Section 427 of the General Education Provision Act (GEPA)

Section 427 of the U.S. Department of Education’s (Department) General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) requires Department grantees, such as the Small, Rural School Achievement program (SRSA) grantees, to describe the steps the grantee will take to ensure equitable access to, and participation in, the Federally-assisted program for students, teachers, and other program beneficiaries with special needs.

**1. What are the GEPA requirements in the SRSA application?**

The school district’s authorized representative completing the SRSA application is required to acknowledge either:

1. The school district previously submitted a GEPA Statement to the U.S. Department of Education that is still current and will continue to implement its SRSA grant consistent with that statement.
2. The school district has not previously submitted a GEPA Statement to the U.S. Department of Education or the school district’s previously submitted GEPA statement is no longer current. The school district authorized representative understands that they will receive instructions from the U.S. Department of Education during the upcoming performance period and will subsequently submit and implement a GEPA statement in compliance with the requirements detailed in the instructions.

**2. Does a school district that previously submitted a GEPA statement as part of its SRSA application need to submit a new GEPA statement with each year’s SRSA application?**

No. A school district only needs to submit a new GEPA statement if its previous year’s statement is no longer consistent with the SRSA planned activities.

**3. What happens if a school district indicates that it does not have a current GEPA statement on file with the Department (i.e., selects option “b” above)?**

The Department will contact the authorized representative for the school district to request a GEPA statement. If the authorized representative fails to provide a statement, the SRSA grant award may be subject to additional monitoring, conditions, restrictions, or other appropriate enforcement actions.

**4. What are the components of a GEPA statement?**

A GEPA statement should consist of a specific explanation of:

1. your school district’s proposed use(s) of SRSA grant funds; and
2. how your school district will use SRSA funds in a way that addresses barriers to access and participation in SRSA programs based on any federally protected categories, such as race, gender, national origin, socioeconomic status, disability, or age.

A GEPA statement need not be lengthy. For example:

The XYZ Unified District will use SRSA funds to purchase laptops and instructional technology as part of a schoolwide technology upgrade. Special Education students and students who are English learners will receive additional instructional support to ensure they have access to technology tools and have the skills needed to utilize that access.

*Note that this example statement is only 2 sentences long.* There is not a minimum word count for a GEPA statement, but it should be specific, describing how the funds will be used locally, in a way that addresses barriers to access and does not discriminate. A generic, “catch-all” statement about non-discrimination is not sufficient.

**5. What are some examples of GEPA statements?**

Provided below are 13 GEPA statements previously submitted to the Department by SRSA grantees that were reviewed and determined to be sufficient.

*Technology*

* 1. Our district will use SRSA grant funds to purchase computers and laptops as part of our school-wide technology upgrade. Because a significant portion of our students are from families where Spanish is the primary language spoken at home, we will provide user instructions for the computers both in Spanish and in English.
  2. Our district will use SRSA grant funds to help with paying our testing coordinator along with digital learning academy classes. Our rural school district has a high poverty base and these funds will greatly help with the much needed outside technology classes that our small school cannot afford a one-site certified teacher. We will ensure that no student or teacher will be denied participation based on gender, race, national origin, disability or age.
  3. A majority of students in the school district are from low socioeconomic families, with over 50% available for Free/Reduced Lunch Program. As a result, we plan to use grant funds to integrate technology in all classrooms and on teacher professional development. Students who participate in supplemental programs and all other students in the district will have equal access to these resources. In addition, all teachers will have access to professional development, including those who serve at-risk students.
  4. Our district will use SRSA grant funds to purchase devices and other related items to support the upgrade to our technology and internet needs. Due to our number of low-income students/families, many students do not have the ability to use digital devices on their own. The district is committed to offering a technology rich educational experience for all of our students. These funds will also be used to provide professional development opportunities to our teachers, which they would not otherwise have. We will ensure that no student or teacher will be denied participation based on gender, race, national origin, disability or age.
  5. Our district will use SRSA grant funds to purchase computers and laptops as part of our school-wide technology upgrade. Due to a large number of our students in the district being from low socioeconomic families, the district will use grant funds to integrate technology in all classrooms. All students in the district will have equal access to these resources. We will ensure that no student or teacher will be denied participation based on gender, race, national origin, disability or age.

*Professional Development*

* 1. Our district will use SRSA grant funds to send staff to trainings to improve K-3 Early Literacy. The training is to ensure students are reading at grade level by the end of third grade. Staff will come back from the training and help other staff use techniques to ensure all students no matter gender, race, national origin, disability or age are denied help to ensure proper grade level reading. Staff will also be training to ensure all students feel safe and work on proper protocol for improvement of behavior and not disciplinary actions.
  2. Our district will use SRSA grant funds for professional development. Because a significant portion of our students are at or below the poverty level, we will provide funds for teacher training that will assist staff in understanding poverty and how to adapt teaching strategies so that poverty students and their parents will be more engaged in their learning. The goal is that through this strategy, students will learn more and perform better on assessments. We will ensure that no student or teacher will be denied participation based on gender, race, national origin, disability or age.

*STEM*

* 1. Our district will use SRSA grant funds to strengthen its district-wide STEM initiative. Because we know that STEM-related classes tend to disproportionally attract boys, we are implementing outreach strategies to encourage more girls to participate in our STEM initiative.
  2. Our district will use SRSA grant funds to purchase robots as part of the computer science

coding program. Because a significant portion of our students are from families where Spanish is the primary language spoken at home, we will provide user coding instructions for the robots both in Spanish and in English. We will ensure that no student or teacher will be denied participation based on gender, race, national origin, disability or age.

*Additional Staff*

* 1. Funds will be used for the salary for our district technology coordinator who provides tech support for our teaching staff and students. This includes servers, networking, personal computers, tablets, software and other technology for all students, including who may not have access to this type of equipment at home. We are committed to ensuring all students and teachers have all technology available to them; regardless of gender, race, national origin, disability or age.
  2. Our district will use SRSA grant funds toward our guidance counselor efforts to support our low-income families/special needs/ESL population. Time is allocated for her to work with these families to ensure communication between home and school with constant conversations through home visits, school meetings, phone calls, emails etc. addressing safety issues, supporting living conditions, attendance, interpreters, meeting IEP requirements, etc. We will ensure that no student or teacher will be denied participation based on gender, race, national origin, disability or age.
  3. Our district will use SRSA grant funds to hire additional art and music instructors, fund field trips, and make technology purchases. Because of the isolation of the island schoolhouse, it is necessary that the students receive exposure to a broad curriculum that brings them both personally and virtually in contact with instruction and experiences that all other students receive who are not being educated in such a unique environment. We will ensure that no student or teacher will be denied participation based on gender, race, national origin, disability or age.

*School Climate*

* 1. Our district will use the SRSA funds to increase safety and enhance the social emotional well-being of our students. Our district will focus on non-discrimination awareness programs for all sub-groups including gender, race, ethnicity, gender orientation and socio-economic status, through outreach to families and community members. Additionally, our district will initiate professional development in this area for all staff.