

# SPEAK UP



The Every Student Succeeds Act's (ESSA) new definition of professional learning and its requirements for evidence along with the allowable uses of funds under Title II have great potential for continuous improvement of teaching and learning.

If states and districts engage teachers who understand their learning needs, the needs of their students, and effective professional learning, then teachers can co-create learning systems that substantially improve teaching and learning.

Through the Agents for Learning competition, Learning Forward and the National Commission on Teaching & America's Future (NCTAF) invite teams of educators to contribute their expertise and ideas to this vital process and, importantly, to exercise their agency in shaping their learning. (Read more about the competition on p. 61.)

The questions here form the heart of the application for the Agents for Learning competition.

Use this tool to expand and explore your vision for professional learning in your school and system and to consider the role of federal funds in supporting that vision. Interested teams can participate in the competition and learn more at [www.learningforward.org/get-involved/agents-for-learning-competition](http://www.learningforward.org/get-involved/agents-for-learning-competition).

## LEARN MORE ABOUT ESSA

See excerpts from the law at [www.learningforward.org/docs/default-source/getinvolved/appendix-a---agents-for-learning-competition.pdf](http://www.learningforward.org/docs/default-source/getinvolved/appendix-a---agents-for-learning-competition.pdf).

# FOR BETTER LEARNING

**1** Please write a comprehensive vision for effective professional learning for your state and, if appropriate, district context. Identify the needs/gaps that exist. Identify the professional learning investments and activities most important to closing the gaps. Finally, discuss the roles and responsibilities for states, districts, and individual educators in achieving this vision. *(Limit 1,000 words.)*

**2** Title II of ESSA provides a list of allowable activities for states and districts to invest in teacher development and support, including a new definition for professional development that ensures that professional development activities are “sustained (not stand-alone, 1-day, or short term workshops), intensive, collaborative, job-embedded, data-driven, and classroom-focused.” How would you advise states and districts to use their Title II funding to address the most critical needs of teachers? (See the definition and the allowable uses of Title II funds at [www.learningforward.org/docs/default-source/getinvolved/appendix-a---agents-for-learning-competition.pdf](http://www.learningforward.org/docs/default-source/getinvolved/appendix-a---agents-for-learning-competition.pdf).) *(Limit 500 words.)*

**ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS:** Please provide responses to three of the following five questions (your choice), keeping in mind that this feedback could be used by your state or as guidance for any state.

**1** The great majority of ESSA/federal funding for professional learning will now go directly to school districts. We are aware that teachers and other educators often find their professional development unhelpful and unproductive. What can states, districts, and individuals do to ensure that ESSA funds learning that meets the needs of students and teachers and produces its intended outcomes? *(Limit 200 words.)*

**2** Under ESSA, districts must report publicly how they are using their federal funds to improve educator effectiveness. States have authority to shift this process from a compliance to a growth orientation. How would you advise your state and district to make the shift to a process that inspires continuous improvement? What data would you encourage states and districts to report to document their support for teacher development and impact of their efforts? *(Limit 200 words.)*

**3** Under ESSA, each state can choose to reserve a portion of their federal funds to focus exclusively on improving school leadership. If a state chooses this option, how do you think it should structure this support and on what should it focus? *(Limit 200 words.)*

**4** Under ESSA, states may apply for competitive grants to support success for every student. What leadership roles for teachers can best ensure they can help every student succeed? What do they need to do to prepare for those roles? *(Limit 200 words.)*

**5** ESSA requires states and districts to consult with teachers, school leaders, and community members as Title and/or consolidated plans are developed. How should states and districts ensure that teachers and other educators are provided the opportunity to share their professional expertise on ESSA planning and implementation? *(Limit 200 words.)*