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The Academic Environment of One Junior High School In Northeastern Pennsylvania as Perceived by the Administration and the English, Mathematics, and Music Faculty: An Ethnography

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THE ACADEMIC ENVIRONMENT OF ONE JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL IN
NORTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA AS PERCEIVED BY THE ADMINISTRATION
AND THE ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS, AND MUSIC FACULTY:
AN ETHNOGRAPHY

A Dissertation

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies and Research

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Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

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Title: The Academic Environment of One Junior High School In Northeastern Pennsylvania as Perceived by the Administration and the English, Mathematics, and Music Faculty: An Ethnography

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This ethnographic study describes the academic culture and climate, as it relates to the music program, of a non arts-integrated junior high school as perceived by members of the English, mathematics, music faculty and selected administrators.

The study, conducted using a three interview protocol, were guided by four questions: 1) What is the relationship between one's life experience and their belief systems?; 2) What is the perceived value and influence of a teacher education and music programs?; 3) What are the connections between teaching, learning and music?; 4) What is the realm of influence of a non-arts integrated music program? Ten (10) teachers and two administrators were interviewed and created cognitive maps over the course of the study.

The results of the study indicated that the pervading influence over the curriculum was the Pennsylvania state assessment tool the PSSA and making adequate yearly progress (AYP) as indicated in the No Child Left Behind federal mandate. While all of the teachers and administrators espoused the value of student involvement in the school music ensembles, they did not share the NCLB definition of music as part of the core curriculum of the school. They perceived students who were involved in musical ensemble as academically stronger than those that were not involved, while affirming that

increased self-esteem, time management skills, and critical thinking skills may result from this involvement. These positive effects, as identified by the teachers and administrators, were seen as transferable to other academic areas, such as math and English. They also felt participation in music ensembles could greatly enhance academic and school success in students that are often removed from participation due to the need for remediation in the PSSA tested areas.

Therefore, increased involvement in music and musical activities during the formative junior high school years is perceived to have a positive affect on social, emotional, and cognitive growth of students. School district and community support for a thriving music program will serve to enhance the academic excellence of its students.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Children attend school to learn to read, write, compute, and to think critically. A standard elementary curriculum includes reading, language, mathematics, social studies, science, and the “specials:” art, music, and physical education (Parkay & Hass, 2000, p. 339). As children progress through the education system additional courses such as foreign language, home economics, technology, etc. are added to the curriculum. By the time students reach seventh or eighth grade, they must make choices as to which additional courses will be taken beyond the standard core curriculum courses (English, math, science, social studies) required of all students in order to fill the school day. Many school sponsored extracurricular activities also become available at this time. Students may engage in activities such as sports, clubs, or performing arts groups. The beliefs and attitudes of the administration, teachers, staff and students towards specific activities often lead students to engage in certain pursuits. The climate or culture of the school as well as school resources may also have an influence upon the types of organizations in which students will participate.

Various federal, state, and local educational mandates have changed the academic culture of school systems. The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB; U.S. Congress, 2001) has placed the burden of having students reach pre-determined academic benchmarks on the schools as demonstrated through standardized testing. The Federal mandate has given states twelve years to bring all students up to a “proficient level” as defined by each individual state. Curricula have been altered to “teach to the test” so that students will perform on at least a minimally proficient basis in order to meet the NCLB guidelines. State funding has been tied to these test scores, creating a culture of high stakes testing.

Schools that fall below the acceptable academic levels must take steps to ensure that their student scores improve. To help insure improvement, some districts have opted to teach only those core subjects that students will be tested on. The “extra” courses in art, music, and even physical education have been cut from the curriculum to give the “academic” teachers more time to teach the test materials to their students. The National Association of State Boards of Education has formed a group to study the effects of NCLB on the arts and to make recommendations so that they will not be eliminated from the curricula as a result of the federal mandate (Colwell, 2005).

According to the 2003-2004 State Arts Education Policy Database sponsored by the Arts Education Partnership, fourteen of the fifty states in this country have no arts requirement for graduation. Five states either expect that students show proficiency in the arts for graduation or leave it up to the individual school districts to decide if arts education is required. Three states and the District of Columbia require one-half credit in the arts. Twenty-three states require one credit in the arts to graduate. Only three states require one and a half to two credits in the arts to meet graduation requirements while one state requires arts credits only if a student will graduate with honors. The definition of the “arts” in this data base includes art, music, theatre, humanities, the visual arts, and foreign language. Therefore, it is possible for students to graduate from high school without ever taking a single music, art, or theatre course.

Why are the arts important to the educational mission for children? A 1999 study completed at the Center for Arts Education Research at Teachers College, Columbia University, concluded “a relationship exists between learning in the arts and other disciplines.” Although causation was not established, the evidence strongly supported

the view that learning in the arts was transferable to cognitive learning in other subject areas as documented by teachers in non-arts subjects such as math, science, and language (Burton, et al., 1999a). Catterall defines this process by stating that, “Transfer denotes instances where learning in one context assists learning in a different context” (Catterall, 2002, p. 151). The transfer of cognitive behavior may become evident in affective development as well. “This points to instances in which heightened self-concept can lead to heightened academic or social self-concepts through some mechanism of transfer” (p. 154). Burton, et al (1999b) concluded that children in schools with comprehensive arts programs performed better “on measures of creativity, fluency, originality, elaboration and resistance to closure--capacities central to arts learning” than students in schools with low arts involvement (p. 36).

Hetland and Winner maintain that study in the arts enables students to “be able to appreciate some of the greatest feats humans have ever achieved...., and to give our children sufficient skill in an art form so that they can express themselves in this art form. The arts are the only arenas in which deep personal meanings can be recognized and expressed, often in nonverbal form” (Eisner & Day, 2004, p.158). Artists create self-expression through painting and sculpture while musicians express themselves through original composition or interpretation of the work of others.

Research supports the fact that high school students who are active participants in school musical activities such as band, orchestra, chorus, or a combination of groups do better academically than students who do not participate. (Hetland & Winner, 2000; Catterall, et al., 1999; Trent, 1996; Schneider, 2000). A May 2005 Harris Poll on public attitudes toward the arts in education revealed that ninety-three percent of the responders

“agree the arts are vital to providing a well-rounded education for children” (Rupert, 2006, p. 5) A number of factors may contribute to this phenomenon.

1. Students must maintain a certain level of academic excellence in order to continue to be a participant in a musical group.
2. The amount of time required for practice and rehearsals precludes students from participating in activities that might otherwise cause them to stray from academic ventures.
3. Students involved in musical activities are required by the nature of the activity to find a balance between their musical and academic endeavors and therefore organize their daily routine more effectively.
4. Students who participate in performing musical groups may be more likely to have an above average IQ than those that are not part of an organized school music program (Babo, 2001, p.149).

A 1991 Report of the National Commission on Music Education stated that a number of significant elements of a child’s education were derived from studying music. Among the elements are:

- The ability to understand and use symbols in new contexts
- Discovering the power, precision, and control of mathematics in unexpected ways
- Finding and directing personal creativity
- Exercising the diverse skills of problem-solving

(MENC, 1991)

All of the areas identified by the Commission represent examples of higher-order thinking. Students involved in other activities, such as athletics, may incur similar educational enrichment, but participation in such activities may be limited to those with specific physical attributes. Participation in an instrumental music program is less physical so as not to limit student involvement (Underwood, 2000).

The most widely studied interdisciplinary relationship seems to be that between music and mathematical ability. Research has shown that musicians are very often adept at mathematics as well, particularly in the realm of working with numbers. According to research completed by Frances Rauscher in 1997, “Music instruction appears to have long-lasting benefits for children’s spatial-temporal skills, skills that are needed for understanding proportions and ratios” (Costa-Giomi, et al., 1999). Music is frequently analyzed from a mathematical point of view (Bahna-James, 1991). Rules of music theory are often rooted in numerical concepts. Patterns and numbers abound in both subjects (Begley, 2000). In a school atmosphere that has a rich and varied music curriculum; studies indicate that music has a strong connection with math and other disciplines (Burton, et. al., 1999).

Larry Scripp indicated in a 2002 essay, “An Overview of Research on Music and Learning,” in *Critical Links: Learning in the Arts and Student Academic and Social Development* that a “strong and reliable association between the study of music and performance on standardized reading and verbal tests” exists as well as success in second-language skill development. The integration of music into the language arts classes of kindergarteners greatly enhanced the literacy efforts put forth by the teachers (Fisher, 2001). Both Fisher and Catterall in his 1999 longitudinal study found that socio-

economic status did not hamper the infusion of music into other academic pursuits and its positive educational effects. The research results indicated that low socio-economic status (SES) students who were involved in musical endeavors throughout high school were actually better academic students than those in higher socio-economic brackets that did not participate in musical activities. Winner and Hetland (2001) suggest "...if they experience success in the subject when it is viewed through an artistic lens, their willingness to stay with the subject may increase. Increased confidence should lead to increased motivation and effort, which in turn should result in higher achievement" (p. 6).

Need for the Study

The stability of school music programs has become fiscally uncertain in times of budgetary crisis especially when funding may be directly related to scores on state standardized tests. In order to balance the budgets, programs not viewed as being directly related to the core curriculum (reading, math, science, and social studies), particularly the music programs are the first to be eliminated. In a letter dated July 2004 to superintendents from the national Secretary of Education, it is stated, "...I often hear that arts education programs endangered because of *No Child Left Behind*. It is both disturbing and just plain wrong. ... The truth is that NCLB includes the arts as a core academic subject because of their importance to a child's education." However, Subpart 1, Basic Program Requirements, of the *No Child Left Behind* document identifies those academic areas where assessment and accountability of national educational standards are to occur at regular intervals. The only core academic subjects identified by NCLB to be tested are mathematics, reading or language arts, and beginning in the 2007-08 school year, science. The general opinion of many school districts that have eliminated music

programs is that the programs have no real academic value or purpose because they are not assessed through federal and state testing programs in order to meet the NCLB standards.

The standards educators use to make curricular decisions are derived from the national and state standards set by the respective education departments and professional organizations. Specific state and national standards have been written and adopted for the arts as well as other academic subjects. The National Standards for Music include 9 standards for all students to master. They are: singing, performing, improvising, composing, reading and notating, listening and analyzing, evaluating music performances, understanding the relationship between music and the other fine and performing arts, and understanding the place of music in history and culture (MENC, 1996).

On January 11, 2003, the Pennsylvania Academic Standards for the Arts and Humanities, 22 Pa. Code, Ch. 4 became law (Appendix C). The law, which specifically outlines the standards for arts education in the Pennsylvania public schools, describes what children should know and be able to do at the end of grades three, five, eight, and twelve. There are four standard categories identified for all of the arts: 1) production, 2) performance and exhibition of the art, historical and cultural contexts that involved each area, 3) critical response, and 4) aesthetic response. The definition of music education by the state lawmakers is “Music education is an aural art form that satisfies the human need to respond to life experiences through singing, listening and/or playing an instrument” (p.

1)

The music standards set by the federal and state education agencies are broad based and encompass a wealth of material from simply naming the notes to analyzing musical selections to learning how to critique works of art. The depth of stated mandates are far reaching and require a staff of experienced music professionals in order to carry out the full extent of the goals for music education. One of the state and national standards, performance, requires that instrumental lessons be given during the school day in order to reach the goal. Although many students may take private lessons, there are numerous others that do not have the financial resources to pay for the individual music lessons. In order to accommodate the number of students in instrumental ensembles, students are sometimes pulled out from class one period per week. The class period changes on a rotating basis so as not to have students miss the same class period every week. This may be the only time when the band and orchestra instructors are able to individually assess the progress of their students. The public school music department in reaching its goals must be in a position to work cooperatively with other departments in the school. Only through cooperation between departments is the in-school lesson program feasible.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to discover and describe the academic culture and climate, as it relates to the music program, of a non arts-integrated junior high school as perceived by representative members of the teacher staff and school administrators. The traditional school model contains English (or Language Arts), mathematics, science, and social studies as its core curriculum. Art, music, physical education and health, foreign language, etc. may be part of the curricular offerings, but are not integrated or related in

content to the core. A non-integrated arts school is one in which the non-core arts (music, art, foreign language, etc) courses are often relegated to being referred to as “specials” and are not involved in cross-disciplinary curricula. Through the perceptions or beliefs and values of those being interviewed, the researcher will be able to draw a cultural portrait of the school as it pertains to the value of its music program.

Guiding Questions

The following guiding questions will be used to assemble the cultural portrait of one junior high school in northeastern PA:

1. What is the relationship between one’s life experience and their belief systems?
2. What is the perceived value and influence of a teacher, education, and music programs?
3. What are the connections between teaching, learning, and music?
4. What is the realm of influence of a non-arts integrated music program?

The results of this study may add to the growing body of literature to describe the importance of music education as an integral part of the academic environment and as part of the core curriculum. “The arts are a fundamentally important part of culture, and an education without them is an impoverished society” (Hetland & Winner, 2001, p. 5).

Cultural Portrait of the School District

The junior high school in northeastern Pennsylvania was selected as the study site because of its strong comprehensive music program and its close proximity to the researcher. Located in Monroe County in Northeastern Pennsylvania, the school district is comprised of students from four municipalities: Stroud Township, Stroudsburg

Borough, Delaware Water Gap Borough, and Hamilton Township. According to Pennsylvania QuickFacts from the U.S. Census Bureau, Monroe County has grown 19.5% from April 1, 2000 to July 1, 2006. The growth may be attributed to the County's close proximity to the New York City metropolitan area. As of 2004 the county had a 9.3% poverty rate as opposed to a rate of 11.2% statewide. The municipalities that are serviced by the school district have grown approximately 3 ½ to 4 % per year since 2000 (Monroe County Planning Commission). The school district has a total student population of approximately 5900, 22.2% of which are deemed eligible for free or reduced lunches, and is located in a small town that is surrounded by rapidly growing rural communities. The percentage of minority students within the district has grown from 5.4% during the 1986-87 academic year to 34.3% in 2007-08. (SASD, 2008).

The support for the music program indicates a long-standing strong commitment and understanding of the importance of a standards curriculum based music program by the school board, administration, the teaching staff, and the community members. A music program has been included in the district's curriculum since around 1896. The orchestra was originally organized in 1929, the marching and concert bands in 1935, and the number of choruses which included small and large vocal ensembles increased during the late 1930's through 1960. The Music Parents Association began in 1939 to support the music programs (Journalism Class, 1962). The selected school district is the only district out of 4 in Monroe County that has a string/orchestral program in the schools. In the district, general music is a mandatory part of the curriculum from kindergarten through eighth grade. The National Center for Education Statistics report, "Arts Education in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools: 1999-2000" states that while

92% of all public elementary schools offer general music, only 52% offer chorus, 48% offer band, and 27% offer string/orchestra (p. 15). While it is recognized that the school district may not be representative of the majority of districts throughout the country, the results may be used to illustrate how a musically rich culture has evolved through the values and belief systems of the administration and English, math, and music faculty of the junior high school.

Organization of the Study

Chapter II is devoted to a review of the literature. The chapter reviews the current literature related to teacher and parent perceptions of school music programs and relationships between music and academic achievement. Chapter III describes the process involved in identifying the population, collecting, and analyzing the data. Chapter IV describes the results of the data analysis. Chapter V presents the conclusions, implications, and recommendations for further study.

Summary

The intent of Chapter I has been to give the reader an understanding of the background and need for the study. The increased responsibility that NCLB has placed on school districts to improve math and reading scores has placed music programs on a proverbial tightrope. The demand for accountability through scientifically based research and high-stakes testing has deprived many music programs of necessary funding despite the fact that music has become a focal point for researchers in the areas of cognition (Rauscher, et al., 1993; Grandin, et al., 1998; McKelvie, et al., 2002, Catterall, 1999, Gouzouasis, 2003, Butzlaff, 2000). Parents, regardless of income, have indicated both intrinsic and extrinsic reasons for having their children study music (Dai & Schader,

2001, Underwood, 2000). For a myriad of reasons, including financial hardship, public schools are often the only resource students have for musical participation and study. However, some school districts that are required to raise standardized test scores so choose to cut or reduce the size of the arts programs in order to fund the necessary remediation warranted in meeting the federal and state guidelines.

This study seeks to examine the academic culture of one junior high school in northeastern PA, a non arts-integrated environment, and its beliefs and value systems as perceived by music, English, and math faculty and administration. The pervasiveness of beliefs within the school culture will be researched in order to understand the value of teachers, education, and the arts as well as the perceived connections between teaching, learning and the arts as it affects the cognitive, social, and emotional development of the junior high school student.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

“Schools Cut Back Subjects to Push Reading and Math” is a headline that appeared on the front page of the March 26, 2006 *New York Times*. The article reported that due to No Child Left Behind approximately “71 percent of the nations 15,000 school districts had reduced the hours of instructional time spent on history, music and other subjects to open up more time for reading and math.” The Center on Education Policy, in it’s fifth yearly report on the affects of the No Child Left Behind Act, reiterated information from the Times article. The July, 2007 report was drawn from 349 school district surveys and 43 district case studies (p. 3). The report states that many school districts having at least 1 school identified as not meeting the proficiency benchmarks have increased instructional time in the tested areas of math and language arts while reducing time in other areas. Students falling below the proficient level in the tested areas often have remediated or additional instruction in those areas that take the place of electives such as music. The report also states that between 73% and 77% of the districts have aligned their math and language arts curricula with the state assessment instrument (p. 12). In an atmosphere of high stakes testing where students must reach standardized benchmarks in order to comply with the federal law, school districts are prohibiting students from taking courses other than math, reading, and gym. One school district official in New Jersey stated that the “low-performing ninth-graders will be barred from taking Spanish, music or any other elective next fall so they can take extra periods of math and reading.” The administrator went on to say that “We’re using that as a

motivation....We're hoping they'll concentrate on their math and reading so they can again participate in some course they love" (Dillon, 2006).

The New Jersey school administrator that talked about music classes as courses that students "love," used the descriptor (love) from her perceptions of the students' response to music courses. The perception may have been gained through observance of school performances, attitudes and discussions among students, faculty discourse, or empirical research. The intent of this research is to examine the academic culture as it affects the music program of one junior high school in northeastern PA through the perceptions of the mathematics, English, and music faculty and a building administrator and the school district superintendent. A picture of the school's culture in an era of quantitative research and high stakes-testing will be pieced together through the understanding of the beliefs and value systems of the faculty and administration. As reported in the *New York Times* article, the junior high school is not immune from the demands of NCLB. Through direct interviews, the researcher will depict how the culture is able to face these many challenges, how the culture may be nurtured both internally throughout the school and externally by parents and the school board, and how decision making is affected.

Perception Theory

"Individuals, come to 'know' their own attitudes, emotions, and other internal states partially by inferring them from observations of their own over behavior and/or circumstances in which this behavior occurs. Thus, to the extent that internal cues are weak, ambiguous, or uninterpretable, the individual is functionally in the same position as an outside observer, an observer who must necessarily rely upon those same external

cues to infer the individual's inner states" (Bem, 1972, p.2). These statements represent the 2 postulates of Bem's self-perception theory. Goldstein and Cialdini took this theory one step further and hypothesized that individuals may infer some of their own traits by observing others with whom they feel a sense of merged identity (2007). Their findings demonstrated that an individual's views of him/herself change as a result of observing how others within their close environment behave. Individuals will take on the perceived attributes of those with whom they feel a kinship. Teachers within a school district have a "merged identity" by virtue of their trade – they are there to educate children. The perceptions that they hold are often shared with those teachers and administrators within the same building or school district. They are often formed by district agendas and by the belief systems of those surrounding them.

Teacher perceptions of school climate may have a direct impact upon the academic achievement of the students within that school. In 1994 a study was conducted through Chicago State University to determine teacher perception of what constitutes a good school climate. Sutherland used the "Teacher Perception Scale" to measure the perceptions of fifty one out of the one hundred fifty teachers in the school district. The district was comprised of four elementary schools and one junior high school in a suburban area of Chicago. The questions Sutherland asked the teachers centered on how well they knew the school, if they believed that the school offered a caring and nurturing environment, whether or not they liked the school, and if they believed that they were an integral part of the functioning of the school. He found that over eighty percent of the teachers believed that they knew the school well and seventy percent believed that they were part of the school in which they worked. The newer teachers in the school felt less a

part of the overall climate than the more experienced teachers, but all teachers shared a strong perception of the caring and nurturing features of the school. The teachers identified the following characteristics of good school climate: respect, trust, nurturing and caring, high morale and academic development (p. 11). In general the study found that teachers, with shared perceptions of a quality school climate, are more likely to work together to improve the schools in which they teach.

School climate has been shown to have a direct impact on student achievement. The role of the school principal, as the instructional leader of the school, is to impart the mission of the school to the teachers and students. “By communicating a sense of mission and purpose and by shaping the school’s instructional climate, thereby influencing the attitudes of teachers, students, parents, and the community at large toward education, they increase both student and teacher motivation and directly impact learning gains” (Krug, 1992, p. 2). A principal that strongly supports the faculty within the building enhances teacher concern for their students (Gentile, 1997). Turner-Clark (1999) found that “the actions/activities of middle school principals do affect classroom teacher success” (p. 111). The principal actions that were perceived as most positively affecting educational climate included being sensitive to teachers’ feelings and needs, being consistent with student discipline, promoting effective teacher-student relationships, and scheduling classroom space. The highlighted actions were viewed as enhancing the work environment therefore resulting in effective schools (p. 113.).

Gentile’s 1997 research topic was to examine whether teacher perception of school climate had an influence upon the academic achievement levels of middle school children in the areas of mathematics and reading. As part of the research, teachers

completed the *Middle School Organizational Climate Survey*. The responses to the survey indicated that the teachers were genuinely concerned with the cognitive, social, and emotional development of the students, the building was conducive to student learning, and that the building principal was supportive of the teachers. “Collaboration and support by the administration enhances a teachers’ performance” (p. 97). Teachers that are strongly supported are more likely to be concerned with the emotional, cognitive and social development of their students. According to this study, teacher concern and a positive perception of administrative collaboration within the building correlated with a tangible increase in reading scores but only a negligible increase in mathematics test scores (p.103). However, “As a staff unifies both as educators and friends, then the students begin to reap these benefits. A unified staff perceives that students are willing and capable of achieving academic success and therefore, the students live up to the expectations” (p. 109). It was noted that teacher gender had no influence upon the teachers’ perception of school climate and years of teaching experience had only a minimal influence upon perception.

Teachers, regardless of discipline, who infuse the arts into their classes, do so because of information given to them either through empirical research or, more likely, through perceptions of their peers as indicated by Goldstein and Cialdini’s research (2007). In a study of teachers’ use of the arts in classroom teaching, Barry Oreck collected data from four hundred twenty-three kindergarten through twelfth grade teachers (2004). Through the use of a survey that he developed, the *Teaching with the Arts Survey*, he discovered that the arts are “valued by teachers as part of the educational experience of students, regardless of other constraints, concerns, or external pressure that

limit their use” (p. 59) and that formal arts training was not a predictor of whether or not arts were included as part of the classroom experience. Two (2) specific areas that were identified for using the arts in the classroom were that the teachers increased their own enjoyment of teaching as well as enhancing their creativity. The benefits for the students included increased intrinsic motivation, thinking, and problem-solving skills (p. 64).

Teachers College researchers, Burton, Horowitz, and Abeles (2000) studied the possibility that higher order thinking skills gained from studying the arts may have an effect on learning in other academic areas. The subjects in the research included 2406 children and their teachers in twelve schools housing elementary and middle school aged children. Some of the schools had strong arts programs, others did not. Qualitative methods as well as quantitative tools were used to illicit teacher perception of school climate and student abilities in the areas of imagination, risk-taking, and expression. The teachers identified students in arts-rich environments as being more risk-takers and willing to be imaginative and creative than those students in low arts environments (p. 241). The study also indicates that teachers and principals in strong arts schools viewed the culture as being one that permits broadening the scope of the curriculum, increased interaction with students, permissible risk-taking of faculty in innovative programs, and overall satisfaction with the workplace environment. These findings were also conveyed to the researchers through direct interviews and classroom observation.

Teachers provided stories that highlighted cognitive, socio-cultural, and personal learning indicators among the students. They also articulated the fact that arts-rich schools tend to have a supportive administration and a collaborative teaching environment (p. 249).

Why do parents have their children involved in musical activities? Parents have cited both intrinsic and extrinsic reasons for including music in the lives of their children. The intrinsic reasons include developing aesthetic awareness and discrimination and to make them more well rounded individuals. Extrinsic factors include attaining a higher level of success and status. A 2001 study by Dai and Schader concluded that parents were most concerned with the intrinsic effects of musical study on their children. The perceptions were expressed by parents whether their children had been involved in musical activity for a long period of time or just beginning their musical participation. The researchers speculated that “parents who have an intrinsic orientation tend to nurture and foster internal motivations of their child to learn and develop” (p. 23). Other non-musical factors that parents listed as a by-product of musical instruction include “discipline, diligence, academic performance, and intelligence.” Parents strongly endorse music as a developmental tool. These parents are also supportive of their child’s musical education, both financially and emotionally (Dai & Schader, 2001). Parents who play a musical instrument, however, are more supportive of music education in the public schools than parents who do not play an instrument (Rodgers, 1999). Underwood (2000) found that all of the band parents that were interviewed believed that participation in instrumental music enhanced the academic achievement of their son or daughter. Comparing band participation with sports, she reported that sixty percent of parents of non-instrumental students believed that sports enhanced academics (p. 105).

Positive perceptions of what constitutes an effective school climate have an impact upon the academic achievements of the students within that school. Much of the research concerning the perceived value of music programs has been conducted in arts-

rich schools that have infused music and other arts into every aspect of the curriculum. This study intends to gain teacher perspectives of the value of a music program in a non-arts integrated academic community. The perception research does not indicate teacher backgrounds, belief and value systems that affect their opinions about music programming in the school. In order for music programs to persist, the need exists to define the culture that supports an extensive music program in order to sustain its existence in a climate of budget cutting and intense focus on reading and math as mandated by No Child Left Behind.

Influences on Perceptions

At some level all children have the innate intelligence for musical cognition. Howard Gardner's inclusion of music intelligence in his 1993 *Frames of Mind* laid the foundation of music as a separate intelligence and explains its use as a source of thinking and problem solving. Researchers such as Frances Rauscher (1997), James Catterall (1999), and Burton, Horowitz, and Abeles (2000) from the Center for Arts Education Research at Columbia University have studied the relationships between musical study and participation and other cognitive areas such as language development and mathematics. The research has enhanced public perception of the value of music in the lives of children of all ages.

The Mozart Effect

One of the most controversial research publications in the area of brain research came in a document popularized as The Mozart Effect. In 1993 Rauscher, Shaw and Ky published a paper entitled *Music and Spatial Task Performance*. College students listened to ten minutes of the Mozart Sonata for Two Pianos in D Major (K.448) prior to testing. Mozart was specifically selected because of his prodigious ability, at the age of four, to write down entire compositions without changing a note. The composition was selected for its use of symmetry and natural sequences of patterns (Grandin, et al., 1998). The largest improvement on pre/post test scoring was from students who scored below average on the pretest. The research showed a causal effect of music on short-term spatial temporal reasoning.

Brain Research

The Mozart research indicated that listening to music and spatial-temporal learning come from the same part of the brain. The question then must be asked – is there a specific part of the brain that is solely dedicated to music? The answer is that there is no musical center of the brain. All of the parts of the brain that are utilized when listening or learning to play music also contribute to other forms of cognition. Musical perception comes out of the interplay of neural pathways in both the right and the left hemispheres of the brain. The right cortex is where the pitch recognition and some aspects of melody, harmony, tone color and rhythm are housed. The left temporal, which is used for language development, is also where those with perfect pitch process this information (Tramo, 2001). Brain imagery has shown that the neural fibers connecting the two sides of the brain thicken in children who have begun to play string instruments prior to the age

of seven. One explanation for this result is that in studying piano and stringed instruments, children must use both hands independently in ways that most children do not (Costa-Giomi, et al., 1999).

The original “Mozart Effect” research showed spatial-temporal improvement for only a short period of time. The study was replicated in 1994 with college students listening to the same Mozart sonata on a daily basis. The improvement increased daily. Another control group in the study, listening to Glass’s minimalist music found no enhancement. The same held true for those that listened to silence before testing (Rauscher, et al., 1994). The study was once again replicated, but with pre-school children. The supposition was that merely listening to music would not have the same effect as actively participating in musical activities. Students were assigned to one of four groups: private keyboard lessons, group singing lessons, computer lessons, or no lessons of any kind. The results indicated that the children in the keyboard group improved their scores dramatically on spatial-temporal tasks. Areas such as finding relationships among patterns and assembling puzzles were positively affected (Rauscher, et al., 1997).

The Mozart Effect study has been replicated with mixed results by a number of researchers since the original study was published. The study was replicated by researchers in Canada. The hypothesis of the group was that the testing results would be based upon the personal preference, of those being tested, of background music consisting of Mozart, Schubert or silence. The assumption was that the higher performance level would be based upon the favorite background condition. A related study was performed having a short story read to the participants in lieu of silence. The results of the first study replicated Rauscher’s (1993) study, but also found a similar

outcome for those that listened to the Schubert piece prior to testing. In the second study there was no significant variation in test scores between participants that listened to Mozart as opposed to those that listened to a short story prior to testing. The researchers' conclusions were that the effects would be generalized to include not only Mozart, but also other Classical era composers as well as those of the Romantic era. The general conclusion of the study was that spatial-temporal scores might be elevated when the participants are exposed to auditory experiences that are personally pleasing (Nantais & Schellenberg, 1999).

A similar study was performed in New Zealand using seventh and eighth grade students who listened to Mozart and popular dance music prior to spatial – temporal reasoning testing. The results did not replicate those found by Rauscher and colleagues in 1993. In fact, there was no discernable difference between the groups who listened to either type of music. Scores were basically unchanged on pre and post tests for both musical genres (McKelvie & Low, 2002). The general discussion of their findings state that even though the Mozart effect could not be duplicated, "... it could be argued that we might have inadvertently tapped into a broader main effect of music, or more specifically, all types of music improve post-test spatial performance in children" (p. 252).

Neurological studies have shown differences in brain patterns and usage between those that have studied and performed music, particularly in children (Rauscher, et al., 1997), and those that have not. Brain researchers have taken that theory and expanded it to test the effects of listening to different genres of music on participants prior to testing. While results from the myriad of researchers (Rauscher, et al., 1993; McKelvie & Low,

2002; Costa-Giami, et al., 1999; Nantais & Schellenberg, 1999) have varied considerably, it may be safe to say that personal preference in background music or other auditory experience is the key to elevated scores in spatial-temporal test results. Age appears to be a factor in the type of music that is preferred. Infants show a positive response when listening to consonant or pleasing sounds while dissonance will make them cry. As children grow older, the type of music that they appreciate is most often what they are exposed to in the home.

The neurological studies, particularly Rauscher's Mozart Effect (1993), have had a great bearing on the perception that classical music, in this case Mozart, makes children smarter. CD's and infant toys that play music are abundant in stores that specialize in educational materials. This perception has often been the impetus for parents to engage their children in musical activities from pre-school through high school.

Connections to Academic Achievement

Researchers, such as James Catterall (1999), Douglas Fisher (2001), Peter Gouzouasis (2003), and others, have studied the effects that music has on other academic areas, primarily mathematics and literacy. The musical involvement of the students in these studies ranges from simply listening to music (classical or other musical genres) to actually playing an instrument or singing. The Rauscher, et al. study (1993) prompted researchers to more closely consider the possible correlations between music and other areas.

Scores on standardized tests most often define academic achievement. In a series of studies done by the College Board from 1990 to 1996, it was found that students who studied in the arts (music and art) scored consistently higher than those not involved in

the arts on the reading and mathematics portion of the SAT. A 2005 study by the College Board states that “students who took four years of arts coursework outperformed their peers who had one-half year or less of arts coursework by fifty-eight points on the verbal portion and thirty-eight points on the math portion of the SAT” (Ruppert, 2006, p.9). The grade point average of students involved in school music programs was also higher than those who were not involved (Kelstrom, 1998). The fact that students involved in music are higher academic achievers than those who are not is supported by numerous research studies.

Music and Mathematics

Of all of the correlations between music and other subjects, mathematical reasoning is the most widely recognized. Research has shown an increase in spatial-temporal reasoning test scores for students involved in musical activities. Spatial temporal reasoning includes the ability to transform and relate mental images in time and space and the ability to compare physical and mental images (Grandin, et al., 1998). This type of reasoning is of great importance in learning mathematics and particularly proportional reasoning. The researchers tested the hypothesis that music training for preschool children will enhance spatial-temporal reasoning. The experimental groups were given six months of private piano lessons while the control groups received computer lessons. In a pre/post test situation that measured spatial-temporal reasoning as well as spatial-recognition reasoning, those student receiving piano lessons showed vast improvement in the spatial-temporal reasoning test. No significant improvement was indicated on the scores of the spatial-recognition tests (tests that require matching or finding similarities between objects). The computer group did not show significant

improvement on any of the tests. The researchers state that from the results of this and other studies that music education must exist in our educational system, preferably starting at the preschool level. The spatial-temporal reasoning derived from music study is imperative for higher-level math and science skills (Grandin, et al., 1998).

Project Zero, an educational research component of Harvard University's Graduate School of Education, and its project REAP (Reviewing Education and the Arts Project) conducted a comprehensive review of all studies from 1950 – 1999 (published and unpublished) that have linked the arts and academic achievement. The results of the review indicated three studies, which proved causation and others that did not. Two of the studies indicated a causal link between music and spatial-temporal reasoning. The first report, based on twenty-six reports, indicated a moderately strong causal relationship between listening to music and spatial-temporal reasoning. There was a wide variation in study findings, ranging from showing clear causation to others showing minimal-to-no results. The report offered no conclusions as to why listening to music enhanced spatial-temporal reasoning. The second report based on nineteen studies indicated a large causal relationship between spatial-temporal reasoning and learning to make music. The effect was even larger when standard musical notation was learned as well. The studies indicated that this causal relationship was found regardless of socio-economic status.

Seven areas were found to have no causal relationship by the REAP project researchers. Four of the studies included music, with two of them including music as part of an arts curriculum. The first report, based on thirty-one studies, indicated a small to medium association between studying the arts and academic achievement as indicated by standardized test scores. No evidence was found that studying the arts caused the

increased test scores. One possible conclusion is that high achieving students are also involved in music activities. A second study indicated only a minimal relationship between studying the arts and creative thinking. A weak causal relationship was found between music training and math, and music and reading. Only half of the six studies in each report indicated causality (Winner & Hetland, 2000).

The musical concept of notes and rhythm in patterns equates to the arithmetic concept of counting. A study attempted to discover if a correlation existed in high school students between study in music theory and mathematics. The extent of correlation was contingent upon the level of math that was being studied by the individual students. Students that were in math courses using numerical calculations and geometry highly correlated with the music theory scores. This included students that took trigonometry and pre-calculus. Scores on mathematics tests that dealt with logical reasoning did not correlate (Bahna-James, 1991).

James Catterall and his research assistants, using National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS) data, studied the effects of involvement in the arts on the academic achievement of 25,000 students in grades eight through twelve over a ten year period. His study, which was reported in two parts, first examined the effects of the arts in general, considering all disciplines, and then investigated the effects of students pursuing a single artistic discipline. The researchers found substantial differences in academic achievement, attitudes and behaviors among students involved in the arts. The differences in the scores were significant for students of low socio-economic status (SES) as well as those students from mid to upper level income families.

The second phase of the study investigated the effects that involvement in band, orchestra, or chorus had on academic achievement of eighth through twelfth grade students. The study also included a separate analysis of instrumental music and achievement in mathematics. The academic performance at each grade level was fairly constant with students involved in instrumental music achieving approximately sixteen to eighteen percent higher grades than those that were not involved in music. The results also indicated that the size of the involved groups change and that by the senior year, the eighteen percent difference really equates to a forty-six percent advantage for those in musical groups. Low SES student scores indicated a similar result to the general group, but in smaller percentages. The findings indicated that the advantage for raising academic achievement increases for those students musically involved and will rise substantially in the last four years of high school. The comparative advantage for involved low SES students was thirty-two percent higher by twelfth grade. “Yet intensive involvement in a single discipline should probably be thought to be even more important developmentally than high levels of more scattered involvement in the arts” (Catterall, et al., 1999, p. 9).

The researchers investigated the question of whether involvement in instrumental music has any effect upon mathematical achievement. Again the researchers used records of eighth through twelfth grade students. The results were three-fold. First, high SES students performed better in math than everyone else, although the students in music substantially outperformed those that were not involved in music. Low SES students involved in music achieved higher scores in mathematics than the average student with no music involvement. The study also indicated that mathematical performance increased for musically involved students over time. The low SES students achieved math scores

that were twice as high as their non-involved counterparts by the twelfth grade (Catterall, et al., 1999).

A meta-analysis was performed on all published and unpublished studies that linked music and mathematics from their inception through 1998. The eligible studies were divided into three parts: correlational studies, experimental training studies where students were given private vocal or instrumental lessons for at least four months prior to math testing, and background music studies that had students listening to soothing background music while testing. The researchers were interested in the effects of music on the mathematics testing. A weak association was found between students that voluntarily took private music lessons and high scores on math tests. A weak causal relationship was found between students who studied music through a school music curriculum and math scores. The researchers determined that a correlation did exist between having soothing music played while testing and enhanced test scores (Vaughn, 2000).

Whitehead (2001) conducted a study of students, ages eleven to seventeen; to see if a music intensive curriculum would enhance math scores. Although the subject base was small, the results indicated that the treatment group (those who received daily music instruction) had a higher level of improvement in their math scores.

Studies have been completed comparing the math scores of instrumental students with that of students that have not participated in music. Zanutto (1997), Babo (2001), Schneider (2000), Hill (1987), and Kluball (2000) researched the effects of participation in music programs with academic achievement. All studies indicated that the music

students scored higher than non-music students on mathematics tests. The results were varied as to the influence of the number of years of musical study.

The most acknowledged relationship between music and other academic areas is that between music and mathematics. The components of numerical math and music are related particularly in the area of rhythm where counting is imperative for performance. Research has shown that there is a strong correlation, and at times, a causal relationship between involvement in musical activities and mathematical achievement. Catterall's 1999 research indicates the fact that students who persevered in school music programs progressively improve their mathematics scores, regardless of socioeconomic status. Zanutto (1997) and Rodgers (1999) found that long-term participation in instrumental music produced higher math scores. The case is made strongly for school music programs that include group instrumental (band and orchestra), chorus, and keyboarding (piano) lessons from the pre-school level through graduation. The disparity between math scores of those involved in music and those that are not involved is statistically significant and striking.

Music and Literacy

A study of eighty kindergarten students in California was conducted to discover whether having music as part of a literacy program has an effect on oral language and reading scores. All children came from homes where Spanish was the first language and all were from low SES families. Four classrooms were involved in the study with two including music in the literacy part of their day while two did not. The study followed the children as well as their teachers through kindergarten and first grade. Students who had

music included in the language part of their day outperformed the non-music counterparts on a ten to one ratio (Fisher, 2001).

Two meta-analysis studies were conducted on all studies conducted from 1950 through 1998 that were involved with music and reading ability. The correlational studies demonstrated a strong correlation between performance on standardized reading/verbal tests and musical experience. There is, however, no causal relationship found. The experimental studies asked if music study enhances reading improvement. There was no reliable effect found. However, the number of studies in this vein was very small (Butzlaff, 2000).

Integration of music into the reading curriculum of fifth graders provided a positive effect upon the reading achievement of these students. Andrews' (1997) research found a strong correlation between those students whose reading classes were infused with music and higher grades. She also found that this group had a more positive attitude about reading in general.

Studies completed by Babo (2001), Zanutto (1997), Hill (1987), Schneider (2000), Trent (1996), and Kluball (2000) support the argument that students involved in school music programs score higher in language and literacy tests than do non-music students. The students included in the studies ranged from fifth through twelfth grades. The students' performance improved in school and standardized tests.

A team of researchers at Northwestern University examined the brainstem encoding of linguistic pitch between musicians with at least 6 years of musical training starting at or before the age of twelve and nonmusicians, with less than three years of musical training at any time in their lives. Using the linguistic pitch patterns of the

Mandarin Chinese language as a basis for linguistic recognition, the researchers measured electrical brain frequency, degree of correlation of pitch contour, and pitch tracking. The results of the study indicated that “either speech- or music-related experience can tune sensory encoding in the auditory brainstem via the corticofugal pathway. Notably, this tuning, whether speech- or music-induced, would enhance all relevant auditory functions (both speech and music) subserved by the rostral brainstem.” The researchers state that, “Such encoding, arguably associated with increased musical pitch usage, may reflect a positive side effect of context-general corticofugal tuning of the afferent system, implying that long-term music-making may shape basic sensory circuitry. These results complement our existing knowledge of the brainstem’s role in encoding speech and frequency modulation by demonstrating the interplay between music and speech, subcortical and cortical structures, and the impact of long-term auditory experiences” (Wong, Skoe, Russo, Dees, and Kraus, 2007).

The research defining the correlation between music and reading is quite small in comparison with the wealth of information connecting music and mathematics. The California study (Fisher, 2001) indicates a strong correlation between having music in the classroom and the high degree of literacy attained. The 2007 study completed at Northwestern University indicates a definitive correlation between increased encoding of linguistic speech patterns in subjects with prior musical study. Both math and literacy research provides evidence that music does enhance academic scores for all students regardless of socio-economic status. A study by Ruppert (2006) and Vaughn and Winner (2000) demonstrates higher SAT scores in both math and verbal scores for students that were involved in arts courses. One of the highest scoring groups belonged to students that

studied music history, music theory, or music appreciation in school. Although causation has not been established in most studies, the positive correlation between musical instruction and involvement on mathematics and literacy development is strong. All the foregoing studies support the view that the study of music and performance enhances academic performance.

Child Development, Parental Involvement, and Musical Abilities

According to Shetler (1994), one hundred percent of young children are involved in some form of musical behavior. He states, “As explorers seeking novel experiences, almost all children are actually performing, listening, and creating a music that has meaning for them, and fills a need for expressive communication.” Shetler also identifies rhythm as the primary musical event in an infant’s life. Drumming, he states, can be heard by a third trimester infant in-utero. The rhythm patterns that children hear are soon translated into vocal patterns, which are identifiable to those close to them. The developmental musical progression transcends all cultures. The rate at which a child progresses musically is dependent upon whether or not formal instruction is provided. Music is “brain food” that is very important to the cognitive development of the child (Shetler, 1994).

A report from the Early Childhood Music Summit sponsored by The National Association for Music Education, National Association for the Education of Young Children and the U. S. Department of Education in June 2000 emphasized the fact that music education is basic education, not auxiliary to education, and is vital to all children. The Summit outlined five educational values that music brings to young children. The first value is that infants use music as among their first forms of communication. Parents

singing lullabies to their children communicate this love and parent-child bonding back to their babies. Second, as children grow, music continues to assist in expanding their world. It is used as a form of self-expression as well as a communicative device. Television shows such as *Sesame Street*, *Mr. Rogers* and *Barney* use music as an educational and developmental aide to teach everything from colors, to letters, to counting, and to emotional states. The members of the summit also acknowledge the fact that “Music exerts a multiplier effect on reasoning skills, especially on spatial reasoning – an effect that has been demonstrated experimentally” (p. 2). Third, music can be used to provide children with vital life skills such as cooperation, collaboration, and group effort when having children sing and play instruments together. Fourth, musical experience led by an experienced musical provider can also begin to teach children to differentiate between what is “good” music and therefore laying the groundwork for an aesthetic sense. Lastly, music provides a strong foundation for a child being ready to begin school. “Music experiences can help children prepare to learn to become literate as it helps them become more aware of and focused on the phonemes that make up the language or languages they will need to excel in school” (p. 3). The members of the Summit were in total agreement of the fact that music was integral to the sound development of the young child.

The renowned Japanese teacher of young violin students, Shinichi Suzuki, is grounded in a strong relationship between parent, child, and teacher. The Suzuki method of string instruction allows children to begin musical instruction as early as age two and a half. Suzuki’s premise for his teaching method is that all individuals are born musical and learn to play musical instruments the same way that one learns to speak. The inclusion of

a parent (usually the mother) in the private lessons of the child allows the instruction to continue at home. A study, which examined teacher and student behavior during Suzuki string lessons, also monitored the behavior of parents during the individual lessons. The analysis of the data indicated that teachers give more verbal feedback to students with a higher percentage of parent involvement and also students with higher parental involvement talked more to their teachers during the lessons than did those with low parental involvement in the Suzuki teaching process (Duke, 1999). Gardner states, “As for the interpersonal costs, they also seem intrinsic to the program (p. 378). The derived benefits are to strengthen the parent-child bond at home while practicing and to create a highly successful and comforting parent-teacher-child learning environment (Kendall, 1996).

Parent involvement and school relationships were the subject of research completed by Murphy in 2007. She found that the more educated the parents were, the more involved they became in their academic endeavors of their children. She also found that enhanced communication between schools and parents can form partnerships that may increase student learning. This research further indicates the importance of parent/child/school relationships in the educational process.

Brain research has scientifically traced brain function of those that listen and perform music through the use of modern medical technology. Neurologist Frank Wilson says that he is “convinced that all of us have a biologic guarantee of musicianship” (Hodges, 2000). These principles do not guarantee that everyone will be a musician, but that humans all have the ability to, if not participate in music, to be able to elicit a musical response through listening. A fundamental principle that is also highlighted is the

importance of parent-child-teacher involvement in musical and educational development. The Suzuki method of string instruction has made that prominent in its educational mission. Positive reinforcement from family members and teachers/caregivers promotes not only musical growth but also self-esteem and self-expression. The value of music for the young child cannot be overlooked. A strong pre-school music education program prepares children with the skills necessary for language development and literacy and other cognitive skills. "Learning transfer may more than likely be a holistic function of music's cognitive processes rather than by any direction attribution (e.g., listening to or learning one particular form of music)" (Gouzouasis, 2003, p. 4). The cognitive development pertains to the increased abilities in attaining academic achievement and social understanding (Catterall, 2002). Parents want their children to succeed academically, but they are also influenced by the perception that studying music enhances a child's sense of self, a higher class distinction, and increased aesthetic awareness. The perceptions held by parents can be supported and justified by empirical research.

Conclusion

A report from the Center on Educational Policy entitled "From the Capital to the Classroom: Year 4 of the No Child Left Behind Act" (2006) gives an overview of the effects of the Act on school systems to date and provides recommendations to the U.S. Department of Education and the Congress to help the educational mission work better. The goal of NCLB is to raise test scores in math and reading to a proficient level. However the report states that, "71% of school districts reported that they have reduced instructional time in at least 1 other subject to make more time for reading and

mathematics—the subjects tested for NCLB purposes. In some districts, struggling students received double periods of reading or math or both—sometimes missing certain subjects altogether. Some districts view this extra time for reading and math as necessary to help low-achieving students catch up. Others point to negative effects, such as shortchanging students from learning important subjects, squelching creativity in teaching and learning, or diminishing activities that keep children interested in school” (p. vii). Yet, according to a 2005 Harris Poll on the attitudes of Americans towards arts education, 93% of respondents agree that the arts are vital to the educational endeavors of students making them more well-rounded individuals (Ruppert, 2006). A dichotomy seems to exist between public perception as to the multiple benefits of arts programs, and the implementation of the NCLB testing standards where programs, including music, are being diminished or cut from the curriculum completely.

The positive perception of the value of the arts is critical to sustaining the programs that currently exists in the schools.

School districts are becoming less independent and more accountable to federal and state agencies in developing and teaching a curriculum that supports high-stakes testing in math and reading. The Center on Education Policy’s fifth year of NCLB report discussed the curricular that had occurred since the 2001-02 academic year. “At the middle school level, about 43% of districts reported that they have changed the English language arts curriculum to a great extent, and 42% said they have changed the math curriculum to a great extent to put greater emphasis on tested content and skills” (p. 13). School budgets must now support increased tutoring and other support services to insure that students meet a proficient level on the state tests. In order to pay for the additional

services, district administrators must rearrange their budgets, and often end up cutting music programs from the curriculum.

The attitudes within the school district, including those of the teachers, students, administration, and parents will affect the level of support or lack of support for school music programs during the current period of fiscal constraint. Their beliefs have a great impact on the decision making process. The purpose of this research is to investigate the beliefs and value systems of the teachers and administration of one junior high school in northeastern PA as they pertain to the music program. Through their varied perceptions, the researcher will be able to gain a perspective on the culture of the school, the challenges that the music program faces, and how the culture can be nurtured despite the conflicting demands placed on them from local, state, and federal policies, as well as local political pressures. In an environment of quantitative research and high-stakes testing, little has been written to gain a qualitative view of the importance of music in the schools. This research begins to fill that gap.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Every school, indeed every classroom has an individual personality and culture. The culture of a defined group is characterized by the behavior, attitude, and language of its population. This study examines the cultural portrait of one junior high school in northeastern PA as perceived by members of the English, mathematics, and music faculty and administration. The study will elicit “participants’ meanings for events and behaviors” and “highlight the nuances of the culture” (Marshall & Rossman, 2006, p. 104). Their perceptions will assist in formulating a representation of the shared value and belief systems that are prevalent in the school as it pertains to the music program.

Research Design

The purpose of this ethnographic study is to discover and describe the academic culture at one junior high school as perceived by members of the English, mathematics, and music faculty, and administration. Using direct interviews, the researcher attempts to discover the perceived academic environment of the school, discipline-specific environments, and whether or not the music program is viewed as having a valued role in that academic culture. The value and belief system of the participants are examined in order to gain insight into how the culture is nurtured, how challenges are faced, and how decisions are made that affect the music program in the school.

Participants in the Study

All members of the eighth and ninth grade mathematics (10), English (14), and music (5) faculty at the selected junior high school were asked to be participants in the study. The principal of the school and the superintendent of the school district were also

asked to participate as administrative voices. Teachers with expertise in math, English and music, were chosen because these disciplines are most often cited in the music/academic achievement research as being affected by music education (Catterall, et al., 1999, Hetland & Winner, 2001, Gouzouasis, 2003, Costa-Giomi, et al., 1999, Bahna-James, 1991, Gentile, 1997, Fisher, 2001, Rauscher, et al., 1993). The members of the faculty have varying years of experience in the teaching field that yield varying perceptions of the school's academic culture and environment. The perceptions of the principal and superintendent aid in defining the culture from an administrative point of view. The actions and activities of the school principal are often perceived as having an affect on the success of classroom teachers and therefore impacting the belief and value system of the faculty (Turner-Clark, 1999). In response to the invitation to participate in this study, three mathematics teachers, three English teachers, and four music teachers volunteered to be interviewed. The principal of the schools as well as the superintendent of the school district also agreed to be interviewed.

Table 1 indicates the gender and ethnicity of the respondents. Table 2 indicates their position and years of teaching and administrative experience. Table 3 indicates the teachers' areas of teaching responsibility as well as additional school assignments such as club advising, new teacher mentoring, and Accreditation for Growth (AFG) duties.

Table 1

Gender and Ethnicity

Position	Sup	Prin	Eng	Eng	Eng	Math	Math	Math
Gender	M	F	M	F	F	F	F	F
Ethnicity	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	B

Position	Mus	Mus	Mus	Mus
Gender	F	M	F	F
Ethnicity	W	W	W	W

Table 2

*Position and Length of Teaching And**Administrative Experience*

Position	Years of Teaching and/or Administrative Experience
Superintendent - Sam	Over 40 years combined experience
School Principal - Joan	20 years teaching high school 11 years administrative experience
English Teacher - Tom	9 years teaching experience
English Teacher - Beth	14 years teaching experience
English Teacher - Megan	5 years teaching experience
Mathematics Teacher - Rachel	12 years teaching experience
Mathematics Teacher - Emily	2 years teaching experience
Mathematics Teacher - Nancy	13 years teaching experience
Music Teacher - Susan	13 years teaching experience
Music Teacher - John	19 years teaching experience
Music Teacher - Pam	14 years teaching experience
Music Teacher - Lucy	34 years teaching experience

Table 3

Teaching and Advisory Responsibilities

Teacher	Teaching Assignments	Advisory Duties
Tom	9th grade: Applied Communications, College Prep, Edge remedial classes	AFG, School Improvement, new teacher mentor, Spelling Bee
Beth	8, 9th grade: Edge, College Prep, Honors English	Responsible for the administration of all Gifted Individualized Education Plans (GIEPs)
Megan	9th grade: Applied Communications, College Prep, Introduction to Theatre	AFG, School Improvement, runs media studio for morning and afternoon announcements
Rachel	8th grade: Math 8, College Prep, Honors Math	School Improvement
Emily	8th grade: Math 8, College Prep, Math Workshop, 1 section of 8th grade science	Builder's Club Advisor
Nancy	8th, 9th grade: College Prep, Math Workshop	
Susan	8th,9th grade strings, string lessons (violin, viola, cello, bass), 8th&9th grade orchestra	AFG
John	9th grade and 10th grade band, band instrument lessons High School jazz band, splits the day between junior high and high school	
Pam	8th grade general music, 9th grade concert choir, string lessons	
Lucy	7 th and 8th grade general music, 7 th and 8th grade chorus, splits the day between the middle school and the junior high school	Tennis coach

All data collected will be stored in the researcher's home files for a minimum of 3 years to comply with federal regulations.

Procedures

The faculty members solicited for the ethnography are members of the teaching staff of the mathematics department, English department, and music departments at the

junior high school. The building principal and school district superintendent were also interviewed.

All participating faculty members, the school principal, and superintendent were given a consent form (Appendix A) that outlined the purpose of the study, the amount of time needed to complete the interviews, and how the interview information would be used (Creswell, 1998, p. 124). The form also indicated that the teacher's participation in the study would be purely voluntary and that they could withdraw from the study at any time (Seidman, 1998, p.51).

The data for the study consists of a compilation of information gained through three sets of interviews, each thirty to sixty minutes long. "People's behavior becomes meaningful and understandable when placed in the context of their lives and the lives of those around them" (Seidman, 1998, p.11). All interviews were done on a one-on-one basis. Both the principal and superintendent also received 3 private interviews. All interviews were digitally recorded for ease of transcribing the data.

The first interview focused upon the life experiences of the individuals: where they grew up and went to school, their involvement in extra-curricular activities as a student, their exposure to the arts in their youth, why they decided to become teachers in their chosen fields, and how and why they became teachers at the junior high school. Perceived factors influencing their involvement in education are of particular importance. Seidman states that "the interviewer's task is to put the participant's experience in context by asking him or her to tell as much as possible about him or herself [sic] in light of the topic up to the present time" (p. 11). The participant's recounting of his/her background gives insight into current belief and value systems. For example, a person

that was given piano lessons as a child often passes that same experience on to their children, especially if it was a positive experience in their life. Historical recollections such as these may not reveal themselves in an interview situation with a set list of questions, but are more likely to be discovered when free response is permitted.

The second interview focused on the specific details of their present experience. What is a typical work day like? What changes have they experienced in their years as teachers? How would they explain their interactions with the students, other faculty, parents, and administration? How does what they do everyday fit into their impression of an effective educational setting? How does their individual discipline impact the cognitive, social and emotional development of a junior high school student?

The final interview provided an opportunity for the faculty members to reflect upon their role in the educational environment of the school. They were asked to describe a master teacher, how the school impacts the community, and what is most valued at the junior high school by faculty, staff, administration, students, and parents. The participants were also requested to describe the school's curriculum, their individual role as a teacher in the school community, and the perceived cognitive, social, and emotional benefits derived from the English, math, and music programs.

Role of the Researcher

“Ethnographers use interviews to help classify and organize an individual's perception of reality” (Fetterman, 1998, p. 40). The interactive nature of the interview permits the researcher to gain as much insight into perceptions held by the participants as possible. The researcher “must affirm that their interest in the subject reflects a real desire to know what is going on, to understand the experience” (Seidman, 1998, p. 26).

Interview Protocol

Each interview was thirty to sixty minutes in length and was composed of open-ended questions that were designed to elicit discourse pertinent to the intended topic. The following sets of questions (Appendix B), inspired by four guiding questions, address the areas of education, home life and community involvement, music, teaching, and junior high school environment. The guiding questions are:

1. What is the relationship between one's life experience and their belief systems?
2. What is the perceived value and influence of a teacher, education, and music programs?
3. What are the connections between teaching, learning, and music?
4. What is the realm of influence of a non-arts integrated music program?

The first set of interviews put the participant's experience in context, from childhood to the present time.

- Describe their schooling from elementary through high school.
- How do they spend their time when not in school?
- What types of arts opportunities were available in their home, community, and/or school?
- Describe their exposure to the arts while growing up.
- Finish the statement: Music is.....
- Describe the moment when they decided to make teaching their life's work and the steps they took to achieve this goal.
- Were there any mentors or special people who influenced them?

- Describe their teaching career.
- Describe a defining moment when they were in junior high school.
- Who influenced them at that age?

The second interview explores, through open-ended questions, the actual details of their present experience as teachers and administrators.

- Describe what makes a well-rounded, successful student.
- Describe their involvement in outside activities in the community and participation in the arts.
- How do the individual disciplines impact cognitive, social, and emotional development?
- How can the arts contribute to the life of a typical 12-15 year old child?
- Complete the sentence: Music education is.....
- Describe a typical work day, including interactions with other faculty members, administration, and parents and the challenges that may be faced.
- What changes have been seen or experienced during their teaching career?
- Describe an effective junior high school.

Participants were encouraged to give examples of stories to illustrate their daily experiences. When respondents are permitted to speak freely through story-telling, more thorough details of their daily routines may be revealed that might not emerge through other interview techniques. Explanations of interactions with students, faculty, administration, and parents may be clearly explained through this type of discourse.

The final interview was a time for the participants to reflect upon “the meaning of their experience” (Seidman, p. 12). Through open-ended questions and cognitive mapping the participants were asked to discuss the intellectual and emotional connections of their experience. Cognitive mapping “displays the person’s representation of concepts about a particular domain, showing the relationship among them. Descriptive text is associated with it” (Miles& Huberman, p. 134).

- Describe a master teacher.
- Describe how the school impacts the community.
- Talk about the impact of artistic opportunities in the school.
- How have the arts contributed to their life/learning?
- Describe the influence or impact that the music program at the Junior High School has on the students and the school.
- How do they see their role as a teacher in the school community?
- Describe their personal contributions to the school: school climate, effectiveness, student learning.
- Explain the school curriculum and connections between disciplines.
- What are the cognitive, social, and emotional benefits of the math, English, and music programs?
- Describe three or four things most valued and supported at the junior high school by faculty, staff, administration, students, and parents.
- What changes in the school climate would they most want to bring about?
- Draw a picture of the school curriculum and explain the picture.

The school's principal and superintendent were given the same three-interview protocol as the faculty members. Their responses from the last interview session would have an administrative point of view and may serve as a precursor to the tenor of the faculty responses.

The researcher's own personal biases exist regarding the importance of music in the school curriculum. She is a music professional of many years who has taught in the public schools, offered private instrumental instruction, and teaches at the post-secondary education level. She has interacted as a volunteer with the school music programs and is a member of state and national music education organizations. As such, she is privy to policy changes and other information affecting school music programs. For the purposes of this study, however, her interaction with the faculty and principal of the junior high school was strictly that of a facilitator and listener rather than as a biased music professional attempting to draw out perceptions that may not be present.

Piloting

The interview sequence protocol was piloted on education professionals that were not part of the intended study. The pilot participants were interviewed three times and asked the same set of questions that the study group was to be asked in order to validate that the questions were measuring what they were intended to measure. The pilot process provided the researcher an opportunity to practice interviewing within the allotted time frame and to keep the researcher and participants on focus during the sequential interviews. Each interview was digitally recorded and analyzed for both validity and the researcher's capability during the interview process. The number of questions asked of the respondents and the time commitment for the interview process was reduced due to

the results of the pilot projects. Some of the questions were redundant and additional responses were gained through follow-up questions thereby condensing the original set of questions.

Trustworthiness

Validity was tested throughout the interview process as the threads or responses are drawn over the course of the three interviews that focused on five sets of experiences: education, home life and community, the arts, teaching, and the junior high school experience. The consecutive interviews were developed in such a way as to reframe questions from a different perspective in order to verify or validate previous responses. The Three Interview Series Protocol (Appendix B) illustrates the fact that each consecutive interview is focused on the same set of experiences and explores a different level of response. Interview one focuses on the past experiences of the participant, Interview two focuses on the details of the present experience, and Interview three is a reflection on the meaning of the experience. The validity of the responses is enhanced by the three-interview protocol. Seidman states that “The three-interview structure incorporates features that enhance the accomplishment of validity. It places participants’ comments in context.” He continues, “...we can connect their experiences and check the comments of one participant against those of others” (p. 17). All transcripts of interviews have been returned to each participant for verification of authenticity and corrections before becoming a permanent part of the research data. This practice insures that the transcriptions properly documented each interview session. If a participant’s responses are dramatically different within or across levels on similar topics throughout the

interview process, those responses would have been deemed to be invalid and discarded from the study.

The triangulation of the data, using information gained through the 3 interview protocol with the faculty and the administrators permitted the researcher to “understand more completely the art an actor (participant) plays in the social drama, and ultimately to put the whole situation into perspective” (Fetterman, 1998, p. 93). The consistency of responses across the three interview protocol focusing on education, home life and community, the arts, teaching, and the junior high school experience further added to the validity of the study. The responses led the researcher to piece together a picture of the academic culture of the school, the beliefs and values systems as illustrated through the perceptions of the participants, and the coherence of the interviewed faculty and administrative personnel as it pertains to the music program.

Analysis of the Data

All interviews were transcribed verbatim and coded from audio, digitally recorded sessions. A precise depiction of the setting for the study and the chronological events within the study was described. Each session’s transcription was returned to the participant for review as to its accuracy. The transcripts were coded according to the experience categories identified in the three interview series protocol of education, home life/community, the arts, teaching, and junior high school related experiences. The researcher identified connecting threads and patterns that exist within and/or across levels. The identified connections established the themes used to answer the 4 guiding questions. Themes that proliferated throughout the interview process were used to craft an interpretation of the culture sharing group as perceived by the interviewed faculty and

the principal. Categorizing the responses lent structure to the interviews and permitted further reliability of the coding procedure. Profiles of the faculty and administration derived from the identified themes formed a narrative that describes the academic culture of the school.

Assumptions of the Study

The identified school district has and is continuing to exhibit intense growth. The school district has grown forty-three percent between 1980 and 2000 (Hackett, 2005). To fulfill the educational needs of the students in the district, a new school was opened in the fall of 2005 to house fifth, sixth and seventh grade students. Despite the compelling need for standardized testing and assessment in the core subjects of math, reading, and science, the school district administration has deemed the music department to be an important educational component. This unique point of view is not indicative of all school districts throughout the country. Most school districts that have a music program, regardless of the size of the school district, will usually have a band program and a chorus but not an orchestra. The district has a strong and extensive music program that includes voluntary participation in chorus, band, and orchestra beginning in the fifth grade. Nineteen full-time music teachers who specialize in vocal music, strings, and band instruments are employed to teach within the schools. The Junior High School employs five music specialists who teach chorus, band, orchestra, and general music. The district has an approved once-a-week pullout music lesson program that has met with success. The music personnel have been sensitive to the fact that lessons should be set at various times throughout the day so that students do not repeatedly miss the same class every week. Most of the non-music teachers have been very cooperative in permitting students to have

group music lessons during their academic class time periodically throughout the school year.

Summary

The academic culture of a school is determined by the administration, faculty, staff, students, parents, school board, as well as the location of the district. All involved parties in a school district may perceive the academic environment and what is important to schools differently. Faculty and administration attempt to work in tandem in order to educate students often under pressure from internal and external sources such as No Child Left Behind. Their perspective on the culture of the school has a direct bearing on the quality of education that the students receive. The intent of this study is to ascertain the values and belief systems needed to support a strong music program in the current climate of fiscal accountability and a narrow view of academic success as measured through high-stakes testing.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

The purpose of the study was to establish, through personal interviews, the perceived academic environment of the selected junior high school as it pertains to the value of the music program. The research approach was based upon Bem's (1972) self-perception theory states that, "Individuals come to 'know' their own attitudes, emotions, and other internal states partially by inferring them from observations of their own overt behavior and/or circumstances in which this behavior occurs." (p. 2) Goldstein and Cialdini, using Bem's theory, went on to demonstrate that people may infer their own attitudes and characteristics by observing the actions of others with whom they feel a sense of belonging or merged identity (Goldstein & Cialdini, 2007). Teachers, principals, and school superintendents have a shared objective which is to educate the students within their district and/or building. Their individual identities are thereby merged by virtue of that shared mission and their perspectives, according to the research, may be a product of a collective identity. The academic environment of the selected school and the beliefs concerning the importance of the school music program are garnered through the perceptions of the interviewed school personnel. Buck, Lee, and Midgley (1992) believe that teachers' perceptions are influenced by the "dominant values, beliefs, and goals within the school" (p. 4).

With the cooperation and assistance of the building principal and her staff, all members of the English, mathematics, and music departments were invited to participate in the study. The disciplines selected were those most often identified as being impacted by involvement in musical activities by researchers who have completed studies

involving music and academic achievement (Catterall, et al., 1999, Hetland & Winner, 2001, Gouzouasis, 2003, Costa-Giomi, et al., 1999, Bahna-James, 1991, Fisher, 2001, Rauscher, et al., 1993). The invitations to participate in the study were placed in each faculty mailbox. The Informed Consent document (Appendix A) outlined the time commitment necessary for each individual to be included in the study. The faculty members that consented to be a part of the study returned the document directly to the secretary in the principal's office who graciously consented to collect the forms for me. She also provided school contact information for each of the respondents in order for me to contact each teacher directly to set up interview schedules.

The study utilized the Three Interview Series Protocol (Appendix B) and was formulated around the following guiding questions:

1. What is the relationship between one's life experience and their belief systems?
2. What is the perceived value and influence of a teacher, education, and music programs?
3. What are the connections between teaching, learning, and music?
4. What is the realm of influence of a non-arts integrated music program?

The three interviews were further subdivided into the areas of education, home life and community, the arts, teaching, and junior high school.

Program Participants

The selected Junior High School is comprised of 1050 eighth and ninth grade students. The administrative team of the building consists of the principal and two assistant principals. The English Department has a complement of fourteen faculty

members. They teach courses that range from Challenge Language Arts and Honors American Literature, which are primarily earmarked for students identified as mentally gifted and talented, to Reading and Writing Workshop classes that are designed for those students needing work in basic language skills. English as a Second Language (ESL) classes are also available for students requiring that resource. The mathematics department has a total of 10 faculty members. They teach eleven different levels of math ranging from Honors Geometry to Math Edge, a course designed for those students who have scored below proficient on the state mathematics assessment test (PSSA) and require additional instruction and guided math practices. The music department consists of five teachers with specializations in chorus, band, orchestra, and general music.

In response to the invitation to participate in this study three mathematics teachers, three English teachers, and four music teachers volunteered to be interviewed (Table 2, p. 41). The principal of the schools as well as the superintendent of the school district also agreed to be interviewed. Each participant was interviewed three times according to the *Three Interview Series Protocol* for approximately thirty to sixty minutes per interview. All interviews were digitally recorded for ease of transcription. The interviews were given at various times throughout the week depending upon the availability of the individual respondents. Some of the interviews were conducted after school and some within the school day during the teacher's preparation periods.

The Junior High School is currently in the School Improvement I category under the No Child Left Behind federal mandate. The school has implemented the Accreditation for Growth protocol to assist in increasing the academic performance of its students (SASD, 2006). Almost all of the teachers' previous teaching experiences were at

the middle school level with years of service ranging from two to thirty-four. Three of the teachers involved in the study are part of the AFG initiative with two of the English teachers being internal coordinators of the program.

Interview Environment

The current importance on security measures dictates that the Junior High School is locked during school hours. Admittance into the building for non-school employees is attained by either buzzing the office through an outside monitor or having a school police officer open the door. Once inside the building, I had to sign in at the front door and sent to the administration office where I was given a visitor pass to be worn while in the building. I had to indicate the purpose of my visit and which teacher I would be seeing. The central office staff and school police officers were very friendly and welcoming and never objected to my being in the school. After two weeks, as I had become a familiar face, I was given a temporary ID by one of the assistant principals for the duration of the interview period so that it would no longer be necessary for me to sign in at the office upon entering the building.

The junior high school is a relatively new building, with construction being completed in 1999. The physical building was very clean, the students were generally orderly as they progressed through the halls between classes, and the teachers guided them with authority and respect. Most of the interviews were conducted in the individual teacher's classroom during the school day unless, as was the case with some of the music teachers, the room was shared with another individual. In those cases the interviews were held in a corner of the school library or the library work room, in the wings of the stage after school, or in the teacher's lounge. The teachers that were interviewed never

hesitated to give up a preparation period to speak with me or to stay after school. On several occasions the school principal allowed a teacher to have a substitute hall monitor in order to be interviewed. I tailored the length of the interviews so that they would fit into a regular class period and would be sympathetic to their time constraints. The principal of the school was interviewed in her office both early in the school day and after school.

The principal's outer office, where her secretary sits, is a friendly and welcoming environment. There is a large bulletin board on the wall with pictures of the junior high school family, their friends, spouses and children of all ages. There was not a vacant spot on the board. The principal's desk was covered in paperwork. She also had a small round table where she often does her work and where the interviews took place. There were two bowls of individually wrapped candy in her office ready for the taking and a minimum of two thermoses filled with coffee. There are pictures of family and friends and photographs that she had taken all over her office. Behind her desk is a large class-covered frame which is a collage given by her photography class when she left her teaching position to become an administrator.

Some of the teachers previously knew me through musical connections in and out of the school setting and a few of them had taught my daughter four and five years ago. Others, I had never met before. I had never spoken to any of them previously about the study. Their willingness to participate in the study was not influenced by the fact that I was the researcher. All interviews were very professional and informative. I was extremely impressed by the candidness of their responses. I had no idea how they would respond to me or to the interview questions. After the "ice" was broken by the first

interview they seemed to feel comfortable providing me with their honest perceptions of their teaching situations, as opposed to impersonal answers that were bereft of their personalities and belief systems. When asked about dealing with student controversy, Megan, an English teacher with five years experience freely admitted, “The first time I had to deal with something like that I was terrified. I had two guys beating the heck out of each other out there in the hallway outside my door. And I thought – what are you doing?” It was also interesting to note that with each consecutive interview the respondents commented that the questions required much more thought to answer. For example Lucy, the teacher with the longest tenure in the building, was not able to draw a picture of the school curriculum. “It was rather overwhelming,” she said. But she was able to talk about the curriculum once we started to dialog on the subject. In some cases, there were periods of silent contemplation before responding. The depth of their responses also increased with each successive interview. When describing her role as a teacher in the school community, Nancy, a math teacher, said, “More than just teaching them the material is sharing what you’ve learned – your life lessons and trying to use it to create....” I believe that their openness was due to the format of the protocol and the nature of the first interview that permitted them to describe their lives and to become familiar and comfortable with me. By the third interview, most of the respondents were not even conscious that the session was being recorded because they were so engrossed in the conversation. Even personal topics, such as the impending birth of Tom’s son, were recorded as part of the last interview.

The district superintendent, Sam, had tendered his resignation at the beginning of the school year just after I had started the interview process. He had been with the district

the past seven years and the decision was made, with his approval, to continue with the interview protocol rather than working with an interim superintendent who may have not been as intimately familiar with the district and its policies and procedures. His demeanor seemed to be much more relaxed and his stress level was greatly reduced during the last two interview sessions due to his recent resignation and new position as a student teaching supervisor and part-time instructor at a nearby university. The first interview was held in his Central Administration office. The office reflected a professional atmosphere having a large cherry wood desk, an executive chair, and matching large conference table in the room. The second and third interviews took place in Sam's temporary office at the university. He was no longer dressed in a suit, but in blue jeans and a button-down shirt. He was very amenable throughout the interviews. His university office was located in an old residence hall that had lately been vacated and was scheduled to be remodeled. The room, which had been used for two-person occupancy, was fairly large with high ceilings, large windows that faced the football stadium and no carpeting to alleviate the slight echo. His new surroundings were fairly sterile with bare, unpainted walls, 2 desks, a laptop computer, and a single phone in the room.

Findings of the Study

The study focuses on discovering the perceptions that English, math, and music teachers as well as the principal and district superintendent have of the academic environment and culture within the target junior high school. The study also focused on their perception of the value of the music program within the confines of the academic environment. Additional focal points include the broad areas of teaching and learning, the

junior high school experience, the arts, and the belief systems of the individuals involved in the study were the focal points of the investigation.

Effect of PSSA's on the Curriculum

Upon analyzing the teachers' responses during all interview sessions it became increasingly obvious that the high stakes testing environment pervaded the academic culture of the district. PSSA testing was clearly the impetus that drove the current curriculum and remediation efforts and was perceived to undermine the school music program. Figure 1, the Pennsylvania state model of NCLB, illustrates the beliefs held by all of the teachers and administrators. The core academic subjects of English/reading and mathematics are geared toward successfully reaching the proficient level on the PSSA tests in order to attain Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). The music program is viewed as being ancillary to the educational outcomes. In this model, the only group that is perceived to view music within the educational sphere is the community-at-large.

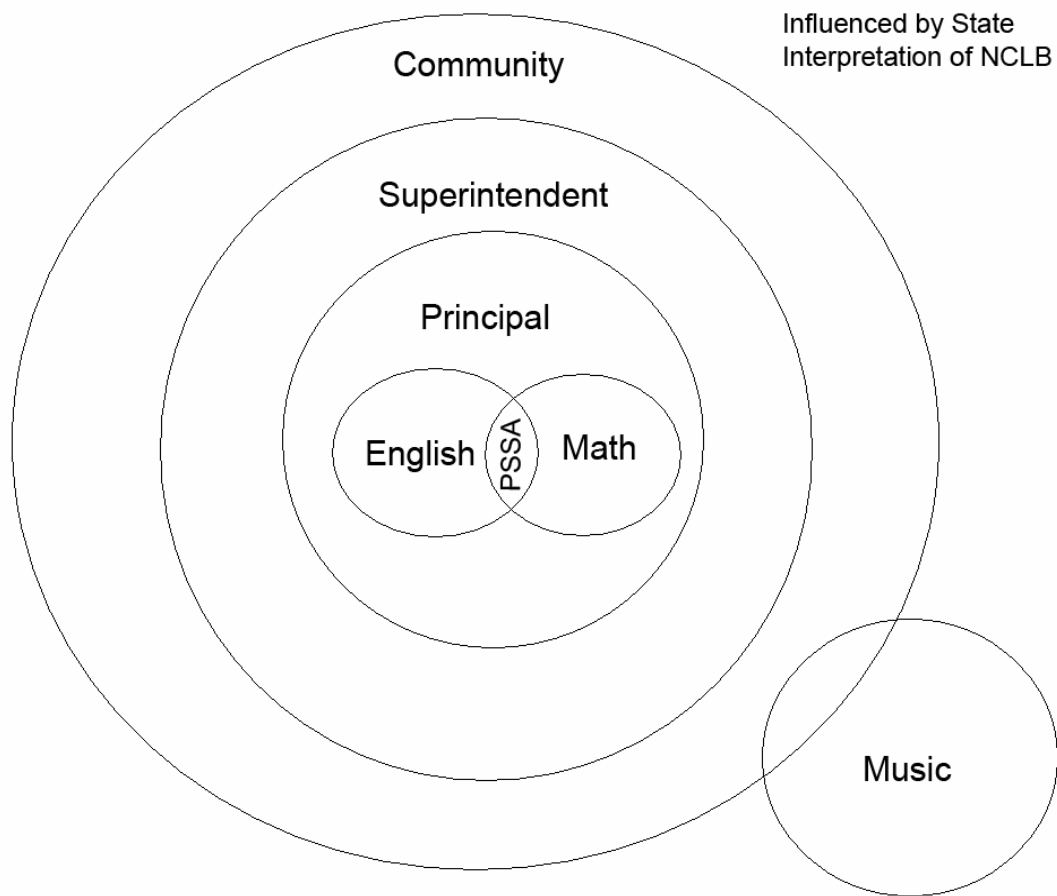


Figure 1. Perceived View of No Child Left Behind as Influenced by the Interpretation of the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

The tone of the district’s position on standardized testing was articulated by Sam, the district superintendent. “NCLB is something you just can’t ignore...” Tom, an English teacher and three-year AFG internal coordinator remarked,

The PSSA’s invades every single conversation about education. It affects staff and administration and students.... It affects the community because so much of our time and our resources and our funding winds up getting channeled into support for and development of programs for those tests.

Susan, an AFG team member and school string teacher has overheard conversations between teachers, who believe that in order to pass the test,

...if we need to do more math and reading then let's not allow them to have their electives, let's not let them have their art and music. Cut down on all of their 'fun things' and just let them get down to business. Just let them get down to business with their core subject areas.

Emily, with only two years of teaching experience but previous non-educational work experience, summed up the effect that the PSSA's has on the tested curricula and the 9th grade electives.

Our whole shift is getting the kids to pass the test. We have to get a September to June curriculum in by the second week of March because the state's testing them on eighth grade curriculum halfway through their eighth grade year.... Some of these kids (ninth graders) that didn't pass the state standards test last year so now they have an extra math class or extra English class that they're forced to take so they no longer have that elective open to maybe take art or to take music.... Those opportunities are literally taken away from them.

Lucy, the director of the seventh and eighth grade chorus, said that

The first year of No Child Left Behind I lost forty kids in my seventh grade chorus.... NCLB and the Math and Reading Edge is offered during rehearsal time. So you have these kids who meet with success in here, but are denied because they're having trouble somewhere else. That bothers me.

Pam, the ninth grade chorus director voiced the same sentiment when she said, "We need to gear our school towards No Child Left Behind – we have no choice. Kids

now have to choose between ensembles because they have 1 remedial course they have to take.” Joan, the school principal, further explained the choral faculty remarks concerning the effect that the PSSA’s have on the music program by saying that “...when we did our remediation in the eighth grade it rolls against the band and chorus block and if a kid has to have both remediations it knocks them out....” Sam, in his explanation of the junior high curriculum talked about how the Edge remedial courses “...will bump into any electives. Unfortunately the only electives that are available in the eighth grade are band, chorus, and music.”

The community support for the music program is seen on several levels. First, there is a music booster’s organization that strongly advocates for the entire music program. Among their many activities, they provide the manpower to set-up the stage for concerts at all of the schools, funding for student scholarships to attend summer music camps and college, water for the students and teachers during marching band camp, and other events during the year such as sponsoring the annual senior music banquet. The group is particularly active in their support of the instrumental program from grades five (when instrumental instruction begins) through twelve. During the interview process Sam, the superintendent, told me about representatives of the group “pounding on my door – ‘We have to start the band down in fourth grade!’” He said that at that time the district was not prepared to expand the program for fear of having to pull it back due to financial constraints associated with NCLB. “But music teachers would tell you differently and moms and dads would tell you differently.” The fruits of their efforts were realized in the fall of 2007 when the string program became available to fourth grade students.

Positive connections between the school and community have been realized through music programs. “I think sometimes those are our best PR pieces,” said the school principal, Joan, who attends as many concerts as possible throughout the year and often introduces each event.

You will find that it makes not only a good connection with the kids but this does make a good connection with the parents. Kids shine at that and it makes parents feel good so they’re more willing to do. The best crowds I ever get into this school are when we have concerts. Even the community members come.

“The Arts give the community the opportunity to see what the kids are doing outside the academic classroom. And it exposes the school community into the main community,” said Lucy who is also the district tennis coach along with her duties within the music department.

The marching band is probably the most visible ensemble of the music program. They participate in the local parades and perform at all home and away high school football games. The half-time show may be the only time that many community members hear the output from the student musicians. Some may argue that “It’s part of the athletic program, it really is,” said Beth, an English teacher, but the community expects the band to be at every game, acting as the musical cheering squad and to provide a good performance during half-time. Sam explained the importance of the extra-curricular activities and athletics to the community from a historical perspective.

At one time, the school was the center of the community, especially in the rural and suburban area. The cultural events, the athletic events, everything happened at the school. Moms and dads were there because their children were there. And this

is certainly true even today at the elementary and even the middle school. As the kids get older the center of their lives, if not for the parents, but at least for the kids still remains at the school. That's why an extra-curricular program and an athletic program are so important for not only the school but the community. This is the cohesive piece that identifies a given geographic area.

Even though all of the people that were interviewed espouse the fact that NCLB is the overwhelming factor influencing the current curriculum, they also believe that the music program is inherently necessary for cognitive and emotional growth. Both Emily and Nancy, who teach college preparatory and workshop mathematics courses, observed that in general their college prep students were involved in band, orchestra, and or chorus while the workshop students usually were not. Emily had not realized that to be the case until we talked, "It never dawned on me the difference between lower level kids and the upper level kids as far as the opportunities that they're taking advantage of." When I asked her to explain her perception she continued,

Well, I think kids that are involved in music just tend to be better students. Those kids tend to be the ones that are more willing to try a problem in class and aren't afraid to get it wrong. They're academically more risk-takers.

Nancy, one of the math teachers, and I talked about the difference between the students who were involved in music and those that were not.

I have 3 lower level math classes and I don't think there are any students in those lower level math classes – workshop - I'm speaking of students that are below the PSSA scores that are in band or chorus or play an instrument. There are forty-five students. They don't have an after school activity, there is a lot of free time doing

nothing. To get things going takes a lot more motivation. My CP class – they are always asking for extra help after school if they need it or over lunch.... They're really diligent about trying to be good students and work on their skill.... They're pretty organized, they're disciplined, they're more motivated. They're sound academically and they can manage – they can juggle the extra class of a language or CP class. They're usually in a higher level....”

Beth teaches all levels of language arts from the gifted students to those students identified as being at-risk. She strongly believes that music is an extremely important part of the school curriculum because it “crosses curricular areas...because it has to do with language, certainly mathematics – fractions and all of that.” She continued by saying,

I know for a fact that kids who are in music, who play an instrument or sing are better students. I just know that for a fact because I teach the at-risk kids that are at risk of dropping out of school or failing out of school.... I think music is very important to keep kids in school. I think we lose perspective in terms of how important education is and a lot of kids feel like failures because they're not good at math, science, social studies, and English, but maybe they're amazing musicians and that's where their self-worth comes from. I can tell you in general that the kids I have who are top level students – they're all involved in music. The kids that I have who are not, who are at risk –unilaterally they are not involved in music at all, except maybe to listen to rap which I don't necessarily consider music.

John, the band teacher, strongly believes that:

From a cognitive standpoint it's learning how to tie the abstract into the concrete.... You have to read the note on the page in order to produce the right sound, you have to process the rhythm accurately at tempo in order for it to make sense. But it's merging the two sides of the brain so that you can learn how to add creativity to the concrete and basically it allows the processing skill and imagination to broaden....

Figure 2 indicates the music program as being an integral part of the educational process which is supported by empirical research (Catterall, et al., 1999, Hetland & Winner, 2001, Gouzouasis, 2003, Costa-Giomi, et al., 1999, Bahna-James, 1991, Fisher, 2001, Ruppert, 2006, Hansen & Bernstorf, 2002, Rauscher, et al., 1993) and federal No Child Left Behind guidelines. The research findings indicate that the infusion of music into the K-12 curriculum has led to higher order thinking skills and increased standardized test scores while creating a picture of strengthened cognitive, social, and emotional growth among students. According to Rod Paige, the Education Secretary for the U. S. Department of Education in 2004, in a letter to superintendents, "The truth is that NCLB included the arts as a core academic subject because of their importance to a child's education." He goes on to say that, "The arts, perhaps more than any other subject, help students to understand themselves and others..."

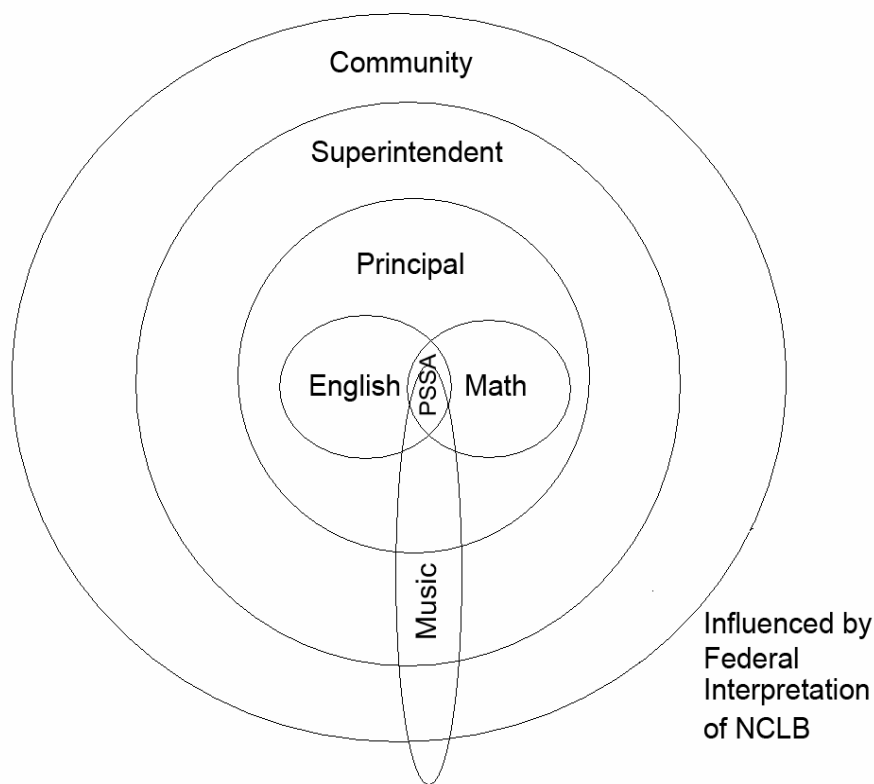


Figure 2. Federal and Researched-Based Interpretation of No Child Left Behind

Music education in the schools also provides emotional and social benefits to the students who are involved in the programs. During the conversation Joan and I had about the impact of the PSSA test and the necessary remediation for those that did not score on a proficient level she talked about “that poor little girl that has to take the Edge classes and all she wants to do is be in chorus.” The student, who had an Individualized Education Program (IEP), had scored poorly on both the reading and math parts of the PSSA. Because the school was in the School Improvement category, students, including the special education students that were not exempt from taking the test and who performed poorly on the tests had to be remediated in whatever area it was that they did not pass. Joan explained that the girl had to take double courses in both math and reading and therefore didn’t have room in her schedule to be in the chorus. Even though the girl

would probably not be able to pass the PSSA due to her special education designation, the district required that she take the remedial courses. In the position as building principal, Joan has to abide by the regulations set by the district for compliance with NCLB; however, she espoused the importance of music in the educational lives of the students.

Sometimes in academics, kids succeed and sometimes kids struggle more, but if they have that little outlet where they're in the orchestra or the band or the chorus and they're achieving some success there, that can make them feel better about themselves and about their work and then that can roll back into academics. At least some things are going right in their life and it can make them feel better about anything.

The music teachers that were interviewed talked about music being a creative outlet and giving emotional support to those students involved in the music programs. As a preface to his thoughts on the importance of school music programs, John talked about the difference between subjects such as math where facts such as " $2 + 2 = 4$. There is no negotiation on this. Everything else is wrong" and music where "Here you have the opportunity to try things with the understanding that it's not wrong – it's just different. You have the freedom of creativity and interpretation in everything you do as far as developing the product goes."

Pam, who teaches general music assists with the eighth grade chorus and directs the ninth grade chorus, talked specifically about the emotional impact that being a part of the music program has had on two students. Her first encounter with each of the students was in the eighth grade. One of the students was very bright and talented and the

other required special education services and was part of a life-skills classroom. The first student, who has always been somewhat of a musical prodigy, fully expected that all of the students in the choral room would be in awe of his ability to compose and perform music. He had arrived in the choral room early for class one day and sat down at the piano to play a new piece that he had composed as the other students were entering the room. When the students continued talking throughout his performance and never acknowledged his performance,

He literally ran up the risers, jumped over the back of the risers, and was crouching down, just sitting there. Eventually what I found out was that he had expected people to be in awe, to sit and be quiet, and listen to this piece that he wrote. His concept of him and other people didn't mesh – didn't work.

Pam, also a mother of four musical children, three of whom were around this student's age, was able to follow this student throughout his high school musical career. Through his involvement with other musicians and music teachers, he was able to incorporate himself into the role of a supporter to other music students (as an accompanist) while pursuing solo ventures. "I think his social development as a result of that just blossomed. A kid like that without that musical involvement would have turned out to be a totally different kid."

The second story that Pam told me was about a special needs student that spent the school day in a life-skills classroom with the exception of singing with the chorus. He loved to sing and would audition for every solo that he could. He was dogged in his determination to win the solo, but was never successful. In Pam's words, the student would "sing as loud as he can on everything and pretty much one pitch that comes out."

As part of the May concert that she puts on every year she permits anyone that wishes to sing to have the limelight.

He chose to sing the Aladdin thing, but he also hand-picked about ten kids that he wanted to sing with him. Once again it was a really important moment for him to be up at a microphone singing for all those people – something he will never do again, never did before. But even more so, these kids love him and they were singing with him and he was the center of attention and they were there and it was so good for them too. I don't know how you quantify this kind of effect.

The culture of the junior high school has been engulfed by high stakes testing as embodied by the PSSAs. Under the purview of No Child Left Behind, student scores have placed the school into the category of School Improvement I. The administration and faculty have embraced the charge of bringing up test scores despite the affect that increased remediation may have upon the non-tested academic areas including the music program. While the music teachers are biased as to the importance of music programs being an integral part of the cognitive process, the math and English teachers believe that their best students are involved in music. They unilaterally state that their “lower level” students have little or no involvement in the school music program possibly, as Nancy suggested, from a lack of motivation. The administrators also believe that music is beneficial to learning. This leads one to question why a concerted effort is not made to incorporate music into the schedules of those struggling in math and English. Instead, the school has made the decision that in order to bring up test scores, students falling below the proficient level on the PSSA's must take double classes in math and/or reading precluding them from participating in the band, orchestra, or chorus. The music

ensembles are seen by the administration and teachers as being extra-curricular, not part of the core curriculum and are therefore expendable in order to reach the NCLB goals.

Teacher Interaction With Colleagues

As a part of my discussions with the teachers I had asked them about the amount of interaction they have with other faculty members outside of their discipline. Most of them said that they spent little time with other teachers except during lunch periods because of the heavy demands of their teaching schedules. Beth, the senior English teacher of the group, had a teaching schedule that was indicative of those that had volunteered to be interviewed.

I never teach the same thing twice. I have six different classes and everything is different. The only break I have is my eighth and ninth period, the last two periods in the day, which are the worst periods to have them. I have a co-teacher with me and we teach applied communications which is low-level English and Reading Edge which is specifically designed to help the kids pass the PSSA reading and writing part...So that's the only break I have is during eighth and ninth period. I have a co-teacher, but I don't sit down and say 'ok you teach,' I'm going around the room and we teach together.

Susan has minimal interaction with her colleagues in and out of the music department because of her dedication to her students.

My interaction is ninety-five percent students throughout the day from the moment you walk in to the moment you walk out. Students, they always have needs and I'm always wanting to fill their needs and it's usually before school, in between classes, during lunchtimes, and it's mostly student oriented.

Knowledge of the Junior High School Curriculum

Knowing that the teachers and administrators were under heavy time constraints during the day and really did not have much time during the day to interact with their colleagues, I was interested in observing how unified they were in their vision of the school's academic structure. In seeking individual insight, I requested that each participant draw a picture of the junior high school curriculum and to include connections between disciplines that they believe exist. After drawing their picture, I asked them to explain their drawing. No two drawings were identical; however there were some similarities in design within the group. The curricular depictions ranged from a fairly concise listing of all of the courses offered at the junior high school to complex webs that illustrate the perceived core courses with a myriad of lines that radiated from the core to other academic disciplines. The teachers and administrators all state that the core course requirements are English/Language Arts, Mathematics, Social Studies, and Science. The federal No Child Left Behind legislation defines "core academic subjects" as: English, reading or language arts, mathematics, science, foreign languages, civics and government, economics, arts, history, and geography.

Sam the district superintendent and Pam, the ninth grade vocal teacher actually listed the course offerings at the junior high school. The difference between the two "drawings" is that Sam actually drew a line down the middle of the paper and then proceeded to list all of the required and elective courses that would be available to eighth and ninth grade students during a nine-period day, including a period for lunch. He even listed the number of days that each course meets to satisfy the eighth grade unified arts

requirement (Figure 3). The depiction mirrors his belief that he does not see much connection between disciplines.

5-30th 9 period day

	8	9
Language Arts	1 Reg. English (and) 1 Reg. Reading @ World Lang.	1 Reg. English 9 Elect: Reading/Journalism/Debate 1st French/Spanish/German
Soc. Studies	18th C. 1 Reg. Am. Hist. and Constitution	1 Reg. 19th C. Am. Hist. Elect: Current Am. Issues/ Model Congress
Science	1 Reg. Earth Science	1 Reg. Physical Sci. Elect: Biology/Human Bio Geometry @
Math	1 Reg. Alg I @ Pre-Alg @ 8th Math @ Edge	1 Reg. Alg 2 @ Alg 1 @ Tech Alg @ Math WS
Unified (45 days)	Art/Fam + Consumer Sci/ Arts 4 Reg Tech Ed / Computer	Elect: Tech Ed Intro Art 1 / Intro Bus Internet / Web / Multimedia Keyboarding / Computer App Intro Fam + Con Sci / Foods
PE/H/Careers (45 days)	Phys Ed / Health / Music Rotation @ Careers / Gen. Music	Reg. Health / Physical
Music Electives	Band @ Chorus @ Orchestra	Elect: Band @ Chorus or Orchestra
Sp. Ed. ESL Edge	As IEP mandates As needed (PSSA rein courses as needed)	As IEP Mandates As Needed Electives: Intro Allied Health
L/R + Lunch	Reg.	Reg.

Figure 3. Sam's perception of the curriculum - District Superintendent.

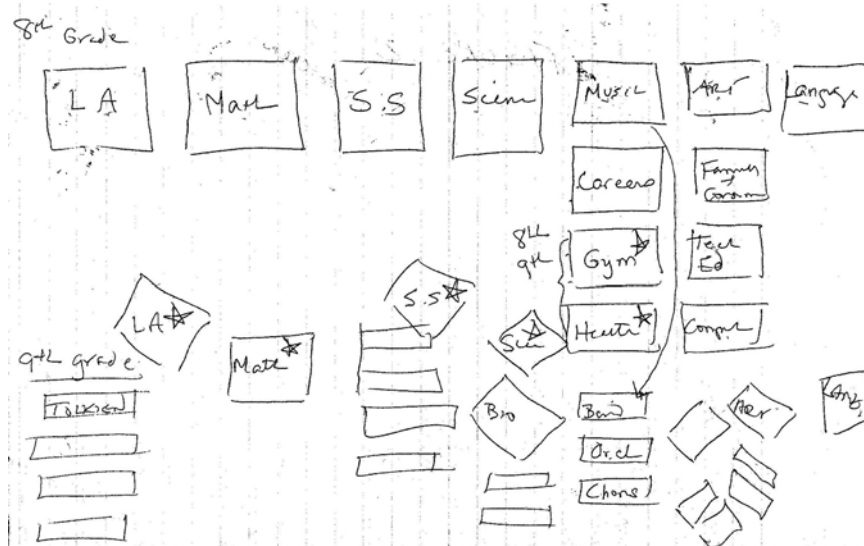


Figure 4. Pam's perception of the curriculum – General music, 9th grade chorus, string teacher.

Figure 4 illustrates the same thought pattern but depicts the different academic areas by means of blocks rather than through the written word. In her explanation of the drawing, Pam worked through the curricular offerings almost as if she were taking the information from the school's program of studies manual. It is not evident from her drawing, but verbally she points to an imbalance of importance among the departments. "It would be nice if they were equal but we have, of course, the two biggies: Language Arts and Math because we are tested on those all the time. These are where everything focuses around." Her drawings show a line only from eighth grade music to the elective music ensemble courses. When asked about connections between disciplines her reply was "There is just a tiny bit of overlap, but we don't really collaborate much." This perception is reflected in her drawing.

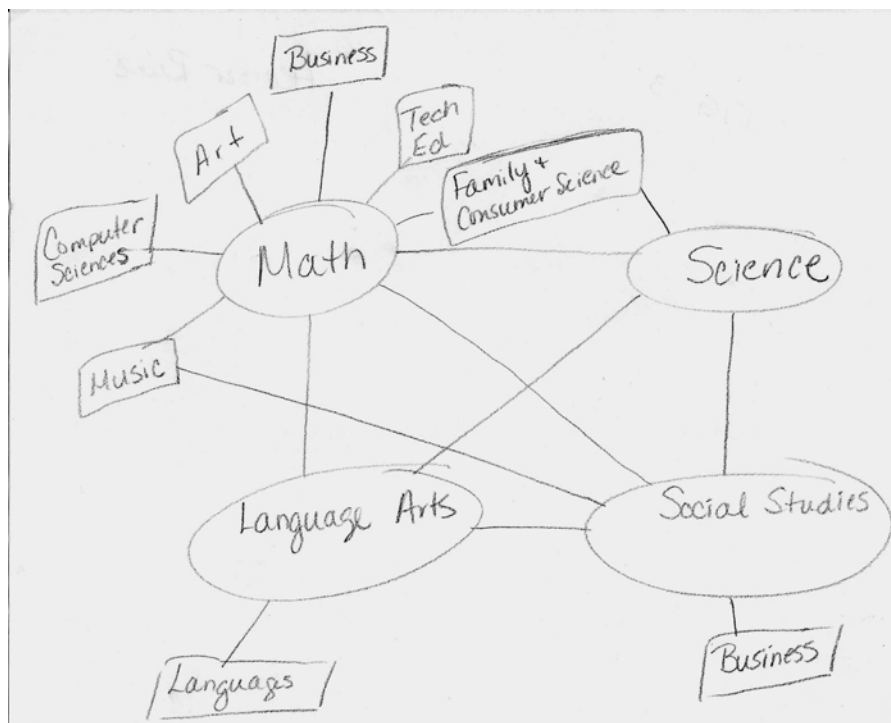


Figure 5. Rachel's perception of the curriculum – Math teacher.

The next group of drawings (Figures 5, 6, 7) is similar in that they indicate the four core courses of math, science, language arts, and social studies as the subjects from

which all others are connected. It is very easy to identify the person who drew Figure 5 as a math teacher. Rachel who has taught eighth grade math for more than eight years, perceives almost all other subjects relating directly to mathematics. Her explanation for this tendency is that, “Obviously the main subjects all relate to each other in some way. I could figure out that everything came back to math...music obviously – math related and throughout history has affected the music. Business courses, tech-ed courses all relate to math.”

Two members of the English department drew Figures 6 and 7. Beth, who was originally hired by the district as the school’s Gifted English teacher, has drawn a web “because I’m an English teacher and we do lots of webs in pre-writing and things like that.” Her illustration centers around the *School Curriculum* with the core courses at the four corners of a rectangle because “they are the cornerstones of education at this point.” She is the only person that has indicated the different tracking levels, which she explained to me in detail, associated with each main academic area and included Special Education within the curriculum.

When I mentioned that it looked like all the academic areas connect to special education she said, Actually, it’s special ed goes to everything else. Special education is linked to math, science, history, and English. I’m not sure how many special ed kids are in the band or in chorus. I know there are quite a few in chorus because they tend to be a dumping ground. Like when you don’t know what else to do with a kid, you put them in chorus because hopefully, if nothing else, they’ll just sway in rhythm.

Beth sees the role of the Special Education department and the services that they offer vastly increasing due to the demands that the PSSA's have placed on the school. As far as the other areas being related, her belief is that "I think they're all interrelated. I really do."

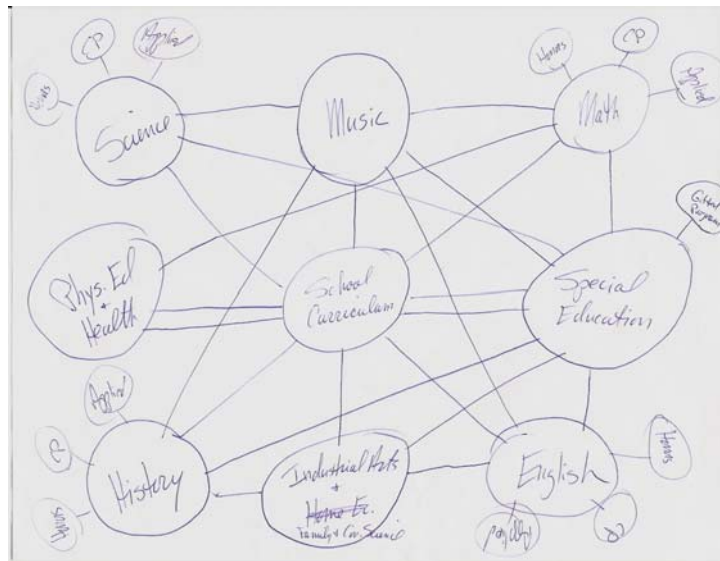


Figure 6. Beth's perception of the curriculum – Language Arts teacher.

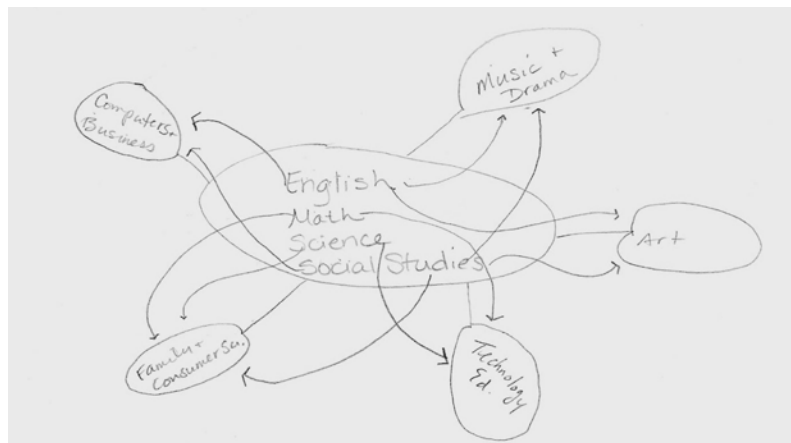


Figure 7. Megan's perception of the curriculum – Language Arts teacher.

Megan, the junior member of the English department, drew Figure 7. She has placed the core subjects in the middle of an oval with the co-curricular subjects appearing outside of the circle. Arrows indicate the links between the areas.

I took the four majors – the things that seem to be what everybody focuses on when you talk about curriculum and put them in the center. Not that they’re the most important, but it’s the required things. I tried to link them to the way I see us if we were to try to incorporate some of the electives into our mean curriculum – how would it work.

As a member of the AFG and School Improvement teams, she explained some of the connections in, association with some of their goals, “How do we incorporate the majors in everything else.”

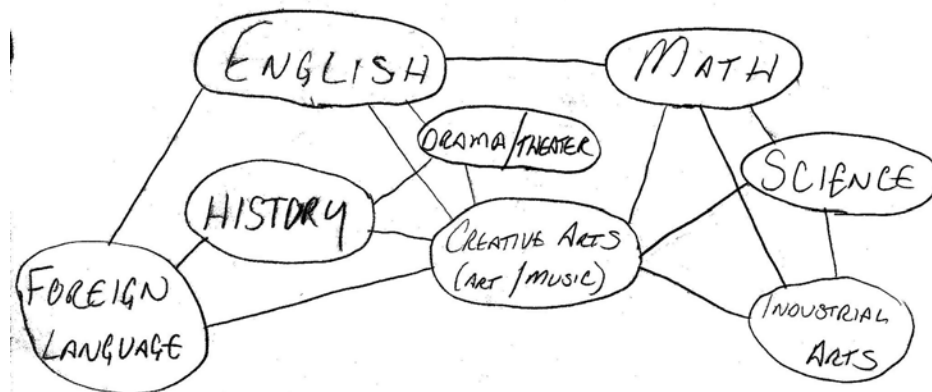


Figure 8. John’s perception of the curriculum – Band teacher.

Figure 8 is much like the previous 2 curricular drawings, except that the 2 tested areas of English and math are at the top of the web. John, who teaches the ninth and tenth grade band students has linked all subjects to the creative arts. He drew a web with English and math at the top and the other subjects linked to them in some way.

Basically in constructing I started with English and math...these are the two things out of which everything else is born.... I basically tried to save the creative arts to the end because I knew – you start to realize, particularly with the creative arts how they do connect to absolutely everything else. They connect the

analytical because there is a little bit of analysis to this and they definitively connect to the intellectual, interpretive – that side of the brain.... That didn't end up in the center of the picture (art/music) by accident. I had to put it there because I think it branches out to absolutely everything else.

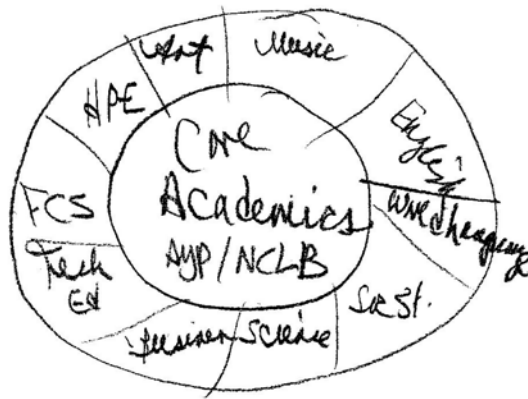


Figure 9. Joan's perception of the curriculum – School Principal.

Joan's drawing (Figure 9) is much like Figure 1 which illustrates the State's view of the importance of PSSA's.

I look at the curriculum in this building in circles like a core, a center. A core circle of academics because right now the NCLB and AYP that we have to make...they're really focusing on the fact that the core academics are basically where it's at because we're tested in the science, the math and English. I will tell you, the first thing that I schedule are those core classes. The kids must have the required and they're required by the state...the electives – they go around the outside and they round everything out.

The other two math teachers, Emily and Nancy, used a triangle to represent the curriculum. Emily, the teacher with the least seniority of the group, placed the three PSSA tested areas at each point of an upside-down equilateral triangle (Figure 10). The

other academic areas were selectively placed on a particular side between two of the points depending upon how they were perceived to be connected to the three main areas.

I tried to make them as even off the triangle as possible because I don't think anyone is more important or less important than another. It's just that math, English, and science are getting the bulk of the attention, so that's why they're on the points of the triangle.

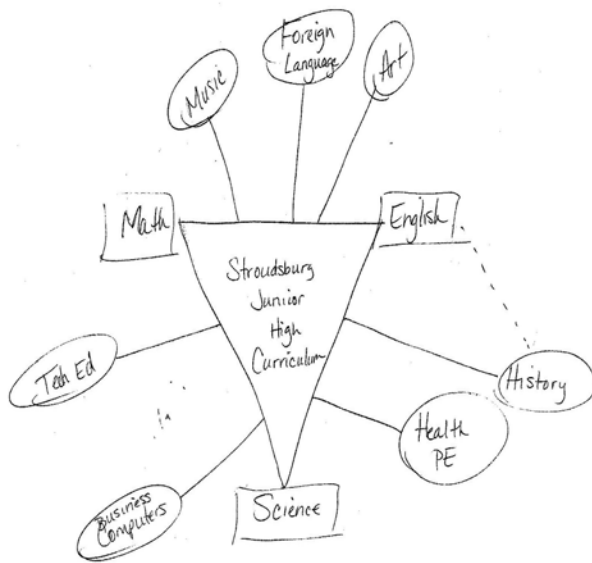


Figure 10. Emily's perception of the curriculum – Math teacher.

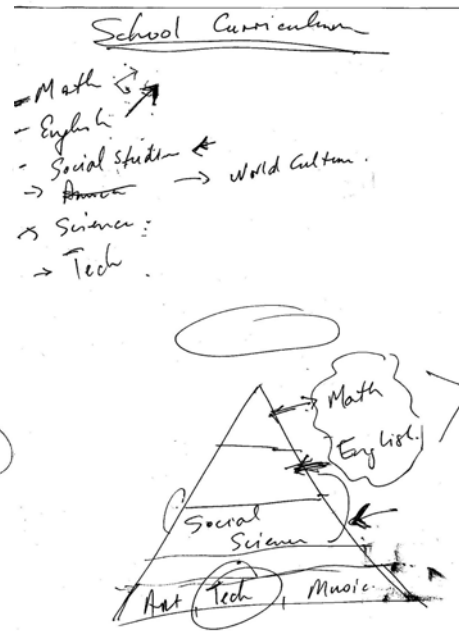


Figure 11. Nancy's perception of the curriculum – Math teacher.

Nancy actually drew her picture of the curriculum (Figure 11) as we spoke. She was unsure about what courses should be part of the drawing, possibly an indication that she was not that familiar with the entire curriculum. Her focus was clearly on the math courses and the students that she taught rather than the entire curriculum. Prior to drawing the triangle, she listed the courses that came to mind that students would take.

The triangle was then subdivided with the courses that she felt important at the top of the triangle, to the least important at the bottom.

I would think math and English would be at the top of the pyramid – things we are looking at mostly. If students are proficient in reading and English then they'd probably be able to handle social studies and science and tech which I guess is an elective....I'd probably put those at the bottom of the pyramid – art, tech, music appreciation.

When I asked her about connections between disciplines, she identified music as being connected to both math and language arts. Being a recorded vocalist, Nancy used the example of music scores for the math-music connection, “The discipline required and the organization required with doing the math and the discipline, time, fractions required in writing music scores – I definitely see that connection....” She has worked with songwriters and used their ability to write lyrics to music as the music-language arts connection.

Tom, an English teacher is pursuing a master's degree and was very interested in the concept of drawing the curriculum. “Interestingly enough one of the classes that I'm taking right now required me to look at our school's curriculum and to consider things like curriculum mapping and how interdisciplinary things are connected and how they are connected grade level....” The focus of his diagram (Figure 12) is on the English department. From the drawing it is obvious that there is a lot of collaboration between the members of the ninth grade English teachers because the only connecting lines are found between the three English teachers.

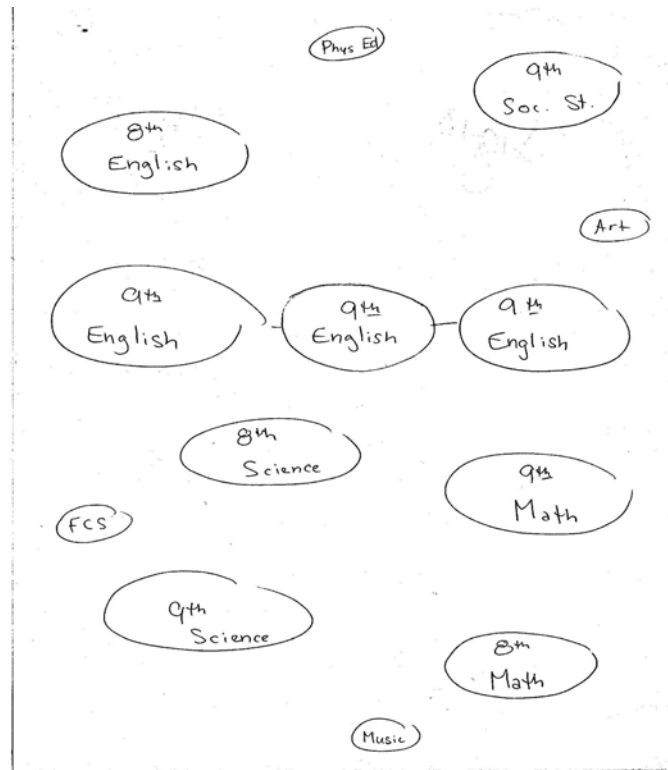


Figure 12. Tom' perception of the curriculum – 9th grade English teacher.

Ninth grade English – I think is extremely interrelated because we have a tight knit group of people in the ninth grade English department who share constantly. And so I know what they're doing and I know how they're doing it and I know we borrow from one another and we all work off the same standards and we all work off the curriculum that two of us developed and while we have our own little techniques and styles, but at the same time, I think it's pretty connected.

He views the other core courses as being important because they are necessary for graduation, but are not connected to other disciplines. The small circles ...music, art, family and consumer science, phys ed – that because they're not core classes wind up being things that are done whenever they can be done as far as fitting into a student's schedule and aren't viewed as "you need this."

The outlier as far as similarities among curricular design comes from Susan, the strings teacher who is very involved with the school's AFG initiative. Her cluster/word web (Figure 13) surrounds *School Improvement* rather than focusing on the traditional courses as did everyone else. Her web illustrates the current environment of the school which speaks directly to shifting the cultural landscape to safety and security, school improvement, attendance, NCLB, discipline, etc. and away from the student and student learning.

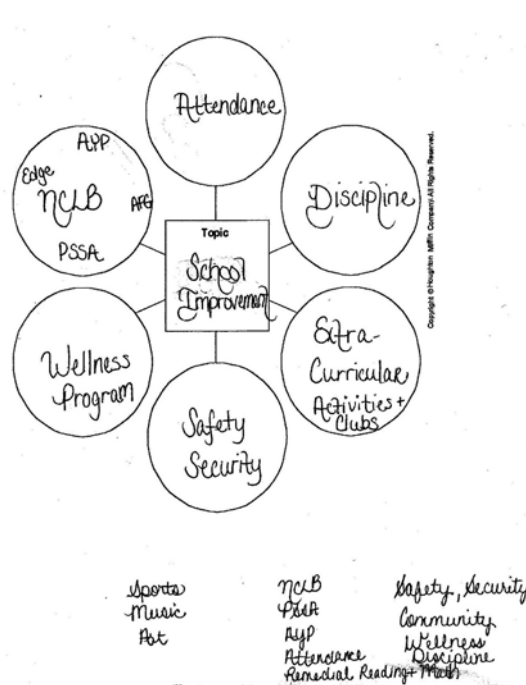


Figure 13. Susan's perception of the curriculum – String and orchestra teacher.

In the center of the graphic organizer, our school curriculum, or our school right now is focused, specially the past few years around school improvement and that's NCLB. So, that's where I based it on. When I thought about it I had written down the different subject areas in which I thought were important and then I looked at all of them and saw this is all basically school improvement issues.... Going along with that, No Child Left Behind, we have an attendance quota that

we need to meet.... That's really very much stressed and basically we'll do just about anything to keep or get the kids to come to school or to stay in school.

Discipline is another thing. This all goes kind of hand in hand with each other as far as we're trying to lower our discipline numbers as far as infractions.... The wellness program is another thing that was adopted.... The wellness program is really a big thing here.... Teachers are constantly being reminded about that if they give anything out in the classroom as incentives or rewards are not to be a food item. School safety and security are big issues, even more so this year now with everybody has to wear ID's. That's a big thing and having the school locked at all times. It's a real important issue. Over here, as far as school improvement and how this relates to the extra curriculum activities and clubs, we've gone out of our way to offer many extra activities after school to keep the kids involved in something that's good for them so they're not going home and getting in trouble or sitting at home bored or a lot of them are unattended.

When asked about whether she saw any connections between the academic disciplines she said,

I know that at the beginning of the year we, at one of our in-services, we were actually asked to connect math in every subject area, every day....We were asked to do that and of course, music and math is a no-brainer, but the kids don't realize it. They really do use math in every subject area. Anything else, I'm not sure how they connect or if they connect.

Lucy, who has been in the district over thirty years and the longest tenured member in the study, didn't draw a picture of the curriculum.

It was rather overwhelming. I'm really not familiar with the other programs in the building in all sincerity. Could I draw – here's the student and you have science, math, English in different levels – yeah, but that's what it would have been. If I had missed something – because I really don't know a lot of the courses that are offered in this building.

She was more confident when talking about connections between the various disciplines.

I know personally in my general music classes and even in some chorus depending on the work; yes the relationship with other disciplines is constant. Whether it be with social studies, sociology of 20th century America or the influence of communism on Stravinsky – that's all politics...

After a bit more discussion about interconnections she said,

OK, sitting here now I can now picture – right. I would have had lines going all over the place...Right now, having a student in the middle and lines going out and lines connecting each one. That would be it. You don't have to teach the interconnectiveness because there is that focus on your area. You certainly can't ignore it.

Lucy is the only person who would have had the student in the middle of her diagram with lines connecting the student with learning in all of the academic areas. "A lot of people ask me what I teach and I tell them, 'I teach kids. I use music to teach kids.'"

The differing perspectives held by the faculty and administration as to what constitutes the curriculum at the junior high school can be categorized into 4 distinct areas. The first is the linear schedule, characterized by simply listing all of the courses or

subject areas available to students. The second is the egocentric view that the individual teachers' area of specialization is the most important or core and that all of the other subject areas revolve around them. The third view is the PA core concept that centers on the tested areas of language arts and math. Science, which begins PSSA testing in the 2007-08 academic year, and social studies are also included in the core by some. Electives such as music, art, and foreign language are clearly perceived as lying outside of the core curriculum. The final view, the "hidden curriculum" may give the clearest picture of what is really pushing the curriculum at the school: school improvement. Student learning seems to take a backseat to passing the test by whatever means possible. A cultural shift has taken place in that the environment has become test-centered instead of being student/learning centered.

Effective Junior High Schools and Challenges to Learning

The No Child Left Behind mandate has reduced teaching effectiveness to quantitative scores. The legislation does not provide for the learning environment to be brought into the mix as a factor in learning. I was interested to hear what the teachers and the administration believe made an effective school and then to know the challenges that they face in bringing about the highest standard of education.

A school superintendent is the chief administrator of a school district and must work with the school board, the schools, and the community in developing and maintaining an educational mission that meets the needs of its constituencies. Sam's belief about the role of an effective junior high school is:

Junior highs and middle schools are supposed to be transition buildings, transition points. The administration has to be knowledgeable of what works for kids of that

age group...and they're allowed to make mistakes, they're allowed to be wrong, they are allowed to learn from their mistakes rather than be severely punished as young adults. They're not. They're adolescents...

Joan has expounded upon Sam's representation of what junior high school should be about. She has included a sense of belonging to a community that could foster a positive learning environment.

Solid academics...a wide variety of electives in English, arts, science, music, and a lot of extra curricular activities they can take part in. People that care about kids...a feeling that they're (the students) safe and I think they can feel they're safe here in this building. I just think you have to build a community around them so that they know that people care about them, that there's opportunities for them and that they have a chance to be successful here.

The teachers' perceptions ranged from straightforward academics to an environment that permits students to grow as individuals and learners. As the advisor to the Builder's Club, a student run community service organization, Emily has the opportunity to work with students outside of the "normal" classroom situation. During the spring of 2007 she and her students secured a grant from PPL Corporation which was matched by Walmart to buy compact fluorescent light (CFL) bulbs which they distributed among the students for use in their homes. The students analyzed their family's electric bill for three months. Their research indicated an eleven percent decrease in electricity use over the period. The results were proudly presented by members of the Builder's Club to the school board along with one CFL bulb for every person in attendance at the meeting. Working with her students on such projects permits her to keenly observe their behavior. She pragmatically

highlighted some of the important developmental issues that students incur that affect their learning.

Character development is really important during these couple of years.... Good attention versus bad attention. It's not all about academics at this age. It's hard because you're trying to teach academics but you gotta address the social – you have to at this age.... It's really important for kids to start thinking about who they are and where they fit in and where they want to fit in and getting those study skills started because as much as teachers try in the early years, kids really don't know how to study.

Tom, the English teacher, was not the ideal student growing up. In fact, with little parental intervention, he was just the opposite. When he was in eighth and ninth grade he did not perceive himself to be a “learner.” His perception of what constitutes an effective junior high school are based in part on his personal experiences then and now as a ninth grade English teacher.

One that reaches out to all students and to all parents – so Utopia I suppose. One that isn't dictated solely or so heavily on tests.... One that doesn't just look at the kids that aren't achieving and therefore lowering scores and holding us down.

Looks at those kids and finds ways that are going to work for those kids to achieve and for their parents – pulls their parent's in. I think that's really the key.

Lucy credits the importance of teachers in an effective junior high school. She has worked in the district for a long time and has worked with a myriad of people throughout her teaching and coaching career.

Teachers are so important. The type of teacher, the sincerity of the teacher, I think is ultra-important. In order for it to be effective you have to have a good, strong faculty...and let them do their thing because they know what they want to do, they know how they want to do it and don't interfere with them.

As a mother of four and one who crosses musical disciplines as a vocalist and an instrumentalist, Pam believes that for children of this age to learn in an effective environment, tracking should be eliminated. She believes that talented students, who pull out of activities because they believe themselves above others, would actually benefit by helping others. Low achieving students end up spending all day, every day with each other.

I think an ideal junior high needs to promote an environment where kids can try to find out what their strengths are and the only way to do that is to explore and not track them. I wish there was a way...this is that thing with the downward spiral.

The challenges that the teachers and the administrators in the district face have dramatically changed in the last ten years. There was a time where the schools were fairly stagnate in size, the curriculum was developed to enhance learning and permit extending beyond the curriculum, and teachers and administration had the support of parents. The schools now deal with NCLB and its legacy of standardized testing where curricula is geared to having students pass the test. Today the district deals with tremendous growth, overcrowded schools, and absentee parents, many of whom work at least an hour from the school. Teachers having the daunting task of attempting to work with the type of parents that Emily, the math and science teacher, described.

Unfortunately a lot of those parents, I don't want to say they don't care because I'm not in their heads and I don't know what they care and don't care about, but either they don't have the time to be concerned or they can't make the time to be concerned.

During our conversation, I asked Joan what she deemed to be her biggest challenge as building principal. Her immediate reaction was to talk, as did Emily, about today's parents.

I think for all of us right now – I would call it unreasonable parents. Parents in the old days used to support schools and teachers. If somebody called home and told my parents that I had smarted them off or done something I shouldn't of I would have gotten in trouble at home.... They (the parents) tend to believe what their children tell them rather than what adults say. I think that's part of it.... There's a side of me that wants to say you're here, let us do our job. Support us because that's why you're here because of what we have and then sometimes I think they don't get it.

When she said “why you're here” she was talking about the influx of people to the district from the New York Metropolitan area. Many have come from schools with little or no discipline to a structured school district that seems as if it's “out in the country” to many of the transplants. The migration has also brought a new, diverse population to the region bringing with it the positive aspects of merged cultures but also some negatives such as gangs. Police presence in the schools has been increased due to the increased growth and culture change. According to John, he believes that the district was not prepared for this new student demographic.

The demographic of our sleepy little town has gone 180 degrees from when I came here the fall of 1994. It's almost like I came across the bridge and forgot to close the gate. They all followed me. The demographic in the schools now has definitely become dominate, soon to be overwhelmed by those that come from the city.... It's almost like we were blind-sided by it and now what do we do? We got completely overrun by it, how do you fix it? It is a "locals versus the move-ins" mentality. We want things to be the way they once were, but reality is reality and nothing is ever going to be the way it once was. So we've got to find some middle ground so we can maintain who we always were and those moving in can adapt to it comfortably and maintain who they always were and I'm betting that a common middle ground can be met that might actually work.

With all of the changes that have befallen the district, the question arises – what changes would you make to enhance the school climate? Several of the teachers immediately came up with the same answer – uniforms! Tom surprised himself when this was the answer that he gave me without a second thought.

I never thought I would say this – uniforms! And that so goes against my nature of just allowing people to be individuals and to be creative. Once we can get rid of this immediate exterior expression...students can find ways to be genuinely creative and genuinely unique beyond the offensive t-shirt and the pulled down jeans and boxers and all those other things. "I would institute a dress code immediately – uniforms."

Rachel's response echoed Tom's.

Uniforms. It think if you did that it would change the school climate a lot because there's a certain thing that I think comes along with wearing a uniform and it would get rid of a lot of stereotypical things. Kids wouldn't be grouped because of the things that they wear. Beth's response was much more geared to how students view themselves in school and in the classroom. As a person who teaches academically gifted students as well as the students needing remediation in language arts and reading, she is able to have a pulse on "academic coolness." I would change the whole idea that being smart is a handicap and that being dumb is cool...I would like make a more accepting, safer environment in terms of the kids being able to take risks. I see a lot of kids who don't take risks because they're afraid they may be wrong. I would rather see kids out there challenging themselves, taking risks, and being congratulated and rewarded by each other for taking those risks and encouraged by each other to take risks and if you're wrong – great! What did you learn?

Susan looks to the method of teaching for change. Her involvement with AFG has given her insight into looking at how the students are taught on a different level than the other teachers, as we evident by her drawing of the curriculum.

I would not focus so much on the product; I would focus on the process.... I think it's what we teach our students and the path at getting them to their final goal that's most important. Sometimes it's not open up a book and let's crack down, it's figuring out who the kids are and how they work and their personalities and the way each students works and kind of tailoring to their needs...I think we need to focus more on that, the process and the journey.

Joan, who sees herself as an advocate for the school, the students and the teachers discussed three main change issues.

More parent involvement. As the parents become involved, kids would become more involved. That's something that bothers me in a sense that I would like more kids to be involved in more things which would make a more positive climate...with my teachers – if I had the power for some more freedom of finances and to establish a little more trust between the board (district school board), administration, and teachers.... Talk to the powers to be about this No Child Left Behind – if I had something to do with that, that could help improve climate too because it's weighing on us, a lot of us.”

Summary

The environment at the selected junior high school has been greatly influenced by 2 main factors. They are No Child Left Behind, particularly Pennsylvania's interpretation of the law, and increased enrollments. The district superintendent had shown strong support to the teachers and the principal in their quest to educate the students within the district. The environment of high stakes testing has overshadowed the educational process by demanding that students pass the state standardized tests. Teachers believe that parents are not as involved in their child's education as parents used to be and are placing increased responsibility for student learning away from home and into the schools. As much as the administration and the faculty espouse the cognitive, social and emotional value of the school music programs, the testing has been a deterrent for many students belonging to any of the performing groups. The music program, however, is

strongly supported by community members as well as the administration that look upon the program as a showcase for excellence.

CHAPTER V

FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of the study was to gain an understanding of the academic environment of a suburban junior high school and the importance of its music program in light of a high stakes testing environment as perceived by members of the English, mathematics, and music faculty and administration. The researcher interviewed each respondent three times and asked that they draw a map of the school curriculum. The cognitive maps of the curriculum assisted in understanding the respondent's perceptions of the importance of each academic area and connections between disciplines. The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the relationship between one's life experience and their belief systems?
2. What is the perceived value and influence of a teacher, education, and music programs?
3. What are the connections between teaching, learning, and music?
4. What is the realm of influence of a non-arts integrated music program?

Overwhelmingly, the focal point of the education process as perceived by the faculty members, the school principal and district superintendent is passing the PSSA's, Pennsylvania's testing platform, and meeting Adequate Yearly Progress as mandated by No Child Left Behind. The music program, although conceptually considered to be vital to the educational mission of the school, has been relegated to the area of "specials." In keeping with the state definition of core courses, rather than the national definition found

in NCLB, the music courses and ensembles are viewed as electives that are not part of the core curriculum.

The recommendations (Appendix D) following the discussion of each research question fall into 1 or more of the categories listed below:

1. Educational benefit – The enhancement of cognitive, social, and emotional growth of all students
2. Parent – The engagement of parent interaction in the academic life of the students
3. Diversity – The intermingling of cultures whether it be racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, or urban/rural mix
4. Curriculum – The academic course selection prepared by the school district within each approved discipline
5. Arts Advocacy – Promotion and support for the music program and the benefits that it brings to the students that participate in the various programs

Guiding Research Questions

What Is the Relationship Between One's Life Experience and Their Belief Systems?

The varied childhood experiences and time periods when each interviewed individual grew up has had a great bearing upon their belief systems about education and the importance of school music programs. The following sets of stories illustrate the affects that home and school environment have had on the professional lives of some of those interviewed. Joan, the school principal and Lucy, a teacher in the music department, who are approximately the same age, grew up in a time period where “There were three things you could be. You could be a teacher, a nurse, or a secretary.... A lot of

girls went into teaching - if you're academically talented...that's what you do, you became teachers." Beth and Lucy came from families where their parents were teachers. They both had no desire to pursue any field other than education and chose to continue the family tradition and become teachers themselves.

Two of the teachers went into education in opposition to some of the negative experiences that they had as public school students. John, a talented trumpet player and music teacher was deeply influenced by one of his teachers that he believed was exceptionally talented but became burned out and increasingly bitter and disinterested in the students.

And I felt cheated – I felt robbed. It crushed me because he was such a musical genius and provided me nothing. I decided in my senior year [of high school] that I am going to become a teacher so that I can share what I'd been blessed with because I've had the opportunity to spend four years watching it done wrong so I know exactly what not to do.

Dan, who spent three years teaching in an inner city school in New York before teaching at this junior high school, believes that he connects well with many of the "problem" children that he works with today because, "I wasn't the best student. In fact I feel I can relate most with my students who struggle because I had discipline problems and I had attendance problems and behavioral problems...." He is, by his own admission, very much of a disciplinarian. Due to his upbringing he understands students that have little or no supervision at home and the consequences that that brings into the school. "I was not very monitored at home.... I got into a lot of trouble – a lot of trouble.... There was not a lot of structure and that's where a lot of my disciplinary concerns came in

because that spilled right into school.” One of the major points he stressed when asked to define a well-rounded, successful student was support from home and parents that encourage inquiry. This response appears to be a result of his lacking parental support growing up.

Growing up in a small farm community and having to work on the vegetable farm during his formative years provided Sam, the district superintendent, with a strong perception of the importance of education, including music education, and the impact that a supportive family has upon the development of children. Despite the fairly poor socio-economic status of the family, his mother was adamant that each child in the family play a musical instrument and be involved in the school music program. “Mom was the one that wanted us all to play a musical instrument. So she got us involved with taking lessons even though we couldn’t afford it.” The school district that he attended had “a rich tradition of excellence.” He realized early on (fifth grade) that he wanted to be a teacher. His inspiration was his art teacher who was a nurturing individual who also believed in “tough love.” It was obvious the impact that she had on his life as he spoke of the memories. He still remembered her name after all of those years. Even though he was drawn to the physical sciences and mathematics, the experience of being in public school and college bands was very important to him. He was able to balance his studies, music lessons, track, and a paper route and went on to attend a four-year college to study secondary education with a major in science. Because of his upbringing, Sam was not one to back down from a difficult situation in the classroom. He was known to have set high standards for himself and high expectations for his students. The students gave him the nickname Stone Face “because if I would smile my face would crack. There was very

little humor and what not, it was just – you’re here to learn chemistry and physics.” Over time, he admitted that he did mellow a bit but never lowered his expectations.

These high expectations carried over to his role as superintendent of the school district. When he hired an employee in the district whether it be a teacher, a cafeteria worker, or a coach he expected that they do their job and do it to the best of their ability.

I hire you as a teacher, I expect you to do your job. I don’t expect you to turn your head because you don’t want to get involved or that you don’t want to bring it down to the office – that’s not your job. You don’t want cafeteria duty or potty patrol or whatever it might be. Those are jobs that belong to all of us in the profession because we’re here for the kids. And that’s the most important thing. If it weren’t for the kids you don’t have a job, so I don’t want to hear your creature comforts and all your issues and problems. Let’s focus on the kids. What are we doing *for* the kids as opposed to what are we doing *to* the kids.

Even though he may not have been popular at all times by all members of the school community, Sam strongly believed that he always had the good of the student in mind. His continuous strong support of the music program was directly influenced by his mother’s insistence on his involvement in the school music program. He maintained that support despite the financial and personnel demands placed on him to increase test scores within the district. He championed not only the large ensemble programs, but also the many achievements of the students within the music program.

Arts Advocacy Recommendation #1

Increased networking within the schools and the district must occur in order to maintain the strength of the music program.

Bem's self-perception theory (1972) states that people infer belief systems from personal observations about themselves over time. He further goes on to affirm that the beliefs drawn from past experiences influence future behavior. The teachers and administrators that were interviewed for this study have all had previous involvement in musical activities and are therefore supportive of the music program. In following the research of Goldstein and Cialdini (2007), a positive perception of the program will permeate throughout the schools as the teachers and administrators have a shared vision of an excellent music program in the schools. Likewise, if negativity is infused in the culture, it may have the opposite effect. The administration and particularly the music department must not take the current music department's valued position for granted. However subtly, the music department teachers should be constantly informing the rest of the school community about the cognitive, social, and emotional benefits of its program in order to preserve the positive perception that is currently held by others within in the district.

*What Is the Perceived Value and Influence of a Teacher, Education, and
Music Programs?*

The interviewed teachers in the junior high school perceive their role within the school as more than just the traditional view of teachers being employed to teach children. They still believe that their role is to educate the students in their individual disciplines and to teach the students to think analytically. But they also say that expectations from parents and administrators have extended their responsibility into the domain of being a disciplinarian, confidant and sometime surrogate parent, as well as that of an educator. The administrators do not necessarily view that added dimension to the

teachers' roles. Joan, the school principal, believes that part of her role is to be "the champion of the teachers so they can teach the kids so the kids can learn." The district superintendent, Sam, is firmly committed to the statement that "Teachers are the center point of the employee area.... I think they're the most important cog in the wheel for public education in the U.S."

Teachers perceive that the changing demographics and growth in the district has brought with it a change in parental attitude regarding the education of the children. Many of them seem to have the impression that parents do not care as much about the education of their children as they had in the past. Due to the fact that many parents work during the day and are not available to speak with school personnel by phone, the district instituted a web-based application, the Parent Web Portal for the 2006-2007 academic year. The purpose of the internet application is to, according to the district web site, "allow parents to access their child's homeroom attendance, student schedules (9-12), mid-term progress reports, student report cards (K-12), special district and building announcements, extra curricular and athletic activities/schedules via the Internet." Yet many of the parents don't communicate with their child's teachers. The teachers almost unanimously have stated, "We're still not getting the involvement that we should be getting...." They perceive a shift in responsibility away from the students and on to anything or anyone else. "If they don't do well as they're supposed to, it's somebody else's fault." According to the teachers, the parents blame the teacher rather than their son or daughter for not doing well in school. Several of the teachers mentioned how hard it was to have their students do homework. Nancy told me that she no longer gives tests or

quizzes on Mondays because of the poor passing rate. “There’s no guarantee that they’ve studied....”

The No Child Left Behind initiative, as interpreted by the Pennsylvania Department of Education and passed down to the school districts has given new meaning to what constitutes a “good school system” which is making or surpassing Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) on the state’s academic assessment tests. Unfortunately, so say the teachers, the PSSA testing has taken over the curriculum. The student test results not only affect the math and English areas but also the areas that are not part of the core curriculum such as the music programs. Emily in the math department explained that the eighth grade PSSA examination is given to the students in March and covers information that might not be taught until the end of the school. For that reason they have to “cram” in the information prior to the test being given. “We have to get a September to June curriculum in by the second week of March.... The state’s testing them on eighth grade curriculum halfway through their eighth grade year.” Those students that have not reached the proficient level in eighth grade must take an additional math or English Edge course to hopefully bring them up to the proficient level. In many cases, students who take the extra one or two remedial courses are precluded from taking other courses such as music for lack of time in their schedule. The school principal, Joan, realizes the effect NCLB has had on the arts. “I think some schools are knocking out some of the arts and things like that.... But you have to do what you have to do to maintain your school otherwise they’ll come in and take you over.” One of the music teachers overheard some of the other teachers in the building say, “If we need to do more math and reading then let’s not let them have their electives, let’s not let them have their art and music.”

“Music is a really important part of learning.” According to the Sam, “It’s a means of expression.... I think it’s a necessary component.” All the teachers and the administrators strongly believe that music is an important part of the curriculum, but have not found a way to ensure that all students are able to participate. Several of the non-music teachers who were heavily involved in school music programs growing up said that the music programs allowed them the freedom to be who they really were. Emily, who teaches both math and science, spoke about the value of the music program as it related to one of her students who was involved in the music program for a year.

For some kids music can save them. They don’t really fit in anywhere in school so they’re looking for way to get out of school, but then they find music and they find a way to stay. Or the music teachers find a way to keep them in school by using music because it’s the only thing that interests the kid. Last year I had a student that had Asperger’s. High functioning autistic and highly intelligent student, but because of the Asperger’s – very socially just inept. He was in choir – they got him into choir. Now he wasn’t good in the choir but it somehow clicked something in him and he was able to be a little more friendly with some of his classmates. You saw a different side of him and a very positive side came out of him. This year he’s not in the choir and this year I see him as more of the isolated kid, nobody talking to him. It was kind of saving him – it really was.

A feeling of accomplishment and self-esteem may come from music programs when it is not evident in other areas. One of the English teachers, Beth, was adamant about the value of music education programs when she said,

I think we lose perspective in terms of how important music education is and a lot of kids feel like failures because they're not good at math, science, social studies, and English, but maybe they're amazing musicians and that's where their self-worth comes from.

The inclusion of a music education program in the schools is also perceived as making children into more well-rounded individuals. One of the benefits of a music education program, as perceived by the teachers, is that it gives students a sense of responsibility, self-discipline, and self-motivation.

Lucy has been a long-time advocate for including all students who want to sing in her choir. She related a story about several of the life-skills students who sang in her chorus. These students are not part of the inclusion population because of their various disabilities, but they love to sing and are a welcomed part of the chorus. "They come every day to chorus. They love it. Their teachers will tell you it's their favorite time of the day." The other students in the chorus have gotten to the point where they would help them with their music, turning pages and showing them where they are in the music. The inclusion of the IEP students has taught many of the children about reaching out to and helping people that are different from themselves. While Beth, in the English department, believes that chorus is a "dumping ground" for any child that needs an elective rather than being placed in a study hall, especially special education students, Lucy relishes in the experience that inclusion brings to the "regular" students, the special education student, and to herself.

The perceived value of education has been altered from teaching children to think to being able to regurgitate information for the sole purpose of passing the standardized

tests. Teachers are there to make sure that students are given the proper information, including practicing to take tests, in order to pass those state tests. The teachers and administrators realize what high stakes testing has done to their curriculum, but are under great pressure by parents, the school board, and tax payers to promote “Adequate Yearly Progress.” Those involved in the education process of today’s youth understand the importance of a good teacher and that a well-rounded education means inclusion of the arts. Students involved in music programs have proven to have increased cognition, time management skills, and improved self-esteem. All of these benefits carry over into other academic areas. However, many students have been denied the opportunity to be involved in musical ensembles because of the need for additional remediation in order to pass the state tests. These students could have positively benefited from their music experiences possibly leading to increased success in the testing process.

High stakes testing has placed huge demands on the school’s administration and faculty to produce students that will pass the examinations on at least a proficient level. These demands come from the tax payers, parents, the school board and school administrators. The stress to achieve the academic goals may come with a price – that of burned out teachers and students. Teaching to the test often eliminates any creative aspect that the teachers may wish to infuse into the curriculum. The following recommendations are made which may enhance the educational process.

Educational Recommendation #1

Restore the educational focus to student learning and away from a testing culture.

The PSSA testing regimen has had a great impact on the curriculum of the school. The district has realigned their curriculum to coincide with the tested subject material.

This realignment falls in line with the study that the Center on Educational Policy (2007) conducted concerning the fifth year of NCLB. The CEC found that between 73% and 77% of the schools surveyed had aligned their math and language arts curricula to the state test. The students must take the standardized tests in March on curriculum that ordinarily would have taken an entire school year to teach. According to Tom, an English teacher, “It (the PSSA’s) invades every single conversation about education. NCLB is this thing that just hangs over people and they’re either fearing it or resenting it or spiting it. I think it makes us lose focus and perspective – a lot!” Emily, one of the math teachers talked about the effect that the testing has on teaching. “We have to get a September to June curriculum in by the second week of March because the state’s testing them on 8th grade curriculum halfway through their eighth grade year. We’re trying to cram stuff in....” Students are learning to cram for the test and to know test-taking strategies needed to pass the PSSA’s. Critical thinking skills and creativity necessary for information retention do not seem to be part of that learning approach. Students who don’t reach the proficient level must then take an extra math, language arts/reading class, or both to, hopefully, bring their scores up.

Curriculum Recommendation #1

Explore the possibility of including music in the language arts and mathematics classes utilizing collaborative teaching techniques.

In order to make time in the student schedule for the remedial class(es), students must give up their electives. Often the classes that are eliminated from student schedules are musical ensembles. Research has indicated that the inclusion of music into language arts and math classes has stimulated cognition in those areas (Catterall, et al., 1999,

Hetland & Winner, 2001, Gouzouasis, 2003, Costa-Giomi, et al., 1999, Bahna-James, 1991, Fisher, 2001, Rauscher, et al., 1993, Burton, et al., 1999).

Oreck's 2004 research also found that teachers who infused arts in their classroom enhanced their own creativity and made the teaching experience more enjoyable. The inter-departmental collaboration must take place within the curriculum. The arts, particularly music, must be viewed as important to student learning. The No Child Left Behind legislation includes music as a core course, so should the school district. Just as small children learn their ABC's by singing them, the junior high students may be able to better understand the math and language arts skills by infusing music in the students' schedule instead of eliminating it.

Parent Recommendation

Continue striving to increase parent involvement in the education of their children.

Single parent families are prevalent throughout the district, at all socioeconomic levels. Many parents work in New York City and leave in the morning before their children go to school and may not return until late in the evening, leaving students with a surrogate caretaker or to fend for themselves. Parents, particularly those new to the district or from lower socioeconomic strata, may feel awkward coming to the school to speak with teachers and administrators. Many parents will, however, come to an evening concert to hear their son or daughter sing or play an instrument in a concert. Through their child's musical involvement, a sense of community may evolve that will transfer to increased participation in other academic areas of their child's life.

All of the teachers and administrators discussed issues with parent involvement, particularly the parents of academically weaker students. Due to the large number of parents that are unavailable by phone during the day, the district implemented the web-based parent portal. However, there was still a large concern that discourse with parents was difficult. Some teachers like Emily in the math department when talking about parent involvement believe that, "...either they don't have the time to be concerned or they can't make the time to be concerned." Organizations such as the National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education which is centered in Washington DC advocate and promote the importance of parents in fostering cognitive, social, and emotional growth in their children. Murphy (2007) found that parents want to communicate with the school about their children. Parents who were not able to have immediate access to their child's school for whatever reason asked the schools to be more creative in ways to get information about their child to them. The findings show that increased communication from the school with parents had a direct bearing upon their child's academic achievement (p. 90). The school concert is a non-threatening way to connect to parents. Once parents feel comfortable coming to see their children perform, they may then transfer that comfort level to coming to the school to speak with teachers about academic issues.

Diversity Recommendation #1

Institute a regular series of in-service sessions which focus on merging diverse cultures.

The school district has gone through a period of tremendous growth within the past 10 years. Many of the students that have moved into the district come from an urban setting. Their families have moved to the area to live and educate their children while

maintaining their jobs in New York City. The transplants come from a variety of socioeconomic backgrounds. It is not so much a dichotomy between rich/middle class and poor, but between urban and suburban/rural. The urban transplants' previous school and home life may have been far less structured and very different from those of the students, teachers, and administrators that have been educated in a more structured school environment. Many of the teachers believe that they were blindsided by the cultural differences and were not prepared to effectively teach the new students. John, the band teacher talked about his perception of the transformation by saying, "The change in culture, society – that we are much, much more of a melting pot than we used to be and reluctant to adapt. Reluctance to adapt by those moving in and reluctance to accept from those that remain." He views the situation as possibly becoming volatile. "My fear is that this whole thing is just going to explode one day."

Teachers and new administrators, especially those new to the field, should be exposed to divergent cultures through a series of in-service presentations throughout the school year. The district could provide concepts such as those introduced by Ruby K. Payne in her book *A Framework for Understanding Poverty* (1996) to all teachers and administrator. One of the more important points that she makes is that people in predominately singular class structures take for granted what she terms "hidden" rules that fall along socioeconomic class lines (p. 41-43). Most of the teachers that were interviewed grew up in rural and suburban areas and have encountered few people who have lived in a poor environment. They need to have a basic understanding of the environments from which the new students came in order to assist in acclimating them to the new school culture. The exception in the interviewed cohort is Tom, a member of the

English department, who spent three years teaching in a public intermediate school in the South Bronx. “I was there three years, they had three different principals – one each year. The ambulance and the police were in our building all the time. Every year there was some kind of slashing.” He was the only respondent who actually taught in a school that was similar, if not exactly like, the schools that many of the new students came from. In fact, Joan, the school principal, understands that many parents have moved to the area because they wanted to get their children out of the dangerous environment in which they previously lived and went to school. Tom, who has already proven to be a school leader by virtue of his AFG role, would be an excellent in-house resource to assist in understanding this mentality. He is appreciative of the culture shock, particularly in the area of structured school days, that students coming from the city experience when moving to a small town school district where students have few freedoms. A collaborative buy-in from teachers and administrators to increasing awareness of the merging cultures will have a positive impact on learning (Krug, 1992; Gentile, 1997, Turner-Clark, 1999).

Diversity Recommendation #2

Include music as a means of exposing the students to diverse cultures.

Music is an international language that crosses racial, social, and ethnic boundaries. Therefore exposure to the rich heritage of divergent cultures through music may be a school linchpin. The music department could expand the musical repertoire within each ensemble to include more cross-cultural selections which may then be shared with the larger school community. Students from diverse backgrounds can find commonalities with each other through involvement in the musical ensembles. This

involvement may accelerate students' acclimation to their new school through a sense of belonging to the band, orchestra, or chorus. Using Goldstein and Cialdini's (2007) theory concerning shared identities, the students in the musical ensembles are all there to be a part of a whole.

What Are the Connections Between Teaching, Learning, and Music?

The perceived connections between teaching, learning, and music were revealed by each respondent as they drew their picture of the school curriculum. For most of them, it was probably the first time that they had been asked to think about and to describe in picture and words the curriculum as a whole, not only their individual subject area. Everyone perceived the core courses, particularly math and English because of the standardized testing in those areas, to be the anchors of the curriculum. This perception is in line with the view of core courses espoused by the PA Department of Education. The connections to music were perceived in some cases as peripheral to the curriculum and in some cases they were reinforcements to the major subject areas. However, because the curriculum is not organized so that thematic units are infused throughout every department, any direct relationships between music and the other areas were the result of a concerted effort on the part of the individual teachers.

Several of the teachers talked about the connection of music to learning in relationship to some of the research done on brain function. John, in the music program, discussed his perception of the importance of the music program within the school curriculum. "They (creative arts) connect the analytical They definitively connect to the intellectual, interpretive – that side of the brain.... I think it (music) branches out to absolutely everything else." Emily, with a background in science, said, "Music – it just

makes the neurons fire better. It does! It stimulates the creativeness in the brain. It stimulates so many areas of the brain.” She went on to say, “When you study music...you just have a different look at things and you’re able to break things down a little easier. You process things better when you’re truly involved in studying music.” A connection between math and music was prominent in their conversations. Nancy, the math teacher who is involved in music as an avocation, gave an example of the connection using a real-life example. “The discipline required and the organization required with doing the math and discipline, time, fractions required in writing music scores – I definitely see that connection as far as the math goes.”

Perceptions of the associations among music, teaching, and learning also focused on some of the possible effects of being involved in musical activities. Joan, school principal perceived music as an emotional outlet for stressed out students.

If they have that little outlet where they’re in the orchestra or the band or the chorus and they’re achieving some success there that can make them feel better about themselves and about their work and then that can roll back into academics.

A perception held by many of the faculty was that music students learn how to interact with others and to work as a team. Beth, an English teacher, said,

I think that the kids that are in the music program have a better sense of belonging to an entity that is bigger than themselves, yet they are part of a whole. I think that’s really important for their self-esteem and for their development as human beings.

Students who are involved in music are more apt to be able to work in a cooperative learning situation and to assist each other with class assignments. A number

of the teachers believe that students involved in music do better academically as was illustrated in the previous chapter. Part of this perception may be due to time management skills, the ability to interpret what they play and what they read, and more advanced listening skills. Lucy in music said that “I really do believe that we help with listening skills....” Heightened listening skills benefit students in every class situation.

One of the music teachers emphasized that, “Cognitively I think it helps them to think.” She believes that this cognitive advantage carries over into the other academic areas. Another teacher spoke of the cognitive benefits of studying music. Susan, the orchestra teacher believes, “There’s logic and problem solving and all types of things that occur in all of the math, the English, and the music. I think there’s a direct correlation there, especially with problem solving skills....” Several of the math and English who teach multi-levels of their discipline have what they perceive as concrete evidence that the students involved in the musical ensembles are better students. They have compared the students in their college prep and honors classes with those students in the lower level courses. According to Nancy in math,

Most of the students that I have in pre-algebra and college prep *are* in band and chorus..... I have 3 lower level math classes and I don’t think there are any students in those lower level math classes – workshop – I’m speaking of students that are below the PSSA score.

A senior member of the teaching staff put teaching, learning, and music into 1 succinct package when she talked about connections between disciplines. “I can’t think of a subject that wouldn’t be connected with music and as a consequence even with each

other. I can't think of a subject that stands by itself." She went on to say, "A lot of people ask me what I teach and I tell them – I teach kids. I use music to teach kids..."

The English and math curriculum has evolved to incorporate the information necessary for students to pass the state standardized test. Those students who do not score as proficient must take remedial courses to raise their scores thereby bringing the school into compliance with No Child Left Behind by making Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). When discussing the drawing of the school curriculum, the shortest tenured English teacher, Megan, made an interesting observation about the curriculum.

It's almost like the anchors that we've been working on with AFG and School Improvement (math and reading) – how do we incorporate the majors in everything else, but I kinda think it should be backwards – how do we incorporate everything else in the majors?

When asked if she believed that this would make a difference in the curriculum she replied,

I think it would. I don't know that the curriculum would be changed in order to meet that but it would be nice to incorporate because for the students who aren't getting all the other things.... A lot of kids aren't getting music because we're so focused now on getting their reading scores up...so it would be a way of getting some of these other pieces of the puzzle with the classes that you have to be in as far as curriculum is concerned.

All of those interviewed agree that studying music is a beneficial component to learning. However, they realize the impact that the implementation of NCLB has on the students in the school. The school administration is at a crossroads as to educating those

students that fall below the proficient level on the PSSA's. In her administrative role the school principal admits that she must do everything in her power to get the test scores at or above the acceptable limit. On the other hand, she realizes that there may be some students, including some of the special education students, whose time would be much better spent academically by being in a music class. "I go back to that poor little girl that has to take the Edge classes and all she wants to do is be in chorus."

The connection between teaching, learning, and, music are often blurred, especially when the perception of "academic success" is measured by a standardized test that is a one-moment picture of student performance. Students learn by different means and a one-size-fits-all approach to teaching does not promote cognition in all students. It could, in fact, inhibit learning.

Educational Recommendation #2

The school should identify academic strengths, personal interests, and talents in new students before scheduling is completed.

Some teachers and administrators may have an erroneous misconception that students of working-class parents that have moved from the city are academically deficient. The district appears to not have the time to assess what these children *do* know rather than a blanket statement about what they *don't* know. Students should be given some sort of assessment tests when they enter the district and the results should be used as an indicator of their knowledge base. Learning can occur from differing points on a spectrum. Too often the children are placed in the lowest level of all courses and then "tracked" through the system. Teacher expectations are usually not as high with this group as they would be for college-prep and above students, and therefore the students

perform no higher than the lowered expectations. Finding academic strengths and then expecting children to perform academically above minimum requirements might yield positive learning experiences and higher test scores. Too often, low scoring districts are plagued by inexperienced or poor teachers. The studied district should be praised for making sure that the Edge students are taught by the same teachers that teach academically talented and gifted students.

Educational Recommendation #3

The administration needs to develop a broader, more flexible view of scheduling to include academics and music for students who wish to be part of an ensemble despite their academic status.

Students who belong to a chorus may be quite different from students who play an instrument. Many students enjoy singing but do not read music. Family income is not an issue because students do not have to have an instrument – it is always part of them. The students involved in the school choruses cross all academic levels from the life-skills special education students to the mentally gifted and honors students. Talented singers are not necessarily bound by academic tracking. Band and orchestra students, on the other hand must have access to instruments and in order to progress, they must include practice daily. Perseverance is a necessary part of the process of playing an instrument, where many of the singers sing only in chorus and do not practice on a regular basis if at all. The junior high years are a time of growth, and the music teachers can tell story after story of children that have blossomed as a result of being a member of one of the musical ensembles. Catterall and his research assistants (1999) found that students in grades eight through twelve, who were involved in the arts, including music, not only had increased

academic performance, but also possessed a more positive attitude toward school than those that had no arts involvement. Taking music away from the students could take away the one thing in their academic lives in which they find success and connection to the larger school community. This seemingly small fact could make the difference between keeping academically marginal students in school or having them drop out.

What is the Realm of Influence of a Non-Arts Integrated Music Program?

While the music program is not considered a core course by the district, its value is evident throughout the school community. Teachers and administrators believe that it often promotes a sense of self-esteem that may be lacking due to weaknesses in other academic areas. Pam teaches general music, a required course for eighth graders and directs the ninth grade chorus. Her courses are heterogeneously grouped so that she teaches a cross-section of students in each class. She is able to see the impact participation in the music has on her students.

And sometimes (the music programs) gives kids that don't succeed in other areas a real sense of success. I've watched that happen with kids that maybe the classroom is not their thing, but they have a gorgeous voice and that's where they can get their moment - where they can feel that they are not just one of the crowd which I think we all need at some point. It can give them those moments too of success.

Beth, who teaches a range of language arts courses including the mentally gifted class as well as the remedial Edge students, believes that music is important in the educational process.

I think we lose perspective in terms of how important education is and a lot of kids feel like failures because they're not good at math, science, social studies, and English but maybe they're amazing musicians and that's where their self-worth comes from. And I think too much emphasis is put on – are you a good student? and not necessarily – what are your other skills? Maybe you're good at doing other things – if that's singing, well then great! Or it's playing an instrument – well that's fabulous!

Many of those interviewed stated that involvement in music programs assists children in becoming more organized and putting their time to good use. Joan put this perception into words.

There's that research that says that children that are involved in music tend to be more successful. I think sometimes too it helps them balance things too. They do have to balance the fact that if you have practice this afternoon after school and competitions and things like that and you still have to get all your work done – it can help keep them organized too.

This byproduct may manifest itself in more organized study skills and purposeful use of study time with the end result being higher grades. Music programs provide one of the few places where physically and mentally challenged students can participate as viable group member.

Music programs are also powerful public relations tools for the school district. The music teachers put on a number of vocal and instrumental performances throughout the school year that are very well attended by family members and the community at-large. According to Sam, the district superintendent, "...it's a showcase in terms of the

concerts that they put on which are well attended and the kids take pride in what they are able to do.” Joan, the school principal firmly believes that they are “our best PR pieces.” Nancy in the math department believes that the school concerts are a place “...they can invite folks in the community to come and see what they’re doing and perform so they can see how well they’re using their tax dollars.” Lucy, one of the choir teachers agrees by saying, “So much of what we do ends up being in a public forum.” Not all of the music performances are put on within the confines of the schools. The various choruses are often called upon by local civic organizations to perform at functions throughout the school year. The students and vocal music teachers volunteer their time and talents each year to sing in nursing homes during the holiday season. This outreach program benefits those that listen and those that perform as well as providing a community service to many who may not have the opportunity to hear live music outside of the facility in which they reside.

As long as athletics, particularly football, is part of the school culture, a marching band will be part of that program. Most people assume that a school’s marching band will be in the local parades and at all football games, both home and away. The band is often viewed as supporting the cheerleaders and the fans in the stadium. Some even consider the marching band to be more a division of the athletic program in the school than the music program. The band program in this school district permits students in the eighth and ninth grades to part of the one hundred person marching band. According to the school district’s marching band club web site, the purpose of the band is to “provide spirit, enthusiasm and musical support to our school’s athletic teams.” The marching

band is of major importance to the coaches, the team, and the football fans to the point where their participation is expected at every game.

The support that the music program has received in this district is not indicative of all school districts. The importance of the program has been championed by administration, faculty, staff and parents. For example, the superintendent strongly believes that each building should have instruments for any student that wants to play but cannot afford to rent or buy their own instrument. The school board has endorsed this concept and has, to date, been able accommodate the request to fulfill the needs of the music department and the students they serve. The administration and most of the teachers support a once a week pull-out program for group instrumental lessons. When Sam, the superintendent, was asked about this program he said,

It's become part of the culture. That's the way we do it and anyone coming new into the professional staff basically finds that this is how it goes here. It's considered to be important enough that the students can miss some of the academic time as long as you rotate it through so that everybody is equally impacted. That has worked well for us.

Although all of the teachers that were interviewed were supportive of this program, several of them seemed to feel that many science teachers viewed the music program as a necessary evil. All of the music teachers indicated that they believed that the science department was the least willing to permit students to leave class for a lesson. This was further confirmed by Emily in math who also teaches one science class a day. Her perception of the beliefs of many of the science teachers are that students that miss lessons for classes disrupt the lesson plans, particularly those classes that have labs

associated with them. The teachers believe that students may often miss a major part of a lab that may or may not be able to made up depending upon the schedules of the student and the teacher. The science department however, was the only department mentioned that had issues with the approved pull-out program for music lessons.

There exists a strong community interest in the music program that permeates throughout the district and into the highest administrative offices. The community has a stance “music supporters” group that champions the program in many ways including providing physical assistance with stage crew duties at all district concerts, helping to load and unload marching band equipment at all home and away football games, fund raising for student scholarships and summer music camp experiences, and also publicly lobbying the superintendent and school board to maintain the prominence and excellence if the entire music program.

The music program is highly valued within the school district by faculty, students, administrators, school board, parents, and the community at-large. The faculty and principal have testified to the fact that they believe that students involved in music programs perform at a higher academic level than those that are not involved in the music programs. There was unanimous agreement in the perception that involvement in the music programs makes students more well-rounded individuals. They also have the perception that students may excel in musical areas when they may not excel in other academic areas and that the increase in self-esteem gained by success in musical endeavors carries over into the other subject areas. However, the fact exists that NCLB is the pervasive force within the school and the district. Children who have not met the proficient level in math and language arts must be remediated. The remediation must take

place during an elective time period. For many students, the elective period that students lose is the time of their music class. The teachers realize the importance of a strong music program in the school, but also understand that the standardized testing is crucial to the preservation of the school district. The principal, Joan, summed it up by saying,

So there's just that you're running out of time during the day to figure out what you're supposed to do for all the academics which is a concern because I think some schools are knocking out some of the arts and things like that and that's something I wouldn't like to see here because I think we have a really good...and it does – it makes well-rounded kids. You don't want to make them lose the love of stuff because of the test.

The teachers and administrators in the school district are very supportive of the music programs within the schools. They are proud of the history of the program and the fact that student involvement is very strong. The students in the music program are among the top academic students within the school. They also appreciate the public support that the program commands, second only to the football program. There is concern, however, that the program may be in jeopardy due to time constraints associated with preparedness for the state mandated assessment tests. As science becomes an area where high stakes testing is compulsory more time must be given to students within the confines of the school day to prepare for that test. The addition of science testing also adds the distinct possibility of yet another course where remediation will be necessary. The fear is that the district may divert monies which might have gone towards maintaining or even supplementing the current music program to hiring additional teachers and tutorial support personnel to comply with the demands of NCLB. As Rachel,

one of the math teachers who has small children said, “I would like my kids to have music education because I think it brings so much more to you than not. I can’t imagine a life without knowing music or the arts.”

Curriculum Recommendation #2

A concerted effort must be made to maintain the quality and depth of the current music program despite the testing regimen.

Science will be part of the testing regimen beginning with the 2007-08 academic year and those not reaching proficiency in science will need remediation in order to eventually pass the test. The extra time needed for additional science work has to be included within the defined nine period daily student schedule. Students who struggle academically in all areas could theoretically have schedules that include two language arts periods, two periods of math, two science periods, social studies, lunch and the required physical education rotation. There would be no time for any electives regardless of the benefits of those extra courses. The district could, with innovative scheduling methods such as collaborative teaching and class rotations, insure that all students wishing to be involved in one of the music ensembles would not be denied that opportunity. Anecdotal evidence from interviewed teachers and empirical research (Catterall, et al., 1999, Hetland & Winner, 2001, Gouzouasis, 2003, Costa-Giomi, et al., 1999, Bahna-James, 1991, Fisher, 2001, Rauscher, et al., 1993, Burton, et al., 1999) as well as agencies such as the College Board has indicated that students involved in music and musical activities are better students than those that are not. Increased self-esteem and the pride of being part of larger entity has also been indicated as an outcome of belonging to a school musical ensemble. This increased sense of self and success

associated with musical participation may carry over into the other academic areas. Therefore success in other academic areas may emerge as well.

Arts Advocacy Recommendation #2

The benefits of participation in the school music program must constantly be promoted in order to maintain or exceed the current level of student involvement and musical excellence.

The faculty in the music department is made up of a dedicated group of individuals who have worked very hard to build up a successful program. They have had the support of the administration who views their contributions to the school and community-at-large as a “showcase.” The music boosters must also understand that the program could be in jeopardy of being downsized because of the effects of the high-stakes testing and the fiscal constraints placed on the district. The current music program is very dependent upon the high level of community support, both financially and in sheer manpower. In the event that the music program would have to be downsized, consideration must be made as to the effect this would have on community support for the programs. Therefore it is important for the music professionals, school administrators, and community members to espouse the benefits of musical involvement that serve to enhance the social, emotional, and cognitive development of the students.

Impact of Leadership on the Music Program

Research studies (Krug, 1992; Gentile, 1997; Turner-Clark, 1999) have indicated that school climate is greatly influenced by the principal acting as instructional leader of the school. One of the duties of the principal is to instill a sense of unity among the teachers, staff, and students of the school. The one statement that every teacher in the

junior high school building made about the school principal was that she needs to be more visible to the students and the teaching staff. The school community is always more unified when the principal is perceived as being visible and in support of programs that enhance teacher professionalism and student learning.

Joan, the principal, makes a point of attempting to attend every musical event in the school but it is unknown how many non-music teachers are in attendance as well. If the administration were to elevate the importance of the music program to the same curricular level as English, math, science, and social studies, the rest of the school acting as a merged identity (Goldstein & Cialdini, 2007) might see the music program as an integral part of the educational core. One of the priorities of the music department faculty might be to educate the administration and their colleagues to the educational benefits of having a strong arts program. Therefore, with the strong support of the school administrators and faculty, the music program will continue to thrive in a high-stakes testing environment.

Recommendations for Future Study

The study has been a snapshot of one junior high school with a long tradition of hosting a dynamic music program as perceived by a select group of faculty members. The study should be extended to include the perceptions of science, social studies, foreign language, and other visual arts teachers. As mandated testing expands into the “core” curricula, demands on teaching time will be greatly affected. The importance of music programs may become more of an issue as tested disciplines are increased. Building administrators, the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, and members of the school

board should be interviewed in order to determine their perception of school climate and the value of music program.

Due to the effectiveness of the remedial Edge programs, the junior high made AYP (Adequate Yearly Progress) for the 2006-07 school year and is considered to be “Making Progress” and no longer in the NCLB School Improvement I category. According to the district’s fall newsletter (2007) “In fact, all AYP disaggregated measures were met by the junior high school” (p.3). While the remedial programs have proven effective, the overall remediation has had the effect of increased demands upon the teachers and the students. An assessment of the success of the remedial programs from the viewpoint of the teaching staff should be examined. A more in-depth examination of how the teachers perceive changes in curriculum and teaching styles have changed would add substance to the extended research.

The study should be continued at the high school level where students have the opportunity for increased involvement in musical ensembles and other electives, but also have the ability to drop-out of school at age sixteen. High school students are overwhelmed with pressure from high-stakes testing and how test scores could impact their future endeavors. Many teenagers are very apathetic about the importance of the tests in meeting the NCLB benchmarks and therefore do not perform well on the test. Students who do not score at or about the proficient level on the PSSA’s will be remediated. The time for the additional course work could very possibly take the place of a music ensemble. The perceived impact of the music program as an integral part of the academic environment could be important in maintaining the numbers of students involved in the ensembles as well as the high quality of programs within the discipline.

Involvement in an organized music program can also be the impetus to keeping at-risk students in school. The students may perceive making music as their only reason for coming to school, but at least they are in school where learning can take place.

This study should be replicated at schools with populations different from those in the current study. The perceived value of the school music programs at an inner city school with an arts program, and inner city school without an arts program, and a small rural school could be compared with the results of this study. Further study could also be done at selected schools that have chosen to do away with music programs due to the impact of No Child Left Behind. Teacher perceptions could discuss the effects on a music program that has been eliminated.

Despite the ever increasing body of research supporting the benefits of music education in the schools, the future may look bleak to some, but there is hope. VH1 Save the Music Foundation, an affiliate of VH1 the cable music channel is a non-profit organization who's mission is to "purchase new musical instruments to restore music education programs that have been cut due to budget reductions in the past or to save programs at risk of elimination due to lack of instruments." The foundation "has donated nearly \$40 million worth of music instruments to 1,500 public schools in 100 cities, improving the lives of more than 1 million children"

http://www.vh1.com/partners/save_the_music/who_we_are/foundation.html.

The National Association for Music Education (MENC) has partnered with actor and musician "Little" Steven Van Zandt in support of music education. His *Rock and Roll Forever Foundation* is developing a curriculum that will be available free of charge to schools that will teach all phases of music and the arts through Rock and Roll. The

hope is that students will maintain their interest in music through this avenue and gain the benefits of musical study.

Singer, song-writer, and children's entertainer Tom Chapin along with colleague John Forster wrote a satirical song about the effects of No Child Left Behind on schools. The song, entitled *Not on the Test*, premiered on National Public Radio's "Morning Edition" on January 1, 2007. Being a strong advocate of school music programs, his website, <http://www.tomchapin.com/> hosts a *Support Music In Our Schools* emblem at the top of the page. Tom Chapin has given MENC (Music Educators National Conference) members permission to download the song free of charge. The lyrics to his song tell a tale of NCLB.

Not On The Test

by John Forster & Tom Chapin

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Go on to sleep now, third grader of mine.
The test is tomorrow but you'll do just fine.
It's reading and math. Forget all the rest.
You don't need to know what is not on the test.

Each box that you mark on each test that you take,
Remember your teachers. Their jobs are at stake.
Your score is their score, but don't get all stressed.
They'd never teach anything not on the test.

The School Board is faced with no child left behind
With rules but no funding, they're caught in a bind.
So music and art and the things you love best
Are not in your school 'cause they're not on the test.

Sleep, sleep, and as you progress
You'll learn there's a lot that is not on the test.

Debate is a skill that is useful to know,
Unless you're in Congress or talk radio,
Where shouting and spouting and spewing are blessed
'Cause rational discourse was not on the test.

Thinking's important. It's good to know how.
And someday you'll learn to, but someday's not now.
Go on to sleep, now. You need your rest.
Don't think about thinking. It's not on the test.

Through the efforts of professional musicians, educators, and advocacy organizations school districts will be able to sustain successful music programs. In the words of Charles Fowler (1996), "Perhaps the thing that the arts do best, at their best, is open the doors to learning. They open our eyes, our ears, our feelings, our minds" (p.9).

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Appendix A
Informed Consent Form

Dear Participant:

Currently, I am enrolled in a cooperative doctoral program between East Stroudsburg University and Indiana University of PA. My dissertation topic is *The Academic Environment of One Junior High School in Northeastern Pennsylvania as Perceived by the Administration and the English, Mathematics, and Music Faculty: an Ethnography*. The intent of the study is to ascertain teacher perspectives as to the academic culture of the school and whether or not the music programs are a viable part of that culture.

Members of the English, mathematics and music faculty the building principal and school district superintendent are being invited to participate in the study. Participation is voluntary and you may refuse to participate and/or withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. Data will be collected through a series of 3, 45 to 60 minute interviews in a mutually acceptable location. All interviews will be taped to assist in the transcription process. The interviews will be given individually. No individual will be identified by name in the study. All participants will be given a pseudonym. Only the researcher and chair of the dissertation committee will know the identity of each participant. All participants will have the right to review the transcriptions and withhold any part of the transcribed data. The completed interviews will be compiled for use in the dissertation and for possible publication at a later date. All data will be stored in the researcher's home files for a minimum of 3 years to comply with federal regulations.

Thank you for your support of this important study.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Buzzelli-Clarke
Principal Investigator
570/420-1233

Dr.. Patricia Pinciotti
Faculty Sponsor
East Stroudsburg University of PA
570/422-3356

Participant Signature

Witness Signature

Date

THIS PROJECT HAS BEEN APPROVED BY THE EAST STROUDSBURG UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD FOR THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS. Dr, Shala Davis, Chair, 570/422-3336.

Appendix B
Three Interview Series Protocol

Guiding Questions	Experience	Interview #1 Put Participant experience in Context – past life to now	Interview #2 Details of the Present Experience– Stories Reconstruct details of the experience	Interview #3 Reflect on the meaning of the experience Intellectual and emotional connections
1. What is the relationship between one's life experience and their belief systems?	Education	Tell me about your schooling: elementary through high school	Describe what makes a well-rounded, successful student	Describe a master teacher
	Home life/ Community	How did you spend your time when not in school?	Describe your involvement in any outside activities in the community and participation in the arts.	Describe how the school impacts the community
		What types of arts opportunities did you have in your home/family/community/school?		Talk about the impact of artistic opportunities in the school.
2. What is the perceived value and influence of: A teacher Education Music programs?	Arts	Describe your exposure to the arts growing up: Experiences, music?	How can the arts contribute to the life of a typical 12-15 year old?	How have the arts contributed to your life/learning?
		Finish the statement: Music is.....	Music education is.....	Describe the influence or impact that the music program at the Junior High School has on the students and the school.
3. What are the connections between teaching, learning, and music?	Teaching	Describe the moment when you decided to make teaching your life's work and the steps you took to achieve this goal.	Tell me about a typical work day including interactions with other teachers, administration, and parents and any challenges that you face.	How do you see your role as a teacher in the school community? Describe your contributions to : the school climate, effectiveness, student learning.
		Were there any mentors or special people who influenced you?	How does your discipline impact cognitive, social, and emotional development?	What are the cognitive, social, and emotional benefits of the Math, English, and music programs in the junior high school?
		Tell me about your teaching career and how you decided to teach at the junior high school level.	What changes have you experienced/seen in your years as a teacher?	Explain your diagram of the school curriculum. Tell me about connections between disciplines
4. What is the realm of influence of a non-arts integrated music program?	Junior High	Tell me about a significant or defining moment when you were in junior high school.	Describe an effective junior high school	Talk about what 3-4 things, including school activities, are most valued and supported at the Junior High School by faculty/staff/administrative and students
		Who influenced you at that age?	Draw a diagram of the school curriculum	If you had the power to make changes in the school climate, what would those changes be?

Appendix C

Academic Standards for the Arts and Humanities

Pennsylvania Department of Education: Standards for Music

The first standard of production, performance includes the ability to recognize and understand the basic elements of music such as rhythm, melody, and harmony, and to put them together to create a new composition. Composition may be created through traditional theoretical means or through the process of improvisation. Students are also to be able to perform musical composition either through singing or by playing an instrument.

The second standard requires students to relate the arts through history, social, and cultural similarities and to understand the characteristics of different artistic periods of time. All world regions are to be incorporated into musical study throughout the educational process. The work of Pennsylvania artists are to be highlighted.

The third standard is the ability to understand the critical processes necessary to describe and classify musical works and to be able to compare and contrast different compositions. The student is to also understand the role of a music critic and to appreciate and comprehend the background information necessary to review musical works.

The last area of aesthetics response requires students to learn different philosophical views that have and are still influencing composers. Students are to identify and understand environmental and social philosophies affecting composition styles. Exhibit ability to express possible rationales for composition and delivery style of music, be it through film or disc. Show an understanding and an appreciation for regional aesthetic responses to different musical styles (Pa. Code, 2003).

Appendix D

Recommendations

Educational Benefit Recommendations

1. Restore the educational focus to student learning and away from a testing culture.
2. The school should identify academic strengths, personal interests, and talents in new students before scheduling is completed.
3. The administration needs to develop a broader, more flexible view of scheduling to include academics and music for students who wish to be part of an ensemble despite their academic status.

Parent Recommendation

1. Continue striving to increase parent involvement in the education of their children.

Diversity Recommendations

1. Institute a regular series of in-service sessions which focus on merging diverse cultures.
2. Include music as a means of exposing the students to diverse cultures.

Curriculum Recommendations

1. Explore the possibility of including music in the language arts and mathematics classes utilizing collaborative teaching techniques.
2. A concerted effort must be made to maintain the quality and depth of the current music program despite the testing regimen.

Arts Advocacy Recommendations

1. Increased networking within the schools and the district must occur in order to maintain the strength of the music program.
2. The benefits of participation in the school music program must constantly be promoted in order to maintain or exceed the current level of student involvement and musical excellence.