



To: **Arts Education Leaders**
From: Narric Rome, VP of Govt. Affairs and Arts Education
Date: July 15, 2021
Re: Release of Federal Education Funds and Connection to Arts Education

Summary: This past week, the U.S. Department of Education began to approve state plans for using the COVID-19 relief funds approved by Congress – so far 11 state plans have been approved. This step brings additional resources ([estimated](#) to be \$2,637 per pupil nationally) to states, school districts and schools that can mean support for arts education.

Background: Since March 2020, in response to the pandemic, Congress has approved [three stages](#) of education funds. In March 2021, Congress passed, and President Biden signed, the American Rescue Plan which [included](#) nearly \$122 billion in Elementary & Secondary School Emergency Relief (ARP ESSER) funds to support schools, students and educators. In April, the U.S. Department of Education released to state education departments two-thirds of these funds (\$81 billion). The remaining \$41 billion was to become available upon approval of their state ESSER plans – that’s the step the Department took today.

What’s Happening: Since June, the Department has posted the plans from 40 states on how they would utilize the ESSER funds. **All submitted state plans, including very helpful Fact Sheets and Highlights are posted [here](#).**

So far, the Department has approved plans from: **Arkansas, Massachusetts, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Rhode Island, South Dakota, and Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Washington D.C. and West Virginia.**

These plans typically include support for the following uses of these funds:

- ✓ Accelerating and sustaining the safe return to in-person instruction
- ✓ Implementing COVID-19 prevention and mitigation strategies, including expanding access to vaccinations for school staff and students
- ✓ Offering summer learning and enrichment programs
- ✓ Providing social, emotional, and mental health support to students
- ✓ Addressing the academic impact of lost instructional time

What Should Arts Education Advocates Do With This Information? As often the case in arts education policy, there can be quite a distance between federal funds and the local provision of arts education. In reviewing the uses of the funds mentioned above, many of them offer connections to the benefits provided by a quality arts education. Please consider the following resources when making the case to your education decisionmakers about how your state plan and local implementation should include arts education strategies.

Arts Education Partnership’s, ArtsScan is an excellent starting point, and the ArtsEdSearch database can provide evidence-based models relating to the subjects above.	The Education Commission on the States has COVID-19 related policy updates specific to finance, student health & wellness, interrupted schooling, virtual/hybrid learning and teachers.
Review the successful approaches taken in: New Jersey , North Carolina and South Carolina .	National Association for Music Education has an excellent brief on ESSER uses in the classroom.