

Every Student Succeeds Act

Academics and CTE in the Classroom

THE PASSAGE OF THE EVERY STUDENT SUCCEEDS ACT (ESSA) marked a major step toward ensuring that all students are prepared to graduate from high school ready for college and careers. The new law includes critical measures to strengthen the role of CTE in our nation's K-12 education system.

ONE KEY CHANGE IS THAT UNDER ESSA, states may now reserve up to 3 percent of their allocation under Title I funding for disadvantaged students to provide “direct student services.” This reserve allows states to award funds directly to high-need school districts that may be used to cover the costs of participation in CTE coursework that is aligned with state academic standards and leads to an industry-recognized credential, which would not otherwise be available to students. This funding could offer an opportunity for districts to supplement their Perkins funding and expand access to CTE programs of study and career pathway programs to more students.

In addition, the local plan required by Title I of ESSA provides a more detailed picture for how school districts will use federal funds to support the goals and activities outlined in the law. For example, districts may support efforts to integrate academic and CTE content in the classroom—an important theme that will be echoed throughout ESSA's provisions on CTE. This can be done through developing and implementing coordinated instructional strategies that may include experiential and work-based learning opportunities for in-demand careers and occupations. CTE can also be an important part of local efforts to promote effective strategies to transition students from middle grades to high school and on to postsecondary education. Additionally, ESSA allows those schools in greatest need of assistance that are operating schoolwide and targeted assistance programs to develop and implement dual or concurrent enrollment programs to provide postsecondary coursework and opportunities for students to earn postsecondary credit while in high school.

ESSA recognizes the academic rigor of CTE programs by including CTE in the definition of a well-rounded education. Along with English, science, technology, engineering, mathematics, foreign languages, history, and the arts among others, CTE is counted as a critical subject that contributes to the academic and career success of all students. As part of a well-rounded education in ESSA, CTE could be integrated in comprehensive literacy instruction in Title II, and as part of expanded learning time opportunities for students through the 21st Century Community Learning Centers program.

How Does ESSA Support Rigorous Academics and CTE Content in the Classroom?

- Allows for Direct Student Services to Expand Access to CTE Coursework
- Supports Development of Coordinated Instructional Strategies, Including Experiential Learning Opportunities
- Recognizes CTE as Component of Well-rounded Education
- Expands Access to CTE and Academic Programs through Technology
- Promotes CTE in Literacy Education and Expanded Learning Opportunities

Well-rounded education is an important part of Title IV of ESSA, which provides funds for a range of support services for students. Title IV allows states and districts expand access to CTE and academic programs through the use of technology. Funds can be used to improve student achievement by promoting innovative technological practices in the classroom, such as increasing access to online dual or concurrent enrollment opportunities, CTE courses and programs leading to a recognized postsecondary credential. Title IV also promotes “safe and healthy students,” by encouraging districts to improve instructional practices that provide students with information on safe relationship behavior, with a focus on preventing assault, domestic abuse and dating violence. In high schools across the country, CTE family and consumer sciences courses have long incorporated education on safe relationships as part of the curriculum, and CTE educators can utilize ESSA resources to help their students learn how to build healthy relationships.

The Association for Career and Technical Education (ACTE) is the nation's largest education association dedicated to the advancement of education that prepares youth and adults for successful careers. For more information, contact: Mitch Coppes (mcoppes@acteonline.org or 703-683-3111), ACTE, 1410 King Street, Alexandria, VA 22314, www.acteonline.org.

