

3. Engaging on Resource Alignment

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3.1 Resource Mapping and Budgeting

Mapping Resources

Federal funding under ESSA should be viewed as a catalyst to review and reconsider the entirety of a school's available resources, including state and local funds, technology, people, and time. Use your community's common vision to remind your community and decision makers of common ground, and to drive resource decisions.

Conversations about what is possible are often limited by lack of resources. While adequate funding is a very real concern, be sure to include in the collective understanding of **available resources**:

- ✓ partnerships with local businesses, NGOs, and public services
- ✓ links to or partnerships with local healthcare providers or public service agencies (e.g. counseling)
- ✓ philanthropic investment
- ✓ Students, parents, families, and other guardians or mentor adults that might volunteer their time and talent
- ✓ outdoor recreational spaces and on-site job training to expand learning environments
- ✓ online learning, free online tools and databases, and web-based curriculum supports
- ✓ the influence of school board members, the business community and school site counsel
- ✓ technology, including classroom tools and town/city resources
- ✓ peer schools and districts that may be able to pool resources to provide additional services to all students; and other available resources

Clearly communicate the opportunity of this moment with stakeholders: ESSA funding opportunities also allow for restructuring and reallocation, and many of the opportunities under the law allow or explicitly call for partnership, planning, and innovation.



Keep in Mind

Strong partnerships in development of a plan translate into strong collaboration in implementation. Start engaging early!

Engagement with stakeholders in building a resource-base for available strategic options should include a broad group, including stakeholders that may not yet have a direct link to the school or district community (e.g. local businesses, retirees, other public services).

Highlighted Resources Partnerships



Working with Partners is an essential way to build your resources to implement ambitious strategies. Beginning with intentional planning for integrated community schools is one way to build out school and/or district partnerships.

Learn more:

- ✓ [Community Schools Implementation Standards](#) (Partners for Each and Every Child, Coalition for Community Schools)
- ✓ [Framework for Assessing School-Community Partnerships](#) (National Center for Time and Learning)



Interagency Cooperation

Charter Schools: While it may be difficult to completely align agendas, it can be very helpful to work on discrete programs and practices with other departments and agencies (e.g. in the health sector). Start small to build relationships so that you, together, can consolidate and jointly use resources to support students.

School Boards and LEAs: School board members are often connected to outside resources, businesses, and families. School board members and LEAs should connect one another to a broader community and expand collective understanding about what is possible.

Financial Reporting Requirement

Under ESSA, districts must report per-pupil spending at the LEA and school level using actual salary data. This new level of financial transparency aims to promote equity across schools.

Learn more at erstrategies.org/tap/essa_financial_reporting_requirement

Spotlight on California Resource Mapping



[Resource Mapping and Management to Address Barriers to Learning: An Intervention for Systemic Change](#) (Center for Mental Health in Schools at UCLA, 2015)

Promoting Equity

Resources must be allocated unequally in order to promote equitable outcomes for students. Focus efforts, partnerships, funding, and engagement on those that need targeted resources most.

Budgeting

Aligning resources to support strategic changes can also be done in consultation with stakeholders. That doesn't necessarily mean collective decision-making on all the details, but it might mean explicit partnership with outside organizations or peer districts or schools and should include information sharing about the broad budgeting decisions with all stakeholders to promote transparency.

Don't forget that budgeting is policy-making — put your money where your values are, fund fewer programs with fidelity rather than spreading your funds too thin, fund evidence-based programs only, and get creative about where to get additional funding or resources to fill gaps for the essentials (e.g. check out Playful Playgrounds for grants to support facilities funding for school play areas).

The following resources from Education Resource Strategies are helpful tools for budgeting as a priority-driven and collaborative process:

- ✓ [Budget Hold 'Em](#)
- ✓ [Transforming School Funding: A Guide to implementing Student-Based Budgeting](#)
- ✓ [Turnaround Schools Resource Guide: District Strategies for Success and Sustainability](#)



Keep in Mind

If you are a district-level leader, it is important to also follow through on your budget allocations through effective monitoring and information sharing around school use of funds.

Spotlight on California Stakeholder Involvement in Budgeting



California requires all districts to write their district plans, called Local Control Accountability Plans (LCAPs), in collaboration with stakeholders, including developing the district's budget priorities — particularly for targeted student groups. Additionally, stakeholders must be engaged in approving the district's final accountability plan, which includes an annual review of multiple measures of student performance and school quality.

Check out California [Widening the View: Proposals to push California's Local Control Funding Formula from revolutionary to transformational](#) (Education Resource Strategies, May 2016).

3.2 ESSA Funding Opportunities for LEAs, Schools, and Practitioners

Federal funding opportunities under ESSA are largely grants to SEAs that are subgranted — through formula or a competitive grant process — to LEAs, schools, and/or practitioners. It is also important to note that while much of the funding available in Titles II, III, and IV are available to charter organizations, practitioners, and/or districts and schools, this funding can be transferred to support Title I activities — a decision largely made at the state level. Additionally, allowable uses for many of the funds in the law are broad; Applicants should make the case for their innovative ideas through application for funds, focusing on the intent and opportunity of the law over its restrictions.

Funding for engagement is supported explicitly under Title I for state and local use, and ESSA includes explicit funding for engagement (e.g. Title II Teacher Quality Partnership, Title IV Statewide Family Engagement Centers, etc.). Additionally, under many of the competitive grant programs, applicants (including LEAs and schools) should include in their applications funding for engagement with local communities and use those funds to explicitly support meaningful engagement strategies.

While federal funding makes up a relatively small portion of funding for most schools and districts, ESSA's new and pointed inclusion of engagement with communities allows for renewed focus on community involvement in local decision-making. Furthermore, new state systems of accountability may re-shape statewide priorities and investment decisions. District and school leaders can use this opportunity to implement more robust systems of engagement to revisit and revise local (state-, district- and school-level) resource alignment and allocation.

Ask the Experts

- ✓ [The Value Propositions Associated with Funding Research-Based K-12 Education Practices](#) (Center for Tax and Budget Accountability)
- ✓ [What is Resource Equity?](#) (Education Resource Strategies)
- ✓ [Strategic Budgeting](#) (District Management Group)
- ✓ [Spending Money Wisely: Getting the Most From School District Budgets](#) (District Management Group)
- ✓ [Funding Transparency Under ESSA](#) (Education Resource Strategies)



Keep in Mind

While there is significant flexibility for the use of local funds to improve school services for students, ESSA funds may not be allocated for personal use by district or school leaders.