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Contact: DPI Media Line, (608) 266-3559, [media.inquiries@dpi.wi.gov](mailto:media.inquiries@dpi.wi.gov)

## State superintendent statement on ESSER III plan approval by USDE

MADISON – State Superintendent Dr. Jill Underly issued the following statement today in response to the U.S. Department of Education approving Wisconsin’s American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary Emergency Relief plan.

“Today, we received notification that the United States Department of Education (USDE) has approved 95 percent of our ESSER III application. That means school districts will begin receiving much-needed federal relief in the coming weeks. This support will allow them to pursue innovative approaches to address the ongoing challenges presented by the pandemic, and to begin the process of addressing the new normal for learners, their families, our educators, and our communities.

“We at the DPI are committed to working with legislative leaders and the USDE to address this issue. We all share a mutual interest in doing what is best for Wisconsin’s students, and that means supporting our learners as thoroughly and expediently as possible.”

### **Background**

In reviewing Wisconsin’s application, USDE placed a grant condition on a portion of the state plan (a 5 percent set-aside) which was directed by Motion 57, as passed by the Joint Finance Committee. The set-aside specifically required states to outline how these ESSER III funds will “support students who have been most severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic,” specifically students who “missed the most in-person instruction” and “who did not consistently participate in remote instruction” in the two school years preceding this one. Wisconsin’s plan, per a directive by the JFC, targeted these funds at sparse districts that provided in-person instruction during the pandemic and not necessarily at the students who missed the most in-person instruction. Therefore, USDE is asking Wisconsin to submit a new proposal for how these funds are to be spent.

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**NOTE:** Application instructions can be found on [Wisconsin’s State Plan for the American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund](#). This news release is available electronically at <https://dpi.wi.gov/news/releases/2021/jill-underly-esser-iii-arpa-statement>.