

T I T L E I V F U N D I N G O P P O R T U N I T I E S

OVERVIEW

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) authorizes significant funds to help increase the capacity of states, local educational agencies (LEAs), schools, and local communities to provide all students with access to a well-rounded education and to improve school conditions for student learning. These funds can be used to increase access to comprehensive school psychological services, improve school safety and school climate, and strengthen parent and community engagement. A strong system of comprehensive learning supports is equally as important as effective teaching in helping students achieve their academic potential. Access to behavioral, social–emotional, and mental health supports promotes student resilience, improves academic performance, and allows children and youth to successfully deal with challenges they may face. School psychologists play a critical role in creating safe and supportive learning environments that promote student learning. It is imperative that we work with principals, parents, administrators, policy makers, and other relevant stakeholders to ensure that schools implement evidence-based, comprehensive systems of support, in which the school psychologist is considered a key player.

RELEVANT FUNDING STREAMS

Title IV Part A: Student Support and Academic Enhancement Grants (SSAEC). SSAEC is a flexible block grant authorized at \$1.6 billion, representing the second largest authorization in ESSA. Funds will be allocated to states using the Title I funding formula; states will then allocate funds to LEAs using the same formula. Specialized instructional support personnel must be involved in the development of district plans and applications for these funds, which must include a needs assessment that examines the needs for improvement in three key areas: (a) access to and opportunities for a well-rounded education, (b) safe and supportive conditions for learning, and (c) access to personalized learning experiences supported by technology.

Districts must use *at least 20%* of these funds on efforts to improve student mental and behavioral health, school climate, or school safety, which could include:

- comprehensive school mental and behavioral health service delivery systems,
- trauma informed policies and practices,
- bullying and harassment prevention,
- social–emotional learning,
- improving school safety and school climate,
- mental health first aid training, and
- professional development activities.

School psychologists play a critical role in supporting student mental and behavioral health and fostering safe and supportive learning environments that promote student learning.

Full Service Community Schools. ESSA authorizes a competitive grant program to support school community partnerships to address the academic, health, mental health, and other needs of the school and community at large. Any district wishing to receive a full service community schools grant *must* specify how specialized instructional support personnel will be involved in the partnership and service delivery model.

Project School Emergency Response to Violence (Project SERV). Funds are available to strengthen violence prevention activities as part of the activities designed to restore the equilibrium of a learning environment that was disrupted by a violent or traumatic crisis at a school.

KEY MESSAGES

School psychologists are often an untapped resource. When utilized appropriately, we can help schools and districts use limited dollars more effectively while simultaneously improving school and student outcomes. As states and districts begin to develop systems of learning supports, school psychologists can offer significant consultation, leadership, and technical assistance.

- Comprehensive and coordinated learning and mental health supports directly contribute to more positive student outcomes and increased academic achievement. School psychologists have unique training that allows them to deliver these services within the context of learning and in support of the mission of schools.
- In order to have the most positive impact on the academic and wellness outcomes of students, it is imperative that schools and communities work together through a collaborative and comprehensive approach. School psychologists must be integrally involved in school–community partnerships to improve student learning.
- School psychologists are uniquely trained to develop and monitor universal mental health screening processes to identify students in need of mental and behavioral health services, or concerns affecting the entire school community.
- School psychologists enhance coordination of efforts to improve school safety, including crisis prevention, intervention, and response.
- School psychologists can help implement wellness promotion programs, such as mental health first aid and social–emotional learning, in classrooms and provide professional development inservices to school staff and families addressing student mental and behavioral health.

School psychologists have unique training that allows them to provide comprehensive supports, including school mental and behavioral health services, within the context of learning and in support of the mission of schools.

KEY STAKEHOLDERS

Engaging as early as possible with the key stakeholders most relevant to designing accountability is critical. Although specifics in each school district and state will vary, these stakeholders are likely to include:

- State chief school officers
- State/local school boards
- State governors and legislators
- District superintendents

Additional details and contact information for various stakeholder groups can be found at www.nasponline.org/essa/key-contacts.pdf

RELEVANT RESOURCES

Resources related to the Every Student Succeeds Act and school psychological services are available on the NASP website (<http://www.nasponline.org/essa>). These resources include:

- Topic-specific ESSA fact sheets
- ESSA/MTSS/NASP Practice Model Crosswalk
- Resources and guidance from the U.S. Department of Education
- Information about specific funding sources in ESSA
- NASP Practice Model Implementation Guide