

Supporting English Learners

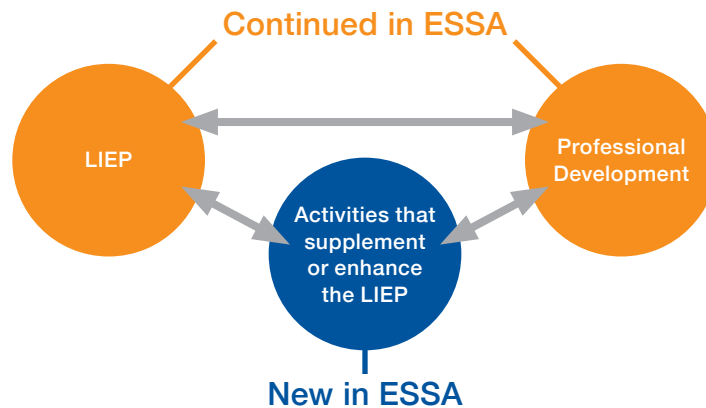
under the Every Student Succeeds Act

Under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), schools are encouraged to take a more well-rounded approach to education. Title III now requires recipients of English Language Acquisition and Language Enhancement grants to implement activities that enhance or supplement the academic and language instruction of English learners (ELs). This new provision provides flexibility for districts to implement new, whole-child strategies that support EL youth, such as integrated student supports (ISS) or wraparound services.

ISS is a locally adaptable, evidence-based approach that complements instruction by offering resources, programs and activities that are tailored to meet the needs of students and their communities. When implemented with fidelity, ISS contributes to improvements in academic outcomes and fosters language proficiencyⁱ. This fact sheet summarizes new opportunities to fund ISS under Title III that are clarified in **recent guidance**ⁱⁱ published by the U.S. Department of Education (Department).

Title III Required Activities

ESSA adds a new requirement that recipients of Title III grants must “provide and implement other effective activities and strategies that enhance or supplement language instruction educational programs (LIEPS) for ELs, which shall include parent, family, and community engagement activities and may include strategies that serve to coordinate and align related programs.”ⁱⁱⁱ Districts must now conduct three complementary activities:



As long as districts adhere to the requirement that funds supplement and not supplant existing resources, this new provision carries a significant amount of flexibility. Through an ISS model, innovative leaders can leverage this opportunity to offer a range of student-centered supports that address the academic and nonacademic needs of each EL in a school. ISS is well-aligned to each component of this new provision:

Enhance and supplement the LIEP: ISS offers a broad range of supports that can include tutoring, physical and mental health care, mentoring and counseling, and assistance with basic needs. Specific activities are informed by a needs assessment and are integrated into a plan that supports the LIEP with measurable goals.

Conduct parent, family and community engagement: According to the Department, parent, family and community engagement activities can include:

- Programs that reach parents and family members at home, in the community, and at school;
- Collaboration with community-based or other organizations or employers with a record of success in improving and increasing parent and family engagement;
- Other activities and strategies that the local education agency determines are appropriate and consistent with such agency’s parent and family engagement [policy](#).ⁱⁱ

Although specific activities vary, ISS providers commonly implement adult language education, opportunities for school involvement (such as family literacy nights), parenting workshops and support groups, family resource centers, crisis support and services for basic needs.

Coordinate activities: Under ESSA, districts may use Title III funds to coordinate and align related activities for ELs. In an ISS model, a site coordinator works with community partners to deliver tiers of support to students and their families, providing a cost-effective program to supplement academic instruction.

A Strong Investment

ISS meets the Departments recommendations to ensure a strong investment of funds and prioritize the unique needs of EL and immigrant students:

Needs-assessment: To ensure a meaningful investment of federal funds, the Department recommends that schools perform a comprehensive needs assessment.^{iv} Evidence-based providers of ISS complement this effort by working closely with school leaders to inform practice based on the data included in these plans.

Relevant, evidence-based activities: The Department recommends that stakeholders select activities that are steeped in evidence (when available) with attention to local context and capacity. ISS is an evidence-based programⁱ informed by both data and local context. Site Coordinators track progress against defined metrics to ensure they provide the best possible supports, producing positive results for schools and students.

Community partnerships: The Department guidance clarifies that schools should partner with private, non-profit, for-profit and faith-based organizations to magnify positive impact. ISS providers emphasize collaboration with such partners and view community organizations as an essential resource to increase capacity for service delivery and bring a sense of supportive community into schools. An ISS Site Coordinator associated with an experienced national model can help schools leverage well-established partnerships to broaden services.

Title III Immigrant Subgrants

Immigrant subgrants are intended for LEAs adjusting to a “significant increase” in the percentage or number of immigrant children and youth, as compared to the two preceding fiscal years.^v Recipients may leverage these funds to enhance the educational opportunities for immigrant students, including by providing non-academic supports to these students and their families.

Allowable uses include family literacy, parent and family engagement; tutorials, mentoring, and academic or career counseling for immigrant children and youth; and activities, in coordination with community-based organizations or other entities, that assist parents and families of immigrant children and youth by offering comprehensive community services.^{vi} The Department recommends a needs assessment to determine the appropriate supports.

Recommendations

Local education agencies should:

- Be aware, particularly in districts with a large influx of immigrants, that Title III grants and immigrant subgrants are available to support partnerships with ISS providers and consider whether these funding sources might be leveraged to meet the unique needs of EL students in your district.
- Consider ISS as a strategy to support low-performing schools with large EL populations and be aware that ISS can be leveraged for schoolwide improvement strategies through a tiered service model.
- Explore opportunities to supplement Title III funds with other funding streams – such as Title I school-improvement dollars – to ensure that ELs are well-supported by a cohesive, comprehensive program.

State education agencies should:

- Emphasize through guidance or in state ESSA plans the Department’s recommendation that LEAs spend Title III funds toward a well-rounded education for ELs, including ISS.
- Communicate the importance of ISS in supporting low-performing schools with large EL populations
- Ensure that leaders of local education agencies are aware that ISS can be leveraged to fulfill new parent engagement requirements included in Title III.
- Encourage local education leaders to coordinate ISS services funded by Title III with other federal funding sources. For example, through a consolidated grant application for all federal funds.

ⁱKristin Anderson Moore, *Making The Grade: Assessing the Evidence for Integrated Student Supports* (Child Trends, 2014), <http://www.childtrends.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/2014-07ISSPaper2.pdf>

ⁱⁱUS Department of Education, *English Learners and Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act* (2016). <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/essa/essatitleiiienglishlearners92016.pdf>

ⁱⁱⁱElementary and Secondary Education Act, as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act, PL 114-95 (2015), Section 3115(c)(3)

^{iv}Department *English Learners and Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act*

^vESEA, Section 3115(d)(1)

^{vi}ESEA, Section 3115(e)(1)(G)

^{vii}For more information, visit: <https://www.communitiesinschools.org/our-work/>

