

Katie's Script

4) ESSA..a look at the Legislation

Hi everyone. Thank you for joining us today. It is our hope that you will leave today with a better understanding of how you can use your connections to the ESSA legislation to better advocate for your libraries.

#5) I am going to start by sharing 4 key messages that AASL has crafted and connected to specific sections in the legislation. These are important messages to highlight in your advocacy efforts. In all cases it is important to understand that school library programs have been added to the legislation as “allowed”, but not required. So it is still up to us to make the connections for those we talk to.

6) Title I- Improving basic programs operated by state and local educational agencies

Message: School librarians and access to effective school library programs, impact student achievement, digital literacy skills, and school climate/culture.

Comments:

Under Title I, new provisions, but not requirements, include developing effective school library programs to provide students an opportunity to develop digital literacy skills and improve academic achievement.

There are a couple of things you need to think about in relation to this section.

First, think about how you are going to make sure that your school district realizes that the school library program is the key to achieving digital literacy.

And second, think about how you are impacting student achievement. School librarians are in a unique position because you directly impact student achievement by fostering critical thinking, and providing students with the skills they need to analyze, form and communicate ideas in a compelling way. Additionally, you work with every student in the school and partner with teachers to provide print and digital materials to meet the diverse needs of your students while collaborating with teachers to deepen student learning in the classrooms. Show how this is happening when you have conversations.

7) Title II- Supporting effective instruction

Message: School librarians share their learning with other professionals when they attend conferences and workshops, applying the benefits of new techniques, strategies, and technologies to the entire district.

Comments:

This has to do with professional development. Because states and school districts can now use their Title II, Part A funds specifically to support effective school library programming, it will be important to make sure that your district and the school personnel in charge of professional development activities are aware of the new uses of funds related to libraries.

Note that under the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), Title II, Part A funds were primarily used for professional development for “teachers” which made it difficult for other instructional support personnel to participate in activities. ESSA rectifies this by specifically authorizing funds to be used to support instructional services provided by effective school library programs.

So, think about how you have been able to provide learning opportunities to educators in your school and district. You are in a unique position to be a leader in your school by connecting classroom teachers or district leaders to current trends and resources for teaching and learning.

8) Title II, Part B- Literacy Education for All

Message: School librarians are uniquely suited to lead the effort in applying for competitive grants because of their expertise and access to strong professional learning networks.

There are two grant opportunities associated with this section of the legislation:

#9)

- Literacy education for all, results for the nation (LEARN)
- Innovative Approaches to Literacy (IAL)..dedicated to funding literacy programs in low income communities.

Comments

These are competitive literacy grants, and you must make the message clear that including school librarians, who are responsible for literacy instruction and development, in the application is critical.

ESSA specifically authorizes funds to be used for developing and enhancing effective school library programs. This includes providing professional

development for school librarians, books, and up-to-date materials to high need schools.

So, make sure that your state, school district, and/or school are aware of these grant opportunities.

Note: Given the uncertain appropriations in the current budget, these grants may be unfunded, but you should still make the connections to your district grant people. There could be other opportunities, and offering to assist with an application puts you in a position to be seen as an indispensable resource and leader. And by all means since this is dependent on federal appropriations, let your congressional delegates know how important it is to fully fund these grants.

10) Title IV, Part A: Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants (SSAE Block Grants)

Message: School librarians increase access to personalized, rigorous learning experiences supported by technology, allowing equitable resources for all students.

*This new grant program in ESSA focuses on safe and healthy students, and how technology can be integrated into schools to improve teaching and learning, in addition to emphasizing access to a well-rounded education that includes a wide variety of disciplines – such as music, the arts, social studies, environmental education, computer science and civics.

Comments:

State Educational Agencies may not be aware that these funds can support personalized learning experiences. Think of ways your library program has supported personalized learning—it is important to not just let your State and local agencies know how the funds can be used.

Library Provisions in this section of ESSA

- Authorizes states (but does not require) to use funds to assist school districts in providing programs and activities that increase access to personalized, rigorous learning experiences supported by technology, including adequate access to school libraries.

- ESSA also authorizes (but does not require) states to use funds to assist school districts in providing school librarians and other school personnel with the knowledge and skills to use technology effectively, including effective integration of technology to improve instruction and student achievement.

- In developing their local applications, school districts consult with teachers, principals, and other stakeholders, including “specialized instructional support personnel: which is defined under ESSA as specifically including school librarians.

- In addition, ESSA requires that school districts conduct a “needs assessment” prior to receiving funds from the state (this must be conducted every 3

years). The needs assessment much include access to personalized learning experiences (which may include access to school libraries.)

11) Some very recent changes to this grant program will be announced soon, so the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Safe and Healthy Students (OSHS), in collaboration with the National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments, will be hosting a webinar about these changes. It is possible that this too will become a competitive grant, rather than a formula.

The link to that webinar is on the left. To learn more about these be sure and register. <http://bit.ly/2ptdytH>

<https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/events/webinar/essa-title-iv-part-changes-title-iv-part-student-support-and-academic-enrichment-ssae>

11) Key words and Phrases

As you advocate for your library program, whether writing a grant or talking to your administrators, be sure to use some of these phrases in framing your points. These are the phrases that will be used in the ESSA plans and so connecting what school librarians do through this language is important.

#12) AASL is also helping keep you informed about ESSA to help with your advocacy efforts.

#13) AASL/ESSA Landing Page

Here you will find lots of resources to help you learn more about how librarians can use some of the sections in ESSA to advocate to state and local leaders. In order to see all content, you will have to create a login.

14)Picture of the page

As you can read across the top menu you will find links to 5 AASL position statements on school library programs, including the definition of an effective school library program and the instructional role of school librarians. Under state workshops is information on the 36 state workshops that have been presented in the last 6 months. You can view the powerpoint presentations and handbooks that guided each workshop. You are free to look at any presentation from any state.

The newest links on the home page are to several state plans that have been submitted to the Department of Education, or have been released from public comment. Some of these documents are first drafts, while others are third and

fourth drafts. It is exciting to note that many of these plans make specific references to school libraries.

I'd like to share a few examples:

The New York Plan specifically states in 3 different places that the state will support equitable access to a well-rounded education by increasing access to school library programs.

The Mississippi plan states that School libraries support rigorous personalized learning experiences supported by technology, and ensure equitable access to resources for all students. Specific references to school librarians can be found in the plan.

The Wisconsin plan states that funds will be used to support the instructional services provided by effective school library programs as they relate to and impact student achievement, digital literacy skills, and school climate;

And in Idaho the plan states that Title II-A funds will be used to partner with the Idaho Commission for Libraries to expand the annual Idaho School Libraries professional development. Their reasoning: In schools where full-time school librarians are properly trained and supported, students achieve at significantly higher levels than students in school where there is not a full-time librarian (see: *School Libraries Work! A Compendium of Research Supporting the Effectiveness of School Libraries*).

Reviewing these may give you some ideas when the time comes to comment on California's plan.

#15) Another way to learn about ESSA and what is going on in other states is to attend the monthly AASL Advocacy and Legislative Coalition. These are held on the 2nd Wednesday of every month at 10 a.m. Pacific Time. We realize that this is a difficult time for working professionals to attend these webinars, so all of these webinars have been archived on the AASL site.

#16) Picture of the AASL Advocacy and Legislative Coalition Site:

Here is more information about this resource, including upcoming calls, as well as the call archive.

#17) And now I would like to introduce Sue Heraper who will focus on ESSA in California.

