



## Fiscal Year 2026 (FY 2026) Legislative Agenda

The Music Education Policy Roundtable is a public policy coalition that advocates for a high-quality music education for all students. Consisting of music organizations, trade associations, businesses, and music education advocates, the Roundtable is unified under a single policy banner and works to achieve a consensus set of federal legislative recommendations aimed at ensuring the continued presence and expansion of robust music programs in U.S. schools. The Roundtable believes that music education should be taught by certified music educators, delivering sequential, standards-based music education to all students nationwide, regardless of personal circumstance or background.

The arts—including dance, media arts, music, theatre, and visual arts—are an essential part of PreK–12 education. Access to arts learning can also motivate students to attend school and significantly reduce chronic absenteeism rates. Congress’s reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) in 2015 underscored the value of arts education by enumerating “music and the arts” as part of a well-rounded education and opening federal funding streams to support arts instruction in public schools. Increased federal assistance from Congress is crucial to ensure that students from all backgrounds have access to a comprehensive arts education.

### Federal Appropriations

#### Supporting Students

**Title I, Part A**—Provides funds to school districts to help disadvantaged children achieve proficiency on challenging academic standards, including music and arts education standards, and improve the performance of low-achieving schools.

- We request this program be funded at **\$18.68 billion** in FY 2026.

**Title IV, Part A**—A flexible block grant program that supports activities in three broad areas:

(1) providing students with a well-rounded education (e.g., college and career counseling, STEM, arts and music, civics, advanced placement); (2) supporting safe and healthy students (e.g., comprehensive school mental health, drug and violence prevention, health and physical education); and (3) supporting the effective use of technology.

- We request this program be funded at **\$1.6 billion** in FY 2026.

**The Nita Lowey 21st Century Community Learning Centers**—A formula grant program that provides financial support to local communities for afterschool, before-school, and summer learning programs serving students in low-performing schools.

- We request this program be funded at **\$2.09 billion** in FY 2026.

**Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) State Grant program (Part B)**—Provides special education services and supports to 7.4 million eligible children with disabilities to ensure a free and appropriate public education.

- We request this program be funded at **\$16.6 billion** in FY 2026.
- We also request that Congress explore pathways for the federal government to provide 40% of funding for IDEA.

### Supporting Music and the Arts

- **Assistance for Arts in Education Program**—Promotes arts education for all students, through activities such as professional development for arts educators; development and dissemination of accessible instructional materials; and community and national outreach activities that strengthen and expand partnerships among schools, local education agencies, and centers for the arts.
- We request this program be funded at **\$40 million** in FY 2026.

**National Endowment for the Arts (NEA)**—Funds projects that help children and youth acquire knowledge and skills in the arts and apply the arts to learning in other subjects as the largest funder of the arts and arts education.

- We request this agency be funded at **\$209 million** in FY 2026.

### Supporting a Well-Prepared and Experienced Educator Workforce

**Title II, Part A**—Focuses on improving student academic achievement by bolstering skills and expertise of teachers, principals, and other educators and increasing the number of high-quality teachers and principals in schools.

- We request this program be funded at **\$3 billion** in FY 2026.

**Augustus F. Hawkins Center for Excellence program**—Designed to support comprehensive teacher preparation at programs at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Tribal Colleges and Universities, and minority-serving institutions.

- We request this program be funded at **\$30 million** in FY 2026.

### Supporting Program Infrastructure and Research

## **Federal Data Collection and Reporting**

Comprehensive collection and reporting of arts education data at the federal level—including gaps in access, participation, and quality—is vital to ensure that all young people have access to excellent arts learning opportunities. Adopted or adapted by 43 states, the National Core Arts Standards can serve as a foundation for creating reliable measures of what children know and are able to do in the arts.

We encourage the immediate reinstatement of data collection in the arts, previously undertaken by the Institute for Education Sciences and the National Assessment of Educational Progress, to address the gaps in access to, participation in, and quality of arts education.

## Federal Legislation

### Arts Education for All Act (H.R. 2485) introduced by Representative Suzanne Bonamici (OR–01)

We urge passage of the Arts Education for All Act, which would expand arts education and programming to America’s youngest learners, K–12 students, and youths impacted by the juvenile justice system. Specifically, the bill would:

- Include provisions to support the professional development of arts educators and to amend the ESEA in order to provide more oversight into the implementation of arts education programs.
- Require research on the use of arts in education by the National Center for Education Research and the collection of data on arts education by the National Center for Education Statistics.

### HBCU Arts Education Act (H.R. 2664) introduced by Representative Alma Adams (NC–12)

We urge passage of the HBCU Arts Education Act, which would amend the Higher Education Act to allow federal HBCU grant funds to support arts, arts education, and cultural programs. New eligible uses of funds include:

- Financial assistance to students in arts, arts education, and cultural programs;
- Outreach programs and development offices for arts, arts education, and cultural departments;
- Comprehensive wraparound services for arts, arts education, and cultural students, including faculty and peer mentorship, work-based learning opportunities, guidance counseling, and career advising; and
- Apprenticeships, internships, and fellowship opportunities to arts, arts education, and cultural programs through partnerships with nonprofit organizations.