



2019 NAfME Legislative Request

Cosponsor the “Guarantee Access to Arts and Music Education (GAAME) Act”

Background

In 2015, the signing of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) marked an unprecedented and historic step forward for music education by enumerating “music” as part of a “Well-Rounded Education” (Title VIII, Sec. 8101 of ESSA). The specific enumeration of music in statute creates the opportunity for music education to be eligible for federal funds in several sections of ESSA. This includes Title I, Part A, where both school-wide and targeted assistance grants are now available to provide supplemental funds for access to a “Well-Rounded Education,” including music.

Students in Need

The National Association for Music Education’s primary mission is to promote the understanding and making of music by all, regardless of one’s circumstance. Often, students of color, urban communities, and rural settings do not share the same access to a high-quality music and arts education. Nationwide, more than 1.3 million elementary students fail to receive any music instruction. There is a wealth of research to underscore the fact that underserved populations are disproportionately deprived of this essential service.

Studies have shown that in-school music programs are highly valuable in engaging students by improving their overall participation and attendance, especially for students who are deemed at-risk. Most importantly, the benefits of music programs transcend typical quantifiable markers of academic achievement. Music education at all grade levels encourages and nurtures the development of essential 21st century skills such as critical thinking, collaboration, and creative problem-solving. These skills are essential to future success not only in academics, but also in the workforce.

Purpose of the Bill

The purpose of this legislation is to encourage school districts that serve disadvantaged and low-income student communities to use their Title I, Part A funds to improve student access to sequential, standards-based music education taught by licensed educators. The bill not only expresses the importance of providing access to music education to these students, but also further articulates the eligibility music education has in Title I, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). In addition, the legislation enumerates how other arts areas, from dance to visual arts, can also be supported under the “arts” section of a well-rounded education.

To cosponsor the *Guarantee Access to Arts and Music Education Act* ([H.R. 1676](#) or [S. 885](#)), **please contact:**

- Justin Pelletier, Justin.Pelletier@mail.house.gov, Congresswoman Nydia Velazquez (D-NY-7) [Lead]
- Katie Rubinger, Katie_Rubinger@tester.senate.gov, Senator Jon Tester (D-MT) [Lead]