

Frequently Asked Questions – *ESSA Implementation Webinar*

March 1, 2016

Title I Related Questions

Does "protection from pull outs" also refer to protection from pull-out instrumental lessons?

The language in ESSA, as in NCLB, its predecessor, is very clear: the law frowns upon students being pulled out of "regular classroom for instruction provided under this part." In other words, IF Targeted Title I dollars are paying for remedial instruction for students, the law would rather have that happen outside of the regular classroom instruction time – for instance, before school, after school, on the weekends, in the summer. Since pull-out instrumental lessons have never, to the best of our knowledge, been paid for by Title I Targeted Assistance dollars, this is not an issue. Pull-out instrumental lessons are not supported by this area of Title I Targeted Assistance, and therefore this protection from pull-outs does not apply.

With the discouragement of not pulling students out of music, art and PE mentioned under the Title I section...does this apply to ALL schools or ONLY Schools that fall into the Title I classification?

This protection applies only to Title I schools. You can always share, of course, with other schools, the intent of Congress here - that students shouldn't miss out on "regular classroom instruction" in order to receive remedial assistance.

Is there a best practices you can suggest to enforce or lessen the amount of pull out for remedial services that occur?

First – are you working in a Title I school? If so, I would share the language of the law (remember, it's been in since NCLB!) with your administrator. Chances are they don't know that the law itself frowns upon pull outs. Second, I would be ready to have solutions available for when pull-outs can be scheduled. Is it a rotational schedule of pull-outs so students miss a little bit from a lot of classes? Is it moving intervention supports to before/after school? Pull-outs may be the solution in your school because it's what you've always done, or it could be the solution because the students needing assistance cannot come early or stay late to get assistance. Figuring out why pull-outs are utilized, and then being able to offer suggestions on ways to either stop or amend the practice will help your concerns not only be heard but be acted upon.

I do have a question regarding special education students. I currently have a student that has been getting pulled from my rehearsals to make up work that he is missing in his "core" classes. Do you know if there are provisions in the ESSA that protect us as teachers and students from this happening?

The answer to your question is... maybe. First, this is not the federal education law dealing with special education. That law, entitled IDEA, or the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, is a separate law entirely. With that said, if the student is receiving remediation through ESSA funding – specifically through Title I – ESSA definitely frowns on that student missing regular classroom instruction in order to receive remedial support (the “protection from pull-outs” section of Section 1009). In addition, the student should have via IDEA an IEP or Individual Education Plan. If you feel that the student should be in music classes, perhaps you can ask to be part of the review of the student’s IEP. During the review, you can raise the question of the student missing music, and perhaps work with the student’s parents and other teachers to have music added into the IEP as one of the classes the student must attend. This would mean the student could not be pulled out for remediation from music as music appears as part of the educational plan for the student moving forward. IEP’s should be updated at least annually, if not more often, in your school.

Is there precedence for teachers who have called out administration for taking students out of one subject for another? I have students punished by missing music class on a weekly basis.

The protection from pull outs refers to students receiving remedial instruction through Title I funds. Your question reads differently – that students who have misbehaved in some manner are “punished” by missing music class. You may want to ask about what district level policy supports such “punishment” of students, as I do not know of any state level policy which would support such action. If no such policy exists, perhaps you can brainstorm with your administrators on other ways to support their need to enforce school rules while not having students miss your important, academic, music class which is not only supported with state level education policy (most likely) but also with ESSA including music as part of what every child should receive in their well-rounded education. If such a policy enforcing missing music as a punishment exists at your district, I would suggest working with a group of stakeholders – administrators, parents, teachers outside of music – to develop a new policy which supports students attending music classes.

Why is music not considered an academic subject as part of whole school reform?

Music IS considered an academic subject as part of whole school reform under ESSA... keeping in mind that the emphasis of Title I under ESSA as well as under NCLB is on the tested subject areas of reading and math. In other words, what supports are necessary to help buoy students who are not doing well in these tested subject areas (I know it's basic, but it's the place of focus for the law). Under ESSA, the emphasis shifts from children to buoying the entire school system to help those children - and that can include music. Regardless, whole school reform models which are based in music/arts education are allowed under both NCLB and ESSA. Both versions of ESEA ask for some level of research basis for the reform model being proposed, and that reform model needs to meet the requirements laid out under Title I Schoolwide programs (Section 1008 in ESSA). Regardless whether or not music is part of the whole school reform model, schoolwide Title I schools will now need to report how they are supporting well-rounded education within their schoolwide plan - and that's new!

Tell me more about specialized instructional supports in ESSA

ESSA, like earlier iterations of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, provides funds out of Title I for instructional supports for students struggling with academic content. Traditionally, this has been focused on the tested subject areas of reading and math (and sometimes science). The intent is to provide additional support, sometimes called interventions, to help struggling students master the content and get them back on track to do well in school. What makes ESSA different is that the opportunities to provide specialized instructional supports has been expanded explicitly to include all content areas covered by well-rounded education. This has happened in two ways:

1. For Title I schoolwide schools, those are schools which have embraced some version of whole school reform, they must now address how they are providing access to a well-rounded education in their Title I schoolwide plan. It might not mean that music, included in a well-rounded education, must be paid for or supported out of Title I funds, but that the all-encompassing school plan must include information on music and all the other well-rounded subject areas. That's new. (and it certainly doesn't preclude music from being supporting with these funds - it's just not required!)
2. For Title I Targeted assistance schools, which are traditionally schools which have focused on academic interventions in reading and math for struggling students, ESSA offers the opportunity for targeted schools to provide supplemental, targeted assistance in the well-rounded educational areas. This is VERY new - and we don't really know what this will look like. Title I funds in a targeted program are targeted at a subset of students who are not doing well in the tested subject areas. The question then becomes, once those students are identified, what might targeted support in music look like for these students? And how will it tie back to the tested subject areas as that's how those students were identified as needing support? Are you as a music educator already working with these students? What might you do on top of what you are already providing them with additional support? NAFME has reached out to the US Department of Education to suggest that guidance in this area would be useful for all well-rounded subject areas including music. If you have ideas on what this could look like, please share them with us and we will share them with the US Department, too.

Title IV related questions

What can title IV funds be used for? Extra teachers?

Title IV funds are extremely flexible with two caveats - they are meant to be supplemental funds AND most likely will not be a significant amount of funds like Title I. First, these are supplemental federal dollars and cannot replace dollars already available from the state/local level to fund music education. Second, the amount of funds that will be available for Title IV are still in flux as Congress works on the budget. Regardless of where Congress ends up, the amount of funds is likely to be small, so funding a full-time extra or "supplemental" teacher may not be possible. The funds can support capital expenses (instruments; sheet music), additional supplies, technology and professional services such as instrumental repairs. Prior to determining how to spend the dollars, the law asks that a district undertake a needs assessment of all well-rounded educational opportunities in the district, including music. What needs does your music program have? Do you have those needs well-documented? Will you be invited to be part of the Title IV needs assessment committee for your district? Will your music supervisor be included? Being part of the team determining the needs assessment, and making certain that music is included in that needs assessment, is the place to begin.

Does district curriculum writing fall under any of the funding opportunities in ESSA? This is sorely needed in many districts.

I think the best answer for this one is "maybe." This may be an appropriate activity under Title IV-A if it shows up in the needs assessment for music education (or any of the other well-rounded educational areas) and you can make the case that it isn't supported already at the local level. This is where it gets tricky, as curriculum writing is normally thought of as a local/state funded activity, not something provided via supplemental federal funds. Again, if you can make the case that it hasn't been funded for awhile by local/state funds, this might be a fundable activity under Title IV-A in support of a well-rounded education.

Funding and Resource Related Questions

Could you provide talking points for music educators advocating with administrators to use Title funding for music education? – and - I have read that while ESSA - specifically TITLE I - will allow funding for ARTS education, does it mean we should expect our schools to see more federal funds to do so? Or will administrators have to continue to work with the funding they received last year?

Great question! Title I funds, like all federal funds, are meant to supplement, not supplant, funding currently available for public education. So... if music education is currently funded in your school by local/state dollars, it should continue to be funded by those funding pots. Neither the authorization for Title I funding under ESSA nor the appropriations work currently underway on Capitol Hill (the budgeting process) point to significantly increased amount of Title I dollars. Your administrators will continue to work with funding levels similar to those received in prior years. This means that gaining access to supplemental Title I funds to support your music programs would a) pull funds away from some other area currently funded with Title I and b) need to make the case for this change of priority as well as the

case that supplemental Title I funds are necessary for the music program. As you can imagine, this isn't easy to do, nor necessarily the right thing to do. Perhaps a way to begin is to sit down with your administrators and ask, "what are the goals of your Title I program, how is the program currently working (or not), and how can I help support the goals of Title I with my music program?"

For Title IV funds, once those funds become available, there should be more flexibility in terms of how they can support music education as part of their intent is to support well-rounded education, which includes music and the arts. For Title IV, the first question to ask your administrator is, "Who is serving on the needs assessment committee for Title IV for our district? And may I participate with that committee and/or provide information on music education in our schools to that committee?" That needs assessments will determine how Title IV funds are utilized in your district, so that's a great place to start!

Will we as teachers and even parents have recourse if the state or local school district does not make music equal to other subjects? Be that in funding, but most especially in contact time with students?

This is an interesting and complex question. Parents always have the right within our educational system to advocate for the education they believe is important for their students - including music education. ESSA shows that Congress believes music is part of a well-rounded education, and it gives mechanisms to allow federal funds to support music education in supplemental ways at the local level. ESSA does not require that music be taught in a certain way, or funded in a certain way, or in anyway dictate what music teaching and learning must look like.

Some states DO have instructional minute requirements for music; however the vast majority do not. You can see what your state does in this area by checking out the AEP Policy Scan here (keeping in mind that this is sometimes not up to date!): <http://www.aep-arts.org/research-policy/artscan/artscan-state-profiles/>.

So - how is this helpful, then, if ESSA doesn't dictate things that we music education advocates might like it to dictate? ESSA clearly shows that including music in education is the intent of Congress. That is a new arrow in our advocacy quiver... and while it might feel like an "unfunded mandate" to our school districts, it certainly is an additional point to be brought to bear when decisions are being made about music education in our schools.

You may want to check out other music advocacy resources that NAFME has assembled to see if they help you "make the case" - <http://www.nafme.org/take-action/>. You can also connect with your state advocacy leader for music education here: <http://www.nafme.org/take-action/elementary-and-secondary-education-act-esea-updates/nafme-advocacy-leadership-force/>. And... if you want to dive in deep and see what the field says a quality music education should look like (and how it should be resourced), consider using the Opportunity to Learn standards to measure the resources currently available in your school/district compared to what the field believes should be in place: http://www.nafme.org/wp-content/files/2014/11/Opportunity-to-Learn-Standards_May2015.pdf

Well-Rounded Education and Definitional Questions

I noticed "arts" was also part of the Well Rounded Education definition. Why is music pulled out as a separate discipline? What does this mean for all arts forms?

ESSA does not specify what areas are including in the "arts" language in the well-rounded education definition. Every state (and local district) may define that differently. For example, under NCLB, the state of Arizona defined the arts narrowly to include music and visual arts when connecting the earlier version of the definition to the Highly Qualified teacher requirement under No Child Left Behind. This is one reason why NAFME worked more than 2 decades with you and your music education colleagues to advocate to have music spelled out in the law – it makes it crystal clear that Congress includes music as part of a well-rounded education instead of leaving it to others to interpret if music should be included or not.

Is music really listed alone, or does it stop at mentioning "well rounded"?

The definition of well-rounded education includes music, along with many other subject areas. This is the first time that music has been listed separately under federal law. The good news is the term "well-rounded education" then carries into all sections of ESSA – including Titles I and IV. This grants us access to these federal funding and support opportunities in a way that is new and significant for the field. Where such opportunities will come to fruition will be based on local needs and advocacy.

Does ESSA enumerate tested subject areas?

Yes. As under NCLB, ESSA has a set of required tested subject areas – reading, math and science. What ESSA does differently is not assign any pre-determined passing level (Annual Measurable Objectives) for students and does not create a school improvement requirement for all schools who don't make progress toward those pre-determined levels. While students will still be required to be tested annually, the consequences for not doing well have been lessened dramatically.

Does this act cover k-12 or ps-12?

ESSA is the latest iteration of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, and, as such, focuses on K-12 education. The law does allow school districts to set aside funds to support early childhood education (preschool) out of Title I funds (Section 1007) as well as has a competition national literacy program focused on early learners in Title II (Section 2223).

Additional Music Education Advocacy questions

What is the name of that organization just referenced, 150 groups?

CEF – the Committee for Education Funding. This is the largest coalition of public education advocates working to support education at the federal level. <http://cef.org/>

NAEP tested my school in the area of Music last week. I've been data mining the NAEP website and it's clear that music scores have been consistently falling over each 8-year test. Can we use this data to help support demands for improved music instruction in K-6?

NAEP data is always an excellent data set by which to talk about how students are not “up to the task” of our one national assessment in music. You may also want to look what your state policy says about K-6 music instruction as well as your state arts standards. Policy documentation can be found here:

<http://www.aep-arts.org/research-policy/artscan/artscan-state-profiles/>

Your arts standards can be found on your state department of education’s website. You can find additional web based advocacy tools from NAFME here: <http://www.nafme.org/take-action/>.

NAfME is working with the National Coalition for Core Arts Standards to attempt to align the next NAEP Arts Assessment in 2022 to the new 2014 National Core Arts Standards, including the 2014 Music Standards. We will keep you and the field posted on our progress in this area.

I am working to get music education into our primary grades. We currently have 4-12. Are there any resources that can help?

Thank you for working to get music into your primary grades – that’s a wonderful goal and a great way to build your music program! You can find a variety of basic advocacy materials to help you with this cause here: <http://www.nafme.org/take-action/>. In addition, NAFME has a strong position statement on the importance of music for early childhood that may be of use to you:

<http://www.nafme.org/about/position-statements/>. Finally – connect with your state MEA advocacy

leader and find out what your state requires as policy regarding music education. 28 states require music be taught, and most of those require it in elementary schools (including potentially early grades).

<http://www.aep-arts.org/research-policy/artscan/artscan-state-profiles/> In addition, you may have state music standards that incorporate the early grades, which may help with your advocacy.

ESSA and State Level Advocacy

On Monday, I'm going to our State Capital to lobby for Music Education. Should ESSA be a major talking point?

Yes and no. This answer depends on how active your state legislature will be in enacting the state level choices available now to states under ESSA. In some states, the legislature will do this work; in others, this work will fall to your State Board of Education and your Department of Education. I think it is safe to talk to your state legislators about how excited you are about ESSA, about the enumeration of music in the well-rounded education definition, and in the opportunities and flexibility built into the law. Keep in mind, of course, that your state legislature plays a large role in determining your state's music education policy AND funding. Focusing on what your state legislature is doing to support music education is just fine, too!

I am on the ESSA implementation team for the Colorado Education Association. What pieces may I share with the other team members?

Congratulations for being part of the ESSA Implementation team for the CEA! You are welcome to share all of the materials from this webinar, and all of the "Everything ESSA" materials up on the NAFME website - <http://www.nafme.org/take-action/elementary-and-secondary-education-act-esea-updates/>