



## **Title IV, Part A - Student Support and Academic Enrichment (SSAE)**

The following frequently asked questions (FAQs) are maintained by the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) to support districts in their implementation of the Title IV, Part A – Student Support and Academic Enrichment (SSAE) grant. Currently, the FAQs focus on planning for FY18 services.

The GaDOE will continue to update this document as additional questions are received. Please submit questions to [federalprograms@doe.k12.ga.us](mailto:federalprograms@doe.k12.ga.us)

Additional information is also available here:

<http://www.gadoe.org/School-Improvement/Federal-Programs/Pages/SSAE.aspx>

### **1. What is the purpose of Title IV, Part A?**

Authorized in December 2015, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) introduced a new block formula grant under Title IV, Part A with a wide range of allowable uses. Title IV, Part A, Student Support and Academic Enrichment (SSAE) grants are intended to improve students' academic achievement by increasing the capacity of States, LEAs, schools, and local communities to:

- provide all students with access to a well-rounded education,
- improve school conditions for student learning, and
- improve the use of technology in order to improve the academic achievement and digital literacy of all students. (*ESEA* section 4101).

### **2. How is funding provided to school districts?**

Current plans are for the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) to award grant funds under the new SSAE program, through formula, to eligible school districts in Georgia beginning in the 2017-2018 school year (July 2017).

### **3. Are school districts required to submit an application to the SEA to receive the SSAE program allocation?**

Georgia has included the Title IV, Part A grant within the Consolidated LEA Improvement Plan (CLIP). Therefore, the results of the CLIP's single district level CNA will be used to define the needs to be addressed through the SSAE grant. Likewise, the CLIP's District Improvement Plan goals and action steps will define the activities to be supported by the Title IV, Part A grant, along with the other federal grants. Rather than require districts to

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define needs and develop activities solely for the Title IV, Part A funds in isolation, we felt it important to include the grant as a core component of the district's overall needs assessment and planning process. So, there will be no separate, standalone application for these formula-based funds. You must consider and plan for their use as a component of the CLIP. The CLIP deadlines are July 31<sup>st</sup> or August 28<sup>th</sup>, 2017. There will be a separate budget to submit for the Title IV, Part A grant after your CLIP is approved.

**4. How many years will the LEAs receive this grant?**

This is a block grant under the ESSA and, as long as funds are appropriated each year from the federal government, all districts should be eligible to receive an allocation.

**5. Can these funds be used only in Title I schools or can non-Title I schools benefit, as well? Can we hire a district-level counselor, for example, to work with all of our high schools?**

These funds are to serve all students. So, they are not to be limited to Title I schools. An LEA may use funds for college and career counseling programs and services under the area of well-rounded educational opportunities. That could include hiring a district-level counselor who coordinates and supports supplemental college and career counseling activities in collaboration with community organizations and institutions of higher education. District-wide activities under the grant should focus on supporting schools enrolling children with the greatest identified need(s).

**6. Is this grant required to be included in the provisioning of equitable services to private school students?**

Yes, equitable services to private school students must be made available with these grant funds.

**7. Do these funds have to be split up to be used in all three areas: well-rounded education opportunities, safe and healthy students, and effective use of technology or can it be all used in one of the three areas?**

If the LEA's annual grant award is \$30,000 or higher, the grant funds must be utilized to address the three areas of focus, and must be based on the results of a comprehensive needs assessment in the areas that the grant is designed to target. It is possible that one initiative developed by an LEA could overlap the areas – well-rounded education opportunities and safe and healthy students, for example. The LEA will have to demonstrate, through its plan and budget, that the three areas are covered in the percentages identified – at least 20% of funding for activities to support well-rounded education opportunities, at least 20% to activities to support safe and healthy students, and a portion for activities to support effective use of technology. If the allocation is below \$30,000, then the funds do not have to follow this utilization requirement.

**8. If our CNA indicates a need to expand our gifted education endorsement and STEM professional learning, can the grant support those initiatives? It was paid by Title II last year.**

These grant funds could be used to support an expansion of gifted education endorsement and STEM PL for staff, as that is consistent with the purposes of the SSAE program (well-

rounded education). Do keep in mind that district-wide services must focus those services on targeting schools with identified greatest need(s).

**9. If the Director of Title I is selected to manage the consolidated application portion and monitoring of the grant but others will be responsible for the implementation of the grant, will the position have to be split funded? If so, can the grant pay a management cost?**

The grant allows for no more than 2% of the LEA allocation to be used for direct administrative costs. The same requirements for split funding apply to this federal grant.

**10. Will more guidance/webinar be provided so that districts will know how to allocate the funds in the proper functions?**

The GaDOE continues to create resources to support the implementation of this grant. A live webinar was held on June 9, 2017 to provide additional information. The recording of this **Webinar** is posted here:

<http://www.gadoe.org/School-Improvement/Federal-Programs/Pages/default.aspx>

**11. Is there someone at the DOE who I can call to ask specific questions?**

We ask that if there are questions, they be submitted, as emails, to [federalprograms@doe.k12.ga.us](mailto:federalprograms@doe.k12.ga.us)

In this way, we can continue to update this FAQ document and share the responses with all stakeholders. Currently, Craig Geers is acting as a primary point of contact for this grant. You may reach out to him if there are immediate concerns at [cgeers@doe.k12.ga.us](mailto:cgeers@doe.k12.ga.us) or (404) 657-1793, but we would like questions to be sent to the federal programs email to facilitate updating this FAQ for everyone's benefit.

**12. Does the requirement that funded activities be evidence-based apply to this grant, and what is the expectation for documenting such evidence, if applicable?**

Yes, in planning for implementation of all activities under Title IV, Part A, the LEA should select relevant evidence-based activities. Documentation is the same as with other Federal programs in the CLIP.

**13. Can my district use these grant funds to support activities in district operated PreK programs?**

Yes, if a district's CNA points to a need for targeted support for its PreK population, it may allocate funds for these activities. The PreK activities should align with all of the requirements of the grant, including providing supports under one or more of the designated focus areas – well-rounded educational opportunities, safe and healthy students, and the effective use of technology.

**14. Can these grant funds be used to fund the district's employee assistance program?**

No, the Title IV, Part A grant is meant to only support activities with a direct impact on student achievement and may not be applied to support activities under any employee assistance programs. All grant-funded activities for teachers or school personnel must be aligned with professional learning or staff training that will directly result in improved student outcomes.

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**15. Do the Uniform Guidance cost principles, under 2 CFR 200.403, apply to the use of SSAE grant funds regardless of the amount a district receives?**

Yes, the requirement that grant expenditures be necessary and reasonable, allowable, allocable to the program, and adequately documented apply to any use of Title IV, Part A funds, regardless of the allocation amount the district receives.

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**16. Are field trips allowable activities for well-rounded educational opportunities?**

Yes, field trips could be considered so long as they are consistent with the purposes of a well-rounded education, are evidence-based, support the identified needs resulting from the district CNA, and are for prioritized schools.

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**17. Will this grant allow for professional development for teachers for these activities?**

Yes, the grant will allow for professional development for teachers.

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**18. Can this grant be used to fund an opportunity room at the schools that would provide a technology-based program for students to work through concerning safe schools?**

Yes, this could be a possible use of the funds within schools, assuming such an activity meets all processes and considerations applicable to the grant.

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**19. Can these grant funds be consolidated?**

Yes, Title IV, Part A funds may be consolidated with other Federal, State, and local education funds in a schoolwide program in a school involved in the GaDOE's pilot program for the consolidation of funds. Keep in mind that districts must prioritize the distribution of funds to schools based on the criteria in ESEA section 4106 (e)(2)(A).

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**20. In an LEA with Title I and Non-Title I schools, the CNA identifies three non-Title I schools with high suicide rates, but low poverty. Can the safe and healthy 20% go to these three schools for suicide prevention?**

These funds are not controlled by Title I designations, as they are meant to provide support to all students. It is allowable to use these funds to implement suicide prevention supports.

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**21. If we transfer funds to Title I, are we required to follow the 20%, 20%, 60% rule?**

No, the statute requires that transferred funds be spent in accordance with all rules and requirements of the program to which funds are transferred. Please note that, under ESSA, required Title I set-asides are calculated prior to any transfers by the district. (See ESSA section 1113(c)(3)(B)). This is a change from NCLB, and is important to know when transferring funds into Title I.

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**22. What about balanced learning, such as Georgia Virtual School? Can this grant cover the tuition for students who are taking online classes not offered at school?**

Yes, funds can be used to pay for online classes not offered at a school, assuming such an activity meets all processes and considerations applicable to the grant.

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**23. If a portion of the 20% that supports well-rounded educational opportunities also happens to support effective use of technology, do we have to support technology with the undesignated 60%?**

It is anticipated that there may be activities an LEA wishes to fund that could fit into more than one of the grant program content areas and could be used to address the application assurances regarding use of funds in each area. If an LEA proposes an activity that falls into more than one content area, it should note in its application budget where the activity fits into more than one content area.

**24. Do schools receiving funds from the district under the district plan for the use of Title IV, Part A funds have to adhere to the requirements regarding the three designated content areas?**

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No, in its plan for the use of Title IV, Part A funds, a district receiving a grant of \$30,000 or more must ensure its overall district plan (CLIP) adheres to the required uses, i.e., at least 20% for activities supporting well-rounded education, at least 20% for activities supporting safe and healthy students, and a portion for supporting the effective use of technology. Through its district plan, the district may allocate funds to schools. Therefore, the schools would not need to worry about meeting the breakout requirements since the breakout requirements were achieved in the overall district plan.