

A Practical Guide to the *REVISED* Every Student Succeeds Act State Plan Template and Future Ready Schools®

On March 16th, the United States Department of Education released its Revised Every Student Succeeds Act State Plan Template. While some states have already submitted their ESSA plan by the first deadline on April 3rd, a good number are still working on their plans in preparation for the September 2017 deadline. This practical guide is to help those states incorporate their plans to support the integration of technology in the classroom into the Revised ESSA Template.

The Revised vs the Original Template

The Revised ESSA Template reflects the new administration's approach to regulation, which differs significantly from the prior administration's. The following are the key differences, as viewed through the lens of a state's Future Ready Schools initiative:

- **Structure:** The Revised Template follows a federal program structure, unlike the Original Template that followed more of a "plan" structure (e.g., identify goals, stakeholders, and areas of implementation).
- **Technology:** Or the lack of it. Technology isn't mentioned in the Title IV Part A section of the new template. Instead, the Department opted for more open ended language asking how the state plans to implement Title IV Part A. *At this time, Congress is deciding how much will be allocated to this program, and whether any changes will be made to the program as a result.*
- **Consultation:** The Revised Template does not require states to provide any evidence of stakeholder engagement in the development of the plan. *Nonetheless, stakeholder engagement is a requirement of the law that states are required to follow.*

While these differences are significant, the underlying requirements of ESSA have not changed, nor has a state's ability to integrate Future Readiness into its plan. [Moreover, it is still recommended that states engage multiple stakeholders in the formulation both of their Future Ready plan and their state ESSA plan, even if they are not required to provide evidence of such engagement in the template.]

Opportunities to Embed in the Revised Template

If a state has an interest in supporting both the use of technology in the classroom and its Future Ready Schools® (FRS) initiatives, it should address the following sections in its consolidated plan:

- *Section A(4)(viii)(e): Title I Part A; Statewide Accountability System and School Support; Technical Assistance:* The Revised Template does not ask states explicitly to identify the specific evidence-based interventions, such as personalized learning, as part of its technical assistance to districts. However, the requirement for evidence-based interventions is in statute, and this would be the section where a state can spotlight its use of personalized learning to support school improvement efforts.
- *Section D.1: Title II Part A; Use of Funds:* This is a fairly broad provision regarding state activities to support effective instruction. States can use this section to explain how they plan to leverage technology to support teacher development and how they plan to improve instructional use of technology in the classroom as a means to improve student outcomes.
- *Section D.6: Title II Part A; Teacher Preparation:* While this section's title speaks specifically of teacher preparation programs, the language is much broader encompassing "the actions the State may take to . . . strengthen support for teachers, principals, or other school leaders based on the needs of the State." This provides an opportunity for State's to reference their efforts to support teachers and leaders as part of their Future Ready.
- *Sections F.1 and F.2: Title IV Part A; Use of Funds & Award Subgrants:* These sections represent the entirety of Title IV Part A and the language is incredibly broad ("Describe how the SEA will use funds received . . . for state-level activities."). So, this is where to build in your specific plans to leverage Title IV Part A funds to support digital learning.

Other Provisions

As with the Original Template, there may be opportunities to incorporate Future Ready Schools work in other sections of the Revised Template depending on a state's specific Future Ready Schools plan. For instance, if a state is planning to use federal funds through ESSA to establish a statewide network that connects students in rural schools to high quality content and teachers across the state, the state may want to mention this in both Section H (Title V Part B: Rural and Low-income school programs) and Section D.2 (Title II Part A; Use of Funds to Improve Equitable Access to Teachers in Title I Part A Schools). Again, these opportunities depend on the nuance and scope of your state's Future Ready Plan.