-Federal entity.** Unless an arrangement is specifically authorized by a Federal awarding agency, a non-Federal entity must follow its written non-Federal entity-wide policies and practices concerning the permissible extent of professional services that can be provided outside the non-Federal entity for non-organizational compensation. Where such non-Federal entity-wide written policies do not exist or do not adequately define the permissible extent of consulting or other non-organizational activities undertaken for extra outside pay, the Federal Government may require that the effort of professional staff working on Federal awards be allocated between:
- (1) Non-Federal entity activities, and
  - (2) Non-organizational professional activities. If the Federal awarding agency considers the extent of non-organizational professional effort excessive or inconsistent with the conflicts-of-interest terms and conditions of the Federal award, appropriate arrangements governing compensation will be negotiated on a case-by-case basis.
- (d) **Unallowable costs.**
- (1) Costs which are unallowable under other sections of these principles must not be allowable under this section solely on the basis that they constitute personnel compensation.
  - (2) The allowable compensation for certain employees is subject to a ceiling in accordance with statute. For the amount of the ceiling for cost-reimbursement contracts, the covered compensation subject to the ceiling, the covered employees, and other relevant provisions, see 10 U.S.C. 2324(e)(1)(P), and 41 U.S.C. 1127 and 4304(a)(16). For other types of Federal awards, other statutory ceilings may apply.
- (e) **Special considerations.** Special considerations in determining allowability of compensation will be given to any change in a non-Federal entity's compensation policy resulting in a substantial increase in its employees' level of compensation (particularly when the change was concurrent with an increase in the ratio of Federal awards to other activities) or any change in the treatment of allowability of specific types of compensation due to changes in Federal policy.
- (f) **Incentive compensation.** Incentive compensation to employees based on cost reduction, or efficient performance, suggestion awards, safety awards, etc., is allowable to the extent that the overall compensation is determined to be reasonable and such costs are paid or accrued pursuant to an agreement entered into in good faith between the non-Federal entity and the employees before the services were rendered, or pursuant to an established plan followed by the non-Federal entity so consistently as to imply, in effect, an agreement to make such payment.
- (g) **Nonprofit organizations.** For compensation to members of nonprofit organizations, trustees, directors, associates, officers, or the immediate families thereof, determination must be made that such compensation is reasonable for the actual personal services rendered rather than a distribution of earnings in excess of costs. This may include director's and executive committee member's fees, incentive awards, allowances for off-site pay, incentive pay, location allowances, hardship pay, and cost-of-living differentials.
- (h) **Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs).**



**Frequently Asked Questions  
Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Fund and  
Governor's Emergency Education Relief (GEER) Fund**

**Use of Funds for Student Transportation**

Listed below are frequently asked questions (FAQs) about allowable uses of ESSER and GEER funds by State educational agencies (SEAs) and local educational agencies (LEAs) for transportation, including to address the current regional and national challenges with hiring and retaining a sufficient number of school bus drivers. These FAQs are intended to supplement the transportation related questions in the ESSER and GEER Use of Funds Guidance published in May 2021, specifically FAQs C-4, C-7, C-9, and C-25.

Other than statutory and regulatory requirements included in the document, the contents of this guidance do not have the force and effect of law and are not meant to bind the public. This document is intended only to provide clarity to the public regarding existing requirements under the law or agency policies.

**1. May an SEA or LEA use ESSER or GEER funds to provide transportation for students to and from school?**

Yes. Supporting or providing transportation services for students is an allowable use of funds under ESSER and GEER as long as the need is related to COVID-19 (e.g., to support daily attendance at school to address the impact of lost instructional time) and the cost is reasonable and necessary. This could include, but is not limited to, transportation services provided directly by the school district; the cost of public transportation services (e.g., bus or subway fare); taxis, rideshare apps, or other driving services; or compensation to parents for providing transportation services for their children (see Question 4).

**2. May an LEA use ESSER or GEER funds to provide transportation for students participating in after-school learning and enrichment activities provided by the LEA?**

Yes. If activities take place away from the school or after regular transportation home has occurred and are intended to address student needs related to COVID-19 (e.g., to address the impact of lost instructional time), and the cost is reasonable and necessary, transportation may be an allowable use of ESSER or GEER funds. For example, an LEA may provide before- and after-school learning and enrichment activities for students including, for example, high dosage evidence-based tutoring to address the academic impact of lost instructional time, and other activities that address the social, emotional, mental health, and academic needs of students, including extended school year (ESY) or other compensatory and related services for eligible students under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Reasonable and necessary costs of transportation to and from such activities would be an allowable use of ESSER and GEER funds.

**3. May an SEA or LEA use ESSER or GEER funds to address a shortage of school bus drivers due to the pandemic?**



Yes. For example, an LEA may use ESSER or GEER funds for retention bonuses for current bus drivers, for salary increases, or for the cost of hiring additional bus drivers to address the shortage of bus drivers due to the pandemic. Similarly, if an LEA is operating more bus routes due to physical distancing, funds may be used to hire additional bus drivers. In addition, funds may be used to pay for the costs associated with obtaining a commercial driver's license for new bus drivers, including the required training.

**4. May an LEA facing a shortage of school bus drivers use ESSER or GEER funds to compensate parents or guardians for transporting their students to and from school?**

Yes. ESSER or GEER funds may be used to reimburse parents or guardians for transportation costs or to offer a stipend for transportation costs, as long as they are reasonable and necessary. This type of program may be appropriate to sustain in-person instruction if an LEA is experiencing challenges hiring and/or retaining the school bus drivers necessary to accommodate the LEA's transportation needs.

Before compensating parents or guardians for transportation costs, an LEA must develop clear, objective procedures that, in addition to other relevant factors, consider: the number of days of transportation provided for in-person attendance; documentation of the travel costs to ensure that the compensation is used only for transportation-related expenses; and a process to account for any ESSER or GEER funds that were paid to parents or guardians but not used for transportation costs.