

# Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER Fund) Monitoring Report

**District:** Newport Independent Schools

**District CARES Act contact:** Rachel Ball

**District Superintendent:** Tony Watts

**Reviewer(s):** Jessica Sanderson, Erma White

**Date(s) of Review:** July 26, 2021

**Project:** 613F/613FP

## Summary of Review Procedures

As part of its responsibility for the administration of federal education programs, the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) is required to monitor districts' program implementation. The Newport Independent School District was selected for monitoring of its implementation of strategies and use of funds allocated from the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER Fund), authorized under section 18003 of the CARES (Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security) Act.

Each district selected for monitoring was required to submit a completed self-evaluation form, a MUNIS expenditure report, and other relevant documentation for review in the areas of programmatic implementation and outcomes, equitable services requirements, and fiscal management. KDE staff reviewed the supporting evidence and documentation. District staff participated in an approximately one-hour interview with KDE staff as part of the monitoring. The findings of the review are presented in this report.

## Strengths

1. The district used survey results to help inform its needs assessment. ESSER funds were spent based on the results of the needs assessment.
2. The district has a process for communication to ensure stakeholders throughout the schools and district are informed and understand expectations.
3. The district has worked to ensure the continuity of services such as meal delivery and pick up and has adopted many practices to ensure the safety of students and staff. For example, Newport Independent School District used funds to purchase two vehicles to provide meal delivery services for students without transportation to meal pickup locations.
4. The district provided technology support to students and staff during the pandemic. For example, the district utilized the above-mentioned vehicles to provide in-home technical support to students during emergency NTI and virtual learning environments.
5. The district provided mental health supports to students during school closures due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Newport Independent was able to employ additional mental health counselors to provide support for the growing need within the district.

**Recommendations**

1. The district has a strong line of communication in determining allowable expenditures that align with the spending plan in GMAP. It is recommended that the district implement a means to document all communication regarding expenditures using ESSER funds. It is also recommended to continue to periodically compare expenditures in MUNIS with the spending plan in GMAP to ensure spending aligns with the application. The spending plan can be revised as needs change.

**Required Actions**

1. There are no required actions.