



## The Student Support and Academic Enrichment (SSAE) Grant Program

**Request: Provide \$1.6 billion (the program's authorization level) for the SSAE program.**

### Background

The bipartisan Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) includes the flexible block grant known as the Student Support and Academic Enrichment (SSAE) grant program, or Title IV-A for short. The block grant is authorized at \$1.6 billion and authorizes activities in three broad areas:

1. Providing students with a well-rounded education (e.g., college and career counseling, STEM, music and 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 (e.g., professional development, blended learning, and 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. The remaining 60 percent of the allocation may be spent on all three priorities, including technology. However, there is a 15 percent cap on devices, equipment, software, and digital content.

If a district receives an allocation below \$30,000, the law does not require a needs assessment or setting aside percentages for well-rounded and safe and healthy student programs. However, it must still direct the funds it receives toward activities in at least one of the three categories. The 15 percent technology purchase cap would continue to apply.

### History of Appropriations

**Fiscal Year 2017:** The FY17 funding bill included \$400 million for the SSAE program, only 25% of the authorized amount, significantly undermining flexibility at the district level. In order to ensure that states and districts have a chance to make meaningful investments, the funding bill included appropriations language that allowed states to competitively award funds to districts, rather than by formula. The states must follow the 20%, 20%, 60% allocation rule, and the districts can choose to apply to 1, 2, or all 3 of the buckets. For the states that chose to issue grants for technology, there is an increased cap of 25% for technology infrastructure. The competitive option is for FY17 only and all grants must be obligated by the end of FY18.

**Fiscal Year 2018:** The House included \$500 million and the Senate included \$450 million in their FY18 proposals. However, given the recent caps deal and the strong bipartisan support for this program, our groups strongly urge Congress to provide a significant increase to the SSAE flexible block grant program so districts can make meaningful investments in this area.