

September 15, 2021

The Honorable Governor Ron Desantis, Governor of Florida  
Office of the Governor, State of Florida  
The Capital  
400 South Monroe St.  
Tallahassee, FL 32399

Dear Governor DeSantis,

The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and the delays in receiving federal emergency aid have created budget pressures for many Florida school districts. Florida schools are facing extensive unexpected costs as a direct result of the public health crisis. Across the state of Florida, school districts are contemplating how to keep students and educators safe, make up for learning losses, attract talented educators, and implement safety protocols with hand sanitizer, air purifiers and PPE. For all these reasons, The Alachua County Council of PTAs urges you to release all federal funds designated for Florida school districts that the State has received pursuant to the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund ("ESSER II"). To date, the Department of Education has only released 12.6 million of the District's 27.3 million in ESSER II funds applied for.

Additionally, we ask that you expedite the application process pursuant to the American Rescue Plan ("ARP"), as our school district alone is waiting for the release of approximately \$61,000.00. Together, these monies are necessary to cover a myriad of expenses that are essential for our children. Here in Alachua County, funds are drastically needed to help improve air circulation and assist with contact tracing. As a whole, these funds serve not only to provide our children with the necessary protection during this pandemic, but also to address their immediate academic needs, including the learning loss, that has arisen due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We cannot stress enough the importance of you releasing these federal emergency funds to our local schools.

We appreciate your consideration of our request. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Mary Benedict

Alachua County Council of PTA's  
3700 NE 53 Avenue  
Gainesville, FL 32609  
[www.accpta.org](http://www.accpta.org)

President, Alachua County Council of PTA's

[Alachua.cc@floridapta.org](mailto:Alachua.cc@floridapta.org)

*LeAnn Campbell*

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Legislative Co-Chair, Alachua County Council of PTAs

[legislation@accpta.org](mailto:legislation@accpta.org)

CC:

Dr. Carlee Simon, Superintendent, Alachua County Public Schools

Leanetta McNealy, Ph.D., Chair, School Board of Alachua County

Mildred Russell, Member, School Board of Alachua County

Tina Certain, Vice-Chair, School Board of Alachua County

Robert Hyatt, Member, School Board of Alachua County

Gunnar Paulson, Ed.D., Member, School Board of Alachua County