Connecting ESSA to School Libraries

Saturday, January 7, 2017

New Mexico, Advocacy for School Libraries

Special Interest Group

(NMLA-ASL-SIG)
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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<td>Welcome Remarks</td>
<td>Kathryn Lewis, AASL Board of Directors, Region 6</td>
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<td>9:00 – 9:30 am</td>
<td>ESSA Overview</td>
<td>Emily Sheketoff, Executive Director of Washington Office of American Library Association</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Federal and State Timeline</td>
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<td>- Effective School Library Program Definition</td>
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<td>- Review of titles that include School Librarians</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Connection of titles to school library role</td>
<td>Kathryn Lewis, AASL Board of Directors, Region 6</td>
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<td>9:30-10:00 am</td>
<td>Review of New Mexico Public Education Department</td>
<td>Lorie Mitchell, Chair, Advocacy for New Mexico School Libraries (Special Interest Group Advocating for Excellence in New Mexico School Libraries)</td>
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<td>- ESSA Survey</td>
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<td>- ESSA Working Groups</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Review of Community Outreach Report</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:00 - 10:15 am</td>
<td>• Review of Key Messages</td>
<td>Kathryn Lewis, AASL Board of Directors, Region 6</td>
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<td>• Identifying Stakeholders</td>
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<td>10:15-10:45 am</td>
<td>Coalition Development Plan</td>
<td>Kathryn Lewis, AASL Board of Directors, Region 6</td>
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<td>10:45-11:00 am</td>
<td>Report/Share Out</td>
<td>Kathryn Lewis, AASL Board of Directors, Region 6</td>
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<td>11:00 - 11:30 am</td>
<td>Connecting message to stakeholders</td>
<td>Kathryn Lewis, AASL Board of Directors, Region 6</td>
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<td>11:30-11:45 am</td>
<td>Report/Share Out</td>
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<td>11:45-12:15</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
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<td>Elevator Speech Development</td>
<td>Kathryn Lewis, AASL Board of Directors, Region 6</td>
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<tr>
<td>12:30-12:45 pm</td>
<td>Connecting ESSA to Practice</td>
<td>Kathryn Lewis, AASL Board of Directors, Region 6</td>
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<tr>
<td>12:45 - 1:00 pm</td>
<td>Elevator Speech Practice and Feedback</td>
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<tr>
<td>1:00 pm</td>
<td>Closing Remarks/Questions</td>
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CONNECTING ESSA TO SCHOOL LIBRARIES

Saturday, January 7, 2017
New Mexico, Advocacy for School Libraries Special Interest Group (NMLA-ASL-SIG)

Welcome

Kathryn Roots Lewis
AASL Board of Directors,
Region 6

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
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.
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
New Mexico ESSA Update

NM Public Education Department ESSA Page
http://ped.state.nm.us/ped/ESSA.html

Questions/Comments email: Amanda Aragon, Director, Strategic Outreach
Amanda.Aragon@state.nm.us

Online Survey Feedback for those unable to attend regional meetings:
https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/CY5HZXK

New Mexico ESSA Updates

Secretary Skandera Letter 10/21/16 - Highlights (http://ped.state.nm.us/ped/ESSA.html)
- Partnered with New Mexico First to host a series of community forums across the state
- Launched four working groups.
  - Opportunity to Learn: Comprised of school grades with a focus on what families and educators deserve to know about their schools including the learning environment.
  - Future-Ready Students: Focused on improving and defining high school graduation pathways for students, ensuring that every student earns a diploma that has value in the real-world.
  - Title III Working Group: Focused on supporting our English Learners, ensuring that students and families have the supports they need in schools.
  - LESC working group: Comprised of members of the Legislative Education Study Committee members who want to be involved in helping plan our transition to ESSA.
- Launched an ESSA webpage featuring background information on the law, how PED is approaching our ESSA transition and implementation.
- Meeting with Tribal Leaders across the state to identifying ways to support native students. In addition, PED staff will be attending the annual Government to Government conference in November to discuss ESSA.

New Mexico ESSA Update

Background Report: Community Outreach on ESSA Implementation
[file:///C:/Users/acline/Downloads/ESSA+Backgrounder-FINAL+10-16-16%20(1).pdf]

Included in handbook:
- Chapter 1: New Mexico Students: Student Achievement and Readiness
- Chapter 2: ESSA History and Requirements
- Chapter 3: Challenges and Opportunities
- Appendix: PED Stakeholder Outreach Graphic
Identifying Stakeholders

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

Meaningful Messaging

Elevator Speech - 4 pieces

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

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Example

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
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

Questions
ESSA Federal Legislation Timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>ESEA was enacted by Congress and signed into law.</td>
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<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 Range</th>
<th>Event Description</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>
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<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>
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<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>
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<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>
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<tr>
<td>October 1, 2016</td>
<td>Effective date for competitive programs under ESSA, unless otherwise provided for in the statute</td>
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<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>
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<tr>
<td>May/June, 2017</td>
<td>ED begins peer review and approves state plans</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 1, 2017</td>
<td>Effective date for formula grant programs under ESSA</td>
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<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.

  - 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.
  
  o 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, jberstein@jbersteinstrategy.com.
Community meetings

- Gallup: October 12
- Farmington: October 14
- Santa Fe: October 17
- Albuquerque: October 18
- Roswell: October 27
- Las Cruces: November 15
Chapter 1:
NEW MEXICO STUDENTS

Student Achievement and Readiness
As a whole, New Mexico students face many challenges. A fifth of the state's population lives in poverty, ranking
the state the second worst in the nation.\(^1\) In addition, over two-thirds of the New Mexico's students' qualify for
free or reduced price lunch.\(^2\) Research shows that 42 percent of young people born to families in the lowest fifth of
income distribution will remain there. For these young people, educational attainment beyond the high school
diploma may offer the only means of moving up the economic ladder.\(^3\)

Since higher levels of educational attainment typically correspond to higher incomes, there is a direct correlation
with increased economic activity of individuals and businesses. This is why the educational attainment of a
population is a common starting point in evaluating the workforce’s capacity to contribute to economic growth.\(^4\)
By 2020, most New Mexico students will not have the education, credentials or degrees required to fill 63 percent
of New Mexico’s jobs.\(^5\)

How are New Mexico Students Doing?
The New Mexico K-12 education system serves over 330,000 students through 89 school districts and 96 charter
schools.\(^6\) The state ranks near the bottom in the U.S. for student performance, scoring among the lowest in math
and reading in the nation.\(^7\) However, parents, educators and policymakers have reason to be encouraged because
New Mexico has made gains in student test scores and increased high school graduation rates since 2003.\(^8\) Since
2012, when school grading first began in New Mexico, the number of schools receiving an A or B grade has
increased so that there are now more schools with an A or B grade than those with a D or F grade.\(^9\) This increase
equals to 30,000 more students having access to A or B schools.\(^10\)

The current student assessment testing system, Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers
(PARCC), has been in use for two years. In 2016, New Mexico PARCC test scores in reading increased by 1.3
percent. Of New Mexico’s 89 school districts (64 percent), 57 showed gains on the tests. About 5,000 more New
Mexico students are now on grade level than in 2015.\(^11\) In addition, 3,239 more Hispanic students and 4,061 more
economically disadvantaged students are proficient in reading compared to 2015.\(^12\) Native American students
showed the highest rate of growth in reading.

New Mexico students also saw an increase in their math PARCC scores. In 2016, students’ scores in math increased
by 2.5 percent. With 77 school districts (86 percent) showing gains in math, 7,300 more students now perform on

\(^1\) (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015)
\(^2\) (NM Public Education Department, 2015)
\(^3\) (Southern Regional Education Board, 2015)
\(^4\) (Leach, 2016)
\(^5\) (Southern Regional Education Board, 2015)
\(^6\) (NM Public Education Department, 2015)
\(^7\) (Uytterbrouck, 2016)
\(^8\) (Uytterbrouck, 2016)
\(^9\) (NM Public Education Department, 2016)
\(^10\) (NM Public Education Department, 2016)
\(^11\) (NM Public Education Department, 2016)
\(^12\) (NM Public Education Department, 2016)
grade level than in 2015.\textsuperscript{13} Elementary students showed the most improvement in math and Hispanic students showed positive gains in all grade levels.

Overall, economically disadvantaged students exceeded statewide growth rates in both reading and math. Schools that participate in the state’s Principals Pursuing Excellence (PPE) program also saw a marked increase above the state average, in the number of students proficient in reading and math (4.24% increase in math, 4.87% increase in reading). The PPE program is a two-year program targeted to 84 low-performing New Mexico schools that supports principals to improve student achievement in their schools.\textsuperscript{14} The success of PPE schools provides an example of an innovative transformative model that could be expanded and applied to other schools.\textsuperscript{15}

**WHAT IS PARCC?**
In elementary, middle, and high school, New Mexico students take the PARCC test. The PARCC test is a nationally recognized standardized test developed by a consortium of teachers, administrators and other experts from eight states including New Mexico, and the District of Columbia. The BIE and the U.S. Department of Defense administer the tests and also participate at varying levels in the development of the PARCC tests. The PARCC tests are designed to measure how well students understand and are able to apply the skills and standards under the Common Core State Standards which cover reading, English and math. The tests are also designed to provide educators with a deeper understanding of how students learn. ESSA requires that 95 percent of students are assessed annually using the state’s designated student assessment. All students in New Mexico, with some exceptions for students with disabilities or who may be English learners, must by law take the PARCC test, and all high school students must pass the PARCC test or alternative test to graduate.

**Additional New Mexico Student Indicators**
Below are additional indicators that measure student academic achievement for New Mexico K-12 students statewide.

\textbf{16}**INDICATOR: ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TRUANCY**
Studies have shown that students who are chronically absent, meaning they miss 10 days or more of the school year due to excused or unexcused absences, are at risk academically, particularly in the early grades. These absences result in loss of instructional time, which translates into weaker reading skills. Attendance habits begin at home. Schools also play a role; student attendance is better in schools where parents feel welcomed and engaged.\textsuperscript{17}

\textsuperscript{13} (NM Public Education Department, 2016)
\textsuperscript{14} (Priority Schools Bureau, NMPED)
\textsuperscript{15} (Christopher Ruszkowski, 2016)
\textsuperscript{16} (NM Public Education Department, 2016)
\textsuperscript{17} (Attendance Works, 2014)
INDICATOR: READING PROFICIENCY

Children who read well are more likely to perform well in other subjects, such as math and science. Strong reading skills also predict the likelihood of graduating from high school and attending college, as well as securing employment and earning better wages. The percent of fourth grade and eighth grade students in New Mexico who are proficient readers has remained about the same over the last decade with an increase of 1.25 percent for fourth grade and an increase of 2.89 percent for eighth grade between 2015 and 2016. This equates to 478 more fourth grade students and 917 more eighth grade students reading at grade level.

INDICATOR: MATH PROFICIENCY

Competence in mathematics is the strongest predictor of long-term academic success. It is also essential in an increasingly technology-based world and workplace. Students with strong math skills are more likely to attend and complete college. Math proficiency is also related to higher levels of employability and influences higher levels of

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18 (Child Trends, 2014)
19 (NM Public Education Department, 2016)
20 (NM Public Education Department, 2016)
21 (NM Public Education Department, 2016)
22 (NM Public Education Department, 2016)
23 (Gulbrandsen, 2011)
earnings. New Mexico made excellent progress in student math scores in the last decade, although 8th grade proficiency took a small dip in 2014. (Chart sources: 26 27)

**INDICATOR: ACADEMIC PROFICIENCY BY RACE/ETHNICITY**
Achievement gaps matter, particularly when the educational disparities affect such large segments of the population. New Mexico schools consistently see double-digit gaps in academic proficiency. The following chart provides one example, fourth grade math where the gap is about 37 percentage points. As of 2013, similar gaps exist in fourth grade reading (31 percentage point gap between highest and lowest achieving groups), eighth grade reading (30 percentage point gap), and eighth grade math (29 percentage point gap).

Indicators disaggregated by race and ethnicity help to measure how well schools are ensuring that all students are learning. The indicators identify which groups of students are not achieving at the same rate as their peers so the school and districts can then take action to address this inequity. That states work to ensure that all students are learning is a key requirement of ESSA. According to PED, the department expected a drop in student test scores in 2015 due to teachers and students having to become accustomed to how the tests are given, a heightened concern about the then new assessment in general and because PARCC assessment content is considered more challenging than previous student assessments.

**INDICATOR: HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION RATE**
High school graduation usually leads to higher earnings for individuals, and greater productivity and economic growth for their communities. The median earnings of individuals with a high school diploma, even with no additional education, are roughly 40 percent higher than earnings of those who do not finish school. As the following two charts show, New Mexico’s overall high school graduation rate has climbed over the last decade, reaching 69 percent in 2014. We still fall short of the national average of 81 percent. New Mexico’s graduation rates were the lowest among neighboring states, where 75 to 88 percent of students graduate. Further, until

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24 (Child Trends, 2014)
25 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2015)
26 (NM Public Education Department, 2016)
27 (NM Public Education Department, 2016)
28 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2015)
29 (NM Public Education Department, 2016)
30 (NM Public Education Department, 2016)
31 (Promising Practices Network, 2015)
32 (Governing: States and Localities, n.d.)
2016 the gap between ethnic groups was not closing. To graduate, New Mexico students must demonstrate competence in core subject areas by passing PARCC or alternative tests and must also complete the required number of credit hours.

What Do Students Want?
Students want to learn the relevant skills that get them a job, preparing them for tomorrow’s careers, according to Ian Esquibel, executive director of the Learning Alliance. The Learning Alliance is a New Mexico nonprofit that supports the educational needs of students and families. Much of this report focuses on education reform from the perspective of what adults would like in our education system. However, it seems important to consider the perspectives and concerns of students as well. The Learning Alliance reports that its student leaders want student-centric implementation of ESSA in which their voice is valued and where adult issues do not impede student success. One of the ideas unique to students is the suggestion by some students that early in their education starting in middle school or earlier, that each student is assigned a guide to continually orient them to the education and career path system that is foreign to so many young people.

33 (NM Public Education Department, n.d.)
34 (Governing: States and Localities, n.d.)
35 (NM Public Education Department, n.d.)
36 (Esquibel, Executive Director, The Learning Alliance, 2016)
37 (Esquibel, Executive Director, The Learning Alliance, 2016)
Chapter 2:  
ESSA HISTORY AND REQUIREMENTS

History of Federal Education Acts

The 1965 passage of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) signaled the federal government’s commitment to and involvement in quality and equality in the schooling offered students in the U.S. In 2002, passage of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act reauthorized ESEA, this time requiring that schools measure student achievement in uniform ways allowing for comparisons among districts, schools, student groups and individual students over time. The new law also required that states intervene to address achievement gaps between disadvantaged students and their peers.

For the first time in U.S history, NCLB clearly quantified how many of our nation’s students were academically “proficient” – including which schools were delivering that level of preparedness for all types of students. Where many people believe NCLB fell short was in its unrealistic goal that every child must perform at grade level in reading and math by 2014, and that all schools could be fixed using the same tool box. Multiple reports indicate that these factors frustrated teachers and administrators alike.

The new ESSA law, enacted in 2015, retains the NCLB requirements that states, districts and schools maintain uniform measurement of student performance allowing for comparisons among schools, student groups and individual students over time, reporting of results, and measurement of teacher and school effectiveness.

However, states and districts have greater discretion to design some elements of their state plans. The new law also allows for substantial resources for teacher and educator professional development as well as teacher recruitment and retention.

The stated purpose of ESSA is to ensure that all children in all communities graduate from high school ready for college and career.

NCLB WAIVERS – A RUNNING START?

Under NCLB, New Mexico and 42 other states chose to operate under “waivers” that allowed flexibility regarding some requirements. This flexibility came in exchange for rigorous state-developed plans to improve educational outcomes for all students, close achievement gaps, increase equity and improve quality of instruction. Under this system, New Mexico developed its current student assessment, school report cards and educator evaluation systems.

Officials at PED report that New Mexico’s 2012 decision to comply with NCLB under the more rigorous waiver program means that the state is closer today to complying with the new ESSA requirements than many states. Proposed regulations under ESSA mirror much of what New Mexico is already doing. For educators in particular, this may mean they have already experienced the large scale changes that other states have yet to go through. In addition, PED reports that it has already assembled staff-expertise to refine assessment systems and analyze data.

38 (Turner C., 2015)  
39 (Turner C., 2015)  
40 (Turner C., 2015)  
41 (U.S. Department of Education, n.d.)  
42 (Ruszkowski, 2016)
ESSA Implementation Timeline
By summer 2017, all states must submit to the U.S. Department of Education their plan for implementation of ESSA. State education departments including PED are using the 2016-2017 school year for planning and transition as well as for stakeholder outreach and engagement. State education departments are also required to conduct stakeholder outreach and engagement throughout the planning and implementation phases. (See Appendix for stakeholder outreach opportunities offered through PED.) It is anticipated that final regulations on ESSA compliance (informed by comments submitted by the public throughout the nation), will be published by December of 2016. Most new ESSA provisions will take effect for the 2017-2018 school year.

ESSA Requirements and Opportunities
Much of the new law is similar to NCLB. As noted above, however, some differences exist including with the following relevant to community discussions in New Mexico:

- School accountability and report cards
- Student assessment and graduation requirements
- Identification and support for English language learners
- Support for low-performing schools
- Support and evaluation of teachers and school leaders
- State education report cards

School Report Cards and Low-Performing Schools
Under ESSA, schools must track and report on at least the following five indicators:

1. Proficiency on statewide tests in English language arts and math
2. Growth in proficiency or another academic indicator that can be broken out by subgroup
3. English language proficiency (a new requirement)
4. High school graduation rates
5. A fifth “other” indicator of school quality such as student engagement, educator engagement or school climate/safety

Like NCLB, ESSA also requires that states identify their lowest performing schools using a school grading system. States must also provide targeted support for the following low-performing schools with the following characteristics.

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43 (U.S. Department of Education, 2016)  
44 (Education Commission of the States, 2016)  
45 (Scott D. Jones, 2016)  
46 (Tamara Hiler, 2015)
• High schools in which the graduation rate is consistently less than 67 percent
• The lowest performing five percent of schools in the state
• Schools in which there is a consistent performance gap between subgroups within the same school (e.g. Student Group A representing a race/ethnicity consistently underperforms compared to Student Group B representing a different race/ethnicity.)

**IMPACTS FOR NEW MEXICO**

New Mexico currently has a school and district grading system with published school report cards. That system tracks all the five required indicators except English language proficiency. The PED proposes public and educator input on the English proficiency requirement.

Regarding low-performing schools, ESSA provides for greater flexibility on any “turn-around strategies.” These decisions and the responsibility for interventions will first be driven by the schools and districts. Under ESSA, the PED’s role is to provide guidance during the turn-around planning process, ensure that the school improvement plans include evidence-based interventions and provide final approval of the plans. Unlike under NCLB, ESSA does not prescribe interventions a school must use to turn it around giving communities some room to innovate.

**Student Performance, Growth Assessments and Coursework**

Like NCLB, ESSA requires that students take standardized tests to measure progress. However, the new law allows greater flexibility in the selection of the assessment tool. States may use some combination of PARCC, computer-adaptive assessments, SAT, ACT or other nationally recognized assessments. A limited number of states may also apply to develop their own assessment system, but the efforts must be self-funded and meet the same requirements as traditional assessments.

Another change under ESSA reduces the emphasis on standardized “proficiency” measures; instead states will be allowed to also gauge progress by measuring student academic growth. This change is in answer to educators’ criticism that while a student attaining grade-level proficiency is important, a better measure is whether a student is growing in their knowledge and making progress over time. (For example, under a proficiency standard, a school would measure whether a third grader knows specific math concepts; under a growth standard, the same school would gauge how much that third grader’s understanding of math measurably improved over the year.)

Increased course options for students present another set of ESSA reforms. Previously, educators expressed concerns that NCLB’s primary focus on math and reading prevented students from receiving the well-rounded education they need for career readiness. Parents and educators also pointed out the value of other courses (like music or technology) to keeping students engaged in school. Answering these concerns, ESSA allows schools to be evaluated on whether students are provided with a well-rounded education through access to advanced coursework and workplace readiness opportunities and by also expanding the definition of “core academic subjects” to include the humanities, arts and social sciences. The new law also provides additional funds to support science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) programs.

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47 (Tamara Hiler, 2015) 
48 (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2016) 
49 (Education Commission of the States, 2016) Note: computer-adaptive assessments are tailored tests that adjust the difficulty of questions based on the student’s response. Generally, if a student answers a question correctly, the next question will be harder; if a student answers incorrectly, the next question will be easier. 
50 (Blair, 2015) 
51 (Scott D. Jones, 2016) 
52 (U.S. Department of Education, 2016)
IMPACTS FOR NEW MEXICO

Beginning in 2015, New Mexico students in grades 3-11 began taking the nationally normed PARCC exams. This set of computer-based assessments are intended to measure whether students are on track for college or careers. New Mexico is one of 11 states using PARCC, and our students are among roughly five million nationally taking the exams. Given the considerable effort by the state, districts and schools to get the effort off the ground, PED recommends that New Mexico remain with PARCC as our ESSA-approved assessment. Presuming that PARCC will continue to be the state’s assessment, this approach will likely require some additional investments; several rural and tribal schools reported challenges with the computer-based model, reporting challenges with hardware and internet speed.

Beginning in 2016, most New Mexico students are required to pass the PARCC test to graduate from high school. Students who do not pass PARCC may still earn a high school diploma by meeting an “alternative demonstrations of competency” (ADC). ESSA allows states the flexibility to develop ADCs for students who do not pass their high school assessment exam. In New Mexico, PED invites input on the development of ADCs. (See appendix for additional engagement opportunities.)

English Learners

The new law contains several changes affecting students whose first language is not English, including changing the preferred terminology to “English learners” (ELs). State accountability systems and report cards are required to measure student progress and proficiency for ELs. States must also give English proficiency and math assessments to English learners in their first year in U.S. schools. The law provides options for how states include EL students in their overall accountability data, enabling them to be phased in over time and as their English improves.

IMPACTS FOR NEW MEXICO

Our state’s population includes many cultures and people with different linguistic backgrounds. Albuquerque Public Schools estimates that about one-fifth of its students are English learners. Many of these students hold tremendous academic potential, given the proven developmental benefits of bilingualism. However, they often require additional support in the classroom to achieve that potential.

New Mexico’s “Educator Equity Plan,” approved by the U.S. Department of Education in 2015, provides some direction in this regard. It calls for targeted training and cultural competency for New Mexico teachers. Further, Article XII of the state constitution calls on the legislature to provide for the training of teachers “so that they may become proficient in both the English and Spanish languages, to qualify them to teach Spanish-speaking pupils and students in the public schools and educational institutions of the state…”

Parents are key to addressing this goal, yet many are English learners themselves. It is critical that their voices are valued as highly as that of other parents. (To that end, interpretation services are offered at ESSA community meetings if requested, and the online parent survey will be posted at www.nmfirst.org in Spanish and English.)

53 PARCC (like ACT or SAT) generally goes by acronym; it stands for Partnership of Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers. Sample exams are posted at https://parcc.pearson.com/practice-tests/.
54 (NM Public Education Department, 2014)
55 (Albuquerque Public Schools, n.d.)
56 (Education Commission of the States, 2016), (Education Trust, 2016)
57 (Witte, 2016)
The PED invites suggestions for including English learner indicators in state and school report cards, preparing teachers to support EL students, and meeting the needs of students and their families in communities. (See appendix for additional engagement opportunities.)

**Support and Evaluation of Teachers and School Leaders**

Under previously granted NCLB waivers, states developed mandatory teacher and school leader evaluation systems. This requirement is removed under ESSA, but instead states are “permitted” to implement evaluation systems. The federal government is prohibited from prescribing evaluation measures, and states with evaluation systems are required to make the public aware of the criteria they use.\(^{58}\)

The new law also requires that state and local report cards include the professional qualifications of teachers (i.e., the number who are “inexperienced,” teaching with emergency credentials, or teaching out of subject). This measure points to the need for high quality, content-based and sustained professional development, and ESSA provides for that. States may use federal education funding for a wide array of teacher support programs including mentoring, targeted training, teacher academies, and STEM master teaching, etc.\(^{59}\)

**IMPACTS FOR NEW MEXICO**

New Mexico has a teacher evaluation system that was launched in the 2013-2014 school year. The system aims to identify effective and ineffective educators. Teachers are evaluated using multiple measures to help assess how well they prepare students. These measures include student growth, principal observations, student surveys and teacher attendance.\(^{60}\) The evaluation is also intended to identify where a teacher may need assistance. The PED proposes to continue the teacher evaluation system under ESSA.

Preliminary interviews conducted for this report indicate that some teachers would propose changes. While teachers overall want to be evaluated — and agree that ineffective educators should be provided additional training or removed from the classroom — teacher advocates express concerns about the current system. They report frustration that when questions about the data in a teacher’s evaluation arise, teachers are unsure of where to go for more information. More information and direction regarding addressing these and other variables might help to improve some teachers’ confidence in the evaluation process.

Regardless what process is deployed for teacher evaluation, appropriate professional development is key in New Mexico. Teacher advocates warn that some previous efforts were seen as punitive rather than supportive, or not structured to meet teachers’ needs. They hold that infrequent, one-size-fits-all teacher workshops do little more than “check the box.” Advocates suggest that professional development should be site specific, job embedded so that it is a daily part of a teacher’s workday, and ongoing so that the teacher may have support necessary from school year to school year.\(^{61}\)

Programs such as TeachNM which provides online information and resources for teachers and administrators and is supported by PED, and Teach Plus which offers a competitive education policy fellowship program for New Mexico teachers, may provide models worthy of consideration.

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\(^{58}\) (Education Commission of the States, 2016)
\(^{59}\) (Education Commission of the States, 2016)
\(^{60}\) (NM Public Education Department, 2014)
\(^{61}\) (Burnstein, 2016)
State Report Cards

New Mexico does not currently publish a statewide report card, but under ESSA it will. State report cards must now also be designed based on input from parents. In addition to providing data on students based on race, gender and economic status as required under NCLB, states must now also report information on the performance of all students and all subgroups including homeless, military dependent and foster-care students.62 The state report card will also provide data on all the variables presented in the previous sections. Some additional requirements include:

- Schools identified for improvement and targeted support plans
- Preschool programs
- Access to advanced coursework, such as advanced placement or dual credit
- Chronic absenteeism
- Per pupil expenditures

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62 (Scott D. Jones, 2016)
Chapter 3: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

In addition to the issues and topics specified in the last chapter, common sense dictates consideration of a few more items. Stakeholders agree that, working together, New Mexico can bring equitable, quality education to all students. They also agree that ESSA provides a unique opportunity to advance that goal.

Parents as a Valued Voice

Parents unquestionably play a critical role in the well-being and education of their children. Advocates interviewed for this report said the many parents do not understand the role of student assessments. For example, some parents do not realize that choosing for their young child to opt-out of PARCC testing can contribute to her or him being less prepared to pass the test in high school (which is a graduation requirement), or that opting-out can have a negative impact how their child’s teacher is evaluated or their school’s grade.

For these reasons and others, parent advocates suggest that ESSA implementation include as direct, transparent and evenly delivered communication with parents as possible, providing opportunities for meaningful feedback from all parents.

Parents who interested in learning more and contributing to the development of education plans for their community can access the online Family and School Community Toolkit created by PED.

Tribal Education Systems

New Mexico’s tribal communities face unique opportunities and challenges. Many tribes, in addition to the day-to-day management of their school systems, are simultaneously deliberating on how to best provide their students with an education system. They want that system to leads to student success while also reflecting culture, language and values.

In addition to these philosophical issues, tribal schools face practical challenges. Many are governed by two education systems that are not necessarily aligned: PED and the federal Bureau of Indian Education (BIE). The BIE governs tribal schools in 23 states including New Mexico. One example of an alignment issue is that students in tribal schools located in New Mexico take the PARCC tests, but it is unclear how they are performing compared to their in-state peers because their scores are compared with only BIE school students. Also, while many tribal students begin their education in BIE tribal run schools, most eventually attend non-tribal schools overseen by PED making assessment of students throughout their education an additional alignment challenge to overcome.

While 99 percent of New Mexico students took the PARCC assessment online in 2016, resources for appropriate infrastructure such as reliable online broadband connectivity in tribal schools is also a concern. For example, some students in tribal communities were reportedly unable to effectively take the PARCC tests because they did not have reliable technology to take the online tests. Currently there is a statewide broadband initiative underway to better connect rural and tribal as well as urban communities.

Tribal advocates interviewed for this report hope that ESSA will bring resources to align and support tribal education standards that are specifically customized for tribal communities. They recommend that those making education policy decisions consistently engage and seek input from tribal communities.

61 (Phillips, 2016)
Rural Access and Local Community Support
Many rural New Mexico school districts feel that they do not have the training and resources to implement ESSA, having been previously frustrated at attempting to comply with NCLB waiver requirements. Advocates for rural districts suggest that New Mexico support an ESSA implementation rural delivery model that is local and trusted and that can consistently provide day-to-day instructional training and technical assistance. Advocates also suggest that the delivery model include teacher recruitment and retention pipeline support specifically for rural areas.

Questions for Consideration
Given the information presented in this background report there are excellent options for education policy discussions. Questions to consider for these discussions may include:

GENERAL
- What is working well/not working well in your school and school district?
- What are the characteristics or qualities you envision for your school and school district?
- What are the strengths of New Mexico’s education system?
- What are the opportunities for improvement to New Mexico’s education system?
- What non-technical aspects of the education system can be improved? (e.g. one-page versus multiple page reports, additional explanation for items in student assessments, etc.)

STUDENTS
- Are there other ways we can ensure all students are successful?
- How should we ensure more students are graduating?
- What are additional ways to demonstrate Alternative Demonstrations of Competency (ADCs)?
- What is the best way to integrate the new required indicator of English language proficiency?
- How can we ensure the success of English learners?

TEACHER SUPPORT
- How do we best support teachers so that they and their students are successful?
- How can educators, schools and districts use evaluations and report cards as tools to improve student and school performance?

COMMUNITIES
- How can we ensure that rural districts have the training and resources they need?
- What would it take to better align education systems and provide resources for tribal communities?

COMMUNICATION
- What is the best way for students, parents, teachers and administrators to receive information about their students, schools, policy changes and guidance, and who should deliver that information?
- What are the best ways and optimal frequency for students, parents, teachers and administrators to provide feedback for improving the education system?

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64 (Chavez, 2016)
CONCLUSION

Implementation of ESSA provides an opportunity for education stakeholders to continue to work together to provide all New Mexico children with a quality education that will shape their future and our state’s economic future, allowing students to reach their full potential. Overwhelmingly, interviewees consulted for this report called for quality coordination and communication among stakeholders. This includes information that is transparent, informative, accessible, appropriate, applicable and consistently provided.

While our challenges are real, New Mexico has an abundance of students, parents, teachers, administrators and community leaders that care, that have the desire and ideas to innovate and refine our education system, and who aim to provide lasting benefits for our children for decades to come.

Appendix:

PED STAKEHOLDER OUTREACH

ESSA provides New Mexico the opportunity to re-engage with students, educators, district leaders, families, and the community for input on how to continuously refine New Mexico’s education system to better support our teachers and students. Source: PED (2016)
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.

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<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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<td>STORY AND KEY DATA</td>
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<td>PULLING IT ALL TOGETHER</td>
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<tr>
<td>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)</td>
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<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 networks. (Title II, Part B)</td>
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<td>ESSA KEY MESSAGES</td>
<td>STORY AND KEY DATA</td>
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<td>School librarians increase access to personalized, rigorous learning experiences supported by technology, allowing equitable resources for all students. (Title IV)</td>
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CRAFTING YOUR ESSA ELEVATOR SPEECH

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

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

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.

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

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

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

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?
## 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. 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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| [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. | Librarians lead professional development and committees. In this district, librarians trained teachers so that students can maintain digital portfolios across content areas. | Include school librarians in Title II funding plans for the state. | 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.) |

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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] School librarians are uniquely suited to lead the effort in applying for competitive grants because of their expertise and access to strong professional learning.</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. 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.)</th>
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<tr>
<td>[Title IV, Part A] School librarians increase access to personalized, rigorous learning experiences supported by technology, allowing equitable resources for all students.</td>
<td>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.</td>
<td>Allocate block grant funds for library resources. 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. (Speaker: Librarian. Audience: State Board Official.)</td>
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</table>
Glossary

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:**


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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/al.aba.org.aasl/files/content/aaslpubsandjournals/slr/vol15/SLR_School_Librarians_as_Technology_Integration_Leaders_V15.pdf.


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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:
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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.
- **School Librarian Instructional Role:** Instructional Role of the School Librarian Position Statement

REFERENCES:


**DISCLAIMER:**
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**APPROVAL/REVISION DATES:** June 25, 2016
July 26, 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 Knight Norton
Executive Director
American Association of School Librarians
American Library Association
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 be 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.