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EARLY & ELEMENTARY  
EDUCATION POLICY

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# UNLOCKING ESSA'S POTENTIAL TO SUPPORT EARLY LEARNING

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## About the BUILD Initiative

BUILD is a national initiative that supports state leaders across the early childhood spectrum—adults dedicated to family support and engagement, early learning, health, mental health, nutrition, and more. And, BUILD brings these leaders together to promote opportunities for all children from birth through age five to start school healthy and prepared for success. Since 2002 when the Early Childhood Funders Collaborative designed and launched the initiative, BUILD has partnered with state-based organizations, early childhood innovators, business leaders, government offices and others to build early childhood systems by developing infrastructure, connecting programs and services for young children that functioned in isolation, at cross-purposes, or without the sufficient resources to meet critical needs, and by advancing quality and equity.

Find out more at [buildinitiative.org](http://buildinitiative.org).

## About the Education Policy Program

New America's Education Policy program uses original research and policy analysis to solve the nation's critical education problems, serving as a trusted source of objective analysis and innovative ideas for policymakers, educators, and the public at large. We combine a steadfast concern for low-income and historically disadvantaged people with a belief that better information about education can vastly improve both the policies that govern educational institutions and the quality of learning itself. Our work encompasses the full range of educational opportunities, from early learning to primary and secondary education, college, and the workforce.

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# INTRODUCTION

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The Elementary and Secondary Education Act was reauthorized by Congress at the end of 2015 as the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA, P.L. 114-95).<sup>1</sup> In addition to providing resources, the policy approach of this major federal education law is to give state and local education agencies significant flexibility, much more than was allowed under the previous iteration of the law, No Child Left Behind.

Everybody agrees that the ESSA shifts significant discretion to states and districts, and while that shift may present some challenges, it also presents opportunities. ESSA provides an open door for states to expand early learning opportunities. This can include investing in early learning services for young children, starting at birth; improving transitions between early learning and the early grades of elementary school; improving support for the workforce in order to improve teaching and learning in both early learning and early elementary grades; focusing on dual language learners and other special populations including homeless children, children in protective services, and Native American and Asian/Pacific Islander children; and aligning state and local planning and implementation for all of early learning, across child care, state pre-K, Early Head Start, and Head Start.

ESSA's flexibility means that state and local ESSA approaches will occur in the context of the particular needs in each state and local community,

with a central focus on how the state education agency (SEA) and local district (local education agency, LEA) understand the issues and see the advantages of leveraging ESSA in this way. State and local readiness and willingness is an important aspect of maximizing opportunity for early learning in ESSA. But because the law does not mandate any early learning spending, state and local leaders interested in seeing ESSA support early learning will need to work hard to make sure that it does so.

While early childhood education (ECE) has always been a part of the federal education law—particularly in the provisions to provide additional support for children from low-income—the reality is that minimal federal education dollars have historically been invested in early learning services. The new law both strengthens and expands allowable uses for early learning, birth through third grade. As with the previous version, it remains up to state and local authorities to decide whether to invest. Creating the conditions for local and/or state investment requires an active, intentional plan. ESSA can play an important role in state and local commitments to early learning.

In this paper, we offer an introduction to ESSA, exploring major provisions that have implications for the early learning system. We cover opportunities for young children, birth through third grade. We touch upon both state and local opportunity for

which all states and localities draw down money, and highlight, as well, a few areas in which the U.S. Department of Education will distribute funds on a competitive basis. We draw attention to how ESSA can help state and community leaders meet the needs of dual language learners (DLLs), who are a growing and vital part of the population. Our goal is to introduce

key provisions of interest to the early childhood community to enable the early childhood community to better understand how ESSA can be a resource.\*

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\* The terms pre-K and preschool are used through to refer to ECE programs serving three and/or four year-olds.

## EARLY LEARNING IN ESSA: THEMES OVERVIEW

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**Dual language learners:** ESSA allows for greater opportunities to meet the learning needs of children who are DLLs, both in the early learning and K–12 systems, through enhanced professional development for all teachers serving DLLs, effective language instruction educational programs, and parent, family, and community engagement (see *Who are Dual Language Learners?* on page 4).

**Early learning broadly defined:** ESSA maintains its broad definition of early childhood education, including programs serving children starting at birth as well as child care, Early Head Start, Head Start, and state pre-K.

It also provides a new definition of professional development (see pages 21–22), one that includes early childhood educators for the first time and

specifically states both what PD should and should not be. For example, among other things, the definition explicitly states that PD opportunities must be ongoing and job-embedded.

**Early learning emphases:** ESSA offers various ways to recognize early learning, including:

- the importance of a mixed delivery system unifying child care, pre-K and Head Start to support program delivery for infants, toddlers, and pre-Kindergarteners;
- collaborations and partnerships not only for service delivery, but also to assure coordination and to make for a smoother experience for families, children, and providers;

- low-income and disadvantaged children as the key beneficiaries of resources coming to states via ESSA;
- transition from early childhood education—and frequently community-based preschool—into the local elementary school. ESSA recognizes preschool/early childhood as part of the educational continuum for all students and that SEAs have a role to play in ensuring children have access to these services;
- data reporting; and
- improving principals’ and other school leaders’ understanding of child development, B–8, and how best to support K–3 teachers as well as pre-K teachers when under their direction. There is also an emphasis on joint professional development with early childhood education providers not located within the school building.

**Evidence-based interventions:** This is a core value of the law. High-quality ECE programs have solid evidence behind them; states and districts should look to early childhood interventions as a first option.

**Flexibility:** ESSA allows for flexibility in state and local approaches occurring in the context of the particular needs in each locality. Additionally, the law restricts the U.S. Department of Education from prescribing or defining what is not already specified under in ESSA.

**Funding:** Historically, funding appropriated has been low and inadequate to the need, especially for certain populations such as DLLs.<sup>7</sup> Without adequate funding overall, states are likely to choose to spend funds on only what is required rather than

thinking more creatively about how to best meet the needs of young children from low-income families before they enter school, provide young DLLs with the necessary services to reach English language proficiency and meet academic standards, and help teachers and school leaders better understand what early learners need to be successful. Advocacy is needed to shore up more funding overall.

**Health and well-being included:** ESSA provides for new partnerships with the health care community focused on young children’s language development. In addition, state accountability measures of school culture and school climate may include measures of health including absences, violence, and bullying incidences. Schools in improvement status may adopt health indicators as part of their strategies to close gaps. States can use Student Support and Academic Enrichment grants and Full Service Community Schools grants (Title IV) for mental health supports, drug prevention, improved health and safety practices, and other efforts to make schools safe and healthy. Title I and other funds can be used to support comprehensive services for children from birth to school entry and beyond, including nutrition, screenings, home visits, social-emotional supports, and other interventions.

**Onus on states and local school districts:** With discretion left to the states and LEAs, the onus is on early childhood leaders and other stakeholders to craft thoughtful strategies that take best advantage of the legislation.

**School quality goes beyond academic achievement:** ESSA offers an opportunity to rethink school accountability, especially at the elementary-school level, as it requires states to incorporate measures of school quality beyond academic achievement scores from third grade and higher.

## Who are Dual Language Learners?

We use the term dual language learners (DLLs) to mean children from birth to eight years old (B-8) who are learning English while still in the process of learning their home languages. DLL is a widely-used term in the early childhood education (ECE) field. In the K-12 context, this population is often referred to as English language learners (ELLs) or English learners (ELs).

DLLs represent a large share of the early childhood population. An estimated 23 percent of three- and four-year-olds in the United States are DLLs, as are almost 30 percent of children enrolled in Head Start.<sup>2</sup> In K-12, the share is also significant, with DLLs comprising nearly 10 percent of public school enrollment.<sup>3</sup>

The majority of DLLs are native-born U.S. citizens. Children of immigrants have driven all U.S. population growth of young children since 1990.<sup>4</sup> Yet these children often have lower rates of enrollment in high-quality early childhood programs and are often viewed in terms of the skills they lack rather than the substantial assets they bring.<sup>5</sup>

Research is clear that speaking more than one language is a cognitive and social asset and it is increasingly a skill that more native English speaking families want for their own children.<sup>6</sup> This is an important point when thinking about the needs of DLLs, as it makes clear that status as a DLL is not a risk factor. Rather, the fact that DLLs are an important subgroup in accountability discussions regarding narrowing achievement gaps is more of a reflection of B-5 and K-12 systems that are ill-equipped to capitalize on their considerable assets.

ESSA presents an opportunity to better align early learning systems with K-12 systems to ensure that DLL learning needs are met. This work will require leadership, intentionality, and a much greater investment in early education. If states and localities are successful at this alignment with B-5 and K-12 systems, there is no doubt that the performance of DLLs will improve significantly. And, given the demographic shifts in our nation, when DLLs succeed, so will our schools.

# BASIC CONCEPTS IN ESSA

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## What ESSA Covers

As a major federal law, ESSA covers a wide variety of educational issues. The content is organized into titles, as shown in **Table 1**. Early learning is included in nearly all parts of the law. This paper highlights selected areas of particular opportunity or relevance for early learning.

## How ESSA Defines Early Childhood Education

ESSA has a broad definition of ECE, and includes programs serving children starting at birth. ECE programs include

- Head Start or Early Head Start programs;
- state licensed or regulated child care programs; and
- programs that serve children from birth through age six that address cognitive (including language, early literacy, and early mathematics), social, emotional, and physical development, either state pre-K programs, programs authorized under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, or programs operated by a local educational agency.<sup>8</sup>

The term “preschool” is also used within the law, but it is not defined separately. In addition, although the early elementary grades are not included in the definition of early childhood education, ESSA calls out many opportunities for improving transitions between ECE programs and kindergarten and for focusing on the needs of children in these grades.

## How ESSA Works

ESSA is similar to existing major early childhood legislation that is familiar to many state and local leaders working on early learning (e.g., Child Care and Development Block Grant/Child Care and Development Fund) insofar as states develop and submit plans to the federal government to show how they will implement the law. As a general matter, funding goes to the State Education Agency (SEA), which passes the majority of dollars to local school districts. States retain some funding for capacity building, technical assistance, and their own programs but most funding is directed to localities. Local school districts create their own plans for review by the state.

ESSA identifies a large number of stakeholders with whom the SEA must consult in plan development.



**Table 1 | ESSA Titles and Parts**

Title	Parts
<p><b>Title I—Improving The Academic Achievement Of The Disadvantaged</b></p>	<p><b>Part A—Improving Basic Programs Operated By Local Educational Agencies</b>            Part B—State Assessment Grants            Part C—Education Of Migratory Children            Part D—Prevention And Intervention Programs For Children And Youth Who Are Neglected, Delinquent, Or At-Risk            Part E—Flexibility For Equitable Per-Pupil Funding</p>
<p><b>Title II—Preparing, Training, And Recruiting High-Quality Teachers, Principals, And Other School Leaders</b></p>	<p><b>Part A—Supporting Effective Instruction</b>  <b>Part B—National Activities [including Literacy Education for All, Results for the Nation- LEARN]</b>            Part C—General Provisions</p>
<p><b>Title III—Language Instruction For English Learners And Immigrant Students</b></p>	<p>Part A—English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, And Academic Achievement Act            Part B—General Provision</p>
<p>Title IV—21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools</p>	<p>Part A—Student Support And Academic Enrichment Grants            Part B—21st Century Community Learning Centers            Part C—Expanding Opportunity Through Quality Charter Schools            Part D—Magnet Schools Assistance            Part E—Family Engagement In Education Programs            Part F—National Activities</p>
<p>Title V—Flexibility And Accountability</p>	<p>Part A—Funding Transferability For State And Local Educational Agencies            Part B—Rural Education Initiative            Part C—General Provisions</p>
<p>Title VI—Indian, Native Hawaiian, And Alaska Native Education</p>	<p>Part A—Indian Education            Part B—Native Hawaiian Education            Part C—Alaska Native Education</p>
<p>Title VII—Impact Aid</p>	
<p>Title VIII—General Provisions</p>	<p>Part A—Definitions            Part B—Flexibility In The Use Of Administrative And Other Funds            Part C—Coordination Of Programs; Consolidated State And Local Plans And Applications            Part D—Waiver            Part E—Approval And Disapproval Of State Plans And Local Applications            Part F—Uniform Provisions            Part G—Evaluations</p>
<p><b>Title IX—Education For The Homeless And Other Laws</b></p>	<p>Part A—Homeless Children And Youths            Part B—Miscellaneous; <b>Other Laws [Including Preschool Development Grants]</b></p>

These stakeholders include representatives from the early childhood community, such as the state’s early learning council. From a process standpoint, a well-organized ECE community has opportunities to engage, develop partnerships, and inform the overall state approach to ESSA. However, because so many decisions are made at the local level, ECE stakeholders are also advised to consider local as well as state approaches.

As of February, state plans are due either in April or September 2017. States may submit an individual program plan or a consolidated plan intended to help them consider ESSA in a more cohesive and coherent way. For those submitting a consolidated plan, the U.S. Department of Education provides a template for state use, with sections labelled Long-Term Goals; Consultation and Performance Management; Academic Assessments; Accountability, Support, and Improvement for Schools; Supporting Excellent Educators; and

Supporting All Students.<sup>9</sup> In addition, the U.S. Department of Education has released non-regulatory guidance on several topics including early learning and ESSA.<sup>10</sup>

### How Much Money Is Involved

Allocations are made across a variety of programs to states. The U.S. Department of Education maintains a distribution table, which shows the overall distribution of all non-competitive funds for the federal appropriations available to each state.<sup>11</sup> Funds included are for programs that allocate funds to states or LEAs using statutory formulas. Table 2 includes not only appropriations via the Elementary and Secondary Education Act programs but also all elementary and secondary education programs; postsecondary education programs; rehabilitative services and disability research programs; and student loan volume.

**Table 2 | Grand Total Federal Education Appropriations to States in Dollars**

State/Area	2015 Actual	2016 Estimate	2017 Estimate	Amount Change FY 2016 to 2017	Percent Change FY 16–17
Alabama	\$ 2,729,781,358	\$ 2,777,873,024	\$ 2,903,257,934	\$ 125,384,911	4.5%
Alaska	\$ 415,238,724	\$ 442,445,026	\$ 458,773,172	\$ 16,328,146	3.7%
Arizona	\$ 6,241,051,368	\$ 6,350,539,683	\$ 6,659,309,114	\$ 308,769,430	4.9%
Arkansas	\$ 1,334,963,163	\$ 1,349,409,058	\$ 1,396,218,886	\$ 46,809,828	3.5%
California	\$ 16,727,837,255	\$ 16,973,949,402	\$ 17,815,299,086	\$ 841,349,684	5.0%
Colorado	\$ 2,780,371,880	\$ 2,821,226,543	\$ 2,956,601,262	\$ 135,374,718	4.8%
Connecticut	\$ 1,711,664,971	\$ 1,737,793,180	\$ 1,812,274,244	\$ 74,481,065	4.3%
Delaware	\$ 407,209,807	\$ 413,471,485	\$ 428,773,254	\$ 15,301,769	3.7%
District of Columbia	\$ 1,667,518,726	\$ 1,692,720,160	\$ 1,773,699,084	\$ 80,978,924	4.8%

<b>State/Area</b>	<b>2015 Actual</b>	<b>2016 Estimate</b>	<b>2017 Estimate</b>	<b>Amount Change FY 2016 to 2017</b>	<b>Percent Change FY 16-17</b>
Florida	\$ 8,838,564,032	\$ 8,964,002,542	\$ 9,403,722,102	\$ 439,719,560	4.9%
Georgia	\$ 5,116,975,414	\$ 5,211,385,809	\$ 5,471,857,449	\$ 260,471,640	5.0%
Hawaii	\$ 451,957,657	\$ 466,122,401	\$ 485,163,362	\$ 19,040,962	4.1%
Idaho	\$ 679,872,934	\$ 687,456,360	\$ 720,105,783	\$ 32,649,423	4.7%
Illinois	\$ 7,469,049,674	\$ 7,559,122,435	\$ 7,910,845,171	\$ 351,722,736	4.7%
Indiana	\$ 3,883,891,185	\$ 3,925,191,883	\$ 4,128,983,203	\$ 203,791,320	5.2%
Iowa	\$ 2,421,686,820	\$ 2,456,539,631	\$ 2,577,353,962	\$ 120,814,331	4.9%
Kansas	\$ 1,499,228,798	\$ 1,530,103,360	\$ 1,601,633,985	\$ 71,530,626	4.7%
Kentucky	\$ 2,157,474,471	\$ 2,188,350,066	\$ 2,283,751,116	\$ 95,401,050	4.4%
Louisiana	\$ 2,176,484,426	\$ 2,206,503,709	\$ 2,314,273,515	\$ 107,769,805	4.9%
Maine	\$ 657,899,841	\$ 668,633,866	\$ 696,035,278	\$ 27,401,412	4.1%
Maryland	\$ 2,418,090,781	\$ 2,471,948,329	\$ 2,585,153,820	\$ 113,205,492	4.6%
Massachusetts	\$ 3,951,763,992	\$ 4,009,659,209	\$ 4,175,895,493	\$ 166,236,285	4.1%
Michigan	\$ 5,170,171,423	\$ 5,221,732,633	\$ 5,445,774,080	\$ 224,041,447	4.3%
Minnesota	\$ 4,177,354,624	\$ 4,252,465,415	\$ 4,452,586,425	\$ 200,121,009	4.7%
Mississippi	\$ 1,526,910,147	\$ 1,535,534,822	\$ 1,593,317,071	\$ 57,782,249	3.8%
Missouri	\$ 3,294,846,788	\$ 3,336,357,596	\$ 3,486,633,631	\$ 150,276,035	4.5%
Montana	\$ 462,528,448	\$ 475,210,890	\$ 490,437,325	\$ 15,226,436	3.2%
Nebraska	\$ 1,003,334,932	\$ 1,019,453,222	\$ 1,061,902,929	\$ 42,449,707	4.2%
Nevada	\$ 817,331,435	\$ 831,275,492	\$ 878,172,603	\$ 46,897,110	5.6%
New Hampshire	\$ 1,061,917,977	\$ 1,079,865,401	\$ 1,130,378,067	\$ 50,512,666	4.7%
New Jersey	\$ 3,221,345,476	\$ 3,270,661,159	\$ 3,409,564,613	\$ 138,903,454	4.2%
New Mexico	\$ 870,397,778	\$ 889,208,003	\$ 921,316,959	\$ 32,108,956	3.6%

<b>State/Area</b>	<b>2015 Actual</b>	<b>2016 Estimate</b>	<b>2017 Estimate</b>	<b>Amount Change FY 2016 to 2017</b>	<b>Percent Change FY 16-17</b>
New York	\$ 11,060,800,392	\$ 11,243,013,055	\$ 11,756,493,778	\$ 513,480,724	4.6%
North Carolina	\$ 4,234,028,617	\$ 4,293,488,602	\$ 4,484,526,711	\$ 191,038,108	4.4%
North Dakota	\$ 371,500,996	\$ 383,307,033	\$ 398,768,891	\$ 15,461,858	4.0%
Ohio	\$ 5,656,542,207	\$ 5,743,154,882	\$ 6,007,822,066	\$ 264,667,184	4.6%
Oklahoma	\$ 1,672,978,363	\$ 1,693,275,053	\$ 1,768,448,810	\$ 75,173,757	4.4%
Oregon	\$ 2,174,406,328	\$ 2,206,412,651	\$ 2,307,132,988	\$ 100,720,337	4.6%
Pennsylvania	\$ 7,516,987,147	\$ 7,668,455,389	\$ 7,989,031,616	\$ 320,576,227	4.2%
Rhode Island	\$ 733,435,118	\$ 742,063,568	\$ 773,765,561	\$ 31,701,993	4.3%
South Carolina	\$ 2,202,213,757	\$ 2,240,871,269	\$ 2,342,082,480	\$ 101,211,211	4.5%
South Dakota	\$ 589,893,533	\$ 605,257,851	\$ 630,914,720	\$ 25,656,869	4.2%
Tennessee	\$ 3,003,457,777	\$ 3,055,602,604	\$ 3,209,576,946	\$ 153,974,343	5.0%
Texas	\$ 10,716,225,910	\$ 10,896,383,073	\$ 11,369,927,766	\$ 473,544,693	4.3%
Utah	\$ 1,549,237,437	\$ 1,557,121,347	\$ 1,638,485,775	\$ 81,364,429	5.2%
Vermont	\$ 442,921,894	\$ 446,551,348	\$ 465,832,968	\$ 19,281,620	4.3%
Virginia	\$ 4,286,211,235	\$ 4,365,120,855	\$ 4,560,297,604	\$ 195,176,749	4.5%
Washington	\$ 2,506,549,880	\$ 2,555,501,919	\$ 2,660,368,154	\$ 104,866,234	4.1%
West Virginia	\$ 1,259,501,298	\$ 1,265,499,500	\$ 1,319,026,513	\$ 53,527,014	4.2%
Wisconsin	\$ 2,513,800,854	\$ 2,550,987,252	\$ 2,658,019,541	\$ 107,032,289	4.2%
Wyoming	\$ 223,082,544	\$ 235,985,163	\$ 245,993,530	\$ 10,008,367	4.2%
American Samoa	\$ 29,697,317	\$ 31,286,564	\$ 37,690,095	\$ 6,403,531	20.5%
Guam	\$ 67,645,393	\$ 69,380,103	\$ 73,711,412	\$ 4,331,309	6.2%
Northern Mariana Islands	\$ 21,491,981	\$ 22,125,183	\$ 25,803,321	\$ 3,678,138	16.6%
Puerto Rico	\$ 2,202,444,863	\$ 2,200,994,140	\$ 2,315,653,630	\$ 114,659,490	5.2%

State/Area	2015 Actual	2016 Estimate	2017 Estimate	Amount Change FY 2016 to 2017	Percent Change FY 16-17
Virgin Islands	\$ 38,716,423	\$ 37,859,259	\$ 37,615,471	\$ [243,788]	-0.6%
Freely Associated States	\$ 21,823,489	\$ 21,721,284	\$ 24,020,320	\$ 2,299,036	10.6%
Indian set-aside	\$ 279,229,620	\$ 290,029,199	\$ 293,017,087	\$ 2,987,888	1.0%
Other	\$ 1,579,352,251	\$ 1,444,124,268	\$ 1,721,621,010	\$ 277,496,742	19.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 164,298,892,927</b>	<b>\$ 166,681,784,206</b>	<b>\$ 174,544,712,742</b>	<b>\$ 7,862,928,536</b>	<b>4.7%</b>

Note: State allocations for fiscal year 2015 and 2016 programs are preliminary estimates based on currently available data. Allocations based on new data may result in significant changes from these preliminary estimates.

Compiled by the Budget Service on December 14, 2016. Retrieved December 30, 2016 from <http://www2.ed.gov/about/overview/budget/statetables/index.html#update>.

**Table 3 | Selected ESSA Programs and Total Authorization Levels under the Law**

Program	FY2017 Authorization Level
Title I, Part A	\$15 billion
Title II, Part A Teacher and Principal Training and Recruiting Fund	\$2.3 billion
Title II, Literacy Education for All (LEARN)	\$160 million
Title III, English Language Acquisition	\$760 million
Preschool Development Grants	\$250 million

This Table provides the total FY 2017 authorization levels for the titles that are addressed in this paper.

Source: The School Superintendents Association, [http://www.aasa.org/uploadedFiles/Policy\\_and\\_Advocacy/ESSA\\_Resource\\_Library/CRS%20ESSA%20120415.pdf](http://www.aasa.org/uploadedFiles/Policy_and_Advocacy/ESSA_Resource_Library/CRS%20ESSA%20120415.pdf).

# LEVERAGING ESSA AS PART OF EARLY CHILDHOOD SYSTEMS BUILDING

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As state and local leaders work on creating an equitable early childhood system that includes early learning, health, and family support, leveraging all possible resources is one critical aspect of the work. Another critical part of the work is coordinating and integrating policy and program across the areas of early learning, health, and family support. A third critical part of the work is creating coordination between early learning, the early elementary grades, and K–12 overall.

ESSA provides opportunities for these areas of work related to ECE systems building. ESSA squarely embraces a mixed delivery system for early education, which is a plus from a systems perspective. Beyond mixed delivery, ESSA has other assets from a systems-building viewpoint. For example, it sets forth a clear standard for program quality for services funded under Title I, indicating that the Head Start performance standards (at least the education performance standards) are to be followed. Likewise, ESSA addresses the need for strong linkages or transitions from early education into the public schools, and stresses multiple opportunities to help achieve this, ranging from focused training for school leaders; joint professional development for teachers in early education and the early grades; family engagement; and various strategies

for building relationships and transferring information from one system to the other.

At the same time, ESSA provides a challenge to early childhood systems builders, as its inclusion of early education is discretionary. State and local education agencies must make affirmative decisions to use their ESSA funds and plans to support early learning. Early childhood leaders must be able to answer questions about why state and local decision makers should include a focus on early childhood, especially given inadequate funding for K–12, competing needs for investment of limited resources, and the diverse delivery approach for early education which goes well beyond a direct school system delivery approach.

State and local perspective informs how each section of ESSA is used, and whether ECE and early grades issues are included and prioritized. A thoughtful strategy for both state and local early childhood stakeholders to engage in ESSA is essential given the discretion that is provided in the federal law. Education partners at both the state and local level must have basic information about why early education is so critical and how it benefits the K–12 system and the children, families, and educators who are engaged in K–12. We caution, however, that information alone is not

likely to lead to inclusion of early learning in state and local ESSA plans.

Early childhood leaders are urged to take the time to learn more about the K–12 education system, the leading issues, and the problems and solutions that the K–12 community is focusing upon. A mutually beneficial partnership is needed. How can ECE leaders better understand and support K–12 priorities? What are the long-term goals of the K–12 system? We urge the ECE community to strengthen its overall understanding of public education, to develop strong relationships with education leaders at the state and local level, including superintendents and principals, and to form partnerships that can advance the successful inclusion of early childhood in state and local education priorities in general and in the use of ESSA resources in particular. In states where the relationship between early learning and K–12 leaders is not strong, this is a prime opportunity to build the relationship.

Another essential aspect of successful system building relates to a shared vision and plan. ESSA, as is common with other federal laws, requires state education agencies, and their local counterparts, to produce plans that are specific to ESSA. As early childhood leaders look to more proactively engage through ESSA, we urge state and local leaders to think about a broader vision and strategy that goes beyond the federal requirements of any particular law, whether ESSA or the Child Care and Development Block Grant. From a systems perspective, ESSA can likely best be used to benefit

children and families if the early learning focus is part of a broader state and local vision for ECE. How does your state and/or locality approach a statewide vision and plan for early childhood? How is the education leadership responsible for the ESSA plan and related decisions involved in a statewide plan? Do these leaders see how the ESSA work can contribute to a state plan? Although ESSA does not require its work to be part of a broader state plan, the vitality and impact of ESSA's contribution can best be realized if it is connected in an intentional manner to this other work.

And if the state does not have a true early childhood plan, and if it is not feasible to create such a plan, are there other opportunities to thoughtfully cohere what is often siloed work, bringing unity to the state's important work in all of early learning (i.e., child care assistance, workforce development, quality improvement, licensing) and early childhood areas (i.e., maternal and child health, child welfare, etc.)?

Finally, ESSA provides for several competitions that are run by the U.S. Department of Education. From a systems-building perspective, these competitions might be leveraged in several ways. Some might help spur innovation, allowing piloting before a new systems component is added. Others might add resources to an existing systems component that is working well but under-resourced. Others might allow improved cross-systems linkages, such as the national competition for pediatric literacy, better connecting traditional concepts of formal education with essential cross-sector health care partners.

# TITLE I: IMPROVING THE ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF THE DISADVANTAGED

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Title I is intended to help ensure that all children receive a fair, equitable, and high-quality education. States and local education agencies have always been able to use dollars under this Title to provide early childhood education programs, beginning at birth. Historically, however, limited Title I dollars (less than 5 percent)<sup>12</sup> have supported children birth to school entry. This is in part because of the many competing demands for these limited dollars as well as short-sighted decisions on how to use them to close the achievement gap. In other words, Title I funds are often used for remediation and intervention rather than for preventing children's struggles in elementary school and beyond. For example: the vast majority of DLLs in K–12 systems are U.S.-born, but they reside in households and communities where a language other than English is the primary language spoken. The research makes clear that the early years are critical for making advances in English language proficiency (reading, speaking, listening, and writing), yet, it is not yet a priority to identify DLLs early to ensure they receive effective language instruction prior to kindergarten entry.

One of the most notable changes in ESSA pertaining to DLLs is the shift in accountability provisions

from Title III into Title I. Now states are required to include DLL progress in achieving English language proficiency and attainment of English language proficiency as part of their state accountability systems. That shift was made to increase the profile of DLLs and may help to increase their importance in states with a high population of DLLs. However, this portion of the law only applies to DLLs in grades 3–12, and leadership and advocacy are required to ensure that the needs of young DLLs in the early grades are not ignored.

ESSA also brings renewed attention on and, in some cases, new attention to state support for local ECE programs, transition planning between ECE programs and kindergarten, family engagement, and school accountability for what happens in kindergarten through second grade. Currently K–2 is akin to a black box, and calling out these early elementary years is an advance in the structure of the federal law.

## State Plans

Under Title I, states must submit plans that have been developed with stakeholders. Many states



will use this as an opportunity to establish their education visions for the next several years. The early childhood community will need to be proactive about making sure its voice is heard and incorporated into that vision. How the youngest children are included in a state's education vision is important question. For example, if the goal is to see a 90 percent high school graduation rate by 2030, what does that mean for today's three- and four-year-olds?

In these plans, states must explain how they will support local school districts and schools that choose to use Title I dollars for ECE programs. There are no parameters put forth in ESSA to guide what state support should look like. States could, for example, encourage districts to provide early learning programs for young children, starting at birth; develop guidance or resources to help districts improve transitions between pre-K and the early grades of elementary school; require districts to explain how they will improve teaching and learning in both children's early years and in the early elementary grades; and align state and local planning and implementation for all of early learning, across child care, state pre-K, Early Head Start, and Head Start. Below are specific areas where states could incorporate early childhood education into their state plans in a meaningful way:

*Quality early learning for at-risk infants, toddlers, and pre-Kindergarteners.* States can use Title I resources to support early childhood education for infants, toddlers, and pre-Kindergarteners, whether provided by a school district, a Head Start program, or a child care program. States can also use Title I to deploy strategies to create a smooth transition and continuum from these programs into the K–12 system.

States where local districts plan to use Title I resources to support early education must explain how they will support this work. For example, states could discuss investments to build capacity for quality at the local level such as developing the early childhood workforce, improving early childhood educator compensation, providing data

and other information on local early childhood programs, and expanding participation in the Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (QRIS). States can provide guidance to local districts highlighting the various uses of Title I for direct services, but also provide comprehensive services and supports such as developmental screenings, home visiting, nutrition and transportation services, and supports for social-emotional development. States could also produce resources to inform the development of agreements between local education agencies and Head Start programs—which are required under ESSA—as well as with other early childhood programs. States could address the needs of DLL children through state partnerships that improve the preparation of their teachers and caregivers.

*Improved transitions.* There are multiple places in the law where efforts to improve transitions between pre-K programs and kindergarten are encouraged. States can support local school districts, schools, and other early learning programs in fostering smoother transitions in many ways, including by

- linking early childhood and K–12 data systems,
- tracking chronic absences before and in kindergarten,
- ensuring that state early learning guidelines and K–12 standards are meaningfully aligned across the full range of domains,
- providing guidance and resources to better connect curriculum and assessment across pre-K and the early grades,
- recognizing social-emotional development as an important component of children's education at least up through third grade,
- developing joint professional development between school leaders and early childhood leaders to share expectations and best practices for transitions,

- sharing effective family engagement strategies from early childhood into early elementary,
- making QRIS a must for all early learning programs—child care, family home providers, state-funded pre-K, and Head Start—as a way to support continuity, and
- targeting outreach and communications at parents of DLLs in their preferred languages to support them during the pre-K to K transition.

*Improved support for the workforce in order to improve teaching and learning.* Title I funds can be used to support professional development opportunities for teachers funded by a Title I Preschool program as long as it is focused on meeting the needs of eligible children (see pages 21–22 for new federal professional development definition). For instance, children participating in these programs may need additional social-emotional support and so PD might emphasize building teacher skills in providing responsive, nurturing learning environments. Title I funds could be used to support educators teaching in early childhood programs located in the surrounding community of a Title I school as long as dollars are used to improve coordination and smooth transitions between these programs and the elementary school.

*Leveraging the school improvement process.* States are required by ESSA to support low-performing local schools in their improvement efforts. As part of that process states will be developing rubrics to help low-performing schools identify their challenges, and setting grant criteria for those schools to access improvement funds. Those processes can include a focus on early learning. For example, state diagnostic tools might force a school to determine the readiness of its incoming kindergartners, and the performance of students in the K–2 grades (using tools other than required accountability tests), including subgroups of children that are not meeting academic and English language proficiency standards. Where incoming kindergartners and/or subgroups of children are behind, the school’s use of improvement grant funds might be directed toward strengthening

partnerships with local early childhood providers and upgrading the quality of early learning opportunities. Improving K–2 instruction is another potential use of improvement grant funds where data suggest that such a focus is necessary.

*Better alignment of state and local planning and implementation for all of early learning.* The state could choose to evaluate how well its overall state early learning planning and implementation strategy fits with local planning and implementation. And, as noted in federal non-regulatory guidance, because states are required to include in their report cards the number and percentage of children enrolled

### School Accountability Systems Must Include a School-Quality Indicator

ESSA offers an opportunity to rethink school accountability, especially elementary school accountability, since it requires states to incorporate measures of school quality beyond academic achievement scores from third grade and higher. These other school-quality measures open the door to including K–2, and perhaps even pre-K, in what it means to be a good elementary school. While it is not a requirement to include a measure that relates to preK–2<sup>nd</sup>, this is an opportunity to do so. States considering this route will need to carefully consider what appropriate and meaningful measures might be. Chronic absence rates could be one, for example. The Ounce of Prevention has given this considerable thought and published a report last year on considerations and possibilities for states called *Valuing the Early Years in State Accountability Systems Under the Every Student Succeeds Act*.<sup>19</sup>

in preschool programs, they may be better able to identify gaps in access to preschool services and improve awareness of the continuum of learning between preschool and the early grades.<sup>13</sup>

*Improved screening and assessment for DLLs.* The majority of states and districts do not formally identify DLLs until they reach kindergarten. According to the National Institute for Early Education Research’s *2015 State of Preschool Yearbook* only 23 state pre-K programs track DLL enrollment and only six programs require that DLLs be assessed in their home language.<sup>14</sup> The majority of these programs identify students as DLLs using parent/family member reports, which take the form of home language surveys. These surveys are often the first step in DLL identification in K–12 but are used inconsistently; as DLL experts Linda Espinosa and Gene García note, while these surveys are required for K–12 students, and used in some state pre-K programs, they are not required

in early childhood programs.<sup>15</sup> As a result, there is a lack of data on how many young DLLs are enrolled in these programs. These data gaps signal a missed opportunity for early identification and subsequent appropriate educational services and accommodations.

There is nothing in ESSA that prohibits states and districts from screening and identifying DLLs starting at age three or four.<sup>16</sup> Identifying DLLs before kindergarten is advantageous. They can be provided with targeted language services at an earlier age, and starting earlier might help them reach English proficiency at a younger age and help reduce achievement gaps in kindergarten. Research suggests that DLLs who are proficient in English by kindergarten are able to keep up academically with their non-DLL peers as they progress through school.<sup>17</sup>

In addition, ESSA provisions require states to standardize approaches to measuring English

## Report Cards

ESSA maintains the requirement for annual state and school district report cards. The goal of these report cards is transparency around school performance and educational opportunities. State and district report cards must include the number and percentage of children enrolled in preschool programs, which could broadly include the number and percent of children in “early childhood programs,” infants to age 6.

States can also include a number of other items in their state report cards if they choose to do so. This presents an opportunity for early childhood advocates to urge states to include data points on number and percentage of children enrolled in the broader definition of early childhood programs, school readiness of kindergarten students, QRIS participation, more detailed information on which children are served by what ECE programs, and early childhood teacher qualifications.

States and school districts must make their report cards available to the public at least by posting them on their respective websites. Additionally, they must make the report cards “meaningfully accessible to parents and stakeholders who are limited English proficient.”

For more information on report cards see: <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/essa/essastatereportcard.pdf>.

language proficiency for DLLs. Specifically, states are required to use a single statewide English language proficiency (ELP) assessment annually, in grades K–12. This presents an opportunity for states that have implemented kindergarten entry assessments (currently, 16 states have KEAs that are used to provide baseline data on children’s knowledge and skills at the start of kindergarten<sup>18</sup>) to align ELP assessments with their KEAs. LEAs currently identify and screen DLLs at kindergarten entry, most of the time, yet these processes are entirely disconnected from the KEA processes, despite the fact that both assessments are used to plan instructional supports and services for DLLs.

## District Plans

*Improved coordination.* For local plans, ESSA requires school districts that do opt to use Title I funds for early education programs<sup>20</sup> to explain how they will support, coordinate, and integrate Title I services with programs offered by local school districts or individual schools.

One key opportunity for greater alignment are the provisions in Title I related to alignment and coordination with Head Start programs. For example, local Title I plans must include a description of how LEAs will “support, coordinate, and integrate” services with Head Start to facilitate smoother transitions between Head Start and public school programs. Importantly, this coordination is required even if a LEA does not operate a Title I preschool program. Coordination activities may include data sharing such as creating a system for receiving child-level records from Head Start and other early childhood education programs and joint training between staff working in different education settings.

These coordination activities may be especially beneficial for DLLs. LEAs should use this as an opportunity to create continuity across Head Start, pre-K, and kindergarten instructional programs. As part of LEA transition plans with early childhood programs, local Title I plans could leverage the Head

Start transition plan requirements to set joint goals for language learning for young DLLs, and align classroom instructional models across pre-K and the early grades. Currently, early childhood programs, including Head Start, establish goals for children’s language learning that drive decisions about language of instruction, staffing, and assessment practices. Ultimately, these decisions are based on the languages and backgrounds of the children and teaching staff. For example, some programs may provide instruction entirely in English with limited support for the home language due to the fact that the children in the classroom speak multiple languages, while other programs may offer dual language models that offer instruction in the home language and English because the majority of DLLs speak a similar home language. However, these decisions often are made in isolation from K–12 and vice versa. Ideally, transition plans among Head Start, pre-K, and the early elementary grades would allow DLLs to experience continuity in the classroom instructional model in pre-K and the early grades where possible.

*Quality early learning for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers.* Districts have many options to emphasize quality for disadvantaged infants, toddlers, and preschoolers, such as expanding high-quality early childhood education programming they or other community organizations offer; focusing on quality improvement in existing community and district programs; and developing the expertise of the early childhood workforce. This also provides opportunities to connect with existing strategies to support quality, such as a QRIS. As in previous iterations of the law, ESSA requires that ECE programs offered with Title I funds comply with the performance standards of the Head Start Act, specifically the education performance standards (see *Head Start Education Requirements and Dual Language Learners* on page 19). The new Head Start performance standards also pave the way for Head Start to participate in state or local QRIS, allowing greater connection between Head Start and QRIS. This will be advantageous if districts elect to leverage ESSA and invest directly in early education.

*Improved transitions.* ESSA makes specific mention of focusing on transitions from early childhood education programs to kindergarten. Districts should use this as an opportunity to describe what they will do to help sustain and build upon children’s learning prior to kindergarten. In other words, how will districts make sure early childhood education and the early grades are well-coordinated to provide smooth transitions and connected learning experiences? Districts could also consider how they can help school leaders identify and develop relationships with early education programs, including Head Start and center-based

programs that typically feed their elementary schools to foster better data sharing, joint professional development, and transition planning.

And, while districts have always been expected to coordinate with Head Start programs to improve children’s transitions, ESSA now also requires that districts develop agreements with Head Start programs and, to the extent possible, with other early education programs as well. Under the law, these agreements should address at least the following activities, including

## Head Start Education Requirements and DLLs

ESSA specifies that Title I-funded pre-K programs comply with the Head Start Performance Standards. Non-regulatory guidance from the U.S. of Education clarifies that these programs “must also meet, at a minimum, the education performance standards of the Head Start Performance Standards.”<sup>21</sup> These standards were updated in 2016 to include best practices for working with DLLs and can be used as a guide for states and localities to look to when designing appropriate programs and services for them in Title I-funded pre-K.

The Head Start Performance Standards place a strong emphasis on supporting the DLL home language and frame bilingualism as an asset. The Standards include these requirements:

- Programs “must recognize bilingualism as a strength and implement research-based teaching practices that support its development.”
- Programs serving infant and toddler DLLs should include teaching practices and teacher-child interactions that emphasize the development of the home language and provide exposure to English. If staff members do not speak a child’s home language, the program may supply culturally and linguistically appropriate materials or use classroom volunteers to support that language.
- Programs serving three- and four-year-old DLLs should use teaching practices focused on both English language acquisition and continued development of home languages.
- Programs must assess DLLs in both their home language and in English in order to get a comprehensive picture of their language development and skills. These assessments can be conducted by teachers or through interpreters.
- Programs must provide parents of DLLs information and resources about the benefits of bilingualism and biliteracy.

- transferring children’s records, including home language surveys and other assessments of the home language;
- establishing channels of communication for coordination;
- conducting meetings with teachers (from Head Start or other early education program and the elementary school) and parents to discuss the specific needs of children entering kindergarten;
- organizing joint-transition related training; and
- linking educational and Head Start services.

This list is not exhaustive, however, and Head Start and other local early childhood program leaders could encourage districts to also consider collaborating on other activities to meet the needs of the children being served, such as collaborating on professional development in areas beyond transitions.

*Schoolwide Title I Programs for Young DLLs:* Districts can implement comprehensive programs that provide intensive, enriched language and literacy education designed for young DLLs starting in preschool and continuing through third grade.<sup>22</sup> These programs can help place young DLLs on a trajectory of meeting ELP targets by third grade.

## TITLE II: PREPARING, TRAINING, AND RECRUITING HIGH-QUALITY EDUCATORS

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Title II is in place to help ensure that adults have what they need to deliver strong learning opportunities for all students, primarily through professional development for teachers. In many places, PD has typically consisted of one-time workshops often loosely connected to what teachers need to know and be able to do. This has led to offerings having little to no impact on

teaching practice.<sup>23</sup> ESSA brings a new vision with its new definition for PD (see *ESSA Professional Development Definition* on pages 21–22).

For the first time, early childhood educators are included in the definition, which means that teachers of young children can be included, whether they are teaching in a community or school

## ESSA Professional Development Definition

**“PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**—The term ‘professional development’ means activities that—

“(A) are an integral part of school and local educational agency strategies for providing educators (including teachers, principals, other school leaders, specialized instructional support personnel, paraprofessionals, and, as applicable, early childhood educators) with the knowledge and skills necessary to enable students to succeed in a well-rounded education and to meet the challenging State academic standards; and

“(B) are sustained (not stand-alone, 1-day, or short term workshops), intensive, collaborative, job-embedded, data-driven, and classroom-focused, and **may include** activities that—

“(i) improve and increase teachers’—

“(I) knowledge of the academic subjects the teachers teach;

“(II) understanding of how students learn; and

“(III) ability to analyze student work and achievement from multiple sources, including how to adjust instructional strategies, assessments, and materials based on such analysis;

“(ii) are an integral part of broad school-wide and district-wide educational improvement plans;

“(iii) allow personalized plans for each educator to address the educator’s specific needs identified in observation or other feedback;

“(iv) improve classroom management skills;

“(v) support the recruitment, hiring, and training of effective teachers, including teachers who became certified through State and local alternative routes to certification;

“(vi) advance teacher understanding of—

“(I) effective instructional strategies that are evidence-based; and

“(II) strategies for improving student academic achievement or substantially increasing the knowledge and teaching skills of teachers;

“(vii) are aligned with, and directly related to, academic goals of the school or local educational agency;

“(viii) are developed with extensive participation of teachers, principals, other school leaders, parents, representatives of Indian tribes (as applicable), and administrators of schools to be served under this Act;

“(ix) are designed to give teachers of English learners, and other teachers and instructional staff, the knowledge and skills to provide instruction and appropriate language and academic support services to those children, including the appropriate use of curricula and assessments;

“(x) to the extent appropriate, provide training for teachers, principals, and other school leaders in the use of technology (including education about the harms of copyright piracy), so that technology and technology applications are effectively used in the classroom to improve teaching and learning in the curricula and academic subjects in which the teachers teach;

## ESSA Professional Development Definition (cont.)

“(xi) as a whole, are regularly evaluated for their impact on increased teacher effectiveness and improved student academic achievement, with the findings of the evaluations used to improve the quality of professional development;

“(xii) are designed to give teachers of children with disabilities or children with developmental delays, and other teachers and instructional staff, the knowledge and skills to provide instruction and academic support services, to those children, including positive behavioral interventions and supports, multi-tier system of supports, and use of accommodations;

“(xiii) include instruction in the use of data and assessments to inform and instruct classroom practice;

“(xiv) include instruction in ways that teachers, principals, other school leaders, specialized instructional support personnel, and school administrators may work more effectively with parents and families;

“(xv) involve the forming of partnerships with institutions of higher education, including, as

applicable, Tribal Colleges and Universities as defined in section 316(b) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1059c(b)), to establish school-based teacher, principal, and other prospective teachers, novice teachers, principals, and other school leaders with an opportunity to work under the guidance of experienced teachers, principals, other school leaders, and faculty of such institutions;

“(xvi) create programs to enable paraprofessionals (assisting teachers employed by a local educational agency receiving assistance under part A of title I) to obtain the education necessary for those paraprofessionals to become certified and licensed teachers;

“(xvii) provide follow-up training to teachers who have participated in activities described in this paragraph that are designed to ensure that the knowledge and skills learned by the teachers are implemented in the classroom; and

“(xviii) where practicable, provide jointly for school staff and other early childhood education program providers, to address the transition to elementary school, including issues related to school readiness.”

Source: Every Student Succeeds Act, Section 8101, <https://www2.ed.gov/documents/essa-act-of-1965.pdf>.



setting. Second, the definition specifically states both what PD should and should not be, clarifying that activities should be sustained and relevant. The definition goes on to provide example activities that could be considered, including providing joint opportunities for elementary educators and early education program providers to address the transition to elementary school and improving children’s school readiness.

Because the definition now explicitly includes early childhood educators, both states and school districts can include them in PD offerings when it makes sense to do so. This could help improve alignment of instruction and assessment in ECE programs both within and without a school building. It also creates an opportunity for states that submitted a workforce development plans under the Child Care Development Block Grant to further leverage and coordinate federal dollars.

## State Plans

ESSA identifies new state activities that emphasize teaching in and leadership for the early grades. These are allowable, not required, uses on a long list of options including whatever else is deemed necessary by the state. Advocacy from the early education community will be needed to encourage states to invest Title II dollars in new ways.

*Targeted and joint professional development including early childhood educators.* Because of the new definition, any state PD activities can include early childhood educators. If a state, for instance, wanted to invest dollars in coaching for Head Start teachers and pre-K educators teaching in non-public school settings it could do so provided that the coaching was aimed at providing a well-rounded education and to meet K–12 education standards.

*Supporting opportunities to address the transition to elementary school.* One allowable activity for states is to support opportunities for elementary school and pre-K program staff to participate in joint efforts to address children’s transition

to kindergarten, especially related to school readiness. In other words, the state could fund efforts to help LEAs identify early childhood programs that typically feed particular schools and establish learning communities including both principals and early childhood program administrators in order to build relationships and foster better collaboration, communication, and transition between the programs.

*Improved early grades leadership and teacher support.* In ESSA, principals and other school leaders are recognized as important for teacher and student success. In fact, the law allows states to set aside up to 3 percent of Title II, “Supporting Effective Instruction,” funds, to support principal and other school leader development. This—coupled with the law’s inclusion of early childhood education in Title II—creates an opportunity for improving principal understanding of how young children learn and how best to support kindergarten through third grade teachers as well as any pre-K teachers under their direction. States could, for instance, look to Illinois as one state that has incorporated early childhood education in principal preparation. Other states such as Minnesota and New Jersey and local programs such as the one at the University of Washington have created opportunities for principals to learn how to be stronger early childhood leaders for students and teachers.<sup>24</sup>

## Local Plans

Districts are also allowed significant discretion on how to use PD dollars under the law. Key allowable activities include providing opportunities to ensure that teachers and leaders understand how children in the early grades learn best and how to measure their progress as well as how to assist school staff and others better meet the needs of young students. Districts could also use these dollars to expand best practices on family engagement and to build teacher ability to work with DLL children.

*Targeted professional development for early childhood educators.* As is the case with SEAs,

school districts could choose to establish PD opportunities specifically for educators working in Head Start or Early Head Start programs, state-funded pre-K programs, and licensed child care programs. These opportunities could be jointly open to elementary school teachers or school leaders, but do not necessarily have to be. They must adhere to ESSA's professional development definition, which requires PD to be ongoing, intensive, and job-embedded as well as have the goal of enhancing educators' knowledge and skills to deliver a well-rounded education (which does encompass social-emotional learning) and prepare children to meet state K–12 education standards.

*Supporting opportunities for joint efforts to address the transition to elementary school.* The language in the law specifies that LEAs could use Title II dollars to support joint professional learning between pre-K and early grade teachers and planning focused on improving children's transitions into kindergarten. This could also be an opportunity to bring principals and ECE program directors together to coordinate transitions from programs to the elementary schools they typically feed. In fact, LEAs could support joint early childhood leadership training for principals, other school leaders, and administrators of other early childhood programs. While coordination is not

always easy when pre-K is located in an elementary school, it can seem more intimidating when it is not. Since most elementary schools do not, and cannot, serve all three- and four year-olds, establishing relationships and plans for coordination and transition with other community providers is a necessity for a strong preK–3<sup>rd</sup> learning continuum. Having school and program leaders make it a priority encourages teachers to do the same.

*Improving early grade teachers' and principals' knowledge of appropriate instruction and assessment in the early grades.* LEAs could also provide PD for early grade teachers, principals, and other school leaders to improve the quality of instruction and strategies for measuring young students' progress. For example, districts could adopt observation-based formative assessment tools for kindergarten and early grade classrooms and provide teachers and principals training on how to use the tools to inform instruction and communicate child progress with parents. Districts could also incorporate elements in principal evaluation (if it exists) that would require the principal to demonstrate an understanding of appropriate teaching in early grade classrooms as well as how he/she is engaging with early childhood programs that typically feed into the elementary school.

# TITLE II: LITERACY

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## Literacy Education for All, Results for the Nation (LEARN)

A portion of ESSA called “Literacy Education for All, Results for the Nation” (LEARN) addresses reading and writing. These provisions reserve funds for early education through grade 12, grouped into three age groups:

- birth to kindergarten entry (15%)
- kindergarten through fifth grade (40%)
- sixth through 12<sup>th</sup> grade (40%)

LEARN places a priority on evidence-based literacy activities. For purposes of early education under LEARN, funds flow from the SEA to the LEA, early education programs directly, or a combination. States have an opportunity to reserve up to 5 percent of the available funds for work such as providing technical assistance to local grantees (including but not limited to local school districts); coordinating with higher education to improve teacher preparation in literacy instruction; updating licensing standards for literacy; and making information about promising approaches available to the public.

ESSA notes many allowable uses of the funds that are set aside for the youngest children, including for:

- high-quality PD for early childhood educators, including that related to effective practices to support the language and literacy development of DLLs
- evidence-based early childhood education literacy initiatives
- family and early childhood educator involvement in literacy development
- targeted early childhood comprehensive literacy instruction for high-need young learners that brings together ECE programs, LEAs, and public-private partners

There are important opportunities here, and in contrast to many aspects of ESSA that allow for the discretionary inclusion of early education, LEARN reserves resources for early learning.

For children in kindergarten through fifth grade, permitted uses of LEARN funds include:

- comprehensive literacy instruction plans
- intervention in reading/writing for children below grade level
- high-quality PD

- activities during, before and after the regular school day
- coordination
- activities to engage families in literacy

### **Pediatric Literacy**

ESSA provides for new partnerships with the health care community focused on young children’s language development. It allows for a new national

program for pediatric literacy, modeled on existing, effective programs such as Reach Out and Read.<sup>25</sup> Through this provision, the U.S. Department of Education can make available funding to medical providers who have been trained in research-based early language and literacy promotion and who, in the course of their well-child visits—starting with babies—provide families with books and support for reading aloud to their children. In contrast to most of what we have outlined in this introduction to ESSA, this program is administered by the U.S. Department of Education, rather than SEAs or LEAs.

## **TITLE III: DUAL LANGUAGE LEARNERS**

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Title III provides states with formula grants to support the education of DLLs, and has several primary purposes:

1. help DLLs become proficient in English;
2. help DLLs meet the same academic content and achievement standards that non-DLLs are expected to meet;
3. help P–12 teachers, school leaders, schools, LEAs, and SEAs develop, implement, and sustain effective language instruction programs and build their capacity to provide these programs; and

4. promote parent, family, and community participation in these language instruction programs.

This section focuses on opportunities for states to support young DLLs spanning preschool through third grade consistent with the core purposes of Title III.<sup>26</sup>

Much like the rest of ESSA, Title III is more explicit about inclusion of early learning programs serving DLLs than the previous law. While Title III funds could always be used for DLLs beginning at age three, the new law includes early childhood programs and teachers as part of the core purpose of Title III.

*Develop and implement dual language early childhood programs.* Title III can be used to support the development and implementation of effective preschool language instruction programs funded by LEAs, including new preschool programs, as long as the use of funds is supplementary and the funds are prorated proportionally to the number of DLLs in the program. While ESSA is devoid of any discussion of the value of bilingualism and biliteracy, despite the evidence of the benefits for both DLLs and English speakers,<sup>28</sup> nothing in ESSA prohibits the use of bilingual instructional models. In fact, several studies have examined the impact of bilingual instructional models on DLL language development, academic achievement, and reclassification (the process used to determine if a DLL has achieved English language proficiency and is ready to exit language services). Dual language programs have been found to enhance DLL academic performance and facilitate an earlier exit from the DLL label and related language services.<sup>29</sup> Given that these students must be included in the

### Combining Title I and Title III Funding to Support Pre-K through K Programming for DLLs

Recent non-regulatory guidance from the U.S. Department of Education indicates that LEAs can use Title I, Title II, and Title III funds on the same activities for DLLs. The guidance provides useful examples of how Title I, Title II, and Title III funds can be used to help build the capacity of the early learning workforce.<sup>27</sup> For example, all three can be used to help prepare early educators to use appropriate and effective instructional strategies for supporting DLL language acquisition and to help increase the number of bilingual teachers.

accountability framework, LEAs should consider intervening as early as possible, and where it is feasible begin dual language programs in preschool and continue through the elementary grades.

*Targeted and inclusive family involvement.* Both Title I and Title III include provisions geared toward promoting family engagement. Title III mandates that LEAs conduct outreach to families of DLLs in grades K–12 and develop state plans with their input. Under the law, parents must also be notified of a child’s identification as a DLL within 30 days and provided with information on level of English language proficiency, the instructional program the child will be in, and their right to decline language services, among other items. LEAs must also communicate with families in “a language they can understand” and provide families with language assistance when necessary. That is one step toward creating a more inclusive environment for families. Other strategies include providing activities geared towards meeting the needs of families. Title III funds can also be used to provide English as a Second Language classes for parents and families, family literacy activities, home visiting, and family outreach activities, such as family reunification support groups. It is important to note that these services can be made available to families before kindergarten. With chronic absenteeism as a potential metric of school success, improving performance on that metric requires engaging families, yet another reason to focus on this effort.

*Enhanced workforce preparation and professional development to work with DLLs.* Title III’s National Professional Development (NPD) grant program provides competitive grants to Institutes of Higher Education (IHEs) and partner LEAs for the purpose of PD and training for pre-service and in-service teachers. NPD grants can help supplement efforts to improve the preparation of preschool through 12<sup>th</sup> grade teachers to work with DLLs with the goal of improving DLL instruction. In FY2016, over \$22 million was awarded to 49 projects. These newly-funded projects will span five years and receive funding in the range of \$200,000–\$500,000 per year. However, the program is discretionary, which

means that new funding is not necessarily available each year.

The most recent NPD competition included a competitive preference for family engagement and invitational priorities for DLL programs aimed at helping students become biliterate and bilingual and for supporting the early learning workforce. Specifically, the competition emphasized PD activities that would help ensure early educators “have the necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities to improve [students’] cognitive, health, social-emotional, and dual language development.”<sup>30</sup> The emphasis on dual language instructional models is especially significant given that ESSA is silent on the topic of bilingual instruction. These grants have the potential to make an impact, especially given data indicating that only 27 percent of teachers have received PD related to DLLs.<sup>31</sup>

*Better coordination with early childhood programs.* Similar to Title I provisions requiring improved coordination and transitions among early childhood and K–12, LEAs that receive Title III funds must coordinate activities and share data with early childhood programs, including early childhood programs in community-based settings. LEAs should use this opportunity to better understand the experiences of DLLs prior to entering kindergarten. This will allow the LEA to better target PD for early childhood educators specific to the needs of young DLLs; coordinate data sharing; align standards, curricula, and classroom instructional models; and conduct transition activities for children and families, all of which are encouraged in Title III of ESSA.

ESSA provides a new option for how the federal government determines the number of DLLs in each state. That count is important since Title III funds are distributed to states based on their share of DLLs. Under NCLB, federal policymakers were allowed to make these determinations by using either data from the American Community Survey (ACS) or state-level data on the number of children being assessed for English language proficiency. ESSA still allows for the ACS and state data, but also allows for these two data sources to be combined to count the number of DLLs in a state. That change provides added flexibility and may allow states to better capture the number of DLLs eligible for Title III funding.

The federal government has traditionally used the ACS to make Title III funding determinations due to gaps in state-level data; however, these data are problematic because they rely on parent reports of whether a child speaks a language other than English at home.<sup>32</sup> In other words, a child’s actual level of English proficiency is not factored into these counts. ACS data also only count children ages five and older, which means that young DLLs are not factored in when determining Title III allocations, even though the law allowed for them to be served beginning at age three.

States’ allocations can vary based on the data used to make these determinations, in either a positive or negative direction. This will be an important conversation for states to have as it may affect the amount of funding available in a specific state. A 2011 National Research Council report found that while ACS and state-level data provide similar allocations, some estimates revealed substantial variations in allocations for a few states based on the data source used.<sup>33</sup>

# TITLE IX: PRESCHOOL

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ESSA has a new section on preschool development grants. This is a brand-new component of ESSA. While there was a previous grant competition<sup>34</sup> with the same name, which provided start-up or expansion funds to 18 states,<sup>35</sup> ESSA articulates a new framework for the federal approach to preschool. This framework notes a three-part purpose or direction for working with the states, which includes 1) supporting strategic planning for high-quality early learning; 2) encouraging partnerships to deliver programs; and 3) maximizing parental choice in a mixed-delivery system. The framework aims to:

- assist a state in developing, updating, or implementing a strategic plan that facilitates collaboration and coordination among existing early childhood care and education programs in a mixed-delivery system across the state designed to prepare low-income and disadvantaged children to enter kindergarten and to improve transitions from such a system into the local educational agency or elementary school that enrolls such children;
- encourage partnerships among Head Start providers, state and local governments, Indian tribes and tribal organizations, private entities (including faith- and community-based

entities), and local educational agencies, to improve coordination, program quality, and delivery of services; and

- maximize parental choice among a mixed delivery system of early childhood education program providers.

There are several points that should inform further guidance for implementation. First, ESSA appears to emphasize the importance of a mixed delivery system unifying child care, pre-K and Head Start, to support preschool service delivery. This is consistent with the definition of early childhood education noted earlier that includes all three of these programs. Second, ESSA focuses on partnerships not only for service delivery, but also to assure coordination and to make for a smoother experience for families, children, and providers in working together in a systematic manner. ESSA also low-income and disadvantaged children as the key beneficiaries of resources coming to states under the law. Finally, as in other parts of the ESSA, there is a focus on transition from early childhood education—specifically, from pre-K—into the local elementary school.

With the new federal framework in mind, state leaders would be wise to continue to build mixed-

delivery pre-K programs that deliberately include all “types” of program providers: child care, Head Start, district, traditional elementary, and charter schools. The inclusion of broad language on partnerships suggests that work on alignment and integration for the benefit of children and families is critical to the development of state approaches to pre-K. This might translate into, for example, efforts to unify enrollment opportunities for these programs, creating a coherent system of PD, or developing the state’s QRIS as a single framework that can be a meaningful part of pre-K efforts.

In keeping with the theme of collaboration and partnership, the new preschool development program will be led collaboratively by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services in conjunction with the U.S. Department of Education.<sup>36</sup> This is not the first time a federal education law has required joint administration of an early learning program; this was also the case for the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge. The Preschool Development Grant program is not a “formula” part of ESSA in which funds are automatically allocated to states and local districts. Instead, states will compete for these dollars. Fund will be available for four years, including a year of planning and up to three years of implementation.

Preschool development grants are state-driven. ESSA specifies a number of requirements for state strategic plans including how the state will:

- more efficiently use existing federal, state, local, and non-governmental resources to align and strengthen the delivery of existing programs;
- coordinate the delivery models and funding streams in the state’s mixed-delivery system; and
- develop recommendations to better use existing resources in order to improve the overall participation of children in a mixed delivery system of federal, state, and local ECE programs; program quality while maintaining availability of services; parental choice among

existing programs; and school readiness for children from low-income and disadvantaged families, including their transition into elementary school.

The quality framework for the state preschool initiatives lies entirely in the hands of the states. This section of ESSA, similar to other sections of the law, prohibits the federal government from engaging in a number of activities, noted below. The federal government cannot prescribe:

- early learning and development guidelines, standards, or specific assessments, including the standards or measures that states use to develop, implement, or improve such guidelines, standards, or assessments;
- specific measures or indicators of quality early learning and care;
- early learning or preschool curriculum, programs of instruction, or instructional content;
- teacher and staff qualifications and salaries;
- class sizes and ratios of children to instructional staff;
- scope of programs, including length of program day and length of program year; or
- any aspect or parameter of a teacher, principal, other school leader, or staff evaluation system within a state, local educational agency, or early childhood education program.

While the preschool-development-grants approach will evolve as ESSA moves from law into regulation and competitions, at the outset it is clear that Congress has endorsed a mixed-delivery approach for pre-Kindergarten and has provided the states with enormous flexibility in how they define and approach quality. State leaders should insist on high quality in their program design, consulting the research base on quality pre-K,<sup>37</sup> as this will be an area for limited federal oversight.



# CONCLUSION

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The inclusion of early childhood education (ECE) in the latest iteration of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act is nothing new. The law has long recognized the importance of children’s earliest years. Few dollars, however, are invested by states and local school districts in early learning services and programming. K-12, and arguably, 3<sup>rd</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grades, are the focus of investments. Overall the law encourages states and school districts to focus on children’s education from third grade on. While this overall emphasis has not drastically changed, attention to children’s early years and grades has grown. ESSA brings a new opportunity for states and localities to rethink investments in children’s learning to include programs and services that take place well before children enter a kindergarten classroom more strategically. In most places, though, this will not come naturally. Considering

how to use ESSA dollars to improve teaching and learning in pre-K and toddler classrooms, or even in kindergarten classrooms may not be a top priority. Ensuring early educators are prepared to use appropriate and effective instructional strategies for supporting DLL language acquisition and to help increase the number of bilingual teachers may not be seen as a top need. Incorporating indicators into school accountability systems that reflect the importance of learning in the early grades may seem too daunting a task. It will require strong voices from the early childhood community, sound ideas and strategies, and promising evidence of outcomes for children to spur state and school district leaders to include—in an intentional and meaningful way—early learning not just in their ESSA plans but also in their larger vision for education.

## Resources for Further Reading

### *General Information about ESSA and early learning:*

Center for Enhancing Early Learning Outcomes,  
<http://ceelo.org/essa/>

Ounce of Prevention Fund,  
<http://www.theounce.org/pubs/policy-pubs/Policy-Convo-05-Valuing-The-Early-Years-final.pdf>

New America's Early & Elementary Education Policy Program,  
<https://www.newamerica.org/education-policy/early-elementary-education-policy/>

First Five Years Fund,  
<http://ffyf.org/resources/early-learning-essa-can-look-like-states-districts/>

National Association of State Boards of Education,  
<http://www.nasbe.org/education-leader/opportunities-in-essa-for-improving-early-education/>

United States Department of Education, Early Learning Guidance,  
<https://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/essa/essaelguidance10202016.pdf>

### *Information about Dual Language Learners:*

Center for Applied Linguistics,  
<http://www.cal.org/>

Center for Early Care and Education Research–Dual Language Learners,  
<http://cecerdll.fpg.unc.edu/>

Dual Language Learners National Work Group, New America,  
<https://www.newamerica.org/education-policy/dual-language-learners/>

Migration Policy Institute,  
<http://www.migrationpolicy.org/>

Understanding Language, Stanford University,  
<http://ell.stanford.edu/>

United State Department of Education,  
<https://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/essa/essatitleiiiguidentenglishlearners92016.pdf>

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Every Student Succeeds Act, <https://www.congress.gov/bill/114th-congress/senate-bill/1177/text>.

<sup>2</sup> W. Steven Barnett, Allison H. Friedman-Krauss, Rebecca Gomez, Michelle Horowitz, G. G. Weisenfeld, Kirsty Clarke Brown, and James H. Squires, *The State of Preschool 2015* (New Brunswick, NJ: National Institute of Early Education Research, Rutgers University, 2016), <http://nieer.org/sites/nieer/files/2015%20Yearbook.pdf>; Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center, “Head Start Program Facts, Fiscal Year 2015,” <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/data/factsheets/docs/head-start-fact-sheet-fy-2015.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> National Center on Education Statistics, “Number and Percentage of Public School Students Participating in Programs for English Language Learners, by State: Selected Years, 2003–04 through 2013–14,” *Digest of Educational Statistics, Table 204.20* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, 2016), [https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d15/tables/dt15\\_204.20.asp](https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d15/tables/dt15_204.20.asp).

<sup>4</sup> Conor P. Williams, *Better Policies for Dual Language Learners: Bridging Research, Policy, Implementation, and Classroom Practice* (Washington, DC: New America, 2015), [http://preview.newamerica.org/downloads/Better\\_Policies\\_For\\_DLLs.pdf](http://preview.newamerica.org/downloads/Better_Policies_For_DLLs.pdf); and Karina Fortuny, Donald J. Hernandez, and Ajay Chaudry, *Young Children of Immigrants: The Leading Edge of America’s Future* (Washington, DC: The Urban Institute, 2010), <http://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/alfresco/publication-pdfs/412203-Young-Children-of-Immigrants-The-Leading-Edge-of-America-s-Future.PDF>.

<sup>5</sup> Linda M. Espinosa, *Early Education for Dual Language Learners: Promoting School Readiness and Early School Success* (Washington, DC: Migration Policy Institute, 2013).

<sup>6</sup> Ellen Bialystok, “Cognitive Complexity and Attentional Control in the Bilingual Mind,” *Child Development* 70, no. 3 (1999): 636–644; Ellen Bialystok, Fergus I.M. Craik, and Gigi Luk, “Bilingualism: Consequences for Mind and Brain,” *Trends in Cognitive Science* 16, no. 4 (2012): 240–250; and Jennifer L. Steele, Robert O. Slater, Gema Zamarró, Trey Miller, Jennifer Li, Susan Burkhauser, and Michael Bacon, “Effects of Dual-Language Immersion on Students’ Academic Performance” *EDRE Working Paper* No. 2015-09, October 1, 2015, <http://ssrn.com/abstract=2693337>.

<sup>7</sup> Courtney Tanenbaum, et al. *National Evaluation of Title III Implementation: Report on State and Local Implementation* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, 2012); U.S. Department of Education Budget History, <http://www2.ed.gov/about/overview/budget/history/edhistory.pdf>.

<sup>8</sup> As defined by the Higher Education Act. See: <https://ed.gov/policy/highered/leg/hea08/index.html>.

<sup>9</sup> U.S. Department of Education, Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA): <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/essa/index.html>.

<sup>10</sup> *Non-Regulatory Guidance, Early Learning in the Every Student Succeeds Act: Expanding Opportunities to Support Our Youngest Learners* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, October 2016), <https://ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/essa/essaelguidance10202016.pdf>.

<sup>11</sup> U.S. Department of Education, Fiscal Years 2015-2017 State Tables for the U.S. Department of Education: <http://www2.ed.gov/about/overview/budget/statetables/index.html>

<sup>12</sup> Hannah Matthews and Danielle Ewen, *Early Education Programs and Children of Immigrants: Learning Each Other’s Language*, paper for June 28, 2010 meeting at the Urban Institute, August 2010, <http://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/alfresco/publication-pdfs/412205-Early-Education-Programs-and-Children-of-Immigrants-Learning-Each-Other-s-Language.PDF>.

<sup>13</sup> *Non-Regulatory Guidance, Early Learning in the Every Student Succeeds Act: Expanding Opportunities to Support Our Youngest Learners* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, October 2016), <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/essa/essaelguidance10202016.pdf>.

<sup>14</sup> W. Steven Barnett, Allison H. Friedman-Krauss, Rebecca Gomez, Michelle Horowitz, G. G. Weisenfeld, Kirsty Clarke Brown, and James H. Squires, *The State of Preschool 2015* (New Brunswick, NJ: National Institute of Early Education Research, Rutgers University, 2016), <http://nieer.org/sites/nieer/files/2015%20Yearbook.pdf>.

<sup>15</sup> Linda M. Espinosa and Eugene García, *Developmental Assessment of Young Dual Language Learners with a Focus on Kindergarten Entry Assessment: Implications for State Policies*, Working Paper #1 (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina, Center for Early Care and Education

Research-Dual Language Learners, 2012), <http://earlysuccess.org/sites/default/files/KEA%20Policy%20brief.CECER-DLL.12-12.pdf>.

<sup>16</sup> The Pre-IDEA Oral Language Proficiency Test (Pre-IPT) can be used to determine oral proficiency in English and to identify DLLs. Additionally, the World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) consortium is developing a set of tools that can be used to monitor DLL language development over time. For more information on the work of the Consortium, see <https://www.wida.us/>.

<sup>17</sup> Tamara Halle, Elizabeth C. Hair, Laura Wandner, and Nina Chien, “Predictors and Outcomes of Early vs. Later English Language Proficiency Among English Language Learners,” *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 27 (February 2012): 1–20.

<sup>18</sup> New America, *From Crawling to Walking* data visualization tool: <http://atlas.newamerica.org/crawling-to-walking>.

<sup>19</sup> Elliot Regenstein, Maia Connors, and Rio Romero-Jurado, *Valuing the Early Years in State Accountability Systems Under the Every Student Succeeds Act* (Chicago, IL: Ounce of Prevention Fund, February 2016), <http://www.theounce.org/pubs/policy-pubs/Policy-Convo-05-Valuing-The-Early-Years-final.pdf>; William R. Penuel, Elizabeth J. Meyer, and Michelle Renée Valladares, *Making the Most of Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA): Helping States Focus on School Equity, Quality and Climate* (Boulder, CO: National Education Policy Center, November 2016), <http://nepc.colorado.edu/publication/ESSA>; and “Students Can’t Wait,” Education Trust, <https://edtrust.org/students-cant-wait/indicator-traffic-light-table/>.

<sup>20</sup> Districts are not required to provide early education programs with Title I dollars.

<sup>21</sup> Administration for Children and Families, Head Start Policy and Regulations, 1302 Subpart C -- Education and Child Development Program Services: <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/policy/45-cfr-chap-xiii/1302-subpart-c-education-and-child-development-program-services>.

<sup>22</sup> One example of an evidence-based model districts could implement is the Sobrato Early Academic Language Model. See “Program Model” at <http://www.sobrato.com/sobrato-philanthropies/sobrato-family-foundation/seal/program-model/>.

<sup>23</sup> Melissa Tooley and Kaylan Connally, *No Panacea: Diagnosing What Ails Teacher Professional Development Before Reaching for Remedies* (Washington, DC: New America, June 2016), <https://www.newamerica.org/education-policy/policy-papers/no-panacea/>.

<sup>24</sup> Kirsty Clarke Brown, Jim Squires, Lori Connors-Tadros, and Michelle Horowitz, *What Do We Know About Principal Preparation, Licensure Requirements, and Professional Development for School Leaders?* (New Brunswick, NJ: Center on Enhancing Early Learning Outcomes, July 2014), [http://ceelo.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/ceelo\\_policy\\_report\\_ece\\_principal\\_prep.pdf](http://ceelo.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/ceelo_policy_report_ece_principal_prep.pdf).

<sup>25</sup> Reach Out & Read: <http://www.reachoutandread.org/>.

<sup>26</sup> **Title III non-regulatory guidance** defines an “English learner” as an individual who is between the ages of three and 21, which means that this funding may be used to support services for DLLs starting at age three.

<sup>27</sup> *Non-Regulatory Guidance, Early Learning in the Every Student Succeeds Act: Expanding Opportunities to Support our Youngest Learners*. (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, 2016), <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/essa/essaelguidance10202016.pdf>.

<sup>28</sup> Jennifer L. Steele, Robert O. Slater, Gema Zamarro, Trey Miller, Jennifer Li, Susan Burkhauser, and Michael Bacon, “Effects of Dual-Language Immersion on Students’ Academic Performance” EDRE Working Paper No. 2015-09, October 1, 2015, <http://ssrn.com/abstract=2693337>; Rachel A. Valentino and Sean F. Reardon, “Effectiveness of Four Instructional Programs Designed to Serve English Learners: Variation by Ethnicity and Initial English Proficiency,” *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis* 37, no. 4 (2015): 612–637; Virginia P. Collier and Wayne P. Thomas, “The Astounding Effectiveness of Dual Language Education for All,” *NABE Journal of Research and Practice* 2, no. 1 (Winter 2004): 1–20; and Wayne P. Thomas and Virginia P. Collier, *A National Study of School Effectiveness for Language Minority Students’ Long-Term Academic Achievement* (Santa Clara, CA: Center for Research on Education, Diversity & Excellence, University of California at Santa Cruz, 2002), <http://cmmr.usc.edu/CollierThomasComplete.pdf>.

<sup>29</sup> Jennifer L. Steele, Robert O. Slater, Gema Zamarro, Trey Miller, Jennifer Li, Susan Burkhauser, and Michael Bacon, “Effects of Dual-Language Immersion on Students’ Academic Performance” EDRE Working Paper No. 2015-09, October 1, 2015, <http://ssrn.com/abstract=2693337>;

Rachel A. Valentino and Sean F. Reardon, “Effectiveness of Four Instructional Programs Designed to Serve English Learners: Variation by Ethnicity and Initial English Proficiency,” *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis* 37, no. 4 (2015): 612–637; and Ilana Umansky and Sean F. Reardon, “Reclassification Patterns Among Latino English Learner Students in Bilingual, Dual Immersion, and English Immersion Classrooms,” *American Educational Research Journal*, 51, no. 5 (2014): 879–912.

<sup>30</sup> Federal Register, Department of Education, “Application for New Awards; National Professional Development Program” 80, no. 238 (December 11, 2015): 3, <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2015-12-11/pdf/2015-31290.pdf>.

<sup>31</sup> National Center for Education Statistics, “Table 8: Percentage of Public School Teachers who Participated in Various Types of Professional Development in the Past 12 Months, by State,” *Schools and Staffing Survey*, (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, 2011–12), [https://nces.ed.gov/surveys/sass/tables/sass1112\\_2013314\\_t1s\\_008.asp](https://nces.ed.gov/surveys/sass/tables/sass1112_2013314_t1s_008.asp).

<sup>32</sup> Clare McCann and Jessica Bowen, “Financing Dual Language Learning: The Data Matter,” *New America EdCentral* (blog), New America, (November 21, 2014), <https://www.newamerica.org/education-policy/edcentral/titleiipt2/>.

<sup>33</sup> National Research Council, Committee on National Statistics and Board on Testing and Assessment Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education, *Allocating Federal Funds for State Programs for English*

*Language Learners. Panel to Review Alternative Data Sources for the Limited-English Proficiency Allocation Formula under Title III, Part A, Elementary and Secondary Education Act* (Washington, DC: The National Academies Press, 2011).

<sup>34</sup> U.S. Department of Education, Preschool Development Grants: <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/preschooldevelopmentgrants/index.html>.

<sup>35</sup> ESSA addresses transition for the existing preschool development grants and permits the continuation and conclusion of these original grants. For more: <https://www2.ed.gov/programs/preschooldevelopmentgrants/index.html>.

<sup>36</sup> The previous Preschool Development Program (of the same name) administered differently with the Department of Education as the lead and included different requirements and expectations for state grantees.

<sup>37</sup> Laura Bornfreund and Lisa Guernsey, “3 Facts and 3 Challenges to Keep in Mind About Pre-K This Election Season,” *EdCentral* (blog), New America, February 8, 2016, <https://www.newamerica.org/education-policy/edcentral/3-facts-3-challenges-keep-mind-pre-k-election-season/>; Hirokazu Yoshikawa et al., *Investing in Our Future: The Evidence Base on Preschool Education* (Ann Arbor, MI: Society for Research in Child Development, October 2013), [http://srcd.org/sites/default/files/documents/washington/mb\\_2013\\_10\\_16\\_investing\\_in\\_children.pdf](http://srcd.org/sites/default/files/documents/washington/mb_2013_10_16_investing_in_children.pdf).



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