

ABSTRACT

Title of Thesis:

AN EXPLORATORY CASE STUDY OF THREE
RURAL ELEMENTARY MUSIC TEACHERS

Stephanie Elizabeth Fernsler,
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Thesis Directed By:

Michael Hewitt, Ph.D.
Professor of Music Education
School of Music

The purpose of this exploratory case study was to examine the experiences and perspectives of three rural elementary music teachers. The study explored rural elementary music teachers' attitudes, perceptions, and opinions about their current music programs. After collecting survey data from three rural elementary music teachers, results indicated similar and different experiences and perspectives of teaching in a rural elementary school, with effective communication, community support and creative implementation being similar experiences. These findings may contribute towards rural elementary music teachers' voices being heard in the music community and inspire other rural music teachers to contribute to music education.

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ELEMENTARY MUSIC TEACHERS

by

Stephanie Elizabeth Fernsler

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Advisory Committee

Dr. Michael Hewitt, Chair
Dr. Kenneth Elpus
Dr. Stephanie Prichard
Dr. Yo-Jung Han

Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to my current and future elementary music students. All of this research has gone towards being able to provide you with a stronger music education. I will continue to ensure that you learn music in a way that is enjoyable for you. This thesis is also dedicated to all teachers during the COVID-19 outbreak, who have dedicated their time and effort to educating children during this difficult time.

I also dedicate this thesis to my soul mate, Casey Wilkes, who has non-stop supported me in this endeavor.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The United States Health Resources & Services Administration (2020) defines rural as relating to or characteristic of the countryside rather than the town. Rural areas often consist of farming and agricultural areas and are absent the tall buildings typically found in urban regions. The United States Census defines rural as an area that contains population, housing and land that is not within an urban area. The Census also states an urban area contains population and housing in urbanized areas of 2,500 people or more.

Rural areas are large compared to urban areas and span much further in distance. Compared to urban land masses, rural areas can encompass hundreds of square miles, where driving 20 miles or more to find a small town, grocery store, or gas station is common. Rural communities could easily be as far away from an urban situation as a couple of hours. Sometimes this distance can be a 2-hour drive or more from an urban location. Sometimes this distance can be beneficial to the people who reside there, as rural communities tend to be close-knit (Sieger, 2020, p. 78) and growth oriented.

In these rural areas though, there can be different methods to educate children in each subject area. In contrast to a teacher of more traditional subjects (e.g., mathematics, language arts, science, social studies), a music teacher engaging the job market has less flexibility in choosing a location, and may need to learn to adapt to different demographic areas (Isbell, 2005), as well as varying expectations on teaching methods. In the 21st century, music is considered a core subject due to the Every Student Succeeds Act; music teachers should be properly trained in methods that will make a music curriculum vibrant and meaningful to their students. However, teachers, including music teachers, don't always get a job in their preferred area and may need to learn to adapt to a different location or demographic area.

Experienced music teachers will be able to not only deliver their curriculum well but also work through their hurdles such as communication, funding or lack of teacher training. Sometimes teachers are ill-prepared to work in certain demographic areas of the country that may not be as developed in educational methods as other parts can be (Sieger, 2020). In undergraduate training, future teachers often have experiences in areas similar to the demographic area of the institution they attend. For example, pre-service teachers at institutions on the east coast tend to have experiences in more of an urban demographic (Sieger, 2020). Regardless of the demographic, every music teacher's students should be exposed to similar learning opportunities and methods (Burkett, 2011).

As stated previously, teaching difficulties can emerge due to a lack of understanding or experience with a particular demographic (Sieger, 2020). This may happen in rural U.S. schools where there tends to be more students per class as well as fewer resources to provide a similar experience to those students enrolled in urban schools (Isbell, 2005). Sieger also notes that communication between music teachers in rural settings can be limited simply due to the paucity of such teachers when compared to their K-6 colleagues.

Rural elementary music teachers and their programs tend to receive less attention and credit (educationally speaking) from their peers (Isbell, 2005). Isbell also notes other factors that negatively influence rural elementary music programs including lack of communication, lack of funding, low enrollment and lack of teacher training. The lack of resources, and respect, for rural elementary music teachers may all too easily cause feelings of frustration and being overwhelmed, to the point where providing effective music instruction for their students becomes that much more challenging (Burkett, 2011).

This exploratory case study has stemmed from my own personal teaching experience in a rural school. At this particular teaching position, there was little community feel towards me as I had never been born or raised in the town. The town was geared more towards supporting their sports teams, as they had one state champion team and one that constantly made the playoffs each season. It seemed at times that there wasn't as much kindness bestowed towards me because I was coming from an urban area, and there were also times where I had asked for help, but it seemed like nobody was willing to give it, unless a sports team asked. I had also come in at the last minute to replace a teacher who was just put on medical leave and, unfortunately, passed away two months later. There was broken communication within the school between teachers and administration, and there was little support towards the music programs offered at the school. In the time I was there I worked with three different principals and assistant principals as well, and those shifts left an impact on both teachers and students. As this was my first teaching position, it ended up leaving me mentally and physically exhausted, to the point where I questioned my teaching abilities. That experience is what caused me to wonder if other teachers in similar circumstances were having the same teaching experience.

There appears to be few references to the attributes and characteristics of successful rural elementary music teachers and programs since 2011. Therefore, the purpose of the present qualitative study is to explore the attributes and characteristics elementary music teachers view as contributing to their program's success. and to encourage the adoption of those attributes and characteristics teachers find successful in rural schools. The central question asks, "What do rural music teachers describe as important attributes and characteristics for implementing their elementary music programs."

The present study will focus on and examine the experiences and perspectives of three rural elementary music teachers. It is hoped that teachers will incorporate this knowledge in the methods used in their classrooms, leading to greater educational impact, growth, and musical inspiration for their students, schools, and the community at large.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Rural music teachers often work diligently to overcome unique challenges rarely encountered by those in more metropolitan areas (Isbell, 2005; Prest, 2013; Sieger, 2020). In addition, pre-service music teachers are generally unprepared for the different demographic which could influence their first teaching position (Burkett, 2011). Most music education programs focus on assessment, curriculum or technique, but leave training their students for rural experiences as an after-thought (2011). Frequently, music education programs place student teachers in urban settings, which can lead to confusion and frustration when the same candidates accept positions in rural areas, where learning techniques and practices may be foreign to the teachers' experiences. These institutions focus on performance-based learning, in which teacher candidates spend a majority of class time focused on techniques, as opposed to the concepts and foundations of education and effective teaching methods. Bates (2011a) found that undergraduate music programs "tend to socialize teachers towards one identity – that of a performing classical musician and conductor".

In general, strong music education programs tend to sort training into four major categories- community, support (including funding), communication and teacher training and fit. Each of these categories plays an important role not only in developing a strong music education program, but also in enhancing teacher knowledge of the subject that they are trained to teach.

Community

Sieger (2020) found that varied degrees of support from school administrators and community member can influence the success of music programs. Spring (2016) states that "a sense of place therefore incorporates not only the geographical setting, but also the impact of historical, social and cultural influences on peoples' lives" (p. 2) and goes on to say that how

rural schools operate is often reflected in one word: community. Many small school districts have a strong community presence because they become the focal point of the community, much like the rural, branch-line railroad station was the focus of thousands of small communities during the first two decades of the 20th century.

Isbell argues that “two-thirds of all public schools in this country are, by some definitions, considered rural and are responsible for educating one-quarter to one-third of all school age children” (2005, pg. 3). Spring (2016) believes that “community...may be grounded in a certain geographical space, or could be undefined in infinite space”, so it is possible that a community is not always defined by its territory, but by how people turn to it as a center of support and care. Hunt (2009) makes the argument of the following involved in forming rural music education: high community involvement, lack of privacy and community scrutiny, and that teachers sometimes lack a “home base” because they are teaching at different schools.

Support

Bates (2011b) suggests that urban schools tend to have more resources than rural schools. He states that music in rural areas is viewed differently, especially when rehearsing small instrumental groups. Bates takes from his personal experience that rural schools had small amounts of band and chorus students and, therefore, music classes were used for rehearsal, but not for teaching specific attributes of music in general. It can be argued that even in urban areas the technique of using teaching time as rehearsal time can take away from what students could really learn in the realm of music.

Stemming from fewer participants in music activities, rural music instruction tends to focus on rehearsal only, and avoids the teaching of music fundamentals and concepts, which

seems to be supported by Hunt (2009). Isbell also reports that “insufficient resources...of a rural setting can overwhelm even the most experienced teacher”.

Rural schools often struggle with funding and “keeping up” with urban districts which may have more private, as well as district, funds to support the arts. However, funding issues seldom, if at all, influence the talent level of students, regardless of the location of the school. Each teacher has the capability to teach and create strong musicians. Inadequate funding simply makes the challenge for the teacher greater, but not insurmountable.

Resources

Successful music programs also come in the way of resources for student achievement. Students always have the capability to be excellent performers, no matter where they go to school (Bates, 2011b). It all comes down to the education they receive, and teachers, even in rural schools, have the capability of teaching and creating strong musicians. It also comes down to the amount of resources that teachers and students are provided with in the classroom. If there are not adequate resources for teachers and students, then it makes it more challenging to teach students and get them to the same level of understanding as schools in urban areas are able to do. It also ends up making it harder in the long run for students to learn and appreciate this area of art when it can't be taught properly or well enough for students to become more invested in it.

Communication

Isbell (2005) writes that music teachers can overcome some of the difficulties associated with teaching in a rural setting through strong avenues of communication with the school and district administration. Being a team player, working together with administrators, can open up opportunities, as well as funding, in a district where parental and community support may be at a minimum. Isbell writes that administration is usually easier to access in rural settings and that

administration is seemingly able to work more as a team because there are fewer people in the building than in an urban district. It is key to be on a team with administration because that is where most of the funding is supplied. The community and parents may not be able to help, aid or provide the way parents would in urban settings because of jobs or other situations. Several researchers taught or worked in urban areas, and it is easier to gravitate towards that particular geographic scene. This is also a factor when it comes to training teachers about assessment and curriculum.

Support from administration is crucial to the success of a music program (Isbell, 2005). In a 2009 study of teachers in rural districts, Hunt reported that “participants especially emphasized how community leaders expected their bands and choirs to perform at local events”. However, it appears that not all school administrators place a high priority on this type of community interaction (2009). Therefore, one aspect of teacher training may need to include constructs such as the teacher “taking the initiative” and “being persistent” when communicating with administrators.

Teacher Training and Fit

Music teachers often encounter limited opportunities for effective professional development in their subject area, leading to feelings of isolation and limited personal support (Sieger, 2020). All teachers enhance their teaching ability, as well as their confidence, with training in their specific subject area, and music teachers are no different. Burkett (2011) reports that these characteristics of effective teaching become evident to students and make the learning experience more enjoyable.

Some researchers report that urban and suburban school music programs benefit more from technique teaching, as opposed to their rural counterparts. However, Bates (2011a) argues

that a fair evaluation of these programs may not be possible because of the size differential of the bands, choruses, etc. It may be that the size of the ensemble is not reflective of the talent level of the participants.

That discrepancies exist in music teacher training (at both the pre-service and continuing education levels), with respect to urban and rural settings, is generally agreed upon. And there may be many perspectives on exactly how to identify and address the specific needs of rural music education programs. Burkett (2011) states that, “Professional development must be oriented towards relevant and useful topics and experiences that spark an inquisitiveness and continuing curiosity of learning and self-development in teachers” (pg. 2).

One aspect to point out is that adjustment takes time in this particular area. Teachers, when starting a new job, should start with an open mind, as what they expect to happen in the classroom may not actually occur. Sometimes, teachers expect, especially at higher grade levels, that the students. As undergraduate students, most are taught about one demographic area and student-teach in one area. Many professors believe that this one way of teaching will work in all areas, but rarely is that true (Burkett, 2011). Undergraduate training needs to include all kinds of demographic areas and prepare students for any kind of scene that they can face when teaching, not just the nearby surrounding areas. Rural education is definitely an area that takes quite a bit of creativity on the teacher’s part. That doesn’t necessarily mean that there isn’t support there, but most rural schools get enhancements for their program through state or government funding, so every bit of money counts toward the classroom. The question then remains: where are the discrepancies? If a community wants music ensembles to perform, then why do some administrations not become more communicative with the community? Isbell also writes that teachers who are trained classically with a strong foundation of musical skills

are absolutely able to perform and teach well in rural areas (Isbell, 2005). Teachers must keep in mind that their training may not be at the grade level that the students are currently at, but they absolutely have the ability to get students to that point. He also points out that attitude is everything in the teaching world.

Burkett (2011) argues that to be able to better oneself in their respective teaching area, one must be able to have the adequate training needed to understand their subject. With so little money flowing into rural school districts, it is difficult to get teachers the training that they need. Burkett states that, “PD must be oriented towards relevant and useful topics and experiences that spark and inquisitiveness and continuing curiosity of learning and self-development in teachers” (p. 3). If teachers are not getting the training they need, how are they able to become more successful at their trade? Burkett found that teachers were more satisfied with training that pertained to music classrooms rather than what the district provided in regard to subjects not in relation to music. Burkett also found in her studies that teachers were more confident in their teaching abilities after attending sessions that pertained to music.

The more teachers become confident in their teaching abilities, the more that they will bring that confidence into the classroom for the students. About 96% of teachers that were interviewed or completed surveys after the sessions were completely satisfied with the professional development that was provided (Burkett, 2011). Teachers also commented that the professional development made them more confident about their teaching skills and approaches within the classroom. Literature also shows a benefit of teaching in a rural school district with allowing more room for creativity in the classroom. Due to teachers not having an abundant amount of resources or technology, teachers work harder at finding creative ways to bring about materials for students.

Schmidt argues that “music teacher preparation should focus on teaching experiences that provide contextual interactions inherent in urban settings (Schmidt, 2013). This leads to a solid argument that music teachers learn more about creativity out in the field than in other times and areas. Bates makes the argument that, “...the conviction that music education can help impoverished participants develop important personal and social skills” (Bates, 2011b). This can also lead to more creativity from the students in having to, for example, make instruments or write songs or melodies out. Teachers not only get to teach the fundamentals to music, but they also get to teach students how to understand music and how to grow their creativity.

By teaching directly to and with the standards, students are only taught what people “think” should be taught, but not what they should actually learn. Students are able to better connect with music if teachers are given the opportunity to teach music in a way that makes sense to the students and makes them connect with the subject. Bates also makes an argument that teachers should “learn about and embrace the musical traditions of less affluent students”, to make room for more creativity but to also be able to engage all students, not just one set of students (Bates, 2011b). Even with the research that is out there for rural music teachers, there is a strong need for more current research and information, due to the amounts of times that curriculums, technology and even the country have changed.

Why there is so little research on it is questionable, but it also means that teachers can be successful no matter what the demographic is of the area. It seems that, from teaching music as a whole, there should be research in it of all areas. Even as far back as the 1800’s, children who lived in the Midwest and west, where it was less populated, were being educated and were also taught music within that education (Bates, 2011a).

Chapter 3: Methodology

The purpose of this exploratory case study was to understand the attributes toward a successful rural music education program for elementary music teachers in rural areas in the United States. Research questions guiding this inquiry included rural elementary music teachers' attitudes, perceptions, and opinions about the attributes of a strong general music program. Given the lack of current research in this field, the study was undertaken to seek data concerning the attributes of programs viewed by elementary music teachers as benefiting their students as they strive for success in their music programs.

Design

This particular study was designed to focus on attributes of successful rural elementary music education programs. Therefore, I used an exploratory case study approach using structured interviews and researcher notes as to collect data. Creswell and Poth (2018), defines a case study as exploring a “real-life, contemporary bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information” (p. 97).

During this study, I also used narrative techniques which gave participants the opportunity to have their voices heard during the discussions. Creswell (2018) defines a case study as “the study of a case (or cases) within a real-life, contemporary context or setting” (p. 96). In this study, I focused on interviewing in-service teachers who are currently teaching elementary music in a rural area. When interviews were taking place, COVID-19 had forced the shutdown of schools throughout the country, forcing teachers and students to move to an online learning environment. Throughout this study I focus on what teachers were achieving with in-person learning in their classrooms, and their current methodologies for approaching

funding, support and communication. In addition, I focus on a specific aspect of elementary music with the rural demographic, largely due to the lack of current research on this particular subject. Multiple teachers were interviewed for this particular area of study, and their results were examined alone and comparisons were made to one another to find relative information. With the results, I explored different aspects of teaching elementary music in a rural setting.

This study also displays some aspects of narrative research. Creswell and Poth define narrative research as “the focus of narrative inquiry not only valorizing individuals’ experience but is also an exploration of the social, cultural...and institutional narrative within each individual's experiences” (2018, p. 67). While this particular study is not a full narrative case, I wanted to ensure that these teachers’ voices were heard in regard to teaching in rural demographics. I wanted to include quotes and phrases directly from the teachers to support the data that was collected for this study.

Participant Selection

After receiving IRB approval, an initial Facebook post was created in a group for elementary music teachers as seen in Appendix A. After a week with no responses, an email invitation was created to contact certain teachers within the states of Colorado, Maryland and Pennsylvania as seen in Appendix B. Those states were chosen because I have ties to them as both a resident and teacher (or future teacher). To find schools in those states that were considered rural, I used the Elementary Secondary Information System (ELSi, <https://nces.ed.gov/ccd/elsi/>). Those schools that were defined as “rural fringe” or “rural distant” by ELSi were considered for this study. “Rural distant” means that the schools are in a rural area completely, whereas “rural fringe” means they are between rural and suburban communities within the state. This was found using the National Center for Education

Statistics, which is the ELSi system. At least 45 teachers were chosen as they taught at schools that fell into the “rural distant” category and were also chosen based on whether there was an email provided on the school website. In using the ELSi online tool, I was able to select the state and the grade levels within the school. After data were collected in a chart, I was able to select how I wanted the list to be organized, starting with “rural fringe” at the top of the list. I went through the schools in the rural fringe category, went onto the websites and looked to see if teacher emails were available through the website. There were several other schools listed in these categories, but being able to reach out to those teachers was more difficult due to no email addresses being available on the school websites. Before sending consent forms to the teachers who responded, I examined websites and maps to determine the distance from the nearest city in the state.

An initial email went out to rural elementary music teachers in Maryland due to the close proximity in the case that an in-person interview needed to be conducted. When only one teacher responded to the email, the search was expanded to Colorado and Pennsylvania. Out of those 45 teachers from those three states, only five teachers, including the teacher from Maryland who initially responded, replied to the email. Of those five teachers that responded to the general email, four signed consent forms (Appendix C) and were subsequently interviewed. The fifth teacher had technology issues that prevented them from participating in an online study, necessitated by the quarantine in place due to the COVID-19 outbreak. Three consent forms were returned, which made those three teachers the teachers interviewed for the study. The fourth teacher did not return the consent form and was therefore eliminated from the study. The reason is unknown as to why it was not returned, however, due to COVID-19, this teacher could possibly have been otherwise occupied with online learning for his students.

Of the three elementary music teachers who were interviewed, two of them taught in rural school districts outside of Denver, CO. The third teacher teaches on the Eastern shore of Maryland. Each teacher was numbered and given a pseudonym to keep their identity and their school districts private. Teacher number 1 (male, “Bob”) teaches at a rural school district that is close to four hours south of Denver, CO. Teacher number 2 (female “Jane”) comes from close to two hours outside of Denver, CO. The nearest landmark to her district and school is the Denver International Airport. Teacher number 3 (female, “Jill”) hails from less than an hour outside of Salisbury, MD on the eastern shore. All three teachers were within the age range of 22-40 years. Age range questions were not answered and therefore, an educated guess was made based off of the years of teaching experience. All three teachers graduated from state universities and completed music education programs. Each of the educators in this study have different levels of teaching experience, with the lowest being a little more than three years of experience.

Bob teaches all grades in his school district, which is close to four hours outside of Denver, CO. He originally is from Oklahoma but moved to Colorado due to teaching and spending time with AmeriCorps. Bob has taught at his current school for two years but has a total of 17 years of teaching experience. He is primarily an instrumental music teacher, but he currently teaches general music as well as band to his students in all grade levels. When we spoke, he also expressed a fondness towards his dog. I inquired, during his interview, about the number of students he taught. He stated, “I have about 300 students and our entire district is about 450 students”.

Jane teaches about two hours outside of Denver, CO. She currently teaches only kindergarten, first and second grade elementary music classes. She stated that she teaches seven kindergarten classes, eight first grade classes and seven second grade classes. She also noted that

“they are fortunate enough to have music class every day”. In total, she teaches 470 students this academic year, with about 30-45 students in each of the music classes she teaches.

Jill teaches on the Eastern Shore of Maryland, about an hour outside of Salisbury. She is currently in her second year of teaching after receiving a degree in music education from Salisbury University, a state institution. In her first year of teaching, she taught kindergarten through fifth grade general music, as well as fourth and fifth grade band classes. This year, pre-kindergarten was added to both the school and her schedule. She advocated for having an assistant in her classroom for pre-K and kindergarten students, especially with pre-K. It was interesting to her that the school decided to add pre-K, especially when Pre-K teachers have different degrees and certifications from general elementary teachers.

All teachers were enthusiastic about participating in the study in order to share their experiences. It was interesting to get different views of how elementary music education is taught from the level of teaching experience of every teacher. They were also chosen for their wide range of years of teaching experience. I wanted to be able to cross examine how a teacher who has had more than 10 years of teaching experience compared to someone with less experience, but a similar teaching demographic. All three teachers had similar experiences when it came to communication and teacher training/teacher fit. What made them unique in this study was the differences between funding and the resources they can provide for their students. Another factor that was considered when picking the participants was indeed the states that they taught in, because it seemed more apparent that states view music education differently rather than similarly. Each unique location was considered when selecting final participants for the study.

It was important to persist with rural music teachers as a focus because rural music teachers should be recognized for their teaching as often as urban or suburban teachers. Distance is hard for these teachers because they are not able to communicate or partake in training or other teacher related events, and that often leaves them out of the loop. I encountered similar experiences of my own when teaching. There were many times when I was unable to participate in music teacher training events because the school was not closed for the day as was typical of others. Music teachers in nearby districts did not communicate with my school, and there were attitude differences towards rural music teachers in general. I experienced those attitudes from students as well, especially at All-State music festivals, where the general student population was more urban than rural. The urban students would ignore the rural students and congregate with urban students. Those attitudes and lack of communication brought my confidence level down in regard to teaching, and it caused me to wonder if other teachers were experiencing the same effects. In doing this study, I wanted to emphasize that these participants would have their voices heard, and that this would lead towards more rural music teachers speaking out.

Development of Interview Questions

I developed a set of 14 questions (see Appendix D) through discussion with colleagues and professors as well as reviewing articles and research in rural music education that I found pertinent to this particular study. I discussed the topic first with a professor whose class I had taken in research methods in music education as this project began as a final project for that particular class, so time had been spent with the professor discussing questions I could form for this study. My committee chair and I also discussed possible questions that could be asked of the participants. I also conferred with a doctoral student in the department who helped me to form questions as well as helped me to find the tool for finding rural elementary schools in the three

states. These discussions helped to shape how I constructed the questions for this study. These 14 questions asked about demographics and practices and were all open-ended questions. After the questionnaire was completed, it was distributed to teacher number two to complete, and teachers one and three were asked these questions through the video interviews.

Topics included in these questions consisted of a) demographics, b), ethnicity of student population, c) communication, d) funding, e) resources, f) administrative and parental support, g) community, h) implementation of creativity into the classroom, and i) successful attributes each teacher brought to their particular program. The development of these questions also stemmed from personal teaching experience, and questions I had formed a few years after I left teaching to pursue a graduate degree. These included certain aspects of teaching that I had either gone through myself or had questioned during my time teaching in public school.

During my time teaching, I often questioned the teaching styles I used, which led me to think that my teaching was not as effective as it could have been. However, in asking these questions to other teachers, I found that I was not alone in thinking that way, and that different teaching situations and demographics can cause teachers to question their abilities. It was those ideas that led to the development of these questions as well as the development of this study.

These questions were developed before the COVID-19 outbreak and were focused on teachers' in-class classroom teaching, not distance learning. The participants' answers reflected teaching practices used in the classrooms prior to schools being shut down for the rest of the academic year. During the interviews, there was discussion about how COVID-19 has impacted their teaching and their classrooms; however, data those discussions were not included as part of the study.

Procedures

Data from first interviews were collected within the span of one week, giving teachers a chance to reflect upon their answers to the particular research questions. To create multiple records, I used audio interviews as well as follow up questionnaires. Following Institutional Review Board recommendations, the researcher made sure that all volunteers remained anonymous in data collection. The researcher took steps to maintain anonymity of teachers, schools and districts. As seen in Appendix E, the IRB approval document was for reaching out to teachers directly through school districts. In mid-March, COVID-19 began to break out within the United States. Due to this, schools were being forced to shut down and, at the time, there was no indication as to whether school would resume in person or not. As seen in Appendix F, I revised my original recruitment plan to reach directly out to the teachers myself, as, with the outbreak, school districts were most likely not going to respond to research requests.

Each teacher was interviewed first by video chat or email due to technology availability. Each interview session lasted 60-90 minutes in length and was recorded with the tools used for a video conference. Teacher number one was interviewed using Zoom, which is a video conference tool that was recently adapted by schools and universities for teaching during the COVID-19 outbreak. The Zoom interview lasted for close to 90 minutes. Teacher number two was interviewed through email. The questions were emailed to her and she responded by filling them in using Microsoft Word and emailing the answers back. In interviewing teacher number three, Skype was used, and a cellular device was used to audio record the interview. This teacher, nor the district, were using the Zoom program for online learning. After concluding each interview, the video files were transcribed using Temi (temi.com) to audio files, which

were then transcribed to a PDF format. Afterwards, those PDF files were transcribed and coded for analysis. Interviews were also listened to while going through the transcriptions to assess accuracy.

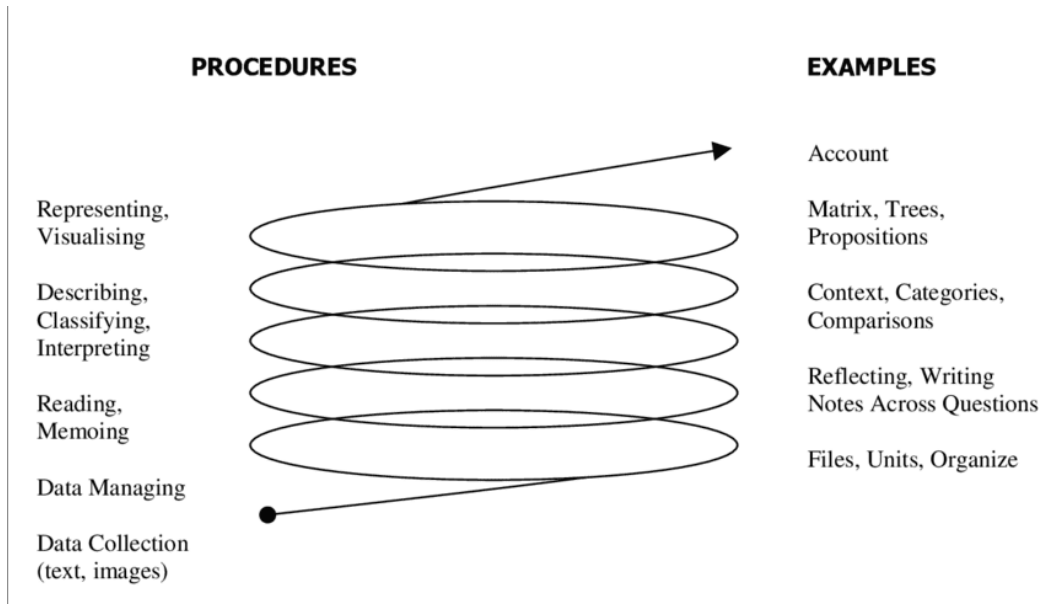
Approximately one week following each recorded interview, a follow-up questionnaire was emailed to participants as seen in Appendix E. Those survey questions were analyzed and coded as they were already in written form. Upon listening to the audio files several instances were identified where the transcript did not accurately reflect what was on the audio files. Thus, the transcripts were edited to reflect the precise text. I followed that process one additional time to make sure that all quotes would be typed as accurately as possible. I kept questions and discussion about the effects of COVID-19 out of the particular study, as the initial intent was to discuss in classroom teaching.

Data Analysis

Creswell and Poth stated that the process of data collection and data analysis are “interrelated and often go on simultaneously in a research project” (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 185). He suggests using a process involving data analysis spiral” as seen in Figure 1.

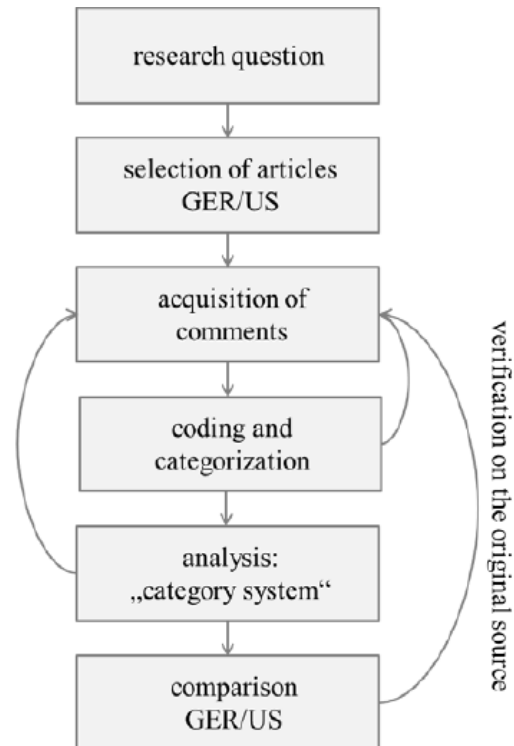
In this spiral, the researcher is to begin with managing and organizing the data. I began data analysis by listening and reviewing the audio recordings that covered all research questions, so I had begun to manage and organize my findings from the interviews. I wanted to make sure that all correspondence was accurate. In my steps towards reviewing the data collected, there was a combination of steps one and two occurring at the same time. After I had organized all of the data collected, I moved on to step number two in which I transcribed the interviews and began to code them into similar categories.

Figure 1. Creswell and Poth Data Analysis Spiral (Creswell & Poth, 2018)



The third step in the spiral was “describing and classifying codes into themes”. I went through a second time, reading and coding each item, looking for additional codes or themes that appeared in the data. After reading through each data analysis, I went through a third and final time for familiar codes within the data collected. In doing so, similar codes were found throughout the data. After coding the interviews, I emailed each teacher with three follow up questions. I looked for similarities between both the audio recordings as well as the email questions that were sent back to me. In looking at Figure 1.2 from Research Gate (researchgate.net), another model of qualitative research, it shows how the researcher will take the necessary steps to continue to code the data, characterize and compare. In this particular model, different from Figure 1, it shows the overall process with data collection, including the initial research question as well as finding literature geared towards that question. The arrows on the side of the diagram show how, during data analysis, there are multiple times that the researcher will go back to comments, coding and categorizing the data. These steps were taken four different times to ensure that all data were coded correctly within the interviews.

Figure 2.1 Research Gate Data Analysis



In any teaching situation, it is important for teachers' voices and opinions to be heard. I attempted to report this study from the perspective of the participants and compared their answers amongst each other, as I was looking for similarities from the music teachers. As I have personally not been teaching in public schools for three years, there were no research effects towards the data that was collected nor were any teachers from nearby areas to my former place of employment asked to participate. However, I certainly sympathized with the music teachers in the data that was collected for the study, having taught in a rural school for four years. I also sympathized with the teachers because all teachers were interviewed right after schools had shut down for COVID-19. At the time, it was not official in either Colorado or Maryland that the schools would be closed for the remainder of the year. All three teachers

were just beginning to get online lessons and packets together for students, so it was an extremely tough and stressful period for them.

Trustworthiness

The main sources of this data collection were participant interviews as well as written answers to questions. I was able to pull demographic information from school websites as well as the district websites and was able to combine that with the information that was given to me by the participants. This process is a form of triangulation due to there being multiple methods used to collect data for the study. Using both written and oral responses from the three participants helped with the triangulation of data. I went back and forth from listening to each conversation and compared it with the written script that was provided by the online source Temi.

In order to remove any biases from this particular study, questions had to be formed and asked in a general manner which would enable each participant to answer to the best of their knowledge and experience. For example, questions like, “do you enjoy working with your principal?” or “do you like your students?” were eliminated from the interviews. I chose to eliminate these because I wanted to collect data about the participants’ professional experiences. While their opinions were expressed in the interviews, I wanted to eliminate those opinions about students or colleagues and focus on their experiences as teachers.

I also was careful to eliminate any discussion about the effects of COVID-19. The pandemic had just begun to shut the nation down when these interviews took place, and I wanted to make sure I focused on the teachers and their teaching abilities and attributes within the classroom. COVID-19 has greatly affected teaching in ways no teacher could even imagine.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this study was to examine the attributes of three rural elementary school music teachers and their school music programs. The present study focused on examining the experiences and perspectives of three rural elementary music teachers.

The results will be discussed around the following themes after discussing demographics:

1. Community Support
2. Effective Communication
3. Creative Implementation

Additionally, I will discuss the differences that I noticed in regard to funding and resources for each teacher's school. Information gathered for each of these areas was carefully considered, coded, and reviewed prior to being included in the study.

Community Support

Community support is a key element to having successful school programs, especially regarding arts programs. All three participating teachers discussed how their particular schools and towns are at least two to four hours away from the nearest city. Students are used to a small community feel within their school district, and it seems that communities are bonded together. It seems that, depending on the district and how many schools there are, that each teacher has a unique teaching situation and a similar range of grades that they currently teach. Two of the teachers stated that they teach band classes starting in fourth and fifth grade, and of those two teachers one teacher stated that music continues on in middle school, but students are given a choice whether or not to take band or choir. Two of the teachers stated that their districts are large in area, and because of that there may be several schools within the district, but distance is something that keeps them at least an hour apart from nearby towns or even other school districts

within the area. However, to gauge the concept of community, teachers use music ensembles to reach out to the community. All three teachers stated that they have performances throughout the year, whether it's a grade level concert or band concerts for family and community members. During Bob's interview, we talked about how some schools are really big on sports programs, and how something as simple as a pep or marching band at games really brings spirit and energy and shows the community just what musicians are capable of producing.

However, ironically, the further apart a community is from a city, the closer that distance brings people together within the smaller community. While distance can appear as a negative factor, all three teachers have used distance to the best of their abilities for providing music to their students. It also seems that more parents and students are engaged in music in the classroom due to there being a distance factor, which can provide limited opportunities for students to be exposed to different aspects of music. In speaking with teachers for this study, they state that with distance learning being a factor due to COVID-19 students are more engaged in online music activities for class. I also spoke with a few parents (not related to this study) who claim that, with having students learn from home, they appear more engaged in material than they were at school.

All three teachers mentioned the community support. Two of the teachers stated that there is an overwhelming amount of community support for the schools and the programs offered. Concerts are fully packed with parents and community members and music is seen as an attribute to education. As stated in Appendix G, Bob says that "the community is super engaged...they pack the theatre and it's great". Teachers are always thanked for bringing music into their children's academic learning. Overall, it seems as though the parents and other community members appreciate music being in their child's education. One factor that could also

be considered for further inquiries is how much of an influence music was in the administration's education. It seems that if music was just as important as other subjects to other teachers and administrators, then that would have an influence on their views of music. One of the teachers also mentioned that one of their administrators used to be a music teacher, which would explain the heavy presence of music within the school curriculum.

Jill has a different community situation. She states that parents are "either really supportive or neutral" to music in their child's education. She will have parents be enthusiastic about what their child is learning, and she will also have parents who are just mildly interested in what their child is learning. She claims that she has never had an issue with talking to parents in general, but she also finds that she is contacting parents less than other teachers. This can be a large community attitude in general, where people are just neutral about certain subjects being learned in school. She states that there are no outside community opportunities for students in the music program, aside from the once or twice a year band concert. Again, further questioning comes into place in this situation. Community support could stem from parents' own education or just stem from how the community views music in general.

Effective Communication

Communication between music teachers and their administration, colleagues, and parents seem to be strong. All three teachers stated that communication is consistent with their administration, colleagues, and parents. Teachers stated that communication is consistent, especially with administration. Jane stated that "our building principal is very supportive of my program, as is our Dean of Students" as seen in Appendix H. Principals never "ignore or disrespect" the teachers when teachers bring important issues to their attention. All three teachers also stated that their administration listens to their needs and does their best to accommodate

those specific needs for the classroom. Jill stated that there was to be a shift in her administration, and it seemed to happen quite a bit, so there wasn't as much consistency as what the other two teachers were experiencing in their schools.

All three teachers gave similar responses when asked about parental communication. It appeared that parental communication was easy for all of the teachers, and there was never inconsistency. If a parent needed to be contacted about a student in music class, the parents were well receptive to the teacher communicating with them. Two of the teachers stated that many parents don't request a parent-teacher conference with them. Instead, the parents usually walk down to the classrooms to inform the teacher how much a student is enjoying music class. All of the teachers reach out to parents to either discuss behavior issues within class (which each teacher stated was rare) or to inform parents of concerts and other events that music students are participating in for school. It appears from conversing with all three teachers that communication is much easier now with the use of email and school websites than it used to be when the teachers were in school, as was for most of us. With email communication, teachers are able to let parents know about concerts, fundraisers, and other events pertaining to music classes.

Another interesting aspect for the music teachers is that none of them have a current parent organization, such as a music boosters' group. Two of the teachers stated that they have a general Parent Teacher Organization for the entire school, but there is not one specifically for music. Jill stated that there are no music boosters or general PTA group at her school, which leads into possible further questioning of why there is no parent organization. Bob and Jane also mentioned that, at the elementary level, it didn't seem as imperative to have a parent music group because many parents are already involved in the whole school parent group. Music boosters

achieve greatness more at the middle and secondary levels, when teachers need help with uniforms, music organization, field trip organization and more.

I also inquired as to whether they were in contact with nearby district teachers. Jane stated, “I rarely, if ever, communicate with other nearby teachers in other districts. If I have a need to collaborate, I will contact the other district teachers, because each one has previously been in my position, so there is a lot of experience to draw on if I have a need.” Jill also stated that “if there would be a need to contact other schools/districts, I feel it would be very easy to communicate with them, especially in this day of online/email/social media ease”. Bob and Jill both stated that they communicate with teachers within their districts, but they too also rarely go outside the district to collaborate with other music teachers. Bob mentioned that the one time he sees more music teachers is at the Colorado Music Teachers yearly conference, which is held in Denver each year.

Creative Implementation

One commonality that all teachers interviewed stated was the amount of creativity that they put into their lessons, and it was not dependent on the amount of materials that they had in the classroom. Each teacher uniquely tries to implement what is in the classroom as far as instruments and movement to create meaningful lessons for student engagement. All teachers also agreed that they try to “gauge student personalities” when creating and implementing music lessons. Bob stated in his interview that “the most important thing I can do is to develop a relationship with them (students) and help them develop their appreciation of music”. One teacher observed that a lot has changed in 10 years as to what students like, or how to react to certain music. Jane stated, “for second grade, I do a unit each year that pertains to world music genres, and we will listen/learn/discuss the aspects of the language and sound of a specific

genre”. Jane also states that “in ten years, students, even the K-2 learners, have changed quite a bit. I like to let students move and dance freely as much as possible. This tells me what types of songs they respond best to, and it helps me select/plan music for each grade level’s concert”. Jill uses movement as a way to be creative with her teaching curriculum, especially with teaching in a trailer. Since there aren’t many materials in the trailer, this teacher also uses movement as a way to see what students like or dislike, and these students are exposed to music less than the other two teachers’ students. She also attempts to see what music students are interested in and incorporates that into her general music classes as well as her band classes.

Teachers also encourage students to share their opinions of music because it helps to have strong discussions amongst each other and in class. It is interesting from a teacher perspective to listen to these opinions, because sometimes they will remain the same amongst students, and sometimes they might change. Not only does that help teachers discover what students are interested in, but it creates new ways of thinking for teachers that are included in lessons. This teaching strategy helps and encourages students to creatively think and also evaluate music. If students are able to evaluate music, one teacher stated, then the chances of them being more accustomed to hearing it and being interested are more likely. Another teacher states that it’s more effective to include students and encourage active participation rather than to “teach directly at them”. They are most likely to remember content given that way, as opposed to teaching similar to a high school or college level, where many professors teach but speaking directly at the students and not encouraging engagement within the class.

Another important aspect to consider when implementing successful teaching methods into elementary music classrooms is the idea of technology, in future discussion, it can be talked about how technology is a key factor to teaching, especially with student engagement. Since

schools and school programs are largely funded through the state, it would be interesting to see which school districts in each state receive substantial funds for technology. Bob and Jane both noted that they have substantial music budgets every year, and when they discuss the need for instruments, teaching tools or technology, the administration is able to find ways to make those requests possible. Jill noted that there is no money in her district's budget for technology. Any supplies or music that she feels is necessary for students' learning has to come from her own pocket, and she is not reimbursed for those items. The only money in her budget is for instruments for band students in fourth and fifth grade, and it is specifically just for those instruments. During the school shut down due to COVID-19, it is easier to see which areas suffer from lack of technology due to what can be offered to students during distance learning.

Differences in Funding/Resources

Funding is one of the largest factors towards successful school programs. In inquiring about funding and resources, there were several different answers. Bob, in particular, stated that he gave a presentation to the school board about what was needed for an effective music classroom, and the school board worked with that teacher to provide Orff instruments, pianos for a piano lab and guitars for a guitar class. This particular situation was something I personally had not been used to and was impressed by the amount of dedication this teacher displayed. This teacher stated that his administration made it clear from the beginning that music was important to them and was to be taught every day to students. They also allotted a generous music budget each school year. Something that he mentioned, which was interesting, was that many teachers who have things to say about rural school districts say things like, “..you can’t expect to have any resources...you’re going to have to use body percussion for the first few years...”. Jane stated, “when I started my classroom budget was \$450, but it has gone

down now to \$250 a year” as seen in Appendix I. However, that teacher’s administration always finds a way to supply money to the music department, and this teacher was given close to \$2,000 recently because there was extra money in the district budget. She stated, “this past year there was extra money in the district curriculum budget, so all music teachers were given approximately \$2,000”. This money was used to buy keyboards for the students so they could begin to learn piano in music class as well as concert music and interactive software for the keyboards. The teacher also stated that they have a strong parent organization (similar to a PTA) that holds fundraisers to grant money to teachers each year. Money awarded was close to \$1,500 and was used for purchasing materials, such as music, for the music classroom.

Bob stated that he had to advocate to get funding, supplies and instruments for his classroom. When he walked into his current music program, there were no Orff instruments or keyboards for student learning. He stated that he went before the school board with a list of instruments and supplies that he thought were necessary to his program. He knew that his yearly budget wasn’t going to cover the cost of the program that he was envisioning, especially for his elementary students.

Jill has a different situation from the other two. As she stated during the interview, “I simply have no budget and have to go from the ground up”. There is no parent organization that helps to fund classroom materials in the district. The yearly budget is only to be used on instruments for band class for fourth and fifth grade. Any music or other materials needed for the classroom come from the teacher’s own budget, and it is not reimbursed. The district does not provide a yearly budget to classroom teachers nor a way to be reimbursed for any supplies bought, which the teacher noted was a little frustrating. Therefore, her classroom is not as heavily stocked with musical instruments of music the way the other two teachers’ classrooms

currently are stocked. This teacher has had to get creative with what is available in her classroom but also has to do it with little to no budget money for the classroom.

Additional Questions

In discussing with rural music teachers for close to an hour each about how they successfully teach music, new questions arose that I asked participants after the initial interview sessions. These questions came up when discussing with participants about certain aspects such as administration and community. With these questions, I emailed each teacher individually to get their feedback. The questions were:

1. How does the culture of the demographic area affect students' interest in music?
2. How many administrators had music heavily present throughout their education? Does that have an effect on how they treat music programs?
3. Do students come into music classes initially happy and excited, or are they neutral towards music. How do you, as a teacher, get students involved and excited to learn music?

All three teachers responded to question number one stating that culture has a big influence on students' interest in music. Two of the teachers responded that there was a positive outcome of music in culture, especially because the majority of their school population is Hispanic. The teachers stated that they felt music was more present in the home because of the culture and traditions that the families are keeping within their household. They also stated that they try to incorporate Hispanic related music into their lessons to keep interest high for those students, but to also introduce other non-Hispanic students to the culture. Bob emphasized that music is important to his students' culture, and that the majority of them listen to mariachi or ranchero styles of music.

Jill stated that culture plays a big part in her students as well, not just in how music is viewed but in how society is viewed by them. This teacher was recounting to me, since the spread of COVID-19 shut down schools, that there were plenty of students who had no access to technology, and her school district wasn't able to provide families with the technology needed for online learning. Even if she had the technology that the Colorado teachers have in their classrooms, students would be overwhelmed by it because it is something that many don't have, even in their own households. She said it's similar in regard to music as well. It's not that students don't enjoy music, it's that they may not have the resources to be able to listen to it at home. Several of her students don't have a computer, much less a smartphone to play music on.

The two Colorado teachers stated that their administrative team was supportive of music classes from the beginning. Bob noted that in his job interview, the administration made sure to point out that music was well received and well supported within the school, and that they wanted music class to occur every day for the students. In personal interviews that I have done myself, I noted that administrators also stated music was important, with one administrator telling me that he was a percussionist himself. It appears that having administrators understand the benefits of music classes helps music teachers to gain the support needed for their programs. In further studies, it would be interesting to note how many administrators have music as a hobby or a major part of their life. It would also lead to further investigation on music class experiences from those administrators. Jill stated that her curriculum director was more experienced with art and media, but not as much with music. She stated that she didn't think that had an effect on that director's job or attitude towards music. To quote, "With where her district is located in the state of Maryland, more of her troubles lie with the district not getting funding or support from the state that is needed in general."

In response to the third question, all three teachers noted that their students generally seem happy when coming to music class. The majority of the elementary students are always excited and eager to come to music class, mostly based on the knowledge that they get to learn and interact differently than in a core subject class. Bob noted that it's a little harder to gauge how the high school students feel about coming to music class. He noted that this can be due to their mood, tiredness, or other factors that elementary students don't quite exhibit yet. He also stated, however, that these students tend to be excited about class once they become engaged in the rehearsal or the activity. All three teachers discussed how they gear music activities towards student interest, which is something I personally struggled with as a teacher. It seems more imperative to gear activities towards what students like to listen to or learn about music, but also gear it towards the culture that they are growing up in currently. If teachers can relate to their students' interests, then students will most likely be excited about coming to class and be interested and involved in learning.

Another thought in regard to further questioning leads towards the COVID-19 outbreak. After sending the follow up questions, the thought occurred that, once schools resume in person learning, it would be interesting to note whether teachers felt they were attributing more with in person learning or online learning. It appears, in speaking with the teachers, that more kids are engaged in lessons when learning from home, where learning can be spaced out for them instead of back to back for seven hours. Even though it appears that online learning is taking more time and energy out of the teachers, are the students more or less engaged? Would music be better suited to being taught online or in the classroom? How will students act or react once they are able to come back to school full time instead of doing their learning at home? Do music teachers feel like their teaching methods are more effective and influential in person or online?

Chapter 5: Discussion

The present study focuses on the necessary attributes of rural elementary school music teachers to help determine how those teachers can improve the delivery of music instruction in a rural setting. The central question asks, “What do rural music teachers describe as important attributes and characteristics for implementing their elementary music programs.”

This study was started based off of personal experience teaching in a rural setting for close to four years. During that time, I had noticed there were discrepancies between community, communication and funding, which led me to wonder if other rural teachers were experiencing similar aspects. It also led to wondering how those teachers achieved creating strong music programs in similar situations. Based on the results of this study, I am able to state that elementary music teachers have similar methods they use in regard to creating successful music programs in rural demographics. They are also able to utilize what they have without the same resources that urban schools are supplied with to create strong music programs. Based on the findings as well, there are still a few discrepancies that fall towards funding and state support for music programs in rural areas. The next section will discuss the findings from the interviews and how these results are connected to current literature.

Community Support

The primary research question looked to evaluate and discover what rural elementary teachers did to accomplish successful programs. Spring (2016) believes that “community...may be grounded in a certain geographical space or could be undefined in infinite space”. In some views, rural is only a space, but it doesn’t define the community within the space. It was found, from all three teachers, that there seemed to be enough community support for their students and their programs, which is an important aspect in the field of music education. In addition to

support, each music teacher found a way to make sure their students and their band programs were involved with the community and reaching out in musical performances. Spring (2006) stated that a community can be considered one certain space, but based on the findings, it seems that community is more likely to be defined by the people in it, and how they create the image of their community. Sieger (2020) noted that “varied degrees of support from school administrators and community members can influence the success of music programs.” (p.10) Bob and Jane felt that it is important to have parent organizations within schools.

Literature after 2011 does not examine the parent’s organizations in rural schools, but it seems apparent that they are helpful towards teacher achievement. Jill stated that it would be helpful at her school to have a parent organization so that parents were involved in school activities. These teachers appear to believe, as do Sieger (2020) and Spring (2016), that the more a music teacher involves students in community performances, the more the community members will see and value music education. Research that was written up until 2011 about rural areas supports the notion that having a strong community presence helps to raise support for small arts programs in schools.

Effective Communication

Isbell (2005) wrote that “administration is usually easier to access in rural settings and that administration is seemingly able to work more as a team” (p. 5). Effective communication is a bridge between teachers, students and administrators. If one part of that bridge is blocked, then communication could be affected between others. Literature states that support is crucial to the success of a music program. All three teachers also stated that they had effective communication with administration and with parents of students. Bob and Jane both stated that administration agrees that music is an important subject in school. This backs up another statement by Isbell

who said, “support from administration is crucial to the success of a music program”. As with any art or sports program, support from administrators can set the tone for how it is viewed among students, parents and the community. Each teacher stated there was never a need to reach out to a parent about their student unless it was a behavior problem. It seems, in speaking with all three participants, that they each view communication with administrators a greater necessity than communication with parents.

Most music teachers don't feel the need to contact parents either because students are performing well or because music is not a core subject at school. The only time a parent is usually contacted is due to a behavior issue in class. As I undergo interviews to teach in a rural school setting, I've noticed the administrators I talk to appear supportive with music classes because they have had musical experience in their own lives away from the school. Administrators also tend to support arts programs because they can see how the student's creativity flows and also how it can positively impact other subjects as well as grade reports and test scores.

Creativity and Resourcefulness

The teachers I spoke with used similar methods when implementing creativity into their music classrooms. Understanding and knowing what sparks student interest really helps to create meaningful and fun music lessons. Also, being able to gauge mood is a good way to understand what students like, don't like or just don't understand. It seemed apparent, across all three teachers, that technology or resources were helpful tools, but they aren't necessary tools for being creative in a music classroom. Orff instruments and keyboards can be essential tools for teaching elementary music classes, but the heart of elementary music is to have the ability to get

kids moving, reacting, singing and dancing to music. While it was not reviewed in the literature, being able to be creative with music lessons becomes important to rural music teachers.

Differences in Teacher Training and Funding

It became apparent that teacher training is not seen as relevant or important for music teachers, especially in rural areas. Burkett (2011), in her research, was adamant that having proper teacher training was important to how teachers not only teach but how they are able to understand the curriculum they are implementing. Due to distance, it seems that teachers must find training and professional development opportunities themselves, and also pay for those opportunities themselves. Bob and Jane stated that because of distance, they don't get opportunities that often to attend music related training and conferences, except for the once a year music educators conference in Denver, CO. Jill stated that she has been to a few conferences outside of her district, but she always has to pay for them herself. In further investigating, it would be interesting to see why districts don't provide arts related professional development to teachers. However, each teacher stated that it was important to them to be able to attend music professional development sessions.

From personal experience, it is extremely helpful to be able to have professional development geared towards teaching music. Sitting through professional development sessions that have no relation to music can make music teachers frustrated and aggravated, because music is different from math or English classes. If there was a way to provide more learning opportunities for rural teachers that aren't far away, then teachers would feel like they are gaining more knowledge towards their teaching subject.

Further Questioning

Findings from this particular study have paved a way for more research in this topic. One thing that came to mind from speaking with teacher number three was how often do administrative changes have an effect on students and the classroom environment? In teaching, administrators do move between schools and districts, whether it's about better pay or a better suited position for their administrative skills and needs. What would be interesting to investigate would be if those switches and changes have an impact on music classrooms and support for those classrooms. Teacher number three stated that her administrator was leaving at the end of the school year for another position, and that there would be new administrators. There is no specific way to tell yet whether those administrators will support or be neutral about music programs. Teacher number one specifically spoke about how his administration mentioned from day one that music was to be in students' learning every day, which has led to a positive impact of his program. In further investigating, it would imperative to note:

1. Do administrative changes affect how music programs are viewed?
2. Does administrative support affect music programs?
3. Do administrators view music differently depending on if music is embedded in their everyday lives?

Another key discussion point would be about state budgets and views towards music programs. In speaking with teacher number three, we agreed that there are certain parts of Maryland that have larger budgets for school programs, and therefore stronger music programs are supported. Why are different school districts having different amounts of funding for education? If music is viewed as essential in certain states, then how do the states determine which music programs or even districts are able to receive more money? Why is it, for example,

that a school district near the nation's capital has a strong, influential music program, but yet further away in the state, music programs are struggling for materials or even money for instruments, so that their music students can learn the same way as other, wealthier districts.

Future Research

In my current job interview experience, it became apparent to me that administrators in different states differ in their views of music programs. Not only that, but each state and each district views music education differently. Researchers of rural music teaching and learning may wish to focus future efforts on the following areas:

1. Does each state differ in regard to arts education?
2. Does each state fund each district different in regard to arts education? How is that determined?
3. Do general attitudes from administration and community effect music programs?
4. Are achievement tests in music viewed as important as core subjects by administrators, especially in rural areas?

In regard to the differences in funding between the three participants, it came to mind that there are apparent differences from states and districts in how arts education is seen and funded. Referring back to question number three, and from some recent job interviews, it seems that administrators who have either had good music education experiences or have music embedded in their daily lives seem more supportive of music programs within the schools. Those administrators who either had little or no experience with music seem to push music aside as opposed to core curriculum and testing.

Especially since 2009, statewide testing has greatly changed within schools, making it more stressful on both teachers and students. With music teachers, it seems that achievement

tests are not actually geared towards what is taught in the classroom. In some cases, this is a situation that comes from people much higher up in education, and those issues with tests should be reviewed and discussed.

Implications for Music Education

In light of this research, it is important to note that music education can be important to students, schools, and districts throughout the country. What sticks out is that these teachers work even harder due to limitations in rural areas. Music classes are a creative outlet for some students and can create an atmosphere that a core class is not able to provide for students. Music teachers work extremely hard to bring that creativity to students and help them explore a topic they may or may not already explore on their own. This is essential in the classroom because music educators are in the classroom to teach about listening and being creative with music. This essential need is occasionally overlooked in rural areas, and it's important for music teachers to be able to create and maintain strong music programs.

Implication 1: Rural music teachers are extremely committed to their students and their programs, and should remain that way. Rural music teachers work just as hard as urban or suburban music teachers, especially with the possibility of limited outlets and resources. It's important to include these teachers as much as possible in musical opportunities that will help them to further their knowledge in teaching elementary music. Distance appears to be the contributing factor to why rural teachers feel "left out" in regard to teacher training and communication with other music teachers. Distance shouldn't be the deciding factor, and there should be music training opportunities available to those who work in rural areas. It is also important to note that rural music teachers should be given the same acknowledgement and respect that other music teachers receive, no matter how different the demographics.

Implication 2: It is important that pre-service teachers are educated about all possible teaching demographics. In undergraduate institutions, it would be imperative to train students to be ready for any demographic area. My own undergraduate institution taught us just about the area surrounding the university, but did not prepare us for other teaching areas, which caused a bit of shock to me in regard to my first teaching job. It is also imperative to prepare teachers to be bold and speak up for what they think their classroom or program needs in order to succeed. Students should be teaching in all demographic areas during their undergraduate education. With proper prepping, more rural music teachers will be prepared for different teaching situations in different states and will be able to provide the best form of music education to their students.

Implication 3: Rural music teachers want to be able to contribute to music education and have their voices heard amongst colleagues. Attitudes towards rural teachers should be as equal as those towards urban and suburban teachers. Rural music teachers want to have the same opportunities to collaborate and work with all music teachers whenever possible, and there should be further research into how we can make those available to rural teachers.

Conclusion

Every teacher, especially elementary music teachers, brings different attributes towards making their music program successful. I can conclude that there are both commonalities and differences among teachers and programs in regard to rural music education. I learned, from each teacher, that certain aspects, such as community, communication and creativeness, are all attributes towards making a strong rural music program. In a rural school, to have community support is an important aspect, because community is what defines the rural area. Community is what helps to shape and mold students and schools. Communication, just like any other school, is key as well, especially due to distance. Teachers should regularly communicate, especially with

administration, to advocate for music's important place in rural schools. Implementing creativity in the classroom is another important factor. I learned that some rural teachers need to be more creative than others due to their current resources, but that creativity can only help make a rural music program stronger.

However, in discussing with the teachers, there are still several discrepancies between states and schools, especially when it comes to funding and state/school views of music education. It seems apparent that views of music programs, especially rural ones, vary between each state and each district. With the outbreak of COVID-19 as well during this interview process, there are several other factors that can be examined, including distance learning and how it is affecting the music classroom, particularly in rural settings.

It is my hope that, in presenting this study, rural music teachers are seen and heard just at the same dynamic level as their urban and suburban colleagues. They should be valued and respected for the work they do not only for their school, but for their students. More acknowledgment is needed to showcase just how important these teachers' contributions are to the field of music education. These teachers are important, as all music teachers are, to the field of music education.

Appendix A

Facebook Post

Greetings!

My name is Stephanie Fernsler and I am a research assistant working with the School of Music at the University of Maryland – College Park. I know that, as educators, we have been hit hard with COVID-19. I am conducting a research study for my thesis about effective teaching practices used by rural elementary music teachers. I am inquiring if there are rural elementary teachers who would like to take about 1 hour to do a skype/phone interview and complete a survey for this research project on attributes of rural elementary music teachers. Participation is completely voluntary, and your name and school will be anonymous.

If you are interested, please email me at sferns@terpmail.umd.edu to participate.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you for your time.

Appendix B

Sample of Email sent to teachers

Greetings!

My name is Stephanie Fernsler and I am a research assistant working with the School of Music at the University of Maryland – College Park, the music education department and Dr. Michael Hewitt. I am currently in the midst of my thesis research in hopes of graduating next month.

First of all, I know that all teachers have been hit hard with COVID-19. You have my utmost respect for what you are doing to ensure that students are still learning.

Secondly, in lieu of moving to Colorado this summer, I am conducting a research study for my master's thesis about effective teaching practices used by rural elementary music teachers due to lack of recent research in the area, my personal expertise and that I firmly believe all students deserve music education in their lives. I am emailing to ask if you would like to take about 1 hour to do a skype/phone/email interview in this particular subject. Participation is completely voluntary, and your name and school will be anonymous in this study. I have attached IRB permission for this study as well.

If you are interested, please email me at sferns@terpmail.umd.edu to participate or if you would like to have more information. Please feel free to pass this on to any other music teachers you may know.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.
Thank you for your time and for all that you are doing for your students :)

Sincerely,
Stephanie Fernsler

Appendix C

Copy of Consent Form

Institutional Review Board
1204 Marie Mount Hall • 7814 Regents Drive • College Park, MD 20742 • 301-405-4212 •
irb@umd.edu

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE
IRBNet Project Number: 1558459-1

Project Title	Characteristics and Attributes of Rural Elementary Music Teachers
Purpose of the Study	This research is being conducted by Stephanie E. Fernsler at the University of Maryland, College Park. I am inviting you to participate in this research project because you teach elementary/general music in a rural elementary school. The purpose of this research project is to identify attributes towards successful rural elementary music programs with teacher resources and strategies.
Procedures	Procedures include completing a one-on-one interview, either over the phone or over Skype, which will last approximately one hour. Questions will focus on rural music teaching, such as communication, support, teacher training and funding. After each interview, I will transcribe our conversation and review it, looking for similarities between responses. I will then send a follow up survey to the participants to clarify items that we discussed.
Potential Risks and Discomforts	One of the risks leading into this study is that teachers would not be able to remain anonymous with the research. Even though information will be confidential, there is the chance that a teacher will not remain

	<p>anonymous to fellow teachers, students or parents. To prevent this from occurring, I will keep all information that is collected on a USB drive but will also keep all data collected locked in a cabinet. When writing down research results, I will keep teachers names anonymous and will also keep the school district anonymous in the results, as well as assigning anonymous names or numbers for each teacher and/or school.</p>
Potential Benefits	<p>The benefits to you include allowing other elementary music teachers in rural areas to learn from some of your teaching methodologies, as well as being able to hopefully gather new ideas from other participants as well. We hope that, in the future, other people might benefit from this study through improved understanding of teaching in a rural demographic in Colorado as well as teaching elementary/general music in a rural Colorado demographic.</p>
Confidentiality	<p>Any potential loss of confidentiality will be minimized by storing data on a password protected computer. Any data that is written out will be stored both on a protected computer as well as in a locked cabinet.</p> <p>If we write a report or article about this research project, your identity will be protected to the maximum extent possible. Your information may be shared with representatives of the University of Maryland, College Park or governmental authorities if you or someone else is in danger or if we are required to do so by law.</p>
Right to Withdraw and Questions	<p>Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You may choose not to</p>

	<p>take part at all. If you decide to participate in this research, you may stop participating at any time. If you decide not to participate in this study or if you stop participating at any time, you will not be penalized or lose any benefits to which you otherwise qualify.</p> <p>If you decide to stop taking part in the study, if you have questions, concerns, or complaints, or if you need to report an injury related to the research, please contact the investigator:</p> <p>Stephanie Fernsler Music Education Department 2110 Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center College Park, MD 20742 sferns@terpmail.umd.edu (240)893-7594</p>
Participant Rights	<p>If you have questions about your rights as a research participant or wish to report a research-related injury, please contact:</p> <p>University of Maryland College Park Institutional Review Board Office 1204 Marie Mount Hall College Park, Maryland, 20742 E-mail: irb@umd.edu Telephone: 301-405-0678</p> <p>For more information regarding participant rights, please visit: https://research.umd.edu/irb-research-participants</p> <p>This research has been reviewed according to the University of Maryland, College Park IRB procedures for research involving human subjects. Statement of Consent</p>

	Your signature indicates that you are at least 18 years of age; you have read this consent form or have had it read to you; your questions have been answered to your satisfaction and you voluntarily agree to participate in this research study. You will receive a copy of this signed consent form.
--	--

If you agree to participate, please sign your name below.

Signature and Date

NAME OF PARTICIPANT
[Please Print]

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

DATE

Appendix D

Interview Questions

1. What are your responsibilities as the music teacher? What grades are taught? What type of music classes are taught?
2. What is your average class size? What is the ethnicity break-down of your student population?
3. How is your communication with administration? How is your communication with other music teachers/people in your department? How is your communication with parents?
4. Do you have an arts curriculum director for your school/district? If not, who is ultimately in charge of the music program and how do they achieve their goal as director?
5. What is the community like in the area(s) where you teach? How do they respond to the music program in general?
6. Do parents typically support arts programs? How do parents provide that support?
7. What kinds of professional development opportunities are available to you as a music teacher? If no music professional development is available, what kinds of professional development opportunities do you receive?
8. How easy/difficult is it for you to communicate with other nearby music teachers from other districts?
9. Does your music program receive funds from your district? If not, how do you receive funds to support your music program?
10. Is there a set music curriculum for your school district? Do you implement Common Core, CMP, National Arts Standards?

11. What kinds of music opportunities are available to music students/ensembles outside of the district?
12. How do you implement creativity into your music classroom? How do you teach different genres and types of music?
13. What types of resources do you have available for your students? Were these resources brought into the classroom by you or the district?
14. Please describe any other challenges you have faced while teaching in a rural school. How did you overcome those challenges?
15. What have been your greatest achievements teaching in a rural music classroom?

Appendix E

Initial IRB Approval



1204 Marie Mount Hall
College Park, MD 20742-5125
TEL 301.405.4212
FAX 301.314.1475
irb@umd.edu
www.umresearch.umd.edu/IRB

DATE: March 10, 2020

TO: Stephanie Fernsler
FROM: University of Maryland College Park (UMCP) IRB

PROJECT TITLE: [1558459-1] Characteristics and Attributes of Rural Elementary Music Teachers

REFERENCE #:
SUBMISSION TYPE: New Project

ACTION: APPROVED
APPROVAL DATE: March 10, 2020
EXPIRATION DATE: March 9, 2021
REVIEW TYPE: Expedited Review

REVIEW CATEGORY: Expedited review category # 7

Thank you for your submission of New Project materials for this project. The University of Maryland College Park (UMCP) IRB has APPROVED your submission. This approval is based on an appropriate risk/benefit ratio and a project design wherein the risks have been minimized. All research must be conducted in accordance with this approved submission.

Prior to submission to the IRB Office, this project received scientific review from the departmental IRB Liaison.

This submission has received Expedited Review based on the applicable federal regulations.

This project has been determined to be a MINIMAL RISK project. Based on the risks, this project requires continuing review by this committee on an annual basis. Please use the appropriate forms for this procedure. Your documentation for continuing review must be received with sufficient time for review and continued approval before the expiration date of March 9, 2021.

Please remember that informed consent is a process beginning with a description of the project and insurance of participant understanding followed by a signed consent form. Informed consent must continue throughout the project via a dialogue between the researcher and research participant. Unless a consent waiver or alteration has been approved, Federal regulations require that each participant receives a copy of the consent document.

Please note that any revision to previously approved materials must be approved by this committee prior to initiation. Please use the appropriate revision forms for this procedure.

All UNANTICIPATED PROBLEMS involving risks to subjects or others (UPIRSOs) and SERIOUS and UNEXPECTED adverse events must be reported promptly to this office. Please use the appropriate reporting forms for this procedure. All FDA and sponsor reporting requirements should also be followed.

All NON-COMPLIANCE issues or COMPLAINTS regarding this project must be reported promptly to this office.

Appendix F

Revised IRB Approval



1204 Marie Mount Hall
College Park, MD 20742-5125
TEL 301.405.4212
FAX 301.314.1475
irb@umd.edu
www.umresearch.umd.edu/IRB

DATE: March 26, 2020

TO: Stephanie Fernsler
FROM: University of Maryland College Park (UMCP) IRB

PROJECT TITLE: [1558459-2] Characteristics and Attributes of Rural Elementary Music Teachers

REFERENCE #:
SUBMISSION TYPE: Amendment/Modification

ACTION: APPROVED
APPROVAL DATE: March 26, 2020
EXPIRATION DATE: March 9, 2021
REVIEW TYPE: Expedited Review

REVIEW CATEGORY: Expedited review category # 7

Thank you for your submission of Amendment/Modification materials for this project. The University of Maryland College Park (UMCP) IRB has APPROVED your submission. This approval is based on an appropriate risk/benefit ratio and a project design wherein the risks have been minimized. All research must be conducted in accordance with this approved submission.

Prior to submission to the IRB Office, this project received scientific review from the departmental IRB Liaison.

This submission has received Expedited Review based on the applicable federal regulations.

This project has been determined to be a MINIMAL RISK project. Based on the risks, this project requires continuing review by this committee on an annual basis. Please use the appropriate forms for this procedure. Your documentation for continuing review must be received with sufficient time for review and continued approval before the expiration date of March 9, 2021.

Please remember that informed consent is a process beginning with a description of the project and insurance of participant understanding followed by a signed consent form. Informed consent must continue throughout the project via a dialogue between the researcher and research participant. Unless a consent waiver or alteration has been approved, Federal regulations require that each participant receives a copy of the consent document.

Please note that any revision to previously approved materials must be approved by this committee prior to initiation. Please use the appropriate revision forms for this procedure.

All UNANTICIPATED PROBLEMS involving risks to subjects or others (UPIRSOs) and SERIOUS and UNEXPECTED adverse events must be reported promptly to this office. Please use the appropriate reporting forms for this procedure. All FDA and sponsor reporting requirements should also be followed.

All NON-COMPLIANCE issues or COMPLAINTS regarding this project must be reported promptly to this office.

Appendix G

Bob transcript

[00:01:48] For months now and I was finally able to get the last-minute steps then to get everything done and taken care of.

[00:01:58] Right on they're working for Maryland. I am, yeah, I'm finishing my master's degree at University of Maryland and then moving out to Colorado in June.

[00:02:08] Excellent. It's. What's it like out there in Maryland? Probably a bit more serious than it is here in Oklahoma where I am.

[00:02:20] It's an it's humid, it's very humid. It is a little crazy right now. We have a lot of restrictions and a lot of counties and Marylanders saying, OK, you absolutely have to wear a face mask when you go to the grocery store or you go out to get gas. Everything is online learning right now. The university is shut down until the end of the school year. As far as public schools go, I don't know. It's still until like April 24th. Twenty-seven. Pennsylvania seems to have shut down for the rest of the year. So, my assumption would be Maryland's probably not far behind and doing the same thing.

[00:03:06] That's kind of the same that we're in. And I guess we just have kind of very few cases here in Oklahoma where I'm. Steyne. I just came to visit over spring break and then everything happened so fast. And I just stayed here. Yeah, but that doesn't look like we're going to be going back in Colorado either.

[00:03:25] Which is because I've been trying to apply for jobs all over the place. And even though they're still hiring, it makes me wonder if they're actually going to go through with it or not.

[00:03:37] What part of Colorado are you looking to get into?

[00:03:41] So we're moving back to my boyfriend's house, which is around Evergreen Conifer Bailly area. Basically like 40 minutes outside of Denver. Yeah. So, his dad unfortunately passed away in January and we had made the decision about a year ago to move out to help both of his parents. Right now, it's just his mom and she really shouldn't be living on our own in the mountains. So.

[00:04:13] Well, that was a beautiful area over there in Conifer.

[00:04:18] Now, I've been out that way for the past three Christmases now and I love it. I have such a hard time coming back to the East Coast, which is where I'm originally from. I'm from, um, northern Pennsylvania. So, mountains, but not quite. Rocky Mountains, quite still beautiful in its own aspect. But I love it. I love it out there. And I have such a hard time coming back to. I'm right outside of D.C. so it's really hard for me to be like. I don't know if I want to do that.

[00:04:53] But yeah, that's a big difference. That's actually what got me out in Colorado as well as Family Christmas is out there, and I just decided to go out full time.

[00:05:04] So, I mean, I'm excited. I've been on the East Coast my whole life. And finally, just like designed to be like, this is what I'm going to do. This is my big adventure for right now. I'm really excited.

[00:05:19] Awesome. Well, best of luck to you out there. Yeah. So you are doing your thesis on music and rural schools?

[00:05:31] I am. A lot of the stemmed from I used to teach in southern Delaware, which is really, really, really rural. So like the nearest district is maybe forty five minutes away. I always remember having issues with like trying to communicate with people outside of the district, trying to get just general funding for a music program in the area. And so going back on, my personal experience is kind of what got the fire started from my project right now because I want to see what teachers are doing to make their programs successful in rural areas just as the same as they are in urban areas, which always seem to get more funds and more resources and more parent involvement. And so I'm trying to figure out, you know, what are the consistent aspects, but then where also the discrepancies in all of this, because I feel like rural teachers tend to struggle more so than urban or suburban teachers. So I'm just trying to figure out what's going on there.

[00:06:44] Well, there are definitely exceptions to.

[00:06:50] So every rule. I want to. So.

[00:06:58] Maybe later on in this conversation, I can share someone's contact information with you. Please. A woman named Sarah of But View. Was she someone on your list that you sent out or how did you acquire that list is kind of it's actually a former DOCS student who's a friend of mine.

[00:07:17] He just got his doctorate in music education last year. He sent me this link to an online source where you can sort out schools by state, by whether they're like world distant, rural, French, urban, suburban. And that really helped me to kind of narrow things down a bit.

[00:07:41] So. I'm super.

[00:07:47] Blessed to be at the district that I'm in right now. And it is completely a different experience than you'll get from anyone else you talk to in the region. I mean, for sure. OK. So.

[00:08:08] I don't know.

[00:08:09] Just ask away. OK, well, let me start with some basic stuff. What grades do you teach? What are your responsibilities as the music teacher? What types of music classes do you teach?

[00:08:24] Sure. So I teach K-12 instrumental music. OK. The district I work for seemed to think that it would be beneficial to have. Kids and music every day. But to give them choral music and instrumental music all through elementary and then once they get to high school or middle school seventh grade, they choose to be in band or choir for seventh and eighth grade. And then the hope is to build that program into a high school band and choir program, that hasn't quite happened yet one year two. And, you know, we basically got shut down the last quarter or the second year, so. Right. So those are my responsibility is now.

[00:09:23] I.

[00:09:25] I teach my case six. I especially like the K 3 as just a general music class, I do. We do lots of singing and dancing, lots of games. And one of the first things I did when I started working there. Was go to the board of education and gave a presentation. I brought in.

[00:09:59] Some of the instruments that I was had available to me and my students.

[00:10:05] And I, you know, express to them what the expectations were that they had given me and just kind of showed a picture of like the space between what they wanted and what what they're given me to work with and. So out of that, I acquired. An entire orphans Unitarian, brand new pair of poles set. Every I've a recorder for every student if they want it. I have a full set of classical guitars and ukuleles. I have watched the beginning of a piano lab, which. I had to put the brakes on because of the space issue. We just moved into a new building, but a. I have every single student in my middle school band. Has the instrument given to them by the school? So, you know, when I started that job, it was my resources were thin and I advocated for. Through my experiences of what they needed to have to get what they wanted and they gave it to me. So I'm basically teaching in a state of the art classroom now.

[00:11:33] That's that's amazing.

[00:11:35] Yeah. What really? Zero. I have complete autonomy over the program and.

[00:11:43] That's you know, so. So the.

[00:11:47] The material aspect of it is not an issue whatsoever, but the problems I face that teachers and more of fluence or even just maybe I guess depending but more metropolitan districts is. You know, the cultural. Well, I don't want to say cultural. Want to say. Well, maybe it is a lot cultural. I mean. These students don't expect to be treated like or to be given those things. You know, it's almost like, whoa, like we're completely overwhelmed. Like, why do we have all this nice stuff, you know, and right.

[00:12:42] Probably because they're not used to that in the home environment or even just like in general. Right.

[00:12:47] And some of them are. But, you know, that's anywhere. But I'd say overwhelmingly my biggest obstacle is behavioral stuff. And by cultural attitudes towards. Excelling and setting high standards.

[00:13:10] Can you actually go off of that a little bit? Like I know when I was teaching, I had a lot of students who's like they grew up in families where the parents dropped out of high school or they barely got through graduate high school. And that was kind of a norm that was set upon them. And that just kind of brought the ad in bad, like, oh, I don't care about school, I don't care about choir, I care about band. So what's like the whole cultural environment for you with your students?

[00:13:43] You know, I do see a lot of that, so. What I found is that the most important part of my job, even more important so than acquiring. The tools I have for my classroom is building trust with those kids. And I think when you're. Working in not only rural areas, but impoverished areas. This kind of language you choose to use with these students can basically make or break the deal. I found like when I use more formal language in my instruction. Then don't get a good reaction. But if I was more like casual language, you know. Right. And don't insist on them. Calling me by, you know. Mr. rosily, however, they think they like to say my name. But if if they want to choose to call me dude, right. So be it. You know, Ryan, I'm just asking for your participation and I'm fine. And I just do my best to relate with the. With them on whatever level I can, you know, I can't, I can't. All the way relate to their situation, but I can add a lot of ways. I was not a traditional student by any means, so.

[00:15:31] But I think that's the most important thing you can do with those kids is because, you know, everyone loves music and especially those kids in the poor areas.

[00:15:39] They might be all they have. You know, as a smartphone and their Bluetooth headphones. And oh my God, you take those away and you have made an enemy. But. So I really just felt like the past two years, the most important thing I can do is to develop relationship with them and help develop their appreciation of music. No, I'm not. And you know it. This is where I start not exactly seeing eye to eye with some of my mentors and things are not necessarily I mean, they're always been supportive, but I think the least important thing I can do is teach them how to read music at this point. So right now we. Last year, we got those Orff instruments shipped in. They came in like. The second week of the second semester and the. Was like the second week of May. We did a concert, I had third their sixth grade performing like African marimba music with. Correct rhythms and separate parts and the really way complicated rhythms for a third grader that we were able to do all by rote, you know, and I just kind of. Step back and thought about what I've seen, other places like that, any place in particular, but through talking with peers that, you know, you might have third graders sitting on the ground composing with and rest and T T's. And I just don't see much purpose to that. If I can get him playing complicated rhythms first, you know, to really engage and create. Because what I saw when I came in there was that. And that's probably true in a lot of these small schools where they've got a K-12 music teacher. I love that job. I can totally see how that guy before me got totally burnt out in five years. You know, we didn't have the resources. I have Russia, but it can be pretty exhausting and oh my God, where was I going with that?

[00:18:23] I'm so sorry. No, it's okay.

[00:18:29] You know what I said? Complete brain fart. So sorry about that.

[00:18:33] That's what happens when we get stuck in one place for, what, three weeks now? Four, five.

[00:18:38] It's been four weeks for me here and. Yep, I'm actually at my parents house and a lot of fun to get to see what I do, you know, nice and helping me with my lessons and stuff.

[00:18:51] Oh, I've been personally struggling because I'm pretty sure my place's employment is the only place in the whole area of D.C. and Maryland does not offering online lessons.

[00:19:02] Really?

[00:19:03] So you're not able to teach right now, which we should be, but we're not. And I'm still getting paid. I don't really feel right about that because parents are paying me to teach their kids how to play piano and sing, not to not do that.

[00:19:23] Yeah, I know. I have. I have like a whole month worth of lessons I've been paid for and have only given one because the parent requested and it was just I just don't. I was not planning on being here for this whole time. And I don't have like. There is an old upright piano here, but it's. Tune. But even so, it was so weird with the i-Pad, I'm like holding the i-Pad and ass, I could only as one hand. It just it worked out for that one kid. Does. His mom was like helping hold the i-Pad and she's very involved, but and she also has the good sense of humor. But I think it's someone that was expecting something a little more professional, more professionalism. Then like, I don't know if I want to give you 40 bucks for that.

[00:20:15] We're doing the best we can.

[00:20:18] OK. So I do remember what I was when I was getting it with that. Yes. As far as like curriculum goes. I think so have you? Have you taught elementary before? Or is that what you're looking to get into?

[00:20:34] It's what I'm looking to get into. I actually taught high school for four years and I. This is the one thing I should have listened to my mom and I should have done my student teaching in elementary and then either middle or high school. But I did middle school and high school instead. And she teaches second grade. So I've always been around that elementary realm. If you want to say just because of her teaching and it wasn't until like I was teaching one on one lessons here in D.C. for the past three years and I was working with younger kids again, I was like, damn it should have done it.

[00:21:20] Yeah, it's interesting because I also thought I would rather do secondary. I love teaching elementary music and I thought, man, I'll have that fun part of my day. And then a more like challenging musically part of the day. And man, I just feel like I was so wrong. It's almost like the music's not any more challenging for me personally. I don't feel like any more challenged academically. It's all behaviorally and you're just like fighting attitudes and like. Apathy, so I, you know, challenged myself outside of my teaching. And then I guess I just completely enjoy the elementary kids. And the challenge of making that like engaging and fun

for them. That's the real challenge in our music at that age for us isn't the challenge. But the engagement. And like to get them to learn without realizing it is. Here's the fun part, I think. And I would love to just the two gentlemen three, but not at the district I'm at now, not in a position to. We don't really have the space. I got my one one room and it's kind of the way it is.

[00:22:38] So I've always. The more I think about, the more I want to be that teacher. That kind of sets the stage for music at the elementary level. And then once they get to middle and high school, they can choose whether or not they're going to keep that a major part of their life or if they're just gonna kind of sidestep it. But that's kind of where I am right now as high schools. Great and all. I struggled for four years and the situation I was in and it just made me realize more like. If I'm getting upset because my high schoolers can't even tell me the name of a quarter note and maybe I shouldn't be in high school right now.

[00:23:21] Oh, totally. And that's, you know, they probably could if they wanted to.

[00:23:27] If so, that, you know, that my district has decided that my superintendent I just adore him.

[00:23:38] He really, truly believes that fine arts will open up avenues for students that they would never. Have otherwise, and he truly believes as well that that stimulation will open up pathways in their brains to more easily learn other things. Right. They need to learn in school. You know, I never I don't really like to get into that conversation that music raises test scores and stuff like music makes you better at math or even that music is math because I. It's definitely not algebra.

[00:24:25] Right. But, you know, it's simple math, I guess.

[00:24:32] But, you know, music is like language and it's everything, I guess you could say that like grammar is mathematical as well. You really wanted to go there. So I don't like to have that argument with people. But he believes in it. And part of that is making music mandatory daily. They have music every day K through eighth grade, which I love daily music. What I've found was. The most challenging thing about middle school is that. So, for instance, this year they we have a really tough group of kids in seventh grade. Real tough to build relationships with behaviorally. I've never experienced of children like this and. We're forcing them to take band or choir well, they chose to take bands, most all of them of the huge bands. And you can't like make a kid want to be there, you know. And I don't have like the space or the manpower or probably even the energy personally to give them options, you know? Right. With 40 kids in one room, it's like we're gonna have to have concert bands. I don't have I don't know what else to do. You know, right now. And. They don't know how I feel about that. The first I was like, oh, yeah, this is great. And I thought, really, you know, I can. I can work this scenario and get these kids involved, but I feel like I failed this year. Last year I felt like we all got on the same page and we gave a great concert. Let the end of the year last year, but this year we won't be giving a concert. But I'm not sure that it would have been anything that. The community would have been proud of. Unfortunately, I hate to say that I really do, but I just didn't feel like I was able to engage them like I was last year. This group of kids. So I don't know how I feel about that mandatory music or at least those two options, right. Maybe like some other electronic music class or

something would fit better for some these kids. But. I remember what I was going to say earlier now. So when I came into this situation and I'm sure it's I'm sure it's like this for a lot of people walking into these K12 positions because I don't think people last long at them. From what I've seen in the San Luis Valley, that's where I'm at. I don't know if you've ever been out there.

[00:27:21] Probably not huge.

[00:27:23] It's it's south of Denver and. It's like the largest high alpine valley in North America. I think on the planet, it's the great sand dunes are there.

[00:27:36] It's it's this huge thing dying to go to the sand dunes.

[00:27:41] Yes. So that's I'm like across the valley from the sand dunes. So from my house, I can look all the way across the valley and see the sand dunes. But the nights that it's like seventy five miles away or something like that. So it's a big expanse. It's very poor. And it's like it's like eight thousand square. Miles. And only 40 some thousand people, so. People, you know, they come out there, have to work this case of job. They don't last very long and they might bounce around from school to school. It's gonna be better. And I think a lot of the teachers will walk into a situation where the kids don't know how to read music, you know.

[00:28:26] And then we'll they burden themselves with trying to teach that. First like that, as if it was a mess necessity to create. And what I found is that while it's a necessity for those kids at home, like, you know, when unbanned instruments because they're in different keys and they just need to build the Reed staff, you know.

[00:28:51] Right. They banned music without reading.

[00:28:54] Now, you can't not. Not unless you're a you know.

[00:28:58] Have learned to do that previously very well. You can get down with a.

[00:29:06] Quartet or something. But what I found was that, man, all these kids couldn't read music in seventh and eighth grade. But they learned so naturally and quickly that. I just was like, I'm not going to focus on this. And fourth, fifth and sixth grade. Especially K through three, like, why would I waste my time with something that doesn't have them moving, using their bodies and my sounds and creating and like hear it like caring, creating sounds that they like to hear. You know, that's I think why we all play music, because we're able to make a sound that satisfies us, you know, and then when you can develop that and you can do it with other people. It's like the best feeling ever. So I don't see any reason why not to just to have them do that right off the bat. Right. But that really is that's something I'd like to look more into. Like the like the process, like how were you processing language and written language, especially like music at that age? Because I have a really hard time teaching fourth and fifth. And +6 even to read and I have been working on that quite a bit after we learn it by rote.

[00:30:41] I will put something up and where we were just getting into like some sight reading type stuff. On the Orff instruments, but man, they had a lot harder time than like the difference between ten, eleven, twelve and 13 was just huge.

[00:31:00] I'd be interested to know that.

[00:31:04] Because they're reading fluently already, you know.

[00:31:07] So it might be a. It might be more of like a coordination thing.

[00:31:16] But that's that's just my observation.

[00:31:21] So let me ask you this. How is do you Offaly? It sounds like you have pretty strong communication with your administration. Is that true?

[00:31:33] Oh, yeah, for sure.

[00:31:35] OK. And strong support as well.

[00:31:38] Absolutely. All right.

[00:31:42] That's actually really impressive.

[00:31:45] It is. I know there are always those people for a loop because getting into this like through my student teaching. Actually, student taught in the valley. I went back to school there as an adult to finish up my degree. Everything I saw there and everyone I talked to is like, you know, you can't expect to have any resources, you're going to have to be using body percussion for the first few years, you know, or kazoos and. Don't expect anyone to listen to you or take you seriously and. During my first interview, you know, they made it super clear that they want to develop a fine arts program that the other schools there can't compete with and that people send their kids there because of the of the music and theater program, you know, and. And like visual art. So, yeah, it was the complete opposite from what I expected to fall into. I'm super lucky I haven't talked to anybody else. Got to fall into that situation. So.

[00:32:57] Well, it sounds like you have a really good situation. I. I got a job and they said, oh, yeah, we'll support you whatever you need. And that never really happened. They never fell through with it. Plus, we kept changing principles. We kept changing superintendents. And it just got to be a tedious project. It was kind of one of those things to where you started to notice that people would teach for a year at the school and then leave the next year. And I think that says something.

[00:33:26] It does. And. I actually just found out that my principal at the high school is leaving us to go teach like in Ridgeway outside Telluride.

[00:33:39] So I was like, oh, do you have any openings there? I'm just kidding. I don't know if you've been to tell you. Right. It's just wonderful. But no.

[00:33:51] It's too expensive for teachers to live there. They actually put you up in like dormitories appearing to teach until you ride. But. Does so, as far as I know, we still have the other two that the elementary principal and the superintendent. So I think as long as they we have a supportive school board, too. I mean, they voted to give me like a ridiculous amount of money. I thought, you know, I was kind of embarrassed to go ask because I just thought, well, was a lot. I've been here for two months.

[00:34:29] But, you know, I think.

[00:34:32] Something I've seen other teachers do is like take a back seat as a. And electives teacher in general, but especially as a music teacher, because like your administrators most likely could well, most like your administrators are gonna be really into sports, you know, principals barely touch football. And so, you know, the PE teacher or a football coach. Yeah, they can they can communicate with them in a way they understand. But I think most music teachers maybe have a hard time standing up for themselves or even just.

[00:35:19] Horin.

[00:35:23] Like putting any importance on what it is they do or showing that importance. Yeah. Yeah, I think that was maybe one. I think to be able to have that philosophy, your teaching philosophy and like your musical philosophy and. What you know, your pedagogy and everything just right on the tip of your tongue to stand up for what you want to do and to be able to say like this is this is what I do. And if we're not going to do this here, then I doubt I can do it somewhere else. You know, but just to just to call yourself a music teacher and then go have some administrator that doesn't know. Doe from t tell you how you're gonna do it. I think. Here's the problem I've seen a lot of my friends have to go in that situation and can't be helped. Help us in it and wait for some other job to come along. And I've never had a problem just standing up for my musical beliefs.

[00:36:33] Right now, I think that's important. I I wish I had done that more. I walked into a situation where it seemed like every person who worked at the school had graduated from that school themselves. Their kids graduated from that school. They work there. The kids work there. If it wasn't a cult, I would have been surprised.

[00:36:58] I'm kind of in a similar school myself. It's small town. A lot of the people graduated from there and teach in there.

[00:37:05] And I think I think it depends on the community, especially this particular community was not very fond of having like city people coming in to the area. So you always got kind of treated differently and looked at differently. I always tried to, like, stand up for the classroom, the kids, what I needed, what I wanted to provide. And it just seemed like sports always got the more important stuff than anything else.

[00:37:36] Oh, I guarantee you, there's a there's 20 schools for every one of my schools that I could have been so unlucky to walk into and then completely shut down and. Because we're a

sports school, too, I mean, they just built a new \$50 million school and. It's sports heavy, but they believe in music, too, so. And I like that, too. I'm not like a sports person. I'm not very competitive. I like the idea of, like, staying healthy in all aspects of life. So, yes, sports is. And that's something that blows my mind in those rural communities, you don't see anyone gaining in a future out of it necessarily. I just thought I'd just done I'm not competitive enough to understand the draw.

[00:38:42] So let me ask you this. Do you feel like you get a lot of community and parents support?

[00:38:52] Yeah, I mean. I think so.

[00:38:58] I get good, so I have like, you know, about 300 students, OK, our entire district has. Like four hundred and fifty students, I believe around and I teach all K through six and then I teach most the middle school. So we're around about 300 students. And so I have chosen and I don't think this probably comes up on my e-mail, but I I don't I try not to call parents. I try not to have too many people trying to get a hold me because it's because it's a lot. But it's the parents that reach out. I've gotten a ton of support from lots of good feedback from the community with the concerts that we've put on with the work instruments. The community is. Super engagement, they packed the the Packer theater and great.

[00:40:13] The school board has been super supportive, which is mostly mostly made up of parents too, so yeah, it is.

[00:40:26] And that's something that everyone from like those people we talked about that graduated from that school and everything, you know. That's something they've all said as well. Back in the day when I graduated, we had a huge band program and everyone loved it. And we had so much fun. We loved our band director. They missed that. I miss that aspect of school. So it's something the older people really want to see. The younger people. I think it's kind of lame, but right now I understand that.

[00:41:04] Have you found it?

[00:41:05] More like like more of this community is kind of push back pushing against the fine arts programing. Rather than seek it out.

[00:41:17] Honestly, what I'm finding is I think it comes down to the specific area and maybe even like the specific state as well. Delaware is not exactly my most favorite place, Miles. The fact that they have nice beaches. That's about it. They kind of end up being stuck up in their ways and especially down south. It's more like this is the way it's always been. This is the way we should keep doing it. And it takes so much convincing to be like, okay, but this is not like nineteen ninety five and we can't necessarily keep doing the same things. It's not gonna be effective in the long run. I I had struggles personally with community support because it was kind of one of those things where they didn't want to try something new or they didn't want to participate in a fundraiser. That wasn't what they are normally used to. And so my first year I really tried to push like different things and broadening things a little bit. The second year, I kind

of went back on and I was like, all right, you know what? Let's start with what you're used to. And I kind of got support. Not as much as the sports, though. And I. When I had fundraisers, not even like the administration would show up for it, it would be like it would just be like the same five choir families and what not not even the band people would come and support me. Come on, people. Like, I'm not asking for much. I'm just asking for you to support the kids. So it ended up being really frustrating for me because I didn't know what to do and this is something that they don't really do in college either. They don't really prep you for all possible out aspects of where you could be teaching potentially.

[00:43:22] Oh, no, they. And there's a lot of things that don't prepare you for, you know. That's a. Pretty pretty weird stuff. Weird things happen to middle schoolers. The things they're going through at home, especially where I met. Are just kind of incomprehensible for me. Right. And for most, most people. Work with, you know, to be involved in such like. Oh, maybe just like adult situations as a child, you know. As an adult, maybe, but not not as a kid. And that's something we're struggling with right now that I'm especially struggling with. Just a super long email to one of my principals about grades. That was a huge that's been like the subject of our conversations and Xoom meetings lately. The grades are not turning in and blah, blah. Not one person's mention that this is a overall traumatic experience for lots of us, even us. You know, this is weird. This never happened before. It's kind of scary, you know? It's like I've stayed here with my parents because I'm, like, worried about them. Like, what if I go twelve hours away and then something happens and I can't get back? So and then the kids are you know, I'm sure there's those kids that are just at home playing video games and.

[00:44:58] Hi.

[00:44:59] How are you gonna keep them from doing that, but there's kids that are in terrible situations at home. Right. And, you know, they're not the only ones aren't turning in their work. But how is it equitable to give that kid a zero? Alongside the kid who's. You know, Dad's a lawyer and he's just sitting at home hanging out all day versus a kid that doesn't, you know, maybe is sharing one computer with four siblings or who knows? Who knows? I've I've had people. I'm having kids take videos and stuff and I like doing my lesson or send me a picture. I'm not saying like you got to turn it in at this time or is worth this many points I'm saying. Hope you enjoy this. I hope you take the time every day to enjoy music. Yeah, and I'd love to see how you're interacting. And I would say I'm getting just about as much interaction in my classroom as everyone else without grades.

[00:46:09] But some of that, you know, I've had kids send me pictures on construction sites.

[00:46:17] Like this one in particular.

[00:46:19] I know the parent, the mom is a doctor and dad's like a contractor or something. There's not anywhere for there her to go during the day. So she's, you know, doing her music project, which was like to build. I had a build just like drums.

[00:46:38] Oh, that's so cool. And Schaefer's guy at home.

[00:46:43] And then like this week, the lesson was. Making a rhythm out of words. So I wrote like. Four questions on a piece of paper.

[00:46:57] And then they count the syllables, you know.

[00:47:00] And then I wrote, you know, I always write the music better insist that they know it's rhyme.

[00:47:08] I was surprised, actually. They have plenty of second graders notating their rhythms for me, even though it's not something I read forced down their throats. Right.

[00:47:18] So then, you know, they recorded my little or they're little. They answered my questions and then they made a little rhythm out of it and played it on their drummer Shaker.

[00:47:27] This little girl's on a construction site.

[00:47:29] Those super kids took the time to do that on a job site that. Anyway.

[00:47:40] I wish I would. I wish I could do that because what my place of work wants us to do is create a quick 10 minute lesson videos, which look great, but every elementary or middle or high school music teacher is already doing that. So why would we be doing the same thing as them? But I did this listening activity and all I said was, oh, you can take a picture of it and send it into harmonic because we would love to see what you're doing. I was told to cut that part of it out because I didn't want it. And I'm like, come on. I haven't seen them in a month.

[00:48:19] It's nice to see you. However, the.

[00:48:26] I was needing a break when all this happened. I've heard a lot of teachers say. I'd rather be in the classroom and I, you know, for those kids that would rather be in the classroom.

[00:48:36] I would like to be there for them. However, I've actually really enjoyed teaching.

[00:48:45] Online because.

[00:48:48] Well, just funds like make the videos, edit them kind of like a TV show or something like have background music fades in and out. It's kind of like a children's show or something. Try and keep them entertained a little bit and gives me time to think about like, what am I really trying to like? What musical concept? Am I really trying to get across here, you know? And. That's been fun. I think my administrators are happy with. With that, because mess up most everything else is an app that they're doing. Even the other music teachers doing more like here's like a worksheet type thing.

[00:49:34] Right. And I was like, I don't do that in my classroom. I really am against teaching something new from. During the distance learning, because you're not better to. Engage with it, sir. Right. Yeah, it's been nice. It sucks that they won't let you haven't sent videos because.

[00:49:55] I mean, if it was me, I would personally love to see that, you know, the kids are doing something because I have this bad feeling at the pit of my stomach that I got stuck with all the kids this year who if I had a dollar for every time I heard the excuse, I'm too busy to practice. I'd probably at least have like one hundred bucks a week. And so I just it would just make me feel better to like actually see that I'm making a difference or like I'm doing something helpful, but I do that. So.

[00:50:31] So what you are putting lessons out there, though, only just not getting any feedback?

[00:50:37] Yeah, I'm not getting any feedback whatsoever. And like they specifically asked me when this was all going down there, like we know you're one of like two people with a music education degree. Like, we feel like if you have resources, if you have games, send them to us. I sent them at least 30 different things and I haven't gotten any feedback on it whatsoever.

[00:51:03] So since I'm in like. Direct contact daily with students and their parents and coworkers with students. So I was talking with a coworker who I give I give her some piano lessons and so I've given them some things to work on. And he's he's very busy. Right. But I just know from talking with some people like that that they might have they might be in fourth grade, have like 14 different classrooms to go into undoable classroom and. So that when I heard about that, Mike, when I was in the meeting about like we're all going to set up these classrooms and started kind of. Because I I'm at a school, not at a studio. So I see like what their teachers are putting out there, too. And oh, man, I I decided then I was like, I'm not. Because that was my initial idea to is to say, like, OK, I'd like to interact with them, but I can only do so much like. Takes me forever to edit these videos and stuff. So. And I want them to be meaningful, so it's just taken some time and I've gone out into the community here in Tulsa with friends, I used to play in bands with and stuff and recorded lessons with them and like doing fun things or like just to show them like what you know, what someone I know can do with an instrument or like I get it a lesson about my dad's vinyl collection. I made a video and I haven't even put that one out there yet. But I talked about how that sound gets recorded on the vinyl and then their assignment is to listen to one of their parents favorite songs and then tell me what the song was and what they thought about it. And that's like that's all it'll be that week because you've got all these teachers putting. All these resources out there like dumping, you know, saying, all right, this should be good for the rest of the year, but it's overwhelming and none of it's getting done. And then right. That's then you have the teachers that are like this assignment. You have, you know, between eight and eleven to do this assignment on this app today and then you move on to something else. So you've got. Teachers given exact schedules and you've got teachers just dumping things. And what I'm hearing from parents is that like, well, we're putting way more time into this. We were in a school day. So, you know this, everyone's overwhelmed with that, so I decided I don't want to be of.

[00:53:53] No, that's that's completely fair. I get that.

[00:53:57] But I also agree with you, because that's kind of what I wanted to do is give them options and resources to use. So I think that's important, too.

[00:54:05] I think that's always been my main thing as far as like communicating with administration or commuting, communicating with parents. Like, I want feedback. I live off of feedback. So like, if there's something that I'm not seeing or if there's something I'm missing or if there's something I'm doing really well, I want to know, because that helped shape my teaching skills and personally myself as a teacher. But like, if I send you stuff and I'm not hearing anything about that, that either makes me feel like you asked. But you don't really care or there's something else.

[00:54:44] I agree, I also thrive off that feedback and.

[00:54:48] I get that at the elementary level big time and it's something I really appreciate from my administrators, she. She even went as far as to take piano lessons from me for a short time, which I thought was super cool, you know. She.

[00:55:04] Oh, yeah, that will bugger back there.

[00:55:09] By.

[00:55:13] He's mad that I close the bathroom door.

[00:55:16] I forgot to. I've had to incorporate the dogs into my lessons a few times because I've got the kids love that they do.

[00:55:24] Yeah, I'm sure they do.

[00:55:28] They are you know, I live in such a small town and I I just bought a house right in town. And so me and my dog walk. There's, you know, there's literally just a main street, a neighborhood on either side and the main streets about. There's one stoplight. And then maybe three or four blocks. That's the town. So after after school or on the weekends. Myself and other teachers walking their dogs or riding bikes like you see. The kids and you get to know them outside. You know why we are walking down the street and some football or something, and so they'll know my dog already.

[00:56:10] So what kind of a dog?

[00:56:14] He's a little basset hound.

[00:56:17] Try to remember, he's a fox hound. Doctson Nc6.

[00:56:22] Oh, my God. It's just it is just a big old sausage.

[00:56:27] Oh, hi, sweetie. So cute.

[00:56:33] It is it was taking a nap, Yeah, I have this little bugger back here, but we've been talking about getting a dog after we move out, so I love the dogs, man.

[00:56:49] He'd be going outside.

[00:56:51] I grew up with dogs. One reason I have a cat is because I just felt like dogs should live in a house with a yard and not apartments. And I've been living in apartments for so long.

[00:57:05] It could crash on us here. Ridiculous. Oh.

[00:57:16] All right. Oh, yeah. Cool. He's also part dog, too, aren't you? Yeah. Green eyes.

[00:57:30] Yeah, I adopted him from the SPCA. So yeah, a little Shroder there he he was an alley dog.

[00:57:38] He was like abandoned. Oh. We just stuck to me like glue.

[00:57:44] So now I'm like nine hours. Yeah. OK. So I did have another question for you. What do you do as far as professional development in your school, sir?

[00:57:59] Do you mind if I take a short break? Before I answer that, please. I'm just going to I'm going to meet you and I'll be right back. I'm sorry.

[00:58:06] You got it. Cool.

[00:58:19] What are you doing, bud?

[00:59:21] Hey.

[00:59:30] OK. I'm so sorry about that. Oh, please don't apologize. Totally fine.

[00:59:38] So as far as professional development is concerned, we do well in know they actually.

[00:59:46] So they send me to the statewide music educators conference each year. Oh, perfect.

[00:59:53] And that's been really nice.

[00:59:57] So the university I was that was sending me there, too, for a couple of years, so.

[01:00:05] I've got to know some educators like on the front range through that.

[01:00:08] And honestly, those those those experiences have been more helpful in my overall education, right. Than my entire bachelors program.

[01:00:27] Because you. You can't. Tell somebody exactly like you can't prepare someone. To have like the students, you know, by reading a chapter on.

[01:00:44] And maybe my so that's been great. And then we also. We have a behavior management system, we use leaven logic on this. We've heard of that.

[01:01:03] I want.

[01:01:05] Give you any opinions on it?

[01:01:07] It should be very can be very helpful.

[01:01:13] And especially in certain situations. It's all about giving students some autonomy and choices and choices. But we do that weekly. We have a meeting optional. But like I said, from my experience, the behavior management is the most difficult part of the job, so that that's helpful. And. Learning to operate the classroom, but they've they give me the kind of. My choice of where I went to get my professional development and they they've been really good about that. They and perhaps I will see you there next year. They have the Colorado Music Educators Conference at the Broadmoor in Colorado Springs every year, and it was just fantastic. Tons of people, tons of resources.

[01:02:15] Yeah. I'm really hoping to get to that. My old school would never send me anywhere. They wouldn't pay for me to go anywhere. And Delaware. Delaware started having professional like music professional development days. But my district's calendar never coincided with that. So I had to be teaching while everyone else in the state was able to get up there. It got kind of frustrating. And when we did have like professional development at school, it was never, ever, ever a fine arts base. It was always like, OK, go with the English teachers, OK? Go with the math teachers. And we're sitting there and we're like, Really?

[01:03:02] Yeah, I've been there when during my student teaching. That is so frustrating. Actually, I was dealing with that. So within the first three years of teaching in Colorado, you have to go through an induction program to BOCES, which is.

[01:03:23] I even know what it stands for, I know.

[01:03:26] How about another scene in Colorado? Colorado educators that.

[01:03:33] It's, you know, a bunch of paperwork and observations and professional development hours. And there was that there was not one online course they offered that had anything to do. With my job, right. And so thankfully, like because my district sent me to the conference, I was able to get my all the hours I needed there.

[01:03:55] And through one other professional development day.

[01:04:01] At the university I went to. Actually, my mentor teacher from student teaching put together an awful workshop. Oh, wow. And that was super helpful. And or for workshops in general are super helpful. Fortunately, haven't got to go to any outside of my area. I know that some music teachers in the region I'm in will go to Denver to do their work classes. But. Like four hours from Denver sat on. Take many opportunities to get up there on the weekend, They're always on the weekend, too. So I'm always kind of like that's that's yeah, that's a that's definitely an option. And I don't know if you're familiar with or if, but I'm just a little.

[01:04:51] Yeah.

[01:04:52] I love everything about it. For the most part, it's so vast, too, like I still don't know exactly. What it means to say to each worth.

[01:05:05] But I think I'm figuring it out.

[01:05:11] Here's a guy named Dave, Doug Goodkin, and he wrote this book that I did not travel with. It's called Sing, Play, Dance. And it is a wonderful resource against a history of. Of the AWF like car or from how all that stuff came together, but also really good resources.

[01:05:44] I will have to look into that. OK. I think my last question for you, because I definitely have kept you over my you. I know. And I need to finish up a couple of things before class tonight. So I guess my last question is kind of a two part. Could you tell me what? Personally have been your greatest achievements teaching in this kind of area? And then can you tell me some of the really big challenges that stuck out to you?

[01:06:23] So like I said, the greatest challenges have been building relationships with.

[01:06:33] The students, not even so much the parents, but to gaining the students trust you now come from outside their culture. For sure.

[01:06:46] But that is definitely the most important challenge I've found to overcome, to be relatable to them and build like, you know, meaningful relationships, writing the things that I've accomplished there that I'm most proud of.

[01:07:06] I mean, from from the get go to. Sets like.

[01:07:15] High expectations. OK. And to stand my ground on this, that has been a huge accomplishment because, you know, when you go in and change everything and just turn it upside down and say, oh, sorry, that's not how it's going to be anymore, you know, you're going to get some pushback. And I I was able to stay calm and some days only pretend to enjoy myself.

[01:07:48] But, you know, to convince most of these kids that it's fun to excel at something, you know.

[01:07:58] Right. So just to set those high expectations and then to.

[01:08:05] Advocate for them and get them the resources we needed and then to like within the first semester of having those resources to actually like use them in a meaningful way and show the community like what we can do, right.

[01:08:22] That is definitely my the thing I'm most proud of.

[01:08:27] For sure, it sounds like a pretty successful program right now. It's getting there at the elementary level for sure.

[01:08:39] My my biggest disappointment this this year is that we don't get to.

[01:08:48] To put that out there for the community in her mind, I was excited because last year it was I mean, the reaction from the community after we did that marimba music was just wild. You know, they they loved it and the kids loved it. We're so proud of themselves. And I think everyone was kind of anticipating same where that would go this year. Right. So. You know, giving them some to be proud of is a huge, huge accomplishment.

[01:09:24] So this is this is just kind of not even pertaining to my thesis, but just kind of pertain to the situation right now. Do you think that after all this is over, we're going to come back as different teachers or do you think we're going to be the same, but we're just going to do different things with our teaching methods?

[01:09:48] I actually had this conversation with. My folks the other night.

[01:09:56] I use that term. Everyone's using on the news. The new normal. Ouch. Freaks me out. And yes.

[01:10:07] So I just started teaching in a brand new school, you know, right before this January.

[01:10:15] I was literally riding a bus between the elementary school and the high school, like all day long Al-Qosh 30 minute classes. Because the elementary school didn't have the space.

[01:10:32] Before that, I've been traveling from room to room with like shaker's and a guitar and doing dancing and singing in the classroom, moving the desks.

[01:10:42] And then when we got the awful instruments and the admen saw like how cool they were. They were like, well, we gotta get the kids on right now, so I started walking a. It was only like a block away or two, maybe from elementary to high school and. I was walking home and then. The superintendent was like, wow, we've got a bus and someone's gonna something's gonna happen on that walk. So for a year I rode this bus with the choir teacher. We'd had two classes on a whole grade level at a time all day and it was just absolutely miserable. But I got old real quick and I get carsick, so just terrible. But we did it and we stuck it out and we had that concert. Well, now we're in this 50 million dollar school with all these resources we need and. What I'm getting at is this like. If we took if this is a new normal right and we're going to be teaching in this way often.

[01:11:53] Then.

[01:11:56] I've been thinking a lot about the possibilities of taking like the. The resources that go into a physical school and given them to individuals, spreading them out. If we were going to learn from home, you know them, right? I feel like if you had equal amount of resources. But we're putting them to the individual then. That could be super meaningful. Still, I hope that

doesn't happen. You know, I I've been enjoying this time at home, especially like practicing my own instruments and stuff. And some things that I've had on the back burner. Now, the sudden I have like four hours a day to work on one piece of music in. But I hope that doesn't happen. Do you have gained anything from this experience?

[01:12:58] That I need to slow down? I have learned that with being in grad school full time, teaching lessons after school into the evening hours and also working for a church like my schedule is just jam packed. And I would just constantly be going all hours of the day, wouldn't get home until like nine o'clock at night. And having this kind of has actually forced me to just kind of slow down a little bit and take time for myself. But it's also given me a lot of thought, too, about like, okay, what can I do to be a more effective teacher? What are some practices that I can work on so that I can communicate effectively with my students now and continue to do so as well? So it's been a lot of time for research for me as well, especially with moving and trying to find a job. I'm just trying to be like, okay, what what kind of a lesson would this be? How can I implement this? I mean, I'm grateful. I don't think it was smart that my roommate left for New York for the rest of the month.

[01:14:11] But who would do the job on Friday? Hmm.

[01:14:17] Yeah, she. Long story. She went to see her boyfriend in New York. And then she's gonna go to her retired parent's house in Connecticut for a few days, which. No, no, no. And then she's just gonna go right back to New York and I'm like, what are you doing?

[01:14:36] Yeah, that's, you know.

[01:14:39] I've had a hard time watching some people here in Oklahoma not take it seriously, and we still have. I won't say it's still right under two thousand cases in the entire state. Confirmed. So like you all. And we've tested over twenty thousand people, so New York City, they have more deaths than we would like.

[01:15:02] And we've even tested in Maryland at least nine thousand cases.

[01:15:09] Oh, yeah. That's a small state.

[01:15:12] Yeah. Yeah.

[01:15:15] But even here, up until, like, I've been in line at the grocery store. I've stopped to go in there now I'm having everything delivered, but I've turned around and told the stranger who's not, you know, not wearing a mask or anything, and I'm like, can we please get about 10 feet away from me right now? Because you obviously think that this is some sort of conspiracy. That's. Tulsa's quite the blue dot in a red state here, but right. Still, even like next door neighbors telling my dad how this is just some big old conspiracy to shut down the economy. And people think that way. And I'm like, you want to risk it because so I don't have any problems asking people to kind of step away from me.

[01:16:05] I people in Maryland, for the most part were okay. I feel like the governor just kind of was like, OK, this is your first warning, OK? This is your second warning. Okay. Now I'm putting you in timeout. And before everything, like, really blew out of proportion and they're like, OK, now you have to wear face coverings in public. Some of us suffer from allergies right now. And if I sneeze, I don't have Corona. It's not a symptom. I have allergies. I'm sorry. Mother Nature is inconveniencing with us with all this pollen and everything. I got these your turn to, though, and I just turned around us like, oh, it's allergies. Go back to buying all the toilet paper.

[01:16:55] Yeah, it's me and my parents have been taking our temperature every day or so, at least because we. Biologies here and nets as well, it's like everything's but it out and. Just runny noses coughing. I'm even like wheezing all the sudden, like. Like I used to as a kid. I have the extra lines and stuff that. Oh, yeah. And just like not to touch your face.

[01:17:23] I know it's so hard. So workers are.

[01:17:29] And I think that's the biggest thing we need to recognize as educators right now, is that so I reckon we're probably about the same age. You remember what it felt like to go through 9/11 and the A-student. Like what? What grade were you in? Sixth grade. OK. So I'm a little older than you. I was in high school and. Growing up in the South, like the Baptist South Baptist churches. Oh, yeah. I mean. I was 14 as a freshman in high school, and I remember my academics taking kind of a downward turn there because I was having a hard time focusing. We literally had adults that we trusted. I was telling my mom this the other day and she was pretty upset about it. Like, why wouldn't you talk to me about that? Well. Take their word for it, you know. It's like literally teachers mentioning it, but especially the youth pastors and things telling you that, you know, it was just the end of the world. Jesus is coming back like this is in. This is like the apocalypse, you know? And. Just nothing like that had ever happened before. It was completely overwhelming and traumatic, and imagine that a lot of the kids are experiencing this time in a similar way. And we have to acknowledge that and give him some slack. You know, with everything and just try it, maybe, maybe our intention should be more to distract them from what's actually going on. Right. What? Something interesting and fun rather than. Business as usual. Because like you said, like this, if there's any silver lining to all this, it's the fact that the whole planet has had to slow down and kind of it's been pretty eye opening about what's actually necessary. What's important like to think? I think it's pretty unavoidable for us all to see a big priority shift right. As a society. So it might not be a bad thing.

[01:19:51] Well, we'll see what happens. We will. We'll be back in August. Business as usual?

[01:19:58] Oh, I hope so. They keep talking about going through the fall in the winter. And I'm like, no, no, no, no, no, no.

[01:20:07] Well, it's freaking me out as though, like, we might have to get used to this happening like every year or so.

[01:20:16] Yeah, course. That's where.

[01:20:20] I would hope that failed. I mean, I don't see why they couldn't. I don't see what would keep them from developing a vaccine like they have for everything else. Right. Eventually, you know, maybe they're just in the next year or so talking about that. But that would totally. So a stick in the spokes of how we develop curriculum, what we can actually plan for students to be doing. Because even just this happening for a few weeks completely changed what all all of my plans I had for my students and myself. So. Right.

[01:20:59] So we'll see. We'll see. Do you. Do you need me to fill out that form?

[01:21:04] I if you could just. Yeah. If you could just sign the consent form and then send it back to me because I'm not going to use any of this until I have that physically in my possession. But that's pretty much all I need.

[01:21:18] Read on and see when you're writing your thesis, will you? I guess you will have to like name is a resource if you use anything we talked about in writing. Right. Not now. Be doing like a digital thesis on everything.

[01:21:34] No, no, no, no. No digital thesis, no video. It's all in writing. All of my participants are gonna be anonymous. And this and the district's not even going to be named. This is just it's an exploratory case study, so.

[01:21:48] Oh, cool. Well, I would never see the finished product if you would trust the little lady. It's something that I'm extremely interested in as well.

[01:21:56] So, yeah, no, I am more than happy to send you the link. They're going to pub. The University of Maryland publishes those things online. And so once that gets taken care of, I will definitely send out your way.

[01:22:09] Awesome. Thank you. And I really appreciate you reaching out to me. It's been really fun to talk about what it is we do, especially now. I needed maybe a reminder of why I do sides' makes stupid videos in my parents living rooms.

[01:22:25] Well, thank you so much for all of your help. I really appreciate it.

[01:22:29] This is good. Good luck to Stephanie and good luck getting out west.

[01:22:33] Hi. Thank you so much. Take care. I like.

Appendix H

Jane transcript

1. What are your responsibilities as the music teacher?
What grades are taught? What types of music classes are taught?

As the music specialist I am responsible for teaching the Colorado Academic Standards to the kiddos. In my music classes students are exposed to all kinds of instruments, movement/dancing, and we are singing every day. I plan, direct, and organize 3 vocal concerts each school year, one for each grade. I teach at a K-2 grade specific school. We have 7 Kindergarten classrooms, 8 first grade classrooms, and 7 second grade classrooms.

2. What is your average class size? What is the ethnicity break-down of your student population?

Students in our school are fortunate to attend P.E. and music class every day. We have about 470 students this year, so I always have one and a half or two full classes at a time. There are always at least 30 students, and my largest group is around 45 students. Our student population is very diverse, but I don't have specific percentages of students who qualify for free or reduced lunch. We have a large Hispanic population, and an ESL classroom. If you would like more specific demographic numbers let me know, and I will see what I can get from our district office.

3. How is your communication with administration? How is your communication with other music teachers/ people in your department?
How is your communication with parents?

I would say my communication with administration is very good. Our building principal is very supportive of my program, as is our Dean of Students. And overall, our district administration has been, in my opinion, very supportive of all the district music and band programs. I have never felt ignored or disrespected when I've asked for assistance or needed support. When there is extra money available for classroom acquisitions (not very often), the music staff are always given an allotment to use for purchasing needed music or instruments or technology. Whatever is on the teacher's wish list.

Communication with other district music teachers is very good. There are only 7 of us overall in various music instructor roles in the entire district, and we work well together. We collaborate often and get along well.

My communication with parents is very good. Although I really don't communicate with them on a regular basis. I think this is due primarily to the fact that I see all the students, so communicating with that many parents is not conducive to

staying sane in my classroom. I usually don't have any issues that require me to contact parents regularly such as discipline, behavior, or other concerns. On average, I may get 4 calls an entire school year from various parents to discuss their students, and it is usually pertaining to where their child stands during a concert. I am available during our fall and spring parent/teacher conference nights, but usually the parents only stop by to say how much their kiddo loves music class.

4. Do you have an arts curriculum director for your school/district? If not, who is ultimately in charge of the music program and how do they achieve their goal as director?

There is no arts curriculum director for our district. The Assistant Superintendent has been in charge of all curriculum development and acquisition since I've been here (10 years). He has always allowed the district music staff to work together to decide on specific requests, materials and curriculum, and then he would acquire those requests. The music staff meets occasionally to discuss performance dates, concert assistance, or any other issues pertaining to our specific programs.

5. What is the community like in the area(s) where you teach? How does the community respond to the music program in general?

- Do parents typically support arts programs? How do parents provide that support?

Our community is small, about 13,000 people, but it is always supportive of our music programs. I think a lot of it has to do with our music staff who stay really involved in non-district local musical events/choirs/bands/churches/etc. This helps the community stay more aware of our district music programs and events.

I have always had good parental support of my program, and I think it is because of the young age of my students. I've always said that working with the younger learners is very rewarding due to the fact that I can do nothing wrong in their eyes. They are young enough to not be embarrassed about their voices or abilities, and they love everything we do, so it makes it easy for the parents to be supportive. Most of that support of me is verbal, such as the congratulations after a fun Christmas performance, or at parent/teacher conferences when they comment about how their student enjoys music class. I do know the other district staff in the middle and high schools have parental support through a music boosters club, which is run by parents and, through fundraising efforts, provides financial and other assistance to the bands, dramas/musicals, and all choirs.

6. What kinds of professional development opportunities are available to you as a music teacher? If no music professional development is available, what kinds of professional development opportunities do you receive, if any?

There are opportunities available, I get pamphlets and flyers and email advertisements all of the time, but I do not participate in music specific professional development. I have had much success in the classroom and haven't felt the need to pursue it. I feel like the curriculum materials I have on hand, and those I've amassed during my tenure, have provided me excellent teaching ideas touching on many different music learning techniques (i.e., Orff, Kodaly, etc.). The most significant opportunity for music professional development in this area would be the annual Colorado Music Educators conference. I do know some of the other district music instructors to attend this conference every year. I do participate in all mandated building and district professional development.

7. How easy/difficult is it for you to communicate with other nearby music teachers from other districts or schools?

I rarely, if ever, communicate with other nearby music teachers in other districts. If I have a need to collaborate, I will contact the other district teachers, because each one has previously been in my position, so there is a lot of experience to draw on if I have a need. If there would be a need to contact other schools/districts, I feel it would be very easy to communicate with them, especially in this day of online/email/social media ease.

8. Does your music program receive funds from your district or the state? If not, how do you receive funds to support your music program?

My music program does receive funds from our district. Each teacher is allotted an annual classroom budget. The amount allotted varies from building to building. Typically, the district administration will decide on building budgets during the annual budget process, and then the building principals are responsible for allotting the classroom teachers their budget amounts. When I started my classroom budget was \$450, but it has gone down now to \$250/year. However, any music I purchase that I deem curriculum based will be paid by the district, and I've always received any requests I've asked for. This past year there was extra money in the district curriculum budget, so all music teachers were given approximately \$2,000. This was the first time ever for this kind of allotment. I used the money to buy 25 keyboards and stands, and I created a piano lab, which the kiddos really loved. Also, our district has a wonderful PTO group of parents who hold fundraisers each year in order to grant money to the teachers in the district. I will, on average, be awarded around \$1,500 from the PTO. I also use this money to purchase concert music, interactive software, and keyboards for the piano lab. In the past I've used PTO grant money to build the school concert music library, and to purchase recorders to have on hand so every student has their own when I teach a recorder unit.

9. Is there a set music curriculum for your school district?

Do you implement Common Core, CMP, National Arts Standards?

Our district does have a set music curriculum. Since I've been part of the district, we have utilized Spotlight on Music, published by MacMillan/McGraw Hill, which I really like for the younger learners in our building. I also supplement with several other music providers and publishers such as Musicplay, Musick8, Hal Leonard, etc. I do reference the Colorado standards regularly when lesson planning, but I admit I do not reference Common Core, CMP, or National Arts Standards very often. Although, I do know our district curriculum does incorporate the National Standards, so I am comfortable that our current curriculum applies those standards in its lessons.

10. What kinds of music opportunities are available to music students/ensembles outside of the district?

Music opportunities outside of the district include various private lessons (drum, brass, guitar, flute, piano, voice, etc.). There are many church choirs, and there is a large group of local citizens involved in Master Chorale, which is a large concert SATB group that puts on two performances yearly. There is also a women's chorale and men's chorale, both made up of local citizens, and it is common for high school students to participate in these chorales. One of our district teachers also directs the local children's chorale, a group of older grade school students who will perform during Master Chorale and other concerts. Also, a local church hosts a First Friday performance in which a local musician, and often students, is featured in a musical performance each week, and this is a very popular event with older citizens as it occurs on Fridays at noon.

11. How do you implement creativity into your music classroom? How do you teach different genres and types of music to your students?

I like to gauge students' personalities when trying to be creative with lessons. In ten years, students, even the K-2 learners, have changed quite a bit. I like to let students move and dance freely as much as possible, this tells me what types of songs they respond best to, and it helps me select/plan music for each grade level's concert. For second grade, I do a unit each year that pertains to world music genres, and we will listen/learn/discuss the aspects of the language and sound of a specific genre. For first grade and Kinders, I will explain the aspects/specifics of a particular genre, teach them a song (by rote/call and response), then have them sing with the music. After we will discuss again the aspects of that genre. I encourage students to share their individual opinions and feelings about a specific genre. For example, before our spring concerts were canceled this spring (COVID-19), my first-grade students were learning an African song of welcome that was to be in the performance. They learned about the language and the meaning of the words, which helped them love the song. Also, to be creative, I tend to attempt teaching these young learners things that other music teachers would deem impossible for their age group. I came into this role in an unorthodox way, so I don't teach in the same manner as most

traditionally trained music teachers might. For example, for the same concert, I taught the entire first grade (approximately 165 students) a song involving memorization of all 50 states and state capitals, which is probably something other music teachers wouldn't attempt for such a young group. I make sure each grade level is exposed to several genres annually.

12. What types of resources do you have available for your students? Were these resources brought into the classroom by you or the district?

I have lots of music resources, textbooks, rhythm instruments, recorders, keyboards, art supplies, games, etc. I also have a Promethean board that I use daily. Pretty much all of the resources are provided by the district (or PTO in some instances). I do use my own stage piano daily, as I find it is more conducive to instructing larger groups than a spinet or upright acoustic piano. I have used my own personal money and crafting technology/supplies when creating stage décor for music performances, classroom decorations, and bulletin boards.

13. Please describe any other challenges you have faced while teaching in a rural school. How did you overcome those challenges?

It is interesting, because I don't really consider ours as a rural school, despite the fact we are in a small rural/ag based area of Colorado. This is probably because ours is the largest district in the area, surrounded by several much smaller districts. Any challenges I feel I've faced would pertain to financial obstacles. Our district is one of the lowest paid in the state. For several years our district faced financial issues, pay grade steps were frozen, budgets cut, positions cut, and it can get frustrating. I have a Bachelors degree, and a Masters of Educational Leadership, but I make less money than many people in the area without either of those credentials. I overcome because I love the students, and I enjoy the people I work with. Also, I am fortunate to have a spouse who has a successful business, so for now I can justify a smaller salary.

14. What have been your greatest achievements teaching in a rural music classroom?

The greatest achievements for me have been the development of my fun concerts, the development of my instrumental units (recorder, piano), and my attainment of Masters while teaching full time.

Appendix I

Jill transcript

Speaker 1 (00:00):

A little crazy, but you know, we're, we're making do with what we can make more. They can do what we can. Um, um, we have a lot of students who do not have internet access so we've had to send out physical copies and all that. So it's been interesting for the last couple of days, but we've been able to make it work and we're just hoping to be back in the classrooms. June,

Speaker 2 (00:22):

do you think that's going to happen cause a lot of the States have already called it for the rest of the year.

Speaker 1 (00:29):

I think it can go either way for me. I mean, um, I have a coworker who has worked with the state superintendent before and she said that there that she is very much a supporter of online learning as long as it is accessible for the kids. So I think if we're going in the direction that we are going in, we will probably be close for the rest of the year. And I just got word from my summer job. I'm not working there this summer, but I've worked at a camp in Michigan for the last three years.

Speaker 2 (00:59):

Wait, is it, is it, is it blue Lake? My boyfriend worked there for so many years and he went on there. He was there. Hold on. Wait, wait, wait. This is 2020. He, he did the orchestra tour in 2017 and 2018

Speaker 1 (01:23):

I think. I might have a friend that might know him then.

Speaker 2 (01:26):

Okay. He's a clarinet player. His name is Casey Wilkes.

Speaker 1 (01:30):

You will have the Mart write that down. I have a friend who did the orchestra in on 2017.

Speaker 2 (01:36):

Okay. And then before that he was just doing like the regular band and orchestra stuff again. So

Speaker 1 (01:45):

I was there from 2017 to 2019 and then they just released a statement saying that they are canceling all the sessions the summer for 2020 and all of us are distraught.

Speaker 2 (01:58): I can only imagine.

Speaker 1 (02:01):

We, we just, um, we're talking about doing like a virtual choir videos. I do. I'm doing my research on that. Oh, that'd be great. Of Canterbury lane. We're going to see what we can do, but um, so it's been alive of them shits riding here, so it was great.

Speaker 2 (02:16):

Yeah, no, trust me. I mean, I'm, while I'm finishing this degree, I'm teaching private lessons in D C and I, I swear to you, I swear to you, we're the only place that's not doing online lessons right now and I'm getting frustrated. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. That's what I said too. Okay. So just to kind of give you a little bit of a background you're in, um, I'm not gonna use your County in my research or your name or anything like that, but just so that I'm making sure that you're in Dorchester, right? Yes. Okay. So I used to teach in lower Delaware for about four years, right around why Komiko County? So I think familiar with where you are. Yeah. So I lived in Salisbury for about a year cause I lived in Seaford, Delaware for about three years while I was teaching. Um, but basically basically what happened for me is that I was going through some possible research ideas and it occurred to me that my teaching experience I feel could have been a lot better if I had worked a little more with the circumstances that I had. And that just made me think like, was I the only one in that situation or was I, do other people have the same issues? So that's kind of where this idea for my research stemmed from. Um, but again, I like, well I was doing a literature review and I was like, there's nothing after 2011 and everything has changed since then. So

Speaker 1 (03:53):

yeah, there's not a lot, especially, especially around here, there is not a lot after, like prior to 2010

there's not a lot, especially in this area.

Speaker 2 (04:02):

Right. And I think this is an area that needs to be looked at because I've been in situations where, because I went to the university of Delaware for my undergrad. So how having taught up there, having been in schools up there, I was very involved in stuff. And then moving down South, like none of that happened. And I'm like, uh, um, they deserve opportunities too, so.

Speaker 1 (04:29):

Okay. Could it be, because we're not in nearby a major city. I mean the nearest major steady Valley is two hours away. So I swear I do not have Cogan we have everybody says now we're in the somewhere the nearest nearby city, the nearest, nearest major city is like two hours away. So it could be that, I don't know. But when I saw your email and you sent out a mass email to some civically rural elementary school, I was like, this is it. We are finally getting research done. Okay.

Speaker 2 (05:09):

So I'm going to kind of start, you have the questions in front of you too. I'm kinda going to start with some basic questions just to get an idea of what your teaching atmosphere is like. Um, we might STEM away from that knowing me. I am probably going to end up asking more than what I sent you and that's

Speaker 1 (05:25):

no. Okay. I have all the time. We're good.

Speaker 2 (05:30):

Okay. So why don't we start with the first question. Um, what are your responsibilities as the music teacher? Like what grades do you teach? What types of classes do you teach?

Speaker 1 (05:41):

So I teach, uh, preK through fifth grade. Originally when I first came in last year it was kindergarten through fifth grade. But then the principal at the time found that pre K teachers were not getting planning as other teachers were. So they decided to add. So you decided to add pre-K and with the kindergarten classes? So now we have a combined I freaking kindergarten class. Okay. Um, that's interesting. I teach all the grades. I teach mostly I teach general music but I do teach two band classes, one in fourth grade and one in fifth grade. And I see them once, I see them about once a week with the occasion that um, we have a, we have a four day rotation period and in a five day a week, if I see them on Monday, I will see them on Friday. Again, more than likely we are working, we are working on changing that possibly for next year for more or for more effective purposes.

Speaker 1 (06:39):

Um, my current responsibilities include, I have to create lesson plans that are at least 50 minutes long. Um, and I teach approximately four to six classes a day. Um, and I see old upper grades. I see most of the grades. Um, I see most of the grades throughout the day. But my day can go from, my day, could be for classes where I don't have a third grade class. Okay. First grade class, do the sectioning or I can see all the pre K through five. So I do teach that. I do have to do a student learning objective. I do choose student learning objectives for the year. Um, so I have to create, I have to create a baseline data and I have to collect some of them. Dude, at the very end of the year, I do have to do two prompts. I do have to do Koster's. Um, Ali if one concert, but preferably two. Um, I just did one this past winter, her and then we were letting go. Okay, we'll do it. They won the spray. Uh, I

Speaker 1 (07:56):

do you ever do a tend to staff meaning professional development, things like that? Um, so I do do a staff meeting. I did you do a committee committee meeting for my last a month and need it? Uh, have no, it's okay. Okay. So I'm gonna, I'm probably gonna actually branch into a couple of other questions out of order just based on what you just told me. Um, so as far as professional development goes, what, what kinds of professional development do you do? Um, the type of professional development I do is you usually by County gives. Okay. The County tells me like, um, I'm trying to think. The County usually tells me if the professional development ideas that we have. So if we're in the state of Maryland, you have to have six CB CD credits by the time you are finished, I believe in your first box. Okay. And your teacher said that? I can, if I left act at least then I can count as one CPD credit. So for example, I went to a, what's

your count? Yeah, yeah. Or a for a comp. Worked out, able to combine my hours there. Okay. Yeah, I know, I know we're, we're Chester County is, so yeah, I've been an ed camp not too long ago, so I've been attending for the last two years. Okay. Um,

Speaker 2 (10:02):

yeah, cause I, I remember when I was working in lower Delaware, we, we did professional development, but we did as a school and there was nothing that like pertained to music and that's what got me frustrated in the long run was that, you know, I'm sitting through stuff for math, for English, for social studies, but where's the music part of it?

Speaker 1 (10:27):

Oh, Lee. And I'll bet I'll probably get more. Um, I thought was worth that was kind of professional developments, which you tapped into basically. And it has to do with music. I have to pay for it on my own, really, unless that by my supervisor that they can pay for. It's very pear rare. Yes. So for example, a lap on to have, I'm in the, if to have nappy membership, um, for all the teachers in the County. We all had nappy membership from elementary all the way to high school. That has changed this year. Right. So because of that, the conference and pitch \$40 or wrecking for registration for first and second or I had a, for all of my travel on my own, I had to pay for my hotel. I had [inaudible] they are everything on my own. Wow. This year, if I were to attend to it, um, they've said I would have three \$5 registration.

Speaker 3 (11:38): Hmm.

Speaker 1 (11:43):

That sounds like it's really frustrating. Oh, it is very, very frustrating. It's very frustrating. Um, okay, so

basically

Speaker 2 (11:54):

you have to, if it's music related, you have to do it on your own. There's like the school is just not gonna pay to send you anywhere or pay for it.

Speaker 1 (12:03):

Okay. Four and a [inaudible]. Wow. A less, I'm told by my supervisor and by the County that I can't, that they are going to pay for it, which is very seldom in the last year. It's in the last year and a half, two years I've been there.

Speaker 2 (12:18):

So, so let me ask you this then. Kind of stemming off of that, you said you have a supervisor, is that like an art or is that for, is that like an arts supervisor for the whole district that you have? Is it music specific or is it just somebody that's like here this is what you do.

Speaker 1 (12:35):

Do you have an art? I do have an art supervisor, however, she and also the supervisor for media and GLL. I'll ask also another department that I can't ever off the top of my head. Oh, she doesn't cover justice. Typically music. So for example, like half of the County, I know they'll find our supervisor there because he was a peeler. The choir teacher when I was in high school, I wasn't to why copper? You have to do dance. So he only does fine art. Right.

Speaker 4 (13:04):

Um, he only does find for the problem is my cat. Not the problem, but the CRA, the supervisor, I had Chicago number three and she's not even based on music.

Speaker 2 (13:18):

Right, right. Well, honestly, I think that somebody's doing more than one thing is probably not the best idea. But I also never had any kind of curriculum director when I was teaching like nothing. Very true, nothing. And that's all that also got frustrating because it's like I want someone who has taken the time to like research and understand these things to teach me about how to apply music standards to my lessons, but we didn't have that outlet, so my goodness, that is crazy. Um, okay, so

Speaker 4 (14:03): [inaudible]

Speaker 2 (14:05):

so, um, what's your average class size per say? Like per grade level?

Speaker 4 (14:14):

Um, for braids one time I can have it seen 18 students per class for the pre K and kindergarten grew. I

can average about 22 to 25. [inaudible]

Speaker 2 (14:27): 22 to 25 pre cares

Speaker 1 (14:31):

and kindergarten or nurse.

Speaker 2 (14:34):

Wow. My mom used to be a kindergarten teacher and I was like, you know what, God bless you. God

bless you. Definitely.

Speaker 1 (14:44):

I do have, um, so the pre K kindergarten classes, I do have their assistant in there. I am the only specialist out of the four of us that does not have a creaky assistant, but I do have at least a kindergarten assistant help me kind of direct back there. So it's not like I'm on my own really. However, some days when the substitute where the instructional assistant may AB out and there's no stuff to do covering, I made on my own and I've had to fight for that because I'm in a, I'm in a portable truck trailer and I said, well, what if I have a, you know, a fire drill or something happened. I have 25 kids that I have to fend for

on my own, so I don't fight for somebody to be in a room and say, Hey, can we have somebody in my room at least just in case that there's ever an emergency? Oh my goodness.

Speaker 1 (15:37):

Wow. Um, okay. How would you say communication is with your administration this year? My administration has been very together and they have been very helpful. Unfortunately, our vice principal just moved to another school and it happened that I'd been 19 Oh this year. So I've had a complete, I've had a complete change in administration. I have as all female administration. Last year I had, you know, principal principal guidance counselor especially that I had, they, here they are principal moved up to the board and then the, my friends will move back to her old school. So they brought into new male administrators. Why Pat had been a principal prior and the vice principal who has now moved, he's originally from out of state. Um,

Speaker 1 (16:44):

communication wise they're really good. They are very, very, very well with um, communication. And if you have to have a meeting with them, they are usually very forward and say, yes, I have a time slot or no, I don't have a time slot. We work together very well. Um, there's some perk and some flaws. But um, overall I think the UpToDate communication's really good. Um, they, there's no gray areas or no fine

lines. I have women, you know, crossed off, um, that we have to, you know, work with. Um, so overall I think it's really, really good. I think. What about with the parents? How is it communicating and working with parents if that half and half is 50, 50, so, um,

Speaker 2 (17:48): work in a district

Speaker 4 (17:51):

to working, you know, throughout the day and night. So, and some parents I'm able to get some on the first ring. Some of parents I am not able to talk to you at all.

Speaker 2 (18:01): Right.

Speaker 4 (18:02):

I have not talked to you since I first started my job last year. Um, so it's a give or take. Um, I would say about 50 for them. The parents that I do call, I am able to reach my annual contact. Um, however the other 50% have not been able to contact me for whatever reason or I have not been able to get into contact with that. Um, but usually real communication with parents, especially my band parents.

Speaker 2 (18:34):

Do you find that parents when you do get in touch with them are pretty supportive? For the most part?

Speaker 4 (18:43):

For the most part this year I, I found that they're pretty neutral or they're very supportive of it. Um, I've had kids come up to me, I had a situation this year. You're there. I had a call for a viral issue and I talked to this parent before and I told them, I told them straight to the tee what happened. And the kid came back the next day with an apology letter. So the parents are usually very supportive. Um, the veterans are usually very supportive for an event. If not, they're usually pretty neutral. They're like, okay, thank you for letting me know about you. I'll let my child. Um, I think in my last two years, I have only had one or two negative phone calls, maybe two negative phone calls. That's actually not too bad.

Speaker 2 (19:34):

I dealt with a lot of parents who are like, why is my child getting into bass in choir?

Speaker 4 (19:41): Oh my God.

Speaker 2 (19:43):

Well, it was because they didn't do work. So they're in what's going on? All right, let's set. Like, if you're not doing work, I'm going to fail you. Like I'm not going to give you an A just for sitting there.

Speaker 4 (20:01):

Yeah. There's basically [inaudible].

Speaker 2 (20:04):

All right, well, let's see here. Um, kind of touched on that, kind of touched on that. Okay. Um, let me actually go back to, um, not so much like professional development, but more so like, do you stay in touch with other nearby districts as far as music goes? Do you guys like do field trips? Do you do FaceTime? [inaudible]

Speaker 4 (20:31):

not so nearby. Not so much here by the district.

Speaker 5 (20:47): Okay.

Speaker 4 (20:48):

I've been able to do a field trip or fact on Sunday. Um,

Speaker 1 (20:52):

I simply have no of a budget to, um, go from the ground up. And I have no bud here from the school, no budget. I have a budget, but that is specifically only for instruments, use the band and specifically instruments used for the school. Um, I do have for you to contact with my teachers in my County. If we have a group email, I'll, um,

Speaker 5 (21:21): Mmm.

Speaker 1 (21:23):

Microsoft teams account for music teachers. All for all the music teachers, veterans. Um,

Speaker 4 (21:29):

we're hoping to be communicated about that. Yeah. We'll say like, Hey, here's my idea. I think, and then we all met on an ed broke there. Um, other than that, we've been pretty commuted as there's ever an email up South saying like, Hey, what are y'all conference? Hey, what are we doing? We're all pretty

Speaker 5 (21:47): be prompt with,

Speaker 1 (21:51):

okay. That's actually good. I, um, I, I only only found like one teacher, so it's a give or take. Okay.

Speaker 5 (22:04): Okay.

Speaker 2 (22:06):

Yeah, we only had, um, my district is only a high school in a middle school, so there were like three of us and we didn't, yeah, we didn't really communicate with districts nearby and we also didn't have the same school calendar as some of the other schools in the state of Delaware. So like, we couldn't go to the statewide music conference or we couldn't do this or they couldn't do that. So it was always funny. My mom's like, Oh yeah, I don't have school today. And I'm like, what are you talking about? I'm teaching right now. But I think that was mostly because of Jewish holidays. So, so, so, uh, let, let's go back to the funds for a second. So can you tell me a little bit more about like how did you build your program from the bottom up?

Speaker 1 (23:08):

So curriculum to see if, and this was by a teacher who is no longer with us, she passed away last year, unfortunately. I'm so sorry. Send me the lesson phase and then sent me the, uh, standards that connected with that lesson sequence. So for example, if I had a lesson, see that, what's for pregame the TTG I can't say exceeded you want to us. Um,

Speaker 1 (23:42):

it would say that it covers theater one and, and both. So it would have those kinds of things. Now you can go really vowed that was where my imagination can go watch because I was like, okay, this is my objective. How am I going to, so, um, I love you that I could do as well. Um, so it was kind of like a, my curriculum, what I did have a curriculum able to grow. We all have the same standards. We all had to stay rough days, but it wasn't, I wasn't doing the same. Uh, I wasn't doing the same lesson as the team. Sure. Ah, my true school or I was doing the same teacher, same thing, ad shopping, elementary school gym. It was always, this will be, but this is our own way of doing that. Okay. Um, I'm trying to think with band it was a little difficult. I had to get a lot of help from administration and support and from my staff and administration. Um,

Speaker 5 (24:58): Mmm. Mmm.

Speaker 1 (25:01):

You talked to a lot of community leaders in the area. I talked to my, um, person who was with my instrument is taking care of instrument rentals. I had to learn about all that from the ground up since I, I primarily buyer base per position. It was a whole, um, is responsibility of making care of that. The tools were taken care of. Um, Oh, I'm trying to say,

Speaker 5 (25:33): Oh,

Speaker 1 (25:34):
that's all I can think of right now if it's starting up. Okay.

Speaker 2 (25:39):
And so when you put standards to your lesson plans, are those like the national arts standards or are they the state standards? Um, do you guys use common core at all? Speaker 1 (25:50):

They are the face. Okay. So you don't touch the national ones at all? No, we don't really touch the national ones for the lesson scenes. I can do the optional ones, but we don't have to do a lot of big national standards and we'll be fine. Okay.

Speaker 2 (26:15):
Um, okay. So let me ask you this, because I know you do general music. How do you implement the idea of creativity into your music classroom?

Speaker 1 (26:28):

This is a good one. Um, when I was student teaching and I was going to do the idea with fourth and fifth grade before everything went down with right, um, my original plan was I was, I like to implement things that the kids love to do. So I was originally was going to bring out an idea from my student teaching days and I had to create a steam lesson plan. So I had to create a steam lesson plan that was incorporated with music. So I kind of put the idea of my mentor teacher and I had the kid and create an instrument made out of recycle process engineering and it can incorporated art. So they had to create this idea and they had a plan all out and then they were able to create it. Um, this fear what I've already implemented.

Speaker 6 (27:18): Okay.

Speaker 1 (27:19):

Or like give love to move, like really loved him to get around. So I was doing a little bit of research and I was like, okay, I have a little trailer. What can I do with my entire trailer? So my fourth and fifth graders and third graders, sometimes they love, they love getting up and moving and let me do some research on some physical music games. But I found a game clubs job and if we put five tape, um, things with duck came up and the kids have to start, can I let her laugh, yell out a letter on the staff and the first person who gets to that get the point for their teeth. They love it so far. Just being able to implement

that, like getting the idea of the kids, like what they left them, you know, and getting them, um, getting the idea of what they like to do and doing, um, and kind of money into music because music has a class, um, my high school that they don't really look forward to. They look, look for media because they have technology, they order, technology does, there's computers they look forward to. Jim doesn't get to move around or in MIDI art and music you don't want to be here like Ooh. So it was like really difficult for me to do. Um, so I tried to take into consideration what the kid's life and then I try to implement into a way that is appropriately or for school.

Speaker 2 (28:53):

Now. Do you, do you incorporate different types of genres of music into your lessons as well? Cause I know like when I was student teaching we had to do a lot of like folk songs and all that kind of stuff.

Speaker 1 (29:08):

We are not required to teach specific types of genres like folk songs and things like that. But to try to tap into different genres of music. [inaudible] um, um, especially around the black history month time last year. And unfortunately I wasn't able to do this this year. Um, last year I taught all new African American, African American musician every single class. So one day was Louis Armstrong, one day with Elvis, Cheryl, things like that. Um, and that

Speaker 4 (29:42):

showed them different types of music. Um, last year, fifth grade I started [inaudible]

Speaker 1 (29:51):

we'll need a tire month. And so that developed them to a new genre. We got into a discussion about,

Oh, um,

Speaker 4 (30:03):

the videos, audio, they love watching things on it. I'm still trying to find ways of getting some money from his activities though, so we'll see what happens.

Speaker 2 (30:11):

Huh. Um, so as far what kinds of resources or technology do you have in your classroom?

Speaker 4 (30:21):

I do have a projector. I don't have a smart board.

Speaker 1 (30:23):

Okay. Um, I, I do have obviously a computer and all that and I would like to use that. Um, reflux. I do have a curriculum that was used very, very long ago. Okay. Do you use a 50 acre? Like do you use music tech teacher? I use a lot of online resources that I can con that I can copy and paste or I can print out for my kids. Okay.

Speaker 2 (30:57):

I remember trying to get the smart board fight one while I was teaching and I never, I always lost that battle every year.

Speaker 1 (31:05):

They do not and they have not and will not probably put one in my school in my, in my word especially.

Speaker 2 (31:12):

Yeah. And that, that's the funny thing is that, you know, this day and age kids are just so in tune to technology more than we are. Like they could probably run my computer better than I ever could as a five-year-old and that's what really gets them involved.

Speaker 4 (31:28): Five year olds.

Speaker 2 (31:31):

I think the scary part is that I have six year olds that have cell phones and I'm like, um, no, no, that's D C for ya. Okay. Um, so I guess let me go to my last two questions. Um, let me start with what have been your, what do you think have been your greatest achievements while you've been teaching in this kind of an atmosphere?

Speaker 1 (32:09):

And it's the same app and I have been able to connect with kids who are considered the hot.

Speaker 4 (32:20):

I thought it'd be kid. You have a really rough time with other teachers. Um, I like I said, teach in a title one school. So I have seen and heard probably most of anything like I've seen situations where there are regular teachers and very well rounded schools

Speaker 1 (32:40):

are probably like, what in the world are you talking about? I would never see that happen in my school. I'm like, well this was my school. So, um, with it being a rural title one school, you know, it's, it's, it's just a student teacher relationships. I'm currently reading a book now on, um, it's called, I wish my teacher knew by Kyle Schwartz and I'm reading that on emphasizing the student teacher relationship debts and OS Nestle. I'm still learning because the last, my second year learning more and more every day about my kids and what they like to do and what they [inaudible] wants. The way he has equity. Has echo, echo what a bowler is that of econ party because my thing is that people learning and well you labeled the learning. Some kids just need to learn better honors, um, in terms of visual or oral. So I think my biggest achievements, like I said, I hadn't been able to learn about the kids and learn all what they do and learn about how it has gotten

Speaker 2 (33:57):

right. Yeah, I agree with you. I mean, I'm a big advocate for, I feel like especially as a music teacher, I want to understand what the kids understand, but also what they want to know, not just what I think they should know. And I think being able to develop that connection is a really good aspect. All right. Um, then let me ask you this. What were some, what are some of the, well, actually let me rephrase that. Um, can you tell me any other challenges that you've had while teaching? In a rural music's classroom.

Speaker 3 (34:43): [inaudible]

Speaker 1 (34:46):
wow. I know there's a lot, I know there's take, you know, rural fool

Speaker 3 (34:59): [inaudible]

Speaker 1 (35:05):

I don't know. It's like obviously the occasional cab with kids. There's not much of like any other shop out ended with like [inaudible] with at the school. What is a community support? And that was a challenge that I had as well. How big that federal support from parents, especially being the music teacher. Right. But I think that one, I think like I said, that goes back into student relationship. If you treat your kid like they are, you know,

Speaker 4 (35:38):

Kings and Queens, no matter how many times they throw stuff, cross your room, you know, it's, you know, if it's,

Speaker 1 (35:45):

it's one of those things that your, your parents are going to be there to support you. My biggest challenge, I had basically been like behavior. I have been iPod stuff thrown at me. I've had to call me up and down. I've had kids call me [inaudible] had kids. We do do all other things. Same setup, all the things. Um, and I saw your question was how did I overcome those challenges? I literally just sought support from my administration and from veteran teachers when I was talking to my team and I told them like, Oh, I was told this by a kid, you know, and I did this in react fashion to it. How do you, is the best way to handle it? And then they gave me some feedback and they pop on that. Luckily being a second year teacher I have a little bit more better of what to do. But I um, I've learned with James, with certain kids, you just can't do the time of dang when they're in their little moment and then,

Speaker 4 (36:47):

well, five minutes later, you know, don't, don't you find the guy. So

Speaker 1 (36:52):

because I had behavioral challenges, I think one of my biggest challenges was community support. But I have gotten a lot of community support back since then.

Speaker 2 (37:00):

Okay. Okay. So last question that I didn't put on the list. Is there anything else that you want, is there anything else you want to add that you feel people should know about in regards to teaching in a rural setting?

Speaker 1 (37:23):

Are there the Cardinal up? I'm sure I'm going to say [inaudible]. Yeah.

Speaker 4 (37:34):

Should be treated with the same dignity and respect as inner city schools. There are schools that you can tell that are in the state that are not treated as well as other schools are.

Speaker 1 (37:52):

Uh, um, this can be in terms of physical building structure. This can be in term of the teachers. It can be in terms of students, parental support they have can be in terms of anything. Um, I, I've seen that there are some that some inner city schools are not treated as well as rural schools that I've seen some rural school rules are not true that you know, other schools in the state. Right. This can be also because of you know, property types. This could be because of all the things that you could possibly think up when it comes to teaching and being in a school. But I think the one thing that has to be

Speaker 4 (38:28):

is how can we make, how can we make a lie like a,

Speaker 1 (38:33):

I guess settle. Like, how can we have consistency across the board in the state of Maryland where Montgomery County is not super high achieving an African American, she met sadly because they have the resources to it. But what kind of a good County and Carolina County are lower because they don't have a much resources. How can we make that more? Because, because it all goes back to funding. It all goes back to property. Exactly. It goes back to all the money aspect. Academic, she met his to resources and then if the kids don't have many resources, they're after your teens. It's not going to as much. So that's my question though. I just have to,

Speaker 2 (39:20):

no, I agree with you. I mean I don't think that, I don't think that kids in a rural setting should have any less opportunities than like Montgomery County, which we all know is like the big head honcho over here. Um, and that's always been my biggest thing is that it's like, no, these kids are talented and they should be able to have those same opportunities. So where's the, where's the discrepancy there?

Speaker 4 (39:50):

Yes. I can completely agree with you. On that.

Speaker 5 (39:54): [inaudible]

Speaker 2 (39:57):
okay. I think for right now, I have everything I need.

Speaker 4 (40:05): Okay, perfect.

Speaker 2 (40:06):
I really appreciate you doing this. This is like, well, first of all, I haven't been able to do much writing in the past week, so now I'm like, yes. All right, let's go. I'm ready.

Speaker 4 (40:18):
I love it. I love it when I got your initial [inaudible]. [inaudible] well, I would like somebody finally doing research on the world school. You need to do this. Like I'm loving them. I'm loving.

Speaker 2 (40:31):
Well, we're, we're moving to Colorado in June because that's where Casey's originally from and he, we're moving to the mountains and I'm like, Oh my gosh, I'm going back to a rural setting. Here we go. This is what I need to do.

Speaker 4 (40:47):
Oh, geez. Get ready. Get ready.

Speaker 2 (40:49):
I know, I know. Oh, don't forget to ask your friend if he knows him.

Speaker 4 (41:03):
Yeah, I wrote down the name. I will, um, I'll call him right after that and say, Hey, I just did this, uh, the, uh, conductor's boyfriend within Iowa. I went about, or no, um, to the neighbors, I guess.

Speaker 2 (41:24):
Okay. Well. Again, thank you so much. I really appreciate it. Um, once my thesis gets written, do you want me to send you the link so you can read it as

Speaker 1 (41:35): Oh, absolutely. Yeah.

Speaker 2 (41:36):
All right. You got it. I will do that. I'm hoping to get this done by like early mid may, fingers crossed. Um, but I'll, I'll, I'll keep in touch with you. Um, I just really appreciate you doing this for me.

Speaker 1 (41:50):

Of that I'm doing, I'm doing an independent stuff. Yeah. Hopefully. Fingers crossed. Hope doing a music independent study. I go to falls where university masters and I don't think I have approved me to do an independent study as part of my master's program. Um, they've approached upper muted to do a independent study music, so I would love to use your seat for the class.

Speaker 2 (42:16):

Yeah, no, absolutely. I, I will send that to you as soon as it's ready to go.

Speaker 1 (42:28):

Perfect. Thank you so much.

Speaker 2 (42:30):

Thank you. Thank you so much. All right. Bye. Bye.

Speaker 1 (42:40):

I have a good day. Bye bye. Bye.

Appendix J

Follow Up Email

Good afternoon!

I hope you are doing well! Thank you so much again for taking the time to speak with me a few weeks ago.

In writing, I had a few additional questions that I hope you won't mind answering for me! You can either write answers in an email or attach a document.

Thank you again!

Stephanie Fernsler

1. How does the culture of the demographic area affect students' interest in music?
2. How many administrators had music heavily present throughout their education? Does that have an effect on how they treat music programs?
3. Do students come into music classes initially happy and excited, or are they neutral towards music. How do you, as a teacher, get students involved and excited to learn music?

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