

MINUTES

Commissioner's Task Force on ESSER II and EANS Distribution of Money

Friday, May 21, 2021



Call to Order

(00:12:04)

Chairman Porter called the weekly meeting of the Commissioner's Task Force to order at 3:00p.m. on Friday, May 21st.

The meeting was conducted via video conference and was live streamed for the public to observe and listen.

Approval of Agenda

MOTION
(00:12:25)

Adam Thomas made a motion to approve the agenda for the May 21st meeting, and Nick Compagnone had seconded it. Motion carried (19-0).

Attendance:

The following Task Force members attended by video conference:

Jim Porter	Frank Harwood
Janet Waugh	Tracy Callard
Pat Pettey	Jason Winbolt
Brenda Dietrich	Melissa Rooker
Adam Thomas	Mike Argabright
Simeon Russell	Janet Eaton
Lisa Peters	Adam Proffitt
Alicia Thompson	Robertta Lewis
Nick Compagnone	Jamie Rumford
Brad Bergsma	

Approval of May 7th Meeting Minutes

MOTION
(00:12:56)

Bert Lewis made a motion to approve of the May 7th minutes, and Mike Argabright had seconded it. Motion carried (19-0).

EANS I: Status Update and Overview of Change Request Process – Tate Toedman

(00:13:32)

Tate mentioned that the Kansas State Board of Education approved the Task Force recommendations of the EANS I reconsideration requests on Tuesday, May 11th, 2021. The KSDE review team has communicated these decisions to the schools, and service centers following the Board's decision. Also, KSDE is in the process of developing a process for schools to submit change requests if they need to make minor adjustments to their approved EANS I expenditures.

He stated that any EANS I funds not accounted for in the initial process will be included in the EANS II application process in August/September.

Tate discussed that several guiding principles shape the EANS change request process; all guiding principles for EANS I eligibility should apply equally to change request evaluation, balance flexibility, consistent with the intent of the original approved requests.

Tate then mentioned that if private schools have found that they would like to submit a new request, they cannot submit it during the EANS I change request process. If a private school would like to have a new request considered, they will need to submit the specific request during EANS II (if they qualify for EANS II funding). The change request process in place is designed for minor adjustments of previously approved requests (such as dollar amount; or quantity of item). Change requests will be submitted by schools to the KSDE Review team via email, and there will be four categories that will need to be filled out.

Also included in his presentation were a few details about the EANS II process, which included the following (dates are tentative):

- The EANS II application process will begin on August 13th, 2021 and will close on August 27th. This timeline will be very close similar to the EANS I application process.
- Pre-work information will be available to private schools to lower the amount of time used close to the due date of the application; private schools will be able to fill out their school's spreadsheet, and the application will look very similar as the EANS I application.

Private schools may see a few minor changes to the EANS application, as the KSDE review team is hoping that it will become more user friendly.

ESSER II: Application Status Update – Doug Boline

(00:32:40)

Doug Boline mentioned that there have been 126 ESSER II applications submitted out of 286 (44%) 68+ additional ESSER II plans currently in progress (as of May 20th, at 5:00 p.m. CST).

- 34 applications (representing 57K students; totaling to \$25.7 million) will be reviewed by the Task Force today, and they will be included (if there are no changes) in the slate for next week to be voted on for recommendation to the Kansas State Board of Education during their June Board meeting (estimating 71 applications).

- 21 applications that have been received for this week's batch have applied for 95% or more of their ESSER II allocation. Although the majority of school districts are applying for their entire allocation, there are some that are not.
- 18% of total ESSER II allocation (\$60.2 million) has been reviewed to date.

ESSER II: Summary & Discussion of Requests Deemed Eligible by KSDE – Doug Boline

(00:36:52)

Doug then mentioned that the average eligible expenditure per district is \$757K (range is from \$37K to \$10,564K), and over the total length of plan, the eligible planned expenditures per student is \$454 (range is from \$34 to \$1,388).

Note - These numbers reflect the 34 completed reviews included in the pre-read material for the May 21st Task Force meeting. Not all school districts are not using their entire allocation.

ESSER II: Discussion of Requests Deemed Ineligible by KSDE - Doug Boline

(00:38:40)

Doug Boline restated that the KSDE review team would like to avoid bringing the Task Force any ineligible requests, but sometimes school districts are persistent about bringing certain requests to the Task Force for discussion; and this is when they will be given to the Task Force. For example, USD 430 South Brown County has requested full-time certified salaries totaling to \$369, and the relation related to the pandemic was shown as "reimburse to cover the costs for live streaming activities." The KSDE rationale for not approving this request is that streaming extracurricular events is not an ESSER II allowable use.

Another section that the KSDE review team is receiving push back on is the additional pay for staff. There are two requirements in which the district must meet before additional pay would be approved as an eligible expenditure for the ESSER II funds, and the request must consist of the following (guidance as of Friday, May 21st, 2021):

1. The additional pay must be for activities that are above and beyond each individual's contractual job responsibilities, which in the case of ESSER must be directly related to COVID-19.

AND

2. The additional pay must be committed prior to the additional duties being performed and may not be committed to retroactively to pay for duties previously performed.

Doug then stated that "Workforce **bonuses** other than hazard pay or overtime" are cited by the United States Treasury as an example of "costs that would not be eligible expenditures of payments from the Fund".

Also, additional pay must be committed prior to the additional duties being performed.

ESSER I: Emerging Themes from Initial Quarterly ESSER Reports (as of March 31st) – Doug Boline

(00:59:39)

Doug started this section by mentioning that the the first year of the pandemic, Kansas public and private school districts had to manage the crisis of protecting student learning across changing learning environments. According to the quarterly surveys given to school districts, the vast majority of districts changed learning environments at least twice from in-person to remote (in Spring 2020) and from fully remote to partially remote/hybrid or in-person (in Fall 2020).

The quarterly reports have also shown that districts focused CRF and ESSER I funding on the immediate need to ensure continued learning. Reported CRF and ESSER I expenditures as of March 31st, 2021, totaled \$140 million and were largely focused on educational technology (37%), supplies to sanitize and clean (24%), and general operations (21%).

Please note that this data is preliminary. All data is self-reported by districts; major discrepancies have been resolved by KSDE.

Doug mentioned that all 286 school districts throughout the State of Kansas transitioned to remote learning from March 2020 through the end of the 2019-20 school year. Doug also stated that 242 (85%) of school districts throughout the state returned back to in-person learning in August 2020; although the majority of school districts returned to in-person, it does not represent that the majority of students returned back to in-person learning. The 16 largest school districts were still in a remote learning model in December of 2020.

(01:03:12)

Next Steps and Plan for Upcoming Task Force Meetings – Doug Boline

(01:19:16)

Doug then discussed the next few steps for the Task Force which included the following:

- Pre-Read of reviewed applications for Task Force will be provided on Wednesday, June 2nd.
- No Task Force meeting will occur on Friday, May 28th, 2021.
- During the next Task Force meeting on June 4th, the Task Force will be focused on reviewing and voting on second slate of ESSER II applications in advance of the Kansas State Board of Education meeting.

Brenda Dietrich recommended to the Task Force that a tentative schedule be created with summer approaching, as having Task Force meetings currently scheduled for Friday afternoons, we may see more calendar conflicts with Task Force members.

ADJOURNMENT - Chairman Porter adjourned the meeting at 4:17 p.m. The next meeting will occur on Friday, June 4th at 3:00 p.m.

(01:29:36)