Connecting ESSA to School Libraries

Saturday, March 11, 2017

Ohio Educational Library Media Association (OELMA)
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    “Preparation of School Librarians”
  • Rule Marking & Guidance, Comments submitted to proposed rulemaking on ESSA (7/26/16)
  • Student Support and Academic Achievement Enrichment Grants (ESSA Block Grants)
## Schedule

**March 11, 2017**

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<th>Time</th>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Presenter</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>9:45 am</td>
<td>Welcome Remarks</td>
<td>Laura Hicks, AASL Board of Directors, Regional 2 Director</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:45 – 10:05 am</td>
<td>ESSA Overview</td>
<td>Emily Sheketoff, Executive Director of Washington Office of American Library Association</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Federal and State Timeline</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Effective School Library Program Definition</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Review of titles that include School Librarians</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Connection of titles to school library role</td>
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<td>Laura Hicks, AASL Board of Directors, Regional 2 Director</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:05-10:20 am</td>
<td>Review of Ohio Department of Education ESSA Plan</td>
<td>Liz Deskins, OELMA Past President</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:20-10:35 am</td>
<td>• Review of Key Messages</td>
<td>Laura Hicks, AASL Board of Directors, Regional 2 Director</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Identifying Stakeholders</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:35-10:45 am</td>
<td>Coalition Development Plan</td>
<td>Laura Hicks, AASL Board of Directors, Regional 2 Director</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:45-10:55 am</td>
<td>Report/Share Out</td>
<td>Laura Hicks, AASL Board of Directors, Regional 2 Director</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:55-11:05 am</td>
<td>Review of Key Messages</td>
<td>Laura Hicks, AASL Board of Directors, Regional 2 Director</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Elevator Speech Development</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Sample Elevator Speech</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:05-11:20 am</td>
<td>Elevator Speech Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:20-11:35 am</td>
<td>Elevator Speech Practice/Refinement</td>
<td>Small group work</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:35-11:50 am</td>
<td>Report/Share Out</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:50 am</td>
<td>Review of supplemental handbook material</td>
<td>Laura Hicks, AASL Board of Directors, Regional 2 Director</td>
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<tr>
<td>Noon</td>
<td>Closing Remarks/Questions</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Welcome

Laura Hicks
AASL Board of Directors,
Region 2

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
Ohio ESSA Update

Ohio ESSA Update

OH Department of Education ESSA Page
http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Every-Student-Succeeds-Act-ESSA

OH draft state plan-

Contact: essa@education.ohio.gov
Subscribe: https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/OHED/subscriber/new

Ohio ESSA Updates

Technical Submission of OH ESSA State Plan -

The Department released a Draft Overview of Ohio's State Plan for The Every Student Succeeds (ESSA) Act on January 19, 2017. This overview document outlined the intentional process Ohio pursued to engage critical stakeholders in the development of its draft ESSA state plan; communicated the state's timeline for releasing, receiving comments, revising and submitting the draft state plan; and highlighted the significant policies contained in the draft. The document clearly explained how stakeholder feedback informed the state's proposal under ESSA. The table below outlines key ESSA requirements and our proposed response based on stakeholder feedback.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ESSA Requirements</th>
<th>Changes Proposed based on stakeholder feedback</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACADEMIC CONTENT STANDARDS</td>
<td>Conducting an ongoing process to review and revise Ohio's Learning Standards by teams of Ohio Educators</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adopt challenging academic content standards that align to credit-bearing coursework in the state's public education system and relevant career-technical standards</td>
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<td>TESTING</td>
<td>Identify opportunities to further reduce time devoted to state assessments; align approval of assessments to highlight assessments that are approved for more than one purpose to help districts reduce local testing; potential reduction to local testing as a result to revisions to the Ohio Teacher Evaluation System (OTES)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annually administer state tests in reading and mathematics in grades 3-8 and once during high school, as well as science assessments in selected grade bands</td>
<td>• Provide stability by maintaining the current state testing system. • Explore innovative improvements (such computer adaptive testing)</td>
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## Ohio ESSA Updates

### ESSA Requirements

### Changes Proposed based on stakeholder feedback

### ACCOUNTABILITY

- Establish long-term and interim goals of achievement for all students and each student subgroup;
- Develop and implement an accountability system that “meaningfully differentiates” school performance annually. Accountability measures must include academic achievement, graduation rate, an additional achievement measure that may be a growth measure, performance of student subgroups, achievement of English language learners and additional measures of school quality, such as students’ access to rigorous coursework, school climate and absenteeism rates.
- Provide stability in measures.
- Address educators’ feedback on opportunities for improvement of Report Card measures.
- Integrate greater emphasis on growth into gap-closing measure and address concerns regarding K-3 Literacy Improvement measure.
- Investigate and pilot additional measures of school quality such as student engagement and climate surveys.

### SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

- Use accountability systems to identify schools and districts in need of comprehensive support, as well as those in need of targeted support due to one or more persistently underperforming subgroups of students.
- Provide support for schools and districts identified as needing comprehensive and targeted support.
- Implement an evidence-based framework with significant local decision making.
- Ongoing educator involvement in the implementation of the Ohio Clearinghouse of Evidence-Based Strategies.
- Place a coherent focus on the needs of students, families and communities by coordinating the need for integrating student supports.
- Strengthening partnerships with other state and local agencies to coordinate expanded school-based health and mental health services.

### EDUCATOR EFFECTIVENESS

- Implement plans that ensure equitable access to effective teachers for poor and minority students.
- No longer requires HQT or evaluations linked to student growth.
- Establish strategies for equitable access to effective teachers that align and support human capital management.
- Review Ohio’s educator effectiveness system through recommendations of the Educator Standards Board (plan to be developed separately from the state ESSA template).
Ohio ESSA Updates- DRAFT Plan

Draft state plan included in handbook.

Goal:
• Keep ground that we have
• Get additional footing in other areas

Identifying Stakeholders & Building 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
Connect Messages to Stakeholders

Connecting the dots

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

ESSA Key Messages

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

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

ESSA Elevator Speech

https://vimeo.com/183395638

Meaningful Messaging
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)

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?
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>
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<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>
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<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>In December 2015, bipartisan support for the ESSA was high and the overdue reauthorization was finally signed into law.</td>
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## ESSA State Timing, Rules and Implementation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>December 10, 2015</td>
<td>President Obama signs the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) into law</td>
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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>
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<tr>
<td>August 1, 2016</td>
<td>(1) ESEA waivers are null and void, per the statute, and (2) comments are due on the NPRM re: accountability and state plan issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 1, 2016</td>
<td>Effective date for competitive programs under ESSA, unless otherwise provided for in the statute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October/November, 2016</td>
<td>Final regulations published by ED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February/April, 2017</td>
<td>States submit plans for School Year 2017-2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May/June, 2017</td>
<td>ED begins peer review and approves state plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 1, 2017</td>
<td>Effective date for formula grant programs under ESSA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August, 2017</td>
<td>New state plans take effect in schools at the start of the 2017-2018 school year</td>
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Conference Agreement to Reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act

OPPORTUNITIES FOR SCHOOL LIBRARIANS

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

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

Background

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

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

Library Provisions

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

Next Steps

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

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

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

Background

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

Library Provisions

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

Next Steps

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

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

  - 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.
  
  - 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.
  
  - 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.
  
  - Note that while efforts to fund IAL in the past have been successful, the lack of an explicit authorization for these activities has hindered advocacy efforts related to expanding the program. The specific authorization of IAL under ESSA will help with future funding as Congress has expressed its support for these activities under the most recent authorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.
TITLE IV, PART A – STUDENT SUPPORT AND ACADEMIC ENRICHMENT GRANTS (BLOCK GRANT)

Background

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

Library Provisions

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

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

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

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

Next Steps

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

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

Description of Grants
The newly enacted bipartisan Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) includes a flexible block grant program under Title IV Part A, which is authorized at $1.65 billion in FY 2017. Title IV, Part A authorizes activities in three broad areas:

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

Distribution of Funds
Each state will receive an allocation based on the Title I funding formula. Using the same Title I formula, the states will then allocate funds to school districts.

Any school district that receives a formula allocation above $30,000 must conduct a needs assessment and then must expend 20 percent of its grant on safe and healthy school activities and 20 percent on activities to provide a well-rounded education programs. The remaining 60% of the money can be spent on all three priorities, including technology. However, there is a 15% cap on devices, equipment, software and digital content.

If a district receives an allocation below $30,000, the law does not require a needs assessment or setting aside percentages for well-rounded and safe and healthy students programs. It must spend money on activities in at least one of the three categories. The 15 percent technology purchase cap would continue to apply.

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

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

Program Funding Need
Strong evidence demonstrates the need for students to have access to health and safety programs, a diversity of academic programs, and modern technology.

- Evidence supports a direct correlation between physical and mental health and learning that is essential to academic success, school completion, and the development of healthy, resilient, and productive citizens. Schools are uniquely positioned to help students acquire life-long knowledge and skills through comprehensive health education, physical education, nutrition, comprehensive school mental and behavioral health services, counseling, and integration among all education and health programs.
- In order to prepare students to succeed, they need access to a well-rounded curriculum. Funds through the block grant will help schools expand music, art, STEM, computer science, accelerated learning, history, and civics courses, as well as expand access to college and career guidance and counseling.
Federal investments in education technology ensure schools have technology-proficient educators, well equipped classrooms, sufficiently supported administrative structures, and a curriculum optimized to take advantage of the benefits technology offers to all students—such as closing the opportunity and learning gaps and providing students with essential modern workforce skills.

Given the elimination under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of numerous programs that support the overall health and safety of students, the investments in education technology, as well as helping districts ensure access to a well-rounded education, a robust federal investment in support of these programs is absolutely essential through Title IV Part A. Without a significant investment in Title IV, Part A, districts will be forced into choosing which of the priorities to invest in—even though an ample investment in all three is necessary to providing students with a comprehensive education.

For further information, or if any questions arise, please contact Sunil Mansukhani at The Raben Group, smansukhani@rabengroup.com or Jon Bernstein at Bernstein Strategy Group, jbernstein@jbernsteinstrategy.com.
Driving Education Excellence: Securing the Future for All Ohio Students

A Draft Overview of Ohio’s State Plan for The Every Student Succeeds (ESSA) Act
Dear Ohioans,

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) was signed into federal law on Dec. 10, 2015, replacing the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). This long-awaited legislation represents a shift from broad federal oversight of primary and secondary education to greater flexibility and decision-making at the state and local levels.

After a year of hard work, the Department is proud to release the draft overview of Ohio’s ESSA state plan. ESSA requires states to develop plans that address standards, assessments, school and district accountability, and special help for struggling schools.

As part of the legislation, each state is required to conduct significant outreach to stakeholders to collect input for their state plan. Ohio takes this mandate very seriously and has already engaged 15,000 Ohioans in the development of the draft. A plan that is deeply rooted in the needs of Ohio's students, educators and communities requires everyone's input. Thus far:

- Approximately 3,100 individuals participated in 11 webinars on a variety of topics to be addressed in the state plan;
- 1,500 Ohioans attended the 10 regional meetings held across the state;
- There were more than 11,000 responses to the ESSA online survey; and
- Department staff participated in more than 70 meetings and presentations around the state and collected suggestions and recommendations submitted through email to the Department.

Based on the feedback we’ve received, below are a few of the major policy points included in this draft summary report:

- One of the main themes communicated during stakeholder engagement was the need for stability in the state testing system, as Ohio has changed tests two times in the last three years. Accordingly, Ohio is proposing to maintain its current state assessment system. However, the Department will work in partnership with Governor Kasich and the General Assembly to re-examine any state assessments not required under ESSA – an area in which Ohio has already made significant progress. Thanks to the leadership of the Ohio General Assembly, administration time for state assessments was reduced by 50 percent between 2014-2015 and 2015-2016.
- ESSA requires each state to set a time period for state-level goals; Ohio has selected 10 years. The metrics for which we establish long-term goals include: percent proficiencies in math, ELA, and science; performance index; graduation rates; chronic absenteeism; and English language proficiency.
- Reducing the threshold number of students for which a subgroup of students must be separately reported for accountability purposes (N-Size) from 30 to 15 to ensure that more student subgroups are identified in an effort to provide targeted interventions.
- Ohio proposes to use chronic absenteeism and discipline incidents as its initial indicators of school quality.
- Ohio will build on the existing School Report Card measures and weighted frameworks by reviewing and/or making revisions to several measures.
- State set asides in title funding will be redirected back to local school districts strategically.

Once again, the Department is committed to working with stakeholders as the draft plan is finalized. Ohioans will be able to submit comments to this draft summary now, and to the full report beginning on Feb. 2 through March 6. Once edits are made based on the comments received, the full draft plan will be submitted to the U.S. Department of Education in April.

The Ohio Department of Education appreciates the constructive feedback we’ve already received from nearly 15,000 educators, parents and community members. Together, we’ll make significant strides in improving opportunities and outcomes for Ohio’s students.

Sincerely,

Paolo DeMaria
Superintendent of Public Instruction
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This overview document outlines the intentional process Ohio pursued to engage critical stakeholders in the development of its draft ESSA state plan; communicates the state’s timeline for releasing, receiving comments, revising and submitting the draft state plan; and highlights the significant policies contained in the draft. This overview document is not to be mistaken for the full draft ESSA state plan, which will be posted to the Ohio Department of Education’s (the Department) website on February 2, 2017.

Understanding ESSA

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) was signed into federal law on December 10, 2015. It reauthorizes the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), the nation’s 50-year-old education law that sought to achieve equal opportunity for all students. It also replaces the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act, which was enacted in 2002, and took a significant step in shining light on where students were making progress and where they needed additional support regardless of race, income, zip code, disability, home language or background. Among other things, ESSA provides states and districts with more decision-making authority and offers more flexibility for programs based on state specific needs.

Leveraging Our Assets to Maximize ESSA and Enhance Student Success

Ohio benefits from nearly two decades worth of education policies aimed at positioning our students for success in college, career and life. In 2001, Ohio led the nation in implementing rigorous standards for what students should know and be able to do, aligning those standards with assessments for gauging student growth and reporting outcomes through clear accountability mechanisms. Today, thanks to the leadership of Governor Kasich, support from Ohio’s General Assembly and direction from the State Board of Education, Ohio continues to stake its leadership claim.

Ohio’s leaders have thoughtfully and collaboratively enacted strategic, student-focused reforms that span the state’s entire education continuum—from early childhood to college and career. Together, these accomplishments provide a platform for taking student success to even greater heights over the next several years. Key highlights include:

**Early Childhood**

- Expanding early childhood education by tripling the number of high quality preschool opportunities for Ohio’s most vulnerable students.
- Ensuring that Ohio’s children of all ages attend quality-rated childcare facilities and receive at least 12.5 hours of education instruction each week.
- Ohio developed and implemented a new statewide Kindergarten Readiness Assessment starting in 2014-2015 to measure all areas of school readiness (academic, social and physical).

**K-12**

- Continuing to update Ohio’s Learning Standards to ensure that they remain world-class and set our students on a path of success after high school.
- Implementing the Third Grade Reading Guarantee to make sure Ohio’s younger students have the reading skills they need to succeed later in school.
- Revising the state’s approach to testing students to be more efficient and require less testing time (which actually decreased by more than 50 percent from 2014 to 2016).
- Enacting the A-F School Report Card, which provides parents a better understanding of how their child’s school and district is performing and where it can improve.
- Strengthening dropout prevention and recovery programs to help keep Ohio’s students in school.
- Expanding student access to career and technical education, beginning in 7th grade, and giving more students a jumpstart on career education.
- Increasing student access to high-quality STEM education programs and project-based learning initiatives.
College and Career

- Adopting a state-level attainment goal: 65 percent of Ohioans, ages 25-64, will have a degree, certificate or other postsecondary workforce credential of value in the workplace by 2025.
- Incentivizing Ohio’s colleges to graduate more students—not just enroll them—through a change in the state’s funding formula.

Engaging 15,000 Ohioans to Build a Responsive Draft Plan

The Department did not write this plan in a vacuum. Our goal was to meaningfully engage diverse groups of stakeholders to solicit a range of thoughts, opinions and recommendations. We instituted a 13-month (from 2016 to 2017), three-phased stakeholder engagement process that reached more than 15,000 Ohioans. Each stage of stakeholder consultation contributed feedback that has been incorporated into the state’s draft plan. Additionally, through each phase, we closely engaged the Governor’s Office and members of the Ohio General Assembly. Phases include:

Phase 1: Initial discussions via individual meetings (January – October 2016)

The Department met with more than 70 groups across Ohio to discuss the changes resulting from ESSA and gather initial thoughts from the field and stakeholders. Through these discussions, the Department sought to understand stakeholder priorities and values, which are embedded throughout the draft plan.

Phase 2: Issue-specific discussions and feedback via regional stakeholder meetings, webinars and surveys (July – October 2016)

From late August to October 2016, the Department worked with Philanthropy Ohio (the organization that represents Ohio’s foundation community) to conduct 10 regional stakeholder meetings that engaged nearly 1,500 Ohioans, including educators, school leaders and administrators, parents, higher education partners, business leaders and the general public. The facilitated conversations yielded rich feedback specific to standards and assessments, accountability, educator effectiveness and school improvement and student supports. A detailed report out of the stakeholder meetings can be found on Philanthropy Ohio’s website.

From late July to September 2016, the Department hosted a series of interactive webinars that engaged approximately 3,100 participants. The webinars were organized to address a specific topic and gather even deeper participant feedback. Webinar topics included: determining minimum subgroup (or “N” size) for reporting student performance; using nationally-recognized high school assessments; discussing report card indicators, ratings and disaggregation requirements; transitioning away from the highly qualified teacher requirement; using the State Equity Plan to guarantee equitable access; addressing the learning needs of students who are homeless; providing an overview of the school improvement process; discussing the academic content standards’ review process; and understanding federal funding options and flexibilities.

In August 2016, the Department deployed an online English/Spanish survey to gather even more input. Nearly 11,000 Ohioans responded to a targeted set of ESSA-related questions.

Phase 3: Direct engagement of the Ohio General Assembly Joint Education Oversight Committee and State Board of Education (late 2016 – January 2017)

The Department specifically engaged the Joint Education Oversight Committee (JEOC), which is comprised of five members each from the Ohio Senate and Ohio House of Representatives. The State Board of Education, through its Urban and Rural Renewal Committee, also hosted monthly discussions with stakeholders across the state to gather input specific to migrant students, homeless students, correctional education, foster children and successful afterschool programming.
Calling Stakeholders to Submit Comments and Feedback on the Draft Plan

This overview is intended to be the beginning of a conversation with stakeholders about what we heard over the last 13 months and the path we charted based on that input. We welcome feedback based on this initial effort. Input received will inform the draft plan that is currently being finalized.

The Department invites stakeholders to review the more detailed, draft ESSA state plan when it is available on February 2, 2017 and submit comments and feedback. This review period will begin as soon as the plan is publicly available and conclude on March 6, 2017. Visit the Department's website on February 2 to download the full draft state plan.

Submitting the Final Plan

The Department will adhere to the following timeline for submitting the final plan:

- **January 19**: An Overview of Ohio’s State Plan for ESSA posted to the Department’s website for review and comment.
- **February 2**: Full Draft of Ohio’s ESSA State Plan posted to the Department’s website for review and comment.
- **February (on a date to be determined)**: The Department will conduct a webinar to explain the ESSA State Plan in greater detail and review questions.
- **March 6**: Review and comment period comes to an end.
- **April 3**: The Department will submit its final plan to the U.S. Department of Education (USED).

USED has **four months** to approve or submit suggestions for Ohio’s ESSA State Plan.

It is important to note that this process does not end on April 3, 2017, when the Department submits the final plan to USED. After the plan is submitted, we will continue to engage stakeholders to clarify provisions, answer questions and, most importantly, support school districts with the implementation of the plan.

Understanding the Significant Policies in Ohio’s Draft ESSA Plan

The next section of this overview document describes major policies and decisions contained in Ohio’s draft ESSA plan. We have organized the sections by the following:

- **What ESSA requires.** We briefly describe what ESSA calls for in key sections.
- **What we heard from stakeholders and the field.** We engaged and listened to more than 15,000 stakeholders. We have incorporated their input across the plan.
- **Our proposal in response to ESSA.** We clearly highlight Ohio's ESSA-related policy decisions.

Challenging State Academic Standards and Academic Assessments

Challenging Academic Standards

**What ESSA requires.** ESSA reinforces state authority over the implementation and adoption of academic standards and prohibits USED from mandating or incentivizing states to adopt a specific set of standards. The bottom line: States continue to have control of the standards they choose to adopt. Following are specific requirements of ESSA:

- Requires “challenging” English language arts and mathematics standards aligned to credit-bearing, remediation-free coursework in the state university system.
- Calls for the alignment between state career-technical education (CTE) standards and college- and career-readiness standards.
What we heard.

- Based on feedback from the 10 regional stakeholder meetings, Ohioans overwhelmingly remain supportive of the state's rigorous standards.
- While we did not receive much feedback on the state's CTE standards, we did sense an underlying theme that CTE continues to be an underused pathway for many students. This underscores the importance of aligning our CTE standards to Ohio's Learning Standards.

Our proposal in response to ESSA. Ohio led the nation when it adopted and implemented rigorous academic standards for what students should know and be able to do in English language arts and mathematics more than 15 years ago. Since then, we have constantly sought to uphold world-class standards. In 2010, the State Board of Education adopted Ohio's Learning Standards and school districts began to fully implement and test them in the 2014-2015 school year. Currently, Ohio-based educators and content specialists from K-12 and higher education, along with community members, are working on Advisory Committees in each content area to review and update the state standards. The goal: Ensure our standards remain the best for our students. Visit Ohio’s Learning Standards webpage for more information.

As part of our response to ESSA, Ohio will continue to advance the recommendations of the Advisory Committees, which have suggested minimal to modest changes for English language arts and mathematics. The social studies, science and financial literacy standards were recently posted on the Department's website for public comment. The completed standards for world languages, fine arts, technology and physical education are expected to be posted on the Department's website in 2019. The State Board of Education is poised to adopt newly revised English language arts and mathematics standards by February 2017. It will adopt revised standards in social studies, science and financial literacy in early winter 2018. Updated standards for world languages, fine arts, technology and physical education are expected to be adopted the following year.

Ohio ensures a seamless set of rigorous standards from birth to grade 12 and ensures access and alignment of the standards for all students including those with significant cognitive disabilities. Ohio has comprehensive Early Learning and Development Standards addressing academic, social, and physical standards for children birth to age 5 that are aligned to Ohio's Learning Standards. In addition, Ohio's Learning Standards Extended help to ensure that students with significant cognitive disabilities are provided with multiple ways to learn and demonstrate knowledge. At the same time, the extended standards are designed to maintain the rigor and high expectations of Ohio's Learning Standards.

Ohio is committed to aligning our CTE standards to our Learning Standards. In fact, the state is a recent beneficiary of the New Skills for Youth grant, which we will use to support the alignment of CTE standards to Ohio's Learning Standards. We also plan to build an online tool that educators can use to create customized standards documents that integrate academic and technical content from CTE courses or industry-recognized credentials.

Aligned Academic Assessments

What ESSA requires. The big assessment theme—ESSA provides greater flexibility about what tests and when tests are administered. Notably, ESSA:

- Retains current testing requirements by grade level and subject area: mathematics and English language arts in grades 3-8 and once in high school; science once each in elementary, middle and high school grades.
- Continues to require states to disaggregate results by student subgroups.
- Permits use of national assessments such as ACT or SAT as a substitute for state end-of-course assessments.
- Permits computer-adaptive testing and competency-based assessments.
- Allows out-of-level testing for high school mathematics in grade 8.
- Maintains the requirement that 95 percent of students participate in state assessments—and states must factor participation in their report cards.

What we heard. Stakeholders emphasized two consistent themes:

1. Stabilize the state-level assessment system and resist making new modifications for several years. Ohio has changed the majority of its tests two times over the last three years.
2. Strategically reduce tests where it makes sense to do so. While the state has reduced the amount of time students spend taking tests—down by approximately 50 percent from 2014 to 2016—stakeholders expressed an interest in continuing to explore a further reduction in testing.
**Our proposal in response to ESSA.** Figure 1 identifies the state’s current assessment schedule for grades 3-8. At the high school level, students who graduate in 2018 will be required to take end-of-course tests in English I and II, algebra I, geometry (or integrated mathematics II and II), biology (or physical science for the class of 2018 only), American history and American government.

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**Figure 1** - Ohio’s current assessment schedule for grades 3-8.

Ohio’s current testing schedule for grades 3-8 and high school goes beyond what is required of ESSA. We currently administer the following assessments that are not mandated by ESSA:

- Fall administration of the grade 3 English language arts assessment;
- Grades 4 and 6 social studies assessments;
- American history and American government end-of-course assessments;
- One end-of-course assessment in English language arts; and
- One end-of-course assessment in mathematics.

As part of ESSA, Ohio will reexamine its testing requirements. The Department is poised to work closely with the Governor, legislature and education leaders to examine the pros and cons of adjusting the testing schedule—guided by the lens of what is best for future student success. Any discussion about high school level end-of-course exams will be done in coordination with the State Board of Education’s current reexamination of Ohio’s graduation requirements.

School districts also administer locally-determined assessments on top of state-required assessments. This increases the time students spend taking tests.

With regard to computer adaptive testing, Ohio will work with stakeholders and educators to further investigate the costs and benefits associated with the approach. One known benefit: Computer adaptive testing does have the ability to measure student performance more deeply and provide schools with data more quickly.

Ohio will explore offering more competency-based science assessments. Through our STEM schools and programs, we have already ventured into the competency-based testing space. We will continue down that path.

The state will continue the middle school double-testing waiver (for grade 8 algebra I) and will urge USED to maintain its extended waiver for all relevant end-of-course exams.

At this time, Ohio will NOT adopt a process for using the ACT and/or SAT as substitute exams in high school. This decision was driven by the stakeholder feedback, which urged stability and constancy in our testing system.

### An Aligned System of Accountability, Support and Improvement

**Accountability System and Report Card**

A comprehensive district and school accountability system is essential for supporting local decision making that results in increased student success. We take pride in the fact that Ohio’s accountability system is nationally heralded for its comprehensive, innovative and easy-to-understand structure.
**What ESSA requires.** Each statewide system must account for all schools and “meaningfully differentiate” performance using at least:

1. Academic achievement (proficiency) on state assessments;
2. Graduation rates for high school;
3. English language proficiency;
4. Another statewide academic indicator for K-8 schools (which may include growth);
5. Not less than one other state-set non-academic indicator of school quality or student success;
6. 95 percent assessment participation rate benchmark incorporated in the achievement measure;
7. Long term and interim improvement goals for all student subgroups; and
8. A summative (or overall) rating.

**What we heard.** Stakeholders echoed four primary topics:

- Include nonacademic measures of school quality (e.g. “Prepared for Success” measure or results of a school climate survey);
- Incorporate a separate achievement indicator for students who “re-take” end-of-course tests;
- Clarify and improve the K-3 Literacy Improvement measure; and
- Provide credit for improving the “Gap Closing” subgroup performance measure and a better explanation of the value-added progress measure.

**Our proposal in response to ESSA.** Ohio will leverage ESSA to support clear and high expectations and drive continuous improvement. To that end, the Department will:

- Clarify “grade” definitions and provide detailed explanations of grading scales.
- Use parent surveys and focus groups to make report cards more user-friendly and understandable.
- Improve specific report card measures and components. More information is contained in the “Report Card Measures” section below.

**School and District Summative (Overall) Rating**

**What ESSA requires.** States must implement a single, summative rating with at least three performance levels for schools and districts. ESSA includes A-F letter grade systems as a specific example of a summative rating.

**What we heard.** Stakeholders were split. Some supported the A-F Report Card, while others suggested developing something different.

**Our proposal in response to ESSA.** In 2012, Ohio's leaders put in place our A-F Report Card. This system meets many of ESSA’s requirements. Going forward, we propose using the overall A-F Report Card grade to meet the school and district summative rating.

**Report Card Measures**

Ohio’s School Report Card includes 11 measures that are organized into six components: Achievement, Progress, Graduation, K-3 Literacy, Gap Closing and Prepared for Success. We break down those six components below using the same organizational structure: What ESSA requires; What we heard; and Our proposal in response to ESSA.

**Academic Achievement**

**What ESSA requires.** State accountability systems must include a measure of student achievement, accompanied by interim and long-term goals for all students and student subgroups for ELA, mathematics and science. ESSA further requires that participation be factored into the measure of student achievement.

**What we heard.** Among other things, stakeholders expressed the need to maintain stability in measures and assessments.

**Our proposal in response to ESSA.** The Achievement component of Ohio’s School and District Report Cards includes two graded measures: Performance Index and Indicators Met.

- Performance Index measures the achievement of every student, not just whether or not he or she reaches “proficient.” Districts and schools receive points for every student’s level of achievement. The higher the student’s level, the more points the school earns toward its index. This rewards schools and districts that improve the performance of highest- and lowest-performing students.
• The Indicators Met measure represents whether student performance on state tests met established thresholds. Individual indicators are based on a series of up to 31 state tests that measure the percent of students proficient or higher in a grade and subject. Schools and districts also are evaluated on the gifted indicator, giving them up to 32 possible indicators during the 2015-2016 school year.

Under ESSA, Ohio will use the Performance Index and Indicators Met measures as achievement measures. The Performance Index and subgroup performance for English language arts, mathematics, science and graduation rate will be reported as required on school and district report cards.

The test participation rate will continue to be a factor in the Performance Index. Schools that miss the 95 percent participation rate for all students or for one or more subgroups of students must develop an improvement plan that addresses the reason(s) for low participation in the school and include interventions to improve participation rates in subsequent years. The improvement plans are developed in partnership with stakeholders and parents.

These strategies are designed to help Ohio meet its goal of achieving a state-level Performance Index of 100 or greater by 2027.

Ohio proposes to add a separate “Re-Take” indicator for high school level end-of-course examinations and include only first-time test takers in the existing end-of-course indicators.

ESSA requires an additional indicator of “School Quality” to be integrated into the accountability system. This indicator will not be based on state tests, but on a broader measure of school quality that is likely to lead to increased student achievement. It must be a statewide measure and disaggregated by subgroup. Stakeholders were overwhelming supportive of including such an indicator—as long it did not result in an additional burden (in terms of costs and data collection) to districts.

Ohio proposes to measure student engagement by considering chronic absenteeism and student discipline incidents. We will use these as an initial indicator of school quality. This new initial indicator will include progress towards reducing chronic absenteeism so that schools have a gauge of their progress. The Department will also investigate the use of school climate surveys as both a school improvement tool and a potential measure to include as part of Ohio’s accountability system in the future. Our goal: By 2027, Ohio’s statewide rate for chronic absenteeism will be 5 percent or less.

Graduation Rate

What ESSA requires. All states must use the four-year cohort graduation rate as part of their state and local accountability systems. States may also include an extended graduation rate. ESSA requires long-term and interim goals at state and local levels for the four-year graduation rate.

What we heard. Ohioans are focused on ensuring all students graduate well-prepared for life after high school.

Our proposal in response to ESSA. Ohio’s existing Graduation component includes both a four- and five-year graduation rate. The four-year graduation rate includes those students who graduate within four years of entering ninth grade for the first time. The five-year graduation rate includes those students who graduate within five years of entering ninth grade for the first time.

Going forward, Ohio will continue to include both the four- and five-year cohort graduation rates as report card measures. We will set long-term improvement goals that align to existing graduation rate benchmarks. This will work to support our goal: By 2027, the four-year cohort graduation rate for all students will be 93 percent or better.

Progress (Growth)

What ESSA requires. ESSA recognizes that a single achievement measure is not sufficient and requires states to include an additional academic measure for all students and student subgroups which may be a measure of student growth.

What we heard. Stakeholders emphasized the need to highlight growth measures because they shine light on student progress regardless of where they start. Stakeholders did raise questions about the interpretation of current measures, particularly during times when the state experienced multiple test transitions.

Our proposal in response to ESSA. Not all children start their learning journey at the same place, but every student should learn and grow throughout the school year. The Progress component examines the growth that all students make based on past performance. Measuring growth paints a clearer and fuller picture of student performance.
Ohio's Progress component includes measures of growth for all students, students with disabilities, students identified as gifted and students scoring in the lowest achieving 20 percent of students statewide. Results from the following are used to determine those measures.

- Student growth in English language arts and mathematics for students in grades 4-8;
- Students taking end-of-course examinations; and
- Students taking recently added science and social studies exams.

Ohio will measure growth using value-added progress as the additional academic measure. Progress of student subgroups beyond those already included as part of the state’s Progress component will be reported on school and district report cards, but will not be graded. We will also review the Progress component’s grade scale and consider recommendations to simplify and improve understanding of the component.

**Gap Closing**

**What ESSA requires.** Ohio must track schools’ performance in closing achievement and graduation gaps for designated student subgroups and establish an indicator of progress by English Learners (ELs) in becoming English language proficient. (Prior to the 2017-2018 school year English language proficiency was a “report-only” measure on report cards.)

States must also establish the minimum number of students or “N-size” (or number) necessary for a subgroup, such as students with disabilities, to be included as part of the graded Gap Closing component. The N-size must be statistically sound and substantially include students in the state accountability system. The maximum N-size permitted under ESSA is 30. States must report (though these will be non-graded) subgroups of students who are of military families, in foster care, homeless or classified as in the juvenile justice system.

**What we heard.** Stakeholders expressed that the existing Gap Closing component does not provide sufficient “credit” for progress made by students. Students can and do make significant progress even when student scores remain between established benchmarks. Stakeholders urged that any measure of English language proficiency should also provide credit for student progress.

Stakeholders did not reach a clear consensus on N-size. There were two schools of thought: include all students in reported or graded subgroups, which means lowering the N-size—or hold the N-size steady so as not to impact the reported performance of those schools who serve a small number of students in subgroups.

Stakeholders did fully agree that revising the Gap Closing component to include progress was essential if the N-size was reduced to fewer than 30 students.

**Our proposal in response to ESSA.** Schools must continue to close the achievement gaps that exist based on income, race, ethnicity or disability. The Gap Closing component shows how well schools are meeting performance expectations for our most vulnerable students in English language arts, mathematics and graduation. It compares the academic performance of nine student groups against the performance of a 10th group. Thus, Ohio will use a revised Gap Closing component to examine progress in closing student subgroup achievement gaps in mathematics, English language arts and graduation. The Department will continue to determine the details of the revised Gap Closing measure.

Ohio will also fold the new English Learner proficiency measure into the Gap Closing component. The English Learner proficiency measure will include improvement. Subgroups of students who are military families, in foster care, homeless or classified as students in the juvenile justice system will each be reported.

Ohio will adjust its N-size for subgroup reporting to 15. This decision was driven by the goal of ensuring that all students have the supports necessary to succeed. All too often, Hispanic and English language learners, as well as students with disabilities, are excluded for their schools’ subgroup analysis when the N-size was 30.

**K-3 Literacy**

**What ESSA requires.** States must have accountability measures for all school buildings—not just those that include grades generated by required state assessments.

**What we heard.** Stakeholders said the measure was difficult to understand and caused confusion among parents and the broader community.
Our proposal. Reading is the foundation for all learning. We must identify and address reading issues as early as possible. The K-3 Literacy component looks at how successful the school is at getting struggling readers on track to proficiency in third grade and beyond. The component is directly related to Ohio’s Third Grade Reading Guarantee, which aims to make sure that all students are reading at grade level by the end of grade 3.

As part of the report card redesign, the Department will explore better alignment between the Third Grade Reading Guarantee and the K-3 Literacy component.

Prepared for Success

What ESSA requires. ESSA includes student access to and participation in rigorous coursework among the nonacademic measures of school quality. States may have one or more nonacademic measure(s) of school quality which may differ across grade bands.

What we heard. Stakeholders said that measuring college and career readiness matters, but they raised questions about the new measure on the report card.

Ohio proposes to clarify the calculation of the Prepared for Success component so that it is based on the four-year cohort rather than the combined four and five-year cohorts. Ohio will also consider how “access to advanced coursework” may be incorporated further into the report card as an additional indicator. Whether training in a technical field or preparing for work or college, the Prepared for Success component considers if Ohio’s students are ready for future opportunities.

Long Term State Goals

What ESSA requires. ESSA allows for the customized improvement of objectives at the state and local levels. Each state must determine the timeline for long-term and interim goals for all students and student subgroups and set specific state-level goals for required accountability measures.

What we heard. Stakeholders requested that the long-term timeline be sufficient to demonstrate results. Educators in particular were excited about the opportunity to develop district-specific goals at the local level.

Our proposal in response to ESSA. Ohio proposes to set its long-term timeline for improvement goals at 10 years. Proposed state-level goals include:

- Percent proficient mathematics for all students- 80% by 2027
- Percent proficient ELA for all students- 80% by 2027
- Percent proficient science for all students- 80% by 2027
- State Performance Index of 100.00
- 4-year graduation rate for all students- 93% by 2027
- 5-year graduation rate for all students- 95% by 2027
- Chronic absenteeism- 5% or less for all students by 2027
- English Language Proficiency by 2027 TBD

Similar to our ESEA waiver student subgroup goal (submitted in the full state plan), we will seek to reduce baseline achievement and graduation rate gaps by 50 percent by 2027.

Schools and Districts Identified for Support

ESSA requires states to identify:

- The lowest 5 percent performing schools.
- High schools struggling with graduation rates (four-year graduation rate is less than 67 percent).
- Schools struggling with gaps among subgroups.

What we heard. Stakeholders urged use of accountability measures on Ohio’s School Report Card (such as the value-added measure) as gauges for continuous improvement—not as punitive labels.
Our proposal in response to ESSA. Today, Ohio identifies Priority (the lowest-performing 5 percent, required by ESEA), Focus (struggle with large achievement gaps in student performance and graduation rates, required by ESEA) and Watch (struggle with student subgroups and demonstrate low achievement) schools. The state also deploys an Academic Distress Commission and State Support Teams to support school districts that have a three-year history of low performance on Ohio’s School Report Card.

Going forward, and leveraging ESSA, Ohio will ensure that the criteria for identifying Priority, Focus and Watch schools fully aligns with Ohio’s School Report Card measures.

The Department will ensure identification criteria aligns to Report Card measures and state requirements for identifying struggling districts and schools (e.g. Academic Distress Commissions, and state “Watch” districts and schools with subgroup gaps). Entrance and exit criteria will be understandable and clearly linked to improvement planning requirements.

Priority Schools: Ohio will base criteria for identifying the Priority schools (Comprehensive Support) on the Report Card Overall Grade methodology. Schools will be identified every three years. The identification of Priority schools is as follows:

- Schools with an overall report card grade of ‘F’
  - The next lowest performing schools as determined by overall report card grade (A-F) to meet the 5% threshold as necessary; or
- Schools with a 4-year cohort graduation rate of less than 67%; or
- Schools with one or more student subgroups performing at level similar to the lowest 5% of schools (based on individual subgroup performance).

During our transition into ESSA (from ESEA), Ohio will maintain its current Priority school list through the 2017-2018 school year and generate a new Priority list based on ESSA accountability measures at the end of the 2017-2018 school year. We will update that list every three years (at the end of the 2020-2021 school year.) Schools meeting exit criteria will be removed from lists annually.

Focus Schools: The Department will base criteria for identifying the Focus schools (Targeted Support) on the revised Report Card measures, which will be reviewed annually:

- Schools that earn a grade of a ‘D’ or ‘F’ for the Gap Closing report card component two consecutive years;
- Schools that have one or more student subgroups that fail to meet specific locally determined improvement goals for three consecutive years; and
- Schools that do not meet multiple student subgroup performance benchmarks.

During our transition into ESSA (from ESEA), Ohio will maintain its current Focus school list through the 2017-2018 school year and generate a new Focus list based on ESSA accountability measures at the end of the 2017-2018 school year. Again, we will update that list every three years (at the end of the 2020-2021 school year). Schools meeting exit criteria will be removed from lists annually.

Watch Schools: Those schools that struggle to meet the needs of one or more student subgroups.

Exit Criteria

ESSA requires states to identify the exit criteria for those schools identified as in Priority or Focus status. Exit criteria aligns with the Report Card measures.

Based on feedback, the Department has identified the following exit criteria guidelines:

- The maximum time frame for the improvement requirements is four years.
  - The exit criteria for the Priority schools (Comprehensive Support) will be based on the revised Report Card measures including the revised Gap Closing measure which includes achievement, progress and graduation rate data of all required subgroups. The exit criteria include:
    1. School performance is higher than the lowest 5% of schools as determined by the overall report card grade for two consecutive years;
    2. School earns a four-year graduation rate of better than 67% for two consecutive school years, and;
    3. No student subgroups are performing at a level similar to the lowest 5% of schools (based on individual subgroup performance).
  - The exit criteria for the Focus schools (Targeted Support) will be based on the revised Report Card measures including the revised Gap Closing measure which includes achievement, progress and graduation rate data of all required subgroups. The exit criteria includes:
    1. School or district earns an overall grade of ‘C’ or better as determined by report card grade, and earns a ‘C’ or better for Gap Closing, and meets subgroup performance goals per state requirements.
**District Continuum of Support**

**What ESSA requires.** As part of the overall school improvement system, the state is responsible for approving district improvement plans and plans for Priority schools identified for Comprehensive support. Districts have responsibility for approving plans for Focus schools identified for Targeted support.

**What we heard.** Stakeholders want more local control for school improvement planning. Community groups, such as those representing vulnerable student groups, want a greater voice in developing those local plans and serving as a resource for implementation.

Stakeholders recommended the process be less focused on compliance and more focused on quality, evidence-based practices. Partners such as the Educational Services Centers (ESCs), State Support Teams (SSTs) and Information Technology Centers (ITCs) have reiterated their willingness and ability to support districts in this work.

**Our proposal in response to ESSA.** Ohio has developed a continuum of supports based on federal and state laws and regulations. This continuum ranges from “Independent” support districts which have no specific state mandated improvement requirements to districts under the oversight of an “Academic Distress Commission” which is the most intensive school improvement strategy.

Ohio will continue to utilize a continuum of support based on new ESSA requirements and ongoing state law. This continuum will be aligned to Ohio’s Report Card measures and be used by the regional support system to prioritize supports.

The proposed continuum of district supports is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Distress Commission</th>
<th>Intensive Supports</th>
<th>Moderate Supports</th>
<th>Independent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Districts that are under the Supervision of an Academic Distress Commission</td>
<td>Overall “F” on district Report Card or At least two Priority Schools or A four year graduation rate of less than 67% or An “F” on Gap Closing for two consecutive years.</td>
<td>Overall “D” on district Report Card or “D” or “F” on Gap Closing for the two most recent years or At least one Priority, Focus or Watch School</td>
<td>All other districts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All schools and districts not identified for support are encouraged to identify and address areas for improvement and access some of the universal supports available through the school improvement system.

**Rewards and Recognition**

Ohio must honor and celebrate school districts that grow and achieve. To that end, we identify the following recognition categories:

- Schools of Promise - Recognizes and highlights schools that are making substantial progress in ensuring high achievement for all students.
- Schools of Honor - Recognizes schools that have sustained high achievement and substantial progress while serving a significant number of economically disadvantaged students.
- All ‘A’ Award - Recognizes districts and schools that earned straight As on all of their applicable report card measures.
- Overall A - Recognizes districts and schools that earned an Overall A on the summative report card grade.
- The Momentum Award - Recognizes districts and schools for exceeding expectations in student growth for the year.
- Blue Ribbon Schools
- National Title 1 Distinguished Schools

**An Aligned, Evidence-Based Improvement System**

**What ESSA requires.** ESSA makes significant shifts away from NCLB’s one-size-fits-all approach to school improvement which mandated top-down requirements and forced the lowest performing schools to choose from four prescriptive federal models of school improvement.
ESSA addresses educators’ feedback that school improvement should be more locally driven, and gives districts and schools much more discretion in designing school improvement plans. It also emphasizes the importance of local community engagement in designing those plans.

Instead of prescriptive models of school improvement, ESSA focuses on the notion of evidence-based strategies. School improvement plans must be based on evidence-based strategies, and the many supports that go along with ESSA such as 21st Century Community Learning Centers and other Title funds should be aligned to those evidence-based requirements.

**What we heard.** Stakeholders want more local control in decision making as it relates to school improvement planning. Community groups, such as those representing vulnerable student groups, want more of a voice in developing those local plans and can serve as a resource in implementation.

The regional partners have close relationships with schools and districts and can build on that expertise and local knowledge.

Stakeholders have indicated that there is much opportunity for continued alignment of initiatives especially as it relates to support coming from the state.

Numerous stakeholders emphasized the need for a more coherent focus on addressing the needs of students, families and communities in struggling schools. More integrated student supports are needed to help students succeed. Community organizations are doing much work in this area and can be valuable partners in this work. Ohio has pressing concerns that are impacting our students and families such as the opioid crisis, homelessness, and the needs of students in the juvenile justice system. The final regulations require districts to notify parents at schools identified for support and how to be involved in the improvement process.

**Our proposal in response to ESSA.** Ohio has a robust system of school improvement supports based on a regional system including the Educational Service Centers (ESCs), State Support Teams (SSTs), Instructional Technology Centers (ITCs), and direct support from the Department and other partners.

Moving forward, Ohio will build on the strengths of this regional system by developing and implementing an **evidence-based system** of improvement that provides tools and support for schools and districts by leveraging numerous partnerships, including partnerships with ESCs, SSTs and ITCs.

Schools and districts will be identified for improvement based on federal and state requirements that focus on overall performance and the performance of all subgroups of students.

Ohio will continue to utilize the **Ohio Improvement Process (OIP)** as a framework to establish systemic collaborative structures designed to support development and implementation of a strategic plan and focused goals. An updated and expanded Decision Framework will continue to be utilized as the primary data-based needs assessment.

Stakeholders consistently identified nonacademic factors as key needs in struggling schools and districts. In order to support a more comprehensive assessment of school needs, the parameters of tools, such as the Decision Framework, will expand to add additional focus on non-academic student supports. These supports include mental health services, especially in light of the emphasis on chronic absenteeism. Incentives in the competitive School Improvement funding process will provide for a site coordinator to serve as a nexus for community partners to address integrated student supports.

To support school and district planning, Ohio will create an **online evidence-based clearinghouse**, leveraging partnerships with the Ohio Education Research Center (OERC) and selected regional and local education agencies. The clearinghouse will provide schools and districts with a broad menu of proven strategies and programs to support local planning, decision-making and implementation.

To further support schools and districts with implementing evidence-based strategies, the Department will build its research capacity both internally and with partners to emphasize performance monitoring (rather than just compliance monitoring) and rigorous research to meet the evidence-based requirements. Local action research will be supported by the Department through a variety of partnerships including working with Proving Ground and interested districts to develop quick turnaround evaluation of strategies.

Ohio will create the **Peer-to-Peer Improvement Network** encouraging partnerships and opportunities for educators to collaborate across district boundaries to fashion solutions to common challenges.

Implementation of an aligned, evidence-based system of continuous improvement require a suite of tools and resources easily accessed by schools and districts. Plans for additional tools and resources include:

- Redesigned online planning tool/consolidated grants application, known as the Comprehensive Continuous Improvement Plan (CCIP)
- Local stakeholder engagement toolkit
- District and school reviews, including training for peer reviewers
- Data analysis tools
- Resource allocation tool
- Equity Index (state Equity Plan)
- Performance database to support peer-to-peer improvement network

Schools that do not make significant progress may be subject to more rigorous interventions such as required “onsite review,” in-depth resource allocation reviews, more rigorous requirements on tiers of approved evidence-based strategies, and required direct student services.

**School Turnaround Funding**

**What ESSA requires.** ESSA requires the state to set aside up to 7 percent of Title I funding to support efforts to turn around struggling schools identified by the accountability system. This essentially replaces the School Improvement Grant (SIG) program, which had been a separate, competitive grant program with very prescriptive requirements for turnaround strategies.

The 7 percent set aside can be allocated by formula or a competitive process, but the funds must be targeted at schools most in need of support.

**What we heard.** Stakeholders provided varying and sometimes conflicting feedback on this provision. Some recommended providing the school improvement funding as a formula allocation without connecting to strategic priorities. Others have suggested a more competitive approach that can be targeted to schools based on the quality of their school improvement plans with funding incentives that can be connected to innovative practices.

**Our proposal in response to ESSA.** Ohio has applied for and received multiple rounds of SIG grant funding to support struggling schools. While ESSA eliminated this grant program, the currently awarded funds will continue to support the work of awardees for a few additional years while the program is completely phased out. The 7 percent Title I School Improvement set aside will be a competitive process, and may include incentives for a menu of options including participation in Tier I (Random Control Trials) and Tier II evidence-based research such as collaborative evidence-based research partnerships with Proving Ground. An additional incentive will be available to support a resource coordinator to serve as a site leader to coordinate student and family services (health, mental health, integrated student supports, etc.).

**Direct Student Services**

**What ESSA requires.** ESSA provides Ohio with the flexibility to set aside an additional 3 percent of Title I funding to support direct student services in geographically diverse districts with large numbers of schools identified for support. These funds would be distributed competitively and could be used for a variety of supports including personalized learning, credit recovery programs and access to advanced coursework.

**What we heard.** Some stakeholders have suggested not utilizing this flexibility, while other feedback has encouraged the use of innovative approaches especially since it can be targeted for strategic priorities such as access to advanced coursework in geographically diverse areas. The state will be required to maintain an approved list, with rigorous qualification requirements, of direct student service providers.

**Our proposal in response to ESSA.** This is a new flexibility available to states through ESSA. Ohio will utilize its flexibility option to reserve up to 3 percent of Title 1 funding to support direct student services. These funds will be targeted to districts with the highest percentage of schools identified for improvement to:

- Improve access to rigorous coursework at all grade levels including but not limited to Advanced Placement courses.
- Expand the number of students accessing accelerated coursework, particularly students in traditionally underrepresented student groups.
- Support development and delivery of transitional coursework to reduce college remediation rates and better prepare students for postsecondary education.
- Support early literacy initiatives.
Title I Schoolwide Waivers

**What ESSA requires.** Under ESSA, schoolwide programs continue to be a tool for leveraging Title I funds to improve academic achievement and implement a school improvement plan.

ESSA states that Ohio may permit school buildings receiving Title I Part A funds to operate schoolwide programs where 40 percent or more students are economically disadvantaged. Ohio may issue a waiver to permit school buildings below the 40 percent threshold to operate schoolwide programs under certain conditions.

In order to issue a waiver, states must consider “how a schoolwide program would best serve the needs of students in the school in improving academic achievement and other factors.” U.S. Department of Education guidance recommends that states “establish a process informed by feedback from the public and ensure schools receiving a waiver will operate a schoolwide program in a way that improves the academic achievement of students in the school that would otherwise be eligible to receive Title I services through a targeted assistance program.”

**Our proposal in response to ESSA.** Ohio will develop a process with stakeholder input that permits issuance of schoolwide waivers in instances where schools can demonstrate that economically disadvantaged students have previously made sufficient improvement under a schoolwide program.

Supporting Rural Schools

There is not a specific decision point for rural schools, but relevant stakeholders have emphasized the need to have a coherent approach to supporting rural schools which leverages the opportunities in ESSA to target strategies and resources. Ohio will support its rural schools through targeted and coordinated regional efforts. School improvement initiatives will be strengths-based and culturally sensitive to meet the unique needs of each district. Ohio will support rural education by:

- Developing partnerships in the Appalachian region of the state
- Designating a Rural Education Liaison in the Office of Improvement to coordinate school improvement initiatives
- Leveraging the Title I Direct Student Services set aside to target resources for advanced coursework for high need, rural students
- Leveraging the Title II set aside for professional development to support the needs of educators in rural schools
- Targeting 21st Century Learning Center grants to rural schools
- Providing technical assistance in selecting evidence-based improvement strategies

Dropout Prevention and Recovery

**What ESSA requires.** State accountability systems must identify and support schools that are struggling with graduation rates with all students, and with subgroups of students. Alternative schools, such as those that focus on dropout prevention, are permitted to have specialized or differentiated improvement strategies.

**What we heard.** Stakeholders continue to emphasize the needs of these students and the importance of coherent strategies to ensure that all students leave high school prepared for success.

**Our proposal in response to ESSA.** Graduating all students prepared for success is a critical piece of the vision for Ohio’s education system. Unfortunately, nearly 20 percent of the Ohio Class of 2015 failed to earn a high school diploma within four years of entering high school. Over time this graduation gap left Ohio with approximately 10 percent of its adult population aged 25 and over without a high school diploma or its equivalent.

The Department proposes multiple strategies to begin to close this gap and improve the graduation rate for Ohio students. Initiatives include:

- Expansion of the number of districts participating in the Student Success Dashboard pilot, which uses data to target students that are at-risk for dropping out.
- Leveraging the existing Alternative Education Challenge grants to improve outcomes for at-risk students including more aligned coordination with required school improvement plans.
- Using recommendations from the State Superintendent’s Dropout Prevention and Recovery Advisory Committee to develop a specifically-designed evidence-based improvement protocol for Ohio dropout recovery charter schools (referred to as “community schools” in Ohio) identified for comprehensive or targeted support.
English Learners (ELs)

What ESSA requires. ESSA places an increased emphasis on English Learners (ELs) including strong accountability requirements. ESSA requires Ohio to make several technical decisions regarding these strengthened accountability provisions and additional support mechanisms such as identification procedures.

What we heard. ELs are a growing population with diverse needs. Stakeholders emphasized these needs as part of an improvement structure that includes larger student and community needs. Stakeholders also pointed out that current N-size requirements exclude many ELs from their school’s Gap Closing measurements.

Our proposal in response to ESSA. English Learners are a major emphasis in ESSA. These students represent a growing population with diverse needs. Currently, Ohio reports the academic achievement and graduation rates of ELs through its Gap Closing measures. Separately, Ohio reports on the English proficiency through AMAO reports. Ohio supports ELs through the Lau Resource Center. Ohio’s plan reflects several decision points:

- An “EL Progress to English Proficiency” measure will be added to the Gap Closing component of the Report Card to measure these students’ improvement towards proficient use of the English language. ELs’ academic achievement will continue to be measured.
- With the N-Size adjustments, more ELs will be included in their respective schools’ Gap Closing measure.
- Ohio will continue to utilize the option to continue the previous ESEA waiver flexibility which includes test scores of ELs in accountability only after they have been in the U.S. for two years, while requiring ELs to take all assessments from year 1 and include in growth measures.
- Ohio will include former ELs in the EL subgroup for accountability for four years after exiting the program.

Ohio’s Entrance and Exit Procedures for English Learners

- Entrance Procedures: Ohio has a two-step process of ensuring proper identification of English Learners (ELs) during enrollment beginning with the utilization of the state-developed Home Language Survey. The survey is the primary tool used to identify language backgrounds other than English of all students. The second step is the use of English language proficiency screeners to measure proficiency in reading, writing, listening and speaking of students identified with language backgrounds other than English. A number of commercially developed EL screeners are currently available to Ohio districts and schools serving the needs of English Learners. Moreover, in school year 2017-2018, Ohio will introduce a new state-provided English Learner screener to help standardize the identification process. The new screener aligns with the Ohio English Language Proficiency Assessment (OELPA) and the Ohio English Language Proficiency Standard. Department staff are in the process of consulting with statewide and regional stakeholders in standardizing state EL entrance and exit procedures by improving the processing and authentication of the Home Language Survey and putting in place strategies to streamline and align commercially available screeners with the one developed by the state.

- Exit Criteria: An EL student is reclassified (no longer an English Learner) when the student has attained a performance level of proficient on the OELPA. The test is composed of four domains: reading, writing, listening and speaking.

Nonpublic School Ombudsman

What ESSA requires. ESSA requires Ohio to create a Nonpublic School Ombudsman position within the Department to monitor and enforce compliance with equitable services provisions. This person is to serve as the primary point of contact for addressing questions and concerns from private school officials and local education agencies regarding the provision of equitable services.

What we heard. Stakeholders have emphasized the importance of this role, and suggest having the position in place to support consultations that take place in planning for the 2017-2018 school year.

Our proposal in response to ESSA. In accordance with requirements in ESSA the department will establish the position of Nonpublic School Ombudsman with the Office of Nonpublic School Options. The Ombudsman will:
- Ensure expenditures for educational services and other benefits provided for eligible private school children, their teachers, and other educational personnel serving those children shall be equal, taking into account the number and educational needs of the children to be served, to the expenditures for participating public school children.
- Ensure funds allocated to a local education agency for educational services and other benefits to eligible private school children are obligated in the fiscal year for which the funds are received.
- Ensure the timely notices of allocated funds to the private schools.
- Ensure the school districts and private schools engage in timely and meaningful consultation.
- Ensure the school districts maintain records and documentation of consultation and that the consultation is documented by a written affirmation.
- Resolve written complaints by private school officials.
Supporting Excellent Educators

What ESSA Requires. Continuing with the theme of flexibility, ESSA gives states more discretion in defining effective educators. Specifically, it:

- Eliminates the Highly Qualified Teacher requirement (that educators meet certain training, content and pedagogical expectations for licensure) requirement.
- Does away with the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) flexibility waiver requirement that states have evaluation systems linked to student growth.
- Continues to require that all students have equitable access to quality teachers and leaders.
- Provides flexibility using Title II funding to provide poor and minority students with greater access to effective educators.
- Allows states and school districts to use new, evidence-based approaches for Title II, Part A, to attract, select, place, support, develop and retain excellent educators more effectively. This could include mentoring new educators, recruiting effective educators, implementing teacher leadership opportunities, enacting professional learning for principals and improving equitable access to effective teachers.

What we heard. Stakeholders expressed:

- Strong support for local educators—they understand the critical roles teachers and leaders play in helping students learn and grow.
- Differences on how best to evaluate the effectiveness of educators.
- Educators do not believe that the current evaluation system is working as it should. While there is some support for elements of the evaluation process, there is broad support for refinement to the system to make it simpler.
- There is concern on the part of educators related to the calculation of student growth and its inclusion in the evaluation system.
- There is broad support for providing resources to support all teachers, including those who are new or struggling, through professional development.

Our proposal in response to ESSA. In the short term, Ohio’s state plan requires a description of our methods for ensuring that students have access to quality teachers and leaders. Our plan will be based on those elements currently in state law and our existing equity plan. Ohio will define equity through a newly defined measure of quality and the Ohio Teacher and Principal Evaluation Systems in our state plan. However, the freedom from prescriptive mandates gives the state the opportunity to reflect on our current system, have a larger conversation with stakeholders, and consider how we want to define effectiveness moving forward. A few efforts have been initiated to begin that conversation.

The State Superintendent has tasked the Educator Standards Board (ESB) with reviewing and identifying opportunities to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the existing Ohio Teacher Evaluation System while addressing the complexities of teaching and learning and being attentive to educator accountability. The December 2016 and January 2017 ESB meetings were used for this purpose. Any and all findings will be reported to the state superintendent for additional consideration. This is an opportunity for reflection based on feedback from the ESB and the recent ESSA stakeholder meetings.

The Ohio Educator Equity Lab convened in December 2016 and nine representative district teams engaged with stakeholders to refine their newly developed local equitable access plans for FY17. At the convening, participants gave feedback on local equitable access planning requirements, such as data measures, which could be included in the ESSA plan and have potential to impact equitable access to excellent educators for all students in Ohio.

Ohio is committed to using all available dollars to support and expand our quality educator workforce.

Ohio will implement the 3 percent Title II set-aside to support principal and teacher leadership development throughout all stages of educators’ careers. This set-aside supports strategies focused on developing strong, effective principals and other school leaders especially in schools with large populations of poor, minority and students with disabilities.

One or more programs may be designed and piloted in upcoming years focused on training, induction, mentoring, coaching and professional development of principals, teachers and teacher leaders. Program design could include collaboration with various stakeholder workgroups. In some instances, the pilots may focus particularly on high-needs, turnaround schools, or typology focus. The programs would help to create a state-wide system of support for principals, teachers and teacher leaders in order to foster environments that nurture success of all students and ensure continuous professional development based on principal, teacher and teacher leader needs and aspirations across the course of their careers.
Supporting All Students: Well-Rounded and Supportive Education for Students

Title IV

What ESSA Requires. ESSA establishes a broad vision for schools emphasizing the importance of a well-rounded education for all students.

- Instead of continuing to fund nearly 50 separate grant programs, ESSA offers districts flexibility to configure student services and supports to meet specific local needs by consolidating grant programs into a single block grant under Title IV.
- In addition to collapsing programs into a single block grant, ESSA dramatically expands how funds can be used at the local level, organizing activities into three areas of focus: well-rounded education, health and safety, and technology.
- Like local districts, the Department has additional flexibility under ESSA around its use of Title IV funds to support state priorities.

What we heard.

- Stakeholders strongly support strategic, coordinated and well-aligned partnerships with community organizations and service providers.
- Stakeholders noted that a great deal more can be done to meet the holistic needs of students and families.
- Some said partnerships should not be mandated by the state, rather these partnerships should be locally developed.
- Stakeholders recommended that Ohio explore the opportunity to use school climate and student engagement surveys both as potential accountability measures and as a part of a comprehensive school improvement strategy.

Our proposal in response to ESSA.

- Using flexibility provided by Title IV, we propose to use Ohio's state share of Title IV to support access to rigorous coursework by helping to subsidize fees paid by economically disadvantaged students choosing to participate in Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate examinations, STEM/Technology initiatives and school climate and safety resources.
- Ohio will partner with schools and districts to pilot the use of climate surveys. The results of these pilots will allow Ohio to explore the climate as an additional indicator of school quality and the use of climate surveys as part of a larger improvement strategy.
- Ohio will also continue to support the Ohio Center for P-20 Safety and Security. The Center focuses on school climate, safety, security and emergency management concerns in the K-12 and higher education environments, providing guidance and direction to promote physically safe and emotionally secure environments for students, educators and staff.
- Ohio will also continue implementation of the system of Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports through direct training and facilitation to districts and schools.

Vulnerable Students

What ESSA Requires. Some students face unique challenges that negatively impact their progress in school. New provisions included in ESSA highlight five specific groups of students that often require additional help and support. While the circumstances that create the barriers faced by these students may differ; students who are homeless, migrants, in foster care, involved with the juvenile justice system or are members of military families share many of the same challenges. ESSA includes provisions designed to address barriers associated with student transiency, instability and family crisis.

What we heard.

- When asked to identify “the most important issue facing our students and schools today,” poverty and homelessness were the top issues participants identified.
- There is a lack of coordination for students who move between school districts and juvenile justice centers resulting in challenges and frustration.
- While not all of the student groups below were specifically mentioned by stakeholders, there was much discussion around the challenges in students’ lives that are beyond the control of students, teachers, schools or districts.

What we propose.

Support for Military Families

Frequent moves experienced by military families create challenges with respect to transfer of records, graduation requirements, kindergarten entrance, adapting to changing curriculum and accessing specific programs and services necessary to meet students’ unique educational needs.
• In an effort to better support children of military dependents, the Ohio Department of Education proposes to create the Ohio Network for Military Families. The Ohio Network for Military Families will serve as an online ‘virtual’ hub providing information and tools for families and connections to a range of student and family supports.

• The Ohio Department of Education will partner with the Wright-Patterson Air Force Base and the Ohio National Guard to connect with counselors, teachers, principals, superintendents and administrative office staff to inform and educate school staff on how to recognize challenges faced by military families and provide appropriate supports for Ohio’s ‘military kids.’

• Districts will also now report which students come from military families so that these students’ academic growth can be monitored.

Support for Students in Foster Care
Ohio is committed to supporting the educational stability of students in foster care. Frequent moves and emotional and physical trauma can create challenges for students in foster care such as transportation to their school, immediate enrollment in a new school if in their best interest, and transfer of records to ensure appropriate scheduling and supports are in place.

• The Department and the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) recently issued joint guidance to districts and child welfare agencies to support the unique needs of students in foster care.

• We will work with partners to provide training around enrollment, transfer of records, and class placement for students in foster care.

• The Department has hired a Community and Family Coordinator to ensure sustainable collaboration with the ODJFS and other state-level partners.

Migrant Students
Migrant students often have several gaps in their education resulting from lack of continuity. The most unique and significant challenge faced by migrant students is mobility. Migrant children miss school when their families move from one work site to another. Additionally, migrant students, particularly teens, often work or take care of their younger siblings instead of attending school out of economic necessity. Ohio will build on existing supports for students from migrant families.

• The Department will continue to work in collaboration with the Ohio Migrant Education Center to support the educational, health and social service needs of students from migrant families through health fairs, dental and vision screenings, data exchanges, and literacy and social supports for families.

Support for Students in the Juvenile Justice System (Title I Part D)
Students that move between traditional schools and juvenile justice facilities face many challenges, including delayed academic record transfer and limited access to specific programs and services necessary to meet students’ unique educational needs. To implement provisions in ESSA, the Department will require all districts to:

• Identify a single point of contact for students in the juvenile justice system. This person will be responsible for communicating with local detention and other treatment facilities regarding student placement, assist in the transition of student records (including IEPs), transfer of credits and serve as a liaison between the district and the local juvenile court.

• Describe in their local plan the supports the district has in place for youth that transition from the juvenile justice system back to their home district.

• The Department will create the position of Correctional Education Consultant (CEC) to assist districts with these responsibilities.

• The Department will explore developing a new competitive grant to serve as a resource to help all identified local education agency personnel with development and implementation of transition plans and help close communication gaps between juvenile justice centers and local education agencies.

Homeless Students
ESSA has created a renewed focus for states on measuring and reporting the academic performance of some of our most vulnerable students, those who are homeless. These new requirements will give states and districts detailed information to determine whether students are receiving the support necessary to be successful.

• Historically, the McKinney-Vento Homeless Children and Youth Program has guided the work to ensure that homeless children have equal access to the same high-quality educational opportunities as non-homeless children and youth. Ohio will invite applications for the FY2018 McKinney-Vento competitive grant. The one-year grant period allows time for Ohio to realign the grant priorities to better align with changes ushered in by ESSA. Grants awarded as a result of the FY2019 competition are expected to cover a three-year period.
Federal Grant Programs

21st Century Community Learning Center

What ESSA requires. ESSA maintains the 21st Century Community Learning Center grant program and recognizes the program as an important contributor to meeting students' needs by providing enrichment opportunities during non-school hours for children. This program is targeted at students who attend high-poverty and low-performing schools, and is focused on providing additional support for academic standards.

What we heard. ESSA stakeholder feedback supports the 21st Century Community Learning Center as a valuable resource. Educators describe this program as providing essential opportunities to support student achievement outside the school day. Stakeholders saw the continuation of this grant as a chance to more closely align these programs with school and district improvement plans.

What we propose. The Ohio Department of Education will not hold a new 21st Century Community Learning Century grant competition for FY2018. All continuing grantees will be renewed per their regular schedule. Current grantees who are in their final award years (years 3 and 5) will submit documentation for the grant closeout process in October 2017. While the allocation for FY2018 has yet to be finalized we will fund $23,765,380.49 for FY2018 for 140 grantees.

Consolidated Comprehensive Competitive Grant System

What ESSA requires. ESSA allows districts to consolidate eligible federal funds and state and local education funding in order to create a single school funding system based on weighted per-pupil allocations for low-income and otherwise disadvantaged students.

Districts can consolidate and use Title I and other federal, state and local funds for schoolwide Title I programs in schools serving a school attendance area where not less than 40 percent of the children are from low-income families, or where 40 percent of the children enrolled are from such families.

What we heard. Stakeholders strongly support the ability of school districts to make decisions based on local needs and coordinate multiple programs and sources of funding.

What we propose. Ohio is exploring the concept of building a comprehensive consolidated competitive grant application system. For the school year (SY) 2017-2018 Ohio will design and begin building such a system to align all competitive grant programs to the priorities of the state's ESSA plan. In SY 2018-2019, the comprehensive consolidated competitive grant system will provide eligible grantees with a single application containing potential federal and state competitive education grant opportunities to select which align to the school and/or district's needs assessment and improvement plans. This comprehensive system will streamline the competitive grant process and allow the state and its subgrantees to leverage resources, align individual program funds to district and school needs and provide a comprehensive process to using competitive grant funds to meet specific grant requirements. Furthermore, the consolidated competitive grant system will assist the state and districts in removing program silos and award funds in a more coordinated manner.
Coalition Development Plan

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

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

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

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

**Title II**
Supporting effective instruction

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ESSA KEY MESSAGES</th>
<th>STORY AND KEY DATA</th>
<th>THE ASK <em>(What’s the need? Who are you talking to?)</em></th>
<th>PULLING IT ALL TOGETHER</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School librarians and access to effective school library programs, impact student achievement, digital literacy skills, and school climate/culture. (Title I)</td>
<td>INSERT STORY</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>
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<tr>
<th>ESSA KEY Messages</th>
<th>Story and Fact/Data</th>
<th>The Ask</th>
<th>Pulling It All Together</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[Title I] School librarians and access to effective school library programs impact student achievement, digital literacy skills, and school climate/culture.</td>
<td>Nearly 60 percent of first year college students require some remediation.(^1) The critical thinking and research skills developed in an effective school library program are essential components of college readiness.</td>
<td>Ensure that students have access to school library programs throughout K-12 schooling.</td>
<td>We are seeing a disparity in preparedness among our incoming students. We count on students having digital literacy and information literacy skills that will allow them to do college level work and, all too often, those skills must be remediated. That deficit negatively impacts student engagement, retention, and academic performance. Please use Title I funds to help close that gap and ensure that all students in [state] have access to effective K-12 school library programs. (Speaker: College Administrator. Audience: State Legislator or Board of Ed Official.)</td>
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| [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,”
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<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.</th>
<th>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.</td>
<td>Our school library offers digital and print materials that are accessible to every student in the building and this is critically important to our diverse population. When our 5th graders do their science unit on electricity, the library is able to supplement the text with materials from our shared databases, which even include audio support for struggling readers and English language learners. We also offer supplemental reading materials for kids performing above grade level. It is critical to have these resources in a place where all students and teachers can access them; please ensure that [state’s] implementation plan includes school libraries in its programs eligible for Title IV funds. (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.
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](http://www.ala.org/aasl/standards/guidelines)

**REFERENCES:**


**DISCLAIMER:**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

REFERENCES:

**RECOMMENDED READING LIST:**


**DISCLAIMER:**

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

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

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

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

DEFINITIONS:

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

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

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

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

POSITION:

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

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

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

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

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

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

DEFINITIONS:

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

RECOMMENDED READING LIST:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

§299.15 – Consultation and Coordination

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

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

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

§299.19 – Supporting All Students

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sincerely,

Emily Sheketoff
Executive Director
Washington Office
American Library Association

Sylvia K. Norton
Executive Director
American Association of School Librarians
American Library Association
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.