



Addressing Staff Shortages

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Virtual Spring Forum 2022
Planning for Uninterrupted Crises

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What is the staffing issue?



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Economic Policy Institute (EPI) Survey

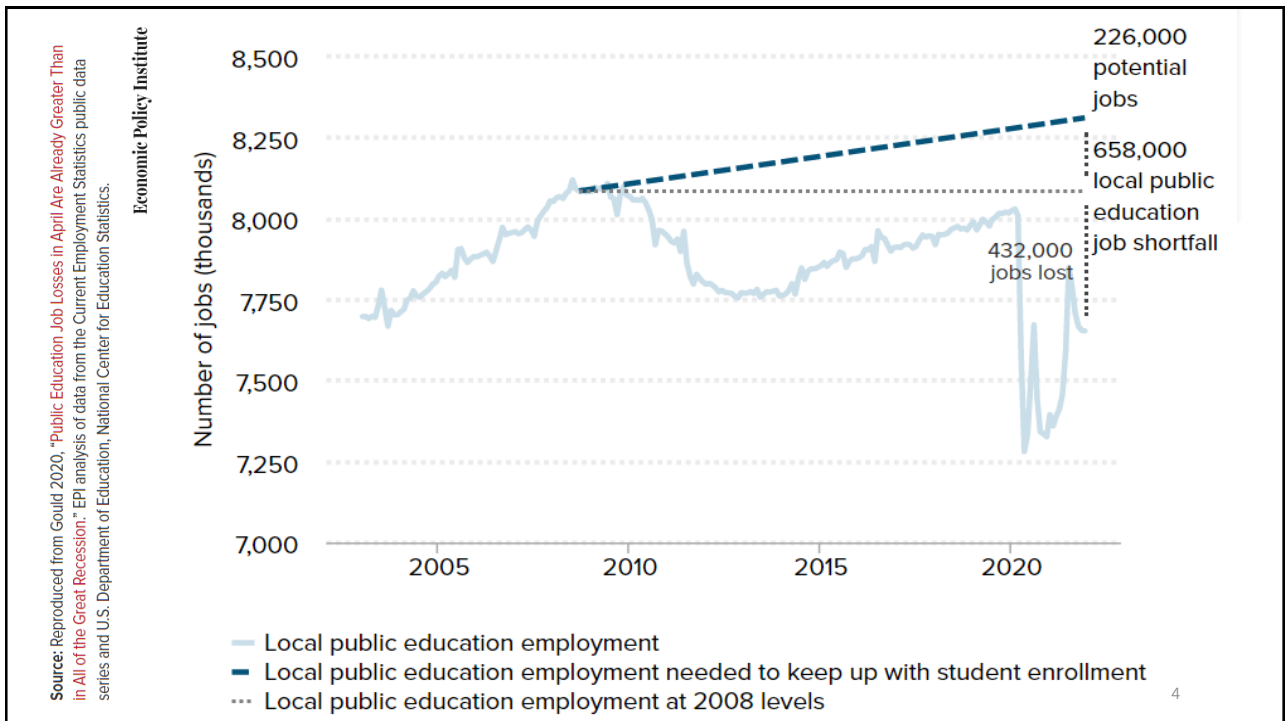
- **From 2019-2021, state and local public education employment fell by nearly 5% overall**

- Bureau of Labor Statistics data indicate that the number of employed public K–12 teachers fell by 6.8%, school bus drivers by 14.7%, school custodians by 6.0%, and teaching assistants by 2.6%
- Had school staffing kept pace with student enrollment growth since Fall 2008—i.e., schools maintaining the same classrooms sizes and staffing ratios—K–12 public education employment today would be 658,000 (or 8.6%) higher than it was in December 2021.

- **Significant losses among non-teaching staff**

- Number of bus drivers down by 14.7%, school custodians by 6.0%, and 2.6% drop among teaching assistants

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Schools Struggling to Fill Vacancies

- NEA survey: Ratio of hires to job openings in the education sector in January 2022 was 0.57 hires for every open position
- Fewer teachers in “teacher pipeline” programs
- Teacher pay lags other comparable positions by 19.2% (source: EPI)
- Teacher vacancies highest in Special Education (source: IES)
 - More than half of schools (57%) with one or more vacancies said they increasingly needed to use teachers for work outside their job descriptions

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Poll Question 1:

- Does your local district have a lot of vacancies?
 - Nope, we’re good!
 - We have a decent amount of turnover but we can fill openings pretty quickly
 - We fill positions eventually
 - It’s like a ghost town!

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New Concerns About Threats and Violence

- American Psychological Association Report (March 2022)
 - 43% of teachers and 27% of administrators said they are planning or want to leave their current positions due to concerns about school climate and safety.
 - 33% of teachers reported at least one incident of verbal harassment or a threat of violence from a student, and 37% of administrators
 - 37% of teachers and 42% of administrators said they had been harassed by a parent
 - Teachers and administrators in private schools also reported similar rates of threats and verbal harassment. However, most of those statements in private schools came from parents rather than students.
 - Mental health identified as a concern across all roles, alongside aggression from parents and teachers and concerns about COVID-19

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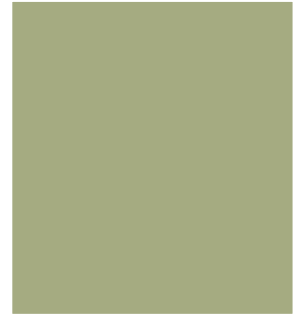
The therapy dog after I share all of my problems:



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What are the options?



ESSER Allowability



- A two-part test!
- Part I: does the expense go to “prevent, prepare for, and respond to” the pandemic?
 - New language: “including its impact on the social, emotional, mental health, and academic needs of students”
- Part II: is it an allowable expenditure listed under ESSER?
 - Also: necessary and reasonable



ESSER: Selected LEA Uses of Funds

A. Any activity authorized by the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965

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.

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.



ESSER: Selected LEA Uses of Funds

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–

- (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;
- (ii) **Implementing evidence-based activities** to meet the comprehensive needs of students;
- (iii) Providing information and assistance to parents and families on how they can effectively support students, including in a distance learning environment; and
- (iv) Tracking student attendance and improving student engagement in distance education.



ED Guidance: "Premium Pay"

- D-6. May an LEA use ESSER and GEER funds to provide "premium pay" or other additional compensation for teachers, principals, and other school personnel, including school nutrition staff and custodians?
- *Yes. Premium pay must be reasonable and necessary and consistent with 2 CFR § 200.430(f), and given pursuant to an established plan (which could be established in response to the COVID-19 pandemic), consistent with applicable collective bargaining agreements and other relevant policies and requirements.*

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"Incentive Compensation"

- "Incentive compensation to employees based on cost reduction, or efficient performance, suggestion awards, safety awards, etc., is allowable to the extent that the overall compensation is determined to be reasonable and such costs are paid or accrued pursuant to an agreement entered into in good faith between the non-Federal entity and the employees before the services were rendered, or pursuant to an established plan followed by the non-Federal entity so consistently as to imply, in effect, an agreement to make such payment."

§ 200.430(f)

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Dear Colleague from ED

- “Strategies for Hiring and Retaining Qualified and Effective Educators”
 - 1. Increase Educator and Staff Compensation
 - Cash incentives
 - Bringing retired educators and social workers back without losing their pension
 - “additional compensation” for support staff
 - 2. Build and Maintain a Cadre of High-Quality Substitute Teachers
 - “recruit and train high-quality substitute teachers”
 - “permanent subs”
 - “substitute stipends” for training and workload
 - Increases in hourly rates

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Dear Colleague from ED

- “Strategies for Hiring and Retaining Qualified and Effective Educators”
 - 3. Support Educator and Staff Well-Being, Including Improved Working Conditions
 - Peer to peer support
 - More on-site mental health
 - Flexible scheduling to increase planning/ vacation days
 - 4. Make investments in the educator pipeline
 - Provide loan forgiveness, grants, or scholarships
 - Develop teacher residency programs
 - Professional development

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Poll Question 2:

- What kind of teacher recruitment/retention strategies are you using?
 - Business as usual
 - Focus on recruitment
 - Raises for everyone!
 - Bonuses for everyone!
 - Bringing back retirees
 - Multiple options
 - Crossing our fingers and toes, lighting a candle, etc.

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ED Fact Sheet on Addressing Teacher Shortages

- Echoes "Dear Colleague"
- Suggests use of State and Local Fiscal Relief Fund dollars for staffing, including:
 - Rehiring public sector workers up to pre-pandemic levels
 - Includes payroll, covered benefits, and other costs associated with
 - Providing assistance to disproportionately impacted schools
 - Includes providing services to districts with high rates of poverty; evidence-based educational services; practices that address the social, emotional, and academic needs of students; and new, enhanced, or expanded early learning services.

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ED Fact Sheet on Addressing Other Staff Shortages

- Strategies:
 - Increase pay and benefits
 - Provide flexibility for retirees and licensees from other States
 - Provide targeted incentives
 - Support staff well-being



ED Fact Sheet on Addressing Other Staff Shortages

- Staff positions to target:
 - Substitute teachers
 - Bus drivers
 - Paraprofessionals
 - Instructional aides
 - Teachers
 - Cafeteria workers
 - Custodians
 - Nurses
 - Mental health counselors
 - Administrative assistants
 - Principals/ assistant principals
 - District-level administrators



Other Sources of Funds

- Coronavirus State & Local Fiscal Recovery Funds
 - Treasury regulations: can provide “premium pay” to essential workers, including educators and school nutrition staff
 - Limited to \$13 per hour, and no more than \$25,000

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Chalkbeat

U.S. schools are flush with cash, but struggling to spend it on schedule

By Matt Barnum | Mar 15, 2022, 5:00am EDT

“We need the personnel,” she said. “Despite our best efforts, we’re not able to fill them because of the workforce shortages that we’re seeing in our area.”

It’s hard to solve those problems with temporary funding, both because it takes time to attract people into new fields and because large pay raises aren’t sustainable.

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ED Guidance (March 2022):

- HEERF funds
 - Used for scholarships, stipends, and “other financial aid” for teachers in training
 - Additional courses or test fees for licensure or certification
 - Expand an institution’s educator preparation program (EPP) in response to the pandemic
 - More faculty and staff, build out in shortage areas
 - Discharge institutional loans, debts, or unpaid balances
- SSARP “basic needs” can include teacher training needs



ED Guidance (March 2022):

- ESSER and GEER Funds
 - Monthly payments to college graduates from low-income backgrounds who enter teaching and enroll in IBR
 - Must advise graduates about PSLF, TEACH, and other teacher loan forgiveness options
 - Tuition assistance or reimbursement
- MUST still have connection to “prevent, prepare for, respond to” pandemic “including its impact on the social, emotional, mental health, and academic needs of students”



Looking ahead



- Budget discussions focus on:
 - Educator preparation, especially native language instruction and special education
 - Increase in resources for school-based mental health and other supports



Poll Question 3:

- What kind of federal assistance would be most helpful in filling staffing positions?
 - More money
 - More flexibility with the money we have
 - Building up “teacher pipeline”
 - All of the above



Resources

- EPI Survey/ Data: <https://www.epi.org/publication/solving-k-12-staffing-shortages/>
- IES Report: <https://ies.ed.gov/schoolsurvey/>
- APA Survey: <https://www.apa.org/education-career/k12/violence-educators-technical-report.pdf>
- ED ESSER Guidance (May 2021):
https://oese.ed.gov/files/2021/05/ESSER.GEER_FAQs_5.26.21_745AM_FINALb0cd6833f6f46e03ba2d97d30aff953260028045f9ef3b18ea602db4b32b1d99.pdf
- ED Dear Colleague: https://oese.ed.gov/files/2021/12/21-0414.DCL_Labor-Shortages.pdf
- Teacher Shortages Fact Sheet: <https://www2.ed.gov/documents/coronavirus/arp-teacher-shortages.pdf>
- Staff Shortages Fact Sheet: <https://www2.ed.gov/documents/coronavirus/arp-staff-shortages.pdf>
- Teacher Shortage HEERF/ESSER uses: <https://www.ed.gov/coronavirus/factsheets/teacher-shortage>



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