



Elementary Music Education in
Canada and Australia:

**A study of music education in two public elementary schools, a
music specialist's perspective.**

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Abstract

The purpose of this report was to study music education in two public elementary schools. This comparison exemplified best practice of primary music education teaching in two schools; Malvern Primary School Victoria Australia and Dalhousie Elementary School Winnipeg Canada. The research looked at the current status and quality of music education in Victoria. Qualitative methodology was utilized through a case Study of an “at risk” student, implementation of a program for autistic students and a Power point presentation about the Victorian Essential Learning Standards to a group of Specialist Music teachers with a discussion afterwards. Extracurricular activities such as Hand bells, choirs and recorder extension groups were continued and include letters of commendations from the education Minister and a Member of the Legislative Assembly. The report recognized the need for music specialist teachers in all primary schools. It identified the support required for specialist music teachers to maintain quality music education including that of Government, Principals, Zone Coordinators, teachers, parents and community. The report also exemplified the need for individualized music programs and a change of the current curriculum and assessment. From this investigation the report identified and recommended implementation strategies.

Study Objectives

The study objectives were to

Improve the understanding of Primary Music education through qualitative research of two schools in Winnipeg Canada and Victoria Australia.

In addition the research was required to cover a range of related issues connected to the primary research objective. This included:

What is best practice and how is it maintained, supported, nurtured and given the status it deserves?

How do we continue the delivery of music programs that reflect world’s best practice by specialist teacher’s who are supported and have the skills.

How do we enable all students to be identified and nurtured for music programs to accommodate their full potential either through “at risk behaviour” autism and giftedness?

How do we maintain the integrity of music education through the curriculum?

The objective was answered through differing methodologies these included;

Identification of best practice in music education of two schools in Winnipeg Canada and Victoria Australia.

The identification, development and implementation of an individual music program to an “at risk student”.

The identified need for the development and implementation of a particular music program to a group of special needs students.

A Seminar to specialist teachers of the Pembina Trails Division outlining the Victorian Essential Learning Standards Arts Curriculum and then an open question forum outlining similarities, differences and solutions to prescriptive problems.

A continuation of the current choral group for both Grade 5/6 and Grade 3/4.

The continuation of hand bell group of 20 Grade 6 students including performances letters of commendations from the Education Minister and Member of the Legislative Assembly.

A continuation of the group for extension recorder.

The continuation of a sustained partnership with the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra.

The detailed research strategy included the following elements;

Research to compare Australian music curricula with Canadian music curricula.
Identification of the provision for music education through extra-curricular activities, including instrumental instruction and performance;
Identifying the need for individualized music learning programs where needed.
Identification of music education provisions in Australian school education authorities' Curriculum frameworks and documents, the nature and scope of the curriculum, and expected outcomes at each level of school with assessment.
Identification of the provision of Music Coordinator at Division Level to support and liaise with government and teachers to ensure best practice.

Introduction:

The purpose of this review

The review reports on exemplary examples of best teaching practice in both Victoria Australia and Winnipeg Canada. It examines the current quality and status of musical education in Victoria Australia. Key recommendations arise from these aspects.

Why now?

There is also a general perception that Australian school music education is approaching a state of crisis. The Stevens Report (2003) provided an initial examination of music achievement and provision, and this highlighted the need for more comprehensive research. Since augmenting the Diminished the Victorian Curriculum has been further watered down. (Gill 2009) Your children are being discriminated against if they are not receiving a well-planned and properly taught music program at their schools. The implementation of music specialist teachers into all primary schools is on the decline and Maths and English are currently the only student outcomes reported on nationally every two years. If we are to convince Victoria of the need for specialist music teachers then according to Music Matters this approach will work.

I have also become persuaded that a more analytic and contextual approach to the philosophical problems of music education, combined with insights from contemporary scholars in the philosophy of music, music cognition, education, and psychology, holds important opportunities to advance music teaching and learning. (Music Matters 1995)

Who is the review for?

International Teaching Fellowship,
School Principals, Administrators and Leaders such as School Council and School, Management group members; Teachers; Parents; Musicians and those who support music education including those in the music industry; Professional associations especially those providing for music education; The Australian community.

Overview of the Report

There are five sections to the Report of the Review. Part 1 is an Introduction. Part 2 provides an informed context for the Review through a review of national and international literature. Part 3 provides the research methodologies. Part 4 is the results from a study of music education in two schools Victoria Australia and Winnipeg Canada giving examples of best practice and Part 5 identifies and discusses issues, challenges and opportunities and generates practical applications and concludes the body of the Report looking forward to enhanced music education in schools. There is also a bibliography.

Part 2

Contexts for the review.

Review of National and international literature.

Australian Attitudes to Music

The Australian Attitudes to Music survey (Australian Music Association, 2001) found near unanimous concurrence that the study of music should be part of a well-rounded education (95%) and all schools should offer an instrumental music education as part of the regular curriculum (91%). The study also found that 87% of respondents supported the notion that music education should be mandated by the States to ensure every child has an opportunity to study music in school.

Music is not currently mandated by the states and is largely dependent on the ability of the classroom teacher to bring their knowledge to music education. Specialist Music educators however have the knowledge and ability to sustain a sequential program and ensure music is taught.

Music can bring school success to those students unsuccessful in other curricular subjects (multiple intelligences)...music makes all school subjects more interesting, develops more effectively the right side of the brain, provides greatly enhanced communication skills and the ability to connect and apply learning across subject areas. It develops higher order thought processes and skills in perceptual learning. It provides a command of general knowledge, equips students to deal with ambiguity and to solve problems, provides world awareness...aids in improving self-concept, self-management skills...develops a connection between disciplined work habits and getting results...employs several kinds of literacy... [It] constantly appeals to many different intelligences, visual, auditory, kinaesthetic, social, logical and more. (pp. 20-21)

"Music education in Australian schools is at a critical point where prompt action is needed to right the inequalities in school music." (Augmenting the diminished 2005)

If we value music so highly in Australia how do we fix the problem that appears to be widespread? Music education is often neglected in Australia particularly for students from impoverished backgrounds.

many Australian students miss out on effective music education because of the lack of equity of access; lack of quality of provision; and, the poor status of music in many schools. (Augmenting the diminished 2005)

While there are examples of excellent music education in schools (Augmenting the diminished 2005)

Excellent music education does exist in Australia and the implementation would appear simple however, the current lack of music specialist teachers, supportive principals and school leadership needs to be addressed. The simple rectification of the problem would indeed improve the status of music.

Improve music education in schools through supportive principals and school leadership, adequately educated specialist teachers, increased time in the timetable, adequate facilities and equipment; (Augmenting the diminished 2005)

It is important to never underestimate the power of music education.

Raising the quality and status of music education will have a positive impact on the breadth and depth of aesthetic, cognitive, social and experiential learning for all Australian students and, ultimately, for our society at large. (Augmenting the diminished 2005)

(Pat Farmer MP) concludes that parents, communities and organizations need to work together to ensure that music curriculums in schools are a success.

The current Victorian Curriculum The Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS) outlines what is essential for all Victorian students to learn during their time at school from Prep to Year 10. They provide a set of common state-wide standards which schools use to plan student learning programs, assess student progress and report to parents. (Gill 2009) exemplifies the problems associated with the VELS particularly in relation to the Arts and the generalized language used to provide a curriculum that is nonsensical and obviously not written by music educators, art educators or dance or drama educators.

On reading most creative arts curriculums, and I have read most of them in the country, one is reasonably led to believe that many of the curriculum writers who dream up this nonsense would appear to be non practitioners of anything genuinely educational or artistic, but seem to have a facility in eduspeak: bullshit baffles brains, I believe is the appropriate expression. (Gill 2009)

The VELS differ from traditional curricula by including knowledge and skills in the areas of physical, social and personal learning. Skills which are transferable across all areas of study such as thinking and communication are also included. The discipline based learning areas are English, Language, Science, Maths, The Arts and Humanities. The Arts includes Music, Drama, Dance and Visual Art. The assessment is based on standards. (Gill 2009) would argue that the Victorian Curriculum is damaging the integrity of Music. The VELS approach to the Arts has combined four separate subjects into one.

In most recently regressive acts of educational malfunction, schools of thought have emerged that would have one believe that the arts are all related and function the same way. The visual arts, dance and drama all have their unique qualities and their own integrities, all of which must be preserved and not rolled into one meaningless subject. (Gill 2009)

The preference to merge music into the subject of creative arts reflects research and pedagogies in teaching the arts, but also meets budget-saving and timesaving requirements. But the disadvantage of this is that music fundamentals may be overlooked by interdisciplinary teaching, and subsequently, benefits of music are almost inevitably are lost.

This also applies to the assessment of Music which is also reported as purely The Arts. Hence if a student is doing well in music but not so in visual arts the two results are combined and the average is taken. Could we compare English with mathematics and average the two? To date music will not be represented in either phase 1 or phase 2 of the National Curriculum. The status of music education is compromised because it is simply not represented in the Curriculum.

This document identifies years 3, 5, 7, and 9 as the key indicators for student outcomes. It contains ways of working, knowledge and understanding as its key concepts for teachers to follow and be guided for the teaching of the five strands of the Arts. Student outcomes are only identified through Math and English and those outcomes are collected and made accessible to parents. Which asks the question what sort of society are we creating?

My main theme has been this dialectical relationship, firstly as it is found at the heart of the nature of musical knowledge itself, secondly as it appears in the processes of research, and finally as a necessary tension in education. In this last area I have been specific concerning the implications, both for formal music education in general classes and for specialist

instrumental teaching. Our understanding of musical knowing has to be translated, analysed into curriculum planning, (Intuition, analysis and music education)

If we are to improve the understanding of musical knowledge then specialist teachers who have acquired that knowledge need to analyse, translate and plan the curriculum.

Improve curriculum support services (advisory, instrumental music, vocal music and music technology;) Augmenting the diminished sees the improvement of curriculum support services as a priority.

The crux of it all seems to be that we badly lack any kind of conceptual framework. The consequences of this are twofold. In the first instance we miss a sense of direction in teaching, or indeed, may cheerfully take wrong directions. In the second place we are unable to look after ourselves when negotiating our way through the thickets of educational administration and politics, at whatever level in the system we may (A basis for Music education)

However it neglects to tell us how or what will be put in place to achieve this and how do we actually improve our current curriculum?

Methodology of music.

The predominant methodology used in primary music by specialist music teachers in most states of Australia is a highly skills-based program using the Kodály philosophy (Choksy, 1974) This methodology is a sequential structured learning. Music syllabus documents up to the introduction of the Essential Learnings (2008) have favoured the Kodály influence. Since their inception, Orff and Kodály methodologies have been widely disseminated throughout Europe, the United Kingdom, the USA, Canada, South America, Australia, the Middle East and parts of Asia. Both Orff and Kodaly incorporate practical, hands on method to music using instruments and voice. Orff promotes a sequential program that eventuates with the musical independence of students. Wiggins (2001) also believes that music instruction should empower students with musical understanding also ensuring musical proficiency and, eventual, musical independence.

Music is for everyone

Music educators know and believe that music is for everyone (Monsour, 2000), and with this philosophy specialists music educators enlist their skill to reach all students through music.

Recognition of the impact of Australia's diverse and complex cultural factors on school music including cultural diversity, musical giftedness and talent, music and students with special needs, and gender issues in music; (Augmenting the diminished 2005)

However (Augmenting the Diminished) neglects to recognize the "At risk students" which is of particular interest but does go on to say;

Music facilitates more than musical education it often becomes '[a]n exercise in friendship and co-operation where the completed whole is more than the sum of the parts [that] represents a goal which few subjects in the curriculum can readily attain' (Hughes, 1983, p. 17).

Of particular interest are the list given by the 1982 Gulbakeean Report. As they encapsulate a lot of the problems associated with Students at Risk.

1. Developing the full variety of children's intelligence;
2. Developing the capacity for creative thought and action;
3. The education of feeling and sensibility;
4. The exploration of values;
5. The understanding cultural change and differences; and

6. Developing physical and perceptual skills.

The studies suggest that for certain populations--including young children, students from economically disadvantaged circumstances, and students needing remedial instruction learning in the arts may be uniquely able to advance learning success in other areas.

But today, the arts are increasingly being advocated for their practical relevance to "serve the educational and human priorities of the moment This is to satisfy community desire to see prevailing concerns such as 'drop out rates, school reform, cultural diversity and violence' addressed through arts education (Fowler 1996)

More and more students are entering schools without the skills that enable them to be successful in an academic setting. However, it is not children's cognitive skills that are of concern; it is their social and emotional skill deficits that are most troublesome. Family and community risk factors can inhibit social and emotional development (i.e., skills that children need to control their behavior in the classroom) in young children, relationships provide the foundation for social-emotional skill development.

These behaviours are becoming wider spread with a group of student's who are deemed "at risk". There is not a lot of study in this area and it is difficult to find quantifiable data however schools are working in at risk assessment teams with psychologists and teachers to discuss case studies of students so that teachers may learn how to proceed, engage and improve both social and academic outcomes for these students.

Co curricular music in schools

Choirs form in an integral part of music education according to researchers. The voice is used extensively in both classroom and co-curricular music programs in schools both in Australia and internationally. (Chang, 1992; Chong, 1992; Kinder, 1987; Moore, 1994; Van Eeden, 1991; Wong, 1991). Choirs enable students to work together and also understand texture in music.

Choral practitioners also note that inspiration is a significant contributor to students' enjoyment and continued participation in choral activities (Wis, 1998). Not only is it necessary to carefully analyse repertoire, but rehearsals should be planned to enable students to develop analytical competencies, gaining valuable insights into the song repertoire which in turn develop their understanding and enjoyment of the singing experience (Wis, 1998). To ensure all students benefit from the experience of choir the choice of song is important from both a singing aspect and also for enjoyment. The mention of performance of the choirs and participation in Eisteddfods is not discussed but also gives the students a goal to strive for and is currently a contributor to improving the status of music in the community.

Part 3

The research methodologies

The reason I have chosen a qualitative methodology approach to the report is because it not only encapsulates a sense of empathy but enhances the use for applied practice in education. The comparative study answers the problems at grass root levels and the practice that can be directly put in place.

There are limitations with this sort of methodology

The qualitative data is in the form of words, pictures or objects whereas the quantitative data is in the form of numbers and statistics. The aim of Qualitative data is a complete detailed description whereas with quantitative data the aim is to classify features, count them and construct statistical models in an attempt to explain what is observed. The researcher for Qualitative data only roughly knows what they are looking for whilst the researcher knows clearly in advance what they are looking for. The design emerges as the study unfolds in qualitative data but all aspects are carefully designed before data is collected. Researchers tend to become subjectively immersed in the subject matter whilst the other is far more objective.

To achieve the research objectives of the review of school music education, a combination of Qualitative methodologies were employed.

- Overview of the two schools with best teaching practices.
(Documents of support from The Minister of Education for Best teaching Practice, Parliament and Newspaper article)
- Australian Curriculum Forum with 20 Music Specialists from Pembina Trails Division
- Methodology approach to "At Risk student" Case Study
- Methodology Approach to Special Needs students with autism

With the case study it is difficult to come up with any definitive results as usually a team of teachers, psychologists and other professionals would hear the Case Study then discuss best practices and work out possible methodologies to improve the student's wellbeing. This approach stops the teacher from becoming too subjective, validates the approach and facilitates new approaches if necessary.

Part 4

Results

1. Overview of both schools including best practice.

"Malvern Primary school is located in an affluent residential area in the midst of Melbourne's private school belt. Between 70% and 80% of the children who attend the school go on to attend private schools."

Malvern Primary school has 727 students and is a school that compares extremely well with like schools the Principal Mr Bennetts attributes this to the broad breadth and depth including a wide range of specialist teachers; Music, Art, Drama, Languages other than English (Italian) Library.

Malvern Primary currently employs two full time music specialists who teach students 1hr per week. Malvern Primary has four choirs

Senior Choir Grade 5/6 1 hour per week before school (non compulsory)

Mezzo Choir Grade 4 1 hour per week before school

Junior Choir Grade 2/3 ½ hour per week after school

Instrumental Grade 2 ½ hour before school

Band instruction 1 hour before school with Specialist Music teacher assisting.

Fee Paying Instrumental lessons within the school during school hours.

Performance

Eisteddfods, Ballarat Exchange Program, Mid year and end of year concerts, Extensive community performances.

Technology

Interactive white board training and use. Finale Program, Music Ace 1 and 11

Music Education in Dalhousie elementary School Winnipeg.

Dalhousie School is located in Fort Richmond, in the south end of Winnipeg near the University of Manitoba. Dalhousie is a dynamic school serving a diverse community.

Dalhousie is a diverse multicultural school of lower socio economic scale. The school currently employs specialists for music, library, Languages other than English (French)

Dalhousie elementary school has one full time specialist music teacher who teaches students 1 ½ hours every six days.

Senior Choir Grade 5/6 1hour per week In school time compulsory

Junior Choir Grade 3/4 1 Hour per week In school time compulsory

Extra Curricular

Hand bells Instrumental grade 6 3x ½ hour lessons during Lunchtime

Recorder Club 1x ½ hour lessons during lunchtime

Performance

Eisteddfods, Pembina Trails sings, Orff Day, Assembly performances, Extensive Community Performances

Technology

Music Ace 1 and 11 Program 2-6

2. Curriculum Discussion with Pembina Trails Specialist teachers.

The talk was based on the VELs. (See attached Power point)

At the end of the talk there was discussion about how the curriculum had evolved and what affect the current Victorian Curriculum has on the status of Music Education

The question that arose was how do we maintain the integrity of music education through the curriculum? The answers from the specialist teachers were unanimous; (See discussion conclusion)

3. "At Risk" Student Case Study.

Music became an integral part of the life and experience of an "at risk" student. A program was used to serve as a means for self expression, provide a means of success, provide opportunities for social physical, emotional and cultural development and enhance positive self concept and begin positive relationships. The motivational strategies that were included in this Case Study included self esteem activities, encouraging the family to continue the musical work at home and with others and opportunities to work collaboratively in writing and performing songs.

The subject was given access to a drum kit with supervision for 15 minutes every day. During this time only positive comments were conveyed and continuity encouraged.

After week one the subject was not seeing as much of the social worker and would visit me each day to ensure their ability to play on the drums.

After week two the subject was attending a lesson a day and had not had any violent explosions.

After week three the subject was attending a lesson a day and had not had any violent explosions.

After week four the subject was attending an average of 3 lessons a day and had not had any violent episodes.

A Discussion with the subject's father about holidays and the possibilities of drum use with an uncle.

After week ten the subject was attending all lessons including classroom music.

Spoke to parent who ensured subject got time on a relative's drums during the break.

Subject continued classes.

(other teachers complained of the noise)

The principal spoke out in support of the program and wholeheartedly remained fast to the continued program.

After 15 weeks the student was trialed with other students to play in a band however this proved to be unsuccessful and was trialed again at a later date. The student only ever had one further outburst. Unfortunately the program had to be ended.

Working with students with autism.

After assessing the strengths and needs of each person in the group, an appropriate plan was developed with goals and objectives. Working with a small group, using a variety of music and techniques the reliance on spontaneous musical improvisation became an essential. The use of percussion or tuned instruments, and my own voice, to respond creatively to the sounds produced by the student, and encouraged the student to create his or her own musical language. The aim was to create a context of sound in which the student felt comfortable and confident to express them self, to experience a wider range of emotions, and to discover what it was like to be in a two-way communicating relationship.

Goals were set to increase opportunities for cognitive, physical and sensory stimulation. This included the use of particular song with repetition to develop motor skills (e.g., increase muscle tone, improve motor planning skills, balance & coordination etc) Other greeting songs were used to promote social skills and improve interpersonal relationship skills. This was achieved through singing a welcome song each time I saw the students. They would turn to their Educational Assistants and look at them, shake hands and say their name if able.

To develop recognition of emotion in others and expression in self (verbal & non-verbal), songs were used to identify expression. Images of particular emotions on flash cards, songs and facial expressions enabled the students to identify and recognize expression in self. Improvisation was used to enhance self esteem, confidence and to improve verbal & non-verbal communication skills. The students were then given opportunities for non-verbal self-expression through the use of music and to develop play skills. These play skills included movement to music, singing and chanting, educational/instructional songs, involvement in a group, improvisation and instrumental play.

Part 5

Discussion and Conclusion.

Both schools employ enthusiastic dedicated specialist music teachers. At Malvern Primary School mentoring was highly regarded and ensured so the new teachers could continue the excellent music practice within the school. At Dalhousie school the music teacher had worked there for numerous years ensuring that the program was continued and of the highest caliber. All of the specialist music teachers were passionate about music and devoted extra hours to ensure that extra curricular activities were in place to extend the gifted students and enrich all students. Warmth and rapport was noted by the teachers at Malvern Primary School towards the students. This in turn created an atmosphere of engagement by the students. The specialist music teachers in both schools promoted excellence in their field both at the school and through their own endeavors.

The programs were similar in their use of Kodaly, Solfege and Orff instruction. Composition, performance, improvisation, singing, playing of instruments and notation were both used widely in the schools' programs. A diversity of musical styles within both schools was also noticed with a strong emphasis on the cities Orchestra. This visit ensured the students were enriched through listening, learning and seeing an orchestra and where they perform. Music when at all possible was integrated into other curricular areas to enhance learning in those areas. Recorder played an important role in both schools ensuring that students can not only read music by secondary school but can utilize this when adapting to a new instrument when in secondary school. Both schools embraced a curriculum that included indigenous music.

The Principals in both schools were to be congratulated on their support of the school music programs. They were advocates for the music program both within the school and throughout the community. Professional development was encouraged and supported in both of the schools. Resources were well funded in both schools with a good budget for purchasing and maintenance of equipment. The teachers of both schools offered collegiate support which without makes any specialists' music teacher's job impossible.

Parent's attendance for performances at both schools was high. This also contributed to the high status of music within the schools. Parents remain responsible for the tuition fees at Malvern Primary School enabling the students to develop their musical skills and continue the excellence into Secondary school. The band also enabled students to perform together.

The group of twenty Specialist teachers who attended the VELS forum also contributed to the Pembina trails curriculum and this was then overseen by the Co coordinator and then taken to a panel to continue the process. The Pembina trails division ensured that specialist teachers were involved in the writing of the curriculum. On further discussion with the group they all agreed that the language was clear and concise with detail on exactly what is expected. (musical outcomes) The precision of the language was inversely proportional to the status of the curriculum being compromised. The specialist teachers confer with the curriculum as to what will go in the report so that the two correspond and are in a clear language for parents to comprehend. They also agreed that music would need to be a separate discipline subject as well as visual art, drama and dance.

Music became an integral part of the life and experience of an "at risk" student. A program was used to serve as a means for self expression, provide a means of success, provide opportunities for social physical, emotional and cultural development and enhance positive self concept and begin positive relationships. The motivational strategies that were included in this Case Study included self esteem activities, encouraging the family to continue the musical work at home and with others and opportunities to work collaboratively in writing and performing songs.

With the case study it is difficult to come up with any definitive results. The student had less violent explosions when contributing to the music program. Involving the parents with the program meant they were aware of his ability and this contributed to the student's self identification of success. With further time the student would have worked with other students to form a band which would have had significant outcomes with social interactions.

A unique application of music was used to enhance personal lives of autistic students by creating positive changes in human behavior. Music was utilized as a tool to encourage development in social/ emotional, cognitive/learning, and perceptual-motor areas. The program was implemented for an educational setting. Music was an effective means because it was a nonverbal form of communication, it was a natural reinforcer, it was immediate in time and provided motivation for practicing nonmusical skills. Most importantly, it was a successful medium because almost everyone responds positively to at least some kind of music.

Playing the guitar and singing created musical experiences that struck a chord with a particular person, making personal connections and building trust. One student would allow me to introduce physical touch which he abhorred but when singing he appeared comforted with the touch particularly stroking the temples. People on the autism spectrum are often especially interested in and responsive to music. Because the music was motivating and engaging, it was used as a natural reinforcer for desired responses.

It also helped a student with sensory aversions to certain sounds like, the bells to cope with sound sensitivities or individual differences in auditory processing. Simple songs, pieces or musical styles suited the mood and developmental needs of the student at any given moment. In fact, the music didn't need to fall into conventional patterns or even use words; response to cries, screams and body movements by the students, all of which have rhythm and pitch and are susceptible to organization in musical terms.

The use of a music specialist can never replace music therapy however it can result in improving student outcomes particularly in the area of one student who noticeably had less violent outbursts after music sessions. The program would have to be assessed over a greater period of time and more results conducted. It is difficult to isolate the music program from other lessons the students were experiencing and what the overall benefits were. However the need for individualized music programs can be utilized in comparative situations such as students with giftedness and other impairments.

To maintain the status of music education in Victoria Australia, best practice of specialist music teachers would always ensure a good program however support would have to be the next essential element in maintaining the status of music education in Victoria Australia. Support refers to Government ensuring there is a budget in all primary schools for a music specialist to be employed. It would be principal's who would ensure firstly, that they be given a constructive timetable, musical instruments made available, adequate budget and more importantly a belief that music is an integral part of the school's educational philosophies and priorities.

Provide a location once a year where specialist teachers provide students with a day of specialized, best teaching practice.

Through the provision of an online instrumental service for use throughout the zone this could ensure that schools that don't have a large budget still have access to instruments.

Staging also could be lent out to schools within the division from a central storage area.

The Co-ordination of concerts would be organized prior so the stage would be transferred to different schools ensuring a smaller budget because there would not be the need to buy.

Those schools who have a large hall could rent out to other schools. PA equipment and chairs would be booked and delivered through the division.

The employment of a musical consultant for the zones in Victoria would enable the consultants to address issues with the Education Committees. Thus ensuring that the status of music education would be kept in tact and all issues prevailing would be addressed, developed, implemented and brought back to the specialist teachers to be involved in the decision making. Meetings implemented once a month with a group of specialist music teachers would be empowering, it would provide food for thought and reestablish the inspiration, motivation and produce best practices. It would enable a knowledgeable discussion to take place with people who have differing ideas and opinions and invoke thought, change and improvement. Educational teaching methods would be discussed, methodology discussed and resource material trialed and critiqued. Partnerships, connections and networking facilitate effective music in schools and make everyone accountable. All of these initiatives can only benefit student outcomes.

In particular the current VELS curriculum for music would be addressed and worked on to articulate, concisely and clearly the standards and progression points for music. Curriculum, policy, syllabus and support materials would be scrutinized by a select group of specialist teachers. This team would be involved in the planning, writing and the overseeing of a curriculum that is well articulated. Maybe when national bench marks for music are printed every two years will people start jumping up and down about the lack of music in some schools and the poor results.

Music would need to be ensured as a separate discipline with a separate reporting assessment. Until this happens the status of music will always be compromised in Victoria as the people who write the curriculum move further away from concise musical language this entitles the government to a "get out of specialist teacher employment free card"

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