

ARCHIVE: COVID-19 Superintendent Call

May 20, 2020

The following are questions asked by directors of schools during this call and the answers provided by the department. For additional guidance and up-to-the-minute supports, please check the TDOE website for more information:

<https://www.tn.gov/education/health-and-safety/update-on-coronavirus.html>.

ESSER and CARES

- Question: Are the ESSER fund and CARES Act the same grant, or are they separate grants?
 - **Response:** The CARES Act provides \$30.75 billion for the new Education Stabilization Fund, which includes three sections of relief funds:
 - \$3 billion for the Governor's Emergency Education Relief Fund, which governors can use at their discretion to support their K-12 and higher education needs related to COVID-19.
 - \$13 billion for the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER Fund), which states can use for a wide range of purposes, including purchasing computers and hot spot devices for online learning; purchasing supplies for cleaning and sanitization, supporting professional development for educators, and supporting access to quality instruction for students with disabilities.
 - \$14 billion for the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund, which is awarded directly to institutions of higher education.
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- Question: What is the GEER fund?
 - **Response:** The Governor's Emergency Education Relief fund (GEER fund) may be used by the governor at his discretion to support K-12 and higher education needs related to COVID-19. The governor has one year to determine how these funds will be used, and we are waiting for guidance from his office. Please note funds may be used for emergency support:
 - the most significantly impacted LEAs;
 - the most significantly IHEs; and
 - any other education-related entity deemed by the governor as essential for carrying out emergency educational services including PreK, social and emotional support, and protection of jobs.
- Question: Once the ESSER funding application is approved at the end of June, how soon will funding be available to spend?
 - **Response:** The funds will be available immediately after the application is approved.