

Every Student Succeeds Act Primer: Teacher Preparation



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The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015 offers several opportunities for states, districts, and not-for-profit and for-profit entities to invest in high-quality innovative teacher preparation and support new educators as they begin their careers.

Title II Part A: State and District Grants

Title II of ESSA provides formula grants to states and local districts to support the preparation, recruitment, and professional development of teachers, principals, and other school leaders. ESSA grants states and districts considerable latitude in determining how to target Title II funds so long as their efforts increase and/or improve educator effectiveness and access to effective teachers for students from low-income families and students of color.

Development and expansion of teacher-preparation programs

ESSA offers states and districts multiple opportunities to innovate in the development and expansion of teacher-preparation programs and address challenges related to teacher shortages in fields such as special education and declining enrollments in both traditional and alternative teacher-preparation programs. Under ESSA, states and districts can use Title II funds to

- develop or expand one-year residency programs where teacher candidates learn under the mentorship of experienced teachers prior to becoming teachers of record;

- develop or expand alternate routes into teaching that target midcareer professionals from other fields, former military personnel, and those with advanced degrees; and
- support state-created "teaching academies" that prepare teachers or school leaders to work in high-need schools.

Systemic reform of teacher preparation

ESSA allows states to use Title II funds for multiple strategies to reform teacher preparation statewide, including the following:

- reform state teacher-preparation program standards and approval processes;
- reform teacher certification or licensure, which may include using performance assessments to determine teacher readiness for the classroom;
- develop reciprocity agreements to allow new teachers certified in one state to teach in multiple states; and
- create new strategies to ensure that effective, experienced teachers are well represented in schools serving predominantly students from low-income families and students of color.

Recruitment into teaching positions

Under ESSA, states and districts may use Title II funds to develop, improve, and implement district and school mechanisms for recruiting teachers that focus on

- increasing underrepresented teachers of color and teachers with disabilities;
- targeting and attracting effective teachers to schools predominantly serving students from low-income families and schools with the lowest proficiency rates on state assessments;



- developing teacher career continuums that appeal to teachers, which may include opportunities to serve as teaching coaches, mentors, and in other school leadership roles; and
- differentiating pay to recruit teachers for high-need schools and fields.

Induction and mentoring for new teachers

ESSA promotes the following practices to help school districts reduce teacher turnover and improve retention to develop teachers' instructional expertise over time:

- using evidence-based induction and mentoring practices for new teachers;
- designing and implementing new strategies to retain effective teachers; and
- screening and hiring new teachers early to provide a larger pool of candidates and more time for new teachers to prepare for the start of the school year.

Title II Part B: National Activities

ESSA authorizes several "national activities" that are funded through competitive grants available to a range of eligible entities, depending upon the activity, including states, districts, and nonprofits and partnerships that may include for-profits, institutions of higher education, and others. These programs include

- Literacy State Development Grants, which may be used to strengthen and enhance courses for teacher candidates in explicit, systemic, and intensive instruction in evidence-based literacy methods;
- Supporting Effective Educator Development Grants, which may be used to create nontraditional preparation pathways to serve traditionally underserved school districts; and

- STEM Master Teacher Corps program, which provides federal funds to recognize, reward, attract, and retain outstanding science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) teachers, particularly in high-need and rural schools.

Supporting English Learners and American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian Students

States may use grant funds awarded under Title III of ESSA to provide effective teacher preparation related to meeting the educational needs of English learners. Title VI of ESSA provides funds to support the recruitment, preparation, and professional development of American Indian teachers in districts that serve a high proportion of American Indian students. Grantees, which include districts, Indian tribes and organizations, and consortia of these groups, or Indian community-based organizations, may use funds to prepare teachers so that they understand and appreciate Alaska Native history, cultures, values, and ways of knowing and learning.



For additional fact sheets and videos about ESSA, visit www.all4ed.org/essa/.

The **Alliance for Excellent Education** is a Washington, DC–based national policy and advocacy organization dedicated to ensuring that all students, particularly those traditionally underserved, graduate from high school ready for success in college, work, and citizenship. www.all4ed.org

The **American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE)** is a national alliance of educator-preparation programs dedicated to high-quality, evidence-based preparation that assures educators are profession-ready as they enter the classroom. Its more than 800 member institutions represent public and private colleges and universities in every state, the District of Columbia, the Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, and Guam. Through advocacy and capacity building, AACTE promotes innovation and effective practices that strengthen educator preparation. www.aacte.org