

# EVERY STUDENT SUCCEEDS ACT (ESSA)

## Title III—Language Instruction for English Learners and Immigrant Students



**WHY TITLE III MATTERS.** English learners (ELs) comprise about 10 percent of the overall student population and continue to grow at a rapid rate. The purpose of Title III is to 1) help ensure that English learners, including immigrant children and youth, attain English proficiency and develop high levels of academic achievement and 2) assist teachers (including preschool teachers), administrators, and other school leaders in developing and enhancing their capacity to provide effective instructional programs.

Title III also continues to promote parental, family, and community participation in language instruction educational programs for the parents, families, and communities of English learners. While accountability for the progress of English learners has been folded into Title I, along with all other student subgroups, Title III still remains the dedicated formula funding to states to improve the education of English learners and immigrant youth to learn English and meet challenging state academic standards and to implement effective language instruction programs.

### NEW!

States now must establish and implement—after consultation with district boards representing the geographic diversity of the states—standardized English learner entrance and exit procedures. This includes a requirement that all students who may be English learners are assessed for that status within 30 days of enrollment in a school within the state.

### NEW!

### FUNDING. TITLE III: PART A—ENGLISH LANGUAGE ACQUISITION, LANGUAGE ENHANCEMENT, AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT ACT

The authorization levels for Part A formula grants to states gradually increase from \$756 million in FY 2017 to \$885 million by FY 2020 at the following amounts:

- FY 2017 \$756,332,450
- FY 2018 \$769,568,267
- FY 2019 \$784,959,633
- FY 2020 \$884,959,633

Principals and school leaders should know about a competitive discretionary grant program run by the Department of Education called the National Professional Development Project that was originally authorized in No Child Left Behind. This grant program supports professional development activities to improve classroom instruction for English learners and assists educational personnel working with English learners to meet high professional standards, including standards for certification and licensure.

### STATES RECEIVING A FORMULA GRANT MAY RESERVE UP TO 5 PERCENT OF FUNDS FOR:

1. Establishing and implementing standardized statewide entrance and exit procedures, including a requirement that all students who may be English learners be assessed for such status within 30 days of enrollment in a school
2. Providing effective teacher and principal preparation
3. Planning, evaluation, administration, and interagency coordination related to the subgrants
4. Technical assistance
5. Providing recognition, which may include providing financial awards, to recipients of subgrants that have significantly improved the achievement and progress of English learners in meeting the state-designed long-term goals

States can use funds to make subgrants to eligible entities as long as 95 percent of state funding is used for purposes described in relevant Title III sections. States receive funding in a weighted formula with 80 percent of funds based on the population of English learners and 20 percent based on the population of immigrant children and youth in the state as compared to all states using data from the American Community Survey conducted by the U.S. Department of Commerce.

Authorization levels provide a recommended funding level for operating a program and provide guidance to the Appropriations Committees as to an appropriate level of funding. However, it is only the Appropriations Committees that have the authority to decide specific discretionary spending levels for programs on an annual basis. Often programs are funded at levels much lower than authorized.

## NEW!

In September 2016, the Department of Education issued nonregulatory guidance at <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/essa/essatitleiiienglishlearners92016.pdf> on Title III of ESSA for states and districts. The guidance includes information and resources for state, district, and school personnel, including:

- Use of Title III funds to serve ELs
- Design and delivery of language instruction educational programs, which include educators of ELs
- Key information on family, parent, and community engagement
- Key information on distinct populations of ELs, including early learners, former ELs, immigrant students, and ELs who are also students with disabilities
- Clarifications of the rights ELs have under federal civil rights law related to supports and services
- A list of publications and resources for administrators and educators who work with ELs

This guidance at <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/essa/essatitleiiienglishlearners92016.pdf> will help inform the work done to all states and to school districts receiving Title III funds as they transition to the new requirements under ESSA.

## OPPORTUNITIES TO ADVOCATE

- **Engage now with your district in discussions about the instruction of English learners** and providing effective teacher and principal professional development to improve teaching skills in meeting the diverse needs of English learners.
- **Collaborate and work with other principals in your district and state** to influence the state Title I and Title III planning as they work in tandem for English learner accountability.
- **Make the case for increased Title III funding.** Members of the Labor, Health and Human Services and Education Appropriations Committees in the House and Senate must hear from principals why increased Title III funds are critical to the recruitment, professional learning, capacity-building, and other important needs of principals and the school teams to effectively implement language instruction programs that help English learners grow and meet challenging state academic standards.
- **Share any good news with your local media.** If you have good news to tell or believe your community, city, or state media can highlight the work and success of your teachers and students, visit [www.nassp.org/essa-communicationkit](http://www.nassp.org/essa-communicationkit) for tips, tools, and resources on how to raise the visibility of your school via social media as well as traditional outlets.