What is the Every Student Succeeds Act?

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) is the new K-12 federal education law, which reauthorizes the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and replaces No Child Left Behind. It was signed into law in 2015 and will be phased in over the next few years. The law was designed to increase opportunities for local input and flexible decision making based on what communities and states need. A key goal of the new law is to ensure all students have access to a quality education—inside and outside the classroom.

Why does ESSA matter to afterschool and summer programming?

Many areas in the law provide opportunities to boost student achievement by building and strengthening before, afterschool and summer learning opportunities. The following describes each relevant title of the law and opportunities for state networks to engage in the implementation process.

Title I

Every state will need to submit a new Title I plan to the U.S. Department of Education. This plan will determine the accountability measures and the types of supports schools will use to track and improve student outcomes—at the state level and at the local district level. Each state also must show the U.S. Secretary of Education that public comments were taken into account before the plan is approved. States are required by law to make a draft plan available for public comment for at least 30 days. There are multiple opportunities for afterschool networks to weigh in on their state’s plan to position afterschool and summer programming as a support that will help states achieve their goals AND make the case for more resources for out-of-school time programming.

Title I: Opportunities for Action

Provide input on the state plan

- **Ask your state education agency** if your network or a provider can be formally included in the development of the state plan. Some states are forming advisory councils and are including afterschool representation as part of the council.
- **Participate in any listening tours** your state education agency is having and share stories, facts and any materials you have to show how afterschool and summer programs are critical to academic success.

- **Make sure the state agency knows** that afterschool is an allowable use of Title I funding.
- **Sign up for any email lists** that provide updates about how the state is moving forward with its plan. Understand and track your state’s timeline.
- **Meet with superintendents** and other education officials to provide input on your state’s plan. Submit model language for your state’s plan.
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Review and comment on state plan

- **Understand the timeline** for release of the state plan in your state.
- **Monitor the release** of your state plan and submit comments.
- **Learn more about fifth indicators.** Get informed about discussions of accountability indicators for school quality and student success. *Learn more about fifth indicators.*

Ensure allocation of Title I funding includes afterschool

- **Work with principals** to ensure they are aware that funding can be used to support afterschool programming.
- **Encourage parents** to advocate for quality, affordable afterschool opportunities.

**Title II: Teacher Preparation and Development**

Title II aims to increase the effectiveness of educators throughout their teaching career so they can help all students improve their academic achievement, especially low-income and minority students. The U.S. Department of Education released *guidance* in September 2016 encouraging states and districts to use Title II funds to make sure all children have access to an effective teacher and to ensure teachers in high-need schools have the extra support they need. Uses of Title II include many areas relevant to the afterschool field, including:

- Providing high quality trainings in STEM and Career & Technical Education.
- Supporting the integration of technology into curricula and instruction.
- Recruiting qualified individuals from other fields, including mid-career professionals.
- Assisting local educational agencies and schools in effectively recruiting and retaining teachers, principals, or other school leaders who are effective in improving student academic achievement.

To receive grants under Title II, both the state and local agencies are required to undertake *meaningful consultation* in developing an application, which includes involvement of “teachers, principals, other school leaders, as well as other organizations with relevant and demonstrated expertise in teacher training and preparation.” Afterschool providers can be among those consulted.

**Title II: Opportunities for Action**

**Work with local and state education agencies** to ensure they know afterschool settings can be considered environments where teachers gain real-world training experience and earn hours of practice and observation.

**Ask your state education leaders** to ensure the final state plans enable school staff and afterschool staff to attend all joint trainings and professional development opportunities, particularly in the fields of positive youth development and science, technology, engineering and math (STEM).
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Title IV, Part A: Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants

Districts receiving these funds will have great discretion in how to allocate them—with the intent of providing states and districts with more flexibility in assisting students and families. Regardless, districts that do receive funds are expected to coordinate them in partnerships with non-profits. Funds can be used to pay for increasing collaborations between schools and STEM afterschool programs and for funding resource counselors to establish community partnerships, as well as programs to support mentoring and healthy lifestyles for students. Because these funds will flow to schools and students where these types of needs have been identified, state level afterschool advocates can help local afterschool providers and parents participate in the needs assessment process in local communities.

Title IV, Part A: Opportunities for Action

Work with local education agencies to prioritize afterschool

- Inform local needs assessments. If your local education agency must conduct a needs assessment (because they are set to receive more than $30,000), work to ensure that access to safe, supportive programs from 3 to 6 p.m. is part of the assessment for a well-rounded education.

- Create fact sheets about how afterschool supports a well-rounded education and safe and healthy schools so that key stakeholders can make the most informed decisions.

- Work with local afterschool providers that are part of your network to ensure they have the tools they need to engage in the needs assessment process.

Title IV, Part B: 21st Century Community Learning Centers

Each state is required to submit a plan for implementing 21st CCLC as part of either a consolidated state plan or as a stand-alone Title IV plan. As with Title I, states are required to show that public comments were taken into account. Statewide afterschool networks can engage with state agencies to provide input on the plan.

Based on the plan submitted, state education agencies will need to write a new request for proposals (RFP) for 21st CCLC. States are required to engage in meaningful consultation with stakeholders in the development of the new 21st CCLC RFP. The state education agencies will be revisiting and updating eligibility criteria, competitive priorities and indicators as part of the re-write. In addition to weighing in on those changes, afterschool networks can remind SEAs about the role networks and intermediaries can play in providing professional development, capacity building, technical assistance and training to grantees and potential grantees through the increased percentage in funding for 21st CCLC state activities under ESSA.
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**Title IV, Part B: Opportunities for Action**

**Weigh in on state application**
- **Use the process** to develop and/or maintain a relationship with your state’s 21st CCLC director.
- **Make the case** that afterschool advocates should be included among those consulted about the new RFP.
- **Offer input** on the updated RFP regarding eligibility criteria, competitive priorities, quality, professional development and outcomes measurement.

**Offer technical assistance**
- **Work** with the 21st CCLC directors to roll out the updated RFP.
- **Work with state your education agency** to serve as a technical assistance provider to sites receiving 21st CCLC funding.
- **Provide ideas** on how your state 21st CCLC office can utilize the statewide afterschool network and similar intermediaries to provide professional development, capacity building and technical assistance and training to grantees and potential grantees through the increased percentage in funding for 21st CCLC state activities under ESSA.
- **Look for opportunities** to help the state improve the quality of its programs through professional development.

For more detailed instructions and discussion questions, please visit Chapter 2.