



Agency Priority Goal | Action Plan | FY 23 – Q1

Address the impact of COVID-19 on students, educators, and faculty

Goal Leader:

Joaquin Tamayo, Chief of Staff, Office of the Deputy Secretary

Goal Overview

Goal Statement

The Department will be a leader and partner in addressing the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in educational areas. By September 30, 2023, the Department will respond to the impact of COVID-19 and the need to continuously provide for high-quality educational environments and capabilities by supporting state educational agencies (SEAs), local educational agencies (LEAs) and institutions of higher education (IHEs) to:

- Continue to support schools in maintaining safe, fully in-person instructions for students.
- Utilize COVID relief funds on appropriate, effective and evidence-based activities to reengage students, address lost instructional time, and improve educational opportunities by offering 300+ Department-led technical assistance engagements.

Problem to Be Solved

States, districts, schools, and colleges across the country have shifted their focus regarding the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic from re-opening to recovery. The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) [Protect Public Data Hub Learning Modalities Map](#) indicated that 99.4 percent of school districts in the United States reported an option for in-person learning during week of February 20 through February 27, 2022. In addition to ongoing efforts to ensure a safe physical learning environment, educators across the country are addressing needs related to the impact of lost instructional time; student and staff social, emotional, and mental well-being; and ongoing teacher and administrator shortages. The U.S. Department of Education's (Department's) Institute of Education Sciences' (IES') National Center for Education Statistics found in its January 2022 [School Pulse Panel](#) survey results, that nearly all public schools reported requiring students to quarantine as a result of COVID-19. Additionally, 44 percent of public schools reported full- or part-time teacher vacancies, and school leaders reported concerns including lack of substitute teachers, student learning loss, and parental frustration over changing safety guidelines. The Department has and continues to play a critical role in supporting full recovery from the pandemic in the education community, from prekindergarten through higher education, through both distribution of unprecedented funding and on-going technical assistance.

What Success Looks Like

Indicators of success will include: (1) educational institutions continuing to be an option for in-person learning; (2) educators and other school staff being recruited, inducted, professionally developed, and retained in sufficient numbers to meet students' needs; (3) student and staff needs related to social, emotional, and mental well-being being addressed, (4) robust, evidence-based strategies and approaches to addressing learning loss will be implemented, evaluated, and continuously improved, and (5) decrease in indicators such as chronic absenteeism to demonstrate student re-engagement with schooling (6) institutions of higher education report on their annual report that Higher Education Emergency Relief Funds enabled them to keep students enrolled who were at risk of dropping out due to pandemic-related factors.

States, districts, schools, colleges, and universities have unprecedented relief funds to support these key indicators. The Department will monitor spending of relief funds in each of these key areas for both accountability and oversight and to identify ongoing opportunities where technical assistance and engagements can benefit applicants and the impact of the programs.

Goal target(s)¹

Achievement statement		Key indicator(s)	Quantify progress			Frequency
By...	We will...	Name of indicator ²	Target value	Starting value	Current value ³	Update cycle
09/30/23	The Department will respond to the impact of COVID-19 and the need to continuously provide for high-quality educational environments and capabilities by supporting SEAs, LEAs and IHEs to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to support schools in maintaining safe, fully in-person instructions for students. Utilize COVID relief funds on appropriate, effective and evidence-based activities to reengage students, address lost instructional time, and improve educational opportunities by offering 300+ Department-led technical assistance engagements. 	1. Amount spent within each ESSER program on meeting students' academic, social, emotional, and other needs.	TBD	TBD	\$6,135,079,987.56	Annually
		2. Percentage of institutions of higher education that report on their annual report that Higher Education Emergency Relief Funds enabled them to keep students enrolled who were at risk of dropping out due to pandemic-related factors.	75%	89.8%	89.8%	Annually
		3. Percentage of K-12 public schools offering full-time in-person instruction.	100%	--	99.9%	Quarterly

¹ Number of states reporting the use of Department funds for full-service community schools, was removed as a key indicator for APG 1, due to data unavailability.

² Due to a variety of factors that make accurate data unavailable to calculate, key indicator 1 was replaced with *Amount spent within each ESSER program on meeting students' academic, social, emotional, and other needs*. The current value is the total of amount spent in each ESSER program: ESSER I \$2,881,927,315.72, ESSER II \$2,834,799,390.28, and ARP ESSER \$418,353,281.56.

³ Key Indicator 2: The current value represents the latest data available (for FY2021) which has just been reported in the grantee annual performance reports in Q3 of FY2022. FY2022 value will be available in FY2023 Q4, based on Annual Performance Reports received for prior year.

Goal Team

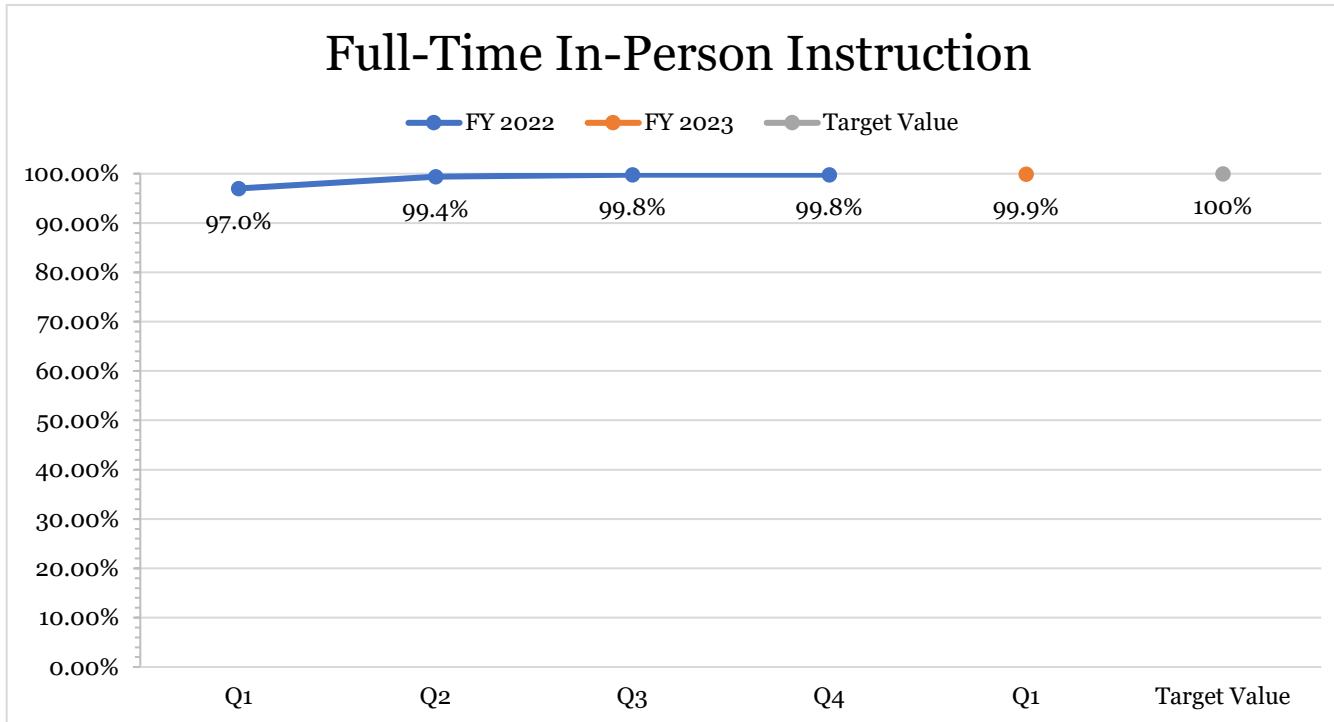
Goal Leader Joaquin Tamayo <i>Chief of Staff, Office of the Deputy Secretary</i>		
Education Stabilization Fund (ESF) and American Rescue Plan (ARP) Programs <i>(funded by pandemic recovery funds)</i> James Lane Senior Advisor, Office of the Secretary	Full-Service Community Schools <i>(funded by pandemic recovery funds)</i> James Lane Senior Advisor, Office of the Secretary	Higher Education <i>(funded by pandemic recovery funds)</i> Nasser Paydar Assistant Secretary, Office of Postsecondary Education

Goal Strategies

The Department will employ a variety of strategies intended to support this agency priority goal, including the following:

- The Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (OESE) will implement ongoing monitoring of relief funds, including review of State relief fund reporting, and provide ongoing support to States in the use of relief funds. A variety of resources related to use of relief funds can be found using the following links: [Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund - Office of Elementary and Secondary Education](#) and [Deadlines and Announcements - Office of Elementary and Secondary Education](#).
- The Department's cross-office efforts by OESE, IES, and the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services to support the field will include ongoing development and dissemination of resources via multiple avenues including social media. For example, the Department will continue to lift up examples from the field through the [Safer Schools and Campuses Best Practices Clearinghouse](#), implement [Lessons from the Field](#) webinars, publish [fact sheets](#).
- The Department will continue ongoing collaboration with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to support the physical safety of schools and campuses.
- Implementation of technical assistance communities of practice to support States and districts.
- The Department will support effective use of funds through the many opportunities for peer sharing and partnering with States, school districts, and other education stakeholders.
- The Department will facilitate institutions' use of CARES Act flexibilities related to the administration of Title IV and Higher Education Act of 1965 programs as well as flexibilities outlined in the Federal Student Aid Programs Federal Register Notice using authority of the Higher Education Relief Opportunities for Students Act of 2003 to assist students affected by the COVID-19 pandemic in completing their programs of study.
- The Department will continue to host and participate in engagements and provide technical assistance for institutions that receive funding, in order to ensure that they are using their funds to meet priority needs and for appropriate purposes.

Key indicators



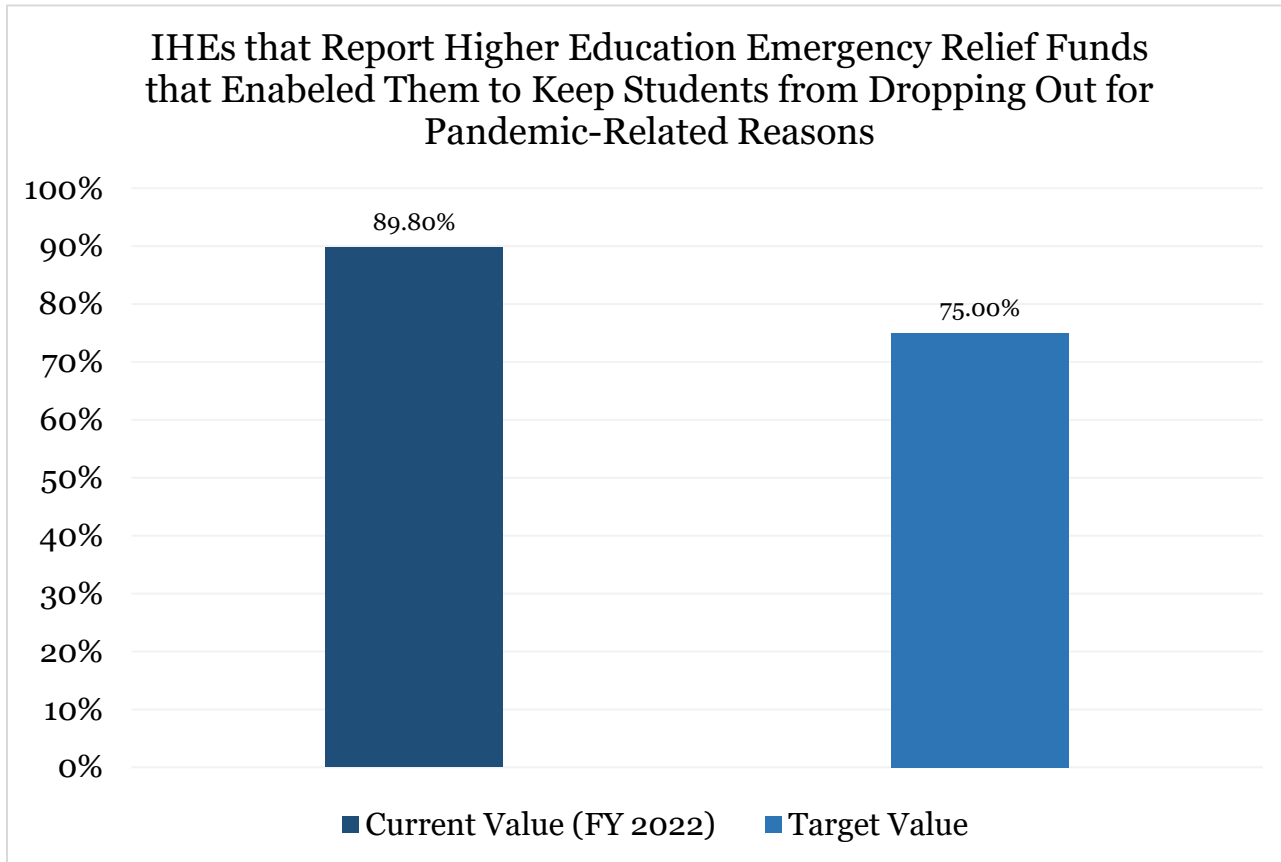
Percentage of K-12 public schools offering full-time in-person instruction.

Key Indicator Title

Quarterly

Frequency

Key indicators



Percentage of institutions of higher education that report on their annual report that Higher Education Emergency Relief Funds enabled them to keep students enrolled who were at risk of dropping out due to pandemic-related factors.

Key Indicator Title

Annually

Frequency

Key milestones

Milestone Summary					
Key Milestone	Milestone Due Date	Milestone Status	Change from last quarter	Office	Comments
Conference Presentation: Association of Educational Federal Finance Administration (Monitoring and Audit Resolution)	FY 2022, Q1	Complete	N/A	OESE	OESE's Management Support Office and State and Grantee Relations teams conducted joint presentations at the Association of Educational Federal Financial Administrators conference on monitoring and audit resolution requirements, with emphasis on what to expect regarding ESF and ARP compliance and accountability reporting.
Release basic Needs Guidance	FY 2022, Q2	Complete	N/A	OPE	In January 2022, OPE released basic needs guidance.
Conduct Higher Education Emergency Relief Funds (HEERF) Supplemental Support under American Rescue Plan (SSARP) Webinar for grantees and release NIA on SSARP Institutions with the Greatest Need	FY 2022, Q2	Complete	N/A	OPE	In February 2022, OPE conducted HEERF SSARP Webinar for grantees and released the NIA on SSARP Institutions with the Greatest Need.
External Stakeholder Webinar: with the Council of Chief State School Officers on Pandemic Recovery Funds Financial Management Requirements	FY 2022, Q2	Complete	N/A	OESE	Stakeholder webinar with noted advocacy group and association of state education chief officers; coverage of pandemic monitoring and compliance requirements.

Briefing with Congressional Appropriations Committee Staff on ARP 1 Year Deadlines, Monitoring, Reporting and Accountability (both House and Senate staff)	FY 2022, Q2	Complete	N/A	OESE	OS Senior Advisor and senior leaders from OESE met with appropriators to respond to specific questions related to progress and requirements on the approach of the one-year anniversary of the ARP.
External Stakeholder Webinars: ARP Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief and Emergency Assistance to Non-Public Schools Annual Performance Reporting	FY 2022, Q2	Complete	N/A	OESE	Training and technical assistance opportunity provided to SEA and LEA grantees; coverage of annual performance reporting requirements and ARP Year 1 deadlines.
External Quarterly Grantee Monitoring Reviews	FY 2022, Q2-Q3	Complete	N/A	OESE	52 SEAs participated in a quarterly monitoring call focused on the LEA use of the 20% ARP ESSER set aside to address learning loss. In fiscal year 2023, all SEAs will participate in two quarterly monitoring calls focused on a high-
Publication of Full-Service Community Schools Grant Program notice inviting applications (NIA)	FY 2022, Q3-Q4	Complete	N/A	OESE	NIA published in July, and also received an additional \$7 million to add to the FY 2022 enacted budget level to bring the full amount of grants to be awarded in December to \$75 million.
Release Mental Health Guidance	FY 2022, Q3	Complete	N/A	OPE	In May 2022, OPE released Mental Health Guidance.
Conduct HEERF quarterly reporting webinars	FY 2022, Q3	Complete	N/A	OPE	In June 2022, OPE held HEERF quarterly reporting webinars.
Implement HEERF A2 Grantee Webinars on use of funds for construction and renovation	FY 2022, Q3-Q4	Complete	N/A	OPE	In FY2022, OPE held 6 HEERF A2 Grantee Webinars on use of funds for construction and renovation.

Release SSARP Slate	FY 2022, Q4	Complete	N/A	OPE	In July 2022, OPE released the SSARP Slate, awarding 244 grants to institutions of higher education.
Approval and removal of conditions on resubmitted ARP ESSER state plans	Ongoing	On-Track	N/A	OESE	OESE reviewed 7 State plan resubmissions for the ARP ESSER program requirements and approved the removal of conditions for three States in the 1 st Quarter. Additionally, OESE reviewed and approved 1 State plan amendment during the 1 st Quarter.
Public schools offering full-time in-person instruction	Ongoing	On-Track	N/A	IES	The School Pulse Panel (SPP) is a new study collecting information on issues concerning the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on education.
Continue to effectively monitor HEERF implementation on an ongoing basis.	FY2023 Q1 - Q4	On Track	N/A	OPE	OPE continues to monitor HEERF implementation, including institution use of funding. As of the most recent available data, 21.8% of institutions are under enhanced monitoring
Continue to conduct technical assistance activities with HEERF grantees, focused on assisting grantees with HEERF allowable uses and reporting.	FY2023 Q1 - Q4	On Track	Please view “comments” column for updates.	OPE	To date, for FY2023, OPE hosted a technical assistance session with the 62 Institutional Resilience and Expanded Postsecondary Opportunity grantees (November 2022). OPE Plans to host two technical assistance webinars in March 2023 to provide guidance as the HEERF grant awards performance period comes to an end.

Narrative – FY 2023 Q1

The Department continues to track in-person learning across the country via the [HHS Protect Public Data Hub School Learning Modalities](#) map.

OESE continued to work with SEAs and LEAs to provide high-quality technical assistance regarding the Educational Stabilization Fund (ESF) and other American Rescue Plan (ARP) education funding and programs during FY 2023, Q1. OESE has provided nearly 50 relevant sources overall of financial, technical, and programmatic sources to help grantees, advocacy groups, and other stakeholders in helping the Nation's schools and communities recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Since Q1 of fiscal year 2022, OESE lifted conditions placed on approved State plans that, during the initial review, did not fully meet the ARP ESSER requirements. For those approved plans that did not fully meet the requirements, a State required, and the Department allowed for, additional time to identify evidence-based interventions that a State will implement to address the academic impact of lost instructional time and ensure that such interventions respond to students' academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs. Of the 23 States with conditions placed on their State plans, seven States submitted amended plans to have their conditions lifted, and three States had their conditions lifted during Q3. The other four States received feedback on their amended plans.

Starting in Q3 of fiscal year 2022, OESE is regularly reviewing requests to amend section D (*Maximizing State-Level Funds to Support Students*) of ARP ESSER State plans. OESE has reviewed and approved one State's amended plan. Two States submitted proposed plan amendments, but no approval was required. These two States made changes to each State's plan that were not substantial and in parts of the plan that the Department does not require approval to amend.

OESE did not conduct quarterly reviews with States during the 1st quarter of fiscal year 2023; however, OESE reviewed the implementation of the GEER and ESSER for one State as a part of OESE's consolidated monitoring. OESE also closed monitoring findings for three states, with one State having two findings that have not been closed. The remaining items will be closed when the State's OIG audit findings are resolved and closed by OESE.

OESE also released a template for States to request a one-time CARES Act grant extension to the period of liquidation that can be extended to any subrecipient. In addition to making the request template available, OESE provided two technical assistance opportunities for grantees to ask questions (serving a combined total of approximately 160 participants from 30

States), released a technical FAQ document that provided guidance for completing a request and the implementation of oversight activities for those States with an approved request. Technical assistance was also provided to grantees on a case-by-case basis during Quarter 1. By the end of Quarter 1, OESE had received six State requests for review (three requests for extensions to ESSER grants and three requests for extensions to GEER grants). Please note that requests were received at the end of Q1 and reviewed for approval at the start of Q2. Decisions on extensions will be reported as required during that quarter.

The Department announced \$63 million in new five-year Full-Service Community Schools (FSCS) grants to support 42 local educational agencies, non-profits, or other public or private organizations and institutions of higher education working to expand existing community schools or establish new programs in eight new states and territories, including Alabama, Alaska, Louisiana, Maryland, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Tennessee and Puerto Rico. The new grantees are committed to implementing the four pillars of community schools: 1) integrated student supports that address out-of-school barriers to learning through partnerships with social and health service agencies and providers; 2) expanded and enriched learning time and opportunities; 3) active family and community engagement; and 4) collaborative leadership and practices.

In Q1 of FY 2023, OESE updated “Appendix B” of the maintenance of effort (MOE) FAQs to support States’ reporting efforts. In December, OESE issued a [letter to Governors and Chief State School Officers](#) that ensures understanding of the MOE and maintenance of equity (MOEquity) requirements. In addition, OESE updated the Uses of Funds FAQs for the ESSER and GEER programs and held a webinar to review those for grantees.

OESE also issued non-regulatory guidance for Title I, Part A, Equitable Services for eligible private school children, teachers, and families. This guidance was significant in that it also sought to align and clarify how these services related to pandemic relief and recovery funding and ways these services might be beneficial, with the potential of being very impactful on impoverished and other students and communities that are still attempting to overcome the adverse effects of the global pandemic.

Now that all new streams of HEERF have been distributed, the Office of Postsecondary Education (OPE) anticipates the need for ongoing technical assistance regarding A2 flexibilities and ensuring compliance as it gets closer to the expiration date for those funds. The A2 flexibilities are those that the HEERF funding stream specifically dedicated to HBCU, TCCUs, and MSIs. To date, OPE (Higher Education Programs) has approved 58 requests submitted under the A2 flexibilities, totaling over \$200,000,000. The Department will issue guidance reiterating that student funds should be distributed at the start of the semester and not on a weekly or monthly basis, to ensure institutions are not using these funds as a condition of continued enrollment.

In FY2022, OPE's Emergency Response Unit (ERU) conducted 15 technical assistance activities with HEERF grantees focused on assisting grantees on HEERF allowable uses and reporting and exceeded our performance target by doing 8 more sessions than planned. OPE plans to continue these technical assistance engagements throughout FY2023.

OPE has released a selection of guidance documents for institutions to encourage using HEERF to support student basic needs, including food, housing, and childcare and best practices to address mental health on campus. These efforts will support inclusive environments, equity in student access and completion. OPE, in concert with others, implemented a revamped annual report to collect additional data on how ARP funds support evidence-based programs.

OPE is tracking the number of institutions who indicate that they have used HEERF to keep students enrolled through their annual reports. Results from FY2021 APRs received from institutions (the latest information available), show that 89.8% indicate this to be the case. The target was to have more than 75% of institutions indicate their use of the funding for this purpose in FY2022. The Department will have these results in Q4 of FY2023 when the FY 2022 APRs are received. Based on FY 2021 results, it appears the Department will achieve the target.

OPE strengthened its ability to monitor grantees, including the development of an ongoing risk-based monitoring plan and improving its data collection through quarterly and annual reporting; which will assist with ongoing monitoring efforts. To this end, OPE has initiated enhanced monitoring for appropriate use of pandemic relief funding for institutions under high-risk status. As of September 30, 2022, 21.8% of institutions are under enhanced monitoring; exceeding the monitoring target by almost 12%. The current high attrition of staff, due to resource limitations, may negatively impact the percentage of grantees monitored.

Additionally OPE, continues to work closely with Federal Student Aid (FSA), to provide guidance to students, institutions and others to facilitate use of CARES Act and other flexibilities using the authority under the HEROES Act related to Title IV programs to assist students affected by the COVID-19 pandemic in completing their programs of study.

Additional information

Contributing Programs

Organizations:

Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (OESE), Office of Postsecondary Education, Office of Career and Technical Adult Education, and Institute of Education Sciences

Program Activities:

- State and Grantee Relations: ARP Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ARP ESSER) Fund and the Education Stabilization Fund
- School Choice Improvement Program: Promise Neighborhoods, Magnet Schools Assistance Program, and Full-Service Community Schools
- Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund

Stakeholder / Congressional Consultations

The Department's fiscal year (FY) 2022 and FY 2023 Agency Priority Goals (APGs) were developed and informed by the priorities of the Administration, the Department's Secretary, and internal and external stakeholders, including educators, education policymakers, state and local leaders, education researchers and related organizations, advocacy organizations, students, and families. Specifically, the Department engaged and solicited suggestions, research, and focus areas from staff at all levels across the Department. The feedback from staff provided valuable perspectives about the opportunities and challenges for the Department. Additionally, as required by the [*Government Performance and Results Act and Modernization Act of 2010*](#), the Department shared the strategic framework and APGs with Congress.

In June 2021, education community stakeholders were given the opportunity to provide comments through a published notice of proposed Secretary's Supplemental Priorities and Definitions for Discretionary Grants Programs in the *Federal Register*. Following the invitation for comments, the [*Final Secretary's Supplemental Priorities and Definitions for Discretionary Grants Programs*](#), which included public comments, discussions, and changes, was published in December 2021.