



## **The Opportunity**

On March 11, 2021, President Biden signed the American Rescue Plan into law, putting nearly \$2 trillion into all facets of the American economy. Included in this legislation is approximately \$122 billion for public education, including a whopping \$12.4 billion for public education and up to \$3 billion for out of school time (OST) in Texas. A more extensive overview of available ESSER III funds can be found at the end of this document.

Along with the impressive, even staggering, dollar amounts outlined comes an incredible opportunity to reconsider education in this state and this country, seizing the incredible investment of this moment to build something sustainable, communal, and different. With this money, we can take an enormous step closer to reaching every kid in Texas through OST and doing it in a way that engages whole communities. Together we can design and implement youth- and family-centric supports that will reduce poverty, proactively address racial and gender equity, and catch up those kids who most need us right now.

We must take an all hands on deck approach to this effort leveraging existing relationships, identifying new ones, and cultivating as much engagement as possible to get this money into the right hands to serve kids. With a collaborative, coordinated effort to advocate at local, regional, and statewide levels, we can improve and invest in community partnerships that will help us to secure sustainable funding for more and better out of school time opportunities for Texas kids.

## Questions for Consideration

- What do we want to accomplish if we could do exactly what we wanted with ESSER money?
  - What will be different in 3-4 years with this investment?
  - What will be true for Texas kids if we spent this money with them in mind?
  - Does this proposal take a good first step in that direction? What's missing?
- What resonates? What falls flat? What jumps out?
  - How do we account for the field's sustainability in this plan?
- Does this align with our strategic plan and that of our partners and stakeholders?
- Does this approach close gaps; increase equity; help the kids who need it most?
- Are there any kids or programs who don't show up or aren't supported in this framework?
- What are the channels to ensure a student-centered approach?

## **Strategy Considerations**

There are three components to be mindful of as we examine and refine this strategy: immediate ESSER III obligation of funds at both local and state levels; quality and quality improvement; and sustainability & alignment.

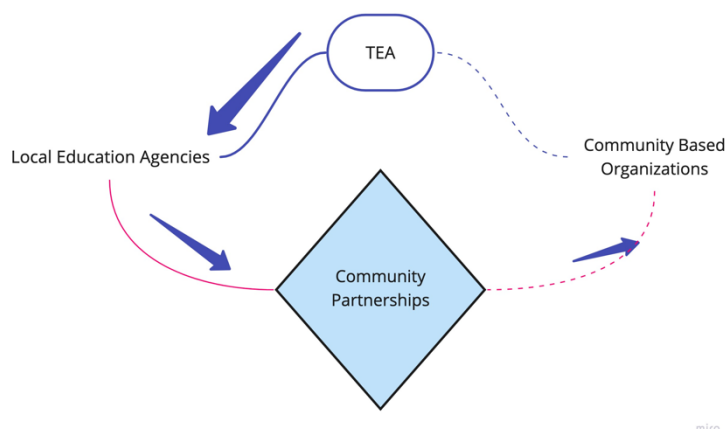
ESSER: TXPOST and its partners must begin local education agency (LEA) and state education agency (SEA) advocacy around ESSER relief dollars with a focus on ESSER III and the community partnerships it explicitly promotes in the summer, afterschool, and learning recovery spaces.

Quality: Sustaining and starting high quality OST programs is in the interest of every program in Texas, and we need to increase our capacity to support all the kids who need us at this moment. As we work toward this outcome, we should prioritize dialogue about why quality matters and commit to a culture of accountability to the youth we serve. With a once in a lifetime

opportunity in ESSER III, we can invest in infrastructure that will support our efforts to gather more data on what works to serve kids in OST and analyze and extrapolate from that data to see improved impact as a result of our better understanding. Quality and quality improvement in Texas will be more informed, more strategically aligned across objectives, and more likely to be available if we do our work well.

Sustainability: As Texas experiences an incredible influx of temporary funding, we have to look beyond the old way of doing things and the existing infrastructure we have in place. Part of what this money can fund is a different way of connecting people, and this will require innovation and creativity in our thinking and our building. When we get to the other side of ESSER funding, we should be able to do things better than we can currently. In large part, this means better understanding the connections between existing structures and also understanding where there are currently no connections. If we can understand where the gaps are, we can design new systems that will fill those gaps for kids.

To date, our funding and safety net infrastructure relies heavily on the state-local system of school districts through both formula and grant funding. Texas Education Agency (TEA) aims to develop partnerships to support initiatives like Additional Days School Year (ADSY), goals like college, career, and military readiness, and existing state funding streams like 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21CCLC) and the Foundation School Program but has no requirements to guarantee meaningful engagement in those partnerships. Moreover, we're only directly funding half the equation.



We know we will have to have more and more meaningful partnerships to equitably close gaps for the kids who most need support, and the most direct path to those partnerships is to invest directly in the community-based organizations who are doing this work. If we level-up these organizations, we have a whole new world of foundation from which to build something new in Texas.

## Strategies for Implementation Guidance

### LEAs: Community Roundtables

Such an opportunity requires coordinated efforts at the local & statewide levels. Locally, TXPOST intends to support conversations with superintendents, either individually or in roundtable, regional discussions, to outline the following:

- Topics for consideration
- Questions to discuss
- Problems the district(s) wants to solve
- Understanding existing obstacles to district goals
- Ways OST can support reaching district goals
- Outlining how districts and community-based organizations (CBOs) can set shared goals
- Assessing what agreements might be necessary to go forward with community partnerships between districts and CBOs

In targeting communities where we have existing relationships and supporting regional networks as they undertake these conversations with the superintendents, we can document the process of these conversations to extrapolate best practices and build a tool that will support both the OST field and school districts in seeing these conversations had far more broadly. Such a resource will also serve as a key advocacy tool at the state level and with other peer advocates in the space. This toolkit and any designed templates will be publicly available and shared through TXPOST channels.

#### LEAs & TEA: Community Partnerships through Formula Funding

To fully institutionalize OST within our educational ecosystem, the local set asides outlined in ESSER III present an opportunity to more explicitly incorporate OST into district operations as a necessary 'service' from the district—establishing a version of the temporary 20% set aside in perpetuity. TXPOST proposes that districts first seek community partnerships with existing CBOs that are already providing high-quality OST and can more efficiently scale up their programs before opting to build their own, triggering more community connection and shared responsibility for whole-child development. By including district & CBO touchpoints (principal and site coordinator, for example) and cultivating a collaborative leadership model to govern this relationship, we can fortify school districts, engage assets in our communities, and coordinate such efforts across the state to keep improving outcomes for all Texas youth.

#### TEA: Community Partnerships

In building new, complementary systems rather than turning to existing infrastructure, TEA could also invest in building community partnerships by building a network of technical assistance and facilitation to support community partnerships, including connections with ESCs and districts to ensure appropriate coverage. Rather than rely on LEA personnel to coordinate relationships, however, CBOs and the SAN would be funded to lead this effort. In addition to then building the community from the community, we are also bringing solutions and connections to school districts rather than demanding that they do more. TXPOST could also serve as an expert and/or develop a network of partnership coordinators to support this effort across the state.

#### TEA: Grantmaking and/ or Passthroughs

Passthrough: TXPOST along with other statewide umbrella organizations (like BGC, YMCA, etc.) propose being passthrough organizations to conduct grantmaking, designed in partnership with TEA, to support each of our constituencies.

Knowing that existing grant infrastructure at the state level heavily favors organizations like school districts with significant organizational capacity over leaner, smaller community-based organizations, this proposal will allow for a different reach into communities and to OST organizations than is typically possible from TEA. To fully support Texas kids, we need to be connecting with the OST programs who are closest to their communities. Especially with so much money already flowing to LEAs through ESSER III, this proposal offers a complementary, rather than redundant, path to reaching more programs and more kids.

TEA Grantmaking: Conversely, TXPOST could consult with TEA on designing a grantmaking program geared directly at those harder-to-reach CBOs. The state of Georgia is currently working with the statewide afterschool network (SAN) there on this proposal. GaDOE will retain oversight over the funding and grant monitoring, and GSAN will bring their particular expertise to designing an equitable, accessible grant program.

### TEA: Tutoring & Learning Recovery

There are existing proposals under consideration at the Legislature relating to tutoring as a key strategy to recover lost learning. We know that more than academic learning has been lost, and therefore more than merely academic tutoring interventions will be necessary to recover. In expanding what we mean by tutoring, we can incorporate community partnerships in this important recovery effort. Moreover, some proposals include recommendations to deploy a tutoring corps made up of educator candidates, solving dual goals of gaining clinical education hours and providing meaningful relationships with tutors to support remediation. Again, we should consider OST professionals as another component of such a corps, potentially offering additional training to ensure successful implementation and allowing for “credit” to promote expanded career opportunities for our own staff in the future.

### TEA: Existing Programs

The flexibility and space for innovation that a program like ADSY creates reveals prime real estate in which to attack learning recovery with just as much innovation. Particularly with an eye on sustainability for these wraparound services and targeted interventions, ADSY school districts should focus on establishing community partnerships to provide OST services to Texas youth. In adopting a model situated in a community understanding of schools, we can better leverage this current influx of resources and future, more sustainable opportunities through Texas funding streams.

Additional state initiatives will yield similar opportunities, and TXPOST’s current legislative efforts will help in establishing a foundation from which to better understand and advocate around such opportunities through the lens of ESSER funding building the community partnerships necessary for long-term sustainability.

### TEA: Other State Activities

In addition to funding a significant increase in OST at a programmatic level, TEA has the opportunity to invest in OST at a more systemic level, building robust infrastructure to support community partnerships, data collection and analysis, coordination and alignment, and continuous quality improvement. TXPOST can invest in additional resources around our quality standards, including trainings & technical assistance. TXPOST can also facilitate data coordination and analysis and is currently undertaking a TEKS alignment project with its Service Learning pilot program.

## ESSER III

Texas is receiving \$12.4 billion from ESSER III that is broken out according to the chart below.

**Table 2. Summary of State Educational Agency (SEA) Grant Reservation Requirements Proposed Under the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Fund Included in the Senate Substitute to H.R. 1319**

SEA Reservations and Allocations	Percent to Be Reserved or Allocated by the SEA of Total SEA Grant Award
Reservation of funds for activities to address learning loss	At least 5.0%
Reservation of funds for summer enrichment activities	At least 1.0%
Reservation of funds for afterschool programs	At least 1.0%
Reservation of funds for other state activities	At most 2.5%
Reservation of funds for administration	At most 0.5%
Allocation of funds for grants to local educational agencies (LEAs)	At least 90.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

### Local Education Agencies

Of that, 90%, or over \$11 billion, will go to LEAs. Of the money that LEAs are to receive, Congress has specifically set aside funds that school districts must use to address learning loss, including afterschool and summer. In Texas, this means more than \$2.2 billion set aside for learning recovery through OST.

“A local educational agency that receives funds under this section shall reserve not less than 20 percent of such funds to address learning loss through the implementation of evidence-based interventions, such as summer learning or summer enrichment, extended day, comprehensive afterschool programs, or extended school year programs, and ensure that such interventions respond to students’ academic, social, and emotional needs and address the disproportionate impact of the coronavirus on the student subgroups described in section 1111(b)(2)(B)(xi) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 6311(b)(2)(B)(xi)), students experiencing homelessness, and children and youth in foster care...”

### Texas Education Agency

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) will receive the remaining 10%, totaling more than \$1.2 billion. TEA has five different set asides and three of particular interest to the out of school time field: 5% (nearly \$621 million) to address learning loss and 1% (\$124 million) each for afterschool and summer initiatives.

“A State—

(1) shall reserve not less than 5 percent of the total amount of grant funds awarded to the State under this section to carry out, directly or through grants or contracts, activities to address learning loss by supporting the implementation of evidence-based interventions, such as summer learning or summer enrichment, extended day, comprehensive afterschool programs, or extended school year programs, and ensure that such interventions respond to students’ academic, social, and emotional needs and address the disproportionate

impact of the coronavirus on the student subgroups described in section 1111(b)(2)(B)(xi) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 6311(b)(2)(B)(xi)), students experiencing homelessness, and children and youth in foster care, including by providing additional support to local educational agencies to fully address such impacts;

(2) shall reserve not less than 1 percent of the total amount of grant funds awarded to the State under this section to carry out, directly or through grants or contracts, the implementation of evidence-based summer enrichment programs, and ensure such programs respond to students' academic, social, and emotional needs and address the disproportionate impact of the coronavirus on the student populations described in section 1111(b)(2)(B)(xi) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 6311(b)(2)(B)(xi)), students experiencing homelessness, and children and youth in foster care;

(3) shall reserve not less than 1 percent of the total amount of grant funds awarded to the State under this section to carry out, directly or through grants or contracts, the implementation of evidence-based comprehensive afterschool programs, and ensure such programs respond to students' academic, social, and emotional needs and address the disproportionate impact of the coronavirus on the student populations described in section 1111(b)(2)(B)(xi) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 6311(b)(2)(B)(xi)), students experiencing homelessness, and children and youth in foster care...”