

Short-term impacts of Education Through Music—Los Angeles in elementary schools

2021





Dear Friends:

In 2006, Education Through Music-Los Angeles (ETM-LA) was founded with the mission to restore quality music education back into the core curriculum of under-resourced schools within marginalized communities. We are predicated on the belief that every child deserves to receive music as part of a well-rounded education in order to nurture critical thinking, socio-emotional wellness, and overall development through building skills for life. Through music education, we seek to close the achievement gap and remove barriers to equity and access.

ETM-LA grew from partnering with two schools reaching 800 students in our first year, to now reaching 46 schools and approximately 19,000 students in our 15th year. During this time, we witnessed remarkable transformation through our work. Students and stakeholders shared stories of triumph and the positive impact of music in their lives; children were becoming more resourceful and resilient. We saw our communities become more connected and confident – embracing their agency to champion equity and access for all children.

As ETM-LA continued to expand services, both formally and informally observing the impact of our music education programming, we found it important to ensure the removal of implicit bias within the collection of our data. As an affiliate of the original Education Through Music program in New York City, we had access to previously-documented positive effects of the ETM program in their partner schools in areas such as learning, motivation for school, and parent engagement. We desired additional data on the impact of our music education programs in and on our Los Angeles communities and schools.

To this end, we launched an external evaluation in 2018 with Evaluation Specialists to ascertain how our school-wide model of weekly, yearlong, sequential, comprehensive music as a core subject - and reaching every student - was making a difference as compared to other schools without a school-wide approach to music programming.

In this two-year study, we sought to focus primarily on outcomes around socio-emotional wellness and positive shifts in school culture and attitudes about learning music. Despite the study being truncated due to the COVID-19 pandemic in year two, which resulted in our instructional pivots to synchronous and asynchronous distance learning, the evaluation concluded with key insights into the measurable positive impacts ETM-LA is having on school communities and students.

Salient findings of the study around the benefits of music include:

- 40% increase in teachers who report high student engagement in learning at ETM-LA partner schools, compared to only 7% in schools receiving intermittent or no music programming
- 95% of ETM-LA partner school teachers believe music education should be offered as part of the core curriculum.

The positive results of this study are a testament to the dedication and collaboration from our ETM-LA team, partner schools, and community partners. Education Through Music-Los Angeles is committed to continuing this vital work with schools, districts, communities, and stakeholders to provide music as part of a school's core curriculum, as well as conduct professional development, leadership guidance, and ongoing community engagement.

We are pleased to share this summary of findings. For more information about Education Through Music-Los Angeles, visit www.etmla.org.

Victoria Lanier
Executive Director
Education Through Music-Los Angeles



Education Through Music-Los Angeles

Education Through Music-Los Angeles provides and promotes the integration of quality music instruction into the curricula of disadvantaged schools to enhance students' academic performance and development. In its 15th Year, Education Through Music-Los Angeles (ETM-LA) is an independent 501(c)3. The ETM-LA program is based on the ETM® model that has successfully revitalized communities in New York City for 30 years. As a recognized leader in music education, ETM-LA provides a comprehensive, sequential, skills- and standards-based music education program, as part of the school day at no cost to the student.



ETM-LA believes all children
deserve music education
as part of their
regular core curriculum

Education Through Music-Los Angeles, founded in 2006, is a music education program founded on principles from Education Through Music – New York (ETM-NY) model. Both programs are based on theory, provide comprehensive and structured services, and have a well-developed, structured curriculum and set of support activities. ETM-LA provides weekly, yearlong, quality music instruction for every child, through a proven curriculum based on National Common Core and State Standards. By integrating the ETM-LA model into curricula in ways that support student learning in a range of academic areas, schools are able to plan for and develop a sustainable music education program. Through customized training and mentoring for teaching artists and music teachers, leadership guidance for principals, and professional development for academic teachers, and parent and community involvement, the ETM model helps schools integrate music into their classrooms and academic curriculum. Additional program information can be found at [Education Through Music-Los Angeles](#).



Known Benefits of Music Education

Music education can produce powerful effects on young student's development. A recent study, published in the *Journal of Research in Music Education*, adds to the already existing body of scientific research showing linkages between music, math, and reading. Bergee & Weingarten's study (2020) shows strong, statistically significant links between music and both math and reading achievement.¹ Additionally, a review by Hallam (2010) of the large and growing literature in this area describes music education's many positive benefits.² Engagement with music appears to produce positive changes in youth's brain activity and function. In addition to the expected increase in students' musical skills, engagement with music also appears to lead to superior language development, literacy, numerical skills, creativity, concentration, self-confidence, social skills, teamwork, and self-discipline. Not surprisingly, these positive effects are experienced most by students that find their music program enjoyable and rewarding.

Prior program evaluations show considerable promise for the program. In New York City, the ETM-NY program evaluations have shown that principals and teachers rate the program offerings favorably and report that program activities are successfully integrated into the larger curriculum.³ They also perceive the program as having positive impacts on students both musically and more broadly (e.g., self-esteem, self-confidence, and ability to cooperate). Additionally, longitudinal testing of ETM-NY shows increases in student musical skills, as well as English and Math skills. Program evaluations of schools in the ETM-LA program also show that within the first four years of incorporating ETM-LA's program into the curriculum of partner schools, standardized test scores showed an average increase of 19.3% more students achieving at or above proficiency in English Language Arts, and a 9.6% increase in Math.⁴ Moreover, 100% of surveyed ETM-LA classroom teachers agreed that music is a vital part of the curriculum, and 93% observed that music supported overall improvements in students' self-confidence and self-esteem.⁵

“

I believe that music provides students with a way to express themselves. I also believe strongly in its connection to learning in multiple subjects.

ETM-LA partner school teacher

“

I think it's the best class ever because I like playing instruments. It's relaxing.

ETM-LA student

“

It stimulates students' creativity, helps them grow into their personalities, and helps them form identity. It makes them love learning.

ETM-LA partner school teacher



¹ Bergee, Martin J., and Kevin M. Weingarten. "Multilevel Models of the Relationship Between Music Achievement and Reading and Math Achievement." *Journal of Research in Music Education*, vol. 68, no. 4, 2020, pp. 398–418, doi:10.1177/0022429420941432.

² Hallam, Susan. "The Power of Music: Its Impact on the Intellectual, Social and Personal Development of Children and Young People." *International Journal of Music Education*, vol. 28, no. 3, 2010, pp. 269–289, doi:10.1177/0255761410370658.

³ LS Associates. "Measure by Measure: Developing the Whole Child through the ETM Music Education Model: Model and Evaluation Summary." Etmonline.org, 2008, etmonline.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/2008evaluation.pdf.

⁴ 2016, UCLA Anderson School of Management's Net Impact Consulting Challenge.

⁵ 2015, ETM-LA Community Partnership Survey.



Findings Overview

In this report we show findings from a study we conducted in six Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) Elementary schools to rigorously evaluate the impacts of the Education Through Music–Los Angeles program on teacher attitudes towards music education and their assessments of changes over time in student behaviors associated with academic and social success.



Evaluation Specialists

Evaluation Specialists is an independent program evaluation company with offices in California, Colorado, and Washington. In collaboration with Education Through Music–Los Angeles staff, we designed this study, developed data collection tools and protocols, collected the data, conducted these data analyses, drew conclusions based on these findings, and created this report. ETM-LA provided content review of this report, though the conclusions remain those of Evaluation Specialists.

Evaluation Goals

We designed this study to evaluate the impacts of the Education Through Music–Los Angeles program. We focused on improvements most likely to occur in the first years of ETM-LA programming. One type of early effect is a school culture that more strongly appreciates the benefits of and supports music education for all children. This includes teachers' attitudes and broad stakeholder support (for example, from school staff, PTA members, and parents). Among students, expected early effects include their engagement with and enjoyment of school, feelings about themselves, social emotional skills, and classroom behavior.

The aim of this evaluation was to answer five questions during the first two years of ETM-LA program implementation. We answered one of the questions using data from teachers in schools receiving ETM-LA:

1. Do teachers in schools participating in ETM-LA favorably rate program services and activities? We answered three other questions by comparing schools receiving ETM-LA programming to control schools that were not (described in more detail in the next section):
2. Do ETM-LA teachers show greater improvements in their own attitudes about music education than teachers in control schools?
3. Do ETM-LA teachers perceive greater improvements in support for music education among school staff, PTA members, and parents than teachers in control schools?
4. Do ETM-LA teachers report that students show greater growth in social emotional skills and greater improvements in classroom behaviors associated with academic success than those in control schools?

Finally, we answered the remaining question by interviewing students at one ETM-LA school to assess their feelings about their music classes:

5. How did their ETM-LA music classes make them feel when in class and, more generally, about themselves and their school.



Schools that Participated in the Evaluation

ETM-LA identified 21 schools possibly able to serve as ETM-LA intervention schools. We then used a two-step matching procedure to identify – for each ETM-LA partner school – potential control schools that were receiving intermittent or no music programming. In the first step, for each ETM-LA partner school we created a list of other schools that were similar in student population characteristics. Primary matching characteristics were English Language Arts (ELA) and Math grade 3 test scores, percent of student body from diverse racial/ethnic backgrounds, student body size, and – as a proxy for socioeconomic status – the percent of students eligible for free or reduced lunch. In the second step, we reduced the list of potential matches by only retaining schools that matched an ETM-LA partner school on National School Lunch Program Provision Status, charter/public status, and percent breakdowns of the student body based on gender and being an English learner (EL).¹

ETM-LA staff then used this information and contacted school principals. Staff recruited six LAUSD Elementary schools into the study. Four agreed to serve as intervention schools providing ETM-LA programming. Two schools provided intermittent music programming and agreed to serve as control schools. At the two control schools some students received intermittent, in-school music programming during the study period. The number of weeks music programming was provided to students in the control schools ranged from six weeks to weekly throughout the academic year. However, only some or selected students received this music instruction. The control schools were told they would receive ETM-LA programming after the study was completed. To be eligible to participate in the evaluation, schools needed to meet three criteria:

1. no previous participation in ETM-LA programming,
2. demonstrated commitment and capacity for supporting the full implementation of ETM-LA programs and evaluation activities,
3. consent from principals and teachers to participate in the evaluation.

Data Collection Approach

Ethical and Independent Review Services and LAUSD reviewed and approved of all procedures. We collected information from teachers and students. 124 teachers (77 ETM-LA and 47 intermittent music programming teachers) responded to online surveys and reported on their attitudes toward and perceived support for music education in their school. Teachers also assessed twelve student behaviors associated with academic and social emotional success. We also conducted in-person interviews with 26 students at one ETM-LA partner school to collect their attitudes about and perceived effects of their music classes.

We collected the teachers online survey data at the end of the followup period. Teachers reported on their current perception of attitudes, support, and student behaviors. Additionally, they reported retrospectively on their recollection of these outcomes at the beginning of the evaluation period. For ETM-LA partner schools, this was before the implementation of programming; for schools receiving no or partial music programming it was at an equivalent timepoint. The number of months from the beginning of evaluation participation to followup ranged from 19 to 24 academic months. We developed the survey for teachers using a compilation of program-specific questions we developed ourselves and questions taken from validated, published, widely-used measures.



¹ Recent changes to Gender Norms and Title IX state "students have the right to be evaluated and graded without regard to their sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression." Unfortunately, data on non-binary students was not available for matching purposes.



Findings

Appendix A provides greater information about analysis methods, findings, and rationale. Because the number of teachers surveyed was moderate ($n = 124$), we interpret the results here based on effect sizes (i.e., measures of how large the difference is) to describe how much ETM-LA and intermittent programming schools varied from each other. We also note which comparisons were statistically significant.

Teachers at ETM-LA schools were more likely than teachers at intermittent programming schools to report at post-test support for music education from 1) parents, 2) the PTA, 3) other teachers, and 4) administration. They were also more likely to perceive a culture of support for music education at their school. Findings marked with an asterisk had effect sizes above our criteria and those marked with two asterisks also were statistically significant ($p < .05$). Appendix A shows effect sizes and statistical significance for each finding.

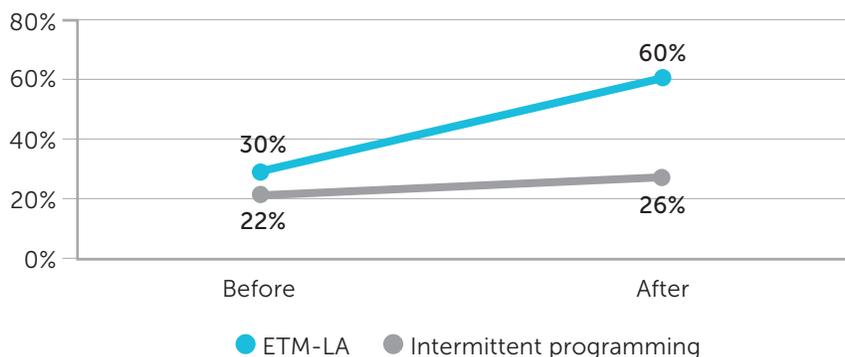


ETM-LA programming increased broad support for music education

More ETM-LA partner school teachers report...

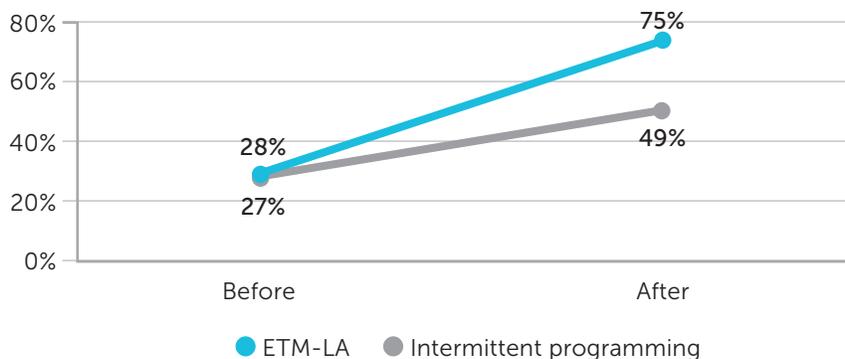
Parents support including music education as part of the core curriculum**

(percent of teachers that strongly agree)



There is a stronger culture of support for music education in ETM-LA schools**

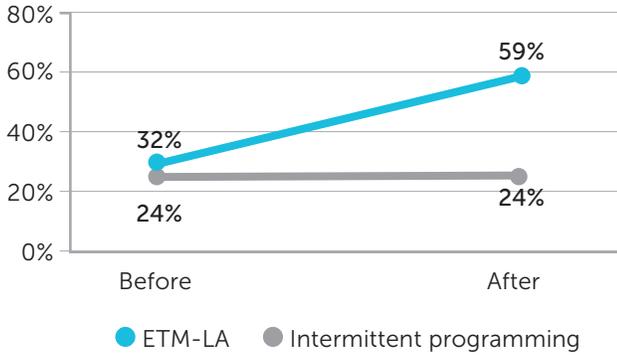
(percent of teachers that strongly agree)



More ETM-LA partner school teachers report...

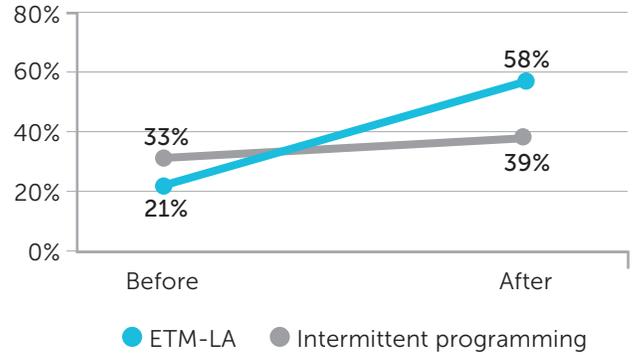
PTAs support including music education as a part of the core curriculum**

(percent of teachers that strongly agree)



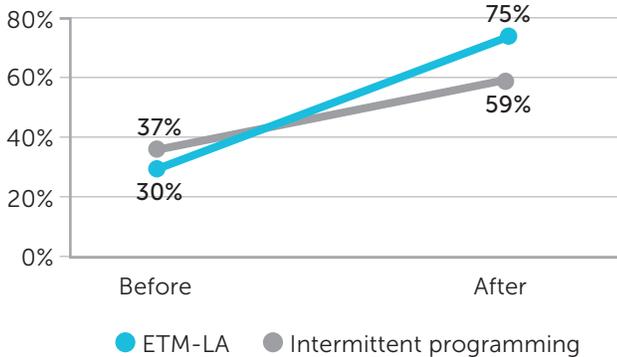
Teachers support including music education as a part of the core curriculum**

(percent of teachers that strongly agree)



Administrators support including music education as a part of the core curriculum**

(percent of teachers that strongly agree)



“

Increasing a child's motivation to learn is priceless!

ETM-LA partner school teacher



Teachers at ETM-LA partner schools were more likely than teachers at schools receiving no or partial music programming to strongly agree at post-test that 1) music education should be offered during school as part of the core curriculum, and 2) children in every grade benefit from music education. Teachers at ETM-LA schools and those receiving typical music education did not differ at followup in their attitude that music education helps students learn core subjects.

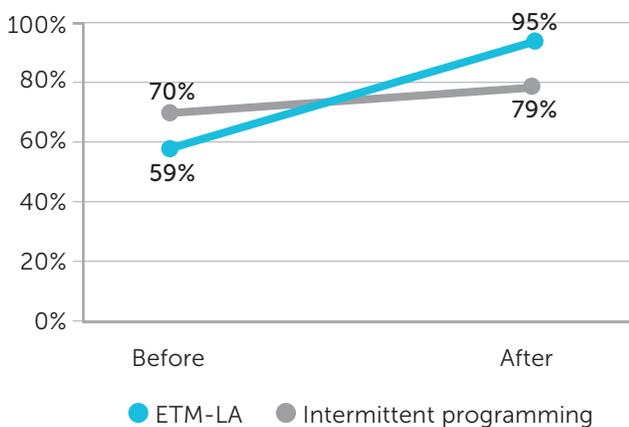


ETM-LA programming positively impacted teacher attitudes about music education

More ETM-LA partner school teachers agree...

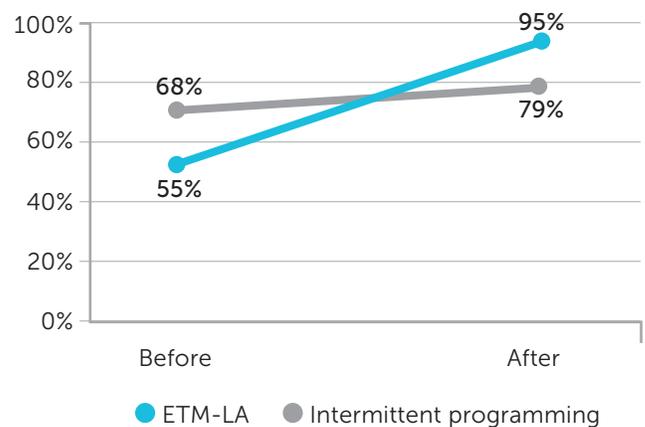
Music education should be offered as part of core curriculum**

(percent of teachers that strongly agree)



Children in every grade benefit from music education**

(percent of teachers that strongly agree)



An education without music is an impoverished thing. In a better world, every student would have music every week, every year.

ETM-LA partner school teacher



Music programs increase participation throughout the day and attendance because of how much students look forward to attending music class.

ETM-LA partner school teacher



Teachers reported that, over time, ETM-LA students exhibited these behaviors more often than students receiving intermittent music programming. The graphs are ordered starting with the greatest impact.

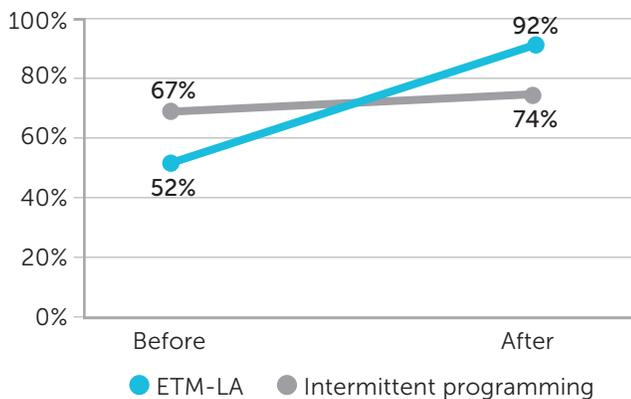
As shown, ETM-LA students benefitted in all but one of the outcomes reflecting social emotional learning. These include 1) understanding the feelings of, (2) working well with, 3) having skills for resolving conflict with, and 4) cooperating with peers. Additionally, ETM-LA partner school teachers reported improvements in outcomes reflecting academic skills. Specifically, a larger percentage were 1) engaged in learning, 2) believed that hard work leads to success, and 3) paid attention in class.


ETM-LA programming positively impacted seven student behaviors associated with social emotional learning and academic success

ETM-LA partner school teachers report...

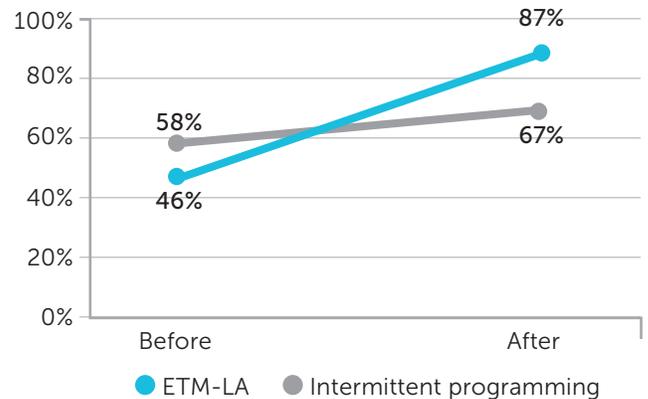
ETM-LA students are engaged in learning more often**

(percent of teachers saying most or all of the time)



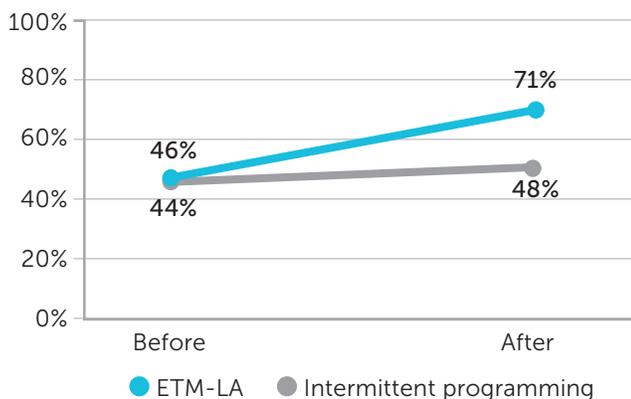
ETM-LA students work well with peers more often**

(percent of teachers saying most or all of the time)



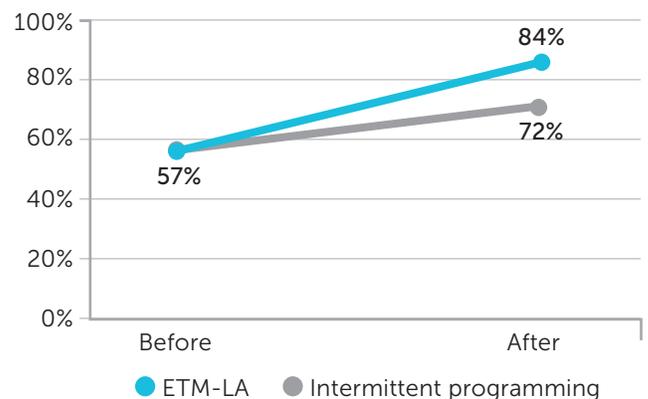
ETM-LA students use effective strategies to resolve conflict with their peers more often*

(percent of teachers saying most or all of the time)



ETM-LA students believe they will succeed if they work hard more often*

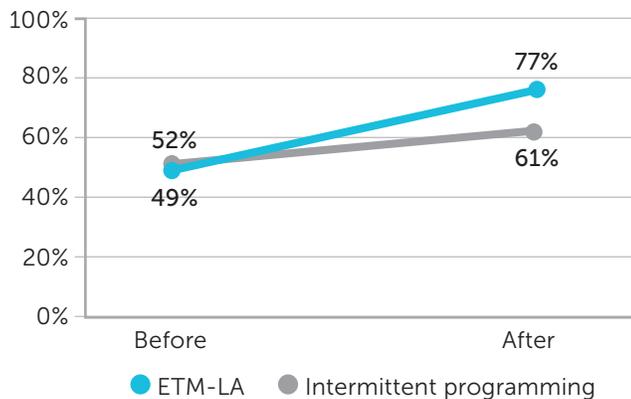
(percent of teachers saying most or all of the time)



ETM-LA partner school teachers report...

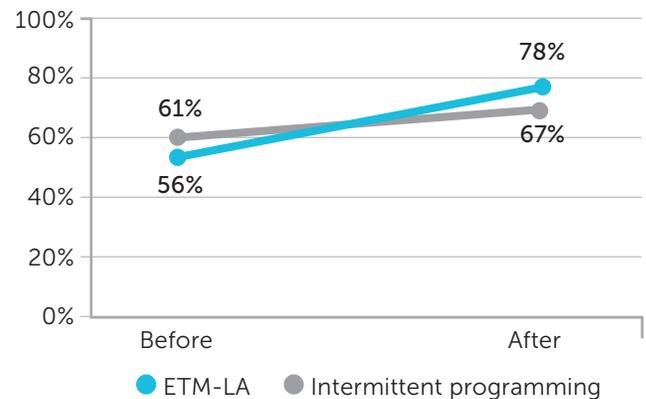
ETM-LA students understand the feelings of peers more often*

(percent of teachers saying most or all of the time)



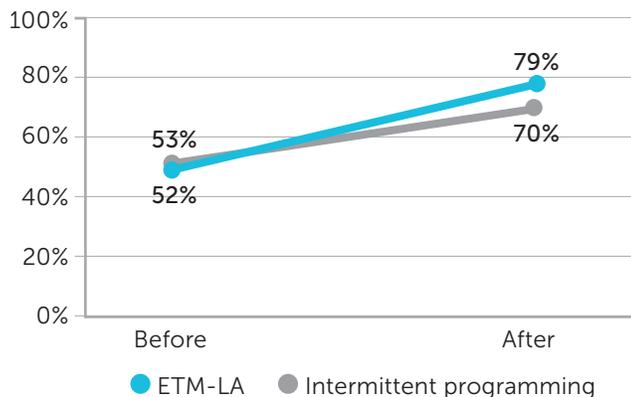
ETM-LA students pay attention in class more often*

(percent of teachers saying most or all of the time)



ETM-LA students cooperate with peers without prompting more often*

(percent of teachers saying most or all of the time)



“

I watched my students gain a greater connection to the world through music.

ETM-LA partner school teacher

“

Students benefitted from clear, consistent expectations, and they grew immensely in their ability to focus and participate in appropriate ways!

ETM-LA partner school teacher

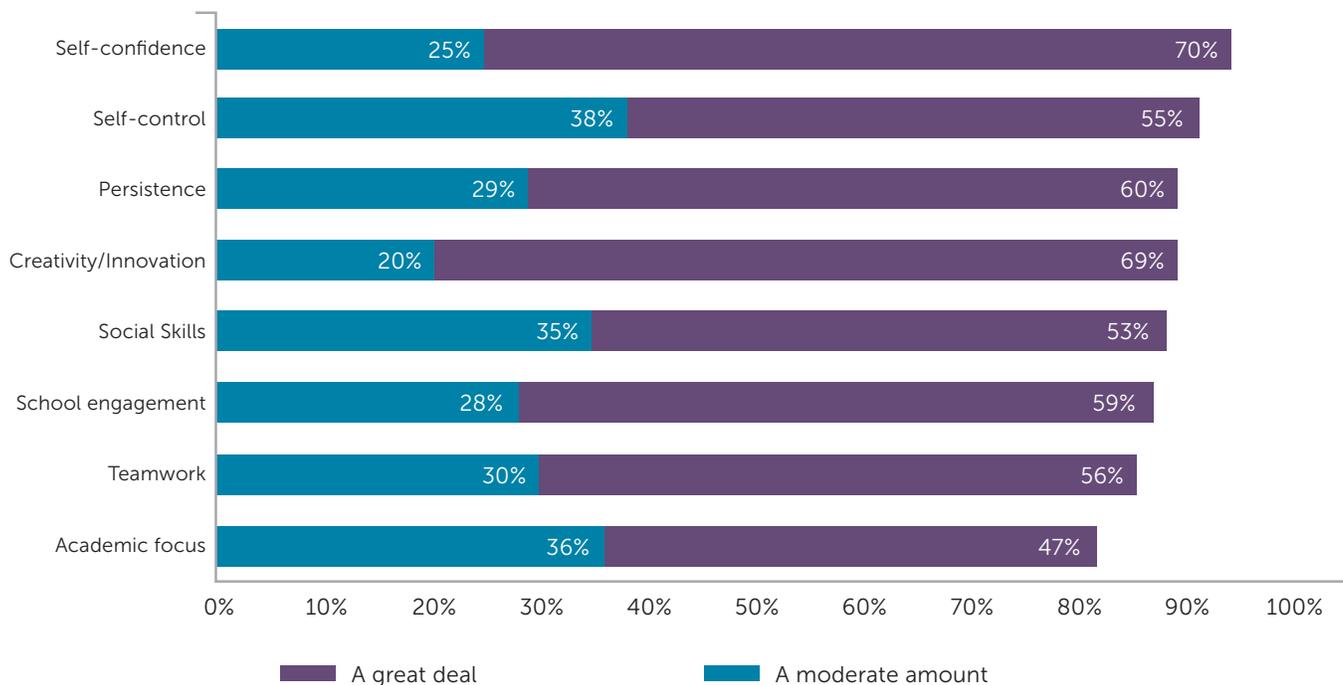




Teachers attributed improvements in eight areas of student development to ETM-LA programming

Five other outcomes (not shown in figures) showed no observable program differences between ETM-LA and intermittent programming schools in the frequency of reported student behaviors. These behaviors included: 1) participating by raising their hands, 2) caring about doing well in school, 3) coming to class prepared, and 4) completing their homework. The sole social emotional skill that did not differ was respecting the rights and feelings of peers.

In all eight areas ETM-LA partner school teachers reported the program contributed to student development
(percent teachers reporting a moderate amount or great deal)



Music class makes me like myself more - because sometimes I can get upset easily, and when I'm going to music it makes me a little bit like - makes me think a little bit more about myself. How I'm proud of myself and how I do all those things.

ETM-LA student



I've seen some of my students who have the most behavior issues find their voice and confidence in music.

ETM-LA partner school teacher



A majority of ETM-LA students said their music classes made them like school more, like themselves more, and feel happy.

No students said music class made them like school or themselves less.

“

I like to work with my friends and I also like playing games. So, it mixes a bunch of my favorite things – a project, a bit of competition, and something involved with music.

ETM-LA student

“

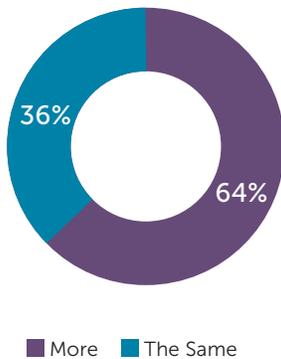
Their self-expression and self-esteem has grown.

ETM-LA partner school teacher

ETM-LA students report...

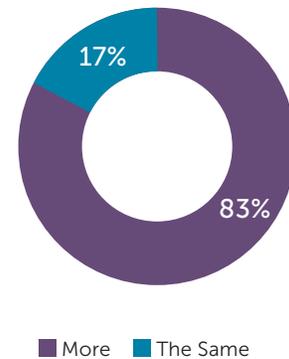
Music class makes students like themselves more

(percent ETM-LA students)



Music class makes students like school more

(percent ETM-LA students)



When asked to describe how music class makes them feel, three quarters of ETM-LA students said “happy”. The second most common response was “proud”. Negative reactions were rare, and no students said music class was boring.

“

Music class makes me happy because I like playing music.

ETM-LA student

“

It makes me feel proud because I can learn new things.

ETM-LA student

“

I used to be very shy, but after this I wasn't that shy anymore.

ETM-LA student

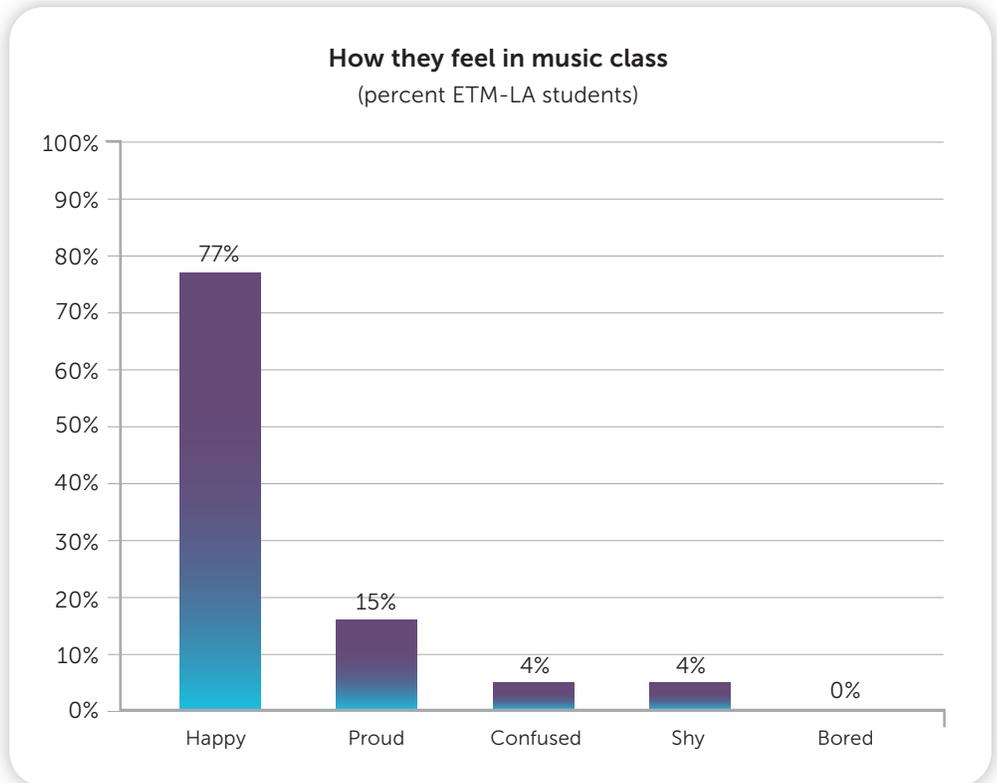


ETM-LA students report...

“

My students and I love it and look forward to it every week!

ETM-LA partner school teacher



What conclusions can be drawn?

This study shows that ETM-LA programming has multiple positive impacts. It improves the organizational culture supporting music education, provides quality programming, and favorably impacts student social emotional and academic outcomes.

Support for music education is strengthened by ETM-LA participation. The findings show that ETM-LA programming creates a culture of support that has potential to sustain music education. This includes support from influential people, including parents, PTA members, teachers, and administrators.

At the beginning of the study, a majority of teachers already believed that music education should be offered as a core part of the curriculum and that children in every grade benefit from it. Even so, after experiencing ETM-LA in their school, teachers were significantly more likely to strongly hold these attitudes.

This culture of support facilitates the implementation of ETM-LA programming from which students derive benefits. ETM-LA supports development of a variety of student behaviors associated with academic and social emotional success.

This study's duration was long enough to detect these positive outcomes. It is likely that studying students for a longer period of time, and as they reach older ages, would shed even more light on these and other ways that ETM-LA fosters positive social and academic development.



Appendix A:

Data Analysis Methods and Findings

Data Analysis

We used SPSS V26 for preparation and analysis of teacher survey data. In analyses comparing ETM-LA and intermittent programming schools, we conducted an Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) for each outcome. These ANOVA included the outcome at the end of the evaluation period as the dependent variable. Independent variables were experimental condition (ETM-LA vs. intermittent programming) and – as a control variable to adjust for between-condition differences – the outcome variable at the beginning of the evaluation as reported retrospectively by teachers. Because the number of teachers surveyed was moderate ($n = 124$), we interpret the results based on effect sizes (i.e., measures of how large the difference is) to describe how much ETM-LA and intermittent programming schools varied from each other. We considered an effect of eta-squared (η^2) of greater than or equal to .015 (a present but relatively smaller effect) as a meaningful finding.

For information from students, we transcribed their interviews to identify quotes for use in this report. We have chosen student statements that illustrate each theme and included them throughout the report. We also quantified student responses according to their responses of the effects of music education on how they feel about themselves and school.

Analysis of Teacher Data

Table 1. Support for Music Education in Your School

Source of support	ETM-LA		Intermittent programming		$F(1, 120)$	p	η^2
	M	SD	M	SD			
Parents	3.60	.49	3.17	.57	19.48	.000	.140 (large)
School culture	3.74	.47	3.43	.58	17.42	.000	.127 (medium)
PTA	3.55	.58	3.16	.60	16.10	.000	.122 (medium)
Other teachers	3.57	.52	3.33	.60	9.25	.003	.072 (medium)
Administrators	3.75	.47	3.54	.59	8.04	.005	.063 (medium)

Note: η^2 is a measure of the magnitude of the differences between conditions; typical interpretations are that .01 is a small, .06 is a medium, and .14 is large difference. We chose greater or equal to .015 as the criteria for assuming a meaningful difference between conditions.



Table 2. Attitudes About Music Education in Your School

Attitudes	ETM-LA		Intermittent programming		<i>F</i> (1, 120)	<i>p</i>	η^2
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			
Music education should be offered as part of core curriculum	3.95	0.22	3.72	0.62	11.60	.001	.088 (medium)
All students benefit from music education	3.95	0.22	3.74	0.57	10.83	.001	.082 (medium)
Music education helps students learn core subjects	3.70	0.05	3.65	0.53	0.62	.432	.005 (no effect)

Note: η^2 is a measure of the magnitude of the differences between conditions; typical interpretations are that .01 is a small, .06 is a medium, and .14 is large difference. We chose greater or equal to .015 as the criteria for assuming a meaningful difference between conditions.

Table 3. Student Behaviors Associated with Social Emotional Learning and Academic Success

Impact of music education on student behaviors	ETM-LA		Intermittent programming		<i>F</i> (1, 120)	<i>p</i>	η^2
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			
Engaged in learning	3.05	0.46	2.80	0.55	11.93	.001	.092 (medium)
Work well with peers	2.96	0.47	2.76	0.61	7.96	.006	.063 (medium)
Use effective strategies to resolve conflict	2.75	0.57	2.50	0.69	6.86	.010	.054 (small)
Believe they can succeed	2.96	0.52	2.78	0.63	3.35	.070	.027 (small)
Understand the feelings of peers	2.82	0.51	2.70	0.70	2.98	.087	.024 (small)
Pay Attention	2.84	0.51	2.74	0.57	2.73	.101	.022 (small)
Cooperate with peers	2.84	0.49	2.76	0.57	1.81	.182	.015 (small)
Complete homework	2.77	0.58	2.91	0.55	1.71	.193	.014 (no effect)
Respect	2.84	0.49	2.76	0.57	1.20	.275	.010 (no effect)
Raise hands	2.88	0.43	2.80	0.69	1.06	.305	.009 (no effect)
Prepared	2.83	0.55	2.82	0.58	0.55	.460	.005 (no effect)
Care about doing well	2.91	0.49	2.87	0.58	0.45	.505	.004 (no effect)

Note: η^2 is a measure of the magnitude of the differences between conditions; typical interpretations are that .01 is a small, .06 is a medium, and .14 is large difference. We chose greater or equal to .015 as the criteria for assuming a meaningful difference between conditions.



To cite this report:

Vanslyke, J., Beadnell, B., Rainey, D., Carmichael-Djang, H., Mathies, A. (2021). Short-term impacts of Education Through Music–Los Angeles in elementary schools. Available at www.etmla.org and www.evaluationspecialists.com

For additional information please contact
Victoria Lanier, Executive Director, 818.433.7600

Copyright 2021 Education Through Music-Los Angeles.
All rights reserved.

Education Through Music-Los Angeles
2501 W Burbank Blvd, Suite 301
Burbank, CA 91505
phone: 818.433.7600
www.etmla.org

