

TITLE IV-A COALITION

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On behalf of the undersigned members of the Title IV-A Coalition, we offer the following response to the Department of Education’s consideration to allow districts to use SSAE grant funds to purchase firearms:

Washington DC, August 23, 2018—“The Title IV-A Coalition, comprised of dozens of organizations advocating for increased investments and the successful implementation of the program, is extremely dismayed at the Department’s consideration to allow school districts to purchase guns with SSAE grant funds. These grants were intended to provide direct and ongoing educational services, like mental health services and violence prevention programs that provide tangible support for students, not the one-time purchase of equipment, including firearms.

While the program authors in Congress intended for flexibility at the district level, there are limitations to the flexibility within the law and it is an absolute stretch to say that the guidance offered in 2016 under the previous administration regarding using Title IV-A funds for schools to improve school safety could be construed to mean unfettered flexibility to purchase firearms. The fact that the Department of Education is so desperate to promote guns in schools—despite its Commission on School Safety’s refusal to even consider the topic—that it is willing to raid a federal program intended to provide educational services like mental health programs, music and arts education, STEM, AP/IB, computer science and the effective use of technology, is absolutely preposterous and in the opinion of the many diverse organizations we represent, frankly dangerous.

The Title IV-A Coalition has spent the past two years educating members of Congress, states, districts, and educators about the wide range of evidence-based supports and services the SSAE program offers that the Department should be helping to implement successfully. The Department has not only ignored its implementation, but instead proposed the elimination of the flexible block grant two years in a row. Only now, after Congress significantly increased funding, has the Department taken notice and is attempting to capitalize on an opportunity to push their baseless agenda to arm teachers, which the majority of the country has spoken out against. Given this irresponsible and misguided advice to districts and states coming from the Department, we call on Congress to hold the Department accountable for the inadequate implementation of the SSAE program. Lastly, we hope that the Department will implement the SSAE block grant and support the programs and services that provide direct educational benefits to students.”

Afterschool Alliance
Alliance for Excellent Education
American Federation of School Administrators
American Psychological Association
American School Counselor Association
Communities In Schools
CoSN
Girl Scouts of the USA
International Society for Technology in Education
National Association for College Admission Counseling
National Association for Music Education
National Association of School Nurses
National Association of School Psychologists
National Association of Secondary School Principals
National Center for Learning Disabilities
National Council of Teachers of Mathematics
National PTA
National Summer Learning Association
School Social Work Association of America
SETDA
Young Audiences, Inc