

F. Title IV, Part A: Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants

1. Use of Funds

(ESEA section 4103(c)(2)(A)): Describe how the SEA will use funds received under Title IV, Part A, Subpart 1 for State-level activities.

In order to address both the academic and nonacademic needs of Montana students, the OPI encourages LEAs to adopt a whole-child philosophy to ensure that all students receive a fair, equitable, and ~~high-quality~~high-quality education. The OPI provides support to LEAs in using data-driven approaches to identify and address the needs of every student and assists LEAs in providing equitable access to a broad well-rounded education aimed at developing our children into college- and career-ready young adults. This work is rooted in our rigorous college and career readiness standards and is based on an integrated multi-tiered model that includes supports for social and emotional well-being, health and safety, cultural responsiveness, and family and community factors in addition to the traditional academic and behavioral indicators typically used to identify a child's needs.

~~To implement these supports, the OPI has created a leadership council to both align and target the agency resources to effectively support the LEAs in serving every student's needs. The council is comprised of leaders from each division in the agency as well as the superintendent's leadership team. By employing this leadership collaborative, the OPI is able to more effectively make decisions regarding the types and intensity of support that will be made available to each LEA in the state to strengthen student learning and success. This effort has resulted in strong cross-agency collaboration and has greatly reduced the duplication of supports being provided to LEAs. By aligning our initiatives and work, the agency has become more efficient in addressing priorities as well as improving budgetary decisions. The result is that the OPI's key initiatives and its collaborative use of resources have a much broader impact in supporting every child's success.~~ The funds available under Title IV, Part A will be used to strengthen the evidence-based supports already in place rather than to construct or use duplicative support systems in each division. Montana's Student Support and Academic Enrichment (SSAE) program state funds will be used to increase the capacity of the OPI to:

- Provide all students with access to a well-rounded education.
- Provide safe and healthy learning environments.
- Improve the use of technology in order to improve the academic achievement and digital literacy of all students (ESEA section 4101).

In order to increase the capacity of the OPI to address these three categories within the SSAE program, a cross-agency team designed a multi-pronged approach that expands existing expertise and resources within the state. As a result of this collaboration, ~~the team determined that the administration of the SSAE program will be housed in the OPI Education Opportunity and Equity Division~~ the administration and programming for Title IV, Part A will be housed within the Health Enhancement and Safety Division (HESD). HESD will work to ensure alignment and consistency in grant administration with the Title I programs.

The team further determined the state-level activities will be implemented using a three-pronged approach.

Use of State Level Funds

1.) Support training and technical assistance provided by existing staff within the Health Enhancement and Safety Division. This effort will focus on legislatively mandated priorities for Montana schools, including bullying prevention, suicide prevention, school emergency planning, and sex trafficking prevention.

2.) Support course development on the Hub within the three content areas supported under SSAE. The Hub is a learning network on the Moodle platform dedicated to providing free, high-quality professional learning for all K-12 educators across Montana.

3.) Partnerships between the OPI and other professional development providers. RESAs establish a systemic approach to identify regional needs and provide support to local school districts through communication, direct interaction, follow-up, and ongoing collaboration.

Where possible, the OPI will work to coordinate and integrate the SSAE program with activities authorized under other sections of the law, as well as other federal programs to improve outcomes for students. Furthermore, SSAE funds may not be sufficient to independently fund many of the innovative SSAE activities. By leveraging other state and local resources in combination with the SSAE grant funds, the OPI will be able to achieve the goals of SSAE programs.

2. Awarding Sub-grants (ESEA section 4103(c)(2)(B)): Describe how the SEA will ensure that awards made to LEAs under Title IV, Part A, Subpart 1 are in amounts that are consistent with ESEA section 4105(a)(2).

The OPI will reserve 95 percent of its SSAE program allocation for sub-grants to LEAs. The OPI will keep ~~and~~ not more than 1 percent of its SSAE program allocation for administrative costs, including public reporting on how LEAs are using the funds and the degree to which LEAs have made progress toward meeting identified objectives and outcomes. (ESEA section 4104(a)(1) and (2)).

The OPI will then use the remaining 4 percent of funds to support LEA activities and programs designed to meet the purposes of the SSAE program as described above in the table.

The OPI will award the SSAE sub-grants to LEAs by formula. ~~Because the SEAs allocation will be insufficient to provide all LEAs with at least the \$10,000 minimum, the funds will be divided equally among all eligible LEAs, as per guidance received from the U.S. Department of Education on June 30, 2017.~~

~~The timing of the start of this new program will not allow the state education agency (SEA) to have the infrastructure in place to administer Title IV, Part A effectively for the 2017-2018 year.~~

~~As a result, LEAs will be encouraged to transfer these funds into Title I or Title II for the 2017-2018 school year after consultation with their required community stakeholders.~~

~~If LEAs choose to keep their funds in Title IV, Part A, those funds will be obligated by the SEA to the LEA by September 30, 2018. This will allow time for the SEA to develop the required program components including administration, monitoring, technical assistance, and data collection.~~

~~If Title IV, Part A becomes funded for future years, the OPI will consider the benefits of structuring a competitive process for these funds in future years, if SEAs are authorized to administer funds through a competitive process beyond the 2017-2018 year. More administrative decisions will be made known when the future of these funds is determined.~~

~~Under this proposed funding structure, no LEAs will receive more than \$30,000 and, thus, no comprehensive needs assessments will be conducted, and LEAs will not be monitored on the percentage breakdowns between the three categories.~~

~~For LEAs who choose not to transfer their funds into Title I or Title II, the OPI will encourage those LEAs to apply for funding as a consortium as authorized in ESEA Section 4105(a)(3).~~

~~Montana has over 400 small, rural schools with fewer than 100 students. The OPI recognizes that combining SSAE program funds will result in economies of scale so that these smaller LEAs may benefit more than if they had used the funds that each respective LEA was individually allotted. Further, with the focus of the RESAs centered on facilitating collaboration, the RESAs can serve as a catalyst for these consortia. All eligible LEAs will receive a minimum of \$10,000. An LEA that receives at least \$30,000 in SSAE program funds will complete a needs assessment that includes, at a minimum, a focus on the three SSAE goals listed previously. (ESEA section 4106(d)). Based on the results of that assessment, the LEA must use:~~

~~At least 20 percent of funds for activities to support well-rounded educational opportunities (ESEA section 4107);~~

- ~~• At least 20 percent of funds for activities to support safe and healthy students (ESEA section 4108); and~~
- ~~• A portion of funds for activities to support effective use of technology (ESEA section 4109).~~

~~Within each of these areas, LEAs will have broad flexibility to use the SSAE program funds for a variety of activities to improve student outcomes and address the opportunity gaps identified through the need's assessment.~~

When developing an SSAE application, an LEA, or consortium of LEAs must engage in consultation with stakeholders in the area served by the LEA (ESEA section 4106(c)(1)). Such stakeholders must include, but are not limited to, parents, teachers, principals, students, school leaders, support staff, local government representatives, community organizations, private school personnel, and Indian tribes or tribal organizations, when applicable.

Leveraging Federal, State, and Local Resources

In order to maximize the use of the SSAE program resources, the OPI, LEAs, and schools may partner with organizations, such as nonprofits, institutions of higher education, and community organizations to offer programs and services to students. In addition, the OPI and local leaders will consider how other federal, state, and local funds may be leveraged to support a holistic approach to well-rounded education.

The OPI will, as required, review existing resources and programs across the state, and coordinate any new plans and resources under the SSAE program with existing resources and programs (ESEA section 4103(c)(2)(C)(i)). The OPI will monitor LEA implementation of activities under Title IV Part A. The OPI will

provide technical assistance to LEAs to carry out their SSAE programs and assist with the application process. The OPI provides for equitable access for all students to Title IV, Part A, SSAE program activities.