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SELECTED ELEMENTARY MUSIC EDUCATORS' PERCEPTIONS OF
CURRICULUM, SCHEDULING, AND WORKLOAD

A thesis submitted to the Graduate School
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Music

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Pittsburg State University

Pittsburg, Kansas

May 2023

SELECTED ELEMENTARY MUSIC EDUCATORS' PERCEPTIONS OF
CURRICULUM, SCHEDULING, AND WORKLOAD

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SELECTED ELEMENTARY MUSIC EDUCATORS' PERCEPTIONS OF CURRICULUM, SCHEDULING, AND WORKLOAD

An Abstract of the Thesis by
Mara Nowlin

Many people would agree that elementary music education is important, but the subject does not always get an equal opportunity when compared to subjects that are regulated with standardized tests, such as math or language arts. I set out to study elementary music programs in the Midwest (specifically the Four-States Region of Kansas, Arkansas, Missouri, and Oklahoma). I sought to answer questions about what elementary music curricula are available and popular, and how districts come to select their music curriculum.

Additionally, I wanted to discover more about various school scheduling decisions surrounding elementary music courses. Finally, I examined elementary music performance traditions and how they played a role in my study. I wanted to explore the merits of performance opportunities for young music students. In many elementary music classes, the process of preparing and presenting performances is integrated with the rest of their school music instruction. My hope in completing this study was to gain new insight and encourage music educators and their administrators to evaluate their elementary music programs and look for potential areas of improvement. In doing so, the goal is to give young music students the best learning opportunities possible.

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Chapter I

Introduction

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this study was to identify common threads that impact elementary music programs, therefore affecting the music education of elementary school students. Influential factors may include curriculum and available instructional resources, classroom management, administrative scheduling and involvement in the classroom, as well as performance expectations. These are just a small sampling of the many influences steering the direction of an elementary music program. Research questions were created and sent via survey to elementary music educators in the region. For the purposes of this study, the term “elementary” music refers primarily to music students in Pre-K through sixth grade. The goal of surveying educators was to discover common threads and illuminate a few of the many advantageous ideas and decisions made surrounding elementary music.

My hope is that this study fosters efficient and practical decision-making in regard to music education programs at the elementary level. I set out to understand how principals choose to support elementary music programs in their district. I was also interested in the importance of maintaining music education from the viewpoint of parents and other caregivers in the area of survey. Compiling educator experiences and

holding discussions with area administrators may lead to increased input from educators and informed decisions from administrators in the future. The goal of such conversations is to enhance the quality of music education for elementary school students in the region. Specifically, this study sought to explore the following questions:

1. What are some common overarching goals of elementary music programs?
2. In what ways do performances steer the course of study for elementary music students?
3. How does the availability of resources (e.g., time, money, staff, community exposure to arts) affect the direction of an elementary music program?

Rationale

Music education is a field with varying expectations and requirements, both on the part of the educator and the output of each individual school's program. Nearly all music educators have highly demanding work schedules, as is the case with most educators in general. However, music educators often complete a remarkably wide variety of tasks and duties throughout the school as a whole. Typically, elementary music is not formally tested in the way that other subjects are. Therefore, the open-endedness of study direction can create vast differences, for better and for worse, in the potential music education of elementary students.

Depending upon state mandates and guidelines, elementary music education offerings vary widely from school to school. A few defining factors may include administrative demands of the educator, available curriculum and resources, and the amount of class time allotted (and regularly utilized) for elementary music. Additionally, the expectations of an elementary music program, set forth by the community,

administrators, and music educators, will vastly impact the course of study for elementary musicians.

Inspiration, solidarity, and common threads can be found in researching the various affordances and constraints of elementary music programs. Conducting such research and presenting information about the factors listed above provides an opportunity for positive new ideas to be shared. Additionally, such reflection can illuminate areas of improvement for the numerous aspects of elementary music programs. Providing a solid music education at the elementary level can vary greatly by method depending on each school and its educator. Regardless of location or other factors, a quality musical foundation should be the main priority. Elementary music provides the beginning pathway for lifelong musicianship. For many young learners, the elementary music classroom is where a passion for music begins.

Procedure

An electronic survey was sent via Google Forms to elementary music educators in the central Midwest region (Kansas, Missouri, and Oklahoma). Responses were gathered via electronic survey (Google Forms) during the spring of 2022. Educators responded in detail about their current and past relevant career experiences. Their responses were analyzed for commonalities. Some questions, such as those about scheduling, curriculum, or financial matters may have required input or assistance from their administrators. For these questions, educators may have spoken with their administrators and reported the answers in the survey on their behalf. Educators were asked to answer candidly about their personal experiences and viewpoints of the profession.

In addition to digitally surveying 12 music educators, I also interviewed three administrators (two district administrators and one building administrator) through face-to-face conversations. The interviews were also conducted during the spring of 2022. The list of survey questions sent to educators, as well as the questions I asked in administrator interviews, can be found in Appendices A and B, respectively.

Methodology

I created an electronic survey via Google Forms and sent the link by email to a list of respondents with whom I have personal contact. I was confident that the selection of peers would generate ample data, but in the event that the sample needed to be larger, I planned to contact elementary school principals, primarily from the Four-States region (Northeastern Oklahoma, Southeastern Kansas, Southwestern Missouri, and Northwestern Arkansas) via email and ask them to have their elementary music educators complete the survey. I collected sufficient responses from my peers and their connections within a matter of days.

I wanted to know how elementary music teachers in the region are spending their time at school. Also, I was curious as to who determines how that time is spent. Music educator duties often vary from those of the typical classroom teacher. Music educators service many more students and often play a grand role in shaping the school at large through their highly visible position in performances, as well as often coordinating assemblies and other large school gatherings.

For my research, I selected the Oklahoma Fine Arts standards as a keypoint of reference. The reason that I selected the Oklahoma standards is because I am currently employed in Oklahoma. The standards were adopted in 2020 and are found on the

Oklahoma State Department of Education (OSDE) website, which also provides a curriculum outline and various other related resources (“Oklahoma Fine Arts,” 2020). Additionally, the National Association for Music Education also has core music standards for music education at the national level. These standards were last updated in 2014 (“2014 Music Standards,” 2014). I used the Oklahoma and National music standards to examine available curricula and resources and to study how various curricula align with the music standards. The driving reason behind this survey was to find commonalities about what makes elementary music programs thrive, what challenges are faced, and what educators do to provide the best educational experience possible.

Respondents answered the questions anonymously; the survey form did not collect a name, email address, or any other identifying information from the survey respondents. The data was collected automatically through Google Forms. I viewed the answers to the open-ended responses and noticed common themes, though the respondents who provided such responses may teach in a completely different situation from one another. The software automatically generated graphs and charts from some of the questions, such as those involving how much time students spend in music class and what types of duties music educators complete outside of their music classrooms. Because the survey responses remain anonymous, the data are not tied to any one respondent, nor can I see who has completed the survey.

I conducted semi-structured interviews with the three administrators, basing the questions on those of the educator survey. The questions were answered in a flexible interview style. Given the position of authority and typically transparent protocols that administrators must follow in making decisions, the responses given in these interviews

create a minimal power dynamic or risk for the administrators being interviewed. By contrast, the risk could be greater for the educators who have filled out the electronic survey if they could not do so anonymously.

In the message to survey participants and the discussion prior to administrator interviews, I ensured that clear definitions of “curriculum” (meaning a course of study and the materials that accompany it), and “expectations” (performance expectations, supervisory duties, and other professional obligations), were provided in the context of this study. I attempted to capture audio recordings of the administrator interviews with some success, though also encountered recording and Internet difficulties. In addition, I wrote shorthand notes with some direct quotes and other paraphrases during the face-to-face interviews. The audio recordings will remain on my personal, password-protected device for the required three years set forth by Pittsburg State University; the handwritten notes will be destroyed upon completion of the thesis project. The educator survey will remain in my password-protected Google account (to which only I have access) for the required three years, and then will be deleted.

Limitations

Many of the sources for this study are first-hand interviews and accounts. Therefore, the data is largely qualitative in nature. I did not seek to gather data of every elementary music teacher’s experience in the region, and rather sought to have deeper insight from a small sample of professionals. Though I do not believe the respondents have answered any survey questions with intentional deceit, there may have been some questions that required the respondents to speak to their building or district administrator in order to provide accurate information.

The survey sample is small and consists of some educators whom I know personally. I asked five people to complete the survey and they then spread the word to other educators. Twelve surveys were completed. Many of the respondents attended the same university for their undergraduate degrees, meaning they received similar career training. Additionally, the majority of the respondents are employed by rural school districts.

Chapter II

Review of Literature

School Scheduling

Nearly every public school across the United States of America deals with budget constraints and dwindling resources. Music and other arts programs are often the first to be cut when school districts are forced to downsize. Staffing cutbacks, loss of classroom space, or loss of curriculum often places strain on arts programs. Though most school staff are aware of the benefits of music education, too often this awareness is not reflected when drafting budgets. Music provides community and engages students' learning processes, as well as creating opportunities for accomplishment. Yet, most governmental investment in education is aimed towards subjects that are evaluated through standardized testing, such as reading and math. Instability in funding for the arts creates numerous issues for music educators and their students (Clark, 2022).

There is a discrepancy between many administrators' and stakeholders' high regard of music education and its frequent underfunding in public schools. Other subjects such as math, science, or reading are typically substantially assessed and regulated by the state, forcing schools to feel the need to focus their time, instruction, and personnel on such subjects (Clark, 2022). Music education, however, is connected to strong student

achievement, as well as providing students an outlet for self-expression and discovery and improves the quality of life for many. (Clark, 2022).

School Climate Responsibilities

The Center for Responsive Schools released a book to assist specialist teachers (such as music teachers, physical education (PE) teachers, librarians, and the like) in creating a responsive classroom environment (meaning classrooms that focus on structure and social emotional learning for students). Specialists typically teach a large number of students (most often the entire school building) and can have a significant impact upon their school environment as a whole. Numerous resources exist on responsive classrooms for general educators, but the resource listed above is one of the most comprehensive of its kind for “Special Areas” classes, such as music, art, or PE. This resource creates a strong case for routine, teacher language, and procedures in what can otherwise be a chaotic and unpredictable environment. Music and PE are not merely play time for students, but can and should be an academically rich part of the curriculum (Responsive Classroom, 2016).

The resource from the Center for Responsive Schools outlines opening routines to create excitement and consistency. An orderly student entry is emphasized, as well as greetings, warm-up tasks, and a brief overview of the day’s activities before transitioning to learning tasks. The importance of intentional teacher language is also discussed at length. Positive teacher language can shift student outlook and focus, as well as enhancing relationships with students. Positive student-teacher relationships are known to create more time for teaching content as less time is spent correcting negative or disruptive behavior. Reminders and redirection for students are also key, but should be

short and to the point. Teachers are encouraged to ask guiding questions that allow for in-depth student responses, amplifying the student voice in the classroom. (Responsive Classroom 2016).

Another key component of instruction is interactive modeling, which simply means to model a task and involve students in practicing the task through hands-on methods. Teachers should explain to students what they will model, then proceed to model the task, and invite students to partake in completing the task with assistance. Finally, all students are able to practice the skill at hand and receive teacher feedback. Interactive modeling creates competence, preparation and confidence in students until they are free to learn on their own (Responsive Classroom 2016).

Overall, many aspects of the resource focuses on rules, procedures, and routines, which can be helpful when music educators are short on time and focused on many different roles in school and life. Elementary music schedules typically only allow small increments of time to create habits with their classes. Maintaining consistency of classroom procedures and practicing skills empowers students to utilize group, partner, and individual skills, which in turn elevates the music experience for even the youngest learners. All of these skills lay a foundation for learning to occur. Interactive lessons (rather than merely lecture) are also encouraged, as using numerous learning styles will benefit a wider variety of learners, resulting in enhanced retention. Finally, teachers are encouraged (within their scope of autonomy) to select content that is most relevant and meaningful for students (Responsive Classroom 2016).

Academic choice for pupils, meaning students are guided in what they should learn but may have some leeway in the way they learn, can also be productive. Choosing

which content to emphasize will allow students to prioritize their own learning based on interests and skills (Responsive Classroom 2016). Energizers and brain breaks are discussed in this rich resource, as well as ways to respond to misbehavior. The strategies of proximity and redirecting language are mentioned frequently. Visual cues are also encouraged in the classroom to remind students of ways to stay on task within their expected behaviors. Finally, closing routines such as celebrating learning, reiterating the message of the day, and an orderly exit remind the teacher to end class positively (Responsive Classroom 2016).

Curriculum: Traditional (Book-Form) and Digital

Odegaard (2020) has written a useful and accessible curriculum-centric book for the music world, *Music Curriculum Writing 101*. Developing, choosing, implementing, and supplementing a curriculum can be incredibly overwhelming. Odegaard (2020) provides insight into choosing curriculum that aligns with state and national music standards. The resource encourages highly engaging curriculum along with strongly recommending a course of study that will reinforce skill mastery through performance preparation. Whether the educator is setting out to write an entire curriculum from scratch, align their current teaching materials with standards, or advocate for their music program, the detailed content of this book will be beneficial (Odegaard).

Murillo (2017) investigated selected educators' perceptions of digital curricula for elementary music classes, focusing on three major digital curriculum platforms:

“Quaver’s Marvelous World of Music,” by QuaverEd, “MusicPlay Online,” by Themes and Variations, and “Interactive Music,” by Silver Burdett. The majority of the educators felt that the digital curriculum they currently utilized was aligned with standards and

traditional music education practices. They also felt that an inclination towards digital curriculum would be a lasting trend. The majority of educators who were surveyed utilized “Quaver’s Marvelous World of Music,” and over half of the teachers surveyed had music education experience that pre-dated their digital music curriculum usage. Though digital curricula was widely reported in use for instructional time, most educators surveyed reported infrequent use of their curriculum for assessment purposes (Murillo 2017).

In Murillo’s study, greater than 70% of survey participants indicated positive outcomes in student participation, classroom management, retention of musical concepts, and retention of songs. Nearly all of the participants (95.8%) stated that their curriculum aligned with the grade level music standards of their state. Finally, over 80% indicated the digital curriculum aligned with other research-based curricula methods/music education philosophical practices. A few examples include the methods of Orff, Gordon, and Kodály, with roughly the same number of teachers (>80%) stating that they would recommend their digital curriculum to other educators (Murillo 2017).

Content is an important component of curriculum development, but how such content is presented can also make or break a curriculum. Odegaard (2020) provided relevant content through specific suggested activities that align with each standard and several benchmarks. She showcased concert ideas that align directly with National Music Standards (Odegaard, 2020). Odegaard (2020) guided the reader through choosing appropriate teaching materials to accompany their content. She specifically listed materials such as books and articles that can be of assistance with lesson engagement strategies. Additionally, she described guidelines and examples for organizing curriculum

so that lessons have a natural flow. Odegaard (2020) showed examples of clear, effective lesson plans (2020).

An elementary music educator has a responsibility to create a well-researched and intentional curriculum. However, unless they know the curriculum is effective for their students and is taught effectively, their curriculum development efforts may be for naught. Hence, student assessment should be an integral part of curriculum implementation. Odegaard (2020) reinforced this idea by outlining the benefits of assessment and providing examples for different styles of assessment in the music classroom. Music assessments are often vastly different than those of math, science or other subjects, but still need to clearly display student learning, both for grading purposes as well as educator reflection and planning. Odegaard (2020) provided tips for communicating assessment results to students and parents through informal means such as email or through more formal manners of communication, such as portfolios and project reports.

Finally, Odegaard (2020) emphasized each student's individual responsibility for their education. Odegaard (2020) described the importance of student ownership, inclusion of all students, and self-assessment. She also mapped the possibility of students evaluating and assessing their peers in a constructive manner. Though all students will have various levels of musical ability, each student may find a way to actively contribute to the group through the methods mentioned in her text. She provided a sample curriculum for fifth through twelfth grade orchestra, and listed various sources and websites (Odegaard, 2020).

Lamb (2014) studied the Missouri elementary music standards and the perception

of educators' attitude towards their curriculum by surveying 169 music educators. She also reported on professional development practices and behavior management methods that were detailed in music educator surveys. Her research illuminated common threads, as well as highlighted opportunities for improvement in elementary music programs in Missouri (Lamb 2014).

Value of the Arts Alongside Other Subjects

Elementary music educators already recognize the importance of arts education. In a time, however, when reading and writing literacy rates are low for both students and adults, incorporating reading instruction into music education is worth investigating and implementing. When multiple subject areas can be combined in crossover education methods, student learning is enriched and becomes more efficient. Andrews and Sink (2002) provided 20 practical lessons that incorporated reading instruction into music, as well as aligning such practices with the grades K-4 and 5-8 music standards (Andrews & Sink, 2002) .

Music is often described as the universal language, given that every country around the world has its own musical traditions. Listening to music of other cultures, such as Native American tribes, and identifying the instruments and practices involved through research and reading is one suggested activity that combines music, literacy, and social studies. Studying program music is another direct way to include reading and writing in music instruction. Students listening to programmatic music and writing creative description of what they envision when listening to a particular piece are provided opportunities to increase their skills in not only music, but English language arts

as well. Moreover, “tall tales” or other short stories could be retold by students via parody songs or original compositions (Andrews & Sink, 2002).

Within music instruction, there are several common pre-existing connections to language arts, such as listening to, performing, describing, or composing a ballad. Musical works can also be accompanied by an existing story, whether told orally or through a book. An often-used example is *Peter and the Wolf*, where each musical theme represents a character in the story. Several other options for such a lesson exist, such as a children’s book called *Tubby the Tuba*. Most educators, with a bit of creative thinking, could pursue programmatic pieces which also suit other children’s books (Andrews & Sink, 2002).

Not all educators may be experienced in presenting the vast connections that can exist between music, literacy, and most other academic subjects. Andrews and Sink (2002) displayed factors that affect reading achievement and attitude in their research to emphasize the importance of cross-curricular education. They also described the non-music outcomes that can result from music education, such as improved academic achievement in other subject areas. Andrews and Sink (2002) further noted that incorporating literacy instruction into music is beneficial. This practice is proven to provide results beyond musical growth and should be considered and incorporated on a more frequent basis by educators (Andrews and Sink).

Chapter III

Methodology

Selection of Sample

A relatively small sample (N=12) was chosen in order to allow for in-depth analysis of the data. I considered the potential respondents' level of experience as well as their current employment assignments. Educators with a main (at least half-time) assignment of elementary music were selected through personal connections and asked to complete the survey. Other possible respondents were prompted by the selected respondents spreading the word to other elementary music educators in their personal circles. Finally, I selected administrators for interviews based primarily on their accessibility. Each administrator who was interviewed serves in a unique position, offering various viewpoints. For example, one administrator is a district superintendent, while another is the assistant superintendent, and the third is a building principal.

Limitations of Pool of Respondents

Potential respondents were selected mostly through personal connections, such as people I attended Pittsburg State University with, or have met through student teaching or throughout my teaching career thus far. Most of the respondents taught in rural school settings and many attended the same handful of universities for their bachelor's degrees, with several of the respondents attending Pittsburg State University in Kansas.

Participants answered open-ended questions and therefore needed to respond objectively with factual information about their experiences, rather than reporting their personal preferences regarding their job situation. The respondents may have sought administrator input to fully answer some questions. Doing so would have required additional time on the part of both the respondent and their administrator(s).

Survey Design

The survey was administered in a digital format through the website Google Forms. The majority of questions (N=8) were open-ended and required a written response, while some of the questions were multiple choice (N=5). I designed the questions, beginning by crafting three overarching questions and then creating sub-questions within those categories. I narrowed the questions by relevance and topic. The survey was completed electronically.

Data Collection

Surveys were sent via private social media messages to possible participants (N=12), who then clicked on the link to complete the survey. Google Forms automatically collected and organized the data for each question. For questions involving quantitative data, Google Forms provided options to generate charts, graphs, and illustrations that represent the responses provided. Regarding the open-ended questions, Table 1 and Table 2 display the variety of responses and are showcased in the Findings chapter of this document.

Analysis and Interpretation of Data

When analyzing data, I selected options from various charts and graphs on Google Forms, Microsoft Excel, or “meta-charts.com,” to organize, analyze, interpret,

and display the data. I studied the surveys in two ways. One method was to look at each question separately and to view all responses to that question. I also found it helpful to view a respondent's survey as a whole, one full survey at a time, to see which responses may have an impact on others. After studying the surveys, I used written language to discuss the findings. Common themes are of utmost importance in this study, alongside the discovery of new ideas and possibilities for improvement in elementary music programs.

Chapter IV

Findings of Survey Results and Interviews

Music Educator Surveys

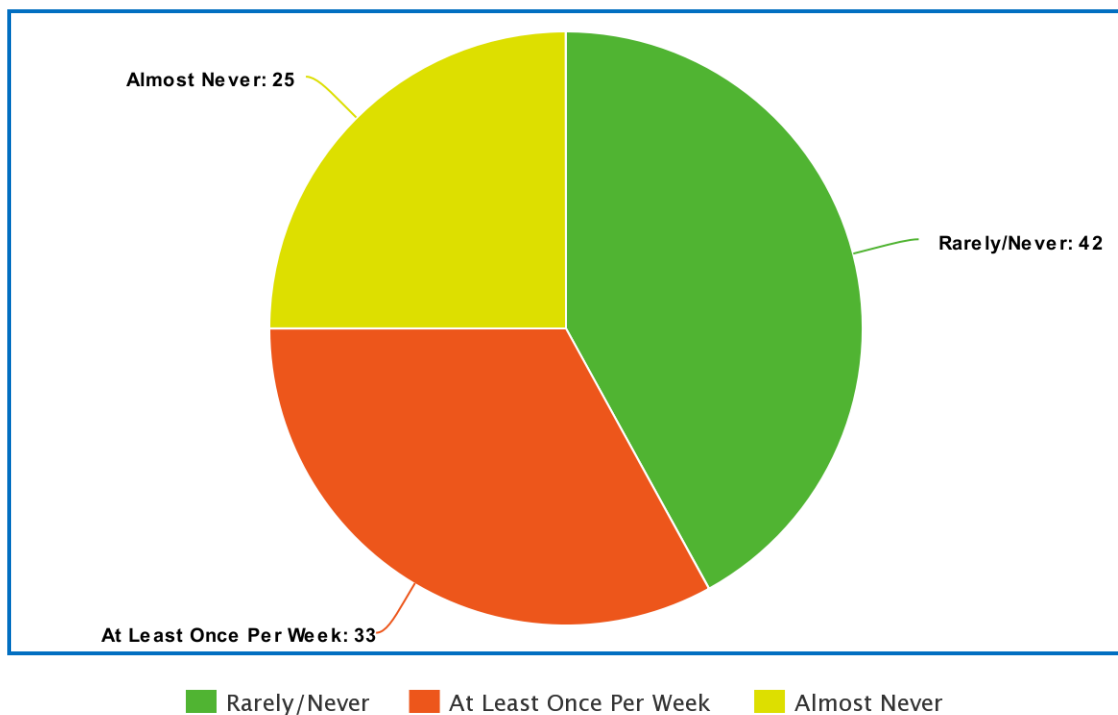
Question 1: Estimate how frequently students are removed from music class to receive other school-related services (e.g., speech, physical therapy, occupational therapy) or to complete unfinished classwork.

Forty-two percent (N=5) of respondents indicated students are rarely or never removed from music class to receive various therapies and services or to complete unfinished work. The next largest percentage was approximately 33% (N=4) of respondents' experience in which students are removed from their music class at least once per week, with slightly fewer (25%; N=3) respondents reporting students being removed almost daily.

Figure 1

Frequency of Students Being Removed From Music Class

Frequency of students being removed from the respondents' classes to receive other school-related services (e.g., speech, physical therapy, occupational therapy) or to complete unfinished classwork, displayed by percentage of educator response.



meta-chart.com

Question 2: Has your teaching assignment been shifted to other academic focuses since the onset of the pandemic? If so, in what way?

The majority (75%, N=9) of respondents reported that their teaching assignment had not notably shifted. One respondent reported an emphasis upon literacy through incorporating reading and writing in their lessons; another mentioned an added duty of providing academic enrichment during Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) time, which is similar to study hall in their school, as explained by the respondent.

*Question 3: How many times each week do your music classes meet, and for how long?
(For example, I see each class 2-3 times each week for 30 minutes).*

Each participant provided a unique response to this question. One respondent reported that they teach their classes, “2 times a week for 45 minutes. Wednesday is a shifting schedule where I sometimes see classes for an extra 45 minutes.” Another said that their schedule is a, “4 week rotation. Each class 60 minutes for the entire week. This changed from 30 minutes every other day due to the pandemic.” Two respondents reported that they see each class once per week for one hour. Other responses included, “once a week for 50 minutes,” “2-3 times each week for 45 minutes,” or “2 times for 25 minutes.” Others stated that, “each class comes for 30 minutes 3 times every six days (which in a perfect world is 30 minutes every other day, but the schedule rarely works that way).” Another educator said that they teach each class, “3 times, 1 hour twice per week, and 30 minutes once per week.” Another educator reported their class time as, “2-3 times a week for 30 minutes,” with another seeing their classes once per week for 45 minutes. Finally, another respondent stated that their class time differed by grade level, with fourth and fifth grade students being taught for 57 minutes one or two times per week, with Kindergarten through third grade having 25 minute music classes, twice per week. The overarching theme is that most elementary music students receive close to one hour of music instruction each week, whether that is at one time or split into two or three segments.

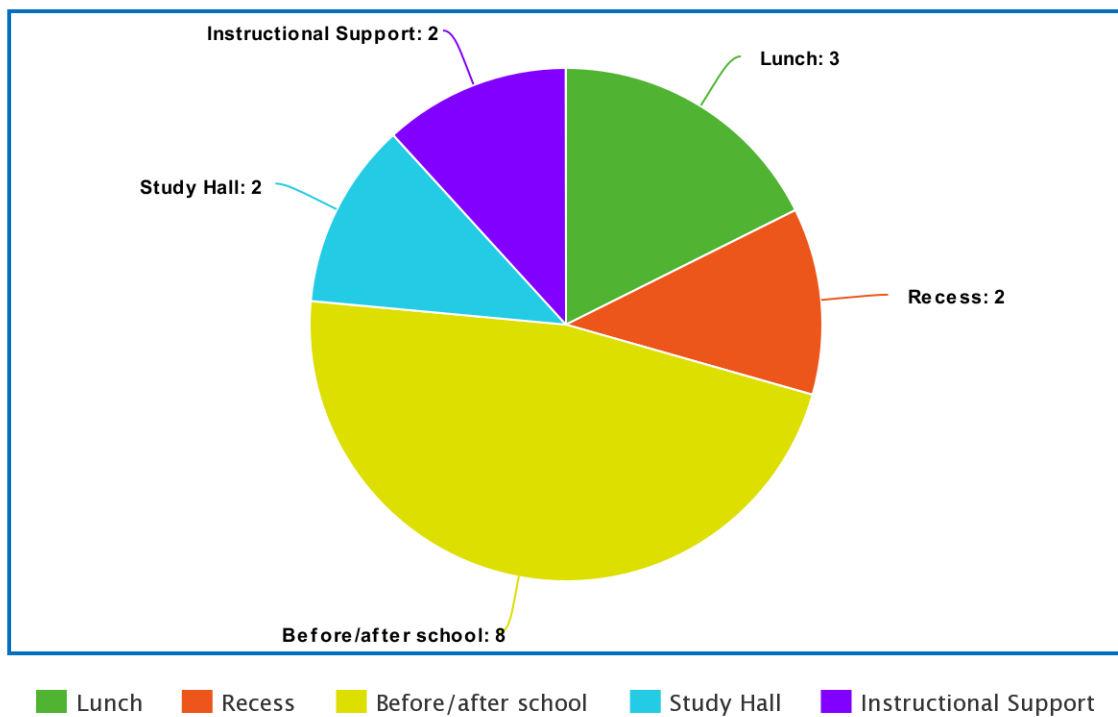
Question 4: Do you have any other duties during the school day, such as supervisory duties or classes that are not characteristic of an elementary music teacher? Please check all that apply.

There were 18 responses to this question, indicating that at least one respondent had multiple supervisory duties or non-music classes. Eight respondents reported that they have before and/or after school duty (such as bus duty, hallway duty, or parking lot supervision). Lunch duty was assigned to four of the respondents, with two respondents having recess duty. Additionally, four respondents reported that they provide various types of academic support or intervention, as planned by the students' classroom teachers based on academic needs. Only one respondent reported not having supervisory duties or non-characteristic classes of a music teacher.

Figure 2

Supervisory/Non-Music Instruction Duties

This figure displays the number of responses reported for various types of non-music duties during the school day.



meta-chart.com

Question 5: If you answered "Other," to the previous question, please briefly explain.

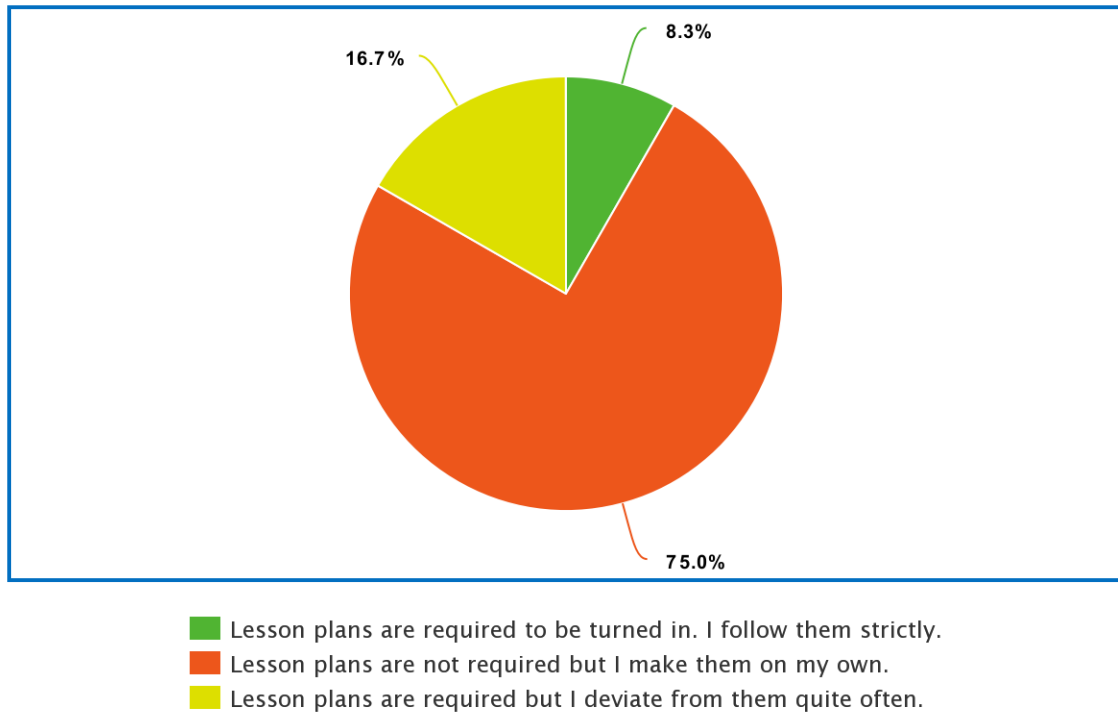
Six educators took the opportunity to list duties that were not mentioned in Question 4, or to elaborate further on their non-music duties. One educator reported the building administrator used Title I funds to make him/her full-time, so one day per week, this respondent helps students with reading. Another respondent supervises study hall for students with missing work. A third participant works with students one-on-one during study hall where they practice academic skills such as reading, writing, or math. Another spends one hour a day working with students of various grade levels on the students' reading and math skills. This same respondent also spent 30 minutes a day in the office during the secretary's lunch break. A fifth respondent helped kindergarten and 1st grade students with sight words or any skills per request of their teacher. Finally, another respondent is a K-12 music teacher, so this individual has music class duties outside of elementary music duties.

Question 6: Choose what best applies to how you use lesson plans (if you use them). Are lesson plans required?

The majority (75%, N=9) of respondents reported that lesson plans are not required, but that they complete some form of lesson plans on their own. The other 25% of respondents fall into three categories: (1) Lesson plans are required to be turned in. I follow them strictly. (2) Lesson plans are required but I deviate from them quite often. (3) "Lesson plans are required, but my administrator knows that I evaluate each week's lesson and adjust according to the needs of the students (and the schedule) within that week's plans."

Figure 3

Lesson Plan Usage



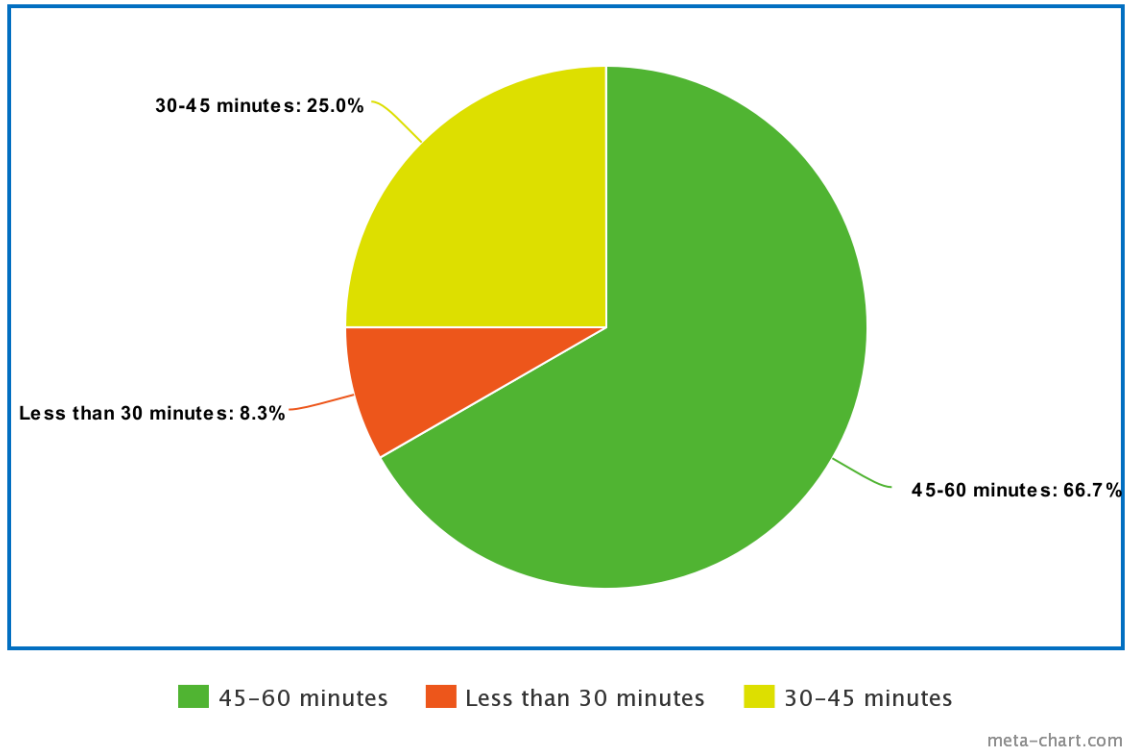
meta-chart.com

Question 7: On average, how much daily planning time are you granted to map out your units, lessons, and prepare materials? This should not include your lunchtime.

Nearly 66% of respondents reported that they receive 45 to 50 minutes of planning time each day. Twenty-five percent of respondents reported receiving 30 to 45 minutes of planning time daily, while one respondent reported receiving less than 30 minutes of planning time daily.

Figure 4

Planning Time Assigned to Respondents

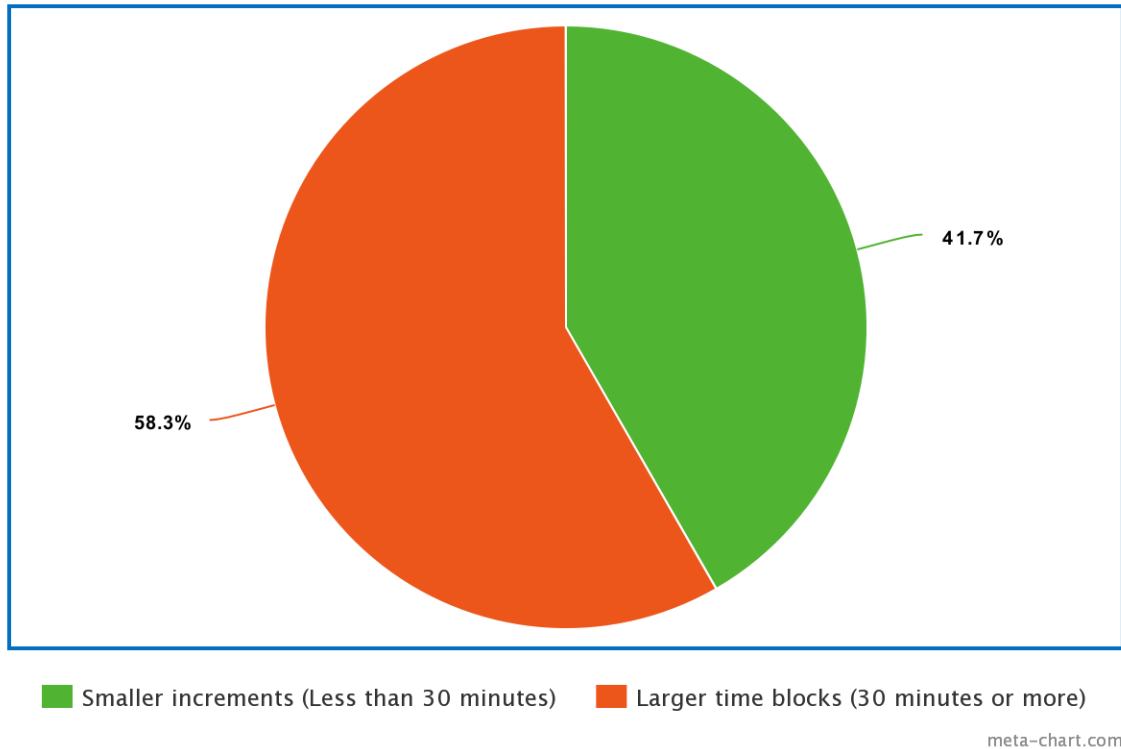


Question 8: Is your planning time primarily in large blocks or split into smaller time increments?

Over half (58%) of respondents reported that their planning time is in larger time blocks of 30 minutes or more. The remainder (42%) reported planning time increments of less than 30 minutes.

Figure 5

Planning Time Increments (Small or Large Time Blocks)



Question 9: What music-related topics do you feel are essential to include in elementary music?

Nearly all educators reported that music literacy, melody, rhythm, and singing should be taught in an elementary music classroom. Additionally, several participants emphasized music theory, ear training, music history, and musical expression. Musical instruments and appropriate singing voices were mentioned several times. One participant noted an inclination to teach spatial awareness and performer and audience etiquette. Finally, one participant mentioned social and emotional learning as well as citizenship as an important part of the music classroom.

Table 1*Individual Responses of Essential Elementary Music Topics*

Theme	Subtheme
Music Theory/Fundamentals	<p>Melody, rhythm, form, harmony, expression, timbre</p> <p>Basic fundamentals of music</p> <p>Music literacy, singing, playing classroom percussion instruments</p> <p>Theory</p>
Music History	<p>Music history, musical elements, how to read music, how to create music, instrumental education</p> <p>All those on our state standards plus music history</p>
Music Literacy/Reading Music	<p>Listening skills, interacting with music, and creating music</p> <p>Experience learning an instrument or skill, and show that music can be created in a variety of ways</p> <p>Ear training, music literacy, application of music literacy (through instruments/voice/tech)</p> <p>Reading music, appropriate singing voices, ability to use a variety of instruments, a general knowledge of different types of music, and the ability to connect feelings and thoughts to music</p>
World Music/Cultural Music/Musical Variety	<p>Beyond the usual information, I think it's important for students to</p>

learn about different genres and cultures.

Skills and developing an authentic appreciation of music. Students should be able to sing in tune and have accurate rhythmic skills by the time they leave me. Basic music reading ability. Learning history and culture as well.

SEL/Citizenship

Music literacy, SEL, citizenship

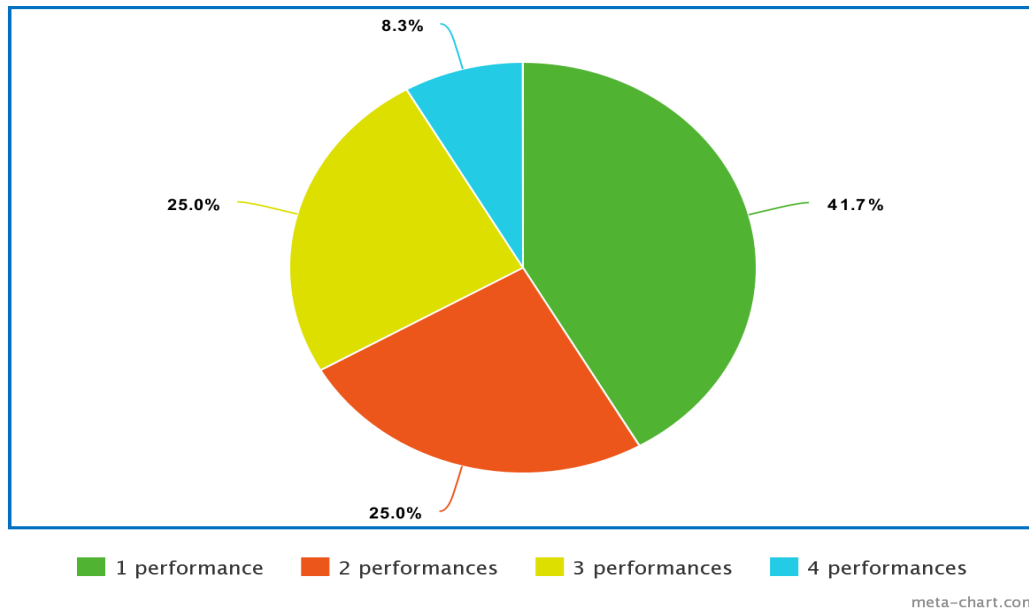
Spatial awareness/physical movement, audience/performer etiquette (for a variety of venues), and how to enjoy music and share it with others

Question 10: Please indicate how many music performances your elementary students present each school year.

Responses varied from one to four performances. Some participants stated their current performance practices at the time of the survey were different than the years before the pandemic. Some participants simply provided the number of performances that they produce with no other information. Others provided more detailed information. For example, one participant indicated: “Pre-pandemic: 1 per grade level, plus Veterans Day Assembly and Talent Show (various run-out performances with ensembles).” Another mentioned that, “each grade level participates in one evening performance each year. Other, smaller performances (such as singing a song at an assembly or performing at a nursing home) happen on occasion but are not required.” Another educator’s students present “2 concerts for K-1, 2 for 2nd-3rd, 2 for 4th-5th. 6 concerts in total.

Figure 6

Number of Performances by Elementary Music Performing Groups



Question 11: Are musical performances a requirement of your administration, your personal choice, or both?

Performance Reasoning for Elementary Music Performing Groups

All of the educators responded that their performances are both their personal choice and are also expected by their administration and community. Four of the educators mentioned that, because of the pandemic, their performances are scheduled by personal choice at the moment and not by requirement.

Question 12: Describe the overall morale and participation level of families and students in regard to performances.

Most of the educators reported positive participation and morale among their families and students. Detailed descriptions can be found in Table 2 below.

Table 2

Description of Morale Surrounding Music Performances in Respondents' Local

Communities

Theme	Subtheme
Nearly All Students Participate in Performances	<p>Nearly 100% participation, but the families have a long history of support for music programs.</p> <p>Most parents are completely on board but a few are worried more about personal matters than to have their student(s) attend</p> <p>Mostly supportive. 75-80%</p> <p>Big turnout, lots of families in the community come to support their students.</p> <p>“...just like you don't want your baseball team to have to forfeit the game for lack of players, we need as many of us to show up as possible so that we can be as successful as possible.</p>
Moderate Support from Families	<p>Most students who don't come are in a situation where they can't find transportation (parents work evening shifts). There are a few who simply don't want to and just don't come.</p> <p>Approximately 65% of students participate in performances outside of the school day</p> <p>The families enjoy it, but there has been an obvious aura of no one knows what to do because it has been so long since they've been to performances.</p>

As Students Get Older, Fewer Student Participate

Younger students love them, upper elementary is 50/50 on it. Families are split- some love it, but at least half never show up

The older the kids get, the less that show up. Kindergarten usually has about 99% of the kids there ranging up to about 85% of the fourth graders.

Question 13: Is there anything else you would like to contribute about any of the topics addressed today?

Only 25% of respondents answered this question, with answers ranging from discussing schedule changes, to mentioning a need for character education and social emotional learning, and finally a sentiment discussing the difficulty of the 2021-2022 school year with hopes for better school years ahead.

Opportunity for Additional Comment on Survey Topics

Nine of the educators did not provide any additional comments on the survey topics. One respondent stated, “Next year, it is anticipated that we will go to a 2 week rotation instead of 4 (4 is not conducive to program prep). We will see each week 1 for 60 minutes on Monday and Tuesday, Week 2 on Thursday and Friday, and Wednesday we will alternate with cohorts for 30 minute classes (unless there is a day off). The next week would be similar with Week 3 and 4. This is a schedule the art teacher and I came up with last year. Art and Music will switch and PE/Technology (due to proximity). Another educator remarked that, “Most of my students need to be taught how to be a person rather than music. If their needs are not met, then my lessons go down the drain.”

Finally, one more remark was submitted: “This year has been tough on everyone! I hope that we have better years ahead of us in education.”

Administrator Interviews

The three administrators that I interviewed are the superintendent, assistant superintendent, and an elementary building principal of Miami Public Schools in Miami, Oklahoma. I wanted to know how administrators assist in organizing and supporting arts programs in their district. This is how the questions for interviews were determined; to allow administrators to speak on their mindset of elementary music programs from their wealth of knowledge as an administrator.

Anchor Question #1: What factors (such as scheduling, legal requirements, finances, and opportunity for students) are considered when forming an elementary music program?

How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected the staffing of your music educators and their course offerings?

All three administrators mentioned that the COVID-19 pandemic ushered in a reconfiguration in their schools, resulting in enhanced music staff presence at both lower elementary schools, meaning that both sites now have a full-time elementary music educator rather than sharing one educator between two or more buildings.

Reconfiguration was already being discussed, but a need to create a virtual segment of the school district expedited the changes. However, this change did leave the Early Childhood Center without a dedicated music educator, in hopes that their classroom teachers would incorporate music frequently into everyday routines.

Talk a little about your view of the purpose of music programs in elementary school.

One administrator believed that arts programs exist to give children as much exposure to the arts and their connections to the world as possible. She viewed most elementary arts programs as the time to teach students the aspects of the arts that they should learn to be well-rounded people. She mentions that this may be a student's only art education if they choose not to partake in arts courses or activities throughout the rest of their lives. She reflected fondly on her childhood experiences with the arts and how they shaped her as a person. Her desire is that all students have the opportunity for enriching artistic experiences.

Another administrator reflected briefly upon the research that connects arts participation to academic success and how students deserve those benefits. The third administrator mentioned that the arts are a common outlet for students to let out their emotions, stress, or frustrations.

In what ways are non-music staff expected to actively contribute to the positive culture of your school at large?

Each administrator noted that all staff are expected to form positive relationships with their students and coworkers. Non-music staff typically help with music events and utilize music to varying degrees in their schools and classrooms.

Anchor Question #2: How does one develop or decide upon the curriculum and course of study for an elementary music program?

Do you have a set music curriculum in your school? If so, what do you recall about how the curriculum came to be selected? Why was it chosen?

The three administrators interviewed indicated that their elementary music programs all employ QuaverMusic. It was chosen with recommendation from the

experienced upper elementary music teacher. It was also chosen because QuaverMusic curriculums aligns with the Oklahoma state music standards, as well as the national music standards.

Discuss or describe any physical or technological resources required to utilize your curriculum. Who provides such resources? And how would you describe the success of the curriculum?

The administrators mentioned that curriculum requires a computer, speakers, and projector or Smart Board/Smart TV. All required materials are furnished by the school. Each of the elementary music teachers were highly satisfied with the curriculum and the students were displaying musical growth and knowledge, so QuaverMusic will continue to be utilized in their district as long as possible.

What music-related topics do you feel are essential to include in elementary music?

Each administrator expressed that a variety of music genres should be explored, as well as the fundamental building blocks of music. Additionally, one administrator emphasized the importance of exposing students to high caliber fine arts that they may never experience outside of the school.

Anchor Question #3: In your opinion, what are the merits of performing opportunities for elementary music students?

Discuss some arts opportunities (whether spectating or performing) that exist in your community. Are your students actively involved?

One administrator mentioned that the Miami (OK) Little Theatre offers theatre experiences for all ages. They present the opportunity for children to perform in a summer show and some of their other shows throughout the year. Very few of Miami's

elementary students are actively engaged in this opportunity. The local arts and humanities council provides events to expose students to various aspects of the arts. Most recently, the Tulsa Opera presented a performance for all of the elementary students.

What performances are currently being considered for this school year and in what format?

All elementary schools in the district, as well as the upper school choirs and bands present multiple concerts. These performances will take place in-person fully for the first time since the pandemic. Some may also be livestreamed. Additionally, the junior high and high school will present a musical for the first time in several years.

What role do musical performances play in your community? For example, do they exist to celebrate holidays, display learning, complement community events, or some combination of these?

Each administrator agreed that musical performances in their area exist for a combination of reasons, mostly those stated in the question.

What, if anything, do you do to encourage concert etiquette (both among students and community members)?

All three administrators agreed that concert etiquette is an extreme struggle. They mentioned keeping the perspective of being thankful that families are present for the performances and are bringing their children to perform, rather than skipping the performance. Some directors feature audience etiquette notes in the paper program, or include comments about appropriate behavior during the announcements at the start of the program. All administrators hoped that, as in-person events become commonplace

again, school staff can continue to encourage, teach, and model etiquette to students and their families.

Please feel free to share additional thoughts you may have about the topics we addressed today.

The administrators expressed fond memories of their experiences in the arts and hoped to make decisions that provide such opportunities to their students. They believed that music is an outlet to students that helps them succeed in other facets of life, such as academics, relationships, future employment. The administrators of the sample interviews want to provide the arts to their students to strengthen students' connections with others and the world around them.

Chapter V

Discussion

Process

For this study, I obtained an overview of elementary music programs in the Four-State Region. Various aspects were studied such as the availability of curriculum and resources, how schools make scheduling decisions, and what the legal requirements are for elementary music. I discovered how educator choice is utilized within their programs and explored the merits of elementary student performances as part of their music program. Finally, I gained insight towards administrator decision-making regarding music in their schools. I created a survey via Google Forms and invited peers to complete the survey. The potential respondents were also asked to forward the survey on to others who met the requirements. For the purposes of this study, respondents must be a full-time (or at least half-time) elementary music educator in the Midwest, ideally Oklahoma, Kansas, Arkansas, or Missouri. After receiving 12 responses, I closed the survey in order to perform an in-depth analysis of the data.

Summary of Results and Discussion

This study explored how elementary music educators viewed their curriculum and school duties as a whole. Though each state has its own standards for the arts, the way such standards were executed and prioritized varied immensely in each of the twelve

districts represented. Most educators surveyed reported being satisfied with their curriculum; they were allowed freedom as to which musical concepts were taught and how they provided instruction. Rarely did the educators themselves actually choose the curriculum, or decide upon their scheduling throughout the day, but rather those decisions tend to fall to district and building administrators. Finally, a majority of educators stated that their school performance schedules are the result of tradition and community or administrator expectation. Educators rise to the occasion of a demanding public performance schedule and use such performances to demonstrate learning. Such showcases of public school students often improves the arts culture in their respective communities.

The first series of questions in the survey focused on school scheduling and its impact on elementary music programs. One question produced a surprising result about students not being removed from class for work completion or other services such as speech or various therapies. Almost half of the respondents reported that students are rarely removed from their music class, which was significantly higher than I personally expected. Also, most of the respondents reported that their teaching assignment had not been notably shifted after the start of the pandemic. Through reading much anecdotal commentary from elementary music teachers in the United States on social media, I expected varying responses about teaching assignment changes. Nevertheless, few programs represented in the survey results have been reduced or impacted by the pandemic in terms of reduced music classes.

Another significant factor that drove my motivation for this study was to examine how elementary music educators were spending their time during the school day. I

suspected that elementary music educators frequently fulfill supervisory duties, perhaps at a disproportionately more frequent level than general classroom teachers. Though schools often need to staff various areas of their facilities for adequate supervision, utilizing music educators in this way does reduce their availability for music instruction time. All but one respondent reported being assigned at least one supervisory duty. There were 18 responses, meaning anywhere from one to seven of the respondents reported multiple duties or non-music classes.

The next section of the survey spurred a discussion of curriculum, standards, lesson plans, instructional materials, and planning time. I was surprised to learn that a high number (75%) of respondents were not required to submit written or virtual lesson plans to their administrators. This sampling of educators, however, still completed lesson plans independently on their own. When asked about a course of study, many of the educators surveyed listed that they believe the building blocks of music (fundamentals, basic theory, world music) should be included in elementary music lessons. A common thread also emerged in incorporating citizenship and social emotional learning. Given the demographic of the survey as elementary music educators and the topic primarily being music instruction, I did not necessarily expect this response but was not surprised either, as I see an immense need for such instruction in my own classroom.

Sixty-six percent of respondents reported receiving 45 to 50 minutes of planning time (not including lunchtime), with over half of those respondents having their plan time in uninterrupted time increments of 30 minutes or more. Typically, elementary music educator plan time revolves around the schedule of the classroom teachers and is not

always in a consecutive time block. One respondent reported receiving 30 to 45 minutes of planning time daily.

The final section of the survey examined performances for elementary music students. As expected, the responses varied by teacher. Each community's arts culture is as unique as the community itself. Most of the respondents agreed that at least some type of performance is required or strongly expected by their administrator, but the respondents also personally prefer to have their students perform concerts. Almost everyone reported positive morale and support from their community members for performance opportunities. Another interesting point to note is that some school districts were not yet allowing (or were at least not requiring) in-person performances because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Given the seemingly lax response to the pandemic by many communities of the Midwest (per my perception), I expected that such interruptions were not taking place anymore (at the time of survey in the spring of 2022) for most music educators in the region. Hopefully, as time goes on, students will receive enhanced opportunities to perform and share music as in pre-pandemic times.

The last question provided an opportunity for educators to provide insight or write any final thoughts. Twenty-five percent of respondents addressed this question, with discussions about schedule changes, character education, and expressing hopes for better days ahead in the education field. Children are growing up in a rapidly changing world and a universally traumatic event took place in the last several years during the COVID-19 pandemic. Students, their families, and educators are still learning to cope with the events of the last few years, and discovering how to proceed. Though changes have taken

place and more changes may be coming, my hope is that music education can reach a more stable ground in the coming years despite all of the difficulties.

In speaking with administrators about the topics of my study, I interviewed a building principal, as well as the superintendent and assistant superintendent of the same district. Though the administrators had different areas of focus in their job duties, they each had fairly similar interview answers. However, each had unique insight stemming from their current job duties and past experiences which set their answers apart from one another. One such area of variance was highlighted by discussing of the purpose of an elementary arts programs. One administrator felt that the arts are an integral part of education and that we should expose students to as many artistic topics as possible from a very young age. While the other two administrators value the arts, they spoke from the viewpoint of the arts as an outlet or expression. Still, they felt that arts experiences should be offered to students in order to fulfill a wide range of interests.

One trait I greatly appreciate about the administrators in the district of study is that they seem to trust and listen to their arts educators, as was evident in both their responses and in their actions. The music educators' professional opinions are valued and taken into consideration as often as possible. For example, the selection of the QuaverMusic curriculum was adopted at the recommendation of the current upper elementary music teacher. When budget concerns arose during the pandemic, the elementary music teachers spoke out about prioritizing the QuaverMusic curriculum. The administrators listened to the educators' concerns and found a way to make this curriculum part of the budget. The administrators expressed in their interviews a desire to see the arts grow in their district. They also want to encourage students and staff to

participate in other arts programs that already exist in their community. My hope is that all administrators value the arts (both philosophically and practically) as fervently as these administrators. Budget issues, time constraints, and staffing considerations may cause arts subjects fall lower on a priority list at times. However, perhaps through enhanced advocacy and persistence, maybe one day the arts will have a universally equal seat at the table with other school subjects.

Recommendations for Future Study

This small-scale study provided insight into the vast differences between elementary music programs in the Four-State region. A larger group of respondents could be beneficial in obtaining a broader picture of the state of elementary music education in the United States. Receiving responses from a wide variety of states could provide a more comprehensive scope of arts cultures across the country. Arts standards and funding vary greatly from state to state. I also hypothesize that the COVID-19 response in relation to music programs would display significant differences in coastal regions compared to the Midwest. For example, my teaching practices were barely regulated, other than we did not host in-person concerts for a year or two. However, in some states, they could not sing or play instruments together indoors for months or years.

In the future, further study of the same topics could be conducted by speaking with a larger number of administrators. It was helpful to interview numerous educators to hear about the survey topics from their point of view. The research could be broadened with the point of view of numerous administrators. One must remember that the accessibility of speaking with administrators in a single district made the interview process smooth and comfortable. Typically, administrators are the people who make most

of a school building or school district's decisions, so insight from a number of different school districts could be gained by listening to more administrators' reasoning.

Additionally, I will be interested to see how the COVID-19 pandemic continues to shape music education. Seventy-five percent of respondents reported that their teaching assignment had not changed notably since the pandemic, with 25% reporting an increased focus on reading/language arts. However, I suspect this is not the trend nationwide and will be curious to see how the numbers of students in music programs, as well as their funding and opportunities, will be impacted for years to come. Finally, continuing to explore the many music education resources and curricula that are available would be of great benefit to any educator as they expand their horizons and have more to offer the students in their influence.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Survey Questions for Educators

1. Estimate how frequently students are removed from music class to receive other school-related services (e.g., speech, physical therapy, occupational therapy) or to complete unfinished classwork.
2. Has your teaching assignment been shifted to other academic focuses since the onset of the pandemic? If so, in what way?
3. How many times each week do your music classes meet, and for how long? (For example, I see each class 2-3 times each week for 30 minutes).
4. Do you have any other duties during the school day, such as supervisory duties or classes that are not characteristic of an elementary music teacher? Please check all that apply.
5. If you answered "Other," to the previous question, please briefly explain.
6. Choose what best applies to how you use lesson plans (if you use them). Are lesson plans required?
7. On average, how much daily planning time are you granted to map out your units, lessons, and prepare materials? This should not include your lunchtime.
8. Is your planning time primarily in large blocks or split into smaller time increments?
9. What music-related topics do you feel are essential to include in elementary music?
10. Please indicate how many music performances your elementary students present each school year.
11. Are musical performances a requirement of your administration, your personal choice, or both?

12. Describe the overall morale and participation level of families and students in regard to performances.
13. Is there anything else you would like to contribute about any of the topics addressed today?

Appendix B

Administrator Interviews

Anchor Question #1: What factors (such as scheduling, legal requirements, finances, and opportunity for students) are considered when forming an elementary music program?

1a. How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected the staffing of your music educators and their course offerings?

1b. Talk a little about your view of the purpose of music programs in elementary school.

1c. In what ways are non-music staff expected to actively contribute to the positive culture of your school at large?

Anchor Question #2: How does one develop or decide upon the curriculum and course of study for an elementary music program?

2a. Do you have a set music curriculum in your school? If so, what do you recall about how the curriculum came to be selected? Why was it chosen?

2b. Discuss or describe any physical or technological resources required to utilize your curriculum. Who provides such resources? And how would you describe the success of the curriculum?

2c. What music-related topics do you feel are essential to include in elementary music?

Anchor Question #3: In your opinion, what are the merits of performing opportunities for elementary music students?

3a. Discuss some arts opportunities (whether spectating or performing) that exist in your community. Are your students actively involved?

2b. What performances are currently being considered for this school year and in what format?

2c. What role do musical performances play in your community? For example, do they exist to celebrate holidays, display learning, complement community events, or some combination of these?

2d. What, if anything, do you do to encourage audience etiquette (both among students and community members)?

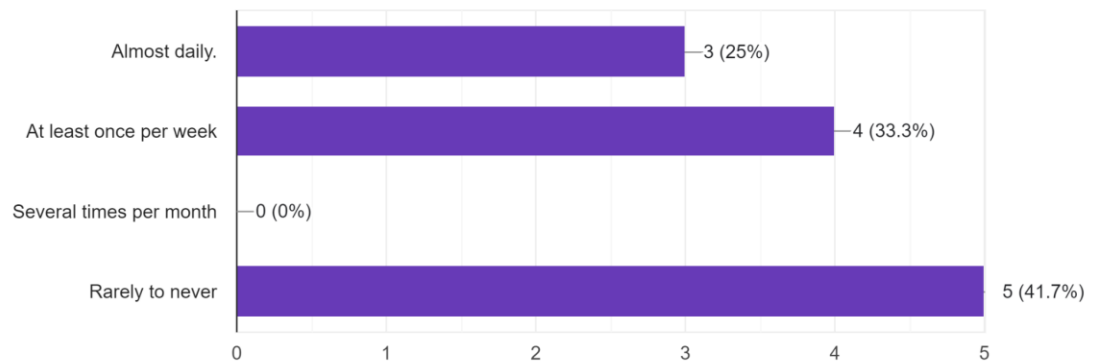
Please feel free to share additional thoughts you may have about the topics we addressed today.

Appendix C

Survey Results

Estimate how frequently students are removed from music class to receive other school-related services (e.g., speech, physical therapy, occupational therapy) or to complete unfinished classwork.

12 responses



Has your teaching assignment been shifted to other academic focuses since the onset of the pandemic? If so, in what way? 12 responses

No

Enrichment during MTSS time

I just started this year and cannot answer.

No.

It has been shifted to focus more on reading/English. They want me to read more books, have them write more, and talk more to each other.

Has your teaching assignment been shifted to other academic focuses since the onset of the pandemic? If so, in what way? 12 responses

No

Enrichment during MTSS time

I just started this year and cannot answer.

No.

It has been shifted to focus more on reading/English. They want me to read more books, have them write more, and talk more to each other.

Once a week for 50 minutes

3x30 minutes per week

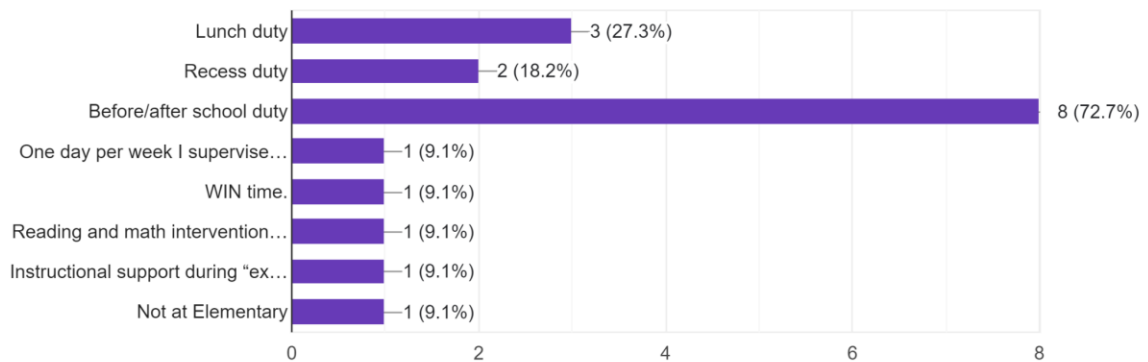
2 times for 25 min.

2-3 times a week for 30 minutes

I see each class twice a week, 45 minutes each.

Do you have any other duties during the school day, such as supervisory duties or classes that are not characteristic of an elementary music teacher? Please check all that apply.

11 responses



If you answered "Other," to the previous question, please briefly explain. 6 responses

My admin used title 1 funds to make me full time, so Monday afternoons I help students with reading.

One day per week I supervise a study hall for students with missing work

I work with students one on one during WIN time. We work on basic skills: reading, writing, math

I spend an hour a day working with different kids in different grades on their reading or math skills. I also spend 30 minutes a day as the “secretary” while ours has her lunch break.

I help K-1 students with sight words or other skills as requested by their teachers.

I teach k-12, so I do teach other music classes at other buildings

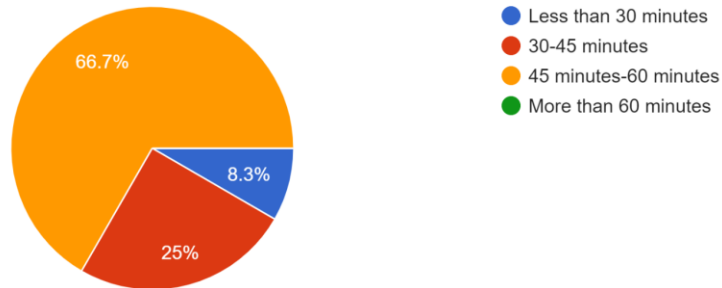
Choose what best applies to how you use lesson plans (if you use them). Are lesson plans required?

12 responses



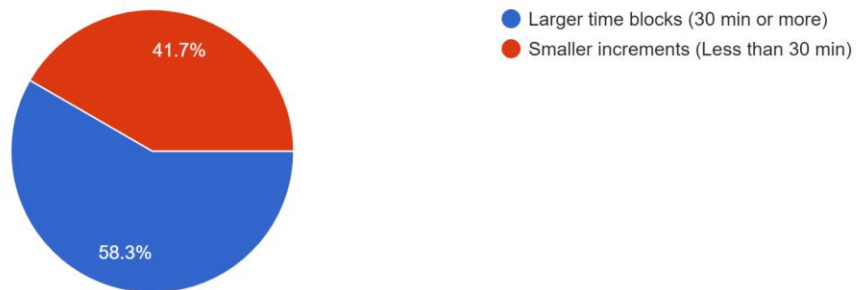
On average, how much daily planning time are you granted to map out your units, lessons, and prepare materials? This should not include your lunchtime.

12 responses



Is your planning time primarily in large blocks or split into smaller time increments?

12 responses



What music-related topics do you feel are essential to include in elementary music?12
responses

Beyond the usual information, I think it's important for students to learn about different genres and cultures. Experience learning an instrument or skill, and show that music can be created in a variety of ways.

Ear Training, Music Literacy, Application of Music Literacy (through instruments/voice/tech), Spatial Awareness/Physical Movement, Audience/Performer Etiquette (for a variety of venues), and how to enjoy music and share it with others.

All those on our state music standards, plus music history

Music literacy, SEL, citizenship.

Skills and developing an authentic appreciation of music. Students should be able to sing in tune and have accurate rhythmic skills by the time they leave me. Basic music reading ability. Learning history and culture as well.

Theory

Music literacy, singing, playing classroom percussion instruments

Reading music, appropriate singing voices, ability to use a variety of instruments, a general knowledge of different types of music, and the ability to connect feelings and thoughts to music.

Melody, rhythm, form, harmony, expression, timbre

Basic fundamentals of music

Listening skills, interacting with music, and creating music.

Music history, musical elements, how to read music, how to create music, instrumental education

Please indicate how many music performances your elementary students present each school year. 12 responses

At the moment none. In the past I believe there were 3 concerts.

Pre-pandemic: 1 per grade level, plus Veterans Day Assembly and Talent Show (various run-out performances with ensembles)

One per grade level, plus one for an honor choir group

1 per grade (except Kindergarten)

Each grade level participates in one evening performance each year. Other, smaller performances (such as singing a song at an assembly or performing at a nursing home) happen on occasion but are not required.

4

Approx 3 (non-pandemic years)

2

1 per grade level

1

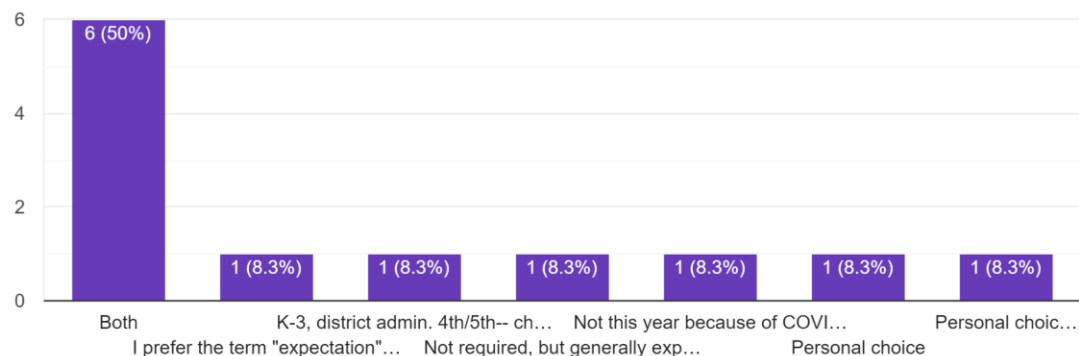
3

2 concert for K-1, 2 for 2-3,

2 for 4-5. 6 concerts in total.

Are musical performances a requirement of your administration, your personal choice, or both?

12 responses



Describe the overall morale and participation level of families and students in regard to performances. 10 responses

In my "program prep" presentation and parent letter, I inform students and parents that we do not grade the evening performance based on attendance, but just like you don't want your baseball team to have to forfeit the game for lack of players, we need as many of us to show up as possible so that we can be as successful as possible. We are a team. I also make an effort to offer MANY opportunities for student solos/special parts to ensure that we will have a mostly-full performance. I find that often, it is the highlight of the year for students in that grade level--students love to perform for their families and families love to see their kids doing great things and feeling awesome about it! Note: we also do a school-wide assembly in preparation for the performance (this is the performance that is typically recorded for evaluation at a later date).

Approximately 65% of students participate in performances outside of the school day. The families enjoy it, but there has been an obvious aura of no one knows what to do because it has been so long since they've been to performances.

Most families at my school participate and look forward to our concerts. Most students who don't come are in a situation where they can't find transportation (parents work evening shifts). There are a few who simply don't want to and just don't come.

Big turnout, lots of families in the community come to support their students.

Mostly supportive. 75-80%

The older the kids get, the less that show up. Kindergarten usually has about 99% of the kids there ranging up to about 85% of the fourth graders. Of the kids that do come, typically the entire family, extended and immediate, come to watch.

Nearly 100% participation, but the families have a long history of support for music programs.

Younger students love them, upper elementary is 50/50 on it. Families are split- some love it, but at least half never show up.

Most parents are completely on board but a few are worried about more personal matters than to have their student(s) attend.

Is there anything else you would like to contribute about any of the topics addressed today? 5 responses

Nothing that I can think of at this moment.

Next year, it is anticipated that we will go to a 2 week rotation instead of 4 (4 is not conducive to program prep). We will see each week 1 for 60 minutes on M and T, Week 2 on Th and F, and Wed we will alternate with cohorts for 30 minute classes (unless there is a day off). The next week would be similar with Week 3 and 4. This is a schedule the art teacher and I came up with last year. Art and Music will switch and PE/Tech (due to proximity).

No.

This year has been tough on everyone! I hope that we have better years ahead of us in education.

Most of my students need to be taught how to be a person rather than music. If their needs are not met, then my lessons go down the drain.