Education Technology in the Every Student Succeeds Act

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The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) includes an increased focus on technology-related requirements to achieve educational outcomes and opportunities for all students. This demonstrates a commitment to the integration of technology and resources that can enhance teaching and learning for all students and support Universal Design for Learning (UDL) in instruction and assessments, with an emphasis on those with disabilities and English language learners (ELLs). An overarching theme throughout the ESSA is technology broadly, and how it relates to accessibility specifically. Educational leaders should prioritize accessibility when making technology-related decisions because it plays an essential role in all students' access to the curriculum and ensures equal educational opportunities that may foster improved outcomes to all students.

Funding for technology is available through Title IV, Part A, of ESSA, including a $1.65 billion flexible block grant in 2017. Technology-related funding is modeled after the Title I funding formula[i], and focuses on three key areas:

1. Provide all students with a well-rounded education.
2. Improve school conditions for student learning.
3. Improve the use of technology in order to improve the academic achievement and digital literacy of all students.

The following is a summary of the technology-related opportunities and terms within ESSA, their implications for students with disabilities (SWDs), and a variety of resources to support state and local leaders in leveraging technology to advance equal educational opportunities; these include assistive technology, technology readiness, digital learning, and technology.

ESSA REQUIREMENT	ACTION NEEDED	RESOURCES
ESSA ensures that states and districts include **assistive technology** (AT) in their educational planning and investments. AT is recognized as a key element to personalize	The term "assistive technology" was not mentioned in NCLB; it is mentioned explicitly five times in ESSA, indicating a significant increase in focus. In order to maximize outcomes, state and	• **Accessibility Tools and Resources: Getting Started with Accessibility** http://www.ctdinstitute.org/library/2016-10-20/accessibility-tools-and-resources-getting-started-accessibility

ESSA REQUIREMENT	ACTION NEEDED	RESOURCES
learning and support SWDs during daily instruction and on assessments. For more information on assistive technology: • TITLE I. SEC. 1111(b)(2)(B)(vii)(II) • TITLE II. SEC. 2244(b) • TITLE IV. SEC. 4104(b)(3)(C)(iii); TITLE IV. SEC. 4109(a)(3) • TITLE IX. SEC. 9215(m)	district leaders need to develop the infrastructure to increase stakeholder knowledge and use of assistive technology. This includes resources to secure funding and the provision of high-quality professional learning for teachers, parents, and students so that the use of technology advances the teaching and learning of all students.	• **Born Accessible Learning Resources** http://www.ctdinstitute.org/sites/default/files/file_attachments/Born_Accessible_QuickGuide_508_0.pdf • **Evolution of Federal Disability Legislation: 1973–2016** http://www.ctdinstitute.org/library/2016-08-19/evolution-federal-disability-legislation-1973-2016 • **PowerUp: Assess Teacher Needs to Set Goals** http://powerupwhatworks.org/page-puww/assess-teacher-needs-set-goals • **PowerUp: Plan Professional Development** http://powerupwhatworks.org/page-puww/plan-professional-development • **Understanding the Basics of Assistive Technology** http://www.ctdinstitute.org/library/2016-08-19/understanding-basics-assistive-technology
The integration of technology into teaching and learning requires state leaders to invest in programs and activities for districts that identify and promote effective, evidence-based initiatives. This includes **technology readiness** (e.g., technology infrastructure, including updated and appropriate devices, software, and Internet access), using technology consistent with the principles of universal design for learning, and building district capacity to support teachers in using technology.	A strong technology-based infrastructure is necessary for schools and districts to be technology ready. Without it, technology may not be used to the highest degree possible. Therefore, states and districts need a solid infrastructure that includes technology tools and devices to meet the needs of all students. Several steps should occur as states and districts build a solid technology infrastructure, including: • a review of current policies; • an assessment of the existing infrastructure	• **2016 National Education Technology Plan** http://tech.ed.gov/netp • **ConnectED Initiative** http://www.whitehouse.gov/issues/education/k-12/connected • **Every Student Succeeds Act Fact Sheet:** http://www.shapeamerica.org/events/speakoutday/upload/Title-IV-fact-sheet.pdf • **Future Ready Schools: Building Technology Infrastructure for Learning** http://www.ctdinstitute.org/library/2015-03-16/future-ready-schools-building-technology-infrastructure-learning • **Office of Educational Technology: Future Ready Schools—Summits** http://www.futureready.org/event-type/summits/ • **PowerUp: Budgeting for Technology** http://powerupwhatworks.org/page-puww/module-3-budgeting-technology

ESSA REQUIREMENT	ACTION NEEDED	RESOURCES
For more information on technology readiness or infrastructure: • TITLE IV. SEC. 4104(a)-(c); TITLE IV. SEC. 4109	(including a process for continual review and revision); • a selection of vendors; and • the purchase of technology hardware and software tools.	• **PowerUp: Incorporating Universal Design for Learning** http://powerupwhatworks.org/page-puww/incorporating-universal-design-learning • **PowerUp: Technology Implementation Support Modules** http://powerupwhatworks.org/page-puww/technology-implementation-support-modules • **Technology Implementation Practice Guide** http://www.ctdinstitute.org/library/2014-11-25/technology-implementation-practice-guide • **Technology Purchasing Checklist** http://www.ctdinstitute.org/library/2015-12-30/accessing-complex-text-students-disabilities-technology-purchasing-checklist
Digital learning is defined in ESSA as "any instructional practice that effectively uses technology to strengthen a student's learning experience and encompasses a wide spectrum of tools and practices." For more information on digital learning: • TITLE IV. SEC 4102(a)	The definition of digital learning in ESSA widens the scope previously described in NCLB by explicitly recognizing the importance of technology resources for teaching and learning. In addition, it gives specific attention to the need for professional development to empower teachers with the knowledge and tools necessary to effectively teach SWDs, including general education teachers. As states and districts seek to promote digital learning, they should ensure that all digital tools are accessible to all students, including SWDs.	• **Digital Accessibility Toolkit: What Education Leaders Need to Know** http://www.ctdinstitute.org/library/2016-10-11/digital-accessibility-toolkit-what-education-leaders-need-know • **Evolution of Federal Disability Legislation: 1973–2016** http://www.ctdinstitute.org/library/2016-08-19/evolution-federal-disability-legislation-1973-2016 • **PowerUp: Tech Tips** http://powerupwhatworks.org/page-puww/tech-tips • **PowerUp: ELA Teaching Strategies** http://powerupwhatworks.org/page-puww/ela-instructional-strategies • **PowerUp: Math Teaching Strategies** http://powerupwhatworks.org/page-puww/math-instructional-strategies • **PowerUp: Plan Professional Learning Opportunities** http://powerupwhatworks.org/page-puww/recommendation-5-plan-professional-learning-opportunities • **PowerUp: Provide Access to Technology and Support**

ESSA REQUIREMENT	ACTION NEEDED	RESOURCES
		http://powerupwhatworks.org/page-puww/recommendation-6-provide-access-technology-and-support • **Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2. 0** https://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG20/
Technology is referenced throughout ESSA with guidance and opportunities to leverage and allocate funds toward technology. This includes tools and resources to do the following: • implement technology-based professional development; • build district capacity (and other administrators, leaders, and teachers); • improve the use of technology for academic achievement; • ensure personalized learning supports through technology; • develop and improve assessment instruments; • support family engagement; and • advance student achievement through telecommunications.	Integrating technology tools and devices into the classroom can seem challenging, especially with the myriad of options, decisions, and costs. However, the effective use of technology is a priority in ESSA and should be a priority in states and districts. State and district leaders should consider ways to use Title IV funding to support the full integration of technology to enhance teaching and learning and support SWDs, including those ELLs who also may have a disability.	• **Assessing Progress of Your Technology Initiatives: Guide for State and Local Education Leaders** http://www.ctdinstitute.org/library/2016-06-09/assessing-progress-your-technology-initiatives-guide-state-and-local-education • **Are Your Technology Initiatives Working?** http://www.ctdinstitute.org/library/2016-06-20/are-your-technology-initiatives-working • **¡Colorín Colorado!: Special Education and English Language Learners** http://www.colorincolorado.org/school-support/special-education-and-english-language-learners • **Digital Accessibility Toolkit: What Education Leaders Need to Know** http://www.ctdinstitute.org/library/2016-10-11/digital-accessibility-toolkit-what-education-leaders-need-know • **5 Things to Know About Your Role in Ensuring Accessibility** http://www.ctdinstitute.org/library/2016-10-11/5-things-know-about-your-role-ensuring-accessibility • **Future Ready Schools: Building Technology Infrastructure for Learning** http://www.ctdinstitute.org/library/2015-03-16/future-ready-schools-building-technology-infrastructure-learning • **Getting Started with Accessibility** http://www.ctdinstitute.org/library/2016-10-11/getting-started-accessibility • **2016 National Education Technology Plan** http://tech.ed.gov/netp/

ESSA REQUIREMENT	ACTION NEEDED	RESOURCES
For more information on technology: • TITLE I, SEC 1201(L); SEC 1202(c) • TITLE II, SEC 2101(ix)(xvii); SEC 2013(i) • TITLE IV, SEC 4101(3)(c); SEC 4101(iv); SEC 4106(c)(d); SEC 4109(a)(c); SEC 4205(8); SEC 4303(2), SEC 4505(g); SEC 8002(x) • TITLE VIII, SEC 8002(x)		• **Why You Need to Care About Accessibility** http://www.ctdinstitute.org/library/2016-08-19/why-you-need-care-about-accessibility

[i] Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. (2016). *Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA): ESSA implementation resources for educators.* Alexandria, VA: Author. Retrieved from http://www.ascd.org/ASCD/pdf/siteASCD/policy/ESSA-Title-IV-FAQ_Mar32016.pdf