

# HOW HAVE SCHOOL DISTRICTS SPENT ESSER FUNDS SO FAR?

*Highlights from ASBO International's ESSER Spending Survey*

In February 2022, ASBO International surveyed more than 150 school finance leaders across 35 states about how their districts have spent ESSER I, II, and III funds from the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic through January 2022.

Read key highlights below and access the full report at [asbointl.org/ESSER](https://asbointl.org/ESSER).

## TOP 5 ESSER SPEND CATEGORIES (OVERALL)



### TOP ESSER I SPEND CATEGORIES

Purchasing PPE/Supplies & Training to Mitigate Viral Spread

**71%**

Technology & Broadband Investments

**69%**

District Emergency Response & Planning

**41%**

### TOP ESSER II SPEND CATEGORIES

Technology & Broadband Investments

**62%**

Addressing Learning Loss

**56%**

Purchasing PPE/Supplies & Training to Mitigate Viral Spread

**49%**

### TOP ESSER III SPEND CATEGORIES

Addressing Learning Loss

**54%**

Mental Health Services

**36%**

Supporting Specific Student Populations

**29%**

## MOST POPULAR ESSER SPENDING STRATEGIES

### TO MAINTAIN EDUCATIONAL SERVICES:

- Retaining and recruiting ancillary staff
- Retaining and recruiting instructional staff
- Purchasing curricula, textbooks, and supplies

### TO ADDRESS LEARNING LOSS:

- Expanding summer learning and enrichment offerings
- Adding specialist staff to support students
- Purchasing technology and improving connectivity
- Investing in professional development to address student needs

### TO REPAIR & IMPROVE FACILITIES:

- HVAC repairs and upgrades to improve indoor air quality
- Projects to provide safer drinking water for students
- Repairing/renovating an existing facility or school

## TOP 5 CHALLENGES WITH SPENDING ESSER FUNDS

**Sustainability Issues** (spending responsibly to avert a fiscal cliff)

**Balancing Competing Priorities** (spending quickly vs. strategically to support students)

**Labor Issues** (unable to hire or retain staff to implement programs/initiatives)

**Supply Chain Issues** (product shortages, shipping delays, rising costs, etc.)

**Spend Timeline Issues** (unable to complete larger projects in time, e.g., construction)

# STORIES FROM THE FIELD

## HOW ESSER FUNDS ARE HELPING STUDENTS

"Our focus on spending these one-time federal ESSER dollars is on our students. We have planned, and continue to review our plans, around learning recovery—providing additional staff to support students, providing updated curriculum to support onsite and offsite learning, and new technology bringing our district closer to a 1:1 model with enhanced onsite learning tools as well. We continue to focus on the safety of our students as well by purchasing new desks to provide students with their own learning spaces and are working on improvements around our HVAC systems. Adding a new portable for our high school will also help allow for additional learning spaces for our students."

—**Nine Mile Falls School District, WA**

"We have used and continue to use ESSER funds to support students through a variety of needs, which have pivoted throughout the pandemic. In the beginning, we focused on cleaning, sanitizing, and providing masks to students. We opened schools in August 2020 under a hybrid learning program and used funds to (1) set up new fully functional classrooms with technology, phones, air purifiers, physical barriers, and space to create safe and socially distant learning environments while students were in school and (2) to provide a new laptop to families in PK to 5th grade (who were not on our one-to-one laptop program) for a successful remote learning day. As time moved and we received additional funds, we put this towards adding teaching resources (curricula, materials, and teachers) to classrooms to address learning loss needs. We also found due to the environment we had to provide incentives to employees for excessive time spent supporting their students."

—**Roanoke County Public Schools, VA**

"Our district has been committed to maintaining its mission in providing our students with the best opportunities for academic success. In addition to addressing the various social and emotional wellbeing of students and staff, with the implementation of research-based academic specialists providing intervention to students who are below benchmark, we have seen great academic gains from the start of this current school year to the mid-year benchmark in December 2021. We remain committed to this approach in providing necessary resources to overcome the academic regression that took place during the pandemic for some students."

—**Crane Elementary School District, AZ**

"Our district has utilized funds to increase the ability of students to improve their education in the best environment possible by providing curricula, technology, supports, etc. Our old buildings were repaired and our HVAC units were replaced along with replacing LED lighting at all schools in order to provide the best learning environment possible. We have provided professional development to our staff and purchased Tier I curricula for our schools to be able to provide exceptional instruction. In addition, the funds have helped us keep our schools open through the global pandemic while making sure the students and staff have all of the cleaning supplies and PPE needed at all times. One of our most exciting things is to provide school supplies to all students for the next 3 school years in order to provide some financial relief to our families."

—**Catahoula Parish Schools, LA**

"Our district prioritized the use of ESSER funds to move the district forward and emerge stronger than before the pandemic. Our priorities are: Health & safety of our students & staff; Embracing the opportunity to implement innovative technology and learning systems; Addressing learning loss for our students; Providing additional supports for the social and emotional well-being of students and staff; and Improving our facilities and overall building health."

—**Williamsport Area School District, PA**

Learn more about how school districts are spending ESSER funds to support students at [asbointl.org/ESSER](https://asbointl.org/ESSER).