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| **ESSA Title IV, Part A****Quick Reference Guide** | Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education logo |
| *Last updated July 1, 2017* |

This guide provides a general overview of program priorities, requirements, and examples of activities aligned to ESE goals. Other resources include the [Federal Non-Regulatory Guidance](https://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/essa/essassaegrantguid10212016.pdf) and [ESSA full text](https://www2.ed.gov/documents/essa-act-of-1965.pdf). Please see the [Funding Opportunity](http://www.doe.mass.edu/grants/current.html) for details related to submission and spending requirements. *Proposals must be received at ESE by 5:00 p.m. on Friday, September 29, 2017. Unclaimed funds will be redistributed to eligible districts via competition.* ***For more information about Title IV, Part A please contact*** ***achievement@doe.mass.edu*** ***or 781-338-3010.***

**PURPOSE**

The purpose of Title IV, Part A of the *Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)* is to build the capacity of districts to help ensure that all students have equitable access to high quality educational experiences.

**PRIORITIES**

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| Graduation hat | Heart graphic | computer graphic | tree graphic |
| *Provide all students with access to a well-rounded education* | *Improve school conditions for learning to ensure safe and healthy students* | *Improve the use of technology to improve academic achievement* | *Better outcomes for students* |

**REQUIREMENTS**

**Meaningful consultation with stakeholders**

Districts must consult with stakeholders in the three priority areas throughout the program development and implementation process. Stakeholders must include, but are not limited to, the following (as applicable):

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

Districts with an allocation of at least $30,000 must complete a comprehensive needs assessment that includes a focus on the three priority areas. If they are not already doing so, districts are encouraged to assess Title IV, Part A priorities when developing, communicating and implementing district and school plans for improving student performance.

**Equitable services**

Federal law requires districts receiving these funds to provide for the equitable participation in funded activities of private school students, teachers and other educational personnel in private schools located in the district, including by engaging in timely and meaningful consultation with private school officials during the design and development of their Title IV, Part A programs.

**Supplement, not supplant**

Federal law requires districts only to supplement the funds that would, in the absence of such funds, be made available from state and local sources for the education of students participating in programs assisted under Title IV, Part A, and not to supplant such funds.

**Provide all students with access to a well-rounded education**

Funds can be used to increase access to and/or improve the quality of learning opportunities across disciplines, including civic learning and engagement, STEM, the arts, comprehensive health and physical education, Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) exams, and more. Activities may include but are not limited to hiring staff and providing professional development.

**Examples of allowable activities aligned to ESE priorities include:**

**Increasing completion of MassCore**

<http://www.doe.mass.edu/ccte/ccr/masscore/> recommends course-taking requirements across the disciplines (including foreign languages, the arts, health, including physical education, civics, and technology) to ensure that students are prepared for success after high school. MassCore encourages that all students have access to AP and dual-enrollment opportunities, as well as the integration of work-based and service-learning opportunities throughout a course of study. During the 2014-15 school year, approximately 72% of all Massachusetts high school graduates completed MassCore, compared with only 57% of students who are economically disadvantaged.

**Increasing opportunities for civic learning and engagement**

Over the last several years, ESE has undertaken a number of steps to improve supports for civic learning and engagement, including: adopting a revised definition of college and career readiness that incorporates preparation for civic life; launching an annual civics literacy conference; convening a review panel to revise the [2003 History and Social Science Curriculum Frameworks](http://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/); considering opportunities to strengthen the integration of civics into the core curriculum; and developing an action plan to guide its work in continuing to promote and support civic education.

**Increasing opportunities for health and physical education**

The [Massachusetts Comprehensive Health Curriculum Framework](http://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/) encourage a program of studies to help students develop the knowledge, skills and habits to be successful and healthy. ESE anticipates that during the 2017-18 school year we will confirm a timeline to begin the process of reviewing and revising this Framework.

In cooperation with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), ESE [collects data](http://www.doe.mass.edu/sfs/yrbs/) on youth and school health policies and practices through the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) and School Health Profiles (Profiles) to help inform school health policies and practices, including health education offerings.

**Increasing opportunities for arts education**

As articulated in the [Massachusetts Arts Curriculum Framework](http://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/), through dance, music, theatre, and the visual arts people express ideas and emotions that they cannot express in language alone. Activities may include but are not limited to programs that help students: communicate fluently and effectively in at least one artistic discipline; apply both imagination and rational thinking to the making of art; understand the value of reflection and critical judgment in creative work; present and perform art publicly, with confidence, pride, and distinction; use artistic literacy as a natural enhancement to learning other subjects; understand how world cultures have been historically influenced and shaped by the arts; and understand the ways in which the arts contribute to contemporary life. ESE anticipates that during the 2017-18 school year we will confirm a timeline to begin the process of reviewing and revising this Framework.

**Subsidizing** **AP and IB fees for economically disadvantaged students**

Districts may use Title IV, Part A funds to cover part or all of the costs of AP and IB exam fees taken by economically disadvantaged students in both May 2017 and in May 2018.

**Improve school conditions for learning to ensure safe and healthy students**

Funds can support evidence-based programming and other services that create safe and healthy learning environments for all students. Activities may include but are not limited to implementing prevention and/or intervention programs, providing school-based mental health services and counseling, hiring staff, and providing professional development. Activities must be evidence-based or supported by a logic model that demonstrates why they are expected to be effective in addressing identified needs.

**Examples of allowable activities aligned to ESE priorities include:**

**Bullying prevention and intervention**

Since May 2010, all schools and districts are required to develop and implement a <http://www.doe.mass.edu/sfs/bullying/>. Each school district, and charter school shall provide age-appropriate instruction on bullying prevention in each grade that is incorporated into the curriculum of the school district or school. The curriculum shall be evidence-based.

**Safe and supportive schools**

ESE works in collaboration with the state-legislated Safe and Supportive Schools Commission to update and refine a [safe and supportive schools framework and self-assessment tool](http://bhps321.org/). These resources provide guidance to schools on the creation of safe and supportive schools that foster positive school climates, and that integrate and align related initiatives, in order to improve educational outcomes for all students.

**Emergency management planning**

As stated in Section 363 of Chapter 159 of the Acts of 2000, each school district in partnership with their local fire and police chiefs must formulate a <http://www.doe.mass.edu/sfs/emergencyplan/lawsregs.html> for each school under the superintendent’s supervision. Plans shall include 1) establishment of a crisis response team: (2) a designation as to who is in charge of said team and designated substitutes; (3) a communication plan; (4) crisis procedures for safe entrance to and exit from the school by students, parents and employees; and (5) policies for enforcing school discipline and maintaining a safe and orderly environment during the crisis.

**Comprehensive substance use prevention**

Integrating substance use prevention and education into schools is one effective way to reach youth and young adults. Schools and districts are encouraged to implement an evidence-based substance abuse prevention curriculum for grades 5 to 12. Programs should be developmentally appropriate and demonstrate cultural competency. Staff responsible for implementing substance use prevention curricula will need specific training and professional development on implementing evidence-based programs and effective strategies for preventing substance use.

**Comprehensive health prevention education**

Schools and school districts collect data on student behavior through survey instruments such as local youth risk behavior surveys, school safety discipline report, and the local unified crime report. Analysis of this data can assist schools in identifying the most commonly occurring behavior among their children and youth. Funds can be utilized to support efforts by districts to establish or expand comprehensive, integrated school/district based initiatives to promote and/or reduce the following: teen dating violence prevention, social competency and social emotional learning, comprehensive suicide prevention, behavioral health, trauma informed practices, school climate and alternatives to discipline. These activities can play a key role in improving academic performance, school engagement and social, emotional and behavioral well-being for all students.

**Improve the use of technology to improve academic achievement**

As articulated in Massachusetts' ESSA plan, funds can support the integration of in-person learning with technology to enable real-time data use, personalized instruction, and competency-based progression. Districts are encouraged to develop their vision for technology use through a thoughtful needs assessment that incorporates stakeholder input, making technology an extension of existing plans to support learning and instruction. For example, technology might support activities related to a well-rounded education or safe and healthy schools.

The [Future Ready Interactive Planning Dashboard and Resource Hub](http://futureready.org/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.

**Examples of allowable activities aligned to ESE priorities include:**

**Strengthening and supporting deep personal connections for students, their peers, teachers, and other adults – particularly English language learners, students with disabilities, and their parents/guardians**

Within the classroom and beyond, technology can facilitate broad communication and engagement in conversations about academic coursework as well as non-academic needs such as social and emotional learning. For example, so-called “nudge apps” can build strong two-way partnerships between educators and parents/guardians in multiple languages. Inexpensive and simple to implement, nudge apps have been shown to improve early literacy skills, student attendance, and completion of financial aid forms.

**Developing personal learning pathways that motivate students to reach their goals and take ownership of their learning in the academic, workplace readiness, and socio-emotional domains**

Technology can support programming that gives students greater voice and choice in what and how they learn, along the way helping them acquire a growth mindset while gaining greater confidence in themselves and their abilities. For example, Massachusetts has embarked on a multi-year effort to combine traditional learning experiences with opportunities to learn valuable workplace skills and/or earn college credit on intentional pathways in rigorous, highly supportive environments. Funds can be used to supplement these activities or replicate them at a smaller scale.

**Piloting projects that let students progress through the curriculum based on demonstrated competency, within the Commonwealth’s Frameworks of rigorous curriculum standards and high expectations, as opposed to seat time**

Competency-based programs are an alternative to traditional systems that bound students to the schedule, credit hours, or seat time. For example, funds could be used to support professional development and programming for students with a history of interrupted schooling, students enrolled in alternative programs, accelerated students, and/or other students for whom the traditional institutional structure is a poor fit.

**Enabling educator access to knowledge, skills, and tools that allow them to gain detailed and timely knowledge of students and to use data to guide instruction**

Supported by technology, educators and students now have opportunities to adjust learning and teaching without waiting for a unit of study to be completed. However, even real-time data is of little use unless educators have the professional development they need to use this information to inform their pedagogy or the opportunity to collaboratively evaluate the effectiveness of technology programs and tools in the classroom with peers, technology specialists, and leadership.

**Tailoring the student learning environment to provide flexibility in what, when, how, and where learning and instruction happens**

Funds can be used to support professional development and other programming that helps teachers reimagine where and when students learn, which may include the expansion of blended learning options for students (learning that combines in-person instruction with online learning).