



Well Rounded Education in SPPS Elementary Schools

Summary of results

February, 2023



Executive Summary

The Office of Teaching and Learning (OTL), in collaboration with the Department of Research, Evaluation and Assessment (REA), completed interviews with 39 of the 40 elementary schools to gather information on their schedules as they relate to a well-rounded education. This report is a summary of the 2022-23 SY content areas and instructional approaches used in the elementary schools and the status of providing a well-rounded education across the district.

Highlights

- Looking at the school's overall well-rounded designation, 46% of schools (17 of 39) are either well-rounded or on-track to providing a well-rounded education.
- All 39 schools address reading, math and science. There are two schools at grades K, 1, 3, 4 & 5 that do not address social studies with an additional school not addressing social studies at grade 3.
- All schools offer visual arts instruction. All but two schools offer music education in grades K, 1 & 2 and 3 schools do not offer music education in grades 3, 4 & 5. Less than 1/3 of the schools offer dance (15%-32% depending on the grade). The same is true for theater instruction with 13% to 27% of grade levels offering theater.
- All but one school offers physical education.
- Nineteen schools offer STEM or STEAM instruction in addition to science instruction.
- Nine schools offer a language component in their schedule.

Instructional Approaches

- All schools use a scheduled block for literacy and math instruction.
- Most schools use a rotational specialist to provide science instruction (36 to 38 schools depending on the grade level).
- A scheduled block is most frequently used to teach social studies (20 to 24 schools depending on the grade level).
- For the arts and physical education (PE), the majority of schools use a rotational specialist.

Introduction and methods

Introduction

As identified in the *Effective and Culturally Relevant Instruction Strategic Focus* in SPPS Achieves, one strategic initiative states, “all student have access to a well-rounded education.” In SPPS, a well-rounded education is one that meets the Minnesota Academic Standards by providing students with learning opportunities that will give them the competitive edge to succeed in school, college and career.

Among other supports, the Office of Teaching and Learning was charged with:

- Documenting how much instruction is taking place in academic content areas; and
- Identifying and addressing barriers at schools in order to provide a well-rounded education.

SPPS is fortunate to have the support of the American Rescue Plan funds to purchase specialized materials, resources and support for field trips, art, music and social studies instruction. In particular, to address a well-rounded education in the arts, instructional materials for visual arts and music were acquired. The Art of Education resource packets were purchased for some schools without visual arts specialists. Quaver Integrated Music is a program purchased for classroom teacher use in support of music standards.

Methods

During the summer and early fall of 2022, principals were interviewed about the schedules and delivery methods for each subject at each grade level. The information was put into individual school summaries and shared with the principals to review to ensure the correct information was captured. It was also shared in an effort to provide recommendations to supplement programming needs with the use of ARP funds. Please note the school summaries are reflective of a schedule for an elementary school over the course of the year. Scheduling and subsequent time within the schedule is not strictly followed each and every day. School assemblies and other events happen, getting ready for recess and dismissals can take longer than expected and other unforeseen events mean the schedule will not occur exactly each day. There is no way to report the number of instructional minutes with 100 percent accuracy.

Calculating instructional time

Instructional time is reported by instructional minutes per week, with the exception of residencies. Some residencies are for short amounts of time over a few weeks. This does not translate well to number of minutes per week. Reporting by instructional time in a week provides a common denominator across schools. Data is based on 175 school days and 35 school weeks.

Schools use rotational specialists to provide instruction for some content areas. Rotations can either rotate by day (e.g. every third day students receive music) or by week (e.g. every third week students receive music). To calculate the amount of time students spend in each content area in an average week, the following calculations were used:

- $175 \text{ instructional days} / \text{frequency of rotation} = \text{number of days receiving specific content}$
- $\text{Number of days receiving specific content} * \text{length of daily rotation in minutes} = \text{total number of instructional minutes for the school year}$
- $\text{Total number of instructional minutes for the school year} / \text{the number of weeks in a school year (35)} = \text{average number of minutes per week}$

- While there are technically more than 35 weeks in the school year, the number of instructional days divided by five equals 35 weeks.

In reporting, all percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number.

Considerations with schedules and reporting

- While 39 schools are included in this summary, the number of classrooms varies at some grade levels. There are 38 kindergarten classrooms, 39 classrooms for grades 1 – 4 and 37 for grade 5. Please note one school does not have a kindergarten at its site and two schools do not have 5th grade at their site.
- The number of minutes of weekly instruction is not indicative of standards being met.
- Content areas listed are not exhaustive of a day/week’s schedule (morning meeting, recess, lunch, passing time, getting ready for end of day, counselor’s time, library, etc.).
- Regarding PE and dance standards, there are dance standards in PE but dance is not a substitute for PE. MDE states that PE is required for all students every year. Dance standards are not inclusive of all PE standards either.
- Health, computer science and world language are all district-determined how best to address. SPPS outlines what the standards are and at what grade bands they should be addressed.
- Through the data collection process for the 2022/23 school year, it became evident there were varying degrees of understanding around addressing Health standards. The data for this year is reflective of the building administrators’ reporting and understanding of when it is addressed at their site. For the 2023/24 school year, additional clarifying questions will be added to the interview to ensure consistency in the data.

Considerations for using the information in this report

- Choices regarding academic programming at individual schools are determined by several factors both internal and external to the school.
- Information in this report does not address the breadth, depth or scope within any academic content standard.

How to use the information in this report:

- To identify patterns in academic programming.
- To inform systematic practices regarding academic programming.
- As a basis for exploring time-resource allocation that supports equitable learning across SPPS.
- As internal reflection on how content areas are addressed.
- As clarification of academic requirements.

Well-Rounded Education in grades K-5

A **well-rounded education** includes instruction in the four core content areas (mathematics, literacy, social studies and science), PE, health, two arts with an exposure to a third. For the purposes of this report, grade levels and schools were identified as **on-track** if they met all the requirements *except* exposure to a third art. Schools still have time to add a field trip or residency and could still fulfill the requirements for a well-rounded education this school year. Schools were identified as **not on track** if they were not offering instruction in the four core subjects as well as PE, health, and two arts.

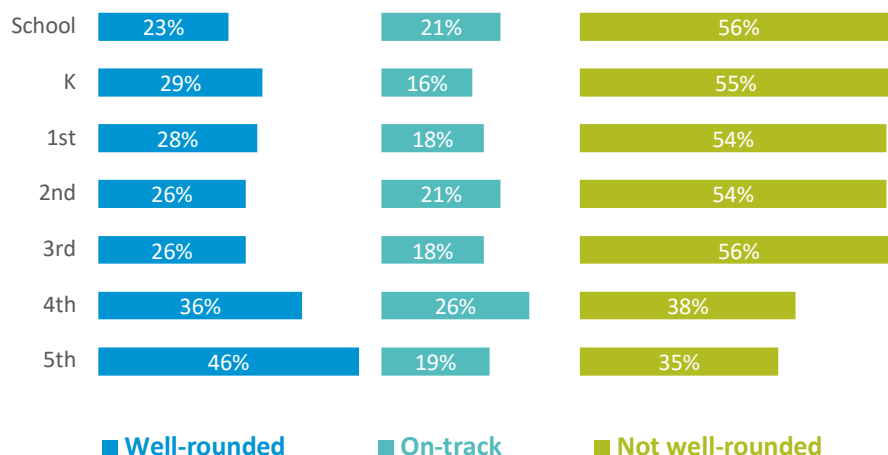
Well-rounded education definitions and notes

- Grade levels at a school may receive different designations. If a school had grade levels with different designations, the designation of the majority of grade levels is used for the school identification. When the designations are evenly split between two categories, the lower category was used for the school-level designation.
- A school or grade level may be out of compliance in more than one area of a well-rounded education. For example, a grade level may not be exposed to a third art and not receiving social studies instruction.

Summary of findings

- 44% of schools (17 of 39) are either well-rounded or on-track to providing a well-rounded education.
- 5th grade had the highest percentage of well-rounded designations (46%).
- Less than 50% of grades K – 3 are well rounded.

Percentage of schools and grade levels identified as **well-rounded**, **on-track** and **not well-rounded**.



Core subject schedules and delivery methods

Addressing the content areas

All 39 schools address reading, math and science. There are two schools at grades K & 2 who do not address social studies and three schools that did not identify social studies instruction at grades 1, 3, 4 and 5.

The graphs below show the range of minutes per week of instructional time by content area as well as the average number of minutes per week in the four core content areas. Please note, for those who integrate content into other content areas are not included in the calculations.

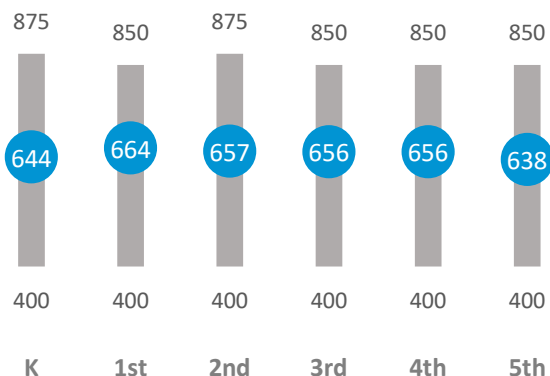
Instructional time



Literacy

- For **literacy** instruction, schools spend 400 to 875 minutes per week, with the average time ranging between 644 to 664 minutes per week.

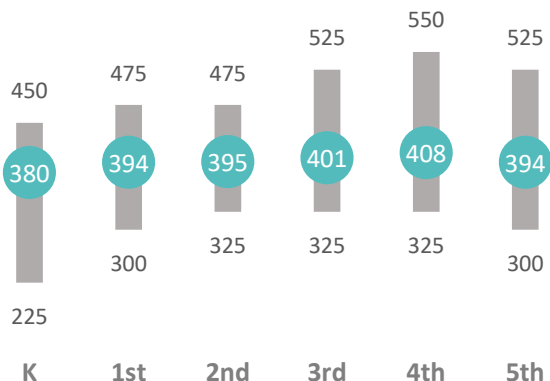
Average number of minutes per week for **literacy** instruction



Math

- For **math** instruction, schools spend 225 to 550 minutes per week with the average amount of time ranging between 380 and 408 minutes per week.

Average number of minutes per week for **math** instruction

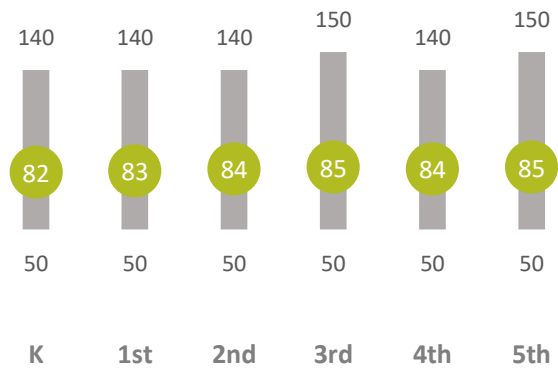




Science

- For **science** instruction schools spend 50 to 150 minutes per week with the average time ranging between 82 and 85 minutes per week.
- Please note some schools also provide additional instructional time focused on STEM or STEAM.

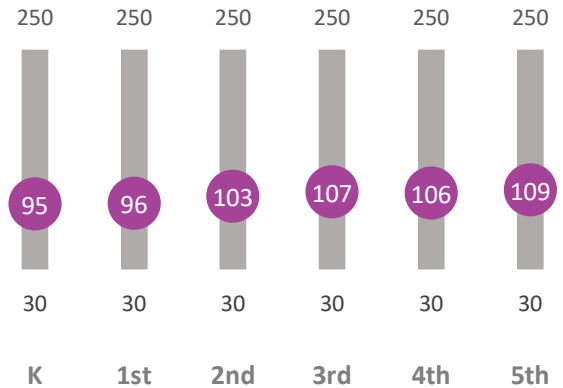
Average number of minutes per week for **science** instruction



Social Studies

- Of the schools that identified a scheduled block or rotational specialist for **social studies instruction**, schools spend 30 to 250 minutes per week with the average time ranging between 95 and 109 minutes per week.
- Schools that indicated they integrate social studies content are not included in these calculations.

Average number of minutes per week for **social studies** instruction



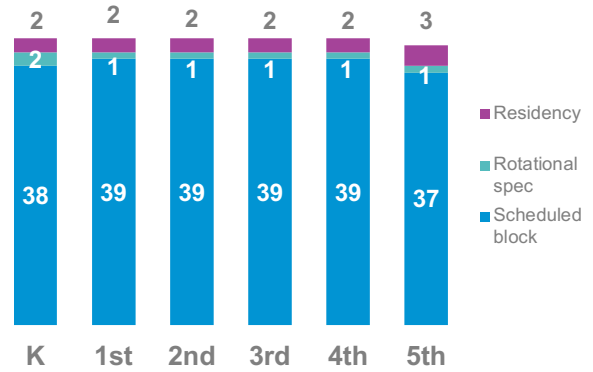
Instructional approaches



Literacy

- All schools use a scheduled block for literacy instruction.
- Additional literacy instructional approaches are offered in a handful of schools.

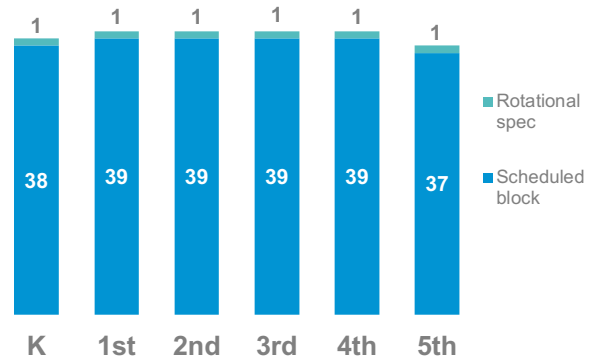
Instructional format of **literacy** instruction by grade



Math

- All schools use a scheduled block for math instruction.
- One school has an additional rotational specialist for math.

Instructional format of **math** instruction by grade

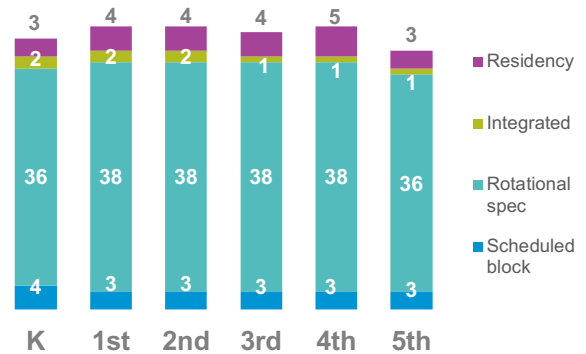




Science

- Most schools use a rotational specialist to provide science instruction (36 to 38 schools).
- All but one school uses a rotational specialist at some grade levels. 3 schools use a scheduled block and one school has a second dose at kindergarten using a scheduled block.
- Additional integration of science content is identified at 2 schools at grades K, 1, & 2 and 1 school at grades 3, 4 & 5.
- Additional science content using residencies is used at three schools at K & 5, four schools at grades 1, 2, & 3 and five schools at grade 5.

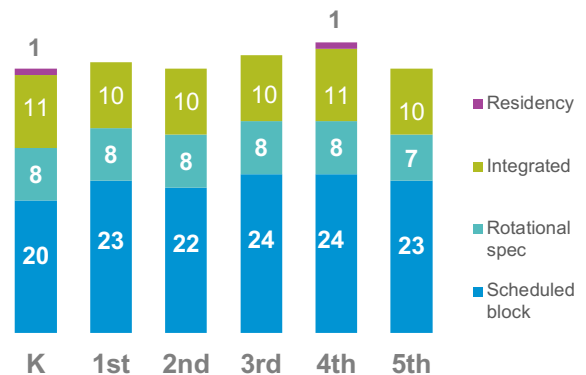
Instructional format of **science** instruction by grade



Social Studies

- A scheduled block is most frequently used to teach social studies (20 to 24 schools).
- 8 schools use a rotational specialist. (Note: Farnsworth is only recorded for K-4.)
- 10-11 schools integrated social studies content in other content areas.
- Two schools indicate they do not offer social studies at grades 1, 3, 5 and 5 and three schools at grades K & 2.

Instructional format of **social studies** instruction by grade

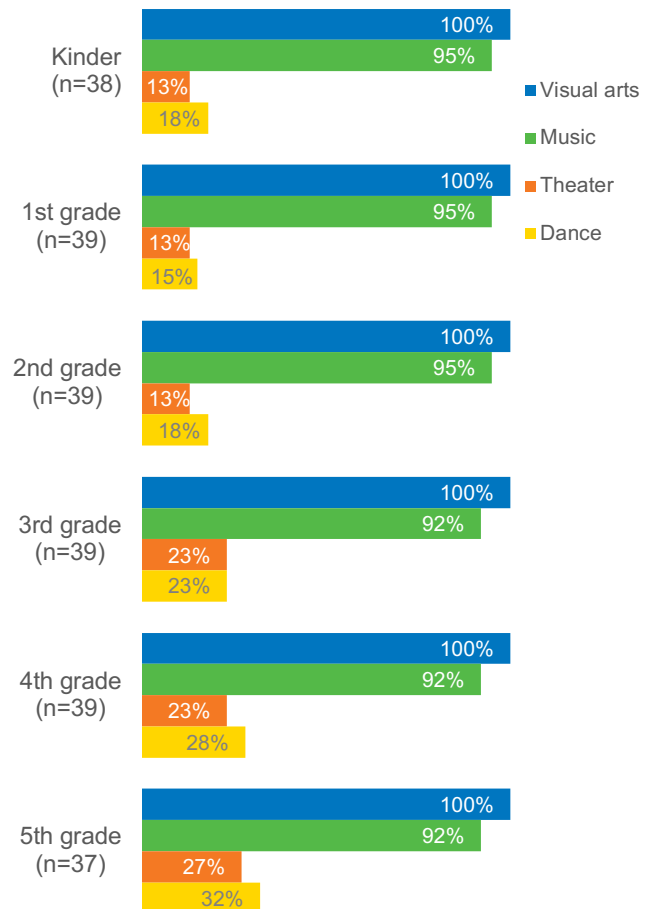


Academic programming in the Arts

Arts Programming

- All schools offer visual arts instruction.
- For visual arts instruction, six schools use the Art of Education materials and one additional school provides visual arts education via a scheduled block. All other schools use a rotational specialist.
- At grades K, 1 & 2, all but two schools (95%) offer music education and three schools (92%) at grades 4, 5, & 6.
- For music instruction, 24 schools use a rotational specialist. Twelve schools have classroom teachers using Quaver music materials. And one school integrates music education into other content areas.
- Less than 1/3 of the schools offer theatre instruction (13%-27% at grade levels). Five schools have a rotation specialist, 1 school integrates theater instruction into another content area and some grades offer residencies (1st grade – 2 school residencies, 3rd grade – 4; 4th & 5th grade – 5 schools).
- Less than 1/3 of the schools offer dance (18%-32% depending on the grade). Schools offer dance instruction through a rotational specialist (3 schools), residencies (1-8 schools, depending on grade level) and one school integrates dance instruction into another content area.

Percentage of schools addressing in each area of art

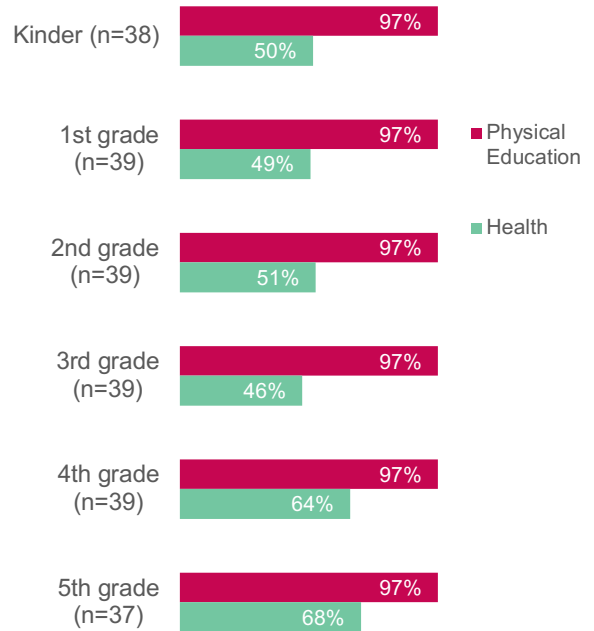


Health and physical education

Health and physical education and other content areas

- All but one school offers physical education.
- Health instruction varies the most in terms of instructional approaches. Health is offered as a scheduled block in the classroom, during morning meeting, integrated into PE and other content areas, during morning meeting, with counselors being brought into classrooms as well as through residencies.
- Twenty schools offer STEM or STEAM instruction in addition to science.
- Nine schools offer a world language.

Percentage of schools offering physical education and health



Glossary

Literacy instructional time: inclusive of Reader's Workshop, writing instruction, interactive read-aloud, and phonics and/or skills block

Math instruction: inclusive of math review, small group, large group and work time

Scheduled block: content taught/co-taught by generalist teacher

Rotational specialist: content delivered by content specialist during a dedicated time on a rotational schedule determined by the site of day/week/year depending on building rotation

Integrated: content addressed within other subject area(s) (i.e.: Reader's Workshop book selections align with social studies content)

Residencies: content addressed in part/whole by a contracted professional