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A Survey of Elementary and Secondary Music Educators' Professional Background, Teaching Responsibilities and Job Satisfaction in the United States

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Abstract

The focus of this exploratory study was to examine the current trends of K – 12 music educators in the United States regarding their (a) professional background, (b) classroom teaching responsibilities, and (c) job satisfaction. Participants included seven thousand four hundred and sixty-three ($N = 7,463$) currently employed music teachers who were members of the National Association for Music Education (NAfME) during the 2015 – 2016 academic year. To assess the variables, participants responded to a researcher created 49-item Music Educator Survey for K – 12 Teachers. Results indicate that overall, K – 12 music educators were predominately Caucasian (90.9%) and have been teaching less than 20 years (74.4%). The majority of music teachers hold bachelor's degrees (98.1%) with 56.2 % holding masters' degrees. 96.8 % held music teaching certification for their state and work in the public-school systems (89.4%). Overall, music educators were satisfied in their teaching positions indicating reasons related to student engagement and relationships. Results of this study can serve to aid in music education advocacy, designing music teacher professional development, and enhancing the effectiveness of music teacher education programs.

Introduction

In 1997, Linda Darling-Hammond's National Commission on Teaching and America's Future follow-up report "Doing what matters most: Investing in Quality Teaching" outlined challenges facing teachers. These challenges include a shortage of qualified teachers, access to professional development, mentoring and collaborative planning time for in-service teachers, low pay, and lack of decision making responsibilities. These issues still resonate two decades later as a demand for teachers is on the rise with teacher attrition as the most significant factor for the

current teacher shortage (Sutcher, Darling-Hammond, and Carver-Thomas, 2016). Work overload and large class settings have also been found to contribute to teacher burn-out and attrition (Bernhard 2007, Heston, Dedrick, Raschke, and Whitehead, 1996). Thus, it is important to examine the demographics of contemporary teachers in the United States, listen to their current views and experiences, and gather data from professionals working in the field to provide a better understanding and support for their teaching situations and careers. Specifically, the intent of the present study was to examine the current trends of K – 12 music educators in the United States regarding their (a) professional background, (b) classroom teaching responsibilities, and (c) job satisfaction.

Review of Literature

Utilizing the 1999 – 2000 *Schools and Staffing Survey* (SASS) and the 2000 – 2001 *Teacher Followup Survey* (TFS), which were both collected through the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), Gardner (2010) found that music teachers are predominately female (61% female vs. 39% male), most had a bachelor's degree (98.1% followed by 40.2% holding a bachelor's and master's degree), and predominately described themselves as white (89.6%). Scholars have found similar trends with collegiate level instructors, with music teacher educators and collegiate band directors being predominantly white and male (Gould, 2003; Hewitt and Thompson, 2006). The predominance of white and male demographics also permeates through studies of obstacles facing pre-service music teachers. For example, Fitzpatrick and colleagues (2014) observed cases of students from marginalized populations who faced many obstacles to entering and completing music education college programs, such as lack of information and resources. Additionally, Elpus (2015)

examined the music teacher licensure test results (PRAXIS II) finding that minorities and female candidates' scores were lower on the Praxis II than their white and male counterparts.

Additional information from the *Schools and Staffing Survey* (SASS) showed that a higher percentage of music teachers (86.8%) versus other types of teachers (55.4%) taught in secondary grades, a majority of music teachers worked fulltime (62.9%), and most music teachers in this study worked in suburban communities (44.5%), followed by 30.6% in rural areas, and 24.9% in large or mid-size central cities. Also, music teachers are more likely to teach in multiple buildings within a school district than their teacher counterparts (Gardner, 2010). Similarly, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) (2009) reported that 46% of full time secondary public school teachers reported they were teaching at more than one school and 36% reported teaching courses outside of regular school hours, which did not include any extracurricular activities (Parsad, Spiegelman & Coopersmith, 2012).

Regarding the role of music as a subject in K – 12 schools, the *National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) 1999 – 2000* report showed 90% of public secondary schools taught music in the schools, and this number slightly increased to 91% in the 2009 follow-up report. Of the secondary schools who responded, 46% reported offering five or more music courses, and 81% stated they had a fulltime music specialist on staff. Similarly, in a study of 541 high school principals, it was found that band was offered in 93% of their schools, followed by choir (88%), jazz/rock ensemble (55%), and orchestra (42%) (Abril & Gault, 2008).

Job satisfaction, retention rates, and teacher burnout of in-service educators has been examined and discussed (Boyd, Grossman, Ing, Lankford, Loeb, & Wycoff, 2011; Friedman and Farber, 1992; Gardner, 2010; Heston, Dedrick, Raschke, & Whitehead, 1996; Lander, Alter, & Servilio, 2008; Madsen & Hancock, 2002; Russell, 2008) throughout music education literature.

For example, Lander, Alter, & Servilio (2008) examined student behavior and its impact on teachers' job satisfaction with K – 12 teachers ($N = 540$) and found a correlation between the presence of students' disrespectful behavior and a reduced level of teacher job satisfaction. Also, the results indicated that the higher the grade level taught (e.g. high school), the lower the job satisfaction level of the teacher. Further, Heston, Dedrick, Raschke, and Whitehead (1996) found that band director's sources of job satisfaction included student success, followed by parental and administrative support. Their sources of stress included negative student attitudes, inappropriate student behaviors, and teaching load.

Russell (2008) examined string teachers' ($N = 304$) beliefs regarding their career plans at one year and at five years of employment, finding that the majority of teachers plan to stay in their jobs for the first year but, only half of the teachers surveyed plan to continue in their career after the fifth year. Their reasons for staying or leaving the profession centered around the importance of music in the curriculum, satisfaction with students, psychological factors and teachers' economic status. Krueger (2000) interviewed thirty music teachers in their first ten years of public school teaching in the state of Washington. Of those who indicated a desire to leave music education as a career, the primary problem viewed was insufficient administrative support. Secondary problems included isolation from other music teachers, poor music facilities, and inadequate budgets. Music teachers with a strong mentor or a support system comprised of other music teachers were found to be more satisfied in music education as a career than those of whom were isolated.

Music educators' teaching stages and perceptions of the outcomes and direction of a long-term career in music education (e.g., Brand, 1983; Eros, 2011; Russell, 2012) have also been explored. Brand (1983) met with a group of six music educators to examine their stages of

their music-teaching careers. He found that for these music educators, the time period between the ages of 28 to 33 was the most unsettling as to wanting to examine other career options, branch into graduate studies, and assess their current teaching strategies and situations. As it is unknown what age exactly these six music educators started their teaching careers, it can be estimated that if they graduated from college around ages 22 or 23, the five-year mark of teaching, as discussed by Russell would be the beginning of this phase on uncertainty as discussed by Brand.

In hopes of exploring more information regarding the attrition issue of new educators, scholars have continued to explore challenges faced by young teachers (DeLorenzo, 1992; Fredrickson & Neill, 2004; Madsen & Kelly, 2002), including music teacher turnover at the state level (Killian & Baker, 2006) and music teacher attrition in relation to administrative support, resource availability, and professional networks (Hancock, 2008; Kruger, 2000; Madsen & Hancock, 2002). Stress and burnout have been linked to music teacher retention with both conditions stemming from inadequate support, non-instructional responsibilities, and feelings of isolation (Hamann, Daugherty, & Mills, 1987; Heston, Dedrick, Raschke, & Whitehead, 1996; Hodge, Jupp, & Taylor, 1994; McLain, 2005; Sindberg & Lipscomb, 2005).

The role of administration has also been examined and its impact on music teacher job satisfaction and attrition (Gardner, 2010, Greenwood, 1991). In the aforementioned *Schools and Staffing Survey* (SASS) study (Gardner), teachers indicated they did not have much influence over school-wide policies but had high levels of autonomy in their music classes. They were least satisfied with principal involvement regarding their instructional practices, salary, amount of paper work and support they received in their work with students with special needs, students coming to school unprepared to learn, lack of parental involvement, and student apathy. It was

also found that regarding retention, turnover, and attrition, music teachers who had more years of experience and more college degrees were more likely to stay in their current job in the music teaching profession. The presence of a music supervisor in the district also contributes to high job satisfaction. Greenwood (1991) surveyed secondary school principals ($N = 431$) to discuss the role of music education in the curriculum, and found that overall, music teachers' perceptions of the level of support from their administrators exhibited the strongest influence on teacher satisfaction and job commitment in this study.

Hancock (2008, 2009) also analyzed data from the National Center for Educational Statistics with the *Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS)* and the *Teacher Follow-Up Survey (TFS)*. In the first study in 2008, the author found that the predictors for turnover included being a younger teacher, school-wide issues, inadequate support from parents and administration, and salary concerns. The follow-up study in 2009 indicates that turnover rate for music teachers was comparable to non-music teachers. In a more recent study, Hancock (2016) analyzed the outcome of music teachers transferring schools or leaving the profession. Results indicate that teachers who did transfer to a different music teaching position believed their professional lives improved in many aspects of the teaching environment, including administrative support. They cited reasons they left as differences with administration and unsatisfactory school environment. Most teachers who left the profession to care for a family member or to attend graduate school indicated they would consider returning to music teaching. In contrast, the music teachers in the study who retired or were disabled were less agreeable to return.

The rate of turnover for K – 12 teachers in the U.S, appears to be higher than in many other occupations, and age is the most salient predictor of teacher turnover (Ingersoll, 2001). Music teachers younger than the age of thirty are at a higher attrition or migration risk than older

teachers. Music teachers between the ages of 30 to 39 years are more likely to be at a higher attrition risk than their younger and older music colleagues (Hancock, 2008). Also consistent with other studies (Gritz & Theobald, 1996; Hanushek, Kain, & Rivkin, 1999), Hancock (2008) found that reasons indicated why music teachers younger than forty are a high attrition/migration risk are partially attributable to salary concerns. Additionally, female music teachers were more likely than male music teachers to be a high attrition/migration risk. It is likely that personal issues, such as falling behind in salary steps when taking time off for childbirth and childrearing, keep female music teachers' salaries lower than those of their male counterparts. Minority music teachers were more likely than White, non-Hispanic music teachers to be a high attrition/migration risk. Teachers who indicated more time spent on instructional and non-instructional activities outside the regular school day were less likely to be at high risk for attrition/migration.

The research in the area of teacher background, responsibilities and job satisfaction comes from predominately the decade between 2000 and 2010. However, since 2010, there has been an extraordinary amount of attention and controversy in education in the United States. For example, the recently passed Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) names music and the arts as core subjects, therefore solidifying its place in K – 12 education. In addition, the Center for Public Education (Crouch, 2012) has found that trends in immigration and birth rates indicate there is no singular racial or ethnic group that is comprised of over 50% of the population, indicating we have increasingly diverse classrooms in K – 12 education. Finally, with the 2016 United States election, and the change in political leadership and positions within the Department of Education, there is increased dialogue of the direction of public education, the role of charter schools, and the increase of school voucher programs (Strauss, 2016). Therefore,

it is important to have a current examination of the topography of music teachers in the United States. The focus of this exploratory study was to examine the current trends of United States K – 12 music educators regarding their (a) professional background, (b) classroom teaching responsibilities, and (c) job satisfaction. Our specific research questions are as follows: What is the demographic make-up of current music teachers? What types of work place environments to employ K – 12 music teachers in the United States? What is the current job satisfaction of K – 12 music teachers?

Methods

Sample. Participants included current K – 12 National Association for Music Education (NAfME) members teaching in public or private institutions during the 2015 – 2016 school year. Participants were invited to participate through an initial email including a link to an on-line survey delivered through the online survey tool *Survey Monkey*. The email was sent by NAfME to the active elementary and secondary music teacher membership. Three additional emails were sent within six weeks at an interval of approximately every two weeks to encourage more responses from the K – 12 teaching membership. During this time period, membership included 41,133 active members. Members who filled out the survey and indicated they were not employed, retired, pre-service teachers, and university professors, were excluded from the sample. Additionally, participants who did not complete the survey were excluded. The participants of this study consisted of a total of 7,463 experienced teachers. The 18.1% response rate with a 95% margin of error yielded 0.8% margin of error.

Survey. The Music Educators Survey for K – 12 Teachers (MES-K12) is a 49-item scale designed to assess the beliefs of current K – 12 music educators. It consists of three sections: (1)

Professional Background, (2) Current Teaching Responsibilities, and (3) Job Satisfaction. Participants were asked to comment in relationship to their current 2015 – 2016 teaching position.

We developed the initial version of the MES-K12 by determining a list of thematic categories for items, based upon reviewing the research literature on music teachers. The professional background questions were based primarily on the Hewitt and Thompson (2006) study, which examined music teacher educators. Additional teacher job satisfaction questions were developed based on existing literature and current trends, around which we constructed six items that fit into one or more of these categories. To refine the psychometric qualities of the survey, feedback was elicited from thirteen retired music teachers and university music education and teacher education professors ($N = 13$), who were asked to respond to each item and to comment on any items that they thought were ambiguous, redundant, or otherwise problematic. The research team reviewed all comments and responses from this pilot form of the instrument, noting ambiguous items and redundancies. Through careful consideration of the items and the types of responses that were obtained, the number of items for the final distribution was 49.

Results

The participants of this study consisted of a total of 7,463 experienced teachers. The participants identified themselves as 61.3% females and 38.7% males (0.3% did not report their gender). Over a quarter of the participants (26.4%) were between 20 and 30 years old, followed by 25.6% between 30 and 40 years old, 17.7% between 40 and 50 years old, 22.2% between 50 and 60 years old, and 7.3% over the age of 60. The ethnic composition identified by the teachers

included: Caucasian 90.9%, African American 2.2%, Asian 0.9%, American Indian or Alaska Native 0.2%, Hispanic Latino(a) 1.2%, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander 0.1%, and 2.9% indicated more than one race. In addition, 0.3% indicated “other” in regards to ethnic composition, and 1.3% did not indicate ethnicity.

Teachers from every state in the United States and the District of Columbia were represented by at least four respondents (0.1%). The top 10 states represented were: New York (6.4%), Pennsylvania (5.4%), Ohio (5.3%), Georgia (5.3%), Illinois (4.6%), Virginia (4.5%), California (4.0%), Washington State (4.0%), New Jersey (3.8%), and North Carolina (3.7%). The lowest 10 states represented were: Nevada (0.5%), South Dakota (0.5%), Arkansas (0.4%), Delaware (0.4%), Texas (0.4%), Vermont (0.4%), Rhode Island (0.3%), Alaska (0.2%), District of Columbia (0.1%), Hawaii (0.1%), and 0.1% of teachers reported to teach internationally in Department of Defense Schools. Of the teachers in the sample, 42.1% have taught less than 10 years, 31.8% have taught less than 20 years, and 26.2% over 20 years. Participants reported their migration as follows: 34.9% said they have only taught in one P – 12 school, 23.4% have taught in two, and 12.6% have taught in more than five. Few music teachers (16.0%) were required to teach a subject area outside of their main field. Less than a quarter of respondents (18.7%) indicated they planned to retire in the next five years.

Professional Background. Of the participants, 38.4% had a bachelor’s degree only, 56.6% had both a bachelor’s and a master’s degree, and 3.3% had earned doctoral degrees. One participant indicated that they did not have a college degree and 1% of the participants indicated they had an education specialist certificate. Twenty-two percent indicated their state required a master’s degree for continuing certification and 78% indicated it was not mandatory in their state. A majority of teachers reported holding a state teaching certification in music (96.8%). In

addition, a majority (94.0%) reported that their current schools required a teaching certification, while 6.0% reported that it was unnecessary. Teachers reported having additional teaching certifications with the most certificates in Orff (7.9%), followed by Kodály (3.8%), National Board Certification (3.2%), Suzuki (1.5%), and Administrative Certification (1.2%). A variety of other certifications (<.01%) included Dalcroze, Music Learning Theory, Foreign Language, English Language Learners, Core Subject, Fitness/Health, Gifted and Talented, Association of Christian Schools International, Educational Leadership, World Drumming, Advanced Placement, Special Education, Medical Certification, Music Therapy, First Steps in Music, Music Technology, Music Adjudication, Theater/Drama/Dance, and Kindermuzik. However, a majority of teachers (72.2%) reported to not hold additional certifications. More details regarding degree and certification are listed in Table 1.

Table 1

Percentages of degree areas and certifications

Achievement	Percentage
Bachelor's Degree	98.1
Music Education	81.5
Music Performance	5.6
Elementary Education	0.8
Composition/Music Theory	0.6
Secondary Education	0.2
Conducting	0.1
Musicology	0.1
Other	3.4
No Response	5.8

Master's Degree	56.2
Music Education	48.7
Music Performance	10.7
Conducting	7.3
Educational Leadership	5.7
Music	3.9
Elementary Education	2.7
Music Theory	0.4
Composition	0.7
Musicology/Ethnomusicology	0.5
Other	16.7
Grade Level of Certification in Music	96.8
K – 12 Music	73.8
P – 12 Music	17.1
Grades 6 – 12 Music	4.2
Grades 9 – 12 Music	2.6
Grades K – 5 Music	1.7
Other	0.6
Areas of Music Certification	96.8
Instrumental, Choral, & General Music	37.7
Instrumental & General Music	20.4
Choral/Vocal & General Music	20.4
Instrumental Music	11.5
Choral/Vocal Music	3.4
Instrumental & Choral/Vocal Music	2.6
Other	1.4

N = 7,463

Over half of teachers (61.5%) reported their school system offered tenure, while 24.2% said no their school system did not, and 14.2 percent said they did not know. Of the respondents, 45.7% reported they were tenured with 61.3% offered tenure. A third of participants (33.4 %)

were not tenured and 14.8% of the teachers were not offered tenure. The question received no response from 6.8% of participants.

Regarding participants primary instrument in this survey, the largest portion were vocalist (27.6%), followed by woodwind instrumentalists (24.2%): brass instrumentalists (22.2%): and string instrumentalists (9.3%). Additional instruments include piano (11.1%), percussion (4.6%), and organ (0.8%). A more detailed list of instruments is provided in Table 2.

Table 2

Percentages of primary instruments of music teachers

Instrument	Percentage
Voice	27.6
Soprano/alto	20.5
Tenor/baritone/bass	7.1
Woodwind instruments	24.2
Flute	7.2
Clarinet	8.0
Saxophone	5.9
Oboe	1.5
Bassoon	1.6
Brass Instruments	22.2
Trumpet	9.0
Horn	3.6
Trombone	5.0
Euphonium	1.8
Tuba	2.8
String Instruments	9.3

Violin	3.7
Viola	1.8
Cello	1.7
Bass	1.1
Guitar	0.9
Piano/organ	11.9
Percussion	4.6

Note $N = 7,463$

Teaching Responsibilities. A majority of K – 12 music educators (89.4%) work in public schools, while 8.1% work in private schools. A small amount (2.21%) of teachers reported to working in a charter school, while 0.3% reported working in more than one school type. Regarding what grade level of students the music teachers instructed, 43.7% reported that they taught elementary students and 71.9% taught secondary school students. Many teachers have crossover between the levels of education they are instructing. Approximately six percent (5.9%) of music educators teach both elementary and middle school, 13.1% teach middle and high school, and 6.7% teach all three levels. The remaining 2.7% did not indicate which level they were currently instructing.

Respondents in the present study indicated that they instruct several different courses throughout their school week and reported teaching the following: band (40.4%), orchestra (13.9%), general music (35.7%), choir (30.2%), music appreciation/music history (3.2%), jazz band (6.4%), marching band (5.5%), chamber music (1.1%), piano/keyboard (3.3%), guitar/ukulele (5.2%), world drumming (0.2%), recorders (0.7%), composition (0.2%), music theory (4.3%), International Baccalaureate (IB) music (0.2%), dance (0.2%), theater/drama (5.0%), music technology (1.4%), special education (0.8%), additional non music course(s)

(5.1%), and other (3.4%). Sixteen percent of teachers reported to teach at least one course that is not music based.

Teachers were asked how many students were currently enrolled in the classes they taught. Respondents indicated they instructed 0 – 100 students, 21.7%; 101 – 200 students, 34%; 201 – 300 students, 15.4%; 301 – 400 students, 8.7%; 401 – 500 students, 8%; 501 – 600 students, 5.2%; and over 600 students, 6.9% throughout the school week. Most teachers only teach in one school during the week (69.5%), however, 21% are in two school buildings, and 5.4% are in three buildings, and 3.9% are in more than four buildings. They report that 36.2% of their schools have one full-time music educator, followed by 30.2% with two full-time music educators, 17.5% of the schools have three, and 16% have more than four.

Job Satisfaction. Participants were asked to rate their present job satisfaction on a scale of 1 being not satisfied to 10 being satisfied. Overall, teachers reported high levels of satisfaction ($M = 7.79$, $SD = 1.84$). When asked if participants were to choose again, if they would teach music education, 80.8% answered “yes” they would. For those who responded “no,” this question was followed up by asking “why would you not choose music education?” Responses included: 17.4% educational policy changes, 10.2% financial reasons, 7.3% time commitment required, 6.2% administration issues, 4.1% indicated they would rather be performing, 2.6% dealing with parents/families, 1% classroom management, .5% loss of interest, and 8.3% indicated other. The participants were also asked with the exception of retirement; how likely they were to leave the profession in the next 5 years?” on a scale of 1 being not likely to 10 very likely. Teachers overall reported they were not likely to leave the profession ($M = 2.48$, $SD = 2.45$). Additionally, they were asked “are you planning to look for another job within the

profession of music education in the next five years?” on a scale of 1 being not likely to 10 very likely, teachers reported they were not likely ($M = 3.80$, $SD = 3.31$).

Participants were asked what their favorite part of their job was and the overwhelming majority of answers indicated working with students. Approximately half (50.2%) stated their favorite part was because of relationships with students, 18.4% said because of teaching or working with students, 7.6% stated student growth and success, 3.5% stated a specific class or ensemble, 1.2% said student’s “aha” moments, 0.7% said changing lives through music, and 0.7% said working with specific grade levels. Other favorite parts of the job include: 2.7% work environment, 2.2% teacher autonomy, 1.6% colleagues, 1.6% performances, 1.6% administration, 1.6% music, .9% community and family support, .3% summers off.

Contrariwise, participants were asked what was their least favorite part of their job. A third of participants (28.9%) stated administrative issues/paperwork/working with administrators, 23.5% indicated working conditions/work load/time commitment, 16.3% stated teacher evaluation/assessment/state policy changes, 9.3% reported poor student behavior and having to discipline, 5.7% said it was due to the lack of support either financially or for music, 5.5% stated parents, 2.5% stated co-workers, and 8.3% stated “other” (e.g. commute, SES of students, recruiting, etc.). Finally, participants were asked what was their biggest concern for music education. Responses included: 45.9% the lack of support for music and 18.9% stated loss of funding. These answers were followed by the emphasis on STEM/Common Core/standardized testing (17.8%), teacher evaluation/educational policies (7.8%), lack of musical opportunities (3.8%), and burnout (1.0%). Only 0.8% said that they did not have any concerns.

Discussion

The primary purpose of this project is to examine the current trends of K – 12 music educators in the United States regarding their (a) professional background, (b) classroom teaching responsibilities, and (c) job satisfaction.

In regards to professional background, in this study 90.1% of teachers identified as White/ Caucasian. This parallels Elpus and Abril (2011) findings that there is an over-representation of white students within the high school music programs as well as students of high economic means and parents with college degrees. This raises the question of how does one from an unrepresented population become a music teacher if they are not afforded the opportunity to participate in music in high school?

Additionally, as seen in the results, music teacher educators are primarily male, whereas K – 12 music teachers are primarily female (Gardner, 2010; Hewitt & Thompson, 2006). Gould (2003) reported that only 5% of collegiate band directors in the United States were female, a number that has held for over thirty years. A 2013 *New York Times* article titled “Missing from the Podium” stated that more needs to be done to encourage women who study conducting to continue in this career (Wolf, 2013). The results from this study in comparison to information regarding females in higher education encourages the dialogue of the impact of gender in regards to grade level and musicians being instructed.

Results of this study indicate that a majority of K – 12 music educators have a master’s degree (56.2%) which is an upswell in comparison to Gardner’s (2010) findings, where 40% held a master’s degree. In contrast only, 22% indicated their state required a master’s degree for continuing certification. This change might be interpreted in relationship to the accessibility to graduate studies. The National Association of Schools of Music (NASM) proposes nine different models that are supported for a master’s degree in music education ([Published by UST Research Online, 2017](http://nasm.arts-</p></div><div data-bbox=)

accredit.org/). These models include an online program, a traditional program, and a summer intensive program, created specifically in mind for K – 12 music educators who are still actively teaching in the field. These models are proposed so schools may develop and support a graduate program that is compatible with the needs of the institution and K – 12 community. Therefore, this shift may be a reflection of more accessibility to graduate studies for current K – 12 teachers.

With respect to teaching responsibilities, although small percentages, results indicate there is a need for music teachers to instruct courses outside of the large ensemble. As seen in the results, some top non-ensemble courses being offered in K – 12 settings include guitar (5%), music theory (4.3%), and piano (3.3%). A small portion of music teachers have obtained additional certifications, which overall seem to be elementary general based (Orff, 7.9%, Kodaly 3.8%). Darling-Hammond (1997) raises the point that teachers lack the opportunity to participate in professional development. These results could point to the lack of professional certifications for secondary music educators.

Finally, in reference to job satisfaction, through this study, a majority of respondents (73.9%) had been teaching less than 20 years, which correlates with the idea that we are losing teachers earlier in their careers (Hancock, 2008, Ingersoll, 2001, Russell 2008). Russell found that the majority of teachers plan to stay in their jobs for the first year but, only half of the teachers surveyed plan to continue in their career after the fifth year. Madsen & Hancock (2002) completed a survey of alumni from Florida state in K – 12 music education and also found that many teachers are leaving early in their career, which they defined as between years 2 and 6. Supporting these findings, Ingersoll (2001) found that music teachers younger than the age of thirty are at a higher attrition or migration risk than older teachers, and Hancock (2008) found

that music teachers between the ages of 30 to 39 years are more likely to be at a higher attrition risk than their younger and older music colleagues.

In regards to their least favorite part of their jobs, 23.5% of teachers indicated working conditions/work load/time commitment, and 5.7% stated it was due to the lack of support either financially or for music. In its 2012 report, the NCES demonstrated that the percentage of schools offering secondary music decreases with the amount of students receiving free and reduced lunch. For example, in schools with 0 – 25% of students eligible for free and reduced lunch, 96% had music in the schools in the 2009 – 2010 school year, which is in contrast to schools with 76% or more of students eligible for free and reduced lunch, where only 81% of the schools had music offerings. Perhaps the increase in lower SES schools is leading to the increased teacher attrition due to frustrations regarding lack of funding and support.

In conclusion, the main focus of this research was to examine the professional background of music teachers as well as to understand their current responsibilities and beliefs in the United States. One limitation of the present study was that we only invited responses through the National Association for Music Education (NAfME) membership, and therefore, teachers who choose not to be members of the organization for a variety of reasons (e.g. financial) were not included in this study. This could result in particular populations' views being excluded.

Our findings reflect the current state of music teachers and provide a more comprehensive description of the work environment and satisfaction with their present employment. Results of this study can serve to aid in music education advocacy, designing professional development, and enhance the effectiveness of music teacher education programs. It is important to have well-prepared and qualified teachers in the schools, invest in-service teacher development, continue the on-going reflective atmosphere of teacher preparation programs, and

support teacher's professional lives. To echo, Linda Darling-Hammond's call from 1997, more work needs to be done to address the working conditions of music teachers nineteen years later.

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