



## MEMORANDUM

**TO: Chiefs, Deputies, Federal Liaisons, and Communications Directors**  
**FROM: Council of Chief State School Officers**  
**DATE: January 14, 2016**  
**SUBJECT: Key Arts Education Provisions under the Every Student Succeeds Act**

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The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) contains numerous references to a “well-rounded” education. The term “well-rounded” is defined as courses, activities, and programming in subjects such as English, reading or language arts, writing, science, technology, engineering, mathematics, foreign languages, civics and government, economics, arts, history, geography, computer science, music, career and technical education, health, physical education, and any other subject, as determined by the State or local educational agency, with the purpose of providing all students access to an enriched curriculum and educational experience.

In addition to the statutory authority provided by references to a “well-rounded” education, ESSA also includes the Assistance for Arts Education grant program, which authorizes grants to local educational agencies and non-profits (among other eligible entities) to support arts education. The following provisions include language related to arts education:

### **Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants**

Generally, these grants are intended to improve students’ academic achievement by increasing states, LEAs, schools’ and local communities’ abilities to (1) provide students with access to a well-rounded education; (2) improve school conditions for student learning; and, (3) improve the use of technology in order to improve academic achievement and digital literacy.

States may reserve up to 5 percent of funds to support school districts carrying out a variety of activities, including offering well-rounded educational experiences to all students. The additional 95 percent of the funds go by formula to LEAs, where funds must support at least one activity or program from three separate categories, including well-rounded educational opportunities. LEAs must allocate at least 20 percent of funds under this category. Among the allowable uses of funds are the integration of arts into other academic subjects including Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) programs.

### **Local Educational Agency (LEA) Plans in Title I**

LEAs are required to develop plans for Title I funding. The plan must include how the LEA will monitor students’ progress in meeting the challenging state academic standards by developing

and implementing a well-rounded program of instruction to meet the academic needs of all students, among other requirements.

### **Schoolwide Programs**

Schools that receive Title I funds and draw at least 40 percent of their students from low-income families may operate a schoolwide program. Under this authority, federal funding can be used to meet the needs of all students in the school. A school that doesn't meet these requirements may request a waiver from the State Educational Agency (SEA) to implement schoolwide programs. When a school operates a school wide program they must develop a plan, which must include a description of the strategies that the school will implement to address school needs, including a description of how such strategies will include programs, activities, and courses necessary to provide a well-rounded education. This provides for these schools to use federal funds on arts education activities.

### **Targeted Assistance Programs**

Targeted assistance programs operate in schools that do not qualify for schoolwide programs or that elect not to operate a schoolwide program. Unlike schoolwide programs, Targeted Assistance Schools must focus funds on eligible children who are failing or who are most at risk of failing to meet state standards.

Each Targeted Assistance School is required to serve participating students identified as eligible children and help them meet the challenging State academic standards, which may include through programs, activities, and academic courses necessary to provide a well-rounded education. This provides for these schools to use Title I funding to provide arts education activities to eligible students.

### **Professional Development**

The term professional development is used throughout the bill and is a major focus of Title II funding for teachers, principals, and other school leaders. It is defined, in part, as activities that “are an integral part of school and local educational agency strategies for providing educators (including teachers, principals, other school leaders, specialized instructional support personnel, paraprofessionals, and, as applicable, early childhood educators) with the knowledge and skills necessary to enable students to succeed in a well-rounded education and to meet the challenging State academic standards.” This ensures that professional development can be provided for educators that provide instruction in the arts.

### **21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC)**

21st CCLC is a \$1 billion program to provide students with a broad array of services, programs and activities during summer recess and expanded learning time (before and after school).



Funds flow by formula to states and are competitive grants from states to the local level. Authorized local activities that can be implemented through this program include well-rounded education programs.

### **Assistance for Arts Education Grants**

Section 4642 of ESSA authorizes grants to local education agencies and other eligible entities to support arts education. Grants awarded under the program may be used to fund professional development for arts educators, teachers, and principals, development and dissemination of arts education materials, and efforts to expand partnerships between schools and centers for the arts.

While LEAs where more than 20 percent of students are from families with incomes below the poverty line are eligible entities under the program, priority is awarded to “eligible national nonprofit organizations” – organizations that are supported by staff and volunteers and which demonstrate effectiveness in addressing arts education for disadvantaged or disabled students.