

The Status of Music Teaching in Illinois

Report of a survey of the music teachers
working in the State of Illinois, spring, 2005: General statewide data

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Rationale

In 2003-04, 2,093,614 children in public schools in Illinois received music education from 4,441 music teachers. That so few are able to accomplish so much is a remarkable accomplishment and a great tribute to their efforts. From the thousands of concerts annually performed in communities throughout Illinois to the breathtaking performances at the IMEA all-state convention, the evidence is abundant that much good work is taking place in the school music programs in Illinois.

Nonetheless, with a teacher to student ratio of 1:471, many children are receiving little or no music education. In addition, music teachers are facing unique challenges. For example:

- State budget cuts resulted in fiscal shortages and subsequent cuts to music programs within school districts across Illinois.
- Standards for teacher preparation and certification have become more rigorous.
- The No Child Left Behind Act requires that school districts become more accountable for the academic learning of all children enrolled in their school.
- Schools must develop curriculum that addresses and measures children's progress towards more rigorous music standards.
- Popular idioms in music are expanding and changing the nature of music education programs.
- Technology is altering all aspects of the experience of music.
- The diversity of children in our classrooms is expanding, including many for whom English is a second language.
- As researchers discover more details about the role of music in the cognitive, emotional and physical well being of all human beings, appreciation of its value as a core school subject is growing.
- A shortage of music teachers is predicted as the "baby boom" generation begins to retire, particularly in inner city and low-income areas.

Although anecdotal evidence abounds, it was unknown to what degree music teachers and their students were affected by these challenges. To find out, the Illinois Music Educators Association undertook this survey of our state's music teachers. The results reveal that much good is happening in our state, but also points out areas for concern.

The survey asked music teachers to assess the scope of their responsibilities, their education and experience, their involvement in music teacher education and, most importantly, their responses to shifts in educational policy and culture. The answers are helping to point the profession towards areas in which it needs to grow or change.

The mission of the Illinois Music Educators Association is to promote lifelong music learning and to provide leadership for the music education community through programs, communications and partnerships. Fulfilling this mission requires that the uncertainties just described be addressed. The results of this study are helping the association fulfill its mission by shaping long-range planning, policymaking and advocacy efforts.

Results will be of interest to music teacher education programs, school districts and other professional organizations serving the needs of music teachers. They will also be of interest to organizations that advocate on behalf of music education in our schools. In the end, however, the children of our state will be the ultimate beneficiaries since they are the ones with the most to gain from skilled, happy, professional music teachers.

Guiding Questions

Four questions guided the design of the survey:

1) What is the scope of responsibility of music teachers in Illinois?

Questions were designed to find out areas in which teachers work; number of children they teach; their non-musical responsibilities; numbers of concerts produced each year; time spent teaching outside of class; scheduling issues and related issues pertaining to the day-to-day responsibilities of teachers.

2) What is the education and experience of music teachers, and to what extent are they involved in continuing professional development? This set of questions focused on the degrees, certification, and continuing education of teachers. We wanted to know if music teachers are certified and, if so, in what areas. We also wanted to know what music teachers are studying and thinking about with respect to their personal professional growth.

3) *How involved are music teachers with music teacher education?* These questions were designed to determine music teachers' present involvement along with their willingness to play a larger role in preparation of future generations of teachers.

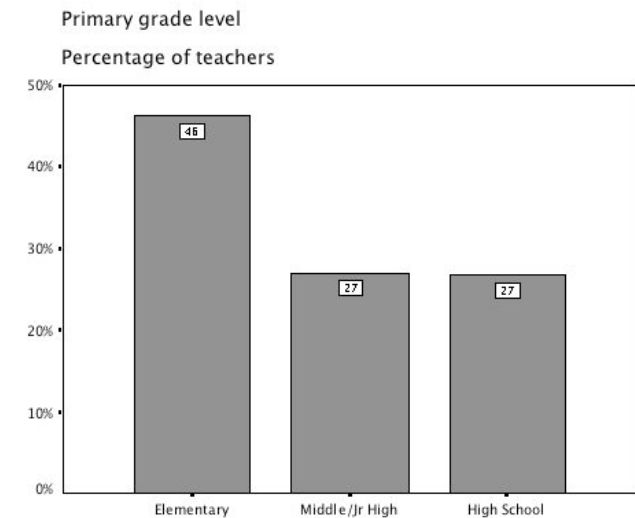
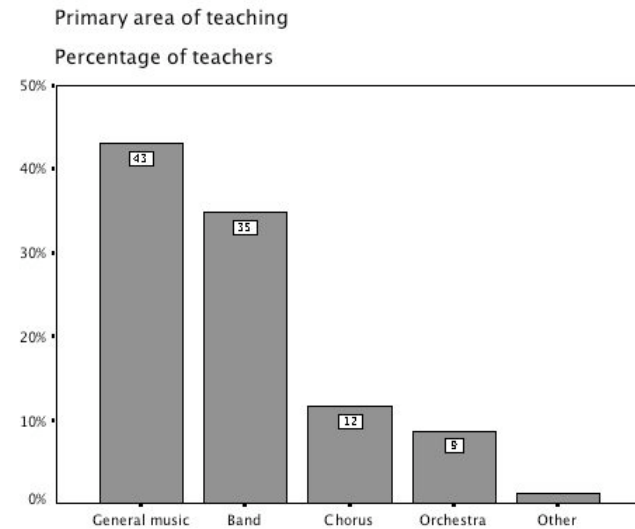
4) *Are changes in education policy, school demographics, music culture, and music funding affecting the work of music teachers?* This set of questions is perhaps the most revealing because it examines such issues as teachers engagement with music standards, curriculum development, changes over the past five years, areas of curricular emphasis, and work with children with special needs. These questions also reveal teachers' perceptions of the challenges and positive attributes of teaching music.

Method

A sample consisting of 25% of all public school music teachers (n=1,110) was selected to receive the survey. The sample was stratified so that it included a randomly selected but proportionate number of instrumental and choral music teachers at the elementary, junior high and high school levels working in each zip code throughout the state.

Two mailings were sent in April, 2005. Subjects selected either a web-based or hard-copy response format. The survey closed on June 6.

A total of 468 responses representing 42% of the sample were received. Responses were evenly distributed throughout the state and proportionately represent the various sub-specialties of choral, band, general music and orchestra. The tables below show the primary areas and levels of teaching of the respondents.



Results

Results are presented in sections that follow the guiding questions of the survey. They are not, however, chronological, so the reader should feel free to skip around. In addition, results are presented in tables and graphs, when appropriate, to ease the scanning process.

Scope of Responsibility

Primary and secondary areas of teaching

Music teachers were asked to indicate both their primary and secondary areas of teaching. The table below shows that more than half of the "primarily choral" and "primarily general music" teachers cross over into each other's area. More surprising is the fact that about one out of four teachers who teach "primarily band" also teach general music and chorus.

The situation, however, is not reversed: only about 1.3 out of ten general music teachers also teach band. Also, 15-20% of choral and general music teachers teach, tutor or supervise another, non-music subject. Other subjects vary widely and include reading, math, resource, other fine arts classes, driver education, and so on.

Percentage of teachers working in secondary areas

Primary area	Band	Chorus	Gen music	Orch	Other subject
Band	na	14.7%	27.6%	4.3%	11%
Chorus	3.6%	na	56.4%	1.8%	20%
General music	13.4%	58.9%	na	.02%	15.3%
Orchestra	4.9%	0%	22%	na	4.9%

Grade levels

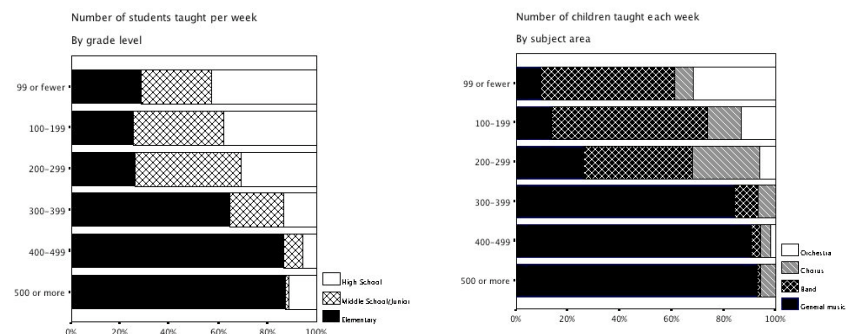
Music teachers also work with children at multiple grade levels. The chart below shows the percentage of teachers working at different levels.

Percentage of teachers working in different grade levels

Primary level	Elementary	Middle/Jr High	High School	College
Elementary	na	34.1%	8.9%	1.9%
Middle/Jr High	40.8%	na	20.8%	4.8%
High school	19.4	30.6	na	4%

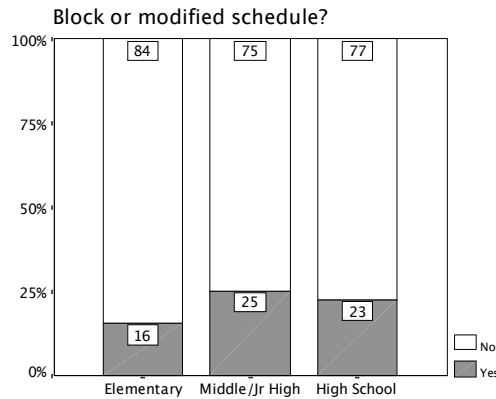
Number of children taught per week

More than half of all music teachers teach 200 children or more per week, and most of these are general music teachers. One out of four (27%) of teachers work with 400 or more children each week. The following two graphs illustrate the relative percentage of students taught each week by teachers at various grade levels and area.



Block scheduling

Block scheduling has been a concern for music teachers for some time. Data suggests that middle school/junior high and high school teachers have about a one in four chance of working in a school on a block or modified block schedule:



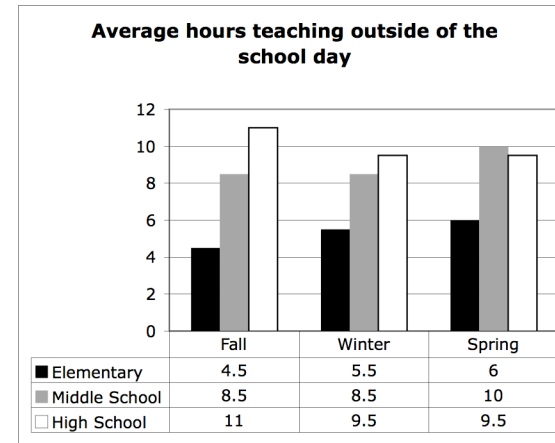
Frequency of live performance

Live performances are most frequent at the high school level but occur at all levels. There are, however, many exceptions, with some giving no performances, and others as many as 60 a year. Average performances per year are as follows:

- Elementary school - 2.94
- Middle school - 4.53
- High school - 17.23

Teaching before and after school and on weekends

Music teachers often teach before and after school and on the weekend the equivalent of one-half to a full day or more of work. There are, however, also many exceptions to this pattern, with some teachers actually teaching (not planning or grading) as many hours before and after school as during the school day. Average hours spent before and after school each week and on weekends are illustrated on the next graph.



Involvement with the annual school musical

Annual school musicals are produced in 58% of the schools where music teachers work. If a school produces a musical, the choral and general music teacher is likely to be involved. The chart below shows the percentage of teachers within each specialty area involved with the school musical.

**Does your school produce an annual musical?
If yes, are you involved?**

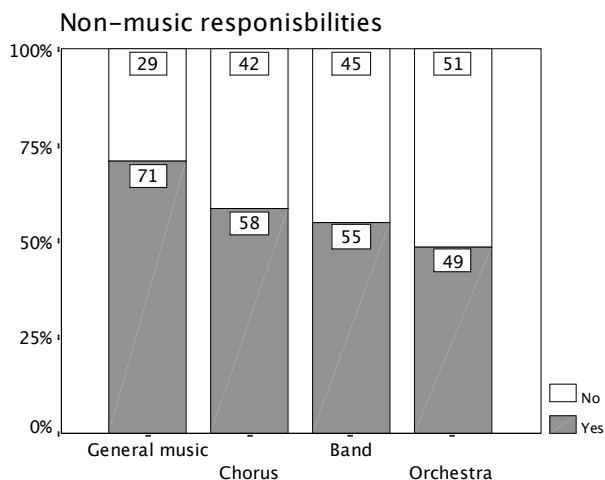
Primary Teaching Area	Yes, and highly involved	Yes, and somewhat involved	Yes, but usually not involved	No musical presented
Band	21%	14.2%	30.9%	34%
Chorus	57.4%	7.4%	3.7%	31.5%
Gen'l music	33.7%	4%	6.5%	55.8%
Orchestra	30%	20%	22.5%	27.5%
All music teachers	32%	9%	16%	42%

Rehearsal and performance accompanists

Forty-nine percent of all music teachers, regardless of sub-specialty, direct a chorus. When asked if they have an accompanist who works with them, more than half (57%) did not. Of those who do, 24% work with a paid adult; 15% with an adult volunteer; and 4% with a student. Accompanists are not available for all rehearsals, however. The median percentage of rehearsals at which an accompanist is available is 10%.

Non-music, non-teaching responsibilities

More than half of all music teachers carry non-music, non-administrative, non-teaching responsibilities. Frequently mentioned responsibilities include serving on a school committee (26%); bus duty (18%); lunchroom monitor (13%); hall monitor (12%); study hall (8%); and "other" (21%), such as playground duty or detention monitor. General music teachers are most and orchestra teachers the least likely to hold these extra responsibilities.



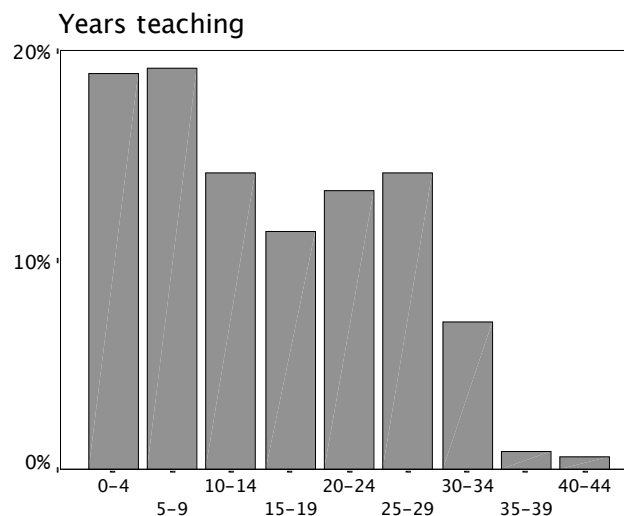
Administrative responsibilities

Music teachers hold relatively few music administrative positions. Those that exist are primarily at the high school level. About one in ten high school positions involve music administration, usually as a chair or head of fine arts or music. The chart that follows illustrates the percentage of music teachers involved at each level.

Education, certification and professional development

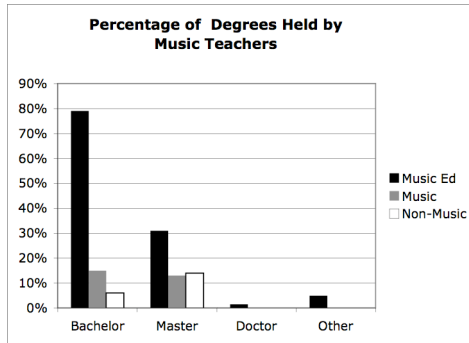
Years experience

Public school music teachers in Illinois are experienced, well educated and, for the most part, certified. They possess an average of 14.78 years of teaching experience, distributed as follows:

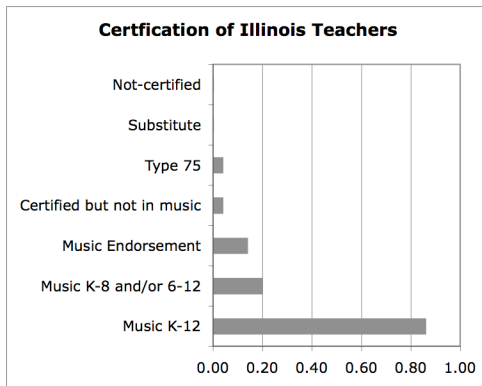


Degrees and Certification

Close to half of all music teachers hold an advanced degree in music, music education or a related area. The following graph shows the distribution of degrees held by Illinois music teachers:



92% of music teachers are certified; 14% hold an elementary or secondary school certificate with a music endorsement. Only 4% of music teachers do not have at least a music endorsement. An additional 4% also possess a Type 75 Administrative Certificate. The others hold music endorsements on another certificate.

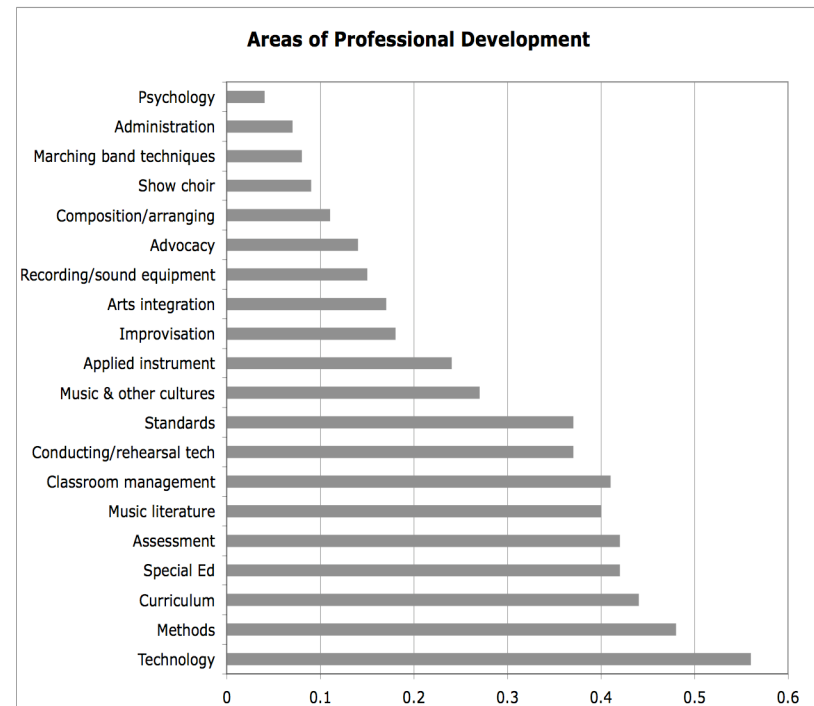


National Board Certification

At the time of this survey, 2% of music teachers held National Board Certification. Most (80%) teachers were not interested.

Professional development

Nearly all music teachers have pursued professional development. The following chart illustrates the percentage of teachers who have pursued professional development in the subject area listed on the left.

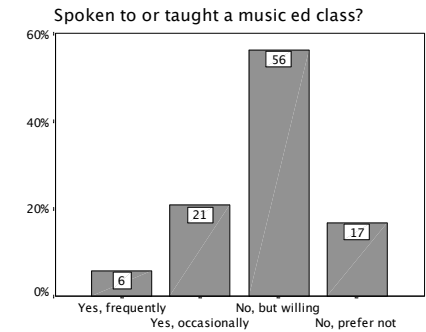
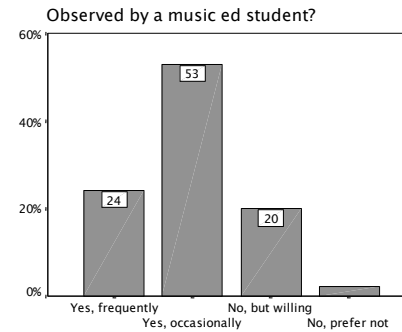
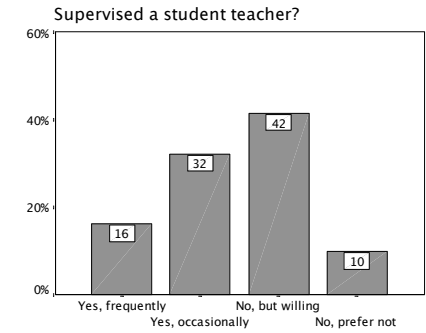
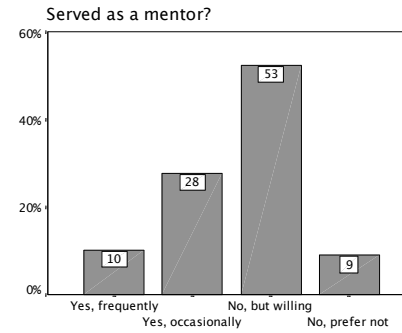


When asked, 62% feel that their professional development effort has improved their work as a teacher at least somewhat.



Involvement with music teacher education

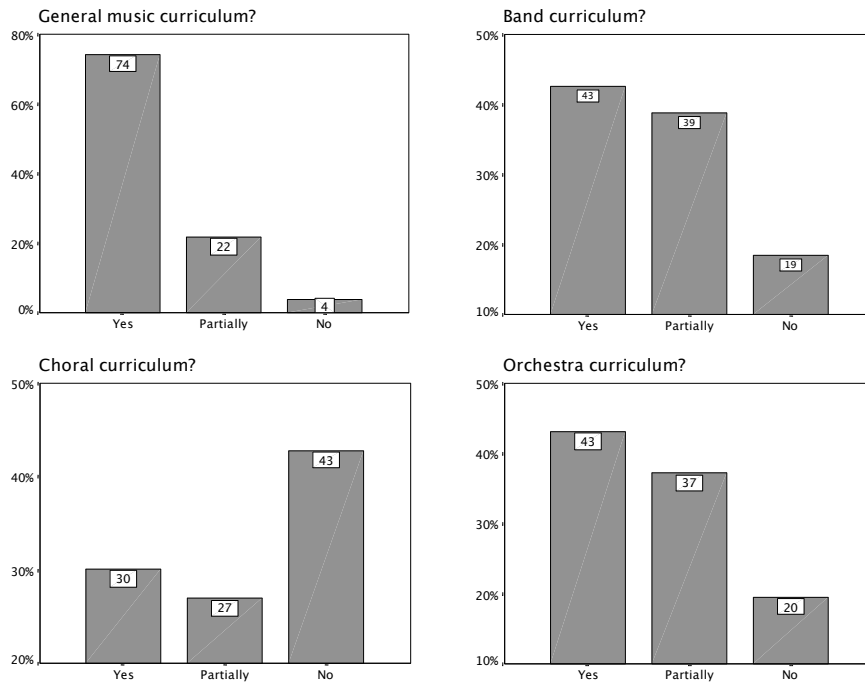
Teachers were asked four questions pertaining to their level of involvement with music teacher education. Most have minimal involvement but many more would be willing to help if asked. The following four charts illustrate current teachers' level of involvement and attitude towards being involved:



Current policies and educational trends

Curriculum-based teaching

When asked if they followed a curriculum, teachers answer “yes” “no” or “partially.” If the question was not applicable to their work, they did not answer the question. As may be seen in the four charts below, teachers for whom general music is their primary area of teaching appear most likely to be following a curriculum. Fewer do so in performance-based classes.



Curriculum design

Three out of four teachers are actively involved either alone or with others in making curricular decisions. When asked who developed or selected their

curriculum, 78% responded that either they alone or they and other music teachers were responsible. About 20% indicated that the district selected the curriculum; 10% claimed other music teachers made the selection. 4% were not sure. (Note that teachers were able to respond more than once to this question if they were involved in teaching more than one subject area, which is why numbers add up to more than 100%)

Alignment with standards

When asked if their curriculum is aligned with state, national, district and school standards, 80% of music teachers report that their curricula are aligned with state standards, which are aligned at the state level with national music standards. Fewer are directly aligned with national, district or school standards, as illustrated in the following charts:

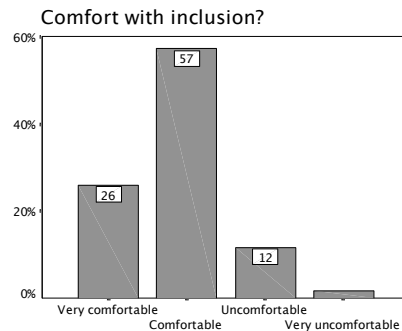
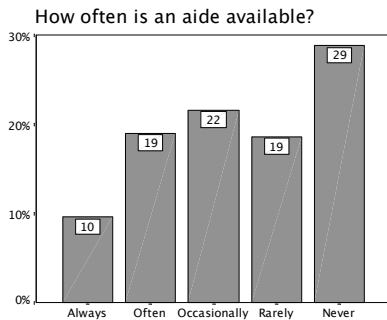


Children with special needs

Children with special needs are routinely included in music classes, most frequently in general music, less frequently in ensembles. Aides, however, tend NOT to be available to assist students with special needs. Although not true of all teachers, most tend to be at least “comfortable” with the inclusion of children with special needs in their classes.

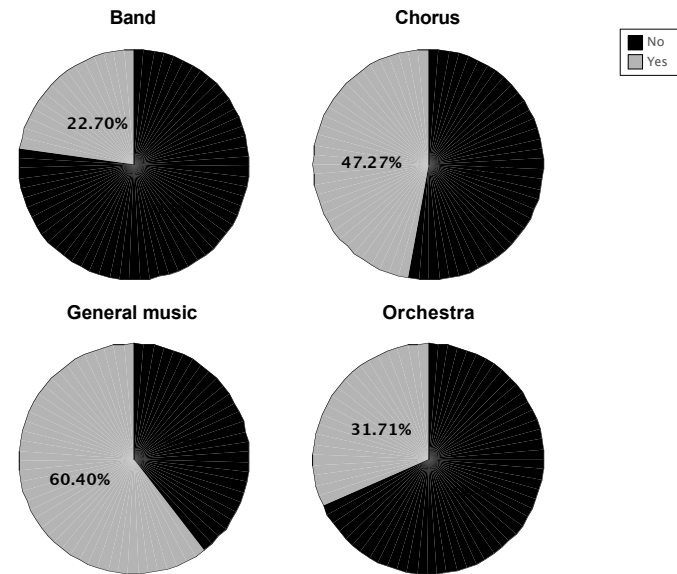
Percentage of music teachers aware of children with special needs in their music classes or ensembles

	General Music	Chorus	Band	Orchestra	All
ADD or ADHD	.97	.91	.84	.83	.90
Learning disability	.97	.95	.78	.83	.89
Behavior disorder	.85	.71	.51	.54	.69
Hearing impairment	.66	.60	.35	.39	.52
Emotional disorder	.70	.57	.29	.39	.51
Physical impairment	.66	.58	.26	.17	.46
Cognitive impairment	.56	.49	.22	.24	.40
Visual impairment	.50	.44	.25	.22	.37



English as a second language

In addition, 43% of music teachers work with students for whom English is a second language, distributed by content areas as follows:



Gifted and talented

A little over a third (38%) of music teachers work with at least one student identified as gifted and talented. Among high school teachers, 4% teach Advanced Placement Theory and 9% teach an assortment of classes identified as “honors” or “gifted education.”

Assessment and evaluation

Nearly all music teachers are involved in the assessment of students. Most (86%) of music teachers assign a letter or number grade to children enrolled in music classes or ensembles. Half as many (43%) assign a verbal descriptor. 60% of teachers give at least one grade that “counts” in determining semester averages and honor roll status; however, only 46% of music teachers’ grades count in determining class rank.

	Yes	No	NA
A letter (“A” “B”) or number grade is reported.	86%	10%	3%
A verbal descriptor is reported, e.g., Good, Pass.	43%	43%	14%
Music grades count when calculating students’ semester average.	60%	23%	17%
The music grade counts in determining Honor Roll status.	60%	20%	20%
The music grade counts in calculating class rank.	46%	26%	28%

Criteria used in assessing student work

When asked to indicate the relative importance of various criteria, “participation” was most frequently indicated as one of the largest contributors to the assignment of music grades. This is followed by “attitude” “attendance” and “improvement.”

Assigning grades	Very important	Important	Not very important	Of no importance	Not applicable
Participation	80%	18%	.002%	.007%	1%
Attitude	65%	29%	3%	1%	2%
Attendance	50%	35%	3%	4%	8%
Improvement	47%	43%	4%	2%	3%
Performance tests	45%	38%	11%	2%	4%

Homework and practice	28%	38%	19%	4%	11%
Paper tests	20%	39%	30%	5%	6%
Organization	18%	40%	24%	7%	11%

Perceived changes in educational environment

Music teachers were asked to consider fourteen issues and evaluate whether they had observed an increase, decrease or no change in that area. Issues pertained to budget, advocacy, numbers of music teachers and students, time allocations, diversity of children and opportunity for study. The charts on the next two pages illustrate the variables and teacher responses.

In summary:

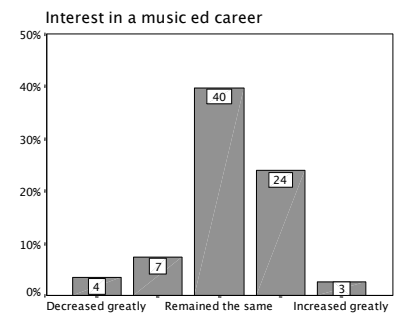
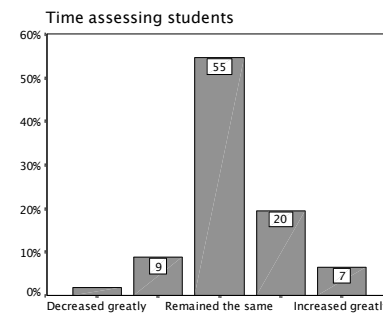
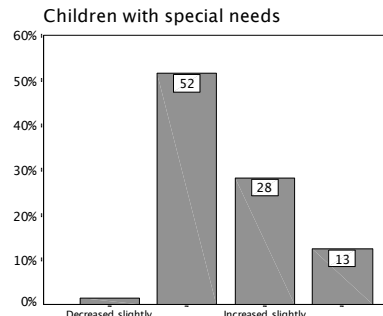
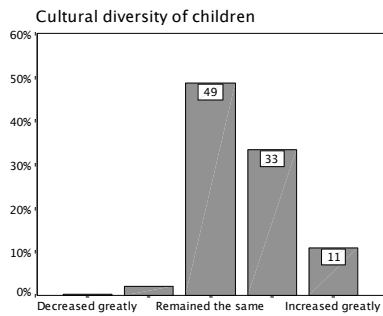
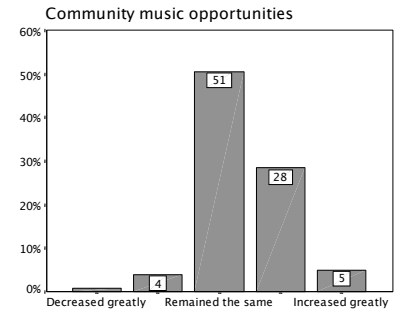
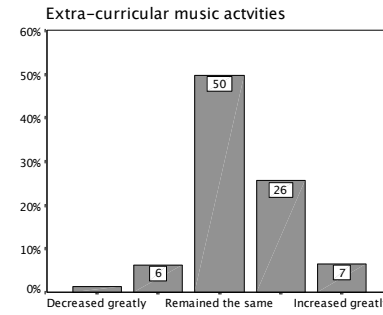
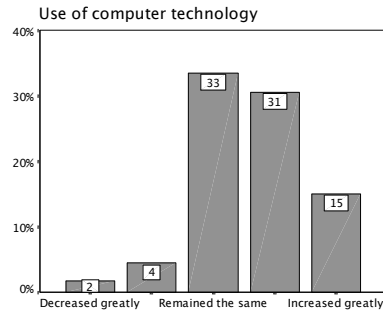
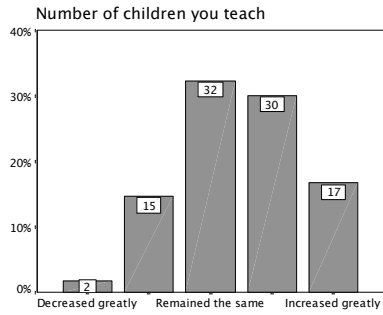
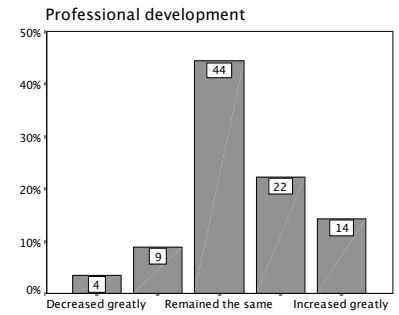
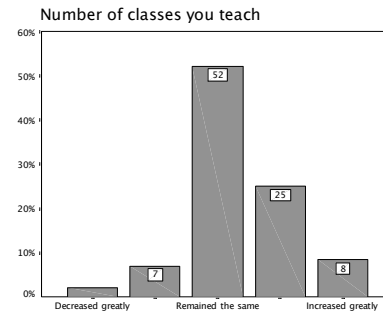
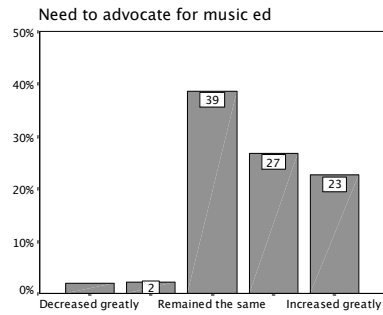
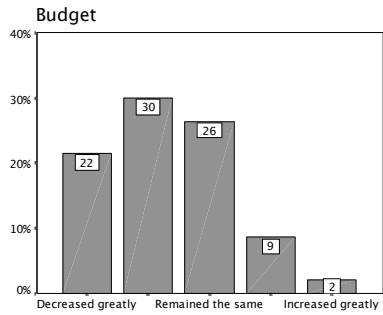
- 52% of music teachers saw their budgets decline;
- 50% feel they need to advocate more for music;
- 47% observed an increase in the number of children they teach;
- 46% increased their use of computer technology;
- 44% observed an increase in the cultural diversity of the children they teach;
- 40% experienced an increase in the number of children with special needs in their classes;
- 33% experienced an increase in the number of classes they teach.

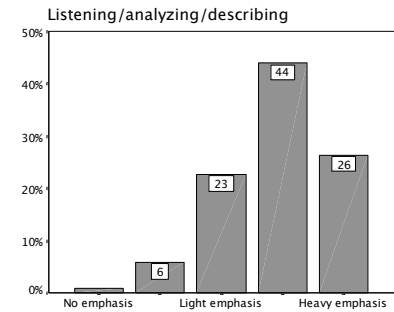
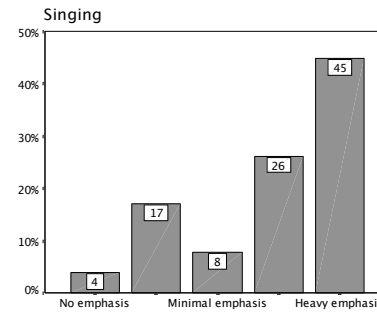
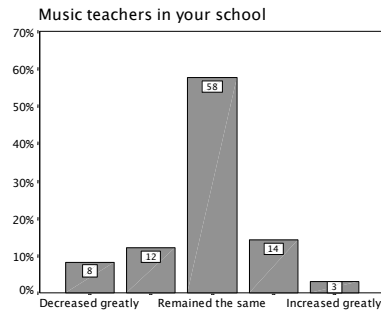
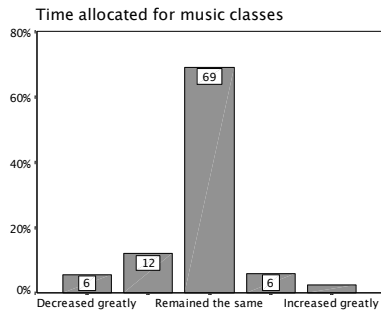
Although there are exceptions, areas that teachers perceive as remaining, for the most part, as “about the same” are:

- Number of music teachers in the school;
- Time allocated for music classes;
- Time assessing students.

¹ Subjects who indicated “don’t know” are omitted from the charts.

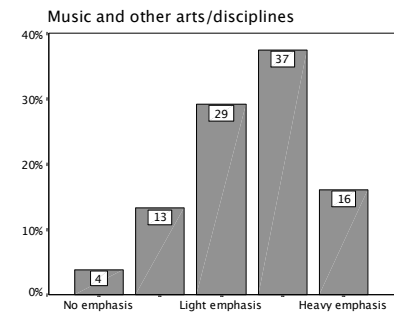
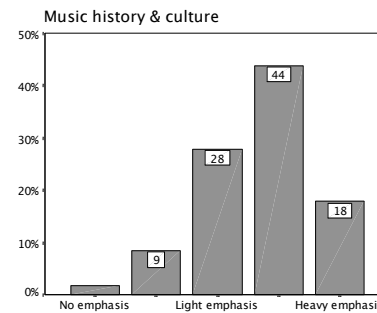
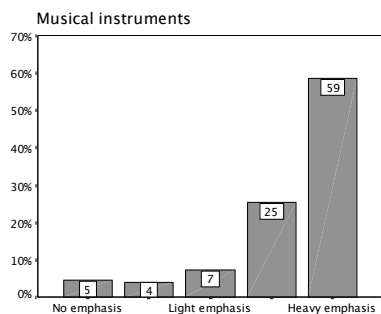
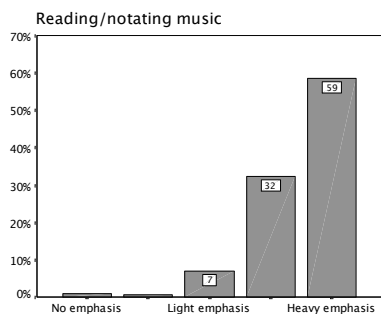
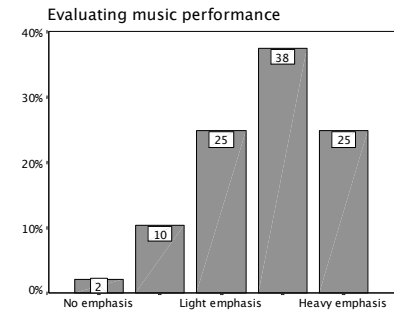
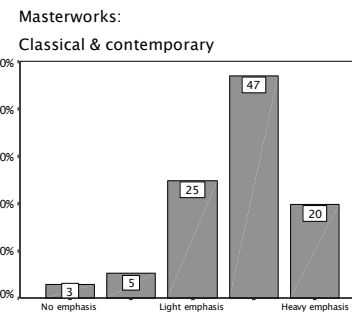
² Percentages are derived by adding together the two categories on either side of the center bar.

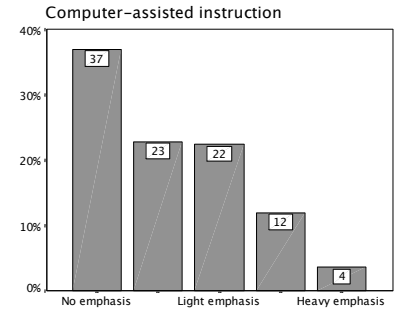
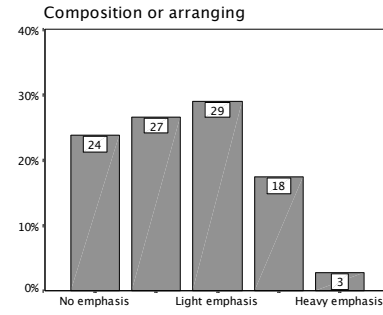
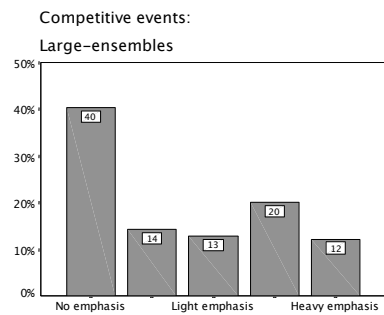
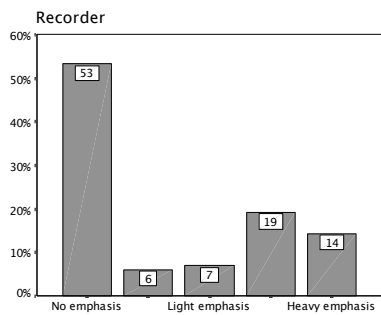
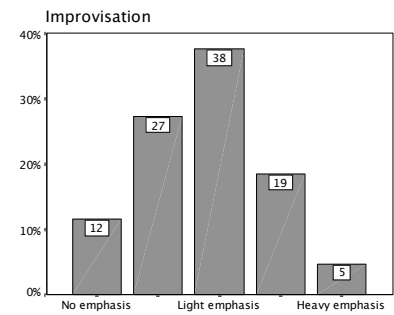
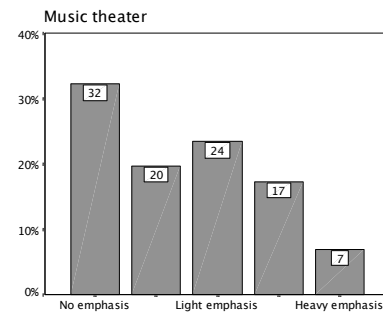
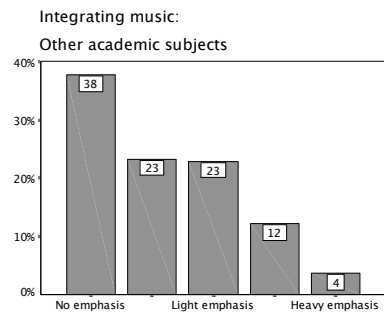
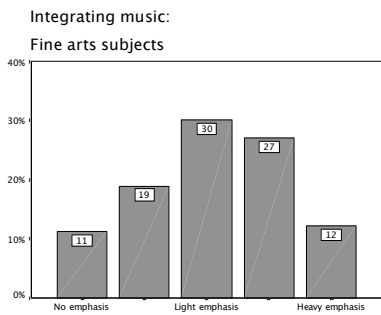
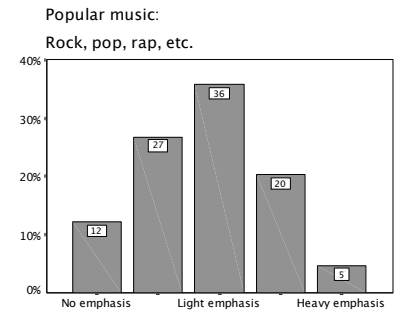
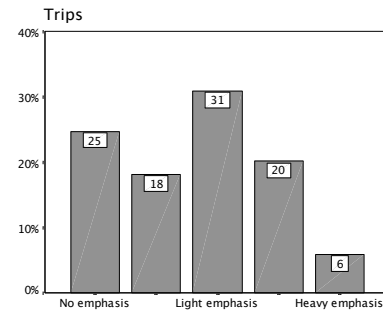
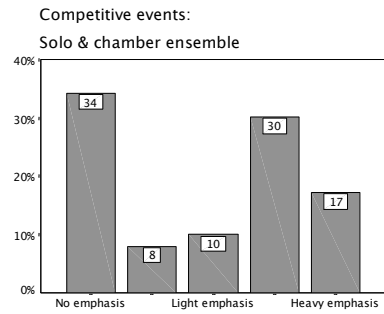
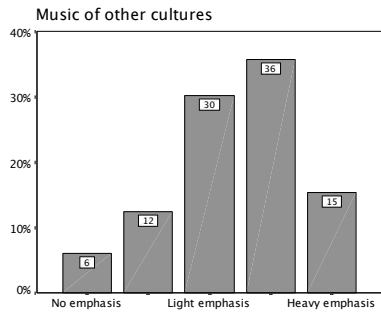


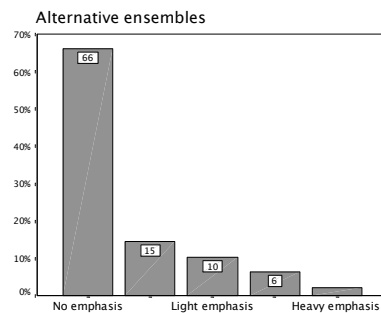
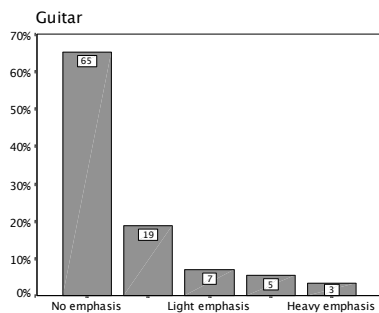
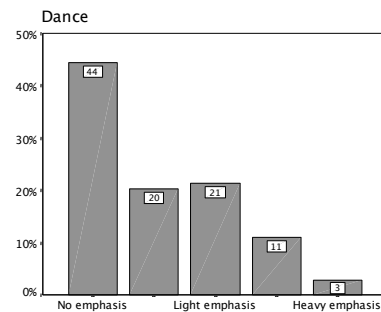
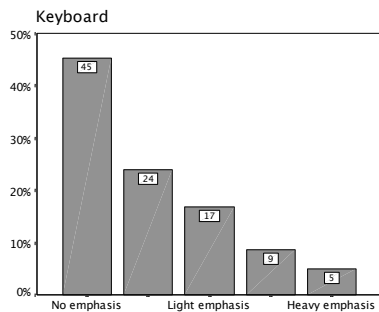


Trends in content areas, methods and strategies

Teachers were asked to indicate the degree of emphasis they placed on 24 different content areas, methods, strategies or trends. If an area did not pertain to their area of teaching, they indicated "no emphasis." The charts below are presented roughly in order of "most" to "least" emphasis. As may be observed in the charts, the traditional areas of reading and notating music, performing on musical instruments and singing appear to receive the most emphasis, regardless of sub-specialty area. Alternative ensembles, guitar, dance and keyboard appear to receive least emphasis.







Greatest challenges as a music teacher

Teachers were asked to describe, in their own words, their greatest challenge(s) as a music educator. Comments (n=583) were coded and grouped into categories that emerged from the data. Those categories in which ten or more comments were observed are listed below, in descending order, beginning with the most frequently cited challenge.

Category	% comments
Limited time and scheduling problems. References to lack of time allocated to music, problems with six-period days and scheduling conflicts forcing students to make choices between music, other activities, or other fine arts classes.	31%
Teaching well to all students. The challenge of meeting standards, planning well, maintaining personal skill, and organizing the curriculum, given the limited time allocated to music.	20%
Motivation and discipline. Concern with maintenance of classroom decorum, children's inappropriate behavior and motivation of children to reach their potential.	17%
Devaluation of music and need to advocate. Teachers complained about colleagues, administrators, parents, guidance counselors and children who devalued music as an area of study.	13%
Budget and finance. Comments pertaining to a lack of financial and other resources needed to build the music program.	10%
Home life, home practice and parental involvement. References to poor home lives, apathetic parental involvement, and failure of children to adequately practice at home.	6%
Recruitment, enrollment and retention of children. Comments pertaining to the difficulty of recruiting and retaining students in elective music programs.	6%
Inclusion of special education and diverse children. Comments regarding the challenges of teaching children with disabilities, or those for whom English is a second language.	6%
Teaching load, class size and extra responsibilities. References to the difficulty of teaching large numbers of children, large class sizes, and the need to complete extra, non-music activities.	6%
No music room. Concerns about "teaching from a cart" or working in sub-optimal, non-classroom settings.	3%
Burnout or remaining energized. Personal concerns about one's sense of psychological health, including references to time taken from one's own family.	3%

Most positive aspects of teaching

Music teachers were also asked to list the greatest positive attribute(s) of their work as a music teacher. Responses (n=493) to this question were coded and sorted into ten categories that emerged from the data. In many respects, categories overlap. They are listed in rank order, followed by the percentage of responses observed within a category.

Positive attribute	% comments
Witnessing students learn and grow musically, intellectually and emotionally. Comments expressing joy in witnessing students' growth, e.g., their love for music, their successes, enjoyment, excitement, sense of accomplishment.	40%
Personal passion for music, music education and the teaching process. Expressions of personal joy in the pleasure of teaching music and making a difference in children's lives.	29%
Personal attributes and qualities. References to qualities such as creativity, enthusiasm, and other traits that suggest a good fit between music education and their personality.	12%
Relationships with children, parents, colleagues. Pleasure in relationships with others who enjoy music.	6%
Making music with children. Performing concerts and making music during the day with children.	6%
Program accomplishments. References to the growth of the music program within the school.	3%
Excellent, talented students. References to the intelligence and excellent musicianship of the students with whom they work.	2%
Reaching many students. The opportunity to work with many children across many grades or to see the same children throughout a lengthy portion of their schooling.	2%
Special education and diverse students. Particular pleasure in seeing children from diverse backgrounds or with special needs succeed.	2%
Administrative support. Appreciation for a superintendent or principal that is personally supportive.	1%

Discussion

The data obtained from this survey represents the full range of schools, programs and geography of our state. Results affirm that there is much that is good in the lives and work of our state's music educators. But the data also raises concerns for our teachers and their personal and professional welfare. The data also has implications for music teacher education, music education policy, and professional development. It suggests and hints at ways that all those concerned with music education in our state may help to provide the very best for our children.

First, the good news: It is clear that the majority of our state's music teachers are functioning at a high level of professionalism. Many write curricula, most align their work on a routine basis to state standards, assess and grade student work, and engage in continued professional growth. Music teachers are well educated and most possess appropriate certification in their subject area. They assume a wide range of non-teaching responsibilities in service to the school as a whole, and are entrusted with the education of many children. Many teach before and after school and on weekends, sometimes for as many hours as they are in school. They are dedicated, enthusiastic, give many live performances, and have many good things to say about their work and their effectiveness.

Many expressed love for their work and are inspired by helping children grow as musicians and creative, expressive human beings. There is a consistency in their general belief that music can help **all** children grow emotionally and in ways that support their humanity, ability to work with others, and their intellect. There is also a pervading sense of pride in the work that many are able to accomplish within their classrooms, schools and communities. As one teacher put it: "Students see music as a window to their soul and as a creative expression of their being. It gives them joy, comfort and a sense of accomplishment."

Another encouraging aspect of the data is that music teachers are consistently addressing the fundamentals of musical literacy, performance, listening and evaluation. Popular and contemporary music is being introduced alongside classical and contemporary masterworks. Many teachers expressed the conviction that much, much more could be offered and taught to children within the school.

Also encouraging is the fact that many music teachers are finding ways to integrate children with special needs into their classes. Children who represent diverse cultures and languages are being included in their music programs. These efforts, laced with the sense of possibility that exists within all children, also leads to the frustrations with large class loads, time and scheduling problems that were voiced by over 30% of music teachers.

The data also raises serious concerns that need to be addressed if the good work that is happening in many music programs is to continue and grow. Simply put, music teachers are being asked to do more with less. They are facing budgetary constraints, working with more children, teaching more classes, spending more time in assessment, engaging in more professional development, and working with a more diverse population of children. This results in less time to spend with individual children, program dilution, and a sense of being stretched thin. One comment in the “greatest challenge” says it all: “Maintaining energy and enthusiasm to inspire, motivate and support the learning of 600 students while carrying equipment from room to room with no breaks.”

At the same time, many teachers also feel a need to advocate for their program’s survival, and for the legitimacy of their work with fellow teachers, administrators and, sometimes, parents and children. In fact, the perception of an increased need to advocate for the survival and legitimacy of their music program was the most pronounced trend observed among music teachers. The demoralizing practice of downgrading the stature of a subject that has been a foundation of human experience in every culture in the world throughout all of recorded history simply must stop.

The data also raises some concerns with respect to the standards being taught and the quality of assessment occurring within the music programs. Many music teachers are asked to work outside of their area of specialization and, although certified, feel uncomfortable doing so. They are also being asked to teach heavy loads and see children for relatively small amounts of time, often in large classes. It is a double bind situation for teachers for which a solution needs to be developed. Stretching teachers thin with large class loads is unfair to children. The notion of effectively instituting a standards-based, systematic music education program in a situation where a teacher is working with classes of 20 - 40 children once a week for less than an hour is asking something that is beyond the scope of all but the most seasoned professional.

Integration of music with other subjects is a topic that is of contemporary interest. Data suggests that this is minimally happening with respect to academic areas, although integration with the other fine arts subjects is far more common. With so little time typically available for music instruction, it may be too difficult to address music standards and academic standards, even though it may be possible to do so under ideal teaching circumstances. This is an area where professional development would be of benefit.

Teacher preparation

The responsibility for the education of future generations of music teachers is a shared responsibility among colleges and current music teachers. There are many music teachers who would be willing to lend a hand if asked.

Based upon the challenges, trends, and areas of emphasis within which teachers are working, the data suggests the following with respect to teacher preparation:

- New music teachers need the knowledge and skill to teach music to groups of children that include individuals with special needs, those for whom English is a second language, and children of other cultures, including war torn nations.
- Effective, humane management of large groups of children is a skill that also must be developed. Motivation and management of children, particularly in large groups, was the second most frequently mentioned challenge facing experienced teachers.
- Although the data in this survey suggests that, on average, the flame of a music program is being kept burning in most schools and districts, it is often within the context of budget reduction, more students to teach, less money, more complex teaching and learning environments, and increased accountability. Teachers need to be prepared to advocate, utilize community resources, and expect programs that may be less developed than the one from which they graduated as a high school student.
- It may be increasingly unrealistic for an instrumental major, in particular, to assume that they will be able to work within their specialty area only. Instrumental teachers need to be prepared for the 25% chance that they will be asked to teach general music. They need techniques and methods that are akin to the work they do in

instrumental classes. If the challenge of helping instrumental teachers work across the music curriculum can be met, the potential for program coherency and systematic progression of musical knowledge and skill will be improved.

- Music teachers also need to develop assessment strategies that include a greater reliance on knowledge and skill. Again, when one works with hundreds of children each week for short periods of time, it is often unrealistic to expect that this can occur. Teachers may have no choice but to settle for an assessment of participation and general perception of attitude, which is often equated with cooperative behavior.

The future

Examination of the data from this survey, particularly the comments of teachers, makes it clear that much good is happening in the music programs of our state. This survey clearly suggests that there are many seasoned professionals among us who are applying some of the best thinking of our profession in their work yet remain virtually isolated from the profession as a whole. Program characteristics vary widely. We need the opportunity to witness these variations and learn from each other, preferably **in context**.

Professional preparation, whether in the beginning stages or as one becomes more involved in professional development, should include more emphasis on best practices in a wide array of contexts. Teacher exchange programs, even if limited to only a day, may be among the most valuable thing we can do for ourselves. Thought needs to be given to professional development of experienced teachers in addition to beginning teachers.

Music teachers need their professional organizations, state and local governments, to combat some persistent issues within the profession, and to help music teachers solidify the fact that music and the arts belong in the education of all children.

Meanwhile, music educators must continue to strive and expect dignified instructional settings and place in the curriculum. We need to assure that best practices are being practiced and transmitted to all within the profession, and to help those teachers in need of support.

Content Areas

The next three sections briefly summarize the implications of the survey as it applies to choral, band and general music teachers. Full reports are available on-line at www.ilmea.org.

Implications for Choral Teacher Education

Dr. Robert Sinclair
VanderCook College of Music

Some of the results from the survey were quite predictable, such as the number of students seen each week, number of extra duties or extra hours worked by educators, involvement in school musicals, as well as the number of mainstreamed students. Other areas, such as professional development, trends in music education, the implementation of the national standards and new assessment strategies offer opportunities for exploration and debate.

The predictable

It was not particularly surprising that most of those who labeled themselves as "choral" music educators (89%) taught in the secondary schools. While there are elementary school choirs, they tend to be a component of a general music curriculum or an extra curricular activity for students and, therefore, not the primary focus of that educator. 40% of choral music educators teach both Middle School and High School levels. The percentages were about equal between those who were primarily Middle School teachers with High School duties and those who were primarily High School with Middle School duties.

For higher education, the implications remain clear. Many undergraduate choral music majors believe that they will find a high profile choral job, usually in a high school. It is important for these future music teachers to discover that a good part of each day will be spent as a part of a larger educational experience for their students and that their job will involve a significant amount of work before and after school as well as weekends. Many will also be assigned extra duties.

Likewise, given the range of ages and abilities that they will meet in the first year of music teaching, music teacher education needs to develop in teacher candidates the ability to select appropriate repertoire, useful classroom management skills, and suitable curricular goals across grade levels while helping their graduates to understand a bigger picture of student growth across these grade levels.

Another important finding in the survey has implications for the education of choral music educators. Result of the survey show that there are very few jobs where the choral music educator is not required to play in rehearsal and, in many cases, accompany the choir. It is clear that our choral majors must develop the requisite skills to play multiple choral parts, accompany in rehearsal and, perhaps, at solo and small ensemble contests, and be able to play well enough that the rehearsal doesn't suffer if they are behind the keyboard.

Less predictable

The responses related to music educators' professional development might also inform higher education about course offerings in continuing education, undergraduate and graduate level courses. As music teacher education standards rise and the curriculum in teacher education becomes more complex, several topics remain important. The three biggest areas for professional development were: music literature, conducting and rehearsal technique, and teaching methods in the subject area.

More problematic

Related to professional development are the responses pertaining to methods, trends and strategies in music education. Looking at how educators are implementing the National Standards into their teaching, several are included by the nature of choral music. Singing; reading and notating music; listening to, analyzing and describing music; and evaluating music and musical performances were areas of moderate to heavy emphasis. Two of the standards that were less emphasized, but may warrant further exploration are: composing/arranging and improvisation. If we want students to read and notate music, asking them create through composition seems logical. Constructing rhythm exercises and writing melodic sight-reading exercises for the choir are ways for students to apply

what they are learning in a very real way. Improvisation and learning to fit into harmonies is great for building confidence and building the listening skills of a singer. Looking for ways to implement all of the standards will help educators to balance their teaching.

From the source: what did the teachers say?

There are a number of challenges that face choral music educators today. The most frequently mentioned issue is time. Many find it difficult to balance their teaching duties and their desire to provide their students interesting, innovative choral experiences with new teaching standards, graduation and college entry requirements, paper work, and extra-curricular choral activities.

Other challenges mentioned include a changing climate of student discipline, changing cultural attitudes, and administrative issues like testing that have a direct impact on the choral music classroom.

On the bright side: The reasons we teach

There is little to add to what the choral educators themselves have said so I will simply rely on a few quotes from the survey.

"Seeing students improve musically over 4 years of high school"...or when a student tells you that "music was the best part of their high school years."

"The greatest positive attribute is to show children that 'all God's critters got a place in the choir.' That together we achieve what we cannot achieve alone. That they are all valuable and contributing members of the performing group."

I hope that in reflecting on the results of this survey, higher education can find confirmation of areas that are being taught successfully as well as finding areas that we can continue to explore. The goal should be to turn out teachers with insight about current trends in student learning, a desire to be models of life-long learning, and well-rounded musicians and conductors prepared to teach and inspire their students to become life-long participants in and consumers of music.

Implications for General Music

Dr. Glenda Cosenza
Northern Illinois University

Child to teacher ratio in general music at the elementary level.

The survey respondents indicate that on average, most general music teachers work with hundreds of students in a given week in the school year. In other words, they must deliver quality instruction--and assess the results of that instruction--to hundreds of students with all kinds of cognitive, psychological and physical abilities and disabilities, all kinds of learning style preferences, all kinds and levels of musical aptitude and interest, and children from a wide range of cultural traditions and backgrounds.

The implications of the foregoing are quite staggering, although certainly not unexpected, for those of us in music teacher preparation. At my institution, we require our students to take a variety of courses to prepare them for working with special needs students, to assess children's learning, to integrate technology into their instruction, and to differentiate the instruction so as to include children of a range of abilities and learning style preferences. None of these courses 'articulate' with one another. They are taught, in some cases, in separate colleges by faculty that have no connection whatsoever with our music faculty. Meanwhile, in our music methods classes, we are woefully aware of the pressures that will come to bear on those who become general music teachers. We dutifully try to cram as much about assessment and working with inclusion students and teaching reading in the music curriculum and creating lessons that will resonate with the 'visual' learners and the 'kinesthetic' learners and the 'left-brain' learners as possible into our one general music methods course, usually at the expense of more in-depth content knowledge.

We may need to radically alter everything about the way we design and deliver methods courses. Perhaps Professional Development Schools can serve as springboards for redesigning college methods classes so that these can be delivered within meaningful contexts. Pre-service educators can take preliminary coursework in which they focus intently on content knowledge first and then work for a full year in a kind of incremental internship

program with university teachers on site, out in classrooms, in the trenches. Music teacher preparation programs around the country—possibly here in Illinois—are already working this way or in ways similar to it. I recommend IMEA sponsor a daylong symposium as part of the annual IMEA meeting. It might take place on Wednesday of IMEA week. We would invite general music teacher education faculty from a variety of institutions around the country who have restructured their general music methods courses and practice teaching experiences and share information and ideas.

Teacher attrition and burnout

The survey indicates a healthy balance among teachers who are new to the profession and teachers who have stayed in the profession for many years in this State. It would be interesting to know how Illinois ranks among other states in this regard. I believe this situation is commendable and while the profession faces enormous challenges, something is working as it ought to. Can we (IMEA) find ways to reward and honor music teachers who reach milestones such as 10 or 15 or 20 years of teaching service? Could we as teacher preparers become aware of reasons why teachers stay in the profession, and why, conversely, they leave it? This information could be of value to our pre-service educators entering the profession.

Implications for Band Programs

Dr. John Grashel
University of Illinois

Approximately one-third of the respondents to the survey identified themselves as music educators that focused on "Band" as the primary teaching area (it should be noted that in Illinois most individuals are certified as "K-12 Music", qualifying them to teach *any* music offering in elementary, middle, or high school settings – in this group over three-fourths hold this type of certification). Interestingly, only one teacher indicated attainment of NBCT certification while 16% of the sample were unfamiliar with NBCT certification. This finding suggests that IMEA might form a task force that could study the topic of NBCT certification and make recommendations to the membership concerning this national certification process.

Six percent of survey respondents hold a Type 75 Administrative certificate, while 10% report engaging in administrative duties as part of their position.

Professional development activities

Professional development activities pursued over the past four years for non-degree purposes were varied and extensive, with Technology the leading area. Assessment, Classroom Management, and Special Education experiences were also reported by many respondents. Almost half of the respondents indicated professional development activity in Conducting/Rehearsal Techniques. Music-specific activities cited included Improvisation, Music of Other Cultures, National/State Standards, Composition/Arranging, Recording/Sound Equipment, Music Literature, Advocacy, Applied Instrument/Voice, and Marching Band Techniques. Interestingly, Arts Integration was mentioned by only a handful of respondents.

Mentoring activities

Mentoring of young teachers by more experienced colleagues is an increasingly vital component of music teacher development in Illinois. Results of this survey indicate that almost half of the respondents would be agreeable to serve as a mentor for novice music educators, while nearly 40% reported that have already provided this function. Thirty-two percent of band educators have talked to students in undergraduate music education classes while 78 % have been observed by preparatory music educators as part of field experience requirements. Fifty-six percent of respondents have served as cooperating teachers for student teachers.

Non-teaching responsibilities

Over half of the respondents indicated that they are assigned non-music teaching duties in addition to music teaching tasks. These obligations include typical assignments such as bus duty, study hall, lunchroom, and hall monitor responsibilities.

Curricular issues

Teachers responding to the survey appear to be actively involved in curriculum development (40 % reported that they had engaged in professional development activities regarding this topic). Seventy-five percent indicated that they “follow” or “partially follow” a curriculum in their teaching. While 73 % stated that their curriculum was aligned with State Standards, only 44.8 % reported alignment with National Standards. This result suggests that IMEA might take a more proactive role in providing in-service experiences that would heighten attention to the National Standards by Illinois band teachers.

Assessment strategies

Not surprisingly, assessment among the respondents is largely “traditional” in concept – such factors as Attendance, Attitude, and Participation dominated the “importance of items in assigning grades” question. With the increasing importance of assessment in today’s schools, it seems incumbent on teacher preparatory institutions as well as professional organizations to insure that this vital content is part of the experiences provided by these entities for Illinois music educators.

Concerns involving special needs children

The overwhelming majority of teachers responding to the survey reported the presence of special needs students in their classes. While most are “Comfortable” or “Very Comfortable” working with these students, only 19 % indicated that an aide is regularly available to assist teachers working with these children.

Greatest challenges

When asked, “*What do you consider to be your greatest challenge(s) as a music educator*” band directors mentioned: student retention, problems with at-home practice and support, traveling between schools, budget constraints, children grouped by grade instead of ability, motivation, sports conflicts, scheduling problems in general, advocacy, maintaining the same program with less and insufficient time with students.

Most positive aspects

Perhaps the most encouraging and interesting aspect of the survey were reactions to the question, "*What do you consider to be the greatest positive attribute(s) of your work as a music educator*". Band directors cited the opportunity to provide a venue other than academics for students to be successful, helping children become better people, instilling a love for music, watching kids grow musically and emotionally, having fun with music every day, instilling pride, helping children make connections between music and other worlds and times, having a positive influence on children, and making a difference in the school.

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