



Summer 2016 Backgrounder – Fully Funding Title IV

Background:

After years of failed negotiations, in December 2015, Congress finally passed a new version of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), now titled the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). The passage of ESSA is an historic victory for music education advocates, because it includes for the first time a *specific* and *separate* mention of “*music*” as a part of a “**Well-Rounded Education**” (Title VIII, Sec. 8002 of ESSA).

ESSA provides a clear message that students should have access to a “Well-Rounded Education,” a broad and rich curriculum that includes music education. Support for well-rounded education is seen throughout the law, including in the section with the third largest funding allocation, Title IV, which may be utilized to support access to music education for all students, regardless of background or circumstance.

Legislative Request:

- **Support Access to Music Education as Part of a Well-Rounded Education by Fully Funding Title IV, Part A:** Under Title IV, Part A of ESSA, the Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants (SSAEG) provides a new and clear intent to support our nation’s schools through a “Well-Rounded Education.”

Funding History for Title IV, Part A [SSAEG] (in millions)

ESSA Authorized Level	FY 2017 President’s Request	FY 2017 NAFME - Roundtable Request
\$1,650.00	\$500.00	\$1,650.00 (Authorized Level)

Despite being the third largest authorized program within ESSA, the President’s FY17 Budget request only recommends \$500 million for the grant, less than one-third of its authorized funding level, which Congress agreed upon in a bipartisan manner. By significantly underfunding this program, it undermines the greater flexibility that Congress had intended for states and districts, and would not allow schools to make meaningful investments in critical areas of need, such as school music programs.

Key Points:

- The Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants (SSAEG), is the result of a consolidation of more than 20 existing programs into a single formula-funded flexible block grant program.
- This new block-grant may be used in part to improve access to music education, and in turn, to support not only student success, but also the promotion of constructive student engagement, problem solving, and conflict resolution. In addition, other funds may be utilized to offer a broad array of enriched educational experiences, such as providing music to underrepresented, disadvantaged, and minority student populations.
- The President budget prescribes language that recommends turning SSAEG into a competitive grant program. A competitive program would significantly disadvantage smaller and more rural school districts that often lack the capacity to apply for funding at all. Sufficiently funding SSAEG would eliminate any need for competitive targeting.
 - These same districts would benefit the most from the program, as they frequently serve students who are in most need, a population that has shown to perform better academically when exposed to a broad curriculum that includes music programs.