

ESSA Essentials

Understanding the funding

Published May 2017

The Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants (SSAEG) under ESSA's Title IV, Part A are authorized at **\$1.6 billion**, but funding depends on annual appropriations. The block grant allows districts to use their funds to support **three broad areas**.

- 1 Well-rounded education
- 2 Student health and safety
- 3 Effective use of technology



Allocation of funding

Each year, the federal government will appropriate a total amount for the SSAEG program and allocate those dollars via Title I formula to the states. States will then allocate those funds to districts.



Schools or districts that receive an allocation **above \$30,000** must:

- Conduct a needs assessment.
- Spend **20 percent** on safe and healthy school activities.
- Spend **20 percent** on well-rounded education programs.
- Spend the remaining **60 percent** on all three priorities, including technology.
- Adhere to a **15 percent cap** on spending for devices, equipment, software and digital content.

Schools or districts that receive an allocation **below \$30,000** must:

- Spend money on activities in at least one of the three categories.
- Adhere to the **15 percent cap** on spending for hardware, software and content.

Investing in these programs is critical to help students succeed

Diverse academic programs

Schools will be able to expand music, art, STEM, accelerated learning, history, civics, college/career prep.

Health and safety programs

Strong physical and mental health leads to academic success, school completion and the development of productive citizens.

Modern technology

Schools need tech-proficient educators, ongoing training, well-equipped classrooms, equity of access and to provide students with skills for the future.

Congress only allocated \$400 million in FY17 and gave states the option to allocate funds via competition.

Congress first authorized the program at **\$1.6 billion**.

\$1.6B

The current appropriation is **\$400 million**.

\$400M

At these lower levels, school districts will face tough choices in deciding which SSAEG program areas to prioritize. **Tell Congress to fully fund SSAEG to grow this amount!**

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Rules for the optional Title IV, Part A grant competition in 2017

- If a state chooses to run the competition, the state must preserve the integrity of the buckets. For instance, a state receiving \$1 million would have to ensure that at least 20 percent of funds are distributed to districts for safe and healthy programs, 20 percent for well-rounded programs and the remaining 60 percent for any or all three of the programs (safe and healthy, well-rounded, technology).
- It's up to the states to determine what they want to do with the "60 percent bucket." They could specify what districts could apply for, or they could allow the districts to determine how to spend the money.
- Districts can apply for one, two or all three of the buckets and must complete a needs assessment prior to applying to receive funds from the state.
- Priority must be given to high-needs districts while ensuring geographic diversity among sub-grant recipients representing rural, suburban and urban areas. This will ensure that rural and urban districts are equally able to receive funding.
- No more than 25 percent of the funds can be used for infrastructure purchases (hardware, software, equipment) for competitive grants. No more than 15 percent can be used for states that choose to allocate funding by formula.
- The minimum grant award is \$10,000 and the duration is for one year.
- Funds will be distributed to SEAs in July 2017 and will remain available for obligation by the SEAs until September 30, 2018, and by LEAs until September 30, 2019.



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