

## Highlights of Approved American Rescue Plan Act Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ARP ESSER) State Plan Investments Related to Career and Technical Education

High school students are gaining new opportunities to participate in career and technical education (CTE) and prepare for in-demand jobs like teaching as a result of President Biden's American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ARP ESSER), which has provided nearly \$122 billion to state educational agencies (SEAs) and local educational agencies (LEAs) to meet the urgent needs of schools and students arising from the COVID-19 pandemic. High-quality CTE programs can boost school engagement and on-time graduation and enhance academic learning, critical parts of strategies to help address the impact of lost instructional time, by giving students hands-on opportunities to apply knowledge and skills that they learned in a classroom setting, while at the same time addressing labor market needs.

For example, [one study](#) found that students in Nebraska and South Dakota who completed a sequence of CTE courses were 7 percentage points more likely than students who did not concentrate their studies in CTE to graduate from high school on time and 10 percentage points more likely to enroll in postsecondary education after graduation.<sup>1</sup> Another [study](#) found that male students enrolled in an information technology-themed career academy in North Carolina had fewer absences in ninth grade and were more likely to graduate on-time and enroll in postsecondary education than peers who attended a regular comprehensive high school.<sup>2</sup> Another [study](#) found that, at the end of two years of high school, students attending one of New York City's Pathways in Technology Early College High Schools (P-TECH) were more likely than their counterparts at regular high schools to pass the state's high school English Language Arts exam with a score that qualified them to participate in dual enrollment courses.<sup>3</sup>

High-quality CTE programs like those offered by New York City's P-TECH schools and the North Carolina information technology academy grow from strong partnerships between school districts, employers, and community colleges and other institutions of higher education and are focused on preparing students for careers that pay family-sustaining wages for which there is strong demand. Students take an integrated sequence of technical and academic courses that include opportunities to participate in work-based learning and to earn postsecondary credit or industry-recognized credentials.

The ARP ESSER Fund includes three state-level reservations of a state's total ARP ESSER allocation for evidence-based activities and interventions that respond to students' social, emotional, mental health, and academic needs: 5 percent of funds are set aside for addressing learning loss, 1 percent for summer

---

<sup>1</sup> Brodersen, R. M., Gagnon, D., Liu, J., & Tedeschi, S. (2021). *The impact of career and technical education on postsecondary outcomes in Nebraska and South Dakota* (REL 2021–087). U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratory Central. Retrieved from: [https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/central/pdf/REL\\_2021087.pdf](https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/central/pdf/REL_2021087.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Hemelt, S.W., Lenard, M.A. & Paeplow, C.G. (2018) *Building Bridges to Life after High School: Contemporary Career Academies and Student Outcomes*. CALDER Working Paper No. 176. National Center for Analysis of Longitudinal Data in Education Research. Retrieved from: <https://caldercenter.org/sites/default/files/WP%20176.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Rosen, R., Byndloss, D.C., Parise, L., Alterman, E., Dixon, M. & Medina, F. (2021). *Bridging the School-to-Work Divide: Interim Implementation and Impact Findings from New York City's P-TECH 9-14 Schools*. MDRC. Retrieved from: [https://www.mdrc.org/sites/default/files/P-TECH\\_Report\\_2020.pdf](https://www.mdrc.org/sites/default/files/P-TECH_Report_2020.pdf)

enrichment programs and 1 percent for comprehensive afterschool programs. The ARP ESSER Fund also addresses the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on student subgroups that have been historically underserved based on race, ethnicity, income status, disability status, gender, and migrant status, as well as multilingual learners, students experiencing homelessness, and children and youth in foster care.

In addition, up to 2.5 percent of the total ARP ESSER allocation may be used for emergency needs to address issues related to COVID-19 as determined by the SEA.

In March 2021, the U.S. Department of Education (ED) made available to each SEA the first two-thirds of its ARP ESSER allocation. SEAs received the remaining funds upon the approval of their State plans, and all 52 SEAs have approved State plans. The Office of Elementary and Secondary Education posts approved state plans on ED's [website](#).

This document highlights examples of how states indicated that they planned to use funds available under one or more of their State-level reservations on programs and activities related to career and technical education (CTE) as part of their work to help students recover from the impacts of the pandemic.

| <b>Career and Technical Education (CTE) Highlights of ARP ESSER State Plans</b>  |
|--|
| <p>The <b>Alaska Department of Education and Early Development (DEED)</b> reports that one of two areas of focus for its distribution of funds reserved for <u>evidence-based summer learning and enrichment programs</u> will be increasing career, technical, and culturally relevant education to meet student and workforce needs. DEED also reports that CTE will be one of two areas of focus for its distribution of the 5 percent reservation to address <u>lost instructional time</u>. It will award competitive grants to “support projects that incorporate academic/technical knowledge and employability skills, are aligned to industry needs, have multiple entry and exit points, and culminate in the attainment of a recognized postsecondary or industry credential(s).” DEED also will award contracts to create CTE statewide programs of study that span elementary to postsecondary education.</p> |
| <p>The <b>Colorado Department of Education</b> reports that it will use a portion of ARP ESSER funds available to address <u>lost instructional time</u> to support career-connected learning and to create new CTE programs, noting that stakeholders from across the state identified this as “a critical need for student engagement and success, given the impacts of the pandemic.” The initiative will include “collaborative partnerships among Colorado’s rural districts.”</p>  |
| <p>The <b>Florida Department of Education</b> will use funds available to <u>address lost instructional time</u> for a Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics Accelerator project. It will award a subgrant to engage “experts in the field to develop state standards for computer science; effective and evidence-based practices for standards implementation; and teacher, student, and parent resources.” It also will distribute to all LEAs formula grants “to support math acceleration and expand and enhance computer science credentials in high school aligned to workforce needs.”</p>   |
| <p>The <b>Georgia Department of Education</b> reports that it will use grant funds available to address <u>lost instructional time</u> to preserve co-curricular opportunities provided by career and technical student organizations (CTSOs) and to award “opportunity grants” to local educational agencies to fund access to courses in subjects like career, technical, and agricultural education (CTAE), and computer science,</p>   |

as well as to provide students opportunities for work-based learning/apprenticeships and to earn industry-recognized credentials.

The **Indiana Department of Education** reports that it intends to invest ARP ESSER State-level reservation funds in several programs and activities related to CTE, including—

- Initiatives to accelerate learning among high school students that will offer students supports and incentives to complete the rigorous Indiana College Core and earn high-wage, high-demand industry certifications.
- Helping students in grades 4 through 8 “engage with college and career readiness concepts” so that “students and their families can begin making informed choices about their postsecondary pathway early in their academic career.”
- Using a portion of the ARP ESSER State-level reservation for emergency needs to develop and expand teacher cadet programs that engage students early in their high school career and put students on a trajectory to becoming a teacher in Indiana, with a special focus on including communities that are underrepresented in the teaching profession.
- Awarding competitive grants “that encourage K-12 leaders to partner with local community organizations and local employers to design and execute career pathway programs that expand beyond the classroom and rethink the traditional school day to incorporate meaningful out-of-school learning opportunities” and that include work-based learning opportunities.

The **Kentucky Department of Education** (KDE) will use \$690,000 in ARP ESSER State set-aside funds to address lost instructional time for “career field days” and CTE “showcase events” for middle and high school students to increase student exposure to CTE opportunities and connections with industry professionals. Additionally, it will use \$15 million, with contributions from all three State set-asides, to provide students with disabilities transition services and supports that will include creating “transition ombudsmen positions” to connect students with transition supports.

The **Maine Department of Education** (MDE) reports that it will use funds reserved to address lost instructional time for an Extended Learning Opportunity (ELO) program that will strengthen career exploration opportunities for middle and high school students and help students to connect with local industry employers. The state will also develop models of early CTE summer programs for students in the middle grades that “will demonstrate how programs in career and technical education can address the ways in which gender stereotypes limit career aspirations” for students. MDE reports that funds reserved for summer learning and enrichment programs also will be used to support such activities as paying transportation costs to reduce barriers to accessing ELO programs, and conducting outreach to local employers and providing incentives to promote their participation in ELO.

Using funds reserved to address lost instructional time, the **Montana Office of Public Instruction** will partner with Montana businesses to create “career paths and industry classrooms leading to micro-credentials and high-demand career opportunities” through the MT Ready initiative. For example, the Montana Contractors Association Education Foundation’s Build Montana program in Billings Public Schools educates juniors and seniors about in-demand career opportunities in the construction industry and the use of construction equipment, exploring principles of machine theory from

engineering science, jobsite safety, machine operation, site development, and the incorporation of machine guidance technology and unmanned aerial vehicles in the construction process. Other MT Ready partners include the Montana Department of Labor, the Montana Chamber of Commerce, the Retail Association, the Montana Equipment Dealer’s Association, Montana Reach Higher, the Montana Automotive Association, and the Contractor’s Association.

The **Nebraska Department of Education** reports that one of several allowable activities for which it will award funds reserved for summer learning and enrichment activities will be “programs that partner with in-demand fields of the local workforce or build career competencies and career readiness.”

The **Nevada Department of Education** (NDE) reports that it will use \$2 million in ARP ESSER funds reserved at the state level to provide a work readiness curriculum with an aligned assessment to 100 schools that may be implemented as a standalone course or integrated into the school’s CTE programs of study. Additionally, NDE reports that CTE is one of the allowable activities for which it will award funds reserved to address lost instructional time.

The **New Mexico Public Education Department** (NMPED) will award funds to community-based organizations to implement evidence-based afterschool programs to students, some of which will include paid internships for high school students. NMPED also is using \$6 million of the state-level reservation for evidence-based summer learning and enrichment for a joint program with municipalities to provide summer internships for students. “The program is evidence-based, using research on best practices for work-based learning, including connecting job experience to labor-market information and internship placements that reflect the state, regional, and local economic data regarding specific, in-demand workforce opportunities.” Finally, NMPED will use \$3.8 million to award grants to school districts and partner organizations to provide summer programming that is focused on one of five targeted areas, one of which is science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) programs and another that is “land-based, agricultural, or CTE type programs.”

The **North Dakota Department of Public Instruction** will use ARP ESSER State-level reservation funds available to address lost instructional time to create a teacher career pathway program for high school students, including students who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented in the teaching profession, that will enable students to earn college credit in the education field while in high school. Courses will be offered to all public schools across the state.

The **Ohio Department of Education** (ODE) will use ARP ESSER State set-aside funds for several CTE-related initiatives. It will award Work-Based Learning Incentive Grants to local workforce development boards “to incentivize employers to develop high school on-the-job internship, pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship opportunities for students.” ODE also will award grants to local OhioMeansJobs Centers to support partnerships with local schools that will expand career counseling services and opportunities for high school students.

The **Oregon Department of Education** will use ARP ESSER State-level reservation funds to address lost instructional time to re-engage high school students who need additional credits to graduate by working to ensure that each local education agency (LEA) has “an equity-centered plan to invest in drop-out prevention, accelerated learning opportunities (i.e., dual credit), and CTE programs that are tailored to local needs and careers of the future.” Oregon also will work with LEAs to expand college

and career counseling and financial aid support for high school students. While Oregon is still planning for its use of summer learning and afterschool learning dollars, it is considering using these funds to offer CTE programs, work-based learning, and internship or apprenticeship programs that complement regular academic instruction.

The **Pennsylvania Department of Education** is distributing \$43.5 million of its ARP ESSER State-level reservation for emergency needs to area career and technology education centers. “Funds will be used to ensure the safe return to in-person instruction, meet students’ academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs, and address opportunity gaps that existed before—and were exacerbated by—the pandemic.”

The **Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction** will award \$2 million in funds available to address lost instructional time as competitive grants to LEAs to create and expand CTE programs and to address barriers to CTE access and participation that widened during the pandemic.