



Facilities

MOST OF THE SCHOOLS participating in the study indicated that they produced productions as part of their overall theatre program. Those that did were asked to describe their performance venues (type, age, seating capacities, and management) as well as supporting production facilities (such as scene and costume shops) and tools (such as lighting and sound equipment.)

Overall, responses suggested wide discrepancies between the type and quality of the various venues and resources available to high school theatre programs in the U.S. Some operate in brand new or recently renovated facilities, with access to a broad range of tools which teachers consider to be of excellent quality. Most theatre teachers, however, reported operating in older, often outdated facilities, and lacked access to satisfactory production resources.

Performance venues

The greatest percentage of participating theatre programs staged performances primarily on a standard theatre stage (**Chart A**), while many schools used general purpose auditoriums. The use of cafetorium/gymtorium spaces was relatively low, and very few schools relied on black boxes or other spaces.

Most of these spaces (41 percent) seated 500-999 people, while about one-third sat 200-244 people. Sixteen

percent sat small houses of fewer than 200 people, while 9 percent sat 1,000 or more.

The performance venues available to participating schools were relatively older; almost half were thirty years old or more, and about 80 percent were at least ten years old. Of that 80 percent, fewer than 27 percent had undergone a major renovation in the past ten years.

The vast majority of the theatre spaces used by programs in this study were owned by the school or district (94 percent), while local municipalities and other entities each owned 3 percent of the venues.

Primary responsibility for managing the performance space most often rested with the theatre teacher (38 percent) or school custodians (31 percent). Technical staff or outside providers were responsible for the space in 13 percent of schools, while the remainder were managed by some other entity.

Other production facilities and tools

Teachers were asked if they had access to various types of production facilities and tools and, if they did, to rate their quality (**Chart B**). Most participating teachers reported that they either lacked access to the majority of these facilities and tools or considered them unsatisfactory. The facilities and tools that most reported were available and of either satisfactory or excellent qual-

ity were sound and lighting systems, lighting and sound control rooms, and wing space. Relatively few schools had access to a box office, scene or costume shops, set storage facilities, orchestra pit, or fly galleries. This may suggest that many schools have been able to invest in technological upgrades, such as sound and lighting systems, but have been unable to obtain the physical space required to maintain many of the needed facilities and tools.

The lack of access to costume shops and storage facilities may result in many teachers renting resources from outside sources. In fact, 74 percent of teachers indicated that they regularly rented costumes from outside providers, while only 31 percent regularly rented sound equipment and 26 percent regularly rented lighting. Fewer than 25 percent rented props, scenery, or other production items. Just under half of participating teachers indicated that, in addition to or instead of renting production resources for a fee, they shared resources with other schools. Forty-six percent indicated that they regularly shared production resources with other schools, while just over half indicated that they did not; 4 percent were unsure if they shared such resources.

Chart A: Kinds of spaces where theatre programs stage performances.

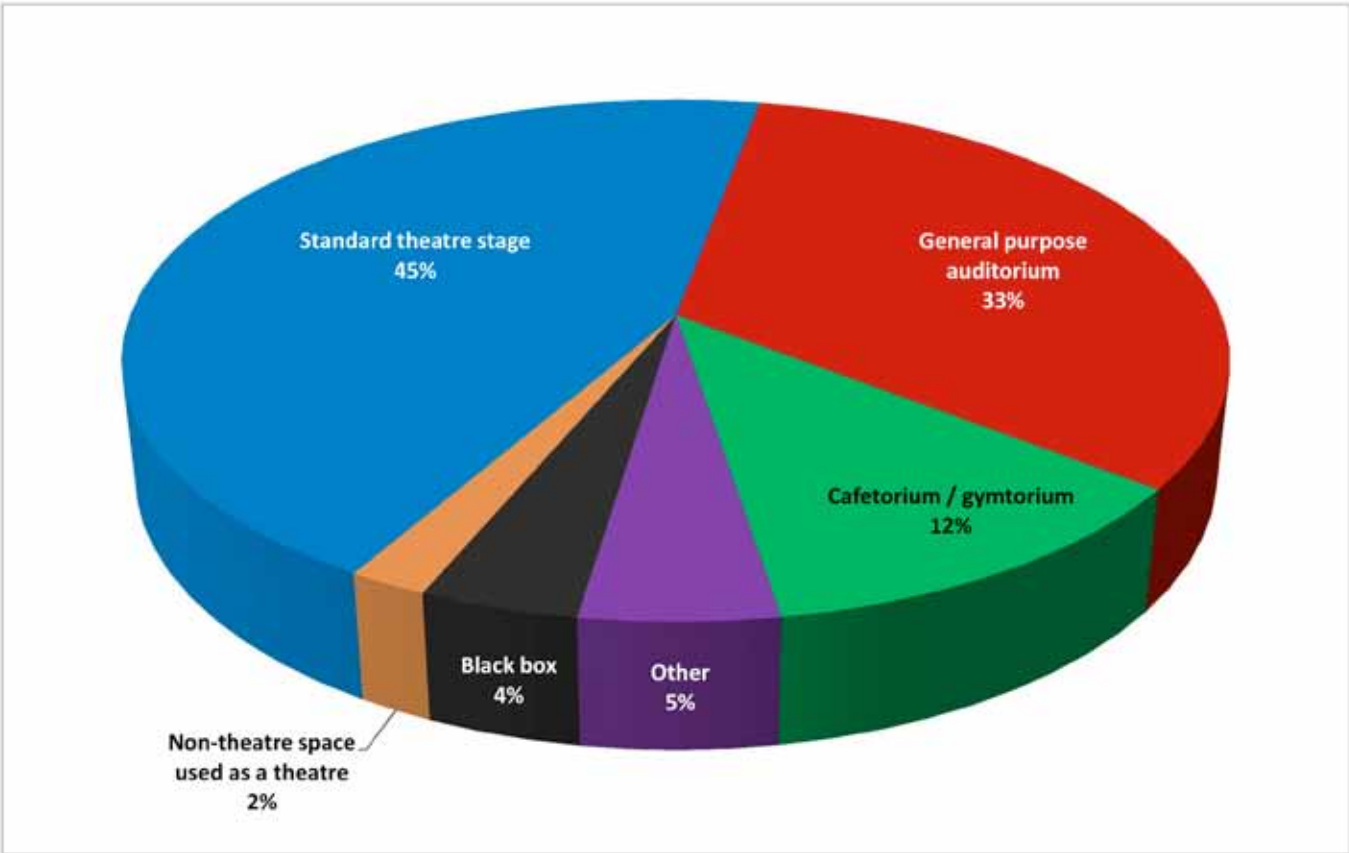


Chart B: Level of teacher access and quality of production facilities and tools.

