



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

January 24, 2022

Ms. Heather Noonan
Vice President for Advocacy
League of American Orchestras
1602 L Street, NW, Suite 611
Washington, DC 20036

Dear National and State Arts Education Stakeholders:

Thank you for your letter to Secretary Miguel Cardona regarding the importance of arts education. I am pleased to respond on behalf of the Secretary. This Administration is deeply committed to arts education as an essential element of a well-rounded education for all of the Nation's students. We recognize the power of the arts to inspire and engage students, to fuel their creativity, and to help them find and fulfill their passions.

As stated in your letter, the Office of Well Rounded Education (WRE) in the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education at the Department of Education (Department) manages the Assistance for Arts Education (AAE) discretionary grant program that promotes arts education for students, including underserved students and children with disabilities, through activities such as (a) professional development for arts educators, teachers, and principals; (b) development and dissemination of accessible instructional materials and arts-based educational programming, including online resources, in multiple arts disciplines; and (c) community and national outreach activities that strengthen and expand partnerships among schools, local educational agencies (LEAs), communities, or centers for the arts, including national centers for the arts. Beyond the data collected from grantees, WRE is exploring options for updating national data collection regarding arts education in conjunction with other offices in the Department.

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

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The Department of Education's mission is to promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access

districts, and schools. The Biden Administration has called for a significant increase to Title I in fiscal year 2022, to more than \$36 billion.

Beyond the grant programs that the Department administers to support arts education under the law, the Department maintains an annual interagency agreement with the National Endowment for the Arts (Arts Endowment) for a joint project to support the activities of the Arts Education Partnership (AEP). The purpose of the AEP is to strengthen arts education as an integral part of the elementary and secondary school learning and enrichment opportunities; help ensure that all students meet challenging State arts content standards; assist in the development and implementation of assessments; and support the national effort to enable all students to demonstrate competence in the arts.

The AEP was formed in 1995 through a collaborative effort among the Department and the Arts Endowment, the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies, and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO). More than 100 national organizations committed to promoting arts education in elementary and secondary schools, and institutions throughout the country have joined AEP to help States and local school districts integrate the arts into the curriculum. AEP works closely with State teams composed of representatives from State educational agencies, State arts agencies, and State alliances for arts education.

The Department strongly supports the continuation of the AEP to facilitate planning, communication, research, and collaboration among national organizations, government agencies, foundations, and businesses that share the goal of making the arts part of a well-rounded education, consistent with the AEP's goals, which are to:

- Engage a national coalition and other stakeholders around the priority issues for education improvement and connect those issues to the importance of a complete and competitive education that includes the arts;
- Equip a national coalition and other stakeholders with a direct interest in arts and education with research and policy analysis to inform the development of new research, policy, and innovative practice; and
- Encourage and support a national coalition and other stakeholders in their continued efforts to ensure equitable access to a high-quality education that includes the arts.

The AEP offers an “ESSA and the Arts” toolkit at <http://www.aep-arts.org/essa/>, with resources to identify opportunities to support arts education. The AEP is also an excellent source of new research on the effects of music and the arts on students, teachers, and schools. ArtsEdSearch (<http://www.aep-arts.org/research-policy/artsedsearch/>) is a national clearinghouse of studies and findings managed by AEP.

We will explore options to update the Department's data collection regarding students' access to arts education and continue to consider ways to expand equitable opportunities for students in arts education through our grant programs and interagency and national

partnerships. Thank you again for your letter, and for your commitment to our Nation's students.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ian Rosenblum". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Ian" and last name "Rosenblum" clearly legible.

Ian Rosenblum
Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy and Programs
Delegated the Authority to Perform the
Functions and Duties of the Assistant Secretary