

MUSIC TEACHERS MISSING IN ONTARIO SCHOOLS

Huge regional gaps in specialists

For immediate release

Toronto (May 15, 2017) – New data from People for Education show a significant decline in the percentage of elementary schools with specialist music teachers over the last decade.

The report on the arts in schools – based on survey results from more than 1000 Ontario elementary and secondary schools – shows that only 41% of elementary schools have a specialist music teacher, either full- or part-time, a decline from 48% in 2006/07, and a dramatic drop from an all-time high of 58% in 1997/98.

Arts education vital for student success

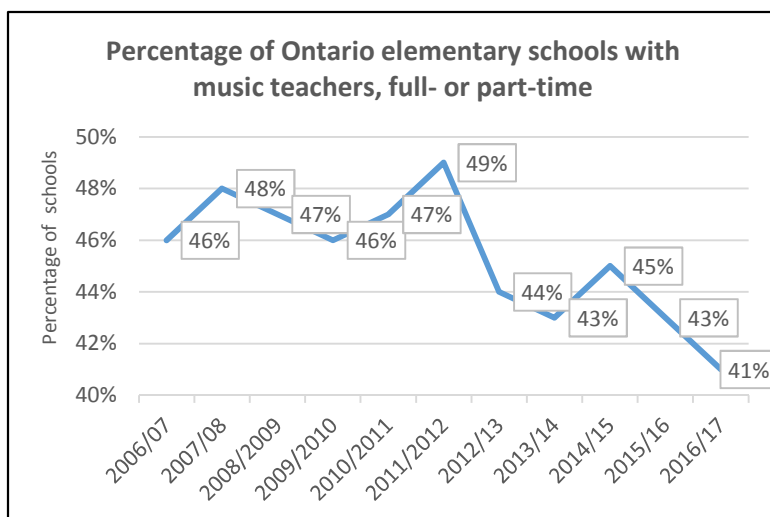
The report cites extensive research showing that education in the arts is a crucial component in the development of students’ cognitive, social, and emotional well-being. The Ontario Ministry of Education has also emphasized the “substantial and important connections between creativity, high academic achievement, economic and social entrepreneurialism, leadership, and problem solving.”

Challenging curriculum, fewer specialists

According to the report, elementary teacher candidates in Ontario are only required to take one course in the arts, but Ontario’s Arts curriculum is extremely detailed, and requires in-depth knowledge, making it a challenge for teachers without specialized arts training.

In 2016/17:

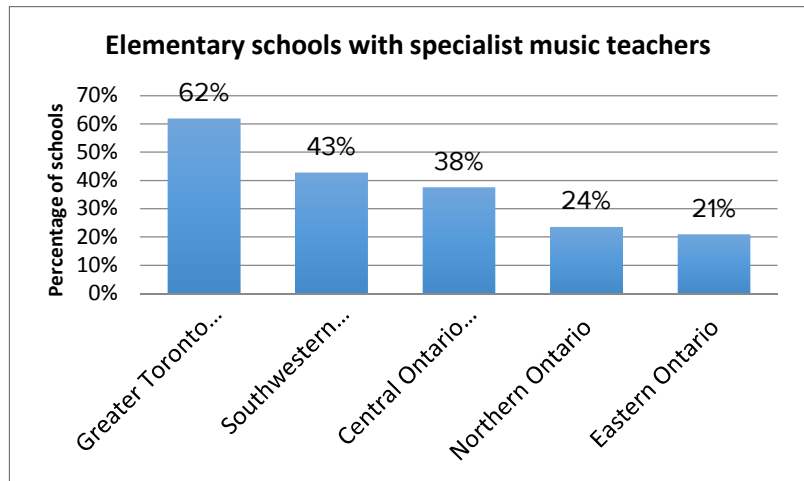
- Only 41% of elementary schools have specialist music teachers, and the vast majority of those are part-time.
- 15% of schools with grades 7 and 8 have a visual arts teacher, a number which has been fairly consistent over the past decade.
- 8% of schools with grades 7 and 8 have a specialist drama teacher.
- 30% of elementary schools have itinerant music teachers/instructors.



- 40% of schools have no music teacher at all (itinerant instructor or music specialist). This is a substantial increase in schools with no music teacher (from 31% in 2007-08).

Regional discrepancies

Funding for specialist teachers in elementary schools is generated by student enrolment, which has an impact on boards with a higher number of small schools. As a result, elementary schools in the Greater Toronto Area are 2.5 times as likely to have a music teacher, as compared to elementary schools in eastern and northern Ontario.



Recommendations

The report makes a number of recommendations, including that the province develop specific arts policy to ensure that all students—regardless of where they live or their family income—have access to arts instruction during school hours, and arts enrichment either during or after school.

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