

A profile of the middle school and high school male student: their perspectives of chorus,
their experiences in chorus and what causes these perspectives

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Abstract

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STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The purpose of this longitudinal study is to examine the male students' perspectives and experiences of chorus and factors triggering those perspectives. An empirical study using phenomenological research of the male student will be used to create a profile of four categories of male students: middle school boys in chorus, middle school boys not in chorus, high school boys in chorus and high school boys not in chorus. Surveys will be administered to the four categories of male students and the qualitative data obtained will prompt changes and adaptations in the choral rehearsal and in recruitment strategies. After the adaptations are implemented, an analysis of the number of male singers and their perspectives on chorus will be conducted.

The surveys will be administered using multiple choice, true/false and short answer questions. The multiple-choice questions collect data on basic biographical information include grade level, number of years in chorus and their other musical experiences. The multiple-choice questions will also hone in on their internal reason(s) for participating or not participating in chorus. The four categories used in the multiple-choice questions are Future Goals, Academic/Musical, Integrative (social), and Psychological (Davis 65). I expect to find that these four categories will be represented, but Integrative (social) and Psychological will prevail over Future Goals and Academic/Musical.

The true/false questions will collect data revealing external factors that may encourage or discourage a male student to join chorus. These external factors include the opinion of their male and female peers, perception of their singing voice, how fun and easy the class is, and the opinions of adults. I believe these factors will vary between middle school and high school students. I predict middle school students are more influenced by their male peers, while high school students are more influenced by their female peers. I also believe that middle school male students will be more influenced by the adults in their lives than the high school male students.

The short answer questions will reveal anecdotal research that will support the qualitative findings from the multiple choice and true/false questions. It is questioned that anecdotal information cannot be used as legitimate data, but on the other hand, this researcher is very close with the research being conducted and the topic she is researching is not a simple quantitative case. As Andrea Ramsey stated about her research:

Phenomenology focuses on questions of meaning, seeking to describe the phenomenon being studied with as much richness of detail as is possible. Also a mode of philosophical inquiry, phenomenology illuminates the richness of lived experience – not through matters of general fact, but rather through “essence” (Faulkner, 2003) (42).

The short answer questions will gather information about individual experiences, traditions, connections, challenges and perceptions. I predict these experiences will carry common themes through each male profile, but no one experience will be exactly the same.

The researcher plans on using the research to improve her program and encourage the involvement of more male students. This type of research will also foster further studies in the area of perception and experiences through the point of view of a male student in addition to the female student.

RATIONALE

Middle school chorus is a time when male singers tend to opt out of chorus. This is a popular trend throughout school districts, including the district where this study will take place. Male students tend to lose interest in chorus when they enter middle school grades, but the interest increases again once they enter high school. This trend can be rationalized by a difference in teaching techniques, since two different teachers traditionally teach the middle school and high school choral department. The trend is also commonly rationalized by the break in buildings, and the students' move from the middle school building to the high school building. This study is particularly intriguing since both the middle school and high school chorus are taught by the same teacher in the same building, leading to the belief that these traditional rationalizations are not the only explanation.

This longitudinal study will take place over a semester and serve to examine the reasons why high school male students and middle school male students feel differently about chorus. It is imperative that the students' opinions and thoughts are heard and that teachers react and respond to those thoughts. As Karen Cumming states

On-site firsthand classroom research that privileges contemporary adolescent students' ideas, opinions, interests, reflections, and understandings is greatly needed. It was through their eyes that I came to a new understanding of adolescents' learning and the influences of interactions on the classroom experiences (65).

Cumming used her students' reflections and interests to adapt her curriculum and engage more students. The researcher of this study will survey students involved with chorus as well as students not currently involved in a choral ensemble. Using the findings from the choral and non-choral student surveys, adaptations will be made to rehearsals and recruitment. After the adaptations are implemented, an analysis of the number of male singers and their perspectives on chorus will be conducted.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

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As a music educator it is imperative to know the students' point of view so the teacher can create a curriculum to interest the students and fill the students' needs. The researcher predicts vital information will be communicated regarding the choral program and will give insight on how to attract more male students into the ensemble. The researcher also believes the answers will vary between these three main groups taking the chorus student survey: middle school students, high school students who perform in the auditioned group and high school students who do not perform in the auditioned group. These results will aid in the recruitment and retention process throughout the year and will hopefully create more balanced choral ensembles in the middle and high school.

Chapter 2: Understanding the Male Teenager through the Lens of Choral Education

Looking into the majority of choral rehearsals, there is an abundance of females. Some schools even opt to have a women's chorus and a high school general chorus, which indicates the high interest female teenagers have for choral groups. At this researcher's school, it is a common theme for elementary and middle school female students to conquer the choral ensemble population. Although the gender numbers begin to even as students enter high school, it is still not a fifty percent ratio. What is the cause of these unequal numbers? Many choral directors and music educators have speculated reasons, reasons that vary from one school community to the next, but it is uncommon to hear the students' voices in this topic. Virginia Davis states

Little empirical research exists on *students'* perspectives on their own music education. Understanding the meaningfulness of music education can help educators develop better educational opportunities for their students by bringing the students' perspectives to light. By understanding the value students find in their musical experiences, educators can better meet individual students' needs, develop more meaningful curricula for students in non-performance classrooms, and perhaps use this information as a means for justifying continues support for public school music programs (62).

As indicated by Davis, the meaning of music education grows from the students' perspective, not only students who are currently involved in ensembles, but also the students who are not enrolled in ensembles. "To create viable recruitment strategies this age, more research is needed concerning adolescent males who do not choose to enroll in choirs as a class in Grade 7 or 8" (Lucas). Opening the research to middle school and high school students enrolled and not enrolled in choral ensembles will give a greater understanding of the students' experiences.

According to previous research on this topic, there are four prevalent themes that affect a male student's attitudes toward the choral ensemble. The themes, which are thoroughly discussed below, are adolescent change (Freer, Hunt, Fischer, Martin, Ramsey), intrinsic vs. extrinsic motivation (Rathunde and Csikszentmihalyi, West, Ramsey, Hedden, Davis), adult perceptions (Hedden, Ramsey, Cummings, Lucas) and peer perceptions (Ramsey). These four themes are represented in various ways throughout the research and may have different implications depending on the student's background and hometown. These themes overlap and the survey represents these themes using multiple choice, true/false and short answer questions.

The adolescent change, especially the change male students experience, is often the explanation for the low number of male singers. The male voice change is much more dramatic than the female voice change, which could be a reason male students decide to leave chorus. What exactly is the underlying factor of this decision? In his article "Boys' Changing Voices in the First Century of MENC Journals," Patrick Freer discusses the reason boys do not want to use their singing voice:

Whether the changing voice itself deters boys from singing is a subject of debate, at least according to research presented in MEJ. In 1988, Kenneth Phillips related, "Students...name the adolescent voice change and the relevance of singing to their career goals as the leading causes behind boys' decisions to drop out of choral music." In contrast, a 2000 article by Steven Demorest reported the reasons for boys' nonparticipation in choir "were related not to vocal or musical concerns, but to male identity" (42).

Although career goals and the male identity are very different reasons a middle school student would decide to leave a choral ensemble, both will be a part of the survey. The male identity issue is related to the adolescent change in multiple research articles. Researchers question whether it is actually the voice change that deters students from chorus, or the change in their identity.

Voice change is a valid reason, and a health concern, for a male singer to question choral singing. In 1984, Manuel Garcia even recommends males should not seriously study singing until the age of eighteen. “Manuel Garcia in ‘Hunts on Singing’ (1984) laid down that boys should not begin serious study of singing till the age of eighteen, and in any case not till the break of the voice was complete, as ‘any tampering at this delicate period might ruin the voice forever’” (Hunt 237). This may be taking it a few steps too far, but there are health concerns for middle school males. Ryan Fisher states

Nineteen percent of the adult participants in Killian’s study reported the voice change process to be a negative experience. Singers seemed to be much more aware of the voice change than non-singers and reported feeling physical pain and hoarseness during the voice change. Several adult male participants responded that the quality of their mature voice was not as good as their prepubertal voice (Fisher 277-90).

Fisher indicates that the student’s vocal health may be a reason male singers decide to leave a choral ensemble. He also touches on the fact that male singers believe they do not ‘sound good.’

‘Sounding good’ may have to do with the male identity issue mentioned earlier. The expressions ‘sounding good,’ ‘sounding bad,’ ‘sounding like...’ are used in multiple articles. Some researchers use it in comparison to the prepubescent voice, others use it to describe what the singers think of themselves, and others use it in comparison to girls. All three of those comparisons tie in with the male identity.

Boys are indeed wary of ‘sounding like girls.’ Moreover, it lent support to an earlier claim by Joyce (2005) that many boys feel inferior to girls in singing. Boys’ need to protect their uncertain, emergent identities (Groth 2007) from such perceived inferiority emerged as significant, as did the uncertainty of generational and gendered identities associated with voice change (Monks 2003) (Martin 243-54).

The male identity involves the voice change, what the voice sounds like and comparing the voice to a female's voice. Despite these issues, some boys still continue with chorus.

Ryan Fisher discusses this topic:

According to Bandura (1994), self-efficacy beliefs impact people's motivation and how they think, feel, and behave. He also concluded that perceived efficacy can determine the pivotal choices people, specifically adolescents, make at significant decision points in life. When faced with difficulties, those with low efficacy tend to give up, whereas those with high efficacy view obstacles as achievable and are more resilient (Bandura, 2006) (Fisher 277-90).

If male adolescents have high self-efficacy, or high self-confidence, they will take the chance and continue with chorus even though their voice is changing. On the other hand, students with low self-efficacy, or low self-confidence, will not continue with chorus.

This deals with the male identity at the middle school age. How does one's perception of himself change as he grows into high school? As one grows older it is perceived that they will gain more confidence in their identity. Some people even believe that being a part of a choral ensemble can assist in creating high self-confidence. Andrea Ramsey's ethnographic research of a high school male chorus reflects this belief. She interviewed multiple students in this choir about self-identity. Here are two interviewees' responses

The confidence you gain just from singing and being a good singer and being praised for that and being genuinely- oh, what's the word? – from having that talent be enjoyed. It makes you feel better – that you're being successful and that you're doing great things, so I guess that feeling of success makes me more confident as well (Ramsey 171).

Being in men's choir and being around all these people who accepted me and liked singing with me and were having fun – it just made me relax a lot more around people and now I feel a lot more like myself and if people don't want to be around me and like me for who I am, for how I act, I mean – that's their problem (Ramsey 171).

These two responses indicate the influence adolescent change can have on a male's self-identity from middle school to high school. The research collected from the survey will continue to inquire about the differences and how it affects students' views of chorus.

Students, in any subject, need to have a portion of intrinsic motivations in addition to extrinsic motivations. The proportions will differ with each student, but it is crucial for educators to understand when and why the majority shifts from intrinsic to extrinsic motivations. Intrinsic motivation is motivation that comes from within a student and extrinsic motivation is motivation that is provided by external factors such as the teacher or the educational environment. The balance of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation shifts as students grow.

A central concern of many studies is motivation (Anderman and Maehr 1994); a disturbingly consistent finding associated with middle school is a drop in students' intrinsic motivation to learn (Anderman et al. 199; Gottfried 1985; Harter et al. 1992). (Rathunde and Csikszentmihalyi 341).

As middle school students enter the adolescent change, their intrinsic motivation decreases and their academic achievement may begin to depend on external factors. The surveys distributed in this study explore the intrinsic motivation male students have to join chorus or not join chorus. It also explores the extrinsic motivation students have to join or not join.

It is an educator's dream that all students are intrinsically motivated to learn and immerse themselves into all subjects. In the real world, that is not the case and students may need an external force to keep them involved. As Chad West states in "Motivating Music Students: A Review of the Literature:"

Whereas research within psychology suggests that external motivators can negatively affect students' enjoyment when used to motivate students in an already enjoyable activity (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Harter 1983; Lepper, 1988), Austin (1988) seems to suggest otherwise. Austin found that external motivators

(i.e., contest ratings) did not negatively affect music students' intrinsic motivation. Furthermore, students who received external motivators achieved higher. Whereas the former finding seems to conflict with intrinsic motivation research, the latter finding is consistent with achievement goal research (e.g., Mayer, 2007), which indicates that external motivators can and do affect achievement.

The three extrinsic motivators involved in this study deal with the social part of chorus, the level of difficulty and how it will prepare them for their future career. The study also explores two extrinsic motivators that would deter students from joining, which are scheduling conflicts and not knowing how to read music. The researcher predicts that extrinsic motivation will be prevalent in both middle school and high school, while the intrinsic motivators will be more prevalent in high school.

Research suggests that many students join chorus for social reasons, which is categorized into smaller categories. Andrea Ramsey's phenomenological research dealt with the social aspects of the men's choir she researched. These aspects included friendship, bonding, traditions and field trips. Ramsey states:

I asked the question, "What is the best thing about Cedar High School Men's Choir?" Unbeknownst to each other, seven of the ten referenced camaraderie of some sort in their responses, using words like: friendships, bonds, connections, brothers, closeness, togetherness, and brotherhood. (102)

The surveys administered to middle school and high school students ask about the topics listed above, but also traditions, the perception of their female peers and what is fun about chorus.

Intrinsic motivation comes from within the student. This motivation is predicted to be more prominent at the high school level, although should still exist at the middle school level. Debra Hedden states "Asmus (1986) noted that a shift occurred during the sixth and seventh grades in which students' attributions changed from effort (external) to ability (internal)" (47-58). According to this research, middle school students who

perceive themselves as having the ability to sing will exhibit more intrinsic motivators.

Those who do not believe that have the ability to sing, will exhibit more extrinsic motivators.

As students mature and grow into their male identity, intrinsic motivation becomes more prevalent. Virginia Davis comments on research conducted on high school choral groups and their extrinsic and intrinsic motivators:

The researchers found that students participated in school music ensembles for a variety of reasons from family influence, enjoyment of music, performing, and social benefits. Students found music-making and performing to be meaningful, as well as the acquisition of musical skills and knowledge. The students also felt they were gaining psychological benefits from their involvement in music groups, such as increased responsibility, self-discipline, and personal growth, and that music-making provided an emotional outlet and a comfortable classroom atmosphere (63).

The intrinsic themes of ‘enjoyment of music,’ ‘performing to be meaningful,’ ‘psychological benefits,’ and ‘an emotional outlet’ are covered in the middle school survey, but are much more detailed in the high school survey.

The last two themes surveyed go hand-in-hand, and they are adult perception and peer perception. The researcher predicts that peer perception will be more relevant as a middle school student and adult perception will be more relevant as a high school student; although the relationship with the choral director tends to be one of the most important factors according to research. Debra Hedden states:

Nolin and Vander Ark (1977) found that the personality of the teacher may be a predominant factor in maintaining interest and participation in music. Other studies reported that high levels of teacher efficacy were directly related to acceptance of the student and amount of teacher effort to assist in the student’s performance or learning (47-58).

It’s an important concept that the teacher portrays a positive environment and expresses interest in each student. “My efforts to engage the students in conversations of interest

and relevance to the individual changed their classroom behaviors significantly” (Cummings 60). Karen Cummings expresses the simple technique of getting to know the student as a person, not as a choral student. If a teacher does not create this open, positive environment, it may not entice male (or female) students to join. “Boys will not work for a teacher who they believe does not like them. Usually a boy draws this conclusion on the teacher’s failure to understand how he learns” (Ramsey 32). Overall the teacher’s interactions with the students may be one of the most important factors.

The other adults in the student’s lives also can make an impact. These adults include parents, family members, other teachers and administration. The complete family environment is a factor in their initial involvement. Debra Heddens finds:

Brand’s (1986) research indicated that factors in the home environment – including availability of recordings and musical toys, the presence of singing, and overall positive parental attitudes toward music – contributed to the development of children who were involved with music (47-58).

If a family is already involved with music, they may encourage their children to join a choral group. Once the student is involved with the group, the on-going parental support is important. The support of other role models and adults can be just as important as the perception of their family and choral director. Mark Lucas discusses the attitudes of the other adults:

What are adolescent males’ perceptions of how their teachers, coaches, and administration feel about guys singing in choir? Three items were used to assess this question. The data suggested that adolescent males in choir perceived their principal and nonmusic teachers as supportive of their participation in choir. Less positive were their perceptions of whether their coaches support their choir participation (46-53).

The perception the students have of their teachers’, principals’ and parents’ attitudes is surveyed in this research project.

In addition to adult perceptions, peer perceptions can affect the participation of middle school and high school male singers. The student's self-identity ties in with peer perceptions. Students with a high level of self-identity will be less prone to let their peers alter what they do. The researcher predicts that peer perceptions will have more of an affect on middle school students than high school students. It is also believed by the researcher that the camaraderie and friendships formed within the ensemble affect the amount of input peer perceptions have over the singers' decisions. As stated in Andrea Ramsey's research:

Individuals who are part of the community feel empowered to accomplish more collectively than they are capable of alone. Individuals within a community may experience empowerment through being interconnected with others and enjoying the security of one's place within in the community (12).

Students who have a community of support and friendship will be less likely to care about the opinions of their peers. The idea of peer perceptions will be explored in the singers' surveys as well as the non-singers' surveys.

Chapter 3: Results and Comparisons of the Surveys

The surveys describing the opinions and experiences male students have with chorus were administered over two periods. The first survey was comprised of multiple choice and true/false questions. These questions dealt with basic biographical information, intrinsic/extrinsic motivation, adolescent change, peer perception and adult perception. The second survey was comprised of short answer questions dealing with intrinsic/extrinsic motivation, adolescent change, peer perception and adult perception.

There were four different surveys administered to each group of male students: middle school male chorus member, middle school male non-chorus member, high school male chorus member and high school male non-chorus member. The surveys for the non-chorus members were very similar between middle school and high school. The only difference dealt with scheduling since it differs between the two grade levels. Both grade levels of chorus members contained similar multiple choice and true/false questions. The high school chorus member survey contained more short answer because their level of education produced much more intelligible and thoughtful responses than the middle school chorus member.

Eight middle school male chorus members were surveyed. As stated in chapter two, it is believed the middle school males tend to drop chorus because of the adolescent changes occurring at that time. It is also discussed that students with a strong self-identity will continue with chorus. The data in this survey supports that fact: 75% of middle school male chorus members believe they are good singers and only 12.5% believe they are poor singers. The 25% (12.5% poor and 12.5% unsure) of students who do not believe they are good singers joined chorus at a later age: fifth grade and seventh grade. It

is possible these students have not yet had enough experience to be comfortable and confident with their voice. Although the majority of these singers believe they are good singers, when asked what the most challenging part of chorus is, 75% of them believed learning their notes and supporting their section was the most challenging part.

It was predicted that middle school students would need more extrinsic motivation than high school students. The data collected in this survey with chorus students does not agree with that prediction. One hundred percent of middle school chorus students are in chorus because it is something they enjoy and it makes them feel good about themselves. In addition to that percentage, the highest subcategory selected, receiving 62.5%, is “it gets things off my chest,” which is categorized as intrinsic motivation. Seventy-five percent of these students also selected “to learn more about music,” as an intrinsic motivator of joining chorus. Though 100% of students selected an intrinsic motivator category, they still enjoy the extrinsic motivation. One hundred percent of these students are in chorus because it is fun and 62.5% are enrolled for social reasons; the top subcategory being “I get to talk with others.” These percentages show the students involved in chorus do so for mainly intrinsic reasons, but the social and fun aspects are also essential. Their short answer responses indicate that 37.5% of them would like more activities to get to know the rest of the chorus members.

It was predicted that middle school students would be affected by the perceptions of their peers more than the adults in their life. The data from the survey shows that neither group has affected the majority of middle school students. Seventy-five percent of male students in middle school chorus are not influenced by the guys or the girls in their school. Zero percent of the students are influenced by their families, 25% believe the

encouragement of school coaches would affect enrollment and 37.5% believe the encouragement of the school principal would affect enrollment. These minority percentages show that the majority of male students in middle school chorus have made the decision on their own terms, which may tie in with their strong male identity. The adult who has the most influence over their decision to enroll is the choral director. Seventy-five percent of these students are in chorus because of the chorus director, proving the teacher's personality and rapport with the students play an important role in recruitment and retainment.

Seven middle school male non-chorus students were surveyed. Fifty-seven percent of these students were involved with elementary chorus while the other 43% were never in chorus. There are few reasons 57% of these students are no longer in chorus that is supported by the information collected in this survey. The students who are currently in middle school chorus have strong self-identities, but non-chorus students may not have strong self-identities, at least in the realm of singing. Fifty-seven percent of middle school non-chorus students are not enrolled because they think they are not good at singing and 0% of the non-chorus students believe they are good singers. The majority of students who are not in chorus because they do not think they are good at singing were involved with elementary chorus, which leads me to question what the trigger in elementary school was that led them to believe they are not good singers.

Another reason that 57% of these students are no longer in chorus could be explained by a scheduling conflict. All students, who were once involved with elementary chorus, are currently enrolled in middle school band, while the students who were never in chorus, are not currently in band. Students in middle school band and

middle school chorus do not have study halls. If a student needs or wants a study hall, they cannot be in one of the ensembles. Due to the cost of instruments and private lessons, it is a popular choice to pick middle school band and drop middle school chorus. To back up this theory, 75% of the students who were in elementary chorus stated that they would consider joining chorus if it did not take place during a study hall. Overall, 71% of these students would consider joining chorus if it did not take place during a study hall.

According to the survey's responses, the male peers of these students have the most influence over their choice to join or not join chorus. Even though 100% of students choose "false" for the question "I am not in chorus because of the other guys in my school," 57% of these students would consider joining chorus if more of their friends were involved. The girls do not influence these students since only 14% did not join chorus because of the girls in his school. The most influential adults, according to this survey, are the coaches since 43% believe that their encouragement could influence them to join chorus.

Fifteen high school male chorus students were surveyed. The difference in male enrollment from middle to high school is a prominent reason this survey was given. The number of students who took this survey demonstrates the staggering difference. Almost twice as many high school male chorus students consented to taking the survey. Strong self-identity is more prominent with the high school chorus members than the middle school chorus members. Seven percent of these students believe they have a poor singing voice; 93% of these students believe they have a good singing voice or they are not sure. Even though a larger percentage of students believe they are good singers, 67% of these

students are in chorus for other reasons, not because they are good at singing. It can be deduced that the strong self-identity is partially attributed to their choral experience. Ninety-three percent of these students believe choir has impacted their life or identity in a positive way. The top five ways choral groups have impacted their lives are: more friends (33%), higher confidence (20%), improved social skills (20%) and increased interests (20%). Student C4, an eleventh grader, answered the question “do you feel being involved in a choir has impacted your life or your identity in any way? If yes, how so?” with “Yes. I think it has given me a new sense as to who I am. Before I joined *Hello Dolly*, I was a shy kid intimidated by the world. I’m much more confident in myself and where I’m headed since joining chorus. Before I would have never auditioned for a thing. Now I’m trying everything I can.”

It was predicted that high school students would be more intrinsically motivated to participate in chorus than the middle school chorus students, but the results of these surveys show that they are equally if not less intrinsically motivated. One hundred percent of students are in high school chorus because it is something they enjoy and it makes them feel good about themselves, which is equal to the middle school chorus results. When asked about their favorite traditions dealing with the high school music department, eighteen different answers appeared, while only one appeared from the middle school chorus. The high school choral department does have more traditions due to the nature of the program and time constraints within the middle school program. When asked what traditions these students would like to see in the future, the high school students answered with eleven different ideas, while the middle school students answered with three different ideas. Since there was not an overwhelming plea for any more

traditions in the middle school chorus, it shows that extrinsic motivation is not as important as their high school counterparts.

Peer perceptions are also more influential at the high school level. Forty percent of the surveyed high school chorus students believe they were influenced by the guys and the girls in their school to join. In this case, this influence would be 'positive peer pressure' since they are joining because of their peers. The high school chorus students were asked: "how do others from school, peers, family, audience members, etc. respond to your choral performances and more specifically, your participation in the group(s)?" Seven percent of students feel a negative response from their peers while 53% feel a supportive and respectful response. Forty percent of the students do not receive feedback from their peers.

The adult perceptions are slightly more influential at the high school level than the middle school level for chorus students. Fifty-three percent of students believe the coaches could encourage more boys to join chorus versus the 13% in middle school chorus. Eighty-seven percent of these students also receive supportive and positive feedback from family members while the other 13% do not receive feedback.

There were four high school non-chorus male students surveyed. One hundred percent of these students do not think they are good singers, but that is not the reason that they are not in chorus. This shows that even if the self-identity of these high school students is not strong, it no longer matters in their chorus enrollment. Twenty-five percent of these students lacked intrinsic motivation to join chorus. To answer the question "circle the reasons you are not in high school chorus," student D4 circled "F. Other - lack of motivation." Twenty-five percent of the surveyed students decided not to

join because scheduling difficulties, while the other 50% do not enjoy singing with a large group. This mix of intrinsic and extrinsic reasons would be more diverse if more students consented to the survey. This particular group of students surveyed seemed to be the least influenced by peers and adults. Zero percent of these students allowed the other guys or girls at their school to influence their enrollment in chorus, while only 25% of these students believed that a coach could encourage more boys to join. Even more interestingly, 50% of these boys' families want them to be in chorus, which does not make a difference, since they are not. Due to the limited number of students in this group, it is hard to understand the population as a whole, but it is an interesting insight into the minds of this group of students.

Chapter 4: Conclusion

The results of the surveys given to each group of male students have been insightful. The answers, some expected and some predictable, will encourage a more open-mind from the choral director in trying to understand the reasoning of a teenage boy, while other answers will cause a definite change in the choral program.

The results relating to adolescent change will yield a more open mind for the director, instead of a concrete change. One idea that is worth more thought and discussion is the students' choral experiences in elementary school. Non-chorus students who were once in elementary school tend to believe they are poor singers. Why? What is the trigger for that thought? Is it triggered by their adolescent change or is it because of the lack of time dedicated to choral training at the elementary level? Further research at this younger age, as well as with adult singers, is encouraged.

The question "how has chorus impacted your life and identity" supports the idea that being in a choral ensemble is more than singing; it is molding their personality and lives. The answers to this particular question will result in the director's understanding of the members' experiences and value their participation more than in the past.

The results dealing with intrinsic and extrinsic motivation yield that chorus members are mainly intrinsically motivated to join chorus, more so in the middle school group, while the non-chorus members are affected extrinsically not to enroll in chorus. The prominent reason these students are not in chorus deals with scheduling conflicts. Nearly sixty-three percent of middle school students would join chorus if it was not during a study hall and 50% of high school students would join if it did not cause scheduling conflicts. The schedule for middle school and high school students at this

particular district is changing the next school year and the number of scheduling conflicts should decrease for these students.

One hundred percent of the students are in chorus because they enjoy it and it makes them feel good about themselves. The second ranked reason (75% for middle school students and 67% for high school students) is their desire to learn more about music with “how to read notes” as the highest ranked topic. The choral director believes it will be beneficial to incorporate more of this topic into the curriculum since there is a high interest and it is an essential skill as a musician.

The extrinsic social motivation is also very important. The choral director will continue with the current traditions in place for high school chorus, but will incorporate more traditions and ‘get to know each other’ activities at the middle school level throughout the whole school year, instead of just during the first couple of rehearsals.

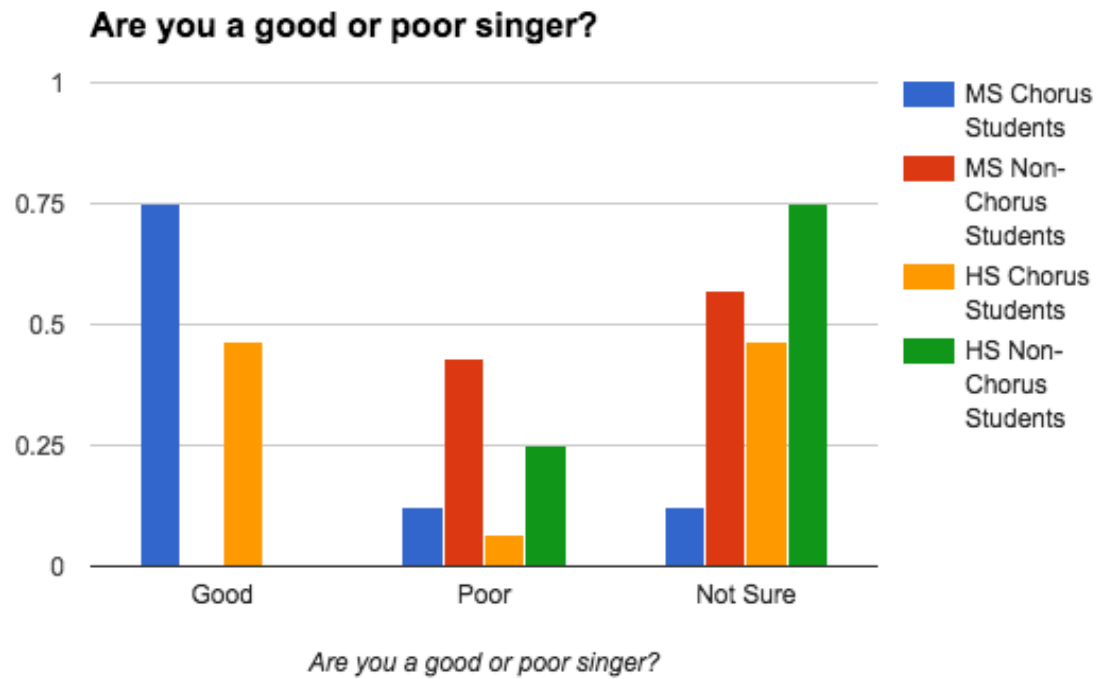
Peer perception is not as important as first predicted. The majority of students are not influenced by the guys and girls at their school. One student reported a negative response from his peers but his written response indicated that it did not influence him: “some peers are negative about it...however, I do not believe that.” If anything, the peer perceptions the students have of chorus are mainly positive and encourage students to join instead of quit. The adult perceptions are much more influential. Since the choral director has the most influence on middle school and high school chorus students, the director will to continue and improve rapport with students. The choral director does not influence students who are not in chorus, which leads to the question: what can the director do to get to know those students and potentially encourage them to join the choral ensembles?

The coach is also a potentially influential adult in these students' lives. Is there a way to incorporate the coaches in recruitment or assemblies to encourage a stronger connection between sports and music? Or maybe a simple conversation with the coaches encouraging them to discuss chorus with their teams would make a difference.

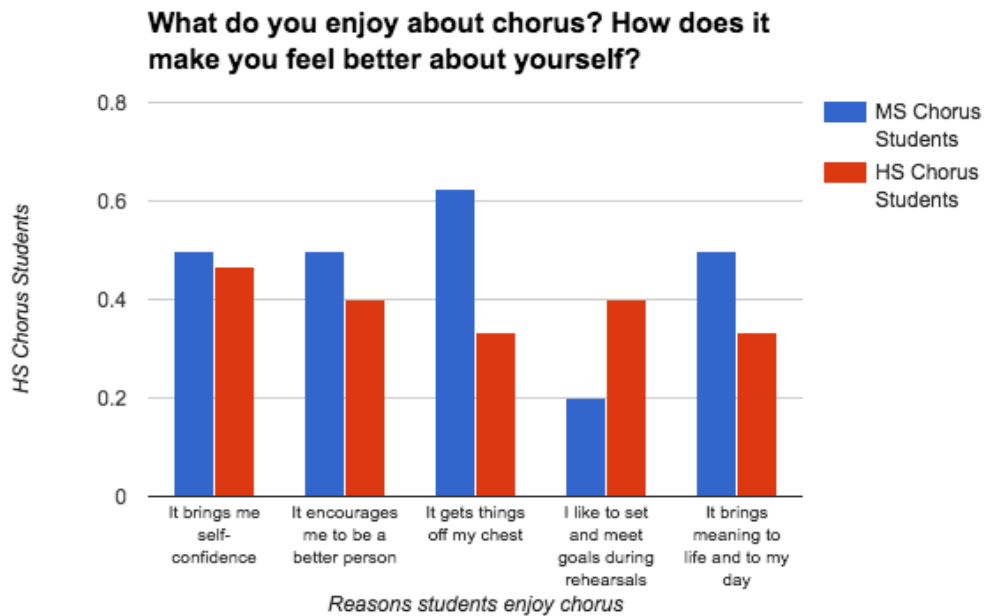
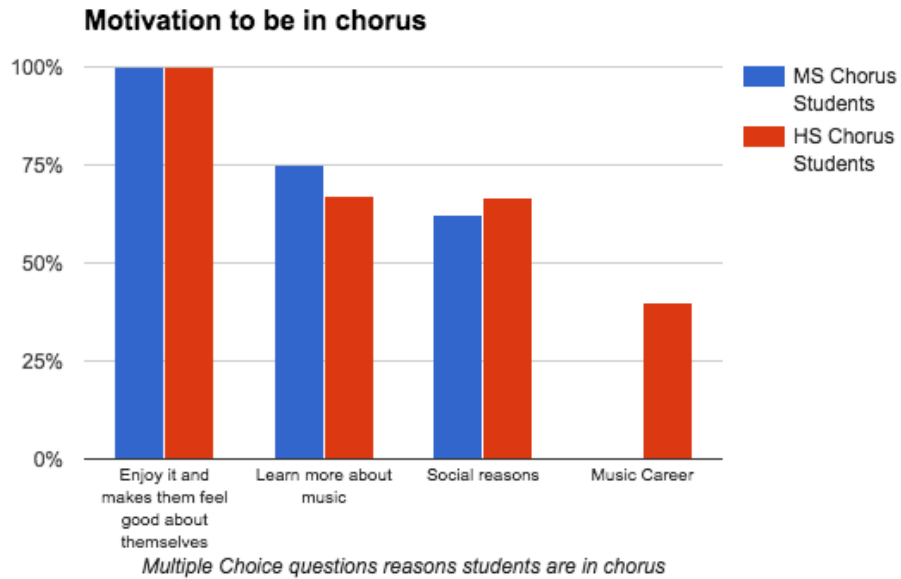
The information from these surveys has been valuable. The next step of inquiry would encourage a larger pool of participants. The group of high school non-chorus members leaves a lot to be desired and it would be beneficial to interview and survey more of those students. The elementary level and adult age is also of interest, which was discussed earlier. What are the perceptions of elementary students in addition to the middle and high school students? It will also be telling if the extrinsic cause of scheduling is solved next year when the schedule change occurs. The next step is implementing the items discussed earlier in this chapter and making influential changes to recruitment and curriculum to improve the balance of choral ensembles. The implemented changes will be spending more time teaching music literacy, continuing to encourage an environment for the students to enjoy and feel good about themselves, get involved outside of chorus to create a rapport with non-chorus students and to incorporate the coaches in recruitment. These concrete changes will hopefully encourage more male students to get involved at the middle and high school levels and create a more supportive learning environment for all singers.

Appendix A - Survey Results

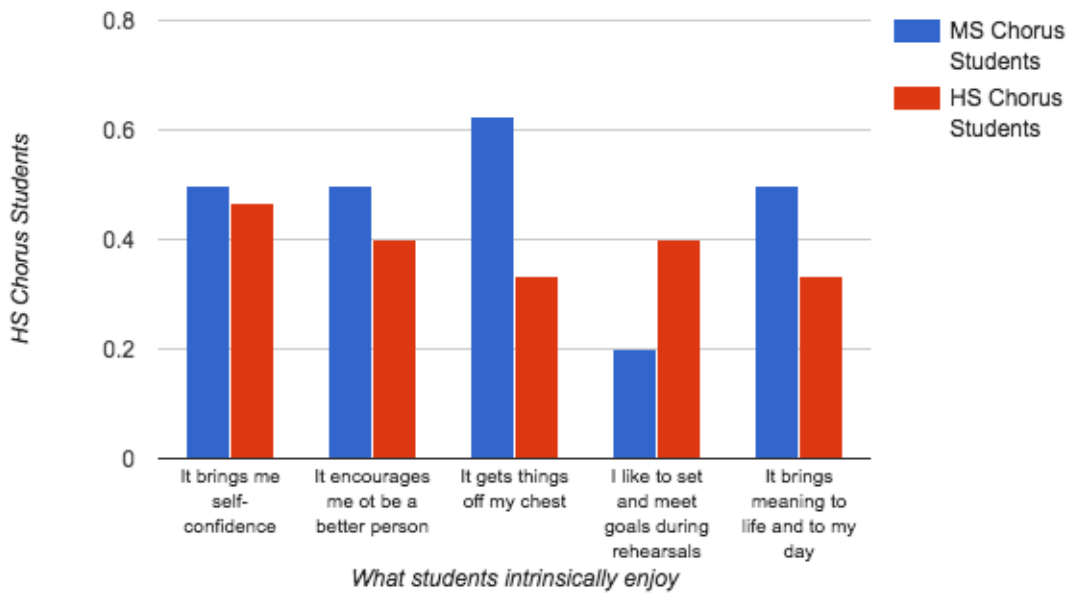
Adolescent Change - Male Identity



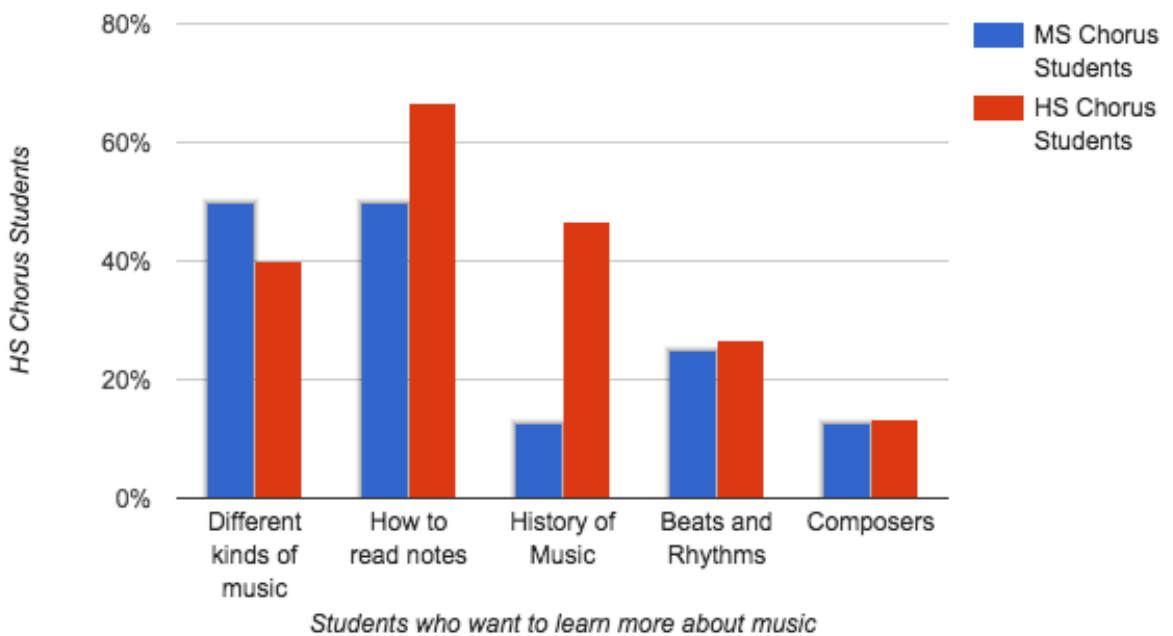
Intrinsic vs. Extrinsic Motivation



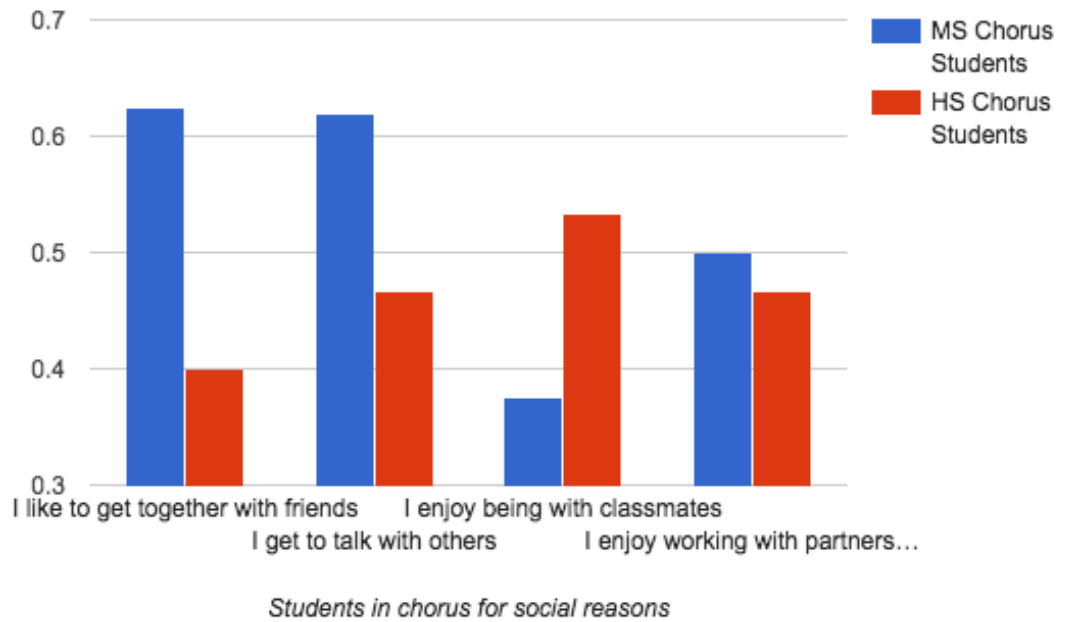
What do you enjoy about chorus? How does it make you feel better about yourself?



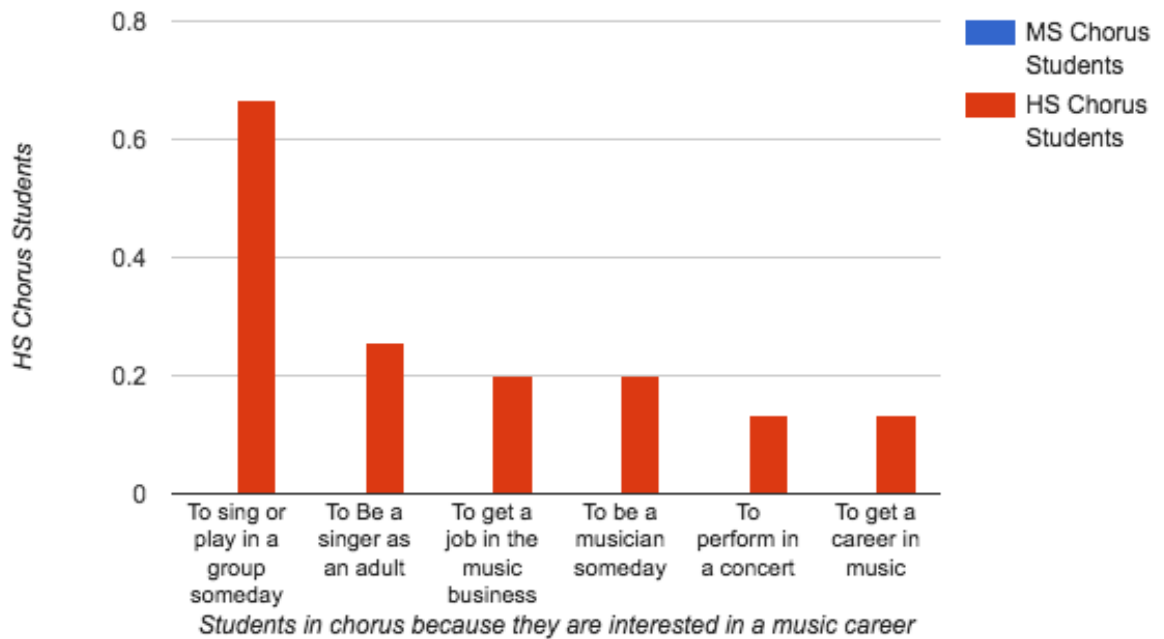
What do you want to learn about music?



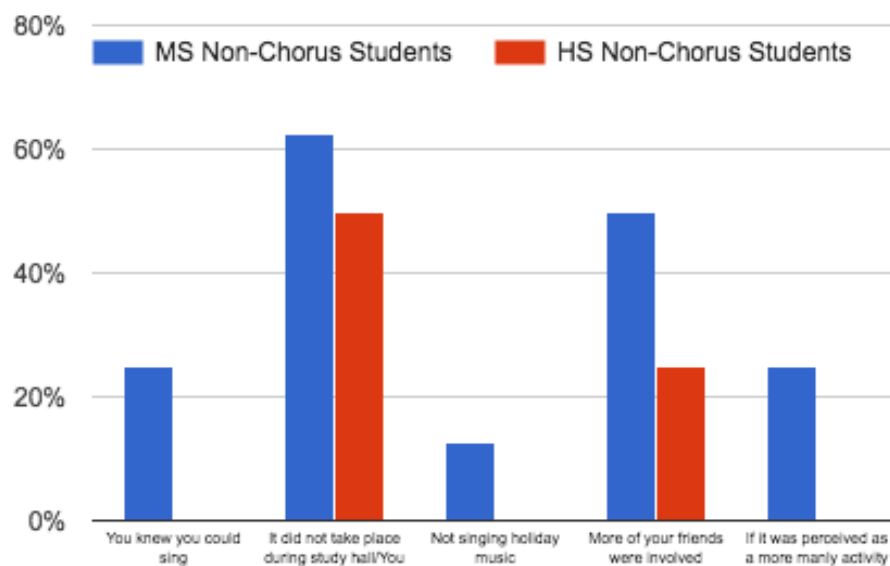
What social aspects do you enjoy in chorus?



What music career are you interested in?

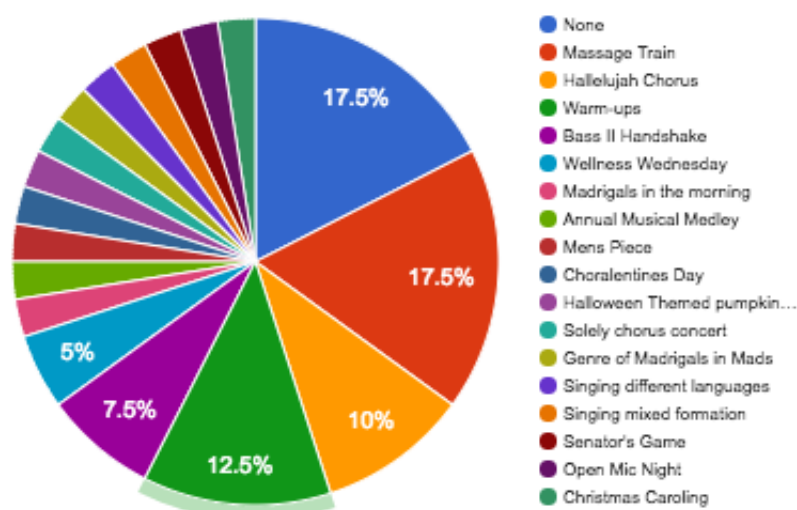


Under what circumstances would you consider joining chorus?

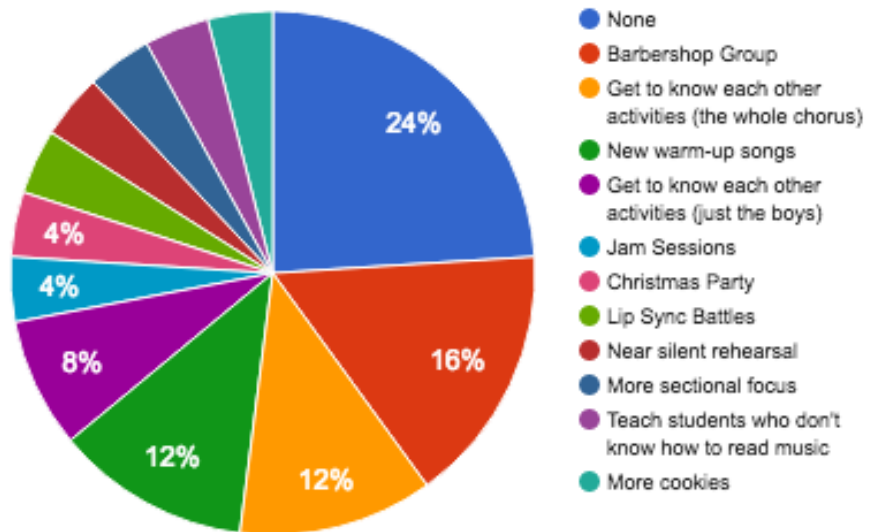


MS and HS Non Chorus Students

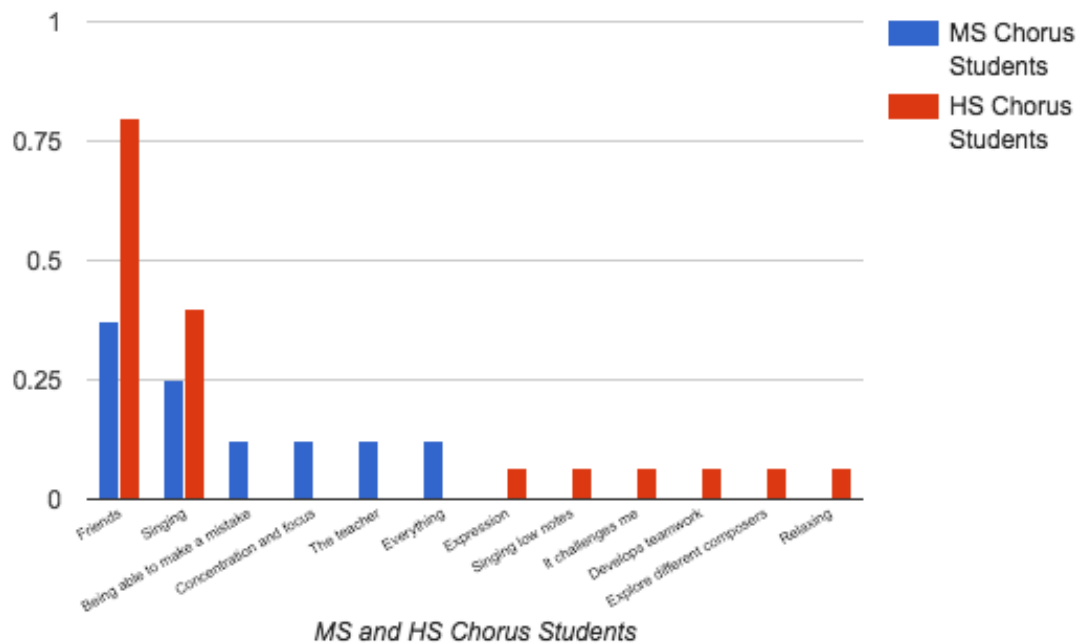
Favorite Current Traditions (MS and HS chorus members)



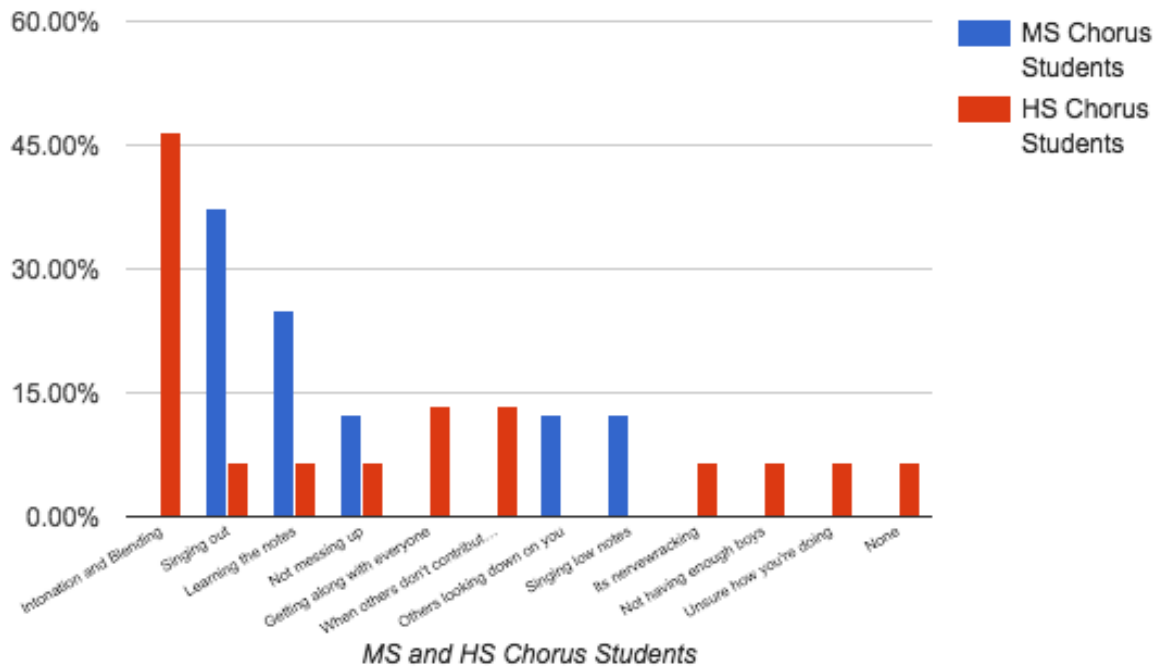
Tradition Ideas - MS and HS Chorus Students



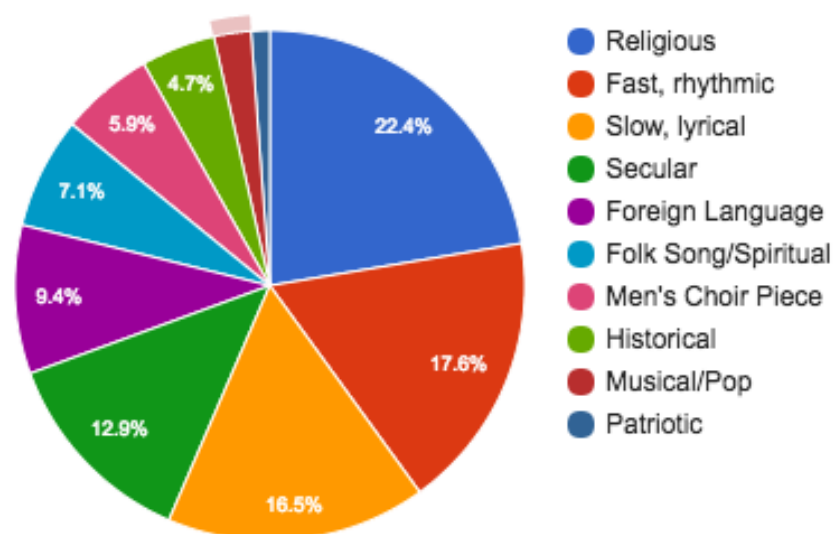
What is the best thing about being in chorus?



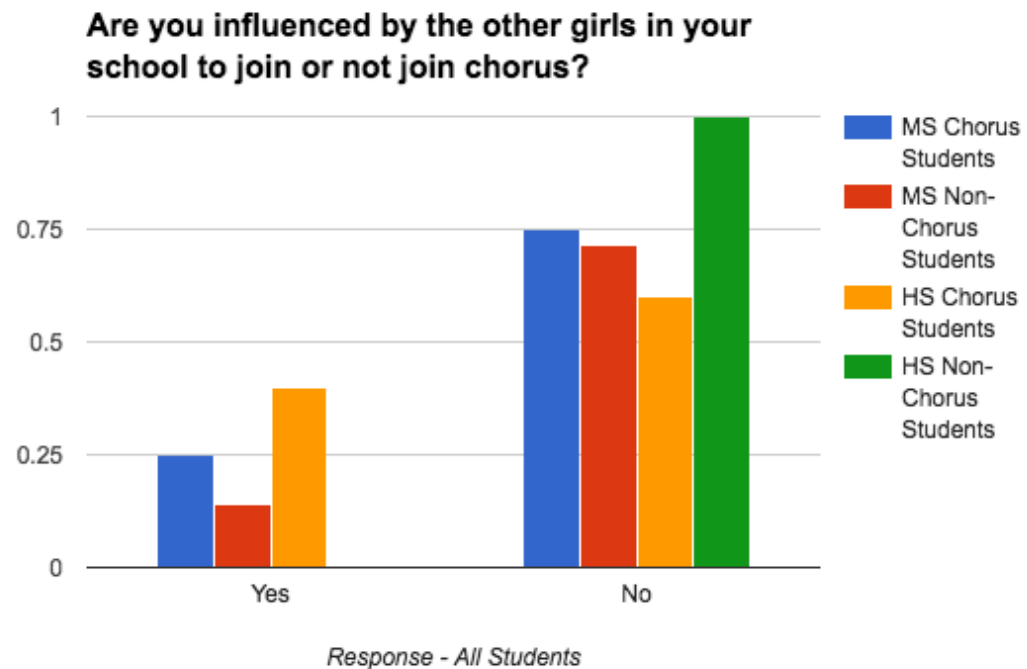
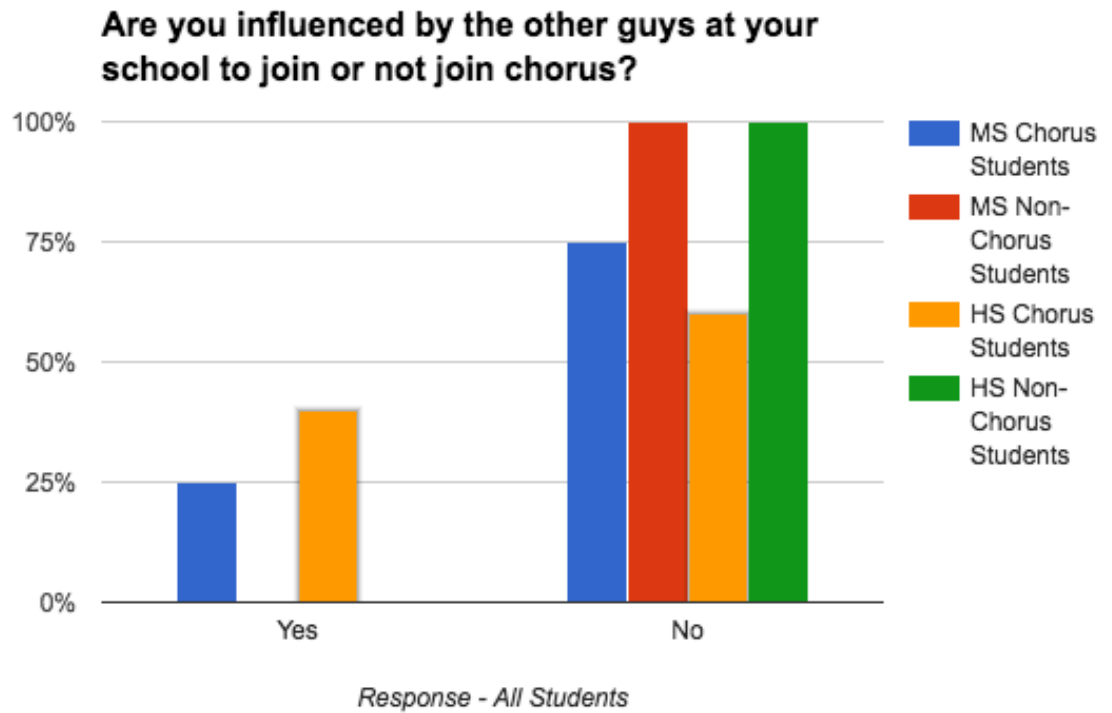
What is the most challenging thing about chorus?



Genre of meaningful songs - MS and HS Students

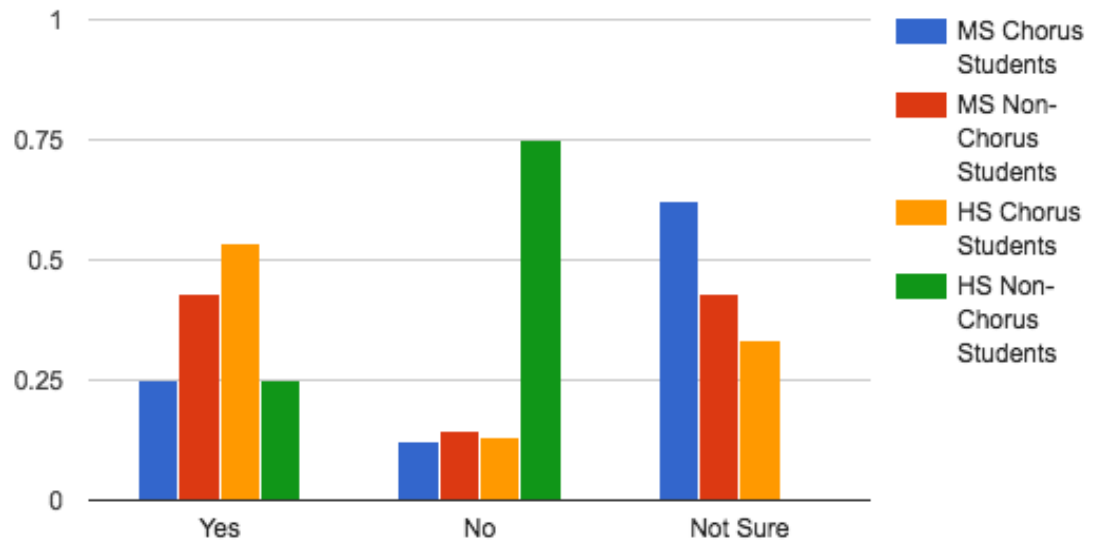


Peer Perceptions



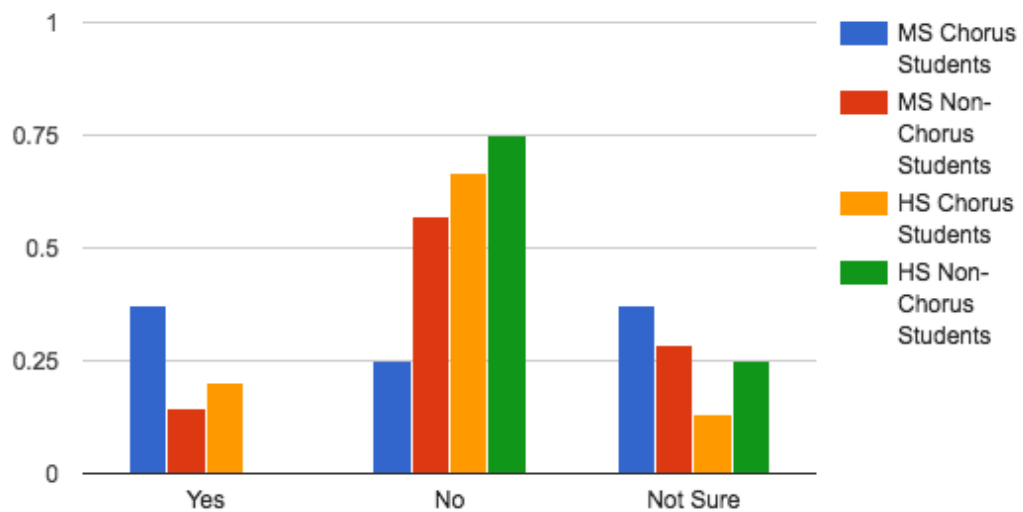
Adult Perceptions

Would the coaches' encouragement influence more boys to join chorus?



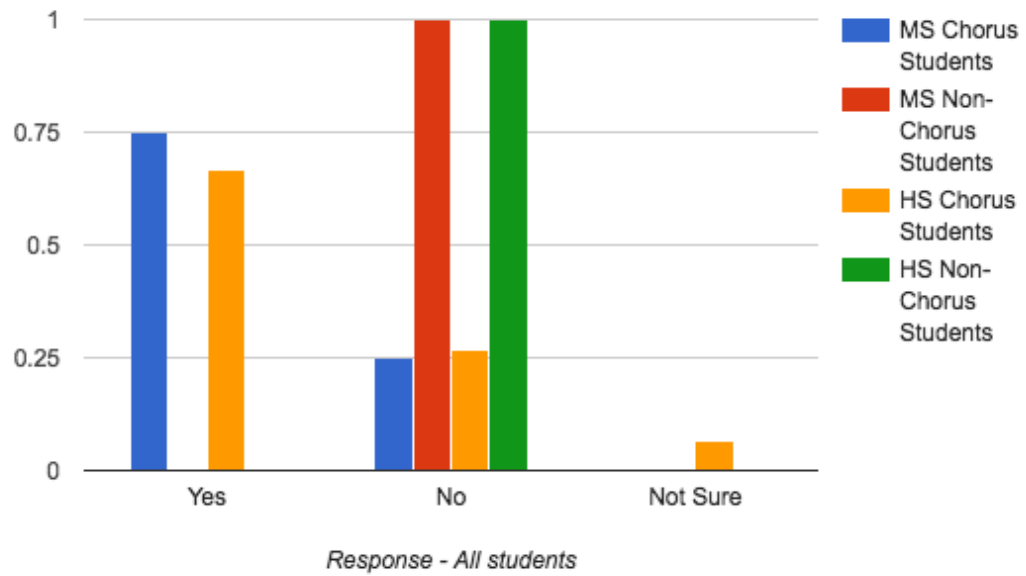
Response - All Students

Would the principal's encouragement influence more boys to join chorus?

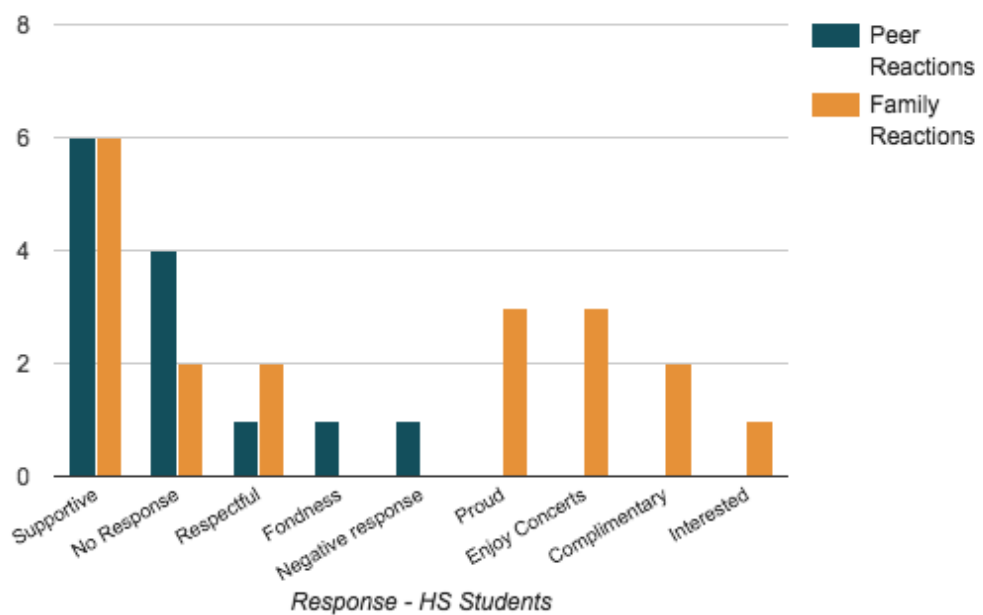


Response - All Students

Does the choral director have influence over your enrollment in chorus?



Peer Reactions and Family Reactions



Appendix B - Student Surveys

Survey AA, # _____

Middle School Male – Chorus Member

Part 1: Multiple Choice

1. What grade are you in?
 - a. 7th Grade
 - b. 8th Grade
2. Do you enjoy coming to school?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Sometimes
3. Do you enjoy singing with the radio or songs from your device?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
4. Circle other music activities you are involved in.
 - a. No other activity
 - b. Concert Band
 - c. Marching Band
 - d. Musical
 - e. Church Choir
 - f. Handbell Choir
 - g. Community Group
 - h. Private Lessons
 - i. Other:

5. Circle all the grades you participated in chorus (middle school or elementary chorus).
 - a. 3rd Grade
 - b. 4th Grade
 - c. 5th Grade
 - d. 6th Grade
 - e. 7th Grade
 - f. 8th Grade

6. Are you in chorus because you want to explore a career in music?
- Yes
 - No
7. If you answered YES to question 6, circle the careers you are interested in. If you answered NO, go to question 8. Circle all that apply.
- To be a singer as an adult
 - To sing or play in a group someday
 - To perform in a concert
 - To get a job in the music business
 - To get a career in music
 - To be a musician someday
8. Are you in chorus because you want to learn more about music?
- Yes
 - No
9. If you answered YES to question 8, circle what you want to learn about. . If you answered NO, go to question 10. Circle all that apply.
- Different kinds of music
 - History of music
 - Beats and Rhythms
 - How to read notes
 - Composers
10. Are you in chorus for social reasons?
- Yes
 - No
11. If you answered YES to question 10, circle what social aspects you enjoy about chorus. If you answered NO, go to question 12. Circle all that apply.
- I get to talk with others
 - I like to get together with friends
 - I enjoy being with classmates
 - I enjoy working with partners or with a group of people

12. Are you in chorus because it is something you enjoy doing during the day and it makes you feel good about yourself?

- a. Yes
- b. No

13. If you answered YES to question 12, circle what you enjoy about chorus. If you answered NO, go to question 14. Circle all that apply.

- a. I like to set and meet goals during rehearsal
- b. It brings meaning to life and to my day
- c. It bring me self-confidence
- d. It encourages me to be a better person
- e. It gets things off my chest.

Part 2: True/False Questions

14. I am in chorus because of the other guys in my school.

True False

15. I am in chorus because of the girls in my school

True False

16. I am in chorus because I am good at singing.

True False

17. I am in chorus because it is fun.

True False

18. I am in chorus mainly because my family wants me to be in chorus

True False

19. I take chorus because it is an easy class.

True False

20. If a coach told the boys in my school to sing in chorus, we would have a lot more boys in chorus.

True False Not Sure

21. If my principal told the guys in my school to sing in chorus, we would have a lot more guys in chorus.

True

False

Not Sure

22. I am in chorus because of the chorus director.

True

False

23. My family thinks it is good that I am in chorus.

True

False

24. My family sings together.

True

False

25. I am a good singer.

True

False

Not Sure

26. I am a poor singer.

True

False

Not Sure

Survey AB, # _____
Middle School Male – Chorus Member

Part 3: Short Answer. Answer as honestly and completely as you can.

27. If you had to explain to an elementary school student what it is like to be in middle school chorus, what would you say to them?

28. Do you have any traditions within your section in chorus? (Even traditions Miss Strouse doesn't know about.) If yes, what are they and how did these traditions start?

29. What traditions would you like to see begin in your section or the whole chorus?

30. Have there been any songs you really loved in chorus? If yes, what were they and what made them special? Was it personal or do you feel the other members of the chorus felt the same way you did?

31. For you personally, what is the best thing about being a part of chorus?

32. For you personally, what is the most challenging thing about being a part of chorus?

33. Are there any things you think chorus directors working with middle school students should know? What advice would you give them?

34. What would encourage more boys to join middle school chorus?

Survey BA, # _____
Middle School Male – Non-Chorus Member

Part 1: Multiple Choice

1. What grade are you in?
 - a. 7th Grade
 - b. 8th Grade

2. Do you enjoy coming to school?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Sometimes

3. Do you enjoy singing with the radio or songs from your device?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

4. Circle music activities you are involved in.
 - a. None
 - b. Concert Band
 - c. Marching Band
 - d. Musical
 - e. Church Choir
 - f. Handbell Choir
 - g. Community Group
 - h. Private Lessons
 - i. Other: _____

5. If you were in chorus in the past, circle the grades you participated.
 - a. I never was in chorus
 - b. 3rd Grade
 - c. 4th Grade
 - d. 5th Grade
 - e. 6th Grade
 - f. 7th Grade

6. Circle the reasons you are not in middle school chorus. *Circle all that apply.*
- a. It's during study hall
 - b. I can't read music
 - c. I don't think I can sing
 - d. I don't want to sing in front of people
 - e. I don't enjoy singing with a group of people
 - f. Other: _____
7. Under what circumstances would you consider joining chorus? *Circle all that apply.*
- a. If it was perceived as a more manly activity
 - b. More of your friends were involved
 - c. You could read music
 - d. You knew that you could sing
 - e. It did not take place during study hall
 - f. Other: _____

Part 2: True/False

8. I am not in chorus because of the other guys in my school.
True False
9. I am not in chorus because of the girls in my school
True False
10. I am not in chorus because I am not good at singing.
True False
11. I am not in chorus because it is not fun.
True False
12. I am not in chorus mainly because my family does not want me to be in chorus
True False
13. I am not in chorus because it is too easy.
True False

14. If a coach told the boys in my school to sing in chorus, I would consider joining chorus.
- | | | |
|------|-------|----------|
| True | False | Not Sure |
|------|-------|----------|
15. If my principal told the guys in my school to sing in chorus, I would consider joining chorus.
- | | | |
|------|-------|----------|
| True | False | Not Sure |
|------|-------|----------|
16. I am not in chorus because of the chorus director.
- | | | |
|------|-------|--|
| True | False | |
|------|-------|--|
17. My family wants me to join chorus.
- | | | |
|------|-------|--|
| True | False | |
|------|-------|--|
18. My family sings together.
- | | | |
|------|-------|--|
| True | False | |
|------|-------|--|
19. I am a good singer.
- | | | |
|------|-------|----------|
| True | False | Not Sure |
|------|-------|----------|
20. I am a poor singer.
- | | | |
|------|-------|----------|
| True | False | Not Sure |
|------|-------|----------|

Survey BB, #_____
Middle School Male – Non-Chorus Member

Part 3: Short Answer

21. What type of music would you enjoy singing in a group?

22. What is the first thing that comes to mind when you think of chorus?

Survey CA, # _____
High School Male – Chorus Member

Part 1: Multiple Choice

1. What grade are you in?
 - a. 9th Grade
 - b. 10th Grade
 - c. 11th Grade
 - d. 12th Grade

2. Do you enjoy coming to school?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Sometimes

3. Do you enjoy singing with the radio or songs from your device?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

4. Circle all the choral groups you are currently a part of.
 - a. High School Chorus
 - b. Concert Chorale
 - c. Madrigals
 - d. Show Choir
 - e. Other: _____

5. Circle other music activities you are involved in.
 - a. No other activity
 - b. Concert Band
 - c. Marching Band
 - d. Musical
 - e. Church Choir
 - f. Handbell Choir
 - g. Community Group
 - h. Private Lessons
 - i. Other: _____

6. Do you know how to read music?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

7. Circle all the grades you participated in chorus (elementary through high school).
 - a. 3rd Grade
 - b. 4th Grade
 - c. 5th Grade
 - d. 6th Grade
 - e. 7th Grade
 - f. 8th Grade
 - g. 9th Grade
 - h. 10th Grade
 - i. 11th Grade
 - j. 12th Grade

8. Are you in chorus because you want to explore a career in music?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

9. If you answered YES to question 8, circle the careers you are interested in. If you answered NO, go to question 10. Circle all that apply.
 - a. To be a singer as an adult
 - b. To sing or play in a group someday
 - c. To perform in a concert
 - d. To get a job in the music business
 - e. To get a career in music
 - f. To be a musician someday

10. Are you in chorus because you want to learn more about music?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

11. If you answered YES to question 10, circle what you want to learn about. If you answered NO, go to question 12. Circle all that apply.

- a. Different kinds of music
- b. History of music
- c. Beats and Rhythms
- d. How to read notes
- e. Composers

12. Are you in chorus for social reasons?

- a. Yes
- b. No

13. If you answered YES to question 12, circle what social aspects you enjoy about chorus. If you answered NO, go to question 14. Circle all that apply.

- a. I get to talk with others
- b. I like to get together with friends
- c. I enjoy being with classmates
- d. I enjoy working with partners or with a group of people

14. Are you in chorus because it is something you enjoy doing during the day and makes you feel good about yourself?

- a. Yes
- b. No

15. If you answered YES to question 14, circle what you enjoy about chorus. If you answered NO, go to question 16. Circle all that apply.

- a. I like to set and meet goals during rehearsal
- b. It brings meaning to life and to my day
- c. It brings me self-confidence
- d. It encourages me to be a better person
- e. It gets things off my chest.

Part 2: True/False

16. I am in chorus because of the other guys in my school.

True

False

17. I am in chorus because of the girls in my school
 True False
18. I am in chorus because I am good at singing.
 True False
19. I am in chorus because it is fun.
 True False
20. I am in chorus mainly because my family wants me to be in chorus
 True False
21. I take chorus because it is an easy class.
 True False
22. If a coach told the boys in my school to sing in chorus, we would have a lot
 more boys in chorus.
 True False Not Sure
23. If my principal told the guys in my school to sing in chorus, we would have a
 lot more guys in chorus.
 True False Not Sure
24. I am in chorus because of the chorus director.
 True False
25. My family thinks it is good that I am in chorus.
 True False
26. My family sings together.
 True False
27. I am a good singer.
 True False Not Sure
28. I am a poor singer.
 True False Not Sure

Survey CB, # _____
High School Male – Chorus Member

Part 3: Short Answer. Answer as honestly and completely as you can.

29. If you had to explain to a middle school student what it is like to be in a high school choral group, what would you say to th

30. What are your favorite traditions in High School Chorus, Chorale and/or Madrigals?

31. What traditions would you like to see begin in your section or the whole chorus?

32. Have there been any songs you really loved or felt were especially powerful?
If yes, what were they and what made them special? Was it personal or do
you feel the other members of the chorus felt the same way you did?

33. For you personally, what is the best thing about being a part of a choral
group?

34. For you personally, what is the most challenging thing about being a part of a
choral group?

35. How do others from school, peers, family, audience members, etc. respond to your choral performances and more specifically, your participation in the group(s)?

36. Do you feel being involved in a choir has impacted your life or your identity in any way? If yes, how so?

37. What role do you think choral music will have in your life beyond graduation?

38. What impact do you think the choral groups you are a member of will have on your life beyond graduation?

39. Are there any things you think chorus directors working with teenage students should know? What advice would you give them?

Survey DA, #_____
High School Male – Non- Chorus Member

Part 1: Multiple Choice

1. What grade are you in?
 - a. 9th Grade
 - b. 10th Grade
 - c. 11th Grade
 - d. 12th Grade

2. Do you enjoy coming to school?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Sometimes

3. Do you enjoy singing with the radio or songs from your device?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

4. Circle music activities you are involved in.
 - a. None
 - b. Concert Band
 - c. Marching Band
 - d. Musical
 - e. Church Choir
 - f. Handbell Choir
 - g. Community Group
 - h. Private Lessons
 - i. Other: _____

5. If you were in chorus in the past, circle the grades you participated.
- a. I never was in chorus
 - b. 3rd Grade
 - c. 4th Grade
 - d. 5th Grade
 - e. 6th Grade
 - f. 7th Grade
 - g. 8th Grade
 - h. 9th Grade
 - i. 10th Grade
 - j. 11th Grade
6. Circle the reasons you are not in high school chorus. *Circle all that apply.*
- a. I don't have time in my schedule
 - b. I can't read music
 - c. I don't think I can sing
 - d. I don't want to sing in front of people
 - e. I don't enjoy singing with a group of people
 - f. Other: _____
7. Under what circumstances would you consider joining chorus? *Circle all that apply.*
- a. It was perceived as a more manly activity
 - b. More of your friends were involved
 - c. You could read music
 - d. You knew that you could sing
 - e. You had room in your schedule
 - f. Other: _____
8. I am not in chorus because of the other guys in my school.
- True False
9. I am not in chorus because of the girls in my school
- True False
10. I am not in chorus because I am not good at singing.
- True False

11. I am not in chorus because it is not fun.

True

False

12. I am not in chorus mainly because my family does not want me to be in chorus

True

False

13. I am not in chorus because it is too easy.

True

False

14. If a coach told the boys in my school to sing in chorus, I would consider joining chorus.

True

False

Not Sure

15. If my principal told the guys in my school to sing in chorus, I would consider joining chorus.

True

False

Not Sure

16. I am not in chorus because of the chorus director.

True

False

17. My family wants me to join chorus.

True

False

18. My family sings together.

True

False

19. I am a good singer.

True

False

Not Sure

20. I am a poor singer.

True

False

Not Sure

Survey DB, #_____
High School Male – Non- Chorus Member

Part 3: Short Answer

21. What type of music would you enjoy singing in a group?

22. What is the first thing that comes to mind when you think of chorus?

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