

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

May 21, 2025

The Honorable Robert Aderholt  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health  
and Human Services, Education,  
and Related Agencies  
House Committee on Appropriations  
2358-B Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health  
and Human Services, Education,  
and Related Agencies  
House Committee on Appropriations  
2358-B Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Aderholt and Ranking Member DeLauro:

As you develop the Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill, we encourage you to use every tool available in support of funding music and arts education by providing \$40 million for the Assistance for Arts Education Program (AAE) in Title IV-F-4 of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* (ESEA), as amended by the *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA). This request is a modest increase of \$3.5 million to account for inflation.

Involvement and education in the arts, including music, visual arts, dance, theater, and media arts, play a critical role in child development. Research shows participation in music programs can promote social and emotional learning and improve academic achievement. Further, arts education provides students with skills crucial to participating in the 21<sup>st</sup> century workforce. At the federal level, ESSA recognizes and defines art instruction as a component of a well-rounded education. On the state level, all 50 states and the District of Columbia have elementary and secondary arts education standards, and 42 of those states implement art education requirements for elementary school students. Unfortunately, only 23 states have dedicated grant programs that provide extra funding to school districts addressing arts education needs.

Title IV-F-4 AAE has received level funding since FY22. To better enable school districts across the nation to provide music and arts education for students with disabilities, the Title IV-F-4 AAE program must receive a robust funding increase. ESSA authorized this grant program under the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (OESE) to promote arts education for students, including those from historically disadvantaged backgrounds or who may be diagnosed with a disability.

Specialized programming, accommodated lessons, and innovative therapies are all being used in school music and arts programs. With approximately 15 percent of students receiving special education services under the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (IDEA), accessibility must be a top priority. Title IV-F-4 AAE funding is crucial for students with disabilities who

may need specific modifications, such as customized instruments in music class or accessible materials in art class.

Title IV-F-4 AAE funding not only aims to remove barriers for students with disabilities but also strives to narrow the longstanding gaps in access to arts education faced by students of color and those from low-income backgrounds. Through collaborative initiatives between schools and community arts organizations, this funding endeavors to create more inclusive and equitable opportunities for all students to engage in the arts. Arts educators in particular would see significant benefits from AAE grants—gaining professional development opportunities by attending national conferences and by learning how to integrate new adaptive technologies or accessible resources into the curriculum.

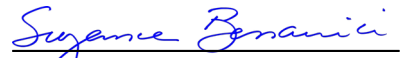
For these reasons, we urge the Subcommittee to provide \$40 million for FY26 in the Assistance for Arts Education Program (AAE) under Title IV-F-4 of ESSA. A \$3.5 million increase will not only guarantee more federal resources go towards strengthening equitable music and arts instruction but ensure students with disabilities are offered the same opportunities to participate and succeed.

Thank you for your time and attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



David Scott  
Member of Congress



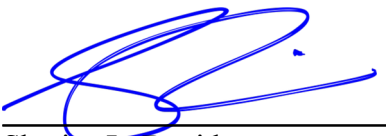
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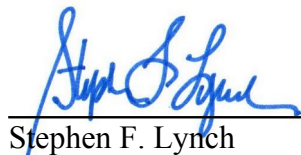
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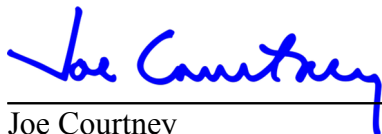
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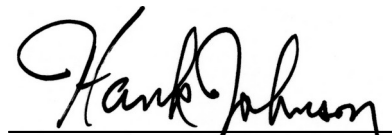
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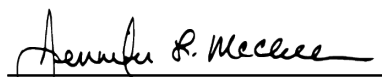
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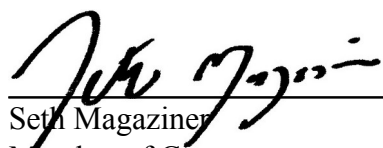
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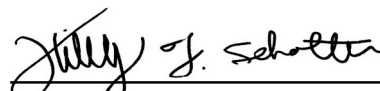
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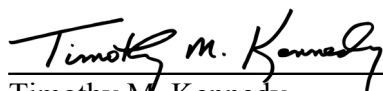
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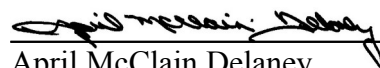
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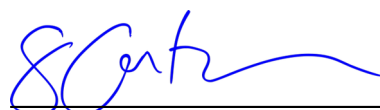
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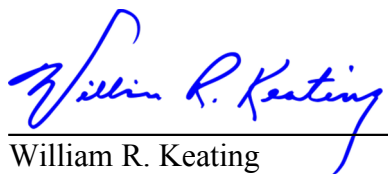
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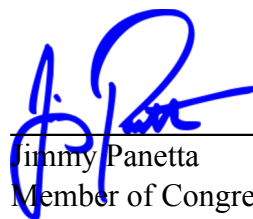
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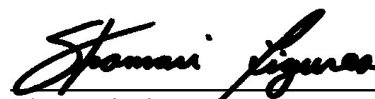
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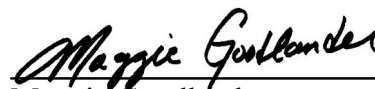
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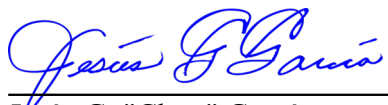
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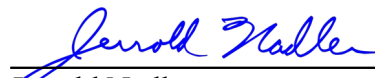
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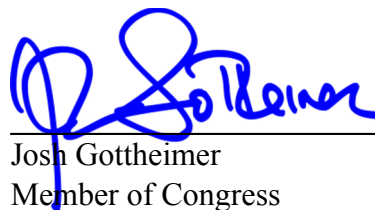
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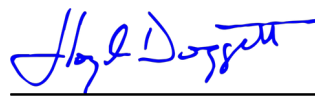
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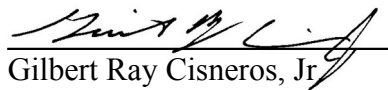
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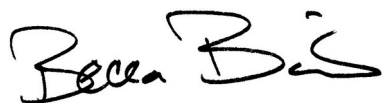
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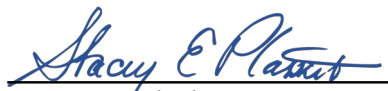
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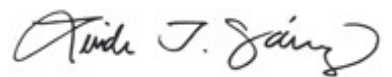
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