



## The Student Support and Academic Enrichment (SSAE) Grant Program Title IV-A of ESSA

**Request:** Provide full funding for the Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grant Program (Title IV-A, ESSA) in fiscal year 2024.

**Current Funding Level:** \$1.4 billion

**Authorization Level:** \$1.6 billion

### Background

The bipartisan Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) established 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 funds 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, digital learning, and devices).

### Distribution of Funds

Each state receives an SSAE allocation based on the ESSA, Title I-A funding formula. States then allocate program funds to school districts also based on the Title I-A formula. Any school district that receives more than \$30,000 must conduct a needs assessment to guide the use of SSAE funds. Regardless of the outcome of the required needs assessment, 20% of SSAE funds must be reserved for safe and healthy school activities and 20% must be reserved to provide a well-rounded education. The remaining 60% of the district allocation may be spent on all three priorities, including technology. Spending for devices, equipment, software, and digital content, however, may not exceed 15% of the district's funding. 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, the district must still direct the funds toward activities in at least one of the three categories. The 15% technology purchase cap would continue to apply.

### Talking Points

- We urge Congress to provide \$1.6 billion for the Student Support and Academic Enrichment grant program for fiscal year 2024. Increased funding will give states and districts the flexibility to invest in the technology and related programs they need most.
- The SSAE grant program must continue to be sufficiently funded—consistent with the authorization level established by Congress—to adequately prepare teachers to effectively use technology for the advancement of student learning and updates to the nation's education technology infrastructure.

- SSAE's flexible funding helps my state/school district meet our students' and teachers' technology and related professional learning needs.
- Technology serves as a powerful tool for promoting educational opportunities and career readiness when it is used appropriately. The nation's education technology infrastructure is insufficient in many parts of the country and distributed inequitably to meet schools' and students' growing needs, leaving many learners far behind their more affluent peers.
- As we raise expectations for what students need to know and be able to do for success, we must also set a higher bar for the nation's technology infrastructure and related professional development to enable its effective use for teaching and learning.
- The absence of robust educational technology and related professional development for teachers and school leaders, not only impacts instruction and decision-making, but also jeopardizes implementation of foundational federal policies, such as using online assessments to support learning and promote accountability.