



Happy Teachers, Engaged Student Musicians: Examining Relationships Between Music  
Educator Job Satisfaction, Teacher Retention, and Ensemble Size

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# JOB SATISFACTION, RETENTION, AND ENSEMBLE SIZE

## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this empirical study was to examine trends between job satisfaction, program size, and teacher characteristics. The objective was to learn if there were commonalities to prevent turnover and assist teachers in growing ensembles. Research was conducted about teacher preferences, effective ensemble teacher characteristics, how to support teachers, teacher transiency, student retention, and program growth and attrition. A Google form survey was issued to music educators with performing ensembles in public and private American schools to collect data on educators' pre-service musical and school experiences, personality traits, musical experiences, and teaching experiences. The study also surveyed ensemble enrollment from 2018-2021. There was evaluation growth from previous to current scores and across teacher careers. Teachers stayed in positions for students, colleagues, supportive administrations or school communities, and high job satisfaction and performance. Teachers left positions due to administration, budgets, life changes, and toxic work environments. Conclusions revealed heavy influence of administrators on music programs and the need for teacher micropolitics literacy. Teacher personalities had a strong impact on enrollment. Teacher satisfaction with schools and principals increased when comparing previous to current schools. There was positive principal and school satisfaction among non-string playing orchestra teachers.

Acknowledgements

To new teachers – you can do great things, and your dream job is out there.

To my students – you make it worth coming to work every day.

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## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

### **Statement of Purpose**

The purpose of this empirical study is to examine trends between job satisfaction and program size and teacher characteristics in order to learn if there are commonalities that can lead other educators or music supervisors to prevent turnover and to assist current teachers in growing their ensembles. Data will be examined about teachers from a background survey focusing on the educators' pre-service musical and school experiences, personality traits and musical experiences as adults, and their teaching experiences. The study will also survey program size from the 2018-2019 school year through the 2020-2021 school year. The educators in the study are music educators in public and private American schools with performing ensembles.

### **Rationale**

There is a decreasing rate of teacher retention as well as a significant number of teachers experiencing work-related stress who would seriously consider leaving the profession if they were able (Van der Vyver et al., 2020; Shaw, 2016). With these transitions and attrition, school administrators and music supervisors alike would benefit from information about educators that would allow them to see how these changes impact the leadership of performing ensembles. Many music educators can cite music teachers of their formative years as contributing factors to their musical success and willingness to continue to perform in school ensembles through the end of high school. Student attrition in music program enrollment is sometimes seen when music teachers at the lower levels are unsatisfactory teachers or not engaging enough to their students for them to wish to continue in their next schools. However, ensemble size does not always indicate a high level of learning among students; there may be other factors to be considered. This study hopes to illuminate some of the characteristics of music educators including their job



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satisfaction, thus increasing the probability of their remaining in a position for a longer period of time. It is also hopeful that the study will lead to data that can link educator characteristics to ensemble growth and student retention.

### **Background**

With the widespread implementation of distance learning due to the coronavirus pandemic starting in the 2019-2020 school year and its continuation into other blended models of instruction (hybrid, concurrent, etc.) in the 2020-2021 school year, many colleagues and friends in music education and in other content areas have shared their stories and experiences. Many of these educators felt that safety was secondary to the push to get students back into schools so that their providers could “get back to work” and so school systems could resume providing many auxiliary services to children that are missing from other agencies and areas, including providing mental health services, perceived socialization, steady meals, clothing, more one-on-one support in the classroom, and safe learning environments. Some other services include programs to provide students dental services, optometrist screenings, help with legal services to assist families with housing, and other areas of need (National Education Association, n.d.). A commonality arose among several teachers trying to determine if they could make a second profession work to leave education that would pay better or respect boundaries in a healthier way.

This made me consider what teacher turnover was like even before the pandemic and sparked my curiosity about what could be done even then to make teachers feel supported. I have a personal connection with this, having left one school system and position in general music for an instrumental music job in another system after my third year of teaching. It is interesting to consider what information is at administrators, supervisors, and department chairs’ disposal

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already to support teachers in ways that help grow their practices and make them feel important and welcome in their positions. Coming into a position with an ensemble attached generates interest in the factors that lead second year and other returning students to continue learning even with a new and unknown teacher. There often seems to be attrition in these transitions, and it would be beneficial to know what factors can be stabilized to minimize both teacher turnover and the often-resulting program size decreases.

### **Expected Findings**

I predict that music educators will overall stay in positions due to close relationships with students in their ensembles, having roots in the community or having a family with close community ties, and administration support. Conversely, I predict music educators will have chosen to leave positions in situations where they feel targeted by administrators, feel their contributions are not appreciated, or feel the number of conflicts with coworkers or stakeholders outweigh the benefits of the jobs. It seems likely that newer teachers will cite administration issues and lack of supportive professional development, while more experienced educators will feel collegial support and networking to have been more influential.

Research will be conducted on previous information and studies to gain knowledge to write specific and intentional questions for the survey. One area will be the job satisfaction of educators, including what teachers like and dislike about their jobs and the profession, reasons for remaining in the same position, and if collegial support has a big impact on educators. Another research focus will be in regards to supports that assist teachers to the degree that they would stay in a position, what factors contribute to educators seeking new positions, and characteristics of effective educators. Finally, music ensemble focused research will be conducted on the relationship between teacher effectiveness and program growth as well as what

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impacts students' decisions to continue ensemble participation throughout their schooling.

Research questions will include:

1. What do teachers like about their jobs?
2. What do teachers dislike about their jobs and the profession?
3. Why do teachers stay in a job?
4. What characteristics make an effective ensemble teacher?
5. What can be done to support teachers in a way that makes them want to remain in a position?
6. How much does collegial support impact ensemble teachers?
7. How much impact do teachers and external factors have on students' decisions to continue ensemble participation throughout their schooling?
8. Is program growth always indicative of teacher effectiveness?
9. Why do teachers leave their jobs?

## **Chapter 2: Influences on Educators and Methods of Support**

### **The Appeal of Teaching**

Teachers often acknowledge that they did not choose to be educators for the salary but more so to provide students with educational experiences that mirrored their own positive experiences growing up and to guide students in learning. Others teach music to provide a better experience than their own. In a study of educators' Myers Briggs personality types, intuition and feeling were common findings, which are those "characterized as enthusiastic and insightful, and who may find their way into jobs that involve teaching, counseling, and/or writing and research" (Steele & Young, 2011, p. 60-61). Dynamic teachers are often applauded for possessing those very characteristics.

Many music educators experience satisfaction in their careers when observing student growth throughout the school year. There are also numerous other job satisfaction influences:

Job satisfaction and 'goodness of fit' are influenced by...the environment, economic issues, personal health and well-being, as well as the interests and strengths of the individual. When there is not 'a good fit' within a profession, increased stress, communication, difficulties, and compromised productivity may result. (Steele & Young, 2011, p. 59)

Those who feel passionate about teaching may find themselves happier at work more frequently than others who may have accepted music education as a second choice after not being able to pursue music performance as an occupation. Likewise, if a teaching salary is sufficient for one's lifestyle and the constraints of the job are not negatively impacting one's personal life, teaching can feel rewarding.

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Work conditions in the school building also impact teacher happiness. Administrators play a large role in the workplace. A study examining teachers' feelings and principals' leadership styles showed teachers experienced higher levels of job satisfaction under principals exhibiting transformational leadership (idealized influence both attributed and behavioral, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration), specifically feeling "high positive affect and low negative affect" (Van der Vyver et al., 2020, p. 98). When principals and other teacher leaders have effective employee management skills, their staff can remain focused on the more practical parts of teaching instead of worrying about unfair treatment or a toxic work environment.

Music teaching, like other performing content areas, requires educators to be familiar and proficient (at the very least) in their specific disciplines. Music educators flourish with these skills, and for some it provides solace when experience-based layoffs are discussed. In that case, the changes around teacher tenure and layoffs were positive for string music educators, since it resulted in the focus being on retaining those who were most qualified to teach their content areas (Shaw, 2016, p. 109). Considering many music educators experience the fear of job loss due to budget cuts at least once during their careers, this type of initiative provides a stronger sense of job security provided teachers are effective at their jobs and can be measured as such by those in power.

### **Common Teaching Obstacles**

It is integral to understand what factors cause teachers to feel negatively about their jobs in exploring the job satisfaction of music educators. "Understanding teachers' experience and perceptions is important because this stress can impact teaching performance, relationships at home and work, longevity in the profession, identity, and self-efficacy...teacher stress [is] highly

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subjective, emotional, and related to personal meaning making” (Shaw, 2016, p. 106).

Discovering more about the causes of teacher stress and what teachers dislike about their jobs or the profession at large will lead to opportunities for solutions. An area of focus not often discussed formally is micropolitics. In education, these aspects deal with work conditions, payment, teachers’ inability to select their students, and schooling being required for children; it also is influenced by social interactions between adults (Iannaccone, 1975, as cited in Conway et al., 2018, p. 306). Knowing about the specifics in this area can assist in identifying stressors more clearly. Educators need knowledge of micropolitics to deal with “(a) strategies (implicit bargaining); (b) individual or group interests (professional or personal); (c) interest groups/sets (unions, cliques based on interests, age, or responsibility); and (d) power” (Hoyle, 1986, as cited in Conway et al., 2018, p. 306). The micropolitics of the professional and personal interests of those in power can impact teachers when interacting with administrators. Educators who felt they had principals with laissez-faire leadership (passive management-by-exception and passive avoidant behaviors) shared feeling “higher levels of negative affect and lower levels of positive affect” (Van der Vyver et al., 2020, p. 98). This kind of hands-off approach leaves teachers in uncomfortable positions of not knowing what actions will elicit negative responses from administrators as well as discomfort in having to ask for additional clarification due to previous unsatisfactory responses.

Some stressors have been common in the field for a long time and are unsurprisingly still troublesome. Legislation such as No Child Left Behind and Race to the Top have pushed accountability tactics for schools and teachers which tie together school funding to teacher evaluation and curriculum; the stress of the possibility of being fired, moved, or paid less has become a source of stress for many teachers (Shaw, 2016, p. 105). The potential impact of

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teacher evaluation on salary and employment can be especially stressful to teachers who do not feel their evaluators are equipped to accurately critique them. Another stressor was uncertainty surrounding teaching assignments and schedules, including being laid off and rehired at the last minute, being assigned to teach non-music classes without being provided curriculum, and having ensembles and other classes split and combined inconsistently from year to year (Shaw, 2016, p. 111). Inconsistencies in ensemble scheduling can be detrimental to program quality and growth, both within a building and across a school system. The stress accompanying music festival or contest participation has increased as teachers worry their effectiveness as teachers would be measured this way; music educators felt simultaneously concerned about getting lower than expected ratings at these events and felt conflicted when receiving high scores as their programs were being constrained and negatively affected by building policies (Shaw, 2016, p. 111). Ensemble teachers take pride in the abilities of their students and strive for growth; the possibility of that growth enabling negative school practices or the lack of growth impacting future staffing is stressful indeed. Normal job-related stress was still reported, including feeling a lack of administrator support (specifically regarding parent issues and teaching schedules), teachers' inner conflicts of having high expectations of themselves and being viewed in a negative light, and frustration with "administrative job responsibilities" such as conducting inventory and completing budgets (Shaw, 2016, p. 112). While not unusual and sometimes unavoidable, these factors may feel magnified to music teachers in the face of other overwhelming stress factors at work.

Some sources of distress were unique to new teachers. More than their veteran counterparts, beginning teachers felt a lack of support from administrators and sometimes also a lack of understanding of their content area and instruction (Conway et al., 2018, p. 310). Without

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the aforementioned micropolitics experience and strategies, beginning teachers do not always possess the contacts, tools, and resources to supplement their teaching. Conway et al. (2018) posited that new music teachers may consider interactions with administrators more negatively because of the “probationary nature of a new teaching position” (p. 311). Early career music educators may feel the lack of an established relationship with administrators compounding with their limited teaching experiences to create additional stress at school. Within the classroom, beginning teachers have more experiences of trying to be in charge of children and feeling frustrated with student participation not meeting expectations (Conway et al., 2018, p. 311). Over time, experience can demonstrate the benefits of finding better ways to engage students to mitigate behavior issues; which should concern teachers of all subjects.

Unfortunately for music educators, factors that are not directly related to music pedagogy and the addition of unrelated tasks to workload are also common stressors. One participant of Shaw’s study (2016) cited entering therapy and hyper-prioritizing using all of his school day time to complete work to avoid having to take too much home (pp. 110-111). This is often seen as an unrealistic tactic, but finding work-life balance is crucial to avoiding burnout. Building level stress for all educators was found to increase if schools were given a “focus school” or similar at-risk label, which caused some music educators to isolate themselves away from other staff members, as well as increasing anxiety around how teachers can be negatively viewed by the general public (Shaw, 2016, p. 110). Sometimes it is difficult to retain teachers of any content area in “at-risk” schools such as these, compromising the education of the students and increasing the efforts that will be needed from their future teachers. School ratings based around reading and math test scores also contributed to music educator stress, as some administrators began requiring all teachers to include instruction from those areas in their classes. An indirect



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stressor stemming from this was increased workload for music teachers who subsequently had to spend extra time assessing the additional math or reading work required by administrators to share with students (Shaw, 2016, pp. 109-110). While educators across disciplines coming together to help students succeed is commendable, it can be frustrating to be asked to diverge from one's content area to do so without being provided additional class time to make up for it.

### **The Fight Against Teacher Transiency**

Many methods are already in place and functioning well (outside of intrinsic reinforcement from the love of teaching) to assist music teachers with feeling supported enough to stay in their positions. Seasoned teachers were able to rely on their existing networks when communicating in order to divert opposition more proactively, but most beginning teachers tend to align with other inexperienced teachers (Conway et al., 2018, p. 312). It should be a priority for teachers to associate with other educators who are knowledgeable about content, student management and engagement, contacts outside of music, and other factors. It should come as no surprise that teachers who meet those qualifications will possess a variety of levels of experience. Conway et al. (2018) also emphasized an important component of professional development and support to new music teachers should be emphasizing the idea that new teachers are part of the school community and not ostracized or adversarial with other staff members; they posit there should be an explicit focus on school building and department level team-building for these teachers (p. 313). New teachers should not let their lack of experience keep them from seeking out others in their school communities but must instead find ways to integrate themselves into the music and building communities. In the micropolitics practice of displacement (being specific in language in conversations used to obtain goals without alarming the other person), experienced teachers found methods of legitimizing their content and

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programs to stakeholders, including in sharing numbers-based information about scores and competitions as well as choosing repertoire favored by parents and guardians in the audience (Conway et al., 2018, p. 313). Some of these micropolitical strategies may be unknown to new teachers, but it is crucial to gain proficiency with presenting the good things happening in music ensembles and the benefits of new ideas to others in a fashion that can be universally understood, even if it is not how music educators would normally discuss their work among colleagues. Early career music educators also benefit from mentors' transparency "about their interactions with administrators...and help [them] learn how to work 'with' and when necessary work 'around' administrators" and students (Conway et al., 2018, p. 314). Teaching relies heavily on positive interpersonal interactions, and learning to navigate professional situations to benefit one's personal and professional goals can make work easier and more enjoyable.

### **Characteristics of Effective Ensemble Teachers**

#### ***Self-Reflection & Accountability***

An effective ensemble teacher prioritizes self-reflection and accountability in pursuing additional knowledge. Zafarghandi et al. (2016) shared teachers need to know themselves and their students in order to provide effective feedback to their classes (section 1). Students' individual qualities and experiences influence how they learn, and teachers must make an effort to become familiar with student traits and experiences that could enhance or challenge their learning. The researchers' study found that educators with extroverted personalities have more instructional immediacy (both verbal and non-verbal) than those with introverted personalities, but educator gender was not much of a factor (Zafarghandi et al., 2016, section 3). Instructional immediacy can be learned, but teachers with more introverted personalities (more so than their extroverted counterparts) must learn to recognize which of their teaching practices may need to

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be supported. Likewise, extroverts tend to start with action and then reflect, whereas introverts tend to reflect first and then act (Zeisset, 2006, as cited in Zafarghandi et al., 2016, section 1.2.2). It is then the responsibility of extroverts to remember the importance of reflecting on teaching in order to improve future lessons and provide tailored instruction that meets learners' needs. Finally, the researchers shared that "extroverted teachers provide a richer communicative environment that establishes a more productive interaction with the students as their audience" (Zafarghandi et al., 2016, section 4). Introverted teachers should ensure their students are provided with sufficient interaction and dialogue during instruction.

De Bruin shared results from a study examining instrumental music teaching practices utilized during the coronavirus pandemic. He found that one benefit from distance learning was teachers' realization of the need to be more aware of students' knowledge acquisition and retention before moving forward in the curriculum, providing deeper student reflection (de Bruin, 2021, p. 7). Oftentimes during in person learning, teachers feel compelled to push forward to align with time-oriented curriculum maps, but ultimately students' mastery should drive instructional pacing. To improve progress, teachers had to increase their awareness of students' needs and think about how to better connect with them, which resulted in a more "nurturing teacher-student relationship" and enabled teachers to act more as facilitators than previously (de Bruin, 2021, p. 6). In a way, this was enabled by the pandemic disrupting time-sensitive milestones of a traditional year, including concerts and festival preparation deadlines, allowing music educators to take more time to focus on students' progress and development. This approach of having a collegial environment between teachers and students in the classroom can increase student engagement as well. In the study, teachers saw the benefits of reflective approaches over time; one respondent shared students were stronger in communicating about

their playing which is often not prioritized in traditional classroom learning (de Bruin, 2021, p. 5). Students being able to explain their learning for themselves and others indicates higher level thinking and understanding, which can lead to improved performance. De Bruin (2021) also shares “Teacher attentiveness and attunement to promoting not just learning strategies but the learning climate can re-calibrate teacher pedagogy and behaviors that maximize student learning” (p. 9). While it may not be the way some teachers learned when they were students, focusing on the communal environment of the classroom does help learners communicate reflectively.

### ***Student Engagement***

Student engagement should also be a strength of an effective ensemble teacher; learning increases when students are excited to learn. Elliott and Silverman (2015, as cited in de Bruin, 2021) share “An important and often overlooked aspect of music education is the reciprocal recognition of the teaching and learning process, knowing that a “bond” exists between teacher and learners in intimate ways, especially given’s music’s (emotional, social, and cultural) potencies” (p. 3). Students are sensitive to the bonds they have with their ensemble teachers, especially having class with them for multiple years. Notable interpersonal connections in the teacher-student dynamic include verbal interactions (including two-way discussions), prioritizing participation of all students through inclusive practices (de Bruin, 2021, p. 2), and teacher-student collaborative goal setting (p. 4). Ensemble directors must purposefully involve all students in active learning. More extended discussion techniques can even be incorporated right into music instruction. One survey respondent (“T7”) felt increased focus on teaching the art of meaningful dialogue and in centering students allowed for students to be “much more articulate, deeper in their reflection and understanding of processes” (de Bruin, 2021, p. 6). When music

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teachers focus on areas that are tangentially related to music making, the skills students acquire can prove beneficial in multiple areas of their lives.

Another measure of importance is focusing on students' needs through "teacher recognition, insightfulness, relatedness, and responsiveness" in order to increase teacher-student bonds as well as enhance music learning (de Bruin, 2021, p. 8). An effective music educator should strive to interact purposefully with their students after building and maintaining relationships with them:

Several teachers found they had a profound effect on their students' development, including passion for the subject, social stability, emotional competence, and self-directed learning. This points to a prominent component of instrumental music educators' jobs in supporting confidence and self-autonomy. (de Bruin, 2021, p. 5-6)

The influence of a thoughtful ensemble teacher extends further than some teachers may realize.

"[L]earning music skills and connection to teacher are interwoven so that engagement with activities and the igniting of student passions, motivations and efficacy captures the essence of music education and therefore the deeper function of the teacher" (de Bruin, 2021, p. 8).

Students inspired by their teachers are able to be more engaged in learning; teachers who can unlock that potential reap the benefits of the work behind strategies used.

### ***Student Emotional Support/Social Connection***

In addition to student engagement specifically during instruction, educators should aim to support students emotionally when possible as well as engaging with them socially (as appropriate). Experiences of veteran teachers with students center more around empowering and supporting students and finding ways to have students lead as partners and take ownership of their learning (Conway et al., 2018, p. 310-311). Once teachers can begin to encourage their

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students as individual people, they are able to have students be more active and self-reliant in their own knowledge acquisition:

Increased self-awareness and knowledge of differences in how individuals interact with their internal and external worlds may lead toward more productive, collegial and professional work environments. Greater self-awareness may also lead to improved...student-teacher interactions, as well as greater job satisfaction and longevity in the field. (Steele & Young, 2011, p. 71)

When teachers become familiar with their students' mannerisms, motivation, and fears, students begin to feel safer and more able to learn without other inhibiting factors at play. In some ways during distance learning, teachers had to relinquish some control over the classroom to welcome students as respected and active participants in the educational process; "[t]his provided opportunity for relationships based on "personal control," and where classroom rules were negotiated and rationale made clear, rather than a "positional control" in which the teacher relied on their position of authority to exert control over students" (de Bruin, 2021, p. 5). When teachers can transition from demanding respect and compliance without explanation to being inclusive and discussing the formation of rules and norms, less time will be wasted on power struggles between teachers and students. De Bruin (2021) concluded that being supported in a safe classroom space by the teacher provides students with more motivation as learners and in their general attitudes (p. 9). Motivated students turn into engaged learners and solid performers, which benefits the ensembles in which they participate.

### ***Professional Development***

Seeking appropriate professional development is also important to effective ensemble teachers. Johnson et al. (2019) shared "[t]eachers know their jobs, and they understand their

contexts; they should have the opportunity to self-initiate any number of types of reflective, differentiated PD...that harnesses research-based educational principles, support of teacher-educators, and input from music teachers themselves” (p. 217). Music-specific professional development is paramount to acquiring and refining extended teaching techniques and new pedagogical information. Teachers, especially those with significant experience, are passionate about being able to create and share their own professional development and could provide it by submitting proposals for a nearby geographical area of other educators to help improve their educational competencies (Johnson et al., 2019, p. 215). Oftentimes current teachers are equipped and willing to share their knowledge with others, and district officials should work with them to facilitate music professional development.

### ***Interactions with Colleagues***

Finally, effective ensemble teachers find ways to communicate and collaborate with the other adults and staff around them in positive ways that help accomplish goals, whether long range or short term. Waite & McKinney (2018) shared that “[b]earing responsibility for one’s personal actions in abetting a team’s performance can ultimately deepen wisdom and learning for every person on the team” (p. 15). Music teachers can and must learn to be team players in the teaching profession, especially when working with non-music teachers. Conway et al. (2018) found that experienced teachers aimed to interact with other teachers to maximize open communication for their students’ sake, as well as supporting colleagues; beginning teachers faced more adversity with other teachers but did overall seek to maintain peace and sought suggestions in dealing with those interactions (p. 309). Extra sensitivity is given by veteran teachers when having discussions with those in positions of power. When interacting with administration, experienced teachers tried to selectively prioritize conversations in which they

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were seeking support or permission, as well as purposefully cultivating conversations about non-school topics to foster a positive relationship to ease those conversations (Conway et al., 2018, p. 310). Reducing the number of conversations with administration and trying to have a larger number of positive interactions can assist with beneficial outcomes in professional conversations.

### **Strategies for Teacher Retention**

#### ***Education Training in General***

Research shows that providing training on leadership and personality types can aid the professional growth of ensemble teachers. Yesil and Sozbilir (2013) shared that understanding personality types with the Myers Briggs Type Indicator tool (MBTI) can help synergy in teams and among colleagues, specifically regarding “workplace behaviors, attitudes, and performance” (as cited in Waite & McKinney, 2018, p. 9). Knowledge of oneself, strengths, and areas that would benefit from improvement allow for clarity when working with others, whether as colleagues or in teacher-student interactions. The MBTI measures one’s personality based on inner feelings and interactions with the outside world and can reveal trends in one’s ability to function as a team member. There are 16 possibilities from four dichotomies; they include extrovert (E) or introvert (I) as attitudes, intuition (N) or sensing (S) for psychological perception, thinking (T) or feeling (F) for action decisions, and judgement (J) or perception (P) as mental functions (Steele & Young, 2011, p. 61; Waite & McKinney, 2018, pp. 9, 11).

The people in the study experienced positive effects from the leadership training they underwent between the pre- and post-MBTI tests, which improved teamwork and may have contributed to participants scoring higher in judgement (J) instead of perceiving (P) the second time (Waite & McKinney, 2018, pp. 12-13). The judgement indicator is present in those who prioritize structure and decision making, which could be helpful in the classroom. Participants



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shared that they felt more knowledgeable about themselves and were inspired to adapt upon their standard traits (knowing their traits are not fixed but instead can be optimized through action and planning) in order to accomplish goals (Waite & McKinney, 2018, p. 12). Providing training such as this would be a great asset to educators experiencing hardship with coworker interactions and classroom management. Specifically, participants used their new knowledge of their personality types to seek adaptations that would be useful in the workplace and to examine interpersonal relationships of their teams through development of individualized professional development plans (Waite & McKinney, 2018, p. 14). Teachers who participate in reflective practices (through their own initiative or when guided by professional development) can potentially experience self-improvement and improved job satisfaction.

Some teachers may not enter the profession with all the skills to provide meaningful feedback to students during instruction. While introverted and extroverted personality tendencies can exist within the profession, new skills can always be acquired through training and classes. The acknowledgement of differences in personalities is the first step:

It would be incumbent on educators, therefore, to promote understanding about the ways that personality typology can aid in the growth of workforce leadership. This increased understanding could facilitate development of managers and leaders who would be capable of attaining an understanding about and providing guidance to their employees. (Waite & McKinney, 2018, p. 15)

If opportunities for such training do not exist in current professional development options, research should be shared with administrators in order to facilitate these reflective learning opportunities for educators, both in music and other content areas. Zafarghandi et al. (2016) shared that “[sic] the real essence of teaching is carried on in classroom through mutual

reciprocity between the instructor and students; hence, efforts should be made to facilitate teaching process as a result of which students would be the beneficiaries” (section 5). Becoming familiar with one’s interpersonal strengths and weaknesses and working to supplement areas of need not only benefits educators as people but also the students they teach.

### ***Music-Specific Professional Development***

Administrators and policy makers need to become educated on the types of professional development available for music teachers and seek to find ways to include or incorporate it for those employees. Johnson et al. (2019) conducted research on music teacher professional development, citing that those in power do not always recognize experts in the field as valuable and often institute professional development designs that are not effective (p. 209). This is not a problem that is specific to music education but teaching as a whole. Unfortunately, there is a lack of federal policy and consistency within the United States on professional development in general, and supporting research behind providing teachers with choices about growing their skills professionally has not been included formally anywhere by policy makers (Johnson et al., 2019, p. 210). Having opportunities to learn about new pedagogy, refresh skills that were not utilized in a previous position that are essential for a new one, or even getting to hear guest speakers who are experts in the field are all beneficial to music educators. The authors go on to share that it is not a lack of information about professional development for music educators contributing to the issue but rather the ignorance of policy makers about it or their suspicion of the validity of professional development that is reflective and differentiated (Johnson et al., 2019, p. 211). It therefore falls to music supervisors or music educators themselves to explain the huge benefits of having content-specific professional development available at the district level. Furthermore, there is federal funding for arts-related professional development; it would benefit

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music teachers more for administrators to provide district based professional development in a flipped classroom format with an asynchronous assessment to allow for arts teachers to maximize their time in collaborative professional development in their content areas (Johnson et al., 2019, p. 215). While it is important for music teachers to show unity with school and district initiatives, music teachers can propose compromise in order to satisfy the needs of the district and their professional growth in music at the same time. “[M]usic teachers need to request discipline-specific PD from their administrators... [and] need to integrate themes from district-level initiatives into their PD requests” (Johnson et al., 2019, p. 216). This shows trust in school leadership and a willingness to work together towards the common goal of improving instruction.

There is plenty of research on what practices are effective and how existing formats can be modified to support teachers in their positions, from undergraduates through veteran teachers. Johnson et al. (2019) suggest that teacher education program policies be modified to encourage using written artifacts and recorded videos to increase reflective practices in pre-service teachers (p. 213). Sometimes pre-service teachers are unable to reflect on their lesson effectiveness through memory alone, so having tangible artifacts would aid in their abilities to reflect (alone, with peers, or with instructors). Pre-service music teachers still progressing through their certification or collegiate program should become aware of their ideas about their career paths and share their findings (Johnson et al., 2019, p. 212). Some pre-service music teachers do not fully comprehend what their day-to-day job responsibilities and routines will look like until student teaching, at which point it is very late to change plans or majors without having wasted considerable time. Looking into the possibilities ahead of time, through practicum or interviews with current teachers in similar positions, would allow for a more realistic idea of what lies

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ahead. Likewise, student teachers need “opportunities for critical reflection and meaningful, purposeful discourse” to accompany the transformative learning that is occurring during practicum for it to be effective, which could lead to strengthening their abilities to independently reflect on teaching and set personal goals (Johnson et al., 2019, pp. 212-213). While most student teaching experiences come with a weekly night class with others to discuss current experiences, being more reflective and using those reflections to inform future practicum lessons and decisions will provide the framework for reflection in a full-time position after graduation.

Changes to existing professional development and supplementary activities are also beneficial to current music teachers. Effective music education professional development should aim to foster growth through reflection on practice and also be designed to cater to teachers at varying levels of experience and content (Johnson et al., 2019, p. 210). Not all music educators teach the same levels or content, and the professional development provided should cater to their individual needs. Reflective practices are also crucial for in-service music teachers. Core Reflection (CR) allows teachers to “focus on inner strengths that can positively affect their teaching in the moment...[which is] an alternative to deficit models of reflection, which require teachers to identify mistakes and weakness after the fact” (Johnson et al., 2019, p. 213). For those that feel penalized by critical comments from deficit models, CR allows for growth after reflection without undue negative focus. CR focuses on core attributes including optimism, trust, nurturing, and open-mindedness, “internal qualities that teachers can identify, practice, and consciously generate in difficult situations” (Johnson et al., 2019, p. 213). For teachers who feel their administrators ask for them to model good teaching practices without more in-depth explanation, the core attributes of CR provide tangible examples of skills to nurture and develop in instruction.

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In addition, Knowledge Communities (KCs) encourage participants to share stories and interpret collaboratively to assist with individual growth while simultaneously assisting all members of the community; KCs that were researched fostered respectful relationships between members over time stemming from organic conversations about teaching practices to the point where participants kept meeting despite the challenge of continuing the commitment (Johnson et al., 2019, p. 214). While current teachers may feel the indirect benefits of working with colleagues, the purposefulness of KCs provide more structure to facilitate meaningful discussion.

It is also crucial for music teachers to share the positive impacts of professional development they attend, especially when it is created by colleagues and independently (Johnson et al., 2019, p. 216). Doing so allows administrators and those in power to understand and see the benefits in providing such opportunities for their music educators and encourages them to continue facilitating them. Finally, Johnson et al. (2019) also “recommend that administrators acknowledge and compensate veteran teachers for serving as valuable mentors and school leaders” (p. 215). When veteran teachers provide recommendations as well as craft and deliver professional development, they should be paid accordingly for their expertise.

### ***Teacher Evaluations***

A big way to encourage teachers to pursue professional growth and continue working in their schools is by changing some evaluation processes. Researchers found that though Danielson’s rubric for teacher evaluation is widespread and requires reflection, it created internal conflict in teachers between wanting to reflect but still wanting to be scored well (Johnson et al., 2019, p. 214). Teachers want to be seen as proficient and distinguished in their observations, but in order for true growth to occur, they must be given the abilities to reflect without being penalized for being honest. The authors also strongly suggested that administrators not include

teacher reflections as evaluated material and instead support educators by providing them with time to meet to reflect collaboratively, as well as providing autonomy in selecting learning goals (Johnson et al. 2019, p. 214). As previously discussed, KCs can help teacher collaboration by providing reflective opportunities, which would help improve future teaching and observations. Similarly, “administrators need a way to assess teachers’ progress on the fluid process of teachers reflecting about their own professional practices...[i]nstead, supervisors might assess the impact of reflective processes based on the resulting enhancements of future instruction” (Johnson et al., 2019, p. 216). When teachers can show how reflection actually improved their teaching practices, administrators would have better data for evaluations while teachers would feel the benefits of the evaluation process firsthand.

### **The Impact of Networking and Interpersonal Relationships**

Relationships with colleagues and creating a network that allows access to new information and collaboration with others is very impactful for ensemble teachers. Shaw (2020) conducted a qualitative study in an ego network design with follow up interviews focusing on the networks for instructional advice and administrative connections of a few select secondary band teachers of three different career stages from the same district in the Midwest (p. 332-333). This study provides insights into the connections of ensemble teachers and reaffirms the importance of maintaining good and purposeful relationships with colleagues in education.

Participants spoke of the importance of having alters [connections providing advice] with whom they corresponded frequently on matters of instruction. Notably, all instructional alters were music educators—no teachers from other subject areas and no administrators or instructional coaches were listed. Topics for discussion included sharing repertoire ideas and instructional strategies. (Shaw, 2020, p. 339)

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Being in a highly specialized field, it is logical that ensemble teachers would utilize those with similar training, experiences, and job descriptions when seeking advice and information about music making in the classroom.

The veteran teacher of the study only sought younger teachers for unfamiliar areas like technology, while the mid-career and beginning educator sought relationships with other directors with similar programs who were renowned for having strong programs and solid experience (Shaw, 2020, p. 339). It is important for earlier career music educators to have discernment in who they utilize for information and assistance in order to maximize the benefit of the connection and make improvements in their teaching and experience as educators. Interestingly, the mid-career band director made more connections with others and purposefully joined committees discussing new initiatives while not avoiding non-music teachers, resulting in his being a resource to multiple groups of teachers (Shaw, 2020, p. 341). While other music educators are valuable sources of information when seeking information about music instruction, utilizing non-music educators for administrative connections and district initiatives can be very beneficial, and these open connections are not easily obtained otherwise. A trend was found in later stage music educators experiencing intentional isolation because of being well-seated in their close-knit networks that have persisted over time, while early-stage music educators were isolated due to being itinerant, not wanting to appear needy, or being in a physically isolated teaching location in buildings (Shaw, 2020, p. 341-342). New teachers must prioritize seeking help when it is needed in order to improve, and veteran teachers should make a point not to become completely isolated from large categories of teachers just because they do not receive a direct benefit from the connection regularly.

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Having close connections with others is highly useful when dealing with issues regarding interpersonal issues in education. Focusing on micropolitics, veteran teachers seem more inclined to maintain dense clusters of connections because of the theoretical benefits, while other teachers purposefully made greater numbers of weaker connections in order to obtain new information from a wider range of sources (Shaw, 2020, p. 344). As previously discussed, ensemble teachers at varying career stages have different professional needs that are satisfied in methods unique to those needs. The abilities of more experienced teachers to negotiate effectively with those in power can stem from learning from previous interactions and having a longer time to establish relationships that transcend individual negotiations with these individuals. The veteran teacher of the study seemed to have the strongest micropolitical skills, understanding the “quid pro quo” nature of relationships with administrators, serving as a more vocal dissenter in issues that affected his program and the programs of his colleagues, and making intentional connections with office workers and other teachers by frequenting high traffic areas in the building to make purposeful social conversations with those who could potentially help him later (Shaw, 2020, p. 340). The job security allowed by being well-known in a school community and having had many years to prove instructional effectiveness enables veteran teachers to navigate challenging interactions with more strategies than less experienced teachers, sometimes even allowing them to advocate for colleagues without as much influential reputation.

Educators must be mindful of potential challenges in collegial interactions and work to facilitate these connections for other teachers in the school and profession:

One can speculate that network ties may be harder to negotiate for a teacher coming from a nondominant culture. This would be an important aspect of networks to study in future



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research, because it has implications for access to resources and various kinds of capital.

(Shaw, 2020, p. 345)

As some school systems aim to employ more employees that accurately represent the races and ethnicities of the students they serve, school officials, administrators, and teachers must be mindful about leaving space for teachers of color and of any age, gender expression, sexual orientation, religion, or ethnicity and intentionally making room for their voices in school discourse and educational communities. “Access to capital and the salient role of privilege should especially be forefront as homophily is considered” (Shaw, 2020, p. 345). There is work to be done in making sure that musicians and teachers do not ‘unwittingly’ keep people unlike themselves from participating in ensembles or from having access to collegial interactions with other music teachers. Network ties of music educators have importance and influence on the attrition and retention of teachers and can provide a way to understand what makes teachers happy and keeps them working in the same position (Shaw, 2020, p. 346). This will be a further area of research.

### **Student Ensemble Participation Factors**

#### ***Student Motivation***

Students’ internal desire to continue participating in music ensembles can be influenced by a multitude of factors. As discovered by Evans and Liu’s study (2019) of Midwestern orchestra students, motivation is very influential on students’ abilities, level of playing, and their desire to continue playing music in school and beyond (p. 83). Students have to want to continue working at their progress on their instrument or voice or continue enjoying enrollment in the class enough to keep at it. Motivation is a topic of interest to music educators because of its influence on the activity for students; they must choose to practice alone, choose music instead

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of other courses or options, and recognize the influence of music on their self-perception (Evans & Liu, 2019, p. 85). Ensemble participation may be a group activity, but preparing music for rehearsals and performances outside of school is a more solitary activity that may not interest students over time:

A classroom environment that highlights and acknowledges shared experiences in practicing among students—such as loneliness, struggles, frustration, discomfort, failure, joy, surprises, and improvement—may fulfil a sense of students’ relatedness by demonstrating that students belong to a community of people who share the same difficulties and rewards while they practice. (Evans & Liu, 2019, p. 100)

If educators are able to help students connect the longevity of hard work with the satisfaction of a final performance, it may help students realize they are working towards that communal effort even when on their own.

There has been research done on the psychology behind student motivation. Several studies reported “[w]hen psychological needs” such as competence, relatedness, and autonomy, “are fulfilled, students learn more, enjoy learning more, participate more in class by asking questions and providing feedback to the teacher, and have greater focus and attention on their work” (Jang et al., 2012; Jang et al., 2010; Reeve & Lee, 2014, as cited in Evans & Liu, 2019, p. 84). This is not surprising; adults also feel more inclined to sustain effort when those needs are met. In an ensemble setting, students’ psychological needs being met “predicted [time spent practicing, intentions to continue participation, and self-esteem] significantly and with noteworthy effect sizes,” which can affect retention, recruitment, and attrition in ensembles (Evans & Liu, 2019, pp. 95-96). When students feel fulfilled by their participation in ensemble classes, they choose to enroll in subsequent years; teachers should seek to figure out what

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motivates their own students to make those connections. In contrast, students' psychological needs frustration (needs not being met) did not significantly predict the practice of students quitting orchestra (Evans & Liu, 2019, p.95). Students might have been able to ignore areas of frustration in comparison to what is rewarding about the activity, or the study participants may have all had their needs met (p. 97). This means that students' occasional dissatisfaction with their ensembles does not automatically indicate that they will stop their participation, prompting investigation of additional factors concerning retention.

Student motivation can be difficult to pinpoint on a case by case basis, but there are some overarching trends to examine. First year instrumental music students are highly motivated by their interest in their new instrument, by social experiences with peers in the activity, and the sense of belonging (Wilcher, 2016, p. 16). Those who teach ensemble students in their first year of performing should find ways to highlight those aspects positively, especially when the time to sign up for the second year approaches. It's possible that students' prior experience may allow students to utilize their previous knowledge more and make it more incentivizing to continue playing, but it was found that "less experienced students appeared to derive just as much benefit from psychological needs satisfaction as more experienced students" (Evans & Liu, 2019, p. 97). Time invested in performing in music ensembles can be connected to the personality benefits of perseverance and how that skill transcends school music making and is valuable to colleges and future employers. Students may need assistance in making these connections since they may not have the language to express or awareness surrounding their psychological needs.

[O]ne of the rewards of studying music is the sense of belonging derived from the cooperation and teamwork involved in a music ensemble. Autonomy can be supported by helping students to see the benefits of choosing to remain in an ensemble and pointing

out the utility value of music so that they may identify intrinsic interest in the activity.

Competence can be supported by giving students opportunities to work with other students at higher levels so that they have a sense of what kinds of competencies and abilities can be gained by sustaining their involvement in music learning. (Evans & Liu, 2019, p. 100)

Sometimes students are not able to see the trajectory of their musical careers and cite not wanting to be professional musicians as a reason to stop ensemble participation. It is incumbent on ensemble teachers to be able to articulately describe the non-musical benefits of participation in their classes to students who may be experiencing those feelings.

### ***Student Academics***

For high and low academic achieving students, grades and the ability to complete coursework satisfactorily in non-music classes can be a factor of ensemble retention. In a study of a metropolitan Midwest district with a predominant minority student body, students who were high achieving academically enrolled and persisted in instrumental music ensembles; however, the researcher also found that math achievement was also an indicator of initial enrollment and persistence, while reading predicted non-initial enrollment (Kinney, 2019, pp. 36-37). Those advocating for music education will often cite high academic performance as a positive influence of the content area, so it is interesting to see that the relationship works in the other direction. “[D]ifferences in academic achievement associated with music participation may be more of a product of demography and selection than an effect of music instruction” (Kinney, 2019, p. 40). Ensemble directors should make an effort to make their groups appealing and accessible to students of all academic abilities, including those with Individualized Education Plans, English Language Learners, and students in Talented and Gifted programs to attract a diverse range of

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academically talented students. Kinney (2019) also found that “higher achieving students are attracted to instrumental programs from the outset and that systematic differences between this population and the general school population remain relatively stable over time” (p. 36). Since many academically advanced students choose to take more challenging course sections or AP classes, ensemble teachers should make efforts to ensure that those opportunities are available outside of rehearsal times. It is worth noting that choirs can always accommodate beginners but many instrumental music ensembles do not provide that opportunity past middle school, which could explain why the demographics of choirs do not greatly differ from the overall school population (Kinney, 2019, p. 40). When possible, secondary instrumental music teachers should explore the possibilities of providing opportunities for first year students to enroll in a newcomer class. It would help overall enrollment and provide opportunities for students who may have moved or for passionate students who may have experienced obstacles that prohibited them from joining in elementary school.

### *Scheduling*

Sometimes students are motivated to continue their participation in ensembles but are hindered from enrollment by scheduling issues. Although students may respond positively overall when asked about their intentions of ensemble participation, students may find other options more appealing during course selections due to an oversaturation of course offerings in schools; ensemble classes must purposefully attract student interest and maintain students’ desire to continue year to year (Evans & Liu, 2019, p. 98; Wilcher, 2016, p. 20, 22). This is a burden felt more acutely by smaller districts and schools with fewer section offerings of popular courses, but ensemble teachers in any teaching situation should purposefully work with guidance departments or school schedule creators in order to maintain the integrity of their programs.

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Scheduling issues can also be alleviated through the use of a “zero period” before-school class time for ensemble classes (Wilcher, 2016, p. 24). While this may put undue burden on students who have limited transportation outside of school-provided busing, it may be a good solution for schools with a high population of students who walk to school or in areas where students have more ready access to family members who can provide transportation. “When making decisions about whether to continue in orchestra or not, students choose from a constellation of information to make the decision, most centrally concerned with the values they associate with the activity” (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002; McPherson & O’Neill, 2010, as cited in Evans & Liu, 2019, p. 88). Ensemble teachers should always strive to be effective and engaging instructors during their classes, and this research solidifies that imparting solid values and not just musical satisfaction is impactful for students. Further research is encouraged, with researchers citing that meeting students’ psychological needs “may lead to better practice, intentions to continue, and self-esteem, but these in turn may subsequently predict the fulfillment of psychological needs” (Evans & Liu, 2019, p. 99). It may be difficult to isolate whether being a good and enthusiastic ensemble member influences intrinsic fulfillment or if the relationship works in the other direction, but both areas merit teacher focus and study.

### *Socioeconomic Status*

Some students with low socioeconomic status can also be impacted in their ensemble participation and school experience by being in the minority due to their race.

Because urban schools often enroll a greater proportion of minorities and economically disadvantaged students, music programs in urban schools are particularly at risk of failing to attract students to music elective offerings and being more likely to populate these

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offerings with students who differ from the general demographic composition of the school. (Kinney, 2019, p. 26)

Ensemble teachers need to put in work and effort into understanding the complex factors that can influence minority participation in music groups and work to make their groups feel inclusive and welcoming to all students. Findings suggested that minority students were not as likely to remain enrolled in ensembles, and “[m]usic teachers are encouraged to consider this when developing curricular offerings, especially in school systems where a greater proportion of minority students exist” (Kinney, 2019, p. 39). As with any aspect of teaching, ensemble teachers should provide opportunities for students in their groups to reflect and provide feedback regarding the course in order to make improvements from year to year and show students that their input is valuable in the eyes of the teacher:

Making a concerted effort to recruit and retain minority students, males, those from a lower SES, and transient students will go far in bolstering enrollment in music ensemble electives, especially if these efforts are coupled with strategies to make these experiences more relevant to traditionally underserved populations...Through deliberate, conscientious efforts to reach students often underserved by music ensemble offerings, teachers will no doubt create a more democratic, equitable, and viable elective choice for all. (Kinney, 2019, p. 40-41)

By its nature, music ensembles focus on students and participants as part of a group, and providing this communal opportunity for students identifying as members of the groups referenced and other marginalized communities provides a beneficial experience for all members of the activity.

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Other socioeconomic factors can also influence ensemble participation in schools. Family structure (having two parents or guardians in the home instead of just one) influenced persistence in high school band, perhaps showing the challenges for single parents to provide support for their students getting to before- and after-school activities associated with the ensemble (Kinney, 2019, p. 38-39). It is important for directors to provide advance notice in writing in relevant languages as early as possible and with frequent reminders to enable students with fewer reliable adults in the home or those lacking stable transportation to be able to participate to the fullest extent possible. Socioeconomic status (SES) and parental attitudes towards instrumental music programs also impact student retention (Wilcher, 2016, pp. 19-20). Showing families and members of the school community how music ensembles are relevant and valuable can be beneficial in this area. “[E]nrollment in music ensembles may be contingent on gender-stereotyped perceptions adolescents have toward music as a serious course of study;” the study found that girls were more likely to be in each ensemble, overwhelmingly so for choir (Kinney, 2019, p. 39). Showing respect for all gender identities and expressions can make students feel safe in their musical groups and want to remain in the activity. Low SES orchestra students may have been influenced by comparatively lower enrollment in the program and subsequently the availability of more school-owned instruments (Kinney, 2019, p. 38). Instrumental music teachers in schools with high percentages of low income students should work with administrators on budgeting and seek grants to secure school owned instruments that can be loaned to students who would otherwise be prevented from participating in band and orchestra.

Some socioeconomic issues were more specific to choral music. There was a significant impact on band and orchestra enrollment by district and school mobility (movement between schools due to families relocating), but choir students were actually comparable to non-music



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students in terms of mobility and were more likely to be transient than band students (Kinney, 2019, p. 39). Ensemble directors should find a system of seeking out students who have transferred schools mid-year or over the summer in order to make sure ensemble students are able to continue at their new school; this further reinforces the urgency for music teachers to form close working relationships with guidance counselors or schedule creators at the secondary level. “For each grade level, choir had a more equitable proportion of lower SES students than band and strings,” and research posited students who participate in music may experience more overall school engagement and lead to better academic performance (Kinney, 2019, p. 38). When offering students in ensembles the opportunity to travel with the group for performances or field trips, ensemble teachers should be sensitive to the financial situations of their students and seek opportunities for fundraising or donations to facilitate equity in trip access.

### *Student Personalities*

The personalities of individual students also influence their decisions in continuing ensemble participation in school. In contrast to the excitement of first year students, the “physiological development of maturity” of students in their second year and the inconsistencies of their day-to-day emotions can contribute to challenges in motivation in ensemble participation (Wilcher, 2016, p. 16). For typical students who start orchestra, band, or chorus between third to sixth grade, peer influences, school climate, and puberty can all impact their decisions to continue or stop participating in ensemble classes. This could be an area where ensemble teachers may have to make an extra effort to peddle their classes as being fun and taught by an engaging instructor in order to help retention.

Within ensembles, different types of students benefit from differentiated teacher attention and class attributes in order to maintain interest and involvement. Wilcher (2016) cited three

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categories of band participants, requiring tailored teacher-student interactions to support their unique qualities; the “leaders” needed high expectations, challenging work, meaningful work, and recognition for their efforts (p. 17). Students who are goal driven and self-motivated need ability-appropriate material as well as praise for their commendable work. The largest group of band students known as the “social set” required strong interpersonal relationships with the teacher above all else to maintain engagement and motivation, since their participation and sustained involvement in the activity stemmed from the impression of the band teacher’s personality and class reputation as well as social pressures from peers to continue or not (Wilcher, 2016, p. 18). While these students might not go on to compete in scored events or serve as section leaders, concertmasters, or soloists, ensembles rely on the cohesive group to be successful, so nurturing these students in a more social manner is still beneficial to music making. Finally, “safe haven students” are most impacted “by being able to participate in a bully-free environment; a sense of belonging; an opportunity to blend in to find their identity and build their self-esteem” (Wilcher, 2016, p. 18). For some students, musical ensembles become their families and support systems, so music educators should work to make sure their groups are inclusive, respectful, and supportive for participants.

### ***Recruitment and Retention Recommendations***

In addition to the previous research regarding contributing factors to ensemble enrollment, there are also a number of other strategies that can be utilized to improve participation. Continuing the recruitment process throughout the entire school year has been proven to solidify enrollment in ensemble classes; having active participation from all music teachers at each level is also beneficial and effective (Bazan & Baylen, 2009 as cited in Wilcher, 2016, p. 24). There should be a symbiotic relationship across levels:

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1. Teachers in elementary schools should work to build strong musical foundations in students and spark interest.
2. Middle school teachers should reach out to their feeders to show students the social benefits of ensemble participation as well as opportunities only provided for ensemble students.
3. High school teachers should aim to maximize students' potential as musicians, foster a culture that inspires a lifetime of music-making, and communicate with middle schools regarding what skills and competencies will be needed from students to facilitate high musicality.

Recruitment strategies can include multiple visits to feeder schools, providing demonstration lessons, using music selections that are interesting and inspiring to students, utilizing current students in the program who have high social capital, allowing for a question-and-answer session with current students, demonstrating possible instruments and allowing trials (for instrumental music), and inviting potential students to an open rehearsal (Bazan & Bailey, 2009; Hayes, 2005, as cited in Wilcher, 2016, p. 25). Providing students with as much relevant information as possible will allow them to make an informed decision about their enrollment, and showcasing the positive and exciting elements should be a reflection of the existing program and not just be for show.

It is important for ensemble teachers working to increase enrollment through retention and more effective recruitment to establish their goals, create a plan, and evaluate its progress, which is an often-neglected step (Wilcher, 2016, p. pp. 25-26). Instead of lamenting low numbers, it is incumbent on directors to reflect upon and investigate their causes in order to craft better techniques for future recruitment. Other staff members may have more influence than

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ensemble teachers might realize. Classroom teachers can influence students' perceptions of the music program positively or influence them to unenroll from the program (Sandene, 1994, as cited in Wilcher, 2016, p. 28). When students have close relationships or high respect for other teachers who cast the music program in a negative light, it can lead to attrition. Ensemble teachers should find ways to show other staff members the benefits and accolades of their programs as well as command respect by serving as an ally and resource to those teachers as much as possible.

### **Areas of Interest for Further Research**

There are still some research questions that require further study to fully answer which will be examined in more depth through the empirical study. There was limited information when looking to determine the impact of a relationship between teacher effectiveness and program growth. It was found that students with a higher SES were more likely to initially enroll in band and continue in eighth grade, but this was not true for students in tenth grade band, suggesting that at the high school level decreased band enrollment may have enabled low-income students to access school-owned instruments (Kinney, 2019, p. 37-38). This kind of program growth could be more akin to maintaining existing enrollment levels with a different composition of students for instrumental music programs. In an interview with instrumental music teachers of SES schools, participants shared their beliefs that creating a feeling of family and providing a welcoming and safe environment for students greatly improved student retention in ensembles (Albert, 2006, as cited in Wilcher, 2016, p. 28). This is not something that happens without substantial work and effort from the ensemble teacher. Cultivating close ties with the community and showing students that the ensemble classroom is for everyone takes time and a cultural shift in all students in the group. While there was plentiful information about effective

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teaching and aspects of teaching that are undesirable to educators, I did not find explanations for why teachers chose to leave their jobs.

### Chapter 3: Empirical Study

#### Research Questions and Survey Overview

The following questions guided the initial research and influenced the data requested in the survey discussed in this chapter:

1. What do teachers like about their jobs?
2. What do teachers dislike about their jobs and the profession?
3. Why do teachers stay in a job?
4. What characteristics make an effective ensemble teacher?
5. What can be done to support teachers in a way that makes them want to remain in a position?
6. How much does collegial support impact ensemble teachers?
7. How much impact do teachers and external factors have on students' decisions to continue ensemble participation throughout their schooling?
8. Is program growth always indicative of teacher effectiveness?
9. Why do teachers leave their jobs?

I created a Google Form to distribute my survey, which I shared after reviewing and summarizing my research on the topic. I provided about a week and a half for responses, cutting them off after new daily responses slowed to one or fewer per day. I included the text below in the description at the beginning of my survey, which encapsulates the purpose of my study.

*This survey is intended for music educators with performing ensembles in the United States. The purpose of my study is to gather information about ensemble teachers. I plan to examine trends between job satisfaction and program size and teacher characteristics in order to learn if there are commonalities that can lead other educators or music*

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*supervisors to prevent turnover and to assist current teachers in growing their ensembles. Conducted to fulfill graduation requirements at The University of the Arts. Contact laward@uarts.edu (myself, Lauren Ward) with any questions.*

The survey was shared solely on Facebook. I shared a slightly more informally worded post to the demographics I felt were first level contacts of mine, including to my district's instrumental music teachers Facebook group, Maestro Mentors (81 members), my community band's group, Columbia Bands Members Only (104 members), and my personal Facebook page as a public post (which could be shared by others and was five times) on May 22, 2021. I shared the survey to a wider range of groups on the same day including LVC NAfME Alumni (92 members), UArts String Repair 2018 (16 members), Schuylkill Youth Symphony/Gabriel Youth Orchestra Alumni & Friends (64 members), American Music Abroad Alumni (1,491 members), MAC-AOSA Discussion Group (471 members), Virtual Concert Band Family (556 members), and Music Education at the University of the Arts (page; liked by 211 people). I also shared the survey to two more groups slightly after the initial posting in order to meet my personal goal of having at least 100 usable responses and to have a more representative sample of responses. I posted to Women Band Directors International Facebook group (about 2,610 members) on May 24 to increase visibility for band teachers, and I posted to School Orchestra and String Teachers Facebook group (about 10,721 members) on May 28 to increase visibility to orchestra teachers, who were underrepresented in the responses at the time. See Appendix A for the post that was shared widely.

I closed the survey on June 3, 2021. The total number of members of all the groups that saw the survey post amounts to 16,417 people (not including those from my personal Facebook friends who would find the survey applicable). Some of the groups do have overlap in members.

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There were 152 responses submitted when the survey was closed, which works out to about a 0.926% rate of response. Please see Appendix B for the complete survey.

### **Survey Questions: Demographic Information**

In preparing my survey, I chose to start with demographic information first so that after my qualifying question, respondents could focus on the subject of the survey. The answer to the final question of this section would either end the survey for those who began it and did not meet the parameters or allow access to the main section. All questions in this section were mandatory and received the full 152 responses with the exception of Question 6.

#### **Question 1: Number of years teaching (Choose based on current year of teaching).**

Respondents were instructed to choose based on their current year of teaching. There were 15.1% of educators who selected 1-3 years, 18.4% selected 4-6 years, 23.7% selected 7-10 years, 20.4% selected 11-17 years, 15.8% selected 18-25 years, and 6.6% selected 26 or more years of teaching.

**Question 2: What kind of school do you currently teach in?** Multiple options were permitted for this question since some charter schools are private and some are public. There were 92.1% educators who selected public school, 6.6% who selected private school, 0.7% (one response) who selected charter school, and one teacher who responded she teaches in a nonprofit that partners with a local symphony and public schools.

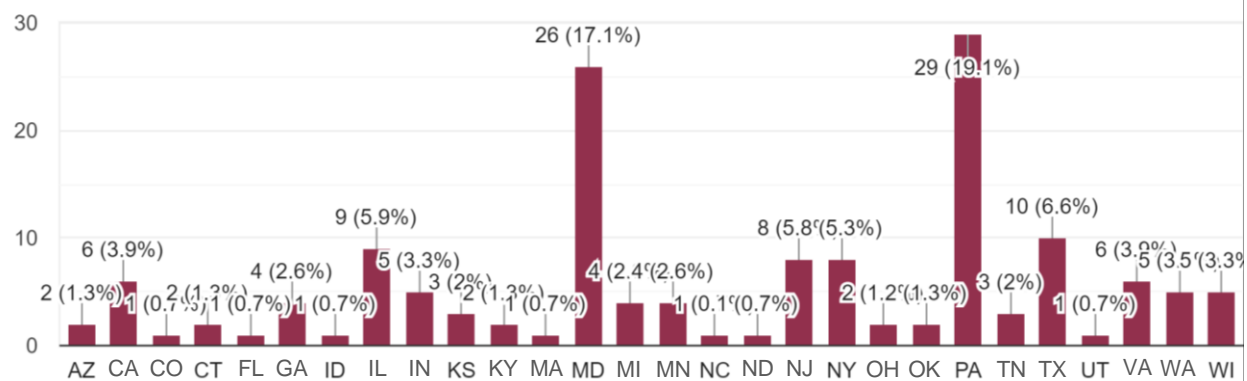
#### **Question 3: What state do you teach in?**

### **Figure 1**

*States of Survey Respondents*



## JOB SATISFACTION, RETENTION, AND ENSEMBLE SIZE

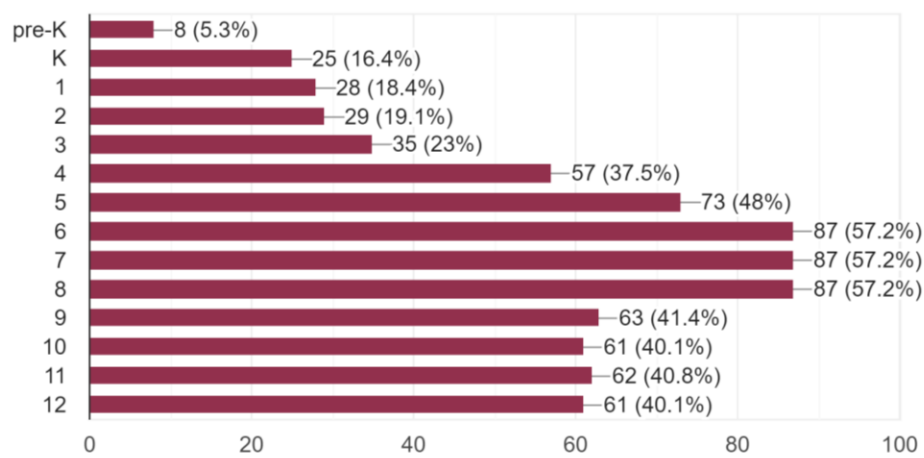


The largest number of responses came from teachers in Maryland and Pennsylvania, which is representative of the friends, classmates, colleagues, and contacts I have made from growing up in and attending schools in Pennsylvania at the high school, undergraduate, and graduate level as well as networking done since my move to Maryland in 2014. Some of the other states with six to ten responses represent other states my personal contacts have relocated to (New Jersey, New York, and Virginia). The other states represent responses from music educators from the Facebook groups the survey was shared with.

### Question 4: What grade level(s) do you teach in your position?

**Figure 2**

#### *Grade Levels Taught*



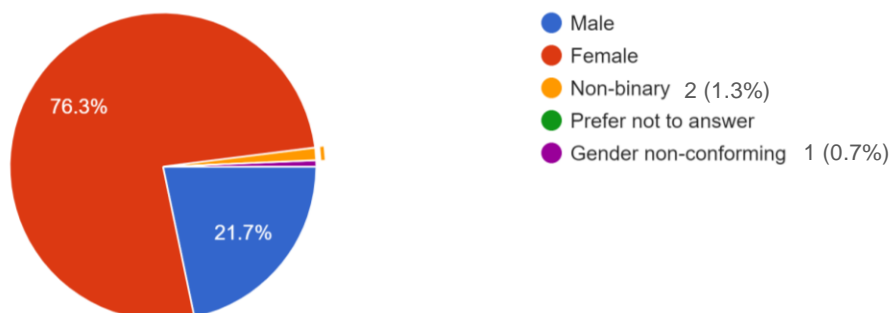
## JOB SATISFACTION, RETENTION, AND ENSEMBLE SIZE

Teachers were instructed to check all that apply. The highest concentrations were in middle school grades (6, 7, and 8).

### Question 5: Gender identity.

**Figure 3**

*Genders*



This question and the provided options were worded to be more inclusive for individuals who are transgender. I had an extended conversation about this question and the next with an agender music teacher friend between issuing it to the pilot study group and before publishing the survey. This influenced my decision to include a write-in option, which was used by one person (“Gender non-conforming”). Responses were overwhelmingly from women earlier in the response collection, so I made an effort to specifically tag some of the male ensemble teachers on my own post from my friends list in an effort to reduce this disparity.

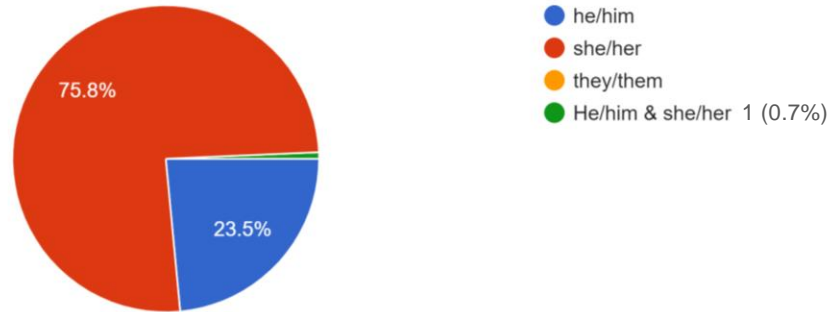
### Question 6: Pronouns.

**Figure 4**

*Pronouns*

## JOB SATISFACTION, RETENTION, AND ENSEMBLE SIZE

149 responses



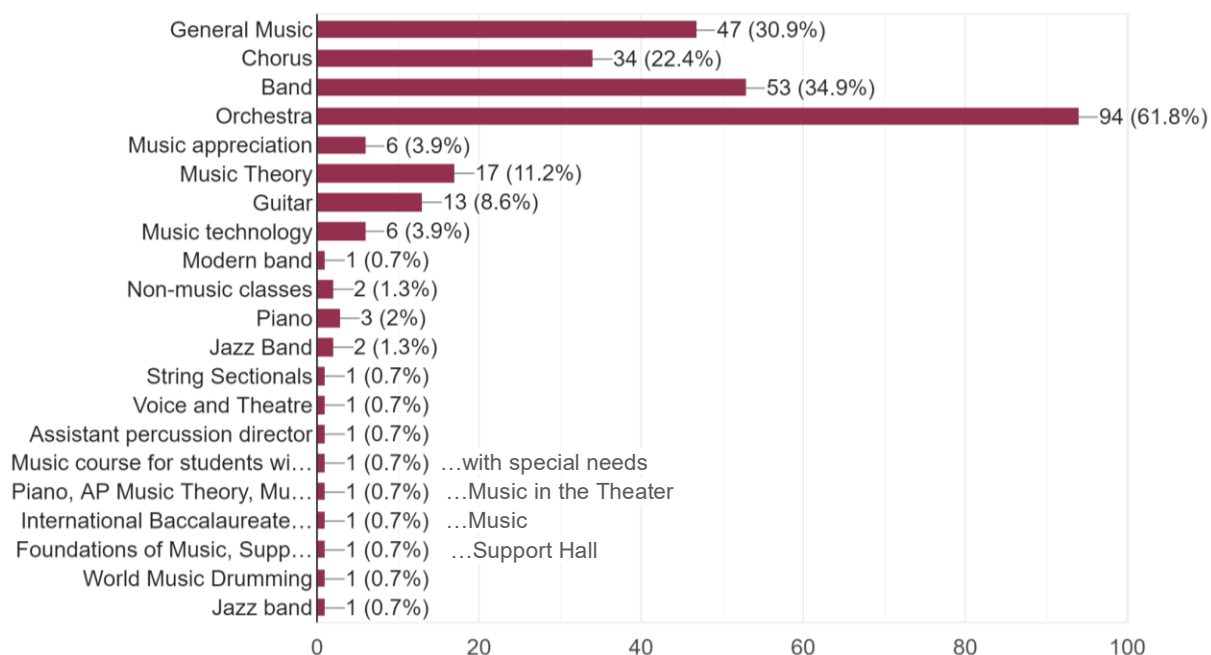
I added this question after the previously mentioned discussion from question 4 (between the pilot study and formal survey) in order to better capture survey respondents and in order to be able to correctly gender any of the open-ended responses in this paper. I chose to make this an optional question in order to allow for responses from anyone uncomfortable with sharing their pronouns or those unwilling to acknowledge the need for this question. Only one person chose not to share pronouns (aside from pilot study respondents who answered before the question was added). One person used the write-in option.

### **Question 7: What do you teach in your current position?**

#### **Figure 5**

*Classes Taught*

## JOB SATISFACTION, RETENTION, AND ENSEMBLE SIZE



Again, educators were instructed to select all that apply. Piano was not a pre-written choice; one person's write in answer included piano and should bring the stand alone total from three to four. The largest concentration was orchestra, likely due to the visibility of the survey as posted to the School Orchestra and String Teachers group on Facebook.

**Question 8: Is one of your current classes a performing ensemble?** This question was set up in the Google Form to either end or continue the survey for respondents depending on their answer. Of everyone who took the survey, 94.7% answered yes, and eight people responded with no. The survey ended at that point for those who chose no since the survey was designed to collect data from current ensemble teachers.

### Survey Questions: Teacher Background as a Musician/Teacher

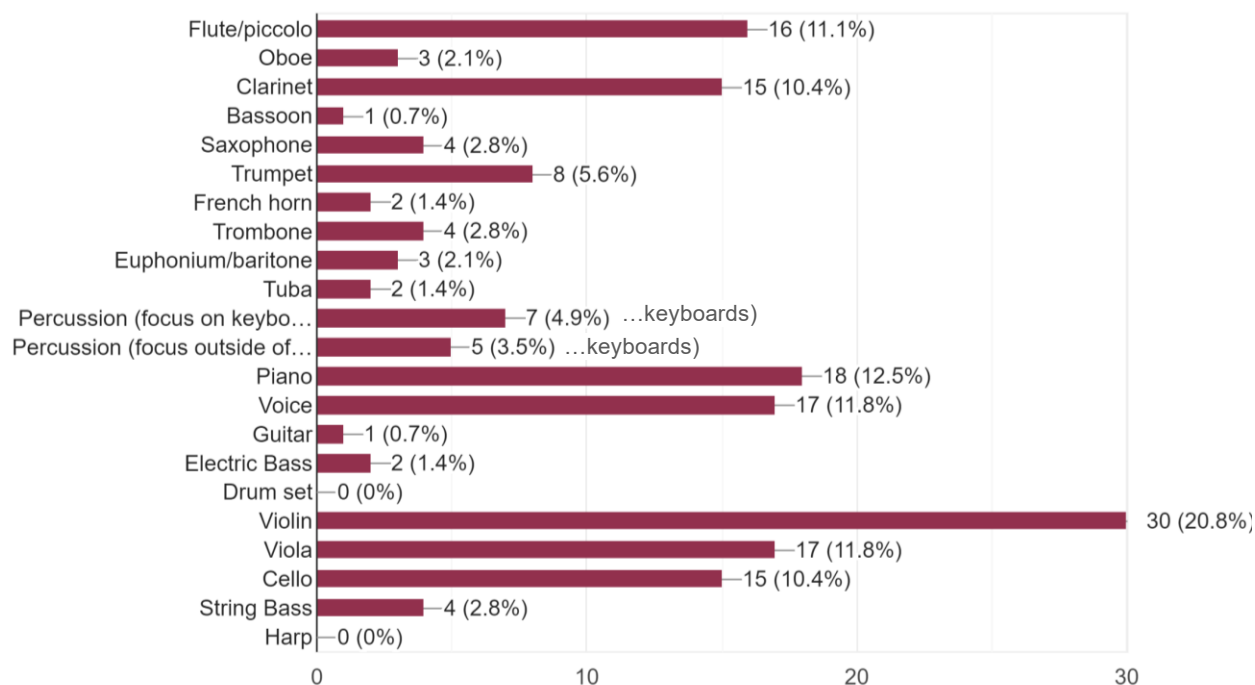
The next section of the survey focused on teacher backgrounds, including high school, college, and musicianship. All questions were required and received 144 responses.

#### Question 9: Primary Instrument

**Figure 6**

## JOB SATISFACTION, RETENTION, AND ENSEMBLE SIZE

### *Instruments Selected*



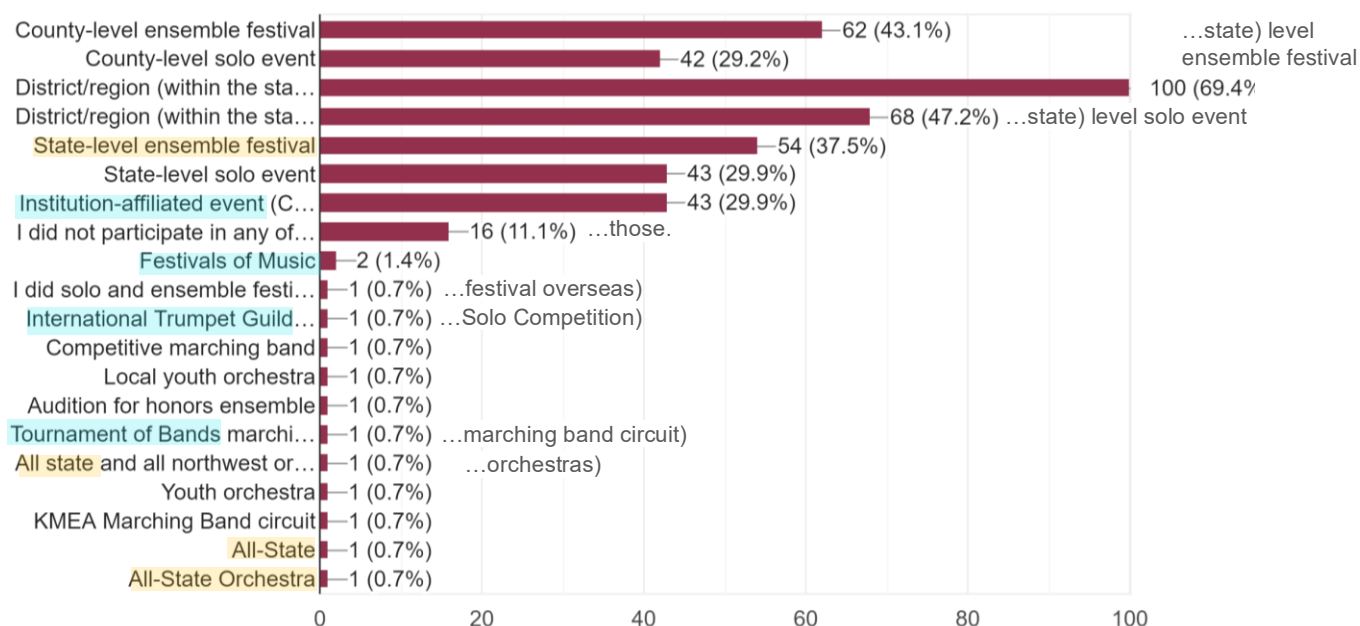
This question allowed for respondents to choose up to two choices since some music teachers had two primary instruments in college or have two strong performing mediums currently. There was no write in option.

**Question 10: Did you participate in any scored or competitive musical opportunities as a high school student?**

**Figure 7**

*High School Scored or Competitive Events*

## JOB SATISFACTION, RETENTION, AND ENSEMBLE SIZE



Participants were instructed to select all answers that applied and were provided a write-in option. Write-in options that fit a prewritten category were color coded to reflect that in the chart above. The most popular choice was ensemble festivals at the district or region level within a state. The popularity of this choice is surprising, since there were many Maryland responses, and ensemble events don't exist as widely at that level in the area.

**Question 11: Did you prepare to teach instrumental or vocal music more in undergrad?** There were 77.1% of teachers who selected instrumental music and 11.8% who selected vocal music. The remaining responses came from the write in option, where participants shared studying both areas equally, earning an undergraduate degree in music performance or another area, or obtaining certification after undergrad.

**Question 12: About how many music majors were there in your undergraduate institution?**

**Figure 8**

*Music Department Enrollment*

## JOB SATISFACTION, RETENTION, AND ENSEMBLE SIZE

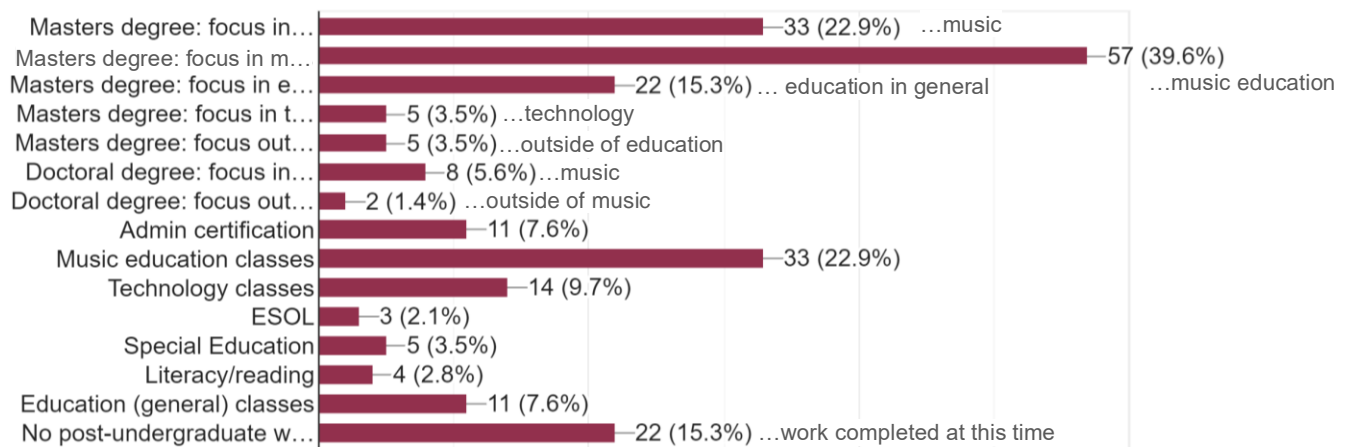


The question description shared to “Answer for the institution you attended to get your teaching certification; include all music majors and not just music education (ex: music recording, performing, etc.).” A write-in option was provided.

### Question 13: What kind of post-undergraduate work have you done?

**Figure 9**

#### *Post-Undergraduate Studies*

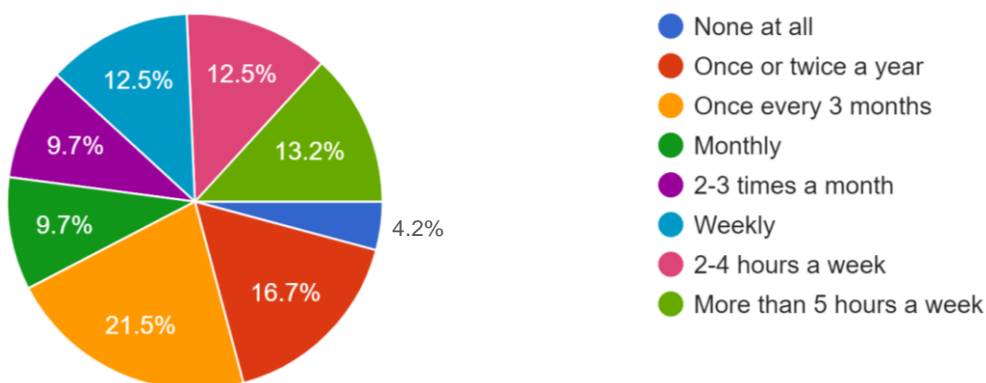


Survey respondents were told to “Check boxes for all that apply, whether completed or in-progress.” 11 people utilized the write in option (7.7% total); those responses included some that fit pre-written options as well others including a master’s equivalency, other certifications, workshops, and injury prevention. A master’s degree in music education was the most popular option.

**Question 14: Before the pandemic, how much did you perform as a musician as an adult?**

**Figure 10**

*Amount of Music Performing*



The question description shared “This can include personal practice time, ensemble rehearsals, gigs, performances, etc.” This question was one of a few with a more even split between all options in the responses.

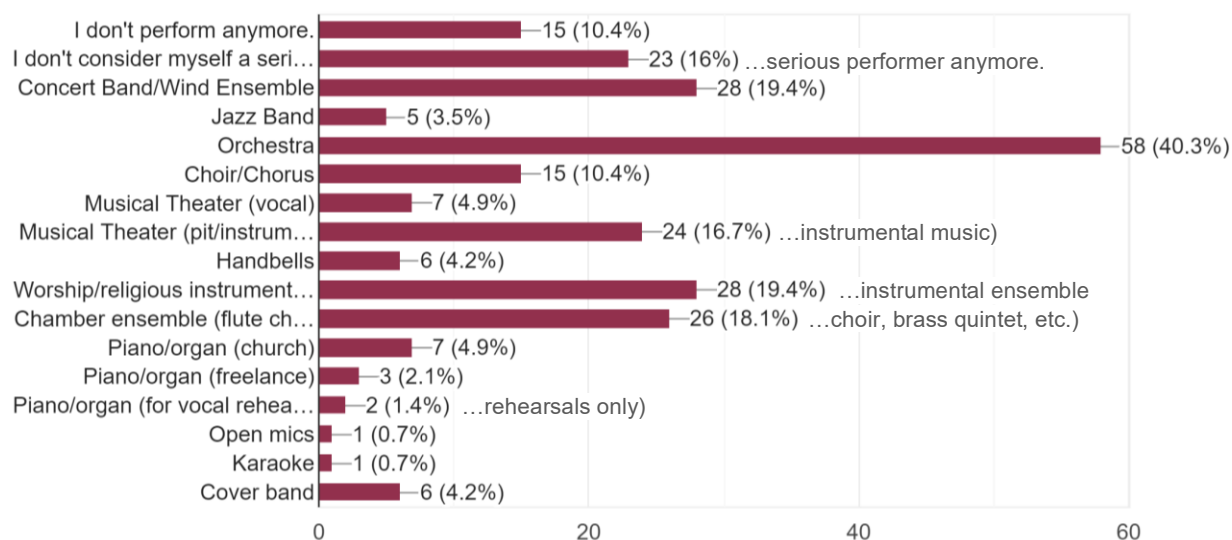
**Question 15: What would you consider to be the top medium(s) of your current performing opportunities?**

**Figure 11**

*Performance Opportunities*



## JOB SATISFACTION, RETENTION, AND ENSEMBLE SIZE

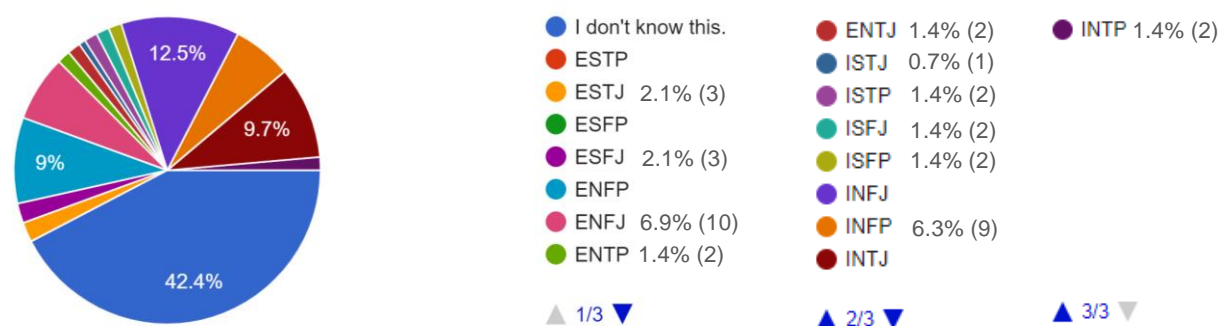


Respondents could “Choose up to 3 options.” Orchestra once again leads other options, indicative of a potential higher rate of response from the orchestra teachers Facebook group.

**Question 16: If you know your Myers Briggs personality type, please indicate it here.**

**Figure 12**

*MBTI Personality Type*



A link was provided to an informational page on the official Myers Briggs website to provide information for anyone unfamiliar with the terminology. The first letter of the personality indicator signifies introversion (I) or extroversion (E). When totaling both, there were 33 people (40% of those who knew their MBTI) who are extroverted and 50 (60%) who are introverted.

**Question 17: Do you consider yourself more of an introvert or extrovert?** This question was included to capture introversion and extroversion data for any survey respondents who were unable to answer the previous question. A link was provided to Simply Psychology's website to provide information for anyone unfamiliar with the terminology. There were 41.7% of respondents who identified as extroverts, and the majority (58.3%) identified as introverts. This aligns pretty closely with the data found in the previous question from those who had previously taken the formal MBTI.

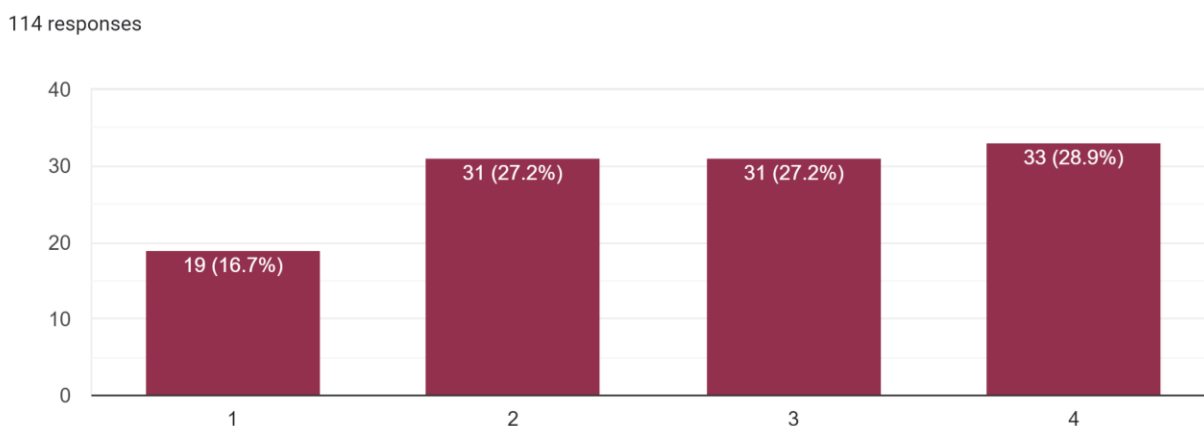
### Survey Questions: Teaching Experience

Questions 18-20 were not required questions and included "If this is your first teaching position, please skip this question." as the question description. The number of responses is different for all three, which could possibly be attributed to those who had multiple principals in their same first teaching position. The rest of the questions in this section were all required and received the full 144 responses.

#### **Question 18: Please rate your satisfaction with your previous principal.**

**Figure 13**

#### *Previous Principal Satisfaction*



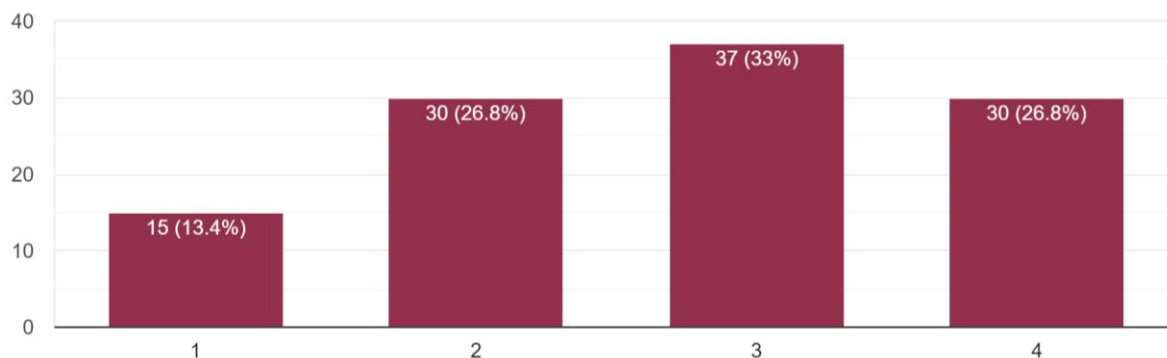
*Note.* The labels on the four-point Likert scale ranged from *1 strongly dislike* to *4 strongly like*.

**Question 19: Please rate your satisfaction with your previous school.**

**Figure 14**

*Previous School Satisfaction*

112 responses



*Note.* The labels on the four-point Likert scale ranged from 1 *very negative* to 4 *very positive*.

**Question 20: Please share your professional rating from your end of year evaluation provided by an administrator at your previous school.**

**Figure 15**

*Previous Professional End of Year Evaluation Rating*

118 responses

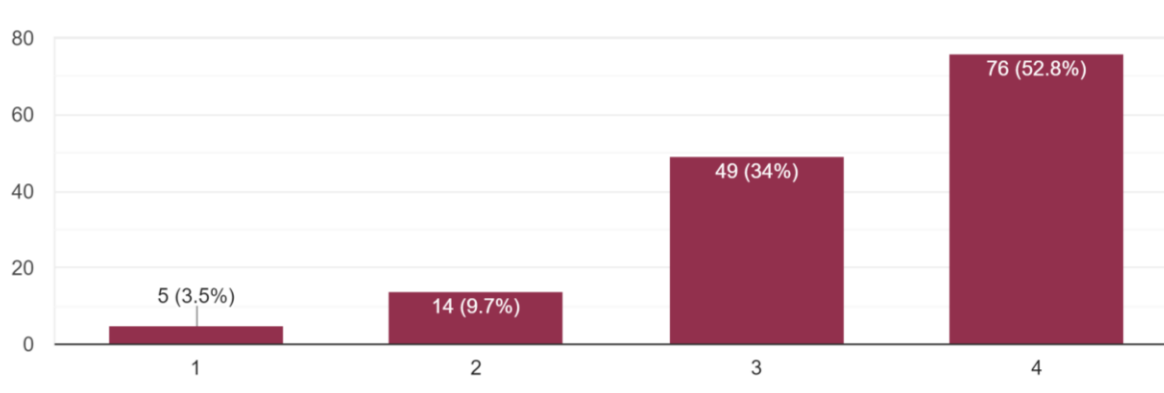


*Note.* Labels for different rating terms were used from a variety of observation tools, including Danielson, Anne Arundel County Public Schools, and state guidelines in Oregon and Pennsylvania.

**Question 21: Please rate your satisfaction with your current principal.**

**Figure 16**

*Current Principal Satisfaction*

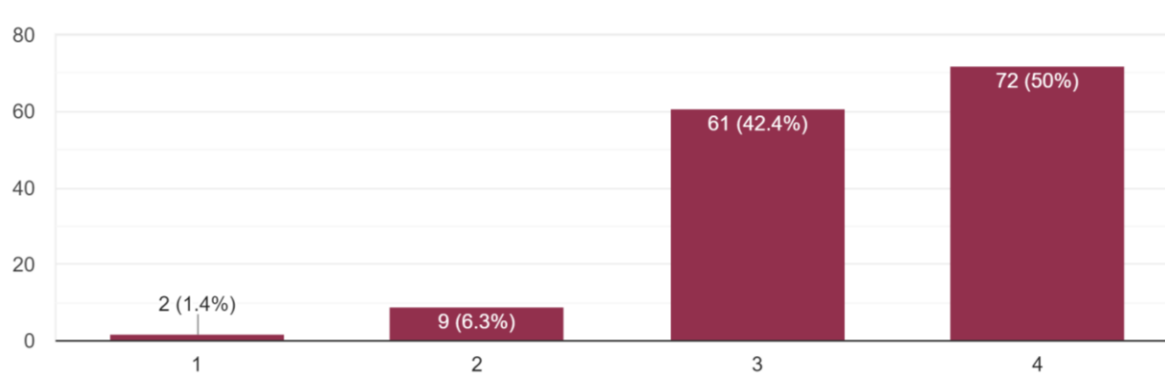


*Note.* “If you have multiple schools in your position, please answer for the school with the administrator that is responsible for your end of year evaluation.” The labels on the four-point Likert scale ranged from *1 strongly dislike* to *4 strongly like*.

**Question 22: Please rate your satisfaction with your current school.**

**Figure 17**

*Current School Satisfaction*



*Note.* “If you have multiple schools in your position, please answer for the school that you spend more of your time at (or have the highest enrollment for your ensemble classes at).” The labels on the four-point Likert scale ranged from *1 very negative* to *4 very positive*.

**Question 23: Please share your last known professional rating from your end of year evaluation provided by an administrator at your current school.**

**Figure 18**

*Current Professional End of Year Evaluation Rating*



*Note.* “If this is your first year teaching and you have not yet received your evaluation rating, please answer based on your last observation.”

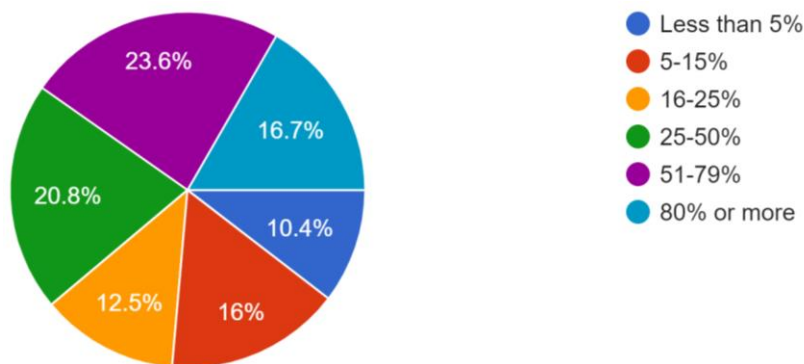
**Question 24: Is your school a Title I school?** The question description shared “If you have multiple schools in your position, please answer for the school that you spend more of your time at (or have the highest enrollment for your ensemble classes at).” There were 59% of respondents teaching at Title I schools, and the remaining 41% did not.

**Question 25: What percentage of students in your school qualify to be enrolled for Free and Reduced Meals? (FARMs)**

**Figure 19**

*Percentage of Students Qualifying for Free and Reduced Meals*

## JOB SATISFACTION, RETENTION, AND ENSEMBLE SIZE



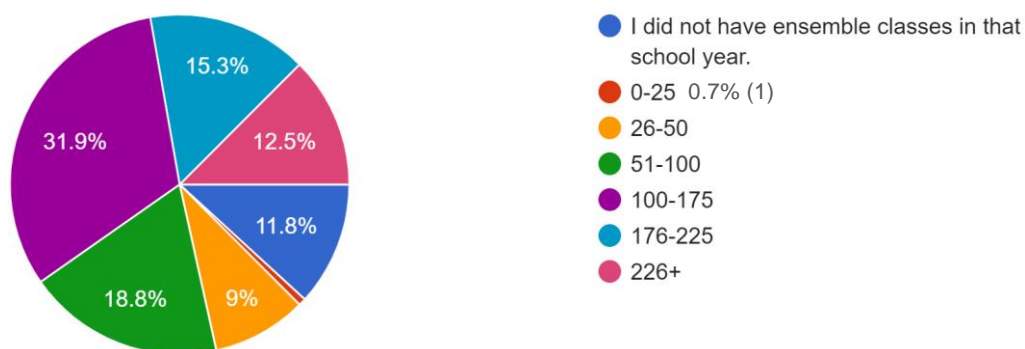
*Note.* “If you have multiple schools in your position, please answer for the school that you spend more of your time at (or have the highest enrollment for your ensemble classes at)”

The following questions about enrollment numbers (26, 27, and 29) all had “Please share the total number of students enrolled (ex. 100 in band + 70 in orchestra = 170). Please also include the total number across multiple schools if you are in an itinerant position.” in the question description.

**Question 26: How many total students did you have enrolled in all of your ensemble classes at the beginning of the 2018-2019 school year?**

**Figure 20**

*Ensemble Enrollment (2018-2019 School Year)*

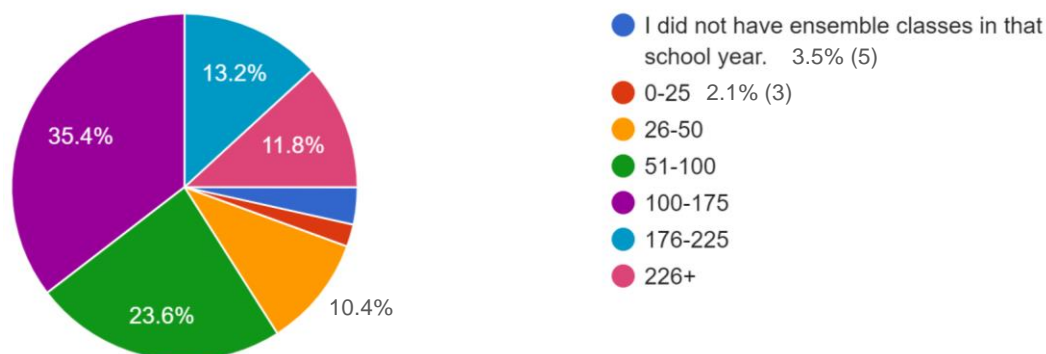


**Question 27: How many total students did you have enrolled in all of your ensemble classes at the beginning of the 2019-2020 school year?**

**Figure 21**

## JOB SATISFACTION, RETENTION, AND ENSEMBLE SIZE

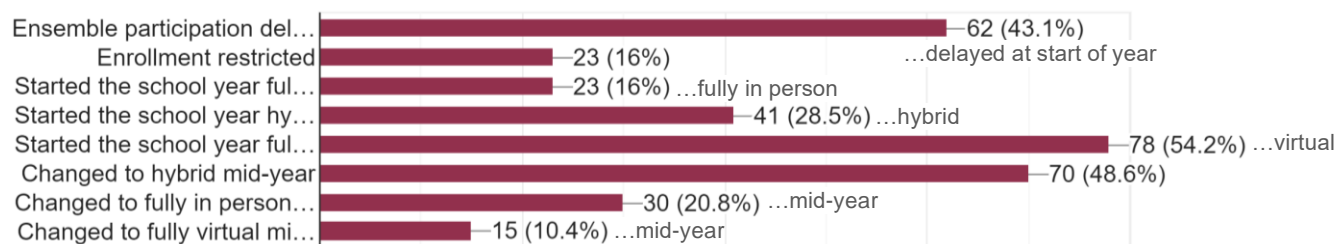
### *Ensemble Enrollment (2019-2020 School Year)*



**Question 28: How did the pandemic affect your teaching for the 2020-2021 school year?**

**Figure 22**

### *Pandemic Influences on 2020-2021 School Year*

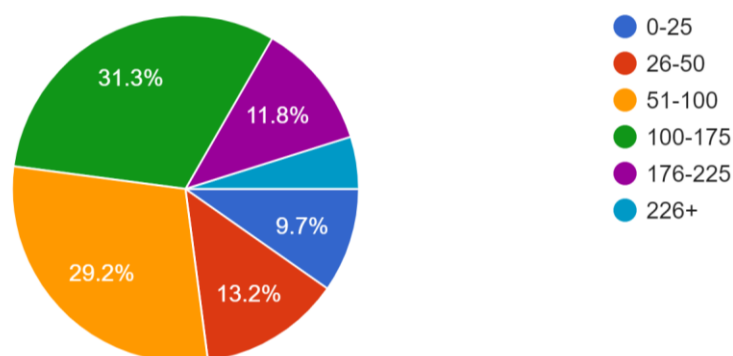


Respondents were instructed to check all that apply, and 18 people also utilized the provided write-in option. Hybrid was defined in the choices as being “some students in person while some students are at home.” Write-in responses included eight that included virtual learning as part of the school year, six options that referenced in person learning (though unclear if fully in person or hybrid), three with enrollment restrictions, three referencing in person challenges or restrictions for ensemble rehearsals or classes, and one stating there was “Full enrollment after Easter,” though unclear if referencing school population or ensemble enrollment.

**Question 29: How many total students did you have enrolled in all of your ensemble classes at the beginning of the 2020-2021 school year?**

**Figure 23**

*Ensemble Enrollment (2020-2021 School Year)*



### **Survey Questions: Open Ended-Input**

At the end of the survey, respondents were provided with several optional open-ended questions. The only required question in this section was question 33, which received the full 144 responses.

**Question 30: Feel free to share any input on your program's growth or decreased enrollment.** 97 people added input for this question. 52 respondents discussed decreased enrollment as a result of the pandemic, including COVID mitigation strategies in buildings, virtual learning schedules either not permitting ensemble enrollment or students and families being hesitant to participate in ensembles virtually, families leaving the area from pandemic-influenced income reduction, and students being uninterested in continuing to learn virtually for an ensemble class. There were 19 responses about decreased enrollment from non-pandemic related factors, including administration pressure, lack of support in the recruitment process, scheduling challenges from other staff members, limited community buy-in to committing to a full year ensemble class, challenging student engagement resulting from inadequate music



## JOB SATISFACTION, RETENTION, AND ENSEMBLE SIZE

education in feeders schools, other course requirements, student performance anxiety, oversaturation of elective choices, and increased time obligations for evening rehearsals. 16 teachers reported their enrollment being maintained or only changing very slightly. Six respondents cited program growth, stemming from factors such as lack of pandemic influence, administration and community support, teacher confidence and personality, and recruiting throughout the school year with the increased virtual opportunities.

**Question 31: If you thought about leaving a position as an ensemble teacher, what factors influenced you to stay?** There were 90 people who added input for this question. Some common responses included the students (31), colleagues (14), administration support (7), school community (13), and job satisfaction or performance (23). Those who cited job satisfaction had strong feelings about it. One respondent shared “I float the idea of trying to teach at a larger school so I can attempt to have larger ensembles, but I love my students, colleagues, administration, and community. Those are things that are priceless and ‘the grass is not always greener on the other side.’ ” Many others had similar sentiments of “I stay because teaching is a calling and I love the kids. I really can’t picture myself doing anything else.”

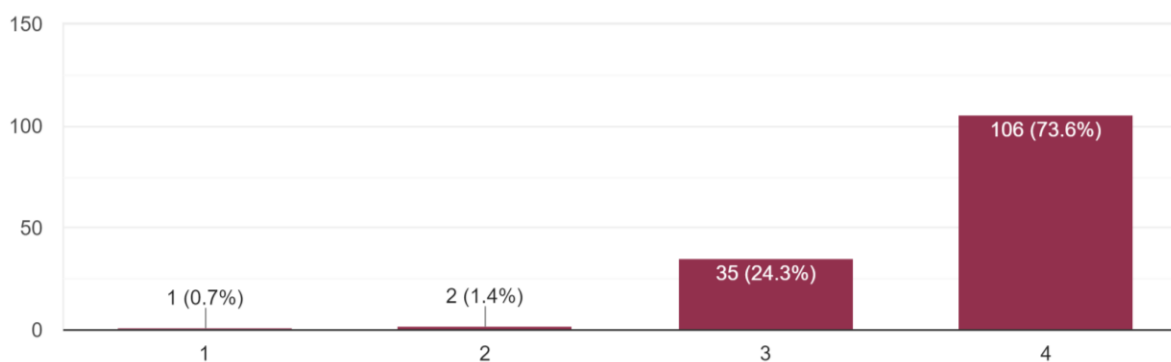
For some reason, 31 cited reasons that are non-negotiable/unchangeable or just commenting on their thoughts about leaving, including feeling alone, feeling unappreciated or disrespected, state-level decisions, unrealistic job expectations from higher ups, job security, job satisfaction, being itinerant or having too many schools, pressure of the program being cut after leaving, technology, commute, not having qualifications for other jobs or lacking imagination for other career choices, the pandemic, work/life balance, tenure, the convenience of not having to search for a new job, needing to move homes or attend school, loan forgiveness requirements, staying for the salary, and teaching in the same school as one’s children.

**Question 32: If you have left a position as an ensemble teacher, what factors contributed to your decision to leave?** This question received 60 responses. Some common responses included administration support (11), job satisfaction or performance (5), burnout or mental health stressors (7), colleagues/school community/toxic work environment (10), budget inadequacy for programs or positions (11), desire for different position/fewer schools or changing from part time to full time employment (14), life changes like children, family needs, going back to school, etc. (10), and commute or distance to home area (5). Eight teachers filled in the answer to say it was not applicable for them. One respondent went into great detail about how being a band director as his first position was a poor fit and how he disagreed with many of the standard pedagogical practices of the discipline and some of the financial burden placed on students and families. Another shared simply that “The public school system is indoctrination.”

**Question 33: How much do you feel your personality as an educator affects enrollment in your ensembles?**

**Figure 24**

*Educator Feelings on Impact of Personality on Enrollment*



*Note.* The labels on the four-point Likert scale ranged from 1 *no effect at all* to 4 *heavy contributing factor*.

## JOB SATISFACTION, RETENTION, AND ENSEMBLE SIZE

Overwhelmingly, respondents did feel personality affects enrollment. The only person who selected 1 went on to explain that their chorus's ensemble participation is mandatory, and that "The success of the ensemble based on my personality is more of a "3" or "4" on that scale."

**Question 34: Feel free to share any other thoughts on previous questions or elaborate on your job satisfaction, what makes an effective ensemble teacher, and/or what affects your program size.** 58 people added input for this question, but three wrote in "not applicable." There were 25 responses regarding job satisfaction, 22 about what makes an effective ensemble teacher, and 21 concerning program size factors (with some overlapping). One respondent discussed the impact of her introversion as a strength in the classroom and in having authentic relationships with students but questioned the validity of the Myers Briggs Personality Type Indicator based on an NPR story.

## **Chapter 4: Conclusions and Findings**

### **Preliminary Findings**

Most of the data in the demographics section was typical of what I expected. There was a decent spread of teaching experience; it is curious to me why there were not more responses from seasoned teachers with more than 25 years of experience. It makes me think of Shaw's findings (2020) in which the veteran teacher interviewed did not always do things for newer teachers since there were no reciprocal benefits. The higher percentages of grade levels taught from fourth grade and up makes sense since there were more respondents who taught instrumental music which starts in that grade in most teaching situations. I was happily surprised to see that only two respondents had to teach non-music classes.

It is somewhat unclear why there was such a majority of female responses to the survey. While it was shared to the Women Band Directors International group, no other Facebook was purposely aligned to membership for one gender. I was aware that there is a very popular Facebook group (Band Directors) that has a lot of active male members, but many colleagues have shared sentiments that the group has a tendency to have a lot of individuals with outdated thinking prone to a lack of inclusion for their students and sometimes blatant sexism. This influenced my decision not to join, post, or ask a colleague to post my survey there. Orchestra teacher responses were nearly double that of band, so it is possible that there is a lack of male orchestra teachers compared to male band directors (often seen at the high school level especially). There were seven male chorus teachers compared to 23 female teachers and one non-binary teacher.

It was surprising to see only 5.6% of respondents with trumpet as their primary instrument; when comparing this to just other concert band instruments, it is still only 11%. I was

## JOB SATISFACTION, RETENTION, AND ENSEMBLE SIZE

expecting to see more since it seems to be common among band educators at the middle and high school level to play trumpet or any brass instrument. I was also expecting to find more voice majors. There were more people teaching general music and chorus who were not voice majors than originally expected. Seeing how many orchestra educator responses there were, I was not as surprised to see the overwhelming amount of string instruments listed as primary instruments in question 9.

It was encouraging to see a high rate of competitive ensemble participation at the high school level among educators. Many music educators shared that they had participated in some combination of county, district/region, or state level ensemble festivals (81.9%, or 118 respondents). Experiencing music making in an ensemble with a guest conductor (or even just someone other than a student's normal high school teacher) among other goal-driven or capable performers provides exposure to a higher level of music making than may normally be seen in the home district. These experiences are valuable since sometimes teachers can default to teaching how they were taught; being able to see another director conduct an ensemble is extremely valuable. The preparation and engagement required to perform even just adequately at such an event requires dedication from the performer, which is a valuable life skill for any music teacher.

It was surprising to find there was not much difference in the average survey data nor the presence of any outstanding trends among those who knew their MBTI type (75 educators) compared the entire group of respondents. Steele and Young (2011) cited research by Kempt (1982) sharing that oftentimes music teachers possess the judging preference (J) and intuition and feeling (NF) but that there is not a front-runner as far as introversion or extroversion (p. 60). From the data gathered in this study, there was in fact a higher incidence of intuition and feeling

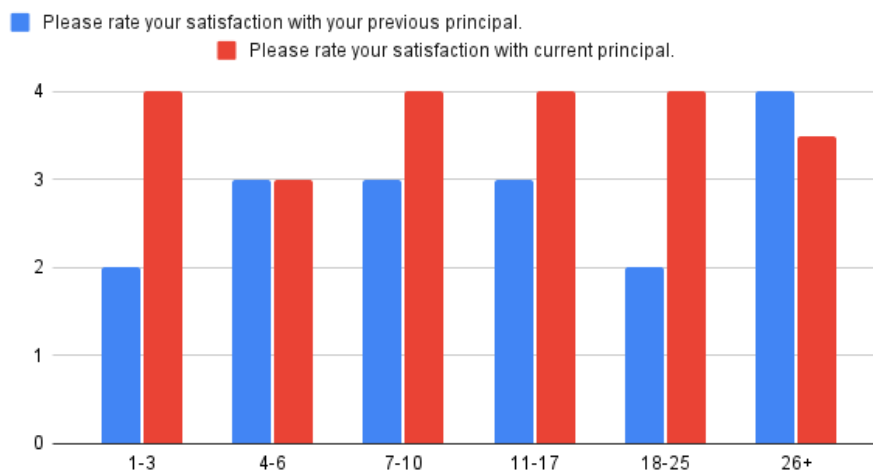
## JOB SATISFACTION, RETENTION, AND ENSEMBLE SIZE

(66% of those reporting their MBTI) but a split between judging and perceiving among those results. There was also a significant number of INTJ respondents (19%), who lean towards thinking (T) instead of the feeling shared as being a commonality in the previous research. For question 17, the results also follow the literature's finding that there is not a prevalence in music teachers' energy tendencies since the split was not that significant (41.7% extroverted and 58.3% introverted).

It is encouraging to see that most educators either had an increase or the same level of satisfaction with their principal (see Figure 25) and previous school (see Figure 26) compared to the current principal and school.

**Figure 25**

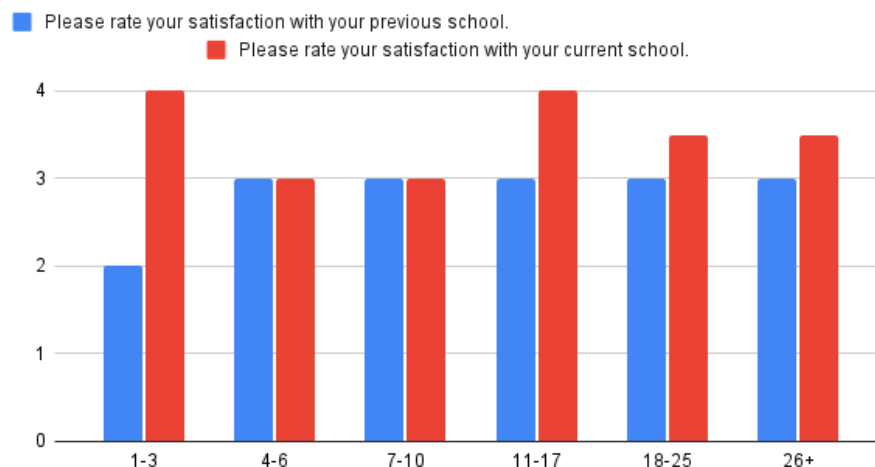
*Median Principal Satisfaction*



**Figure 26**

*Median School Satisfaction*

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Though teachers change jobs for a myriad of reasons, it makes sense that in seeking new employment that teachers would vie for a position and an administrator that would allow them to perform their job to the best of their abilities, provide support, and be welcoming. For the eight female teachers with more than 25 years of experience that provided input on this question, it is somewhat surprising to see a decrease in principal satisfaction from previous school to current school. It is possible that this could be a result of teachers being involuntarily assigned to different buildings within a district, but there is not enough data to say for sure. They all had distinguished ratings at the previous school (except for one unrated teacher), and for the current end of year evaluation, one moved down to a satisfactory rating. One director shared “Some administrative decisions have changed the amount of performances and there is much more emphasis placed on state level orchestra festival.” Another spoke regarding job satisfaction outweighing administration’s impact on teaching:

Even though I have been in the same position for a long time I have had a number of administrators. Some are good and some are awful. I love the kids. I love music and I love teaching kids music. That is why I stay.

## JOB SATISFACTION, RETENTION, AND ENSEMBLE SIZE

Another two respondents heavily praised their administration's support of their programs in the final write-in question, which was echoed by write-in responses from other teachers as well. One instrumental music teacher with seven to ten years of experience elaborated with,

I very much love my job. Like any job, there are days when I'm tired and might not feel like putting forth my best effort. But, that is the ebb and flow of the human experience.

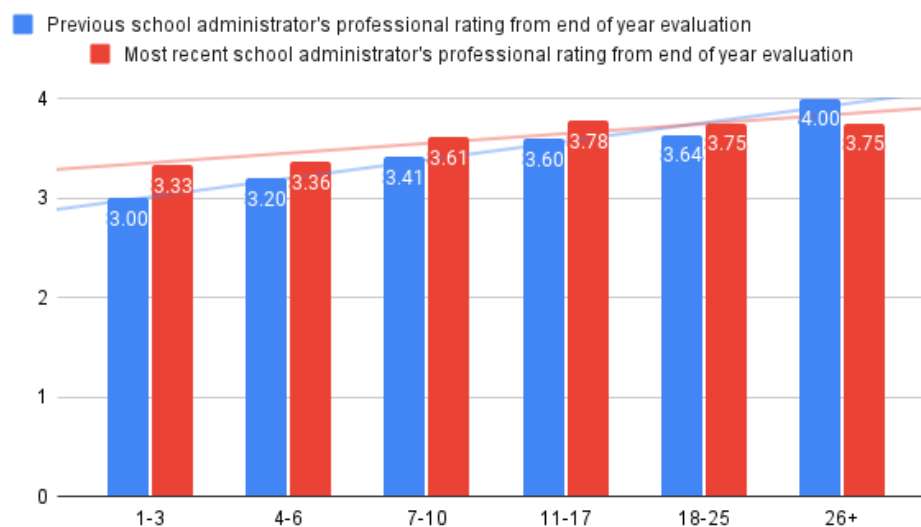
Overall, my kids are wonderful, I get to make music, and I teach in a place where I feel like a valued member of the school community.

Teachers really can be at the mercy of their administration, so it is crucial that administrators come to understand what the impact of an ensemble program can provide for a school and learn how to be supportive to music and music educators in schools.

There is a clear trend of evaluation scores improving from previous schools' observations to current schools as well as scores improving over the length of a teaching career.

**Figure 27**

### *Average Evaluation Scores*



As discussed previously, the decrease in the average for the current evaluation score for 26+ year teachers was from one of the eight teachers scores moving from distinguished to satisfactory in

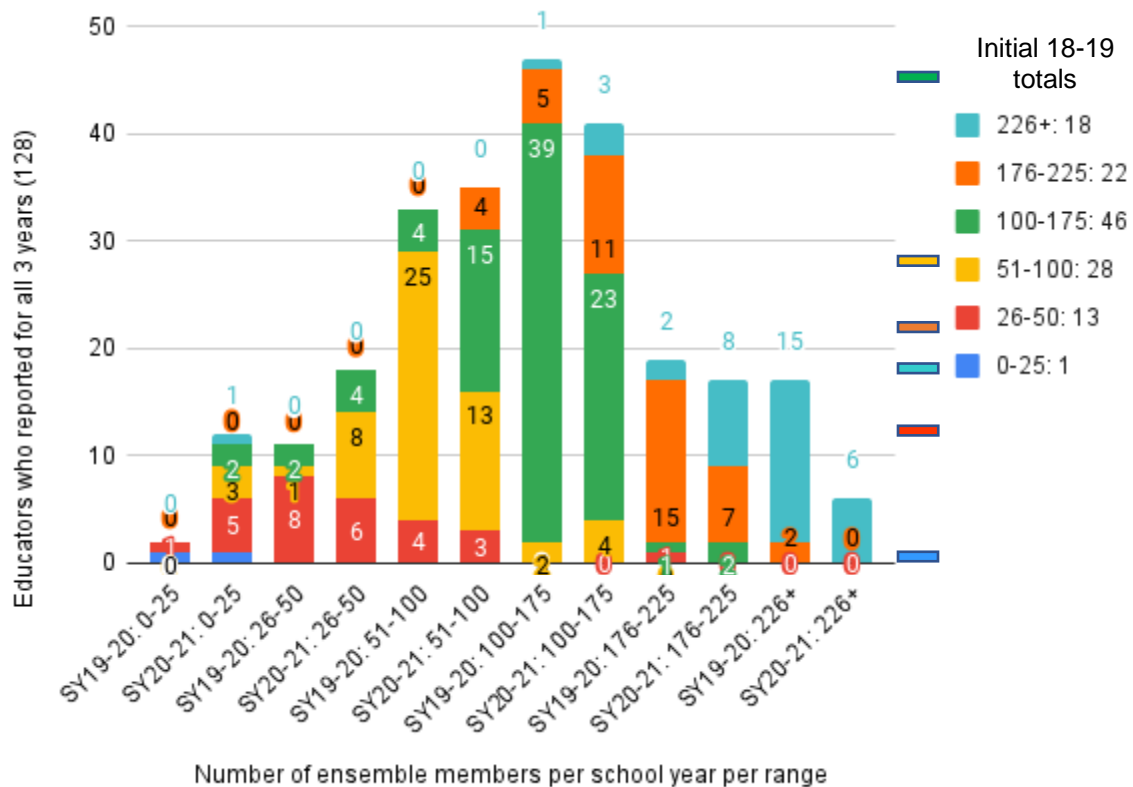


## JOB SATISFACTION, RETENTION, AND ENSEMBLE SIZE

that group. It was encouraging to see the data provided by ensemble educators reflect that no respondents had received the lowest possible rating (Unsatisfactory/Failing/Ineffective). In addition, only three educators received the Basic/Needs Improvement/Approaching Effective rating in their previous school, and every educator who was evaluated received a Satisfactory or Distinguished rating at their most current evaluation. There were 27 educators who did not share their previous rating; respondents were instructed in the survey “If this is your first teaching position, please skip this question.” It is encouraging to see that all of those teachers were scored with satisfactory (59%) or distinguished (37%) in their current rating, except one teacher in a school that does not assign ratings.

**Figure 28**

*Enrollment Change Across Initial SY18-19 Members*



## JOB SATISFACTION, RETENTION, AND ENSEMBLE SIZE

Figure 28 provides a more easily visible representation of the data about ensemble enrollment across the 2018-2019, 2019-2020, and 2020-2021 school years than the initial pie charts provided for questions 26, 27 and 29. The right legend includes the numbers of educators who reported for each tier of enrollment for the 2018-2019 school year. The thin rectangles to the direct left of the legend are placed to show where they would fall for the left axis for the subsequent data. The x axis identifies the relevant school year and the number of ensemble members, with subsequent school years placed next to each other for each tier of enrollment. Most changes to enrollment only spread up or down one tier, except for educators with 226 members or more in 2018-2019 (with movement down to the 100-175 tier for four educators and all the way down to the 0-25 category for another). Those who initially reported having 100-175 or 176-225 ensemble members had the widest spread of enrollment in the following two school years, covering five of the six provided tiers. This suggests that schools with larger ensemble enrollment have a greater chance for enrollment and attrition changes than smaller programs. The factors influencing that change remain unclear. Four of these teachers cited scheduling issues separate from the pandemic as influences on their decreased enrollment, and 19 teachers (41% of schools with wider enrollment spread) experienced pandemic-influenced attrition. One director echoed the sentiments of others, sharing:

My fourth grade numbers were hit the worst, I think because they didn't get to finish the year out in third grade orchestra and the end of the year for us was totally asynchronous during quarantine. I think a lot of kids were turned off.

Many ensemble teachers (of all enrollment changes) are eager for virtual learning and COVID-mitigation strategies to be reduced or made irrelevant for the 2021-2022 school year in order to

## JOB SATISFACTION, RETENTION, AND ENSEMBLE SIZE

reestablish a sense of normalcy within their programs and begin recruiting and retaining more students again.

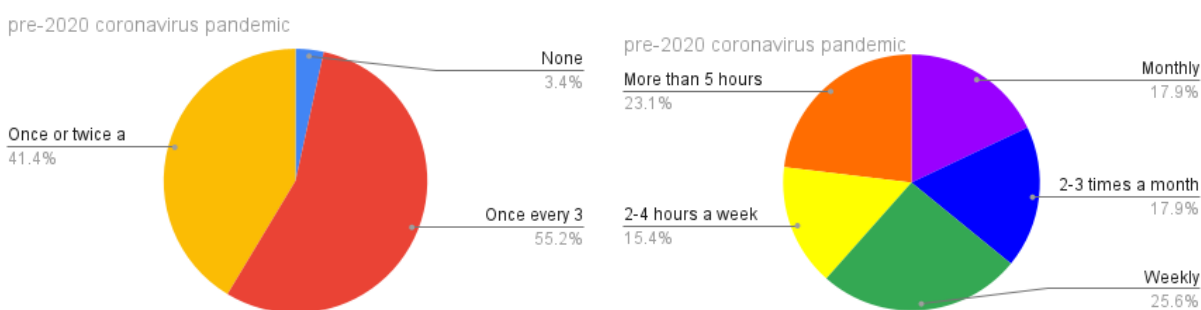
### Data Subsets

In question 10, it was unexpected to have 11% of respondents share that they did not participate in any competitive musical opportunities in high school, even having been provided with a write-in option to capture other events. Within teachers who selected that they either did not perform anymore or that they did not consider themselves to be serious performers anymore as adults in question 15, there was a higher rate of those who had also not performed competitively in high school (37.5%) compared to the original percentage of all educators in the survey.

There were 46.9% of survey respondents who participated in a state-level ensemble in high school.

### Figures 29-30

*All State Ensemble Alumni Performing Less than Monthly; All State Ensemble Alumni Performing Monthly or More as Adults*



Of those, 39 educators performed monthly or more compared to 29 who performed less than monthly. Every member of this subset received a satisfactory or distinguished as their last end of year evaluation (except one person whose school does not conduct such evaluations). There was no significant trend in discernment between the two ratings for those who continue to still

## JOB SATISFACTION, RETENTION, AND ENSEMBLE SIZE

perform more frequently (15 satisfactory ratings and 23 distinguished ratings) and those who perform less frequently (nine satisfactory ratings and 20 distinguished ratings). However, the percentage of teachers who reported a distinguished rating was significantly higher for this subset as a whole (64.1%) than all survey respondents (55.9%). There is not enough information to elaborate on the cause of this, but it is possible that the drive behind those who chose to participate in scored, competitive ensembles in high school still motivates them to be effective teachers. One former all-state orchestra member spoke on being an effective ensemble teacher, sharing “You have to be interesting to your students, know your craft, always try for better when good is possible. Relate to [students], connect with them...[a]dmit your mistakes and learn from them. Never stop performing on your instrument.”

Of those who selected that they had completed no post-undergraduate education or work, there were 13 teachers who had one to three years of experience and ten teachers with more experience (five teachers with 4-6 years, two teachers with 7-10 years, and one teacher each with 11-17, 18-25, and 26+ years of experience). There was no conclusive data on current evaluation ratings for these teachers; all had either satisfactory (57%) or distinguished (43%) evaluations apart from one respondent whose school does not conduct such evaluations. This is a bit lower than the percentage of educators with current distinguished evaluation ratings who were surveyed (55.9%), giving validity to the commonly held belief that professional development is necessary to improve teacher practice over time. It is concerning that the percentage of educators in this subset with schools serving 51% or more of students on Free and Reduced Meals is about 22% higher than that of all survey respondents (62.5% versus 40.7%). It would be beneficial to students in schools with a higher percentage of Free and Reduced Meals and in Title 1 schools for their teachers to seek out professional development appropriate for their populations,

## JOB SATISFACTION, RETENTION, AND ENSEMBLE SIZE

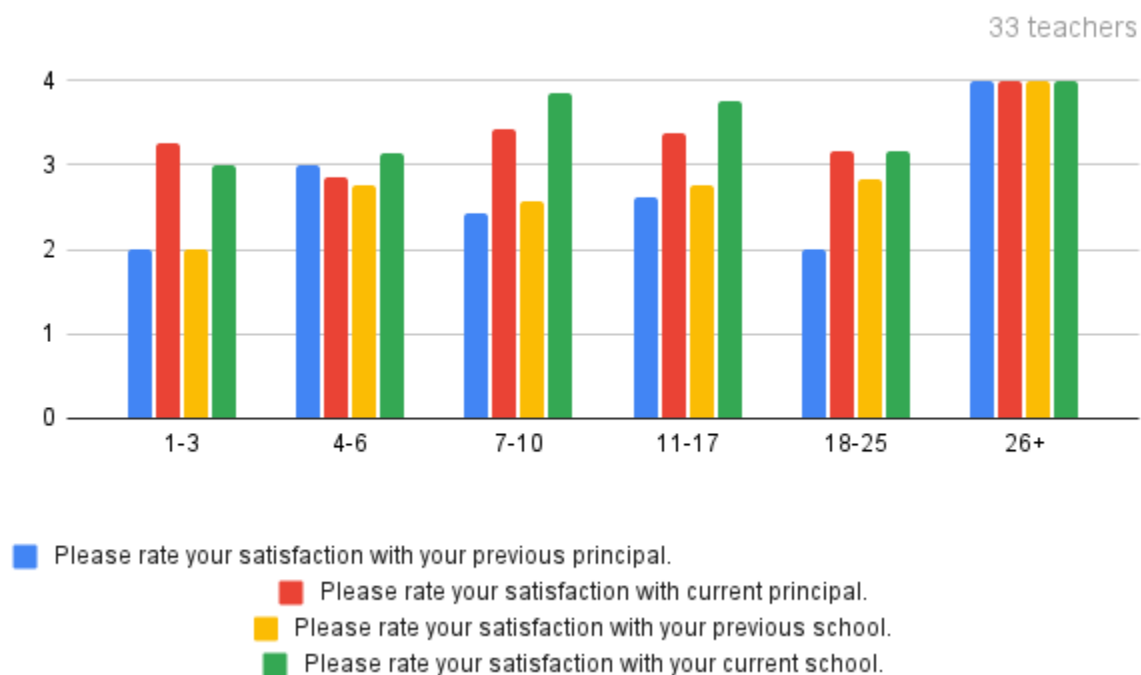
including but not limited to information on restorative practices, social emotional learning, trauma-informed teaching, adverse childhood experiences, and teaching English Language Learners content and language simultaneously (including SIOP or WIDA's can do descriptors).

Examining educator input on their primary instruments and whether they prepared to teach instrumental music or vocal music more in undergrad, there were a number of teachers who were teaching outside their original primary focus. Data for these teachers was pulled out to compare self-rated principal and school satisfaction for the previous and current school in order to examine trends. The charts display the average answer from the four-point Likert scales used (from *1 strongly dislike* to *4 strongly like* for principals and from *1 very negative* to *4 very positive* for schools) within bands of years of experience.

The most common instance of ensemble teachers teaching outside of their primary medium occurred for orchestra (23% of all survey respondents).

**Figure 31**

*Non-String Major Orchestra Teachers*



## JOB SATISFACTION, RETENTION, AND ENSEMBLE SIZE

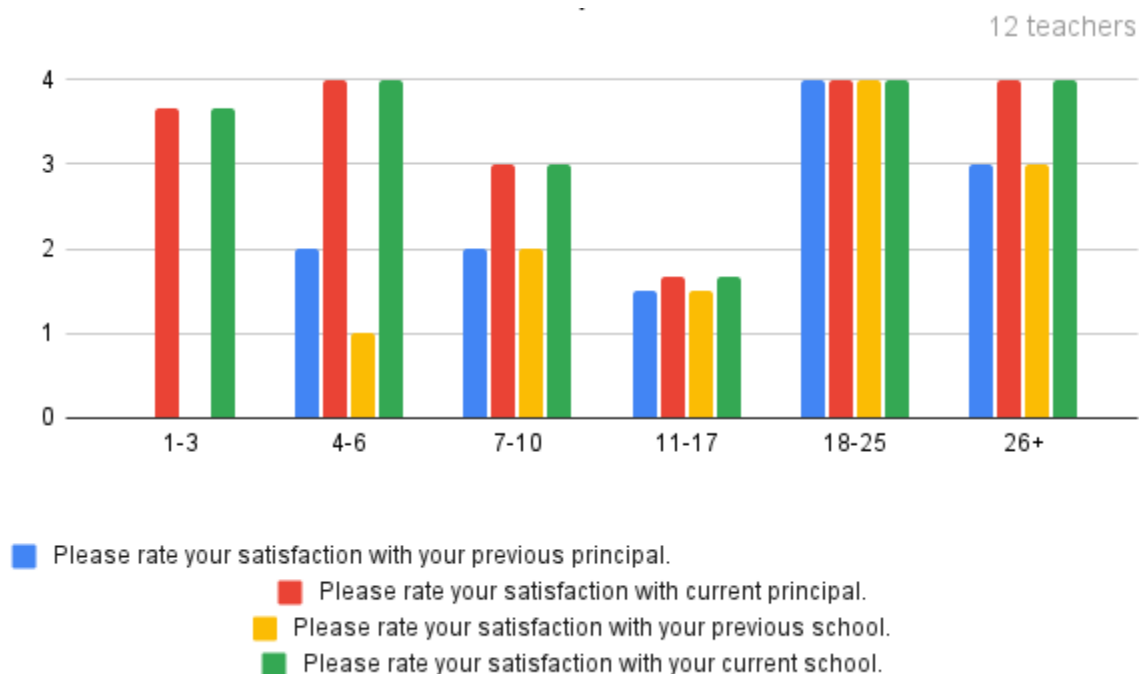
For those who did not list violin, viola, cello, or bass as a primary instrument that teach orchestra, it is surprising to see that none of the average ratings for schools or principals was less than a 2. The median current teacher rating for this entire population was the highest possible, distinguished/highly effective, and the average rating was a 3.7 (out of 4; those who reported that their schools did not perform observations were given the mean score of 2.5 for the purpose of this calculation). The average current self-rating of the principals and schools was not lower than a 2.86. It seems evident that these teachers have been rated as highly effective teachers and are overall pretty satisfied with their current schools and principals. Other than two of the teachers with less than four years of experience, every member of this subset has at least one master's degree. Only five respondents reported focusing more on vocal music in undergrad or being a performance major in another medium. Only six teachers in this subset had less than 50 students enrolled in their ensemble classes this year even with the effects of the pandemic on enrollment. This information should encourage those who may be involuntarily asked to teach strings without playing experience to realize that success in teaching orchestra is possible with hard work and persistence.

There were 8% of educators that were teaching chorus as non-voice majors or did not consider voice a primary instrument; of those, one person reported preparing to teach vocal music more and another said they prepared for instrumental and vocal music, but the other ten teachers had prepared more for instrumental music in undergrad.

### **Figure 32**

*Non-Voice Major Chorus Teachers*

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Five people in this subset are in their first teaching positions, and there are at least 25% of students that qualify for Free and Reduced Meals in the schools of all educators in this subset except one. Only one of these teachers (7.7% of this group) had any program growth between academic years (2018/19-2019/20 or 2019/20-2020/21), compared to growth for 24% of non-primary orchestra teachers and 13% of the total survey respondents. Younger (but not new) teachers and mid-career teachers had a lower average satisfaction with their principals, and for some this was true for satisfaction with their schools as well. One educator shared “Teachers need to be teaching within their main discipline focus” in their final write-in question and later went on to add “Teaching 2 different discipline[s] (choir and orchestra) at the middle school level is too much to ask of one person in regards to time outside of work for events/concerts/rehearsals.” It is possible that instrumental music teachers are more willing to teach their non-primary instrumental area (orchestra instead of band or the reverse) but are less comfortable or happy when having to teach vocal music instead of or in addition to instrumental

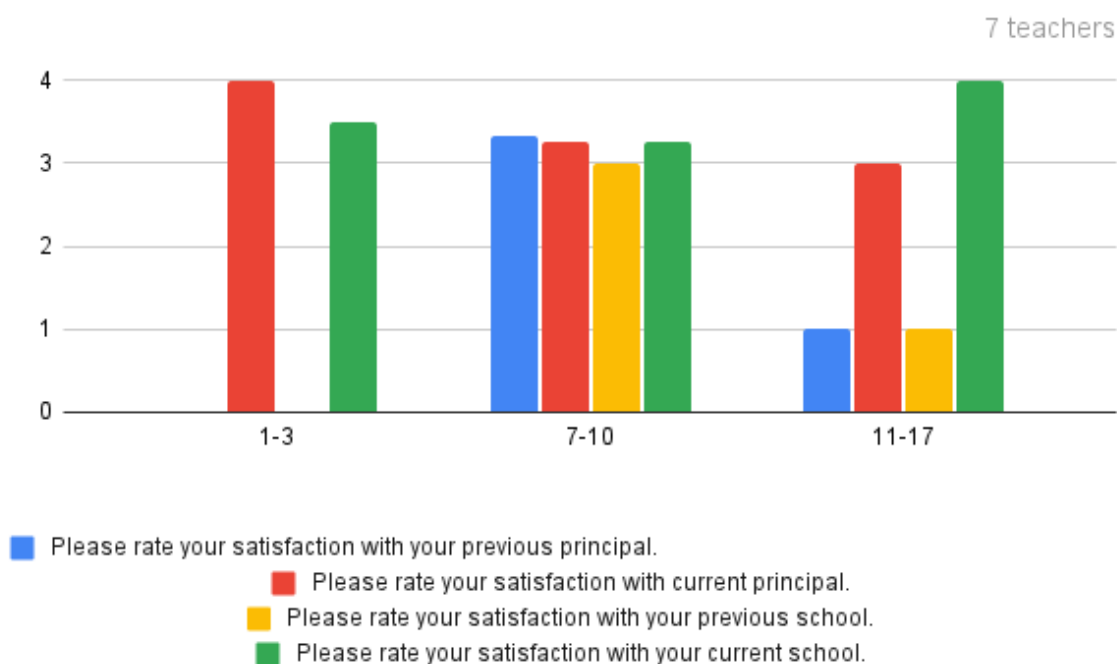
## JOB SATISFACTION, RETENTION, AND ENSEMBLE SIZE

music. Eight of the educators in this subset did also teach a traditional instrumental music ensemble. This suggests instrumental music ensemble teachers may need to seek additional professional development if required to add choral music to their teaching schedules or be aware of their own preferences and capabilities and seek other positions if they are unwilling to do so.

The smallest subset of teachers with ensembles outside of their primary area was those teaching band that studied voice, orchestral strings, or other non-concert band mediums (4.9%).

**Figure 33**

*Non-Band Instrument Band Teachers*



The average score for current principal and school satisfaction was a three or higher for all levels of teaching experience in this group. Every member of this subset shared that their undergraduate training was either geared towards instrumental music or both instrumental and vocal music, and none of these educators consider voice to be their primary instrument (five play string instruments and the other two are pianists). All of these teachers also have masters degrees. This



## JOB SATISFACTION, RETENTION, AND ENSEMBLE SIZE

information reinforces the previous finding within the non-string instrument orchestra teachers' subset that it is not as challenging to switch from teaching one instrumental ensemble to another.

There were 39 educators that attended undergraduate institutions with over 200 music majors (education and other music degrees), or about 27% of respondents. The average professional rating for this subset was 3.54 where a 3 was Satisfactory/Proficient/Effective and a 4 was Distinguished/Highly Effective, and no educator in the subset reported being scored lower than those two options; this is almost the same average score as the entire group (3.53). Only 10% of this group saw ensemble growth in the academic years reported. 43.5% of these teachers had or were in the process of obtaining a master's degree in music education (a slight increase compared to 39.6% of the whole group). The number of teachers in this subset without a master's degree of some kind was comparable to that of the total survey respondents (20.5% versus 20.1%). I was expecting there to be some metric that set these educators apart in a positive way from the averages of the total respondents; most people assume that institutions with larger music departments have more rigor, opportunities, and network connections.

There were surprising findings in examining the opposite ends of frequent and infrequent performing educators. Of those who selected "I don't perform anymore" or "I don't consider myself a serious performer anymore," 42.9% had or were working on earning a master's degree in music education, which is higher than the rate of the total population. These teachers had a slightly lower average satisfaction with their current schools (3.28 versus 3.41) and principals (3.19 versus 3.36) compared to the study average, and the rate of incidence of program growth was also similar to the whole group. For those who selected performing two hours or more per week before the pandemic, 36.8% possessed or were working towards masters' degrees in music education, a full 6% lower than their non-performing counterparts. These teachers had an

## JOB SATISFACTION, RETENTION, AND ENSEMBLE SIZE

average satisfaction rating of 3.38 with their current schools and an average principal satisfaction rating of 3.30, both of which were closer to the study average than the averages of non-performing educators. Frequent performing educators had similar rates of program growth as the study average. It is possible that music educators who enjoy performing frequently choose to invest their time in their own musicianship more than in seeking additional professional development for teaching, but the data is not conclusive or comprehensive enough to prove any true correlation.

Data was examined closely for schools reporting having a high rate (51% or more) of students on Free and Reduced Meals (FARMs) as well as Title I schools. There were 13 schools that reported having a high rate of students on FARMs who were not Title I schools (out of a total of 59), and 13 Title I schools whose educators reported that their FARMs percentage was half or less of the school (out of a different 59); generally schools with higher FARMs rates are also Title 1 schools. Teachers at schools with high rates of FARMs students (3.3%) and teachers at title I schools (5.1%) had a slightly lower percentage of respondents who rated their current school a one or two out of four on the previously described Likert scale (compared to the 7.5% average for all study respondents). However, there was some variance in the percentage of those who rated their current principal as a one or two out of four. The study average was 13.1%, but teachers at schools with high FARMs rates had 15.3% while teachers in Title I schools averaged 16.9%. This mirrors previous findings that administration often has more influence on teacher job satisfaction than school culture or other factors.

From ensemble enrollment data reported for three school years (from 2018-2020), 19 teachers experienced some kind of program growth. The percentage of distinguished ratings for

## JOB SATISFACTION, RETENTION, AND ENSEMBLE SIZE

this subset (68.4%) was significantly higher than for all survey respondents (55.9%). Some did have growth during the pandemic. One teacher of chorus and orchestra remarked,

This year, thankfully, and I know unusually, is a growth year for me. I have good support from admin and the community, and I feel I have a good sense of how to balance fun, rigor, relationship, and appropriate challenges in class.

Others acknowledged the challenges of maintaining numbers during the pandemic but remained optimistic. A violist teaching band and orchestra reflected, “I love the community we're building together. So I would say that's the most important factor for teacher retention - make them feel valued and part of a positive community that is working towards something powerful.”

### **Considerations for Improvement**

A few survey questions would benefit from including additional options or clarifying existing options. I would have included “piano” for question 7 (regarding current classes taught) and clarified “AP or not” for the Music Theory option. The tiers for students in ensemble enrollment had some overlap with the 51-100 and 100-175 category. This did give educators the ability to choose between them if they were right in the middle, but in a future study, it would be better to make the second one 101-175. Similarly for question 14 (regarding amount of time spend performing pre-pandemic), I would have changed “more than 5 hours a week” to “more than 4 hours a week” since otherwise there is a gap in between choices (the previous being 2-4 hours weekly) that could have compromised some educators’ response selections.

Upon reflection, there are additional questions that would have aided in learning more about educators’ job satisfaction. In a future study, I would include additional questions regarding how much enjoyment educators gain from their job, how much does the job assignment resemble the educator’s ideal ensemble teaching job, and how likely an educator

## JOB SATISFACTION, RETENTION, AND ENSEMBLE SIZE

would be to stay in their current position, all using Likert scales. When examining the data that was surveyed, the write-in questions provided a lot of insight into teachers' opinions but were somewhat cumbersome to quantify and were not all equally insightful into the desired areas.

The pandemic definitely influenced many aspects of this study. It is possible people's understanding of the wording of question 15 (top mediums of current performing opportunities) was influenced by the reduction in performing opportunities in 2020 and 2021 (especially for vocalists and wind players); it is unclear if those who selected "I don't perform anymore" in response to their "current" performing opportunities were not performing before the pandemic or if this was reflective of performances after March 2020, other than two educators who performed more than five hours a week but selected that option. Issuing this study again in 2023 would be interesting to see how enrollment changed after some of the COVID-mitigation strategies were lessened to enable more vocal and wind music making.

There are also more steps I would have taken to obtain data from a wider range of participants. It would be good to seek out a bigger band teacher audience for the survey, such as a different Facebook group than the one notorious for bigotry that was avoided. Though there was inclusive wording for gender identity and a question about pronouns, it was difficult to identify the rate of LGBTQ+ educators' responses and also look for common trends among their experiences. A future version of this survey could include a question simply asking if the respondent identifies as a member of that community. It is also always a good idea to purposefully seek more input from members of the LGBTQ+ community. A "check all that apply" question could be included to ask if educators have felt discriminated against in the workplace due to their gender identity, expression, sexuality, and other options (such as race, ethnicity, native language, ability to speak multiple languages, being an immigrant, and others).

## JOB SATISFACTION, RETENTION, AND ENSEMBLE SIZE

Finally, it was also not possible to examine trends between educators who are members of a racial or ethnic minority. These educators' experiences deserve to be shared in academic research; in the future, I would include two questions regarding race and ethnicity with the ability to check multiple options in order to fully capture the identities of survey respondents.

### **Potential Future Research**

There is definitely an opportunity for future research in MBTI. The research cited here that was completed specifically for music therapists and music educators is ten years old, and while it was quality information and had solid research behind it, more current research would be preferable. The second MBTI source was very informative but technically was a survey administered to undergraduate students in health professions. It would be interesting to see a study done for current music educators explaining the methodology behind the MBTI and having someone MBTI-certified (such as a human resource employee or a counselor) administer the official tool. It is possible that some of my survey respondents only reported their MBTI personality type from taking an unofficial online quiz, which could be inaccurate.

Additional research into more information and traits of teachers who teach ensembles outside of their primary performing medium or undergraduate training would also be beneficial. It would be interesting to see if professional development in the unfamiliar medium or extended school experience has a greater impact on feeling more comfortable in that area or in making an ensemble teacher more effective. Students of these teachers could also be surveyed to see how knowledgeable they think their teacher is about various aspects such as instrument hold, finger combinations, shifting, vocal techniques, literature, pedagogy, etc.

Finally, it would be interesting to see how seeking professional development outside of music education affects ensemble teachers' careers and their job satisfaction. Teachers in this

## JOB SATISFACTION, RETENTION, AND ENSEMBLE SIZE

survey pursued areas such as administration certifications, technology, ESOL, special education, general education classes, gifted and talented instruction, instrument performance, and conducting. While all these areas can be beneficial to music educators in their current positions, they also provide opportunities for career changes at a later time. A study could measure the impact of such professional development on teacher effectiveness and job satisfaction over a period of a few years and track how many participants remained in music education positions.

### **Reflection and Impact**

Many of the expected findings were proven to be true by research and the study data. Ensemble teachers did cite job satisfaction and choosing to remain in a job because of feeling connected to students, community support, and being supported by administration, coworkers, and the school community at large. In addition, ensemble teachers did cite leaving positions because of administrators, a reduction in job satisfaction, and toxic work environments. There were some other high frequency causes of teacher transiency not originally found, including inadequate budgets, wanting a different position or fewer schools, and mental health stressors, including teacher burnout. I had initially thought that life changes would be causes for remaining in a position, but they were reported more often as a reason for leaving a position. This makes sense since some responses included having children, family needs like caring for sick relatives or moving for a spouse's job, or going back to school. As far as differences between newer teachers and experienced educators, the data was more nuanced than what I expected to find. Newer teachers (first through third year) overall did not cite administrators as being a source of stress or factor in considering other positions; more of them cited music teacher colleagues and life changes. This could have been due to administrators being overwhelmed by the endless complications of running a school during a global pandemic and being more hands off than

## JOB SATISFACTION, RETENTION, AND ENSEMBLE SIZE

normal in interacting with or managing music educators. Seasoned ensemble teachers (18 years of experience or more) shared being more influenced by pay, needing their job, and colleagues as potential reasons to leave positions. There was a pretty even split in attitudes towards administration for this group (some feeling very supported and others very frustrated); it is possible that being challenged to change teaching practices because of the pandemic amplified the impact of administrative decisions in the classroom.

The preliminary research, survey responses, and data analysis conducted have provided insights into many areas of music education. Formal discussion and instruction about micropolitics in the educator workplace will assist new teachers in learning to navigate professional relationships better with administrators, colleagues, and the school community at large. It is also crucial for ensemble teachers to work towards formulating and attending teacher-led professional development regarding topics of importance in the music education field, including pedagogy, reflective practices, and not just undifferentiated district initiatives. Working with administration to facilitate these opportunities will go far to make them accessible to others and improve professional development for many music educators. In addition, teachers who have not pursued any post-undergraduate studies, classes, or training should make an effort to do so, especially those educators teaching in underserved communities. Any post-undergrad work will be beneficial to music educators, but for teachers in impoverished schools, seeking information to help their students overcome the specific challenges they experience would be best.

Specific results from the issued survey should influence music educators and other school staff moving forward. It is crucial for administrators to learn more about the inner workings of ensemble classes and the challenges directors face even in supportive schools. Principals and

## JOB SATISFACTION, RETENTION, AND ENSEMBLE SIZE

other supervisors should consult state music associations, music supervisors, and department chairs on how to best provide an environment for ensemble teachers that will enable their students' success and continued participation and enjoyment in music classes. For teachers considering or currently working in a position where the ensemble does not match their primary medium of performing, singers should seek out experienced instrumental music teachers and relevant professional development in order to ease their transition to being a band or orchestra director just as band or orchestra players should consult a teacher well-versed in vocal pedagogy. For string majors teaching band and wind or percussion players teaching orchestra, a method refresher class (in woodwinds, brass, or orchestral strings) would be a good professional development opportunity to improve instructional strategies, especially if the class includes a good deal of hands-on playing. From the data gleaned from state ensemble participants who now teach ensembles, it is clear that though the drive to compete is not strictly required to be an effective ensemble teacher, being motivated to improve one's practice and making intentional choices to hone skills can improve teacher effectiveness. The size of an undergraduate music department does not automatically mean alumni will be effective or ineffective ensemble teachers, but prospective music education majors should still seek out a university with a good reputation for its music program with qualified staff.

The survey demonstrated a strong trend of ensemble teachers reporting greater satisfaction with their current schools and principals compared to their previous positions. Ensemble teachers and other music educators should feel comfortable reflecting on their own job satisfaction periodically. If unsatisfied, teachers should determine if they can work with schedulers, administration, students, the school community, or some combination thereof to improve their program, students' musical experiences, and teachers' own enjoyment of the



## JOB SATISFACTION, RETENTION, AND ENSEMBLE SIZE

current position. If that is not possible, music educators can see from the data reported that moving to a new position creates the possibility for better experiences even though change can be difficult. In addition, it can be seen from the data that in the opinion of ensemble educators, teacher personality has a huge impact on ensemble enrollment. Ensemble teachers should make an effort to allow their personalities to shine through in their classes and interactions with students, from passing students in the hallway not enrolled in classes, to recruitment, and all the way to students' promotion to the next building or graduation. There are always opportunities to make impacts on students as long as we recognize them and take them.

In conclusion, the purpose of this empirical study was to examine trends between job satisfaction and program size and teacher characteristics among music ensemble teachers in public and private American schools. The goal was to discover commonalities to inform educators or music supervisors of methods of preventing turnover and to assist current teachers in growing their ensembles. Survey results revealed that job satisfaction is influenced heavily by students, supportive school communities, administrative support, and a love of teaching. Some supports needed to retain ensemble teachers include adequate budgets, full time employment and a reasonable number of schools for itinerant teachers, administration support, reasonable job expectations, and positive workplace culture. Factors in students' continued ensemble enrollment include students' motivation, academics, scheduling, socioeconomic status, and personalities. Influences on program growth were not completely conclusive, but it was apparent that teachers' efforts to cultivate positive classroom communities with students, providing appropriately-challenging, quality ensemble experiences, and supportive administration were positive influences; teachers also firmly believed that educator personality weighs heavily on ensemble enrollment.

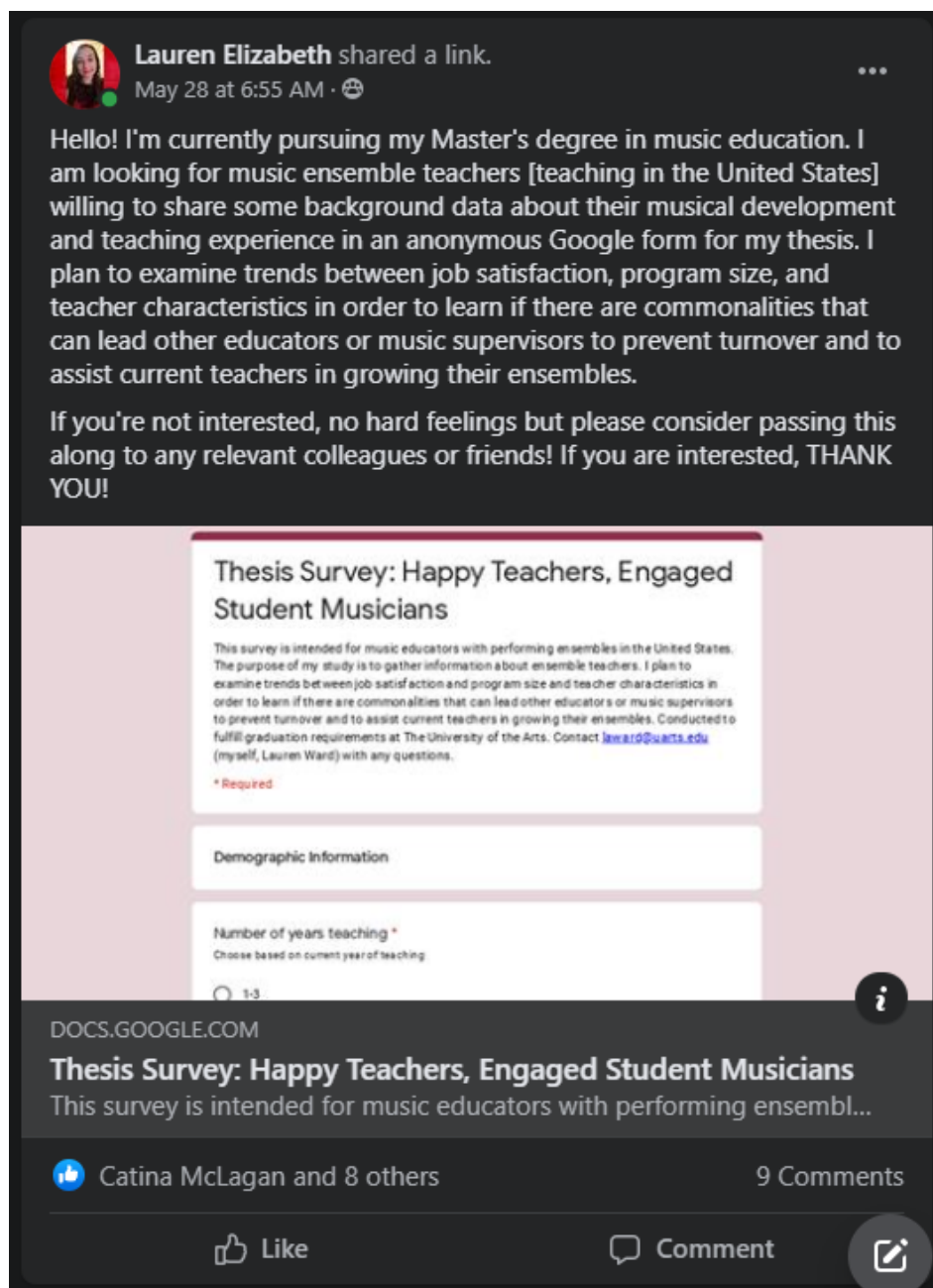
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## Appendix A

### Facebook Survey Post



**Lauren Elizabeth** shared a link.  
May 28 at 6:55 AM · 🌐

Hello! I'm currently pursuing my Master's degree in music education. I am looking for music ensemble teachers [teaching in the United States] willing to share some background data about their musical development and teaching experience in an anonymous Google form for my thesis. I plan to examine trends between job satisfaction, program size, and teacher characteristics in order to learn if there are commonalities that can lead other educators or music supervisors to prevent turnover and to assist current teachers in growing their ensembles.

If you're not interested, no hard feelings but please consider passing this along to any relevant colleagues or friends! If you are interested, THANK YOU!

**Thesis Survey: Happy Teachers, Engaged Student Musicians**

This survey is intended for music educators with performing ensembles in the United States. The purpose of my study is to gather information about ensemble teachers. I plan to examine trends between job satisfaction and program size and teacher characteristics in order to learn if there are commonalities that can lead other educators or music supervisors to prevent turnover and to assist current teachers in growing their ensembles. Conducted to fulfill graduation requirements at The University of the Arts. Contact [laeward@uarts.edu](mailto:laeward@uarts.edu) (myself, Lauren Ward) with any questions.

\* Required

Demographic information

Number of years teaching \*

Choose based on current year of teaching

1-3

DOCS.GOOGLE.COM

**Thesis Survey: Happy Teachers, Engaged Student Musicians**

This survey is intended for music educators with performing ensembl...

👍 Catina McLagan and 8 others 9 Comments

👍 Like 💬 Comment ✎

## Appendix B

### *Complete Survey*

### Thesis Survey: Happy Teachers, Engaged Student Musicians

This survey is intended for music educators with performing ensembles in the United States. The purpose of my study is to gather information about ensemble teachers. I plan to examine trends between job satisfaction and program size and teacher characteristics in order to learn if there are commonalities that can lead other educators or music supervisors to prevent turnover and to assist current teachers in growing their ensembles. Conducted to fulfill graduation requirements at The University of the Arts. Contact [laward@uarts.edu](mailto:laward@uarts.edu) (myself, Lauren Ward) with any questions.

\* Required

#### Demographic Information

Number of years teaching \*

Choose based on current year of teaching

☐ 1-3

☐ 4-6

☐ 7-10

☐ 11-17

☐ 18-25

☐ 26+

## JOB SATISFACTION, RETENTION, AND ENSEMBLE SIZE

What kind of school do you currently teach in? \*

☐ Public

☐ Private

☐ Charter

☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

What state do you teach in? \*

Please type the two letter state abbreviation in capital letters for the state, or use "DC" for District of Columbia

Your answer \_\_\_\_\_

## JOB SATISFACTION, RETENTION, AND ENSEMBLE SIZE

What grade level(s) do you teach in your position? \*

Please check all that apply.

☐ pre-K

☐ K

☐ 1

☐ 2

☐ 3

☐ 4

☐ 5

☐ 6

☐ 7

☐ 8

☐ 9

☐ 10

☐ 11

☐ 12

Gender identity \*

☐ Male

☐ Female

☐ Non-binary

☐ Prefer not to answer

☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## JOB SATISFACTION, RETENTION, AND ENSEMBLE SIZE

### Pronouns

☐ he/him

☐ she/her

☐ they/them

☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### What do you teach in your current position? \*

Select all that apply.

☐ General Music

☐ Chorus

☐ Band

☐ Orchestra

☐ Music appreciation

☐ Music Theory

☐ Guitar

☐ Music technology

☐ Modern band

☐ Non-music classes

☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### Is one of your current classes a performing ensemble? \*

☐ Yes

☐ No

Next



## Musician and Teaching Information

### Your Background as a Musician/Teacher

#### Primary instrument \*

- ☐ Flute/piccolo
- ☐ Oboe
- ☐ Clarinet
- ☐ Bassoon
- ☐ Saxophone
- ☐ Trumpet
- ☐ French horn
- ☐ Trombone
- ☐ Euphonium/baritone
- ☐ Tuba
- ☐ Percussion (focus on keyboards)
- ☐ Percussion (focus outside of keyboards)
- ☐ Piano
- ☐ Voice
- ☐ Guitar
- ☐ Electric Bass
- ☐ Drum set
- ☐ Violin
- ☐ Viola
- ☐ Cello
- ☐ String Bass

## JOB SATISFACTION, RETENTION, AND ENSEMBLE SIZE

☐ Harp

Did you participate in any scored or competitive musical opportunities as a high school student? \*

- ☐ County-level ensemble festival
- ☐ County-level solo event
- ☐ District/region (within the state) level ensemble festival
- ☐ District/region (within the state) level solo event
- ☐ State-level ensemble festival
- ☐ State-level solo event
- ☐ Institution-affiliated event (College-sponsored honors band, Choral society sponsored, etc.)
- ☐ I did not participate in any of those.
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Did you prepare to teach instrumental or vocal music more in undergrad? \*

- ☐ Instrumental music
- ☐ Vocal music
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## JOB SATISFACTION, RETENTION, AND ENSEMBLE SIZE

About how many music majors were there in your undergraduate institution? \*

Answer for the institution you attended to get your teaching certification; include all music majors and not just music education (ex: music recording, performing, etc.)

- ☐ 1-20
- ☐ 21-50
- ☐ 51-100
- ☐ 101-200
- ☐ 201-400
- ☐ 400+
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

What kind of post-undergraduate work have you done? \*

Check boxes for all that apply, whether completed or in-progress

- ☐ Masters degree: focus in music
- ☐ Masters degree: focus in music education
- ☐ Masters degree: focus in education in general
- ☐ Masters degree: focus in technology
- ☐ Masters degree: focus outside of education
- ☐ Doctoral degree: focus in music
- ☐ Doctoral degree: focus outside of music
- ☐ Admin certification
- ☐ Music education classes
- ☐ Technology classes
- ☐ ESOL
- ☐ Special Education
- ☐ Literacy/reading
- ☐ Education (general) classes
- ☐ No post-undergraduate work completed at this time
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## JOB SATISFACTION, RETENTION, AND ENSEMBLE SIZE

Before the pandemic, how much did you perform as a musician as an adult? \*

This can include personal practice time, ensemble rehearsals, gigs, performances, etc.

- ☐ None at all
- ☐ Once or twice a year
- ☐ Once every 3 months
- ☐ Monthly
- ☐ 2-3 times a month
- ☐ Weekly
- ☐ 2-4 hours a week
- ☐ More than 5 hours a week

What would you consider to be the top medium(s) of your current performing opportunities? \*

Choose up to 3 options.

- ☐ I don't perform anymore.
- ☐ I don't consider myself a serious performer anymore.
- ☐ Concert Band/Wind Ensemble
- ☐ Jazz Band
- ☐ Orchestra
- ☐ Choir/Chorus
- ☐ Musical Theater (vocal)
- ☐ Musical Theater (pit/instrumental music)
- ☐ Handbells
- ☐ Worship/religious instrumental ensemble
- ☐ Chamber ensemble (flute choir, brass quintet, etc.)
- ☐ Piano/organ (church)
- ☐ Piano/organ (freelance)
- ☐ Piano/organ (for vocal rehearsals only)
- ☐ Open mics
- ☐ Karaoke
- ☐ Cover band

## JOB SATISFACTION, RETENTION, AND ENSEMBLE SIZE

If you know your Myers Briggs personality type, please indicate it here. \*

Additional information: <https://www.myersbriggs.org/my-mbti-personality-type/mbti-basics/>

Choose ▼

Do you consider yourself more of an introvert or extrovert? \*

Additional information: <https://www.simplypsychology.org/introvert-extrovert.html>

☐ Introvert

☐ Extrovert

Teaching Experience

Please rate your satisfaction with your previous principal.

If this is your first teaching position, please skip this question.

	1	2	3	4	
Strongly dislike	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly like

## JOB SATISFACTION, RETENTION, AND ENSEMBLE SIZE

Please rate your satisfaction with your previous school.

If this is your first teaching position, please skip this question.

	1	2	3	4	
Very negative	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very positive

Please share your professional rating from your end of year evaluation provided by an administrator at your previous school.

If this is your first teaching position, please skip this question.

Choose ▼

Please rate your satisfaction with current principal. \*

If you have multiple schools in your position, please answer for the school with the administrator that is responsible for your end of year evaluation.

	1	2	3	4	
Strongly dislike	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly like



## JOB SATISFACTION, RETENTION, AND ENSEMBLE SIZE

Please rate your satisfaction with your current school. \*

If you have multiple schools in your position, please answer for the school that you spend more of your time at (or have the highest enrollment for your ensemble classes at)

	1	2	3	4	
Very negative	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very positive

Please share your last known professional rating from your end of year evaluation provided by an administrator at your current school. \*

If this is your first year teaching and you have not yet received your evaluation rating, please answer based on your last observation.

Choose

Is your school a Title I school? \*

If you have multiple schools in your position, please answer for the school that you spend more of your time at (or have the highest enrollment for your ensemble classes at)

☐ Yes

☐ No

## JOB SATISFACTION, RETENTION, AND ENSEMBLE SIZE

What percentage of students in your school qualify to be enrolled for Free and Reduced Meals? (FARMs) \*

If you have multiple schools in your position, please answer for the school that you spend more of your time at (or have the highest enrollment for your ensemble classes at)

- ☐ Less than 5%
- ☐ 5-15%
- ☐ 16-25%
- ☐ 25-50%
- ☐ 51-79%
- ☐ 80% or more

How many total students did you have enrolled in all of your ensemble classes at the beginning of the 2018-2019 school year? \*

Please share the total number of students enrolled (ex. 100 in band + 70 in orchestra = 170). Please also include the total number across multiple schools if you are in an itinerant position.

Choose

How many total students did you have enrolled in all of your ensemble classes at the beginning of the 2019-2020 school year? \*

Please share the total number of students enrolled (ex. 100 in band + 70 in orchestra = 170). Please also include the total number across multiple schools if you are in an itinerant position.

Choose

Choose

## JOB SATISFACTION, RETENTION, AND ENSEMBLE SIZE

How did the pandemic affect your teaching for the 2020-2021 school year? \*

Check all that apply.

- ☐ Ensemble participation delayed at start of year
- ☐ Enrollment restricted
- ☐ Started the school year fully in person
- ☐ Started the school year hybrid (some students in person while some are at home)
- ☐ Started the school year fully virtual
- ☐ Changed to hybrid mid-year
- ☐ Changed to fully in person mid-year
- ☐ Changed to fully virtual mid-year
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

How many total students did you have enrolled in all of your ensemble classes at the beginning of the 2020-2021 school year? \*

Please share the total number of students enrolled (ex. 100 in band + 70 in orchestra = 170). Please also include the total number across multiple schools if you are in an itinerant position.

Choose ▼

Feel free to share any input on your program's growth or decreased enrollment.

Your answer

## JOB SATISFACTION, RETENTION, AND ENSEMBLE SIZE

If you thought about leaving a position as an ensemble teacher, what factors influenced you to stay?

Your answer

---

If you have left a position as an ensemble teacher, what factors contributed to your decision to leave?

Your answer

---

How much do you feel your personality as an educator affects enrollment in your ensembles? \*

	1	2	3	4	
No effect at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Heavy contributing factor

Feel free to share any other thoughts on previous questions or elaborate on your job satisfaction, what makes an effective ensemble teacher, and/or what affects your program size.

Your answer

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Submit

## Appendix C

### *Open-Ended Responses*

Question 30: Feel free to share any input on your program's growth or decreased enrollment.

Decreased enrollment, but more because I just could not have as many kids as I would normally given the circumstances of virtual learning and scheduling.
Decreased enrollment in Choir due to full virtual setting.
Has stayed generally the same but I'm expecting a drop off of 5th grade going to 6th next year
Students dropped before the year began and just after due to most likely not being able to perform this school year.
Splitting the full band into smaller 15 person sections caused instrumentation issues, students forgetting an instrument was a HUGE deal, and parts could not always be heard. Our school requires all students to participate in band so enrollment was not effected in anyway.
My 4th grade numbers were significantly lower this year because of the pull out schedule from other classes. Parents did not want their students to leave virtual classes.
Singing was not allowed at the elementary level this year due to the pandemic. Chorus was not scheduled this year.
Usually have 160 to 170 but this year started at 125. My fourth grade numbers were hit the worst, I think because they didn't get to finish the year out in third grade orchestra and the end of the year for us was totally asynchronous during quarantine. I think a lot of kids were turned off.
High school level only dropped due to seniors graduating and lack of interest from the middle school due to covid.
Grew from 2017-2020, then were not allowed to perform and experienced scheduling issues with cohort model 2020-2021 year
Enrollment definitely decreased this year as we offered a virtual academy run by our school in addition to the in person education. A lot of students quit between last year and this year because they didn't have as many opportunities to play their instruments at the end of last year and I think parents didn't want to pay for an instrument that their child wasn't using. Currently, we are trying to recruit those students who played for 1-3 years and then quit during the pandemic to join an ensemble again by offering more slow-paced classes to catch them up.
I wasn't allowed to have band this year. It is extra-curricular and meets before school
Once the pandemic hit we were told to only do general music and we could not longer teach out ensembles even after school and even after we returned to in person.
My program is a mandatory 5th grade chorus, so I will always have all of the in-person 5th graders in my ensembles.
Many students did not sign up for band for fear of virtual learning.

## JOB SATISFACTION, RETENTION, AND ENSEMBLE SIZE

I was restricted enrollment at one of my schools.
For next school, the chorus enrollment is about the same among students whole already at the school (ie rising 7th graders and rising 8th graders). However, it's noticeably lower for students coming into the school (rising 6th graders).
Delaying the start was pointless. The students adapted quickly to virtual learning as young people do, so there was no reason to delay ensemble classes other than depriving students of an opportunity to express themselves and providing an opportunity for their interest to wane and not enroll.
Enrollment in the performing ensemble decreased because it was an extracurricular zoom activity.
No chorus due to covid, limited band due to covid
20-21 5th grade class cut in half; 6th grade class I lost the majority of students
I lost several students to cyber. Our school had a very lax policy about allowing students to enter and exit the cyber program, which took them out of performing ensembles.
Enrollment remained relatively stable. We had a little more attrition between 5th and 6th grade than usual
Enrollment was slightly down due to some kids starting online and wanting to wait to join band as late beginners in 7th grade.
Beginning band enrollment decreased due to admin's approach to Covid. Beginning band students didn't start until the 2nd quarter, and recruitment was limited.
My band program got smaller during the pandemic but my chorus program grew. Parents didn't want to rent instruments with how unpredictable things were
We have a very large school (1400 students for two grades) and there are ensembles per each grade level. Numbers have dropped but they are still large as dictated by this survey. But they are a smaller percentage they we are used to and they are a small percentage of our overall student body numbers.
We lost several students to homeschooling and several to remote learning because of COVID. We did not start beginning band at all.
I opened a new school in 2019 so we were small to begin with, enrollment has dropped a little, when it was supposed to grow a lot.
There is a slight decrease among remaining students for GPA recovery, but there is a large freshman class coming in. Orchestra enrollment went down, band and marching band enrollment maintained.

## JOB SATISFACTION, RETENTION, AND ENSEMBLE SIZE

Enrollment was done online for the 2020-2021 school year. Many students are not comfortable in the language and need support with tasks normally left to parents to complete. Many parents in my base school are illiterate in their native language and in English. Several students who should have signed up for their second year asked why they weren't in instrumental music once they came back for hybrid learning. Recruitment was done in the general music teacher's Zoom, but her classes were conducted after the "regular education" portion of the day was over and many students had closed their computers for the day. I called almost every parent of a second year student to see if they would register but got many voicemails and not much follow up. The beginners I have are very excited and motivated.

I changed schools so the info is a bit skewed

My junior high (grade 7-9) has switched to block schedule. 9th graders are considered part of the HS band which meets everyday. That means band takes up two of their four electives. Sports also takes two electives. We have had many students drop band to be in sports and have more elective options.

8 or 9 years ago, I had close to 100 in just our general choir. Nowadays, 65 is normal. This year I had about 50. This was partially by design because of the pandemic but also decrease in enrollment. My colleagues in middle and elementary school have seen similar trends. I am very concerned about numbers in our ensembles for a few years as a result of the pandemic but am optimistic about the long-term future.

Lack of rehearsal space and schedule time prohibited students from having chorus this year.

I lost about 3/4 of my students; they didn't sign up during the pandemic.

Students chose to stop participating for both health concerns and lack of enjoyment with virtual band and/or masked playing

Covid seriously disrupted ensemble participation. I teach orchestra to elementary students and decided to not start beginners (4th grade) for the 20-21 this school year. My 5th graders did not show up regularly either because orchestra class was scheduled on the weekly asynchronous Wednesday so only the highly motivated students showed up.

I have been at my school for 6 years. When I arrived the Concert Band had 29 enrolled and the Orchestra had 17. Since then, the program has grown. Next year, I have 60 students in Band (divided into a Brass/Woodwinds class and a Percussion class) and 40 in the Orchestra.

COVID mitigation reduced my ensemble from 100 to 53

My program has decreased in growth from last year but not all that much. It is my first year teaching and it could be because of that, the pandemic, or other external factors.

I didn't have any real decreased enrollement for 2020-2021, but I'm sure I will for next school year. We start orchestra in 6th grade and had to do all our recruiting through videos instead of in person.

Orchestra program was on track to triple in size since I have been here. The pandemic has pushed that goal off a couple of years.

## JOB SATISFACTION, RETENTION, AND ENSEMBLE SIZE

All lessons were virtual, despite changes to hybrid learning from remote learning mid year. We were not allowed in the elementary schools. Recruiting was highly restricted and there was much hesitation and anxiety among parents to allow the younger styrofoam enroll. Next year's enrollment is very low, and I think it is an effect of the pandemic.
Heartbreaking, to see so much attrition
Across our district, we have seen decrease in number of enrollments (particularly in choral ensembles). My students cite the fear of performing in front of an audience as a deciding factor in participation. We are a very rural district with few opportunities for outside of school musical ensembles
decrease due to lack of music events - we were not allowed to travel to hear professional groups, perform for our feeder schools, do the fun performance trips
We definitely took a hit due to Covid and the limits of having orchestra class on Zoom. Our population was about 85% virtual this past year.
Recruitment for 2021-2022 is the worst in my 22 year history. The greatest loss is at my higher socioeconomic school (of the two I teach at) where there are 18 different electives for 850 MS kids. Many of the kids had trouble keeping motivated virtually and registration happened a week before we returned hybrid. At the Title 1 school recruitment is better but I feel it may be because those students have more experience getting through challenging times and they're a bit more resilient.
Elementary students decreased. Students at the high school level stayed mostly steady except seniors who changed to part time attendance in the virtual environment. I mostly attribute this to students not being allowed to change their schedules mid year.
I've seen growth and maintenance in my enrollment through my whole career. This year, thankfully, and I know unusually, is a growth year for me. I have good support from admin and the community, and I feel I have a good sense of how to balance fun, rigor, relationship, and appropriate challenges in class.
We were fully virtual. Elementary teachers did not share recruitment materials with students
Because so much was virtual this year, I did what I could to utilize that and "recruit" throughout the year. I think that might have helped...?
A lot of beginners decided to go virtual this year, so our program lost about 30 beginners that way.
Had several students quit playing throughout the year, as we were 100% virtual for most of the school year. Program decreased by 20 students across 5 grade levels
Beginner recruitment had a sharp decline (under normal circumstances we would have 40-50 beginners and we have 7 or 8 signed up for next year). We plan to do a second round of recruitment next year.
We no longer have an elementary ensemble program and our visibility is reduced. We also added a financial literacy course so in 7th grade students have to choose between music or 2 other electives
Enrollment numbers are artificial since we didn't start beginners. My attrition rates were normal and only slight despite COVID.



## JOB SATISFACTION, RETENTION, AND ENSEMBLE SIZE

It's my first year so I can't answer this with confidence.
Our growth has been lacking. The quality of teaching at the Elementary level has not been well. Student engagement throughout the entire program has also been lacking.
6 years ago I had 225 students grades 5-8; w/over 115 at the MS alone. W/more electives classes added at the MS - numbers dropped. This year I lost 6 students and have dropped to about 60 Between 6-8 grade. Less support from admin and community/parents for this type of programming.
Our fine arts enrollment numbers have decreased across the district, but I haven't dropped below 100 students (choir and orchestra) in my programs of the 780 +/- total enrolled in the school.
The program I taught in 19-20 had a slight increase in students due to an enormous freshman class. The program I taught in 20-21 had a slight decrease due to a weird teacher situation + pandemic the year prior.
Our cyber learning program does not allow students to partake in any ensembles.
I lost many students due to virtual lessons
I switched school and am building my current program
Began with 20 students in January 2020. Held onl i summer academy but Dropped to 15 students in August 2020. Worked on enrollment and recruitment. Began 2021 with 31 students.
COVID severely impacted enrollment
Decreased enrollment based on students leaving the district for charter schools, or opting for full virtual schooling options
remote teaching reduced my numbers
Enrollment has stayed fairly consistent. I lose a fair amount of students due to moving, not choosing to drop out.
Enrollment is very much down across the district. The biggest drop was in my continuing 2nd year students (6th grade). Oddly enough, I recruited pretty close to usual numbers. Unfortunately at one school I lost even 20% of those because students found it too difficult to learn online. This school tends to have higher attrition than my other school anyway. Parents & teachers don't really honor the full year commitment. That being said, my other school with beginners had minimal attrition and that is also pretty typical. School culture can really help a lot. In the jr high (7-9) enrollment is down in general. There are just fewer students, but our area is going through massive growth, so I'm not too worried.
Half of my beginners stayed in Orchestra for their 2nd year. I had the same amount of 1st years.
Different schools, different enrollment. Pandemic did not effect my ensemble size. I have 100% retention and am gaining 15 new students for next school year.
Started beginners this year, but less than 50% of normal enrollment
Enrollment will decline next year due to students having an online academy option which does not include music
The counseling department encourages students to take double math and foreign language as freshman and wait until sophomore year to "get their VPA credit out of the way."

## JOB SATISFACTION, RETENTION, AND ENSEMBLE SIZE

We have held steady. Will have a slight lowering of numbers of students in the 5th-8th grades.
Mostly retained students!
Enrollment significantly decreased, but the growth in quality and effort raised significantly.
I will have smaller numbers at the beginning of next year due to attrition (much due to pandemic) and starting students in 6th grade (versus 5th grade).
Many students moved out of district (families could no longer afford to live in the area due to the pandemic). Other students quit because they felt Zoom orchestra wouldn't be enjoyable. Some guardians unenrolled their student because they didn't want their child to become overwhelmed in the remote setting.
2019-2020 #s were 179 and 2020-2021 was 174 so not much of a change but we're right on the line between two categories. Enrollment stayed pretty steady and is projected to grow healthily next year. My district is super supportive and the kids are hungry to play instruments so growth has been steady for years in orchestra.
This year was an absolute cluster. I definitely had decreased enrollment, and the “we lowkey gotta stress tf out to pull something together because the county’s still gonna cut your position if you don’t meet requirements” whilst in the middle of a global pon de replay was just silly.
I didn’t have an elementary choir since I have no idea how virtual choirs even work and I barely had participation from students in regular classes
Heavily impacted by the complicating factors by the pandemic (cost, seen as an extra curricular, students not wanting to participate if we could not rehearse all together in-person, etc)
Some students have left because of increased evening rehearsal time.
I direct our 5th Grade Chorus. Which is a voluntary group that meets twice a week after school. Before the pandemic I was continuously having 90% of the 5th Grade Class join chorus. This past school year we weren’t able to have any after school programs at the elementary level, so unfortunately this class went without a normal chorus experience. However, I was able to piece together a 45 minute virtual winter concert for them! I was given permission to utilize their general music time from mid-October to late December.
My program has continued to grow in the pandemic. More students are enrolled than ever prior to my arrival in 2018.
Enrollment was steady for me
Our feeder middle schools have incredibly low enrollment for beginners next year due to pandemic restrictions on recruiting.
My enrollment stayed steady but band and choir decreased by about 30-40% due 8th grade course requirements and moving to a 6 period day.
Our music program enrollment has been healthy and pretty steady for many years. Even with this year's pandemic, although we down a bit due to students enrolled in virtual classes part of the year, we have maintained fairly well and look to increase our numbers next fall. I think the fact that we were able to offer in person learning all year helped, in spite of the

## JOB SATISFACTION, RETENTION, AND ENSEMBLE SIZE

safety protocols involved. We are fortunate to have a large music facility, with the ability to house all of our music groups while social distancing.
Some students elected to stay home the entire semester or school year and those students didn't get live music classes. I think that lead to many dropping the class
My program was growing before covid. Our numbers for next year are bleak. There is little structural support for recruitment and it all falls on me, on top of everything else I do. It is my least favorite part of the job because I just don't have time to think about it all that much - I teach 2 middle school bands, a middle school orchestra, and run strings programs and two elementary schools. The orchestra and strings programs were new the year I started, 2019-20.
We have not been able to visit and recruit in person at the 5th grade two years running (all performing ensembles start in grade 6). We had to create our own video recruitment and that was a huge strain last year given short notice and high stress. This years video was much better. We went from having 100 strings kids in 6th grade to around 45-50 both years.

Question 31: If you thought about leaving a position as an ensemble teacher, what factors influenced you to stay?

N/A
Not sure I'd ever leave, but it is a somewhat thankless job for all the work that goes into it. It does leave you feeling alone sometimes.
My love for my students and for teaching voice. Choir (even virtual) has been one of the few bright spots in pandemic teaching for me.
Not being certified or qualified for anything else.
Changing schools greatly influenced my stance on teaching ensembles.
My coworkers, my students
The love I have for my students
The students, making a positive impact in community
My students, pay, title 1 required number of years for loan forgiveness
Knowing that this is only temporary and the students who chose to stick it out this year deserve to have a great education no matter what the learning situation is
My students
Gaining better administration/ switching schools.
The students and their families affirming me and making me feel supported.
Hope that next year would be closer to what I signed on to teach.
Feeder program, administrative support/understanding of how a program should be run.
Not wanting to give up on what I am building.
I'm currently at the same school with my children
Commitment to mission of the school
Financial stability; not sure what else I could do.

## JOB SATISFACTION, RETENTION, AND ENSEMBLE SIZE

The pay and benefits are good, my spouse gets benefits, and I like being my own PK-8 program.
Great music program across the district, Supportive and great supervisor, fun students!
I like my part time status for work/ life balance at this point in my life. If I were not part time, I probably would quit teaching.
I am currently considering leaving. I really do enjoy working with the students, they are the reason to stay.
Tenure
Having tenure, liking the community I live in
Students, always the students.
Student engagement and relationships are a big factor for me. Feeling appreciated by the school community and staff for what I do is also important. Knowing that second schools can change as enrollment at my base school increases helps. The convenience of already being employed and not having to go through job hunting and interviews can outweigh other factors or put them into perspective if they are smaller issues.
I have only left jobs to go to school or move
The connection I have with my students and how much I know they rely on their involvement in the music and theater program to keep them engaged in school.
Feelings of obligation to my students and future students. Lack of imagination to consider an alternate career.
Frankly, there is a possibility that our school will split into a K-3 and 4-5 school so I am hoping that happens in the next year or so, so that I can teach 4th and 5th grade and focus on growing the orchestra program.
I float the idea of trying to teach at a larger school so I can attempt to have larger ensembles, but I love my students, colleagues, administration, and community. Those are things that are priceless and "the grass is not always greener on the other side."
Students. Love the students
My entire position is teaching orchestra and I am considering leaving because of job security, satisfaction, and the difficulty of being an itinerant in 5 schools.
Not seriously, but sometimes I think about what it would be like if I had a quiet office job haha! I stay because teaching is a calling and I love the kids. I really can't picture myself doing anything else.
I am leaving my teaching position due to lack of respect and unrealistic expectations at the district level (my 6 schools are fine, but I'm a district hired employee.)
Immediate co workers, students, program support
My school and district's culture
The students and someone needed to be in the district that advocates for Orchestra
The year has been very difficult because of learning modalities changing from hybrid to in-person, to fully remote. The normal concert cycles have not taken place. It's been difficult to derive the customary sense of accomplishment and progress from interacting with music and other musicians.
I didn't think about it.

## JOB SATISFACTION, RETENTION, AND ENSEMBLE SIZE

I started this orchestra program in 2007, and I believe the school district will cut it when I retire because of finances.
Briefly I wanted to quit because I was a more a technology troubleshooter than a teacher. And, technology is what frustrates me the most.
Pay, love of job
I love my students. This is not the way I would want to end my teaching career. I just started my doctoral program which would then be a wasted experience.
My personal philosophy that every child deserved to learn music and play an instrument. Also, my own conviction that I needed to stay, that this was the path for my life, even though it was difficult/hard.
I haven't considered leave the profession, not seriously (I do like to think about what I might like to do in 10-20 years if I need a change, but for the foreseeable future I'm staying in the classroom).
Money
Working on high level music
My students and my school support system
I'm very happy with my job every day.
Love of music, love of teaching children to make music
I cannot imagine myself doing any other job and enjoying it.
Students
Never crossed my mind.
My students.
Good administration; supportive teammates; the kids
Not wanting to "restart" the process, having to get comfortable with a new building/
I have wonderful students and some parents are fantastic to work with. Can't leave due to financial reasons. (Within my family situation).
Didn't think of leaving.
The students and families I work with.
Retirement benefits and positive change in administration
Kids are great. As long as I focus on that, all is well
Freedom of planning in the nonprofit structure. Flexibility to work more effectively during school breaks or changes of schedule.
I am currently leaving my position
I need the job.
Unsure of what to do next. I want to give it more time to see if I can build a better program. The students keep me motivated.
The biggest factor in me wanting to leave is the constant disrespect from our state legislators. This past year was an all out assault on educators. The job itself is stressful and there can be long hours, though I have found a good balance for myself. The stress and hours I can handle, the disrespect and low pay I cannot.
My students, my position, my team

## JOB SATISFACTION, RETENTION, AND ENSEMBLE SIZE

I left a huge, successful program to work in a much smaller, very weak program so I could cut down on my commute.
Asked to perform at state level conference, IMEC.
Student loan forgiveness for Title 1 service, music programs being cut in covid era, phasing out previous director's students
The music and the kids
Only in 2nd district. Left first one because change in scheduling at middle school level. The MYP/IB program halved the amount of teaching time.
I need the job/money. Too good of a job to just walk away from.
Stability, familiarity
My loyalty to the students and the desire to be a better teacher
Knowing that my school and staff is like a family made me want to stay. Something about sticking through this as a team made me stay.
Being the only Black elementary strings teacher & being one of a tiny few LGBTQIA+ elementary strings teachers
Stability, predictability, my own developed skills and expertise
Good school. I really like my students.
The students, the staff, and the overall school atmosphere,
Co teacher
Just only the pay check
I left this year after 4th and 5th grade orchestra was cut.
Last spring semester ('20) was definitely challenging, having to move to virtual learning on short notice for so long. Having just finished my 47th year in the classroom, my biggest challenge was the technology in trying to maintain effective, meaningful, and interesting class work for our students at home. My tech savvy colleagues were my guiding lights, if not for them, I probably would have said it's time to leave!
Coworkers, stability
The kids. And the stable pay/benefits. And the sense of community at my main middle school. I feel like they need me.
Pay- I'm pretty high up the scale and if I trade careers I could not immediately replace my same salary.

Question 32: If you have left a position as an ensemble teacher, what factors contributed to your decision to leave?

N/A
NA
Administration was the one and only factor that made me leave one school in my teaching career



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Administration was terrible at the last school. Other music department colleagues were toxic and the overall work environment was toxic and not good for my mental and physical health.
Burnout. I also taught genraly music between three buildings. Every time I made something work they added more with no extra help or time to make it happen.
No support from admin or colleagues, no classroom space (taught on stage/cafeteria/lobby), no budget for supplies or music
Husband's military orders
Toxic environment. Demanding and entitled parents, rude principal, demeaning superintendent, petty drama, high teacher turnover rate.
Lack of pay, admin lack of communication
My first teaching position was as a band director. I very quickly learned that band is not for me. I have a lot of issues with traditional band education, but here are some of the major ones: I don't like how difficult it is for students to join band in middle/high school if they don't have experience playing an instrument from elementary school. I don't like how expensive band instruments are for students and how easily they break. I don't like the steep learning curve for students to be able to produce a sound on band instruments. I don't like how heavily music literacy is emphasized in band. I don't like the expectation for band students to take private lessons. etc.
General teaching staff that took their frustrations with other music personnel out on my students. It seemed that leaving was better for my students so they would not be penalized for participating in the program.
I am not sure if I am leaving yet, but the other two members of my department are creating a toxic work environment that is driving me to leave.
The public school system is indoctrination
I left elementary instrumental music to teach middle school band. I wanted to be able to see my students every day.
Having kids
My prior school and community did not help in rebuilding the band program. The interest was entirely sports (football and boys basketball). Very much a "good old boys' club".
Position was part-time
I did not leave but factors of me looking included change in schedule, added classes that were not paid, lots of work falling on my shoulders, not making any real music this year!!!! (I know this is covid related but it was hard to keep pushing through when you are not doing what you love!).
I was expected to have fantastic results with little support and no budget.
I am strongly considering leaving. The demands of the job are too great, and I want to be able to explore other areas in my career and personal life. The last two years have shown me that we are not valued as educators, and I don't see the it getting better next year or the unrealistic expectations changing.
Was a part time gig

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I did leave to get away from politics of public education. I was a private counselor for 8 years. I missed the kids and the ensemble community, so I returned 3 years ago. The politics are still awful. The kids and music are still great.
I am planning to leave next year to move closer to home.
When thinking about leaving a position, administration played a part. The principal at my previous second school made organizing my program very challenging and did not always share schedule changes in advance enough for me to make alternate plans for my students. My current large school's principal changed this year, and she is making me heavily consider changing systems or doing an internal transfer. She creates a very toxic work environment in how she speaks to staff members and by not communicating clearly or at all with employees.
I have only left jobs to go to school or move
Block scheduling has been a headache. I'm in my first year teaching, and I have realized I want to spend more time at home. Marching band takes up so much time and energy so I am switching to elementary music after this year.
I used to teach middle school and I wanted to teach high school. That is how I ended up in my current position.
I liked virtual because of the individual attention.
Closer to home
A district that thought you could have a successful band and orchestra program with no budget when your students were 100% free and reduced lunch
I didn't.
Student musical achievement in the new school, larger program size of the new school
N/a
I haven't left a position, other than switching grade levels, from high school to middle school. I have definitely enjoyed my job as a middle school teacher more.
Only because my 2 year contract in the Caribbean was over and I needed to return to University.
burnout, over worked, unhappy
Unsupported administration; burnout - at previous school I grew the program at one of my two schools by 100% (from 56 to 111 in the program in just two years). My administration at the high school (that I loved) and I fought to make my position full time at the high school. The administration at my other school (middle school) blocked this and the county did not approve funding. I LOVE teaching high school, but middle school is not a good fit. As much as it broke my heart because I loved my kids at my previous high school, I found a job that is 100% high school and with better pay and centralized support at the district level, so I left. I love my new kids, too. Still saddens me that I needed to leave my previous high school, but then I think about how toxic the middle school was and I don't regret my decision.
Left to be closer to family; pay increase.
1st job: got married and moved to a new state. 2nd job: Terrible administration. Too many changes required of teachers all at once. 3rd job: I left my last position because I no longer



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wished to commute two hours a day. I hope to retire from this current job in a dozen years or so.
My position has been cut twice in previous districts
Money
Teaching 2 different discipline (choir and orchestra) at the middle school level is too much to ask of one person in regards to time outside of work for events/concerts/rehearsals
Went back to school
I started out in my district as a choir teacher. I left that when I got pregnant with my 4th child and there were also family legal issues I was dealing with. So I left the position to deal with personal family issues.
There was a lack of respect for my class, even though I had one of the largest classes in the school.
Lack of administrative support.
Scheduling impossibilities. Lack of support for important events like CMEA festival performances. General dysfunction throughout the district. Colleagues who have very little classical training and no respect for my ensemble ideals.
See above. Went to a bigger program with 3 teachers.
Being the only Black elementary strings teacher & being one of a tiny few LGBTQIA+ elementary strings teachers; rapidly declining mental health (67% personal, 33% job-related)
Principal/administration, being an itinerant teacher, stress/anxiety
Wanting to teach a higher level of music.
I am leaving my position to pursue doctoral studies. I did wish my school was more appreciative of the rapid and sustainable growth from the band program.
Could not teach the way needed to have success
Unsupportive administration, combined Intermediate/Advance class, split between two schools, no budget
I managed to stay, and probably will for another year or two! I am losing my 2 string colleagues to retirement, and although I'm only part time, I hate to leave a new person or two coming in without some help, this is a big program:).
Student attitude, stress on planning performances and trip, unsupportive administration
Being treated poorly, not respected, one place I was a RIF (reduction in force) due to budget issues.

Question 34: Feel free to share any other thoughts on previous questions or elaborate on your job satisfaction, what makes an effective ensemble teacher, and/or what affects your program size.

N/A
I am pretty satisfied with my current position and job, despite the obvious stresses that come with pandemic teaching. I have chosen to stay despite the challenges presented this year because outside of COVID, I love teaching general music and vocal music. My choir

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has grown since my first year teaching, however the virtual setting has really affected my choir size this year. I am hopeful that my enrollment will increase, however, with more in-person opportunities next year.

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County scheduling restrictions and priority for AP or other classes causes retention to be impossible. With little ability to grow a program or even maintain it, I feel the need to leave the position. More stress than it's worth to constantly fight for and maintain a small program.

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I feel when students have the sense of community and that the ensemble teacher(or teachers in my case since we co-teach with two choir directors) allow their students to feel they are loved and appreciated every step of the way!

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I think personality is huge. Our school has three music teachers and we made three electives to fill the slots since we couldn't facility full band this year. The kids love my elective because of how I teach it. I was told by admin to make my class fun. I have while also making sure they gain content and skills I want them to know when we return to larger ensemble sizes. We had to cut chorus this year, but as soon as my state allowed 6 ft distancing and I could fit more than 10 kids in the room I was allowed after school chorus. My principal let the music department dictate how we would make the schedule work for us, we chose what we would teach and how...it made all the difference. Going into next year we have a modified ensemble plan of grade level bands instead of whole school. The principal let us change the schedule to work better for us. Having an admin that trusts and acknowledges that we are experts in our field and should be in charge of making it work has made ALL the difference during this crazy time. I know in my old position I would never get even remotely that kind of respect and attention. If I was in my old position this year would have been hell.

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I have loved being at one school and having a supportive principal who I know will have my back in anything I want to do has changed everything. My parents can be challenging, but now that I have been in my position long enough they all know what my expectations are. The first few years at this school was difficult with changing admin every year, but now I couldn't be happier.

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Founded program in 2017 in small urban high school. Have experienced heavy growth from two principles: everyone is welcome and appreciated in the music room, and everyone is capable of being successful in music.

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None

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I only say "no effect" because my students have mandatory participation. The success of the ensemble based on my personality is more of a "3" or "4" on that scale.

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Admin support plays a huge role into success of my program, but the past two years for me, it's been my students, not necessarily admin.

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Relationships make a program.

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My students don't have access to a lot of things that might contribute to retention- parent support, private lessons, instrument ownership... Even transportation to events is a struggle. That means building community in the classroom, and my relationships with students, are especially important.

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## JOB SATISFACTION, RETENTION, AND ENSEMBLE SIZE

Scheduling
I am an extrovert at school, but introvert at home. I believe that makes me more exhausted at the end of the day because I work harder to be outgoing. I'm not negative to my students, but it's not my natural state to be outgoing. Effective ensemble teachers are organized, begin with the end in mind, and share ownership of their band programs with their students rather than do the job for personal glory. I consider recruiting to be one of my greatest strengths right now. I have always doubled or tripled the previous enrollment of my beginners within a year of starting the job. Scheduling, finances, and athletics are all variable contributing factors in enrollment across all programs.
New school has a strong tradition of a strong, large band but has had a lot of director turn-over the past 9 years. Admin, Boosters, teachers and families all want to rebuild the program. A solid budget and a great inventory on top of kids that want to work hard is why I am planning on staying here until I retire in 35+ years.
I work in a district where the arts aren't as supported as athletics (by parents, students, and other teachers). We recently got totally new admin (superintendent/principal and vice principal) and they want the program to grow and are supportive. I'm hopeful for the future!
Musical opportunities, exciting opportunities, personable teacher, and feeder/HS teachers affect program size/enrollment. I do love my job but it has been trying this school year. I am in a high performance district but we are trying to change that into a more inclusive music program; however, administration is constantly changing and that gets in the way of changes that should be made within the program or support for the program changes which causes things to be challenging.
Having autonomy makes me a better teacher. I am not always given that.
My program size is heavily impacted by the availability of school owned instruments. Many of my students are first generation Americans with parents who immigrated from Central America and have large families. They need support in obtaining materials such as books, reeds, shoulder rests, etc. Providing information in advance, with multiple reminders, and in English and Spanish has helped the ensembles. My job satisfaction comes often from the feeling of accomplishment after seeing students' progress at the winter and spring concerts, and I missed that the past two years.
I want my students to have fun but I also try to push them. I also try to really get to know them as people.
A few unique facets of our program: Our advanced choral ensemble meets during the day as a class and makes participation in the general choir difficult because it would take up two electives. Our school and community are strong in their values of the trades. Unfortunately in our case that means that arts are sometimes viewed as "extra" or secondary. Our school currently has just over 1000 students enrolled this year. I think these items contribute to our lower numbers.
I very much love my job. Like any job, there are days when I'm tired and might not feel like putting forth my best effort. But, that is the ebb and flow of the human experience. Overall, my kids are wonderful, I get to make music, and I teach in a place where I feel like a valued member of the school community. I think an effective ensemble teacher understands

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personality and emotion. I credit a lot of my success in recruiting and retaining members to my ability to understand the students' emotions and unique traits. I use this information to build authentic relationships with them. In turn, this draws students to my programs because they know they are psychologically safe spaces where they are free to make music and act authentically.

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Love my students, they are like family. Wish I could teach instead of do so much administrative work.

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I have another big issue with enrollment. The MS teacher in my program is not very popular and a lot of students leave the program because of them. The elementary enrollment is great and then the MS/HS enrollment drops significantly.

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Things that affect program size: my community being more band oriented because strings program is only 23 years old (I was in band so my kid is going to be in band), socio-economic level (harder to get kids in orchestra due to perceived cost as being more expensive), recruiting style (videos versus in person), and how many fun things you do (movie nights, trips, challenges that result in parties, etc.). The number one thing that affects program size and what makes you an effective teacher is if the kids believe you care about them. If they know you care about them and love them then they will be more invested in your group and care more. Creating a safe, caring environment where music is fun is the best thing you can do.

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Relationships make or break an ensemble teacher. We need to be semi-likeable or our retention goes down and we no longer have an ensemble. Relationships are even more important when many students do not inherently trust adult figures. I am in a very band heavy district so I need to be twice as likeable, twice as fun, twice as everything to try and keep my numbers growing. It is exhausting when I am always referred to as a band teacher or I am left out of the conversation entirely. 10/10 recommend that feeling (sarcasm)

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Students having positive experiences and experiencing personal growth is the most important factor in all of those, and their musical growth is a very, very close second.

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It's vital the students have a good set-up at the beginning 5/6 campus. It's not as important to have "fun" as having the proper/correct start. My music team is supported by admin that believes if kids are in music, the test scores will be higher and discipline will be better. Our music team has 2 teachers/music group. We teach every class every day. We also frequently interact, support, plan with our feeder schools, grades 5-12.

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When I took my job, we had 170 in the orchestra. Within a few years, we had grown to 270. This was entirely from being seen and present at the feeder campuses - kids are more likely to stay in the program when they feel comfortable with who their new teachers will be.

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Having supportive admin and supportive counselors (who arrange students class schedules) makes a huge difference. Having a functional/organized transportation department, so that we can go on festival trips is important. I really appreciate positive, kind colleagues, that enjoy collaborating together.

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My job satisfaction is greatly impacted and reduced by central office administration decision making and treatment of teachers.

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## JOB SATISFACTION, RETENTION, AND ENSEMBLE SIZE

An enormous amount of energy is required to recruit, maintain, promote, and manage instrument inventory.
I am currently still in my undergrad studies but work full time with my school's marching band and part time with their concert band and percussion ensemble.
Pre-corona I played regularly in a band that did Irish pub music around St. Patty's Day and original music the rest of the year. That didn't quite seem to fit the categories. I like my principal and my school, but district level staff say they are supportive of music and take actions that prevent kids from participating in music. They refuse to take any responsibility for decreased enrollment, saying we are not programming engaging repertoire. They want us to do almost exclusively pop music... I will be looking for a new district if we continue down this path.
You have to be interesting to your students, know your craft, always try for better when good is possible. Relate to them, connect with them, and be a benevolent dictator. Always be in charge. Admit your mistakes and learn from them. Never stop performing on your instrument.
Location affects enrollment. All schools are open campuses and students that are zoned to where I work live closer to another HS and prefer to go there.
Effective ensemble teacher = know and care about your kids as humans first. Then, figure out where they are musically and pick repertoire that is the right balance of challenging, but attainable and enjoyable. Include students in decision making process about rep. Let them know why "boring" technique exercises are important. Create community and buy-in. Care about the kids first.
Teaching is definitely harder in year 27 than years 10-24. Attention spans of students have changed; and the lack of rigor makes it difficult to get kids to stay long enough to see formidable progress. Some administrative decisions have changed the amount of performances and there is much more emphasis placed on state level orchestra festival. Fewer students participate in our booster run scholarship program as well as solo and ensemble festival. School culture has changed as is not at the same standard we had with our former administrator 6 years ago.
I feel that my passion, compassion, and musical knowledge contribute to my program size. I've been teaching 21 years and continue to enjoy the work.
The nonprofit I work for has 2 sites and I direct 1. My site has grown throughout the last 7 months while the other has lost 70-80% enrollment. School support for students and for our partnership is a main factor in the difference between the two sites.
Teachers need to be teaching within their main discipline focus
Even though I have been in the same position for a long time I have had a number of administrators. Some are good and some are awful. I love the kids. I love music and I love teaching kids music. That is why I stay. I am effective because I reflect on what I do that is successful and what isn't.
The personality question is a tricky one. I do not have a lot of natural charisma and as I noted above I'm an introvert but that doesn't mean that I'm shy. Some people are able to find high numbers through being more charismatic and outgoing, I feel that before this year

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I've had solid numbers because I bring a level of authenticity to my classes. With professional boundaries, I am authentically myself in class every day. I think students understand on some level that I'm not hiding behind some constructed personality and they appreciate that. My program is also built on quality. This road takes longer to build up, but the results are better in the end. My students understand how to work hard and I'm not out there trying to be the "fun" teacher who lets them do what they want. We do have fun, but they know that I also expect them to work. We have fun while working too and I make sure they remember their growth as we prepare for concerts or as I bid them goodbye at the end of the year. Fun is also built through the satisfaction of knowing what you've accomplished. Also, please look at the science behind Meyers-Briggs....the short answer is that there is none. It might be more nuanced than that, I just know I heard an NPR story once about how all personality tests are pseudoscience. Good luck with your studies!

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My school is in its 2nd year open, so my program is smaller. I did not teach 4th grade this year, and they are the last general music grade level in my school. The relationships I built with the students in the hallways was a huge factor in why my program is growing to over 30 students next year.

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I work with far fewer students now than I did in my previous job, but I am much happier. My admin is amazing. The students learn so much faster in smaller groups. Plus, I am only 20 minutes from home where at my previous job, I was 45 minutes away.

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I've noticed a trend in my district of hiring second career music teachers who do not have a music degree. They manage to get credentialed without ever having played in a large ensemble or taken a conducting class.

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Job satisfaction comes from support. You need the tools or at least the moral support to be productive, and when budgets are small, a good job" or authentic help can go a long way.

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My days are insanely busy but the kids are so fun and I get so much freedom to choose what I teach and when. The autonomy at this position helps outweigh the scheduling demands that come with being the only teacher for 175 5-12th graders.

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The freedom to create a program the way I feel works best for me and my students (though not at all sanctioned) was helpful this year. As for job satisfaction - I despise the current education system. Everything is taught to a test, even music. My county specifically is also filled with unnecessarily competitive teachers. This makes no sense. Music is a journey; everyone develops at their own speed in their own time, and this idea that we have to put on the best concert with the hardest music and the most pieces twice a year just to impress other educators takes all of the focus off of the kids. Sure, it works out for a lot of students, but what about the ones that don't like or can't handle that pressure? I'm sure there's a way to teach that leads to excellent players without being yet another stressful class that our kids have to deal with.

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Learning about my community, commitment to being open-minded and not "status quo" in terms of content/programming, continuing to work on my own skills as an educators and not getting "stuck in a rut"

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## JOB SATISFACTION, RETENTION, AND ENSEMBLE SIZE

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If I ever leave my school, it will be either because I found a really good job much closer to home (I drive an hour each way) or the parents at my school have become too much to deal with. They can be very pushy and many are Republicans.

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I believe being an effective ensemble teacher stems from knowing your students, being organized, driven, and having a strong musical background to create a strong ground for each student to stand on.

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I'm not happy Bc my school has no small group lessons. I am expected to teach all the instruments at the same time in a large class and the administration is heavily critical if the concert isn't perfect.

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You might want to factor in prep time for better results. My current position was 3 ensembles and 3 hours of lessons/prep that I scheduled. Many people leave due to the # of periods/hours they teach.

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I actually taught full time for 40 years in the same school district (rural), the only string director for grades 5-12. One does not stay that long in the same place unless it's a positive situation, we were blessed with excellent community and admin support, and students and families who really valued and were proud of our program. I love what I do, even on the challenging days, the rewards are great, so when I retired, I moved to part time in a nearby district (urban, actually my alma mater!), where I just finished year #7. Fortunately, very similar situation, with a healthy music program, strong community and admin support, and great kids! Relating to the kids, believing in each of them, supportively challenging them to reach high expectations, and rejoicing with them when they do! Lots of patience and flexibility and encouragement!

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My district has no elementary general music program. Starting in 4th grade, students have the option to sign up for band or strings and be pulled from their regular classes for 30 minutes each twice a week. This structure inhibits enrollment in a huge way. Music is not accessible to most students, and when they start band or strings in 4th grade they have a kindergartener level of music understanding. None of the grade-level standards are possible because they don't have the foundations. We face pressure as ensemble teachers to have students performance-ready throughout the year, yet they don't know the basics so what inevitably happens is a lot of rote teaching and students not understanding the music. Also a lot of the other music teachers are just mean. My students mostly love having me as a teacher because I'm not mean - not a high bar lol. The district has no plans to change this elementary music structure. This district kind of sucks and I would quit if I didn't love my middle school and my kiddos so much. I could find a better job with higher pay in a building that has been updated since the 60s and isn't full of bugs, where the school actually has functioning instruments to give the students, in a heartbeat. But I love the community we're building together. So I would say that's the most important factor for teacher retention - make them feel valued and part of a positive community that is working towards something powerful.

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Fellow staff members impact decisions to stay in the job. If you have friends at school and colleagues to talk to, you're more likely to stay. If you're isolated or somehow blackballed, you won't stay.

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