

U.S. Department of Education Public Meeting
Implementing Programs under Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act

**Statement by Heather Noonan, Vice President for Advocacy
on behalf of the League of American Orchestras**

January 11, 2016

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments regarding implementation of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), which amends the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

The League is the national service organization for the more than 1,300 youth, collegiate, community, and professional orchestras throughout this country. As nonprofit community-based organizations, orchestras partner with parents, educators, and other public stakeholders in pursuing more equitable access to arts education in our nation's schools.

Arts education has proven to improve student success and transform the learning environment. And yet, the U.S. Department of Education's 2012 Fast Response Statistical Survey found that the highest poverty schools have the least access to arts education. In its definition of a "Well-Rounded" education, the new federal law recognizes music and the arts as essential to a complete education for **all** students.

- Guidance from the U.S. Department of Education should encourage states to be publicly transparent regarding the gaps in access to arts education in Title I schools.
- U.S. Department of Education guidance can also bring forward examples of how the arts are effective in meeting Title I goals. In identifying examples, the Department can highlight projects supported by its own Arts Education Model Development and Dissemination program and Professional Development for Arts Educators program. Both of these programs have supported projects proven to improve student achievement.
- In support of ESSA's goal of providing equitable access to a complete education, we urge the Department to more frequently incorporate data regarding the arts in its routine data collection instruments, and through more frequent implementation of the National Assessment of Educational Progress in the Arts.
- The assessment frameworks that accompany arts standards can be brought forward by the U.S. Department of Education as dynamic examples of portfolio- and performance-based practices in measuring what students know and are able to do. These examples can serve as helpful resources as states develop new assessment strategies for **all** subjects that contribute to a complete education.

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in this process. The League of American Orchestras looks forward to submitting more detailed written comments for the record. We and our member orchestras also look forward to partnering with stakeholders in this room, and at the state and local levels, to advance a complete education for all students. Thank you.