

OMEA: GUIDANCE FOR USING SPECIALIZED ARTS CLASSROOMS FOR AFTER-SCHOOL & COMMUNITY PROGRAMS



In alignment with the [Program Standards](#) for Music in Oregon Schools and the National Association for Music Education [Opportunity to Learn Standards](#), a crucial component of a Comprehensive and High-Quality Arts Education involves Authentic and Functional Spaces for arts instruction. These highly specialized classrooms, performance venues, and exhibition spaces support the arts learning environment by providing the physical space for all student practitioners to experience authentic, real-world arts learning.

These spaces also house highly specialized curricular tools, which represents a significant and finite financial investment from the district and building levels. The adopted curricula of arts subjects (dance, music, theatre, and visual arts) cannot be delivered with fidelity without these supplies and equipment. Examples of these curricular tools include:

- Specialized flooring for dance instruction
- Musical instruments
- Stage rigging
- Electronic equipment (speakers, mixers, amplifiers, microphones, stereos, lighting)
- Specialized visual art supplies

Certified arts educators act as stewards for their spaces and are trained in maintaining this specialized and often fragile equipment. They also socialize and train their students to treat it with utmost care and respect and to reinforce keeping all students safe. Arts educators are usually not provided a budget for replacement or repair due to equipment damage.

RECOMMENDATION 1: Keep specialized arts spaces off limits to after-school or community organizations when the certified arts educator is not present to preserve these areas for specialized arts instruction. Provide compensation to the arts educator for additional hours spent monitoring and stewarding their instructional spaces during community use.

RECOMMENDATION 2: Craft comprehensive agreements between the certified arts educator, building administration, and any outside program using a dance, music, theatre, or visual arts classroom when the arts educator is not present or outside of the school day. These agreements should include:

- Flowchart for financial responsibility in case of damage
- Outline what equipment can be accessed, touched, or moved
- Clear lines of communication for questions or concerns about shared spaces, including schedule/access times
- Scheduled quarterly check-ins between admin, certified arts educators, and programs to ensure agreements are assessed and updated to reflect any new learnings or additional needed considerations.

RECOMMENDATION 3: Protect equipment by providing locking, secure storage in arts classrooms that can be accessed by the certified educators. Buildings are already responsible for protecting district assets, including both consumable supplies (paper, paint, mallets, etc) and non-consumable equipment (musical instruments, kilns, theatre lighting).

RECOMMENDATION 4: Require training for outside organizations around using specialized equipment, especially when using an auditorium or theater space, to prevent situations that will put students safety at risk.

RECOMMENDATION 5: Set aside building funds for repair and replacement of specialized arts equipment and supplies if recommendations 1-4 cannot be followed. Some examples of costs:

- Bass Orff Xylophone (K-5 music): \$1,782.37
- Tuba (6-12 music): \$4,000 - \$10,000
- Pianos: (K-12 music): Digital – \$2,790.00. Upright piano – \$5,580.00. Baby Grand piano – \$17,900.00
- Full Marley floor (dance): \$8,000
- Kiln (visual arts): between \$6,000 and \$20,000
- Full color gobo filter for one theater light: \$400 (usually 100-200 lights per theater)



ADDITIONAL CONTEXT & CONSIDERATIONS

- No food other than water should be allowed in specialized arts spaces, for several reasons:
 - The fragility of arts equipment and musical instruments – arts educators spend hours socializing and training students to take care of these curricular tools. Even using the wrong material of a mallet to strike a percussion instrument can cause irreparable damage with replacement costs over \$6000.
 - Crumbs, wrappers, and non-water drinks will directly impede the working condition of musical instruments, and in the case of dance floors, can cause the students to slip and fall.
 - Custodial staff are not usually trained in safely taking care of specialized arts equipment. In the event of a spill, cleaning with inappropriate solvents, materials, or with too much force will irreparable damage or destroy equipment.
 - Silica dust and glazes (both present in ceramics classrooms) are toxic – food consumption near these substances puts student safety at risk
- Street shoes should not be worn on specialized floors used for dance instruction
- Visual Arts supplies and materials can be difficult to manage safely without the guidance of a certified educator around set up, proper use, and clean up. Permanent damage can be done to fixtures, floors, tables, chairs, personal student property, and other classroom equipment, as well as impede student safety.
- Theatre educators must undergo extensive safety training to guide and protect students as they use the theater/auditorium rigging systems (curtains, lighting elements) and electrical equipment.

If you have specific questions about using specialized arts classrooms, or how to advocate for protecting arts spaces, please contact OMEA at advocacy@oregonmea.org.