

## **Example Letter to a District Leader**

***[Note: Sections in Bold Italic describe how you can customize this letter depending on your individual needs]***

Dear ***[District Leader]***:

***[Introduction]***

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), enacted last year by an overwhelming bipartisan majority of Congress, puts an array of key education decisions and flexible funding streams in your hands. In particular, state and local policymakers now have the ability to leverage the enormous potential of informal, out of school, and summer education programs to contribute to our state’s STEM education initiatives.

The steps you take now to prepare our children in STEM will have an enormous impact on our state’s economy, America’s national security, and this country’s continued leadership in science and technology. I encourage you to utilize the new state and district-level decision-making powers granted under ESSA to take action to include afterschool, informal, and summer learning programs as an integral part of efforts to improve STEM education for all students.

Afterschool and summer learning programs around the nation have enthusiastically embraced STEM programming and are engaging children and youth in STEM learning—including those who may not otherwise be selected to, or choose to, participate in STEM programs. Research has demonstrated that high-quality out-of-school STEM learning programs are strong contributors to improving student engagement and learning in STEM fields.

***[Here is the “ask” section. You can use one or both of these sections depending on your needs and preference.]***

***[Title IV, Part Student Support and Academic Enrichment grants program]***

We request that the district apply for federal funding through the Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants program established by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA, Title IV-A). Our organization would like to work with you to help develop the district application and serve as a partner to improving the well-rounded education of all of our students.

Under ESSA, districts can now utilize new funding provided under the Title IV-A program to support collaborations among school, afterschool program, and informal program personnel to improve the integration of programming and instruction in the STEM subjects. These funds can also be used to support hands-on STEM learning, which can take place in a wide variety of afterschool and informal settings. Research has demonstrated the importance of STEM learning in these settings to build STEM fluency and persistence in STEM fields. We urge the

district to use these new federal funds to support learning opportunities that bring together both classroom-based approaches and informal learning to improve student success.

***[Title II, Part A Supporting Effective Instruction state grants program]***

We request that the district utilize federal funding provided through the through the Supporting Effective Instruction State Grants program authorized by the Every Student Succeeds Act (SEIS, Title II-A) to support integration of afterschool and informal learning pathways into STEM teacher professional development programs.

Our organization would like to work with you to help develop the district application and serve as a partner in improving teaching and learning for our critical STEM educators and all of our students.

Under ESSA, districts can now utilize funding provided under the Title II-A program to support the use of best practices to improve teacher quality and professional development program, especially as they relate to learning in the STEM subjects. These funds can also be used to expand the use of hands-on STEM learning, which can take place in a wide variety of afterschool and informal settings. We urge the district to use these flexible federal funds to support innovative professional development for educators that increase collaboration between classroom teachers and afterschool educators.

Specific projects and activities that could be supported with these funds could include...

***[You will want to add some specific suggestions about programmatic activities to support afterschool and informal STEM learning based on your local and state needs and areas of expertise. The accompanying guidance document has several examples and references for additional information]***

***[Conclusion]***

Our organization would like to work with you to help develop the district application and serve as a partner in improving teaching and learning for our critical STEM educators and all of our students.

Under ESSA, districts can now utilize funding provided under the Title II-A program to support the use of best practices to improve teacher quality and professional development program, especially as they relate to learning in the STEM subjects. These funds can also be used to expand the use of hands-on STEM learning, which can take place in a wide variety of afterschool and informal settings. We urge the district to use these flexible federal funds to support innovative professional development for educators that increase collaboration between classroom teachers and afterschool educators.

Specific projects and activities that could be supported with these funds could include... [See the accompanying guidance document for suggestions and sources of additional information on specific programs and activities to propose]

Spending time in programs outside of school that focus on STEM subjects gives all students the opportunity to experiment with STEM ideas in real-world situations. Such opportunities help spark curiosity, especially for those who might not think of themselves as "math and science kids. The success of our youth in today's ever-changing and high-tech society stands to be greatly improved by taking advantage of the complementary nature of formal and informal learning opportunities, which includes after-school and summer programs.

We all benefit when more of our children have a fair and equal chance to live up to their potential and contribute to our society.

Respectfully,

## **Example Letter to a State Leader**

Dear *[State Leader]*:

***[Note: Sections in Bold Italic describe how you can customize this letter depending on your individual needs]***

***[Introduction]***

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), enacted last year by an overwhelming bipartisan majority of Congress, puts an array of key education decisions and flexible funding streams in your hands. In particular, state and local policymakers now have the ability to leverage the enormous potential of informal, out of school, and summer education programs to contribute to our state’s STEM education initiatives.

The steps you take now to prepare our children in STEM will have an enormous impact on our state’s economy, America’s national security, and this country’s continued leadership in science and technology. I encourage you to utilize the new state and district-level decision-making powers granted under ESSA to take action to include afterschool, informal, and summer learning programs as an integral part of efforts to improve STEM education for all students.

Afterschool and summer learning programs around the nation have enthusiastically embraced STEM programming and are engaging children and youth in STEM learning—including those who may not otherwise be selected to, or choose to, participate in STEM programs. Research has demonstrated that high-quality out-of-school STEM learning programs are strong contributors to improving student engagement and learning in STEM fields.

***[Here is the “ask” section. You can use one or both of these sections depending on your needs and preference.]***

***[Title IV, Part Student Support and Academic Enrichment grants program]***

We request that the state apply for federal funding through the Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants program established by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA, Title IV, Part A). Our organization would like to work with you to help develop the state application and plan for administering these new funds and serve as a partner to improving the well-rounded education of all of our students.

These funds can also be used to support hands-on STEM learning, which can take place in a wide variety of afterschool and informal settings. Research has demonstrated the importance of STEM learning in these settings to build STEM fluency and persistence in STEM fields. We urge the state to use these new federal funds to support learning opportunities that bring together both classroom-based approaches and informal learning to improve student success.

Under ESSA, districts will now be applying to the state for an allocation of formula funds under Title IV-A program that can be used to support collaborations among school, afterschool program, and informal program personnel to improve the integration of programming and instruction in the STEM subjects. These applications will be required to demonstrate how proposed activities are aligned with community and workforce needs. Considering this and the strong connections between excellence in the STEM fields and our ability to compete local, state-wide, and nationally in the global economy, we encourage you to prioritize STEM education activities within this program. For example, the state can propose matching district funds with state funds for certain types of activities like STEM programming.

***[Title II, Part A Supporting Effective Instruction state grants program]***

We request that the state utilize federal funding provided through the through the Supporting Effective Instruction State Grants program authorized by the Every Student Succeeds Act (SEIS, Title II-A) to support integration of afterschool and informal learning pathways into STEM teacher professional development programs.

Our organization would like to work with you to help develop the state application and plan serve as a partner in improving teaching and learning for our critical STEM educators and all of our students.

Under ESSA, districts will now be applying to the state for an allocation of formula funds under Title II-A program that can be used to support the use of best practices to improve teacher quality and professional development program, especially as they relate to learning in the STEM subjects. These applications will be required to demonstrate how proposed activities are aligned with community and workforce needs. Considering this and the strong connections between excellence in the STEM fields and our ability to compete local, state-wide, and nationally in the global economy, we encourage you to prioritize STEM education activities within this program. For example, the state can propose matching district funds with state funds for certain types of activities like STEM-related professional development.

Specific projects and activities that could be supported with these funds could include...

***[You will want to add some specific suggestions about programmatic activities to support afterschool and informal STEM learning based on your local and state needs and areas of expertise. The accompanying guidance document has several examples and references for additional information]***

***[Conclusion]***

Our organization would like to work with you to help develop the district application and serve as a partner in improving teaching and learning for our critical STEM educators and all of our students.

Under ESSA, districts can now utilize funding provided under the Title II-A program to support the use of best practices to improve teacher quality and professional development program, especially as they relate to learning in the STEM subjects. These funds can also be used to expand the use of hands-on STEM learning, which can take place in a wide variety of afterschool and informal settings. We urge the district to use these flexible federal funds to support innovative professional development for educators that increase collaboration between classroom teachers and afterschool educators.

Spending time in programs outside of school that focus on STEM subjects gives all students the opportunity to experiment with STEM ideas in real-world situations. Such opportunities help spark curiosity, especially for those who might not think of themselves as "math and science kids. The success of our youth in today's ever-changing and high-tech society stands to be greatly improved by taking advantage of the complementary nature of formal and informal learning opportunities, which includes after-school and summer programs.

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