Title IV, Part A of the Every *Student Succeeds Act*: Student Support and Academic Enrichments Grants

Description

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

1. Providing students with a well-rounded education
2. Supporting safe and healthy students (e.g., school mental health, drug and violence prevention, training on trauma-informed practices, health and physical education)
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% of its grant on safe and healthy school activities and 20% on activities to provide a well-rounded education. The remaining 60% of the allocation may be spent on all three priorities, including technology. However, there is a 15% 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% technology purchase cap would continue to apply.

Funding History

Current Funding Level: $1.4 billion for FY 2026

FY 2017 Appropriations

Title IV, Part A only received $400 million in FY 2017. Funding this program at less than 25% of its authorized level in its first year has presented serious implementation issues, including the need to allow states to allocate funds to districts competitively in order to give districts the opportunity to make meaningful investments. Many districts did not receive the statutory minimums under ESSA of $10,000 and some received no funding at all due to this extremely low funding level.

FY 2018 - 2026 Appropriations

Recognizing that FY 2017 funding levels were 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, Part A in FY 2018, $1.17 billion in FY 2019, $1.21 billion in FY 2020, $1.22 billion in FY 2021, $1.28 billion in FY 2022, $1.38 billion in FY 2023-FY 2024 and $1.4 billion in FY 2025 & FY 2026. At these funding levels, many districts are finally receiving enough funds and have the

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flexibility to make meaningful investments in the program areas they need most based off of their needs assessment, including health and physical education. Additionally, this funding level obviates 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 equally.

Program Funding Need

We are requesting level funding of $1.4 billion for FY 2027. Strong evidence underscores the need for students to have access to programs that meet their comprehensive needs, such as student health 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.

Given the elimination through ESSA of numerous programs that support the overall health and safety of students, the investments in education technology, as well as helping districts ensure access to a well-rounded education, a robust federal investment in support of these programs is essential through Title IV, Part A. Without a significant investment in Title IV, Part A, districts will be forced to choose among competing priorities – even though an ample investment in all three is necessary to providing students with a comprehensive education.

For further information, or if any questions arise, please contact SHAPE America advocacy staff listed below.

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