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. 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 arts, civics, IB/AP)
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).

DISTRICTS RECEIVING $30,000 OR MORE MUST CONDUCT A NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND FOLLOW THE 20/20/60 RULE:

- spend 20% on safe and healthy students
- spend 20% on well-rounded education
- spend 60% across any of the 3 buckets, including supporting effective ed-tech (15% limit on devices)

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.

CURRENT FUNDING LEVEL: $1.21 billion
FUNDING REQUEST: $2 billion

More than ever, in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, districts need the continued investments Congress has made over the years in the Title IV-A program. This flexible funding has allowed districts to continue investing in all three areas that the program supports: safe and healthy students, well-rounded education, and the effective use of technology.

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.

The continued funding in these critical areas, especially during these uncertain times, will give districts the opportunity to build on the successes from the past three years as well as the ability to use Title IV-A funds to address issues that the COVID-19 crisis has made apparent and exacerbated. This pandemic has made it clear that districts face a wide range of unique challenges, whether it’s ensuring all children have access to technology to do remote learning or the ability to provide mental health supports from afar. As school systems begin their journeys back to normal, they will need the flexibility of Title IV-A funds to provide social and emotional learning programs, engaging well-rounded classes like music and physical education, and meaningful project based learning that technology provides.

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