



- Method of Award: Emergency Procurement

Funding Source: Federal/State

This item references Goals 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 of the *Mississippi Board of Education 2018-2022 Strategic Plan*.

Recommendation: Approval

Back-up material attached



## MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Carey M. Wright, Ed.D.  
State Superintendent of Education

August 23, 2021

Monique Corley, Director of Procurement

RE: Emergency Contracts/Procurement for Coronavirus Response & Support to LEAs

Dear Ms. Corley,

Please accept this letter as my approval of Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funded emergency procurements by MDE for critical systems and supports to local school districts in response to the COVID-19 (coronavirus) outbreak. The impact of the pandemic on K-12 student learning is significant in Mississippi. The pandemic has raised new barriers to the delivery of high-quality education in a safe environment. Among the devastating setbacks this pandemic poses, learning gaps in fundamental subject areas such as English and Language Arts, Math, Science and Social Studies have widened. Further, the cumulative, long-term impact to our children's emotional, mental, and social well-being is yet untold. Moreover, the precipitous surge in COVID cases, particularly among K-12 students, requires MDE to act quickly in providing support to the local school districts across the State.

Since March 2020, the federal government has passed three (3) relief packages in response to the COVID-19 pandemic that included unprecedented support for K-12 schools. This support, ESSER, is intended to address the impact COVID-19 has had, and continues to have, on elementary and secondary schools. As a condition of this funding, U.S. Department of Education has established very aggressive timelines to obligate these funds to keep pace with the ever-changing needs of states and local school districts.

In Mississippi, this funding will be used to address issues such as health screening to mitigate the risk of exposure to students, teachers, and staff; to address learning loss due to unfinished learning or to provide additional educational supports to close learning gaps; mental health support; continuity planning to prepare for any additional closures due to subsequent pandemic waves; cleaning and sanitation, etc.

The execution of emergency contracts using ESSER funds will provide for the prompt delivery of crucial services and systems to the school districts in need during this time. Further, MDE is committed to providing for fair and open competition and to performing cost analysis for all funds spent in response to this pandemic emergency. Following the lengthy time schedules associated with other procurement methods, threatens MDE's ability to provide critical support to students, teachers, and parents across the State.

Please contact me if you have any questions. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carey M. Wright".

Carey M. Wright, Ed.D.  
State Superintendent of Education