

INTRODUCTION

This companion document is intended to provide additional guidance related to the allowable activities that support the intent and purpose of safe and healthy students as defined in Title IV, Part A of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).¹

Activities to Support Safe and Healthy Students

A purpose of the SSAE program is to improve school conditions for student learning. When students are healthy and feel safe and supported, they are more likely to succeed in school.

Generally, the SSAE program funds may be used for any program or activity that fosters safe, healthy, supportive, and drug-free school environments, including direct student services and professional development and training for school staff. As indicated in the table below, the authorized LEA activities in may be categorized by topic as: 1) Safe and supportive learning environments; and 2) Student physical and mental health, including substance abuse prevention. Three of the authorized activities--mentoring and school counseling, schoolwide positive behavioral interventions, and pay for success initiatives--are cross-cutting and are applicable to both topics.

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">< Preventing Bullying and Harassment< Relationship-Building Skills< School Dropout Prevention< Re-Entry Programs and Transition Services for Justice Involved Youth< School Readiness and Academic Success< Child Sexual Abuse Awareness and Prevention< Reducing Use of Exclusionary Discipline Practices and Promoting Supportive School Discipline< Suicide Prevention< Violence Prevention, Crisis Management and Conflict Resolution< Preventing Human Trafficking< Building School and Community Relationships< Culturally Responsive Teaching and Professional Development of Implicit Bias | <ul style="list-style-type: none">< Drug and Violence Prevention< Health and Safety Practices in School or Athletic Programs< School-Based Health and Mental Health Services< Healthy, Active Lifestyle< Nutritional Education< Physical Activities< Trauma-Informed Classroom Management< Preventing Use of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drugs |
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Safe and Supportive Learning Environments

The [redacted] provides LEAs with numerous options for enhancing their efforts to provide students and school staff with a positive school climate, which in turn can promote student academic achievement. The 2013 study, [redacted], examined schools that were beating the odds (BTO) and compared them with chronically underperforming (CU) schools. The study found significant differences in the school climate measures between BTO and CU schools. The study also found the probability of beating the odds for a school with a climate score in the top five percent was over ten times that of a school with an average school climate score, reaffirming that school climate makes a difference in student achievement. For additional guidance and resources related to school climate, please see the Department's web page on School Climate and Discipline.

Additionally, a school-based program that utilizes restorative justice is an example of an allowable activity under this section. Restorative justice is a practice that focuses on the rehabilitation of students with serious and/or harmful infractions and behaviors through the reconciliation with victims and the community at large by restoring those relationships in a way that is beneficial and healing to all involved. It can be used as part of local plan to reduce exclusionary discipline practices.

Student Physical and Mental Health

Title IV funds can be used for a wide array of programs and activities that directly support student health and wellness as well as professional development and training for school personnel. Schools that support the physical and mental health of their students increase the likelihood of students' academic success. There is new research on the effects of drugs on the developing teen brain, and the connection between substance abuse and poor academic outcomes. There is also a growing awareness of the need to increase the physical activity of our students and improve nutrition in and outside of our schools, and that focusing on these activities can promote student academic achievement and better behavior.

Cross-cutting

Title IV funds support programs, activities, and professional development and training activities that are cross-cutting in nature and that can positively impact both safe and supportive learning environments as well as physical and mental health. For example, the SSAE program presents an opportunity for LEAs and schools to promote safe, healthy, and affirming school environments that are inclusive of all students. The SSAE funds can be used to reduce incidences of bullying and harassment against all students, including bullying and harassment based on a student's (or their associates) actual or perceived race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity), disability, sexual orientation, religion, or any other distinguishing characteristics that may be identified by the state or LEA.

In addition, LEAs can use funds to implement school-wide positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS). PBIS provides a framework for LEAs to develop their capacity to support the social, emotional, academic, and behavioral needs of all their students in which a wide range of evidence-based programs can be implemented including, but not limited to, prevention of the risk factors

