

# Tips for Accessing Title Funds Program for Inclusive Education (PIE)

Title funds are federal dollars available through the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) signed into law by President Barack Obama in 2015. It follows the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 and the subsequent No Child Left Behind Act of 2002. Title funds are no longer specific to public schools and Catholic schools can take advantage planning accordingly for their use to support all students.

## Overview of ESSA

The Every Student Succeeds Act is the federal law ensuring schools provide a quality education to ALL students. It establishes requirements and school accountability for academic achievement. ESSA focuses on disadvantaged students including those of minority status, living in poverty, and requires an equal opportunity for students who receive special education services. It outlines title funding opportunities and requires Catholic schools to receive an equitable proportionate share for their students.



## Types of Title Funds

Title funds are allocated across the following four expenditures.

- Title I: High percentage of Low-Income Families
- Title II: Professional Development
- Title III: Immigrant & Limited English Proficiency
- Title IV: 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning Center Programs (e.g., STEM, technology)

## Tips for Accessing Title Funds

Equitable proportionate share with no funds set aside for expenditures before Title fund agreements occur, allow more federal dollars to be spent on direct services. Every state operates *differently*; therefore, proactive and meaningful engagement alleviates surprises.

1. Connect with the LEA early. Build relationships and engage in required consultation. Inquire early about projected allocations and ask for the utilized formula. Plan collaboratively and early to make the best use of your dollars.
2. Understand how ESSA provisions positively impact your school. Consult with the LEA and reach agreement on equitable and effective programs. Create alternate programs if programming does not meet Catholic school needs. Request written documentation and expect information about proportionate share. Utilize a third party (aka ombudsman) when necessary, to ensure monitoring and enforcement of equitable service provisions.
3. Know what constitutes professional development. Overall, professional development provides educators with knowledge and skills to enable student success. It is more than a one-time workshop, rather it integrates intensive, collaborative, data-driven, classroom focused learning opportunities including observations with feedback. Moreover, Catholic schools should work with experienced practitioners from the field and faculty from institutions of higher education.
4. Divide and conquer. Create partnerships with other local Catholic schools and have one or two passionate leaders streamline the conversation. Having one conversation simplifies the process with the LEA and assists administrators with the process.

