

# K-12 COVID Relief Funds and Mental Health Support

(updated March 15, 2021)



Effective School Solutions

The American Rescue Plan Act was signed into law on March 11<sup>th</sup>, 2021. This stimulus bill will continue to boost the economy, assist families, small businesses, the unemployed, and support education. A significant portion of this relief package has been allocated to K-12 schools and can be used to help students recover from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

## How much money is allotted for K-12 public schools?

Districts have already received two different infusions of funding. The CARES Act, passed in April 2020, provided an additional \$13 Billion for schools through the Elementary and Second School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER), and the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSA) provided \$54 Billion for school districts through the ESSER II fund. A third bill, the American Rescue Plan, passed in March 2021 and provides an additional \$126 Billion for schools. Also, the American Rescue Plan provides an additional \$350 Billion to support the finances of state and local governments, which in turn will help to support school funding.

## How will the money be allocated?

Funds will be given to the states and the states will distribute the money like Title I funds. 10% of state allocation can be used towards administration purposes.

## How will the new stimulus funding impact existing school budgets?

The approved funding may be used to augment school district budgets and help them pay for the expenses related to supporting students as they return to physical schooling.

## What can the funds be used for?

The following are approved uses for the supplemental K-12 funding.

- **Providing services to support student mental health.**
- Improving coordination among state, local, tribal, and other entities to slow the spread of COVID-19.
- Providing resources to address the spread coronavirus at their schools.
- Supporting school district efforts to improve preparedness.
- Addressing the specific needs of disadvantaged students, including those living in poverty, learning English, experiencing homelessness, dealing with disabilities, or living in foster care.
- Training staff on the best ways to sanitize schools and proper use of personal protective equipment (PPE).

- Purchasing PPE and the supplies needed to clean and disinfect schools. The CDC has provided an [analysis of the costs](#) of such resources.
- Planning for school closures.
- Purchasing the hardware and software needed to conduct remote and hybrid learning.
- Supporting afterschool and summer learning programs.
- Addressing student learning loss through evidence-based approaches, which can include assessments and distance learning equipment.
- Repairing school facilities, especially ventilation systems, to improve air quality and reduce spread of COVID-19.

## What are the key mental health supports districts may need to return students safely to school?

The Effective School Solutions [C.O.P.E. Framework](#) provides a helpful checklist for schools to prepare their mental health safety net for full school re-opening. Some of the vital areas that districts may need to invest in include:

- Additional in-school therapeutic support for students with the most intense emotional and behavioral challenges (Tier 3).
- Additional therapeutic capacity to support increased number of students with more mild to moderate needs (Tier 2).
- Staff training and professional development on identifying mental health warning signs and de-escalating challenging classroom behaviors (Tier 1).

### References:

<https://www.future-ed.org/what-congressional-covid-funding-means-for-k-12-schools>

<https://www.chalkbeat.org/2020/12/22/22195843/stimulus-schools-education-explainer>

<https://districtadministration.com/congress-approves-54-3-billion-in-relief-for-public-schools/>