

Frank Edelblut
Commissioner



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Deputy Commissioner

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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September 6, 2022

Emily Whalen
Director
Next Charter School
5 Hood Road
Derry, NH 03038

Dear Ms. Whalen:

This letter is to summarize and report on the June 16, 2022 FY22 ESSER programmatic monitoring of Next Charter School. I want to thank the Next Charter School team for its cooperation and hard work leading up to the monitoring and for organizing the required documentation prior to the review.

Enclosed is a comprehensive summary of the FY22 programmatic ESSER monitoring at Next Charter School including findings and necessary corrective actions. Your plan to address each finding must be presented to the NHED in writing. A Corrective Action Plan template and Evidence Submission template are attached to this report, and the LEA will need to complete these documents and attach substantiating evidence per the instructions. LEAs will have up to 90 days from receipt of this report to demonstrate compliance in any areas that were found to be in violation of state or federal requirements. Please send all required corrective action and evidence submissions to the attention of Ellen Podgorski at the Division of Learner Support.

We consider this process a partnership. Please do not hesitate to seek technical assistance from me or from anyone within the Division of Learner Support. The goal is to make sure that students and staff are receiving the benefits of the COVID-19 Education Programs in accordance with requirements and regulations in an effective response to the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Sincerely,

Ellen C. Podgorski

Ellen C. Podgorski
Program Specialist, COVID-19 Education Programs

Cc: Jessica Lescarbeau, NHED Administrator of COVID-19 Education Programs



FY22 ESSER Programmatic Monitoring Report on Required Evidence of Compliance

Next Charter School (“LEA”)

Monitoring Review Date: 6/16/22

Reviewer: Ellen Podgorski (“EP”)

Final Report Date: 9/6/22

I. Requirement of Allowable Activities 2.C.F.R.200.403-475

Summary and Analysis:

Monitoring review staff assessed the LEA’s efforts to demonstrate that the LEA’s ESSER-funded activities are allowable, reasonable, and necessary and undertaken to prevent, prepare for, and respond to COVID-19.

LEA presented and EP reviewed a description provided by LEA regarding stakeholder involvement; the LEA conducted surveys of students, staff, and parents in spring 2021 and fall 2021 to seek input. A full staff meeting was conducted in July 2021 to conduct needs assessment.

LEA presented and EP reviewed community survey and results from spring 2021 and fall 2021 survey of students, staff, and parents. The spring 2021 survey is general in nature and not specific to consideration of ESSER-funded activities. The fall 2021 survey is more specific to COVID-19 responses with mask wearing questions and feedback sought on mitigation strategies.

LEA presented and EP reviewed agenda from 7/13/21 staff meeting. Topics include student/parent handbook revision, data reporting system, substitute teachers/plans, facilities, and school improvement plan/needs assessment. LEA stated that the school did not provide technical assistance to stakeholders.

LEA presented and EP reviewed the description of the research process for air filtration purchases and documents LEA used in decision-making. LEA reviewed three systems to compare functionality, price, quality.

Findings:

1. The LEA did not submit sufficient documentation to demonstrate stakeholder involvement in determining allowable, reasonable, and necessary activities. Upon communication of this initial finding, the LEA presented and EP reviewed a Corrective Action Plan to include the following:

In the future, when determining which activities are allowable, reasonable, and necessary, the LEA will seek input from stakeholders, including staff, parents and students, in a way that is specific to ESSER funds. This may include developing ESSER specific surveys to seek input from the entire Next community, or specific stakeholder meetings to discuss the use of ESSER funds. The agenda, and meeting minutes will be stored in a Google drive folder specific to ESSER related issues.

In addition, the LEA presented and EP reviewed minutes from the August 9, 2022 ESSER III Stakeholder Meeting. Attendees include 12 staff members. Minutes show review of allowable activities, prioritization of areas of need (learning gaps, summer programming, special education, mental health services, academic coaching, addressing needs of students with low income), brainstorming ESSER III programs, and planning for next steps. The LEA’s initial corrective action steps are satisfactory and must be continued as described below in order to demonstrate ongoing compliance.

Evidence of Correction Needed:

1. The LEA must submit evidence to demonstrate that, on an ongoing basis, the LEA maintains documentation to demonstrate that stakeholders are sufficiently involved in determining allowable, reasonable, and necessary ESSER activities. Evidence may include meeting agendas, meeting minutes showing stakeholders’ input, surveys, sign-in sheets, and any other documentation that demonstrates stakeholders’ involvement in the process and the LEA’s efforts to keep this documentation on record.

Fully Implemented Corrective Action Plan and Evidence of Correction Due Date: 12/7/2022

II. Requirement to Address Learning Loss: Public Law 117-2 Sec. 2001

Summary and Analysis:

Monitoring review staff assessed the LEA's compliance with the use of at least 20% of ARP ESSER funds to address learning loss.

EP reviewed LEA's description of efforts to address needs of students disproportionately affected by COVID-19 closures. LEA stated that staff met in summer 2021 to conduct needs assessment and identified widespread learning loss in population, which includes 50% representation of students with disabilities. The staff reviewed students' progress toward meeting learning plan goals and determined English to be the area most students were behind in. The team decided to hire a part-time teacher to lead small-group English classes and selected students with IEPs who were not making adequate progress for participation in the program.

LEA presented and EP reviewed an agenda from 7/13/21 staff meeting indicating discussion of school improvement plan and needs assessment.

LEA stated that the school did not provide technical assistance to stakeholders and that no items were purchased to address learning loss.

LEA presented and EP reviewed comparative data on student learning progress for 2021 and 2022. LEA presented and EP reviewed data analysis of learning loss needs, progress, and evaluation results.

Findings:

1. The LEA did not submit sufficient documentation to demonstrate stakeholder involvement in determining evidence-based activities to address learning loss. Upon communication of this initial finding, the LEA presented and EP reviewed a Corrective Action Plan to include the following:

In the future, when determining which activities are allowable, reasonable, and necessary, the LEA will seek input from stakeholders, including staff, parents and students, in a way that is specific to ESSER funds. This may include developing ESSER specific surveys to seek input from the entire Next community, or specific stakeholder meetings to discuss the use of ESSER funds. The agenda, and meeting minutes will be stored in a Google drive folder specific to ESSER related issues.

In addition, the LEA presented and EP reviewed minutes from the August 9, 2022 ESSER III Stakeholder Meeting. Attendees include 12 staff members. Minutes show review of allowable activities, prioritization of areas of need (learning gaps, summer programming, special education, mental health services, academic coaching, addressing needs of students with low income), brainstorming ESSER III programs, and planning for next steps. The LEA's initial corrective action steps are satisfactory and must be continued as described below in order to demonstrate ongoing compliance.

Evidence of Correction Needed:

1. The LEA must submit evidence to demonstrate that, on an ongoing basis, the LEA maintains documentation to demonstrate that stakeholders are sufficiently involved in determining evidence-based activities to address learning loss. Evidence may include meeting agendas, meeting minutes showing stakeholders' input, surveys, sign-in sheets, and any other documentation that demonstrates stakeholders' involvement in the process and the LEA's efforts to keep this documentation on record.

Fully Implemented Corrective Action Plan and Evidence of Correction Due Date: 12/7/2022

III. Requirement to Provide Equitable Services *Applies to ESSER I funds only. *Public Law 116-136 Sec. 18005*

Summary and Analysis:

Monitoring review staff assessed the LEA's compliance with providing equitable services in accordance with federal requirements.

LEA is exempt from this requirement because it is a charter school.

Findings: N/A

Evidence of Correction Needed: N/A

Corrective Action Plan Due Date: N/A

IV. Requirement for Continued Payment to Employees: *Public Law 116-136 Sec. 18006; Public Law 116-260 Sec. 315*

Summary and Analysis:

Monitoring review staff assessed the LEA's compliance with federal requirements for continued payments to employees and contractors.

LEA presented and EP reviewed an attestation by the Director stating that the LEA has continued to pay employees as required.

Findings: None

Evidence of Correction Needed: N/A

Corrective Action Plan Due Date: N/A

V. Requirement for Maintenance of Equity: *Public Law 117-2 Sec. 2004*

Summary and Analysis:

Monitoring review staff assessed the LEA's compliance with Maintenance of Equity requirements.

LEA is exempt from this requirement because it is a charter school.

Findings: N/A

Evidence of Correction Needed: N/A

Corrective Action Plan Due Date: N/A

VI. Construction Requirements: 2 C.F.R.200, 34 C.F.R. 75.600-617, Davis-Bacon Act

Summary and Analysis:

Monitoring review staff assessed the LEA's compliance with ESSER construction requirements.

Upon review of the LEA's file, staff found that the LEA conducted an ESSER-funded construction activity with CRRSA-ESSER funds prior to the full establishment of ESSER-funded construction procedures. As this construction project is not approvable under federally funded construction requirements, LEA and staff worked to ensure that the funds were reallocated to allowable activities.

Findings: None

Evidence of Correction Needed: N/A

Corrective Action Plan Due Date: N/A

Activities Selected for Further Programmatic Review

Summary and Analysis:

Monitoring review staff selected two ESSER-funded activities for which the LEA requested reimbursement for further review.

In September 2021 the LEA requested a reimbursement amount of \$20,856.75 for the purchase and installation of supplemental air filtering devices. LEA presented and EP reviewed invoice and check paid dated 10/6/21 to Knight Electrical for \$2,912.15 for installation of air purifiers. EP reviewed invoice and check paid dated 10/6/21 for purchase of air purifiers. EP reviewed order summary (\$1,436.40 paid with Visa credit card 9/20/21) for purchase of 4 HEPA air purifiers. EP reviewed order summary (\$359.10 paid with Visa credit card 9/24/21) for purchase of 1 HEPA air purifier. EP reviewed requisition form dated 8/12/21 for air filter purchased from Oransi for \$396.13. Total amount of all items = \$20,894.18, which is slightly more than the reimbursement request amount of \$20,856.75. Upon further communication with the LEA regarding federal fiscal requirements for this contracted work for installation of air purifiers, the LEA returned the entire reimbursement amount of \$20,857.15.

In September 2021 the LEA requested a reimbursement amount of \$1,356.39 for the salary of a teacher hired to address learning loss. EP reviewed contract dated 8/23/21 between Next and the teacher. The agreement states that the teacher will be employed on a part-time basis 9/1/21-end of 2021-2022 school year at a rate of \$30/hour.

Findings: None

Evidence of Correction Needed: N/A

Corrective Action Plan Due Date: N/A



**NHED ESSER Programmatic Monitoring
Corrective Action Plan**

(Use a separate form for each Corrective Action Item)

LEA Name:

Name of person completing this form

Date

Finding Number:

Description of Finding:

Please check the box that most appropriately matches the LEA’s status in implementing the Corrective Action Plan (“CAP”). Please also provide any documentation that supports the LEA’s assertion that the CAP has been fully implemented.

- (1) Partially implemented
- (2) Fully implemented
- (3) No further action required (provide detailed explanation below)

If option (1) is selected, please explain the implementation status as well as the anticipated completion date in the space below:

Anticipated Completion Date:

If option (2) or (3) is selected, please explain how the plan was implemented or why no further action is required in the space below:

Please return to Ellen.C.Podgorski@doe.nh.gov at the Division of Learner Support



**Evidence Submission
FY22 ESSER Programmatic Monitoring**

Evidentiary requirement of the Corrective Action Plan submitted to NHED on: _____

Use the template below to describe the evidence the LEA is providing in response to each FY22 ESSER Programmatic Monitoring LEA Report finding and Corrective Action Plan. Attach sufficient evidence to substantiate each corrective action taken. Please return your signed Evidence Submission to the NHED Division of Learner Support no later than December 7, 2022.

Finding 1:

Corrective Action 1:

Evidence 1:

Finding 2:

Corrective Action 2:

Evidence 2:



Finding 3:

Corrective Action 3:

Evidence 3:

Evidence Submission presented by

Superintendent

Date