

Mary Luehrsen ([00:01:13](#)):

Hi everyone. I am Mary Luehrsen, NAMM's director of public affairs and government relations, also executive director of the NAMM foundation. And it sure, wonderful to see so many people logging on to this webinar about title, title four part a get on the train. We had to have a little pun there about a trains, uh, hope some of you picked up that little pun. Uh, but anyway, it's great to see you and, uh, great to have this in gathering where we can talk a little bit of about a very important part of the federal education law and how it can really impact our opportunity to create more music makers, uh, and music education opportunity. We've got a great panel and, uh, some really important information we're recording this, this material that you can, uh, look at later, they'll be resources being posted, but first we'd like to, uh, have a, a kickoff from our president CEO of NA oh, I forgot I have to do some antitrust reminders.

Mary Luehrsen ([00:02:08](#)):

Thank you, Eric. We have our usual antitrust that as our meetings at Nam, we don't talk and share information about pricing or markets. Um, information is all available@nam.org. And we also have a disclaimer that everything that we try to are on our webinars as current up to date, but is not a substitute for legal, uh, or financial, uh, advising or information that you may need to need, uh, get for your business or your school district. And we encourage you to, uh, contact your professionals in that area as needed. So now I'm happy to have with us. And before that, uh, let's jump to Joe. All right. And then we'll go at what we're going to cover. So Joe present, CEO of NA, just coming back from the national association of school of music dealers, where I know you talked about this and other important things happening in music education, we'd love to have words from you. Thanks.

Joe Lamond ([00:03:02](#)):

Well, thank you, Mary. So good to see everyone on today. Uh, thank you. And Eric and Claire and all the NAMM team who's shepherding us all through this. It's a very important time, as we all know, um, we got great partners out there, Mark Larry Lynn. And so many of you who have this along the way that I see on the call, many of you have been to DC with us and have been a part of this whole process. Um, what is our role here? I'll frame up a little bit of what we're trying to accomplish. This is multifaceted work, right? This section of the education, uh, law is important as are the others and the work we're doing at state and many right here. Uh, even in my little town of Carlsbad doing locally, it all matters. So I frame this as one large push forward.

Joe Lamond ([00:03:46](#)):

Um, and our opportunity here is to create that voice, that unified voice, to be knowledgeable on what's happening to be able to talk about the opportunities and to be able to share that and then disseminate it in our local community. That's the real work each and every one of you take this opportunity to bring it, uh, to the people that you can influence. We're all influencers in our own way. Uh, so that is our real role to influence what the policy makers with the elected officials with parents and help them understand what these opportunities are. Um, quick thought on where I think we're at, you know, the status quo has just been so disrupted the last couple years. I don't think anyone can even rethink back two years to this time, remember two weeks to slow the spread. Remember what that was like. Uh, how'd that work out here?

Joe Lamond ([00:04:33](#)):

We are two years later and it's almost like the fog of, you know, I remember this place was empty two years ago. There was no one around California. It was based, go shut down. Well, that's over, uh, pandemic's not over, but it's releasing its grip on our lives. It's releasing its control on our lives and we're back. And I think that's really important as context of our education system. Um, but it has been disrupted, I think, changes everywhere. And that is our opportunity, um, to take this moment when things are so disrupted to get in with our message and drive our message home to where it can maybe be more impactful, more impactful than ever before. So question to you is, will we seize this opportunity, right? We're usually playing the long game. Um, that is the role of, uh, association. That is the role of our work together to play that long and game.

Joe Lamond ([00:05:23](#)):

And I think we need to keep doing that, but we have an opportunity here to get in and score some points quickly. So I think that's an important part of what we're doing today and what Mary and our team and all our partners are doing this. Door's open to crack. It's opening more and more with the other funds that we're allocated for COVID relief, long game, short game we have to do, but this opportunity may not come along again in, in our lifetime even let's make the most of it. And let's seize that opportunity. So Mary let's get to work, shall we?

Mary Luehrsen ([00:05:52](#)):

Absolutely. Thanks, Joe. So let's go back to what we're going to cover today. Uh, we're gonna do a quick background on title four part a, uh, the student academics, um, um, enrichment program, more details on that. How year to year since 2015, we've been advocating for appropriations for that program. This is the money that we use on the district level in this program, um, how to access these funds, um, how funds can be used and a little bit more about the title of four coalition. Um, and we're also be covering, uh, one emphasize that put in your minds why we're doing this. Um, first of all, these funds are available for every school district. I want you to write that down first, these funds are a for every school district, they can support music education, but they will only support music education. If we go to the table and ask for these funds and we have to, we also need to look at the reality of what happened to these funds during COVID and how our local advocacy can assure that during direction of these funds in every school district can be used for music education.

Mary Luehrsen ([00:07:04](#)):

And we do have some success stories that we're modeling from. So we're not starting from nowhere here, but it's a really a time to go back to our local school districts and have a conversation again about these funds. So they can be used for music education. It's kind of that simple in a certain way. Um, but the work of doing it is the inspiration we hope you can take away from today's webinar. So I'm delighted to introduce our panel. We can't do anything without these experts, and I'm gonna ask them to give just a little bit of a thumbnail, invite them on the screen now, and a little bit of thumbnail about who they are and how they're gonna help us today. Uh, Connie Myers, can you kick us off?

Connie Myers ([00:07:49](#)):

Sure. Hey, Mary and, everyone. Thank you. Um, Connie Myers here at Nelson Mullins in Washington, DC, uh, advocating every day for NAMS efforts here in DC. So thank you very,

Mary Luehrsen ([00:08:00](#)):

And if she nudged a little bit in her chair from her office, she could see the capital and ladies and gentlemen, it is still there. So, uh, and folks are starting to move back into that, uh, into that building. And we can actually maybe plan on some meetings in the month ahead. Uh, mark Desta, where are you today? And please introduce yourself.

Mark Despotakis ([00:08:19](#)):

Hi everybody. I am the director of public and government affairs for the Pennsylvania music educators association, uh, former, uh, member of the music products industry that has stepped over, uh, into a different role here. And today I'm coming to you from the Poconos region of Pennsylvania because we are, uh, on day one of our back together conference. There's, uh, uh, over a thousand music educators in the rooms all around me today, doing some great professional development and performances.

Mary Luehrsen ([00:08:48](#)):

Great mark. I love that title and, uh, we missed you at MI, but you are in the right place. We're so glad you're there. Uh, Lynn Tuttle again, can't do this kind of conversation without you tell us where you're from and what you're doing.

Lynn Tuttle ([00:09:01](#)):

Thanks, Mary and good afternoon. Good morning, everyone. Uh, Lynn Tuttle, executive director and CEO for the American string teachers association. We're about three weeks mark after our first in-person national conference again, uh, poster through COVID. Um, and again, we had about a thousand string educators together and the best part mark that I found was, uh, not only, uh, the sense of community of being back together, but just everyone wanting to make music. So even the sessions that weren't about music, making everyone pulled out their instruments and made music anyway. So it was awesome.

Mary Luehrsen ([00:09:30](#)):

I, I love those numbers attending those conferences that gives us inspiration for we're on for June, uh, and, uh, Dr. Lawrence Pasco love to welcome to an am webinar, maybe your first but not your last great to see. I,

Dr. Larry Paska ([00:09:43](#)):

I hope not. No, I hope not. I'm pleased to be here today and thank you so much for the invitation. So I'm Larry Pasco. I'm the executive director of the national council for the social studies. We are 101 years young. Uh, right now we just finished celebrating arts Centennial we're based in silver, spring, Maryland. Um, mark wishing you best of success in your conference. We're returning to an in person as well. And, and Lynn, I'm glad to hear yours were successful. Uh, ours will be later this year. Um, and I'm also in this capacity today representing the title four, a CLI coalition recently been appointed to their board of directors. So I'm happy to talk a little bit more about the coalition and how it advocate and fights for, um, the, the funding that we so desperately need to support well-rounded education through title four a. So thank you.

Mary Luehrsen ([00:10:22](#)):

Thank you. So I hope you're all as inspired as I am by this great panel. So thank you. So we're gonna get into some nitty gritty first, uh, some background. I think it's important to know what we're talking about.

Um, so I'm gonna turn it over to Connie and Lynn, that when we have some slides about this, the, the background of the title, title four part a, so Connie first, and don't be intimidated by these slides. I know there's a lot of information here. We're recording all of this information will be available online. So don't be taking notes, just list and absorb some of this information. Connie,

Connie Myers ([00:10:58](#)):

Thank you, Mary. I mean, as Joe said, we're back to regular order, so it's hard to believe sometimes that regular order, uh, exists in, in Congress and here in DC, but it does. Uh, so we're not talking about COVID funding today. We're talking about, uh, back to the, every student succeeds act, uh, known as ESSA. Um, it was reauthorized in 2015, um, the elementary and secondary education act. Um, it's the main act of the federal K12 education law first enacted in 1965 with a provision calling for reauthorization every five years. It increases, uh, title, the authorization for title one, uh, which provides basic flex funding to help low income school districts, improve student outcomes. And for the first time ESSA places, an emphasis on well rounded education, specifically, including music in the arts and provides funding for it. The language is in ESSA's title four part a the student support and academic enrichment grants, the SS a E G grants, which is title four part a and it's currently authorized at 1.6 billion.

Connie Myers ([00:12:04](#)):

The Nam foundation research has shown that as a result of SS stated emphasis on well-rounded education and the S AEG grants that school districts across the country have increased their commitment to music and arts, uh, programs. The SS, a EEG grants are being used widely to address gaps in music, in access to music and arts instruction. And over the years, as many of you all have been a part of, uh, Nam has consistently worked with policy makers on the benefits of music, education and sought opportunities to expand the concept of music as critical to well-rounded, uh, education for advancing policies and funding, and NA has conducted, uh, so many different types of advocacy with policymakers, uh, and targeted, uh, cost. And that because of that advocacy, uh, title four part a has steadily increased over time.

Lynn Tuttle ([00:13:00](#)):

And Connie, I just interject that because of that advocacy, even before we had ESSA, there's the reason that we have well-rounded education language and funding authorization within this version of the, of ESEA, right? Because under no child left behind so many arts social studies, health PE classes were impacted because of the focus, the laser-like focus on reading and math interventions and the accountability system. And I do think it it's, it's a shout out to the advocates who've been doing this game. The long game is very, would say over the years that really provided this opportunity to show up in this law, right? So it's, it's a funded section of the law and we've never seen anything like that before.

Connie Myers ([00:13:44](#)):

That's actually, that's absolutely right. Lynn, thank you for, um, adding that. So I just wanna remind everybody of the budget of the regular federal budget process and appropriations process. Um, you each year, the appropriation cycle is initiated with the president's budget, which was just released, which many of us, which you all saw. It comes in early February, March a congressional committee and floor consideration then begins with a, uh, annual appropriations bills. And those continue through spring and summer months, um, into the fall and winter this year. It, it even can continued into the following year, which is where we are now, um, until they are enacted. Um, so we just, uh, on March 15, 20, 22 on the next slide, uh, president Biden signed the 1.5 trillion omnibus, uh, spending bill the HR 24

71 consolidated appropriations act. It consisted of all the appropriations bills, all 12 of the FY, uh, 2022 bills, um, providing substantial increase in domestic and national security and also 13.6 billion for emergency aid to Ukraine. So through the FY 2022 labor health and human services and education and related agencies, appropriation bill that's a long word. Uh, the department of education is receiving 76.4 billion for higher education in K12, which is an increase of 2.9 billion above last year's enacted level. Uh, for higher ed, it provides 3 billion, which is an increase of 452 million. And for K12, it includes 42.6 billion, uh, for the remainder of the year, which is an increase of 2 billion from the past year.

Mary Luehrsen ([00:15:34](#)):

And if I can interject something, this is, um, part of the ongoing annual budgeting process, which is the federal relief funds is additional to that. I think we have to be clear that we've talked a lot on our webinars about the Esser funding, federal relief funding, which again, there's another, that that funding is still available. And I know Lynn, you're gonna cover that in a moment, but we wanna just separate this channel of funding, which is part of the regular order of annual funding of the federal budget, right? And that the, when we worked hard to pass the 2015 federal ed law, we got into the slipstream of that annual funding of the federal budget with the title, a title four part a, which is, you know, why it's a very important thing that we, uh, keep bringing up. I want you to all work on. Um, so again, um, again, this just happened, you know, um, month ago, right? That, uh, the federal budget. And now we can definitively talk about the funding that is available for, uh, the title four party funds. So back to you two, anything more on this area.

Connie Myers ([00:16:43](#)):

Yeah. So let me just add on the next slide. Here's what we've been able to accomplish. NA for NA's priorities together with advocacy of 17.5 billion in K12 title grants for local education agencies. Again, a billion dollar increase, 1.2 billion for student support and academic enrichment grants, the SS AEG grants, that's 60 million above last year's levels, 2.2 billion for supporting effective instruction, state grants. Um, again, that's an increase of 27 million and 180 million for the national endowment of the arts, which is, uh, 12.5 million, uh, over last year's funding. So significant increases for this year, uh, that we're seeing again, back through our regular advocacy each year that we are doing to promote each of these, uh, critical areas for, for our, our work.

Mary Luehrsen ([00:17:35](#)):

And those of you that have been doing online meetings. The last two years, we have continued with our virtual advocacy summit. We've had have a, uh, a, uh, an annual ask, you know, that we've been promoting. You can see the results of the annual ask are right in front of us. Um, you know, this consolidated work of going and asking them members to contact their member of Congress during the appropriations review cycle, we can see an outcome of that work right in front of us together with other really important partners that we collaborate with. So thank you.

Connie Myers ([00:18:08](#)):

Thanks, Mary. I'll just add one of just one more slide here. Um, we love this slide because it shows you how our advocacy efforts actually work, right? So as you look at title, uh, one funding on the left side, you see there's been a steady increase over the years for FY 22. The bill that was just passed in March, uh, 17.5, 4 billion for title for K12 title one grants, um, NAS, a advocacy for this and for increasing title four part a, uh, through our work with the approach appropriations committees, their education subcommittees, uh, to seek this level of funding is, is the success of our work of what we do every year,

which makes a difference to, to try to get up to 1.6, 5 billion that is authorized for that SS a G grant title for part a, um, if you look at the title for part a in, in FY 2017, when we started with that account, um, when we first Scott that account, it was only 400 million.

Connie Myers ([00:19:13](#)):

Now we are up to 1.2, 8 billion, again, a 60 million increase over time. Um, so now we're into the, uh, FY 20. What does this mean now for where we are? We're into the 2023 appropriation cycle for this year it's already started. Um, and so, uh, back to our urging Congress to increase title one funding for public and elementary and secondary schools for the most underserved communities in America, urging Congress to, uh, continue to increase funding for title four part a up to the 1.6, \$5 billion level for real well rounded education and asking Congress to continue, uh, the goals and intent of SS a, um, and SS a G and also continuing to seek funding for, uh, our national arts and cultural organizations such as, um, the national endowment for the arts and NEA. So with that, um, Lynn, I don't know if you have other things to add.

Lynn Tuttle ([00:20:16](#)):

No, it's a great overview. Thank you, Connie. Um, and just thinking about, again, the success that, uh, NA and all of the advocacy partners have had in keeping title four part a not only funded, but increasing funding, um, that doesn't all always happen with funding from Congress. And certainly that wasn't the case under the predecessor bill, where you saw the one flexible pot of funding under no child left behind called title five party by this, uh, by this time in no child left Hines 10, your title five part a had gone away because people hadn't been advocating for it at the level that we're seeing with the title four part, a coalition and the work that NA has done and other partners have done. So we've done a great job of making the case to Congress as these dollars are important. And as Mary said at the beginning, the only way to continue making that case is if the dollars are put to good use at the local level. So thinking about how, what you can do to make sure that these dollars are put to use effectively at the local level, and that we can tell the stories, share those stories and success stories back to Congress. That is part of the, you know, getting on board, the title four part, a train that's part of the long term engagement work. And that's, what's gonna continue to keep these dollars flowing. So thanks everyone for your work so far.

Mary Luehrsen ([00:21:27](#)):

Um, thanks, Lynn, give us a, a bit of a connect, the dot between these funds and the federal relief funds. I think that would be helpful before we went on to the, how should we access these funds?

Lynn Tuttle ([00:21:37](#)):

Sure. Well, and once we get to the, how do we access these funds, Mary, right? It's the same process. So you can take notes for this, for how to do for title four part a and it'll work as well for the Esser funds. So Esser funds, which are the, uh, funds for K12 education that came through the stimulus relief packages, um, are kind of like title four party, a both, a lot more zeros. There are a, a lot of zeros, a lot more money was, um, injected into public education in order to stabilize and support the funding structures as we came through the pandemic. So for, to, to, to stabilize and strengthen those structures and to provide additional funds to help meet the additional costs that schools were facing with needing PPE equipment, needing to retrofit, needing to, you know, do HVAC work, all of those kind of things.

Lynn Tuttle ([00:22:25](#)):

So, right, the funds went for some of those big tech and, um, medical supplies and other things that schools needed, but they could also be used to fund a well-rounded education. In fact, the administration came out almost a year ago with a statement saying that Esser funds could be used to support music and arts education, including the purchasing of instruments. So the funds are there and have a lot of flexibility built into them that could continue to support and build, increase support for arts and music education. Um, and as I was sharing with Mary before we started, um, while if you went to talk to any school district across the nation today, they might say, oh, we know how we're spending our Esther dollars, but there are always amendments because budgets never come out the way that you expect them to. So go ask them what their amendment process is, cuz those federal stimulus dollars are available until September of 20, 24. So there's still time to access those dollars. And you may wanna ask about those dollars while you're sitting at the table and talking about title four part a

Mary Luehrsen ([00:23:24](#)):

Thanks Lynn, we have done a lot of webinars about the federal relief funds. I think I can see one again in our future because I think it's all about again, the, that great phrase of being at the table, being a working group, uh, not asking one question, but asking that question many times, uh, with school administrators. Uh, but I think we'll put that on a draft page for another webinar. All right, mark and Larry, I'd love to have your, your good counsel about how these funds can be used, um, in terms of how the funds are divided up by statute and what wedge of those funds are available for music and arts education, as well as other well-rounded subjects. Um, mark, would you like to kick us off?

Mark Despotakis ([00:24:09](#)):

Sure. Um, I think one of the important points to remember going back to, to Connie's uh, good history lesson here for us on, on what's in ESSA, um, is that we are living under this well-rounded so that's, you know, uh, I always tell people, okay, S is a couple thousand pages wrong long, and it's this great suspenseful novel for policy nerds because you're reading it. And it says well rounded and it says well rounded, but it's not until actually like title eight, uh, which, you know, it's, it's the end of the law where it actually defines what that means. And finally, when you get through that couple thousand pages, it lists all those subject areas where it says music, arts, social, whole list. And the, the, the great thing there is that we've, we've moved away from the term core and too well rounded, which I think is just a more meaningful term.

Mark Despotakis ([00:25:01](#)):

And what that says is to me, and I think to all of us, every, this means Congress says every student should have access to these subjects, which thus make a student in a human well rounded. Um, that is the key piece to me of this advocacy work, as you are going and asking for funds, because Congress is saying we are intending for all students to have access. So that's the other key, well, rounded and access are the keywords to me, um, that students should be receiving. And then, uh, what I would encourage folks to do is every state was required to come up with their own version of the ESSA plan, go and take a look at that and see if there's any reporting language similar to that that can help in Pennsylvania. We got a line in there that that specifically calls up music and arts education.

Mark Despotakis ([00:25:56](#)):

So that's, that's a piece of our policy tool and our toolkit when we go and talk to, uh, those who are dispensing the funds. Okay. But what does it actually mean then? Right. So, so you know, the boots on the ground, what can we actually do with this money again? Well, rounded and access. I will talk, I'm

sure we'll talk a little bit later about the, how we do that and that's through this needs assessment and what can you ask for, uh, it's important to remember that there, that there's, uh, three pots basically, of, of money that can be used for well rounded that can be used for title four part a, um, well rounded, safe, and healthy schools and the effective use of technology. Now we could probably fit into all of those areas with music in the arts. Um, but that, that area that we're focusing in on is well rounded.

Mark Despotakis ([00:26:48](#)):

Okay. So I would encourage folks to say, okay, I'm looking at my program. Are there access points where students are not able to participate, be it from a, uh, a curricular, uh, position, be it from, we don't have enough staff position, uh, be it from our facilities position, um, be it from equipment position. Okay. Um, and I won't go into the specifics now, cause I think that we're gonna talk about that later, but I have some actual specific examples of how we've seen that work. So, um, I'll let Larry chime in, but that's kind of my overview of, of how this works.

Mary Luehrsen ([00:27:29](#)):

Terrific. And you've given us a good preview of coming attractions, uh, Larry from your, from your seat, how, how can these funds be used?

Dr. Larry Paska ([00:27:36](#)):

Yeah. Um, so one of my favorite phrases, uh, that I love to read anywhere is the phrase including, but not limited to the reason I love that phrase is because that does give you, and I think it gives everybody a very wide birth wide passage to, um, be innovative. Um, I think a lot of times we stumble because we stay in our silo and we think, uh, I don't know how to cross over, or if I crossed over, would I be rejected? So language in title four, a for well rounded, singles out arts and music, it singles out history and civics, it singles out AP or IB. So one thought I always go back to is what does it look like when you cross pollinate those a little bit? Can you have a really strong arts program that merges with social studies? Can you talk about, um, cultivating a world language program with the context of music, um, or performing or visual arts?

Dr. Larry Paska ([00:28:27](#)):

So thinking outside the box, because this is not a overly prescriptive program, as Mark's describing, there are these three areas of safe and healthy students. Well-rounded education technology. Um, Congress cannot really get more prescriptive beyond those. So it's really the interpretation within those three very broad style, if you will. That, um, there's a great deal of latitude for, for, for all of us, um, to, to promote well-rounded education in, in social studies, just like I know in, um, in your disciplines, obviously we don't have to talk about the shrinking of instructional time. Um, the curricular choices that have to be made. Sometimes students feeling a lot of pressure for, I can only take one course in my free period. What is that? We we've all experienced that our, our other concern that we've experienced in social studies over the past few years is while it's important that funding has come to districts.

Dr. Larry Paska ([00:29:17](#)):

And you know, many of us are working in school buildings where the infrastructure's just old. It's hard to get broadband through those great thick walls that we're built 120 years ago at the same time. Um, they can very easily, we can, we can easily focus so much on infrastructure that we're forgetting what it is we come to when we're actually in that building. We're, we're coming for music instruction, we're coming for civics instruction. We're, we're, we're preparing our kids to be truly well-rounded. And, and I agree

with you, mark, that phrase is so critical to all of us and our disciplines, because I would, I would say math is part of well-rounded. All of us are part of well-rounded, but that phrase really can, can take a backseat to the current emergencies that we're trying to dig through. And yet curriculum and instruction is a, is an emergency alongside everything else we're dealing with in COVID because without a sound instructional program and without the funds to implement that program or to innovate that program, um, we, we do run the risk of, of marginalizing kids.

Dr. Larry Paska ([00:30:11](#)):

We run the risk of their achievement eroding further. Uh, what is good about the funding? The way it's established is that 20% of funds at a minimum have to be dedicated to well rounded. So again, that gives, that gives you the opportunity to say whether it's strengthening my music or arts program, whether it's in, in bringing in higher level courses like IB or AP, whether it's partnering with your social studies department, for example, or language department, you know, to, to, to offer instructional innovation, 20% of funds have to be used at so already. Well rounded is a mandated priority, but again, it stops at that. It it's up to you. How, how you, how you choose to implement your program from there. If you're a district that's getting over \$30,000 in funds, I think was mentioned, you have to do a needs assessment. Um, what struck me from the data that we collected the coalition is that about a third of districts that have reported to us report that, um, arts and music is how they're using their well-rounded funds.

Dr. Larry Paska ([00:31:06](#)):

So you're already starting from a position of some strength. The question is, you know, how, how do you ensure that it it's, you certainly don't want fewer districts reporting that they're using it for arts and music, but is there a way that arts and music programs can be strengthened or enhanced through those curricular connections? I interdisciplinary connections with other subjects or introducing courses like AP and IB up. So 20% is for well rounded, 20% is for safe and healthy students. And then the remaining funds, the remaining 60% can be used across all three areas. The only limitation is that no more than 15% of funds can be used for technology purchases. So that's, you know, again, both good and bad, we're trying to close the digital divide. The good news is there are other funds out there that can help do that. And certainly a lot of the, uh, pandemic funding that schools received were to help close the digital divide.

Dr. Larry Paska ([00:31:56](#)):

Uh, many of you may be aware that, um, several associations have lobbied for inclusion of funding to close the, the digital divide, remote access to learning, um, and, and president Biden, you know, and Congress have authorized funds for that purpose. So, um, so those funds are there. And so restricting technology to 15% keeps the focus on you, the curriculum leader, you the discipline in the school, um, and also helps keep the focus on what kinds of instructional innovations are needed. So, um, one last comment before we talk about advocacy later is I think one of the areas I might recommend right up front, as you're figuring out, how do I apply to my state for funds? How do I, um, ensure that my program is strong is focus on those outcomes you expect early on. I know we're gonna talk about success stories later. I can't emphasize enough that so much of our own advocacy and social studies is about highlighting what works and what's great.

Dr. Larry Paska ([00:32:51](#)):

Um, we're all operating from this deficit model now of everything is wrong and we have to fix what's wrong. And I think when you approach from the position of strength, these funds make a difference in music because these funds make a difference to my kids because these funds make a difference to teachers, because I think that's a, that's an area that all of us who are using title \$4 should, should start from. And I, and we'll talk more about success stories in a bit, but I wanna encourage us to think right up front, if you apply for dollars, what do you wanna point to as evidence of thank goodness I have these funds, I'm now able to do good by teachers and kids, and start charting that out even before you are awarded funding.

Mary Luehrsen ([00:33:28](#)):

Larry, thank you so much for putting that in, uh, plain language, you know, because when we interact with, with the technical realities of a federal funded program, we get a little, we can get a little anxious about those, but, you know, and the concept of needs assessment, you know, it's pretty straightforward if kindergartens in a school district are not having any access to quality instruction, that's a needs assessment. If there's no art in the, in the curriculum below, below grade three, that's a needs assessment. So, and that's your statement of outcomes. And I'm also wait for that innovative, um, entrepreneurial curriculum program. That's going to integrate music with our social studies and our current, uh, societal needs, social justice, realities, music, uh, you know, there's, there's so much, uh, that that really could be tapped and the title four funds could be tapped. And really, you need to convince your local school administrators first to enter into, into a dialogue.

Mary Luehrsen ([00:34:22](#)):

And they fill out the form in the central office, which is a pretty modest form. And we'll talk about that in a moment, but we need to say the question in the room, what happened during COVID, what happened to these monies during COVID? And I think that we have to answer just share, frankly, um, what happen to the allocation of these funds when the technology and broadband needs were so dramatic, um, and why we need to go back with this with this appropriation of 1.2, 1.28 billion that we go back and ask for these funds for well rounded, who would like to maybe share with us Lynn you're on the front line with teachers. What happened to these funds during call?

Lynn Tuttle ([00:35:03](#)):

Well, I think you're exactly right, Mary. So during, during COVID, these funds really went very strongly to both educational technology needs. And again, you could make the case that that was supporting well-rounded education at the moment in time, because many children were learning outside of the building and didn't have access to ways to connect to their curricular leaders without having the, the additional know tech technological infrastructure, whether that was laptop or, or internet bandwidth or, or all of the above. I, I know in our school district, we had bus drivers who were driving around providing wifi hotspots in, in community neighborhoods. And I'm in a well funded, well healed school district, but there were still students who had those needs to have those points of connection. So title four party funds went to, went to programs like that. Um, and again, that, that safe and healthy student aspect, you know, funds were also used to support students in a variety of ways in that moment in time.

Lynn Tuttle ([00:35:52](#)):

And, um, and or, and we talked about this before and earlier now webinar, um, at times districts were just so overwhelmed at trying to get the day to day work done that they would just sweep the title four funds back into title one a and just do, you know, use the funds that way. Cause that is one of the

provisions that the law provides. Um, so I think you're exactly right as we are, um, coming out of the pandemic by that. I mean, K12 schools for the most part are all in person. We're back to sort of regular order and regular routine. It's a great time to remind our district leaders that these funds can be used to support a well-rounded education to remind them the ways in which that as Laurie says, connects to instruction, connects to curriculum, connects to content, connects to the tools that we need for in-person in-person learning.

Mary Luehrsen ([00:36:37](#)):

And I would say that be aware of the, well, this is the way we do it mindset. This is the way it was done during COVID, but let's be mindful of what the law intends absolutely. And that these funds are available, but this is the hard part, I guess, or the fun part, depending on where you're sitting and how much you love, love the advocacy part of this work. This is when you get to sit and, and, uh, start a small working group with teachers with, um, uh, district, our fine arts coordinators start the conversation. You probably won't, uh, uh, get that title for, uh, funds reallocated towards well-rounded in the first conversation, but, uh, with a good solid, the needs assessment and, and good relationships and an enthusiasm for what kids need now, as they're coming back to schools and rebuilding our school environments, there's a lot of success potential out there for the use of these funds, but it's not gonna help happen without carrying the water.

Mary Luehrsen ([00:37:36](#)):

As we say, in advocacy, you have to kind of carry the, or to the door from the well to the door, uh, and out, uh, to where it's really needed into the lives of students. Um, any other comments about what happened during COVID, uh, from Larry or mark or Connie that, uh, we kind of, we it's part of our awareness that we need to do in the advocacy going forward. We really have to be aware that these funds were, are swept over to other places. Um, so it is kind of like a little bit of a doubling down to remind people the use of these funds, mark you're on the front lines with this. Any thoughts about that?

Mark Despotakis ([00:38:11](#)):

Uh, I would just say briefly that to Lynn's point about a lot of this money being swept into title one, um, that was something we were experiencing the for COVID, but I would Inc we we're talking title four today, but I would encourage folks as we talk a little bit later when we talk about who to go to talk to about these funds, to think about uses of title one and where that could fit in with music and arts, not only from this perspective of things being swept over, but this, this presidential administration has talked so much about putting more money into title one. And if that, I mean, obviously we see the going up, but if that becomes even a bigger reality as they would hope, or probably even, I would say half the reality of what they hope, that's, that's a huge amount of money going into that area where I think the music, music and arts world has explored somewhat. Um, but probably not as much as we should be and not as much as we should be moving forward. Um, so that's another draft webinar for you for a conversation down the road. I think as we start to think through that further,

Mary Luehrsen ([00:39:25](#)):

And we're seeing some success by the way, with title, access of title, I funds that's the biggest part. The biggest part of money is title I, uh, and the language is there all going all way back to art Duncan, uh, the title I funds can be used for music and arts. So let's get into some nitty gritty. We're kind of, uh, approaching the, just past halfway mark. Um, mark, I'm gonna start with you cuz you led the charge of

Pennsylvania for how to access these funds. Give us your 1, 2, 3 of how to, uh, for these funds in a school district.

Mark Despotakis ([00:39:59](#)):

Yeah, I think the, the first and most important thing is find out who in your district is the federal programs coordinator find out who is that person who handles the grants. And so, you know, in Pennsylvania we have 500 school districts. So we have some really big districts where they're, there's a, a staff of people who work on grants. And then there are other districts where it might be the elementary school principal who is charged with doing that, uh, in, in the district. And so it's important to get to that person because that's the person who writes the grant. Okay. Uh, it's important to get to that person. It's, let's say you're in one of those small school districts where it is that elementary school principal. And let's say you're the high school choir director and they don't know what happens in your classroom. They don't understand your, the trajectory of your program.

Mark Despotakis ([00:40:51](#)):

So it's getting to know them and it's not always walking in, in that first meeting and saying, okay, here's what I want. Can you fill out the application? So I get it. It is having a conversation. So they understand what you do in your classroom and you understand what their priorities are and their priorities are for the district as they work on these type of grants. So that's number one, the absolute most important thing I tell people is that's the person you have to talk to. You know, what, if you go through this whole process and you do all this title four stuff and you don't get a penny of it, you've still succeeded because you've made the connection. This person now knows you are interested and can help you in the future, um, from that conversation or, or even potentially before you have that conversation, I think it's important to have the roadmap, what, and that's that needs assessment and, and, you know, Mary laid it out very simply.

Mark Despotakis ([00:41:45](#)):

You know, what, what are the access points that we see are, are that we're missing in our program? And that could be, you know, a small in the relative terms, we'll say a small access point of, uh, I have a middle school band and I have five kids that wanna play the base clarinet. And I only have two base clarinets or, or, or the youth funny, whatever it's okay, that's the small level, right? Like that's, that's an access issue. But as you look to a, a broader things, is there, are there pieces missing from the curriculum, uh, that you can say, okay, we need to look at this as part of our curriculum. So it's bringing your entire department together and having that discussion and it's in it's, it's not a complaint Fest. It is where are our issues? And then how could we see them being solved?

Mark Despotakis ([00:42:43](#)):

Okay, that's what you want. And then it's bringing in those outside stakeholders as well. Uh, is it parents, is it community members? Because first of all, that's just a huge benefit to your program anyway, hate to have them involved. But when you go to that federal programs person and say, all right, we had our talk, uh, I'm here to say, we've gone through and we have come up with the plan. This is what we need. This is how we would like to get it. And we feel that this could be funded through title four and they, again, they might say no, but they might say, boy, do you make a great case? We're gonna put that in the regular budget, uh, or, or they're gonna say, yes, we can. We'll, we'll find a way, but it's that conversation, uh, uh, of how you do it. So, I mean, though to me, those are kind of the, here are the steps of how to make it happen.

Mary Luehrsen ([00:43:33](#)):

Now, mark, you have some, a resource I there's a toolkit that you prepared. Right. And I, we're gonna start putting some links in the chat. If we could start, start with that, uh, that could be available to all of you in terms of a toolkit. Yeah, it's basic. And when, when the, uh, federal grants officer ultimately writes this grant, can you tell us a little bit about what that grant looks like?

Mark Despotakis ([00:43:55](#)):

Sure. So, uh, I mean, it, it, it's basically saying here's what we're asking for. I mean, it, it, it's the needs assessment that you've done. Here's what we're asking for. And then here are the outcomes that we see this money. Uh, if by funding, this project here are the outcomes of that. So when a teacher goes and says, this is what we'd like to do, that's why you're saying here's the why and the how, because you are expressing what the outcomes are of the project and you know what it's okay. That if that specific outcome didn't happen, that's okay because you can't predict the future, but it is important to say, this is why we're doing this because we anticipate this outcome. And when it comes back around, after that money has been funded and it's cycled through, there can be that discussion of, well, this was not the outcome that happened, but here is, is the outcome that happened. It was completely unexpected. And boy, what a positive it has been for our program.

Mary Luehrsen ([00:44:58](#)):

And at the end of the day, it's a, from what I've seen, it's a pretty simple form. It's not pages and pages. It's not like a, a grant that, you know, 20 pages, it's a, it's a very simple form. So, you know, by you going with the, that information, you're, you're giving the grants officer some just to sort of fill in and put the, send the form up the line. And, uh, so in other words, it's, it's, we're trying to eliminate the intimidation here, right? Or lower the anxiety, the intimidation of the process, the process is, uh, the, the anxiety is like, is not, not doing it. I mean, it there's, you know, there's great energy. There's great enthusiasm. There's great capacity, the outcomes, I mean, the needs are, are there, it's like, you know, a little bit of organization, a little bit of conversation, uh, and it's not an onerous process. It's not like applying for funds to build a bridge, right. I mean, that's, I don't really have wanna do that in this lifetime, but, you know, it's, it's a relatively simple process. Once the conversation gets started

Mark Despotakis ([00:46:00](#)):

And you, as the music educator are not, you're, you're not going to ever be charged with filling out that form. That's the federal programs person, and they're used to doing this, and I'll be honest. We, we have a, a, uh, a federal programs association in Pennsylvania, federal programs, coordinator association, and in the conversations with them, the, the, the forward thinking ones have said to us, yes, please come to us with ideas because we don't understand everything that's happening in all parts of the school district, because we are not in those areas. So come to us with different ideas, that's helpful to us.

Mary Luehrsen ([00:46:39](#)):

And I think it'd be good to have that person maybe sitting in the symbol section too, the next honors, well, honors, uh, gathering, um, Connie, Lynn, Larry. Any thoughts about this? Uh, great, great primer, mark. Thank you. Yes,

Lynn Tuttle ([00:46:54](#)):

For really an overview mark. And one piece I wanna highlight of what you said was the, the idea of bringing your community together, right? The other music educators, and then your parents and community supporters now members as well. Um, not only are you doing that to, uh, determine and prioritize that needs assessment before you go to the federal programs person, but you're actually helping the federal programs person do his or her job, because one of the requirements within the law is that the community is engaged in this needs assessment work. And so when you bring that list and you say, Hey, we also had parents involved and we had these great music industry partners involved, and these stores involved that's gold to them, cuz it can be so hard for them to get to community members engaged in this work. So you are helping them do their job. It's gonna help them look good. It's gonna provide the background and resources that they need when they get monitored by the feds. So thank you mark for including that part of it, cuz that, I mean that again, you're, you are being a, and a resource for this federal programs person. If you do this work well and just, and you guys D know how to do this, you're just building community when you make that ask.

Mary Luehrsen ([00:47:58](#)):

Terrific. All right, let's go on to the advocacy piece. So I think we've danced around it even, uh, in, uh, more, more directly, but in general, what is the process for teachers, uh, in their role to advocate? I think we talked about building this local. I'd like to call it a working group, a title four part, a working group. It just kind of feels kind of, uh, you know, open ended and, and you know, progress oriented. But what about teachers? What's the role of teachers in all of this Larry you're in the, in that seat? What, what's the role that, that you, uh, you had prescribed for teachers?

Dr. Larry Paska ([00:48:32](#)):

Well, I, I think the, one of the cha I I'm gonna go back to two years ago cuz we all were, we're looking at that anniversary recently of the weekend of March 11th, the 13th 2020 when our entire nationwide infrastructure of schools went virtual overnight. Like, and I I'll, I'll say this to a lot of our groups. We respect and hear you, that you school on a Friday to take your materials home for a couple weeks and go virtual. And then you come back, but you didn't even know what that meant. And suddenly we're building virtual schools. We have online only programs, um, here in the DC area, many of our school districts were remote for most of the years. So that was a massive shift. And I think what's gotten lost in all that is the talk of content, the talk of instructional planning and educators who are already swamped and overwhelmed.

Dr. Larry Paska ([00:49:13](#)):

They're not necessarily the ones who are going to be sitting here saying, huh, what funds are available to me today? It, it, entrepreneurial classroom teachers may go for more local funds or, or things that might be quick wins in their community. There may be a grant out there from a cultural institution or, or, or, or local entity or business, but it a often stops there. Now we know that this, these are not 1.6 billion of funds for music or for social studies or for AP alone. But it does sound kind of catchy. When you say, did you know that there's over a billion dollars of funding for, for well rounded education? Like what are you talking about when, when you, when you say it that way, suddenly people notice. So how would you as a music teacher use a billion dollars. Now I, I know, again, my school's not getting a billion, but when you start the conversation with this positive, Hey, we've just gone through this massive restructuring of education.

Dr. Larry Paska ([00:50:04](#)):

But then it's felt like in the second year of the pandemic, it's really been left to local schools to figure out where it goes from here. There's not a national virtual school infrastructure being built. There's not, you know, this nationwide support for one to one access to technology. So much of this really does come back to the local level. And so when we can take a breath of fresh air for a moment, those of us going on spring break soon, um, may maybe that will help, but start to think about, okay, if, if we can understand where the, there are funds out there, it's never as much as we really need, but they are out there. And if we start that community conversation, and if an, if a teacher says, how would I spend a billion in music? And everyone else says, wait, there's money for music where, and we suddenly talk about title foray in this way, as this is money for us as a resource.

Dr. Larry Paska ([00:50:50](#)):

I, I, I think that's where it can, it can help start because in social studies we feel the same pressure you do. We perceive there's no money. There really isn't a lot. But when we do have programs like this, we're not aware of them and, and teachers in particular feel probably less power than they actually could be that these are funds. They just need to be part of as you're describing the stakeholder groups, the community groups. Um, so I would encourage all of us to use the post COVID or the new normal that we're moving into right now in education to go back to, right. We need to now put the focus back on us, the, the, the content areas, the curricular areas and what, how these funds will support us a absent that I, I do worry that that we've, that we've lost opportunity, but I think so many of us right now have seen what digital music looks like or digital social studies instruction looks like or virtual language instruction, not always perfect, but there is opportunity.

Dr. Larry Paska ([00:51:44](#)):

And that again is I think, where the flexibility of using funds for technology mixed with, with well rounded could work well. Um, again, just thinking through your disciplines for a moment, how can you provide, um, music and art classes in different ways in different settings, different modalities, are there opportunities there that you've always wanted? This is seed money. One last thing I'll say is the big thing that we seen missing right now from teachers and they report this to us everywhere. And I'm sure you do too. Is professional development, such a lack of professional development, supported, funded, professional development. These dollars can be used for that. So even if you already had a program in place, or you're saying, I don't wanna make an investment in something I can't sustain, you can always make an investment in professional learning for teachers that, that, that is sometimes a minimal, sometimes it's large, but these dollars can be used for that. And I think just training educators on how to do music, how to do performing arts in a different way, or using different resources could go a long way towards making these funds very useful.

Mary Luehrsen ([00:52:46](#)):

Thank you so much. And, and I just checking, uh, catching up with some Q and a, I just wanna, uh, ask you Larry about the title four, uh, coalition. Uh, and then we're gonna get into some final thoughts. So Larry, tell us about the title four coalition when it came together and, uh, what it's working on.

Dr. Larry Paska ([00:53:03](#)):

Yep. So the title four, a coalition is, uh, it's relatively new, but has been, uh, currently we count about 40 plus education association spanning multiple curricular areas. I know that there are several music organizations and arts organizations like, uh, NME and league of American orchestras, uh, state ed association for, uh, directors of arts education or members. Um, it is basically if you support one or more

of these areas, you, you, you are an eligible member essentially. Um, when we support well rounded, we can't support our individual disciplines. So the coalition is fighting for Congress to appropriate. And if anything grow these dollars over time, that's really our, our primary focus. Although we see the authorization as 1.6 billion, we're actually trying to be even more aggressive and request at least 2 billion going into next year. We're very pleased that recently, um, we did see a 60 million increase over what was originally planned.

Dr. Larry Paska ([00:53:57](#)):

So again, every penny does count. Um, we know we support the three areas pretty equally. And in fact, our board of directors, we have representatives representing these three areas. So I, I currently, uh, hold a well-rounded education seat. Um, again, what we mostly wanna see is just Congress, please continue to appropriate these funds, grow them, if you can, um, allow us to you know, and please don't, um, you know, don't dig into the weeds on every possible use of every dollar, please. The allow states the flexibility that they need to work with their districts accordingly. That's really where we stop, but the good news is on our website. And I can put some of the links in the chat box as well. We do have several resources that define each of these areas. So we have a description of well rounded, safe, and healthy students technology.

Dr. Larry Paska ([00:54:42](#)):

We also have a general overview fact sheet. We encourage everyone little, really put this on your Twitter. You know, next time you're tweeting out about, Hey, title four a may be a resource for us in music and arts have this graphic with you. Um, what, what we serve to do ultimately again, is just fight for the continuation of these funds. But then we do believe strength numbers at the coalition model at the national level. So having 40 plus organizations band together means that our voices heard more loudly. And in social studies, we came to title four, just as a quick aside at NCSS last year, because we saw that, Hey, these are dollars that could be used to support social education. And many of our members didn't know about them. Many of our teachers didn't realize they could talk to their districts. So membership in the coalition is, is area.

Dr. Larry Paska ([00:55:27](#)):

It's not a large fee it's based on the size of your organization, but it goes to support advocacy on Capitol hill. It also goes to support the development of communications around the title four, a program. We support the coalition as an association because of the value that title four a can bring to social studies. And so we would certainly encourage you, um, as, as leaders or going back to your professional associations, if you're not a member, um, that we think the title four, a coalition could be a smart investment in, in continuing to keep the relevance of this funding, uh, top of mind in the public's eye.

Mary Luehrsen ([00:55:59](#)):

Thank you so much, Larry. Thanks for your service on that board. You've been really important leadership, uh, as a coalition. Um, we're gonna do final thoughts, but we had a great question from one of our participants, um, um, especially, um, how can a commercial man member or a retailer, uh, a manufacturer in a certain region, uh, what is their role in all of this and mark, you were in that role prior to your current spot. Can you maybe address that for NA members on the call?

Mark Despotakis ([00:56:29](#)):

Sure. I, I, I mean, um, it's, it's, first of all, being part of your community is being working with your schools. So it's building the relationship with the music educators in those schools to say, okay, what are your needs? Because that's truly the needs that you're trying to meet the, the needs of the schools. So it's going and having that conversation. And maybe you can find a way where your company partners, uh, with the school district on title four or on something else, but that's, to me, that's the initial starting place, whether you are the local retailer or whether you're, uh, a manufacturer or distributor the area, it's go have the conversation in your home community first, um, what are their needs and just have a conversation of how, how can you help this is all relationship based,

Mary Luehrsen ([00:57:14](#)):

Right? And I thought, you know, our NA members are catalysts for change and be that catalyst for change. Um, on our way to final thoughts, I just wanna to throw up a slide here about success stories. This is a little bit of a, uh, uh, you know, I guess you could say an inspiration look at this, and there's a lot of success stories about how title four has been used hundred thousand in, uh, made, uh, us, um, school district by instruments from Mar mariachi program, uh, 200,000 for in orange county, uh, two 50,000 in Dayton. We know Marsha Neil is on here. We yay. Marsha, who was so instrumental in leading the superintendent down the road, uh, to, uh, to the, to learn about the availability of those funds. So, uh, but please go to this link that we're sharing there's, uh, success stories. And, and, and I don't know how many states, 40 or more states we did a survey, a research study of our own and took those success stories to Capitol hill a few years ago.

Mary Luehrsen ([00:58:17](#)):

And I think maybe we need to band together and do that again, to be sure to tell Congress, yes, these funds are really making a difference. That's the job, you know, Congress gives us the money. We need to demonstrate its effectiveness. And then we go back and ask for more. That's a simple way to talk about our advocacy. So final thoughts, let's go through our, uh, and if Joe Lamont, if you still wishes with us, we'll wrap up at the end with you. So mark, uh, so great that you were doing your work in Pennsylvania. That way I miss you desperately here in music products, but, uh, we'll always be calling on you. What are your final thoughts about this important topic?

Mark Despotakis ([00:58:54](#)):

Uh, like I said, it's it's relationship building. That's what everything we're doing. And every part of our life is right. So this is just an extension of that. So what is the relationship with the right people? Um, they understand what you do. You understand what they do. Um, that's key and it's that federal programs person. That's the key. And I would encourage you to all look through the examples and all of the toolkits provided, uh, so that you can, uh, borrow some, some ideas and, and that's gonna help you think through, okay, these are things that have actually been funded. What can we really do here? Because sometimes, uh, with a friend of mine, who's a federal programs coordinator. I play Stu the federal programs coordinator, and I say to her, okay, can it be used for this? And the answer is always, and Lynn's smiling cuz she knows what the word is. Say it Lynn, what's the word.

Lynn Tuttle ([00:59:48](#)):

Maybe

Mark Despotakis ([00:59:49](#)):

The, exactly the answer is always, maybe it's rarely, no. Right. Uh, because it's about how you will use it. It's, it's what your justification. So I would encourage people, go look at those examples that will really help you think through the process.

Mary Luehrsen ([01:00:05](#)):

And this is a process, so we have to carry the water. No, one's gonna knock on our door. We have to knock on their door and that's again, why we keep mobilizing our NA members to access these funds. These funds are there in every school district, in the United States, uh, Lynn vital thoughts,

Lynn Tuttle ([01:00:26](#)):

Um, just such great, great ideas and um, yeah. Pull on the stories of what others have been successful doing. Um, because sometimes when you bring those examples, you can, uh, uh, break down some of the walls that might be there, right? A federal programs person is used to having people coming and asking them for dollars all day. So if you've done a little bit of your homework, if you can show them examples of where it's been successful elsewhere, they're going to be more, uh, likely to listen to you. Um, and especially if you've done your coalition building work with your Nam colleagues, your, you know, your it's, the music educators working with Nam members, working with parents and others within the community coming forward and knowing what that those needs are. So more kids can play and make more music within the school. I dunno if you got those stories ready, you got the data there and you've got the ask ready. Um, it's gonna be hard to say no,

Mary Luehrsen ([01:01:19](#)):

Thanks Lynn and Lynn, we couldn't have done any of this from the beginning in 2015 at the, a passing of that federal law without you, by our side, Larry, it's so great to have the, uh, title four coalition with us and your work on the board there and also, uh, you know, more history and civics. Uh, we know maybe we can continue with our beautiful democracy. So what are your final thoughts?

Dr. Larry Paska ([01:01:42](#)):

Well, including, but not limited to. So I love the main that's really, that's really important. I would just say really quickly, you know, part of why we had this massive restructuring of education in a weekend in March was because of the emergency of COVID. I think the more we can lift our voices up as subject areas, as educators on behalf of our kids quickly around well-rounded education, we're gonna see a similar, massive restructuring and that's around what good teaching and learning look like. Let's get the well-rounded conversation front and center. And I think we can do that through title four, a through understanding the funds and through working together. So both as a coalition, but also independently, please use your voice to, to RERA well-rounded education as a, as an instructional priority, as, as a priority focus for our schools. And again, thank you for your leadership and your interest in, in trying to tap these funds to do so much good for our schools and our kids.

Mary Luehrsen ([01:02:32](#)):

It's for students' sake after all right, students are the center, Connie, pass your eye up on the capital. It'll tell us what should we should be doing?

Connie Myers ([01:02:41](#)):

Uh, I think we're doing it, Mary. We just have to keep doing it and we have to do it harder and longer and more every day. And um, we built this trusted brand. We're the trusted brand. Uh, we've continued with long term relationships, relationships, which we're hearing is, you know, I was with a member of Congress this morning. It's about relationships and it's about being there at the table, talking to them all the time. They're not just here, they're down in the district. They're there, they're in the district next week in the following week for two weeks. Also your state and local folks, your you're, uh, governors. I mean it is a state local federal it's the across the board. It's not just here in DC, it's regular all the time and providing research and data that is compelling, but one member of Congress and maybe a couple more always remind me when I say what's the most important thing they're like tell the story.

Connie Myers ([01:03:28](#)):

And so I think we've all said it, tell the story, mark talked about, tell the story about why it's providing access and what well-rounded means to a student and give the student a name and talk about those students. And I think that we, I have another member of Congress who said to me a couple months ago, come see us. We want people to know we're open. So I'm like, well help us tell people you're open, get us into the building. So they're trying to help us as much as we are trying to bring them, uh, these, this information to say, this is what's important. And what's working, uh, across the country for music education.

Mary Luehrsen ([01:04:04](#)):

Thanks Connie. And we, uh, do so appreciate everything you're doing every day in our nation's capital and we will be back. That's a, that's not a threat. That's a promise, Joe, your final words for us

Joe Lamond ([01:04:16](#)):

Through brief observations. I mean, you know, as advocacy, you know, heats up in after this weird two years, I mean I'm reminded that quite often in these groups, there's a competitiveness. Um, look what I've done, look what you've done. And I'm always, you know, thinking at that part, oh, is this the part where I have to show who cares more? It's like, don't play that game. We are all trying to push this thing together. And uh, it does happen. We are competitive people by nature, but working with all these groups and I've heard it so many times say it's, it's actually working together is what makes us happen. So, um, you know, trying to overlook when those things do occur, when someone tries to jump up and say, look what I've done. Um, but two, um, what I've seen through the last two years in particular is, and I've noticed the it before, but pushing on that door, you'd be amazed that sometimes it opens so quickly, you almost fall in and that's because of the work that's happened and built and, and advocacy and, and communication is over time.

Joe Lamond ([01:05:13](#)):

But you know, so often we're afraid to even knock or tap on the doorbell when you actually pushing on it, you know, it opens and opens sometimes quickly. And so those are the success stories you want to keep talking about, but yeah, you won't often find a closed door once you've, you know, ask nicely it's it'll swing open. And if you're not careful, you'll fall in with the funding and the support and the kind of cooperation that we're gonna get. So other two things I've observed. So that's it, thanks to everyone for being involved and what a great bunch of champions proud of everyone of you.

Mary Luehrsen ([01:05:42](#)):

Thanks so much, Joe. So to all of you, thank you. We've run a little bit over, uh, we've tried to answer your questions as they've happened in the Q and a, uh, so in the chat box. So thanks. Um, um, be sure that you've got on your schedules to be with in Anaheim, June 3, 4, 5, remarkable music education day lineup gen next lineup for our college music students, nonprofit management Institute, grand rally with Eric Whitacre, the in-person reprise of "Sing Gently," uh, things that just really can't be missed in June and Anaheim. It'll be beautiful. It'll be warm, uh, will all be there. So we really wanna join. We're also having the music education call to action leadership summit, uh, and that information is all available on a website, which we will share. I always wanna thank our behind the scenes crew, Eric, Claire, Bethany. I always want you to turn your cameras on now so we can wave and say thank you for getting us organized and making us look and sound so good. Thank you. And to all of you for the work that you do every day, thank you from the bottom of our hearts, from the NAMM foundation and NAMM and have a wonderful day. See you soon.