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School districts see influx of federal funds



Every South County school district will be using an influx of federal money over the next three years to address challenges from the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond, in what one local school leader is calling a “once-in-a-generation opportunity for schools.”

Like county and municipal governments that received federal CARES Act funds to mitigate the pandemic, school districts across the country have also received federal funds called Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief, or ESSER.

The federal government has passed three relief packages in response to COVID-19 since March 2020, including support for elementary and secondary education.

The legislation amounts to more than \$193 billion in aid to schools, with the majority of relief funds disbursed based on Title 1, the funds districts receive based on percentage of low-income students.

In the St. Louis region, the school district that will see the most money from the second round of stimulus funding is St. Louis Public Schools, which received over \$46 million. **The Hazelwood School District received \$22 million**, while Riverview Gardens received \$15 million.

“They throw out numbers and it’s for a couple of year periods, and some of the numbers are staggering,” said Hawkins.

All ESSER funds have to be spent by September 2025, but the caveat is that the funds are not directly handed over; rather, each district is allocated a certain amount that it can spend and then submit for federal reimbursement. School districts need to recognize that the money is not forever and plan accordingly, Carl noted.

Congratulations
Emily Rupp



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