

THIS IS TITLE IV-A

Title IV, Part A of ESSA: Student Support and Academic Enrichments Grants

Overview and Funding History

Description

The bipartisan Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) includes a flexible block grant program under Title IV, Part A (Title IV-A), which is authorized at \$1.6 billion through FY 2020. Title IV-A, Part A authorizes activities in three broad areas:

1. Providing students with a well-rounded education (e.g., college and career counseling, STEM, including computer science, music and the arts, civics, IB/AP/dual enrollment)
2. Supporting safe and healthy students (e.g., comprehensive school mental and behavioral health, drug and violence prevention, training on trauma-informed practices, health and physical education) and
3. Supporting the effective use of technology (e.g., professional development, blended learning, and purchase of devices).

Distribution of Funds

ESSA stipulates that each state will receive an allocation based on the Title I funding formula. Using the same Title I formula, the states will then allocate funds to school districts.

Any school district that receives a formula allocation above \$30,000 must conduct a needs assessment and then must expend 20 percent of its grant on safe and healthy school activities and 20 percent on activities to provide a well-rounded education. The remaining 60 percent of the allocation may be spent on all three priorities, including technology. However, there is a 15 percent cap on devices, equipment, software, and digital content.

If a district receives an allocation below \$30,000, the law does not require a needs assessment or setting aside percentages for well-rounded and safe and healthy student programs. However, it must still direct the funds it receives toward activities in at least one of the three categories. The 15 percent technology purchase cap would continue to apply.

Funding History

Current Funding Level: \$1.21 billion

FY 2017: The SSAE grant program only received \$400 million in FY 2017. Funding this program at less than 25% of its authorized level in its first year presented serious implementation issues and many districts did not receive the statutory minimums under ESSA and some received no funding at all due to the extremely low funding level.

FY 2018-2020: Despite the President's request to eliminate the program four years in a row and the recognition that FY17 funding level was simply too low to allow the program to operate as intended under ESSA, Congress recognized the importance of this block grant and provided \$1.1 billion for Title IV-A in FY18, \$1.17 billion in FY19, and \$1.21 in FY20. At these funding levels, many districts are receiving at least enough funds and have the flexibility to make meaningful investments in the program areas they need most based off of their needs assessments. Additionally, these funding levels obviate the need for a competitive option and allows the flexible block grant to operate as Congress intended, as a formula grant that benefits all districts equitably.

Program Funding Need

Strong evidence underscores the need for students to have access to programs that meet their comprehensive needs, including their mental and physical health and safety and providing a challenging learning environment that effectively uses technology.

Evidence supports a direct correlation between physical and mental health and learning that is essential to academic success, school completion, and the development of healthy, resilient, and productive citizens. Schools are uniquely positioned to promote student engagement and help them acquire life-long knowledge and skills through comprehensive health education, physical education, nutrition, comprehensive school mental and behavioral health services, counseling, and integration among all education and health programs.

In order to prepare all students for success in school and in life, they need access to a well-rounded and challenging curriculum. Funds through the block grant will help schools expand music, art, STEM, computer science, accelerated learning, history, and civics courses, as well as expand access to college and career guidance and counseling.

Federal investments in education technology ensure schools have technology-proficient educators, well equipped classrooms, sufficiently supported administrative structures, and a curriculum optimized to take advantage of the benefits technology offers to all students--such as closing opportunity and learning gaps and providing students with essential modern workforce skills.

For further information, or if any questions arise, please contact any member of the Title IV-A Coalition Board of Directors listed below.

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"Title IV-A helps fill the gaps on crucial programs like schoolwide literacy, educational technology, and safety that are often touted as important but too rarely funded. The importance on inclusiveness, addressing the needs of all of our diverse student groups, and access to a well rounded education has been paramount." -Chuck Puga, Principal, Smoky Hill High School, Aurora, CO