

*Imyra*

*Delaware*



*Department of Education*

# Opportunity Funding

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- Professional learning provided by content experts.
- Sharing best practices in a variety of ways including regular meetings with curriculum directors, chiefs/principals, social media and presentations.

DDOE will use a third party to also evaluate

- The effectiveness of funds in improving outcomes for EL and low-income students.
- The successes and challenges/shortcomings of the program, including recommendations for future enhancements.

**Application deadline: June 30, 2020**

**School Information**

DISTRICT/CHARTER NAME:  Smyrna School District		
DISTRICT/CHARTER STREET ADDRESS:  82 Monrovia Ave.	CITY:  Smyrna	ZIP CODE:  19977

**Contact Information**

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Funding Period: Fiscal Year 2021

Opportunity Funding  
*Directed Funds for English Learners and Low-Income Students*

**Application deadline: June 30, 2020**

**Purpose:** The Opportunity Funding initiative creates a three-year weighted funding program across the state. Delaware is currently one of only a handful of states without additional funding for English learners (ELs) and/or low-income students (low-income).

**Allocation Method:** Local education agencies (LEAs) will receive \$500 per EL and \$300 per low income student. Funding shall be made available to LEAs upon the passage of the FY20 budget in early July so they may begin to hire staff, procure instructional materials, execute contracts for services, and plan for the upcoming school year. LEAs may use this funding for 100 percent of staff costs, including, but not limited to, reading specialists, math specialists, school counselors, school social workers, school psychologists, and other personnel dedicated to initiatives such as trauma-informed practices.

**Accountability:** LEAs will be held accountable to ensure funds are used to improve outcomes for low income and EL students. Districts and charters will work with Secretary Bunting to set goals at the beginning of the school year, participate in a mid-year progress review, and then evaluate summative performance data during their end of school year conference. Community accountability will be provided in a summit to highlight best practices, in an annual report, and in spotlights showing program successes and challenges across the state.

**Metrics:** Districts and charters will set goals to reduce the gap between English learners', low-income students', and the overall student population's baseline performance rates and 100 percent by half, thus reducing students' non-proficiency by 50 percent.

In addition to the accountability measure data, the Delaware Department of Education (DDOE) will provide support by offering

- Toolkits on evidence-based best practices for improving outcomes for EL and low-income students.
- Guidance for selecting high quality instructional materials.
- Technical support enabling LEAs to take a comprehensive look at their funding streams in order to maximize and coordinate them.

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**Overall Summary**

Provide an overall summary of how the Opportunity Funding will be used to improve outcomes for English learners and low-income students in your district or charter school.

*Include an explanation of how the work will impact each target population as well as the rationale for selecting the plan.*

**Continuation of ARC rollout and Interventions**

In the Smyrna School District, we strive to provide the best learning environments and resources for all of our students. Finding curriculum that engages all students and requires them to learn in ways where they understand the “Why?” is of utmost importance. This allows them to apply their knowledge and use it in their learning process. For this reason, we have begun implementation of the American Reading Company. ARC provides teachers with clear diagnostic data and interventions to support our students. Our rollout has been intentional in providing teachers with the intervention kits and IRLA in their first year so that they can focus on students’ skills and appropriate interventions. In addition, we have capitalized on the opportunity to utilize specialists and EL support teachers and integrate them into our buildings at strategic times so they may support this process. This targeted approach to developing the skills of the English Language Learners and Low-Income students will increase their stamina and confidence in reading, directly increasing achievement and regular attendance. We are providing students with intense support sessions for these reasons. This process has positively influenced the growth in phonemic awareness, comprehension, vocabulary acquisition, and fluency of our Low-Income and English Learner students. This year during our next phase of implementation, we will introduce the interventions to our students in grades 5-6.

**Early Intervention**

We recognize that not all students start school with the same level of skills, and the data bear out this fact. Some students do not receive the early learning experiences and productive play to prepare them for school. These gaps are evident and result in students starting school at a disadvantage in comparison to their peers because of a lack of exposure. Specifically, this is a heightened challenge for our low-income and English language learning students. We want to continue to reach out to our families with resources and support for their children in new and innovative ways. Finding our youngest students, whether in daycares or in the community, and providing resources and information for these families is essential in this process. This goal is accomplished by having our district Reading support teacher and our Pre K coordinator visit local daycares, complete screenings as appropriate, and provide families with resources to support identified needs (similar to the resources that will be provided to the community using the bookmobile) . We will also have our building specialists connect with our Low-Income and English Learner families at conferences and family and community nights to provide resources. Partnering with the Child

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Nutrition Summer Food Service Program at their distribution sites has helped us reach the families most in need and provide them with resources to enrich learning while their students are not in school. Specifically, during an extended period of “virtual/distance” learning, our combined teams of instructional and non-instructional staff have engaged with each family at each site, providing meals and learning resources. The expansion of these distribution sites during the current health crisis will help reach more families closer to their homes. Twenty-four thousand meals served is our one-week high during the pandemic. The families in need and accustomed to the support we are happy to provide will also be receiving the tools to engage their children in foundational work to improve their chances of success when we do return to school.

**After School Tutoring**

Providing small group after school sessions for our Low-Income and English learner students provides individualized guidance and direct support. In many instances, students are unable to take advantage of these services because they do not have a ride home. We are developing a plan to provide transportation to low-income and English language learning students to take advantage of the additional help.

**Community Outreach**

Our district Book Mobile will continue to provide resources to our community. Our district will target the areas in our district where data indicate a higher percentage of Low-Income and English learners reside. The reading resources we provide may be the only ones to which some students have access. Our Book Mobile is a visible way to bring resources to them on a weekly basis. We would like to continue our efforts and work with other district groups to provide new resources in addition to what we are currently doing. This will include games, “kits” to introduce math and science topics, bilingual books and multicultural texts. Resources we order this year will have a focus on the celebration of cultural and racial diversity, tolerance of differences and a message of resilience. Staff members from all of the schools will voluntarily take part in this endeavor.

**Trauma Invested Care and Restorative Teaching Practices**

Our students have trauma in their lives that impacts their readiness to learn. This trauma is even more prevalent with our Low-Income and English learner students as demonstrated life experiences. We began our journey by learning about ACES and the impact on children. As a district, we watched videos by Dr. Nadine Burke Harris and participated in professional development supported by our district psychologists and interventionists. Over the past two years, we have created building level Restorative teams that are involved in intense trainings supporting the growth of relationships amongst staff and staff, staff and students and students with each other. These “champions” lead professional development within their schools, share

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techniques and model circles. Discussion of the transformation from traditional discipline has sparked many difficult conversations and has allowed us to evolve as a district to meet the needs of all of our students. Each year we increase our capacity.

We have started the process of training teachers through the International Institute of Restorative Practices and have a plan to expand that trainer group to make more trainers available to each school during the 2020-2021 school year.

Additionally, this year all staff members completed a two-day Level 1 Fostering Resilient Learners Trauma training. These trainings have changed the viewpoints of our staff on how to work with students who bring the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences (“ACES”) to school with them. Those students, pointedly our Low-Income and English learner students, according to Dr. Nadine Burke-Harris, *The Deepest Well*, “not only experience a greater incidence of trauma, they are more likely to develop toxic stress because their source of buffering was constrained by the daily existential stresses families were under.” For this reason, teachers are shifting their focus to address their students rather than expecting their students to adapt to their set environment. We are continuing to see our discipline numbers go down with our Low-Income and English learner students and have developed interventions for students.

This summer our administrative teams are scheduled for their next level of training with Pete Hall and Kristen Souers of *Fostering Resilient Learners*. The goal is better calibrate efforts across each of our eight schools to ensure that no matter where a Smyrna School District attends, s/he will receive research-based supports. Staff are all challenging themselves to learn more.

**Equity Awareness and Training for Staff**

Smyrna Middle School staff members participated in the DOE Equity Cohort and engaged in meaningful progress this year. As a district, we want to investigate further, set goals to broaden our perspective, and add new leaders to our student/staff teams that provide diverse voices and perspectives. We began the 2019-2020 school year with the incredible work of Dr. Adolph Brown. Our staff were actively engaged and empathetic as Dr. Brown shared the message of implicit bias in our society and his personal journey from despair to a doctorate. We invited Dr. Brown back to Smyrna High School to meet and talk with our high school students. The impact was palpable. We have plans to continue to bringing in speakers (in person or virtually) to our staff and students to continue these conversations. Specifically, we would like Dr. Brown to visit our middle school. Those students, pointedly our Low-Income and English learner students, according to research by Dr. Beverly Daniel Tatum, “Need to participate in meaningful and productive dialogue to raise consciousness and lead to effective action and social change.” Our staff needs support to guide this dialogue and connect with our students in their journey. Once again, this is a commitment to our students that we will support, advocate and work to support them. We will also bring in recent

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alumni who have gone on to achieve success through college, employment or military service. We will continue to share the resources of our community with the students of our community. Because each alumnus will require a criminal background check, we will provide this for them at our cost.

Addressing these areas of need will provide our Low-Income and English learners resources, interventions and opportunities in the classroom, as well as foster relationships with staff members as they visit the sites. These experiences are enhanced by training our teachers receive in the most effective ways to understand our students and their needs. Providing parents with resources to help their children with early learning enables them to have a more active role in the process.

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**Investment and Goals**

Provide additional detail about the plan in the chart below by listing each Opportunity Funding investment with its associated cost and proposed impact. *For each investment, include baseline data and numeric targets to measure impact. A state budget sheet will be completed by the district after the plan has been approved.*

Investment	Cost	Expected impact (Check all that apply)					Is this a continued Opp. Funding investment from 2019-20? (yes/no)
(Please list your priority. Examples: -“Hire full time 1 social worker” - “Purchase RULER for grades 7-9”)	For 2020- 21 (\$)	Raise ELL student achieve- ment	Raise LI student achieve- ment	Increase attendance for ELL students	Increase attendance of LI students	Other, specify	
Gr 5-6 Intervention Programs	200,000	X	X			Identification and strategies for LI and EL	Yes- New Grades
Literacy Training/Coaches	115,000	X	X			Focus on Targeted Intervention, Flexible Groups, EL Adaptations, and Student Conferencing	New Grades
After School Tutoring	30,000	X	X			Focused skills review	yes
Student Transportation for Tutoring	25,000			X	X		Yes at 1 school expand to other schools
Family Community School Events	20,000	X	X	X	X	Additional community locations	yes



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Lending Library and Resource Packets	10,000	X	X			Increased focus on diversity	yes
Trauma Informed Training	40,000	X	X	X	X	Continue training and focus on EL and LI needs/interventions	yes
Cultural Competency/Equity Training	25,000	X	X			Staff Awareness and skill acquisition	no
Student Assemblies and Mentors	18,000	X	X	X	X	Increases EL and LI self-awareness	no