

Summer 2014

Elementary music teachers in urban, high-poverty schools who remain in their position: A descriptive study

Heather Marie Eberly
James Madison University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://commons.lib.jmu.edu/master201019>



Part of the [Music Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Eberly, Heather Marie, "Elementary music teachers in urban, high-poverty schools who remain in their position: A descriptive study" (2014). *Masters Theses*. 194.
<https://commons.lib.jmu.edu/master201019/194>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the The Graduate School at JMU Scholarly Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Masters Theses by an authorized administrator of JMU Scholarly Commons. For more information, please contact dc_admin@jmu.edu.

Elementary Music Teachers in Urban, High-Poverty Schools

Who Remain in Their Position:

A Descriptive Study

Heather Marie Eberly

A thesis submitted to the Graduate Faculty of

JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY

In

Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the degree of

Master of Music

Music Education

August 2014

Acknowledgements

I am truly grateful for all of the help and support I have received through this process. First, I would like to thank my thesis committee, Dr. Lisa Maynard and Dr. William Dabback for their time and careful attention to detail. I would also like to thank my advisor, Dr. Gary Ritcher for his patience, wisdom, and encouragement throughout the entire experience. Finally, I would like to thank my mzuri Chacha for his technological help and continued support and encouragement.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements.....	ii
List of Tables.....	v
Abstract.....	vi
I. Introduction.....	1
Background.....	1
Existing Literature.....	2
Purpose of Study and Research Questions.....	6
Procedure.....	7
II. Review of Literature.....	9
Description of Urban Areas	9
Challenges of Urban Schools.....	10
Urban Elementary Education.....	11
Music Education in Urban Schools.....	12
Teacher Retention and Attrition.....	14
Teacher Background.....	17
Teacher Preparation Programs.....	20
Teacher Support.....	27
Music Teaching Experiences.....	31
Summary.....	33
III. Method.....	35
Development of the Questionnaire and Interview.....	36
Research Site.....	39
Participants.....	40
Data Collection.....	41
Data Analysis.....	42
IV. Results.....	44
Questionnaire.....	44
Personal Background Information.....	45
Teaching Experience.....	46
Reasons For Taking Position.....	47
Rewards and Challenges.....	48
Professional Support.....	49
Social Support.....	51

Reasons For Remaining.....	51
Interview.....	53
Background.....	53
Rewards of Teaching Experiences.....	56
Professional Support.....	57
Social Support.....	59
What It Takes To Stay.....	60
What Might Make It Easier To Stay.....	62
Summary.....	64
V. Summary and Conclusions.....	66
Discussion and Implications.....	70
Relationships.....	71
Background and Teacher Characteristics.....	72
Consistency.....	74
Future Research.....	75
Summary.....	76
VI. Appendices.....	78
Appendix A: IRB Approval Letter.....	78
Appendix B: IRB Addendum Approval.....	79
Appendix C: Approval from School District.....	80
Appendix D: Survey Cover Letter.....	81
Appendix E: Web Consent Form.....	82
Appendix F: Questionnaire.....	84
Appendix G: Answers to Free-Response Questions (Questionnaire).....	93
Appendix H: Verbal Consent for Telephone Interview.....	98
Appendix I: Telephone Interview Questions.....	99
Appendix J: Codebook.....	100
Appendix K: Teacher A Transcript.....	106
Appendix L: Teacher B Transcript.....	111
Appendix M: Teacher C Transcript.....	120
Appendix N: Teacher D Transcript.....	133
Appendix O: Teacher E Transcript.....	142
VII. References.....	151

List of Tables

Table 1 Teacher Socioeconomic Background Information.....	45
Table 2 UHP Settings Encountered During Undergraduate Experiences.....	46
Table 3 Teaching Experience.....	47
Table 4 Reasons for Taking Current Position.....	48
Table 5 Professional and Social Support.....	49
Table 6 Reasons for Remaining.....	52

Abstract

School districts across the United States face increasing numbers of socioeconomically disadvantaged students. Urban school systems, in which these students often reside, experience the highest levels of teacher attrition. The majority of literature in the area of teacher retention and attrition in urban, high-poverty schools has focused on general education while fewer studies specific to music education in urban, high-poverty schools exist. Little research has examined the experiences of elementary music teachers teaching in urban, high-poverty settings. Therefore, the investigator perceived a need to investigate elementary music teachers' reasons for continuing in their positions in urban, high-poverty schools. The purpose of this study was to describe the personal and professional experiences of elementary music teachers who remain in their positions in urban, high-poverty schools and identify possible factors for their remaining in those positions. Elementary music teachers who participated in this study ($n = 5$) completed an online questionnaire and an optional follow-up telephone interview that included questions related to their personal background, undergraduate experiences, teaching experiences, reasons for taking their current position, challenges and rewards, professional and social supports, and reasons for remaining in their current position. Data from the questionnaire were analyzed and descriptive statistics presented. Interview data were transcribed and classified into categories of response. Results of this study indicate that establishing and maintaining relationships with students, parents, other music teachers, and family and friends, appears to be the most important factor in an elementary music teacher's decision to remain in their current position. The majority of participants (80%) reported significant support from their district's mentor program,

other music teachers, and family. Other factors that emerged included background and teacher characteristics. Participants expressed the need for a strong foundation in their subject area (music) and practicum and student teaching experiences in urban, high-poverty settings for continued satisfaction and retention. The participants also shared common characteristics that included being hard-working and persistent while being firm, fair, and “fun” in the classroom. The final factor in the participants’ decision to remain in their position is related to consistency. Some aspects of consistency, such as students home lives (which are beyond the schools’ control) may make other aspects of consistency such as teacher turnover rates and consistent student discipline procedures with schools even more important.

Introduction

Music educators in urban, high-poverty schools often face numerous and overwhelming challenges, yet many find their teaching experiences intensely rewarding. Their personal and pre-service backgrounds, reasons for taking their current teaching positions, and personal experiences throughout teaching are both similar and different to those of their peers who do not teach in urban, high-poverty settings. The investigator's own background as an experienced elementary music teacher in a high-poverty school, and the multitude of challenges and rewards encountered daily served as the basis for the decision to investigate this topic further, with the intention that the findings of this research might be used by other similar professionals in the field who may be questioning their decisions to stay in or leave the profession.

Background

According to Boutelle (2009), school districts nationwide lose approximately 50% of their novice teachers within the first five years of their entering the profession. Professional educators have expressed alarm at the impact this rate of attrition may have on the quality of education schools are able to provide. Hanushek and colleagues (2004) state that student performance is more positively influenced when students learn from experienced teachers. Shields (2009) suggests that school districts should make efforts to support, train, and keep satisfied teachers in order to improve the quality of the students' education. Attrition rates are even higher in urban school systems which experience higher poverty rates than suburban areas and face unique challenges due to various issues that accompany this poverty (Peske & Haycock, 2006; Kincheloe & Steinberg, 2007). Johnson, Berg, & Donaldson (2005) found that teachers may become

frustrated with the conditions experienced in high-poverty schools and, if given the choice, would not choose to teach in these conditions. This research seems to suggest that urban, high-poverty school districts, in particular, may wish to examine the experiences and perspectives of their teachers with a view to why they do or do not remain in their positions.

Jensen (2009) describes poverty as “a chronic and debilitating condition that results from multiple adverse synergistic risk factors and affects the mind, body, and soul” (p. 6). Urban poor, according to Jensen, deal with chronic and acute stressors (including crowding, violence, and noise) and are dependent on often inadequate large-city services. Teacher burnout, resulting in a high rate of teacher turnover, is much greater in schools with higher percentages of low socioeconomic status (SES) students (Feng, 2009). Teachers in urban, high-poverty positions are at a higher risk of migrating from their current position or leaving the profession altogether than their professional colleagues who teach in other school settings.

While studies have explored unique challenges related to teaching in urban, high-poverty settings, little research has been done on teachers’ reasons for staying in their current position in these settings. Describing rewarding experiences and reasons for remaining in the profession could be beneficial and appealing to future educators, those educators who currently experience high frustration levels in their teaching positions, and those who develop the curriculum content of music teacher preparation programs.

Existing Literature

Extensive research in the area of teacher retention and attrition in urban, high-poverty schools exists. Olsen & Anderson (2007) noted teacher dissatisfaction was

largely attributed to the administrative approaches to leadership and the resulting school cultures. Additionally, teachers reported that classroom discipline (Pane, 2010), large class sizes, and lack of administrative support (Jacob, 2007) were major challenges that could contribute to migration or attrition in the profession of teaching. Olsen & Anderson (2007) used the labels "stayers," "shifTERS," or "leavers," to classify teachers and their longevity in the profession.

Regarding those who choose to remain in their positions (stayers), Freedman and Appleman (2009) found them to possess a list of common traits. These traits included:

(1) A sense of mission. These teachers feel that it is their calling and they want to be the ones that help make a difference in students' lives. (2)

Dispositions for hard work and persistence. This personality trait complements a teacher's resilience to continue when things get tough. (3)

Substantive and coordinated preparation in theory and practice (Metaknowledge). Teachers that have had educational experiences that provide them with the foundational knowledge needed to troubleshoot challenges that will materialize in the urban classroom helps teachers to develop the confidence needed to be effective. (4) Reflective stance for ongoing learning. These teachers realize the importance of keeping current with emerging trends as well as continuing need to self-evaluate successes and failures in the classroom (pp. 330-332).

Johnson, Berg, and Donaldson's (2005) review of literature suggests that the retention of teachers in the profession is dependent upon the existence of both intrinsic and extrinsic rewards. Intrinsic rewards are described as the pleasures teachers gain in

working with students, the satisfaction they derive from contributing to learning, the enthusiasm they have for the subject matter, and the influence they have over students. The extrinsic factors include salary and bonuses, benefits, public recognition, and special responsibilities associated with the teaching profession.

Grissom (2009) suggested that the most effective teacher retention strategy in disadvantaged schools was to appoint principals who were experienced and demonstrated a high level of leadership as reflected on their professional evaluations. Meaningful professional development, shared decision-making about school operations, and regular feedback and encouragement by the principal were cited as being effective in promoting increased teacher retention. Olsen and Anderson (2007) noted a pattern of teachers in urban education, namely that those who stayed tended to take on fewer roles outside of their primary teaching responsibility. Their data suggested that teachers who took on additional roles were preparing for their next career phase, thus suggesting that they had already made the decision to leave the classroom.

Fewer studies specific to music education in urban, high-poverty schools have been conducted. Abril (2006) suggests that it is difficult to recruit and retain high-quality music teachers for urban environments because of negative images created by reports of poor facilities, poor test scores, high poverty, and low motivation. Lack of materials allotted for school programs is also a common factor cited as having an impact on teacher migration or attrition (Bruenger, 2010). Another contributing factor for teachers leaving the profession was that music teachers reported that they felt unprepared for the realities of urban teaching because their college preparation was “too focused on teaching music in ideal circumstances” (Fiese & DeCarbo, 1995). The results of this study suggested

that K-12 music students may be paying the price for this potential weakness in teacher preparation programs as classrooms are staffed by more and more under-qualified teachers, while veteran teachers may be leaving the field for other schools or choose to leave the profession completely.

In contrast, Bernard's (2010) study focused specifically on the rewards of teaching music in urban settings. The researcher facilitated a panel discussion on the rewards of teaching music in urban settings at a state conference that included five music educators who taught various levels of students in two large cities in the northeastern region of the United States. Positive stories such as theirs have been noticeably absent from published writings about urban music education. Teachers reported experiencing great reward in building relationships with their students while making them feel valued and respected. In an earlier study, Benedict (2006) noted responses of the music teacher participants and highlighted the value they placed on the importance of building relationships with students because music teachers tend to view their own culture and ways of living as normal and the culture of their students as foreign. This results in potential racial and cultural tensions that can make the creation of academic connections between teachers and students difficult or even impossible. Furthermore, Benedict stressed the need to "find ways to acknowledge and make sense of how our students live in the world" (p. 11).

Numerous studies have examined teacher attrition and retention rates of elementary and secondary teachers working in urban, high-poverty schools. Fewer have focused on the field of music education, and fewer still have investigated the topic specific to the experiences of elementary music teachers teaching in urban, high-poverty

settings. Therefore, the need to investigate retention factors in and reasons for remaining in urban, high-poverty elementary music education remains.

Purpose of Study and Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to describe elementary music teachers who remain in their positions in urban, high-poverty schools and identify possible factors in their remaining in those positions. As a basis for fulfilling the purpose of the study the following research questions were formulated:

1. What are the demographic, personal, and educational backgrounds of elementary music teachers who continue to teach in urban, high-poverty schools?
2. How do these elementary music teachers describe their initial decision to teach in an urban, high-poverty school?
3. What is the nature of the job-related support reported by elementary music teachers who remain in urban, high-poverty schools?
4. What kinds of social support outside of school exist for them?
5. How do elementary music teachers who have continued to teach in urban, high-poverty schools describe their decision to remain in their current position and what rewards and challenges do they cite as contributing to their decision to stay?

It is the intent of the investigator that the data collected from this research will provide insight to general education teachers, music educators, pre-service teachers, and administrators who are interested in the issues of teacher retention and attrition in urban,

high-poverty schools potentially contributing to increasing the future retention rates of elementary music teachers who work in urban, high-poverty schools.

Procedure

For the purposes of this study, the investigator developed a questionnaire and interview questions based on information from previous studies, and her personal experiences working as an elementary music teacher in a high-poverty school setting. Both the questionnaire and interview included questions related to participants' background, undergraduate experiences, teaching experiences, reasons for taking their current position, challenges and rewards, professional and social supports, and reasons for remaining in their current position.

The elementary music teachers who participated in this study were employees in a school district located in an urban area in southeastern Virginia with a population in the vicinity of 250,000. Half of the 31 elementary schools located in the school district had been identified as being of high-poverty status according to the National School Lunch Program's (NSLP) definition (i.e. 76-100 percent of students eligible for free and reduced lunch).

Upon receiving approval by the James Madison University's *Institutional Review Board* (IRB) and the selected district's *Department of Assessment, Research, and Accountability*, the investigator contacted the district's Senior Coordinator of Music, who assisted in the initial communication with potential participants for this research study. Elementary music teachers who had taught for at least the last three years in a high-poverty school (75% or more free/reduced lunch) were invited to participate in the research by completing an online questionnaire and a follow-up phone interview. A total

of five elementary music teachers consented to participate in the questionnaire and interview portions of the study. Following completion of the data collection process, quantitative data from the questionnaires were summarized and percentages calculated. Open-ended questions from both phases of the study were then collected, transcribed, analyzed, and classified into pre-identified categories of response.

The thesis is organized according to the following chapters: Review of Literature, Method, Results, and Summary and Conclusions.

Review of Literature

The majority of the research literature reviewed for the purposes of this study focuses on the topics of retention and attrition specific to general education teachers in urban, high-poverty schools, with special focus on those teachers who have stayed in their positions. A smaller portion of studies devoted specifically to the subject of music educators who continue to teach in urban, high-poverty school settings was also reviewed. Finally, the very limited existing research literature specific to the experiences of music teachers who teach in urban, high-poverty school settings, especially those at the elementary level, was examined.

Many sub-topics emanate from the studies and articles associated with educators in urban settings. The examination of teachers' demographic background and pre-service experiences suggests factors related to success in teaching at urban, high-poverty schools. Furthermore, it appears that aspects of teacher support and satisfaction as well as personal characteristics and experiences may promote longevity in such settings.

Description of Urban Areas

An urbanized area, as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau, is an area with at least 1,000 people per square mile, or an area surrounding a central urban core with 500 people per square mile (U.S. Census, 2000). An urban area is defined as a Census Block Group with a density greater than or equal to 2,000 people per square mile, a place that has a total population greater than or equal to 100,000 people and a density greater than or equal to 2,000 people per square mile, or a place that has a total population greater than

or equal to 200,000 people (U.S. Department of Justice, 2011). Reardon and Bischoff (2011) noted that the actual socioeconomic status of urban populations can vary widely. In fact, the researchers reported that many urban areas such as New York City have concentrations of some of the wealthiest people in the country, but the most densely populated areas lying in or near city centers tend to display high poverty levels.

Challenges of Urban Schools

According to the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (2007-08), there are nearly 26,000 urban schools in the United States, comprising 26% of all public elementary and secondary schools. Urban schools experience unique challenges due to various issues that accompany poverty, such as community violence, infrastructure issues, issues with parental support, and issues with the equal distribution of finances, high-quality teachers, and other essential resources (Peske & Haycock, 2006; Kincheloe & Steinberg, 2007). Jacob (2007) noted that schools situated in urban settings have a higher rate of students whose families do not speak English at home (making it more difficult for teachers to communicate with parents), produce lower achievement test results, have more students living in poverty, have a high transient rate among students, and lack supplies and facilities. In a 1996 study, researchers interviewed teachers about their perspectives on teaching at a school in an urban setting with high populations of at-risk students. The teachers' responses suggested that teaching positions in these schools were associated with a high level of stress since the students were often very poor, very transient, had troubled home lives, many were not primarily English speakers, and were starved for attention at home (Erskine-Cullen & Sinclair, 1996).

Urban Elementary Education

Boutte (2012) addressed the perpetually turbulent landscape of urban schools with emphasis on elementary educators and their role in reversing negative trends and trajectories. Three urban education journals were examined over a 5-year period (2005-2010) to determine the volume of articles pertaining to the elementary level. The three top urban education journals included *Urban Education*, *Education and Urban Society*, and *Urban Review*. Of the 429 articles, only 8% focused on the elementary years. Therefore, Boutte suggested the importance of further emphasis and discussion on early childhood and elementary urban educational issues. Additionally, the article suggested beginning with the improvement of elementary schools as a first step to “change the prevailing image and substance of urban schools from that of endemic nonsuccess to one of success” (p. 525). If students in urban schools gain the academic and social skills needed to succeed in elementary school, this pattern could continue thorough middle and high school, assuming that middle and high schools do their part to continue patterns of achievement. Conversations and collaborations amongst all grade levels would be a necessity.

The second part of Boutte’s (2012) research study contains information and resulting questions regarding components of effective urban schools. How might effective elementary schools look? One possibility for educators wishing to break the cycle of negative expectations for urban children (Milner, 2011) is comprehensively conceived culturally relevant teaching. Boutte (2012) explains culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP) as “academic excellence where student learning is placed in a relevant context while students also become more proficient at understanding their cultures” (p.

530). It is essential for teachers in early childhood and other classrooms to provide opportunities for children to learn to “read the world,” which, according to Boutte, means that teachers should facilitate students’ questioning of the promotion of culture and values being presented in both classroom and societal settings. Becoming culturally aware of students’ environments and circumstances is essential to the educational process. Because many visible and invisible elements affect a student’s reception of education, educators must have empathy and cultural knowledge to be effective (Jensen, 2009). Teacher education programs promoting CRP will be discussed in a later section of the current literature review.

Music Education in Urban Schools

Music’s expressive nature can provide a sense of humanity to children who live in modern urban environments, and participating in the arts can help students learn to effectively express their emotions and their individual viewpoints (Fiese & DeCarbo, 1995). Research has indicated that participation in music may be related to both musical and nonmusical benefits that range from improved scores on math tests to improved self-esteem (Costa-Giomi, 2004). Positive results were also reported in Fitzpatrick’s 2006 comparative study where standardized test scores in math, reading, science, and citizenship of low SES students who participated in an instrumental music program were higher than their low SES counterparts who did not participate in any music program; however, findings in this study also concluded that the students’ scores were higher before they began their instrumental study.

With the intent of looking toward to the 21st century and the role of music education toward the end of the 20th century, a group of music educators invited by the

Music Educators National Conference to discuss the topic held the Housewright Symposium to look at the future of music education. The proceedings of the event were summarized in document form by the Housewright Declaration that stressed the importance of making music available to all students stating: “All persons, regardless of age, cultural heritage, ability, venue, or financial circumstance deserve to participate fully in the best music experiences possible” (Madsen, 2000, p. 219). A report of arts education in public elementary and secondary schools (Carey, N.L., & National Center for Education Statistics, 2002) indicated that while 91% of secondary schools had dedicated instructors, only 72% of elementary schools had them. Only 67% of elementary schools had dedicated rooms and equipment. The report also revealed evidence that high-poverty schools received a lower quality of music education with 8th grade students scoring 27% lower than students in low-poverty schools on assessments that measure musical response and musical creation.

In one study, Costa-Giomi (2008) assessed the status of music education in the elementary schools of a large urban center in Texas to investigate possible inequalities in access to music education resources based on the race and socio-economic characteristics of the student population. Elementary music teachers ($n = 54$) from one of the largest and most diverse urban school districts in Texas were sent a questionnaire designed to gather information about their music programs. Schools were classified as being of high, medium, and low socio-economic status on the basis of the proportion of minority students and economically disadvantaged students in the school. Results indicated clear differences in parental support, facilities, instructional resources, budget allocations, and student-teacher ratio between schools of contrasting SES. These differences invariably

avored schools of higher SES. No differences in teacher preparation and teacher commitment to teaching were found between high and low SES school.

There is still much work to do in the area of music education and urban schools regarding reform. Effective teachers are vital to the success of improving schools. Teachers must become reflective and collaborative teacher leaders and must also expand their roles beyond their classrooms to extend out into communities on a micro and macro level. Thiessen & Barrett, (2002) suggest that emphasizing only the classroom work of music teachers “fails to adequately acknowledge the work of teachers in other contexts, and consequently, underplays the inter-dependence of what teachers do inside and outside the classroom” (p. 761).

Teacher Retention and Attrition

Ingersoll’s study (2001) found that since the early 1990s, the number of American teachers exiting the profession has exceeded the number of entrants by an increasing amount, with less than 20% of the attrition attributed to retirement. Teacher recruitment, retention and attrition are a growing concern for administrators, especially in urban high-poverty schools. When teachers have the option to choose the type of schools in which they would rather work, research indicates that they are typically more attracted to schools with low percentages of economically disadvantaged students (Boutte, 2012; Freedman & Appleman, 2009). Moreover, teachers in urban, high-poverty positions are at a high risk of migrating from their current position or leaving the profession altogether.

The National Center for Education Statistics (2008) report showed that the teacher turnover rate in high-poverty public schools during the 2003–2004 school year was 21%, whereas in low-poverty public schools it was 14%. According to Shields (2009) urban

schools that are populated by higher rates of disadvantaged, low-performing students need to reduce teacher attrition and allow students to learn from quality teachers.

Therefore, to be successful, schools need teachers who are stable, committed, and unified. Shields reports these attributes as being characteristics of effective teachers.

Without efforts to retain teachers, the attrition cycle will continue to repeat itself because inexperienced teachers encounter the same problems that caused their predecessors to leave.

Freedman & Appleman's longitudinal study (2009) explored a constellation of factors that had been previously identified as contributing (or not) to the retention of teachers in high-poverty, urban schools. It focused on one cohort of the University of California at Berkeley's Multicultural Urban Secondary English Credential and MA Program, analyzing qualitative and quantitative data to track the careers of 26 novice teachers through their fifth year after receiving their credential. A discussion of factors that seem to contribute to teachers staying in high-poverty, urban schools and educational settings included:

- (a) A sense of mission, which was reinforced and developed by the teacher education program;
- (b) A disposition for hard work and persistence, which was reinforced and developed by the teacher education program;
- (c) Substantive preparation that included both the practical and the academic and harmony between the two;
- (d) Training in assuming the reflective stance of a teacher researcher;
- (e) The opportunity, given the high demand for teachers in high-poverty schools, to be able to change schools or districts yet still remain in their

chosen profession; and (f) Ongoing support from members of the cohort as well as other supportive professional networks across the years. (p. 329)

Further results regarding the MUSE program in this study will be examined in the teacher preparation section of this review.

Gardner's (2010) study constructed a profile of K-12 music teachers in the U.S. that was the basis of a model to predict retention, turnover, and attrition. Using the *Schools and Staffing Survey* (1999-2000) and the *Teacher Follow-up Survey* (2000-2001), both produced by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), Gardner analyzed data from public and private teachers in all subject areas. Out of 47,857 teachers sampled, 1,903 were music educators. Results showed that comparatively, music teachers were more likely to hold itinerant or part-time positions, and were less likely to receive support for working with special needs students. Music teachers migrated to other positions due to dissatisfaction with workplace conditions and for better teaching assignments. Additionally, music teachers left the teaching profession for better salary or benefits with higher job satisfaction in their new field. This study, however, did not focus specifically on urban music teachers (Gardner, 2010).

According to Brown (2003), classroom management is more difficult in urban schools than in rural or suburban schools. Teachers face the considerable task of "...addressing students' cultural, ethnic, social identity development, language, and safety needs as well as their academic growth. This is a considerable responsibility if not an impossibility" (pp. 277-278). When these issues go unresolved or unsupported, they often lead to teacher migration or attrition.

In Gardner's aforementioned study, the perceived level of administrative support was identified as having had the greatest influence on both music teacher satisfaction and retention. As reported by Gardner, music teachers' perceptions of the extent of support and recognition from their administrators exhibited the most prominent positive effect on retention. Gardner suggested the potential benefit of school officials surveying their music teachers to find out what factors were most important to them regarding job satisfaction. Furthermore, Gardner recommended improving communication among teachers, supervisors, and administrators as an excellent first step toward enhancing music teachers' commitment to their position, and suggested that administrators might also be able to make policy changes to improve teachers' opinions and perceptions of their current positions. However, Gardner warns that even with these changes administrators will probably have less control over teachers' migration to other schools or districts than they may like (Gardner, 2010, p. 119).

Teacher Background

Regarding teaching settings in the Gardner's study, descriptive analysis indicated the largest percentage of music teachers (44.5%) worked in suburban communities, while 24.9% worked in large or mid-size central cities. In addition, results from chi-square tests for homogeneity indicated that music teachers were more likely than other teachers to work in suburban schools, and music teachers were less likely (24.9%) than other teachers 29.7%) to work in urban schools. Furthermore, music teachers generally worked in schools with lower percentages of minority students ($F = 13.3$, $df = 87$, $p = 0.000$). This section will discuss the demographic and educational backgrounds of teachers in urban settings. Student populations in urban schools generally consist of non-white

students from low SES backgrounds, however, music and other teachers generally do not reflect this diversity. Several studies have found that the general teaching force is mostly female, white and middle-class (Gardner, 2010; Groulx & Silva, 2010). Moreover, music teachers have a tendency to come from the middle to upper socioeconomic categories (Gardner, 2010).

In one study, Nieto (2003) determined that one of the main problems driving teacher attrition in urban schools was a cultural incongruity between the teachers and the students they teach. Qualitative data were collected from interviews, journaling and focus group discussions from a group of veteran teachers drawn from urban school settings.

Our public urban schools are increasingly filled by students whose lives and experiences are vastly different from those of their teachers, who are overwhelmingly white, middle class, and monolingual English-speakers. Most know little, either from direct experience or training about the diversity of their students. If this is the case, they may become frustrated and impatient, longing for an idealized past that never was, when all children were easy to teach and looked like them. (Nieto, 2003, p. 125)

Nieto and the group concluded that with time, patience, and thoughtful reflection, teachers can reverse cultural incongruity.

Kelly (2003) completed a study in which the goal was to “investigate the influence of selected cultural factors on the environmental teaching preference of undergraduate music education majors” (p. 41). He created a survey that was administered to 406 undergraduate music majors at four large universities in Florida,

Nebraska, Ohio, and Pennsylvania. A demographic analysis of the students displayed similar results to those studies involving existing teachers. Fifty-eight percent of the sample was female. Additionally, a large majority of the students were Caucasian (83.4%), and most (83.2%) had parents whose incomes fell into the middle-class category or higher. Most of the students had attended large, suburban public schools with “overwhelmingly Caucasian” populations and large, successful music programs (Kelly, 2003). Unsurprisingly, a large majority of the students desired to teach in large public schools in suburban areas with mostly Caucasian students (Kelly, 2003).

In a related study, Bruenger (2010) attempted to determine the factors influenced the urban job-search decisions of highly-qualified teacher candidates who were trained in and experienced with cultural diversity as part of their college degree program. The study utilized a survey modeled on Kelly’s (2003) design to collect demographic information and an open-ended interview with students. Eleven of the best qualified vocal music education students that had graduated within the last five years were chosen by the faculty at a Hispanic-serving university to be interviewed for the study. The participants included five Hispanic students, which corresponded to the population of the University, and eight of the eleven participants spoke fluent Spanish (Bruenger, 2010).

For their first jobs, the teachers surveyed reported that they had mostly chosen to take middle school choral positions when they first entered the profession. Only three of the study participants had applied for jobs in urban schools, and only one had actually accepted a job in an urban setting. The student who selected the urban job offer, a white male, chose to take it because he “welcomed the challenge” of the urban environment and

was comfortable with the Hispanic-majority environment of his school due to his own extended-family contacts and his fluent Spanish-language ability.

The two teachers who applied for jobs in urban schools but ended up choosing employment in suburban districts both came from suburban areas, and reported feeling more comfortable teaching in an area that was similar to the one in which they grew up. The eight students who did not apply for teaching positions in urban districts mentioned that they wanted to work near their homes or in environments similar to their home environment. Additionally, most of this group of eight teachers voiced sentiments about urban schools that displayed implicitly prejudiced ideas about how students behaved or how the arts were perceived and supported in urban environments. Several of the students were not willing to consider teaching in schools or programs that were not similar to those in which they grew up because they assumed that administrators would not support them or that they would have difficulty with the students (Bruenger, 2010).

Both studies (Bruenger, 2010; Kelly, 2003) concluded that students tended to prefer teaching positions in areas that were demographically similar to those from which they came. Students chose both distance proximity to their hometowns as well as favoring the familiarity of school systems similar to the ones they attended. Additionally, Bruenger found that those teachers who had more experience with diversity in their personal lives were more comfortable in urban environments.

Teacher Preparation Programs

Many studies in urban education, both non-musical and musical, indicate the necessity of adequately preparing future teachers for teaching in the often unfamiliar environments of urban, high-poverty schools. As mentioned in proceeding studies,

successful programs often increase the teachers' likelihood of teachers choosing to initially work in or remain in current urban, high-poverty teaching settings. This section of the current review of literature begins by focusing on identifying effective program characteristics in general education teacher preparation programs followed by identifying characteristics of those particular to successful music education teacher preparation programs.

The first program (Boutte, 2012) focused on general education in an urban setting at the elementary level. Although teacher education programs may help to change students' pre-conceived negative views of urban schools, many are inadequate in providing enough background information and field experiences. Boutte (2012) suggests a strong school-university collaboration that plans well-thought-out theoretical and practical involvement. Through an early childhood education (ECE) program at her institution, Boutte and seven of her colleagues designed a plan for students whose needs were not being met. This program led to the possible answer to her question, "Can we envision teaching in urban schools as exhilarating and rewarding versus dreadful and foreboding?" (p. 536)

The cohort began with fifty pre-service teachers who were interested in teaching urban students. Field experiences included sustained and authentic experiences with urban families and communities, reading, and a system of ongoing support and purposeful mediation on issues of equality. The initial program consisted of courses with focus on race and social class. The students in the program were excited to be a part of the program because many of their mothers were teachers who expressed concern for the changing canvas of student demographics and how they felt unprepared to teach in order

to meet the needs of the students (Boutte, 2012). Pre-service teachers from the initial cohort eagerly looked for jobs in urban schools upon graduation.

In the second year, the school's entire ECE program, at the request of the remaining faculty members, was transformed to address equity issues. Professional development was provided to faculty members and courses were transformed. One requirement was a foundations course in culturally relevant pedagogy. Additionally, courses in English and math were rearranged to focus on culture and diversity, and important readings including the state's report cards were assigned before incoming candidates began the program (Boutte, 2012). At the time of the study's publication, teacher retention from the initial cohort was being monitored. There were plateaus and challenges along the way. Boutte describes one challenge coming from a school district expressing concerns in approving a project due to safety issues in their neighborhoods. The university offered dialogic professional development to supervising teachers to give information about the program while continuing dialog with the district (2009).

The Freedman & Appleman (2009) longitudinal study, also mentioned in the teacher retention section of this review, analyzed the movement of 26 novice teachers, a cohort of the University of California at Berkeley's Multicultural Urban Secondary English Credential and MA Program to determine what factors help teachers stay in urban teaching. Students enrolled in the Multicultural Urban Secondary English (MUSE) program was chosen for potential participation in this study because many of the MUSE graduates have chosen to stay in urban teaching, and because of the "wealth of longitudinal, qualitative data" that had potential for creating a "thick description of urban

teachers who choose to stay” (Freedman & Appleman, 2009, p. 324). The stated goals of the program were listed as follows:

(a) to provide novice teachers with a theoretical foundation for teaching in urban, multicultural settings, particularly focusing on social justice, cross-cultural communication, and adolescent development, and (b) to support novice teachers in learning the art and craft of teaching in these settings, particularly focusing on developing curriculum for teaching reading, writing, and literature and on understanding the needs of all students, especially including English language learners and speakers of varied, non-schooled dialects of English. (p. 324)

The two-year MUSE program directed by Freedman offered a full-year methods course as well as courses in urban education and language learning and two secondary student teaching placements with strong teachers during the first year. The second year consisted of a course that supported the writing of students’ MA reflective research papers as well as their first year of full-time teaching. After receiving their MA degree, the early career teachers enrolled in the program could apply to form a school-based teacher research group as part of a Berkeley-based, post-MA program. Project IMPACT (Inquiry Making Progress Across Communities of Teachers) allows more than one third of MUSE graduates to continue teacher research projects with colleagues at their schools and retain ongoing connections to Berkeley (Freedman & Appleman, 2009).

Interviews with teachers in the MUSE program took place during the fourth and fifth year of the program after having teaching experience. To analyze the teacher interview data, the researchers first divided each set of teacher interviews into “stayers in

urban education” and “leavers from urban education” (Freedman & Appleman, 2009). The researchers then examined the responses of each subgroup that had been identified within the participant population and searched for patterns within them. Next, they looked for points of commonality across the two subgroups which could be identified as being relevant in binding the entire sample together.

The year four interviews provided the researchers with a “general sense of patterns related to staying and leaving, whereas the year five interviews provided more specific detail and allowed them to raise questions about issues that were not clear and to see different points of view” (p. 328). A review of the program coordinator’s interview responses was then made for further clarification of any of the patterns the researchers observed. The interviews showed general trends related to why the MUSE teachers made the choices they did from the point of view of the teachers and the coordinator.

At the five-year point nationally, of the participants surveyed, only 54% were still teaching (National Center for Education Statistics, 2002). From this cohort, 73% of the original participants were still teaching. Although some obstacles occurred, such as a decision a particular school district made regarding the strength of the cohort, which was eventually mended, the program showed promise and success in teacher retention in urban schools (Freedman & Appleman, 2009). The outcomes from this study that are most beneficial in a teacher’s decision to stay include, a strong cohort to collaborate with, a continuous network of support, a concise theoretical background to frame future experiences, and a reflective stance on teaching experiences to promote growth.

The focus of Fiese & DeCarbo’s study (1995) was specifically on urban music education. They questioned select music educators from various large urban areas

throughout the United States about the topic of teaching music in urban settings. When asked about their own preparation for teaching in urban schools, the majority of teachers reported that they felt unprepared to do so. While several of the subjects felt musically prepared to teach, they reported feeling that their pre-service education prepared them for teaching the "ideal" student and left them unprepared for teaching in an urban setting where students may not fit the mold of the "ideal" student. The teachers also stated that the professors who taught the teacher education classes were too far removed from the practicality of modern urban schools and suggested that more interaction between teacher education programs and schools would help in keeping professors updated on current issues and trends (Fiese & DeCarbo, 1995).

In contrast, Madsen and Hancock (2002) conducted a study on music educator alumni from a large southeastern university in 1995. Participants completed a survey that consisted of questions related to teacher training. The data was collected from a random sampling of 225 certified music teachers who had been teaching for the last 10 years. Regarding pre-teaching experience, almost every respondent indicated that he or she came from a precollege program that was excellent. This study did not specifically examine music teachers in urban settings (Madsen & Hancock, 2002).

A music teacher education program based upon the professional development school (PDS) model advocated by the Holmes Group (now known as the Holmes Partnership) was studied by Jones and Eyrich (2006). They developed a site-based pedagogy program using the work of Conkling and Henry (PDS) as their inspiration. Their research examined the partnership between a university and school district that allowed designed to help urban music teachers to develop their teaching skills. In this

collaboration between the School District of Philadelphia and the music education program at the University of the Arts, students completed their bachelor's degree in music during the first four years. The following year students received their M.A.T. degree.

The final year of the program included courses held during the first seven weeks of each semester in pedagogy and conducting and rehearsal techniques that were actually held in the school setting. The students and professor spent two days (six hours) per week at the school. Their roles and schedules followed those of the supervising teachers. During the second part of each semester, the students were placed in traditional student teaching settings. All members from this partnership learned from each other. Student interns gained authentic experience with direct feedback while teachers reported increased enthusiasm from their students as the student interns brought in new aspects such as performance groups to the classroom (Jones & Eyrich, 2006).

Another music teacher training program that allowed students to spend a meaningful amount of time working with actual urban students was based in Detroit, Michigan (Emmanuel, 2006). The basis of the program was the concept of an "immersion internship," where interns and their professor lived in the neighborhood in which they were teaching for two weeks after completing a one week orientation. This course was an elective music education course for both undergraduate and graduate students, so participation by the students was limited. The students who participated stated that it was a "life-changing" experience and that they felt more comfortable teaching in urban environments because of the extensive preparation and experience they had received (Emmanuel, 2006).

The university students participating in the elective course observed music educators in various settings in downtown Detroit, they developed and taught partial and full lessons, and the participants kept journals throughout the internship to document their experiences. Results suggested that the majority of the university students who were training to become teachers admitted that during their placement they had struggled to reconcile the realities of the urban teaching environments with their preconceived assumptions. The interns eventually internalized the idea that cultural diversity and urban issues were far more complex in reality than they had been previously aware. The university student interns worked in urban environments in a supervised manner and were challenged to confront their assumptions; therefore, they were able to develop more confidence in their own ability to teach in urban environments in a meaningful, successful way (Emmanuel, 2006).

In summary, while there are a number of teacher education programs that are designed to prepare students for teaching in urban, high-poverty schools, in order for university students to benefit from these programs, they must already be enrolled in schools that offer such programs and find out about them by circumstance, or they must have concerns about or the desire to teach in urban programs and seek them out on their own. The continued development of additional music teacher training programs such as those previously mentioned could benefit future teachers who might potentially take jobs in urban, high-poverty schools.

Teacher Support

Current research suggests that teachers who work in urban, high-poverty school settings and experience support from mentors and other colleagues, supervisors,

administrators, parents, and community members are more likely to experience higher job satisfaction, and consequently are more likely to remain in their position. This section of current review of literature includes an examination of research that has investigated the support systems in place for music teachers and the impact they might have on a teacher's attitude toward their teaching position in an urban school. Determining what types of support that can best assist urban teachers could contribute to increased satisfaction and retention.

Madsen and Hancock's (2002) aforementioned study on the 225 randomly sampled music educator alumni found that administrative support was an area of concern for teachers. Issues included differing understandings of the importance of music education, a perception of music as an extracurricular activity, and challenges to the content of instruction. There were more specific concerns related to apathy for music education and music valued solely for utilitarian purposes. Both the researchers and respondents agreed that all involved in music education should assist administrators and the public in understanding the role and importance of music in education (2002). As previously mentioned, this study did not specifically focus on teachers in urban settings.

Conway (2008) addressed professional development in her phenomenological study to identify the evolving needs of the music teacher. The purpose of the study was to examine the perceptions of experienced music teachers ($N = 19$) regarding professional development throughout their careers. Data included: 13 mid-career teacher interviews, six veteran teacher interviews, a focus group with four veteran teachers, and the principal investigator's log. The sample represented a mix of teaching levels as well as settings

(urban, rural, and suburban). The study spanned three years and data originated from individual interviews.

The results suggested that teachers placed strongest value on informal interactions related to professional development opportunities. This included reaching out to colleagues in other districts at events such as professional conferences. Music teachers at all levels need opportunities to share challenges and rewards with other music teachers. Furthermore, planned professional development should be more interactive and informal. The teachers in Conway's (2008) study also had concerns throughout their careers regarding the applicability of district-sponsored non-music professional development programs. This suggests that the nature of professional development for music teachers may be an important link to continued music teacher success. However, more research is needed to examine and describe existing professional development opportunities for music teachers, and to further discuss what the link between professional development and music teacher success might be.

Regarding support for music teachers in urban schools, Fiese & DeCarbo's (1995) study, which examined select experienced music teachers in urban settings, reported that having had a strong mentor, colleague or supervisor who helped to guide them contributed to their staying in their urban school teaching setting. In addition, the teachers surveyed reported that remaining active in educational clinics and community arts events also contributed to their feeling of success in the urban music classroom setting. Conway (2006) suggested that an induction process in music educator mentor programs (not specifically urban) that includes ongoing help with classroom management, parent interactions, administrative duties, choosing literature and classroom

activities, and standards-based planning and assessment that can be helpful to beginning music teachers. Likewise, Gardner (2010) suggested the benefits to districts of having music supervision who could serve as possible mentors and could provide administrators with advice on policy reforms if the need should arise. Overall, the aforementioned research seems to suggest that supervisors possess the ability to provide necessary support to ensure job satisfaction of their music teachers.

Few studies regarding music education and support exist, although one master's thesis specifically addressed urban music education. This study (Doyle, 2009) examined the perceptions of music teachers in urban elementary schools. Music teachers from Title-I public elementary schools ($N = 135$) in Miami-Dade County were surveyed to gather demographic information, and 56 of the music teachers from those schools participated. The survey generated data regarding the independent variables of student demographics, teacher demographics, student/teacher demographic differences, teacher training, and teacher support; while the dependent variables examined were teacher attitudes about urban elementary music teaching and teacher expectations of their urban elementary music students.

To determine the status of music teacher support in Miami-Dade County, participants' responses to Likert-scale items were analyzed to illustrate teacher perspectives regarding administrative and faculty support of their music classes and programs (Doyle, 2009). Most of the teachers who participated in this study reported that they felt that they were supported by their administration and were able to communicate with their special education staff. However, the large majority of the teachers reported that they received no in-classroom assistance from special education aides in their

teaching settings. Most described feeling that their facilities were adequate, they did not feel included in student scheduling, and they felt that their schools' musical offerings lacked variety.

Music Teaching Experiences

Much has been written about the challenges music educators who work in urban settings face. This section of the current review of literature focuses on rewarding experiences in music teaching that bring satisfaction and pride to the profession. Abril (2006) conducted interviews and observations of three outstanding music educators in urban schools with high poverty rates (over 75% on free or reduced lunch). The intention of the study was to collect the stories of the teachers so that the accounts could serve to guide beginning and struggling teachers or to inspire those who might want to teach in urban schools. They may also provide music teacher educators with ideas to better prepare their students to teach in urban schools.

Abril (2006) visited the campuses of music teachers who had been identified as being outstanding teachers and conducted scripted interviews, which were structured to allow for the possibility of in depth conversation. The interview questions offered participants the opportunity to discuss their reasons for teaching in urban schools, any obstacles and problems they had encountered while teaching, and how they had negotiated solutions to those problems. Although the teachers shared their fears and frustrations specific to teaching music in an urban setting, their responses tended to focus more on the joy they had experienced in working with children and making music.

Policy recommendations by Abril included ensuring that new teachers are well matched to their school placements, and that schools provide high quality mentor

experiences for new teachers. Another of the results of the study suggested that the teachers had been able to succeed in their positions in part by recognizing the limited available funding for their programs and applying for and receiving grants. One important trait found in all three teachers was flexibility and understanding in working with students from trying circumstances. Overall, the results of this study suggest that the teachers interviewed found that teaching in high-poverty urban schools was a difficult, yet fulfilling career (Abril, 2006).

The absence of published positive stories from teachers in urban music education prompted Bernard's (2010) conversation with five music teachers who worked in two large cities in the northeastern United States. This discussion was organized as part of a panel session at a state in-service conference. More than 50 music educators from across the region attended the event. Two of the participants (from City A) taught elementary level music; while of the other three participants (from City B), two taught at the secondary level and one taught elementary music.

The first area examined by the investigator, recognizing potential, was one about which the music educators spoke passionately. The issue of children in cities not being recognized as being as capable as other children was reported as being a common misconception by the participants. Participants also mentioned the importance of not underestimating student interests as well as taking pride in student's accomplishments, especially considering the challenges they may face outside of school.

Next, the music educators in the panel suggested providing varied opportunities for students that allow for all of them to experience success. For example, teachers can provide students with instruments. This includes recorders and other band instruments.

If the funds are not available, according to the educators, there are numerous grants that can be applied for by both teachers and parents. Another opportunity mentioned by teachers in this study includes interactions with visiting artists or cultural institutions. These types of opportunities are a unique way arts-based classes can contribute to increased enthusiasm in students (Bernard, 2010).

Building relationships was also held in high esteem by the panel members in Bernard's study. Teachers should commit to a school wide collaborative community in building relationships and rapport with their own students even though their needs may be unique. One participant described her school community as going beyond "us versus them" and making the school about "we." In conclusion, the discussion panel stressed the idea of infinite possibilities versus dwelling on challenges (Bernard, 2010). Many challenges are beyond the control of the teacher, administrator, or even the district, and while they are often a reality, optimism may lead to a content and successful future as urban music educators.

Summary

Students who attend schools located in urban, high-poverty areas encounter many challenges due to their often poor, transient, and troubled home lives. Additionally, teachers who work in these settings often encounter high levels of stress. Limited literature exists specific to the challenges of teaching in urban educational settings at the elementary level, and researchers suggest that this area needs further study due to its natural foundational and impressionable nature. Moreover, for the purposes of the study, more information on music education in urban schools, specifically at the elementary level is required.

Subcategories of research established from this review that relate to the broader topic of teachers (both classroom and music teachers alike) who work in schools in urban, high-poverty areas, include issues such as: teacher retention and attrition; teacher background information; teacher preparation programs; support perceived by teachers; and teacher's personal and professional experiences. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to describe elementary music teachers who remain in their positions in urban, high-poverty schools and identify possible factors in their remaining in those positions. As a basis for fulfilling the purpose of the study the following research questions were formulated:

1. What are the demographic, personal, and educational backgrounds of elementary music teachers who continue to teach in urban, high-poverty schools?
2. How do these elementary music teachers describe their initial decision to teach in an urban, high-poverty school?
3. What is the nature of the job-related support reported by elementary music teachers who remain in urban, high-poverty schools?
4. What kinds of social support outside of school exist for them?
5. How do elementary music teachers who have continued to teach in urban, high-poverty schools describe their decision to remain in their current position and what rewards and challenges do they cite as contributing to their decision to stay?

Method

This chapter will describe the procedures followed in conducting this study. According to Lauer (2006) “A simple descriptive research design is used when data are collected to describe persons, organizations, settings, or phenomena” (p. 14). The description may consist of a statistical summary of data collected through closed form questionnaire items or through the presentation of themes and categories drawn from responses to open ended questionnaire items and interview questions. The current study employs both approaches.

School systems across the United States are experiencing higher levels of socioeconomically disadvantaged students, and urban (and rural) school systems often face the highest levels of teacher attrition. Numerous studies have examined the teacher attrition and retention rates of secondary school teachers who work in schools located in urban, high-poverty areas. However, fewer have focused on this research topic at the elementary level, and even fewer have specifically examined the impact of working in such school settings on those who choose to pursue careers in the field of music education. Therefore, the need to investigate retention factors in elementary music educators remains.

Consequently, the purpose of this study is to describe elementary music teachers who remain in their positions in urban, high-poverty schools and identify possible factors in their remaining in those positions. The study sought to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the demographic, personal, and educational backgrounds of elementary music teachers who continue to teach in urban, high-poverty schools?
2. How do these elementary music teachers describe their initial decision to teach in an urban, high-poverty school?
3. What is the nature of the job-related support reported by elementary music teachers who remain in urban, high-poverty schools?
4. What kinds of social support outside of school exist for them?
5. How do elementary music teachers who have continued to teach in urban, high-poverty schools describe their decision to remain in their current position and what rewards and challenges do they cite as contributing to their decision to stay?

Development of the Questionnaire and Interview

The investigator derived questions for the questionnaire and interview from a combination of previous studies, (Docker, 2012; Doyle, 2012; Simon, 2013) and her personal experiences in teaching high-poverty students. The 42-item questionnaire (Appendix F) was comprised of a mixture of multiple-choice, Likert scale, and free-response questions. The questions focused on the topics of participants' personal background, undergraduate experiences, teaching experiences, reasons for taking their current position, challenges and rewards, professional and social supports, and reasons for remaining in their current positions.

Questions 1-4 gathered participant contact information, including personal socioeconomic background questions. Questions 5-9 were designed to examine the

participants' undergraduate experiences. Questions 10-13 asked participants to share data specific to how many years the teachers had taught for and whether they had previous experience teaching in urban, high-poverty schools. Questions 14-18 inquired about teachers' reasons for taking their current position. Question 19 allowed for open-ended response regarding reasons for taking the current position.

Question 20 asked participants to describe their thoughts regarding the rewards and challenges of teaching high-poverty students in schools located in urban settings. In response to questions 21-28, participants submitted information regarding their perceptions about the professional support they received in their teaching positions while question 29 invited participants to further express their opinions regarding professional support via free response format. Questions 30-32 inquired about perceived social supports in the participants' teaching environments.

In questions 35-39, participants were invited to respond to questions regarding their reasons for remaining in their current teaching positions. Question 40 asked participants to give a general description on how they felt about teaching high-poverty students in urban environments year after year. Finally, question 41 requested the participants to provide any additional information regarding teaching high-poverty students in schools located in urban areas and their reasons for continuing to do so. Question 42 requested the participant's phone number and best time to call if interested in an optional follow-up phone interview then thanked the participant for completing the questionnaire.

The investigator developed interview questions (see Appendix I) which gave participants the opportunity to elaborate on some of the previously provided responses as

means to allow for the collection of more thick descriptive data. For example, participants were asked to elaborate on how they came to be teaching in their current position in order to get additional background information. They were also asked to share more information about their pre-college and undergraduate experiences. The participants' responses to these questions were included in the analysis of data for the purpose of expanding upon and affirming what they had already reported in the questionnaire. The investigator also repeated the question about the rewards and challenges of teaching high-poverty students in schools located in urban settings to allow for more detail or clarification.

In addition, a question including what might contribute to making the participants' current experience be more positive provided an opportunity for them to expand upon their perceived challenges and what could be better about their current teaching situation. Questions inviting participants to share their teaching strategies, advice, and personal and professional characteristics were included so that the investigator could identify possible factors that contribute to music teachers staying in their teaching positions in urban, high-poverty schools. These questions had not been covered in the questionnaire. The investigator also included questions in the follow-up interview regarding the professional and social supports rated highly in the questionnaire in order to see the reasoning behind their positive ratings. The final portion of the optional follow-up interview included a question asking participants to remark on anything else they would like to add about teaching high-poverty students located in urban school settings and their reasons for continuing to do so with the purpose of covering anything that had not been included in the other questions.

In this study, the investigator piloted the questionnaire and follow-up interview with a colleague whose current position was similar to the potential participants who would be involved in the research. Issues addressed in the course of piloting the questionnaire and interview included the amount of time required to complete the questionnaire and interview, mechanical flaws, and the flow of questioning. The timing estimate of the online questionnaire (20 minutes) proved to be accurate. In addition, the questions were reported as being mechanically without flaw, “non-redundant,” and they seemed to flow well. Regarding the interview portion of the pilot study, the interviewer considered the first two questions regarding personal and educational background a little redundant after reading them, however, the interviewee thought they were necessary; therefore, the investigator retained them. The interviewer also found the timing estimate for the optional follow-up interview to be inaccurate because of added conversation due to familiarity of the interviewee. Creswell (2007) stresses the importance of an effective interviewer being a good listener rather than a frequent speaker. This served as a reminder to the investigator to leave her opinions and experiences out of the conversation unless they served to restate, question or affirm what had already been said.

Research Site

As part of the process of locating potential research sites, the investigator initially identified school districts with large percentages of high-poverty elementary schools on the Virginia Department of Education’s website (2013). As a measure of the level of poverty associated with students attending these elementary school, the investigator used the standard employed by the 2010 Spotlight on the Condition of Education—the percentage of a school's student enrollment who are eligible for free or reduced-price

lunch (FRPL) through the National School Lunch Program (NSLP). This standard identifies high-poverty population schools as those where 75–100 percent of students are eligible for FRPL (NCES, 2014). The VDOE website (2013) presents information regarding percentage of FRPL for the individual schools in each district as part of the school (district) report card in the section entitled “school nutrition programs and statistics.” Three districts stood out in having a large percentage of high poverty elementary schools. A review of the U.S. Census website by the investigator indicated that all districts were located in urban areas. The investigator was unable to make arrangements to include music teachers from elementary schools located in the school district with the largest percentage of high-poverty elementary schools. Music teachers who worked in the second school district, in which half of the 31 elementary (PK-5) schools were considered high-poverty according to the NSLP definition, served as the population used in this study. This school district serves a midsize urban city with an estimated 2013 population of just under 250,000 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014).

Participants

Upon approval (see Appendix A) by *James Madison University’s Institutional Review Board (IRB)* and the selected school district’s *Department of Assessment, Research, and Accountability* (see Appendix C), the investigator contacted the district’s Senior Coordinator of Music, who assisted in the initial communication with potential participants. Elementary music teachers who had taught for at least the last three years in a high-poverty school (75% or more free/reduced lunch) were invited to participate in the research. Of the music teachers serving the 15 high-poverty elementary schools in the urban district selected, ($N = 12$) qualified. The Senior Coordinator of Music provided

potential participants with a general overview and assurance the study was approved by the district and asked if they were willing to be contacted. Three of 12 responded initially. Another two were added through direct contact for a total of five participants or 42%.

Once the investigator confirmed initial interest, she contacted each teacher individually with an introductory email and cover letter (see Appendix D) briefly describing the purpose of the study. An electronic consent form (see Appendix E) was attached to the message, and potential participants could click on the provided link to a previously prepared 42-item questionnaire through the online tool, Survey Monkey. In clicking on the link, the teacher consented to participate in this portion of the study. Participants also provided preferred telephone numbers on the questionnaire if they were interested in participating in the follow-up interview portion of the study. They gave verbal consent (see Appendix H) over the phone through scripted dialog by the investigator for this final segment of data collection.

Data Collection

Teachers who elected to participate in the study ($n = 5$) clicked on a link provided by the investigator at the end of the electronic consent form (See Appendix E). This confirmed their consent and took them to the online questionnaire. The second part of data collection involved a follow-up interview with participants who included a preferred phone number for contact. Each of the initial participants ($n = 5$) provided a phone number. Then, follow-up phone interviews were conducted and recorded through a digital audio recording device after the interviewer read a scripted dialog containing

information about the study and the risk involved. Participants gave verbal consent if they were willing to be recorded (see Appendix H).

The investigator began with brief information about how she became interested in this particular area of research. Then, the investigator used questionnaire responses to guide questions regarding the participants' personal background, the challenges and rewards of teaching in their current positions, perceived professional and social supports in their teaching, their successful teaching strategies in their current position, their advice to other teachers, their personal and professional characteristics, and issues that could be improved for a more positive teaching experience. Through these responses, the investigator could identify possible factors that contribute to music teachers staying in their teaching positions in urban, high-poverty schools. The investigator concluded with "thank you" and provided a final opportunity for any additional information the interviewee would like to state regarding teaching urban, high-poverty students and reasons for continuing to do so.

Data Analysis

Data from both the initial questionnaire and follow-up phone interview were collected within a week of participant consent. Once the questionnaire data was collected, the investigator examined the results from both the group and individual prospective. This information was stored on the investigator's password protected Survey Monkey account. Interview recordings were stored on a password protected laptop.

Quantitative data were analyzed and summarized in the form of descriptive statistics including percentages and mean values for the responses to each item.

Open-ended answers from the questionnaire (see Appendix G) were examined and classified into categories of response. Interviews were transcribed (see Appendices K-O) within 24 hours to ensure accuracy in case there were clarity issues with certain words on the recording. The interviewer electronically sent individual transcripts to participants for review. Once these were returned, they were analyzed and classified into a code book, along with the open-ended answers from the questionnaire, this revealed four main categories of response (see Appendix J). The categories included background, rewards, what it takes to stay, and what could be better. The investigator examined the code book for repetitive words within each category. The resulting themes will be found in the following chapter.

Results

This study sought to describe elementary music teachers who remain in their positions in urban, high-poverty schools and identify possible factors in their remaining in those positions. Elementary music teachers from a midsize urban school district in southeastern Virginia who had been in their teaching positions for at least three years participated in the study. According to the school district's senior coordinator of music, twelve teachers fit the parameters for this study. Once the coordinator and the investigator had contacted these teachers to solicit their interest in participating in the study, five responded and consented to participate, which yielded a participation rate of 42%. Participants first completed an online questionnaire then, upon consent, partook in an optional follow-up telephone interview. All participants ($n = 5$) contributed to this second stage of data collection. The interview allowed participants to respond to previously asked questions in greater detail. The results of both stages of data collection will be detailed in this chapter.

Questionnaire

The questionnaire consisted of queries regarding participants' personal and educational background, their teaching experience, their reasons for taking their current position, their reasons for staying in their current position, and their perceived sources of professional and social supports. Data from multiple-choice, Likert scale, and yes/no questions were collected and percentages were calculated. Mean scores for responses to Likert-type items were then determined. The Likert scale points ranged from five (*strongly agree*) to one (*strongly disagree*). Free-responses from the questionnaire and

answers from the follow-up telephone interview with the investigator were then transcribed, examined, and placed into four main categories.

Personal background information. The first section of the questionnaire queried respondents about their personal background information (See Table 1). In response to question 3, which asked about the teacher's own socioeconomic status as a child, one (20%) of the participants selected the description "lower middle-class" while four (80%) selected "middle-class." In response to question 4 regarding the socioeconomic status of the high school the teacher participants had attended, one (20%) participant attended a "poor high school," one (20%) attended a "lower middle-class high school," and three participants (60%) attended a "middle-class high school."

Table 1

Teacher Socioeconomic Background Information – Pre-College

<i>Background</i>	<i>Poor</i>	<i>Lower Mid-Class</i>	<i>Middle-Class</i>	<i>Upper Mid-Class</i>	<i>Well-Off</i>
Pre-High School Socioeconomic Status	0	1 (20%)	4 (80%)	0	0
High School Socioeconomic Status	1 (20%)	1 (20%)	3 (60%)	0	0

Table 2 presents data regarding participants' undergraduate experience. Four of the five participants (80%) reported having their undergraduate degree program in an urban setting while one (20%) did not. Each of the participants (100%) reported having one or more practicum experiences with urban, high-poverty students. Three participants (60%) reported that they had student taught in a setting with urban, high-poverty students while two (40%) did not. In question 8, when asked whether or not their undergraduate

music education courses addressed how to teach urban, high-poverty students, two respondents (40%) disagreed and two (40%) strongly disagreed. The next question (9) querying about non-music education courses taken and preparation received for their current teaching setting yielded identical responses. The mean score for both questions was 1.8.

Table 2

UHP Settings Encountered During Undergraduate Experiences

<i>UHP Setting Experiences</i>	<i>S. Agree (5)</i>	<i>Agree (4)</i>	<i>Neutral (3)</i>	<i>Disagree (2)</i>	<i>S. Disagree (1)</i>	<i>Mean</i>
Music Courses	0	0	1 (20%)	2 (40%)	2 (40%)	1.8
Non-Music Courses	0	0	1 (20%)	2 (40%)	2 (40%)	1.8

In summary, participants had some degree of practical undergraduate experience in urban settings; however, they felt their music education and general education coursework did not specifically prepare to teach students in urban, high-poverty settings.

Teaching experience. Table 3 shows responses to questions 10 and 11 regarding teaching experience. Two of the participants (40%) had four to six years of experience teaching in their current position and two (40%) had seven to ten years. One (20%) had sixteen to twenty years. The total number of years the participants taught in their current position ranged from four to twenty years. Regarding their years taught in total, two participants (40%) taught four to six years, one participant (20%) taught seven to ten years, one participant (20%) taught sixteen to twenty years, and one participant (20%) taught over 21 years.

Table 3

Teaching Experience

<i>Years of Experience</i>	4-6	7-10	11-15	16-20	21+
Current Position	2 (40%)	2 (40%)	0	1 (20%)	0
Total Years Taught	2 (40%)	1 (20%)	0	1 (20%)	1 (20%)

Reasons for taking position. In reporting reasons for taking their current position by participants in this study (See Table 4), questions 14-17 asked the participants to report their level of agreement with the following statements: (14) I was attracted by positive features of the school district and/or music program; (15) I felt a sense of mission to teach urban, high-poverty students; (16) I had to take a job in this geographical location; and (17) It was the only position available. In response to question 14 regarding being attracted by positive features of the district and/or music program, four of the five participants either *agreed* ($n = 3$) or *strongly agreed* ($n = 1$). The calculated mean score was 4. Participants' responses to question 15 regarding feeling a sense of mission were spread out. Forty percent ($n = 2$) of the participants were *neutral* regarding whether they had been limited geographically (question 16), and 60% ($n = 3$) *disagreed* that they had been. The mean score was 2.4; therefore, location did not appear to be a significant factor in participants' decision to take their current position. In question 17, regarding the current position being the only one available, one participant *strongly agreed* while two participants (40%) *agreed*. Forty percent ($n = 2$) *disagreed* with this statement. The mean score was 3.4, and the participants' responses to this item were spread out.

Table 4

Reasons for Taking Current Position

<i>Reason</i>	<i>S. Agree (5)</i>	<i>Agree (4)</i>	<i>Neutral (3)</i>	<i>Disagree (2)</i>	<i>S. Disagree (1)</i>	<i>Mean</i>
Attracted By Features of Program	1 (20%)	3 (30%)	1 (20%)	0	0	4
Felt Sense of Mission	1 (20%)	1 (20%)	2 (40%)	1 (20%)	0	3.4
Had to Take Job in This Location	0	0	2	3	0	2.4
Only Position Available	1	2	0	2	0	3.4

Only two participants offered additional reasons for taking their current position (question 19). One teacher was a single mother who needed benefits while the other teacher had recently graduated and wanted to find a full-time position. She also reported that she was not aware of the conditions of the school and area at that time (See Appendix G). In summary, being attracted by the positive features of the district and/or music program appeared to be the biggest factor in the participants' reason for taking their current position.

Rewards and challenges. In question 20, all five participants described the rewards and challenges they experienced in teaching in urban, high-poverty schools. With regard to rewards, the following themes emerged: (1) Students love you and what you teach them; (2) Student growth over time; (3) Positive changes at home and school; and (4) Building many relationships by seeing every child in the school. The following

themes emerged pertaining to challenges: (1) Lack of discipline and respect; (2) Lack of parental support (emotional, academic and financial); and (3) Time taken away from music curriculum to teach manners and basic life skills (See Appendix G).

Professional support. Table 5 presents responses relevant to participants' perceived levels of professional support. Questions 21-28 asked the participants to report

Table 5

Professional and Social Support

<i>Source</i>	<i>S. Agree (5)</i>	<i>Agree (4)</i>	<i>Neutral (3)</i>	<i>Disagree (2)</i>	<i>S. Disagree (1)</i>	<i>Mean</i>
District	3 (60%)	1 (20%)	0	1 (20%)	0	4.2
Principal	2 (40%)	2 (40%)	0	1 (20%)	0	4
Music Supervisor	3 (60%)	2 (40%)	0	0	0	4.6
Mentoring	4 (80%)	1 (20%)	0	0	0	4.8
Music Teachers	4 (80%)	1 (20%)	0	0	0	4.8
Non-Music Teachers	2 (40%)	2 (40%)	1 (20%)	0	0	4.2
Music In-Service	3 (60%)	2 (40%)	0	0	0	4.6
Non-Music In-Service	1 (20%)	2 (40%)	0	2 (40%)	0	3.4
Family	4 (80%)	1 (20%)	0	0	0	4.8
Friends	3 (60%)	2 (40%)	0	0	0	4.6

their level of agreement with the following statements: (21) I received a lot of helpful support from the district when I first took my current position; (22) The support from my

principal has been helpful; (23) My music supervisor has been helpful; (24) Mentoring has been helpful; (25) Other music teachers have been helpful; (26) Other non-music teachers have been helpful; (27) Music in-service training has been helpful; and (28) Non-music in-service training has been helpful. For question 21 regarding whether or not the district was supportive, four of the five participants either *strongly agreed* or *agreed*, though one *disagreed*. The mean score was 4.2. Likewise, four of the five participants either *strongly agreed* or *agreed*, but 20% ($n = 1$) *disagreed* with the perceived level of principal support (question 22). The mean score was 4. In question 23, all participants either *strongly agreed* or *agreed* with the perceived level of support they received from their music supervisor. The mean score was 4.6. Most participants ($n = 4$) *strongly agreed* that there was support from mentor teachers (question 24) while one participant *agreed*. The data from question 25 related to perceived support from other music teachers were identical to question 24. Their mean scores were 4.8; thus, participants reported the highest value in support from mentors and other teachers. In question 26, four of the five participants either *strongly agreed* or *agreed* regarding their perceived support from non-music teachers. The mean score was 4.2. All of the participants *strongly agreed* or *agreed* in the perceived support from music in-service opportunities. The mean score was 4.6. This was also rated highly as professional support. In question 28, in which participants were queried about their perceived non-music in-service support, 20% ($n = 1$) *strongly agreed* while 40% ($n = 2$) *agreed*. In contrast, 40% ($n = 2$) *disagreed*. The mean score was 3.4, and the response was spread out. Three of the participants (60%) responded to the free-response question (29) with comments pertaining to their perceived professional support. Two of the three participants restated

the importance of music in-service opportunities, and one participant restated the value of the support from mentors and other music teachers (See Appendix G). These findings aligned with the previous questions with strongest professional supports being mentors, other music teachers, while music supervisor support and music in-service opportunities followed closely behind.

Social support. With regard to social support (See Table 5), questions 30 and 31 asked the participants to report their level of agreement with the following statements: (30) My family has been a source of support; and (31) My friends have been a source of support. In question 30 regarding family support, 80% of the participants *strongly agreed* while 20% of them *agreed*. The mean score was 4.8. Regarding the participants' perceived support from friends (question 31), 60% *strongly agreed* while 40% *agreed*. The mean score was 4.6. In the free-response question (32) for this section regarding social supports that have been helpful, three participants responded. Each of the participants restated the importance of friends as social support while two of the participants restated the importance of family for support (See Appendix G). In summary, all participants agreed that family and friends are an important source of support.

Reasons for remaining. Table 6 presents data related to participants' reasons for remaining in their current teaching positions. Participants reported their level of agreement with the following statements: (33) I find it satisfying to help urban, high-poverty students; (34) Leaving the position would entail financial loss; (35) There are no other positions available; (36) I must remain in the area; (37) I do not want to give up my school-owned resources, materials/facilities; (38) I consider myself to be hard-working

Table 6

Reasons for Remaining

<i>Reason</i>	<i>S. Agree (5)</i>	<i>Agree (4)</i>	<i>Neutral (3)</i>	<i>Disagree (2)</i>	<i>S. Dis. (1)</i>	<i>Mean</i>
Satisfaction in Helping UHP Students	2 (40%)	3 (60%)	0	0	0	4.4
Financial Loss From Leaving	2 (40%)	1 (20%)	2 (40%)	0	0	4
Only Position Available	0	1 (20%)	2 (40%)	2 (40%)	0	2.8
Must Remain in Area	0	0	3 (60%)	2 (40%)	0	2.6
Do Not Want to Lose Resources/Mats.	0	1 (20%)	0	4 (80%)	0	2.4
I am Hard-Working and Persistent	5 (100%)	0	0	0	0	5
Current Experience is Positive	1 (20%)	3 (60%)	1 (20%)	0	0	4

and persistent; and (39) On the whole, my current teaching experience is a positive one.

In question 33 pertaining to satisfaction in helping students, all participants either *strongly agreed* or *agreed*. The mean score was 4.4. The possibility of financial loss (question 34) was reported by participants as a reason to remain by 60%, while 40% chose the *neutral* option (mean = 4.0). As to whether the availability of other positions was a factor, only one participant felt it was; two participants were *neutral*. The mean score was 2.8, and the responses of the participants were spread out. Participants reported either *neutral* (60%) or *disagree* (40%) with regard to whether needing to

remain in the area was a factor. The mean score was 2.6. In question 37, 80% of the participants *disagreed* that having to give up school-owned resources, materials/facilities was a factor in not leaving their current positions. The mean score was 2.4. All participants *strongly agreed* that they consider themselves to be hard-working and persistent. Whether the current teaching experience as a whole is positive (question 39), 20% of the participants *strongly agreed*, 60% of them *agreed*, and 20% of the participants chose the *neutral* option. The mean score was 4. In summary, participants considered their hard work and persistence to be the strongest factor in their remaining, while finding it satisfying to teach urban, high poverty students fell close behind.

Question 40 asked participants to answer the choice that best described their continued teaching experience of urban, high-poverty students. Twenty percent ($n = 1$) said “teaching urban, high poverty students gets easier every year” while 80% ($n = 4$) said “teaching urban, high-poverty students gets harder every year.” Finally, question 41 asked participants to mention anything else they would like to say about teaching urban, high-poverty students and their reasons for continuing to do so. Two participants (40%) responded to this question, and their comments were brief. One participant reported being blessed to serve her wonderful students while the other participant felt she was there for a reason despite the difficulties of the position.

Interview

Background information. The interview stage of data collection consisted of questions that aligned with and expanded upon the questionnaire. The first reported category from interview data involves background information. First, the investigator asked participants to describe how they came to be teaching in their current position.

Most of the participants reported either recently graduating or having a change in personal situation. In addition, most said they applied to several districts and the district in which they were teaching was the only offer they received. Two of the participants actually grew up in this district and two of the participants grew up in a neighboring city. One participant had 16 years of experience in teaching music at the elementary level in the district being studied. She also attended the same school district as a child. She (Teacher E) stated, “I feel like a one-woman crusader to get the message of music appreciation out to the masses and the local community, especially in our urban community” (p. 142).

Regarding their own pre-college background, some participants said they didn’t think their socioeconomic status growing up was a significant factor in their decision to or ability to teach students in urban, high-poverty schools. Teachers B and D both said times have changed since they were in school. Teacher B thought her pre-college background indirectly affected her decision, but her current teaching situation is “definitely more extreme” (p. 111). She stated:

So I would say being in that culture, being in that environment you kind of learn different things and you learn how the students are because you’re a student yourself. So they’re your peers and you see what the teachers go through and how they have to adjust and deal with certain students in certain situations. So, I would say it did somewhat prepare me, not directly; but I would say indirectly for sure. It prepared me for what I’m currently dealing with. (p. 111)

Teacher C discovered how sheltered she was growing up, and stated that her current teaching experience had really opened her eyes. Teacher E recalled her lack of access to musical instruments as a child, which made her determined to build a better program.

In describing their undergraduate experiences, all participants stated they had practicum experiences in urban settings. In fact, three had them in the district in which they were now employed. Participants reported their experiences as being positive in general. Regarding a practicum observation experience, Teacher A said, "...that did help me see what I would potentially have to work with in teaching, yeah" (p. 107). Teacher B felt inspired by her elementary practicum experience and thought it was essential in seeing a teacher's passion and love for what they did with very limited resources. She stated:

He didn't have a classroom, he didn't have anything. He had his little rules for his class posted on his cart, and that's all he had to work with. I was actually very inspired by him, because despite his limited resources, he still had a passion and love for what he was doing. I was very fortunate that in my last week working with him, he was actually able to get a classroom. So that was a really good experience in exposing me to what I might have to deal with and face when I actually became a teacher myself. (p. 112)

Teacher B reported her elementary student teaching placement as actually being in her current school, so she was well-prepared in the sense of knowing what to expect. Her student teaching experience also helped her not to be nervous about teaching in an urban, high-poverty school because of her student teaching experience. While she reported

having practicum and/or student teaching experience in urban, high-poverty schools, Teacher D said it was too long ago to remember the details regarding level of preparation. Teachers C and E reported having student teaching experiences in thriving programs where poverty was not an issue.

Regarding music education coursework as undergraduates, participants agreed that classes were geared more toward learning how to be a teacher and writing lesson plans. Teacher E felt like her courses did not prepare her for practical things. “We got great theory, but the practicality of it all was missing...we still have students coming out of school now and graduating and missing the same things” (p. 144). Teacher C felt like she had some practical background in her non-music education course on classroom management since the instructor was a principal from a local school. There were different perspectives on what should be taught in undergraduate courses. For example, Teacher B felt like most programs aren’t designed to prepare students to teach in specific settings. “They were designed to teach me how to teach no matter where I am...I was able to take the skills from that and just adjust them however they needed to be adjusted to the atmosphere I’m currently in” (p. 113).

Rewards of teaching experiences. The second category from the interview stage includes the rewards of teaching experiences. In general, all participants reported the experience of gradual student growth and progress over the years is quite rewarding. Teachers C and E highly value seeing the “light bulb” look in students. Teacher A reported the following realization regarding rewards:

I’ve come to realize that when you have, or when your children see that you care about things other than what you’re teaching (math, science—

whatever), that they're more receptive. And when you become a little more relevant, culturally relevant or culturally aware of um things they like to do or things that are going on besides what's going on in their classrooms or in your own classroom, it definitely helps a whole lot. (p. 107)

Teachers D and E also mentioned the reward in seeing the parents' enjoyment and appreciation of the music program.

Regarding helpful resources and materials, participants reported many similar items that have promoted rewarding experiences. Stylistically, all of the participants use music students can relate to, such as popular music or music specific to a student's background. They have found most success with fresh, up-beat, exciting and engaging music. Teachers C and E also use strategies such as "trading-off" rap for Mozart or sharing originals then updated remixes of the same song. Teachers B and E stress the importance of connecting activities to life experiences and sharing personal life stories. Teacher B stated:

I do try to connect it to life experiences because kids nowadays want to know why we are doing this, how it is important, how is it going to affect me in my life, and what can I do with it? So I try to, as much as possible, explain to them what they can do with music and this experience. (p. 115)

Professional support. According to the data collected from interviews, professional support helps teaching be a more rewarding and positive experience in multiple ways. With regard to support from principals, Teacher E said her principal gave her what she needed to ensure program success. She also mentioned the strength of her

principal as being a positive aspect for her. "...this principal, she knows who she is. She's running other things in the school and she trusts me to run the music department and keep things straight" (p. 147). The other participants did not mention details regarding principal support. Teachers B and D mentioned the positive support of their music supervisor as being an amazing advocate and continuously supporting programs for teachers and students that are already in place.

Each of the participants spoke highly of the mentor program within the district. In this particular district, veteran teachers were assigned to new teachers during their first year of teaching. They had time set in their schedules to meet with the new teachers on a weekly basis. The new teachers said they were really helpful with whatever they needed. They helped them feel grounded and focused while maneuvering through their new teaching placements in urban, high-poverty schools. Specifically, Teacher B stated:

I think that's very important because there are certain things that when you're really strong in certain areas you can kind of not let that area go, but you can focus on the areas that you are not so strong in. So I think having that sense of support there it helps you to be strong in the areas of teaching music and just being a good effective music teacher. When those things are taken care of, now I can deal with these students who are coming in with all of the diagnoses and disorders, and all these family issues. I can deal with them because I know what I'm doing. I'm competent at my job. I'm confident at my job, and I can handle it. (p. 116)

All participants gave overwhelmingly positive responses regarding support from other music teachers. They noted a strong sense of camaraderie, collaboration, and fellowship. Through ongoing monthly meetings, teachers are able to share ideas and compare notes. They help each other out by loaning instruments and materials, helping with programs in other buildings, and volunteering to help with coverage for another music teacher within their building. Teacher D stated:

There's a lot of camaraderie and sharing ideas, music, stuff people make up, different ways to go about doing things. Like I said, I'm kind of led to believe that doesn't happen in other districts. I'd love to know if that's true, because if it is, it's sad because that is just a wonderful resource...with these meetings we're constantly sharing ideas...I think we've really got it nailed down in [current district]. We really do. (p. 138)

Teacher E also spoke of the importance of getting together with other music teachers:

We get together for fellowship, collaboration, compare notes, what works for you...it's just good to see each other. When you think you're on the island by yourself...that can be detrimental in teaching. You need to reach out and know what other people are doing so that's the greatest strength of that piece right there. (p. 148)

Teacher C, who has always had two separate placements in her seven years in her current district, also mentioned the value of being able to informally see other music teachers teach, especially when she first started. Even though she would prefer to be at one school, "the upside of traveling around is that I have gotten to see lots of people teach and

lots of people approach their programs in different ways...because you're still forming your teaching style" (p. 127).

Social support. All participants noted the importance of family and/or friends and the social supports they provide. According to Teacher A, her family supports her by attending every performance, donating time and money, and just helping when asked. Teachers B and C said their families offer listening ears and try to understand their situation. Specifically, Teacher B said:

My family...they...I think they're just proud of the fact that I'm doing something good...I don't know if they completely understand on a daily basis with the music piece...I think the idea that I'm a teacher is something that they are proud of and they like hearing about. I share with them the various stories from my job and they enjoy hearing them...That's always helpful. (p. 118)

Teacher D spoke of her friend in being a great sounding board. She said it is necessary to have someone to "vent" to, especially when they have been in your situation. She stated:

She's a great sounding board to be able to vent and to get it all out there because she understands, you know. She may not be doing it right now, but was there long enough that she knows...having somebody like that is also invaluable, and I know everybody can't have that. (p.139)

What it takes to stay. The third category of the interview data involves the teachers' personal and professional characteristics, their advice to other teachers, and conclusions with regard to what it takes to stay. First, participants reported their characteristics, and, in some cases, how their students would describe them. The three

words that came up most frequently were firm, fair, and fun. Along with this, Teacher B noted the importance of being competent and confident. Teacher D also mentioned the fact that you must love the kids and love what you do. Teacher B stated:

They know that when they come into my room I expect a disciplined and orderly classroom. They have a lot of fun in my room though. They'll say I'm being fair. Every time you come into my room it's a fresh start. It doesn't matter what happened last week...They would describe me as firm, fair, loving. (p. 118)

When participants were asked to give advice to teachers of urban, high-poverty students or those considering doing so, many stressed the importance of getting to know your students. Teacher D said, "Get to know them and let them get to know a little bit about you...when things are bad you can get them back on your side, or whatever" (p. 137). They also advised others to have a strong foundation and to be grounded in oneself. When you come into an urban, high-poverty school, you must be open-minded, patient, and prepared for anything. Specifically, Teacher C stated:

They're disrespectful, they're loud, they shout at you, and yet, when you can be patient enough to talk to them, to let them in, to hook them and get them involved, they can be some of the most rewarding and dedicated students you'll ever teach. (p. 125)

Teacher B also recommended the importance of researching the district or music department before applying for or accepting a job. Specifically, she said, "I think it's important to research, and I think I mentioned this in my answer...to research the district

and find out what the music department is like” (p. 116). Additionally, Teacher C reported that she tries her best not to yell at her students because:

...a lot of them, that’s all they hear at home. A large part of why they are loud and yelling all of the time is because that’s the only way they ever get heard at home...sometimes it happens...but I try really hard not to because I don’t want to be just one more person yelling in their face. I want them to know that...there are people who care about them and will treat them well and treat them nicely and be there for them when they need it. (p. 132)

In conclusion regarding what it takes to stay, participants said this is where they need to be, and this is what they’re supposed to do. Two of the teachers (C and E) spoke specifically about their trust in others to do what they are doing. Teacher E said, “I just can’t trust anybody else to give the kids what I know I can give them...I just don’t know that they’ll get it” (p. 149). Likewise, Teacher C said:

Every time I think about leaving, I think about who they would get to fill my spot and whether or not they would be up for the task. And whether or not they would stick around... (p. 131)

Many participants said the rewards outweigh the challenges and spoke of their desire to give students new opportunities and experiences both in and out of the classroom to give hope for their future and to see life outside of their community and school.

What might make it easier to stay. In the final category of interview data, participants shared their thoughts on what might make it easier for teachers to remain in their positions in urban, high-poverty schools. Home-related issues were frequently

reported amongst challenges faced by participants. Lack of parental support was common amongst the participants. In particular, Teacher C said, “If you (parents) don’t feel like you have to be respectful of adults and other teachers at the school, then it’s not surprising that your kid feels like they don’t have to be respectful” (p. 130). In addition to the lack of academic, emotional, and financial support, Teacher D said, “children are having children...they haven’t done their growing up entirely themselves” (p. 134). She also stated:

Some of the other teachers and I were talking about a parent who is just trying to be her daughter’s friend. Because they’re so close in age it kind of makes sense. They walk down the hall dressed almost exactly alike, and it’s interesting...they don’t know what to do because they’re allowing the child to rule their world. They can’t get an upper hand. (p. 135)

All participants reported that students come to school from inconsistent living situations with a lack of discipline and manners; therefore, schools are often forced to take instructional time to teach these skills. Many expressed concern with the time they spend teaching life-lessons and non-musical skills that take away from the music curriculum, although they see the necessity of the social skills. Teacher B stated:

I find myself at moments just wanting to say put your instruments away I need to talk to you guys and just have a heart-to-heart with them. There are moments that I do that because it’s just necessary. They need it. They need to hear it. I feel like I would be doing them a disservice if I did not say something. (p. 114)

Inconsistency at school was also noted by many participants. First, challenging schools often have high turnover rates, so students see new principals and many new teachers each year. This is especially hard when many adults are inconsistent in their lives outside of school. Teacher A said:

...the principal of the school has changed numerous times...so when the children see that inconsistency and change every year...a new somebody, a new set of teachers...it kind of does something. It doesn't sit well with them, and that's something that really needs to be fixed...I don't know how...you can't make a teacher stay...you can't force them to stay. (pp. 108-109)

Next, inconsistency with discipline seemed to be an issue worth discussion. Teacher B expressed her concern regarding this in saying:

There's not a lot of consistency in discipline. Kids are smart. They pick up on that. So they know (I can get away with this) and they call it out. These are bold kids...when they see something that's not fair, they're gonna tell you. So I think we could definitely do a better job with being more consistent in disciplinary actions. (p. 117)

Summary

According to the results of this study, three themes emerged relating to the participants' decision to remain in their current position. Relationships, the teacher's background and characteristics, and consistency appear to be the most frequently reported factors contributing to the participants' decision to stay in their position in an urban,

high-poverty school setting. These results are summarized in greater detail as they help answer the research questions with conclusions in the following chapter.

Summary and Conclusions

As previously mentioned, urban schools face unique challenges due to various issues that include poverty. In a 1996 study, researchers interviewed teachers about their perspectives on teaching at an urban school with at-risk students. The teachers mentioned high levels of stress endured since students were often very poor, transient, and had troubled home lives, among other things (Erskine-Cullen & Sinclair, 1996). The purpose of this study was to describe elementary music teachers who remain in their positions in urban, high-poverty schools and identify possible factors in their remaining in those positions.

Participants ($n = 5$) were drawn from an urban school district in southeastern Virginia in which half of its 31 elementary (PK-5) schools are considered high-poverty according to the NSLP definition. Elementary music teachers who had taught in an urban, high-poverty elementary school for at least the last three years completed an online questionnaire via Survey Monkey and a follow-up telephone interview. In order to fulfill the purpose of the study, five research questions were formulated based on previous research and the investigator's experience. The results are here summarized and discussed according to the following questions:

1. What are the demographic, personal, and educational backgrounds of elementary music teachers who continue to teach in urban, high-poverty schools?

The majority of participants ($n = 4$) came from a middle-class socioeconomic background and three of the five attended middle-class high schools. Two of the participants (40%) attended a high school that was considered poor or lower middle –

class. Although some recalled challenges faced by their teachers during the time they were in high school and how the teachers reacted to these challenges, they didn't feel like this had a substantial effect in helping with their current setting. In contrast, four of the five participants had undergraduate experiences in urban settings. All participants had practicum experiences and three student taught in urban settings. Only one of the three participants spoke in detail of her student teaching experience during the interview and how it helped her feel more confident and grounded. Most felt like their practicum experiences in urban, high-poverty schools helped them see certain situations they might face as a teacher. However, four of the five stated that undergraduate music education and non-music education coursework did not, for the most part, adequately prepare students for teaching in particular settings such as urban and high-poverty schools. Two participants noted that times had changed since they were in school. Participants' years of teaching varied from four to six on the low end to more than 21.

2. How do these elementary music teachers describe their initial choice to teach in an urban, high-poverty school?

Four of the five were initially attracted by features of the district or music program. All participants spoke with pride regarding the district's music program. Three of the five admitted it was the only position available. Interestingly, only two of the five said that one of their initial reasons for choosing their position was a sense of mission to work with urban, high-poverty students. None of the participants said they were bound by locale; however, according to interviews, two of the participants grew up in their current district and two participants grew up in a neighboring city.

3. What is the nature of the job-related support reported by elementary music teachers who remain in urban, high-poverty schools?

Two areas of job-related support held the highest value, according to the participants. Their district's strong mentoring program seemed to them crucial for their success as a first-year teacher (mean = 4.8 with a possible maximum of 5). Through regular contact, new teachers felt that they were able to gain the foundation they needed while establishing an ongoing relationship with veteran teachers. In addition, all participants repeatedly discussed the strength in the camaraderie and collaboration they have amongst other music teachers (mean = 4.8). They expressed high regard for the contribution these informal discussions and meetings make to the vitality of the teachers and the total program. Also highly rated as sources of support were the music supervisor (mean = 4.6) and the music in-service program (mean = 4.6). Even though 4 out of 5 participants agreed that their district and principal were supportive, one participant disagreed; therefore, their mean scores were lower (4.2 and 4).

4. What kinds of social support outside of school exist for them?

Participants felt grateful for the support of family (mean = 4.8) and friends (mean = 4.6). Most commonly, they serve as listening ears for stories, concerns, and even a good "venting" session. They are also there to attempt to understand or empathize if they've experienced similar situations as teachers in urban, high-poverty schools.

5. How do elementary music teachers who have continued to teach in urban, high-poverty schools describe their decision to remain in their current positions and what rewards and challenges do they cite as contributing to their decision to stay?

Among the possible reasons to remain, one of the highest rated was that participants find it satisfying to help urban, high-poverty students (mean = 4.4). In discussing the rewards of teaching during their interview, two participants mentioned their satisfaction in seeing the light-bulb look in their students eyes and the reward of seeing student growth. Participants also mentioned that they enjoyed seeing parents become involved and excited about the music program during the interview. Two items that did not seem to be reasons for remaining were a lack of other positions (mean = 2.8) and a need to remain in the area (mean = 2.6).

Other possible factors contributing to these teachers remaining appear in the data and interviews. Teachers agreed that the characteristic of being hard-working and persistent was an important factor in remaining in their positions (mean = 5.0). The importance of this is underscored by the finding that four of the five teachers reported that teaching urban, high-poverty students gets harder every year. When describing their teaching characteristics in the interview, participants overwhelmingly described their core qualities as being firm, fair, and fun. Three participants advised teachers of urban high-poverty students to get to know their students and know who they are themselves. In addition, two participants stressed the importance of a strong foundation in your subject area. Other points of advice included being patient, open-minded, and prepared for anything.

In the interview, the teacher participants commented on pedagogical strategies that helped make teaching more successful and rewarding. All of the participants mentioned incorporating music such as popular music or music specific to the student's

background to increase motivation. Two participants also emphasized the importance of connecting life experiences, including their own, into their lessons.

All of the participants reported three major challenges (which are connected) in teaching urban, high-poverty students. First, they reported that many students are lacking discipline and respect when they come to school. Second, participants mentioned lack of support from parents (academic, emotional, financial) as being a big challenge. Third, the loss of music instruction time due to the necessity to teach social skills appeared to be of great concern. Also, regarding challenges relating to inconsistency at school, two participants reported inconsistency with discipline actions in the school and one expressed concern with the inconsistency of principals and teachers due to a high turnover rate.

Discussion and Implications

This study was limited to a portion of elementary music teachers who teach in high-poverty schools in a midsize urban school district in southeastern Virginia. It paints a picture of this particular district's elementary music teachers that may not be fully representative of the many teachers in similar programs across the region, state, and country. Twelve elementary music teachers in this district fit the criteria for the study, and five (42%) agreed to participate. Regarding possible reasons for non-participation, it could be speculated (based on the investigator's own personal experience) that the other seven potential participants could have been overwhelmed or distracted since the request was sent during the end of the school year, or perhaps they felt uneasy about participating if their experience as a whole had not been positive. The following section will link findings from this study to previous literature to find commonalities as well as gaps that

may need to be filled. Organization is based on three themes that emerged as relating to the decision to remain—relationships, background and teacher characteristics, and consistency.

Relationships. Relationships appear to be the most important factor in these elementary music teachers' decision to stay in their position in urban, high-poverty schools. First, finding satisfaction in helping urban, high-poverty students was a highly rated reason for remaining in their positions. Teachers also noted the importance of getting to know your students. Jensen (2009) stresses the necessity of educators having empathy and cultural knowledge to be effective when teaching high-poverty students. Some participants also valued relationships with parents and saw their excitement in the music program as being a rewarding aspect. Interview comments indicate teachers feel like they are where they need to be and that they are there for a reason. Some expressed concern with what their program would look like if someone else took their place. This suggests that the participants may have developed a relationship with their clients.

Participants also ranked relationships with other music teachers highly in regard to professional support. Research suggests this idea in two ways. First, Boutte (2012) recommends conversations and collaborations amongst all grade levels as being necessary in continuing a pattern of success from the elementary through high school levels. (The teachers in this survey did not specify whether all grade levels were present in their meeting and discussion, but more conversation amongst all grade levels would be beneficial if it is not already happening). Also, Conway (2008) found that music teachers (in all demographic settings) placed a strong value on informal interactions with other music teachers, which was also found to be true in this study.

The district's mentor program was also a highly rated professional support. Teachers reported the support they received from their relationship with veteran teachers during their first year or two in the district made that transition easier. Conway (2006) suggests an induction process in music educator mentor programs that also aligns with the district being studied. Music teachers in Fiese & DeCarbo's (1995) article also reported strong mentors and music supervisors contributed to their success. In contrast, Gardner's (2010) study found principal support to rank highest in teacher retention; however, the teachers in his study were not limited to urban settings. Participants (with one exception) agreed that principal support was an important factor, but, overall it was not rated as highly as the other kinds of support mentioned above. Relationships with family and friends also appeared to be valuable to participants in this study. In addition to donating time and money, their support served as a sounding board to offer advice or just listen. This is a factor which the investigator did find mentioned in her review of the literature.

Background and teacher characteristics. Regarding the teachers' background and teaching characteristics and how they contribute to a strong foundation, Gardner (2010) suggests that music teachers as a whole have a tendency to come from the middle to upper socioeconomic backgrounds; however, the participants in this study reported coming from a middle to lower middle-class background. This may relate to the fact that four of the five participants in this study grew up in or around the surrounding area. This finding is consistent with two studies that concluded that students tended to choose districts that were proximate to their hometown and/or similar to their hometown (Bruenger, 2010; Kelly, 2003).

In order to remain in their current setting, according to the participants in this study, teachers must have strong foundations in their subject area (music). Most of the participants attended urban institutions as undergraduates and had practicum and/or student teaching experiences in urban, high-poverty settings. One participant concluded that these experiences helped to build confidence and ease fear in possible teaching situations.

Emmanuel described an “immersion internship” program in Detroit Michigan where interns and their professor even lived in the neighborhood in which they were teaching (2006). This experience helped the interns develop more confidence that they would be able to teach in urban environments. Participants in the current study state that theoretical coursework did not prepare them well to teach in urban schools. Fiese & DeCarbo’s (1995) findings aligned with this idea when they questioned select music educators from various large urban areas throughout the U.S. They felt like professors were too removed from the public schools, and their education seemed designed to prepare them to teach the “ideal” student. Yet theory specifically related to teaching urban high-poverty students seems to have a place. Outcomes from Freedman & Appleman’s (2009) study on the MUSE program for secondary English teachers in urban schools suggest a concise theoretical background as one of the items being beneficial in a teacher’s decision to stay. Participants in this study felt they were lacking in the specific theoretical background related to teaching urban, high-poverty students.

Various teaching characteristics have contributed to their reasons for remaining, according to the participants in this study. Through their hard work and persistence, the participants strive to create an environment that is firm, fair, and fun to allow for

increased success. Teachers in this study expressed the importance of connecting lessons to their students' lives or even their own. Many incorporate popular music or other genres that are relevant to their students' lives. This idea aligns with Boutte (2012) in her article regarding culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP) in urban education. Participants also mentioned the importance of being patient, open-minded, and prepared for anything when teaching urban, high-poverty students.

Consistency. Finally, consistency is necessary in both the lives of students as well as teachers as reported in this study. First, participants frequently reported challenges related to lack of support from home in many of their students. It was noted that, many times, parents struggle to deal with their children. Costa-Giomi (2008) assessed the status of music education in the elementary schools of a large urban center in Texas. Results from Costa-Giomi's study indicated clear differences in parental support between schools of contrasting socioeconomic status. Also, due to lack of parental support, students in poverty often face inconsistent situations at home; therefore, the role of schools is to be consistent regarding expectations and discipline.

According to Brown (2003), classroom management is a major concern in urban schools. Teachers in the current study expressed concern in the lack of discipline and manners their students have. The time that is taken to deal with these issues in the classroom often takes away from music instruction. The participants suggested more consistency throughout the school (including administrative support) regarding discipline and behavior expectations. Expectations should be clear and discipline should be consistent throughout the school. This aligns with the participants' suggestion to create consistent learning environments that are firm, fair, and fun.

Lastly, participants noted a large turnover rate in school personnel in their schools. This inconsistency can impact students and further diminish their trust in adults. This aligns with the previous literature that mentions teacher recruitment, retention, and attrition as a growing concern for administrators, especially in urban, high-poverty schools. According to Shields (2009), to be successful, schools need teachers who are “stable, committed, and unified.” If efforts are not made to retain teachers, the attrition cycle will continue when inexperienced teachers encounter the same issues.

Future Research

A number of possibilities for future research exist. One possibility would be a longitudinal study beginning with first year elementary music teachers and tracking their career over a period of time. Similarly, it would be interesting to track the same teachers from this study over the next five years or revisit in five years. Also, teachers in other urban, high-poverty districts could be studied to identify similarities and differences. Additionally, studying the perceptions of students in urban, high-poverty schools who remain active in music education and their reflections on teachers who had greatest impact on their decision to pursue music could be noteworthy.

It would be beneficial to look at more collaborative programs between universities and schools and their impact on teacher longevity in urban, high-poverty settings. A future study could even focus on the development of a new program that connects a teacher preparation program directly to the schools. Finally, there was some reference regarding community programs and support offered to teachers and students as being positive factors. The study of successful school and community collaborations or

development of such partnerships might foster increased optimism and longevity amongst teachers and students regarding music education in urban, high-poverty schools.

Summary

Participants in the questionnaire and interview portions of this study identified clear themes as they described their experience of teaching elementary music in urban, high-poverty schools. Establishing and maintaining relationships with students, parents, other teachers, and family and friends appears to be an important factor in a teacher's decision to remain in their current position. Participants recommended getting to know one's students and letting them get to know you to promote student and teacher growth and rewarding experiences. Dealing with individual student situations, participants suggest, can also be easier with parent communication and/or background information.

Participants also recommend reaching out to other music teachers when one feels isolated because the support and camaraderie gives one strength through one's peers' unique ability to empathize. Ongoing relationships with other music teachers (both formally such as a mentor placement and informally) that span from the beginning of a placement and continue throughout the years can be one of the biggest factors in remaining. Friends and family were found to be helpful supports as well. They can be listening ears for better and worse.

Teachers in this study did not, for the most part come from a poor urban background, though most attended urban universities, had practica in, and in some cases, student teaching experiences in urban settings. These helped to provide a musical and instructional foundation, though participants expressed the need for more specific instruction in urban education. Teaching characteristics that include being firm, fair, and

fun along with being hard-working and persistent were important factors in the teachers' remaining in their positions. In addition, connecting activities in the classroom to life experiences and incorporating music that is relevant to their students' lives have promoted rewarding experiences.

Teachers in this study expressed the need for more consistency in the lives of their urban, high-poverty students. The issue of consistency is only partly under the teachers' control. Inconsistency in students' home situations may make consistency at school and environments which are firm, fair, and fun even more important. Communication with parents is part of the job as is teaching self-discipline and social skills. Teacher turnover is another source of inconsistency. School administration should work to retain good teachers in urban, high-poverty schools in order to maintain stability in the lives of students who often have inconsistency in their adult presence and living situations.

Urban schools face increasing challenges with issues relating to poverty, and teachers frequently encounter stressful situations that can lead to thoughts on whether remain in or leave their current position. This study has identified three factors related to this set of teachers' decisions about remaining: meaningful relationships, background and teaching characteristics, and consistency. The description of the participants in this study provides an illuminating picture for our profession. Hopefully we will see an increased number of those who remain committed to working with urban high-poverty students.

Appendix A:
IRB Approval Letter

Dear Heather,

February 5, 2014

I want to let you know that your IRB protocol entitled, “***Elementary Music Teachers in Urban, High-Poverty Schools Who Remain in Their Position: A Descriptive Study***” has been approved for you to begin your study. The signed action of the board form, approval memo, and close-out form will be sent to your advisor via campus mail. Your protocol has been assigned No. 14-0301. Thank you again for working with us to get your protocol approved.

As a condition of the IRB approval, your protocol is subject to annual review. Therefore, you are required to complete a Close-Out form before your project end date. You *must* complete the close-out form unless you intend to continue the project for another year. An electronic copy of the close-out form can be found on the Office of Research Integrity web site at the following URL: <http://www.jmu.edu/researchintegrity/irb/forms/index.shtml>.

If you wish to continue your study past the approved project end date, you must submit an Extension Request Form indicating an extension request, along with supporting information. Although the IRB office sends reminders, it is ultimately ***your responsibility*** to submit the continuing review report in a timely fashion to ensure there is no lapse in IRB approval.

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

Best Wishes,
Carrie

Carrie Tillman
Administrative Assistant
Office of Research Integrity
601 University Boulevard
Blue Ridge Hall
Third Floor, Room # 344
MSC 5738
Harrisonburg, VA 22807
Phone: [\(540\) 568-7025](tel:5405687025)
Fax: [\(540\) 568-6409](tel:5405686409)

Appendix B:
IRB Addendum Approval

Dear Heather,

Feb. 28, 2014

I want to let you know that the addendum request for your IRB protocol entitled, "***Elementary Music Teachers in Urban, High-Poverty Schools Who Remain in Their Position: A Descriptive Study***" has been approved.

Your Close-Out Form must be submitted within **30 days** of the project end date. If you wish to continue your study past the approved project end date, you must submit an Extension Request Form indicating an extension request, along with supporting information. Although the IRB office sends reminders, it is ultimately **your responsibility** to submit the continuing review report in a timely fashion to ensure there is no lapse in IRB approval.

Thank you again for working with us to get your protocol addendum approved. We look forward to receiving your project close-out form upon completion of your study.

Best Wishes,
Carrie

Carrie Tillman
Administrative Assistant
Office of Research Integrity
601 University Boulevard
Blue Ridge Hall
Third Floor, Room # 344
MSC 5738
Harrisonburg, VA 22807
Phone: [\(540\) 568-7025](tel:(540)568-7025)
Fax: [\(540\) 568-6409](tel:(540)568-6409)

Appendix C:

Approval from School District

Department of Assessment, Research & Accountability

May 15, 2014

Heatherly Eberly
Master's candidate, James Madison University
heberly@harrisonburg.k12.va.us

Approval is granted to conduct the proposed study, *Elementary Music Teachers in Urban, High-Poverty Schools Who Remain in Their Position: A Descriptive Study*, in fulfillment of requirements for the degree of Master of Music Education from James Madison University. The proposed study meets the technical criteria following the Research and Survey Policy (www.harrisonburg.k12.va.us) and must follow the stipulations below:

- The research may not begin until a copy of the IRB approval is received by
- Voluntary participation allows each participant—principal to decide individually whether to participate or withdraw at any time, without question, consequence, or follow-up.
- All participants and schools will remain anonymous in data and survey collection, and reporting results. Identifiable characteristics or linkage to the identity of any individual or school is prohibited.
- Approval does not constitute commitment of resources or the endorsement of the study or its findings by the school district or the School Board.
- Data collected and results will not become part of any principal, school, or district record. All research records must be locked in a secured location.
- The researcher will email a copy of the final report for the school district, and report any changes or problems while conducting the study, to

We look forward to your findings and contribution to instructional practice, program services, and achievement for *ALL* students.

Sincerely,

Executive Director
Assessment, Research & Accountability
Office:
Fax:
email:

Appendix D:
Survey (e-mail) Cover Letter

Dear Music Educator,

June 6, 2014

I am a general music educator in Harrisonburg City Schools and a graduate student in Music Education at James Madison University. I currently teach in a school in which 90% of the students receive free/reduced lunch, and my thesis will examine elementary music teachers who teach in high-poverty schools in your district who have been teaching for at least the last three years in this setting.

The purpose of this study is to describe elementary music teachers who remain in their positions in urban, high-poverty schools and identify possible factors in their remaining. School systems across the U.S. are facing increasing numbers of socioeconomically disadvantaged students, and urban and rural school systems often face the highest levels of teacher attrition. Numerous studies have examined teacher attrition and retention rates of elementary and secondary teachers working in high-poverty schools, and a few have specifically examined the field of music education, but the need to investigate retention factors in elementary music education remains.

This study will specifically examine elementary teachers' demographic, personal, and educational backgrounds. Participants will also be asked questions regarding job-related and social supports, challenges and rewards in teaching urban, high-poverty students, and reasons for staying in current position. You are being asked to participate in the first part of data collection by completing an online questionnaire.

If you are willing to participate, please read the consent form below and click link at the bottom of the page. (By clicking on this link, you are giving consent to the conditions outlined in this form.) If you have any questions before you decide to participate, please contact me at heberly@harrisonburg.k12.va.us or 540-810-4020.

Thanks for considering,

Heather Eberly

Appendix E:

Web Consent Form

“Web” / “Email” Consent to Participate in Research (confidential research)

Identification of Investigators & Purpose of Study

You are being asked to participate in a research study conducted by Heather Eberly from James Madison University. The purpose of this study is to describe elementary music teachers who remain in their positions in urban, high-poverty schools and identify possible factors in their remaining. The participants in this study teach in _____ City Schools in Virginia and have taught at least the last three years in urban, high-poverty schools. This study will contribute to the researcher’s completion of her master’s thesis.

Research Procedures

Should you decide to participate in this research study, you will be asked to sign this consent form once all your questions have been answered to your satisfaction. This study consists of a questionnaire and interview that will be administered to individual participants in _____ City Schools. You will be asked to provide answers to a series of questions related to your demographic and educational background, current teaching experiences, job-related and social supports, and reasons for staying in your current position. A follow-up phone interview will expand on previous responses. You may opt not to participate in the follow-up interview. Your interview will be recorded using a digital recording device, and transcribed with your permission.

Time Required

Participation in this study will require approximately 1 hour of your time. The survey should take approximately 20 minutes and a follow-up interview, if necessary, should take approximately 30-40 minutes.

Risks

The investigator does not perceive more than minimal risks from your involvement in this study (that is, no risks beyond the risks associated with everyday life).

Benefits

Potential benefits from participation in this study include gaining knowledge of what factors influence elementary Music teacher retention in high-poverty schools. This could be beneficial for Music Education students, current educators, and administrators. Through examination and implementation of results, teacher retention rates could increase.

Confidentiality

The results of this research will be presented to the Music Education faculty and James Madison University. While individual responses are obtained and recorded online through Survey Monkey, data will be confidential through password protection. Only the researcher knows the password to this survey. *Responding participant’s email addresses and preferred contact information will be tracked using Survey Monkey for follow-up notices. Participants’ names will be replaced with pseudonyms as soon as data is received.* The results of this project will be coded in such a way that the respondent’s identity will not be attached to the final form of this study. Aggregate data will be presented representing averages or generalizations about the responses as a whole. Consent forms, the list linking names and pseudonyms, and any data printed from Survey Monkey will be stored in locked filing cabinet in the researcher’s advisor’s office. Only the advisor has a key to both the office and the filing cabinet. Digital recordings and transcripts with pseudonyms will be stored on the researcher’s password-protected laptop. Upon completion of the study, all information will be destroyed within three years. Final aggregate results will be made available to participants upon request.

Participation & Withdrawal

Your participation is entirely voluntary. You are free to choose not to participate. Should you choose to participate, you can withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind.

Questions about the Study

If you have questions or concerns during the time of your participation in this study, or after its completion or you would like to receive a copy of the final aggregate results of this study, please contact:

Heather Eberly
School of Music
James Madison University

heberly@harrisonburg.k12.va.us

Dr. Gary Ritcher
School of Music
James Madison University
540-568-6753

ritchegek@jmu.edu

Questions about Your Rights as a Research Subject

Dr. David Cockley
Chair, Institutional Review Board
James Madison University
(540) 568-2834
cocklede@jmu.edu

Giving of Consent

I have read this consent form and I understand what is being requested of me as a participant in this study. I freely consent to participate. The investigator provided me with a copy of this form through email. I certify that I am at least 18 years of age. By clicking on the link below, and completing and submitting this confidential online survey, I am consenting to participate in this research.

Name of Researcher (Printed)

Date

This study has been approved by the IRB, protocol # 14-0301.

Appendix F:

Questionnaire

Elementary Music Teacher Questionnaire

Personal Background (pre-college)

1. Please list your first and last name. (this information will remain confidential)

Name:

***2. At what email address would you like to be contacted?**

3. How would you describe your socio-economic status as a child?

- ☐ poor
- ☐ lower middle-class
- ☐ middle-class
- ☐ upper middle-class
- ☐ well-off

4. What was the majority socio-economic status of your high school?

- ☐ poor
- ☐ lower middle-class
- ☐ middle class
- ☐ upper middle-class
- ☐ well-off

Undergraduate Experiences

5. Did your undergraduate degree program take place in an urban setting?

- ☐ yes
- ☐ no

6. As an undergraduate, did you have one or more practicums with urban, high-poverty students?

- ☐ yes
- ☐ no

7. Did you student teach in a setting with urban, high-poverty students?

- ☐ yes
- ☐ no

Elementary Music Teacher Questionnaire

8. How to teach urban, high-poverty students was addressed in my undergraduate music education courses.

- ☐ strongly agree
- ☐ agree
- ☐ neutral
- ☐ disagree
- ☐ strongly disagree

9. How to teach urban, high-poverty students was addressed in my undergraduate non-music education courses.

- ☐ strongly agree
- ☐ agree
- ☐ neutral
- ☐ disagree
- ☐ strongly disagree

Teaching Experience

10. How many years have you taught in your current position?

- ☐ 1-3
- ☐ 4-6
- ☐ 7-10
- ☐ 11-15
- ☐ 16-20
- ☐ 21+

11. How many years have you taught in total?

- ☐ 1-3
- ☐ 4-6
- ☐ 7-10
- ☐ 11-15
- ☐ 16-20
- ☐ 21+

Elementary Music Teacher Questionnaire

12. Have you ever left a position in an urban, high-poverty school?

☐ yes

☐ no

13. If you answered yes to question 12, please share any comments you wish about your reasons for leaving.

Reasons For Taking Current Position

Please indicate your agreement/disagreement with the following statements as reasons for taking your current position.

14. I was attracted by positive features of the school district and/or music program.

☐ strongly agree

☐ agree

☐ neutral

☐ disagree

☐ strongly disagree

15. I felt a sense of mission to teach urban, high-poverty students.

☐ strongly agree

☐ agree

☐ neutral

☐ disagree

☐ strongly disagree

16. I had to take a job in this geographic location.

☐ strongly agree

☐ agree

☐ neutral

☐ disagree

☐ strongly disagree

Elementary Music Teacher Questionnaire

17. It was the only position available.

- ☐ strongly agree
- ☐ agree
- ☐ neutral
- ☐ disagree
- ☐ strongly disagree

18. I was asked to transfer from another (non high-poverty) school in the district.

- ☐ yes
- ☐ no

19. Please add any comments you wish to make about the reasons you took your current position.

Challenges/Rewards

20. How would you describe the experience of teaching in urban, high-poverty schools--the rewards and challenges?

Professional Support

What kinds of district support have been helpful in meeting the challenge of teaching urban, high-poverty students? Please indicate your degree of agreement/disagreement.

21. I received a lot of helpful support from the district when I first took my current position.

- ☐ strongly agree
- ☐ agree
- ☐ neutral
- ☐ disagree
- ☐ strongly disagree

Elementary Music Teacher Questionnaire

22. The support from my principal(s) has been helpful.

- ☐ strongly agree
- ☐ agree
- ☐ neutral
- ☐ disagree
- ☐ strongly disagree

23. My music supervisor has been helpful.

- ☐ strongly agree
- ☐ agree
- ☐ neutral
- ☐ disagree
- ☐ strongly disagree

24. Mentoring has been helpful.

- ☐ strongly agree
- ☐ agree
- ☐ neutral
- ☐ disagree
- ☐ strongly disagree

25. Other music teachers have been helpful.

- ☐ strongly agree
- ☐ agree
- ☐ neutral
- ☐ disagree
- ☐ strongly disagree

26. Other non-music teachers have been helpful.

- ☐ strongly agree
- ☐ agree
- ☐ neutral
- ☐ disagree
- ☐ strongly disagree

Elementary Music Teacher Questionnaire

27. Music inservice training has been helpful.

- ☐ strongly agree
- ☐ agree
- ☐ neutral
- ☐ disagree
- ☐ strongly disagree

28. Non-music inservice training has been helpful.

- ☐ strongly agree
- ☐ agree
- ☐ neutral
- ☐ disagree
- ☐ strongly disagree

29. Please add any comments you wish to make about support you have received both in and/or outside your school district that has been helpful to you in meeting the needs of your urban, high-poverty students. This can include conferences, workshops, and/or books you have read.

Social Support

What kinds of social support have been helpful in meeting the challenges of teaching urban, high-poverty students? Please indicate your degree of agreement/disagreement.

30. My family has been a source of support.

- ☐ strongly agree
- ☐ agree
- ☐ neutral
- ☐ disagree
- ☐ strongly disagree

Elementary Music Teacher Questionnaire

31. My friends have been a source of support.

- ☐ strongly agree
☐ agree
☐ neutral
☐ disagree
☐ strongly disagree

32. Please add any additional comments you wish to make regarding social supports you have received that have been helpful in meeting the challenges of teaching urban, high-poverty students.

Remaining

I am remaining in my current position because...

33. I find it satisfying to help urban, high-poverty students.

- ☐ strongly agree
☐ agree
☐ neutral
☐ disagree
☐ strongly disagree

34. Leaving the position would entail financial loss.

- ☐ strongly agree
☐ agree
☐ neutral
☐ disagree
☐ strongly disagree

Elementary Music Teacher Questionnaire

35. There are no other positions available.

- ☐ strongly agree
- ☐ agree
- ☐ neutral
- ☐ disagree
- ☐ strongly disagree

36. I must remain in the area.

- ☐ strongly agree
- ☐ agree
- ☐ neutral
- ☐ disagree
- ☐ strongly disagree

37. I do not want to give up my school-owned resources, materials/facilities.

- ☐ strongly agree
- ☐ agree
- ☐ neutral
- ☐ disagree
- ☐ strongly disagree

38. I consider myself to be hard-working and persistent.

- ☐ strongly agree
- ☐ agree
- ☐ neutral
- ☐ disagree
- ☐ strongly disagree

39. On the whole, my current teaching experience is a positive one.

- ☐ strongly agree
- ☐ agree
- ☐ neutral
- ☐ disagree
- ☐ strongly disagree

Elementary Music Teacher Questionnaire

40. Which of the following best describes you?

- ☐ Teaching urban, high-poverty students gets easier every year.
- ☐ Teaching urban, high-poverty students gets harder every year.
- ☐ The difficulty of teaching urban, high-poverty students has stayed about the same each year.

41. Is there anything else you would like to say about teaching urban, high-poverty students and your reasons for continuing to do so?

42. Thanks for taking the time to fill out this questionnaire! If you are willing to speak more with me about the questions you answered, please provide a preferred telephone number and best time to be reached. Please let me know if you have any other questions.

phone number

best time to call

Appendix G:

Answers to Free-Response Questions (Questionnaire)

Elementary Music Teacher Questionnaire

Q19 Please add any comments you wish to make about the reasons you took your current position.

Answered: 2 Skipped: 3

#	Response	Date
1	I was suddenly a single mom that needed benefits. This school district offered me a full time position, when another district could only offer part time.	6/18/2014 1:14 PM
2	When hired, I was fresh out of college and frankly just wanted a job. I was not aware of the conditions of the school and the area.	6/18/2014 10:25 AM

Elementary Music Teacher Questionnaire

Q20 How would you describe the experience of teaching in urban, high-poverty schools—the rewards and challenges?

Answered: 5 Skipped: 0

#	Responses	Date
1	These students love you and love what you teach them. The challenges come from the lack of discipline that they come to school with, and every year it seems to be getting worse. When the teacher has to be teaching manners and constantly disciplining the students, it cuts into how much music you are actually able to teach.	6/18/2014 1:19 PM
2	I love my job teaching elementary music. My students, for the most part, are wonderful, and often starved for the attention and creativity that happens in my class. The ability to bond with them and watch them grow over their six years with me is very rewarding. On the flip side, the setting has its challenges as well. Discipline and disrespect are major issues with students in the upper grades, and parents are often of little help; they frequently either promise help or reinforcement that never comes, or are just as disrespectful as the child. Field trips or after school experiences are limited by the fact that most students cannot afford to participate.	6/18/2014 10:31 AM
3	Teaching in an urban setting brings about a unique set of challenges that teachers must face if we are to effectively do our jobs. I honestly believe that in order to continue to teach in this type of setting one has to have a love and passion for teaching and for children. Otherwise, it can be very difficult to continue. In an urban setting we are tasked with not just teaching these children particular academic subjects, but also teaching them life skills that they otherwise probably wouldn't learn. We often have to be the teacher and the parent. We have to ensure their basic needs are being met before we can even attempt to teach. There are students that come to us that are homeless or whose homes are in turmoil, students that have been abandoned or neglected by parents, and students that have been through so much emotional trauma they are numb to what is considered acceptable behavior. The saddest situation is when we have students that come to us and all they know is turmoil, negativity, and poverty. These students, I've found, have the most difficult time believing that there is something better and that they can achieve it. When we consider Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs we are often starting at the bottom of the pyramid with many of these students. Now obviously, this is not the case for every student. We do have students that come from homes with a reasonable amount of stability, support, and resources, but I've found that students from these types of environments can have just as many academic and behavioral challenges as students from unfavorable situations. There are, however, students living in poverty that excel in school. I've found that this is typically because they have a strong familial support system at home. For me, one of the biggest challenges as an urban teacher is actually teaching the required curriculum while also trying to teach the students how to care about their own education and success. I've found that I can't do the former without doing the latter. It is very difficult to stand before a class of students and teach them when they have no understanding of why their learning is important. So I find myself often discussing the importance of education with my students. I've wanted to teach since I was little girl. I absolutely love my job. The rewards are seeing a student that started at the bottom of the pyramid slowly move up as their needs are being met at school and at home. (In urban school settings we often have to teach the parents as well.) I see every student, no matter where they come from, as an opportunity for me to be a better teacher. I'm so fortunate that as the music teacher I get to see every kid in the school. This means that I get to build over 600 relationships every year! The ultimate reward for me is that my students have made me a better teacher and a better person.	6/18/2014 9:42 AM
4	Very rewarding experience. Students are not to be blamed directly or vicariously for their socio-economic status.	6/18/2014 6:02 AM
5	It is very rewarding to see positive changes in my students. It is also rewarding to see a growing interest in all kinds of music from my students. It is challenging having to first address home issues and other things my students are going through before they can even have a clear head to learn. It is challenging trying to understand what is going on so that I can also understand why their behavior may be a certain way.	6/16/2014 10:29 AM

Elementary Music Teacher Questionnaire

Q29 Please add any comments you wish to make about support you have received both in and/or outside your school district that has been helpful to you in meeting the needs of your urban, high-poverty students. This can include conferences, workshops, and/or books you have read.

Answered: 3 Skipped: 2

#	Responses	Date
1	My first year teaching, I had two wonderful mentors. They were veteran music teachers in the district. Their job wasn't necessarily to prepare me for the types of students I would meet, but more so how to teach music effectively, classroom set-up, program planning etc.. This was, however, extremely important for my success as a first year music teacher. Music in-services with the rest of my colleagues around the district have also been integral for my continued success. I honestly think that teachers coming into this district just need to understand what they are getting themselves into. They need to research the district, their particular school, and the community that they will be serving. Most of my colleagues have a deep understanding of that and they are aware of what they will be dealing with from day to day. It really is just the nature of our jobs and I believe as we go along from year to year we develop the necessary skills to teach the students we are given.	6/18/2014 9:42 AM
2	My greatest support has been my own research into the study of high-poverty students and cultural proficiency. Conferences and district seminars/workshops have been informative and motivational.	6/18/2014 6:05 AM
3	The support has been tremendous. Many things that I have learned, however, has had to be tweaked in order to meet the needs of my specific student population. This is true with any situation.	6/18/2014 10:33 AM

Q32 Please add any additional comments you wish to make regarding social supports you have received that have been helpful in meeting the challenges of teaching urban, high-poverty students.

Answered: 3 Skipped: 2

#	Response	Date
1	I have a very close friend who graduated after me, but began working in this school district immediately, while I went and taught piano privately in a higher economic area. She no longer teaches in the district but understands just about everything I need to call and vent about.	6/18/2014 1:26 PM
2	Family, friends, parents of students, colleagues, administrators, central administration leaders, local college music programs, and school district superintendents have all been instrumental in serving as social supports for helping me to reach and teach our urban, high poverty students.	6/18/2014 6:08 AM
3	My friends and family have supported through monetary donations as well as donating time to share with my students.	6/16/2014 10:34 AM

Elementary Music Teacher Questionnaire

Q41 Is there anything else you would like to say about teaching urban, high-poverty students and your reasons for continuing to do so?

Answered: 2 Skipped: 3

#	Responses	Date
1	I am blessed to serve my wonderful urban, high-poverty students and their families.	6/18/2014 6:11 AM
2	Teaching in an urban environment is very difficult, however, I feel like I am here for a reason.	6/18/2014 10:38 AM

Appendix: H

Verbal Consent for Telephone Interview

SUBJECT: Elementary Music Teachers in Urban, High-Poverty Schools Who Remain in Their Position: A Descriptive Study

Oral consent serves as an assurance that the required elements of informed consent have been presented orally to the participant or the participant's legally authorized representative.

Verbal consent to participate in this telephone survey has been obtained by the participant's willingness to continue with the telephone survey by providing answers to a series of questions related to what the participant has heard about Elementary Music Teachers in Urban, High-Poverty Schools Who Remain in Their Position: A Descriptive Study.

*** Phone Script:**

Hello _____, my name is Heather Eberly and I am a graduate student at James Madison University. I am conducting a descriptive study of elementary music teachers who remain teaching in urban, high-poverty schools. This will fulfill my degree requirements and give insight to pre-service music educators, current teachers, supervisors, and administrators.

If you agree to participate, I will ask you questions that expand on the questions you previously answered in my online questionnaire. This will take about 30 minutes of your time. I would like to record this conversation using a digital audio recorder. The investigator does not perceive more than minimal risks from your involvement in this study (that is, no risks beyond the risks associated with everyday life). All information will be confidential, and any identifiable information will be stored in a locked filing cabinet or a password protected laptop only accessible by Dr. Ritcher (my advisor) and myself. Should you choose to participate, you can withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind.

Do you have any questions at this point?

Do consent to participate in this interview?

I attest that the aforementioned written consent has been orally presented to the human subject and the human subject provided me with an oral assurance of their willingness to participate in the research.

Investigator's Name (Printed)

Investigator

Participant's Name

Federal requirements mandate that informed consent shall be documented by the use of a written consent form and in the case of oral presentation must also be witnessed in circumstances where human subjects are blind or illiterate.

Appendix : I

Telephone Interview Questions

Introduce self and project.

- 1) Briefly describe how you came to be teaching in your current position.**
- 2) In the questionnaire, you described your pre-college background in the following way. How has your pre-college background helped your current teaching? What challenges have you faced because of your pre-college background?**
- 3) In the questionnaire, you described your undergraduate experiences in the following way. How have your undergraduate experiences helped your current teaching? What challenges have you faced because of your undergraduate experiences?**
- 4) How would you describe the experience of teaching in urban, high-poverty schools—the rewards and challenges?**
- 5) What resources and strategies do you draw on in teaching urban, high-poverty students? What have you learned about teaching urban, high-poverty students? What advice do you have for teachers of urban, high-poverty students or those considering teaching them?**
- 6) You rated several sources of professional support. The highest rated sources were... Can you discuss these job-related factors that have most influenced your decision to remain in your current position?**
- 7) You rated social supports in the following way. Can you discuss these factors and how they help influence your decision to stay in your position? (If highly rated)**
- 8) In your opinion, what are some things that could make your current teaching experiences be (even) more positive?**
- 9) How would you describe your personal characteristics as a teacher?**
- 10) Is there anything else you would like to say about urban, high-poverty students and your reasons for continuing to do so?**

Appendix: J

Codebook

I. BACKGROUND

A. Pre-college

- not substantial in helping
- didn't have effect
- somewhat
- indirectly
- learned new things
- current more extreme
- times have changed
- mindset
- was sheltered
- new situations
- opened eyes
- definitely different
- didn't have access when I was a child
- determined to build

B. College (practicum and student teaching)

- helped with what I would potentially work with
- essential
- no resources
- cart
- limited
- inspired
- passion and love
- didn't have classroom
- eye-opener
- obvious
- don't have much
- thriving program
- so different, long time ago
- never got to see current setting
- currently in one of schools
- prepared me a lot
- middle of situation
- warned
- wonderful experience
- great experience
- wasn't nervous because of experience

C. College (coursework)

- writing lesson plans
- didn't prepare for practical things
- choose two careers just in case
- classroom management taught by public school principal
- different perspectives on what should be taught
- how to be a teacher
- not designed to prepare for current setting

D. Reasons for taking current position

- recently graduated
- no other offers on the table at the time
- recently graduated
- grateful
- shell shock
- threw myself into it
- single parent
- applied to several districts
- change for respect to music
- one-woman crusader to get message of music appreciation out to the community

II. REWARDS OF TEACHING EXPERIENCES

A. General response

- relevant
- acknowledgement by students in future
- learning to be a better teacher and a better person
- experience
- seeing students flourish and rise
- rich culture
- student experiences and backgrounds
- eye-opener
- light bulb look
- 6 years of growth
- student progress
- student joy
- parents enjoy program
- students love what you teach
- I love what I teach
- light bulb
- change name of program and raise standards
- parents appreciate and respect

B. Resources and materials

- music they listen to
- technology
- connect to life experiences

- trial and error at first
- incorporation of popular music
- original/remix
- fresh
- relates to them
- funny, exciting and engaging
- “taylor” music toward them
- background (where they’re coming from)
- trade-off (Rap for Mozart)
- tell personal life stories
- ask about aspirations
- check on integrity (practice habits, etc.)
- focus
- worthwhile
- importance of music

C. Support

Principal

- gives me whatever I need
- strong and knows who she is

Music Supervisor

- amazing advocate
- continues support of programs already in place

Mentors

- suggestions and tips
- meet every week
- really helpful
- felt grounded
- focused
- 1st year
- time set in schedules
- help with whatever needed
- maneuver
- veteran teachers

Other music teachers

- collaboration
- camaraderie
- help each other
- monthly meetings
- district share
- loan stuff
- help out in other buildings
- seeing other teachers teach
- monthly meeting
- love it
- share

- ongoing
- camaraderie
- observe other music teachers
- volunteer to help with coverage rather than getting sub
- fellowship
- collaboration
- compare notes
- island can be detrimental

Family

- attend every performance
- help when asked
- donate time and money
- proud of me
- listening ears
- try to understand
- husband listens to venting

Friends

- sounding board
- understand from experience
- vent
- necessary

III. WHAT IT TAKES TO STAY

A. Characteristics

- nice
- firm
- fun
- balanced
- serious
- competent
- confident
- firm
- disciplined and orderly
- fun
- fair
- mean
- fun but fair
- fun
- stern
- love what I do
- love kids
- passion and love
- love music
- creative
- fun

- fair
- ethical
- don't tolerate foolishness
- simplistic

B. Advice

- be prepared for anything
- have a foundation and be grounded in yourself
- have an open-mind
- strong musical foundation
- connect with other music teachers
- must have love and passion
- patient
- not for everyone
- hard work
- very important
- get to know your kids and let them get to know you
- know who you are
- don't show weakness
- make it "our" classroom not "my classroom"
- get discipline strategies
- get to know the students
- be equal and ethical
- let children speak
- know the mood and tone of the class before teaching
- always let your students evaluate you
- try not to yell at students

C. Teacher conclusion

- God is keeping me here
- something I'm supposed to do
- won't leave 'til I get it done
- rewards outweigh challenges
- they need me
- hope (cultural arts events)
- opportunities and experiences
- special
- need
- life outside of community and school
- necessary
- support and camaraderie
- informal conversation with other teachers

IV. WHAT COULD BE BETTER (CHALLENGES)?

A. Home

- home related issues
- financial support
- academic support
- children having children
- parents trying to be child's friend
- lack of discipline and manners
- parent/teacher communication
- inconsistent living situations
- parental support

B. School

- getting students to understand value of education
- stop teaching music
- teaching life-lessons
- time to teach curriculum
- not easy, eye-opener
- time teaching non-musical skills
- lack of discipline
- system and organization of some things
- new principal hard to adjust
- inconsistent
- numerous new teachers
- new faces don't sit well with students
- different set of faces
- consistency with discipline
- not having four walls
- teaching during lunch on stage
- principal not helpful
- need new equipment

Appendix: K

Teacher A Transcript

This interview took place June 23, 2014.

I: I'll start by telling you why I chose this topic for my research. I've been teaching for 7 year at an elementary school where over 90% of the students receive free/reduced lunch. At first, I was interested in teaching high percentages of ESL students, but after a few years of experience there, I realized it wasn't the language differences that made my job so challenging, it was the large population of students living in poverty and the aspects that go with that. I often ask myself what keeps me in my position, and I thought it would be interesting to find out what other teachers in similar situations have to say.

I: I will begin with my first question...could you briefly describe how you came to be teaching in your current position?

A: Ummmm...there was umm an opening, and one of my (I had recently graduated) and one of my professors contacted me has said he was contacted by the um, supervisor of music at the time, um and then they recommended me, I mean they were looking for someone and he said he knew someone and then he called me, and um, and that was that I went in for the interview, and that was that. I was hired.

I: Great, and regarding your background, you described yourself as coming from a middle-class family and attending a lower middle-class high school.

A: Ummhmm....

I: Have these backgrounds helped your current teaching, or what challenges have you faced because of your pre-college background?

A: Umm, I think it helped a little...umm it helped me umm...come into contact with people who were in a lower...umm, I don't know how to say it without sounding funny....who were in a lower class than I thought, than I guess I was at the time. But I don't think...I mean it helped a little bit, but I don't think it was like a substantial um I don't think it had an effect on helping in my position that I'm in now.

I: Okay, since you listed having 1 or more practicums in UHP (urban, high-poverty) schools, did these experiences help you with your current teaching? I know you said you did not student teach in this setting, so that may have been a challenge for you when you got your first job.

A: That was just the 10 hour informal observation and that helped me, so it was in the city that I work in currently. I mean, anyway...so that did help me see, umm, what I would be potentially working with. I didn't know I was going to get this job in the same

city at the time, but that did help me see what I would potentially have to work with umm, in teaching, yeah.

I: You also mentioned the fact that your music ed and non-music ed classes did not help in your current teaching. What about challenges and rewards? I know you said addressing home-related issues was big challenge for you in your teaching.

A: Yeah, I've come to realize that when you have, or when your children see that you care about things other than what you're teaching (math, science—whatever) that they're more receptive and when you become a little more relevant, culturally relevant or culturally aware of umm things they like to do or things that are going on besides what, besides what's going on in their classrooms or in your own classroom, it definitely helps a whole lot. It helps a whole lot.

I: I can definitely see where you're coming from there. Are there particular resources that you draw on in teaching UHP students?

A: I'm really big on using music that they listen to in my lessons, or something that's a little more upbeat or up-tempo. As far as umm, I don't know, these crazy songs that they like...umm....But I like to use them in a rhythm exercise or you know things like a lot of hip-hop music or um I have some things that are more Hispanic so we use some Latin songs sometimes. You know umm..

I: So, you like to find songs that increase their motivation?

A: Exactly. Yeah.

I: What have you learned about teaching UHP students, or what has been the most valuable lesson you have learned?

A: Um, oh yeah, well it's...(pause) what's the biggest...it's not easy...it's not all peaches and cream...Um, like I probably mentioned when I was um, doing the survey, it's really just a big eye-opener. So you see I never really realized until I started teaching what children really went through. I will admit, I have very good parents. I had, you know, a very structured home-life, and then to not really know what was going on until I started, um, until I started teaching in my area. I was really, a really big eye-opening experience to actually see and to empathize with what they were going through.

I: Very nice...and from that, what advice do you have for teachers of UHP students or those considering teaching them?

A: Uh...to really be prepared for anything.

I: Hmmm

A: To really be prepared for anything. Yeah, things that you wouldn't expect to happen in a school, just uh in an elementary school will, will happen. I mean things you wouldn't even imagine... just to be prepared, have that, um, have foundation and be grounded within yourself in order to be able to see and understand and to deal with the things that occur within a school year, yeah.

I: It's amazing how much of your day has nothing to do with teaching music.

A: You're right, you're so right. (laughing) has nothing to do with it...

I: As far as professional support, you listed your district, music supervisor, mentors, and other music teachers as being very helpful. Can you discuss these job-related factors that have most influenced your decision to remain in your current position?

A: Ah, well the mentor teacher when I first got to my school was very helpful. Um, there were two music mentors and there was one who was like a general teacher um mentor. So they had a whole lot of support with suggestions and tips and we met every week and it was like, you know I really got to, actually for two years...it was only supposed to be for one year, but they really helped me even after my first year-kind of get my feet grounded and um focused and, you know just a solid foundation. They were really helpful.

I: Were your mentor teachers specifically music teachers?

A: Yes. Well I know they do, um, the general teachers-I don't know if they have specific um, you know if they're a math teacher if they have a math specific teacher, you know, but I know that we have music specific ones. Yes, they were music teachers at other schools in the city, yeah.

I: It sounds like the mentor program in place is quite successful. In your opinion, what are some things that could make your teaching experiences be (even) more positive?

A: Um, you mean in general or school specific?

I: Well, it could be either.

A: If I was going school specific, it would probably have to be more ...um...lack of discipline, I guess if that's what you're asking. Yeah, ok, so the system and organization of some things could be better, in my opinion. Yeah, other things...I think

I: Are you speaking about the administration?

A: Well, the administration itself hasn't been very consistent as far as the actual, well the principal of the school has changed numerous times and you know, that kind of thing. So when children see that inconsistency and change every year—a new principal or a new somebody, a new set of teachers...there is a new group of teachers every year, it kind of

does something. It doesn't sit well with them, and that's something that really be fixed. I mean, I don't how. I mean you can't make a teacher stay...you can't force them to stay...

I: Right.

A: A different set of faces every year. Numerous, I mean a lot, not just one or two. Like, twelve (laughter).

I: So the kids probably say, why does everyone leave us?

A: Yeah, yeah.

I: You rated family as a strong social support in your current teaching position. Can you discuss this further and how your family has influence in your decision to stay in your position?

A: Umhmm. They are at every performance that I ever do. They recently donated things, like we had a field day and they donated snacks and they helped with the, you know some of the activities—things like that. They don't just help with the music stuff. Yeah, but they are at every performance. But, um they do help whenever I ask. Whenever asked, they do it.

I: How would you describe your characteristics as a teacher, or how would your students describe you as a teacher?

A: (laughs) haha, oh my—I think they would say that I was nice but very firm. Um, fun but when it went to or if it got out of control, time to turn the fun off. You know, maybe a pretty balanced umm, teacher in that sense. You know, I'm not completely about fun things even though music is a fun class, you know, I'm also serious. I probably a more serious teacher than most.

I: It sounds like you have a great relationship with your students.

A: Oh yeah, I love them.

I: Most days, right?

A: (laughs)

I: Especially now that school is out?

A: haha, yes, you know sometimes I feel like I don't, but you know, most of the time (laughter), like I can say that I do (laughs)

I: Is there anything else you would like to say about teaching UHP students and your reasons for continuing to do so?

A: Ummm, you know I think I mentioned this in the survey...but I had tried to leave, I tried to leave in the past, and umm, for some reason God is keeping me there, so I'm there for some reason...something I'm supposed to do. And umm, so I won't leave until I get it done, you know. He's keeping me there until I get it done. It's rewarding, it's rewarding. It's difficult, but it's rewarding, you know in the long run. Especially when you have your students come up and say, you know (one of my 5th graders) that she wanted to be a singer and when she wins her Grammy she's gonna acknowledge me, you know, that kind of thing (laughs).

I: So that would be like the ultimate reward?

A: Yeah, yeah. So...

I: Are you saying the rewards outweigh the challenges?

A: Oh, yeah.

I: I often tell myself, okay, I think this will be my last year.

A: Yeah, I tell myself that too. I say every time sign my contract, I'm like this is gonna be the last year. (laughs) I said that this year, we'll see about signing my contract, which I did, and I was like oh, I don't know.

I: Well thanks again for sharing your thoughts and time. I really appreciate it.

A: Oh, no trouble.

I: Do you have any other questions for me at this time?

A: Uh, no, none that I can think of right now. I have your e-mail address, I guess.

I: Once I transcribe this conversation, I can send you a copy to look over for accuracy if you'd like.

A: Oh, okay. That's fine.

I: It's been great chatting, and too bad we don't teach together. I think we would get along quite well.

A: We would (laughs).

I: I hope you enjoy your summer and have a great evening.

A: You too, thanks, bye.

Appendix: L

Teacher B Transcript

This interview took place June 23, 2014.

I: I will go ahead and start with my questions for you. I'll start just by telling you how I came to teach in my position. I've been teaching at my school for seven years. Over 90 percent of my students receive free and reduced lunch. The area I live in isn't quite as big as your city, but I think our populations every similar. When I first started teaching there, we have also a high percentage of ESL students, and I thought that language was the biggest challenge for me. Through the years I've realized that teaching students in poverty has been the hardest part. That's why I kind of wanted to research this area more. Can you describe how you came to be teaching in your current position?

B: I graduated from [*a nearby university*] with a bachelor's in music education. After I finished my student teaching and graduated, I started working. I worked for a little bit at [*neighboring district*] public schools, and then I went to a day care facility where worked a little bit. Then I received a phone call from [*current city*] Public Schools, which is our current district. I interviewed with the principal of one particular school, the school I'm currently in; and he offered me the job, and I took the job. That's how I wound up where I've been for about six years. Yeah, this is my sixth year teaching.

I: Okay, great. In the questionnaire you describe your precollege background as growing up middle-class, but attending a high school that was lower – kind of like a more poor high school. Has that background helped your current teaching?

B: I think the neighborhood that I grew up in – I would say for the most part, it's middle-class. I went to a school – a high school that was actually kind of far from where I lived because I was doing the magnet program, the music magnet program at that particular high school, and so I was transported everyday to that school, and the area that school was in was, I would say lower, um, some parts were lower middle-class and then there were areas of not high socioeconomic status. So I would say being in that culture, being in that environment, you kind of learn different things and you learn how the students are because you're a student yourself, so they're your peers and you see what the teachers go through and how they have to adjust and deal with certain students in certain situations. So, I would say in a way it did somewhat prepare me—not directly; but I would say indirectly for sure, it prepared me for what I'm currently dealing with...Even though I would say that my current situation is even a little bit more extreme than what I dealt with in a high school, because obviously times have changed some since we were in high school. But yeah, I would say indirectly it prepared me for teaching in general, just watching my teachers in high school. I knew from a very early age that I wanted to be a teacher, so I kind of already had that mindset that eventually this will one day be me. I will be standing before a class of students and doing what they are doing, and because I was in the music program in high school, I kind of had an idea that I was going to go into music, ultimately. So, I did in a way get prepared for it from high school.

I: Alright, that's awesome. And, expanding on your undergraduate experiences, you mentioned that you had practicum experiences and student teaching experiences in urban, high-poverty schools. How did those experiences help your current teaching?

B: They were, they were essential. It was very interesting actually, because my practicum was in an elementary school that was actually right up the street from where I went to high school. This gentleman, I mean he had absolutely no resources with regards to anything. His lesson plans were off of the internet, um, he had a cart with a radio, and a keyboard, and that was it. He didn't have a classroom, he didn't have anything. He had his little rules for his class posted on his cart, and that's all he had to work with. I was actually very inspired by him, because despite his limited resources, he still had a passion and a love for what he was doing. I was very fortunate that in my last week working with him, he was actually able to get a classroom. So that was a really good experience in exposing me to what I might have to deal with and face when I actually became a teacher myself. This was the reality of a lot of music teachers where the resources are extremely limited and a lot of teachers don't have a classroom. You pull in lessons from wherever you can get them sometimes. That experience was an eye-opener for me, and it did prepare me for what I would have to deal with when I became a teacher myself. Then to juxtapose that....Actually when I got to Virginia Beach as a long-term sub., I was exposed to a situation where this music teacher was on leave and I was filling in for her when she was on leave. She had every resource available to her. I mean, a beautiful brand new classroom. They had just moved into a new building. She had a beautiful music room that was specifically designed for music, every resource I could think of. And I thought about the location, you know VA Beach is a city that has lots of money and they bring in lots of tourists every year, so they have that money to do that versus Portsmouth where I grew up and where I went to high school...they don't have much. That was obvious in the classroom setting where you come from one school that has very little to another school that has a lot.

My student teaching experience—I am teaching currently in one of the schools. So that obviously would be a big essential in what I'm doing now because I'm still teaching there, so that prepared me a lot. It put me right in the middle of the situation that I was going to be in, even though I didn't know that I was going to wind up teaching in that school one day. Then I student taught at a high school that was, interesting enough, considered a pretty rough high school, and that was lower socioeconomic as far as the students there, but I had a wonderful experience. Even going into that high school, I was warned...be careful because this is the type of atmosphere you're going into and these are the types of kids you're going to have to deal with, and I didn't experience any of that. I absolutely loved it. It was a great experience.

I: So you're saying that even though you had very broad levels of experience in different settings, did you feel like you had a preference toward the setting that you're in now even though you saw there would be opportunity in an area such as Virginia Beach?

B: To be honest with you, I did not have a preference, to be completely honest. I didn't have a preference. I wasn't nervous about going into an urban school setting because I had come from an urban school setting. And I had experienced so much of it. I wasn't

nervous about going into an urban setting, and I honestly did not have a preference either way.

I: Okay. You mentioned your undergraduate classes both in music ed. and general ed. not really giving you a lot of background before your teaching, in teaching UHP students.

Have you faced any challenges because of not having that theoretical background?

B: Hmmm. It's funny because different people I know have different perspectives. I don't think so. I mean I was very fortunate in the fact that going into my current home school where I'm teaching... I was able to adjust, you know. I was able to adjust pretty well. My undergraduate experience taught me how to be a teacher. I mean it didn't really necessarily hone in on a particular type of student or setting, it just taught me how to be a teacher in general. No matter what environment I was in. I was, again fortunate that when I went into the school that I'm currently in, I was able to adjust pretty well. I do think it's because I grew up in that type of setting where this is what you see and this is what you deal with. Granted, I've dealt with some things where I am currently that obviously I didn't deal with I was in school, but I don't think that my undergrad. experience prepared me necessarily to deal with a certain type of atmosphere or setting because I don't think they were supposed to do that. There weren't designed to do that. They were designed to teach me how to teach no matter where I am...how to teach music and how to be a music teacher, and a good teacher in any type of setting. So I was able to take the skills from that and just adjust them however they needed to be adjusted to the atmosphere I'm currently in.

I: Great, you mentioned, as far as the rewards of your teaching...kind of bouncing off of that. You said that having a strong passion for what you do, and knowing that you are teaching the students life skills; and you really want to give every student an opportunity. I think you touched on Maslow's hierarchy of life stages...so regarding those, and you kind of mentioned this in the previous question, but how would you describe your rewards in teaching in this setting?

B: Rewards for me, pretty much again, and I think I stated this...is just learning to be a better teacher. I mean experience, in my opinion is the best teacher, and I've seen so many teachers who have come into the field and, whether music or any other subject, and they just aren't really able to adjust and able to adapt. I don't know if it's because their education level was different or if it's because their preparation was different, but I think that once you're in it and you experience it...If you're gonna do your job correctly, you have to learn how to adjust, adapt, and be there for the kids. For me, the ultimate reward, as I said, is becoming a better teacher because the experiences I've gotten over the past 6 years, I can take those experiences to any school system I go to. I can use those skills that I've learned to do my job effectively. We've seen a number of different things over the past few years with different kids, and with different situations that they've come from. The reward for me is being a better teacher. Obviously, when you see a child that is really starting to flourish and rise educationally, and not just educationally, but emotionally and physically even mentally. That's a reward as well. I know that ultimately I've become a much better teacher than I was my first year teaching because of the rich culture that all of these kids are bringing with them and all of the experiences and

backgrounds they're bringing with them. It's opened my eyes a lot. It's made me a better person, and it's made me a better teacher as well.

I: I agree with that for myself as well. Can you think of one particular challenge you've had in your experience so far...that stands out?

B: There are many challenges, obviously. For me the challenge is trying to make these kids understand the value of their education. That for me is the biggest challenge, and I often find myself in the middle of teaching, very torn because it's like, I love music. It's my passion. Education, however, is more of a passion than music is. I often have those moments where I stop teaching music and just have a life lesson with these kids. I can't always do that, obviously, because I'm being paid to teach the curriculum, but I find myself at moments just wanting to say *put your instruments away I need to talk to you guys* and just have a heart-to-heart with them. There are moments that I do that because it's just necessary. They need it. They need to hear it. I feel like I would be doing a disservice if I did not say something. I think one of the biggest challenges for me has just been trying to continue to do what I've been paid to do as far as teaching these children to be musicians and to be musical people, but also trying to teach them to be people—decent human beings who value and understand the importance of their education...

I: Isn't it amazing how much of our day is spent not even teaching music whatsoever?

B: Absolutely, absolutely. It's constant, and I find that one of the things...we had a professional development this year with other music teachers in my district. Our supervisor asked us to put down some of the challenges we were having and my only response was that I don't have enough time to teach. It's simply because I'm not just trying to teach the music, I'm trying to teach them values and how to value their education and lives because a lot of these kids aren't kids aren't getting it at home. I think that's going to continue to be a challenge. I don't think that's ever going to go away. It will get better, I hope, but I don't think it's going to go away.

I: Do you think that's something that might be unique in fields such as music because there aren't quite as many pressures to get to a certain standardized point?

B: It might be, I think any teacher who really cares about children and cares about their education, that's something that, at some point or another, they've discussed. But I do think we have more of a freedom as music teachers to address those topics...and of course there are ways you can tie music into anything, so we have to find creative ways to kind of tie that in to what we are teaching in the curriculum. Honestly, for me I sometimes just have to put things into perspective. As wonderful and great as music is, if these kids can't sit still and listen and value what they're learning, sometimes you have to take a step back and say, I need to start from the foundation and then work my way up to teaching quarter notes and half notes.

I: Yes, that's so true. Speaking of quarter notes and half notes, are there particular resources or strategies that you draw upon in teaching your students? Um, musical or non-musical.

B: We are fortunate that we have a very strong music department in [school district] because I mean, considering what's happening around the nation in various areas with music departments and art departments....We collaborate a lot. The music teachers in our area, we talk and collaborate. So we're a good source of support for each other. I use my colleagues a lot. We do have other musical resources that we use. I use a lot of technology. I'm fortunate enough to be in a classroom that has the technological resources where I can draw the technology in and just the basics of movement and dance and singing, and always trying to make it a fun and enjoyable experience for the kids. At the same time, I do try to connect it to life experiences because kids nowadays want to know *why are we doing this, how is it important, how is it going to affect me in my life, what can I do with it*, so I try to, as much as possible, explain to them what they can do with music and this experience. What you can do when you move on to middle school band and orchestra and chorus and the scholarships you can get and how you can experience music in college. I try to tie it all in to real life experience because that's what they want to know. They want to know how is it—when I'm grown, how is this gonna benefit me. How is this gonna affect my life? Why do I need to know this? And these kids are smart enough to ask these questions. They ask those questions. They want to know why it is important. I tell them this is something you can use for your life, and I explain to them that teachers that teach them, we didn't just get here just because, we went through school and we sat where they are sitting, and we had to go to college....try to make it a real-life experience for them so they really understand why it's important.

I: My next question, you've kind of answered it, but it's regarding advice that you may have. Do you have advice for teachers who may consider teaching in UHP schools?

B: They need to go into it with an open mind. They need to have a strong musical foundation and whatever they can, if they can connect with other music teachers in their area, connect and draw on those people as resources. I would tell them if you do not have a love and a passion for education and teaching, honestly they may need to reconsider, because it's not something to take lightly. It is not something to go into haphazardly. The kids are going to pull on you mentally, physically, emotionally. If you're not prepared, especially because our salary is not much for what we do...If you are not prepared to handle everything you're going to deal with in an urban and high-poverty district, then you have to really think carefully about going into it. I know many teachers who came into it and are no longer there because it was just too much for them. For me, what keeps me there is the love that I have for teaching and for education. I would say if you don't have that, then you might want to reevaluate if that's something that you really want to do because I do think it's difficult to keep going because the pressures are just hard. They're coming from administrators, kids, parents, downtown, everywhere. It takes a certain strength, I think, to really hang in there and stick with it. The biggest piece of advice, again, if you don't have a love and passion for it, then maybe reconsider. Is this really what you want to do for a career choice?

I: I think you need to be teaching college students.

B: Yeah, it would be great if college professors were telling that to their students. It's necessary with the challenges that these kids are facing nowadays. I've stood in my

hallway crying because children are doing through so much, and it falls on you, and you have to be prepared to deal with it.

I: That's so true. You mentioned having a lot of support from other music teachers, and you also mentioned other support as far as support from the district, mentor teachers, supervisor support. Are there any other those you want to expand on at all? I know you've already talked about music teachers.

B: Right, um, I think it's important to research, and I think I mentioned this in my answer...to research the district and find out what the music department is like. I can say one of the things that make this department as strong as it is because you collaborate. There is that sense of camaraderie there. We have the support of our supervisor. She is an amazing advocate, and she works hard to make sure that we stay afloat. I think it's important when you're going into an urban high-poverty to make sure that it's there, because you're going to need it. When I came into my jobs here, they have two veteran music teachers in the district who are there for those new first year teachers, and they're there to help you maneuver through the school and what you're going to have to do to be effective at your job. I think that's very important because there are certain things that when you're really strong in certain areas you can kind of not let that area go, but you can focus on the areas that you are not so strong in. So I think having that sense of support there it helps you to be strong in the areas of teaching music and just being a good effective music teacher. When those things are taken care of, now I can deal with these students who are coming in with all of these diagnoses and disorders, and all these family issues. I can deal with them because I know what I'm doing. I'm competent at my job. I'm confident at my job, and I can handle it. I think it's important, for me, that's the biggest piece. When you're looking to go into any particular district, to really research and find out what is this district like? How is this music department? Do they have that support and camaraderie because it was essential for me.

I: Yes, regarding your collaboration with other music teachers, you rated music in-service as the highest. You strongly agreed that was important to you. Were there any in particular that found to be effective, besides collaborating with other music teachers?

B: We have faculty meetings and professional development at our school. Usually none of those have to do with music at all.

I: Of course not.

B: Sometimes it's hard to sit through those because I don't really know how this effects what I do on an everyday basis? But then there are those times when it's like, this is really good. I can really pull on this. At my home school, I'm on the data team, so I actually like being on the data team. Most people don't, but I actually enjoy it because it helps me see where our school is as a whole as far as reading, math, science, and social history and all of that stuff. It helps me to see where we are, and it helps me to see how I can influence those areas in our school as a whole. How can I pull math into my lessons and reading, and um, how can I infiltrate those into my lesson? So, how can the other teachers put music behind music behind what they're doing to help their children succeed? So those have been very good. Another thing that's really good about getting

together with the rest of the school is that they see the same kids I do. We can get together and say what's your solution for this child? What is working? What are you doing that is working so that I can put this in my classroom? To help them succeed in my class. They don't have to do with music, but you can still collaborate.

I: So you're saying informal collaboration?

B: Informal conversation, our district is taking on this new thing called PBIS.

I: We have that as well.

B: Yeah, and that's becoming a really big thing. That's been really helpful with regards to implementing a school-wide system for behavioral expectations for our kids. It's across the board, no matter what classroom they are in. It helps us resource teachers to feel like we're included in what's going on in the school. Sometimes it's very easy for us to feel excluded since we're the only ones who do what we do.

I: The PBIS, is that district-wide or just your school?

B: It's district-wide.

I: Okay, alright. In your opinion, what are some things that could make your current teaching experiences be even more positive? Are there things that could get better?

B: I think. Absolutely. I think better communication I would say between parents and teachers definitely makes things better for us. We have lots of kids coming in with lots of different issues. I think the parents are very hesitant in letting us know exactly what's going on with their child, and we often have to figure it out when they go off or stumble upon...oh this child has this particular issue that we didn't know anything about. So definitely better communication between parents and teachers. I also think, for my particular school, I think that the consistency in disciplinary actions could certainly make things a lot better. We struggle with that in certain areas. Some kids, in my opinion, are shown favoritism. There's not a lot of consistency in discipline. Kids are smart. They pick up on that. So they know *I can get away with this* and they call it out. These are bold kids. They call it out when they see it. When they see something that's not fair, they're gonna tell you. So I think we could definitely do a better job with being more consistent in disciplinary actions, and just in general, more support of everything that's going on in the school. Sometimes we can drum up support for certain things, but for other things, there's not as much support. The kids notice that too. We send a message to them with whatever we do. Of what's important and what's not important. I think we don't always understand as teachers that they are watching us, and our attitude about music, art, and PE. If their classroom teacher is showing a negative attitude toward those things, the kids is definitely going to think, *ok, it must not be that important if I'm constantly getting pulled out of PE, music or art to do this test or remediation or to do this....well they must not be important because I don't have to go*. I think we need to do better with just showing the kids that every subject is important and you are expected to succeed in all of the areas. There's always room for improvement.

I: Yes, indeed. You rated your family as being very supportive in your teaching. Can you discuss these factors and how your family has helped your decision to stay?

B: My family...they...I think they're just proud of the fact that I'm doing something good. (laughs) I think they're just proud of the fact that I'm a teacher, and I don't know if they completely understand on a daily basis with the music piece. I've had this conversation sometimes with my uncle because he and I go back and forth. He jokes and laughs about it, it's all in fun. He knows that I'm a music teacher. He says things like, *don't you just sing and play all day?* I explain to him what I do, so I don't think they fully understand what I do. I think the idea that I'm a teacher is something that they are proud of and they like hearing about. I share with them the various stories from my job, and they enjoy hearing them. They make it known that they're proud of what I do. That's always helpful. Being able to have listening ears just so they understand. We'll get into conversations about the way children are now and the things we have to deal with now. A big support for me was my grandfather. He's passed away now, but one of the last conversations I had with him, he asked me what I wanted to do. This was when I was a teenager. I told him I wanted to be a teacher. He supported that. I think that would be great for you, and you could definitely do that. That meant a lot to me, so that family support has really always been there. That definitely makes it easier to deal with.

I: Good. How would describe your characteristics as a teacher, or how would your students describe you?

B: I think they would describe me as firm. I am very firm, I must say that. I don't know if that's the word they would choose, but I think they know that Miss [name] doesn't take a lot of stuff. They know that when they come into my room I expect a disciplined and orderly classroom. They have a lot of fun in my room though. They'll say I'm being fair. Every time you come into my room it's a fresh start. It doesn't matter what happened last week. That's gone. It's a fresh start every single week. They would describe me as firm, fair, loving. And I tell them all the time that I love them. Even when they don't want to hear me lecturing them and talking, I tell them I'm saying it out of love. I'm telling them because I love them and I want to see them succeed. I think would describe me as fun. I think they enjoy what goes on in the music room. I've had very few occasions where a kid didn't want to come to my room. Loving, but firm and fair.

I: It sounds like you have a great relationship with them.

B: Yeah, I would like to think so. (laughs)

I: Is there anything else you would like to say about UHP students and your reasoning for continuing to teach in that setting?

B: Ummm, I think I've covered most of it. I just, the biggest piece, I've said over and fortunate because I've wanted to teach since I was a little girl. Coming into the field I was excited about it, and I'm still excited about it even after 6 years. It's draining, you know as well as I do. It can pull on everything in you. You go home at the end of the day, and you're just worn out. It's harder, I think, for music teachers because we are not

seen that way. A lot of times, even administration and other teachers in the building...we have to constantly advocate for what we do, and constantly explain why what we're doing is so important. I get it all the time, the little comments from other colleagues, *aren't you glad you get this day off, or aren't you glad you don't have to do this?* So they often have this idea that we are just sitting around when they don't understand we're constantly working. We have advocate for ourselves. It's a wonderful experience. I enjoy going to work every day. I know a lot of people can't say that, so I'm very fortunate that I can. I get excited when old students come back to visit, and they tell me...it warms my heart to no end when they come back to me and say they're still in music class. It just makes me feel like I've....and I'm a singer. But when kids come back and say *I'm in band or I'm in chorus*, it just makes me sooooo excited, because it shows that something that I did made a difference.

I: It makes you feel like you're doing your job well.

B: Absolutely. I love that when kids come back. I'm still in music. I'm still sticking with it. Then I think about all of the possibilities that are there for them if they keep going in music, you know. I'm very fortunate to do what I do.

I: Well I thank you for giving me your time this evening...and your very well-thought-out answers...

Appendix: M

Teacher C Transcript

This interview took place June 24, 2014.

I: I'll go ahead and start just by telling you a little bit about myself and how I came into my position. This was my 13th year teaching. I taught...I actually went to VCU as an undergraduate and lived in Richmond then I taught in more of a rural area my first 2 years, and I grew up in the Harrisonburg area and eventually (seven years ago) came back to Harrisonburg and started teaching. When I first got to my school, I guess the first thing I noticed was a high percentage of ESL students, and for the first few years I thought that was really the most challenging thing that I had to um, deal with in my teaching, and I felt like I wasn't prepared for it. After a few years of teaching at that school, it was more-so working with high-poverty students and issues that come along with that population. So when I was trying to find a good topic for research, I thought, well, this is an everyday part of my life and I ask myself every year, what keeps me here? (laughs) you know, we have good days and bad days, so that's a little background. So that's my background. So, if I could ask how you came to teaching in your current position.

C: Well, um, I went to [*university attended*] in [*town*] and I came into my current position just after graduating. Um, I had applied in, I don't know, 12-14 districts all across the state. Some in [*northern part of state*], some near [*central part of state*], and some in my native area, which is [*current area*], and after going on a lot of interviews I hadn't had a lot of luck, so far. Umm, I had been told that I was a finalist for at least 2 of the positions, but didn't get either one, and then [*current district*] called and I did my interview with them. I had actually done one of my practicum experiences with one of the teachers in [*current district*] who turns out to be one of their music mentors. She had said something to the music supervisor and I ended up getting the job pretty quickly with [*current district*]. As I had no other offers on the table at the time, and I was 22 years old and scared stiff of not actually getting a job...

I: Right...

C: Um, I said yes, and I was very grateful for it. I have been there for 7 years...so

I: Awesome.

As far as the pre-college background, you listed on the questionnaire as growing up in a middle class socioeconomic background and attending a high school where the majority of students came from a middle-class s.e. background. Have those backgrounds helped you or have they been challenging in your current teaching?

C: Um, I think that I mean, my high school was probably middle class, but we also, I mean I grew up in [*hometown city*] which is a neighbor city to [*current city*] and they are close together, and both cities have um, [*hometown city*] not so much the upper class, but

a decent middle-class base and a large low-income ratio. So my high school, I said my h.s. was middle class because most of the kids in my classes were middle class, but overall the composition of the high school was fairly mixed.

I: Okay

C: With middle and low income. Um, but I do think that I was a little bit more sheltered than I thought. When I first started teaching I was like, okay, it's not so different from where I grew up, and I found over the first few years that maybe that was not the case. That is was a little bit more different than I had imagined as I came across some situations at my home school with certain children or certain families that opened my eyes to the situations of the very low income of the families in the neighborhood where I teach.

I: Okay, and kind of expanding on that, in the questionnaire, you mentioned your undergrad experience as having 1 or more practicums in an urban, high poverty setting, but not student teaching.

C: Yes

I: So, how have those experiences helped or challenged your current experience?

C: Um, I felt that my student teaching experience was extremely good. I was very lucky to be placed with teachers who were obviously very good at their craft and were very willing to help me along the way. Um, and I was fortunate enough to be placed in schools that had great thriving programs and good PTA support, and so my elem. placement for student teaching, the teacher had all of the Orff instruments he could desire. He had an afterschool Orff Ensemble, you know he was great. When I was placed at my elementary school I looked around and thought, "well, this is going to be different." (laughter) Um, I should tell you, my placement is split. I have two schools to which I go. The school that I'm primarily describing as my school is my home location. I'm there 3 days a week. My other school is also Title I and has a high income ratio as well. I'm still teaching in that same bracket that you're looking for in both places. I got to the school and found that instruments were broken and old. PTA support was little to non-existent. I said, okay, I'm going to have to tackle these issues in a different way than what I would have done had I been at my student teaching placement. It was a bit of a shell shock at first, but I threw myself into it. Fortunately Norfolk has an excellent mentoring program.

I: Ummhmmm.

C: Um, they have 2 very experienced teachers who have time set aside in their schedules to come out to newbies in their schools and help you out.

I: Ummhmmm.

C: They helped you with whatever you needed whether it's how to teach this concept or how to fix this broken instrument. Or, I can't seem to get the kids to buy in. What do I do?

I: Right,

C: They were always there and ready to lend whatever expertise they had to offer, and that helped ease my transition a lot.

I: Awesome, yes, I've heard excellent things about that program. Um, regarding your classes in your undergraduate experience, you marked neutral on both music education as well as general education classes as far as preparation. Did you feel that you didn't have a lot of background, theoretical background in teaching urban, high-poverty students?

C: Yes, um, the education courses, you know, I don't know how it was at VCU, but at [university], music ed. is almost like a double major. You take a full load of music classes, but you also have to take all of the liberal arts education requirements. Not like English or math, but more the education theory courses which mostly don't apply to music instruction, but while I remember at times it being discussed, being the area that we were in, [university] is out in the middle of the boonies, so theoretical and practical emphasis, mainly practical, was a lot on rural because that's where you could go into the buildings. All of the schools around the campus were rural schools. Urban was not as easily focused upon. It's hard when the town that your college is in is the most urban thing within an hour to an hour and a half's drive.

I: That makes sense.

C: The school for the town is the county school. It's a very different setting. I remember one of my education classes, a classroom management class was taught by a principal who was an adjunct professor. He came from [neighboring city] schools, so that was possibly a little more insight to teaching in the city experience, but that's where the bulk of that came in, in our classes.

I: Okay. Just the fact that you had a class in classroom management was a good thing.

C: [University] made us take Human Growth and Dev. before we were officially admitted into the music ed program. Once you were, the other classes were classroom management, and special ed class, and there was something else. I can't remember the name of it. The best thing about the classroom management class was that it was in fact taught by someone who was in a school and not a professor.

I: Good. You already touched on some of this, but how would you describe the experiences of teaching in an UHP school regarding the rewards or challenges that you haven't mentioned?

C: Umm, I...really enjoy my job. I do. I love teaching elementary school music and I love the *lightbulb look*. I don't know if you know what I mean, but when a kid finally

gets something and they realize they can do it, that is just the best moment of my day. When that happens that is the best moment of my day. I work with Kg. through 5th grade students, and seeing them grow over that 6 year period and change from someone who knows nothing, nothing at the beginning of kg. to someone who by the end of 3/4 grade can read music off the staff and play recorder, you know read rhythms, read melodies. It's definitely rewarding to see their progress and to see the joy that it gives to some of them. I mean, of course you're never going to reach every single kid and every kid is not going to become a musician, but you know, you have the ones in the class who live for that 45 minutes of the week. Those are the kids that I strive, when I'm having a bad day, to remember that those kids need those 45 minutes. It doesn't matter if the last class acted rotten and couldn't get their act together, but there's kids in the next class who are waiting for their 45 mins. It's not fair to them for me to take the last class into the next one.

I: Okay..

C: As far as challenges go there's the usual ones...lack of money for field trips or after school activities or parental support for outside activities whether it's recommending a student for community choir or telling parents this kid should have...I've pretty much, sadly, given up on recommending getting lessons at my school b/c the truth is the parents just don't have the money to pay for them. There are several kids who I would say would do extremely well with piano, guitar or any type of private instruction. Bringing it up you get the anger response of the parent feeling angry that they can't provide that for their child, or it's not necessary, why should I have to spend my money on that. Or, you get the response where you make the parents feel bad by not being able to pay for it. I just don't bother if I know that's the situation. Over the years you get a feel for family situations through PTA meetings, the phone and talking to the kids. I don't initiate that. Obviously, if the parents come to me—we want to put our kid in piano, I am more than happy to give them information and put them with someone who will be good for their child and hopefully affordable. I've made a point in tracking down people who possibly have lower rates than others. That would be an affordable option. I don't initiate that. I do sometimes refer students to a children's choir here in the area. It is a tuition based program, but they do offer scholarships to students who are worthy—who have the voice and the dedication, you know, the commitment. So I do refer students to organizations where the parents may not have to pay for, but it is a challenge, and some of these kids won't be given the opportunity.

I: Are there particular resources or strategies that you draw upon in teaching your students?

C: Umm, well it was a lot of trial and error at the beginning (laughs). I of course as a brand new teacher I was learning an entire new series textbook. I was learning what would and wouldn't work with my students as far as classroom management, as far as content while at the same time trying to broaden their horizons. My principal a couple of years ago wanted us to do a little musical something. Not a full program, but a little musical something at each PTA meeting, which I was fine with. She wanted it to be...I said you

know, do you want it to be a holiday theme, do you want it to be themed around the month? Do you want it to be about what they're learning in the classroom, curriculum-based for that time, or you know, just tell me what you want and I'll make it happen. And she said, well I want it to be something that will draw the parents in, that they'll recognize. I want it to be pop music based. I'm going, oh Lord! Because pop music in that neighborhood is, um, gangster rap.

I: Right.

C: And I'm just going-that's not going to work. I can't do most of that stuff with my kids from school so I had to get kind of creative to meet her request. So that's what I did, you know pulling in various songs from the radio and adding boomwhackers or silly dance moves or whatever I ended up doing, um, but the incorporation of more popular music is one way that I've managed to get my older students to cooperate a little bit more, um, anything that has a really good groove beat they're, you know if it's got a hip-hop beat behind it, they're fine. But, I really, for example, I had a really difficult 4th grade class this year who...they fought with each other constantly. No matter what seating arrangement you did, somebody was always too close to somebody else, and even so, they were screaming at them from across the room.

I: I'm sure it got really fun near the end of the year.

C: Yes, yes it did. Um, but everybody has a class like that every once in a while and this year it was that particular class. One thing that I stumbled upon completely by accident um, I do a composer of the month, and over the course of, you know as they're entering music when they come into the room we do steady beat and meter patterns and then we get going on the lesson. We learn one quick fact about the composer and then we move on. Well, over the course of this I happened to introduce them to Lindsey Sterling.

I: Mmmhmm.

C: I don't know if you've heard of her...umm she

I: I have not

C: Oh, she's amazing. You should look her up on youtube. She's a hip-hop electronica violinist.

I: Ahh, ok, she's the one on youtube, I think I have seen some of her stuff.

C: Yes, she has like 4 million bajillion followers on youtube and um, I found out, I played them...the composer of the month was Andrew Lloyd Webber and I played them this Phantom of the Opera remix that is really really awesome, and I played it for them after we heard some of the original Phantom music the week before, and they went hog-wild for it.

I: (laughs)

C: And I went, oh, okay. So I told them a little bit about her, she writes her own stuff, but she also remixes like songs from the radio. She's done lots of them...Bruno Mars Grenade, Starships, lots and lots. And they're like, well we want to hear a remix. Ok fine, here's the deal. We have to get through x, y, and z. At the end of class if we have 5 mins., after we've done our work, I'll let you pick a remix of your choice.

I: Right, very good.

C: That kept them on the hook for like 6 weeks. Not kidding. Um, it's things like that I use to, you know. I just thought it was so cool that they were experiencing what they consider to be a classical old person instrument in a new and fresh way that really relates to them, so that was a good thing for them. But I mean I really try to pick things that they will find either funny or exciting or engaging. I don't do a lot of slow. I try to work it in, but they just don't like slow. They wanna move, they wanna do. Um, the occasional ballad will fly, but if I try to do "Oh Danny Boy" or something they would probably flip a lid. I made that mistake one time, I probably won't do it again. Not cool songs.

I: (laughs) Do you have any advice for teachers who teach UHP students or those who are considering teaching them?

C: (pause) The thing that I would say the most is, um, learn to be patient. So many of these kids are in rough, rough home-life situations. I've got kids at my school with parents in jail, parents not in jail, but you know at home doing things they shouldn't...drugs, alcohol um, kids on their 4th or 5th relative that they're living with because people just keep disappearing from their lives. (pause) and...they just see all these bad examples at home and they bring it to school because they don't know any other way to act. They're disrespectful, they're loud, they shout at you, and yet, when you can be patient enough to talk to them, to let them in, to hook them and get them involved, they can be some of the most dedicated and rewarding students you'll ever teach.

I: Yes.

C: It's not for everybody and it's hard, but it is also very important.

I: Speaking of importance, you rated in professional support, some of the highly rated items were district support, district music supervisor support, mentoring (which you've already talked about), and then other music teachers. As far as these supports, how have they been influential in your decision to stay in your position?

C: Well, I won't lie, there have been a couple of times when I was ready to go. I mean, we all experience those low points, those crises of conscience where you just don't think you can teach anymore...um...

I: I think every year I tell myself, this will be my last year...

C: And, we have in our district what's called the blue card. It's a transfer card. It's a request for voluntary transfer, and I have filled out my blue card several times. Not so much because I'm trying to get away from the school, but more of a, um, if a full-time became available where I could stay at one place all week, then I would have my transfer card in and be eligible to interview.

I: Right...

C: You know what I mean (*I agrees*). It wasn't so much...I have to leave this school, although I can recall one year that almost pushed me to that. (laughs) Ummm, the district has fantastic music teachers. Overall, I feel that the quality of our teachers (music teachers) is extremely high and we really do try to help each other out and it's one of the things that I really like about teaching where I do. We generally have a monthly meeting and everybody gets together after school one day and we talk about whatever is coming up-cultural arts enrichment programing or district chorus auditions or all-city...whatever's coming up. And we also often do like district share. You know, everybody brings a program idea and we all bat 'em around or somebody brings a, you know we have a drumming workshop or we have a...it doesn't really matter as long as we're there and we're talking to each other, you know, somebody says I need...my kids are doing this thing in the program next week and I'm short 4 boomwhackers. I've got those, you can have them! We loan stuff back and forth all the time whether its instruments, costumes, bodily help. A lot of us will go to each other's schools...you need help running sound, I'm there. You need somebody backstage to pull curtains, okay. One of the things that I really liked about this placement...I told you have split placement. My home school has stayed the same for 7 years, but my other days of the week have fluctuated and changed several times, so in the course of 7 years of teaching, I have been in 6 or 7 different buildings.

I: Mmmhmm...

C: Just as needs change around the district because my other two days I spend that are large enough to have a full time music teacher, but they need a day's worth of extra help.

I: Okay.

C: So instead of say having...the way our district does scheduling, all the 3rd graders go to resource classes at the same time so their teachers can do block planning-can get together and plan together. And so if you have 5 3rd grade classes, great, but if you have 6, then the music teacher no longer has time to see all 6 of the classes.

I: Okay

C: Because they have to go at the same time.

I: Ahhh

C: So that's where that extra one day a week comes in. I go over to a school like that for that day and I take all of those extras.

I: Okay, and is it the same group every time?

C: Yes. It's the same classes every week. We set a schedule at the beginning of the school year, and it's the same class every week. But, it's really given me insight into how other teachers do things and it's given me good connections and good friendships with several of the other music teachers in the building, in the different buildings. Um, which in turn gives you a great support network, you know if you need something, then one of those people likely has what you need. And they can loan it to you...assuming that the show is not the same night.

I: Isn't it nice to see other people teach? I feel like we don't get enough opportunities for that.

C: Yes, and I agree with that, and wish we had more time to go and sit with other people. But it is one of the things that I do like about moving around and going from school to school, you know. It would be nice to have my own cozy little spot that I got to stay five days a week, all day, everyday. And if it had 4 walls, that would be fantastic. Right now I teach on the stage in the cafeteria.

I: In your home school?

C: Yes, so I don't have 4 walls. I don't have privacy. I teach during the lunch hour, well, the lunch like 2 ½ hours, and so if one day there was a place with 4 walls and no cafeteria class that wanted me, I'm sure I would really be open to that (laughs).

I: Oh, yes (laughs).

C: The upside of traveling around is that I have gotten to see lots of people teach and lots of people approach their programs in different ways.

I: You know I've never heard of that prospective, so that's an interesting way to look at it...

C: That's one of the positive things about the way my placement is. And I think when I first started, I think it was really, really valuable. I mean I was a brand new teacher. So, I think when I first started that was really valuable to me because you're still forming your teaching style. Yeah, you student taught somebody was probably back there holding the reigns guiding you. And, when they turn you loose in the wild, it's a totally different experience.

I: Yes.

C: You have to figure out in that first year or two what your style's gonna be and how you're gonna accomplish certain things and having several perspectives to choose from was really nice.

I: Alright. And besides the 4 walls, what could make your current teaching experiences be even more positive?

C: Honestly, I think that would be one of the biggest things. I mean some of the...teaching during lunch is rough.

I: I'm sure.

C: Our cafeteria is very loud. I wear a headset mic to teach while lunch is going on in the cafeteria. But even still the kids sometimes say, *we can't hear you* or *what did you say?* They miss part of the directions when there was a fight and the cafeteria got super loud or...So I feel bad for those classes...those grades that come during lunch I feel like they get their instruction, but they don't, they don't get the full benefit of it with all the lunch noise in the background because they can't hear me as well and they can't hear their own product as well. So having a room would be nice, but our building is very small and very old and very crowded. So we are at 130% capacity, I think.

I: Wow.

C: So, um, the building was built back in the mid to late sixties and classrooms were probably built for class sizes 16-18 and are each holding 20-25. And, we have 3 mobile units out back, and the art teacher doesn't have a room, I don't have a room, the PE teacher teaches at the rec center across the parking lot. Nobody has a space.

I: Wow.

C: There are literally no classrooms left. Um, so I'm not under any kind of delusions that while I'm at the building I will probably get a room. So I make the best of the situation I have. You know, it's...

I: Okay, very good.

C: You do what you can with what you have. I'm fortunate enough to have a small budget that allows me to purchase a new microphone this year after my old one died after 5 years of heavy use...um, and you know, we keep on keepin' on.

I: Awesome.

C: Just keep swimming, as they say...

I: Regarding social support, you rated family and friends as being very supportive in your decision to stay in your position. How do they help you?

C: Well, when I've had a bad day, I try hard not to dwell on it and bring it home, but there are those days when you just need to vent it.

I: Indeed.

C: And so I say *I can't believe this actually happened!* So my family and friends have been overall fairly positive. My husband has on one or two occasions gone—*the same stuff keeps happening, why?* So, the definition of insanity is supposed to be, you know, seeing the same thing hoping for different results. And he's like *it's obviously never going to change*...usually with regard to administrative support for...disciplinary actions. When are you going to lose the insanity and try to move away from this crazy principal. My principal is not helpful all that often.

I: I kind of gathered that from your survey.

C: Yeah, she's a nice enough person, she really is, but she does not back us up on disciplinary issues in the 7 years I have seen overall student deportment and respectfulness and overall behavior go down severely, because the kids have learned that there aren't really a lot of consequences that deal with actions. And if they can get away with it, why should they have to follow the rules?

I: I think I've been hearing that frequently...

C: Yeah, so when I got there the school was really, considering the environment, really pretty high level of compliant behavior and respectfulness.. And like I said, over the years, the kids who have grown up with her, she had only been there for a year I think when I came, and umm, now the students who have grown up with her all the way through have realized that they can get away with a lot because she doesn't' always bring the hammer down...

I: Okay.

C: ...and deal with the behavior the way it should be dealt with, but that's a whole other issue and not what we were talking about...I apologize for going off topic.

I: No, that's fine. I'm trying to get information from you in any way I can so....(C laughs) One of your colleagues mentioned the PBIS behavior system, did you also start that?

C: Um, it was a required district-wide initiative this year. So, yes.

I: Okay.

C: It wasn't as bad as I thought it would be. I will say that, because when they first introduced it to us it basically, um, we were all like, positive behavior intervention

support? Does that mean there's not going to be any consequences anymore? That was everybody's first response. And, well the truth was, it wouldn't have made that much difference at our school. There are not a lot of consequences to begin with. But, it (pause) it's fine for what it is, (pause). It basically focuses on trying to reward students, or those who are doing the right thing to show students that are not, the benefits of following the rules and doing what they're supposed to do, which is all well and good, but I still think we shouldn't have to bribe them into behaving. They should be required to do it.

I: We started that system, I think 2 years ago, and I think that's been the biggest issue...how, what, you're so limited as far as what you can do for the students that doesn't involve food or materialistic prizes.

C: Right, absolutely. Call me crazy, if I had done half of what these kids did, not even, if I had done a quarter of what some of these kids have done, my momma would have beat my behind. You know, *the teacher had to call home and told me you were disrespectful? Oh, no. Oh, no.* I would have, my momma would have tanned my hide. I was brought up knowing that was completely unacceptable. But then I meet the parents, and then I'm not surprised...because the parents treat us the same way. You get those angry parents...*well what do you want me to do about it, you're the teacher.* Well, you're the parent. Parent your child. I had one parent...*if you dare write my child up again*, this child has already been written up by pretty much every other teacher in the building, whether they were his teacher or not. *I'll tell you the same thing I told that art teacher and that PE teacher and whoever else she had already talked to...he goes to that school to learn, he doesn't need no music or art or PE, he needs to learn...okay.* Nice talking with you ma'am. Have a nice day, bye. It doesn't do you any good to argue with them, they just keep going. Parents like that, you meet them, and you go oh, that explains a lot about your kid. Okay. No wonder the kids feels like he's owed everything. You obviously feel the same way. The kids who have the worst attitudes, their parents are usually holy terrors as well. I have had parents get up in my face, and I look at them and I go, when that's the example the kids see at home, then of course that's how they're going to act. If you don't feel like you have to be respectful of adults and other teachers at the school, then it's not surprising that your kid feels like they don't have to be respectful. We do the best we can with the kids we have, but the truth is, if the parent isn't willing to step in and help, there's only so much we can do. There are kids for which that is not true. There are kids that we have flipped and seen tremendous changes in, but there are also kids who come from families like that, we've seen them act like that from kindergarten all the way to middle school. They end up in alternative school when they tick off the wrong person. The truth is, we just need more parental support. Discipline for general deportment and if they wanted to help with academics, that would be welcome too.

I: (both laugh) As far as, thinking about yourself, how would you describe your characteristics as a teacher, or even, how would your students describe you?

C: Umm, well some of them would say I'm mean because I do hold them to a certain standard and I expect them to meet it, and if they can't function as nice little members of society while they're in my classroom, then they lose privileges. They lose instrument time, they lose dance time. They go sit by themselves instead of participating with the group. If you're not being nice to people or you can't keep your hands to yourself, then you're not going to participate, I'm sorry. So I'm sure there are some of them that would call me mean. Or, upholding the standard of civility in my class, but I would say that most of them would probably say that I...oh lord...that I'm fun but fair. If things happen, we get to the bottom of it and you know, the rules apply equally to everybody no matter who you are. We always have a good time. I would like to think that they would say that I support them and that I really try to make time to talk to them individually when I have a chance...especially when I notice that somebody is having a bad day, um.. And,this is harder than I thought.

I: I mean, I think you've said a good amount. I think that sounds good. I know it's hard to step back and think...hmmm.

Both laugh...

I: Well, is there anything else you'd like to say about teaching UHP students and your reasons for continuing to do so? Anything that you haven't had a chance to...bring up or...

C: I don't know, I guess... one of the factors is that they need me. They, this school that I'm at, they had long term subs in my position for 2 ½ years before I came in. a rotating array of long-term subs. Whoever the teacher was before me was, I don't know, on medical leave or something. But, what I've heard of her, she was no great shakes? either....when I got here they were starving for it. They were so ready to learn something and that was amazing to me. Every time I think about leaving, I think about who they would get to fill my spot and whether or not they would be up for the task. And whether or not they would stick around...

I: That's a good way to think about it.

C: Because, for a lot of these kids, there aren't a lot of people who stick around.

I: ...and even in their lives outside of school...

C: Right, and you know, that's important to them and it's important to me...

I: Do you think that's a little more unique at the elementary level since you see the kids throughout elementary school?

C: I think, yeah. That's one of the reasons I really like teaching elementary school. You have a good long time to bond with the kids. This is a little bit unrelated, but the way their home lives are is another reason that I try really hard not to yell...ever, because a lot

of them, that's all they hear at home. A large part of why they are loud and yelling all of the time is because that's the only way they ever get heard at home. And...sometimes it happens, and it's necessary, but I really try hard not to because I don't want to be just one more person yelling in their face. I want them to know that not every adult is like that, and that...there are people who care about them and will treat them well and treat them nicely and be there for them when they need it. So that hopefully, if there is (God forbid) something crazy that happens at home and they need somebody to talk to about it, they'll come to someone at the school and tell them what's going on because, annoying they may be sometimes, but...

I: They need that safety beyond...

C: They're my kids.

I: Well that's pretty cool. It sounds like you're doing an amazing job, and I know it's not easy. So, I uh, I appreciate your time today and your great...answers.

C: Absolutely. Like I said, I'm also a grad student right now so I understand the challenge of trying to do this while you are working...

I would imagine it's hard to find somebody who has stayed for long periods of time in these positions, and it's hard to get this done while you're trying to work and have a life...

Appendix: N

Teacher D Transcript

This interview took place on June 27, 2014.

I: I'll just give you a brief background as to why I began to research this topic. I currently teach in a school where we have 92% free and reduced lunch students. I was just interested in...now [my district] is a little different from your school district as far as not being really urban, but I still face a lot of the same challenges that you are facing, and that's kind of why I became more interested in this topic, so...

If you could, briefly describe how you came to be teaching in your current position.

D: Okay, I don't know if it's brief or not, let's see...I graduated a long time ago. I graduated in 1988, and I immediately got married and moved to [*neighboring state*], and I...instead of teaching in the public school setting, I opened up a private piano practice and did very well with that for a little over 10 years. Then, when my second child was born, I decided I could not continue that on anymore, so I was just going to be a stay-at-home mom period. Then, a little bit after that, my whole life fell apart because my husband decided he didn't want to be married anymore. So, I ended up moving to, basically my hometown and kind of substituted for a while in the public school setting just to kind of get my feet wet at let my emotions have some time to heal and calm down. Then, when I felt like I was ready, I applied to several different districts and whatnot. The district that I was living in was the district that I graduated from and I had my kids in, and I had done my substituting in, did not have any kind of full-time positions at the time, and [*current district*] did. [*Current district*] is where I started off in elementary school. I took the position at [*current district*] even though it had changed an awful lot from what it was when I was a kid. I don't know the percentage right now of how much our free and reduced lunch right now is. I don't believe it's that high at my particular school. Anyway, we do have some homeless kids in my school, but that wasn't what your question was, was it?

I: Well I think the criteria for the study was above 75%. I think the school you are at fits this range. (pause) hello?

Is that all?

D: I think so. [*Current district*] offered me the full time position with the benefits so I took it, and I've been there ever since, so....

I: Excellent, as far as your pre-college background, in the questionnaire you listed basically growing up middle-class and attending a high school that was the same. Did that background help you in your current teaching setting or has it been challenging growing up in that background?

D: It's definitely different. Like I said, I'm back in the school district where I went. I'm teaching elementary students, and I'm back in the same district I was in when I started

elementary school. Kids that went to my church actually went to the school that I am teaching in, and I am teaching their kids, which is really freaky. I don't know if you follow all of that.

I: Uh huh.

D: So I have kids I am now teaching...anyway. They've left that school once before to try to get to a more middle class kind of school system, but they're having financial situations right now. The guy is on disability leave or whatever from the military...anyway. So, they end up back. Like I said, it's very different and it's challenging. I know one of my...I guess you're going to hit on it later, but the biggest challenge to me is when you're teaching in a district where children are having children, they haven't done their growing up entirely themselves. The children that they end up sending to school just have no...the discipline is so lacking. Discipline and what we're calling manners today, I guess. Just the simple fact of close your mouth and raise your hand before you speak is just really difficult for these children. I find that to be the biggest challenge. You have children that, in my opinion, are not really school ready. It's not really their fault. It's what they're growing up in and whatever, but it makes teaching very difficult, in my opinion.

I: Yes, and also with your background in undergraduate experiences, you did mention that you had experience with your practicums and student teaching in urban, high-poverty schools.

D: Yes.

I: Can you expand on that a little bit?

D: I don't know. It's been so long ago (laughs).

I: You don't really have to explain those experiences, but maybe how they've helped you, how that experience has helped you today?

D: I don't know....hmmmm.....I don't really honestly know if any of it really actually helped because it's sooo different today. It has changed, in my opinion, so much over the last, I guess 20 years that...I remember answering the question...I'm pretty sure I answered no, that I didn't have any training in college on urban settings, and if I did, I certainly didn't pay attention to it, is all I have to say (laughs).

I: Right, that was the second part of the question. You did disagree with your music ed. and general ed...you said they had not been helpful in preparing you for teaching in that setting. So that kind of goes along with it, I guess. If things are different now, that wouldn't have...

D: Right.

I: Okay, and you have already mentioned some of the challenges. What about...you did mention that the students love what you teach and they love you. What are some of the other rewards that you get in your teaching?

D: Other rewards besides those (laughs). Well I mean, the parents enjoy it too. I don't know if this even comes into play, but I am an almost 50 white female teaching in a setting which is hugely African-African. We have more than, I was just telling another teacher the other day, we have more Hispanic students, I believe, than students that are Caucasian. It does sometimes amaze me because sometimes what we are asked to do—we are asked to teach them music and expand their horizons outside of the stuff that they listen to on the radio all the time. I ran into some difficulty recently with somebody else that's on staff at my school wanting to do something for a 5th grade promotion ceremony, that she just did not feel like it was just hitting it with parents and what they were really wanting and interested in. However, that is not what I have gotten from the parents themselves. When I have to put on programs (I have to do 3 a year), I obviously have a December one, and I have one at end of the year, which keeps getting pushed back. It's now it March or April because we have to get it done before SOLs...which is crazy to me. Then, we have a Black History program which sometimes that's not all my baby. Sometimes that gets put together by a committee, but these programs that I put on, the parents just rave about them. That's pretty rewarding too. I'm not doing the rap and the hip-hop all the time. It is in there occasionally, but that's not what I'm teaching them all the time. They do end up loving what I'm teaching, so that's another reward.

I: That's great. You did mention the lack of social skills as far as a challenge is concerned, and also the amount of time you spend in teaching non-musical skills in your classroom.

D: ...and it's not just me, it's the whole school (laughs).

I: Trust me, I know (both laugh).

Is there anything else, a big stand out as far as a challenge?

D: pause

I: You said the parents enjoy the programs. Do you feel like they support what you're doing in the classroom?

D: Yeah, I seem to have no problems with that.

I: If you have a discipline issue with a child, does this parent back you up?

D: Well...that's iffy. Like I said before, some of the parents really aren't old enough to be parents themselves and don't know what to do. Some of the other teachers and I were talking about a parent who is just trying to be her daughter's friend. Because they're so close in age it kind of makes sense. They walk down the hall dressed almost exactly alike, and it's interesting. I've had many parents who say *I'm at a wits end, I don't know*

what to do. They don't know what to do because they're allowing the child to rule their world. They can't get an upper hand. That is one thing that is rampant among my school right now. When you do have discipline problems with a certain child, we're not getting back-up from home because home doesn't really know what to do.

I: Okay...alright...are there any particular resources or strategies that you draw upon when teaching your students...either musical or non-musical?

D: (pause) I'm not quite sure I know what to say. (laughs)

I: Maybe something that you wouldn't necessarily do in another setting but you've started doing because of your students?

I know you said you don't do a lot of the hip-hop stuff they might be in to, but is there anything else that you...

D: Well...

I: Or something you use to get them motivated?

D: Now that you bring that up, I do feel like I do have a handle on what the students do actually like, so the music that I'm going to use in the classroom...I kind of start wondering if that's really true or how much of it is because they like me, because every now and then I have to do a day at a different school, and sometimes the things that I do at my school don't really fly at that school. Of course, that school is almost 100% free/reduced lunch.

I: So you think once they feel comfortable with you, you can get them to buy in to whatever you are working on...

D: Yes, but I do tend to try to pick out music that is...I don't know what kind of music series you're using, or anything, but we're using the Silver Burdett. That really has a vast amount of differences in it. Sometimes I will sit and listen to a song that I haven't listened to out of that series, and it's like, oh my gosh, where would I ever use that song? When I sit back and think about it, it's like well, if I was in a totally opposite school district of where I am now, that song might work. But it's not going to work here in [current district]. So I do kind of feel like I do tailor music towards them. I do now that I do an awful lot of Af. American Spirituals, which some people think you really shouldn't be doing because you're throwing religion into it and whatnot. That's what a lot of these kids are coming from, and I don't know if I'm getting away with something or not, but they really love that kind of stuff.

I: Well, it's kind of the historical factor too, and some they can take home and relate maybe to families.

D: Yeah, so I don't shy away from that. I do kind of sway clear if it mentions Jesus, but if it mentions God, I'm not...it's part of...it's like you said, it's part of their background

where they're coming from, so we use it, and I haven't had a problem with that either, so...

I: Do you have any advice for teachers of UHP students or those may consider teaching them?

D: I don't know that I could give any advice. I still feel like I need some help with the discipline sometimes. (sigh) I don't know beyond just—try to get to know the kids, and try to let them get to know you a little bit. I know it's...some people would argue with this, but when the kids do like you, honest to goodness, they're gonna try to do more for you and...musically, discipline-wise and everything. Get to know them, and let them get to know a little bit about you. So you've got a decent rapport with them so that when things are bad, you can kind of get them back on your side, or whatever. I don't know. Other than that, I don't know that I have any other advice. (laughs)

I: Well I think that's great. I think that's great advice. You rated your district, music supervisor, and the mentor program pretty highly on the questionnaire, oh, and also other music teachers. I've definitely heard a lot about the mentor program. Can you discuss these supports and how they've influenced your decision to stay? It sounds like you could move to another school district, but you haven't chosen to do that.

D: That's a sticky situation. We might not want to go there right now. (laugh)

I: Okay.

D: If you want to talk about the mentoring, I can talk about that all day.

I: Okay. Can you briefly mention something about your music supervisor, mentor program, or other music teachers? Is there anything you would like to expand upon in those areas?

D: I would be very curious if...because I've heard things that make it sound like our district is a little bit different than some other districts, and would really love to know if that was true or not. I wish somebody would do some research on that. Our district, musically, is very tight. We have...this isn't really the mentoring part, but anyway. We have almost monthly meetings where all of the elementary music teachers get together. While everybody else is having their professional development, occasionally we have to go to those, and I just find that ridiculous. I don't need to know how to do math and social studies, and whatever.

I: I know. You're preaching to the choir.

D: It's usually just a waste of my time. So if they could take us out of those and put us all together with the music teachers, I would be extremely happy. Sometimes it is more than once a month because we have those all-city staff days when we're with them for the

entire day, and I love it. I share an office space with the art teacher. He can't stand going to the art meetings, but anyway. (laughs) Apparently they don't do what we do. We have some people come in. We had Gary from Silver Burdett come in and do some things with us, but on an ongoing basis, we share a lot. There's a lot of camaraderie and sharing ideas, music, stuff people make up, different ways to go about doing things. Like I said, I'm kind of led to believe that doesn't happen in other districts. I'd love to know if that's true, because if it is, it's sad, because that is just a wonderful resource. You can pick up the phone and call someone at any time and say *I need something* or flash out an e-mail *Does anybody have the music to such-and-such?* You're gonna get it. Like I said, with these meetings, we're constantly sharing ideas. I kind of hate it when my name falls on the list of bring something to share, because I never feel like I have anything worthy (laughs). Then you go, and everyone loves what you came up with at the last minute. I think we've really got that nailed down in [current district]. We really do. When I first started back in 2004 in [current district]...their mentoring program is a little different now than it was then. I loved it because they would actually take you out of the classroom once a month you would have classes for ½ day and observe another music teacher for ½ day.

I: Great. I feel like we don't get enough of a chance to do that.

D: Oh my gosh...it was...for me coming back to it, ...after being away from the public school setting for 15 years...I mean, that was...it did more wonders for me than anything else. So yeah, and I sadly think that's part of the component they've taken away. To me, sitting in those stupid classes is not getting it. The going and actually observing what other music teachers are doing was invaluable.

I: Was that something, you said you sometimes go to other schools...have you been able to see another music teacher when you're in another building? Just by chance, not necessarily in a formal way.

D: Sometimes, just by chance, but not in a formal setting like I did when I first started teaching.

I: Okay. And, the meetings and everything, is that basically set up by your supervisor? Do you feel like your supervisor's leadership has helped to bring that camaraderie together? Or is it just the specific group of teachers you have?

D: I don't know. It goes way beyond her because she's only been in this position for about 3 years now. I don't know. I don't know how long this goes back. I would say I would commend her for continuing it. It is something that...I mean, I don't know where it all started.

I: Okay, well I don't need to know the history as much as the strength of the program...

D: I was going to say it was probably set by the district, but then again, it's not because a lot of those meetings are after school hours and we're just kind of expected to be there.

It's funny how some of the classroom teachers get so upset that we have a little bit more free time than they do, but I'm like...you know we have all of these night time performances and...

I: So you're saying you have some of these meetings during the school day?

D: Well, some of them are, but some of them are at the end of the school day, after hours until 5:00...

I: So you just get professional leave if you have a meeting during the day?

D: Yes.

I: Do you get a substitute, or do they just cancel classes?

D: Well, a lot of them are on those professional development days or on early release days when the kids have already gone home. Or, they're on teacher workdays that they've set aside.

I: Okay, I get it now. You mentioned your friend, as far as social supports, on the questionnaire, you mentioned a friend having experience in the same district, and you said that she was a great source of support.

D: I actually put that on the questionnaire?

I: Uh huh. (both laugh) I read your mind, no not really. So have you received advice from her or...

D: Oh yes, actually, the school that she was in for all those years was one of the schools that I ended up going to for a one day thing a couple of times. It hasn't been the one I did most recent, but yes. I was walking into some of the same teachers that she knew, and I would say hello to them and that sort of thing. Oh yes, she gives me advice when...like I said, some of it has changed, but she is a fabulous sounding board when anything does go wrong musically or public school wise or whatever. She's a great sounding board to be able to vent to and get it all out there because she understands, you know. She may not be doing it right now, but was there long enough that she knows. So yes, having somebody like that is also invaluable, and I know everybody can't have that.

I: Well, it's nice to at least have one person that you can kind of vent to and, yes, it's necessary for sure.

How would you describe your characteristics as a teacher? Or even, how would your students describe your characteristics as a teacher?

D: (pause) That's difficult. (laughs) (pause) Say that one more time.

I: Well, the first part—How would you describe your characteristics as a teacher, or, if it's easier, how would your students describe you as a teacher?

D: I'm trying to think about which word to use first. (pause) I would think they would say I'm fun, but I'm also stern. What I do with music, it's fun. I mean, I love what I do, and that has to come across. I love the music. I love what I do. I love teaching. I love the kids. I kind of think that's a must. If you don't love those three things, then you shouldn't be here. Anyway, my kids speak to me when they see my at Wal-mart. I call is getting Miss [teacher's name) —ed all the time. My own children will be with me somewhere, and that's what we call call it. Whoop, you got Miss [name] —ed again (laughs). They'll scream in the middle of Wal-Mart and that's cool because I don't feel like they're going to do that do a teacher they don't like and don't enjoy what she does. So, anyway...

I: Okay, and the last question...is there anything else you'd like to say about teaching UHP students and your reasons for continuing to do so? Anything you feel like you haven't touched on or...

D: I don't know what this has to do with a whole lot, but when you said that it just brought this to mind, so I'm going to go ahead and say it...umm... I think some of these children that are poverty-level, homeless and think kind of thing, I do think that some of the things that we can do in music can definitely lighten their load a little bit. It can change their perspective on things and give them something to hope for.

There's something else that happens around here, which, I don't know that it happens everywhere. I'm also very glad and fortunate that it is around in this area. [current school district] have what they call cultural arts events. I don't know if I'm calling it the right thing because they just changed the name of it. I don't know if it started because of this or not, but because some of these children will never get some opportunities to do certain things [current district] has made sure that every kid gets a little bit of the culture that's around here...a taste of it. I just find that very rewarding and almost prideful. I mean I'm almost tearing up talking about it because of some of the reaction I've had from some of the parents.

I: Is this something they come into the schools to do, or...

D: We have some art groups that actually come in and do...they kind of do it by grade level as far as who gets what. The tiny kindergarten and 1st graders get this storyteller person who comes into the schools and does this cool little program for them. The 2nd graders, because they're studying China, they get this Chinese lady that comes in and brings all kinds of Chinese culture. She brings the culture to them. She brings clothes, instruments and all kinds of stuff that they would never ever be exposed to...some of them. It's like bringing a museum to the school. And on the 4th grade level, they go to an art museum and find out about art from all over, everywhere. The 5th graders get to go see some kind of...actually I think they do a couple of things. But this thing is called Rhythm Live. It's a dance kind of thing, and it's actually from Africa kind of thing. So

that's really cool. The third graders, this is what's near to my heart, they get to go see the Virginia Symphony. I do a whole big unit, most of us do, because we're given a whole packet of information regarding what they're going to be playing for them. You can't guarantee that every music teacher does it, but we're strongly encouraged to prepare these kids for the symphony. I take it very seriously and they know the music, what's going to happen as far as what they're going to hear before they get there. No matter what you prepare these kids for they've never, and some will never be in a building that large again. They may never see these kinds of instruments ever again. To me, that is so cool for these kids. I have had parents that have come up to me weeks after the field trip and just talk about how their kid is still talking about that concert. I'm tearing up, because to me, that's just special. That's something that those kids need. Who knows, a couple of them may end up going really far in music and may end up majoring in music someday. Who knows, maybe even on that stage. Even if it's just for one, it's just really cool. I'm sorry, I can't believe I'm getting that choked up over that. But that is...there was a couple years ago when funding got really low, and that's something, to me, people need to keep sight of. Those kids, they need those experiences.

I: Does the city provide funds for that?

D: I don't think so (laughs). I think they used to, but when funds got tight, they started cutting it. So our supervisor that we had before the one we have now really went...because she felt as strongly about it as I did...she went and knocked on doors and whatnot and made sure we had the funding to keep it in [*current city*]. I have noticed that some of the surrounding cities have kept it too, so I don't know if they had it almost cut out like we did or not. It seemed to me very important. Maybe some of the surrounding...the city that I live in...I don't think it would hurt me as much to pull it out of that city as it would to pull it out of [*current district*]. There's just so much more poverty so to speak and so much...they'll never ever get a chance. At least let them have a chance to experience it, because it really is cool. As bizarre as it is, they're in this auditorium and they're supposed to be quiet, and for the most part, they are. They've never experienced...a couple years ago it was at a place that had huge chandeliers in the foyer. The chandelier was 4 times the size of these kids. They're hanging way up in the rafters and they're just going...their eyes are really big and their mouths are hanging open and they're like *oh my gosh!* It's just neat to let them see because you feel like some of them never get out of their neighborhood. To me it's necessary. Let them get out and see so they can see that there is a life outside of that. You have to go after it and strive to get it because if you keep living like you're living with your parents now, you're never going to get out.

I: Well that's awesome. Thanks for sharing that. We're at the end of my interview. So, you made it.

D: I hope I gave you some decent stuff.

I: You did. I've really enjoyed talking to you, and I've enjoyed talking to everyone. Thanks for your time, and have a great vacation.

Appendix: O

Teacher E Transcript

This interview took place on July 2, 2014.

I: I have been teaching...this was my 7th year teaching at this particular school that I'm at. I do have a free/reduced lunch rate of 92% at my school. At the end of every year I think about what keeps me there, so I thought it would be an interesting study to ask other elementary music teachers the same question.

Now, could you briefly describe how you came to be teaching in your current position?

E: Oh, let's see. Well, I started out as a middle school music educator with [*current district*] in 1998. My background prior to that is early childhood, and of course my degree is in public school music education. I've always loved and been interested in music through church and throughout my childhood. It's more than a calling and affirmation. It's a ministry of sorts. I wanted to ensure that the children learned things at their young ages that I was deprived of in many ways. I attended one of the urban schools for which you're studying and the nature of the urban schools. We didn't have access to many of the instruments and things we needed to make music a memorable experience. I said if I ever get a chance to grow up and change this through music education, that's what I wanted to do. I was privileged to be able to do that. I started at the middle school level and then became a dean of students but wanted to go back into music and wanted it at the elementary level. So I pursued, and I've been at the elementary level for about ___ years and I had 8 years in middle school. I reached my goal as far as becoming a music educator with writing total music programs having different student teachers as a cooperating teacher bringing music to the forefront of public education. Throughout our neighborhoods and school district, it's there, it's in the schools so to speak, but it's not well respected. That has to be changed and someone has to take the lead in doing that. So that's pretty much where I come in. I feel like a one-woman crusader to get the message of music appreciation out to the masses and the local community, especially in our urban community. So many of my students are familiar with just rap music. Okay, so let's do a trade-off. Your rap music for my Mozart or my Debussy. Let's go there. It has worked. I don't know if I'm giving you too much information, but this may apply to another answer. You can extrapolate the details. I left and came back for some of my own business ventures. When I came to this particular school my mission was to go up to this school and see...what did the students know? Within 1 week that I saw every class, I made it my business to ask 1 generic question. *Who can tell me something about Beethoven?* Heather, most of the students didn't know. All of the classes thought Beethoven was a dog.

I: Yes, you get it.

E: So I didn't know about the movie that was out about the dog so I kind of personalized it and thought, what guys, you don't call Beethoven a dog! That because that's what they could associate with that. I thought, oh my goodness, my work is cut out here. Do

you see what I'm saying? Who didn't teach these children that information? These kids were 5th graders. Why didn't they learn about this in kindergarten or preschool? I've been privileged to see that generation, that group of students graduate this year, and Heather, they know who Beethoven is. That's where we come in to it being more than just a job or fancy. You have to love it. I think that's where we come in. So...I hope I answered that (laughs).

I: How many years did you say you've been teaching at the elementary level?

E: 16 years at the elementary music level. I've been a part of administration and all of that, but music has always been a big part.

I: Can you hear me okay?

E: I can hear you.

I: Okay, so of your words are getting choppy. I know it's kind of stormy around here so I wasn't sure if you could hear me.

I: In the questionnaire yourself as growing up lower middle-class and attending a lower-middle class high school. How has this background helped your current teaching?

E: (Just walked outside) Okay, can you hear me better? Okay this might work. It was a predominantly black high school [*name of high school*]. That particular school had a rich history of music. It's bands and choirs won all kinds of awards throughout its history. The school had a very rich history and it was the first accredited public school for blacks in [*current city*] and even Virginia. Everyone wanted to attend [*name of school*] because of that rich history. The best music educators in [*current city*] taught there. Everybody wanted to filter through [*name of school*] to have some sort of recognition in the community. I had some wonderful musical experiences and I was determined, once again to build upon my background. I always wanted to be a teacher, so I observed and emulated those teachers whom I admired. That laid the foundation for me to become...I call myself an award-winning teacher. How 'bout that!

I: Great! Wonderful! What about your undergraduate experiences as far as practicum placement or student teaching in urban, high-poverty settings. You said you had this experience on the questionnaire.

E: Yes...(lost sound)

I: I'm sorry, I'm having a hard time hearing you.

E: Heather? Let me go somewhere else. Have you been to [*current city*] before?

I: Yes, I have.

E: Okay, are you familiar with the schools in any way?

I: No I'm not, but I do know that you have an outstanding music program.

E: We do. We do. We have a strong program and strong leadership. I'm stepping outside for a little bit. I hope this helps. (sirens in background) Well, I don't know. Okay, a sign of where we are, okay you can hear it. (laughs) This is right on time. What was the question?

I: Just talking about your student teaching and practicum placements and how they helped...

E: Oh yeah, even when I student taught back in 1980, we have, and it's sad but true, and you probably have it where you live too...you know certain sides of the city feel that they're the hierarchy of music or whatever...I don't know if you can empathize or not, but I was privileged to work with west side. The side where students don't suffer from as much lack as far as equipment and things of that nature. I was with [cooperating teacher's name] who was one of the top music educators in this area. She was assigned to 3 schools. That's the way they were, so I would follow her to [named 3 middle schools]. They were not the model of what you are studying. She had every instrument and everything you could think of to make music rewarding. Whereas...and I never really got to see the other side of the school such as schools like the one I teach at now. No, I didn't student teach in such a school, but I knew about them and attended one as a child, so how about that. It was good to learn what they know and bring it home so to speak.

I: And what about your undergraduate experiences as far as the classes you took in music education and your general education classes? You disagreed with the fact that they prepared you to teach in an UHP setting.

E: No, they didn't. You know why? Because, hold on Heather.

I: Okay.

E: What I meant by that was...when I was in college, for instance, undergrad school, the main focus was writing lesson plans. All of the...no one taught you how to handle the kid who cusses you out. How you handle that. How do you handle a student who's never touched an instrument and doesn't appreciate it? The family doesn't appreciate...the kid takes the violin home then everyone touches it and breaks it. They didn't prepare us for practical things. We got great theory, but the practicality of it all was missing. We still have students who are coming out of school now and graduating are missing the same things. So a lot of practice was needed. In observing the student teachers that have come to me, they are so young. Today's teacher pool is so young. It seems as though all of those folk who are old-school who didn't play...you're going to learn it whether or not you want to...they have left the scene. It's kind of like well, you get it if you get it, if you don't, you don't. If you're not gifted, okay. There's a lot of that apathy and mediocrity going on. I feel that students still aren't prepared for...they come

in to teach and they just sit. There's no initiative, and I couldn't do that when I was out to student teach. Actually, they taught us at [university] you better have two careers because the first things the public schools will cut is music and art. Consequently, we all have other things that we can do well other than music. So when you talk about training, they prepared us that way, but the classroom discipline piece is running teachers out of the schools. Basically, I had a strong mother that didn't play with us. I'm serious, she did not play. So I don't have discipline problems, I didn't write referrals, I don't do that. You earn the trust and you get them. I think my principal actually flipped when I sent him my first referral. It didn't go anywhere. I just did it to call the child's bluff. *Oh you won't write me up.* Oh, I won't? Discipline is my strong suit...and keeping kids focused. I didn't learn that from college though. I think student teachers need that. That's one reason why I was called to the school where I am. If they continue, there was about 3 or 4 teachers before me. They told me those teachers were walking out the first day. Long story short, no they did not prepare. It still seems to be that way.

I: You've touched on some of this, but how would you describe your experiences of teaching in this setting as far as the rewards and challenges? I know you mentioned that it was very rewarding and the students can't help their current socioeconomic status. If you want to go into any of the main rewards or challenges...you're already mentioned discipline and having a firm handle on that.

E: I want to speak to the rewarding aspect of it all. I mean, to just see the light bulb go on in these children *Oh, I get it* or using the hand staff to get the kids to really understand note names and note values and all of that, and how it all associates with other areas. The math, the fractions, and if you don't know how to count and divide you're going to mess up somebody's—*Oh I get it* know. What about this whole acoustical piece? Sound and...you know it's just rewarding to see kids come to love what you love. I take great joy in that. When I first came to the school, the children were not as knowledgeable of things as I would have hoped. What I did, I changed the whole nature of the school's music program was just a music class, and they had assigned a teacher to the stage. It's large beautiful auditorium with drawings all over the walls...it's beautiful. I came in there and said, no this is going to be (and their mascot is the [name]) the [mascot name] academy of music. You change the name and raise the standards, and that's what it has become throughout the school and district. Wherever I have to mention the school's music program, that's how I refer to it. That's very rewarding. The kids no longer say *I go to such-and-such* no *I attend the [mascot name] academy of music*. Raising the standards and appreciation bar of music...that's my greatest reward. When parents come into an assembly...you will stay...the children will not perform until you are quiet. You have to talk to them...I guess you have to be a mother hen...but the parents have to know. I teach the students choral etiquette, audience etiquette...now parents it's your turn to demonstrate—blah, blah, blah. They come in and no one leaves out. The door is closed. They don't come in in the middle of a song. I know I'm on my high-horse here, but I can't stand the disrespect of music. So the reward comes when the parents now appreciate music. They used to call me Ms. Music because there were about 4 or 5 people in the school named [teacher's last name]. I said, just call me Ms. Music. I'm known throughout the whole community everywhere as Ms. Music. The parents...Ms.

Music, can I help you with this...I believe the reward has been getting the community and everybody to respect music and to let them know...if I give you a quality music program, I want a quality respect. That's the greatest reward that has come out of this, and it's not all rap and sleezy stuff. It's quality music at its best. I do believe that. I'm not ashamed to put the kids up anywhere. Now you have some who aren't serious about it yet, but that's alright. It will come in time.

I: That's amazing. Good job! What resources and strategies do you draw upon in teaching urban, high-poverty students? Is there anything in particular that you find works? You mentioned some relating music to other subjects...is there something in particular that you have found to be helpful?

E: You know what is so enticing to the students is when I give them life stories...my own personal life stories and experiences as a child. They sit and listen. I even have a photograph of myself. It's the only one that I have...when I was 7 years old. It's extremely large...probably as large as your front door. I keep that before them, and I tell them how I promised little [teacher E] what she was going to do, and I said *boys and girls big [teacher E] is doing what she promised little [teacher E], and you're helping me*. So I keep my childhood dreams before them, and I ask *what are your aspirations?* I'm constantly checking in to their aspirations. *Where do you see yourself? Last week you here, where are you today?* I have constant integrity checks. *Did you practice your music last evening? How long did you practice? Did mommy sign off on it?* You know, whatever. Just to get the kids to become accountable of their education. Education is a personal thing, and the first thing it teaches you is to walk alone. It's a lonely walk if you do it right. So I tell them to stay focused. There's a lot of focus. I have a lot of little acronyms and pet words that I give to them. You've probably heard the one...proper preparation prepares for performance, back up straight feet on the floor, when I say *busfof*, they know to sit up straight. They say it, and I love it! Position 3, position 2, this is 1...you know, just making music fun. My cooperating teacher said *I'm not here to make music fun* and used to think she was so mean. She said I'm not here to make it fun for these children... I'm here to make it worthwhile. Now that I'm older, I understand what she means. We can't all run around and laugh and skip and hop. You have to sit down and master the rudiments. So that's what she meant. Anybody can hop and sing, but do you really understand music? If I could say anything, that's it for me.

I: Right. What advice do you have for teacher of UHP students or those considering doing so?

E: The first piece is most essential. First, you must know who you are. You cannot come...and it doesn't matter what your race is...it really doesn't. If you are a weak teacher, the students see it in your eyes. There's something about weakness that exudes through their eyes. Students see it. We're talking about students, Heather who have more street sense than you or I. They are very cunning, so they will play to that. So my first advice—know who you are, know your parameters that will allow student to do and not do. You can establish the rules. You have to make it our classroom. The children have to invest with suggestions and ideas into creating the environment. It is not

your classroom. That's the worst thing you can say. *This is my classroom*. No, no, no. You're going to lose them and make music the bad guy, and we don't want to do that. Now, the whole discipline piece...you better get some strategies from somewhere on how to talk to the urban youth. It's essentially the piece—because I did some research on this—years ago, but it was very intriguing to me, and I observed it when I went to the public schools. The piece where the white teachers and the black boys, and that whole strain on relationship because our black boys...they don't mind fighting you. They've seen enough abuse, and they're going to protect their image and street name...they don't care who they're disrespectful to. I would say, the teachers, the Caucasian especially, need to get to know their students. Visit their homes, meet their parents, I mean just become...I don't know how you can really do it, but you've got to trust children as though you would treat your own child. You can't let them know a difference is being made or it's going to be heck on someone's hands. I would just say look for equity, be ethical in everything that you do and let the children speak. I've seen a lot of that. Even to this year. Let the children speak to share their voices. I tell my kids if they are respectful, that can share anything with me. If I ask them to do something in music and they don't want to do it, Heather, I don't have a problem if a student doesn't want to do something in music class as long as they can justify why they don't want to do it and let me know when you will feel like you want to do it. I get the best response out of that. Well, [teacher's name] I'm not sure that I can do that today, grandma was ill this morning, and they don't feel like singing. *Grandma's ill music teacher, why all the slow music? Put on something happy*. You see what I'm saying? They really have to be able to sense the mood and tone of the classroom before they teach.

I: I liked your comment about telling them to let you know when they feel up to it. That's a good way to communicate it too.

As far as professional support, you rated your principal highly as far as being supportive for you. How has your principal supported you?

E: My principal, oh my goodness, she gives me whatever I need for the music program. She allows me to set the dates for when I want my programs. I'm big on inviting the community in to participate in my programs. I feature my students...so I feature them and make sure that they control the show. I always bring in guests and honor community music leaders with a plaque or trophy every year so the students can get to see these people, perform with them, or whatever. She supports me in that. Sometimes the principals are like, I need to see what you're doing, but see, they asked for me. That's the trump card I have over them. You asked me to come back into this district. I did not apply for the job I have, Heather. You understand. So that's an advantage for me. Even if it were not, this principal, she knows who she is. She's running other things in the school and she trusts me to run the music department and keep things straight...and I do, and the teachers, I mean they can hardly wait to see the next program. I send out big bills, I make it look like what music should look like. Yes, she supports me, and I'm sad to see her leave. She has accepted a parallel principal job in [neighboring district], but I do have a wonderful gentleman who has been with us before as ap. He has also really supported the arts so it's going to be another good year.

I: You also rated other music teachers as very supportive. How do you support each other, or how are they supportive to you?

E: Oh wow. Being the mother hen or being the senior educator in music and many things in the school. I ensure that the music program is not tarnished in any way. If they are assigned classrooms, I make sure that they are on top of their game. If they can't make it, I really don't like to call in substitute teachers because sometimes they can do some real damage. I prefer, if you're going to be out, let me have all the students and I'll do a generic music master class. There are basics that everybody needs to know regardless of what your instrument is, so I will do a master class or invite somebody in to speak to the children or perform for them or something like that. So we support each other in that regard, you know, if we're absent and need coverage. You know, I have it or we can take it, or we can do this. That's a big piece, especially with most of the students having to come to us during resource blocks and the teachers needing breaks and whatever they need to do. I don't want that to become a problem for anybody else, so I just volunteer to do things...I keep my music kids.

I: And you in-services as far as music related and non-music, you strongly agreed that they were helpful. How have they been supportive for you?

E: Oh, they're great. I think that the most liked part about all of that is the collaboration with the other music teachers in the district. We get together for fellowship, collaboration, compare notes, what works for you... It's just good to see each other. When you think that you're on the island by yourself, that can be detrimental in teaching. You need to reach out and know what other people are doing so that's the greatest strength of that piece right there.

I: That seems to be what everyone is saying, that collaboration word has come up quite a few times.

E: Yes, it really does, and umm, it just feels good to see them. You know when you've been away from a person for so long and you finally see them...see what's working for you...sometimes we don't even talk about music. It's just other things to fortify each other.

I: As far as social supports, you listed friends and family as highly supportive of you and your career. How have they been supportive?

E: Oh wow, my whoo...well I'm a preacher's daughter so I grew up in the preacher's daughter's family playing the organ and everything that goes with that. So I was always the one teaching the brothers and sisters how to sing and all of that. So they depend on me for strength and insight, and they're there to render the same with lots of encouragement. Growing up, my mother would literally spank us if we did not look out for each other. That has been engrained on our psyche to this day. We're all in our 50s, and we still look out for each other. So that's great support knowing that somebody has your back and it's great.

I: What are some things, in your opinion, that could make your job be (even) more positive?

E: Oh wow, I think if I could finally get all of the music equipment...everything is on a strict budget. For instance, I don't, my particular school, when I first came there several Orff instruments, but they were in such poor shape. I had to get rid of all of that stuff. You know those repairs are costly. I don't have the budget to purchase those instruments so what I end up doing is borrowing from other programs as I need certain pieces or for certain methods. That would be the greatest enhancement of my program. The energy, love, and enthusiasm are there, but I need materials. The administration does not appear to have the money. I'm tired of hearing that sob story throughout the country. It's not just my school district.

I: How would you describe your characteristics as a teacher, or, if it's easier, how would your students describe you as a teacher?

E: Oh wow, and you know, that's a great question because I...

I: You kind of mentioned some of that already, too...

E: I have, I really have. The piece I want to address here goes back to your prior question about what I would tell young teachers or something... Always let your students evaluate you. Always let them let you know how you're doing. I had a board when I was teaching chorus just for me. It was bloopers. Teacher's bloopers. Every time I made a blooper, I got points. They loved that. Sometimes I would just make mistakes on purpose because I didn't get any points...just kidding. I would say let the students evaluate you. Having said that, I did let the students evaluate me a couple of weeks ago and the key thing was creativity, there's that fun piece, and they want to come to music. It's only 45 minutes. I told you I was in an auditorium, right? The kids literally run and hide because they don't want to leave music. Having that enthusiasm, making it contagious to the students. Children will learn to love what the teacher they love loves. I think they would say I'm fun, fair, and I don't tolerate foolishness. When you walk into my classroom, you're going to be in butterfly position...that means you wings are out and crossed across your shoulders and they may not speak in butterfly position. They know the rules. I only have 1 rule, Heather. That's another thing...rules and procedures...big on procedures, but I only have one rule that trumps everything in the school...obey quickly. That's the rule. If you do what I ask you to do the minute I ask you to do it, we will have no other problems. So they learn that quickly. Being simplistic...simplistic and fair and you'll have a good music class.

I: Well, is there anything else you would like to say about teaching UHP students and your reasons for continuing to do so?

E: My reason is because, Heather, I don't know how to say it, I just can't trust anybody else to give the kids what I know I can give them. Does that make sense to you?

I: It does yeah.

E: I just don't know that they'll get it. Because, say for instance, I mean I have several degrees, and people have asked me, why are you still here, or why are you even here? I'm like, well first of all, it's a calling. God has me here because he leads us where he needs us, so that's primary. But secondly, I know I know what they need and I know I'm placed there for this season of their little lives for whatever the reason, so I just think I'm in the right place at the right time. And in the right time I will be rewarded for the sacrifice, so it's all good. It really is.

I: Well, that's all I have for you. I really appreciate your time and it sounds like you have a great program.

E: Yes, I thank God for it.

I: Thanks so much, take care.

References

- Abril, C. (2006). Teaching music in urban landscapes: three perspectives. In C. Frierson-Campbell (Ed.), *Teaching music in the urban classroom: Volume I*. (pp. 75-98). Lanham, MD: MENC/Rowman & Littlefield Education.
- Benedict, C. (2006). Defining ourselves as other: Envisioning transformative possibilities. In C. Frierson-Campbell (Ed.), *Teaching music in the urban classroom: Volume I*. (pp. 3-13). Lanham, MD: MENC/Rowman & Littlefield Education.
- Bernard, R. (2010). The rewards of teaching music in urban settings. *Music Educators Journal*, 96(3), 53-57.
- Boutelle, J. (2009). *Factors influencing teacher retention in an urban secondary school district* (Doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Digital Dissertations database. (Publication No. AAT 3371189)
- Boutte, G. S. (2012). Urban schools: challenges and possibilities for early childhood and elementary education. *Urban Education*, 47(2), 515-550.
- Brown, D. F. (2003). Urban teachers' use of culturally responsive management strategies. *Theory Into Practice*, 42, 277-284.
- Bruenger, S. (2010). Why select new music teachers chose to, or chose not to, apply to teach in an urban school district. *Journal of Music Teacher Education*, 19(2), 25-40.

- Carey, N. L., & National Center for Education Statistics. (2002). *Arts education in public elementary and secondary schools, 1999-2000*. Washington, DC: U.S. Dept. of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement. Retrieved from <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2002/2002131.pdf>
- Conway, C. (2006). Navigating through induction: How a mentor can help. *Music Educators Journal*, 92(5), 56-60.
- Conway, C. (2008). Experienced music teacher perceptions of professional development throughout their careers. *Bulletin Of The Council For Research In Music Education*, (176), 7-18.
- Costa-Giomi, E. (2004). Effects of three years of piano instruction on children's academic achievement, school performance and self-esteem. *Psychology Of Music*, 32(2), 139-152.
- Costa-Giomi, E. (2008). Characteristics of elementary music programs in urban schools: What money can buy. *Bulletin Of The Council For Research In Music Education*, (177), 19-28.
- Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. W. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry & research design : choosing among five approaches / John W. Creswell*. Thousand Oaks : Sage Publications, c2007.
- Docker, R. K. (2012). *Job satisfaction of experienced and novice music teachers in high-poverty urban public schools*. (Order No. 3534655, The Pennsylvania State University). *ProQuest Dissertations and Theses*, , 190. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/1275924262?accountid=11667>. (1275924262).

- Doyle, J. L. (2012). *The effects of teacher background, teacher preparation, and support on attitudes and expectations of K-12 urban music educators*. (Order No. 3511751, University of Miami). *ProQuest Dissertations and Theses*, , 210. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/1023124306?accountid=11667>. (1023124306).
- Doyle, J. L. (2009). *Music teacher perceptions of issues and problems in urban elementary schools* (Open Access Theses, Paper 185). Retrieved from http://scholarlyrepository.miami.edu/oa_theses/185
- Erskine-Cullen, E., & Sinclair, A. (1996, March 25). Preparing teachers for urban schools: A view from the field. *Canadian Journal of Educational Administration and Policy*, 6.
- Feng, L. (2009). Opportunity wages, classroom characteristics, and teacher mobility, *Southern Economic Journal*, 75(4), 1165-1190.
- Fiese, R. K., & DeCarbo, N. J. (1995). Urban music education: The teachers' perspective. *Music Educators Journal*, 81(6), 27-31.
- Fitzpatrick, K. (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. doi:10.1177/002242940605400106
- Freedman, S. W., & Appleman, D. (2009). In it for the long haul: How teacher education can contribute to teacher retention in high-poverty, urban schools. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 60(3), 323-337.

- Gardner, R. (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. doi:10.1080/10632910903458896
- Grissom, J. A. (2011). Can good principals keep teachers in disadvantaged schools? Linking principal effectiveness to teacher satisfaction and turnover in hard-to-staff environments. *Teachers College Record*, 113(11), 2552-2585.
- Groulx, J. G., & Silva, C. (2010). Evaluating the development of culturally relevant teaching. *Multicultural Perspectives*, 12(1), 3-9.
- Hanushek, E. A., Kain, J. F., & Rivkin, S. G. (2004). The Revolving Door. *Education Next*, 4(1), 76-82.
- Ingersoll, R. M. (2001). Teacher turnover and teacher shortages: An organizational analysis. *American Educational Research Journal*, 38(3), 499-534.
- Jacob, B. A. (2007). The challenges of staffing urban schools with effective teachers. *Future of Children*, 17(1), 129-153.
- Jensen, E. (2009). Teaching with poverty in mind: What being poor does to kids' brains and what schools can do about it. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Johnson, S.M., Berg, J.H., & Donaldson, M.L. (2005). *Who stays in teaching and why: A review of the literature on teacher retention*. Washington, D.C: AARP.
- Jones, P. M. & Eyrich Jr., F. P. (2006). Real-world methods: Preparing future music teachers in today's classrooms. In Frierson-Campbell, C. (Ed.) *Teaching music in the urban classroom: Volume II*. (pp. 81-94). Lanham, Md: Rowman & Littlefield Education.

- Kelly, S. N. (2003). The influence of selected cultural factors on the environmental teaching preference of undergraduate music education majors. *Journal of Music Teacher Education*, 12(2), 40-50.
- Kincheloe, J. L., & Steinberg, S. R. (2007). *Cutting class: socioeconomic status and education / edited by Joe L. Kincheloe and Shirley R. Steinberg*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, c2007.
- Lauer, P. A. (2006). *An education research primer : how to understand, evaluate, and use it / Patricia A. Lauer*. San Francisco, CA : Jossey-Bass, c2006.
- Madsen, C. (Ed.). (2000). *Vision 2020: The Housewright Symposium on the Future of Music Education*. Reston: Music Educators National Conference (MENC).
- Madsen, C., & Hancock, C. (2002). Support for music education: A case study of issues concerning teacher retention and attrition. *Journal Of Research In Music Education*, 50(1), 6-19.
- Milner, H. H. (2011). Culturally Relevant Pedagogy in a Diverse Urban Classroom. *Urban Review*, 43(1), 66-89. doi:10.1007/s11256-009-0143-0
- Nieto, S. (2003). *What keeps teachers going? / Sonia Nieto*. New York : Teachers College Press, c2003.
- Olsen, B., & Anderson, L. (2007). Courses of action: A qualitative investigation into urban teacher retention and career development. *Urban Education*, 42(1), 5-29.
- Pane, D. M. (2010). Viewing classroom discipline as negotiable social interaction: A communities of practice perspective. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 26(1), 87-97.

- Peske, H. G., Haycock, K., & Education Trust, W. C. (2006). Teaching Inequality: How Poor and Minority Students Are Shortchanged on Teacher Quality: A Report and Recommendations by the Education Trust. *Education Trust*.
- Reardon, S. F., & Bischoff, K. (2011). Income inequality and income segregation. *American Journal Of Sociology*, 116(4), 1092-1153.
- Shields, D. J. (2009). Keeping Urban Teachers: A National Necessity. *Schools: Studies In Education*, 6(1), 77-98.
- Simon, K. A. (2013). *Music education in urban america: A demographic report of music teachers in high-poverty urban schools*. (Order No. 3564965, The Florida State University). *ProQuest Dissertations and Theses*, , 149. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/1411921708?accountid=11667>. (1411921708).
- Thiessen, D., & Barrett, J. (2002). Reform-minded music teachers: A more comprehensive image of teaching for music teacher education. In , *Collected Work: The new handbook of research on music teaching and learning: A project of the Music Educators National Conference*. Pages: 759-785. (AN: 2002-22767)
- U.S. Bureau of the Census (2000). *Urban and rural definitions* Retrieved from http://www.census.gov/geo/www/ua/ua_2k.html
- U.S Bureau of the Census. (2011). How the Census Bureau measures poverty. Retrieved from <http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/poverty/about/overview/measure.html>
- U.S. Bureau of the Census. (2014). State and County Quick Facts. Retrieved from <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/index.html#>

U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2002). Digest of education statistics, 2002. Washington, DC: Author.

U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (2007-08).

Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Survey. Common Core of Data.

Retrieved from <http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/ruraled/tables/a.1.s.-2.asp?refer=urban>

U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (2008). *Contexts*

of Elementary and Secondary Education. The Condition of Education 2008.

Retrieved from http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2008/2008031_4.pdf

U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (2010). *High*

Poverty Public Schools. 2010 Spotlight. Retrieved from

<http://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/analysis/2010-section1a.asp>

U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (2014).

Concentration of Public School Students Eligible for Free or Reduced-Price

Lunch. Common Core of Data. Retrieved from

http://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator_clb.asp

U.S. Department of Justice. (2011). *Appendix A. scope and methodology - attorney*

general's report to congress on the growth of violent street gangs in suburban

areas. Retrieved from

<http://www.justice.gov/archive/ndic/pubs27/27612/appenda.htm#Definition>

Virginia Department of Education. (2013). National School Lunch Program (NSLP)

Free and Reduced Price Eligibility Report. Retrieved from

http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/nutrition/statistics/free_reduced_eligibility/2

013-2014/schools/frpe_sch_report_sy2013-14.pdf