



**National Association
for Music Education**



The Impact of Federal Funds on Music & Arts Education: Results from 2023 Survey

A Report for Music and Arts Education Advocates

November 2023

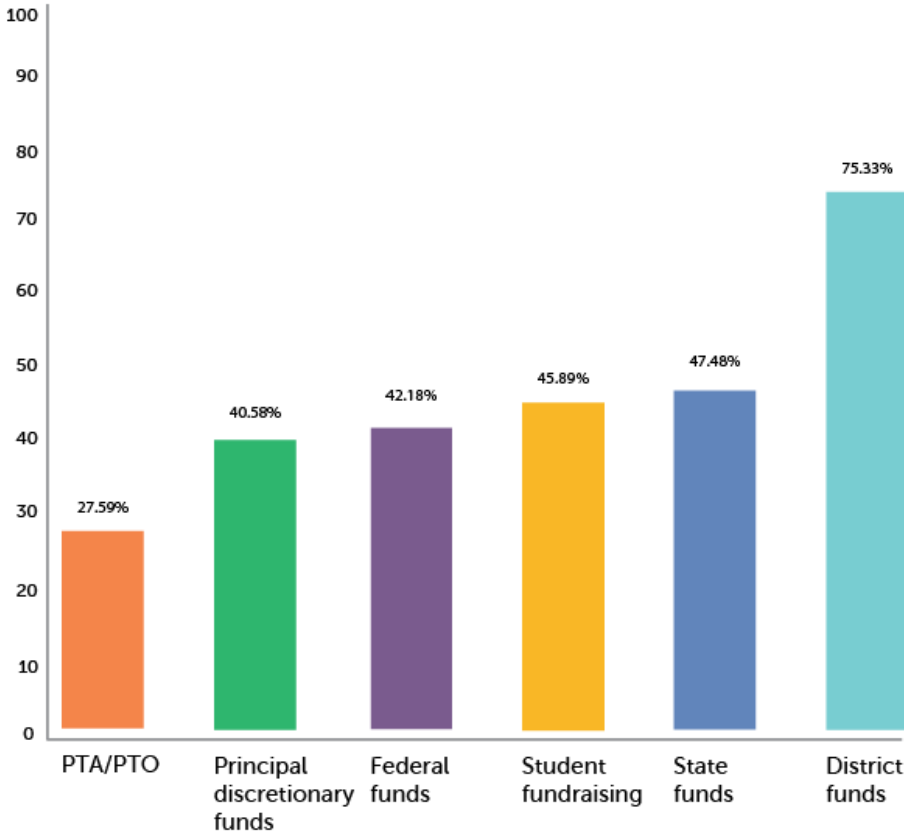
The National Association for Music Education (NAfME), in collaboration with the Educational Theatre Association (EdTA), the National Dance Education Organization (NDEO), and the National Art Education Association (NAEA), conducts an informal annual survey to collect data about the use of federal funds to support music and the arts (dance, theatre, and visual arts). [Responses](#) for the 2022–23 school year were received from 48 states and the Department of Defense Education Activity between October 2 and October 27, 2023. The majority of the 388 individuals who filled out the survey were classroom teachers and district arts supervisors.

Federal Funds Available for Music and Arts

When Congress passed the most recent iteration of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) in 2015, the [Every Student Succeeds Act](#), music and the arts were listed as part of a well-rounded education and eligible for funding under Title I; Title II, Part A (Supporting Effective Instruction State Grants); and Title IV, Part A (Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants). In addition to the annual appropriations allocated to these programs in FY 2023, Congress authorized an unprecedented \$193.2 billion for the Elementary and Secondary Education Relief ([ESSER](#)) fund during the COVID-19 pandemic. The funding was intended to reopen school buildings safely and accelerate student learning, but it could also be used to support student access to a well-rounded education.

Funding Sources for Music and Arts Programs

What funding sources were used to support music and arts instruction in school year 2022–23?

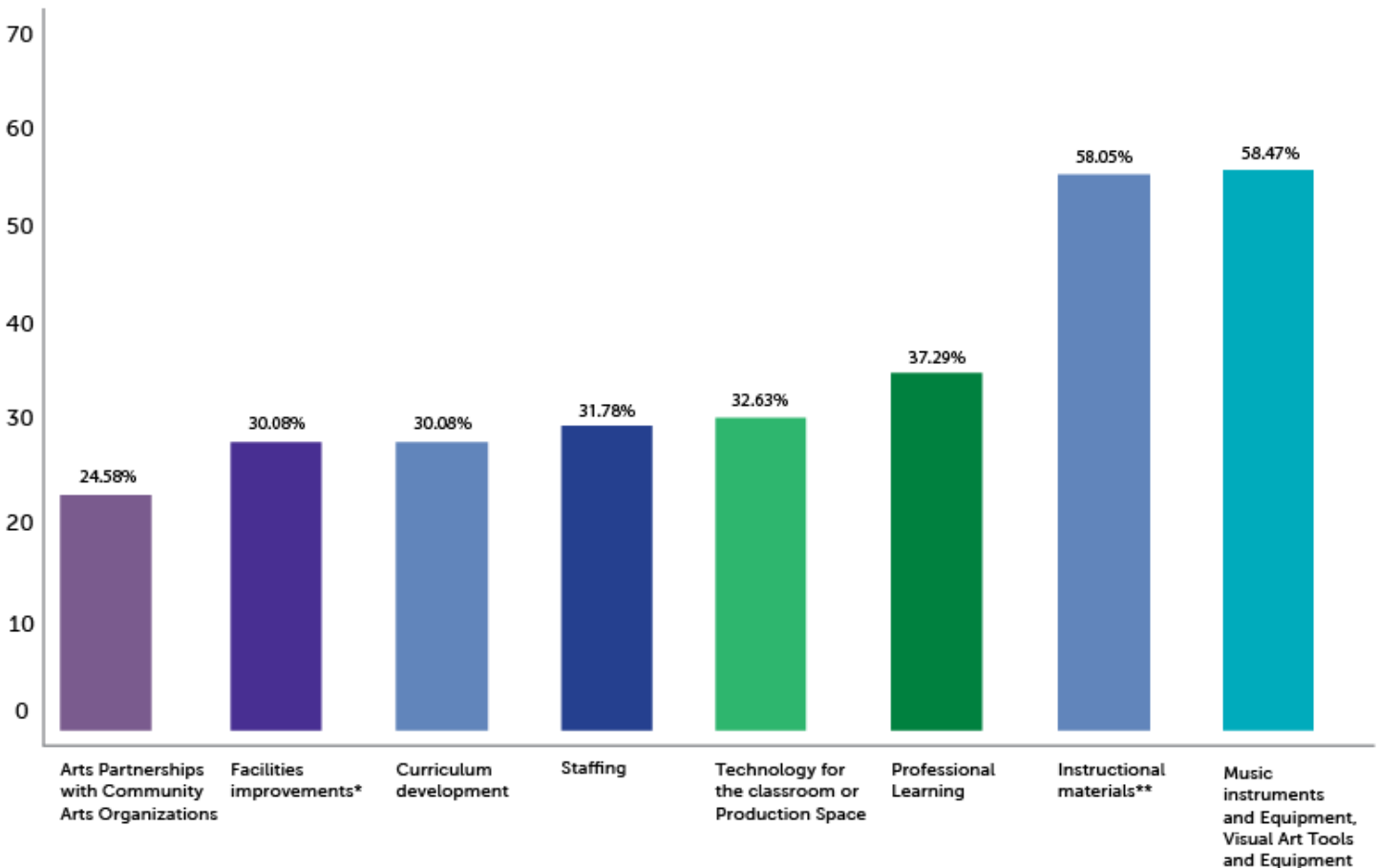


A new question was added to the 2022–23 survey about all sources of funding for school music and arts programs. Seventy-five percent of respondents reported the use of district funds, with state funds and student fundraising tied as the second-most cited funding source. Other arts educators indicated support from the principal’s discretionary budget and the PTA or PTO. And when asked how federal funds could address unmet needs, many educators expressed concern about the student fees required for participation in their music and visual arts programs, which is often cost-prohibitive for some families.

While more than 40 percent of respondents were able to access federal funds for music and the arts, other educators said they were unaware of those funds being an option or that they did not know who at the school or district level made those decisions. Many also said they were informed the funds could not be used to support their programs. Other respondents indicated that the principal had control over the budget and chose to use federal funds for other activities. And some just felt that school and district leaders didn’t support their programs or understand the positive impact of music and arts for their students. One retired educator stated, “Our district does not value the visual and performing arts as part of a well-rounded education or as a career path.”

Use of Federal Funds

If federal funds were spent for music and the arts, how were they spent?



* (e.g., acoustical treatment, theatrical lighting, sound system, rigging, ventilation)

** (e.g., textbooks, digital resources, supplemental materials)

More than 58 percent of respondents who received federal funds for music and the arts purchased musical instruments and other supplies, many with ESSER funding, to avoid sharing items among multiple students. Examples included theatre equipment, auditorium lighting, choir risers, art supplies, and technology to support graphic design.

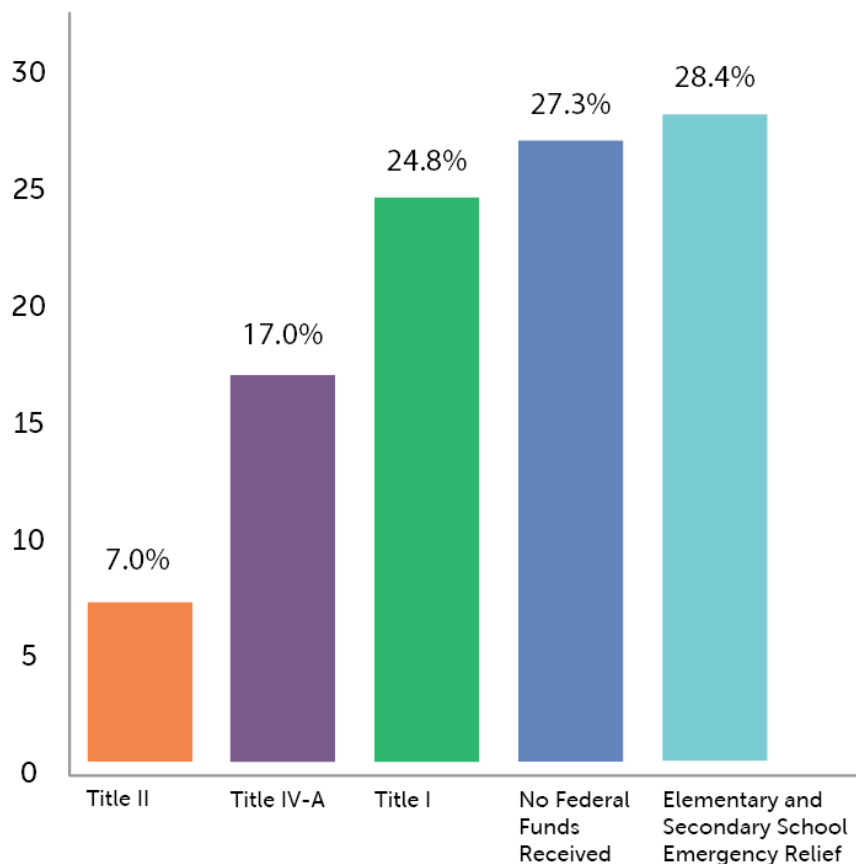
Some schools were able to use ESSER funding to increase staffing for their music and arts programs, allowing more students to participate and ensuring arts educators did not have to teach at multiple schools. Other schools used ESSER funding to provide content-specific professional learning opportunities and offer summer enrichments opportunities in music and the arts. One music educator reported commissioning a piece of music from an underrepresented composer for the music program.

While this survey focused on the 2022–23 school year, some respondents said they had already been told they would not be able to use ESSER funds for their programs the following year. Many shared specific software or activities that would have to be cut or that student fees would need to be reimplemented.

“Students were given access to resources and educational tools that helped them learn new material equitably. Without the funding, families would have to pay for these resources themselves, which many can’t afford to do.”— Middle School Band Director, New Mexico

Types of Federal Funds Used

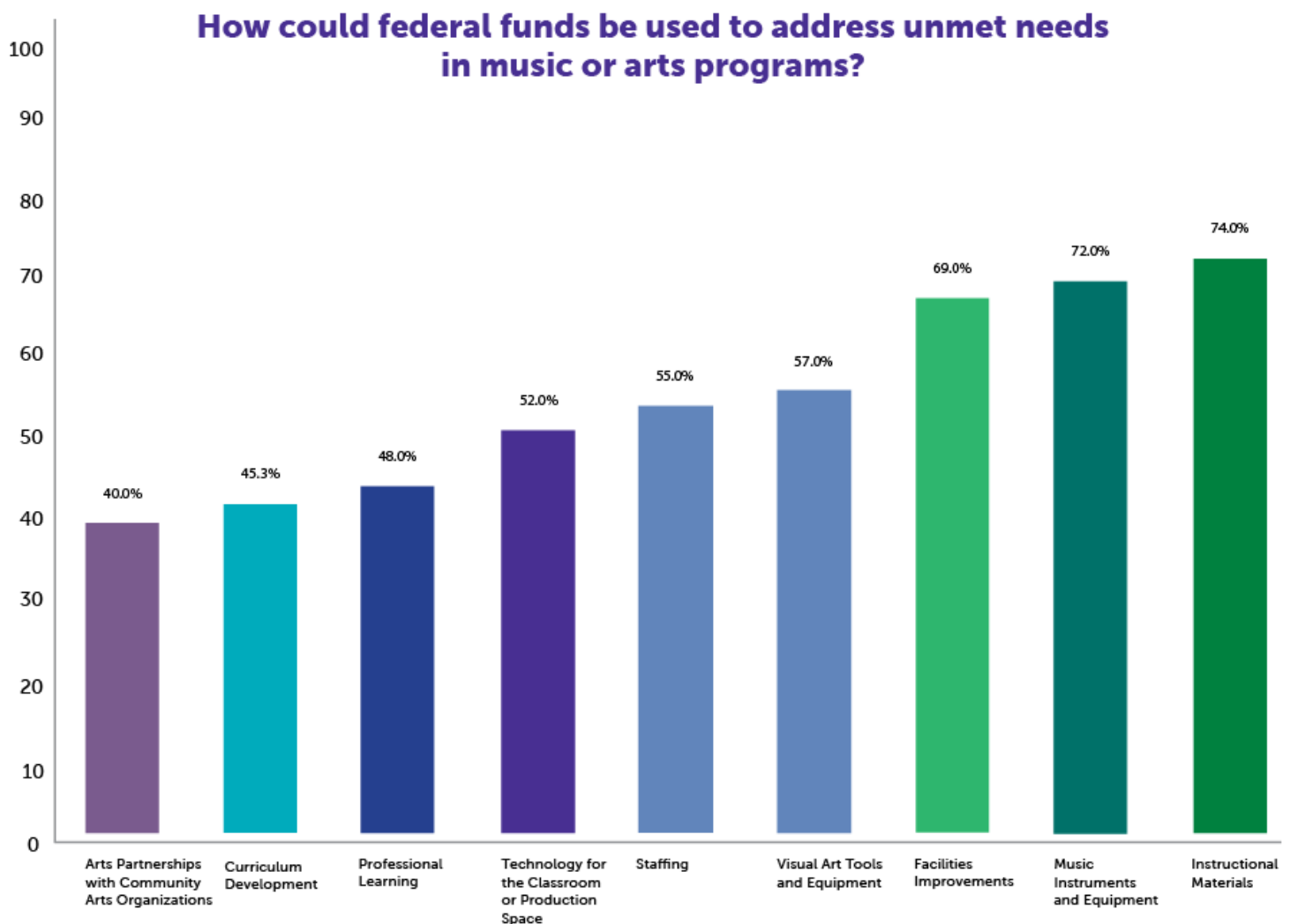
Select the types of federal funds that are used to support music and arts programs in school year 2022–23. Select all that apply.



While more than 25 percent of respondents reported the use of ESSER funds to support music and arts programs, Title I was the second most-cited funding source often in combination with ESSER funds or Title IV. Again, schools used the funding to purchase instruments and other supplies, but they also offered after-school choral and visual art programs and partnered with community arts providers. Schools used Title IV, Part A funding to replace aging instruments, purchase supplies such as kilns and water-based oil paint, and to install a ballet barre and new flooring for the dance classroom. One school offered a new music technology course, and others provided summer instrument and voice lessons and fine arts camps. Respondents also addressed teacher retention and improved quality of instruction through mentoring and targeted professional development.

“Federal funds contributed directly to my students having access to materials they WOULD NOT have been able to use, otherwise. High-quality materials like iPads with accompanying tools like Logitech pencils for them and programs like Procreate for classes isn’t something we could have purchased on our own. Our kids appreciate having an opportunity to learn and advance their skills!”—Jeffrey Clark, K-12 Arts Educator

Unmet Needs for Music and Arts Programs



The survey asked respondents about the unmet needs that could be addressed with additional federal funding. Many educators pointed to the age of their musical instruments with one respondent stating that they are currently repaired with paper clips and tape. They also mentioned ventilation, acoustics and sound support for their performance facilities, furniture appropriate for music and visual arts classrooms, and transportation to take students on field trips. Others expressed a desire for 21st century tools such as digital drawing tablets and computers for graphic design, photography equipment, and other technology. Survey respondents also mentioned staffing to help reduce class sizes and ensuring full-time arts educators at all schools as a priority.

Call to Action

Federal education funding is intended to provide equity across multiple localities and can help ensure more students have access to high-quality music and arts programs. Your continued advocacy is essential to this work!

1. Educate district leaders about the opportunity to use Titles, I, II, and IV-A funding for music and the arts [<https://bit.ly/TitleIVAtoolkitFAQ>].
2. Urge your members of Congress to support robust funding for Titles I, II, and IV-A in the annual Labor-Health and Human Services-Education appropriations bill [<https://bit.ly/SupportMusicEdFY24>].
3. Ask your Representative to cosponsor the Arts Education for All Act (H.R. 5463).
4. Share stories about how federal funding has been used to support YOUR music program with the NAFME Advocacy & Public Policy team (advocacy@nafme.org).