

May 19, 2017

TO THE ADMINISTRATOR ADDRESSED:

SUBJECT: 2017–2018 Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)
Consolidated Federal Grant Application

The 2017–2018 ESSA Consolidated Federal Grant Application is expected to be available online in the eGrants application system on June 6, 2017.

TEA expects your LEA to align the use of federal grant funds to 1) TEA's Strategic Priorities for improving student academic achievement listed below; 2) TEA's recommended uses of ESSA funds; and 3) other best practices guidance available on the TEA [Transition to ESSA](#) page.

1. Recruiting, Supporting, and Retaining Teachers and Principals
2. Building a Foundation of Reading and Mathematics
3. Connecting High School to Career and College
4. Improving Low-Performing Schools

Guidance and Oversight

The new federal statute offers significantly increased flexibility to LEAs for using federal funds to effectively implement comprehensive, districtwide research-based programs and activities to maximize student academic outcomes, particularly for those students at risk of not meeting challenging state academic assessment standards.

ESSA renews the U.S. Department of Education's emphasis on conducting comprehensive needs assessments and increases LEAs' responsibilities for monitoring student outcomes, coordinating use of federal funds, and for offering high-quality technical assistance to schools engaged in continuous improvement planning.

TEA is charged with offering effective guidance and oversight to LEAs under ESSA while also monitoring performance. In support of the agency's guidance and oversight responsibilities, TEA has published additional resources on its [Transition to ESSA](#) webpage. ESSA guidance available on TEA's webpage offers LEAs resources for enhancing the rigor of district and school-level comprehensive needs assessment and continuous improvement planning processes, identifying best practices that maximize student outcomes aligned to the ESSA Consolidated State Plan, and monitoring whether schools are effectively using federal funds to improve student outcomes.

TEA strongly encourages your LEA to review the needs identified in your comprehensive needs assessment process, evaluate your use of federal grant funds, and align to 1) TEA's Strategic Priorities for improving student academic achievement, 2) TEA's recommended uses of ESSA funds, and 3) best practices guidance.

Funding Update

While the passing of the new federal fiscal year 2017 budget by Congress recently increased funding to Title I, Part A, it also has provided two somewhat unexpected funding concerns for LEAs under Title II, Part A and Title IV, Part A under ESSA.

- The budget increased the Title I, Part A appropriation by approximately \$550 million nationwide. Although Texas will see an increase overall in 2017-2018, not all LEAs will see an increase in funding. Due to the variable hold-harmless provision in the Title I, Part A formula and the use of updated estimated Census data, some LEAs may see reductions in their Title I funding for 2017-2018.
- The budget reduces the amount of Title II, Part A funding to be available in 2017–2018 by approximately 12.75%. With the statutory changes in the formula calculation and this decrease, some LEAs will see a reduction in their Title II, Part A entitlement for 2017–2018.
- The budget reduces the amount of Title IV, Part A funding by 20% from the amount previously expected and posted on USDE’s web site. TEA will continue to award the grant by formula for 2017-2018; however, if the federal appropriation continues to be lower in subsequent budgets, TEA may decide to award the funds on a competitive basis in the future.

Because of this late passing of the federal budget, TEA has not yet received necessary funding information from USDE to be able to calculate preliminary planning amounts. Those planning amounts are expected to be released with the ESSA Consolidated Federal Grant Application on June 6, 2017.

The budget also reinstated some 2016-2017 allocations that had been reduced in the previous federal budget continuing resolution. Before TEA can calculate the 2017-2018 planning amounts, the applicable final allocations for 2016-2017 will be revised and budget adjustments made to the 2016-2017 NCLB Consolidated Application for Funding to add the reinstated funds into the current year budget. Those funds can then be expended during the summer or will carryover (roll forward) into the 2017-2018 application when carryover is calculated in November 2017.

Once the 2016-2017 revised final allocations are calculated, TEA will shut down access to the NCLB Consolidated Application in the eGrants system from 2pm to 8am for several days to allow TEA staff to implement the budget adjustments. The amendment functionality in eGrants will be available for LEAs from 8am to 2pm each day. More detailed information on the scheduling of the budget adjustments will be provided through the Grants GovDelivery email bulletin service.

TEA will release additional ESSA guidance publications and updates on the State Consolidated Plan throughout the spring and early summer. If you have questions about the guidance, other resources, or accessing the Transition to ESSA webpage, please contact Susan Patterson at (512) 463-8992.

For questions about federal grant allocations or completing the ESSA application, please contact the ESSA application unit staff at grants@tea.texas.gov or (512) 463-8525.

Sincerely,

Cory Green, Associate Commissioner
Department of Grants Compliance and Oversight