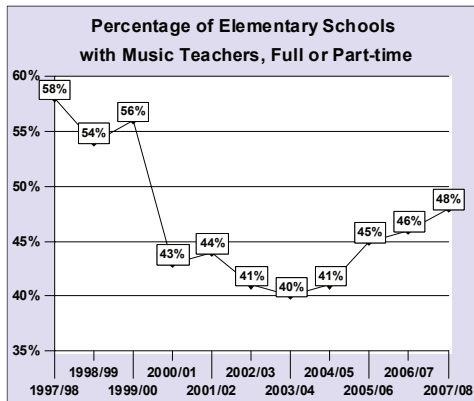


Student success & the arts

In Ontario, high school students have told us, and the Ontario Student Trustee Association confirms that Ontario sec-

ondary school students have difficulty fitting arts courses into crowded timetables, and many smaller secondary schools no longer offer arts curriculum.

Research over the last 20 years has shown that arts programs enhance students' ability to learn, their capacity for articulate expression and their facility to solve complex problems. There is also a wide body of research confirming that arts programs engage students who might otherwise drop out of school.



the arts

from The Annual Report on Ontario's Public Schools 2008

According to UNESCO

"...at a time when family and social structures are changing, with often adverse effects on children and adolescents, the school of the 21st Century must be able to anticipate the new needs by according a special place to the teaching of artistic values and subjects in order to encourage creativity, which is a distinctive

attribute of the human species. Creativity is our hope."

what schools told us...

The school board needs to provide a music teacher allocation for each school, so that we can meet ministry curriculum expectations."

An elementary school in Toronto DSB

The full report is available at www.peopleforeducation.com.

People for Education is a registered charity working to support public education in Ontario's English, French and Catholic schools.

P.O. Box 64, Station P, Toronto, Ontario M5S 2S6

phone: 416-534-0100 fax: 416-536-0100

e-mail: p4e@peopleforeducation.com website: www.peopleforeducation.com



people for
Education

BECAUSE EDUCATION MATTERS MOST

the arts

Across North America and in England, concerns have been raised about the “two-tier curriculum” that results from a singular focus on test score targets.

Researchers have found that arts education is increasingly relegated to the bottom tier of the system, with less and less time and funding spent on arts-related courses and activities.

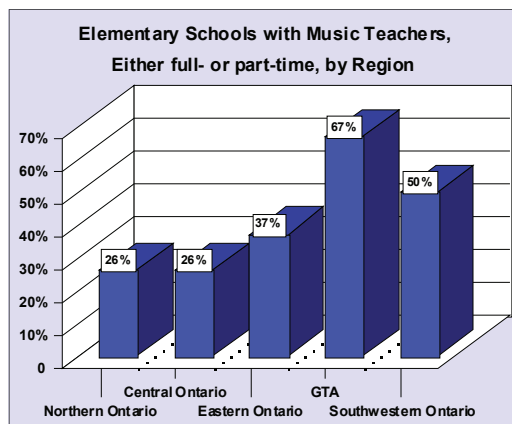
No dedicated funding for elementary Arts specialists

There is extensive arts curriculum for Kindergarten to Grade 8, much of which requires specialized knowledge. To teach the curriculum effectively, teachers must under-

stand fine art theory, be able to read music and have some knowledge of drama. But there is no funding specifically dedicated to arts specialists in elementary schools, and the majority of schools do not have them.

Even in schools with grades 7 and 8, only 14% have a visual arts teachers, a number that has declined fairly steadily since 1998 when it was 17%. Only 6% have a drama teacher. More schools have music teachers, but even then they are common only in fairly large schools.

The funding that elementary schools do spend on specialist teachers comes from teacher preparation time. By contract, every teacher must have preparation time during the school day to prepare lessons, contact parents and work with other teachers. During that time, another teacher covers the class. Thus, funding for preparation “time” is actually funding for other teachers.



In schools that are large enough to generate a substantial amount of preparation time, the funding to cover the time may cover the costs of core French, music, physical education, guidance or other specialist teachers, but boards are not required to spend the money on these specialists. And increases in funding for teachers’ preparation time over the last three years have not resulted in parallel increases in specialist teachers.

Regional variations

Funding for specialists is generated by numbers of teachers, so it is difficult for all but the largest of elementary schools to provide specialist teachers in the arts.

In Northern Ontario, where most of the elementary schools are very small, only 26% have music teachers – nearly all part-time. In contrast, in the GTA where elementary schools tend to have more students, 67% have music teachers, though half are part-time.

Fundraising and fees

Much of schools’ arts programming comes through extra-curricular activities or arts enrichment, such as attending

plays or musical events. But most of the cost for this type of arts enrichment falls to parents, resulting in inequitable access for students. Parents fundraise for arts-related programs in 53% of elementary schools and 47% of secondary schools.

The Arts in Ontario schools in 2008

- ❑ 48% of elementary schools have music teachers, continuing a slight upward trend established over the last four years, but still below 1997/98 levels when 58% of schools had them.
- ❑ There are significant differences in schools’ budgets for arts programs, and many schools rely on parents to supply the funding. This year, 47% of secondary schools and 53% of elementary schools report fundraising for arts enrichment in their schools.
- ❑ A majority of secondary schools charge fees for Art classes, and nearly one third charge fees for music.

But there are many school communities without the capacity to raise money for things like musical instruments, art supplies and other forms of arts enrichment. And often the communities with the least capacity to fundraise are also home to the students who have little or no access to formal arts programs outside of school.