



Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grant Program Funding

Primary Message

Provide at least \$1.65 billion for the Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grant (SSAEG) program established in Title IV of the Every Student Succeeds Act (P.L. 114-95).

Background

The SSAEG program, established by Title IV of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), is now the main source of federal support for education technology initiatives, including both technology infrastructure investments and related professional development. The formula program provides flexible funding to school districts, through States, focused on three areas: (1) effective use of technology – including up to 15% of funds for tech infrastructure; (2) ensuring well-rounded students; (3) promoting positive conditions for learning. Congress recently began negotiations to determine fiscal year 2017 spending levels for the U.S. Department of Education. The Senate and House Appropriations Committees will initially lead this work, followed by consideration by the full Congress later this year. The fiscal year 2017 Department of Education budget will be the first year that federal spending is aligned to the new ESSA. As such, it will be particularly important to ensure that Congress gets off on the right foot, by providing sufficient funding for the SSAEG program.

Core Talking Points

- We urge Senator/Representative _____ to ask the Senate/House Appropriations Committee to provide no less than \$1.65 billion for the new Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grant block grant. This flexible source of funding will help my State/school district to meet our students and teachers' technology needs. [Supplement this talking point with a specific technology project your State/school district is implementing or wishes to implement.]
- The SSAEG program must be sufficiently funded – consistent with the authorization level established by Congress late last year - to meaningfully and timely update the nation's education technology infrastructure.

Supplementary Talking Points

- Technology serves as a powerful tool for promoting educational opportunities when it is used appropriately. The nation's education technology infrastructure is insufficient in many parts of the country and distributed inequitably, leaving many communities far behind their more affluent peers.
- As we raise expectations for what students need to know and be able to do for success, we must also set a higher bar for the nation's technology infrastructure and related professional development required to enable its effective use for teaching and learning.
- The absence of robust education technology, and related professional development for teachers and school leaders, not only impacts instruction and decision making, but also jeopardizes implementation of foundational federal policies, such as using online assessments to support learning and promote accountability
- Congress should also abide by the overall spending levels established by the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015. Reducing the spending caps agreed to by Congress and the White House in 2015 will harm public education, including limiting needed investments in education technology.