



ESSA: Mapping opportunities for the arts Assessments

In December 2015, the U.S. Congress passed the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) providing state and district leaders with increased flexibility to best meet the needs of all students. This increased flexibility allows these leaders to look beyond the traditional methods of approaching student achievement and find innovative solutions for ensuring that all students have the opportunity to experience a well-rounded education — one that pushes beyond the subjects of reading, writing and mathematics, and includes the arts, sciences and humanities as essential components.

Assessments can provide educators, administrators and policymakers with valuable information on student progress and serve as an effective tool for ensuring that the academic needs of all students are being met. Under ESSA, states receive funding for the development and implementation of assessments that measure student learning in the standards adopted by individual states. ESSA's flexibility provides states with opportunities for engaging the arts within these funding streams through both the development and refinement of assessments of arts learning. Download the full report: [ESSA: Mapping opportunities for the arts](#).

Highlights From ESSA: Mapping opportunities for the arts

Developing Standards and Assessments

States may use the Title I, Part B funds to develop standards and/or assessments in mathematics, English language arts, science and any other subject that the state chooses — including the arts. The [National Coalition for Core Arts Standards](#) created Model Cornerstone Assessments aligned with the new [National Core Arts Standards](#) that assess arts learning across selected grade levels and artistic disciplines.

Innovative Assessment and Accountability

Under this new program, states may, either individually or as a group, apply to the U.S. Department of Education to pilot a new system of state assessments. This system can include a wide range of assessment structures, including competency-based and performance-based assessments. For states that adopted standards for the arts, these systems can include assessments of arts learning aligned to the state arts standards.

Other Assessment Activities

Once states have developed assessments, ESSA allows them to use Title I, Part B, Section 1201 funding for the continued improvement or refinement of the assessments — including assessments in the arts.

STATE EXAMPLE: WASHINGTON



Washington state law ([Revised Code of Washington 28A.230.095](#) and [RCW 28A.655.075](#)) requires that districts annually assess student learning in the arts, social studies, civics, educational technology, health and physical education and verify that this assessment has taken place. Although the state does not have a mandatory statewide assessment for these subjects, they do provide [sample standards-aligned assessments](#) that districts can utilize and report to the state.