

PRINCIPALS' PERSPECTIVES ON THE FACTORS THAT IMPACT K-12 MUSIC PROGRAMS

by

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(Under the Direction of Rebecca L. Atkins)

ABSTRACT

School's curriculum decisions are based on mandates derived from federal, state, and local policies and other government funding resources but the decision-making in large part is left to the principal at the school level. Unfortunately, music programs are often the first programs to be eliminated, though, principals and other administrators understand the value of these programs on the balance of the overall curriculum (Simon, 2013). The purpose of this qualitative descriptive phenomenological study was to describe principals' lived experiences and perceptions of how the process of funding, legislation, and decision-making has impacted K-12 music programs.

I interviewed seven principals on their perceptions of the value of music education, and the impact of legislative changes and funding allocation on the existence of music programs within the K-12 curriculum. Additionally, the participants shared other factors that influenced their decision-making process. Findings indicated that these principals highly valued the role of music education in a well-rounded curriculum. Legislation and politics played a small role in the decision to include, cut or expand

music programs, but principals' decisions were based on the needs of the students, students' interests, and the role the music program had on the school culture and community at-large.

KEYWORDS: principals, decision-making, music programs, No Child Left Behind (NCLB), Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my mother Juanita Cash, and my father James Toliver for their continuous love and support. I would also like to dedicate this work to my sister Brittney Cash, my grandparents Charles and Francesca Tyler, my deceased godmother Pat Hodges, my deceased grandparents Clearance and Mary Ann Cash, and my family, and friends. Thank you for your support throughout this long journey. A special shout out to my dog Tatum (A man's best friend) for being my number one supporter when no one else was there to listen to me talk, cry or yell out loud. Finally, to my ancestors who were silenced and never saw freedom, this is dedicated to you.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Music is a powerful tool in humanity, lending humans the ability to communicate beyond linguistic boundaries, emotional restraints, and cultural biases (Parido, 2018). “Music is the one aspect in any society that is instantly significant and universal, yet there is something about music that is unexplainable and mysterious” (Parido, 2018, p.2). Art, in its essence, allows students to be free, inspiring their creativity, critical thinking, and self-identity. Art reflects who students are, who they strive to be, and contributes to their well-being (Hines, 2017). As Victor Hugo stated so succinctly, "music expresses that which cannot be put into words and that which cannot remain silent” (Barnes, 2017, p. 34).

Historically, music advocates have faced resistance in their pursuit of widespread support for the inclusion of music education (Majors, 2013). Major (2013) discussed how school administrators did not see enough value to include music in the school day. In the 1960s, music education made some significant changes to curriculum and standards, including the introduction of varied styles and genres, that over time led to more student participation (Hebert, David & Campbell, Patricia, 2000). By the 1990s, music education met the standards that complimented the growing age of academic inclusion (NAfMe, 1991).

However, in the 2000s, music education programs were struggling to survive, often attributed to the budgetary constraints of the school system. Additionally, the

priorities of these schools, accompanied by societal and economic challenges, may have impacted the decision-making. In the 21st century, music programs remain one entity to suffer from spending cuts (Brasche & Thorn, 2018; Colwell, Hewitt, & Fonder, 2017; Kelley & Demorest, 2016). These cuts have significantly impacted the way school music programs operate, and though program administrators have been creative in maintaining these programs with less funding, in some circumstances, these programs have been eliminated (Goral, 2018). Music advocates have continued to face challenges in school systems that do not support the inclusion of music education (Major, 2013).

The fine arts curricula in the United States include the areas of visual arts, music, dance, and drama (Murfee, 1995; Cahnmann-Taylor & Siegesmund, 2017). Despite the long historical importance of incorporating music in America's educational curriculum, advocates of music programs continue to justify how music contributes to student achievement. The College Board (2015) reported that students who enrolled in four years of music classes scored an average of 92 points higher on their SATs compared to students enrolled in music courses for a period of 6 months or less (Goral, 2018). However, even with evidence of the impact of music, there has been a drastic reduction in the arts education programs throughout the nation, leading to subpar educational experiences (Dwyer, 2011; Kinney, 2010; Kelley & Demorest, 2016). Furthermore, a decrease in choral programs in urban schools has been linked to a reduction in academic achievement (Dwyer, 2011; Kinney, 2010).

In the K-12 public school systems, decisions are made by the local Board of Education. As a head administrator of the school, principals have a direct impact on decisions surrounding public funding and the inclusion of curriculum and programs

offered in the school. The principal of each school can make decisions on funding allocation, teacher allotment needs, and curriculum needs for that particular school. Mandates enforced by federal, state, and local policies that rely on government funding support the school's curriculum. (Beveridge, 2010; Rabin & Hedberg, 2011; Spohn, 2008). Legislative funding, coupled with academic achievement of the school, has impacted decisions relating to the inclusion of music program offerings and the amount of funding provided to different curriculum areas or departments in order to improve the overall academic achievement as it related to the culture and mission of each school (Mulford, 2003).

Over the years, the federal government has provided legislation to aid schools that are in low-socioeconomic settings access to resources. The Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 (ESSA) is the nation's current main K-12 education law for all public schools. The ESSA Act governs how school systems are accountable for students' achievement as well as meeting their educational needs. ESSA (2015), replacing No Child Left Behind (NCLB) (2001), mandated that each child should have an education, providing an additional section of language in the policy that highlights the importance of specific subjects (Nierman & Colwell, 2019). to the subjects included in NCLB (2001), were

“English, reading, language arts, mathematics, science, foreign languages, civics and government, economics, arts, history, and geography” (American For the Arts, 2001, p. 6).

ESSA, added the term “a well-rounded education” to include courses, such as “English, reading or language arts, writing, science, technology, engineering, mathematics, foreign languages, civics and government, economics, arts, history,

geography, computer science, music, career and technical education, health, physical education, and “any other subject, as determined by the State or local educational agency to provide all students access to an enriched curriculum and education experience” (The Every Child Succeeds Act: Promises and Prospect for Student with Disabilities, 2016, p.2).

ESSA (2015) mandated that students should be exposed to a variety of subjects and gave principals and school systems more freedom to choose a curriculum that meets these mandates effectively (Beveridge, 2010; Ravitch, 2016). With this new legislation, many school principals allocated resources to college and career readiness programs instead of considering funding music programs and fine arts curricula (Glatthorn, Jailall, & Jailall, 2016). As a result, education of the arts declined in order to focus on other subjects over the last decade throughout the public education system (Bodilly, Augustine, & Zakaras, 2009; Major, 2013; Rabkin & Hedberg, 2011), causing a reduction in choral, band and music programs across the country (Collins & Platz, 2009; Kinn, 2015).

A focus on accountability through assessment has also affected decision-making. Many principals reported shifting funds from after school music programs towards remedial courses (Abril, 2006). These factors combined with unfavorable economic condition, lack of funding for some areas (i.e. urban, rural) may affect the ability to offer music instruction (Major, 2013; Dorman 2017). These curriculum decisions made by the principal will not only have an impact K-12 schools but could eliminate the music program from the curriculum (Glatthorn, Jailall, & Jailall, 2016).

School district decision-makers are charged with finding ways to ensure success and continued growth for their students on state-mandated tests and have an ethical

responsibility to focus on positive results (Abril, 2009; Gerrity, 2007; Major, 2013; McMurrer, 2007). However, coupling these issues with concerns of teaching students in schools with high poverty populations further agitates these challenges. (Boutte, 2012). Principals are required to confront the problem of low student achievement at their schools, and the decisions they make can exert indirect and, in some cases, direct influence on student academic achievement (Sims, 2011). Coupled with accountability pressure, many principals have the responsibility to challenge and change the uncertainty at the school caused by being recognized as low performing or needs improvement schools (Day, Kington, Strobot, & Sammons, 2006).

Statement of the Problem

While much of the literature addresses principals' behaviors, and some address certain leadership theories about principals, only two research studies addressed the decision-making process and how the process of funding has impacted K-12 music programs. One such study (Major, 2013) examined the decision-making process for reasons why Berkley School District in Michigan was able to keep music programs in the previous 10 years without making any cuts. Majors interviewed administrators, school board members, and principals and found that decision-makers considered the value music added to the community, community support, the funding available to hire quality teachers, the utilitarian and aesthetic value of music programs, and the contribution to the school image when making decisions about including music. Majors suggested other school districts nationwide might look at this school district as a model, taking positive strategies that apply to their situation and finding successful ways to keep their K-12 school music program.

In a similar study, Mayes (2014) explored school leadership beliefs about the factors influencing decision-making on music programs in urban schools in Alabama. Mayes interviewed 10 administrators and two upper level administrators on values that determine why or why not to sustain music programs. Following the interviews, principals attended a focus group discussion. Results revealed similar findings to Major (2013) and that principals valued music education for the role music education played in teamwork building, creativity, improved social skills, for improved academic achievement, and scholarship opportunities. Furthermore, teacher quality was vital to the program and an issue in their district. Recommendations from this study suggested making space available for all music programs and providing adequate funding.

Purpose of the Study

As a former music teacher in a K-12 public school urban setting, I, along with many close colleagues across a number of districts, experienced cuts or eliminations of full and partial music programs and were told these cuts were due to funding issues. In addition, I learned in my leadership graduate classes how leaders make decisions based on the financial constraints of their organization. These courses were beneficial in understanding the difficult decisions of principles leading K-12 school programs. I have often wondered what other factors contributed to these cuts including legislation and general decision-making.

The purpose of this qualitative descriptive phenomenological study was to gather information about principals' lived experiences and perceptions of how the process of funding, legislation and decision-making has impacted K-12 music programs. The study

investigated principals' perspectives of the factors that may influence the exclusion of music programs from the curriculum of K-12 schools.

Research Questions

Four research questions below guided this study:

RQ1: What are the principal's beliefs and perceptions of the value of including music programs in K-12 schools?

RQ2: How and to what extent has legislation changes impacted decision making of inclusion of music programs?

RQ3: How and to what extent has funding allocation impacted the decision making of inclusion of music programs?

RQ4: What other factors have influenced the decision of a principal to include or exclude music programs from the K-12 curriculum?

Overview of the Methodology

To better understand the specific experiences of K-12 school principals, I interviewed principals using questions from Major's (2013) study as a guide, collected data about funding and curriculum, and collected data about the decision-making process that involves strategies that are designed to sustain music programs. A descriptive qualitative research design was selected to better understand the participant's reflections of their own specific experiences and serve as a lens in understanding the participant's reflection of their experience in a detailed format. This study was a phenomenological study, specifically exploring principals' perspectives and experiences from K-12 school systems. Phenomenology design allowed for an in-depth narrative of one's experiences. Investigating "the very nature of the thing or object of human experience" is the

researcher's goal in phenomenological research (Creswell, 2013, p.177). Music enrollment, music courses offered, and enrollment by race/ethnicity and the mission and vision of each school were also obtained for this study.

Additionally, this study will follow Grounded Theory, which refers to a set of systematic inductive methods for conducting qualitative research toward theory development (Charmaz, 2003). “Grounded theory has considerable significance because it (a) provides explicit, sequential guidelines for conducting qualitative research; (b) offers specific strategies for handling the analytic phases of inquiry; (c) streamlines and integrates data collection and analysis; (d) advances conceptual analysis of qualitative data; and (e) legitimizes qualitative research as scientific inquiry” (Charmaz, K. 2003). Grounded theory studies build a theoretical framework that supports the study once the data collection has been acquired (Morse et al., 2016).

Educational Significance

The results from this study may be of interest to teachers, principals, students, parents, and other education stakeholders. The study addresses a gap in the literature concerning the principal's perspective on how the process of funding and decision-making has impacted choral arts and K-12 music programs. This is the first study to explore how mandates set forth by ESSA (2015) have affected K-12 music programs. My goal is for district leaders (i.e. principal, assistant principals, instructional leaders, and upper leadership) to be able to use data to reevaluate the importance of music education opportunities for public education students.

This study may help increase support from school principals, state and federal school officials, parents, and ultimately develop more effective methods to improve

funding allocation for music inclusion in K-12 school systems. The results presented in this study will help move the music field a step closer to determining how principals' perceptions have an influence on the decision-making process, and how legislation and values may be factors as to why some schools are able sustain their music programs, while other do not. Furthermore, this information may give music teachers a better understanding of the factors affecting the decision-making process of principals.

Summary

The answers to the research questions presented in this dissertation present principals' experiences on factors that influence decisions, such as legislative, funding, curriculum, amongst others. This information may give K-12 music educators a better understanding of the process of funding, the role of leadership and decision-making, an understanding of what different principals value about the arts, and values and information about why some schools have music and can sustain their programs, while other are eliminated. In turn, music educators may be able to use this knowledge to help shape their advocacy efforts to continue K-12 music programs in their schools.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The notion of equal funding for schools has always been a topic of discussion and debate (Simon, 2013). The majority of school funding is derived from local property tax, and the imbalanced allocation of those funds is a continuous issue for most jurisdictions (Odden, 2003). A report on the fairness of school funding rated all 50 states using the following criteria: funding level, funding distribution, state fiscal effort, and public coverage (Baker, Sciarra, & Farrie, 2010). The report indicated that many states do not equally distribute education funding to accommodate the needs of the schools and students who reside in poverty-stricken areas. As a result, school administrators often prioritized students' needs when it came to school budgets (Simon, 2013).

Throughout time, thousands of fiscally independent, publicly funded school districts emerged across the nation (Goldin & Katz, 2008). Martin (2015) discussed how there are patterns of inequalities that exist in how programs are funded that leads to compromising essential programs as the arts. Some communities simply did not possess enough taxable wealth to adequately fund their schools on their own, whereas others had more than enough (Marlin, 2015). For example, to account for funding inequity, in the state of Texas, the media coined a term called the Robin Hood plan, where specific legislation in 2003 provided a court mandate for all schools to experience equitable school financing across all school districts throughout the state. This ensured that poorer school districts received more resources than their counterparts (Wheeler, 2019).

The U.S. Constitution grants no authority over education to the federal government. As a result, the funding of education remains, constitutionally, a state responsibility (Crampton, 2007). States, in turn, have varied regarding the extent to which they have acquired fiscal responsibility, therefore, allowing funding responsibilities to fall on local taxpayers. For example, in Illinois, the state's proportion of educational revenue in the fiscal year 2012 consisted of 26.1% federal sources of revenue that totaled up to 8.1 %, leaving 65.9% of revenue to be covered by local sources (Illinois School Report Card, 2013). Similarly, the state of Georgia received the following public funding allocation: 9% federal, 46 % state, and 45 % local sources. (Georgia Department of Education, 2017). On the national level, school districts, on average, receive about 48% of their total revenues from the state, 44% from local sources, and 8% from the federal government (Berliner & Glass, 2014). Local governmental communities may vary both in terms of their capacity to fund schools and the values they ascribe to education or, more specifically, to public schooling. Local funding relies on the taxable property to include housing and land, and its reliance on taxation depends highly on the school funding structure within the state. The existing state and local funding structures have had a great effect on the public dollars that each school district is provided in its budget to educate students (Berliner & Glass, 2014).

Legislation History Affecting Funding

The introduction of funding legislation from the federal government was developed to address the inequities affecting funding within American schools. These legislative efforts began with the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) (1965) for K-12 schools, followed by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) and

the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015 (Dee & Jacob, 2009). Title I was introduced and was passed by Congress on April 9, 1965.

Title I. Dee and Jacob (2009) stated, “Title I, is the federal government’s signature program for targeting financial assistance to schools and districts serving high concentrations of economically disadvantaged students” (p. 6). Title I was adopted to improve the academic achievement of low-performing students. Under the expectations of the NCLB, the provisions outlined in the Annual Year Progress (AYP), that schools must increase the percentage of students who score at the proficient level or above on state English/Language Arts and Mathematics assessments. This expectation impacted the entire school population of students enrolled in Grades 3 through 9 and other students who fall into a subgroup. These subgroups consisted of students in a specific ethnic group. According to a Georgia Department of Education (2010) reported how school districts are expected to meet AYP goals by assessing the school districts as it pertains to state standardized testing.

Before the initiation of federal funds allocated to fund education, many obstacles and inequities existed in schools on a large scale. According to (Stickney & Plunkett, 1982), Sexton (1961) explored the relationship between a child’s educational opportunities and the amount of parental income. Sexton (1961) collected data from over 285,000 students, 10,000 teachers, and 300 schools on achievement and available educational opportunities examining the relationship between a child’s educational opportunities and the amount of parental income. The average family income groups of the elementary and high school students consisted of the following groups: Group I:

(\$3,500-\$4,857), Group II: (\$5,300-\$6,695), Group III: (\$7,100-8,500) and Group IV: (\$9,112-\$11,055) (Sexton 1961).

Rational for the unequal distribution results of this data revealed that the lower-income groups were subjected to instruction by substitute teachers as well as were taught in the oldest building with substandard facilities. The income groups in Sexton (1961) study revealed that the top two elementary school income groups were performing above grade level on standardized achievement tests compared to all the schools in the two low-income school groups who were below grade level. Remedial services were available to more children in the two top-income groups than the two low-income groups. As a result, 11% of children in the low-income group were retained and did not move to the next grade level. "Gifted" children were exclusively in the top groups while "delinquents" came from the lower groups. Forty-nine percent of the students from the lower-income group dropped out compared to 17% of the higher income group. Forty-two percent of the schools in the lowest income groups did not have a cafeteria and did not serve any free meals or free milk compared to 22 % of the top-income group schools (Sexton 1961) The results of this study demonstrated the inequalities in terms of the level of education. There are fewer facilities and fewer resources to assist low-income students that lead to an increase in the drop-out rates and the ability of these students to be successful in taking the standardized achievement test because some school districts lacked the resources and support. The funding allocation for Title I has changed over the years. "For the fiscal year 1998, the Clinton administration allocated \$7 billion in Title I funds to serve over 6 million students" (Wong & Meyer, 1998, p.115). This allocation was and still is the largest increase in K-12 federal education funding implemented to aid students

in achieving proficiency on the mandated state standardized tests (Camera & Cook, 2016). In 2002, President George W. Bush increased Title I funding to 10 billion dollars (Borman, 2002). In 2007, the funding for Title I reached and continues to exceed 25 billion dollars per year (U.S. Department of Education, 2016).

One of the major components of Title I is the required self-evaluation for the effectiveness component. "Title I was the first federal education law to mandate annual effectiveness evaluations" (Borman & D'Agostino, 1996, p. 309). Instead of estimating the impact of the program on student achievement, the main value of the early federal evaluation addressed a more fundamental question: Were the federal funds spent on the target students for the intended purpose of providing supplemental educational services? A study sponsored by the Washington Research Project and NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund provided one of the more prominent reports of a large-scale violation in the operation of the program (Martin & McClure, 1969). In many cases, districts did not respond to requests from the states for achievement test results, or the districts provided incomplete data (Wargo, Tallmadge, Michaels, Lips, & Morris, 1972). Wargo et al. (1972) concluded that localities had disregarded regulations, guidelines, and program criteria and did not implement Title I as intended by Congress. These revelations prompted the development of more stringent federal guidelines for program compliance and accountability measures (Borman & D'Agostino, 1996).

In 1974 the evaluation methods were changed, and Title I gained greater creditability and accountability in the school system. Although the assessment of students and programs has always served as an essential component of Title I, there was minimal federal guidance on how to measure student achievement. Before 1974, Congress was

concerned about the lack of information on the quality and effect of these programs funded by Title I and therefore mandated a uniform evaluation and reporting system. Based on pre- and post-testing, the system evaluated the impact of programs by comparing student performance to the national comparison group (School Reform, 1996). Although the system did not prescribe a specific type of test, the common practice was to use a commercially developed norm-referenced test, a type of test already widely used in schools and districts across the country (School Reform 1996).

No child left behind (NCLB). The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 was introduced to provide financial support and assistance to socioeconomically disadvantaged children (Adam, 2016). This particular act focused on ensuring states and schools boosted the performance of certain subgroups of students. These groups included English-language learners, students in special education, and underprivileged minority children whose academic achievement gap, on average, was under state requirements (Adam, 2016). States did not have to comply with the new requirements, but if they didn't, they risked losing federal Title I funding (Vinovskis, 2015).

To accomplish this goal, state assessment systems were created to assure students met state and grade-level expectations (Maleyko & Gawlik, 2011; NCLB, 2001; Shannon-Baker, 2012). According to NCLB, all students should have reached proficiency on state standardized assessments in reading and math by the 2014 school year (NCLB, 2011, Rush & Scherff, 2012; Shannon-Baker, 2012). NCLB set a policy whereby schools and administrators were held accountable for increasing student achievement. If a school did not meet Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) requirements for two consecutive years, the

school would be identified as a school required to implement a school improvement plan (Forte, 2010; NLCB, 2001; Shannon-Baker, 2012).

Additionally, NCLB (2001) specifically listed fine arts programs as one of the eight major subject areas of study for public education. In a letter to school and education community leaders, the United States Secretary of Education Duncan (2009) suggested that arts were defined as a core subject and stressed that "the arts can help students become tenacious, team-oriented problem-solvers who are confident and able to think creatively" (p. 1). However, research has shown a belief that fine arts were still regarded as nonessential in traditional American education (Pogrebin, 2007).

As a further example highlighted by a study completed by Shepard (2009), the state of Massachusetts cut fine arts programs due to financial problems and their focus on meeting requirements for No Child Left Behind (NCLB) mandates. Shepard (2009) also emphasized that principals felt significant pressure to make cuts, with the arts typically being the area first to be removed. The National Statistics on Music (2010) found that schools throughout the nation had decreased their allocation of monies dedicated to music education (Lehman, 1990; Woodworth, Gallagher, & Guha, 2007; McMurrer, 2008; Major 2013).

Every student succeeds act (ESSA). The Every Student Succeeds Act (2015) is the most recent reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) (1965). Replacing its predecessor, the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act, ESSA modified provisions related to standardized testing and shifted accountability provisions to the states, still ensuring that students would take annual standardized tests in the third and eighth grades. States now have greater control of what standards students are held to,

though the Department of Education would still monitor the achievement of those standards. First, states submit the goals and standards to the Department of Education, who then provide the states with feedback, eventually approving these standards.

The purpose of the standardized tests is to determine levels of capabilities in the classroom, which then can act as a barometer to each state's success in their achievement gaps (Johnson, 2016). The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) was established to measure the strength of education, to measure the abilities of the student, and to force schools to some form of accountability in teaching students effectively.

The legislation also provided a list of subjects that could be included to contribute towards a well-rounded education (Nierman & Colwell, 2019). According to ESSA (2015), a well-rounded education is defined as:

“courses, such as English, reading, or language arts, writing, science, technology, engineering, mathematics, foreign languages, civics and government, economics, arts, history, geography, computer science, music, career and technical education, health, physical education, and any other subject, as determined by the State or local educational agency, to provide all students access to an enriched curriculum and educational experience” (Walker, p. 4).

ESSA provided the ability for principals to select what programs could be included and excluded from their school's curriculum, to provide a well-rounded education to their students (Glatthorn, Jailall, & Jailall, 2016; Major, 2010). ESSA does not require any of these subjects to be studied; but instead has created an expectation that states will make reasonable efforts to expose their students towards a wider range of subjects while highlighting flexibility for how public schools measure student progress in

a variety of areas (Glatthorn, Jailall, & Jailall, 2016). For example, a student wellness curriculum was implemented in the state of Vermont (Blanco, 2019). In the 2018 to 2019 school year, all Vermont public schools required their students in grades 4, 7, 9, or 10 to take the state's physical education assessment. Similarly, Connecticut, Michigan, Illinois, Kansas, and Washington required students to be exposed to Social and Emotional Learning to increase areas of both academic and school success (Blanco, 2019). This curriculum requirement met the ESSA definition of a well-rounded curriculum, providing students with skills and knowledge that promoted a healthy lifestyle.

Ludwig, Boyle, & Lindsay (2017) discussed implementation of arts programs under the lens of ESSA, stating that programs need to be evidenced-based under the new legislation according to one of the four tiers; tiers one through three focus on demonstrating “a statistically significant effect on improving student outcomes or other relevant outcomes; and tier four stating that arts programs must provide a rationale that an intervention is ‘likely to improve student outcomes or other relevant outcomes.’” (Ludwig, Boyle, & Lindsay, 2017 pg.7).

The enactment of ESSA has not diminished any issues associated with education equity between low-income and high-income and between African American, Hispanic, Indian, Asian, South-Pacific students and Caucasian students (Knight, 2019). Knight (2019) reported that problems still existed with district allocated funding and resources for schools that represented minority and low-socioeconomic populations. The reason why issues of inequity have continued is due to schools having to employ less experienced teachers who are teaching in environments where they have larger classes

compared to schools whose demographic consists of high socioeconomic status and predominately Caucasian students.

Furthermore, poverty-stricken communities have been negatively impacted by the inequalities due to disproportion of funding allocation. Some communities do not possess taxable wealth to adequately fund their schools independently in comparison to other school districts that sustain their wealth. In 2011, about 13,600 K-12 regular public-school districts existed across the United States (Digest of Education Statistics, 2011). In concentrated poverty-stricken school districts, the challenges continue to arise as their counterparts are tested on their abilities by the state system. These districts operate to effectively intervene to make necessary changes in the inequalities of resources which affect the decision-making on curriculum changes (Baker, Sciarra, & Farrie, 2014).

Curriculum Decision Making in Schools

Decision-making is formally defined as the process of resolving a problem, which happens over period of months, weeks, or even years (Garvin & Roberta, 2001; Zikmund, 2003). Also, Fullan (2002) added to this definition, describing decision-making as making choices that lead to organizational change. The process of decision-making may require a group to provide feedback upon reviewing all of the alternatives before making conclusions to support or not to support the proposed solution.

Decisions are influenced by public funding and how funding allocation is distributed throughout the school district. Due to the changes in state testing assessments, educational accountability has adapted to meet the change. The decision-making process has expanded to include school officials such as the school itself, principals, local school boards, and the school district (Malin, 2015). Principals are essentially powerful leaders

in how they influence so much in the decision-making process. Principals rely on their professional knowledge accumulated through experience in making important decisions to meet the needs of the school (Sergiovanni, 1991). Weiner (2016) stated that “it is important for the principal to approach curricular additions and changes via shared responsibility of teachers, instructional coaches, and leadership team” (p. 28).

The process of decision-making is considered the most important activity by educational leaders (Harrison, 1996) and one of the easiest to get wrong (Garvin & Roberto, 2001). The principal becomes the lead decision-maker that can make effective decisions with or without the recommendations from others (Gordon & Alston, 2009; Hoy & Miskel, 2008). Sometimes these decisions have to be made quickly and there is no time to get input from others. The quality of these decisions determines the success or failure of the entire school (Fitzpatrick, 2012b).

The role of the school principal is complex involving more responsibility and demands compared to the past (Abu-Hussain, 2014). While a range of leadership patterns exist, the principal remains the central source of leadership influence (Wallace Foundation, 2012). The Wallace Foundation has issued more than 70 research reports and other publications that focus on school leadership (Wallace Foundation, 2012). The summary of these reports described behaviors of effective principals. These behaviors include shaping a vision of academic success for all students, creating a climate hospitable to education, cultivating leadership in others, improving instruction, analyzing data, and managing people to foster school improvement (Wallace Foundation, 2012, p. 2).

Mastrorilli (2016) examined how school processes, specifically administrator control and school morale, influenced student engagement and the student drop-out rate at the high school level. Matroroilli et al. (2016) supported the assumption that high school students who did not complete the school course of study had limited access to the same opportunities as graduates and were at risk of unemployment, welfare dependency, and imprisonment. The schools were able to combat this dropout rate with access to more funding to provide more resources to students. Weiner (2016) interviewed and observed instructional leadership teams from four charter schools located in a large northeastern city. Weiner et al. (2016) noted the principals appeared to deploy a variety of sub-committees to gain insight on the course of actions needed to be taken on the curricula decision-making process, but the majority of instructional leadership teams reported that principals of their charter schools had difficulties releasing authority to team members. The participants also discussed how the principal would request advice from the instructional leadership teams. They expressed their relationships with the principals were subordinate, as the principal would align the school with a more hierarchal model of leadership demonstrating an autocratic decision-making environment.

Edgerton and Desimone (2019) researched how principals affect the decision-making process in schools by studying differences in how principals, teachers, and school districts experience college and career-readiness programs. Edgerton and Desimone (2019) expanded how there was a clear disparity between principals, school districts and teachers as it pertains to accountability in curricula changes. For example, a majority of participants reported that out of the three states where the study was completed, teachers experienced higher levels of accountability towards college and career-readiness

programs than principals. Additionally, the results of their study highlighted how teachers also felt that they had significantly lower accountability levels when it came to addressing their state standards through the curriculum.

Principals play a large role in influencing curricula in their schools by analyzing student testing data from the curriculum, in order to improve content in K-12 education (Oliver, 2016). Stakeholders and principals need to understand the importance of their role when it comes to shaping policies and developing curricula. These policies influence state and local curricula due to new requirements set forth by ESSA (2015) (Glatthorn, Jailall, & Jailall, 2016). Furthermore, stakeholders need to understand that each school should have their curricula delivered efficiently and effectively and understand how the principal can work with classroom teachers to ensure that curricula are operational and meaningful.

History of Funding and Legislation of Fine Arts in the United States

Since the 1920s, the arts were considered important to the growth development of a child's education, and some school districts discovered ways to support the arts financially (Heilig, Cole, & Aguilar, 2010). The Great Depression (1929-1942) and World War II (1939-1945) exhausted the nation's available funding (Heilig et al., 2010). During the Cold War (1947-1991), there was more emphasis placed on the subjects of science and mathematics, thus pushing arts aside and out of the school's curriculum (Heilig et al., 2010).

In 1963, the U.S. Office of Education supported research in the arts, thereby creating a policy, including the arts in the curriculum as a core-based subject (Heilig et al., 2010). This policy survived because the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and

Welfare affirmed that arts programs are necessary for school-aged children (Heilig et al. 2010). This action led to the creation of a grant agency called the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), which provided funding through foundations on a national level for school arts programs. Even with legislation and funding organizations in place, budget cuts and state budget deficits are attributed to a reduction in the choral, band, and music programs (Collins & Platz, 2009; Kinn, 2015). For the past decade, music education has declined in comparison to other subjects offered through public education (Bodilly, Augustine, & Zakaras, 2009; Major, 2013; Rabkin & Hedberg, 2011).

There is often a continuous balancing act among school administrators to ensure that students have the resources they need to be successful. When encountered with budget cuts, principals make decisions to reduce budgets based on classes that do not affect accountability. The subjects that are not state tested, therefore, are first to be scrutinized for cuts (Pederson, 2007; Schnider, 2005). These budget cuts are often problematic for school arts programs and can result in consequences that can range from the elimination of equipment and materials to the elimination of programs and teacher positions (Simon, 2013).

Even with ESSA and funding in place, Shaw (2017) found that music programs were reduced in urban elementary schools in Lansing, Michigan based on budgetary constraints. He interviewed 18 teachers and current employees and found three areas of vulnerability in these urban elementary schools' arts programs, including declining enrollment, budget problems, and negative perceptions of elementary art teachers. Furthermore, Glatthorn, Jailall, & Jailall (2016) reported that many school principals

chose to allocate resources to college and career readiness programs rather than to fund music programs and fine arts curricula.

Ludwig, Boyle, & Lindsay (2017) discussed the implementation of arts programs under the lens of ESSA, stating that programs need to be evidenced-based under the new legislation demonstrating “a statistically significant effect on improving student outcomes or other relevant outcomes,” and by providing a rationale “that an intervention is ‘likely to improve’ student outcomes or other relevant outcomes” (p.18). The authors continued to report that arts integration can include music. ESSA (2015) offers funding assistance from organizations such as the Assistance for Arts Education grant program. School administrators can apply for this grant, thus helping with funding allocation towards the fine arts curriculum within their schools.

According to Abril & Gaul (2008), principals generally value music education and understand the importance of having arts and music in a school’s curriculum due to support and their perceptions of music programs. Abril and Gault (2007) explained that the inclusion of music in a school curriculum depends on the values associated with those decision-makers. A recent study conducted by the Music for All Foundation (2004) examined data from the California Basic Educational Data System and compared the amount of music instruction in California schools over five years from the school year of 1999-2000 through 2003-2004. A comparison of enrollment figures, percentage of student involvement, and the total number of music teachers indicated a 50% decline in student involvement in music education courses and a 26.7% decline in the number of music teachers (Abril & Gault, 2006). Based on the interviews of educators and policymakers, researchers speculated that this decline could be attributed to the current

California budget crisis and the implementation of No Child Left Behind (Abril & Gault, 2006) School principals throughout the United States reported that standardized tests, budgets, and No Child Left Behind were all factors that hurt music programs (Abril & Gault, 2006).

Benefits of Disadvantaged Students Participating in Music

Because urban schools tend to have higher rates of low-socioeconomic students and different ethnic backgrounds, it is important to understand urban schools and how music programs can benefit students. Green and Burke (2007) stated that arts programs fulfill a part of Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Additionally, arts programs fulfill the importance of being a part of a social set or environment and create a platform for learning and applying social skills, which in turn can improve self-esteem and promote student learning (Gerrity, 2009; Jones, 2009).

Music education offers alternatives to troubled youth, helping them to relate to themselves and others (Robinson, 2013). Cutting arts education classes, particularly for disadvantage and at-risk students, is disheartening in and of itself (Beveridge, 2010; Robinson, 2013). Participating in music education activities has been shown to positively influence the academic achievement of disadvantaged students (Abril & Gault, 2008). The study of music education can engage and motivate, influence self-efficacy, improve students' academic scores, and increase positive perceptions (Abril & Gault, 2008; Hallam, Creech, Varvarigou, & McQueen, 2012; Heimonen, 2008; Paquette & Pieg, 2008; Repress & Lufti, 2006).

Music education programs foster a positive atmosphere that promotes responsibility for at-risk students to rise above their socio-economic circumstances and to

focus on their talent (Campbell, 1997; Caughlan, 2008; Mcpherson & Hendricks, 2010; Murphy, 2009; Respress & Lutfi, 2006). Eliminating arts education classes, particularly music, will be a detriment to at-risk students (Beveridge, 2010; Robison, 2013). Morrison and Allen (2007) explained that students tend to be more active in their participation in situations where teachers and principals provide a curriculum that is thought-provoking and promotes social interactions and increased motivation in the classroom. Arts education is essential to students, the community, and stakeholders who hold political office and contribute financially to the school (Campbell et al., 2007).

Urban Schools and Music Programs

Misconceptions and stereotypes have plagued urban music education due to the assumption that generally, urban schools suffer significant deficits and are in constant crisis (Martignetti, Talbot, Caluhs, Hawkins, & Niknafs, 2013; Stitt, 2018).

Unsurprisingly, urban music education is faced with the challenge of inadequate resources added to the organizational culture that tends to focus on tested subjects. The insufficient resources, deterioration, and crisis in urban schools have contributed to the continued belief that excellent music programs are limited in urban settings, thereby discouraging many young individuals from pursuing music as a viable career.

(Fitzpatrick-Harnish, 2015). The existence of negative stereotypes in urban schools have led educators to be reluctant to teach in these environments and decide to relocate to instruct in middle class suburban classrooms where these programs are more successful (Fitzpatrick-Harnish, 2015).

Kinney (2019) examined non-music predictors (academic achievement, socio-economic status, number of parents or guardians in the home, mobility, ethnicity, and

sex) on urban students' decisions to enroll and persevere in middle and high school music ensemble electives. The results of the study revealed socioeconomic status became a weaker indicator for student band enrollment in high school, whereas the number of parents or guardians in the home became a stronger indicator of whether they would participate in the band in high school. For example, students who experience stability in the family will be successful in their participation in music programs because they feel supported.

Gaztambide-Fernández, Nicholls, & Arráiz-Matute (2016) examined arts programs offered in urban schools, including music, in both the United States and Canada, and suggested it was possible to determine whether an urban school would be more likely to include an arts program simply by examining their mission statements. The results revealed that mission statements of 84 specialized arts programs across two countries examine the ideas, values, and commitment that are expressed in these public statements (Gaztambide-Fernández, et al. 2016). The researchers described how the mission statement of different school districts vary as it relates to music programs and how it relates to the student population it serves. Gaztambide-Fernández, et al. (2016) found that mission statements provided a clearer picture of the ideas that shaped these programs. They encouraged educators, principals and community members to engage in conversations and create a shared vision, purpose and value of an education in the arts.

Suburban School and Music Programs

Understanding young people's motivation to participate in music requires understanding factors that impact participation such as culture, family, friends, places, and time (Hallam, 2002). Research has examined school and community cultures that

enabled students to participate in music (Bennetts, 2013; Hall, 2011; VanDeusen, 2016). Writte and Walsh (1990) described the urban and suburban teaching landscapes as representing “two very separate educational worlds” (p.192). Hannaway and Talbert (1993) stated, “due to the substantial cultural social, and economic differences between urban and suburban schools, the metropolitan status of schools represents an important social and organizational frame for policy-oriented research” (, p.5).

There appears to be limited research conducted on suburban schools and music curricula; however, some studies have examined suburban schools in relation to music education and community mobilization. For example, Sarasin (2019) examined the organization and management of a community-driven string music program that was operated under the direction of a parent-run board. The results of the study showed that in a suburban school, the level of parental involvement was crucial when it came to decision-making, gathering funding opportunities for the program, which in turn strongly influenced student outcomes and the success of the program.

Similar to urban schools, music programs in suburban schools are also highly affected by teacher turnover and attrition rates. Martinez (2017) interviewed 3 administrators, 3 new music teachers and a focus group of 3 former music teachers who resigned from their positions at the study site. The suburban school located in Central Texas found that these suburban school music teachers tended to leave their post due to unequal treatment. Many of the participants felt they were treated unfairly and differently compared to teachers who taught core classes. Another concern stated the lack understanding by music teachers and administrators about available supports to new teachers. Therefore, when it comes to building strong music programs in suburban

schools, it is important for administrators to treat music teachers equally, which in turn could increase attrition rates, ensuring that qualified music teachers can effectively build music programs.

Rural Schools and Music Programs

Research indicates that administrative support is crucial to the success of rural music programs (Isbell, 2005), that have unique needs and circumstances that are often overlooked in the dominant model of music education (Prest, 2013). Rural schools are often judged from the perspective of what they lack in comparison to larger suburban or urban schools, rather than from the quality and nature of the educational experiences they can provide for students (Bannerman, 2019). Teaching in a rural district necessitates an appreciation for the interwoven community relationships present in a rural locale, as understood through the idea of place within the community (Ilvento, 1998; Lyson, 2002 & White & Reid, 2008). Schools are community hubs both economically and socially as well as major employers within small communities (Lyson, 2002; Miller, 1995). Music teachers employed in rural settings encounter budgetary limitations that may result in unemployment as schools face financial hardships to support music programs (Bates, 2018).

The influence and importance of a school in a rural community reach beyond what may be true in other school setting types (Hicks, 2010). According to Grant and Drafall (1991), one benefit of teaching in a rural school is that administrators are accessible and supportive, subjecting educators less to the bureaucracy of the school system. Communities, schools, their music programs, and the individuals who participate in these groups are tied to the social, cultural, and political contexts in which they reside

(VanDeusen, 2016). Social, cultural, and historical meanings can facilitate values and support for a school music program by a member of its school and community

(VanDeusen, 2016). Music teachers desire for administrators to value their voice and feedback in the decision-making process specifically relating to financial planning and curriculum development (Isbell, 2005).

Principals play a large role in the decision-making process for including the arts, but few studies explored the principal's perspective. Major (2013) examined the decision-making process of keeping or cutting programs in one selected public-school district. The results showed that Berkley School Districts Administrators (i.e. principals and assistant principals) had committed to offering a well-rounded education to all their students and that music education played a large part in that education. To achieve the district's mission, Berkley administrators relied on community support, quality teaching, and creative ways of working with a finite budget. Leaders in the district actively sought ways to generate new revenue, collaborate with other districts to save money, and only made cuts to areas that did not affect music programming (Major, 2013).

Decision-making varies from school to school, system to system, and state to state. Mayes (2014) explored the perspectives of administrators (n=12), from K-8 school settings from one urban district in Alabama on how administrators make decisions to include or exclude music in the curriculum by conducting in-depth interviews with 8 principals, 2 assistant principals and 2 district directors. Additionally, Mayes (2014) retrieved and reviewed archival documents, held a focus group discussion, and took field notes. Specifically, the participants in this study identified several factors as effective, and those most often included were having support from the community, influences from

personal values, providing adequate funding, the fact that arts provided scholarship opportunities for students, and helps students excel in core subjects (Mayes, 2014).

Mayes (2014) suggested that administrators should consider adopting effective strategies that can prosper the decision-making process. In addition, Mayes (2014) recommended that local administrators and central office administrators, and other community stakeholders should focus on finding appropriate music programming for students at the elementary, middle, and high school level and disregard their ability to fund various band programs.

There are several limitations to the study, however, the research was limited because the sample size was small and limited to K-8 local administrators and central office program directors from 1 large school system in the southeastern region. The results also concluded that administrative beliefs affected the decision-making of music programming in urban schools, but the results will not apply to all schools within the United States. However, despite these limitations, school district administrators may use the findings to help design school programs (Mayes, 2014).

Value of Music Education

The value of music education in schools is an area of significance in the education profession; therefore, the difficulty of budgetary cuts can impact music programs. Administrators, parents, and music teachers identified NLCB mandates, standardized testing, fiscal constraints, staff deficiencies, facilities, and declining enrollment numbers as obstacles in providing and maintaining a school music program (Abril & Gault 2007; Abril & Gault, 2008; Major, 2013 and Miksza 2013). The era of accountability, with resulting changes to curriculum and resources, has forced schools and communities to

consider the value of public schools and school music programs in their communities (Elpus, 2014).

Summary

Public funding affects the decision-making process, and the allocation of resources play an essential role in the inclusion of music programs in the curriculum. There is evidence that the decision to include or to eliminate music programs from the school's curriculum may be a financial matter, often a trade-off between tested and non-tested subjects (Sowell, 2007). Furthermore, decisions made by principals may be influenced by personal philosophy and the mission and vision of the faculty and staff (Glatthorn, Jailall, & Jailall (2016). In addition to state and local funding, the economic value that music adds, and whether this decision will contribute positively to the overall reputation of the school district are factors influencing the decision to include music. (Major, 2013). The threat to public school music education programs is a systemic problem, which has been affected by different federal funding legislation. For without an art perspective, the arts will be disconnected from the world in which one lives (Fowler, 1996).

After reviewing a substantial amount of literature, Sowell (2007) discovered how the decision to eliminate music programs may be based on financial constraints that impact the trade-off between tested and non-tested subjects. Additionally, decisions made by principals will usually be determined by personal philosophy, the mission and vision, the economic values that music adds, and whether this decision will contribute positively to the overall reputation of the school district (Major, 2013). Leaders are continually seeking ways to understand the decision-making process (Haines, Street, & Haines, 2008;

Stenmark et al., 2010), however, if school principals can make decisions to keep music programs and improve student achievement with adequate funding, the decision to keep or cut programs would not be necessary (Major, 2013).

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) (2015) mandated that each child enrolled in a public school is expected to receive a well-rounded education. This change in legislation included the subject of music as an option, but the act does not require principals to include music courses within their curriculum specifically. The purpose of this qualitative descriptive phenomenology study was to describe the lived experiences of rural, suburban and urban school principals on how the process of funding and decision-making impacted music programs, specifically in K-12 schools.

Research Methodology and Design

A qualitative phenomenological design was chosen for this study because qualitative research allows for in-dept narrative of experiences and readers to focus on the views of participants (Parsons, 2009). Creswell (2005) acknowledged that unlike quantitative research designs, qualitative research, specifically the phenomenological methodology, encourages dialogue and discussion between the researcher and participant involved. According to Creswell (2005, 2017), phenomenological researchers explore an educational research problem by examining and understanding the experience of an individual or group of individuals. I was interested in obtaining K-12 school principals' perspectives and lived experiences on how the process of funding and decision-making have impacted music programs. This research hopes to aid music educators in developing

a better understanding of factors influencing choices to include or exclude music programs from their curriculum.

Research Questions

The research questions explored how principals perceive music programs, legislation, and other factors that have impacted their decision-making process for incorporating music programs into the curriculum. These questions led to other questions that explored and reflected the experiences of the principals.

This study was guided by four research questions:

RQ1. What are the principal's beliefs and perceptions of the value of including music programs in K-12 schools?

RQ2. How and to what extent has legislation changes impacted decisions of inclusion of music programs

RQ3. How and to what extent has funding allocation impacted the decision making of inclusion of music programs?

RQ4. What other factors have influenced the decision of a principal to include or exclude music programs?

Ethical Considerations

The University of Georgia's Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved the study (Appendix A) prior to the data collection. Participants of the study were informed of the risks through the consent form. The risks were limited, but I ensured the full confidentiality of the participants throughout the study. For example, the participant's full names were not used in the study. Instead, each participant was referred to by an anonymous identification number or letter (Principal A, Principal B., etc.). Additionally,

the public, K-12 schools at which they served was identified similarly (e.g., School A, School B, etc.) (Denzin & Giardina, 2016).

In the written document and articles, I referred to the schools as located in a southern or northern state. Since I previously resided and worked in the area the interviews were conducted, it is possible that some readers could make assumptions about the identification of the interviewees. Therefore, I did not identify the interviewees in conversations with anyone. However, the interviewee could mention that he or she was interviewed for this study to other people. If colleagues questioned me, I agreed not to divulge the identity of the school system, school, or principal. I stored all paper copies, including confidential information such as consent forms and transcription documents in a locked filing cabinet located in a private office of my residence. All electronic audio recordings of the semi-structured interviews will be kept in a password-protected file folder located on an external hard drive and stored in a locked filing cabinet and destroyed after five years after following the completion of the study. I am the only person with immediate access to confidential information to protect the anonymity of the participants and the integrity of the research process.

The Research Instrument

To ensure alignment between the interview questions and the study's problem statement, purpose, research questions, and methodology, I followed an interview protocol. To construct a robust interview protocol guided by the questions and findings from Major (2014) and Mayes (2004). I sent the interview questions to a panel of three principals (not from the participant pool) before data collection. To ensure accuracy the interviews provided the researcher with rich and detailed qualitative data for

understanding participants' experiences, how they describe those experiences, and the meaning they make of those experiences (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Each member of the panel had similar professional and educational experiences to that of the intended participants. These principals were then invited to provide feedback on each interview question (Castillo-Montoya, 2016). The feedback that was provided ensured a strong alignment between the interview questions and the purpose of the study and ensured that each interview question was easy to comprehend and could be answered within the parameters of the study. The first section of the original principal interview questions asked about demographic information, followed by 17 other questions (see Table 3.1).

Table 3.1

Original Principal Interview Questions

Questions	Original Principal Interview Questions
1.	Can you provide some information about your background in education and how many years you have occupied your position? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Demographic information b. Degrees, years in the classroom c. Content area taught d. Years in administration e. Your administration role
2.	Were you ever part of a music program in middle, high school or college?
3.	How has being involved in a music program help shape the vision and mission of the school you are currently a head principal of?
4.	What other factors outside of legislation have influenced the decision of a principal to include or exclude choral music or change the funding?
5.	What are your beliefs and perceptions of the values of including choral music programs in your school?
6.	What other factors outside of legislation have influenced the decision of a principal to include or exclude choral music or change the funding?
7.	Which programs do you find most significant and a priority for your student population?
8.	Describe the process for determining the content, organization, and funding of music programs?

9. How do you prioritize the curricula in making decisions on what subjects should be considered as a priority?
10. If you were challenged with a difficult decision that might involve either cutting music or cutting another program, what criteria would you use to make this choice?
11. What financial decisions have influenced any changes to your current music programs over the past five years?
12. How do you as the principal, make decisions on the curriculum?
13. What changes did your district have to make to its musical offerings to satisfy the requirements from NLCB to Every Student Succeeds Act (2015)
14. What is your definition of a well-rounded education, and what subjects would you include?
15. What percentage of funding from your school's budget is allocated to music programs within your school?
16. What type of funding model do you used to determine how funds are allocated to each department?
17. What is the priority of music classes when making teacher and student schedules relevant to the core classes like math and science?
18. In the past, has your district sacrificed any programs to save music?

After receiving feedback from the three principals, it was brought to my attention that the questions were too wordy and not consistent in nature. After revising the initial feedback, I sent the following questions back to those same three principals and my committee chair for approval. The new interview comprised of 17 questions, which were divided into five different categories. The categories were as follows: background information, values, legislation, decision-making, and funding. (see Table 3.2).

Table 3.2

Revised Principal Interview Questions

Questions	Revised Principal Interview Questions
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Background Information

1. Please provide some information about your background in education and how many years you have occupied your position?
 - a. Age, gender, years as assistant principal, years as principal
 - b. Degrees, years in the classroom
 - c. Content area(s) taught
 - d. Years in administration

- e. Your administration role
2. Were you ever part of a music program in either the middle, high school, or college level?

Values

1. What are your beliefs and perceptions of the values of including music programs in your school, such as band and choir?
2. Do you feel your involvement in the music program has shaped your vision and mission for your school? In what ways?

Legislation

1. What changes did your district have to make to its musical offerings to satisfy the requirements from NLCB to Every Student Succeeds Act (2015)
2. What other factors outside of legislation have influenced the decision of a principal to include or exclude music programs due to change funding?
3. What role do you think politics plays in the schools' decision-making process?

Decision Making

4. Which programs do you find as the main priority for your student population?
5. How do you prioritize the curricula in making decisions on what subjects should be considered as a priority?
6. How would you define a well-rounded education and what subjects (in your dream vision) would you include to encompass that description?
7. How do you prioritize music classes in considering both teacher and student schedules to incorporate other pertinent math and science classes in your planning?
8. In the past, has your district sacrificed any specific programs to retain music programs?

Funding

9. Over the past five years, what financial decisions have influenced any changes to your current music programs?
10. Does your school have a central office base budget or site-based budget?
11. What percentage of funding from your schools' budget is allocated to music programs within your school?
12. If you were challenged with a difficult decision that might involve either cutting music or eliminating another program, what criteria would you use to make this choice?
13. What type of funding model do you use to determine how funds are allocated to each department?

Data Collection Procedures

After receiving permission from the University of Georgia Institutional Review Board (IRB) (see Appendix A), I identified and invited 12 participants by email to participate. Only 4 out of the 12 responded stating their willingness to participate. Therefore, I posted information via my personal Facebook pages, professional groups and reached out to other colleagues to help identify and invite more participants. From this process, I recruited 3 more participants that met the inclusion criteria. To be included in the study, the participant had to meet the following set of criteria:

1. Each participant held a job title as a head principal.
2. Each participant was employed at a K-12 public school.
3. Each participant was in the role of head principal for a minimum of (4) years.
4. Each participant was employed in his or her current position for a minimum period of three years.

After determining the participant had met the criteria for the study, I contacted the participants via electronic (email). After agreeing to be a participant in the study, I sent via email the principal a recruitment letter (see Appendix A), consent form, confidentiality agreement (see Appendix B), and link to the demographic survey on Qualtrics. Table 3.3 below provides the questions administered from the Qualtrics.

Table 3.3

Qualtrics Demographic Survey

Numbers	Qualtrics Demographic Questionnaire
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please fill in the details <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) First name ii) Last name iii) Age iv) City v) State vi) Email addresses vii) Phone numbers
2.	What is your gender?
3.	What level as the principal represents your school?
4.	What type of population closely relates to your students?
5.	What is your highest level of degree or schooling that you have completed?
6.	What is your race or ethnicity?
7.	How many years have you been in administration?
8.	What content area did you teach before moving into administration? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Art Teachers b) Band Director c) Choir Director d) Drama Teacher e) Economics Teacher f) English/Language Arts Teacher g) History Teacher h) Math Teacher i) P.E. Teacher j) Orchestra Teacher k) Science Teacher

Once the consent form was signed and returned, and the demographic questionnaire completed on Qualtrics, I set up a time to complete the semi-structured interview (approximately 45 minutes) based on the availability of the participant. Each interview was conducted using phone conversation. All interviews were audio-recorded using an app called *Trint* which recorded the audio conversation while both parties were on the line. The *Trint* application was used to record these interview conversations and later downloaded into an audio file. During each semi-structured interview, I asked the same questions to each participant, prompting responses and asking follow-up questions to ensure the strength and understanding of answers.

Participants

Creswell (2013) recommends 5 to 25 participants for a phenomenological study. I employed purposive and snowball sampling to achieve a goal of 7 participants (Creswell, 2005, 2013; Huberman 1994). Purposive sampling limits participants to individuals who have experienced the phenomenon I investigated (Creswell, 2013). This study included seven public K-12 school principals from Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Nebraska, Mississippi, and Virginia. This study used snowball sampling as each administrator was able to refer another participant for the study. There was one principal from K-5, one from K-8, two from the middle school level (6-8), one from middle school (7-8) and two from the high school level. Among the seven participants, three represented rural schools, three from urban and one represented a suburban school. Five participants were males and two were female. Six participants were African American and one Caucasian. The number of years of experience ranged from six to twenty-six years as a school administrator (see Table 3.4 for demographics related to principal and schools, 3.5 enrollment makeup and 3.6 for enrollment numbers for K-12 music programs).

Table 3.4

Demographics characteristics of Principal and school

Principal	Ethnicity	Gender	Setting	Years Experience	Type	State
A	AA	Male	Rural	11	MS (T1)	Mississippi
B	AA	Male	Rural	12	MS (NT1)	Mississippi
C	AA	Male	Urban	19	HS (T1)	Indiana
D	AA	Male	Urban	22	MS (T1)	Florida
E	AA	Female	Urban	19	ES (T1)	Nebraska
F	AA	Female	Urban	12	E/MS (T1)	Mississippi
G	C	Male	Suburban	26	HS (NT1)	Virginia

Note. AA- African American C- Caucasian MS-Middle School HS-High School T1-Title 1 NT1- Non-Title 1

Table 3.5

Enrollment Makeup by Race/Ethnicity of each K-12 School

Schools	Grades Enrollment	Grades	Low	Asian SES %	Black%	Hispanic%	White %	MR%	NA %
A	558	6-8	100	0	99	0	1	0	0
B	450	7-8	0	5	50	2	39	21	2
C	2,400	9-12	100	1	50	30	15	2	1
D	837	6-8	100	0	73	21	6	0	0
E*	429	K-5	93	3	65	15.9	14	5.6	1.4
F	289	K-8	0	0	98	0	2	0	0
G	1,411	9-12	0	2	10	1	84	1	1
Total: 6374									

Note. *performing arts school MR- Multi Racial NA-Native American

Table 3.6

Enrollment Numbers of K-12 Schools Music Programs

School	Grade	Band	Choir	GM/MA	Orchestra	Piano	Percent
A	6-8	0	25	142	0	0	30
B	7-8	85	50	0	0	0	30
C	9-12	142	46	0	0	51	10
D	6-8	0	159	139	0	0	35
E*	K-5	50	98	50	50	0	58
F	K-8	0	0	289	0	0	100
G	9-12	84	134	0	46	0	18

Note. *performing arts school GM- General Music MA- Music Appreciation

Principals were asked in the Qualtrics demographic survey to answer the question related to content area. It was interesting to see that four out of the seven administrators were former English Language Arts teachers, one former Math teacher, one former Science teacher and one former Choral director.

Profile of Participants

Principal A profile. Principal A is a 33-year-old African American male, who works as a middle school principal at a Title I urban setting in the southern region of the United States. He had the opportunity to serve in public education for 12 years and has been employed at the middle school for four years. Before transitioning into an administration role, he was a choral director and taught general music for 6 years at the middle and high school levels. Principal A reported that he was employed at several schools throughout the district and served as an assistant principal for 2 years. He holds a bachelor's degree in Arts in Music with an emphasis on voice, piano, and music competition and obtained a Masters in Choral Conducting and a second graduate degree in Educational Leadership as well as an Ed.S. Principal A participated in the choir on all three different levels that included middle and high school and college. His love for the music profession was developed through his exposure to the choir and the appreciation of music education.

Principal B profile. Principal B is a 34-year-old African American male, a middle school principal located in a rural setting in the southern region of the United States. He has served as a principal for the past eight years. He obtained his bachelor's in English and later completed an MA in Secondary Education. He was encouraged by the field of education and completed his Ph.D. in Educational Leadership to pursue his

passion, working with youth who were enrolled in lower-performances schools. Principal B shared his participation as an instrumentalist at the middle and high school levels. His experience in the band promoted his support for music education as he felt music fostered a well-rounded education for students.

Principal C profile. Principal C is a 39-year-old African American male, a high school principal in an urban setting, located in the northern region of the United States. As a principal for the past 10 years, he shared that he was an educator for seven years prior to moving to principal. He received his bachelor's degree in elementary education, along with his master's degree in curriculum and instruction, and holds an educational certificate that qualified him to become an assistant superintendent. He is currently pursuing a Ph.D. degree. He participated in both the choir and band in high school and college and appreciates the arts and supports these programs.

Principal D profile. Principal D is a 43-year-old African American male, a middle school principal in an urban setting, located in the southern region of the United States serving primarily Title I eligible students. He received his undergraduate degree in Sociology and his Master's in Educational Administration. Principal D has a total of twenty-one years in education and was an educator for five years with the remaining years as an administrator. As an educator, he was able to serve as a department chair and academic coach for two of these years. Principal D participated in the middle school band and participated in the choir at both the high school and collegiate level. His coaching and music background increased his awareness of the importance of quality music programs.

Principal E profile. Principal E is a 40-year-old African American woman, has served as a K-5 principal in an urban setting located in the northern region of the United States for the past nine years. She received her bachelor's and Master's degrees in Elementary Education and a second Masters in Administration K-12. She obtained certification as an ESL educator. Principal E is currently working on her doctorate in education. She has experience teaching at the middle school level for over three years. Principal E served as an Assistant Principal for over four years. She shared that she played strings in elementary school and participated in band in middle school. She emphasized her love of music and supported these programs because she felt music motivates students in a way that captures their ability to strive in education.

Principal F profile. Principal F is a 38-year-old African American female, a principal at a K-8, urban school setting in the southern region of the United States for the past five years. She was a teacher for 10 years and moved into a magnet coaching position role in the district for one year. She graduated with a bachelor's degree in Elementary Education, Master's degree and specialist in curriculum and instruction with an emphasis in elementary education. She is currently working on her doctorate in education. Principal F began her interest in music through exposure to recordings and this interest flourished in playing the clarinet in both the concert and marching band. Principal F was able to attribute her experience and appreciation of music based on her own positive reflections.

Principal G profile. Principal G is a 50-year-old white male, a high school principal in a suburban setting in the northern region of the United States. Principal G has served a total of 26 years in this profession of which 15 years were served as an educator

and became an Assistant Principal. Principal G emphasized the importance of program offerings such as journalism, ROTC, and music programs. Principal G reflected upon his significant experiences and acknowledged the work of his staff and how these efforts contributed to academic achievement, as well as the exposure to the arts. He reflected upon his middle school band experience and his appreciation for the arts while playing in the percussion section.

Data Analysis

After all, interviews were completed, I obtained assistance to transcribe the interview data by using *rev.com*. Rev.com is a transcription company that transcribes participant recordings and translates to a narrative form. All participants received a copy of his or her interview transcription in written form and were encouraged to systemically review and confirm the verbal accounts. I asked participants to review their transcript and provide feedback on his or her responses to the best of the participant's recollection of the interview. All members completed the member check and I made any adjustments.

These transcriptions were manually coded to reflect upon the participants experience and divided into different themes that were used as part of the research findings. After manually coding, I used Atlas.ti 7.0, a qualitative software program, to find other themes that emerged from the qualitative software program (Friese, 2019). Atlas.ti 7.0 is a qualitative computer software that assists researchers in their management of textual, graphical, audio, and video data (Friese, 2019). First, I entered the transcriptions in Atlas.ti 7.0. Next, I uploaded sections of questions to see if results would be different from manual coding that was done. Codes were used to analyze data. During the process, as new themes emerged from the data, new codes were created either

“Atlas.ti 7.0”, or from key concepts or experiences. This software was beneficial to help find any emerging themes I did not find in the manual coding.

My goal was to capture the true meaning of each transcription, therefore, a thorough review of these transcripts allowed for the identification of codes, patterns, and themes. The patterns were identified based on similar and different perspectives of the participants.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative descriptive phenomenological study was to explore and describe principal beliefs, decision-making processes on funding, and other factors that impact K-12 music programs. I will present the findings by category (Beliefs on the values of music education, Mission and vision statements, Legislation, Decision making, Factors affecting funding, and Outside related factors) and question.

Beliefs on the Value of Music Education

One research question that guided the study was “**What are the principal's beliefs and perceptions of the value of including music programs in K-12 schools?**”

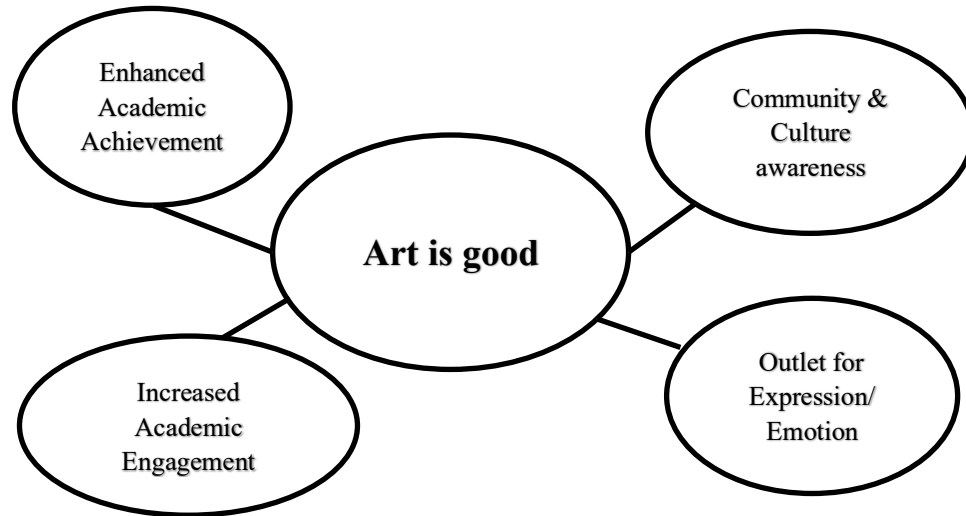
In the interview process, all seven of the principal's placed high value on music and art-related courses and made statements that showed their belief that art is good. These principals believed from their perception and beliefs that all schools should include some form of music or that music should be a part of academic makeup of their curriculum. The principals also understood music to be lively, creative, and lovely art.

Collectively the participants valued music and expressed how its existence provided joy and excitement in their schools. I asked the question “**What are your beliefs and perceptions of the values of including music programs in your school such as band and choir?**” The following are the principals’ answers:

- As a former choral director, music is inclusive of everything else. Music brings everything together. So, I truly believe that music holds a high value at my school and is part of the curriculum” (Principal A).
- “I think music it’s important to give the kids the opportunity to express themselves outside of the physical academics” (Principal B).
- “I believe that choral music definitely has a place in my school” (Principal C).
- “Music is very important to me. In order to have a music program within the building, it becomes challenging at times, based upon some of the requirements or mandates from the states. But we do work around that to figure out ways to include a quality program within the building” (Principal D).
- I think it’s very important because our kids, um we know traditionally in the African American community music has played a major part in that. I think two, we have seen a lot of school districts that have lost their arts programs. I mean, school has already changed enough, so I definitely don’t want to see it lost (Principal E).
- I truly believe in the arts. I think it’s great. You know some of our students... I have always question or thought about the word “smart.” To me it is very biased and selective word. Just because I am not an expert over here to the left doesn’t mean I won’t be one over here to the right (Principal F).
- “We highly value our music programs. We promoted them a lot. I mean our band is an 18 times Virginia honor band. Our music programs have won certain awards for different things they have done. Show choir is amazing. This is show choir season right now, so they’re always winning awards at these events. Just from the county prospective, we had three or four delegates make All-State Honor band which is the highest in the county this year. So, yeah, we highly value that and place a lot of value on it. (Principal G).

Figure 4.1

Theme and associated patterns of Art is good



The purpose for valuing music varied for each school. In other words, each principal had different reasons why he or she valued music in their school. Many of the participants expressed that music programs positively impacted academic achievement, student engagement, and the overall culture and community, as well as offered an emotional and expressive outlet.

The following themes emerged from the data analysis: 1) enhanced academic achievement, 2) increased academic engagement, 3) an outlet for expression/emotion, and 4) community involvement and awareness. Principals shared that participating in music was a benefit to **enhance** a students' **academic achievement**. The following are the principals' responses:

- “Music programs are very important. Studies have shown that music plays an important role in academic achievement and test scores” (Principal F).

- We know the value that music adds to a student’s life, just in the way they learn. We also know [music] enhances their academic learning in other areas because of learning music. We are also looking at our numbers there to encourage kids to go in those classes (Principal G).

Two principals in the interview discussed how music **increased academic engagement**. By having strong engagement in schools, the educator can enhance student learning and assist students in their overall success. The following are the principals’ answers:

- I think music engagement helps students with presenting publicly, interacting with a crowd/audience, the logistics (arriving to a place on time, knowing when to perform and when to support other performers, etc.) (Principal A).
- I believe that music has a place in my school. It's another way to engage students, it's also a way to, um, you know, to really tap into various parts of the mind and brain” (Principal C).

This section discussed principal’s role of music as an **outlet for expression/emotion**. Four principals shared how music can be an expressive outlet for students in their school. Principal B and Principal C shared how students who engage in music will be able to find their creative side. The following are the principals’ answers:

- “I think it's important to give the kids the opportunity to express themselves outside of the physical academics. I think it’s important that they have these experiences outside of the core academics” (Principal B).
- “Music is also an outlet for many students, and an avenue or pathway or avenue after high school” (Principal C).
- “I think it's a good outlet for our kids, for music and visual performing arts. It is necessary for the student population that I serve at my school” (Principal E).

The principals believed that music would promote a sense of community.

Community and culture awareness were mentioned throughout the interview from some principals. The following are the principals’ responses:

- “I am working to build that sense of community and pride for music at my school” (Principal A).
- “Music plays a vital role because our kids. Um, we know traditionally in the African American community that music has played a major part in that” (Principal E).
- Music programs have brought African Americans, White, and Hispanics students together due to the sense of belonging and it builds community within our school. And one factor that we have is that our surrounding communities are big advocates and they support the music programs at my school (Principal G)

Principals’ Role in Supporting the Arts

Principals had a variety of ways they supported and promoted the arts. The following are their answers:

- I wholeheartedly believe in whole child education, which simply the idea of addressing all needs of the child through the education settings. So many people just talk about the main academic courses but, they leave out fine arts. I believe in that. I believe academics is all-inclusive. I work really had to be sure that people understand that (Principal A).
- When I first arrived at my school back four years ago, there was not a music program at all. The only classes that were offered were regular academic classes such as math, science, and social studies. This is the first year of the fall of 2019 that my school was able to offer a choral program at our school. I want it to be part of the academic language at my school (Principal A).
- “I’m a music person, so I try to promote it. My vision has always been to see more of the arts in the school setting and extracurricular events” (Principal B).
- Our Christmas program (2019) that we just had I choreographed all the dance for that. So, I support it and they know I like to have good programs, the best that we can do. We’re not experts at it but we do the best we can offer. And when they have practice after school, or on Saturday I am right there (Principal F).

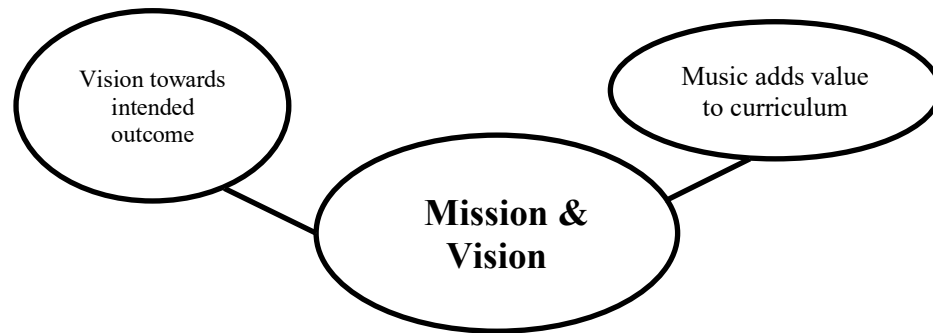
Mission and Vision Statements

The participants explained how the mission and vision of their school played an important role in how administrators' value music programs. The mission and vision of each public-school are used to drive their educational goals for the schools. From the

mission and vision statements, the principals shared the following vision: (1) vision towards the intended outcome, and 2) music adds value. See Figure 4.2 for themes that emerged from these questions.

Figure 4.2

Theme and associated patterns of mission and vision



The following questions were asked in the interview **“Do you feel your involvement in music programs has shaped your vision and mission for your own school, and if so in what ways?”** The following are their answers:

- So, participating in choral music or in school choir has developed my mindset on a greater scale about how teams work and the inner working or teams and those subgroups within the teams work together to achieve a common goal (Principal A).
- “I do believe it has. Uh, it has allowed me to continue with providing opportunities and space for such program when I have the opportunity to have them” (Principal C).
- “It has definitely shaped it to a certain degree. Um, in reference to you know my experiences. I definitely value the experiences, um that students have or will have the opportunity with a quality music education program” (Principal D).
- I think for me, I love music. Um one of our magnet themes is visual and performing arts and so we try weave it into a lot of what we do. Our kiddos are very music oriented, so I think it if we try to add in more musical things, um and we know that music and movement is good for our kids (Principal E).

- Umm...Yes! I definitely do because I have to support what's going on in the music program, be there to support that. Anytime that we have Christmas programs, I have had a direct involvement meeting with the music teacher and even students, helping out in any way I can. I dance, so after I played in the band, I ended being a dancer, so I made up dance routines for my school, even as the principal. (Principal F).
- It's a big part of our vision, and our mission. I mean our mission is "to empower all learners to be successful. And so, we know the value that music adds to a student's life, just the way that they learn (Principal G).

In addition, I referenced each school's mission and vision statements to gather more insight to where each school placed value. In assessing the mission statements of each school, I discovered that there was no mention of the arts or music in any of these mission and vision statements. However, one school's mission expressed whole children learning. Please see table 4.1 which includes the vision and mission statement of each school that was compiled from each school website.

Table 4.1

Mission and Vision Statements of Schools

Participant	Type of K-12 School	School Setting	School Mission	School Vision
Principal A	Middle School (Title 1)	Rural	Our school will achieve a proficiency rate of 65 % or above on Reading, Mathematics, and Science; and remain a school of enrichment, focusing on whole-child educational strategies to increase the development of the student in which we serve.	Our School will become a leading middle-level institution, fully preparing students for high school and beyond.
Principal B	Middle School (Non-Title 1)	Rural	Our school is committed to partnering with parents and the community to achieve excellence, promote character, and to meet the intellectual and social needs of all its students.	Our School is for ALL students to graduate college, career, and life prepared.
Principal C	High School (Title 1)	Urban	Our mission is to prepare students to be life-long learners who are knowledgeable, productive, well-rounded citizens in an interdependent global society.	Our school vision is to provide each student with a safe and loving environment so they can learn and mature appropriately.
Principal D	Middle School (Title 1)	Urban	Our school is committed to ensuring excellence for every student, in every classroom, every day.	Our school vision is Every student is inspired & prepared for success in college or a career and life.
Principal E	K-5 Magnet (Title 1)	Urban	Our school prepares all students to excel in college, career, and life	Every student, Every day. Prepared for Success
Principal F	K-8 (Title 1)	Urban	Our school mission is to promote high levels of success for all in a family focus atmosphere.	Our school vision is to create and extremely effective school that promotes high levels of student achievement and contribute to the overall improvement of the community in which we serve.
Principal G	High School (Non-Title 1)	Suburban	Our school mission is to empower all learners to be successful.	Inspire, Empower, and Lead. We are a student-centered driven organization committed to providing all students with exceptional learning experiences in order to prepare them to be confident, ethical, productive citizens.

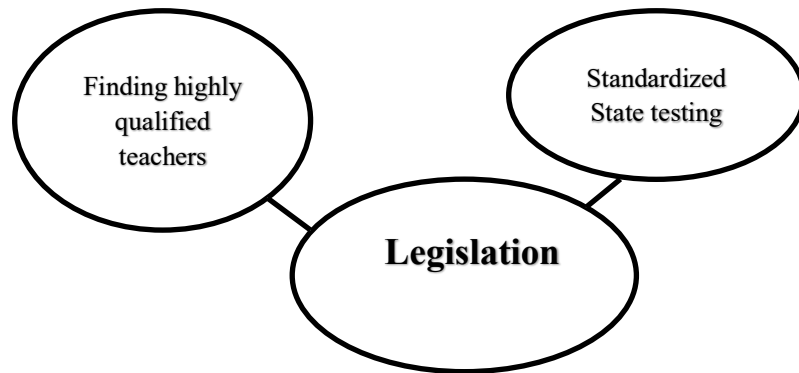
Legislation

Music programs have a significant role in education, which is to enhance general academic achievement and improve student's social and emotional development.

However, other factors related to legislation, such as finding highly qualified teachers, and mandated standardized testing have made an impact on the curricular decisions in schools. See Figure 4.3 for themes that emerged from these questions.

Figure 4.3

Theme and associated patterns of Legislation



I was interested in learning if the changes in legislation impacted the inclusion of music programs. The second research question that guided the study stated, “**How and to what extent has legislation changes impacted decision making of inclusion of music programs?**”

Principals expressed concerns with finding **highly qualified music teachers**. The highly qualified teacher provision is one of the goals of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. The original language as defined by the federal government, Title II of the No Child Left Behind Act,

“the term highly qualified teachers are those who hold a bachelor’s degree and a teacher license from their state, and who demonstrate competence in the subject areas they teach. Individual states may have more specific regulation as to what defined a highly qualified teacher (U.S. Department of Education, 2016).”

The following are the statements from the principals:

- In terms of No Child Left Behind, it has affected me trying to find highly qualified music teachers. We struggle with ascertaining certified teachers, so often, I have to seek support from the state agency in terms of the licenser to secure someone who is not certified but has the skill set to implement instruction in the classroom (Principal A).
- It’s hard to find teachers that are highly qualified to teach music in my state. I had to call on a retired teacher to come and teach at my school in order to just have a music program. I am glad that I have the autonomy to make certain decisions for my students at my school (Principal E).

Two principals stated in their interview how legislative mandates such as state **standardized testing** have impacted curriculum offerings at their school. The following are the principals’ responses:

- “As a principal, I cannot ignore the pressure that is put on me and my staff of making sure we are continuously showing growth on state testing which includes English, Math, and some science classes.” He added, “So that is always primary and sometimes takes up the bulk of my mind. It determines a lot of my decisions” (Principal A).
- “I have to make sure our students in 3rd and 4th grades are able to pass the state assessment in order to meet state requirements” (Principal F).

There were three questions under the legislation section.

The first question stated, “**what changes did your district have to make to its musical offerings in order to satisfy the requirements for the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) to now the Every Students Succeeds Act (2015)?**”

Although the principals’ stated legislation made no impact, their comments revealed the following answers:

- So, in terms of changes that school district had to make? Um well, in terms of (NCLB) I always think about the highly qualified education status, from that, being certain that they are certified teachers. Well, the unfortunate part is where my school is located, we struggle finding certified teachers (Principal A).
- “Well, no changes were made prior to coming here. So originally, I don’t think they had a functioning choir. So, the choir is fairly new” (Principal B).
- Our district didn’t really have to make any changes. We were already, you know, we have programming in place. I will say that now we have, um, autonomy and the principals can choose. And so, while a school may not offer music, they may offer art, or if they don’t offer art, they may offer physical education and so, there is still some autonomy there, and there are some offerings that allow students to be a little more creative if you will (Principal C).
- “We just have to ensure that students were scheduled into the correct classes based upon the specific need. Um, and of course you know for some students that did definitely limit the number of elective classes that they were able to take. Um, but you know, just being very strategic at the same time to ensure that students have the opportunity to take part in music programs, it nor during the school day, definitely outside of the school day (Principal D).
- “You know what, I honestly don’t know. Um... We haven’t really changed a lot of our programming. A lot of it has stayed very similar” (Principal E).
- "...again, there's no real changes that have come down on me as it relates to legislation changes. We, you know, we budget appropriately for that program as we would anything else” (Principal G).

The next question under legislation asked, **what other factors outside of legislation have influenced the decision of a principal to include or exclude music programs due to the change of funding?** The following quotations were the principals’ responses:

- Exclude-I did a reduction in having to reduce the staff based on the teacher unit allocations. When I arrived at my current school, I had no electives. So, I risked reducing the amount of staff who provided interventions for (reading and math) to increase opportunities to engage performing arts (music and art specifically). So, I desired to increase exposure, without having an increase budget to work with (Principal A).

- “Outside of school, I would say the community that the school is located in. I would also say student need/desire would be a factor as well” (Principal B).
- I think funding, of course, I think privatization, lots of principals really think about what needs to happen academically, and unfortunately, there’s usually a focus on just math and English, or math and reading as opposed to you know math, English and the arts and other areas. And so, sometimes that influences decisions that are made, and ultimately that does impact or affect students (Principal C).
- “I would say definitely student input and the community” (Principal D).
- Our school district has continued having music teachers, like whether it’s choral, band, or strings, and art classes at our elementary schools, so that’s been a benefit. With the changing in magnet funding we don’t have as many magnet students, so we don’t have a second art teacher and second music teacher, but our numbers don’t necessarily require it. Due to changes in magnet recruitment, so we don’t have as many kids as we did when our school first opened as a magnet (Principal E).
- “Well I will say one thing that has happen, um we looking to received additional funding” (Principal F).
- “Um... again, there’s no really changes that have come down on me. We, you know, we budget appropriately for that program as we could anything else” (Principal G).

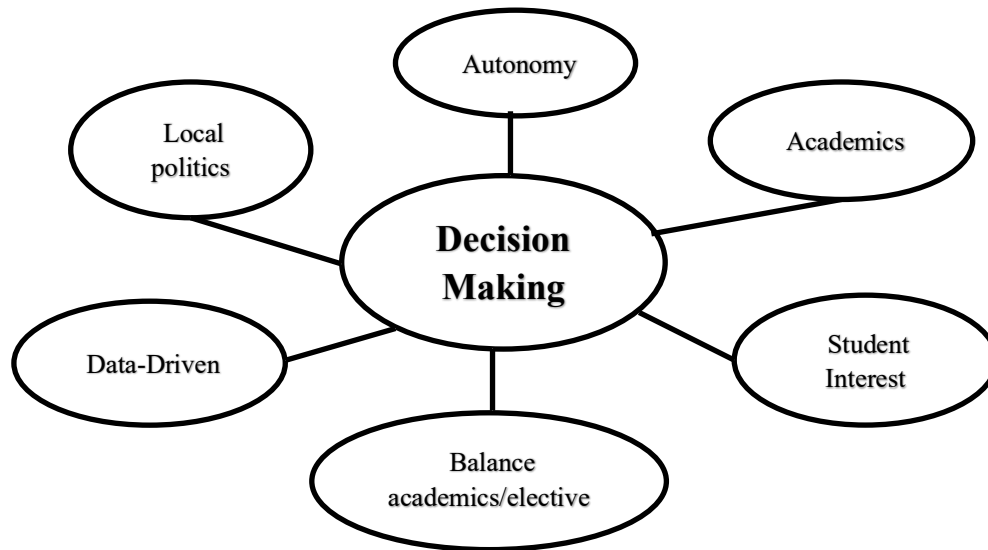
Decision Making

Principals make many decisions on an everyday basis. Decision making is a process that guides certain actions. Decisions are based on the beliefs, values, and previous experiences of individuals. Leader must know themselves, know why they choose paths, know who to involve, and know which decision-making model to use (Hoy and Misket, 2001). The next section of the interview questions talked about decision making. There were five questions in this section that were developed and answered by seven principals and the answers resulted in six main themes.

All seven principals had different responses as to how political decision making may have impacted specific individual scheduling of music offerings at their school. See Figure 4.4 for the themes that emerged around decision making.

Figure 4.4

Theme and associated patterns of Decision-Making



Answers varied to the question “**What role do you think politics play in the schools’ decision-making process?**” The following are the principals’ answers:

- “Local politics play a very minimal role in school decision making” (Principal A).
- Politics plays a major role in decision-making in schools especially if those political leaders have children in the school setting. Decision may be based on the political leaders and appeasing them as opposed to what’s best for all students, especially those students who didn’t have someone who speaks up for them (Principal B).
- “I think it does play a role, I think um, it depends on the school board and local politics and just sort of where we are. The culture and climate sort of dictates to what degree things need to happen” (Principal C).
- “I think that it definitely plays a role in it. I mean politics plays a role into everything that we do” (Principal D).
- “I don’t know if it’s political as much as the money behind it” (Principal E).
- “Oh, you know politics controls everything. OH politics” (Principal F).

- That’s a loaded question. What role does politics play in it? Obviously, I think its whatever legislation is coming out. You know, we have to adhere to some of those pieces that come out or that get added into either the ESSA or whatever the case may be” (Principal G).

Many principals stated that they have the **autonomy** to make decisions at their school. Principals are being held to higher standards. Similarly, they acknowledged that the provision of funds and some other related activities are all carried out by the autonomy of the principal. Principal D stated that politics plays a specific role, he went on to say, “Um however as a building principal, I have the final say on what goes on in my building. I definitely always want to go down fighting for the specific need and desire of my building.”

The following are the other principals’ answers:

- “I have the autonomy to decide on what music programs are part of the curriculum at my school” (Principal C).
- I have quite a bit of autonomy in my building. However, we do have policies that we have to follow. When it comes to anything that is not policy, like day-to-day operations, any type of programs, and things like discipline. We have policies to follow, but we still have a lot of wiggle room. They allow autonomy and support from central office (Principal F).

The next question under decision-making category asked, “**What programs do you find as the main priority for your student population?**” The following are the principals’ answers:

- So, prior to me getting to the school I lead now, there were no electives at all. So, as I have gotten there each year I expanded, um one at a time. So, it began with PE and then we started moving into fine arts because some people think that physical education is fine arts and it’s not. But then we started to move into art and then I was able to move into choral music. So, at this point students can select what programs they want to participate due to being district based (Principal A).
- “Sports is the first major program and STEM programs are the second for the local students at my school. The district is known for its athletic programs and it sits in a local STEM industry” (Principal B).

- Well we are a large urban high school, and so we offer programming from student interest surveys. So, we do have an arts pathway. We also offer career tech pathway, and a problem-base pathway. We offer what our kids really want and most of that is done by course request and what our student needs are (Principal C).
- “At the school I am currently serve as principal, we definitely look at programs associated with working with student deficits in the areas of reading and mathematics” (Principal D).
- I think all of them. I think your regular core curriculum is awesome and needed, but then also I think your arts and like your special classes are needed as well. So, we have art, music, PE, technology and a librarian. We trying to incorporate more social-emotional learning (Principal E).
- What programs? Oh, that’s tough. There are so many priorities. It really is. Well first and foremost, I would say for us, we struggle a lot academically. We’re behind the ball with basic reading and writing skills. We have to make sure we have programs to support and target reading, struggling readers and interventions for that (Principal F).
- With such a large student body, you know I’ll say it from this standpoint: we would like to continue to push more kids to take advanced level courses, just for that level of rigor. We also realize that some just aren’t, or may not be ready for that, but we do encourage that. We do the PSAT testing now for our ninth graders as well as 11th graders. This gives us data to what potential students have, especially in the ninth grade, and so we use that data to help guide or make recommendations to the students (Principal G).

The third question under decision making stated **“How do you prioritize the curricula in making decision on what subjects should be considered priority?”** The following are the principals’ answers:

- It goes back to what was previously indicated in terms of just the way our schools in this area are measure by the state agency in terms of state testing. So obviously there is a heavier layer of support on reading instruction and reading intervention programs for where and then of course math fluency programs and then science proficiency because this is how we are measured based on both components. Let me say there’s a developing support in place for other initiatives to truly bring that whole child education full circle (Principal A).

- “Well, I think they there are all equal. I try to make sure that there is equality across the board, whether it’s football, basketball, choir, or band, I try to make sure that it is equal across the board with music classes and our academic classes that we offer. (Principal B).
- “Our data drives those decisions. So, we look at what our data tell us and then determine who’s going to do what and what to make as priority” (Principal C).
- “I prioritize curriculum by looking at student data” (Principal D)
- We have district -wide curriculum, so that’s pretty much done for us, but I think the biggest thing is making sure that math, reading, and science are tested at the state level because we want to make sure that our teachers are meeting these standards by incorporation of using district-provided curriculum and meeting these content standards with pacing guidelines. We also try to incorporate the arts into the content areas as well (Principal E).
- Well as it relates to the curriculum, that goes back to state laws and state assessments. So, I always have to start there with what is being assessed by the state because at the end of the day, if we get an “F” the that’s bad. We must start there with our curriculum and finding resources to ensure that we are successful. We have reading and math assessments. Our fifth and eighth grade students also have to take a science assessment, so we have to make sure that we have enough science resources. Our third graders in our state take a reading assessment test, which determines whether or not they will be promoted to the fourth grade (Principal F).
- We have curriculum specialists and so forth to oversee and monitor those things. If any changes come from the state, when it comes to the standards of learning for those areas, we make the adjustment. I’ll use IB as an example, we know IB math curricula is changing, so we have to change with it. We will send our teachers out for the necessary training (Principal G).

The participants were asked to share their opinions on the fourth question which stated, **“how do you prioritize music classes in considering both teacher and student schedules to incorporate other pertinent math and science classes in your planning?”** The following are the principals’ answers:

- All classes are planned and scheduled with equal importance. In designing the master schedule, I don’t plan Math, Science, and other core subject classes prior to music. They are planned together to design a cohesive teacher and student schedule (Principal A).

- “Well our band and dance teacher are both part time. Our choir teacher is a retired teacher and so I have to work around her schedule, and they all teach at other schools” (Principal B).
- Well right now the master schedule is really driven on the academic core, which currently consist of math, English, science and social studies. However, we are shifting our vision really to look at making sure that we just don’t talk about academic offerings, and we don’t really look at music or band as an elective. It should be a part of the academic core. It should be a part of what you know students need in order to be successful. So that’s a paradox shift that we are currently working on (Principal C).
- That’s a really interesting question. I ‘ve served as a middle school and high school principal and it’s a little different based on each campus. I will share with you from the high school perspective, at a large high school with a vibrant music program, this was one of the first group of students we did schedules for. Just based upon the specific need of the program. You definitely want to value what goes on at the high school level in music education (Principal D).
- The nice thing is, it works out really well when we have our music teachers full time and they are not traveling. So, it’s all built in, so all of our grade levels except for Pre-K get to participate in music class instruction. However, our Pre-K students can participate in general music class just not band, choir or orchestra until they move up to Kindergarten (Principal E).
- We make sure that everybody takes music class. Music is schedules in their day and it’s on a rotation schedule. So currently right now all K-8 students take music class. Some classes take music just once a week while others may go two or three times a week (Principal F).
- So, our choral classes are some of the larger classes in the music department. So, let’s say we have two large women ensemble classes, well this gives us a little flexibility but most of the time these are what we call singleton classes. So, we have to be very strategic in how we place those classes. So those classes are normally scheduled early in the process. IB is one, special education is another, and then these singleton classes. There could be kids in special ed that are in chorus, so it’s a juggling act trying to look at that. We get teacher input because they know kids. They typically know what schedules they have, so I do what we call a dream sheet. This is a teacher’s opportunity to tell me what they would like to teach, and they give first, second and third choices of classes they would like to have on their schedule. We like to get input from our teachers. Now I can’t always accommodate every single request on the dream sheet but at least it gives us an idea of their thoughts (Principal G).

All seven principals stated that either they had no knowledge of any programs being sacrificed due to retaining music programs within their district or school. The last question under decision making category asked, **“in the past, has your district sacrificed any specific programs for the purpose of retaining music programs?”** The following are the principals’ responses:

- “No changes have been made where we have to make a sacrifice” (Principal A).
- “Probably, it’s a No” (Principal B).
- “No, they have not. In fact, those are typically the first programs to go” (Principal C).
- “I would have to say no, my district hasn’t had to sacrifice anything” (Principal D).
- “I don’t think so. Not that I’m aware of” (Principal E).
- “Not to my knowledge” (Principal F).
- “Not to my knowledge” (Principal G).

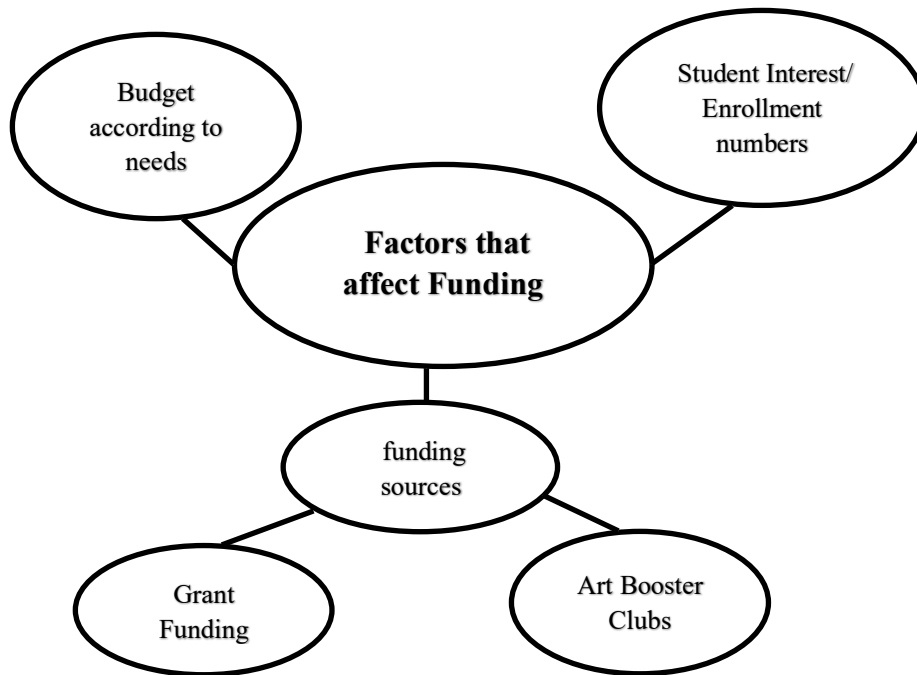
Factors that Affect Funding

Funding is a key concern that promotes real challenges for Principals in obtaining school and district support. All the participants shared many factors that affect funding allocation. Factors that should be considered that emerged from the principal’s responses were as follows: student interest/ enrollment numbers, budget according to needs, and outside funding (i.e. booster clubs and grant funding). The distribution of funding resources and how these funds can be used for the implementation of music programs was a focus of the discussion with the participants. Many of the participants noted that the music programs are self-sponsored; meaning many music teachers are left to raising

funding for their band, choir and orchestra programs. See Figure 4.5 for the themes that emerged around factor that affect funding.

Figure 4.5

Theme and associated patterns of factors that affect funding



Research Question 3: How and to what extent has funding allocation impacted the decision making of inclusion of music programs?

The purpose of research question three was to understand how funding allocation has impacted the inclusion of music programs. The distribution of resources and how these funds can be used for the execution of music programs was a focus of the discussion with the participants. Many of the participants noted that the music programs are self-sponsored; meaning many music teachers are left to raising funding for their band, choir and orchestra programs. The following are the principals' responses:

- “It is important to have adequate funding so that students are able to have good music programs” (Principal A).
- As I’ve mentioned before, music programs are such an integral part of the overall high school experience. Budgeting for these programs is a high priority. Booster organization for these programs are also a necessity and we work in partnership with them to enhance funding resources (Principal G).

Based on the comments, the school principals determine the needs of music programs depending on the **student interest and enrollment numbers** data to make decisions. If students are not interested in taking music courses, it makes it challenging to incorporate into the master schedule. The following are the principals’ answers related to student interest and enrollment:

- "I would get input from student and parent surveys, and a needs survey and prioritize what has the greatest influence on our students” (Principal B).
- I am over a large urban high school. My school can offer programming for our students based on the interest of our students which will allow each student to select courses that relate to an arts pathway (Principal C).
- “When I do the master schedule, I look at student interest and make that decision of what music classes should be offered” (Principal D).
- “as it relates to funding changes; I would say the number of students that we have based on what the data look likes” (Principal D).
- “I use enrollment numbers to determine how money will be allocated to different programs, which sometimes may result in a reduction to some music offerings because there are not enough students to fill the class” (Principal G).
- “...I would look at overall enrollment. I would look at student interest, basically, um, so why there is a low percentage of students that signed up. I would base my decision on what the data looks like” (Principal D).

When planning for the academic year, many principals addressed that there should be money from the budget that should be **budgeted according to needs** specifically for music programs.

- “I think more money should be allocated to more music programs in my district. Many of the music programs in my district are suffering to stay active due to funding or not having a full-time music teacher” (Principal F).
- “I think you should budget your music programs just like you would your math and science classes” (Principal G).

These participants recognized how the budget is challenging because the elimination of these programs or the reduction of classes can have a negative impact on the students, however, finding a balance on funding academic classes and music classes is always a challenge for these administrators.

Fine Art Booster Clubs. In many schools’ fine art booster clubs help support Art, Band, Chorus, Drama, and Orchestra programs. In many case booster clubs work to ensure that fine art needs and requests are taken care of for the benefit or students at the school. Additionally, they help through fundraising efforts to purchase and fund things like music, uniforms, scholarships, activities, awards, instruments, and other necessary supplies. These organizations have afforded students a meaningful experience through fine arts programs. The following are the principals’ answers:

- Booster clubs or art booster clubs could help raise outside funding for our music programs in my school. Also, our music supervisor has also worked to help find extra funding to help with music programs in my school as well (Principal E)
- “Many of our music programs at my school have booster clubs that help with the funding of the programs as well” (Principal G).

Grant Funding. Two principals mentioned other funding resources that would support their music programs. The following are the principals’ answers:

- “So, in my case I chose to use those funds (funds from Saturday School cancellation that was reallocated to building level principals) to build a choral program. Next year I will also use funds to start a band program at my middle school” (Principal A).

- “They fundraise everything that they need. So, nothing comes from a budget from the school. Choirs have to fundraise anything that they need” (Principal B).
- “Our school music department received a grant in the amount of \$10,000 (music teacher applied) that drastically influenced some decisions as it relates to supplies and planning of the music programs” (Principal F).

Prioritization and Funding

The participants were asked to share their thoughts under the funding category for the interview. Question one: **“over the past 5 years, what financial decisions have influenced any changes to your current musical offerings?”** The following are the principals’ answers:

- Particularly this year there was change in district leadership and based on that change, there was a change in the vision and direction of the school. So, funds that were previously allocated to um, like after school programs and Saturday school programs where students were not necessarily taking full advantage, and where teachers did not truly have expertise, those programs got eliminated. Those funds were then shifted to other focuses, and the autonomy was given to building leadership. So, I used those funds to build a choral program at my school (Principal A).
- No. Because the music teacher has always been a retired teacher, her budget has already been set. So that’s not an issue. They fundraised everything that that they needed. So, nothing comes from a budget from the school. Choirs have to fundraise anything that they need (Principal B).
- “In the past five years... I would have to say none, only because we have truly thrown in money and reallocated funds to make sure that music and art thrive. We are now able to offer an arts pathway. This will ensure that students have a voice and [the arts] have a place in the academic structure of our high school (Principal C).
- I would say probably the number of students that we had based on, um depending on what their data looked like. That would definitely affect it. This is because you would not run as many music courses or any other elective when you have a number of students that need intensive math, those mandated courses for student with specific deficits (Principal D).
- “No, we haven’t made changes to our offerings” (Principal E).

- None that I am aware of honestly. One thing that I do know that has recently happen is that we received a \$10,000 music grant so that definitely influence some stuff as it relates to supplies. This was written before I became principal at the school (Principal F)
- “I would have to say none, really” (Principal G).

The next question under funding addressed **“What percentage of funding from your school’s budget is allocated to music program within your school?”** The following are the principals’ answers:

- We receive a lot of funds because the school is traditionally an underperforming school. So, we have another set of federal funds that we are entitled to received. Those funds are allocated per pupil. In terms of district funds, it probably less than 3% of those funds are allocated to our music program. But this percentage does not necessarily weigh on the amount, but when we look at the total amount of allocation then it’s done by per student in each music program (Principal A).
- “I think 1-2% of funds are allocated from our budget to music programs. If there are certain instruments, that we need to buy like a tuba, then those funds are pulled from the repair budget” (Principal B).
- I can’t say there is a certain percentage per say, but we look at FTE - (Full Time Equivalent), we look at course request, and based on that, is how we determine how we are going to allocate certain funds. We also look at our current music department and art department, to see how they recruit for their programs. If current students promote these programs, the interest continues to skyrocket. So that’s how we drive some of that decision making (Principal C).
- “Wow this is a great question; I would say about 3% is allocated to band and choir at my school” (Principal D).
- “There is about 10 % percent of my budget that is allocated to the music department” (Principal E).
- “I would say about 2-3% maybe” (Principal F).
- Phew, that’s a deeper dive. That’s hard to say. I don’t really know off the top of my head. Hmm... I would say 5-6 % percent ranges would a good guesstimate of that. You know again, every program has a certain amount of funding that they get, and they receive (Principal G).

The third question asked, **“If you were challenged with a difficult decision that might involve either cutting music or eliminating another program, what criteria would you use to make this choice?”** The following are the principals’ answers:

- I would make that determination by (1) student interest, (2) teacher preparation and capacity regarding the content knowledge and capability, (3) schools capability to continue to fund the programs – uniforms, travel, food, other expenses and (4) the likelihood of teacher retention to continue the program for those students (Principal A).
- “I would put in student and parents survey and needs survey and prioritize what has the greatest influence on our students” (Principal B).
- I would probably use a SWOT analysis (strengths, weakness, opportunities, and threats) to determine you know, their strengths and their weakness and such for those programs and what it would mean for climate and culture on campus, what it would mean for our community. I would make the decision based on that. So, it would be very diplomatic process, which would allow us to have input from all stakeholders (Principal C).
- “Student data, data drives all of those decisions, so um, it would definitely be student data and then maybe some additional surveys” (Principal D).
- I think it would depend on which programs benefit our kids the best. You know regarding, um, I mean, I would touch base with staff, students and families. Because what we may think is important, may not be the same thing that our kids may think is important, or beneficial to them (Principal E).
- I would definitely want to look into finances. I would look at student interest, and what they are interested in. I would also probably want to consider what programs would possibly be able to lend themselves to scholarships. Honestly, I probably would want to include some of my parents and students with a survey. I don’t know what all would be in it, but I would want to know their thoughts and opinions on it (Principal F).
- I would look at what is the greatest need first. Next, I would look at getting input from different stakeholders as well, but the primary thing would be to look at enrollment numbers. I would look at student interest and if there happens to be very low percentage of students who want to take that class, I would probably not be able to offer those 6 students that signed up for music theory. However, I would be able to offer the band class for the 30 students that have signed up (Principal G).

The last question under funding stated, “**What type of funding model do you use to determine how funds are allocated to each department?**” Many principals answered and said they really didn’t have a funding model that they used to allocated funds for each department. The following are the principals’ responses:

- “I don’t actually have a funding model per say. Each program has a set budget but due to the choral program being new, it’s still in the developing stages” (Principal A).
- “I would have a needs survey and build a committee that would work on the budget” (Principal B).
- “It’s usually driven by the amount of staff members in each department” (Principal C).
- We utilize within our district the staff allocation model for funding. So, basically about 75-80% percent of our funding for the school goes directly to salaries. Everything else from there you have to spilt according to the specific needs of the campus. So, you know it really is not a huge amount of money that each department gets. In fact, I don’t allocate money towards any department at all. Not at the middle school level (Principal D).
- “Our district for the most part, does that for us. So, we really don’t have choice on that matter” (Principal E).
- “I am not sure. I think this is above my pay grade. I don’t have a funding model. I’ve never seen a funding model. However, when it comes to funding, academics is going to receive the most funding” (Principal F).
- I look at the overall need for funding and those needs to be things such as supplies to professional development, and so forth. So, the funding needs for PE would be different from the funding needs for band or choir. I asked them what their needs are, and you know, how much from the budget will be needed to fund their particular need. I really try to make it as equitable process as possible (Principal G).

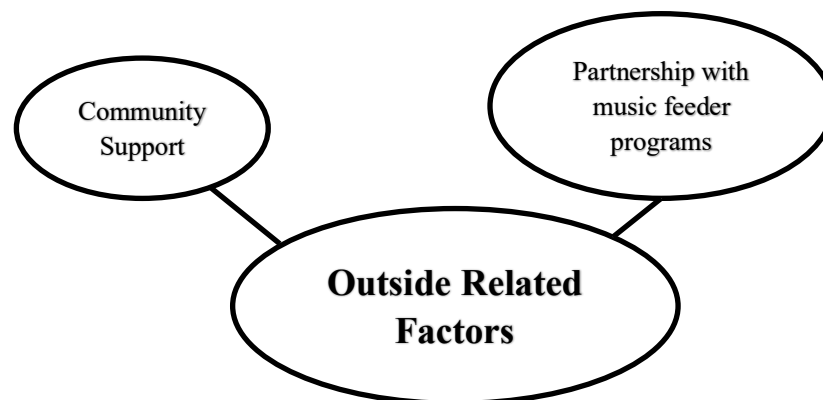
Outside Related Factors

Outside related factors certainly played a role in how these programs are viewed on campus. In districts with strong music programs, the community is very involved in

the artistic development and are actively engaged in music programs within their community. The participants explained that community support is vital to their success and a sense of community can be built upon through a music partnership with the local feeder programs (i.e. elementary, middle, and high schools) in their district. Thus, community support can be influential in receiving extra funds due to community support and visibility beyond the school. See Figure 4.6 for themes that emerged from these questions.

Figure 4.6

Theme and associated patterns of outside related factors



Research Question 4. **“What other factors have influenced the decision of a principal to include or exclude music programs?”**

The final question was designed to understand other related factors that may have influenced music inclusion in schools. These factors include community support and developing partnerships with local feeder programs within your district. All seven principals stated that other factors have affected how music programs are included in the curriculum at their school.

According to (NafME, 2020) “the No.1 factor for creating support for art education is community support and involvement. In districts with strong arts education programs, the community is defined as parents and family, artist, arts, organization, business, local civic and cultural leaders” (Art Education is Essential, pg.1). Community support is important for the continuation of music programs in schools. The following are the principals’ responses, many which aligned with NAFME’s statement:

- Community support and community exposure are very important. If you are leading a school in a community that has not previously been exposed to choral arts, then it’s really difficult sometimes, especially if the district leadership is from similar communities that have the same lack of exposure. So, it’s difficult to convince those leaders that are the decision makers, to buy into the idea of expanding the curriculum to include fine arts. I believe that students need exposure to develop conceptual understanding of the world that music programs can sometimes foster (Principal A).
- “I think students’ need/desire is the main factor” (Principal B).
- Funding is a threat that influences the decision to include or exclude programming in schools. Because music is important to me and my students, I work to “lock” music positions in so that despite student attendance and funding, we can work to always provide music programming for students. Also, course requests can drive some of the decision-making for music course offerings. This includes the number of sections, types of courses, etc. (Principal C).
- “I believe some can be influenced by student interests, feeder patterns and or need for additional elective courses” (Principal D).
- “I would say the need of our students! We know that music is valued by our students and our community and is values in our district. Luckily our district hasn’t cut music or art programs” (Principal E)
- “Support from stakeholders, superintendent, grants, other funds, and student interest” (Principal F).
- The community supports our music programs and are willing to contribute money to help the music programs at my school. In fact, our chorus teacher is new this year with us, but she was recently the middle school teacher for the last five years. The middle school and high school chorus teacher have created such a partnership, basically saying that, I’m the chorus teacher up here, you’re the chorus teacher down there, but it’s all one program. And so, as we continue to

look at it that way, our programs will thrive. So, when the chorus teacher started here this past school year, I said, I want you to keep that same mentality and help the new person at the middle school (Principal G).

Principals' opinion on how teachers can promote their programs. The following question was asked, **“how can your music programs be inclusive to show the importance of having it at your school?”** All seven principals expressed how music inclusiveness is important, for not only the principal but for the music teacher. The concept of music being included in the curriculum involves the principal, teachers and the community to include parents and stakeholders who understand the importance of music programs in their school.

- "Cross-curricular strategies, showing how music positively impacts other content areas. Showing connections between music and math, science, social studies and English. Also, intentionally tracking students' progress in other classes is shown between music instruction and academic disciplines" (Principal A).
- "I think music teachers can utilize those programs more during the regular school day and after school programs. This will allow students to be the spokesperson instead of the teachers" (Principal B).
- "Music teachers can enhance their programs when students see the correlation between content and witness teacher collaboration" (Principal D).
- Luckily one of our magnet missions is to focus on visual and performing arts, along with our district who continues to support the arts in our elementary schools. I think that is the biggest determining factor of showing the importance of the programs is from upper administration (Principal E)
- "Music teachers could work with core teachers to provide subject area resources. They could also provide staff trainings on the inclusiveness of music in the classroom" (Principal F).
- Look for avenues to promote your programs. First day of school: play for students as they enter the building, perform at pep rallies, sporting events, and community events; be inclusive for ALL students (Principal G).

After analyzing the data, I went back to ask a follow up question to all the principals. I asked, “**What advice would you give music teachers as it relates to data if data is your way to make decisions?**” The following are the principals’ answers:

- The advice that I would give to music teachers is be data-driven themselves. Use rubrics and other metric systems to guide their instruction, and measure their outcomes, which aligns to school wide expectations for all teachers (observations and general instructional expectations) and expectations with festivals and competitions (Principal A).
- “We don’t really use testing data for our music teachers but, in order to know if the [music program] is growing; we look at trend data to see retention rates. [We] monitor a cohort of students to see why those students may drop out or are not interested anymore (Principal B).
- “Data drives instruction and decision-making. As a result of the data, we can determine the next steps. Teachers should use assessments that produce rich data that will ultimately determine instructional moves and planning” (Principal C).
- “I would advise a music teacher to always have measurable goals as related to classroom instruction. These goals should consist of retention within the program and alignment of student performance with previous students with the program” (Principal D).
- If I used data to make decisions for music and the arts programs, I would look at the percentage of students that are taking music classes. Which type of music classes are the most popular, and which classes are the least popular. I would also encourage music teachers to get student feedback and use that data to help evaluate the music offerings and future offerings looking at from the voice of the students (Principal E).
- “Music is like any other class. They should have assignments and assessments which is data. They can also use surveys for interests and programs” (Principal F).
- “I look at how data of music programs align with the goals of the school and how they fit within the continuous school improvement plan” (Principal G).

The administrators from the interview were asked to give their own personal view on what their vision would look in a well-rounded educational system for all students. “**How would you define a well-rounded education and what subjects (in your dream**

vision) would you include to encompass that description?” The following are the principals’ answers:

- So, I define a well-rounded education as one that builds strong readers, and writers. One that builds a decent student, one that is fluent in math, science, and history. One that is also not necessarily fluent in the arts but exposed to fine arts because it’s through that exposure that builds the appreciation and hopefully the desire to participate. When I say fine arts, I would like to have a heavy implementation of traditionally black choral music. So, I think it may be slightly biased, but I think the curriculum or content that is mostly aligned to that type of learning of building a well balance choral program. (Principal A).
- I think a well- rounded education includes core classes and the arts or extracurricular activities such as sports. I think both core classes and the arts help to make a student more well-rounded. It teaches them lessons that they can’t learn from English or Math. I would see theater being incorporated into the curriculum at my school (Principal B).
- I am one that supports a comprehensive model, you know, I think children need different things in order to be successful. They also should be exposed to different things. Just because I took math didn’t necessarily make me a mathematician, or, you know, want to be a math teacher. Some students have taken choir or band, and I think the exposure is what’s most important, especially as we, you know, aim for the student to be prepare for life after high school (Principal C).
- A well-rounded education is definitively for me. Teaching the whole child, ensuring that we teach the entire child, the mind, body, and spirit. So, looking at every aspect of life related to what goes on in the classroom each day and every area of curriculum that we would typically associate with schools such as reading, writing, and math. I also consider the mental health side of the work that we must consider. In addition to, of course, other areas and outlets for students such as music education, and any kind of art education, and physical education (Principal D).
- I think it includes all of them. Like your art, chorus, band, orchestra, P.E., and technology. I know we tried to do more with STEM over the years, but that’s been impacted by funding with magnet funding. I would also include reading, writing, math, science and social studies. I also think more reading needs to be incorporated, getting those fundamentals. Social-emotional pieces are good because some of our kids are coming in lacking some of those social-emotional skills. One more thing I wish we could do more of if we had time is languages such as; Spanish, French, sign language, Japanese and Chinese. I’d like to see that offered to younger kids at the elementary level. Right now, we do not have enough staff nor funding to make that happen, but I think it would be awesome if we could expose kid to languages early (Principal E).

- I truly believe that all student should have a well-rounded education. I don't really know what grade level some of these choices should start. I've never really thought about it. I do believe that everyone needs to know how to read, how to write, and know math skills. I also think that we should have programs in place for choice and strengthens and enhances those things that children are really good at. I really hate that several of our schools don't have shop anymore and learning how to repair cars I think some of that skill- based stuff should start in high school. Art, music, and dance would also be a part. Students should be able to choose classes they want to take. Computer skill class should also be included in a well-rounded education (Principal F).
- Hmm, that's a great question. I would say, something in arts and music. ROTC, advanced classes, if they wanted to go that route. Journalism would be added as well. There would be some type of guide where they feel like they could thrive the most or where they have the most interest while being successful (Principal G).

Summary

The data collected for the research study allowed the researcher to understand the position of the Principals in terms of what impacts their decision-making process and how these decisions can foster the environment. Most educational leaders value music education because they understand the importance of music in schools' curriculum. Clearly, the principals expressed the importance of music programs as a part of the entire school curriculum.

Funding and legislation play a role in the decision-making process of principals. Many principals stated that standardized testing is mandated from the government. Testing is tied to funding that is given from local, state and federal levels. Funding factors from the data collected suggest that decision making on funding affects how resources will be allocated due to principals having the autonomy on certain decision on the school's curriculum and certain offerings. The participants in this study were dedicated to having music programs, and these principals were able to share their

perceptions of how music programs created an educational component to the existing curriculum, as well as how these programs cultivated an educational atmosphere dedicated to the arts for its students.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine the perception of principals about music programs in K-12 schools in North, East, and Southern States. The data was collected through an interview with the eligible participants, transcribed and coded. Several themes emerged from the principals' responses to the interview questions within each category as follows: the values of music education, legislation, decision making, factors affecting funding, and outside related factors).

The study explored the values of music education and found the theme that “arts are good.” The principals shared how music is valuable in their school. They reported that music is an outlet of expression for many students. Principals also expressed how autonomy can impact certain decisions as it relates to the curriculum and any changes to programs offered to students in their schools. Budgeting, student interest and enrollment numbers play a role in the decision-making process for these administrators.

Additionally, principals consider outside funding sources like grant-funding and booster clubs as instrumental in offsetting these expenses to support band, choral, and orchestra.

Principals in this study emphasize the importance of community support by exploring partnerships with feeder music program that can enhance visibility of these programs.

This research will be used to aid music educators in developing a better understanding of

what factors have influenced their choice to include or exclude music programs from the curriculum.

Interpretation of Findings

Research Question 1. What are the principal's beliefs and perceptions of the value of including music programs in K-12 schools? The principal's personal values influenced the decision-making process. Principals believed that music is lively, creative, and lovely and has universal value and will benefit their school. All participants demonstrated through their responses the importance of music as part of the school's curriculum. The results from this study mirror Abril and Gault (2007) that finding the inclusion of music in a school's curriculum is dependent on the values of those in charge of making these decisions (Abril & Gault, 2007). Although the participants in the current study were committed to preserving curricular programming, these principals explained the challenges they face with prioritizing other programs unrelated to the arts. Some principals work diligently within their school to make arts and academics equal, and some physically participate in rehearsals, and productions within their school.

Similar, to Major's findings (2013), although facing some financial constraints, administrators continue to maintain a well-rounded curriculum that includes music courses because they recognize the value of music programs. All the participants in this study discussed the importance of well-rounded education, which included the arts, sports, technology, and different pathway offerings besides academics. The participants in the study collectively agree that music programs could attribute to the student's ability to do the following: express themselves, promote engagement, and create opportunities for outward expression through the arts. These skills can easily transfer to the student's

ability to communicate and present effectively in their future endeavors as they embark upon the world. These findings also align with the National Association of Music Education's stance on benefits of music education. Self-awareness, self-efficacy, self-management, perseverance, social awareness, and relationship skills are central to any arts education activity, no matter the age and ability of the student or the environment in which the learning occurs (NAfME, 2020).

It is clear these principals value music and make decisions to keep the programs, though concerned about how these programs could be sustained in times where funding resources are competing with other programs. As found in previous studies, principals play a large role in influencing curricula in their schools (Oliver, 2016), and the values and lifelong appreciation for the arts is a determining factor regarding whether music programs are included or excluded from the school curriculum (Major, 2010, 2013).

Research Question 2. How and to what extent has legislation changes impacted decision making of inclusion of music programs?

In 1963, the U.S. Office of Education supported research in the arts, thereby creating a policy to include the arts in the curriculum as a core-based subject (Heilig et al., 2010). This policy survived because the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare affirmed that arts programs are necessary for school-aged children (Heilig et al., 2010). ESSA has guided principals in how they can make effective decisions on what programs will be most beneficial in serving their student population needs (Glatthorn, Jailall, & Jailall, 2016; Major, 2010).

As defined in ESSA, "music and the arts" are considered a large part of a well-rounded education. Every state in the nation recognized the importance of the arts as

reflected in rigorous PreK-12 state arts standards. Forty-six states require an arts credit to receive a high school diploma. Federal and state policymakers support arts education which supports a well-rounded education for all students (Arts is Essential, 2020).

Abril and Gault (2007) explained how school principals emphasized that standardized tests, the NCLB act, and the lack of funding can impact the existence of the arts in schools. The principals explained they were required to meet the criteria of state-testing mandates as well as, political and other budgetary aspects in all their decision-making practices. However, all of these principals were committed to keeping the music programs.

The participants shared that legislation did not play a significant role in the decision-making process, specifically to the inclusion or exclusion of music programs. However, similar to Abril and Gault (2007), it seems legislation was used to guide the activities and the process of the decision-making process for principals. For example, some principals stated that finding highly qualified teachers and mandated state standardized testing had affected their music programs within their school curriculum. Furthermore, the principals, by making efforts to find qualified teachers, showed an alignment with the findings of Major (2013) who reported that music success could exist when there is quality teaching and support from the principals.

Although music courses are part of the course list as approved by the legislation, West (2012) discussed how historically music programs were not considered essential. Research suggests that music education has diminished in comparison to other academic programs offered in public education (Bodilly, Augustine, & Zakaras, 2009; Major, 2013; Rabkin & Hedberg, 2011). Based on the comments of these principals, music programs

were considered essential in their schools and their offerings have not decreased. Instead, the principals of this study have worked to secure music teacher positions and find ways to continue to keep music a part of the curriculum.

Question 3. How and to what extent has funding allocation impacted the decision making of inclusion of music programs?

Principals are essentially powerful leaders in how they influence the decision-making process. Principals rely on their professional knowledge accumulated through experience and incorporate this knowledge in making important decisions to meet the needs of the school (Sergiovanni, 1991). Principals must assess the curriculum and address any budgetary issues that may interfere with their ability to fund music programs; however, these decisions require the principal to assess all the pertinent student data. The importance of prioritizing student needs is essential for administrators as they make decisions on annual school budgets (Simon, 2013).

The findings of this study reveal that principals base their decisions on enrollment and on what subjects are needed to meet the needs of students. Two principals leading lower performing schools explain that they are more focused on academics than providing music programs because these students are struggling academically. Whereas, in the rural and suburban schools in this study where students were successful academically, principals focus on providing a well-rounded curriculum and are able to incorporate music programs.

In this study, it is clear that the principals have the autonomy to make decisions about curriculum, funding, and scheduling. The data clearly demonstrates these principals show favor to the arts and make accommodations for these programs. Two participants

emphasized how autonomy plays a role in decisions related to funding music programs. According to Abril & Gault (2008), school administrators are highly influential in determining what course offerings are made available to their students. Principals also have autonomy of what courses are offered and what funds are allotted to these programs. The number of admitted students is a determinant of the allotted funds. The findings of this study are consistent with a report provided by Baker, Sciarra and Faire (2010) stating that the following criteria should be applied to all schools in the U.S.: funding level, funding distribution, state fiscal effort, and public coverage. “The report indicated that many states do not equitably distribute educational funding to accommodate the needs of the schools in poverty-stricken areas. As a result, school principals tended to prioritize students’ needs when it comes to school budgets” (Simon, pg. 11).

The participants in this study identified several factors as effective for the ability to keep the music programs going. Those factors include student interest, enrollment numbers, art booster clubs, and grant funding. Most of the participants report that their music programs are self-sponsored. Despite this reality, Principal B expanded that in a situation where there are not enough funds for a music program, the choir/band would have to fundraise anything that they needed rather than jeopardizing their music activity. Three participants also report that their school only allocates 3% of their budget to the music programs and any related activities.

Principals address the focus on finding appropriate funding for music programming for students in elementary, middle, and high school regardless of their ability to fund the program. A recent study conducted by the Music for All Foundation (2004) used data from the California Basic Educational Data System to examine and

compare the amount of music instruction in California schools over five years from the school year of 1999-2000 through 2003-2004. A comparison of enrollment figures, percentage of student involvement, and the total number of music teachers indicated a 50% decline in student involvement in music education courses and a 26.7% decline in the number of music teachers. The number of students enrolled was a factor of funding allocation (Abril & Gault, 2006). The principals in this study did discuss that retention data was an important factor in determining the music programs to be continued in the curriculum.

Principal support is a critical component when ensuring music inclusion is a part of the schools' curriculum. Fowler (1996) suggested that a principal who is supportive can create success in the arts that will be envied and copied by others. In schools across the nation, principals are responsible fully or partially for the decision to include or exclude programs in their schools (Abril & Gault, 2006). The principals in this study use the umbrella of data driven decision-making to decide which courses to offer and which ones to eliminate. Additionally, the arts programs rely heavily on outside funding sources to supplement their budgetary needs. By having these financial resources, principals have been able to maintain these programs within their schools. Interestingly, most of these principals were unable to clearly articulate how music programs are specifically funded at their school. Many had already inherited a teacher, and his/her salary were already set. Further research is warranted to explore how music programs are specifically funded and how money is allocated at the national, state, local, and school level for music programming.

Question 4. What other factors have influenced the decision of a principal to include or exclude music programs from the K-12 curriculum? The findings support the research literature; for example, Charles Fowler (1996) explained how music education could change the values of a community. Music educators are challenged with influencing the community and changing the mindset about how they view the value of music education in schools. Successful teachers are change agents for the improvement of students and the educational process (Abril & Gault, 2006). There were two schools from the study that had high quality music programs. Major (2013) suggested that schools with supportive principals, great community support, high-quality teachers, and those who valued the arts find ways to maintain these programs. Opening the doors to the school community will foster positive value toward school music and improve the opportunity for all children to participate in the study of music at school (Abril & Gault, 2007).

Like a corporation building a brand, the school carefully constructs, maintains, and modifies its image. As a school creates an image through its heritage, physical spaces, test scores, college acceptance rates, and programs offered, these items have an affect on the community's perception of value. A positive image not only keeps currently enrolled families pleased with principals and their child's education but also helps attract new students and their families to the school within that district (Major, 2010). The principals in this study express the importance of community support and building partnerships with their local music feeder programs as vital when decisions are being made about the music programs' existence. By having community involvement, these partnerships will foster positive values toward school music and improve the opportunity

for all children to participate in the study of music at school (Abril & Gault, 2007).

Further research is also needed on the role of music programs on school culture development and how music programs operate within the culture of the school.

Future implications. The results of the study may be useful to K-12 schools, specifically administrators and music teachers to understand how these decisions impact the existence of music programs. Each principal discussed how data-driven evidence drives the decision-making process. Music educators can initiate conversations discussing various data around the program including retention and student interest in different types of music classes. For example, music teachers can create student interest surveys and present the findings to the principal about the need to add a music technology class. Teachers can collect retention data for a period of 4 years showing growth of program and the need for more support or another teacher.

Furthermore, music educators can use resources from the National Association of Music Education (NAfME). One checklist is the NAfME Opportunity-to-Learn Standards. The checklist for music teachers is “considered guidance on Curriculum and Scheduling, Staffing, Material and Equipment, and Facilities” (NAfME, pg.1. 2014). The standards identify the resources that need to be in place, so teachers, schools, and school districts are able to give students opportunities and experiences at both the basic and quality levels to reach the Core Music Standards.

One finding was the importance of feeder program relationships. These professional development times would be used to build those relationships, plan annual feeder concerts, and recruitment strategies to build enrollment numbers in the music

department. Teachers can request time for professional development with feeder schools in order to collaborate rather than attending unrelated group professional development.

Music teachers can collect and present specific data on the involvement of the community and parents of their organization to show the support for the arts. Majors' (2013) investigation of Berkley School District's intent to cut music programs, ended up saving the programs because of the communication with administration that occurred through the study. The school district after realizing the value they placed on music education through that inquiry, came up with creative ways of adding revenue by redesigning the website, and targeting newspapers and radios to attract new students. District members and administrators were committed to offering a well-rounded education to all students because music plays an essential part in the education process. The community also participated in home improvement programs so that residents could upgrade their homes rather than moving out of the district. These partnerships were the gateway to helping with the budgetary concerns they were having in the school system. Major (2013) suggested that other school districts nationwide might look at Berkley School District as a model, taking positive strategies that apply to their own situations and seeing Berkley as a warning for potentially negative side effects stemming from decisions made during changing conditions. If administrators, board members, parents, and community members come together, then music education could be saved not only today, but for the future as well.

Principals in the current study discuss outside funding as a source for continuing music programs. Teachers can promote the interests of community members and stakeholders to volunteer their time or assist in fundraising efforts to offset expenses

related to maintaining music programs. Music teachers should keep track of these efforts as a way to show principals the active involvement of the community and how their program is a part of the climate of the community and positive culture of the school. Furthermore, spending time on promoting the program helps build pride and may aid in recruiting and retention.

Principals clearly articulated the need for music programs to include assessments and observable measurable outcomes for individual students. Like all other subjects, music teachers need to provide assessments through measurable objectives to show individual student growth. A rubric on rehearsal technique would help young musician self-assess rehearsal performance expectations and provide teachers with data to make curriculum decisions with the classroom setting. Individual singing tests would foster student growth in singing and improve the overall program over time. The data from these assessments would help the teacher shape the curriculum and programming. Music assessment alone cannot create educational excellence in music. Research involving assessment in music has historically centered on grading practices (attendance, behavior, performance skill, practice logs and participation) employed by both elementary and secondary music educators (Barkley, 2006, McCoy, 1991, Lehman, 1998, Simanton, 2000 Sherman, 2006). However, there has been some work regarding the collection of assessment data including performance-based, or criterion-referenced assessment, and portfolio assessment. Accountability has become the “catch phrase” for educators and politicians recently. “If assessment is to play a part of an educational accountability solution, then assessment practices need to be clear, consistent, (over time, and transparent” (Sawson, 2017, pg.5). Wesolowski (2012) stated, “Now more than ever

teachers... find themselves in situations where thorough documentation of student performance is necessary” (p.36). Therefore, data assessments in music programs are an essential factor when decisions on the curriculum are being addressed.

Limitations and Assumptions

One major limitation of the study is that every principal who volunteered for this study was involved in a music class during their own K-12 experience. All the principals were musicians. Therefore, this musical background has most likely impacted their positive statements of the importance of music education. Future research is needed to address the perspectives of principals with no music background to assess if they value music inclusion in the same way as the principals from a music background.

Furthermore, there were only seven principals which means only one person’s perspective was included per school type and grade level. Another limitation of the study was that private school principals were not part of the study. Private school principals may share different perspectives because of possible access to more funds than a public school. Those perspectives may influence their decision making on political factors, stakeholders and the community involvement. More research would be required to understand the different perspectives of principals who lead charter schools, private, and other public institutions in how they perceive the value of music education.

Because this study followed a qualitative methodology, researcher bias could have been evident (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). One assumption was that as educational leaders, the participants in the study would answer questions truthfully (Parson, 2009) and honestly and straightforwardly (Mason, 2017). However, the principals were aware that I am currently employed within the choral education music field and may have

answered differently than if I had not been a musician. I attempted to limit bias through the methodology. By following a semi-structured interview protocol, I was able to focus primarily on these questions and eliminate some potential for personal bias. However, I had preconceived notions about the importance of music education programs in public, rural, suburban, and urban K-12 schools, and this bias may have reflected in the way I worded the questions. I conducted a follow-up interview to complete any gaps in the data collection. This activity provided another opportunity to focus specifically on the participants' responses.

Summary of Results

These findings are fundamental in understanding ways in which music teachers can communicate with administrators thus, becoming advocates for their music programs. Therefore, shaping legislative policies at the school, state, national, and local level may have an impact on the existence of arts within these schools. Teachers and administrators could collaborate effectively, and it seems collaboration with student's community, and other music faculty may have an impact on the final decisions in terms of music programs offerings.

The results reveal the principals' beliefs of the importance of the inclusion of music programs in K-12 Schools. Legislative mandates had minimal influences on how these administrators would decide on what programs would be included in their overall curriculum. These principals had full autonomy on how they would incorporate music programs and relied on grants and other financial resources to offset these expenses. Several principals in different categories from the interview talked about how important community and culture is to the school climate.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study offers a small step forward in how principals from public K-12 school systems value the significance of music education; more research is warranted. To expand the body of research concerning K-12 principals, a quantitative research (survey) sample utilizing over 100 participants is recommended in order to supplement and extend the results from the current qualitative study. One may gain insightful information from many different respondents from different perspectives asking questions such as “how many” and “how often” via a quantitative survey design.

Another recommendation for future research would be to explore principals that are not musicians, on how their beliefs and perceptions of K-12 music education programs differ from principals who are musicians. Finally, it would be interesting to explore private K-12 school principals’ experiences on decision-making process on legislation, funding and other factors that have impacted public K-12 schools. This information may broaden the scope of the literature in the field of music education and educational leadership, which would provide varied viewpoints on principals’ perspectives, which might further drive the discussion and implementation of policies.

Conclusion

The inclusion of music in a school’s curriculum depends on the values of those in charge of making the decisions (Abril & Gault, 2007), and clearly in this study, the principals all valued music education. The values by local, state and national decision makers have a major impact on music teaching learning (Abril & Gault, 2007). For instances, studies have shown that school principals have stated that standardized tests, the NCLB, and poor funding are all factors that hurt the arts in schools (Abril & Gault,

2007). The principals in this study appeared challenged with finding a balance between demands of the community, teachers, students, outside legislation, and other related factors that influenced their decision-making process. Many participants in this study reported that they understood the importance of the arts; however, academics and the success of students achieving positive scores on standardized test were a priority of parents and the community.

Principals may be able to use the findings to reevaluate the importance of music education opportunities for public school students, while increasing support from local, state, and federal governments. This can be done by having meetings with local stakeholders and government officials to speak on the importance of music into a well-rounded balanced education system. Incorporating music education opportunities into educational programs will engage learners by producing a meaningful experience that becomes part of the fabric of the learner (Gunter, Estes, & Schwab, 2003).

The findings from this study provide an insightful understanding of how administrators base their decisions to continue music programs in their schools. Principals base their decisions on measurable outcomes because they must adhere to legislative mandates. Music educators will need to properly plan curricula outlined by the National Association for Music Education to meet the standards. Music educators can promote their programs to administrators by conducting the following practices: collecting student survey data; student growth measurement within the classroom structure; conduct a needs assessment using the opportunity- to- learn standards as outlined by the National Association for Music Education. By music educators

conducting the above strategies, the data gathered can be communicated to principals and administrators and can help in the decision-making process.

Many educators and administrators are beginning to realize that music programs do not take away from basic subjects, but instead enhance the academic achievement of most students (Longley, 1999). The schools that are finding the highest rate of overall success realize that an integrated arts education can meld all aspects of education together, which in turn can produce highly intelligent, creative, critical thinkers, which will be the leaders of tomorrow (Longley, 1999). As for those schools that have not realized the importance of music education, advocates must continue to press on to ensure that someday every child has a chance to experience the benefits of an arts integrated curriculum (Hobby, 2002).

As the evolution of K-12 education, changes, the therapeutic and unifying power of the arts has been evident as the COVID-19 pandemic swept the country (NAfME, 2020). Arts education cultivates the creation of a welcoming school environment where students can express themselves in a safe and encouraging way (NAfME, 2020). Administrators, music teachers, and the support of the community are essential in finding innovative methods to fund music programs and provide access to all K-12 school systems. The importance of music educators to collect data through assessment and other means will help provide administrators with a solid foundation for continuing to include and promote music programs as part of a well-rounded education.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A:
UGA IRB Forms



Tucker Hall, Room 212
 310 E. Campus Rd.
 Athens, Georgia 30602
 TEL 706-542-3199 | FAX 706-542-5638
 IRB@uga.edu
<http://research.uga.edu/hso/irb/>

Human Research Protection Program

EXEMPT DETERMINATION

January 16, 2020

Dear [Rebecca Atkins](#):

On 1/16/2020, the Human Subjects Office reviewed the following submission:

Title of Study:	Principals' Perspective on Decision-Making Process and the Impact on Funding and Legislation Changes on Choral Arts
Investigator:	Rebecca Atkins
Co-Investigator:	Brandon Cash
IRB ID:	PROJECT00001452
Review Category:	Exempt 2ii

We have determined that the proposed research is Exempt. The research activities may begin 1/16/2020.

Since this study was determined to be exempt, please be aware that not all future modifications will require review by the IRB. For more information please see Appendix C of the Exempt Research Policy (<https://research.uga.edu/docs/policies/compliance/hso/IRB-Exempt-Review.pdf>). As noted in Section C.2., you can simply notify us of modifications that will not require review via the "Add Public Comment" activity.

A progress report will be requested prior to 1/15/2025. Before or within 30 days of the progress report due date, please submit a progress report or study closure request. Submit a progress report by navigating to the active study and selecting Progress Report. The study may be closed by selecting Create Version and choosing Close Study as the submission purpose.

In conducting this study, you are required to follow the requirements listed in the Investigator Manual (HRP-103).

Commit to Georgia | give.uga.edu
An Equal Opportunity, Affirmative Action, Veteran, Disability Institution

Sincerely,

Jennifer Freeman, IRB Analyst
 Human Subjects Office, University of Georgia

APPENDIX B:
Recruitment Letter



UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

Dear Principal.

My name is Brandon T. Cash and I am the A [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] I am a doctorate candidate in Music Education at the University of Georgia. I am writing to invite you to participate in my research study about Principal perspectives on decision-making processes and the impact of funding and legislation changes in K-12 music programs.

Because of your extensive background as a principal you have been identified as a potential participant in this study. To be eligible for this study you will need to have at least 5th year as the head principal and be in your 3rd-4th year at current school at your school. The information you provide about your experience with curriculum your decision-making process, funding and changes in federal legislation would contribute a valuable insight to all school leaders and music educators. I have obtained IRB permission from the University of Georgia and from your school district if required by your system.

The interview will last approximately 40 minutes and will be audio recorded. After the initial interview, I will provide you the transcripts of the interview so you can confirm accuracy. All information will be kept completely confidential. I will never refer to you, your school system, or your school by name verbally or in writing. Instead, I will use a pseudonym (Participant A, B, School A, B) and refers to states by regions of the country. Therefore, there are little to no known risks for participating in this study

Participation is voluntary and refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. Also, you may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits. By consenting to participation in this study, you do not give up any personal legal rights.

If you would be willing to participate in an interview, please contact me at btc59368@uga.edu. Remember, this is completely voluntary. A summary of the results will be mailed to you upon completion of the study. You may contact me or my dissertation [REDACTED] the University of Georgia [REDACTED] [any questions.](#)

Thank you for consideration of this invitation.

Brandon T. Cash
[REDACTED]

APPENDIX C:
Participant Consent Form

Approved by University of Georgia
Institutional Review Board
Protocol number **00001452**
Approved on: 01/16/2020
For use though: 01/15/2025

Participant ID # _____

**UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA
CONSENT FORM**

**PRINCIPALS' PERSPECTIVES ON THE FACTORS THAT IMPACT K-12 MUSIC
PROGRAMS**

Researcher's Statement

We are asking you to take part in a research study. Before you decide to participate in this study, it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. This form is designed to give you the information about the study so you can decide whether to be in the study or not. Please take the time to read the following information carefully. Please ask the researcher if there is anything that is not clear or if you need more information. When all your questions have been answered, you can decide if you want to be in the study or not. This process is called "informed consent." A copy of this form will be given to you.

Principal Investigator:

*Dr. Rebecca Atkins
The University of Georgia- Athens, Georgia
Hugh Hodgson School of Music*



Co-Investigator:

*Brandon T. Cash
Doctorate Student: Music Education
The University of Georgia- Athens, Georgia
Hugh Hodgson School of Music*



Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative descriptive phenomenology study is to describe the lived experiences of K-12 principals on their perspectives of decision-making processes and the impact of funding and legislation changes have had on K-12 music programs in northern and southern states.

Study Procedures

If you decide to participate, you will provide demographic information and participate in an interview. The demographic information will be requested through a link and completed online. The interview will be completed either in person or through video conference and audio recorded. Only researchers approved for this study will have access to your demographic information and interview data. The interview transcript will be sent to you for check for accuracy. Follow up interviews may be requested as needed for clarification.

Risks and discomforts

You will not have any more risks than you would in a normal day of life. You may experience some discomfort when asked personal questions about your identity. You may choose not to answer any questions that cause you discomfort. Also, a risk of participation is concerns of confidentiality. However, your identity will be protected using the confidentiality procedures outlined below.

Results of this study may be presented at professional conferences and included in publications of peer-reviewed journals.

Benefits

Participation in this study may not benefit you personally. The information you provide about your experience with curriculum, your decision-making process, funding and changes in federal legislation may contribute a valuable insight to all school leaders and music educators.

Incentives for participation

Participation is voluntary. There will no monetary incentive for being in the study.

Audio/Video Recording

Interviews will be recorded using audio recording devices. Recordings will assist with accurately documenting your responses.

The audio recording(s) will be stored on a jump drive in a locked file cabinet. The audio recording will be stored for the duration of the study and archived after transcription. The audio files will be destroyed after 5 years from the completion of the study.

Privacy/Confidentiality

We will keep your records private to the extent allowed by law. Only Brandon Cash and Dr. Rebecca Atkins will have access to the information you provide. You will not be identified personally. We will use pseudonyms, rather than your name on study records. The information you provide will be stored on a password protected computer and an external hard drive in a locked drawer. The results of this study may be presented at professional conferences and included in publications of peer-reviewed journals. Your name and other facts that might identify you will not appear when we present this study or publish its results. De-identified data will be kept for five years after data collection so that others may use the data for educational purposes.

APPENDIX D:

Original Principal Interview Questions

Original Principal Interview Questions

QUESTIONS

1. Can you provide some information about your background in education and how many years you have occupied your position?
 - a. Demographic information
 - b. Degrees, years in the classroom
 - c. Content area taught
 - d. Years in administration
 - e. Your administration role
2. Were you ever part of a music program in middle, high school or college?
3. How has being involved in a music program help shape the vision and mission of the school you are currently ahead principal of?
4. What other factors outside of legislation have influenced the decision of a principal to include or exclude choral music or change the funding?
5. What are your beliefs and perceptions of the values of including choral music programs in your school?
6. What other factors outside of legislation have influenced the decision of a principal to include or exclude choral music or change the funding?
7. Which programs do you find most significant and a priority for your student population?
8. Describe the process for determining the content, organization, and funding of music programs?
9. How do you prioritize the curricula in making decisions on what subjects should be considered as a priority?
10. If you were challenged with a difficult decision that might involve either cutting music or cutting another program, what criteria would you use to make this choice?
11. What financial decisions have influenced any changes to your current music programs over the past five years?
12. How do you as the principal, make decisions on the curriculum?
13. What changes did your district have to make to its musical offerings to satisfy the requirements from NLCB to Every Student Succeeds Act (2015)
14. What is your definition of a well-rounded education, and what subjects would you include?
15. What percentage of funding from your school's budget is allocated to music programs within your school?
16. What type of funding model do you used to determine how funds are allocated to each department?
17. What is the priority of music classes when making teacher and student schedules relevant to the core classes like math and science?
18. In the past, has your district sacrificed any programs to save music?

APPENDIX E:
Revised Principal Interview Questions

Revised Principal Interview Questions

QUESTIONS

Background Information

1. Please provide some information about your background in education and how many years you have occupied your position?
 - a. Age, gender, years as assistant principal, years as principal
 - b. Degrees, years in the classroom
 - c. Content area(s) taught
 - d. Years in administration
 - e. Your administration role
2. Were you ever part of a music program in either the middle, high school, or college level?

Values

3. What are your beliefs and perceptions of the values of including music programs in your school, such as band and choir?
4. Do you feel your involvement in the music program has shaped your vision and mission for your school? In what ways?

Legislation

5. What changes did your district have to make to its musical offerings to satisfy the requirements from NLCB to Every Student Succeeds Act (2015)
6. What other factors outside of legislation have influenced the decision of a principal to include or exclude music programs due to change funding?
7. What role do you think politics plays in the schools' decision-making process?

Decision Making

8. Which programs do you find as the main priority for your student population?
9. How do you prioritize the curricula in making decisions on what subjects should be considered as a priority?
10. How would you define a well-rounded education and what subjects (in your dream vision) would you include to encompass that description?
11. How do you prioritize music classes in considering both teacher and student schedules to incorporate other pertinent math and science classes in your planning?
12. In the past, has your district sacrificed any specific programs to retain music programs?

Funding

13. Over the past five years, what financial decisions have influenced any changes to your current music programs?
14. Does your school have a central office base budget or site-based budget?
15. What percentage of funding from your schools' budget is allocated to music programs within your school?
16. If you were challenged with a difficult decision that might involve either cutting music or eliminating another program, what criteria would you use to make this choice?
17. What type of funding model do you use to determine how funds are allocated to each department?

APPENDIX F:
Curriculum Vita

Brandon T. Cash

EDUCATION

- 2020** **Doctor of Education: Music Education**
The University of Georgia
- 2018** **Educational Leadership Certification Program**
University of Georgia
- 2014** **Music Education Certification Program**
Piedmont College
- 2011** **Master of Counseling: Student Affairs College Development**
Hampton University
- 2007** **Bachelor of Arts: Vocal Music Education K-12**
Hampton University

CERTIFICATIONS

Georgia Teaching Certificate T6: Secondary Music (K-12)

AP Music Theory Certification

Educational Leadership Certification Tier I

International Baccalaureate Certificate: Level 1- Music

ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

FULL TIME APPOINTMENTS

2019- Present **Assistant Professor of Music/ Director of Choral Activities**

Department of Fine Arts
Mississippi Valley State University
Itta, Bena, MS

2009-2011

**Graduate Assistant
Hampton University
Hampton, VA**

PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHING

2016-2019

**Director of Choral Activities
Maynard Holbrook Jackson High School**

- Conduct three choral ensembles
- Taught Beginning Keyboard
- Taught music appreciation
- Taught International Baccalaureate Music

2018-2019

**Maynard Holbrook Jackson High School,
Fine & Performing Arts Department, *Chair***

- Assist the Fine Arts Coordinator with department responsibilities
- Provide visionary leadership and strategic vision to advance the department
- Recruit, supervise, mentor, and evaluate faculty.
- Recruit students and promote the growth of the PFA programs.
- Continue to develop a successful, and diverse faculty and staff and foster a collaborative and collegial work environment
- Work with the department faculty to increase the retention and graduation rates of students in the PFA

2016-2017

**Atlanta Public Schools, *Atlanta Georgia*
Fine Arts Support Teacher**

- Assist the Fine Arts Coordinator with department responsibilities
- Provide Professional Learning Community guidance and professional development for fine arts teachers
- Assist with the design, development, implementation and evaluation of curriculum for fine arts programs
- Assists with the coordination of pre-planning days, teacher workday activities, countywide art shows, music concerts and theatre productions
- Mentors new teachers through the school year

2012-2016

**Director of Choral Activities
Mount Zion High School**

- Conduct three choral ensembles

- Taught Beginning Keyboard
- Taught AP Music Theory

CHURCH POSITION

2005-2010 **Brown Grove Baptist Church, *Ashland, VA***
DIRECTOR OF MUSIC MINISTRIES/Choir Director (2005-2010)

- Serve as conductor for all major choral ensembles of the church
- Prepare music for Sunday worship
- Conducted two rehearsal weekly
- Managed Choral budget and met with the pastor twice monthly to discuss Sunday service program.

CLINICIAN/ WORSHIP EXPERIENCE

2019 Riverdale High School, Advanced Mixed Chorus, Terrence Williams, Choral Director (February)

2019 Alcovy High School, Intermediate Women' Chorus, Chantae Pittman, Choral Director (February)

2018 Liberty Middle School 7th & 8th Grade Choir, Jamez Dudley, Choral Director, Newton, GA (September)

2016 Maynard Holbrook Jackson High School, Lydia Williams, Choral Director Advanced Mixed Chorus (February)

2014 M.E. Stilwell School of Arts High School, Dr. K. Pace, Head Choral Director, Advanced Mixed Chorus, (May)

Martha Ellen Stilwell School of the Arts High School, Dr. K. Pace, Head Choral Director, Advanced Mixed Chorus, (February)

GUEST CONDUCTING AND ADJUDICATION

GUEST CONDUCTING

2018 Tri-County Honor Choir, Cairo High School, Cairo, GA

ADJUDICATION

2012 Hampton High School High School Choral Festival, Hampton, VA

PRESENTATIONS

2015 *Fine Arts Series: Learning Basic Music Theory Workshop: Mount Zion High School, Jonesboro, GA*

2007 CMENC Regional Conference: Presentation: The Study of Spirituals of African American Composers: (March) *Norfolk, VA*

2020 MMEA/ACDA State Conference: Teaching Music in the Urban Setting: You Have the job, what to do Next? (March)

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPEMENT

2020 American Choral Directors Association Southern Conference, Mobile, AL (13 students participated in the first HBCU Concert Choir (March 11-14)

2020 Pragmatic Programming for Perilous Times-a webinar with Dr. Jason Max Ferdinand (April 29th)

2020 Mississippi Choral Adjudication Certificate (May 1st)

2020 Performing Arts Association: The Essential of Performing A Conversation: What Do Science and Data Say about the Near-Term Future of Sing (May 5th)

2020 Middle School Choir Director Tune-Up -Dr. Craig Robertson (May 6th)

2020 King and I Productions: Digital Learning with Jay Champion (May 12th)

2020 Re-Imagining Music Education: Planning Now for the 2020-2021 School with Music Program Leaders (NafME) (May 23rd)

2020 The Future of Choirs and Singers in a Pandemic! -Dr. Valerie D. Johnson (May 26)

2020 Choral Conductors Colloquium: Rehearsal Framework: Mission Statements, Goals, Priorities, and Strategies: Dr. Anton Armstrong (June 10th)

RELATED EXPERIENCE

- 2017** **Organizer for GMEA District 5 High School 9th-12th Grade Honor Choir**
Coordinated, help with volunteer workers, and other logistics for over 190 students participating in the High School Honor Chorus
- 2016** **Georgia Music Education Association State Conference, Athens, Georgia**
Registered participants for the conference.
- 2015-2016** **Treasurer- District 6: Georgia Music Educators Association**
Financial manager for all Fine Arts areas responsible for an annual \$40,000 budget for the district (Band, Choral, Orchestra, Piano divisions)
- 2015** **Georgia Music Education Association, District 6 High School Honor Chorus Organizer**
Responsible for hosting, organizing workers, and arranging logistics for over 300 students participating for the District 6 High School Honor Chorus

CHORAL PERFORMING EXPERIENCE

- 2018** **Governor's Mansion Performance, Atlanta, Georgia, Maynard Holbrook**
Jackson High School Concert Choir (*invited choir*) (December)
- 2017** **Presidential Jimmy Carter Center Performance Atlanta, Georgia: Maynard**
H. Jackson High School Concert Choir (*invited choir*) (December)
- 2016** **An Evening of Choral Excellence: Bethune- Cookman University Concert Choral Concert, Tyrone, Georgia, Mount Zion High School Concert Choir (*invited choir*) (April)**
- 2016** **Clayton State University Choral Festival: Mount Zion High School Concert Choir, Jonesboro, GA (*invited choir*) (March)**
- 2015** **Presidential Jimmy Carter Center Performance Atlanta, Georgia: Mount Zion High School, Jonesboro, GA (*invited choir*) (December)**

2015 **Georgia State University Sing Fest, Atlanta, Georgia** Mount Zion High School Concert Choir: (*invited choir*) (September)

2014 **Presidential Jimmy Carter Center Performance Atlanta, Georgia:** Mount Zion High School, Jonesboro, GA (*invited choir*) (December)

PROFESSIONAL GROUP PERFORMANCES

2018 *Motown Series*, Quincy Jones, Wendell P. Whalum Community Choir

2015 Wendell P. Whalum Community Chorus, Atlanta, Georgia, Dr. David Morrow (Director)

2014-2015 Atlanta Singers, *Atlanta, Georgia*, Dr. David Morrow, Director

FEATURED SOLO PERFORMANCES

2018 *Motown Series*, Quincy Jones, Wendell P. Whalum Community Choir

2018 *Bound for Canaan's Land*, Undine Smith Moore, Ray Hope Ministries Mass Choir, Black History Program, Atlanta, Georgia

2015 *Glory, Glory, Glory to the Newborn King*, Moses Hogan, Atlanta, Singers, Atlanta, Georgia

2010 *Messiah*, G.F. Handel 2010 Hampton University Concert Choir, Hampton, Virginia

2007 *I Will Lift Up Mine Eyes: A Cantata*, Adolphus Hailstork 2007 The Hampton University Concert Choir, Hampton, Virginia

2006 *Hold Fast to Dreams*, Ronald Carter 2006 Hampton University Concert Choir, Hampton, Virginia

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

American Choral Directors Association (ACDA)
American College Personal Associations (ACPA)
Chi Sigma Iota-National Counseling Honor Society
College Music Society (CMS)
Georgia Music Education Association (GMEA)
Kappa Delta Pi- International Honor Society in Education (KDP)
Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia Fraternity of America Inc. (PMA)
Mississippi Music Educators Association (MMEA)
National Association for Music Education (NafME)
National Collegiate Choral Organization (NCCO)
Music Education National Conference (MENC)
National Association for the Study and Performance of African American Music
Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc.

HONORS AND AWARDS

2015 Awarded: *Teacher of the Month*: Mt. Zion High School

2013 Vocal Coach- Clayton State University Idol Competition

2010 Who's Who Among College and University Students in America

2010 Rob Dixon Opera Competition 1st Runner-Up

2009 2nd Place Winner, NATS, Regional Singing Competition

2007 Outstanding Music Major (Graduation Honors) Hampton University

2006 Treasurer- Pi Beta Chapter- Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia Fraternity of America, Inc.
