

FACT SHEET

ARP Spending Fact Sheet: How Are New England Districts Using ARP Funds?

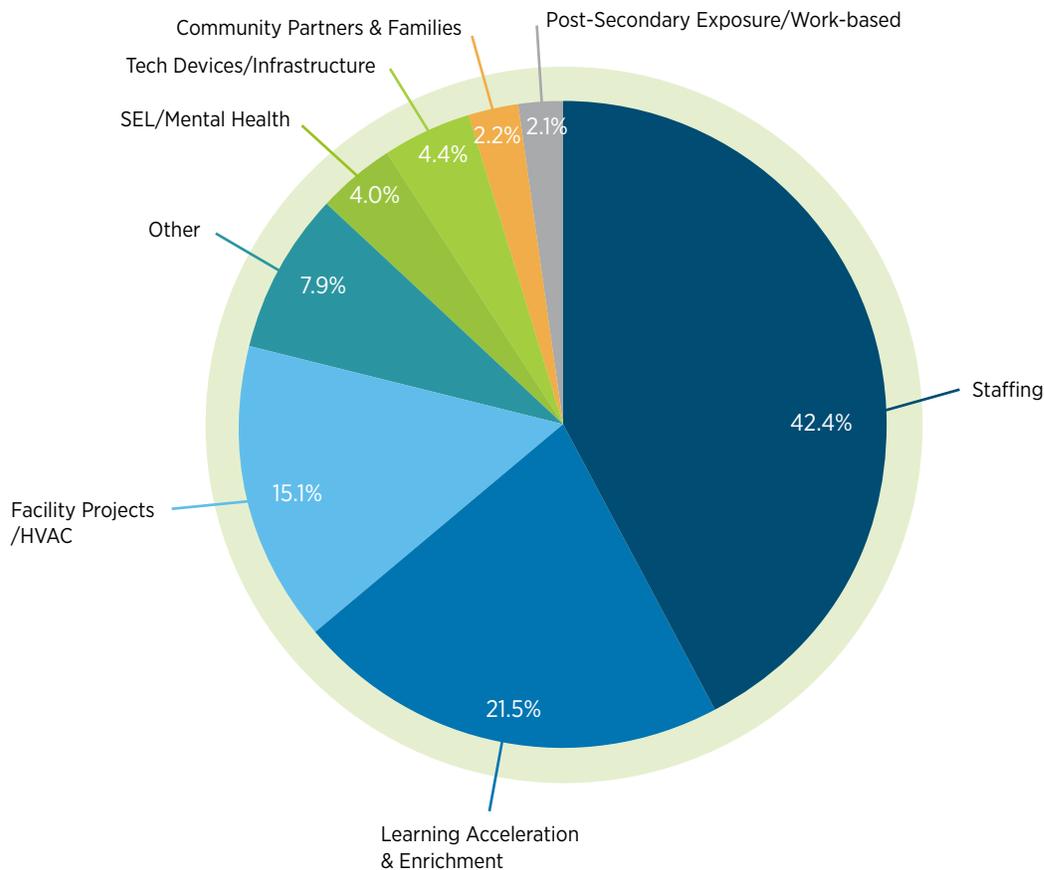
In early 2021, the federal government passed the American Rescue Plan (ARP), granting schools and districts across the nation \$123 billion in pandemic relief funds. School leaders had to quickly devise plans for this unprecedented amount of money, in accordance with federal requirements and state guidance.

The Center on Reinventing Public Education collected and reviewed 85 ARP spending plans from 81 school districts and four charter management organizations (CMOs) in New England. Within this sample, 57 districts and three CMOs reported planned expenditures totaling over \$1.2 billion. The other 21 organizations did not include specific dollar figures, but provided some details on how they planned to use the funds. This analysis is part of our **ongoing work** observing post-pandemic recovery in New England.

By reviewing these spending plans, we can get a preliminary look at how districts in this region are strategically preparing for repercussions from the pandemic. Spending plans are not representative of how districts are actually spending their funds, but these findings will inform future analyses of recovery spending in New England.

ARP Funds by Category

From 57 districts and 3 CMOs that reported planned expenditures in dollar amounts



Total Number of Districts that Mention Supports

From 81 districts and 4 CMOs that did and did not report planned expenditures



Sampling Methodology

Based on statewide enrollment, the number of districts and CMOS from each state follow:

Connecticut: 21 Maine: 13 Rhode Island: 11

Massachusetts: 19 New Hampshire: 12 Vermont: 9

We randomly selected districts to be included in the sample with the following conditions:

1. Sample includes the largest district, based on student enrollment, in each state.
2. Half of each state's district allocation comes from districts with over 20% poverty. If there were fewer districts in this category, we chose the highest-poverty districts by rank until half of the spots were full. We used random selection if there were additional districts.
3. We randomly drew the remaining half of each state's allocation from a list of districts with less than 20% poverty.
4. For Massachusetts, we used a modified approach to ensure the sample included districts from each locale code. Low-poverty districts did not include ones that were in the top 20 districts by enrollment size, since those districts are the focus of other work.
5. Most Vermont districts do not have poverty data, so we sampled the largest district, the largest city district, and then did a random draw.
6. We included additional districts and CMOs based on our other work for [this project](#).

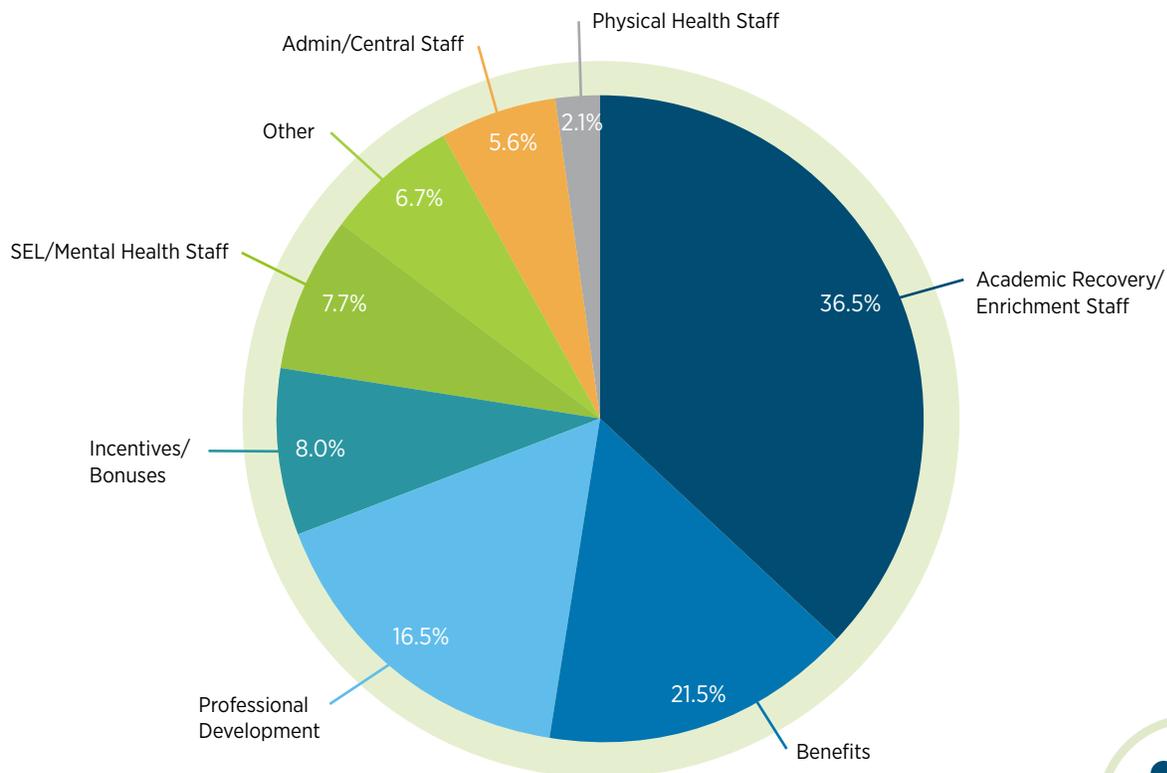
Analysis Methodology

We reviewed planned expenditures in districts' and CMOs' ARP Use of Funds Plans, separating items according to categories laid out in this [codebook](#). We placed line items under a single category so that there was no overlap between categories. We included specific dollar allocations if this information was publicized in the plan.

After an initial round of categorizing line items, we further distilled items categorized under "Learning Acceleration/Enrichment," "SEL/Mental Health," "Staffing," and "Other" into relevant sub-categories to provide more insight into the breakdown of these funds.

Staffing Spending Breakdown

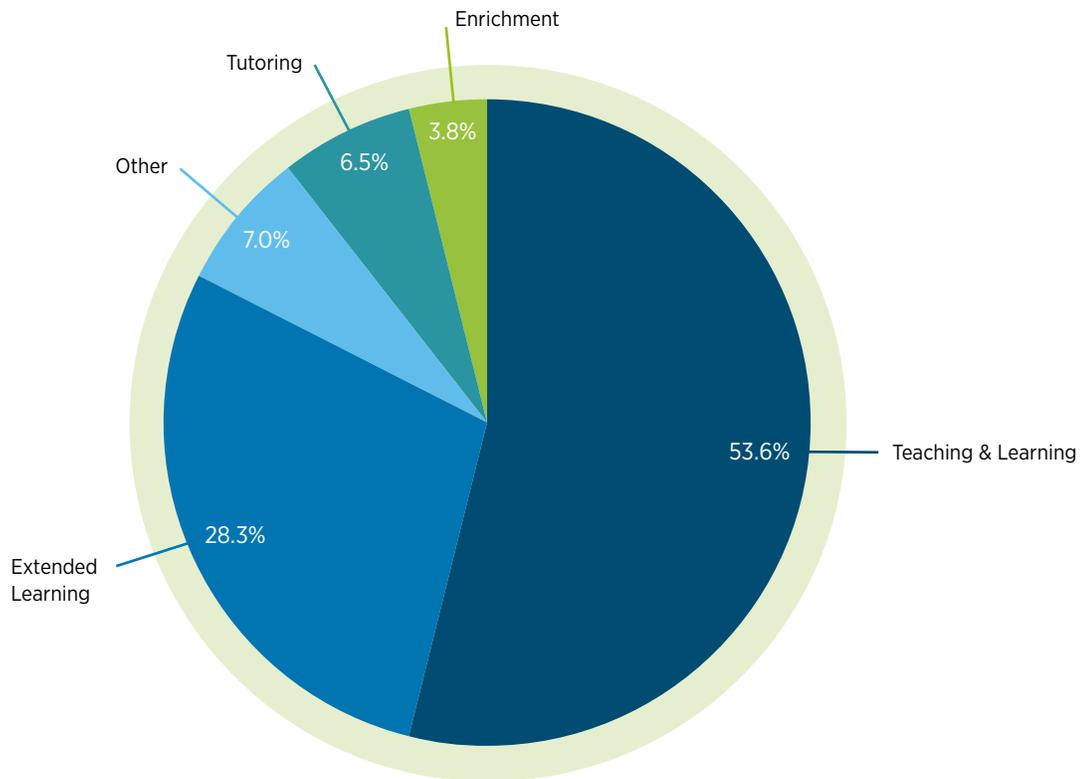
n=58



Staffing

- Staffing – including salaries, benefits, incentives/bonuses, and professional development opportunities – is by far the largest planned spending category, totaling more than 40% of all ARP funds within this sample, or \$534.8 million. Of that:
 - Over one-third of these planned funds (slightly more than \$191 million) are for hiring staff for academic recovery and enrichment services, which include additional full-time and/or substitute teachers, math/reading interventionists, and paraeducators/paraprofessionals.
 - About 15% of these funds (\$80 million) are for employee benefits for these new hires.
 - Less than one-tenth of planned funds are for SEL/mental health staff, including social workers, psychologists, and counselors. Despite this relatively smaller allocation of funds, over half of districts/CMOs (48) within the larger analysis of 85 plan to hire some SEL/mental health staff.
 - Roughly 16% of these funds (over \$86 million) are for professional development opportunities, which include curriculum planning, leadership training, and equity-centered practices.
 - Another 8% (\$42 million) is for staff incentives/bonuses, including stipends for professional development, staff SEL/wellness activities, and for work beyond regular school hours. A minority of districts also are setting aside funds for retention bonuses.
- A total of 83 districts/CMOs reference increased staffing support in their ARP plans, including those that did not report spending allocations.

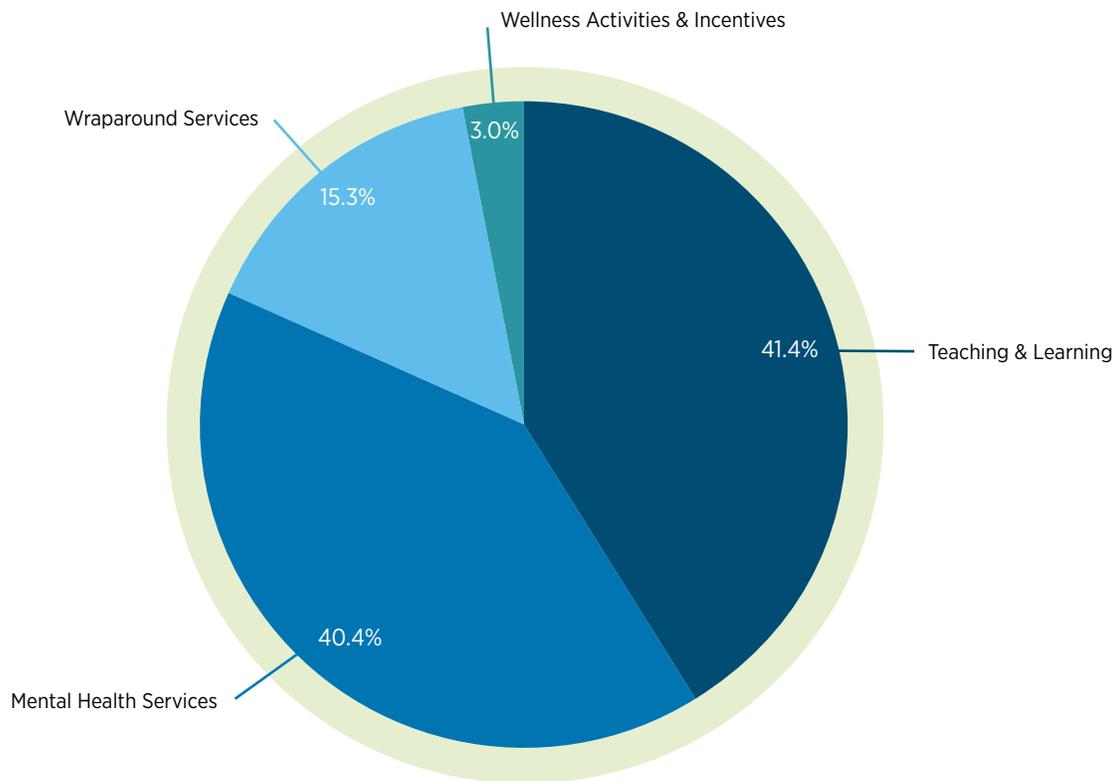
Learning Acceleration & Enrichment Spending Breakdown n=58



Learning Acceleration and Enrichment

- Fifty-eight of the 60 districts and CMOs that reported spending allocations plan to invest \$266.2 million in learning acceleration and enrichment, which accounts for 21.5% of their total ARP spending. Of that:
 - More than half (\$142.6 million) will be invested in curriculum (e.g., software licenses), instructional materials and supplies, intervention programs, and contracted and/or hourly teaching staff (e.g., part-time academic intervention staff).
 - Slightly less than a third (\$75.3 million) will be invested in extended learning, which includes summer school, after-school programs, and extended school days and years.
 - Tutoring makes up only 6.5% of districts' planned investments.
- A total of 83 districts/CMOs reference learning acceleration and enrichment in their ARP plans, including those that did not report spending allocations.

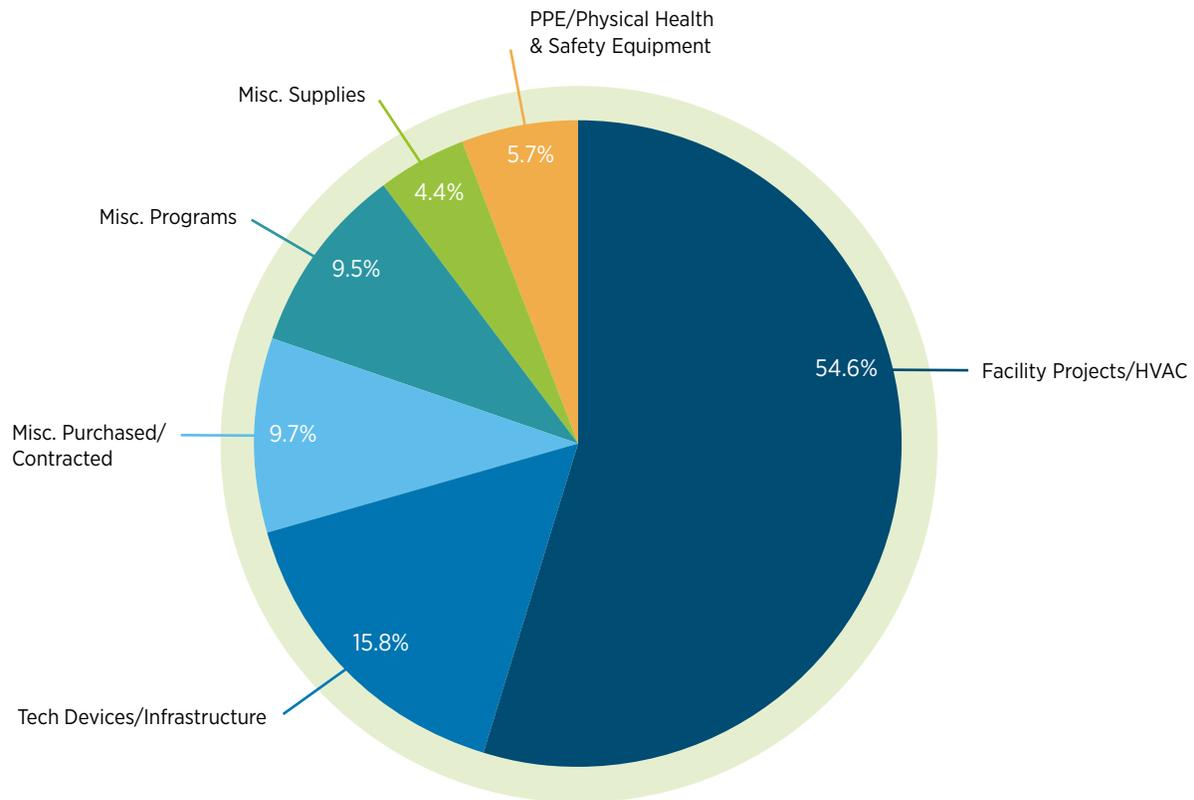
SEL/Mental Health Spending Breakdown n=28



SEL/Mental Health

- Twenty-eight districts/CMOs plan to invest in social-emotional learning (SEL) and mental wellness initiatives, totaling just under \$50 million, or 4% of all ARP spending within this sample. Of that:
 - Over 40% of these funds (roughly \$20 million) will be spent on SEL curriculum, programming, and materials. The next largest spending categories under this umbrella are mental health services (\$19.8 million) and wraparound services (\$7.5 million).
 - Other spending within this category includes nutrition services, survey/screening tools, and wellness activities/incentives for students, amounting to less than 4% of funding within this category.
- A total of 41 districts reference plans for social-emotional well-being and mental health supports in their ESSER plans, including those that did not report spending allocations.

Other Spending Breakdown n=57



Community Partners and Families

- Twenty districts/CMOs include family and community supports in their ARP spending plans. This category made up less than 2% of planned ARP spending overall.
- Investments include expanding parent opportunity academies; engaging community partners in academic, SEL, or enrichment programs; and home visits.
- A small minority of districts/CMOs (8) plan to hire family support personnel, such as family liaisons and translators, but funding for this only amounts to 0.5% of funding under the staffing category.



Post-Secondary Exposure/Work-based Learning

- Nineteen districts will invest \$21.6 million in post-secondary exposure and work-based learning, which accounts for 1.8% of total ARP spending.
- Allocations include funding for college and career awareness activities (e.g., field trips), certifications and credentialing exams, dual enrollment programs, new and existing career pathways (e.g., computer science), partnerships with local colleges and businesses, partnerships with career pathway organizations, and miscellaneous career and technical education initiatives.
- A total of 29 districts/CMOs in our sample of 85 plan to invest in this category.



Data

- Only 19 districts/CMOs plan to invest in data, which includes new or expanded data systems, survey tools and systems, learning management systems, subscriptions to software programs (e.g., PowerSchool), student progress monitoring, and behavior monitoring tools.
- They plan to spend \$5 million on data needs, making up 0.4% of the total ARP allocation.
- Spending for this category makes up the lowest proportion of overall spending. While only 19 districts/CMOs mentioned dollar amounts, 29 plan to invest in data.



Other Categories

- A significant portion of funds (over \$337.3 million, nearly 30% of the ARP total) does not fall under any of the above categories. A closer breakdown reveals that many districts/CMOs are investing in immediate school safety and infrastructure projects. Of that:
 - Over half of these funds, which total 15% of all planned ARP expenditures, are for improving and/or repairing HVAC systems and other facilities projects, such as constructing playgrounds, classroom repairs, and building improvements. These expenditures amount to slightly more than \$186.5 million – just \$1 million less than for hiring academic/enrichment staff.
 - Nearly \$54 million (about 5% of the ARP total) is for purchasing new technology devices or investing in upgraded infrastructure, including computers, smartboards, projectors, wifi hotspots, and increased broadband services.
 - A little more than \$42 million (less than 2% of all ARP spending within this sample) is reserved for PPE supplies and other physical health/safety equipment.