

**A Report
on
PreK-12 Music Education
in
New York State
with a Special Focus on the
Middle Level**

Prepared for the New York State School Music Association
by the
NYSSMA Classroom Music Committee
January 2007

Acknowledgements

A number of individuals contributed to the development of this report. In addition to those listed below we are grateful to the music educators who responded to the survey, the NYSSMA Executive Council and Officers for their support of the project, the University at Buffalo doctoral students Elisabeth Etopio and Karla Hamlen for their help with data collection and analysis, and technical support specialist Robert Perini for assistance with web services.

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Introduction

A major national education reform of the 1990's focused on Standards and related Assessments. New York State, as did other states, responded by developing its own set of learning standards that paralleled the national standards. The New York State Education Department (NYSED), in cooperation with NYSSMA, developed the New York Learning Standards for the Arts to guide the work of music educators and insure a level of music achievement for students. As a logical extension to the learning standards development, NYSSMA and NYSED initiated a plan for the development of a standards-based resource guide and state assessments in music. They collaborated in writing a Goals 2000 grant proposal which supported in part the development of a High School (Commencement Level General Education) Arts Assessment.

The standards reform was followed by a number of changes in New York State regulations, including increased high school diploma requirements and more recently a Middle Level Initiative. The cumulative effect of these changes has been the maintenance of required PreK-12 music and arts instruction, and increased emphasis on instruction in mathematics, English language arts, and other subject areas.

The Classroom Music Committee (CMC), a standing committee of NYSSMA, in studying the regulations and discussing their implications for classroom music practice across the State, realized these changes had the potential for serious impact on classroom music in our schools. Accordingly, they proposed a formal study of the current status of classroom music education in New York State that would place particular emphasis on the Middle Level. The results of such a research project would help establish a baseline that could be used for comparative purposes in the future. Further, the study sought to determine (1) how members perceived the usefulness of various NYSSMA services, and (2) why some music educators in the state do not belong to NYSSMA.

Procedures

An ad hoc subcommittee of the Classroom Music Committee with Maria Runfola and Edward S. Marschilok as principal investigators designed the survey. Two earlier NYSSMA surveys, one in 1991 (*Report on Music Education and the Middle School*) and one in 1989-90 were reviewed for format and questions. Some sections of both surveys were included in the draft for the current survey to allow for comparative analyses. A completed draft was reviewed by members of the Classroom Music Committee and the Executive Council for format and clarity. The instrument was revised to include their suggestions. Based on cost effectiveness, a web-based survey sponsored by the University at Buffalo was used to collect the data. Maria Runfola (UB faculty) facilitated the data collection and compilation process. The survey was launched in the fall of 2005 with the first response made on September 16 and the last response

made on January 24, 2006. The site was shut down on Sunday, January 29, 2006 and the data were downloaded for analyses.

The survey was open to all music educators in New York State whether or not they were members of NYSSMA. In order to encourage participation, Patricia Chiodo, former Chair of Classroom Music Committee, arranged to advertise the survey on the NYSSMA website; to promote it at the Summer 05 and Winter 05 Conferences; and to mail a post card to all music teachers in the State (N= approximately 7500).

Five hundred forty seven New York State music educators responded to the survey. The participants' responses were collected automatically in the on-line survey database which allowed for their confidentiality to be maintained. Data were then analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Analysis of quantitative data revealed a reasonable cross section of responses from elementary, middle, and high school music teachers, both classroom and instrumental; 330 respondents were female, 217 male. Detailed tables regarding the demographic characteristics of the sample are reported in the presentation of the data tables that follow. In addition, survey participants had numerous opportunities to provide comments and were very willing to share their ideas and beliefs regarding the major thrusts of the survey. Members of the CMC compiled these open-ended responses, analyzed them for common themes, and organized the data into tables when possible.

Presentation of Data

Part I: Respondent Information

1. Number of years in music education:

Years	Frequency	Percentage
0-5	101	18.46%
6-10	104	19.02%
11-20	145	26.51%
21 or more	197	36.01%
Total	547	100%

The number of respondents appears to provide a reasonable representation of the field when grouping the data in 10-year periods.

2. Gender:

Sex	Frequency	Percentage
Male	217	39.67%
Female	330	60.33 %
Total	547	100%

More women responded than men, but there seems to be a good representation of both.

3. Level (Multiple responses were permitted):

Level	Frequency	Percentage
Pre-K	41	7.50%
Elementary	288	52.65%
Middle	316	57.77 %
High School	207	37.84 %
College	30	5.48 %
Supervisors/Administrators	60	10.97%
Other	22	4.4%
Total	964*	*

All levels and categories are represented in relative proportions to the field. A variety of music levels were included in the “Other” category, such as private, community-based, church-affiliated, adult choral, retired and student.

*The numbers and percentages total more than 547 and 100% since participants were encouraged to select any applicable category.

4. Institution:

Level	Frequency	Percentage
Public	501	91.59%
Private/Parochial	23	4.20%
Retired	22	4.02%
No answer	1	.19%
Total	547	100%

Public, private and retired music educators participated in reasonable numbers.

5. NYSSMA zone in which you teach/taught:

Zone	Frequency	Percent
1	66	12.07%
2	67	12.25%
3	45	8.23%
4	25	4.57%
5	12	2.19%
6	15	2.74%
7	57	10.42%
8	11	2.01%
9	42	7.68%
10	12	2.19%
11	33	6.03%
12	23	4.20%
13	55	10.05%
14	52	9.51%
15	20	3.66%
No answer	12	2.20%
Total	547	100.0%

The entire state was represented. Respondents from every zone participated.

6. Subject Area (Retired educators were encouraged not to respond):

Subject Area	Frequency	Percentage
General/Classroom Music	310	56.67%
Chorus	244	44.61%
Instrumental lessons	233	42.60%
Band	222	40.59%
Vocal lessons	96	17.55%
Theory and/or Comprehensive foundations	84	15.36%
Orchestra	72	13.16%
Music in our lives	43	7.86%
Other	55	10.05%
Total	1359*	*

All subject areas were represented and clearly most educators taught in multiple areas. General classroom music was a subject area taught by more than half of the respondents, with slightly less than half of the respondents teaching chorus, and a similar number teaching band. Lesser numbers of respondents taught orchestra and high school courses. In addition to the subject areas listed above, “Other” respondents indicated: jazz (16), piano/keyboard/guitar (8), administrators (6), theatre/drama/musicals (5), music technology (4), music history/theory (3), wind ensemble /small ensemble/woodwinds (3), marching band/winter guard (2), recorder (2), handbells/tone chime choir (2), drumming/steel band (2), vocal performance class, conducting/score reading, Suzuki violin, autistic/special ed, and all.

*The numbers and percentages total more than 547 and 100% since participants were encouraged to select any applicable category.

7. District grade-level groupings (Retired educators were encouraged not to respond):

Grouping	Frequency	Percent
K-12	16	2.92%
K-4; 5-8; 9-12	70	12.80%
K-5; 6-8; 9-12	253	46.25%
K-6; 7-12	27	4.94%
K-6; 7-8; 9-12	58	10.60%
K-8; 9-12	11	2.01%
Other	89	16.27%
No answer	23	4.21%
Total	547	100.0%

Almost half of the respondents indicated their district is grouped into elementary (K-5), middle (6-8), and high school (9-12). The other areas are represented, but there was a variety of configurations, in particular “other” was the next highest percentage response.

7A. Grade level configuration supporting or inhibiting music program:

Approximately 84% of survey participants (N=459) provided responses to this item. Comments were organized by the grade level configuration included in the survey. Comments were generally positive, negative, or neutral (no impact) with respect to the respondents’ music programs. A number of participants supplied both positive and negative responses resulting in totals greater than 100%. Some comments were not responsive to the survey question and have not been included.

K-12 respondents (N=15) were quite positive about their configuration, remarking that working in one building allowed teachers to share resources. One person liked knowing exactly what the students have been taught, stating “if you’re the only game in town there is no one to blame but yourself”. On the down side, teachers commented that performing groups were small and had trouble keeping balanced instrumentation.

K-4; 5-8; 9-12 respondents (N=55) included orchestra, choral, and general music teachers who were satisfied with the configuration. Band directors were critical, reporting that most instrumental students do not begin lessons until grade 5. In districts where there was a 6-8 band, huge differences in ability level occurred between 6th and 8th graders because of the later start.

K-5; 6-8; 9-12 was the most common configuration (N=210). Those who responded positively felt it works well with their program citing the opportunity to work with a related arts team. They felt “it allows time to develop the young/beginning musician”. The most common complaint came again from dissatisfied instrumental directors responsible for grade 6-8 bands in districts where lessons begin in grade 5. However, band directors from large districts that support a band for each grade level were very satisfied. Several respondents felt grades 6-8 do not belong together, stating “sixth grade belongs at the elementary school”. Another common complaint was students being removed from general music and performing groups because of AIS (Academic

Intervention Services). Some performing ensemble directors regret that “elementary ensembles are not as good without 6th graders”. Several districts reported that general music ends at grade 5.

The majority of K-6; 7-12 music educators (N=24) were happy with their job situation. They liked the greater continuity between grade levels and the “chance to see students grow over six years”. There was no consistency in the negative comments, ranging from “no continuity between elementary and secondary” to a “feeling of being isolated”.

K-6; 7-8; 9-12 survey participants (N=47) liked the opportunity for general music instruction to continue uninterrupted through grade 6. Instrumental teachers felt they can really give students a strong start when they have them for three years.

The K-8 and 9-12 (N=9) was the smallest group of respondents, usually from very small school districts. The majority of teachers were dissatisfied with small performing ensembles and the limited amount of contact time with general music.

8. District Pre-K program:

Pre-K Program	Frequency	Percent
Yes	207	37.84%
No	246	44.97%
Do not know	71	12.98%
No answer	23	4.3%
Total	547	100.0%

Nearly 40% of the respondent districts had a pre-K program. A majority of the respondents, however, did not have a pre-K program or were unaware of the existence of a pre-K program in their respective districts.

9. District Pre-K music program led/taught by:

Pre-K Program	Frequency	Percent
Classroom specialist	66	12.07% (31.88%)
Music specialist	48	8.78% (23.19%)
Both	15	2.74% (7.25%)
Do not know	63	11.52% (30.43%)
No answer	355 (15)	64.89% (7.25%)
Total	547 (207)	100.0%

The majority of respondents did not answer or did not know who leads/teaches the district’s pre-K music program. Of the 207 respondents who were aware that their district included a pre-K program, classroom teachers were mostly responsible for music instruction (32%). Approximately 23% of the knowledgeable respondent districts had music specialists responsible for the music learning of pre-K students. A small percentage of these districts (7%) had music specialists and pre-K teachers who worked together to provide music experiences for the pre-K students.

10. District kindergarten music activities led/taught by:

Kindergarten Music	Frequency	Percent
Classroom teacher	58	10.60%
Music specialist	388	70.93%
Both	40	7.31%
Do not know	38	6.95%
No answer	23	4.21%
Total	547	100.0%

An overwhelming majority of the respondents reported that their district’s kindergarten students received music instruction from music specialists. In approximately 7% of the districts, music specialists and classroom specialists collaborated to provide music experiences for kindergarten students. Approximately one in ten districts had kindergarten programs where music activities were led/taught by classroom teachers.

Part II: NYSSMA Information

1. NYSSMA Membership:

NYSSMA Membership	Frequency	Percentage
Currently a member	402	73.49%
Previously a member	104	19.01%
Have never been a member	40	7.31%
No answer	1	0.18%
Total	547	100.0%

Almost three-quarters of the respondents were NYSSMA members. Approximately one-fifth of the respondents were previously NYSSMA members, but for a variety of reasons were not currently members.

2. Reasons for non-NYSSMA membership:

Reason	Previous Members N = 104*	Never a Member N = 40*
Cost/Expense/Money/Fees/Dues too much	66	24
Value/no benefit/need	27	17
No time	16	5
Plan to re-join/join	9	4
Lack of: assistance to NYC teachers; NYSSMA diversity; materials for urban education.	4	2

“Cost” (expense, money, fees, and dues) emerged as the main theme from the analysis of comments regarding “reasons for non-NYSSMA membership.” The next most often recorded reason was “value” (no benefit/need). Specifically, some respondents did not feel that the cost benefit ratio was reasonable.

A number of participants indicated that they will re-join or join in the near future. A small number of respondents indicated a lack of NYSSMA attention to urban (NYC) music program issues.

*The number of responses total more than the N since some respondents commented in more than one category.

3A. NYSSMA Resources used:

Resource	Frequency	Percentage
Website	439	80.26%
The School Music News	428	78.24%
Assessment in Classroom Music	91	16.64%
Music: A Resource Guide for Standards-Based Instruction	207	37.84%
NYSSMA Manual	470	85.92%
None of the above	24	4.39%
Total	1659*	*

Participants indicated that the NYSSMA resources most commonly used were the NYSSMA Manual, the NYSSMA website, and the School Music News. More than three out of four respondents reported using one or more of these three resources. Approximately two out of five people have used *Music: A resource guide for standards-based instruction*. The total number of responses indicated that, on average, participants use three or more NYSSMA resources.

*The numbers and percentages total more than 547 and 100% since participants were encouraged to select any applicable category.

3B. MENC Resources used:

Resource	Frequency	Percentage
Website	379	69.29%
Membership magazines	385	70.38%
Publications	317	57.95%
None of the above	75	13.71%
Total	1156*	*

More than half of the participants have used MENC’s membership magazines, website, and other publications. The total number of responses indicated that, on average, participants use

two or more MENC resources. In general, NYSSMA resources were more widely utilized than MENC resources.

*The numbers and percentages total more than 547 and 100% since participants were encouraged to select any applicable category.

3C. NYSED Resources used:

Resource	Frequency	Percentage
Website	246	44.97%
Curriculum Publications	141	25.78%
Summary of Arts Part 100 Regulations	135	24.68%
Music: A Resource Guide for Standards-Based Instruction	267	48.81%
None of the above	160	29.25%
Total	949*	*

Almost half of the respondents reported that they utilize the NYSED website and *Music: A resource guide for standards-based instruction*. It is interesting to note that in this item, 267 participants reported using the resource guide, whereas in item 3A, only 207 participants cited using the document. Either the respondents did not realize that it was the same document jointly developed by NYSED and NYSSMA, or different people use the NYSSMA website than the NYSED website.

Approximately one-quarter of the participants used NYSED’s curricular publications and the summary of arts regulations. Almost 30% of those questioned had not made use of any NYSED resources.

*The numbers and percentages total more than 547 and 100% since participants were encouraged to select any applicable category.

4. Additional resources NYSSMA could develop:

Common Themes NYSSMA can assist music educators by:	Member Responses	Non-member Responses	Totals
Providing access to informational resources: e.g. calendar of regional events, existing music library, camps	56	22	78
Working collaboratively with SED to revise and develop Syllabi, Curricula, Assessments, Lesson Plans	45	8	53
Offering better access to and additional advocacy strategies in support of local music education programs	33	12	45
Continuing to present professional development opportunities: e.g. Regional Workshops and Conference sessions	28	10	38
Expanding the offerings on the NYSSMA web site: e.g. Blogs, chat rooms	25	6	31

The most frequently requested additional resources were informational items including calendars of regional events, easy access to the NYSSMA music library inventory, and a listing of summer music camps for students. A number of respondents encouraged NYSSMA to continue to work collaboratively with the NYS Education Department to revise and develop syllabi, assessments, and other curricular resources for PreK–12 music education programs. Respondents were either unaware of NYSSMA’s advocacy materials or were desirous of additional advocacy strategies to support their programs. Some survey participants were looking for continued professional development opportunities, while others expressed interest in enhanced web site materials.

It is interesting to note that a small number (12) indicated NYSSMA is doing a “good job”.

5. Personnel resources:

Resource	Frequency	Percentage
County Presidents	231	42.23%
NYSSMA Officers	170	31.08%
NYSSMA Zone Representatives	284	51.92%
NYSSMA Classroom Music Committee	45	8.23%
SED Representative	75	13.71%
None of the above	184	33.64%
Total	989*	*

Half of the respondents reported that they used their NYSSMA Zone Representatives as a resource. A fair percentage of respondents utilized their county presidents (42%) and NYSSMA officers (31%) as personnel resources. A small percentage of participants reported using services provided by the classroom music committee. Approximately one-third of the respondents do not use any of the personnel resources provided by NYSSMA or SED.

*The numbers and percentages total more than 547 and 100% since participants were encouraged to select any applicable category.

6. NYSSMA Importance/Provision of Programs:

NYSSMA	Frequency (Percentage)			
	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Importance	307 (56.12%)	192 (35.10%)	33 (6.03%)	14 (2.56%)
Effective Programs	267 (48.81%)	250 (45.70%)	21 (3.84%)	8 (1.46%)
Do Other Things	133 (24.31%)	310 (56.67%)	91 (16.64%)	12 (2.19%)

A large majority of the participants agreed (strongly or somewhat) that NYSSMA was an important organization and that it provides effective programs for themselves and their students. Despite this overwhelming support, the respondents also felt that NYSSMA can do some additional things to help them with their music programs.

7. Suggestions for NYSSMA help with local music programs.

There was a tremendously strong call for staff development in a variety of formats: “focus workshops on middle level needs”, “more resources for the middle level educator”, and a call to work collaboratively with SED to develop curriculum. Another major theme for staff development called for targeting the urban music educator.

Teachers suggested that NYSSMA “be more pro active in educating the public and school administration as to the validity of the arts”. Member and non-members would like NYSSMA to recommend minimum seat time for elementary and middle school students.

Requests for improvements in the format for NYSSMA Solo Festivals and revisions to the NYSSMA Manual were frequently repeated.

Providing avenues to access grant money, establishing mentor programs for new teachers, and using the NYSSMA Web Site for online discussion were also suggested multiple times.

8. NYSSMA Activity Attendance (in the past three years):

Activity	Frequency (Percentage)			
	Always	Frequently	Occasionally	Never
Winter Conference	69 (12.61%)	73 (13.35%)	135 (24.68%)	270 (49.36%)
Summer Conference	33 (6.03%)	44 (8.04%)	77 (14.08%)	393 (71.85%)
Classroom Music Session (Winter Conf.)	24 (4.39%)	50 (9.14%)	87 (15.90%)	386 (70.57%)
Classroom Music Session (Summer Conf.)	17 (3.11%)	24 (4.39%)	56 (10.24%)	450 (82.27%)
Regional Workshop	23 (4.20%)	54 (9.87%)	152 (27.79%)	318 (58.14%)
PEAK Festival	9 (1.65%)	6 (1.10%)	20 (3.66%)	512 (93.60%)
Solo/Ensemble Festival	311 (56.86%)	80 (14.63%)	63 (11.52%)	93 (17.00%)
Major Organizations	78 (14.26%)	73 (13.35%)	126 (23.03%)	270 (49.36%)

Solo/ensemble festivals were the most frequently attended NYSSMA activity over the last three years. A majority of the respondents indicated that they have always participated in solo/ensemble festivals, while another 26% of the respondents either frequently or occasionally were involved in these festivals.

While half of the participants attended one or more winter conferences in the past three years, smaller percentages attended a classroom music session at the winter conference. Half of the participants have also been involved at some level (always, frequently, or occasionally) with major organizations over the past three years. Regional workshops have also been attended by approximately 40% of the respondents.

Large proportions of respondents have not attended the summer conference or PEAK festival in the last three years.

9. NYSSMA Activity Value:

Activity	Frequency (Percentage)			
	High value	Some value	Little value	Not applicable
Winter Conference	163 (29.8%)	118 (21.57%)	51 (9.32%)	215 (39.31%)
Summer Conference	74 (13.53%)	85 (15.54%)	51 (9.32%)	337 (61.61%)
Classroom Music Session (Winter Conf.)	69 (12.61%)	84 (15.36%)	45 (8.23%)	349 (63.80%)
Classroom Music Session (Summer Conf.)	40 (7.31%)	53 (9.69%)	45 (8.23%)	409 (74.77%)
Regional Workshop	51 (9.32%)	125 (22.85%)	47 (8.59%)	324 (59.23%)
PEAK Festival	23 (4.20%)	12 (2.19%)	31 (5.67%)	481 (87.93%)
Solo/Ensemble Festival	271 (49.54%)	142 (25.96%)	38 (6.95%)	96 (17.55%)
Major Organizations	134 (24.5%)	102 (18.65%)	66 (12.07%)	245 (44.79%)

A majority of the respondents indicated that solo/ensemble festival was a valuable NYSSMA activity. Major Organizations and the Winter Conference had value (high plus some) to the participants. A high number indicated that other activities were not applicable.

10. Recommended topics for Classroom Music Sessions at Conferences/Regional Workshops (N=334)

Approximately 61% of the participants responded to this question (N=334). There was strong agreement among NYSSMA members and non-members that curriculum with its related elements was the most important topic for future classroom music sessions at conferences and workshops. The participants were interested in attending “more hands on workshops – Kodaly, Orff, Dalcroze” as well as learning about “curriculum development” and “practical introductions to Music Learning Theory.”

A large number of respondents wanted sessions regarding choral literature and conducting; the use of technology and available software; and workshops on upper elementary and middle level education. Classroom instrument instruction, advocacy of local programs, special education, and assessment were also proposed sessions.

11. Teach/administer Middle Grades (5-8):

Middle Grades (5-8)	Frequency	Percent
Teach/administer one or all	411	75.14
Do not teach/administer	136	24.86
Total	547	100.0

Three-quarters of the participants taught or administered at least one of the middle grades (5-8).

Part III: Focus on Middle Level

1. All Students Receive Classroom/General Music Instruction:

Grade	Frequency (Percentage) N=411*			
	Yes	Uncertain	No	No answer
5	350 (85.16%)	12 (2.92%)	15 (3.65%)	34 (8.27%)
6	283 (68.86%)	10 (2.43%)	74 (18.00%)	44 (10.71%)
7	167 (40.63%)	24 (5.84%)	154 (37.47%)	66 (16.06%)
8	124 (30.17%)	24 (5.84%)	193 (46.96%)	70 (17.03%)

According to respondents, a large majority of grade 5 students and two out of three grade 6 students received classroom/general music instruction. Only four in ten grade 7 students and three in ten grade 8 students received classroom/general music instruction. Overall, as students

progress from grades five through eight, fewer of them receive classroom/general music instruction.

*Note: N=411 because only those who indicated they teach/administer the middle grades answered this item.

2. The periods of general music students receive per year:

Periods (Times per Week/Cycle)	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8
180 (Every Day)	1	2	3	1
120 (Three per Week)	0	4	5	4
90 (Every Other Day)	1	34	33	19
76-80 (Two per Week)	44	26	20	10
Daily for 8-13 weeks	7	19	2	6
36-50 (Once per Week)	146	200	123	116
30 (One of Six Days)	17	13	2	0
Not offered	1	26	42	62
Other	1	41	61	49
Do not Know	41	32	39	32
Total	259	397	330	299

Most middle level students (grades 5-8) received between 36 and 50 periods per year, or the equivalent of one period per week, of general classroom music instruction. In grades 5 and 6, small but significant numbers of schools provided 76 to 90 instructional periods per year, or the equivalent of 2-2.5 periods per week. The patterns were repeated in grades 7 and 8 but with somewhat smaller numbers, particularly at grade 8. As noted elsewhere in this report, the number of students who received no general classroom music instruction increased dramatically from grade 5 to grade 8. However many students performed in their middle-level band, chorus and/or orchestra instead of participating in general music classes.

3. The minutes in each period of general music for students in grades 5-8.

Minutes	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8
30	68	27	0	0
33-39	31	27	27	24
40-41	118	144	124	89
42-44	22	61	63	53
45-46	38	31	28	23
48-58	11	11	13	10
60	5	8	5	4
80	1	3	4	4
90	0	1	1	2
0	3	23	47	92
Unsure	40	7	10	18
Total	337	343	324	319

The responses to this item did not fit any consistent pattern. Groupings presented in the chart emerged from reviewing the patterns of data.

Classroom general music instruction was delivered to students in 30 to 90 minute periods over grades 5, 6, 7, and 8. In grades 5-6 the vast majority of general music classes were 30 to 44 minutes in duration. Yet, a small number of classes had longer periods of 48 to 60 minutes. The pattern in grades 7-8 was similar to that in grades 5-6 with a slight shift to longer durations. Most 7-8 classes were delivered in 40 to 46 minutes. A few districts were using longer periods of 48 to 90 minutes in duration.

Some school districts did not offer general music to students in these grades. This trend was more apparent in grades 7 and 8. The data suggested that some schools were not in compliance with regulations as enacted the New York State Board of Regents.

4. Grade 7 and 8 Students meet the ½ unit requirement by:

Instructional Area	Frequency	Percent (N=411)
Classroom/General Music	296	72.02%
Band/Choir/Orchestra	258	62.77%
Other	16	3.89%
Don't know	74	18.00%
Total	644*	*

Almost three-quarters of the grade 7 and 8 students met the one-half unit required music instruction through participation in classroom/general music. A large number of the students also fulfilled their required music instruction by participating in band, chorus, and/or orchestra. Some grade 7 and 8 students participated in both classroom/general music instruction and one or more performing groups.

*Note: N=411 because only those who indicated they teach/administer the middle grades answered this item. The numbers and percentages total more than 411 and 100% since participants were encouraged to select any applicable category.

5. When do the performing ensembles in your school meet?

Participants were asked to provide data on whether their grade 5 through 8 ensembles met before school, during the day, activity period, after school, combination, or didn't know. Unfortunately, a coding error resulted in unusable data summaries.

6, 7, & 8. Number of times per week that the 6th, 7th, and 8th grade performing ensembles meet:

Frequency	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8
Every Other Day (2.5 per Week)	168	198	157
Twice per Week	76	48	76
Once per Week	67	16	67
Daily	25	40	25
Three times per Week	22	25	22
Four times per Week	4	7	4
Six Times per Week	1		1
Once in Three Days (Two of Six Days)	19	2	4
Once in Four Days	1		1
Once in Six Days	3		
2.5 per Month	1		
1.5 Times per Week (Six Times per Month)	1		1
Six Times per Year	1	2	1
Less than once	1		1
Three times before Concert	1		1
Variable	2		2
Out of school	2	4	
Not Sure	3	15	3
Total	398	357	366

Most of the grades 6, 7, and 8 performing groups have at least two rehearsals per week. The most frequently reported rehearsal pattern was every other day (approximately 47%), followed by twice per week (approximately 18%), and followed by once per week (approximately 13%). A small, but notable, number of performing groups rehearsed on a daily basis.

Part IV: Standards

1. Standards Effect on Music Program (past 5 years):

Standards Effect	Frequency	Percent
Yes	346	63.25%
No	165	30.17%
Not applicable	36	6.58%
Total	547	100%

A strong majority of respondents indicated that the standards have had an effect on their music program in the past five years. How the learning standards specifically impacted aspects of the districts' music programs is addressed in the next two items.

2. Results of Learning Standards on Music Instruction/Program Offerings:

Instruction/Program	Frequency	Percent
Increased	122	22.30%
Decreased	57	10.42%
No change	167	30.53%
Not applicable	201	36.75%
Total	547	100%

The learning standards did not change or were not applicable to approximately two-thirds of the participants' music instruction time and/or program offerings. Two in ten respondents indicated their instruction time and/or program offerings increased as a result of the implementation of the learning standards, while one in ten indicated a decrease. There were no apparent differences in the patterns of comments between members and non-members.

Based on the respondents' comments, the New York State Arts Standards have contributed much to help teachers with their instructional program. A number of ways were enumerated but the predominant one was assistance in developing lesson plans as well as a cohesive, expanded curriculum and more course offerings. These areas were cited in numerous comments (N=22) along with the validation for music in the overall education of children. Other stated reasons included help with teacher orientation and accountability.

While the Arts Standards have helped all music teachers, many participants felt that the standards and assessments in English language arts and mathematics often take precedence over the music standards in the schools. Consequently, in spite of the positive trends reported, respondents expressed serious concern that music programs have been diminished because of AIS (Academic Intervention Services) and testing. Several respondents said too many students were being denied the opportunity to participate in music offerings. The areas of scheduling (N=8), school day changes (N=8), program cuts (N=7), and perceived lack of administrative support have affected the quality of the participants' programs. This suggests that many NYS children may not be receiving the amount of music instruction to which they are entitled by the Part 100 regulations.

Part V: Additional Comments

Responses to questions in Part V were analyzed for emerging themes. Tabulations were completed separately for members and non-members. Where there was consensus regarding the themes, no comparisons are reported. However, for those questions where there were differences in opinion between members and non-members, those differences are reported.

1. Middle level best practices and/or exemplary programs/teachers:

Survey participants consisted of members (N=197) and non-members (N=75). Topics concerning best practices emerged, with four key ideas emerging as important among 10% or more of all participants.

Regular and frequent instructional time during the school day was the top concern among members and non-members. While specifics varied depending on existing conditions with schools, participants noted the importance of consistent contact time with students within the school day.

Active participation was also identified as a best practice among all respondents. Suggested examples of active participation included all performance ensembles, keyboards, guitars, recorders, technology and drumming experiences. Orff and Kodaly experiences were also noted among “hands on” experiences.

Providing a variety of music course offerings was suggested by responding members. In addition to general music and traditional performing ensembles, participants suggested coursework in music technology, contemporary issues, music history and world music.

Finally, members suggested that general music be made mandatory for all students regardless of participation in performance ensembles. Among non-members, only 5% of the responders made this suggestion.

Both members and non-members offered many names and school districts as being exemplary.

2. Middle level weak elements:

With 64% of those responding, there was an overwhelming feeling as to the weaknesses in the middle school music programs. The four main categories were:

- scheduling;
- lack of administrative support;
- lack of good curriculum;
- lack of student engagement.

Scheduling was mentioned four to one as the main cause, including block scheduling, AIS, lack of academic standards, and no continuity of program. Lack of administrative support also contributed to weaknesses in middle level music programs and may relate to scheduling issues.

Other contributing factors included the lack of an exciting, sequential curriculum that engages students, poor teaching, program cuts, and placing students in performing groups rather than general music classes.

Two persons mentioned lack of communication with the parents. This might be construed as lack of parental knowledge of the program and the goals of the program.

3. Opportunities to enhance middle level music programs:

Approximately 45% of the participants responded to this question (N=247). Five main points emerged from the responses (listed in order of frequency):

Ensembles/Performances:

Offering a variety of ensemble and performance opportunities for middle school students (e.g., music theater, drumming groups, select bands and choruses, chamber ensembles) encouraging students to participate in All-County and NYSSMA Solo/Ensemble festivals; performing at community venues such as nursing homes and senior centers.

Scheduling

Academic scheduling that includes adequate rehearsal time, common planning time for music faculty, interdisciplinary planning, and opportunities for students to participate in multiple ensembles as well as classroom/general music.

Enrichment Opportunities

Field trips to live performances, community partnerships, arts in education, and visiting performing artists/clinicians, school music clubs, bringing in community members to play with school ensembles.

Advocacy/Support

Developing a strong rapport with parents, administrators and colleagues to foster understanding of the importance and value of music education; advocating for support both financially and academically.

Motivation/Relevance

Addressing topics of interest to this age level, using classroom instruments (guitars, keyboards, drums) and technology with an emphasis on “hands-on”, active-learning; choosing appropriate and motivating literature; encouraging students’ continued participation in the music program.

Many respondents expressed concern about the negative effects of inadequate scheduling, testing in other subject areas, and budget issues. Several comments indicated that a state assessment in music and increased state requirements would help enhance programs. Another frequent topic was encouraging the interaction of local music programs. For example, one respondent mentioned developing festivals where local middle school groups could “meet each other, [perform] with each other, and learn from each other”. Others suggested school visitations and opportunities for students to observe nearby music programs. As one comment stated, “They need to hear other groups/schools/students their age perform”. Finally, many respondents addressed the need to encourage “our best and brightest teachers” to teach middle school, and to provide these teachers with more training in curriculum development and “the development of the middle school child.”

4. Threats to middle level programs:

Over 75% of the participants responded to this question (N=421). There was strong consensus among NYSSMA members and non-members alike that “required testing outside of music, the consequences of such testing”, “the impact of NCLB and AIS” were far and above the most serious threats, and that music time has been seriously reduced because “they take kids OUT of music class for remediation/testing/reviews.” “High-Stakes Testing, ELA and Math are taking over our schools, leaving that which research proves to benefit the overall learning process behind.”

Next, serious concern was expressed for the “impact of budget cuts on music programs” with almost 25% of the comments on this topic. Whether it was un-passed budgets with corresponding “loss of music programs altogether” or more resources going to “tested areas”, or “lack of funds to buy equipment, music and supplies for instructional needs,” “budget” was perceived as a serious threat to music at the middle level.

Various problems arising out of poor scheduling practice “that does not allow for the needs of the music program” was next in importance. A number of comments were made regarding “administrators who don’t view music as an important part of the overall curriculum and who don’t know how (or are unwilling) to schedule around music classes.” Generally, it was the opinion that poor scheduling practice reflected the “lack of respect and valuing of music by school boards and administrators.”

The fourth threat to emerge was “change in regulations, particularly part 100 as it relates to the Middle Level” and a lack of substantive state regulations mandating classroom music with appropriate seat time. Ancillary to this threat is the lack of a focused curriculum with clearly defined measurable skills and content at the State level or advocated by NYSSMA.

Frustration could be sensed throughout the comments as music educators were seeing the programs at the middle level consistently diminished with more and more time spent on Math and ELA in spite of research that has shown increased seat time does not necessarily yield increased test scores

Summary and Key Findings

The survey was divided into five sections. The material that follows includes a summary paragraph for each section of the survey and highlights of results.

Part I: Respondent Information. This section sought to compile basic demographic data to ensure that the participants were representative of the field. Questions addressed the number of years in music education, gender, teaching level, type of institution, NYSSMA Zone, subject area, and district-level groupings. Additionally, a few questions on PreK programs were included since this is a relatively recent educational development and an area of interest to the Classroom Music Committee. Most of the questions were multiple-choice, with a few open-response blanks to allow for “Other” than identified district-level groupings, configurations and subject areas. Participants could also comment on how their district’s grade-level configuration either inhibited or supported their music program.

- The number and type of respondents provided a reasonable representation of the field. Slightly more women responded than men. Participants represented all educational levels, subject areas of music education, public and private schools, and the entire state.
- A majority of respondents taught classroom general music with sizeable numbers who taught chorus or band, and smaller numbers who taught orchestra and high school courses.
- Almost half of the respondents indicated their district was grouped into elementary (K-5), middle (6-8), and high school (9-12). Other groupings were represented, but there was a variety of configurations, in particular “other” was the next highest percentage response. Respondents commented in positive ways about how their grade level configuration supported their music program, particularly with respect to instructing students over multiple grade levels. Band directors commented negatively about their grade level groupings when beginning instrumentalists were prematurely placed in multiple year performing organizations.
- A sizeable number of respondent districts had a PreK program where classroom teachers and music specialists provided music instruction. An overwhelming majority of respondent districts provided kindergarten students with instruction from music teachers.

Part II: NYSSMA Information. The survey’s fundamental goals included addressing membership needs and determining the value of NYSSMA to the field. Participants were asked to respond to the following: reasons for non-NYSSMA membership; the use of NYSSMA, MENC and NYSED resources (including publications and websites); suggestions for resources NYSSMA could develop; use of resource personnel; NYSSMA’s importance; suggestions for help with local music programs; and participation rates and value of NYSSMA conferences, workshops, and festivals.

- Almost three-quarters of the respondents were NYSSMA members. Approximately one-fifth of the respondents had previously been NYSSMA members, but was not currently. “Cost” (expense, money, fees, and dues) emerged as the main theme from the analysis of comments regarding “reason for non-NYSSMA membership.” The next most often recorded reason was “value”.

- A large majority of survey respondents used the NYSSMA Manual, website, and the School Music News. Approximately two out of five people used *Music: A Resource Guide for Standards-Based Instruction*. A good majority used MENC membership magazines, website, and publications.
- Additional resources that NYSSMA could develop included informational items such as calendars of regional events, easy access to the NYSSMA music library inventory, and a listing of summer music camps for students. A number of respondents encouraged NYSSMA to continue to work collaboratively with the NYS Education Department to revise and develop syllabi, assessments, and other curricular resources for PreK–12 music education programs. Other requested resources included advocacy materials, program support strategies, professional development opportunities, and more web site materials. It was interesting to note that a small number indicated NYSSMA is doing a “good job”.
- A majority of the respondents used their NYSSMA Zone Representative. Two out of five respondents used their county presidents. Approximately one-third used the NYSSMA officers.
- A majority of the participants indicated that NYSSMA is important to them, provides effective programs, and can do some other things to help them with their music program. A majority of the respondents indicated that they have always participated in solo/ensemble festivals and have not participated in the other NYSSMA activities over the past three years.
- Respondents indicated that future classroom music conference sessions should address curriculum and related elements, such as Kodaly, Orff, Dalcroze, and Music Learning Theory.

Part III: Focus on Middle Level. A large number of the Survey’s respondents (75%) have taught or administered in at least one of the middle level grades of 5-8. They were asked to respond to this section’s items. Questions addressed the frequency of classroom general music instruction at each specific grade level, how students in the district meet the ½ unit music requirement (grades 7-8), as well as the frequency and time of performing ensemble rehearsals. Participants had the opportunity to include some open-ended responses, which allowed for data inclusive of a wide variety of scheduling configurations.

- Most grade 5 (85%) and grade 6 (69%) students received classroom general music instruction. Lesser numbers for grade 7 (40%) and grade 8 (30%) received classroom general music instruction.
- The majority of grade 5-8 students who are enrolled in general classroom music received between 36 and 50 instructional periods per year or about one period per week. A number of schools offered 76 to 90 periods per year. From grade 5 to grade 8 increased numbers of students did not participate in general classroom music.
- In grades 5-6 the vast majority of general music classes were 30 to 44 minutes in duration and in grades 7-8 most were 40 to 46 minutes.
- Respondents reported that most students fulfill their ½ unit of required music instruction in grade 7 and 8 through classroom general music participation or through performing group participation, while some students participate in both classroom general music and one or more performing groups.
- Most grade 6, 7, 8, performing groups have at least two rehearsals per week.

Part IV: Standards. Participants were asked whether or not the standards had an effect on their music program, and if so, did the effect result in increased or decreased music instruction time and/or program offerings. An open-ended section allowed participants to include comments related to this topic.

- A majority of the respondents indicated that the standards have had an effect on their music program. Many commented that the New York State Arts Standards have really helped teachers with their instructional programs, particularly with respect to developing lesson plans and a cohesive and expanded curriculum. While Arts (Music) Standards have helped, an emphasis on other learning standard areas, such as English language arts and mathematics, has had a negative impact on music programs, chiefly by limiting music instruction for some students.

Part V: Additional Comments. In this open-ended response section, participants addressed four topics specific to the focus on middle-level programs. They were asked to identify the following: strengths (best practices and/or exemplary programs/teachers), middle level weak elements, opportunities to enhance middle level music programs, and threats to middle level programs.

- Survey participants identified five key ideas related to middle level best practices. The top area was regular and frequent music instruction during the school day. Other key areas were active participation, a variety of music course offerings, and mandating general music for all students.
- The respondents' comments on weaknesses in middle school music programs fell into four categories. Scheduling was a main concern. Other weakness contributors were lack of administrative support, lack of good curriculum and lack of student engagement.
- Almost half of the survey participants provided suggestions on opportunities to enhance middle level music programs. Five main points emerged from the responses and they were: offering a variety of performing activities and ensembles; academic scheduling that adequately provides for the music program; enrichment activities such as field trips, community partnerships and visiting artists; developing advocacy/support with parents, administrators and colleagues; and addressing motivation and relevance for middle level students.
- Many respondents expressed concern about the negative effects of inadequate scheduling, testing in other subject areas, and budgetary issues. Several indicated that a state assessment in music and increased state requirements would help enhance programs.
- Over three-quarters of the participants commented on threats to middle level programs. Strong consensus focused on required testing outside of music and the consequences of such testing including the impact of NCLB and AIS. Other concerns included budget cuts, poor scheduling practices, unaware or unsupportive administrators, and changes in part 100 middle level regulations.