

Summary of the 2019 National ESSA Title IV-A Survey

July 2, 2019

Title IV, Part A: Background

The most recent iteration of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), which was signed into law in December 2015, brought significant changes to the role of the federal government in K–12 education.

Perhaps no change enjoyed as much bipartisan support as the Student Support and Academic Enrichment (SSAE) program (Title IV, Part A [IV-A]). Designed as a flexible funding block grant, the program is consistent with the cornerstone of the ESSA rewrite, returning decision-making authority to state and local education agency levels. Title IV-A provides significant, critical funding to states and schools, and provides broad guardrails to guide how those dollars are spent, creating “buckets” related to well-rounded education, safe and healthy students, and the effective use of technology. The flexibility of the grant makes it a telling indicator for the varying needs and interests of schools today.

This survey provides more detail about how U.S. school districts are investing the \$1.2 billion federal program, and is a strong complement to the [2018 version](#) of the survey.

About the Survey

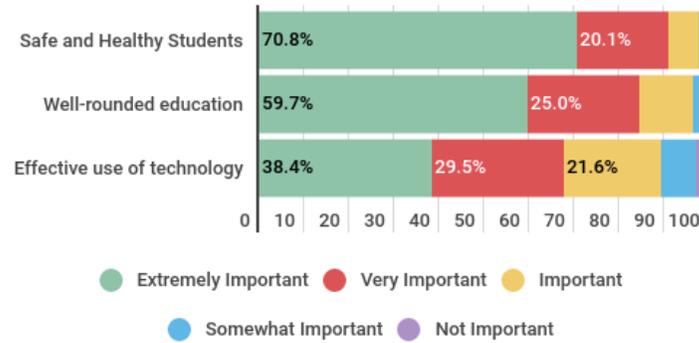
AASA, The School Superintendents Association, the National Association of Federal Program Administrators, the Association of Educational Service Agencies, the Association of School Business Officials International (ASBO), Whiteboard Advisors, and the Title IV-A Coalition spearheaded a national survey of school districts in May 2019, which garnered 1,040 respondents detailing their use of the Title IV-A funding.

Summary of Findings:

- **Across the Investment Categories, Student Health and Safety is a Top Priority.**
 - When asked to describe how school district leaders were prioritizing investment between the individual buckets of ESSA Title IV-A, student health and safety emerged as the top priority (65% of respondents indicating it was “extremely important”); followed by well-rounded education (52% of respondents indicating it was “extremely important”); and education technology (31% of respondents indicating it was “extremely important”).
 - When asked to look to the future and rate the importance of continued investment in the three buckets, respondents prioritized continued investment in student health and safety with 70% responding “extremely important” compared to 59% for well-rounded education and 38% for education technology. See Table 1.

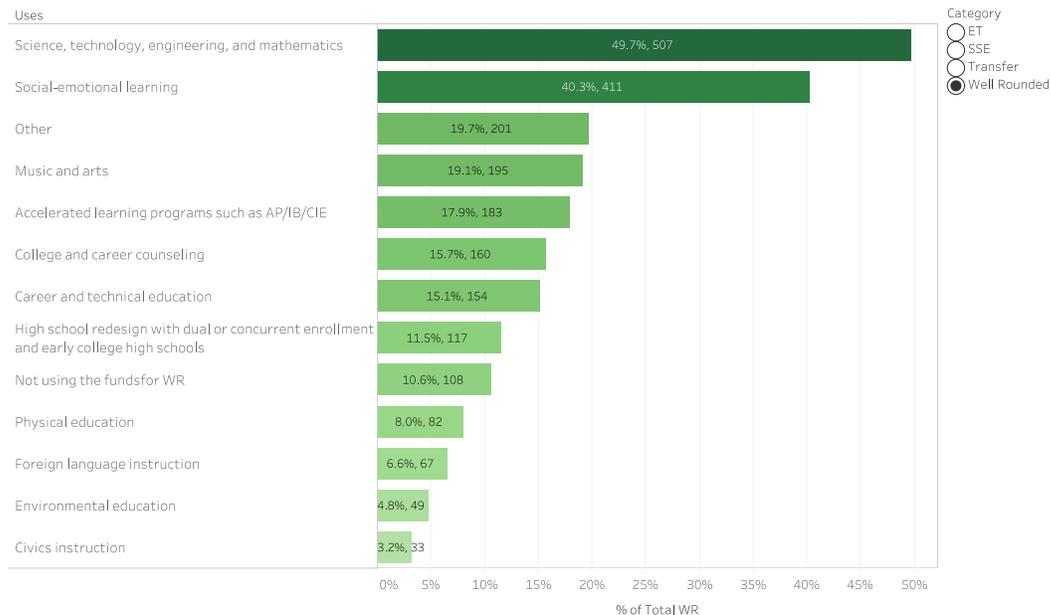
Rate the Importance

Rate the importance of the three investment categories in THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE.



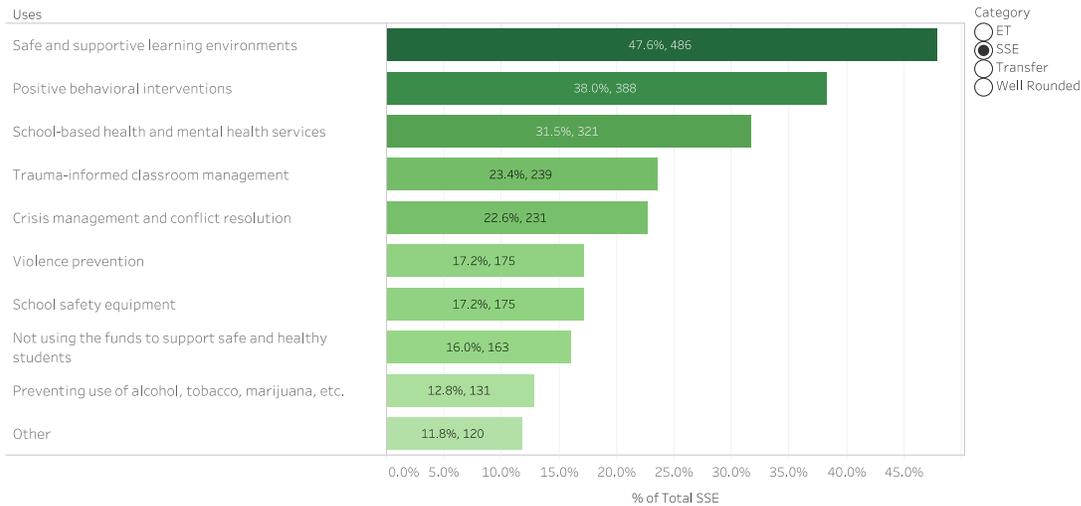
- **Within the Investment Categories, the Important Nuance of IV-A Emerges.** Respondents were asked to expand on the specific programmatic investments they made within each of the three broad buckets. The top five responses in each category are as follows:

- **Well-Rounded Educational Opportunities:**
 1. science, technology, engineering and mathematics (49%);
 2. social-emotional learning (40%);
 3. other (19%);
 4. music/arts (19%); and
 5. accelerated learning programs such as AP/IB/CIE (18%).



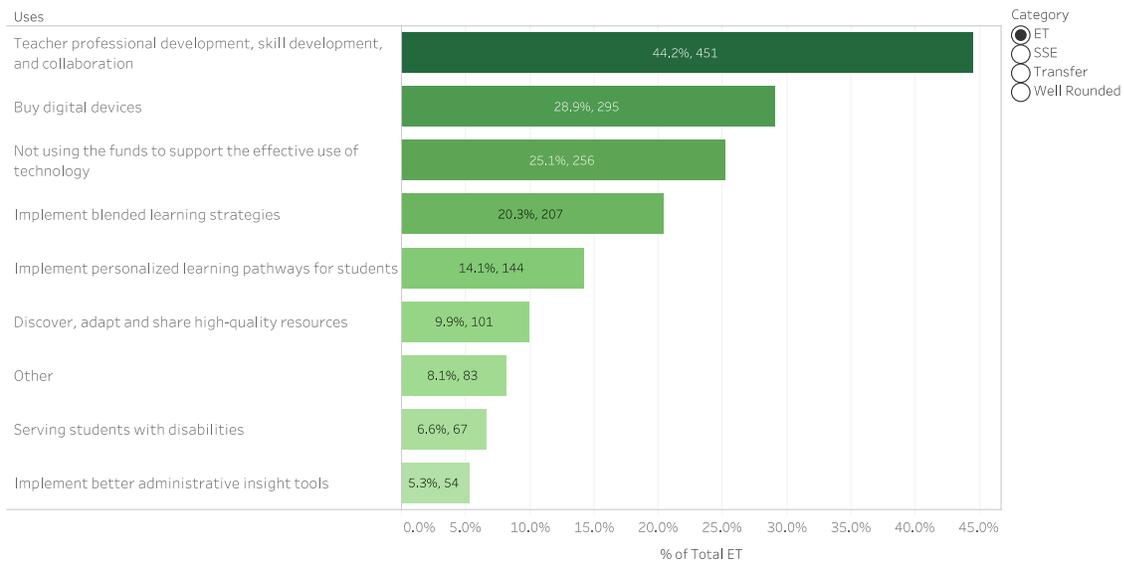
- **Safe and Healthy Students:**

1. safe and supportive learning environments (47.9%);
2. positive behavioral interventions (38.3%);
3. school-based health/mental health services (31.7%);
4. trauma-informed classroom management (23.6%); and
5. crisis management/conflict resolution (22.8%).



- **Effective use of Technology:**

1. teacher professional development/skill development/collaboration (44)%;
2. buy digital devices (29%);
3. not using the funds to support the effective use of technology (25%);
4. implement blended learning strategies (20%); and
5. implement personalized learning pathways for students (14%).



- **Evidence Matters.** The overwhelming majority (92%) of respondents indicated their districts are making efforts to ensure activities, strategies or interventions purchased with the funds are evidence-based, as defined by ESSA.
- **Most are not Transferring the Funds.** Less than one-quarter (21%) of respondents indicated their districts were exercising the transfer option to transfer their Title IV-A funds to a different program. Of those respondents who exercised the flexibility to transfer funds:
 - 27% transferred the funds to ESSA Title I;
 - 12% transferred the funds to ESSA Title II;
 - 1% transferred the funds to ESA Title III; and,
 - 4% reported “other”.
 - Of those respondents transferring funds between Title programs, 20% indicated they moved 90%–100% of their grant amount, while 6% reported transferring 10% or less.
- **Respondent Profile**
 - **Demographics.** When asked to report the percentage of students in their districts receiving free/reduced price lunch (FRPL), 16% of respondents said they are from districts with a FRPL rate of 60-70%. Meanwhile, 15% of respondents are from districts with a FRPL rate of 50–60%; 14% of respondents from districts had an FRPL rate of 40–50%; 12% of respondents from districts reported an FRPL rate of 90–100%; and 11% of respondents from districts had an FRPL rate of 70–80%.
 - More than half of respondents (56.5%) described their communities as rural, compared to 23% reporting ‘suburban’, and 14% reporting ‘urban’.
 - **Familiarity with ESSA IV-A.** When asked to describe their familiarity with how their districts are allocating and investing their Title IV dollars, 86% of respondents reported ‘very familiar’, compared to 1% reporting ‘somewhat familiar’, and 2% responding ‘not familiar’.
 - **Level of Funding.** Districts receiving more than \$30,000 in Title IV-A funding are required to administer a needs assessment to inform their Title IV-A investments. More than half of the respondents (54%) indicated that they breached the \$30,000 threshold. Forty-two percent received less than \$30,000 and did not need to administer a needs assessment.

For more information, contact Noelle Ellerson Ng, AASA associate executive director, policy & advocacy; Ally Bernstein, Title IV-Coalition executive director; or Elleka Yost, ASBO international government affairs manager.