



**NORTH CAROLINA MUSIC EDUCATORS ASSOCIATION**  
ASSOCIATED WITH THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION  
AND AFFILIATED WITH THE  
**THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR MUSIC EDUCATION**  
**AND THE NORTH CAROLINA ARTS EDUCATION LEADERSHIP COALITION**

## **Federal Program Title I, Part A: Guiding Language Request**

February 10, 2022

### **Background**

- In August 2021, over 45 National and State Arts Education stakeholder groups wrote to U.S. Department of Education Secretary, Dr. Miguel A. Cardona, requesting the Department of Education issue a letter to state Title I Directors, Chief State School Officers, and Secretaries of Education **specifying the eligibility** of arts education for use of Title I funds.
- The letter noted how the arts have been included for decades in the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)* as important subjects of learning, and they are **an eligible use of Title I funds** under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). However, many instances of local education agency officials believing the contrary are often cited.
- In a January 24, 2022 response, the U.S. Department of Education (Ian Rosenblum, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy and Programs) shared the following:
  - Under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), music and the arts (dance, media arts, music, theatre, and visual arts) are included in the list of subjects that provide a well-rounded education for all students. States and local districts have the discretion to define specifically what a well-rounded education means for students and how to best use Federal, State and local funds to meet the needs of their students to provide a well-rounded education. Furthermore, the Department supports the use of Title I, Part A of the ESEA to support arts education. An LEA may use Title I, Part A funds to support arts education as a strategy to assist Title I students with meeting the State's challenging academic standards. Consistent with Title I, Part A requirements, whether funds may be used for a particular activity depends on that school's need assessment and schoolwide or targeted assistance plan. Title I provides more than \$16 billion annually to States, school districts, and schools. The Biden Administration has called for a significant increase to Title I in fiscal year 2022, to more than \$36 billion.

### **Request**

- **NCMEA requests NCDPI send communication to PSU superintendents, leadership, and federal program coordinators sharing Deputy Assistant Secretary Rosenblum's statement on Title I, Part A and the arts and further clarify in federal programs guidance that Title I, Part A funding may be considered as a resource to support the arts.**
- **We respectfully ask the following statement be shared:**
  - "Under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), music and the arts (dance, media arts, music, theatre, and visual arts) are included in the list of subjects that provide a well-rounded education for all students. States and local districts have the discretion to define specifically what a well-rounded education means for students and how to best use Federal, State and local funds to meet the needs of their students to provide a well-rounded education. Furthermore, the Department supports the use of Title I, Part A of the ESEA to support arts education. An LEA may use Title I, Part A funds to support arts education as a strategy to assist Title I students with meeting the State's challenging academic standards. Consistent with Title I, Part A requirements, whether funds may be used for a particular activity depends on that school's

**Continued →**

need assessment and schoolwide or targeted assistance plan.” -Ian Rosenblum, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy and Programs, U.S. Department of Education

- **We encourage NCDPI to share examples of use of Title I, Part A funds to support the arts. Such examples<sup>1</sup> might include:**
  - **Local Education Agency Plans** — Title I, Part A, Subpart 1, Section 1006 — To receive Title I funding, a district must submit a plan to the state education agency that describes how it will identify inequities in educational opportunities and help close the achievement gap for all students. These plans must include a description of how the district will provide a well-rounded education — a new requirement within ESSA. As the definition of a well-rounded education includes the arts, a district can provide a description of its arts education programs and the role of those programs in providing all students a well-rounded education when describing the instructional programs offered to Title I-eligible schools and populations.
  - **Schoolwide Programs** — Title I, Part A, Subpart 1, Section 1008 — Schools can use funding under this section of Title I, Part A to establish and implement plans based on a needs assessment to improve the education program of the entire school. To be eligible for schoolwide program funds, schools must have at least 40 percent of their students identified as coming from low-income families and create a schoolwide plan which embraces whole school reform. As a part of a well-rounded education, these plans may incorporate the arts as strategies to provide all students with opportunities to succeed. For example, opportunities for the arts can include:
    - Engaging the arts to improve students’ non-academic skills, such as self-efficacy or engagement.
    - Supporting student attendance and other non-academic indicators through increasing access and opportunities in the arts and other well-rounded educational subjects.
    - Incorporating arts-based techniques in professional development programs to strengthen the effectiveness of educators in improving student learning outcomes.
  - **Targeted Assistance Schools** — Title I, Part A, Subpart 1, Section 1009 — Schools that do not meet the poverty threshold for schoolwide schools can use Title I funding to create programs targeted to help academically at-risk students meet the state’s academic standards. These programs can occur during the traditional school day or in expanded learning time. Allowed with the passing of ESSA, the arts, as part of a well-rounded education, can be included as a potential strategy for meeting the objectives set by schools for the Targeted Assistance Schools programs. These strategies can include in-school, afterschool and summer programs that engage arts-focused learning in support of students meeting the state’s academic standards.
  - **Parent and Family Engagement** — Engaging the families of students is an important aspect of ESSA and appears in several areas of Title I.
    - For example, districts must establish, implement and annually review with parents and other stakeholders a policy for engaging families in the school and, through doing so, improve their children’s education. The arts, as an effective strategy to engage families in the school, can be incorporated into these policies in a variety of ways, including incorporating arts programming in a back-to-school night or other broader parent engagement events, providing updates on arts education activities in parent newsletters, and including attendance at arts events as part of a parent engagement plan evaluation (Title I, Part A, Subpart 1, Section 1010).
    - In addition, the district must provide parents and families of English language learners (ELLs) with information on how they can support their children in learning within the well-rounded education subjects. For example, schools can provide parents with expectations for their children in arts classes, as well as strategies to encourage their children to practice and engage in creative activities at home (Title I, Part A, Subpart 1, Section 1006).

---

<sup>1</sup> "ESSA: Mapping Opportunities for the Arts - ERIC." <https://www.ecs.org/wp-content/uploads/ESSA-Mapping-Opportunities-for-the-Arts.pdf>. Accessed 10 Feb. 2022.

- Finally, schools must include parents, educators and other impacted community stakeholders in the development of the schoolwide program plan. By finding out about their school's process, arts educators, parents and others interested in engaging the arts in their school can participate in the development process and provide feedback to school leaders to help ensure that the school consider the arts as a strategy within the plan (Title I, Part A, Subpart 1, Section 1008).
- **Encourage PSUs to share with NCDPI their successes in utilizing Title I, Part A funding to support their arts education programs.**

## Why This Is Important

- **Supports the implementation of the new Arts Education Graduation Requirement enacted in Session Law 2020-78.**
  - NCMEA remains very grateful to the General Assembly for the visionary work of establishing the arts education graduation requirement.
- **Demonstrates the strong partnership between stakeholder groups, NCDPI, and the State Board of Education on the implementation of the Arts Education Graduation Requirement.**
  - The law ensures that music will continue to be a strong part of the well-rounded education available to all students.
  - Music education is critically important as we move forward from the COVID pandemic and as students increasingly need school environments that support their social and emotional development.
- **Offers additional financial support and opportunity to solidify arts education programs for school districts experiencing arts education learning loss and atypical enrollment changes in music and arts education programs as recovery continues from the COVID pandemic.**
  - Leaders, schools, and communities recognizing and valuing music and arts education in our schools during the 2022-2023 academic year and beyond can ensure:
    - Music and arts programs continue to be funded *at pre-pandemic levels*
    - Classes are offered across *all grade levels* and appropriately scheduled
    - Curriculum and scheduling addresses students' *learning loss in music and the arts* as well as other content areas
    - Licensed music and arts educators continue to be employed and teach in the discipline for which they were trained
- **Providing professional development opportunities** and creative ways to recruit, retain, and teach students during times of the COVID-19 pandemic for stakeholders of all socioeconomic backgrounds.
- **Music is critical in connecting students with success in other academic areas.** Recent research articulates this point (from the implication statement on page 308-Page 1 of the PDF of this study): "Students highly engaged in music were, on average, academically over 1 year ahead of the peers not engaged in school music. In light of this study (the largest of its kind to date), as well as supporting evidence suggesting music learning in childhood may foster competencies (e.g., executive functioning) that support academic achievement, educators may consider the potential positive influence of school music on students' high school achievement."<sup>2</sup>

## What We Know About Music

- **Supporting a well-rounded education helps the emotional well-being of students.**
- We must ensure that **students continue to have access to education that fosters them and their interests** underpinning skills they will need to enter the workforce and institutions of higher learning.
- NCMEA **encourages local public school units to, at minimum, maintain all music courses for the 2022-2023 school year and beyond** because they benefit students and their abilities to cope with the troubling times brought on by the COVID pandemic.

<sup>2</sup> "A population-level analysis of associations between school music ...." <https://psycnet.apa.org/record/2019-34936-001>. Accessed 10 Feb. 2022.