



Title IV, Part A of the Every Student Succeeds Act – ‘Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants’

One of the many new opportunities within the “[Every Student Succeeds Act](#)” (ESSA) is a new flexible block grant titled Student Support and Academic Enrichment (SSAE) Grant, which was created under Title IV, Part A. Designed by a bipartisan effort, SSAE may be used to provide states and school districts supplemental funding to three broad areas:

- 1) **Providing students access to a well-rounded education (e.g. music and arts),**
- 2) Supporting safe and healthy students (e.g. comprehensive school mental health, drug and violence prevention, training on trauma-informed practices, health and physical education) and
- 3) Supporting the effective use of technology (professional development, blended learning, devices).

Distribution and Eligibility of Funds

Although the grant is **not** limited to Title I schools, the Title IV block grant utilizes the same formula-to-formula funding methodology as Title I (Title I, Part A, Subpart 2). Each state will receive an allocation based on the Title I funding formula. Using the same Title I formula, the states will then allocate funds to school districts.

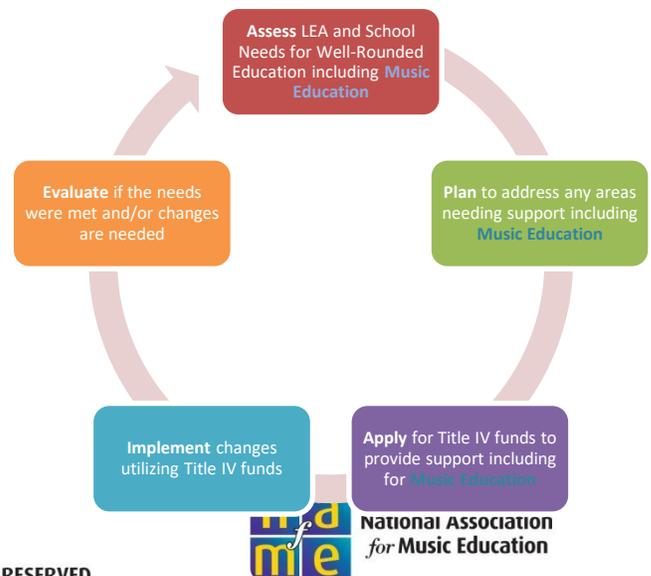
Any school district that receives a formula allocation **above \$30,000 MUST conduct a needs assessment** and then must expend 20 percent of its grant on safe and healthy school activities and 20 percent on activities to provide well-rounded education programs. The remaining 60% of the money can be spent on all three priorities, including technology. *However, there is a 15% cap on devices, equipment, software and digital content.*

If a district receives an allocation **below \$30,000, the law DOES NOT require a needs assessment** or set aside percentages for well-rounded and safe and healthy students programs. Under these circumstances, districts must spend money on activities in at least one of the three categories. The 15 percent technology purchase cap would continue to apply.

What is a ‘Needs Assessment?’

Needs assessments will be utilized by a school district to determine and identify where access may be lacking for their students, such as in music education. The needs assessment process for Title IV, Part A is part of the routine cycle of planning and evaluation expected in the federal law for all titles, including Titles I and II.

After identifying the deficiencies, school districts create a plan to address those needs, which become a part of their funding ask to the state department of education. After receiving the funds and implementing the plan, districts



must conduct a comprehensive needs assessment **at least once every three years**, to reevaluate the outcomes and repeat the process.

What makes this so interesting is that **YOU** can be involved with your district during the process of creating a needs assessment and evaluating programs. This is where **YOU can make the difference** – getting involved and making certain the needs of your music programs are fully identified and incorporated as appropriate into your Title IV, Part A plan and funding application for the 17-18 school year. For further information on how you can participate in the needs assessment process, see our webinar, "[OTLs, Title IV, & You.](#)"

Consequences of Underfunding

- If Congress funds SSAE below the authorized level, our nation's school districts would be forced to make difficult and unconscionable trade-offs between high-quality programs and fail to create a "well-rounded" course of study.
- Significantly underfunding the program directly undermines the greater flexibility that Congress had intended for the states and districts to have under ESSA.
- The Title IV, Part A block grant was created as a result of consolidating over 20 existing competitive grant programs established by "No Child Left Behind" (NCLB).
 - Often the districts who are in most need are those that are smaller and more rural, which lack the capacity (no arts administrator or grant writer) to apply for those competitive grants. By sufficiently, funding Title IV, SSAE eliminates any need for competitive targeting and increases local control over educational investments, such as supporting music and arts.
- Federal statute in ESSA (Title IV, Sec. 4105) indicates that no allocation made to a school district under Title IV, Part A may be less than \$10,000. If SSAE is underfunded, certain districts would see severe reductions in their Title IV allocations due to other districts being prorated to meet the minimum \$10,000 award threshold.

No matter how schools make this decision, critical program areas will face limited investments – or none at all – shortchanging our students, educators, and communities in significant ways.

Head to NAFME's Grassroots Action Center (bit.ly/NAfMEgrassroots) and use our advocacy tool to send a letter to your member of Congress, asking them to support music education and fully fund SSAE.
