

NAfME Applauds Congresswoman Velazquez and Senator Tester on Introduction of Guarantee Access to Arts and Music Education (GAAME) Act

The National Association for Music Education (NAfME) applauds the introduction of, and wholeheartedly endorses, the Guarantee Access to Arts and Music Education (GAAME) Act ([H.R. 1676](#) and [S. 885](#)).

If passed, this legislation would provide language articulating the ability for school districts to use their Title I, Part A funds to improve access to sequential music and arts education for disadvantaged and low-income students, including programs taught by certified music educators. The GAAME Act's reinforcement that Title I's school-wide and targeted assistance funds can be used to support music and arts education aligns with NAfME's mission, which is to advance music education by promoting the understanding and making of music by all.

Often, students of color, urban communities, and rural settings, do not share the same access to a high-quality music and arts education as their suburban counterparts. Nationwide, over 1.3 million elementary students fail to receive any music instruction. Students eligible for the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) had significantly lower scores on the music portion of the most recent National Assessment for Educational Progress (NAEP) Arts Assessment than those ineligible for NSLP. Additionally, Black and Hispanic students scored the lowest of all ethnicities on the music portion of the NAEP Arts Assessment.

Studies have shown that in-school music programs are highly valuable in engaging students by improving their overall participation and attendance, especially for students deemed at-risk. Furthermore, the benefits of music programs transcend typical quantifiable markers of academic achievement. Music education at all grade levels supports the development of essential 21st century skills, such as critical thinking, collaboration, and creative problem-solving, all of which are essential to future success in not only academics, but also the workforce. When students are denied a quality music education, they are denied the ability to hone skills valuable for success.

Music education has a storied history with Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. Upon ESEA's passage in 1965, Title I funds were used for music education programs in different parts of the country. The latest iteration of ESEA, the Every Student Succeeds Act, allows Title I-A funds to be used for well-rounded programs, including music education. The GAAME Act follows this path by making clear Title I-A funds can and should be used for music programs across the country.

We thank Congresswoman Velazquez and Senator Tester for their support of music and arts education and look forward to working with them to advance this bill in Congress.