

## **Talking Points for Outreach to School District Administrators: Use of ESSA Funding for Environmental Education**

### **Overview**

- Title IV of the Every Student Succeeds Act makes environmental education explicitly eligible for funding for the first time.
- In Title IV, Part A (Student Support and Academic Enrichment), environmental education is one of the many eligible activities associated with providing students with a “well-rounded education”.
- In accordance with certain parameters, local education agencies (LEAs) have tremendous flexibility in how they use these block grants.
- The FY2018 federal budget includes \$1.1 billion for Title IVA, nearly three times more than the FY17 budget.
- Funds in Title II of ESSA may be used for professional development to support teachers’ ability to provide a “well-rounded education,” including environmental education.
- [Guidance from the U.S. Department of Education](#) to the states on Title IVA highlights environmental education as one of the activities eligible for funding.
- ESSA funding is meant to supplement, not supplant, state and local education funding. In other words, LEAs must use their federal allocations for additional resources and programs to help students succeed, rather than replace state and local funding.

### **The Case for EE**

- Integrating EE into the curriculum can help to achieve other academic goals, including meeting Next Generation Science Standards and providing students with opportunities to practice STEM skills.
- Research demonstrates that EE helps students gain not just knowledge, but also important skills such as critical thinking and problem solving. [More on what the research tells us about the benefits of EE for K-12 education can be found here.](#)
- For states that have an environmental literacy plan or priorities for environmental literacy, these funds offer a new opportunity to advance goals associated with those plans and priorities.

### **Process**

- Federal funds in Title IVA are distributed by Title I formula to the states and, in turn, distributed according to formula by states to each LEA.
- LEAs will submit an application to their State Education Agency describing their plans for use of funds.
- LEAs that receive more than \$30,000 are required to conduct a needs assessment and include a wide variety of stakeholders in the needs assessment.
- A [comprehensive timeline for ESSA implementation](#) has been developed by the Council for Chief State School Officers and provides additional detail.