

WHY AM I IN BAND?

Why am I in band?

Music And Non-Music Factors That Affect Students' Decisions

To Participate In Band

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ABSTRACT

In a descriptive study using Likert scale statements, a cluster sample large Midwest high school band was surveyed to determine the factors that influenced member decisions to be in marching band. In addition to the intrinsic music value, this study considers non-music variables such as middle and high school teachers, competition, social factors, student, teacher and community support, competition from sports and after school programs, scheduling and class rank issues, and financial issues, such as pay to play and jobs. Twenty seven participants out of sixty responded and results were analyzed for central tendency (mean, mode, median), variability (standard deviation, range) and relationship (coefficient of correlation). The significant results were that, although students enjoyed playing their instruments, and that 70% desired to study privately, they were in band because they enjoyed it and did not consider sports, academics, after school activities or jobs to be major conflicts. They rated their ensembles highly and claimed band is fun, seemingly without considering competitive success as a major factor.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Introduction

There are studies on music attitudes and motivational teaching strategies, and studies on recruiting and retention in elementary school, but fewer that consider non-music-related variables that go into a student's decision-making process concerning participation in high school band, and especially involving the transition from middle school band to high school marching band. In addition to the intrinsic music value, this study considers non-music variables such as middle and high school teachers, competition, fear of failure, social factors, student, teacher and community support, competition from sports and after school programs, academic scheduling and class rank issues, and financial issues, such as pay to play, after school jobs and distance from school. Sandene (1994) includes size of instrument or even condition of the instrument case as a reason for dropping out of band. By understanding how students perceive these variables, teachers, parents and administrators can better focus on increasing both enrollment and retention in the high school band program. This descriptive, quantitative study evaluated the importance and effect of several music and non-music related factors on a student's decision to continue band after middle school, or to stay in high school marching band.

Statement of the Problem

Students are in band for a variety of reasons. For many, perhaps most, there are combinations of several factors. But there are also many reasons for dropping out. Are they in band because they love to play their instrument, because they love music? Are directors motivating or de-motivating? How noteworthy is the fear of leaving the middle school as a top-of-the-heap eighth grader to become a rookie freshman merged with strangers from other middle schools into a large high school? Do they fear failure in marching, memorizing music or band

competition? Is the marching band participation fee or distance from the high school problematic? Can they take band and the Advanced Placement (AP) classes for college preparation and to raise their grade point and class rank? Do they fear upperclassmen? Are parents supportive? Corenblum and Marshall (1998) include attitudes of parents, teachers and school toward band as predictors for continuing study in music. Are different perspectives and teacher expectations conflicting or confusing? Scheib (2003) compares music staff in a school where one teacher is highly competitive while another is referred to as an ex-work-a-holic. How do different personalities, perspectives and priorities impact decisions about which teacher(s) to study with?

Austin (1990) indicates, from information compiled by the National Center for Educational Statistics, that enrollment in high school band has declined over the past fifteen years and that there is a dramatic decrease in the number of individuals engaged in music studies as students progress from grades 7-12. Why the decline? There can be scheduling complications from sports programs, extracurricular clubs and academic classes. A large high school can have dozens of athletic programs and dozens more extracurricular club and organization opportunities. In designing his Conflict Resolution Model, Latten (1998) prioritizes scheduled and re-scheduled sporting events on his list of conflicts directors must deal with, but those also become conflicts for students involved in both. Because sports groups are more apt to cut people for lack of attendance, students trying to do both view skipping an after school band rehearsal as the lesser evil because they perceive their band spot as more secure. Or, they avoid conflict by quitting something, possibly band. How conflicting is an Advanced Placement class scheduled only during band, or the difference a weighted (AP course) versus non-weighted (band) class might have in class rank?

Financial issues are problematic for students and teachers. More students must work to pay for cell phone, car, insurance and gas. Those who must support financially challenged parents can see a 3-hr after school band rehearsal as an expense, to sacrifice after school income for band practice. Corenblum and Marshall (1998), found that socioeconomic level can negatively impact participant retention in band. Tightened budgets force marching bands to instigate “pay to play” policies and intense fundraising. From a study involving music teachers who left the profession (Scheib, 2004), we can deduce that unhappy, over-stressed or burned-out teachers negatively impact students. Teachers who concentrate on the business management aspects of the band can lose students, but so can inadequate funding. Shore (1986) found that 73% of band dropouts and 70% of those still in band *both* commented on a questionnaire that they were “never contacted or encouraged by the high school teacher to continue in the program”.

And yet, with increasingly momentous factors, administrators expect band directors to maintain or increase participation, keep the athletic event crowd happy *and* improve competitive success. Any sign of enrollment decline prompts reduction in force (RIF) actions, class closures and rearranged schedules.

If the arts are to survive and thrive, we need to compete for our students and our programs. Understanding student perceptions of the choices *they* have is a start.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to survey a cluster sampling of high school marching band students from one large Midwest school, and to use Likert scale statements to discover how music and non-music factors affect the decision to stay in band with the goal to better focus

teacher efforts to encourage middle school students coming into the high school, as well as those already in the high school program, to stay in band.

Research Questions

1. What motivates students to stay in band?
2. How conflicting are sports and other after-school activities?
3. How important are the teaching styles or personalities of the band directors?
4. Are academic conflicts and the problem with weighted grades and class rank factors?
5. Are there financial concerns with the pay to play fee, fundraising, cost of transportation to school, or the need for generating income?
6. How important is support from parents, teachers, students and community?

Null Hypothesis

Students continue from middle school to high school marching band because they enjoy music and are neither encouraged nor hindered due to non-music factors such as sports or after school schedules, band director personalities, social aspects of band, academic conflicts, financial concerns, or jobs.

Definition of Terms

- Administrators / Administration: school principal and other officials and policymakers who have authority to make changes in curriculum and teaching assignments.
- Band: an ensemble of students who play brass, woodwind, and percussion instruments.
- Band Assessment: A “pay to play” fee assessed to members to participate in the band.
- Band Director: teacher for an ensemble made up of wind, brass and percussion.
- Band Member: any student in band or marching band.

- Color Guard: an auxiliary part of the marching band made up of (primarily) girls who carry flags on poles and other theatrical props.
- Competition: hosted by a school as a fundraiser and/or sponsored by the Indiana State School Music Association (ISSMA), using judges to rate and rank performances.
- Drum Major: a student conductor of a marching band during performance.
- High School: a state-funded educational institution for grades 9-12.
- Instrumentalist: a band student who plays woodwind, brass or percussion instruments.
- Marching Band: a predominantly outside moving ensemble that can include student conductors (drum majors) and non-musicians (color guard).
- Middle school: a state-funded educational institution for grades 6-8.
- Private lesson: Individual study with an instrumental specialist, usually for a fee.
- Reduction in force: (RIF) staff reduction process involving contract non-renewal.
- Sports Program: an organized athletic group that involves high school students.
- Weighted Grades or Averages: A formula some schools use to place more value on academically challenging courses, i.e. Advanced Placement (AP) Biology, to break grade point average ties and to determine class rank.

Chapter Summary

There is increasing competition for the time of high school students. This chapter presented some of the factors that can affect a student's decision to stay in band. It outlined the problem and asked several questions to arrive at the study's purpose. Research questions were listed and terms were defined.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to consider the factors that affect student decisions to continue in band. In addition to motivators to stay in band, there are factors that cause students to drop out of band. Original literature reviewed focused either on retention motivators or on factors affecting attrition in music studies, particularly between middle and high school and throughout the high school years. Regardless of the approach, nearly every study focuses on the influence of teacher behaviors. First considered will be literature focused on reasons students are in band or stay in band, followed by studies indicating reasons for dropping band and finally, studies on teachers and teacher affect on students' participation.

Review of Related Literature

Several studies focused on different combinations of factors that affect recruiting and retention in band. Acorn (2002) includes love of music, then emphasizes band activities, fun and enjoyment, and the need for encouragement from parents, peers and teachers. He apparently disagrees with an opinion by Frank Battisti from the New England Conservatory, referenced but not quoted in his paper, that the correct type of band program focuses only on the artistic aspects of music as opposed to one emphasized as a great activity for students.

Reinforcing the idea that love of music is important and that those who love music tend to have better instrumental technical skills, mastery and cooperative orientations are contrasted with competitive and ego motivations in a regional study of northeastern schools (Schmidt, 2005). Schmidt agrees with motivational theorists' research concluding that musicians attribute their success and failure internally (ability and effort) over external attributions (luck, task and difficulty). His only reference to competition claims no difference in performance

achievement among elementary band students who had been opposed to competitive versus non-competitive goal structures. His study was limited to three schools in New York and Massachusetts, which makes it less applicable in a mid-west setting.

Corenblum and Marchall (1998) include attitudes of parents, teachers and school toward band, socioeconomic level and academic competency as predictors for continuing study in music. Also including school as a factor, Rothlisberger (1995), in a study that included building principals, band directors and band students, but that excluded parents, concluded that band has a positive influence on student education, including the development of life-skills. Students were concerned about maintaining their eligibility to be in band, and indicated that they were not in band for competitive reasons. Open communication between building principals, band directors and students is vital to aligning curriculum, expectations and perceptions of the program.

In contrast to studies that consider the positive motivators for joining and staying in band, Boyle (1995) studied responses from teachers and students ranking nineteen reasons for dropping band, concluding the top three reasons students give as (a) time, (b) sports, and (c) school activity conflicts while directors prioritize (a) lack of commitment to work, (b) scheduling conflicts, and (c) lack of parental support. Of the nineteen reasons studied, students ranked “lack of communication and encouragement from senior high school band directors”, relationship with the director/teacher and performance pressure in the middle of the overall list. At the very bottom was after school jobs.

Sandene (1994), who goes beyond focusing on recruiting to look at retention, considers factors that can be easily overlooked by teachers, but that can be important to students; such as the weight of the instrument to carry to and from school, and even the condition of the instrument case it is in.

Because several researchers point to teacher behaviors, teacher motivation and other teacher-oriented factors, two articles from the same author who specializes in job stress in music education provide a way to consider what affects the teacher, who then affects the students. In a study of roll stress within a particular music department, John W. Scheib (2003) studies a highly competitive vocal teacher, an ex-work-a-holic band director, a philanthropic assistant focused on students' life success, and an orchestra director building a program. How do an ex-work-a-holic band director and competitive-oriented choir director in the same department affect students deciding whether to be in either or both groups. Scheduling conflicts and pressure to recruit and retain are included as reasons why dissatisfied music teachers leave the profession (Scheib, 2004).

Chapter Summary

This chapter framed the focus of the study, which is to study reasons for staying in band, but also provides a long list of negative factors that contribute to student decisions to quit. Part of the problem of recruiting and retention contribute to roll stress in teachers, which can result in a negative impact on students. There is limited literature focused on recruiting middle school students into high school marching bands or on the challenges of retaining students in the types of programs that seem to be prominent in large Midwest schools. Studies questioning the benefits of competition, which all seem to be negatively biased, address music or educational value but not enrollment or retention. In addition to studies targeting enrollment from middle school to high school marching bands and retention of those in marching programs, studies comparing the life-long benefits of participation in band programs for those who never continue their music education past high school graduation would be beneficial.

CHAPTER 3: DESIGN AND METHOD

Introduction

In this chapter you will learn about the group in the study from a detailed overview of the band, the music department, school, community plus area and state overview of competition-oriented marching bands.. The ethical issues address the parental consent form, the measurement tool and its design, the survey method, data collection and data analysis.

Description of the Sample

The population for this study is all high school marching band instrumentalists in grades 9-12. A survey with a cover letter and parental consent form were mailed to a cluster sampling of all high school band instrumentalists in a large high school in the Midwest. Color Guard members, who do not also play an instrument, were excluded because they cannot respond to survey statements concerning their experience with middle school bands and directors.

The Music Department has one full-time choir director, an assistant choir director who is half-time at the high school, a full-time band director and a 1/3 time assistant band director. There are approximately 250 choir and 175 band students in the fall.

The vocal program includes an Applied Vocal Pedagogy class, a female choir, freshmen choir, a competitive upper-class concert choir and a highly competitive, selective show choir. The show choir backup band involves approximately fifteen instrumentalists who must attend after school marching band rehearsals on Mondays and Wednesdays and after school show choir rehearsals on Tuesdays and Thursdays August through mid-October. Fridays are football games and Saturdays are band contests. When marching season ends, show choir rehearses every day after school through the end of March, with Saturday competitions throughout February and March. Twenty students, including the backup band, participate in both band and show choir.

With adequate school facilities, the vocal program hosts a major show choir competition that raises funds necessary to secure professional choreography services and provides significant funding for consultants, equipment, props, summer camp expenses, food, travel and more.

The high school instrumental program includes Fall semester marching band that rehearses twice weekly in June, all day weekdays two weeks prior to school, daily as a class during the Fall semester and two days per week after school August through mid-October, performs at all home football games plus six county parades, and then competes in 4-6 marching competitions. Also in the Fall there are Freshman-only and Upperclassmen-only Concert Bands for those who elect not to march. Each perform twice throughout the semester. After marching season, the marching band is divided into Freshman/Sophomore and Junior/Senior Concert Bands that give one concert, performing separately and combined. During basketball season, there are two mandatory participation pep bands that play at approximately seventeen home basketball games with each band responsible for about half. During Spring semester there is always one Freshman Concert Band and one or two Upper-class Concert bands, depending on enrollment. Those bands each give two concert performances and participate at an area rating festival. There is one upper-class Jazz Band that meets as a class during the entire year and a second extracurricular Jazz Band for those not in the class. The class Jazz Band performs at each concert and travels at least once yearly to an area festival. There are semester long Theory I and II, Music History and Music Appreciation classes, although not every class is offered every semester. Unlike the vocal program and other Class A programs with which it competes, the instrumental program cannot realistically consider hosting a marching band competition as a major fundraiser, due mostly to the logistical problems related to the football stadium being across a highway and too far from parking and other school facilities.

The sampled school population is approximately 2000 in a small community of about 18,000, but it is also the only high school in a large geographic, yet sparsely populated county of 38,000, according to the Indiana Business Research Center (IBRC, 2005). The county population is 88% white, 8% black, and 4% Hispanic or Latino. The athletic program involves 204 girls and 259 boys in 21 sports (45 different teams) with 68 coaching positions. The researcher is the Assistant Band Director of the cluster sample.

The state from which the cluster sample comes is one of the most highly competitive in the nation in marching ensembles. The Bands of America (BOA) organization has its national headquarters in the state and has had national championships in the state capital city. In 2004, four of the top twelve nationally ranked bands were in state and within 100 miles from the sample. Two additional of the top twelve were in two adjacent states and within 150 miles. The third adjacent state also had a top twelve band 250 miles from the sample. (BOA, 2004). In 2005, four of the top twelve were in state and within a 100 mile radius. The top ranked band in the state festival rankings was ranked 3rd and 2nd in the BOA national rankings in 2004 and 2005. Six of the state's festival top ten are within 100 miles from the sample. Drum Corps International (DCI, 2005) hosts several major competitions in state because of the huge following competitive drum corps enjoy within the state.

Ethical Considerations

Because this survey involves high school students, a parental consent form (see Appendix C) with a Full Disclosure Statement including (a) The Purpose of the Study, (b) Statements that the study is Voluntary and Anonymous, (c) Statement of Benefits and Risks, (d) Parental consent form to be signed and returned prior to student involvement and (e) complete contact information

for questions or concerns were mailed with the surveys and an addressed, postage paid return envelope. The high school Principal and the Band Director approved this study.

Research Design

Following collection of background information and yes/no questions, the Survey tool contains Likert scale statements, with participants ranking their agreement as SD-strongly disagree, D-disagree, N-neither disagree nor agree (neutral), A-agree, and SA-strongly agree.

After a brief professional review, the original tool was modified and some questions were eliminated or restructured. A peer-review panel suggested further shortening of the survey and clarification of some terms, after which the survey tool was reduced from nine to three pages. After a second professional review, the final version was printed.

Method

The original intent was to have all participants come to the high school band room to take the survey. Unexpected summer building maintenance necessitated a change, so the survey, consent form, cover letter and postage-paid, pre-addressed envelope were mailed to 60 instrumentalists, representing the sample. At a cost of \$.63 per outgoing piece plus the \$.39 stamp on the return envelope, the researcher spent \$61.20 in postage. Complicated by the fact of the required parental consent form, a hand-written note at the bottom of the cover letter instructed no names on the survey and assured parents and participants that the consent form would be separated from the survey prior to survey analysis.

Measurement Instrument

The instrument was a three page survey containing nine preliminary and background questions and forty-eight Likert scale questions where participants will circle one of five levels of agreement from SD=Strongly Disagree to SA=Strongly Agree.

Data Collection

Participants were instructed to mail surveys to the researcher's home address in the pre-addressed, postage paid envelope. In addition to surveys received via mail, some were handed to the researcher at concerts and private lessons, one was found inside the researcher's front door and another hand delivered to the researcher's mailbox.

Data Analysis

Raw data was entered into Microsoft® Excel and analyzed for central tendencies (mean, median, mode), variability (range and standard deviation), percentile rank (percentile rank,) and relationship (coefficient of correlation).

Chapter Summary

This chapter presented an overview of the school, music and athletic departments and the school from which the cluster sample came. Also summarized was the level of marching competition within the state and how some in-state bands are ranked in national competitions. Because subjects were under 18 years old, ethical descriptions were included. The research design and method, different from that described in the proposal, are detailed. The type of measurement instrument designed along with the process for collecting and analyzing the data were also described.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

Introduction

This chapter will report on the raw data and report results analyzed for central tendency (mean, mode, median), variability (standard deviation, range) and relationship (coefficient of correlation). In addition to the intrinsic music value, survey questions were designed to consider non-music variables such as middle and high school teachers, competition, fear of failure, social factors, student, teacher and community support, competition from sports and after school programs, academic scheduling and class rank issues, and financial issues, such as pay to play, after school jobs and distance from school.

The background answers were translated into numbers as follows:

Female = 1, Male = 2

Caucasian/white = 1

Middle Schools

‘A’ Middle School = 1

‘B’ Middle School = 2

‘C’ Middle School = 3

Two of the Above = 4

Grades: used 9,10,11,12

Yes/No Answers: Yes = 1, No = 2

Likert Scale responses were changed numerically as follows:

SD (Strongly Disagree) = 1

D (Disagree) = 2

N (Neutral) = 3

A (Agree) = 4

SA (Strongly Agree) = 5

For most of the results reporting, the “mean” (average) number will be used to indicate level of agreement. The scale was a 5-point continuum from 1=Strongly Disagree to 5=Strongly Agree. An number less than 3.00 indicates disagreement with the statement while anything above 3.00 indicates agreement.

The Results

Of the 60 surveys mailed, 24 were returned within the requested deadline, which gave students an evening plus a full day and a partial day to complete and mail the completed survey in the stamped addressed envelope. Three additional responses were received the following three days and are included in this study. Those unable to complete the survey included two drum majors away at camp, the color guard captain out of the country, at least two students at church camp and six students at a 4-H competition.

Eighteen females and six males, (three freshmen, eight sophomores, eight juniors and eight seniors), completed surveys. One hundred percent were caucasian/white. Seventeen students attended Middle School ‘A’, eleven participants came from Middle School ‘B’ and three went to Middle School ‘C’. Four students included in those numbers attended Middle Schools ‘A’ and ‘B’.

Demonstrating a serious interest in music, nine (33%) have studied privately on their instrument while sixteen (70%) indicated a *desire* to study privately “if funding and a teacher were available”. Fourteen (58%) have studied piano. Seven (26%) agreed or strongly agreed with a statement about majoring in music. Mean and median were close to four and mode was five on the question about enjoying playing an instrument alone. Four seniors and two juniors indicated

enjoyment listening to solo literature, but the overall answer score on solo literature was 3.5, only slightly above neutral.

When it comes to the social aspect, only one student gave a lower than “agree” answer to the statement about band being “fun” and the highest response (mean=4.73/5.00) in the entire survey (100% answered ‘A’ or ‘SA’) was agreement that bus rides to competitions are fun with high responses also to statements about being part of a large group and the thrill of performing.

Statements about community and teacher support were asked because of research indicating their importance (Corenblum and Marchall, 1998). Responses were negative and neutral about the community’s financial support and teachers’ verbal support, however one “strongly disagree” answer about teacher’s making positive comments had a note that “no teacher had commented”, which indicates a weakly worded question.

There was moderate agreement (mean = 4.08 and 3.92) on questions about the school having good concert, jazz or marching bands. Students did not want directors to be more selective in the quality of musicians in the band if it could mean a smaller band, indicating the size of the band was important. Students moderately agreed that the size of the band is affected by the level of success in competition (3.93), the music and the competition show (3.69) and sports scheduling (3.67). Close to neutral responses consider size affected by academic scheduling (3.33) and only slightly higher that the director affects size (3.59). Everyone either agreed or strongly agreed that marching band is fun (4.70). Students agreed (4.07) that their directors work well together and that directors are part of the reason they like band (4.00). Students agreed that band helps their grade point average (4.15) but were neutral (3.26) about taking an AP course if they were not in band.

The middle school responses were revealing. Some of the most positive responses were to questions about middle school being fun; fun because of the music (4.27), fun because of friends in band (4.11) and fun because of the director (4.00). The only strongly negative responses, and the only responses lower than four out of five about middle school band being fun because of the director all came from the same middle school. Concerns about memorizing music, learning how to march, or not knowing the director(s) did not seem to affect decisions significantly.

Sports and after school activity conflicts are not major conflicts for band members (2.0 and 2.62), although the range for both answers was four on a five point scale, indicating significant conflicts for some. Twenty-two (81%) are actively involved in after-school clubs or church youth groups and twelve (44%) have part-time jobs. Two questions concerning the need to have a part time job to pay for expenses scored below 1.7, but with ranges of three and four.

Academics are important to band students. All but one senior and all of the juniors will take an Advanced Placement (AP) class, and even though the range on this question was 4, only one freshman indicated no interested in taking an AP class. With a mean of over 5 and 5.0 for both median and mode, this was one of the most strongly agreed with statements in the survey.

Due to the time restraints and time of year, contacting people who had quit band was not a practical option. An attempt to get that information from the perspective of students still in band did not produce significant responses. Statements about someone who quit band were neutral or on the disagree side for the reasons listed (conflicts with sports (A=12, SA=1, mean=3.04), conflict with academic scheduling (A=9, SA=4, mean=3.11), had a job (A=11, SA=0, mean=2.96), had financial issues (A=6, SA=0, mean=2.48), had trouble with transportation (A=4, SA=0, mean=2.26), didn't get along with members (A=6, SA=0,

mean=2.26), didn't get along with the middle school (A=1, SA=1, mean=2.11) or high school director (A=6, SA=6, mean=3.27), didn't want to march or learn how to memorize music (A=5, SA=2, mean=2.56), didn't enjoy marching band or the time commitment (A=10, SA=4, mean=3.44)), but most of those answers, which were to be about a single person, had one or two strongly agree statements, which would likely reflect *the* reason that person quit.

Each statement about variables that might affect the size of the band received a wide range (4.0) of responses. Size affected by level of success in competition (3.93), sports scheduling (3.67), academic scheduling (3.33), the director (3.59) and music and competition show (3.69).

According to the table of Critical Values for Correlation Coefficients (Mertler, C. & Charles, C. 2005), significant correlations exist between the middle schools attended and the experience reported by the students, particularly those relating to the director. Also between the director and level at which the participant agreed to having learned a lot about music. There was a significant correlation between those who liked band in middle school because of the director and those who said they learned a lot about music in Middle School band. Students who did not have fun in Middle School Band because of the director claimed they did not learn a lot about music. Those agreeing with statements about having good concert and jazz bands also agreed with a good marching band statement and that size and success of the marching band is affected by the director.

Conclusion

This study disproves the null hypothesis. There *are* other reasons than the intrinsic value of music that motivate students to continue in high school marching band.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, the results were reported, categorized by the factors being addressed and reported mostly by indicating the *mean* score out of the 5-point continuum. Some significant correlations were also reported.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

Introduction

In this chapter, discussion of the findings as well as mis-understood questions will be addressed. Recommendations for future studies will be included.

Discussion

Given the variety of students in a high school marching band, it is not surprising that most of the statements had a wide range (3-4) of responses. The responses that came back with a narrow range (0=total agreement, 1=narrow range, 5=wide range), especially a range of 1.00, were responses related to the social aspect of band. Based on this survey, it would seem that most are in band because it is fun and not because of its level of competitiveness success. Given that band is an elective, and when considered with the increasing numbers of options high school students have (over forty clubs and forty athletic teams at the high school, plus after school activities and jobs), directors and administrators must consider that if band is not an enjoyable activity, that students may select other activities.

Responses and notes written on surveys indicate some confusion with some of the statements. One participant separated the ranking for jazz band and concert band. Two participants either asked verbally, or wrote on the survey that there was confusion over how to agree or disagree with a statement about a job conflicting with band when they had no job; i.e. if they have no job, do they respond neutrally or strongly disagree. On the question intended to measure the level of support from teachers, when asked to agree or disagree with “teachers say good things about the band”, one student circled SD (strongly disagree) and wrote that “none of my teachers have said anything”. The intent was that SD would indicate teachers saying negative things about the band. The apparent confusion renders that question invalid.

Although there is overwhelming circumstantial evidence that the size of other Class A school programs is proportional to the level of success, there is no specific research to support that idea, or that in the case of a competitively successful band, student reasons for being in band may shift from social enjoyment to being a part of a 'successful' organization. Research comparing enrollment to competitive success should be conducted. Until that level of success is achieved, directors have the formidable challenge of simultaneously expanding and improving the program while maintaining the positive social and fun aspects of being in the program.

Additional research about the time and number of marching band rehearsals for competitive programs would be helpful. Also, research indicating how those programs balance competition with community involvement, i.e. marching in parades or the number of basketball games at which the band plays. Without supporting statistics, the researcher is aware of Class A bands that march in 0-1 area parades (compared to 6 from the sample group) and at approximately 10 home basketball games or fewer(vs 15-17). To focus on competitive success *and* a high level of community involvement does not seem to be the norm.

The level of correlation between band budgets and competitive success would be another helpful research project. How much is expendable income to purchase state-of-the-art equipment, top-of-the-line marching instruments, and to hire expert training and consulting a part of a band's competitive success? An area band (25 miles from sample) lists over twenty staff in the program of the competition they host. Nine of ten Class A finalists in state competition in 2005 had sound systems on the field. Eight had matching all silver brass instruments. All were marching all silver tubas or sousaphones (@\$4500 ea).

That band can be fun *and* encourage 70% to desire to study privately, then 1) there is positive, motivating and encouraging education taking place, and 2) the school should address

that significant desire for advanced learning through specialized individualized instruction. The survey statement about studying privately included both teacher availability and funding. Further research dividing those variables would better explain whether the problem is lack of specialized teachers or the ability to pay for specialized study. In the meantime, evidence points toward academic offerings of an Applied Music class or classes being well received.

As expected, a high number of students have jobs and/or are involved in sports, band, and after school activities, but few of those in band indicate many conflicts, and few reported having to work for money to pay living expenses. It would be interesting to know how many of them are in the same athletic events that others use as a reason for quitting band. It also seems to indicate that excuses of jobs and sports conflicts, with the exception of a small number of sports that do present a valid conflict, there must be other unstated reasons for quitting.

Multiple students questioned how to rank statements about the “director” when there are two directors at the high school. Statements that would have separated the two high school directors, or that would have ranked or compared them were intentionally avoided for professional considerations and at the advice and recommendation of the supervising professor.

With more time than this study allowed, surveying students who have actually quit band, either between middle and high school or after a year or more in the high school band, would provide valid and valuable information to encourage those in leadership to make adjustments to accommodate reasonable issues that may currently be overlooked or not considered.

Chapter Summary

Students are in this particular band because it is fun and they enjoy the social aspects; i.e. being together, traveling together, performing together. They would prefer a larger band to one that is more selective of participants. They believe they have a good band, even though the

band's competitive success indicates otherwise, at least in the area of competitive marching band. The conflicts with sports and other activities, at least for those in the band, are marginal and manageable. It would be interesting to compare answers from students who are in a successful competitive marching band and to survey former band students about why they quit.

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APPENDIX A: TIMELINE

Mail labels were generated and affixed to #10 business envelopes prior to proposal approval. Within two days from proposal approval, final edits were completed, materials printed, collated, stapled, folded, stuffed and sealed, and surveys mailed via USPS first class mail. Since all recipients were in the same or adjacent zip codes, all materials should have been received the next day.

Participants were asked to mail the completed survey no later than the third day following receipt. Data was analyzed and results reported two days after the completed survey receipt deadline.

APPENDIX B: COVER LETTER

[DATE]

Dear Parents,

I am in the last two weeks of a summer school graduate class at Ball State University and am conducting a *quick* research project as part of that class. I would like to invite your marching band student(s) to participate in a survey. I will appreciate receipt of the completed survey anytime, but to be included in my “official” study, I **must have them in hand on Monday, July 17, 2006.** I am enclosing a stamped, addressed envelope for your convenience. Please **do not sign the survey and do not put a return address label on the envelope** as surveys are to be **anonymous**.

The purpose of the survey is to look at the reasons why your child is in the marching band as well as factors that went into that decision. From that, I hope to find reasons others may not be continuing, with the ultimate goal of adjusting my strategies and methods to do a better job of recruiting and retaining more students in our high school band program.

Please note:

- ♪ Participation is completely voluntary and will NOT affect band grades, position in band, or relationships with directors.
- ♪ The survey will be anonymous as no names will be placed on the surveys.
- ♪ The forms collected will be confidential. Forms will NOT be shared with anyone at HNHS. I will be analyzing them as part of my project. The small research class and Dr. John W. Scheib, Assistant Professor of Music Education at Ball State University, and the teacher for this class, will also review them.

Attached is a **Consent Form** that outlines the purpose of the project. **In order to include your survey in my study, I absolutely must have your signed consent.** There can be no exceptions. Thanks for your continued support – and for your help in this particular project.

The original intent was to conduct the survey at school, but building maintenance schedules required a last minute change to mailing the survey and the consent form. In a perfect survey, the consent form would not be returned with an anonymous survey. Be assured that the survey will be separated from the consent form prior to its analysis.

Sincerely,

John Gardner

APPENDIX C: CONSENT FORM

Consent Form for Research Class Project

**John Gardner, Graduate Student
School of Music, Ball State University
Summer 2006**

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to survey current high school marching band students to discover how music and non-music factors affect a student’s decision to participate in band. From that, I hope to also extract factors which might cause student attrition in band (e.g., cause students to not continue participating in band).

Respect for Persons

Participation in this study is voluntary. Since all participants are under the age of 18, no one will be permitted to take the survey without parental consent. Consent may be withdrawn at any time. The survey will be anonymous, i.e., there will be no student names on the surveys.

Benefits and Risks

The intent of this study is to discover how combinations of music and non-music factors go together in a student’s decision to in band. With a better understanding from the student’s perspective, teachers and administrators can adjust and focus strategies to better encourage middle school students coming into the high school, as well as those already in the high school program, to continue in band. Participants in the study, and indeed, all students in band should benefit from the information collected. A risk, even though the survey is anonymous, includes the potential that the researcher may attribute patters of answers to individuals who participated.

Confidentiality

Participants will not be identified on the survey and surveys will not be distributed or shown to anyone at the school other than the researcher. Surveys *will* be shared and analyzed by a small graduate school research class and by Dr. John W. Scheib, Assistant Professor of Music Education at Ball State University.

I have read the above and consent to my child’s participation in this study.

Parent or Guardian

Student Name

Signature of Parent or Guardian

Date

Contact Person: John Gardner 260-356-1799
 1246 Cherry St.
 Huntington, IN 46750
 JRGardner@bsu.edu

APPENDIX D: THE SURVEY TOOL

General Information

The purpose of this survey is to evaluate several factors that influenced your decision to stay in band. You'll be asked about someone who has quit band. By understanding YOUR perspective, we hope to adjust strategies for the ultimate goal of retaining more people in our band program. Some of the factors evaluated in this survey include:

- The value of music in the school curriculum.
- Your Middle and High School Band Directors.
- Your view of competition.
- Your middle school perceptions of marching band, i.e. marching & memorizing music.
- Support from your parents, other teachers, and the community.
- Impact of sports, work, other after school activities, academic scheduling, or distance from school on band participation.

NOTE: This survey is *voluntary*. It will have no impact on your band grade or band position. You may, at any time, discontinue and discard the survey, no questions asked. Do NOT put your name on the paper. To give us some background and basic information, indicate the correct answer from each of the following:

1. Which are you? ___ female ___ male
2. Which are you? ___ Caucasian/white ___ Hispanic/Latino
 ___ African-American/black ___ Other
3. What grade will you be in when school starts?
 ___ 9th ___ 10th ___ 11th ___ 12th
4. In which Middle School did you have band? (Check all that are appropriate).
 ___ Crestview ___ Riverview ___ Salamonie
 ___ Other ___ None
5. Have you studied with a private teacher on your instrument?
 ___ Yes ___ No
6. Would you study privately on your instrument if funds and a teacher were available?
 ___ Yes ___ No
7. Have you had piano lessons? ___ Yes ___ No
8. Are you active in an after school group, such as 4-H, FFA, church youth group, etc?
 ___ Yes ___ No
9. Do you have a part-time job? ___ Yes ___ No

DIRECTIONS: For the following, *circle* the letter(s) to indicate your level of agreement:

- SD if you *Strongly Disagree* with the statement Example: SD
- D if you *Disagree* with the statement
- N if you neither Disagree nor Agree; i.e., you are *Neutral* about the statement
- A if you *Agree* with the statement
- SA if you *Strongly Agree* with the statement

- 10. I will major in music in college. ----- SD D N A SA
- 11. My participation in school sports conflicts w/band activities. ----- SD D N A SA
- 12. My participation in non-school sports conflicts w/band activities. - SD D N A SA
- 13. I pay for my clothes, gas, insurance and/or make car payments. ---- SD D N A SA
- 14. My part-time job conflicts w/band activities.----- SD D N A SA
- 15. I have/will take at least one Advanced Placement (AP) class.----- SD D N A SA
- 16. I will quit if band's lower weighted grade lowers my class rank. --- SD D N A SA
- 17. I enjoy playing my instrument when I am alone. ----- SD D N A SA
- 18. I enjoy playing my instrument in band. ----- SD D N A SA
- 19. I enjoy listening to recorded solo literature on my instrument.----- SD D N A SA
- 20. I learned a lot about music in Middle School Band. ----- SD D N A SA
- 21. Middle School Band was fun...
 - because of the music we played. ----- SD D N A SA
 - a. because my friends were in band. ----- SD D N A SA
 - b. because of the director. ----- SD D N A SA
- 22. Prior to coming to high school, I was concerned...
 - a. about marching and memorizing music. ----- SD D N A SA
 - b. that I did NOT know the high school director. ----- SD D N A SA
 - c. about conflicts between band and sports. ----- SD D N A SA
 - d. about conflicts between band and getting a job.----- SD D N A SA
- 23. If you have NOT completed a marching band season, skip to #24.
 - a. I like the bus rides to competitions----- SD D N A SA
 - b. I like being part of a big group ----- SD D N A SA
 - c. I like the thrill of the performance ----- SD D N A SA
- 24. Support
 - a. The community supports the band financially. ----- SD D N A SA
 - b. My other teachers say good things about the band. ----- SD D N A SA

- c. My parents encourage my participation and give time and/or money, volunteering or attending events. ----- SD D N A SA
- 25. We have good concert and jazz bands. ----- SD D N A SA
- 26. We have a good marching band. ----- SD D N A SA
- 27. About MARCHING Band...
 - a. Directors should recruit the *better musicians* even if the result is a *smaller* band. ----- SD D N A SA
 - b. The size of the marching band is affected by ...
 - i. the level of success in competition. ----- SD D N A SA
 - ii. sports scheduling. ----- SD D N A SA
 - iii. academic scheduling. ----- SD D N A SA
 - iv. the director. ----- SD D N A SA
 - v. the music and the competition show. ----- SD D N A SA
 - c. Marching band is fun. ----- SD D N A SA
- 28. Our high school directors
 - a. Work well together.----- SD D N A SA
 - b. Are part of the reason I like band.----- SD D N A SA
- 29. Academic considerations
 - a. My band grade helps my grade point average. ----- SD D N A SA
 - b. If I were not in band, I'd take a heavier weighted class to improve my class rank. ----- SD D N A SA

DIRECTIONS: Think of someone who would have helped your band, but who dropped out. Indicate your level of agreement for each of the statements about that person.

- 30. Someone no longer in band...
 - a. had conflicts with sports.----- SD D N A SA
 - b. had a conflict with academic scheduling. ----- SD D N A SA
 - c. had a job, or had to get a job. ----- SD D N A SA
 - d. had financial issues with the band assessment fee.----- SD D N A SA
 - e. had trouble with transportation to school.----- SD D N A SA
 - f. didn't get along with band members. ----- SD D N A SA
 - g. didn't get along with the middle school director.----- SD D N A SA
 - h. didn't get along with the high school director. ----- SD D N A SA
 - i. didn't want to march or learn how to memorize music. ----- SD D N A SA
 - j. didn't enjoy marching band or the time commitment. ----- SD D N A SA

APPENDIX E: DATA