7-14-2022

# A Comparison of Nebraska Urban, Rural, and Reservation Schools' Readiness to Achieve Nebraska State Music Standards

Amber E. Knight
*University of Nebraska-Lincoln*, amber.knight89@gmail.com

# A COMPARISON OF
# NEBRASKA URBAN, RURAL, AND RESERVATION SCHOOLS' READINESS
# TO ACHIEVE NEBRASKA STATE MUSIC STANDARDS

by

Amber E. Knight

A THESIS

Presented to the Faculty of

The Graduate College at the University of Nebraska

In Partial Fulfillment of Requirements

For the Degree of Master of Music

Major: Music

Under the Supervision of Professor Glenn E. Nierman

Lincoln, Nebraska

August, 2022

# A COMPARISON OF NEBRASKA URBAN, RURAL, AND RESERVATION SCHOOLS' READINESS TO ACHIEVE NEBRASKA STATE MUSIC STANDARDS

Amber Elizabeth Knight, M.M.

University of Nebraska, 2022

Advisor: Glenn E. Nierman

Every person has a unique perspective through which the concept of music education is filtered, and for good reason: music classrooms and programs across the United States are very different. Programs are dissimilar in everything from tangible items, such as facilities and available teaching materials, to foundational frameworks, including curriculum and program philosophy. Local geographical and cultural contexts contribute to the dissimilarity of music programs across the United States, and even those within the same region or state. The purpose of this study was to examine the commonalities and differences in school climate and access to resources among urban, rural, and reservation Nebraska public school districts to determine their readiness to achieve Nebraska State Music Standards. All students deserve a quality, standards-based music education. The research questions focused on teachers' perceptions of school climate; advantages or disadvantages of staffing and scheduling; and availability of equipment, materials, and curricular resources. The survey tool was developed and updated from the "Survey of Nebraska School Music Programs" (Nierman, 1998). Survey data gathered from a random stratified sample of music educators in Nebraska

Class C and D rural schools, socioeconomically diverse urban schools, and reservation settings were analyzed using descriptive research tools, ANOVA tests, and chi-square analysis. Among the findings were indications that urban music educators had the most access to teacher development resources; rural music educators gave a significantly higher appraisal of school climate than reservation music educators; and rural music educators had significantly higher student-to-teacher ratios than urban music educators. This study illuminates some of the challenges and rewards of teaching in underserved districts in Nebraska, which could positively impact the musical growth of Nebraska students, as well as broaden the philosophical perspective of music educators in the state. Finally, this study acknowledges Native American reservation music programs, which have been largely overlooked in educational research.

*Keywords:* Reservation public schools, National Core Music Standards, *National Opportunity to Learn Standards,* socioeconomic status, school climate, teacher retention, teacher attrition

# Table of Contents

## List of Figures

## List of Tables

## Acknowledgements

This document was a labor of love, representing the combined efforts of numerous wonderful individuals to bring it to fruition. I harbor immense gratitude for the following people:

Dr. Glenn E. Nierman, my extraordinary advisor, whose vast research knowledge and tireless advocacy imparted lessons about education that extend beyond the classroom. Dr. Nierman, your guidance and kindness assuaged my anxieties throughout this process. Your teachings have shaped me as a consumer of research and developer of curriculum in my classroom. Your work for the music education community has influenced more lives than you will ever know. Thank you for the example you have set for future generations of educators!

Dr. Carolyn Barber and Dr. Robert Woody, who comprised my committee. Thank you for being generous with your time and your insights, which have shown me that my work matters, and reinforced the importance of clarity. Your discussions during my defense exemplified the need for multiple perspectives when discussing issues of accessibility and equity in music education. Thank you for sharing your knowledge with musicians and educational communities in your locale and across the nation.

My students, colleagues, and friends in the Isanti community, with whom it has been a tremendous pleasure to work, play, and grow. My experiences at Isanti Community Schools, and my sojourn within the community, were priceless. Thank you for all that you have shown me, for your friendship and hospitality, and for the opportunity to work with your children. To my kids, I hope I taught you half as much as you taught me. I hold you in my heart always.

My family and friends, whose loving support enabled me to complete this research project. Your belief in my capabilities has always been a tremendous benefit, and I am truly blessed by your care. Particular thanks to my dad, Fred Knight; my mom, Tina Knight; my stepmom, LuAnn Thomsen; my dear friend and fellow student researcher, Cara Morgenson; and my "big sister," Dr. Irene Graves. I am blessed by the support of many family members and friends, but you kept me going in times of great uncertainty. If all professionals had cheerleaders like you, the research literature would be immeasurably vast.

Jay Jeffries, of the Nebraska Evaluation and Research (NEAR) Center at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, whose expedient and thoughtful work ensured statistical accuracy and helped me make meaning from the data. Your patient help encouraged this fledgling researcher, and gives me hope that other practitioners will be empowered to engage with research if such fine assistance continues to be available.

Each of the Nebraska music educators who took the time to participate in this study. Thank you for helping shed some light on the course offerings, availability of resources, and your impression of the climate at your school. Without your insights, this study would not exist.

The Creator, who guides the steps of my path. Thank you for providing me the skills to seek and share knowledge. May I always use all that I have for the benefit of Your children.

# Chapter One: Introduction to the Study

## The Problem

The geographical and cultural contexts in which a music teacher works are irrevocably entwined with administrative expectations of the curriculum and classroom; community expectations of the function of the music program; and a host of extramusical factors that influence students. As a nascent music educator, the researcher began to recognize disparities among Nebraska music districts, having acquired a music education in a predominantly middle-income urban setting and engaged in teacher preparation and practica in established, affluent urban classrooms before accepting a K-12 teaching position at a rural reservation school in a community faced with systemic poverty and high teacher turnover. Teaching on a Native American reservation proved to be a wholly different experience from the researcher's personal music education in elementary and secondary school and the practica she completed as a preservice music educator, exposing potential and perceived effects of a rural setting, systemic poverty, and ethnic marginalization on the Native American student population.

The educational literature is rich with studies of students in urban settings, with specific research regarding music availability and enrollment (Pellegrinelli, 2012); differences of aforementioned availability between schools with predominantly White or non-White student enrollment (Salvador & Allegood, 2014); and teacher, administrator, and community member perceptions of the role and challenges ascribed to music education in such settings (Doyle, 2012; Shaw, 2015; Sindberg, 2013). While much of the literature has focused on the struggles and stressors inherent in teaching in urban school systems, some researchers have begun to focus on the predictors of effective urban

teaching. As Shaw asserts, “The practical realities of teaching in urban settings can present a myriad of obstacles that reinforce negative perceptions of urban education . . . [However,] rather than further documenting the plight of urban music education, research can elucidate factors influencing urban teaching success” (Shaw, 2015, p. 199). Recent studies have done just this, utilizing surveys and interviews to ascertain skill sets and attitudes that benefit urban music educators (Fitzpatrick, 2011; Katsarou et al., 2010; McCullough & Ryan, 2014; Voltz, 1998).

Rural, tribal, and, in particular, reservation school environments have historically received far less attention in the annals of music education research. Some rural case studies and comparisons with urban music education settings have shed a bit of light on similarities and differences between these climates, and the implications for music educators serving in each realm (Hunt, 2009; Wilcox, 2005; Prest, 2013; Yang & Fetsch, 2007), but these are localized qualitative studies that may not be applicable to rural settings across the nation. Almost no research has been done on the music programs of tribal schools, public schools on tribal land, or non-reservation public schools with high percentages of Native American enrollment. There is a profound disconnection between populous urban or suburban areas and the relatively isolated, self-sustaining reservations scattered around the United States.

This lack of visibility for isolated rural and reservation schools in the research begs the question, are public schools in these environments able to provide a quality music education that assists all students in meeting state or national standards? Until recently, Nebraska music educators relied on the 1994 National Music Standards as a basis for curricular objectives. These nine content-based standards were upgraded in 2014

to supply “an authentic sequence for outcomes . . . that were emphasized in the 1994 standards” (Shuler et al., 2014, p. 41), shifting the focus from product to process. Rather than listing distinct content standards, the new national standards consist of four artistic processes that encompass all curricular activities: create, perform, respond, and connect.

Nebraska’s K-12 Fine Arts Standards were adopted the same year as the national standards were revised, and encompass the same artistic processes and common anchor verbs. The Nebraska standards differ slightly from the national standards by providing explicit connection statements, by grouping the standards into grade level ranges, and by eschewing specific courses in the standards outline. The *National Opportunity to Learn Standards* (National Association for Music Education [NAfME], 2020) specify the resources needed to facilitate student achievement of the core music standards in terms of curriculum and scheduling, staffing, materials and equipment, and facilities. Educators, administrators, and policymakers can utilize the *National Opportunity to Learn Standards* (hereafter referred to as the OTL Standards) to determine whether a school is equipped to enable students to meet the state and national standards for music education at a basic or quality level. For the purposes of this document, quality in music education is tied directly to the OTL Standards, as they provide explicit measurements of the resources needed to “give students a meaningful chance to achieve” the national music standards (NAfME, 2020).

## The Purpose

The purpose of this study was to examine the commonalities and differences in school climate and access to resources among urban, rural, and reservation Nebraska

public school districts to determine their readiness to achieve Nebraska State Music Standards.

## Research Questions

1. What are the various courses taught in the music program, and are they extracurricular or part of the school day? (Checklist; Descriptive Statistics)
2. How do teachers at urban, rural, and reservation schools rate their school climate based on such factors as parent/community involvement, administrative support, student achievement rates, and availability of resources? (Numerical Rating Scale and Self-Report Inventory; F-Test and Descriptive Statistics)
3. Do participants have access to curricular resources, mentorship, and professional development opportunities? (Numerical Rating Scale; F-Test)
4. Is the number of students per music teacher statistically significantly different in reservation, non-Native rural, and urban schools? (Self-Report Inventory; F-Test)
5. Does the school have access to sufficient quality instruments and technological equipment to enable all students to participate fully in music instruction? (Checklist; Chi-Square Analysis)

## Definition of Terms

In order to study systematically the problem as articulated, the following terms needed to be defined for the purposes of this study:

*Reservation schools* refer to public schools located on Native American reservations. Although the student population at a reservation school may be primarily or entirely Native American, the school is subject to state law rather than oversight from the federal Bureau of Indian Affairs. In contrast, tribal schools refer to any tribal education

agency, which is defined by 20 USCS § 5502 as "a school or community college which is controlled by an Indian tribe, band, or nation, including any Alaska Native village, which is recognized as eligible for special programs and services provided by the United States to Indians because of their status as Indians and which is not administered by the Bureau of Indian Affairs" (Tribal Education Agency Law and Legal Definition, 2021). In the state of Nebraska, none of the reservation schools are tribal education agencies.

*Urban schools*, for the purpose of this study, are schools with a rather large number of students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. They are not representative of "inner city" urban schools, because access to Nebraska's equivalent of "inner city" urban schools was denied in the Institutional Review Board's review process. Therefore, the urban schools surveyed in this study may be closer in resource levels and demographics to large suburban schools than "inner city" urban schools.

*Socioeconomic status (SES)* is defined by the American Psychological Association as "the social standing or class of an individual or group. It is often measured as a combination of education, income and occupation" (American Psychological Association, 2021, para. 1). SES is typically realized by access or lack of access to resources, resulting in increased or decreased power and/or privilege.

*School climate* reflects the general levels of positivity versus negativity embodied by school personnel and students. For purposes of this study, it was measured by survey participants' perceptions of the degree to which various resources necessary for students to achieve state music standards, derived from NAfME's *National Opportunity to Learn Standards* (2020), were available: time; curriculum resources; human resources (staffing); materials and equipment; appropriate scheduling; and facilities. Further,

factors such as student achievement, parental/stakeholder involvement, and teacher attrition contribute to perceptions of the quality and character of school life, and were also examined as elements of climate.

*Teacher retention* and *teacher attrition* are opposite sides of the coin regarding educators who choose to stay in their current position from year to year (retention), and those who choose to leave their post or the profession entirely (attrition). Researchers, including Linda Darling-Hammond (2003) and Carl Hancock (2015), distinguish teachers who change positions within the profession as being engaged in "migration" rather than attrition; however, because this study is interested in school climate, the focus is the rate of retention versus turnover, regardless of whether the latter is migration-based or attrition-based.

*Class C* and *Class D* are enrollment-based classifications prescribed by the Nebraska School Activities Association (NSAA). Schools or districts possessing high school enrollment numbers from 75-150 are labeled "Class C," while schools with 74 or fewer enrolled high school students qualify as "Class D." Not all reservation public schools are classified by the NSAA; therefore, the rural schools eligible for this study include all schools of equivalent enrollment size (NSAA, 2021).

## Delimitations

While schools in every context benefit, either directly or peripherally, from the input and cooperation of a variety of stakeholders, such as students, parents and guardians, certified and classified staff, administrators, school board members, and local as well as federal authorities, this study is focused on the experiences and perceptions of music educators at urban, rural, and reservation Nebraska schools. Aside from students,

whose experiences and perceptions would make a valuable addition to the results of this study, music teachers are the stakeholders most directly involved with the construction, implementation, and perpetuation of institutionalized music coursework. Therefore, due to limitations of time and the resources necessary to survey multiple stakeholders, the study was delimited to gathering information from music educators.

Only music educators within Nebraska were surveyed for this research study. Because of limitations of time and resources needed to collect data, a random, stratified sample of music educators from urban, rural, and reservation school systems in Nebraska was surveyed so that inferences could be made to the population of music programs in small Nebraska school districts. The experiences of music educators in urban, rural, and reservation settings in other states and countries are beyond the scope of this study.

This study excluded all non-urban music programs within large districts (Class B, A, or AA), because it was assumed that these schools have a greater availability of resources for their music programs than smaller rural and reservation schools, wherein the communities often face geographical isolation, conditions of systemic poverty, or both. For the purposes of this study, urban schools were delimited to high schools within the Class AA urban centers that serve a relatively high percentage of economically marginalized students. While these high schools have higher enrollment numbers than the rural and reservation schools sampled for this study, it is theorized that some urban Nebraska schools may experience similar issues to other underserved schools in the state. The challenges faced by larger, more affluent, and/or private school music programs are different from those faced by the school settings in this study, and are more widely

understood by education professionals. Therefore, this research study was delimited to underserved areas of Nebraska.

## Basic Assumptions

The validity of survey data is always dependent upon many factors; among the most crucial are how representative is the sample of the population surveyed and how accurately does the measurement tool capture the essence of the areas of interest to be studied. Because of the randomized selection of the sample and the care taken to examine the face and content validity of the measurement tool, it was assumed that the data for this study were not biased in an unrepresentative manner.

## Theory

At the heart of this study, as at the heart of teaching, is the concept of the quality of education offered to students. All measured perceptions and explanations of factors relate back to this overarching concept. Certainly a primary goal of both the Nebraska State Music Standards and *National Opportunity to Learn Standards* (NAfME, 2020) is to help school districts promote a level of artistic literacy that enables students to participate in and encounter music for a lifetime.

In the beginning stages of this study, the researcher conceptualized three primary non-scholastic factors that may contribute, with varying levels of intensity, to urban, rural, and reservation schools' effectiveness and readiness to achieve Nebraska State Music Standards: parental involvement (or stakeholder/community influence), systemic poverty (or socioeconomic status), and student home life. Educators have little-to-no impact on these contributing factors, but because they have an impact on students, they

may offer contextual insight into the successes and travails of aspects of the quality of education available.

Many factors affect the quality of formal music education available to students, including the following *National Opportunity to Learn Standards* categories: curriculum and scheduling; staffing; materials and equipment; and facilities (NAfME, 2020). Access to these resources, as well as availability of human resources (such as mentors, teacher teams, or others engaged in similar curricular work), aministrative support, school climate, and teacher efficacy are theorized to have a direct impact on the quality of music education. Job satisfaction, which contributes to teacher efficacy, may be predicated on such factors as levels of stress, rates of staff/administrative turnover, amount of perceived administrative support, involvement in decision-making processes, monetary compensation, and access to mentorship and professional development.

Researchers have uncovered a variety of factors associated with staff attrition, which will be discussed in Chapter Two. While less attention has been given to the impact of staff attrition or retention on the quality of education, several studies have indicated that teacher turnover rates disproportionately affect schools in high-poverty (Darling-Hammond & Sykes, 2003; Ingersoll, 2001, 2003), urban, and lower-performing settings (Hanushek et al., 1999; Ronfeldt et al., 2013; Young, 2018). Additionally, Ronfeldt, Loeb, and Wyckoff determined that student achievement, as measured by test scores, suffers when turnover rates are higher (Ronfeldt et al., 2013). Finally, Ingersoll proposed methods by which schools might enhance organizational conditions, which would “contribute to lower rates of turnover . . . diminish school staffing problems, and ultimately aid the performance of schools” (Ingersoll, 2001, p. 525). If it can be argued

that higher levels of attrition are generally detrimental to student achievement (Boyd et al., 2005; Kelchtermans, 2017; Ronfeldt et al., 2013; Young, 2008), it follows that attrition and retention impact the overall quality of education available within a school or district. Similarly, music programs experiencing high or recent teacher attrition, or perhaps loss of mentorship due to attrition in other subject areas, may suffer from a temporarily diminished level of music education. Lack of consistency in expectations and instructional methods can be difficult for students, and forming a trusting professional bond with a new music teacher takes time.

The socioeconomic status (SES) of students can also have a significant impact on their access, or lack of access, to an equitable and quality music education. Various studies have revealed unequal access to music programs between large and small schools (Kelley & Demorest, 2016), between more and less affluent districts (McAnally, 2013; Shuler, 2012), and between economically privileged or marginalized students within the same districts (Albert, 2006; Bates, 2012; Elpus, 2014; Fitzpatrick, 2006; Hoffman, 2013; Kinney, 2009). The relationship between the SES of students and their involvement with school music is complex. Fitzpatrick compared the standardized test results of students involved in instrumental music and their non-musician classmates, and determined that "students who participated in high school instrumental music were higher scorers from the beginning of their music study of an instrument." Fitzpatrick's finding indicated a positive correlation between instrumental study and high test scores, "suggesting that . . . [there] might be a stronger than average concentration of higher-scoring students involved in instrumental music classes" (Fitzpatrick, 2006, p. 82). If, as Fitzpatrick's Ohio-based study suggests, students with more monetary privilege are more likely to

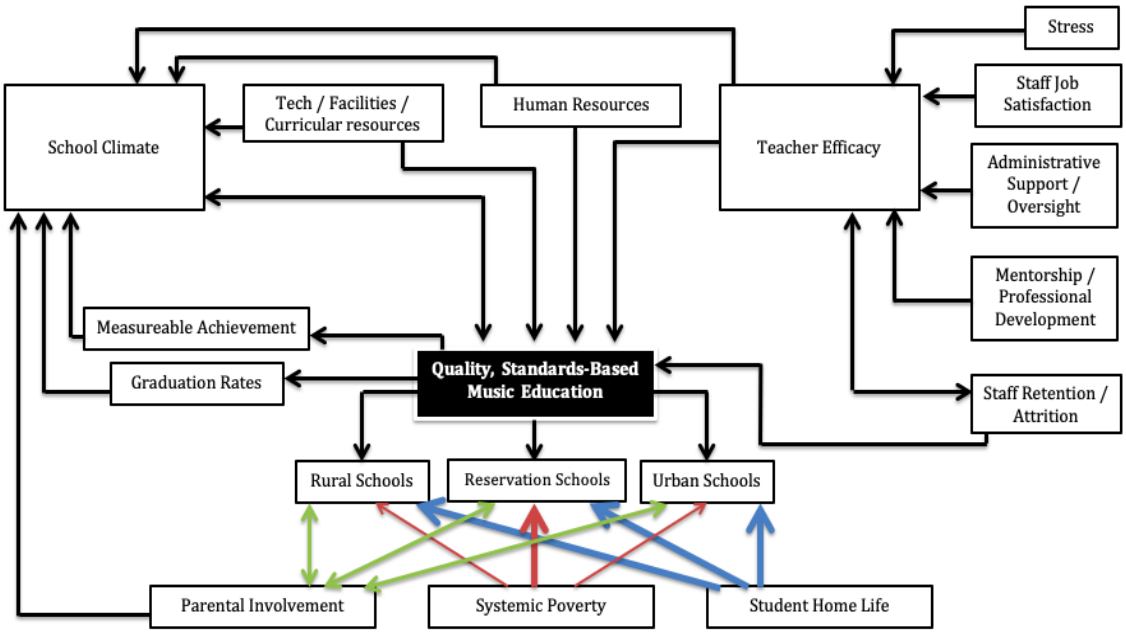
enroll in band, what are the reasons underpinning the greater concentration of high-SES students in band, and what can be done to increase musical opportunities for economically marginalized students?

As Fitzpatrick explicitly states, "more needs to be done to understand the importance of socioeconomic barriers to student performance" (Fitzpatrick, 2006, p. 81). Researchers such as Bates (2012), Hoffman (2013), and Kinney (2009) have outlined some obvious potential barriers to music education for students with relatively low SES, such as lack of access to funding for musical instruments, repairs, uniforms, and field trips; as well as a lack of opportunity to attend extracurricular practices or performances without transport or supervision, particularly if the student is from a single-parent household (Kinney, 2009). Furthermore, students who require additional academic support, such as those on IEPs, those in ELL courses, and those in supplementary courses for tested subjects, have less time for elective courses (Elpus, 2014; Hoffman, 2013). Music classes are typically considered to be elective in the public school system, and are sometimes scheduled opposite core coursework, or concurrently with other music courses. One Title I school district in Ohio was required to reduce its non-tested coursework in the wake of the No Child Left Behind Act: "To make room for the increased class periods in math and language arts, band and choir were scheduled at the same time as the general music classes so students lost the opportunity to study general music and participate in band and choir" (Spohn, 2008, p. 5). When scheduling and course offerings are tied to achievement on standardized tests, students may have limited access to the variety and quantity of music classes offered in other districts, which negatively impacts the overall caliber of the program

Figure 1 illustrates the interconnections between identified categories that may contribute to the quality of music education available to students at urban, rural, and reservation schools.

**Figure 1**

*Factors Contributing to Urban, Rural, and Reservation Schools' Readiness to Achieve Nebraska State Music Standards*




## Methodology

The following is a description of the methods and procedures used in this study. The organizational bases were 1) Participants, 2) Materials, 3) Procedure, and 4) Data Analysis.

### Participants

This study focused on the music programs of underserved areas of Nebraska: urban, rural, and reservation schools. Nebraska has no true inner-city school systems that

were accessible to the researcher. The closest approximations to the underserved urban environments featured in the literature are the large urban high schools with relatively high socioeconomic diversity. Other underserved areas in Nebraska include geographically isolated rural schools and reservation schools, neither of which featured heavily in educational research at the time of study. The sample size was determined by the number of reservation and urban music educators available to be surveyed. There are only four reservation schools in the state of Nebraska, each of which would be classified as either Class C or Class D by the NSAA (2021). Restriction of access to a number of socioeconomically diverse urban schools reduced the pool of available Class AA urban schools to three; this limitation will be explained further in Chapter Three.

**Materials**

Materials employed by this study included the Nebraska Department of Education email list for music educators, the "Opportunity to Learn Standards for Music Education" Survey (see Appendix A), an initial outreach email (see Appendix C), and two follow-up messages (see Appendices D and E). The survey tool consisted of thirty-six items presented as numerical rating scales, checklists, and self-report inventories. These items were designed to gather data on respondents' coursework and schedules; perception of school climate; access to curricular and teacher development resources; music department staffing; and availability of equipment and materials.

A pilot study of the face and content validity of the survey tool took place before the survey was distributed to the aforementioned sample of music educators (see Chapter Three). Attention was given to the layout, question format, and length of the survey. This ensured that respondents could easily view the questions on their computer or phone; that

questions were concise and easy to understand; and that plentiful data was gathered while keeping the survey short enough that participants would not be discouraged or rush through the questions.

**Procedure**

The "Opportunity to Learn Standards for Music Education" Survey (hereafter referred to as the OTL Survey) was distributed to a stratified random sample of Nebraska music educators (with some purposive sampling, as explained in the Participants section). The survey was issued via email in the fall of 2021 to ensure a representative sampling from urban, rural, and reservation schools of comparative sizes. The survey tool was created using *Qualtrics*, which permitted respondents to access the survey on any electronic device with an internet connection.

The invitation and follow-up emails were distributed by *Qualtrics* and contained an electronic link to the survey. Participants provided informed consent by clicking on the link and selecting "I agree" under the heading, "Documentation of Informed Consent." The first reminder email was sent via *Qualtrics* to any educators who did not finish the survey in approximately ten days. Several days thereafter, the final reminder email was issued to any respondents who had not yet completed the survey.

All survey response data were collected and stored by *Qualtrics*. The researcher analyzed the data with the assistance of the Nebraska Evaluation and Research (NEAR) Center for support with data organization and statistical analyses.

**Data Analysis**

Research question one considered the courses offered at the respondents' schools, and whether they are offered during the school day, as an extracurricular activity, or both.

The section of the survey dedicated to scheduling was presented as a checklist, and analyzed using descriptive statistics, to determine trends in course offerings, and any unique specialized coursework that might be available to students in certain school contexts.

Question two focused on respondents' perceptions of school climate. Survey items related to climate included five-point numerical rating scale questions that highlighted different aspects of school climate, such as support, consistent expectations, and promotion of continuous learning. This first set of eighteen numerical rating scale items was analyzed using an F-test. Another five-point numerical rating scale question asked music educators to assess their students' overall achievement in core classes. A question about the amount of annual staff turnover utilized a three-point rating scale ("Low" turnover was indicated by a rate of less than 10% attrition; "Medium" turnover was indicated by a rate of attrition ranging from 10-20%; and "High" turnover was indicated by an annual rate of attrition exceeding 20%). These two numerical rating scale questions were analyzed using descriptive statistics. The final two questions in this section asked educators to self-report their number of years of music teaching experience and their number of scheduled planning minutes per week. These data were analyzed using descriptive statistics to determine the average experience level of music teachers within the sample, the range of experience therein, and any trends in the amount of plan time allotted for the three school categories.

Research question three, relating to the availability of curricular and teacher development resources, was addressed by six numerical rating scale survey items. These perceptual data were analyzed using an F-test.

Research question four concerned staffing; six self-report inventory items were analyzed using an F-test to determine if any statistically significant differences in student-to-teacher ratio existed. The descriptive statistics for this research question also focused on the number of full-time and part-time music teachers present at each school, and what percentage of the respondents' position was dedicated to music instruction.

Question five addressed the equipment and materials available to music educators at rural, urban, and reservation schools in the form of a checklist. Respondents could indicate that they had what they needed to achieve student learning outcomes, that they had some of what they needed, or that they did not have what they needed. A chi-square analysis was applied to this data to determine whether there were any significant differences between expected and observed access to equipment and materials.

## Significance of the Study

A music classroom is often a product of its environment, impacted by the philosophy and capacity of the educator at its helm, the priorities of the school at large, the contributions of educators from other disciplines, the climate of the school, the involvement of the community, and the cultural and socioeconomic environments of the location. All students deserve a quality music education. While quality music education can be defined and accomplished in many ways, for the purposes of this study, quality in music education was measured by music educators' perceptions of school climate and access to the resources outlined in the OTL Standards. This study intended to illuminate potential barriers to the provision of a quality music education at underserved districts in Nebraska, and to showcase the joys of serving in these districts. Finally, this study acknowledged the scarcity of information on the state of music education in tribal and

reservation school contexts, in the hope that more researchers will explore Indigenous music education with a goal of achieving equity in education for all students.

# Chapter Two: Related Literature

## Introduction

The theoretical model for this study, *Factors Contributing to the Ability of Urban, Rural, and Reservation Schools' Readiness to Achieve Nebraska State Music Standards* (see Figure 1), encompasses a variety of factors that potentially advance or inhibit the quality of music education available to students at rural, urban, and reservation schools in Nebraska. Therefore, this chapter opens with a brief discussion of the evolution of the national music education standards, how they relate to the Nebraska state fine arts standards, and how the theoretical model for this study takes its foundation from the *National Opportunity to Learn Standards* (2020). Next, the challenges, rewards, and characteristics beneficial to educators in each underserved context, given the information available, are presented. Music education at reservation schools in America remains largely unexplored, so the section on Indigenous Education considers the broader perspective of historical education initiatives and executive orders, and the potential for improving the policies and structures of education for Indigenous students both on and off reservations.

A brief comparison of culturally relevant educational design to the process of educational decolonization segues into an explanation of culturally responsive pedagogy. The concept of culturally responsive pedagogy (alternately referred to in studies as culturally responsive education, culturally responsive schooling, and, in the case of McCarty and Lee's 2014 study, culturally revitalizing pedagogy and culturally sustaining pedagogy) is not explicitly present in the theoretical model, but the research on the qualities of effective teachers in each of the underserved areas is replete with examples

of, or in the case of Indigenous education, direct references to, the crucial acceptance of its philosophy. Finally, one particular facet of school climate is addressed: retention and attrition trends for American educators in underserved districts.

## National and Nebraska State Standards for Music Education

### The 2014 Revised Core Music Standards

In 1994, the National Association for Music Education (NAfME) devised a set of nine content *National Standards for Music Education,* which provided school music programs throughout the United States a standardized framework for assessing student achievement in music. The nine content standards focused on musical activities and terminal goals, such as improvisation and performance of a variety of repertoire (Save The Music Foundation, 2021).

The *2014 Revised Core Music Standards* transformed these national music standards, shifting the focus from the musical product to a set of artistic processes: create, perform, respond, and connect. These processes are the foundation of the anchor standards, which provide specific benchmarks to achieve each step of the process. The four overarching concepts are the basis for every core music strand, including PK-8 General Music, Composition/Theory, Music Technology, Guitar/Keyboard/Harmonizing Instruments, and Ensembles (NAfME, 2014). The common anchor standards contained in each of these strands offer a step-by-step process to accomplish in-depth musical learning in the realms of creativity, performance, response, and connection. For example, the "Creating" process for the PK-8 General Music strand includes common anchor standards for Imagine; Plan and Make; Evaluate and Refine; and Present. Within those common anchor standards are musical goals that become increasingly advanced and

detailed as students progress in age and ability. Notably, the common anchor standards do not specify any curricular resources or impose any limitations on the musical content to be crafted or studied. Their purpose is to provide a method for achieving the four all-encompassing artistic processes.

**The National Opportunity to Learn Standards**

The *National Opportunity to Learn Standards* (OTL) were developed by NAfME in 2015 to "identify the resources that need to be in place so that teachers, schools, and school districts can give students a meaningful chance to achieve at the levels spelled out in the 2014 [Revised Core] Music Standards" (NAfME, 2020, p. 1). These OTL Standards were then revised in 2020. These standards offer guidance on the Curriculum and Scheduling, Staffing, Materials and Equipment, and Facilities necessary to provide all students "the opportunity to achieve music literacy" (p. 2). The OTL Standards include parameters for "Basic" and "Quality" music programs across all grade levels, as well as strand-specific guidelines.

This study utilizes the OTL Standards as a tool for determining the readiness of small Nebraska schools to offer an enriching music education. Quality music education entails the provision to every student of the resources and opportunities necessary to meet or exceed state and national music standards. For instance, within the PreK-8 General Music strand, the National Standards' Common Anchor #4 regarding selection of repertoire asks fifth grade students to "Demonstrate and explain how the selection of music to perform is influenced by personal interest, knowledge, and context, as well as their personal and others' technical skill" (NAfME, 2014). Lack of access to a broad variety of music for performance greatly limits student musicians' ability to select

repertoire that resonates with them personally, and is pedagogically appropriate for their skill level. The OTL Standards describe in detail the materials and supports needed to meet the state and national standards, thereby cultivating a quality music education for all students.

**The Nebraska Fine Arts Standards**

Nebraska's *K-12 Fine Arts Standards* were based on the *2014 Core Music Standards*, and were finalized in the same year. Like the national standards, Nebraska's state standards for music are comprised of core artistic processes undergirded by anchor standards that guide musicians through each process. Unlike the national standards, the state standards are delineated by grade bands (K-2, 3-5, 6-8, and 9-12), rather than by single grades or separate strands for different courses. The *K-12 Fine Arts Standards* also include anchor standards for Media Arts, Visual Arts, Dance, and Theater. Additionally, the Connect anchor standard is embedded into each of the three artistic processes—Create, Perform, and Respond (Nebraska Department of Education, 2014).

While Nebraska's music standards do not feature a supporting document such as the OTL Standards, the profound connection and similarity between the state standards and the *2014 Core Music Standards* enables the OTL Standards to be utilized for the purposes of this study. The OTL Standards serve as national implementation guidelines for a quality standards-based music education, and Nebraska's standards are rooted in the same processes and assessments as the national standards. Therefore, the OTL Standards were employed as a measure of the ability of Nebraska school music programs to afford students a quality music education based on data gleaned from the "Opportunity to Learn Standards for Music Education" Survey.

# Urban Music Education

## Challenges for Urban Educators

As was mentioned in the problem segment, a considerable number of studies relevant to urban education exist (Chester & Beaudin, 1996; Fitzpatrick, 2011; Katsarou, Picower, & Stovall, 2010; McCullough & Ryan, 2014; Salvador & Allegood, 2014; Voltz, 1998; Waxman & Padron, 1995), many of which delineate the issues facing students and staff in urban settings. Waxman and Padron (1995) discussed "at-risk factors," or "educational disadvantages," which students in urban settings may face, such as living in a single-parent household, having a sibling who dropped out of school, or being alone at home for three or more hours after school (Waxman & Padron, 1995, p. 45). At the time of this study, the percentage of students considered educationally disadvantaged was on the rise, as was the level of risk experienced.

Other studies point to shortages of qualified teachers in urban settings (Gardner, 2010; Hunt, 2009; Ingersoll, 2001; Jacob, 2007; Renfro, 2003). It is theorized that because the majority of American educators are White, middle-class people who were educated in stable suburban districts, they are not adequately prepared for the context-specific challenges of urban music education (Doyle, 2012; Renfro, 2003). Additionally, given the choice, most teachers gravitate toward districts that bear similarities to their own formative schooling (Jacob, 2007), meaning that suburban districts are less likely to experience shortages of qualified teachers than urban, rural, and reservation districts (Truscott & Truscott, 2005). In response to this trend, researchers recommend revitalizing hiring practices to ensure dismissal of less-qualified and retention of highly qualified teachers (Jacob, 2007), as well as focusing on bringing in more applicants of color

(Renfro, 2003), and offering urban preservice experiences (Carter Andrews, 2009; Doyle, 2012; Fiese & DeCarbo, 1995; Shaw, 2015). If the demographics of practicing teachers become heterogeneous, the likelihood of increasing applicant pools for underserved districts will rise.

**Characteristics of Successful Urban Music Educators**

Various interviews with practicing urban educators assert that teaching in an urban context requires specific skills and circumstances for success, beyond proficiency in one's subject matter. According to Talbert-Johnson in "Preparing highly qualified teacher candidates for urban schools" (2006), "If teachers are to become highly qualified in urban schools, they must possess not only the content knowledge but also the affective characteristics that enhance their effectiveness in the classroom" (p, 152). Such characteristics include listening and responding to the needs and wishes of students (Mixon, 2005; Talbert-Johnson, 2006) and offering choice (Anderson & Denson, 2015; Wilcox, 2004)—admirable qualities in any teacher, but imperative for music educators wishing to recruit and retain musicians. A common theme is the imperative element of support from staff in the form of mentorship and camaraderie, administration in the form of advocacy for the program and attention to instruction, and the community in the form of generalized support of the arts (Chester & Beaudin, 1996; Hinckley, 1995; Fiese & DeCarbo, 1995; Singer, Murphy, & Singer, 1998; Renfro, 2003; Wilcox, 2004). Finally, to better prepare prospective educators for the specific issues facing urban school systems, firsthand experience with urban music programs during teacher training is encouraged (Anderson & Denson, 2015; Baker, 2012; DiBara, 2007; Doyle, 2012).

Many music educators were taught in their preservice education programs to be consummate professionals, because teachers are held to a high moral standard, and because it is imperative to set a good example for students. This duty can lead educators to maintain emotional distance from their students, projecting the attitude that students do not need to *like* them, they just need to respect and learn from them. While educators must ensure that their relationship with students is one of mentorship rather than friendship, educators in urban contexts must be prepared to develop closer interpersonal relationships with their students, and hopefully with guardians and the community at large, to make a greater educational impact.

According to Anderson and Denson (2015), who synthesized the articles regarding urban and inner-city music teacher preparation in *Music Educators Journal* from 1970 until 2013, "Music teachers who aspire to teach in the city should be required to develop in-depth cultural, sociological, and psychological understanding of the students they will be teaching" (Anderson & Denson, 2015, p. 39). Due to the frequent cultural and economic disparities between practicing educators and their clientele in urban settings, it is imperative that music educators take the time to get to personally know each of their students. Of course, successful educators have an understanding of their students' academic capacities, strengths, and areas for growth, and differentiate their instruction according to the abilities and needs of their students. However, to offer a vital music education befitting a diverse student population, teachers in urban environments should also be aware of their students' cultural backgrounds and musical interests, and incorporate music that students enjoy into the curriculum whenever reasonably possible. This act of musical representation "bridge[s] the gap between student musical practices

outside of school and in [the] classroom" (p. 38), thereby personalizing, or differentiating, musical instruction for a variety of learners.

Additionally, when an educator is not an expert in a particular genre, drawing upon existing community expertise can further establish the teacher as a member of the community. This endeavor can have a positive impact on recruitment and retention of students due to parent and community buy-in. Anderson and Denson assured educators that they need not be an authority on every musical style, and that allowing other musical experts to provide instruction will benefit all involved, because "your students will appreciate your honesty and diligence to continue to learn, especially if you are learning styles that they personally identify with" (p. 39). Bernard (2010) also mentioned the possibility of bringing visiting artists into the classroom, or planning a trip to a local institution for the arts, which rural and reservation educators cannot readily do, by virtue of location.

**Benefits for Urban Educators**

Although teaching in an urban school system often poses specific challenges, educators can alleviate some of the stressors associated with urban teaching by immersing themselves in the cultural context, often relying upon students and community members as a guide (Shaw, 2015; Wilcox, 2004). Furthermore, urban music educators point out that their challenges are offset by the rewards of watching their students make personal and musical progress in school (Fitzpatrick, 2011), and helping students enjoy unfamiliar musical styles that they may not experience without a music education (Doyle, 2012). Career urban music educators exhibit a fierce dedication to benefiting the lives of their students (Baker, 2012; Bernard, 2010; DiBara, 2007; Sindberg, 2013).

# Rural Music Education

## Characteristics of Successful Rural Educators

On the surface, rurally-based music educators may appear to share little with their urban counterparts, but they might benefit from the same wisdom regarding success in the classroom, according to existing rural case studies. National Association for Music Education staff member  Ella Wilcox interviewed rural music educator Stan Johnson, of Shickley, Nebraska, whose tips for teaching in a rural setting echo the advice of researchers on successful urban education. Johnson encouraged educators to "[b]e a good listener. Appreciate the musical potential of all your students . . . Don't let challenges overwhelm you . . . Talk to fellow teachers . . . Recharge by attending clinics and conventions . . . [and] Remember that today's crises will be your best stories later" (Wilcox, 2005, p. 30). With descriptors such as "overwhelm" and "crises," it is clear that Johnson has dealt with stressors, just as urban music educators have. Similarly, McAnally (2013) indicated that general music teachers who are attentive to their students' individual needs will witness greater success, even in the face of poverty.

## Challenges for Rural Educators

In the literature, many of the enumerated challenges facing rural educators are similar to those in urban environments. According to Yang and Fetsch (2007), "Census data indicate that in comparison to Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs), rural areas have lower median family-household and per-capita incomes, higher poverty rates for families and individuals, and higher unemployment rates" (p. 1). Lower than average income and elevated poverty rates mean rural students, like economically marginalized students in urban districts, have little access to instruments and other resources.

Therefore, districts must provide what they can in order to strive for a quality, equitable music education.

Distressingly, school districts situated in contexts of rural poverty are likely to be underfunded, as Truscott and Truscott (2005) noted: “Some of the most distressed education systems exist in rural states that are chronically financially depressed, deeply affected by global economic change, and buffeted by substantial outmigration of talented young people and families” (p. 126). This unequal distribution of resources begs the question, how can our nation achieve quality education for students living in underserved areas? The researchers posit that “targeting funding toward the variables that enhance school quality *at the classroom level* could improve educational outcomes in high-need urban and rural schools.” However, these initiatives are costly, and the districts in need have low local tax bases (Truscott & Truscott, 2005, p. 128).

Scholar Anita Prest (2013) argued that the majority of preservice music educators lack context for rural music education because they received urban schooling and urban-based practica in order to facilitate communication and oversight between university professors and students. However, many of the urban education studies warn that potential music educators are unprepared for the challenges endemic to urban settings because they “come from suburban, upper- to middle-class backgrounds and have likely experienced strong, traditional school music programs that are classically based” (Doyle, 2012, p. 47; see also Anderson & Denson, 2015; Doyle, 2013; Doyle, 2014; Shaw, 2015; Talbert-Johnson, 2006).

## Comparison of Rural and Urban Contexts

As mentioned above, the literature highlights both geographically isolated rural districts and inner-city urban districts as underserved in several comparable ways, including insufficient funding for curricular materials, instruments, and repairs; inadequate rehearsal facilities; and scheduling issues (Fitzpatrick, 2011; Hunt, 2009; Isbell, 2005; Mixon, 2005; Prest, 2013; Truscott & Truscott, 2005). The latter problem manifests in different ways in urban and rural districts. Urban music educators may contend with their courses being scheduled opposite required classes or other music classes (Spohn, 2008); potential musicians being unavailable to participate due to supplementary courses, extracurricular familial demands, or absence of transportation (Bates, 2012; Hoffman, 2013; Renfro, 2003); and lack of feeder programs at the elementary level (Mixon, 2005). Rural music educators, on the other hand, may face low enrollment that necessitates creative instrumentation and repertoire arrangements (Bates, 2010); decimated program numbers due to previous staff turnover (Isbell, 2005); and demanding schedules due to positions that span large grade ranges, and may require one to teach additional subjects or serve in leadership positions for the school or district (Bates, 2010).

### Benefits for Urban and Rural Educators

Bates argued that the smaller ensembles that are likely to form in rural school settings offer a more sustainable model for music education than the traditional bands and orchestras of the dominant suburban setting (Bates, 2013). He emphasized the social interplay between musicians in small ensembles, which “foster more interdependence between musicians. Contrast the large, director centered, ensemble with a bluegrass band.

In the former, a large group of individuals follow the directions of a conductor and, in the latter, a group of musicians play together collaboratively and without formal direction" (Bates, 2013, p. 36-37). Bates' defense of small ensembles resonates with the philosophy of inclusive education, in which music educators strive to provide authentic musical experiences for all students, rather than focusing on the competitive aspects of music performance that exclude student musicians on the basis of instrumentation, voice part, or ability. This philosophy, combined with the attitude that one must work with the resources at one's disposal when cultivating a program, can promote recruitment and retention of student musicians. Furthermore, the small ensemble format is appropriate in urban as well as rural environments. Availability of resources, enrollment numbers, and student interests are all arguments in favor of teaching through small ensembles in urban and rural settings. Bates' assertion that the dominant ensemble model is neither superior nor entirely appropriate in some musical settings provides an interesting counterpoint to decades of the one-size-fits-most model of large, Western ensemble-based music education.

In addition to the professional autonomy often afforded in rural districts (Bates, 2010), music educators cited feelings of connection within a close-knit community as one of the rewards of the rural setting (Bates, 2013). Small-town American culture differs from suburban and urban environments, and educators who migrate to rural areas must contend with this stark contrast and determine their place in the community. "They might choose to live in slightly larger communities (if they exist) within driving distance of the rural school where they are employed so that they have more access to goods and services," Prest (2013) explained, "or they may find a home in the rural community

where they are employed because of the unique amenities that that specific community offers (outdoor activities, affordable lifestyle, etc.)" (p. 5). The "unique amenities" specified above illustrate the allure of rural environments for some people: while goods and services may be sparse, the small-town lifestyle and the geographical context of rural spaces provide a palpable sense of place (Corbett, 2009) to one's chosen home.

**Characteristics of Successful Rural and Urban Music Educators**

In her 2009 study, Catherine Hunt interviewed nine teachers, administrators, and parents from rural and urban districts to compare and contrast their perspectives on music education within their given environments. She identified a number of similarities regarding the need for recruitment and retention of educators, adequate preservice preparation for the unique challenges of these underserved areas, and an understanding of the community context surrounding the school. Hunt revealed, "Urban stakeholders identified that a teacher should use community awareness to develop programs that directly support students' values and diverse needs. All participants addressed the need for music teachers to understand the cultures and issues in the community that affect students' attitudes toward teachers and programs" (p. 39). Music educators who step into a non-suburban district expecting a thriving example of large, stable ensembles and plentiful resources will quickly find that underserved programs do not resemble this model. By immersing oneself in the cultural context of the district, one will better meet the specific needs of the student musicians in that district, and develop professional relationships that may increase the tenacity and vitality of the music program.

# Indigenous Music Education

## Overview

Some of the modern research on Indigenous populations explores the concept of historical trauma as it pertains to "the impact of colonization, cultural suppression, and historical oppression of Indigenous peoples in North America" (Kirmayer, Gone, & Moses, 2014, p. 299; see also Heart & Horse, 2000, for information on the historical trauma of the Lakota). The researcher herein acknowledges the persistent, systemic impact of colonization on the Indigenous groups of North America, which influences many aspects of life, including education. However, the rich body of research on colonization and historical trauma are outside the scope of this study, which seeks to determine whether there are any statistically significant differences in Nebraska music students' opportunities to receive a quality music education in rural, urban, and reservation settings. Furthermore, as a non-Indigenous educator, the researcher does not wish to speak on behalf of a population with whom she shares no lived experience. Therefore, this section includes some brief background information on recent educational initiatives pertaining to Indigenous students; explores the qualities that contribute to success for educators who work with Indigenous students and/or in tribal settings; and highlights the theme of advocacy for local control of Indigenous education within the literature.

## Background of Indigenous Educational Initiatives in America

Castagno and Brayboy, in their 2008 review of the literature, outlined the interplay between sovereign nations and the United States federal government pertaining

to the culturally responsive schooling (or lack thereof) of Native American students in the latter half of the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries:

> In the 1960s and 1970s, tribal nations and urban Indian communities increased pressure on the federal government to facilitate educational change and greater tribal control over the education of Indigenous youth. These efforts led to a number of important pieces of legislation and federal investigations related to Indigenous education and, specifically, the role of tribal languages and cultures in schools serving Indigenous youth. (Castagno & Brayboy, 2008, p. 945)

The federal response to the desire for greater tribal autonomy in education was initially promising, utilizing data-filled reports on Indigenous education and the lack of language- and culture-driven curriculum therein as a call to action. Funding was provided for the creation of language programs and recruitment of Indigenous educators, and the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act of 1975 contributed to the founding of tribally-controlled education programs (Demmert & Towner, 2003).

The 1990s witnessed another sequence of federal legislation and reports regarding Indigenous students. The Native American Languages Act of 1990/1992 "formalized the importance of the federal government's role in preserving, protecting, and promoting the rights and freedoms of tribal language use and preservation" (Castagno & Brayboy, 2008, p. 945). In 1991, the U. S. Department of Education published the report, "Indian Nations at Risk: An Educational Strategy for Action Final Report." President Clinton's 1998 Executive Order 13096 focused on the educational practices used with Indigenous students, the role of language and culture in the evolution of scholastic strategies, and the support of tribal governments' educational initiatives and revitalization of cultural

traditions (Castagno & Brayboy, 2008). A later executive order that became law in 2004 excluded the final goal, replacing it with the objective of seeing Indigenous students meet the goals of the No Child Left Behind Act, which was met with discontent:

> This is a significant change and highlights our concern—and that of many Indigenous communities—that schools are moving further away from providing an effective, high-quality, and culturally responsive education to Indigenous youth. We agree with Inupiaq scholar Leona Okakok's (1989) insightful commentary. She writes, "To me, educating a child means equipping him or her with the capability to succeed in the world he or she will live in" (p. 253). She continues by making a powerful (and political) statement that "education is more than book learning, it is also value-learning" (p. 254). Indeed, to equip a child with the capability to exist in the world requires value judgments about what that child needs to succeed. The values, ideas, and priorities embedded in NCLB are not necessarily shared within tribal nations and Indigenous communities. (Castagno & Brayboy, 2008, p. 946)

Indigenous students are expected to simultaneously navigate the dominant national culture and their specific cultural heritage, and must forge a personal identity from these often conflicting perspectives. The skills that Indigenous children need to succeed within their personal, familial, tribal, and national contexts, as well as the best strategies for attaining these skills, have long been the source of debate. In 2022, all four of Nebraska's reservation schools are public schools subject to state and federal regulations, and these districts are as yet bereft of any culturally-based curricular resources.

**Importance of Administrative Support**

While ample research studies, surveys, and interviews provide insight into the challenges and rewards inherent in teaching music in an urban context, and a growing number of case studies illuminate the benefits and issues of music education in rural localities, there is still a dearth of literature regarding the typical conditions of music education in tribal areas, especially at reservation schools. Stryker's 2016 school and staffing survey emphasized the significance of administrative support to teacher job attitudes, which mirrors the findings of urban and rural studies: "administrative support is highly associated with each of the teacher job attitudes: organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and pay satisfaction" (Stryker, 2016, p. iii-iv). He explained that levels of perceived job satisfaction were higher for educators at tribally controlled schools than at public schools whose demographics have relatively high enrollments of Indigenous students. Additionally, educators situated at Bureau of Indian Education schools reported significantly greater satisfaction with their salaries than educators at tribally controlled schools (Stryker, 2016).

**Curriculum Development and Indigenous Culture**

In contrast to the lack of resources for music educators in Indigenous contexts, the literature encompasses a multitude of studies detailing the history of the relationship between sovereign nations and the American education system, and ideas for how to improve academic outcomes for Native American students. Echoing the call for specific preservice training for urban and rural contexts, researchers have exhorted teacher training programs to better prepare prospective educators for tribal and reservation settings (Belgarde, Mitchell, & Arquero, 2002; Castagno & Brayboy, 2008; Yazzie,

1999). Yazzie (1999) noted the potential disconnection between Indigenous culture and university settings, and the impact that the absence of exposure to Native American culture will have on educators who will service Native students:

> Many teachers are trained in colleges and universities located at a distance from reservations and urban communities where Native culture exists. As students of culture, teachers engage in course work in the humanities, anthropology, religion, social sciences, math, science, and education, which taken together constitute a curriculum. This knowledge frames how teachers will view American Indian students' learning and lives. Because of this, the discussion on appropriate curriculum development should examine the ideologies teachers have internalized during their own schooling and will take with them to schools serving American Indian children. (p. 95)

Yazzie encouraged institutions of higher learning to examine their coursework that instructs future educators on how to develop curricula, in order to create a scholastic environment that does not perpetuate the disconnection between Indigenous culture and American academics.

**Characteristics of Successful Music Educators in Tribal Contexts**

Researchers have cited specific attributes that educators should possess to effectively teach in Indigenous environments. Pewewardy and Hammer (2003) contended that "Teachers in a multicultural society need to hold an attitude of respect for cultural differences, know the cultural resources their students bring to class, and be skilled at tapping students' cultural resources in the teaching-learning process" (p. 5). In other words, they must be culturally responsive, a pedagogy or philosophy discussed in greater

detail below. Lee and Quijada Cerecer (2010) drew from two studies detailing Navajo and Pueblo students' thoughts on what educators can do to foster culturally responsive environments. "Students voiced an interest in forming stronger and closer relationships with the teachers and other adults. Students wished adults would talk to them and get to know them as a method of building community" (p. 205). The notion that successful teachers form specific and positive interpersonal bonds with their students is consistent across the contexts of urban, rural, and Indigenous education. Yazzie (1999) cited the affective qualities of quality educators in tribal contexts as being "informal, . . . caring and warm, [willing to] give up authority," and outwardly respectful of students (p. 95).

**The Call for Local Control of Educational Policy**

Finally, the literature surrounding Indigenous education in America heavily emphasizes the "fundamental role of tribal sovereignty in Native American schooling" (McCarty & Lee, 2014, p. 101), and the potential for local control of schools and involvement in curricular development to enhance academic outcomes for Indigenous students in any scholastic situation (Faircloth, 2009; Lomawaima & McCarty, 2002; Pewewardy & Hammer, 2003). As Faircloth (2009) elucidated:

> A return to local control of education will not ensure that all Native youth will be academically successful nor does it ensure that they will remain in their communities of origin. However, it does provide a vehicle by which children and youth have the social, cultural, and economic capital necessary to be successful wherever they choose to reside—both in the physical and philosophical sense. (p. 5)

Indigenous students are present in every academic context, from reservation schools, to isolated rural schools, to suburban districts, to urban environments. Locally developed, culturally responsive educational policies that resonate with students are imperative for Indigenous students to get the best educational opportunities possible.

Faircloth (2009) examined local control of Indigenous education as a means of empowerment to "define the purpose and direction of education" (p. 3), thereby decolonizing educational systems for current and future generations of Native American students. She defined decolonizing as "facilitating children and youth's ability to attain and maintain social, economic, and cultural capital within both the local/tribal and global communities" (p. 3), as opposed to the colonization of education, which results in the diminution of vital capital within the local and global communities. The American education system has historically been weaponized against Indigenous people. Even today, some educators consciously or unconsciously view students of color from a deficit perspective, placing limits on their potential (Benedict, 2006). In light of this growing body of research, including the popularization of culturally responsive pedagogy, the decolonization of curricula and educational systems is urgently necessary.

## Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

### Definitions of Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

The anecdote that opens Belgarde et al.'s 2002 article features a meeting between Pueblo community leaders and local school personnel, who have gathered to determine how the school and community can become more united:

> During the conversation, a Pueblo leader leaned forward and passionately exhorted to the school personnel, "Do not teach our children our culture. Use our

> culture to teach them." His poignant charge to mainstream professional educators captures the historic tension that still exists today between schools and American Indian communities. Teacher educators who prepare teachers for American Indian populations must advocate and deliver culturally responsive programs that fully integrate Native cultural and community beliefs, and values and practices into the construction of academic curriculum in order to bridge a gap that has effectively marginalized Native students for at least a century. (Belgarde et al., 2002, p. 42)

The charge to "use [their] culture to teach them" is, broadly, a workable definition of culturally responsive pedagogy, which has been touched on in each of the sections above, and is explored in greater detail below.

Researcher Geneva Gay has written much about culturally responsive pedagogy. In her 2013 research study, Gay referred to her previous work in describing the philosophy of culturally responsive teaching:

> I define culturally responsive teaching as "using the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant to and effective for them" (Gay, 2010c, p. 31). It is a means for improving achievement by teaching diverse students *through* their own cultural filters. (Gay, 2013, p. 49-50)

Recent literature on multicultural education abounds with the term "culturally responsive teaching" (Gay, 2000, 2013; Kindall-Smith, McKoy, & Mills, 2011; Shaw, 2012; Waxman et al., 1995), but while one might surmise that this pedagogy befits classrooms comprised of enrollment from a broad variety of ethnic backgrounds, a significant number of studies related to Native education boast the term (Castagno & Brayboy, 2008;

Lee & Quijada Cerece, 2010; López, Heilig, & Schram, 2013; Rogers & Haime, 2010). Two reasons for the emphasis on culturally responsive teaching at tribal or reservation schools are obvious. First, as mentioned earlier, the majority of American educators, even at reservation schools, are non-Native. These educators must therefore learn about and respond to the cultural mores of their charges to develop relationships with their students and approach curriculum with empathy for their individual perspectives. Second, even if—and, indeed, perhaps especially if—the instructor at a reservation school is Native, the cultural context of the school should influence the content and delivery of the curriculum to help students make the strongest mental connections for long-term learning.

**Culturally Responsive Content in the Music Classroom**

Kindall-Smith et al. (2011) and Shaw (2012) advocated for culturally responsive pedagogy that engages with cultures represented in the classroom and cultures that are absent from the classroom. Shaw explained that culturally responsive educators "seek to deepen students' understanding of, appreciation for, and value of cultures other than their own. In an ethnically and racially mixed classroom, each musical experience might simultaneously validate some students' cultures while broadening others' cultural horizons" (Shaw, 2012, p. 77). For example, in a homogeneously Isanti Dakota music classroom, culturally responsive pedagogy may manifest as rehearsing a round dance song, an intertribal, or a hand game song of an ensemble's choice. The educator must be aware that these traditional pieces are allowed to be performed outside of their specific cultural contexts as long as no women touch the sacred drum, if one accompanies the

song. If the educator is not Isanti, he or she will invite the Dakota musicians to share their expertise to the degree that they feel comfortable.

On the other hand, culturally responsive pedagogy may manifest in that same classroom as a study of the old Irish folk tune "The Belle of Belfast." When the musicians explore the cultural and historical context of the tune, anyone who represents that culture can choose to share their knowledge or perspective. If no one in the room represents the culture, or feels comfortable claiming any authority on cultural matters, this presents an opportunity for research: Does anyone have a family member or friend who would be willing to share their knowledge of the piece or its cultural context? What information is available in the score, or on reputable Web resources? If culturally responsive pedagogy includes those cultures present and absent from the classroom in a desire to broaden musical horizons, then educators and students should seek to contextualize their repertoire using any resources available, and embracing a mindset of continuous learning. When the class discusses the typical setting in which the song is performed, including variations on the lyrics depending upon the location (such as "The Belle of Dublin City"), they may determine if they can conjure an authentic performance context for the piece. Culturally responsive education includes the selection of multicultural repertoire, but delves much deeper into the context of the music to broaden students' understanding of their own culture and that of others.

**Culturally Responsive Instructional Strategies**

Gay (2002) further defined culturally responsive pedagogy as the use of multicultural instructional strategies. In other words, not just the content of a course but its methods of delivery can be culturally responsive. Educators are familiar with the

concept of differentiated instruction for students at different ability levels. Culturally responsive pedagogy applies that process to the cultures represented in the classroom. Of course, when employing culturally responsive instructional strategies, as when engaging in culturally responsive lessons and content, educators must be respectful and approach the pedagogy in a valid way (Shaw, 2012). This entails having a thorough understanding of the culture being studied, or being open to learning about it from experts in the classroom.

For example, when seeking research on Native American music education and reservation music education, the researcher encountered an article entitled "Powwow in the Classroom," written by Nancy H. Barry and Paula Conlon in 2003. Neither of the researchers included their cultural background in the article or in biographical information online, although Conlon has immersed herself in Indigenous musical and dance events for multiple decades and "incorporated these first-hand experiences into her teaching, writing, and research presentations" (Paula Conlon, n.d.). Therefore, "Powwow in the Classroom" provides an example of non-Indigenous music educators utilizing and sharing the knowledge they have gained, so that practicing music educators may respectfully and appropriately explore Indigenous music in the classroom. Barry and Conlon provided some guidelines for teaching Native American music, some of which is vital and probably not common knowledge, such as "*Don't* use sacred or ceremonial music out of context. If you are unsure of the context, find another example . . . There is currently an abundance of genuine Native American melodies to choose from. (See the Suggested Resources for Teaching Native American Music sidebar)" (p. 22). However, the fact that this article, which was written in the twenty-first century, needed to specify

that “Not all Native American groups lived in teepees, nor did they all wear fringed buckskin and eagle-feather war bonnets” (p. 22) speaks to the disconnection between sovereign nations in America and the dominant White culture. Note that the authors, who provided some highly useful resources for music educators, also utilized the past tense when referring to Native Americans—an often unintentional yet all too common linguistic distancing mechanism.

Researcher Andrea Boyea (1999), on the other hand, suggested that an abundance of caution is in order when programming Native American music outside of Indigenous cultural contexts, in part because “tribal traditionalists want to protect sacred customs and privileged practices” (p. 105). She cited the “deep ambivalence” many Native Americans feel regarding the dominant culture, including the Western attitudes and philosophies about the role of music in everyday life, and insisted that “this ambivalence must be recognized and respected when bringing elements of [Indigenous] culture, such as their musics, into schools” (p. 105). There is a balance to be found between enthusiastically launching into multicultural resources without researching context and cultural validity, and fearfully eschewing any genre or culture that feels unfamiliar. Within that balance, music educators can provide culturally valid, validating, and responsive experiences that will deepen their students’ understanding of themselves, promote knowledge and empathy of others, and contribute to a rich and varied classroom music education.

## Retention and Attrition of Music Educators

### Overview

Researchers have uncovered a variety of reasons for staff attrition, including layoffs and involuntary transfers (Hancock, 2015), job dissatisfaction or desire to pursue

a different career (Hancock, 2015; Ingersoll, 2001), teaching closer to home (Hancock, 2015; Jacob, 2007), lack of support (Ingersoll, 2001; Renfro, 2003), student demographics including achievement (Hanushek, Kain, & Rivkin, 1999), and salary concerns (Darling-Hammond, 2003; Hancock, 2015). This section expounds specific scenarios that might promote retention and attrition within urban and rural districts, with particular emphasis on isolation versus connection, support versus lack of support, and balance versus burnout.

**The Positive Impact of Support**

As mentioned above, the need for administrative and community support for urban music teachers and their programs is a recurring theme in the literature. Many researchers have surveyed and interviewed urban educators, and their advice for potential teachers is unequivocally to ingratiate themselves to the community in order to garner local support, as well as to make positive connections with staff and administration to build or maintain their music programs. In 2004, Ella Wilcox published an article focusing on Washington, D.C.-based elementary music teacher Claudine Nash, whose tips for new teachers in urban districts highlight the importance of relationships within the school and community:

> Develop and maintain a great relationship with your principal, administration, faculty, and especially the custodial staff . . . Get to know the environment in which you're teaching. This will give you a better understanding of the children placed in your charge . . . Attend community meetings, serve on special projects if asked. By doing this, your students will know and appreciate that you care about them and what is happening around them. (Wilcox, 2004, p. 73)

Nash's advice to participate in community events outside of contract time, while exceeding the scope of a music educator's duties, is not uncommon for educators in underserved areas. The researcher was encouraged by mentors in her reservation district to attend school board meetings, community events, and extracurricular activities so that students would sense her investment in the district and community members would become familiar with her. While immersing oneself in the broader community context can cultivate positive professional relationships, it is a process that takes time outside of the workday, in addition to the extracurricular activities commonly expected of music educators.

**Balancing Work and Personal Life**

Wilcox's interview of Shickley-based Stan Johnson portrayed a devoted rural music teacher whose extracurricular work included private lessons, planning, and administrative tasks as Nebraska's state chairman for Class D All-State Band. While it is not unusual for educators to spend some time outside the contract day planning, grading, and preparing to teach, Johnson's work tended to extend into the late evening:

> When all of this is wrapped up, Johnson often will "go home for an hour, and then it's back again to work with students after they've finished athletic practices. Often, I bring pizza or sandwiches for them, since they haven't gone home to eat. I may be at school until 9 p.m. or later." Sometimes, it doesn't end there: "I have many students that make audition tapes for honor bands and choirs each year, and we do this at night at school or in our living room." (Wilcox, 2005, p. 29-30)

Johnson's evening schedule was atypically long, and he graciously volunteered many hours on behalf of his students, but the implication for music educators in underserved

areas is clear: If you are the only music educator in your school or your district, the breadth and success of the program rests on your shoulders, with little to no assistance. You may be called upon to write arrangements for specific instrumentations or voice parts; facilitate musicals, pep bands, or extracurricular course offerings; enact simple instrument repairs to preserve the budget; write choreography or drill; or any number of other tasks that are within the realm of music education, but can lead to exhaustion and burnout if staffing and resources are insufficient.

**The Negative Impact of Perceived Isolation**

On the administrative side of relationship-building, in her article, "The Urban Teacher Struggle," Lisa Renfro quoted Willa Dunleavy, a former music supervisor in Fort Worth who insists that strong administrative support is crucial for the success of urban music programs:

> The main problem in urban districts is having administrators from top to bottom who value the arts and will work diligently for the children to have a well-balanced curriculum . . . The district has to value and want a strong music education program, and then you can get the teachers. But if that support isn't there, they don't stay long. (Renfro, 2003, p. 38-39)

Given the historical likelihood that district budget cuts will target arts programs in schools, preservice music educators are coached on advocacy methods, and practicing educators benefit from professional organizations that provide advocacy resources and strategies. However, school and district leadership must be receptive to the needs of music educators and supportive of their program-building efforts if they wish to retain qualified educators. Music teachers who lack the support and resources of other districts

can feel a sense of discontentment and may not remain in the district, as Donna Wiggins of Winston-Salem State University has witnessed:

> Wiggins . . . said that teachers of urban or "high-priority" schools (a more specific term that Wiggins prefers) experienced a sense of isolation from the larger teacher community and from the upper administration. "There's an exile factor in that those teachers are very much aware of the resources and special programs going on in schools that don't have the academic challenges that they have . . . This leads to frustration and a sense of isolation." And these feelings lead, in many districts, to high turnover rates . . . High teacher turnover rates cause many students . . . to quit music. (Renfro, 2003, p. 39-40)

The isolation of urban music educators may not be geographical, as it is for many rural and reservation music educators—reservations being locations of literal exile for Indigenous groups who were displaced from their homes—but the feeling that one's circumstances differ profoundly from the dominant suburban culture of established, successful music programs can be lonely. If collaboration with other educators is beneficial for one's growth, attitude, and success (Chester & Beaudin, 1996; Doyle, 2013), isolated educators in underserved areas must diligently seek opportunities to collaborate, or they may end up leaving the position.

**The Effects of Collaboration and Isolation**

Another study that emphasized the value of collaboration and the detrimental effects of isolation was Laura K. Sindberg's 2013 case study of seven upper-Midwestern metropolitan music teachers. Isolation presented itself to these educators in a variety of forms, such as prescribed and frequent mobility within the district that prevented them

from becoming acquainted with their colleagues, philosophical differences with other educators, and lack of support from professional organizations. The educators' efforts to collaborate with other teachers in their buildings, as well as with other music educators in their district through Professional Learning Communities, helped them share their experiences, support and receive the support of others in their discipline, and engender support for their programs (Sindberg, 2013).

Although supportive interpersonal relationships can be fulfilling, the aforementioned demands of the profession can eventually lead to fatigue and attrition even in very personally rewarding situations. In DiBara's study, "Responsible to the Kids: The Goals and Struggles of Urban High School Teachers," forty teachers at thriving urban high schools were asked about their responsibilities and efforts amid high standards and high-stakes testing. According to DiBara,

> While relationships with students help sustain teachers' commitment to very demanding work, they also take their toll. A veteran science teacher reported, "When you go home, you take the job with you. If you care, you have to." A substantial minority of teachers in the sample have a vision of themselves leaving teaching because they are uncertain that they can continue to work at their own high standards for the long term. Nearly half of the teachers mentioned that the responsibilities of teaching become overwhelming. (2007, p. 24)

At the school labeled "Grant High" for the purpose of this study, at which seven of the respondents indicated that the demands on teachers at their school were too high, over half indicated they would be unable to teach at the school for the rest of their career (DiBara, 2007). This study was not limited to music educators, but the notion of taking

one's job home is familiar to teachers in all subject areas. Furthermore, the pressure to meet district proficiency goals on standardized tests, compounded with school-wide expectations and one's own high standards for performance, can lead to a high-stress work environment that is not sustainable for the length of a career.

**The Relationship Between Attrition and Teacher Quality**

Rather than focusing on turnover from the perspective of the teacher, Brian A. Jacob considered the systemic causes and ramifications of teacher attrition and shortages on urban school systems in his 2007 article, "The challenges of staffing urban schools with effective teachers." Jacob posited that because some urban school systems struggle to recruit and retain teachers, "urban teachers are less highly qualified than their suburban counterparts with respect to characteristics such as experience, educational background, and teaching certification" (Jacob, 2007, p. 129). He explained that urban teachers are not necessarily less effective without these aforementioned qualities, and asserted that policies designed to increase teacher effectiveness must focus on student achievement, rather than specific attributes of educators.

Jacob considered the role of supply and demand with regard to urban teacher shortages, highlighting wages and working conditions as commonly understood supply-side issues. Significantly, he discussed geography as another issue impacting the supply of teachers to urban environments. The education profession generally relies on a local labor market, and the majority of practicing teachers nationwide were schooled in suburban environments. Since educators often migrate toward districts that are demographically consistent with those of their upbringing, "the high turnover in low-achieving urban schools, particularly among more highly qualified teachers, may thus in

part reflect a preference for living close to home rather than a desire to avoid low-achieving or minority children" (Jacob, 2007, p. 140).

## Summary

A review of the literature confirms that while there are specific contextual differences in urban, rural, and reservation school districts, these environments harbor many similar challenges and rewards for educators. Surveyed teachers, parents, community members, and students from these underserved areas generally agree that although pedagogical knowledge of one's subject is important, effective educators exhibit qualities such as warmth, respect, willingness to listen to and address the needs of students, and eagerness to forge interpersonal connections with students.

The retention, attrition, and migration of teachers occurs for a variety of reasons, but underserved urban districts, as well as isolated reservation and rural districts, often struggle with teacher shortages because the local pool of educators is smaller than in suburban areas. This is likely due in part to the demographics of practicing educators, which are overwhelmingly middle- and upper-class and suburban-based, and whom the data shows are likely to select teaching positions in districts similar to that of their upbringing.

Especially because the demographic attributes of most educators do not match the clientele of underserved urban, rural, and reservation school districts, culturally responsive pedagogy is an important instructional strategy with which educators should become familiar. Culturally responsive pedagogy provides a framework for exploring multicultural musical heritage in a respectful and valid manner; and offers students the opportunity to share their own lived experiences, thereby making relevant connections to

the material while enriching the learning of other musicians. Finally, research and writings in the area of culturally responsive pedagogy show that the openness and inquiry-based lessons that culturally responsive pedagogy necessitates will contribute to close interpersonal relationships with students, which will increase the success of both educator and student.

# Chapter Three: Methodology

In order to illuminate the potential issues and favorable circumstances associated with teaching music in Nebraska's rural, urban, and reservation communities, the researcher developed a survey utilizing the *National Opportunity to Learn Standards* (National Association for Music Education [NAfME], 2020) and Nierman's "Survey of Nebraska School Music Programs" (Nierman, 1998). Questions focused on the availability, quantity, and perceived quality of curriculum, staffing, scheduling, and equipment and materials. Additional queries addressed the perceived climate of the district with regard to such factors as administrative support and enforcement of policies, student motivation and achievement, and the relationship between the school and community.

While school climate is not a factor in NAfME's *National Opportunity to Learn Standards* (OTL Standards), it is included in the theoretical model of this study because it encompasses factors that may be unique to, or more pronounced in, the types of school music programs surveyed. For example, teachers in smaller, close-knit communities can form personal relationships with parents and community members that positively impact their lives (Bates, 2010) and contribute to feelings of belonging (Corbett, 2009). On the other hand, the community surrounding a reservation school may differ from that of a predominantly white rural school for a variety of reasons.

The focus of this chapter is on the sample of Nebraska educators surveyed and the materials developed to investigate the research questions. It includes a discussion of participants, personnel, materials, procedure, and data analysis.

## Participants

To determine music teacher perceptions and experiences with factors that may distinguish the contexts of urban, rural, and reservation schools, the "Opportunity to Learn Standards for Music Education" Survey, hereafter referred to as the OTL Survey, was emailed to one educator at each of the four reservation schools in Nebraska, to a stratified random sample of members of the Nebraska Music Education Association who teach in Class C or D schools, and to a sample of high school music educators working in schools with higher percentages of economically marginalized students in a metropolitan Nebraska school district. The rural schools were drawn from a pool of Class C and D schools as categorized by the Nebraska School Activities Association, with one school from each of the NSAA's six geographical districts selected, so that the researcher did not neglect any region of the state. Rural school selections were limited to Class C and D designations to offer comparability with the reservation schools in the state, two of which would be classified as Class C (N = 75-150) by high school population, and two of which are labeled Class D (N = 0-74) by high school population (NSAA, 2021). Standardizing the size of the rural and reservation districts highlighted the similarities and differences between their respective music programs.

Nebraska is a largely rural state, with clusters of small towns and villages scattered across its expanse; but it encompasses two urban centers, Lincoln and Omaha, which are situated in the southeast region within fifty miles of one another. Some schools in these metropolitan districts primarily service affluent clientele, while others have a higher percentage of economically marginalized students. This survey study was designed to ascertain the viewpoints of the music educators at the latter schools, which

are Nebraska's best approximation of the nation's underserved urban schools that are featured prominently in academic research. Due to restriction of access to one of the two large urban districts (Class AA schools) in Nebraska, purposive sampling was used to select music educators from schools with high socioeconomic diversity in the urban district whose IRB officials allowed its teachers to participate in the study.

In the state of Nebraska, some public school teachers are itinerant, and must travel between schools or even different districts; some are specialized, focusing on elementary, middle school, high school, or some combination thereof; and some teach PreK-12 or K-12 music classes in one or more buildings in a district. By virtue of enrollment and geographical context, some of the full-time music educators who participated in the survey teach a wide range of grade levels within one or multiple school buildings. Educators at private schools of comparative enrollment were not surveyed in order to maintain a focus on the resources and needs of small or underserved public schools. Because there are four Native American reservation schools in the state of Nebraska, the survey was offered to the population of music educators at reservation schools in the state, and to a comparable number of educators teaching in non-reservation urban and rural schools.

Up to three emails were sent to each sample group, yielding eleven completed surveys: three reservation schools, three Class C schools, two Class D schools, and three Class AA schools with high socioeconomic diversity. The desired sample size was dictated by the number of reservation schools in the state—four schools. Ideally, music educators from a comparable number of schools from each of the three school categories would have completed the survey, representing a relatively equal number of schools in

each of the three school classifications in the study's framework (urban schools, reservation schools, and Class C or D rural schools from each of Nebraska's six geographic districts). Ultimately, only eleven of fourteen schools were represented in the study.

## Personnel

The OTL Survey was designed by the researcher, a Nebraska music educator and author of this study, using *Qualtrics*. The survey utilized NAfME's OTL Standards (2020) as well as inquiries into the educators' perceptions of school climate to ascertain any statistically significant differences between the music programs of small rural, urban, and reservation schools in Nebraska. The researcher collected and analyzed the data with the assistance of a consultant in the Nebraska Evaluation and Research (NEAR) Center, who provided support with data organization and statistical analyses.

## Materials

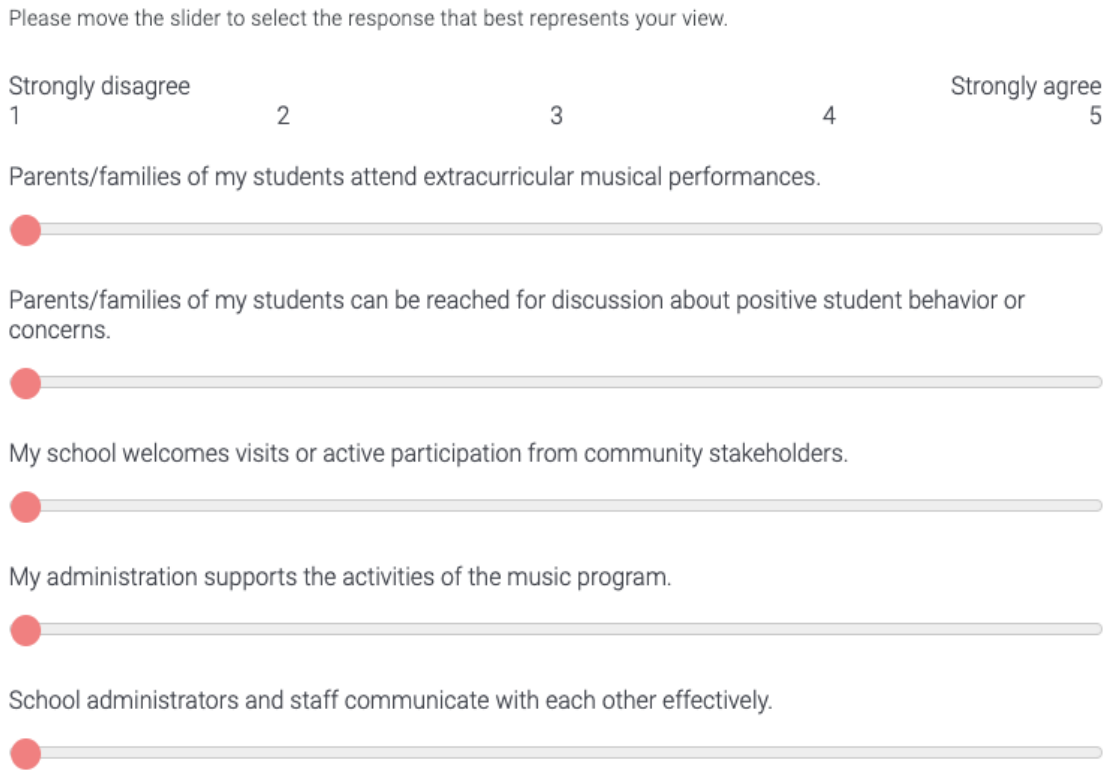
### Survey Construction

The OTL Survey was based on the "Survey of Nebraska School Music Programs," developed by Nierman (1998), "which was based on recommendations concerning the conditions necessary for effective learning found in *Opportunity-to-Learn Standards for Music Instruction* (MENC, 1994)" (Nierman, 1998, p. 40). The survey was comprised of thirty-six questions utilizing a combination of numerical rating scales, self-report inventories, and checklists, depending upon which format yielded the most thorough, accurate, and relevant information from particular queries. Figure 2 depicts an example of a series of questions about school climate, using a numerical rating scale. Originally, a pure Likert scale format was utilized, but the attitudinal spectrum was

eventually subdivided with numerical gradations to allow for specific responses and to facilitate analysis.

**Figure 2**

*Use of Numerical Rating Scale for Survey Questions Regarding School Climate*




The five-point numerical rating scale served as the format for most of the survey questions, because the majority of questions focused on a variety of specific statements necessitating precise attitudinal responses from participants. For example, two of the questions in Figure 2 seek information about the school climate with regard to parental involvement in distinctly different ways. An educator may indicate that most students' families actively attend music programs, but find that the same community members can

seldom be reached for personal discussion, or vice versa. Because the climate questions may seem related, but do not necessarily influence one another, independent numerical rating scales offered participants the ability to respond precisely, and the researcher the capacity to compare trends within the array of questions relating to climate, professional development, and curriculum.

The four curriculum and mentorship questions employed a five-point numerical rating scale as opposed to a "yes" or "no" checklist because some of the questions, like those in the curriculum section, sought a specific attitudinal response. For instance, the question, "My district's mentorship program contributes to the successful acclimation of new teachers," may receive an intense positive or negative response from educators who have strong opinions about their district's mentorship policies, while others may not feel they have the perspective, longevity, or knowledge to speak to the successful acclimation of staff. On the other hand, while questions such as, "My district utilizes a mentorship program for new teachers," may seem definitive, veteran teachers in districts with changing policies may have witnessed such initiatives come and go over the years.

Most of the staffing questions were formatted as self-report inventories so that each respondent could provide exact numerical feedback regarding the population of elementary, middle, and high school students serviced by the school, as well as the number of full- and part-time music educators. The purpose of these queries was to illuminate any statistically significant differences in the ratio of teachers to students among urban, rural, and reservation schools in Nebraska; therefore, it made more sense to employ self-report inventories than sliding scales to obtain accurate population information from each participant.

The “Scheduling” section and the “Equipment and Materials” section were both framed as a single checklist with three potential responses for each item. Due to the variety of possible course offerings, as well as the inclination to discover the extent of extracurricular requirements, it was determined that a checklist would be expedient for participants and easier to compile than pure self-report inventories. However, several spaces were included at the end of the scheduling checklist for educators to report courses they taught that were not listed above.

While the “Scheduling” checklist permitted the responses “during school day,” “extracurricular,” and “N/A” to attain a detailed understanding of music class schedules at surveyed schools, the equipment and materials checklist distinguished its categories as “I have what I need,” “I have some of what I need,” and “I do not have what I need.” Music educators have divergent philosophies regarding necessary materials for their music programs, and specific communities often have unique expectations for music educators to meet. While one teacher may desire or be expected to emphasize and compete with traditional ensembles, another district may highlight music composition and technology, or ensembles other than band, choir, and orchestra. The “Equipment and Materials” checklist served the dual purpose of analyzing the resources available to music educators, and identifying the resources they felt they needed to successfully maintain or build a music program.

The OTL Survey was designed to be easily navigable but precise, to gather attitudinal, numerical, and descriptive information about the musical resources and overall climate of surveyed schools. The survey is reproduced in its entirety in Appendix A.

**Face and Content Validity**

An assessment of the face and content validity of the survey tool took place prior to its distribution. Initially, the content to be included in the OTL Survey was confirmed by an extensive review of the literature. The researcher sought feedback from four music educators and two teachers of other subjects in the form of a ten-question Face and Content Validity Survey, reproduced in Appendix B. This assessment tool contained the following open-ended and Likert scale questions:

1. Please indicate how clear the survey directions are for Section 2: Climate ("For the questions in this block, either move the slider to select the response that best represents your view, or enter the correct numerical response.")
2. Section 2 Directions: Please use the box below to describe your rating from the previous question by including a few brief general or specific comments.
3. Please indicate how clear the survey directions are for Section 4: Staffing ("For the following questions, please type a numerical answer, or select the response that best represents your view.")
4. Section 4 Directions: Please use the box below to describe your rating from the previous question by including a few brief general or specific comments.
5. Are the survey items (size, font, spacing, and format) appropriate with regard to presentation on both a computer screen and a mobile phone?
6. Survey Presentation: Please use the box below to describe your rating from the previous question by including a few brief general or specific comments.

7. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the survey statements are succinct and discernible as statements about access to opportunity to learn standards (scheduling, climate, curriculum, staffing, and equipment & materials)?
8. Succinct & Discernible: Please use the box below to describe your rating from the previous question by including a few brief general or specific comments.
9. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the survey items are representative of items designated by the National Association for Music Education as opportunity to learn standards? (https://nafme.org/my-classroom/standards/opportunity-to-learn-standards/)
10. Accurate Representation: Please use the box below to describe your rating from the previous question by including a few brief general or specific comments.

Two of the six surveyed educators, one of whom teaches music and the other of whom teaches another subject, provided feedback using the Face and Content Validity assessment tool. Both reviewers gave the survey tool high ratings. The Likert scale questions were all rated 5 out of 5 stars *(M* = 5), and the open-ended questions received generally positive feedback, with a couple of linguistic suggestions and a request to be able to reply "N/A" on courses that an educator does not teach. Upon collection of feedback, slight changes were made to the survey tool, including the addition of a "Not Applicable" (N/A) column in Section 1: Scheduling. The overall structure and content of the survey was confirmed to be appropriate.

# Procedure

## Overview

The survey tool was administered to a stratified random sample of Nebraska music educators via email in the spring of 2022 to ensure a representative sampling from urban, rural, and reservation schools. The survey tool was generated using *Qualtrics*, which enabled participants to take the survey on any electronic device with an internet connection. As per the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's Institutional Review Board (IRB) policies, confidential survey data was stored securely on the researcher's work computer until analysis was complete, and was deleted thereafter.

## Securing Institutional Review Board Approval

In order to receive the approval needed to administer the survey from the IRB, the researcher had to acquire distribution approval from the metropolitan districts from which she planned to draw a sample. One district provided consent to contact music educators, and the other rejected the proposal, narrowing the pool of eligible, economically diverse urban schools from which to draw.

The Institutional Review Board inquired as to whether it would be necessary to reach out to the tribal council associated with each of the reservation school districts before disseminating the survey. Initially, each reservation public school's administration was contacted to determine their views on the matter; as a result, all four schools granted permission for the researcher to contact the reservation schools' music educators directly with the survey. In Nebraska, all reservation schools are currently public schools, rather than tribally-controlled Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) schools. Therefore, while tribal

government entities do interface with the schools about relevant legal procedures, district policies are determined by local school boards and enforced by school administrators.

**Sampling Strategies**

The sampling method in this study combined purposive sampling of the population of reservation schools and socioeconomically diverse urban high schools available with stratified random sampling of Class C and D rural schools from each region of the state of Nebraska. When access to one of the two urban districts was denied, the population of Class AA high schools servicing high percentages of economically marginalized students decreased to three available schools, each of which was deliberately surveyed. In contrast, the population of Class C and D schools in Nebraska is greater than two hundred, and is spread across six geographic districts outlined by the NSAA. Therefore, to garner a sample size of rural schools that was not markedly different from that of the reservation and urban samples, while accurately representing data from across the state, the researcher randomly selected one Class C or D public school from each of the six districts to survey. Rural schools were selected from a pool of Class C and D schools in order to maintain the commonality of size with the reservation schools, each of which qualifies as Class C or D (or equivalent) by the NSAA (2021). It is because there are no urban schools of equivalent size in the state of Nebraska that the three socioeconomically diverse Class AA high schools were purposefully surveyed.

**Distribution Schedule**

Once the research project, including the use of the OTL Survey and the sample to which the survey was to be given, was approved by the UNL Institutional Review Board (IRB), the researcher contacted potential participants with an initial IRB-approved email.

The message briefly outlined the purpose of the study, the voluntary and confidential nature of participation, the contact information of the researchers and the IRB office, and the link to the OTL Survey, which could be accessed via any computer or mobile device. An IRB-approved follow-up email was sent to the selected individuals who did not respond within ten days, once again outlining the confidentiality clause and providing the survey link. A final reminder message was sent out to anyone who had yet to respond within another week, containing the same information. In order to garner a representative sampling of schools from each category, multiple samples of rural schools from across the six geographical districts were compiled for distribution. Once the collection window had passed and an appropriate number of responses had been received, data analysis began.

## Data Analysis

Data analysis procedures varied by the type and format of the survey questions. In this section, these analysis procedures will be discussed in the order in which the research questions were presented.

The first research question, regarding which courses are offered and whether or not they are extracurricular, was structured as a checklist and analyzed using descriptive statistics to indicate the commonalities and differences in course offerings. The goal was to determine if there were any significant trends or disparities in types of coursework offered. For example, do any small or underserved schools have the resources to provide orchestral ensembles? Do rural and reservation music programs model themselves after larger suburban districts, primarily teaching through the traditional school ensembles utilized in most American schools, or do they explore small or nontraditional ensembles?

Is there evidence of any demographic-specific coursework, such as drum circles, Native flute lessons, or Mariachi groups? Finally, for how many extracurricular musical activities are the educators responsible outside of contract time, if any?

Research question two, which asked teachers to rate their school climate based on factors such as administrative and community support and involvement, was primarily measured with a series of eighteen five-point numerical rating scales, which were analyzed using an F-test. These numerical rating scale questions were analyzed as a set, but for ease of survey navigation, they were grouped into categories as follows: questions regarding the relationships between students, teachers, administrators, parents/guardians, and community members; questions regarding enforcement of policy, schoolwide goals and priorities, and safe work environment; and questions regarding social-emotional needs, bullying, and any barriers to teaching. Two more numerical rating scale questions in this section were examined with descriptive statistics. The first asked teachers to report the overall student achievement level in core classes, employing a five-point numerical rating scale ranging from 1 (“Far below average”) to 5 (“Far above average”). The subsequent survey item considered average annual staff turnover, utilizing a three-point numerical rating scale (less than 10% attrition was designated as low turnover, 10-20% was designated as medium turnover, and anything over 20% was designated as high turnover). The final two survey questions in the “Climate” section asked educators to self-report their number of years of music teaching experience and their number of scheduled planning minutes per week, thereby offering insight into the amount of experience of music educators at surveyed schools, and the amount of time available to plan for their courses. These data were reported using descriptive statistics.

The third research question focused on educators' awareness of district guidelines for curriculum, availability of curricular materials, and presence or absence of a successful mentorship program for new teachers. As shown in Appendix A, the final two curricular questions, inquiring about access to music-related professional development, were placed at the end of the staffing section. Originally, because these questions considered subject-specific professional development both in and out of the district, they were placed with other questions regarding staff. Later, it was determined that the presence or absence of music-specific professional development is more of a curriculum and resource issue than a staff issue. Therefore, all six curriculum-related numerical rating scale questions were analyzed together using an F-test.

Research question four, concerning the number of students for whom each teacher is responsible, was answered by a series of six self-report inventories. After ascertaining the average number of students per teacher in each school setting, an F-test was applied to determine the existence of any statistically significant differences in the ratios of teachers to students.

The final research question, which considered access to materials and equipment such as instruments and technology, was addressed by a checklist and examined using a chi-square analysis. Regarding the given equipment and materials outlined in the OTL Standards (NAfME, 2020), educators reported whether they had what they needed, some of what they needed, or did not have what they needed. A chi-square analysis was applied to discover any significant differences in observed and expected frequencies for each of these categories.

## Summary

This chapter delineated, once again, the objective of research, as well as the attributes of selected schools to be surveyed, structure of the survey tool, and data analysis methods utilized in this study. The purpose of the survey was to ascertain the readiness of the music programs in Nebraska's underserved schools to provide quality music education as delineated by the OTL Standards (NAfME, 2020), and to examine educators' conceptions of the overall school climate in which they operate. The content of the survey was based upon the "Survey of Nebraska School Music Programs," developed by Nierman (1998), as well as the researcher's theoretical model of the elements that contribute to or hinder a quality, standards-based music education that was grounded in a thorough review of the literature.

Practicing educators studied the survey tool to determine its face and content validity in preparation for its distribution to the representative sample of Class AA urban, Class C and D rural, and reservation schools in Nebraska. Multiple samples, each chosen at random, of teachers at reservation schools and at rural schools within the state's six geographical districts were sent the OTL Survey to obtain a representative sample from each school category. Eleven schools were represented in the data collected. The analysis of this data to answer the study's research questions will be presented in the following chapter.

# Chapter Four: Presentation and Analysis of Data

## Introduction

This study sought to ascertain any statistically significant differences in course offerings, access to curricular resources and professional development, staffing, and access to quality instruments and equipment. Additionally, educators were asked to rate the overall climate of their school. To accomplish the purpose of the study, five research questions were developed:

1. What are the various courses taught in the music program, and are they extracurricular or part of the school day?
2. How do teachers at urban, rural, and reservation schools rate their school climate based on such factors as parent/community involvement, administrative support, student achievement rates, and availability of resources?
3. Do participants have access to curricular resources, mentorship, and professional development opportunities?
4. Is the number of students per music teacher statistically significantly different in reservation, non-Native rural, and urban schools?
5. Does the school have access to sufficient quality instruments and technological equipment to enable all students to participate fully in music instruction?

Chapter Four commences with a presentation of the demographic data. The rest of the chapter details the results of the research questions.

## Demographic Analysis

The size of the sample was dictated by the number of reservation schools in Nebraska ($N$ = 4). The initial research plan included the sampling of four

socioeconomically diverse urban schools, four non-Native rural schools of equivalent size to the reservation schools (Class C or Class D), and the population of reservation schools. The population of socioeconomically diverse Class AA urban schools in Nebraska is ($N$ = 10) as classified by the NSAA, and further defined by Title 1 participation or demographics. There are ($N$ = 81) Class C schools and ($N$ = 122) Class D schools on the NSAA list of music classifications (2021). As discussed in the previous chapter, the number of available Class AA urban schools was reduced to three, so the researcher contacted each of those schools to achieve a representative sample and a comparable number of schools for each of the three categories. The number of Class C and D schools in Nebraska ($N$ = 203) far outnumbers the population of reservation schools and the eligible subset of Class AA schools; therefore, it was determined that it would be appropriate to obtain responses from one Class C or D school in each of the six geographical districts outlined by the NSAA. This sampling strategy prevented data from being skewed toward one geographical region of the state where differences were known to exist.

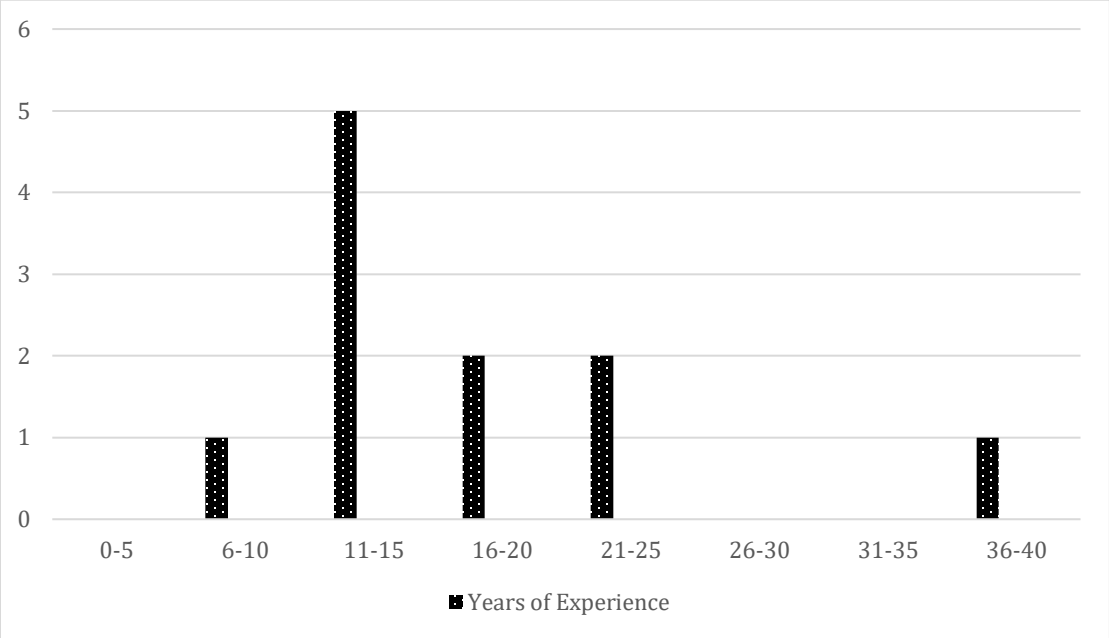
The anticipated sample size was ($N$ = 13), including three urban, four reservation, and six rural schools. Multiple random samples of educators from the rural and reservation categories were sent the "Opportunity to Learn Standards for Music Education" Survey (OTL Survey) to accrue a representative sample. Eleven surveys were completed, providing data from three urban, three reservation, and five rural schools.

The only demographic question the respondents were asked was their number of years of music teaching experience. Because underserved school systems are likelier to struggle with teacher attrition (Darling-Hammond & Sykes, 2003; Hanushek, Kain, &

Rivkin, 1999; Ingersoll, 2001, 2003; Jacob, 2007; Renfro, 2003), the distribution of new and experienced teachers was of interest. While longevity in the field is not necessarily an indicator of longevity within a district, a high frequency of new educators within the sample would indicate recent turnover or retirement at most of the sampled schools. Figure 3 represents the distribution of years of music teaching experience.

**Figure 3**

*Distribution of Years of Experience in Music Education*




There were no novice teachers in the sample. The results show that the average number of years of teaching experience for the respondents was ($M$ = 18.27, $SD$ = 8.64), ranging from nine years to forty years of experience, with a median of fifteen years of experience.

## Research Question One: Scheduling

Determining the type and breadth of music courses offered, and whether they occur during or outside the school day, was the function of this research question. The first item in the OTL Survey was a checklist of potential music courses, which respondents could acknowledge as either being taught during the school day, as an extracurricular, or not at all ("N/A"). Four blank spaces were listed at the bottom so that educators could record any other courses they teach that were not specified. Enumerated courses included General Music, Choir, Band, Orchestra, Lessons, Nontraditional Ensembles, Music History, and Music Theory. In the blank spaces, some respondents listed "World Music, and music composition as part of IB Music" ($n = 1$); "Music Tech" ($n = 1$); "Jazz Band" ($n = 2$); "Guitar" ($n = 1$); and "Electronic Composition" ($n = 1$) as other music courses taught during the school day. Table 1 represents the frequency of these course offerings across the full sample of schools, with "Music Tech," "World Music/Music Composition," and "Electronic Composition" combined as "Music Composition."

**Table 1**

*Frequency of Music Course Offerings During the School Day Across School Categories*

| Music Course | Frequency | % of Respondents |
|---|---|---|
| General Music | 10 | 90.9 |
| Choir | 9 | 81.8 |
| Band | 10 | 90.9 |
| Orchestra | 3 | 27.3 |
| Lessons | 3 | 27.3 |
| Non-traditional Ensembles | 3 | 27.3 |
| Music History | 3 | 27.3 |
| Music Theory | 2 | 18.2 |
| Music Composition* | 3 | 27.3 |
| Jazz band | 3 | 27.3 |
| Guitar | 1 | 9.1 |

**Note.* "Music Composition" represents three self-reported courses in this vein: "Music Tech," "World Music/Music Composition," and "Electronic Composition."

Some music classes were selected by educators in only one of the school categories, while other courses were selected by several educators across the three school categories. The type and frequency of music coursework offered during the school day at the urban, rural, and reservation schools is outlined in Table 2.

**Table 2**

*Frequency of Music Course Offerings During the School Day by School Category*

| Music Course | Urban | | Rural | | Reservation | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Frequency | % | Frequency | % | Frequency | % |
| General Music | 2 | 66.7 | 5 | 100 | 3 | 100 |
| Choir | 3 | 100 | 4 | 80 | 2 | 66.7 |
| Band | 3 | 100 | 4 | 80 | 3 | 100 |
| Orchestra | 3 | 100 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Lessons | 0 | 0 | 2 | 40 | 1 | 33.3 |
| Nontraditional Ensembles | 1 | 33.3 | 1 | 20 | 1 | 33.3 |
| Music History | 1 | 33.3 | 1 | 20 | 1 | 33.3 |
| Music Theory | 1 | 33.3 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 33.3 |
| Music Composition* | 2 | 66.7 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 33.3 |
| Jazz Band | 3 | 100 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Guitar | 0 | 0 | 1 | 20 | 0 | 0 |

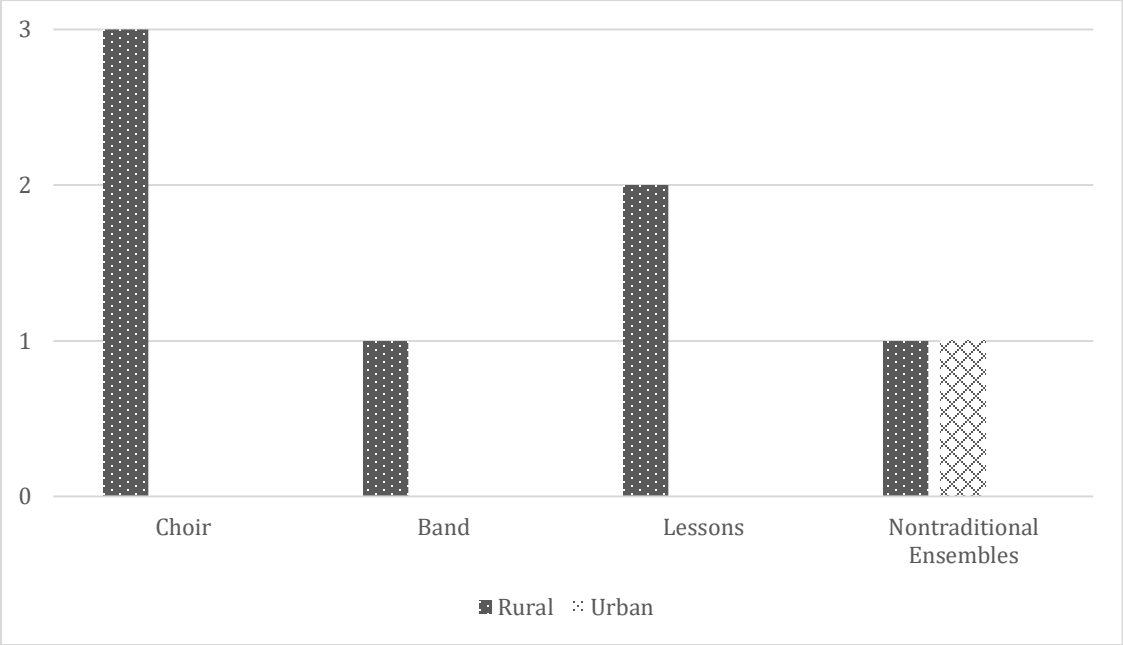
**Note.* "Music Composition" represents three self-reported courses in this vein: "Music Tech," "World Music/Music Composition," and "Electronic Composition."

The two most common course offerings across the three types of schools were General Music and Band, which were selected by every school except one. Orchestra and Jazz Band were only reported by teachers at urban schools, while Guitar was only reported by one rural school. Courses represented in each school category included General Music, Choir, Band, Nontraditional Ensembles, and Music History. Lessons were reportedly taught during the day at certain rural and reservation schools, but not at any urban schools in this sample.

All of the extracurricular courses were provided by rural schools, except for one urban school that offered Nontraditional Ensembles outside the school day. None of the surveyed reservation schools offered extracurricular music courses. Figure 4 illustrates the frequency of each extracurricular course, and the category of school represented.

**Figure 4**

*Frequency of Extracurricular Course Offerings in Rural and Urban Schools*




## Research Question Two: Climate

Much of the data for the second research question was gathered by asking respondents to select a number on a series of five-point numerical rating scales (eighteen consecutive survey items), with 1 corresponding to “Strongly disagree” and 5 corresponding to “Strongly agree.” The first six questions in the “Climate” section focused on parent, community, and administrator support, with such queries as, “My

school welcomes visits or active participation from community stakeholders," and "School administrators promote the success of all students." The next six items dealt with the educators' perceptions of their work environment, and whether or not the school prioritized continuous learning for staff and students. Examples of these items included, "Rules for student behavior are consistently enforced"; "Teachers actively work to create a safe and welcoming environment for every student"; and "Most students are motivated to learn." The subsequent six questions considered concepts such as bullying, the social and emotional needs of students, and whether non-curricular expectations interfered with teaching duties. Queries included, "Students respect each other's differences (for example, gender, race, culture, orientation, etc.)"; and "Student misbehavior interferes with teaching."

Out of the eighteen questions, fourteen were written so that a response of 5 ("Strongly agree") represented a positive appraisal and 1 ("Strongly disagree") represented a negative appraisal. Four of the questions, such as the final example provided above, were drafted so that a response of 5 indicated a negative climate appraisal, while a response of 1 was highly positive. Before applying a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) test to this dataset, the responses to those four questions were reversed so that higher response numbers truly indicated a positive climate appraisal, and lower numbers represented a negative appraisal. The descriptive statistics for climate are outlined in Table 3.

**Table 3**

*Descriptive Statistics for Climate Analysis*

| School Type | *n* | *M* | *SD* | *SE* | 95% Confidence Interval for Mean | | Minimum | Maximum |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | Lower Bound | Upper Bound | | |
| Rural | 5 | 3.777 | 0.349 | 0.156 | 3.344 | 4.210 | 3.22 | 4.17 |
| Urban | 3 | 3.722 | 0.434 | 0.251 | 2.644 | 4.800 | 3.44 | 4.22 |
| Reservation | 3 | 2.880 | 0.321 | 0.185 | 2.083 | 3.678 | 2.53 | 3.17 |
| Total | 11 | 3.518 | 0.524 | 0.158 | 3.165 | 3.870 | 2.53 | 4.22 |

It is worth noting that the averages for rural and urban schools skewed positive—above a three on a five-point scale—while the reservation average fell slightly below the midpoint of the scale. This suggests that, in this sample, rural and urban educators' feelings regarding school climate generally trended toward the positive. While the reservation sample had the lowest overall perception of school climate ($M$ = 2.880), the average was still approaching neutral.

Table 4 provides the summary of the ANOVA used to detect differences in the perception of climate by teachers at the three school types.

**Table 4**

*ANOVA Summary Table for School Climate Evaluation*

| | *SS* | *df* | *MS* | *F* | *p* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between Groups | 1.680 | 2 | 0.840 | 6.287 | 0.023 |
| Within Groups | 1.069 | 8 | 0.134 | | |
| Total | 2.750 | 10 | | | |

The results of the ANOVA indicated that a significant difference in perception of school climate existed among one or more of the school types at the $p < .05$ level of confidence. Tukey's Honestly Significant Difference (HSD) test, shown in Table 5, was employed as a post hoc test to determine where the significant differences were to be found.

**Table 5**

*Results of Tukey HSD Test for Climate Analysis*

| School Type | | *MD* | *SE* | *p* | 95 % Confidence Interval | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | Lower Bound | Upper Bound |
| Reservation | Rural | -0.89673* | 0.26698 | 0.024 | -1.6596 | -0.1338 |
| | Urban | -0.84183 | 0.29850 | 0.053 | -1.6948 | 0.0111 |
| Rural | Reservation | 0.89673* | 0.26698 | 0.024 | 0.1338 | 1.6596 |
| | Urban | 0.05490 | 0.26698 | 0.977 | -0.7080 | 0.8178 |
| Urban | Reservation | 0.84183 | 0.29850 | 0.053 | -0.0111 | 1.6948 |
| | Rural | -0.05490 | 0.26698 | 0.977 | -0.8178 | 0.7080 |

*$p < .05$.

The next item in the Climate section asked, "I perceive the overall student achievement level in core classes to be," and provided a five-point numerical rating scale distinguished by the following gradations, with the term *average* meaning "typical": 1 = Far below average, 2 = Below average, 3 = Average, 4 = Above average, and 5 = Far above average. The descriptive statistics for perceived student achievement are reported in Table 6.

**Table 6**

*Descriptive Statistics for Perceived Student Achievement in Core Classes by School Category*

| Urban ($n$ = 3) | | Rural ($n$ = 5) | | Reservation ($n$ = 1) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *M* | *SD* | *M* | *SD* | *M* | *SD* |
| 3.333 | 0.577 | 3.6 | 0.894 | 2 | 0 |

The respondents from rural schools, on average, perceived their students' achievement in core classes to be the highest out of the three school categories. At 3.6, the mean was only slightly higher than the urban teachers' average response, which was 3.333; additionally, the standard deviation at the rural schools was more substantial than at the urban schools. Only one of the three reservation school teachers responded to this question, providing an incomplete picture of music teachers' perceptions of student achievement in core classes at reservation schools.

The next question was represented by a three-point numerical rating scale, and stated, "I perceive the annual percentage of staff turnover at my school to be," with a response of 1 indicating turnover that is "Low (less than 10%)," a response of 2 indicating "Medium (between 10% and 20%)," and a response of 3 indicating "High (more than 20%)." The descriptive statistics for perception of annual staff turnover are outlined in Table 7.

**Table 7**

*Descriptive Statistics for Perceived Level of Annual Staff Turnover by School Category*

| Urban (*n* = 3) | | Rural (*n* = 5) | | Reservation (*n* = 3) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *M* | *SD* | *M* | *SD* | *M* | *SD* |
| 2.333 | 0.577 | 1.8 | 0.837 | 2.667 | 0.667 |

Out of the three school categories, reservation school respondents perceived the average annual turnover at their schools to be the highest, with a mean of 2.667 on a three-point scale. This was followed by the urban schools, which averaged 2.333 on a three-point scale, with a slightly smaller standard deviation than the reservation school respondents. The rural music educators perceived the lowest average annual turnover of the three school categories ($M = 1.8$), with the highest standard deviation ($SD = 0.837$). Although the rural schools represented the lowest perceived annual staff turnover, the average rating was still closer to "Medium" (between 10% and 20% of staff) than "Low."

The final two items in the Climate section were self-report inventories, analyzed using descriptive statistics. The former question, regarding years of music teaching experience, was discussed in the demographics section above. The latter question asked, "The number of weekly planning minutes in my schedule is," and permitted respondents to type their exact number of planning minutes. Respondents across all three categories reported a ($M = 300.682$, $SD = 149.031$) number of planning minutes per week, with a median score of 300 minutes. The results of this survey item were analyzed using descriptive statistics, and are reported in Table 8.

**Table 8**

*Weekly Planning Minutes by School Category*

| Urban (*n* = 3) | | Rural (*n* = 5) | | Reservation (*n* = 3) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *M* | *SD* | *M* | *SD* | *M* | *SD* |
| 500 | 0 | 204 | 104.127 | 262.5 | 64.952 |

## Research Question Three: Curriculum

The third research question, "Do participants have access to curricular resources, mentorship, and professional development opportunities," was represented in the OTL Survey as two sections of five-point numerical rating scales. The first four questions in this section asked the respondents to assess the state of music curriculum and staff mentorship at their school, with 1 corresponding to "Strongly disagree," and 5 corresponding to "Strongly agree." The final two questions dealt with the presence or absence of music-specific professional development in the district, and the approval or denial of music-related professional development activities proposed by the teacher. These questions also utilized five-point numerical rating scales, with 1 represented by "Strongly disagree," and 5 represented by "Strongly agree." The descriptive statistics for these curriculum and teacher development questions are presented in Table 9. The data regarding curricular and teacher development resources were analyzed using a one-way ANOVA, the results of which are depicted in Table 10.

**Table 9**

*Descriptive Statistics for Teacher Development Analysis*

| School Type | *n* | *M* | *SD* | *SE* | 95% Confidence Interval for Mean | | Minimum | Maximum |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | Lower Bound | Upper Bound | | |
| Rural | 5 | 2.467 | 0.650 | 0.291 | 1.660 | 3.274 | 1.33 | 3.00 |
| Urban | 3 | 4.667 | 0.289 | 0.167 | 3.950 | 5.384 | 4.50 | 5.00 |
| Reservation | 3 | 1.944 | 1.347 | 0.778 | -1.402 | 5.291 | 0.50 | 3.17 |
| Total | 11 | 2.924 | 1.361 | 0.410 | 2.010 | 3.839 | 0.50 | 5.00 |

**Table 10**

*ANOVA Summary Table for Teacher Development Evaluation*

| | *SS* | *df* | *MS* | *F* | *p* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between Groups | 13.035 | 2 | 6.518 | 9.506 | 0.008 |
| Within Groups | 5.485 | 8 | 0.686 | | |
| Total | 18.520 | 10 | | | |

The Tukey HSD test was applied as a post hoc test to the ANOVA, as shown in Table 11.

**Table 11**

*Results of Tukey HSD Test for Teacher Development Analysis*

| School Type | | *MD* | *SE* | *p* | 95 % Confidence Interval | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | Lower Bound | Upper Bound |
| Rural | Urban | -2.20000* | 0.60471 | 0.016 | -3.9279 | -0.4721 |
| | Reservation | 0.52222 | 0.60471 | 0.677 | -1.2057 | 2.2502 |
| Urban | Rural | 2.20000* | 0.60471 | 0.016 | 0.4721 | 3.9279 |
| | Reservation | 2.72222* | 0.67609 | 0.009 | 0.7903 | 4.6541 |
| Reservation | Rural | -0.52222 | 0.60471 | 0.677 | -2.2502 | 1.2057 |
| | Urban | -2.72222* | 0.67609 | 0.009 | -4.6541 | -0.7903 |

*$p < .05$.

## Research Question Four: Staffing

Research question four concerned staffing: "Is the number of students per music teacher statistically significantly different in reservation, non-Native rural, and urban schools?" The OTL Survey presented six self-report questions regarding enrollment of elementary, middle school, and high school musicians; number of full-time music educators at the school; number of part-time music educators at the school; and the percentage of the respondent's position dedicated to music education. Table 12 shows the descriptive statistics for questions regarding staffing.

**Table 12**

*Descriptive Statistics for Student-to-Teacher Ratio Analysis*

| School Type | *n* | *M* | *SD* | *SE* | 95% Confidence Interval for Mean | | Min | Max |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | Lower Bound | Upper Bound | | |
| Rural | 5 | 199.400 | 99.382 | 44.445 | 76.001 | 322.799 | 97.00 | 365.00 |
| Urban | 11 | 108.991 | 36.895 | 11.124 | 84.204 | 133.778 | 62.50 | 137.25 |
| Reservation | 4 | 151.500 | 55.597 | 27.798 | 63.033 | 239.967 | 116.00 | 233.00 |
| Total | 20 | 140.095 | 69.260 | 15.487 | 107.681 | 172.510 | 62.50 | 365.00 |

The number of teachers listed in each school category in Table 12 represents the number of reported music teachers across the schools in each specific category. For example, although only three reservation schools provided responses, one of the schools reported two full-time music educators, for a total of four in the category of reservation schools. Unsurprisingly, the number of music teachers across the three urban schools was highest, totaling eleven. When conducting a one-way ANOVA to determine if there was a statistically significant difference in student-to-teacher ratios, it was assumed that for schools with multiple music teachers, each educator was responsible for an approximately equal number of students. Because all of the teachers were listed as full-time music teachers in these instances, this was considered an acceptable assumption.

The results of the one-way ANOVA to determine differences in student-to-teacher ratios are illustrated in Table 13. The Tukey HSD analysis is presented in Table 14.

**Table 13**

*ANOVA Summary Table for Student-to-Teacher Ratio Evaluation*

| | *SS* | *df* | *MS* | *F* | *p* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between Groups | 28,747.820 | 2 | 14,373.910 | 3.916 | 0.040 |
| Within Groups | 62,392.919 | 17 | 3670.172 | | |
| Total | 91,140.740 | 19 | | | |

**Table 14**

*Results of Tukey HSD Test for Student-to-Teacher Ratio Analysis*

| | | | | | 95 % Confidence Interval | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| School Type | | *MD* | *SE* | *p* | Lower Bound | Upper Bound |
| Reservation | Rural | -47.90000 | 40.63960 | 0.481 | -152.1551 | 56.3551 |
| | Urban | 42.50909 | 35.37223 | 0.468 | -48.2333 | 133.2515 |
| Rural | Reservation | 47.90000 | 40.63960 | 0.481 | -56.3551 | 152.1551 |
| | Urban | 90.40909* | 32.67547 | 0.034 | 6.5848 | 174.2333 |
| Urban | Reservation | -42.50909 | 35.37223 | 0.468 | -133.2515 | 48.2333 |
| | Rural | -90.40909* | 32.67547 | 0.034 | -174.2333 | -6.5848 |

*$p < .05$.

## Research Question Five: Equipment and Materials

Research question five focused on the instruments, technology, and other equipment and materials available to music educators in the sample. For seventeen specific items in a checklist, respondents were asked to select, “I have what I need,” “I have some of what I need,” or “I do not have what I need.” Because many music programs differ with regard to coursework, grade levels, and scheduling, the questions

were formatted so that respondents could determine whether the presence or absence of each checklist item was sufficient for the needs of their programs. For example, some music educators require access to hardware and software for electronic composition to provide a quality music education for their students, while others approach the standard for creation of music differently. Some music educators benefit from choral risers for performances, while others teach only instrumental music and may have no use for risers.

A chi-square analysis was applied to determine if any significant differences existed between observed and expected frequencies in each category of access to resources ("I have what I need," "I have some of what I need," and "I do not have what I need"). The expected frequencies values were computed using the formula (row sum x column sum) / total, which is a formula commonly used in the chi-square test of independence contingency table.

The observed frequencies are listed in Table 15.

**Table 15**

*Contingency Table for Teacher Evaluation of Available Resources by School Type*

| | | ***Teacher Resource Score*** | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Do not have what I need | Have some of what I need | Have what I need | Total |
| **School Type** | Reservation (*n* = 3) | 20 | 13 | 18 | 51 |
| | Rural (*n* = 4) | 10 | 13 | 45 | 68 |
| | Urban (*n* = 3) | 2 | 27 | 22 | 51 |
| | Total | 32 | 53 | 85 | 170 |

The 3 (school type) X 3 (teacher resource score) cross-tabulation analysis showed that a significant difference, $X^2$ (4, $N$ = 10) = 35.59, $p$ < .05, existed among the school types in terms of their assessment of the resources available to them to achieve student learning outcomes, as reflected in the Nebraska State Fine Arts Standards.

## Summary

The data collected for the five research questions by the OTL Survey were analyzed in a variety of ways. The only demographic information collected was the number of years of music teaching experience for each respondent, which was analyzed using descriptive statistics and presented as a bar graph. There were no novice teachers in this sample, with years of experience ranging from nine to forty years, with a median of fifteen years of experience. These numbers did not indicate how long the educators from the sample had worked within their respective districts, or within the categories of urban, rural, and reservation schools in the state of Nebraska.

Descriptive statistics were employed to examine the results of question one. This question sought to determine the types of courses taught during and outside the school day in each of the three school categories. Regarding courses taught during the school day, General Music and Band were the most frequent responses across the entire sample ($n$ = 10), followed immediately by Choir ($n$ = 9), with a sharp decline in responses for every other course category. The least frequent responses ($n$ = 1) included a few self-reported courses, and several enumerated courses received only two or three responses. Table 2 presented the frequency and percentage of respondents from each school category who reported teaching specific courses during the day, to reveal the course breakdown by school category. Some courses were only taught in urban schools from the

sample (Orchestra, Jazz Band, World Music/Music Composition, and Music Tech), and Guitar was only taught at one rural school. Aside from specifically listing Electronic Composition as a course offered during the school day, there were no courses unique to the reservation schools in the sample. Aside from Orchestra and Guitar, the other music classes received responses from at least two of the three school categories. Finally, the responses regarding extracurricular music coursework were presented in Figure 4, revealing that from this sample of educators, all extracurricular instruction is provided at rural schools, aside from one instance of Nontraditional Ensembles being offered at an urban school.

Research question two concerned teachers' perceptions of their school climate. The bulk of the data from this question were analyzed using a one-way ANOVA and Tukey's HSD post hoc test, which found a significant difference in the perception of climate between teachers at rural and reservation schools. The rest of the numerical rating scale and self-report inventory questions utilized to attain climate data were analyzed using descriptive statistics. Rural music educators' perception of their students' achievement in core classes was highest out of the three school categories, followed by urban music educators. Only one reservation music teacher responded to this question, providing little comparative information. Teachers in reservation school environments perceived the highest annual staff turnover rate, followed by urban, then rural. Even the rural music educators' perceptions of annual staff turnover averaged near a medium turnover rate (between 10% and 20% of staff). Finally, urban music educators reported the most planning time during the school day by far ($M$ = 500, $SD$ = 0). This was followed by reservation educators' planning minutes ($M$ = 262.5, $SD$ = 64.952), with the

least amount of plan time—and the greatest variability within those responses—reported by rural educators ($M$ = 204, $SD$ = 104.127).

The analysis of research question three examined access to curricular and teacher development resources. The results of the ANOVA and Tukey's HSD post hoc tests revealed that urban music educators have significantly more access to curricular and teacher development resources than rural or reservation music teachers. There was no significant difference detected between the access of rural or reservation music educators to these resources.

Research question four utilized self-report inventories to investigate the staffing situation in each of these school categories. A one-way ANOVA was applied to determine whether any significant differences in student-to-teacher ratios existed; rural music educators were found to be responsible for a significantly larger number of students ($M$ = 199.4) than urban music educators ($M$ = 108.991). The mean number of students per teacher at rural schools nearly doubles that of the urban schools, with no significant difference found between either of these categories and the reservation schools ($M$ = 151.5).

In analyzing research question five, a chi-square analysis was employed to discover if teachers had the expected amount of access to the equipment and materials needed to achieve student learning outcomes, and significant differences were found to exist. Reservation music educators reported significantly less access to equipment and material resources than expected, and their assessment that, "I do not have what I need" represented 62.5% of responses in that category, in contrast to 31.3% rural and 6.3% urban responses. Rural music educators reported the most access to equipment and

materials, as indicated by 52.9% of responses in the category, “I have what I need,” compared with 25.9% urban and 21.2% reservation responses. Urban music educators reported slightly less than expected access within the “I have what I need” category, but also selected, “I do not have what I need” less frequently than expected, with responses of, “I have some of what I need” being higher than expected.

# Chapter Five: Summary, Discussion, and Recommendations

## Summary

### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the commonalities and differences in school climate and access to resources among urban, rural, and reservation Nebraska public school districts to determine their readiness to achieve Nebraska State Music Standards.

### Procedure

The data for this survey were collected via a web-based survey tool, which was based on the "Survey of Nebraska School Music Programs," developed by Nierman (1998). The OTL Survey was sent to a random stratified sample of Nebraska music educators serving socioeconomically diverse, urban Class AA schools; Class C and D rural schools; and teachers from the population of reservation schools in the state. The sample of music educators was asked to report their course offerings and staffing situation; to offer their perception of school climate, annual staff turnover, and student achievement; and to evaluate their access to curricular and teacher development resources, and equipment and materials. The survey tool was generated using *Qualtrics*, and was distributed via email.

### Design of the Study

This study was quantitative in nature, devised to discover any statistically significant differences in access to the resources needed to achieve student learning outcomes for underserved school music programs in urban, rural, and reservation settings

in the state of Nebraska. Data were analyzed using a combination of F-tests, chi-square analysis, and descriptive statistics, as presented in Chapter Four.

## Results

### Research Question One: Scheduling

The first research question considered the variety and frequency of courses taught during and outside the school day at each of the three school categories. The first section of the OTL Survey utilized a checklist to obtain data for this question, enumerating eight potential courses and providing four additional spaces for alternate music course titles. The results indicated that General Music and Band were taught most frequently across the sample, in all schools but one, or at 90.9% of schools in this sample. Choir was reported to be taught at nine of the schools, or 81.8% of this sample, during the day. All other enumerated and self-reported courses received far fewer responses, with a minimum of one and a maximum of three.

Trends in the data included the following: All three urban schools offered Orchestra and Jazz Band, and only the urban schools in this sample offered these courses. Only one rural school reported teaching Guitar, and none of the urban or reservation schools reported this course. No rural schools reported teaching Music Theory or Music Composition, while at least one urban and one reservation school did. All extracurricular coursework was offered by rural schools, with the exception of one urban school that provided extracurricular Nontraditional Ensembles. The most frequent extracurricular offering was choir, at three rural schools; this was immediately followed by lessons, at two rural schools.

**Research Question Two: Climate**

The second research question concerned educators' perceptions of their school climate, primarily expressed by eighteen survey items formatted as five-point numerical rating scales. These questions focused on parent, community, and administrative support; enforcement of expectations and attitude toward continuous learning; and school safety and students' social and emotional wellbeing. An ANOVA analysis of the data, conducted at the .05 level of confidence, revealed a significant difference or differences in the perception of climate, $F(2, 8) = 6.287$, $p = .023$ among the three school settings. Tukey's HSD was then employed as a post hoc test to determine where the significant differences were found. There was a statistically significant difference between rural ($M = 3.777$) and reservation schools ($M = 2.880$). There was no statistically significant difference between reservation and urban schools, or between urban and rural schools; the urban school mean was slightly lower than the rural mean ($M = 3.722$). All three means were skewed toward the positive end of the climate spectrum, with even the lowest mean rating above a 2.5 on a five-point scale.

The next question in the Climate section, also posed using a five-point numerical rating scale, asked teachers to evaluate their students' overall achievement level in core classes. This question was included to garner music educators' perceptions of the overall student achievement level at their school. The researcher specifically sought to address the concerns and celebrate the successes of music educators in underserved areas of Nebraska, and one factor that often contributes to the perception of a school as being underserved is lower levels of achievement (Hanushek et al., 1999; Ronfeldt, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2013). The respondents from rural schools, on average, perceived their

students' achievement in core classes to be the highest ($M$ = 3.6), followed by urban ($M$ = 3.333), and then reservation respondents ($M$ = 2). Only one of the reservation school music teachers responded to this question, so that response may not be representative of the cohort of reservation schools in Nebraska.

Next, surveyed educators were asked to report their perceived rate of annual staff turnover: Low (less than 10%), Medium (between 10% and 20%) and High (more than 20%). Out of the three school categories, reservation school respondents reported the highest annual turnover at their schools, with a mean of 2.667 on a three-point scale, and a standard deviation of 0.667. This was followed by the urban schools, which averaged 2.333 on a three-point scale, with a slightly smaller standard deviation than the reservation school respondents ($SD$ = 0.577). The rural music educators perceived the lowest average annual turnover of the three school categories ($M$ = 1.8), with the highest standard deviation ($SD$ = 0.837). Although the rural school respondents perceived the annual turnover at their schools to be the lowest, the average rating was still closer to Medium (between 10% and 20% of staff) than Low.

The final two items in this section were self-report inventories; the former asked respondents for their number of years of teaching experience, and the latter asked for their allotted number of weekly planning minutes. The sample consisted entirely of veteran music educators, with the fewest number of years of experience reported as nine, and the most experienced educator reporting forty years in the classroom. The average number of years of teaching experience for the respondents was ($M$ = 18.27, $SD$ = 8.64), with a median of fifteen years.

Regarding plan time, respondents across all school categories reported a ($M$ = 300.682, $SD$ = 149.031) number of planning minutes per week, with a median score of 300 minutes per week. There was no standard deviation among the three urban schools; each of the respondents from this category reported 500 weekly planning minutes, which was considerably higher than any of the teachers in rural or reservation settings. The rural educators reported the lowest average number of planning minutes, at $M$ = 204, with the highest standard deviation, $SD$ = 104.127. The self-reported numbers in this category varied widely; but, on average, rural music educators reported less than half the number of weekly planning minutes of urban music educators. The average number of minutes reported by reservation school music teachers was closer to the rural average than the urban average ($M$ = 262.5), with less variability among responses.

**Research Question Three: Curriculum**

Research question three focused on educators' access to curricular and teacher development resources, as assessed by six numerical rating scale survey items. Again, an ANOVA analysis ($p < .05$) was conducted, $F(2, 8) = 9.506$, $p = .008$, and the Tukey HSD test was used to as a post hoc test to identify the significant difference(s). Significant differences in access were found to exist between urban ($M$ = 4.667) and rural ($M$ = 2.467) educators, and between urban and reservation ($M$ = 1.944) educators. No significant difference in access to curricular and teacher development resources was detected between rural and reservation music educators.

**Research Question Four: Staffing**

Question four was designed to determine if there was a significant difference in student-to-teacher ratios between the three school categories, as well as to describe the

staffing situation within these categories by asking how many full- and part-time music teachers were on staff, and what percentage of the surveyed educator's job was dedicated to music instruction. A one-way ANOVA detected a significant difference at the $p < .05$ level, $F(2, 17) = 3.916$, $p = .040$. When the Tukey HSD test was employed as a post hoc analysis, it revealed that rural music educators were responsible for teaching significantly more students than urban music educators in this sample. There was no statistically significant difference found between reservation schools and the other two categories.

**Research Question Five: Equipment and Materials**

Research question five addressed the instruments, technology, and other physical equipment and materials available to help music educators meet the Nebraska State Fine Arts Standards. The final section of the OTL Survey presented a checklist of seventeen items, for which respondents could indicate, "I have what I need," "I have some of what I need," or "I do not have what I need." The 3 (school type) X 3 (teacher resource score) cross-tabulation analysis showed that significant differences, $X^2 (4, N = 10) = 35.59$, $p < .05$, existed among the school types in terms of their assessment of the resources available to them to achieve student learning outcomes, as reflected in the Nebraska State Fine Arts Standards. Reservation music educators reported that they do not have what they need to achieve student learning outcomes far more frequently than rural or urban music educators. In fact, 39.2% of the reservation teacher resource scores fell into the category, "I do not have what I need," and 62.5% of total responses in that category were from reservation music educators. In contrast, 66.2% of rural teacher resource scores fell into the category, "I have what I need," and rural music educators' responses represented 52.9% of responses in this category. Urban music educators' teacher resource scores were

largely split between, “I have some of what I need” (52.9%) and “I have what I need” (43.1%), with only 3.9% falling into the category, “I do not have what I need.”

## Discussion

### Research Question One: Scheduling

The prevalence of ensembles such as choir and band within this sample suggests that, regardless of size and setting, Nebraska schools are expected to adopt the traditional large ensemble model that is ubiquitous nationwide. Often, in addition to their onstage endeavors, bands that perform at sporting events and choirs that contribute music to local institutions present the face of the music program to the community. Therefore, any school with even the bare minimum of resources is likely to cultivate traditional Western ensembles at any achievable size. Additionally, the state of Nebraska facilitates performance opportunities such as the annual Class D All-State Band, as well as conference band and choir clinics, that allow students from schools with low enrollment to participate in large ensembles with other schools from their area.

Because the reservation and rural schools in this sample encompass grades K-12, it was not surprising that general music was offered at each of these schools. General music is the most common school music structure provided at the elementary level, and is also offered fairly often at the middle school level. The unexpected element of these results was that two out of the three surveyed urban high schools reported offering general music as well. One reason these schools may choose to offer general music is to provide fine arts opportunities for students who are unable or unwilling to participate in ensembles. The OTL Survey did not have the scope to examine the reasons for each school’s scheduling choices, so any of these speculations might constitute a reason for

programming general music at the high school level. Additionally, because there is no national or state curriculum for general music beyond Grade 8, the course could include a broad variety of musical activities suitable for consumers or creators of music, students with exceptionalities, or anyone interested in continuing music education outside the realm of ensembles.

Within this sample, orchestra was only offered at the urban schools, which confirms the assumption that orchestral resources are not typically available in small, isolated, or underserved schools in Nebraska. String instruments are expensive, and access to string instrument repair shops is rarer than band instrument repair shops outside the urban areas of the state. It could be argued that band instruments are also expensive to repair and replace, and the research agrees that this is an issue for some underserved music programs issues (Fitzpatrick, 2011; Isbell, 2005; Mixon, 2005; Truscott & Truscott, 2005). However, band instruments can be utilized for athletic as well as stage bands, which might garner additional community support due to the visibility of these ensembles in a variety of venues. Nevertheless, the reality is that if these results are representative of the state of Nebraska, typically, only students in urban and suburban school settings have the ability to participate in Orchestra.

The fact that orchestra was only available to students at the urban schools in this sample, and guitar was only offered at one rural school, might mean that most schools in this sample were immediately disqualified from the scheduling criteria needed to provide a "Quality" music program as defined by the *National Opportunity to Learn Standards* (2020), hereafter referred to as the OTL Standards. As stated in the OTL Standards document, "while the Basic program calls for ensemble classes to be offered beginning in

grade 5, the Quality program requires offerings in all areas specified in the Core standards, including Ensembles and Guitar/Keyboard/Harmonizing Instruments beginning in grade 4 or 5" (NAfME, 2020, p. 2). The core music categories include General Music, Composition/Theory, Music Technology, Guitar/Keyboard/Harmonizing Instruments, and Ensemble categories (NAfME, 2014). Unless a school can provide at least one course from each of those categories, its program cannot merit a rating above "Basic" with regard to Curriculum and Scheduling. Some of the schools in this sample reported coursework in most of the required strands, but no keyboard or harmonizing instruments courses were listed. Perhaps some of the schools incorporated Orff instrument instruction into their general music classes, or featured keyboard as one of the Lessons instruments, but the OTL Survey was unable to ascertain that information. The self-report inventories for this question did not lend themselves to explanations of curriculum and course descriptions.

There were no course offerings unique to the reservation schools in this sample. Although the reservation schools provided students access to Western ensembles, general music, lessons, music composition, and more, none of the respondents specified any Indigenous music courses or ensembles, such as Native American flute or drum groups. One school provided a nontraditional ensemble course, but the type of ensemble was not identified. Again, there are a variety of potential reasons for these results. For instance, the researcher facilitated Native flute studies and encouraged the formation or continuation of drum groups. However, due to scheduling and staffing constraints, there were no specific classes for these musical experiences. Native flute playing fell under the "Lessons" category for this reservation school, as it is largely a meditative, soloistic

experience. Some male students participated in drum groups, but this was viewed as a community endeavor rather than part of the school music curriculum, in no small part due to the sacred nature of the drum, which cannot be touched by females.

The disconnection between cultural music and school music revealed by the results of this study hearkens back to the call for sovereignty of Indigenous education. If the music teacher represented the culture of the reservation school, rather than representing the White, middle-class demographic that dominates education, then Native American student musicians would benefit from deeper, culturally authentic musical experiences that may contribute to their identity and knowledge of their heritage. The music course offerings at a tribally-controlled school might differ significantly from those of a reservation public school. It would be worthwhile to examine the music course offerings at Bureau of Indian Education schools across the United States to compare and contrast their scheduling trends with those of reservation public schools.

**Research Question Two: Climate**

The results of this study revealed several notable findings regarding music teachers' perception of climate. The initial series of eighteen numerical rating scale survey items yielded a significant difference in overall climate perception between reservation school music educators ($M$ = 2.880, $SD$ = 0.321) and those in rural school settings ($M$ = 3.777, $SD$ = 0.349). There was no significant difference between urban music educators' assessment of school climate ($M$ = 3.722, $SD$ = 0.434) and that of reservation or rural music educators. Although the urban mean was closer to the rural mean than the reservation mean, there was not a large enough difference between the climate assessment of reservation and urban music teachers to be statistically

significantly different. Considering the greater access to resources reported by urban schools (as discussed in research questions three and five), the relatively lower student-to-teacher ratio (as discussed in research question four), and the markedly greater number of allotted planning minutes, it follows that urban teachers would report a significantly higher perception of school climate than either reservation or rural teachers.

In fact, rural music educators reported the highest perception of climate, while receiving the lowest number of average planning minutes and teaching significantly more students during the day than either reservation or urban music teachers. On the other hand, rural respondents rated their students' achievement level in core classes to be the highest of the three school categories, and their schools' average annual staff turnover to be the lowest of the three school categories. Perhaps rural educators' perceptions of their students as successful, and their slightly more stable staffing situation, carried more weight for these educators than plan time and access to physical resources. All of these factors have been established as predictors for staff retention, but in the literature, when the question of success in underserved areas arises, support from school personnel and community members is often foremost among the discussion items (Chester & Beaudin, 1996; Hinckley, 1995; Fiese & DeCarbo, 1995; Singer, Murphy, & Singer, 1998; Renfro, 2003; Wilcox, 2004). Most of the numerical rating scale questions in the Climate section of the survey addressed some aspect of support (for staff, students, or the music program; from administrators, parents, or the community), so the results suggest that the rural music educators in this sample perceive the most overall support.

Conversely, urban music educators perceived their students' achievement in core classes to be slightly lower than their rural counterparts, and perceived the annual staff

turnover at their schools to be appreciably higher—closer to the reservation mean than the rural mean. The overall climate average for the urban educators fell between the rural and reservation educators. This suggests that urban music educators perceive somewhat less support (although not significantly less) than rural music educators, and somewhat more support (again, not significantly more) than reservation music educators. Teachers at reservation schools reported the highest perceived annual staff turnover and the lowest overall climate assessment. Reservation music educators also indicated the least amount of access to teacher development resources (significantly less than urban teachers, but not significantly less than rural educators; see research question three) and equipment and materials (significantly different than rural and urban schools; see research question five). It is possible that the frustrations resulting from lack of access, compounded with a perceived lack of support, contributed to this relatively lower climate assessment. However, it bears repeating that the mean climate score for reservation school music teachers was not far below the midpoint on a five-point numerical rating scale.

It is unsurprising that the urban teachers in this study reported the highest number of planning minutes. In the state of Nebraska, public educators' salaries are most often negotiated by teachers' unions and local school boards. By virtue of the district's size, the union for this urban center has greater membership and resources than the isolated local associations that serve the rural and reservation schools. Some educators in that urban center receive more than one planning period per day. By contrast, rural and reservation music educators teach more grades, and have fewer music colleagues on staff, if any. Only two of the eight rural and reservation music educators in this sample reported two full-time music educators on staff. A considerable number of the small public school

districts in Nebraska are comprised of one school building (or two, if the elementary is separate), and only have the resources to employ one music teacher. Their negotiating bodies operate in relative isolation, and in competition with schools that fall into their geographic arrays. Therefore, while this is not an equitable practice, it stands to reason that rural and reservation music educators would be granted less plan time than their urban counterparts.

It would be interesting to find out whether the perception of school climate in these underserved areas might differ if the survey was presented during a different school year, or distributed at a different time of year. The OTL Survey was distributed during mid-to-late spring of 2022, which is later in the year than most educational surveys. This timeline may have influenced the number of survey responses from reservation and rural schools, which were lower than expected. Additionally, recent school years have been impacted to some degree by the global pandemic, with school districts everywhere facing some degree of additional hardship. Would there have been a difference in perceived school climate if the survey had been distributed in 2019? In future studies of this nature, it will be interesting to note whether underserved schools exhibit any difference in perceived climate as our nation moves past the pandemic and increasingly resumes normal teaching routines, or incorporates new pandemic protocols into practice.

**Research Question Three: Curriculum**

The results of this study clearly indicated that urban music educators have significantly more access to curricular and teacher development resources than rural or reservation music teachers. The urban district in which the surveyed educators teach has access to a central music library, a collection of instruments available for rent, and a

plethora of music teachers within proximity to one another who can collaborate on curricular ideas and share physical resources. There is music-specific professional development available within this urban center, because there is a much larger number of educators who benefit from it than in isolated rural or reservation settings, where curricular resources are fewer and the sole music teacher often represents the district. When music-specific professional development is not available in the district, many music teachers seeking educational or networking opportunities join professional organizations. Most of the professional associations available to music educators represent specialized coursework, such as the Nebraska State Bandmasters Association, the American String Teachers Association, and the Nebraska Choral Directors Association. Reservation and rural music educators, who often teach students at a variety of levels up to PK-12, could choose to join multiple professional organizations to attain specialized assistance befitting all of their students. Unfortunately, this endeavor can be cost-prohibitive and overwhelming.

On the other hand, the Nebraska Music Education Association represents Nebraska music educators in all settings. This organization hosts an annual conference in Lincoln, Nebraska, and provides ample professional development sessions hosted by educators and music professionals. However, the conference relies on practicing music educators to submit applications for hosting sessions, and the session content largely depends upon the expertise of those who have the time and inclination to host. This means that there are often fewer sessions focused on the particular needs of rural music educators, and no sessions specific to the needs of reservation music educators. If teachers in remote areas of the state contribute the time and resources to travel to the

southeast corner of Nebraska to attain professional development, and find little relevant information, they are unlikely to return for future conferences. The Nebraska Music Education Association's conference in November of 2021 featured two sessions targeted toward rural, small-school, and K-12 music educators out of over fifty available sessions. Teachers seeking professional development in Indigenous music education could work with community musicians, if the option is available, or attend national symposia such as the National Indian Education Association conference, if granted access and funding. Again, these are effortful endeavors that must be initiated by isolated educators receiving relatively little plan time (see research question four) and teaching a broad variety of coursework (see research question one). The fact that there is little access to professional development and curricular resources for music educators in reservation and rural areas is alarming, especially considering that rural settings represent the vast majority of public school districts in the state of Nebraska.

The OTL Standards (2020) document outlines the following professional development framework for schools to meet the criteria of a "Basic" music education:

> Each school district or school provides a regular program of in-service education that includes at least two paid days for professional development activities arranged by the district or school each year for every music educator. In addition, every music educator is permitted at least one paid day of leave each year for professional development activities proposed by the teacher and approved by the school. (NAfME, 2020, p. 6)

Questions relating to paid professional leave were not included in the survey, so it is uncertain whether the schools in any of the three settings actually met the OTL specific

criteria for Basic or Quality programs with regard to professional development opportunities. The urban schools had a statistically higher mean for "Teacher Development Activity" than either the rural or the reservation schools, which were not statistically significantly different from each other. The fact that the urban school mean ($M$ = 4.667 on a 5-point scale) was near the top rating suggests that the urban teachers perceived their available "Teacher Development Activity" to be more than adequate for meeting state and national music standards. The rural and reservation teachers, on the other hand, had means below 3.00, the midpoint of the ratings, ($M$ = 2.467 and $M$ = 1.994, respectively). This suggests that rural and reservation school music educators did not feel that their districts were meeting their needs for professional or curriculum development. It may be difficult for schools in rural and reservation settings to prepare for helping their students to achieve state and national music standards.

There are options for increasing professional development opportunities specific to the needs of reservation music educators, within both state and national contexts. For example, Educational Service Units are available to all rural and reservation schools, and can assist in securing music-related professional development opportunities. Additionally, Professional Learning Communities should be encouraged among educators at reservation schools in order to increase mentorship, collaboration, and exchange of resources with educators in similar teaching environments. Similarly, reservation school districts should facilitate connections with Indigenous professional organizations, such as the National Indian Education Association. Some of NIEA's annual conventions contain music-specific sessions, and all of the organization's conventions include pow wows and gatherings featuring music from a variety of live

drum circles. Out of several hundred public school districts in the state of Nebraska, only four are reservation schools; therefore, those educators should strive to familiarize themselves with any local or national resources that will assist in providing a quality, culturally responsive education for their students.

**Research Question Four: Staffing**

A number of factors may contribute to the relatively low student-to-teacher ratio at the urban schools in this sample. While Nebraska's Class AA urban high schools have much higher student enrollments than the Class C and Class D schools represented herein by the rural and reservation schools, music classes are not technically required at the high school level in Nebraska, unless these music classes are the only avenue for achieving fine arts credits. Most often, music courses at the high school level are simply some of a variety of courses—including visual arts courses and theater courses—that can fulfill fine arts graduation requirements. Therefore, the urban music educators surveyed must rely on recruitment of students to their elective courses, and retention of musicians from feeder programs in elementary and middle schools, to maintain or increase their numbers. Furthermore, the urban schools in the sample reported a total of eleven full-time music educators across three schools. Thus, even though the number of students enrolled in music at these schools ($M$ = 400 students per school) is higher than at the rural ($M$ = 249 students per school) and reservation ($M$ = 202 per school) schools, the average number of students for which each urban educator is responsible is lower by virtue of the number of available staff members.

These results shed light on the staffing of music programs in Nebraska, and highlight how crucial it is to recruit and retain quality music educators at rural and

reservation schools. Many isolated districts across the expanse of the state are represented by only one or two music teachers, who are responsible for the music education of hundreds of students. When one of these educators leaves or retires, the institutional knowledge accrued and applied over years of service is often lost. Additionally, the research clearly states that it is more difficult for underserved school settings to recruit and retain educators, especially if the local pool of educators is small (Boyd, Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2005; Jacob, 2007; Truscott & Truscott, 2005; Young, 2018). Acknowledging that many music teachers in the state of Nebraska are the sole source of music education for an entire district of students should impact everything from the preservice education available to prospective educators, to the resources and mentorship available for new educators, to the strategies enacted to support and retain quality music educators.

Preservice education programs should work with isolated and underserved districts, whenever possible, to provide student teaching experiences in these settings. The assertion in the literature that prospective urban music educators who experience urban music classrooms firsthand are better prepared to teach in those environments could conceivably be applied to rural (Prest, 2013) and reservation contexts. The more exposure one has to a particular classroom environment, the better one can develop strategies for success in that particular environment, with the assistance of the resources at one's disposal.

All public school districts should provide new teacher mentorship programs in order to encourage professional growth and retention. This is perhaps especially imperative in districts with only one teacher per subject area, particularly when the

district is geographically isolated from other schools. Administrative support and staff mentorship is a recurring theme in the research literature regarding teacher retention and teacher success in underserved schools. Therefore, administrators should provide guidance and support, particularly to new educators, and facilitate collaboration with other music educators in similar school environments.

Many of the specifications for staffing in the OTL Standards (2020)—access to in-service training for and consultation regarding special education, access to teacher aides if they are available for other classes, collaboration with community arts organizations when it befits the curriculum—were not addressed in the OTL Survey. However, one hallmark of a quality music program is the provision that "class loads for music teachers are not significantly higher than other academic areas. Ratios should be established to ensure additional music teachers are hired to ensure equitable music instruction for all students" (p. 6). According to the *U.S. News and World Report* (n.d.), the average student-teacher ratio in the urban high schools whose music teachers took this survey was 14.667:1. In the rural schools, the average student-teacher ratio was 10:1; and in the reservation schools, the average student-teacher ratio was 8:1 The corresponding student-music teacher ratio for these school settings was 109:1, 152:1, and 140:1, respectively. The ratio of music teacher to students in all of these Nebraska school settings are significantly higher than recommended. Are Nebraska schools staffed to help students achieve music standards? These figures would indicate that music programs in all of these settings are greatly understaffed.

**Research Question Five: Equipment and Materials**

While the urban music educators in this sample reported by far the most access to curricular and teacher development resources, the rural music educators reported more access to the equipment and materials needed to achieve student learning outcomes than reservation or urban educators. The urban music teachers reported, “I have what I need” less often than expected; “I do not have what I need” far less frequently than expected; and, “I have some of what I need” both more often than expected and most often overall. This result is somewhat unanticipated, given the urban center’s access to a pool of physical resources and opportunities for collaboration with a number of nearby music teachers. However, no district has infinite resources, and the communal resources available to this urban district are shared by a large number of people. Additionally, because there is no state or national curriculum for music education, and because the local context and clientele should and do impact the shape of music programs, the equipment and materials needed to meet the needs of students can differ dramatically between districts. Perhaps the urban schools in the sample have less access to the type, caliber, and quantity of equipment and materials needed to provide a comparable music education to schools with students that come from higher SES homes in their district. It is easier to draw direct comparisons between music programs within the Class AA urban setting than it is between rural Class C and D schools in the same regional conference, which may differ in many immediately perceptible ways. Thus, with little reason or basis for comparison, the rural music educators in the sample may feel that they generally have what they need to provide a quality music education within the parameters of their districts.

In contrast, the reservation school music teachers reported that they did not have what they need far more frequently than expected, with the observed frequency ($n$ = 20) more than double the expected frequency for that category ($n$ = 9.6). The observed frequency of the response, "I have what I need" ($n$ = 18) was notably less than the expected frequency ($n$ = 25.5). Although reservation schools serve high-need populations and face a number of unique challenges, the reservation public schools in Nebraska receive grant funding to compensate for the lack of a tax base. At least two of the four schools have recently secured funding to update their facilities, so it is surprising that the respondents reported a lack of necessary equipment and materials. A myriad of factors could underlie this particular issue, including lack of arts-specific budgeting, administrative attitudes toward the music program, or lack of experience in the position necessary to cultivate advocacy and attain resources. While the teachers in this sample were all veteran music educators, it is possible that some of them had recently accepted the position in the district at which they were surveyed. Stepping into a music program requires time to adjust and assess before procuring additional resources. However, the longevity of the surveyed educators within each district is unknown; and the reason or reasons for the significantly low assessment of access to equipment and materials at the reservation districts is a matter of speculation meriting further research.

The "Equipment and Materials" section of the survey only provided a cursory overview of some of the physical music supplies that would assist in achieving student learning outcomes. There were no questions regarding access to high-quality pianos in every music classroom, or school-sanctioned Web portals. The existence of a specific annual budget and a written depreciation and replacement plan was not considered. Given

NAfME's charge that the annual budget should be "equal to at least 5 percent of the current replacement value of the total inventory of instruments and equipment" (p. 7) in order to achieve a basic score, many or all of the surveyed schools likely fall short of this goal. Even the rural music educators in this sample still only reported having some of what they needed in certain instances. It is improbable that the public school music budgets of underserved districts in Nebraska meet or exceed five percent of the replacement value of their entire inventory.

## Recommendations for Further Research

The primary goal of this study was to illuminate the state of music education at underserved areas in Nebraska. This included analyzing the capacity of music programs at rural, urban, and reservation schools to achieve the Nebraska State Fine Arts Standards with the resources at their disposal. This study also strove to highlight the challenges and rewards inherent in teaching at underserved districts in Nebraska, with particular emphasis on reservation schools, which have been largely overlooked in the literature. Foremost among the recommendations for further research is the exhortation that reservation public schools deserve acknowledgement within the body of educational research. Little is known of the common practices, needs, and specific joys of teaching—and, specifically, of teaching music—in reservation school settings. Therefore, many assumptions are made about the school systems situated on reservations, and these assumptions have the potential to negatively impact efforts to recruit and retain quality educators. Research on best practices for Indigenous music education would be highly valuable, considering the lack of access to professional development for music teachers at reservation schools. Finally, just as sovereign nations within the United States must be

recognized as a vital part of our population rather than being relegated to the past tense, reservation and tribal schools in the United States should be considered equally worthy of study as other underserved school contexts.

This study was delimited to the underserved areas of Nebraska, and therefore presents a small sample of educators from urban, rural, and reservation schools in the state. It would be worthwhile to reproduce this study on a larger scale and, now that underserved school categories have been defined, further differentiate the school contexts involved. For example, one might choose to survey the population of reservation school music teachers in the nation, or compare and contrast the resources or structures of music programs at Bureau of Indian Education schools with those in reservation settings. Regarding rural schools, in the state of Nebraska alone, Class C and D public schools number over 200 (NSAA, 2021). Thus, conducting a resource comparison study on the population of rural districts, or some subset thereof, would provide a larger pool of responses from which to draw conclusions.

It would be useful to discover any trends in scheduling at reservation public schools across the United States, including any Indigenous or nontraditional ensembles offered, to make the case for culturally responsive pedagogy that provides authentic musical experiences beneficial to the enrollment numbers and demographics of reservation districts. In the state of Nebraska, the reservation school music educators do not currently have the means for systematic collaboration. Additionally, they have reported inadequate access to the curricular resources, teacher development resources, and equipment and materials necessary to achieve student learning outcomes. Thus, it

would behoove reservation schools to discover alternative music courses, resources, and strategies to effectively meet state and national standards for music education.

School climate is such a profound topic that, to delve deeper into the various factors contributing to music educators' perceptions of school climate, it should be evaluated independently in future studies. While a substantial portion of the OTL Survey was devoted to climate questions, each survey item analyzed a different facet of climate, without any redundancy, and without fully exploring the topic. Replicating or expounding this study's analysis of school climate could potentially reinforce the results. On the other hand, distributing a school climate survey at a different time of year or during a different school year may yield divergent results. Because the survey items in this category were somewhat more subjective and emotionally-based than other questions, this particular element of the study would benefit greatly from replication, hopefully with a larger sample size.

The results of the "Curriculum" section of the survey absolutely bear repeating, and merit further study. Do music educators at underserved and isolated areas of the Midwest lack access to professional development and curricular resources? If the study is reproduced to include underserved districts across the nation, what will the trends in access prove to be? Even reassessing a similar sample of Nebraska music educators in underserved contexts would be productive. If the results of a second OTL Survey echo those of the first, it should provoke action among music education stakeholders and professional organizations to facilitate professional development opportunities that are accessible and relevant to rural and reservation music educators.

The fundamental reason for continuing to study staffing trends in Nebraska is to raise awareness of the discrepancies between the urban and suburban settings, which may be sufficiently staffed with music educators, and the rural and reservation settings, which often have as few as one or two music teachers for the entire district. If the results herein, which indicate that rural music educators are responsible for significantly more students than urban music educators, are confirmed by future studies, there may be serious policy implications. First, preservice education programs in Nebraska will need to vigorously examine their efforts to prepare music educators for the likely event that they will find placement in an underserved rural environment. Second, state professional organizations and curriculum writers should facilitate K-12 music curricula and resources that would help isolated music educators achieve student learning outcomes. Finally, district administrators should develop recruitment and retention strategies for music educators and other specialists who serve large numbers of students, as well as mentorship programs for new staff members. Support is vital to the success and retention of quality music educators; and if the results of this staffing analysis are verified, retention is imperative to the continuing provision of a quality music education to public school students in isolated rural environments.

The results of the "Equipment and Materials" section of this study were unexpected, and warrant additional consideration. Perhaps, as suggested above, future studies could differentiate between the underserved school categories of this study to explore trends in access among, for example, reservation schools at a national level. Perhaps, to retain the categories assessed herein by chi-square analysis while attaining a larger sample, a regional study of underserved music programs in the Midwest could be

conducted. A more expansive version of this study might be able to examine in more detail the reasons for access or lack of access to equipment and materials, using self-report inventories.

## Significance of the Study

All students deserve an excellent music education, which includes effective and innovative teachers who benefit from administrative and community support, diverse coursework that is responsive to their needs and aspirations, a curriculum guided by the state and/or national music standards, and a variety of resources that encourage achievement of standards through an inclusive and culturally responsive lens. This study was undertaken to determine the readiness of Nebraska urban, rural, and reservation school music programs to provide a quality music education based upon NAfME's *National Opportunity to Learn Standards* (2020). Small school districts in the state of Nebraska have a limited pool of local music educators from which to draw; therefore, new or migrating teachers will benefit from an awareness of the resources available and the expectations of these districts. Armed with an understanding of the potential needs, challenges, and rewards of teaching music in the contexts of urban, rural, and reservation schools in Nebraska, current and future music educators can infer potential needs of similar districts elsewhere, to prepare themselves for success in whichever climate they elect to serve.

Furthermore, this study offers a glimpse into the current state of music education in Nebraska's small schools, including reservation schools. Current educational research has not thoroughly examined the storied history of Native American music, particularly as it intersects with public education. The ramifications of marginalization, cultural

erasure and assimilation, systemic removal, and racism are echoed in the dearth of academic literature on the subject. This study intends to encourage further research into the practices, challenges, and rewards of teaching music at schools with predominantly Indigenous student populations. Additionally, if marked differences exist between the music programs of urban, rural, and reservation schools, raising awareness of the needs of various programs can generate conversations about equity within our state- and district-level educational systems.

## References

Albert, D. J. (2006). Socioeconomic status and instrumental music: What does the research say about the relationship and its implications? *Update: Applications of Research in Music Education*, *25*(1), 39–45. https://doi.org/10.1177/87551233060250010105

American Psychological Association. (2021). *Socioeconomic status.* Author. http://www.apa.org/topics/socioeconomic-status/

Anderson, S. A., & Denson, G. L. (2015). Preparing the successful urban music educator. *Music Educators Journal*, *101*(4), 35–40. https://doi.org/10.1177/0027432115573965

Baker, V. D. (2012). Profile of an effective urban music educator. *Update: Applications of Research in Music Education*, *31*(1), 44–54. https://doi.org/10.1177/8755123312458293

Barry, N. H., & Conlon, P. (2003). Powwow in the classroom. *Music Educators Journal*, *90*(2), 21–26. https://doi.org/10.2307/3399930

Bates, V. C. (2010). Preparing rural music teachers: Reflecting on "shared visions." *Journal of Music Teacher Education*, *20*(2), 89–98. https://doi.org/10.1177/1057083710377722

Bates, V. C. (2012). Social class and school music. *Music Educators Journal*, *98*(4), 33–37. https://doi.org/10.1177/0027432112442944

Bates, V. C. (2013). Drawing from rural ideals for sustainable school music. *Action, Criticism, and Theory for Music Education*, *12*(1), 24–46.

Belgarde, M., Mitchell, R., & Arquero, A. (2002). What do we have to do to create culturally responsive programs? The challenge of transforming American Indian teacher education. *Action in Teacher Education, 24*(2), 42–54. https://doi.org/10.1080/01626620.2002.10734418

Benedict, C. (2006). Defining ourselves as other: Envisioning transformative possibilities. *Teaching music in the urban classroom*, *1*, 3–13. https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Cathy-Benedict/publication/273774033_Defining_Ourselves_as_Other_Envisioning_Transformative_Possibilities/links/550c8b940cf2752610964a85/Defining-Ourselves-as-Other-Envisioning-Transformative-Possibilities.pdf

Bernard, R. (2010). The rewards of teaching music in urban settings. *Music Educators Journal*, *96*(3), 53–57. https://doi.org/10.1177/0027432109356268

Boyd, D., Lankford, H., Loeb, S., & Wyckoff, J. (2005). Explaining the short careers of high-achieving teachers in schools with low-performing students. *American Economic Review*, *95*(2), 166–171. https://doi.org/10.1257/000282805774669628

Boyea, A. (1999). Native American music and curriculum: Controversies and cultural issues. *Philosophy of Music Education Review*, *7*(2), 105–117. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/40327141

Carter Andrews, D. J. (2009). "The hardest thing to turn from": The effects of service-learning on preparing urban educators. *Equity & Excellence in Education*, *42*(3), 272–293. https://doi.org/10.1080/10665680903060261

Castagno, A. E., & Brayboy, B. M. (2008). Culturally responsive schooling for Indigenous youth: A review of the literature. *Review of Educational Research,78*(4), 941–993. https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654308323036

Chester, M. D., & Beaudin, B. Q. (1996). Efficacy beliefs of newly hired teachers in urban schools. *American Educational Research Journal, 33*(1), 233–257. https://doi.org/10.3102/00028312033001233

Corbett, M. (2009). Rural schooling in mobile modernity: Returning to the places I've been. *Journal of Research in Rural Education (Online)*, *24*(7), 1–13. http://sites.psu.edu/jrre/wp-content/uploads/sites/6347/2014/02/24-7.pdf

Darling-Hammond, L. (2003). Keeping good teachers: Why it matters, what leaders can do. *Educational Leadership*, *60*(8), 6–13.

Darling-Hammond, L., & Sykes, G. (2003). Wanted: A national teacher supply policy for education: The right way to meet the "highly qualified teacher" challenge. *Education Policy Analysis Archives, 11*(33), 1–55. https://doi.org/10.14507/epaa.v11n33.2003

Demmert Jr, W. G., & Towner, J. C. (2003). A review of the research literature on the influences of culturally based education on the academic performance of Native American students. Final Paper. Retrieved from https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED474128

DiBara, J. A. (2007). Responsible to the kids: The goals and struggles of urban high school teachers. *The New Educator*, *3*(1), 11–30. https://doi.org/10.1080/15476880601141672

Doyle, J. (2012). Music teacher perceptions of issues and problems in urban elementary schools. *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education,* (194), 31–52. https://doi.org/10.5406/bulcouresmusedu.194.0031

Doyle, J. (2013). Predictors of culturally relevant attitudes and expectations of urban music teachers in the USA. *Music Education Research, 16*(4), 436–453. https://doi.org/10.1080/14613808.2013.859662

Doyle, J. L. (2014). Cultural relevance in urban music education. *Update: Applications of Research in Music Education, 32*(2), 44–51. https://doi.org/10.1177/8755123314521037

Education: The latest news on education. *U.S. News & World Report.* (n.d.). Retrieved June 27, 2022, from https://www.usnews.com/topics/subjects/education

Elpus, K. (2014). Evaluating the effect of no child left behind on U.S. music course enrollments. *Journal of Research in Music Education, 62*(3), 215–233. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022429414530759

Esposito, J., Davis, C. L., & Swain, A. N. (2011). Urban educators' perceptions of culturally relevant pedagogy and school reform mandates. *Journal of Educational Change, 13*(2), 235–258. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10833-011-9178-6

Faircloth, S. C. (2009). Re-visioning the future of education for Native youth in rural schools and communities. *Journal of Research in Rural Education (Online), 24*(9), 1–5. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/234668918_Re-Visioning_the_Future_of_Education_for_Native_Youth_in_Rural_Schools_and_Communities

Fiese, R. K., & DeCarbo, N. J. (1995). Urban music education: The teachers' perspective. *Music Educators Journal*, *81*(6), 27–31. https://doi.org/10.2307/3398779

Fitzpatrick, K. R. (2006). The effect of instrumental music participation and socioeconomic status on Ohio fourth-, sixth-, and ninth-grade proficiency test performance. *Journal of Research in Music Education*, *54*(1), 73–84. https://doi.org/10.2307/3653456

Fitzpatrick, K. R. (2011). A mixed methods portrait of urban instrumental music teaching. *Journal of Research in Music Education, 59*(3), 229–256. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022429411414912

Gardner, R. D. (2010). Should I stay or should I go? Factors that influence the retention, turnover, and attrition of K–12 music teachers in the United States. *Arts Education Policy Review, 111*(3), 112–121. https://doi.org/10.1080/10632910903458896

Gay, G. (2000). Culturally responsive teaching: Theory, research, and practice. Teachers College Press.

Gay, G. (2002). Preparing for culturally responsive teaching. *Journal of Teacher Education*, *53*(2), 106–116.

Gay, G. (2013). Teaching to and through cultural diversity. *Curriculum Inquiry*, *43*(1), 48–70. https://doi.org/10.1111/curi.12002

Hancock, C. B. (2015). Is the grass greener? Current and former music teachers' perceptions a year after moving to a different school or leaving the classroom. *Journal of Research in Music Education, 63*(4), 421–438. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022429415612191

Hanushek, E. A., Kain, J. F., & Rivkin, S. G. (1999, April 1). *Do higher salaries buy better teachers?* National Bureau of Economic Research. https://www.nber.org/papers/w7082

Heart, B., & Horse, M. Y. (2000). Wakiksuyapi: Carrying the historical trauma of the Lakota. *Tulane Studies in Social Welfare*, *21*(22), 245–266. https://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.452.6309&rep=rep1&type=pdf

Hinckley, J. (1995). Urban music education: Providing for students. *Music Educators Journal*, *82*(1), 32–35. https://doi.org/10.2307/3398883

Hoffman, A. R. (2013). Compelling questions about music, education, and socioeconomic status. *Music Educators Journal*, *100*(1), 63–68. https://doi.org/10.1177/0027432113494414

Hunt, C. (2009). Perspectives on rural and urban music teaching: Developing contextual awareness in music education. *Journal of Music Teacher Education, 18*(2), 34–47. https://doi.org/10.1177/1057083708327613

Ingersoll, R. M. (2001). Teacher turnover and teacher shortages: An organizational analysis. *American Educational Research Journal, 38*(3), 499–534. https://doi.org/10.3102/00028312038003499

Ingersoll, R. M. (2003). Is there really a teacher shortage? https://repository.upenn.edu/gse_pubs/133

Isbell, D. (2005). Music education in rural areas: A few keys to success. *Music Educators Journal*, *92*(2), 30–34. https://doi.org/10.2307/3400194

Jacob, B. A. (2007). The challenges of staffing urban schools with effective teachers. *The Future of Children, 17*(1), 129–153. https://doi.org/10.1353/foc.2007.0005

Katsarou, E., Picower, B., & Stovall, D. (2010). Acts of solidarity: Developing urban social justice educators in the struggle for quality public education. *Teacher Education Quarterly, 37*(3), 137–153. http://0-www.jstor.org.library.unl.edu/stable/23479502

Kelchtermans, G. (2017). 'Should I stay or should I go?': Unpacking teacher attrition/retention as an educational issue. *Teachers and Teaching, 23*(8), 961–977. https://doi.org/10.1080/13540602.2017.1379793

Kelley, J., & Demorest, S. M. (2016). Music programs in charter and traditional schools: A comparative study of Chicago elementary schools. *Journal of Research in Music Education*, *64*(1), 88–107. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022429416630282

Kindall-Smith, M. (2004). Teachers teaching teachers: Revitalization in an urban setting. *Music Educators Journal, 91*(2), 41–46. https://doi.org/10.2307/3400048

Kindall-Smith, M., McKoy, C. L., & Mills, S. W. (2011). Challenging exclusionary paradigms in the traditional musical canon: Implications for music education practice. *International Journal of Music Education*, *29*(4), 374–386. https://doi.org/10.1177/0255761411421075

Kinney, D. W. (2009). Selected nonmusic predictors of urban students' decisions to enroll and persist in middle school band programs. *Journal of Research in Music Education*, *57*(4), 334–350. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022429409350086

Kirmayer, L. J., Gone, J. P., & Moses, J. (2014). Rethinking historical trauma. *Transcultural psychiatry*, *51*(3), 299–319. https://doi.org/10.1177/1363461514536358

Lee, T. S., & Quijada Cerecer, P. D. (2010). (Re) Claiming Native youth knowledge: Engaging in socio-culturally responsive teaching and relationships. *Multicultural Perspectives*, *12*(4), 199–205. https://doi.org/10.1080/15210960.2010.527586

Lomawaima, K. T., & McCarty, T. L. (2002). When tribal sovereignty challenges democracy: American Indian education and the democratic ideal. *American Educational Research Journal*, *39*(2), 279–305. https://doi.org/10.3102/00028312039002279

López, F. A., Heilig, J. V., & Schram, J. (2013). A story within a story: Culturally responsive schooling and American Indian and Alaska Native achievement in the national Indian education study. *American Journal of Education, 119*(4), 513–538. https://doi.org/10.1086/670965

McAnally, E. A. (2013). General music and children living in poverty. *General Music Today*, *26*(3), 25–31. https://doi.org/10.1177/1048371313478611

McCarty, T., & Lee, T. (2014). Critical culturally sustaining/revitalizing pedagogy and Indigenous education sovereignty. *Harvard Educational Review*, *84*(1), 101–124. https://doi.org/10.17763/haer.84.1.q83746nl5pj34216

McCullough, R. G., & Ryan, A. M. (2014). From “urban” to urban: Engaging schools and communities in teacher education. *Issues in Teacher Education, 23*(1), 151–176. https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1045818

Mixon, K. (2005). Building your instrumental music program in an urban school. *Music Educators Journal*, *91*(3), 15–23. https://doi.org/10.2307/3400071

National Association for Music Education. (n.d.). *National standards archives*. Author. https://nafme.org/my-classroom/standards/national-standards-archives/

National Association for Music Education. (2014). *2014 music standards.* Author. http://www.nafme.org/my-classroom/standards/core-music-standards/

National Association for Music Education. (2020). *National opportunity to learn standards: Facilities, personnel, and curricular resources.* Author. https://nafme.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/NAfME-Opportunity-to-Learn-Standards-2020.pdf

Nebraska Department of Education (2014). *Fine Arts Standards.* Author. http://www.education.ne.gov/FineArts/

Nebraska School Activities Association. (2021). *2020-2021 NSAA Music Classification.* Author. https://nsaa-static.s3.amazonaws.com/textfile/music/muclass.pdf

Nierman, G. (1998). The state of music education in Nebraska: Curriculum. *Nebraska Music Educator*, *57*(2), 40–41.

Obidah, J. E., & Howard, T. C. (2005). Preparing teachers for "Monday morning" in the urban school classroom. *Journal of Teacher Education*, *56*(3), 248–255. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487105275920

Paula Conlon. (n.d.). Retrieved June 1, 2022, from https://www.paulaconlon.com/

Pellegrinelli, L. (2012, April 6). Music education in public schools gets a passing grade. *NPR.* https://www.npr.org/sections/therecord/2012/04/06/150133858/music-education-in-public-schools-gets-a-passing-grade

Pewewardy, C., & Hammer, P. C. (2003). Culturally responsive teaching for American Indian students. ERIC Digest.

Prest, A. (2013). The importance of context, reflection, interaction, and consequence in rural music education practice. *Journal of Research in Rural Education*, *28*(14), 1–13. Retrieved from http://jrre.psu.edu/articles/28-14.pdf

Renfro, L. (2003). The urban teacher struggle. *Teaching Music*, *11*(2), 36–40. Retrieved from https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ679882

Rogers, C. A., & Jaime, A. M. (2010). Listening to the community: Guidance from Native community members for emerging culturally responsive educators. *Equity & Excellence in Education, 43*(2), 188–201. https://doi.org/10.1080/10665681003719657

Ronfeldt, M., Loeb, S., & Wyckoff, J. (2013). How teacher turnover harms student achievement. *American Educational Research Journal, 50*(1), 4–36. https://doi.org/10.3102/0002831212463813

Salvador, K., & Allegood, K. (2014). Access to music education with regard to race in two urban areas. *Arts Education Policy Review, 115*(3), 82–92. https://doi.org/10.1080/10632913.2014.914389

Save The Music Foundation. (2021, May 13). *The national standards for music education (NAfME)*. https://www.savethemusic.org/resources/national-standards-for-music-education/

Shaw, J. (2012). The skin that we sing: Culturally responsive choral music education. *Music Educators Journal*, *98*(4), 75–81. https://doi.org/10.1177/0027432112443561

Shaw, J. T. (2015). “Knowing their world”: Urban choral music educators’ knowledge of context. *Journal of Research in Music Education, 63,* 198–223. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022429415584377

Shuler, S. C. (2012). Core music education: Students’ civil right. *Music Educators Journal, 98*(4), 7–11. https://doi.org/10.1177/0027432112446912

Shuler, S. C., Norgaard, M., & Blakeslee, M. J. (2014). The new national standards for music educators. *Music Educators Journal*, *101*(1), 41–49. https://doi.org/10.1177/0027432114540120

Sindberg, L. K. (2013). Perceptions and perspectives of music teachers in urban settings: Isolation, conversation and collaboration. *Music Education Research, 16*(4), 387–403. https://doi.org/10.1080/14613808.2013.848849

Singer, J. Y., Murphy, M., & Singer, A. (1998). Listening to the diverse voices of urban and suburban minority school district educators. Retrieved from https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED461697

Spohn, C. (2008). Teacher perspectives on no child left behind and arts education: A case study. *Arts Education Policy Review*, *109*(4), 3–12. https://doi.org/10.3200/aepr.109.4.3-12

Stryker, D. L. (2016). *A schools and staffing survey analysis of teacher job attitudes and working conditions in Native American communities* (Doctoral dissertation, The University of Utah).

Talbert-Johnson, C. (2006). Preparing highly qualified teacher candidates for urban schools. *Education and Urban Society, 39*(1), 147–160. https://doi.org/10.1177/0013124506293321

Taylor, D., & Tashakkori, A. (1995). Decision participation and school climate as predictors of job satisfaction and teachers' sense of efficacy. *The Journal of Experimental Education, 63*(3), 217–230. https://doi.org/10.1080/00220973.1995.9943810

Truscott, D. M., & Truscott, S. D. (2005). Differing circumstances, shared challenges: Finding common ground between urban and rural schools. *Phi Delta Kappan, 87*(2), 123–130. https://doi.org/10.1177/003172170508700208

USLegal, Inc. (2021). *Tribal Education Agency Law and Legal Definition*. https://definitions.uslegal.com/t/tribal-education-agency/

Voltz, D. L. (1998). Challenges and choices in urban education: The perceptions of teachers and principals. *The Urban Review, 30*(3), 211–228. https://doi.org/10.1023/a:1023256901974

Waxman, H., & Padron, Y. (1995). Improving the quality of classroom instruction for students at risk of failure in urban schools. *Peabody Journal of Education, 70*(2), 44–65. http://www.jstor.org/stable/1492846

Wilcox, E. (2004). More than a living….Teaching in an urban school. In Music Educators National Conference: The National Association for Music Education, *Illinois Music Educator, 11*(4), 24–28.

Wilcox, E. (2005). It all depends on you: A rural music educator who won't quit. *Teaching Music, 12*(4), 26–31.

Yang, R. K., & Fetsch, R. J. (2007). The self-esteem of rural children. *Journal of Research in Rural Education, 22*(5), 1–7. Retrieved from

http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.584.7198&rep=rep1&type=pdf

Yazzie, T. (1999). Culturally appropriate curriculum: A research-based rationale. In K. Swisher & J. Tippeconnic (Eds.), *Next steps: Research and practice to advance Indian education* (pp. 83–106). Charleston, NC: Appalachia Educational Laboratory.

Young, S. (2018). Teacher retention and student achievement: How to hire and retain effective teachers. *Delta Kappa Gamma Bulletin*, *84*(3), 16–21. http://libproxy.unl.edu/login?url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&AN=131118252&site=ehost-live

# Appendix A

## OTL Survey Tool

Start of Block: SCHEDULING

For the following question, please select all that apply.

Courses I teach include the following:

| | During school day (1) | Extracurricular (2) | N/A (3) |
|---|---|---|---|
| General Music (1) | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Choir (2) | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Band (3) | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Orchestra (4) | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Lessons (5) | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Nontraditional Ensembles (6) | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Music History (7) | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Music Theory (8) | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Other: (9) | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Other: (10) | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Other: (11) | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Other: (12) | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

End of Block: SCHEDULING

Start of Block: CLIMATE

For the questions in this block, either move the slider to select the response that best represents your view, or enter the correct numerical response.

Please move the slider to select the response that best represents your view.

| | Strongly disagree 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | Strongly agree 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Parents/families of my students attend extracurricular musical performances. | | | | | |
| Parents/families of my students can be reached for discussion about positive student behavior or concerns. | | | | | |
| My school welcomes visits or active participation from community stakeholders. | | | | | |
| My administration supports the activities of the music program. | | | | | |
| School administrators and staff communicate with each other effectively. | | | | | |
| School administrators promote the success of all students. | | | | | |

Please move the slider to select the response that best represents your view.

| | Strongly disagree 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | Strongly agree 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Rules for student behavior are consistently enforced. | | | | | |
| Goals and priorities for the school are clear. | | | | | |
| Teachers at school are continuously learning. | | | | | |
| Teachers actively work to create a safe and welcoming environment for every student. | | | | | |
| Most students are well-behaved and respectful to staff. | | | | | |
| Most students are motivated to learn. | | | | | |

Please move the slider to select the response that best represents your view.

| | Strongly disagree 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | Strongly agree 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I spend a great deal of time dealing with students' social and emotional challenges. | | | | | |
| Students in my school would feel comfortable reporting harassment or bullying to school officials. | | | | | |
| Students respect each other's differences (for example, gender, race, culture, orientation, etc.). | | | | | |
| Students have attitudes that reduce academic success. | | | | | |
| Student misbehavior interferes with teaching. | | | | | |
| Routine duties interfere with teaching. | | | | | |

I perceive the overall student achievement level in core classes to be:

| | Far below average 1 | Below average 2 | Average 3 | Above average 4 | Far above average 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I perceive the overall student achievement level in core classes to be: | | | | | |

I perceive the annual percentage of staff turnover at my school to be:

| | Low (less than 10%) 1 | Medium (between 10% and 20%) 2 | High (more than 20%) 3 |
|---|---|---|---|
| I perceive the annual percentage of staff turnover at my school to be: | | | |

My total number of years of music teaching experience is:

_____

The number of weekly planning minutes designated in my schedule is:

_____

End of Block: CLIMATE

Start of Block: CURRICULUM

For the following questions, please move the slider to select the response that best represents your view.

| | Strongly disagree 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | Strongly agree 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| My district has clear guidelines for the music curriculum. | | | | | |
| My district provides necessary materials for implementation of music curriculum. | | | | | |
| My district utilizes a mentorship program for new teachers. | | | | | |
| If so, my district's mentorship program contributes to the successful acclimation of new teachers. | | | | | |

End of Block: CURRICULUM

Start of Block: STAFFING

For the following questions, please type a numerical answer, or select the response that best represents your view.

The number of students enrolled in elementary music at my school is:

_____

The number of students enrolled in middle school music at my school is:

_____

The number of students enrolled in high school music at my school is:

_____

The number of full-time music teachers at my school is:

_____

The number of part-time music teachers at my school is:

_____

The percentage of my job dedicated to music is (for example, if your position is .5 FTE for music and .5 FTE for Spanish, type "50"):

_____

Please move the slider to reflect your view on these professional development questions.

| | Strongly disagree 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | Strongly agree 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| My district provides music-related professional development activities each year. |  | | | | |
| My district approves music-related professional development activities proposed by music teachers. |  | | | | |

End of Block: STAFFING

Start of Block: EQUIPMENT AND MATERIALS

For each of the following categories of equipment and materials, please choose the response that best represents your view.

| | I have what I need (1) | I have some of what I need (2) | I do not have what I need (3) |
|---|---|---|---|

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Quality band instruments (1) | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Quality orchestra instruments (2) | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Quality general music instruments (3) | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Quality instruments for Indigenous, international, or nontraditional ensembles (4) | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Quality piano or keyboard (5) | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Music library (6) | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Method books (7) | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| General music series or instructional resources (8) | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Technology resources for teacher (9) | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Technology resources for students (10) | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Electronic composition software (11) | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Projector or interactive board (12) | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Seating designed for music class (13) | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Choral risers (14) | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Music stands (15) | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Adaptive devices for students with exceptionalities (16) | ○ | ○ | ○ |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| PA system with microphones (17) | ○ | ○ | ○ |

End of Block: EQUIPMENT AND MATERIALS

# Appendix B

## Face and Content Validity Assessment Tool

**Face and Content Validity:**

**Opportunity to Learn Standards in Class C and D Nebraska Music Programs Survey**

Name: _____

1. Please indicate how clear the survey directions are for Section 2: Climate ("For the questions in this block, either move the slider to select the response that best represents your view, or enter the correct numerical response.")

**1 Star - Very Unclear** **5 Stars - Very Clear**



2. Section 2 Directions: Please use the box below to describe your rating from the previous question by including a few brief general or specific comments.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

3. Please indicate how clear the survey directions are for Section 4: Staffing ("For the following questions, please type a numerical answer, or select the response that best represents your view.")

**1 Star - Very Unclear** **5 Stars - Very Clear**



4. Section 4 Directions: Please use the box below to describe your rating from the previous question by including a few brief general or specific comments.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

5. Are the survey items (size, font, spacing, and format) appropriate with regard to presentation on both a computer screen and a mobile phone?

**1 Star - Highly Inappropriate** **5 Stars - Highly Appropriate**



6. Survey Presentation: Please use the box below to describe your rating of the previous question by including a few brief general or specific comments.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

7. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the survey statements are succinct and discernible as statements about access to opportunity to learn standards (scheduling, climate, curriculum, staffing, and equipment & materials)?

**1 Star - Strongly Disagree** **5 Stars - Strongly Agree**

**Succinct:**



**1 Star - Strongly Disagree** **5 Stars - Strongly Agree**

**Discernible:**

8. Succinct & Discernible: Please use the box below to describe your ratings from the previous question by including a few brief general or specific comments.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

9. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the survey items are representative of items designated by the National Association for Music Education as opportunity to learn standards? (https://nafme.org/my-classroom/standards/opportunity-to-learn-standards/)

**1 Star - Strongly Disagree** **5 Stars - Strongly Agree**



10. Accurate Representation: Please use the box below to describe your rating from the previous question by including a few brief general or specific comments.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

## Appendix C

### Email Invitation to Participate in the Research Study

**Subject: Invitation to Participate in a Music Education Research Study**

Greetings, fellow music educator,

My name is Amber Knight, and I am the K-12 Music Educator at Santee Community Schools. Dr. Glenn Nierman, Professor of Music Education at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, and I are inviting you to participate in a music education research study. We are excited about the potential of this study to help teachers garner more resources for their music programs, and we need your help, please. The purpose of this study is to determine the readiness of music programs to achieve Nebraska state music standards based on fulfillment of the National Association for Music Education's *National Opportunity to Learn Standards.* In particular, this study seeks to determine whether there are any statistically significant differences in the capacity of urban, rural, and reservation public school music programs in Nebraska to achieve the aforementioned standards.

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your responses will remain completely confidential, as the report will only use aggregated results. By accessing the survey on Qualtrics and completing it, you are providing informed consent.

To participate, please click on the link below, or copy and paste the link into your web browser.

If you have any questions about this study, please contact the Principal Researcher, Amber Knight, at aknight@santeeschools.org. If you have any questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant, please contact the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Institutional Review Board at 402-472-6965.

Thank you for your time and participation in this research study.

Regards,

Amber Knight

**Follow this link to the Survey:**
${l://SurveyLink?d=Take the Survey}

Or copy and paste the URL below into your internet browser:
${l://SurveyURL}

Follow the link to opt out of future emails:
${l://OptOutLink?d=Click here to unsubscribe}

## Appendix D

## First Reminder Email

**Subject: First Reminder: Invitation to Participate in a Music Education Research Study**

Greetings, fellow music educator,

On [date], you received an email invitation to participate in the Opportunity to Learn Standards for Music Education in Nebraska Survey created by Amber Knight, K-12 Music Educator at Santee Community Schools, and Dr. Glenn Nierman, Professor of Music Education at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Our records indicate that you have yet to respond. Please consider taking approximately fifteen minutes to complete the survey, as your response is crucial to our research regarding music education resources at rural, urban, and reservation schools in Nebraska.

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your responses will remain completely confidential, as the report will only use aggregated results. By accessing the survey on Qualtrics and completing it, you are providing informed consent.

To participate, please click on the link below, or copy and paste the link into your web browser.

If you have any questions about this study, please contact the Principal Researcher, Amber Knight, at aknight@santeeschools.org. If you have any questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant, please contact the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Institutional Review Board at 402-472-6965.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Regards,

Amber Knight

**Follow this link to the Survey:**
${l://SurveyLink?d=Take the Survey}

Or copy and paste the URL below into your internet browser:
${l://SurveyURL}

Follow the link to opt out of future emails:
${l://OptOutLink?d=Click here to unsubscribe}

## Appendix E

## Final Reminder Email

**Subject: Final Reminder: Invitation to Participate in a Music Education Research Study**

Greetings, fellow music educator,

On [date], you received an email invitation to participate in the Opportunity to Learn Standards for Music Education in Nebraska Survey. Please consider taking approximately fifteen minutes to complete the survey, as your response is very important to our data regarding the resources available to music students in rural, urban, and reservation school settings in Nebraska.

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your responses will remain completely confidential, as the report will only use aggregated results. By accessing the survey on Qualtrics and completing it, you are providing informed consent. Responses are due by June 1st.

To participate, please click on the link below, or copy and paste the link into your web browser.

If you have any questions about this study, please contact the Principal Researcher, Amber Knight, at aknight@santeeschools.org. If you have any questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant, please contact the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Institutional Review Board at 402-472-6965.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Regards,

Amber Knight

**Follow this link to the Survey:**
${l://SurveyLink?d=Take the Survey}

Or copy and paste the URL below into your internet browser:
${l://SurveyURL}

Follow the link to opt out of future emails:
${l://OptOutLink?d=Click here to unsubscribe}