

## FUNDING SOLUTIONS AND INSIGHTS

*A resource designed to help district administrators understand how to identify, align and procure federal grants and funds for professional development needs in Visual Arts.*

### WHY PERSONALIZED PD FOR VISUAL ARTS

There isn't a teacher that perhaps sees more students in a week than the one in the art classroom. Although an elective in most districts, teachers in Visual Arts are commonly tasked with accomplishing a lot with very little time and resources. When it comes to their professional learning, art teachers are oftentimes required to participate in events or activities that have little relevancy to their needs and classroom dynamics or atmosphere. Like every other subject area, Visual Arts needs access to an on-demand solution that can give back more time and deliver relevant professional development.



While the need for on-demand, personalized professional learning is not difficult to identify in most districts, the funding for such solutions can be. That is why The Art of Education University has prepared this resource to help district administrators understand how to more effectively identify funding pathways and successfully advance a purchase through the procurement process.

### UNDERSTANDING ESSA

In November of 2018, the American Institutes for Research released a study titled, "Review of Evidence: Arts Education Through the Lens of ESSA", which describes in tremendous depth that while the "Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)...includes a diverse array of programs and funding streams that states, local educational agencies, and schools might leverage to support school improvement and student success," there are funding

streams and evidences “*devoted specifically to advancing arts education*” that many are simply unaware of. More generally, the report explains that “*the inclusion of arts in ESSA shows that policymakers, not only arts advocacy groups and educators, view arts as an essential component in a well-rounded education*” and that efforts to secure federal funds for Arts Education can no longer be ignored.



The American Institutes for Research, which is a nonprofit, nonpartisan behavioral and social science research, evaluation, assessment and technical assistance organization based in Washington, D.C., further reports, “*ESSA includes more than 10 different funding opportunities that state educational agencies, local educational agencies, and schools can use to implement arts education interventions for students in prekindergarten through Grade 12. These funding opportunities can be used to support activities such as teacher professional development, school improvement efforts, supports for English learners, arts courses, instructional materials, and extended learning time programs.*” In other words, there is a way for every LEA or school district across the country to qualify for federal funding under ESSA.

The report also aimed at determining what impact well-designed and well-implemented arts education “interventions” would have on student outcomes. According to the researcher’s meta-analysis, the average impact analyzed across a multitude of studies showed a “moderate and statistically significant” effect, such as how “*an average child would gain 15 percentile points in a relevant student outcome...as a result of participating in an arts education intervention. The 15-percentile-point increase would put the average effect of arts education interventions at the 75th percentile among the 70 interventions in mathematics, reading, and science...*” In other words, with the right interventions, Arts Education is proven to greatly impact student achievement.

The Logic Model used in this research further suggests *“The implementation of arts education interventions may lead to improved intermediate outcomes that are expected ultimately to contribute to other key student outcomes. Examples of intermediate outcomes at the student level include students’ attitudes toward an art type or toward arts education in general. Some interventions focus on teacher practice, such as teachers’ ability to employ specialized instructional strategies, classroom interactions and behavior/motivation techniques, and assessment practices. These intermediary outcomes may, in turn, affect key student outcomes such as art content mastery (e.g., art achievement) and the creation of art products (e.g., performance); academic achievement (i.e., nonart content mastery); attitudes and dispositions; behavior outcomes (e.g., attendance); social-emotional skills (e.g., self-confidence and self-awareness); other cognitive outcomes (i.e., process abilities such as creativity and critical thinking); and success in life and work.”*

Evidence is probably the most difficult step in drafting an application for title funding. Thankfully, however, the American Institutes for Research went to great lengths to identify *“what evidence exists linking arts education interventions with improved student outcomes”* and amazingly discovered **18 fully-acceptable examples** supporting exclusively the case for Visual Arts\*. The domains covered in the study included art learning, social-emotional, attitude, and process abilities.

## WHAT'S AVAILABLE

While the report highlights nearly a dozen federal funding opportunities, school district administrators need to be aware of other pathways to consider, such as the following:

- General Professional Development Budget  
*While Visual Arts teacher generally see more students than any other teacher, their needs around professional development oftentimes go overlooked and prioritized like the other teachers.*
- Last Year's Title funds  
*Sometimes, funds from last year's title award can go unallocated or allocated but never consumed.*

- Curriculum/Textbook Budget  
*Due to the lack of art classroom curriculum, many partner districts have succeeded in using such funds for Art Ed PRO as it provides supplemental curriculum and lesson planning resources.*
- Title I, Sec. 1003: School Improvement  
*Eligible activities under this particular title include arts-focused school turnaround model that feature arts instruction and professional development for arts educators in schools identified for comprehensive or targeted support and improvement.*
- Title II, Part A: Supporting Effective Instruction  
*Eligible activities under this particular title include teacher professional development activities for arts educators.*
- Title III, Part A: English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement Act  
*Eligible activities under this particular title include professional development to build arts educators' capacity to meet the needs of ELs and acquiring digital resources that support ELs in art classes.*
- Title IV, Part A: Student Support and Academic Enrichment (SSAE) Grants  
*Eligible activities under this particular title include professional development and equipment to support the effective use of technology in delivering arts instruction, supporting collaboration among arts educators, and/or engaging with arts professionals outside of the school.*
- Title IV, Part F: National Activities Subpart 4 - Awards for Academic Enrichment  
*Eligible activities under this particular title include art courses or programs, professional learning programs for art educators, development and use of instructional materials and digital resources to support arts instruction*
- Professional Development for Arts Educators Grant  
*This program supports professional development programs for arts educators in visual arts.*

The report described throughout the previous text is one of tremendous significance with research, evidence, and insights that must be thoroughly examined and processed.

To access the full report, **[click here](#)**.

## HOW TO PROCURE

In order to qualify for funding, an arts intervention or activity must clearly align with the grant program’s purpose and preferred activities. In other words, an application must be written in the right language or in a way that utilizes keywords that demonstrate alignment with the Title’s overall purpose or mission. This requires learning to read and write the language. For examples on how to do this, read a recently approved application and pay particular attention to how the writer aligned the district’s goals with the grant’s overarching purpose and ultimately proved or demonstrated a justification for funding. And, if the application just so happens to contain content that matches up with what you need, you can save more time by quite literally copying and pasting.

Often times, application submissions consist of more emotion or a local point of view than it does the necessary keywords. Unfortunately, an emotionally-driven application will not work. The only words that matter are the ones that align or match up with the grant’s purpose and the more ways you can synonymously utilize keywords throughout the application, the easier it will be for the underwriter to connect the dots and approve.

The application must also satisfy any applicable evidence-based requirements associated with the grant. For certain ESSA programs, such as Title I, Section 1003: School Improvement, the law explicitly requires the use of evidence-based interventions for at least some of the activities allowable under this program. Grant applications that include evidence-based interventions “*must receive competitive preference in grant competitions,*” suggesting that their inclusion will “*have a greater chance of being awarded...*” Some ESSA grant programs do not specify any evidence-based intervention requirements. Nevertheless, applicants may still choose to provide evidence-based interventions in the hopes that demonstrating a connection to student outcomes will earn greater favorability.

If the application gets denied, it is most likely because its language did not align well enough or consisted of weak justifications. However, applications can always be

resubmitted after making the right adjustments. American educator, Thomas Palmer, wrote, “If at first you don’t succeed, try, try again.” It is also makes sense to apply for multiple grants, especially when the same application can be used for others. And if multiple awards happen to come in at the same time, a multi-year product adoption would be the way to go. Federal funds, however, can’t be stacked on top of each other but private grants can. To understand how each state incorporates the arts with Federal funding as it relates to their own individual State plan and how it might impact a districts decision, [click here](#).

## CONSIDERATIONS ON STATE PD REQUIREMENTS

Not every art teacher’s career path or professional learning requirements is the same. With the **Choose Your State** feature, districts can now determine how providing personalized professional learning as provided by The Art of Education University might impact teacher salary advancement, license renewal, and continuing education according to its states own requirements. The Art of Education University is committed to making sure that the pathway to greater success and achievement for each and every art teacher’s is clearly mapped out.