Consolidated State Plan
Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965
Title IV, Part A
Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants

Alabama Department of Education
Prevention and Support Services Section

TITLE IV, PART A INTRODUCTION

To ensure our education system prepares every child to graduate from high school ready to thrive in college or careers, *ESSA* established the Students Support and Academic Enrichment (SSAE) program as one of the provisions to support students' successes. This program is intended to help meet these goals by increasing the capacity of State educational agencies, local educational agencies, schools, and local communities to: 1) provide all students with access to a well-rounded education, 2) improve school conditions for student learning, and 3) improve the use of technology in order to improve the academic achievement and digital literacy of all students. (*ESSA* section 4101)

Within each of these areas, LEAs have broad flexibility to use the SSAE program funds for a variety of activities to improve student outcomes and address the opportunity gaps identified through the needs assessment. The following table provides examples of allowable activities and is not an exhaustive list. (Non-Regulatory Guidance *Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants*)

Overview of Examples of Allowable SSAE Uses of Funds* Overview of Allowable SSAE Program Activities

Well-Rounded Educational Opportunities (ESEA *section 4107*)	Safe and Healthy Students (ESEA *section 4108*)	Effective Use of Technology (ESEA *section 4109*)
• Improving access to foreign language instruction, arts, and music education • Supporting college and career counseling, including providing information on opportunities for financial aid through the early FAFSA • Providing programming to improve instruction and student engagement in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), including computer science, and increasing access to these subjects for underrepresented groups • Promoting access to accelerated learning opportunities including Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) programs, dual or concurrent[5] enrollment programs and early college high schools[6] • Strengthening instruction in American history, civics, economics, geography, government education, and environmental education	• Promoting community and parent involvement in schools • Providing school-based mental health services and counseling • Promoting supportive school climates to reduce the use of exclusionary discipline and promoting supportive school discipline • Establishing or improving dropout prevention • Supporting re-entry programs and transition services for justice-involved youth • Implementing programs that support a healthy, active lifestyle (nutritional and physical education) • Implementing systems and practices to prevent bullying and harassment • Developing relationship building skills to help improve safety through the recognition and prevention of coercion, violence, or abuse • Establishing community partnerships	• Supporting high-quality professional development for educators, school leaders, and administrators to personalize learning and improve academic achievement • Building technological capacity and infrastructure • Carrying out innovative blended learning projects • Providing students in rural, remote, and underserved areas with the resources to benefit from high-quality digital learning opportunities • Delivering specialized or rigorous academic courses and curricula using technology, including digital learning technologies and assistive technology

(Non-Regulatory Guidance *Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants*)

Definition

"School climate" describes a range of campus conditions, including safety, relationships and engagement, and the environment, that may influence student learning and well-being. Positive school climates that promote student learning and well-being often feature:

- Safe environments free of violence, bullying, harassment, chronic absenteeism, truancy and substance use;

- Appropriate facilities and physical surroundings;

- Supportive academic settings;

- Clear and fair disciplinary policies;

- Respectful, trusting, and caring relationships throughout the school community; and

- Available social, emotional, and behavioral supports and services.

Positive school climates are inclusive of and responsive to students of all backgrounds, regardless of race, color, national origin, language, disability, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or gender identity. See appendix, General 1 for the Social/Emotional Intervention Initiatives for Students Success and appendix, General 2 for the Blueprint for Support Services

Research also shows that students who become truant and eventually drop out of school are placed at a long term disadvantage in becoming productive citizens. High school dropouts, for example, are two and a half times more likely to be on welfare than high school graduates. In 1995, high school dropouts were almost twice as likely to be unemployed earn much lower salaries. Students who become truant and eventually drop out of high school too often are destined for a life of struggle.

We know that in some cities unexcused absences can number in the thousands each day. Statistics gathered are as follows:

- Studies have shown that two-thirds of male juveniles arrested while truant tested positive for drug use.

- According to one confidential survey, nearly 1 in ten, 15 year olds were truant at least once a week.

- During a recent sample period in Miami, more than 71 percent of the 13 to 16 year olds prosecuted for criminal violations had been truant.

- In Minneapolis, daytime crime dropped 68 percent after police began citing truant students.

- In San Diego, 44 percent of violent juvenile crime occurs between 8:30am and 1:30pm.

- In Pittsburgh, each day approximately 3,500 students or 12 percent of the student population are absent and about 70 percent of these absences are unexcused. In Philadelphia, approximately 2,500 students a day are absent without an excuse.

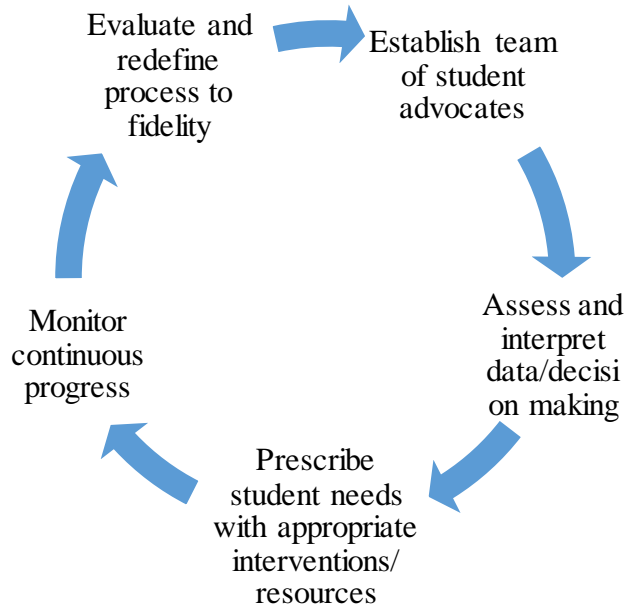- In Milwaukee, on any given school day, there are approximately 4,000 unexcused absences.

Research further shows that creating positive school climates can help districts, schools, and teachers meet key goals, including: boosting student achievement and closing achievement gaps; increasing high school graduation rates; decreasing teacher turnover and increasing teacher satisfaction; and turning around low-performing schools. Positive school climates also enhance safety in the school and community by increasing communication between students, families, and faculty. At the same time, schools reduce various forms of harm to students that can stem from negative school climates, including violence, bullying, and even suicide.

A positive school climate that provides students with ready access to emotional and behavioral supports can affect the capacity of students and staff to prevent, respond to, and recover from emergencies.

- Prevention – A positive school climate can help to prevent student failure because it can reduce the incidence of behaviors that can contribute to crisis (e.g., violence, bullying, harassment, chronic absences, truancy, and substance abuse). Further, schools with positive school climates engage students in developing strong relationships with staff and peers, increasing the likelihood that students will quickly report potential threats to trusted adults within the school.

- Response – Schools with positive school climates teach students the social and emotional competencies that enable them to develop persistence, tolerance of frustration, resilience and ability to manage their emotions during an emergency or crisis of any sort in their life. The teachers, counselors, school resources officers, and other staff who create positive school climates train regularly on child and adolescent development, and on how to respond appropriately to a variety of student behaviors so they are able to de-escalate aggressive behavior before it becomes a threat to school safety and attendance.

- Recovery – A positive school climate can help in the recovery from student failure because it represents a commitment, to providing emotional and mental health services and supports to all members of the community. Schools with such a climate create an environment that recognizes the importance of social and emotional health, and so support the recovery of all members of the school community and promote an understanding that individual needs will vary.

The Implementation Process for Behaviors to include but are not limited to attendance, alternative pathways, discipline, school health, school safety, and social and emotional follows:

Evaluate and redefine process to fidelity

Establish team of student advocates

Assess and interpret data/decision making

Prescribe student needs with appropriate interventions/ resources

Monitor continuous progress

A. Attendance

Attendance is an essential ingredient of Academic Success. The Annie Casey Foundation identified: Attendance Every Day, Achievement Every Year, and Attainment over Time as a "School Success Framework". Hedy Chang , CEO of Attendance Works , has spent countless hours researching and validating the impact of students missing as few as 2 days a month of school on the academic benchmarks of success and the implications of lower reading skills in the early years to high school dropouts and potentially to domestic violence and crime. Robert Balfanz, Executive Director of the Everyone Graduates Center, stormed the research world with the significant statistical differences among students who were identified early for at risk behaviors associated with school failure such as attendance, behavior and course or grade attainment through the national development of Early *Warning Systems.*

Alabama with approximately 13 million total absences is reflective of the nation's concern with as many as 7.5 million students missing at least one month of school every year. This equates to 135 million days of lost instructional time and consequently erodes academic achievement and threatens students' chances of graduating on time. Most everyone agrees that this is totally unacceptable as attendance has grown to be the number one indicator of school failure for students and reveals a high correlation to poor work ethics in the workforce.

Alabama *was* one of the first states to design a Kindergarten through Grade 12 tool, The Alabama Graduation Tracking System (GTS) and to provide professional development opportunities for the administrators/ educators on the Six Step Implementation Process to include a monitoring instrument with evidence to support implementation. See Appendix A1, the Introduction/ Implementation Process for the Alabama K-12 Graduation Tracking System (GTS) and Alabama State Department of Education Operation Graduation: GTS and Combatting Truancy.

See also Appendix A2, "Alabama system IDs at risk students to reduce dropout rate", Tech and Learning publication.

Definition – Chronic Absenteeism is defined as missing extensive amount of school for any reason –is a predictor of third graders being unable to read on grade level, middle school students failing key/core courses and ninth graders dropping out of school. *Attendance Works* proposes counting students as chronically absent when they have missed 10 percent or more school days. This research-based threshold allows for easy comparisons across districts and promotes earlier identification of students to trigger intervention. Chronic Absence is one of only a few measures meeting all of the requirements for ESSA's School Quality indicator. According to *Data for Action 2013*- 21 states indicate that data is collected on chronic absenteeism but definitions vary. See Appendix A3, the recent release of the first time ever national data set on chronic absence by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights (OCR) reveals that this promise of an equal opportunity to learn is being broken for far too many children. Percentages to reflect the band of chronic absences in Alabama as calculated from total absence data using the four bands of categories : Satisfactory Attendance (missing less than 5%); At-risk Attendance (missing 6-9.99%); Moderate Chronic Absence (missing between 10-19%): and Severe Chronic Absence (missing over 20%) clearly denote a concern in many of the school systems. The largest impact at this time is the inordinate number of students ranging in the "Moderate Chronic Absence" band missing a range of 10-19% of school. See Appendix A4, Examining Bands of Attendance.

Alabama understands the impact and importance of monitoring chronic absences:

- Development of a habit of regular attendance is essential to succeeding in school and in the workplace.

- Chronic absence affects far too many students exacerbating achievement gaps and contributing to drop out rates.

- School systems and schools may not realize the scope of the attendance problem because absenteeism is easily masked by average daily attendance and truancy figures. (Truancy is determined by only calculating unexcused absences.)

- Intervening early can save school systems and schools money in costly remediation when absences continue unchecked.

Implications for Action

A growing number of efforts across the country (Grand Rapids, San Francisco, Connecticut and Arkansas) who have demonstrated that chronic absenteeism is solvable have several components in common: required a community wide effort that emphasized the importance of showing up for school, created a welcoming environment once students arrived and addressed barriers such as unreliable transportation, asthma or a dangerous walk to school. Another common thread throughout these success stories is access to real-time data to trigger action. Steps required include:

1. Invest in consistent and accurate data collection

   - Adopt a common definition of chronic absence-

   - Offer guidance on how to count a full day of Instruction or Absence

   - Ensure standard protocol exists for collecting attendance data

   - Create systems for assessing data accuracy

2. Use data to understand need and disproportionate impact in order to target resources

   Multi-Tiered System of Support.

Tier 1 – Students receive high-quality, scientifically based instruction, differentiated to meet their needs, and are screened on a periodic basis to identify struggling learners who need additional support. Examples may include: recognizing good and improved attendance; educating and engaging students and families; monitoring whether absences are increasing; clarifying attendance expectations and goals and establishing positive and engaging school climate.

Tier 2 – Students not making adequate progress in attending school are provided with increasingly intensive interventions matched to their needs on the basis of levels of performance and rates of progress. Examples may include: providing personalized early outreach; meeting with students/family to develop a plan; and extending outreach to students with health challenges; offering attendance Mentor/Buddy strategies.

Tier 3 – Students receive individualized, intensive interventions that target the students' skill deficits for the remediation of existing problems and the prevention of more severe problems. Examples may include: intensive education case management with coordination of public agency and legal response as needed.

B. Discipline

The need to rethink and redesign school discipline practices is long overdue. Too many schools resort too quickly to exclusionary discipline, even for minor misbehaviors. Exclusionary discipline is so common that in some cases, pre-K students as young as three- and four-years old are getting suspended. Schools should remove students from the classroom as a last resort, and only for appropriately serious infractions, like endangering the safety of other students, teachers, or themselves. Unfortunately today, suspensions and expulsions are not primarily used as a last resort for serious infractions.

A landmark study in Texas found nearly six in ten public school students, a majority of students, were suspended or expelled at least once between 7th and 12th grades. Nationwide, as many as 95 percent of out-of-school suspensions are for nonviolent misbehaviors such as being disruptive, acting disrespectfully, tardiness, profanity, and dress code violations. Data for the Alabama collected over a three year timeframe between the years of 2014 to 2016 reveal an average of 61,992 in-school suspensions, 81,076 out-of-school suspensions, and 433 expulsions (Alabama State Department of Education).

No school can be a great school if it is not first a safe school, and no teacher or student should ever feel unsafe or unable to concentrate on teaching and learning. Principals, teachers, families, and students all have a vested interest in minimizing disorder and disruptiveness in schools. Therefore it is imperative for classroom management techniques, alternative to suspension, and education policies which reflect restorative justice practices be implemented in support of student success. Positive school climates not only minimize unnecessary suspensions and expulsions, but also reduce disorder in the classroom and bolster learning. Those goals are complementary, not conflicting—they reinforce each other (U.S Department of Education).

<u>Definition</u> – School discipline has two main goals: (1) ensure the safety of staff and students, and (2) create an environment conducive to learning.

Implications for Action

<u>Tier 1</u> – Students, parents, school personnel, community members, all stakeholders are granted the opportunity for policy input and information sharing. School personnel and students receive training on schoolwide behavior expectations in all areas of the school to include the classroom, common areas, and hallways. Teachers and administrators receive additional training in creating a positive.

<u>Tier 2</u> – Students not making adequate progress in social and emotional behaviors are provided with increasingly intensive supports for their needs on the basis of needs.

<u>Tier 3</u> – Students receive individualized, intensive interventions that target the student's social and emotional behaviors to in an effort to prevent more severe problems. See Appendix B, Discipline Intervention Initiatives for Students Success.

C. School Health

School health directly affects students' ability to learn. It is crucial that school health professionals collect and analyze their schools' needs quantitatively through gathered data and qualitatively through student and staff feedback. *(Standardized Health Record Assessment based on Act 2009-280).* Each local school superintendent shall designate one registered nurse for the entire school district whose responsibilities shall include annually providing a full and comprehensive assessment of all student health needs within that district. Based upon the assessment findings, the designated nurse shall make a recommendation to the local school superintendent concerning the implementation and coordination of students health needs.

School nurses protect and promote student health, facilitate optimal health which can advance academic success. They are the leaders who bridge health care and education, provide care coordination, advocate for quality student-centered care, and collaborate to design systems that allow individuals to develop their full potential. (*NASN Board of Directors* February 2017)

Definition - Optimal learning requires good emotional and physical health. School Health Services works together with families and community for children's health. The School Nurse at each school works with the school administrator to provide an environment that promotes optimal wellness and safety for all students. The school nurse provides individualized quality health care for students, emphasizes health education at all levels and utilizes available community and school resources to promote an overall healthy lifestyle for students, staff and families.

Implications for Action

Tier 1 – Students receive high-quality, scientifically based instruction, differentiated to meet their
     needs, and are screened on a periodic basis to identify struggling learners who need

additional support. At this level all Students may benefit from Services provided from Health Screenings, Child Nutrition Program, and the School Wellness Program.

Tier 2 – Students not making adequate progress in the core area of wellness are provided with increasingly intensive interventions matched to their needs on the basis of levels of performance and rates of progress. This is more Student Specific, the Interventions focus on the chronic and acute illnesses that has been identified from the school health assessment record. Individualized health care plans are written to tailor the care given to each student.

Tier 3 – Students receive individualized, intensive interventions that target the students' health for the existing problems and the prevention of more severe problems. Health care team conferences are provided for those that have a need to know the medical needs of the student. Collaboration is needed to provide the resources and the referrals in order for the student to be successful at school. See Appendix C, School health Intervention Initiatives for Students Success.

D. School Safety

Each school day, our state's schools are entrusted to provide a safe and healthy learning environment for approximately 740,000 elementary and secondary school students in public schools. Families and communities expect schools to keep their children and youths safe from threats (human-caused emergencies such as crime and violence) and hazards (natural disasters, disease outbreaks, and accidents). (USDOE, Office of Safe and Healthy Students, REMS TA Center)

Definition - Safe schools promotes the protection of students from violence, exposure to weapons and threats, theft, bullying, and the sale or use of illegal substances on school grounds. School safety is linked to improved student and school outcomes. In particular, emotional and physical safety in school are related to academic performance. At the same time, students who are victims of physical or emotional harassment or who are involved in the sale or use of illegal substances on school grounds are at risk for poor attendance, course failure and dropout. (National Center for Safe Supportive Learning Environments)

Implications for Action

Tier 1 – Students, parents, school personnel, community members, and first responders receive annual high-quality trainings and information about school safety (see Appendix D1, Emergency Operations Plan pamphlet. Students and school personnel received school safety updates on a periodic basis within the school year. School personnel receive additional training in warning signs of social and emotional behaviors in students who need additional supports. Students receive additional training in warning signs of social and emotional behaviors and how to seek help.

<u>Tier 2</u> – Students not making adequate progress in social and emotional behaviors are provided with increasingly intensive supports for their needs on the basis of needs.

<u>Tier 3</u> – Students not making adequate progress in social and emotional behaviors are provided with increasingly intensive supports for their needs on the basis of needs. See Appendix D2, School Safety Intervention Initiatives for Students Success.