Title I

What is Title 1?

Title I is the part of national education policies that provides funding to improve the academic achievement of "disadvantaged" children, defined as those from financially impoverished communities. Title I was part of the original 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), and it has been updated with each ESEA renewal. It is therefore a part of the most recent federal education law, the 2015 Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).

Getting Funded:

Currently, schools in which at least 40% of students come from low-income families can receive Title I funds. These schools are referred to as Title I schools.

The funds can be used both for programs targeting low-achieving students and for schoolwide programs that serve all children. (Note that while the funds are distributed to schools based on overall poverty, the targeted programs directly address academic achievement rather than poverty.)

Funds can go to programs and interventions taking place during regular school hours and for after-school and summer programs. Private schools are also eligible to receive funds for eligible students.

Title I and Music Education:

Since schoolwide programs serve all students in a Title I school, under ESSA, music instruction can be included in these plans. However, this music instruction is generally justified as a means of improving all students' academic performance and engagement. The same holds true for including music as a part of targeted assistance programs. While ESSA Title I allows for both schoolwide programs and targeted assistance programs to include music instruction, it dissuades funding music for its own sake.

Taking Action:

ESSA requires that, alongside parents and community members, teachers at a Title I school are involved in the creation of the schoolwide plan. Music educators can take this opportunity to advocate that Title I funds be used for their subject, including augmenting regular curricular offerings, arts integration projects, and afterschool and summer instruction. They will typically need to use the rationale that music education will improve academic achievement and engagement.

Music educators might also consider to what extent they currently address the needs of impoverished and low-achieving students as well as how they might better serve these learners. In addition to creating more opportunities for receiving Title I funding, deeper engagement with such students may be a more ethical way forward for music education.

Additional Information:

https://www2.ed.gov/programs/titleiparta/index.html

https://nafme.org/wp-content/files/2015/11/How-Funding-Works-Title-I-FY18-Post-Omnibus.pdf