

Successful, Safe, and Healthy Students Act of 2011

Bill Summary

The Successful, Safe, and Healthy Students Act of 2011 (SSHSA) will authorize \$1 billion for grants to States to develop comprehensive, data-driven, and evidence-based programs to address critical conditions for learning. SSHSA will advance student achievement and positive child and youth development by promoting student health and wellness, preventing bullying, violence, and drug use, and fostering a positive school climate. Some key conditions for learning that States and schools will be able to address under SSHSA include:

Increasing opportunities for physical activity, good nutrition, and healthy living. We are facing a national obesity crisis, which is costly not only to our educational success, but also to our nation's healthcare system. Indeed, almost 1 in every 5 children (age 2 to 19) is obese, and 27% of young Americans are too overweight to serve in the military. SSHSA will help to address this crisis by giving students more access to physical activity, helping parents and communities understand their children's access to PE, and funding initiatives that promote physical health through movement and healthy lifestyles. Grants will also support programs to prevent the use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs.

Preventing bullying, harassment, and violence in schools. Five percent of all students, and one-third of LGBT students, skip school because they feel unsafe. Under SSHSA, LEAs will establish policies to prohibit and prevent bullying and harassment of *all* students, regardless of their race, color, national origin, sex, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, or religion. Schools will gather data that they can use to identify strengths and weaknesses, and to address them through comprehensive, evidence-based programs.

Providing a supportive environment that promotes mental health, and models positive social and emotional skills. School counselors, school social workers, school psychologists, and other support staff play a vital role in supporting learning by fostering a positive school climate and providing mental health, counseling, and early intervening services. SSHSA would allow schools to support these essential staff, and to link with local mental and behavioral health systems to ensure continuity and coordination of services.

The Successful, Safe, and Healthy Students Act of 2011 will establish two State grant programs:

(1) Successful, Safe, and Healthy Students State Grants: States will receive funding to implement programs to support positive conditions for learning by promoting student health and fitness, mental health and counseling services, and drug and violence prevention. Funds would be distributed by formula to States, but if the appropriation for this program is below \$500m, the grants would be awarded competitively.

To be eligible to apply for funding under this program, States must:

- Establish a statewide physical education requirement consistent with widely recognized standards
- Require all LEAs in the state to establish policies that prohibit bullying and harassment of all students.

States receiving funding under this program will be required to:

- Distribute subgrants competitively to LEAs, or partnerships of LEAs and non-profit organizations, to improve the conditions for learning in their schools, giving priority to those with the highest poverty and greatest needs. At a minimum, States must distribute the following percentage of subgrant funds for the following activities:
 - 20% for programs to promote physical activity, education, fitness, and nutrition
 - 20% for drug and violence prevention (including bullying prevention), and
 - 20% for programs to promote mental health and counseling.
- Use data from the conditions for learning measurement system to target funding and program design.
- Annually report on conditions for learning data to the public.

(2) Grants for State and local data systems: SSHSA will authorize at least \$30 million for formula grants to States to develop or enhance systems that will give local leaders the information they need to improve the conditions for learning in their schools and communities. This grant will help build State capacity to develop a high-quality plan for the Successful, Safe, and Healthy Students State Grants.