



NEBRASKA

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

January 21, 2021

To: Nebraska Public School Superintendents, ESU Administrators, and Title I Listserv Members

CC: State Board of Education, Commissioner's Cabinet, and NDE Leadership

RE: Commissioner's Message: ESSER II Fund Allocations

The Nebraska Department of Education awarded more than \$58 million last spring through the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Fund authorized by the Coronavirus Aid, Recovery, and Economic Security (CARES) Act. On December 27, 2020, the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2021, was signed into law, which provides Nebraska K-12 education with an additional \$243 million for an ESSER II Fund.

This new funding - more than four times the initial awards under the CARES Act - is intended to help the Nebraska Department of Education and Nebraska public school districts to restore and maintain high-quality learning environments and take comprehensive action to mitigate the unprecedented learning loss that many of our most vulnerable students have endured. Therefore, I highlight recommendations and best practices for school districts to consider to effectively address significant learning loss and take actions to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on the students and families who depend on our K-12 schools.

- Support At-Risk Populations
- Braid ESSER II and ED Grants to Support Teaching and Learning
 - Title II funds to train teachers and school leaders on teaching in blended learning environments,
 - Title IV, Part A funds on educational technology aligned both to any ESSER purchases to support longer-term and sustainability technology plans,
 - IDEA, Part B funds to support the needs of students with disabilities in new learning environments,
 - Perkins funds to adjust programs of study given new needs, and
 - Braiding several ED grants to support the social and emotional needs of both students and staff.
- Utilize the [Launch Nebraska](#) Coronavirus Resource Website
- Support a Hierarchy of Digital Learning Needs: Technology, Devices, Software Systems, Digital Content, and Professional Development and Training
- Provide Supplemental Student Learning Opportunities

Although the ESSER II uses of funds are similar to those for ESSER, there are important distinctions between the ESSER II and ESSER programs, including the period of funds availability, equitable services to non-public schools, and reporting on efforts to measure and address learning loss. You should plan to use all remaining ESSER funds by the end of April 2021, before making use of the ESSER II funds.

The Nebraska Department of Education has released the LEA ESSER II Fund allocations. The LEA allocation table is available now on the NDE [CARES Act website](#).

The Nebraska Department of education is committed to preparing a streamlined application process for Nebraska public school districts to apply for the ESSER II funds with a simplified approach to reduce districts' administrative burden. School districts can expect to apply for their allocation of funding and start receiving funds within the next several weeks.

Respectfully,



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Commissioner of Education



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