In the fall of 2017, the Center on Education Policy (CEP) surveyed state deputy superintendents of education or their designees about state implementation of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). This special report on direct student services is based on a question in that survey that was not included in the main report, *Planning for Progress: States Reflect on Year One Implementation of ESSA*.

“Direct student services” is a new opportunity in ESSA that allows states, if they choose, to reserve 3% of their Title I funds to make grants to school districts for the following types of assistance to students:

- Enrollment and participation in academic courses NOT otherwise available at a student’s school, such as advanced courses and career and technical education coursework
- Credit recovery and academic acceleration courses that lead to a regular high school diploma
- Activities to help students successfully complete postsecondary level courses (such as AP and IB) that are accepted for credit at higher education institutions, including reimbursing low-income students for the cost of the exams
- Personalized learning, including tutoring
- Transportation costs for school districts that offer public school choice to students in low-performing schools (those implementing “comprehensive support and improvement” plans under ESSA)¹

School districts must apply to state education agencies for direct services funding. States must give funding priority to school districts serving high numbers or proportions of comprehensive support and improvement schools (CSI) or targeted support and improvement (TSI) schools.

Forty-five state leaders responded to CEP’s survey. State officials in 8 responding states reported that they plan to reserve funds for these direct student services, while 28 said their state will not reserve these funds, and 8 were not sure.

For more information on ESSA implementation and the main report on the state survey, visit CEP’s website at cep-dc.org.

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¹Comprehensive support and improvement schools include the lowest-performing 5% of Title I schools in the state and high schools that graduate one-third or fewer of their students. Targeted support and improvement schools are public schools with one or more consistently under-performing subgroups of students.