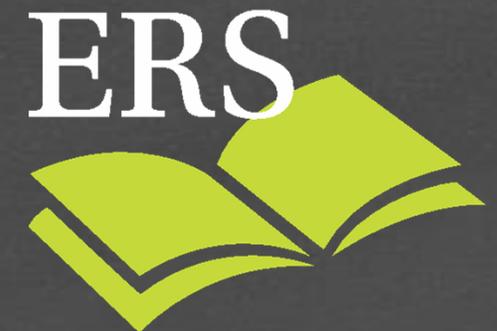


Helping School District Leaders Use ESSER Funds for Equity-Focused Recovery and Re-design

CLSFF PLC Webinar

April 22, 2021



Welcome!



Please rename yourself to include your organization name in Zoom

Chat question #1:

What is one thing you **know for sure** about federal stimulus funding for K-12?

Chat question #2

What is one thing you **want to know more about?**

Defining our shared challenge

- Students, especially students from low-income backgrounds and students of color, have experienced **months of disrupted learning**.
- With federal stimulus funding (ESSER), **school districts have unprecedented power** to rapidly respond to meet students' needs and ensure that we don't "return to the old normal" when new funding expires.
- Based on spending patterns after the Great Recession, we know it is **easy to spend quickly, backfill shortfalls, and reinvest in more of the same** strategies that existed before COVID — instead of using funds to spark meaningful long-term change.

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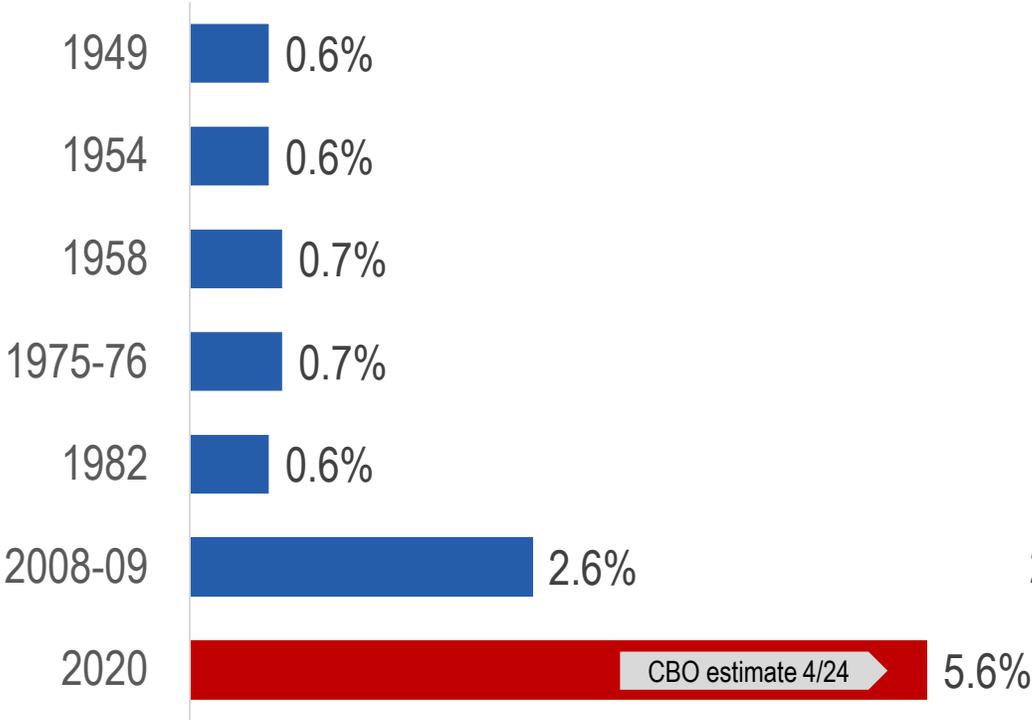
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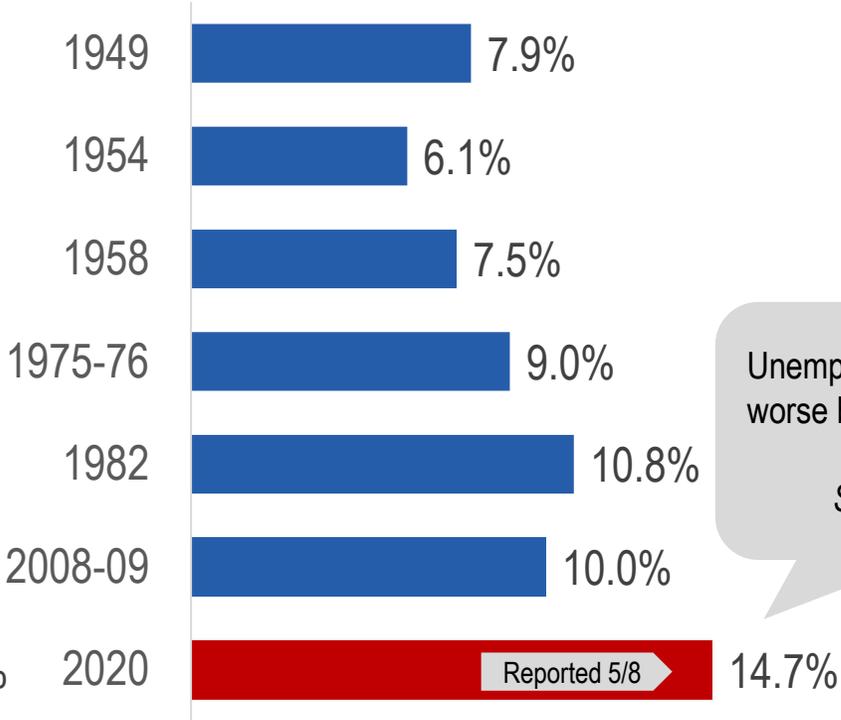
Flashback: A year ago, we were deeply concerned about the near- and long-term economic impact of the pandemic

APRIL 2020

Decline in Annual GDP during U.S. Recessions since 1948



Peak Monthly Unemployment during U.S. Recessions since 1948



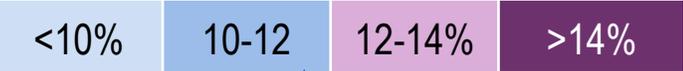
Unemployment is “going to get worse before it gets better.”
Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin, 5/10/20

Source: ERS analysis of historical data from Bureau of Economic Analysis and Bureau of Labor Statistics. 2020 projections from the Congressional Budget Office, <https://www.cbo.gov/publication/56335>

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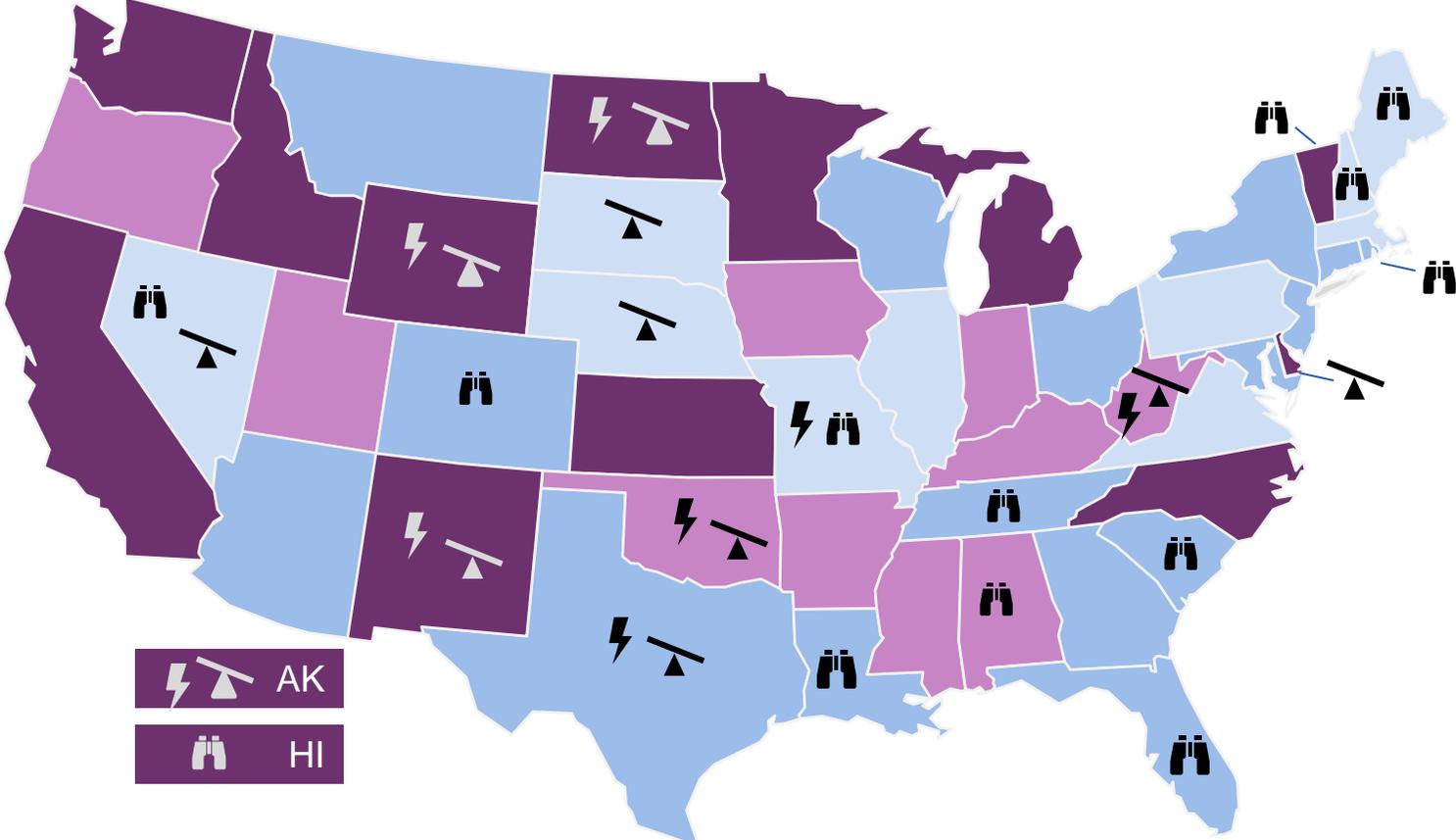
APRIL 2020

Projected impact of a 25% decline in state revenue, *holding all other revenue constant**



U.S. average = 11.7%

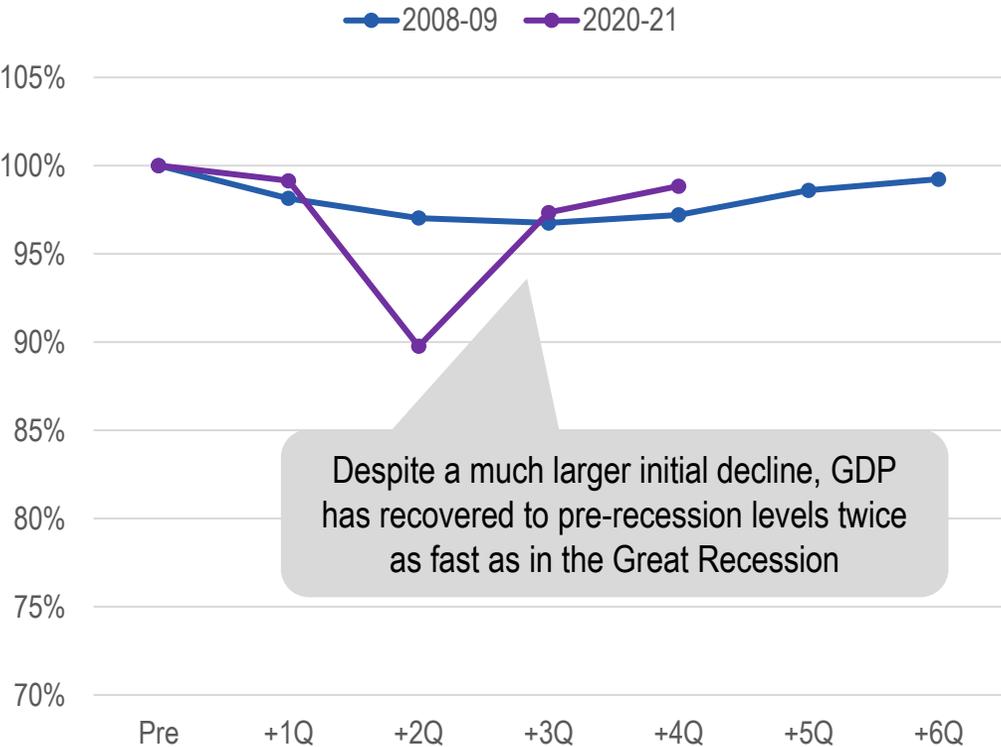
-  **Energy-reliant states:** Severance taxes comprise at least 5% of state revenue
-  **Tourism-reliant states:** Tourism accounts for at least 5% of state GDP
-  **States with least diversified economies, regardless of industry:** Hachman Index < 70



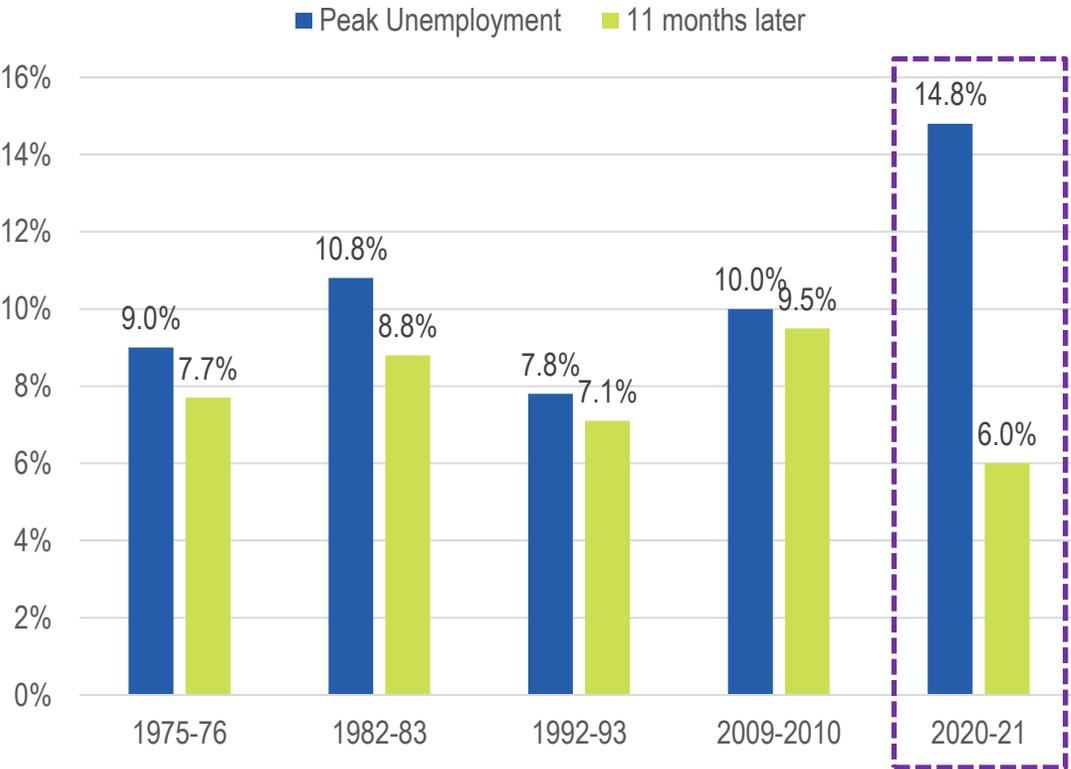
* I.e. does not include potential decreases in local tax revenue or additional federal stimulus dollars
Sources: NCES, ERS analysis.

Compared to prior recessions, the economy and labor markets have recovered quickly

Quarterly GDP vs. Pre-Recession Peaks

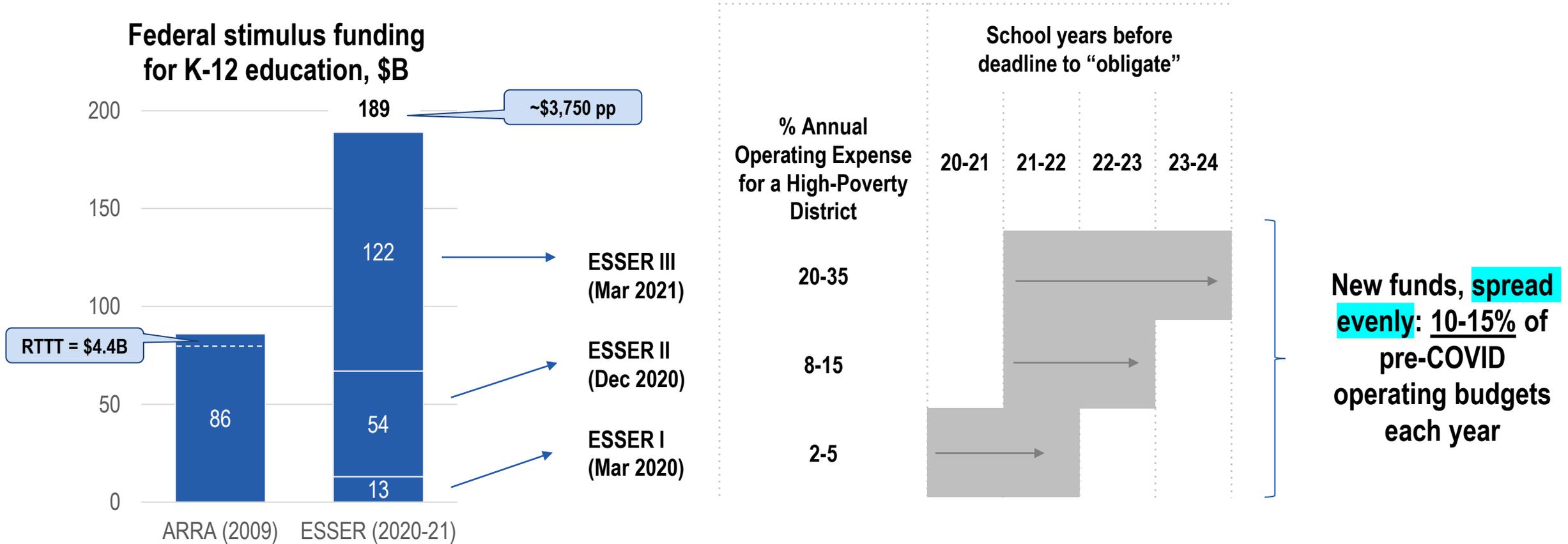


U.S. Unemployment in Economic Recessions



Sources: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, Gross Domestic Product [GDP], from FRED, Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis; Bureau of Labor Statistics, both retrieved April 13, 2021, ERS analysis.

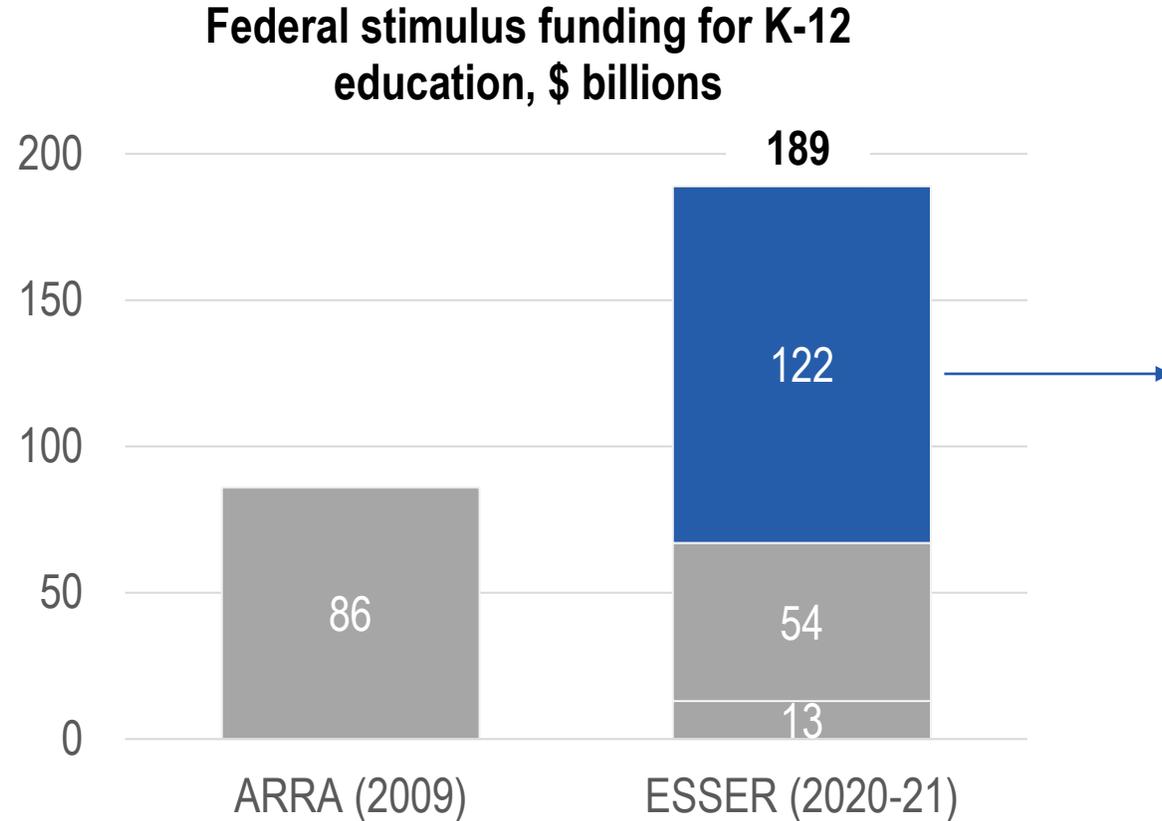
The federal government is providing significantly more K-12 stimulus support than during the Great Recession



Notes: ARRA = American Recovery and Reinvestment Act; ESSER = Elementary and Secondary School Relief Fund. Total for K-12 excludes set-asides for non-public schools and for Governor's Fund (GEER)

Source: ERS; [District Administration](#); [National Conference of State Legislatures](#)

ESSER III funds are allocated to reach students living in low-income communities



ESSER III provides non-recurring revenue to be spent over the next three years

- Most of ESSER III (\$110B) allocated directly to districts through **Title I** formula, with few prescriptions
- State education agencies have several **set-asides** to distribute funds to districts for summer and after school programs
- **Equity:** Districts must protect high need schools from reductions in state and local funding

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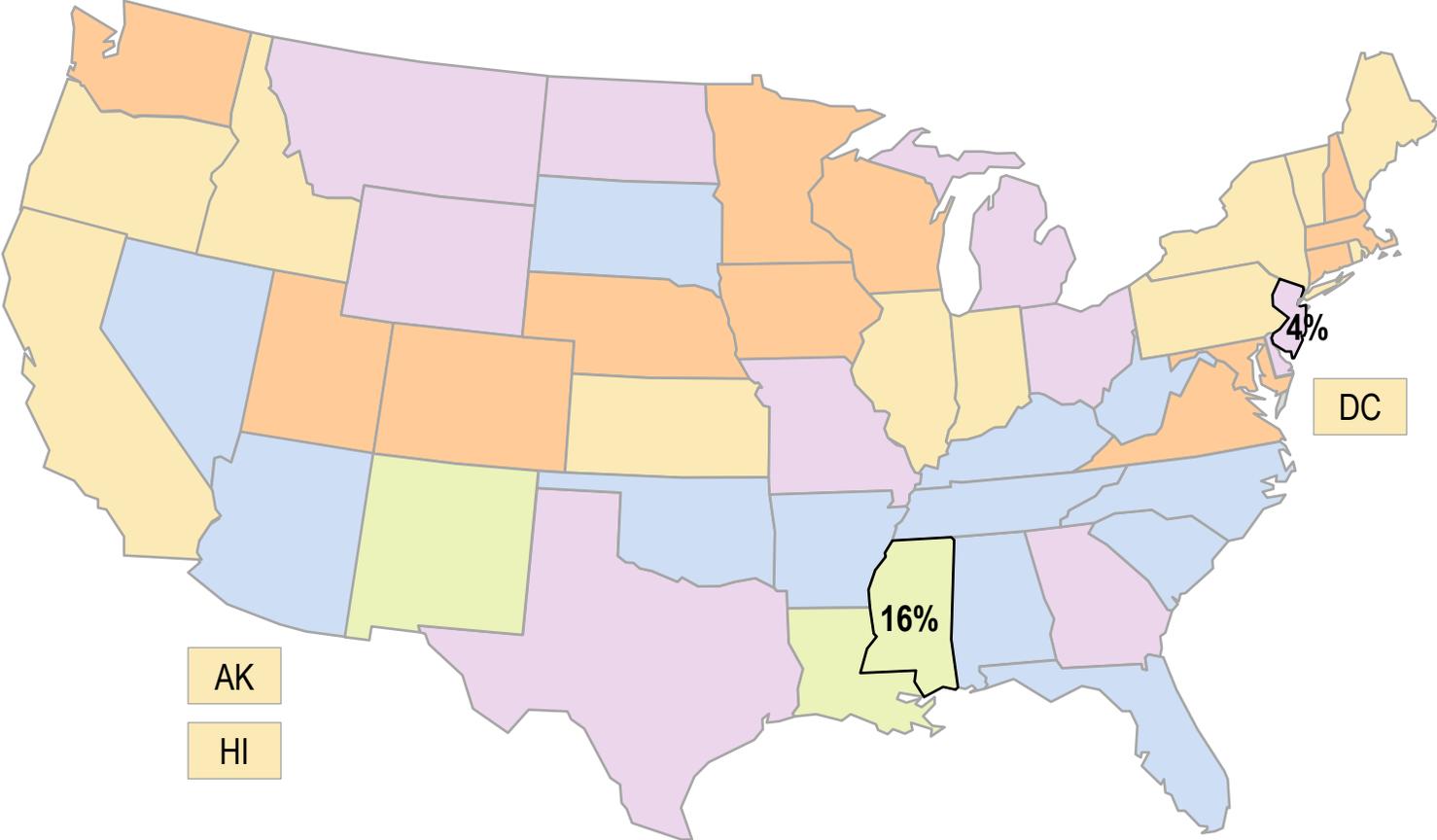
Source: ERS; [District Administration](#); [National Conference of State Legislatures](#)

ESSER I, II and III funds have a widely varying impact on K-12 education spending

ESSER I, II, III funds as % of annual K-12 expenditures (spread over 3 years)

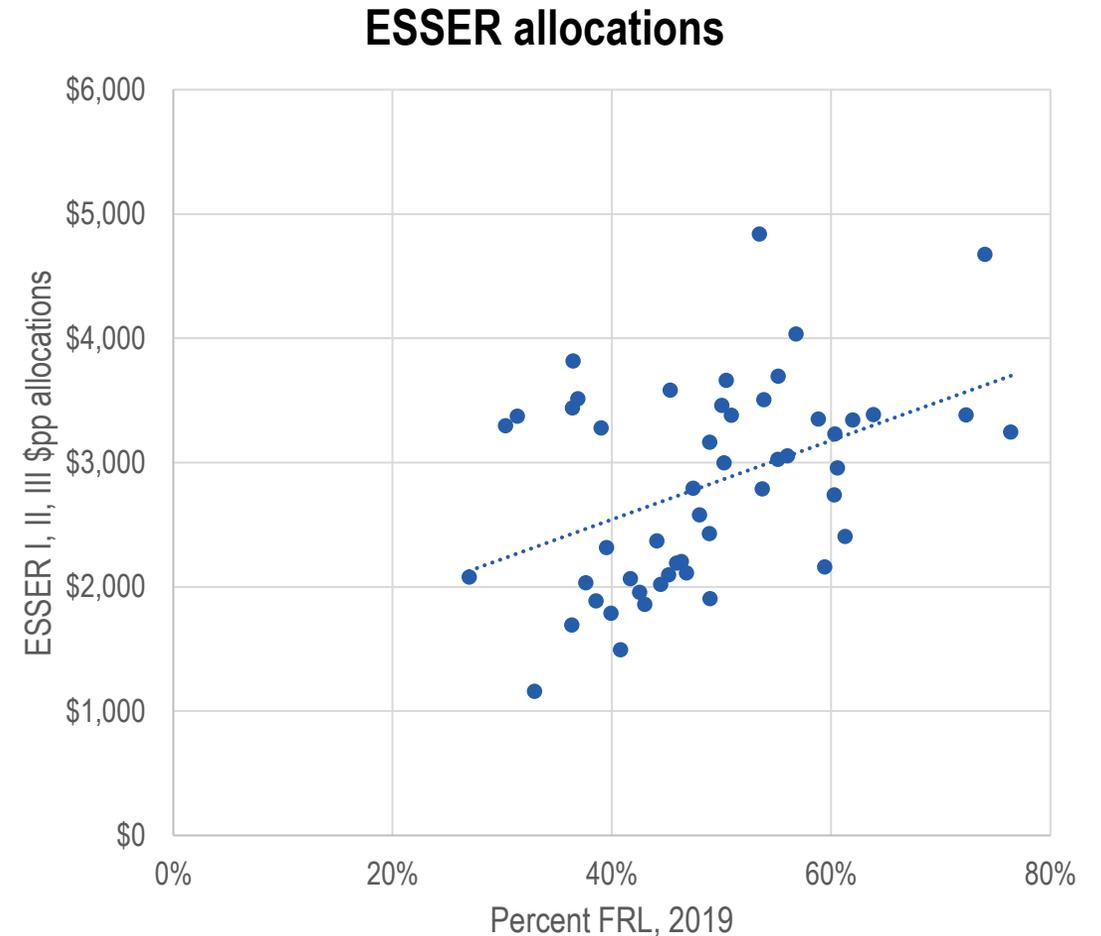
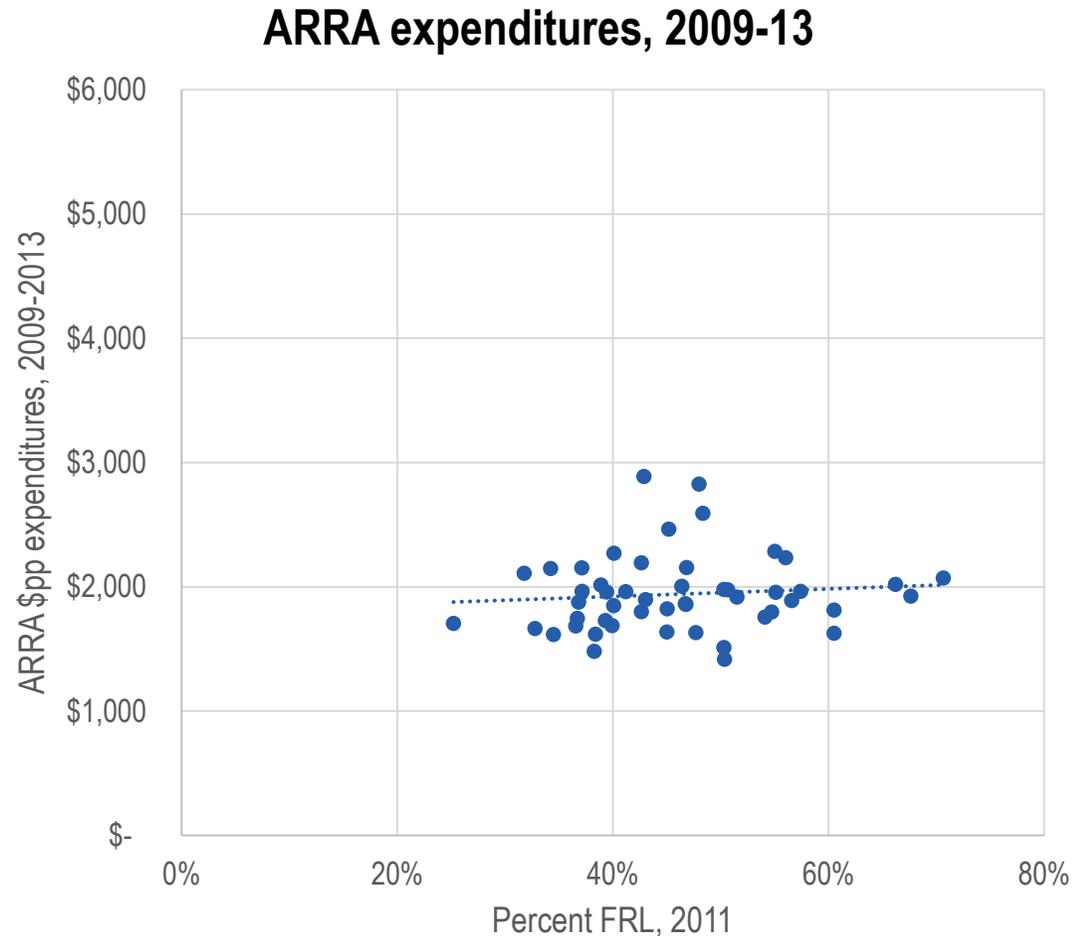


U.S. average = 7.7%



* I.e. does not include potential decreases in local tax revenue or additional federal stimulus dollars
Sources: U.S. Department of Education, NCES, ERS analysis.

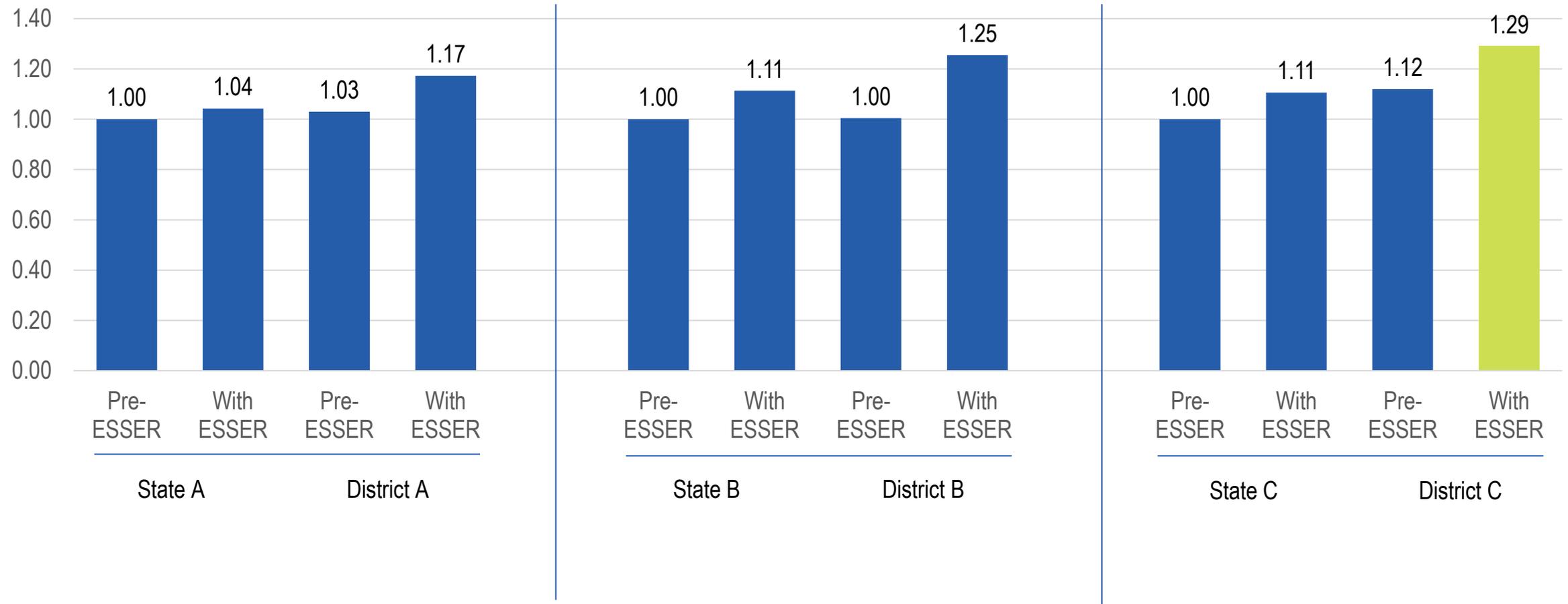
ESSER allocations are more need-driven than ARRA through link to Title I methodology



As a result, ESSER has a disproportionate funding impact on higher-need districts

PRELIMINARY ESTIMATES

Estimated Annual Expenditures + ESSER Spending Plans for 2021-22
(1.00 = statewide unweighted \$pp before ESSER)



Source: U.S. Department of Education, in-progress district ESSER plans for 2021-22, ERS analysis.

Defining our shared challenge

- Students, especially students from low-income backgrounds and students of color, have experienced **months of disrupted learning**.
- With federal stimulus funding (ESSER), **school districts have unprecedented power** to rapidly respond to meet students' needs and ensure that we don't "return to the old normal" when new funding expires.
- Based on spending patterns after the Great Recession, we know it is **easy to spend quickly, backfill shortfalls, and reinvest in more of the same** strategies that existed before COVID — instead of using funds to spark meaningful long-term change.

How can district leaders use stimulus funds to **center equity, accelerate student learning** for and create a sustainable foundation for **long-term improvement**?

How can philanthropy, technical assistance providers and leadership advisors **help them accomplish these goals**?

We couldn't have designed for the dramatic changes in mindset that we are seeing now

- Changes in **school designs** to better meet students' and teachers' needs are possible.
- **Technology** can be a central part of instruction, collaboration, and teachers' professional learning.
- **Families** can be and must be deeply involved in supporting students' learning.
- Teachers' **roles** can be differentiated to benefit everyone.
- **Community partners and programs** can facilitate learning both inside and outside of typical school hours can help to meet students' social-emotional needs.
- It is everyone's job to tackle **racial inequities** by addressing systems, structures, policies, practices, and biases.

But it is challenging to invest new resources strategically

- **Rapid timeline, limited/taxed capacity**, combined with **pressure to spend stimulus quickly**
- **Needed focus on the immediate and urgent**, without time or staff to work on long-term planning
- **Lack of strong processes** to determine how best to invest these funds or track the impact of these investments
- Historic premium on spending new dollars on staff positions in schools
- Systems need to simultaneously **support schools to use these resources well** in new designs



Result to avoid: Using stimulus funds to pad budget shortfalls, reinvest in the status quo, or layering in 'add on' approaches that will disappear when the funds run out

7 Principles for Investing ESSER Funds

Define Vision & Strategy for Recovery & Redesign

Understand
and quantify
student
need.

Design new
scheduling
and staffing
tools.

Take a “do
now, build
toward”
approach.

Plan for Sustainability.

Size the full cost of implementing strategies, integrating all sources of funding, and invest to build bridges to new ways of organizing resources that sustain the work.

Design for Equity.

Act deliberately to disrupt long-standing patterns of inequity by differentiating resources based on need and context, engaging stakeholders along the way.

**Define
Success,
Measure,
& Adjust.**

Create System Conditions.

Scale your strategies by creating district-level enabling conditions and clarifying decision-making roles and central office supports for schools.

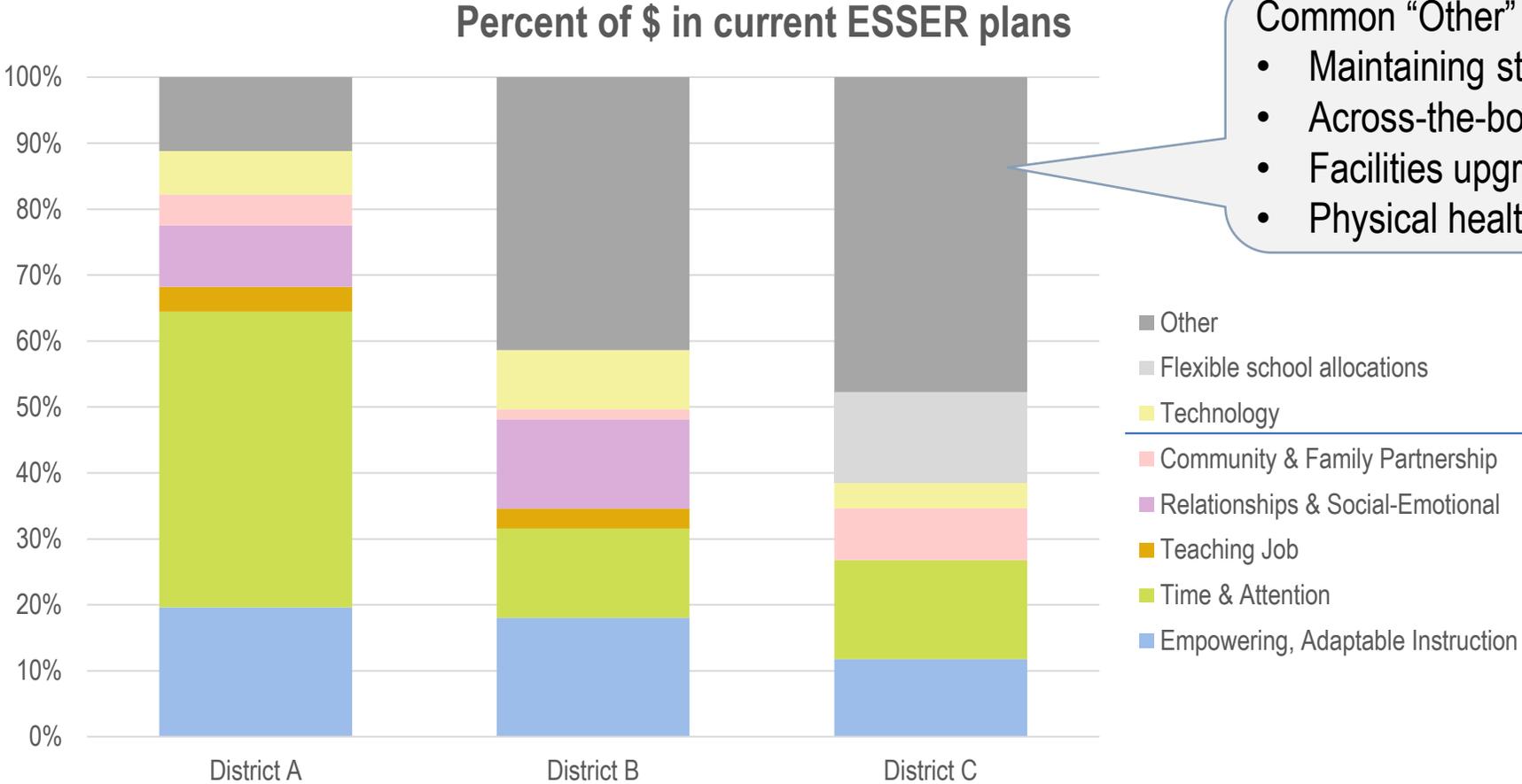
Power Strategies are designed to help district leaders focus on impact now and in the future

- ✓ Grounded in years of **research**
- ✓ Address students' critical **academic and social-emotional needs** that have emerged or been exacerbated as a result of the pandemic
- ✓ Tackle underlying cost structures in ways that make them **sustainable** to implement over time

Power Strategies to accelerate equity-focused recovery and redesign

1	Empowering, Adaptable Instruction	Ensure teaching teams have high-quality curriculum, time and support to collaboratively assess and accelerate learning and provide just-in-time support.
2	Time and Attention	Expand and target individual attention and learning time inside and outside of traditional school hours, especially for students with the greatest learning needs.
3	Teaching Job	Restructure teaching jobs and roles to be more rewarding, collaborative, and sustainable while enabling excellent instruction from a diverse teaching force
4	Relationships & Social Emotional Support	Organize to cultivate positive student-adult relationships and ensure support for wellness and social emotional needs
5	Community & Family Partnerships	Engage families, community partners, and other out-of-school resources to increase academic, health, social, and emotional support for students.

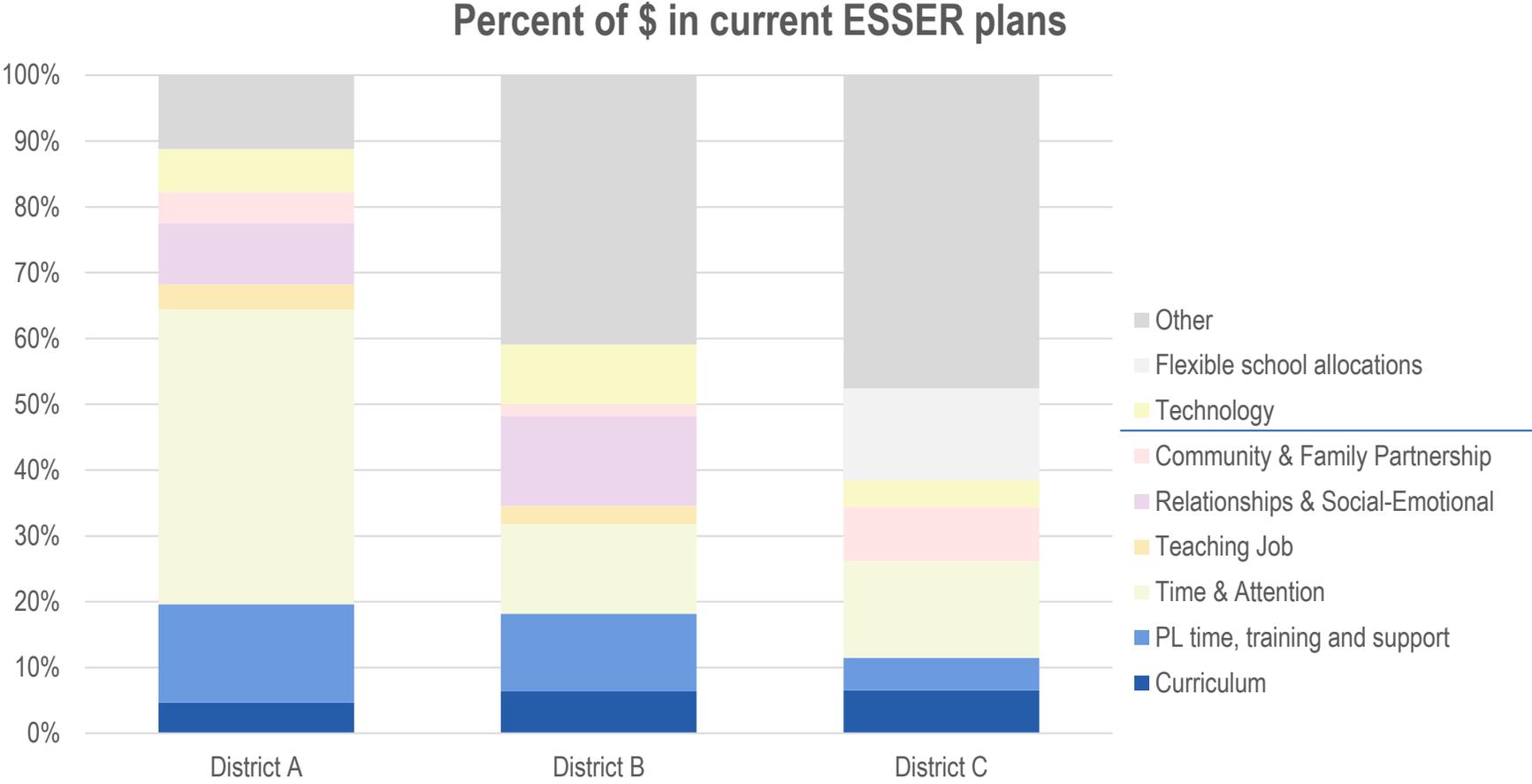
Examples: How are districts aligning resources against power strategies?



Common "Other" investments:

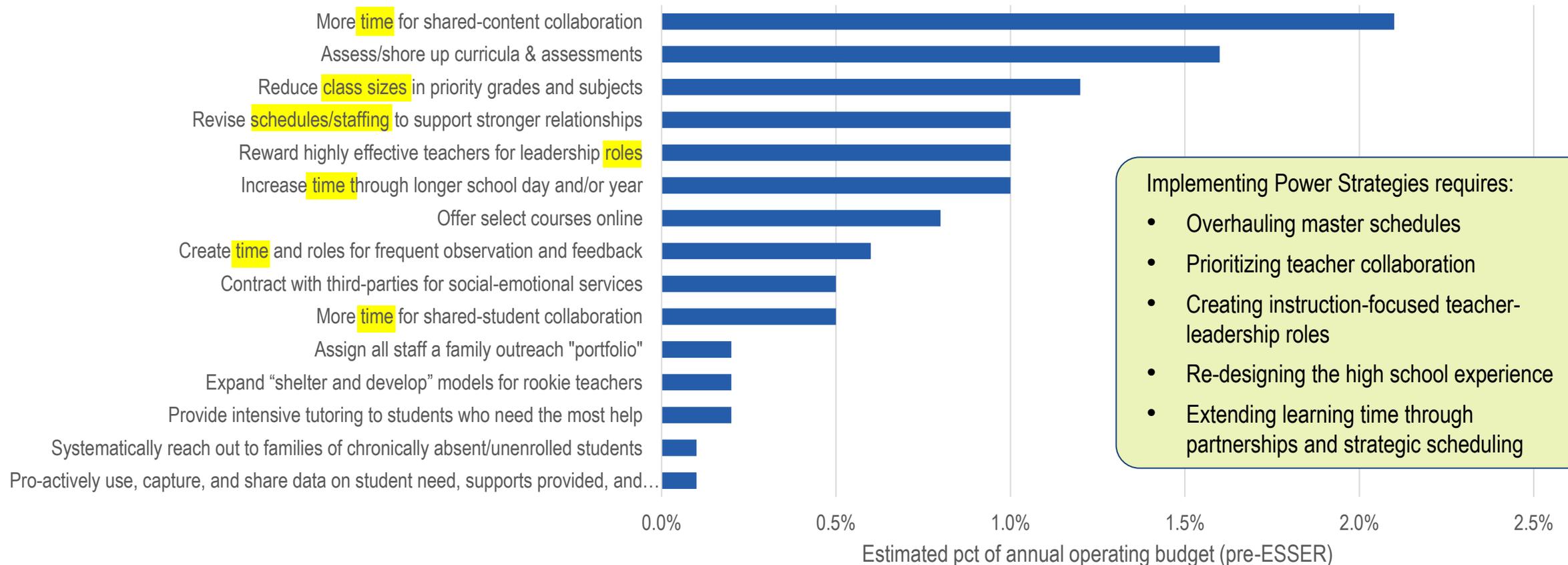
- Maintaining staffing through enrollment decline
- Across-the-board bonuses
- Facilities upgrades
- Physical health/nurses

30-50% of 2021-22 investments in Empowering, Adaptable Instruction are going to curricula



Power Strategies require changing underlying cost structures, rather than layering on new resources

Estimated costs to implement Power Strategies



Implementing Power Strategies requires:

- Overhauling master schedules
- Prioritizing teacher collaboration
- Creating instruction-focused teacher-leadership roles
- Re-designing the high school experience
- Extending learning time through partnerships and strategic scheduling

Goal: expand and vary time and provide more individualized attention to students, both inside and outside of traditional school hours

Do Now...

- Extend core instructional time in a specific grade or subject
- Assign existing non-teacher staff to small-group instruction at targeted times in the day
- Identify a partner to provide high-dosage tutoring for a subset of high-need students

Build Towards...

- More learning time via extended school days and years, intersessions, intensive “high-dosage” tutoring, and other after-school learning opportunities.
- Smaller class sizes in priority grade levels and subjects, and where student needs are greatest, offset by larger class sizes in other areas
- Integrated learning experiences across live and asynchronous platforms
- Specialized and advanced HS classes offered online to maximize access and free teachers for more individualized instruction

District leaders can consider investments to accelerate redesign for equity and excellence *and* lower long-term costs

Investment	Why it could change the game
Raise spending or staffing weights for schools with high concentrations of students living in poverty and with higher learning needs	All schools get more resources now, but when recovery funding ends funds are still distributed more equitably if cuts must happen.
Design and transition costs for new compensation structures with defined benefits contribution	Paying great teachers more long-term requires differentiating compensation. A 10% reduction in benefits costs saves ~2% of budget.
Invest in principals through compensation, professional learning and additional school leadership staff	A little goes a long way: Strong principals raise teaching effectiveness across the board and reduce teacher turnover
Redesign and implement new models for rookie teacher support coupled with increased investment in recruiting	Expands reach of expert teachers and brings high-potential candidates into classrooms. Places candidates in doable, supported roles while enabling careful selection of new teachers.
Increase teacher compensation linked to expanded work year-more or longer days	Finding time for teacher collaboration and connection with families and students helps enable new visions for teaching and learning.

Changes to state policies and contractual requirements can accelerate redesign for equity and excellence

Time

- Length of school day and/or year
- Seat time requirements
- Rigid class size and staffing ratios
- Rigid, narrow planning time requirements

Roles

- Teacher-of-record policies
- Limits on teacher-leadership roles
- Traditional (non-differentiated) compensation structures
- Staff dismissal policies

Course-taking

- Limits on partner-offered courses
- Rigid course-taking requirements for high schoolers

Measuring equity of your ESSER plan – “how much”

Investment	Total \$M	Need-based \$M	Non-need-based \$M	Pct Need-based
Health plan + nurses	24	-	24	-
School supplement	21	9	13	38%
Summer learning	18	9	9	50%
Literacy	18	3	15	17%
Family outreach	12	6	6	50%
Facilities	12	-	12	-
Staff bonuses	10	-	10	-
Add'l need allocation*	6	-	6	100%
Math coaching	4	3	1	75%
Hotspots	3	-	3	-
Tutoring	3	-	3	-
Total	131	36	95	27%

PRELIMINARY ESTIMATES

Equity metrics should consider both “**how much**” is need-driven (including what needs are driving allocations) and “**how well**” investments are expected to re-shape student and teacher experience

* Implemented through increase in student-based budgeting allocations, non-ESSER funds

Source: In-progress district ESSER plan for 2021-22, ERS analysis

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How can district partners be a driving force for change in school systems?

- Encourage investment in **categories of design changes** for schools that will **meet students' academic and social-emotional needs** now and **enable sustainability** in the long-term.
- Provide funding to create **extra capacity in school systems** to focus on **long-term planning and community engagement** in this work **over multiple years**.
- Invest in **support providers** who can **help systems through this work**, including by working closely with cohorts of systems to rapidly learn together.
- Advance the development of **easily accessible and translatable planning and design tools** that districts can use to guide rapid and complex decision-making.
- Support **networks and cohorts** of leaders and systems to work on shared strategies and **translating lessons** for wider use.
- Help districts develop **strong continuous improvement structures** to monitor how these new approaches are working.