

## **ESSERF Equitable Services Webinar FAQ Answers**

- 1. Can funds be used to pay for a district-level Instructional Technologist for teacher professional development related to digital/distance learning?**

Yes, this will be an allowable cost for ESSER funds.

- 2. Can private schools use last year's low-income count? (from Title I, Part A)**

Yes, last year's count may be used.

- 3. What if a district has out-of-district out-of-state private schools that are not listed?**

There are no requirements to transfer equitable service out of state.

- 4. Can funds be used to pay for cleaning supplies, masks, thermometers that have already been ordered?**

Yes, if the purchases occurred on or after March 13, 2020.

- 5. Many classrooms have tables instead of desks, which makes it impossible to adhere to the CDC's social distancing guidelines. Could some ESSER funds be used to purchase desks where they are needed to ensure social distancing?**

Yes, this would be an allowable cost for ESSER funds.

- 6. Can a school district use funds to support the Pre-K program with additional funds set aside in Title I. Would this be allowable?**

Yes, this would be an allowable cost for ESSER funds.

**7. On slide 25, should the FY20 number or the FY21 number be used for low income?**

Please use the FY20 numbers from Column I (School Eligibility Page).

**8. Is there a date that districts need to have alerted other school districts that their private schools want to participate in these funds?**

LEAs should receive notification by June 19, 2020.

**9. Are funds to be budgeted at the school's location? Or at the district's location?**

There is no requirement in ESSER to budget funds at the school level; however, funds should be budgeted in the location where they are spent.

**10. If a district makes a purchase with ESSER funds this year, what are the limitations in future years to avoid supplanting?**

There is no supplement, not supplanting requirement for ESSER funds; however, if the district makes purchases from ESSER this year, the LEA will not be able to use Title III or Title V next year.

**11. Would a lease agreement for student devices be allowable?**

Yes, this would be an allowable cost for ESSER funds.

**12. It was mentioned by staff at the Mississippi Department of Education that districts would have some flexibility to expedite purchases with these funds. If that is the case, are districts still required to get multiple quotes, etc.?**

Purchases using ESSER funds must follow federal procurement guidelines. Please refer to the federal purchasing decision tree found by selecting the link below:

<https://mdek12.org/sites/default/files/Offices/MDE/OFP/federal-programs-library/Federal%20Programs%20Procurement%20Decision%20Tree%20-%20Revised%208.23.18.pdf>

**13. If a private school did not participate in Title I, can the private school participate in ESSER?**

Yes, the private school may participate in ESSER equitable service.

**14. Will the districtwide administrative budget include the director's salary if we cost pool?**

Regarding the personnel details page, districtwide administration section, the LEA will only include administrative personnel budgeted with ESSER funds. ESSER funds cannot be a part of the cost pool.

**15. If a private school has decided NOT to participate, does the district check that? and is there anything further for the district to do for equitable service?**

On the Non-Public Equitable Share page, in the "Non-Participating Private Schools" section, select the non-participating private school and select either "Contacted-Refused Consultation" or "Contacted-Not Participating" in the drop-down box.

**16. A district has identified the need for social-emotional supports for students which will require a social worker. Is this allowable since it is an identified need?**

Social-emotional support is an allowable activity under Title IV, Part A; therefore, the LEA will need to select the budget tag "ESEA Programs."

**17. Could a district use the Free and Reduce documentation for its private schools instead of the household income survey?**

Yes.

**18. What role is suggested for the Federal Programs Director? LEA ESSER Update or Director?**

LEA ESSER Director

**19. Can the full allocation be used as district incentives if all activities are inclusive of all schools in the district?**

There is no requirement in ESSER to budget funds at the school level; however, funds should be budgeted in the location where they are spent.

- 20. Can a district include salaries or not? I heard you say not to but there's a place for personnel details.**

Salaries are allowable under the ESSER program.

- 21. Does the district have to form a committee and meet regarding these expenses?**

There is no requirement to meet; however, the LEA must be able to describe how it prioritized the most important educational needs resulting from COVID-19.

- 22. With equitable services, should the LEA also communicate with surrounding LEAs who have students zoned to the LEA attendance zone but attending private schools in a different LEA's attendance zone as is current practice with Title I applications?**

Yes.

- 23. May all public funds be used for a districtwide initiative?**

Yes, this allowable with ESSER.

- 24. Are these funds available to all public schools-Title I and non-Title I?**

Yes, ESSER funds are available to all schools.

- 25. Where can household forms be located for the private schools to complete?**

Yes, the forms are available in the MDE Document Library, Equitable Service, ESSER.

- 26. Does the non-public school have to follow Title I requirements?**

Yes, ESSER funds are available to all schools.

- 27. What is the timeline once the application is submitted?**

The application will be reviewed by staff and any changes will be requested of the LEA. Once the application is in an approvable format, the LEA will be granted access to request funds.

- 28. Based on the ESSER FAQ from the May webinar, charter schools do not provide equitable services to private schools even though charter schools operate as LEAs. How is this indicated in MCAPS in the equitable services section?**

Check the "District does not have any private schools" box on the Non-public Equitable Share page.

- 29. Do charter schools automatically select no private schools in my district?**

Yes, charter schools do not provide equitable service to non-public schools.

- 30. Can private schools participate in ESSER but not participate in Title I?**

Yes, private schools can participate in ESSER but not in Title I.

- 31. Does the LEA secure all household income forms from private schools to arrive at the low-income numbers?**

Yes, unless the LEA has the low-income count from FY20 participating private schools.

- 32. Where are the 12 initiatives?**

It is in the FAQ document; check webinar.

- 33. Slide 32 mentions budgeting by location. There are two schools in the LEA. May the LEA budget all funds at the district level and send out to the schools instead of budgeting for each school?**

There is no requirement in ESSER to budget funds at the school level; however, funds should be budgeted in the location where they are spent.

- 34. Does the MDE require school board approval for the ESSER budget?**

No, the MDE does not require LEA's board approval.

- 35. The presentation indicated that districts could use the funds to cover existing staff salaries and to keep people employed. Given taxes are**

**likely to be down, is this acceptable, or does the LEA need to follow the guidance of not using staff?**

Salaries are allowable under the ESSER program.

- 36. What if private schools indicated a desire to participate but they do not submit the household income forms? How long does the LEA give them to submit?**

Two weeks is a reasonable time.

- 37. How should LEAs be notified of out-of-district private school participation and what is the timeline?**

June 19, 2020 is the established deadline to upload ESSER Intent to Participate Form.

- 38. Can an LEA submit a budget if it has not heard from the private school in the district or from the surrounding school districts where other private schools are located?**

Yes, but the LEA must have adequate documentation that attempts were made to contact private schools.

- 39. Can an LEA use this money for internet connectivity for students without access at home?**

Yes, this will be an allowable cost for ESSER funds.

- 40. What if an LEA cost pooled in FY20 but will not in FY21? Does the LEA still have to allocate ESSER funds to cost pool?**

LEAs are not able to cost pool ESSER funds. The LEA will have to take the administrative cost from the ESSER program.

- 41. Does someone have to administer the grant?**

Yes.

**42. What is the date for submission?**

July 10, 2020 is the deadline; however, the LEA can request an extension. Please email Quentin Ransburg at [qransburg@mdek12.org](mailto:qransburg@mdek12.org) requesting an extension.