

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

The newly enacted bipartisan Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) includes a flexible block grant program under Title IV Part A, which is authorized at \$1.65 billion in FY 2017. The Title IV Part A Student Support and Academic Enrichments Grants -- the third largest authorized program in ESSA-- combines (and eliminates) several targeted programs under No Child Left Behind, including the Math and Science Partnership Grants. The Math and Science Partnership grants, which received \$152.7M in FY2016, was the largest single program at the Department devoted exclusively to STEM-related purposes. Title IV, Part A authorizes activities in three broad areas:

- 1) Providing students with programs that ensure a **well-rounded education** (programs in STEM, college and career counseling, arts, civics, and access to IB/AP);
- 2) Supporting **safe and healthy** students (e.g. comprehensive school mental health, drug and violence prevention, health and physical education); and
- 3) Supporting the effective use of **technology** (professional development, blended learning, and devices).

The Need to Adequately Fund STEM Education

K-12 STEM programs will have an impact on our nation's economic future. In the past few years, U.S. businesses have voiced vocal concerns over the supply and availability of STEM workers. Growth in STEM jobs was three times as fast as growth in non-STEM jobs in the past 10 years, and at all levels of educational attainment, STEM job holders earn 11 percent higher wages compared with their same-degree counterparts in other jobs.

Strong evidence demonstrates the need for students to have access to STEM programs, and for a variety of health and safety programs, diverse academic programs, and modern technology.

NSTA and the STEM Education Coalition fully support full funding of the ESSA Title IV, Part A Student Support and Academic Enhancement Grants at the authorized level of \$1.65 billion. The new initiative would support state-led efforts to promote hands on STEM learning, STEM specialty schools, integration of informal and formal STEM programs, and support improvement in computer science instruction. We are very disappointed the Administration proposed only \$500 million for this program, which was a central focus of the ESSA and recommend Congress establish the program as authorized.

Program	FY2016 Funding Level	STEM Ed Coalition FY2017 Request	POTUS FY2017 Request	House FY2017 Bill	Senate FY 2017 Bill
ESSA Title IV Student Support and Enrichment Grants	n/a	\$1.65 billion	\$500 million	\$1 billion	\$300 million

Distribution of Title IV, Part A Grant Funds

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 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 money can 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 students programs. It must spend money on activities in at least one of the three categories. The 15 percent technology purchase cap would continue to apply.

Title IV Part A STEM Activities

Districts can use Title IV Part A grants to provide students with a well-rounded education and improve instruction and student engagement in STEM by:

- Expanding high-quality STEM courses;
- Increasing access to STEM for underserved and at risk student populations;
- Supporting the participation of students in STEM nonprofit competitions (such as robotics, science research, invention, mathematics, computer science, and technology competitions);
- Providing hands-on learning opportunities in STEM;
- Integrating other academic subjects, including the arts, into STEM subject programs;
- Creating or enhancing STEM specialty schools;
- Integrating classroom based and afterschool and informal STEM instruction; and
- Expanding environmental education.