The status of middle and high school string orchestra programs in Virginia public schools located in midsized urban settings

Keara Lea Smith
James Madison University

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The Status of Middle and High School String Orchestra Programs in Virginia Public Schools Located in Midsized Urban Settings

Keara Lea Smith

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

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Dedication

In loving memory of Carlester “Precious” White. I dedicate my thesis to my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, my loving parents, family, and friends. I would also like to thank the faculty members who offered support and encouragement during the journey and completion of my thesis.
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Abstract

The majority of literature about teaching in urban settings has focused on the experiences of educators and students in large urban settings (Costa-Giomi, 2008; Fitzpatrick, 2008, 2011), and has been general classroom focused (Elpus & Abril, 2011; Glenn, 2005; McEachin & Brewer, 2012; Young, 2007). A smaller body of literature about teaching music classes in urban settings exists (Kinney, 2010; Bernard, 2010), while less still exists about the status of orchestra programs in urban settings (Fitzpatrick, 2011, Hamann & Gillespie, 1998; Smith, 1997). Little research examines midsize urban educational settings by state, and less still has examined the status of orchestra programs in midsized urban settings in Virginia.

The purpose of this study was to examine the status of middle and high school string orchestra programs in Virginia public schools located in midsized urban settings. String orchestra directors \((N = 30)\) were invited to complete an online survey of 26 questions. Nineteen of the orchestra directors participated. Fifteen participants completed the survey, while four surveys were incomplete. Individual data for study participant’s responses to multiple choice and Likert scale responses were collected, compared and analyzed. Data for free-response questions were transcribed for each individual participant before being grouped according to observable grouped theme categories.

Results of this study suggested participants possessed a high level of training (master’s or doctorate degree), and reported having a high level of job satisfaction. With regard to ethnicity, 87\% \((n = 13)\) of the participants indicated that their own ethnicity was not reflective of the majority ethnicity of the student population with which they worked.
A majority of the participants (66%) indicated that they had experienced some level of difficulty when recruiting students for their school’s orchestra program.

A number of shared themes were identified in the participants’ free response transcriptions. Participants shared the values of showing respect to, caring for, and having high expectations for their students. Respondents emphasized being organized, and having classroom management skills. Other themes included the importance of having adequate and effective teacher preparation; access to instruments and other resources; and the support of parents, administrators, and colleagues.
Chapter 1

Introduction

For many novice, and some experienced orchestra directors, the idea of teaching in an urban setting has often been viewed as a daunting task due to the commonly perceived and documented challenges associated with teaching within these settings. As such, many orchestra teachers may avoid career choices that might lead them to teach in urban settings. Commonly perceived challenges for those teaching in urban settings include, but are not limited to: a lack of adequate resources; highly diverse student populations; and a lack of administrative and parental support. Indeed, research confirms these challenges are common, even though some teachers in urban settings do not experience them.

Background

Due to the existence of the aforementioned challenges, the use of the word “urban” when associated with teaching settings has generally come to be perceived as having negative connotations. The term “urban” in its most basic form is often described as cities with large populations that are racially and economically diverse (McEachin & Brewer, 2012). While every teaching situation whether in an urban or rural setting has its own distinct challenges, many orchestra directors and their students thrive in the context of orchestra classes set in urban settings, while others have negative experiences. Certainly, all students who live in urban settings should have the educational opportunity to take orchestra classes from a qualified orchestra director if they choose to do so as part of their educational experience. However, with the negative connotations that schools in urban settings seem to have acquired, are many orchestra directors inadvertently being
discouraged from the idea of teaching in urban settings without cause? In thinking about this, how much of a role or responsibility should and do teacher preparation programs have in adequately preparing future orchestra teachers to meet such challenges?

**Existing Literature**

The majority of literature on the topic of teaching in urban settings has focused on the experiences of educators and students in large urban settings (Costa-Giomi, 2008; Fitzpatrick, 2008, 2011), and has also been general classroom focused as opposed to being music classroom focused (including instrumental ensembles) (Elpus & Abril, 2011; Glenn, 2005; McEachin & Brewer, 2012; Young, 2007). A smaller body of literature exists in the realm of teaching music classes in urban settings (Bernard, 2010; Kinney, 2010), and less still exists that examines specifically the status of orchestra programs in urban settings (Fitzpatrick, 2011; Hamann & Gillepsie, 1998; Smith, 1997). It is a potential weakness of this whole body of research that the majority of the literature has been specific to examining the teachers, students, schools or programs of large urban settings.

Little research has been conducted specifically in the examination of midsize urban educational settings, especially in the state of Virginia, and very little (if any) of the research that has been undertaken in Virginia has examined the status of orchestra programs in midsized urban settings. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to examine the current status of public school string orchestra programs in midsized urban settings in the state of Virginia.

Within the large body of research literature that exists on the topic of teaching in urban settings, there are a number of clearly identifiable sub-categories. Among the body
of research specific to teaching music in urban settings, one such sub-category has been that of teacher retention and attrition. Madsen and Hancock (2002) found that the music teachers they studied reported that they were leaving the profession due to a lack of administrative and parental support.

The issues of student enrollment and program needs in relation to retention and attrition in urban music programs have also been examined. Schmidt, Baker, Hayes, & Kwan (2006) surveyed 391 teachers from 98 school districts and found that only 16% of the urban school districts included in their study offered string orchestra instruction, and that those schools which offered strings had higher overall student enrollment rates (from within the total school population) compared to the overall student enrollment rates of schools that did not offer string orchestra. Kinney (2010) found that students from urban school settings with high academic achievement were most likely to continue with band instruction rather than other music performance ensemble class choices.

Fitzpatrick (2008, 2011) examined the perceived levels of administrative support and related reported teacher satisfaction for music teachers in urban settings. The music teachers surveyed reported having relatively positive levels of job satisfaction. Another finding of these studies was that the majority of the subjects surveyed tended to agree that a specialized set of skills were needed to be successful at teaching music in an urban setting.

As previously mentioned, a number of music focused studies have examined the overall status of music programs in urban schools. The sorts of characteristics that these studies examined included issues pertaining to student enrollment retention, size of programs, and student and teacher demographics. Specifically, Hamann and Gillespie
(1998) examined the needs of school orchestra programs and found that 78% of the participants in their research study experienced an increase in the size of student enrollment in their orchestra programs over a five-year period. In an earlier study, Smith (1997) investigated the number of districts in the United States that offered string instruction and found that only 15.9% of school districts offered string instruction. In a similar study, Alexander and Smith (2008) examined the growth of string programs and found that the number of string orchestra programs in the United States had increased to 29% (almost twice as many) 11 years later, and that 24.6% of these programs were located in urban settings.

Hartley and Porter (2009) investigated variables that contributed to the starting grade level of orchestra programs and found that starting grade level for students contributed to retention rates in music programs. Costa-Giomi’s (2008) investigation of the status of music education in elementary schools of a large urban setting in Texas also contributed greatly to the body of literature existing on the topic of music classes in urban settings. Results suggested that schools in Texas with a lower number of minorities and a smaller proportion of economically disadvantaged students had more adequate facilities and instructional resources, more parental support, and greater access to external funding than schools with a high number of minorities and a larger proportion of economically advantaged students.

Another useful source of information when investigating the topic of teaching in urban settings is that of historical literature, which uses existing collections of descriptive data to provide a basis for comparison of past, current, and potential future trends. McEachin and Brewer (2012) and Rury (2012) both found that the urban school systems
from the states they examined once served as models for all school districts within the state, and that economic inequality had taken a toll on the overall status of the urban school districts they examined.

In contrast to the body of research-based studies that exist on the topic of teaching in urban settings, there also exists a healthy presence of pedagogically-based articles specific to the topic, many of which incorporate data taken from existing research studies. One issue addressed within the pedagogical literature realm includes the perceived rewards of teaching music in urban settings (Bernard, 2010), and teaching diverse student populations (Paluck, 2006; Sheldon & Etzel, 2003; Young, 2007).

Another issue addressed by both Paluck (2006) and Young (2007) in the pedagogical literature is the importance and need for culturally responsive pedagogy training for future teachers during their college studies due to the challenges of working with diverse populations when teaching in urban settings. Likewise, Sheldon and Etzel (2003) acknowledged the need for pre-service training specific to teaching in urban settings for all future educators, including the skill of grant writing. Out of these four pedagogically-based studies, Bernard (2010), Paluck (2006) and Sheldon and Etzel (2003) were music educators and Young (2007) was a general educator.

**Justification for Research**

As previously mentioned, the status of string orchestra programs has been examined by researchers in the context of public school systems within large cities, but there is little or no research specific to the status of programs in midsize cities. This area of research is worth further study because of the difference in population sizes between large and midsized urban settings, which could ultimately lead to the misappropriation of
different findings and therefore implications that might not be transferrable between the two different settings. On a practical level, children, teachers, and the state of music education could benefit from the findings of a study specific to midsize urban orchestra programs, such as the one that is the basis of this thesis. Addressing and exploring this topic could potentially lead to more musical satisfaction for children, better job satisfaction for teachers, and the suppression of the negative connotation sometimes associated with teaching in urban schools.

While little research has been undertaken that is specific to teaching string orchestra in a midsized urban setting, a number of researchers have investigated the status of string orchestra programs offered in school districts throughout the United States. Smith (1997) found that less than a quarter of schools in the United States offered string instruction during the 1994-1995 school year. Hamann and Gillespie (1998) gathered data about string orchestra programs in the United States and found that the majority of string orchestra programs existed in larger suburban school districts, and that less than half of the programs were located in urban districts.

The aforementioned research study (Hamann and Gillespie, 1998) and related resulting white papers had been initiated by the American String Teachers Association as a means by which to show the need for building orchestra programs in the public schools. Ten years later, Alexander and Smith (2008) undertook a similar study and found that fewer string programs were offered in the United States than had previously been found by Hamann and Gillespie (1998), but that there was still a reported teacher shortage.

The socioeconomic status of students and surrounding neighborhoods has been frequently discussed when addressing the status of the type of students who attend urban
schools. Smith (1997) reported that of those string programs included in her study, the majority existed more often in average socioeconomic level, medium-sized districts located near large cities, and least often in low socioeconomic level districts. Costa-Giomi (2008) found that over half of the students who participated in an elementary school music program located in a large urban district in Texas were classified as economically disadvantaged. Fitzpatrick (2008, 2011) found that majority of the participating instrumental music teachers employed by Chicago Public Schools were unsatisfied with the financial support and funding of their music programs.

Commonly reported issues associated with urban music programs throughout the United States such as a lack of resources and instrument repairs have affected the overall satisfaction of music teachers who teach in these settings. Such issues have also presented further challenges for music teachers teaching in urban settings as they continue to seek to do their jobs well, and in doing so they find that they need to fulfill a wider range of responsibilities than perhaps they were prepared for during their teacher preparation. Young (2007) provided a list of responsibilities that are expected of teachers who teach in urban settings:

(a) Provide a variety of instruction to meet content area, individualized, and group needs;
(b) Facilitate, monitor, record, assess, and evaluate the learning goals of each child.
(c) Manage classroom actions and activities.
(d) Handle the needs of students (physical, behavioral, emotional, mental, social, cultural, racial, ethnic, and linguistic).
(e) Walk in the shoes of the children (Young, 2007, p. 109).

On a more positive note, Bernard (2010) drew attention to the rewards of teaching in an urban setting by gathering stories from music teachers who worked in two large cities in the northeastern region of the United States. The teachers involved in this study reported that they received benefits from working with students in urban settings that they would not normally experience in suburban or rural settings. The most common reward reported by the teachers in the study was that of building relationships with their students, and helping to make their students feel valued and respected.

**Purpose of Study and Research Questions**

The findings of the majority of the previously mentioned literature reviewed for this study were specific to large urban settings. While some of the characteristics and purposes of a large urban educational setting are transferable and generalizable to a midsize urban setting, the fact remains that data specific to midsized urban educational settings are unique. The data acquired from the current study should be viewed as a reliable source for making future recommendations to all programs, including orchestra programs that are a part of the school environment located in a midsized urban setting.

Therefore, the purpose of this study was to examine the status of middle and high school string orchestra programs in public schools located in midsized urban settings in the state of Virginia. To accomplish this purpose, a survey containing questions specific to teacher and student demographics, music program information, and teacher skills and training was sent via email to string orchestra directors (N = 30) from five school districts in midsized urban settings in the state of Virginia. This study attempted to examine and
describe the current status of midsized urban string programs through the use of multiple-choice, Likert scale, and free-response questions.

This study sought to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the key characteristics of string orchestra programs in Virginia public schools located in midsized urban settings (e.g., student diversity, availability of instrument repair and resources, administrative and parental support)?

2. What role, if any, does ethnicity play in the status of string orchestra programs in midsized urban settings? Specifically, what are the ethnicities of students and teachers involved in orchestra in midsized urban settings, and does ethnicity affect instruction?

3. How does recruitment and retention affect the size of string orchestra programs within midsized urban settings? Specifically, what issues contribute to the success or lack thereof in building orchestra programs in these settings?

4. What specialized set of skills is needed for orchestra teachers to be successful when teaching within the context of a midsized urban setting? Specifically, how do these skills vary based on years of experience, and what are the implications for teacher preparation programs?

Limitations of the Study

Seven school districts in the state of Virginia were identified for being suitable for inclusion in this study based on the demographically-based definition of midsize urban districts found on two different education websites. Both the National Center for Education Statistics (2000) and the Department of Education (2014) websites described a midsize city as the “territory inside an urbanized area and inside a principal city with a
population less than 250,000 and greater than or equal to 100,000.” From those identified as matching the required demographic characteristics of the midsized urban setting, two of the seven districts did not have string programs. Therefore, a total of five school districts within the state of Virginia were included in this study. Once the midsized urban school districts with orchestra programs had been identified, the researcher began collecting orchestra director information for the middle and high school orchestra directors within each district.

As the names and email addresses of potential participants were not included on an accessible list, some contact information could only be acquired by looking at each school’s individual website. To ensure that the names that were obtained from the school websites were accurate, a list was sent to the Virginia Band and Orchestra Directors Association representative for each region included from the original master list of schools who had been contacted individually for this purpose.

Definitions

For the purposes of this study, the following terms will be defined as:

**Urban.** An area with a dense population of at least 2,500 for urban clusters, or at least 50,000 for urbanized areas (United States Census Bureau, 2006a). Characteristics often include, but are not limited to diverse populations, varied socioeconomic statuses, and a limited budget.

**Midsize urban city.** The territory inside an urbanized area and inside a principal city with a population less than 250,000 and greater than or equal to 100,000. Urban cities range from “small” (50,000 – 100,000) to “large” (250,000 or more) (National Center for Education Statistics, 2000) and (Department of Education, 2014).
**Status.** The current standing of and key characteristics attributed to an organization’s, person/people’s, or thing’s place in a “society” of similar entities.
Chapter 2

Review of Literature

While some of the existing literature on the topic of urban education has examined the role of music education in such settings, the majority of literature related to urban education has examined the topic from a general education perspective. Despite this, a small portion of the literature does focus on the role and status of string orchestra education in urban settings, and indeed is vital when attempting to determine specific background and program information about orchestra programs in the United States. The existence of this knowledge specific to orchestra programs in large urban settings highlights the fact that there is a further void in the existing literature and research specific to string orchestra programs in midsized urban settings.

The existing research-based literature and pedagogically-based articles related to the topic of urban education have examined a number of sub-topics relevant to the issue. These include: articles written from a historical perspective; articles that have examined the issues of recruitment and retention of students and teachers in urban settings; and teacher preparation, years of experience, and job satisfaction issues. This body of literature provides an excellent source of background information for those wanting to explore and gain greater insight into the status of string orchestra programs within midsized urban middle and high schools.

Historical Background of Urban Schools

As previously mentioned, it is imperative to study the historical progression of schools within urban settings in order to gain better prospective of the past and present status of urban schools. Rury (2012) provided an extensive historical background of the development of urban education:
Urban schools are widely believed to represent the most vexing problems in American education today. Just the mention of urban education can conjure images of disorder, discipline issues, and low academic achievement. Middle-class urbanites often send their children to private institutions…to avoid the city schools, which are seen as serving students left with no alternatives (p. 8).

This recent statement contrasts greatly with much earlier views of schools in urban settings.

Approximately fifty years ago, urban school systems were seen as ideal educational models, especially in large cities. Consequently, they received better quality resources than their smaller counterparts due to their large size. Another attractive feature about urban schools at this time was that historically, they also offered a wider range of courses and specialized programs than most other schools. Teachers in urban schools were also paid more than teachers who worked in other settings, which resulted in the presence of more experienced educators in urban schools.

During the 1960’s minorities began to migrate into urban areas, and schools located in urban environments which then became highly segregated. The tax base of these school systems then began to decline as the resulting movement of non-minorities into suburban neighborhoods occurred. By the 1970’s, urban schools faced budget cuts, and the ethnicity of the student populations of those schools then became mostly African American or Hispanic.

The combination of ethnical segregation, and the declining tax base resulted in an increase of disadvantaged children attending schools located in urban settings. Educators were expected to teach effectively despite the lack of adequate resources. In addition,
they required the skills necessary to educate a diverse population of students due to the recent immigration. Since then, many efforts to reform the urban education situation have occurred and continue to challenge the educational system. Regardless, in order for all students to receive a quality education the issue as a whole - social and economic - must be examined in order for the state of urban education to be improved and educational inequalities addressed.

**Description of Urban Schools**

The demographic data of schools located in urban settings (like those in suburban and rural settings) details information specific to population size, geographic location, economic issues, and ethnicities, to name a few. McEachin and Brewer (2012) described urban centers as “areas of densely packed racial and economically diverse populations” (p. 68). Los Angeles, New York City, Detroit, Atlanta, and Chicago were used by the authors to illustrate examples of well-known cities that fit the aforementioned description.

Urban areas also experience higher poverty rates than suburban areas. Approximately 13.9% of urban residents were below the poverty line in 2006. The researchers found that urban schools often received teachers that were less experienced and less qualified. Some of these teachers experienced difficulties while teaching in urban settings and have reportedly left for more appealing schools. Experienced teachers have used their seniority to avoid difficult positions within urban settings. This has led to the pairing of inexperienced teachers with disadvantaged students resulting in higher teacher attrition rates.
Status of Urban Music Programs

The status of string orchestra programs has been examined in a variety of studies, beginning with the number of string programs in the United States. Smith (1997) investigated the number of school districts in each state that offered string instruction and at which grade levels. The following questions were addressed:

(1) What is the current relationship between access to string instruction and school-district location, size and socioeconomic level?

(2) How does access vary by school type—elementary, middle, high school?

(3) How does access vary in different regions of the country (Smith, 1997, p. 652)?

The method included data collection from state departments of education (from 18 states), reports from six state music education associations, and mail-outs and phone calls to individual school districts in 26 states. The researcher also used Market Data Retrieval School Directories (1994-1995) to obtain socioeconomic (SES) rankings and population data for the school districts. The following percentages were used to determine the SES ranking of each district: (1) low – 25+%; (2) average – 5 to 24.9%; and (3) high – 0 to 4.9%. School district size was classified as follows: (1) small - fewer than 2,500 students; (2) medium -2,500 to 9,999 students; and (3) large -10,000+ students. The location classifications were obtained from A Guide to State and Local Census Geography. The populations were classified as follows: (1) rural - fewer than 2,500 people; (2) urban – 2,500 to 49,999 people; and (3) metropolitan – 50,000+ people.

The researcher used chi-square comparisons, Pearson Product-Moment correlations, and multiple-regression analyses to analyze the data. The findings of this study indicated that 15.9% \((N = 2,258)\) of the school districts in the United States offered
string orchestra instruction during the 1994-1995 school year. The following groups are listed from largest to smallest: Eastern Division \((n = 1,070)\) out of 3,055 districts; North Central Division \((n = 592)\) out of 4,380 districts; the Southwestern Division \((n = 196)\) out of 3,024 districts; the Western Division \((n = 154)\) out of 1,271 districts; the Southern Division \((n = 152)\) out of 1,311 districts; and the Northwest Division \((n = 104)\) out of 1,142 districts.

When comparing the results of this study to the 1992 National Endowment study, there was a noticeable decline in the number of school districts offering string orchestra classes from 1989 to 1994. String orchestra classes were offered most often in the Northeastern region of the country, and least often in the Northwest region. Orchestra was also offered more often in districts located near large cities, rather than rural districts. Urban areas consisted of 2,500 to 50,000 people (63.8%); metropolitan areas had more than 50,000 (25.8%); and rural areas had less than 2,500 people (10.4%). The percentages for total offerings by socioeconomic statuses are as follows: (1) average SES level (63.5%); (2) high SES level (32.1%); and (3) low SES level (4.4%). The results indicated that string orchestra classes were offered most in average SES level, medium-sized districts located near large cities, and least often in low SES districts.

Hamann and Gillespie (1988) gathered data about string orchestra programs by means of a survey in order to determine the needs of school string programs in the United States. String teachers from school orchestra programs throughout the United States served as participants, and completed a 44-question survey that they had received by traditional mail service. Survey questions asked for responses specific to information
about the following: student enrollment; teacher profile; type of school district; and type of instruction.

The survey was divided into six topic areas as follows: (1) the types of schools with orchestra programs; (2) the organization of school orchestra programs; (3) the orchestra curriculum; (4) the type of students involved in orchestra classes; (5) the music studied; and (6) the types of people teaching orchestra. Participants were chosen from a list created in 1992 that contained 9,415 schools throughout all 50 states. The researchers used random sampling to select one out of every seven schools from the list (N = 1,345).

A total of 652 completed surveys from 44 states were returned, yielding a return rate of approximately 51%. The results of the first category, “schools with orchestra programs,” reflected that respondents had reported that 53% of their elementary schools had less than 500 students, that 59% of the middle schools in their school district 500 to 1,000 students, and that the high schools in the school district had more than 1,000 students. The results indicated that the majority of the schools with orchestra programs in the United States were located as follows: 56% suburban; 30% urban; and 14% rural.

Thirty-one percent of the respondents reported that they did not use their school district’s curriculum for instructional planning or evaluation of student achievement.

The “orchestra curriculum” section of the survey suggested that about half of the participants taught full orchestra at either middle and/or high school. The teachers who were surveyed reported that they also taught band, guitar, general music, chamber orchestra, and choir. In the “orchestra students” section of the survey, participants reported that the number of string students in their program had increased within the prior
five years. Seventy-three percent of the middle school teachers surveyed, and 78% of the
surveyed high school teachers reported an increase in the number of string students.

Seventy-four percent of the participants’ beginning students continued with their
instrumental studies after their first year of string orchestra instruction. The results also
indicated that 70% of the orchestra directors’ students successfully made the transition
from the elementary to middle school orchestra programs in their school districts, and
that 71% of these students then continued their orchestra studies into high school. The
participants also reported that the ethnicities of all of the students involved in orchestra
participation in their programs combined were as follows: 73% white; 9.6% African-
American; 8.16% Hispanic; and .04% Native American.

The section of the survey dealing with questions about “orchestra music”
reflected that the orchestra directors had a mean school budget of $720 per year. The final
section of the survey which addressed questions specific to the “orchestra teacher
profile,” revealed that there were more women than men teaching string orchestra.
Results from this section also indicated that the orchestra teachers surveyed were
typically white and most held a master’s degree. Seventy-two percent of the teachers
surveyed had been teaching for ten or more years, and 17% of them had taught for five
years or less.

Schmidt et. al (2006) investigated public school music curricula in general music,
choral, band, and string programs within the state of Indiana. Program characteristics
were determined based on the examination of school demographic characteristics such as
enrollment, the percentage of minority students, and the percentage of students receiving
free lunches. A random sample of Indiana Public School Districts was selected (N = 98)
from an existing list of school districts in the 2004-2005 Indiana Directory of Music Teachers. The Indiana State Department of Education website was used to obtain demographic data for the selected schools. The researchers then developed a survey instrument by participants for each of their specialized areas music teaching (e.g., general music, choir, band, and orchestra). The participants were mailed a copy of each survey and were asked to respond to the respective survey(s) that correlated to the classes that they taught.

In the survey questions, the researchers requested information specific to the number of grade levels taught in a given area, and teaching load information (i.e., the number of students currently taught) for each class taught. Participants were also asked to provide information concerning: the number of ensembles they taught within each music class category; the number of minutes of class instructional time each week; the number of participants in each ensemble; and the approximate number of performances held in the program per year.

The results for the orchestra-specific surveys indicated that 16.3% of the 98 school districts sampled offered string instruction. Schools that offered string instruction had larger student enrollments than those without string instruction. Of these schools, the mean percentage of students receiving free lunches was 21.93%. The mean percentage of Caucasian students enrolled in the schools was 83.17%. The sample of orchestra directors surveyed ($N = 30$) had a mean of 16.03 years of teaching experience, and the average string teaching load was 69.7 students per class. Rehearsal time per week for high school level string orchestras reflected a mean of 267 minutes. Over 90% of the participating orchestras received a first division rating, suggesting that even though orchestra programs
were small in the state the state of Indiana that the majority of the orchestra programs were of strong quality.

In a more recent study, Alexander and Smith (2008) collected information about the growth of orchestra programs in the United States as part of an ongoing series of white paper research studies initiated by the American String Teachers Association. This research addressed the characteristics of orchestra programs, and the profiles of those teaching in them. A questionnaire was emailed to a pre-existing list of 8,766 school string orchestra directors. The 104 question questionnaire focused on the following four areas: (1) program characteristics; (2) program support, curriculum, and funding; (3) staffing and hiring practices; and (4) student and teacher characteristics. Seven hundred and ninety-four surveys were completed over a three-week period.

Results suggested that 29% of school districts in the United States had string orchestra programs. When the participants were asked to identify the type of school system they currently taught in, 13.9% of respondents indicated that they taught in schools located in rural areas, while 61.4% of participants reported that they taught in a suburban school setting, and 24.6% of the orchestra teachers reported that they taught in an urban setting. Participants were also asked to report whether or not their enrollment had decreased, increased, or stayed about the same during the 2003 to 2008 time period. At the middle school level, 13.5% of the orchestra directors who participated in the study reported a decrease in their student enrollment numbers, while 37.9% of participants reported an increase in the size of their programs. A total of 23.2% of the participants reported that the size of their program had remained relatively constant throughout the time period, and 25.4% of the subjects did not respond to this question.
At the high school level, 9.9% of the participants reported that they had observed a decrease in the size of their programs during the 2003-2008 time period, while 29.2% of the respondents reported an increase in the size of their programs. A further 18.3% of the participants reported that the size of their programs had remained constant, while 42.6% of the orchestra directors did not respond to this question. Almost half (47.6%) of the participants reported a slight increase in the number of string orchestra teaching positions during the five year time period encompassed by the study, while 3.3% of participants reported a large increase in the number of positions created. Conversely, almost a third of the participants (29%) reported a slight decrease in the number of orchestra teaching positions in their school districts, while a much smaller percentage (6%) reported a large decrease in the number of positions available. A small percentage of participants (4.1%) did not respond to this question.

With regard to the topic of funding, almost half (46.5%) of the participants indicated that their program funding had decreased slightly during the 2003-2008 time period, while 17% of the participants reported a large decrease in their program funding during this time. On a positive note, almost a third of participants (27.5%) reported a slight increase in the amount of funding received by their orchestra program during the 2003-2008 time period, while 4.2% of participants reported a large increase in the amount of funding their programs received. Only 4.7% of participants did not respond to this question.

**Demographics of Students in Urban Schools**

Demographic information specific to ethnicity, gender, and socioeconomic status have contributed to the process of informing researchers about the status and
characteristics of music programs within urban settings. Elpus and Abril (2011) sought to construct a national demographic profile of high school band, choir, and orchestra students in the United States using evidence from the 2004 follow-up study of an Educational Longitudinal Study originally undertaken by the United States government in 2002. Data were collected from parents, school building administrators, math and English teachers, and school librarians from 750 schools throughout the country. The researchers used a non-random, probabilistic sampling procedure to also select 25 students from the 2002 tenth-grade class roster to participate in the study. Hispanic and Asian students were intentionally oversampled in order to ensure adequate representation of all ethnicities, due to low percentages. The three variables examined in this study were based on the following criteria:

(1) theoretical relevance to this study; (2) significance of the variable or the construct represented by the variable as a correlate of music study in prior research; and (3) usefulness in accurately describing the subset of United States high school students who opted to participate in a school music ensemble (Elpus & Abril, 2011, p. 131).

The results of this study indicated that only 21% of American high school seniors participated in band, choir, and/or orchestra in 2004. Sixty-one percent of the students who participated in these groups were female. The ethnic make-up of the student population was as follows: White (65.7%); Black (15.2); Hispanic (10.2%); Multiracial (4.3%); Asian (3.8%); and American Indian/Alaskan Native (0.7%). English as a primary language students made up 90.4% of the total student population, while primary language Spanish speakers made up 4.4% of the student population, and 2% of the student
population’s primary language was of Pacific and/or Asian heritage. The socioeconomic statuses of the students were as follows: highest quartile (32.2%); third quartile (27.8); second quartile (23%); and lowest SES quartile (17%). Seventy-nine percent of the students came from a two-parent/guardian home, and 20.6% of the students lived in a single-parent/guardian home.

The results of this study showed that there was statistical significance in the associations between gender and music participation, and between race/ethnicity and ensemble participation. The results indicated that White students were overrepresented in the study, which contributed to the association between race/ethnicity and music ensemble participation. Conversely, Hispanic students were significantly underrepresented.

Costa-Giomi (2008) investigated the status of music education in the elementary schools of a large urban setting in Texas, and explored possible inequalities in access to music education resources based on the race and socioeconomic characteristics of the student population. Seventy-five elementary music teachers from one of largest and most diverse urban districts in the state of Texas were invited to complete a questionnaire consisting of questions specific to music teachers, their music program, and the perceptions of the music teachers about their school’s characteristics. Fifty-four music teachers completed the survey, yielding a response rate of seventy percent.

The large school district that was studied as part of the survey process served almost 80,000 students. Within this large student body, the researcher reported that minorities represented 71% of the total student population, and that 53% percent of the total number of students in the school district was considered economically
disadvantaged. The schools included in the study were classified into three economic status (ES) groups according to the number of economically disadvantaged (ED) students included in their student population. The group percentages were as follows: high ES (20% - 53.5%); ED students, medium ES (55% - 89%); and ED students, and low ES (90% - 98%).

Two Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) tests were used to analyze interval and ratio data. The first ANOVA was based on the economic classification of the schools, and the second was based on the racial classifications of the students attending the schools. Chi-squared tests were used to analyze nominal and ordinal data. Two tables were drawn to represent these data - one based on economic-status, and the other based on the minority representations of students.

The results of this study suggested that schools with a lower number of minority students, and a smaller proportion of economically disadvantaged students had more adequate facilities and instructional resources, more parental support, and greater access to external funding than schools with higher numbers of minorities and a larger proportion of economically advantaged students. Costa-Giomi (2008) further found that schools with a low proportion of minority students had twice as many students with disabilities, which could be attributable to the high quality of resources and funding available for these schools. While music teachers from schools of high economic status reported that they had the support of 70% of parents, they reported that a lack of parental support in the areas of fundraising. Sixty-one percent of parents from schools located in high economic status areas volunteered, while no parental volunteerism was reported for the parents from schools situated in low economic status areas. There were no significant
differences discovered in the teacher portion of the survey. The only minor difference that existed between teachers who taught in high versus low economic status schools was related to the supervision of student teachers.

It has been a common practice for American universities to place student teachers into successful programs during their student teaching semester, which in this study, might account for the teachers who reported that they hosted student teachers in their programs. Half of the music teachers from economically disadvantaged schools reported receiving district administrative support, while only three of the teachers reported having no support from their administration. The researcher also found that more music teachers from schools located in low SES areas reported having a more supportive administration than music teachers whose schools were associated with students from other SES backgrounds. Costa-Giomi (2008) recommended that there should be future exploration of how student outcomes and teacher effectiveness differ among schools of contrasting socioeconomic statuses.

**Student Enrollment**

Music programs within urban settings have commonly been perceived as having low enrollment rates due to factors such as a lack of resources, and a lack of administrative and parental support. Abeles (2004) examined student interest in instrumental music instruction through the influence of three orchestra and school partnerships. The researcher’s secondary purpose was to increase students’ interest in participating in an orchestra program. The participants included second through fourth grade students at partnership and non-partnership schools. Partnership one consisted of five elementary schools in a large city in the northeastern region of the United States. This partnership was designed to nurture the talents of participating students. One second
grade classroom at each of the five participating schools were offered the opportunity to play violin in an in-school, modified Suzuki program. The students were provided with instruments and instruction once a week.

Partnership two was located in another large northeastern city and was designed to provide information about musical instruments to third and fourth grade students to increase their interest in learning to play an instrument. The following resources were provided for double classrooms of 40 to 60 students to accomplish these goals: (1) in-school auditorium performances of a chamber orchestra for audiences of 300-500 students; and (2) chamber music programs (e.g., string quartets, violin duos, woodwind quintets) which include performances of repertoire, instrument demonstrations, discussions, and participatory activities. The third partnership consisted of a collaboration between a group of five urban and suburban elementary schools, and an orchestra in a large city in the Midwest region of the United States. This partnership was designed to serve students in kindergarten through grade five. Its purpose was to assist general classroom teachers (non-music teachers) with the integration of music into the curriculum, and to help students gain a fundamental knowledge of orchestra instruments and orchestral repertory.

The results suggested that partnership students selected being a musician as a vocation more frequently than non-partnership students. There was also a significant difference in the percentage of music vocational choices amongst all groups. The Pearson Chi-square test was used to indicate that the pattern of music vocational choices across the groups was significantly different. The differences were further examined by contrasting the data with the comparison group data from the same city. The results
indicated that students in all four partnerships differed significantly in the frequency that they chose a music icon from the parallel comparison group.

The researcher collected additional data from fifth-grade students at the end of the school year. A survey was given to 485 students who consisted of 273 students from the Partnership 3 schools, and 212 students from two non-partnership schools. Approximately 22% of the Partnership 3 students surveyed took instrumental music lessons at their school, while 12.3% of students at the non-partnership schools took lessons at their school. A chi-square analysis of this difference indicated that it was statistically significant.

Kinney (2010) aimed to “fit theoretical models of prediction to students’ decisions to enroll and persist in urban middle school band programs using independent variables of academic achievement, SES, family structure, mobility, ethnicity, and gender” (p. 334). The researcher hoped that a detailed examination of socioeconomic status (SES), academic achievement, ethnicity, parental involvement, and participation in secondary school music programs would assist music educators in developing improved recruiting and retention strategies for students.

The participants were from a Midwestern metropolitan area with a population of 409,764 for the year 2006. Within this area, the median annual household income was $28,730, and approximately 19.2% of the population received an income that was considered as being below the poverty line. From this area, the researcher identified and selected for further study two middle schools that were considered by the state department of education as “in need of improvement” due to inadequate yearly progress on state proficiency tests for two consecutive years. These two schools were purposefully
chosen because of their similarities in demographics and achievement test scores. The same band director was employed at both of the schools, which minimized teacher effects on recruiting and retention. With the assistance of the school’s district curriculum specialist and data analyst, the researcher was able to access a database containing student demographic information and achievement test scores.

The district selected for inclusion in the study did not measure academic achievement in seventh-grade, thus only sixth and eighth-grade academic information was used in this study. The sample size consisted of sixth graders ($n = 402$) and eighth graders ($n = 340$). Sixty-nine of the sixth graders (17.2%) were enrolled in band. Of those students enrolled in band, their ethnicities were as follows: White, 67.7%; African American, 23.6%; Hispanic, 1.5%; and multiracial, 7.2%. The sixth grade band students consisted of 47% male students, and 53% female students. Fifty (14.7%) of the 8th grade students were enrolled in band. Their ethnicities were as follows: White, 67.4%; African American, 25.3%; Hispanic, 1.2%; and multiracial, 6.2%. The eighth grade band population was made up of 52.1% male students and 47.9% female students.

In order to calculate the results of this study, the researcher implemented two models using logistic regression analysis techniques. One model predicted initial enrollment and the other predicted retention. The results suggested that students with high academic achievement, and those from two parent or two guardian homes were most likely to begin and continue in band instruction. This finding remained consistent for female students and those from a higher SES. Results also indicated that SES was a significant predictor of enrollment for eighth-grade students rather than for sixth-grade students, which suggested that although it may have been a factor that affected retention,
socioeconomic status does not necessarily influence student enrollment. Contrary to popular belief and misconception, Alexander and Smith (2008) found that enrollment in string orchestra at the middle and high school level mostly increased from 2005 to 2008.

**Student Retention and Attrition**

After exploring the factors and rate of student enrollment, literature related to the retention and attrition of students could potentially assist with the characterization of string orchestra programs in urban settings. Hartley and Porter (2009) investigated three primary variables concerning the starting grade level of beginning string instruction in public schools. The variables included initial enrollment, retention data for both the end of the first year and at the seventh-grade year of instruction, and music performance level in the seventh grade. Secondary variables included the schedule of instruction, the classification of the “decision makers,” with regard to music instruction, the grade-level organization, and whether or not students had access to private lessons.

Teacher names, schools, and addresses were obtained by the researchers from MTD Marketing, Incorporated. The survey was then sent to 556 elementary, middle, and junior high school orchestra teachers. It consisted of 12 basic questions that were aimed to determine starting grade level of string instruction, schedule of instruction, school district building organization, school location demographics, initial enrollment, and retention information. One hundred and seventy two elementary, middle, and junior high school string teachers responded to the survey. The final total number of usable surveys was 166. Retention data were self-reported by respondents in this study, but were not verified by school officials.

To compare the performance achievement levels between the string orchestra programs included in this study, eight school string orchestras were chosen to perform
while being recorded and judged. The school orchestras were chosen based on the following criteria: (a) student instruction began earlier than the seventh grade; (b) the directors of the orchestras had agreed to participate in the study; and (c) the schools involved were located within a reasonable driving distance of the researcher. The researcher made personal visits and field recordings of 22 different middle school string orchestras. The overall performance ratings were used to compare performance achievement levels and starting grade levels. Data specific to private lesson instruction were also collected.

Results suggested that there were no statistically significant differences among the percentages of eligible students who enrolled in orchestra, and the grade levels at which they began instruction. The researcher analyzed initial enrollment by using a chi-square test. The results of the chi-square analysis indicated a higher retention rate for students who had begun their string instruction in seventh grade orchestra classes, than for students who had begun their string instrument instruction in later start grades. A retention rate of 60% or better was reported by 31% of the orchestra directors whose students began instruction in the fourth-grade. Retention rates were 72% for students beginning orchestra classes in the fifth-grade, and 94% for students beginning orchestra instruction in the sixth-grade.

**Teacher Preparation and Experience**

While high student enrollment and retention can contribute to the success of a string orchestra program, the amount and quality of teacher preparation and experience has also been found to contribute both to the success of the program, and that of the teacher – especially those working in an urban setting. Most teacher preparation programs have found it a challenge to include additional training specific to teaching in
urban settings in their curricula because of the large amount of existing courses required as part of their standard degree requirements. Madsen and Hancock (2002) suggested that music teachers who received training from a less than adequate teacher education program were most likely to leave the profession.

Young (2007) suggested that general teacher education programs should provide training on how to adequately teach students of diverse ethnicities. The researcher drew attention to the various skills and aspirations that are required to be successful as a teacher in an urban school setting while emphasizing the importance of ethnicity and culture. The purpose of this article was to determine whether exposure to the combination of critical pedagogy and culturally responsive pedagogy would help in the development of educators who could teach children who are culturally and linguistically diverse. As part of this process, the researcher broke down the multiple responsibilities that teachers are expected to successfully meet as follows:

(a) provide a variety of instruction to meet content area, individualized, and group needs, (b) facilitate, monitor, record, assess, and evaluate the learning goals of each child, (c) manage classroom actions and activities, (d) handle the needs of students (physical, behavioral, emotional, mental, social, cultural, racial, ethnic, and linguistic), (e) and walk in the shoes of the children (Young, 2007, p. 109).

Pre-service teachers \(N = 158\) enrolled in the education program at a state university on the west coast with a population of 33,000 students served as subjects in this study. The ethnic percentages of the pre-service teachers who participated in this study were as follows: White, 87%; Latino American, 7%; African American, 2%; Asian American, 2%; and Other, 2%. On the first (pre-course) and last (post-course) day of the
class that had been designed for the purposes of this study, the pre-service teachers were administered an open-ended question, “What does it mean to think outside the box?” During the time period in which subjects attended the course (spring, 2000 to summer, 2001), 158 responses were collected. Critical Discourse Analysis was used to analyze the data. The researcher examined the responses and developed the following four “thematic structures”: (1) single-dimensional perspective; (2) bi-dimensional perspective; (3) multidimensional perspective; and (4) metamorphosis (Young, 2007, 106).

The findings of the pre-course test suggested that pre-service general education teachers needed to develop a more culturally responsive and critically conscious knowledge about themselves and other people. After the post-course test, the researcher implied that the pre-service teachers had transformed into transformative teachers and discovered their “ah ha” moment, meaning that the pre-service teachers felt more comfortable with their ability to be able to better identify and meet the needs of students from a variety of ethnical backgrounds.

Paluck (2006) also provided guidelines for orchestra teachers to use when working with diverse student populations. Paluck taught at a school in an urban neighborhood located in Rochester, New York where African-American and Hispanic students comprised 61.2% and 23.1% of the total student population, respectively. The orchestra program at this school was revived in 1997 after being eliminated about 30 years previously, and the principal at the school was eager to establish a model. Before a model was designed for the string program, Louis Bergonzi proposed three guiding principles for the school.
1. We must nurture protective processes so that children can succeed; we do this by changing systems, structures, and beliefs within schools and communities.

2. We must recognize that the learning process is long-term and developmental.

3. We must adopt an asset model rather than a deficit model (i.e., we must view these children as having strengths and being resilient as opposed to having weaknesses and being at risk) (p. 66).

Stephen Benham was recruited to assist with the administrative duties and group instruction. With the help of Bergonzi and Benham, seven tenets were proposed to contribute to the model of the school string orchestra program.

1. Work with families.
2. Make connections to greater community.
3. Use multi-age instructional grouping.
4. Include one-to-one relationship with adult (not necessarily a parent).
5. Encourage peer support/approval for individual achievement.
6. Allow and foster help-seeking behaviors.
7. Keep learning experiential and authentic (p. 67).

The string orchestra program at the school involved in this study focused on culturally responsive pedagogy. The students at the school did not use method books, but instead used a three-ring binder containing songs, technique handouts, and musical concepts worksheets. Paluck’s teaching process was highly interactive, including call-and-response, performing solos in class, and working in small groups to build a sense of community. The music-making process used in the class was more reflective of the string folk music (fiddling) tradition with an emphasis on being non-competitive, inclusive, and
encouraging individuality and community. The journey of the program design was not perfect, but the school managed to maintain multi-age group lessons, a strong sense of community, coordinated individual lessons, and integrated experiences.

Sheldon and Etzel (2003) described the practice of offering string instrument instruction in orchestra classes to some groups and not others as a form of discrimination. The authors found that string orchestra teachers who taught in school districts that had experienced budget cuts often resorted to applying for grants in order to fund their music programs. From a practical perspective, the act of grant writing might be considered daunting, especially amongst teachers whose preparation and instructional time is already overly full. In this document, the authors also suggested that attention should be given to poor children who live and attend schools within urban settings because more than likely they have dealt with (or deal with) inadequate shelter, lack of food, in addition to the potential violence experienced in the surrounding neighborhoods in their short lifetimes. Being able to effectively teach children who have faced these adversaries has proven to be a difficult task for teachers.

While the challenges experienced by the children must be acknowledged, teachers have struggled with the very essence of teaching in urban settings.

“Content knowledge, organizational skills sequencing and pacing in the presentation of materials, recognizing a variety of learning styles, individualizing instruction and compassion for the student are essential for any teacher in any environment to ensure that every student has an equal chance for success in the classroom” (Sheldon & Etzel, 2003, p. 137).
Sheldon and Etzel (2003) also indicated that most teachers in urban settings are of different ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds than their students, and suggested that successful urban teachers adopt the responsibility of making their students feel valued, teach them how to value themselves, and provide safety and structure for students in addition to providing intellectual stimulation. The authors expressed the viewpoint that if teachers are expected to nurture their students, then they should be taught how to do so during their university studies.

**Teacher Retention and Attrition**

Madsen and Hancock (2002) completed a case study that examined issues related to music teacher retention and attrition. The music education faculty from a large southeastern university developed an Alumni Questionnaire in the spring of 1995. The survey asked important questions specific to music teacher preparation, in addition to asking for information relevant to the issue of why music teachers stay or leave the profession. A random selection of 225 certified music teachers were chosen to represent a population of 433 graduates who had completed a bachelor of music education degree within the previous 10 years. Mailing addresses were obtained from an alumni list provided by the participating institution.

The 1995 Alumni Questionnaire asked participants to comment on their perceptions of the level of support they had received as teachers or to express the reasons why they were no longer in the profession of teaching music. Participants’ comments were classified and tabulated by an experienced evaluator. A second evaluator reviewed the comments and collapsed them into four main categories. Comments were coded and placed into one of the four categories: (1) administrative support issues; (2) parental
support issues; (3) financial issues; and (4) personal issues (Madsen & Hancock, 2002, p. 9).

The second part of the study by Madsen and Hancock (2002) was undertaken in 2001. Participants’ continued (or not) occupation and status as a music educator was determined by examining data in a national state music organization’s membership list. Phone numbers were acquired from university organizations such as band alumni and university alumni associations. Contact information was also acquired from potential participants’ family members, employers, or recent professional colleagues. As had been done previously, an experienced evaluator classified and tabulated participants’ occupation data. Six categories were established for the classification of the participants’ occupations:

1. public or private school music teacher grades K-12,
2. college-level music teacher,
3. professional musician having a private studio,
4. military ensemble musician,
5. stay-at-home parent,
6. other profession (Madsen & Hancock, 2002, p. 10).

For the purposes of this study, only those teachers employed to teach music in schools (K-college) were classified as still teaching in music education. Individuals involved in other professional music activities were classified as no longer teaching in music education. The researchers divided the results into two sections. The first part of the results indicated that 84% of the participants chose “Yes” to the question that asked whether they were a part of a successful music program prior to college. Sixteen percent chose “No.” The second question asked for the participant’s current status as a music educator. Over 79% of the participants were currently teaching, 3.2% were in graduate
school/administration, and 17.5% indicated that they were not currently teaching in traditional settings.

The data for the number of years that the participants had taught for were as follows: 0 years, 7.3%; 1-2 years, 35.8%; 3-4 years, 25.6%; 5-6 years, 15.3%; 7-8 years, 10.2%; and 9-10 years, 5.8%. Of those surveyed, 32% of the participants had taught at the middle school level, 31.4% of the participants had taught at the high school level, and 10.9% of participants had taught at the middle and high school levels. Half of the participants surveyed had taught in a band setting, while 20% of the teachers had taught in a choral setting, 20% in choral/general settings; and 10% in orchestral settings. The participants were also asked to rate the level of support they experienced as music teachers on a scale of 1 (low) to 10 (high). Participant responses suggested that overall the music teachers felt supported by their administrators with the average rating for administrative support being 7.47. The average rating for the level of support the teachers perceived from their school was 7.12, and from parents, 7.27.

As part of the study, the participants were also asked to comment on the topic of retention and attrition. Forty-three percent of the comments addressed personal issues, 37% addressed administrative support issues, 9% of comments addressed financial issues, 7% of comments addressed parental support issues, and 4% of comments addressed difficulties with classroom management.

The second part of the results indicated that 65.6% of the participants who had participated in the earlier phase of the study were still in the field of music education. The sample was composed of nearly equal numbers of gender (67 men, 55 women). An examination of gender in the earlier (1995) version of the study revealed that in the newer
version of the study that 14.9% of the men and 23.6% of the women previously surveyed were no longer teaching in a school setting. There was no significant difference in teacher attrition for women from 1995 to 2001; however, there was a significant difference in teacher attrition for men from 1995 to 2001. In discussing the implications of their research findings, the researchers suggested that in the future, a more controlled version of their study could be replicated in order to understand the reasons why gender and time, influence individuals’ decisions to leave the field of music education.

**Teacher Job Satisfaction**

The job satisfaction of music teachers is usually measured through a variety of contributing factors that relate to the overall success of the music program including student enrollment, parental and administrative support, and the effect skills specific to teaching in urban settings have on their personal experiences as teachers. Fitzpatrick (2008, 2011) investigated the different ways that instrumental music teachers navigate the urban landscape. The researcher used the Triangulation Convergence Mixed Methods Design approach by combining both quantitative and qualitative approaches in an effort to alleviate any downfalls created by the use of only one approach. This mixed methods study was broken into three phases.

The aforementioned study was undertaken in Chicago Public Schools, in which the total enrollment of 435,470 students included 85.6% of students from low socioeconomic status backgrounds. The study participants were chosen from a pre-existing group of instrumental teachers who had previously served as instructors of the district All-City band. The first phase of the study consisted of the completion of a video recorded focus group in which seven instrumental music teachers were involved that
lasted for 1 hour and 54 minutes. The music teacher’s comments were then transcribed, coded, and aligned with the research questions designed for the purposes of this study.

In phase two of the research study, a 99-item questionnaire with an estimated 15-minute duration was developed using the content from the focus group data as its basis. The survey was completed by 90 instrumental teachers, yielding a response rate of 59%.

In phase three of the study, four teachers who were chosen to represent four subgroups. The four subgroups categorized the teachers into the following instrumental teacher groups: (1) Inexperienced Teachers (five years or less); (2) Experienced Teachers (more than 5 years); Teachers with (3) Struggling student participation; and Teachers with (4) Thriving student participation. The four instrumental teachers were chosen by the Chicago Public School Music Curriculum supervisor, who had at least 30 years of teaching experience. The supervisor chose the names of the participants by determining which instrumental music teacher best fit the definitions of the subgroups that had been provided by the researcher. Following categorization, the four teachers and subgroups were used to produce a four-way matrix.

The results suggested that the instrumental teachers involved in this study had modified their pedagogical approaches by utilizing their knowledge to fit the urban context in order to be successful in their teaching setting. Most of the instrumental teachers indicated that a specialized set of skills were required to be successful in an urban context. The subjects also reported that they had positive levels of job satisfaction, and believed that the development of their students was essential. The four instrumental teachers reported that they had experienced serious challenges when trying to build
successful programs, but that they perceived the positive rewards from the musical improvement and achievement of their students as benefits of their profession.

The results of this study also indicated that instrumental teachers who came from a different geographical background (urban or suburban) than their students experienced a moderate level of challenge than those who did not. Those instrumental teachers who were of a different ethnicity than the majority of their students felt that there was a lesser degree of challenge. The instrumental teachers included in the study believed that it was very important for teachers to show concern for students’ lives outside of school when teaching in an urban setting versus teaching in a suburban setting. The researcher used a Wilcoxon Signed Rank test to ask the participants to indicate the significance of skills that are relevant to being successful while teaching in an urban setting. Skills that reflected a moderate effect size were as follows: “focusing on the basics;” “being creative with resources;” “showing concern and care for students’ lives outside of school;” and “spending personal funds to help your students” (Fitzpatrick, 2008, p. 241).

The instrumental teachers also indicated a strong agreement in the belief that music teachers like themselves tended to maintain high expectations for their students. There was moderate agreement between the instrumental teachers that their classroom management was more effective than that of other teachers in their school, and low agreement that they were more motivated to do their best when they started teaching than they are now. A majority of the participants held a positive self-perception of their success as an instrumental music teacher in an urban school setting. Results related to the reasons why the teachers accepted positions in urban school settings indicated that 35.29% of the instrumental teachers did so because they wanted to help people, and that
35.29% of the teachers attended an urban school and wanted to contribute to the success of similar schools. Of the participants, 16.47% also reported that the reason they were teaching in an urban setting was because they were not able to attain a teaching position in a non-urban setting.

The researcher found that there was a medium-size correlation between the level of satisfaction in teaching in an urban setting and the following variables: perceptions of administrative support; maintaining high expectations for students; and the perception of teaching in a clean, orderly, and safe school. The instrumental teachers reported perceiving a moderately positive degree of support from their school administrations (and colleagues in their urban school settings, while perceiving the amount of parental support at a much lower level. The disrepair or lack of instruments also presented the participants with a moderate level of challenge in successfully fulfilling one of the demands of their jobs. In response to being asked to list the top three skills they felt they needed to assist them in making their music program successful the most commonly selected necessities by the instrumental teachers were financial support/increased funding (20% of all responses), the repair and purchase of instruments (15%), and administrative support (13%).

The researcher also found that many of the teachers believed that their students’ participation in the school’s instrumental program provided them with an outlet from the problems of the school and neighborhood. A further finding of the study was that while the instrumental teachers reported experiencing high levels of frustration at times when it came to dealing with the challenges that they often faced, in contrast they also found
many of the other positive experiences they associated with teaching instrumental music in an urban setting as being tremendously rewarding.

Bernard (2010) gathered stories from five music teachers who worked in two large cities in the northeastern region of the United States. The purpose of this study was to highlight the rewards of teaching music in an urban setting. The researcher listed some of the challenges of teaching music in an urban setting as including: the scarcity of instruments, and other resources; a lack of parental and administrative support; and difficulties with classroom management. Despite these challenges, many rewards of teaching in urban settings were reported by the music teachers interviewed for this article.

The three main themes that emerged from the music teachers personal stories were as follows: (1) students in urban schools can do everything that other students can do; (2) it is important for music educators to provide opportunities for students in urban schools; and (3) building effective relationships with students is a vital part of teaching music in urban schools. Two teachers represented City A, which had a population of 176,000 residents and more than 25,000 students within 47 schools in the district. The first participant, Allison, was a first year teacher who had no experiences in living or working in a city. The second participant, Marion, had 14 years of teaching experience and grew up in City A. Three teachers represented City B, which had a population of 600,000 residents and more than 58,000 students within the 144 schools in the district. Nathan grew up in Canada where all children had the opportunity to learn music in school. He taught band, music theory, and music history in City B for several years. Diana grew up in a city in the Midwest, which had very strong music programs. She
taught vocal classes and chorus for several years. Louise had over 30 years of teaching experience.

The participants shared similar views of teaching in an urban setting, especially on topics related to the students. The music teachers expressed the shared view that students in urban schools are just as competent as those in any other setting, and that they can only achieve what their teachers expect from them. In the context of the article, the researcher suggested that students in urban settings may actually receive benefits and opportunities that they otherwise would not receive in a different setting. One benefit of students who learn music in urban settings is the opportunity to interact with guest artists when they make visits to school campuses. The participants in this study also expressed the importance of building relationships with students because of the fact that the students expressed a need to and appreciation for being heard, respected, and valued.
Chapter 3

Method

For novice and experienced teachers alike, the idea of teaching in an urban setting has often been viewed as a daunting task due to the commonly perceived and documented challenges associated with teaching within such settings. As such, many orchestra teachers may avoid career choices that might lead them to teach in urban settings. As previously mentioned, commonly perceived challenges for those teaching in urban settings include, but are not limited to: a lack of adequate resources; highly diverse student populations; and a lack of administrative and parental support. Indeed, research confirms these challenges are common, even though some teachers in urban settings do not experience them. Due to the existence of the aforementioned challenges, the use of the word “urban” when associated with teaching settings has generally come to be perceived as having negative connotations.

Determining how to effectively teach in an urban setting cannot be achieved without first identifying the key characteristics of an urban setting. Prior research has indicated that string orchestra was offered less in urban settings than in suburban settings. Larger student populations have been reported in urban schools than in suburban schools, yet there are fewer string programs in urban schools. This presents a concern in the string community because it has resulted in fewer musical choices for students in urban settings. The lack of string orchestra programs in urban settings has suggested the need for additional research in pursuit of a solution.

While the status of school orchestras has been investigated nationally through scholarly journals and regularly published whitepapers supported by the American String
Teachers Association, very little research has been conducted specifically on the status of orchestra programs in urban settings. Even though the previously mentioned sources of literature have included data relevant to the status of orchestra programs in urban settings, they examined the issue as a secondary rather than primary goal of the research. In addition, while prior literature has examined the status of orchestra programs in large urban settings on a national level, there is a void in the realm of research relevant to the status of orchestra programs in midsize urban settings on a state level. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to examine the status of public middle and high school string orchestra programs located in midsized urban settings in the state of Virginia.

The National Center for Education Statistics described a midsize city as the “territory inside an urbanized area and inside a principal city with a population less than 250,000 and greater than or equal to 100,000” (NCES, 2000). A list of cities and school districts in the state of Virginia were obtained using the Common Core of Data list within the National Center for Education Statistics database website (CCD, 2014). The researcher determined how many middle and high school orchestra programs existed within each of the cities identified as being midsize, according to the definition previously mentioned by National Center for Education Statistics.

From this search, a final list of five school districts from the state of Virginia that corresponded with the “midsized urban” description was created. The researcher then obtained a list of middle and high schools for each pre-selected school district, resulting in a total of 24 middle schools and 13 high schools being identified by the researcher as having string orchestra programs in the state of Virginia, and meeting the necessary criteria to be labeled a midsized urban setting school.
This study sought to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the key characteristics of string orchestra programs in Virginia public schools located in midsized urban settings (e.g., student diversity, availability of instrument repair and resources, administrative and parental support)?
2. What role, if any, does ethnicity play in the status of string orchestra programs in midsized urban settings? Specifically, what are the ethnicities of students and teachers involved in orchestra in midsized urban settings, and does ethnicity affect instruction?
3. How does recruitment and retention affect the size of string orchestra programs within midsized urban settings? Specifically, what issues contribute to the success or lack thereof in building orchestra programs in these settings?
4. What specialized set of skills is needed for orchestra teachers to be successful when teaching within the context of a midsized urban setting? Specifically, how do these skills vary based on years of experience, and what are the implications for teacher preparation programs?

Participants

The participants \( N = 30 \) in this study included public school orchestra directors from five school districts located in midsized urban settings in the state of Virginia. District A had a city population size of 246,392, and served a total student population of over 33,461 students. District B had a city population size of 151,218, and served 12,396 students. District C had a city population size of 227,146, and served 21,892 students. District D had a city population size of 183,412, and served 30,568 students, while
District E had a city population size of 211,172, and served 24,000 students (United States Census Bureau, 2010).

Where possible, participant email contact information was obtained from the individual websites of each of the various schools located within the five pre-selected school districts included in the study. To further determine the accuracy of this information, the researcher then contacted region representatives from the Virginia Band and Orchestra Director’s Association via email to share a draft list of the orchestra director’s names, schools, and email addresses with the purpose of having the region representative for VBODA Orchestra review for accuracy and edited the list as appropriate. Once final names and email addresses were confirmed, the researcher then contacted each orchestra director individually with an introductory email briefly describing the purpose of the survey. Each orchestra director was invited to participate in the research by visiting a previously prepared survey link available at Qualtrics, with the purpose of completing an online survey which consisted of 26 questions. A consent form was also included in the initial email for potential participants to complete (see Appendix A).

**Procedure**

When visiting the website link provided by the researcher, the orchestra directors who elected to participate in the survey ($N = 19$) were presented with 26 questions containing a mixture of multiple choice, Likert scale, and free-response questions. The survey questions focused on topics specific to teacher and student demographic information, music program information, and teacher skills and characteristics.
**Survey Questions**

The questions were as follows:

Q1 Please select your gender.

- Male
- Female

Q2 Which ethnicity do you most identify with?

- African American
- White
- Hispanic
- Asian/Pacific Islander
- Other (please specify) ________________

Q3 Select the type of location that best reflects the setting where the majority of your K-12 schooling took place.

- Urban (of, relating to, characteristic of, or constituting a city)
- Rural (of or relating to the country, country people or life, or agriculture)
- Suburban (a smaller community adjacent to or within commuting distance of a city)

Q4 How many years of teaching experience do you have (Including the 2013 - 2014 academic year)?

- 1 to 3 years
- 4 to 6 years
- 7 to 9 years
- 10 to 14 years
- 15 to 20 years
- 21 to 25 years
- 26 to 29 years
- 30 or more years

Q5 What is your current terminal degree?

- Bachelor's
- Master's
- Doctorate
Q6 During your university studies, did you receive any training specific to teaching in an urban setting?
- Yes
- No

Q7 In what context did this training take place? Check all that apply.
- Music education class/es
- General education class/es
- Music education class/es specific to teaching in an urban setting
- General education class/es specific to teaching in an urban setting
- In the field (observations, practicum, student teaching)
- Other (please specify) ____________________

Q8 Which of the following most influenced your decision to teach orchestra in an urban setting?
- I have always had a passion to help children who attend schools in urban settings.
- I attended a school located in an urban setting myself. I had a positive experience and wanted to give back.
- I did not get a job in a different setting.
- Other (please specify) ____________________

Q9 Are you the same ethnicity as the majority of your students?
- Yes
- No

Q10 Please select the response that best reflects your opinion in regard to the question that follows.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Great challenge</th>
<th>Somewhat of a challenge</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Not much of a challenge</th>
<th>No challenge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How much of a challenge has your ethnicity played (if any) in the ease with which you work with your students?</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q11 Please select the response that best reflects your opinion in regard to the question that follows. To what degree are you currently satisfied with the...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Very Dissatisfied</th>
<th>Dissatisfied</th>
<th>Moderately Dissatisfied</th>
<th>Satisfied</th>
<th>Very Satisfied</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experience of teaching orchestra at a school located in an urban setting</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
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<td>○</td>
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<tr>
<td>Success of your orchestra program</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quality and accessibility of instruments</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitudes of students</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support from parents, administrators, and other teachers within your school</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q12 Please select the response that best reflects your opinion in regard to the question that follows.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Very Difficult</th>
<th>Difficult</th>
<th>Slightly Difficult</th>
<th>Easy</th>
<th>Very Easy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is the current level of</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>difficulty that you normally</td>
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<tr>
<td>experience while recruiting</td>
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<tr>
<td>students for your orchestra program?</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q13 Which of the following factors do you feel contributes to the potential difficulty of recruiting students in your current school setting? Please check all that apply.

- Peer pressure
- Block scheduling
- Rotation of electives
- Lack of parental support
- Lack of administrative support
- Other (Please specify) ____________________

Q14 How many students were enrolled in your orchestra program during the 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 school year? Please indicate your answer in the appropriate box (es).

- Middle School (2012-2013) _______
- High School (2012-2013) _______
- Middle School (2013-2014) _______
- High School (2013-2014) _______
Q15 Please provide a list of ethnicity percentages for the students in your program.

African American ______
White ______
Hispanic ______
Asian/Pacific Islander ______
Other (please specify) __________________________

Q16 In your estimation, approximately what percentage of your total school orchestra student population receives a free or reduced lunch?

- 0-25%
- 26-50%
- Over 50%
- Not sure

Q17 Does your program charge an instrument usage fee to students?

- Yes
- No

Q18 Please indicate how much students are required to pay each year.

______________________________

Q19 Please indicate which classes you teach and approximately how many students are enrolled in those classes for the 2013-2014 school year. (e.g., General Music, Chamber Orchestra, Concert Orchestra, Music Theory, Music Technology)
Q20 During an average year, approximately how many rehearsals do you have each week? Please indicate the duration of the rehearsals.

Number of rehearsals per week _______
Duration of rehearsals__________

Q21 During an average year, approximately how many rehearsals do you lose due to testing or other school programs? Please feel free to write a comment.
Q22 To what extent is the following set of skills important to succeeding as an orchestra teacher in a school located in an urban setting?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Not at all Important</th>
<th>Somewhat Unimportant</th>
<th>Neither Important nor Unimportant</th>
<th>Important</th>
<th>Extremely Important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Providing an appropriate level of challenge</td>
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<tr>
<td>Having a deep knowledge base of the fundamentals of teaching music</td>
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<tr>
<td>Having a strong philosophy of music education</td>
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<td>Being fully prepared, including good lesson plans</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maintaining an orderly classroom</td>
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<td>Being creative with the resources that you are given</td>
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<td>Building supportive and</td>
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<tr>
<td>encouraging relationships</td>
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<td>with students</td>
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<tr>
<td>Displaying concern and care</td>
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<td>for students’ lives outside</td>
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<tr>
<td>of school</td>
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<tr>
<td>Demonstrating respect for</td>
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<tr>
<td>students</td>
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<tr>
<td>Proving the importance of</td>
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<tr>
<td>your program to students,</td>
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<td>parents, administrators,</td>
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<tr>
<td>and the community</td>
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<tr>
<td>Balancing the demands of</td>
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<td>district/school policies with</td>
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<td>the needs of your program</td>
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<td>Maintaining open lines of</td>
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<tr>
<td>communication with parents</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Q23 What advice would you give a new teacher who has just begun working in an urban setting?

Q24 In your opinion, what key factors should be focused on by orchestra teachers, school administrators and teacher preparation programs to help maintain and build successful orchestra programs in urban settings?

Q25 In your opinion, what do you believe are some of the personal benefits and rewards of teaching in an urban setting?

Q26 Please feel free to provide any additional comments on this topic. Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. I appreciate your support of my research. Sincerely, Keara Smith.
Collection of Data

The data from the participants’ survey responses were collected and stored on Qualtrics both individually and by group to allow for ease of comparison of the results. Participants were given a two week time period in which to complete the survey. A reminder email was sent to those participants who had not yet completed the survey at the one week mark, and a final reminder was emailed three days before the survey’s planned completion date. Once the survey deadline was met, the researcher examined the results both individually and from a group perspective, to look for any noticeable trends within the data. Numerical data were then summarized and converted to percentages for greater ease of data comparison. Free-response answers were also transcribed and examined, before being classified into themed categories (see Appendix B). The final return rate of this survey was 63% ($N = 19$).
Chapter 4

Results

The purpose of the study was to examine the status of middle and high school string orchestra programs in public schools located in midsized urban settings in the state of Virginia. Participants in this study were administered a survey that consisted of questions specific to teacher and student demographic information, music program information, and teacher skills and characteristics. Likert scale and multiple choice response data were collected and converted to percentages, while the participants’ free-response answers were transcribed, examined and placed into themed categories. Out of the 30 surveys that were emailed, 19 participants responded and completed the survey in full, while an additional four of the participants began the survey, but only completed the questions up to question #6, yielding a return rate of 63%. It was unclear to the researcher why the four incomplete surveys were not completed. A problem in the execution of the survey due to issues with the Qualtrics website was considered and investigated, but no reason – other than perhaps the questions themselves – could be determined for the non-completion of the four surveys.

In response to question #1, which asked about gender, 58% of the participants selected female and 42% selected male. In response to question #2, regarding ethnicity, 63% of the participants identified themselves as being White while 26% of the participants identified themselves as being of African American ethnicity. One of the participants identified themselves as being Hispanic (5%), while one of the other participants identified themselves as being of Asian/Pacific Islander heritage (5%). For question #3, a total of 13 participants (68%) reported that for their own K-12 education
they had attended a school in an urban setting. Four of the participants (21%) reported that they had attended school in a suburban setting, while another two of the participants (11%) reported that they had attended school in a rural setting.

In response to question #4 which referred to the number of years of teaching experience the participants had, 11% \((n = 2)\) of the participants reported having one to three years of teaching experience, 5% \((n = 1)\) reported having four to six years of teaching experience, and 21% \((n = 4)\) of the participants reported having seven to nine years of teaching experience. In addition, 16% \((n = 3)\) of the orchestra teachers surveyed reported having 10 to 14 years of teaching experience, 16% \((n = 3)\) reported 15 to 20 years of teaching experience, 11% \((n = 2)\) reported 21 to 25 years, and 21% \((n = 4)\) of the orchestra directors reported having 26 to 29 years of teaching experience. None of the participants reported having 30 or more years of teaching experience.

In response to the question specific to the participants’ college degrees (question #5), 47% \((n = 9)\) of the orchestra directors reported that they had earned a bachelor’s degree, while 42% \((n = 8)\) of the teachers had earned a master’s degree, and 11% \((n = 2)\) of the orchestra directors surveyed reported that they had earned a doctorate degree as part of their college preparation (See Table 1).

With regard to the question of whether or not they had received training specific to teaching in an urban setting (question #6), 37% \((n = 7)\) of the participants reported “Yes,” and 63% \((n = 12)\) of the participants reported “No.” Those participants who had answered “Yes” to question #6 were automatically taken to question #7, which asked for more detail specific to the context in which the participants had received training to teach in an urban setting. Three of the participants reported that they received training in a
music education class, another three of the participants reported that they had received training in a general education class, and five of the orchestra directors reported that they had received training in the field (e.g., observations, practicum, student teaching). None of the participants reported taking a music or general education class that was specific to teaching in an urban setting.

Question #8 of the survey asked participants to select one of four statement options specific to the main source of influence in their decision to teach in an urban setting. Thirteen percent \((n = 2)\) of the participants selected the statement “I have always had a passion to help children who attend schools in urban settings,” twenty percent \((n = 3)\) of the participants selected the statement “I attended a school in an urban setting myself and wanted to give back,” while twenty percent \((n = 3)\) of the orchestra directors selected that statement “I did not get a job in a different setting.” Forty-seven percent \((n = 7)\) of the participants chose “Other” and provided a free-response statement (see Appendix B).

In response to question #9 which asked whether or not the participants were the same ethnicity as the majority of their students, the majority of participants \((87\%, n = 13)\) indicated “No,” while 13\% \((n = 2)\) of the participants selected “Yes.” In response to question #10, “How much of a challenge has your ethnicity played in the ease with which you work with your students,” 33\% \((n = 5)\) of the participants selected “No Challenge,” 20\% \((n = 3)\) of the participants selected “Not Much of a Challenge,” 13\% \((n = 2)\) selected “Neutral,” and 33\% \((n = 5)\) of the orchestra directors selected “Somewhat of a Challenge.”
Table 1

*Teacher Background*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Degree</th>
<th>Years of Experience</th>
<th>Job Satisfaction</th>
<th>K-12 Setting (attended by teacher)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>7-9</td>
<td>VS</td>
<td>S</td>
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<td>B</td>
<td>W</td>
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<td>21-25</td>
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<td>N/A</td>
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<td>M</td>
<td>15-20</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>U</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Question #11 asked the participants to report their self-perceived personal level of satisfaction for the following questions: (1) The experience of teaching orchestra at a school located in an urban setting; (2) The success of the orchestra program in which they taught; (3) The quality and accessibility of instruments; (4) The attitudes of students in the orchestra program; and (5) The level of support from parents, administrators, and other teachers within the school setting in which the participants worked. In response to the level of satisfaction the orchestra directors felt about teaching in an urban setting, 33% of the participants ($n = 5$) reported that they were “Very Satisfied,” while 40% ($n = 6$) reported being “Satisfied,” and 27% ($n = 4$) of the participants reported being “Moderately Dissatisfied” with the experience of teaching in an urban setting. None of the participants reported that they were “Dissatisfied” or “Very Dissatisfied” with teaching in an urban setting.

In response to the question asking the participants how satisfied (or not) they were with the success of their program, 40% ($n = 6$), of the participants reported that they were “Very Satisfied,” 47% ($n = 7$) of the participants reported being “Satisfied,” and 13% ($n = 2$) of the participants reported being “Moderately Dissatisfied” with the success of their program. None of the participants reported that they were “Dissatisfied” or “Very Dissatisfied” with the success of their orchestra program.

In response to how satisfied the participants were with the quality and availability of instruments in their music program, 40% ($n = 6$) of the participants reported being “Satisfied,” 47% ($n = 7$) of the participants reported “Moderately Dissatisfied,” 7% ($n = 1$) of the participants reported being “Dissatisfied,” and 7% ($n = 1$) of the participants reported being “Very Dissatisfied” with the quality and availability of instruments. None
of the participants reported that they were “Very Satisfied” with the quality and accessibility of instruments.

When asked to report how satisfied they were with the attitudes of their students, 13% (n = 2) of the participants reported that they were “Very Satisfied,” 47% (n = 7) of the participants reported being “Satisfied,” 27% (n = 4) of the participants reported being “Moderately Dissatisfied,” and 13% (n = 2) of the participants reported being “Dissatisfied” with the overall attitudes of their students. None of the participants reported that they were “Very Dissatisfied” with the attitudes of their students. In response to the level of satisfaction concerning administrative, parental, and colleague support, 27% (n = 4) of the participants reported being “Very Satisfied,” 27% (n = 4) of the participants reported being “Satisfied,” 20% (n = 3) reported being “Moderately Dissatisfied,” 13% (n = 2) of the participants reported “Dissatisfied,” and 13% (n = 2) of the participants reported being “Dissatisfied” with the amount of administrative, parental, and colleague support.

In response to question #12, participants were asked to report the level of difficulty that they normally experienced while recruiting students into their orchestra programs. Seven percent (n = 1) of the participants reported that recruiting students into their orchestra program was “Very Easy,” 27% (n = 4) of the participants reported that it was “Easy,” 53% (n = 8) of the participants reported that it was “Slightly Difficult,” 7% (n = 1) of the participants reported that it was “Difficult,” and 7% (n = 1) of the participants reported that recruiting students for their program was “Very Difficult.” With regard to recruiting difficulties (question #13), participants were given five potential factors and were asked to check all that apply. The pre-determined options included “Peer
Pressure,” “Block Scheduling,” “Rotation of Electives,” “Lack of Parental Support,” and “Lack of Administrative Support.” Six (40%) of the participants selected “Peer Pressure” eight (53%) of the participants selected “Block Scheduling,” two (13%) of the participants selected “Rotation of Electives,” three (20%) of the participants selected “Lack of Parental Support,” and four (27%) of the participants selected “Lack of Administrative Support” as factors that affect the amount of students that they recruit for their orchestra programs. Seven (47%) of the participants selected “Other” and provided a comment (see Table 2).
Table 2

Recruitment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recruitment</th>
<th>Factors for Low Recruitment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E = Easy</td>
<td>PP = Peer Pressure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VE = Very Easy</td>
<td>NP = No Problem With Recruitment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD = Slightly Difficult</td>
<td>PS = Program Scheduling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LF = Lack of Funding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BS = Block Scheduling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>RE = Rotation of Electives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LP = Lack of Parental Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LA = Lack of Administrative Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LC = Lack of support from colleagues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LI = Lack of instruments and resources</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Recruitment</th>
<th>Factors for Low Recruitment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
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<td>PP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>VE</td>
<td>NP</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
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<td>RE</td>
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In response to question #14, which asked the participants to indicate whether or not they experienced an increase in enrollment, 75% \((n = 9)\) of the orchestra directors at the middle school level experienced an increase in enrollment from the 2012-2013 school year to the 2013-2014 school year. Seventeen percent \((n = 2)\) of the orchestra directors at the middle school level experienced no change in enrollment from the 2012-2013 school year to the 2013-2014 school year. One \(8\%\) orchestra director at the middle school level experienced a decrease in enrollment from the 2012-2013 school year to the 2013-2014 school year. Forty percent \((n = 2)\) of the orchestra directors at the high school level experienced an increase in enrollment from the 2012-2013 school year to the 2013-2014 school year. Sixty percent \((n = 3)\) of the orchestra directors at the high school level experienced a decrease in enrollment from the 2012-2013 school year to the 2013-2014 school year (see Figure 1).
Figure 1

*Student Enrollment*

![Bar chart showing student enrollment for different participants.
2013-2014 and 2012-2013 enrollment levels are indicated.
Participants range from A to O.
Number of Students on the y-axis.
}
In response to question #15, regarding the student ethnicities within the participants’ orchestra program, Participant A reported having 35% African American, 22.5% White, 26.25% Hispanic, 12.5% Asian/Pacific Islander, and 3.75% unspecified student ethnicities in their orchestra program. Participant B reported having 52% African American, 26% White, 7% Hispanic, 6% Asian/Pacific Islander and 8% multi-racial in response to which student ethnicities existed within their orchestra program. Participant C reported having 56% African American, 27% White, 3% Hispanic, and 14% Asian/Pacific Islander in response to which student ethnicities existed in their orchestra program. Participant D reported having 54% African American, 40% White, 2.5% Hispanic, 2.5% Asian/Pacific Islander, and 1% unspecified in response to which student ethnicities existed in their orchestra program. Participant E reported having 73% African American, 18% White, and 9% Hispanic in response to which student ethnicities existed in their orchestra program. Participant F reported having 45% African American, 44% White, 4% Hispanic, and 7% Asian/Pacific Islander in response to which student ethnicities existed in their orchestra program.

Participant G reported having 31% African American, 40% White, 14% Hispanic, 7% Asian/Pacific Islander, and 8% unspecified in response to which student ethnicities existed in their orchestra program. Participant H reported having 99% African American and 1% White in response to which student ethnicities existed in their orchestra program. Participant I reported that they were unaware of the ethnicities of the students in their orchestra program. Participant J reported having 95% African American, 3% White, and 2% Hispanic in response to which student ethnicities existed in their orchestra program. Participant K reported having 5% African American, 5% White, 80% Hispanic, 2%
Asian/ Pacific Islander, and 8% unspecified in response to which student ethnicities existed in their orchestra program. Participant L reported having 80% African American, 5% White, and 15% Hispanic in response to which student ethnicities existed in their orchestra program. Participant M reported having 40% African American, 45% White, 3% Hispanic, and 2% Asian/ Pacific Islander in response to which student ethnicities existed in their orchestra program. Participant N reported having 5% African American, 70% White, 20% Hispanic, and 5% Asian/ Pacific Islander in response to which student ethnicities existed in their orchestra program. Participant O reported having 20% African American, 50% White, 20% Hispanic, 5% Asian/ Pacific Islander, and 5% unspecified in response to which student ethnicities existed in their orchestra program (See Table 3).

In question #16, participants were asked to estimate the percentage of students in their orchestra that received free or reduced lunch. Majority of the orchestra directors reported that “Over 50%” of their students received free or reduced lunch, while a minority of the orchestra directors reported that “0-25%” of their students received free or reduced lunch Seven percent (n = 1) of the directors indicated “0-25%,” 20% (n = 3) of the directors indicated “26-50%,” 67% (n = 10) of the directors indicated “Over 50%,” and 7% (n = 1) of the directors selected “Not sure” in regard to the percentage of students in their orchestra that received free or reduced lunch (See Figure 2).
Table 3

Teacher and Student Ethnicities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Teacher Ethnicity</th>
<th>% African American Students</th>
<th>% White Students</th>
<th>% Hispanic Students</th>
<th>% Asian/Pacific Islander Students</th>
<th>% Unspecified/Multiracial Students</th>
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<td>50</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
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<td>S</td>
<td>H</td>
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<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<td>N/A</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
In response to question #17, pertaining to whether or not an instrument fee is charged to students, 80% \((n = 12)\) of the participants selected “Yes” and 20% selected “No” \((n = 3)\). In response to how much students are required to pay each year (question #18), five of the participants that selected “Yes” reported that only the violin players were required to pay $25. Four of the participants that selected “Yes” reported that the requirement of an instrument fee depended on whether or not the students received free or reduced lunch. Three of the participants that selected “Yes” reported that the students were required to pay a fee of $85-86 and one participant reported that their students had to pay a fee of $45. One of the participants that selected “Yes” reported that beginners were required to pay a $35 instrument fee, while returning students were required to pay a $50 instrument fee.
Question #19 asked the participants to indicate the types of classes that they teach, along with the number of students enrolled in each class. A majority of the participants at the middle school level reported that they taught beginning, intermediate, and advanced orchestra, while a minority of the participants reported that they taught a guitar class. At the high school level, most participants reported that they taught concert orchestra, string ensemble, and chamber orchestra. One subject in particular reported that they taught two band classes. With regard to enrollment numbers at the middle school level, the highest was beginning orchestra with an enrollment number of 180 students. The lowest enrollment was 16 students in advanced orchestra. The highest enrollment at the high school level was 101 students for concert orchestra and 15 students for guitar class.

In response to the question that asked for the number of orchestra rehearsals each week and the duration of these rehearsals, 20% \((n = 3)\) of the orchestra directors indicated that they rehearsed twice a week. Two of these three participants rehearsed for one hour, and the remaining one participant rehearsed for 90 minutes. Forty-seven percent \((n = 7)\) of the orchestra directors indicated that they rehearsed two to three times a week (depending on block scheduling) for a duration of 90 minutes. Twenty percent \((n = 3)\) of the participants indicated that they rehearsed three times a week for a duration of 90 minutes.

In response to question #21, regarding the number of rehearsals missed per year due to testing or other school programs, a majority of the participants indicated that they missed three to ten rehearsals each school year. A minority of the participants reported losing 30 to 40 rehearsals each year due to testing or other school programs. One
participant in particular reported losing more rehearsals at the middle school level than at the high school level due to low school-wide test scores.

Question #22 asked participants to indicate the importance of the following set of urban orchestra director skills: (1) Providing an appropriate level of challenge; (2) Having a deep knowledge base of the fundamentals of teaching music; (3) Having a strong philosophy of music education; (4) Being fully prepared, including good lesson plans; (5) Maintaining an orderly classroom; (6) Being creative with the resources that you are given; (7) Building supportive and encouraging relationships with students; (8) Displaying concern and care for students’ lives outside of school; (9) Demonstrating respect for students; (10) Proving the importance of your program to students, parents, administrators, and the community; (11) Balancing the demands of district/school policies with the needs of your program; (12) Maintaining open lines of communication with parents.

In response to “Providing an appropriate level of challenge,” seven (47%) of the participants selected “Extremely Important,” seven (47%) of the participants selected “Important,” and one (6%) of the participants selected that providing an appropriate level of challenge for the students was “Neither Important nor Unimportant.” With regard to having a deep knowledge of the fundamentals of teaching music, 87% (n = 13) of the participants indicated “Extremely Important,” and 13% (n = 2) of the participants indicated that it was “Important.” None of the participants selected “Neither Important nor Unimportant” in response to the importance of providing an appropriate level of challenge for the students.
Specific to “Having a strong philosophy of music education,” 73% (n = 11) of the participants indicated that it was “Extremely Important” to them, 20% (n = 3) of the participants indicated that it was “Important” to them, and 7% (n = 1) of the participants indicated that having a strong philosophy of music education was “Neither Important nor Unimportant” to them. In response to “Being fully prepared, including good lesson plans,” 73% (n = 11) of the participants indicated “Extremely Important,” 27% (n = 4) of the participants indicated “Important,” and none of the participants selected “Neither Important nor Unimportant.”

With regard to “Maintaining an orderly classroom,” 80% (n = 12) of the participants indicated “Extremely Important,” 20% (n = 3) of the participants indicated “Important,” and none of the participants selected “Neither Important nor Unimportant.” In response to “Being creative with the resources that you are given,” 73% (n = 11) of the participants indicated “Extremely Important,” 13% (n = 2) of the participants indicated “Important,” and 13% (n = 2) of the participants indicated “Neither Important nor Unimportant.” In response to “Building supportive and encouraging relationships with students,” 87% (n = 13) of the participants indicated “Extremely Important,” 13% (n = 2) of the participants indicated “Important” (13%), and none of the participants selected “Neither Important nor Unimportant.”

In response to the question “Displaying concern and care for students’ lives outside of school,” 60% (n = 9) of the participants indicated “Extremely Important,” 33% (n = 5) of the participants indicated “Important” (33%), and 7% (n = 1) of the participants indicated “Neither Important nor Unimportant.” Specific to the question about “Demonstrating respect for students,” 80% (n =12) of the participants indicated
“Extremely Important,” 20% \( (n = 3) \) of the participants indicated “Important,” and none of the participants selected “Neither Important nor Unimportant” as their response.

With regard to “Proving the importance of your program to students, parents, administrators, and the community,” 73% \( (n = 11) \) of the participants indicated “Extremely Important,” 27% \( (n = 4) \) of the participants indicated “Important,” and none of the participants selected “Neither Important nor Unimportant.” In response to the question about “Balancing the demands of district/school policies with the needs of your program,” 40% \( (n = 6) \) of the participants indicated that they believed that it was “Extremely Important,” 60% \( (n = 8) \) of the participants indicated “Important,” and none of the participants selected “Neither Important nor Unimportant.”

Specific to the question about “Maintaining open lines of communication with parents,” 67% \( (n = 10) \) of the participants selected “Extremely Important as their response, while 33% \( (n = 5) \) of the participants indicated “Important,” and none of the participants selected “Neither Important nor Unimportant” in regard to parental communication. None of the participants selected “Somewhat Unimportant” or “Not at all Important” for either the “Balancing the demands of district/school policies with the needs of your program” or “Maintaining open lines of communication with parents” categories.

Specific to the free-response question regarding advice that should be given to new teachers who have begun teaching in an urban setting, the following themes emerged: Respect, care, and high expectations for students; Help from colleagues and mentors; Being organized; Effective classroom management skills; and Communication with parents.” With regard to the free-response question about the necessary key factors
to help maintain and build successful orchestra programs in urban settings, the following themes emerged: Adequate and effective teacher preparation programs; Access to instruments and other resources; Parent and administrative support; and Effective classroom management skills. In response to the question regarding the benefits and rewards of teaching in an urban setting, the following themes emerged: Student success; Providing opportunities for those who are disadvantaged; Helping students develop and appreciation of the arts; and Exposing students to live musical performances (See Appendix B).
Chapter 5
Discussion

As previously mentioned, it is unfortunate that the topic of urban education has developed and been associated with an extensive list of negative connotations and misconceptions. The availability of historical and descriptive data provide greater perspective on the previous “good standing” of urban education (McEachin & Brewer, 2012; Rury, 2012). Some of the common negative characteristics associated with schools located in urban settings include but are not limited to: a lack of adequate resources; highly diverse student populations; low student enrollment (in music classes); and a lack of administrative and parental support. A lack of adequate resources could be particularly detrimental to school subjects that are hands-on, such as music (Costa-Giomi, 2008). The success of teaching diverse student populations highly depends on the amount of training specific to teaching in an urban setting while participating in a college education program (Paluck, 2006; Sheldon and Etzel, 2003; Young, 2007).

Another common misconception specific to the size of music classes in urban music education is that generally student enrollment rates are low. This may be the case for some urban music programs, but research shows that many districts have experienced an increase in student enrollment over time, despite the lack of string programs in urban settings throughout the United States (Alexander & Smith, 2008; Hamann & Gillespie, 1998; Kinney, 2010, Schmidt et. al, 2006; Smith, 1997). The amount of administrative and parental support that has been reported in a number of the research studies is also an indication of the existence of successful music programs, which have ultimately served as
an influencing factor in significant factor of job satisfaction for music directors who teach in urban settings (Bernard, 2010; Fitzpatrick, 2008, 2011; Madsen & Hancock, 2002).

This study attempted to examine the status of string orchestra programs in public schools located in midsized urban settings in the state of Virginia.

This study sought to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the key characteristics of string orchestra programs in Virginia public schools located in midsized urban settings (e.g., student diversity, availability of instrument repair and resources, administrative and parental support)?

2. What role, if any, does ethnicity play in the status of string orchestra programs in midsized urban settings? Specifically, what are the ethnicities of students and teachers involved in orchestra in midsized urban settings, and does ethnicity affect instruction?

3. How does recruitment and retention affect the size of string orchestra programs within midsized urban settings? Specifically, what issues contribute to the success or lack-thereof in building orchestra programs in these settings?

4. What specialized set of skills is needed for orchestra teachers to be successful when teaching within the context of a midsized urban setting? Specifically, how do these skills vary based on years of experience, and what are the implications for teacher preparation programs?

Participants in this study were first chosen based on the particular city’s matched attributes to the definition of a midsized urban city. Once the cities were chosen, middle and high school orchestra directors from public schools within the cities were invited to
participate in this study. The participants took a survey consisting of topics related to teacher and student demographics, music program information, and teacher skills.

Implications

Recruitment and enrollment rates of students into string programs within urban settings have been misconceived as low and difficult due to factors such as a lack of resources and a lack of administrative and parental support. Even though 53% of the participants in this study reported having slight difficulties with recruitment, a majority of the programs experienced an increase in enrollment from the 2012-2013 to 2013-2014 school year. Similar to the findings of this study, Hamann and Gillespie (1998) found that music teachers experienced an increase in enrollment over a five year period. Schmidt et. al (2006) also reported an increase in enrollment specifically in string programs in the United States. It appears that recruitment and enrollment levels may not have reached the desired levels, but this finding suggests that there is some improvement in the growth of the midsized urban orchestra programs used as the basis of this research study.

The participants in Schmidt’s (2006) study also reported that 21.93% of their students received free or reduced lunch. The participants in the current study were asked to estimate the number of students in their program who were eligible for free or reduced lunch. Sixty-seven percent of the participants estimated that “Over 50%” of their students received free or reduced lunch. These responses were cross referenced with the overall percentage of students who received free or reduced lunch within the entire district, which yielded a mean of 58.7% across the five districts included in this study (Virginia Department of Education, 2013). Fitzpatrick (2008, 2011) had a similar finding in which participants within a large urban setting reported that over 50% of their students were
eligible for free or reduced lunch. These findings perhaps indicate the large number of disadvantaged students who attend schools within urban settings. Students who are economically disadvantaged are rarely able to provide their own musical instruments and resources, and it becomes the responsibility of the school to provide these students with resources necessary to succeed in an urban string orchestra program. The high volume of disadvantaged students combined with a limited budget has contributed to the challenges within urban settings.

Fitzpatrick (2008, 2011) also found that teachers whose ethnicities were different from their students experienced a lesser degree of challenge. The findings of the current study revealed that the ethnicity of a majority of the orchestra directors were not representative of the ethnicities of their students (87%). The participants were also asked to indicate how much of a challenge their ethnicity has played in the ease of working with their students. The majority of the participants indicated that their ethnicity presented “No Challenge” or “Not Much of a Challenge.” Similar to the findings of Fitzpatrick (2008, 2011), the current study suggests that orchestra directors felt comfortable working with students regardless of ethnicity. One participant in particular wrote, “Don't worry too much about the diversity of the students, just teach and care about them.” In Fitzpatrick’s 2008, 2011 study, the participants did however indicate that they experienced a moderate level of challenge when they came from a different geographical background (urban, suburban, rural) than their students. In the current study, 68% of the participants indicated that they attended school in an urban setting, which is important because it may partially account for their success, but only 40% indicated that they specifically wanted to work in an urban setting while searching for a job.
Madsen and Hancock (2002) and the current study both found that teachers feel that it is necessary to receive quality teacher preparation specific to teaching in an urban setting. Madsen’s and Hancock’s (2002) study suggested that music teachers who received training from a less than adequate teacher education program were most likely to leave the profession. The current study found that 63% of the participants did not receive training specific to teaching in an urban setting. The remaining 37% who selected “Yes” reported that they did not take a class focused solely on teaching in an urban setting, and that the training that they received was given as part of a music or general education class. This is a major issue because teachers who teach in urban settings may possibly continue to experience the difficulties associated with this particular setting until it is implemented into the curriculum for college education programs.

The majority of the participants ranked the following skills as “Extremely Important” when teaching string orchestra in an urban setting: (1) Providing an appropriate level of challenge; (2) Having a deep knowledge base of the fundamentals of teaching music; (3) Having a strong philosophy of music education; (4) Being fully prepared, including good lesson plans; (5) Maintaining an orderly classroom; (6) Being creative with the resources that you are given; (7) Building supportive and encouraging relationships with students; (8) Displaying concern and care for students’ lives outside of school; (9) Demonstrating respect for students; (10) Proving the importance of your program to students, parents, administrators, and the community; and (11) Maintaining open lines of communication with parents. “Balancing the demands of district/school policies with the needs of your program” was ranked as “Important.” In a similar study,
Fitzpatrick (2008, 2011) found that music teachers believed that a specialized set of skills were needed to be successful in an urban setting.

Based on the results of the current study, in addition to studies done by Bernard (2010), Fitzpatrick (2008, 2011), and Hamann and Gillespie (1998), the status of string orchestra programs within urban settings appears to be in good standing as reflected in student enrollment rates and the overall job satisfaction of teachers. Even though a majority of the participants indicated that they experienced some difficulties with recruitment, there was a noticeable increase in enrollment for a majority of the programs, which contributes to the forward progression of string programs within urban settings.

The current study also found that the overall job satisfaction of string teachers in urban settings could be attributed to the following factors: (1) the success of their orchestra program; (2) the quality and accessibility of instruments; (3) the attitudes of students; and (4) the amount of support from parents, administrators, and other colleagues. The responses for the success of participants’ orchestra program and the attitudes of their students were generally positive. A majority of the participants reported that they were dissatisfied to some degree with the quality and accessibility of instruments, in addition to the lack of administrative, parental, and colleague support. These findings are similar to those found in the studies of Fitzpatrick (2008, 2011) and Bernard (2010). Madsen and Hancock (2002) examined teacher retention and attrition and found that music teachers were leaving the profession due to a lack of administrative and parental support. If the issues of the accessibility of instruments and administrative, parental, and colleagues support could be improved, then the overall status of urban education will also improve.
Future Research

Approximately half of the participants surveyed in the current study had 15 or more years of teaching experience, and over half held a Master’s degree or above. This could be a possible indicator that experienced teachers with a higher level of education tend to have better job satisfaction while working in urban settings. Additional research is needed to establish the extent to which years of teaching experience and a higher level of education effects the job satisfaction of teachers who work in urban settings.

Another topic worth exploring in future research is the issue of availability of teacher preparation specific to teaching in urban settings. Participants in the current study expressed that they did not receive adequate training on how to effectively teach in an urban setting, and they believed that this training could be especially helpful for novice teachers. Future researchers should explore the reasons and factors that contribute to the content that is taught in college teacher education programs. Due to the nature of free-response answers, a study would lend itself to a qualitative approach. Through interviewing, future researchers would have the opportunity to further explore the attitudes of orchestra directors, and possibly students on a more in depth level. The current study examined string orchestra programs and was conducted in midsized urban settings due to the lack of research done in this specific type of setting. The profession could benefit from additional research done in all sizes of urban settings.

With continuing threats to the existence of music programs of all types in public schools, it is important that research continues to document the important role played by orchestra programs in all school settings, but perhaps most importantly in school settings where students may not have the opportunity to get to play a string instrument outside of
the regular school day. The gift of getting to play music in orchestra settings is one that
dedicated and determined orchestra directors are giving their students every day in urban
settings throughout the United States. It is the hope of the researcher that studies like this
one will help to contribute to inspiring more orchestra directors to consider teaching
careers in urban settings, and to provide music teacher preparation programs that will
better prepare novice teachers for the potential challenges often associated with the
classrooms located in urban settings.
Appendix A

Invitation and Consent Form

Dear --------,

My name is Keara Smith and I am currently working on my thesis as part of the requirements for completing a Masters of Music in Music Education degree at James Madison University. My thesis is examining the status of orchestra programs in midsized urban settings in the state of Virginia. I am hoping you might be willing to assist me by providing your valuable input by answering a number of questions in a short online survey.

The survey should take approximately 10 minutes of your time to complete, and all responses will remain anonymous, with any data obtained being kept in the strictest confidence and reported in a non-identifiable manner. I hope you will accept my invitation, as the final goal of my research is to be able to offer advice to new orchestra teachers in the field specific to the topic of teaching in urban settings. Please contact me if you would like to receive a copy of the final aggregate results after the study is completed.

After reading and agreeing to the content of the consent form, please click the link below to begin answering the survey questions. My goal is to have all surveys completed by Monday, March 31. If you have any questions regarding the survey, please feel free to email me or my advisor, Dr. Lisa Maynard at the address below.

Thank you, in advance for your consideration of, and participation in my survey.

Sincerely,

Keara Smith

Web Consent Form/Cover Letter

Identification of Investigators & Purpose of Study
You are being asked to participate in a research study conducted by Keara Smith from James Madison University. The purpose of this study is to collect data related to public school orchestra programs within midsized urban settings in the state of Virginia. The researcher seeks to identify the current status of these programs, while exploring the possible challenges and benefits of teaching in such settings, and making recommendations based on the data collected. This study will contribute to the completion of the investigator's master's thesis.
Research Procedures
This study consists of an online survey that will be administered to individual participants through Qualtrics, an online survey tool. You will be asked to provide answers to a series of questions related to public school orchestra programs within midsized cities).

Time Required
Participation in this study will require 10 minutes of your time.

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 reading the final product of the study and contributing to a field of study that is seldom explored.

Confidentiality
The results of this research will be reported in the researcher's master's thesis, which could potentially be presented at a professional conference. While individual responses are anonymously obtained and recorded online through the Qualtrics software, data is kept in the strictest confidence. No identifiable information will be collected from the participant and no identifiable responses will be presented in the final form of this study. All data will be stored in a secure location only accessible to the researcher. The researcher retains the right to use and publish non-identifiable data. At the end of the study, all records will be destroyed. 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. However, once your responses have been submitted and anonymously recorded you will not be able to withdraw from the study.

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:

Keara Smith
Music Department
James Madison University
Smith9kl@dukes.jmu.edu

Dr. Lisa Maynard
Music Department
James Madison University
maynarlm@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 been given the opportunity to ask questions about this study. I have read this consent and I understand what is being requested of me as a participant in this study. I certify that I am at least 18 years of age. By clicking on the link below, and completing and submitting this anonymous survey, I am consenting to participate in this research.

http://jmu.co1.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_8tYIY3gvO8w435j

Keara Smith March 22, 2014
Name of Researcher (Printed) Date

This study has been approved by the IRB, protocol # 14-0272.
Appendix B

Free-Response Question Transcriptions

Q8. Which of the following most influenced your decision to teach orchestra in an urban setting? (Participants who selected “other”)

Participant B: “My children attend school in this district and I wanted to be close to them.”

Participant D: “I moved to Virginia during the Summer of 2013 and took the only job I had interviewed for and was offered. I have always taught in an urban setting.”

Participant F: “I enjoyed my experience student teaching in this setting, so I continued in it.”

Participant K: “Having taught in the rural and suburban, I was interested in the change.”

Participant G: “I have always had a passion to help others regardless of setting.”

Participant N: “This is where I was offered a job.”

Participant O: “The job location is suitable for my plan.”

Q23. What advice would you give a new teacher who has just begun working in an urban setting?

Participant A: “The number one thing you can do to build a strong orchestra program is show the students that you genuinely care about them and their success in orchestra as well as their daily lives.”

Participant B: “Have a very organized and consistent discipline procedure. Communicate often with parents about upcoming events and classroom expectations. Have multiple
activities during the class period. Choose music that the students will be successful with - music that they like or respect and within their grasp of ability.”

 Participant C: “1. Be respectful of all students, even those you do not teach. 2. Be fair. 3. Be prepared/organized. 4. Have other interests outside of your work. 5. Maintain a regular sleep schedule.”

 Participant D: “I would let this new teacher know that it is so important to always keep an open mind and to seek out as many professional development opportunities as possible. Working in an urban setting presents a new challenge each day. It might be as simple as rearranging your schedule so that some students can re-take a test, but it can be as challenging as letting the majority of your beginning orchestra class leave halfway through the lesson every day so that they can get extra help in math. Teaching in an urban setting requires compromise and figuring out which battles are worth fighting. Also, chances are that you are not the only music teacher facing these challenges. Finding other supportive colleagues in your area can be a great way to get new ideas for lingering problems in your program. Finally, attending conferences such the ASTA National Conference is a great way to find out what is going on in programs around the country and what have worked (and not worked!) for them.”

 Participant E: “Do not be afraid. The students will attempt to challenge your authority and your knowledge. Stand your ground. Demonstrate to them that you know what you are doing.”

 Participant F: “Have a mentor that can help you every step of the way because it will be definitely challenging; however, it is also very rewarding!”
Participant G: “You are going to get overwhelmed: lesson plans, politics, programs, parents, and everything else expected and unexpected. Just keep in mind that it's not about you, it's about the students and taking them from what they know to where you want them to go.”

Participant H: “Try not to take poor student behavior personally. Set realistic goals, Talk to parents as much as possible.”

Participant I: “Classroom management has to come before actually teaching music.”

Participant J: “Get organized quick! ask questions from your co-workers.”

Participant K: “Be honest with yourself. Ask yourself why you are accepting this position. If your reason is attached to money, you should keep looking for a job that pays better. If you choose to work in an urban setting, talk to at least THREE people who are teaching in the field in the discipline you will be teaching. MUST be a competent educator.”

Participant L: “Have patience and develop a long term goal. Don't expect a huge program without having to work for it.”

Participant M: “Be consistent and fair. Show you care about the students and their progress, regardless of their playing level.”

Participant N: “Don't worry too much about the diversity of the students, just teach and care about them.”

Participant O: No response

Participant P Incomplete: No response

Participant Q Incomplete: No response

Participant R Incomplete: No response
Participant S Incomplete: No response

Q24. In your opinion, what key factors should be focused on by orchestra teachers, school administrators and teacher preparation programs to help maintain and build successful orchestra programs in urban settings?

Participant A: “Ensure that all students have access to instruments. Ensure that orchestra is considered to be an important part of the success of the school. Don't take students out of orchestra to better their core content skills and knowledge, but require that core content is integrated into the orchestra classroom.”

Participant B: “Discipline procedures Solid technique development knowledge of the repertoire and the method book. A positive and PATIENT attitude.”

Participant C: “Funding is critical to a successful program. Students in the urban setting are not often able to purchase their own instruments and class materials. In my opinion, colleges do not adequately prepare future teachers to work in an urban setting. Observation/participation classes should include more "hands on" hours. Future teachers should observe both successful and non-successful programs.”

Participant D: “I am currently in the first year of rebuilding two middle school orchestra programs. In general, I would say that building the orchestra program by making it relevant to the lives of young people is extremely important. Why should students take orchestra? What value does it have in the lives of middle school students? Teacher preparation programs need to provide as much quality pedagogical instruction as possible. In retrospect I realize that my undergraduate music education program prepared me as much as they possibly could, but there is so much learning that can only take place in the classroom in front of a room full of students. Have additional resources to return to
after entering the profession is extremely important. Where can an orchestra teacher go for helpful hints on bass technique, etc? There are so many wonderful resources available. Creating and providing young teachers with these resources is very important.”

Participant E: “Building programs from the bottom. Strong middle school programs are the key to successful high school programs. The concept of "grow your own" will only take you to a certain level.”

Participant F: “Students need to have many outreach programs to help orchestras be successful. The teachers need a lot of support from administrators and parents as well.”

Participant G: “Strong music education programs so that teachers know their professional subject with performance and teaching experience, a focus on improving the quality of student education for those to be taught, knowing that public education goes beyond the classroom.”

Participant H: “More strategies for classroom management. More funding -of course educating administrators about the value of music education.”

Participant I: “Supply everything for the students”

Participant J: “Relationships are important.”

Participant K: “Allow for collaborative planning - in-house (school) and community partnerships.”

Participant L: “Recruitment, retention, class discipline, instrument repair.”

Participant M: “Class room management skills, a course in teaching in an urban setting and special education classes.”

Participant N: “Strong fundamentals, scheduling classes that allow students of different levels to be successful.”
Participant O: No response

Participant P Incomplete: No response

Participant Q Incomplete: No response

Participant R Incomplete: No response

Participant S Incomplete: No response

Q25. In your opinion, what do you believe are some of the personal benefits and rewards of teaching in an urban setting?

Participant A: “Urban students don't want to be perfect, and they realize that they won't have everything in the world, but they want to feel successful. Watching my students walk off stage after a performance, gleaming in the limelight of being a "star," gives a type of job satisfaction that cannot be achieved elsewhere.”

Participant B: “These are some of the most creative people I have come in contact with.”

Participant C: “I have had the good fortune to work with many talented students over the years who would never have been given the opportunity to learn an instrument had it not been for the funding provided by my school district. I am a perfect example. I am the last of six children from a working class family who could never have afforded this opportunity. To see the joy in the face of a child who feels a sense of accomplishment on the instrument is the greatest reward.”

Participant D: “I love creating a safe and positive place for students to flourish. Many of my students come to school because they love participating in orchestra and I feel so lucky that I get to see their faces light up when they acquire a new skill or play something they didn't know that they could.”
Participant E: “If you can teach in an urban setting with all of the many challenges, you can teach anywhere.”

Participant F: “You open doors for students that they thought could never be opened or didn’t even know existed. What an awesome feeling.”

Participant G: “In teaching in an urban setting, you can build within the community. Students and families are close in location which helps in branching out which also takes time and commitment. One can also reach out to feeder schools and local businesses for support in building a solid program. The urban setting also offers life's amenities.”

Participant H: “We are near the Kennedy Center”

Participant I: “You stay physically fit running after the kids! Also, you can help them develop a love for music.”

Participant J: “A HONEST day's work. I see results EVERYDAY – even on my “challenging” days. The students appreciate that I WANT to teach them. They respond in kind.”

Participant K: “Some of these students come from severely broken families and lives. Music sometimes can be their only escape. I love seeing a student succeed in music when sometimes it's the only thing they have left.”

Participant L: “Seeing students grow to love and have an appreciation for the arts. Having an opportunity to expose them to live performances. Watching the students grow as young musicians.”

Participant N: “Student achievement”

Participant O: No response

Participant P Incomplete: No response
Participant Q Incomplete: No response

Participant R Incomplete: No response

Participant S Incomplete: No response
References


