



State of Alabama
Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act
Governor's Emergency Education Relief (GEER) Fund
Local Educational Agency (LEA) Application

In order to receive a CARES Act GEER Fund allocation, an LEA must submit this application to the SEA.

GENERAL INFORMATION

1. LEA Information	
LEA Name	Blount County Board of Education
Mailing Address	P O Box 578
Physical Address	204 2nd Avenue East
City/Town and Zip Code	Oneonta, AL 35121
Superintendent's Name	Rodney P. Green
Contact Person	Craig Sosebee
Contact Person Position	Federal Programs Coordinator
Contact Telephone Number	(205) 775-1950
Contact Email	cwsosebee@blountboe.net

PROGRAMMATIC, FISCAL, AND REPORTING ASSURANCES

The United States Department of Education (USED) has approved the application from the State of Alabama for GEER funds under the CARES Act. The Governor of Alabama allocated \$48,851,495 to the Alabama State Department of Education. GEER funds can be obligated through 9/30/2022. Pre-award costs to the GEER fund will be allowed for allowable cost incurred on or after March 13, 2020.

2. Allowable Service(s) Section

The LEA Superintendent or his/her authorized representative assures or certifies that they will use the awarded GEER funds in the following ways (select one option per letter):

A. Private School Equitable Services Allocation

NOTE: Use the Private School Equitable Services Implementation Form for this section.

- The LEA has no private schools in their attendance area
- The LEA has private schools but ALL declined to participate in CARES Act GEER funding
- The LEA has private schools that will participate in CARES Act GEER funding

Complete the section below only if you have private schools that will be participating in GEER funds:

Total LEA GEER Allocation	\$486,862.00
Total LEA Private School Allocation	\$0.00
Total LEA Private School Administrative Costs Set-Aside	\$0.00
Total # of Private Schools Participating	0.00
Total Student Enrollment at the LEA	7,531.20
Total Student Enrollment at ALL Participating Private Schools	0.00

B. Equip school buses with Wi-Fi capabilities to increase internet connectivity and help bridge the digital divide within the LEA.

LEA Allocation for Section B: \$172,800.00

- The LEA will use the allocation above for equipping school buses with Wi-Fi capabilities.
 The LEA will **not** use this allocation for equipping school buses with Wi-Fi capabilities.

Complete the section below only if your LEA chooses not to use this allocation:

Reason/Rationale: _____

We will transfer this allocation to:

- Academic Support to Bridge Learning and Achievement Gaps of Students (C)

Amount to be transferred: _____

- Before and After School Tutoring for Learning and Remediation In Schools (D)

Amount to be transferred: _____

C. Provide additional academic support to bridge learning and achievement gaps of students within the LEA.

LEA Allocation for Section C: \$218,690.00

- The LEA will use the allocation above for providing additional academic support to students.
 The LEA will **not** use this allocation for providing additional academic support to students.

Complete the section below only if your LEA chooses not to use this allocation:

Reason/Rationale: _____

We will transfer this allocation to:

- Equipping School Buses with Wi-Fi Capabilities (B)

Amount to be transferred: \$65,690.00

- Before and After School Tutoring for Learning and Remediation in Schools (D)

Amount to be transferred: _____

D. Provide before and after school tutoring as defined in the Alabama Literacy Act for learning and remediation in schools within the LEA.

LEA Allocation for Section D: \$97,372.00

- The LEA will use the allocation above for providing tutoring to students.
 The LEA will **not** use this allocation for providing tutoring to students.

Complete the section below only if your LEA chooses not to use this allocation:

Reason/Rationale: _____

We will transfer this allocation to:

- Equipping School Buses with Wi-Fi Capabilities (B)

Amount to be transferred: _____

- Academic Support to Bridge Learning and Achievement Gaps of Students (C)

Amount to be transferred: _____

NOTE: Only answer the questions below that apply to how the LEA will use GEER funds.

2A. Equitable Services Assurances

The LEA Superintendent or his/her authorized representative assures or certifies the following:

- The LEA receiving GEER funds will provide equitable services to students and teachers in non-public schools located within the LEA in the same manner as provided under Section 1117 of the ESEA as determined through timely and meaningful consultation with representatives of non-public schools.
- The LEA will ensure that a public agency will maintain control of funds for the services and assistance provided to a non-public school under the GEER fund.
- The LEA will ensure that a public agency will have title to materials, equipment, and property purchased with GEER funds.
- The LEA will ensure that services to a non-public school with GEER funds will be provided by a public agency directly, or through contract with, another public or private entity.

Provide a brief explanation answering the following questions:

- 1) Were services from private schools accepted or refused in your LEA?
- 2) If services were accepted by private schools, who accepted and what allocation did they receive?
- 3) When did private schools in your LEA receive timely and meaningful consultation?
- 4) What services will each private school receive and when will the services be implemented?
- 5) How will GEER funds be used to improve remote learning services and support technical capacity and access at private schools within your LEA?
- 6) If a private school administrative set-aside is being taken by the LEA, what is the allocation and how will it be used?

2A. Equitable Services Assurances

- 1) No, Private Schools declined participation.
- 2) N/A
- 3) Private schools were sent an email with receipt on July 27, 2020 and were also sent certified mail on July 27, 2020. Phone calls were also placed and received.
- 4) N/A
- 5) N/A
- 6) N/A

2B. Equipping School Buses with Wi-Fi Capabilities

Provide details as to how the LEA will use GEER funds to connect Wi-Fi to district buses.

Blount County Schools will purchase the Wi-Fi hardware for 120 school buses with CRF-Devices (f/s 4294) budget and provide the data for 3 years with the GEER funds. This data will provide a diameter of 300 feet per school bus. This Wi-Fi will be for all regular route buses and activity buses providing data for all students transported for any school event. These buses can also be parked in areas in the community to provide data for students during non-transported times.

2C. Additional Academic Supports to Bridge Learning and Achievement Gaps

Applicable Grade-Level(s) (Check all that apply):

Pre-K K 1st 2nd 3rd 4th 5th

Applicable Support(s) (Check all that apply):

- Reading/ELA Family Engagement/At-Home Learning Resources
 - Math Family Engagement/At-Home Learning Resources
 - Dyscalculia-Specific Screener
 - Dyslexia-Specific Screener
 - Vulnerable Populations Resources or Supports
- ES MS HS

NOTE: Only answer the questions below that apply to supports selected above by the LEA.

Reading and Math Family Engagement/At-Home Learning Resources

Describe how the following conditions will be maximized through the purchase of resources, tools, or other supports with the use of GEER funds:

- Aligns to Alabama ELA and/or math course of study standards;
- Provides opportunities to extend learning and build connections at home;
- Reinforces key grade level concepts;
- Includes grade-level appropriate manipulatives for math and literature for reading;
- Provides individual student opportunities for both intervention and enrichment activities; and
- Includes easy-to-follow planning calendars or activity suggestions for families.

Blount County Schools will provide at-home learning resources in the areas of reading and mathematics. This may include reading resources and math manipulatives. These resources will be aligned with Alabama Course of Study standards. Resources will be selected to reinforce grade-level concepts as well as providing enrichment and intervention materials. The goal is to provide support to the kindergarten through third grade students/parents. However, other grade-levels may receive additional resources as well.

Dyscalculia Screener

Describe how the following conditions will be maximized through the purchase of resources, tools, or other supports with the use of GEER funds:

- Identifies dyscalculic tendencies in students and is not time intensive to administer;
- Recommends intervention strategies;
- Presents easy to interpret reports and information on a student's strengths and weaknesses;
- Provides diagnostic reports for teachers;
- Provides parent reports and guidance; and
- Provide additional opportunities to screen students beyond grade 3.

Dyslexia-Specific Screener

Describe how the following conditions will be maximized through the purchase of resources, tools, or other supports with the use of GEER funds:

- Aligns to evidence-based science of reading criteria;
- Provides ability and options to universally screen, identify risks, progress monitor, and/or report results in a seamless system;
- Provides recommendations for intervention strategies and/or individualized learning paths to help close achievement gaps; and
- Provides additional opportunities to screen students beyond grade 3 (if applicable).

Vulnerable Populations Supports

Describe how the following conditions will be maximized through the purchase of resources, tools, or other supports with the use of GEER funds:

- Provides streamlined approach to gather, use, and monitor identified vulnerable population data;
- Includes tools or resources to assist with development and/or implementation of individualized plans for specific needs of students;
- Includes communication tools to ensure meaningful communication in a language understood by the parents/guardians;
- Provides evidence-based learning activities that align to students' plans; and
- Provides other related or applicable services specific to vulnerable populations.

Blount County Schools conducted a needs assessment to determine the most appropriate use of these funds. 76% of our school leaders identified the need for improving our technology infrastructure to support remote learning. Additionally, it was discovered that 19% of our schools feel that more than half of their students may need a device for online learning and/or support with internet access. Based on these findings, our District Improvement Team decided to utilize these funds to increase internet accessibility, as well as the academic support in place for our vulnerable populations.

The goal is to also provide professional development, tools, and resources that will assist the LEA in meeting the requirements of the Alabama Literacy Act. Blount County Schools will provide approximately 60 teachers with Institute for Multi-Sensory Education IMSE (virtual or face-to-face) training. This training will be targeted toward kindergarten-2nd-grade and special education teachers. This training will provide hands-on multi-sensory training that will allow teachers to incorporate the strategies into any curriculum. This professional development will expand the knowledge base of teachers in the science of reading. It will provide teachers with the knowledge and skills needed to adjust to the instructional needs of individual students. GEER funds will also be allocated toward the purchase of SPIRE materials to add to the current resources Blount County schools utilize in kindergarten through 3rd-grade. This program is explicit, systematic, and spirals to support the intervention needs of students that have deficiencies in reading foundations. SPIRE has a screening process that evaluates the areas of strengths and weaknesses to determine the appropriate level of placement. It also has checkpoints throughout the lessons to determine proficiency. Blount County will renew the Mindplay subscription with the GEER funds. This computer-based is primarily utilized in 4th-grade through 12th-grade. This program has a placement screener that evaluates the student's strengths and weaknesses. Mindplay places the students in the appropriate level and assigns lessons in the needed areas of focus. There are multiple data-based reports that provide strong data references to parents, students, and teachers. This allows for goal setting and the individualization of reading plans. Parent reports are available in English and Spanish. All of these supports will assist Blount County in meeting the needs of the vulnerable populations.

2D. Before/After School Tutoring

Describe how the following conditions will be maximized through the purchase of resources, tools, or other supports with the use of GEER funds:

- Aligns to *Alabama Literacy Act* requirements for students who are identified with a reading deficiency;
- Provides learning opportunities outside of the traditional school day; and
- Includes description of employee duties/responsibilities aligned to intensive intervention needs.

GEER monies will also be allocated to provide students with an identified reading deficiency, the extra intervention and support that may be needed to make the necessary gains. Blount County Schools will offer before or after school tutoring to students that have been identified as having a reading deficiency and did not receive the full summer reading support. This money will be utilized to continue our Summer Literacy program. This program will offer a minimum of 70 hours of intensive reading intervention in the areas of foundational reading. These summer camps will be offered at each Blount County School that has a kindergarten through third grade. Teachers and support staff will provide intensive reading intervention to students that data indicates a reading deficiency.

3. Budget Development

The LEA Superintendent or his/her authorized representative assures or certifies the following:

The LEA will use GEER funds for activities outlined in the application and allowable under Section 18002(c) of Division B of the CARES Act. The United States Department of Education **does not** expect administrative or executive salaries and benefits for IHEs, SEAs, or the other education related entities referenced at Section 18002(c)(3) to be a lawful purpose for GEER funds.

Total CARES Act - GEER Allocation: **\$486,862.00**
 (NOTE: Make sure to include Equitable Services in the total)

Provide a detailed budget to explain how GEER funds will be used at the LEA as identified by data, needs assessments, and other areas impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

3A. Equitable Services

			Total Section A Allocation
Expense Items	Brief Description of Expense Items	Funding Source (Function - Object - Program)	Estimated Budget Amount
Private School Allocation	See Detailed Narrative in Section 2A		
Private School Admin. Costs	See Detailed Narrative in Section 2A		

3B. Equipping School Buses with Wi-Fi Capabilities

			Total Section B Allocation
Expense Items	Brief Description of Expense Items	Funding Source (Function - Object - Program)	Estimated Budget Amount
			\$172,800.00
Wi-Fi Equipment	Data services for bus WIFI	4120-331-8410	\$172,800.00
Indirect Costs			
Other (if applicable)			

3C. Additional Academic Supports to Bridge Learning and Achievement Gaps			
			Total Section C Allocation
Expense Items	Brief Description of Expense Items	Funding Source (Function - Object - Program)	Estimated Budget Amount
Salaries	Teacher stipends for IMSE Training	2215-192-8220	\$45,000.00
Benefits (if applicable)	Teacher stipend for IMSE Training	2215-220 thru 250-8220	\$9,000.00
Classroom Supplies (including print materials)	At-Home Learning Resources for Reading & Math	1100-411-1200	\$85,610.00
Transportation (if applicable)			
Indirect Costs			
Other (if applicable)	IMSE In-person and Virtual Training for 60 teachers	2215-312-8220	\$58,330.00
	Mindplay virtual reading program	1100-311-1200	\$18,750.00

3D. Before/After School Tutoring			
			Total Section D Allocation
Expense Items	Brief Description of Expense Items	Funding Source (Function - Object - Program)	Estimated Budget Amount
Salaries	After school & summer tutoring	1100-134-4300/4600	\$73,000.00
Benefits (if applicable)	After school & summer tutoring	1100-220 thru 250-4300/4600	\$14,616.00
Classroom Supplies (including print materials)	Instructional materials	1100-411-1200	\$9,756.00
Transportation (if applicable)			
Indirect Costs			
Other (if applicable)			

How will the LEA plan for implementation and measure impact for effectiveness for purchases identified?

To increase the accessibility of our students, Blount County will immediately begin defining plans for procurement and installation of WIFI solutions for buses and then develop a plan for utilizing this to support the learning needs of our students and increasing internet availability. The District Improvement Team will continue reviewing student data, identifying learning gaps, and implementing learning supports to address student needs. To measure the impact for effectiveness, student achievement data will be collected and analyzed throughout the academic year using Aimsweb. To measure the impact of the internet accessibility improvements, school leaders will be surveyed to determine effectiveness.

What is the proposed timeline for providing services and assistance to students and staff?

Blount County Schools began providing services on March 13, 2020 and will continue providing services and assistance through the availability of the CARES Act GEER Funding grant of September 30, 2022.

OTHER ASSURANCES AND CERTIFICATIONS

4. Other Assurances and Certifications

The LEA Superintendent or his/her authorized representative assures or certifies the following:

- The LEA that receives GEER funds will, to the greatest extent practicable, continue to pay its employees and contractors during the period of any disruptions or closures related to COVID-19 in compliance with Section 18006 of Division B of the CARES Act.
- The LEA will comply with the maintenance of effort provision in Section 18008(a) of Division B of the CARES Act absent waiver by the Secretary pursuant to Section 18008(b) thereof.
- The LEA will cooperate with any monitoring policies and/or procedures with regards to the allowability of expenditures.
- 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 for interview and examination, upon request.
- The LEA will use GEER funds for purposes that are reasonable, necessary, and allocable under the CARES Act.
- The LEA will comply with the provisions of all applicable acts, regulations and assurances; the provisions of Education Department General Administrative Regulations in 34 CFR Parts 75, 76, 77, 81, 82, 84, 86, 97, 98, and 99; the OMB Guidelines to Agencies on Governmentwide Debarment and Suspension (Nonprocurement) in 2 CFR Part 180, as adopted and amended as regulations of the Department in 2 CFR Part 3485; and the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards in 2 CFR Part 200, as adopted and amended as regulations of the Department in 2 CFR Part 3474.

5. Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act Assurances

The LEA Superintendent or his/her authorized representative assures or certifies the following:

- (a) The purpose of this section is to assist the Department in implementing the Department's mission to ensure equal access to education and to promote educational excellence throughout the Nation, by -
- (1) ensuring equal opportunities to participate for all eligible students, teachers, and other program beneficiaries in any project or activity carried out under an applicable program; and
 - (2) promoting the ability of such students, teachers, and beneficiaries to meet high standards.
- (b) The Secretary shall require each applicant for assistance under an applicable program (other than an individual) to develop and describe in such applicant's application the steps such applicant proposes to take to ensure equitable access to, and equitable participation in, the project or activity to be conducted with such assistance, by addressing the special needs of students, teachers, and other program beneficiaries in order to overcome barriers to equitable participation, including barriers based on gender, race, color, national origin, disability, and age.
- (c) The Secretary may establish criteria and provide technical assistance for meeting the requirements of this section.
- (d) Nothing in this section shall be construed to alter in any way the rights or responsibilities established under the

What steps does the LEA propose to take to permit students, teachers, and *other program* beneficiaries to overcome barriers (including barriers based on gender, race, color, national origin, disability, and age) that impede equal access to, or participation in, the program?

It shall be the policy of the Board that the school district shall place an equal emphasis on the nondiscriminatory provision of educational opportunities for children and no person shall be denied the benefits of any education program or activity on the basis of race, color, disability, creed, national origin, religion, age or sex. All programs offered by schools within the school district shall be open to all students in compliance with statutory and judicial requirements.

The Blount County Board of Education provides a variety of support services and opportunities for its students. Among them are Special Education, At-Risk Student Support, and Problem Solving Team (PST). The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding nondiscrimination policies, Title IX, and Section 504: Gary Noles Blount County Board of Education P. O. Box 578 Oneonta, AL 35121 (205) 625-4102

6. Section 442 of the General Education Provisions Act Assurances

The LEA Superintendent or his/her authorized representative assures or certifies the following:

(a) Each local educational agency which participates in an applicable program under which Federal funds are made available to such agency through a State agency or board shall submit to such agency or board a general application containing the assurances set forth in subsection (b). The application shall cover the participation by that local educational agency in all such programs.

(b) The general application submitted by a local education agency under subsection (a) shall set forth assurances

(1) that the local educational agency will administer each program by the application in accordance with all applicable statutes, regulations, program plans, and applications;

(2) that the control of funds provided to the local educational agency under each program, and title to property acquired with those funds, will be in a public agency and that a public agency will administer those funds and property;

(3) that the local educational agency will use fiscal control and fund accounting procedures that will ensure proper disbursement of, and accounting for, Federal funds paid to that agency under each program;

(4) that the local educational agency will make reports to the State agency or board and to the Secretary as may reasonably be necessary to enable the State agency or board and the Secretary to perform their duties and that the local educational agency will maintain such records, including the records required under section 443, and provide access to those records, as the State agency or board or the Secretary deem necessary to perform their duties;

(5) that the local educational agency will provide reasonable opportunities for the participation by teachers, parents, and other interested agencies, organizations, and individuals in the planning for and operation of each program;

(6) that any application, evaluation, periodic program plan or report relating to each program will be made readily available to parents and other members of the general public;

(7) that in the case of any project involving construction -

(A) the project is not inconsistent with overall State plans for the construction of school facilities, and

(B) in developing plans for construction, due consideration will be given to excellence of architecture and design and to compliance with standards prescribed by the Secretary under section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 in order to ensure that facilities constructed with the use of Federal funds are accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities;

(8) that the local educational agency has adopted effective procedures for acquiring and disseminating to teachers and administrators participating in each program significant information from educational research, demonstrations, and similar projects, and for adopting, where appropriate, promising educational practices developed through such projects; and

(9) that none of the funds expended under any applicable program will be used to acquire equipment (including computer software) in any instance in which such acquisition results in a direct financial benefit to any organization representing the interests of the purchasing entity or its employees or any affiliate of such an organization.

(c) A general application submitted under this section shall remain in effect for the duration of the program it covers. The State agencies or boards administering the programs covered by the application shall not require the submission or amendment of such application unless required by changes in Federal or State law or by other significant change in the circumstances affecting an assurance in such application.

To the best of my knowledge and belief, all the information and data in this agreement are true and correct. I acknowledge and agree that the failure to comply with all Assurances and Certifications in this agreement, all relevant provisions and requirements of the CARES Act, Pub. L. No. 116-136 (March 27, 2020), or any other applicable law or regulation may result in liability under the False Claims Act, 31 U.S.C. § 3729, et seq.; OMB Guidelines to Agencies on Governmentwide Debarment and Suspension (Nonprocurement) in 2 CFR Part 180, as adopted and amended as regulations of the Department in 2 CFR Part 3485; and 18 U.S.C. § 1001, as appropriate.

Cindy W. Parker

LEA Chief Financial Officer (Typed Name)

Cindy W Parker

LEA Chief Financial Officer Signature

Rodney P. Green

LEA Superintendent (Typed Name)

Rodney P. Green

LEA Superintendent Signature

(205) 775-1950

Telephone Number

8/20/2020

Date

(205) 775-1950

Telephone Number

8-20-20

Date

**Send completed application to CARESapp@alsde.edu.
Upon approval of the application, funds will be released to the LEA.**

ALSDE Internal Use Only

Date Application Received: *8/20/2020*

Date ALSDE Approved: *8/21/2020*

[Signature]

State Superintendent and/or Designee Signature

Date

8-21-2020

Date GEER Funds Released: _____