Alabama: Aggregate Data

Alabama data are drawn from the results of a voluntary survey of public elementary, middle and high school principals. For Alabama, 624 survey responses were received, a response rate of 45.2% of all K-12 public schools in the state. All of these data, as well as additional tables and graphs, are available at www.southarts.org/artseducation. A list of the questions asked, including demographic categories, is incorporated in an Appendix to this report.

Access
Access to arts education classes in Alabama schools responding to the survey is below both regional and national averages\(^1\) across the board – for visual art, dance, music, theatre, and creative writing. Among responding schools from Alabama, 42% offer visual art classes, compared with 71% for the South, 83% for the elementary school national average, and 89% for the secondary school national average. While 69% of responding schools in Alabama offer music classes, the regional average is 80%, with national averages at 94% for elementary schools and 91% for secondary schools. Alabama’s access to dance (7%) is also lower than the regional average (14%), as is the state’s access to theatre (15%) in relation to the region (22%), and creative writing (15%) in comparison to the region (22%) [Fig. AL-1].

However, in the schools that offer arts classes in Alabama, the percentage of students enrolled and the number of minutes in class each week are very close to the regional average.

In addition to arts classes, responding Alabama schools provide access to arts education through a variety of programs, including field trips (39%), arts integration (32%), gifted/talented programs (27%), after school programs (20%), community arts programs (16%), and visiting artist programs (15%).

Quality
The percentage of arts instruction following a sequential and ongoing curriculum for responding schools in Alabama is slightly behind the regional average for all five discipline areas – visual art, dance, music, theatre, and creative writing. The percentage of arts instruction following state and national standards in Alabama schools responding is very close to the regional average in all disciplines except dance. Finally, the percentage of arts instruction taught by certified specialists in responding Alabama schools is slightly below the regional average in all disciplines.

Instructors
The qualifications for arts instructors in Alabama schools responding is slightly below the regional average in visual art, music, and theatre, with most instructors qualifying as certified arts specialists, and with a major secondary group of classroom teachers with arts-primary assignments. In dance, Alabama’s instructor qualifications in these schools are very different from the region, with 17% of schools with certified specialists, 39% with classroom teachers, and 83% with paraprofessionals or prep-time specialists. This contrasts with the regional averages of 40%, 31%, and 16%, respectively [Fig. AL-2].

Approximately 80% of Alabama’s arts instructors in schools responding participate in arts-specific professional development, including 61% in district workshops, 44% in

workshops by arts organizations, 39% in college or university workshops, 35% in state arts council workshops, and 32% in school workshops.

**Resources and Partners**

Much higher than the regional average, 35% of responding Alabama schools receive no funding for arts education. Approximately 24% of them receive funding from arts fund raisers, 21% from PTA/PTO, 20% from individual contributions, and 20% from the district. Responding Alabama schools are especially low in arts education funding from the district, the school, and PTA/PTO when compared to the region. These Alabama schools spend arts education funding on arts supplies and equipment (54%), arts field trips (41%), arts instructor professional development (26%), and arts assemblies (19%).

**Principal Perspectives**

Alabama school principals responding to the survey identified budget constraints (77%), insufficient personnel (57%), competing priorities (40%), time in the school day (37%), and insufficient space or facilities (25%) as major obstacles to providing arts education. They also identified increased arts education funding for community and state arts organizations (54%), a certified specialist for teaching the arts (53%), arts supplies or equipment (38%), and facilities and classroom space (25%) as helpful for arts learning.

**Figure AL-1**

![Responding Alabama Schools with Access to Arts Classes](image)


* The region average for Creative Writing is only made up of data from the four states which included the subject area in their survey - AL, GA, KY, and SC.
Figure AL-2

Arts Instructor Qualifications in Responding Schools

Source: Arts education survey data collected from public school principals by South Arts during the 2012-2013 school year.
Alabama: Elementary School Data

**Access**
Students in Alabama elementary schools responding to the survey have lower access to arts classes than the rest of the South and the nation, but especially in visual art. Only 39% of these Alabama elementary schools offer visual art classes, compared with 69% in the South, and 83% in the nation. 69% of Alabama elementary schools responding offer music classes, compared with 79% in the region and 94% in the nation. Meanwhile, access to dance classes in these Alabama elementary schools (5%) is slightly below the regional average (11%) and above the national average (3%).

Around 4% of responding Alabama elementary schools offer theatre classes, compared to 9% in the region and 4% for the national average. Finally, 7% of these Alabama elementary schools offer classes in creative writing, compared with 18% in the region [Fig. AL-3].

Among the responding elementary schools that offer arts classes, the average percentage of students enrolled in arts classes is very close to the regional average for visual art (99% and 96%, respectively) and music (96% and 97%, respectively). The percentage of students enrolled is slightly lower in these Alabama elementary schools for dance (34% to 48%), theatre (27% to 40%), and creative writing (77% to 82%). The average number of minutes enrolled is also slightly lower for responding elementary schools in the four main disciplines, and significantly lower in creative writing.

Alabama elementary schools that responded to the survey offer access to arts education through a number of other programs, including arts integration (44% of schools), arts field trips (42%), gifted/talented programs (36%), after school programs (28%), visiting artist programs (20%), and community arts programs (20%).

**Quality**
The quality of arts education in Alabama schools responding to the survey is very close to the regional average, only falling slightly below regional averages for instruction following a sequential and ongoing curriculum, instruction following state and national standards, and instruction taught by a certified arts specialist. The one discipline where Alabama elementary arts instruction is significantly below the regional average for responding schools is theatre.

**Instructors**
Arts instructors at responding Alabama elementary schools are mostly arts specialists in the disciplines of visual art and music, with a smaller percentage classified as classroom teachers with arts-primary assignments, and relatively close to the regional average. In dance and theatre, however, a much lower percentage of these instructors are arts specialists, and schools have a greater reliance on classroom teachers with arts-primary assignments and volunteers or parents with arts interest or experience [Fig. AL-4].

**Resources and Partners**
Alabama elementary schools responding to the survey receive arts education funding from a variety of sources, although significantly less than the regional average in most categories. Their arts education funding sources include PTA/PTO (29%), the district (18 %), arts fund raisers (17%), the school budget (16%), and individual contributions (15%). Funds are generally spent by these schools on arts supplies and equipment (56%), arts field trips (38%), arts instructor professional development (23%), and arts assemblies (22%).

**Principal Perspectives**
Principals, the primary arts education decision-makers for 68% of responding schools, rated their three greatest obstacles to providing arts education, including budget constraints (76%), insufficient personnel (53%), time in the school day (47%), and competing priorities (43%). Factors that these principals would find helpful to improve arts learning include increased arts education funding for community and state arts
organizations (58%), a certified arts specialist (55%), arts supplies or equipment (34%), training in arts integration (27%), flexibility in scheduling (24%), facilities and classroom space (21%), and training for classroom teachers in arts education (20%).

**Figure AL-3**

**Responding Alabama Elementary Schools with Access to Arts Classes**


* The region average for Creative Writing is only made up of data from the four states which included the subject area in their survey - AL, GA, KY, and SC.
Elementary School Arts Instructor Qualifications in Responding Schools

Source: Arts education survey data collected from public school principals by South Arts during the 2012-2013 school year.
Alabama: Middle School Data

Access
In both visual art and music, Alabama middle schools that responded to the survey have less access to arts classes than the regional and national averages. Approximately 39% of responding Alabama middle schools offer visual art classes, in comparison to the regional average of 73%, and the national secondary school average of 89%. These Alabama middle schools fare slightly better in music, with classes offered in 70% of schools, compared to 84% in the region, and 91% in the nation. In dance, 5% of responding Alabama middle schools offer dance classes, compared to 13% in the region and 12% in the nation, and 16% offer theatre classes, compared to 25% in the region and 45% in the nation. For creative writing, 16% of these Alabama middle schools offer classes, while the regional average is 22% [Fig. AL-5].

The average percentage of students at responding Alabama middle schools enrolled in arts classes where they are available (33% in visual art, 11% in dance, 29% in music, 19% in theatre, and 20% in creative writing) is below the regional average for responding schools (39% in visual art, 20% in dance, 39% in music, 22% in theatre, and 34% in creative writing) across all disciplines. The number of minutes students spend in arts classes in these Alabama middle schools is slightly lower than the regional average, except for dance, where it is greater in Alabama.

Alabama middle schools responding to the survey provide access to a number of other arts education programs, including field trips (31%), gifted/talented programs (20%), arts integration (17%), and after school programs (13%).

Quality
Middle school arts instruction for schools responding to the survey comes close to the regional average for measures of quality, including following a sequential and ongoing curriculum, following state and national standards, and instruction by certified arts specialists. The one discipline where the quality of arts education in responding Alabama middle schools is below the regional average is dance, where schools have a lower percentage of classes following a sequential and ongoing curriculum and a lower percentage of classes taught by a certified arts specialist.

Instructors
For responding schools, like elementary arts instructors in Alabama, middle school arts instructors have very close to the same qualifications as arts instructors in the region in the disciplines of visual art and music, with a greater percentage certified as arts specialists (72% and 80%, respectively), and a lower percentage of classroom teachers with arts-primary assignments (26% and 21%), respectively. In dance and theatre, however, a greater percentage of instruction in responding schools relies on classroom teachers, paraprofessionals or prep-time specialists, or volunteers or parents with arts interest or experience [Fig. AL-6].

Resources and Partners
Alabama middle schools responding to the survey raise funds for arts education from a number of sources, including arts fundraisers (32%), individual contributions (30%), the district (25%), and the PTA/PTO (17%). Meanwhile, these Alabama middle schools spend funds for a number of arts programs, including arts supplies and equipment (57%), arts field trips (46%), and arts instructor professional development (30%).

Principal Perspectives
For Alabama middle school arts education, both principals and superintendents are major decision-makers for 68% of schools. Responding principals identified their three primary obstacles to providing arts education, including budget constraints (76% of principals), insufficient personnel (69%), competing priorities (42%), and insufficient space or facilities (36%). These principals also identified factors that would be helpful to
improve arts learning, including a certified arts specialist (57%), increased arts education funding for community and state arts organizations (50%), arts supplies or equipment (35%), and facilities and classroom space (28%).

**Figure AL-5**

![Responding Alabama Middle Schools with Access to Arts Classes](chart.png)

*Sources: Arts education survey data collected from public school principals by South Arts during the 2012-2013 school year; National Center for Education Statistics, Arts Education in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools, 1999-2000 and 2009-2010.*

*The region average for Creative Writing is only made up of data from the four states which included the subject area in their survey - AL, GA, KY, and SC.*
Middle School Arts Instructor Qualifications in Responding Schools

Source: Arts education survey data collected from public school principals by South Arts during the 2012-2013 school year.
Alabama: High School Data

**Access**
Alabama high schools responding to the survey have significantly lower access to visual art and music than the regional and national averages. 54% of these Alabama high schools offer visual art classes, while both the regional and national averages are 89%. In music, 65% of responding high schools offer classes, while the regional and national averages are 91%. Responding Alabama high schools are closer to the regional and national averages in dance (all three are 12%), theatre (38%, 45%, and 45%, respectively), and creative writing (32% for the state, 35% for the region) [Fig. AL-7].

Where arts classes are available in Alabama high schools responding, they have a higher enrollment than the regional average in visual art (24% compared to 19%), music (20% compared to 18%), and theatre (12% compared to 10%), and basically the same enrollment level as the region in dance (8%) and creative writing (7% compared to 8%). The average number of minutes students spend in arts classes in these Alabama high schools is at the regional average for dance and theatre, and slightly lower in visual art, music, and creative writing.

Additional arts education programs offered at responding Alabama high schools include field trips (37%), arts integration (17%), and community arts programs (10%), all of which are less prevalent than elsewhere in the region.

**Quality**
In Alabama high schools responding to the survey where arts classes are available, most programs follow a sequential and ongoing curriculum in visual art (95%), music (87%), theatre (73%), and creative writing (64%), with a lower rate in dance (48%). These Alabama high schools also closely match the regional average for arts instruction following state and national standards, as well as arts instruction taught by certified arts specialists, except in dance where the state average for schools responding is lower.

**Instructors**
Arts instructor qualifications at high schools in Alabama responding to the survey come close to matching the regional average in visual art and music, with most instruction taught by certified specialists (71% in visual art, 74% in music). In dance and theatre, these Alabama high schools rely much more on classroom teachers with arts-primary assignments (53% in dance, 42% in theatre) than the regional average [Fig. AL-8].

Of the arts instructors in responding Alabama high schools, 86% participate in arts-specific professional development. They receive professional development through college or university workshops (54%), workshops by arts organizations (52%), district workshops (50%), and state arts council workshops (44%).

**Resources and Partners**
Alabama high schools which responded to the survey receive arts education funding from arts fund raisers (40%), individual contributions (28%), the district (24%), and the school budget (21%). These high schools spend arts education funds on arts supplies and equipment (59%), arts field trips (52%), arts instructor professional development (36%), and release time (24%).

**Principal Perspectives**
As the primary decision-maker for arts education and arts programs, responding principals rated their top three obstacles to providing arts education, including budget constraints (81% of principals), insufficient personnel (55%), competing priorities (38%), and insufficient space or facilities (32%). These principals also identified factors that would be helpful to improve arts learning, including arts supplies or equipment (54%), increased arts education funding for community and state arts organizations (52%), certified arts specialists (40%), and facilities (35%).
Figure AL-7

Responding Alabama High Schools with Access to Arts Classes


* The region average for Creative Writing is only made up of data from the four states which included the subject area in their survey—AL, GA, KY, and SC.
High School Arts Instructor Qualifications in Responding Schools

Source: Arts education survey data collected from public school principals by South Arts during the 2012-2013 school year.