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Maryland State Department of Education Provides $10 Million in Grant Funding to Support In-Person Instruction This Fall

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For Immediate Release
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Additional COVID-19 Emergency Relief Funds to Support Local School Systems that Reopen Buildings to Students by Second Quarter of School Year

BALTIMORE — As a result of improved health metrics throughout the State, the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) is encouraging in-person instruction and providing $10 million in grant awards to support Maryland schools that reopen to students this fall. MSDE will award a total of $10 million in grants to local school systems, the SEED School, the Maryland School for the Blind, and the Maryland School for the Deaf for starting in-person instruction by the start of the 2020-2021 school year's second quarter. Each grant award will include a base amount of $200,000 as well as a per-student allocation. Funds can be used for expenses related to building readiness and transportation.

"This additional $10 million in funds will assist schools in reopening and safely getting some of our kids back into classrooms and into healthy and supportive learning environments," said Governor Hogan. "With our health metrics continuing to improve, small group in-person instruction can occur safely, and should be available across the State."

"It is our responsibility to make sure that school buildings reopen safely as soon as possible so that every child has access to a high quality, meaningful education," said State Superintendent Karen B. Salmon, Ph.D. "We are pleased to provide this additional support to assist with health and safety precautions as schools work to return to in-person hybrid and small group instruction this fall."

The $10 million in grant funding is provided through federal funding, the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER Fund), which allows state education agencies to retain no more than 10 percent of its ESSER Fund grant to address emergency needs resulting from COVID-19 through subgrants and contracts.

To qualify for funding, local School Systems will submit a grant application to MSDE that details the system's in person learning plan for the fall. Grants applications are due by October 2nd.

The authority and decision making on safe openings continues to rest with county boards of education. Currently, 16 of the state's local school systems have developed plans for returning children to schools for some form of in person instruction. Decisions for in-person return should be based on a set of statewide metrics, guidelines, and benchmarks issued by the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) in collaboration with the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE). Find the guidance and benchmarks here.

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Fall Reopening Grant Funds 9 21 2020 PDF

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