



ESSA Fact Sheet

On December 9, after years of stalled negotiations and Congressional stalemates, the U.S. House of Representatives put No Child Left Behind away for good, and passed by an overwhelming majority a new version of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

This new bill, entitled the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), is an enormous victory for music education advocates. We are truly on the verge of a new day for music education, with opportunities to use federal funding to increase access to music education for all students, especially the most vulnerable. Among the most important provisions for music education in the bill:

- **A New and Clear Intent to Support Our Nation’s Schools Through a Well-Rounded Education:** This is a sea change from NCLB, which focused heavily on the academic success of students narrowly defined as reading and math.
- **Enumeration of Music as a Well-Rounded Subject:** Replacing the Core Academic Subject language from NCLB, this language clearly articulates that music should be a part of every child’s education, no matter their personal circumstance.
- **Requirements for Well-Rounded Education:** Schools will now be able to assess their ability to provide a well-rounded education, including music, and address any deficiencies using federal funds.
- **Flexibility of Title I funds to support a well-rounded education.** All Title I programs, both school-wide and targeted, are now available to provide supplemental funds for a well-rounded education, including music.
- **More Professional Development for Music Educators:** Funds from Titles I, II and IV of ESSA, may support professional development for music educators as part of supporting a well-rounded education.
- **Flexible Accountability Systems:** States must now include multiple progress measures in assessing school performance, which can include such music education-friendly measures as student engagement, parental engagement and school culture/climate.
- **Protection from “Pull Outs”:** The new ESSA discourages removing students from the classroom, including music and arts, for remedial instruction.



Key Terminology for S. 1177, the “Every Student Succeeds Act”

As you continue to read jargon- and acronym-happy updates, you may find the following key terminology definitions useful:

The **Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)** is the same bill as “No Child Left Behind” and the “Every Student Succeeds Act.” Originally signed into law by President Lyndon B. Johnson in 1965, ESEA is the federal government’s most extensive statute addressing primary and secondary education. The intent of the legislation is to provide supplemental funds and programs to serve low-income students and enable State and Local Educational Agencies (LEAs, or school districts) to improve the quality of elementary and secondary education. Every several years, Congress must reauthorize ESEA to meet changing needs in education.

No Child Left Behind (NCLB) is the last reauthorized iteration of ESEA. Receiving bipartisan support, NCLB was signed into law in 2002 by President George W. Bush. NCLB highly focused on exposing achievement gaps in traditionally underserved and vulnerable student populations through use of greater accountability measures. The law officially expired in 2007 and stop-gap solutions were made until a new ESEA is passed.

The **Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)** is the title of the latest ESEA reauthorization by Congress, expected to be signed into law. After months of bill drafts and negotiations in Congress, ESSA is the result of a bipartisan compromise that was approved by conference committee in November 2015. The agreement substantially shrinks the federal education footprint and returns accountability to the states. Most recently, the bill passed the U.S. House of Representatives on December 2nd by a vote of 359 – 64. The Senate is expected to vote on the bill on Monday, December 7, 2015.

The **“Well-Rounded Education”** provision (previously known as “Core Academic Subjects”) is a section (Sec. 8002) within ESSA that lists courses, activities, and programming in subjects deemed critical when providing students a broad and enriched educational experience. The provision includes “music” and “arts,” which articulates the importance of music as a part of every child’s education. This provides an unprecedented step forward for music education, as “Well-Rounded” is mentioned in a variety of other significant provisions throughout the bill.



The “**Core Academic Subjects**” provision was first established in NCLB. The provision lists “the arts” as a core academic subject and served as an important touchstone for advocates and supporters, nationwide. The provision was re-imagined in the Every Student Succeeds Act as the “Well-Rounded Education” provision, and lists “music” and “arts” separately as part of a well-rounded education.

Title I of ESEA provides financial assistance to local education agencies (LEAs, school districts) to meet the needs of children from low-income families and ensure they are meeting academic standards. Title I embodies the original intent of the original Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, to level the playing field for all students regardless of personal circumstance. Assistance can be school-wide, if enough students in the school meet the poverty “threshold,” or it can be used for individual students within a school.

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) is the measure by which school districts and states are held accountable for their students’ performance under Title I of NCLB. AYP is utilized to determine if schools are performing sufficiently when educating their students. Schools failing to meet AYP in consecutive years, under NCLB, face the loss of access to Title I funds and other consequences.

Highly Qualified Teacher is a provision listed in Title II of NCLB. The provision defines a “Highly Qualified Teacher” as one who meets applicable State certification and licensure requirements, holds a minimum of a bachelor’s degree, and has demonstrated in a manner of competency in each of the academic areas in which the teacher teaches. ESSA does not utilize this term, but mentions appropriate certification and credentialing for teachers funded under federal law.

Supplement not Supplant is a provision within ESEA, which states federal funds that are made available must be used to supplement, and not take the place of, other Federal, non-Federal, or state funds that would have otherwise been used for the same purpose.