

September 3, 2021

Dear Parent/Guardian:

A question has been presented to our Board of Education: **Does the mask mandate have any correlation with receiving ARP ESSER Federal Funds for Chardon Local Schools?**

There is **NO** correlation between a mask mandate and the receiving of ARP ESSER (Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund) Funds, the correlation is between submitting an appropriate Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Service Plan to receive the funds. The Chardon Local Schools submitted the appropriate Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Service Plan in June 2021 (https://www.chardon.k12.oh.us/ReturntoLearning_2020-21.aspx) and have been receiving federal funds on a reimbursement basis ever since.

Just to set minds at ease, Chardon Local School District checked with the Ohio Department of Education, Federal Funds Office and received the following response from Jeremy Marks, Director of Federal Programs/Federal Liaison Office of Federal Programs in Columbus:

“ I am not aware of any order from the U.S. Department of Education or the US Executive branch that specifically requires states and LEAs to comply, or risk the emergency aid, with the CDC guidelines. Congress approved these emergency funds to help states and schools prevent, prepare for and respond to COVID-19. Our state ARP ESSER plan as well as the LEA applications to be approved for funding, includes an assurance that the state and LEAs will develop strategies and implement public health protocols including (to the greatest extent practicable), policies and plans in line with the CDC guidance related to addressing COVID-19 in schools. However, I do not see anywhere the state’s award nor am I aware of any other official documentation from the federal government where it mandates the states and LEAs follow the CDC guidelines or risk loss of funds. “

** LEA (Local Education Agency)*

Jeremy Marks, Director of Federal Programs, Ohio Department of Education

It is important to understand that federal funding represents less than 0.5 percent of the Chardon Local Schools annual total revenue. Please feel free to contact Deb Armbruster, Treasurer/CFO at deb.armbruster@chardonschools.org for any additional information.

Sincerely,

Deb Armbruster

Treasurer/CFO