

# Title II Summary

## The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015



### Overview

The purpose of Title II in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) is to increase student academic achievement by training and recruiting high-quality and effective teachers, principals and other school leaders. States and districts receive Title II funding based on a formula that takes into account the number of low-income students that attend the schools in the state or district. There are also competitive grant programs within Title II for which states, school districts, and non-profit organizations can apply.

Title II is divided into three parts:

1. Supporting Effective Instruction
2. National Activities
3. General Provisions

### Supporting Effective Instruction

There are three major changes regarding teachers, principals and school leaders in the change from ESEA/NCLB to ESSA. Under ESEA/NCLB, the funding formula weighs a state's total student population at 35% and weighs the state's student population from families below the poverty line at 65%. In ESSA, the state grant formula is changed to increase the weight of the poverty factor over a multiyear period. ESSA starts with the same formula proportions as ESEA/NCLB but gradually changes the formula over time (from FY 2017 to FY 2020) until the proportion is 20% of the state's total student population and 80% of the state's student population from families below the poverty line in FY 2020.

ESSA does not require states to set up teacher evaluation systems with student test scores constituting a significant portion of the evaluation. This was a key component of the waivers issued by U.S. Department of Education under NCLB. Teacher and principal evaluation systems can be based in part on evidence of student academic achievement, which *may* include student growth via test scores but *must* include multiple measures of educator performance and provide clear, timely, and useful feedback to educators. The other allowable activities under Title II include areas like certification and licensure, recruiting and retention, career pathways, teacher preparation programs (including academies) and multiple professional development subjects including family engagement. Overall, ESSA allows for more state flexibility in the use of formula grants than ESEA/NCLB did in Title II.

Furthermore, ESSA eliminated the highly-qualified teacher provision, which required states to ensure teachers in core academic subjects hold a bachelor's degree, state certification and have demonstrated content knowledge. Under the new law, teachers in Title I schools only need to fulfill their state's licensing requirements. ESSA explicitly states that neither the Secretary of Education nor other federal employees can mandate, direct or have control over: teacher or school leader evaluation systems; the definition of a teacher or other school leaders; or the professional standards, certification and licensure for teachers and school leaders.

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### **National Activities**

The National Activities section under Title II contains competitive grant programs that states, school districts and non-profit organizations can apply for to receive funding from the federal government. Below is a summary of the programs:

#### *Teacher and School Leader Incentive Fund*

The Teacher and School Leader Incentive Fund is a competitive grant program that provides states, school districts and non-profit organizations the opportunity to develop, implement, improve or expand comprehensive performance-based compensation or human capital management systems for teachers, principals or other school leaders who raise student achievement and close the achievement gap.

#### *Literacy Education for All, Results for the Nation (LEARN)*

The Literacy Education for All, Results for the Nation program is a competitive grant program for comprehensive literacy state development grants to ensure high quality instruction and effective strategies in reading and writing from early education through 12<sup>th</sup> grade. The program also allows for school districts to use funds for programs to improve family literacy to help families become more financially responsible.

#### *Innovative Approaches to Literacy*

Innovative Approaches to Literacy is a competitive grant program that supports the development of literacy skills in low-income communities by improving school library programs, early literacy services and providing high-quality books to children and adolescents.

#### *American History and Civics Education*

The American History and Civics Education competitive grant program will provide 12 grants for presidential and congressional academies to improve the quality of teaching and learning of American history, civics and government. The presidential academy grants support teacher education and professional development, while the congressional academy grants are designed to provide hands-on and engaging activities to deepen and broaden students' understanding of history and civics.

#### *Supporting Effective Educator Development (SEED) and School Leader Recruitment and Support*

The Supporting Effective Educator Development (SEED) and School Leader Recruitment and Support program both seek to provide resources to support the recruitment, placement, professional development and retention of high-quality educators to underserved and high-need school districts.

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### *STEM Master Teacher Corps*

The STEM Master Teacher Corps program provides grants to states to recognize, reward, attract and retain high-quality Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) teachers in high-need and rural schools.

This section also requires the Secretary of Education to establish a comprehensive center to help states and school districts support students at risk of not attaining full literacy skills due to a disability. The center will provide assessment tools to identify students at risk with regard to reading or writing skills (including those with dyslexia). The center is also required to disseminate information and materials to state, regional and local educational agencies, school and other comprehensive centers and regional educational laboratories.

### **Questions**

If you have questions about this memorandum or Title II in general, please contact Jacki Ball, director of government affairs, at [jball@PTA.org](mailto:jball@PTA.org) or (703) 518-1243.