

# GUIDANCE

TITLE IV PART A: STUDENT SUPPORT AND ACADEMIC ENRICHMENT



New York State Education Department

Office of ESSA-Funded Programs

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# Title IV Part A, Student Support and Academic Enrichment (SSAE) Program

## INTRODUCTION

This guidance outlines the purpose of the Title IV, Part A Student Support and Academic Enrichment (SSAE) Program, program requirements, eligibility and allowable SSAE program activities.

The SSAE program activities, procedures and resources that are presented in this guidance document should not be regarded as exhaustive or limiting. LEAs for example, may utilize alternative needs assessments that are consistent with the Title IV statute, but are more in keeping with their needs and circumstances.

## Purpose

Newly authorized under subpart 1 of Title IV, Part A of the ESEA, the Student Support and Academic Enrichment (SSAE) program is intended to help meet these goals by increasing the capacity of local educational agencies (LEAs), schools, and local communities to: 1) provide all students with access to a well-rounded education, 2) improve school conditions for student learning, and 3) improve the use of technology in order to improve the academic achievement and digital literacy of all students.

This guidance document provides key information on the provisions of the new SSAE program including a discussion of the allowable uses of funds, fiscal responsibilities, and the local application requirements. In addition, the guidance provides examples of several innovative activities that demonstrate some of the SSAE program allowable uses of funds. It is important to note that SSAE funds may not be sufficient to independently fund many of these innovative activities.

The SSAE program provides LEAs, and schools the flexibility to tailor investments based on the needs of their unique student populations. Coordination and integration of the SSAE program with activities authorized under other sections of the law, as well as other federal programs to improve outcomes for students is encouraged. Ensuring all students have access to a holistic well-rounded education is central to the shared work across programs in ESSA. LEAs or a consortium of LEAs may apply for SSAE program funds and must prioritize the distribution of funds to schools based on one or more of several factors, including schools that are (i) are among those with the greatest needs, as determined by the LEA, (ii) have the highest numbers of students from low-income families, (iii) are identified for comprehensive support and improvement under Title I, Part A of the ESEA; (iv) are implementing targeted support and improvement plans under Title I, Part A of the ESEA; or (v) are identified as a persistently dangerous public school under section 8532 of the ESEA. (ESEA section 4106(e)(2)). This provision is discussed further in the program application requirements section of this document.

An LEA that receives at least \$30,000 in SSAE program funds must conduct a comprehensive needs assessment that includes, at a minimum, a focus on the three content areas identified in Table 1. Based on the results of that assessment, the LEA must use:

- At least 20 percent of funds for activities to support well-rounded educational opportunities;
- At least 20 percent of funds for activities to support safe and healthy students; and
- A portion of funds for activities to support effective use of technology with no more than 15 percent of the portion of funds for purchasing technology infrastructure<sup>1</sup>.

Within each of these areas, LEAs have broad flexibility to use the SSAE program funds for a variety of activities to improve student outcomes and address the opportunity gaps identified through the needs assessment. Table 1 provides an overview of activities LEAs may consider as they prepare for

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<sup>1</sup> LEAs or consortiums of LEAs may not spend more than 15 percent of the portion of funding earmarked for the Effective Use of technology on devices, equipment, software applications, platforms, digital instructional resources and/or other one-time IT purchases.

implementation of the SSAE program. Allowable uses of funds under each of the three content areas may include, but are not limited to: direct services for students, professional development for teachers and administrators, salaries of personnel to carry out identified programs and services, and supplemental educational resources and equipment.

**Table 1. Overview of Examples of Allowable SSAE Uses of Funds**  
**Overview of Allowable SSAE Program Activities**

<b>Well-Rounded Educational Opportunities (ESEA section 4107)</b>	<b>Safe and Healthy Students (ESEA section 4108)</b>	<b>Effective Use of Technology (ESEA section 4109)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improving access to foreign language instruction, arts, and music education</li> <li>• Supporting college and career counseling, including providing information on opportunities for financial aid through the early FAFSA</li> <li>• Providing programming to improve instruction and student engagement in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), including computer science, and increasing access to these subjects for underrepresented groups</li> <li>• Promoting access to accelerated learning opportunities including Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) programs, dual or concurrent enrollment programs and early college high schools</li> <li>• Strengthening instruction in American history, civics, economics, geography, government education, and environmental education</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promoting community and parent involvement in schools</li> <li>• Providing school-based mental health services and counseling</li> <li>• Promoting supportive school climates to reduce the use of exclusionary discipline and promoting supportive school discipline</li> <li>• Establishing or improving dropout prevention</li> <li>• Supporting re-entry programs and transition services for justice-involved youth</li> <li>• Implementing programs that support a healthy, active lifestyle (nutritional and physical education)</li> <li>• Implementing systems and practices to prevent bullying and harassment</li> <li>• Developing relationship building skills to help improve safety through the recognition and prevention of coercion, violence, or abuse</li> <li>• Establishing community partnerships</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supporting high-quality professional development for educators, school leaders, and administrators to personalize learning and improve academic achievement</li> <li>• Building technological capacity and infrastructure</li> <li>• Carrying out innovative blended learning projects</li> <li>• Providing students in rural, remote, and underserved areas with the resources to benefit from high-quality digital learning opportunities</li> <li>• Delivering specialized or rigorous academic courses and curricula using technology, including digital learning technologies and assistive technology</li> </ul>

\*Note: This table provides examples of allowable activities and is not an exhaustive list. Please consult the statute for more information. The text of the *ESEA*, as amended by *ESSA*, is available at:

<http://legcounsel.house.gov/Comps/Elementary%20And%20Secondary%20Education%20Act%20Of%201965.pdf>.

## Program Eligibility

LEAs that received a Title I, Part A allocation in in the prior program year are eligible for a Title IV allocation.

## Program Application Requirements

LEAs must submit their Consolidated Application for ESSA funded Programs and **meet all the requirements** within to receive a Title IV, Part A allocation.

The LEA's application must include descriptions of the SSAE programs and activities the LEA proposes to implement which includes a description of the identified needs and goals and identification of the proposed use of funds as it aligns to the needs and goals. LEAs must also provide the required assurances from Section 8306 of ESSA.

In addition, the LEA's application should describe any proposed uses of funds for the direct administrative costs of carrying out the LEA's program responsibilities consistent with the LEA's authority to reserve up to two percent of the allocation.

The Consolidated Application for ESSA funded Programs is accessible at <http://www.nysed.gov/essa/schools/consolidated-application>

SSAE program activities that are supported with Title IV, Part A funds must be planned through consultation with stakeholders served by the LEA. Stakeholders include:

- parents,
- teachers,
- principals,
- other school leaders,
- special service providers,
- students,
- community based organizations,
- local government representative,
- Indian tribes or tribal organizations, and
- others with relevant and demonstrated expertise.

The LEA must continue to engage with constituent stakeholders throughout implementation of the grant to improve the supported activities objectives and intended outcomes described in the ESSA Consolidated application.

## Title IV, Part A, Allocation and Distribution

LEAs must prioritize the distribution of Title IV, Part A funds to schools that-

- have the greatest needs (as determined by the LEA);
- have the highest percentages or numbers of low-income children,
- are identified for targeted or comprehensive support and improvement, OR
- are identified as a persistently dangerous public elementary or secondary school under section 8532 of the ESSA.

***LEAs receiving a Title IV, Part A allocation must provide equitable services to children in eligible non-public schools and consult with private school officials to identify the needs of eligible private school students and teachers consistent with the requirements in section 8501 of the ESEA.***

LEAs that receive an allocation of \$30,000 or more must:

- use at least 20 percent of their Title IV, Part A funds to support well-rounded educational opportunities;
- use at least 20 percent of their Title IV, Part A funds to support school conditions for Safe and Healthy Students;
- use a portion of their Title IV, Part A funds to support the effective use of technology with no more than 15 percent of the portion of funds for purchasing technology infrastructure;
- conduct a comprehensive needs assessment every three years to examine the needs for improvement of well-rounded educational opportunities, school conditions for student learning, and access to personalized learning experiences supported by technology; and
- complete an annual State report regarding how funds for the SSAE program are being used.

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

**Q 1. May an LEA use a single activity to address more than one of the application requirements regarding use of funds in the three SSAE program content areas: (well-rounded education, safe and healthy students, and effective uses of technology)?**

A 1. There may be certain activities an LEA wishes to fund that could fit into more than one of the SSAE program content areas and could be used to address the application requirements regarding use of funds in each area. For example, a student trauma recovery program that utilizes student performance art could be categorized in either the safe and healthy students content area or the well-rounded content area and could be used to satisfy expenditures requirements in both areas. In such cases, the LEA should explain in its Consolidated Application for ESSA Funded Programs how the activity fits in more than one content area. The approval or disapproval will be consistent with the relevant statutory application requirements.

**Q 2. What other stakeholders should an LEA consider consulting with as it develops its Consolidated Application for ESSA-Funded Programs?**

A 2. In addition to the list provided in the Program Application Requirements section, an LEA should consider involving members from the business community, health providers, police, social workers, librarians, technology experts, service providers, faith-based community leaders, and other key stakeholders, as appropriate. LEAs are explicitly authorized to use a portion of funds in these areas to develop and implement programs and activities that may be conducted in partnership with an Institute of Higher Education (IHE), business, nonprofit organization, community-based organization, or other public or private entity with a demonstrated record of success in implementing these activities. In addition, LEAs may find it particularly helpful to include such partners in the needs assessment process.

**Q 3. If LEAs apply for funds as a consortium, how is the consortium's funding determined?**

A 3. Section 4105(a)(1) requires that the State make allocations to its LEAs based on each LEA's share of funds under Title I, Part A of the ESEA, and section 4105 (a)(3) provides that LEAs may form consortia and combine the allocation that each LEA in the consortium receives to jointly carry out allowable activities. Accordingly, the funding for a consortium is the sum of the allocations of its member LEA.

**Q 4. Is an individual LEA that receives an allocation of less than \$30,000 of SSAE program funds required to use a certain percentage of funds for each of the three content areas?**

A 4. No. Section 4106(f) allows an individual LEA receiving an allocation of less than \$30,000 to use funds for only one (or more) of the three content areas in the SSAE program. Such LEAs must provide an assurance that they will either use not less than 20 percent of SSAE funds for well-rounded education, use not less than 20 percent of SSAE funds for safe and healthy students, or use a portion of SSAE funds to support the effective use of technology consistent with 4106(f).

**Q 5. Must an LEA distribute SSAE program funds to each of its schools?**

A5. No. An LEA is not required to distribute SSAE program funds to each of its schools. An LEA must prioritize the distribution of funds to schools as described in the Title IV, Part A Allocation and Distribution section of this document.

**A 6. Do the application requirements regarding use of funds in the three SSAE program content areas apply to the schools to which an LEA distributes funds?**

A 6. No. The application requirement regarding use of funds in the three SSAE program content areas apply at the LEA level. These requirements serve to establish minimum expenditure requirements (i.e., not less than 20 percent of funds for activities to support well-rounded educational opportunities, not less than 20 percent for activities to support safe and healthy students, and a portion of funds for activities to support the effective use of technology) that an LEA must meet with respect to its entire allocation. In meeting these requirements, an LEA has flexibility in determining the amount of funds to distribute to a school and for which activities, provided its determinations are consistent with its needs assessment and school prioritization. An LEA might, for example, use 20 percent of its funds for an arts program in only two of its elementary schools and use 40 percent of its funds for a district-wide school climate program, consistent with its assurance to prioritize schools most in need.

**Q7. In the case of a consortium of LEAs, do the application requirements regarding use of funds in the three content areas apply to the consortium as a whole or to each member LEA?**

A7. The application requirements regarding use of funds apply to the consortium as a whole, i.e. each LEA in a consortium is not required to meet the expenditure requirements individually with respect to its allocation. Thus, a consortium may, for example, spend less than 20 percent of a single member LEA's allocation of SSAE program funds for activities to support well-rounded educational opportunities in that LEA, provided the consortium spends at least 20 percent of its aggregate funds for those activities.

**Q8. Must funds be shared with private schools?**

A8. Yes, LEAs receiving funds under Title IV, Part A must provide for the equitable participation of private school students, teachers and other educational personnel in private schools located in areas these agencies serve in Title IV, Part A-funded activities, including by engaging in timely and meaningful consultation with private school officials during the design and development of their Title IV, Part A programs.

**Q9. Can funds be utilized for professional staff?**

A9. Yes, funds can be utilized for professional staff if it is supported by the comprehensive needs assessment and the expense is necessary and reasonable for the implementation of the grant program.

**Q10. Are project activities under the grant for in-school and/ or after-school? Are funds restricted for new activities or can they be used to enhance or expand current programs/activities?**

A10. Project activities can be used for both in-school and/or after-school activities as supported by the results of the comprehensive needs assessment. The use of funds must be necessary and reasonable for effective implementation of the program. Funds may enhance or expand current activities, but may not supplant current funding sources.

**Q11. Are there restrictions on what technology, and software, can be purchased?**

A11. Costs must be necessary and reasonable as they relate to the program. Applicants may not exceed 15% of the portion of funds earmarked for the effective use of technology for technology infrastructure related expenses. To clarify, LEAs or consortiums of LEAs may not spend more than 15 percent of the portion of funding earmarked for the effective use of technology on devices, equipment, software applications, platforms, digital instructional resources and/or other one-time IT purchases.

**Q12. Is carryover allowed?**

A12. Yes, 100% carryover of Title IV funds is allowed.

**Q13. Can funds be transferred into another Title?**

A13. Yes, funds can be transferred into another Title. Under the ESSA, SEAs and LEAs may transfer funds they receive by formula under certain programs to other programs to better address State and local needs. The ESSA amended the transferability authority by changing the programs from and to which a SEA or LEA may transfer funds and removing limits on the amount of funds that may be transferred. Title IV funds can be transferred to Title I, Part A; Title I, Part D; Title II, Part A; Title III, Part A; Title IV, Part B; and/or Title V, Part B.