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February 22, 2021

MEMORANDUM

TO: Superintendents and State Charter School Leaders

FROM: Gabriel C. Baca, Director – Student, School and Family Support Bureau 

RE: **Data collection regarding funds available for paying Retention Stipends under the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations (CRRSA) Act, through the Elementary and Secondary School Education Relief Fund (ESSER II SEA Reserve).**

Dear Superintendents and State Charter Leaders,

We would like to inform you of the opportunity to apply for funding available for the purpose of paying Retention Stipends. This funding is made available by NMPED from the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations (CRRSA) Act Elementary and Secondary School Education Relief Fund (ESSER II SEA Reserve) funds. In order to provide this funding to local education agencies (LEAs), NMPED will collect data about the number of eligible recipients of Retention Stipends. You can begin the application process for this funding by providing the information described below by March 15, 2021.

Purpose:

During the COVID-19 pandemic, New Mexico public school employees have worked hard to maintain safe and healthy schools and have continued providing educational services despite continuous or intermittent school closures for lengthy periods of time due to COVID-19. The uncertainty of the work environment and working conditions have been challenging for many public school employees. Many LEAs have reported challenges with employee retention. Providing Retention Stipends is seen as a way to help LEAs retain staff for the 2021-2022 school year.

Data for Determining LEA Award Amounts:

By March 15, 2021, please submit the following requested data through the Google Form at this link:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSc1E_BlpToj_eGOcIsCI8yiRzN6CT_MU7M4eZXVbfSf25pOng/viewform?usp=sf_link

- Number of current employees who worked, between March 13, 2020 and June 30, 2020, in person on school premises for at least 50% of the hours for which the employee was compensated and who provide a written intention to return as an employee for the 2021-22 school;

- Number of current employees who worked, between September 8, 2020 and February 19, 2021, in person on school premises for at least 50% of the hours for which the employee was compensated and who provide a written intention to return as an employee for the 2021-22 school year.

Allowable Uses of Funding:

An LEA may only use these funds to pay Retention Stipends to LEA employees per the details below. Requests for reimbursement that contain costs other than those stated in this memo will be denied.

Criteria for Determining Retention Stipend Eligibility and Amount:

The awards will be up to the amount of funding that is currently available for this purpose.

- **Eligibility:**
 - Employees who are on the payroll are eligible. If the employee provides a written intention to return as an employee for the 2021-22 school year:
 - A retention stipend in the amount of \$100 is available if the employee worked, between March 13, 2020 and June 30, 2020, in person on school premises for at least 50% of the hours for which the employee was compensated; and
 - A retention stipend in the amount of \$100 is available if the employee worked, between September 8, 2020 and February 19, 2021, in person on school premises for at least 50% of the hours for which the employee was compensated.
 - Contractors are not eligible.
 - Superintendents, Charter School Head Administrators, and cabinet level officials are not eligible for the stipends. The list of those not eligible includes associate or assistant superintendents and executive directors. Principals and assistant principals are eligible.

Timeline:

The data submission is due March 15, 2021. PED will make awards to LEAs based on the data submitted up to the amount of funding that is currently available for this purpose.

Program Requirements:

- A reference to this program and names and job titles of employees receiving the stipends will be required for approval of requests for reimbursement.
- Annual reporting on the use of funds will be required of all LEAs.
- A school district must include employees in its locally-authorized charter schools when submitting the requested data.
- Stipends must be reported as taxable income pursuant to federal and state taxation requirements.
- Indirect costs are allowable.
- Administrative costs are not allowable.
- There is no requirement that these funds be used to supplement and not supplant existing funding.

Contact:

If you have any questions about providing data pursuant to this Memorandum, then please contact me at Gabriel.Baca2@state.nm.us.