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Success vs. Survival: The Challenges of Teaching K-12 School Music in South Metro

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THESIS APPROVAL SHEET

Success vs. Survival: The Challenges of Teaching K-12 School Music in South Metro

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Abstract

Music education has been an essential part of American education and society. Since the earliest beginning of our nation's founding, many proponents of music education successfully advocated for musicians to teach music as a curricular discipline within the core of academics. Still, changes continue to occur with governmental reform and educational policies. Coupled with the demographic changes within our society, successful and influential music education has become a difficult challenge for many educators who teach within communities with limited resources. Many teacher-educator preparation programs across the nation modify curriculums to meet the concerns of an ever-changing society, including socioeconomic status, funding deficiency, and cultural diversity. This study utilizes a qualitative research study with the topic "Success vs. Survival" to identify teacher perspectives exploring and documenting music programs specific to schools in south metro Atlanta. The researcher examines root causes, suggestions from study participants, and suggestions for improvement. Although many publications address this topic, there are few location-specific essays. This study utilizes a qualitative research study to identify teacher perspectives exploring and documenting music programs specific to schools in south metro Atlanta. The thesis includes survey and ethnographic research in the form of surveys and interviews from the perspective of the subjects, who are music teachers of all grade levels. Finally, the dissertation examines the challenges of teaching music education in urban and low-income communities. It offers the professional experiences and perspectives of music educators who serve Title I and low-income school districts in south metro Atlanta. Using the testimonies and experiences of experts in the field, the author provides insight into some methods and means to recondition these issues.

Dedication

"Seek His will in all you do, and He will show you which path to take" (Proverbs 3:6, New Living Translation). Without my Lord and Savior, none of this would have occurred. Father, I thank you for the extraordinary talents that you have richly blessed. Thank you for allowing me to share your gifts with other friends and apprentices in the craft. To my parents, Mrs. Sherrye and Mr. Leonard Battle, who constantly supported, prayed, and remained patient and concerned throughout the journey, this is for you. Sometimes the best word to your ears is Mom and Dad. I also dedicate this dissertation to my younger sibling, Dr. Katrina Nychole Battle, who served as the motivational factor to complete my doctoral degree.

What can I say to my fraternity brothers of Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia and Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc.? The start of graduate work has been a fantastic journey, and the best is just beginning! We can now enjoy the fruits of our spirits and labor. My heavenly brother and grandmother, Octavious Lenard Battle and Pearlene Battle, I'm sure you both are watching down from paradise with that smile that you always have graced us. Mr. Leonard Giles, to be the first undergraduate to complete a doctorate under your tutelage and guidance is simply amazing. This one's for you, Mr. G! Continue being the best band teacher and director ever walking this earth and enjoy your retirement.

Finally, I dedicate this dissertation to all band directors who battle daily with the "Success and Survival" of their music programs. We often have to fly to what other teachers may only have to walk. Continue to be the best urban and inner-city music teacher possible. Those students desire the same love, compassion, and guidance that rural, suburban, and private students may have. We teach for the outcome, not the income, and seeing the final product year in and year out makes me proud to be amongst you all and your hard work. I pray and hope you

all never stop giving, receiving, and applying knowledge because I duly note and commend your hard work. Always remember, "he who strives after perfection is striving after God."[1] Keep God first, and the rest will fall in place. Please forgive me for any omission to all friends, family, and colleagues. Davion loves you all, and stay blessed!

[1] Undine S. Moore and Michelangelo Buonarroti, *Striving After God*, 1958.

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Chapter One: Introduction and Overview

Many directors and music teachers face an uphill battle teaching music in urban settings. Factors that possibly complicate successful teaching may be educational and non-educational. These factors depend upon the overall individuality of students, schools, and the communities that serve them. Socioeconomic status, poverty, single-parent households, testing, and scheduling are a few factors common to teaching in an urban setting. Douglas Broughter states: "Let us face it. Many teachers shy away from those schools because they feel it is much more difficult to 'work' for the same or less compensation. While wealthier school districts can compensate for budget cuts that reduce or eliminate music programs with private funding, low-income districts cannot. Therefore, the kids who might benefit from music education are often the least to get it."[2]

Although factors may be similar in many major cities across the United States, the severity of these factors may differ based on location, demographics, and general public approval and support. An extensive review of existing literature shows that larger districts in urban areas have the abovementioned issues due to the varied community statistics within a metropolitan area. Wealth sharing may not be a common practice in many major cities. Atlanta, Georgia, could serve as an example. Atlanta, Georgia, is comprised of twenty-two counties in a metropolitan area. Many of these counties range from affluent to poverty-stricken, where the economic, social, and educational factors may vary. Atlanta's heritage includes the Civil Rights Movement, the music and movie industry, southern cuisine, and the most recent accomplishments of its high school, college, and professional athletic teams. Throughout its

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[2] Douglas Boughter, M.Ed, *Poor Schools, Great Music: Building Great Music Programs in Schools with Student Poverty* (Independently Published, 2019), 6.

history within this city, music has been a crucial component of the city's development of its communities and celebrates its heritage and success.

Background

The thought and notion of "Success vs. Survival" arise from the author's idea and desire to explore urban school music teaching challenges through K-12 school music directors. For decades, our nation has witnessed many urban and inner-city band programs thrive and perform at outstanding levels of achievement and mastery. Many directors in urban and inner-city schools desire their programs to be a spectacle in the public limelight. The accolades that follow those notable performances are accomplishments that last a lifetime.

Theoretical Framework

With the factors mentioned in the introduction and overview, urban music faces several challenges in its music programs. A phenomenological research approach is used in this study to provide the experiences of music teachers in South Metro Atlanta. "Phenomenological research is a design of inquiry from the humanities in which the researcher describes the lived experiences of individuals about a phenomenon as expressed by participants. This description culminates in the essence of the experiences of several individuals who have experienced all spectacles. This design has strong philosophical underpinnings and typically involves conducting interviews."[3] Through surveys and interview questions, this study unpacks the challenges of music teachers through testimonies and lived experiences.

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[3] John W. Creswell and J. David Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, 5th ed. (Los Angeles, CA: Sage, 2018), 31.

The interview questions allow the candidates to expound upon the previous issues from their viewpoints. Perspectives may eliminate the opportunity for retort or argument. Views can serve as one of the foundational functions of phenomenological research. Additionally, "phenomenology is the essence of qualitative exploration. Understanding the participant's consciousness as part of a phenomenon can be seen in many theoretical and conceptual constructs making up qualitative research. In education research, phenomenological examinations are crucial to understanding the critical relationships between all stakeholders. Phenomenological approaches are vitally necessary to address the core of many issues from a pragmatic outlook."[4]

Some bias is inevitable in investigating the core of the many issues mentioned. Most of the contributing factors may not be a simple coincidence. Many urban music teachers may share the same story, varying from minimal to expansive, which is indeed a phenomenon within the framework. However, the stories of many teachers may be a more significant issue that has continued to develop over time. "Exploring the phenomenon of necessary content knowledge through the lived experience of those teaching could have profound effects on preservice education, teacher induction, and professional development."[5] From a phenomenological perspective, many teachers in urban schools can present their standpoint on the challenges plaguing numerous inner-city and urban schools. While these issues are perhaps understood, they continue to go unnoticed due to several other contributing factors.

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[4] Ryan M. Hourigan and Scott N. Edgar, "Phenomenological Research in Music Education," in *The Oxford Handbook of Qualitative Research in American Music Education,* ed. Colleen M. Conway (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2014), 148.

[5] Ibid., 152.

Statement of the Problem

Programs struggle with the overall operation due to many contributing factors. Funding deficiencies, retention, scheduling, community, parental involvement, and administrative support are a few factors music teachers face yearly teaching in urban schools. Doyle states the following: "support for music can manifest in an administrator's value for music programs, stable funding, beneficial scheduling, balanced importance with athletics and other subjects, parent and community regard, and a sense of general and specific support from school and district officials of the arts and one's program."[6] The difficulties mentioned by Doyle are multifaceted, and outsiders may often conceal the severity of a single school or district. Such factors are worthy of discussion.

Statement of the Purpose

This study examines the impact of educational and non-educational factors that challenge music teachers in South Metro Atlanta. This study aims to provide personal and professional perspectives from music teachers of all grade levels that may often have been overlooked or not observed. Additionally, this research explores the challenges K-12 music teachers face in South Metro Atlanta and the unique challenges faced by multiple music teachers selected for this study.

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[6] Jennifer L. Doyle, "The Effects of Teacher Background, Teacher Preparation, and Support on Attitudes and Expectations of K-12 Urban Music Educators" (PhD diss., University of Miami, 2012), 10, ProQuest.

Significance of Study

"Every formal urban music education area—general, instrumental, and choral music—deserves serious study."[7] Despite the gratifying and exciting benefits, rewards, and advantages of teaching music education in an urban school setting, there are many challenges that instrumental music teachers face yearly to ensure that their programs are recognized. These challenges may include socioeconomic status, funding deficiency, increased poverty, cultural diversity, and implementing changes in curriculum design and instruction to meet the goals and needs of all students.

Urban music programs can provide relevance, high expectations, and variety. "Funding and support also affect the teaching potential, recruitment, and retention of band directors teaching in urban schools."[8] "Band directors' willingness to teach at urban schools are affected by factors limiting students' ability to participate in band. Widespread poverty, inadequate facilities, and outdated instruments also contribute to the lack of desire to teach in urban schools."[9] Urban music programs can provide relevance, high expectations, and variety. Their programs thrive and continue to maintain in an ever-changing field of education. "From the minute a child is taught how to play an instrument, sing in a choir, be in the drumline, perform in a mariachi group or play his first note in the beginning, the student is no longer poor."[10] Non-traditional music experiences such as gospel choirs, salsa bands, mariachi bands, and synthesizer

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[7] Kate R. Fitzpatrick, "A Mixed Methods Portrait of Urban Instrumental Music Teaching," *Journal of Research in Music Education* 59, no. 3 (2011): 231, https://doi.org/10.1177/0022429411414912.

[8] Kevin Howard, "Motivating Factors Affecting the Recruitment and Retention of Suburban Middle School Band Students" (PhD diss., Milligan College, 2019), 6, ProQuest.

[9] John Eros, "Becoming Part of the City: Influences on the Career Choice of an Urban Music Educator," *International Journal of Music Education* 36, no. 3 (2018): 411, https://doi.org/10.1177/0255761418771798

[10] Boughter, *Poor Schools, Great Music*, 13.

ensembles may appeal to the diverse interest of inner-city students.[11] However, many directors

must consider the earlier potential issues when starting non-traditional or extra-curricular

ensembles.

Harold Abeles states that music teacher education has seen considerable attention from

researchers and policy-makers since *No Child Left Behind* in 2003.[12] However, even with this

deepened level of research and scholarship, the issues surrounding entry to the music education

profession, preparation of music teachers at the preservice level, and support of music teachers at

the in-service level continue to challenge the discipline.[13] These challenges are even more

prevalent in urban inner-city Title I schools with a majority of minority students.

In many urban schools, the focal point of administrators is improving academic

achievement. Low test scores, attendance concerns, and problematic student behavior may place

an administrative team and their attention on meeting the standards under state and national

reform. Under their leadership, some administrators have threatened, overlooked, or dissolved

music programs altogether.[14] Some teachers exceed expectations due to a robust parent and

booster organization, combined with the support of the administration and community. Other

teachers are doing exceptionally well if they can survive a typical school day without any issues

or incidents. Bates asks: "What is your music program doing to encourage access to music

education by all students, regardless of their family's income level and background?"

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[11] Tarik Hasani Rowland Sr., "Urban Music Education: Teacher Perspectives on Critical Issues" (PhD diss., University of Georgia, 2018), 12, ProQuest.

[12] Harold F. Abeles, *Critical Issues in Music Education: Contemporary Theory and Practice* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2021), 259–260.

[13] Ibid., 260.

[14] Vincent C. Bates, "Social Class and School Music," *Music Educators Journal* 98, no. 4 (2012): 33, https://doi.org/10.1177/0027432112442944

Schools and districts must acquire and provide adequate resources for improving academic programs equally across the board. Supporting Bates' question, research has shown that all students should have and deserve the rights, privileges, and benefits of outstanding musical education, regardless of the factors he mentioned in his question. Bates' examinations of cultural practices and norms, social networks, financial resources, and the creation of equity in school music are of great importance and duly worth consideration and implementation to ensure success. From an advocacy standpoint, there must be a balance of support financially, educationally, and socially to keep music programs alive in the urban school setting.

"Teaching instrumental music may present extraordinary challenges in urban schools, but urban instrumental music directors can build successful programs."[15] Many urban music educators may fear that teachers will only educate students academically in a classroom with no musical, athletic, or artistic way to express themselves freely. Miksza's article urges music teachers to work together to build incrementally on the current curriculum within public schools from an intellectual approach. He says, "no one will benefit from throwing the baby out with the bathwater regarding curricular reform."[16] Curricular reform has mixed opinions and viewpoints from educators. The cliché is that one size does not fit all.

Many inner-city schools are Title I. Educational leaders may redirect funding to more academic instructional resources and activities. Many students do not come from two-parent homes with a combined income of over seventy thousand dollars. Through past experiences and the experiences of other music teachers, some materials and resources in urban music programs

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[15] Kevin Mixon, "Building Your Instrumental Music Program in an Urban School," *Music Educators Journal* 91, no. 3 (2005): 16.

[16] Peter Miksza, "The Future of Music Education Continuing the Dialogue About Curricular Reform," *Music Educators Journal* 99, no. 4 (2013): 49, https://doi.org/10.1177/0027432113476305

are purchased or donated by those same music teachers. Budget cuts in many areas make it difficult for teachers to provide students with the education they deserve, which is needed for these individuals to become functioning members of society. "The entire organization is affected when personnel cut the district's music and other art programs."[17] Some may perceive that urban communities with stable music programs are within affluent communities. On the other hand, some communities that maintain successful music programs are impoverished due to the hard work of directors, parents, students, and administrators.

Research is available for music education in inner-city and urban schools, but it is varied and broad. Some researchers and scholars have attempted to expound upon portions of this literature more specifically. "In terms of school efficiency or financial savings, little information is available regarding the possible consequences of cutting electives such as foreign languages, physical education, visual arts, and music."[18] Further research and study of these issues are needed.

There is a lack of equality for music programs within certain districts in South Metro Atlanta. One factor may be the location and reputation of the schools' communities. Another component may be the high turnover and attrition rate of music teachers and students. An additional aspect could be an absolute scarcity of funding and administrative support for the music programs. By any means, this study is specific to highlight the perception that music teachers face in a large southern city. As there are many research studies and publications on

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[17] Emily Dawn Slaton, "Music Education Budget Crisis," *Music Educators Journal* 99, no. 1 (2012): 34, https://doi.org/10.1177/0027432112454837

[18] Mark L. Fermanich, "Money for Music Education: A District Analysis of the How, What, and Where of Spending for Music Education," *Journal of Education Finance* 37, no. 2 (2011): 131.

urban music teaching, the author has specified the significance of this study in a particular location.

Central Research Questions

"While teaching music can be a gratifying and fulfilling career for most, teaching in urban school settings can be an exhausting, discouraging, and frustrating experience, even for seasoned directors."[19] Many directors can conceal those issues in performance with passion, exertion, exposure, and pride. "Although reports show schools with extra-curricular activities such as music programs gain higher SAT scores, graduation rates, and attendance rates than schools without music programs, funding and support for music programs remain significant concerns."[20] The issues mentioned earlier may be potential facts based on the recent experiences of the author, prompting the following questions for examination and study:

Research Question One: What challenges are prevalent in teaching music in elementary, middle, and high schools in South Metro Atlanta?

Research Question Two: What more is needed for teachers to succeed in elementary, middle, and high school music courses in South Metro Atlanta with limited resources and support?

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[19] Juvon R. Pollard Sr., "Teaching in the Trenches: A Grounded Theory Study on the Recruitment and Retention of Urban High School Band Directors" (DME diss., Liberty University, 2021), 2, ProQuest.

[20] Howard T. Everson and Roger E. Millsap, *Everyone Gains: Extracurricular Activities in High School and Higher SAT® Scores* (Research Report No. 2005‑2, College Board, 2005), 2.

Hypotheses

According to Bates, "without specific interventions, opportunities and access will remain unequal; students in poverty will not be able to participate in school music as successfully or completely as middle-class or affluent students. With first-chair placements, leading roles, and high scores at festivals, students from middle-class families and the affluent are deemed successful in music education."[21] In many school districts, socioeconomic status can and sometimes will determine the success and survival of middle and high school music education programs and is particularly relevant in high-poverty areas.

Music education's viability and relatability rely on the correlation between socioeconomic status and government funding to provide resources to student populations. Government officials and educational specialists design and fund programs based on the resources allocated to their systems based on socioeconomic status. Homeownership, as opposed to renting, automobile ownership compared to public transportation, free or reduced lunch, and educational and employment status among parents and legal guardians are just a few considerations that music teachers must consider in the overall analysis of socioeconomic status. Students are classified and categorized using these metrics and their educational experiences.

In the melting pot that we call America, many cultures, races, and ways of life make our nation unique and special, and music performance and music education play an integral role. Cultural relevance is also a trending topic and issue in successfully educating music students across our nation and in various communities. Music education may be effective with diverse artists' overwhelming popularity of music if it is inclusive. Vanessa Bond states, "as students embrace musical repertoires and practices, they validate their perspectives and cultural

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[21] Bates, *Social Class and School Music*, 34.

heritages."[22] In some instances, the musical influence in urban and inner-city schools is firmly rooted in the surrounding culture of the community. Incorporating student viewpoints and culture may increase interest and participation in musical ensembles.

Music teachers may experience issues teaching students if they are deficient in reaching students. Fitzpatrick suggests that teachers examine and contemplate the obscurity of their students' cultural identities and their significance in overall students' self-assessments. Fitzpatrick believes that "taking into account our students' cultures in the music classroom requires attention to both content and pedagogy. Teaching music in a culturally relevant manner requires that we acknowledge our students' cultures."[23] To be genuinely comprehensive requires the understanding, knowledge, and appreciation of the diverse cultures of all students. The statements above are critical to maintaining relevance and continuity in urban music education programs.

Some of these recent reforms focus on fundamental coursework and standardized assessment, which have impacted arts programs' availability in urban schools. "Many have concentrated on using high-stakes standardized testing to assess students, teacher merit pay tied to various student outcomes, a continuation of the charter school and school choice movements, year-round schools, project-based education, and various forms of digital education. These reforms and others come packaged with different names at different times, and many others will emerge."[24] Some districts in South Metro Atlanta may not utilize merit pay for music educators.

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[22] Vanessa L. Bond, "Culturally Responsive Education in Music Education: A Literature Review," *Contributions to Music Education* 42 (2017): 160.

[23] Kate R. Fitzpatrick, "Cultural Diversity and the Formation of Identity: Our Role as Music Teachers," *Music Educators Journal* 98, no. 4 (2012): 59, https://doi.org/10.1177/0027432112442903

[24] Kate Fitzpatrick-Harnish, *Urban Music Education: A Practical Guide for Teachers* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2015), 101–102.

Still, the emphasis on improving or maintaining high academic achievement among participating

students may lead to less ensemble participation, smaller enrollments, and more focus on

academically rigorous courses.

There may be some disparity in accountability regarding the sanctions of low-performing

schools. Officials with a lack of knowledge or understanding may not hold schools that may not

have high ethnic populations and achieve poorly to the same standards. It could also be that some

facets of the music education curriculum would need to be revamped by professionals from the

"one size fits all", or the factory assembly line production models. Many school districts have

also been issues nationwide with removing music programs and emphasizing teaching or passing

the test. Fitzpatrick states:

> We must work to design and develop meaningful learning opportunities for our students
> tailored to their needs, not to the students who go to school in the next town and not to
> the school we attended. There should be no one-size-fits-all music program that we
> implement across every setting. If you want your music program to be successful, you
> have to tailor it to meet the particular needs of your students, your school, and your
> community.[25] The issues mentioned earlier preclude the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis One

There are many challenges that South Metro Atlanta music teachers face yearly to ensure

that their programs are accepted, respected, and thrive in an ever-changing field of education.

These challenges may include socioeconomic status, funding deficiency, increased poverty,

cultural diversity, and implementing changes in curriculum design and instruction to meet the

goals and needs of all students. Mixon states:

> Urban schools are plagued with inadequate funding and often have older
> instruments, probably too few in number and too many in disrepair. In some instances,
> textbooks and method books may need replacement, along with other instruction
> resources and materials. Technology equipment for instructional use may also be

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[25] Kate Fitzpatrick-Harnish, *Urban Music Education*, 69.

outdated. Some facilities may not have adequate spacing or be conducive for instrumental music teaching. There may be a silver lining here because, like cars, those older instruments are probably built to last, and it is less expensive to fix existing instruments than to purchase new ones.[26]

In many urban and inner-city schools, students, parents, and teachers struggle with meeting the bare necessities of attending school, such as lunches, pencils, notebooks, and book bags. "Many students will not have the money for method books or equipment supplies such as reeds and oils, and if teachers and directors receive any money for these purchases, it will probably not be enough.[27] Many parents cannot rent or purchase instruments for students in instrumental ensembles. Furthermore, due to minimal funding for these ensembles, participation fees for general operations are costly and unfavorable. Those issues may take precedence over instrument rentals and method book purchases.

Everyone may be unable to afford private lessons, nor do they all live in a two-parent home in suburban areas. Many urban music programs in the Atlanta area may function on the circumstance, leaving students deficient and inadequate resources for a decent music education experience. Lessons, rehearsals, sponsorships, instrument loaners, and the community's donations greatly assist in building the culture and community around a music education program.

While many offer suggestions, many come from music educators who may have never experienced the alternative. Benham states that "teachers are not typically considered outsiders in their classrooms. Most often, the culture of the teacher is dominant within the classroom setting. Students from other backgrounds are expected to leave their culture at the classroom

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[26] Mixon, "Building Your Instrumental Music Program."

[27] Ibid.

door, at which point they become the other. In many classrooms, the status of the teacher as the outsider or 'other' is not appropriate since many teach in situations similar to those in which they grew up."[28] Although a high minority presence may not be the case in the affluent places of metro Atlanta, most teachers resemble the same cultures, beliefs, and customs of the students they serve in the southern regions.

Resource disparities between urban and non-urban schools have been well-documented. Inadequate supplies and support in some Atlanta schools and communities prompt the second hypothesis. Most districts have a music supervisor or coordinator overseeing assets and recommending each school. Daniel Albert states, "although instrumental music teachers direct learning activities, administrators and school districts create school support for instrumental music programs by deciding what resources will be allocated."[29] Ultimately, in many cases, the discretion will still lie in the hands of the principals. According to Dee Hansen, "music supervisors must be vigilant about informing the school and community about the 'outputs' of district music programs."[30]

Hypothesis Two

Music teachers in South Metro Atlanta may have difficulty employing teaching strategies with limited to no resources. Music teachers in South Metro Atlanta may use methods such as

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[28] Stephen Benham, "Being the Other Adapting to Life in a Culturally Diverse Classroom," *Journal of Music Teacher Education* 13, no. 1 (2003): 23, https://doi.org/10.1177/10570837030130010104

[29] Daniel J. Albert, "Socioeconomic Status and Instrumental Music: What Does the Research Say About the Relationship and Its Implications?" *Update: Applications of Research in Music Education* 25, no. 1 (2006): 42, https://doi.org/10.1177/87551233060250010105.

[30] Dee Hansen, *Handbook for Music Supervision* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Education, 2002), 56.

community outreach, lessons from alums and the community, community instrument donations, collaborative parenting, and performance opportunities for exposure.

Core Concepts

Challenges and resources as core concepts of this study provide a philosophical examination of inner-city urban music education. The underlying belief systems in inner-city and urban music education are also analyzed. "Although urban schools can be remarkably different, many music teachers share common areas of interest concerning urban music teaching. Teachers in urban schools face many significant challenges, including a lack of resources, chaotic school climates, a student body much more likely to struggle with poverty, and administrators and policy-makers who focus on tested subjects."[31] These challenges are discussed in dialogue frequently among music educators in South Metro Atlanta.

According to Abril and Bannerman, "some schools are faring better than others in their ability to offer and maintain music programs, especially given the confluence of budgetary constraints and the need to meet academic improvement goals."[32] The needs of music programs vary by community, location, city, and state. Mark and Madura state "rarely is a music budget adequate for the many expenditures of large ensemble programs and their associated travel expenses. If the music budget is generous, money may be available for sheet music, supplies, repairs, and large items, such as a new sound system or platform risers. However, suppose the

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[31] Frank Martignetti, Brent C. Talbot, Matthew Clauhs, Timothy Hawkins, and Nasim Niknafs, "'You Got to Know Us': A Hopeful Model for Music Education in Schools," *Visions of Research in Music Education* 23 (2013): 3.

[32] Carlos R. Abril and Julie K. Bannerman, "Perceived Factors Impacting School Music Programs: The Teacher's Perspective," *Journal of Research in Music Education* 62, no. 4 (2015): 345, https://doi.org/10.1177/0022429414554430.

music budget is minimal. In that case, the teacher may need to use materials the school owns or borrow from other schools."[33] Mixon states, "despite my frugality, like most urban teachers, I spend a good deal more of my own money than is allowed as a deduction on my income taxes."[34]

"Differences in school funding structures have often led to the inadequate resourcing of urban districts and programs. Such financial inequalities have seriously impacted the educational opportunities for urban students, not only in music education programs but across all disciplines."[35] Additionally, "urban schools tend to have high numbers of students who may have a higher propensity to take part in negative social behaviors, such as drug abuse, violence, and nonattendance."[36] These factors challenge many urban, and inner-city music educators as the issues mentioned earlier may be prevalent both school-wide and in their respective programs. Those issues may even precede everyday professional tasks such as lesson planning, grading, parent contact, conferences, faculty meetings, and professional development. When an inner-city music teacher has to consider, endure, and address those issues, managing these issues is just a fraction of what occurs in some inner-city and urban music programs.

Additional concepts explored are scheduling, evaluation, family and community involvement, and administrative support. Kubitschek, Hallinan, Arnett, and Galipeau state, "time is a limited school resource in high schools and is structured according to school and student schedules. Teachers' schedules set the maximum instructional time for a particular class.

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[33] Michael L. Mark and Patrice Madura, *Music Education in Your Hands: An Introduction for Future Teachers* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2010), 106.

[34] Mixon, "Building Your Instrumental Music Program," 21.

[35] Fitzpatrick-Harnish, *Urban Music Education*, 91.

[36] Jennifer Doyle, "Music Teacher Perceptions of Issues and Problems in Urban Elementary Schools," *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education* 194 (2012): 33, https://doi.org/10.5406/bulcouresmusedu.194.0031

Students' schedules set the maximum number of hours exposed to that course material during the school day."[37] Many students in music courses in Georgia may have other personal interests in Career, Technical, and Agricultural Education or CTAE pathway courses, including Culinary, Health Occupations, Automotive, and Engineering.

Guidance counselors and assistant principals may have difficulty scheduling students in music courses year-round. Other variables and factors could depend upon the pathway selections, and music is considered a humanities course under the fine arts umbrella. A solution could be having only the interested music students take music courses under the humanities pathway to prevent the loss of the music elective shortly. The previous actions would allow adjustment, adaptation, and revision of current school schedules, such as migrating from a six-period schedule to a seven-period.

Many schools operating under the 4X4 block may have severe issues modifying and scheduling students under this suggestion. Fitzpatrick-Harnish declares the following:

> Music programs must be considered within a school's scheduling system to succeed. Most music programs encompass multiple classes, whether general music classes or performance ensembles. A music teacher will often work with every student at the elementary level, so scheduling adequate time for music classes can be challenging. Similarly, many performance classes that begin in elementary or middle schools are 'pull-out' classes scheduled during other classes.[38]

Some music teachers may contend that block scheduling is advantageous for any music program. It assists the director with other hidden components of the curriculum. Directors have time to

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[37] Warren N. Kubitschek, Maureen T. Hallinan, Stephanie M. Arnett, and Kim S. Galipeau, *High School Schedule Changes and the Effect of Lost Instructional Time on Achievement* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 63.

[38] Fitzpatrick-Harnish, *Urban Music Education*, 98.

teach, reinforce, and manage, which would be many tasks. Colwell and Hewitt state the following:

> Block scheduling is not always bad; some variations are advantageous to instrumental music. For example, ninety-minute blocks can be broken down into full ensemble rehearsals, followed by sectionals with specific goals for each section, and then a return to the entire ensemble. Another advantage is that the extended period allows for listening activities essential to learning. However, students may need more motivation to practice when they rehearse only every other day. Precious rehearsal time cannot be used for practicing music.[39]

Following the abovementioned statements, many music teachers have attempted those actions when facing middle and high school block scheduling. In certain instances, block scheduling may be an efficient practice for maximizing student learning at the high school level, but it may not be as effective in middle school. As young adolescents, the attention and focus of the average middle school student begin to decline after a certain period, which in turn can create classroom management issues for any teacher. Some middle schools in South Metro Atlanta currently function on a modified schedule where students take music, art, and physical education classes every other day, with a weekly rotation of two days one week and three days the following week. That scheduling format can become a nightmare for middle school music ensemble teachers.

According to Cannady and Rettig, "alternative schedules may not add hours to the school day, but they can vastly improve the quality of the time students spend at school."[40] Given the preceding statement, a suggestion would be to modify the master schedule towards a modified traditional schedule. There would be a seven-period, seventy-five-minute schedule. They would

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[39] Richard Colwell, Michael P. Hewitt, and Mark Fonder, *The Teaching of Instrumental Music*, 5th ed. (New York, NY: Routledge, 2018), 63.

[40] Robert Lynn Canady and Michael D. Rettig, "The Power of Innovative Scheduling," *Educational Leadership* 53, no. 3 (1995): 4.

see their teachers within this schedule and take their courses daily. Curiously, seventy-five minutes is perhaps adequate to give teachers and students the flexibility and opportunity for intense learning and a brief rest before moving to the next class within the schedule. Although block scheduling may seem practical due to time, it is ninety minutes in many scenarios and examples. Over time, students may lose several weeks of quality instruction.

"The best teachers do not simply teach content; they teach people." Many music educators in urban areas may combat the formalities of maintaining a successful program while ensuring that they meet the standards, policies, and procedures under state-mandated teacher evaluation systems. In many instances, districts may directly correlate teacher evaluations to whether a teacher is allowed to return to their current position, school district, or profession. [41] Many music teachers may require lesson planning, implementation, and delivery assistance. A recommendation would be to collaborate with the department chair and administrator or pair with a lead or mentor teacher.

Berberick, Clementson, Hawkinson, and Robinson make the following assertion:

The recent passage of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015 reauthorized and amended the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, thus revamping several policies established under the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001. One of the most significant changes to education policy resulting from ESSA is that test-based accountability (i.e., evaluating teacher efficacy by student performance on tests) is no longer federally mandated. Test scores may be relegated to a lesser weight, and other evaluative systems may be added to determine accountability at the discretion of each state. While it is unclear what impact the ESSA legislation will ultimately have on teacher evaluation at the state and local levels, administrators continue to evaluate music teachers using existing general traits of effective teaching and student growth measures, despite the issues raised by researchers.[42]

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[41] Joan M. T. Walker, "Authoritative Classroom Management: How Control and Nurturance Work Together," *Theory Into Practice* 48, no. 2 (2009): 122, https://doi.org/10.1080/00405840902776392

[42] David M. Berberick, Casey J. Clementson, Jennifer K. Hawkinson, and David M. Rolandson, "A Comparison of Principal Practices and Music Educator Perceptions Regarding Teacher Evaluation," *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education*, no. 209 (2016): 44, https://doi.org/10.5406/bulcouresmusedu.209.0043

"Using festival ratings as an indicator of teacher effectiveness also creates cognitive dissonance because they are not valid measures of individual student growth. Moreover, festival ratings often reflect factors that disadvantage smaller schools with fewer resources, such as rural or inner-city schools."[43] Through several conversations among affiliated colleagues, some teachers also miss festivals due to scheduling conflicts with state-mandated testing, transportation, and other issues related to their respective schools and programs.

Some music teachers may struggle with building music programs for success due to a lack of understanding of the culture and communities surrounding their respective schools and programs. Understanding the surrounding community and the parents of the students that instrumental music educators serve is vital. Partnerships and outreach must ensure that all parties are involved and communicate effectively. Amy Cox states, "an educational partnership is when two parties come together for the common good or to enhance student learning."[44] Partnerships are essential to provide a well-rounded education for all children, and student learning is enhanced when they engage through family/community partnerships.

Through successful partnerships, students learn to value their community more because they see and experience how the community benefits their families and lifestyles. They will understand the importance and reasons for paying bills and taxes and the value of work through partnerships. "Musicians work with parents, teachers, and administrators to help children

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[43] David J. Elliott, Marissa Silverman, Gary E. McPherson, Karen Salvador, and Janice Krum, "Music Teacher Evaluation, Teacher Effectiveness, and Marginalized Populations: A Tale of Cognitive Dissonance and Perverse Incentives," in *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophical and Qualitative Assessment in Music Education*, ed. D. J. Elliot, M. Silverman, and G. E. McPherson (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2019), 151–152.

[44] Amy Cox-Peterson, *Educational Partnerships: Connecting Schools, Families, and the Community* (Los Angeles, CA: Sage, 2011), 5.

develop an appreciation and a love for the power of music in their lives."[45] Volunteer work,

collaboration with the community, shared decision-making, and communication are just a few of

the many involvement strategies to seek, plan, and integrate successful partnerships. Such

application requires commitment, passion, and desire to make the collaboration come to fruition.

Schools must enhance parental self-efficacy and allow parents to capitalize on their skills

and gain more knowledge. These actions may mean providing training and workshops for

parents to understand better how to support their children academically and socially. Next, the

districts and schools must prepare and offer many opportunities for families to be involved

through various activities at school and home and communicate with them regarding the various

factors that promote students' academic success. Doing so may be tedious, but it will help the

school communicate more transparently with the parents and community.

A school must give various opportunities for families to build relationships to network

with any stakeholders within the academic field, which may involve parents being more

comfortable with school involvement instead of shying away from assistance with their child's

educational process. Some parents may feel more comfortable engaging with other families than

with school. Schools should provide more opportunities for parents to build relationships to

facilitate peer learning and information sharing via parent meetings or program events and

workshops.

Some schools may examine a specific group of people in the surrounding community as

not acceptable to work with children. Other schools may think some parents are more suitable

and sensible than other guardians. As a supplement to improving education under reform

practices, all personnel should build trust between families and the school. It is essential to have

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[45] Cox-Peterson, *Educational Partnerships*, 231.

parents visit the classroom and show how the students work, perform, achieve, and behave. In doing so, parents will learn what their student is doing, see it first-hand, and help their student improve. Asking parents to work on projects or individual practice and helping them video themselves doing different excellent activities may also assist.

Having parents and community stakeholders attend important school board meetings is always effective. The prominent education stakeholders within a community besides the educators are students' parents, community personnel, pastors, business owners, and others. There is no such instance of a superintendent firing a parent. The webs of interaction extend beyond the school building. All discourse should be encouraged among those members who can increase the value of partnerships within the educational system and the community. Some educators may perceive that the community can be more than just networking. Networking is such a broad verb for many activities that can take place among educators. Community interaction and engagement are potent weapons at the educator's disposal. The alternative is a forfeiture of or limited capacity for educators' full autonomy when operating their classrooms at their respective school buildings.

There must also be a vision for the program that music teachers are trying to build, and the teacher must clearly articulate it to all stakeholders. Vertical articulation between the elementary, middle, and high school programs and directors is critical to a successful music program as a school cluster or school zone in South Metro Atlanta. Music teachers must also understand the bigger picture of education and partner with the inner-school community. Self-reflection on teaching impact is significant.

Finally, music teachers must build valued relationships with the inner-school community. Although the COVID-19 pandemic has had a tremendous effect on programs, most, if not all, of

these issues were widely prevalent before the pandemic. Parents are the final catalyst in a student's music education experience in many cases. Parents have the autonomy and authority to determine whether their child continues in music education courses past the state-required elective. The involvement of parents beyond booster clubs, conferences, performances, and teacher conferences is crucial. Diane Briscoe declares, "welcoming and encouraging parental participation by the school, teacher, or child is significant in motivating parents to become involved in their child's education. Schools with supportive principals and teachers can foster parental involvement by being open to parental concerns and ideas and keeping parents informed of activities, policies, and the pupil's progress. Opportunities to meet with parents regularly face-to-face can be a powerful tool in establishing a rapport, securing trust, and limiting misunderstandings, which underlines the importance for schools to organize activities for staff and parents to meet."[46]

Teachers must foster a relationship with administrators like any other relationship. A tremendous level of support from the administration is vital to the success of any music program. Some school-provided funding for music programs may come from an administrator's discretionary funds. "Administrators can play a significant role in other important issues, such as developing a supportive culture for the arts, providing priority consideration for scheduling, and fostering the support of colleagues and parents."[47] Administrative support is crucial to instrumental music programs in urban schools. Fitzpatrick states the following:

> Administrators who do this well are treasured, as they give our students excellent service. They also do us a service as teachers, as our job satisfaction has been found to correlate with the level of administrative support we perceive for our music program. To ensure

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[46] Diane Briscoe, "Enhanced Learning for Young Music Students: Involving and Motivating Parents," *Music Educators Journal* 103, no. 2 (2016): 43, https://doi.org/10.1177/0027432116676517

[47] Fitzpatrick-Harnish, *Urban Music Education*, 95.

this support, music teachers must become their advocates and take on the challenge of "educating their administrators about what a balanced, sequential program of music instruction entails." Teachers who feel that their administration is not providing the necessary support for developing an excellent music program need to find ways to make connections, foster relationships and educate administrators about the importance of what we do.[48]

A limited opinion may be that there are not enough former music teachers in the administrative profession. The smallest of administrative decisions can impact programs. Administrators who are former music teachers may wrestle with the person having no administrative assistance to understand the nuances of harm that can come from certain decisions related to scheduling, communication, facilities, course sequencing, and many other circumstances. The previous factors are why advocating for programs is so essential. Directors must be proactive in communicating needs and potential harm from some decisions. At times, it may be too difficult to bridge the gap, depending on the receptivity of leaders.

Some music teachers may criticize administrators and counselors for not supporting the program for many reasons, including not scheduling students for the correct class or even scheduling students. It is a complex situation and assumption to suspect that an urban school or district does not desire a quality music and arts program. Regardless of their musical knowledge or background, many administrators willingness to be inclusive of their music programs. The music teacher is responsible for presenting solutions to issues and collaborating effectively towards a common goal: practical and quality music education and instruction.

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[48] Fitzpatrick-Harnish, *Urban Music Education*, 96.

Definition of Terms

Advocacy - The act of public support for or recommendation of a particular cause or policy.[49]

Attrition - A reduction in an organization's numbers, usually due to resignation, retirement, or death.[50]

Block Schedule - A system for scheduling the middle- or high-school day, typically by replacing a more traditional schedule of six or seven 40–50 minute daily periods with more extended class periods that meet fewer times each day and week.[51]

4 x 4 Block Schedule – A schedule in which students take four 90-minute classes every day and finish a course in one semester instead of an entire school year.[52]

A/B or Alternating-Day Block Schedule – A schedule in which students take eight 90-minute classes that meet every other day.[53]

Co-curricular - Refers to activities, programs, and learning experiences that complement, in some way, what students are learning in school—i.e., experiences that are connected to or mirror the academic curriculum.

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[49] Susan Conkling and Brian Kaufman, "Equality and Quality: The Influence of Private Funds on Public Arts Education in Boston and Baltimore," *Arts Education Policy Review* 121, no. 1 (2020): 18, https://doi.org/10.1080/10632913.2018.1530710

[50] *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, s. v. "attrition," accessed February 22, 2022, https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/attrition

[51] "Block Schedule," The Glossary of Education Reform, last modified August 29, 2013, https://www.edglossary.org/block-schedule/2013

[52] "4 X 4 Block Schedule," The Glossary of Education Reform, accessed modified December 17, 2022, https://www.edglossary.org/block-schedule/

[53] "A/B' or 'alternating-day' block schedule," The Glossary of Education Reform, accessed December 17, 2022

Curriculum - Refers to the lessons and academic content taught in a school or a specific course or program. Depending on how broadly educators define or employ the term, curriculum typically refers to the knowledge and skills students are expected to learn, which includes the learning standards or learning objectives they are expected to meet; the units and lessons that teachers teach; the assignments and projects given to students; the books, materials, videos, presentations, and readings used in a course; and the tests, assessments, and other methods used to evaluate student learning. In dictionaries, the curriculum is often defined as the courses offered by a school, but it is rarely used in such a general sense in schools.[54]

Multicultural Education - Any education or teaching incorporating the histories, texts, values, beliefs, and perspectives of people from different cultural backgrounds. At the classroom level, for example, teachers may modify or incorporate lessons to reflect the cultural diversity of the students in a particular class.[55]

Poverty - The state of one who lacks a usual or socially acceptable amount of money or material possessions.

School Community - Typically refers to the various individuals, groups, businesses, and institutions invested in the welfare and vitality of a public school and its community—i.e., the neighborhoods and municipalities served by the school.[56]

School Culture - Generally refers to the beliefs, perceptions, relationships, attitudes, and written and unwritten rules that shape and influence every aspect of a school's functions. The term also

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[54] "Curriculum," The Glossary of Education Reform, accessed December 19, 2022, https://www.edglossary.org/curriculum/

[55] "Multicultural Education," The Glossary of Education Reform, accessed December 19, 2022, https://www.edglossary.org/multicultural-education/

[56] "School Community," The Glossary of Education Reform, accessed December 19, 2022, https://www.edglossary.org/school-community/

encompasses more concrete issues such as students' physical and emotional safety, the orderliness of classrooms and public spaces, or how a school embraces and celebrates racial, ethnic, linguistic, or cultural diversity.[57]

Socioeconomic Status - A descriptive term for the position of persons in society based on a combination of occupational, economic, and educational criteria, usually expressed in ordered categories on an ordinal scale. Many classification systems have been proposed, from a simple division according to occupation, which generally relates closely to income and educational level, to more complex systems based on specific details of academic status, income, employment, and sometimes other criteria, such as whether the usual place of dwelling is owned or rented and the rateable value of the residence. Other factors, including ethnicity, literacy, and cultural characteristics, influence socioeconomic status, which is an essential determinant of health.[58]

Systemic Reform - What students learn or how teachers teach—the concept of systemic reform may be used for (1) reforms that impact multiple levels of the education system, such as elementary, middle, and high school programs; (2) reforms that aspire to make changes throughout a defined system, such as district-wide or statewide reforms; (3) reforms that are intended to influence, in minor or significant ways, every student and staff member in school or system; or (4) reforms that may vary widely in design and purpose, but that nevertheless reflect a consistent educational philosophy or that are aimed at achieving common objectives.[59]

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[57] "School Culture," The Glossary of Education Reform, accessed December 19, 2022, https://www.edglossary.org/school-culture/

[58] *Oxford Reference*, "Socioeconomic Status," accessed February 22, 2022, https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/oi/authority.20110803100515750

[59] "Systemic Reform," The Glossary of Education Reform, last modified August 29, 2013, https://www.edglossary.org/systemic-reform/

Teacher Autonomy refers to the professional independence of teachers in schools, especially the degree to which they can make autonomous decisions about what they teach to students and how they teach it.[60]

Title I – A school where forty percent or more students receive free or reduced lunch costs.

Urban - Of, relating to, characteristic of, or constituting a city.[61]

Urban School - Primarily serves poor and ethnically diverse students in densely populated areas.[62]

Chapter Summary

Many music teachers teaching in South Metro Atlanta have succeeded in leading their programs to various accomplishments despite the obstacles and barriers mentioned in this study. For many successful music programs, there must be a collaborative effort among the teacher, students, administration, and the sheltering community. Most music teachers' issues in their ensembles may be synonymous with other urban cities or metropolitan areas. Still, the demographics of such regions are uniquely dissimilar, particularly in the variance of location and culture.

Regardless of the person's background, music education must be valued, not just for entertainment purposes. The road to a thriving music program is not swift. It requires consistent support in funding and resources, course sequencing, teachers' development in the content area, and outside support and activity. Many may not truly understand all the nuances of making the

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[60] "Teacher Autonomy," The Glossary of Education Reform, last modified August 12, 2014, https://www.edglossary.org/teacher-autonomy/

[61] *Oxford Reference*, "Urban," accessed February 22, 2022, https://www.oxfordreference.com/

[62] Richard H. Milner IV., "But What is Urban Education?" *Urban Education* 47, no. 3 (2012): 556, https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085912447516

music program sustain success. If they are open to listening, then growth can occur. The alternative is that music teachers should also be in unity with what is happening in the school building and understand the curriculum track of every music student and how they are progressing. It may also be valuable to approach administrators not with a problem but with a problem and multiple solutions. That may be the simple notion of giving a little to gain a lot.

Further, personnel must base the ownership and value on music education being integral to all school education and not just when desired. Leadership personnel must be receptive to receiving what they may only understand at a surface level. Many administrators and leaders read books and articles about improving their schools' areas. Some things work comprehensively, and others are content-specific. Music teachers must present the research to them. Music teachers must also be aware that they are dependent on others being consistently successful in having a chance to be successful. People invest in what they value. Unfortunately, some may appreciate entertainment over education, not realizing that one directly correlates to the other.

It is a disastrous reality in South Metro Atlanta schools that some music education programs are flourishing, some are maintaining, some are significantly declining, and some are just existent and not functional. There is a decline, and music teachers must identify the root cause. Some key attributes to mitigate these issues could be leadership, effective communication, solution, and expectation of excellence. Music programs not having funding, low numbers, and lack of support will cause some to perceive those issues as a hurdle and not a roadblock. Teachers must figure out a way to get over the hurdle. The relationships that music directors build can be the glue that connects students to school and not drop out, resort to violence, or do other harmful actions. Music teachers must build relationships at a high level to promote student

success in school and encourage them to walk into their future and fulfill their destiny, which should be the purpose. It may be for some music teachers to drop their ego and be the hero.

This study examined music teachers' perspectives in grades kindergarten through twelfth grade from schools in South Metro Atlanta. Through thorough research and analysis, this study explained various strategies and solutions to educational practitioners and specialists. The views also assist with the understanding of what challenges these directors face consistently. Finally, this study advocates for the survival and support of music programs in South Metro Atlanta schools.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Introduction

This chapter provides a synopsis of the literature on teaching music in urban schools. The first section of this chapter discusses the roles and characteristics of successful urban music teachers teaching music in urban schools and extending music education to the surrounding community. The first section provides who urban music teachers are, what they do, and where they teach. The second section mentions the culture, scheduling, attrition, and funding challenges many urban school music teachers face. In many cases, higher education officials may notice the evidence of these factors but not consider them. The third and final section offers why urban teachers choose the locations and communities they teach and they continue to deliver quality music education despite the obstacles and challenges persisting in many urban music programs.

The Urban School Music Teacher

The thriving urban music teacher is committed to fulfilling several roles and responsibilities. Some urban music teachers may attest that their time is spent far greater in educating musical students and operating a successful band program than the general classroom educator. In some settings, one may perceive that the passion of the urban music educator may be conflicted with the priorities of the school they serve. As an integral part of this study, the researcher ensures that readers understand who the urban school music teacher is and what the urban school music teacher does.

For example, Laura K. Sindberg designed a case study to examine professional isolation, conversation, and interaction from the perspective of public school music teachers working in

urban schools.[63] The data collection methods included open-ended interviews, follow-up email correspondence, and author reflections. Even though the author transcribed each analysis interview, some consultations provided more descriptive information about the subject than others. Participants were selected through purposeful sampling, considering their ability to provide insight into the research questions. She suggests that concerned individuals should further understand how itinerant music teachers, especially those operating in urban districts, cope with isolation, conversations, and collaboration. While this study has important implications for the current research in the form of interviews, purposeful sampling, and open-ended questions, a more in-depth analysis must be completed to investigate the challenges of urban music teaching thoroughly.

Kerry Simon's mixed research design explores the demographics of music teachers in urban schools with high poverty rates. He includes qualitative data collection through open-ended interview questions in the initial design phases. In addition to addressing concerns, teachers were allowed to elaborate on their encouragement. Simon quotes, "urban education has evolved into an eclectic mix of students and teachers from diverse backgrounds. Some urban schools are immaculate multi-million dollar buildings built by acclaimed architects and filled with state-of-the-art equipment and resources to accommodate brilliant students and award-winning teachers. However, some schools are the exact opposite with dilapidated buildings, poor students, and overworked teachers."[64]

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[63] Laura K. Sindberg, "Perceptions and Perspectives of Music Teachers in Urban Settings: Isolation, Conversation and Collaboration," *Music Education Research* 16, no. 4 (2014): 388, https://doi.org/10.1080/14613808.2013.848849

[64] Kerry A. Simon, "Music Education in Urban America: A Demographic Report of Music Teachers in High-Poverty Urban Schools" (PhD diss., Florida State University, 2013), 10, ProQuest.

Research shows that teachers must possess a specialized skill set to effectively teach their students within the urban school setting. The urban music educator is more than just the elective teacher. They serve many purposes and fulfill many tasks that administrators and other school district personnel may or may not mention at the start of the teacher's service. Accomplishments and concerns are an integral part of the current study's research. However, investigating how and why these actions occur for urban music teachers is another approach beyond the initial research questions and requires additional thought, perception, and commentary.

As many urban school music teachers provide learning, they are also learning. Vicki Baker's study involved three Texas urban school districts close to several universities with music education programs that could potentially use data accumulation to train teachers to fill the music education positions perennially available in these districts.[65] Her study included a survey questionnaire, in which many questions are identical to the current study's research methods and data collection process. A checklist format asked participants to indicate which type of school they attended in elementary, middle, and high school. A second question asked participants to identify the current position in which they teach and the total number of years in urban education. Free response questions asked respondents to describe the unique challenges they faced, their university training, recommendations for better training, and why they chose to teach in an urban school setting.

The results of Baker's study included challenges unique to urban music educators. The most frequent responses cited discipline issues, unsupportive parents, insufficient funding for

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[65] Vicki D. Baker, "Profile of an Effective Urban Music Educator," *Update: Applications of Research in Music Education* 31, no. 1 (November 2012): 45, https://doi.org/10.1177/8755123312458293

instruments, private lessons, camps, resources, and economic and cultural diversity.[66] Problems and challenges mentioned in the article are also examined further in this document and are an essential part of the scope and focus of the current study. The method of Baker's analysis has close similarities in location specifics, probing questions, and survey or questionnaire format. However, the researcher explored more detail when speaking to qualified participants in this research study.

Some urban music students may require a motivational person within their educational experience for those students to continue their journey. In many cases, that motivational person could be their music teacher, as the time spent allows those students a moment of escape from many of the facets of their personal lives. June Hinkley uses a transformative approach in her article investigating music education in urban schools, various curricula, and program offerings. She challenges urban music educators to look for solutions to do what is right in providing quality music education to urban students. According to Hinkley, "sometimes these urban areas are little more than incubators of indifference; they can scarcely be said by some to be an appropriate environment for children's education."[67] The researcher found this helpful article to the current study because many urban music educators realize and understand what is at stake. Furthermore, most are committed to ensuring the success of all students regardless of circumstances.

Considering any music educator's general tasks and combining them with the many challenges that may present themselves in an urban school setting can sometimes be dispiriting,

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[66] Baker, "Profile of an Effective Urban Music Educator," 47.

[67] June Hinckley, "Urban Music Education: Providing for Students," *Music Educators Journal* 82, no. 1 (1995): 32, https://doi.org/10.2307/3398883

especially for novice directors. Otis Simmons writes a complete publication on teaching urban

schools. Although the text is of an older context, many topics discussed are still prevalent in

many of today's urban music education programs. The chapters and topics range from the urban

music teacher to urban environments, testing, pedagogical suggestions, and much more. The

researcher found several statements throughout the text than can be quoted as a critical portion of

the current research and study.

According to Simmons, "success as a teacher in urban schools means that the teacher

thoroughly understands the dynamics of their personality. Self-awareness and awareness of

student differences are integral to successful music teaching in urban schools. Correspondingly,

success in urban settings requires the teacher to formulate viable instruction systems that release

creative energy in learners."[68] Many urban students arrive at school with many personal issues,

desiring acceptance, guidance, and, most importantly, compassion. Meeting the urban music

student where they are and making acceptable but approximate goals through instructional

techniques is crucial for success. Despite the daily challenges that many urban music teachers

face, most are committed to a common goal: improving students. The text, as mentioned earlier,

provides valuable information that is duly in need of further exploration. Interviews of selected

participants, perceptions, observations, and some opinions aid in solidifying the basis of this

study.

Carol Frierson-Campbell's two-volume text provides a wealth of information that the

researcher found impactful and worthy of inclusion in the current study.[69] The text uses several

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[68] Otis D. Simmons, *Teaching Music in Urban Schools* (Boston, MA: Crescendo Publishing Company, 1975), 3.

[69] Frierson-Campbell Carol Frierson-Campbell, 2006. *Teaching Music in the Urban Classroom: A Guide to Survival Success and Reform*, vol. 1, (Lanham Md: Rowman & Littlefield Education, 2006).

studies from a pragmatist approach. The foundational elements of most studies included observations, interviews, and inferences. The many studies in both texts allow the reader to conclude the chapter titles. The author mentions cultural responsivity, music teacher stories, teaching strategies, leadership, reform, and partnerships within the texts, providing inclusive information relevant to this study's components. The old saying goes, "students will not care how much you know until they know how much you care."

Mentoring, parenting, and providing intervention are crucial parts of the daily activities of many urban music teachers. Christina Shields conducted a study that analyzed music education as an intervention for at-risk urban adolescents through participation in performance groups and mentorship.[70] Homeroom teachers, guidance counselors, or principals identified the students as at-risk for participating in the study. Six domains, including musical competence, were assessed using scales administered at the beginning and end of the study. Students' perceived musical competency and global self-worth changed from a moderate positive relationship to a low positive relationship, showing that musical participation was domain-specific and related to global self-worth but not identical. Although this study was more longitudinal and quantitative regarding the methods used, the results and pertinent information are proven to be one of the many characteristics that urban music teachers must possess, thus making the article a significant factor in the elements of the current research.

There is also the optimism and the benefit of teaching music in an urban setting. The zero-to-hero mechanism and concept can appear in many urban school music teachers, and the school population, administration, and general public are privileged to witness the evidence. For

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[70] Christina Shields, "Music Education and Mentoring As Intervention for At-Risk Urban Adolescents: Their Self-Perceptions Opinions and Attitudes," *Journal of Research in Music Education*, 49 (2001): 273–86.

example, Rhoda Bernard presents an article consisting of a discussion among five music

educators in two large cities in the northeastern United States.[71] This study aimed to highlight the

rewards of teaching music in urban environments. One method used in this article that mirrors

the procedures used in the current research is the participating music teachers. The attendees

consented to the recording, transcription, and presentation of the session.

The results indicate that urban music students have the same high achievement level as

other students. Furthermore, urban teachers must provide opportunities, build strong positive

relationships, and maximize the potential for urban students to succeed. The methods and

suggestions mentioned in the article parallel the domains of the researcher's interests,

procedures, and results within the current study. By utilizing similar studies and methods and

incorporating results, the researcher can refine and make adaptations to the present study for

further in-depth discussion and analysis.

In conclusion, in this study interest, urban music teachers may be perceived by many as a

gift to society. Many urban music teachers deal with overcrowded schools, dilapidated facilities,

and a lack of resources and support. Nevertheless, the successful and rewarding part of teaching

in urban settings could be the growth of the students and the understanding of the community.

The previous subtopic utilized literature examining urban music teacher responsibilities and the

challenges paramount in many urban school settings. In subsequent headings, this chapter

examined how society perceives urban music teachers and what they do.

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[71] Rhoda Bernard, "The Rewards of Teaching Music in Urban Settings," *Music Educators Journal,* 96 (2010): 53–57.

Reaching the Community

Community support and outreach are very inherent to the focus of this study. One of this study's critical questions examines the activity and support of surrounding communities in urban school music programs. The community can be a supplemental learning device for urban music teachers who utilize every resource available. Community input and outreach must be a thriving benefactor of the community in urban music education programs. It must also be extended for successful urban music teaching to be effective.

Utilizing Epstein's School, Family, and Community Partnerships Model, Kevin Droe's study examined teacher and parent perceptions of school, family, and community connectedness as a function of music participation and type of community. The author contacted five school districts in the same state as their university for the study. During this study, the questionnaires asked parents and teachers to assess their perceptions of family, school, and community connectedness. The results indicated that community type significantly influenced parent perception of family-school and school-community connectedness. The author states, "positive and nurturing conditions for learning can be simultaneously affected by a student's school, community, and family."[72] Community outreach can be one of the only ways urban music programs continue. Concerning the current research study, several questions regarding community support have been pondered and asked within the data collection surveys and interviews.

Some communities may operate as a benefit rather than a burden in urban music programs. These communities understand the advantages of quality music education, and their

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[72] Kevin L. Droe, "Investigating Parent and Teacher Perceptions of School, Family, and Community Connectedness," *Contributions to Music Education* 40, no. 1 (2014): 57.

constituents invest in sheltering programs to continue successful results. Bergee, Eason, and

Johnson devised a project to determine what factors result in high-quality music programs in

schools and communities. Through a series of semi-structured interviews, the authors of this

study examined programs compiled from NAMM Foundation survey items and data rankings of

the best one-hundred music education communities.

As an integral part of the current research, the researcher seeks answers to community

involvement and outreach probe questions in the data collection process. The project results

included that the 100 Best Communities for Music Education tended to encompass school

communities more than whole communities found themselves examining school systems.

Secondly, the applicants were from schools at the higher end of the continuum, and the teachers

in the districts believed their schools put music on an equal footing with athletics. Additionally,

teachers from communities not chosen expressed that they perceived their programs take a back

seat to athletics and that funding levels matter. The following statement mentions, "music

programs help forge strong communities, providing music programs."[73] When everyone involved

in the music-making process in an urban school setting benefits from positive gains.

There is evidence of musical communities that surround urban school music programs.

The definition of a musical community is more than a municipality that has a storied lineage of

successful musicians and music educators. Further, the term musical community can be as broad

as its name. For example, Schippers and Bartleet conducted a research project involving a

[73] Martin J. Bergee, Becky J. A. Eason, and Christopher M. Johnson, "Galvanizing Factors of Communities Applying to Be One of the 'Best 100 Communities for Music Education,'" *Bulletin - Council for Research in Music Education* no. 186 (2010): 27, https://doi.org/10.2307/41110432

combination of qualitative methodologies.[74] In this research project, the authors observed

participants, conducted semi-structured interviews with them, and explored their relationships

with community music facilitators, community music participants, festival organizers, local

council workers, instrument repairers, radio presenters, and music retailers.

This study sought to investigate structures, personnel, and pedagogy in community music

organizations and how they may link to schools in Australia. Analytical methodologies included

ethnographic case studies and quantitative surveys. The result of this systematic approach is well

suited to uncovering individual stories of community musicians and educators, the dynamics of

their practice, and the broader global socio-cultural issues and frameworks that arise from such

situations. Although the authors of this study completed the research components in Australia,

many of the findings are directly applicable to many music programs in urban music settings.

The researcher found several parts of this study beneficial to the current research because

community participation and impact can be integral to many urban music programs.

Some urban school music teachers may struggle with building music programs for

success due to a lack of understanding of that community and their relationship with the

communities surrounding their respective schools and programs. "One important way music

educators define program success is their relationship to the community."[75] The goal of

involving the community in urban music education programs should be that everyone, including

the community, has a chance to learn, interact, and improve their musical skills. In particular,

Roger Mantie conducted a study that examined the characteristics, attitudes, and perceptions of

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[74] Huib Schippers and Brydie-Leigh Bartleet, "The Nine Domains of Community Music: Exploring the Crossroads of Formal and Informal Music Education," *International Journal of Music Education,* 31 no. 4 (2013): 454–471. https://doi.org/10.1177/0255761413502441

[75] Bergee, Eason, and Johnson, "Galvanizing Factors," 37.

adult community band musicians in nine randomly selected ensembles using Lave and Wenger's situated learning, leisure theory, and quality-of-life theory. Additionally, the study sought to gain insights into how music education might facilitate more meaningful connections between school and community and increase participation in music activities throughout the lifespan.

The author developed a questionnaire for ensemble participants and directors as part of the study. Each conductor or ensemble representative administered a questionnaire to obtain responses. The open-ended questions were manually manipulated in a spreadsheet through a three-stage reduction process to create between four and twelve categories for each question. The results indicated that music students who learned their instruments in school had minimal differences from those who did not. In light of the current research, this study uses several devices integral in data collection, including the survey-type questionnaire and the implementation into the spreadsheet. A crucial element of the current research is the community's involvement, engagement, and support, one of the survey's probing sub-questions.

Sara Jones' study examined the benefits and challenges of a community-school music partnership. The author used an intrinsic case study to collect data via observations, interviews, and artifacts analysis during the school year. In an intrinsic case study, a researcher examines something unique in a particular context, individual, or program.[76] The outcomes concluded that the program's strengths lie in the teaching artists' flexibility and ability to teach in various environments, providing students with opportunities for active music-making and giving them the space to build classroom communities. There were unanticipated challenges, such as

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[76] Sara K. Jones, "Making Music: A Community–School Music Partnership," *Arts Education Policy Review* 121, no. 2 (2020): 59, https://doi.org/10.1080/10632913.2019.1584136

insufficient facilities, a lack of professional development for teaching artists with little classroom teaching experience, and achieving their social justice education goal.

Although the research involved an intrinsic case study, it is an essential part of the research because many urban music teachers may utilize musicians from the community and other community-sponsored music events to enhance the instructional benefits for students enrolled in their ensembles. On the contrary, many urban music educators may have similar concerns mentioned in the article when directors exercise community inclusion. Professional and community musicians can assist urban music educators in reinforcing music concepts and performance practices. They may allow urban music educators to improve their musical skills and teaching abilities.

The urban music teacher may have to use their creativity and imagination to reach the community for support. However, little help from the public is better than no support in urban school programs. "The teacher who develops techniques that get over in recreational centers urban situations is helping the community (the taxpayers) understand the value of music in human experience."[77] As part of this study, the researcher explored community demographics, resources, and other pivotal components in urban music education.

<center>Urban Music Teacher Challenges</center>

Culture

With the overwhelming popularity of music by diverse artists, many critics may question the effectiveness of music education. An urban music teacher must know the culture of their respective buildings and communities. Educators in urban settings hear "Culturally Responsive

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[77] Jones, "Making Music."

Education" in professional development and meetings from a general teaching perspective. Dave Brown examined several aspects of their educational practices by studying urban teachers' strategies, communication patterns, work with parents/caregivers, and curriculum choices.[78] In the data collection, the author utilized a complete interview study with thirteen teachers at urban schools in seven American cities from the first through twelfth grades. Throughout the study, the author reveals data collected to determine whether teachers' classroom management strategies align with research on culturally responsive teaching.

One significant finding was that all teachers interviewed handled disruptive behavior, primarily nonpunitive. Rather than using fear or punishment to maintain a cooperative learning environment, they rely on solid relationships built on trust. Teachers respected students' ethnic and cultural needs through congruent communication patterns. Teachers talked about building caring learning communities and showing genuine interest in every student. Many urban teachers learn about the cultures of their students for positive reinforcement. The norms, values, and customs of urban students may differ from other students classified as rural or suburban. This study correlates with the current research as the researcher examined culture through the conversational lens of participants' lived experiences within the methodology portion of the study.

Many cultures, races, and ways of life make the nation unique and special, and music performance and education play an integral role. Accommodating those cultures is an advantage to all music educators. Being culturally responsive is to be aware and inclusive of the various cultures of students. Music schools in urban areas tend to be diverse in terms of culture. A

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[78] Dave F. Brown, "Urban Teachers' Professed Classroom Management Strategies: Reflections of Culturally Responsive Teaching," *Urban Education,* 39 no. 3 (2004): 266–289. https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085904263258

student's culture may be an extension of the surrounding community or traditions and lifestyles learned from parents or guardians. Even though music education specialists have designed the music curriculum to encompass all genres of music for study, performance, and educational purposes, Western art music dominates the majority of many music curriculums throughout the nation.

For instance, Julia T. Shaw conducted a collective case study that explored how urban choral educators leverage contextual knowledge to shape their pedagogical methods.[79] Using a children's choir organization, the author gained a unique perspective on urban teachers' contextual knowledge in nine of a large midwestern city's most diverse residential suburbs. Teachers from different ethnicities taught in multiple classrooms each week, allowing the study's researcher to examine how the same teacher reacted to different demographics. To navigate the urban environment successfully, participants relied upon their knowledge of the context and personal practical knowledge.

The researcher in this study examined four cases of urban teachers with contextual knowledge within an urban children's chorus. Teachers illustrated contextual knowledge through culturally responsive practice using Geneva Gay's five essential elements of culturally responsive teaching. The research collected data through semi-structured individual interviews, focus groups, ethnographic field notes, autobiographical notes, and artifacts. The study lasted for fifteen weeks. Based on the findings of this study, urban choral educators can successfully navigate the urban context by utilizing their understanding of learners, context, and personal practical knowledge. In urban music teaching, contextual knowledge is a critical possession that

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[79] Julia T. Shaw, "Knowing Their World': Urban Choral Music Educators' Knowledge of Context," *Journal of Research in Music Education,* 63, no. 2 (2015): 198–223. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022429415584377

teachers must have for success. However, from a cultural standpoint, much of the understanding may come through lived experiences and interaction with the students and community that are a part of the urban school's structure.

In an urban setting, music teachers may face difficulty reinforcing musical concepts and historical points because the students may not understand Western Art Music or may lack interest. Understanding the cultures of urban students may also require altering musical selections. Specifically, David Rolandson and Daniel Conn conducted a study to examine whether significant ensemble teachers support the inclusion of popular music classes in high schools. Participants completed the Popular Music in High Schools Questionnaire (PMQ), a self-designed survey tool. The PMQ measures participants' perceptions and support for popular music courses in high schools. The researchers within this study conducted semi-structured interviews with nine high school teachers of large ensembles (five instrumental teachers and four choral teachers) from various geographical regions of North Dakota to generate PMQ items.

The interview protocol contained open-ended questions inspired by previous research on popular music, teaching preferences, and music teacher preparation. The authors also asked teachers to reflect broadly on their attitudes and feelings regarding popular music in schools. The interview data were divided into four themes and used to generate and organize PMQ items into different sections. The sections included in the PMQ were Obstacles Preventing Popular Music Inclusion, Support for Popular Music in Schools, Teachers' Confidence and Preparation for Teaching Popular Music, and Teachers' Desire to Teach Popular Music. The authors also collected demographic information to compare responses.

The open-ended questions were analyzed using the code generated during the preliminary interviews. The researchers used a Likert-type scale to measure non-demographic responses from

strongly disagree to strongly agree. The study omitted PMQ items that asked for neutral responses to minimize social desirability bias and reworded several items to reduce response bias. As the PMQ concluded, a text box prompted participants to share any additional thoughts or feelings about popular music courses in schools.

There appeared to be a musical hierarchy where traditional large ensembles are essential and popular music is considered a supplement. Participants expressed concern that large ensembles would suffer as students migrated toward popular music courses. Furthermore, participants cited accepted musical hierarchies and genres as significant obstacles to the broader inclusion of popular music in schools, considering the strong beliefs many music teachers hold regarding large ensembles and Western art music.

Popular music is broadly inclusive in the marching band setting in some urban schools. However, incorporating popular music into jazz, concert, and chamber ensembles may be beneficial for maintaining student interest. "If approached authentically, popular music in schools can motivate students to pursue music, promote lifelong music engagement, and attract new students to school music programs."[80] Popular music is also integral to embracing the cultures in urban music programs. The previous study has implications for the current research as it addresses several concerns of the researcher and many urban music teachers.

One can also note that the misunderstanding or lack of knowledge of cultures in urban schools may create varied points of view among urban music educators. Jennifer Doyle's research examined student/teacher demographic differences, teacher quality indicators (TQIs), teacher preparation, and school and community support on urban music teachers' attitudes

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[80] David M. Rolandson and Daniel R. Conn, "Large Ensemble Teachers' Support for Popular Music Courses in High Schools," *Journal of Music Teacher Education* 32, no. 1 (April 2022): 2, https://doi.org/10.1177/10570837221091525.

towards and expectations for their students.[81] This study is a previously mentioned study whose objectives included assessing the psychometric validity of the survey instrument and determining what combinations of variables predicted positive attitudes and high expectations among teachers.

Music educators from twenty large cities in the United States completed the Culturally Relevant Teaching Questionnaire. The study examined four dependent variables: Culturally relevant teaching attitudes, culturally relevant music attitudes, implicitly prejudiced perspectives, and expectations. Additionally, study variables included student and teacher matching and mismatching of race and ethnicity, urbanicity, socioeconomic status, teacher quality indicators, and preparation and support. By dummy-coding, scale measures translated various TQI aspects such as years of teaching experience, years of teaching in urban settings, level of education, type of certification, major, and status of in-field teaching. The scores were then combined to create a TQI composite. A convenience sample of seventy-eight music educators across the USA from K-12 general music, choral, and instrumental music specialized programs completed the CRT Questionnaire.

The results of this study indicated student and teacher demographics, teacher quality indicators, teacher preparation, and school support affect the nation's urban music teachers' expectations for their students. Further, the study discovered that school and community support could influence teachers' perceptions of their students. The impact of preparation was moderate on both attitudes and expectations. Despite the minor to mild effects of the demographic variables, results showed that teachers had more positive attitudes when their demographic

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[81] Jennifer Doyle. "Predictors of Culturally Relevant Attitudes and Expectations of Urban Music Teachers in the USA," *Music Education Research* 16, no. 4 (2014): 436–453. https://doi.org/10.1080/14613808.2013.859662

groups matched their students. Culturally Relevant Attitudes scores indicated that most teachers had a positive outlook on teaching and music.

In contrast, the scores of many of these same individuals reflected negative, implicitly prejudiced attitudes about music students in urban settings. Teacher quality indicators appeared to have small but meaningful adverse effects. Teachers with higher teacher quality indicators displayed lower scores on both Culturally Relevant Attitudes about Teaching and Culturally Relevant Attitudes about Music. Considering Culturally Relevant Teaching is a relatively new area of pedagogy, teachers with more extended experience and who have been away from their undergraduate education longer may not have had formal exposure to it. It is also possible that teachers with more experience and certification may view pedagogy more traditionally, thus feeling less inclined to adjust instruction to suit different cultures and student interests. Western music pedagogy may play a significant role in this phenomenon, especially in the United States.

Doyle correlates the perspectives of many urban music teachers with less than five years of teaching experience. As an integral part of this study, understanding student culture is paramount in many urban music programs. Misunderstanding various cultures or the lack of understanding can be frustrating and discouraging. Although Doyle's study is quantitative, the results and methods utilized parallel the issues of interest and interest within the current study's research.

Urban music teachers, especially novice teachers, could face teacher-to-student relationship issues because they lack an understanding of cultural backgrounds in an urban school setting. In examining cultural differences from a societal standpoint, music education is not exempt, specifically in an urban school setting. Despite the great attempts of Civil Rights, Affirmative Action, the Women's Movement, Black Lives Matter, and the LGBTQ+ Coalition,

cultural misunderstanding remains a pervasive problem. With these rising movements continuously happening, one could question the affiliates of these movements and their representation in music education.

Taylor, Talbot, Holmes, and Petrie examined the experiences of ninety-five lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) music education majors and thirty-nine heterosexual allies, Texas Music Educators' Association student members.[82] An anonymous online survey collected the data, which included questions regarding LGBTQ+ students' experiences in their programs and across campuses. Students, faculty, and staff discussed curricular practices and institutional factors that promote LGBTQ+ inclusion. Five students participated in follow-up interviews to examine their classroom experiences and campus-level initiatives. Most of the one-hundred thirty-four participants attended large public institutions and identified as LGBTQ+. The students could check various designations related to sexual orientation and gender, such as transgender, gender nonconforming, and others. Among the one-hundred thirty-four participants, ninety-five were lesbian, gay, bisexual, pansexual, demisexual, asexual, or queer. Thirty-nine were associated with heterosexual allies.

Almost all participants reported antibullying policies at their schools. In contrast, only fifty-five percent of respondents stated specific protections for sexual orientation, and thirty-five percent mentioned gender identity policies. Most participants knew faculty or staff who publicly identified as LGBTQ+, though only thirty-seven percent could identify music education course instructors who were LGBTQ+. Most respondents viewed these faculty or staff members as

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[82] Donald M. Taylor, Brent C. Talbot, Edward J. Holmes, and Trent Petrie, "Experiences of LGBTQ+ Students in Music Education Programs Across Texas," *Journal of Music Teacher Education,* 30, no. 1 (2020): 11–23, https://doi.org/10.1177/1057083720935610

actively working to foster an inclusive environment across campus and in their music education program.

These six components are related: Outward appearance and students who disclose their LGBTQ+ identities to others; Feeling comfortable and students' ability to express gender and sexuality on campus and in their music education programs; Programs and courses that embrace the inclusion of gender and sexuality in the classroom by professors; Preparation and students' capacity to address broad issues of social justice in the classroom; Program acceptance and perceptions of acceptance in music departments among students; Acceptance on campus and perceptions of acceptance by students on campus.

Regarding social justice, students who attended large public institutions reported being significantly better prepared than those who attended smaller or medium-sized public schools. The differences between students at private schools and students at public schools were not significant. Forty-four percent of participants across all groups felt confident serving as a resource for students with questions about gender expression or sexual orientation. On the broader question of social justice, sixty-nine percent stated their concern and that they could produce socially conscious programming. As a result of what they learned and experienced in their education programs, they had confidence in talking about social issues in education.

Eighty-six percent of respondents agreed that participants could create a music classroom that included people of all backgrounds. In contrast, sixty percent of participants agreed that they are ready to advocate for social change in their careers as a result of their careers. There was a significantly greater acceptance rate for large public schools than small-medium private schools. Students who attended small and medium public schools did not differ significantly from their

counterparts. Most respondents perceived students, faculty, administrators, and staff as being accepted across campus.

In this regard, it is evident that general statements of inclusion are welcome, but explicitly discussing LGBTQ+ issues is beneficial not only for topics other than just supporting them but also for preservice music teachers who will inevitably encounter LGBTQ+ students individually. The quantitative and qualitative data revealed that preservice teachers in Texas feel accepted and supported in their music teacher education programs do not equip them to identify or deal with LGBTQ+ issues and provide support to students who identify as such.

Although many music educators in Texas acknowledge the importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion, they may not adequately address issues specifically concerning gender and sexuality to their students. Instructors might find connecting these ideas to their existing syllabi easier if these topics are embedded and layered throughout the curriculum rather than reducing coverage for one day. Professors might challenge students in introductory music education courses to consider how simple changes in gendered language can foster a sense of belonging, which is a solid foundation for future study during their fourth or fifth year of study. It is also possible for some teachers to have conflicting beliefs resulting from conservative religious traditions and the desire to interact compassionately with all students. When teachers empathize with students, they can acknowledge the diversity of experiences without changing their beliefs. The ability of LGBTQ+ students to share their perspectives and identify universal values of acceptance is perhaps a starting point for educators to establish a positive dialogue with their students.

Whereas the previous study addressed the inclusion of LGBPTQ+ students on college campuses, there is far more inquiry in urban public school music programs. Including LGPTQ+

students in ensembles and classes can be a formidable challenge for urban music teachers

depending on the viewpoints of their peers, colleagues, and the school population. Changes can

occur within students at the elementary school level and will continue until their adulthood.

Conflicting values and norms of urban music teachers can present a burdensome barrier to

success. It is of considerable significance to note the previous study because many urban music

programs consist of students who identify differently, resulting in a difference in cultural beliefs

and values.

In conclusion, South Metro Atlanta has many urban schools with a majority population of

minority students. These populations are generally African-American, Hispanic, or Asian. Their

cultural backgrounds heavily influence the African-American student population. Urban music

teachers may experience anxiety and concern when school settings consist of gender identities

combined with diverse backgrounds. The urban school music teacher of the same race,

nationality, and orientation as these students may have some knowledge and can relate to the

cultures of those specified students. Some urban music teachers have successfully embraced the

cultures of the students they serve. Those teachers modify their instructional delivery to meet

those needs. However, further application in preparation programs and professional development

is vitally necessary for urban music teachers. Many urban music education programs in South

Metro Atlanta are built, operated, and thrive from a cultural standpoint. Within this study, the

author examines culture because it can be a significant factor in the prosperity or demise of an

urban music program.

Scheduling

The scheduling of urban music programs may be considered a massive one. Some urban

schools and districts have accommodations for all curricular subjects to have a fair amount of

time to maximize student learning and potential. Many others may have disastrous scheduling

practices for music classes and programs. The current research evaluated scheduling as a critical

focal point and issue that may aid or plague many urban music programs.

For example, using high school students who earn multiple credits in music ensembles as

samples, Vicki Baker's study examined the scheduling patterns of such students and the reasons

they choose to enroll in ensembles.[83] Four hundred forty-three undergraduate music majors aged

twenty-one years or younger were participants from ten Texas universities. Public or private high

school students were the only participants in the study. The participants attended eighty-nine

percent of Texas high schools, while eleven percent attended high schools outside the state. The

survey collected participant responses in a free-response format about scheduling obstacles and

reasons to participate in music ensembles, as well as selections from a checklist about enrollment

in Advanced Placement (AP) classes, music ensemble enrollment, and high school schedules.

A pilot study with music educators, undergraduates, and graduate students validated the

validity of the researcher-designed survey. This study tabulated the frequency and percentage of

respondents. As part of a questionnaire, students filled out information about whether or not they

were enrolled in ensembles, taking classes during the day, and what types of schedules they

followed in high school. Respondents listed any scheduling obstacles and reasons for taking

ensemble classes in high school in a free-response format. The final survey was reworded due to

their suggestions and added more questions.

According to the results, schedule conflicts were the most common obstacles. The

average number of music ensemble classes taken by grades nine through twelve was highest

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[83] Vicki D. Baker, "Scheduling Accommodations Among Students Who Persist in High School Music Ensembles," *Journal of Music Teacher Education,* 18 no. 2 (2009): 7–17, https://doi.org/10.1177/1057083708327386

among respondents who took summer school and correspondence courses. Ensemble membership was primarily motivated by the enjoyment of performing music and socializing. Potential benefits of this research include improved retention rates. This study had implications for further exploration in the current study because scheduling and other courses designed for school improvement and college preparedness may take precedence over music courses, particularly in many urban school settings.

All in all, scheduling requires flexibility, communication, and patience for the urban instrumental teacher. When an urban music educator actively works with involved personnel in scheduling, one could perceive that it is a victory for all. There will be some give-and-take, but modifying the schedule to accommodate all music students should be the goal. Urban music educators must possess the knowledge and versatility to schedule accommodations. Knowing how the master schedule is effective from a data standpoint is also deeply concerning.

Another challenging issue in scheduling with urban ensemble directors is student participation in other activities. Most students desire to enhance their educational experience through other sponsored extracurricular programs. These programs can include clubs, proms, athletics, and many others. Within an urban setting, the participation may make a representation of ensembles insubstantial. Success depends on the understanding of the puzzle pieces. Challenges like these never have a perfect solution or a perfect case. However, having knowledge and awareness of this issue is crucial.

Attrition

The survival of many music programs in South Metro Atlanta depends on student enrollment and participation. Preservice to retirement, many urban directors experience lapses in enrollment, lack of student interest, or no students to select. This study considered it appropriate

to mention the issues or gains of recruitment and attrition. Acquiring and maintaining students in ensembles is another critical component and can be challenging in urban music programs. After scheduling the students, retention, and recruitment are other tasks that may appear daunting for urban music teachers.

Specifically, Darryl Kinney designed a study based on academic achievement, socioeconomic status (SES), mobile status, ethnicity, and sex as explanatory variables to predict whether urban students would enroll and persist in music ensembles.[84] The study used multinomial logistic regression to predict the initial enrollment in the band, strings, and choir electives in sixth grade. Predictive models demonstrated differences between instrumental and choir students at each grade level and between the band, orchestral, and choir students. The academic achievement, family structure, and mobility of choir students differed from those of instrumental students.

The researcher in this article selected a midwestern metropolitan area as the site of the study. Approximately 787,033 people live in this region, with a median household income of $43,348. In 116 schools, 49,602 students made up the district's enrollment (62.0% Black, 25.9% Caucasian, 8.9% Hispanic, 3.0% Asian, and 0.2% Native American). Student enrollment in free or reduced lunch programs is 78.5%, while 16.9% of students are transients. More than half of the students were females. Ninety-two percent of district students attended school, and seventy-seven percent graduated from high school. Among the district's schools were sixteen middle (grades sixth through eighth), three elementary schools (grades kindergarten through eighth), six middle/high schools (grades sixth through twelfth and seventh through twelfth), and eighteen

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[84] Daryl W. Kinney, "Selected Nonmusic Predictors of Urban Students' Decisions to Enroll and Persist in Middle School Band Programs," *Journal of Research in Music Education,* 57 (2010): 334–50 https://doi.org/10.1177/0022429409350086.

high schools grades ninth through twelfth). This study limited generalizability by focusing on just one district, but the district was considered significant enough to randomly distribute individual teacher effects of recruiting and retention.

As of the sixth grade, students in this district could choose between general education and fine art electives. The electives consisted of dance, drama, band, strings, choir, visual arts, health, and physical education as "unified arts courses." The sixth through twelfth grades electives were integrated into the regular school day and not taken as "pull-outs." On average, the elective music courses met approximately five hours a week in which full-time and part-time licensed music teachers taught. Students could earn high school credit by taking up to two electives during the eighth grade. A high school diploma of distinction required one credit in fine arts out of twenty-four total credits.

The author used polytomous logistic regression techniques to build preliminary and final models for every grade level to construct the most prudent predictive model for the data. In this study, predictor variables included both categorized variables (socioeconomic status, number of parents or guardians at home, district mobility, school mobility, ethnicity, and sex) and continuous variables (i.e., sixth, eighth, and tenth-grade reading and math achievement tests). Ethnicities, such as White, Black, Hispanic, and Asian, were the dichotomous categorical variables. For categorical variables, the dummy (i.e., reference) codes were as follows: SES = high SES, family structure = two-parent/guardian homes, district mobility = no district mobility, school mobility = no school mobility, ethnicity = White, and sex = male.

Participants in the sixth, eighth, and tenth grades were analyzed using a baseline-category logit model, using music ensemble membership (band, orchestra, choir, or none) as the criterion variable, with none as the baseline. In each of the three grade levels, 12,104 (sixth grade), 11,493

(eighth grade), and 13,581 (tenth grade) exceeded Hosmer, Lemeshow, and Sturdivant's sample size guidelines. The researcher determined that four hundred thirty-nine samples were required to achieve a minimum power of .90 while maintaining an alpha level of .05. As a result, all cohort samples were considered sufficient for analysis.

In general, higher-achieving students enroll in and persist in instrumental music electives based on their academic achievement. The level of math achievement was a significant predictor of initial enrollment and persistence in band and orchestra programs in the eighth and tenth grades. Each grade level showed a majority of differences between music and non-music students. In contrast, instrumental and choir students differed on a smaller number of factors. While some considerations influenced initial band, string, and choir enrollment, most remained relatively stable throughout retention models. As the number of parents and guardians at home became more salient for this group, socioeconomic status became a weaker predictor of band enrollment in high school. Choir participation was predicted by reading test scores but not math or reading achievement, whereas math and reading achievement predicted instrumental music elective enrollment.

This study had many implications for the current research because many factors that contributed to the study are applicable. Many urban ensemble teachers must consider socioeconomic status, proficiency in academics, mobility, and ethnicity in building, sustaining, or reviving an instrumental music program in an urban setting. According to Scott Shuler, "enrollment numbers matter, philosophically and practically. We must teach more students because everyone needs to understand music."[85] In an urban setting, attrition may prove harmful

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[85] Scott C. Shuler, "Music Education for Life: Building Inclusive, Effective Twenty-First-Century Music Programs," *Music Educators Journal* 98 no. 1 (2011): 8, https://doi.org/10.1177/0027432111418748

to programs. Transfers, graduation, and changes in student interest may be paramount in some urban schools.

Similarly, Rachel Gamin explored factors teachers believe influence students' decision to drop instrumental music during the first year of study in a similar study.[86] Additionally, the study asked teachers in different demographic regions and those in band and orchestra about their beliefs about these factors. In the last step, the study compared the first-year attrition rates between ensemble types, scheduling methods, and geographical areas. In like manner to the current research, the researcher designed a questionnaire and distributed it to fifty-one instrumental music teachers randomly chosen from Ohio.

The methods included a stratified random sampling procedure to select one-hundred schools in Ohio with instrumental music programs representing different socioeconomic and demographic groups. There were fifty-five string teachers and forty-five band teachers in the sample, which consisted of forty percent suburban, thirty percent urban, and thirty percent rural. There were two parts to the questionnaire designed by the researcher for this study. The first part collected information about the participants' bands and orchestras, the total enrollment at the beginning of the academic year, and the total attrition from the beginning of class in the current academic year.

The second half contained Likert-scale items asking teachers to rate the degree to which they agree with statements describing commonly cited reasons in the literature for instrumental music program attrition. Four collegiate music education professors with experience teaching

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[86] Rachel M. Gamin, "Teacher Perceptions Regarding Attrition in Beginning Instrumental Music Classes During the First Year of Study," *Contributions to Music Education* 32, no. 2 (2005): 43–64. http://www.jstor.org/stable/24127153

beginning instrumentalists evaluated and approved the instrument for content validity. Five experienced instrumental music teachers who were not participants in the main study pilot-tested the questionnaire in a test-retest format to obtain reliable data.

There are many similarities between the results of the study and those found in the existing attrition literature. A lack of musical aptitude was more influential on dropout decisions than the perceived difficulty of the instrument and a fear of failure. The study also ranked peer and parent influence highly, frequently mentioned in the research. Teachers rank attrition factors differently from those cited in the literature for students who leave instrumental music later on, although there are some similarities between this study and the literature.

Students and teachers may be under increased pressure due to growing numbers and the importance of standardized testing. This study found that conflicts with extracurricular activities, which usually account for a significant portion of student attrition, did not appear to play a significant role in the first year. In addition, academic difficulty ranked second in this study, is less commonly cited in the literature as a cause of attrition for older or more experienced students. In terms of motivation, the three factors associated with attrition (practice time required, academic problems, and perceived difficulty of the instrument) are consistent with previous research. The instrument's difficulty may discourage students from practicing and continuing to participate, considering it is generally futile on their part.

There was also some consistency with previous literature in terms of lower-scoring factors. Interestingly, teacher influence ranked lowest in the study. According to the study, students' unwillingness to practice was primarily attributed to attrition in the first year. Teachers from both bands and orchestras did not demonstrate significant differences in their responses. It may be an artifact of the unbalanced sample size and the small number of rural teachers in this

study that schedule conflicts rated significantly lower for rural teachers than for their urban or

suburban peers. An analysis of instrumental study attrition found that the average attrition rate

(0% to 47.3%) was somewhat lower than the average attrition rate (24.4%-75%) later. As time

goes on, attrition may become more problematic. Instrumental music teachers may find it

challenging to deal with significant attrition during the first year of instruction based on the

findings in this study.

This study had much information relating to the current research. The attrition rates for

programs that pull students out of the regular classroom as part of their scheduling system were

significantly higher than those that allow for a dedicated lesson time that does not conflict with

any other academic requirements. Scheduling conflicts accounted for a substantially lower

percentage of attrition in rural teachers. Many of the concerns explored in this study are equally

significant in the current research. Furthermore, the author makes the following statements:

"Prospective directors must realize that there will be students who will quit the band as quickly

as they join. The attrition problem is complex because teachers, parents, and students often do

not agree on which factors significantly influence participation and dropout decisions."[87] The

previously mentioned statements may indicate many music teachers in the south metro Atlanta

area, comprised of many school districts.

Withdrawals from music programs in the inner city and urban schools are a primary

concern for some teachers. With new students having to readjust to the formalities of the

requirements associated with music programs, frustration and discouragement may be factors for

program departure and school transfer. Some students may transfer programs in urban areas

based on the operation of the total program. Music teachers in urban and inner-city schools must

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[87] Gamin, "Teacher Perceptions," 44.

be mindful when teaching the curriculum and allowing the contents of that specified curriculum to cause attrition in their programs.

Daniel Albert's study examined strategies for attracting and retaining band students in school districts with low socioeconomic status.[88] Using a phenomenological framework, the author interviewed instrumental music teachers, administrators, and parents in middle school (grades six to eight). Additionally, the researcher observed music classes. This study selected participants based on two criteria. The first criterion for defining a low SES district was that fifty percent of a district's total student population must participate in the federal National School Lunch Program. Secondly, twenty-five to thirty percent of the school population must consistently participate in the school's instrumental music program. Participants included four parents, two administrators, and three middle school instrumental music teachers.

The methods included the use of semi-structured interviews. There were three interviews with each teacher participant. As part of the first interview, the interviewer wanted to learn more about the instrumental music program (scheduling, budget, parental involvement) and establish a rapport. The second interview asked teachers to provide specific recruitment and retention strategy details. Directors also asked parents willing to be interviewed for this research study. The researcher observed each instructing their respective ensemble to identify potentially effective strategies for recruiting and retaining teacher participants. The third interview addressed issues raised in previous interviews as a follow-up interview.

The results of this study are numerous. Teachers' recruiting strategies emphasized exposure as a critical factor. Also included were performances in the surrounding communities,

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[88] Daniel J. Albert, "Socioeconomic Status and Instrumental Music: What Does the Research Say about the Relationship and Its Implications?," *Update: Applications of Research in Music Education* 25, no. 1 (2006): 39–45. https://doi.org/10.1177/87551233060250010105

publicity via local media outlets, and advertising methods such as compact discs. One participant's school benefited from creating a culturally appropriate ensemble that performs music popular in that culture. In the opinion of the three teachers participating, recruitment does not entirely determine the music the group performs but rather how students perceive it. The three participants agreed that students must have access to instruments to participate.

To keep students engaged in instrumental music programs, the teachers believe building rapport with students, fostering positive relationships, and showing a commitment to the profession are essential. Most of the instruments students use in their programs are school-owned or donated. As a result of anticipating future problems or changes, the three teacher participants took proactive measures. Teachers implemented several strategies to foster a sense of caring in the classroom, including setting up mentoring programs that paired sixth graders with eighth graders and providing a safe learning environment. Participants believed that students' ability to work towards goals, such as frequent concerts within their community and festival trips, motivated them to perform at a high level.

According to the teacher participants, "good teachers can teach anywhere," which means music teachers in low socioeconomic status districts exhibit qualities that can make them successful wherever they teach. Classroom management, according to participants, requires a firm hand and a clear explanation of expectations. It is possible to raise awareness and anticipation of instrumental music programs by making personal contact and being visible at elementary schools, which includes holding assemblies and teaching general music classes.

The questions and methods of Albert's study are a natural characteristic of the current research components. However, the present research desired further explanation and exploration on more than just the middle school levels. This study correlated with the current analysis

because many of the schools and the chosen districts have schools that are of low socioeconomic status. Nevertheless, the selected study encompassed many concerns within the current research. These are of precious respect and attention to many urban school music teachers.

Affordability is another challenging issue for many urban music teachers in retaining student participation. Although governmental and district funding is available, many programs are so far beyond the minimal amount of operation that it may send operating budgets into the hundreds of thousands. Providing music programs in public schools with equal access is still a priority. It is nevertheless typical for socioeconomic status, ethnicity, and the size of the school to impede access to and participation in school music programs. Music programs at secondary schools seem to face these issues more frequently. In any urban music school program, having students is vital to sustaining an ensemble and maintaining employment. Through perceived experiences, the research will indicate a note for discussion regarding enrollment, scheduling, and attrition. Cost efficiency should be the goal of many urban music teachers, especially those who teach in lower-income and Title I school settings. The subsequent section mentions these issues.

Funding

Another governing factor in urban music programs involves funding or the lack thereof. Funding is significant to this study because it can be one of the supreme factors challenging urban music education. The current study utilized a probing question regarding funding throughout the data collection. Numerous urban music teachers are combating funding deficiencies for the essential operation of their programs. Many schools in urban areas may have funding allocated for music programs specified for use.

Still, many urban programs are in such dire need that the available budget is a marginal amount to operate efficiently. Moreover, many administrators in these settings may not thoroughly understand how music programs work and their importance in developing a well-rounded education for every student. Unfortunately, through the experiences of many urban music teachers, administrators use most funds allocated through the Title I program for other advanced educational technology and instructional materials.

Marci Major's study components and methods echo the measures within this current study. For example, she conducted a qualitative study focusing on the decision-making process for retaining or dissolving the music program in a selected urban public school district in the Detroit metropolitan area.[89] The author used a guided list of questions, took extensive field notes, and digitally recorded the discussion for each interview. In addition, the author of this article used letters to interviewees who received a letter asking for participation voluntarily and signed an institutional review board-approved consent form before participation began. Following the suggestions of the International Review Board, the current study researcher uses the same instruments.

Major's study went into depth since it focused on a single district with a very extreme case, thus gaining new insights and meanings from the data. The study examined the procedures and characteristics of the decision-makers within this school district. The methods of collecting data for this research included interviewing, documenting, and observing participants to ensure comprehensiveness and reliability. Considering interviews to provide the bulk of information,

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[89] Marci L. Major, "How They Decide: A Case Study Examining the Decision-Making Process for Keeping or Cutting Music in a K-12 Public School District," *Journal of Research in Music Education* 61, no. 1 (2013): 5–25. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022429412474313

the researcher conducted two in-depth interviews, one focus group interview, thirteen focused interviews, one informal conversational interview, and e-mail clarification conversations.

The study's focus group consisted of eight music teachers from the researcher's selected school district. The author interviewed two current music teachers, one retired music teacher, one principal, four upper administrators, two former upper administrators who worked in other school districts, and three parents. Two music teachers and one school administrator participated in the in-depth interviews over several meetings. They answered questions and served as informants who discussed who else to interview and where to locate information. One of these parents had children who participated in music beyond elementary school, and the other two served on a school board.

The researcher guided each interview with a list of questions, took field notes, and digitally recorded each interview. Additionally, the researcher collected public records, administrative documents, and written reports of school events. Each document is carefully reviewed and proofread for support or discrepancy concerning the themes found in the interviews' coding. Furthermore, the author read the information in each document carefully to identify any differences or support for the themes found in the interview coding.

This research conducted four types of data collection: informal observations, focus groups, interviews, and document analysis. To collect data, the researcher used their role as a participant-observer. Having worked in the district previously, the researcher believed this district would provide insight into educational decision-making. The interviews and data collection provided the opportunity to compare personal experiences with the themes found in the interviews. According to the researcher, interviewing parents, school board members, music teachers, upper administrators, and building managers avoided potential biases. The research

created triangulation using these diverse populations by examining different data sources within the same method. There was a high degree of overlap among the interviewees, and data was collected from various sources, focus groups, and informal observations.

Several participants indicated that teachers, administrators, parents, and community members maintained a strong music ensemble through synergy. The organization was thriving and of high quality for the district's music teachers at the time of the study. Some interviewees' perceptions of school principals played a prominent role in the value of music programs. However, some interviewees view the upper administration as having more influence because their constituents view them as leaders. Also, the school administrators made music an integral part of the curriculum rather than providing it as an extracurricular, saving money on teacher salaries and benefits.

According to the study's results, there was strong attendance at events among parents and community members, enrolment of their children in music courses, and active engagement in the children's music education. Community members who are elected to the school board strongly support music education. Students' participation in the district's classes influenced the district's commitment.

This study is closely related to the current research regarding decisions made by administrative and elected officials concerning music programs. The methods used, such as personnel interviews, are an integral component of the current study. The researcher of the current study searched extensively in the metro Atlanta area for schools and directors who may have been affected by the mentioned issues and challenges. According to the results of Major's study, advocating for what music educators believe music can achieve is not enough. In addition to tackling the root problems of public policy and budget constraints, music advocacy must help

administrators solve their dilemmas. Advocating from this perspective might save music education today and in the future.

Fermanich's study presents a detailed analysis of spending for music programs in suburban districts by school, object, and program area, such as general, instrumental, or choral music programs.[90] It is important to note that the study defines resources as district general fund allocations and local funds raised by schools, such as course fees, grant writing costs, and teachers' out-of-pocket expenses. An analysis of the music program resources in the district relied on three primary data collection methods. The first stage of this study involved obtaining administrative data on school expenditures for music programs; staffing levels, assignments, and costs; course offerings and enrollment; and student characteristics.

An online survey was administered to music teachers and principals as a second step to gather data on school-level support for music programming, including fundraising and out-of-pocket expenses. The survey terminology was developed in consultation with district staff to ensure consistency with district norms. The administrative data collected was further examined by semi-structured interviews with forty-five principals, music specialists, and parents within a sample of eight district schools and central office staff as needed. To provide a representative cross-section of schools, the researcher chose a purposive sampling based on elementary, middle, or high school levels and the quality of music programs.

Among the eight schools participating in the interviews, three were elementary schools, two were middle schools, and three were high schools. Sixteen music teachers, twenty-one parents, and seven principals participated in the interviews. At their schools, all participants

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[90] Mark L. Fermanich, "Money for Music Education: A District Analysis of the How, What, and Where of Spending for Music Education," *Journal of Education Finance* 37, no. 2 (2011): 130–149.

participated in focus groups. Moreover, discussions included the district's budget director and the music program coordinator. The study examined common themes and perspectives by recording, transcribing, coding, and analyzing all the interviews. This analysis's data for option, charter, and special program schools were unavailable, so it concentrated only on the district's traditional elementary, middle, and high schools.

In the district studied, more than seventy thousand students are from various geographical places. A variety of schools are located in the district, ranging from inner-ring rural schools to isolated inner-ring schools. A moderate degree of diversity exists in the district, with approximately twenty-five percent of its students belonging to a minority group and the same percentage qualifying for free or reduced lunch. There were nearly nine hundred million dollars in the district's total operating budget, or about nine thousand dollars per student. School districts with more than fifteen thousand students spend about this per student on average. The district's general fund represented almost three-quarters of its budget funded primarily by state and local general revenues. Other miscellaneous funds and federal funds supplement the remaining amounts.

The current economic recession had decimated state and local revenues, and the district had faced financial challenges. Budget projections for the district showed it would meet tens of millions in cuts. After nearly a decade of declining enrollment, voters rejected a proposal for additional operating funds. Music had traditionally been an extracurricular activity through the district's comprehensive music program, which offers a wide range of music and performance courses for students in grades one through twelve. Music instruction was rotated weekly with visual art and physical education classes in elementary grades one through six.

In the district's elementary schools, students had access to music instruction at a similar frequency as the national average. Music instruction was provided for forty-five minutes daily in elementary grades one through six in visual art and physical education rotation. Additionally, instrumental music electives were available for students in grades five and six. Music teachers staffed the elementary schools with a full-time general music teacher and a part-time instrumental or band teacher. Some elementary schools offer music education classes in their choirs. In 2008-2009, nearly twenty-seven thousand students participated in the district's elective music programs, according to data provided by the district. In addition to the almost forty-three hundred elementary instrumental music students in grades five and six, there are more than twenty-two thousand secondary instrumental music students. Numbers do not represent the number of music classes for all elementary students in grades one through six.

177.5 full-time music teachers in the district occupied two-hundred thirty-three full-time and part-time positions. Music teachers at many of the district's schools taught instrumental and choral music at one or more schools, but most had only one teaching assignment. Some elementary instrumental teachers traveled between four or five schools, with many serving more than one. Across the district, music teachers earn an average salary of forty-four thousand dollars full-time. The district also employed a full-time music coordinator as part of the district's overall program budget of one hundred sixty-four thousand dollars.

As part of its school music program for 2008-09, the district spent $13.9 million. Funds from school activities accounted for another $1.4 million of this amount. The district spent just over 1.6% of its $853 million operating budget. The district's general and special revenue funds partly funded music programs. This subsidy includes various earnings, including course fees, fundraising donations, ticket sales, and grants. These finances were raised primarily by schools

to support their music programs. The district did not use federal dollars for its music programs, such as Title I funds.

School staff interviews indicated that the actual school revenue was often significantly higher than the figures reported in district or school budget documents, particularly for high schools. The numbers excluded any additional revenues raised by parent/student booster clubs at individual schools. In some cases, booster club accounts exceeded tens of thousands of dollars, allowing them to supplement more expensive music programs like the high school marching band. Funds retained and expended by clubs are not included in school budgets because they are maintained and paid by their accounts. Since these funds did not appear in either district or school budgets, accounting for these funds was impossible.

Averaging one hundred eighty-seven dollars per student in the district was spent on music based on total enrollment, not students participating in music. The highest spending per student was at the elementary level, averaging one hundred ninety-five dollars, followed by middle schools with one hundred eighty-nine dollars and high schools with one hundred forty-three dollars. Music program participants, as opposed to students enrolled in the school, received an average of two-hundred thirteen dollars more per participant than those enrolled in music classes. For elementary schools, it was one-hundred seventy-six dollars; for middle and high schools, it was two-hundred sixty and three-hundred sixty-three dollars.

Compared to secondary schools, elementary schools offer music education to all students, resulting in a cost of music education much closer to that of enrolled students. Despite this, elementary school participation amounts were slightly lower than pupil participation rates. This study duplicated participation counts because they included the entire enrollment of elementary school students in general music classes and those in optional instrumental and choral classes.

The duplications led to a higher music participation rate in elementary schools. Middle and high school students who took music as an elective had significantly higher per-pupil expenditures than students who did not take music as an elective.

Music education in the elementary grades accounted for more than half of the district's total music expenditures. The district used these dollars to hire one-hundred elementary general music teachers for staff in elementary music classes. Additionally, twenty-nine positions were available for instrumental music teachers in grades five and six to teach the elective instrumental program. The secondary school music staff included thirty-two instrumental and twenty-seven choral music positions in middle schools and twenty-five instrumental and twenty choral jobs in high schools. The district spent nearly 2.2 million on music programs in its middle schools and almost 3.5 million in its high schools. Compared with elementary and middle schools, high schools raise significantly more in-house funds through school-based fundraising events, which account for twenty-three percent of their music program funding.

From school to school and across all grade levels, poverty, and minority student concentrations varied greatly. School characteristics reflect the characteristics of the neighborhoods they serve because these are neighborhood schools. Other variables examined included the total number of students enrolled in school, the entire school per pupil expenditures, the education level of music teachers, the participation rate in music programs, and the number of special revenue dollars collected per pupil. There were many factors contributing to spending across both elementary and secondary schools, according to the findings. As another factor unmeasured but likely to have had an impact in this study, principals were given a great deal of discretion in deciding how many electives to offer at their schools and how much school

resources to allocate, such as instructional materials, professional development, and school-based fundraising proceeds, via the district's school-based management policy.

District and school staff also identified other potential causes. Students' participation in music and the resources for their music programs can be significantly improved when music teachers put in individual effort and receive support from their administration. Because mean spending on instrumental music instruction is much higher than that on choral music, levels may also be affected by the mix of participation across music programs. Middle school instrumental music spending averages two-hundred sixty-two dollars per participant, and high school instrumental music spending averages two-hundred forty-nine dollars per participant. The cost of choir instruction for middle school students is twenty-two dollars, while the price for high school choir students is about one hundred and one dollars.

To conclude, this study revealed that music expenditures per pupil varied widely from school to school, with elementary schools showing the most significant variation. There are several explanations for this variation, including differences in teacher costs between schools, differences in schools' educational budgets, and the schools' ability to raise funds from the community. Little evidence suggests that school characteristics, such as minority or low-income student numbers, affected the level of music expenditures or the assignments of music teachers, as did the results from recent studies of urban schools regarding overall spending and staffing patterns.

Fermanich's study had several critical factors integral to the current research. Funding for music education programs may not always be an affordable task. The questions asked within Fermanich's study, including resource allocation, administrative support, and spending, are of significant interest and examination in the current research. The implications of the study

mirrored the second question of the current research. Many programs utilize separate funding sources and fundraisers to finance operational activities properly. Analysis and exploration of funding sources and allocation for urban music programs throughout South Metro Atlanta will continue.

In many schools throughout South Metro Atlanta, school districts hire a school bookkeeper to regulate all finances regarding extra and co-curricular activities. Utilizing bidding, vendors, and countless accountability documents that may be required, the music education experience may be dwindled due to the totalitarian positions of bookkeepers and, in many cases, administrators. Working with school bookkeepers could be a dream or a complete nightmare for some urban instrumental music teachers.

Booster and parent organizations can provide a great deal of assistance financially to urban programs if the parties operate them soundly and efficiently. Elpus and Grisé conducted a study that sought to understand the finances of public school music parents' associations and music booster groups and the relation between the socioeconomic status of school communities and the amount of money raised by their local music booster groups.[91] The project included the creation of a comprehensive dictionary of words based on three categories: music (band, choir, choral, music, etc.), school (elementary, high school, etc.), and entity/organization (booster clubs, friends of, parent associations, etc.). The researchers generated a national dataset of music booster groups' finances based on the 2016 edition of IRS Publication 78, which lists over 1.03 million not-for-profit organizations.

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[91] Kenneth Elpus and Adam Grisé, "Music Booster Groups: Alleviating or Exacerbating Funding Inequality in American Public School Music Education?", *Journal of Research in Music Education* 67, no. 1 (2019): 6–22, https://doi.org/10.1177/0022429418812433

The study focused solely on nonprofit organizations that filed IRS Form 990s (Return of Organization Exempt From Income Tax) for fiscal years beginning in 2015. The researchers retained complete information based on the EINs of the verified music booster organizations. The following step combined data from booster groups with household income data from the national census. According to the census data of 2015, the study developed a breakdown of median household income by ZIP code for the areas served by the music booster groups. The final step in the data analysis involved choosing the most appropriate regional grouping.

To answer the first two research questions, the authors utilized an empirical approach that involved creating and cleaning an analytic data set. The study answered the third research question by examining the median household incomes of communities with booster groups and analyzing the difference between the average median household incomes across communities with booster groups using analysis of variance (ANOVA). Additionally, this study estimated the magnitude and direction of the relationship between median household income and booster group revenues using fixed effects regression models. A fixed effects regression model accounts for the data's nesting. The model takes into account that household income affects booster group revenue. Booster groups are nested within states, and each state has similar policies for school music and fundraising.

The study results show that music booster groups raised at least two-hundred and fifteen million dollars in revenue during 2015. Two important factors determine the lower bound of the possible national impact of music booster groups. First, the IRS does not require nonprofit groups with revenues under fifty-thousand dollars to report detailed financial information, which requires the researchers to exclude the numbers from the estimate. The second reason why Form

990 may not be necessary is that many more music booster groups may not (yet) hold a federal tax-exempt determination letter.

States and the federal government supplement the relatively low levels of local resources available to poorer students in most districts to supplement the lack of public funding for schools in the United States. There were at least seven hundred and twenty-three music booster groups nationwide that raise at least one hundred thousand dollars annually, which is quite successful locally. A previous study showed a strong correlation between a music booster group's total revenue and the median household income within a ZIP code. This association was even more vital for groups that met the complete Form 990 filing threshold for contributions to public education. Many districts can close the gap between students in more affluent and poorer communities by strategically deploying state and federal funds. Even if this is an unintended consequence of wealthier parents' support of their local public schools, the private donations of more affluent parents and parent-led school-supporting nonprofits can redouble the spending gap.

Ultimately, this study is the first national study of booster group revenues using government data which presents substantial limitations. According to music teachers, fundraising is a significant component of providing quality music education to students. Several studies have shown that music booster organizations can raise substantial nongovernmental funds to support public music education. However, it remains unclear what the most common uses of these funds are. It is unclear whether most of the funds raised by music booster organizations supplement or substitute for nonexistent public budgets. More systematic research is needed to understand how music booster organizations use their funds. To improve the opportunities for students to

participate in well-funded music education, a clearer understanding of private support for public music education is necessary.

The previous study sought the core components of music booster organizations and their work with music programs. It is not uncommon for many music programs in South Metro Atlanta to have booster organizations to supplement financial tasks. However, the current research interests examined their establishment and function and whether they suitably fit administrators, district personnel, and urban music teachers. If one were to investigate the funds raised by the parent, booster, and nonprofit organizations to support music programs financially, it would still be a penny compared to the billions of dollars allocated to public education alone. One should also consider that some administrators may discourage or disapprove of booster organizations due to the numerous exchanges of funds between different personnel, which can place the music teacher, administrators, and other adults at legal risk.

It is crucially vital for urban music teachers to notify all personnel of any financial difficulties or inequalities that they may have for their programs in the first instance. Patience and persistence will be crucial components. All suggestions are easily practicable. One must question the effectiveness of the subordinates who will ultimately make the final decision. Funding is not the means to an end. However, it is one of the most critical portions of successful urban music programs. As a component of the current study, the researcher examined what funds are available, their uses, and their continuity.

Chapter Summary

Teaching in urban environments and inner-city schools can be challenging because some schools may not be conducive to learning. After all, positions of power may harness the general operation of music programs. The researcher will address these issues in the following study and

present possible solutions. This chapter was an extensive review of the literature supporting detail

of teaching music in urban schools with limited resources and support. In addition to providing

information on teaching music in inner-city and urban schools, the author examined the following

subtopics: The Urban School Music Teacher, Reaching the Community, Urban Music Teacher

Challenges, Culture, Scheduling, Attrition, and Funding. The following chapter examines the

research methods and procedures used in this study.

Chapter Three: Research Methods and Procedures

Introduction and Overview

In many communities throughout South Metro Atlanta, there has been a decline in music programs in participation, funding, teacher retention, support, and continuity. The researcher identified many of the contributing factors previously in the review of the literature chapter. They may involve administration, culture, enrollment, assessment, and many other facets of the ever-changing educational policies and reforms that require adjustment in all forms from all involved personnel. The importance of realizing and informing these issues to all may be a significant factor in these programs' continued development, success, and survival. The research discovered why many music educators in South Metro Atlanta struggle to maintain ensembles and examined the root causes of the earlier issues stated throughout this paper.

Music teachers' personal and professional experiences in the leadership of music programs in South Metro Atlanta have prompted an immediate need for attention and this study. From a historical perspective, music programs have been or once were part of the communities in south metro Atlanta. Some programs have continued to flourish with the support and understanding of the communities they serve. Many are faltering or defunct. Some teachers may perceive the countless ineffective professional development opportunities as inadequate.

This chapter provided a synopsis of the study's methodology by emphasizing the methodological design, the central focus or research questions, and the theories that will pilot this study. This chapter also included the study's setting, the participants' criteria, selection, rationale, number of participants, procedure, and the data collection process. The researcher used supporting literature review details to justify this study. The chapter concluded with a chapter summary, the plan for data analysis, and briefly prefaced the method for data results.

Design

This study utilized a qualitative research design. "The purpose of selecting a qualitative method was to provide reasonable interpretations of the meanings, functions, and consequences of human actions from the viewpoints of diverse participants."[92] Additionally, Creswell and Creswell state the following:

> The qualitative research paradigm has its roots in cultural anthropology and American sociology. Educational researchers have only recently adopted it. Qualitative research intends to understand a particular social situation, event, role, group, or interaction. It is essentially an investigative process where the researcher gradually makes sense of a social phenomenon by comparing, replicating, cataloging, and classifying the object of study. Marshall and Rossman suggest that this entails immersion in the everyday life of the setting chosen for the study; the researcher enters the informants' world and, through ongoing interaction, seeks the informants' perspectives and meanings.[93]

In support of the current research, several studies have used a qualitative design to understand the perceptions of music teachers and districts' decisions regarding the overall future of instrumental music programs. With South Metro Atlanta being a specific location, the qualitative study brought detail from a phenomenological approach involving survey research design and interviews. In the data collection, analysis, and drafting stages, the researcher developed an understanding at the beginning of the research design and process, including considering the factors, a starting point, whom to contact, and what issues to draw on.

Other authors have used qualitative research to understand the perceptions of music educators in urban settings from a retention standpoint. Olsen and Anderson used a qualitative method to examine why early career teachers stay in or consider leaving the urban schools where

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[92] Koji Matsunobu and Liora Bresler, "Qualitative Research in Music Education: Concepts, Goals and Characteristics," in *The Oxford Handbook of Qualitative Research in American Music Education*, ed. Colleen Marie Conway (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2014), 24.

[93] Creswell and Creswell, *Research Design,* 226.

they currently teach. The research design included three two-hour, semi-structured, audiotaped

interviews conducted with each teacher during the 2003 to 2004 academic year—one in fall, one

in winter, and one in spring.[94] Similarities existed for the current study in Olsen and Anderson's

designs in the form of interviews. However, the length of such differed from the interview

process of this study.

Surveys are used in qualitative research to collect and analyze data to present results and

possibly offer future insight for continuing research. This study used surveys to support the

hypothesis and questions about the scope of the investigation. One researcher used surveys as

part of qualitative research to investigate possible inequalities in access to music education

programs. Following a qualitative design, Costa-Giomi and Chappell based their study on a

survey conducted in one of the largest school districts in Texas. They focused the analysis on

middle and high school band programs. It outlined the differences in program characteristics

between schools of contrasting socioeconomic statuses to investigate whether students of diverse

racial and economic backgrounds can access similar music education opportunities in the school

district.[95] The authors included teacher and program information, perception, and school

classification questionnaires. These are included in the current research's survey portion and are

integral to supporting the detail.

The researcher has included the primary characteristics of a qualitative design in the

current study. For surveys, the researcher asked specific questions to find interviewees and

linked responses to the survey answers. The screening questions were the first questions of the

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[94] Brad Olsen and Lauren Anderson, "Courses of Action: A Qualitative Investigation into Urban Teacher Retention and Career Development," *Urban Education* 42, no. 1 (January 2007): 8, http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0042085906293923

[95] Eugenia Costa-Giomi and Elizabeth Chappell, "Characteristics of Band Programs in a Large Urban School District: Diversity or Inequality?," *Journal of Band Research* 42, no. 2 (Spring, 2007): 4.

survey. For interviews, the participants were still in their natural environments and communicated with the researcher over video conferencing. Additionally, the researcher completed thematic coding, where each interview was electronically recorded and transcribed to analyze the data. Once the data information was collected, the researcher stored it on a password-locked computer The researcher and faculty committee are the only individuals with access.

<center>Questions and Hypotheses</center>

Research Questions

The researcher used the following research questions in this study:

Research Question One: What challenges are prevalent in teaching music in elementary, middle, and high schools in South Metro Atlanta?

Research Question Two: What more is needed for teachers to succeed in elementary, middle, and high school music courses in South Metro Atlanta with limited resources and support?

Hypotheses

The researcher used the following hypotheses in this study:

Hypothesis One: There are many challenges that South Metro Atlanta music teachers face yearly to ensure that their programs are accepted, respected, and thrive in an ever-changing field of education. These challenges may include socioeconomic status, funding deficiency, increased poverty, cultural diversity, and implementing changes in curriculum design and instruction to meet the goals and needs of all students.

Hypothesis Two: Music teachers in South Metro Atlanta may have difficulty having successful programs with limited to no resources, support, high-stakes testing,

scheduling, and many other factors. Music teachers in South Metro Atlanta may use methods such as community outreach, lessons from alums and the community, community instrument donations, collaborative parenting, and performance opportunities for exposure.

<div align="center">Participants</div>

To conduct this study, the researcher emailed over one-hundred music educators. In addition to the linked responses from the surveys, the study interviewed eight final participants. All participants were music educators from three focus school districts in South Metro Atlanta. The grade levels taught were kindergarten through twelfth grade and are integral to the study's components. The participants were educators representing the following school districts: Atlanta Public School District, Clayton County School District, and Dekalb County School District.

According to Fusch and Ness, "when data saturation occurs in qualitative research, a researcher receives the same answers from participants repeatedly; in other words, no new information is gleaned from participants, signaling the end of data collection."[96] Data saturation occurred minimally throughout the survey portion of the study due to duplicate answers or responses. To alleviate these issues, the researcher included the interview process to retrieve more information and expound answers to many questions.

The researcher used interpretation as a part of this research process. According to Creswell and Creswell, "interpretation in qualitative research involves several procedures: summarizing the overall findings, comparing the findings to the literature, discussing a personal

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[96] Patricia I. Fusch and Lawrence R. Ness, "Are We There Yet? Data Saturation in Qualitative Research," *The Qualitative Report* 20 no. 9 (2015): 1408.

view of the findings, and stating limitations and future research. In terms of overall findings, the question 'What were the lessons learned?' captures the essence of this idea. These lessons could be the researcher's interpretation, couched in the understanding that the inquirer brings to the study from a unique culture, history, and experiences."[97] Many of the answers to the interview and survey questions involved participants' experiences similar to the participants' perceptions and experiences, producing relevant information for the study.

For accurate answers and results in the study, the participants met the following criteria:

1. Each participant must be a current, former, or retired music educator in an urban K-12 environment representing the following districts: Atlanta Public School District, Clayton County School District, and Dekalb County School District.

The researcher asked demographic questions, including student ethnicity, Title I funding, and students' free or reduced lunch percentages. Locations in South Metro Atlanta were the specific scope of the study. However, was some bias in the scope of the research. The screening requirements and questions provided a more accurate and in-depth analysis by making conclusions from the participants' experiences to alleviate this issue.

Participants were both male and female, and their participation was voluntary. The researcher contacted the participants via email, phone, in-person, and social media. As part of the state music educators' association, the organization's website listed much of the contact information was listed in a portal for each participant. The author utilized this information and made individual contacts with potential candidates. The researcher located all participants' phone numbers, social media information, and email addresses. However, the researcher only used emails and phones for the survey portion of the study.

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[97] Creswell and Creswell, *Research Design,* 221.

Setting

All survey participants completed this part of the research electronically through a link to the consent and survey forms. For interviews, the researcher asked each participant to select a location, such as their home or workplace. The researcher encouraged participants to choose a preferred location to avoid distractions. Additionally, the author urged location preference to ensure that outsiders would not overhear the discussion.

Four selected interview participants completed the interview in their music classrooms or offices. The remaining three participants completed the interview in their home office locations. The author sent the survey via email on a university-prepared template and received responses via email, which were recorded and analyzed by the researcher. The author recorded all interview sessions via video conferencing.

Instrumentation

The researcher collected data in this study by using two components. The first component consisted of surveys distributed to all participants selected for the study. The survey asked eleven predetermined questions, and three initial questions confirmed the participants' qualifications for this study. The predetermined questions asked participants about funding, scheduling, administrative, parental, and community support. The researcher determined the questions by reviewing the literature, hypotheses, and other issues that the researcher perceived needed attention. The author designed the survey answers in a check box category of selections. The type of selections were rateable answers ranging from adequate, needs improvement, inadequate, non-existent, and not applicable. The researcher orchestrated these questions to target specific areas of concern to support the research. Additionally, the survey asked all participants to include

suggestions and comments at the bottom to increase perception and minimize the possibility of outside arguments or bias.

Once the participants answered the survey questions, the researcher used the responses to determine the appropriate interviewees. The interview was the second component of the data collection procedure. The author omitted anonymity from the survey. After determining the suitable candidates for an interview session, the researcher contacted the candidates to select a reasonable date, time, and location for the interview process. During the interview, each candidate answered the same open-ended questions listed in a template that the researcher arranged. These questions were an unabridged version of the questions in the survey, allowing the interviewees to expound upon their answers. The researcher confirmed during the interview that each setting would promote privacy and confidentiality for each candidate.

Creswell and Creswell state, "in qualitative interviews, the researcher conducts face-to-face interviews with participants, telephone interviews, or engages in focus group interviews with six to eight interviewees. These interviews involve unstructured and generally open-ended questions that are few and intended to elicit views and opinions from the participants."[98] The researcher's purpose for the interview was to provide additional information that may have been omitted or excessive within the survey. During the development of the interview questions, the researcher contacted several individuals with similar educational and professional backgrounds in the South Metro Atlanta area. Although all interviewees and survey participants were in music, the researcher selected participants in different facets of music education, such as band, chorus, orchestra, general music, and music technology to diversify the study results. In response to other individuals' feedback and suggestions, the researcher adjusted the study as necessary.

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[98] Creswell and Creswell, *Research Design,* 263.

Procedures

In compliance with the policies of the International Review Board of Liberty University, the researcher obtained IRB approval before beginning any facets of this study. After approval of both the IRB and the dissertation committee chair, the researcher contacted participants via email, social media, and telephone. As part of communication with participants, the researcher explained the study's objectives, participants' needs, and eligibility criteria. After contacting possible participants, the researcher once again verified that the participants met the following criteria:

1. Each participant must be a current, former, or retired music educator in an urban K-12 environment representing the following districts: Atlanta Public School District, Clayton County School District, and Dekalb County School District.

Before interviewing the participants, the researcher emailed the consent forms and asked them to sign and return them before the interview. The consent form allowed participants to receive an overview of the study's purpose, the requirements for participation, confidentiality, privacy, and risk associated with participating in the research study. The email and survey link included consent as an attachment. Participants typed their names and dates on the consent forms before completing the survey and signed consent forms electronically before the interview. This study included a slight risk of exposure to professional and personal information related to the field of study. The author ensured that participants could withdraw from the study without any consequences or conditions related to employment.

The researcher sought to interview participants that would diversify the study in multiple facets. The participants came from different areas of music education, including chorus, band, orchestra, general music, drama, and music technology. Furthermore, the participants were of

different races and genders. After selecting participants, the researcher contacted the candidates

to schedule a private interview. Before scheduling the interview, the author sent each participant

a text or Facebook message to determine their availability. Once each participant confirmed

availability, the researcher sent a Zoom link to the previous contact information by text message

or Facebook messenger. The author used Zoom video conferencing to conduct the interviews.

The researcher asked each participant related questions and used the same time

increments of thirty to forty-five minutes for each discussion. Each question consisted of a

follow-up question or an opportunity to elaborate on the answers provided by the candidates.

During the interview, the author recorded field notes for clarification purposes and to synthesize

any recorded material that may be difficult to interpret on audio or caption on the video. After

the completion of each video session, the researcher transcribed the information stated in the

video and began preparation for data analysis.

Data Analysis

For data analysis, the researcher used the Microsoft Excel Statistics platform. Within the

platform, the author used formulas placed in specific categories. The categories consisted of the

answers to the survey questions from the more extensive selection of teachers in the surveys. The

researcher used the answers from the survey questions from the more significant number of

teachers who completed the survey. From the answers, the researcher analyzed them by

percentages and put them in their particular category. Using tables, the author created data

interpretation so that readers and future researchers can visualize and draw conclusions.

During the data analysis, the researcher utilized the concept of essence description.

Moustakas states, "phenomenological research uses the analysis of significant statements and the

generation of meaning units."[99] For example, Carrillo, Baguley, and Vilar conducted a study regarding the influence of professional identity on the teaching practice of four school music educators.[100] Although the authors of this study utilized a narrative inquiry methodology, they used a semi-structured interview schedule to provide consistency in the areas explored with the participants and the flexibility to pursue particular points of interest during the interviewing process.[101] The recorded statements in the interview sessions proved their effectiveness in the overall scope of the current research and study.

Additionally, Parker and Powell used a phenomenological study to explore music education majors' identity development within the context of two music education methods courses.[102] "Within their research, the authors used the phenomenology method to understand the lived experience of individuals."[103] The article states the following:

> Phenomenology is descriptive, as the task is to capture the essence of human experience through textual expression. It distinguishes appearance and spirit between the things which grounds our experience. Through interaction, human beings can reach one another. We understand, however, that descriptions of lived experiences cannot be identical to the experiences themselves. Music teachers and educators relate to the world through our pedagogical approach. Thus, through this inquiry, we hoped to build relationships between our experiences and the participants' experiences to further our collective knowledge.[104]

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[99] Creswell and Creswell, *Research Design,* 272.

[100] Carmen Carrillo, Margaret Baguley, and Mercè Vilar, "The Influence of Professional Identity on Teaching Practice: Experiences of Four Music Educators," *International Journal of Music Education* 33, no. 4 (November 2015): 451, https://doi.org/10.1177/0255761415582348

[101] Carillo, Baguley, and Vilar, "The Influence of Professional Identity," 453.

[102] Elizabeth Cassidy Parker and Sean R. Powell, "A Phenomenological Study of Music Education Majors' Identity in Methods Courses Their Areas of Focus," *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education*, no. 201 (2014): 23, https://doi.org/10.5406/bulcouresmusedu.201.0023

[103] Parker and Powell, "The Influence of Professional Identity," 27.

[104] Ibid.

The researcher completed the data analysis by winnowing the data. "Because text and image data are so dense and rich, the researcher cannot use all the information in a qualitative study. Thus, in analyzing the data, researchers need to 'winnow' the data, focusing on some of it and disregarding other parts."[105] The researcher utilized this process because much of the text and information decoded from the interviews may have oversaturated the data. Furthermore, the information within may have been excessive for the methods portion of this study. The researcher winnowed the data to condense the details and evidence into a concise summary.

Trustworthiness

"Trustworthiness or rigor of a study refers to the degree of confidence in data, interpretation, and methods used to ensure the quality of a study. In each study, researchers should establish the protocols and procedures necessary for a survey to be considered worthy of consideration by readers."[106] The researcher provided the interview participants with a debriefing and an opportunity to review the recorded interview to ensure trustworthiness. If there were any discrepancies or inaccuracies, the researcher took the appropriate measures suggested by the faculty advisor to make the necessary corrections. Additionally, the researcher ensured that participants would not experience retaliation regarding their employment positions.

The researcher also utilized transferability in this study. According to Connelly, "the nature of transferability, the extent to which findings are helpful to persons in other settings, is different from other aspects of research in that readers determine how applicable the results are to their situations. Qualitative researchers focus on the informants and their stories without

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[105] Creswell and Creswell, 268.

[106] Lynne M. Connelly, "Trustworthiness in Qualitative Research," *Medsurg Nursing* 25, no. 6 (2016): 435.

saying that this is everyone's story. Researchers support the study's transferability with a rich, detailed description of the context, location, and people studied, transparency about analysis, and trustworthiness. Researchers must provide a vivid picture that will inform and resonate with readers."[107] Although the participants had similar backgrounds and experiences, the author aimed to eliminate any possibility of bias within this study. The researcher utilized the methods in this study to ensure that the readers and future researchers will have a firm foundation of the study's implications, intent, and results.

<div align="center">Ethical Procedures</div>

To comply with the university's policies, the researcher designed this study to follow strict ethical procedures. The primary ethical method at the beginning of this study involved the researcher obtaining permission from the university's International Review Board (IRB). Through the IRB, the researcher completed the methods utilized in this study. As part of the requirements of the IRB, the researcher provided each interview participant with a consent form before conducting the interview. The researcher provided consent forms as an attachment to the email and survey link. To complete the consent form, the interview participants typed their names and date on the consent form before completing the survey, and the selected participants for the interview signed the consent forms electronically. The researcher provided all survey participants with screening questions at the beginning. The researcher began the recruitment process immediately following the IRB approval. All locations were electronic.

The researcher used the data collected from the online surveys and stored it securely in an online database. The researcher stored the data on a password-locked computer, and the

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[107] Connelly, "Trustworthiness in Qualitative Research," 435–436.

researcher and faculty committee were the only individuals with access. As part of the interview method and data collection, the researcher had minimal risk of participants providing identity information. Due to the participants' current position, the information given during the interviews and surveys may lead to the identification of a participant. However, the study utilized no deception or anonymous data collection methods. The study did not involve any compensation or gifts for participants and was strictly voluntary, thus eliminating coercion. The study also refrained from the usage of minors or children. The researcher deleted the data upon completing the research and approval of the dissertation.

Chapter Summary

This study aimed to identify critical issues affecting music education in South Metro Atlanta public schools. This study used a qualitative research design through a phenomenological approach. The researcher recruited a maximum number of approximately fifty music educators for survey participant enrollment and selected eight participants for interviews. The numbers by grade level were fifteen high schools, eight middle schools, seven elementary schools, and one district official. The researcher utilized data collection methods in the form of surveys and interviews. The researcher followed specific ethical guidelines by ensuring confidentiality and privacy for all participants.

This chapter provided a synopsis of the study's data collection procedures by emphasizing the design, central focus questions, theoretical framework, and hypothetical presumptions that pilot the study. This chapter also examined the study's focus, settings, participants' information, criteria, selection, instrumentation, and procedures. The conclusion involved a plan for data collection and analysis. The subsequent chapter includes the results of all data collection and analysis.

Chapter Four: Research Results and Findings

Introduction and Overview

There is increasing evidence in the research community that providing adequate support for urban music programs affects teacher confidence and adaptability, which, in turn, significantly impacts student achievement and strengthens music programs. This hermeneutic qualitative case study aimed to identify perspectives researched and documented concerning the experiences and perceptions of urban elementary through high school music teachers. Based on interviews and surveys conducted, this chapter examined the hypotheses that (a) challenges may include socioeconomic status, a lack of funding, poverty, cultural diversity, and implementing changes in curriculum design and instruction to meet the needs and goals of all students.

Furthermore, (b) those who teach music in South Metro Atlanta may find it challenging to implement effective teaching strategies due to limited resources. They may be able to expose themselves to the community through community outreach, lessons from alums and the local community, donations of instruments from the local community, collaborative parenting, or performances. As part of the purpose of trying to gain a better understanding of issues that affect music programs in urban schools, it is permissible to share this information.

This chapter's purpose demonstrated applied research results, citing music education and current professional experts within the field. Additionally, the chapter summarized the finding through tables and interview transcripts. The author highlighted the most important discoveries in this chapter. Participants shared their real-life experiences in this chapter to provide information about their experiences. The data gave descriptions of each participant to protect their privacy using pseudonyms. As the reader approached the final chapter of this dissertation, the content of this chapter provided the framework for a seamless transition.

Restatement of the Purpose

This study examined the impact of educational and non-educational factors that challenge music teachers in South Metro Atlanta. This study aimed to provide personal and professional perspectives from music teachers of all grade levels that may often have been overlooked or not observed. Additionally, this research explored the challenges K-12 music teachers face in South Metro Atlanta and the unique challenges faced by multiple music teachers selected for this study. The following research questions guided this study:

Research Question One: What challenges are prevalent in teaching music in elementary, middle, and high schools in South Metro Atlanta?

Research Question Two: What more is needed for teachers to succeed in elementary, middle, and high school music courses in South Metro Atlanta with limited resources or support?

Descriptive Statistics

The statistical analysis for the present study began with general descriptive statistics. The researcher conducted a descriptive statistical analysis of the following: current grade level of the participants, work location of the participants, years of experience, and ethnicity of participants.

Grade Level

The survey asked participants to indicate the current grade level in which they are teaching. One participant indicated they were at the district level in the music department, and one teacher indicated ninth through the twelfth-grade chorus. Two participants were ninth through twelfth-grade orchestra teachers. Seven participants were kindergarten through fifth band teachers, and twelve were sixth through eighth-grade band teachers. Eighteen participants

were ninth through twelfth-grade band teachers. Table 4.1 summarized the descriptive statistics

of the qualifications of the study participants.

Table 4.1. Current Grade Level of Participants

Grade Level	N	Percentage
District Music	1	2.4
9th -12th Chorus	1	2.4
9th -12th Orchestra	2	4.8
9th -12th Band	18	43.9
6th - 8th Band	12	29.4
K - 5th Band	7	17.1

Source: Survey Study 2022

Work Location of Participants

Fourteen teachers teach in the Atlanta Public School District, resulting in 34.1 percent of

participants. Six participants currently teach in Clayton County School District, which totals 14.6

percent. Dekalb County School District teachers comprised the majority of responses and

participants, totaling twenty-one educators and 51.2 percent. Table 4.2 summarized descriptive

statistics of the work location of the participants.

Table 4.2. Work Location of Participants

School District	N	Percentage
Atlanta Public School District	14	34.1
Clayton County School District	6	14.6
Dekalb County School District	21	51.6

Source: Survey Study 2022

Experience of Participants

The experience level varied among participants. One teacher had five years of experience or less, and seven teachers with six to ten years of experience. Nine teachers had eleven to fifteen years, while ten participants had sixteen to twenty years. Five teachers had twenty-one to twenty-four years of experience, and nine had twenty-five or more years of experience. Table 4.3 summarized the descriptive statistics of the years of experience of participants.

Table 4.3. Experience of Participants

Years of Experience	N	Percentage
0-5 Years	1	2.4
6-10 Years	7	17.1
11-15 Years	9	22.0
16-20 Years	10	24.4
21-24 Years	5	12.2
25 or more Years	9	22.0

Source: Survey Study 2022

Ethnicity of Participants

The study identified participants in three different ethnic groups. One participant identified as Caucasian. Nine participants identified as multi-racial. Thirty-one participants identified as African American. Table 4.4 summarized the descriptive statistics of the ethnicities of participants in the study.

Table 4.4. Ethnicity of Participants

Ethnicity	N	Percentage
Caucasian	1	2.4
Multi-Racial	9	22.0
African American	31	75.6

Source: Survey Study 2022

The second part of the survey asked questions related to the music program. The researcher asked participants to rate the music programs' facilities, student schedules, sources of external funding allocations, administrative support, and parent and community support. Responses varied on all survey questions. In response to the question, the researcher asked participants to rate the music program's facilities, and eight participants rated the facilities as inadequate. Thirteen participants rated the facilities as adequate. Twenty participants rated the facilities as needing improvement. Table 4.5 summarized the participants' responses regarding their music program facilities.

Table 4.5. Rating of Music Program Facilities

Rating	N	Percentage
Inadequate	8	19.5
Adequate	13	31.7
Needs Improvement	20	48.8

Source: Survey Study 2022

The author asked participants to rate the student scheduling within their music program in response to the question. Eleven participants rated the student scheduling as adequate. Fifteen participants rated the student scheduling as inadequate. Fifteen participants rated the student scheduling as needing improvement. Table 4.6 summarized the participants' responses regarding the student scheduling within their music program.

Table 4.6. Rating of Student Scheduling

Rating	N	Percentage
Adequate	11	26.8
Inadequate	15	36.6
Needs Improvement	15	36.6

Source: Survey Study 2022

Additionally, the researcher asked participants to rate the sources of their music programs' external funding allocations. Four participants rated the external funding allocations as non-existent. Eight participants rated external funding allocations as inadequate. Thirteen participants rated the external funding allocations as adequate, and fifteen participants rated the external funding allocations as needing improvement. Table 4.7 summarized the participants' responses regarding the external funding allocations within their music program.

Table 4.7. Rating of External Funding Allocations

Rating	N	Percentage
Non-Existent	4	12.2
Inadequate	8	19.5
Adequate	13	31.7
Needs Improvement	15	36.6

Source: Survey Study 2022

The author asked participants to rate the administrative support of their music program. One participant rated the administrative support as non-existent. Eight participants rated the administrative support as inadequate. Sixteen participants rated the administrative support as adequate, and sixteen participants rated the administrative support as needing improvement. Table 4.8 summarized the participants' responses regarding the administrative support for their music program.

Table 4.8. Rating of Administrative Support

Rating	N	Percentage
Non-Existent	1	2.5
Inadequate	8	19.5
Adequate	16	39.0
Needs Improvement	16	39.0

Source: Survey Study 2022

Lastly, the researcher asked participants to rate their music program's parent and community support. Five participants rated the parent and community support as non-existent. Six participants rated the administrative support as inadequate. Fifteen participants rated the parent and community support as adequate, and fifteen rated the parent and community support as needing improvement. Table 4.9 summarized the participants' responses regarding the parent and community support for their music program.

Table 4.9. Rating of Parent and Community Support

Rating	N	Percentage
Non-Existent	5	12.2
Inadequate	6	14.6
Adequate	15	36.6
Needs Improvement	15	36.6

Source: Survey Study 2022

Participants

Teachers with music teaching experience from elementary, middle, and high schools in South Metro Atlanta participated in this study. The researcher emailed seventy-four music educators during the survey to gather data. The researcher identified the emails and contact information by checking the website of the state's music educators' organization (GMEA OPUS). These music educators represented three target school districts ranging from five years of experience to retirement in the south metropolitan Atlanta area.

The researcher developed survey instruments consisting of a Likert-type scale and open-ended questions. The Likert-type scale and open-ended questions explored teaching experience, demographics, facilities, funding, scheduling, support, and socioeconomic status at different schools. Of the seventy-four emails the researcher sent, the responses revealed only forty-one for

review. Twenty-eight respondents agreed to an audio and video recorded interview if selected, totaling 68.3 percent of responses (Figure 1). Figure 4.1 and Table 4.10 summarized the participants' responses regarding the survey and the recorded interview sessions.

Figure 4.1. Participant Responses to Survey and Interview
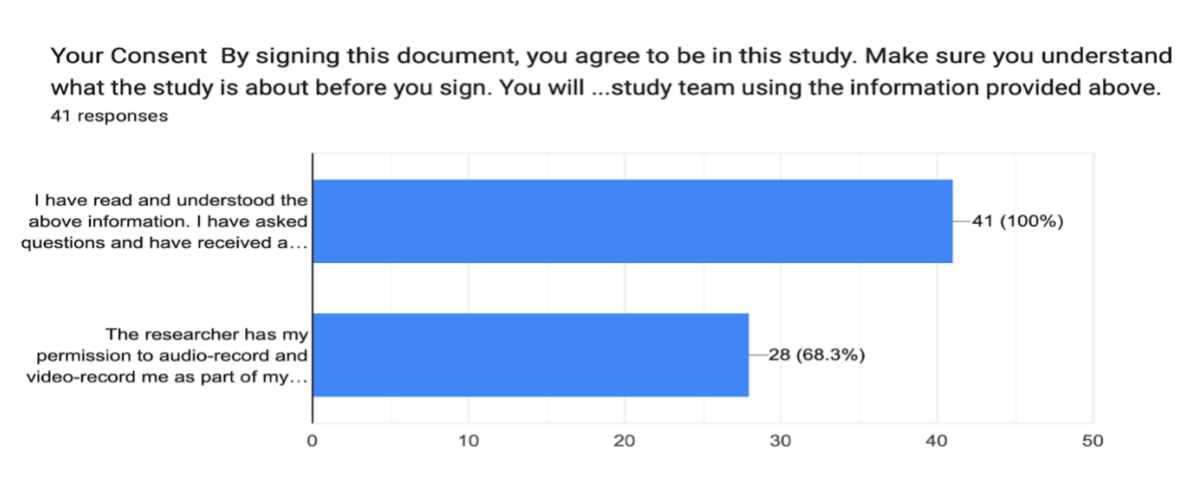
Source: Survey Study 2022

Table 4.10 Participant Responses to Survey and Interview

Rating	N	Percentage
Responses	41	100
Audio and Video Recorded Interview	28	68.3

Source: Survey Study 2022

Fourteen teachers represented Atlanta Public School District, resulting in 34.1 percent of participants. Six participants currently teach in Clayton County School District, which totals 14.6 percent. Dekalb County School District teachers comprised the majority of responses and participants, totaling twenty-one educators and 51.2 percent (Table 11). The experience level varied among participants. One teacher had five years of experience or less, and seven teachers with six to ten years of experience. Nine teachers had eleven to fifteen years, while ten participants had sixteen to twenty years. Seasoned veteran educators rounded out the last two

categories, with five teachers having twenty-one to twenty-four years and nine teachers with

twenty-five years to retirement (Table 12).

Table 4.11. Participant Locations

District Location	Participant Count	Survey Percentage
Atlanta Public School District	14	34. 1 %
Clayton County School District	6	14. 6 %
Dekalb County School District	21	51. 2 %

Source: Survey Study 2022

Table 4.12. Years of Experience

Experience Level	Participant Count	Survey Percentage
1 – 5 Years	1	2. 4 %
6 - 10 Years	7	17. 1 %
11 – 15 Years	9	22 %
16 – 20 Years	10	24. 4 %
21- 24 Years	5	12. 2 %
25 Years - Retired	9	22 %

Source: Study Survey 2022

In this study, eight educators participated in an in-depth interview, responding to twelve

questions about music teaching challenges in their respective districts. The participants of this

interview included orchestral, choral, general music, drama, band, music technology, and one

teacher who teaches all music subject areas. The researcher selected these participants to

diversify the study and encompass as many facets of urban music education in South Metro

Atlanta as possible. Each interview participant varied their teaching experience by grade level.

For instance, the orchestral participant has experience extending from grades six through twelve.

The general music participant has experience in grades kindergarten through fifth. One band

teacher has experience in grades six through twelfth grade.

With expertise in sixth through twelfth grades, the all-content teacher has instructed students in band, orchestra, and chorus. The drama teacher has also taught band, choir, and elementary general music. One of the interview participants had eighteen years of middle and high school band experience and now works as a guidance counselor at the high school level. All interview participants have taught in at least two of the three target school districts as part of this study.

Seven interviewees were all African-Americans and have a variety of backgrounds. To diversify this study, the researcher chose one interview participant who is a Caucasian male with military experience and experience from predominantly white institutions. Six participants attended historically black colleges and had taken courses at predominantly white universities in addition to their degrees from historically black colleges. It is worth noting that one participant obtained only a baccalaureate degree from a historically black college.

In addition to their undergraduate degrees, six participants held graduate degrees in music education. Among the participants were four doctoral candidates in the field of music education. There were six male participants, while two women participated in the study, and one identified as a former band teacher, chorus, and music technology director—one other woman identified as an only orchestra. There was no restriction on the amount of knowledge each participant gave in response to interview questions. Additionally, to the twelve questions asked in the interview, the participants answered additional questions regarding their demographics and backgrounds to enhance the discussion.

Orchestral Teacher No. 1

Orchestra teacher number one had extensive teaching experience in two of the targeted districts in this study. Orchestra teacher number one has taught grades sixth through twelfth and

is well-versed in teaching music education in urban, suburban, and rural settings. This educator has also taught orchestral music education in a neighboring district, Fayette County Schools, just southwest of Atlanta and a component of the Atlanta metropolitan area.

Instrumental Music Teacher No. 2

Instrumental music teacher number two had fifteen years of teaching experience in the Dekalb County School District. This teacher had taught band at the high school level at the same school during this time. Before the assignment in Dekalb County, instrumental music teacher number two taught instrumental music in Alabama for one year as a preservice music educator. Instrumental music teacher number two is highly knowledgeable in attrition, scheduling, and community support. The school this teacher serves is in a very transient community of Dekalb County.

All-Content Area Teacher No. 3

The third interview participant in this study had an extensive background and history. This teacher had teaching experience from grade five through twelve and has taught at multiple middle and high schools in two of the targeted districts in this study. Before arriving in the Atlanta metropolitan area, all-content teacher number three also taught high school bands in the Jackson, Mississippi, area. This teacher had taught in two of the targeted districts of Dekalb County School District and Clayton County School District. Furthermore, the interview participant had taught all content areas of music education, including band, orchestra, chorus, and general music.

Instrumental Music Teacher No. 4

Instrumental music teacher number four had eleven years of teaching experience in grades sixth through twelfth. This teacher had taught band in Meriwether County School District at a rural school from sixth through twelfth grade and in the target district of Atlanta Public Schools on the middle grades levels. The educator is a native of the metropolitan Atlanta area, educated in the neighboring Cobb County School District. Additionally, this interview participant has an extensive understanding of urban school music programs as he completed his undergraduate study at Clark-Atlanta University and completed preservice educational studies in many of metro Atlanta's urban and suburban school districts.

General Music Teacher No. 5

General Music teacher number five had five years of experience teaching elementary general music grades kindergarten through fifth grade. As a graduate and participating music student of the Dekalb County School District, this educator had teaching experience in Atlanta Public School District and Dekalb County School District. Well-versed in guitar, trumpet, and choral performance, general music teacher number five encompassed many much-needed areas of music education at the elementary school level.

Choral/Instrumental/Drama Teacher No. 6

Music educator number six presented a diverse approach and experience to this study due to cultural backgrounds, previous undergraduate study, and teaching experience in rural and urban school districts. This educator had fifteen years of teaching experience in all grade levels and had taught in multiple communities in and out of the metro Atlanta area. The interview

participant also had teaching experience in the private school sector. The educator taught chorus, drama, and general music courses at the elementary level in the target district of Dekalb County.

Instrumental Music Teacher No. 7

This educator in the interview portion of this study presented tremendous experience to all selected participants. With over eighteen years of teaching experience in grades six through twelve, this educator was the only participant who taught instrumental music in the same school that educated him. This educator also was a part of the opening of a new school in the Dekalb County School District, where he served seventeen of the eighteen years of teaching. Instrumental music teacher number seven is now a guidance counselor at the high school level in Dekalb County School District, where he has occupied that role and position for the past four years.

Music Technology Teacher No. 8

The final educator within the portion of this study had thirty years of experience. The educator has taught general music, band, chorus, and music technology in two of the three target districts, plus experience in Fulton County School District and Gwinnett County School District, two of the counties that comprise the metropolitan area of Atlanta. The teacher's expertise included marching and concert band in flute and chorus, where she is an accomplished pianist. The current role of this teacher included music technology, in which she teaches at the alternative level in the neighboring Gwinnett County School District.

Research Question One: What challenges are prevalent in teaching music in elementary, middle, and high schools in South Metro Atlanta?

The researcher interviewed music educators from multiple grade levels and areas of performance to understand their experiences and perceptions. . Most participants' experiences indicated that more attention is needed for music programs in South Metro Atlanta, emerging as subthemes. Discussions with music educators showed the importance of administrative support, funding, scheduling, and adequate resources. To gain an understanding of the variety of music programs, participants provided a description of their music programs and sheltering school buildings. Following the disclaimer questions, the researcher asked interview participants about their current educational status, district of service, and prior service in other schools and communities. The researcher used these questions to aid and safeguard the screening and qualification questions.

Music Programs in South Metro Atlanta Before Covid-19

The author then asked participants to provide their views on the state of music programs in South Metro Atlanta before the Covid-19 pandemic. Four participants noted a resurgence or positive transformation in music programs. These interviewees cited that most principals, communities, and districts garnered, encouraged, and welcomed support, and music program enrollment was soaring. The remaining three participants noted that there were significant issues taking place in music programs before the pandemic. One educator mentioned the issue of government funding for music, arts, and vocational programs. This educator asserts that once districts granted building and school principals full autonomy of such financing, they would use their judgment to determine what governmental funds would be allocated to music programs if any.

Additionally, one participant emphasized how the Twentieth Century Fox Motion Picture *Drumline* was highly influential in restrengthening and maintaining thriving music programs in the area. However, the participant noted how the unfortunate tragedy of a band student in Florida began to restrict many music programs, specific bands in which directors, principals, and students began to withdraw interest and participation due to concerns and connections between those districts and the heavily scrutinized Florida university. This interviewee stated that a significant decline and shift began to occur in the South Metro Atlanta schools, and the crippling effects are still prevalent in the present time.

All participants declared that the Covid-19 pandemic had significantly affected music programs, with some being more extensive than others. Most teachers have noted that many programs had unraveled before Covid due to the listed concerns within the current study. The awareness of each interview participant varied by location, instrument, and grade level. All respondents base the general reason for concern about music programs' success, maintenance, and survival on how administrators view and perceive them in their schools.

Funding Allocations

The second subtheme involved funding and allocation. The first primary research question and both hypotheses required exploration, discussion, and analysis, thus prompting the need for this question. The researcher orchestrated this question in the interviews and the surveys. According to most interview participants, most music programs received limited funding from their respective school districts and administration. Some participants reported that their music programs received no government funding for their music programs.

For instance, one band teacher stated multiple issues in their experience with receiving funding. This teacher said that the principal could apply what they decide to give for programs

within the Dekalb County and Atlanta Public School districts. The teacher discovered this information through discussions with a former principal. The districts allocated funding directly to ensemble teachers for their programs at one time. Unfortunately, that is no longer the case. According to this participant, there is a lack of awareness about who mandates funds for fine arts programs by many ensemble directors and fine arts teachers.

Additionally, the interview with this teacher discovered that principals and administration could and sometimes will utilize those funds for other means. With many teachers oblivious to government funding such as Title I and Title IV, this teacher suggested that teachers learn and understand what funds are available for their programs and utilize them as much as possible. The educator stated that the program might not receive a total amount in most instances, so he uses what is available. As stated by this educator, there is money for the band, but that does not imply that the orchestra and chorus will receive the same amount as they do not.

Being a departmental chair, this teacher resourced them and kept track of an entire comprehensive band program from top to bottom. However, it was not enough to cover all the costs despite getting a certain amount of funding allocated to them. In a low-income community, orchestras and choruses suffered because they received scraps from the community instead of the amount of the band. Furthermore, this teacher stated that ensemble directors could not allow students to purchase resources for themselves to participate, nor are they allowed to request them to do so because they would be taking away many students from the situation.

For example, this director explained the school and the band's drumline use. From the outside, the marching band was the largest ensemble in most situations in his area. Instrumental care such as mallets, drumsticks, snares, and other necessities take much funding to replace, thus

diluting a significant amount of funding. Further, the marching band mainly drives up the entire cost. In any event, this teacher reviews all of the funding options first.

This teacher did mention some highlights within the interview session. As reported in the interview by this teacher, whether it is solo ensemble groups, jazz groups, concert groups, or marching bands, it is evident that much of the funding required for maintaining a comprehensive music program is nonexistent. One important point noted is if principals, students, parents, and administrators have information on the importance of musical compositions to the program and curriculum, then teachers can use school supply funds or Title I funds from both the department and the principal. Those factors can make a huge difference.

Facilities

The third subtheme emerged from the interview questions of facilities, storage, rehearsal, and performance space. This question presented a mixed perception among the interview participants as some stated that they had adequate learning facilities, while others noted that the facilities were non-existent. In particular, General Music Teacher number five said that in his previous district, he was not even in the music room at that school. Furthermore, this teacher notes that the school set aside an office for the music teacher.

The educator continued by stating that the classroom was a general academic classroom located next door to the gymnasium, making the outside noisy during instructional time. According to the findings, this teacher used a vacant physical education teacher's office at his previous school building. He states that his last building and school did not have a stage or adequate space for successful and effective music instruction. However, his current location has an actual music room, and the acoustics are pleasant. Additionally, he described the new location

as a spacious rehearsal space with risers that he could pull out if necessary. He contends students can be moved to the cafeteria stage for extensive rehearsals during instructional time.

One of the interview participants stated that they were "jinxed" when upgrading music facilities. "They did nothing to upgrade the music facilities, which I felt was unfair." According to this teacher, administrators, system officials, and other affiliated personnel never considered facility plans and blueprints for fine arts and music spaces prior to the renovation of the school building. However, this teacher stated that the present facility is adequate compared to other buildings in her experience.

Conversely, Instrumental music teacher number four taught in a school building that was a former high school back in the sixties and seventies. As time went on, the district turned it into a middle school. This teacher's middle school, in particular, has adequate rehearsal space and practice space in addition to the high school building. The district also built another wing just for the connection classrooms approximately three years before his arrival, which was still relatively new. This school, in particular, had adequate space. However, this teacher has visited other schools which other middle schools may not have because they are built under the traditional middle school model.

All interview responses to the question of adequate learning facilities presented a dichotomy. Another teacher who has taught band, chorus, drama, and general music provided greater detail in his teaching experience. This teacher stated that facilities and classrooms are severely outdated, even in his current school. His former facility closed for a year of remodeling. Upon his service in Dekalb County School District as the elementary school music teacher and chorus director, he could only utilize an available classroom space with a small stage in the cafeteria.

Resources and Instructional Materials

This subtheme presented an interesting scope from the responses of the interview participants. One teacher stated that the system coordinator of Clayton County School District, placed as a former music educator in Dekalb County School District through experience, has ensured that Clayton County Schools are getting what they deserve. Specifically, music programs are acquiring access to the instruments they did not have because of his experience with a former music coordinator. The all-content teacher states that this person has been here and has been able to help educate some of our higher position officials in the school district regarding how music programs work and not just band. According to this interview participant, music programs are getting more educated about what it takes to establish a comprehensive program.

General Music Teacher Five compared his two schools in the Atlanta Public School District to Dekalb County Schools. Within the current school building, a few band instruments are inoperable and damaged beyond repair. This teacher desired to order recorders the previous year, but the administration did not approve due to Covid-19 safety concerns. This teacher stated evidence of an elementary band program in past years, but the music classes are now general music instruction.

The educator is considering a string program with guitars at his current location. According to this educator, this school has a storage closet of percussion instruments, including glockenspiels and acoustic guitars. This teacher uses instrument playing in the elementary classroom to incentivize good student behavior. However, the teacher stated that none of these resources were available at the previous district as there was no desire to learn, and the focus was on test scores, leaving the music classes to pull-outs or babysitting.

Furthermore, interview participant number eight had instances where there were adequate performance facilities, such as the stage and other areas. However, this teacher stated that she lacked supplies, such as stands. For example, in one district, this teacher lacked the designated area appropriate for teaching band students. Sometimes, she had to teach band students outside or find an area suitable for teaching. There were other times when this teacher had to share a space, which made the learning environment unsuitable.

This teacher stressed the issue of having to escort students to classes, set the entire band room up in the designated space, and take the students back to the designated area inside their classroom. This teacher also stated that much of the instructional material provided in Title I funding was for such resources as instructional magazines and periodicals but none of the significant necessities such as music stands, chairs, or instruments. The educator stresses the sacrifices of many music educators who purchase the reeds for woodwind instruments, the oils for brass, and the mallets and sticks for percussion instruments. The districts may or may not reimburse the teachers for expenditures.

Parent and Booster Organizations

Within each interview, parent and booster organizations varied for each participant. For example, orchestra teacher number one has a parent booster organization that supports the orchestra program. With the limitations of school district-level funding, the parents assist with expenses such as Large Group Performance Evaluation (LGPE) registration fees. The state music educators' association (GMEA) mandates LGPE and is integral to summative teacher evaluation in many districts. However, the district does not cover registration costs. Additionally, this educator has parents and boosters to assist financially with the other demands of the orchestra

program, such as uniforms, instrumental repair, performance trips, and many other items that district-level funding may not directly cover.

This teacher stated, "So honestly when the district money runs out, the booster organizations kind of step in and through our fundraising, and their assistance helps fill in the gaps. The nuts and bolts are extra that makes a quality program like clinicians when needed, and slightly better instruments than what the school system will provide." From this interview, this teacher had a decent amount of support from parent and booster organizations, which is another prop to many of the faltering sides of inner-city music programs.

In contrast, instrumental music teacher number two allowed parent participation in parent financial support but could not have a booster organization. The booster organization was dissolved approximately eight years ago and never returned at the principal's discretion. According to this educator, "of course, it is always dealing with parents that want to be chief of every single thing that they come across, and they want to have the responsibility placed upon them, and no one else and tries to run the band program." This teacher mentioned that directors must consider many things in incorporating parent booster organizations.

This teacher reiterated that the parent organization was cut due to funding issues and never returned. Furthermore, this teacher said similar actions were to occur with a few other schools in neighboring areas. These schools cut their music programs, which led to the parent organizations' dissolution because of similar issues. However, this teacher stated that the programs receive parental support when needed in the form of minor fundraising events such as car washes. The overarching result of this question proved that parent and booster organizations are at the discretion, preference, and sometimes the mercy of administrators, as many music teachers are not allowed full autonomy in music programs.

In contrast, music technology teacher number eight had mixed reviews and experience with parent and booster organizations. This teacher proclaimed that in her experience, it depended on the school. In some cases, this teacher had provisions for boosters and parent organizations, and sometimes there was no approval. This teacher affirms that parent and booster organizations depend on the school and the community. According to this teacher, "it depended on the school, and in many cases, it was lacking."

This teacher indicated in many cases a few faithful parents are committed to their child's musical education and experience. They worked diligently in fundraising and performance events. Unfortunately, this teacher declared that it will always be the same parents, leading to burnout. "It was always the same three or four people. Overall, even if there was a booster club, it was lacking in terms of support. Often there was an imbalance in who would do what, which can easily burn out because they are the same people." The over-arching issue of parent burnout can be prevalent in many inner-city and urban programs based on the accurate understanding of the value of education.

Administrative Support

The theme of administrative support emerged from the interview questions. Throughout the majority of each interview, most participants indicated administrative support. However, most have stated that administrators are more concerned with the overall operation of their school building, leaving the musical programs at the steps of the music teachers. Namely, music educator number six stated that the conditions of the school populations tied most administrators' hands in his experience within the Dekalb County School District. This educator stated that most administrators had responsibilities of maintaining order, eliminating chaos, and handling countless discipline issues.

Currently, this educator is teaching in a district with an excessive turnover rate of administrators, including principals and assistants. According to the interview participant, he developed a positive working relationship with administrators, only for them to leave the school a year or two later. "Look, this is that program, especially. I have been here for eight years, and I have grown my program, and you know anybody who has been here to see it would be like, wow. I have had four head principals and three assistants." This teacher understood changeover in leadership. However, the high turnovers contribute to the derailing of programs.

Inversely, interview participant seven had a positive administrative support system during his tenure. According to this teacher, he had supportive administrators with one exception. Principals looked to him for school outings and different events because the band, and students, were exceptionally well-behaved and displayed outstanding musicianship. This band director stated that one of his principals was a musician, and he supported the arts. "He would play the piano, and I would play my instrument sometimes."

Participant seven stated that most of his administrators supported the arts. "Some of them, you can tell what principals have music appreciation, and what principals with their driven supports driven in other areas whether it be fraternal or sorority affiliation, and sometimes they are knowledgeable on what it takes to build a music program." Administrators with musical backgrounds benefit the music programs because they understand the workload of sustenance, excellence, and accountability.

Instrumental music teacher number two reflected on his administration and believed that the verbiage was there, but the actions were not. "When we talk about administration, you can talk with the game, but if you do not cover what you are talking about, I do not feel you are fully supportive of the program. Being the person I am, I expect your word to be your bond, but it

does not always happen with administration." Furthermore, this teacher also believed that the administration had other things on its agenda, and the music and fine arts programs took a back seat on many occasions. Administrative support for music programs should be as thorough for fine arts programs as for traditional academic disciplines and athletics. Students benefit when principals fully support music programs because those programs assist in educating the entire child.

Scheduling

The scheduling theme presented the most issues among all interview participants. These issues ranged from the 4X4 block scheduling format to the alternate day or A day B day schedules. Particularly, instrumental music teacher four mentioned that there had been many instances of the story of all band directors in his district. In particular, the biggest issue was scheduling kids who want to participate in the program. Additionally, many teachers had difficulty scheduling students into the classes because administrators pull them in different directions where the school sees fit.

This educator proclaimed that not only in his building but many schools in his district had music programs that are not high on the priority list. Further, guidance counselors and instructional administrators placed numerous students in courses related to flagship programs such as STEM, honors courses, and advanced placement. According to this teacher, these courses are what most administrators and guidance counselors suggested for student preference. The educator contended that getting interested students signed up for the class is challenging and even more complicated than having them year-round.

During his tenure, the all-content participant also voiced his concerns about scheduling within all music programs. "I think scheduling is probably one of the biggest challenges. Music

programs, not just band, but the orchestra and even chorus." The educator had been in situations he would have students in the fall semester for marching band only to lose them after the Christmas break with a different group of students. Many of these students had no prior musical participation experience.

This teacher referred to scheduling practices as a double-edged sword because many new enrollees may be interested in ensemble participation, while others may be there for full-time enrollment numbers and to fill the class. He contended that the program lost many interested students because of non-placement in the appropriate ensemble courses. The director took several alternative approaches to his scheduling dilemma. "Keep them interested in whatever that causes because kids are kids, and you must understand that. If that kid is with you, they will buy into everything you do. If you take that kid away, there is that fifty-fifty chance that some of them may stay." This issue is prevalent within many programs within the target districts.

Interview participant number three believed some issues improved with his extended time at that school. However, the current school operates on block scheduling which places the director with three classes daily and a planning period. The teacher states that kids have limited flexibility to take music courses instead of a seven-period schedule. This educator used extra remedial academic opportunities such as study hall at the beginning of after-school rehearsals to keep as many familiar students in the music program as possible.

According to interview participant number six, the private school and Dekalb County were very similar. He saw each grade level for fifty minutes daily on a daily rotation at the Middle and High School level. Unfortunately, this teacher is now also on block scheduling and is working with guidance counseling for his students. The educator reiterated that high

administrative turnover creates variations in scheduling, which is detrimental to student

enrollment.

Fortunately, this teacher has combatted some issues by substituting marching band

participation for a physical education course credit. The adverse issue for this educator is that

most top-performing students took advanced placement courses, which do not have much

flexibility with the ensemble courses. As mentioned with the earlier participants, this educator is

in a similar situation to the ninety-minute block where there are only four daily classes.

However, with most of his students, two of the four courses are advanced placement in addition

to the state-mandated Carnegie core units required for student graduation.

According to this teacher, the block scheduling component did not allow much flexibility

for extra electives. Pathway programs attracted the best and brightest students, many of whom

were music students. "They wanted to take those AP classes that they qualify for. I could see the

benefit if I were a general educator and maybe taught math or something. Okay, I have an hour

and a half to this complicated algebra lesson, and the kids have extra time to do the classwork."

This teacher's issues appeared to surface from the importance of student participation in the

advanced academic courses, leaving music courses as a second to last resort.

This teacher also worked diligently to alleviate scheduling issues to benefit the music

programs. He is currently working on creating a rotating schedule of just the electives. The

barriers still are prevalent as the requirements of courses of study and pathways demand students

to choose. For example, the educator said that the administration canceled a guitar class last year.

"It is a pain to try to figure out. There is so much we can do at the end of the school day after

school." Despite many obstacles, this director created scheduling solutions such as a split block

within the elective courses of forty-five-minute increments. The interview suggested that many

teachers have found creative ways to combat scheduling issues that will be advantageous for their ensembles.

Chapter Summary

This chapter investigated the challenges many music educators have in teaching music in South Metro Atlanta. Through thirty-minute interviews, the results varied among teachers, who indicated that they had proper facilities, support, scheduling, and funding, while others indicated a contrast within the variables. Additionally, the teachers within the entire study represented diverse backgrounds and an assortment of schools, communities, and school districts throughout South Metro Atlanta. However, the results indicated that further attention is duly essential to all music and arts programs within the selected school districts and is also worthy of further study, research, and analysis. The following chapter provides a conclusion, the limitations of this study, and opportunities for future research.

Chapter Five: Conclusion

Restatement of the Research Questions

This study examined the impact of educational and non-educational factors that challenge music teachers in South Metro Atlanta. This study aimed to provide personal and professional perspectives from music teachers of all grade levels that may often have been overlooked or not observed. Additionally, this research explored the challenges K-12 music teachers face in South Metro Atlanta and the unique challenges faced by multiple music teachers selected for this study. The following research questions guided this study:

Research Question One: What challenges are prevalent in teaching music in elementary, middle, and high schools in South Metro Atlanta?

Research Question Two: What more is needed for teachers to succeed in elementary, middle, and high school music courses in South Metro Atlanta with limited resources or support?

Restatement of the Hypotheses

The researcher used the following hypotheses in this study:

Hypothesis One: There are many challenges that South Metro Atlanta music teachers face yearly to ensure that their programs are accepted, respected, and thrive in an ever-changing field of education. These challenges may include socioeconomic status, funding deficiency, increased poverty, cultural diversity, and implementing changes in curriculum design and instruction to meet the goals and needs of all students.

Hypothesis Two: Music teachers in South Metro Atlanta may have difficulty having successful programs with limited to no resources, support, high-stakes testing, scheduling, and many other factors. Music teachers in South Metro Atlanta may use

methods such as community outreach, lessons from alums and the community, community instrument donations, collaborative parenting, and performance opportunities for exposure.

Summary of Results

This qualitative research study aimed to identify viewpoints that have not yet been explored and documented concerning outlining factors' effect on public school music programs in South Metro Atlanta. The researcher designed a survey to collect feedback and perspectives from music teachers in districts without music administrators. Follow-up interviews included teachers' perspectives on the state of these programs. The research's findings support the initial hypothesis that teachers may face challenges in school districts in South Metro Atlanta.

The survey included questions concerning status, facilities, support, scheduling, booster organizations, and enrollment. Additionally, all teachers in this study indicated their years of experience and current location. The results presented a dichotomy for the current study. The survey states that most teachers indicated that poor, outdated, or no facilities present contributed to one of the challenges of teaching music in South Metro Atlanta Public Schools.

Secondly, the primary factor that survey and interview participants indicated involved the scheduling of students. A significant issue indicated by many participants involved the issues of block scheduling. Many participants stated that block scheduling allows them to adjust instruction because they do not see all music students daily. Some educators have even taken additional roles in instruction, including developing the master schedule, countless lessons before and after school, and even on weekends. However, the interviews note that these

educators are committed to going beyond their means to ensure that all students receive a quality music education.

Another outlining factor involved the funding of music programs in this study. Vibrant and successful music programs are very costly, and the maintenance of such may present even more than general classroom instruction. Most of the teachers who participated in this study stated that music programs in South Metro Atlanta do not receive Title I or Title IV funding from their school districts, as administrators redirect those funds to other academic areas of instruction. However, one music educator indicated in the interview that his knowledge of Title I and Title IV funding allocations is advantageous and essential for all music teachers because they may miss the funding that the districts, county, state, and federal governments designate for music and arts programs.

In South Metro Atlanta, no individual is responsible for the communities' school location, socioeconomic status, demographics, or current educational ability. However, individuals are responsible for the quality of music education that they offer to all students. This study's previous statements concern parental, community, and administrative support for all participating music educators. While some in the survey indicated the presence and support of parent or booster organizations and administrative support, the interviews indicated otherwise. As one teacher stated, the verbiage seems suitable but not backed by actions. Through the author's experience, this is a significant area of concern and is worthy and noted for future research. This research aims to continue from an advocate standpoint for the survival of music programs and the continuation of music in every American school. Continued searches for programs that have had success with similar issues should continue.

Limitations

The limitations of this study were inescapable. Many research studies may indicate limitations. This study sought to examine the state of public school music programs in South Metro Atlanta before the Covid-19 Pandemic. However, similar issues may occur in major cities and rural school districts across the United States regardless of location, socioeconomic status, or census and popular opinion. Due to the expectations of all educators to return operating procedures to normal following a significant pandemic, the author continued reminders and allowed space for time constraints throughout the research process. This research aims to continue in other school districts and municipalities to create a quality, fair, and equitable music education for all students.

Implications for Future Practice

While the results of this study are limited to one specific research area, educators and practitioners can apply the implications to all areas of arts, physical, and vocational education. Through proper research methods, including qualitative and quantitative, seminars, presentations, and other educational tutorials, this research may presuppose a slight improvement in the conundrum of American public education. Moreover, the study's conclusions will assist music teachers by highlighting the need for a music program that will offer opportunities for professional growth.

All music teachers in South Metro Atlanta must continue researching, asking questions, and seeking advice from the correct personnel regarding government funding and the purposes of the uses within music programs. There could be a case where funds could be available, and due to a lack of knowledge or understanding on the educator's behalf, the administration may utilize those for other interests, preferences, or priorities. Furthermore, districts may discontinue those

funds altogether. No teacher in highly concentrated areas involving a lower socioeconomic community should expect all students and parents to provide the much-needed financial support or continue to seek outsourcing of funds for the advancement and sustainability of their music programs. Every avenue of information is crucially vital.

Understanding the community before accepting specific music openings in South Metro Atlanta is crucial to pre-service, novice, and veteran music educators. Disconnections between the community and the music programs can prove detrimental to music programs within the specified school districts within this study. The more successful music programs in South Metro Atlanta and surrounding communities have vast community support, which the selected teachers indicated through the interviews and the researcher's literature review.

As stated earlier, culture is integral to any community in South Metro Atlanta schools. Understanding the culture of the students will prove paramount to the success of music programs in South Metro Atlanta. How students learn, behave, and respond to directives and guidelines may also be rooted in the cultural background of students. Musical selections and genres of music are not exempt. A teacher who can utilize students' learning, cultural, and musical preferences in those communities may benefit the students, teachers, schools, and programs at pivotal points in the future.

Scheduling should not be a "bait and switch" for music educators in South Metro Atlanta. However, there must be a collaborative effort between the music educator and the instructional personnel to ensure that the right students are in the correct musical classes for all involved. Music educators may require additional effort to assist guidance counselors and assistant instruction administrators with designing the master schedule for the entire school building. It is not uncommon for most schools in South Metro Atlanta to operate fully on the master schedule,

allowing for minimal adjustments or changes aside from standardized testing, early release dates, or athletic spirit events. The goal should be to ensure that music courses are first to prevent any possible "dumping ground" class scenario.

In many cases, attrition and enrollment challenges are inevitable in some communities, schools, and South Metro Atlanta. Due to the massive size and population of Atlanta and the surrounding counties that comprise the city, population shifts are evident and apparent yearly. However, the awareness of music teachers will prove highly beneficial so that they can implement solutions to alleviate those issues. Solving these issues through proper scheduling, cultural and community awareness, and a positive and supportive working relationship with the administration is possible.

Lastly, the research and the author highly recommend suggestions for workshops and professional development courses in specified areas. Many teachers who regularly participate in workshops, conferences, and masterclasses will have the opportunity to advance their careers and craft. Professional growth is a significant opportunity that gives music educators time to network inside and outside their districts, work with and educate their communities, and learn from them—additionally, getting to know the communities that music educators serve is essential.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study of how South Metro Atlanta music programs work, their backgrounds, and their status are crucially imperative to advocating for improving music education for all students. Understanding the socioeconomic status and music education programs in high-poverty areas, cultural diversity, and implementing curriculum design and instruction to meet the goals and needs of all students is essential. There must be further research and analysis to create a greater understanding and need for improvement.

Additionally, the interview participants indicated confidence in addressing poverty and inequality in music education by realizing cultural, personal, and social variances of people that may have them subjected to impoverished conditions in various forms. Research shows that the music education field is much denser than the music, the product, and the application. One must understand that successful ensembles and students extend beyond the classroom, and with proper research, study, and careful consideration of all factors, it can be successful.

In previous years of teaching, there have been numerous occasions where there was a need to restructure and rebuild music programs at schools plagued with a lack of resources, low test scores, little to no community support, deteriorating facilities, and a lack of instructional materials for proper instruction. In the attempt to deliver successful music education instruction despite the obstacles, there is no certainty of what types of students, schools, and learning environments where the author and many others may be teaching, but they will need to offer the following answers based on previous research.

Research shows that every child can and will learn if educators present content conducive to student learning regardless of learning environments, quality of schools, and student backgrounds. A safe balance of utilizing popular music and music for study can be a way to make musical connections with the students while continuing to generate interest—student interest is also a critical factor in the sustainability and survival of any instrumental program.

Meeting the standard will always be a crucial emphasis. However, student progress is also essential. It may not seem as noticeable at first, but continuing to make the goals of making the student better than they were not yesterday but five minutes ago, regardless of the festival ratings or any standardized test score, may prove victorious. In the author's pragmatic approach toward music education, he would like to believe that providing more experiences or

experiments is necessary. This process could involve more collection developments to discover what is effective. With these core principles in mind, further research of these educational concepts is vitally necessary, integral, suggested, and most importantly - beneficial.

Lastly, this research is not a means to an end. However, it exposed, informed, and educated the masses on the issues with music education programs in public schools, the need for support, and the benefit of a quality music education program. When every facet is supportive, interested, and concerned, all students will matter and benefit regardless of participation. The notes and improvement of these critical issues in South Metro Atlanta and many other school districts are imperative for success and, most importantly, survival.

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Appendix A: Liberty University IRB Approval

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY.
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

July 22, 2022

Davion Battle
Jerry Newman

Re: IRB Exemption - IRB-FY21-22-1016 Success vs. Survival: The Challenges of Teaching K-12 School Music in South Metro Atlanta

Dear Davion Battle, Jerry Newman,

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB) has reviewed your application in accordance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and finds your study to be exempt from further IRB review. This decision means you may begin your research with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your approved application, and no further IRB oversight is required.

Your study falls under the following exemption category, which identifies specific situations in which human participants research is exempt from the policy outlined in 45 CFR 46:104(d):

Category 2. (iii). Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording) if at least one of the following criteria is met: The investigator records the information obtained in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects can readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects, and an IRB conducts a limited IRB review to make the determination required by §46.111(a)(7).

Your stamped consent form(s) and final versions of your study documents can be found under the Attachments tab within the Submission Details section of your study on Cayuse IRB. Your stamped consent form(s) should be copied and used to gain the consent of your research participants. If you plan to provide your consent information electronically, the contents of the attached consent document(s) should be made available without alteration.

Please note that this exemption only applies to your current research application, and any modifications to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty University IRB for verification of

continued exemption status. You may report these changes by completing a modification submission through your Cayuse IRB account.

If you have any questions about this exemption or need assistance determining whether possible modifications to your protocol would change your exemption status, please email us at irb@liberty.edu.

Sincerely,

G. Michele Baker, MA, CIP
Administrative Chair of Institutional Research
Research Ethics Office

Appendix B: Research Participant Consent Form

Title of the Project: Success vs. Survival: The Challenges of Teaching K-12 School Music in South Metro Atlanta

Principal Investigator: Davion Rashad Battle, Doctoral Student, Liberty University

Invitation to be Part of a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study. Taking part in this research project is voluntary. To participate, you must be a current or former K-12 grade music teacher in a South Metro Atlanta public school. The school must be located within three districts: Atlanta Public Schools, Clayton County Schools, and Dekalb County Schools.

Please read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to participate in this research.

What is the study about, and why is it being done?

The study aims to identify teacher perspectives by exploring and documenting instrumental music programs specific to schools in South Metro Atlanta. The study includes research in the form of surveys and recorded interviews. Finally, the study examines the challenges of teaching instrumental music education in low-income communities in South Metro Atlanta.

What will happen if you take part in this study?

If you agree to be in this study, the researcher will ask you to do the following:

1. Complete an online survey. The survey should take approximately 5-10 minutes.
2. Participants may be selected to participate in an interview via Zoom, Microsoft Teams, or Google Hangouts. The discussion should take approximately 30-45 minutes. Interviews will be audio and video recorded and transcribed. Interview participants will have the opportunity to review their interview transcripts for accuracy, reliability, and validity.

How could you or others benefit from this study?

Participants should not expect a direct benefit from participating in this study.

Benefits to society include increased public knowledge of music education in low-income urban areas. Additionally, this study could create opportunities for future research.

What risks might you experience from being in this study?

The risks involved in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.

How will personal information be protected?

The records of this study will be kept private. Published reports will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher and faculty committee will have access to the data. The researcher may share data collected from you for use in future research studies. If data collected from you is shared, any Information that could identify you will be removed before the data is shared.

Please Note:

- Participant responses will be kept confidential through the use of codes. The researcher will conduct the discussion in a location where others will not easily overhear selected interview participants' conversations.
- The researcher will store data on a password-locked computer which the researcher, in future presentations, may use. After three years, the researcher will delete all electronic records.
- The researcher will transcribe and record all interviews. Only the researcher will have access to these recordings. Recordings will be stored on a password-locked computer for three years and then erased.

How will you be compensated for being part of the study?

There will be no compensation for participation in this study.

Is study participation voluntary?

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University or your school district. If you decide to participate, you are free not to answer any questions or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

What should you do if you decide to withdraw from the study?

If you choose to withdraw from the study, please contact the researcher at the email address or phone number in the next paragraph. Should you decide to cancel, data collected from you will be destroyed immediately and will not be included in this study.

Whom do you contact if you have questions or concerns about the study?

The researcher conducting this study is Davion R. Battle. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact him at [PHONE NUMBER REMOVED], [EMAIL ADDRESS REMOVED], or [EMAIL ADDRESS REMOVED]. You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor, Dr. Jerry Newman, at [EMAIL ADDRESS REMOVED]

Whom do you contact if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at irb@liberty.edu.

Disclaimer: The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is tasked with ensuring that human subjects research will be conducted in an ethical manner as defined and required by federal regulations. The topics covered and viewpoints expressed or alluded to by student and faculty researchers are those of the researchers and do not necessarily reflect the official policies or positions of Liberty University.

Your Consent

By signing this document, you agree to be in this study. Make sure you understand what the study is about before you sign. You will be given a copy of this document for your records. The researcher will keep a copy of the study records. If you have any questions about the study after you sign this document, you can contact the study team using the information provided above.

I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

☐ The researcher has my permission to audio-record and video-record me as part of my participation in this study.

_____

Printed Subject Name

_____

Signature & Date

Appendix C: Recruitment Email

IRB Recruitment: Email

Dear Music Educator:

As a graduate student in the School of Music at Liberty University, I am researching as part of the Doctor of Music Education degree requirements. My study aims to identify teacher perspectives and challenges by exploring and documenting music programs specific to schools in South Metro Atlanta. I am writing to invite eligible participants to join my study.

Participants must be a current or former K-12 grade music teacher in a South Metro Atlanta public school. The school must be located within three districts: Atlanta Public Schools, Clayton County Schools, and Dekalb County Schools.

Participants, if willing, will be asked to complete an online survey. The survey should take approximately 5-10 minutes. Participants who complete the survey may be selected for an interview. Interview participants will be asked to participate in an interview via Zoom, Microsoft Teams, or Google Hangouts. The discussion should take about 30-45 minutes. Interviews will be audio and video recorded and transcribed. All interview participants will be able to review their transcripts for reliability and validity. Names and other identifying information will be requested for this study, but the information will remain confidential.

To participate, please click here [HYPERLINK REMOVED] to complete the survey. After you complete the survey, I may contact you to schedule an interview.

A consent document is the first page you will see after clicking on the survey link. The consent document contains additional information about my research. If you choose to participate, you must sign the consent document electronically and proceed to the survey.

Please contact me at [PHONE NUMBER REMOVED] or [EMAIL ADDRESS REMOVED] for more information or if you have questions.

Sincerely,

Davion Battle
Doctoral Student, Liberty University
[PHONE NUMBER REMOVED]
[EMAIL ADDRESS REMOVED]

Appendix D: Follow-Up Email

IRB Recruitment: Follow-Up Email

Dear Music Educator:

As a graduate student in the School of Music at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the Doctor of Music Education degree requirements. Last week, you were sent an email inviting you to participate in a research study. This follow-up email is being sent to remind you to complete the survey if you would like to participate and have not already done so. The deadline for participation is (will be added at a later date).

Participants, if willing, will be asked to complete an online survey. The survey should take approximately 5-10 minutes. Participants who complete the survey may be selected for an interview. Interview participants will be asked to participate in an interview via Zoom, Microsoft Teams, or Google Hangouts. The discussion should take about 30-45 minutes. Interviews will be audio and video recorded and transcribed. All interview participants will have the opportunity to review their transcripts for reliability and validity. Names and other identifying information will be requested for this study, but the information will remain confidential.

To participate, please click here [HYPERLINK REMOVED] to complete the survey. After you complete the survey, I may contact you to schedule an interview.

A consent document is the first page you will see after clicking on the survey link. The consent document contains additional information about my research. If you choose to participate, you must sign the consent document electronically and proceed to the survey.

Please contact me at [PHONE NUMBER REMOVED] or [EMAIL ADDRESS REMOVED] for more information or if you have questions.

Sincerely,

Davion Battle
Doctoral Student, Liberty University
[PHONE NUMBER REMOVED]
[EMAIL ADDRESS REMOVED]

Appendix E: Social Media Recruitment

IRB Recruitment: Social Media (Facebook Messenger)

Attention Music Educator: I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a Doctor of Music Education Degree at Liberty University. My research aims to identify teacher perspectives in exploring and documenting instrumental music programs specific to schools in South Metro Atlanta. The study includes analysis in the form of surveys and recorded interviews. To participate, you must be a current or former K-12 grade music teacher in a South Metro Atlanta public school. The school must be located within one of the three selected districts: Atlanta Public Schools, Clayton County Schools, and Dekalb County Schools.

All participants will be asked to complete an online survey. The survey should take approximately 5-10 minutes. Participants who complete the survey may be selected for an interview. Interview participants will be asked to participate in an interview via Zoom, Microsoft Teams, or Google Hangouts. The discussion should take about 30-45 minutes. Interviews will be audio and video recorded and transcribed. Interview participants will have the opportunity to review their interview transcripts for accuracy, reliability, and validity. A consent document will be provided as the first page of the survey. Please review this page, and if you agree to participate, you're your name and the date and click the "Next" button at the end.

If you would like to participate and meet the study criteria, please click here to access the survey. [HYPERLINK REMOVED]

Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Appendix F: Final Survey Questions

Success vs. Survival: The Challenges of Teaching K-12 School Music in South Metro Atlanta

Please complete the following survey with specific regard to each inquiry by placing an X in the appropriate box.

Screening: Are You a current or former K-12 music educator in Atlanta Public School District, Clayton County School District, or Dekalb County School District?	Yes	No	Retired
	☐	☐	☐

I. Qualifications	K-5 Band/Gen. Music	6-8 Band/Gen. Music	9-12 Band/Gen. Music	District Coordinator
Please indicate your current grade level.	☐	☐	☐	☐

II. Location	Atlanta Public Schools	Clayton County Schools	Dekalb County Schools
Please indicate your current school or district location.	☐	☐	☐

III. Years of Experience	1 – 5 Years	6 – 10 years	7 – 15 Years	18 – 25 Years	25 Years - Retired
Please indicate your experience level (years of experience).	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

IV. Do you currently teach in a school that receives Title I or Title IV Funding?	Yes	No
	☐	☐

V. Demographics	Mostly White/Caucasian	Mostly Black or African American	Mostly Hispanic or Latino	Mostly Asian	Other Races/Ethnicities (i.e., Native Americans)
Please indicate the approximate demographics of the student population within your school building.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

VI. Do most, if any of the students receive free or reduced lunch in your school building?	Yes	No
	☐	☐

Facilities, Funding, Scheduling and Support	Adequate	Needs Improvement	Inadequate	Non-Existent	Uncertain/Not Applicable
1. How would you rate the facilities (classroom and performance space, rooms, and storage) provided for your instrumental music program?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. How would you rate the scheduling for students within your instrumental music program?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. How would you rate the external funding allocations (district, Title I, Title IV) sources for your instrumental music program?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. How would you rate the administrative support for your instrumental music program?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. How would you rate the parent and community support for your instrumental music program?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Please indicate any other comments including suggestions below:

Please provide your name:

Please provide your work email address:

Appendix G: Final Study Interview Questions

Success vs. Survival: The Challenges of Teaching K-12 School Music in South Metro Atlanta

Interview Questions

1. What grade level(s) do you currently teach music?

2. How many years of experience do you have teaching music?

3. What school district are you currently serving?

4. Have you served in any other school districts?

5. What was your view on the state of music programs in south metro Atlanta prior to the pandemic?

    a. Could you elaborate, please?

    b. Did you notice any decline in south metro Atlanta music programs prior to the Covid-19 Pandemic?

6. Regarding funding, does your program receive any other allocations from the district, Title I, or Title IV funds to assist with the financial needs to operate your music program?

    a. Could you elaborate more?

    b. Why not?

7. Do you have adequate learning facilities for classes, practices, rehearsals, and performances in your school building?

    a. Why not?

8. Do you have adequate functioning and sufficient materials such as instruments and resources to educate your music program properly?

    a. Could you elaborate more?

    b. What other alternatives do you use if there is a shortage?

9. Are you allowed to have a parent or booster organization support and assist your instrumental music program financially?

    a. If so, how is parental involvement and support?

      b.   Why not?

10. Do you have generous support from your principal and administrative team for your music program?

      a.   How do you perceive your principal's overall interest and support for your instrumental music program?

      b.   Is a collaborative effort between you and your principal to support your instrumental music program?

11. How does the scheduling work for your music program?

      a.   Is the scheduling method effective in maintaining and acquiring student participation?

      b.   Does the guidance department collaborate with you to equip your instrumental music program's most efficient scheduling method?

      c.   What other methods or approaches do you take to rectify scheduling issues for needed instructional and rehearsal time?

12. What suggestions for improvement would you like to offer to the earlier questions and concerns?

Appendix H: Doctoral Thesis Proposal Decision

The thesis advisor has rendered the following decision

concerning the proposal status for Davion Rashad Battle on

the research topic title of,

Success vs. Survival: The Challenges of Teaching K-12 Instrumental Music in South

Metro Atlanta

as submitted on Friday, October 28, 2022:

1. ____X____ **Full Approval** to proceed with no proposal revisions. The student may fully engage the research and writing process according to the established the timeline. Upon full approval, the student may apply for IRB approval, if applicable (see STEP 4 concerning IRB approval process).

2. _____ **Provisional Approval** to proceed with proposal pending cited revisions. (This is the most common decision). The student must resubmit the

   proposal with cited revisions according to the established timeline. The Advisor will

   indicate the committee's status on your response to the required revisions. The

   student may NOT apply for IRB approval until full approval is granted.

3. _____ **Redirection of Proposal**. The student is being redirected to develop a new proposal, as minor revisions will not meet the expectations for the research project. The student may NOT apply for IRB approval.

Jerry L. Newman	**Karen M. Kuehmann**
Print Name of Advisor	**Print Name of Reader**
REMOVED	REMOVED
Signature	**Signature**
9/20/2022	**9/20/2022**
Date	**Date**

Appendix I: Interview Transcripts

Participant One

Researcher: Okay. Good afternoon. Good evening. We have the orchestra director, number one.

Participant One: All right.

Researcher: First, do you agree to have this transcribed for anonymity?

Participant One: I agree.

Researcher: Okay, well, let us go ahead and get started.

Participant One: Okay.

Researcher: Okay, this will probably take about thirty minutes of your time, and we will go ahead and start with the questions, What is your current grade level in instrumental music?

Participant One: I teach ninth through the twelfth-grade orchestra.

Researcher: Were there any other former grade levels before you taught ninth through twelfth?

Participant One: I also have experience with the sixth through the eighth-grade orchestra.

Researcher: Okay. Well, let us continue. Thank you for those answers.

Researcher: Where did you receive your undergraduate study?

Participant One: My bachelor's is from Georgia State University.

Researcher: Any graduate work?

Participant One: My master's is from UGA (University of Georgia), and my Ph.D. is in progress at Georgia State University.

Researcher: Congratulations! Thank you so much for those answers.

Researcher: What school district are you currently teaching?

Participant One: Atlanta Public Schools.

Researcher: Okay, and have you served in any other school districts?

Participant One: Yes, I taught for seven years in Clayton County and then one year in Fayette County.

Researcher: Okay, all right. Let us get down to the following questions, programming questions. What is your view on the state of instrumental music programs in the South Metro Atlanta area? We are studying programs prior to the pandemic. We know the pandemic has done many different things per se, but before the pandemic, what is your view of the state of instrumental music or just music programs in general?

Participant One: Okay, I feel like that is a vast question. In South Metro or Atlanta? Any specifics, any direction that you want to go?

Researcher: Oh, yes, I will elaborate. Well, we are considering funding, which is a miss. So, you know, music, education, especially on this south side of town, and by that, I guess you mean like the south of I-20, considering the Metro Area?

Participant One: I feel like we do have to work harder to get results in terms of product, in terms of, you know, kids joining the program, and also in terms of just quality instruction and community support. It is a very multifaceted issue that you know we can talk about forever, but I am sure we can talk about it, and it is kind of like, which part do you start? Do you start with quality instruction or quality teachers in these programs to help, you know, grow programs to help build community support?

Furthermore, I think this issue speaks to the orchestra more than you know the band. There is a shortage of string specialists in orchestra programs. So, I would have to say it would start with orchestra, at least. It would have to start with quality instructors who know what they are doing and how to build community support around string instruments. Moreover, as I said, on the south side of town, where you know string instruments are not as popular as band instruments. It is work. It is very daunting work.

Researcher: Thank you so much for those responses. I have in, in my experience, taught orchestra as a band teacher, which is a very daunting experience. So, thank you for those answers because we do not have many orchestra teachers on the south side. That is just the gist of the situation. Okay, thank you for those answers. Does your program receive other allocations from the school district, like Title I funds?

Participant One: So, the school that I teach at just lost our Title I status about, I would say, two to three years ago. The neighborhood where the school is located is going through a gentrification process. So that is the reason for us losing the Title I funds. When we got the funds, I have to say those funds were typically reserved for the core classes. Music classes rarely got Title I funds.

As far as other district funds, we do get per-pupil funds. That is an allocation based on student enrollment that we split between all of the arts departments and our respective school. Then, as far as district funds, the fine arts department gets a budget that the fine arts coordinator allocates to assist with the financial needs of your instrumental music program.

Researcher: Okay, I understand this, Title I can work for you, or it can be a complete nightmare, especially when competing with core classes.
Participant One: Right.

Researcher: So, thank you for that response. All right. I am moving on to the next question. Do you have adequate learning facilities for classes, practices, rehearsals, and performances within your school?

Participant One: Yes, I will say, however. Nevertheless, my school recently went through a renovation, and the music department got I know this is not a politically correct. We got jipped, for lack of a better word. They did nothing to upgrade the music facilities, which I felt was unfair. However, compared to other school systems and where I previously taught, I do say I have adequate facilities.

Researcher: But for the sake of time, we will continue going forward because we have done that.

Participant One: Correct.

Researcher: Okay, all right. Do you have adequate functioning and sufficient material, such as instruments and resources, to properly educate your students within your music program?

Participant One: Yes, I do feel like I have adequate resources.

Researcher: All right. That is a significant step. Thank you so much for that. Next question: Are you allowed to have a parent or booster organization to support your music program financially? Could you elaborate just a little bit on that? Tell me about the parental support and about what they do.

Participant One: Yes, and I do have one. So, I have a parent booster organization supporting the orchestra program. Because, like I said before, while we get district-level funding, it is limited, and they help with things like LGPE fees. As you know, LGPE is mandated by the district. We have to go to LGPE, but it is not paid for by the school system, which is another topic for another day. So, they know with these like that they help with the fundraising, and they generally just help make things like repairs. They help with fundraising on trips. They help with uniforms when the kids need extra assistance. So honestly, when the district money runs out, the booster organizations step in through our fundraising, and their assistance helps fill in the gaps.

Researcher: Okay, this issue is a two-fold process with the funding?

Participant One: Right, yeah, like the nuts and bolts, like the extra that makes a quality program. Like I said, your clinicians when you want to bring in clinicians or when you want to get slightly better instruments than what the school system will provide, yes. In general instruction, but for it to sustain your program, you are functioning a lot off of fundraising from your booster organization.

Researcher: Understood. As music programs, we all understand that as music educators, none of it is a cheap process if we are going to be in it. So, thank you for that. Moving on, do you have generous support from your principal and administrative team for your music program?

Participant One: I would say admin administration is generally supportive. I do not know if I am allowed to say it, but in the district I work in, principals have much autonomy in managing their budgets. Principals have autonomy. So, I am lucky to have a supportive administration. Once again, that would be an intermediate step as far as district funds.

There is the school-level money which I will say: I am conscientious, and when I ask my admins for money because, as I said, I know the big picture thinking like an administrator, it is not just the music program that that money has to pull. It is from all the other electives that will have to pull. Athletics, to a certain extent, you have to pull from that. However, I know that when I ask my administration, they will be generally supportive and try to help me get what I need.

Researcher: Okay, thank you so much for that response. You are right. It seems like you are in a pretty decent situation, which you know requires a small amount of loosening and tightening in areas, but that is some excellent news in our part of this study. Thank you for that response. Let us move on to the next question. How does the scheduling work for your instrumental music program?

Participant One: Okay, so there are four levels of the orchestra at my school; Beginning, intermediate mastery, and beginning-intermediate as mastery level. According to the Georgia Department of Education, music sequence generally all of the ninth graders from my feeder, the incoming ninth graders from my feeder program get into the intermediate class, and then from there, as they progress through the program they can progress through the intermediate class and then the mastery class. That is something that I am particularly proud of at the high school level is my beginning class. So, I have a beginning-level class, which I like to call the start-from-scratch class.

Researcher: I know that is not common at the high school level. Your music program generally has a beginning-level instrumental class or orchestra. Okay, well, that is great to have four classes because experience, all the levels were thrown in one group. So, you can imagine some orchestra, band, and choral directors deal with, you know, teaching level of mastery in one setting. Thank you for those responses. That is very good for the study. All right, last but not least, what are your suggestions for improvement? Would you like to offer to the questions mentioned earlier and your concerns?

Participant One: So, are we talking about concerns specifically for your study and how you are researching a little bit if you can elaborate on that question?

Researcher: Well, it is part of the research. We are trying to present solutions to some that may be dealing with these issues regarding funding, scheduling, enrollment attrition, and things that happen in these southern area schools in Atlanta, Georgia, and not just one district in general, but multiple districts.

Participant One: Overall, that it? Yeah, I would say you have to be very vocal, and I get that it is walking a fine line, especially for my novice teachers fresh out of college. You know, walking a fine line between being vocal and not getting on your admins' nerves for lack of better work. However, you have to make sure that those baseline expectations are there, and you have to

present it in a way that if you do not have this, then your students suffer, and I do not know any administration who is going to they are going to say no.

For example, I am mentoring a new teacher in the district, and she is doing fantastic and recruiting for the band program or whatnot. She is literally about to outgrow her classroom space. So, she came to me, and she was like, "well, how do I approach that in a way that the admin will understand and do something?" You present it in a way that puts the students at a disadvantage. You present it in a way where the parents, for lack of a better word, will not stand for that. So, in the case of the classroom situation, you present that as a fire code issue, and that is how you get results. Furthermore, you are just advocating for your program in any way possible.

At the same time, you must ensure your program is seen if you are asking for all of this. Do not be afraid. So yes, when they ask for a performance here, do not be afraid to be seen within your school outside of your music building.

Researcher: I could just say being very vocal and asking for the things you need. Thank you so much for your response. Being vocal is critical, especially in these programs, because no one knows or sees. You cannot keep performing in the band, orchestra, and chorus rooms and say, okay, we sound outstanding. No one else has seen that. So, thank you so much for your responses.

This has been an incredible interview experience, and I wish you the best of luck completing your Ph.D. I will be rooting for you as well. Yes, we are trying to get this done, so absolutely. Thank you so much. We are going to go ahead and stop the recording at this moment. If you have a few minutes, I will debrief and go from there, right?

Participant One: Okay, That is fine.

Participant Two

Researcher: Hello everyone. We have general music teacher number five. Today is Monday, August 20th, at 4 P.M. Eastern Standard time. Let us go ahead and start with the questions. What great level are you currently teaching right now?

Participant Two: K-5 music, kindergarten through fifth grade.

Researcher: Okay, next question. How many years of experience do you have teaching instrumental music?

Participant Two: This is my fifth year.

Researcher: This is your fifth year, and what school district are you currently serving?

Participant Two: I currently teach in Georgia, Dekalb County School District.

Researcher: Okay, thank you for that answer. Have you served in other school districts besides Dekalb County?

Participant Two: Yes, I taught at APS (Atlanta Public Schools) for three years.

Researcher: Okay, and APS will be coded as Atlanta Public Schools. All right, thank you for those answers. Let us talk a little bit about your background. Where did you study for your undergraduate study?

Participant Two: Fort Valley State University, in Fort Valley, Georgia.

Researcher: Okay, thank you for those answers. Is there any graduate work currently or in the past?

Participant Two: No, just undergrad.

Researcher: Okay, thank you for those answers. Let us get into the probing questions I have for you. As part of this research and this interview, what is your view of the state of instrumental music programs or music programs in general?

Participant Two: That is a good question. So, prior to the pandemic, I guess we could say we had more free range with the resources. For example, this year and last, I wanted to get recorders for the students, but I was not allowed to do that because of the pandemic. So, I guess now, after the pandemic, there is somewhat of a shortage of options for the curriculum.
That is the main thing that I can point out right now.

Researcher: Okay, thank you for those answers. In a sub-question to this, have you noticed any decline, or you know, numbers in as far as enrollment is concerned, in South Metro Atlanta programs musically with chorus, orchestra, or band prior to the COVID-19 pandemic? This part of the study is part of the primary research looking at things that happen. We all know that we have been affected by Covid 19. However, part of this research looks at factors that may have contributed to a decline in South Metro Atlanta programs, so could you elaborate just a little bit for me, please?

Researcher: Okay, my apology for that. What was, or is your view? I am sorry.

Participant Two: Could you repeat the question for me? I want to make sure I have a clear understanding.

Researcher: Did you notice any decline in the South Metro Atlanta music programs, particularly public schools, prior to the Covid-19 pandemic?

Participant Two: Prior to the Covid. No, I did not. So, you are asking if I was aware of any decline or noticed any decline before the pandemic; I noticed an increase that things were gradually going in a positive direction before the pandemic.

Researcher: Okay, thank you for that answer. That is great to hear. It creates a little dissension in the data, which helps as part of the study.

Participant Two: Yes, things were improving before the pandemic.

Researcher: All right. Well, thank you for that answer and for coming back to the classroom because our children need it.

Participant Two: During the pandemic, I took about a year off and started teaching again in 2021.

Researcher: At this point, and juncture right now, especially in music education, we as advocates, if we are going to save it, we need as many hands on deck as possible. So, thank you for returning. Let us go to my next probing question regarding funding. Does your program receive any other allocations from the school district, whether Title I or Title IV, funding to assist with your financial needs to operate your program?

Participant Two: You mean, in addition to the files we get automatically?

Researcher: It could be your Title I funding, which you get automatically. Do you receive any additional funding?

Participant Two: If we receive funding for the program as far as additional funding for this district, I am not sure since it is like my second year.

Researcher: Okay, and that is perfectly fine. It is wonderful.

Participant Two: No other than the fundraises that we put on ourselves.

Researcher: In the past, have there been any outsourcing funds that may have come into your program?

Participant Two: No.

Researcher: Okay, so there is not, or it is not a significant funding source for you?

Participant Two: No, other than the funds allocated initially to us annually in the budget. Now at my previous school and Atlanta Public School System, I did not. I was not even in the music room at that school. They set aside an office like a big office for the music teacher. I did not have any resources there, barely had any resources. That room was right next door to the gymnasium, so it was kind of noisy, but the school I am at now has an actual music room, and the acoustics are excellent. As a giant rehearsal space, I have risers I can pull out if I need to, and then, if I need to, I can move the kids to the stage cafeteria. My last school did not have a stage or anything like that, so the school I am at now is outstanding.

Researcher: Okay, thank you for that answer. The following probing questions would be: Do you have adequate learning facilities, or have you had adequate learning facilities for your music, such as for classes or practices, rehearsals, and performances, in your school building?
Okay, thank you so much for those answers. Next question, do you have instruments that are working correctly?

Participant Two: No, I think we have about four trumpets. I think only two are functional. We have a baritone that is not functional. We do have some acoustic guitars. They are functional. A couple of them need some re-stringing, but we do have those. We have about seven of those, and I am pretty happy.

Researcher: Okay, that was going to be my next question. Because it seems like you are dealing with a musical classroom where you have answered minimum music, such as band, but also you have a base or just a basic set of Kodaly. What alternatives are you using with this instrument shortage or non-functional instruments? Do you have any alternative that you can use?

Participant Two: Lots of technology. The kids sometimes will bring their chrome books to music class, and there are some online resources that I use; a music tech teacher has an online piano that they can play with and interact with, and I teach the piano keys that way. We do not have keyboards. That is it. The tech is a big part of many of my lessons to make up for that.

Researcher: Okay, So, okay, so tech, not only integration, which is a big plus that's going around now, is your integration of technology, especially during the pandemic or when it was ending, alleviating some of the other issues that you have? The kids were still virtual, and many teachers had to adapt.

Participant Two: Yes.

Researcher: Okay, understood. Thank you so much for that. We are down to about three more questions. It is not a very long interview. Are you allowed to have support or anything of that nature?

Participant Two: Yes. Funny used to say that because I was speaking with one of the second-grade teachers. She has a degree in drama. She is trying to put together a little drama club, and I am working with the art teacher where but in one of the productions this December and then to get some funding for something called the Sunshine Community there.

Researcher: Are you allowed to have a parent or boost the organization that will support and assist your Yeah, music program financially?

Participant Two: If you are part of the Sunshine Community, you pay dues, and those dues go towards any events that you want to put on, any extracurricular activities, things like that.

Researcher: Okay, that is good. That is good to hear. So, from experience, some instrumental and some class teachers are not allowed.

Participant Two: I will look towards using that committee to help with some of the stuff for music. You know, boosters, so you are in a pretty fortunate situation. When you say boosters, do you mean like outside, like parents, or that?

Researcher: Yes.

Participant Two: It is more of a feature organization. Oh, the Sunshine Committee, whereas a much more of a teacher. Now, as far as having outside boosters, I have not spoken with the administration, but I do not feel that they will have an issue with that, mainly because they know that we are so strapped for money.

Researcher: Great.

Participant Two: That is a good question, so I could not tell. I do not think I have been here long enough to have that question.

Researcher: Okay, so you could not say yay or nay on that issue?

Participant Two: Correct.

Researcher: Okay, not a problem. Thank you—next question. You have answered, but for the sake of the interview, do you have generous support from your principal and administrators?

Participant Two: Hmm, Oh, yeah. Before I came here, I did not want to, you know, be wrong about the previous music teacher, but they were relieved. I came, you know, with some of the ideas I had and my precious experience in Atlanta.

Researcher: Was that for your music program?

Participant Two: Yes.

Researcher: Yes, that is an excellent answer, and I appreciate that response.

Participant Two: Atlanta Public Schools, and how I was able to do, you know, so much with so little. So now that I am here, I need all the support you know I can handle.

Researcher: Many teachers have gone through the trenches, having just a little to do anything, sometimes to function. So that is very good. Thank you for that next question: How does scheduling work for your music program?

Participant Two: My first class is at 7:45, from 7:45 to 8:30. That is with the fifth graders, and then I get a ten min break, and then the fourth graders come in from, what is it 8:40 to 9:25, and then I get the second graders from 9:30 to 10:15, and then the third graders come in from 10:20 to 11:05. Then I get about an hour and a half for planning and lunch together, and then the kindergarteners come in at 12:30 to 1:15 and then the first graders in the day from 1:15 until about 2:00.

Researcher: Yeah, okay. So, what you are dealing with is forty-five min increments of instruction?

Participant Two: 16:17:48 Hmm, right. Correct.

Researcher: Let me ask another probing question. Do you see the same students daily, or is it staggered?

Participant Two: My students were staggered. We have six classes per grade level and go by the day system. So, on day one, you get a set of classes; on day two, a set of classes; and on day three difference in the class. Staggered, so I see each class every six days.

Researcher: Yes, this is the rotating A/B modified block schedule that every music teacher loves. So, does your guidance department collaborate with you to equip your music program with an efficient schedule method, or is this just one set in stone?

Participant Two: Pretty much it is set in stone, and that was how it was when I was at APS. I do not have any scheduling issues, if any. My schedule is pretty good. Maybe if another teacher is out, they will split the classes among all the special teachers, and I have a few extra students, but I can handle that as nothing too major.

Researcher: Okay, that sounds typical. What methods or alternative approaches do you use if you have scheduling issues?

Participant Two: I have a pretty good schedule.

Researcher: Okay, not a problem. That is a specific thing too, primarily through experience with the conversion with other colleagues is, you know, when another teacher is out, whoever is the next in line, you know, the content area, it is, taking their classes. So that is always one of the things we just had. We do have enough teachers at this point to click. We do not, so that is very good. That schedule is just flexible enough for you to still function and operate in your music program. All right. The final question I have for you is what suggestions for improvement which you like to offer to the questions mentioned earlier?

Participant Two: I would say, pay more attention to the arts. Yes, just as a district, pay more attention to the arts. Do not just put it on the back burner because it is just as important, you know, as all of the other core classes, especially music and music, as all the subjects in it. I guess once they start thinking of it as an actual, you know, subject, especially at the elementary level. I can speak from the elementary level because I have only taught elementary, you know, if they, you know, think of it as being as important as science and math and things like that, and I think things will be a lot better off and you know because there is a music career is essential as medicine.

Researcher: Absolutely. I wholeheartedly agree with that statement. Being a career musician outside of music education, there is always work in music. So, I agree, and I concur with that statement. Thank you so much for that answer. Right now, the time is 4:23 P.M. We will go ahead and stop the transcript at this point, and we will debrief the recording for probably another five or six minutes, and then I will let you go.

Participant Two: Okay.

Participant Three

Researcher: Good afternoon. Today is Monday, August the twenty-ninth. It is 4:32 P.M., and we have instrumental director number two as part of the study. So, we will go ahead and get started with some beginning questions and then begin with the pilot questions.

Participant Three: Okay.

Researcher: Okay, so first question. Where did you study your undergraduate?

Participant Three: Undergraduate study was at Alabama A and M University in Normal, Alabama, next door to Huntsville, Alabama.

Researcher: Okay, any graduate studies after that?

Participant Three: Graduate studies included Alabama A&M University, Capella University, and Full Sail University.

Researcher: Okay, Understood: Thank you for those answers going forward. What is your location? Where do you teach music currently?

Participant Three: I currently teach at a high school in metro Atlanta. This school is the Dekalb County school system where I work.

Researcher: Okay, were there other school districts before you arrived in Dekalb County?

Participant Three: This was the only one before I was a graduate assistant at Alabama A&M University.

Researcher: Okay, thank you for those answers. Now we will go ahead and proceed to the interview questions. What grade levels do you currently teach music?

Participant Three: I teach ninth through the twelfth band, advanced, intermediate, and beginning.

Researcher: Okay, how many years of experience teaching music?

This year is going on like 15 years of experience through K-12, but of course, before six years, with Alabama A&M University's band.

Researcher: Wow! 15 years! That is going to diversify the study. Thank you so much. All right, let us go ahead with some of the programming questions. What is your view on the state of music programs in South Metro Atlanta before the pandemic? Before I allow your answer, this question is probing from the standpoint of the research studies and surveys the state of music programs before the Covid-19 pandemic. We all know that Covid 19 pandemic wreaked havoc on music programs. However, we are attempting to investigate how the programs were before

the Covid-19 pandemic. So, to reiterate the question, what is your view on the state of music programs in South Metro Atlanta before the Covid-19 Pandemic?

Participant Three: Hmm. So, I am trying to think about the region of South Atlanta. So, this is going from Fulton County to Dekalb County, including Clayton County, and just the bottom part of Dekalb. I would say that before the pandemic, you only had a handful of programs that were successfully maintaining the level of expectancy for marching bands, concert bands, and jazz bands on the southside. On the southside, what was interesting to me was that before Dr. Beasley got to Clayton County, many of those band programs down there were suffering from top to bottom, which was interesting. And then you move over the south to Dekalb, and it seems as if the county continuously pressured to open new schools left and right, continually stretching our resources. So, you had my school going down to a magnetic.

Cedar Grove, all these schools on the south side, and we were fighting for the resources because they were opening new schools, which attracted students to venture further out, like in your case. You know Stephenson was open a long time ago with Arabia Mountain. So, what happened to those programs? It included scheduling, student body falling off tremendously, and block scheduling. All three of those hurt the achievement of our programs on the southside. Furthermore, if you context the schools on the north side and how they operated, you did not have many schools that opened next door to a particular school. The district spread them out, whereas student bodies fluctuated within those clusters, and many schools did not transition over to a block schedule, which is very interesting.

Researcher: Yes.

Participant Three: So, when you are when you talk and when you are looking at the north-side, and then their entire scheduling portfolio versus the southside, too many schools block scheduling, it hurt a lot of fine arts programs, and statistically, you can see how that fell off. So, let us take McNair (Ronald McNair High School). There, for example, McNair, in the nineties, had a solid musical program.

Researcher: Very much.

Participant Three: Yeah, before Dr. Ellis left McNair, they were one of the top programs in the State of Georgia in the southeast. You could say Cedar Grove as well. Of course, you know Cedar Grove was one of the big-time premier schools, but then that is when they started opening up too many schools, and both of those schools went to block scheduling, and you could see the continued trend falling off now before the pandemic. They were still in the same arena as far as struggling to keep the numbers, keeping the resources in block scheduling, not working towards the achievement for that band program, and the director. So, that is what I see the viewpoint of before Dr. Beasley and Dr. Beasley got down there before the pandemic, but he put forth efforts to assist the band programs but not so much for a lot of the other counties, which is very interesting. So, I am glad that you are going through this and bringing the stuff out.

Researcher: So, we know every music teacher loves block scheduling, don't we?

Participant Three: Oh, I tell you that it is the ultimate killer of the arts. Block scheduling if your API (Assistant Principal of Instruction) does not schedule based on arts first and then surround everybody else through that scheduling after arts. If you do not do it that way, the arts will be in the cold, and the schedule will be all screwed up like it is now.

Researcher: Understood absolutely. Thank you for that answer—excellent answers. I may imply regarding funding. Does your program receive any other allocations from the district status title, one or title or funds to assist with the financial needs to operate your music program?

Participant Three: This is just a reference to my program and how I operate back in the nineties, maybe early two-thousands. The principals began receiving all the funding for music programs in every school. I am not sure if it is the entire State of Georgia. Still, I know that for the Dekalb County and APS (Atlanta Public Schools), the principal then had the opportunity to allocate what they decided to give you for your program. I learned about that because a principal told me before band directors received money directly from the county since they do not do that anymore. The principals can sit back and say, I am not going to give you what you were supposed to get; I am going to provide you with what I think is unique.

Moreover, that is what happens with a funding allocation to band programs. If the band director, or the just fine arts, and just fine arts in general, do not know what is for them, the principal or administration can use that money for other means. Unfortunately, many people do not know that. Nevertheless, I know what I should receive and how I should receive it, and I utilize it as much as possible. However, that does not mean I get the total amount, so I use what is available.

Researcher: Okay. Understood. So, this is an issue where you may not get what you need.

Participant Three: I get money, but that does not mean orchestra and chorus will get the same thing because they do not. I resource them and deal with a comprehensive band program from top to bottom. If you are talking about solo ensemble groups, you are talking about jazz groups, various concert groups, and a marching band; a lot of the funding that is needed is not given to those programs in order to keep and maintain a comprehensive music program from top to bottom. So, that little money that I use. Nevertheless, the orchestra and chorus program is still kind of scrapping for resources and financial resources.

Researcher: Understood. Well, just to take another step. This statement is not a question designed in the interview questions, but when you explain your marching band, I often know with the red.

Participant Three: But I know that orchestra and chorus suffer because they get scraps versus what I receive is not enough. Since we are in a low-income community, we cannot allow students or request students to purchase resources for them to participate because you will take many students out of the situation. So, if you just take, for example, the drum line you look at, you know, the basic wear and tear up a drum line. Of course, the tear is the mallets, the sticks, snares, and things of that nature that right there could take much money just to replace, so the marching band, as one of the larger entities of any program, would eat up a lot of that allocated

money from the principal. Marching band primarily drives up the price because, in most situations, just looking from the outside.

In most cases here, the marching band is your largest ensemble. So, it is going to dry up all of the funding first. Is that something similar to your situation?

Researcher: All right. So, you are one hundred percent correct, and the rest of the money will probably use to get, you know, compositions for preparing for festivals, holiday concerts, and things of that nature and nothing else?

Participant Three: Yep, exactly like pool and teeth. However, one thing this is important is if the principal or your administration just knows that those compositions are part of the program and part of the curriculum, and that is where you can utilize school supply funds or Title I funds from not just the principal but from your department as well, and that helps out a lot. Nevertheless, as I said, you must know the ins and outs of making your program work in a low-income area. You do not want to sit back, hoping your children can suffice.

Researcher: It is like pulling teeth. Okay, Thank you so much for those answers. Excellent answers. Do you have adequate learning facilities for classes, practices, rehearsals, and performances within your school building?

Participant Three: As I said, you count many kids out doing that. Adequate facilities are, I would say, based on perception. I can go up to a north-side school and see what I do not have versus what I see here. So, it was relative. I have facilities. I have adequate spacing. I have storage, but I do not have an adequate size band room. The issue is that admins did not allow others to provide a voice for what we expect our facility to look like. So, without taking any insight from experienced individuals, they went with the basic design, which hurt us from getting what we needed in a facility, so our band room was not big enough.

Our auditorium design is not for having actual shows. Our practice rooms are not soundproof, and our storage is minimal. So, if I go to Dunwoody and try to gauge what they have versus what I have, it will be completely different. However, being on the south side, we do not have the same. How can I say community drive? That would push the desire versus a Tucker, Dunwoody, or Chamblee, whereas those parents come out in droves if they do not get what is needed for their child to be successful.

Researcher: Understood. The community concept is crucial to the research. Thank you so much for that answer. Since we are talking about community, it segues into the next probing question: Are you allowed to have a parent or booster organization supporting your music program?

Participant Three: We are allowed to have parent participation in parent financial support, but we cannot have a booster organization. They dissolved the organization maybe eight years ago, and we never brought it back, which was the principal's decision at that time to do so. Furthermore, of course, it is constantly dealing with parents who want to be chief of every single thing they come across, and they want to have the responsibility placed upon them, and no one else tries to run the band program. Many of those things go into play when you talk about parent organizations. Nevertheless, they cut our parent organization due to funding issues, and we never

brought it back, and the same thing happened with a few other schools in our area cutting their music as well; they cut their parent programs.

Our parent organizations, because of the same thing, so no, we have not had one in eight years. However, we receive support from our families when needed, You know. For example, we do a fundraiser car wash and things of that nature.

Researcher: All right. Thank you so much for that. As you elaborated, we will move on because I had a sub-question up under reading your answer. We have three more questions left. Do you have generous support from your principal and administration for your music program?

Participant Three: Then, parents will come out to assist. Nevertheless, having a parent organization, band booster, or anything like that we do not have it. I would say that the verbiage is there, but the actions are not. When we talk about administration, you can speak with the game, but if you do not cover what you are talking about, I do not feel you are fully supportive of the program. So, for example, scheduling, we just talked about how block scheduling is one of the worst things that ever happened to the arts. We can also talk about ensuring the students are in the correct class, which we rarely have in block scheduling, but placing some kids in the class in general, regardless of their levels, should be the number one priority to ensure that your program is successful.

It remains because if you have less than a certain number of students, they can dissolve your program. So, being the person I am, I expect your word for your bond, but it does not happen with admins.

Researcher: Understood, so, it will always be that third wheel somewhere?

Participant Three: Now they do support me. I do not get any financial issues, but this scheduling is where the support is lacking. Nothing is ever going to be, I say, just conducive for you to operate smoothly.

Researcher: Okay, all right. Thank you for those answers. You answered the following question: How does scheduling work for your music program?

Participant Three: Of course not. You already know it is disastrous.

Researcher: The next question would have been, is to schedule a method effective according to your answer is not.

Participant Three: Yeah.

Researcher: Does the Guidance Department work with you, as far as you know, getting the right necessary kids to equip your music program?

Participant Three: Well, here is the thing with that. So, I will go back and forth with them all day, and one of the counselors is a former band director from the county as well, so he

understands he knows what we are dealing with, but the issue is like I said, it goes to administration, and not following the guidance that I give when recruiting and starting for ninth-grade kids. Nevertheless, it also deals with our retention issue in our clusters.

So, we have a meager retention rate going from the middle to the high school for our program, and then we are highly transient. This issue also hurts our student body and our programs when it comes to enrollment, so both of them go into play. I told the middle school director that I wrote this statistic on our retention rate. Our retention rate is lower than 42% going from middle school to high school. That is entirely unheard of, and developing and sustaining a program is impossible. When you have lower retention and are transient, those two combinations do not go hand in hand.

Researcher: Yeah. I mean, just to add, it makes people question what we want to do. Do we want this school in this cluster to remain in operation? That is a failure. So that is what we are facing here.

Participant Three: Now that is the thing. So, if since we are so multi-cultural, you are still trying to push Americanized, not just sports, but air Americanized culture on students that do not want that so that you can have a large student body, but your participant, your participation rate for everything that is Americanized is going to be very low. You do your soccer; you do your cross countries. You know they will be great, but you come to the band. If you come to chorus or do football in the fall, you will have low return and retention turnout. Furthermore, the reason why is that it is not for us. Our community has not made us have Americanized sports and Americanized culture.

Researcher: Yes, this is a multifaceted issue because now, since you are talking about being transient, that is where the diversification piece is. Anything dealing with the high school student body comes in. So, thank you for that answer. My final question would be, what suggestions do you offer to the earlier concerns?

Participant Three: Well, the first thing when you are dealing with because we went through a live, you need to finance your scheduling relationships and just deal with the cluster. First, I would align your entire cluster from top to bottom. That means your elementary, middle, and high school directors. Everybody has a line of expectations. Next, I would ensure that I get with my API, make my API my best friend, and ensure that that master schedule is around me. That is the next thing that I would do. So, those are two things, ensuring that the band directors are on your page.

When you do them with the cluster, ensure the API schedules those kids that those band directors are supposed to send to you once they move on to the high school level. The next thing that I would do is ensure that the county understands and that you understand with the county how much money you are supposed to receive, how much money you receive for repairs tied to Title One funds you are supposed to receive to make sure that your program remains comprehensive, and that comes from the principal step number one. Number two comes from the district coordinator.

Of course, we do not have one right now, but that comes from the district coordinator. Find out how much money the county is supposed to allocate for you to get instrument repairs. All of that comes from the county coordinator. Those are the main three things you should have to keep a comprehensive program in the low-income area prosperous, but if you do not have that alignment, it will fall apart again. That alignment is the first thing you must do to develop those relationships with every band director in your cluster.

That middle school band director is your savior. If you are on the high school level, that elementary director is your savior. If you are on the middle school level and that is how it has to be. Alternatively, starting, and that is, I give that advice for any brand new band director coming out. You have to have those three things alike. I would also say that it is very wise, and I do not know if you have done this before, but it is very wise to get those students who like to act out, not really per se a bad kid but like to act out and have much energy, put them in a band program—a lot of the kids that are in our neighborhoods.

They are at risk, and they need something to do. They need some way to get off the street. They need something to participate in, just to have and set to get some ownership. Moreover, I do not think doing band is the issue, just doing strings or something like that. However, give them something to be productive. All kids need to be effective, and many educators turn kids away like the ones that are in trouble a lot of the time.

Nevertheless, you know what I do. Put those keys in the band because it gives them structure. Furthermore, it gives them some type and some place of belonging, and then they put ownership from there, and then they want to be a part and showcase that they are part of the band. And then the attitudes will change. That is another key that I try to give young kids. I am not going to do any names, but I told our old coordinator the same thing, too, and he was shocked that I brought kids in like that.

Researcher: Understand. Okay, is there anything else? Well, we have pretty much encompassed the entire interview. I asked for thirty minutes. Well, it is now 4:56 P.M. So, I will go ahead and stop the recording in the transcript, and then we will just debrief for about three or four minutes.

Participant Three: But no, I bring those kids in and get them something to do. So. That is the most important thing, too.

Researcher: If that is okay, all right. Well, let me turn the recording off.

Participant Four

Researcher: Good evening! The time right now is 5:44 P.M. It is Monday, August twenty-ninth, 2022. I am now in the interview session, and as part of this research study, we have All-Access Director Number Three. This director, according to history and study, and as far as the survey says that has taught band, orchestra, chorus, and general music. He is in all content areas. So, he is all-access number three. All right, so we will start with the probing questions. What grade levels do you currently teach music?

Participant Four: I currently teach grades sixth to eighth.

Researcher: Sixth through eighth, okay. How many years of experience do you have teaching music?

Participant Four: This would be my tenth year too.

Researcher: Okay, that is that is very good. It may diversify the study. We are from pretty much elementary through high school. So, thank you for that answer. In what school district are you currently teaching?

Participant Four: I am in the Clayton County school district.

Researcher: Okay, that is South Atlanta, which is a very, very important component of this study, which is in South Atlanta.

Participant Four: Yes, my first school district; was in Cleveland County, Port Gibson, Mississippi, where I did my first year teaching.

Researcher: Thank you for that answer. Have you served in other school districts before the Clayton County School District?

Participant Four: Then I went to the Dekalb County School District, where I talked for two years at Tucker High School as a paraprofessional, and then I was the head director at Tucker before Coming to Clayton County.

Researcher: Understood. Let me go into these questions quickly. Where is your undergraduate study? Where did you study for undergrad?

Participant Four: I went to Alcorn State University for my undergrad and graduated with a bachelor's in music education.

Researcher: Okay, any graduate study?

Participant Four: Yes, Jackson state also, so I graduated from Jackson State with a master's in music education.

Researcher: Hmm. Okay, Jackson State, yes, the beloved Sonic Boom.

Participant Four: Right. I was accepted into the University of Southern Mississippi before I had to come home. I was doing the D.M.A. program over there. Yeah, and that was before I had to come home.

Researcher: Okay, understood.

Participant Four: So, I did not finish that.

Researcher: Understood, we all understand. We are all educators, and life happens. Life happens, so thank you so much for the answer. Let us go ahead and get into the probing questions. There are about eight to nine questions. So, what is your view of the state of music programs in the South Metro Atlanta area before the pandemic? Before I allow you to answer this study, this research investigates where these programs were before the pandemic. In the author's interest, he has seen some actual challenges, issues, and problems before the pandemic. Everybody knows that the pandemic took a complete shellacking on instrumental music programs.

However, prior to that, the research author would like to understand where these programs were in South Metro Atlanta, encompassing South Fulton County, South Dekalb County, and South Clayton County, which are all South Metro Atlanta components in Atlanta. Restating the question, what is your view of the state of the music programs in South Metro Atlanta prior to the Covid-19 Pandemic?

Participant Four: Right. I would say that being a product of the South Metro Atlanta area, since I am from Clayton County, I have seen the programs fluctuate going up and down. Just do different decades. For example, you know how Forest Park (Forest Park High School) is now an outstanding program. However, back when I was in high school, that was not one of your well-known programs. Moreover, as far as the state of them before the pandemic, I would say that the metro, the South Atlanta Metro bands were on the rise simply due to new young energy.

The directors in the past, you know, have folks who were maybe stuck in nowhere and are kind of closing their way out. We now have new energy inside the field. So, now as far as the competition and different things, nature was there before the pandemic. I would still say post-pandemic, but it was on the rise in the South Atlanta area. When you think about Atlanta, most folks think about your Southwest Dekalb's (Southwest Dekalb High School) and just Stephenson (Stephenson High School). East side schools in Dekalb County, but as far as the state, I would say that it was up before the Covid-19 Pandemic and up and coming before the pandemic.

Researcher: Okay, all right. Thank you for those answers. Your response diversified the study, and it helped. That does help going forward. Okay, Next question, when you were at the helm of your programs regarding funding, did your music problem receive any other allocations from the school district? Regarding that, is it just Title I funding or Title IV funding to assist the bands in operating your music programs?

Participant Four: No, definitely not. Yes, the school issues I have been in were under Title I, but those Title I Funds were mainly for low-income students or economically challenging

environments. So, with those funds, you know, the funds were not allocated towards band programs to help those kids participate. We still had to do fundraisers and different things of that nature, even to allow a kid to participate in the band and not let it be a financial reason for why he could. So those Title I funds did not help.

Researcher: Could you elaborate, please? What? This next question is just a quick probing question and is not on the Transcript. However, did you see any Title I funding?

Participant Four: As funds being allocated toward a program, at least, not that I can remember. No, everything was maybe like helping the kids get pencils and paper, different things of that nature, but I do not remember from my experience any money allocated towards the band from Title I. No.

Researcher: Understood now. Title I funds can get very discretionary by the principals, and through experience, many principals may not see their arts at the forefront of the surface as the critical area.

Participant Four: Yeah.

Researcher: So, right, and especially now, I am saying we are dealing with a band because that is one of the most expensive programs on the campus.

Participant Four: No, And so definitely those Title I funds had to be allocated, you know, towards something that was probably least expensive or what they feel or well, what they felt the school needed towards the whole school versus just the band program.

Researcher: Absolutely. All right, I would say for the simple fact that when you spend money on a band, I think people want to be able to spend that money and see maybe what teachers are buying. If that makes sense, I can say, "Hey, I am about to allocate this money towards laptops or whatever I did for the school." Then people will say we see the school getting laptops versus if someone says, "hey, I am about to buy ten clarinets for this band program." I do not think people or your higher-ups would see that as a necessity versus getting those laptops for school. There is an issue where we deal more with cost efficiency than the music program or whatever. So yeah, I say it is one thing principals are looking for.

Participant Four: Correctly valid. Okay, cost efficiency: and what people are saying, well, probably not complaining about the most. I would say yes, as far as the schools that I have been in for the simple fact that the buildings were new. When I was at Tucker High School, I want to say that the building was built around 2011 or 2012-ish, or something like that. So, sort of facility was upgraded, versus what I heard. My experience at Mundy's Mill is that the school was built in 2003 versus some of those other high schools built in the fifties and sixties.

Researcher: Okay, in experience, did you, or do you have adequate learning facilities for classes, practices, rehearsals, and performances within the school building?

Participant Four: So, regarding the renovation and overall architecture, I think the facilities in my experience as far as the buildings I have been in have been adequate.

Researcher: Okay.

Participant Four: I cannot say that for all schools because that is not the case.

Researcher: Well, thank you for saying that. The answer provides a small quantity of variety to these opening questions.

Participant Four: Right.

Researcher: Now, I can, I can honestly say, moving on for in your experience or currently, do you have adequate functioning and material and sufficient materials, such as instruments and resources to educate your music program properly?

Participant Four: Can we name the drop?

Researcher: Okay, I got it. Okay, So there is a particular person, right?

Participant Four: There is a person hired in Clayton County. He is from Dekalb County, and I can honestly say that being from Clayton County, going through there leaving, and coming back before he got there, and at the time he came, I can say that Clayton County Schools are getting what they deserve because of this individual and more directors. Specifically, you have, you know, access to the instruments that they did not have in the past because it is the person you know.

Researcher: Understood.

Participant Four: So, now to maybe like five years ago. Now, within, you know, saying that span of those, you know, three to four years, this person has been here, and he has been able to help educate some of our higher-ups as far as the way band works, and not just band, but just music programs. Higher are getting more educated about what it takes to establish a comprehensive program.

Researcher: Understand.

Participant Four: That is not just the band program, but the orchestra program and choral program.

Researcher: Yes. So, it is happening now. It is completely understood. Because we all realize that music is expensive. If it is going to be extensive, it will be expensive.

Participant Four: Battle, this is right. That is one of my most significant models going. If your music programming is to be specific, it will be expensive.

Researcher: So, thank you for those answers. Thank you so much. Right. You nailed it here. We are going to move on forward. I have about three more questions.

Participant Four: All right. Yes, in Clayton County, I think you must have your bylaws, handbook, and different things. Therefore, you know those parents can understand, you know, the code of ethics when it comes to being a part of a band booster or a boost organization period, whether football, bad or anything. Although we are allowed, what I am saying is to do that. You know I take my boosters. You know what? I can have them, but push comes to shove, you know. If I have to get rid of them, I will.

Researcher: I am not going to take too much longer. Can you have a parent or boost to the organization to support and assist your music program financially?

Participant Four: No, and yeah. You know, it is one of the things I just did because a crucial part of running booster organizations is with a lot of no within the instrumental concept. You have to be able to keep them at bay, you know? I have had. I have had some minimal choral experience, but with the instrumental concept of teaching both band and orchestra, there is an invisible line where you are putting yourself out there. So, an inner-school responsibility becomes very crucial at that point.

Researcher: Big time.

Participant Four: Right, because you know, because you are talking about having another hand that's not yours, and there is money that is not yours.

Researcher: You have nailed it. Okay, I understand. So, thank you. I can have them, and I cannot have them. Thank you for that answer. That is worthy of an entire study. Oh, big time. So, thank you for those answers. I may present some future research, but here, I will move on for the sake of time because we could discuss that for an entire hour.

Participant Four: Yeah, bye, Right?

Researcher: Yes, when it was doing good, you know everybody will support when they feel like they could put their name behind something that's either up and coming so, or what everybody is saying. When you are talking about doing something from the ground up, you know you will probably not have that support immediately. When you are getting things going, you know you will get that support after folks get to know you in different things.

Participant Four: So, when I was that Port Gibson, in my first year, I was scrapping to find band members. So, I did not have much support from my parents and different things that nature did because I was new. However, I got much support when the band went from twenty people to ninety. Folks were like, "oh my gosh! Hey, the band is getting bigger. Hey, what do you need now?" So, people would hop on a moving train, you know, say, versus helping it to get started

Researcher: Understood. I understood that the workpiece in establishing music programs is not an easy one, but you know we have to. We also examine the communities we teach in; more often than not, they are more interested in the result.

Participant Four: Right.

Researcher: Do you have, or have you had in your previous experience, generous support from your principal and administrative team for your music programs?

Participant Four: Right, and see? That is it. Oh, and if we can produce the result, despite challenges, if we can reproduce the results, we have a much better outcome.

Researcher: Oh yeah, big time, you know. Then, it often comes down to whether or not you can weather that storm; you know you get it.

Participant Four: Absolutely. You know, after that train moves, you will get support.

Researcher: Thank you so much for that answer. Moving forward, we have about two more questions, and I will conclude the recording and just debrief for a quick second. The next question is how scheduling has worked for your music programs in the past; how does it work for you?

Participant Four: That is a tough one, and I look at the end of the day, I can honestly say, you know, is that people expect you to turn there to go. I think scheduling is probably one of the biggest challenges. Music, programs, not just band, but the orchestra and even chorus, because I have been in a situation, you know, even at Mundy's Mill (Mundy's Mill High School), where you know, in the fall, I would have my band kids, and I get them going. Once January comes around, I have a group of kids who have never touched an instrument. The thing about that is, you know it is a double-edged sword because you look at the new kids that you are bringing in. So, some of them join the band when you get them going. The key is that they have been taking the class. You may have lost some because they are not with you in the band class.

Keep them interested, whatever that cause. I mean, kids are kids, and you have to understand that. If that kid is with you, they will buy into everything you do. However, if you take that kid away, you know there is that fifty-fifty chance that some of them may be stable and that some may say, "look, I just want to do this. Let me know when there is after-school band practice." Then there are some kids like, "well, you know what, since I have not been in a band class, I am just going to drop out since they took me out of class." So, it is getting those different kids that next semester that touched music, and now you just replace those. Now you are talking about a dog or moving in circles, having to train up new kids every semester because you are constantly losing them due to scheduling.

Researcher: The next probing question was going to be two probing questions. Is there a collaborative effort regarding scheduling between you and your administration and in the guidance counseling?

Participant Four: I got to know the counselors, and they say we are good friends. The janitor, and the counselors, I would give them a little token of gratitude. I need my band kids, and what they would do is they would try. I think the more time you spend at a school you get to know your colleagues. I think they tend to try to work with you better.

Researcher: Okay, yes, great through a great experience.

Participant Four: You know, if you spend that time making sure that I stay on top of the kid as far as passing their classes because a lot of them are taking up the class because they have maybe failed something during their ninth-grade year. Since we are on a block schedule now and have four classes a day, there is not that much wiggle room for the kids to take your class versus when we had seven periods. I got them inside some band class because I would rather have you in some form or fashion than not. With this block scheduling method, I would have study hall by having the kids at the beginning of the practice do a tutorial with the teacher. They would have to get a pass from that teacher. Most kids would say I would instead pass that class so they could stay inside of the band program.

Researcher: All right, because they are students, you know, saying before anything. So definitely, regarding scheduling, what other methods or approaches do you use to rectify scheduling issues for the much-needed instructional and rehearsal time? (Probing Question). Understood, that is a crucial component because we, as educators, no matter what field you are in, whether music or physical education, whatever the case may be, you cannot win if you do not pass. There is no way around that. So, thank you so much for that answer and no suggestions.

Participant Four: Hey, it is correct.

Researcher: The last question I have for you is, what suggestions for improvement would you like to offer to the earlier questions and concerns in this study?

Participant Four: Okay, spend time with that program. You cannot expect people to move mountains for you in your first year so just spend time at that location if you feel like that location is a fit for you because every location is not a good fit for everybody with music programs. You are welcome to elaborate as much as you can and understand the community, and the needs of that community, making sure you know what wins over the program.

We want the administration to know what they expect from the band program. Let us do it if they want to see X, Y, and Z. I would do X, Y, and Z or whatever those persons will say. They said that they wanted to see inside the band, and that is what we try to do, whether it was discipline or playing popular music. I will try to accommodate them in some form of fashion. I can continue to get support from the administration because you do not want them not being on your side. So that is what I say, and I come by just spending time at that school.

Parental involvement, you could take that with a grain of salt saying so. I have seen band programs flourish with parents not being so involved with the program, and I have seen programs flourish with parents who are heavily involved. So, I think it is all in the system you have in your program and which works best for you. So, being personable, just being able to talk

to people, I think that is something that you know that a music teacher just has to have. You have to be personable not just to your parents but to the kids too.

Researcher: Absolutely. Okay. You have provided a wealth of information from your background, number one, and experience.

Participant Four: So, it is just some of my two cents. I do not know that much, Davion.

Researcher: You have provided a wealth of information. I do not have any more questions here currently, and I am just going to turn the recording off, and we will debrief for about two to three minutes.

Participant Four: Okay.

Researcher: Once again, thank you so much for your time.

Participant Five

Researcher: We have Interview Participant Number Five on Wednesday, August thirty-first, at 9:15 P. M. Interview Participant Number Five will be named Instrumental Music Teacher Number Four. Let us start with the question: What great level do you teach music?

Participant Five: Early sixth through eighth-grade middle school.

Researcher: Thank you for those answers. How many years of experience do you have teaching music?

Participant Five: I am in year eleven right now.

Researcher: Thank you for those answers. What school district are you currently serving?

Participant Five: I am currently serving in Atlanta Public Schools.

Researcher: Thank you. Have you served in any other school districts prior? Okay, let us get a little bit, just a little bit about your background.

Participant Five: Yes, Meriweather County School District.

Researcher: Where did you study your undergraduate study?

Participant Five: I got my undergraduate degree from Clark-Atlanta University in Atlanta, Georgia.

Researcher: Okay, thank you for those answers. What was your view of music programs prior to the pandemic?

Participant Five: We have had historically high turnover rates, and with band directors and teachers in general, but in my years prior to the pandemic, that retention rate has somewhat improved. So, we are having, you know, admin administrators and directors stay in place longer. After the pandemic, we dealt with a high turnover rate with band directors that was getting corrected prior to the pandemic.

Researcher: Okay, thank you so much for that answer. Did you notice any decline in the Atlanta or Metro Atlanta programs prior to the pandemic? The focus of study focuses on that prior to the pandemic. Everybody knows that the payment took an entire toll.

Participant Five: Right. There is a considerable decline in enrollment in programs, and that is primarily due to circumstances outside of the school building as well as in the school building. You have to look at what is happening in those areas' housing market. Much public housing closed, which was a substantial percentage of the school enrollment in Atlanta Public Schools.

Researcher: Understood, so we see a lot of smaller enrollments in schools?

Participant Five: So, once all of the public housing apartments were torn down, enrollment in schools on the south side of I-20 declined drastically. Atlanta Public Schools, in particular, implemented a public-private charter partnership, and more school buildings were added to the system. Let us take my cluster, for example. There is one high school, and there were already two feeder schools, which was a lot of the population, so once they implemented the public-private charter that added an entire another school in that same system, so now with the population that we had was splitting three ways instead of the typical one. So, enrollment in each particular school went down because the kids were zoned in many smaller clusters.

The community that I serve is in the West End. We were splitting kids three ways, and we may have been pushing two to three hundred. Typically, it had about eight hundred to nine hundred. So, the post-public-private charter contract went down to about three to four. We see a lot of smaller schools, and I would just go and take it a step further and say that some schools are maybe on the closure list because they just do not have enough right now.

Researcher: Therefore, that is the attrition issue that the study is encompassing right now.

Participant Five: That is where a hover is around now. So that is another factor that ultimately impacts unusual enrollment. When it comes to gentrification, we deal with a severe attrition issue. So, it is not one of those things that music teachers and administrators can fix per se, but it just needs to be known.

Researcher: Thank you for the answer to that question. Regarding funding, does your program receive any other allocations from the school district regarding Title I or Title IV?

Participant Five: So, you are asking, does my program receive specific Title I? Yes, we were. We received funding. It is not the specific Title I that we receive. All the schools receive the same thing, whether Title I or not. It is a blank budget. Regardless of your socioeconomic status, everybody could be a good or bad thing. In addition to the blank budget that all the middle schools receive, you also receive a per-pupil allotment based on your particular school's enrollment the year before the year projects.

So, a school of three hundred like my own will not get the same per-pupil allotment. Then, as a school of nine hundred, those funds are supposed to be used for non-dispensable items. No reeds or books, but tangible things that students need in the classroom. Again, that formula is just put in for all the schools. So, specific Title I funds, no, they do not implement that in Atlanta Public Schools for music programs. The school might get them, but the music programs are not a part of that.

Researcher: Okay, thank you for that answer.

Participant Five: In the distribution of Title I, we are talking about an F.T.E. (Full-Time Enrollment) component.

Researcher: Yes, and that is duly, and that is duly understood. Thank you for that answer.

Participant Five: Yes, my school building, in particular, used to be a high school back in the sixties and the seventies, but as time passed, they turned it into a middle school. So, my middle school has adequate rehearsal and practice space in addition to the high school building. They also built another wing just for the connection classrooms about two or three years before my arrival, and it was still relatively new. Some of the inventory was still left over when it was a high school. They had a marching band, concert band, and symphonic band. So, my school, in particular, had adequate space.

Researcher: That was going to be the following question in this study. Do you have adequate learning facilities for classes, rehearsals, practices, and performances within your school building? Understood. Thank you for those answers going forward.

Participant Five: Other middle schools may not have because they are built under the traditional middle school model.

Researcher: Do you have adequate functioning and sufficient materials, such as instruments and resources, to educate your music program properly?

Participant Five: No. The budget, as I said, is blank. It has very tight red lines around it. You can only spend it on certain things. You do not have the liberty to spend it as you see fit. Say, if we need a particular instrument, we do not necessarily have the liberty to use that money to buy specific immediate needs. We have to fundraise for that, even as far as repairs. We are not allowed to go to our repairman based on availability and quality of work.

The district has its own repair company, and we have to go through much work put on them because of that. We are left at the mercy of this company. So, they get around to our repairs whenever they see fit. If we have a last-minute repair, we are not in a position to choose. We have to wait, resulting in students sitting idle for weeks. So, we are left to the point where we have to do the repairs ourselves if it is something you know as a band director. Those last-minute repairs happened maybe before the performance was so inadequate.

Researcher: Okay, I am sure you have answered my sub-question. As far as you know, my sub-question was what other alternatives do you have? You have to make the repairs yourself, duly understood, without adequate resources.

Participant Five: No, I would have to say no.

Researcher: We are talking about an urban area, so we understand. This could create management problems and attrition problems at the forefront later on. Do you have a parent or booster organization to financially support and assist your music program?

Participant Five: Yes, we are allowed. We are allowed to have those programs. We have a parent liaison full time at my school that oversees all parent and community outreach, with parents in particular. That position was made because we historically have low parent participation. So, it is

a struggle to get to these programs, but yes, we are allowed to have band boosters. Have I ever experienced organization from parents and support? No, that is a different question.

Researcher: Okay. That would be my next sub-question. So, you just answered it.

Participant Five: I have not received parental support. I would have to say no. There have been many instances that are the story of all band directors in my district. In particular, the biggest issue is scheduling kids who want to participate in the program. They have difficulty being scheduled in class because they are pulled in different directions where the school sees fit. The music programs are not high on the priority list. Oh, your half-line students will be put in those flagship programs such as your STEM (Science, Engineering, Technology, Mathematics) classes. I will be honest. Those kids will be shown a preference for any of the other flagship programs. So, getting them signed up for the class is tough, and it is tough to have them year-round. If they are in a class, it may be for the semester. Of course, none of these programs are what college students should be in there for an entire year.

Researcher: Understood, so once again, this is a more significant issue that requires more research. There will be some limitations in this study, but it just requires more research because we are dealing with an entirely colossal issue here. But thank you for those responses
You have already answered this scheduling question. I will not delve into that, pretty sure, based on your responses. Do you have general support from your principal and administrative team for your music program?

Participant Five: So, regarding administrative support, I would have to say no based on that fact. It is just make-or-break that directors have and are very innovative to keep programs going based on scheduling issues. That scheduling can be disastrous for your music program.

Researcher: Okay, Thank you so much for that experience. Scheduling is a make or break, especially on the 4 by 4 block or the A/B Block. All music teachers love block scheduling, do we not? So, I just wanted to throw out the last question.

Participant Five: Many rehearsals are before school, after school, or on weekends. However, you can only do so much within the eight hours of instructional time during the day, and it is not utilized, so thus the scheduling can make or break.

Researcher: We are at the last question. What suggestions for improvement would you like to offer to the earlier questions and concerns regarding this study? You can go for the study. You can go for improvement as well as the questions are concerned, which is an open-ended question. You may proceed as you wish.

Participant Five: You are saying, what suggestions do I have for the study? No! No suggestions. I think we have covered pretty much the big picture. Of course, there are a lot of different factors that affect it, but essentially we have captured the big picture.

Okay: Well, I have no further questions in this interview session. The time is right now. 9:35 P. M. We have covered pretty much thirty minutes of the time. I will stop recording, and we will debrief for about five minutes if that is okay.

Participant Six

Researcher: Good Morning, everyone. Today is Thursday, September First. It is now 8:25 A. M. We have instrumental music director number six. We will go ahead and get started with the interview questions for this study. Okay, so, just a few quick background questions: Where did you study your undergraduate study?

Participant Six: I did my undergraduate study at the University of Nevada, Reno, and after a year and a half there and then I moved to Georgia and finished the degree at Georgia State in Atlanta, Georgia.

Researcher: Okay, any graduate study behind that?

Participant Six: I went on to do my master's at Georgia College and State, and currently working on my doctorate in music education.

Researcher: Okay, all right. I am just going forward here. What grade levels do you currently teach music?

Participant Six: I am contracted with Manchester High School, which is ninth through twelfth, but I co-teach sixth-grade band at the middle school across the street. I also march eighth graders in the marching band here, so I guess you could say sixth, eighth, and then ninth through twelfth.

Researcher: Okay, thank you for that answer. How many years of experience do you have teaching music education?

Participant Six: I am now in my fifteenth year of teaching

Researcher: Thank you so much. Very good. Thank you. What school district are you currently serving?

Participant Six: I teach in Meriwether County in Georgia.

Researcher: Have you ever served in any other school districts?

Participant Six: I started at a private school in Roswell, Georgia, and I spent a year and a half in Dekalb County, also in Atlanta, Georgia.

Researcher: Okay, Dekalb County Schools is a target area of the study, so thank you so much for that answer. What was, or is your view, the state of music programs before the Covid-19 Pandemic?

Participant Six: We had some very flourishing music programs throughout the state, especially in our suburban areas where a high tax revenue came in with substantial student populations that allowed these programs to grow. I will not go into what has changed since then unless it is one of your follow-up questions.

Researcher: Just a quick follow-up question. Did you notice any decline in the South Metro Atlanta programs prior to the Pandemic?

Participant Six: I did not. I spent my first eight years in a private school, so I was in a little bubble. I was not, I know, really out there, as you would say. Yeah, I had very few colleagues, and probably in my last seven or eight years, I started to make more contacts and be more about my district. So, I think no; I guess that is kind of like a little bubble. So, it is hard to tell.

Researcher: Okay, understood, no problem. Regarding funding, did your former programs, you know, your current program, receive any other allocations from the school district, such as Title I or Title IV funding, to assist with the financial needs of your music program?

Participant Six: I can say that, yes, they did receive funds. I can also, unfortunately, say that I did not receive those funds.

Researcher: Could you elaborate more on why or why not?

Participant Six: I could not answer why. I recently met at the district county office and spoke with the person in charge of acquiring the Title I or Title IV funds. She told us, as the entire Fine Arts department of Meriwether County, that funds were allocated specifically to Fine Arts. Three weeks ago, I submitted a five-hundred-dollar sheet music order that has not been filled, so I wish. No. I have been sending emails asking why, and unfortunately, I do not have an answer.

Researcher: Wow, that is very unfortunate that that happens. This is one of the probing areas of the study. You have some band programs. You have music programs that receive funding, and then you have some that just do not get anything. They may get pennies on the dollar. So, that is a very pressing issue that deserves further research and study. So, thank you for that answer. Okay, next question. Do you have adequate learning facilities, or did you, in the past, have adequate learning facilities for classes, practices, rehearsals, and performances within your school building?

Participant Six: I could say that while I was in Dekalb County, I was at an elementary school that was later closed for a year for remodeling. It was highly outdated. Did I have the facilities needed? Yes. I was in Dekalb, and I was the elementary school music teacher and choir director. I had a classroom and a little stage in the cafeteria kind of deal to get the job done. Here in Meriwether, decent classrooms, you know, I definitely could use better storage facilities and things like that. They just put new stage curtains up in our auditorium, and we can get and have our performances in there just fine. We are working on a grant to update the devices.

Researcher: All right, well, we have previous interviews. We have discovered that some have adequate learning facilities. Some have adequate storage, and then some are dealing with outdated buildings and crumbling facilities. So, I would say it is a dichotomy per se.
So, Thank you for that answer. Do you have or did you have adequate functioning and sufficient materials, such as instruments, sheet music, reeds, valve oil, and things like that, to properly educate your music program?

Participant Six: No, I did not. One of the benefits of having been in the private school system is I brought much personal stuff to Dekalb County. In addition to being an instrumental music teacher, I was also the drama teacher and elementary chorus teacher, and many things were on track and saved on my computer. So, that got me through my time in Dekalb County. My booster program is where much of our stuff comes from in Meriwether County. Their job is to take care of our marching band or extracurricular activities. They are also trying to help not just the high school but the classes at the middle school as well with elementary the unified support team.

Researcher: Thank you so much for that answer because you just answered my next question regarding boosters. Once again, we are dealing with this study where some have boosters. So do not. Some have parent organizations masked under boosters, but it is not. It is just parents. So, it is sticky in these areas. There is no consistent practice or process with many of these instrumental, choral, and orchestral programs. So, deserving of some probing and some more research in some areas here. Thank you for that answer. Next question: Do you have generous support from your principal and administrative team for your music program, or did you in the past?

Participant Six: No, unfortunately, in Dekalb County, their hands were kind of tied to dealing with other issues as far as discipline issues. It is a private school. You would think private schools have much money. All of their funds are generated by tuition. However, they at least gave me a dollar amount to spend every year. In both Dekalb and the county where I am now, it is this ambiguous number that I just kind of have to ask and hold my hand out and hope something happens.

I have also recently had a very high turnover of administrators with assistants and head principals. So, as soon as I developed a working relationship with one a year or two later, I got somebody else, and I could not win. It is tough to say, "hey, look, this is that program, especially when I have been here for eight years. I have grown my program, and anybody who has been here to see it would be, wow, we need help because he is putting in work." However, I got a new face every two years, which was a shame.

Researcher: Understood, changeover in leadership derails programs, whether the director or administration because you never get a sound footing anywhere. At least if you have a non-supportive administrator that has been there for a while, such as five or six years, many times, you know what to expect. With a high turnover rating, did you say this is every two years?

Participant Six: Most recently, yes. I am in year eight here. I have had four head principals and three assistant principals.

Researcher: Wow. Yes, that is a painful feeling. I am so sorry to hear that. We are going to move on to the next question. You have already answered the sub-question. It is hard to collaborate between you and the administration because you do not have a chance to build a relationship because they are in and out so fast. You have answered that question. How did scheduling work for your music programs in the past, and how does it work now? How does it work with your guidance counseling as far as scheduling is concerned?

Participant Six: Well, I will talk briefly about my past before I get to where I am now. You know, the private school and Dekalb County were very similar, where I saw each grade level for fifty minutes a day on a daily rotation at the middle and high school levels. They are on block scheduling. For some reason, the guidance counselors had little to do with scheduling. A similar problem I have with my administrators is that we have also had a high turnover, and I have been fighting a battle with dual enrollment, a battle with getting P.E. (Physical Education) credit to count for what they spend in marching band.

I did finally win that battle. So, I just finally went eight years later. I won that fight, but I still have some top students who want to take A.P. (Advanced Placement) classes or dual enrollment classes. That leaves no room for a band. Due to the block schedule, they can only take four classes a day, two of which are A.P. or dual enrollment. Then they have their graduation requirements, which does not leave much room for them to continue the elective all four years. So, there is not much room for extra electives or just continuing their electives for four years.

Researcher: Okay. So, just a quick probing question. What is your view on block scheduling as one of the target areas we discuss in this study? So, what would be your perception of block scheduling for your instrumental, choral, or music programs in general?

Participant Six: From a Fine Arts perspective, it is detrimental because we can get in all our first-year or tenth-graders with no problem. Then you need a course, or this pathway happens, or as I said, instrumental music programs draw the brightest. They also want to get a head start on college. They want to take those A.P. classes that they qualify for. If I was a general educator and taught maybe math or something, I could see the benefit there. Okay, I have an hour and a half to teach this complicated algebra lesson, and the kids have extra time to do the work in class.

Nevertheless, I am working on creating a rotating schedule for the electives. We started drama this year, and of course, my kids are very interested in taking drama, too, because that is how they are and cannot. They have to choose. That is not right. I had a guitar class last year, and they canceled it. Nevertheless, it is something I could bring back if we can either allow an A/B rotation. One thing we will try with the middle school after we get back from the Christmas break is a split block where we will do a forty-five-minute rotation with just the elective classes.

Researcher: Okay. Thank you so much for that answer. That is something that the author in this study did not consider as far as modifying scheduling because it is really a pain to figure out how you can schedule your students. Only so much can be done at the end of the school day, you know, after school. So, thank you for the answer because the next probing question was going to be, what other methods or alternative approaches do you have for your scheduling and rehearsal time? So, thank you for that answer. All right. We are now down to our final question. What suggestions for improvement would you like to offer related to this study's earlier questions and concerns?

Participant Six: Concerning anything that you have asked?

Researcher: Yes, it could be study related or related to the issues that we are trying to investigate in music programs in South Metro Atlanta.

Participant Six: I have been looking into why we have such a divide in funding for programs when we push Title I. The purpose of Title I being "hey, these kids are common economic or economic disadvantage; however, we want to phrase it. They cannot compete with these kids from the suburbs. Yes, okay, let us just create Title I." Then, Title I is focused on academics and not creating the whole child. Then it explicitly says there is Title I funds for fine arts, and it is not getting pushed to those Fine Arts teachers as I have seen at two different schools.

I would also suggest doing what I am starting to do now and discussing with your administrators if you can hopefully keep them for more than one or two years about options of how I can keep my dual enrollment kids in the band for four years. What other scheduling options are there? If we cannot go to a traditional six- or seven-day class schedule having to do four, what if we rotate one? Just get your principal's or A.P.'s support on those. However, what if we rotate one or one if we split one?

Researcher: Understood. You mentioned a very, very valuable point about Title one. If they continue to push these funds toward academics in the academic disciplines, it defies ESSA's goals, which are designed to educate the entire student. So, how can we educate the entire student if we are only going to push Math, English, Science, and Social Studies and two of those Science and Social Studies are not focused on, especially in our state? We focus on Math and Reading scores in many of our areas, especially in South Metro. So, it is quite a conundrum that we are dealing with all the way around. Nevertheless, is there anything else that you like to add? Those are all the questions that I have for you.

Participant Six: No, I do not think so. I hope I have helped.

Researcher: Well, you helped a lot. It will help with the data collection methods as part of this study. We appreciate your participation. I will go ahead and turn off the recording and debrief if you have about five minutes of your time.

Participant Six: I have time, no problem.

Researcher: All right, thank you. Give me one second.

Participant Seven

Researcher: Good afternoon, everyone. Today is Thursday, September 1st. It is approximately 1:06 P. M. In the interview, we have the instrumental music director number seven, and we will get started with these questions. So, just a few background questions before I start the study questions. The first would be, where did you study Music Education?

Participant Seven: I studied Music Education at Morris Brown College.

Researcher: Okay, any other graduate experience after that?

Participant Seven: I have graduate experience. I received my master's degree in school counseling.

Researcher: Okay, thank you for those answers. Okay, let us go ahead and probe into the questions. What grade levels did you teach in Music Education?

Participant Seven: I was certified K through twelfth. I taught sixth through twelfth.

Researcher: Okay, thank you. How many years of experience do you have teaching music?

Participant Seven: Wow! About eighteen years of musical instrument and music experience and teaching.

Researcher: Thank you so much. What school district do you currently serve?

Participant Seven: I serve in Dekalb County School District, where I was also a band director for eighteen years.

Researcher: Thank you. Okay, any other prior districts to Dekalb County?

Participant Seven: No, sir.

Researcher: All right. Thank you, sir. All right. Let us get to the following few questions. During your time as an instrumental band director, what was your view on the state of music programs in South Metro Atlanta, programs prior to the COVID-19 Pandemic?

Participant Seven: Well, it underwent quite a few changes when I came in. The bands were pushing very well. They had great numbers; you know the numbers continue to grow in some regions of Dekalb County. You had this in the south end of Dekalb County. We would like to say that the bands were booming because everyone had a nice size; at least one hundred plus marching bands, and many groups were making superior ratings from middle school to high school. I know my cluster, in particular, we have made superior ratings for quite some time.

Researcher: Okay, thank you for those answers. This just is a sub-question. Did you notice any decline in the South Metro Atlanta programs prior to the Covid-19 Pandemic?

Participant Seven: Yes, there was a significant decline. After the movie *Drumline* came out, the bands' population grew. Everyone wanted to be a part of that culture. However, as time passed, I believe the incident that may have happened in Florida with the young man who tragically passed brought a light on Dekalb County because the young man was a product of Dekalb County.

So unfortunately, when the light was brought on to this young man that passed at FAMU (Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University) and went to a school in Dekalb County on the south end. That brought light to us in Dekalb at that time, and we were, you know, evidenced, scrutinized, and watched with a close eye with what we were doing and how we were teaching, and what we were doing to get our bands to perform at such a high level. At that point, the band directors just felt like our hands were tied, and at that point, we decided to pull back. When we pulled back, the students pulled out and got out of the program. So, that is how it happened. That is what I saw. That decline happened, and it continues. Where they are now, it is hard to rebuild.

Researcher: Understood. Thank you so much for that answer. That is a very different spin on what we are looking at as far as what we were studying. In this study and research, being that Dekalb County is one of the target areas in this study, we did not consider the incident of the young man that happened in Florida. So, that is very interesting to note. Thank you for that answer. During your tenure regarding funding, did your school or your program receive any Other allocations from the school district, such as Title I and Title IV, to assist with the financial needs of your music program?

Participant Seven: In my program at Columbia Middle School, I did not receive any deficit spending or per-pupil funds, even though my program was the largest in the school. I did not receive per-pupil funds from the principal, who was in control of the money at that time. I have seen three principals there; maybe neither of them has given us money. The money I received was from the actual music coordinator indicator in Dekalb County, and I received those instruments in my last two years at Columbia Middle School. 2016-2017 is when I received new instruments, and I have been there since the school opened in 2001.

Researcher: Did the administrators give you any rationale for why you could not receive any funds?

Participant Seven: One particular principal said there are no per-pupil funds. There are no per-pupil funds for any programs right now. I would continue to revisit this. I would get the same answer.

Researcher: That is very interesting. Thank you so much for that answer. During your tenure, did you have adequate learning facilities for classes, practices, rehearsals, and performances in your school building?

Participant Seven: In my school building, yes, I did. I may ensure that we, myself and the students, maintain the practice area or the band room after every class and after school. It was necessary to keep a decent and in-order room to have a productive practice.

Researcher: Thank you so much for that. Next question, do you have adequate functioning and sufficient material such as instruments, music, reeds, valve oil, sticks, and all other resources to educate your music program properly?

Participant Seven: Through my band dues, I provided the students with the proper equipment they needed. In the latter years of my tenure, we had great functioning instruments when the school first opened. However, I did get removed from school. When the school first up, we had great instruments. I was removed from the school because they did not have a point in keeping me, so I had to do long-term subbing somewhere else.

However, I was still working with the high school at the time. So, during my time away, the instruments got broken somehow, and when I got back, I fixed them. I sent them off some of them, but I was able to fix them because I learned how to repair and fixation is not in good working condition through my resources class at Morris Brown College. So, I was able to get the right things that the kids needed through the band dues. I am sorry music as well, so I could talk to the parents and let them know what I was buying up front, and when I bought music, I made sure I kept it in my library. My middle school band music library was very imaginary before I left.

Researcher: Okay, thank you for that answer. So, I want to touch on one particular thing about the point. You said something about points in order to maintain your employment at that particular school. Could you kind of elaborate on this point?

Participant Seven: Well, with points, the school's population determines the point. The point means the teacher that you can get to improve your program. So, just say Columbia Middle had a population of twelve hundred. That means they get the point for every; I want to say one hundred to two-hundred kids. You get the point of adding another staff member. So, I was considered a point because a band was director there.

However, the enrollment at the school was high enough for me to come in as another band director, but when the enrollment dropped below, I was the last brought in, which meant I was the first one to be removed.

Researcher: Okay, this is more of an FTE (Full-Time Enrollment) Concept.

Participant Seven: Yes.

Researcher: Okay, thank you so much for that answer. That is going to saturate the data for this study. So, thank you so much for that answer. During your time, were you allowed to have a parent or booster organization to support and assist your instrumental music program financially?

Participant Seven: Yes, the first principal did allow us to have a booster club. The second principal thwarted my booster club activities, even though it was 501 C3, and at that point, I was told to bring the money into the school. So, I just had a parent support group at that time. Once that happened, we were very reputable and continued to move forward with the money still being in the school. Once the money got turned into the school I went to and had internal affairs come into the building to investigate if I was illegally embezzling money, it turned out that I was not, and I added up to the dime.

However, the money remained in the school account, and I did draw up a clause where it would be no deficit spending of the band money. If you are an organization in a school and you have a clause written up saying no deficit spending at the end of the year or whatever is left, The principal has free reign to spend the money. So, I made sure I put that clause in, and it still stands today.

Researcher: Okay. Perfect answer because my question behind that was how is the parental involvement and support? So, I would say that you had excellent parents during your tenure at the time.

Participant Seven: Yeah, towards the end, it dwindled off, of course, but that was one of my driving factors to step away from the classroom.

Researcher: Understood. Next question: During your tenure, did you have generous support from your principal and administrative team for your music program?

Participant Seven: To be quite honest, I did. I did, except for the second principal, but the rest of the principals were very supportive and looked to me to represent the school in different outings and events because the band students were extraordinarily well-behaved and displayed outstanding musicianship and leadership at their young age. So, they were very supportive.

Researcher: Okay, how would you perceive your principals' overall interest and support of your instrumental music program?

Participant Seven: My last principal at Columbia Middle School was a musician, and he supported the arts. He would play his piano, and I would play my instrument sometimes. We have a great relationship now. He was very supportive of the arts. The others were very supportive. For some of them, you can tell what principals have a music appreciation and what principals have an appreciation for their drive in sports or driven in other areas. Whether it is fraternal or sororities, they are driven in those areas, and sometimes their knowledge or entail of what it takes to build a news program or a band program is not as thoughtful or fastidious as a musician of our caliber.

Researcher: Understood it, understood, so there was a collaborative effort going on at, or a lot of your time. Okay, all right, thank you for that answer. How did the scheduling work in your music program at the time? You know, was it adequate to maintain student participation? Was it practical to acquire students?

Participant Seven: When the school opened, I had six band classes, and we worked on modified block A-Day B-Day. So, I honestly liked A-Day/B-Days, and it was many kids. Unfortunately, over time we transitioned, and the numbers started to go down, so I had to collapse my classes, and it was A-Day was General Music at the point at that time, and I was certified in that area, and B-Day was instrumental music.

So, I was given lemons, but then I made lemonade because, in general music, I was teaching kids lines and spaces and how to read rhythms. On Friday, if we meet, I will give them percussion instruments teaching them to play percussion or the bells. Some of those kids picked up on the concept of what I was doing. I moved them to the band class. The band class was a year-round class, and I would move them. The eighth graders of their beginning, I will use them as leaders. Even though they played with the beginning sixth-grade band, they were still leaders because they were older. They could tell them how to act, and they would be acting differently.

So, I used the general music class to recruit from my band class because kids took to that. "Oh man, I like that. I used to play." That is where you get kids. "Oh, I used to play this!" I would say well, why did you stop? "Because it was too hard," I said if you get in here, as a recruitment tool and relationship building. I am big on relationship building. So, that is what I did.

Researcher: Okay, all right, not a problem. So, your guidance department was pretty effective with an efficient scheduling method, I may presume?

Participant Seven: I learned early that you must stay in the counselors' faces and their good graces. So, when they ask you for something, give it to them. Alternatively, take them some reams of paper. You always have to have your ducks in a row, for lack of better terms.

Researcher: Understood because the next probing question was what methods you would use to maintain or recruit students for your program if there were any scheduling issues, and I think you have answered that thoroughly. So, thank you for that.

Participant Seven: You said recruitment tools?

Researcher: Yes.

Participant Seven: Between class changes, I would be playing my instrument in the hallway.

Researcher: Okay.

Participant Seven: That would attract because the band room is in the back of the school by the gym. To be quite honest, in the back, you can hear me plan upfront, but it is pleasant, and I play the instruments in the hallway that I need in my band program because the kids would be like, "oh, I like that instrument. Could you play this song on that instrument? I want to get in the band."

Sometimes, I would put a whole concert on in the band room. Many kids would line up behind me while I was playing, and then, when it was time to go in, they went in. They would take the instruments out, and we get to work. I would just do it.

Researcher: All right, perfect answer. We are down to our last question. What suggestions for improvement would you like to offer to the questions in this study, the questions, and concerns related to this study?

Participant Seven: I do not have any improvement questions because they were very probing and thought-provoking. I enjoyed the questions. They allowed me to speak and answer to the best of my knowledge. I enjoyed the questions. It is nothing to improve because it was straight to the point, and we got right to the bottom. I appreciate the questions.

Researcher: All right, well, thank you so much. We will stop the recording in this interview, and for about the next two to three minutes, we will debrief, and then I will let you go.

Participant Seven: Okay, no problem.

Participant Eight

Researcher: Okay, we will go ahead and start this meeting. This is the last of the interviews for this study. It is 12:18 P. M. Today's date is Friday, September 16th, and we have Music Technology Teacher number eight. So, we will go ahead and get started with the screening questions. This interview session has about twelve questions. There are some sub-questions that I may ask periodically throughout, but they should not last any more than about thirty minutes. Is that okay?

Participant Eight: Sure.

Researcher: Okay, first question: What grade levels do you currently teach music?

Participant Eight: I teach sixth through the twelfth grade.

Researcher: Okay, next question: How many years of experience do you have teaching music?

Participant Eight: I have twenty-eight years of experience.

Researcher: Thank you so much; that will diversify my study well. Next screening question, What school district are you currently serving?

Participant Eight: I am currently serving in Gwinnett County Schools.

Researcher: Okay. Next question: Have you served in other school districts before Gwinnett County?

Participant Eight: Yes, Atlanta Public Schools, Fulton County Schools, and Dekalb County Schools.

Researcher: Okay, thank you for those answers. All right, let us move into the probing questions of this study. What was your view of music programs before the pandemic? So let me rephrase this question. I am sorry. What was your view on the state of music programs in South Metro Atlanta before the pandemic?

Participant Eight: Well, my view of those programs before the pandemic is that we had passion as directors but lacked support. We lacked funding for the program, and we frequently lacked appropriate facilities to teach our classes and parental support; so, not to mention supplies. That was also a concern pre-pandemic.

Researcher: Okay, all of these were pre-pandemic issues, and your answers almost answered all of the probing questions in this study, but we will continue. Thank you for those answers.

Participant Eight: Sure.

Researcher: Regarding funding, does your program, or in the past, did your program receive any other allocations from the school district Title I or Title IV funds to assist with the financial needs to operate your music program?

Participant Eight: We did have Title I funds, but they were limited. It might be for some periodicals, magazines, or things like that but not anything substantial to support what we needed in terms of literature or equipment. Those would be the main issues, but the funds were insufficient regarding the other types of supplies we needed.

Researcher: Okay, thank you very much. Thank you very much for your in-depth answer right there. In the past, do you have adequate learning facilities for classes, practices, rehearsals, and performances within your school building?

Participant Eight: The overall answer to that question is no. However, in some instances, I had adequate performance facilities such as the stage and things like that, but I might have lacked the number of supplies such as stands and music stands for the students to use. I may have had an adequate facility for performance, such as the stage, but I lacked a designated area to teach. For example, in the band, I lacked the designated area appropriate for teaching band students.

There have been times that we had to teach band students outside or come up with an area. There were other times I had to share a space. However, it was not conducive. In other words, some of the things that I had to do to get my students to classes once I arrived at the building, I had to go and get my students out of their classes, set the entire band room up, you know, have band class all in that designated time. Take the students back to the designated area inside their classroom. So, those are just some of the challenges and the reason why I said no to the answer to the questions.

Researcher: Oh, okay. Thank you so much. That helps out a lot. So, the next question was whether you have adequate functioning and sufficient materials, such as instruments and resources, to properly educate your music program. That was the probing question, but you have thoroughly answered that question.

Participant Seven: Okay.

Researcher: We will move to the next probing question dealing with a booster, parent, and financial support. The next probing question: Are you allowed to have a parent or booster organization to support and assist your instrumental music program financially?

Participant Seven: In times past, it depended on the school. Sometimes I was allowed. Sometimes I was not allowed. So, it is kind of like it depended on the school and the community whether or not any administrator could have it or not have it. That is kind of a blanket answer for me. So, it just depended on the school.

Researcher: Okay, I appreciate that answer. If you were allowed, how was parental involvement and support?

Participant Eight: Lacking, you might have concerning a whole ensemble, you may have one or two or three faithful parents who would be engaged in that booster activity or any fundraising events. It was always the same three or four people. So overall, it lacked support even if you had a booster club. You know you had several other children in the program.

However, their parents could not lend or their family members, you know, anybody, to come in instead to offer it. So, often there was an imbalance in who would do what, which can be, or get people quickly burned out because they are the same people. What is that like for them to kind of operate independently? I always had to be engaged with that as well. So, it is like we say support is lacking on that point administratively and functionally.

Researcher: Okay. So that was the next question, what will be administrative support, and you answered that question. So, in any event, was there any collaborative effort between the administration and your music program?

Participant Eight: No! I sometimes had, even if the district had allocated a small fund to obtain some periodicals and materials or things like that, there were times when the administrator took that budget money and allocated it to other programs and things in the school. So, we could not even use that bit of it. If the administrator says you cannot use it, you cannot.

So that was unfortunate, but that was often the case. They did not see the value of the music programs. They did not see the value for the students. They did not see the value and did not invest a dime. So yeah, those are some kinds of things I experienced.

Researcher: Okay, understood. Next question: How does scheduling work for your program? How did it in the past? How does it work currently scheduling students and inquiring?

Participant Eight: Unfortunately, the scheduling greatly hinders the music programs. In recent years they have not allowed you to schedule the kids according to their needs. They tend to schedule them according to grade level but not according to their actual performance level, which for us as directors, is not the best situation. Frequently, you might recruit the kids, but in the schedule, you might have conflicts.

They may pull the kids or hold the kids for class. If the kids did not finish some work in another class, they might pull them out. So, even though they were scheduled for the class, they could not come to participate in the class. Sometimes I had an A/B week schedule, an on-and-off schedule. So, I would see the kids maybe three or four times a week.

Sometimes I had it every other day scheduled, and then, you know, I might see them on one week, and I might see them on another week. Again, not an excellent supportive schedule with consistency because this is what our kids need. They need consistency and to be involved in an ensemble at their proficiency level, which helps the band director get them with the peer helper. It allows them to be able to do things that would help the students be able to build each section of the schedule. It is an overall misunderstanding of the need to schedule our musical programs.

Researcher: Okay, thank you for that answer; in-depth and very complex answer because the next sub-question was going to be, does the Guidance Department collaborate with you or your instrumental music programs or music program in general for an efficient scheduling method? I can already make the valid assumption that it is a no.

Participant Eight: That is a no.

Researcher: Okay, all right. At this time, did you use other methods or strategies to rectify scheduling issues? I know music teachers have tried to use other methods of their own to try to rectify scheduling issues. Did you use anything of that matter?

Participant Eight: Oh, I would try to seek the counseling department to assist me or anyone responsible for scheduling. I would first try to be proactive in recruiting students to the program. It takes you getting personally involved. Once seeing what some scheduling challenges may be, you kind of were left with the after-school rehearsal concept to be able to rectify whatever was happening in the schedule during the day.

However, very little room, wiggle room, to try to change because it is kind of like in the school; once it is set in stone, it is overall. It is an afterthought if it is not considered a priority. It is not a good solution for our program, but another thing I would try to do if I had a planning period or something like that, any kind of planning period I would try to see if I could get that student to be with me so that I can work with them individually if there was a space in the schedule that was just open.

Can I create a class for a small ensemble, maybe a woodwind or percussion section or whatever? I would try everything to get those students to meet the program's daily needs. Of course, we always knew the end goal where we were trying to go to, but it was minimal. You are like inside a box trying to figure out which way I go. If there is an opening, I found it and would implement it myself, but honestly, it does not mean it was supported or approved.

Researcher: Understood. Thank you so much for that answer. The final question: What suggestions for improvement would you like to offer to these questions and concerns regarding this study? It could be just how the study is set up in general, or it could also be with the concerns such as the challenges of teaching music education in South Atlanta public schools.

Participant Eight: Let me make sure I understand the question. You are asking me what suggestions I would use regarding improving the study or implementing programs.

Researcher: We would like to go on the other end as implementation more so strategies.

Participant Eight: Okay. I could say this when I started band, you had beginning, intermediate, and advanced band; the approach to teaching those areas should be at least divided according to level and not necessarily their grade level because you could have a student who is a sixth grader. Let us just say middle school, which is very advanced and proficient, and it would be great to get them in that advanced ensemble, but again, it would change the scope of how they look at schedules. It is not impossible to do because it has been done.

The other thing is that I would add the music theory piece to the middle school curriculum because they need music theory to understand those concepts better. Sometimes, they say, "oh, well, they will get that in general music." No, they will not, and I think there is a misconception even when it comes to choral music. The chorus also needs to be an opportunity for them to be divided according to levels.

In scheduling, they just think, "oh, well, it is a voice. Let us throw them in there," but that presents a whole other set of challenges concerning technique, the ability to read and perform the studies in pedagogy. So, it is just those things that I would say. Number one, get your band directors, choral directors, and orchestra teachers. Get them involved from the beginning. The administrators should seek them out.

They know what they need best. The other part is that sometimes they want to see the result but will not consult us, take surveys, or do anything to find out what we lack. What are the needs? What if we want to build a program here? You tell us what you need to build this program, and I think that insight would be critical if they sought it out from the directors because they could get a clear insight—especially someone who has had an opportunity to be at the school and sees the challenges.

None of us can have a program without adequate funding. We need adequate funding for proper and appropriate literature. We need to be able to have a budget for the repair of instruments. We need to be able to have miscellaneous things, things that we go to all the time. What I notice, and what I could tell you, and I am sure you have done as well, is that we bought these things and made a difference. We purchased the reeds. We purchase the pads, everything the oil. We purchase these things.

We had additional mouthpieces on hold in case students needed them. The directors' passion they have in love for the music is that met with appreciation. So, I would say that they need the insight of the directors. There needs to be a steering committee district-wide. Let us get the directors together and deal with some actual incense needs assessment to bring the programs up to the quality level.

Often, when we had our initial year of professional development, they would bring people in from the youth orchestras and ensembles around the city, and they would say, "oh wow, we want our kids to participate," but you cannot produce a kid to participate and be at that level when we are not following step one and point A. We have to start at the beginning.

What are the needs, and meet those first? Then we can put those students out. It presents much pressure on the directors. You asked me a question earlier, and I just thought about it. What things might you have done to fill in the gaps for what we might not have had? I know directors who, instead of teaching some of these kids the notes and how to read them properly, came up with their methods to get the kids to learn how to have it because they did not have the music literature. So, directors have done everything that they can, I think, and in their power. I do not know one who has not, but we need the support administratively, district-wise, and locally, and

we have to have parent involvement. I cannot imagine myself and my programs if I did not have my parent to back me up. It is just impossible for me to be able to excel.

Researcher: Okay. Well, thank you. Thank you very much. Those are all the questions that we have for the particular study. I will turn off the recording and the transcript, and we will debrief for about five minutes if that is okay.

Participant Eight: That is fine.

Researcher: Okay, give me one second.

APPENDIX J: THESIS DEFENSE DECISION

DOCTOR OF WORSHIP STUDIES or DOCTOR OF MUSIC EDUCATION THESIS DEFENSE DECISION

The committee has rendered the following decision concerning the defense for

Davion Rashad Battle on the Thesis,

Success vs. Survival: The Challenges of Teaching K-12 School Music in South Metro Atlanta

as submitted on February 24, 2023:

a.   _____ X _____ Full approval to proceed with no revisions. The document should be prepared for submission to the Jerry Falwell Library.

b.   _____ Provisional approval pending cited revisions. The student must resubmit the project with cited revisions according to the established timeline.

c.   _____ Redirection of project. The student is being redirected to take MUSC/WRSP 889 again, as minor revisions will not meet the expectations for the research project.

Dr. Jerry L. Newman, Ph.D (ABD), D.W.S, Ed.S.   REMOVED   02/25/2023

_____

Print Name of Advisor/Mentor   **Signature**   **Date**

Dr. Karen M. Kuehmann, Ed.D.   REMOVED   02/25/2023

_____

Print Name of Reader   **Signature**   **Date**