

ESSER Funds Optimization Rubric

	Targeted, Inclusive Optimization	General Optimization	Developing Optimization
(A) Planning and stakeholder engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Stakeholders from each of the following groups are actively engaged in the planning process: students; teachers; families; school leaders; board members; central office staff; research and evaluation teams; community leaders; university, business, and civic partners - Purpose, membership, roles, responsibilities, and deliverables are carefully designated and defined within and across working groups - Schools and students who need more targeted support are equitably represented in the planning process and receive the resources they need to attain district goals - Two-way communication consistently occurs and intentionally includes students and families who have had a variety of experiences, learning contexts, and outcomes over the past year - Formalized family engagement structures and processes adapt in response to heightened needs and aid in disrupting systemic inequities - Participatory budgeting practices are used 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Stakeholders from most groups are actively engaged in the planning process - Purpose, membership, roles, responsibilities, and deliverables are designated and defined - Schools and students who need more targeted support are represented in the planning process and receive resources - Two-way communication frequently occurs and includes students and families who have had a variety of experiences, learning contexts, and outcomes over the past year - Formalized family engagement structures and ongoing processes exist - Participatory budgeting practices are explored 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Some stakeholders are engaged in the planning process - Purpose, membership, roles, responsibilities, and deliverables are not clearly designated or defined - Schools and students who need more targeted support are not adequately represented in the planning process - Two-way communication infrequently occurs and/or does not include students and families who have had a variety of experiences, learning contexts, and outcomes over the past year - Family engagement structures and processes are not formalized - Participatory budgeting practices are not considered

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(B) Understand your needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - An equity-focused, student-centered needs assessment is conducted to capture current conditions and identify priority needs of students - Baseline data include engagement measures (e.g., attendance), academic measures (e.g., grades, assessments, samples of student work), and student perceptions (e.g., surveys, focus group feedback) - Baseline data are disaggregated by race, gender, socioeconomic status, English learner status, disability status, grade level, and level of participation in instruction during the pandemic - The district research department and local university/research partners are actively engaged in initial planning and throughout the project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A needs assessment is conducted to capture current conditions and identify priority needs of students - Baseline data include measures of student engagement, academic performance, and perceptions - Baseline data are disaggregated by student characteristics - The district research department and/or local university/research partners are included in the project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A needs assessment is not conducted or does not include disaggregated baseline data on multiple student measures - The district research department and local university/research partners are not included in the project
(C) Define your goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Goals, outcomes, measures, metrics, and evidence are clearly defined and communicated to all stakeholder groups prior to allocating funds - An organized and transparent process for tracking the use of funds has been determined - Investments are directly aligned to the district’s vision, mission, goals, and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Goals, outcomes, measures, metrics, and evidence are clearly defined - A process for tracking the use of funds has been determined - Investments are generally aligned to the district’s vision, mission, goals, and values - Investments are made in existing promising initiatives from the current strategic plan that would benefit from additional resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Goals, outcomes, measures, metrics, and evidence are not clearly defined - A process for tracking the use of funds has not been determined - Investments are not clearly aligned to the district’s vision, mission, goals, and values - Investments are made without attention to existing promising initiatives from the current strategic plan

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	<p>values, with a clearly defined theory of action for each investment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Existing initiatives from the current strategic plan are examined with a critical eye toward how well they have worked, for what target groups, and why; then investments are made in promising initiatives that would benefit from additional resources - Investments are consistently monitored for progress toward meeting strategic goals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Investments are frequently monitored for progress toward meeting strategic goals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Investments are infrequently monitored for progress toward meeting strategic goals
<p>(D-1) Define priority investments – Use an equity lens</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A framework such as <i>Targeted Universalism</i>¹ is used to establish explicit, high universal expectations for all students, while implementing the systems of supports needed for all student groups to succeed - The community’s multifaceted and varied experience of loss and trauma is acknowledged and actively addressed - A school-level and/or student-level COVID-19 response <i>Equity Index</i> is created to drive equitable allocation of funds based on the pandemic’s impacts - New forms of parental engagement (surfaced through finding ways to provide 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Explicit, high universal expectations are held for all students, while implementing the systems of supports needed for all student groups to succeed - The community’s multifaceted and varied experience of loss and trauma is acknowledged and addressed - Funds are equitably allocated based on the pandemic’s impacts - New forms of parental engagement (surfaced through finding ways to provide access to virtual learning for most vulnerable students) are emerging to help disrupt systemic inequities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - High expectations are held for all students - The community’s multifaceted and varied experience of loss and trauma is acknowledged - The allocation of funds has not changed in response to the pandemic’s impacts

¹ Haas Institute for a Fair and Inclusive Society. (2019, May). *Targeted universalism: Policy & practice*. <https://belonging.berkeley.edu/targeteduniversalism>

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	access to virtual learning for most vulnerable students) are formalized and adopted to disrupt systemic inequities		
<p style="text-align: center;">(D-2) Define priority investments – Build capacity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All professional learning for instructional staff is coherent, high quality, sustained, and supported to build content knowledge, address unfinished learning, and foster professional collaboration for continuous improvement - Investments are prioritized for systems and supports that are necessary for successful school-based or student-based programming - Investments are prioritized for talent management structures to recruit, select, train, retain, and grow high performers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Most professional learning for instructional staff is coherent, high quality, sustained, and supported to build content knowledge, address unfinished learning, and foster professional collaboration for continuous improvement - Investments are made in systems and supports that are necessary for successful school-based or student-based programming - Investments are made in talent management structures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Some professional learning for instructional staff is coherent, high quality, sustained, and supported to build content knowledge, address unfinished learning, and foster professional collaboration for continuous improvement - Investments are not prioritized for systems and supports that are necessary for successful school-based or student-based programming - Investments are not prioritized for talent management structures
<p style="text-align: center;">(D-3) Define priority investments – Focus on core instruction</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Investments are prioritized for core educational infrastructure, such as district curriculum guidance, instructional materials, assessment, and aligned and coherent professional learning - All work is aligned to state learning standards that develop essential learning across grade levels, assessments, and district/school curriculum expectations for quality teaching and learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Investments are made in core educational infrastructure - Most work is aligned to state learning standards that develop essential learning - Quality curriculum guidance utilized 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Investments are not prioritized for core educational infrastructure - Some work is aligned to state learning standards that develop essential learning - Quality curriculum guidance is not available

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Quality curriculum guidance adheres to the CGCS seven key features² 		
(D-4) Define priority investments – Be student-centered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Asset-based language and approaches that enable students to embrace a growth mindset are consistently used by all district and school staff - All district and school staff are collectively held responsible for the outcomes of each student, including students most impacted by the pandemic - A system exists that ensures all student have access to advanced coursework and opportunities to develop their knowledge and skills to participate successfully in advanced courses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Asset-based language and approaches that enable students to embrace a growth mindset are used by most district and school staff - Most district and school staff are held responsible for the outcomes of each student, including students most impacted by the pandemic - A system exists that ensures students have access to advanced coursework but it is applied inconsistently 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Asset-based language and approaches that enable students to embrace a growth mindset are not consistently used by district and school staff - Some district and school staff are held responsible for the outcomes of students - There is no system to ensure all students have access to advanced coursework
(D-5) Define priority investments – Strive for high-leverage, high-impact investments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Instructional investments are anchored in essential learning, keeping kids on grade level while addressing unfinished learning with just-in-time supports - Staff at all levels of the organization are consistently assessed to determine the areas in which they need to enhance their knowledge and skills - Research-based strategies are carefully tailored to the district context without losing fidelity to what works 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Instructional investments are anchored in essential learning - Staff at all levels of the organization are frequently assessed to determine the areas in which they need to enhance their knowledge and skills - Research-based strategies are used 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Instructional investments are not anchored in essential learning - Staff are infrequently assessed to determine the areas in which they need to enhance their knowledge and skills - Research-based strategies are not used

² Council of the Great City Schools. (2019, October). *Curriculum quality rubric: A self-assessment tool for districts*. <https://www.cgcs.org/cms/lib/DC00001581/Centricity/Domain/4/Curriculum%20Quality%20Rubric.pdf>

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(D-6) Define priority investments – Embrace systems thinking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There is coherence across strategic and tactical plans to ensure that schools are not overwhelmed by many disparate projects and initiatives - Formal structures are in place that support cross-functional collaboration and routine communication between departments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Many strategic and/or tactical plans are in place but there is some confusion about how the plans work together resulting in unnecessary redundancies across the system or gaps - Cross-functional collaboration and communication between departments occur 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Few strategic and tactical plans are in place, and schools are managing many disparate projects and initiatives - Cross-functional collaboration and communication between departments rarely occur
(E) Invest in longer-term ROI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The district focuses on implementing a few high-leverage investments really well, choosing priorities wisely and going deep into one initiative before moving to the next - Planning is end-user-centered, and all initiatives are mapped by user to understand collective impact - Shared definitions and understanding are used to describe and communicate the clear vision, goals, expectations, and outcomes of the work - A five-year funding plan (of which three years are financed by ESSER) is established and methodically followed to avoid budget shortfalls - Turnover and the successful onboarding of new staff are anticipated and planned for - Priority is given to building internal instructional capacity rather than 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The district focuses on implementing a few high-leverage investments really well - Planning is end-user-centered - The vision, goals, expectations, and outcomes of the work are clearly described and communicated - A three-year ESSER funding plan is established and methodically followed - Staff turnover is anticipated and planned for - Internal instructional capacity is being built - If external organizations are used, general plans (without timelines or benchmarks) are made to incorporate their services into the district’s work and transfer their expertise to district staff - External personnel and materials are generally aligned to the district’s vision, mission, values, goals, frameworks, and standards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The district goes wide rather than deep, focusing on implementing many investments all at once - Planning is not end-user-centered - The vision, goals, expectations, and outcomes of the work are not clearly described or communicated - A three-year ESSER funding plan is not established or followed - Staff turnover is not planned for - Priority is not given to building instructional capacity rather than purchasing services that will no longer be available at the end of this federal funding period - External organizations are used without plans to incorporate their services into the district’s work or transfer their expertise to district staff - External personnel and materials are not clearly aligned to the district’s vision,

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	<p>purchasing services that will no longer be available at the end of this federal funding period</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If external organizations are used, plans are made from the outset with clear timelines and benchmarks to incorporate their services into the district’s work and transfer their expertise to district staff - All external personnel and materials are directly aligned to the district’s vision, mission, values, goals, frameworks, and standards 		<p>mission, values, goals, frameworks, and standards</p>