



# School Nutrition & the Every Student Succeeds Act

*School nutrition programs can be incorporated into a state's ESSA plan as an evidence-based intervention for improved academic performance.*

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requires that each state submit a [State Plan](#) outlining accountability frameworks and indicators of success. ESSA strongly encourages participation from community stakeholders in the development and implementation of the plan.

## Examples of Nutrition Programs in State Plans

[Montana](#) endorses school nutrition programs as a key initiative for supporting school conditions and a comprehensive learning environment.

[Indiana](#) includes a “Multi-tiered Systems of Support” framework to support the whole child, including nutritional health.

[Oklahoma](#) aims to expand school nutrition programs in efforts to combat child hunger and increase academic achievement.

[Illinois](#) utilizes the Whole Child model of which Nutrition Environment & Services is an essential part.

[New Jersey](#) ensures “basic human needs of children, such as safety and nutrition” are met through school and district accountability systems, including reports.

[New York](#) will encourage LEAs to adopt a Whole Child model in recognition that student hunger can lead to poor school performance.

## Title I: Improving Basic Programs Operated by State and Local Education Agencies

Title 1 provides all children with a fair, equitable, and high-quality education. States are required to notify Local Education Agencies (LEAs) of low performing schools and the LEAs must create support and improvement plans for these schools. Improvement plans are to be developed in partnership with stakeholders, be based on needs assessments and utilize evidence-based interventions, such as school nutrition programs.

### School Nutrition Programs as an Evidence-Based Academic Intervention <sup>3</sup>

Hunger due to insufficient food intake is associated with lower grades, higher rates of absenteeism, repeating a grade, and an inability to focus among students.

Student participation in the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) School Breakfast Program (SBP) is associated with increased academic grades and standardized test scores, reduced absenteeism, and improved cognitive performance (e.g., memory).

36 states and D.C. list rates of chronic absenteeism as an indicator of success.

Skipping breakfast is associated with decreased cognitive performance (e.g., alertness, attention, memory, processing of complex visual display, problem solving) among students.

Deficits of specific nutrients (i.e., vitamins A, B6, B12, C, folate, iron, zinc, and calcium) are associated with lower grades and higher rates of absenteeism and tardiness among students.

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

SSAE grants are intended to support school efforts to provide all students with access to a well-rounded education and improve school conditions for student learning.

**SSAE federal funding increased from 400 million in FY 2017 to 1.1 Billion in FY 2018.<sup>7</sup>**

States agencies are required to award 95% of the SSAE grant allotment to LEAs. LEAs will submit a local application to their state agency and use awarded funds to develop programs that foster safe, healthy, supportive environments. Each LEA is awarded a minimum of \$10,000. LEAs receiving more than \$30,000 must complete a comprehensive needs assessment.

Allowable SSAE use of funds includes implementation of programs that support a healthy, active lifestyle, such as school nutrition programs.<sup>3</sup>

Georgia's [State Plan](#) will use SSAE funds received to support the education of the whole child including through nutrition efforts.

Check your [state plan](#) for opportunities to align school nutrition programs with efforts to foster a supportive learning environment.

Engage with administrators to include support for school lunch and school breakfast programs in needs assessments and improvement plans, and to apply for SSAE funds.

### Sample Questions for Needs Assessments:

- What is the average daily participation of free and reduced-price students?
- Does the school offer an afterschool or snack program?
- Does the school offer alternate breakfast service models?

### Opportunities to Incorporate School Meals in a School's Improvement Strategy

<b>SUMMER 2018</b>	Schools start work with stakeholders to develop needs assessments and an improvement plan
<b>2018-2021/2023</b>	States support implementation of school improvement plans
<b>2018-2021/2023</b>	Lowest performing schools improve over a period of 2-4 years or must implement more rigorous strategies

### Key Sources:

1. Congress.gov, [S.1177 Every Student Succeeds Act](#)
2. United States Department of Education, [ESSA State Plan Submission](#)
3. United States Department of Education, [Non-Regulatory Guidance Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants](#)
4. National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, [Health and Academic Achievement](#)
5. Pew Charitable Trusts, [The Every Student Succeeds Act Creates Opportunities to Improve Health and Education at Low-Performing Schools](#)
6. Georgetown University Future Ed, [Chronic Absenteeism Under the Every Student Succeeds Act](#)
7. National Education Association, [Fiscal Year 2018 Appropriations for Programs Authorized Under ESSA](#)