

## School District Recommendations for Implementing ESSA: Talking Points

Use these talking points in meetings with district officials. Include real examples from your program where you can. If your program does not yet touch on one of these areas, cite some examples from the recommendations document.

- **Improving Academic Outcomes:** Afterschool programs can improve academic outcomes and should be used as a crucial strategy for improving schools and academic achievement
- **Family Engagement**
  - Afterschool programs provide a crucial bridge between communities and schools and can help foster the family engagement called for under ESSA
  - Title I Part B calls on education agencies to collaborate with community-based organizations, such as afterschool programs, to carry out parent engagement plans and in using its parent engagement funds.
  - PROVIDE EXAMPLES OF HOW YOUR PROGRAM ENGAGES PARENTS
- **STEM**
  - The US is experiencing rapid growth in the need for STEM professionals
  - Afterschool programs expose young people to STEM career options
  - Title IV Part A: Student Support and Academic Enhancement Grants (SSAE) require that districts receiving more than \$30,000 in federal funds to spend at least 20 percent of their funding on “well-rounded” educational activities, which can include STEM
  - Districts receiving SSAE grants are expected to coordinate use of funds in partnership with non-profits
  - PROVIDE EXAMPLES OF HOW YOUR PROGRAM ENGAGES YOUTH IN STEM
- **College and Career Readiness**
  - Afterschool programs provide a link to higher education and career readiness
  - Afterschool programs expose students to higher education options and career paths and teach them skills that can unlock doors to future career prospects
  - Illinois has included college and career readiness as one of its student success/school quality indicators in its ESSA implementation plan
  - Districts that receive Title IV, Part A: Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants can invest in out-of-school time career and college readiness strategies
  - PROVIDE EXAMPLES OF HOW YOUR PROGRAM GETS YOUTH COLLEGE AND CAREER READY
- **Literacy Instruction**
  - Quality afterschool programs have proven effective in raising students’ reading skills
  - Title II Part B: Literacy Education for All, Results for the Nation (LEARN) provides federal support to States to develop, revise, or update comprehensive literacy instruction plans
  - ESSA specifically states that these literacy initiatives can be “augmented by after-school and out-of-school time instruction”
  - PROVIDE EXAMPLES OF HOW YOUR PROGRAM SUPPORTS LITERACY
- **Training and Evidence-Based Practices**
  - ACT Now released Statewide Afterschool Quality Standards in spring 2016, as noted in the state ESSA plan. These Standards were developed in partnership with ISBE and are evidence-based practices that lead to positive youth outcomes. Schools should encourage afterschool instructors to obtain Standards training.
  - Districts should use federal funding provided through Title II Part A to support the integration of afterschool and informal learning pathways into STEM Teacher professional development programs to expand the use of hands-on STEM learning, which can take place in a wide variety of afterschool and informal settings