



Leveraging Federal Title IV Funds in Pennsylvania for Music Education

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) creates a new funding stream that is designed to ensure a “well-rounded” education for all students. Under ESSA, music and the arts are designated as well-rounded subjects. These new federal funds, known as Title IV, Part A or Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants (SSAEG), will flow through the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) to school districts.

Through conversations with the Pennsylvania Department of Education, we have compiled this reference document to access Title IV, Part A funds for your district that can potentially be used for arts education.

When Congress passed ESSA, they recommended funding Title IV, Part A at \$1.65 billion. Unfortunately, funding levels have been far less than that. While there is advocacy work happening at the federal level to bring funding closer to \$1.65 billion, it’s important to take advantage of the Title IV, Part A funds that are available to help music and arts programs but also to show the value of using these funds in the hopes of increasing the future funding allotment from the federal government.

HOW TO RECEIVE TITLE IV, PART A FUNDS IN PENNSYLVANIA

Local Education Agencies (LEAs) or districts receive what is known as a *Consolidated Application* in the spring of each year. This application is due back to PDE before the beginning of the school year.

As your LEA begins to discuss their budget for the next school year (usually in the winter of the preceding school year), it’s a good idea to begin discussing your LEA’s use of Title IV, Part A funds.

LEAs are required to complete a *Needs Assessment* to determine where Title IV, Part A funds can be used. Beginning in the winter/spring, you should ask your administration how you can be involved in the process to determine the use of these funds. It’s likely you won’t know what the funding allocation from the federal government will be at this point. You should still participate in the process to bring attention to any deficiencies in your program.

AREAS TO EXPLORE IN YOUR NEEDS ASSESSMENT

- Musical Instruments
- Sheet Music
- General Music Supplies/Text Books
- Performance Space Upgrades
- Music Technology (Computers, tablets, software)
- Curriculum Materials
- Content Area Specific Professional Development
- Arts Integration
- Additional Music Courses (Adding a piano or guitar class)
- Music Related Field Trips

A fantastic resource to review before making your case for additional resources for your music program is NAFME's Opportunity to Learn Standards (OTL): <http://bit.ly/nafmeotl> You can find a checklist version of the OTL standards – ready for your use as a *Needs Assessment* and a NAFME podcast available as an overview on using the OTL's for your Title IV *Needs Assessment* here: <http://bit.ly/otlwebinar>

These OTL standards will help you benchmark your program and put you in a position to set it up for success. This will help you make the case for Title IV, Part A funds but also for funds out of your LEA's regular budget that can impact your program.

The OTL standards also help you to have a measurable goal. Having a goal for the use of the funds is required under the law. Once the funding has been implemented, you will need to provide evidence that you met the goal of the use of funds. That can be an artifact that shows the goal was met by way of the funds. Examples include: narratives, videos, student work, etc.

Your LEA will be required to complete the PDE *Consolidated Application* that describes the applicable use of funds.

- Remember, you won't be the only subject area asking to use these funds, so it's important to do your research and provide a compelling argument.
- These federal funds are meant to be supplemental in nature – not to supplant what is already provided locally. You need to show need through a *Needs Assessment* and you need to show that federal funds aren't supplanting local funds to pay for it. As an example, if you would like to add a new tuba to your music program, you would show the value of using these federal dollars by explaining that there are no local dollars to cover the purchase. Perhaps your school only budgets for a certain number of instruments a year and a tuba purchase would exceed that amount and would be considered supplemental.
- These funds are not a lot in the grand scheme of a LEA's budget. So, make sure to keep your ask reasonable. At this point, an LEA is likely to see in the \$10,000 range of funding, but continued advocacy at the federal level is trying to increase that amount. (You can see how much your LEA received in 2019-20 funding on PDE's website: <http://bit.ly/patitleiv>)
- LEAs do have options under the federal law to combine their Title IV, Part A funds with other funding streams in the law, like Title I. If you provide a compelling enough argument for the use of funds for music, you may be able to convince your LEA to only use the funds under Title IV, Part A for a music related project.
- These funds are not recurring year-to-year. So, making a case to use these funds for any program that would require a yearly investment is not the best route. Each year, your LEA has to submit a new application for the use of these funds.

The current application states:

LEAs receiving at least \$30,000 in Title IV, A funding must complete the assurances below as it applies to your LEA.

LEAs receiving **less than \$30,000** in Title IV, A funding only need to mark Yes for one of the assurances below as it applies to your LEA.

It's important to note that at the time of the *Consolidated Application* submission, an LEA may not know if their allocation will be over \$30,000. The Title IV, Part A provision of ESSA was

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designed to provide LEAs with a reasonable infusion of dollars to help in the areas of: 1) ensuring a well-rounded education, 2) promoting safe and healthy students and 3) the effective use of technology.

Remember, when an LEA receives less than \$30,000 in Title IV, Part A funds, the assurances listed below are not applicable and that LEA can use the funds for any one area if they so choose.

Assurances for grants of at least \$30,000 listed in the application are:

The LEA assures that at least 20% of its allocation is spent on activities to support well-rounded educational opportunities.

The LEA assures that at least 20% of its allocation is spent on activities to support safe and healthy students.

The LEA assures that some of its allocation is spent on activities to support the effective use of technology.

The LEA assures that it will comply with section 8501-8504, regarding equitable participation of private school children and teachers.

The LEA assures that it will complete an annual State report regarding how funds for the SSAE program are being used.

If the LEA receives **less than \$30,000** in Title IV, A funding, mark N/A in the assurance below.

The LEA or consortium assures the prioritization of the distribution of funds to schools based on one or more of several factors, including schools that:

- Are among those with the greatest needs, as determined by the LEA or consortium;
- Have the highest numbers of students from low-income families;
- Are identified for Focus/Priority under Title I, Part A of the ESEA;
- Are identified as persistently dangerous public school under section 8532 of the ESEA.

The *Consolidated Application* goes on to ask the applicant to address specifically how the LEA will use funds in the areas of well-rounded education, safe and healthy students and/or the effective use of technology. The good news is that PDE lists “Music and Arts Programs” as a suggested area for use of funds. An LEA has to provide a narrative response describing the proposed use of funds. This is where the research you have done will come in handy. By presenting your case for the needs of your program, you’ve already done some of the work for your administrators. Once you convince them of your need for these funds, they’ll be able to use your argument as part of their application being sent to PDE.

Once an LEA submits their application to PDE, the Title IV requests, along with other parts of the application, are reviewed by PDE and monitored throughout the school year to ensure the funds are being spent as outlined in the plan.

The process will continue each year as long as ESSA remains the federal law. Even if you don’t receive funds for your program this year, stay part of the process. Your administrators will notice your tenacity and may find other areas of the budget to fill your program needs.