Connecting ESSA to School Libraries

Thursday, January 12, 2017

School Librarians of Rhode Island (SLRI)
This program is made possible through the matching funds provided by Follett School Solutions. Follett advocates for, and understands, the expertise and dynamic role school librarians play in making a difference in their district’s success.
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- Rule Marking & Guidance, Comments submitted to proposed rulemaking on ESSA (7/26/16)
- Student Support and Academic Achievement Enrichment Grants (ESSA Block Grants)
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<td>6:00 pm</td>
<td>Welcome Remarks</td>
<td>Pamela Harland, AASL Board of Directors, Regional 1 Director</td>
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<tr>
<td>6:00 – 6:30 pm</td>
<td>ESSA Overview</td>
<td>Emily Sheketoff, Executive Director of Washington Office of American Library Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>6:30-6:45 pm</td>
<td>Review of Rhode Island Department of Education</td>
<td>Sarah K. Hunicke, MLIS, President, School Librarians of Rhode Island (SLRI)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 6:45 -6:55 pm| • Review of Key Messages  
• Identifying Stakeholders                                               | Pamela Harland, AASL Board of Directors, Regional 1 Director               |
| 6:55 – 7:05 pm| Coalition Development Plan                                              | Pamela Harland, AASL Board of Directors, Regional 1 Director               |
| 7:05-7:10 pm | Report/Share Out                                                        | Pamela Harland, AASL Board of Directors, Regional 1 Director               |
| 7:10-7:30 pm | Review of Key Messages  
Elevator Speech Development  
Sample Elevator Speech | Pamela Harland, AASL Board of Directors, Regional 1 Director               |
| 7:30-7:45 pm | Elevator Speech Development                                             | Small group work                                                           |
| 7:45-7:50 pm | Elevator Speech Practice/Refinement                                     |                                                                           |
| 7:50-8:00 pm | Report/Share Out                                                        | Pamela Harland, AASL Board of Directors, Regional 1 Director               |
|              | Review of supplemental handbook material                               |                                                                           |
|              | Closing Remarks/Questions                                               |                                                                           |
Welcome

Pamela Harland  
AASL Regional Director, Region I  
Plymouth State University

Handbook
SHARE, SHARE, SHARE

Tag @aasl

#ESSAlibraries

Send photos to jhabley@ala.org

ESSA Webpage

http://essa.aasl.org/

ALA Washington Office

Emily Sheketoff
Executive Director of Washington Office of American Library Association

https://vimeo.com/183396897
Effective School Library Program

The American Association of School Librarians (AASL) supports the position that:

An effective school library program has a certified school librarian at the helm, provides personalized learning environments, and offers equitable access to resources to ensure a well-rounded education for every student.

Effective School Library Program

As a fundamental component of college, career, and community readiness, the effective school library program:

1. is adequately staffed, including a state-certified school librarian who
   a. is an instructional leader and teacher,
   b. supports the development of digital learning, participatory learning, inquiry learning, technology literacies, and information literacy, and
   c. supports, supplements, and elevates the literacy experience through guidance and motivational reading initiatives;

2. has up-to-date digital and print materials and technology, including curation of openly licensed educational resources; and

3. provides regular professional development and collaboration between classroom teachers and school librarians.

Effective School Library Program Cont.
Title I

Title I – Improving basic programs operated by state and local educational agencies

Message: School librarians and access to effective school library programs, impact student achievement, digital literacy skills, and school climate/culture.

https://vimeo.com/183388920

Title II, Part A

Title II: Supporting effective instruction

Message: School librarians share their learning with other professionals when they attend conferences and workshops, applying the benefits of new techniques, strategies, and technologies to the entire district.

https://vimeo.com/183390785

LEARN

Literacy education for all, results for the nation (LEARN)

New literacy program that specifically authorized school librarians to participate in required activities.

https://vimeo.com/183392270
Innovative Approaches to Literacy (IAL)

New authorization that specially authorizes funds to be used for developing and enhancing effective school library programs.

https://vimeo.com/183393334

Title II, Part B

Title II, Part B: Literacy education for all, results for the nation (LEARN)/ Innovative Approaches to Literacy (IAL)

https://vimeo.com/183393643

Message: School librarians are uniquely suited to lead the effort in applying for competitive grants because of their expertise and access to strong professional learning networks.

Title IV, Part A

Title IV, Part A: Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants (Block Grants)

Message: School librarians increase access to personalized, rigorous learning experiences supported by technology, allowing equitable resources for all students.

https://vimeo.com/183394913
Rhode Island ESSA Update

Rhode Island Department of Education ESSA webpage-

Questions, comments and concerns on ESSA-related topics can be sent to the Office of the Commissioner-
ESSA@ride.ri.gov

Rhode Island ESSA Updates

Included in handbook:
• “The Every Student Succeeds Act: A Catalyst for RI’s Education Strategic Plan”
• Decision Guide (10/24/16)
• “RIDE making progress toward development of ESSA transition plan” Commissioner Memo (11/18/16)
• Stakeholder Engagement Information
• ESSA Key Questions

Committee of Practitioners-
http://www.ride.ri.gov/InformationAccountability/EveryStudentSucceedsAct(ESSA).aspx#349943-members

All meetings will take place on Wednesdays, from 4:00pm-6:00pm, unless otherwise noted. All meetings are open to the public. All agendas posted below are PDFs unless otherwise noted.
http://www.ride.ri.gov/InformationAccountability/EveryStudentSucceedsAct(ESSA).aspx#349944-meetings
Identifying Stakeholders & Building Coalitions

Coalitions

• Critical to identify stakeholders
  • Including at the school, district (LEA) and state (SEA) levels
• Form coalitions
  • Bring together groups and organizations that support libraries
• Think outside the box
  • Utilize relationships and connections with education officials and
policymakers in support of the effort
• When anyone thinks of ESSA how do you get them to connect to school libraries
  • Be prepared to talk about positive impact of library programming in
  the community – How are you making a difference?

ESSA Stakeholder Engagement Required Participants

• Governor
• State legislature
• State boards of education
• Local educational agencies
• Representatives of Indian Tribes located in the state
• Teachers
• Principals & other school leaders
• Specialized instructional support personnel
• Paraprofessionals
• Administration & other staff
• Parents
State Support and Opportunities

- Must provide support to schools not meeting state-determined goals for student and school performance
- Must engage stakeholders and include them in the development of state plans to monitor student and school performance.
- School Librarians are among the list of stakeholders
- Be at the table!

Parents as Stakeholder Partners

- ESSA includes a provision for family engagement. Parents must be “meaningfully consulted” and involved in:
  - State and local Title I plans
  - Title II state and local applications
  - Title III state and local plans
  - Title IV-A local applications
  - Title IV-B state applications
  - State and local report cards
  - School improvement plans

Coalition Development Plan

- Name individual/organization/business
- What previous activities/news tie them to your efforts
- What stake do they have in school library funding
- What can they contribute to your plan
- What three things could you do today to strengthen a relationship with them
Connecting the dots

• Four ESSA areas (Title I, Title II- Part A, Title II- Part B, and Title IV, Part A)
• Review the key messages on your message card
• Connect the dots to your work

ESSA Key Messages

• School librarians and access to effective school library programs, impact student achievement, digital literacy skills, and school climate/culture.
• School librarians share their learning with other professionals when they attend conferences and workshops, applying the benefits of new techniques, strategies, and technologies to the entire district.
• School librarians are uniquely suited to lead the effort in applying for competitive grants because of their expertise and access to strong professional learning networks.
• School librarians increase access to personalized, rigorous learning experiences supported by technology, allowing equitable resources for all students.

Key Words/Phrases

• Specialized instructional support staff
• Digital literacy skills
• Academic achievement
• Personalized, rigorous learning experiences
• Adequate access to school libraries
• Use technology effectively
• Effective integration of technology
• Improve instruction and student achievement
ESSA Elevator Speech

https://vimeo.com/183395638

Meaningful Messaging

Elevator Speech - 4 pieces

1. The message
2. The Story & Key Data
3. The Ask
4. The Elevator Speech
Example

Title I: Improving basic programs operated by state and local educational agencies

Message: School librarians and access to effective school library programs, impact student achievement, digital literacy skills, and school climate/culture.

Story & Data: A middle school librarian links the reading incentive program to books read and increases in reading scores.

Ask: Include librarians on district-wide school improvement team.
(Audience: District Administrator)

The Elevator Speech:
For the past 3 years, as part of our school-wide reading focus, the library has hosted the Panthers Pounce reading challenge. Last year our students read nearly 11,000 books— that's about 27 books per student. Our reading scores have increased 6%-- 7% for English language learners!— and now students demand to come to the library on the first day of school! Librarians partner with colleagues throughout the building to improve student achievement. Will you include a librarian on the district's school improvement team?

ESSA Elevator Speech

Reminders:
- The intention is to educate not humiliate.
- What you do is important, so sound important.
- Practice
- You can start the conversation.
Elevator Speech Development

Step One: Make the connection from ESSA language to AASL's school library talking points to your school library program.

Step Two: Practice

Step Three: Fine Tuning

Step Four: Practice Again
Step One: Make the connection from ESSA language to AASL’s school library talking points to your school library program.

Step Two: Practice

Step Three: Fine Tuning

Step Four: Practice Again

Questions
## ESSA Federal Legislation Timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>ESEA was enacted by Congress and signed into law.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>Congress expanded ESEA to include new programs (and titles) that serve at-risk children (migrants and neglected children). The Bilingual Education Act was also passed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>The renewal of the ESEA called for states to develop standards and standards-aligned assessments for all students. States and districts were obligated to identify schools that were not making “adequate yearly progress” as detailed in the Improving America’s Schools Act (IASA).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>ESEA became NCLB (No Child Left Behind Act). NCLB shifted much of the decision-making and resource allocation away from states. NCLB also significantly expanded testing requirements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>In December 2015, bipartisan support for the ESSA was high and the overdue reauthorization was finally signed into law.</td>
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# ESSA State Timing, Rules and Implementation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>December 10, 2015</td>
<td>President Obama signs the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) into law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 22, 2015</td>
<td>U.S. Department of Education (ED) publishes request for information (RFI) re: regulations on Title I of ESSA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 21 – April 19, 2016</td>
<td>ED holds three sessions of negotiated rulemaking (neg-reg) on assessment and supplement, not supplant (SNS) issues</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 27, 2016</td>
<td>ED releases assessment regulations that were agreed to by the neg-reg committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 31, 2016</td>
<td>ED releases a notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM) on accountability and state plan issues under Title I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 1, 2016</td>
<td>(1) ESEA waivers are null and void, per the statute, and (2) comments are due on the NPRM re: accountability and state plan issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 1, 2016</td>
<td>Effective date for competitive programs under ESSA, unless otherwise provided for in the statute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October/November, 2016</td>
<td>Final regulations published by ED</td>
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<tr>
<td>February/April, 2017</td>
<td>States submit plans for School Year 2017-2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May/June, 2017</td>
<td>ED begins peer review and approves state plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 1, 2017</td>
<td>Effective date for formula grant programs under ESSA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August, 2017</td>
<td>New state plans take effect in schools at the start of the 2017-2018 school year</td>
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Conference Agreement to Reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act

OPPORTUNITIES FOR SCHOOL LIBRARIANS

This document highlights library-related provisions in P.L. 114-95, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and provides an overview of initial next steps to help maximize opportunities for effective school library programming under the new law.

TITLE I, PART A – IMPROVING BASIC PROGRAMS OPERATED BY STATE AND LOCAL EDUCATIONAL AGENCIES

Background

- Under Title I, Part A of ESSA, States (referred to as State Educational Agencies) and school districts (referred to as Local Educational Agencies) must develop plans to implement federally-funded education activities.

- States and school districts must develop their plans with “timely and meaningful consultation with” teachers, principals and other stakeholders, including “specialized instructional support personnel” which is defined under ESSA as specifically including school librarians.

Library Provisions

- ESSA includes new provisions that authorize – but do not require – school districts to include in their local plans how they will assist schools in developing effective school library programs to provide students an opportunity to develop digital literacy skills and improve academic achievement.

Next Steps

- Because the local application provision related to effective school library programming is allowable (not required from the federal level), it is critical that school district personnel be made aware of their ability to develop and implement effective school library programming.

- Contact and work with the superintendent’s office in developing the local plan under Title I, Part A to ensure that the school district takes into consideration:
  - The importance of developing and maintaining effective school library programs; and
  - How effective school library programs can help with the development of digital literacy skills and improve academic achievement.

- Contact and work with State and school district officials regarding the ability of school librarians to participate in both the State and school district planning and application process (as part of “specialized instructional support personnel”).
TITLE II, PART A – SUPPORTING EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTION

Background

- Title II, Part A of ESSA provides funds for States and school districts to increase academic achievement through professional development.

Library Provisions

- ESSA includes new provisions that authorize States, as well as school districts, to use grant and subgrant funds for “supporting the instructional services provided by effective school library programs.”

Next Steps

- Because States and school districts can now use their Title II, Part A funds specifically to support effective school library programming, it will be important to make sure that school district and school personnel that develop and implement professional development activities are aware of the new uses of funds related to libraries.

- Work with school district and school personnel to encourage the use of Title II, Part A funds specifically for effective school library programming, as well as part of other professional development efforts taking place with these funds.

  o Note that under the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), Title II, Part A funds were primarily used for professional development for “teachers” which made it difficult for other instructional support personnel to participate in activities. ESSA rectifies this by specifically authorizing funds to be used to support instructional services provided by effective school library programs.

TITLE II, PART B, SUBPART 2 – LITERACY EDUCATION FOR ALL, RESULTS FOR THE NATION (LEARN)

Background

- ESSA includes a new literacy program that provides federal support to States to develop, revise, or update comprehensive literacy instruction plans. States award competitive subgrants to school districts for activities that focus on children in kindergarten through grade 5 as well as children in grades 6 through 12.

Library Provisions

- ESSA specifically authorizes school librarians to participate in required grant activities that focus on children in kindergarten through grade 5 as well as activities that focus on children in grades 6 through 12.

- In addition, ESSA allows all local subgrants (that serve children in kindergarten through grade 5 and/or children in grades 6 through 12) to be used to provide time for teachers and school librarians to meet, plan and collaborate on comprehensive literacy instruction.
Next Steps

- Since this is a new competitive program under ESSA, it will be important to work with individuals responsible for literacy instruction and development at the State, school district, and school level.

- Encourage/assist appropriate State, school district, and/or school personnel in developing and applying for grants or subgrants.
  
  o Note that subgrants awarded for local uses of funds must include professional development for school personnel that specifically includes school librarians. Therefore, any grants awarded at the school district level under this program must provide professional development for school librarians.

TITLE II, PART B, SUBPART 2, SECTION 2226 – INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO LITERACY (IAL)

Background

- ESSA includes a new authorization of the Innovative Approaches to Literacy (IAL) program (previously funded through appropriations legislation) that provides dedicated funding to promote literacy programs in low income communities.
  
  o Note that while IAL activities have been funded over the past several years through appropriations bills, the “codification” (or explicit authorization) of this program in ESSA provides a specific “line item” to help better secure funding in future years.

Library Provisions

- ESSA specifically authorizes funds to be used for developing and enhancing effective school library programs, which includes providing professional development for school librarians, books, and up-to-date materials to high need schools.

Next Steps

- Since IAL is a competitive grant program that has been funded in the past (through appropriations), but is newly authorized under ESSA, it will be important to focus advocacy efforts at the federal level to ensure enough funds are appropriated to continue and possibly expand the IAL program.
  
  o Note that while efforts to fund IAL in the past have been successful, the lack of an explicit authorization for these activities has hindered advocacy efforts related to expanding the program. The specific authorization of IAL under ESSA will help with future funding as Congress has expressed its support for these activities under the most recent authorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.
TITLE IV, PART A – STUDENT SUPPORT AND ACADEMIC ENRICHMENT GRANTS
(BLOCK GRANT)

Background

- ESSA authorizes a new program to provide Student Support and Academic Enrichment activities (commonly referred to as the “Block Grant” under ESSA) to help States and school districts target federal resources on locally-designed priorities.
  - Funds are allocated to States and then school districts based on their share of Title I, Part A funding (formula grant allocated on the basis of poverty).

Library Provisions

- ESSA authorizes (but does not require) States to use funds to assist school districts in providing programs and activities that increase access to personalized, rigorous learning experiences supported by technology, including adequate “access to school libraries.”

- ESSA also authorizes (but does not require) States to use funds to assist school districts in providing school librarians and other school personnel with the knowledge and skills to use technology effectively, including effective integration of technology, to improve instruction and student achievement.

- In developing their local applications, school districts must consult with teachers, principals and other stakeholders, including “specialized instructional support personnel” which is defined under ESSA as specifically including school librarians.

- In addition, ESSA requires that school districts conduct a “needs assessment” prior to receiving funds from the State (that must be conducted every 3 years). The needs assessment must include access to personalized learning experiences (which may include access to school libraries).

Next Steps

- Because States are authorized (and not required) to support school districts by providing programs and activities that increase access to personalized learning experiences (which may include professional development for school librarians and better access to school libraries for students), it will be important to contact and work with State Educational Agency officials to make them aware of their ability to use funds in support of personalized learning experiences.

- Since school districts are required to consult with stakeholders that may include school librarians on the development and implementation of their local activities, it is critical to work with technology leaders at the school and school district levels to ensure that school librarians can adequately participate in the planning process.
Title IV, Part A of ESSA: Student Support and Academic Enrichments Grants

Description of 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. Title IV, Part A authorizes activities in three broad areas:

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

Distribution of 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 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 programs. The remaining 60% of the money can 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 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.

President’s FY17 Budget Request
The President’s FY 2017 budget proposal would provide $500 million for the Title IV flexible block grant, less than one-third of the authorized $1.65 billion level. The Administration also requested to include language in the appropriations bill that would allow states to distribute $50,000 per year to districts on a competitive basis and would allow states to limit their spending to just one of the three listed priorities, or specific activities within one of the priorities.

Since the Student Support and Academic Enrichments Grants program is the third largest authorized program in ESSA, failing to adequately fund it, as the President’s FY 2017 budget proposes to do, will undermine the bipartisan Congressional intent in passing this important law.

Program Funding Need
Strong evidence demonstrates the need for students to have access to health and safety programs, a diversity of academic programs, and modern 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 help students 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 students to succeed, they need access to a well-rounded 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 the opportunity and learning gaps and providing students with essential modern workforce skills.

Given the elimination under the Every Student Succeeds Act (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 absolutely essential through Title IV Part A. Without a significant investment in Title IV, Part A, districts will be forced into choosing which of the priorities to invest in—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 Sunil Mansukhani at The Raben Group, smansukhani@rabengroup.com or Jon Bernstein at Bernstein Strategy Group, jbernstein@jbernsteinstrategy.com.
Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) gives Rhode Islanders unprecedented flexibility.

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), signed into law December 10, 2015, revises the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 by giving states a more robust role in defining how education policy and resources shape the practices of schools and districts. The new law provides states with a great deal of flexibility in a number of key areas, including academic standards, accountability, support for school improvement, student and educator support, and use of federal education funds. The U.S. Department of Education has asked all states to submit a plan for transition to ESSA, and our goal at the R.I. Department of Education (RIDE) is to complete our plan and submit it by July 2017.

ESSA will be leveraged as a catalyst for the vision laid out in the strategic plan.

ESSA gives an opportunity for Rhode Island to further develop and resource Rhode Island's Strategic Plan for PK-12 Education, completed in 2015. As a part of our state plan, we will build upon the strategic plan to carefully consider our state’s long- and short-term goals, the metrics by which we will hold schools and districts accountable, and the means by which we will assess our progress toward these goals for all students and subgroups of students. We will also determine how we can best utilize federal funding to support students, educators and schools in reaching these goals. In the end, Rhode Island’s state plan for ESSA will outline critical steps to realizing the vision set forth in our state’s strategic plan and ensure that every Rhode Island graduate is prepared to take on life and career as a critical and creative thinker, collaborative and self-motivated learner, and culturally competent active citizen.

Rhode Islanders will work together to solidify our ESSA state plan.

Engagement and public input are critical elements of our state planning process. Over the course of the 2016-2017 school year, RIDE will be engaging with the greater education community with critical questions surrounding our state plan. Starting in July 2016, a group of 26 community members will gather monthly as a Committee of Practitioners to give the RIDE team input on high-level questions concerning ESSA, to serve as liaisons to the community at large regarding our planning process, and to weigh in on multiple drafts of the Rhode Island State ESSA Plan. To get widespread input and feedback, RIDE, with the Committee of Practitioners, will be hosting open community forums in Fall 2016, will launch a public survey in Winter 2017, and will hold a public comment period in Spring 2017. Additionally, RIDE will be meeting frequently with critical stakeholder groups on pertinent topics to gain understanding and advice on how the state plan can support current practice. RIDE’s internal ESSA Oversight Team will incorporate all of this feedback, input, and guidance into several drafts of an ESSA state plan and submit to the U.S. Department of Education for the July 5, 2017 deadline.

To stay up to date on the latest ESSA state planning news, please visit RIDE’s ESSA website at www.ride.ri.gov/ESSA.
# Rhode Island’s Every Student Succeeds Act State Plan: Decision Guide

As Rhode Island prepares to transition to the new federal education law – the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) – we have the opportunity to review and revise many current educational policies and practices in our state. The following represents a summary of the key issues we are considering during this transition. The list below outlines major decisions within ESSA, the federal requirements surrounding that decision, and the current practice in Rhode Island. There are also notes on the current status of the decision and discussion opportunities during which the question has been or will be considered by the public. No recommendations or decisions have been finalized at this date.

Decisions are presented in the categories of: Academic Standards; Assessments; Accountability; Report Cards; School Improvement; Educator Quality; Supports for Equitable Student Achievement

## Academic Standards

**RIDE Staff Contact:** Phyllis.Lynch@ride.ri.gov

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions Under Consideration</th>
<th>ESSA Requirements</th>
<th>Current Practice in Rhode Island</th>
<th>Decision Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Should Rhode Island continue to support the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) as statewide learning standards? | States must provide students with [challenging academic learning standards](#) in Math, English Language Arts, and Science. § 1111(b)(1)(A) | Rhode Island adopted the [CCSS](#) in July 2010 and [NGSS](#) May 2013. | Recommendation: Maintain alignment with CCSS and NGSS  
Discussion: Committee of Practitioners (8/24/16) |
| Should Rhode Island continue to use its existing proficiency standards for students qualifying as English Language Learners? | States must adopt [proficiency standards](#) to support English Language Learners (ELL) that are aligned with statewide academic learning standards § 1111(b)(1)(F)(i)-(iii) | The [World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA)](#) English Language Development (ELD) Standards were revised in 2012. Rhode Island has been using the standards since 2004. | Recommendation: Maintain alignment with WIDA ELD |
| Should Rhode Island continue to use its existing proficiency standards for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities? | States may adopt [alternate academic standards](#) for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities through a documented and validated standards-setting process. § 1111(b)(1)(E) | Rhode Island administers the [Multi-State Alternate Assessment](#) and approved alternate academic standards in 2015 in Mathematics and English Language Arts. | Recommendation: Maintain existing proficiency standards for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities |
## Assessments

**RIDE Staff Contact:** Phyllis.Lynch@ride.ri.gov

### Questions Under Consideration

<p>| Should Rhode Island continue to use the PARCC assessment in English Language Arts and Mathematics as its state standardized assessment tool for grades 3 through 8? | States are required to implement high quality standardized assessments in English Language Arts and Math every year for students in grades 3 through 8. § 1111(b)(2)(A)-(B) | Rhode Island began administering the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Career (PARCC) English Language Arts and Math Assessment in the 2015-2016 school year in grades 3 through 8. | Recommendation: Continue to administer PARCC Assessment in English Language Arts and Math for students in grades 3-8 | Discussion: Committee of Practitioners (8/24/16) |
| What assessment(s) should Rhode Island use to test Science proficiency? | States are required to implement a high quality standardized assessment in Science at least one time between grades 3-5, grades 6-9, and grades 10-12 § 1111(b)(2)(A)-(B). | Rhode Island currently administers the New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP) Science Assessment in grades 4, 8, and 11. | Recommendation: Continue collaboration with other states to develop a new science assessment that is aligned with the currently adopted science standards (NGSS) | Discussion: Committee of Practitioners (8/24/16) |
| What assessment(s) should Rhode Island use to test English Language Arts/Literacy and Mathematics proficiency in high school? | States are required to implement a high quality standardized assessment, consistent with relevant, nationally recognized professional and technical testing standards, in English Language Arts and Mathematics at least once in high school. § 1111(b)(2)(B) | Rhode Island began administering the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Career (PARCC) English Language Arts and Math Assessment in the 2015-2016 school year in grades 9 and 10 in English Language Arts/Literacy, and Algebra I and Geometry in Mathematics. Rhode Island also will begin paying for all students to take the SAT and PSAT once each in high school. | Currently Under Consideration: Options: (1) Administer PARCC assessments in English Language Arts 9, English Language Arts 10, Algebra I, and Geometry; or (2) Administer PARCC English Language Arts 9 and Algebra I, and SAT in 11th grade; or (3) Administer PSAT in 10th grade and SAT in 11th grade. | Discussion: Committee of Practitioners (8/24/16) |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>ESSA Requirements</th>
<th>Current Practice in Rhode Island</th>
<th>Decision Status</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Will Rhode Island offer academic assessments in languages other than English?</td>
<td>States must <strong>identify the languages other than English</strong> that are spoken by a significant portion of the student population of the State and must indicate which assessments will be offered in these languages. § 1111(b)(2)(F)(i)</td>
<td>Rhode Island currently offers the PARCC mathematics assessment in Spanish and English.</td>
<td><strong>Recommendation:</strong> Rhode Island will continue to offer PARCC assessments in Spanish.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How will Rhode Island ensure that all schools meet the required 95% participation rate for the state assessment program?</td>
<td>States must test all of their students, and if <strong>participation rates</strong> drop below 95 percent, the federal department of education may take enforcement action against the state. § 1111(c)(4)(E)</td>
<td>The Rhode Island Department of Education will put a notation on the school’s report card and school cannot attain “Commended” status if 95% of the student body does not participate in the assessment.</td>
<td><strong>Currently Under Consideration:</strong> Recommendation to be developed that increases consequences with multiple years of missing participation rates.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will Rhode Island exclude some English Learners from the state assessment requirements?</td>
<td>State may choose to <strong>exclude English Learners</strong> (ELs) who have been enrolled for less than 12 months from one administration of an English Language Arts assessment. § 1111(b)(3)</td>
<td>Currently, Rhode Island English Learners (ELs) who have been in the United States for less than 12 months are exempt from one administration of the English Language Arts /Literacy assessment.</td>
<td><strong>Recommendation:</strong> English Learners (ELs) who have been in the United States for less than 12 months will continue to be exempt from one administration of the English Language Arts/Literacy assessment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How will Rhode Island assess the English Proficiency of English Learners?</td>
<td>States must administer an annual <strong>assessment of English proficiency</strong> to all English Learners in all grades. § 1111(b)(2)(G)</td>
<td>Rhode Island currently administers the <strong>ACCESS</strong> for ELs in Kindergarten – grade 12.</td>
<td><strong>Recommendation:</strong> Rhode Island will continue to administer the ACCESS for ELs in Kindergarten – grade 12.</td>
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</table>

**Accountability**

*RIDE Staff Contact: Phyllis.Lynch@ride.ri.gov*

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions Under Consideration</th>
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<th>Current Practice in Rhode Island</th>
<th>Decision Status</th>
</tr>
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</table>
| What additional measures should Rhode Island include in the school accountability index, beyond those that are required? | The **state accountability index**, the composite measure used to classify schools, must include multiple measures for performance, including academic achievement on English Language Arts and math assessments, growth in academic achievement, high school graduation rates, English Language proficiency, and at least one | The following measures are currently included in a [Composite Index Score for accountability](https://example.com/):  
- Percent of students that meet or exceed expectation on state assessments  
- Performance gaps between subgroups of students on the state assessment | **Currently Under Consideration:** Recommendation to be developed that provides a broader picture of student achievement, which may include measures of college and career readiness, student cohort preparedness for transitions, and student chronic absenteeism. |
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<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Discussion:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Will Rhode Island include multiple measures of high school graduation in</td>
<td>States must include a measure of how many students graduate in four years in their high school accountability and may include adjusted cohort graduation rates to include students who take five, six or more years to graduation high school. § 1111(c)(4)(B)</td>
<td>Recommendation: Continue to use a composite graduation rate measure that includes the four-, five- and six-year graduation rates.</td>
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<td>the school accountability index?</td>
<td>Rhode Island currently uses a Composite Graduation Rate measure that is a weighted average of four-, five- and six-year graduation rates. § 1111(c)(4)(B)</td>
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<tr>
<td>How will Rhode Island include a measure of English Proficiency in its</td>
<td>States must set an expected level of growth in English Proficiency for English Learners and include student results on the English Proficiency assessment within its accountability index. § 1111(c)(4)(A)-(B)</td>
<td>Currently Under Consideration: Recommendation to be developed for accountability that includes student performance on the English Language Proficiency assessment (likely, ACCESS).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>accountability index?</td>
<td>Rhode Island does not currently include English Proficiency in its accountability index.</td>
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<tr>
<td>What should the minimum number of students be in a federal accountability</td>
<td>States must collect data on federally-identified student subgroups, under ESSA, including the “new” subgroups of homeless, foster, and military-affiliated youth. All metrics within the accountability index must be disaggregated based on these subgroups and each state must identify the minimum number of students for subgroups to be included in accountability and reporting. § 1111(b)(2)(B)(xi) § 1111(h)(1)(C)</td>
<td>Recommendation: Continue to require a minimum of 20 students for a subgroup to be included within the accountability index.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>subgroup?</td>
<td>Rhode Island currently requires a minimum of 20 students within any one student group to include that student group within the accountability index for the school.</td>
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<tr>
<td>How will accountability data be used to sort and categorize public</td>
<td>Based on the performances of schools on the state accountability index, states are required to “meaningfully differentiate” public schools,</td>
<td>Currently Under Consideration: Recommendation to be developed to identify only the lowest-performing schools.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>schools? How will the index be used to identify schools in need of</td>
<td>Rhode Island currently calculates a Composite Index Score using the accountability metrics and ranks scores to categorize schools.</td>
<td></td>
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<td>support and</td>
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</table>
### Improvement?

States must specifically identify the lowest-performing 5% of schools for comprehensive support and improvement and, for those with consistently underperforming subgroups, targeted support and improvement.

§ 1111(h)(1)(C)-(D)

### Classification

Labels for the 2015-16 school year will include Priority, Focus, and Commended.

Discussion:
Committee of Practitioners (9/21/16)

### What academic and graduation rate goals and benchmarks should the state establish for all Rhode Island students and schools?

States must establish "ambitious State-designed long term goals" with measurements of interim progress for all students and federally-identified student subgroups. The goals must be tied to academic achievement, graduation rates, and English language proficiency, and may include other measures.

§ 1111(c)(4)(A)

During the transition to ESSA, states are not required to have annual targets or long term targets.

Currently Under Consideration:
Recommendation to be developed that includes long term goals and interim measures of progress that are both ambitious and attainable, such as postsecondary success measures and percent of students earning diploma recognitions.

Discussion:
Committee of Practitioners (1/25/17)

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### Report Cards

**RIDE Staff Contact:** Michael.Ferry@ride.ri.gov

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<th>Current Practice in Rhode Island</th>
<th>Decision Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What should be included in school-level report cards?</td>
<td>States must design and produce annually a report of each school’s performance, including, but not limited to, metrics within the state-defined accountability index and any classification that it receives. States must make this information accessible to parents and community members and it should be easily understood by the general population. § 1111(h)(2)(A)-(C)</td>
<td>Rhode Island currently produces report cards for each school that includes all the data included in the Composite Index Score for accountability, assessment participation rates, and the school’s current classification.</td>
<td>Currently Under Consideration: Recommendation to be developed that includes performance on the school accountability metrics and classification as well as broader measures of school performance. Discussion: Committee of Practitioners (9/21/16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>What should be included in LEA (district)-level report cards?</strong></td>
<td>States are required to design and publish an annual report card on districts' performance and it must include a variety of components, including, but not limited to, an aggregate of all LEA’s schools' performance. § 1111(h)(2)(A)-(C)</td>
<td>Rhode Island currently produces report cards for each LEA (district) that includes all the data included in the Composite Index Score aggregated by school level (elementary, middle, high) and the current classification for each school in the district.</td>
<td><strong>Currently Under Consideration:</strong> Recommendation to be developed that includes aggregate performance on the LEA schools as well as broader measures of LEA performance. <strong>Discussion:</strong> Committee of Practitioners (9/21/16)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>What should be included in the state-level report cards?</strong></td>
<td>States are must design a state-level report card, to be published annually that monitors progress against the state goals and interim benchmarks, and can include other measures of the state’s choice. § 1111(h)(1)(A)-(C)</td>
<td>Rhode Island currently produces report cards for entire state that includes all the data included in the Composite Index Score aggregated by school level (elementary, middle, high) for all students in the state.</td>
<td><strong>Currently Under Consideration:</strong> Recommendation to be developed that includes aggregate performance of all students, progress against interim goals, and broader measures of state-level performance. <strong>Discussion:</strong> Committee of Practitioners (9/21/16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>How and in what format should report cards be published?</strong></td>
<td>States are required to report in a manner and format that is accessible to parents and community members. § 1111(h)(1)(B) § 1111(h)(2)(B)</td>
<td>School, LEA, and state-level report cards are currently posted on the RIDE website annually.</td>
<td><strong>Recommendation:</strong> Continue to post static school, LEA, and state-level report cards on the RIDE website annually in both English and Spanish with a plan to transition to dynamic (interactive) report cards as soon as possible. Report card should be dynamic to include multiple layers of data. RIDE will ensure LEAs have the means to disseminate the information widely to parents and community members. <strong>Discussion:</strong> Committee of Practitioners (9/21/16)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## School Improvement

**RIDE Staff Contact:** Brian.Darrow@ride.ri.gov

### Questions Under Consideration

| How should RIDE support LEAs with schools identified for improvement? | The state must **provide technical assistance** to each LEA serving a significant number of schools identified for either comprehensive or targeted support. § 1111(d)(3)(A) | Currently, RIDE provides technical assistance and facilitates meetings with LEAs and schools to review school improvement plans. | **Currently Taking Input**

**Discussion:** Committee of Practitioners (10/19/16)

| What should be required of LEAs within their improvement plans for schools identified in need of comprehensive or targeted support? | LEAs must develop **evidence-based improvement plans** for all schools identified in need of comprehensive or targeted support. All plans must be developed in **partnership with stakeholders** (ex: principles, teachers, parents) and must address deficiencies in student performance and other metrics within the accountability index. Schools identified for comprehensive support must also include a needs assessment, identify resource inequities, and have their improvement plan approved by the school, LEA, and state. § 1111(d)(2)(B) | Currently, identified schools in Rhode Island are required to develop an annual plan informed by multi-year intervention strategies, chosen from a list provided by the state, and annual targets set by the LEAs. | **Currently Taking Input**

| How will RI allocate available federal funds to support LEAs with schools in need of targeted or comprehensive support? Will grants be competitive or formula? | **States may set aside federal funds (up to 7% of Title I) to allocate to LEAs to support schools implementing targeted or comprehensive support initiatives. States may allocate these funds on a formula or competitive basis and may define funding criteria. States and LEAs have flexibility on how these funds may be used, rather than on pre-determined federal school improvement models.** § 1003(a)-(b) | Rhode Island annually sets aside up to 4% of Title I and allocates these funds (1003a) on a formula basis to support school improvement at low-performing schools. Historically, Rhode Island has also allocated school improvement grants (1003g – which are no longer available in ESSA), as available, on a competitive basis for schools to implement pre-defined school improvement models. | **Currently Taking Input** |
How can schools exit identification as needing improvement, and what are the consequences for schools that don’t?

States must **create exit criteria** for schools identified as needing either targeted or comprehensive support and improvement. States must also take rigorous action if a school identified for comprehensive support has not met state-established exit criteria within a state-identified period of time (not to exceed four years). States may also initiate additional improvement strategies in any LEA with a significant number of schools identified for comprehensive support that do not meet the exit criteria.  

§ 1111(d)(3)(A)(i)

Rhode Island’s current exit criteria for “Focus” or “Priority” schools are, respectively, two or three consecutive years of receiving an index score greater than or equal to 50. Rhode Island has continued to support schools with their transformation efforts if they have not yet met the exit criteria.

Currently Taking Input

Discussion: Committee of Practitioners (10/19/16)

## Educator Quality

**RIDE Staff Contact:** Lisa.Foehr@ride.ri.gov

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</table>
| How will Rhode Island ensure and measure that low-income and minority children are not served by ineffective, out-of-field, and/or inexperienced teachers? | States are required to **identify the measures they will use** to determine the proportion of low-income and minority students being served by inexperienced teachers. § 1111(g)(1)(B) | RIDE's plan for ensuring Equitable Access to Excellent Educators was approved by USDoE. Many task level strategies were implemented this year by the Educator Excellence team | Currently Taking Input  
**Discussion:** Committee of Practitioners (11/30/16) |
| What can Rhode Island do to support a robust human capital strategy, including preparation, recruitment, evaluation, support, professional growth, and advancement to ensure high quality teachers are available for all students? | Resources will be provided to states and school districts to implement activities to **support teachers, paraprofessionals, and other educators**. School leaders will have the **authority to make staffing decisions** that meet the needs of the school. § 2103(b)(3) § 2212(e)(2)(C) | RIDE has revised its standards for preparation programs and is implementing a revised approval process to ensure quality and provide feedback for improvement. | Currently Under Consideration: Recommendation to be developed for an outline of steps to achieve a state-wide vision of high performing systems of preparation, recruitment, support, evaluation and advancement. Educator evaluation work with the field will also receive additional attention.  
**Discussion:** |
What can Rhode Island do to support a robust human capital strategy, including preparation, recruitment, evaluation, support, professional growth, and advancement to ensure high quality leaders are placed in every school?

Resources will be provided to states and school districts to implement activities to support leaders. School leaders will have the authority to make staffing decisions that meet the needs of the school. § 2103(b)(3) §2212(e)(2)(C)

RIDE does not currently have a state-wide strategy in this area.

Committee of Practitioners (11/30/16)

Currently Under Consideration: Recommendation to be developed for an outline of steps to achieve a state-wide vision of high performing systems of preparation, recruitment, support, evaluation and advancement.

Should Rhode Island utilize a small portion of LEA funds to support state-wide effort to prepare and develop effective school leaders?

Three percent of Title II funding may be designated by states for specific state-level strategies related to the training and development of school leaders. § 2101(c)(4)(B)

RIDE does not currently have a state-wide strategy in this area.

Currently Taking Input

Should RIDE allow LEAs to utilize their educator quality funding (Title II) to run “academies” to train teachers and leaders within the LEA?

A small portion of Title II funding may be used to establish or expand teacher, principal or other school leader preparation academies run by the LEA. § 2101(c)(4)(B)(xii)

No such academies exist in Rhode Island at this time.

Currently Taking Input

Supports for Equitable Student Achievement

RIDE Staff Contact: David.Sienko@ride.ri.gov

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<th>Current Practice in Rhode Island</th>
<th>Decision Status / How to Get Involved</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How will Rhode Island support students in typically transient subgroups?</td>
<td>States must collect data on federally identified student subgroups, under ESSA, including the subgroups of homeless, foster, migratory, and military-affiliated youth. State agencies and schools must collaborate to ensure educational continuity for foster youth and students experiencing homelessness and ensure equitable access to</td>
<td>Approximately 5 districts in Rhode Island are granted funds under the McKinney-Vento act to support students experiencing homelessness. Rhode Island does not currently accept federal funding to support migrant students, and therefore does not track these students separately. Identifying and supporting students in foster care and military-affiliated</td>
<td>Currently Under Consideration: Schools and RIDE will need to work together to update enrollment census data to include all applicable subgroups. A recommendation will be developed to expand and adapt the current support for students experiencing homelessness to include those who are likely to be more transient for other reasons.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Statement</td>
<td>Consideration</td>
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<tr>
<td>How will Rhode Island support students affiliated with the juvenile</td>
<td>States must ensure the timely re-enrollment of each student who has been placed in the juvenile justice system in secondary school or in a re-entry program. States must provide opportunities for such students to participate in credit-bearing coursework.</td>
<td>Currently Under Consideration: A recommendation will be developed that ensures collaborative efforts on the part of the juvenile justice system and the school or school district to facilitate timely enrollment, participation in credit-bearing coursework, and graduation.</td>
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<td>justice system?</td>
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<td>What will Rhode Island’s criteria be for community-based programs</td>
<td>The state will award 21st Century Community Learning Center grants on a competitive basis to support high-quality, effective programs, criteria for which shall take into consideration the likelihood that a proposed community learning center will help participating students meet the State’s challenging academic standards and any local academic standards. The state must give priority to schools identified for targeted or comprehensive support and intervention.</td>
<td>Currently Under Consideration: The grants may be open to programs serving students from any school, with priority to schools with high percentages of students from low-income families or schools identified as in need of support and improvement. Grant criteria may expand to include alignment with school improvement strategies and state performance metrics. Discussion: Committee of Practitioners (12/14/16)</td>
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<td>receiving funding under the Title IV Part B 21st Century Community</td>
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<td>Learning Center grants?</td>
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<td>How can per-pupil expenditure data be used to ensure equitable access</td>
<td>States must identify per-pupil expenditures of federal, state, and local funding, disaggregated by funding source.</td>
<td>Currently Under Consideration: Conduct an analysis of per-pupil expenditure data to assess equitable distribution of resources within and across LEAs.</td>
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<td>to educational opportunity?</td>
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<td>Should Rhode Island reserve the optional 3% of the State’s Title I</td>
<td>Each State educational agency may reserve not more than 3 percent of its educational services.</td>
<td>Recommendation: Because of significant administrative</td>
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### Allocation for “Direct Student Services”?

| Title I allocation for each fiscal year to carry out direct student services. § 1003A(a)(1)(A) | Supplemental Educational Services (SES) funding opportunity under No Child Left Behind. Rhode Island no longer offers SES under the ESEA Flexibility Waiver. | Requirements and the limited number of students that would be eligible for the funds, RIDE will allow schools and LEAs more authority to choose how to use the funding for their students by including the 3% in regular Title I allocations. |

### How will the state use the Title IV Part A Student Support and Academic Enrichment grants to support equitable student achievement?

| Each state must develop a plan for the use of these funds to improve students’ academic achievement by increasing the capacity of states, LEAs, schools, and local communities to: (1) provide all students with access to a well-rounded education; (2) improve school conditions for student learning; and (3) improve the use of technology in order to improve the academic achievement and digital literacy of all students. § 4107(a) § 4108 § 4109(a) | This funding is a new offering within ESSA. | Currently Under Consideration: A recommendation will be developed that maximizes the opportunity for flexibility and innovation in this part of ESSA to support strategic and innovative initiatives. Discussion: Committee of Practitioners (12/14/16) |

### Closing Note:

Engagement and public input are critical elements of our state planning process. Over the course of the 2016-2017 school year, RIDE will be engaging with the greater education community with critical questions surrounding our state plan, as outlined above. Starting in July 2016, a group of 30 community members will gather monthly as a Committee of Practitioners to give the RIDE team input on high-level questions concerning ESSA, to serve as liaisons to the community at large regarding our planning process, and to weigh in on multiple drafts of the Rhode Island State ESSA Plan.

To cultivate widespread input and feedback, RIDE, with the Committee of Practitioners, will be hosting open community forums in November 2016, will launch a public survey in Winter 2017, and will hold a second round of community meetings in Spring 2017. Additionally, RIDE will be meeting frequently with critical stakeholder groups on pertinent topics to gain understanding and advice on how the state plan can support current practice. RIDE’s internal ESSA Oversight Team will incorporate all of this feedback, input, and guidance into several drafts of an ESSA state plan and submit to the U.S. Department of Education for the July 3, 2017 deadline.

To stay up to date on the latest ESSA state planning news, please visit RIDE’s ESSA website at www.ride.ri.gov/ESSA. For questions or comments, please email Felicia Brown at Felicia.Brown@ride.ri.gov.
RIDE making progress toward development of ESSA transition plan

We are proceeding with our work to develop a comprehensive plan to align our education system with the requirements of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). We anticipate submitting our plan to the U.S. Department of Education on or by July 1.

To help us formulate the Rhode Island plan for transition to ESSA, we are holding monthly meetings with our Committee of Practitioners and we are holding Community Forums. We have held four Community Forums to date (in Providence, Lincoln, Coventry, and, Thursday night, in Portsmouth), where attendance has ranged from 40 to upwards of 70 participants. We have one more scheduled forum, to take place on Monday, in South Kingstown. RIDE staff members, members of the Committee of Practitioners, and some representatives from the team who led the development of our 2015-2020 Strategic Plan are leading the conversations at these community forums.

Thanks to this process, we are gathering insightful input that is guiding us as we design the Rhode Island plan. As we move forward, we are working to ensure that we build formal connections between our Strategic Plan and the ESSA transition plan.

Early conversations about our transition to ESSA confirm that we must build upon our implementation of academic standards: the Common Core State Standards (in literacy and mathematics) and the Next Generation Science Standards.

Regarding high-school assessments, our preliminary recommendation is that we employ a hybrid approach, using the SAT college-readiness test in grade 11 and the PARCC course-based tests in grade-9 (Algebra I and English 9). The use of college-readiness assessments such as the PSAT and SAT, available to students at no cost and during the school day, is an equity strategy that helps all students see college as an option and apply for college admission.

We are also developing a series of indicators that will be part of our accountability index and of the school, district, and state report cards, which could include reduced chronic absenteeism as a measure of student engagement, completion of challenging coursework, and other measures of school climate.

One point of agreement is that we need to include more than just test scores as we support continuous improvement of teaching and learning in our schools. We are eager to design and develop report cards that include a comprehensive set of information for educators, families, students, and the community.

###
Implementing the Every Student Succeeds Act in Rhode Island: Leveraging Every Voice through Stakeholder Engagement

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) gives us an opportunity to further develop and resource Rhode Island's Strategic Plan for PK-12 Education. Public engagement will be used as a foundation for Rhode Island's state planning process. Over the course of the 2016-2017 school year, RIDE will be engaging with the greater education community with critical questions surrounding our state plan through multiple channels, including:

- **Committee of Practitioners**: A consistent group of diverse community members gathers monthly to give input on high-level questions concerning ESSA, to serve as liaisons to the community at large regarding our planning process, and to weigh in on multiple drafts of the ESSA Plan.

- **General Public**: The general public will be given multiple opportunities to weigh in on the ESSA state plan, including input forums, surveys, forums to give suggestions, and a public comment period.

- **Critical Stakeholder Groups**: Affinity groups across the state will be consulted at various points throughout the ESSA state planning process on specific topics that pertain to them through individual and joint meetings, and web-based communication.

- **Policy Makers**: Elected and appointed officials at the state level will be informed of the input from constituents across the state and will be asked to weigh in on a variety of topics throughout the planning process.

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**Phase 1: Seeking Input (Aug. - Dec.)**
- Committee of Practitioners discusses major themes
- Public input forums
- Critical stakeholder group meetings to collect input
- Policy Makers kept up to date and give input

Based on the above, RIDE establishes recommendations.

**Phase 2: Collecting Feedback (Jan.-Feb.)**
- Committee of Practitioners discusses goals / funding
- Public survey
- Critical stakeholder group feedback sessions
- Policy makers give feedback

Based on the above, RIDE drafts sections of initial plan.

**Phase 3: Taking Suggestions (Mar. - Apr.)**
- Committee of Practitioners reviews complete plan
- Public forums explaining plan
- Critical stakeholder groups consulted on plan
- Presentation to General Assembly and Council

Based on the above, RIDE drafts complete plan.

**Phase 4: Attaining Approval (May - Jun.)**
- Committee of Practitioners plans for implementation
- Public comment period
- Critical stakeholder groups give comment
- Governors Approval

Based on the above, RIDE finalizes and submits plan.

**Phase 5: Communicating Plan (Jul. - Sep.)**
- Committee of Practitioners helps communicate plan
- Guidance plans available to the public
- Critical stakeholder groups discuss actions needed
- Plan distributed to policy makers

Based on the above, RIDE publishes guidance on plan.

To stay up to date on the latest ESSA state planning news, please visit RIDE’s ESSA website at [www.ride.ri.gov/ESSA](http://www.ride.ri.gov/ESSA)
The Every Student Succeeds Act: Rhode Island’s Approach to a Cohesive State Plan

ESSA will be leveraged as a catalyst for the vision laid out in the strategic plan.

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) gives an opportunity for Rhode Island to further develop and resource Rhode Island’s Strategic Plan for PK-12 Education, completed in 2015. As a part of our state plan, we will build upon the strategic plan to carefully consider our state’s long- and short-term goals, the metrics by which we will hold schools and districts accountable, and the means by which we will assess our progress toward these goals for all students and subgroups of students. We will also determine how we can best utilize federal funding to support students, educators and schools in reaching these goals. In the end, Rhode Island’s state plan for ESSA will outline critical steps to realizing the vision set forth in our state’s strategic plan and ensure that every Rhode Island graduate is prepared to take on life and career as a critical and creative thinker, collaborative and self-motivated learner, and culturally competent active citizen.

Key Considerations within Rhode Island's ESSA State Plan

Academic Assessments
- Should Rhode Island continue to use the PARCC assessment in English Language Arts and Mathematics as its state standardized assessment tool for grades 3 through 8?
- What assessment(s) should Rhode Island use to test Science proficiency?
- What assessment(s) should Rhode Island use to test English Language Arts/Literacy and Mathematics proficiency in high school?
- Will Rhode Island offer academic assessments in languages other than English?
- How will Rhode Island ensure that all schools meet the required 95% participation rate for the state assessment program?
- Will Rhode Island exclude some English Learners from the state assessment requirements?
- How will Rhode Island assess the English Proficiency of English Learners?

Academic Standards
- Should Rhode Island continue to support the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) as statewide learning standards?
- Should Rhode Island continue to use its existing proficiency standards for students qualifying as English Language Learners?
- Should Rhode Island continue to use its existing proficiency standards for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities?

Educator Quality
- How will Rhode Island ensure and measure that low-income and minority children are not served by ineffective, out-of-field, and/or inexperienced teachers?

To stay up to date on the latest ESSA state planning news, please visit RIDE’s ESSA website at www.ride.ri.gov/ESSA
What can Rhode Island do to support a robust educator talent management system, including preparation, recruitment, evaluation, support, professional growth, and advancement to ensure high quality teachers are available for all students?

What can Rhode Island do to support a robust human capital strategy, including preparation, recruitment, evaluation, support, professional growth, and advancement to ensure high quality leaders are placed in every school?

Should Rhode Island utilize a small portion of LEA funds to support state-wide effort to prepare and develop effective school leaders?

Should RIDE allow LEAs to utilize their educator quality funding (Title II) to run “academies” to train teachers and leaders within the LEA?

School and District Accountability

What additional measures should Rhode Island include in the school accountability index, beyond those that are required?

Will Rhode Island include multiple measures of high school graduation in the school accountability index?

How will Rhode Island include a measure of English Proficiency in its accountability index?

What should our minimum number of students be in a federal accountability subgroup?

How will accountability data be used to sort and categorize public schools? How will the index be used to identify schools in need of support and improvement?

What academic and graduation rate goals and benchmarks should the state establish for all Rhode Island students and schools?

School Improvement Strategies

How should RIDE support LEAs with schools identified for improvement?

What should be required of LEAs within their improvement plans for schools identified in need of comprehensive or targeted support?

How will RI allocate available federal funds to support LEAs with schools in need of targeted or comprehensive support? Will grants be competitive or formula?

How can schools exit identification as needing improvement, and what are the consequences for schools that don’t?

School Report Cards

What should be included in school-level report cards?

What should be included in LEA (district)-level report cards?

What should be included in the state-level report cards?

How and in what format should report cards be published?

Student Support Strategies

How will Rhode Island support students in typically transient sub-groups?

How will Rhode Island support students affiliated with the juvenile justice system?

What will Rhode Island’s criteria be for community-based programs receiving funding under the Title IV Part B 21st Century Community Learning Center grants?

How can per-pupil expenditure data be used to ensure equitable access to educational opportunity?

Should Rhode Island reserve the optional 3% of the State’s Title I allocation for “direct student services”?

How will the state use the Title IV Part A Student Support and Academic Enrichment grants to support equitable student achievement?

To stay up to date on the latest ESSA state planning news, please visit RIDE’s ESSA website at www.ride.ri.gov/ESSA
Coalition Development Plan

Of course there are some “assumed” coalition groups—teachers, parents and administrators. But this is an opportunity to think outside the box and garner support from the community at large. Who in your community would have a stake in local school district plans to ensure that school library programs provide students an opportunity to develop digital literacy skills and improve academic achievement? Who needs to have college and career ready individuals graduating today?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Individual/Organization/Business Name</th>
<th>What previous activities, news or accomplishments tie them to your efforts?</th>
<th>What stake do they have in school library funding?</th>
<th>What can they contribute to your plan?</th>
<th>What three things could you do today to strengthen a relationship with them?</th>
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ESSA Key Messages

“Ask Me How School Librarians Ensure Student Success”

**Title I**

*Improving basic programs operated by state and local educational agencies*

**Message**

School librarians and access to effective school library programs, impact student achievement, digital literacy skills, and school climate/culture.

**Title II**

*Supporting effective instruction*

**Message**

School librarians share their learning with other professionals when they attend conferences and workshops, applying the benefits of new techniques, strategies, and technologies to the entire district.

**Title II, Part B**

*Literacy education for all, results for the nation (LEARN)/ Innovative Approaches to Literacy (IAL)*

**Message**

School librarians are uniquely suited to lead the effort in applying for competitive grants because of their expertise and access to strong professional learning networks.

**Title IV, Part A**

*Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants (Block Grants)*

**Message**

School librarians increase access to personalized, rigorous learning experiences supported by technology, allowing equitable resources for all students.
Elevator Speech Development

You’ve found yourself faced with the questions, “Are there really any libraries left?” and “What with e-books and Internet are they necessary?” You’ve been asked these questions in a situation in which you know a true conversation is not possible, so how do you make the most impact in the least amount of time? Develop your messages now, and practice!

**Step One:** Make the connection from ESSA language to AASL’s school library talking points to your school library program.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ESSA KEY MESSAGES</th>
<th>STORY AND KEY DATA</th>
<th>THE ASK (What’s the need? Who are you talking to?)</th>
<th>PULLING IT ALL TOGETHER</th>
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</thead>
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<td>INSERT STORY</td>
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CRAFTING YOUR ESSA ELEVATOR SPEECH

The MESSAGE:
What do you need your audience to know?

Example
School librarians and access to effective school library programs positively impact student achievement and school climate/culture.

The STORY & KEY DATA:
Connect the message specifically to your work, with a quick fact/data and story.

Example
A middle school librarian links the reading incentive program to books read and increases in reading scores.

The ASK:
Consider who you are talking to, what they care about, and what it is within their power to impact. Make a specific request.

Example
Include librarians on district-wide school improvement team. (Audience: District Administrator)

For the past 3 years, as part of our school-wide reading focus, the library has hosted the Panthers Pounce reading challenge. Last year our students read nearly 11,000 books—that’s about 27 books per student. Our reading scores have increased 6%--7% for English language learners!—and now students demand to come to the library on the first day of school! Librarians partner with colleagues throughout the building to improve student achievement. Will you include a librarian on the district’s school improvement team?

The ELEVATOR SPEECH
Packages the above in a way that is short, personal and memorable.
## Elevator Speech Examples

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ESSA KEY Messages</th>
<th>Story and Fact/Data</th>
<th>The Ask</th>
<th>Pulling It All Together</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[Title I] School librarians and access to effective school library programs impact student achievement, digital literacy skills, and school climate/culture.</td>
<td>Nearly 60 percent of first year college students require some remediation.(^1) The critical thinking and research skills developed in an effective school library program are essential components of college readiness.</td>
<td>Ensure that students have access to school library programs throughout k-12 schooling.</td>
<td>We are seeing a disparity in preparedness among our incoming students. We count on students having digital literacy and information literacy skills that will allow them to do college level work and, all too often, those skills must be remediated. That deficit negatively impacts student engagement, retention, and academic performance. Please use Title I funds to help close that gap and ensure that all students in [state] have access to effective K-12 school library programs. (Speaker: College Administrator. Audience: State Legislator or Board of Ed Official.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>[Title II, Part A] School librarians are teacher leaders, providing professional development, building capacities around technology integration, and collaborating with colleagues for instruction and assessment.</td>
<td>Librarians lead professional development and committees. In this district, librarians trained teachers so that students can maintain digital portfolios across content areas.</td>
<td>Include school librarians in Title II funding plans for the state.</td>
<td>My librarians are integral to staff development and, in addition to leading committees throughout our district, they deliver quarterly professional development workshops for our teachers. Because of the librarians, our middle school students now have cross content digital portfolios. I urge you to specifically identify school librarians in state plans for use of Title II funds. (Speaker: District Administrator. Audience: State Board Official.)</td>
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</table>

\(^1\) National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, “Beyond the Rhetoric: Improving College Readiness Through Coherent State Policy,”
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Title II, Part B, Subpart 1</th>
<th>I have written more than $25,000 in grants, and my literacy action research project provided the data and supporting documentation for our district’s successful IAL grant last year.</th>
<th>Appoint a librarian to the district’s Title II grant team.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School librarians are uniquely suited to lead the effort in applying for competitive grants because of their expertise and access to strong professional learning.</td>
<td>Through successful grant writing, I have secured more than $25,000 in library resources that are shared by teachers and students throughout the school. In addition, my literacy action research was incorporated into the district’s IAL grant. Please appoint me to the district’s Title II grant team. (Speaker: Librarian. Audience: District Administrator.)</td>
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<tr>
<th>Title IV, Part A</th>
<th>I work with the 5th grade science teacher to provide supplementary materials to the textbook for struggling and advanced readers. This allows all students to understand the core principals of topics such as electricity, and to scaffold to texts of higher reading levels.</th>
<th>Allocate block grant funds for library resources.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School librarians increase access to personalized, rigorous learning experiences supported by technology, allowing equitable resources for all students.</td>
<td>Our school library offers digital and print materials that are accessible to every student in the building and this is critically important to our diverse population. When our 5th graders do their science unit on electricity, the library is able to supplement the text with materials from our shared databases, which even include audio support for struggling readers and English language learners. We also offer supplemental reading materials for kids performing above grade level. It is critical to have these resources in a place where all students and teachers can access them; please ensure that [state’s] implementation plan includes school libraries in its programs eligible for Title IV funds.</td>
<td>[Speaker: Librarian. Audience: State Board Official.]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The following are definitions that appear in either AASL board approved position statement or as defined under the US Department of Education.

**Appropriate Staffing** (for school libraries):

1. The library program is serviced by one or more certified school librarians working full-time in the school library.

2. The specific number of additional school librarians is determined by the school’s instructional programs, services, facilities, size, and number of students and teachers.

3. In addition to library-degreed professionals, highly trained technical and clerical support staff are necessary for all library programs at every grade level. Each school should employ at least one full-time technical assistant or clerk for each school librarian. Some programs, facilities, and levels of service will require more than one support staff member for each professional.

4. The school district is served by a district library supervisor who provides leadership and support for the building-level school library programs by providing resources, professional development, and leadership in developing and implementing the district’s school library program. The district library supervisor is a member of the administrative team and helps determine the criteria and policies for the district’s curriculum and instructional programs. The district library supervisor communicates the mission, strategic plan, goals, and needs of the school and district library programs to the superintendent, board of education, other district-level personnel, and the community.

**Collaboration:**

Working with a member of the teaching team to plan, implement, and evaluate a specialized instructional plan.

**Community Readiness:**

The ability to be a productive, active, engaged member of a democratic society.

**Digital Learning:**

Learning materials and resources displayed on a digital device and shared electronically with other users. Digital learning content can be both open and/or commercial content (U.S. Dept. of Education 2016).
Digital Literacy:

The ability to use information and communication technologies to find, evaluate, create, and communicate information, requiring both cognitive and technical skills (ALA 2013).

Effective School Library Program:

1. is adequately staffed, including a state-certified school librarian who
   • is an instructional leader and teacher,
   • supports the development of digital learning, participatory learning, inquiry learning, technology literacies, and information literacy, and
   • supports, supplements, and elevates the literacy experience through guidance and motivational reading initiatives;

2. has up-to-date digital and print materials and technology, including curation of openly licensed educational resources; and

3. provides regular professional development and collaboration between classroom teachers and school librarians.

Information Literacy:

A set of abilities requiring individuals to recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information (ACRL 2000).

Information Technologies:

Modern information, computer, and communication technology products, services, or tools, including the Internet, computer devices, and other hardware, software applications, data systems, and other electronic content (including multimedia content) and data storage.

Learning Community:

A group of people (can include students) who share common academic goals and attitudes who meet regularly to share expertise and work collaboratively to improve instruction and the academic performance of students.

Local Education Agencies (LEA):

A public board of education or other public authority legally constituted within a State for either administrative control or direction of, or to perform a service function for, public elementary schools or secondary schools in a city, county, township, school district, or other political subdivision of a State, or for a combination of school districts or counties that is recognized in a State as an administrative agency for its public elementary schools or secondary schools.
**Specialized Instructional Support Personnel** (school librarians):

Under ESSA, perform a wide range of activities in schools, including a broad array of prevention and intervention services that promote effective teaching and learning and promote school success. SISP also collaborate with teachers and school staff to ensure that students receive high quality instruction responsive to their diverse academic, physical, social, emotional, and mental health needs.

**State Education Agencies (SEA):**

A formal governmental label for the state-level government agencies within each U.S. state responsible for providing information, resources, and technical assistance on educational matters to schools and residents.

**Virtual Resources:**

Resources that are not physical in nature, such as computer hardware platforms, operating systems, storage devices, computer network resources, electronic databases, and e-books.
Definition for Effective School Library Program

POSITION:

The American Association of School Librarians (AASL) supports the position that an effective school library program has a certified school librarian at the helm, provides personalized learning environments, and offers equitable access to resources to ensure a well-rounded education for every student.

As a fundamental component of college, career, and community readiness, the effective school library program:

1. is adequately staffed, including a state-certified school librarian who
   a. is an instructional leader and teacher,
   b. supports the development of digital learning, participatory learning, inquiry learning, technology literacies, and information literacy, and
   c. supports, supplements, and elevates the literacy experience through guidance and motivational reading initiatives;
2. has up-to-date digital and print materials and technology, including curation of openly licensed educational resources; and
3. provides regular professional development and collaboration between classroom teachers and school librarians.

Effective school libraries are dynamic learning environments that bridge the gap between access and opportunity for all K–12 learners. Under the leadership of the school librarian, the school library provides students access to resources and technology, connecting classroom learning to real-world events. By providing access to an array of well-managed resources, school libraries enable academic knowledge to be linked to deeper, personalized learning. The expanded learning environment of the school library ensures the unique interests and needs of individual students are met. In this way, effective school library programs prepare students for college, career, and community.

Under the leadership of a certified school librarian, the effective school library program delivers a well-rounded educational program (AASL 2009). This program focuses on accessing and evaluating information, providing digital learning training and experiences, and developing a culture of reading. The program uses a variety of engaging and relevant resources. Robust school libraries have high-quality, openly licensed digital and print resources, technology tools, and broadband access. This environment is essential to providing equitable learning opportunities for all students. More than 60 studies in two dozen states show that the “levels of library funding, staffing levels, collection size and range, and the instructional role of the librarian all have a direct impact on student achievement” (Gretes 2013).

In an effective school library program, the school librarian serves as an instructional leader, program administrator, teacher, collaborative partner, and information specialist (AASL 2009). Working with classroom teachers, the school librarian develops information literacy and digital literacy instruction for all students. Serving as an instructional leader, the school librarian contributes to curricular decisions and facilitates professional learning. Additionally, as the library program administrator, the school librarian oversees and manages the program and works with school and community partners. These partnerships result in expanded and improved resources and services for all students.
An effective school library program plays a crucial role in bridging digital and socioeconomic divides. School library programs staffed with state-certified professionals provide an approachable, equitable, personalized learning environment necessary for every student’s well-rounded education.

BACKGROUND:
The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) includes language for “effective school library programs” in the provisions of Title I, Part A; Title II, Part A; Title II, Part B, Subpart 2; Title II, Part B, Subpart 2, Section 2226; and Title IV, Part A. The definition of an effective school library program provides guidance to administrators, school boards, and school librarians in implementing ESSA.

DEFINITIONS:
- **Collaboration:** Working with a member of the teaching team to plan, implement, and evaluate a specialized instructional plan.
- **Community Readiness:** The ability to be a productive, active, engaged member of a democratic society.
- **School Librarian Instructional Role:** Instructional Role of School Librarians Position Statement

REFERENCES:


DISCLAIMER:
The position taken by the American Association of School Librarians (AASL) represents the organization and cannot be applied to individual members or groups affiliated with the association without their direct confirmation.

APPROVAL/REVISION DATES: June 25, 2016
Appropriate Staffing for School Libraries

POSITION:

The American Association of School Librarians (AASL) supports the position that every student in every school, including independent schools and public charter schools, should have access to an updated school library with a certified school librarian. The success of a school library program, no matter how well designed, ultimately depends on the quality and number of personnel responsible for managing the instructional program and the library’s physical and virtual resources. A certified school librarian, supported by technical and clerical staff, is crucial to an effective school library program. Every student, teacher, and administrator in every school building at every grade level should have access to a fully staffed library throughout the school day.

The following minimum school library staffing requirements define an effective school library program structured to transform teaching and learning throughout the school community:

1. The library program is serviced by one or more certified school librarians working full-time in the school library.
2. The specific number of additional school librarians is determined by the school’s instructional programs, services, facilities, size, and number of students and teachers.
3. In addition to library-degreed professionals, highly trained technical and clerical support staff are necessary for all library programs at every grade level. Each school should employ at least one full-time technical assistant or clerk for each school librarian. Some programs, facilities, and levels of service will require more than one support staff member for each professional.
4. The school district is served by a district library supervisor who provides leadership and support for the building-level school library programs by providing resources, professional development, and leadership in developing and implementing the district’s school library program. The district library supervisor is a member of the administrative team and helps determine the criteria and policies for the district’s curriculum and instructional programs. The district library supervisor communicates the mission, strategic plan, goals, and needs of the school and district library programs to the superintendent, board of education, other district-level personnel, and the community.

BACKGROUND:

The staffing of school libraries will be guided by the language for effective school library programs in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). A certified school librarian is essential to an effective school library program, yet only two-thirds of school libraries are staffed with certified school librarians (Davis 2010).

DEFINITIONS:

- Effective School Library Program: Definition of an Effective School Library Position Statement

REFERENCES:


**RECOMMENDED READING LIST:**


**DISCLAIMER:**

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**APPROVAL/REVISION DATES:** June 25, 2016
Instructional Role of the School Librarian

POSITION:
The American Association of School Librarians (AASL) supports the position that school librarians are instructors as well as collaborators with fellow educators in the pursuit of student learning in school libraries, classrooms, learning commons, makerspaces, labs, and virtual learning spaces. School librarian instruction results in students who read and utilize print and digital resources for curricular and personalized learning needs. School librarians teach students how to be inquiring learners who evaluate and use both print and digital information efficiently, effectively, and ethically, with the goal of developing lifelong learning and literacy skills (AASL 2007). School librarians lead the way in digital learning and literacies by teaching and providing professional development in their school communities and districts.

The role of the school librarian is to guide students and fellow educators through the intersection of formal and informal learning. The instruction the school librarian offers is integral to a well-rounded education. As educators and instructional partners school librarians are critical to teaching and learning in the school community. The school librarian plays a prominent role in instructing students, faculty, and administrators in a range of literacies, including information, digital, print, visual, and textual literacies. As leaders in literacy and technology, school librarians are perfectly positioned to instruct every student in the school community through both traditional and blended learning.

BACKGROUND:
In the ever-changing information and education landscape, the instructional role of school librarians is vitally important for staff and students. As print and digital literacies, inquiry, and reading motivation have become crucial elements of teaching and learning, school librarians as educators and information specialists play a key instructional role in successful schools.

DEFINITIONS:
- **Digital Learning:** Learning materials and resources displayed on a digital device and shared electronically with other users. Digital learning content can be both open and/or commercial content (U.S. Dept. of Education 2016).
- **Digital Literacy:** The ability to use information and communication technologies to find, evaluate, create, and communicate information, requiring both cognitive and technical skills (ALA 2013).
- **Information Literacy:** A set of abilities requiring individuals to recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information (ACRL 2000).

REFERENCES:


RECOMMENDED READING LIST:


www.ala.org/aasl/advocacy/legislation/essa.


www.ala.org/aasl/sites/ala.org.aasl/files/content/aaslpubsandjournals/slr/vol15/SLR_School_Librarians_as_Technology_Integration_Leaders_V15.pdf.


DISCLAIMER:

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APPROVAL/REVISION DATES: June 25, 2016
Role of the School Library Program

POSITION:
The American Association of School Librarians (AASL) supports the position that an effective school library program plays a crucial role in preparing students for informed living in an information-rich society. The school library program provides learning opportunities that enable students to become efficient, effective, and creative users of information. Further, the school library program encourages students to examine the authority of authors and the bias of sponsors; to assess the importance of currency of information to the topic at hand; to determine the scope and relevance of information to meet their needs; and to create and share new ideas, resources, products, and information. This instruction occurs best in the context of the school curriculum where students are guided by a standard of excellence set by their classroom teachers in collaboration with the school librarian.

The school library program is not confined by the school library walls, but rather, with the use of technology and online resources, connects to the community and branches throughout the entire school. The school library program provides the mechanism for students to access the resources they need 24/7, whether in the library, in the classroom, or in the student’s home.

Beyond its curricular role, the effective school library program gives each individual member of the learning community a venue for exploring questions that arise out of personalized learning, individual curiosity, and personal interest. As part of the school library program, the school librarian provides leadership and instruction to both students and staff on how to use information technologies constructively, ethically, and safely. The school librarian offers expertise in accessing and evaluating information and collections of quality physical and virtual resources. In addition, the school librarian possesses dispositions that encourage broad and deep exploration of ideas and responsible use of information technologies. These attributes add value to the school community.

School library programs also provide opportunities for learners to read for enjoyment. School librarians’ skills in the selection and evaluation of resources are critical in providing students, staff, and families with open, non-restricted access to a high-quality collection of reading materials that reflect personal interests and academic needs in multiple formats. School librarians take a leadership role in organizing and promoting literacy projects and events that encourage students to become lifelong learners and readers.

The school library program is based on long-range goals developed through strategic planning that reflect the mission of the school. The school librarian participates fully in all aspects of the school’s instructional program, including federally mandated programs and reform efforts. The school library program provides flexible and equitable access to collections, technology, and a state-certified school librarian for all students and staff, physically as well as virtually. The collection includes materials that meet the needs of all learners, represents various points of view on current and historical issues, and offers a wide variety of interest areas. Policies, procedures, and guidelines are developed to maintain the effective school library program. The school library staff and budget are sufficient to support the school’s instructional program and meet the needs of the school library program’s goals.

For students, the school library represents one of America’s most cherished freedoms: the freedom to speak and hear what others have to say. Students have the right to choose what they will read, view, or hear and are expected to develop the ability to think clearly, critically, and creatively about their choices, rather than allowing others to do this for them.
BACKGROUND:
Citizens of this information world must have the skills and dispositions to access information efficiently and to critically assess the sources they rely upon for decision making, problem solving, and generation of new knowledge. The effective school library program plays a critical role in schools in instructing students on how to access information efficiently and critically assess resources.

DEFINITIONS:
- **Effective School Library Program:** [Definition of Effective School Library Position Statement]
- **Learning Community:** A group of people (can include students) who share common academic goals and attitudes who meet regularly to share expertise and work collaboratively to improve instruction and the academic performance of students.
- **Information Technologies:** Modern information, computer, and communication technology products, services, or tools, including the Internet, computer devices and other hardware, software applications, data systems, personal electronic devices, and other electronic content (including multimedia content) and data storage.
- **School Librarian Instructional Role:** [Instructional Role of the School Librarian Position Statement]
- **Virtual Resources:** Resources that are not physical in nature, such as computer hardware platforms, operating systems, storage devices, computer network resources, electronic databases, and e-books.

RECOMMENDED READING LIST:

DISCLAIMER:
The position taken by the American Association of School Librarians (AASL) represents the organization and cannot be applied to individual members or groups affiliated with the association without their direct confirmation.

APPROVAL/REVISION DATES: June 25, 2016
Preparation of School Librarians

POSITION:
The American Association of School Librarians (AASL) supports the position that, in addition to meeting state certification requirements, school librarians hold a master’s degree or equivalent from a program that combines academic and professional preparation in library and information science, education, and technology. The graduate degree is earned at a college or university whose program is recognized by appropriate bodies such as the American Library Association (ALA), the American Association of School Librarians/Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP), or state education agencies. The academic program of study includes directed field experience coordinated by a college/university faculty member and takes place in an effective school library program under the direct supervision of a certified, full-time school librarian.

BACKGROUND:
In order to address the critical need for a reading-rich environment in the ever-changing information landscape, the preparation of school librarians is vitally important. As technology has become a crucial element of teaching and learning, school librarians as educators and information specialists play a key role in the success of schools.

DEFINITIONS:
- **Information Technologies**: Modern information, computer, and communication technology products, services, or tools, including the Internet, computer devices, and other hardware, software applications, data systems, and other electronic content (including multimedia content) and data storage.

REFERENCES:


DISCLAIMER:
The position taken by the American Association of School Librarians (AASL) represents the organization and cannot be applied to individual members or groups affiliated with the association without their direct confirmation.

APPROVAL/REVISION DATES: June 25, 2016
Meredith Miller  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Room 3C106  
Washington, DC 20202-2800

Dear Ms. Miller:

On behalf of the American Library Association (ALA) and the American Association of School Librarians (AASL), thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Department’s proposed regulations governing accountability and State plans under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) as reauthorized by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).

The mission of ALA, the oldest and largest library association in the world, is “to provide leadership for the development, promotion and improvement of library and information services and the profession of librarianship in order to enhance learning and ensure access to information for all.” The mission of AASL, the ALA division focused on school libraries, is “to empower leaders to transform teaching and learning.” To help accomplish this mission, AASL supports effective school library programs that have a certified school librarian at the helm, provide personalized learning environments, and offer equitable access to resources to ensure a well-rounded education for every student.¹

School libraries are a safe learning environment where all students have equal and equitable access to learning, support, and information for personal and educational purposes. As poverty rates across America remain high, our schools must serve as an “equalizer” to provide all students with equal and equitable access to the resources, support, and instruction necessary to succeed academically and become productive and engaged citizens in a democratic society. Research confirms that effective school library programs are a wise investment for our children’s education and workforce readiness.

ALA has been disheartened by the lack of support for effective school library programs and comprehensive literacy instruction at the Federal, State, and local levels over the years. Data² available from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) highlights the lack of support for too many of our students in thousands of schools across the country. NCES data reveals that approximately 8,830 public schools across the nation do not have a school library and for those schools that do have a library, nearly 17,000 schools do not have a full or part-time school librarian on staff.

Accordingly, ALA and AASL were pleased to support the bipartisan conference agreement on ESSA and we are encouraged that the updated law provides opportunities to recognize the key role effective school library programs play in improving student academic achievement and ensuring that students are adequately prepared for college and success in the workforce.

¹ For additional information see AASL definition of “effective school library program.”  
² For additional information from NCES, see http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/sass/tables_list.asp#2012.
To help build on these efforts under ESSA, our comments on the proposed regulations focus on consultation requirements under §299.15 and activities to support all students under §299.19.

§299.15 – Consultation and Coordination

Under ESSA, a State may continue to submit a consolidated State plan in lieu of individual, program-specific plans. As part of the consolidated State plan, the proposed regulations would require the State Educational Agency (SEA) to engage in timely and meaningful consultation with stakeholders as part of the design and development of the plan. Specifically, §299.15(a)(6) of the proposed regulations provides that stakeholders consulted during the development of the State plan must include “teachers, principals, other school leaders, paraprofessionals, specialized instructional support personnel, and organizations representing such individuals.”

Under ESSA, the statutory definition of the term “specialized instructional support personnel” includes qualified professional personnel such as school librarians. To help ensure consistency with the statutory provisions under ESSA, we recommend that language under §299.15(a)(6) be clarified to highlight the statutory ability of school librarians to participate in the consultation process with the SEA in the development and implementation of the State consolidated plan.

We believe it is important to specifically highlight school librarians as part of the consultation process because they make the whole school more effective. School librarians serve as instructional leaders, program administrators, teachers, collaborative partners, and information specialists. They work with every student in the school, teaching them to think critically, providing the resources and support they need in school and beyond, and nurturing their creativity. They are also an essential partner for all classroom teachers, providing print and digital materials that meet diverse needs and collaborating to deepen student learning and drive success. Finally, school librarians are leaders in the school, helping to develop curriculum and connecting other educators to current trends and resources for teaching and learning.

§299.19 – Supporting All Students

As part of the consolidated State plan, each SEA must describe its strategies, its rationale for the selected strategies, timelines, and how it will use funds under the programs included in its consolidated State plan to ensure that all children have a significant opportunity to meet challenging State academic standards and graduate with a regular high school diploma. §299.19(a)(1)(iv) of the proposed regulations requires that such strategies and descriptions include “the effective use of technology to improve academic achievement and digital literacy of all students.”

Literacy skills have always been a critical component of our education systems. Today, the attainment of digital literacy – for both students and educators – can help to ensure that all students graduate from high school prepared for postsecondary education or the workforce without the need for remediation.

School libraries are places of opportunity. Effective school library programs play a crucial role in bridging digital and socioeconomic divides. They foster a safe and nurturing climate during the day and before and after school, to serve as critical learning hubs for instruction and use of technology, digital, and print materials (including curation of openly licensed educational resources) to better prepare students for success for school and the workforce:
• *Avery County High School* – In Avery County High School (Newland, NC), the school librarian trains students and teachers on how to become a responsible consumer of information. The school library provides instruction on how to document resources; the importance of following copyright laws; safe use of online resources, including potential dangers of online sharing; and an awareness of the digital footprint all online users leave.

• *Weddington Hills Elementary School* – At Weddington Hills Elementary School (Concord, NC), digital literacy instruction is provided through the school library program. Students in kindergarten and first grades are learning skills such as keyboard recognition, how to access PowerPoint, how to obtain digital images following copyright requirements, and the importance of citing sources. Students in second and third grades are using various technologies to research, collect information, synthesize, and create new products, including a focus on academic honesty and copyright issues. By fourth and fifth grades, students are exploring digital tools for collaboration, multi-media presentations, analysis of data, and interaction with people and events beyond their own communities.

• *Centerville Elementary School* – From kindergarten up students are exposed to digital learning platforms and computers at Centerville Elementary School (Frederick, MD). From lessons on internet safety to proper citation of web sources to their digital footprints and cyberbullying, the students are receiving weekly lessons to help make them true 21st century learners.

• *Mooresville Intermediate School* – At Mooresville Intermediate School (Mooresville, NC), students receive digital literacy training in the school library related to accessing information sources, taking notes appropriately, citing sources, finding copyright-friendly images for projects, and using digital tools to share their learning in new, innovative ways.

To better encourage the effective use of technology to improve academic achievement and digital literacy in ways that support all students, we recommend that §299.19(a)(1)(iv) be clarified to highlight the critical support school libraries provide with regard to improving the digital literacy of all students.

An effective school library program plays a crucial role in bridging digital and socioeconomic divides and focuses on accessing and evaluating information, providing digital learning training and experiences, and developing a culture of reading. The school library program uses a variety of engaging and relevant resources. Robust school libraries have high-quality, openly licensed digital and print resources, technology tools, and broadband access. This environment is essential to providing equitable learning opportunities for all students.

By providing access to an array of well-managed resources, school libraries enable academic knowledge to be linked to deeper, personalized learning. The expanded learning environment of the school library ensures the unique interests and needs of individual students are met. In this way, effective school library programs prepare students for college, career, and community.

Therefore, as the Department considers recommendations on the proposed regulations governing accountability and State plans under ESSA, we respectfully ask that the final regulations specifically include school librarians and school libraries under §299.15
(Consultation and Coordination) and §299.19 (Supporting All Students) to ensure that implementation of ESSA includes adequate consultation and an appropriate focus on the role of school libraries in using technology to improve academic achievement and digital literacy of all students.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide recommendations; please do not hesitate to contact Emily Sheketoff from ALA at (202) 628-8410 or Sylvia Knight Norton from AASL at (312) 280-4388 if you have any questions or if there is anything we can do to assist with implementation of ESSA.

Sincerely,

Emily Sheketoff
Executive Director
Washington Office
American Library Association

Sylvia K. Norton
Executive Director
American Association of School Librarians
American Library Association
P.L. 114-95, The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants (ESSA Block Grant)

SUMMARY OF PROGRAM

Overview – ESSA authorizes a new flexible block grant program – Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants under Title IV, Part A, Subpart 1 – to increase the capacity of States, LEAs, schools, and local communities to:

1. Provide all students with access to a well-rounded education;
2. Support safe and healthy students; and
3. Support the effective use of technology.

Authorization Level and Funding – ESSA authorizes the program at $1.65 billion for FY2017 through FY2020.

- The Administration’s FY2017 budget request included $500 million for Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants.
- Prior to the August 2016 recess, the Senate Appropriations Committee provided $300 million and the House Appropriations Committee provided $1 billion in their respective bills for Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants.
- The funding level will be finalized as part of negotiations to fund the Federal government for FY2017.

Allocation of Funds by Formula – Each State, and subsequently each LEA, receives an allocation based on their State or local share of the ESSA Title I funding formula.

- States reserve 5 percent of their allocation for State-level activities and 95 percent of funds are provided for local awards to LEAs.
- Each LEA that receives a formula allocation must conduct a “needs assessment” and then must use:
  - Not less than 20 percent of funds to support well-rounded educational opportunities;
  - Not less than 20 percent of funds to support safe and healthy students; and
  - A portion of funds (not defined under ESSA) to support the effective use of technology.
- Remaining funds at the local level can be used by the LEA to support any of the three aforementioned categories of activities.

State-Level Activities – States are authorized to use their share of funding (5 percent) for State-level activities and programming designed to meet the purposes of the program, including:
• Monitoring, training, technical assistance and capacity building for LEAs;

• Identifying and eliminating State barriers to the coordination and integration of programs, initiatives, and funding streams so that LEAs can better coordinate with other agencies, schools, and community-based services and programs; and

• Supporting LEAs in providing programs and activities that:

  o Offer well-rounded educational experiences to all students, which may include:

    ✓ STEM courses;
    ✓ Music and arts education;
    ✓ Foreign languages;
    ✓ Accelerated learning programs that provide postsecondary level courses accepted for credit at institutions of higher education (such as Advanced Placement courses);
    ✓ American history, civics, economics, geography, social studies, or government education;
    ✓ Environmental education; and
    ✓ Other courses, activities, programs or experiences that contribute to a well-rounded education.

  o Foster safe, healthy, supportive, and drug-free environments, which may include:

    ✓ Reducing exclusionary discipline practices in schools;
    ✓ Mental health awareness training and school-based counseling;
    ✓ Integrating health and safety practices into school and athletic programs; and
    ✓ Disseminating best practices and evaluating program outcomes to promote student safety and violence prevention.

  o Increase access to personalized, rigorous learning experiences supported by technology, including:

    ✓ Providing technical assistance to LEAs to identify and address technology readiness needs, which specifically includes “access to school libraries”;
    ✓ Supporting schools in rural and remote areas to expand access to digital learning opportunities;
    ✓ Supporting the delivery specialized or rigorous academic courses and curricula through the use of technology, including digital learning technologies and assistive technology.
    ✓ Disseminating promising practices related to technology instruction, data security and the acquisition and implementation of technology tools and applications;
    ✓ Providing teachers, paraprofessionals, school librarians and media personnel, specialized instructional support personnel, and administrators with the knowledge and skills to use technology effectively; and

1 Under ESSA, the term “digital learning” is defined as any instructional practice that effectively uses technology to strengthen a student's learning experience and encompasses a wide spectrum of tools and practices, including: (1) interactive learning resources, digital learning content (which may include openly licensed content), software, or simulations, that engage students in academic content; (2) access to online databases and other primary source documents; (3) the use of data and information to personalize learning and provide targeted supplementary instruction; (4) online and computer-based assessments; (5) learning environments that allow for rich collaboration and communication, which may include student collaboration with content experts and peers; (6) hybrid or blended learning, which occurs under direct instructor supervision at a school or other location away from home and, at least in part, through online delivery of instruction with some element of student control over time, place, path, or pace; and (7) access to online course opportunities for students in rural or remote areas.
✓ Making instructional content widely available through open educational resources, which may include providing tools and processes to support LEAs in making such resources widely available.

Local Consultation – In developing the local application, an LEA is required to consult with parents, teachers, principals, specialized instructional support personnel (which specifically includes school librarians under ESSA) and other stakeholders with relevant and demonstrated expertise in programs and activities designed to meet the purpose of the program.

- In addition, LEAs are required to engage in “continued consultation” with such stakeholders to improve local activities and to coordinate programming with other related strategies, programs, and activities being conducted in the community.

Local Needs Assessment – Prior to receiving funds under the program, LEAs must conduct a “comprehensive needs assessment” (that must be conducted every 3 years) to examine needs for improvement of:

- Access to, and opportunities for, a well-rounded education for all students;

- School conditions for student learning in order to create a healthy and safe school environment; and

- Access to personalized learning experiences supported by technology and professional development for the effective use of data and technology.

  - Note: Under State Activities, States are authorized to support local efforts to increase access to personalized learning experiences by providing technical assistance to LEAs to identify and address technology readiness needs, which specifically includes “access to school libraries” under the statute.

- LEAs that would receive an allocation of less than $30,000 are not required to conduct a comprehensive needs assessment.

Local Uses of Funds – As part of the local application, LEAs must provide assurances that funds will prioritized to schools that have the greatest need, the most low-income children, are identified under the accountability system or identified as persistently dangerous. Similar to activities authorized at the State-level, LEAs are authorized to use their share of funds (95 percent) to:

- Develop and implement programs and activities that support access to a well-rounded education and that:

  - Are coordinated with other schools and community-based services and programs;

  - May be conducted through partnerships; and

  - May include programs and activities, such as:

    ✓ College and career guidance and counseling;
    ✓ Activities that use music and the arts as tools to support student success;
    ✓ Activities to improve instruction and student engagement in STEM (including computer science);
    ✓ Efforts to raise student academic achievement through accelerated learning programs
Activities to promote traditional American history, civics, economics, geography, or government education;
Foreign language instruction;
Environmental education;
Activities that promote volunteerism and community involvement;
Activities that support educational programs that integrate multiple disciplines, such as programs that combine arts and mathematics; or
Other activities and programs to support student access to, and success in, a variety of well-rounded education experiences.

- Support safe and healthy students through the development, implementation and evaluation of programs and activities that:
  - Are coordinated with other schools and community-based services and programs;
  - Foster safe, healthy, supportive, and drug-free environments that support student academic achievement;
  - Promote the involvement of parents;
  - May be conducted through partnerships; and
  - May include programs and activities, such as:
    - Drug and violence prevention activities;
    - School-based mental health services;
    - Health and safety practices for schools and athletic programs;
    - Support for healthy, active lifestyles, including nutritional education and regular, structured physical education activities;
    - Prevention of bullying and harassment;
    - Mentoring and counseling for all students;
    - Dropout recovery programs;
    - Training for school personnel related to suicide prevention, crisis management, conflict resolution and school-based violence prevention strategies;
    - Child sexual abuse awareness;
    - Reducing exclusionary discipline practices; and
    - Pay for success initiatives.

- Use technology to improve the academic achievement, academic growth, and digital literacy of all students – including by addressing shortfalls identified in the local needs assessment conducted prior to receiving funds – which may include:
  - Providing educators, school leaders, and administrators with the professional learning tools, devices, content, and resources to personalize learning and to administer computer-based assessments and blended learning strategies;

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2 Under ESSA, the term “blended learning” is defined as a formal education program that leverages both technology-based and face-to-face instructional approaches that include an element of online or digital learning, combined with supervised learning time, and student-led learning, in which the elements are connected to provide an integrated learning experience; and in which students are provided some control over time, path, or pace.
Building technological capacity and infrastructure, including procuring content and purchasing devices, equipment, and software applications in order to address readiness shortfalls (as identified under the comprehensive needs assessment);

Note: There is a 15 percent cap under ESSA related to the purchase of technology infrastructure under the program.

Developing or using effective strategies for the delivery of specialized or rigorous academic courses through the use of technology, including digital learning technologies and assistive technology;

Blended learning projects;

Professional development in the use of technology (which may be provided through partnerships with outside organizations) to enable teachers and instructional leaders to increase student achievement in STEM (including computer science); and

Opportunities for students in rural, remote, and underserved areas to take advantage of high-quality digital learning experiences, digital resources, and access to online courses taught by effective educators.

SUMMARY OF LIBRARY PROVISIONS

- ESSA authorizes (but does not require) States to use their share of funds to assist LEAs in providing programs and activities that increase access to personalized, rigorous learning experiences supported by technology, including adequate “access to school libraries.”

- ESSA authorizes (but does not require) States to use their share of funds to assist LEAs in providing school librarians and other school personnel with the knowledge and skills to use technology effectively, including effective integration of technology, to improve instruction and student achievement.

- In developing their local applications, LEAs must consult with teachers, principals and other stakeholders, including “specialized instructional support personnel” which is defined under ESSA as specifically including school librarians.

- ESSA requires that LEAs conduct a “needs assessment” prior to receiving funds from the State (that must be conducted every 3 years). The needs assessment must include access to personalized learning experiences (which may include access to school libraries).

NEXT STEPS – ADVOCATE FOR INCLUSION OF LIBRARY PROGRAMMING

State-Level Advocacy

- Because States are authorized (but not required) to support LEAs in providing programs and activities that increase access to personalized learning experiences (which may include and professional development for school librarians and better access to school libraries for students), it will be important to contact and work with education officials at the State-level (State Educational Agency) to make them aware of their ability to use funds in support of personalized learning experiences, including ways in which effective school library programs can contribute to personalized learning activities in schools.
Since States are authorized (but not required) to support LEAs in the delivery of specialized or rigorous academic courses and curricula through the use of technology, including digital learning technologies, it will be important to contact and work with State education officials to ensure that such activities include effective school library programs that provide digital learning technologies.

Local Advocacy

Since LEAs are required to consult with stakeholders – which may include school librarians – on the development of their local activities, it is critical to contact and work with leaders, administrators and technology educators at the school and LEA level to ensure that school librarians can adequately participate in the development and implementation of programming.

Since LEAs must conduct a “comprehensive needs assessment” that includes access to personalized learning experiences supported by technology and professional development for the effective use of data and technology, it is essential to contact and work with leaders, administrators and technology educators at the school and LEA level to ensure that “access to school libraries” is considered as part of the local needs assessment.

Since LEAs are authorized (but not required) to support the delivery of specialized or rigorous academic courses and curricula through the use of technology, including digital learning technologies, it will be important to contact and work with leaders, administrators and technology educators at the school and LEA level to ensure that such activities include effective school library programs that provide digital learning technologies.