

## Table of Contents

- I. Context..... 2
  - Purpose of this Guide ..... 2
  - What’s Required..... 3
    - About the ESSER III District Plan ..... 3
    - About the Safe Return to In-Person Instruction & Continuity of Services Plan ..... 3
- II. Overview of Federal Requirements for the ESSER III District Plan ..... 4
  - Student Investment Account (SIA) Plan and Community Engagement ..... 5
  - Review and Feedback..... 5
    - Overview/General Information Resources..... 6
- III. Instructions to Build and Submit the ESSER III District Plan ..... 6
  - Section 1. District Use of ESSER III Funds to Address Unfinished Learning ..... 7
    - Federal Requirements ..... 7
    - Section Context..... 7
    - Investment Priorities for the  $\geq 20\%$  ..... 8
    - Form Items..... 8
    - Additional Resources ..... 10
  - Section 2. District Community Engagement to Inform the Use of ESSER III Funds ..... 10
    - Federal Requirements ..... 10
    - Section Context..... 10
    - Form Items..... 11
    - Additional Resources ..... 12
  - Section 3: ESSER III Integrated Planning Tool ..... 12
    - Federal Requirements and Section Context..... 12
    - IPT Instructions ..... 13
- V. Contact Information ..... 14

# Oregon ESSER III District Plan Guide

## I. Context

On March 11, 2021, President Biden signed the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act of 2021. The ARP Act includes nearly \$122 billion for the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER III) Fund. State and Federal communications are referring to the Act and funds as “ARP-ESSER” or “ESSER III” - these are interchangeable. The Oregon Department of Education (ODE) was allocated \$1.121 billion in ESSER III funds and 90% of this amount (\$1,009,633,486) must be allocated to districts using the Title I formula. The [Oregon ESSER III State Plan Application](#) for this funding was submitted on June 7, 2021, and on July 15, was formally [approved by the US Department of Education \(USED\)](#).

This federal relief funding is a significant opportunity for Oregon to provide support recovery from impacts of the pandemic and accelerate student achievement; to address student needs and emerge stronger post-pandemic. Outcomes realized through the use of the ESSER III funds can set a foundation for years to come. As such, we have a collective responsibility to invest strategically, monitor implementation, and report on progress transparently.

The Department believes that to demonstrate strong growth at the state and local levels, it remains important to invest in a small number of high-impact items, within a cohesive and aligned strategy. These investments should be rooted in research and best practice as the most critical for long-term student success. ODE strongly encourages all districts to capitalize on this moment to create generational impact, lasting legacy, and a roadmap for investments that can and should be made in the future.

With strategic investments, the ESSER III funds will allow us to expand efforts already underway, such as:

1. Addressing unfinished learning through asset-based acceleration strategies.
2. Prioritizing health, safety, wellness, and connections for all communities.
3. Strengthening high-quality, culturally-sustaining and revitalizing instruction, leadership, and pathways to graduation and post-secondary transitions.

## Purpose of this Guide

This guide serves as an accompanying resource to aid in the completion of the required deliverables for the ESSER III District Plan. It is designed to:

- Provide additional context for the ESSER III District Plan
- Clarify related federal requirements
- Outline the relationship between the Student Investment Account (SIA) plans and ESSER III District plans.
- Provide technical information to complete the ESSER III District Plan deliverables.
- Share resources to support district planning.

# Oregon ESSER III District Plan Guide

## What's Required

All Oregon school districts are required to **complete and submit the following items through a single Smartsheet form to ODE no later than August 23, 2021:**

1. An ESSER III District Plan; and
2. A Safe Return to In-Person Instruction & Continuity of Services Plan.

### About the ESSER III District Plan

The ESSER III District Plan is designed to be completed and submitted by school districts. Districts must include all public schools within the district boundaries that the district operates or sponsors including district-sponsored charter schools as part of their plan.

- Build on learning from their Student Investment Account (SIA) Plan;
- Provide essential information required by ESSER III by acting as a structure for collecting and aligning the ESSER III-specific information to support planning and sharing key information with your community and staff.

### About the Safe Return to In-Person Instruction & Continuity of Services Plan

- Replaces the Ready Schools, Safe Learners Operational Blueprint under Executive Order 21-06;
- Fulfills the requirements of American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER III) State Plan; and
- Fulfills the requirements of the Oregon State Board of Education requirement. (OAR 581-022-0105).
- Should be informed by the [Ready Schools, Safe Learners Resiliency Framework for the 2021-22 School Year](#).

## Process Steps for Completing and Submitting All Plans by August 23, 2021

1. [Access the Smartsheet Form](#)
2. Review and utilize the following resources to help complete each Section in the Smartsheet Form:
  - (Sections 1-3) – This ESSER III District Plan Guide can aid you in the completion of the plan deliverables for the ESSER III District Plan. It includes context, a summary of key federal requirements, technical information, and resources.
  - (Section 4) - The [Continuity of Services Instructions](#) as an accompanying resource to aid in the completion of the plan deliverables. It includes technical information and instructions.
3. Complete each Section:
  - Section 1: District Use of ESSER III Funds to Address Unfinished Learning
  - Section 2. District Community Engagement to Inform the Use of ESSER III Funds
  - Section 3: ESSER III Integrated Planning Tool
    - Complete and upload the [ESSER III Integrated Planning Tool](#)
  - Section 4: Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan
    - Complete and upload the [Continuity of Services Plan Template](#) and paste the public link in Smartsheet
  - Section 5: Document Upload

## II. Overview of Federal Requirements for the ESSER III District Plan

The ESSER III District Plan is designed to meet the federal requirements for a Local Education Agency (LEA) Plan as outlined in the ARP Act. You may reference the requirements as well as ODE’s response, in [Section E](#) of the Oregon ARP ESSER State Plan.

Many of the federal guidelines and requirements (such as data collection requirements) have not yet been decided by USED and the funds extend until September 2024, so we expect district plans for the use of ESSER III funds to necessarily be updated and evolve over time. ODE will review federal guidelines as they are released and determine whether amendments or updates to the ESSER III District Plans are necessary. ODE is committed to partnering with districts to

# Oregon ESSER III District Plan Guide

support the development of plans over time, as more is learned about local needs and federal guidelines.

## Student Investment Account (SIA) Plan and Community Engagement

The U.S. Department of Education (USED) requires that school districts develop high-quality plans for the use of ESSER III funds to provide a safe return to in-person instruction along with a focus on meeting student’s academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs.

A notable planning requirement is for districts to engage in meaningful consultation regarding the use of ESSER III funds. Almost all districts across Oregon conducted community engagement as part of their SIA planning process. In the Oregon ESSER III State Plan, ODE asserted that *most* of the consultation requirements for district’s use of funds are met by districts that submitted an SIA Plan Application and an SIA Plan Update.

As part of ESSER III requirements ODE is only collecting supplementary engagement information for:

- Migrant students, and
- Students who are incarcerated.

**Please note:** If your district did not submit an SIA Application for School Year 2020-21 and/or an SIA Plan Update for the 2021-23 biennium, ODE will connect with you to develop an alternate plan to meet the related ESSER III requirements.

## Review and Feedback

ODE will use and consider the information submitted through the ESSER III District Plan along with SIA Plan information previously shared with ODE to evaluate whether the ESSER III planning requirements have been met. ODE may contact districts for clarification or more information.

ODE will use and consider information in the ESSER III District Plan with other related data collections and expenditure reports to monitor progress and overall compliance, including the district use of ESSER III funds consistent with section 2001(e)(2) of the ARP Act. (Prior to receiving funding commitments, each district signed the [LEA Assurances for the ARP ESSER Fund](#), issued by ODE in June 2021, that assured the use of funds in accordance with the ARP Act.) ODE acknowledges that districts may not yet have a finalized plan and that the plan may change over time. Districts will not be held accountable to spend the funds as estimated, however, all expenditures must be allowable under the ARP ESSER III Act. ODE may periodically ask for an update to districts’ ESSER III District Plans.

The USED has not yet issued final regulations on data requirements. However, the USED [proposed data collection](#) is available for public comment and review. The deadline to submit comments is on or before August 31, 2021. ODE will communicate any new data or reporting

# Oregon ESSER III District Plan Guide

requirements with districts as they become available.

## Overview/General Information Resources

- [ODE ESSER III Website](#) includes timelines, presentations, district allocations, and other resources supporting the [Oregon's ARP ESSER \(ESSER III\) State Plan](#).
- [Oregon Invests & Envisions Equity in Education Framework](#) to guide district and state investments under the ESSER III allowable uses.
- [USED Frequently Asked Questions](#): Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Programs and Governor's Emergency Education Relief (GEER) Programs.
- The [Final ARP ESSER Fact Sheet](#) includes additional background information and lists allowable uses.
- [Office of Elementary & Secondary Education Emergency Relief Fund Webpage](#) has an array of ESSER related information, including links to what's happening around the nation.

## III. Instructions to Build and Submit the ESSER III District Plan

The **ESSER III District Plan** must be submitted using the [Smartsheet](#) by August 23, 2021. The information addresses the following:

- District investment priorities, including strategies and evidence-based interventions to address the academic impact of lost instructional time. A minimum of 20% of each district's total allocation must be spent on addressing the academic impact of lost instructional time.
- Student needs the district has identified through their needs assessment, including community engagement related to the SIA Plan process and, if applicable, other related initiatives (e.g., RSSL and, strategic planning) that are informing ESSER III investment decisions.
- Initial information on current and planned engagement activities to inform the use of ESSER III funds to support migrant students and students who are incarcerated.
- The estimated (or budgeted) costs of key activities the district is investing the ESSER III funds in to support the strategies. (See the [ESSER III Integrated Planning Tool section](#) in this guide for additional details.)

Districts must include all public schools within the district boundaries that the district operates or sponsors including district-sponsored charter schools as part of their plan.

The following sections in this guide walk through each component of the ESSER III District Plan as they appear in the Smartsheet. They outline relevant federal requirements, provide technical information for the form, and include some resources and contextual information to support planning.

# Oregon ESSER III District Plan Guide

## Section 1. District Use of ESSER III Funds to Address Unfinished Learning

### Federal Requirements

U.S. Department of Education (USED) recognizes that the safe return to in-person instruction must be accompanied by a focus on meeting students' academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs, and by addressing the opportunity gaps that existed before – and were exacerbated by – the pandemic.

Districts are required to use at least 20 percent (20%) of ESSER III funding to address [unfinished learning](#), or expenditures related to addressing the academic impact of lost instructional time through the implementation of evidence-based interventions.

**Evidence-based Interventions** are practices or programs that yield **evidence** of student results and improved learning outcomes. The intent of grounding in evidence-based interventions is to ensure formal research and studies undergird the actions districts and schools take to support student learning and well-being. They are defined in four tiers.

- Tier 1 – Strong Evidence: the effectiveness of the practices or programs is supported by one or more well-designed and well-implemented randomized control experimental studies.
- Tier 2 – Moderate Evidence: the effectiveness of the practices or programs is supported by one or more well-designed and well-implemented quasi-experimental studies.
- Tier 3 – Promising Evidence: the effectiveness of the practices or programs is supported by one or more well-designed and well-implemented correlational studies (with statistical controls for selection bias).
- Tier 4 – Demonstrates a Rationale: practices that have a well-defined logic model or theory of action, are supported by research, and have some effort underway by a State Educational Agency, LEA, or outside research organization to determine their effectiveness.

*Referenced from USED's [ESSER and GEER FAQ](#), May 2021*

### Section Context

Section I focuses on the district plans for the use of ESSER III funds to address student needs arising from the COVID-19 pandemic, with a particular focus on strategies and evidence-based interventions or activities to address unfinished learning. A focus on deep investment in a small number of high-impact areas with cohesive and aligned strategies can provide a tremendous opportunity for significant growth.

# Oregon ESSER III District Plan Guide

## Investment Priorities for the ≥20%

To support planning, ODE adapted Education Resource Strategies (ERS)'s [five research-backed overarching “Power Strategies,”](#) which encompass a number of evidence-based interventions to address unfinished learning. Under each strategy are examples of interventions. The examples are included in the form itself as well as in the ERS resource link.

**Power Strategies:** in the context of this guide, the term is based on [ERS’ 5 “power strategies” \(and real-life examples\) to accelerate equity-focused recovery and redesign](#). ERS describes “power strategies” as strategies that address critical student needs and lay a sustainable foundation for lasting improvement. They are grounded in years of research on how to best support students’ academic and social-emotional development.

While options are listed for districts, ODE recognizes that district and school leaders have an array of choices and local needs for investment. If a district identifies something outside of the suggested strategies, please select “Other Strategy” and provide detail.

## Form Items

In the Smartsheet, you are asked to identify the strategy (or strategies) your district is prioritizing or is likely to prioritize. For each strategy you select, there are two follow up questions:

- List Specific evidence-based intervention or activities within this Strategy. (<200 words)
- Describe how the district will measure the effect of this investment for students who have been most impacted by COVID-19? (<500 words)

Please review the Strategies below adapted from Education Resource Strategies (ERS) and indicate which strategy (or strategies) best describes your district’s priorities for addressing academic impact of lost instructional time.

- Our district has or is likely to prioritize the following strategy (or strategies): (Select all that apply; it is okay to only select one)
  - **Empowering, Adaptable Instruction:** For students to experience empowering curriculum that is motivating, appropriately-challenging, and that honors their identity and lived experience, districts and schools need a high-quality, culturally relevant curriculum, time and expertise for teachers to collaborate and check-in on student learning, and support that is differentiated and adjustable to meet students’ strengths and needs. (Possible examples: Implementing or deepening authentic, culturally-responsive learning; assessing quality of current instructional materials and Investing in high-quality instructional materials from the adopted materials list or independent adoption that meets state criteria and providing high-quality professional learning for teachers on implementation, investing in formative assessment practices, providing sufficient time for both content-focused collaboration and planning as well as student-focused collaboration, providing instructional coaching and resources, providing career



connect learning (CTE).)

- **Time & Attention:** For students to engage in learning that meets their strengths and distinct needs, districts and schools need to explore new ways to expand and vary the time and individualized attention they receive inside and outside of school hours. (Possible examples: Providing focused, high-dosage tutoring, peer tutoring, extended school day, enrichment programs, summer academic and enrichment, planning for post-secondary and career, developing work-based learning programs.)
- **Conditions for Teachers:** For students to experience engaging, high-quality instruction in a supportive environment, districts and schools need to prioritize ways to make teaching jobs and roles more rewarding, collaborative, and sustainable while also tending to teacher mental health and well-being. (Possible examples: providing mentors and/or at least one team member that has an instructional content expert to help with planning, providing stipends and/or release time for selected teacher leadership roles, investing in wellness supports, providing highly effective teachers with opportunities to share their strengths and expand their impact.)
- **Relationships & Mental Health Support:** For students to feel safe, welcome and supported in school, districts and schools need to develop structures and enact policies and practices that cultivate positive, supportive relationships, and provide for staff and student mental and emotional health needs. (Possible examples: create time and space in the school day for relationship building, provide opportunities for staff and students to make meaning of their experience through creative outlets [art, music, writing, movement etc.], regularly engage with staff, students and families to assess their relational and emotional support needs, and build robust relationships with linguistically and culturally responsive community health and mental health providers and local systems of care.)
- **Family & Community Partnerships:** To increase academic, health, mental health and emotional support for students, districts and schools need to engage families as partners and leverage the local community and its system of care to provide integrated, wrap-around services and supports. (Possible examples: Implementing or deepening community-based organization's support to provide authentic, culturally-responsive academic enrichment and learning supports, strengthening connections with local systems of care, communicating in home languages, culturally-specific liaisons, business and college partnerships.)
- **Other** prioritized strategies, please describe.

# Oregon ESSER III District Plan Guide

- This section also includes a district acknowledgment of the Plan review and approval process.

In review of meeting ESSER III planning requirements, Districts acknowledges that:

- ODE will use and consider information (1) submitted for the District ESSER III Plan, and (2) previously submitted as part of the SIA Application for SY 2020-21 and SIA Plan Update for the 2021-23 biennium; or
- If District did not submit the SIA Application for SY 2020-21 and/or SIA Plan Update for the 2021-23 biennium, District will work with ODE to meet the requirements fulfilled through the SIA process.

## Additional Resources

- [USED ESSER and GEER FAQ](#) focusing on use of funds for ESSER and GEER Programs, including ESSER III
- [USED Guidance on Maintenance of Effort Requirement](#)
- [USED ARP ESSER \(ESSER III\) Website](#)
- [Oregon Department of Education: Student Investment Account Guidance : Student Success Act : State of Oregon](#)
- [Do Now, Build Toward Approach](#): Seven principles for investing ESSER funds with a “Do Now, Build Toward” approach

## Section 2. District Community Engagement to Inform the Use of ESSER III Funds

### Federal Requirements

For ESSER III, USED requires districts to engage in meaningful consultation with stakeholders, including, but not limited to students, families, and educators (school and district administrators, teachers, and their unions).

To the extent they are present in the district, meaningful consultation is also required with Tribes, civil rights organizations (including disability rights organizations), and 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.

The districts must also provide the public the opportunity to provide input in the development of the district’s plan for the use of ESSER III funds and take such input into account.

### Section Context

The Oregon ESSER III State Plan asserted that *most* of the district’s planning requirements for meaningful consultation are met through the ongoing community engagement that has been part of the district’s SIA Plan process. The SIA Plan Application included narrative responses

# Oregon ESSER III District Plan Guide

describing the engagements and learning, artifacts of engagement, and the use of an equity lens for decision making. The SIA Plan update for the 2021-23 biennium required continued community engagement on SIA Plan priorities funding decisions.

Inherent in the assertion that the SIA Plan process meets most of the ESSER III meaningful consultation requirements is that districts are incorporating learning from their SIA needs assessment, including community engagement with focal groups, to identify student needs and inform ESSER III investments decisions and strategies.

**Please note:** *If your district did not submit an SIA Application for SY 2020-21 and an SIA Plan Update for the 2021-23 biennium, ODE will connect with you to develop an alternate plan to meet the related ESSER III requirements.*

For the ESSER III District Plan, ODE is only collecting supplementary information for migrant students and students who are incarcerated as those two student groups are not currently part of the SIA Plan process. The focus of section two of the Smartsheet is to collect baseline information and inform next steps to support the students' needs.

## Form Items

- **Community Engagement to Inform ESSER III plan:** The Oregon ESSER III State Plan asserts that districts already met most of the requirements for community engagement as a result of the SIA requirements. What student needs have you identified from your SIA planning process, including community engagement with focal groups or other related efforts (e.g., RSSL and strategic planning) that you are prioritizing for ESSER III investments? Please include student needs for those most impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. (<500 words)
  
- **Migrant Students**
  - How many migrant students are enrolled in your district and served through your district or through the ESD for the 2021-2022 school year? (If you have no migrant students please leave this field BLANK. If this field has any value entered there will be conditional questions, which are listed below.)
  - Have you conducted engagement during the past 18 months to better understand migrant student needs? Engagement may be in relation to your SIA Plan or any other related process (e.g., RSSL, strategic planning, or return to in-person learning.) (yes/no) (If you answer yes, more information about how you documented and/or use the learning from this engagement will be asked. <200 words)
  - Please indicate if engagement is happening through another organization and the name of the organization(s). (Selected response: Migrant Parent Advisory Committee (PAC), Students, Families, Principals and school leaders, Teachers, Community-based Organizations, ESD, or other organizations.)
  - Which programs and/or supports do your migrant students access? (More information regarding Migrant Education Program services can be found on the [Title](#)

# Oregon ESSER III District Plan Guide

- [I-C webpage](#)). (Selected response: Student and Family Supports, Summer School/Summer Activities, After School/Academic Supports, or other activities.)
- How have you or will you plan engagement to understand the needs of migrant students to inform interventions and use of ESSER III funds? (<500 words).
  - **Students who are incarcerated**
    - Have you engaged with incarcerated youth over the past 18 months in relation to your SIA plan or any other process (e.g., RSSL, strategic planning, and/or return to in-person learning)? (yes/no)
    - Indicate if engagement is happening through other organizations, and if so, which ones. Please check all that apply. (Selected response: No engagement is happening, ESD, Another school district that is providing contracted services, Contracted or community partner, or another entity)
    - Please describe how the engagement is informing the district's ESSER III investments. (<200 words)
    - Do you have a way to identify students returning from incarceration? (yes/no)
    - Do you have targeted services or consistent protocols (even if rarely used) to support their return to school? (yes/no) (If yes, please briefly describe your services to support students' return to school. (<200 words))

## Additional Resources

- SIA: Guidance for Eligible Applicants, [Part 3](#), which walks through the community information that was part of the SIA Application for SY 2020-21.
- [SIA Community Engagement Toolkit](#)
- [Tribal Consultation Toolkit](#)

## Section 3: ESSER III Integrated Planning Tool

### Federal Requirements and Section Context

USED requires districts to use ESSER III funds consistent with the ARP Act and to make such plans available to the public. As such, districts must complete and submit the ESSER III Integrated Planning Tool (ESSER III IPT). This tool is designed to help align outcomes and strategies to concrete activities and their associated budgeted or estimated costs. (It is an adapted (and simplified) version of the SIA IPT.) ODE recognizes that the ESSER III District Plans may change as districts adapt to new issues as in-person school resumes and pandemic conditions change. If dollar amounts are already solidified and budgeted, please include those. If not, please include estimated amounts.

**Outcomes** are the changes you are trying to cause.

**Strategies** inform long-term goals, have a theory of action or impact, and consider resources, context, people and timelines.

**Activities** are concrete and oriented to smaller steps or shorter time frames within the arc of a given strategy or set of strategies. Activities generally have specific resource allocations and might also be called initiatives, tactics, investments or work plans. (In the case of the ESSER III District Plan, an activity may be an intervention or a set of investments in support of an intervention.)

*Adapted from [SIA Guidance](#), December 2019*

**The ESSER III IPT includes outcomes and sections for the essential information, and at their discretion, districts can add sections, columns, or layer-in information relevant to their district and community.**

USED establishes overarching outcomes for ESSER III investment, which are to:

1. Address student needs arising from the COVID-19 pandemic and/or to emerge stronger post-pandemic, which may include reopening schools safely, sustaining their safe operation, and addressing students' academic, social, emotional, and mental health.
2. Address unfinished learning through the implementation of evidence-based interventions and ensure that those interventions respond to students' social, emotional, and academic needs and address the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on underrepresented student groups (each major racial and ethnic group, children from low-income families, children with disabilities, English learners, gender, migrant students, students experiencing homelessness, and children and youth in foster care).

## **IPT Instructions**

The following steps are required to complete and submit the ESSER III Integrated Planning Tool:

1. Open the [ESSER III Integrated Planning Tool](#)
2. Create a copy of the document or "Save As" and name the document *[District Name] ESSER III Integrated Planning Tool* before entering any information.
3. Review the sheet tabs from left to right starting with the instructions on the **Start Here** tab.
4. Follow the directions on the *Instructions* tab
5. Be sure to complete the final step: Post a copy of your plan on your district website where the public can find it and in a way that follows accessibility standards.

Note: If the district is providing funding to a public charter school they sponsor or operate to deploy separate strategies from that of the district, then they need to identify those strategies separately in the ESSER III IPT.

# Oregon ESSER III District Plan Guide

## V. Contact Information

- Oregon ESSER III District Plan: [ODE.ESSER@ode.state.or.us](mailto:ODE.ESSER@ode.state.or.us)  
Watch for more information on Office Hours and other Q&A opportunities coming soon.
- Ready Schools, Safe Learners Resiliency Framework and Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan Template:  
[Katarina.E.Moseley@ode.state.or.us](mailto:Katarina.E.Moseley@ode.state.or.us)