



# An Investigation of Music Standards within Minnesota and Wisconsin Classrooms

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## About Our Study

### Background Information

In 2014, the National Coalition for Core Arts Standards (NCCAS) released new standards for arts education, including revised music education standards. The 2014 Core Arts Standards provide a roadmap for educators to improve teaching and learning in arts classrooms. Our research team explored the extent to which music teachers have embraced the 2014 standards when writing music lesson plans.

### Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to gather information from current music educators in Minnesota and Wisconsin regarding their attitudes about and implementation of state and national music standards within their classrooms. Specific research questions included:

- Are there differences among music educators regarding the value they place on the inclusion of specific music standards when constructing daily lesson plans, based on (a) sex, (b) age, (c) school setting (rural-urban-suburban), (d) classes taught (band-choir-orchestra-classroom music-other), (e) school type (elementary-middle/junior high-high school), (f) state in which employed (Minnesota-Wisconsin), (g) state from which Music Education degree was awarded, (h) teaching experience (years), or (i) highest degree earned (Bachelors-Masters-Doctorate)?
- Are there differences among music educators regarding their knowledge about State (Minnesota and Wisconsin) and National (1994 and 2014) music standards, based on (a) sex, (b) age, (c) school setting (rural-urban-suburban), (d) classes taught (band-choir-orchestra-classroom music-other), (e) school type (elementary-middle/junior high-high school), (f) state in which employed (Minnesota-Wisconsin), (g) state from which Music Education degree was awarded, (h) teaching experience (years), or (i) highest degree earned (Bachelors-Masters-Doctorate)?
- Are there differences among music educators regarding their implementation of specific music standards within daily lesson plans, based on (a) sex, (b) age, (c) school setting (rural-urban-suburban), (d) classes taught (band-choir-orchestra-classroom music-other), (e) school type (elementary-middle/junior high-high school), (f) state in which employed (Minnesota-Wisconsin), (g) state from which Music Education degree was awarded, (h) teaching experience (years), or (i) highest degree earned (Bachelors-Masters-Doctorate)?

## Data Analysis

### Participants and Variables

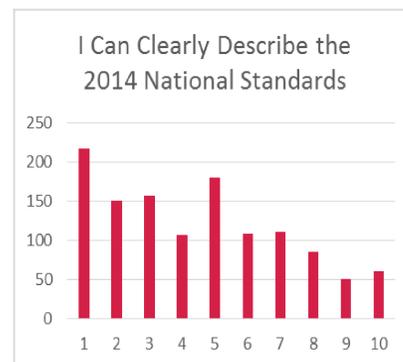
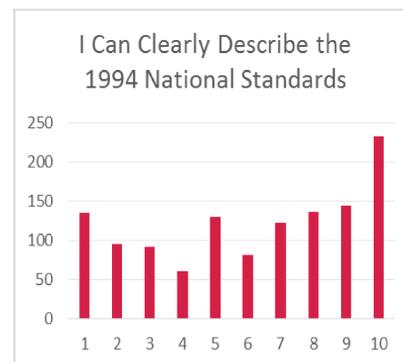
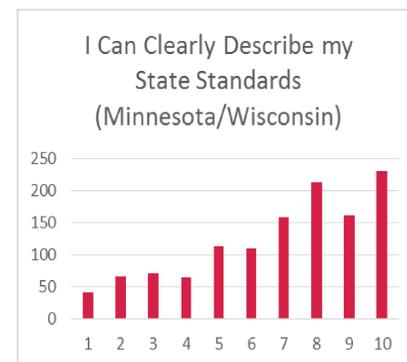
Our research was conducted via an online survey sent to 4573 music educators in Minnesota and Wisconsin. The survey was distributed in mid-February 2016. We received  $N = 1277$  total responses, which represented a response rate of 27.9%. The survey included demographic information, followed by a series of questions about music educators regarding their attitudes about and implementation of state and national music standards, based on a 10-point Likert scale. Independent variables included (a) sex, (b) age, (c) school setting (rural-urban-suburban), (d) classes taught (band-choir-orchestra-classroom music-other), (e) school type (elementary-middle/junior high-high school), (f) state in which employed (Minnesota-Wisconsin), (g) state from which Music Education degree was awarded, (h) teaching experience (years), or (i) highest degree earned (Bachelors-Masters-Doctorate). Dependent variables included responses to 16 prompts (10-point Likert scale).

### Data Analysis

One-way between-groups analysis of variance (ANOVA) were conducted for each prompt to explore mean differences between groups. Post-hoc comparisons were generated using the Games-Howell test. The level of alpha error ( $\alpha$ ) was set a priori at .01. Analysis revealed statistically significant differences ( $p < .01$ ) within the categories of age, school setting, teaching experience, and highest degree earned. No significant differences were found among educators based on sex, classes taught, school type, state in which they are employed, and the state in which they earned a Music Education degree.

### Of Special Note

Our research team was challenged regarding the practical significance of our findings, since the comparisons with  $p$ -values  $< .01$  were scattered in a non-systematic way. Our most noteworthy findings were within (a) *Age* and (b) *Years Teaching*: mean scores from the *Age* bracket 40-49 and *Years Teaching* bracket 21-30 were generally higher than other brackets, often at a level of significance. This would seem to align with significant differences found within *Highest Degree Earned*, specifically between Bachelor's Degree and Master's Degree; we suspect that these differences are related. Finally, responses from three survey prompts were telling regarding differences in *Current Knowledge about the Music Standards* (see graphs below): based on this data, music educators are not as familiar with the 2014 National Core Standards as they are with either the 1994 National Standards or their own state's standards.



## Survey Prompts & Mean Scores

Value of Music Standards	Mean
• I believe that music educators should utilize lesson plans	7.8
• I believe that music lesson plans should include specific music standards	6.8
• My school principal believes that I should utilize lesson plans	7.1
• My school principal believes that my music lesson plans should include specific music standards	6.4
• My school-district administrators believe that I should utilize lesson plans	7.3
• My school-district administrators believe that my music lesson plans should include specific music standards	6.8
• I am motivated to learn more about the 2014 National Core Music Standards	6.6

Current Knowledge About Music Standards	Mean
• I can clearly describe my state music standards (Minnesota or Wisconsin)	6.8
• I can clearly describe the 1994 National Standards	6.1
• I can clearly describe the 2014 National Core Standards	4.4
• I can clearly describe similarities and differences between the 1994 and 2014 National Music Standards	3.7

Implementation of Music Standards	Mean
• This school year, I have consistently written lesson plans for my music classes	6.5
• When writing music lesson plans this school year, I have consistently included specific music standards	5.3
• When writing music lesson plans this school year, I have consistently included a broad array of specific music standards	5.8
• When including music standards in the music lesson plans I have written this school year, I have consistently utilized national (rather than state) music standards	4.7
• When including national music standards in the music lesson plans I have written this school year, I have consistently utilized the 2014 (rather than 1994) National Core Music Standards	3.8