



#267-21

**Commonwealth of Virginia
Virginia Department of Education
Superintendent's Memo #267-21**

DATE: September 17, 2021
TO: Division Superintendents
FROM: James F. Lane, Ed.D., Superintendent of Public Instruction
SUBJECT: **U.S. Department of Education Issues Guidance on Using ARP Act ESSER Funds to Address Unfinished Learning**

On August 31, 2021, the U.S. Department of Education released [Strategies for Using American Rescue Plan Funding to Address the Impact of Lost Instructional Time](#). Section 2001(e)(1) of the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act requires school divisions to use **at least 20 percent** of their Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) formula funds to address unfinished learning through the implementation of evidence-based interventions such as summer learning or summer enrichment, extended day, comprehensive after school programs, or extended school year programs. School divisions must ensure that the strategies and interventions implemented respond to students' academic, social, and emotional needs and address the impact of lost instructional time on disproportionately impacted students. The guidance document highlights evidence-based tools, strategies, and interventions to address learning loss in the three areas below.

Reengaging students by meeting their social, emotional, mental health, and academic needs

This section of the guidance provides strategies for building trust with families and supporting students during the return to in-person learning. Recommendations include:

- Prioritizing student health and safety through the implementation of COVID-19 mitigation strategies;
- Measuring school climate, providing social-emotional supports, and reducing school exclusions;
- Implementing early warning indicators and multi-tiered systems of support frameworks;
- Providing teachers with intensive professional development to support learning acceleration;
- Implementing high quality and effective tutoring programs; and
- Implementing creative approaches to staffing, such as through co-teaching models.

Supporting parents and caregivers in their child's success

This section of the guidance focuses on the critical role of parents and caregivers in supporting learning and addressing learning loss. Strategies to engage families in schools include:

- Conducting personal outreach with students and families to discuss concerns such as chronic absenteeism or disengagement in a non-punitive manner;
- Expanding home visit programs (safely, including through masking and distancing); and
- Providing parent and caregiver training, resources, and tools to facilitate or extend at home learning.

Using high-quality assessments to support student learning

This section of the guidance highlights the role of high-quality assessments in providing educators and parents with the information they need to support student success. The roles and recommended uses of diagnostic and formative assessments, summative assessments, and performance-based assessments are discussed. The guidance provides examples of how to support educators with professional development to build their assessment literacy.

For more information

Questions can be directed to VDOEfederalrelief@doe.virginia.gov.