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## FEDERAL EMERGENCY AID FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION

# Strategies for Using Non-Recurring Federal Aid for Public Education



**EDUCATING  
THROUGH CRISIS**  
COVID-19

Now is the time to increase educator voice and advocacy.

Rather than simply trying to return to “normal,” we have an unprecedented opportunity to create the public schools all our students deserve—regardless of demography or geography.

Unions can lead the way. Working together with parents, communities, and other caring stakeholders, we can advocate for equitable and just conditions for all of our students.



**CRRSAA**  
 Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act  
 FUNDING FOR STUDENTS



#### NEA Resources

This strategy guide is a supplement to the following NEA resources:

THE ESSER FUNDS: BARGAINING AND ADVOCACY GUIDANCE FOR SAFE AND EQUITABLE SCHOOLS

<https://www.nea.org/resource-library/esser-funds-bargaining-and-advocacy-guidance-safe-and-equitable-schools>

NATIONAL & STATE GUIDES TO FEDERAL EMERGENCY AID AMOUNTS, USES, AND REQUIREMENTS

<https://www.nea.org/resource-library/neas-guide-federal-emergency-aid-amounts-uses-and-requirements>

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

SEA	State Educational Agency
LEA	Local Educational Agency
CARES ACT	Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act
CRRSA ACT	Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2021
ARP ACT	American Rescue Plan Act of 2021
ESSER	Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief
GEER	Governor's Emergency Education Relief
ESEA	Elementary & Secondary Education Act
IDEA	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
AEFLA	Adult Education and Family Literacy Act
CTEA	Career and Technical Education Act

## SUMMARY

## Strategies for Using Non-Recurring Federal Emergency Aid

This guide offers suggestions on strategies to increase pay, address educator shortages, hire additional school staff, and promote more equitable opportunity for all students using non-recurring federal emergency aid. All recommendations should be considered in light of your local bargaining environment, and should be negotiated or implemented in collaboration with the local association if bargaining is not legally permitted.

*Suggested Strategies*

**COMBINING (OR BRAIDING) ESSER & GEER FUNDS WITH OTHER FUNDING.** ESSER and GEER funds may be used in combination (or braided) with funding under other federal education laws, or state and local funding. An SEA or LEA may use ESSER and GEER funds to expand participation in an activity or services it is currently conducting or plans to conduct under these programs. Among other uses, ESSER and GEER funds can be used to cover one-time costs, start-up or initial phase costs, or any short-term costs associated with either rolling out or expanding a program or project, while other recurring federal funds remain available to cover the costs to sustain the program longer term. This strategy can be applied across all program areas, such as expanded learning time, early childhood education, community schools, and growing the educator pipeline, as well as the other strategies outlined below to enhance educator recruitment and retention. *These funds can and should be seen as investments and should be used to implement longer term solutions.*

**PROVIDE PROFESSIONAL GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES TO EDUCATORS TO MEET EXPANDED OR DIFFERENT NEEDS.** Suggestions include strategies on extending the reach of current teachers, aspiring and early career educators, and education support professionals.

**ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES TO AUGMENT STAFFING.** Suggestions include strategies on hiring additional staff, addressing educator shortages, and prioritizing hiring educators of color.

**PILOT OR DEMONSTRATION PROGRAMS.** Small-scale, short-term activities that an LEA or school may introduce to determine if a program works in practice or should be taken to scale. Because federal emergency aid funds are available over multiple years, there is sufficient time to initiate a pilot program with these funds, and, if proven to be effective or successful, to continue or expand the program beyond the duration of the federal funds.

**INVESTMENTS TO REDUCE FUTURE COSTS.** Suggestions include investing in system innovation for sustainable improvement in practice, or improving the coordination of services for students with multiple types of needs, to help reduce more intensive, costly interventions in the future, and that free up resources that can be used to support other priorities.

**HIRE NOW TO ADVANCE EQUITY.** Use non-recurring federal funds to advance racial and social justice. Students of color, English learners, and students with disabilities have suffered the most during the pandemic. For these students, federal emergency aid is available now and for the next two to three years to not only accelerate their recovery but to reconstruct the meaning of public education as the great equalizer. If the immediate need is for additional staff to address students' social, emotional, mental health, and academic needs, then federal funds should be used for this purpose regardless of their duration. ARP Act funds are of such an unprecedented scale that to hold them in reserve or limit their reach to conform to conventional uses that are fiscally "safe"—if less effective—would be to perpetuate a system that is structurally unjust. The federal emergency aid is a one-time chance to undue long-term harm.

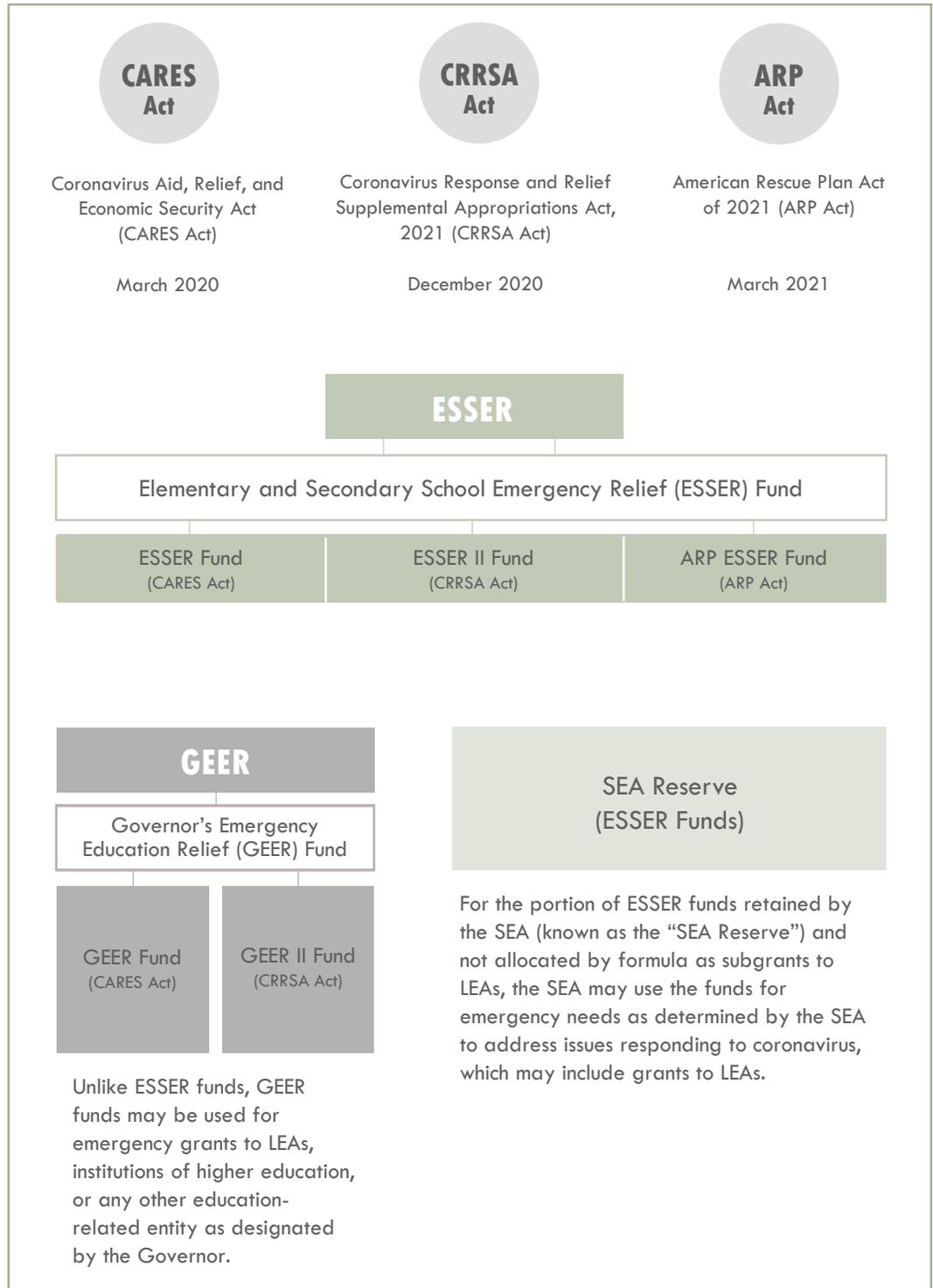
**OVERVIEW**

Federal Emergency Aid for Public Education

*There are three main federal laws providing emergency aid for public education*

*Each law has a main source of funding for public elementary and secondary education*

*There are other potential sources of funding for public elementary and secondary education under the three federal laws*



**OVERVIEW**

Federal Emergency Aid for Public Education

TOTAL FEDERAL DOLLARS

*in billions*

CARES	CRRSA	ARP	TOTAL
\$13.2	\$54.3	\$122.8	<b>\$190.3</b>
ESSER I	ESSER II	ARP ESSER	
\$3.0	1.3	0.0	<b>\$4.3</b>
GEER I	GEER II		
\$14.0	23.0	39.6	<b>\$76.6</b>
HEERF I	HEERF II	HEERF III	
\$30.2	\$78.6	\$162.4	<b>\$271.2</b>

**ESSER**

Elementary and Secondary School  
Emergency Relief (ESSER) Fund

**GEER**

Governor’s Emergency Education  
Relief (GEER) Fund\*

**HEERF**

Higher Education Emergency Relief  
Fund (HEERF)

*\*for elementary & secondary education  
or higher education or both*

## DUAL ROLE

## Federal Aid Helps Schools &amp; Boosts Local Economies

The federal emergency aid not only helps educators and students respond to and recover from the pandemic, but it also creates tangible economic benefits that will strengthen and revitalize local communities.

### How the Federal Emergency Aid Catalyzes the Economic Vitality of Local Communities

Investing federal dollars in public schools acts as a catalyst for greater economic activity in the community. Extra income leads to more spending, which creates more income and more jobs, and so on—an economic principle known as the multiplier effect. Investment in public education generates a larger multiplier than most other professional sectors because it is a labor-intensive field with more of each dollar of revenue going into local hands for local spending.

Beyond public education's long-term benefits to individuals and communities—less unemployment, reduced dependence on public assistance programs, greater tax revenue, reduced crime, improved public health, and greater political and civic engagement—investing in public schools has an immediate and measurable economic impact on the neighborhoods where they are located. New federal dollars going to school districts in response to COVID-19 remain in the local community, which creates a positive effect on the income and employment of the local economy.

Most studies show that the economic multiplier for spending at the local level generates 1.3 to 1.5 times every dollar spent. For example, if the multiplier is valued at 1.50, for every dollar invested in education, there is an increase of \$1.50 in the local economy. This effect occurs because investing in the local economy increases consumer spending, which causes greater demand and leads to more jobs and increased wages. As noted previously, because education is a labor-intensive field, schools generate a large multiplier and more of each dollar of revenue goes to local payroll.

### *An example of the impact of a school district on the local economy*

#### The economic impact of **Arlington Public Schools (APS), Virginia:**

- Every \$1 spent and retained in Arlington County by the APS operating budget results in \$1.53 of Arlington County spending
- Every direct APS job is associated with another 0.42 Arlington County jobs
- Every \$1 spent and retained in the region by the APS capital budget results in \$1.58 of Arlington County spending
- Every \$1 million spent by the APS capital budget results in 10.5 Arlington County jobs

## STRATEGY

## Braiding ESSER &amp; GEER Funds with Other Funding

ESSER and GEER funds may be used in combination with funding under other federal laws, such as ESEA, IDEA, AEFLA, CTEA (Perkins V), and McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, or any other education funds. Combining, or what is known as braiding, funds occurs when different funding streams are used together to leverage support, such as to expand participation in a current activity or service an SEA or LEA is currently conducting or plans to conduct under these programs. When ESSER and GEER funds are braided, they do not lose their individual identity and continue to be subject to the relevant statutory requirements. This strategy creates coherence between new and existing investments, and prevents siloed spending that will enable a smoother transition when the federal aid ends eventually. It also stretches the window for new investment. When viewed more broadly—across funding sources and years—LEAs will be able to mix and match revenue to incremental spending on strategies that extend beyond the period of ESSER and GEER funding availability. Among other uses, ESSER and GEER funds can be used to cover one-time costs, start-up or initial phase costs, or any short-term costs associated with either rolling out or expanding a program or project, while other recurring federal funds remain available to cover the costs to sustain the program longer term. This strategy can be applied across all program areas, such as expanded learning time, early childhood education, community schools, and growing the educator pipeline.

Braiding Funds  
to Support  
Expanded  
Learning Time  
Programs

## SUMMER PROGRAMS

*Evidence Base & Strategy*

**Responsive design.** For costs related to designing a summer program that meets student and community needs and includes academic support as well as enrichment activities like art, sports, or science exploration.

**Appropriate duration.** Programs are more effective when attended for multiple summers, which federal emergency aid funds make possible.

**Stability.** To establish partnerships with educator preparation programs in order to hire recent graduates, offering bonuses, and/or partnering with community-based organizations in order to ensure stability in staff and student participation and to address summer staffing shortages.

## AFTER- AND OUT-OF-SCHOOL PROGRAMS

*Evidence Base & Strategy*

**Connection.** To incorporate “connection” in the program, which helps students master the curriculum they have been studying and look ahead to the curriculum they will encounter when school resumes, and to create opportunities for youth to connect with each other and with adults.

## STRATEGY

## Braiding ESSER &amp; GEER Funds with Other Funding

## Braiding Funds to Support Expanded Learning Time Programs

## AFTER- AND OUT-OF-SCHOOL PROGRAMS

*Evidence Base & Strategy*

**Relevance.** To ensure that programs have more design and content flexibility than the typical school day to be relevant to students' real-world experience and community—a strategy shown to make learning more engaging and effective.

**Partnerships.** To help establish strong, meaningful partnerships between schools and community-based organizations.

## TUTORING PROGRAMS

*Evidence Base & Strategy*

**Trained tutors.** To provide stipends or small grants—which do not create an ongoing fiscal commitment—to teachers, paraprofessionals, college students, or others who are prepared for specific tutoring strategies, rather than a cadre of ever-changing, untrained volunteers.

**High-quality materials.** To upgrade materials so that tutors use a well-developed curriculum utilizing culturally relevant authentic learning activities, and with frequent formative assessments to move students along a learning progression.

**Consistency and frequency.** To ensure tutors work consistently with individuals or small groups of students, and that tutoring occurs at least three days a week for at least 30 minutes in groups of no more than five students, at least for the next two to three years to recover lost instructional time due to the pandemic.

**Integration.** To integrate tutoring as part of the regular school day and schedule when possible, or regularly after school.

Using federal emergency aid funds, states and LEAs can incentivize expanded learning time programs that meet high-quality standards and that prioritize underserved schools. States and LEAs can also provide the structures, supports, and professional development LEAs or schools need to implement these programs successfully. For example, states can support LEAs in partnering with community-based organizations by providing sample memoranda of understanding (MOUs) and identifying, vetting, and categorizing potential partners.

## STRATEGY

## Braiding ESSER &amp; GEER Funds with Other Funding

*An example of a federal investment in expanded learning time programs*

The **Iowa City Education Association** advocated for ARP money to support a host of meaningful changes to support students and educators, including funding summer school in 2021 for every 1st grader who was non-proficient in math or reading, with summer school slots open for non-proficient students from different grade levels as space allowed; and funding a summer 2021 “Boost” Program at every junior high and every high school for 2 weeks to offer social and emotional learning and academic success skills coaching to rising 7th & 8th graders in junior highs and rising 9th & 10th graders in high schools to build a culture of academic, leadership and social-emotional skills.

Braiding Funds  
to Support  
Early Childhood  
Education

## EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION (ECE) PROGRAMS

*Strategy Using Non-Recurring Federal Funds*

To support ECE programs for children from birth through kindergarten, consistent with ESEA. These programs can be located on school campuses, but they can also be in community-based settings in a district’s attendance zone, including local Head Start, child care, and preschool programs. States and LEAs may use federal funds in many ways, including:

- professional development for early childhood professionals who serve Title I—eligible children, including providers in non-school settings
- summer enrichment programs for young children and their families
- extending the day for part-day pre-K, Head Start, and kindergarten programs
- support services, such as nutrition, vision, dental, and counseling services
- screening and diagnostic assessments
- transition programs
- parental involvement initiatives and home visiting programs
- transportation
- data collection and sharing
- salary parity for teachers in pre-kindergarten programs in districts where disparities exist in salaries and benefits between pre-K and comparably educated and credentialed K-2 teachers.

Consistent with ESEA and to ensure quality, ECE programs using federal emergency aid must comply with Head Start’s educational standards.

## STRATEGY

## Braiding ESSER &amp; GEER Funds with Other Funding

## Braiding Funds to Support Early Childhood Education

Also, federal funds can be used to support professional development for any staff who support federally funded ECE programs, whether or not staff are employed by the district. For example, Title II of ESEA allows professional development funds to be used to support joint professional development of district- and community-based ECE staff serving children in a Title I attendance zone. Federal recovery funds can similarly support these opportunities. Joint professional development can support equitable learning opportunities across settings.

*Examples of federal investments in early childhood education*

States can support high-leverage LEA investments by providing LEAs with guidance on how to use their federal funds to support early learning. State department staff and guidance documents can clarify the many ways funds can be used for ECE and offer suggestions on how to build community partnerships, such as through sample memoranda of understanding and district examples. **California's First 5 Commission**, for instance, provided small planning grants between 2001–02 and 2005–06, which nearly doubled the number of districts using Title I funds for ECE and increased total Title I funding for ECE by 76%. **Washington state** currently provides LEAs with guidance on how to use Title I, Part A funds for early learning programs and explains why they are beneficial. Districts, in turn, have flexibility to use funds in a variety of ways.

Districts can look to current uses of Title I funds as examples for federal emergency aid. For example, **Montgomery County, MD** uses Title I, Part A funds to extend preschool programs through the summer to support transitions to kindergarten. It also uses funds to extend the length of the day for Head Start participants, expand schoolwide family engagement activities, and provide professional development such as coaching for early childhood teachers.

Source: <https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/product/federal-funds-ece-factsheet>

## STRATEGY

## Braiding ESSER &amp; GEER Funds with Other Funding

Braiding Funds  
to Implement &  
Support  
Community Schools

## COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

## Strategy Using Non-Recurring Federal Funds

- To negotiate contract language or collaborate on policy to establish an infrastructure for planning and support, such as collaborative district teams to share in decisions about how to design and implement new community school initiatives; county-level staff to help establish systems-level partnerships; and district-, county-, or state-level staff to provide technical assistance to community school sites.
- To coordinate partnerships with nonprofit and government agencies.
- To conduct collaborative assets and needs assessments to identify existing resources on-site and in the school community, as well as the academic, social, emotional, physical, and mental health needs of students, families, and school staff.
- To provide broadband and device access, and establish on-site food pantries and meal delivery, health and mental health services, and counseling and other trauma-informed supports, as determined by collaborative assets and needs assessments.
- To support active family and community engagement, such as training and compensating staff to make home visits and developing culturally and linguistically relevant communications.
- To provide professional learning experiences and collaborative opportunities for all educators to improve teaching and learning in a way that meets each student's needs, including ensuring that a strong and proven culturally relevant curriculum is used to address student learning needs and expand student experiences.
- To convene a learning community for school-level and district-level partners to share best practices and address common problems.

Community schools can be supported with federal emergency aid, as they are an allowable use under Titles I, II, and IV of ESEA. The ARP Act underscores this by specifically identifying “full-service community schools” as an allowable use of funds to support student mental health. Community schools also qualify as an evidence-based intervention for schools identified as needing support and improvement under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). Districts using federal emergency aid to implement and support community schools may seek additional federal funding through the Full-Service Community Schools Program competitive grant, authorized under Title IV of ESEA.

## STRATEGY

## Braiding ESSER &amp; GEER Funds with Other Funding

*Examples of federal investments in community schools*

States can support community schools in three main ways: (1) establishing competitive grant programs using federal emergency aid (as **California** has done) or existing state funds (as **New Mexico** has done), which may leverage LEA federal funds to provide matching grants; (2) offering entitlement funding, as with the **Maryland** Concentration of Poverty School Grant Program, the **Kentucky** Family Resource and Youth Services Centers, and the **New York** state school funding formula set-aside for community schools; and (3) supporting high-quality implementation of community schools by funding technical assistance, as **New York** has done through regional technical assistance centers.

In 2020, **California** used \$45 million in the first round of ESSER funding to start a competitive community school grant program. The state has allocated \$3 billion from the state general fund, supplemented by additional funding for mental health, after-school, and summer school programs, to develop new and expand existing initiatives over the next 5 years, with funding prioritized for high-poverty schools.

**Vermont** is using \$3.4 million in ARP ESSER funds for a competitive community school grant program that will support the hiring of coordinators at high-poverty school sites, assets and needs assessments, and services aligned with all the interconnected pillars that define a community school.

The **New York City** Recovery Budget, including ARP ESSER funds, features \$10 million in fiscal year 2022 to expand the school district's research-backed community schools initiative from 266 to 406 sites citywide.

Source: <https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/product/federal-funds-cs-factsheet>

## NEA Resources

COMMUNITY SCHOOLS <https://www.nea.org/communityschools>

COMMUNITY SCHOOLS 101: A PRIMER ON THE FUTURE OF PUBLIC EDUCATION  
<https://www.nea.org/sites/default/files/2021-08/Community%20Schools%20Fact%20Sheet.pdf>

## STRATEGY

## Braiding ESSER &amp; GEER Funds with Other Funding

Braiding Funds  
to Support the  
Educator Pipeline

## TEACHER RESIDENCIES

*Strategy Using Non-Recurring Federal Funds*

Federal emergency aid can be used to create and support teacher residency programs consistent with allowable uses through ESEA. High-quality residencies are characterized by features such as district–university partnerships, candidate financial support, and yearlong comprehensive clinical experiences tightly linked to coursework. Under ESEA, residency programs must offer at least a year of preservice training, including instruction in subject-area content and in pedagogy. Funding can be directed to new or existing programs. Current residency programs—including those described in state ESEA plans—can serve as models for new investments. Federal funds could also be used to provide stipends and training for cooperating/mentor teachers who host the residents.

## GROW YOUR OWN PROGRAMS

*Strategy Using Non-Recurring Federal Funds*

Another application of federal emergency aid comes through the Perkins Career and Technical Education Act allowable use for high school teacher career pathways, a type of Grow Your Own (GYO) model focused on teacher recruitment, retention, and diversification of the profession. A wider range of GYO program types can be funded under ESEA allowable uses, including routes that provide paraeducators, other education support professionals, community members, and career changers with training and support to earn teacher certification.

## PREPARATION FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS

*Strategy Using Non-Recurring Federal Funds*

Through IDEA, LEAs can use ESSER and GEER funds to support preparation and professional development specifically for special education teachers. Also among allowable uses of funds in IDEA are investments to establish or improve preparation partnerships between districts and educator preparation programs and to create routes for paraprofessionals to become special education teachers, another variation on the GYO model.

## STRATEGY

## Braiding ESSER &amp; GEER Funds with Other Funding

## Braiding Funds to Support the Educator Pipeline

Strategic investments can support student learning opportunities and educator preparation. The ARP Act funds allocated to student learning opportunities can also support partnerships with educator preparation programs. Teacher candidates, as well as recent educator preparation program graduates who missed out on in-person clinical experiences during the pandemic, can fill a variety of roles in learning opportunity programs: serving as tutors in high-quality tutoring programs, staffing summer programs and after-school or expanded learning programs, or working as paraprofessionals or substitute teachers in co-teaching or resident roles.

Such an approach to staffing provides multiple benefits: districts can draw on these candidates and graduates to meet staffing needs and strengthen learning opportunity programs, teacher candidates can cover preparation costs through paid clinical experiences, and candidates and recent graduates can gain useful in-person experience.

*Examples of federal investments in the educator pipeline*

Examples of Grow Your Own programs with records of promising results include the Recruiting **Washington** Teachers program, the **North Carolina** Teacher Cadet Program, and Educators Rising **Nebraska**. Similarly, **Connecticut** is expanding the Educators Rising Academy curriculum in school districts across the state, giving high school students access to a program that encourages students early on to consider careers in education and diversifies the educator pipeline. Developed by teachers for teachers, with the support of the NEA, CEA, and the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, PDK International's *Educators Rising* program uses a grow your own teacher recruitment strategy, embedding education curriculum into high school classes and afterschool clubs, and 52 percent of current members are students of color.

**Tennessee** used \$2 million in ESSER SEA reserve funds for a Grow Your Own competitive grant program supporting a variety of pathways for high school seniors, education assistants, and teachers to earn credentials in STEM fields and special education, among others.

Source: <https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/product/federal-funds-edprep-factsheet>

## STRATEGY

## Braiding ESSER &amp; GEER Funds with Other Funding

Braiding Funds  
to Implement  
Health and Safety  
Practices Beyond  
COVID-19

Strategy Using Non-Recurring Federal Funds

Federal non-recurring funds can be used to help school districts and unions bargain and implement the safest workplace practices, including COVID mitigation strategies, but also protection against other workplace hazards. NEA locals can bargain provisions that provide adequate supplies of personal protective equipment, and cleaning and disinfecting materials and related training; inspections of buildings and vehicles; and necessary facility upgrades. Funds can also be used to hire additional nurses.

*An example of a  
federal investment in  
health and safety*

The **Education Association of Passaic, NJ** worked with the Passaic Public Schools District to allocate ARP ESSER funds to support the 28 certified school nurses for performing additional duties resulting from the coronavirus. The district, whose community faces tremendous socio-economic challenges, has nearly 12,900 students, 93% of whom are identified as Hispanic. In its state plan, New Jersey has indicated that the ARP-funded “Acceleration Coach and Educator Support Grant” may be used to support a variety of school staff, including educators and key support staff, such as school counselors, special education personnel, nurses, social workers, and psychologists.

## STRATEGY

Provide Professional Growth Opportunities to Educators to Meet Expanded/Different Needs

Suggestions include strategies on extending the reach of current teachers, aspiring and early career educators, and education support professionals.

## Extending the Reach of Current Educators

*Potential Asset & Strategy*

**Current teachers.** Affiliates can negotiate or advocate for financial incentives to encourage current educators to take on additional responsibilities and expand the reach of their talent—to enable master teachers to provide mentoring and coaching to early career educators who are profession-ready. Federal funds could be used to provide additional base pay or stipends to these teacher leaders to incentivize this additional contribution to learning, and to cover the training for teachers to serve as coaches and mentors. For example, IDEA funding can be used to train classroom teachers and paraprofessionals on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports to improve student behavior in inclusion classes. Also, IDEA funds can be used to train classroom educators on how to use and integrate technology, which can help with the paperwork and caseload issues of special educators with whom they work in inclusion classrooms. Finally, provide appropriate substitute coverage or offer part-time employees the opportunity to work additional hours, subject to the terms of any existing collective bargaining agreement.

**Current teachers and aspiring and early career educators.** Provide incentive programs such as tuition remission, loan forgiveness, housing stipends, and other significant stipends to serve in under-resourced schools.

**Current school support staff.** Affiliates can negotiate or advocate for financial incentives to encourage school support staff to take on additional responsibilities beyond their current role. Locals should negotiate or advocate for any “additional responsibilities” and ensure that education support professionals are trained appropriately and compensated for additional work. Employees performing work in higher-paid classifications should earn the pay of the higher classification.

Source: [https://www.wested.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Brief-2\\_06-21-2021\\_Federal-COVID-Relief-Aid.pdf](https://www.wested.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Brief-2_06-21-2021_Federal-COVID-Relief-Aid.pdf)

## STRATEGY

## Alternative Approaches to Augment Staffing

Suggestions include strategies on hiring additional staff, addressing educator shortages, and prioritizing hiring educators of color.

### The Need for Additional Staff

#### *Potential Asset & Strategy*

**Teacher preparation institutions.** Partnerships between districts and teacher preparation institutions require alignment and planning, coordination, communication, and training, and require resources to support these costs. For example, federal funds could be used to pay for startup costs, including hiring staff who can coordinate the new positions, and providing training to staff for implementation. For districts in remote rural communities and other underserved areas with limited accessibility to teacher preparation institutions, or limited infrastructure or personnel to implement these partnerships, greater upfront investments may be necessary. For example, seed funding to establish local after-school or summer learning programs, personnel to match districts to regional community-based organizations that can provide this programming, or long-distance partnerships that leverage virtual collaboration when broadband is available.

### Retaining Educators

#### *Potential Asset & Strategy*

**Current educators.** To improve student learning and teacher working conditions, districts should hire additional teachers, specialized instructional support personnel, and education support professionals. This would help reduce educators' workloads and student class size. When used in educating students with disabilities (SWD), IDEA funding can be used for incorporating programs that provide for collaboration time between special educators and regular educators of SWD, reduce class schedules, reduce caseloads, provide professional development specific to the needs of SWD, and for additional pay for special education teachers.

### The Need for School counselors, Psychologists, and Social Workers

#### *Potential Asset & Strategy*

**Graduate schools of social work, psychology, and counseling.** To bring in aspiring school counselors, psychologists, and social workers to supplement the current workforce. This approach could provide these graduate students with additional field experience while also helping to meet the expanded need for staff in these positions. Universities might offer credit hours for residencies or internships to students who provide services during the school day or through after-school or summer learning programs. Graduate students might also be hired full time in the summer when they are not handling a full course load. Investing in personnel to provide student

## STRATEGY

## Alternative Approaches to Augment Staffing

The Need for  
School counselors,  
Psychologists, and  
Social Workers

well-being services has the short-term benefit of meeting urgent needs that have resulted from the pandemic while also potentially addressing longer-term shortages by establishing relationships between aspiring professionals and the schools and districts most in need of these services. This approach is intended to provide a preparation experience and not a fast-track into these professions before the completion of the appropriate background.

The Need for  
Instructors and  
Tutors, Including for  
Extended Learning  
Opportunities

*Potential Asset & Strategy*

**Retired educators.** Retired educators have the expertise and experience to contribute to the school community in the short-term. Districts can hire retired educators to serve as substitutes or to support current employees; however, the school district must ensure that their retirement benefits are not adversely impacted. The Internal Revenue Service has issued FAQs clarifying that, in some instances, retirees can return to work and still receive their pensions. For example, Kentucky passed legislation to allow temporarily retired teachers to be rehired and keep their pensions to help with teacher shortages. The same approach can apply to retired social workers and psychologists, for example. States have different retirement eligibility rules, so please contact your state affiliate or state retirement system to learn about the break in service requirements for your state.

**Aspiring educators.** The same funding mechanism can be used for aspiring educators to serve as tutors only until the district has a need for them to take on a permanent placement in a district school. Aspiring educators who are currently pursuing their teaching credentials can benefit from additional field experience (and potentially get credit toward their certification). States or districts could form partnerships with regional teacher preparation programs to identify aspiring teachers and match teacher candidates to school placements.

**Novice educators.** Districts or schools that have hired novice teachers for placement in the fall could consider bringing these teachers on in the summer before they begin their full-time role, to serve as summer school teachers or tutors and gain additional field experience and orientation to the school and district. This approach should be accompanied by early-onset induction and mentoring.

Source: [https://www.wested.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Brief-2\\_06-21-2021\\_Federal-COVID-Relief-Aid.pdf](https://www.wested.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Brief-2_06-21-2021_Federal-COVID-Relief-Aid.pdf)

## STRATEGY

## Alternative Approaches to Augment Staffing

*Examples of alternative approaches to augment staffing*

The **Millard Education Association (MEA), NE** negotiated a voluntary summer learning program; new positions for paraprofessionals; and a mentorship program for struggling students, staffed by retired MEA members, who are paid at the same rate as substitute teachers.

The **San Diego Education Association, CA** and school district signed an agreement to create a “Resident Visiting Teacher” position at every school providing standby substitute teachers.

The **Iowa City Education Association, IA** secured the hiring of full-time building substitute teachers at each building. Schools with larger enrollments have two building substitutes and have just been authorized to increase that number to three. The building substitutes receive a higher rate of pay and will now receive district benefits. This reduces the need for teachers to use their preparation time to cover for colleagues who are out but unable to find a substitute.

## STRATEGY

## Pilot or Demonstration Programs

Pilot or demonstration programs are small-scale, short-term activities that an LEA or school may introduce to determine if a program works in practice or should be taken to scale. Because federal emergency aid funds are available over multiple years, there is sufficient time to initiate a pilot program with these funds, and, if proven to be effective or successful, to continue or expand the program beyond the duration of the federal funds.

*Examples of pilot or demonstration programs included in ARP ESSER state plans*

**New York** state funds two Teacher Diversity Pipeline pilots designed to assist teacher aides and teaching assistants in attaining the necessary education and professional training to obtain teacher certification. The goals of this program include increasing the diversity of the teaching force in under-resourced districts and schools, as well as addressing teacher shortages/needs in under-resourced districts and schools.

With the support of a State Personnel Development Grant, **NYSED** is developing and implementing a pilot program to establish MTSS-I as a framework that helps educators prioritize the needs of the whole child and integrates academic, behavioral, and social emotional support within a culturally responsive and sustaining framework. The multi-tiered system of supports helps LEAs and schools prioritize interventions by establishing tiers of support.

In **Maryland**, the Teacher Collaborative Grant program was developed out of legislation that aims to elevate the teaching profession and attract individuals to the teaching profession by offering grants to partnerships consisting of teacher preparation programs, LEAs, and exclusive employee representatives. Grantees are currently piloting programs that redesign the practicum experience for candidates to better prepare them to enter the classroom with confidence, implement a career ladder that incentivizes teachers who gain expertise and move up the ladder, and provide professional education in international and national best practices in teaching. With the implementation of the career ladder, highly-qualified teachers will be incentivized to move up the career ladder as they gain additional expertise and leadership, and will be compensated as such.

**Maryland** established a voluntary pilot program allowing first-year teachers 20 percent more time for planning, peer observation, and mentoring. To date, three LEAs have participated in the program. MSDE is facilitating a workgroup of stakeholders, including representatives of primary and secondary education, higher education, and education policy experts, to determine effective ways to recruit, retain, and promote quality educators at all levels.

## STRATEGY

## Investments to Reduce Future Costs

Suggested strategies include investing in system innovation for sustainable improvement in practice, or improving the coordination of services for students with multiple types of needs, to help reduce more intensive, costly interventions in the future, and that free up resources that can be used to support other priorities.

System Innovation  
for Sustainable  
Improvement in  
Practice

## EARLY INTERVENTION SERVICES

*Strategy Using Non-Recurring Federal Funds*

Investing in early intervention screening and data systems is a cost-effective strategy for identifying students in need of additional support. Doing so can facilitate identifying struggling students in the near term and closing opportunity gaps in the long term. Avoiding costly interventions in the future also helps free up resources to be used to support students in other ways. Such interventions — including early intervention services for children aged 0 to 3, as well as other supports for young learners — have the potential to reduce identification for special education services. Although early intervention is critical before students are referred for special education, African American and Hispanic/Latinx children are identified for support later than their White peers are. Similarly, using federal emergency aid to improve the coordination of services for students with multiple types of needs, such as English learners who also receive special education services.

## CAPACITY BUILDING

*Strategy Using Non-Recurring Federal Funds*

Core staff capacity building to increase instructional quality and advance equity. The impact of the federal emergency aid can be magnified through effective professional learning and growth opportunities. The most effective professional learning opportunities for educators are collaborative, actively engaging, discipline-specific, and of a sustained duration. School districts and affiliates should negotiate or collaborate on additional pay for master teachers to lead professional learning opportunities and extend their impact in a school. In addition, educators can benefit from race and equity training to increase their ability to navigate conversations about race and racial justice, and to develop and strengthen approaches to culturally responsive teaching. Educators can also benefit from professional learning to support their and their students' social-emotional needs after the return to in-person instruction.

## STRATEGY

## Hire Now to Advance Equity

Use non-recurring federal funds to advance racial and social justice. Students of color, English learners, and students with disabilities have suffered the most during the pandemic. For these students, federal emergency aid is available now and for the next two to three years to not only recover lost instructional time but to reconstruct the meaning of public education as the great equalizer.

If it is determined the immediate need is for additional staff to address students' social, emotional, mental health, and academic needs, then federal funds should be used for this purpose regardless of their duration. While the federal funds are one-time only, under the ARP Act they are of such an unprecedented scale that to hold them in reserve or limit their reach to conform to conventional uses that are fiscally “safe”—if less effective—would be to perpetuate a system that is structurally unjust. The federal emergency aid is a one-time chance to undue long-term harm.

*Examples of meeting immediate needs with non-recurring federal emergency aid*

In **Casper, WY**, the realities of the pandemic also created an urgent demand for more school nurses. Nurses were being tasked with screening students for COVID-19, keeping in communication with more families, and educating staff and students about safety measures, in addition to handling the usual sprained ankles and stomachaches. Before the pandemic, **Natrona County**—which includes Casper—had only one nurse for every two schools. Keeping up with the increased workload would have been impossible. But thanks to pandemic relief funds from the federal government and educators advocating for changes that matter, each of the district's 28 schools now has a counselor and a nurse present every day. The Natrona County Education Association, Natrona County Public Schools administrators, and school board members worked together to ensure the funds were used in ways that would benefit students the most—including academic supports at the elementary level and HVAC improvements throughout the district's buildings.

The **Columbus Education Association (CEA), OH** negotiated an agreement for 33 additional school counselors; 88 literacy specialists and other student support positions; professional development for CEA members on racial disparity, equity, diversity, and inclusion; and, an upgraded HVAC system in many schools.

The **Iowa City Education Association, IA** successfully advocated for 8 new academic support specialists; 6 new full-time nurses; more teachers for high school language arts and math classes; a comprehensive diversity, equity, and inclusion plan; and a teaching fellows program that supports educators of color in becoming school leaders.

QUESTIONS?

send to

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EDUCATING  
THROUGH CRISIS  
COVID-19