

# **Factors Contributing to Student Retention in School Band Programs**

**A Student Survey Designed to Identify Teacher  
and Music Program Strengths**

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## **PART ONE**

### **PREAMBLE**

As a music teacher with seven years experience, I was very determined to continue to build the band and music programs within the schools and community where I taught. Most of my colleagues, including non-music specialists, believed the band-building goal was achieved when a major, sustainable increase in the number of students who chose to participate in the program occurred. In my attempt to understand the development of my band programs, I discovered that some students chose to participate in band because they loved learning about music through band activities and could not imagine going to a school without a band program. Other students chose to participate in band because it was a fun activity that provided them with enjoyable experiences they could not get anywhere else. There was also a small group of students who probably would not be in their school's band program without the constant encouragement from their parents, peers and teachers.

I had the same teaching assignment for six years, and had been trying to build my band program. Each year, I asked myself the following questions: What do I have to do to become a better teacher and conductor? What activities do I have to plan to motivate the students? What are the factors that determine whether each band student achieves success or failure? What factors affect student retention? Why do students quit?

I was an itinerant teacher between an elementary school and a middle-years school. I taught band to students from grade four to grade nine. Both schools were of similar size. In the past six years, the membership in the band program at the elementary school had grown from about 13% of the students eligible to participate in the band

program to about 80%. The junior high school band program had remained quite constant for the first five years of my teaching position. Each year, about 13% of the school's population participated in the band program. During my seventh year of teaching I was assigned to teach full-time at the middle-years school, and leave the successful band and music program at the elementary school. About 25% of the student body had chosen to continue their music education through participation in the middle-years band program that year. It was my hope that the increase in student participation in the middle-years band program would be sustained.

Prior to my change in teaching assignment, I was comfortable with the growth of the elementary school band program. The high student participation rates at the elementary school remained constant. However, I was distressed by the lack of participation in the band program at the middle-years level. Many band students from the three elementary schools which feed the middle-years school do not continue with band when they enter junior high school. Many students who were members of their elementary school band program dropped band before even trying it at their middle-years school.

During my first two years of teaching, I thought some students did not choose band because I was a new and different teacher, or perhaps people saw my band program as one of poor quality. It was not until my third and fourth years of teaching that I began to realize that there must be factors other than those relating to myself that contributed in determining whether students chose band. Obvious factors were those relating to peer-pressure, as well as those factors relating to conflicts within the school timetable.

My junior high school band has played quality wind literature over the past six years by such notable composers as: Bach, Reed, Vaughan Williams, Del Borgo, Grainger, Mozart, and Beethoven. I am very proud of the repertoire we have been able to study. I have come to realize that the quantity of students in a music program does not necessarily correlate with the quality of the music education being received by students. My bands at both schools have always been well received at festivals and concerts. If I have been able to offer my band students a substantial music education married with an enjoyable band experience, why did five years elapse before a noticeable increase in numbers occurred?

In the past five years, I have participated in professional development activities to improve my conducting skills, and I have finished programs of study at the undergraduate and graduate level. Participation in a number of local, provincial, and international music education conferences has served to provide me with personal and professional growth opportunities. I attended a conducting symposium at the University of North Dakota with Gordon Brock and Joseph Missal. I studied conducting at the University of Alberta with Frank Battisti and the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra. Both experiences gave me a better understanding of where I want and need to go as a school band conductor. I am better aware of my strengths and weaknesses as a conductor because of these programs, and I have a better insight into why the students and I function the way we do in rehearsal. Yet, I still needed to find answers to some of my questions regarding student success with band.

All band teachers have exceptional students whose ability enables them to push the musical limits of their section within the band, as well as within the entire band

program. As well, every band program has students who are swept along by a group that does not maintain the teacher's minimum standard of performance. These weaker students often occupy most of the available instructional time and teacher energy. My experience is that they are not always the students who choose to quit band programs.

Often the students who are having the most problems are quite dedicated and, even though they have less success than others, they do not consider quitting band as an option. It is ironic that many students who quit band have significant skill and talent. It is often professional, educated parents from affluent families who support their children's decision to quit band, without question, even though they are successful at music.

I reviewed literature specific to the band [music] experience to try to determine what factors played a part in the success and failure of band students' music education. Specifically, I was interested in discovering the reasons why students joined band programs; why students participated in them on a long-term basis (grades four to twelve); and why students quit band programs.

## **FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO STUDENT RETENTION: A LITERATURE REVIEW**

To look at issues that relate to student participation in an educational program without looking at the structure of the program, school, and community is impossible. Immediately, questions that need answering are: What makes a program successful? What is the curriculum of a successful band program? To what extent is the continuation of student participation in a band program dependent upon the ability of the teacher to relate and transfer curricular information to the student? What are the social and economic factors affecting the students' lives? Where does the band program fit in each

student's life and family values? How does school climate and culture affect student participation? Can school administrators directly or indirectly control the development of music programs?

Frank Battisti, from the New England Conservatory, stated during a conducting course at the University of Alberta in 1999, that there are two types of band programs. According to Battisti, the first type of band program is one that focuses on music. This type of program needs great teachers and has nearly all the students in the school participating because of the love for music. The second type of band program is one that is a great activity for students. The focus of this type of program often centres on band trips and music festivals. Fund-raising and other activities are often the focus over making music. Battisti believes only the first type of band program is acceptable.

Margaret Anderson (1996) believed that student achievement in music is related to motivation. She explained that the ideal balance of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation will give students personal success in studying music. Anderson introduced this idea by clarifying that the premise of her study was that "...motivation is not innate, rather it is a learned experience"(p. 29).

Anderson explored the definitions and types of motivation relevant to her study. She explored intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, and fear motivation while reflecting that our goal as educators is to promote life-long learning. "Ultimately it is the individual student who is responsible for making choices about their [sic] actions..."; therefore it is necessary for educators "...to motivate [students] to seek excellence in the development of their musical talents and skills"(Anderson, 1996, p.29).

Human laziness is the biggest obstacle to overcome in terms of motivation, according to Anderson. She believed: “We, by and large, look for the easy way out....We find it more natural to choose tension relieving over goal-achieving”(p.29). This idea supports her later observation that teachers find it necessary to put emphasis on student effort. Students are more concerned with putting effort into maintaining their sense of self-worth. Anderson reported that Covington (1983) discovered that as children become older, they begin to think that success is a reflection of ability, while younger children attribute success to effort.

In her study, Anderson suggested that there are two basic groups of music students: the Superstars and the Dropouts. The Dropouts put in great effort and fail. The sense of failure might be imagined or actual. Over time, the students developed a great sense of shame; therefore, the students wanted to discontinue the shameful experience. Superstars seemed to know that failure was normal and that time and effort would get them positive results. Students from both groups attributed ability, task difficulty, luck and effort as causes for success or failure. Students viewed ability and effort as internal causes of success, and luck and task difficulty as external causes of success. When students saw internal factors contributing to failure, their sense of self-worth was shaken.

According to Anderson, 1996, the key for success with all students is appropriate teacher praise. Anderson felt that the teacher’s role was to promote music achievement, effort, and perseverance to help develop habits for success that would make them life-long learners. However, without intrinsic motivation to bridge successes, students were likely to quit band upon experiencing failure. This comment from Anderson suggested that her educational paradigm is one of value-centred education. Anderson stated that a

goal of band programs was to produce life-long learners; yet, there was no mention thus far of curricular goals and objectives. Was the goal of Anderson and her band programs to produce self-motivated life-long learners, and if so, did that concept fit within state curricula or within her own?

The verity of Anderson's study lends her comments academic weight. Her observations and conclusions were consistent with accepted knowledge of the field. However, there was no mention of the structure of those successful band programs that have high student retention. Anderson did not address the issue that the structure of band programs may have an effect on the students' desire to continue in band. Anderson used extensive sources within her study, and her work was professionally relevant and clearly written. I would share it with colleagues as a useful study – not a rigorous one.

Barry Corenblum and Eric Marshall's study (1998) "The Band Played On: Predicting Students' Intentions to Continue Studying Music", was an up-to-date, relevant study. Their starting point was past research that indicated socioeconomic level and academic competency as predictors of musical aptitude and achievement. They looked at the possibility that other factors may contribute to student performance in band such as current grades, extracurricular musical activities, teacher evaluation, and attitudes of parents. Corenblum and Marshall hypothesized that if educators knew factors that contributed to student retention, educators might be able to adapt teaching strategies and resources, and to develop intervention strategies for students who are likely to drop out. This hypothesis was a logical one, but it lacked depth. Corenblum and Marshall do not include the curricula of the band and music program as a possible factor in student

success and retention. I find Corenblum and Marshall's theory to be shortsighted, and hierarchical.

Corenblum and Marshall found that the main reason socioeconomic level affects students' involvement with band was because there was more money in the home to spend on musical activities outside of the school such as: private instrumental and piano lessons, regular attendance at concerts and other musical events, listening to recordings in the home, etc. They also found that students participated and did well in activities judged to be valued, self-enhancing, or rewarding. Corenblum and Marshall found that parental support was a major factor in shaping students' attitudes. However, the integrity of that conclusion was somewhat weakened because the researchers did not separate the influence of parents' attitudes over their children from socioeconomic influence. Student attitudes toward music were the highest from students who participated in extra-curricular musical activities that their parents supported. Teacher attitude was also found to be a predictor of students' intentions to continue in band. If students saw that any teacher in the school, not just the band teacher, had slightly negative thoughts about the band program, the students' perceptions of and participation in the band program were affected. Student perception of administrative support from the Principal and Vice-Principal also weighed heavily on students' intentions to continue in band.

Corenblum and Marshall, 1998, randomly selected two hundred and fifty-three grade nine students from Winnipeg because the largest decrease in band enrollment occurred when students first entered high school. The students were from a culturally diverse community with great variances in socioeconomic levels. The researchers used a questionnaire that was short enough to complete within one class period.

The researchers found that “...the more positively teachers rated [graded] band students, the more likely students were to say that they would take band next year”(Corenblum & Marshall, 1998, p.5). Corenblum and Marshall summarized that “perceived parental support, teacher evaluations, and outside musical interests were better predictors than were student attitudes”(p.6). The more students perceived their parents as supporters of the band program, the less likely the students were to quit band. The researchers did not find any correlation with culture and dropout rates.

Unfortunately, Corenblum and Marshall did not look through the band room doors to get a sense of what happens inside. Is there a provincial band curriculum? What is the focus of the curriculum? Does it allow for ease of curricular alignment and articulation? Does the curriculum encourage students to perceive a difference between elementary/middle years curriculum with that of the high school curriculum?

Corenblum and Marshall’s research methods appear to have been be crafted very well. I was surprised with their finding that high teacher-assigned grades were retention factors, because other common educational literature not specific to music education indicated that if high grades were assigned without merit and accountability, the integrity and educational importance were diminished thereby encouraging a sense of apathy and a loss of interest which translated into higher student drop-out frequency.

Legette’s study (1998), “Causal Attributions of Music Majors and Nonmusic Majors Regarding Success and Failure in Music: A Study of Motivation and Achievement”, gave a different perspective on students’ attitudes toward participation in music. Legette tried to examine the difference in student motivation between music majors and non-music majors. He believed that the difference in student motivation

occurred in all levels of education. Classes, whether made up of students in kindergarten or in grade twelve, always had students whose goal was to do the best they could, and students who were happy with less than their best.

For his study, Legette used 105 undergraduate students. Forty-three were music majors and sixty-two were non-music majors. All of the students were enrolled in a beginning guitar course. He administered the Music Attribution Orientation Scale (MAOS) to find out how important students thought effort, background, classroom environment, musical ability and affect for music were in terms of their personal musical success based on a scale of one to five.

Both the non-music major students and the music major students perceived effort, affect for music, and musical ability as being the leading causes contributing to their successes or failures in music. Legette conceded that there might be a combination of any number of forces at work at one time influencing student achievements. He suggested, “once these forces are known, music teachers may be able to structure their lessons accordingly”(p.5). Legette’s suggestion reinforced Corenblum and Marshall’s idea that teachers may be able to increase student retention by adapting the resources used and the teaching strategies employed.

We must consider, according to Legette, the Attribution Theory when exploring student success in music education. One of the tenets of the Attribution Theory that had struck a chord with Legette is

...that motivation and achievement are influenced by individual beliefs about the causes of their success or failure at given tasks. The four attributions commonly associated with this theory are ability, effort, task difficulty, and luck. The attributions of ability and effort are classified as internal and are assumed to

originate from the student, while task difficulty and luck are considered to be external because they are perceived to be events happening outside of the individual's control. (p.2)

In the classroom, students who mastered their goals were said to have had a strong belief that success follows one's efforts. In turn, students who perceived an emphasis on performance goals tended to focus more on ability; therefore, those students attributed failure to a lack of ability. Legette's findings ring true with those of Anderson, Corenblum, and Marshall.

After reading Legette's study, I still did not have enough information to answer all of my questions. His study was based on a beginning-level guitar course offered to undergraduate students. The university in which the study took place put music and non-music students together in that course. Legette did not indicate if there were reasons why the class was structured in this way. Did the university want to include the element of peer teaching? Were there insufficient numbers of students to warrant two classes that could be geared toward the students' abilities? Why were there not any allowances in the curriculum of the course for the fact that some students may be professional musicians, and others may be totally inexperienced?

A study by Chandler et al., (1988) as noted by Legette, cited: "Findings ... showed that if students see themselves as musically successful, they will be encouraged to challenge more and attribute success to internal factors such as effort and musical ability"(p. 3).

In failure situations, Legette reiterated that causes were attributed to external reasons like task difficulty, luck, and current level of performance. Legette also cited the same results as Anderson: as the student gets older, perceptions of how to achieve

success change from amount of effort to amount of ability. Should the university have written a curriculum for the beginning-level guitar course that would have allowed for two 'streams' of activities? Perhaps, the advanced music students could have been given assignments and instruction that would have challenged them at a more advanced level than the non-music students.

Most of the comments made by the researchers so far indicate that they see the educational system as a functioning hierarchy. The implication is that the band program, its structure, and its educational goals are without flaw; therefore, the student cannot assign blame on the program, or the instructor. Finally, the idea was articulated that not only is the student responsible for his or her own success, but the teacher is as well. Legette realized there was a need for re-examination of current educational practices. Changes in lesson styles and structures, as well as in curriculum development, are needed.

The results of Legette's, 1998, study became intriguing when he compared music majors to non-music majors. Legette found that the music majors put more emphasis on effort, musical ability, and affect for music, compared to the non-music majors. The students rated each question on a one-to-five scale with five being the most important. Interestingly, the researcher found that the non-music majors outperformed the music majors. This was surprising since success is often attributed to effort and ability. Legette suggested that perhaps the non-music majors felt intimidated to study with music majors, and worked harder to compensate for the perceived limitation. In addition, Legette thought the music majors could see the course as one where the level of competition would not be there. If there was no pressure for the students to be tenacious, and since

the music majors attributed their success to effort and ability, perhaps there was an overall sense that less effort was required. Furthermore, there was no mention of prerequisites for the course. One can logically assume that each student had to have a working understanding of the mechanics of music, or the class would have been a beginning theory course with some guitar. This scenario would obviously not be a suitable course for students who are musicians with an understanding of basic theory. Therefore, one could assume that the course had non-music majors who were accomplished musicians as well, but were studying a different discipline than music.

This article when applied to my band posed questions on a different level than the other literature. If Legette's hypothesis regarding the reasons why music majors did not put a great deal of effort into the guitar course were true, then perhaps those same examples could be extrapolated to answer the question of why students remain in band.

Conceivably, some senior band students who are strong musicians and high academic achievers see band class as an opportunity to earn required credit, have fun, and get high grades without doing any 'real work'. Those academically orientated students who push the musical limits of the band may also find the band class to be a refreshing break. As a student, I did homework and studied in all of my subjects except for band, piano, and choir. I could always play or sing my part without much practicing. My experiences in music were of low stress and high reward.

J. David Boyle, Nicholas J. DeCarbo, and Douglas M. Jordan (1995) looked at the problem of band dropouts from the perspective of the teacher. The authors studied band teachers' opinions of the reasons students quit band. They found that "...student 'lack of commitment to work' was the most highly rated reason for student dropout"(p. 1). As

well, the authors found loss of interest, scheduling conflicts, lack of parental support, and conflicts with sports to be amongst the highest rated reasons for student drop-out.

Scheduling conflicts was the only element of program structure explored. No effort was made to compare the program structure of successful programs with that of struggling programs. Cultural and economic issues were not explored either: a look beyond the surface issues was necessary to see how the mechanics of day-to-day teaching in each band program affected student performances and intentions.

Boyle et al., theorized that a large number of dropouts may have been students who began band in early grades. They felt that if band programs were offered for the first time in grade seven, the students who elected to participate would make a strong commitment to the program, and likely remain participants until high school graduation. I was pleased that the authors produced research to refute this hypothesis. Boyle et al., cited a study by Hartley (1991) that indicated "...the grade at which an individual begins instrumental instruction has no effect on enrollment and retention in seventh-grade students"(p. 3). I thought more literature to support or refute this hypothesis should have been presented. Rather, Boyle et al., produced a focus statement reminding the reader that the purpose of their study was to examine band teachers' views regarding reasons for students dropping out of band. I need only to reflect briefly on the achievements of my grades four, five and six students to believe we would be doing a great disservice to our students by starting band as late as grade seven. In fact, Frank Battisti believes that as soon as students are physically able to operate their band instrument, they should begin band.

The grade level at which students have the opportunity to study an instrument for the first time is important because most music students drop out during their middle years, when musical skill development is at its greatest. The conclusion drawn from observing middle-years dropouts in this Florida study was the same as that of the Canadian study completed in Winnipeg by Corenblum and Marshall.

Boyle, DeCarbo and Jordan (1995) reported that Solly (1986) surveyed 225 students who dropped out of their band program. One hundred sixty-four students responded to the survey. The researchers selected another group of 164 students who were continuing in the band program to use as their comparison group.

Results indicated that 73% of the dropout students and 70% of the continuing students were never contacted or encouraged by the high school teacher to continue in the program. Within the dropout group, 55% reported that they lost interest. Because this study requested data from students over a variety of grade levels (4-12), it was observed that 12% of the students dropped out after being in the program for at least six years. Junior high school parents and teachers indicated that transportation to and from after school rehearsals was a factor in determining participation in the instrumental program.(p.3)

According to Frank Battisti, the students' loss of interest is easily explained if we look at his paradigm of the different types of band programs. A student may have loved being a member of a band that had great activities and functioned as a club. Over time, however, the same experiences may become routine and unexciting. Possibly the student was involved in another activity that was providing exciting and new experiences, just as the student used to enjoy experiences in the band program. If the band program's focus is the music, the student will always find band exciting.

Boyle et al., reported nineteen reasons, in five broad areas, why students quit band. Also reported were the five top reasons band teachers gave for students quitting their band programs. The students indicated that the areas, in order of frequency, were: “...(a) it’s too time-consuming, (b) conflicts with participation in sports, (c) conflicts with other school activities, and (d) fear of failure”(p. 3). The top four reasons band teachers reported for student dropouts were: “...(a) lack of parental support, (b) class schedule conflicts, (c) conflicts with participation in sports, and (d) conflicts with other school activities”(p. 3). With the exception of lack of parental support, all of the problems indicated by the band teacher are school problems that are the responsibility of administrators to remedy.

The three authors cited only one reason why students quit band that could be related to an instructional issue: Fear of failure. This student-made comment reflected an in-class concern. What type of student motivation is used in class? What type of environment has been created in a band class where students want to quit before making a mistake? The teachers studied did not mention any in-class issues as possible areas of concern.

Boyle, DeCarbo and Jordan summarized their research findings as: loss of interest; scheduling conflicts; and lack of parental support as the three most important reasons students quit band. They also noted that all of the previous research indicated the same results. However, Boyle et al., found a new category that had not emerged in previous research. The lack of commitment to work had not been discussed previously. This study was unclear about the effect each variable has on the other. For example, does lack of commitment to work result from loss of interest? Does loss of interest stem from

poor curriculum implementation, or poor curriculum? Does lack of parental support lead to a lack of commitment to work?

Boyle et al., suggested that “...better [curricular] articulation between middle/junior and senior high school programs could alleviate some of the dropout problem”(p. 5). This curricular suggestion is quite logical. There is a need to recognize the importance of curricular alignment as well, if our goals are to promote student retention and life-long learning.

My experience has been that each band program in Prince Albert has different performance and achievement goals and educational outcomes for its band students. Each time a band is formed from feeder schools at the junior high and high school level, the majority of that year is spent determining the comfort zone. This comfort zone can only be as difficult as the least advanced members of the band. The problem is that many students are given music at a level of difficulty far too easy to be appropriate. On the other hand, many students are given music that challenges the advanced players while the less experienced students are hopelessly lost and left out of the educational process. Therefore, the challenge is to try to establish an instructional level that is not overwhelming for some, and not too elementary for others. More discussion from Boyle et al., in this area would have helped shape a more complete picture of some of the struggles and challenges students may go through which could influence their decision to drop out of music programs.

The three researchers reported that the top concern band teachers had was of the “...lack of support from schedule makers...”(p. 6). This idea is married to the comment

that, according to band teachers, with the exception of lack of parental support, school administrators cause the most problems for band programs.

This study was consistent in its findings with the other literature in this review and with the past research included for reflection by Boyle et al. It is very important to look at the school's administration in terms of helping or hindering a program and not putting all of the factors for student drop-out within the parameters of teacher and student. The study was quite interesting for the high school level, but did not present a complete picture of the band experience. I found myself asking about the elementary and junior high school situations. The authors did an effective job of tying in their research with research completed in the past, in a clear and reader-friendly manner through the use of headings and sub-headings.

Roy M. Legette's second article in this review is "Causal Beliefs of Public School Students about Success and Failure in Music." It is a recent (1998) look at motivating students toward greater musical achievement. Legette delved into the background of the Attribution Theory citing ability, effort, task difficulty and luck as four attributions commonly associated with this theory.

Legette's article was the only study which reported that gender played a part in the motivation and effort of students. He reported that young students in third and fourth grade think that girls put more importance on effort as a causal attribution than boys do at the same age. However, Legette failed to reproduce the same gender information for the junior high and high school age students. Legette's observation was not as complete as Anderson's simplistic findings that young students attribute success with effort and that older students attribute success with ability. However, neither researcher explored

gender and students' internalization of achievement in discovering the relationship gender plays at various ages.

Legette's investigation looked at school level, as opposed to grade level, to examine why students quit band. He used a much larger sample size of 1,114 elementary, middle, and high school students in two adjacent city and county school systems in Georgia. The Music Attribution Orientation Scale (MAOS) was administered during their weekly music lessons. The results were presented in graph form. The mean and standard deviation for comparisons of causal attribution by gender were given. Effort ranked the highest, as it did in previous research.

Legette found a slight difference between the results of city and county schools. County schools listed class environment and musical ability higher than effort, while city schools listed effort and musical ability higher than the other three criteria. Interestingly, not only were ability and effort the leading attributions cited, but also they tended to increase as the school level increased. Younger students tended to use more effort-related attributions, and shifted to ability-related attributions, as they grew older. This finding concurred with much of the previous research, but there needed to be more work done to verify that students' interpretations of reasons for success are true. Does ability really play a more important role in achievement than does effort in older students? When does effort dissipate and ability take over? Perhaps failure is the impetus to change to effort from natural ability, as the key to achievement.

I also thought that value-based education may have played a role in determining the differences between rural and urban schools. I attended both rural and urban schools and experienced a distinct difference in the atmosphere of the urban and rural schools, as

well as a difference in the tone of academic achievement, and in the way in which students interacted with each other. I was less aware of socio-economic differences between students at the rural schools I attended. As well, there was a stronger sense of community which helped to foster positive peer interactions at the rural schools.

Legette's article made some interesting observations between city and county schools and school level. It was not written with a specific band audience in mind, but with intent to cover all music participation.

The literature did not give examples of elementary, junior, and high school band programs where student motivation was not a major concern. A future research project might be to explore programs that staff, parents, and students deem as successful, and try to find out why. How are 'successful' programs structured? What are the mechanics of those programs (i.e. scheduling and time-tabling, teacher-student contact, etc.)? What are students' perceptions of their own successes? How do the factors of ability and effort change or remain the same in programs where the vast majority of the school population participates in the music program?

In two recent conducting courses in which I participated, I was surprised by the description of an ideal band program that was presented by the facilitators. I found myself wondering if the professors had forgotten that a band program can still be a good, solid source of music education for a student, without being 300 students large and without touring internationally each year. Why does a band need to consist of 100 members to be seen as a quality program? Should it be my goal as a teacher to drill eight pieces all year so that my group can play repertoire usually played by older ensembles?

If I chose to drill a piece of music note by note, the students would be missing the entire point of music: art.

I am concerned with the notion put forth by Battisti that we need to have students study their band instrument privately, play on very good quality instruments, and cut all band trips. The state of education in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan is not so ideal. All of the schools in the city have some at-risk students, many of whom are the victims of a poor social and economic environment. I believe that the band program in a community school takes on a different role than that of Battisti's program of the 1960's in Ithaca, New York.

According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, finding personal fulfillment, realizing one's potential, and finding beauty are at the top of the hierarchy. Making music is about all of those things. I believe band programs offer students who are disadvantaged, and do not have all of their needs met outside of school, an opportunity to experience

Self-Actualization needs: to find self-fulfillment and realize one's potential
Aesthetic needs: symmetry, order, and beauty
Cognitive needs: to know, understand, and explore
Esteem Needs: to achieve, be competent, and gain approval and recognition
Belongingness and love needs: to affiliate with others, be accepted, and belong
Safety needs: to feel secure and safe, out of danger
Physiological needs: hunger, thirst, and so forth

Atkinson et al., 1990. (p. 525)

an environment where they can feel safe – where making mistakes is expected. Being a band member may be the only time some students feel like a member – like they belong. Music can offer each student an opportunity to achieve, to become competent, to learn of and about music, to make something beautiful and priceless, and to realize their potential.

To what extent is the success of the program determined through the abilities of the teacher to choose good quality repertoire, if the music is the main element of any curriculum in a music program? The teacher's role is to interpret the curriculum [music/score] and relay the information with hope of a learning transfer taking place through the use of verbal and non-verbal cues [conducting]. To what extent are programs limited by the conducting abilities of their teacher? Can poor conductors have truly well-rounded, successful band and music programs?

My colleagues and I share a goal. We want our students to be life-long music lovers and practitioners. Our newly amalgamated school division offers music education, through participation in band programs, in a variety of different ways. Possibly our best indicators that we are producing life-long musical people may be the band students in grade twelve. If the students stayed in the program from grade four through to grade twelve, there must be many supporting factors for the students. It may prove to be valuable to examine what structures, characteristics, and components of students' band programs were frustrating and needed improving, and what characteristics encouraged student retention. We may be able to build on the strengths of our programs in a positive and constructive way.

Band programs are carefully orchestrated machines that hold students, staff, and parents in a delicate balance. As Hancock (1996) reports in Smithrim & Upitis (1996):

“If more administrators were tuned into brain research, scientists argue... music and gym would be daily requirements”(p. 58).

The literature I reviewed has left me with insight as to why students may quit band when they may not be able to articulate their reasons. It affirmed the role of parental and administrative support that I have believed is vital to a band program’s success. I am content with the research presented, but am left wondering: How are successful programs structured? How are they run? What are the qualities that foster inclusion and risk-taking among all students?

## **PART TWO**

### **THE SURVEY**

Band programs differ because of school and school division policies, structures, and teacher preferences. Band programs are nurtured to meet the needs of each individual band teacher or the students. Teaching styles, repertoire choices, and student-teacher rapport are characteristics that music educators develop throughout their careers. The research literature which is most meaningful is that which is student-based. It is important for educators to recognize the potential of our students to be a source of insight to help us gain perspective on what we try to do each day.

Much of existing research literature on participation in school band programs has investigated issues which are not student-centred. For example, literature on how to recruit and schedule, how to form a band parent group, how to choose repertoire, and how to win music competitions is of no interest to the student playing clarinet in the front row. To dispute the necessity to become an effective recruiter, time-table maker, parent group chairperson, repertoire selector or music festival strategist is not necessary. These teacher-centred issues are vital to achieve program success. However, the issues band teachers struggle with are most likely not the same as those of their band students.

A look at issues students face while involved in school band programs may assist teachers, administrators, and senior administrators in making decisions which affect band programs, and student retention within these band programs.

The literature reviewed in Part One indicated some reasons students decide to drop out of their school band programs. As students pass from their first year in band, which may be as early as grade four, through to the end of grade twelve, the reasons for

student drop-out may change. A significant indicator that a music program is meeting the needs of its students is the level of student enrollment at the senior program level.

Students who choose to keep their band program as a part of their public school experience indicate through participation that they value the music program and see it as a necessary part of their education. The band students who began band in grade four and are still studying music in their last year of high school met with the same challenges and issues as the students who were in the same beginner band, but dropped out along the way. What were the program characteristics and structures which helped students decide to continue to study music through band? What role did their parents play at varying age levels? Was the influence of their peer group the deciding factor? How did the school time-table make it easy or difficult to stay in band? Did the school band have extensive band trips?

Our school division is the result of an amalgamation of two rural and two urban school divisions. Each former division offered band and music education in different ways. Each band program in our new school division had structures in place that existed because of former practice and traditions. To aid in the continuing process of building the band programs within our current school division, identification of the positive, unique, and successful elements of each of the separate band programs is necessary. Once individual programs have been analyzed and strong qualities worth nurturing and preserving are identified, that data may be used to create a growth plan for the band programs within our school division. The broad issues and themes discussed in the literature of Part One are valuable, but do not provide the necessary and specific

information to enable growth in a common direction to benefit the students of our school division.

A survey designed for high school band students may be a way to gather specific information regarding the reasons high school students still belong to their school band programs. Gathering information through the use of a survey is an attractive method in this case. An easy way to involve most of the grade twelve band students while sacrificing the least amount of student-teacher contact time is through survey research. A survey can be administered by the researcher or by the band instructor. Students have the option to be as forthright and thorough as they wish, without having their sense of confidentiality threatened. A twenty-minute segment of one class period could result in a sample size as large as the band membership being asked to participate. A band could have anywhere from sixty to one hundred members. The length of class time necessary to complete the survey is negligible when compared to the number of respondents who would give data. The role and responsibility of the teacher or researcher would be to read a statement of instruction, distribute and collect the surveys, and answer any questions along the way.

According to Asiu, et al., 1998, students may not answer surveys in a truthful and rigorous manner if they feel that the survey is mandatory. Students must have the option not to participate in the research process. Students need to understand that their anonymity will be protected at all times. If students understand how participation in the survey questionnaire will have a meaningful impact on the issue at hand, they may be apt to be more thorough and complete.

The survey must be concise to avoid responses that "...may reflect fatigue"( Cox, 1996, p.14). The validity of the information gathered by the survey may be impacted if students resent "...questions focused on sensitive issues, distrust...assurances of confidentiality or anonymity, [and]...resent the time required by survey participation..."(Asiu, et al., 1998, p. 4). Cox, (1996), added that if students become fatigued while completing the survey, the validity of student responses will be affected. Therefore, consideration of the time of year when asking for student participation is vital. Students may be preoccupied near exam or holiday time. At various times of the year, students may be too focused on preparing for a concert or music festival to give the survey the attention the researcher may desire. Perhaps the ideal time to request student participation in survey research may be following a concert or festival, when extra student stress has subsided.

Asiu, et al., 1998, suggested that prior to completion of the survey, students should receive a pep-talk. The intent of the pep-talk is to reduce the response burden students could feel. If successful, the validity of the data received would be less questionable. However, the researchers did not address the possibility that the pep-talk could also influence student response and affect data validity by encouraging answers which reflect the tone of the pep-talk. Included in the pep-talk are the instructions for survey completion and statements emphasizing the voluntary and confidential nature of the research process. The idea to stress anonymity was to help students feel like they could be honest and thorough without any possibility of recourse from their superiors.

The experiences of Asiu, et al., 1998, have produced the following insights into successful survey design and implementation: "...on average, a survey should consist of

22 items and require 13 minutes or less to complete; ...surveys should be administered only three to four times per school year; ...make it simple and quick and people will respond honestly”(p. 10). The students who provided the data suggesting ideas for survey design and completion were surveyed frequently. The students were cadets at a military academy who were continuously being surveyed to provide program feedback so that improvements could be developed and implemented. The survey situation the cadets faced may have been extreme; therefore, it is reasonable that a survey with extended length and duration could still be used. Such a survey should be designed with the goal of being as succinct as possible.

If students are given a reward or privilege for survey participation, such as a free class period, monetary reward, or other token of appreciation, the data collected from the survey may become less accurate because students may rush through the process in order to receive the available reward.

Once themes and items have been recorded, Johanson, Green, and Williams, 1998, suggested that a small group of people gather to discuss what each item on the survey is intended to discover and the various ways students could interpret the item so that the item could be worded in a more effective and efficient manner. They suggested that the best forum for this process is an oral one. “A major purpose of having...subjects ‘think aloud’ while reading and reflecting on the items [to be included on the survey] is to better understand the cognitive processes involved in making the required responses to the items”(Johanson, Green, and Williams, 1998, p. 2).

According to Johanson, Green, and Williams, 1998, less experienced researchers often blunder by phrasing survey items in a positive or negative way. Frequently, it is

easy to leave a neutral framework and move toward one that reflects the designer's bias. The survey designer may choose to word items in a specific tone in an attempt to elicit a specific response. To do so requires the researcher to address the possibility that respondents will be influenced by survey design, which may affect data validity.

The type of items included on a survey need to be varied to address participant preferences, attention span, interest and survey validity. Cox, 1996, pointed out that if response formats are mixed within the same group of items of a common theme, respondents may need to think too much in order to understand what is being asked. In other words, it is important to employ a variety of simple questioning styles and formats. Surveys should be designed with sections that have a common question type. It is more important that the same type of question be utilized within a section of the survey, than it is that all of the questions of a common research theme are presented in a group with many different questioning styles.

Forced-choice items are a good idea to include in survey design because the respondent does not have to formulate the actual answer, but has to choose the best answer from a list of possible answers. The possibility may exist that the answer the respondent has may not be included in the list of choices. A ranking-type question, where the respondents must indicate in order a group of supplied items, is often very difficult and requires too much thought. If a respondent becomes discouraged, the verity of the remainder of the responses may be questionable. If a ranking question is deemed appropriate to include in a survey, a limitation on the number of items to be ranked may be helpful to the respondent. An open-ended response item can be a wonderful way to allow respondents to address any item or issue that is of interest.

If used prior to the more structured items, the open-ended item will permit the researcher to determine whether there are concepts or ideas that were missed or omitted in the structural response format items. Such an open-ended item can provide evidence of content validity, when phrased something like ‘What is the most important aspect of your attitude towards...’ and if the responses can be classified or clustered to reflect the same ideas or constructs as the closed-response items. If used at the end of a survey, the open-ended item cannot serve this purpose since the respondent will most certainly have been influenced by the prior closed-response items. Nonetheless, free-response items at the end of the survey phrased as ‘Do you feel there are any additional concepts or concern...’ or ‘Were there items that seemed less appropriate...’ may also identify a missed concept or opportunity.... (Johanson, Green, and Williams, 1998, p. 3).

James Cox, 1996, suggested survey writing can be easy if the process is thought of as a series of logical and progressive steps or stages. He believed the first step in survey design is to brainstorm a list of the kinds of information on which you want your survey to focus. In harmony with this idea from Cox, Part One of this project was codified to discover the emergent research themes within the research. I discovered that all inquiry, investigation, and discussion thus far, could be summarized into the following themes:

- A. Age At and Quality Of First Band Experience
- B. Band Program Goals and Focus
- C. School Culture
- D. Factors Influencing Drop-Out
- E. Successful vs. Unsuccessful Program Structure
- F. Teacher Characteristics

## G. Parental Influence and Support

## H. Ability vs. Effort

## I. Student Motivation

It is very difficult to effectively compartmentalize all of the information that is presented by the research. Clearly, some issues could belong under more than one category. All of the themes have been illustrated in APPENDIX A in an attempt to convey the interplay between each theme, and the sometimes immediate effect on student retention in our band programs. The process of establishing the emergent themes of the research literature has, in fact, established the context for the survey instrument.

To further narrow the focus of the survey, a list of questions pertaining to each research theme was created. A chart displaying each theme, and the corresponding initial questions for consideration was developed: see APPENDIX B. These questions are not intended to be the questions of the survey instrument; rather, a way to avoid extraneous information during survey design, and a point-of-reference during the design process.

The actual writing and formatting of the survey questionnaire is most important and time consuming. It is necessary to ensure that presentation and wordings do not influence the respondent toward a specific bias. “If items are precisely written, the responses will reflect the writer’s actual intent in the questions. Not what the respondent thinks the intent is. The clearer the items, the better the chance that the respondent need read each item only once. This decreases the time required to complete the [survey]”(Cox, 1996, p. 8).

Cox, 1996, reminded the reader that common-sense guidelines when writing must be followed. For example, Cox, 1996, brought attention to: the use of simple sentence structure, including word order; the elimination of jargon and terminology with vague or ambiguous meaning; absolutes, like ‘every’ or ‘always,’ need to be avoided; and the tone of question statements so that the respondent will not feel indicted by a negative response.

Respondents may judge the survey questionnaire based on the appearance of the document. The effort and interest may be influenced by how the form looks and not by the contents of the survey. In such a case, the validity of the data gained during the entire research process may be affected.

The survey presented in APPENDIX C is an example of a completed survey, within the context of this project. Teachers or researchers who would like to survey students within their program or school division, could use this survey as a starting point for their research project.

After the design-stage of the survey was completed, an alignment check was performed to ensure that the questionnaire was not longer than it needed to be. A succinct and focused questionnaire has a better chance of having fewer inaccurate responses due to fatigue.

An alignment check is the process of cross-referencing the actual survey questions with the themes in APPENDIX A, and the initial guiding questions of APPENDIX B. If any item or question on the survey does not correspond with the original themes or guiding questions, it is unnecessary

and should be removed. The Alignment Check in APPENDIX D demonstrates this process.

There are two items on the survey that do not belong to the questioning themes. These two items were included to get some student demographic information: sex and grade. It is possible to distinguish groups of student surveys from more than one high school by changing the basic appearance of the survey instrument. For example, all of the high school band students from Meath Park High School could receive a survey with a white instruction or thank you page, while students from Carlton Comprehensive High School may receive a tan instruction or thank you page.

The survey has been included in CD-ROM format to give researchers an opportunity to adapt and modify the instrument to suit their program needs. It is vital that the teacher, researcher, or school board who may choose to use this research project accepts ethical responsibilities with regard to the students who may be asked to participate in their research.

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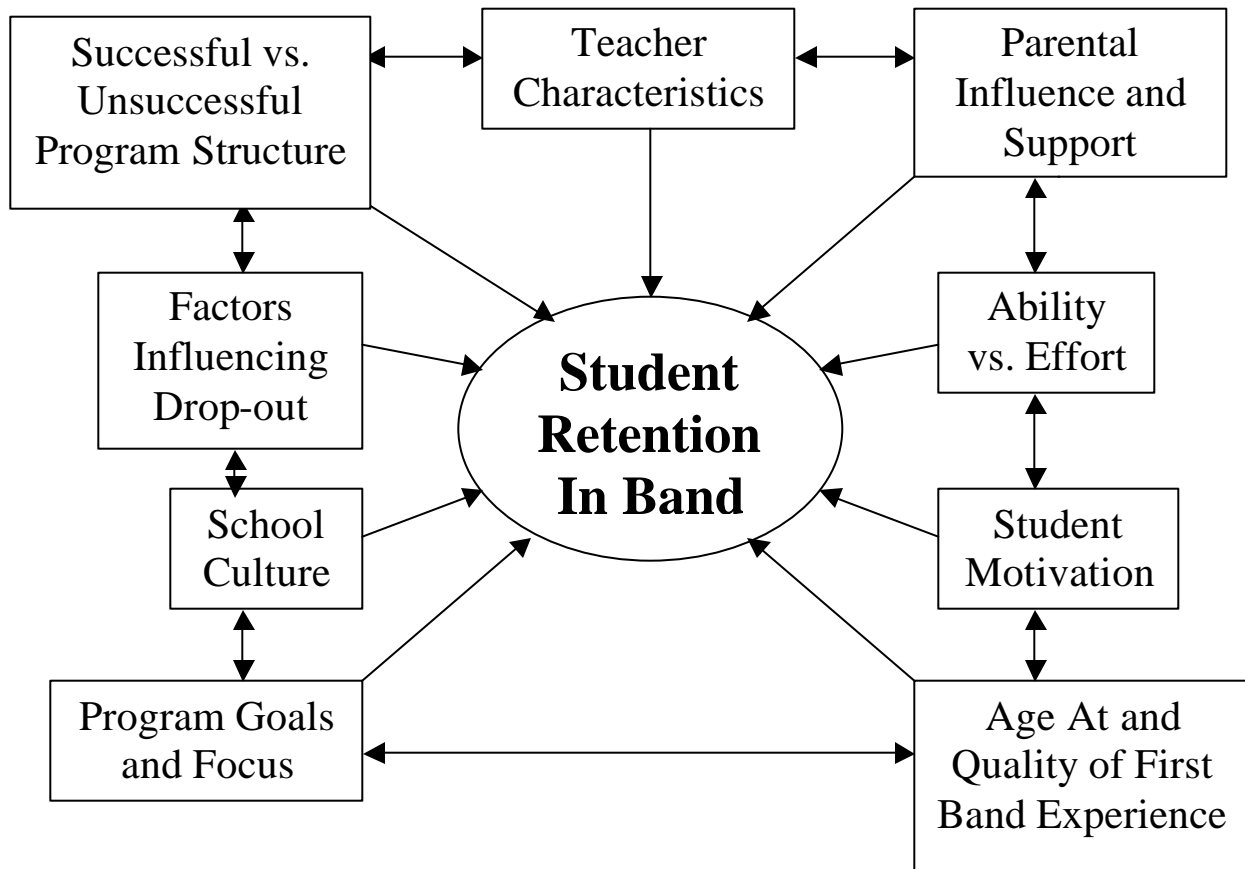
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## APPENDIX A:

### ISSUES AND THEMES RELATING TO STUDENT RETENTION AS FOUND IN THE RESEARCH LITERATURE

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**Appendix B:** EMERGENT ISSUES AND THEMES RELATING TO STUDENT RETENTION AS FOUND IN THE RESEARCH LITERATURE

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<b>THEME 1</b>	<b>AGE AT AND QUALITY OF FIRST BAND EXPERIENCE</b>
Surfacing Questions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What was the earliest grade your school offered band?</li> <li>2. What grade were you in when you joined band for the first time?</li> <li>3. In what grades did you belong to your school band program?</li> </ol>
<b>THEME 2</b>	<b>PROGRAM GOALS AND FOCUS</b>
Surfacing Questions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What do you remember the most about your elementary school band and band teacher?</li> <li>2. What do you remember most about your junior high band and band teacher?</li> <li>3. What will you remember the most about your high school band and band teacher?</li> <li>4. How important were music festivals to your band teacher at each level?</li> <li>5. Were your band trips always focused around activities relating to music education, or was most of the time on band trips spent sight-seeing?</li> <li>6. What is the one word you would use to describe each level of band?</li> <li>7. Did your band feel like it was a fun club or a hard class?</li> <li>8. Which describes your band experience best:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) a wonderful way to have fun at school, travel, and be with your friends, or</li> <li>b) A wonderful way to learn of and about music, by learning how to play an instrument as a part of the band.</li> </ol> </li> </ol>
<b>THEME 3</b>	<b>SCHOOL CULTURE</b>
Surfacing Questions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Did most kids join band in your elementary school? Why?</li> <li>2. Did you think the band program was important in your school?</li> <li>3. Which groups or types of kids usually were in the band?</li> <li>4. How important was the band to the teachers in your school? To the Principal?</li> <li>5. How important was the school culture toward band in determining whether you would join?</li> </ol>
<b>THEME 4</b>	<b>FACTORS INFLUENCING DROP-OUT</b>
Surfacing Questions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Estimate the number of students who joined band with you, the first year it was offered.</li> <li>2. How many of those original band students are still in band today?</li> <li>3. What are the top three reasons you have heard kids say why they</li> </ol>

	<p>decided to quit band?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Do you agree that the reasons they gave were genuine?</li> <li>5. Why do you think kids really quit band over the years?</li> <li>6. Please rank the top four possible factors contributing to a student's decision to drop out of band. The number '1' factor would be the most influential. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- peer pressure</li> <li>- support and encouragement from parents</li> <li>- support from friends</li> <li>- timetabling or scheduling band</li> <li>- difficulty of music</li> <li>- quality of band trips and other related out-of-school musical activities</li> <li>- parents insisting student remain in band program</li> <li>- love of music</li> <li>- love of instrument</li> <li>- feelings toward band teacher</li> <li>- desire to remain with friends in band</li> <li>- other</li> </ul> </li> </ol>
<b>THEME 5</b>	<b>SUCCESSFUL AND UNSUCCESSFUL PROGRAM STRUCTURE</b>
Surfacing Questions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Was band compulsory for all students?</li> <li>2. How was band offered or scheduled in your elementary, junior and high schools?</li> <li>3. Was the way in which your band class scheduled a factor on whether you would continue to take band or to quit band?</li> <li>4. What made being in band difficult when you were in elementary school?</li> <li>5. What made being in band difficult when you were in junior high school?</li> <li>6. What made being in band difficult when you were in high school?</li> <li>7. Every band program has something that makes being in band attractive. What was the one thing, throughout all of your band years, which helped band kids stay in band?</li> </ol>
<b>THEME 6</b>	<b>TEACHER CHARACTERISTICS</b>
Surfacing Questions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What is the most important characteristic or quality a new band teacher coming out of university should have?</li> <li>2. Was your favorite band teacher the most effective band teacher? In other words, is the teacher who was most effective at teaching music your favorite band teacher, or is it the teacher who had the personality you liked the most, the best teacher?</li> <li>3. Without naming your favorite band teacher, list one word which describes him or her best.</li> <li>4. What is the characteristic you liked the most and the characteristic you liked the least about your favorite band teacher?</li> </ol>

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Without naming your other band teachers, what was the characteristic you disliked the most about him or her? What was the characteristic you liked the most about him or her?</li> <li>6. What was the focus or goal of your favorite band teacher and his or her band program?</li> <li>7. What were the goals of other band programs you may have been a member of?</li> </ol>
<b>THEME 7</b>	<b>PARENTAL INFLUENCE AND SUPPORT</b>
Surfacing Questions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Did you bring up the idea of joining the band to your parents first, or did they suggest it to you?</li> <li>2. Did your parents expect you to join the band?</li> <li>3. Were your parents surprised when you did join the band? Why?</li> <li>4. What was it about the band program that made your parents value or like it?</li> <li>5. What was it about the band program that made your parents dislike and not value the band program?</li> <li>6. Did your parents make you practice?</li> <li>7. Were you asked to play your instrument for your parents and others?</li> <li>8. What other musical activities, outside of school, were you involved in (i.e., piano, singing lessons, etc)?</li> </ol>
<b>THEME 8</b>	<b>ABILITY vs. EFFORT</b>
Surfacing Questions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. In which grade did you practice the most? Why?</li> <li>2. Do you think anyone could be in the band?</li> <li>3. In elementary school, did kids have to practice their instruments to be successful?</li> <li>4. What made the best players in your band the best? The amount of practicing they did, or the amount of natural talent they had?</li> <li>5. Which is most important for the elementary school student, ability or effort?</li> <li>6. Throughout your band career, which did you rely on the most: ability or effort?</li> <li>7. What characteristic did you hear your band teachers talk about the most: students' natural ability to make music, or the effort students put into making music?</li> <li>8. Why do you think some students loved band in elementary school, but dropped out before they reached grade twelve?</li> <li>9. Do you remember a comment or message your band teachers may have said frequently regarding how well you were learning your music?</li> </ol>
<b>THEME 9</b>	<b>STUDENT MOTIVATION</b>
Surfacing Questions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Why did you decide to join band?</li> <li>2. Did you know from an early age that one day, you wanted to play in</li> </ol>

	<p>the school band?</p> <p>3. Who was influential in helping you decide to join band: your parents, your friends, or both?</p>
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**APPENDIX C: HIGH SCHOOL BAND STUDENT SURVEY:**  
A STUDENT SURVEY DESIGNED TO IDENTIFY BAND  
TEACHER AND MUSIC PROGRAM STRENGTHS

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**High School Band  
Student Survey**

*A Student Survey Designed To Identify  
Band Teacher and Music Program  
Strengths*

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# HIGH SCHOOL BAND STUDENT SURVEY

A SURVEY DESIGNED TO IDENTIFY BAND TEACHER AND MUSIC PROGRAM STRENGTHS

## **A NOTE ABOUT PROTECTING YOUR ANONYMITY**

**Please do not write your name on any of the survey materials.** We are interested in your responses to the survey items, but we insist you remain anonymous. The responses given will not affect your grade or standing in your music class. We recognize the value of *your* opinion and would like to use the information you pass on to us to help keep our band programs strong.

## **WHAT IS INVOLVED IN TAKING THIS SURVEY?**

THIS SURVEY IS NOT COMPULSORY. If you do not wish to participate in this survey, please pass the survey materials back to the teacher. Thank you for your time.

The survey will take approximately twenty minutes to complete. We ask you to be thoughtful in your answers. Try to be as accurate as possible. Remember that we do not wish to identify any respondents. We are only interested in your valuable opinions, which are often overlooked.

Please do not share your thoughts or responses with others. It is important for you to answer without being influenced by others, or influencing others.

The survey will consist of a variety of question styles. If at any time, you would like to add or qualify your response, please make a note in the margin of your survey.

When you have finished taking the survey, and are satisfied with the responses you have given, please give your survey materials back to the teacher.

The surveys will be collected and given to a researcher who will use the data your group has given to create a list of responses to all survey items. We will use that data to determine how our band programs are doing and what type of changes – if any – need to be made. We are giving you an opportunity to affect change because we value your insight.

Thank you.

# HIGH SCHOOL BAND STUDENT SURVEY

A SURVEY DESIGNED TO IDENTIFY BAND TEACHER AND MUSIC PROGRAM  
STRENGTHS

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## PLEASE CHECK THE APPROPRIATE RESPONSE

1. Male ?      Female ?
  
2. Please indicate your present grade.  
? Grade 10  
? Grade 11  
? Grade 12  
  
Other \_\_\_\_\_
  
3. In what grade were students in your school given their first opportunity to join a band program?  
? Grade 3  
? Grade 4  
? Grade 5  
? Grade 6  
? Grade 7  
? Grade 8  
? Grade 9  
  
Other: \_\_\_\_\_
  
4. Please check each grade in which you participated as a member of your school band program.  
? Grade 3  
? Grade 4  
? Grade 5  
? Grade 6  
? Grade 7  
? Grade 8  
? Grade 9  
? Grade 10  
? Grade 11  
? Grade 12
  
5. Was band a class that all students **had** to take?  
? Yes            ? No
  
6. Did your parents encourage you to practice your instrument?  
? Yes            ? No
  
7. Were you ever asked to play your instrument for your parents, for others, or for special occasions?  
? Yes            ? No

8. In which grades did you do the most weekly practising?
  - ? Elementary School – Grades 4, 5, and 6
  - ? Junior High School – Grades 7, 8, and 9
  - ? High School – Grades 10, 11, and 12
  
9. When was band the most fun?
  - ? Elementary School – Grades 4, 5, and 6
  - ? Junior High School – Grades 7, 8, and 9
  - ? High School – Grades 10, 11, and 12
  
10. When was band the most challenging?
  - ? Elementary School – Grades 4, 5, and 6
  - ? Junior High School – Grades 7, 8, and 9
  - ? High School – Grades 10, 11, and 12
  
11. When was band the most rewarding?
  - ? Elementary School – Grades 4, 5, and 6
  - ? Junior High School – Grades 7, 8, and 9
  - ? High School – Grades 10, 11, and 12

**PLEASE CIRCLE THE BEST ANSWER. YOU MAY CHOOSE MORE THAN ONE ANSWER.**

12. Were your band trips organized entirely around activities related to music education, or were sight-seeing and non-musical items included in the itinerary?
  - a. Entire itinerary was focused on music education.
  - b. Itinerary was focused mostly on music education, with some educational non-music activities.
  - c. Itinerary had some activities related to music education, but was mostly made up of other activities.
  - d. Itinerary consisted of a performance at a festival or concert, with the remaining time dedicated to fun activities.
  - e. OTHER: \_\_\_\_\_
  
13. In what other musical activities have you been involved? Please indicate the number of years of participation with each activity.
  - a. Voice lessons \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Piano lessons \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. Guitar lessons \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. Other: \_\_\_\_\_
  
14. Which of the following **best** explains how some players in your band became the top players?
  - a. Natural talent
  - b. Consistent practising over the years

- c. A lot of hard work and dedication
  - d. Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- 

15. Which of the following characteristics is more desirable in a band student?

- a. Ability
- b. Effort

16. Which do *you* rely on more?

- a. Ability
- b. Effort

17. Which group of people was the **most** influential in persuading you to join band?

- a. My parents
- b. My friends
- c. Other family members
- d. My teachers
- e. Myself. I always wanted to be in the band.

18. Why did you decide to join the band? Circle all that apply.

- a. The band trips
  - b. To be with my friends
  - c. To get out of class
  - d. I love music.
  - e. Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- 

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**PLEASE READ ALL OF THE FOLLOWING ITEMS BEFORE ANSWERING THIS QUESTION.**

19. Please rank only the *top four* of the possible factors which could contribute to student drop-out. Put a number "1" beside the most significant factor. A number "2" would be less significant, and so on.

- Peer pressure to quit
- Lack of support and encouragement from parents
- Pull-out band rehearsals conflicted too much with regular class
- Music became too difficult
- Band trips were no longer exciting
- Did not like the type of music in band
- Did not have close friends in the band
- The band teacher was too strict
- The band teacher was too easy-going
- Other:
- Other:

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**HOW STRONGLY DO YOU AGREE WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS?**

20. Band is a great way to have fun at school, be with your friends, and travel.

<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>
?	?	?	?

21. I would encourage beginning band students to never quit band.

<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>
?	?	?	?

22. Band takes up too much extra time.

<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>
?	?	?	?

23. Our school band program was very important to all teachers in my school(s).

<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>
?	?	?	?

24. It was clear that our Principal was proud of our music program, and supported our band.

<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>
?	?	?	?

25. Almost all of the time and energy we put into our band program was to learn to be better musicians. Fund-raising and preparing for band trips were always less important.

<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>
?	?	?	?

26. Band is more like a fun club than it is a class.

<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>
?	?	?	?

27. Students quit band because they dislike their band teacher.

<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>
?	?	?	?

28. Students quit band because the music gets too hard.

<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>
?	?	?	?

29. Students quit band because they think it is not cool to study music in a band program.

<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>
?	?	?	?

30. Most students who have quit band regret their decision.
- |                       |              |                 |                          |
|-----------------------|--------------|-----------------|--------------------------|
| <b>Strongly Agree</b> | <b>Agree</b> | <b>Disagree</b> | <b>Strongly Disagree</b> |
| ?                     | ?            | ?               | ?                        |
31. Band lowers my grade average.
- |                       |              |                 |                          |
|-----------------------|--------------|-----------------|--------------------------|
| <b>Strongly Agree</b> | <b>Agree</b> | <b>Disagree</b> | <b>Strongly Disagree</b> |
| ?                     | ?            | ?               | ?                        |
32. Students quit band because they don't want to do the necessary practice.
- |                       |              |                 |                          |
|-----------------------|--------------|-----------------|--------------------------|
| <b>Strongly Agree</b> | <b>Agree</b> | <b>Disagree</b> | <b>Strongly Disagree</b> |
| ?                     | ?            | ?               | ?                        |

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**PLEASE READ ALL OF THE STATEMENTS AND THEN CIRCLE THE BEST ONE.**

33. Band was offered to students in my elementary school in the following way:
- It was not offered.
  - All rehearsals were held outside of class time.
  - We were pulled from class for some rehearsals, and we sometimes had to practice in the morning, lunch hour, or after school.
  - We were pulled from class for all of our rehearsal time and had to catch-up on the work we missed.
  - Band was scheduled into our timetable. When we went to band, the other students had a different class which we didn't have to worry about.
  - Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- 
34. Band was offered to students in my junior high school in the following way:
- It was not offered.
  - All rehearsals were held outside of class time.
  - We were pulled from class for some rehearsals, and we sometimes had to practice in the morning, lunch hour, or after school.
  - We were pulled from class for all of our rehearsal time and had to catch-up on the work we missed.
  - Band was scheduled into our timetable. When we went to band, the other students had a different class which we didn't have to worry about.
  - Other: \_\_\_\_\_
-

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**WE APPRECIATE YOUR TIME AND THOUGHTFULNESS. PLEASE WRITE YOUR THOUGHTS IN RESPONSE TO THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS.**

35. When you think back over all of the time you have been in band, all of the music you have played, and to all of the places you have travelled, what is the thought that is foremost in your mind?

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36. When you think of your favourite band teacher, which qualities of that teacher are the most important to you? (Please remember not to include names.)

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37. What characteristics would you like to see in a new band teacher, right out of university?

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38. What are the least desirable characteristics of a band teacher? (Please remember not to include names.)

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39. Think back to your first beginner band. Many of the students who were in band with you then have quit along the way. Why do you think these students decided to quit band?

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40. Please share with us any of your thoughts, opinions or advice that you would

like to share.

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*As a token of our appreciation for your time and thoughtfulness, we would like you to keep the pencil you used to fill out this survey.*

*Perhaps it could go in your band folder.*

*We think your band teacher would appreciate it!*

*Thank you.*

## APPENDIX D: ALIGNMENT CHECK OF SURVEY ITEMS

### THEMES OF QUESTIONS

- A. Age At and Quality Of First Band Experience
- B. Band Program Goals and Focus
- C. School Culture
- D. Factors Influencing Drop-out
- E. Successful vs. Unsuccessful Program Structure
- F. Teacher Characteristics
- G. Parental Influence and Support
- H. Ability vs. Effort
- I. Student Motivation

SURVEY QUESTIONS	THEME A	THEME B	THEME C	THEME D	THEME E	THEME F	THEME G	THEME H	THEME I
1*									
2*									
3	X	X	X	X	X				
4	X	X		X					
5		X	X	X	X				
6				X			X	X	X
7				X			X		X
8	X		X		X		X	X	X
9			X	X					X
10		X	X	X					X
11			X	X					X
12		X		X	X	X			X
13				X			X	X	X
14			X					X	X
15				X				X	X
16				X				X	X
17			X	X		X	X	X	X
18		X	X	X	X	X			X
19		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
20		X	X	X	X				X
21				X					X
22		X	X	X	X				X
23		X	X	X		X			X
24			X			X			X
25		X	X	X	X	X	X		X
26		X	X	X	X	X			X
27				X		X			X
28		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

<b>QUESTIONS</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>I</b>
<b>29</b>			X	X					X
<b>30</b>				X					X
<b>31</b>			X	X			X	X	X
<b>32</b>			X	X			X	X	X
<b>33</b>	X		X	X	X	X			X
<b>34</b>	X		X	X	X	X			X
<b>35</b>	X	X			X				
<b>36</b>						X			
<b>37</b>						X			
<b>38</b>						X			
<b>39</b>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
<b>40</b>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

\*Denotes questions designed to gain student demographic information.

### **THEMES OF QUESTIONS**

- A. Age At and Quality Of First Band Experience
- B. Band Program Goals and Focus
- C. School Culture
- D. Factors Influencing Drop-out
- E. Successful vs. Unsuccessful Program Structure
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