

Title IV: How Are You Spending Your Funds to Meet Your SEL Goals?

By Emily Cremidis | Categories: SEL, Caring School Community, Thought Leadership

Little Sister looked on as Mom greeted Big Brother with a hug. "How was it?" Mom asked. "Fine," replied the child, who proudly sported a new backpack. Mom pressed further: "The girl who gave you trouble last year—is she in your class?"

It was the close of the first day of school and I was walking onto campus as this family was leaving. We happened to be in Hayward, California, but I imagined families the country over were having similar conversations. *Yep*, I thought. *Relationships come first and they can be hard*. Then I smiled because the staff had invited me there to present the second edition of our research-based social-emotional learning curriculum, *Caring School Community*. How fitting!

When I visit a campus to present curriculum, balancing competing priorities within the budget is often part of the conversation. These days it's easier, though, because Title IV has prioritized social-emotional learning.

As a topic, federal funding is specific, detailed, and typically not the stuff of blogs. Today, though, we want to dig into Title IV, Part A, because it prioritizes healthy and safe school environments.

In 2017, Title IV, Part A (Student Support and Academic Enrichment, or SSAE), was authorized at \$1.65 billion. Per the US Department of Education, eligible programs promoting healthy and safe schools include bullying prevention, relationship-building skills, school readiness, and the reduction of exclusionary discipline practice and promotion of supportive school discipline. Because the 2017 version was a competitive grant, your district may not have sought these funds; however, in 2018, this funding is formula-driven. Eligible schools must apply for their portion of the funding through the Consolidated Application and Reporting System website.

Are We Eligible?

Local education agencies (LEAs) that received Title I funding in 2017 are eligible to receive Title IV funds this year. They will receive the funds in the same proportion (not amount) as their Title I funding. Small LEAs need not worry as there is a \$10,000 minimum allocation to qualifying agencies.

How Can We Use the Funds?

When reviewing your Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP), California county offices of education will be looking to see that your LEA's expenditures align with your data. Consider what are you learning from:

- The CA Healthy Kids Survey results
- Incident data from suspensions and expulsions
- Absence records
- Academic data

- Staff feedback about their professional learning needs around healthy and safe communities

This information should give you guidance for what your LEA needs to nurture healthy and safe environments that maximize opportunities for learning. If you're looking for ideas on how to prioritize relationships and build community, check out the *Caring School Community*(CSC) program. This curriculum explicitly teaches social skills, which results in calm and orderly learning environments. The program also offers three tiers of disciplinary support for teachers and administrators. I invite you to download a sample lesson for use in your classroom. You're also welcome to register for our CSC webinar series; at an event on October 30th, we will address the topic of maintaining a *Caring School Community*.

More About Title IV

Learn more about this funding source at the following resources:

- Every Student Succeeds Act Fact Sheet Title IV, Part A: Student Support and Academic Enrichments Grants
- Department of Education's Non-Regulatory Guidance Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants (2016)
- ESSA, Title IV, Part A: Changes to the Title IV, Part A, Student Support and Academic Enrichment (SSAE) Grants Resulting from the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2017

Pick-up Again

I think back on that family from the first day of school and imagine pick-up time next month. What if the girl/s in his class? How is it going? What management tools does his teacher have and what tools is the teacher imparting to the students? I am glad to know that Title IV acknowledges that building relationships and communities is a big part of learning, and I'm appreciative that the fostering of safe and healthy school environments has been prioritized.