Learning and Transparency Technical Assistance Program Grant

COLORADO SCHOOL FINANCE PROJECT
Support Children - Support The Future

April 22, 2022
Today...

What is the grant and why is it needed?

Who are we?

What is our plan?

Where to get more information?
What is the Learning and Transparency Technical Assistance Grant?

Awarded by the Colorado Department of Education

Began March 1, 2022 and will conclude on September 30, 2024

Help school districts offer their families and communities transparency into the COVID relief funding made available to them, how the funds were used, the programs available for students, and how to access them, and the impacts of these programs on COVID-related needs of their students.
Allowable uses of funds include:

● Building upon the **stakeholder engagement and posting requirements** for the LEA ESSER plans by effectively communicating the needs identified for the LEA and how the LEA is using ESSER funds to address them;
● Ensuring that students and their families -- particularly low-income families, children with disabilities, English learners, racial and ethnic minorities, students experiencing homelessness, and foster care youth -- are aware of and know how to access the programs that will best support their students in accelerating and completing interrupted learning;
● **Continued engagement** around the LEA’s ESSER plan, progress being made, and adjustments to meet the evolving needs of their students and communities;
● **Sharing best practices and lessons learned** across their schools, communities and other Colorado LEAs to leverage what is working in one school or community to others; and
● **Communicating the spending and impact of the strategies implemented** through the LEA’s ESSER plan
4 award recipients

- Aurora Public Schools
- Colorado School Finance Project
- The Keystone Group
- Colorado Education Initiative (CEI)

Learning & Transparency Technical Assistance
Why is there a need for this grant?

The federal stimulus dollars represent an unprecedented influx of funding that have **transparency and accountability requirements**.

School districts and BOCES are doing the hard work of deploying federal pandemic recovery funds to improve the lives of students they serve. Under resourced schools need **help in telling their story**.

We are **stronger together** and by sharing stories, lessons learned, and best practices, we emerge better equipped to help students.
TELLING YOUR STORY

Creating safe and healthy learning environments

Addressing lost instructional time

Supporting educators and staff stability and well-being
Poll Question...

How important do you think it is that WE are the ones telling our story?
What will CSFP do?

Assist Colorado school districts and BOCES in carrying out the critical role of transparency and communication with families and communities, continued community engagement, the use of COVID relief funds, and the impact of those funds on addressing the COVID related needs.

Provide technical assistance program to help school districts inform their families and communities about the programs being offered and how those programs are accelerating learning and recovery for their students.
Supports Include

- Field Managers for personalized support
- Communication resources and toolkits
- Technical assistance on impact analysis
- In-person and virtual workshops and trainings
CSFP Will Assist With

- Understanding and meeting federal requirements with ESSER-related funds
- Communicating how school districts and BOCES are using federal pandemic recovery funds
- Communicating how to engage communities in decision-making
- Communicating how to ensure transparency and accountability
PRIMARY GOAL

Help school districts communicate with students, families, and their communities the opportunities available because of ESSER $s
Poll Question...

Do you feel you have the resources and tools to meet the ESSER requirements on your own?
Timeline

March-June 2022
Grant Kickoff
Initial reach out to all school districts
CSFP publishes interactive map with ESSER I data

July-September 2022
Field Service support and technical assistance given to school districts
Monthly communications
Trainings

October 2022 - September 2023
CSFP publishes interactive map with ESSER II data
Field Service support and technical assistance given to school districts
Monthly communications
Trainings

October 2023-August 2024
CSFP publishes interactive map with ESSER III data
Field Service support and technical assistance given to school districts
Monthly communications
Trainings

September 2024
Final report due and work completed
ESSER FACT SHEETS

- Help districts meet **transparency and communication** requirements
- Build understanding of ESSER and federal stimulus funds with basic information

East Grand 2 School District

Federal Stimulus Funding for Colorado

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Congress passed three stimulus bills that include funding for education: the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act (March 2020); the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations (CRRSA) Act (December 2020); and the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act (March 2021). View full list of acronyms used [here](#).

Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF)
The CARES Act established the Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF) to support states with expenses due to the public health emergency with respect to the COVID–19 incurred from March 1, 2020, to Dec. 30, 2020. In May 2020, Gov. Polis directed the transfer of $510 million from the State of Colorado’s CARES Act CRF to CDE to be awarded to school districts, the Charter School Institute, the Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind and facility schools on a per pupil basis. Additionally, each BOCES in the state received $25,000.

Governor’s Emergency Education Relief Fund (GEER)
The CARES Act included $3 billion for a Governor’s Emergency Education Relief (GEER) Fund. Colorado was allocated more than $44 million from the GEER fund. The Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act of 2020 added $4.06 billion for the Governor’s Emergency Education Relief (GEER) Fund. GEER II included $2.75 billion for emergency assistance to nonpublic schools through the Emergency Assistance to Non-Public Schools (EANS) grants of which $28,433,931 has been allocated to Colorado.

April 22, 2022
ESSER FACT SHEETS

Provide transparency in funds received through ESSER I, ESSER II, and ESSER III allocations

How are students being supported through the use of federal stimulus dollars?
The federal stimulus dollars are a once-in-a-generation opportunity to support our students and to address the multi-year effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition to the pandemic, the shortfall in state funding to Colorado schools during the 2020-21 school year doubled and the one-time federal stimulus funds helped to temporarily mitigate the significant loss in funding to school districts. As Colorado spends less on education per student than most other states, a teacher shortage existed before the pandemic making it difficult for school districts to recruit and retain highly qualified teachers. While all the one-time federal stimulus dollars will expire by September 30, 2024, they have supported local students and communities weather the effects of the pandemic.

ESSER I — Addressing the immediate crisis
Expenditures allowed through Sept. 30, 2022
In March 2020, the CARES Act established the Education Stabilization Fund, which initially provided funding for the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER I) Fund. ESSER I Fund dollars were appropriated to states based on the 2019-20 Title I shares with 90% allocated to local education agencies (LEAs) that received a Title I allocation in the most recent fiscal year and the remaining 10% for a state reserve fund. ESSER I funding for East Grand 2 was based on its Title I allocation and an ESSER I supplemental made by the Colorado Department of Education (CDE). View CDE’s Federal COVID Education Funding website for additional details.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, CDE administered the district and charter needs inventory to determine how funds could be used to address the pandemic. This included the following:

- Addressing the immediate crisis
- Providing stability and managing the health crisis
- Recovery and acceleration

The decision on how to spend federal pandemic recovery resources is inherently and intentionally local as school communities are best equipped to identify and address their most urgent local needs. The top uses of ESSER I funds for our district are provided in the explanation below.

Points that are emphasized:
- Funds are one-time
- Funding cliff exists
- Funds are to address COVID-related issues or challenges
- Decisions on how to spend federal pandemic recovery resources are inherently and intentionally local
Top 3 Investment Priorities are highlighted

Investment Priorities include:

- Generic description related to one of 3 categories:
  - Creating safe & healthy learning environments
  - Addressing lost instructional time
  - Supporting educator and staff stability & well-being

- District specific detail pulled from CDE reports
NEXT STEPS?

✓ Reaching out to all school districts in early May

Want more information: Visit cosfp.org and fill out the information form or click here.
Poll Question...

How important is it to you to collaborate with other districts and to know how they have prioritized their ESSER investments?
QUESTIONS?

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Support Children - Support The Future
Who is CSFP?

✓ Non-profit, non-partisan
✓ Supported by school district contributions
✓ School finance analysis for local and state policy makers since 1995
✓ Governed by a board comprised of national and state experts on school finance

Our Mission: To compile, collect and distribute research-based, non-partisan information and data on topics related to school finance for state and local policymakers.

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