On December 10, President Barack Obama signed the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), which passed in the Senate the day before by a final vote count of 85 to 12. ESSA replaces the previous No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). Important for music educators to know is that ESSA includes a critical standalone listing for music in the legislation’s all-important definition of a “Well-Rounded Education” (previously known as “Core Academic Subjects”).

While Texas as a state historically has not embraced federal education policy overall, TMEA will continue to provide you information and updates about our opportunity to influence the state and local implementation of this act. NAfME executive director Michael Butera said it best by stating the Every Student Succeeds Act is a beginning and an opportunity, but the depth of its impact for the arts will be determined by the development of policies at the federal, state, and local levels.

As with any law—especially those at the federal level—the direct effects of and opportunities created by this act will take some time to realize. However, the following are some key points to understand moving forward. (The following analysis summary is reprinted with permission by the National Association for Music Education.)

**Title I: Improving Basic Programs Operated by State and Local Educational Agencies**

**Section 1008: Schoolwide Programs (Schoolwide Program Plan):** Plans which may be executed via a combination of federal, state and local funds, in efforts to improve the overall educational program of a school meeting the appropriate threshold of disadvantaged students to become eligible. Strategies should seek to strengthen academic programs, increase the amount and quality of learning time, and provide a well-rounded education (music, arts).

**Section 1009: Targeted Assistance Schools (Targeted Assistance School Program):** Aimed at assisting schools and Local Educational Agencies with support in ensuring that all students served meet the state’s challenging student academic achievement standards in subjects as determined by the state. Criteria includes the potential to provide programs, activities and courses necessary to ensure a well-rounded education (music, arts).

**Section 1112: Local Educational Agency Plans (Plan Provisions):** Application for federal support to state educational agencies, who then work with local educational agencies to implement plans designed to close the achievement gap and help students meet challenging state academic standards, via several avenues, including the development and implementation of a well-rounded (music, arts) program of instruction.

**Section 1112: Local Educational Agency Plans (Parental Participation/In General):** For English learners, local educational agencies receiving grants are required to conduct outreach to parents encouraging the sharing of information regarding how they...

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can be involved in ensuring that their children achieve at high levels within a well-rounded education (music, arts).

**Title II: Preparing, Training, Recruiting High-Quality Teachers, Principals, or Other School Leaders**

*Section 2224: Subgrants to Eligible Entities in Support of Kindergarten Through Grade 12 Literacy (Local Applications):* Eligible entities receiving subgrants must report on how a school integrates comprehensive literacy instruction into a well-rounded education (music, arts).

*Section 2224: Subgrants to Eligible Entities in Support of Kindergarten Through Grade 12 Literacy (Local Uses of Funds for Grades 6 Through 12):* Eligible entities receiving subgrants must assess the quality of adolescent comprehensive literacy instruction as part of a well-rounded (music, arts) education, and provide time for teachers to meet to plan evidence-based adolescent comprehensive literacy instruction to be delivered as part of a well-rounded education (music, arts).

**Title IV: 21st-Century Schools**

*Section 4101: Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants (Purpose):* Federal grants to state and local educational agencies aimed at improving students’ academic achievement, through a variety of measures, including by providing access to a well-rounded education (music, arts).

*Section 4104: State Use of Funds (State Activities):* States receiving formula grants must use those monies in part for purposes of carrying out particular State Activities, which may include offering well-rounded (music, arts) educational experiences to underrepresented, disadvantage, and minority students.

*Section 4106: Local Educational Agency Applications (In General):* As part of the Needs Assessment for a local educational agency to receive an allocation of formula grant funding from a state educational agency, improvement in access to, and opportunities for ensuring all students receive a well-rounded education (music, arts), is included.

*Section 4107: Activities to Support Well-Rounded Educational Opportunities (In General):* Programs and activities that use music and arts are referenced specifically, as tools to support student success, through the promotion of constructive student engagement, problem solving, and conflict resolution.

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June 2014, the Trinity University Music Department was recognized as an ALL-STEINWAY SCHOOL by Steinway and Sons, for its commitment to excellence and purchase of 32 Steinway pianos.
Section 4107: Activities to Support Well-Rounded Educational Opportunities (In General) via Bonamici Amendment: Programs and activities that integrate the arts (including music) into STEM for purposes of increasing participation in STEM, improving attainment of STEM-related skills, and promoting a well-rounded education (music, arts). Also, programs and activities that support educational programs that integrate multiple disciplines, such as programs that combine arts and math.

Section 4201: Purpose; Definitions (Purpose): Part is designed to provide opportunities for communities to establish or expand activities in 21st Century Community Learning Centers, including via offering students a broad array of additional services, programs, and activities, such as music and arts.

Section 4205: Local Activities (Authorized Activities): The Local Competitive Subgrant Program aimed at 21st Century Community Learning Centers and Expanded Learning Program Activities includes a description of Authorized Activities aimed at advancing student academic achievement and supporting student success. The description includes well-rounded education (music, arts) activities, including such activities that enable students to be eligible for credit recovery or attainment.

Section 4401: Magnet Schools Assistance (Special Rule): If all conditions are met, grant funds under this part may be used to improve knowledge of art or music.

Section 4641: Awards for Academic Enrichment (Program Authorized): From reserved funds, the U.S. Secretary of Education shall award grants, contracts, or cooperative agreements, on a competitive basis, to eligible entities for the purposes of enriching the academic experience of students by promoting arts education for disadvantaged students and students with disabilities.

Section 4642: Assistance for Arts Education (Awards to Provide Assistance for Arts Education/In General/Conditions/Consultation/Eligible National Nonprofit Organization): Reincarnation of Arts in Education program from NCLB (Title V, Subpart 15), aimed at promoting arts education (including music education) for students, including disadvantaged students and students with disabilities, through professional development for arts educators, teachers, and principals; development and dissemination of instructional materials and arts-based educational programming, including online resources, in multiple arts disciplines; and community and national activities that strengthen and expand partnerships among schools, local educational agencies, communities, or national centers for the arts. A variety of entities are eligible for funding under this program, with priority given to funding a national arts education organization meeting eligibility requirements. In carrying out activities, the U.S. Secretary of Education must consult with arts educators (including professional arts education associations, such as the National Association for Music Education [NAfME]). A previous version of this program was responsible for funding The Kennedy Center and its Very Special Arts (VSA) program, as well as a small number of competitive professional development and model program implementation grants under NCLB.

Title VIII: General Provisions

Section 8002: Definitions (Expanded Learning Time): Includes activities and instruction for enrichment as part of a well-rounded education (music, arts).

Section 8002: Definitions (Professional Development): Teachers, principals, other school leaders, specialized instructional support personnel, paraprofessionals, and, as applicable, early childhood educators, with the knowledge and skills necessary to enable students to succeed in a well-rounded education (music, arts), are, importantly, all included here.

Section 8002: Definitions (Well-Rounded Education): Music and arts are listed as part of a well-rounded education (formerly known as Core Academic Subjects). This listing importantly connects music and arts to various other cited provisions throughout the ESSA. Of significance, music is listed in this section as a standalone subject for the first time ever, providing clarity as to meaning, and serving as an advocacy tool that can help to inform state and local level funding decision-making.

Note: All other references to well-rounded education throughout S. 1177 are either not relevant to music and arts, or refer to amendments to United States Code and have no impact on this legislation.

Who We Are

The Brazos Valley Chorale is known and respected for its difficult and ambitious repertoire of great choral masterworks and contemporary classics. The 100+ mixed-voice volunteer singers form a cross-section of the community, from college students to retirees - all committed to excellence in choral music of all types.

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Brazos Valley Chorale

Dr. Eric Posada added “Artistic Director of the Brazos Valley Chorale” to his list of accomplishments in 2015. He also serves as the Assistant Director of Choral Activities at Texas A&M University where he conducts the Century Singers and the Women’s Chorus. He also serves as Director of Music at St. Joseph Catholic Church in Bryan, TX.