

Public Comment: South Dakota's ESSA State Plan

7/6/17

#1 -- Kristi Tornquist, Brookings, General Public

I was pleased to see libraries referenced in the text of the plan. For students to be fully prepared for success, they need to know how to locate, access, evaluate, and appropriately use (without plagiarism) information resources. These skills are typically best taught by a library professional (a person trained in library science). I was happy to see the recommendation that schools are expected to have a school library program with a certified librarian. In general, teachers and paraprofessionals are not trained in delivering this type of education. Information literacy skills are a necessity if our young people are to be successful in their careers, in college, and in navigating life.

#2 -- Susan Rolfes, Vermillion, Parent

I am glad to see that you are encouraging college-preparedness at the high school level with this initiative. I think it is great that the level of a student's learning is being considered and not just measured by specific grade levels. Dual credit is a great program offered by the SD DOE allowing youth to simultaneously earn high school and college credits. However, school districts can set guidelines that alter the spirit of this concept and the ability to learn and excel at one's own pace at the high school level. One limitation placed on our district's students under dual credit dictates that "students may enroll in post-secondary classes not offered at our high school". This results in students in our district taking the same class twice for 1.5 years (one example, AP Calculus 1-one year in high school and one semester in college). In that same 1.5 years, a gifted student could take college-level Calculus 1, Calculus II, and Calculus III. Most gifted students double-up on advanced math and science classes in high school to get a challenge. Our district has no gifted program due to budget cuts yet we continue to expose them to a repetitious, drawn-out learning cycle. They are limited first to the four walls of a traditional high school classroom. My daughter was so adversely impacted by this limitation that she chose to change school districts the 2nd semester of her junior year to advance her education in the direction of her future of majoring in engineering. In her new district, she could excel by attending college full time in the morning at USD and a NSU online class and then drive 30 miles round-trip to her new high school to attend classes in the afternoon. Ironically, my daughter was given the option by school staff to pay full price for a 5-credit hour Calculus I class (over \$1600 versus \$250 dual price) to get around the district's dual credit policy. Is it fair to financially penalize the gifted students in a district? I have been appealing this district policy for over 1.5 years and the school board plans to form a committee to review. It is so slow going and adversely impacting my children and others in Vermillion. SD DOE has their hands tied because implementation of programs is allowed to be regulated at the district-level. Educational policy should never be designed to "limit" a student...the ability to learn should be unlimited in our state without district, financial, or time penalties.

#3 -- Sara Haugen, Aberdeen, Parent

Stop making vaccines mandatory in order for children to attend school.

#4 -- Amy Scott-Stoltz, Sioux Falls, Parent

I would like to see more interaction with IHE and the DOE on the following: - 1) understanding and working with technology in the classroom, and 2) techniques to address behavioral issues in the classroom. Both of these areas have been topics of conversations with educators in the past, but I have found increasing numbers of educators telling me they are given new technology without proper training. I am also hearing that behavior issues in the classroom are increasing in number and severity as well as starting at younger ages.

#5 -- South Dakota Music Education Association, South Dakota

We, the South Dakota Music Education Association, ask of the South Dakota Department of Education to please add music education to their plan for implementation of ESSA. Music is listed in the Every Student Succeeds Act as a core, stand-alone subject at the national level and we feel that our state Department of Education should hold music education in South Dakota with that same regard. We encourage you to look at what other states are doing and follow appropriately to benefit the students of South Dakota. Here are a few examples from states that have already submitted their ESSA plans:

The Time Spent in Fine Arts, Music and Physical Education Indicator uses a 100-point index. This measure is the amount of exposure students have to courses in the fine arts, music and physical education. – Michigan's ESSA Plan

Access and participation rates in music and arts education could be part of the state's dashboard or school report card system. New Jersey has been doing this work for the last several years, while Nevada is just starting and in the next school year will be able to disaggregate the access and participation rate data based on sub-group populations, such as gender and race.

A dashboard will be created to determine the extent to which LEAs are providing students with a well-rounded education. The dashboard will serve as a springboard to attending to the needs of all of Nevada's students where deficiencies may be evident. – Nevada's ESSA Plan

Illinois specifically calls out that the resource review for schools identified for improvement should include all areas of the curriculum: Gaps in the impact of funding, supports and services, relative to allocation, for all students, relevant student groups, and teachers (e.g., gifted, fine arts, library and media specialists, school service personnel, and career and technical educators and programming) – Illinois' ESSA plan.

We respectfully request that music is listed as a stand alone subject in ESSA and title IV. We are looking for accountability about the provision of music education in South Dakota's public schools. SDMEA proudly advocates the benefits of music in our schools. We firmly believe that music should be a stand-alone, core subject in South Dakota to bring our state in line with the standards set under the ESSA. The SDMEA board of directors welcomes dialogue about the implementation of the ESSA in our state

Sincerely,
The South Dakota Music Education Association

#6 -- William Ward, Rapid City, Teacher

Music education is essential to being educated. Research has shown that those who participated music Ensemble score better on standardized testing. It music education is not listed in this document than principles we'll use that as a tool to eliminate music education in the schools.

#7 -- Kelby Robinson, Garretson, Teacher

Please consider adding music education to this ESSA document. It is incredibly important for students to have music education in school.

#8 -- Kelsey Marker, Brookings, Teacher

As stated in a letter from the South Dakota Music Education Association: "...please add music education to (your) plan for implementation of ESSA. Music is listed in the Every Student Succeeds Act as a core, stand-alone subject at the national level and we feel that our state Department of Education should hold music education in South Dakota with that same regard."

#9 -- Liz Luke, Sioux Falls, Student

Music education is vital to the success of every student. There have been studies that show that students in some sort of music ensemble are more successful in their education when compared to those not in music. Taking away the importance, or not including music education in the core standards of South Dakota's education plan, is taking away a chance for creativity and advanced education for all students. Please consider adding music education to the plan.

#10 -- Cody Swanson, Langford, Teacher

Please support the importance of music in our students lives.

#11 -- Jason Groon, Harrisburg, Teacher

Please list music as a core stand-alone subject

#12 -- Mindee Birnstiehl, Freeman, Teacher

I feel strongly that the State of South Dakota should follow the lead of the Every Student Succeeds Act at the national level in regards to music education. At the national level, music education is listed as a core, stand alone subject. The proposed ESSA plan for the State of South Dakota does not even mention music education. It is a well known fact that outstanding music programs lead to increased student performance in the classroom, higher attendance rates, increased self-esteem as well as improved behavior over schools without quality music programs. Thank you for your consideration.

#13 -- Molly Charlson, Sioux Falls, Teacher

Please add music to into ESSA in the state of South Dakota.

#14 -- Hillary Hill, Sturgis, Teacher

I would ask that you please include music education. It is located in the national standards, and should be part of South Dakota's as well.

#15 -- Florence K. Thompson, Caputa, Other

Annual Measurement of Achievement -- I strongly object to the use of the Federally Sponsored and Federally Mandated Tests being used to evaluate students, teachers, and schools in South Dakota. This flies in the face of the "Local Control" mantra touted in ESSA. I realize this is currently a federal mandate, but the SD Department of Education has been supporting the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) from the beginning. SDDOE employees had, and continue to have, positions of leadership with the SBAC. This is a clear conflict of interest and does not represent the sovereign interests of our state. Instead of promoting Federal control, South Dakota should be opposing it. I also object to forcing 95% of students to take these tests and the inclusion of their information in a giant database. (If South Dakota has "achieved statewide participation rate of more than 99 percent", I consider this to be an appalling indication of the total lack of freedom and parents rights in our state.) Parents should be able to refuse to have their children tested and included in this database for any reason. District School Boards

should determine the evaluation instruments to be used in their districts. When did the goal of American Education change from educating citizens to live in a free country, to tracking, management and workforce development for a global system?

Florence K. Thompson, President South Dakota Parents Involved in Education

#16 -- Renea Schoenfelder, Dimock, Teacher

Why is music not included in South Dakota's version of ESSA when it is a stand alone core subject of the document at the national level?

#17 -- Susan Karels, Milbank, Teacher

Please add music education into ESSA in South Dakota.

#18 -- Paul Schilf, Brandon, Other

We, the South Dakota Music Education Association, ask of the South Dakota Department of Education to please add music education to their plan for implementation of ESSA. Music is listed in the Every Student Succeeds Act as a core, stand-alone subject at the national level and we feel that our state Department of Education should hold music education in South Dakota with that same regard. We encourage you to look at what other states are doing and follow appropriately to benefit the students of South Dakota. Here are a few examples from states that have already submitted their ESSA plans:

The Time Spent in Fine Arts, Music and Physical Education Indicator uses a 100-point index. This measure is the amount of exposure students have to courses in the fine arts, music and physical education. – Michigan's ESSA Plan

Access and participation rates in music and arts education could be part of the state's dashboard or school report card system. New Jersey has been doing this work for the last several years, while Nevada is just starting and in the next school year will be able to disaggregate the access and participation rate data based on sub-group populations, such as gender and race. A dashboard will be created to determine the extent to which LEAs are providing students with a well-rounded education. The dashboard will serve as a springboard to attending to the needs of all of Nevada's students where deficiencies may be evident. – Nevada's ESSA Plan

Illinois specifically calls out that the resource review for schools identified for improvement should include all areas of the curriculum: Gaps in the impact of funding, supports and services, relative to allocation, for all students, relevant student groups, and teachers (e.g., gifted, fine arts, library and media specialists, school service personnel, and career and technical educators and programming) – Illinois' ESSA plan.

We respectfully request that music is listed as a stand alone subject in ESSA and title IV. We are looking for accountability about the provision of music education in South Dakota's public schools. SDMEA proudly advocates the benefits of music in our schools. We firmly believe that music should be a stand-

alone, core subject in South Dakota to bring our state in line with the standards set under the ESSA. The SDMEA board of directors welcomes dialogue about the implementation of the ESSA in our state

#19 -- David Holdhusen, Vermillion, Teacher

As a music educator and teacher of future music educators, I would like to ask that the South Dakota Department of Education to please add music education to their plan for implementation of ESSA. I was disappointed to learn that Music was not addressed in the state's plan. Music is listed in the Every Student Succeeds Act as a core, stand-alone subject at the national level and I believe that the State of South Dakota should hold music education in that same regard. I strongly encourage you to explore what other states are doing and follow appropriately to benefit the students of South Dakota. Here are a few examples from states that have already submitted their ESSA plans: "The Time Spent in Fine Arts, Music and Physical Education Indicator uses a 100-point index. This measure is the amount of exposure students have to courses in the fine arts, music and physical education." – Michigan's ESSA Plan Access and participation rates in music and arts education could be part of the state's dashboard or school report card system. New Jersey has been doing this work for the last several years, while Nevada is just starting and in the next school year will be able to disaggregate the access and participation rate data based on sub-group populations, such as gender and race. "A dashboard will be created to determine the extent to which LEAs are providing students with a well-rounded education. The dashboard will serve as a springboard to attending to the needs of all of Nevada's students where deficiencies may be evident." – Nevada's ESSA Plan Music plays an important role in the lives and education of students across the state. This was clearly understood by the authors of the federal law. South Dakota has an obligation to its students to provide the highest quality education in its public schools. Music should be a part of that learning process. I respectfully request that music is listed as a stand-alone, core subject in South Dakota to bring our state in line with the standards set under the ESSA.

#20 -- Beth Neitzert, Aberdeen, Teacher

As orchestra chair-elect of the South Dakota Music Education Association, I ask that the SDDE add music education to their plan for implementation of ESSA. Music is listed in the ESSA as a core subject at the national level and I feel that our state DOE should hold music education in South Dakota with that same regard.

#21 -- Sara Weischedel, Aberdeen

As the ESSA includes music as a core curricular subject, the State of South Dakota needs to recognize this in the state plan as well. As the state plan stands, there is no mention of music as such.

#22 -- Daniel Mollet, Vermillion, General Public

Music and Arts education are a critical component of education at all levels, and funding for such programs should be a high priority for any educational legislation. Please add funding for these areas into the ESSA

#23 -- Joy Lang, Lennox, Teacher

Please include music education!

#24 -- Kristin Schmeling, Vermillion, Teacher

Add music education into the ESSA implementation plan in South Dakota.

#25 -- Kari Wilmes, Vermillion, Teacher

I urged you to add music education to the ESSA state plan. The arts are an integral part of our students education whether it be for the life and critical thinking skills it develops or the inherent value of music itself.

#26 -- Dr. Boyd Perkins, Sioux Falls, School Administrator

Please add fine arts and music to the SD ESSA plan. The inclusion of creative training and the ability to apply and process information is more important in today's information rich world than ever. These creative higher level thinking concepts are taught through the fine arts perhaps better than any other subject. Creativity and creative risk taking is what sets the American student apart from the rest of the world and keeps our country as a leader in innovation.

#27 -- Victoria Hyder, Mitchell, Teacher

Music education is listed as a stand alone core subject at the national level, and I believe it should be listed the same way at the state level. However, unless I missed something, you don't have it listed anywhere. I hope you will consider adding this and showing respect for my profession as a music educator.

#28 -- Karen Timanus, Gregory, School Board Member

Please add music education into the ESSA implementation plan in South Dakota.

#29 -- Haley Hoium, Sioux Falls, Teacher

As an educator whose students participate in the state assessment, I would like to see Smarter Balanced Assessment replaced with an assessment such as the MAP Growth (Measures of Academic Progress). MAP has a more individualized approach to assessment that measures student performance.

#30 -- Gerald Jonason, South Dakota, General Public

I fully believe that Music and all the other Fine Arts should be considered in South Dakota's ESSA Plan.

#31 -- Deborah Rausch, Milbank, Teacher

Please include Music Education in your ESSA plan.

#32 -- Amy Nelson, Clark, Teacher

Please add music to the ESSA implementation plan.

#33 -- Mary Beth Sutton, Flandreau, Teacher

Please add music education into this plan.

#34 -- Sara Olson, Brookings, Teacher

Keep music in schools

#35 -- Laurie Trygstad, Sioux Falls, Parent

Add music education

#36 -- Ron Stary, Brookings, Teacher

No music education listed in this

#37 -- Laura Petersen, Sioux Falls, Teacher

Add music education into the ESSA implementation plan in South Dakota

#38 -- Blake Wieseler, Yankton, Student

Music education is vital to the success of students not only in the classroom but outside too. Music is one of few activities that allows students to use the entire brain. Music education and music educators change students lives in several ways. At my high school, students that would not normally talk to each other on normal circumstances are having conversations and laughing with each other. Music allows for creativity and creating a world all of the student's own imagination. Music education allows for us, as the general public to enjoy the concerts, theatrical productions, and fun events. Music allows for people to forget their worries and bond and link cultures through creativity. Students at my high school have gone on to be successful doctors and other great professions throughout the world. With music education, we can teach each other lessons not only about us as a group but also each us on an individual basis. Music education has had a profound impact on me. Without the music educators, I would probably still be pretty successful, but with them, I'm something more potent. Music educators inspire their students to achieve their goals no matter how big it small they might be. Music education deserves a rightful place among the curriculum in South Dakota. With music, we can live in a world with less violence and allow for the healing of all souls. Students in South Dakota would benefit from music education as it has been proven that students who participate in Music programs tend to better on tests and perform better under pressure. Music Education such a crucial role in students lives, so don't take that away from them! I hope you will stand by me as an advocate not only for students in South Dakota, but deserving students around the globe.

#39 -- Larry Petersen, Sioux Falls, Teacher

Research shows that music education strengthens academic achievement, yet nowhere in your ESSA plan does music education play a role. I believe strongly that music education must be included as a vital element of the South Dakota ESSA plan, and would like to encourage the state legislature to revisit to secure its inclusion.

#40 -- Jennifer Spencer, Harrisburg, Parent

Fine arts needs to be included. My children have benefitted immeasurably by being in Music classes and ensembles.

#41 -- Heidi Long-Lind, Hill City, General Public

I am very concerned that music education is NOT in this document. Music education needs to be part of this!

#42 -- Andrea Harstad, Crooks

Please include music education within South Dakota's Every Student Succeeds Act. This needs to be done and is the correct decision for our students of the state of South Dakota.

#43 -- Julie Olson, Mitchell, Teacher

I am very concerned by the lack of accountability parameters or goals for science education in the state's ESSA plan. Beyond the mention of the adoption of new state standards (p. 9), and a "science" test (p. 52) there is nothing about including science into this plan. This will put our state at risk for not developing the sciences and engineering (to include bioengineering) that our state is currently trying to develop. School districts will be reluctant to dedicate funds that are necessary for the implementation of the new South Dakota Science Standards in the forms of teacher professional development, materials/supplies, as well as reliable ways to assess it for further improvement and accountability.

#44 -- Jordan Seidel, Rapid City, Teacher

Please consider adding music education into the ESSA. Music education is a huge part of the school systems in South Dakota with most of the classes being the largest classes inside the school. It would be a shame if the state did not acknowledge such a huge part of our students daily education.

#45 -- George Drago, Rapid City, Parent

The intention when President Obama initiated the ESSA Act, had Music Education listed as a vital, required class in a qualifying school. I feel that if we as a state remove that language, we will be putting our students at a massive disadvantage. Music is a VITAL part of a successful education. Please show that South Dakota agrees with the National Guidelines, and that we give our youth the education they deserve.

#46 -- Jennifer Maturi, Sioux Falls

Please add music education into the ESSA implementation plan in South Dakota.

#47 -- Susan Beckler, Aberdeen, Parent

Music and all of the arts are an integral part of our education system. They do more for brain development in children than can be stated in a short comment.

#48 -- Jonathan Neswick, Brookings, Student

No part of this plan references the importance of music education in the success of every student. Music of some shape or form plays an important role in the identity of any individual, and disregarding education on the subject will not provide success to many students in the state of South Dakota.

#49 -- Katie Opp, Gregory, Teacher

Please consider including music in the ESSA. I feel that our goal should be to help students become well rounded people that are ready for the future. It's not that math and reading aren't important. Instead, all the subjects are important. Please consider including music in your ways to improve education in our state.

#50 -- Joan Michel, Sioux Falls, Parent

Please add music education to the plan. Studies have shown it affects how well students do in so many ways. I moved back to SD BECAUSE my daughter would get music education as part of a public education.

#51 -- Cara Uken, Renner, Parent

Please add music education. Participating in music is known to have many interdisciplinary benefits to school children and can help them with college admissions and job placement down the road. Music ensembles make vital contributions to our community. We need music in our schools.

#52 -- Jennifer Zabel, Sioux Falls, Parent

Music education is just as critical as math, science and English. Studies have proven that children who participate in music have higher test scores and are better at adapting to stressful situations and multi-tasking.

#53 -- Bob Kramer, Sioux Falls, Parent

Music is essential and needs to be added to this.

#54 -- Dr. Wendy van Gent, Aberdeen, Teacher

Music must be included as a stand-alone subject in the public schools. There is a plethora of research to support the inclusion of music as a necessity for the well-being and well-rounded child pre-K through 12. Please consider adding music to the SD ESSA to benefit ALL children in South Dakota.

#55 -- Shari Kosel, Lead, General Public

Your state plan is lacking ANY arts education implementation and I feel this is a huge mistep for the children in South Dakota. Arts education is an integral part of all students' lives.

#56 -- Kim Bruguier, Mitchell, Teacher

I would like to request that the department of education please include music education to the state report card. Music education should be a graduation requirement and every school in South Dakota should have a certified music educator.

#57 -- Carson Pruett, Brandon, General Public

Please consider adding requirements of music education to South Dakota's ESSA State Plan. As a graduate of the South Dakota public school systems, I have seen the significance of music education and music as a whole on my life. I am currently a senior at South Dakota State Univeristy, and study Spanish as one of my majors. The current ESSA state plan references EL (English learning) students multiple times, and stresses the need for them to succeed. I, along with any language learner, will tell you the number one way to gain competency over your second language is through interaction with native speakers. When I was in high school, there were not many EL students. However, our demographics are changing, and we need a way to further include our EL students, not seclude them from the rest of the student body in the way that often happens now. Music education is one of the answers to the that problem. Bands, orchestras, and choirs all require teamwork and cohesiveness to function. EL learners participating in one of these groups would promote not only English learning, but would give the students a sense of belonging, driving both motivation and happiness. Math and Science do not foster this sense of comradery in the way Music does. Language classes (English, Spanish, etc.) only further divide students based on which student is capable of speaking what language. My experience with music has brought out my leadership skills and compassion 100%. It is an invaluable skill to have (playing an instrument) that I will carry with me for the rest of my life. I urge you to take this into context when implemeting South Dakota's ESSA Stare Plan. I would be happy to answer any additional questions or thoughts. Thank you.

#58 -- Kelly Corwin, Rapid City, General Public

In education, we are working with human beings, so we must not forget the importance of working with creativity, meaning, and emotion. Educational research proves that music education

provides support and benefits student progress toward academic goals. As a university educator, I see firsthand the benefits of student participation in and exposure to music education. English learners, for instance, show huge benefits from music education. Music crosses language and cultural boundaries, and works in parts of the brain that everyday speech and reading do not. SD has a unique opportunity to acknowledge and use these benefits to help English learners adapt to their school environment much more quickly and easily by incorporating music education. Math and reading proficiency is another focus of the ESSA plan, and experienced musicians know that music (reading, playing, and even listening) teaches and reinforces mathematics in ways that involve the whole brain, not just the reading/memorization/calculation functions. In every rehearsal, I'm working with beats per minute and fractional note values. Learning to read music also cross-trains the brain, making it easier to transfer those skills to reading text. Additionally, what better motivation and reinforcement for reading could there be than students reading the words in their favorite songs? I personally recall "Sing Along Songs" (music videos with words to follow along with) being an important part of my learning to read, and choral singing in elementary school expanding my vocabulary. The document mentions plans for involving homeless and disadvantaged students in extracurricular activities, but does not place incentive or timeline for doing this. There are countless stories of music education creating the stability needed in a young student's life to enable them to excel in academics and move on to careers and further education. We should learn from these examples and provide incentives and timelines for enabling all students to excel in music education. The SD teacher training requirements include options for teachers to add music-related specializations. Given what we know about how music benefits English learners, lower proficiency math students, and disadvantaged students, SD should provide incentives for teachers in training to include music education experience and specialization in their educational paths, and should also make music education an integral part of meeting the stated goals of the plan. Besides the benefits I already mentioned, music education develops social skills and teamwork, and rewards the commitment and tenacity required to practice and be a contributing member of a goal-driven group. Education cannot be undertaken as an academics-only siloed goal; we are working with humans and must acknowledge how human learning actually works.

#59 -- Tonchi Weaver, Rapid City, Other

I am troubled by the transition into "personalized learning", which will greatly increase fine-grained data collection on each child. Was there an outcry from parents for this "reform"? Like most of the buzz-words in education, there is no definitive meaning for this term. There is, however, a heavy reliance on adaptive technology and embedded testing and it will change the role of the teacher in the classroom. This will necessitate a great deal of funding and professional development. This plan is wedded to the "content standards", which are not academically sound, as well as the SBAC tests which are aligned with them. I believe is the result of SD education officials' deep involvement with the private entities that own the standards and hold contracts to administer the SBAC tests. The state will decide what career choices are best for each child through the "personalized learning" approach. There is no local control in this plan.

#60 -- Jonathan Bakken, Brookings, Teacher

Dear Mrs. Stadick Smith, We, the South Dakota Music Education Association, ask of the South Dakota Department of Education to please add music education to their plan for implementation of ESSA.

Music is listed in the Every Student Succeeds Act as a core, stand-alone subject at the national level and we feel that our state Department of Education should hold music education in South Dakota with that same regard. We encourage you to look at what other states are doing and follow appropriately to benefit the students of South Dakota. Here are a few examples from states that have already submitted their ESSA plans:

The Time Spent in Fine Arts, Music and Physical Education Indicator uses a 100-point index. This measure is the amount of exposure students have to courses in the fine arts, music and physical education. – Michigan's ESSA Plan

Access and participation rates in music and arts education could be part of the state's dashboard or school report card system. New Jersey has been doing this work for the last several years, while Nevada is just starting and in the next school year will be able to disaggregate the access and participation rate data based on sub-group populations, such as gender and race.

A dashboard will be created to determine the extent to which LEAs are providing students with a well-rounded education. The dashboard will serve as a springboard to attending to the needs of all of Nevada's students where deficiencies may be evident. – Nevada's ESSA Plan

Illinois specifically calls out that the resource review for schools identified for improvement should include all areas of the curriculum: Gaps in the impact of funding, supports and services, relative to allocation, for all students, relevant student groups, and teachers (e.g., gifted, fine arts, library and media specialists, school service personnel, and career and technical educators and programming) – Illinois' ESSA plan.

We respectfully request that music is listed as a stand alone subject in ESSA and title IV. We are looking for accountability about the provision of music education in South Dakota's public schools. SDMEA proudly advocates the benefits of music in our schools. We firmly believe that music should be a stand-alone, core subject in South Dakota to bring our state in line with the standards set under the ESSA. The SDMEA board of directors welcomes dialogue about the implementation of the ESSA in our state. Sincerely, Jon Bakken SDMEA Orchestra Chair

#61 -- Denise Perry, Brookings, Teacher

It is our responsibility to educate the whole child, and this includes music instruction. Music education has many proven benefits to children - including social and emotional health. Music performance can be a lifelong skill. Music appreciation helps develop empathy for others, as well as develop an understanding of oneself. Music participation requires higher-level thinking skills, and teaches a 21st Century Skills. These are all skills we hope to develop in our citizens. Music education directly impacts many students in helping them to be ready for college, career and life.

#62 -- Sharon Schulz-Elsing, Sioux Falls, Parent

Please add music education to the ESSA implementation plan in South Dakota--it's an important aspect of our children's educational experience!

#63 -- Luke Corwin, Rapid City, Other

While science and math are frequently mentioned in this plan, music education is absent, and I think it should be at least as prominent as language arts. Music is only mentioned as part of teacher certification and training. I have been an amateur musician (tuba player) since 5th grade, and that has been a great benefit to my life. I started playing as part of a public school music program, and I want the students of my state to have the same opportunity I did.

#64 -- Sheila Freed, Sioux Falls, Other

I think school health should be included in the safe and healthy schools portion of our ESSA plan. The SD Board of Nursing states medication can be given in the school setting by unlicensed staff as long as they have training and have over-sight of a nurse, however, many of our schools have no nurse over-sight which creates a safety issue for students. I would like for schools to get rewarded for prioritizing the health and safety of their students.

#65 -- Kim Nelson, Brookings, Parent

Music education needs to be included!

#66 -- Nancy Schneider, Brookings, General Public

Yes, add music

#67 -- Rina Reynolds, Brookings, Parent

The plan does not include Music Education as a part of the plan. This is a critical element of education in every student experience. Please review, reconsider and make a revision.

#68 -- Lorna Jost, Volga, General Public

Music education is important!

#69 -- Rebecca Cruse, South Dakota Arts Council

Thank you for the hard work you have all put into the South Dakota Department of Education's plans for ESSA implementation. At the South Dakota Arts Council, we have been following the process and believe these comments are relevant and necessary. Please feel free to reach out to me for additional information or as a resource for future planning. My focus at the agency is Arts Education, and I have seen the amazing impact the arts can have on students and communities.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Cruse
Deputy Director
South Dakota Arts Council
605.773.5084

The arts are an effective teaching tool to help reach students who learn differently. There are also multiple ways to assess learning in and through the arts in less traditional and stringent ways. Many of the goals outlined in the state's ESSA plan would benefit from planning to include the arts as a tool for achievement. I've mentioned some of those below and provided links from two case studies that show direct connection to the points.

Academic standards: The SD Board of Ed also adopted new fine arts standards in 2015. It would be good to mention those in the paragraph.

English learners would benefit greatly from arts education. The arts are universal and help bridge language barriers and foster understanding.

School quality is boosted by arts inclusion. A multitude of arts education studies show that students who experience rich arts engagement in school are higher achievers, attend school more regularly, are more understanding and compassionate toward their peers, and leave school more prepared for the college or work environment.

Supporting Schools, After School Programs, and Effective Instruction: Comprehensive arts programs are uniquely designed to support students in need or at risk. These programs can target areas where improvement is needed and even serve the families of students and the greater community.

Please consider reviewing these short examples of the arts helping to achieve results for low-income students and supporting educators.

http://www.aep-arts.org/wp-content/uploads/Success_Stories_Title-I_Final_06.27.17.pdf

http://www.aep-arts.org/wp-content/uploads/Success_Stories_Perpich_Final_06.27.17.pdf

#70 -- SD Chapter of the American Choral Directors Association

June 30, 2017

Dear Ms. Smith:

On behalf of the South Dakota Chapter of the American Choral Directors Association (SD-ACDA), I am writing to ask the South Dakota Department of Education to please add music education to its ESSA state plan.

I understand that each state is required by law to address federal mandates, and that those mandates are specifically related to English Language Arts (ELA), Math, and Science. The language of the federal ESSA plan, itself, however defines a "well-rounded education" in these words:

The term 'well-rounded education' means courses, activities, and programming in subjects such as English, reading or language arts, writing, science, technology, engineering, mathematics, foreign languages, civics and government, economics, arts, history, geography, computer science, music, career and technical education, health, physical education, and any other subject, as determined by the State or local educational agency, with the purpose of providing all students access to an enriched curriculum and educational experience.

By this definition, ELA, Math, and Science alone do not constitute a well-rounded education. It seems clear, therefore, that any document that seeks to map out a path for our students to become "college, career, and life ready" must include all of the elements that make an education well-rounded. This current state ESSA draft does not appear to include many of those elements, including the arts.

Music, in particular, is at the core of who we are as human beings. It has been a part of every society known to have existed on earth. We naturally turn to music when we celebrate and when we mourn. It functions in our daily lives in ways that are ceremonial, entertaining, informative, collaborative, inspiring, and even healing. I recently spoke with an eighth grade student from South Dakota who had experienced depression. In her words, "I don't know if I would be alive today if it weren't for my music." Music enriches all of our lives, and, for some, it can even be lifesaving. Without an ongoing commitment by our schools to teach our children the skills and knowledge necessary to perform and understand music, we will fall short in our duty to offer the well-rounded education that I know we all desire to provide.

On behalf of our SD-ACDA members, I ask you to remember that we owe it to our children and, indeed, to our society, to look beyond federal mandates and include music and the arts as core elements of the educational blueprints we design.

Sincerely,

Paul Nesheim, President
The American Choral Directors Association-South Dakota Chapter