2021-24 American Rescue Plan
Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund
Local Educational Agency ARP ESSER Plan, Application and Assurances
Purpose
Florida must subgrant not less than 90 percent of its total ARP ESSER allocation to local educational agencies (LEAs) (including charter schools that are LEAs) to help meet a wide range of needs arising from the coronavirus pandemic, including reopening schools safely, sustaining their safe operation, and addressing students’ social, emotional, mental health, and academic needs resulting from the pandemic. The State must allocate these funds to LEAs on the basis of their respective shares of funds received under Title I, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) in fiscal year (FY) 2020.

The purpose of this document is to guide districts to plan for the continued implementation of reopening and recovery through the utilization of the 2021-24 ARP ESSER and to assure federal requirements are met. Florida utilized the 2020-21 District Reopening Plan and the Spring 2021 Education Plan to respond to and mitigate the impact of the emergency and to promote the health, safety, and welfare of persons connected with Florida’s educational system.

The Department 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. In this document, districts will describe how they will support the development of high-quality plans for the use of ARP ESSER funds to achieve these objectives for the following student groups: students from low-income families, from each racial or ethnic background, by gender, English Language Learners, students with disabilities, experiencing homelessness, in foster care, migratory students and other student groups.

Directions
Districts shall submit its ARP ESSER application to the Office of Grants Management via ShareFile on or before November 12, 2021. ShareFile access has been established for the ARP ESSER Lump Sum program for each LEA. The complete application shall include:

- LEA ARP ESSER Plan, Application and Assurances utilizing this template.
- DOE 100A Project Application Form; and
- DOE 101 Budget Narrative Form.

Each LEA developed and made publicly available on the LEA’s website a plan for the safe return of in-person learning in the Fall of 2020. This was before the enactment of the ARP Act. This plan must be updated to address the requirements of the U.S. Department of Education’s Interim Final Rule, 88 FR 21195. The requirements of the Interim Final Rule are summarized in Appendix A. Each LEA shall seek public comment on the updated plan and take such comments into account prior to the submission of the final plan to the Department. Updated plans must comply with state law, including any applicable executive order, any agency emergency action, or any agency regulation or rule. No later than 60 days from receipt of its DOE 200, Project Award Notice, each LEA shall email its updated final plan to recoveryplan@fldoe.org. The subject line of the email must include district name and Plan for the Safe Return of In-person Instruction. Upon the Department’s approval, the LEA shall post this plan on the LEA’s website within 90 days of the award.
Part I: Implementation Plan

The LEA will submit an implementation plan, outlining planned activities for each of the following uses of funds under section 2001(e) of the ARP Act. The description must be adequate to ascertain that the proposed use of funds is necessary to prevent, prepare for, or respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, including its impact on the social, emotional, mental health, and academic needs of students. Activities should be numbered consecutively. If the LEA does not plan any activities for one or more authorized uses, please indicate that there are no planned activities. School district LEAs shall include the activities identified for charter schools within the LEA, aggregated at the district/LEA level.

Public Comment Requirement: The School District of Manatee County’s (SDMC) Local Educational Agency ARP ESSER Plan was crafted through meaningful consultation with its partners to include civil rights organizations (such as 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.

Actions included posting a draft ARP ESSER Fund LEA Plan on the SDMC website’s homepage with a request for public comment that included a hyperlink to the ARP ESSER Community Input Survey. This information was available in both English and Spanish. Notice of this opportunity for public comment also included a mass online dissemination to teachers, youth serving agencies, stakeholders, and partners by leveraging the district’s active participation in various coalitions, committees, and groups representing subgroups of Manatee County.

To reach parents, ConnectEd calls were conducted in English and Spanish directing them to the SDMC website and survey. The survey was open and publicized from November 17th to the 29th to allow time to review feedback and update the plan. Public notice of the ARP ESSER Fund LEA Plan was also accomplished via the Manatee County School Board public meeting on December 14, 2021 and its online searchable listing of agenda items.

Activity 1: Addressing Learning Loss (at least 20% of total allocation). Of the total amount allocated to an LEA, the LEA must reserve at least 20 percent of 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 those interventions respond to students’ social, emotional, and academic needs and address the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on underrepresented student subgroups (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).

The School District of Manatee County (SDMC)’s mission is to educate and develop students for success. Located in an area experiencing exponential growth, the district evaluates its student population, services, location of its programs, and capacity on a regular basis. To this effort, SDMC proactively develops strategies and interventions that will meet the needs of all of its students – especially those who are underserved or at-risk. Of its nearly 52,000 students, 54.6% identify as a minority, 57.7% are eligible for free or reduced lunch, 15.9% students with exceptionalities (non-gifted) and 11.6% are English Language Learners.

The background knowledge of its students and rich history of serving this community is what buoyed SDMC’s efforts as administration, staff and teachers quickly reinvented the delivery of education to ensure that students could stay on track to meet critical benchmarks. These actions went beyond pivoting to online learning, providing technology and digital access throughout the county, and ensuring that no child went hungry. However, even with this monumental effort, the impact of the pandemic highlighted gaps in services and areas of need that were especially true for especially true for Manatee’s underserved, disadvantaged and underrepresented student subgroups.

ARP ESSER funds will be used to provide effective and efficient instruction and services for disadvantaged and underrepresented students as well as additional support to address tiered academic support. These evidence-based interventions will extend learning during the school day, after school and summer months with innovative and engaging programming.
(1) **Extended Instruction**: Key efforts include a districtwide initiative that will provide funding to extend learning at every school site. Based on a per-pupil formula, for two years, each site will receive an allocation that must be used to support extended learning opportunities such as afterschool enrichment/tutoring, Saturday classes and summer enrichment. In addition, the most fragile Title I schools in the district, commonly referred to as the Big Ten, will receive additional funds to support these critical extended learning endeavors. As part of this work, these schools will be implementing a 6-week summer program with transportation.

(2) **Third Grade Reading Academy**: According to Florida Standards Assessment (FSA) English Language Arts (ELA) data, 49% of third graders districtwide scored a level 3 or above in 2020-21. Breaking this down per subgroup, only 13.6% of English Language Learners (ELL), 35.1% of students with low socio-economic status (SES), and 27.5% Students with Disabilities (SWD) scored proficiently. Data supporting Grade Level Reading reports that one in six children not reading proficiently in third grade do not graduate from high school on time, a rate four times greater than that for proficient readers. This program will provide robust support to third grade students not meeting key benchmarks. ARP ESSER funds support the staffing required for this person, which includes nine classroom teachers and fourteen paraprofessionals to deliver targeted interventions in small group settings.

(3) **Stronger Learning Environments**: Funds through ARP ESSER will be dedicated to providing a number of Intensive Reading and Math Remediation classes and supports to include 31 teachers. Additionally, having a core team of Reading Paraprofessionals to support high-intensive high and middle schools, underperforming students can participate in small group, direct instruction focusing on foundational reading skills. These educational serves are critical post COVID-19 due to overall gaps in learning. Furthermore, this delay in skill acquisition is an even larger challenge within reading classrooms in both middle and high schools than found in other core classes. Fulltime substitutes and classroom teachers for ESOL Resource Classrooms are also included in this effort to provide effective instruction to the students needing the most assistance. Note that a majority of this work is being continued from successful endeavors supported by ESSER II.

(4) **Professional Development Supporting the Reimagine Academy Program**: The Reimagine Academy Program is an evidence-based intervention to lift Manatee’s retained third graders. ARP ESSER funds will pay for non-contracted hourly so that Academy Teachers and paraprofessionals can participate in a boot camp, held outside of teacher contracted hours, to deepen their learning and understanding of the use and application of innovative and research-based materials and instruction to improve reading proficiency.

(5) **Curricula Development**: To align interventions and tiered support to curriculum standards while addressing gaps due to lost learning, School District of Manatee County (SDMC) teachers will actively develop curricula to include the new K-12 curriculum maps for reading and math. Funds will support non-contracted hourly for a team of teachers to write these maps, estimating 3-5 teachers per team for 3 full days. Additionally, maps are required in secondary to address updates in social studies. B.E.S.T. Standards address skills, standards, vocabulary that should be mastered prior to teaching course standards and has checkpoints that will generate data indicating gaps in student mastery. Curriculum maps need to address not only the standards for each area, but interventions to use when gaps are noted along with best practices and appropriate accommodations.

(6) **Volunteer Pre-Kindergarten Summer Booster**: Funded by ARP ESSER, this program will support Manatee’s emergent students who have completed VPK but are not yet ready for Kindergarten. This summer program will build their proficiency and achievement level and place them on the pathway to grade level reading.

(7) **Diagnostic Assessment for PreK – 12th Grade**: Dependent on what the State of Florida mandates and/or provides for progress monitoring, this school district will plan for the selection of meaningful and research-based diagnostic tools that can be used for all students.
(8) **Equitable Access:** ARP ESSER funds will help increase student access to college preparation activities – especially for underrepresented subgroups. The goal is for every eight-grade student throughout the School District of Manatee County (SDMC) to have the opportunity to sit for the PSAT over the next two years.

(9) **Districtwide Gifted Screening:** Ensuring that all student subgroups, including low-income and minority, have equal access to and are represented within the district’s gifted-and-talented program, SDMC will adopt a universal screening process. To this effort, funds will provide non-contracted hourly for three Psychologists to administer the second-grade district-wide gifted screening, using a new computer-based screening assessment, to more than 3,000 children.

(10) **Leading, Teaching and Learning:** To increase the skill level and capacity of Manatee’s administration and teachers, with emphasis on recognizing and supporting the vast needs of diverse learners, several programs, conferences, and collaborative professional development activities are contained within this proposal including the following examples:

- **Teacher Mentor Plan:** To address learning loss and the need for high-quality educators, SDMC proposes a Teacher Mentor Plan that will build capacity and skill required to leverage data analysis with effective lesson planning. This program will support new teachers by setting the example of a highly effective learning environment and help them develop data analysis and lesson planning skills. A teacher mentor will be stationed at every school site to support new teachers at their individual locations.

- **New Teacher Orientation/Induction:** This program will support the teaching profession and work to deter staff turnover. This program will provide a new teacher with meaningful interaction with members of the school district to ensure a successful start to the school year. Additionally, induction activities include ongoing support in the areas of the Danielson Framework to ensure thoughtful planning, environments conducive to learning, rigorous, standards-based instruction, and professional standards are understood and upheld. A new Higher Orientation will also be extended.

- **Summer Professional Development for the Teaching and Learning Conference:** Research suggests that seminars and workshops can be a highly effective means of sharing information and expanding educators’ knowledge and skills, especially when paired with collaborative planning, structured opportunities for practice with feedback, and follow-up coaching (Gusky, 2014). This four-day conference will build the capacity of Manatee’s Kindergarten - 12th grade teachers while aligning with the Manatee County Strategic Plan’s goal to establish professional learning systems to advance continuous academic improvements.

- **Professional Development on B.E.S.T. Standards for ELA and Mathematics:** Training opportunities for Kindergarten - 12th grade teachers will be offered throughout the school year that will focus on the implementation of the Florida B.E.S.T. Standards for ELA and Mathematics. Offered outside of teacher contracted hours, these professional learning sessions will promote collective responsibility for student achievement, narrow the achievement gap, and will build educator capacity in the areas of curriculum and instruction. The goals of the training align with the Manatee County Strategic Plan.

- **Professional Development Opportunities for Secondary adoption of B.E.S.T. Standards (grades 6-12):** to include intensive reading teachers, BEST champions, and other content areas to include Reading Coaches. The professional learning opportunities will build teacher capacity in the areas of intervention curriculum, progress monitoring, and best practices in instruction. Professional development opportunities for secondary will occur outside of teacher contracted hours throughout the school year. The second-year allocation will include professional development for year 2 of B.E.S.T. Standards implementation.

- **Leadership Training, Coaching, and Mentoring:** Includes activities such as the formation of professional learning communities (PLC) to disseminate information at school sites. Customized PDs for leadership. Supporting the enhancement and update of the district’s Leadership Development Program to include a systematic approach for leadership success and succession.

**Activity 2(A) Any activity authorized by the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965.**

ESEA supports equitable primary and secondary education with funds authorized for professional development, instructional materials, resources to support educational programs, and the promotion of parental involvement. ESEA
encompasses a number of Title Programs that guide the School District of Manatee County (SDMC)'s work and required direction of its resources. Specific activities funded through this application are noted in the following ARP ESSER Fund LEA Plan details and include Title I, C Migrant Education, Title III, Title IV, and Title IX. This plan includes a number of activities that can be tied to ESEA including Activity 2(M).

**Activity 2(B)** Any activity authorized by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

To meet the needs of its most fragile students, the School District of Manatee County (SDMC) aligns to IDEA, which “ensures that all children with disabilities are entitled to a free appropriate public education to meet their unique needs and prepare them for further education, employment and independent living.” Specific activities funded by ARP ESSER are noted in the following plan, including Activity 2(F).

**Activity 2(C)** Any activity authorized by the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act.

The School District of Manatee County (SDMC) offers programs to support students who have aged-out of school with GED support and career counseling. The Manatee Technical College also offers a wealth of programs that support adult learners. Specific activities funded by ARP ESSER are noted in the following plan, including Activity 2(F).


1. To expand student knowledge and access to fields supported by career and technical education, Manatee is developing an interactive field exploration tours program for students in 4th grade through 8th grade. Students will travel to the Manatee Technical College (MTC) and participate in guided tours of 16 career clusters that are offered on campus. Students will interview current career technical students, instructors, and program directors to learn about the opportunities and requirements for careers in this area. Lesson plans and activities will be aligned to the B.E.S.T. Standards. MTC will provide lessons and activities that will be developmentally appropriate for each grade level. It is expected that 40 school sites will engage these career exploration activities. Note that the cost for transportation is included within this proposal.

**Activity 2(E)** Coordination of preparedness and response efforts of local educational agencies with State, local, Tribal, and territorial public health departments, and other relevant agencies, to improve coordinated responses among such entities to prevent, prepare for, and respond to coronavirus.

Through a coordinated comprehensive and strategic plan, the school district leveraged its existing partnerships with local agencies, such as the Manatee County Health Department, to implement procedures and protocol critical for student and staff safety. Moving forward, the school district continues to evaluate its plan regarding the processes and outcomes of each activity.

1. **Oversight:** Funds will specifically support Administrator and Grant Management positions assigned to manage and oversee ESSER funding to ensure the effective delivery of and fulfillment of activities and services. This is a continued activity from ESSER II.

2. **Prevention:** Prepare for and respond to a coronavirus outbreak efficiently and effectively, funds will allow for temporary Custodians. Having a substitute will allow for the district’s regular custodial team to participate in critical professional development on the most up-to-date sanitation procedures. This coverage will also ensure that ongoing deep cleaning and sanitization efforts are uninterrupted when there is a staff absence.

Additionally, through ARP ESSER funds, the district will take actions to further improve the coordination of preparedness and response efforts through the implementation of the SNAP Health Center. This web-based system will manage student health data that is critical to pinpointing possible COVID-19 outbreaks and will connect the efforts of school nurses to district personnel to the Health Department. This information is included under Activity 2(G).
Activity 2(F) Activities to address the unique needs of low-income children or students, children with disabilities, English learners, racial and ethnic minorities, students experiencing homelessness, and foster care youth, including how outreach and service delivery will meet the needs of each population.

Serving nearly 52,000 students district wide, the School District of Manatee County (SDMC) employs a vast array of strategies, services, and activities to meet the needs of this community’s most at-risk population to include students who are disadvantaged, impoverished, homeless, English language learners or enrolled in Exceptional Student Education. The need for culturally appropriate and impactful outreach and service delivery is critical as more than half of SDMC’s students identify as a minority, 11.6% are English Language Learners – a percentage that has demonstrated steady growth, and 15.9% are students with varying exceptionalities. With the assistance of ARP ESSER, SDMC can create, support, and expand services that will impact the lives of this district’s most at-risk and underserved students.

(1) Addressing Learning Loss for Underrepresented Students: ARP ESSER will support an expansion of the Positive Interventions in Education (PIE) program, which is an alternative for Manatee County students who have been suspended out-of-school (OSS) as a consequence for certain violations of the district Code of Student Conduct. The program provides supervision in a structured environment, along with behavioral and academic assistance for a period of one to ten days. The goal is to decrease a student’s learning loss while they serve OSS as they have the opportunity to complete regularly assigned schoolwork, receive academic assistance from a Certified Teacher, and complete behavioral reflection activities. Students are primarily responsible for obtaining all academic assignments from their teachers and submitting them upon return to their zoned school. PIE is available on a first come-first serve basis with a daily program capacity of 30 students. Students who attend PIE will be counted in full attendance at their zoned school for each successful day completed.

PIE is especially critical to the working family as these students have the opportunity to stay on-track with their studies, learn key life skills, and are supervised during the school day. The need for this program is significant. PIE is currently offered at one elementary and one secondary site in south Manatee County. Having a daily capacity of 25-30 students, the secondary site has already served 400 students this school year. ESSER ARP would assist in expanding the program to offer a PIE unit in North Manatee County to meet the heightened need for these services as well as increase access to students living in an area that is demonstrating exponential growth. Funds will support staffing and technology needed to ensure program success.

(2) At-Risk Students: Mentoring and Objective Reflection & Restorative Education (MORRE) Program: In comparing student behavior data from Quarter 1 across three school years in Table 1, trending data reflects a significant increase of OSS actions at the middle school level this school year. Using 2019-20 Quarter 1 as a baseline, the data illustrates significant increases of OSS at all three levels. It was this data that precipitated the district’s current focus on SEL, Universal Tier I MTSS instruction, restorative practices, and the development of district-wide discipline matrices in all three levels.

Table 1: Trend Data: Students Suspended Out of School and OSS Actions

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>Actions</td>
<td>Days</td>
<td>Students</td>
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<td>612</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1,138</td>
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Working to promote academic achievement, personal success, and address the unique needs of at-risk students exhibiting behavior not conducive to learning, MORRE is a new program designed to reduce the impact of OSS by
providing a pathway for out-of-school suspension (OSS) forgiveness. While open to all students, this program will focus primarily on students who are impacted with higher rates of OSS.

School staff will work one-on-one with at risk students who are suspended from school, during the after-school hours, to forgive OSS. Funds will provide non-contracted hourly for 1 hour each day of services in elementary schools and 2 hours each day in secondary schools. Inclusive of all students.

(3) Career Advisory & Readiness Training (CART) Program: A newly developed program, CART will serve at-risk students attending alternative programs for intensive credit recovery, teenage parenting, and those involved with the juvenile justice system to help expand their career horizons and provide immediate placement into higher-earning jobs – particularly in Florida’s expansive service industry.

This program centers on the identification of potential career fields for students, the delivery of employability or “soft” skills, and the attainment of industry certifications such as SafeServ Manager training. This will assist student in obtaining managerial-level positions within Manatee’s flourishing service industry. The course will be connected to other district alternative programs, that include Learning Is for Everyone (LIFE), Teen Age Parenting Program (TAPP), and Impact, and is operated 5 days a week for 1 hour per day. Funds will support staffing, Serve Certification exams and curricula.

Note that the school district will leverage its robust partnerships with community organizations such as Replay Outreach, CareerSource Suncoast, Florida Ready to Work, and My Career Shines to assist with further skill development and job placement for students successfully completing the CART program. CART will additionally connect students who earn certifications to the culinary academy at Manatee Technical College (MTC). The goal is to expand this model of career prep for alternative students to other industry certifications and programs at MTC.

(4) Low-Income Emergent Learners: Soar In 4: Soar in 4 is Manatee County’s monthly movement to ensure all early learners and their families have the opportunities and support they need for success in preschool, school and beyond. Focusing on 15 economically disadvantaged neighborhoods and the Title I elementary schools in those zones, the goal is for all students to be reading on grade level by the end of third grade. Soar in 4 partners with 20 agencies that provide interactive and standards-based learning engagements in after school programs at each of Manatee’s Title I schools throughout the year, to include Mote Marine, Ringling College, Ringling Museum, The Bishop and more. Funds will support staffing critical to facilitating the active learning engagements. Funds will support non-contracted hourly to allow for a Soar in 4 Event at each school using teachers/paraprofessionals to facilitate interactive learning engagements.

(5) Students Experiencing Homelessness: Transportation to a school site remains a challenge for Manatee’s homeless students. Due to a lack of staffing, it can take 48 to 72+ days for the school district to arrange for a school bus reroute to/from the school of origin (school zone where the family became homeless). To mitigate these barriers, funding will support the hiring of a Transportation Coordinator to coordinate transportation services for homeless and immigrant students. This person is critical to providing seamless services to these high-risk students and families through ongoing communication and the coordination of daily access to school.

Activity 2(G) Developing and implementing procedures and systems to improve the preparedness and response efforts of local educational agencies.

Over the past two years, the School District of Manatee County (SDMC) has worked tirelessly to respond strategically to the COVID-19 crisis through a coordinated effort that included local agencies, the community at-large, local business owners, and stakeholders.

As part of this effort, Manatee’s school clinics have developed procedures consistent with the CDC and Florida Department of Health guidelines to protect students and staff during the COVID-19 emergency. The district also increased communication efforts through a number of channels to students, staff and families with messages aligning to CDC guidelines. An online COVID-19 CASES DASHBOARD was created that listed the number of confirmed COVID-19
cases that directly impacted the schools and district facilities. SDMC updates this page as needed based on information received from the Florida Department of Health. ARP ESSER funds will specifically support the following:

(1) **SNAP Health Center**: As the frontline workers of school health, nurses and health leaders require real-time information to stay ahead of COVID-19 outbreaks before they occur. Through ESSER ARP, the district will embark on another initiative to improve its preparedness and response to COVID-19 with the implementation of the SNAP Health Center. A secure, web-based software suite that is designed specifically to manage school health programs, this Electronic Health Record (HER) Software System increases accuracy of student health data by eliminating redundant data entry, ensures interoperability as it works with Student Information System Software, and increases efficiency and capability by saving time and improving operations. Student health data is secured by FERPA/HIPAA compliant software.

As part of its capabilities, SNAP will continuously monitor all health documentation entered into the system (including both students and staff members) for suspected or positive cases and exposures. If the number of COVID-19 occurrences reaches the district-defined threshold, automatic notifications are immediately triggered across the entire district, and HIPAA compliant emails are launched to defined stakeholders. The integrated Health Portal feature contains COVID screening capabilities for students and staff to record home-screening results, which are immediately reported to the district.

Note that the School Health staff are employed by the School District of Manatee County and Manatee County Health Department. Each school clinic is staffed by a School Nurse (Registered Nurse), Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) and/or Health Aide. This program will be uploaded on the school district’s Single Sign-on and provide secure access to these vetted staff. Reporting and data tracking activities relating to COVID-19 outbreaks will be monitored by the District Operations Center to best coordinate the district’s efforts to communicate in real-time with the Health Department.

**Activity 2(H)** Training and professional development for staff of the local educational agency on sanitation and minimizing the spread of infectious diseases.

(1) The School District of Manatee County (SDMC) provides a robust professional development program to its teachers and staff. Regarding COVID-19 and sanitation, ARP ESSER funds will support the training of its custodial staff. A qualified trainer will provide onsite professional development focusing on new cleaning techniques that will minimize the spread of infectious diseases and align to CDC guidelines. SDMC’s custodians will receive overtime so that training can occur outside normal work hours so as not to disrupt the current workload.

**Activity 2(I)** Purchasing supplies to sanitize and clean the facilities of a local educational agency, including buildings operated by such agency.

(1) To ensure that learning environments are clean and safe, the School District of Manatee County (SDMC) has earmarked ARP ESSER funds to support the purchasing/reimbursement of supplies to clean and sanitize the district’s school sites and buildings. SDMC will align to CDC guidelines and any other protocol when selecting sanitation supplies.

**Activity 2(J)** Planning for, coordinating, and implementing activities during long-term closures, including providing meals to eligible students, providing technology for online learning to all students, providing guidance for carrying out requirements under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and ensuring other educational services can continue to be provided consistent with all Federal, State, and local requirements.

Funded by braiding a number of federal programs and funding sources, the School District of Manatee County (SDMC) has the means to employ a vast array of strategies, services, and activities to meet the comprehensive needs of this community’s most at-risk population to include students who are disadvantaged, impoverished, homeless, English language learners or enrolled in Exceptional Student Education. Throughout the school closures due to COVID-19, the school district’s Food and Nutrition Department ensured that meals were disseminated at central locations (including school sites) so that no child went hungry. These activities have been recorded and compiled to serve as a roadmap to address future challenges.

During the height of the pandemic and beyond, the district’s Information Technology Services Department also worked to provide hotspots throughout the county, laptop computers, and other means of technology to promote a
seamless transition to online learning. The school district continues to take steps to support online learning for all students – especially those in underserved and/or disadvantaged areas of the community.

(1) To ensure that curricula are relevant, standards-based, and aligns with the needs of students, ARP ESSER funds support textbook adoption efforts.

Additional activities, not specifically tied to Activity 2(J), are reflected throughout SDMC’s comprehensive plan to include professional development, technology, staff liaisons and more.

**Activity 2(K) Purchasing educational technology (including hardware, software, and connectivity) for students who are served by the local educational agency that aids in regular and substantive educational interaction between students and their classroom instructors, including low-income students and children with disabilities, which may include assistive technology or adaptive equipment.**

The School District of Manatee County (SDMC) will earmark new ESSER funds to support 21st century learning throughout the district through educational software and overall connectivity

(1) Educational Software: The following are examples of educational software included in the district’s ARP ESSER Fund LEA Plan.

- Nearpod: This online interactive program utilizes formative assessments to drive insights into student learning. Adaptive instruction in real time is included with in-the-moment feedback. This builds authentic connections for students through checkpoints and activities focusing on social and emotional well-being. Nearpod assists students in building background knowledge and topic engagement.
- iTeacher Toolbox for online instructional platform: A digital collection from which teachers can draw relevant, standards-based resources to introduce new concepts, reteach standards, or help students learn prerequisite skills from earlier grades in both ELA and Mathematics. It is an easy-to-navigate platform that provides a complete set of K–8 instructional resources for mathematics, reading, and writing alongside multimedia content, discourse supports, and assessment practice.

(2) Connectivity: Manatee’s proposal includes funding to support network infrastructure, which is required to be upgraded across 31 school sites over the next 5 years. Upgrades to network switches across these 31 schools will ensure a robust and resilient network for Manatee’s students and staff to achieve their educational goals and support critical operational and life safety programs that are required by statute. Project Connect 2022 will be a SDMC initiative to assist with closing the home-work gap for students lacking broadband connectivity when they leave school campuses. This funding request will allow the district to expand a private wireless network infrastructure in up to eight regions or zones throughout the county and connect to the existing district-owned fiber network that supports Manatee’s most impoverished communities.

SDMC implementation plans include a procurement procedure to ensure that all purchases are approved and align to applicable State statues, Florida State Board of Education Rules, School Board policies and administrative procedures. All purchases will follow a system of advanced planning, scheduling and group buying to increase economies of scale and strengthen the efficiency of the daily procurement process for the school district.

SDMC’s Information Technology Services Department will be charged with coordinating resources and working with district and school administration to determine and fulfill needs. This department also provides a wealth of information on its webpage regarding connectivity and support.

**Activity 2(L) Providing mental health services and supports, including through the implementation of evidence-based full-service community schools.**

According to a report by the U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights, one of its 11 observations on the impact of COVID-19 indicated that “Nearly all students have experienced some challenges to their mental health and well-being during the pandemic and many have lost access to school-based services and supports, with early research
showing disparities based on race, ethnicity, LGBTQ+ identity, and other factors.\textsuperscript{1} ‘... nearly three in ten parents surveyed in a Gallup poll said their child was experiencing harm to [their] emotional or mental health with 45% citing the separation from teachers and classmates as a major challenge.\textsuperscript{2}

The school district’s Department of Student Services provides a wealth of services designed to mitigate risk factors facing today’s students including teams of School Counselors, Social Workers and Graduation Enhancement Technicians. Additionally, at the school sites, this department implements the Mental Health Awareness Education Plan, which integrates five hours of mental health education into grades 6-12 utilizing Sandy Hook Promise Start with Hello and other materials. SDMC also enjoys robust partnerships with local service agencies including providers of mental health. These agencies support students with referrals, outreach, and relevant information. ESSER ARP funds will continue to support the important work of the school district’s team of Social Workers and School Counselors who will assist in addressing the mental health needs of Manatee County’s students.

Lastly, Youth Mental Health First Aid is mandatory for every school district employee. This daylong education program provides information on the unique risk factors and warning signs of mental health problems in adolescents, builds understanding of the importance of early intervention, and teaches individuals how to help youth in crisis or experiencing a mental health challenge.

**Activity 2(M)** Planning and implementing activities related to summer learning and supplemental afterschool programs, including providing classroom instruction or online learning during the summer months and addressing the needs of low-income students, children with disabilities, English learners, migrant students, students experiencing homelessness, and children in foster care.

**1) Exceptional Student Education (ESE) Afterschool and Summer Tutoring:** Tutoring will be provided throughout the school district to address the most need. Held in a classroom setting, sessions will be limited to eight students with tutoring provided by 1 ESE Certified Teacher and 1 Paraprofessional or Behavioral Technician. The low staff/student ratio is necessary to provide individualized and small group instruction to students, which is critical to academic growth. Additionally, this low ratio will allow staff to assist students that may demonstrate problem behaviors thus preventing them from successfully participating in many other afterschool or summer programs.

Diagnostics and instruction will be provided using MindPlay Literacy, My Virtual Reading Coach, and Ascend Math. Through Destination Knowledge, software licenses are valid through August 2024 and include professional development tied to program implementation as well as on-going technical support such as running and interpreting reports, differentiating instruction, and how to utilize the program in a blended learning environment. Additionally, every student who needs basic skills instruction is assigned to MindPlay Virtual Reading Coach (MVRC). Additional instruction will be provided in a small group format by SDMC’s Certified Teachers.

Focusing exclusively on increasing the academic success of students with disabilities, this program will impact approximately 780 elementary and middle school students to be served at 43 school sites. To increase access to this supplemental program, transportation will be provided. Along with transportation and staffing, funds will provide for printing, supplies, materials, and technology-related supplies.

**2) English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Migrant Middle School Summer for Migrant Afterschool and Summer Programs:** SDMC provides afterschool tutoring for grades Kindergarten through 8\textsuperscript{th} for ten weeks and a month-long summer school program for middle school ELLs. To provide access to robust STEM-based learning, the ESOL and Migrant Summer School Programs will feature a science component to include coding and engineering. ARP ESSER funds will

\textsuperscript{1} https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/20210608-impacts-of-covid19.pdf

provide middle school ELLs with hands-on minds-on experiences linking to the science standards. Supporting afterschool tutoring for ELLs, funding will provide Vocabulary Workshop Kits critical to language acquisition.

**Activity 2(N)** Addressing learning loss among students, including low-income students, children with disabilities, English learners, racial and ethnic minorities, students experiencing homelessness, and children and youth in foster care, of the local educational agency, including by—

The School District of Manatee County implements a number of interventions and strategies to address learning loss, especially among its most underserved student populations.

Manatee County’s students learning English as a Second Language (ELL) are categorically underperforming on standardized testing across the district when compared to their Non-ELL peers. ARP ESSE funds will be used to address these gaps with activities such as (1) Provide educational materials to support newcomer ELLs and Secondary ELLS and address gaps in fundamental educational skills.

(i) administering and using high-quality assessments that are valid and reliable, to accurately assess students’ academic progress and assist educators in meeting students’ academic needs, including through differentiating instruction: Manatee’s ARP ESSER plan specifically ties to the following:

(2) High-quality Assessments: Although 10th grade students did not have the opportunity to take the 10th grade Reading FSA during the 2019/2020 school year, those students are still responsible for passing the reading portion of the FSA or receive a concordant score from the SAT or ACT to graduate. Many of the students in question are struggling readers who are assigned to an intensive reading course and need support preparing for these assessments. SDMC proposes to use the Princeton Review SAT Premium Preparation 2021 Guide and the Official ACT Preparation Guide as both provide practice tests and proven techniques to support teachers and students as they prepare for the SAT or ACT in an effort to achieve a concordant reading score to meet graduation requirements. These guides will be distributed across schools to be utilized as class sets in a grades 11 and 12 intensive reading classrooms.

**Diagnostic Assessments for Pre-Kindergarten through 12th Grade:** SDMC will align with State mandates as to what assessment to use for progress monitoring. To this effort, SDMC will plan for the selection of meaningful and research-based diagnostic tools that can be used for all students.

**Early Learning Registrar:** To ensure that this communities’ youngest students have access to school and are properly placed on the appropriate academic pathway to success.

(ii) implementing evidence-based activities to meet the comprehensive needs of students. Delivering Evidence-based Activities:

(3) The school district’s plan continues the use of several standards-aligned, evidence-based programs such as ACALETICS® Math Program. Research-based, supplemental programming, ACALETICS is proven to increase learning skills through engaging activities in which students set and then exceed individual goals. Also included, World Book is a comprehensive suite of e-learning resources that is crafted for all ages and abilities with articles, videos, educator tools, eBooks, and research guides to drive learning.

To address learning loss and an apparent gap in foundational reading skills due to COVID-19, the School District of Manatee County (SDMC), will also employ a number of positions to provide intensive reading support at the middle and high school levels. These positions will be responsible for assisting with facilitating small group, direct instruction to address these gaps in learning and help provide a stronger learning environment. The following critical positions have also been included within this proposal to deliver evidence-based interventions and activities including a Secondary ELA Specialist, Secondary Reading Specialist, and additional middle school Reading Coaches.

(iii) providing information and assistance to parents and families on how they can effectively support students, including in a distance learning environment:

SDMC leverages a number of resources to grow its teacher-family relationship in an effort to foster learning at home. To provide information and assistance regarding critical supports, services, and opportunities, SDMC employs a team of School Counselors, Social Workers and liaisons who serve as advocates for Manatee’s underrepresented students.
(4) MTSS Representatives: To ensure that the continuity of services is maintained by a strong and successful teaching staff, ARP ESSER funds will specifically support a MTSS supplement for every MTSS representative at Manatee’s elementary and middle schools. The MTSS representative is key ensuring that their school environment embeds core Social Emotional Learning strategies critical to a safe and successful learning environment.

Parents as Teachers: Soar in 4 is Manatee County’s monthly movement to ensure all early learners and their families have the opportunities and support they need for success in preschool, school and beyond. Soar in 4 partners with 20 agencies who will provide interactive and standards-based learning engagements in after school programs at each of Manatee’s Title I schools throughout the year, to include Mote Marine, Ringling College, Ringling Museum, The Bishop and more. Additional information is included under Activity 2(F).

(5) To ensure that curricula are relevant, standards-based, and align with this district’s high standards, ARP ESSER funds support textbook adoption efforts.

(iv) tracking student attendance and improving student engagement in distance education: In the Spring of 2020, the School District of Manatee County (SDMC) crafted an instructional continuity plan (SDMC/ICP) to address the transition of schools from brick and mortar to a virtual platform in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The three main components of this plan focused on access to mobile devices, access to internet, and standards-based content delivery. To improve student engagement in distance education, Schoology was disseminated as the virtual platform due to its ability to provide personalized experiences as well as a number of opportunities to participate in online tasks and discussions in a very engaging way.

To further improve the district’s distance education, SDMC has designated a Project Manager to oversee, facilitate and assist with implementation of the ICP, additional professional development using the Schoology platform and I-Ready to increase teacher efficacy in asynchronous teaching. Moving forward, SDMC will align the prescribed format of the State’s ICP plan once it is released. Planning and revisions will be adjusted and aligned accordingly.

(6) Dual Language to Close Achievement Gap: In an effort to close this achievement gap, SDMC has piloted a dual language program that began with a select group of Kindergarteners at a Title I elementary school. Aligning to the 50:50 two-way immersion mode and research-based, this program has flourished to include grades Kindergarten through second and has expanded to two other elementary schools. In the next year, the program will expand by a grade level at each of the Dual Language Programs and add an additional elementary school.

The overarching goal of the SDMC Dual Language Program is to improve English language acquisition among emergent ELL learners, and academic achievement in reading among all emergent learners. In order to increase skill and achievement, the Dual Language Instructors will employ classroom strategies daily to promote language development including explicit and systematic instruction in vocabulary, exposure to rich language input, structured classroom space and routine to provide scaffolding, and encourage language development in the home front.

As participation in this program is voluntary and each student’s parent/guardian has agreed to their child’s placement along with homework requirements. These classes will receive rich support from the school district’s ELL Instructional Support Leader, Curriculum and Professional Learning Coaches, and English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) staff. It is expected that by June 30, 2021, the percentage of students in the ELL subgroup who score a Composite Proficiency level score of 4.0 and a minimum proficiency of 4.0 in the reading domain on ACCESS, will increase by 5% as compared to other ELLs in Kindergarten not enrolled in a Dual Language program.

In order to evaluate the project and determine academic increases, specific data from ACCESS, iReady diagnostics, and classroom assessments will be collected, synthesized, and analyzed by the ELL Instructional Support Leader, Dual Language Program Teacher(s), district staff and the school district’s Assessment and Accountability Department. Evaluation of process and implementation will be ongoing as the evaluation information is critical for continued expansion of a successful model program.

During this time of growth, the community, students, and schools were severely impacted by COVID-19. Moving forward, ESSER APR funding will support a Dual Language Specialist who will be fully dedicated to the growing dual
language programs and assist the Dual Language Teachers with planning, modeling, and providing training. This will specifically assist the schools and grade levels that were added during the pandemic. Funds will also support items needed to implement evidence-based activities including content area dictionaries, libraries to include authentic Spanish text for English Language Learners learning to read and write in both English and Spanish, and headphones for English Language Learners using Imagine Learning to reinforce foundational reading skills.

**Activity 2(O)** School facility repairs and improvements to enable operation of schools to reduce risk of virus transmission and exposure to environmental health hazards, and to support student health needs. While the School District of Manatee County (SDMC)'s operations and maintenance teams work tirelessly to ensure that school sites are sanitized and free of environmental health hazards, funds have not been specifically tied to this activity.

**Activity 2(P)** Inspection, testing, maintenance, repair, replacement, and upgrade projects to improve the indoor air quality in school facilities, including mechanical and nonmechanical heating, ventilation, and air conditioning systems, filtering, purification and other air cleaning, fans, control systems, and window and door repair and replacement.

(1) ARP ESSER funds will be dedicated to activities to improve indoor air quality such as ventilation through fans, dehumidifiers, and additional equipment.

**Activity 2(Q)** Developing strategies and implementing public health protocols including, to the greatest extent possible and not inconsistent with state law, policies in line with guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for the reopening and operation of school facilities to effectively maintain the health and safety of students, educators, and other staff.

The School District of Manatee County (SDMC) aligns its strategies and protocols to the guidance put forth by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Florida Department of Health in Manatee County, and any Executive Orders. SDMC continues to publicly disseminate accurate information regarding COVID-19 prevention measures using an integrated social media strategy, as well as print, leveraging the talent of its Communications, Family & Community Engagement Department. COVID-19 information is updated under Hot Topics on the SDMC’s main webpage and includes testing sites. Funds from ARP ESSER have not been specifically tied to this activity.

**Activity 2(R)** Other activities that are necessary to maintain the operation of and continuity of services in local educational agencies and continuing to employ existing staff of the local educational agency.

To maintain the operation and continuity of services, the School District of Manatee County (SDMC) will direct ARP ESSER funds to balance budget expenses in several areas that were critically impacted due to COVID-19. Specific activities to be funded:

(1) Disaster Relief Payments are included within this budget to maintain the operation of and continuity of services.

(2) Contract for Childcare: Headstart will provide early morning childcare services for school district Bus Drivers at Matzke Center. This service ensures that bus drivers have childcare necessary for them to work their early bus routes. This service is also paramount as there is a shortage of bus drivers throughout this county.

(3) COVID Claims are included within this budget to maintain the operation of and continuity of services.

**Activity 2 (S)** Administration. LEAs may take reasonable and necessary administrative costs, to include direct and indirect costs. Indirect costs may be taken up to the negotiated, unrestricted indirect cost rate. However, to ensure that the total administrative costs are reasonable, the total direct and indirect costs may not exceed five percent (5%) of the LEA’s total award.

(1) The School District of Manatee County (SDMC) has thoughtfully crafted a budget that is reasonable, necessary, allowable, and allocable to support the ambitious activities put forth in the ARP ESSER Fund LEA Plan. To this effort, five percent of the total award will be used toward administrative and indirect costs to support the district’s capacity.
Part II: Ensuring Effectiveness of Interventions

Please describe how the LEA will ensure that the interventions it implements, including but not limited to the interventions under section 2001(e)(1) of the ARP Act to address the academic impact of lost instructional time, will respond to the academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs of all students, and particularly those students disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, including students from low-income families, students of color, English learners, children with disabilities, students experiencing homelessness, children and youth in foster care, and migratory students. In your response, please include a description of interventions and strategies that are aligned to the LEA’s data (disaggregated by subgroup) and describe how the LEA will measure the effectiveness of the selected interventions.

In crafting the School District of Manatee County’s (SDMC) Local Educational Agency ARP ESSER Plan, administration, staff, and stakeholders assessed the critical needs and learning gaps of this community’s students and families that were either kindled or fueled with the onset of COVID-19. To this effort, a number of supports and interventions were included in this plan to address the academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs of all students with emphasis on those who are typically underserved.

The following data helped drive the proposed plan: 2020-21 FSA English Language Arts data reports that 50.2% of students grades 3-10 scored a level 3 or higher; slightly lower than 2018-19, which was 51.9%. However, achievement drops as one takes a deeper dive: English Language Learners (ELL) 9.9% versus 55.8% non-ELL, 36.9% of students with low socioeconomic status (SES) versus 62.6% non-SES; and 20.8% of Students with Disabilities (SWD) versus 55.3% of Non-SWD.

FSA Mathematics data reports that 55.3% of students grades 3-10 scored a level 3 or higher; lower than 2018-19 (58.2%). Subgroup information: English Language Learners (ELL) 26.7% versus 60.1% non-ELL, 44.8% of students with low socioeconomic status (SES) versus 66.4% non-SES; and 30.5% of Students with Disabilities (SWD) versus 60.3% of Non-SWD.

To address student achievement and the overall academic impact of lost instructional time, SDMC included a number of supports critical to fostering effective leading and teaching. As capacity is built among Manatee’s teachers – especially those serving high needs students – it is expected that academic performance will increase. As this district transitions to and implements the Florida Benchmarks for Excellent Student Thinking (B.E.S.T.) Standards for ELA and Math, funds allocated through ARP ESSER will continue to support robust and intensive professional development and training. Continuous trainings for K-12 teachers are critical to the implementation of these standards with fidelity. Additionally, professional development is paramount for teachers to effectively build student proficiency, understand how to use benchmark data, and provide impactful remediation when needed.

Further complementing this work, the school district intends to employ a number of assessments that are approved by the FLDOE to provide a foundation for data-informed instruction. Nearpod was included in the budget as it utilizes formative assessments and includes adaptive instruction in real time to drive personalized learning.

According to research, differentiating instruction can occur through content, process, product and/or learning environment. To support students needing to process learning through more intensive support, funds will allow for the placement of Intensive Reading/Math Remediation Teachers within the school sites most in need. Additionally, paraprofessionals will be hired to specifically provide reading support to underperforming middle school students.

Interventions for students with disabilities include a comprehensive extended learning program with transportation to ensure equal access to programming. Funds will also continue to support services to English Language Learners, homelessness, children and youth in foster care, and migratory students.

USE SIGNED PAGES
Part III LEA Plan for Safe Return of In-Person Instruction
Each LEA developed and made publicly available on the LEA’s website a plan for the safe return of in-person learning in the Fall of 2020. This was before the enactment of the ARP Act. This plan must be updated to address the requirements of the U.S. Department of Education’s Interim Final Rule, 88 FR 21195. The Interim Final Rule “does not mandate that an LEA adopt the CDC guidance, but only requires that the LEA describe in its plan the extent to which it has adopted the key prevention and mitigation strategies identified in the guidance.” 88 FR at 21200. Any updated LEA plan must be consistent with state law, including any applicable executive order, any agency emergency order, or any agency regulation or rule. Note specifically that LEA policies must comply with section 381.00316, Florida Statutes, and that any policies implemented after August 9, 2021 must comply with Florida Department of Health Rule 64DER21 -12, F.A.C., and any policies implemented after September 22, 2021 must comply with Florida Department of Health Rule 64DER21-15, F.A.C.

Each LEA must seek public comment on the plan and take such comments into account prior to submission of the final plan to the Department within 60 days of the award. Upon the Department’s approval, the LEA shall post this updated plan on the LEA’s website within 90 days of the award.

☐ By checking this box, the LEA acknowledges the requirement that each LEA shall update its Plan for Safe Return of In-Person Instruction to reflect the requirements stated above, shall seek public comment on the updated plan and take such comments into account prior to the submission of the final plan to the Department within 60 days of the award. Upon the Department’s approval, the LEA shall post this updated plan on the LEA’s website within 90 days of the award.

Part IV: Assurances

The district must agree to ALL of the assurances by checking the corresponding boxes.

☒ Assurance 1: LEA Periodic Plan Update with Public Comment. As required in the U.S. Department of Education’s Interim Final Rule, 88 FR 21195, the LEA must regularly, but no less frequently than every six months, review and as appropriate, revise its plan for the safe return to in-person instruction and continuity of services. In determining whether revisions are necessary, and in making any revisions, the LEA must seek public input and take such input into account. If at the time the LEA revises its plan the CDC has updated its guidance on reopening schools, the revised plan must address the extent to which the LEA has adopted policies, and describe any policies, for each of the updated safety recommendations. Significantly, the Interim Final Rule “does not mandate that an LEA adopt the CDC guidance, but only requires that the LEA describe in its plan the extent to which it has adopted the key prevention and mitigation strategies identified in the guidance.” 88 FR at 21200. Any updated LEA plan must be consistent with state law, including any applicable executive order, any agency emergency order, or any agency regulation or rule. Specifically, LEA policies must comply with section 381.00316, Florida Statutes, and any policies implemented after August 9, 2021 must comply with Florida Department of Health Rule 64DER21 -12, F.A.C., and any policies implemented after September 22, 2021 must comply with Florida Department of Health Rule 64DER21-15, F.A.C.

☒ Assurance 2: Continue progress monitoring and interventions. The district agrees to provide robust progress monitoring and requisite interventions must be extended to all students with tiered support for students who are performing below grade level and are not making adequate progress. Students who are receiving instruction through innovative teaching methods must transition to another
teaching method if they fail to make adequate progress. The district agrees to provide monthly progress monitoring reports to parent/guardians for students identified as performing below grade level and/or demonstrating decline on the district’s progress monitoring system.

☑️ **Assurance 3: Allowable Uses of Funds.** The LEA will use funds for activities allowable under section 2001(e) of the CRRSA Act.

☑️ **Assurance 4: Maintenance of Equity.** The LEA will comply with all requirements relating to Maintenance of Equity, in accordance with section 2004(c) of the ARP Act.

☑️ **Assurance 5: Reporting.** The LEA will comply with all reporting requirements and submit required reports to the Florida Department of Education at such time and in such manner and containing such information as the department may subsequently require.

☑️ **Assurance 6: Audits, Inspections or Examinations.** The LEA will cooperate with any examination of records with respect to such funds by making records available for inspection, production, and examination, and authorized individuals available for interview and examination, upon the request of (i) the Florida Department of Education, the Florida Auditor General; (ii) the Department and/or its Inspector General; or (iii) any other federal or state agency, commission, or department in the lawful exercise of its jurisdiction and authority.

**Acknowledgement**

Local Educational Agency Chief Executive Officer or Authorized Representative

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<td>Cynthia Saunders, Superintendent</td>
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