Title II, Part A of the Every Student Succeeds Act

Title II, Part A of the “Every Student Succeeds Act” (ESSA) contains programs used to improve teacher and principal quality. Funds of this Title have traditionally been focused on professional development. The use of funds in Title II, Part A may primarily be used for the purposes of:

1) The recruitment of teachers, principals, and other school leaders;
2) The training and retaining of teachers, principals, and other school leaders;

Through the elimination of “core academic subjects,” and the inclusion of a “well-rounded education,” music and arts educators have an expanded allowable use of Title II funds for these kinds of activities.

Highly Qualified Teacher Status

Under ESSA’s Title II, “highly qualified teacher” (HQT) requirements have been ELIMINATED and are no longer a part of federal education law. Credentialing and certification requirements for educators, including content expertise which was the main focus of “HQT” language in No Child Left Behind, have now been left up to the states. However, ESSA does maintain state-approved certification and licensure requirements for teachers and paraprofessionals working in Title I schools.

In addition, states are no longer required to have teacher evaluation systems, which include measures of student growth. Many states put teacher evaluation systems in place to compete for the U.S. Department of Education’s Race to the Top funding and/or to meet the requirements to receive an ESEA waiver from the more stringent accountability measures found in No Child Left Behind. While ESSA no longer requires these teacher evaluation systems be in place, many states may choose to continue using the systems, including measures of student growth, since these systems have been written into state law and administrative rule.

Distribution and Eligibility of Funds

Distribution of Title II, Part A funds are done annually by each state to each district through funding formula with heavier weight given to districts with higher poverty. That weighting towards more funds for districts with higher poverty grows over time based on language in the law (Title II, Part A, Sec. 2101). Funds are traditionally spent at the district level, not school site level.

Current State of Play – U.S. House & Senate FY 2017 Allocations

Under ESSA, Title II, Part A is authorized for $2.29 billion in funding for FY17; however, this formula grant has seen underfunding propositions in Congress’ latest appropriations bills. The Senate’s FY 2017 LHHS-Ed appropriations bill would provide $2.05 million for Title II, Part A, while the House of Representative’s allocation would provide $1.95 billion, both falling short of the authorized level.

NAfME included fully funding Title II, Part A as part of our 2016 Hill Day asks to members of Congress. For more information on the asks NAfME carried to the Hill on behalf of music educators in June 2016, please visit http://www.nafme.org/wp-content/files/2014/06/2016-NAfME_Roundtable-Legislative-Agenda-FINAL-April-6.pdf. Additional information on ESSA can be found at http://bit.ly/NCLBends.