

ADVANCING MUSIC EDUCATION IN NEW ORLEANS 2018-2025



New Orleans has a deep history of musical innovation that is essential to the history and development of American music, yet its students have often been denied access to their own rich cultural legacy.

Additionally, the city's charter-based public school system means that there is no system-wide strategic plan to ensure all students have access to instructors, instruments, and high-quality coursework – an unacceptable status quo in a city whose musical culture drives the creative economy.

Since 2018, through philanthropic investment, participatory planning and active convening, Save The Music and its NOLA partners at Artist Corps NOLA and the New Orleans Arts Education Alliance have engaged and connected stakeholders to envision a sustainable music education ecosystem and develop a shared commitment to its success.

The pieces and people are in place to affect significant change. **Our shared vision is that every child in every public school in New Orleans has access to a quality music education.**

NOLA Public Education By The Numbers, 2022-2023 ¹



48K PreK-12 students are enrolled in 79 total public schools and Type 2 charter schools.



90% of students are from historically marginalized groups, 74% of which are Black students.



86% of students are from low income households.



Only 24% of Black students and 33% of Hispanic students attend schools with A or B School Performance Scores, despite making up approximately 80% of the public school student population.

The State of Music Education In New Orleans, 2018 ²



17% of New Orleans public schools reported having the instruments they needed for music programs.



Only 37% of schools reported having concert band programs, despite educators agreeing these programs are essential.



Only 19% of schools reported instruments in good condition.

¹ [The State of Public Education in New Orleans, 2022-2023, Cowen Institute](#)

² [*Data and research points collected by Artist Corps New Orleans' Mapping Music Project](#)

BRINGING THE MUSIC ECOSYSTEM TOGETHER



Music Education Convenings

In **May 2018**, Save The Music Foundation (STM) teamed up with key local partners such as Artist Corps New Orleans (AC NOLA), Preservation Hall Foundation, and New Orleans Arts Education Alliance (NOAEA) to host a two-day [Music Education Convening](#), the first formal gathering of music educators across the district in over 13 years. The event brought together 150 attendees including public school educators, local community music program educators and staff, foundations and national funders, school district leadership, and cultural institutions.

May 2022 marked the second Music Education Convening. This event – designed to celebrate educators, school and community music programs – included networking receptions for educators, local and national organizations and funders, and strategic community conversations facilitated by AC NOLA.

The third annual Music Education Convening will take place on **May 11 and 12, 2023**.

Our Actionable, Multi-Year Plan to Close The Gaps

Building on the first Music Education Convening in 2018, STM, AC NOLA and NOAEA teamed up to create an actionable strategic plan to advance music education in New Orleans. Together, we successfully launched a multi-year program to close the music education gaps existing in 50+ schools in the city by 2025.



Key Plan Elements

- 🔑 School-Level Needs for Instruments and Equipment
- 🔑 Local Partnerships and Coordination
- 🔑 Staffing & District Support
- 🔑 Professional Development for Educators
- 🔑 Support for Teaching Artists
- 🔑 Measurement & Evaluation
- 🔑 Continuous Strategic Advocacy

OUR IMPACT

[STM](#), [AC NOLA](#), and [NOAEA](#) have made [significant progress](#) on this community-driven project to advance music education in New Orleans.

Between 2018 and 2023, we collectively:

- Jump started new music programs for **37** schools with insufficient resources
- Delivered **11** emergency grants to bring back band activities after the global pandemic and Hurricane Ida
- Secured commitments from **18** Charter Management Organizations to provide qualified educators to teach in-school music
- Provided nearly **12** responsive professional development clinics for music teachers focusing on trauma informed learning and social-emotional learning
- Provided over **1,300** units of protective performance equipment so students could continue to safely make music during the pandemic
- Increased access to comprehensive music education for nearly **14,000** students

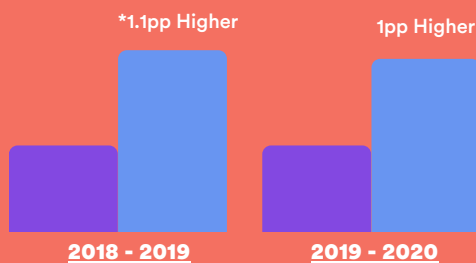


Following a unanimous resolution of the Orleans Parish School Board, AC NOLA and NOAEA engaged and facilitated the work of more than 50 educators and 20 community organizations to create a set of formal policy recommendations, [“COVID-19 Response: Guidance for Music & Arts Education in New Orleans Public Schools.”](#) This collaborative implementation of COVID-19 policy has strengthened STM’s partnership with NOLA-PS, and has also served as a template for state-level policy and advocacy.

School Outcomes:

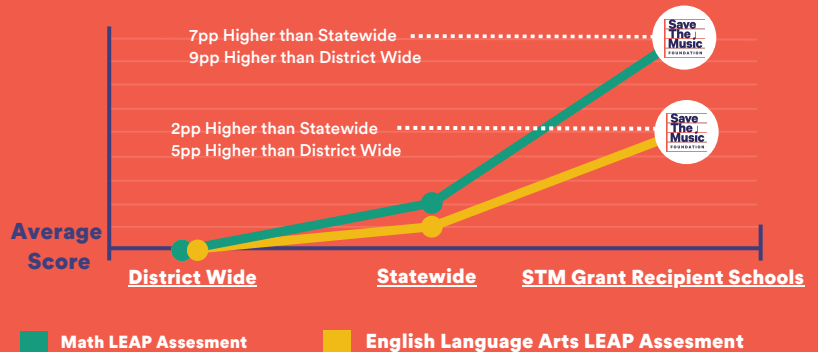
Improved Attendance

Attendance Rates

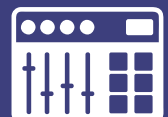


Higher Test Scores

Grade 8 Percentage Scores



Save The Music’s J Dilla Music Technology Grant enabled Livingston Collegiate High School to offer Sound Design as an elective course for the first time in fall of 2022. Soon after Sound Design began, students from all grades began reaching out to the teacher, Mr. Walker, expressing interest to participate in the course to reach their musical aspirations. He is now increasing the number of sections to three.



*Percentage Points (pp)
[Data collected by Metis Associates](#)

STUDENT, PARENT, AND COMMUNITY OUTCOMES

Each year, from 2018 through 2022, Save The Music teachers in New Orleans completed a comprehensive survey to provide data regarding how their new music program influenced school, students and community.

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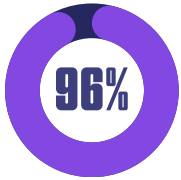
Music and the band help me to see and feel things that I've never felt before. I look at everything differently. I didn't know I could do something this powerful and important. I never thought I would be a musician, and play with other people that I normally would not speak to.

-New Orleans Public School Student

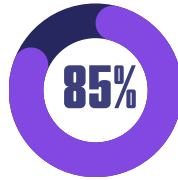
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Social-Emotional Learning and 21st Century Skills:

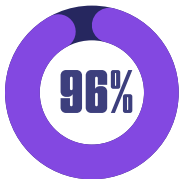


- 96% of teachers reported music education has resulted in students' increased self-confidence



- 85% of teachers reported music education has resulted in students' improved critical thinking skills

Academic Engagement



- 96% of teachers reported music education has resulted in students' improved discipline/behavior during class



- 100% of teachers reported music education has resulted in students' improved engagement in school



Parental Involvement and Community Support

- 96% of teachers reported music education has resulted in increased parental involvement and community support.



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“Thank you for caring about my child's future. My child is happier and feels successful because he is creating and is part of something positive.”

- Parent of New Orleans Public School Student

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LEAD PARTNERS

Save The Music (STM) helps students, schools, and communities reach their full potential through the power of making music.

Artist Corps New Orleans (AC NOLA) works to strengthen music education through service, partnering with schools and arts organizations to match resources, programs and personnel where the needs are greatest.

New Orleans Arts Education Alliance (NOAEA) is a collective impact project – gathering parents, the educational community, government, cultural institutions, business, and philanthropy – to ensure access for all children to an education that includes exemplary arts instruction.

As intermediaries who reflect the core value of educational equity, AC NOLA and NOAEA serve as vital project partners. They assist in navigating CMO and district relationships, provide local mentorship and professional development to music educators, and provide on-the-ground administrative and technical assistance through partnerships with New Orleans' many stakeholders.

With additive project funding from the ELMA Music Foundation, STM engaged the **Upbeat Academy Foundation (UAF)** to pilot STM's J Dilla Music Tech program two Travis Hill Schools to build key vocational skills and introduce career pathways in the music industry for justice-impacted youth in nontraditional educational settings.



Lead Funders

Leadership supporters of this project include the **ELMA Music Foundation**, **CMA Foundation** and **Baptist Community Ministries**. Additional local and national project supporters include **Sound Start Foundation**, **Threadhead Cultural Foundation**, **Entergy Charitable Foundation**, **Bonnaroo Works Fund**, **Central Bucks School District**, and **CMT**.



Research Partner and Methodology

In order to examine implementation of the program and to understand its preliminary outcomes, STM hired **Metis Associates**, a NYC-based research and evaluation firm to review existing documentation and develop an overview of findings from the first three years. The Metis team reviewed and analyzed extant data from three categories of sources: 1) evaluation reports from the first five years of the program, which were completed by an external evaluator; 2) progress reports completed by participating schools during their involvement in the program; and 3) data from reports published on the Louisiana Department of Education website, including school-wide attendance rates, chronic absenteeism rates, and annual academic testing scores.

