

## ESSA at the Local Level - Webinar FAQ

### **Does the budget (appropriations) have any money for early childhood education music?**

ESSA does open some opportunity to support funding for early childhood education in Title I-A, Title II-A, and Title IV-A. However, whether these funds are used on early childhood education entirely depends on the results found within the needs assessment process conducted by your school and school district.

There are a few competitive grants within Title I of ESSA that deal with early childhood, but do not particularly emphasize music or well-rounded education. These competitive grants have traditionally focused on literacy.

### **Please expand on ESSA frowns upon students being pulled from music for intervention.**

Title I, Section 1009 (Targeted Assistance Programs) of ESSA indicates to “minimize the removal of children from the regular classroom during regular school hours for instruction provided under this part.”

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.

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.

### **What did the asterisk mean in the grid?**

In our ESSA State Plan analysis, the check marks signify an explicit mention or inclusion of music and arts education within a certain section of the plan. While the asterisks, signify some sort of caveat, minor involvement, or that the plan indicated that well-rounded educational activities could be paid for with these funds, which can include (but doesn't require) music education.

For example, Ohio's section on Title IV-A indicates a well-rounded component, but does not explicitly indicate a goal to use those funds towards increasing access to music and arts education.

### **If state plans are determined to have weaknesses, how long do they have to "fix" them?**

If the U.S. Department of Education finds a state ESSA plan to be not in compliance, in whole or in part, the State will have an opportunity to revise and resubmit its plan within 45 days of the notice (Title VIII-E

of ESSA). The Department is required to submit a detailed description of specific provisions within the plan that do not meet the requirements and can provide technical assistance, upon request of the State.

Very few states have had their plans returned for substantive revision. To date all of the first 13 plans to be submitted have been accepted.

**Are these funds mainly available for implementing new programs, or can they be used to expand current programs.**

This ultimately depends on the emphasis behind your school district's application and its findings from its needs assessment. If you work at a Title I school, this also depends on music's involvement in your schoolwide plan or schoolwide reform.

Remember, these are limited funds that are supposed to be supplemental, and not meant to replace what should already be paid for at the local level – whether through property taxes or state funding. There will be a large list of requests beyond music education for any of these federal dollars. Most importantly, know what your district's needs are and be a collaborative player to best meet the needs of the students within your school and district.

**Since it seems most likely that the Title I portion of ESSA will be best funded at the federal level, should our state focus be in that area initially?**

Not necessarily, as those funds are meant to only support Title I schools and Title I students. Title II-A, Title IV-A, and many other sections of the ESSA can provide much more supplemental support outside of those Title I schools.

Funding for those other areas can improve with the proper advocacy work. This is why it is important for you, as a grassroots advocate, to play a part during the appropriations process. Be sure to advocate to your members of Congress about the importance of education funding, and how raising the spending caps may help improve the federal investment on education. The higher the overall investment, the more opportunities we get to increase access to music education and support music educators.

**Does portability go to non-Title I schools? and is that the main issues with supporting?**

Yes, if portability was implemented with Title I, the funds could follow a child to a non-Title I school.

However, this would undermine the intent of Title I under ESSA, which is to provide federal supplemental funding to schools in high poverty, and support the academic needs of students within those schools. By implementing portability, it would weaken the targeting of Title I dollars, and chip away funds from those Title I schools who are in most need for programmatic support. Additionally, there would be an increase in administrative burden, in order to track the funds and how it is being spent when following a child.

In essence, once Title I dollars are distributed, the dollars fund Title I programs – not necessarily to fund the children of poverty at that school. Current practice allows the funds to benefit the students who are academically at risk within that high poverty area – providing more support for more students.

**Could you please give an example of how a Title I school could include music in their improvement plan?**

Sure! If your school has an attendance issue, you could write in your music program as one answer to that attendance issue, as you could show that students in your music program come to school more days out of the school year than students not in your music program. You could therefore make the case that additional Title I funds could be used to expand your program (more sections? More instructional minutes? A new offering such as world drumming to reach new students?) in order to support attendance and student engagement at your school.

**If I become part of this process at my school, and manage to receive funds to my program, do I need to continue to do this every year? Or does it remain in my program, at that level for longer than one year?**

For block funding, such as for Title I-A, Title II-A, and Title IV-A, yes, because a school district by an annual basis is required to resubmit an application for those funds. Block funding thus, is usually spent on an annual basis.

However, a needs assessment, specifically to Title IV-A, may or may not be a part of the annual application. ESSA only requires a Title IV needs assessment to be conducted every 3 years when the grant is distributed by formula. However, this statutory language is just a minimum requirement; a district has the flexibility to conduct a needs assessment annually in conjunction with their application if they choose to.

Now, if your program were to receive a competitive grant, the funding could last beyond a year, which would not require an application annually. There are certain competitive grants, like the “Arts in Education” Grant within ESSA, that may last longer than a year. The duration is usually set by the Department of Education who is distributing the grant.

**Please address what funds if any might be available for summer programs run by school districts. Is there funding for academic and intervention programs or even enrichment programs in the arts?**

For Title I-A, Title II-A, and Title IV-A, these funds are largely used to benefit in-school programs, meaning programs that take place during regular instructional hours of the academic year.

However, there are other areas, such as the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers grant (Title IV, Part B), which may be used to benefit summer and after school programs. A few state ESSA plans, such as Arizona and New Hampshire, have indicated to use their Title IV-B dollars to provide support music

and arts education. Some districts also fund supplemental summer learning programs through a Title I district set-aside.

Our best recommendation is to connect with your district's federal programs manager to see how summer programs are being funded and if those associated programs are receiving federal support.