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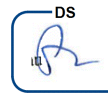
RYAN STEWART, ED.L.D.  
SECRETARY OF EDUCATION

MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM  
GOVERNOR

March 19, 2021

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Superintendents and State Charter School Leaders

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

**RE:** Clarifications regarding February 24, 2021 Memo on Data collection regarding funds available for paying Retention Stipends under the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act, through the Elementary and Secondary School Education Relief Fund

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***Due to the limited number of data submissions, we are extending the deadline for data submissions to March 29, 2021 and eliminating the written intent to return requirement for eligibility. This March 19, 2021 Memo contains clarifications to effectuate those changes. Material amendments to the February 24, 2021 Memo appear in italics and bold. If you wish to update your response, please do so, and we will use the most current response as your final submission.***

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 29, 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. Retention Stipends are designed to recognize the quality of work currently performed by employees under challenging circumstances and to assist LEAs in achieving valuable longevity standards by helping LEAs retain staff for the 2021-2022 school year.

### Data for Determining LEA Award Amounts:

By **March 29, 2021**, please submit the following requested information about **eligible** employees through the Google Form at this [Retention Stipend Google form link](#):

- Number of current employees who were required to, and did work, in-person, physically on school district, charter school, or school premises at least 50% of their paid hours or more, between March 13, 2020 and June 30, 2020;
- Number of current employees who were required to, and did work, in-person, physically on school district, charter school, or school premises at least 50% of their paid hours or more, between September 8, 2020 and February 19, 2021.

### 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:

**Awards will be made up to the amount of funding that is currently available for this purpose.**

- **Eligibility:** *Subject to funding availability, employees who are on the payroll and are still working through the period of May 1 through May 15, 2021 are eligible for the stipends.*
  - **Amount:**
    - A retention stipend in the amount of \$100 is available if **an eligible** employee was required to work, and did work, in-person, physically on school district, charter school, or school premises at least 50% of their paid hours or more, between March 13, 2020 and June 30, 2020; and
    - A retention stipend in the amount of \$100 is available if **an eligible** employee was required to work, and did work, in-person, physically on school district, charter school, or school premises at least 50% of their paid hours or more, between September 8, 2020 and February 19, 2021.
  - 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. Also not eligible are chief financial officers, chief information officers, chief operations officers and business managers and others at the executive level. Principals and assistant principals are eligible.

### Timeline:

The data submission is due **March 29, 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. **The award amounts and the application will be released in mid-April and will be due May 15, 2021.**

### 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.
- Administrative costs will be capped at 2% for this award. Administrative costs include indirect recovery and any direct administrative charges.
- There is no requirement that these funds be used to supplement and not supplant existing funding.
- There is nothing in the CARES Act that would prohibit an LEA from using ESSER (24301) or ESSER II (24308) funds to pay similar stipends to employees who are not be eligible for the program outlined in this Memo.