

July 6, 2020

Superintendents:

This morning, Governor Kay Ivey awarded \$48,851,495 from the Governor's Emergency Education Relief (GEER) Funds to ALSDE to be distributed to local school systems in grants. As we begin implementation of the [Roadmap to Reopening Schools](#), this funding will help further statewide efforts to increase Internet connectivity, improve remote learning opportunities, provide additional academic support to bridge learning and achievement gaps, and support intensive before and after school tutoring for learning and remediation in schools. We are very excited about this announcement and our staff is working diligently on the details and procedures for distribution of the funds. We will be distributing a GEER funds application as soon as they are available. The applications will support LEA grants as follows:

\$10 million to equip all school buses with WiFi capabilities to increase internet connectivity and help bridge the digital divide

- Enable school buses with WiFi. This would allow students to have Internet access while riding buses to and from school. It will also allow buses to be parked throughout the community as mobile hotspots, a practice that has been effectual in both rural and urban communities this spring.
- Currently 226 of our 6,418 buses are enabled (less than 1%).
- More detail will be available in the application process, but this amount calculates to approximately \$1,550 per bus.
- School systems that have converted their buses to WiFi since March 13 may be eligible to reimburse themselves from this fund, subject to Federal rules.
- School systems that had previously converted their school buses to WiFi will want to know how the funding will work for them; we are working on an answer for them.
- Additional details will follow in the coming days.

\$39 million to support the most vulnerable populations including expenditures to improve remote learning opportunities; provide additional academic support to bridge learning and achievement gaps; and support intensive before and after school tutoring resources for learning and remediation in schools. Options may include the following, but the application will be more specific:

- Digital Resources
- Resources specific to vulnerable populations
- Early Literacy Parent At-Home Kits and Resources
 - PK-5 Reading and Math Family Engagement Bags
 - PK-3 Reading Family Engagement Packs
- Early Math Parent At-Home Kits and Resources (K-5)
 - PK-5 Reading and Math Family Engagement Bags
- K-3 Reading and Mathematics Screeners
- Grants to local school systems to provide tutoring as defined in the Alabama Literacy Act

As discussed at the SSA conference, GEER funds are a portion of the funds allocated to states through CARES. Governors have wide discretion in the distribution of GEER fund, and we are very appreciative that Gov. Ivey decided to allocate the entire GEER fund to our local school systems through the ALSDE. The GEER fund requires some weighting, and we are working on those weights and running allocations later this week.

ESSER funds are those which are allocated to both states and school systems through the state departments of education based on their fiscal year 2019 allocations under Title I, Part A. As you know, ESSER funds reserved for ALSDE are being used to purchase a statewide digital curriculum. We remain deeply engaged with the executive office and legislative leadership around the \$300 million set aside for distance learning as well as other funds which could support K-12 schools. We will continue to keep you updated as plans continue to be rolled out around all of these funds.

As always, thank you for all that you do,

Eric G. Mackey

State Superintendent of Education

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