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ARTS EDUCATION ADVOCACY

The passage of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) resulted in the inclusion of a number of arts-friendly provisions. The bill also minimizes the role of the federal government, putting much of the decision-making at the state level. This means that local and state arts education advocates have an opportunity to activate in a new way.

ESSA Facts:

- The arts are included in the definition of a “well-rounded education” (previously called a core academic subject), making those subjects eligible for Title I funds, and well-rounded education subjects are included in a number of additional provisions that could lead to additional funding for the arts.
- ESSA retains a specific line item, “Assistance for Arts Education” fund, which provides funding to national programs.
- **Other important arts provisions:**
 - Support for programs that incorporate subjects, including the arts, into STEM (science, technology, engineering, math);
 - Continued authorization for 21st Century Community Learning Centers, which has funded afterschool arts programs.

Effective Arts Ed Advocacy

Opera companies can be great advocates for arts education. With the passage of ESSA and the reduction of the federal footprint on education policy, the importance of local and state advocacy increased.

States and school districts are writing implementation plans for ESSA. Now is the perfect time to engage as a stakeholder and share your expertise about the value of arts education and why every student should have access to a well-rounded education.

Arts organizations should be armed with important information about ESSA and education policy within each state.

- **Educate** yourself about your state’s policies for arts education with [this state-by-state reference](#). Are the arts recognized as a core academic subject? Does your state have arts education standards?
- **Get to know** [national](#) arts education standards and connect your programs to the learning goals.
- **Connect** your arts education talking points with research. [ArtsEdSearch.org](#) is a searchable database connecting vetted research with policy objectives.
- **Take a deeper dive** into the [top ESSA issues](#) to gain a better understanding of new and continuing programs in ESSA.
- **Explore** [ESSA: Mapping Opportunities for the Arts](#), a special report that highlights the ways that states and districts can engage the arts in ongoing work of ESSA.

OPERA America represents the opera field as an advisory committee member for the Arts Education Partnership and has been working closely with national arts education advocates to develop an action plan for effective implementation of the Every Student Succeeds Act in order to provide a well-rounded education that includes the arts to all students.