

**IMPROVING QUALITY OF ELEMENTARY MUSIC PROGRAMS THROUGH COMMON  
CURRICULUM**

**By**

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**for the degree of**

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## IMPROVING QUALITY OF ELEMENTARY MUSIC PROGRAMS THROUGH COMMON CURRICULUM

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Sponsor: Faith Maina, Department of Curriculum and Instruction

**Abstract:** *Developing a music program based on quality curriculum is the key to success. The purpose of my research was to explore whether teachers used curriculum for quality control in an Elementary music program. Using student questionnaires, teacher interviews, and teacher observations I found that the music curriculum in each school was different. There were no similarities in lesson plans and methods which is detrimental to the quality of a music program.*

### I. Introduction

My musical journey has been shaped mostly by my mother. My mother started playing piano as a young child. She played French horn in high school and had to make a decision whether to major in French horn or piano. She decided to major in piano. Ever since the day I was born I can remember having a piano in our house and my mother teaching piano. When I was four she started to give me lessons. I can remember performing a short Suzuki piece on the piano when I was five. Even then it was being ingrained in me how important musical performance was.

My mother recognized that it would be hard to continue taking lessons from her and that I should try a different instrument. I remember seeing a girl the same age as I was playing violin. I liked the sound and how you could use your whole body to play. I started playing the violin in first grade. In fourth grade I decided to take up the clarinet as well as continue to play

the violin. The excitement soon died down as my lesson group was so large that we moved slowly. I decided to quit clarinet and just concentrate on one instrument, the violin. Throughout my musical life I have had many teachers. The teachers that taught me the longest each had developed their own focused curriculum.

In order to maintain a quality music program one has to have an understanding of their curriculum in their school and district. The purpose of this research was to investigate the current practice used by teachers in an elementary school music program and how that practice impact the quality of the program.

## **II. Literature Review**

There were a few key themes that emerged from the literature review: a) highly effective teachers, b) assessments, and c) common instruction.

### *II. a. Effective Music Teachers*

Duke and Simmons conducted a study involving teachers who taught different instruments (Brand, 2009). They found that each teacher used the same 19 qualities that had been identified to be held by effective teaching such as clear goals and expectations, and appropriate repertoire. Manny Brand (2009) observed music teachers from nine different countries. He not only observed that they knew about music but also that they had, “high energy and enthusiasm during their teaching” (Brand, 2009, p. 16).

#### *Assessment*

Fisher (2008) conducted a study on national music assessment. He found that “With state music assessments varying in scope and purpose and with some states lacking a music assessment program, it becomes impossible to measure the status of music education nationally” (Fisher, 2008, p. 7). Fisher (2008) argues that if assessments were the same for all music students’, standards would be higher. This would mean there would be a basic music education that every student would receive.

### *Common Instruction*

There is a large discrepancy between music teachers and their instruction. A study by Johansen on distinguishing between teaching subjects and student learning (2007) found that

Rather than adopting a defensive ‘wait and see’ attitude, it would be wise to take an offensive ‘let us take action to be one step ahead’ attitude. I would suggest that we have to start the process by defining what educational quality is in our own subject areas. (Johansen, 2007, p. 436)

According to Turner (2008) educational quality among music teachers needs to be based on standards that are the same across the board. Turner (2008) argues that “Access to quality instruction by qualified music educators is a critical and indispensable component in the equation for success” (p. 16). Johansen (2007) found that the differences are apparent considering that each university has different requirements for their music education students. “Music teacher education courses normally include music pedagogy, general music education, instrumental education and choral conducting. Beyond these general categories, course content varies between countries and institutions, depending on cultural specificities.” (Johansen, 2007, p. 2) .

It is clear from this analysis that there is a gap between what teachers are teaching and the essential aspects of music that students need to understand. The purpose of this study was to investigate the practices of music teachers in an elementary program. Understanding those practices is key to developing a quality music program.

### **III. Methodology**

#### **III. a. Sampling**

**Student participants:** The population target for my research were students in grades four through six involved in the orchestra program at three different elementary schools. Every orchestra student was invited to participate in the research through a consent letter sent to their parent or guardian informing them about the research. In order for the student to participate this consent letter had to be signed and returned (Appendix C). The consent form included a personal introduction as a graduate student and music teacher in the district, information on the topic, an overview of the student questionnaire, and a confidentiality clause. Parents were informed that the questionnaire would only take 15 minutes to complete and would involve questions pertaining to their music education. Students were free to withdraw at anytime during the study without penalty and confidentiality and anonymity would be maintained at all times.

**Teacher participants:** also targeted the three general music teachers from these schools for teacher observations and interviews. All three general music teachers agreed to participate.

(Appendix B)

Teacher A: This general music teacher is a female. She was in her mid 30's and had been teaching for four years in this school.

Teacher B: This general music teacher is a male. He was in his early 30's. This was his 4<sup>th</sup> year teaching in this school.

Teacher C: This general music teacher is a female. She was in her early 50's. She had been teaching for over 30 years. She was highly experienced in this district.

The three general music teachers were given informed consent forms which informed them that they would be observed and interviewed (Appendix B). Observations would be done with three different grade levels and interviews would take no more than 45 minutes. Teachers were informed that participation in this study was voluntary. Teachers would remain anonymous and would have the option of dropping out the research at any time without penalty. Each of the three general music teachers signed the consent forms.

### III. b. Instruments

**Questionnaire:** My first instrument given to the students was the questionnaire. The questionnaire was composed of two parts. The first part had 12 questions while the second part had 9 questions. The questions were varied in design and were made to help the participants engage about their musical development. I placed open ended questions in the questionnaire in order to let the participants express their feelings and opinions about their music education. The first four questions were to give a brief background of the student's musical education. The next four questions were to let the student gage the program and the

teacher. Questions 9 through 12 focused on student skill level and how music is perceived in their homes. The second part of the questionnaire was designed to focus on what the student thought of playing their specific instrument (Appendix F).

**Interviews:** The second instrument that I used was teacher interviews (Appendix G). These interviews took a maximum of 45 minutes and asked specific questions pertaining to their curriculum and teaching methods. The main focus of the interview focused on how the general music teacher came up with their lesson design and if their curriculum was meeting their needs. One goal of doing the interview was to see if teachers were teaching using the same curriculum.

**Teacher observations:** The third instrument was teacher observations. Observations were used as a precursor to the interviews to find out how their methods were being used. I looked for differences among teachers having to do with their curriculum. The goal of the observations was to look for ways to improve teaching and learning practice.

### III. c. Procedure

First, permission was obtained from the Human Subject Committee of my institution. Next I applied and obtained permission from my district to conduct my research. Permission slips were sent home with students and requested parental permission. Every participant in my study was informed that their participation was voluntary and they could opt to stop at any time without penalty. Signed consent was obtained from each building administrator.

Thirty seven students participated in my study. All of these students are involved in the orchestra program. All of the students were given the questionnaire during their lesson time. These students came from three different schools.

All three general music teachers received consent forms containing information about teacher observations, teacher interviews and how the data would be used. They were also notified that the study was voluntary and they had the option of stopping at anytime. Also they were informed that any information collected would be confidential and they would remain anonymous.

I made an excel file that listed all of the students who would be doing the questionnaire and the number associated with each questionnaire. I then gave them the questionnaire and consent form at the same time. When the students were done with the questionnaire I collected them .When the consent forms were returned I marked off on the excel spreadsheet next to their name and corresponding number that I could use their questionnaire in my research.

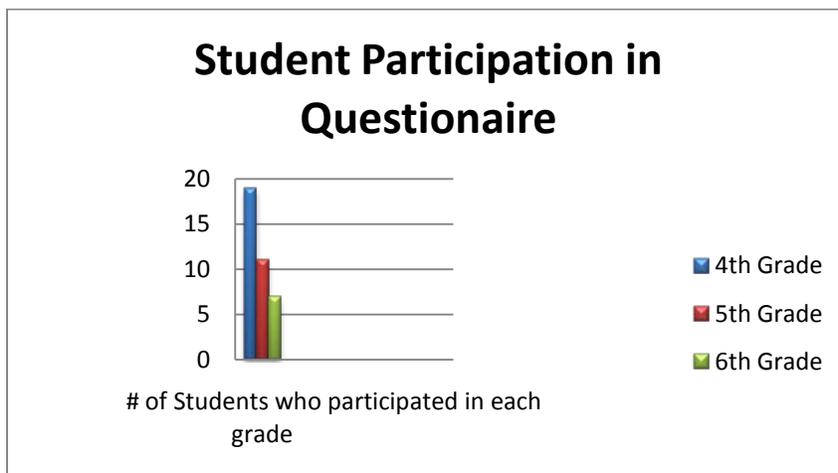
I emailed the teachers for availability and scheduling. I brought notes with me to the observation and the interviews and recorded key parts. I was able to put the recordings and interviews onto my computer.

#### IV. Data Analysis

Eighty four students from grade four through six were given a 23 item questionnaire.

Figure 1 below shows the number of students per grade level that completed the questionnaire.

**Figure 1: Grade Participation in Questionnaire**



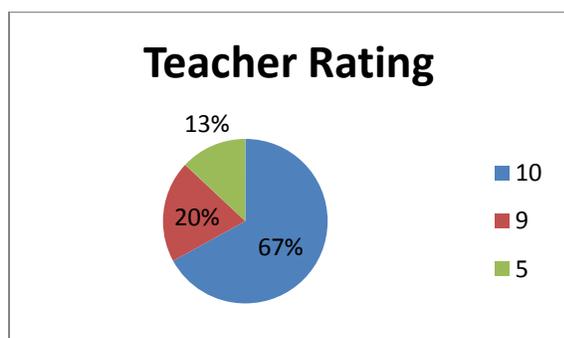
On a scale of 1-9 with 1 being worthwhile and 9 being not worthwhile students rated their music program as follows: Fifty Four percent of the students rated it a one. Twelve percent rated it a two. Seven percent rated it a three. No students rated it a four. Two percent rated it a five. Five percent rated it a six. Five percent rated it a seven. Two percent rated it an eight and five percent rated it a nine.

**Table 1: Rating of District Music Program**

Ratings	Percentage
1	54%
2	12%

3	7%
4	0%
5	2%
6	5%
7	5%
8	2%
9	5%

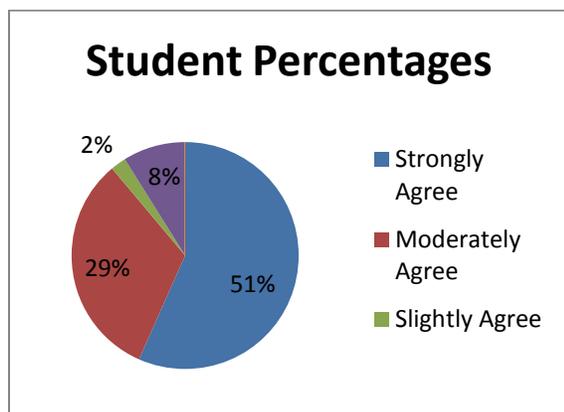
When asked how they would rate their music teacher 67% rated them a ten being a successful music teacher. 20% rated them a nine and 13% rated them a five.



**Figure 2: Teacher Rating**

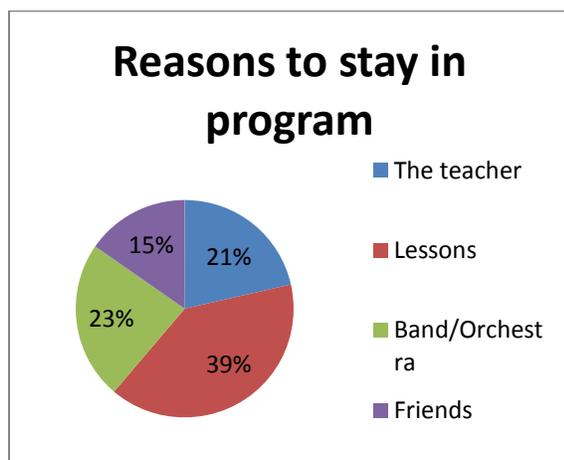
Regarding the quality in the district music program, 51% of students strongly agreed, 29% moderately agreed, 2% slightly agreed, and 8% had no opinion that it maintained a high level of quality.

**Figure 3: Student Observation of the Districts music department quality**

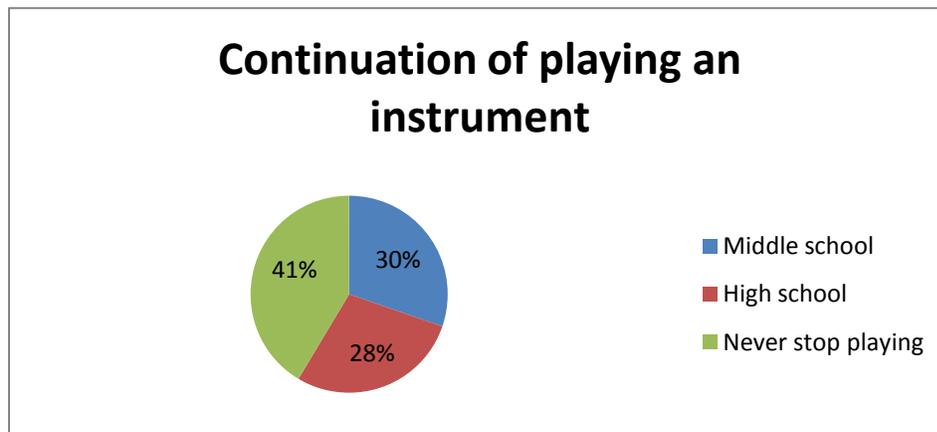


Twenty one percent of students said that the teacher was the most important reason they stayed in the program. 39% marked that lessons kept them in the program. 23% marked band/orchestra as the reason that they have stayed in. 15% marked friends as the reason that they have stayed in the program. Each student choose those reasons to stay in the program.

**Figure 4: Reasons to Stay in the Program**



Thirty percent of students indicated they would continue playing through middle school, 28% checked high school, and 41% checked for the rest of their lives.

**Figure 5: Longevity of Performing**

### Teacher Observations

#### Teacher A Observation

The first observation was done of the kindergarten class. A picture book was read to the class about spring. Questions were asked during the reading to keep the students attention and to engage them. The main question asked was, "What do you see?" Next a Little Rabbit Foo Foo was read to the class. Students enjoyed the book and listened intently. This book will lead in a later class to a musical song. Students went back to their seats. Students listened to a rabbit song. Students clapped along with the song keeping rhythm and pace. Students echoed back parts of the song working on their singing. Next they sang it on their own incorporating clapping rhythms. The song was learned by layering on parts and eventually singing it with the cd recording. The main musical focus of this lesson was rhythm, dance, and singing.

The next grade that was observed was a third grade observation. Recorders were handed out and music packets to perform from. Students fingered the notes and played Hot Cross Buns. Students worked on writing the notes in for Gently Sleep in groups. Students read about breath marks and how to incorporate rests into the music. Next the students broke up into groups and worked on their own while the teacher walked around giving individual help. Students came back together and played Merrily We Roll Along. The main focus of this lesson was on musical performance, note reading and notation.

The last observation was of the fifth graders. This lesson was based on an introduction to keyboards. The teacher read a book about Bach. She explained how muscle memory works in music. Students took out their music books. Students went through writings about keyboard instruments. The students learned about harmony and descant parts in music. The main focus of this lesson was on harmony, keyboards, and an introduction to note reading.

### **Teacher B Observation**

The first grade I observed with this teacher was kindergarten class. They started going over the notes in the C chord. The teacher reviewed how to play the boom whackers. The class took turns in groups of three playing the boom whackers in rhythm to the music. They sang while they played the boom whackers using two music abilities at once. All of the students were engaged even while others were using the instruments. The main focus of this lesson was on instrument performance, rhythm, and chord structure.

The second observation I did was third grade. First the teacher talked to the class about how the students should act when in an audience at a professional show. Each student received a recorder and practiced from their book independently. Before playing recorders the class went over line and space notes and fingerings for each. They each have to pass recorder tests in order to move onto the next song to get their certificate. The focus of this lesson was note reading, performance, and rhythm.

The last observation was the 5<sup>th</sup> grade. The first part of the class focused on different forms in pop songs. The class learned about verse and chorus parts and how a composer uses repetition to grab the listener's attention. Students engaged in listening and hearing the verse and chorus in a pop song. Students sang a song while finding the verse and chorus. This particular lesson was focused on musical form and listening.

### **Teacher C Observation**

The first observation was a kindergarten class. This class played musical games. The first game was called clay where the students partnered up. One sculpted while the other student was the clay. The music's rhythm cued the students when to sculpt the other student. The next game was called circle counts. Students made circles while listening to music changing their circles every time the teacher called out a different number. This lesson focused on listening, rhythm, and musical interpretation.

The next observation was a third grade class. Students reviewed what makes up musical notation. Students wrote their own rhythms and notes. Next they practiced their own

composition on their own xylophone. One different focus that was emphasized was listening to music and changing the notes to make it sound better. The other main focus was musical composition.

The last observation was a fifth grade class. Students There were two groups working at one time. The first group was practicing plate spinning while the second group was working on gymnastics. The gymnastics group had to come up with music to fit their routine and so did the plate spinning group. The main focus of this lesson was to come up with a routine to follow and implement a musical background to it.

<b>Class</b>	<b>1 Main Theme</b>	<b>2. Main Theme</b>	<b>3. Main Theme</b>
<b>Teacher A</b>			
Kindergarten	Rhythm	Dance	Singing
Third Grade	Musical Performance	Note Reading	Notation
Fifth Grade	Harmony	Keyboard	Note Reading
<b>Teacher B</b>			
Kindergarten	Instrument Performance	Rhythm	Chord Structure
Third Grade	Note Reading	Performance	Rhythm
Fifth Grade	Musical Form	Listening	Musical Interpretation
<b>Teacher C</b>			
Kindergarten	Listening	Rhythm	Musical Interpretation
Third Grade	Listening	Changing notes	Musical Composition
Fifth Grade	Musical Interpretation	Dance Routine	Rhythm

Table 2: Main Focus of Observations-Curriculum

<b>Teacher Interviews</b>	
<b>Curriculum Categories</b>	<b>Comments</b>
What makes up the curriculum?	<p>Teacher A: "It is made up of basic standards and mandates but there is room for leeway and experimentation."</p> <p>Teacher B: "Kindergarten works on percussion, first grade and second focus on literary recognition, third graders do recorders, fourth and fifth grade do guitar, and sixth graders do piano."</p> <p>Teacher C: "Spiral, fundamental concepts. Notation is taught to everyone. There is an emphasis on listening and moving based from the state standards."</p>
Is this curriculum sufficient?	<p>Teacher A: "The district put together a curriculum. I have series books and state standards. There is ample room for creativity but a consistent curriculum is need across the board"</p> <p>Teacher B: "For what I want it to be yes. There is no way for the district to test retention."</p> <p>Teacher C: "Yes, we do not have a district curriculum."</p>
Are your colleagues on the same track as you with regard to curriculum?	<p>Teacher A: "Yes and no. Long term teachers no but new teachers yes."</p> <p>Teacher B: "I do not know where they are. It does not exist."</p> <p>Teacher C: "Yes, we each have strengths."</p>
Are all of the teachers teaching by the same standards?	<p>Teacher A: "Absolutely not."</p> <p>Teacher B: "Yes and no. End goals are the same. People teach to their own strengths."</p> <p>Teacher C: "There is some variance. It would help to get together and talk."</p>
What is one area that music teachers can	<p>Teacher A: "Sharing, We are never asked to share."</p>

improve upon?	<p>Teacher B: "Sharing ideas, materials, and lesson plans."</p> <p>Teacher C: "They can communicate better and have the same foundation. It would help if they went to each others concerts."</p>
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Table 3: **Teacher Interviews**

## **V. Discussion and Interpretation**

### **Summary**

The purpose of this study was to examine how curriculum was being used in order to maintain quality in an elementary music program. It examined the music curriculum across multiple schools to better understand how effectively it was being implemented. After reviewing the data I made three conclusions. a) not all of the teachers were using the same curriculum in order to maintain music quality and b) some teachers taught without a curriculum or created their own. c) quality is being maintained from students standpoint

### **Discussion**

I observed three music teachers teaching the same grades during the same week and all were teaching different concepts. I understand that teachers need freedom to teach their own styles but without common curriculum, quality may not be maintained in the long run. Students will learn different methods for understanding music and confusion may follow. Although all of the students were learning something important they were missing common content and common curriculum which leads to poor maintenance of the district elementary music program.

When my students were asked why they stayed in the music program, 21% of students stayed in due to their teachers, 39% marked lessons, 23% marked orchestra and only 15% marked friends. This shows that 85% of the students stay in the program due to curriculum and teaching. This finding concurs with Fisher (2008) study which found that "While many music educators are extremely effective in imparting music skills and knowledge to their students, too great a number are unsuccessful and negligent in providing these essential music competencies" (p. 4). As teachers these essentials need to be shared and understood by all so that students are reaping the benefits of a common curriculum, common content, and common musical methods. Students learning is still emphasized even without a consistent curriculum. Music teachers have certain state standards that they have to follow. These standards allow an incredible amount of freedom in their music teaching lessons, methods, and curriculum. Each of the teachers I interviewed mentioned these state standards but failed to mention if they had a shared curriculum. These comments are consistent with Fisher (2008) who argues that "While national and state music standards exist, these standards, in many cases, are not mandatory and merely serve as a guide or recommendations for music educators to follow." (p. 1). Quality in a music program is made up of consistent music methods across grade levels and schools. The only way to achieve this is to have a common curriculum. Quality can be attained in the music classroom for a short time as a result of teachers individual lessons. Long term quality relies on teacher collaboration and a focused curriculum. Teachers who teach with a non-curriculum based style have the freedom to educate what he/she considers to be important without being regulated.

Afer three observations of different kindergarten classes at my three Elementary schools I observed different teaching styles. The first schools kindergarten class focused on reading a picture book. The second schools kindgerten class focused on learning the notes that made up the C chord. The third schools kindergarten class played two musical games. Each observation had one similarity and that was music. The first schools students focused on singing, while the second schools students focused on performing rythms, and the third schools students focused on music games using physical motion. All three of the schools curriculums, or lack there of, focused on entirely different music foundations. If these schools had a common curriculum their students would have been taught the same music content, language, and methods during this week.

Another advantage of using a common curriculum is that students are taught using repeated methods and greater retention of knowledge will be gained. If there are three differet music teachers (Band, Orchestra, Chorus) then the common language should be used throughout teaching. This will help enhance the students musical knowledge as well as help them aply methods to all areas of music.

To further show how each schools musical education curriclum differs, none of the schools had the same focus in any of the same grades. When asked if the schools had a music curriculum one teacher responded "a consistent curriclum is needed across the board." Another said "It does not exist." The last responded saying "We do not have a district curriculum." This study clearly shows that the teachers in this school district do not have a curriculum. If they did have a curriculum, they are not following it. When asked if the teacher

thought his or her colleagues were on the same track when it came to teaching the curriculum there was mixed response. The first teacher responded saying “Yes, and no, long term teachers no, but new teachers yes.” The next responded saying “I do not know what they are doing. It does not exist.” The last responded “Yes, we each have our own strenghts.” These comments show the problems of not having a consistent curriculum. By not knowing what their colleagues are teaching, the students will enter the higher grades all understanding different musical language and content.

My conclusions were that using the same curriculum would maintain quality. The second conclusion was that some teachers taught without any curriculum while others used their own. The lack of consistency is a problem with students and one can see that as teachers do not see the inconsistency that they are teaching.

### **Limitations**

My main limitation was time. Implementing student questionnaires, teacher interviews, and teacher observations in three buildings was difficult to do in a month. This was a small sample the sampling method was convenience. The data can not therefore be genralized. But even with those limitations, conclusions can still be made.

### **Implications**

My research shows that while non curriculum based teaching can be affective in the short term, curriculum based teaching is needed for long term music education quality. In order to create life long learners of music it is essential to have common content and a

common curriculum. Teachers need to know the curriculum and have the best tools for implementation it as well. A teacher's ability to improvise should come from their own teaching style not a lack of curriculum. The real benefits of having teachers on board with a curriculum will be seen with the students in their understanding of music. My district should spend time on creating a common curriculum. It should include common language, units, and grade level goals.

### **Recommendations for Further Research**

In order for quality to be maintained at the elementary level further research into how to implement a common curriculum needs to be done. Teachers have to find ways to collaborate with their colleagues in order to teach using similar methods that enable students to comprehend music better. Doing research over multiple years of the same grades would be helpful in determining where gaps are in the curriculum. If teachers can see how effective curriculums are being used in other districts this would also help to further the use of a common curriculum.

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### Appendices

**Appendix A**-Letter to Administration

**Appendix B**-Informed Consent for Teachers and Students

**Appendix C**-Letter of Permission for Parents

**Appendix D**-Letter of Introduction

**Appendix E-Important Dates for Participants****Appendix F-Student Questionnaire****Appendix G-Teacher Interview****Appendix A****Letter to Administration**

Dear Administrator,

My name is Cameron Edele, a music teacher in your school and I am currently a graduate student at Oswego State. As part of my graduate degree I am required to conduct a research project. My research project will be focused on this question: How does one maintain a quality elementary music program?

I hope to reach a broad range of teachers and students throughout the district. With your permission I would like to do student questionnaires, teacher interviews, and teacher observations.

In order to do this I will need written permission from you allowing me to conduct my research.

If you would like more information I can show you my research proposal as well.

In order to move with this in a timely manner I would appreciate a quick response. This study is totally voluntary. The information gathered will be kept confidential as well as the names of any students and teachers involved. If you have any questions regarding this study, please contact my academic advisor, Dr. Faith Maina at [faith.maina@oswego.edu](mailto:faith.maina@oswego.edu). If you have concerns about

the rights of the participants, please contact the Chair of SUNY Oswego Human Subject Committee, Dr. Barry Friedman at [barry.friedman@oswego.edu](mailto:barry.friedman@oswego.edu). Below is my contact information and I look forward to hearing from you.

I authorize Cameron Edele to conduct his research at \_\_\_\_\_ school.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
(Administrator)

Cameron Edele

## **Appendix B**

### Informed Consent for Teachers and Students

The study that you are about to take part in is about maintaining quality in an elementary music program. This study is being done by Cameron Edele, a graduate student at SUNY Oswego.

Professor Dr. Maina will be supervising the study has been approved by the Human Subjects Committee at SUNY Oswego.

There will be three parts of this study. One part will be a questionnaire for students, interviews with teachers, and teacher observations. The questionnaire should take students 15 minutes to complete. The interviews will take up to 45 minutes and the observations will during a regular scheduled class.

Data collected from this study will be confidential. Names will also be kept anonymous as to keep information private. Results will be handed out at the end of the study as to inform the participants.

By participating in this study I hope that you are able to examine your role as teacher or student in the music department and how to improve it.

As this study is fully voluntary, if at any time you wish to not continue you are free to do so.

If there are any further questions about this study please feel free to contact, Cameron Edele at [Edele@oswego.edu](mailto:Edele@oswego.edu). If there are any questions about your rights as a participant please contact

Dr. Friedman, Chair of the Human Subjects Committee (312-6381).

I have read the above statement about the purpose and nature of the study, and I freely consent to participate.

Participant's Signature      Date

Experimenter's Signature      Date

Print Participant's Name

Print Experimenter's Name

## Appendix C

### *Letter of Permission*

Dear Parent/Guardian,

My name is Cameron Edele and I am currently enrolled at Oswego State taking graduate classes. In order to complete my graduate degree I have to write a thesis. In order to write my thesis I need to do research.

The research topic is, "What elements make up a quality Elementary music program." This research includes a study which will uncover the areas the music department can improve. The goal is for teachers to find ways to increase their effectiveness and have a common curriculum.

This study will include a questionnaire for grade 4-6 students enrolled in a music classroom and music teacher classroom observations. The student questionnaire will include questions on different music content areas that they are involved in and how they view the instruction. Additionally asked are questions on how they feel about their music teacher's instruction. Each questionnaire will take a maximum of 15 minutes to complete. During classroom observation your child participation may be recorded. Therefore I would like to seek your permission to use your child in my study.

I assure you confidentiality will be maintained. Your child's name will not be recorded. At any point in time you may withdraw your child from the study with no penalty. In addition, your child will not be denied any instruction or benefits from the study.

Please return this form to with your approval.

I authorize the participation of \_\_\_\_\_ as a subject in the research investigation.  
(child's name)

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

(Parent or Guardian)

## Appendix D

### *Letter of Introduction*

Dear Student,

My name is Cameron Edele and I am a certified Music teacher. I am currently enrolled at Oswego State as a graduate student. In order to fulfill my requirements I am doing a thesis project. My thesis involves what Elements make up a quality elementary music program. In order to do this I will be doing questionnaires, observations, and interviews.

You have the choice of taking part in this study or not. This study has to do with your ideas and thoughts about elementary music education. This study has been approved by the Faculty Research Committee on Human Subjects at the State University of New York at Oswego.

The questionnaire is full of open ended, multiple choice, and rated questions. Your answers will only be used in my study and kept in private. Your names will be kept confidential as well. During your participation if you wish to terminate your participation there is no penalty.

By completing this questionnaire you will be sharing your thoughts about the elementary music program in your school. After the study is done I will share the information with those who partook in it. I hope this questionnaire will increase the foundation for our music program as a whole.

Completion of this questionnaire is optional. Should you have any thoughts or concerns please feel free to contact Cameron Edele by email at [Edele@oswego.edu](mailto:Edele@oswego.edu). Should questions arise about your rights please contact Dr Friedman, (312-3474) chairs of the Human Subjects Committee, SUNY Oswego.

Sincerely,

Cameron Edele

State University of New York at Oswego

I have read the above statement about the purpose and the nature of the study, and freely consent to participate.

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Participant's Signature

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Date

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Experimenter's Signature

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Date

## Appendix E

### Important Dates for Research Participants

#### **Tuesday, March 1-Tuesday, March 8**

- Submission of signed parental consent forms and participation form.  
These need to be turned in by March 8<sup>th</sup> in order to take part in the study.

#### **Wednesday, March 9-Wednesday, March 16**

- Student questionnaires are completed during general music class  
Students who are absent will be contacted and class time will be available to make up the questionnaire.

#### **Thursday, March 17-Thursday, March 24**

- Interviews and observations will start this week

## Appendix F

### Student Questionnaire

1. Tell me how you feel about your elementary music education in three sentences.

2. Single Response Items

i) In what year did you start to play an instrument? \_\_\_\_\_

ii) Did your parents play an instrument? \_\_\_\_\_

iii) In one word describe your elementary music education. \_\_\_\_\_

3. What is your favorite instrument in elementary school?

- a) Strings
- b) Brass
- c) Woodwinds
- d) Percussion
- e) Recorder

4. Which of the following musical groups do you participate in elementary school?

- \_\_\_ a)chorus
- \_\_\_ b)orchestra
- \_\_\_ c)band
- \_\_\_ d) group outside of school

5. How would you rate your elementary music program, worthwhile or not worthwhile?

Worthwhile    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    Not Worthwhile

6. Imagine the worst elementary music teacher possible and we will rate that person a one.

Now imagine the best elementary music teacher possible and we will rate that person a ten.

Given those two ends of the scale, where would you rate your experience?

7. I think that Oswego music education covers all aspects of music.

- \_\_\_ a) strongly agree
- \_\_\_ c) moderately agree
- \_\_\_ d) slightly agree
- \_\_\_ e) no opinion

\_\_\_ f) moderately disagree

\_\_\_ g) strongly disagree

8. Rate your elementary music experience using these dimensions.

Easy - - - - -Hard

Boring - - - - -Exciting

9. How would you rate your musical skill level?

1=Very good 2=Good 3=Average 4=Not very good

10. How much do you practice music at home?

1=Every day 2=Every other day 3=Twice a week 4=Once a week 5=never

11. Do you feel that music is important to your education?

1=Yes 2=Not sure 3=No

12. How important is music in your home?

1=Very important 2=Somewhat important 3=Not very important

### **Second Part of Questionnaire**

1. How difficult did you feel playing an instrument is?

1=Very hard 2=Hard 3=Average 4=Easy 5=Very Easy

2. Did you start an instrument and then quit?

1=Yes 2=No

3. If you did quit, why did you quit?

1=Too hard 2=Bored 3=Did not like teacher 4=Could not afford to keep renting

4. What do you feel is the important element of instrument music that keeps you in the program?  
1=The teacher      2=Lessons      3=Band/Orchestra      4=Friends
5. What the most difficult part of playing an instrument or singing?  
1=Performing      2=Rehearsal      3=Practice at home      4=Lessons
6. Please complete this sentence, I hope to continue playing or singing throughout-  
1=Middle school      2=High school      3=For the rest of my life
7. In two sentences please explain one challenge of playing an instrument or singing?
8. Do you feel that your teacher is prepared everyday to teach you?  
1=Always      2=Sometimes      3=No
9. Do you find the curriculum engaging and fun?  
1=Always      2=Sometimes      3=No

## **Appendix G**

### Teacher Interview Questions

1. Please explain your curriculum and weekly lessons.
2. Do you find it hard to stick to a strict lesson plan?
3. What challenges do you feel that you face teaching in the Oswego City School District?
4. What would you change about the curriculum that teachers use to teach music?

5. Do you feel that your colleagues are on the same track as you are about curriculum?
6. Do you feel that all of the music teachers are pushing the same standards?
7. What is one area that you feel music teachers can improve upon?
8. Do you feel that teachers are open to change or stuck in their old ways?
9. How can you see change occurring?
10. Would you be willing to head a curriculum committee?