



STEPHANIE ROBERTSON

Research on Music Education Programs in Louisiana

In 2018, the Department, in partnership with the Louisiana State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, launched the inaugural Louisiana Teacher Public Interest Fellowship. The fellowship allows recipients to spend the upcoming school year advocating for a key education initiative of their choosing. These initiatives are aligned with the Department's priorities. Recipients are chosen from the previous year's Louisiana Teacher of the Year state-level honorees list. The fellowship is supported by a stipend of state funding that is utilized to offset the costs incurred while conducting the work of the fellowship.



"Our nation was built by people with the drive and courage to put their ideas into action. That's what this award represents." - Dr. Cade Brumley, Louisiana State Superintendent of Education



September 2024

MEET THE FELLOW

Ms. Stephanie Robertson is a Vocal Music Educator at Ponchatoula High School in Ponchatoula, Louisiana where she teaches choir, fine arts survey, and music appreciation dual enrollment for grades 9-12. She is a co-sponsor of the school's Drama Club and serves on the School Well-Being Team. Under her direction, the PHS choirs are represented in Louisiana Music Educators Association (LMEA) All-State Choir, District Honor Choir, and Parish Honor Choir ensembles, earn excellent and superior ratings at parish, district, and state choral assessments, and perform around the community. Ms. Robertson received her Bachelor of Music Education degree from Southeastern Louisiana University and her Master of Music degree from Kent State University. Before teaching at Ponchatoula High School, she taught PreK-6 general music at Hammond Eastside Magnet School in Hammond, Louisiana and served as an itinerant general music, choir, and piano teacher for elementary and junior high schools in St. Tammany Parish. Ms. Robertson is an active member of the National Association for Music Educators, American Choral Directors Association, Tangipahoa Association of Music Educators, and Louisiana Music Educators Association where she serves as the District IX District Director and is a member of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee. She was named the 2022 Ponchatoula High School Teacher of the Year, 2022 Tangipahoa Parish High School Teacher of the Year, and 2023 Louisiana State Teacher of the Year Semifinalist. She is passionate about music education and is committed to helping her students appreciate, learn, and excel not only in music but also in life.



Stephanie Robertson
2023 Public Interest Fellow

THE INITIATIVE

The Power of Music: Research on Music Education Programs in Louisiana is a research-based initiative that seeks to help music educators and education stakeholders gain a better understanding of the music programs throughout the state of Louisiana. Using the work being done in Tangipahoa Parish to build and support music programs, the initiative will provide music educators and education stakeholders resources, mentorship, and collaboration opportunities to advocate for quality music education programs in grades PreK-12 across Louisiana. The hope is that the work of this initiative will provide a foundation for state and district leaders to revitalize and grow music programs in Louisiana.

Overarching Fellowship Goals

- The overarching goal of The Power of Music: Research on Music Education Programs in Louisiana is to provide the state department with a comprehensive look at music education in our state through:
 1. Providing data on the current status of music programs in the state of Louisiana and how the programs align with state accountability
 2. Providing awareness of advocacy resources/support, mentorship, collaboration, and professional development opportunities for music educators across Louisiana through the creation of a website tailored to help music educator

STRUCTURE

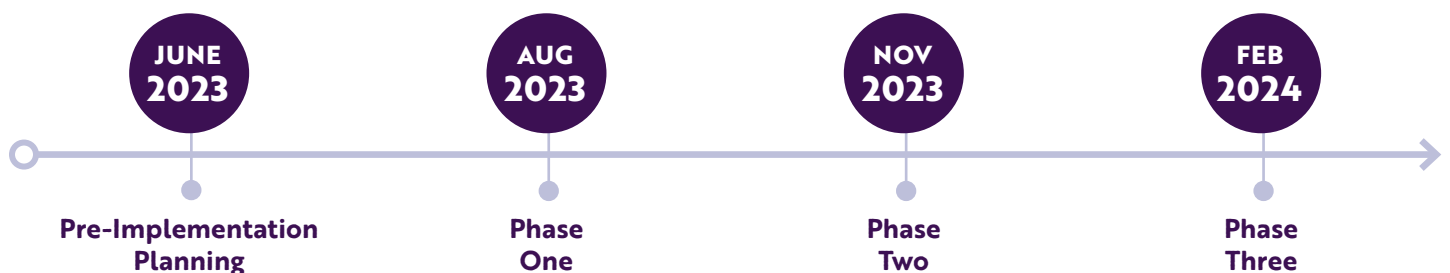
INTERNAL TEAM MEMBERS

Team Member	Title	Role
James Square	Tangipahoa Parish School System Music Teacher and Music Resource Teacher/Mentor	Consultant
Daniel Williams	Tangipahoa Parish School System Music Implementation Consultant/Facilitator	Consultant

BUDGET

Team Member	Title	Price
Personnel Stipend	Hours worked outside of school for Fellowship	\$2,500.00
Supplies	Survey incentives	\$1,000
Domain License	Squarespace domain license for Music Teach website	\$12.00
Survey Platform	Jotform subscription (1 year)	\$594.00
Substitute	Reimbursement for Substitutes	\$291.06
Travel	Mileage for meetings and conferences	\$673.05

TIMELINE



PRE-IMPLEMENTATION PLANNING

Action Steps	Person(s) Responsible	Target Date
Find survey platform	Stephanie Robertson	October 2023
Research music programs and compiling a list of potential contacts for interviews	Stephanie Robertson	October 2023
Set budget	Stephanie Robertson	September 2023

RESOURCES USED FOR PLANNING

- [Louisiana Division of the Arts - Arts Education and Accessibility](#)
- [Louisiana Arts In Education Public Survey 2009](#)
- [Striking A Chord: The Public's Hopes and Beliefs for K-12 Education in the United States: 2015](#)
- [Louisiana Music Education Working Group Recommendations : June 13, 2016](#)
- [Give A Note Foundation: The Status of Music Education in United States Public Schools - 2017](#)
- [Advancing Music Education in New Orleans 2018-2025](#)
- [National Arts Education Status Report 2019](#)



PHASE ONE

Goals

- Research information regarding music programs throughout the state
- Inform stakeholders and fellow music educators about the fellowship project

Date	Meeting Title/Topic
8/23/23	BESE Meeting Presentation
9/23/23	LMEA Board meeting presentation
9/28/23	Team Meeting regarding the survey
10/17/23	Met with Dr. Brumley regarding fellowship
10/18/23	Tangi Music Teachers Workshop - Fellowship info

PHASE TWO

Goals

- Finalize survey using Jotform

Date	Meeting Title/Topic	Resource Link
11/16/23	Met and networked with music educators and stakeholders regarding fellowship and had an infographic with information regarding the fellowship at the conference and shared on LMEA website	Research Initiative Infographic
12/1/23–2/6/24	Work on and finalize the survey	

PHASE THREE

Goals

- Disseminate survey and analyze data
- Create/launch website for resources and information for music educators
- Present findings and website at Teacher Leader Summit

Date	Meeting Title/Topic	Resource Link
2/8/24-3/1/24	Survey sent to music educators, principals, and school system leaders regarding music programs	
March-April	Analyze data from survey and create report	
April-May	Create and launched website for music educators to find professional development opportunities, advocacy tools, and other resources related to music education in Louisiana	Music Teach
5/28/24	Present session at Teacher Leader Summit	Teacher Leader Summit presentation



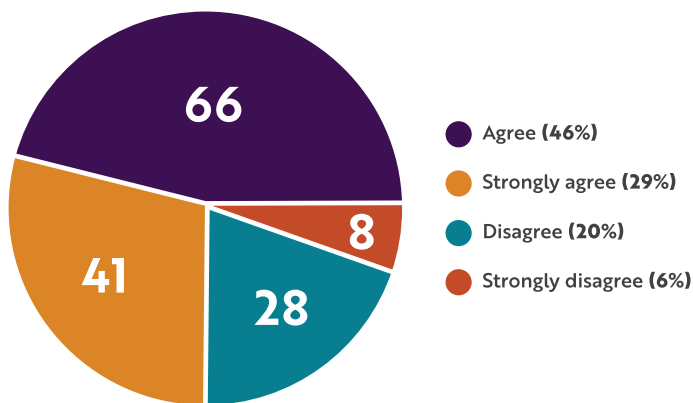
IN CONCLUSION

This year has been eye-opening regarding music education in Louisiana. The project's original intent was to give a comprehensive overview of music education across the state, but it became more of a research and resource project.

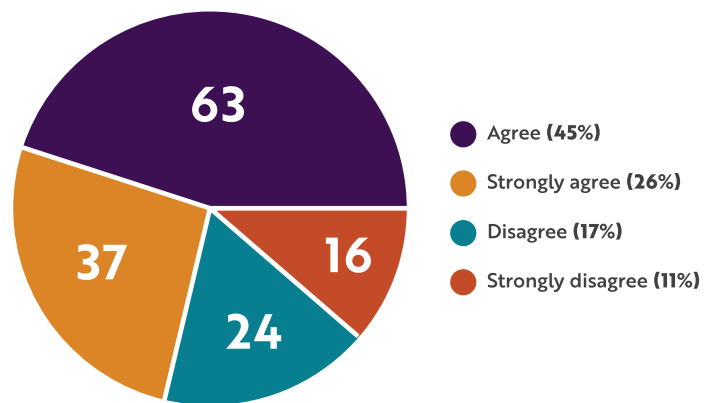
At the beginning of the project, there was a lot of research into policy surrounding music education, as well as networking with fellow music educators in Tangipahoa Parish and surrounding areas. Music educators' responses centered around funding, scheduling, and resources. These three became the priority areas that were the basis for the survey questions. Three surveys were created to get perspectives from as many stakeholders as possible: one for music educators, one for school principals, and one for a school system representative.

The survey was sent to superintendents and the Louisiana Music Educators Association (LMEA) Board of Directors to disseminate to the music educators and principals within their area in hopes that it would reach as many people as possible. The survey resulted in 209 responses from 32 parishes representing all grade levels. Here are a few graphs representing responses from participants:

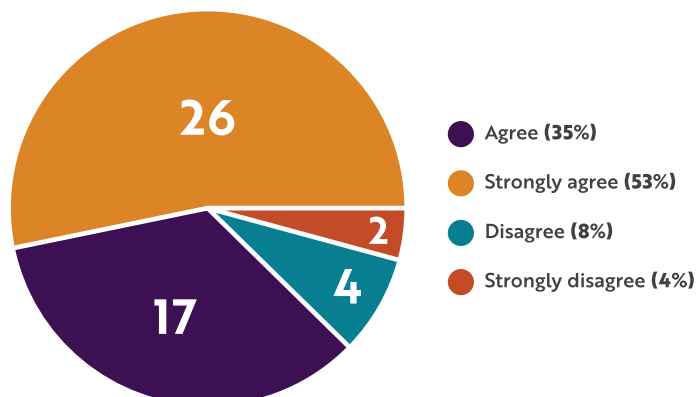
Music is an integral part of my school's curriculum.



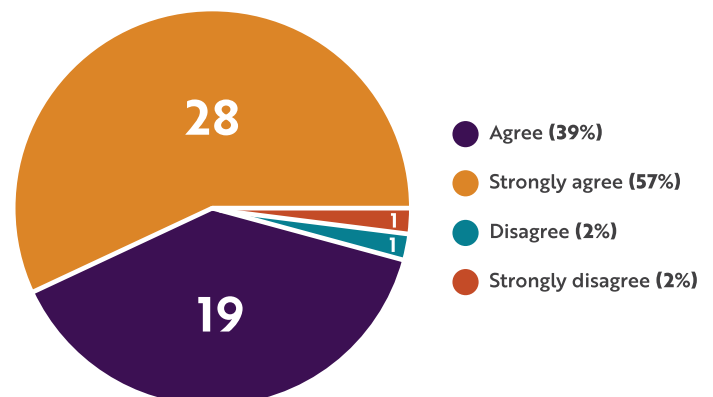
Music classes are taken into consideration when deciding the master schedule.



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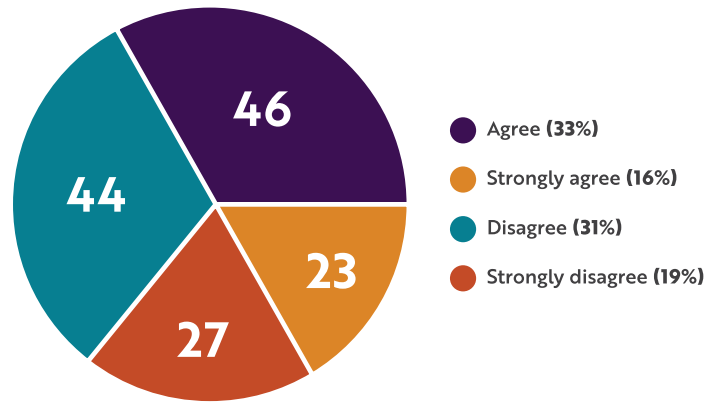
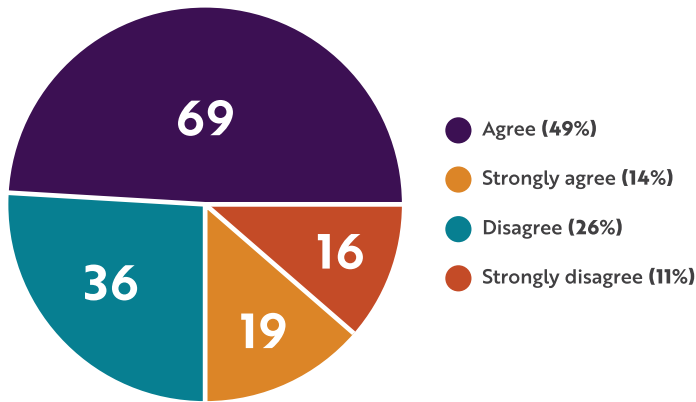


Students are encouraged to participate in the music classes/ensembles offered at my school.

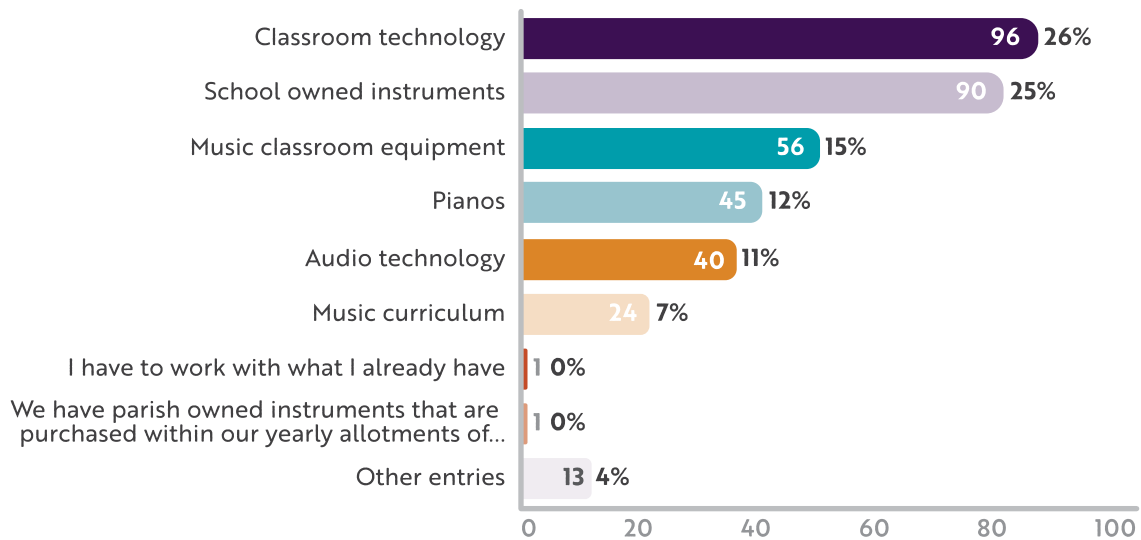


The music facilities at my school meet the needs of my music class/program.

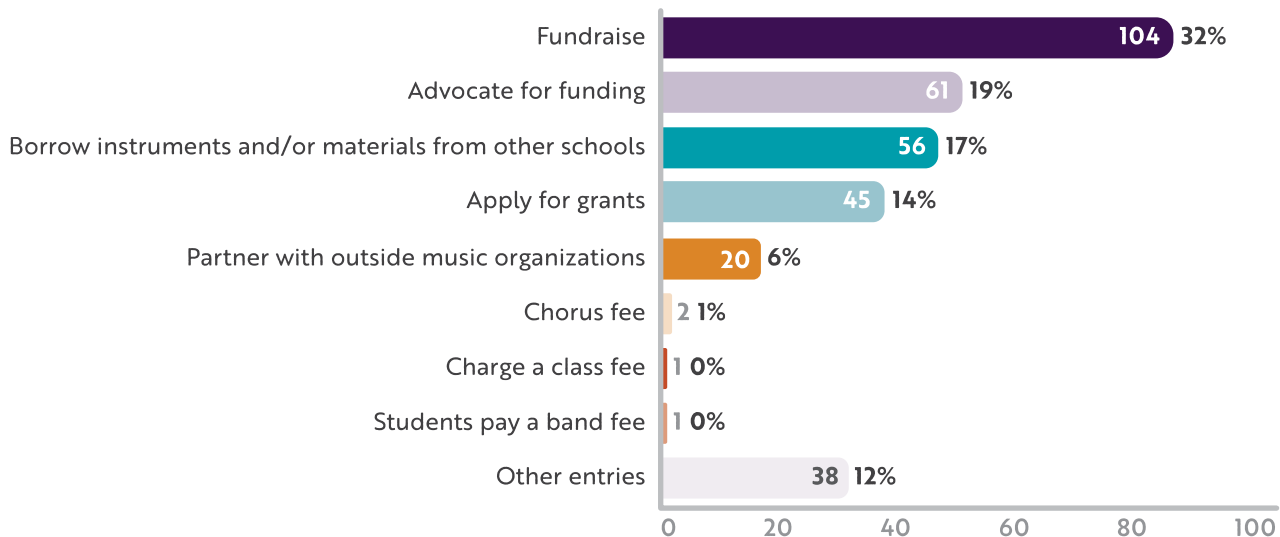
I have sufficient financial support from my school and/or school system for my class/program to run successfully.



My school provides the following materials for my music class/program.



To meet the needs of my class/program, I must... (select all that apply)



Below is a word cloud summarizing the most frequent answers regarding providing resources for music teachers from these surveyed groups:



When asked about other thoughts, needs and/or resources that were needed, the majority of answers were:

- More support from school and school system leaders
- An understanding of the importance and impact of music education for students in Louisiana
- Funding for programs

Upon completion of the survey, it was found there was a “one-stop shop” for music educators and other stakeholders to find the tools and resources necessary to help music programs. A website was created and launched in April 2024 called [“Music Teach”](#).

“Music Teach, your premier online destination dedicated to fostering excellence and innovation in music education across the vibrant state of Louisiana. Our mission is to serve as a comprehensive resource for music educators, students, and enthusiasts, celebrating Louisiana’s rich musical heritage while supporting the professional growth and development of educators.”

This website is an expanding resource that offers links and information for music educators regarding professional development opportunities, mentoring opportunities, advocacy resources, grant opportunities, research articles, curriculum resources and suggestions, and more. It is also a space where music educators can share their ideas, resources, tips, and the like. Resources are being added weekly in hopes that this will be an easier and more efficient way for music educators and other stakeholders to find help and support. Anyone interested in contributing to the website or wanting a copy of the full survey report can complete a [request form](#). We would love to hear from you!

What happens next? My hope is to expand “Music Teach” to be a resource for all arts disciplines. I will also continue advocating for music education and working with music educators, leaders, and stakeholders to build and strengthen music and arts education in my school district, the surrounding districts, and the state.

Thank you for this amazing opportunity! This is not the end; it’s just the beginning!

CONTACT INFORMATION

Stephanie Robertson, 2023 Louisiana Public Interest Fellow

Email: Stephanie.Robertson@tangischools.org

School System: [Tangipahoa Parish School System](#)

School Name: [Ponchatoula High School](#)