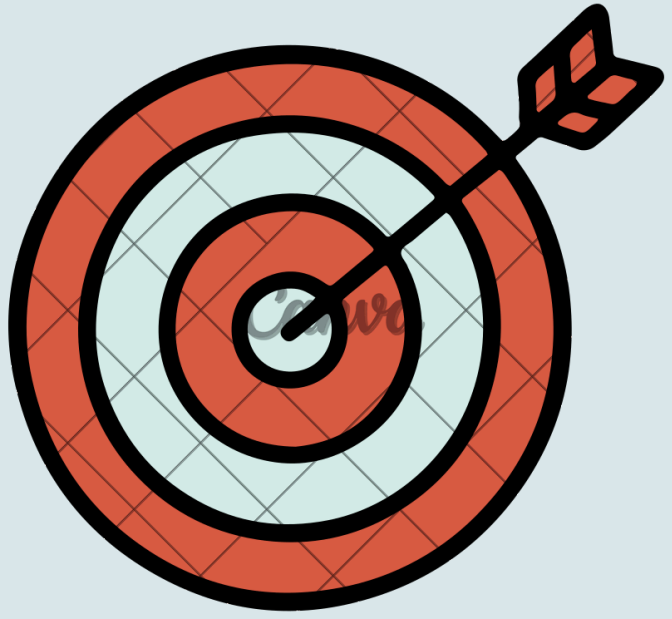


PUBLIC LAW 114-95

ESSA (Every
Student Succeeds
Act)



Purpose

The ESSA (Every Student Succeeds Act) states that their purpose is: “to provide all children significant opportunity to receive a fair, equitable, and high-quality education, and to close educational achievement gaps.”

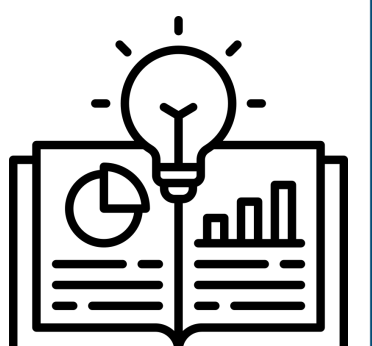
What this means: The purpose of this law is to give all children a well-rounded K-12 education, regardless of demographic. It breaks barriers that make it harder for certain kids to succeed because of their gender, race, or financial status.

Context:

The ESSA defines a “well-rounded education” as containing classes in various subjects such as English, math, and **music** to provide students with a better education. This means that the national government recognizes music as an essential part of education, and “[reinforces]... the regular academic program....”



In short, the ESSA requires the states to enforce curriculums that include music education because it enriches core classes.



What is the impact?

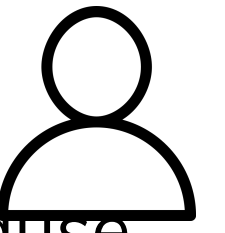


Policy Actions

The ESSA replaced the NCLB (No Child Left Behind) act, which previously left music education overshadowed by strict testing of core classes like math and English.

Now, the ESSA pushes states or local education agencies (such as school districts or education charters) to allocate funding to music and arts programs, as well as other activities. Schools are allowed to use Title I (a fund that supports low-income), Title II (supporting teacher training), and Title IV (supporting well-rounded education and student health) funds for music programs.

Who is affected?



- All K-12 students are affected because it defines music as a mandatory part of their education. Research shows that educational programs in music and the arts can especially bridge equity gaps (between different demographics).
- State lawmakers and LEAs (local education agencies) are forced to create meaningful legislation that ensures schools can create impactful music educations that contribute to a well-rounded education. Funding was fully integrated from 2018 to 2021.

Why does this policy matter?

The ESSA specifically prioritizes music education as a component to a “well-rounded education,” recognizing its importance in curriculum. Music education also is shown to help particularly vulnerable kids, making sure every child’s voice is heard and given a fair chance.



Limitations

The ESSA hands supervision of music education to states and LEAs. This could create inconsistencies in standards between states from different schools, or create strain on states or LEAs with limited resources.

Sources

- <https://www.congress.gov/114/plaws/publ95/PLAW-114publ95.pdf>
- <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED529798.pdf>
- <https://www.upperadams.org/departments/curriculum/federal-programs/federal-programs-title-i-ii-iii-iv>
- <https://www.everystudentsucceedsact.org/>