



Non-Regulatory Guidance
*Student Support and Academic
Enrichment Grants*

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October 2016

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Purpose of the Guidance

The U.S. Department of Education has determined that this guidance is significant guidance under the Office of Management and Budget's, Final Bulletin for Agency Good Guidance Practices, 72 Fed. Reg. 3432 (Jan. 25, 2007). See

www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/memoranda/fy2007/m07-07.pdf. Significant guidance is non-binding and does not create or impose new legal requirements. The U. S. Department of Education is issuing this guidance to provide State and local educational agencies with information to assist them in meeting their obligations under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

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INTRODUCTION

President Obama signed the *Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)* into law in December 2015, which reauthorized the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA)*. *ESSA* reflects the civil rights tradition of *ESEA*, which reflects our nation's longstanding commitment to equity of opportunity for all students.¹ The new law has a clear goal of ensuring our education system prepares every child to graduate from high school ready to thrive in college and careers. The *ESEA* includes a number of provisions that promote equitable access to educational opportunity, including holding all students to high academic standards, ensuring meaningful action is taken to improve the lowest-performing schools and schools with underperforming student groups, and providing more children with access to high-quality preschool. As we work to improve education outcomes for students the ultimate goal is to provide all students—regardless of zip code, race, ethnicity, religion, family income, sex (including gender identity), sexual orientation, disability, language status, gender, or migrant status—with a high-quality education.

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 State educational agencies (SEAs), local educational agencies (LEAs), schools, and local communities to: 1) provide all students with access to a well-rounded education,² 2)

¹ Throughout this document, unless otherwise indicated, citations to the *ESEA* refer to the *ESEA*, as amended by the *ESSA*.

² "Well-rounded education" is defined in *ESEA* section 8101(52). 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>.

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. (*ESEA* section 4101).

In this guidance document, the U.S. Department of Education (Department) provides key information on the provisions of the new SSAE program including a discussion of the allowable uses of funds, role of the SEA, 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. This guidance discusses leveraging other state and local resources in combination with the SSAE grant funds to achieve the goals of SSAE programs and activities. Finally, the Appendix provides resources, tools, and additional innovative strategies to support effective implementation of the SSAE program to improve outcomes for all students.

The SSAE program provides SEAs, LEAs, and schools the flexibility to tailor investments based on the needs of their unique student populations. Where possible, the Department encourages 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. The Department notes that ensuring all students have access to a holistic well-rounded education is central to the shared work across programs in *ESSA*.³ LEAs or a consortium of LEAs may apply for SSAE program funds⁴ 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 local application requirements section of this document.

Table 1 provides an overview of activities LEAs may consider as they prepare for 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.

³ See [Dear Colleague Letter on Using Federal funds to Support Humanities](#) and [Dear Colleague Letter: Federal Funding for Technology](#).

⁴ Throughout this document, when the term “LEA” is used, it includes a singular LEA or a consortium of LEAs, as SSAE subgrants may be made to LEAs or consortia of LEAs. (*ESEA* section 4105(a)(3)).

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

Overview of Allowable SSAE Program Activities		
Well-Rounded Educational Opportunities (ESEA section 4107)	Safe and Healthy Students (ESEA section 4108)	Effective Use of Technology (ESEA section 4109)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving access to foreign language instruction, arts, and music education Supporting college and career counseling, including providing information on opportunities for financial aid through the early FAFSA 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 Promoting access to accelerated learning opportunities including Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) programs, dual or concurrent⁵ enrollment programs and early college high schools⁶ Strengthening instruction in American history, civics, economics, geography, government education, and environmental education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promoting community and parent involvement in schools Providing school-based mental health services and counseling Promoting supportive school climates to reduce the use of exclusionary discipline and promoting supportive school discipline Establishing or improving dropout prevention Supporting re-entry programs and transition services for justice-involved youth Implementing programs that support a healthy, active lifestyle (nutritional and physical education) Implementing systems and practices to prevent bullying and harassment Developing relationship building skills to help improve safety through the recognition and prevention of coercion, violence, or abuse Establishing community partnerships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting high-quality professional development for educators, school leaders, and administrators to personalize learning and improve academic achievement Building technological capacity and infrastructure Carrying out innovative blended learning projects Providing students in rural, remote, and underserved areas with the resources to benefit from high-quality digital learning opportunities Delivering specialized or rigorous academic courses and curricula using technology, including digital learning technologies and assistive technology
<p>*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 <i>ESEA</i>, as amended by <i>ESSA</i>, is available at: http://legcounsel.house.gov/Comps/Elementary%20And%20Secondary%20Education%20Act%20Of%201965.pdf.</p>		

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. (*ESEA* section 4106(d)). Additional recommendations about conducting a needs

⁵ “Dual or concurrent enrollment programs” are defined in section 8101(15) of the *ESEA*. 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>.

⁶ “Early college high school” is defined in section 8101(17) of the *ESEA*. 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>.

assessment are located in the “Implementing Effective SSAE Program Activities” section of this document. 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 (*ESEA* section 4107);
- At least 20 percent of funds for activities to support safe and healthy students (*ESEA* section 4108); and
- A portion of funds for activities to support effective use of technology (*ESEA* section 4109).

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.

Leveraging Federal, State and Local Resources

In order to maximize the use of the SSAE program resources, SEAs, LEAs, and schools may partner with organizations such as nonprofits, institutions of higher education (IHEs), museums, and community organizations to offer programs and services to students. In addition, State and local leaders should consider how other Federal, State and local funds may be leveraged to support a holistic approach to well-rounded education. Under the law, SEAs must review existing resources and programs across the State and coordinate any new plans and resources under the SSAE program with existing resources and programs. (*ESEA* section 4103(c)(2)(C)(i)).

At the local level, schools may use other *ESEA* program funds to coordinate and strengthen complimentary services. For example, *Title IV*, Part B funding for 21st Century Community Learning Centers also provide opportunities for academic enrichment through an array of programs and activities such as nutrition and health education, drug and violence prevention, and arts education. The SSAE grant can also be used in conjunction with other titles within *ESEA* to support specific interventions, activities, or services. For example, *Title I*, Part A (*Title I*) of the *ESEA* may be used to promote supportive school climates to reduce the use of exclusionary discipline practices in a *Title I* schoolwide program. Likewise, LEAs may use *Title II* funds to provide training for school personnel to address issues related to school conditions for student learning, such as safety, peer interaction, drug and alcohol abuse, and chronic absenteeism. Rural LEAs that receive funding under either the Small, Rural School Achievement Program (SRSA) or the Rural and Low-Income School Program (RLIS) under *Title V*, Part B, may use those funds for activities allowed under the SSAE program funds, among other things. Additionally, LEAs may consider leveraging other federal resources such as AmeriCorps funds, if applicable, by partnering with grantees that provide similar programs or services in low-income schools and communities.⁷

⁷ For a listing of individual AmeriCorps grantees in each State, please see: www.NationalService.gov/State-Service-Locations

LEAs may also consider applying for funds in consortium to implement programs across districts. Working together, LEAs may be able to more efficiently deliver services through economies of scale that enable them to serve more students at lower cost and reduce administrative overhead.

Supplement not Supplant Requirement

In considering how to use SSAE program funds, SEAs and LEAs should be mindful that SSAE program funds may be used only to supplement, and not supplant, non-Federal funds that would otherwise be available for activities authorized under the SSAE program. (*ESEA* section 4110). This means that, in general, SEAs and LEAs may not use SSAE program funds for the cost of activities in the three SSAE program content areas – well-rounded education, safe and healthy students, and technology – if the cost of those activities would have otherwise been paid with State or local funds in the absence of the SSAE program funds.⁸

Federal Civil Rights

The SSAE grant recipients must comply with Federal civil rights laws that prohibit discrimination based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, and age. These laws include *Title VI* of the *Civil Rights Act of 1964*, *Title IX* of the *Education Amendments of 1972*, *Title II* of the *Americans with Disabilities Act*, the *Equal Educational Opportunities Act*, Section 504 of the *Rehabilitation Act of 1973*, and the *Age Discrimination Act of 1975*. Further, Section 427 of the *General Education Provisions Act* (20 U.S.C. §1228a(a)) require the SSAE grant recipients to include in its application for the SSAE program funds, a description of the steps the applicant proposes to take to ensure equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally-assisted program for students, teachers, and other program beneficiaries with special needs. This provision allows applicants discretion in developing the required description. The statute highlights six types of barriers that can impede equitable access or participation: gender, race, national origin, color, disability, or age. Based on local circumstances, the SSAE grant recipient(s) should determine whether these or other barriers may prevent their students, teachers, etc. from such access or participation in, the Federally-funded project or activity. Recipients should be aware that failure to meet their civil rights obligations, or respond to the Section 427 requirement, may be considered violations of grant conditions as well as violations of the civil rights laws and therefore, they may be subject to civil rights and programmatic enforcement mechanisms if there is a possibility of a violation of these requirements. This may include adding special conditions on a grant, designating a grantee as having high risk status, and/or possibly withholding funds (subject to a hearing requirement).

ROLE OF THE STATE EDUCATIONAL AGENCY

The SEA plays an important role in ensuring equitable access to an excellent education. In general, the Department allocates the SSAE program funds to States by formula based on each State's share of funds under *Title I*, Part A of the *ESEA*. (*ESEA* section 4103(b)). To receive its

⁸ For additional information on the SSAE program supplement not supplant provision, please see Key Question 1 in Role of the SEA and Key Question 4 in the Local Application Requirements sections of this guidance.

allocation, an SEA must submit a plan to the Secretary of Education that, if submitted individually for the SSAE program,⁹ must include the in *ESEA* sections 4103(c)(2)(A)-(C).

An SEA must reserve at least 95 percent of its SSAE program allocation for subgrants to LEAs and not more than one percent of its SSAE program allocation for administrative costs, including public reporting on how LEAs are using the funds and the degree to which LEAs have made progress towards meeting identified objectives and outcomes. (*ESEA* section 4104(a)(1) and (2)). SEAs award SSAE subgrants to LEAs by formula¹⁰ in the same proportion as to the LEAs' prior year's *Title I*, Part A allocations. (*ESEA* section 4105(a)(1)). An SEA may use any remaining funds to support LEA activities and programs designed to meet the purposes of the program, which may include monitoring and providing technical assistance to LEAs; identifying and eliminating State barriers to the coordination and integration of programs, initiatives, and funding streams that meet the purposes of the program; and otherwise supporting LEAs in carrying out activities in the three SSAE program content areas. (*ESEA* section 4104(a)(3)).

SEAs are also responsible for developing the application that LEAs must submit to receive their funds from the State. At a minimum, the application must contain the elements described in the "Local Application Requirements" section of this guidance, and may include such other information as the SEA may reasonably require. (*ESEA* section 4106(a)(1)). An SEA may wish to consider how the local application for funding may promote strategies to maximize the impact of the SSAE program funds and advance the State's goals related to implementation of the *ESEA*. For example, an SEA may consider:

- Needs assessment criteria and protocol – SEAs may include specific needs assessment criteria for LEAs to address, consistent with the statutory requirements in section 4106(d) of the *ESEA*.
- Matching funds – SEAs may identify particular activities for which a State would provide matching funds to LEAs. For example, an SEA may publish a list of activities for which, if implemented by LEAs with SSAE program funds, the State would contribute matching funds to help enhance or scale-up the activity.
- Encouraging consortia – States may wish to encourage LEAs to apply for funding as a consortium as authorized in *ESEA* section 4105(a)(3). Combining SSAE program funds may result in economies of scale so that smaller LEAs may benefit more than if they had received their individual allocation. LEAs in a consortium may also benefit from

⁹ Under section 8302 of the *ESEA*, a State has the option to submit to the Secretary a consolidated State plan covering multiple *ESEA* programs including the SSAE program. On May 31, 2016, the Department published a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) in the *Federal Register* that proposed specific requirements for the submission of State plans under *ESEA* programs, including optional consolidated State plans. Please note that these regulatory provisions are what the Department has proposed. They may change based on the Department's review of comments received during the public comment period, which closed on August 1, 2016.

¹⁰ The specific formula in Section 4105(a)(1) provides: "The State shall allocate to each local educational agency in the State that has an application approved by the State educational agency under section 4106 an amount that bears the same relationship to the total amount of such reservation as the amount the local educational agency received under subpart 2 of part A of *Title I* for the preceding fiscal year bears to the total amount received by all local educational agencies in the State under such subpart for the preceding fiscal year."

communities of practice and glean lessons from other LEAs implementing similar activities.

Key Questions

- 1) How should an SEA determine if an activity included in a local application is an allowable use of funds under the SSAE program?

Generally, an SEA should first consider whether a proposed activity is consistent with the purposes of the three content areas in the SSAE program (well-rounded education in section 4107, safe and healthy students in section 4108, or the effective use of technology in section 4109). Assuming that the activity is consistent with the purposes of one of the three content areas, as applicable, the SEA should make further determinations as to allowability of costs in accordance with the cost principles in the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (Uniform Guidance) at 2 CFR Part 200, Subpart E. Specifically, the cost of an activity is allowable under the SSAE program, is reasonable and necessary for performance of the grant (i.e., it is of a type generally recognized as ordinary and necessary for operation of the grant) and allocable to the grant (i.e., it is chargeable to the grant award in proportion to the benefits received by the grant award as a result of the cost). Also, because section 4110 prohibits supplanting, the SEA should consider whether the proposed use of funds for the activity is supplemental and would not supplant other State or local funds that would otherwise be used for the activity in the absence of the SSAE program funds.

- 2) What is the SEA required to do if the amount of SSAE program funds reserved for LEA allocations is insufficient to make allocations to LEAs equal to the minimum amount of \$10,000?

If the SEA does not have sufficient funds to make allocations to any of its LEAs in an amount equal to the minimum of \$10,000, it must ratably reduce the LEA allocations, as required by section 4105(b) of the ESEA. This means that the SEA must reduce all LEA allocations proportionately to fit the funds that the SEA has available for LEA allocations. Ratable reduction ensures that all of the LEAs will receive allocations of some amount.

LOCAL APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

LEAs are required to submit an application to the SEA to receive their SSAE program allocation. An LEA may, if it chooses, apply for funds in consortium with one or more surrounding LEAs. (*ESEA* section 4106(b)). During the design and development of its application, an LEA or consortium of LEAs must engage in consultation with stakeholders in the area served by the LEA. (*ESEA* section 4106(c)(1)). Such stakeholders must include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Parents
- Teachers
- Principals
- Students
- School leaders
- Charter school teachers, principals, and other school leaders, when applicable
- Specialized instructional support personnel
- Indian tribes or tribal organizations, when applicable
- Local government representatives
- Others with relevant and demonstrated expertise
- Community-based organizations

An LEA or consortium of LEAs must continue to consult with the stakeholders identified above to improve the activities it conducts and coordinate implementation with other related activities conducted in the community. (*ESEA* section 4106(c)(2)). The Department recently released a [Dear Colleague Letter on Stakeholder Engagement](#) highlighting the importance and value of stakeholder engagement. The letter provides tips for removing barriers and resources that may help with the development of a meaningful stakeholder engagement plan.

Note: LEAs must also 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*. This process is different from the consultation related to the development of an LEA application described above.

ESEA section 4106(d) requires that an LEA receiving an SSAE program allocation of at least \$30,000 must conduct a comprehensive needs assessment prior to receiving its allocation,¹¹ and subsequent needs assessments at least once every three years, to examine its needs for improvement of:

- Access to, and opportunities for, a well-rounded education for all students;
- School conditions for student learning to create a healthy and safe school environment; and
- Access to personalized learning experiences supported by technology and professional development for the effective use of data and technology.

¹¹ An individual LEA receiving an allocation that is less than \$30,000 is not required to conduct a comprehensive needs assessment. (*ESEA* section 4106(d)(2)).)

The LEA's application must describe the SSAE programs and activities the LEA proposes to implement, which must include as applicable, descriptions of any partnership with an IHE, business, nonprofit organization, community-based organization, or other public or private entity with a demonstrated record of success in implementing allowable activities under the SSAE program. The LEA must also describe, as applicable, how funds will be used for activities in the three content areas – well-rounded educational opportunities, safe and healthy students, and effective use of technology. Furthermore, the LEA's application must also include program objectives and intended outcomes and describe how the LEA or its partners will periodically evaluate the effectiveness of its SSAE program activities based on those objectives and outcomes. (*ESEA* section 4106(e)(1)). 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 its allocation for such costs as authorized under *ESEA* section 4105(c).

LEA or Consortium of LEAs Assurances

In accordance with *ESEA* section 4106(e) (2) and (f), an LEA or consortium of LEAs must assure in its application that it will:

- Prioritize the distribution of funds to schools served by the LEA based on one or more of the following criteria—
 - Are among the schools with the greatest needs;
 - Have the highest percentages or numbers of children counted under section 1124(c) (*i.e.*, children counted for purposes of basic grants to LEAs under *Title I*, Part A of the *ESEA*);
 - Are identified for comprehensive support and improvement under section 1111(c)(4)(D)(i) (*i.e.*, are among the lowest-achieving schools);
 - Are implementing targeted support and improvement plans as described in section 1111(d)(2) (*i.e.*, have consistently underperforming student subgroups); or
 - Are identified as a persistently dangerous public elementary school or secondary school under section 8532. (*ESEA* section 4106(e)(2)(A)).
- For an LEA or consortium that receives \$30,000 or more, use—
 - Not less than 20 percent of funds to support one or more of the activities authorized under section 4107 pertaining to well-rounded educational opportunities;
 - Not less than 20 percent of funds to support one or more activities authorized under section 4108 pertaining to safe and healthy students; and
 - A portion of funds to support one or more activities authorized under section 4109(a) pertaining to the effective use of technology, including an assurance that it will not use more than 15 percent of the remaining portion for purchasing technology infrastructure as described in section 4109(b).¹²

¹² An LEA that receives less than \$30,000 is required to provide only one of these assurances. (*ESEA* section 4106(f)).

(ESEA section 4106(e)(2)(C)-(E)).

- Comply with section 8501-8504, regarding equitable participation of private school children and teachers. (ESEA section 4106(e)(2)(B)).¹³
- Complete an annual State report regarding how funds for the SSAE program are being used. (ESEA section 4106(e)(2)(F)).

Key Questions

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

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 assurances 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 (ESEA section 4108) or the well-rounded education content area (ESEA section 4107) and could be used to satisfy expenditures requirements in both areas. In such cases, the LEA should explain in its application to the SEA how the activity fits in more than one content area. The SEA will ultimately approve or disapprove the activity through its application approval process consistent with relevant statutory application requirements.

- 2) What other stakeholders should an LEA consider consulting with as it develops its application?

In addition to the list provided above in the “Local 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. Under ESEA sections 4107(a)(2) (well-rounded education) and 4108(4) (safe and healthy students), 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 IHE, business, nonprofit organization, community-based organization, or other public or private entity with a demonstrated record of success in implementing these activities. In

¹³ Under sections 8501- 8504 of the ESEA, LEAs and SEAs 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. New or changed requirements that affect the equitable participation of private school students, teachers and other educational personnel under the ESEA will be addressed in forthcoming guidance. Except as otherwise provided in that guidance, the existing non-regulatory *Title IX, Part E Uniform Provisions, Subpart 1 – Private Schools (Revised March 2009)* will remain applicable.

addition, LEAs may find it particularly helpful to include such partners in the needs assessment process.

- 3) If LEAs apply for funds as a consortium, how is the consortium's funding determined?

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 LEAs.

- 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?

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).

- 5) What does supplement not supplant mean in the context of the SSAE program?

Section 4110 requires that SSAE program funds be used to supplement, and not supplant, non-Federal funds that would otherwise be used for activities authorized under the SSAE program. This means that an SEA or LEA may not use SSAE program funds to carry out activities that would otherwise be paid for with State or local funds. In determining whether a particular use of funds would violate the non-supplanting requirement, SEAs and LEAs should consider matters such as whether the cost involved is currently paid for using State or local funds or whether the cost involved is for an activity that is required by State or local law. In no event may an SEA or LEA decrease the amount of State or local funds used to pay the cost of an activity simply because of the availability of the SSAE program funds. There is a presumption of supplanting if Federal funds are used for State-required costs or costs previously covered with non-Federal funds. The presumption may be overcome if the SEA or LEA is able to demonstrate through written documentation (e.g., State or local legislative action, budget information, or other materials) that it does not have the funds necessary to implement the activity and that the activity would not be carried out in the absence of the SSAE program funds.

- 6) Must an LEA distribute SSAE program funds to each of its schools?

No. An LEA is not required to distribute SSAE program funds to each of its schools. Consistent with ESEA section 4106(e)(2)(A), an LEA must prioritize the distribution of funds to schools as described in the LEA or Consortium Assurances section of this document and must implement the SSAE program consistent with all relevant statutory

requirements. In prioritizing the distribution of funds, an LEA that provides district-wide services with the SSAE program funds must focus those services on schools with the greatest need identified in ESEA section 4106(e)(2)(A).

- 7) Do the application assurances regarding use of funds in the three main content areas apply to the schools to which an LEA distributes funds?

No. The application assurances regarding use of funds in the three SSAE program content areas apply at the LEA level. These assurances 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 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.

- 8) In the case of a consortium of LEAs, do the application assurances regarding use of funds in the three content areas apply to the consortium as a whole or to each member LEA?

The application assurances 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.

IMPLEMENTING EFFECTIVE SSAE PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

While LEAs must comply with local application requirements as outlined in the previous section, they also have substantial flexibility in how they utilize the SSAE program funds to provide students access to a well-rounded education, improve school conditions for student learning, and utilize educational technology. In addition to the required needs assessment, education leaders should consider using further steps described below to improve the overall effectiveness of the SSAE program activities to improve student outcomes.

Identifying Local Needs

Conducting a needs assessment is an important and required aspect of the SSAE program. The needs assessment must be comprehensive and examine areas for improvement related to students' access to well-rounded educational opportunities, learning conditions that cultivate a

safe and healthy environment for students, and effective use of technology. (*ESEA* section 4106(d)). LEAs that receive an allocation of \$30,000 or greater must conduct a comprehensive needs assessment at least once every three years.¹⁴ As noted in the “Local Application Requirements” section, when embarking on the local needs assessment, LEAs must engage in timely and meaningful consultation with a broad range of stakeholders (*ESEA* section 4106(c)) and should examine relevant data to understand students’ and schools’ most pressing needs, including the potential root causes of such needs. In addition, if the LEA has recently conducted a needs assessment that corresponds to the SSAE sections, the LEA may want to consider how best to incorporate the information for the completed needs assessment into the comprehensive needs assessment for the SSAE program.

Questions to consider:

- *Which stakeholders can help identify local needs and/or root causes? How can they be engaged early and in a meaningful way throughout the process?*
- *What data are needed to best understand local needs?*
- *Do our current systems fully capture the needs of our hardest to serve students – including those who might experience adversity that might not come-up in a survey or other data tools (e.g. trauma experienced by a recent influx of refugee students)?*
- *Are there inequities inherent in the system that is driving some of the local needs?*
- *How should the identified needs be prioritized when several significant needs are identified?*

Select Relevant, Evidence-Based Activities¹⁵

Once the needs have been identified, stakeholders should select relevant evidence-based activities, when evidence is available, that will have the likelihood of working in the local context . Evidence-based activities are more likely to improve student outcomes but the effectiveness also depends on the local context (e.g., the alignment of that activity to other efforts underway, the population being served) and local capacity (e.g., funding, staff and staff skills, resources, buy-in from stakeholders).

Questions to consider:

- *Are there any evidence-based activities that would address the identified needs (Also see Guidance on the Definition of “Evidence-Based”)?*
- *Are there identified interventions supported by strong or moderate evidence, as defined in the ESEA that would address the identified needs of the student population being served (Also see Guidance on the Definition of “Evidence-Based”)?*
- *How does the local context, including the district’s larger strategic goals and improvement plans, influence which activity may be best suited for the district and/or the school?*

¹⁴ LEAs receiving an allocation less than \$30,000 are not required to conduct a comprehensive needs assessment. However, a needs assessment is an important first step in using SSAE program funds to improve student outcomes.

¹⁵ Please see Guidance on the Definition of “Evidence-Based” in the Appendix for further discussion of evidence levels.

- *Does the district have the capacity to implement this activity or intervention, (time, people, money)? If not, would additional staff development help, or should an alternative activity be considered?*
- *Does the potential outcome of an activity or intervention justify its costs, or are there other activities that would be a more cost-effective way to address identified needs?*
- *How will the selected activity be sustained over time (e.g., are ongoing funding sources available)?*

Plan for Implementation

An implementation plan, developed with input from stakeholders, sets up LEAs and schools for successful implementation (see here for an example of a Department-funded implementation planning and monitoring tool). Such plans typically include the following components:

- ✓ A logic model, which demonstrates a theory of action by visually connecting the activity to expected outcomes that are stated as well-defined and measurable goals and clarifies how the activity will work (see here for how Department regulations define “logic model” and for a description of logic models);
- ✓ Well-defined, measurable goals with implementation timelines for successful execution;
- ✓ Clearly outlined roles and responsibilities for people involved, including the person or people responsible for the activity’s success, those with a deep understanding of the activity, and those working to implement the activity on the ground;
- ✓ Identified resources required to support the activity (e.g., staff time, funding, materials, support from community stakeholders, technical assistance);
- ✓ A process to monitor implementation, as well as to collect information on how the activity is working, to ensure continuous improvement, including plans for data collection, analysis, and/or evaluation to examine performance against well-defined and measurable goals; and
- ✓ An outreach strategy to regularly engage stakeholders.

Implement Activities

Effective implementation of the selected activity is essential to achieving identified goals. Inevitably, there will be unexpected hurdles during implementation, so having an ongoing mechanism to identify and address these issues, and to collect information for performance monitoring and evaluation, is crucial.

Questions to consider:

- *Is the implementation plan being followed as designed? If not, why not?*
- *What mid-course adjustments could be made to improve implementation? Is there stakeholder feedback that could be used to inform such adjustments?*
- *Do resources need to be realigned or timelines adjusted?*
- *What are barriers to successful implementation? Who needs to be involved in order to make changes that result in removal of these barriers?*

Examine and Reflect

The final step for improving effective implementation is to examine how the activity is working and then use that information to make decisions about mid-course correction, steps for continuous improvement, and next steps. There are different ways to examine how activities are working. Performance monitoring, for instance, involves tracking data about an activity to see how outcomes compare to identified targets and goals. Rigorous evaluations, on the other hand, measure the effectiveness of an activity, answering questions about the impact of a specific activity on measured outcomes. These activities produce information that should be used to guide future investments.

Questions to consider:

- *What are reasonable expectations of success at the beginning, middle, and end of an activity or intervention, and how should success be measured?*
- *Is performance data sufficient or is there a need to assess the effectiveness of the activity with a rigorous evaluation? If so, are there resources to support a rigorous evaluation?*
- *What interim progress and/or performance milestones should be collected?*
- *What does the information collected suggest about ways to improve the activity and/or to improve future activities and investments?*

Key Questions

- 1) What tools and data may be available for an LEA to use in its comprehensive needs assessment and to help in choosing evidence-based programs and practices?

Although the Department does not endorse any specific tools, the Appendix includes a list of resources and examples that LEAs may find helpful in conducting a needs assessment and in choosing programs and practices.

- 2) What if no evidence of effectiveness is available for an activity to address an identified need?

If there is no evidence of effectiveness for an activity to address an identified need, an LEA should use a logic model to demonstrate a rationale for why an activity is expected to address the need in the LEA's specific context. The logic model should use prior research or data from performance monitoring to provide support that the activity is likely to improve the relevant outcome(s).

ALLOWABLE ACTIVITIES

The following section provides information on the activities that LEAs may conduct under the three content areas of the SSAE program and offers examples of practices that may be helpful to grantees. Generally, LEAs may use funds for a wide variety of activities within each content area, including, but not limited to, direct services for students, professional development¹⁶ for

¹⁶ ESEA section 8101(42) defines "professional development." 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>.

teachers and administrators, salaries of personnel to carry out identified programs and services, including but not limited to athletic administrators, and supplemental educational resources and equipment. The examples provided below are not an exhaustive list of strategies, but rather, describe a range of practices that are illustrative of the possibilities under the law. Additional resources are provided in the Appendix.

Activities to Support Well-Rounded Educational Opportunities

Consistent with section 4106(e)(2)(C) of the *ESEA*, an LEA or consortium of LEAs receiving an SSAE program allocation of at least \$30,000 must use at least 20 percent of the SSAE program funds for activities under section 4107 that support student access to a well-rounded education. Programs and activities carried out under this section must be coordinated with other schools and community-based services and may be conducted in partnership with IHEs and other entities. (*ESEA* section 4107(a)(1)-(2)) The purpose of a well-rounded education is to provide an enriched curriculum and education experiences to all students. It includes programs and activities in the subjects discussed in more detail below as well as other activities, including those that integrate multiple academic disciplines. In general, an LEA may use funds under section 4107 for any program or activity that supports student access to and success in well-rounded educational experiences.

A well-rounded education starts with early learning opportunities that make time for exploration and continues with K-12 education that helps students make important connections among their studies, their curiosities, their passions, and the skills they need to become critical thinkers and productive members of society. In addition, a well-rounded education promotes a diverse set of learning experiences that engages students across a variety of courses, activities, and programs in subjects such as English, reading/language arts, writing, science, technology, engineering, mathematics, foreign languages, civics and government, economics, arts, history, geography, computer science, music, career and technical education, health, and physical education.¹⁷

Research supports the benefits of a well-rounded education. For example, students are better able to understand a text when they have had exposure to the knowledge and experiences referenced in that text.¹⁸ Experience shows that students who have been exposed to the language and vocabulary of the natural world, the sciences, and social studies are better readers. Research also shows that students who have strong experiences in the arts often perform better in math.¹⁹ The arts also help children think creatively, and develop language skills in other languages.²⁰

Programs and activities that support a well-rounded education may include--

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Afflerbach, Peter P. "The Influence of Prior Knowledge on Expert Readers' Main Idea Construction Strategies." *Reading Research Quarterly* 25, no. 1 (1990): 31-46. and Georgia Kosmoski, Geneva Gay, and Edward Vockell. "Cultural Literacy and Academic Achievement." *The Journal of Experimental Education* 58, no. 4 (1990): 265-272.

¹⁹ "Arts Integration: A Promising Approach to Improving Early Learning" February 2016 <http://www.wolfltrap.org/~media/files/pdf/education/arts-integ-brief-2016-final.pdf?la=en>.

²⁰ Carolyn Asbury and Barbara Rich, *Learning, Arts, and the Brain: The DANA Consortium Report on Arts and Cognition*. (Washington, DC: Dana Press, 2008).

Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (ESEA section 4107(a)(3)(C)). An LEA may use funds for programming and activities to improve instruction and student engagement in STEM subjects. STEM activities may include: increasing access for groups of underrepresented students to high-quality courses; supporting participation in nonprofit competitions (e.g. robotics, math competitions, computer programming); providing students hands-on learning and exposure to STEM, including through field-based and service learning; supporting the creation and enhancement of STEM-focused specialty schools; facilitating collaboration among programs that take place during the school day and those that take place during out-of-school time to improve the integration of STEM instruction in those programs; and integrating other academic subjects such as the arts into STEM curricula. In a high-quality STEM opportunity, STEM skills and content knowledge are integrated and learned through exploration, inquiry, problem solving, and often involve real-world contexts or applications.

SPOTLIGHT: Studies show that prekindergarten and kindergarten students whose teachers integrated music and arts with STEM curricula and lessons experienced significant increases in math learning.²¹ For example, the Early STEM/Arts project of the Wolf Trap Early Learning Institute paired teachers with Wolf Trap teaching artists to receive intensive professional development in applying arts-integrated techniques to math curricula. The artists visited teachers' classrooms for in-class sessions with the students and transitioned from classroom leaders to coaches as the teachers gained skills in integrating music, dance, and drama into their own instruction. An independent study found that students in the classrooms of teachers who participated in the Early STEM/Arts program received the equivalent of 1.7 additional months of learning, or 34 additional days, compared to their peers in the control groups.

Music and arts (ESEA section 4107(a)(3)(B)). An LEA may use funds for programs and activities that use music and the arts, which may include dance, media arts, theater, and visual arts, as tools to support student success through the promotion of constructive student engagement, problem solving, and conflict resolution. ArtsEdSearch, a clearinghouse of rigorously reviewed evaluation research concerning the effects of arts on teaching and learning, contains a growing body of research²² that affirms when part of a well-rounded education in schools, arts learning contributes to increased academic achievement and student success in preparation for college, career, and life. (See also ESEA section 4107(a)(3)(I)).

SPOTLIGHT: Many schools and districts are implementing programs that have made the arts part of a well-rounded education for all students. In Boston, school district and city leaders have embarked on a revitalization of the arts throughout the district in order to close a longstanding “arts opportunity gap.” For example, at Otis Elementary School,

²¹ Ludwig, Meredith and Song, Mengli. 2015. Evaluation of Professional Development in the Use of Arts-Integrated Activities With Mathematics Content: Findings From the Evaluation of the WolfTrap Arts in Education Model Development and Dissemination Grant Final Grant Report. Washington, DC: American Institutes for Research. <http://www.wolftrap.org/~media/files/pdf/education/aemdd-report-2016.pdf?la=en>

²² ArtEdSearch, the national online research clearinghouse of student and educator outcomes focused on arts learning: <http://www.aep-arts.org/research-policy/artsedsearch/>. This resource is included in the Appendix and is supported by a cooperative agreement from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Department to the Education Commission of the States.

where the student body is 80 percent Hispanic and more than 90 percent are eligible for free and reduced-price lunch, the arts are a critical component of the school's vision for success. In the initial data collected for the Boston Public Schools Arts Expansion initiative, Otis Elementary was providing some visual arts and music but wanted to ensure access for all students and provide additional arts disciplines. Through the Arts Expansion Initiative, in 2011 the school began adding arts disciplines by engaging in partnerships and hiring additional arts teachers. Arts integration collaborations between arts specialists and classroom teachers focused on making content connections across the curriculum. Partnerships with local arts institutions broadened students' artistic horizons and deepened their learning. A number of indicators have improved at the school, which could possibly be attributed to the arts expansion initiative. In the 2015-16 Student Climate Survey, Otis Elementary outscored other elementary schools in six of seven indicators and had a 94.8 percent attendance rate in 2014-15. Since its arts expansion, student proficiencies on the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System in English language arts and mathematics have increased, and the school has moved from tier 3 to tier 2 in the district accountability and assistance levels.

Foreign language instruction (ESEA section 4107(a)(3)(F)). An LEA may use funds to support instruction in foreign languages, which is essential for students to fully participate in today's global economy and increasingly diverse communities. The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages finds that language learning can support academic achievement, provide cognitive benefits, and positively affect attitudes and beliefs about language and other cultures.²³

Accelerated learning programs (ESEA section 4107(a)(3)(D)). An LEA may use funds for efforts to raise student academic achievement through accelerated learning programs, including by: reimbursing low-income students to cover all or part of the costs of AP, IB, or other accelerated learning program examinations; and increasing the availability of, and enrollment in, AP or IB programs, dual or concurrent enrollment programs, early college high schools, and other accelerated learning options. AP and IB programs are designed to help students prepare for college-level work and enable students to take college-level courses in high school and potentially earn college credit based on scores achieved on AP and IB exams. Dual or concurrent enrollment programs and early college high school programs enable students to prepare for college rigor and, through college course enrollment opportunities, graduate from high school with college credits and vocational certificates. Counseling, mentoring, or programs that develop study skills and critical thinking are also important components of accelerated learning programs.

SPOTLIGHT: There are several programs providing students with extensive access to accelerated learning opportunities. For example, the Advance Kentucky initiative is boosting college and career readiness by increasing

²³ For more information on what the research shows, please see American Council on The Teaching of Foreign Languages website at <https://www.actfl.org/advocacy/what-the-research-shows>.

access to AP programs. Available in over 40 percent of its public high schools in Kentucky, the project is designed to start in middle school and give every student access to challenging coursework, not just to those traditionally eligible to participate, so that students will be ready and successful in AP courses in high school. While the program focuses on raising student and teacher expectations, it provides support to teachers through content-rich training and professional learning. More information on the program is available at <http://advancekentucky.org/>.

High school redesign with dual or concurrent enrollment and early college high schools (ESEA section 4107(a)(3)(D)(ii)). An LEA or consortium of LEAs may use funds to support strategies designed to decrease high school drop-out rates, and to increase high school graduation rates and college-entrance rates and to redesign what the high school experience can be. Early College High Schools have been particularly impactful for racial and ethnic minority students and students from low-income families.²⁴

SPOTLIGHT: Jobs for the Future Inc. (JFF) is one example of an early college program. Since 2002 JFF and their partners have helped start or redesign nearly 250 early college schools that currently serve more than 75,000 students nationwide. JFF has seen increased graduation rates with 90 percent of early college students graduating high school compared to the national rate of 78 percent. In addition, 23 percent of graduates of early college high schools graduate with an associates or college certificate along with their high school diploma. Seventy-three percent of early college students identify as students of color, 61 percent are from low-income families, and 56 percent will be the first in their immediate families to attend college.²⁵ Utilizing the JFF model these early colleges incorporate the following key features: 1) Aligned curricula and instruction; 2) Personalization and student supports; 3) Utilize the power of place (early colleges are located on or near college campuses); 4) College credit; and 5) Partnerships.

Civics instruction (ESEA section 4104(b)(3)(A)(i)(V)). An LEA may use funds to promote the development, implementation, and strengthening of instructional programs in civics. Civics is generally understood to mean the content of what citizens should know about politics and government, including the foundations of the American political system. Schools can provide civics instruction through both formal and informal education beginning in the early years of the education process.

SPOTLIGHT: There are many programs that help educators incorporate civics into the learning environment. Facing History and Ourselves is one such program that integrates

²⁴ Berger, Andrea, Lori Turk-Bicakci, Michael Garet, Joel Knudson, and Gur Hoshen. 2014. *Early College, Continued Success: Early College High School Initiative Impact Study*. Washington, DC: American Institutes for Research. <http://www.air.org/sites/default/files/downloads/report/AIR%20ECHSI%20Impact%20Study%20Report-%20NSC%20Update%2001-14-14.pdf>. and Edmunds, Julie A.; Larry Bernstein; Fatih Unlu; Elizabeth Glennie; John Willse; Arthur Smith; and N. Arshavsky. 2012. *Expanding the Start of the College Pipeline: Ninth-grade Findings from an Experimental Study of the Impact of the Early College High School Model*. *Journal of Research on Educational Effectiveness*, 5(2), 136–159. <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/19345747.2012.656182>

²⁵ <http://www.jff.org/initiatives/early-college-designs>.

the study of history, literature, and human behavior with ethical decision making and innovative teaching strategies. The program includes teacher professional development as well as classroom content (historical case studies) and pedagogy. Facing History aims to promote students' historical understanding, critical thinking, and social-emotional learning. The program is also designed to help humanities teachers effectively integrate civic education in their humanities courses to enhance both discipline-based and civic learning outcomes. A study published in April 2014²⁶ shows how Facing History helps students develop critical thinking skills and fosters both academic and civic growth, while also promoting teacher self-efficacy and professional satisfaction.

College and career counseling (ESEA section 4107(a)(3)(A)). An LEA may use funds for college and career counseling programs and services. These programs and services are, generally, designed to help students make informed and better educational and career choices as they develop personal, social, educational, and career skills. Programs often offer students information starting in middle school about how to prepare for college, including the importance of choosing rigorous high school course offerings, how to choose from among career options, how to enroll in and receive federal financial aid through the FAFSA, and how to pursue academic and occupational training needed to succeed in the workplace. To help prepare students to transition to college, assistance is provided on identifying postsecondary opportunities that are associated with students' interests, applying for college admissions and obtaining financial aid, and preparing for college aptitude tests (*e.g.* SAT and ACT).

Social emotional learning (SEL) (ESEA section 4107(a)(3)(J)). An LEA may use funds for activities in social emotional learning, including interventions that build resilience, self-control, empathy, persistence, and other social and behavioral skills. Extensive research, as well as educators' own experiences, shows that school-based SEL programs play an important role in fostering healthy relationships and increasing academic and career success.²⁷ A growing body of research in this field is demonstrating that various tools and practices can enhance students' social and emotional development.²⁸ For example, implementing practices that support students' sense of belonging and value can increase students' academic success.²⁹

SPOTLIGHT: Many schools are incorporating SEL into their programs and services. For example, the Austin Independent School District (AISD) has succeeded in developing a model for systematic and systemic SEL for all of its 83,600 students focused on four core practices: explicit skills instruction, SEL integration, school climate and culture, and family and community engagement. SEL coaches are deployed throughout the system to

²⁶ Barr, D. J., Boulay, B., Selman, R. L., McCormick, R., Lowenstein, E., Gamse, B., ... Brielle Leonard, M. (2015). A randomized controlled trial of professional development for interdisciplinary civic education: Impacts on humanities teachers and their students. *Teachers College Record*, 117(2).

²⁷ Durlak, J.A., Weissberg, R.P., Dymnicki, A.B., Taylor, R.D., & Schellinger, K.B. (2011). The impact of enhancing students' social and emotional learning: A meta-analysis of school-based universal interventions. *Child Development*, 82(1), pp. 405–432.

²⁸ CASEL Guide to Effective Social and Emotional Learning Programs (<http://www.casel.org/guide/>).

²⁹ Blackwell, L.A., Trzesniewski, K.H., & Dweck, C.S. (2007). Implicit theories of intelligence and achievement across the junior high school transition: A longitudinal study and an intervention. *Child Development*, 78, 246–263. Available at: mtoliveboe.org/cmsAdmin/uploads/blackwell-theories-of-intelligence-child-dev-2007.pdf. Cohen, G. L., Garcia, J., Purdie-Vaughns, V., Apfel, N., & Brzustoski, P. (2009).

“Recursive Processes in Self-affirmation: Intervening to Close the Minority Achievement Gap.” *Science*, 324, 400–403.

support implementation of SEL. Using a vertical structure, Austin started with two high schools and their feeder schools. As of 2015-16, all 130 schools in the district are receiving professional development in implementing SEL. Evidence-based SEL programs are one important part of AISD's implementation strategy. Elementary and middle schools are using explicit instructional materials and lessons are generally taught weekly by the classroom teacher and reinforced and integrated into instruction in all areas of the school. In several high schools, ninth-graders attend a Methods for Academic and Personal Success (MAPS) class to develop skills to help with their transition to high school. Results show those teachers' ratings of their 3rd grade students' SEL competencies were positively related to students' performance in STAAR reading and math. Also, secondary schools with more years in SEL showed greater improvement in attendance and greater reduction in campus discretionary removals than did schools with no years in SEL.³⁰

Environmental education (ESEA section 4107(a)(3)(G)). An LEA may use funds for activities in environmental education, which is generally understood as instruction that encourages students to develop knowledge, intellectual skills, attitudes, experiences, and motivation to make and act upon responsible environmental decisions. Environmental education is generally understood to be a multi-disciplinary field that integrates disciplines such as biology, chemistry, physics, ecology, earth science, atmospheric science, mathematics, and geography.

SPOTLIGHT: Many schools across the nation provide environmental education classes for students. Project Learning Tree® (PLT) is one example of an award-winning environmental education program designed for teachers and other educators, parents, and community leaders working with youth from preschool through grade 12. PLT provides educators with supplementary curriculum materials, professional development, and resources to integrate environmental education into lesson plans for all grades and subject areas and to use the outdoors to engage students in learning about the world around them. GreenSchools, PLT's service-learning program, inspires students to apply STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) to create greener and healthier schools by reducing energy and water use, improving their school site, recycling, and other projects that also save schools money. Program evaluations demonstrate that PLT's Green Schools program contributes positively to important outcomes in student learning and engagement including students' presentation, writing, planning, problem-solving, technology, leadership and teamwork skills. <https://www.plt.org/>

Activities to Support Safe and Healthy Students

The second purpose of the SSAE program is to improve school conditions for student learning. When students are healthy and feel safe and supported, they are more likely to succeed in school.

³⁰ https://www.austinisd.org/sites/default/files/dre-surveys/14.139_Social_and_Emotional_Learning_Key_Outcomes_2010-2011_Through_2014-2015.pdf and https://www.austinisd.org/sites/default/files/dre-surveys/14.140_Social_and_Emotional_Learning_Competency_Survey_Relationships_With_AISD_Outcome_Measures_0.pdf.

According to the *Indicators of School Crime and Safety 2015*³¹ report, schools have made significant progress toward improving school safety and on many measures schools are safer than they have ever been. However, significant challenges still remain:

- In 2014, about 33 out of every 1,000 students ages 12-18 reported being the victim of a non-fatal crime at school. This was down from 85 students out of 1,000 in 2000.³²
- The percentage of students who reported being bullied was still significant but lower in 2013 (22 percent) in comparison to every prior survey year (28 percent in 2005, 2009, and 2011 and 32 percent in 2007).³³
- Twenty-two percent of students in grades 9–12 in 2013 reported that illegal drugs were made available to them on school property.³⁴
- The percentage of public schools reporting student sexual harassment of other students at least once a week was lower in 2013-2014 (1.4 percent) than prior survey years, including 2009-2010, when it was 3.2 percent.³⁵

In addition, students' physical health issues such as epilepsy, diabetes, and asthma may pose a barrier to learning.³⁶ Furthermore, poor eating habits and a lack of physical activity have contributed to a significant increase in the number of young people who are obese. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, childhood obesity is a serious problem in the United States. Despite recent declines in the prevalence among preschool-aged children, obesity among children is still high. For children and adolescents aged 2-19 years, the prevalence of obesity has remained fairly stable at about 17% and affects about 12.7 million children and adolescents for the past decade. In 2011-2012, 17.7% of 6- to 11-year-olds had obesity, and 20.5% of 12- to 19-year-olds.³⁷

In addition, unaddressed mental health issues may also interfere with learning and place young people at greater risk of using drugs and engaging in other harmful behaviors.³⁸ Approximately 20 percent of youth ages 13 to 18 have experienced a severe mental disorder³⁹ and 13 percent of

³¹ Zhang, A., Musu-Gillette, L., and Oudekerk, B.A. (2016). *Indicators of School Crime and Safety: 2015* (NCES 2016-079/NCJ 249758). National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education, and Bureau of Justice Statistics, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. Washington, DC. Accessed from <http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2016079>.

³² Zhang, A., Musu-Gillette, L., and Oudekerk, B.A. (2016).

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ If a student has a physical or mental health impairment (such as epilepsy, diabetes, or asthma) and that impairment substantially limits a major life activity, then the student is a student with a disability and may be entitled to services or reasonable modifications under section 504 of the *Rehabilitation Act of 1973* (Section 504) and *Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990* (*Title II*). 34 *C.F.R.* Part 104; 28 *C.F.R.* Part 35.

³⁷ Ogden CL, Carroll MD, Kit BK, Flegal KM. Prevalence of Childhood and Adult Obesity in the United States, 2011-2012. *JAMA*.2014;311(8):806-814. doi:10.1001/jama.2014.732. Accessed from: <http://jama.jamanetwork.com/article.aspx?articleid=1832542>

³⁸ If a student has a mental health impairment that substantially limits a major life activity, then the student is a student with a disability and may be entitled to services or reasonable modifications under Section 504 and *Title II*. 34 *C.F.R.* Part 104; 28 *C.F.R.* Part 35.

³⁹ Merikangas, K. R., He, J., Burstein, M., Swanson, S. A., Avenevoli, S., Cui, L., ... Swendsen, J. (2010). Lifetime Prevalence of Mental Disorders in US Adolescents: Results from the National Comorbidity Study-Adolescent Supplement (NCS-A). *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*, 49(10), 980–989. <http://doi.org/10.1016/j.jaac.2010.05.017>.

children ages 8 to 15 had a diagnosable mental disorder in a given year.⁴⁰ In summarizing studies on the relationship between children's emotional distress and academic achievement, researchers found that students with frequent feelings of internalized distress (such as sadness, anxiety, or depression) showed diminished academic functioning and those with externalized distress (such as anger, frustration, and fear) exhibited difficulties including learning delays and poor achievement.⁴¹ School mental health programs improve educational outcomes by decreasing absences and discipline referrals and improving test scores.⁴²

An LEA or consortium of LEAs that receives \$30,000 or more in SSAE program funds must use at least 20 percent of those funds to develop, implement, and evaluate comprehensive programs and activities that:

- Are coordinated with other schools and community-based services and programs;
- Foster safe, healthy, supportive, and drug-free environments that support student academic achievement;
- Promote the involvement of parents in the activity or program;
- May be conducted in partnership with an IHE, business, nonprofit organization, community-based organization, or other public or private entity with a demonstrated record of success in implementing activities authorized under section 4108; and
- May include a wide variety of programs and activities discussed in detail below among other programs and activities. (*ESEA* section 4108(1)-(5)).

It is important to note that a State or LEA receiving funds under the SSAE program, generally must obtain prior written, informed consent from the parent of each child who is under 18 years of age to participate in any mental-health assessment or service that is funded with SSAE program funds. Prior written, informed consent means active consent; silent (passive) consent does not constitute prior written, informed consent is therefore not sufficient. Section 4001 of the *ESEA* describes in detail the contents of such consent, as well as limitations and exceptions to when prior, written informed consent is required.⁴³

⁴⁰ National Institutes of Mental Health. (n.d.) Prevalence Statistics: Any Disorder among Children. Accessed from <http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/statistics/prevalence/any-disorder-among-children.shtml>.

⁴¹ Roeser, R. W., Eccles, J. S., & Strobel, K. R. (1998). Linking the study of schooling and mental health: Selected issues and empirical illustrations at the level of the individual. *Educational Psychologist*, 33, 153-176.

⁴² Jennings, J., Pearson, G., & Harris, M. (2000). Implementing and maintaining school-based mental health services in a large, urban school district. *Journal of School Health*, 70, 201-205.

⁴³ *ESEA* section 4001 provides: SEC. 4001. GENERAL PROVISIONS. (a) PARENTAL CONSENT.— (1) IN GENERAL.—

(A) INFORMED WRITTEN CONSENT.—A State, local educational agency, or other entity receiving funds under this title shall obtain prior written, informed consent from the parent of each child who is under 18 years of age to participate in any mental-health assessment or service that is funded under this title and conducted in connection with an elementary school or secondary school under this title.

(B) CONTENTS.—Before obtaining the consent described in subparagraph (A), the entity shall provide the parent written notice describing in detail such mental health assessment or service, including the purpose for such assessment or service, the provider of such assessment or service, when such assessment or service will begin, and how long such assessment or service may last

(C) LIMITATION.—The informed written consent required under this paragraph shall not be a waiver of any rights or protections under section 444 of the General Education Provisions Act (20 U.S.C. 1232g).

Generally, the SSAE program funds may be used under section 4108 for any program or activity that fosters safe, healthy, supportive, and drug-free school environments, including direct student services and professional development and training for school staff. As indicated in Table 2, the authorized LEA activities in section 4108 may be categorized by topic as: 1) Safe and supportive learning environments; and 2) Student physical and mental health, including substance abuse prevention. Three of the authorized activities--mentoring and school counseling, schoolwide positive behavioral interventions, and pay for success initiatives--are cross-cutting and are applicable to both topics.

Table 2. Overview of Authorized Topics Under Section 4108 of the ESEA*

Safe and Supportive Schools	Student Physical and Mental Health
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preventing Bullying and Harassment • Relationship-Building Skills • School Dropout Prevention • Re-Entry Programs and Transition Services for Justice Involved Youth • School Readiness and Academic Success • Child Sexual Abuse Awareness and Prevention • Reducing Use of Exclusionary Discipline Practices and Promoting Supportive School Discipline • Suicide Prevention • Violence Prevention, Crisis Management and Conflict Resolution • Preventing Human Trafficking • Building School and Community Relationships • Culturally Responsive Teaching and Professional Development of Implicit Bias 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drug and Violence Prevention • Health and Safety Practices in School or Athletic Programs • School-Based Health and Mental Health Services • Healthy, Active Lifestyle, Nutritional Education • Physical Activities • Trauma-Informed Classroom Management • Preventing Use of Alcohol, Tobacco, Marijuana, Smokeless Tobacco, Electronic Cigarettes • Chronic Disease Management
<p>Cross Cutting Authorized Topics Mentoring and School Counseling Schoolwide Positive Behavioral Interventions Pay for Success Initiatives aligned with the purposes of <i>Title IV</i></p>	

*NOTE: This chart provides a summary of topics and is not an exhaustive list

(2) EXCEPTION.—Notwithstanding paragraph (1)(A), the written, informed consent described in such paragraph shall not be required in— (A) an emergency, where it is necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of the child, other children, or entity personnel; or (B) other instances in which an entity actively seeks parental consent but such consent cannot be reasonably obtained, as determined by the State or local educational agency, including in the case of— (i) a child whose parent has not responded to the notice described in paragraph (1)(B); or (ii) a child who has attained 14 years of age and is an unaccompanied youth, as defined in section 725 of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11434a).

Safe and Supportive Learning Environments. As noted in Table 2, section 4108 of the ESSA provides LEAs with numerous options for enhancing their efforts to provide students and school staff with a positive school climate, which in turn can promote student academic achievement. The 2013 study, *A Climate for Academic Success*,⁴⁴ examined schools that were beating the odds (BTO) and compared them with chronically underperforming (CU) schools. The study found significant differences in the school climate measures between BTO and CU schools. The study also found the probability of beating the odds for a school with a climate score in the top five percent was over ten times that of a school with an average school climate score, reaffirming that school climate makes a difference in student achievement. For additional guidance and resources related to school climate, please see the Department's web page on [School Climate and Discipline](#).

Additionally, a school-based program that utilizes restorative justice is an example of an allowable activity under section 4108. Restorative justice is a practice that focuses on the rehabilitation of students with serious and/or harmful infractions and behaviors through the reconciliation with victims and the community at large by restoring those relationships in a way that is beneficial and healing to all involved. It can be used as part of local plan to reduce exclusionary discipline practices.

SPOTLIGHT: There are many districts successfully implementing programs featuring restorative justice practices. For example, The Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) implements programs that utilize restorative practices. These restorative practices have positively influenced students to build caring relationships with adults and peers. As a result of these efforts, over the past two to three years, the overall number of out-of-school suspensions in the OUSD declined significantly. Almost 70 percent of school staff surveyed reported that restorative practices have improved school climate at their school in the past year. Students in restorative justice circles report having an enhanced ability to manage emotions, resolve conflict with parents, and maintain positive relationships with peers.

The Department, along with the U.S. Department of Justice, also launched an initiative in 2011 to support the use of positive school discipline practices that included effective alternatives to exclusionary discipline while encouraging a reduction in disproportionality for students of color and students with disabilities. A link to these resources, including a toolkit for teachers, is available in the Appendix. It has been noted that incarcerated and court-involved youth have a higher rate of dropout, and need appropriate transition services and credit recovery services in order to be supported in school. A study from the Youth Law Center found that when looking at barriers to achievement for court involved youth in California that, youth in court schools typically come into the system from under-performing schools and test at levels significantly below their age-equivalent peers. Additionally, the vast majority of students have experienced

⁴⁴ Voight, A., Austin, G., and Hanson, T. (2013). *A climate for academic success: How school climate distinguishes schools that are beating the achievement odds (Full Report)*. San Francisco: WestEd.

one or more forms of trauma, which can seriously interfere with concentration and other aspects of learning.⁴⁵

SPOTLIGHT: The Maya Angelou Schools supported by the See Forever Foundation, are one example of a public charter school system that is focused on offering holistic program to teens involved in the juvenile justice system. The schools combine rigorous academics with critical wrap-around supports and interventions designed to prevent young people from dropping out of high school and re-engage those who have already dropped out. The supports include onsite mental health counseling, paid internships and vocational training; extended day and weekend tutoring; credit recovery options; and intensive alumni support. The 2014 and 2015 graduates had a combined total of 63 percent of the students enroll in a post-secondary program. Additionally, during the 2014 and 2015 school years, 78 percent of the students who were enrolled in workforce programs earned their credentials (For more information visit <http://www.seeforever.org/>).

Student Physical and Mental Health. As noted in Table 3, section 4108 funds can be used for a wide array of programs and activities that directly support student health and wellness as well as professional development and training for school personnel. Schools that support the physical and mental health of their students increase the likelihood of students' academic success. There is new research on the effects of drugs on the developing teen brain, and the connection between substance abuse and poor academic outcomes.⁴⁶ There is also a growing awareness of the need to increase the physical activity of our students and improve nutrition in and outside of our schools, and that focusing on these activities can promote student academic achievement and better behavior.⁴⁷

SPOTLIGHT: Many schools are improving the mental health services offered to students. For example, the Elk Grove Unified School District in California has implemented Project GROW (Getting Ready for our World) through a U.S. Department of Education grant. This program is one example of how grant funds have helped improve the mental health resources in five of the school district's most disadvantaged schools, with a special focus on addressing the needs of military children. With the grant funds, the school district has been able to increase the ratio of mental health professionals to students, reduce the number of disciplinary referrals, and reduce suspensions in three schools from 239 in the baseline year to 187 in year 2 of the grant. It has focused on using evidence-based interventions that build student resilience and strength and prevent mild problem behaviors from becoming worse, and directed intensive services where they

⁴⁵ Youth law center, Educational injustice: Barriers to Achievement and Higher Education for Youth in California Juvenile Court Schools. www.ylc.org (2016).

⁴⁶ *America's Dropout Crisis: The Unrecognized Connection to Adolescent Substance Use* online at: <http://preventeendruguse.org/pdfs/AmerDropoutCrisis.pdf>.

⁴⁷ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (n.d.) Physical Activity Facts. Accessed from <http://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/physicalactivity/facts.htm>; Center for Disease Control and Prevention. (n.d.) Nutrition and the Health of Young People. Accessed from <http://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/nutrition/facts.htm>.

are most needed. The project director recently received the California Association of School Psychologists 2015-2016 Outstanding School Psychologist of the Year Award.

Cross-cutting. Also as noted in Table 3, section 4108 supports programs, activities, and professional development and training activities that are cross-cutting in nature and that can positively impact both safe and supportive learning environments as well as physical and mental health. For example, the SSAE program presents an opportunity for LEAs and schools to promote safe, healthy, and affirming school environments that are inclusive of all students. The SSAE funds can be used to reduce incidences of bullying and harassment against all students, including bullying and harassment based on a student's (or their associates) actual or perceived race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity), disability, sexual orientation, religion, or any other distinguishing characteristics that may be identified by the state or LEA. In addition, LEAs can use funds to implement school-wide positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS). PBIS provides a framework for SEAs and LEAs to develop their capacity to support the social, emotional, academic, and behavioral needs of all their students in which a wide range of evidence-based programs can be implemented including, but not limited to, prevention of the risk factors associated with substance abuse, bullying, and violence as well as promotion of mental health and wellness.

SPOTLIGHT: Many schools are successfully implementing PBIS to improve outcomes for students. For example, Andrews Elementary in Three Rivers, Michigan has been implementing PBIS for both "behavior" and "literacy" for the past five years. The impact of PBIS implementation on student outcomes is evidenced both by low levels of problem behavior, and high performance on reading assessments. The national median for major office discipline referrals per 100 students per school day in elementary schools is .22. During the past four years the rate of major office discipline referrals per 100 students per school day at Andrews Elementary varied from .12 to .18. Students have also benefitted from having both a positive school-wide social culture and from the use of an effective literacy curriculum delivered with systematic and explicit instruction. During the past five years the proportion of students at Andrews Elementary meeting or exceeding literacy benchmarks has ranged from 72 percent to 82 percent. In part because of PBIS, Andrews Elementary is a learning community with a positive social culture, active instruction on and support of pro-social behaviors, low levels of problem behavior, clear instruction on basic early literacy skills, and a student body that is mastering the literacy skills that will lead to future educational success.

Many SEAs and LEAs have implemented programs that help students transition from correctional facilities back to school. An allowable SSAE program activity includes the development and implementation of a plan (also known as a youth PROMISE plan) that includes evidence-based strategies to reduce exclusionary discipline practices, reduce entry into the prison system, and support reentry and transition of youth offenders returning from confinement back to their community and their local schools by providing mentoring, intervention, school counseling, and other education services to address unique risk factors.

SPOTLIGHT: There are a number of programs that support reentry and transition services for youth offenders. For example, in Washington State, the Educational Advocacy Program (EA) works through nine regional Education Service Districts

(ESD) specially trained staff to provide comprehensive support and case management for youth transitioning out of juvenile detention centers. The program helps youth overcome barriers to return successfully to school; and facilitates school coordination activities for youth returning to or reengaging in school. The challenges these youth face call for a coordinated, collaborative, and multifaceted intervention. EAs are tasked with facilitating this challenging transition process using a multi-tiered, public health model. This model enables the effective management of student caseloads by identifying three tiers of services distinguished by their intensity and students' needs. EAs use State-level educational data to assess and monitor students' progress.

In School Year 2014-2015, ESD 112 released an EA evaluation report (Maiké & Nixon, 2015) summarizing the process and outcome of the EA program in Vancouver, Washington serving 78 youth between the ages of 15 and 17. The report showed that enrollment in the EA program was associated with improved academic outcomes and lower rates of recidivism. Prior to receiving EA services, 53 percent of youth participants (those with available academic data) failed to pass any classes; at follow-up, 73 percent of these students had passed at least one class during the most recent grading period. In terms of school engagement, of the 40 youth who transitioned back into secondary education, 73 percent continued to remain enrolled in school 90 days post re-entry. Among the 78 youth receiving EA services, 91 percent did not re-offend during their enrollment in the program.

To assist LEAs and SEAs in improving their reentry strategies, ED recently released a Reentry Education Tool Kit. The guide is designed to help education providers and their partners create a reentry education continuum in their communities.⁴⁸

Activities to Support the Effective Use of Technology

In addition to supporting a well-rounded education and safe and healthy schools, a portion of the SSAE program funds, if \$30,000 or greater, must be used for increasing effective use of technology to improve the academic achievement, academic growth, and digital literacy of all students.

When carefully designed and thoughtfully applied, technology can accelerate, amplify, and expand the impact of effective practices that support student learning, increase community engagement, foster safe and healthy environments, and enable well-rounded educational opportunities. Technology can expand growth opportunities for all students while affording historically disadvantaged students greater equity of access to high-quality learning materials, field experts, personalized learning, and tools for planning for future education. Such opportunities can also support increased capacity for educators to create blended learning opportunities for their students, rethinking when, where, and how students complete different components of a learning experience. However, for technology to be truly transformative,

⁴⁸ RTI International. (n.d.) Reentry Education Tool Kit. Accessed from <http://lincs.ed.gov/reentryed/>.

educators need to have the knowledge and skills to take full advantage of technology-rich learning environments.

A Special Rule in the SSAE program states that no more than 15 percent of funds for activities to support the effective use of technology may be used "for purchasing technology infrastructure as described in subsection (a)(2)(B), which includes technology infrastructure purchased for the activities under subsection (a)(4)(A)." To clarify, LEAs or consortiums of LEAs may not spend more than 15 percent of funding in this content area on devices, equipment, software applications, platforms, digital instructional resources and/or other one-time IT purchases. (*ESEA* section 4109(b)).

Note that the modernization of the Federal Communications Commission's E-rate program has significantly increased access to funding for building a robust infrastructure to support learning enabled by technology. Additionally, coordination of Federal program support can help maximize the impact of available resources. For example, a school incorporating digital learning in a *Title I* schoolwide program might use *Title I* funds to purchase devices and digital learning resources to incorporate blended learning, *Title II* funds to help teachers improve instruction through effective blended-learning practices, and *Title III* funds to provide access to technology specifically for English Learners. Supplemental funds awarded to rural communities through the Small, Rural School Achievement Program (SRSA) and the Rural, Low-income School Program (RLIS) may additionally be used to support technology instruction in schools. As grantees incorporate technology into instructional practice, any use of technology for these purposes must comply with applicable privacy laws and the specific program requirements of each funding source. For more information please see the [Office of Educational Technology's privacy web page](#) and [ED's Technical Assistance Center \(PTAC\)](#).

In addition to purchases for technology infrastructure, at least 85 percent of funds used under section 4109 may be used to support a variety of professional development, defined in 8101(42) as activities that are an integral part of school and local educational agency strategies, activities and for capacity building and other activities directly related to improving the use of educational technology. Also emphasized in 8102 (42), professional development activities should be sustained, (not stand-alone, one-day, or short term workshops), intensive, collaborative, job-embedded, data-driven, and classroom-focused. SEAs and LEAs may use the SSAE program funds to support educators in accessing needed technology, in learning how to use it effectively, and to provide continuous, just-in-time support that includes professional development, mentors, and informal collaborations. This professional development should support and develop educators' identities as fluent users of technology, creative and collaborative problem solvers, and adaptive experts in the effective selection and implementation of educational technology. Funds may be used to provide ready access to high-quality content and expertise, and provide opportunities for more focused, relevant, and continuous professional development. Specifically, the SSAE program funds may be used to provide educators, school leaders, and administrators with the professional learning tools, devices, content and resources to do the following activities, among other allowable uses.

Provide personalized learning (*ESEA* section 4109(a)(1)(A)). Personalized learning allows educators to adjust the pace of learning and to optimize instructional approaches for the needs of each learner as they strive to meet rigorous expectations for college and career success. Learning

objectives, instructional approaches, and instructional content (and its sequencing) all may vary based on learner needs; and learning activities are meant to be meaningful and relevant to learners, driven by their interests, and often self-initiated.⁴⁹

SPOTLIGHT: Highline Public Schools, a district outside of Seattle with over 20,000 students, implemented personalized learning to create more equitable opportunities for all of their students. Federal funds were used to support a district taskforce and school-based personalized learning leadership teams that worked together to create personalized, standards-based goals based on learner strengths, needs, language, culture and aspirations. Students and teachers select tools purposefully for learners to explore ideas, develop skills and knowledge, design solutions to problems, and create artifacts that demonstrate learning. Through personalized learning pathways, learners use self-assessment and formative feedback to monitor growth, reflect on their learning and challenge themselves to reach more rigorous goals. Several indicators improved at the school, which could possibly be attributed to the personalized learning initiative. After implementing personalized learning, Highline students showed significant gains between 2014-2015 and 2015-2016; for example, 11th grade SBA ELA scores increased from 72% to 96% and math increased from 67% to 75%. Similarly, 8th grade science scores increased from 38% to 63% on the state science assessment (MSP).^{50 51}

Discover, adapt and share high-quality resources (ESEA section 4901(a)(1)(B)). These high-quality resources include openly licensed educational resources. Openly licensed educational resources, also referred to in ESEA as “open education resources” and “openly licensed content” (see ESEA section 4102, for the definition of “digital learning” that includes these terms), are teaching, learning, and research resources that reside in the public domain or have been released under a license that permits their free use, reuse, modification, and sharing with others. Open resources may include full online courses, curated digital collections, or more granular resources such as images, videos, and assessment items.⁵²

Many schools are sharing resources. For example Williamsfield Community School District, a small rural Illinois district with approximately 300 students was able to replace several textbooks by creating, curating and sharing openly licensed educational resources tailored for their community. Some textbook funds were redirected to provide personalized professional learning opportunities for teachers, librarians, and administrators to create and use openly licensed educational resources. Collectively, these activities supported the creation of a cutting edge STEM program with participating students winning multiple awards

⁴⁹ U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Technology, Future Ready Learning: Reimagining the Role of Technology in Education, Washington, DC, 2016. (NETP16). Available at <http://tech.ed.gov/netp/>.

⁵⁰ U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Technology, Highline Public Schools: Personalized Learning as a Pathway to Equity, Washington, DC, 2016. Available at <http://tech.ed.gov/stories/highline/>

⁵¹ District Reform Support Network: Leading Change: The Emerging Human Capital Landscape in Personalized Learning Initiatives, 2016, prepared by the Applied Engineering Management Corporation for the U.S Department of Education. Available at <https://rttd.grads360.org/#communities/pdc/documents/12595>

⁵² U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Technology, Future Ready Learning: Reimagining the Role of Technology in Education, Washington, DC, 2016. (NETP16). Available at <http://tech.ed.gov/netp/>.

at state-level STEM competitions, that otherwise would have been impossible with traditional resources. Williamsfield also attributes its status of 21st most improved district in Illinois from 2014 to 2015 to its shift to using openly licensed educational resources.

Implement blended learning strategies (ESEA section 4109(a)(4)). These strategies include a formal education program that leverages both technology-based and face-to-face instructional approaches that include an element of online or digital learning, combined with supervised learning time, and student-led learning, in which the elements are connected to provide an integrated learning experience, and in which students are provided some control over time, path, or pace. (ESEA section 4102(1)). Funds may be used for ongoing professional development on how to implement blended learning projects and to support planning activities. An LEA, for example, may use funds to provide initial professional learning for educators on effective blended learning model instruction, ongoing collaborative planning time, and ongoing, job-embedded professional learning opportunities to improve educator practice. These ongoing opportunities could include access to digital professional learning resources, a collaborative community of practice, and/or coaching.

Implement school- and district-wide approaches to inform instruction, support teacher collaboration, and personalize learning (ESEA section 4109(a)(1)(D)). Technology offers avenues for teachers to become more collaborative with other educators and community partners to improve their instruction and to extend learning beyond the classroom. Educators can create learning communities composed of students; fellow educators in schools, museums, libraries, and after-school programs; experts in various disciplines around the world; members of community organizations; and families. This enhanced collaboration, enabled by technology, may offer access to instructional materials as well as the resources and tools to create, manage, and assess their quality and usefulness.

The SSAE funds may be used to provide personalized professional development so that educators receive tailored, job-embedded support.

SPOTLIGHT: Many schools are focusing on ways to extend learning beyond the classroom. For example, Kettle Moraine School District in Wisconsin used micro-credentials⁵³ to provide opportunities for teachers to engage in rigorous, self-paced, job-embedded professional learning aligned to district goals and connected to the daily skills they need in their classrooms. Teachers submit learning plans and measurable benchmarks, accomplish that learning in a manner that best fits their learning needs, apply the learning in their classrooms, submit artifacts, and then receive compensation based on the learning they demonstrated, as well as a micro-credential.

⁵³ Micro-credentials, often referred to as badges, focus on mastery of a singular competency and are more focused and granular than diplomas, degrees, or certificates. The earning and awarding of micro credentials typically is supported by a technology-based system that enables students and evaluators to be located anywhere and for these activities to take place everywhere and all the time. Micro-credentials also allow for the portability of evidence of mastery. Information about the student's work that earned a badge can be embedded in the metadata, as can the standards the work reflects and information about the awarder of the badge. As with other data systems, a key goal for the next generation of micro-credentialing platforms is interoperability with other educational information systems. (NETP16).

*After the initial successful pilot with 49 teachers, an additional 151 faculty members elected to earn a micro-credential on personalized learning.*⁵⁴

The SSAE program funds can also be used to help educators learn how to use technology to increase the engagement of English learner (EL) students and communication with parents and caregivers of ELs, as well as parents and caregivers who lack English proficiency.

Funds, subject to the 15 percent Special Rule, may be used to build technology capacity and infrastructure, which includes procuring and ensuring quality of content, and purchasing devices, equipment and software to increase readiness. For example, an SEA or LEA could choose to purchase and implement a professional learning platform or software that would support virtual coaching and/or provide just-in-time professional development that enabled educators to learn how to use technology more effectively. Educators in rural areas, isolated community schools, and/or who are the sole teachers in their school or district of particular content, such as the arts or STEM, may especially benefit from such implementations. Funds could also be used to purchase or create a system that improves the procurement and evaluation process for identifying solutions and implementations that match the context of the SEA or LEA.

The SSAE program funds may also be used to develop or implement specialized or rigorous academic courses using technology, including assistive technology.⁵⁵ (*ESEA* section 4109(a)(3)). For example, the SSAE program funds may be used to provide rural, remote, and underserved areas with resources to take advantage of high-quality digital learning experiences, digital resources, and access to online courses taught by effective educators. (*ESEA* section 4109(a)(6)). Separate from the up to 15 percent of funds that may be used to purchase online courses (technology infrastructure), other technology funds under section 4109 may be used to train educators on how to implement these online courses. Funds could also be used to expand professional learning for educators in rural, remote or underserved areas through the use of virtual coaching models.

Additionally, the SSAE program funds may be used to support professional learning for STEM, including computer science. Educators, for example, could participate in virtual, blended, or face-to-face courses and workshops designed to increase their capacity to offer high-quality STEM courses, such as computer science, engineering, game design and/or other STEM-related courses. Opportunities to learn how to embed STEM elements, such as engineering design principles, computational thinking, and app design, within other learning experiences could also be included.

⁵⁴ U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Technology, Washington, DC, 2015. *Future Ready: Micro-Credentialing for Professional Learning*. Kettle Moraine School District interviews conducted by American Institutes for Research. Available at <https://youtu.be/hxgyXmqxYEK?list=PLhdwy3ASoEfkU27IJ2HAKTJh-ACanSPsg>.

⁵⁵ Assistive technology includes any item, piece of equipment, software program, or product system that is used to improve access for or to increase, maintain or improve the functional capabilities of persons with disabilities.

Schools must make assistive technology available to students with disabilities when that technology is necessary to provide access to the curriculum for the student to receive a free appropriate public education under the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* and section 504 of the *Rehabilitation Act*. When a school provides technology to students without disabilities, the benefits provided by that technology must also be made available to students with disabilities in an equally accessible and equally integrated manner. When possible, creation or procurement strategies should support resources that are “born accessible.”⁵⁶ For example, an SEA or LEA could create professional learning, guidance and support structures necessary to build teacher capacity around accessible resources that are “born accessible” or “born digital,” and therefore attend to such features as - text descriptions for non-text items (e.g., animations, images, graphics, and other embedded media), use of color or contrast, and the ways in which information is organized and presented. As schools and districts use open educational resources, digital assessments, and online materials, State and district leaders can support teachers in learning about accessibility and provide trainings, resources and tools that will aid in procuring the appropriate resources for their students.

Additionally, acquisition of content creation tools will allow State and local staff to create digital texts, graphics, learning games, online courses and other resources that include accessibility features, to ensure educational materials, content, software and learning platforms including those that are openly licensed and are accessible to all students. Additional examples of effective use of funds for technology can be found throughout the National Education Technology Plan and in the Dear Colleague Letter from the Office of Educational Technology.

Key Questions for Activities to Support Well Rounded Education, Safe and Healthy Schools and the Effective Use of Educational Technology

- 1) May an LEA use funds to pay for accelerated learning examinations taken by low-income students during the 2016-2017 school year?

Yes. Under the special rule in section 4107(b) of the ESEA, an LEA may use FY 17 funds to cover part or all of the fees for AP, IB, or other accelerated learning examinations taken by low-income students in both the 2016-2017 school year and 2017-2018 school year.

Consistent with section 4104(b)(3)(A)(ii), a State may also use funds not reserved for LEA subgrants or State administrative costs to reimburse the costs of accelerated learning examinations for low-income students. Under the special rule in section 4104(c), a State may similarly use funds to pay for accelerated learning examinations taken by low-income students in the 2016-2017 school year.

⁵⁶ The term “born accessible” is used to convey the idea that content and learning materials, especially in the case of digital materials, can be created with accessibility features to meet the needs of individuals with disabilities and others build-in from the moment they are created as opposed to adding accessibility features later on. (NETP16/Benetech).

- 2) Can the SSAE program funds be used to develop and implement emergency operations plans?

Yes. Any activity that fosters safe, healthy, supportive, and drug-free environments that supports student academic achievement, including the development and implementation of an emergency operations plan, is allowable under section 4108.

- 3) Pay for Success initiatives are an allowable activity under the SSAE program. What is a Pay for Success initiative?

ESEA section 8101(40) defines "pay for success initiative" as a performance-based grant, contract, or cooperative agreement awarded by a public entity in which a commitment is made to pay for improved outcomes that result in social benefit and direct cost savings or cost avoidance to the public sector.⁵⁷ Pay for Success initiatives may be particularly well-suited to interventions that improve the health and safety of students due to the cost savings often associated with improved outcomes. For additional information please see the Department's web page on [Pay for Success](#).

- 4) What is the scope and applicability of the Special Rule in section 4109(b)?

At least 85 percent of the educational technology funds must be used to support professional learning to enable the effective use of educational technology. LEAs or consortiums of LEAs may not spend more than 15 percent of funding in this section on devices, equipment, software applications, platforms, digital instructional resources and/or other one-time IT purchases.

Specifically, the statute states that LEAs may not use more than 15 percent for purchasing technology infrastructure as described in section 4109 (a)(2)(B) which states: "purchasing devices, equipment, and software applications to address readiness shortfalls" and in section 4109 (a)(4)(A) which states: "blended learning technology software and platforms, the purchase of digital instructional resources, initial professional development activities, and one-time information technology purchases."

CONCLUSION

Throughout the *ESEA* there is an emphasis on the importance of providing all students with a high-quality, well-rounded education. In particular, the SSAE program focuses on increasing the capacity of SEAs, 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) more fully utilize educational technology to improve the academic achievement and digital literacy of all

⁵⁷ www2.ed.gov/about/inits/ed/pay-for-success/index.html.

students. The flexibility of the SSAE program funds allows educators to tailor investments based on the needs of their unique student populations.

While strong literacy and math skills are essential for success in college, careers, and life, designing an education system that solely focuses on the demonstration of proficiency in these areas will never be sufficient for developing well-rounded and engaged students. A well-rounded education allows students to develop skills and knowledge in a wide range of subjects, becoming expert and passionate about a few, and confident in their quest for more. A safe and healthy school that addresses the social and emotional well-being of their adults and students is also part of a well-rounded education. Furthermore, a well-rounded education is enhanced through the incorporation of educational technology to improve student outcomes. With the passage of *ESSA* there is an opportunity for SEAs, LEAs, and schools to broaden the definition of a well-rounded education. This reauthorization of *ESEA* provides an opportunity to get the balance right in places where the focus has become too narrow—and to do so in ways that and ensure access and equity for all students.

Through this guidance the Department provides resources and tools and also spotlights examples of innovative strategies to support the effective implementation of the SSAE program. Local leaders should consider how other Federal, State, and local funds may be leveraged across programs to maximize the impact of the programs and services that can be provided under the SSAE program to generate added value and improve outcomes for students. Additionally, SEAs, LEAs, and schools should thoughtfully consider how partnerships with organizations such as nonprofits, IHEs, museums, and community organizations might help leverage limited resources. Regardless of the emphasis or focus, the unique partnerships between schools and community stakeholders have the potential to expand opportunities for students and improve outcomes. If there are questions regarding this guidance document or the SSAE grant in general please contact David Esquith at David.Esquith@ed.gov.

APPENDIX

RESOURCES AND TOOLS BY SUBJECT AREA

The following resources and tools are provided for the reader's reference . There are many examples that educators, parents, advocates, administrators, and other concerned parties may find helpful, and use at their discretion, with respect to implementing Title IV, Part A of the ESEA. The U.S. Department of Education does not control or guarantee the accuracy, relevance, timeliness, or completeness of this outside information. Further, the inclusion of links to items and examples does not reflect their importance, nor are they intended to represent or be an endorsement by the U.S. Department of Education of any views expressed, or materials provided.

Well-Rounded Educational Opportunities

Advanced Placement and Dual Enrollment

A Comparison of the College Outcomes of AP and Dual Enrollment Students

(<http://research.collegeboard.org/sites/default/files/publications/2015/10/a-comparison-of-the-college-outcomes-of-ap-and-dual-enrollment-students.pdf.pdf>) A report on the college outcomes of AP and dual enrollment students suggests that educators are increasingly focused on ensuring that students experience a rigorous curriculum in high school and graduate college and career ready. One way of introducing rigorous course work is to have students take college-level work, often in the form of either an AP course and exam or a dual enrollment course. The results indicated that AP students who obtained at least one score of 3 or higher on an AP Exam performed well on all examined outcomes of the study except for four-year college enrollment, which was highest for students who had taken a dual enrollment course affiliated with a four-year college.

Arts Education Research and Policy Clearinghouses

ArtsEdSearch (<http://www.aep-arts.org/research-policy/artsedsearch/>) an online clearinghouse of student and teacher outcomes associated with arts learning in and outside of school. Research studies are vetted for rigor and address a range of outcomes including academic, cognitive, personal, socio-emotional, and professional. The Arts Education Partnership (<http://www.aep-arts.org/>), the manager of ArtsEdSearch, is supported by the Department and the National Endowment for the Arts through a cooperative agreement with the Education Commission of the States.

ArtsScan (<http://www.aep-arts.org/research-policy/artscan/>), also managed by the Arts Education Partnership, is a searchable database of State policies supporting education in and through the arts from all 50 States and the District of Columbia.

Preparing Students for the Next America (<http://www.aep-arts.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/Preparing-Students-for-the-Next-America-FINAL.pdf>) is a short research bulletin outlining the research-based benefits of arts education on preparing students for success in school, work, and life.

Civic Education

The Role of Civic Education (http://civiced.org/papers/articles_role.html) provides a definition of “civic education,” suggests the essential components of a good civic education, and identifies where and when civic education occurs. The authors provide general recommendations for where and how civic education can be implemented in K-12 instruction.

College and Career Counseling

A National Look at the High School Counseling Office: What Is It Doing and What Role Can It Play in Facilitating Students' Paths to College

(http://www.nacacnet.org/research/research-data/nacac-research/Documents/NACAC_Counseling_PhaseII.pdf), a report produced by the National Association for College Admission Counseling, uses the nationally representative High School Longitudinal Study of 2009 (HSL:09) data from Spring 2012 to examine American high schools’ counseling departments and the factors related to high school juniors’ actions, plans, and beliefs surrounding their eventual college enrollment. More specifically, Part I of the report focuses on what high schools and their counseling offices are doing to help students make a transition to postsecondary education.

Environmental Education

Guidelines for Excellence: K-12 Learning (2010) (<http://www.gufsee.org/grades-K-8/excellence-in-environmental-education-guidelines-for-learning>), a guide published by the North American Association for Environmental Education, offers a vision of environmental education and promotes progress toward sustaining a healthy environment and quality of life. The guidelines provide learners, parents, educators, home schoolers, administrators, policy makers, and the public a set of common, voluntary guidelines for environmental education.

E-STEM Environmental K-12 Programs, in 2015, the UL company and the North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE) selected five STEM focused environmental, K-12 education projects to recognize with grants. The awards recognize efforts by the five non-profit entities to promote E-STEM learning through projects involving real environmental problems, with each demonstrating success and innovation in this field. Information on the award-winning E-STEM programs, both in school and after school, may be found at: <http://ulinnovationeducation.naaee.net/winners>.

US Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools inspires schools, districts, and IHEs to strive for 21st-century excellence, by highlighting promising practices and resources that all can employ. To that end, the award recognizes schools, districts, and IHEs that: reduce environmental impact and costs; improve the health and wellness of schools, students, and staff; and provide environmental education, which teaches many disciplines, and are especially good at effectively incorporating STEM, civic skills, and green career pathways. Information on the Department of Education’s Green Ribbon

Schools program and past awardees may be found at: <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/green-ribbon-schools/awards.html>.

Federal Arts Education Research Reports

The Arts and Achievement in At-Risk Youth: Findings from Four Longitudinal Studies (2012) (<https://www.arts.gov/publications/arts-and-achievement-risk-youth-findings-four-longitudinal-studies>) examines arts-related variables from four large datasets – three maintained by the U.S. Department of Education and one by the U.S. Department of Labor – to understand the relationship between arts engagement and positive academic and social outcomes in children and young adults of low socioeconomic status (SES). The analyses show that achievement gaps between high- and low-SES groups appear to be mitigated for children and young adults who have arts-rich backgrounds.

Re-Investing in Arts Education: Winning America’s Future (2011) (http://pcah.gov/sites/default/files/PCAH_Reinvesting_4web.pdf) culminated 18 months of research, meetings with stakeholders, and site visits all over the country by the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities. The report represents an in-depth review of the current condition of arts education, including an update of the current research base about arts education outcomes, and an analysis of the challenges and opportunities in the field that have emerged over the past decade.

The Arts in Early Childhood: Social and Emotional Benefits of Arts Participation: A Literature Review and Gap-Analysis (2000-2015) (<https://www.arts.gov/sites/default/files/arts-in-early-childhood-dec2015-rev.pdf>) synthesized findings from 18 recent reports in psychology and education research journals. These studies focused on the social and emotional outcomes of young children who participated in art forms such as music, dance, theater, drawing, and painting. Available from the National Endowment for the Arts Interagency Task Force on the Arts and Human Development.

Arts Education in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools: 1999-2000 and 2009-2010 (<http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2012014rev>) presents selected findings from a congressionally mandated study on arts education in public K–12 schools. The data were collected through seven Fast Response Survey System (FRSS) surveys during the 2009-10 school year.

National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) in the Arts (2008) (<http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/arts/>) measured students' knowledge and skills in the arts by asking them to observe, describe, analyze, and evaluate existing works of music and visual art and to create original works of visual art. The results of a 2016 NAEP Arts Assessment of eighth graders’ arts knowledge and skills will be released in April 2017 (<https://www.nagb.org/naep/release-schedule.html>).

Foreign Languages

What the Research Shows, produced by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) (<http://www.actfl.org/advocacy/what-the-research-shows>), provides links to studies that show some of the benefits associated with learning foreign languages.

Need Indicators for Foreign Language. A tool from ACTFL to help districts assess their foreign language needs.

(<https://www.actfl.org/sites/default/files/publications/reports/ACTFL%20Metric%20Tool.pdf>)

Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics, Including Computer Science (STEM)

Successful K-12 STEM Education: Identifying Effective Approaches in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics. A report from the National Research Council Committee on Highly Successful Science Programs for K-12 Science Education, which offers a framework for understanding “success” in STEM education and discusses approaches for formal K-12 STEM education including recommendations regarding inclusive STEM skills.

STEM Learning Is Everywhere: Summary of a Convocation on Building Learning Systems. A 2014 publication of the Teacher Advisory Council of the National Research Council, which highlights the multiple settings in which students learn, and the importance of both in- and out-of-school time in fostering a more seamless learning of STEM subjects. The report also discusses the new expectations of the Next Generation Science Standards and the Common Core Standards for Mathematics and Language Arts.

President’s Council of Advisors on Science and Technology (PCAST) released a report in 2010 to highlight opportunities in K-12 STEM education and areas of focus. Prepare and Inspire: K-12 Education in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math for America’s Future. September 2010.

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/microsites/ostp/pcast-stem-ed-final.pdf>

The Exploring Computer Science (ECS) program, supported by the National Science Foundation, has shown to increase computer science learning opportunities and to increase the participation of underrepresented students in computer science. On average, ECS students show an increase in self-rated computer science knowledge, increased persistence on computer science problem solving and higher likelihood to pursue additional computer science coursework. The program provides training and ongoing professional development for educators and curricular resources. ECS has grown from serving students in Los Angeles Unified School District to serving students across the country, including the seven largest school districts in the country.

Social and Emotional Learning

CASEL Guide to Effective Social and Emotional Learning Programs

(<http://www.casel.org/guide/>) provides a systematic framework for evaluating the quality of SEL programs. The guide applies the framework to identify and rate well-designed,

evidence-based SEL programs. The guide also shares best-practice guidelines for district and school teams on how to select and implement SEL programs.

Social-Emotional Learning Assessment Measures for Middle School Youth

(<http://www.search-institute.org/sites/default/files/a/DAP-Raikes-Foundation-Review.pdf>) from the Raikes Foundation identifies research-based tools that measure social and emotional well-being of middle school students.

Teaching Adolescents to Become Learners. The Role of Noncognitive Factors in Shaping School Performance: A Critical Literature Review

(<https://consortium.uchicago.edu/sites/default/files/publications/Noncognitive%20Report.pdf>), issued by the Consortium on Chicago School Research, outlines a new framework for understanding how non-cognitive factors influence the behaviors that drive academic performance in middle and high school students.

Social Studies

National History Education Clearinghouse. Visiting History: A Professional Development Guide *Teaching History* (2013) (<http://teachinghistory.org/visiting-history>)

Safe and Healthy Students

Asthma Management in Schools

Environmental Protection Agency (<https://www.epa.gov/asthma/managing-asthma-school-environment>). This guide offers valuable information for all school staff, especially school nurses, teachers and maintenance staff, on how to identify and control common environmental factors in schools that may trigger asthma episodes. Download the *Managing Asthma in the School Environment* document to learn how you can help control asthma at your school and boost student performance.

Bullying and Harassment Prevention

StopBullying.gov (www.stopbullying.gov) provides information from various government agencies on what bullying is, what cyberbullying is, who is at risk, and how to prevent and respond to bullying.

Drug and Violence Prevention

Youth.gov (www.youth.gov) is a Federal website related to creating, maintaining, and strengthening effective youth programs. Included are facts, funding information, and tools to assess community assets, generate maps of local and Federal resources, and search for evidence-based youth programs.

Healthy Students

CDC Healthy Schools is a Federal website (www.cdc.gov/healthyschools) with numerous resources to assist school districts and schools in creating healthy learning environments, including information related to nutrition, physical activity, obesity prevention, and the management of chronic conditions. There are also professional development and training materials for school personnel.

National Cancer Institute’s Research-tested Intervention Programs (RTIPs)

(<http://rtips.cancer.gov/rtips/index.do>) is a database that contains information on evidence-based cancer control interventions and program materials. Users may search for interventions that are implemented in school and focus on nutrition, obesity, or physical activity.

Human Trafficking

U.S. Department of Education Fact Sheet

(<http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oese/oshs/factsheet.html>) contains information and resources related to human trafficking.

Indoor-Air Quality (IAQ)

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

(<https://www.epa.gov/iaq-schools/indoor-air-quality-tools-schools-action-kit>) EPA’s *Indoor Air Quality Tools for Schools Action Kit* guidance was designed to assist schools and districts with reducing exposure to indoor environmental contaminants in schools through voluntary adoption of sound and effective IAQ management practices. The Action Kit provides best practices, industry guidelines, sample policies and IAQ management plans for improving indoor air problems at little or no cost using straightforward activities and in-house staff. Additionally one can stay connected and learn about upcoming training opportunities Join the connector network at (<https://www.epa.gov/iaq-schools/forms/how-you-can-stay-connected-school-iaq-network>)

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports

Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)

(www.pbis.org) was established by the U.S. Department of Education to define, develop, implement, and evaluate a multi-tiered approach to technical assistance that improves the capacity of States, districts, and schools to establish, scale-up, and sustain the PBIS framework. Emphasis is given to the impact of implementing PBIS on the social, emotional and academic outcomes for students with disabilities.

Re-entry Programs and Transition Services

Virginia’s Department of Justice sponsors a program to provide regional Reentry Advocates to help create a seamless reentry process, connect youth to employment and vocational services and to link youth and families with services in the community. Reentry Advocates partner with local government agencies, local school districts and community stakeholders to connect youth and their families with benefits and resources, employability services and skills training and to connect them with positive adult role models. <http://www.djj.virginia.gov/pages/community/re-entry.htm>

Relationship-building Skills

U.S. Department of Education Fact Sheet

(www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oese/oshs/teendatingviolence-factsheet.html) contains information and resources related to relationship-building skills.

Safe Schools

Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention’s Model Programs Guide (<http://www.ojjdp.gov/mpg/>) includes information on evidence-based juvenile justice and youth prevention and intervention programs that cover topics such as bullying, discipline, school climate, school safety, school violence, and truancy.

School Climate

The National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments (safesupportivelearning.ed.gov) is funded by the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Safe and Healthy Students to help address issues that affect conditions for learning, such as bullying, harassment, violence, and substance abuse.

US Department of Education Policy, Guidance, and Resources for School Climate and Discipline (<http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/school-discipline/index.html>). Creating a supportive school climate—and decreasing suspensions and expulsions—requires close attention to the social, emotional, and behavioral needs of all students. Administrators, educators, students, parents, and community members can use this site to find tools, data, and resources to: (a) increase their awareness of the prevalence, impact, and legal implications of suspension and expulsion; (b) find basic information and resources on effective alternatives; and (c) join a national conversation on how to effectively create positive school climates.

School-Based Mental Health Services

Center for School Mental Health (<http://csmh.umaryland.edu/index.html>) strengthens policies and programs in school mental health to improve learning and promote success for America’s youth. CSMH advances evidence-based care in schools and collaborates at local, State, national, and international levels to advance research, training, policy, and practice in school mental health.

SAMHSA’s National Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices (NREPP) (http://www.nrepp.samhsa.gov/01_landing.aspx) is a registry of substance abuse and mental health interventions. Users may search for interventions that are implemented in a school or classroom.

Suicide Prevention

U.S. Department of Education Fact Sheet (www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oese/osh/suicideprev-factsheet.pdf) contains information and resources related to suicide prevention.

The National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention (<http://actionallianceforsuicideprevention.org>) is a public-private partnership charged with advancing the National Strategy for Suicide Prevention.

Effective Use of Technology

Characteristics of Future Ready Leadership: A Research Synthesis

(<http://tech.ed.gov/files/2015/12/Characteristics-of-Future-Ready-Leadership.pdf>) may prove useful for strategic planning for superintendents, their leadership teams, and those supporting them in other contexts. It is aligned with the recommendations of the 2016 National Education Technology Plan, designed to ensure that as district leaders work to become Future Ready they will also be making progress toward implementing the broader technology vision for the nation. The research synthesis defines exemplary dimensions of policy and/or practice within four focus areas: collaborative leadership, robust infrastructure, personalized professional learning and personalized student learning.

Diagram Center Webinars (<http://diagramcenter.org/diagramwebinars.html>) hosts a collection of free training, information sharing and what's going on in the field based on the overarching theme of accessibility and making educational materials accessible.

Ed Tech Developer's Guide (<http://tech.ed.gov/developers-guide>) is a guide for developers, startups and entrepreneurs addresses key questions about the education ecosystem and highlights critical needs and opportunities to develop digital tools and apps for learning. This guide is designed to help entrepreneurs apply technology in smart ways to solve persistent problems in education.

Expanding Evidence (<http://tech.ed.gov/expanding-evidence>) outlines new types and sources of evidence of learning afforded by technology with an aim toward helping education decision-makers obtain the increased quality and quantity of evidence needed to fuel innovation and optimize the effectiveness of new learning resources.

Future Ready Interactive Planning Dashboard and Resource Hub

(<http://futureready.org/about-the-effort/dashboard/>) is a dashboard where district teams complete an in-depth self-assessment to determine their overall readiness to undergo a digital transformation, create a vision for student learning, and evaluate what aspects of the system they must address to make that vision a reality. After completing the self-assessment, each district team receives a customized report that analyzes the district's readiness in each of the seven gears of the Future Ready Framework, identifies gaps, and offers customized strategies and free resources.

Future Ready Schools Infrastructure Guide

(<http://tech.ed.gov/futureready/infrastructure>) provides practical, actionable information intended to help district leaders (superintendents, principals, and teacher leaders) navigate the many decisions required to deliver cutting-edge connectivity and devices to students, and outlines principles and policies that support capacity building for educational technology and digital citizenship. It presents a variety of options for district leaders to consider when making technology infrastructure decisions, recognizing that circumstances and context vary greatly from district to district.

#GoOpen District Launch Packet (<http://tech.ed.gov/open-education/go-open-districts/launch/>) is designed for districts that have decided to implement a systematic approach to incorporating openly licensed education resources into their curriculum.

Learning Analytics (<http://tech.ed.gov/learning-analytics>) is intended to help policymakers and administrators understand how learning analytics has been—and can be—applied for educational improvement while rigorously protecting student privacy.

The National Education Technology Plan 2016 (<http://tech.ed.gov/netp/>) is the flagship educational technology policy document for the United States. The 2016 Plan, *Future Ready Learning: Reimagining the Role of Technology in Education*, articulates a vision of equity, active use, and collaborative leadership to make everywhere, all-the-time learning possible. The principles and examples provided in the document align to the effective use of technology content area under *Title IV, Part A*.