



STATE OF ARKANSAS  
**Department of Finance  
and Administration**

**K**

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September 6, 2022

Senator Jonathan Dismang, Co-Chair  
Representative Michelle Gray, Co-Chair  
Performance Evaluation & Expenditure Review Committee  
Arkansas Legislative Council  
State Capitol Building  
Little Rock, AR 72201

RE: FY 23 American Rescue Plan Act Request

Dear Co-Chairs:

Pursuant to Section 37 (01) of Act 199 of 2022, I am forwarding the attached American Rescue Plan Act request(s) that have received my approval as Chief Fiscal Officer of the State.

- Department of Education – Division of Elementary and Secondary Education  
– Help mitigate spread of COVID-19 at schools and continue district services  
and operations \$65,602,517

Sincerely,

Larry W. Walther  
Cabinet Secretary

LWW  
Attachment(s)

**AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT OF 2021 PROGRAM APPROPRIATION  
AND PERSONNEL AUTHORIZATION REQUEST  
SECTION 37 OF ACT 199 OF 2022**

Agency: ADE - DESE Business Area Code: 0500  
 Program Title: American Rescue Plan - Elementary and Secondary Schools Emergency Relief Fund (ARP - ESSER)  
 Granting Organization: USDE CFDA #: 84.425U  
 Effective Date of Authorization: Beginning: 7/1/2022 Ending: 6/30/2023

Purpose of Grant / Reason for addition or change (include attachments as necessary to provide thorough information):  
 Funds are provided to State educational agencies and school districts to help safely reopen and sustain the safe operation of schools and address the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on the Nation's students.

**American Rescue Plan Act Program Funding**

Func. Area: EDUC Fund Code: FRP5000 Direct Funding: x  
 Funds Center: E65 Internal Order/WBS Element: \_\_\_\_\_ Steering Comm. Approved: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Continuation: \_\_\_\_\_

Program Funding Amount	
Regular Salaries	
Extra Help	
Personal Services Matching	
Operating Expenses	
Conference & Travel Expenses	
Professional Fees	
Capital Outlay	
Data Processing	
Grants and Aid (CI: 04)	
Other: ARP Grant	65,602,517
Other: ARP Grant	
Total	\$ 65,602,517

Anticipated Duration of Federal Funds: 9/30/23

<b>DFA IGS State Technology Planning</b>	<b>Date</b>
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Items requested for information technology must be in compliance with Technology Plans as submitted to DFA IGS State Technology Planning.  
 \* unclassified positions only

**Positions to be established: (list each position separately)**

Org Unit	Pers Area	Pers SubArea	Cost Center	Position Number	Comnt Item	Position Title	Class Code	Grade	Line Item Maximum *

State funds will not be used to replace federal funds when such funds expire, unless appropriated by the General Assembly and authorized by the Governor.

Approved by: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: 9/6/2022  
 Cabinet Secretary/Agency Director  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Date: 9-6-22  
 Office of Budget  
 CH  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Office of Personnel Mgmt

Timestamp	District	Superintendent	Remaining ARP ESSER allocation as of July 9, 2022	The district's current ARP ESSER Use of Funds plan meets the recommendations of ALC.	If yes, please provide the URL to the ARP ESSER Use of Funds plan posted on the district website.	The district revised the ARP ESSER Use of Funds plan to meet the recommendations of ALC. The revised ARP ESSER Use of Funds plan is posted on the district website and the URL is provided below.	The district ARP ESSER Use of Funds plan does not meet the recommendations of ALC and (1) a justification is provided below and the (2) URL to the ARP ESSER Use of Funds Plan is provided.
8/25/2022 9:37	3102000 Dierks School District	Grover Hill	\$783,991.38	No		<a href="https://core-docs.s3.amazonaws.com/documents/asset/uploaded_file/1444/Dierks_School_District/2390582/ESSER_ARP_REVISED_PLAN.pdf">Yes, will meet recommendation. https://core-docs.s3.amazonaws.com/documents/asset/uploaded_file/1444/Dierks_School_District/2390582/ESSER_ARP_REVISED_PLAN.pdf</a>	
8/25/2022 14:23	4708000 Gosnell	Len Whitehead	\$1,169,021.44	No			<a href="https://www.gosnellschool.net/page/esser">https://www.gosnellschool.net/page/esser</a> The district has previously obligated funds for projects that fit the districts needs. We will continue to regularly reevaluate the plan and make adjustments.
8/26/2022 8:17	6061000 Friendship Aspire Academies Arkansas	Phong Tran	\$1,832,556.85	No		yes, expectation met. <a href="https://www.friendshipaspire.org/ARP-ESSER-plans">https://www.friendshipaspire.org/ARP-ESSER-plans</a>	
8/26/2022 10:00	803000 Green Forest	Dr. Matt Summers	\$2,392,148.51	No		<a href="https://s3.amazonaws.com/scschoolfiles/291/arp_esser_use_of_funds_revised_8-29-2022.pdf">https://s3.amazonaws.com/scschoolfiles/291/arp_esser_use_of_funds_revised_8-29-2022.pdf</a> Green Forest will exceed the recommendation to use the funds for Recruitment and Retention additional pay in the amount of \$5000.00 for all certified, classified and Covid related staff.	
8/26/2022 11:15	3510000 White Hall	Gary Williams	\$3,262,245.96	No		Yes <a href="https://5il.co/1emxa">https://5il.co/1emxa</a>	
8/26/2022 11:23	6640000 Future School of Fort Smith	Boyd Logan	\$531,045.71	No			Future School has committed significant funds to technology and curriculum purchases as well as other efforts to address learning loss such as hiring learning specialists and additional staff to increase engagement of students and families. In addition, Future School has provided two COVID bonuses over the last two years. The first bonus was a flat bonus of \$2,000 per staff member. The more recent bonus paid in June was based on a percentage of a given employee's salary (roughly amount to another monthly paycheck for each employee). It is possible that Future School will revise our plan again in the future to provide additional recruitment and retention bonuses, but we do not believe it is fiscally prudent at this point in time.  Please see revised plan at the link below: <a href="https://drive.google.com/file/d/1slm8q7pPAXj6Eg25L_wkwTL5cw7W2hYm/view?usp=sharing">https://drive.google.com/file/d/1slm8q7pPAXj6Eg25L_wkwTL5cw7W2hYm/view?usp=sharing</a>

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8/26/2022 15:34	2202000	Drew Central	Kimbraly Barnes	\$1,003,074.94	No	N/A	No	<p><u><a href="#">Yes (1) Funds were used to purchase an HVAC system for the multipurpose gym that is used by all students K-12 and community. The system was needed to prevent the continuation of mold and mildew growing in the gymnasium area, and under the floor (\$496,223.91). 20% (\$320,144.46) was also set aside for loss learning. In May, along with ESSER II monies, \$186,150.11 of ARP funds were used to pay full-time faculty and staff members a retention payment. Below is a brief explanation of how the district will provide a \$5000 recruitment, bonus, and retention payment to ALL full-time employees in September 2022, November 2022, and a final retention payment to personnel who remain with Drew Central or have been a part of the Drew Central School District for 5 years or longer. Part-time employees will receive a pro-rated amount. This is in addition to the \$8,010.00 employees have received above pay since November, 2020 - June 2022.</a></u></p> <p><u><a href="#">September 2022 - \$1500.00 Recruitment pay</a></u></p> <p><u><a href="#">December 2022 - \$2000.00 Christmas Bonus (from operating funds)</a></u></p> <p><u><a href="#">June 2023 - \$1500.00 Retention pay</a></u></p> <p><u><a href="#">(2) https://s3.amazonaws.com/scschoolfiles/1345/attachment_1_lea_assurances_234826_rev_8_26_22.pdf</a></u></p>
8/29/2022 13:11	1204000	West Side	Brandi Wallace	\$1,278,668.22	Yes	<u><a href="https://drive.google.com/drive/u/1/folders/1lhmaazNVY5CjeR-gtefcgd3DQXz9o2x5">https://drive.google.com/drive/u/1/folders/1lhmaazNVY5CjeR-gtefcgd3DQXz9o2x5</a></u>	We had money budgeted for a retention bonus, but changed it to meet the specific suggested amounts.	

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8/29/2022 15:58	1612000 Valley View	Roland Popejoy	\$334,642.47	No			<p><a href="#">The Valley View School District is unable to disburse the ALC recommended bonuses even though each of our staff members deserve this amount and more for the efforts they made throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and each day prior to and following the pandemic to meet the needs of our students. Our district has worked diligently to utilize the limited ESSER funds received to address our needs under the plan developed by our district leadership team and stakeholders.</a></p> <p><a href="#">Providing the ALC recommended bonus will total approximately \$1.75 million. Our district's ARP ESSER allocation is \$1,530,985.17. The required 20% learning loss set-aside from the ARP allocations would leave our district with \$1,224,788.14 to apply to the staff bonuses if we had used the entire remaining allocation for this purpose rather than applying it to other district needs.</a></p> <p><a href="#">Our district has just over \$333,000 remaining in ESSER funds that have been obligated in the form of employment contracts to continue our efforts in meeting the learning loss needs of our students, which was a primary focus of the ARP ESSER funding. This leaves me in the difficult position of not being able to issue bonuses to our staff even though I want to find a way to do so.</a></p> <p><a href="#">The primary reason that our district is unable to provide the recommended bonus to each staff member is based on the formula used in determining ESSER allocations. The Valley View district received just \$531.96 per student when accounting for our district ADM. When you compare this with other district allocations in our county and throughout the state, the inequity is apparent. The district ARP allocations in our county ranged from \$531.96 per student to \$3,263.74 per student with the average of the eight county schools being \$1,823.66 per student. This equates to most districts in our county receiving 4 to 6 times more per student than our district received even though each district faced similar challenges and needs resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.</a></p> <p><a href="#">This inequity was observed and acknowledged by DESE in spring 2021 when DESE released FIN-21-033 and distributed supplemental ESSER II</a></p> <p><a href="#">This inequity was observed and acknowledged by DESE in spring 2021 when DESE released FIN-21-033 and distributed supplemental ESSER II Allocations. Per this Commissioner's memo, DESE assigned a portion from the state ESSER II set-aside to award supplemental funds for all districts that did not receive at least \$600 per ADM in its regular ESSER II allocation. DESE states in the memo, "This is in acknowledgment that many districts face similar items of cost related to addressing coronavirus concerns, irrelevant to its poverty data or other federal funding levels." Our district greatly appreciated the approach that DESE took in recognizing and responding to the challenge that districts like ours were facing when it came to addressing areas such as technology, employee emergency leave, food security, and cleaning and sanitation supplies with the limited initial ESSER I and II allocations.</a></p>
8/30/2022 8:03	3606000 Johnson County Westside	Brad Kent	\$967,500.14	Yes	<a href="https://core-docs.s3.amazonaws.com/documents/asset/uploaded/file/1812/JC_WSD/2393215/doc14629020220825151919.pdf">https://core-docs.s3.amazonaws.com/documents/asset/uploaded/file/1812/JC_WSD/2393215/doc14629020220825151919.pdf</a>	Yes	

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8/30/2022 9:06	602000 Warren	Bryan Cornish	\$3,125,390.92	No		<a href="https://docs.google.com/document/d/1vAs4v60mKbtE8LUMBBCX4ZFioysMNlyZ3rE4CS1OBFE/edit">https://docs.google.com/document/d/1vAs4v60mKbtE8LUMBBCX4ZFioysMNlyZ3rE4CS1OBFE/edit</a>	It was our hope that DESE would apply similar reasoning to the federal ARP allocations. If a similar measure of equity was applied with the ARP funds, our district would likely have received approximately \$2.3 million in supplemental ARP funds. This would have allowed our district the opportunity to provide the ALC recommended bonus like many other districts in our county and state have been able to provide to their staff members.
8/30/2022 10:08	101000 DeWitt	Nick Hill	\$1,049,045.10	No			<a href="https://core-docs.s3.amazonaws.com/documents/asset/uploaded_file/1721/DSD/2406963/ARP_ESSER_Updated_8-25-2022.pdf">https://core-docs.s3.amazonaws.com/documents/asset/uploaded_file/1721/DSD/2406963/ARP_ESSER_Updated_8-25-2022.pdf</a>  <a href="https://www.dewittschools.org/Portals/0/Files/2022-2023%20ESSER%20Plan%20Final%20Draft%208-25-2022.pdf">https://www.dewittschools.org/Portals/0/Files/2022-2023%20ESSER%20Plan%20Final%20Draft%208-25-2022.pdf</a>  <a href="https://www.dewittschools.org/Portals/0/Files/2022-2023%20ESSER%20Plan%20Final%20Draft%208-25-2022.pdf">https://www.dewittschools.org/Portals/0/Files/2022-2023%20ESSER%20Plan%20Final%20Draft%208-25-2022.pdf</a>
8/30/2022 11:04	3306000 Izard County Consolidated	Fred Walker	\$2,174,831.52	Yes	<a href="http://icc.k12.ar.us/uploads/7/7/7/6/77765386/arp_esser.pdf">http://icc.k12.ar.us/uploads/7/7/7/6/77765386/arp_esser.pdf</a>	Yes	District ARP ESSER Use of Funds Plan: <a href="https://drive.google.com/file/d/1mslIU2YIPdm4arYwCQHo3lpV3XZjThh/view?usp=sharing">https://drive.google.com/file/d/1mslIU2YIPdm4arYwCQHo3lpV3XZjThh/view?usp=sharing</a>
8/30/2022 16:40	6050000 Arkansas Lighthouse Academies	LaShawnDa Noel	\$1,068,909.73	No	N/A	N/A	<a href="https://www.arklighthouseacademies.org/Portals/0/Files/2022-2023%20ARP%20ESSER%20Plan%20Final%20Draft%208-25-2022.pdf">https://www.arklighthouseacademies.org/Portals/0/Files/2022-2023%20ARP%20ESSER%20Plan%20Final%20Draft%208-25-2022.pdf</a>  <a href="https://www.arklighthouseacademies.org/Portals/0/Files/2022-2023%20ARP%20ESSER%20Plan%20Final%20Draft%208-25-2022.pdf">https://www.arklighthouseacademies.org/Portals/0/Files/2022-2023%20ARP%20ESSER%20Plan%20Final%20Draft%208-25-2022.pdf</a>
8/31/2022 9:46	3601000 Clarksville	David Hopkins	\$4,921,963.45	No			<a href="https://www.clarksville.k12.tn.us/Portals/0/Files/2022-2023%20ARP%20ESSER%20Plan%20Final%20Draft%208-25-2022.pdf">https://www.clarksville.k12.tn.us/Portals/0/Files/2022-2023%20ARP%20ESSER%20Plan%20Final%20Draft%208-25-2022.pdf</a>  <a href="https://www.clarksville.k12.tn.us/Portals/0/Files/2022-2023%20ARP%20ESSER%20Plan%20Final%20Draft%208-25-2022.pdf">https://www.clarksville.k12.tn.us/Portals/0/Files/2022-2023%20ARP%20ESSER%20Plan%20Final%20Draft%208-25-2022.pdf</a>
8/31/2022 11:22	3004000 Malvern	Brian Golden	\$6,158,700.85	Yes	<a href="https://files.gabbart.com/825/21-22_msd_use_of_arp_esser_funds.pdf">https://files.gabbart.com/825/21-22_msd_use_of_arp_esser_funds.pdf</a>	<a href="https://s3.amazonaws.com/scschoolfiles/825/21-22_msd_use_of_arp_esser_fundsdocx.pdf">https://s3.amazonaws.com/scschoolfiles/825/21-22_msd_use_of_arp_esser_fundsdocx.pdf</a>	

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8/31/2022 11:59	4702000	Blytheville School District	Veronica Perkins	\$8,882,644.89	No			<p>BLYTHEVILLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS            ADDITIONAL COMPENSATION FOR RETENTION/RECRUITMENT OF EMPLOYEES RELATED TO COVID-19 FOR LICENSED AND CLASSIFIED STAFF 2022-2023.</p> <p>During the 2021-2022 school year, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, BPS had an increased number of retirements and resignations. The retirement of veteran staff members and large number of resignations will impact student learning, professional growth of novice teachers, and growing teacher leaders within the District. Several former staff members have cited that added stress, concerns about health, and increased workload they experienced during the 2021-2022 school year due to the COVID-19 pandemic as their reasons for retiring or resigning. Blytheville Public Schools, during the 2021-2022 school year, has had 13 staff members retire compared to 12 during the 2020-2021 school year. Secondly, the number of individuals resigning from the district has increased from 41 in the 2020-2021 school year to 77 at the end of the 2021-2022 school year. Thirdly, there has been a decline in the number of applicants to fill these openings. Lastly, the number of education graduates has dropped in all certification areas at Arkansas State University, located in Jonesboro, which gets first pick of education graduates, is our largest institution supplying new teacher candidates to our district. This has created a high level of competition for a very limited number of education graduates in our area. The additional openings combined with the reduced numbers of applicants and graduates has critically impacted the Blytheville School District.</p> <p>BPS has 148 contracted licensed staff, 128 contracted classified staff and 12 part-time staff. The bonus that has been recommended by the Arkansas Legislative Council (ALC) Performance Evaluation and Expenditure Review (PEER) Subcommittee, could help to mitigate the amount of resignations and early retirements our district has had to manage. Based on staffing data for the 2022-2023 school year, the projected cost will be \$1,343,750.00 (salary and benefits). Additional compensation for retention of staff in 2022-2023 school year will be 7.47% of the District's total ESSER allocation of \$17,982,490.90.</p> <p>There are many factors that have been taken into account as we consider options for the best use of funding. We have balanced the need to respond to existing needs which require large amounts of funding while, in tandem, working to attend to the needs to support the initiatives to increase recruitment and retention of highly qualified staff. Additionally, we are receiving Level 4 assistance for Human Capital and literacy, thus, we have not amended our current plan. Our intent is to work members of the team of DESE to determine the fiscal viability of the recommendations and seek their input before we move forward.</p> <p><a href="https://www.blythevilleschools.com/documents/state-required-information/1599">https://www.blythevilleschools.com/documents/state-required-information/1599</a></p> <p><a href="https://core-docs.s3.amazonaws.com/documents/asset/uploaded_file/23/BSD/1407847/ARP_Use_of_ESSER_Funds_Revised_6_7_2022.pdf">https://core-docs.s3.amazonaws.com/documents/asset/uploaded_file/23/BSD/1407847/ARP_Use_of_ESSER_Funds_Revised_6_7_2022.pdf</a></p>
8/31/2022 13:08	505000	Valley Springs	Kyle Mallett	\$816,361.77	No		No	<p><a href="#">The Valley Springs School District has worked diligently with the stakeholders to ensure that we have been good stewards of the ESSER and ARP Funds that we were Allocated in the previous years.</a></p> <p><a href="#">With this money, we have purchased cleaning supplies, equipment, HVAC renovation, staff, buses, technology, and have entered into an approved contract to build a PE fitness center to help protect our students by allowing them a warm, safe, and dry environment to have class in. We followed the procedures set forth and have received appropriate approval to use our ARP funds in this manner. We are also in the process of fulfilling the obligation to expend 20% of our funds to target learning loss as required by law.</a></p> <p><a href="#">In addition, we have provided our entire staff with recruitment and retention bonuses in each of these past two years and have allocated funds to provide them with a bonus this year. However, based on our needs, it will not meet the ALC recommendations.</a></p> <p><a href="https://drive.google.com/file/d/1q116tRZ1pnQoWUByvB8OoPMaJSUgYFK3/view?usp=sharing">https://drive.google.com/file/d/1q116tRZ1pnQoWUByvB8OoPMaJSUgYFK3/view?usp=sharing</a></p>