

# Maximize COVID Relief Funding Impact Through Online Learning



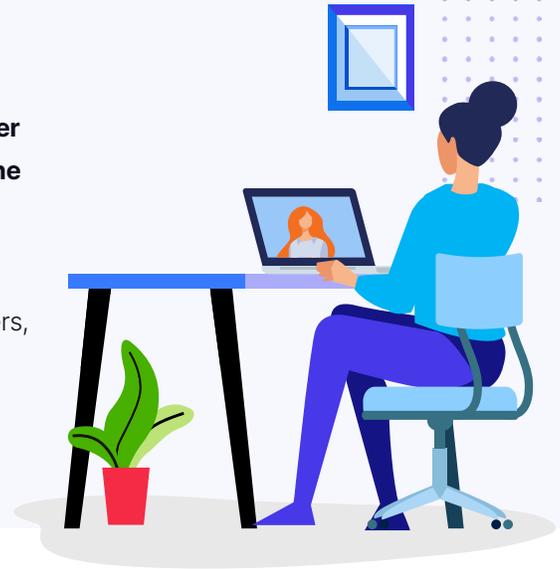


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**The COVID-19 pandemic significantly impacted industries globally, leaving many negative effects. Some were hit harder than others, of course, and had more widely-felt impacts. The education system is a prime example.**

As millions of teachers and students were sent home to teach and learn, and families struggled to assume the roles of teachers, tutors, and 24/7 caregivers, significant challenges emerged.



## Addressing the challenges of distance education

**School systems have risen to the challenge, which has meant varying approaches depending on the fluid nature of the virus spread.**

Back in 2020, McKinsey reported, “While school officials in Canada and the United States spent their summer planning for hybrid learning, rising infection levels prompted many large US districts to start the academic year remotely. By November, these decentralized education systems were a patchwork of remote, hybrid, and in-person instruction, with many children remaining fully remote.”

Remote learning, historically, had not been highly regarded by teachers in K-12 school districts. McKinsey research shows that when distance learning became a “must do” in early 2020, teachers in eight countries rated its effectiveness only 5 on a scale of 1-10.

As schools came back together for some form of in-person and hybrid learning, funding was made available by the federal government to help address a variety of needs. The situation has been improving, though, with virtual classrooms and other tools providing the foundation to make seamless transitions between remote and in-class environments and fuel the continued need for hybrid learning.

Funding issues, however, can represent a barrier to school systems when adopting new technology. Fortunately, significant steps have been taken federally to make funding available to school systems to address teaching challenges and stem potential learning loss among students.

# Overview of the legislation

**The total federal funding for K-12 education increased by more than 2.5 times through Education Stabilization Funds (ESF) made available during the pandemic.**

In 2020, the federal government passed three broad acts to address the wide-ranging impacts of COVID-19 on the economy, businesses, individuals—and the education of students at all levels.

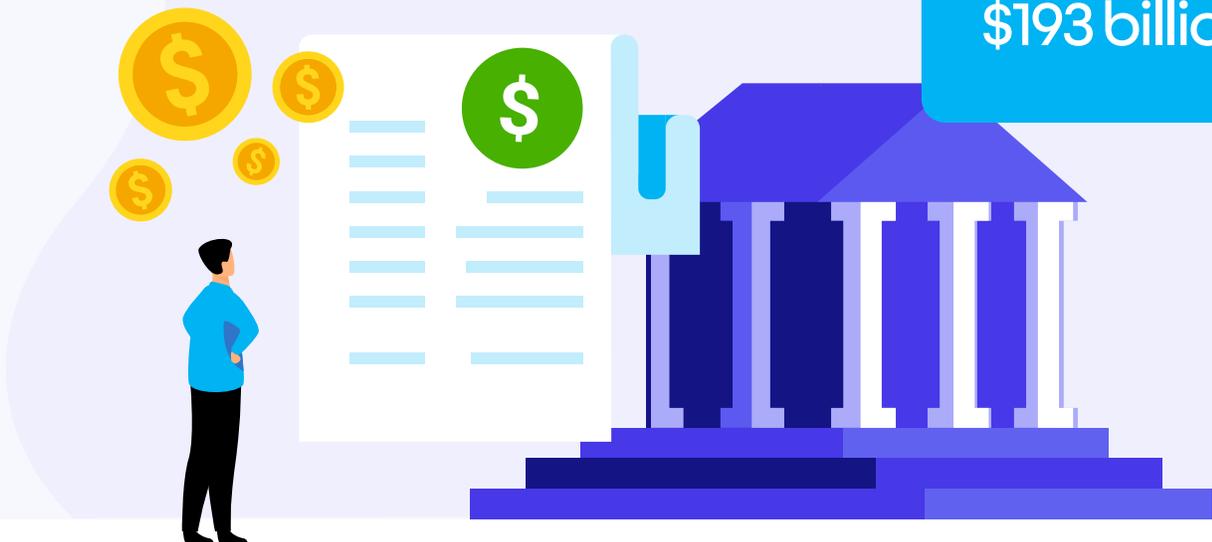
**The CARES Act**, or Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act, passed in March 2020 at the beginning of the pandemic. It was a \$2 trillion package of various types of relief, with \$13.75 billion specifically earmarked to K-12 education.

**The CRRSA Act**, or Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act, which added another \$81.9 billion to the Education Stabilization Fund. Again, specific funding was allocated to address K-12 needs—in this case another \$54 billion.

**The ARP Act**, or American Rescue Plan Act, passed in March of 2020, which includes the largest allocation for K-12, at \$122 billion of the \$170 billion funding.

Overall, additional funding directed to K-12 schools in 2020 totaled more than

**\$193 billion**



# A look at ESSER and GEER

**Within each piece of legislation, the ESF included two specific sources of K-12 funding—ESSER and GEER—which both address the significant needs of schools and districts when it comes to access and equity of learning in a virtual and hybrid environment.**

## **The Elementary and Secondary Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER)**

ESSER is allocated to schools to help address the impact of COVID on education and to implement new models of virtual teaching and learning while addressing learning loss. ESSER can be used for technology that aids interactions between students and their instructors, including summer learning and after-school programs, and provides resources to address individual school needs.

## **The Governor's Emergency Education Relief Fund (GEER)**

GEER allows governors the latitude to allocate funds to best meet the needs of students and schools in their states, specifically to ensure the quality and equity of access to virtual learning. GEER offers solutions to address learning loss for all students with access to virtual learning solutions available anytime, from anywhere.

These sources of funding are designed to tackle the issues schools and districts faced to adapt their systems throughout the pandemic. One of the most remarkable designations of funds is related to the topic of learning loss, which has been significant for children of all ages. School districts are required to spend at least 20% of ARP funding to specifically address learning loss. Creating an engaging learning environment—whether in-person or virtual—is a significant part of these efforts.

One notable element of this funding is the recognition that learning in the future is likely to continue to leverage a hybrid approach to meet diverse learning needs and ensure continuity in education.

# Themes in Funding priorities



## Learning loss

One of the top priorities of education stabilization funding is to address learning loss driven by the massive disruption of education that the COVID-19 pandemic created. Learning loss refers to any loss of knowledge and skills due to extended breaks in a student's education.

**When receiving available funding from the American Rescue Plan, school districts must commit to spending at least 20% of the funding to address learning loss.** This means that creating an engaging learning environment is critical here.

While many higher education institutions had been providing distant or virtual learning options to students, the practice was far less widespread in K-12 before the pandemic hit. It quickly became apparent, though, that technology like Zoom and Microsoft Teams had the potential to quickly and effectively close the gaps caused by the sudden mandate for distant learning across all grade levels.

Virtual access means that learning can take place anytime and anywhere. A combination of hybrid learning, as well as synchronous and asynchronous learning options, provides a foundation for ensuring that the learning environment is engaging and minimizes, or eliminates, learning loss.



## Educational technology for substantive educational interaction

The move to distance and hybrid learning surfaced the issue of inequitable access to hardware and software for students across the country. While students were able to access their typical instructional resources on devices, the lack of synchronous learning proved to be a barrier for both teachers and students. **Education stabilization funding enabled schools to purchase technology that supports an engaging experience for students.** Schools are now able to employ a more interactive approach to instruction, with technology that helps ensure individual learning styles are met and students are set up for success both in and out of the physical classroom.



## Summer learning and after-school programs

Summer learning programs have historically been opportunities for enrichment and credit recovery. Many schools and districts have enhanced these programs to address the unique learning needs that students have accumulated these past few years. Much of these learning acceleration programs take place in online and virtual settings, allowing for further individualization while decreasing unnecessary facility costs. **The Education Stabilization Fund allocates resources for expenses related to summer and after-school programming, including both technology and curriculum.**



## Virtual access to learning, anytime, anywhere

If nothing else can be gleaned from the sudden pivot education systems experienced, it is now known that schools and districts must be prepared for the unknown. Inclement weather, school construction, or even prolonged illness can disrupt in-person education for a single student, a classroom, or even an entire district. A virtual learning system that is in place throughout the academic year ensures students not only receive quality instruction in the classroom, but that level of instruction will continue regardless of location. **The Education Stabilization Fund allocates resources to build longstanding access to virtual learning environments to address a multitude of situations.**



# How Class can help

## **Class meets funding guidelines for both ESSER and GEER, making it an obvious choice for school districts across the country as they apply for and utilize these new funding options.**

Founded by education software pioneer, Michael Chasen, Class empowers educators to engage learners, increase access, and foster real-time collaboration with instructor-led tools that revolutionize online learning. Class's next generation virtual classroom harnesses the performance, scale, and familiarity of industry-leading video-first communications platforms, Zoom and Microsoft Teams.

Through Class, K-12 school systems can address learning loss in the following ways.



### **Increasing student engagement.**

Class offers an interactive, connected learning experience with tools that can help instructors track student focus, receive feedback and interact with students. Class features also allow students to interact and engage with each other, replicating an in-classroom experience to boost engagement and learning.



### **Enhancing student attention.**

Sitting in front of a screen for hours listening to a teacher doesn't capture the attention of many, or any, students. Class offers features that allow teachers to create a varied learning environment through lectures, group and one-on-one interactions, polls, whiteboards with annotation capabilities, and more. In addition, through Class, teachers and administrators can monitor attention and engagement and make adjustments to keep students on track.



### **Providing supplemental parent and guardian supervision.**

Parents and guardians play a critical role in their children's education. There's no denying that parents have been challenged to suddenly adapt to a remote learning environment where they play an integral role. Class offers options that supplement parent supervision, like automating attendance-taking, recording classes securely and privately for parents to monitor their children's learning experiences, and proctoring exams within the platform. Through these features, not only do students feel more connected and engaged, but parents do too.



### **Adapting to learning styles.**

We know that children have varied preferences when it comes to learning. The ability to offer a range of options for delivering information in ways that individual children prefer can boost engagement and minimize learning loss. With Class, teachers can address multiple learner types in dynamic and engaging ways—playing videos, sharing screens, facilitating group work in real time, and more.



### **Providing individual feedback.**

Teachers don't teach classrooms. They teach students—individual students. Class facilitates teachers' ability to provide individualized feedback to students through one-on-one meetings, automatic grading and breakout rooms. These varied options help to ensure that students don't backslide, wherever they may be learning from.



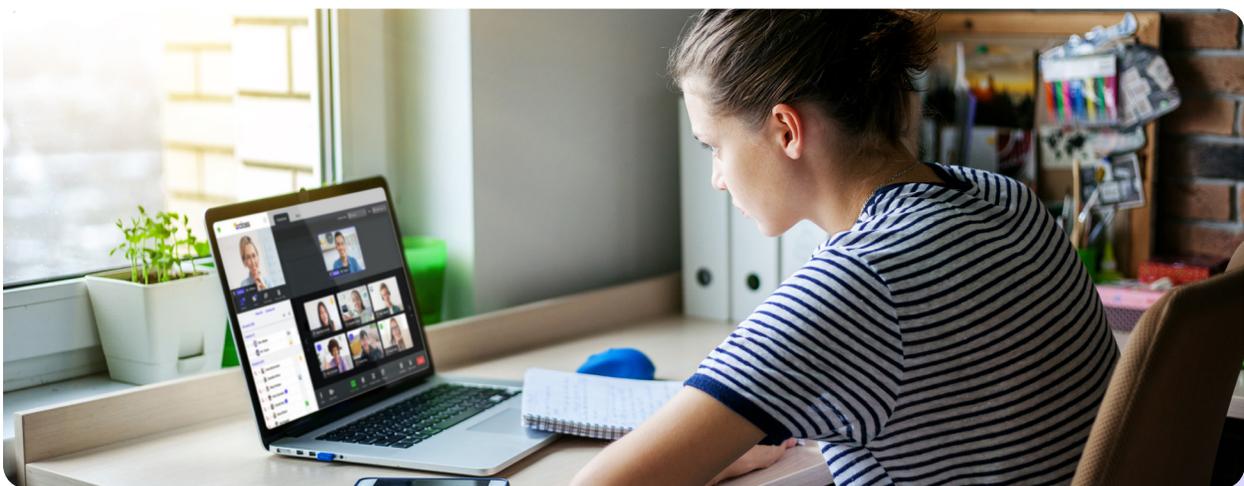
### **Decreasing absenteeism and truancy.**

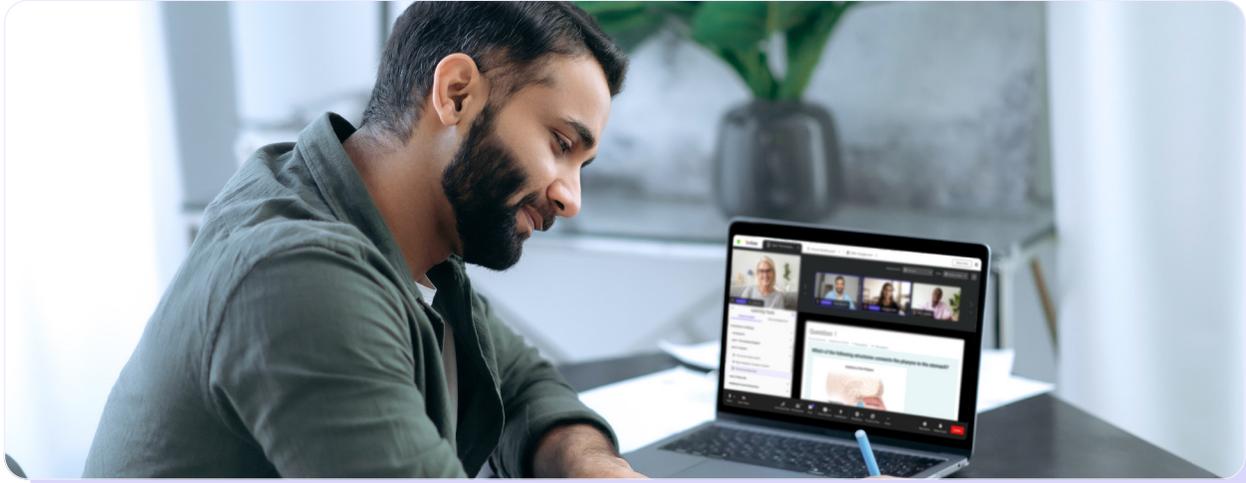
The virtual environment makes it easy to not only track attendance, but as we've already addressed, to monitor engagement and participation as well. In fact, it's safe to say that this is far easier—and more accurate—to do online than in a face-to-face classroom setting. Tracking this information over time also helps to reveal trends and opportunities for improvement.



### **Overcoming inequitable broadband access.**

One of the challenges of offering remote education is the variability in access to the internet that some students face, especially those in rural and low-income environments. Class helps school districts use scalable enterprise video and audio to ensure a quality experience for all students and educators.





# How Class meets funding guidelines

Addressing all of the funding requirements necessary to successfully attain federal funds can be challenging. **Class minimizes these challenges by meeting funding requirements across the board** for both ESSER and GEER.

	ESSER	GEER
Provides new models of virtual teaching and learning	•	•
Facilitates summer learning	•	•
Facilitates after-school programs	•	•
Addresses learning loss	•	•
Provides virtual access to learning	•	•
Ensures quality of access to learning	•	•
Delivers enterprise video and audio tools	•	•
Provides student and instructor interaction tools	•	•

# Tips for securing funding

**The federal government has made funding available to help school systems address learning loss and other impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic.**

Class is providing the platform to create an infrastructure that meets funding requirements. Securing funding to help your students and their families weather the storm that the virus has caused is fairly straightforward. Here are our top tips for securing funding:

1

Follow ESSER and GEER updates from the U.S. Office of Elementary and Secondary Education. Ask your district grand director about allocations received from your local education agency (LEA).

2

Identify school and district needs, including addressing learning loss, improving distance learning, and ensuring equity of teaching and learning opportunities.

3

Gather resources on solutions that address the needs of your district, including product features and documentation from your Class advisor.

4

Schedule a meeting with district leaders and your Class advisor to discuss how Class can address your district's priorities.

5

Work with your district grant coordinator to earmark specific funding for Class to impact virtual learning, summer instruction, learning loss, and access and equity initiatives.

Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, the need for new approaches to educate students representing a wide range of economic, socioeconomic, and geographic differences was on the radar of teachers and administrators. **Since 2020, the federal government and educational technology providers like Class have stepped up to address disparities, gaps, and the need to stem learning loss for all students.**



## About Class Technologies Inc.

Class is the next generation virtual classroom—built upon the audio and video capabilities of Zoom and Microsoft Teams. Developed by Class Technologies Inc., the company enables the active learning of 10M+ users from 1,500+ education, corporate, and government agencies worldwide and is the largest provider of virtual classroom software for education. For more information and to schedule a demo, visit [class.com](https://class.com), and follow us on [LinkedIn](#), [Instagram](#), and [X](#) at @WeAreClassTech.

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