

ON THE PATH TO TITLE I ARTS: From Policy to Practice



Arts strategies work, and are making a difference in the lives of many of our nation's most vulnerable children.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY/INTRODUCTION

Across the country, many schools, districts and states are engaging the arts as key teaching and learning strategies to achieve the goals of Title I. These strategies represent an important shift in understanding for arts education advocates, as they see their work supporting the larger goals of education equity, and for educators, as their understanding of the value of the arts shifts from the margin to the center. But most importantly, these strategies work, and are making a difference in the lives of many of our nation's most vulnerable children.

Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act dedicates block funding – about \$15 billion per year – to closing the achievement gap for America's most under-resourced students. It represents the federal government's foundational commitment to education equity, and the bar for appropriate use of funds is set high. Any Title I-funded program must be backed up by evidence-based research, go through a serious annual planning cycle, be approved by a school site committee, and undergo regular compliance monitoring and evaluation. The good news is that **arts strategies can meet these stringent requirements** and can be incorporated into a school or district's plan.

We are seeing evidence of this work in California. In San Diego, the district has appropriated \$3 million of its Title I dollars to support an arts integration program in 22 schools. In Oakland, a school used Title I funds to build a dance program focused on language and literacy development. And in Orange County, the county office of education is piloting an arts elective class to promote the Title I goal of positive student behavior.

The California Alliance for Arts Education has spent the last seven years immersed in the arts and Title I, helping our partners understand the law, developing resources and guidance for implementing research-based Title I arts programs, and collecting evidence of the **shift from policy to practice**. This paper is intended for school leaders, policymakers, practitioners, and advocates looking for examples of what works and how to make it happen. It is divided roughly into three parts: *Building the Pathway*, which outlines the specific actions taken and resources created over the years of the initiative; *Perception, Policy, and Practice*, which describes the changes we have seen occur around those actions and resources, along with lessons learned along the way; and *Policy in Action* sidebars, case study examples of successful programs in school and districts who are implementing arts strategies to support Title I goals. We hope our experience informs your own work and understanding of the Title I system as well as the role we all can play as agents of change.

POLICY IN ACTION

Learning Through the Arts Initiative, San Diego

District-wide Title I arts integration initiative including close working partnership with community arts organization

San Diego Unified School District's Learning Through the Arts Initiative is unique, as a district-wide Title I program initiated by the superintendent using district-level Title I funds. In 2013, newly-appointed superintendent Cindy Marten was seeking innovative ways to encourage schools to provide arts opportunities in California's second largest school district. A former principal, she was interested in the role of the arts in school success, as well as finding ways to supplement the arts in some of the district's most under-resourced schools. She was also interested in doing something both high-profile and effective with some of the district's carryover Title I funds. After consultation with regional arts education leaders, the district constructed a unique plan to provide professional development in arts integration, along with teaching artist partnerships, to a cadre of district schools ranging from elementary to high school. Schools had to apply to participate in the program, called Learning Through the Arts, and 22 schools were selected for the program's first year.

From the beginning, Learning Through the Arts partnered closely with Arts for Learning San Diego, an experienced longtime provider of arts education and arts integration. The partnership ensured that all the teaching artists and their organizations were properly vetted from the beginning, and LTA's oversight could help make quick adjustments for fit and structure. Choosing arts integration as the intervention for the program avoided confusion with school-based arts programs and provided a clear base for Title I research compliance. Arts integration programs have been shown to have a positive effect on students' understanding of core subjects, as well as on their engagement in school – often demonstrated by higher attendance – and general school climate and culture. While the Title I funds used to support the program come from the district level and not the individual schools, each school is required to incorporate the arts integration strategy and its research justification into the individual school site plan. Program funds pay for teaching artists, supplies, teaching artist and classroom teacher collaborative planning sessions, and classroom teacher professional development. Currently, Learning Through the Arts comprises the work of 41 teaching artists from 15 San Diego non-profit arts organizations as they collaborate with 185 classroom teachers from 17 different schools. In one year, teaching artists and classroom teachers work in 232 different classes to provide about 6,500 students with arts integration lessons.



BUILDING THE PATHWAY

In our Title I work, the Alliance set out to create a clear pathway from federal legislation through state policy guidance down to strategy implementation at the school level, with some benchmarks along the way to make complex legislation more legible to administrators, advocates, educators, and artists alike.

Getting Policy Guidance

In order to clarify the relationship of California state policy to federal Title I policy, The Alliance met with officials at the California Department of Education (CDE) to get guidance on the appropriate uses of Title I funds in support of the arts.¹ The CDE responded with a letter in June 2012, signed by the deputy superintendent, that outlined the parameters for using Title I funds to support arts programming that achieves Title I goals.² That letter was updated in February 2016 to more fully align with federal guidelines that had expanded flexibility for Title I funds (see page 15 for that complete letter).³ A broad constituency of local, regional, and state leaders worked on the pathway to getting that clarification, and encouraged the Alliance to continue to build resources that could support the growing interest in Title I and the arts, with the hope that such programs could improve student outcomes while also increasing their access to the arts. We set out on a path to create and share resources, in the form of a policy paper, an online planning guide, school plan templates, and other materials that would help schools and districts develop Title I arts programs that would be compliant with both the letter and the spirit of Title I law.

Policy Paper and Online Resource

In 2014, the Alliance published a **policy paper** documenting the first few years of work on Title I – A Policy Pathway: Embracing Arts Education to Achieve Title I Goals.⁴ At the end of the paper, the Alliance stated a plan to create resources around Title I and the arts and build networks to facilitate the creation of new programs. The first leg of that journey was the creation of an online resource, [title1arts.org](https://www.title1arts.org), to provide information and tools for creating Title I arts interventions based on the annual planning cycle developed by the California Department of Education (see page 18 for full diagram) and distilled into discrete action steps. At every stage of the planning process, from accessing school data to project implementation, the site provides links to federal and state guidelines combined with concrete examples connected to the arts. For school

¹ Stevenson, Landon, Brazell, 2013. A Policy Pathway: Embracing Arts Education to Achieve Title I Goals.

² Deborah Sigman, Letter to County and District Superintendents, June 2012.

³ Tom Torlakson, Letter to County and District Superintendents and Charter School Administrators, February 2017. Available at <https://www.title1arts.org/home-c1eou>.

⁴ Policy paper available for download at <https://www.title1arts.org/home-c1eou>.

leaders new to the arts, we wanted to underscore the evidence linking the arts to Title I student achievement goals. And for arts educators less familiar with Title I, we wanted to give clear guidelines to the complex and essential process of planning a Title I program.

At the center of the online resource is a research matrix (see p. 20) based on the Title I goals for student achievement – the central goal of achievement in ELA and mathematics, along with the leading indicators that point to academic success: student engagement, school climate and culture, and family and community engagement. The matrix maps specific research studies in each of the goal areas onto the three school levels of elementary, middle and secondary school students. With a single mouse click, school leaders can access study citations and specific language about the research that can be put into school site plans. All of the research cited in the matrix comes from ArtsEdSearch, a national clearinghouse of outcome-based arts education research developed, vetted, and maintained by the Arts Education Partnership.⁵ Summary language in the matrix also contains links to the full research description in artsedsearch.org.

Along with the links to research and guidelines, the Alliance also created five short films⁶ illustrating the stages of planning and implementing a Title I arts program in real schools in San Diego County. Interviews with administrators, teachers, and principals give real world examples of both process and results.

Building a Network

For the online resource to be most helpful, it needed to be put into the hands of partners who could reach out to school leaders around the state and on the ground to begin the process of building programs. We connected with colleagues at the California County Superintendents Arts Initiative, a project of the California County Superintendents Education Services Association (CCSESA). Eleven of their county arts leads volunteered to participate in a pilot cohort dedicated to taking [titlearts.org](https://www.titlearts.org) on the road to facilitate and document Title I arts programs. Over two years, these county leads conducted meetings with district administrators, led workshops and webinars, and participated in new principal onboarding to introduce the Title I arts work around the state. Feedback from the cohort suggested the need for even more specific examples of program development and rationale, and led the Alliance to create several new resources to complement the website.



POLICY IN ACTION

Fortune School, Sacramento

Planning and community buy-in in a network of charter schools

Charter schools as a group have often lagged behind other public schools in providing a robust arts education for their students. However, the Fortune School network of six charter schools, based in Sacramento, stands out from the pack for its comprehensive music and math achievement program, funded by Fortune School's Title I dollars. Fortune's music program is a textbook example of how to design a program from the ground up in a way that is transparent, compliant, and fully engages all stakeholders.

When Fortune School first began receiving Title I funds in 2012, the administration considered several possibilities for the expenditure of the dollars, based on needs assessment data. Promising research on the connection between music and math learning convinced them that a music program held the most possibility for the funds. Over the course of a planning year, Fortune worked closely with its six individual school site councils and its program monitoring consultant at the CDE to develop a rigorous, research-based music program designed to serve its student achievement goals. Now three years into operation, the program's success is due to the key factors of planning transparency, community buy-in, rigorous research-based design, and clear connection to achievement goals.

⁵ ArtsEdSearch.org, a project of the Arts Education Partnership, copyright 2018.

⁶ All five films can be seen at <https://www.titlearts.org/library>

POLICY IN ACTION

Reach Academy, Oakland

Community arts partner brings arts to the center in Title I school

The story of REACH Academy's arts programming is an example of how a well-informed community organization can be an effective and supportive partner in making the arts a part of a school's fabric. Luna Dance Institute, based in Berkeley, has a long history of partnership with Bay Area public schools, including many with whole-school Title I funding. In the spring of 2014, REACH was considering replacing a sports program focused on student engagement that had not been as successful as hoped. One of the REACH teachers knew about Luna's reputation from a colleague and began a conversation about integrating dance programs in school settings. The school had carryover Title I funds they wanted to use to support the program, and Luna was able to connect the school with colleagues at the Alliance and elsewhere who had knowledge of Title I requirements and could help REACH write the dance program into the school site plan.

The final approved rationale for the dance program was to improve literacy and language development through increased student engagement. First launched in the spring of 2014, the program has persisted through challenging circumstances, including administrative changes and changes in funding strategies. The program is now supported through district grants and contributions raised through Luna, even in the face of a district in budget crisis. But the use of Title I funds from the beginning legitimized the program as a critical piece of the school's success, and allowed it to build over time. Additionally, Luna's leadership as an informed advocate for arts education helped the school maintain its commitment to dance.



Creating New Tools

We needed to make the complex system of Title I accessible to a broader audience, and we developed tools according to that need. First, the Alliance created a general flyer, *Four Things You Can Do to Start the Conversation About Title I and the Arts.*⁷ One side of the flyer condenses the salient research connecting arts education to the major Title I goals for student achievement. The other side suggests concrete actions for supporting Title I arts interventions in schools and districts.

Next, given the importance of compliance, we needed to show exactly what that looks like. We created ten sample school site plans — known in California as the Single Plan for Student Achievement, or SPSA — for Title I-funded arts interventions that could be used as templates by schools and districts (see p. 19 for an example).⁸ We also met with staff at the California Department of Education to review the language in the plans and assure its

compliance with state program guidelines. Finally, in the wake of the passage of ESSA and the development of state accountability plans, the Alliance decided to make a short animated film explaining the clear connection between federal Title I guidelines and research-based arts interventions. We vetted the language in the film with both state and federal officials for an accurate description of federal policy and its implementation.⁹

Together with the SPSA templates, the flyer, and the title1arts.org website, the film completed an array of tools available to partners, educators and advocates to talk about the role of the arts in Title I programs.

⁷ See title1arts.org to download flyer.

⁸ See <https://www.title1arts.org/develop-a-plan> to download the sample school site plans.

⁹ See title1arts.org to view the film.

Spreading the Word

As the project was developing around the state, the Alliance had a number of opportunities to present the work nationally at meetings and conferences. Through these presentations and events, along with participation in Americans for the Arts State Policy Pilot Program, the Alliance connected with other states who were also interested in exploring the connections between the arts and Title I. We eventually partnered with three of these states – Arizona, New Jersey and Minnesota – to develop sister websites to title1arts.org, demonstrating that much of the work is transferable to other states and can be aligned with their state policies. In Arizona, arizonatitle1arts.org is hosted by Arizona Citizens for the Arts and creates a repository for the pioneering work in Title I and the arts that Arizona has promoted for more than a decade. In New Jersey, newjerseytitle1arts.org is hosted by ArtsEdNJ and is linked to an exciting pilot program, the New Jersey Title I Arts-Integration Pilot Program, using state level Title I funds to support arts integration programs in school districts across the state. And in Minnesota, mntitle1arts.org is hosted by the Perpich Center for Arts Education, a state agency, primarily to help support Minnesota's Turnaround Arts schools.

The impact of all these activities can be cumulatively described in a set of categories of learning and implications for future work, described below.

PERCEPTION, POLICY AND PRACTICE

The evolution of the Title I work over the last seven years can be roughly divided into three categories: a change in **perception**, a change in **policy**, and a change in **practice**.

A change in **perception** means a shift in attitude and understanding of the role of the arts in Title I. Over the years of presentations and meetings about Title I and the arts, we saw a gradual change in the theme of questions from “can we do it?” — seeking permission — to “how do we do it?” — seeking a strategy. While it's hard to measure that change in perception in numbers, around the time the questions started changing we also started getting a lot more information about real schools doing the work. The cohort of county arts leads that we have worked with over the last two years have shared that the greatest barrier to entry is no longer fear of reprisal, but dueling priorities or scarcity of resources. It's a different set of challenges, but they are more specific and easier to take on one by one.



POLICY IN ACTION Montgomery Elementary, Chula Vista

Title I funds supplement and support school success through arts integration strategies linked to student engagement and academic achievement

Montgomery Elementary School in Chula Vista, California, is fully committed to the arts. Since California's largest elementary school district launched its \$15 million commitment to the arts in 2015, Montgomery has been able to add 1 full-time (music) and 1 part-time (visual art) VAPA teacher to its staff, who provide approximately 2 hours of weekly instruction in the arts for all students. In an effort to deepen Montgomery's arts programming and link it more closely to grade level classrooms, the school worked with Chula Vista's VAPA coordinator to join the Kennedy Center Any Given Child Partnership, which pairs some of its classroom teachers with arts integration professional development provided by La Jolla Playhouse. Last year, Montgomery decided to use some of its school-based Title I dollars to fund that same professional development for every teacher in the building.

At Montgomery Elementary, the arts integration program is seen as key to increasing student engagement as well as supporting academic achievement. Title I funding allowed Montgomery to embed arts integration strategies across its teachers and curriculum for lasting impact. Every Montgomery teacher participates in a nine-week partnership with a teaching artist, where they integrate a chosen content area with theater. Teaching artists first model integration techniques, then co-teach with classroom teachers, using a scaffolding approach that lets teachers move on to teaching theater skills independently.

POLICY IN ACTION
Orange County Department
of Education ACCESS
(Alternative, Community
and Correctional
Education Schools
and Services)

Title I, Part D funds support arts and social-emotional learning program for incarcerated youth

In California, the court and community schools responsible for juvenile offenders are under the supervision of the county offices of education, who manage the educational funding and programming for the schools. The Manager of the Title I Program for the Alternative Education Department (ACCESS) of the Orange County Office of Education has been working with the Visual and Performing Arts Coordinator to determine possible arts education programs and strategies to address student needs. Under the leadership of the school's administrator, the Fischer School at Orange County Juvenile Hall will implement an arts elective class to address the Title I goal of increasing positive student behavior in the school, thus reducing the number of Student Incident Reports (SIRs) and providing students with enhanced opportunities for pro-social, cooperative learning. This arts program will be supported by Title I, Part D funds.

The Fischer School serves roughly 200 incarcerated youth, and the principal has identified social-emotional learning as a primary need for his students. Title I, Part D funds will support a partnership with national nonprofit Little Kids Rock to provide ongoing professional development for a music teacher in the program methodology. Little Kids Rock will also provide musical instruments for the program. Research validating the benefits of social-emotional learning and student engagement from music education is the basis for Title I Program's support of this initiative. The arts program will be written into the Local Control Accountability Plan Addendum for implementation in the 2018 - 2019 school year.



Contiguous with a change in perception has been a change in **policy**. At the beginning of the initiative, there was no clear guidance from the California Department of Education (CDE) about the appropriate use of Title I funding to support arts education strategies that advanced student achievement. Since then, we have seen the publication of the two letters cited above, in June 2012 and March 2017, clarifying the use of federal funds for arts education. Additionally, we were able to develop, with the help of the CDE, those 10 examples of school site plans (SPSAs) that included specific information about the kinds of programs and evidence base required for appropriate use.

Finally, we have seen the change in perception and policy lead to a change in **practice**. Since we started the Initiative, between 40-50 California schools and districts have openly adopted the work and are including Title I arts strategies in their school plans. We hesitate to claim victory until we see sustained practice over

time, but in combination with other efforts like district strategic arts plans linked to the district's Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP), and upcoming revision of the state arts standards, we see possibilities for convergence and sustainability. Specific examples of schools and districts doing the work are highlighted the *Policy in Action* in sidebars throughout this paper.

From these three areas, we've gathered several lessons that have influenced not just the Title I initiative, but all of our advocacy efforts.

Know your allies — cultivate the important relationships in government and administration at all levels, as well as the educational and art support agencies (interest groups, PTA, arts advocacy organizations) who can reinforce and promote the message.

At the state level, we worked very closely with the state department of education — both on the arts education



side and with federal programs administrators — to craft our website, our outreach materials, and our sample school plans, so that we could say with confidence to districts and schools that what we were giving them was not rogue information or wishful thinking, but a strategy sanctioned by decision-makers. This paid off when it was time to update the state guidance letter on the use of federal funds for arts education, because we were seen as a trusted partner and asked to help craft some of the language in the new letter - ultimately resulting in more specific language and expanded opportunities for the use of Title I funds to support the arts.

For outreach to the county level, we worked with our partners at CCSESA (California County Superintendents Educational Services Association) to build a cohort of county arts education administrators that would help us create a distribution network of our tools and give us firsthand feedback on the uptake.

Take a multi-tiered approach — Educate yourself on the decision-making process at every level. Communicate and listen widely, from the school building to the district to the state level. Understand barriers and access points so that you can take advantage of emerging opportunity or an engaged partner as they appear.

A watershed moment for us in the journey was the realization that the ultimate goal of the Title I Initiative is school flexibility — that each school leader and Title I school site planning team feels the freedom to make the funding allocations that best meet the school's needs. Having the school building as the focus allowed us to see all the levels of decision-making that were either barriers or supports to that flexibility. We needed to be prepared to present materials and have conversations with principals, in district and county-level meetings, and with the state department of education that led to increased rather

than limited flexibility, and to understand the concerns and priorities at each level. Schools want to retain staff and create new programming without losing funds to other programs. Districts and counties want to be able to highlight success and keep pace with state requirements. And at the state level, officials want to implement federal policy with efficacy while keeping an eye on the state's specific overall goals.

We found that we could maintain our communications at the state level, with its smaller number of interlocutors, through regular emails, phone calls, and meetings.

At the county and district level, though, we developed a two-page flyer, *Four Things You Can Do to Start the Conversation About Title I and The Arts* as both a leave-behind and a road map for conversations. It connects the research that supports Title-I funded effective arts strategies with specific actions that advocates or administrators can take in their communities and includes links to the tools in title1arts.org that can move the process along.

Change takes time — Recognize that Title I is not just a policy issue but a culture issue, especially at the point where decisions get made. Changing a cultural perception takes time and patience. At its heart this is a conversation about the role that arts education plays as an essential resource in achieving student success. Not everyone is convinced about that and it is our task to increase understanding about why the arts are so critical in students' lives. Sometimes, despite our desire to achieve long range goals, change must be measured incrementally.

It's important for us to understand that after six years of work in advocacy, research, and outreach strategies, we are only now beginning to be able to see concrete fruits of our labor in the form of schools acknowledging and being willing to share their Title I-funded arts education strategies. Even now, there are still many schools and programs that exist in the 'arts twilight' - where vital components of arts programs are funded by Title I in total compliance with federal law, but schools are unwilling to share their plans or programs publicly out of fear that there may yet be some consequence or change in policy that prevents funds being used in any but the most traditional way.

Changing the conversation merely opened the door — it didn't force anybody to walk through it. The truth is that scarcity of resources and fear of reprisal still figure into many schools' and districts' approaches to the arts, and it's still difficult to step out and be the early adopter. Supportive superintendents and school leaders move on, and the case has to be made again. When we started the initiative, we envisioned the development of a set of resources without imagining the intensive consultation that would be needed just to begin to move the needle. We were fortunate to have the time and resources necessary to expand what we thought would initially be a two-year effort into something much more extensive. We will come to a point where it's time to move on from active and focused intervention into folding the Title I work more organically into the other services our organization provides. And yet, the shift in thinking that the Title work I has given us, to face into the question of education equity where the arts are concerned, will be a vital engine to our advocacy going forward. We encourage any state, region, or district to consider investing the time and resources necessary for this initiative to take root.

APPENDIX HOW WE GOT HERE – AN ADVOCACY JOURNEY

In 2011 the CAAE became involved in a controversy that was brewing in Los Angeles Unified School District, where an edict had gone out from the Title I office that it was no longer appropriate for schools to use Title I funds for arts education. Partnering with the local advocacy organization, Arts for LA, our first response was to seek guidance from the office of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction. In meetings with senior staff we offered evidence that both the current Secretary of Education at the time, Arne Duncan, and his predecessor during the Bush administration, Rod Paige¹⁰, had written advisory letters, clearly establishing the appropriate use of arts education as a strategy within Title I programs. And yet, when we looked around for evidence around the state for examples of schools using Title I funds for that purpose, we couldn't find any — either the schools that were using Title I funds in that manner weren't willing to talk about it publicly, or schools and districts had been scared off by the fear of reprisal from state auditors who might judge the investment in arts education to be inappropriate, and require schools to return the money after it had been dispersed locally. In other words, the same confusion that was causing problems in LA seemed to dominate school districts' policies throughout the state, and as we learned in conversations with other states' representatives, throughout the country.

And so we embarked on a journey, referring to it optimistically as a 'Policy Pathway' in the title of a policy paper we published in 2013, to clarify what we'd learned about the appropriate use of Title I funds. Along the way we refined our skills as communicators, discovering that as arts education advocates we needed to amend our language from "We want Title I funds to be able to support the arts..." to "We want the arts to support the achievement of Title I goals." This was more than "word smithing." We were learning that in order to engage in a dialogue about a federal program with separate goals from our own, we needed to recognize the legitimacy of their priorities. In order to be taken seriously in those exchanges we needed to understand the fundamental requirements of Title I funding, and be prepared to fulfill the reporting requirements of those programs.



We also recognized that there was significant cultural resistance to including the arts as a strategy critical to student success. In that regard, we were ready for this conversation, having faced that resistance regularly as we've advocated for arts education. But we chose this battle for what we described as a 'trifecta' of advocacy for our organization. First, it potentially brings the arts to the core of the curriculum as a strategy for increasing student achievement. Second, it focuses on underserved kids, the students who need arts the most. And finally, it uses existing resources in the form of federal funding that is distributed annually in block grants across the nation.

¹⁰ Arne Duncan, letter to School and Education Community Leaders, August 2009. Rod Paige, Letter to Superintendents, July 2004.



CALIFORNIA
DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION

TOM TORLAKSON
STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

February 22, 2017

Dear County and District Superintendents and Charter School Administrators:

FEDERAL FUNDING TO SUPPORT ARTS EDUCATION

This letter is an update to the California Department of Education's June 15, 2012, letter, clarifying the use of federal funding to support arts education under the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). Local educational agencies (LEAs) have the flexibility within certain programs to use federal funds to support the arts. While Title I, Part A funds may not be used to fund programs whose primary objective is arts education, these funds may be used in limited circumstances to fund aspects of arts education if the strategies have been demonstrated to improve student academic achievement in English language arts (ELA) and/or mathematics, or to improve other factors that directly impact student achievement, such as family engagement, school climate and culture, and student engagement. To use Title I, Part A funds at a school site, the school should ensure that these resources are consistent with the strategies to meet the goals addressing state priorities articulated in an LEA's Local Control and Accountability Plan. If a school is required to have a Single Plan for Student Achievement (SPSA), then the School Site Council must develop, review, approve, and include these funds in the SPSA. Any LEA seeking to use funds for this purpose must comply with the requirements governing the development and approval of the SPSA. Title I, Part A funding might be appropriately used to support arts education as a strategy to improve student achievement in ELA and/or mathematics at a Title I school if, after conducting a comprehensive needs assessment, the school has identified evidence-based strategies or programs incorporating arts instruction to improve student achievement. Implementation of the selected strategy or program should include student achievement objectives that are evidence-based, specific, measurable, attainable, and focused on increasing the academic achievement for all participating students in the school. At the end of each year, implementation of the strategy or program must be evaluated for effectiveness in terms of its impact on student achievement.

Additionally, other federal programs, including Title II, Part A can be used alone or in combination with Title I to support arts education in the context of professional development, strategic partnerships with nonprofit organizations, model program development, and the dissemination of best practices. Because of the complexity and varying rules of different federal programs, LEAs are encouraged to refer to their legal counsel regarding the specific uses of ESSA funds when designing programs.

As states around the country are building new accountability systems in compliance with the ESSA and the understanding of a well-rounded education, we want to continue to share with you opportunities and parameters for using federal funding to support school initiatives.

Superintendent Tom Torlakson believes that all California's children should receive a holistic education that includes activities that reinforce academics, develop skills, capture student interest, and support student engagement. Arts education can play an important role in this regard. We hope this letter will assist you in making important decisions about the use of federal dollars to support arts education.

If you have any questions regarding this subject, please contact Lori Marshall, Interim Director, Improvement and Accountability Division, by phone at 916-391-0926 or by e-mail at lmarshall@cde.ca.gov.

Sincerely,
Keric Ashley, Deputy Superintendent District, School, and Innovation Branch
TT:lm



WHY IT MATTERS

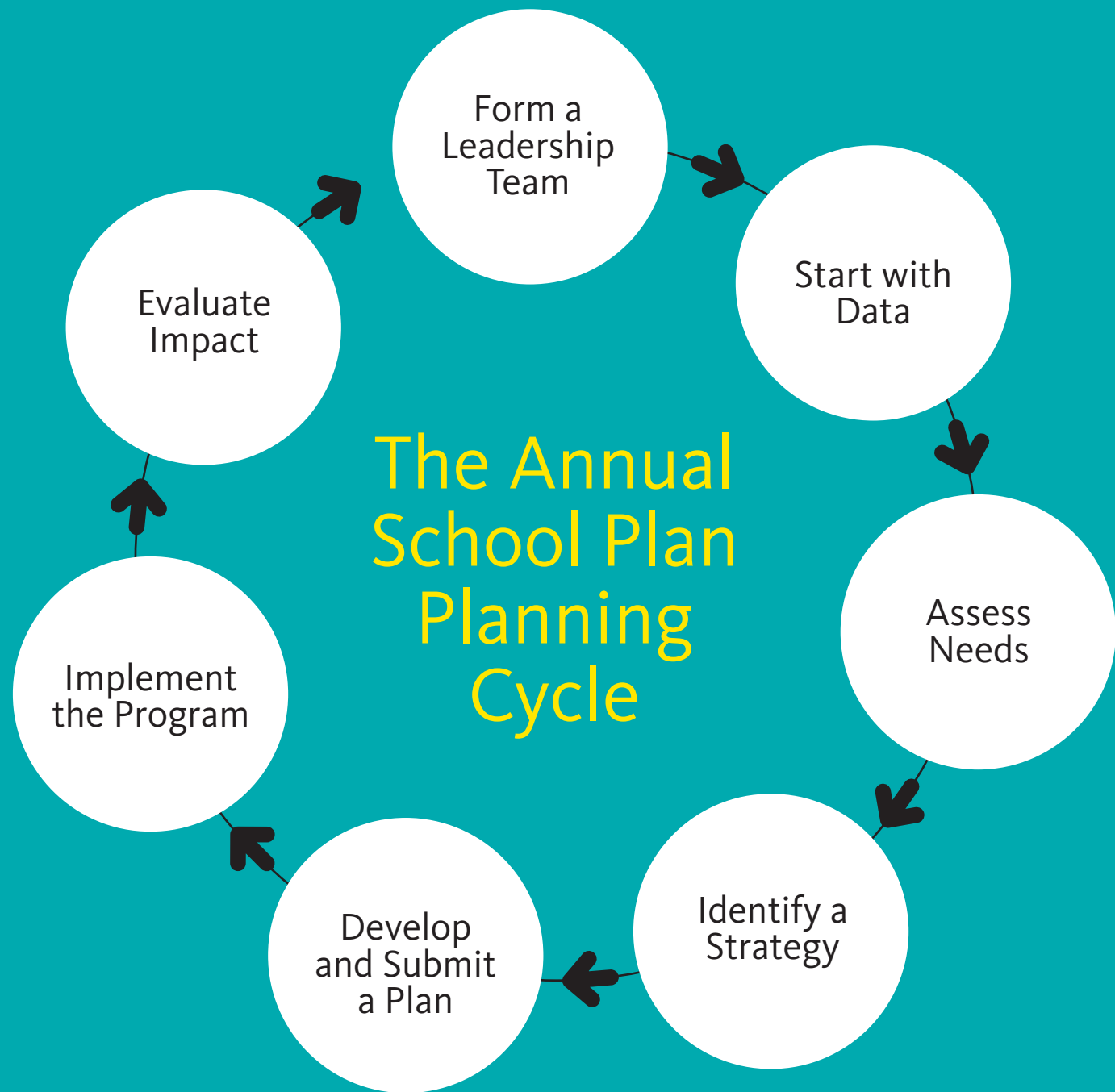
Title I was recently recertified as part of the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act - now known as ESSA (the Every Student Succeeds Act). Originally conceived by President Lyndon B. Johnson as a plank of both civil rights and the Great Society, Title I has evolved through the years, but has always been a hallmark of the federal government's commitment to building educational equity. Title I resources are intended to support student achievement in English Language Arts and mathematics, both directly and by improving areas that lead to student success, such as school climate and culture, family and community engagement, and student engagement. Nationally, Title I spending is \$15.5 billion, constituting the largest federal expenditure for education, with California receiving \$1.9 billion annually.

Any program that uses Title I dollars must be supported by evidence-based research — a testament to the law's importance and impact. We know that a substantive and growing body of research demonstrates that arts education can be an asset to schools and districts as they strive to reach their goals for student achievement, from integrating the arts with instruction in other academic subjects to increase content retention and understanding, to transforming the teaching and learning environment through a variety of arts and arts integrated programs. Making the case for the arts as a strategy for student achievement in Title I schools explicitly ties the arts to education equity and social justice. To do so effectively as advocates, we need to understand both the research and the law.

For Schools and Districts - Why Invest in Title I?

How the numbers break down

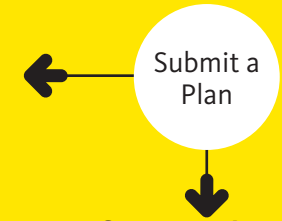
1. Title I spending in 2017 was **\$15.5 billion**. California's share of that funding was about **\$1.9 billion**. **Within that funding:**
 2. **96%** of Title I funding to states is passed directly to districts.
What that means for schools and districts: In many ways, the district is the unit of change. It is important to have policy clarity at the state level for Title I funds supporting arts education, but most compliance monitoring, and therefore decisions about spending, happens at the district level.
 3. **74%** of those funds goes directly to individual schools.
What that means for schools and districts: District-level efforts must involve recruiting strong principals and providing them with continuous education. Many of the state's strongest principals are already choosing arts strategies as part of their Title I spending; however, Title I schools also have a high rate of principal turnover. When the district encourages such spending, as has happened in San Diego and Chula Vista, principals bring their programs into the light and inspire others to get on board. Some of our county lead partners have begun introducing the Title I arts material as part of new principal onboarding.
 4. **76%** of funds to schools goes to elementary schools.
What that means for schools and districts: Many Title I elementary schools do not have any arts education programs, in spite of state education law requirements. Elementary school leaders need to be aware they can utilize arts strategies to achieve their Title I goals and should be encouraged to implement and support such programs. And the students and parents who have benefitted from elementary level arts programs will demand them at the secondary level.
 5. **90%** of school-based funding is spent on salaries and benefits for instructional staff.
What that means for schools and districts: With a set precedent for using Title I funds to hire instructional staff, we can build a case for including qualified arts teachers in that funding allocation, when the hiring of those teachers can be shown to meet other school wide goals for school improvement.
 6. **56%** of Title I funding is concentrated in schools with school wide programs — where over 40% of the student population is classified as living in poverty.
What that means for schools and districts: School wide Title I programs have the most flexibility in spending. Programs can serve all students in the school, regardless of their Title I status, and can consolidate funds from other federal and state funding sources to support those programs. So, for example, a school wide music program could include funding for not only a music teacher, but also funds for professional development in arts integration and collaboration with outside community arts providers.



The Annual School Plan Planning Cycle

This graphic of the Title I Annual Planning Cycle was developed by the California Department of Education and used as the central structure for title1arts.org. All Title I schools must incorporate the planning cycle in the development of their school site plans, as shown on the facing page.

Neighborhood Elementary School Central Unified School District Single Plan for Student Achievement ACADEMIC GOAL — MATHEMATICS



CUSD GOAL: Every student will reach high standards, at a minimum achieving proficiency or better in mathematics.

I. Indicate all data reviewed to address this Academic Goal:

SOURCE OF DATA: California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP), Interim Math Assessments, ST Math Data

Start with Data

II. Based upon the data reviewed, summarize the issues affecting student proficiency in mathematics:

The lowest percentage of academic achievement among 4th grade students in 2016 CAASPP Mathematics was in the Concepts & Procedures strand with 50% of students performing Below Standard. Comparing 4th grade student achievement in this mathematics strand that measures understanding of fractions, Neighborhood ES 4th grade students scored 17% lower than CUSD student averages. Based on Neighborhood ES's 4th grade Interim Assessments in mathematics and ST Math data, students scored lower in CA Mathematics Standards Number & Operations – Fractions compared to other categories.

Assess Needs

III. State the School's Measurable Objective:

Increase 4th grade teacher capacity to deliver math instruction in CA Mathematics Standards: Number & Operations-Fractions and regularly monitor the effectiveness of the instruction by providing formative assessments, analyzing the data, planning and providing additional instruction to increase the 4th grade student academic achievement in mathematics.

Evaluate Impact

Develop a Plan

IV. Focus Areas

Describe the Evidence-based Strategy(ies) selected to achieve the School's Measurable Objective(s) and the Actions/Tasks the school will use to accomplish the Strategy(ies).

On what dates will the Actions begin and end?

How will the school measure the effectiveness of each Action?

Identify the title/position of staff responsible.

What is the program funding source and expenditure?

Effective Instructional Program (Professional Learning and Classroom Instruction)

Neighborhood ES 4th grade teachers and Intervention Coordinator will be provided professional development by the *Music Project* (arts partner organization) addressing 4th grade student achievement in mathematics by deepening student knowledge and understanding about fractions by using an integrated instructional strategy incorporating mathematics and music education.

09-01-16 to 06-01-17

Pre-Assessment ST Math
Interim Math Assessment
Post-Assessment ST Math
Interim Math Assessment
16-17 CAASPP

Principal
4th Grade Teachers
Intervention Coordinator

Title I
Teacher Training Rate
Service Contract

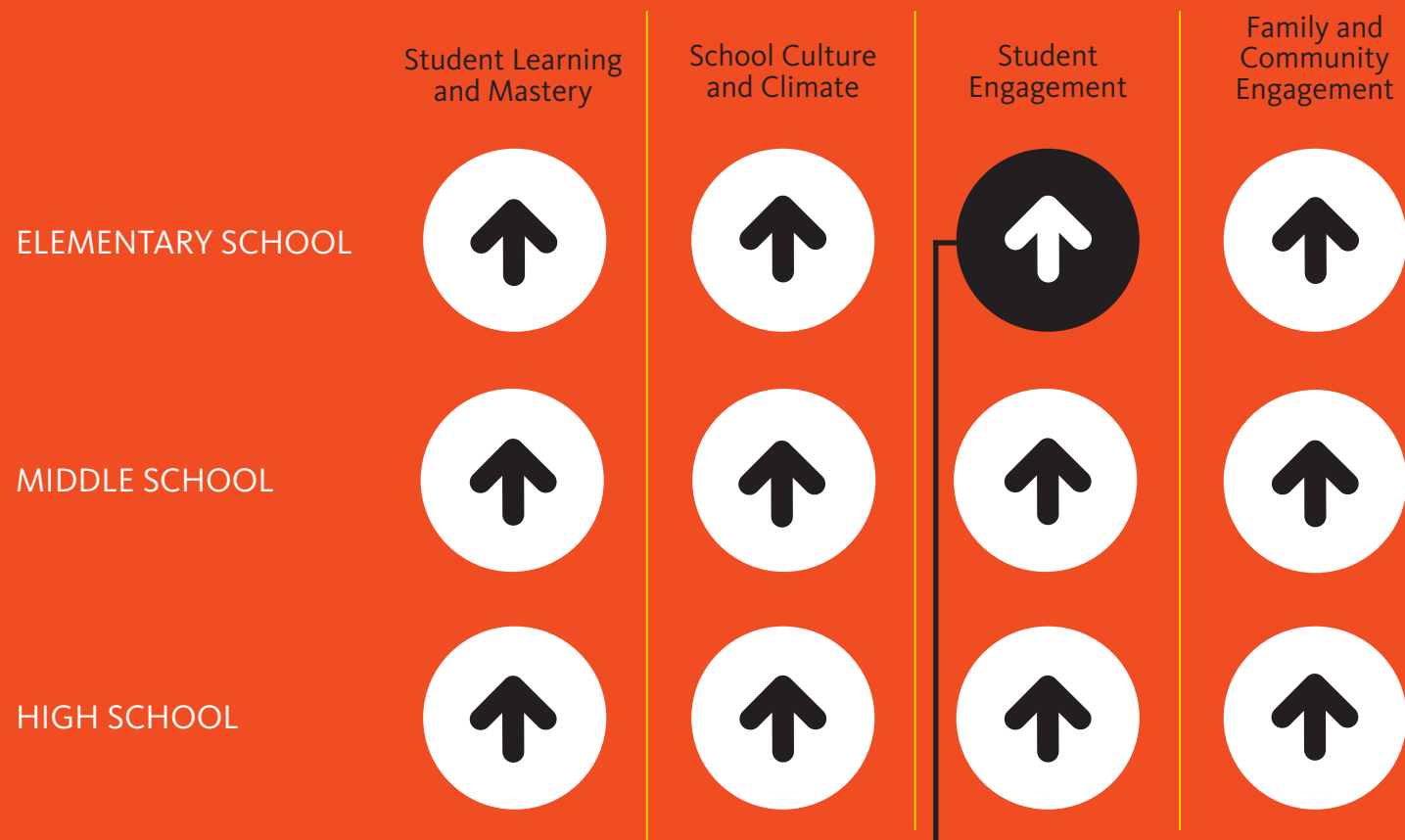
Identify a Strategy

The teachers will learn to incorporate this evidence-based arts integration model into their classrooms to provide standards-based instruction about fractions to students. The professional development is based on the research findings from *Educational Studies in Mathematics*, Volume 81, Issue 2 (2012); "Academic Music: Music Instruction to Engage Third-Grade Students in Learning Basic Fraction Concepts" by Susan Courey, Endre Balogh, and Jody Siker.

Implement Program

This chart shows a sample Single Plan for Student Achievement, required annually for every school in California. The labels on the chart show how the sections of the plan correspond to the annual planning cycle for Title I.

What Need Did You Assess?



Student Engagement - Elementary School

Below is the research linking arts strategies to student engagement at the elementary school level. Click on any of the study citations to link to a full summary of the study in [ArtsEdSearch](#), the online database of arts education research.

Student Engagement Elementary School

- Students receiving arts integrated instruction demonstrate improved attitudes towards school and increased attendance ([Barry, 2010](#); [Carger, 2004](#); [Smithrim & Upitis, 2005](#)).
- In arts integrated lessons, student engagement and active classroom participation increase, especially for students previously most disengaged ([Ingram & Meath, 2007](#); [Stevenson & Deasy, 2005](#)).
- Arts integrated instruction helps make academic content more relevant to students and provides them avenues to take ownership of their learning ([Bellisario & Donovan, 2012](#); [Bresler, DeStefano, Feldman & Garg, 2000](#); [Carger, 2004](#); [Stevenson & Deasy, 2005](#)).
- Students participating in arts classes develop their ability to hold sustained focus and attention and demonstrate increased school engagement ([Catterall & Peppler, 2007](#); [Heath & Wolf, 2005](#)).
- Arts and arts integrated classes provide avenues for students to express themselves and to make themselves and their learning visible to others. As a result, students report that they feel more visible and valued in their schools ([Stevenson & Deasy, 2005](#)).

This excerpted page from [title1arts.org](#) shows the research matrix developed to link Title I goal areas to specific arts education research studies. The text box underneath the matrix shows an example of research citations that schools can use to support their arts education Title I intervention strategies.

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