

LEA ARP ESSER Plan: "A Plan for the LEA's Use of ARP ESSER Funds"

Please submit in both Excel and PDF form to ESSER@doe.nh.gov by 1/13/2023.

The American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief ("ARP ESSER") Fund, authorized under the American Rescue Plan ("ARP") Act of 2021, provides New Hampshire over \$350 million to support schools in safely reopening and sustaining safe operations of schools while meeting the academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs of students resulting from the coronavirus disease 2019 ("COVID-19") pandemic.

This mandatory template is intended to collect all federally required information from an LEA in a convenient format and to assist LEAs in meeting the federal requirement that, requirement that, an LEA shall publish an LEA ARP ESSER Plan, which is often called a "school district use of funds plan." See the Department of Education's most current guidance posted here: https://omb.report/icr/202201-1810-002/doc/117519100.

For further context, please reference ARPA (https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-bill/1319/text) or the Interim Final Requirements of ARP ESSER in which the U.S. Department of Education established these requirements (https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2021-04-22/pdf/2021-08359.pdf).

I. General Information

- 1) School District / Charter School Name: The Birches Academy of Academics & Art A Public Charter Sch → Cell C18 Must be Input for Formulas to
- 2) District ID Number: 731 → Autopopulates upon Selection
- 3) SAU Number: 401 → Autopopulates upon Selection
- 4) Date of Publication: 1/24/2023
- 5) Approver Name - (Superintendent / Head of School): Chris Smith
- 6) Email & Telephone: chrissmith@birchesacademy.org

II. Transparency and Accessibility

- 1) This plan for the LEA's Use of ARP ESSER funds was published and made publicly available online at the following specific web address:

Yes - Description Required

Description:

www.birchesacademy.org/covid19

- 2) The plan is in an understandable and uniform format (please choose one):

Yes - Description Required

Description:

The plan is available in pdf format on the web and available in the office as well.

- 3) The plan, to the extent practicable, is written in a language that parents can understand or, if not practicable to provide written translations to a parent with limited English proficiency, orally translated (please choose one):

Yes - Description Required

Description:

We will provide the plan in another language if requested.

- 4) The plan, upon request by a parent who is an individual with a disability, is provided in an alternative format accessible to that parent (please choose one):

Yes - Description Required

Description:

We will provide the plan in an alternative format if requested.

III. Stakeholder Engagement

Best Practices in Implementing ARP ESSER LEA Use of Funds Plan

- 1) How the LEA provided the public the opportunity to provide input in the development of the LEA's plan for the use of ARP ESSER funds:

Yes - Description Required

Description:

The Birches Academy sent out surveys to the community to gather input. We also have a feedback form available on our website. The form is accessible at The Birches Academy website. <https://www.birchesacademy.org/covid19> In addition, we held weekly online forums where the public could provide input.

- 2) How the LEA took public input into account regarding the development of the LEA's plan for the use of ARP ESSER funds (please choose one):

Yes - Description Required

Description:

The administrative team gathered the information from the surveys and compared it with an internal needs assessment to generate the combined plan on spending.

- 3) How the LEA engaged in meaningful consultation with specific stakeholders, including, but not limited to:
a. Students (please choose one):

Yes - Description Required

1) Description:

Middle school students are consulted and interviewed on a continuous basis.

i) Number of total responses: There were 64 responses received.

ii) Uses consulted on: 11/1/2021 students were consulted on what their goals were both academic and non-academic. They were asked what they need in order to be able to achieve these goals and to identify any areas of weakness. This information allowed us to aid students with their goals and also gave us insight into what areas of social-emotional learning we needed the most support in. Student feedback focused largely on the acquisition of a library, gym and instructional concerns. There were also several calls for the expansion of our class opportunities and clubs.

iii) Description of feedback received: Students are not asked directly what they would spend money on- instead they are asked about academic and non academic goals. We also ask about strengths and weaknesses. This allows us to not only plan for supporting students in their identified areas of academic need and weakness, but it also gives us insight into what social-emotional supports might be necessary to help our students.

Please indicate how consultation was:

2) Inclusive:The Birches Academy gave multiple ways in which stakeholders could communicate regarding planning.

3) Widely advertised and available:The Birches Academy used multiple mediums to get information out regarding the solicitation of the plan. We used the website, social media, emails and newsletters.

4) Ongoing:The Birches Academy continues to solicited feedback on the plan from stakeholders.

- b. Families (please choose one):

Yes - Description Required

1) Description:

We have sent out multiple surveys to parents as well as leave a form on our website open to comments at anytime from parents.

i) Number of total responses: There were 54 responses received.

ii) Uses consulted on: The Birches Academy continues to solicited feedback on the plan from stakeholders. We asked questions about the issues facing their students, whether the school was meeting their needs of students and challenges faced. This set of questions focused on learning loss and social issues that affected students. Families focused a great deal on an idealized vision of a new building or additional educational space, but there was also several comments about non-traditional and enhanced programming.

iii) Description of feedback received: Parents shared with us what had worked for their child academically as well as any challenges that they had faced in being successful in their education. Additionally we asked parents about accessibility of their child's education and any problems they may have encounter with this throughout the year.

Please indicate how consultation was:

2) Inclusive:The Birches Academy gave multiple ways in which stakeholders could communicate regarding the planning.

3) Widely advertised and available:The Birches Academy used multiple mediums to get information out regarding the solicitation of the plan. We used the website, social media, emails and newsletters.

4) Ongoing:The Birches Academy continues to solicited feedback on the plan from stakeholders.

c. School and district administrators, including special education administrators (please choose one):

Somewhat - Description Required

1) Description:

The leadership team consists of two administrators in our one-school district. We collated the data as it came in and were able to generate some ideas of needs in our population informed by the various communications with parents and other stakeholders throughout the year including direct communication, responses to our weekly bulletin, informal meetings held periodically throughout the year which we invite all stakeholders to, and the information we read in

i) Number of total responses: 2

ii) Uses consulted on: Student and community needs with regard to social emotional learning initiatives and needs as well as learning loss. Leadership focused a lot on novel ways of addressing student learning as well as finding ways to mitigate not only learning loss but the social implications that arose from students having existed through a long period of isolation.

iii) Description of feedback received: Teachers and parents alike reported to administration through in-person, telephonic and in-meeting communication that although students were struggling with various academic issues there was a larger concern in both the number and severity of mental health issues facing students. Several parents reported either on their own or in answer to questions resulting from a phone call about a student's behavior that even though their child was struggling with significant mental health issues including in some cases active suicidal ideation, the students were being placed on six-month or longer waiting lists. Parents and teachers further reported that students self-reported and were observed to have trouble relating to peers and forming friendships.

Please indicate how consultation was:

2) Inclusive: Administrators spoke with regular education and special education teachers. Administrators also have daily contact with students and parents. Administration is also in contact with outside agencies and other school districts where this topic was heavily discussed. The need is further indicated by

3) Widely advertised and available: N/A

4) Ongoing: The administrators are a continuing part of data analyzing and are in daily contact with members of the community who bring their concerns forward.

d. Teachers, principals, school leaders, other educators, school staff, and their unions (please choose one):

Yes - Description Required

1) Description:

Teachers completed questionnaires during the SWOT process, and their feedback was elicited at bi-weekly staff meetings. Administration also employs a train the trainer methodology and maintains an open door policy to facilitate teachers bringing their ideas forward.

i) Number of total responses: Teachers participated in weekly staff meetings, bi-weekly team level meetings and individual meetings with school leadership.

ii) Uses consulted on: They were asked to bring their concerns forward with regard to learning loss, social emotional learning and other concerns they have about students. Teachers focused on additional materials and tools that could help them to more effectively reach students. They also raised their concerns about the psychological impact that COVID had on their students and the need for social-emotional curriculum to be implemented at the school.

iii) Description of feedback received: Teachers reported a large increase on the relative number of students who seemed to struggle socially. Teachers reported that students seemed overall to lack a basic understanding of appropriate socialization and rules for proper and effective communication. Teachers also reported a huge increase in the number of students who expressed depression indicators such as being withdrawn, loss of appetite, social isolation and expressing self-harm and self-deprecating ideas.

Please indicate how consultation was:

2) Inclusive: All teachers are required to attend weekly staff meetings and bi-weekly team meetings. All staff have access to the leadership team due to the small size and structure of our school.

3) Widely advertised and available: Teachers were asked individually during conferences with administration what challenges they faced this year versus previous years. Teachers also engaged in weekly staff meetings and bi-weekly grade level meetings.

4) Ongoing: Staff meetings and communication continue and are a regular part of our staff culture and practices.

e. Tribes, if applicable (please choose one):

No

1) Description:

N/A

- i) Number of total responses:*N/A
- ii) Uses consulted on:*N/A
- iii) Description of feedback received:*N/A

Please indicate how consultation was:

2) **Inclusive:**N/A

3) **Widely advertised and available:**N/A

4) **Ongoing:**N/A

f. Civil rights organizations, including disability rights organizations (please check one):

No

1) Description:

The Birches Academy follows all State and Federal laws and has policies in place to ensure that student civil rights are safeguarded. We do not have ties with and specific civil rights organizations or disability rights organizations, although we consider accessibility as part of our Universal Design for Learning philosophy. We are glad to work with an organization to better aid our students should an opportunity arise.

- i) Number of total responses:* N/A
- ii) Uses consulted on:*N/A
- iii) Description of feedback received:*N/A

Please indicate how consultation was:

2) **Inclusive:**N/A

3) **Widely advertised and available:**N/A

4) **Ongoing:**N/A

g. Stakeholders representing the interests of children with disabilities, English learners, children experiencing homelessness, children and youth in foster care, migratory students, children who are incarcerated, and other underserved students (please choose one):

No

1) Description:

We solicited responses from our whole community, but due to the small size of our student body and school community we are able to adjust to individual needs as they are brought forward. We seek to have people respond not only to what general support is required but also what specific support is needed. We utilize a universal design for learning philosophy and make any needed accommodations available for anyone who might benefit.

i) Number of total responses: The number of total responses that came from parents speaking only for their special education student is unknown as our surveys were sent to our whole community. Parents with concerns which center on special education issues largely contact their sending districts as it is they who provides specialized instruction where warranted. Parents do sometimes express that their student might benefit from a particular accommodation, and in keeping with our Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles, if the accommodation would be helpful to one student we would make it available for all.

ii) Uses consulted on: What general support is required but also what specific support is needed. We utilize a universal design for learning philosophy and make any needed accommodations available for anyone who might benefit.

iii) Description of feedback received: In addition to concerns around social problems and emotional problems with students, we also received feedback from parents about what technologies did and didn't work for their particular student. This is one of the things that prompted us to allow Special Education students back into the school earlier than their non-identified peers. It also prompted us to test some flipped classroom strategies which allowed students who were identified and had IEPs or students identified as ESL to view their instructional materials multiple times if they needed to.

Please indicate how consultation was:

2) **Inclusive:**Entire community was solicited for information about needs and support

3) **Widely advertised and available:**We used several avenues to reach out to families including our weekly communication newsletter.

4) **Ongoing:**We remain open to communication and feedback from community organizations both in problems they are facing and the solutions they are finding.

h. Community-based organizations, including partnerships to promote access to before and after-school programming (please choose one):

No

1) Description:

Because we draw students from many different communities and our location and they have many different funding structures, we do not work with any particular community organization. We cooperate with all of the organizations and allow them to advertise to our families. We offer before and after school

care at our school and we also offer after school clubs to our students, but these are run by and/or through our school.

- i) Number of total responses:N/A*
- ii) Uses consulted on:N/A*
- iii) Description of feedback received:N/A*

Please indicate how consultation was:

2) Inclusive:N/A

3) Widely advertised and available:N/A

4) Ongoing:N/A

- i. Early childhood education providers and families, including partnerships to ensure access to and continuity of care for families with children of different ages, particularly as they transition to school (please check one):

No

1) Description:

Our students are drawn from a wide and ever-changing variety of places so it is difficult to isolate needs in this way. However, we are always seeking information from different organizations about best practices which we access through articles, reaching out through phone calls and membership in the Charter School Association.

- i) Number of total responses:N/A*
- ii) Uses consulted on:N/A*
- iii) Description of feedback received:N/A*

Please indicate how consultation was:

2) Inclusive:N/A

3) Widely advertised and available:N/A

4) Ongoing:N/A

<p>1. Introduction</p> <p>1.1. Background</p> <p>1.2. Objectives</p>		<p>2. Methodology</p> <p>2.1. Study Design</p> <p>2.2. Study Population</p> <p>2.3. Data Collection</p> <p>2.4. Statistical Analysis</p>										<p>3. Results</p> <p>3.1. Demographic Characteristics</p> <p>3.2. Prevalence of Disease</p> <p>3.3. Risk Factors</p> <p>3.4. Prognosis</p>										<p>4. Discussion</p> <p>4.1. Interpretation of Findings</p> <p>4.2. Strengths and Limitations</p> <p>4.3. Implications for Practice</p>					<p>5. Conclusion</p> <p>5.1. Summary</p> <p>5.2. Recommendations</p>				
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Table 1: Summary of Key Findings									
Area	Findings	Implications	Recommendations	Priority	Timeline	Responsible Party	Status	Next Steps	Review Date
1	Key finding 1	Implication 1	Recommendation 1	High	Q3 2024	Team A	Completed	Final Report	Q4 2024
2	Key finding 2	Implication 2	Recommendation 2	Medium	Q4 2024	Team B	In Progress	Interim Report	Q1 2025
3	Key finding 3	Implication 3	Recommendation 3	Low	Q1 2025	Team C	Not Started	Initial Assessment	Q2 2025

X. Authorization

**Please print and sign this page. Return a signed version with your completed packet to:*

ESSER@doe.nh.gov



1/13/23

Approver Signature - Superintendent / Head of School

Date

Christopher Smith

Printed Name - Superintendent / Head of School

Appendix A. ARPA Statutory Excerpt

(e) USES OF FUNDS.—A local educational agency that receives funds under this section—

(1) shall reserve not less than 20 percent of such funds to address learning loss through the implementation of evidence-based interventions, such as summer learning or summer enrichment, extended day, comprehensive afterschool programs, or extended school year programs, and ensure that such interventions respond to students' academic, social, and emotional needs and address the disproportionate impact of the coronavirus on the student subgroups described in section 1111(b)(2)(B)(xi) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20U.S.C. 6311(b)(2)(B)(xi)), students experiencing homelessness, and children and youth in foster care; and

(2) shall use the remaining funds for any of the following:

(A) Any activity authorized by the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965.

(B) Any activity authorized by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

(C) Any activity authorized by the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act.

(D) Any activity authorized by the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006.

(E) Coordination of preparedness and response efforts of local educational agencies with State, local, Tribal, and territorial public health departments, and other relevant agencies, to improve coordinated responses among such entities to prevent, prepare for, and respond to coronavirus.

(F) Activities to address the unique needs of low-income children or students, children with disabilities, English learners, racial and ethnic minorities, students experiencing homelessness, and foster care youth, including how outreach and service delivery will meet the needs of each population.

(G) Developing and implementing procedures and systems to improve the preparedness and response efforts of local educational agencies.

(H) Training and professional development for staff of the local educational agency on sanitation and minimizing the spread of infectious diseases.

(I) Purchasing supplies to sanitize and clean the facilities of a local educational agency, including buildings operated by such agency.

(J) Planning for, coordinating, and implementing activities during long-term closures, including providing meals to eligible students, providing technology for online learning to all students, providing guidance for carrying out requirements under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and ensuring other educational services can continue to be provided consistent with all Federal, State, and local requirements.

(K) Purchasing educational technology (including hardware, software, and connectivity) for students who are served by the local educational agency that aids in regular and substantive educational interaction between students and their classroom instructors, including low-income students and children with disabilities, which may include assistive technology or adaptive equipment.

(L) Providing mental health services and supports, including through the implementation of evidence-based full-service community schools.

(M) Planning and implementing activities related to summer learning and supplemental afterschool programs, including providing classroom instruction or online learning during the summer months and addressing the needs of low-income students, children with disabilities, English learners, migrant students, students experiencing homelessness, and children in foster care.

(N) Addressing learning loss among students, including low-income students, children with disabilities, English learners, racial and ethnic minorities, students experiencing homelessness, and children and youth in foster care, of the local educational agency, including by—

(i) administering and using high-quality assessments that are valid and reliable, to accurately assess students' academic progress and assist educators in meeting students' academic needs, including through differentiating instruction;

(ii) implementing evidence-based activities to meet the comprehensive needs of students;

(iii) providing information and assistance to parents and families on how they can effectively support students, including in a distance learning environment; and

(iv) tracking student attendance and improving student engagement in distance education.

(O) School facility repairs and improvements to enable operation of schools to reduce risk of virus transmission and exposure to environmental health hazards, and to support student health needs.

(P) Inspection, testing, maintenance, repair, replacement, and upgrade projects to improve the indoor air quality in school facilities, including mechanical and non-mechanical heating, ventilation, and air conditioning systems, filtering, purification and other air cleaning, fans, control systems, and window and door repair and replacement.

(Q) Developing strategies and implementing public health protocols including, to the greatest extent practicable, policies in line with guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for the reopening and operation of school facilities to effectively maintain the health and safety of students, educators, and other staff.

(R) Other activities that are necessary to maintain the operation of and continuity of services in local educational agencies and continuing to employ existing staff of the local educational agency.

Appendix B. Interim Final Requirements of ARP ESSER Excerpt

Appendix B. Interim Final Requirements of ARP ESSER Excerpt

(2) LEA ARP ESSER Plan.

(a) Each LEA that receives ARP ESSER funds must submit to the SEA, in such manner and within a reasonable timeline as determined by the SEA, a plan that contains any information reasonably required by the SEA. The plan, and any revisions to the plan submitted consistent with procedures established by the SEA, must describe—

(i) The extent to which and how the funds will be used to implement prevention and mitigation strategies that are, to the greatest extent practicable, consistent with the most recent CDC guidance on reopening schools, in order to continuously and safely open and operate schools for in-person learning;

(ii) How the LEA will use the funds it reserves under section 2001(e)(1) of the ARP Act to address the academic impact of lost instructional time through the implementation of evidence-based interventions, such as summer learning or summer enrichment, extended day, comprehensive afterschool programs, or extended school year programs;

(iii) How the LEA will spend its remaining ARP ESSER funds consistent with section 2001(e) of the ARP Act; and

(iv) How the LEA will ensure that the interventions it implements, including but not limited to the interventions under section 2001(e)(1) of the ARP Act to address the academic impact of lost instructional time, will respond to the academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs of all students, and particularly those students disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, including students from low-income families, students of color, English learners, children with disabilities, students experiencing homelessness, children in foster care, and migratory students.

(b) In developing its ARP ESSER plan, an LEA must—

(i) Engage in meaningful consultation—

(A) With stakeholders, including: Students; families; school and district administrators (including special education administrators); and teachers, principals, school leaders, other educators, school staff, and their unions; and

(B) To the extent present in or served by the LEA: Tribes; civil rights organizations (including disability rights organizations); and stakeholders representing the interests of children with disabilities, English learners, children experiencing homelessness, children in foster care, migratory students, children who are incarcerated, and other underserved students; and

(ii) Provide the public the opportunity to provide input and take such input into account.

(c) An LEA's ARP ESSER plan must be—

(i) In an understandable and uniform format;

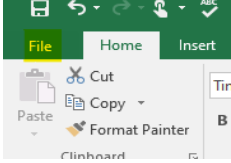
(ii) To the extent practicable, written in a language that parents can understand or, if it is not practicable to provide written translations to a parent with limited English proficiency, be orally translated for such parent;

(iii) Upon request by a parent who is an individual with a disability as defined by the ADA, provided in an alternative format accessible to that parent; and

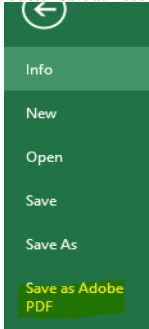
(iv) Be made publicly available on the LEA's website.

Please follow these steps once all tabs of your Districts Excel workbook are completed.

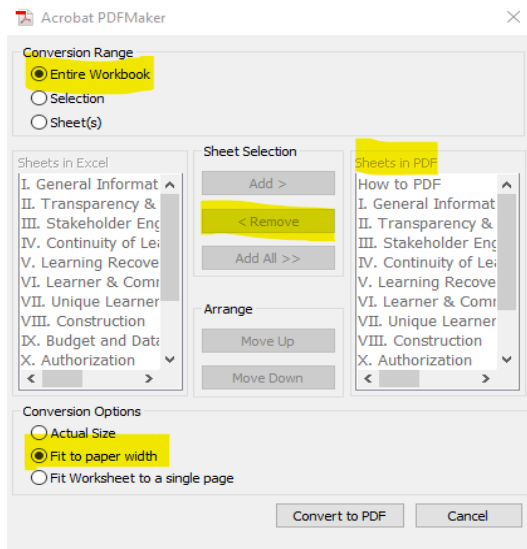
1) Go to File:



2) Select "Save as Adobe PDF":



3) Select "Entire Workbook" and "Fit to paper width." Locate the "IV. Budget and Data Reporting" tab from the list beneath "Sheets in PDF." Select "Remove." The reason is because this spreadsheet is so large, that the information will not easily transpose. The V. Authorization tab will need to be printed manually from Excel. The print range within the Excel workbook has been established for all tabs outlined.



3) Items due to the NHDOE by 01/13/2023:

- A. NH ARP ESSER LEA Fund Use - Excel Workbook
 - i. Print the "V. Authorization" tab from Excel file
 - ii. Manually print and sign the "V. Authorization" tab from Excel file
- B. NH ARP ESSER LEA Fund Use - PDF Version
- C. Return each item listed above in one email message to ESSER@doe.nh.gov (3 separate attachments)