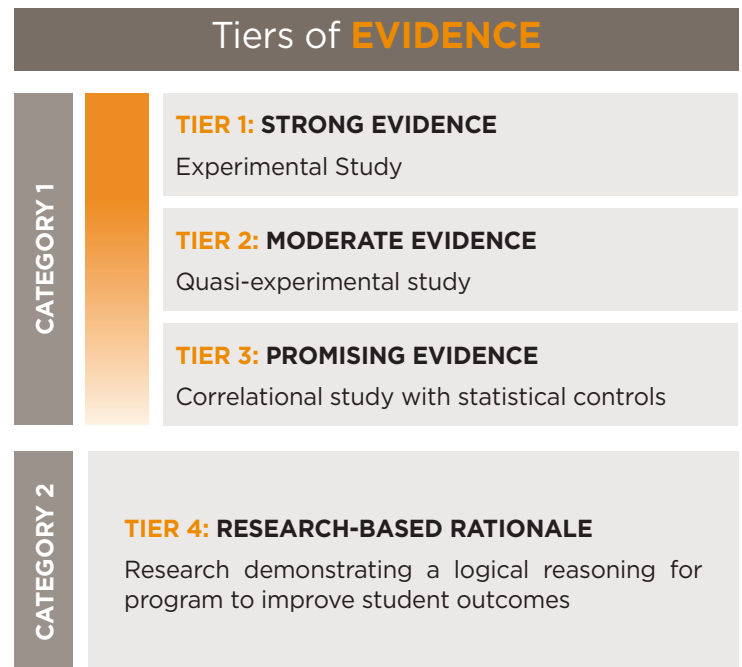# ESSA: Mapping opportunities for the Arts Tiers of Evidence

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.

ESSA builds on No Child Left Behind's (NCLB) legacy of supporting effective programs by requiring that programs and strategies be evidence-based. However, the definition of evidence-based has significantly expanded from the limited scientifically based research in the previous law. Rather than the two acceptable research designs allowed under NCLB, ESSA provides four tiers divided into two categories.

Most studies exploring arts in education programs did not meet NCLB's strict definitions for scientifically-based research. However, ESSA's expansion of acceptable research in the four tiers of evidence allows for the inclusion of many more studies related to the arts in education. A few opportunities identified within ESSA's programs for engaging the arts, as well as research supporting the role of the arts in addressing program priorities follow. Download the full report: ***ESSA: Mapping opportunities for the arts***.

## Tiers of EVIDENCE

**CATEGORY 1**

**TIER 1: STRONG EVIDENCE**
Experimental Study

**TIER 2: MODERATE EVIDENCE**
Quasi-experimental study

**TIER 3: PROMISING EVIDENCE**
Correlational study with statistical controls

**CATEGORY 2**

**TIER 4: RESEARCH-BASED RATIONALE**
Research demonstrating a logical reasoning for program to improve student outcomes

## Highlights From ESSA: Mapping opportunities for the arts

### Title I, Part A

The primary programs under Title I, Part A, schoolwide programs and targeted assistance schools, focus on ensuring that academically at-risk students have educational programs that allow them to meet their state's academic standards — particularly in the areas of English language arts and mathematics. As part of ESSA's well-rounded education, states can include the arts as strategies in both ESSA programs. **ArtsEdSearch research supporting these goals:**

- *The Effects of Creative Dramatics on Vocabulary Achievement of Fourth Grade Students in a Language Arts Classroom: An empirical study*. (Potentially Tier 1)
- *Academic Music: Music Instruction to Engage Third-Grade Students in Learning Basic Fraction Concepts*. (Potentially Tier 3)

# ESSA: Mapping opportunities for the Arts
## Tiers of Evidence

### Title II Grants

The funds provided under Title II grants provide educators with professional development opportunities that strengthen their ability to help students reach the state's standards. Programs utilizing the arts or arts-based techniques to improve student achievement in those state standards would be eligible for the Title II grants. **ArtsEdSearch research supporting these goals**:

• *Embracing the Burden of Proof: New Strategies for Determining Predictive Links Between Arts Integration Teacher Professional Development, Student Arts Learning and Student Academic Achievement Outcomes*. (Potentially Tier 3)
• *Arts integration and the Mississippi Arts Commission's Whole School Initiative*. (Potentially Tier 4)

### Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants

This program provides funding to districts to expand and improve education in their schools. ESSA outlines three categories for these grants: providing a well-rounded education, ensuring safe and healthy schools, and improving the usage of technology within a school. While the arts can play a role in strategies aligned to all three of these priority areas, ESSA only requires evidence-based strategies for programs funded to ensure safe and healthy schools, and to improve the usage of technology within a school. **ArtsEdSearch research supporting these goals**:

• *The Effects of a Creative Dance and Movement Program on the Social Competence of Head Start Preschoolers*. (Potentially Tier 1)
• *Evaluation of a Theater-Based Youth Violence Prevention Program for Elementary School Children*. (Potentially Tier 3)