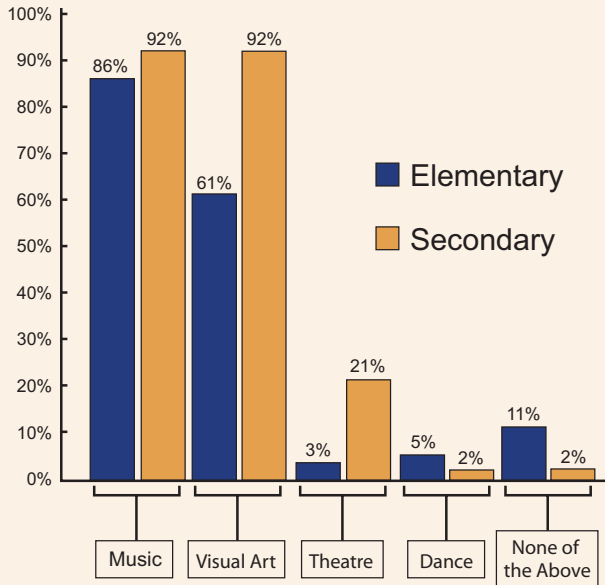
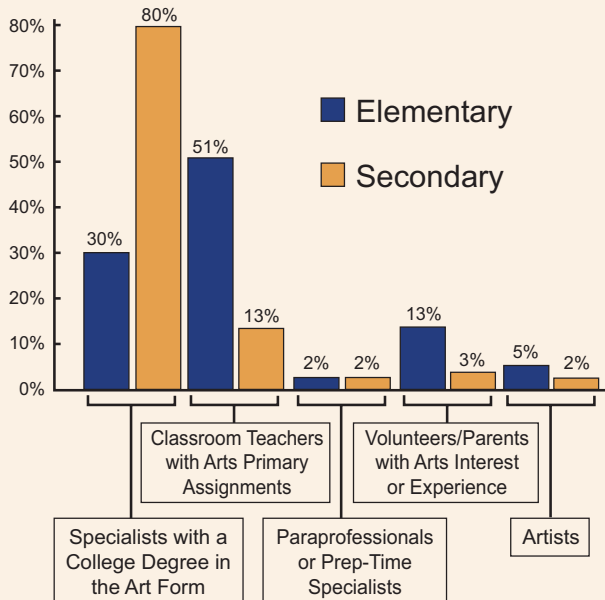


Percentage of Schools in the State where Students Received High Quality Instruction



For Our Children: A Report on the Status of Arts Education in Montana
Source: Bothell Assessment and Research and WESTAF 2010

Frequency Students Received Instruction from Teachers with Certain Qualifications



For Our Children: A Report on the Status of Arts Education in Montana
Source: Bothell Assessment and Research and WESTAF 2010

Resources

- More than one quarter of responding schools have multi-year collaborations or partnerships with artists, arts companies or cultural organizations that help meet the school/district arts education goals. This is an area where greater outreach could benefit everyone involved.
- Local or touring artists or arts organizations provide a valuable resource for Montana schools.
 - Over half the schools take advantage of visiting performing groups (51%) and field trips to arts events or museum tours (57%), followed closely by holding arts-centered assemblies (45%).
 - Close to one third of the schools utilize an artist in residence (30%).
- Only six out of every ten schools are aware of the Montana Arts Council's Artists-in-Residence grant program. However, the arts council depletes its arts education grant funding six months into each fiscal year. Unless additional funding is provided, a higher demand for resources cannot be met.



www.art.mt.gov
406-444-6430

800-282-3092 (Arts Education Hotline)

Cover photo courtesy of Herb Winsor.



montana arts council
an agency of state government

Executive Summary

A Report on the Status of Arts Education in Montana: 2009-2010 School Year

This report **summarizes the status** of arts education in Montana using data collected from 313 of Montana's 847 elementary, middle and secondary schools statewide. This information was formed from responses by principals, superintendents and head teachers – it is *their perception* of the state of arts education in their schools.

Questions throughout the survey were designed to quantify and evaluate each school's situation in offering the arts as a core subject. The survey was conducted by Bothell Assessment and Research in Utah in collaboration with the Montana Arts Council, the Idaho Arts Commission, the Utah Arts Council, the Wyoming Arts Council and the Western States Arts Federation in Denver, Colorado. This Executive Summary is compiled by the Montana Arts Council.

For a complete copy of this report, call Beck McLaughlin at (406) 444-6522 or go to http://www.art.mt.gov/schools/schools_survey.asp

Survey Demographics

- Thirty-eight percent (38%) of Montana schools responded, exceeding the sample target goal response rate of 30% by 8%.
- Responding schools accurately reflect geographic and community-size representation.

To look at how closely the study reflects the actual state, we looked at the percentage of schools in the six counties with the highest population:

Percentage of schools in “urban” counties (the six counties with the highest population) 30%

Percentage of schools in “urban” counties from survey respondents 36%

Percentage of schools in “rural” counties (all other counties) in Montana 70%

Percentage of schools in “rural” counties from survey respondents 64%

We also examined the representation from the eastern half of the state and the western half:

Number of schools in the eastern half of the state 40%

Number of schools responding to the survey in the eastern half of the state 35%

Number of schools in the western half of the state 60%

Number of schools responding to the survey in the western half of the state 65%

River Resource Day outside Sheridan, MT. Photo: Herb Winsor



Student Learning

How do the arts fare in Montana schools as part of the No Child Left Behind law?

The arts are a core academic subject as outlined in the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) law. To study this, the survey focused on assessing high-quality arts experiences among students:

Elementary Schools

- Music (86%) and Visual Arts (61%) experiences were offered most frequently.
- Theatre (5%) and Dance (3%) experiences were few and far between.
- Eleven percent (11%) of the respondents offer no high-quality arts experiences. (The survey focused on assessing high quality arts experiences among students. See the criteria used to define high quality arts experiences on page 12.

Secondary Schools

- Music (92%) and Visual Arts (92%) experiences were offered most frequently.
- Theatre (21%) fared better than in elementary schools, but is still sparse.
- Dance (2%) experiences were equally as rare as in elementary schools.

Less than half of Montana school districts (43%) treat the arts as core curriculum.

State Arts Standards and Assessment

The Montana Board of Public Education’s Content Standards indicate what all students should know, understand and be able to do in the arts.

- While familiarity with state standards for arts instruction is high in Montana (83%), less than half of the schools include and clearly articulate the arts in their School Improvement Plans (44%).
- Teacher-developed assessments are the most popular method for assessing student learning in the arts (57%). Only 15% of the schools use assessments that are developed and required by their school district.
- What would be most helpful to improve learning in the arts? The top three answers:



Student participating in a music residency at Bynum School. Photo: Susan Luinstra

1. Hiring a certified arts specialist for teaching visual art.
2. Greater availability of arts supplies or equipment.
3. Hiring a certified specialist for teaching music.

Teachers

Teachers with varying levels of preparation provide arts education across Montana schools.

Teachers who are licensed to teach K-8 students in Montana are endorsed to teach dance, music, theatre and visual arts.

Professional Development

- Twelve percent (12%) of the administrators that completed this survey participate in arts professional development, a high number given the pressure placed on school administrators to increase test scores and develop skills in reading, writing and math.
- Twenty-nine percent (29%) of the schools were familiar with teacher professional development in the arts offered by the Montana Arts Council, suggesting that new avenues of communication are necessary to expand this awareness.
- The most popular incentive methods for arts education professional development are release time (28%) and credits for recertification (29%).