



Summary of Summer Opportunities within State Plans for the Every Student Succeeds Act

A Guide for State Leaders

The National Summer Learning Association is the only national organization exclusively focused on closing the achievement gap by increasing access to high-quality summer learning opportunities. Each year we connect with thousands of programs serving millions of kids, in countless kinds of summer learning and enrichment experiences. From this perspective, NSLA identifies many opportunities in ESSA to support summer learning, and recommends states include consideration of summer opportunities in creating implementation plans in these areas. More detailed descriptions and suggestions are found in the NSLA [ESSA Stakeholder Guide](#).

Opportunities for summer learning explicitly established within ESSA

ESSA already contains many explicit references to summer learning and enrichment opportunities.

Title I

- Summer programs are an allowable activity for Targeted Assistance Schools (Sec 1009(b)(2)(B)).
- Summer programs are an allowable activity for the Education of Migratory Children (Sec 1301(1)).

Title II

- The definition of “comprehensive literacy instruction plans” described in Sec. 2221 (Literacy Education for All, Results for the Nation (LEARN)) includes partnership with private and nonprofit partners, and notes that “it is not required that these activities be carried out in a classroom setting.”
- When designing comprehensive literacy plans, local entities may include activities that “are augmented by after-school and out-of-school time instruction” (Sec 2224(c)(1)(C)).
- An explicitly allowable use for these local sub-grants is “connecting out of-school learning opportunities to in-school learning in order to improve children’s literacy achievement” (Sec 2224(e)(2)).

Title III

- Community-based organizations are specified in several places as key partners for these activities (including shared professional development), and community engagement as a strategy for engaging ELL and immigrant students and connecting families to learning.

Title IV

- The 21st Century Community Learning Center program is reserved for programming that takes place “during non-school hours or periods when school is not in session (such as before and after school or during summer recess)” (Sec 4201(b)(1)(A)).
- Reauthorization of the Promise Neighborhoods program includes references to expanded learning time and the Summer Food Service Program (Sec 4624).
- The definition of a “full service community school” includes “access to services ... during the summer” and required services include “out-of-school-time programs and strategies” (Sec 4622).
- The Jacob K. Javits Gifted and Talented Students Education Program mentions summer programs as one type of “innovative methods and strategies” to serve these students (Sec 4644(c)(2)).



Opportunities for additional summer learning activities and partnerships

Title I

- Summer stakeholders and community partners should be included in locally developing and implementing a school's comprehensive support and improvement plan.
- Direct Student Services (Sec 1003A), names many learning activities that take place in the summer such as advanced coursework, credit recovery, and career and technical education.

Title II

- Summer school is a rich opportunity for pre-service training, career advancement training, and professional development for teachers and principals (Sec 2101(c)(4)), and for principals and teachers to develop and refine their knowledge and practices around community engagement, parent engagement, and coordination of community services (Sec 2103(b)(3)(E)).
- Library, STEM, and CTE programs are well-suited to the summer months.
- Summer opportunities allowed under this program may be different than traditional summer school that many states have mandated for students who are reading below grade level.
- Recognize research showing that book distribution programs (Sec 2226(a)(3)) alone are insufficient to improve literacy skills, and need to be coupled with guided support.

Title III

- Clarify that summer school and more generally, summer learning, are appropriate and effective uses of these funds to support English-language learners under Sec 3115(a), (d), and (e), and for teacher professional development (Sec 3115(c)).
- Digital badging models are an ideal use of these funds for expanding ELL learning beyond the classroom in the summer, in accordance with Sec 3115(d)(7)(B).

Title IV

Part A – Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants.

- Clarify that these activities need not take place during the school day or school year (Sec 4101), particularly as other programs under this Title specifically recognize the allowable use of summer and OST (e.g., Secs. 4201, 4624, 4625, and 4644).
- Take advantage of the call for coordination, and emphasize the need for a community systems-approach to learning that includes school year and summer providers and stakeholders. Such coordination will also maximize use of smaller pots of funding by pooling them toward common goals and strategies.

Part B – 21st Century Community Learning Centers

- To date, 19 states have made summer programming either a requirement or a priority for these subgrants. We ask that more states actively support summer activities under this program.
- Adopt the best parts of differing definitions of expanded learning time in ESSA: require ELT programs to conduct the types of activities as laid out in Title IV, while allowing ELT to mean “a longer school day, week, or year schedule to significantly increase the total number of school hours” (Sec 8002(6)).

Please [see our ESSA Stakeholder Guide](#) for more in-depth discussion of these recommendations. Please contact the National Summer Learning Association with any questions or comments on policy issues related to summer learning.