

Liberty University

**SEL and Community Engagement Strategies for the
Recruitment and Retention of Suburban Middle School Band Students**

A Dissertation Submitted to
the Faculty of the School of Music
in Candidacy for the Degree of
Doctor of Music Education

by

Gina Vingara

Lynchburg, Virginia

April 2023

Abstract

Research has not yet found a correlation between community engagement and social-emotional learning (SEL) in a manner that benefits the recruitment and retention of suburban middle school band students. Teachers who create community engagement initiatives can boost the number of student recruits as the program becomes more widely recognized as a valuable asset of the school. This explanatory sequential mixed methods design study examined strategies regarding community engagement and SEL for recruiting and retaining middle school instrumental music education students. Perspectives on community engagement and SEL benefiting recruitment and retention of middle school band students emerged. Research revealed a connection between community engagement and social-emotional learning regarding middle school band recruitment and retention strategies. The researcher surveyed sixty-four suburban middle school band teachers regarding their perceptions of community engagement and SEL and their effects on recruitment and retention in their programs. The researcher interviewed four suburban middle school band teachers to gather their experiences and identify strategies in this area. This research can further advance middle school band teachers' approaches to recruiting and retaining students. Based on the findings of this research, researchers can conduct similar studies on recruitment and retention that embrace social-emotional learning competencies and community engagement initiatives for other types of music and elective courses.

Keywords: SEL, community engagement, partnerships, music, band, education, recruitment, retention, middle school

To Justin, my beloved fiancé, who has genuinely and selflessly been there for me every step of the way. Thank you for your immense amount of love, support, encouragement, and guidance. Being students together at Liberty University was such a blessing. This would not have been possible without you.

Acknowledgments

All praise, honor, and glory to Jesus Christ.

Thank you to my dad, Rick, for raising me to be a child of God who understood the value of hard work, being an educator, and educating myself to the fullest. Thank you for all your support and answering the phone whenever I call.

Thank you to my future mother-in-law, Mona, for loving and caring for me so selflessly. Thank you for all the Costco breaded chicken that fueled me during the writing of this thesis.

Thank you to Dr. Kathryn Wert and Dr. Karen Kuehmann for your time, attention, support, prayers, and guidance as I completed this thesis. I felt your presence from hundreds of miles away.

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Chapter One: Introduction

Suburban middle school band teachers (MSBT) embody a wide array of philosophies that guide their processes and strategies for recruiting and retaining students into their programs. Previous scholarly literature cited many reasons students join and persist in band programs. Cecil Adderley, Mary Kennedy, and William Berz found that students stayed in band for “musical, social, academic, and family reasons.”¹ Hyesoo Yoo found that the most vital factors influencing band student retention were social-contextual and physiological factors related to students’ perceptions of self-governance, competence, and relatedness.²

There may be other strategies to recruit and retain middle school band students that are equally effective. One strategy the researcher explored in this thesis was social-emotional learning, or SEL. Researchers, educators, and other professionals in the field of childhood education formed the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) in 1994.³ With their primary goal to attend to children’s social and emotional needs through education, they developed SEL. CASEL stated that the five competencies of SEL are self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. The five competencies are illustrated in a circle demonstrating how a variety of groups can provide SEL (see Figure 1.1). CASEL defines SEL in the following manner:

SEL is the process through which all young people and adults acquire and apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to develop healthy identities, manage emotions and

¹ Cecil Adderley, Mary Kennedy, and William Berz, “‘A Home Away from Home’: The World of the High School Music Classroom,” *Journal of Research in Music Education* 51, no. 3 (2003): 190. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3345373>.

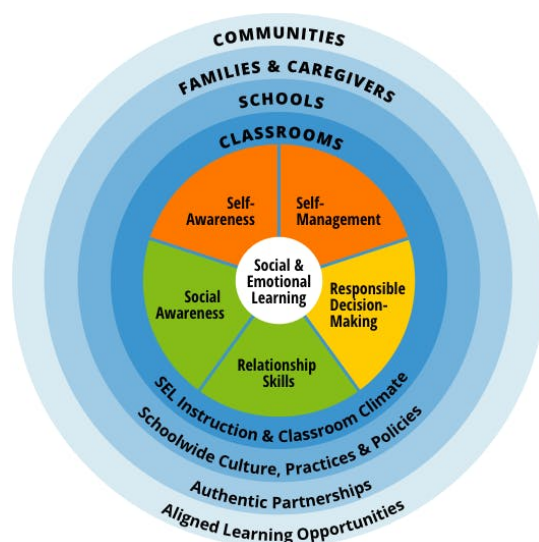
² Hyesoo Yoo, “A Motivational Sequence Model of High School Ensemble Students’ Intentions to Continue Participating in Music,” *Journal of Research in Music Education* 69, no. 2 (2021): 181. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022429420954880>.

³ “Our History,” About Us, CASEL, accessed February 5, 2023, <https://casel.org/about-us/our-history/>.

achieve personal and collective goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain supportive relationships, and make responsible and caring decisions.

SEL advances educational equity and excellence through authentic school-family-community partnerships to establish learning environments and experiences that feature trusting and collaborative relationships, rigorous and meaningful curriculum and instruction, and ongoing evaluation. SEL can help address various forms of inequity and empower young people and adults to co-create thriving schools and contribute to safe, healthy, and just communities.⁴

Figure 1.1. CASEL’s “CASEL wheel” demonstrating the SEL framework.⁵



A study by Gates Bryant et al. found that ninety-three percent of school districts in America adopt some form of social-emotional learning curriculum or philosophy.⁶ In her article “Social, Emotional, and Academic Development Through an Equity Lens,” Nancy Duchesneau recommended that educators “[e]ngage parents, students, and communities as full partners” to equitably implement SEL.⁷ Therefore, it may be worthwhile that researchers investigate the

⁴ “Fundamentals of SEL,” Fundamentals of SEL, CASEL, accessed February 5, 2023, <https://casel.org/fundamentals-of-sel/>.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Gates Bryant et al., “Finding Your Place: The Current State of K-12 Social Emotional Learning,” *Tyton Partners* (July 2020): 4.

⁷ Nancy Duchesneau, “Social, Emotional, and Academic Development Through an Equity Lens,” *The Education Trust* (August 6, 2020): 3.

effect of SEL and community engagement on the recruitment and retention of suburban middle school band programs.

Another strategy to recruit and retain suburban middle school band students that the researcher explored in this thesis was community engagement. Sam Redding stated that community engagement involves creating a “school community” with “people intimately associated with a school—students, their families, teachers, administrators, school staff, and volunteers—bound together by their common interest in the students served by the school.”⁸ MSBTs’ relationships with school personnel constitute examples of community engagement. These relationships include school administration, guidance counselors, custodians, maintenance staff, secretaries, and music teachers from feeder schools. MSBTs can create and maintain relationships with stakeholders not employed by the school, including parents and guardians of band students, Board of Education (BOE) members, and leaders of local organizations and groups. Local groups can include religious organizations, retirement communities, nursing homes, rehabilitation centers, parks, sporting facilities, or restaurants. Community engagement opportunities for middle school band students can exist with bands from local school districts, professional musicians who serve as clinicians or guest speakers, and other groups from the same school district such as community service or athletic clubs. Regardless of the type of partnership, Helen Westmoreland stated that “there is a need for schools to create collaborative and coordinated systems for family and community engagement.”⁹

⁸ Sam Redding, “The School Community: Working Together for Student Success,” in *Handbook on Family and Community Engagement*, eds. Sam Redding, Marilyn Murphy, and Pam Sheley (Lincoln, IL: Academic Development Institute/Center on Innovation and Improvement: 2011): 16. <https://www.schoolcommunitynetwork.org/downloads/FACEHandbook.pdf>.

⁹ Helen Westmoreland, “Introduction,” in *Handbook on Family and Community Engagement*, eds. Sam Redding, Marilyn Murphy, and Pam Sheley (Lincoln, IL: Academic Development Institute/Center on Innovation and Improvement: 2011): x.

Background of the Topic

Recruitment and retention are prominent terms in current educational literature and research. Malcolm Tight found that scholarly papers in English about either student retention or student engagement increased exponentially since 1960. In 1990, nine published papers discussed student retention and one discussed student engagement. In 2018, student retention was the topic of ninety-two published papers and student engagement was the topic of four hundred and four published papers.¹⁰ MSBTs can prioritize maintaining and sustaining partnerships with school stakeholders. In her paper “Engaging Families and Communities in School Turnarounds: When Students Can’t Wait,” Lauren Morando Rhim recommended that “a proactive and intentional ... strategy” should be developed to “enable schools and districts to leverage their power and expertise to successfully” promote positive change.¹¹ Some beneficial partnerships to MBSTs’ programs may include music teachers from feeder schools, guidance counselors who create the schedules, and school administrators who oversee and decide what they permit in their schools. In their article “The Prosocial Classroom: Teacher Social and Emotional Competence in Relation to Student and Classroom Outcomes,” Patricia A. Jennings and Mark T. Greenberg stated that teachers can implement SEL into their classrooms more beneficially when an effective principal supports them.¹² Middle school band teachers can also form and maintain partnerships with groups such as age-restricted communities, religious organizations, parks, restaurants, and sporting facilities.

¹⁰ Malcolm Tight, “Student Retention and Engagement in Higher Education,” *Journal of Further and Higher Education* 44, no. 5 (2020): 691. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0309877X.2019.1576860>.

¹¹ Lauren Morando Rhim, “Engaging Families and Communities in School Turnarounds: When Students Can’t Wait,” in *Handbook on Family and Community Engagement*, eds. Sam Redding, Marilyn Murphy, and Pam Sheley (Lincoln, IL: Academic Development Institute/Center on Innovation and Improvement: 2011): 34.

¹² Patricia A. Jennings and Mark T. Greenberg, “The Prosocial Classroom: Teacher Social and Emotional Competence in Relation to Student and Classroom Outcomes,” *Review of Educational Research* 79, no. 1 (2009): 504. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654308325693>.

SEL is a potential factor in the recruitment and retention of middle school band students. Teachers who embed SEL in their pedagogy and curriculum can promote educational equity, inclusion, and social justice. MSBTs may promote student retention by promoting social justice in their classrooms. In her article “Equity in Music Education: Why Equity and Social Justice in Music Education?” Juliet Hess stated that social justice involves undoing and challenging educational structures that produce mistreatment of any aspect of identity “as well as the work of challenging discourses that rationalize these structures.”¹³ CASEL stated that SEL “offers a way for adults to examine ... their own social and emotional competencies. ... [T]he policies and practices that they put in place may impact equity, and acknowledge and address the larger impact that systemic and individual bias, racism or oppression may have on the lives of their students.”¹⁴

Including students equitably in the band classroom means that all students are treated fairly and have equal opportunities, including special education and marginalized students. Lawmakers passed the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in 1975 that constitutes “a free and appropriate public school education for ... students” who demonstrate a “disability that adversely affects academic performance.”¹⁵ The National Center for Education Statistics noted that in the 2019-2020 school year, fourteen percent of American public school students received special education services through IDEA, a one-percent increase from the 2009-10 school year.¹⁶ These students are permitted to attend music classes regardless of their

¹³ Juliet Hess, “Equity in Music Education: Why Equity and Social Justice in Music Education?” *Music Educators Journal* 104, no. 1 (2017): 72. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0027432117714737>.

¹⁴ “Equity and SEL,” Equity and SEL, CASEL, accessed June 17, 2022, <https://schoolguide.casel.org/what-is-sel/equity-and-sel/>.

¹⁵ “Students With Disabilities,” Condition of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, last modified May 2022, accessed May 25, 2022, <https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator/cgg#fn1>.

¹⁶ “Students With Disabilities,” Condition of Education, National Center for Education Statistics.

specific classification. Congress passed the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) in 2015, which promotes inclusionary practices in music education by mandating Title I funds be more flexible “to support a well-rounded education,”¹⁷ including music education. When MSBTs implement the five SEL competencies in their instructional practice, special education students and their parents or guardians may feel more welcome to enroll and remain in band. In her dissertation “The Impact of Music Teacher Training on the Rate and Level of Involvement of Special Education Students in High School Band and Choir,” Carol Vincent Linsenmeier found that special education students participated in secondary band at a lower rate than general education students. Her sample revealed that the band program contained fifteen percent of the total general education population and 5.86 percent of the total special education population.¹⁸

Middle school band teachers have numerous opportunities to address SEL and community engagement issues. Teachers incorporating the five SEL competencies in their pedagogy may promote a more caring, safe, and inclusive learning environment. If amply promoted and strategically implemented, community engagement initiatives and partnerships with school stakeholders and community members can serve as a recruitment tool for students to join band. Researchers have yet to determine whether partnerships and community engagement initiatives in an elective music ensemble at any grade level can promote higher recruitment and retention rates.

¹⁷ “ESSA Fact Sheet,” National Association for Music Education, November 2015, accessed May 25, 2022, <https://nafme.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Fact-Sheet-ESSA-RL-12-7-Edits.pdf>.

¹⁸ Carol Vincent Linsenmeier, “The Impact of Music Teacher Training on the Rate and Level of Involvement of Special Education Students in High School Band and Choir,” PhD diss., Kent State University (October 2004): 91-2.

Theoretical Framework

The existing research the author compiled in this thesis documented potential factors that prompt students to join and remain in band. Many of these factors exist in a theoretical framework. Some theories that govern the two research questions are intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, inclusion, social-emotional learning, social identity, and culturally relevant pedagogy. Regarding community engagement and educational partnerships, fundamental theories include “overlapping spheres of influence” and Joyce L. Epstein’s Six Types of Involvement.¹⁹ According to Seth Pendergast, self-determination theory (SDT) and expectancy-value theory (EVT) were incorporated in this research study because they were “particularly well-suited for understanding some of the most common challenges related to retention and recruitment in the choral classroom.”²⁰ Pendergast sought to determine whether SDT and EVT can positively affect instrumental and choral music classrooms.

Boards of education often structure middle school band programs as an elective course. In the event of fiscal hardship, school districts may reallocate funding from elective and non-standardized tested subjects first. Kenneth Elpus and the Give a Note Foundation found that forty-two percent of music teachers surveyed “said that their program’s fundraising was essential to delivering an adequate music curriculum.”²¹ This reveals their music programs may not exist without outside funding sources. If there is little desire from students, families, and educational

¹⁹ Joyce L. Epstein, “School/Family/Community Partnerships: Caring for the Children We Share,” *Kappan* 92, no. 3 (November 2010): 82, 85. <https://doi.org/10.1177/003172171009200326>.

²⁰ Seth Pendergast, “Research-to-Resource: Two Motivation Frameworks for Encouraging School Choral Participation,” *Update: Applications of Research in Music Education* (March 17, 2022): 2. <https://doi.org/10.1177/87551233221082507>.

²¹ Kenneth Elpus, “The Status of Music Education in United States Public Schools,” *Give a Note Foundation* (2017): 24. https://www.giveanote.org/media/2017/09/The-Status-of-Music-Education-in-US-Public-Schools-2017_reduced.pdf.

stakeholders to maintain an instrumental music program, there is a greater chance that the BOE may eliminate the program.

The research displayed the effects of SEL, community engagement, and partnerships on education. Over forty states and over ninety percent of school districts in the United States partnered with CASEL's Collaborating States Initiative to create conditions for high-quality and systemic SEL in schools.²² Heather B. Weiss and M. Elena Lopez recommended a data-driven reform to school-and-family partnerships because “[f]amily engagement often consists of separate and uncoordinated programs.”²³ They noted that “[r]ather than focusing on ‘random acts,’ family engagement elevates the strategies that support learning, continuous improvement, and successful outcomes.”²⁴

Statement of the Problem

Researchers have minimally studied the effects of SEL and community engagement on the recruitment and retention of suburban middle school band students. No research exists on the perceived effects of recruitment and retention and educational partnerships between MSBTs and school staff such as guidance counselors, program supervisors, school administrators, and music teachers from feeder schools. Therefore, the benefits of MSBTs recruiting and retaining students through implementing SEL and community engagement are neither maximally recognized nor

²² “Collaborating States Initiative,” Our Mission and Work, CASEL, 2022, accessed September 3, 2022, <https://casel.org/about-us/our-mission-work/collaborating-states-initiative/>.

²³ Heather B. Weiss and M. Elena Lopez, “Making Data Matter in Family Engagement,” in *Handbook on Family and Community Engagement*, eds. Sam Redding, Marilyn Murphy, and Pam Sheley (Lincoln, IL: Academic Development Institute/Center on Innovation and Improvement: 2011): 22.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 22.

implemented. This thesis discusses how suburban MSBTs can recruit and engage students through SEL and community engagement initiatives.

Mutually-beneficial partnerships between the band program and various groups may provide students a heightened sense of value as members of an ensemble. To promote recruitment, suburban MSBTs should implement pedagogy and curriculum with which students can best connect and relate. Opportunities exist that may provide unique learning and performance experiences with musicians, families, and school stakeholders. In her article “School/Family/Community Partnerships: Caring for the Children We Share,” Epstein stated, “Collaborative work and thoughtful give-and-take among ... policy leaders, educators, and parents are responsible for the progress that has been made ... in understanding and developing school, family, and community partnerships.”²⁵

Statement of the Purpose

This study examined the relationship between SEL and community engagement and their effects on recruiting and retaining suburban middle school instrumental music students. The researcher surveyed sixty-four suburban MSBTs, then interviewed four to analyze their perceptions on the topic. From the findings of this study, other MSBTs can affirm or redirect their recruitment and retention efforts toward a philosophy that embeds SEL and community engagement initiatives based on participants’ perceptions and experiences of SEL and community engagement regarding recruitment and retention.

²⁵ Epstein, “School/Family/Community Partnerships,” 94.

Significance of the Study

Researchers have yet to study the effects of SEL and community engagement on the recruitment and retention of suburban middle school bands. This study is essential for suburban MSBTs, band teachers of all levels and socioeconomic statuses, preservice band teachers, and administrators and supervisors of middle school performing arts programs. This study can provide the rationale for teachers who work in districts that incorporate SEL curriculum to better align their practices to their schools' philosophies. MSBTs can identify vital school stakeholders or local groups that can partner with the band program to promote students' cultures, backgrounds, and lived experiences. These partnerships can be structured to engage and entice students to be part of these experiences year after year. Music supervisors and other school leaders can benefit from this study as they can pursue and allocate more funds for SEL activities, community engagement, and partnerships for their middle school bands. The Give a Note Foundation found that one-fifth of music teachers surveyed had inadequate funding from their school and school district.²⁶ In his article "The Status of Music Education in United States Public Schools," fifty percent of music teachers Elpus surveyed believed that the community support for their music program was somewhat adequate to very inadequate.²⁷

Research Questions

One research-based framework in education is Social-Emotional Learning. CASEL stated that SEL contains five "broad, interrelated areas that support learning and development": self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible

²⁶ Elpus, "The Status of Music Education," 30.

²⁷ Ibid., 30.

decision-making.²⁸ Some school districts incorporate SEL in their school goals or mission, vision, or philosophy statements because of its “wide range of outcomes, including academic performance, healthy relationships, [and] mental wellness.”²⁹ In their article “Developing Social and Emotional Learning Skills through Secondary School Concert Bands,” Skowrung Saibunmi, Nintida Chandransu, and Surasi Chanoksakul stated that school music ensembles are an ideal environment for students to learn SEL skills. These skills include managing their emotions, understanding the aesthetic and emotional components of music, relaxing, practicing imagery, and strengthening relationships.³⁰

According to Jennings and Greenberg, “the quality of teacher–student relationships, student and classroom management, and effective social and emotional learning program implementation all mediate classroom and student outcomes.”³¹ Band teachers can incorporate self-management, social awareness, and relationship skills in their community engagement endeavors. According to Judith M. S. Gross et al. in their article “Strong School–Community Partnerships in Inclusive Schools Are ‘Part of the Fabric of the School... We Count on Them,’” partnerships between the school and the community contribute to positive student outcomes.³² They stated that positive student outcomes can occur “when schools work collaboratively with community members, agencies, organizations, businesses, and industry around common goals.”³³

²⁸ “Fundamentals of SEL,” Fundamentals of SEL, CASEL, accessed February 5, 2023, <https://casel.org/fundamentals-of-sel/>.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Skowrung Saibunmi, Nintida Chandransu, and Surasi Chanoksakul, “Developing Social and Emotional Learning Skills through Secondary School Concert Bands,” *Malaysian Journal of Music* 10, no. 1 (2021): 3. <https://doi.org/10.37134/mjm.vol10.1.1.2021>.

³¹ Jennings and Greenberg, “The Prosocial Classroom,” 492.

³² Judith M. S. Gross et al., “Strong School–Community Partnerships in Inclusive Schools Are ‘Part of the Fabric of the School... We Count on Them,’” *School Community Journal* 25, no. 2 (2015): 11.

³³ Ibid.

Partnerships in education can be considered part of a broader educational endeavor called community engagement. Numerous community engagement initiative opportunities exist nationwide across various age groups and curricula, including in suburban middle school band programs.

This thesis strives to solve the following research questions:

Research Question One: What social-emotional learning and community engagement strategies can suburban middle school band teachers adopt to maximize the number of students entering the program?

Research Question Two: What social-emotional learning and community engagement strategies can suburban middle school band teachers adopt to maximize the number of students remaining in the program?

Hypotheses

Elpus and Carlos R. Abril stated in their article “Who Enrolls in High School Music? A National Profile of U.S. Students, 2009–2013” that “socioeconomic status (SES) and academic achievement [were] the most significant determinants” in students’ likelihood of joining band.³⁴ More pressing and fixable issues may limit recruitment and retention efforts than SES and academic achievement.

Research Question One: What social-emotional learning and community engagement strategies can suburban middle school band teachers adopt to maximize the number of students entering the program?

³⁴ Kenneth Elpus and Carlos R. Abril, “Who Enrolls in High School Music? A National Profile of U.S. Students, 2009–2013.” *Journal of Research in Music Education* 67, no. 3 (2019): 324. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022429419862837>.

Hypothesis One: Social-emotional learning and community engagement strategies that suburban middle school band teachers can adopt to maximize the number of students entering the program may include strengthening their relationships with school district personnel, utilizing SEL in the curriculum and pedagogy to promote cultural relevance, and promoting inclusivity through community outreach endeavors.

Middle school band students entering the program may be first-generation Americans. According to Kim Parker et al.'s research article "Demographic and Economic Trends in Urban, Suburban and Rural Communities," immigrants have accounted for the majority of population growth in the US since 1965.³⁵ Jeffrey S. Passel and D'Vera Cohn's research article "Children of Unauthorized Immigrants Represent Rising Share of K-12 Students" encouraged teachers to review the prevalence and demographics of these students in their ensembles and the entire school.³⁶ Because first-generation students may experience social and emotional hardships, MSBTs can promote transculturation. Renée Crawford's article "Beyond the Dots on the Page: Harnessing Transculturation and Music Education to Address Intercultural Competence and Social Inclusion" defined transculturation as a pedagogical strategy that emphasizes "reciprocal flows [of cultures,] and the transformative effects [they have] on ... understandings of self and others."³⁷ When repertoire aligns with students' cultures, students may feel more inclined to

³⁵ Kim Parker et al., "Demographic and Economic Trends in Urban, Suburban and Rural Communities," Pew Research Center, May 22, 2018, accessed August 7, 2022, <https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/2018/05/22/demographic-and-economic-trends-in-urban-suburban-and-rural-communities/>.

³⁶ Jeffrey S. Passel and D'Vera Cohn, "Children of Unauthorized Immigrants Represent Rising Share of K-12 Students," Pew Research Center, November 17, 2016, accessed June 17, 2022, <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/11/17/children-of-unauthorized-immigrants-represent-rising-share-of-k-12-students/>.

³⁷ Renée Crawford, "Beyond the Dots on the Page: Harnessing Transculturation and Music Education to Address Intercultural Competence and Social Inclusion," *International Journal of Music Education* 38, no. 4 (2020): 539. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0255761420921585>.

enroll and remain in band. Because it promotes the SEL competencies of self-awareness, social awareness, and relationship skills, transculturation may be a critical strategy for MSBTs to employ.³⁸

Research Question Two: What social-emotional learning and community engagement strategies can suburban middle school band teachers adopt to maximize the number of students remaining in the program?

Hypothesis Two: Social-emotional learning and community engagement strategies that suburban middle school band teachers can adopt to maximize the number of students remaining in the program may include maximizing student engagement through social-emotional learning, creating and sustaining educational partnerships, and implementing community engagement opportunities.

Most middle school band programs are scheduled as an elective course, meaning a minimum amount of students must enroll for the program to exist. Therefore, teachers should eliminate barriers that impede recruitment and retention. MSBTs may enhance engagement and retention by implementing SEL. SEL is a relatively new term given the long history of educational strategies, but it is gaining momentum in twenty-first-century American education. Bryant et al. found that seventy-three percent of American school districts have adopted SEL curriculum.³⁹ Research has yet to determine whether including SEL competencies in middle school band programs results in higher recruitment and retention rates. Mary Katherine Strachan

³⁸ Crawford, "Beyond the Dots on the Page," 539, 555, 556.

³⁹ Bryant et al., "Finding Your Place," 4.

found that while music teachers favored incorporating SEL in their classrooms, they needed to be more confident of its core ideologies and how to implement the five competencies of SEL.⁴⁰

Culturally-relevant pedagogy (CRP) is another emerging topic in education. Georgina Barton and Stewart Riddle stated that CRP is the manner in which music teachers “acknowledge socio-cultural differences in the practices, meaning-making, and performative expression of music in different learning environments to make careful pedagogical choices about the ways to best connect learners to music-making experiences.”⁴¹ MSBTs may find that students feel a greater sense of belonging in the classroom if their interests, cultures, and other characteristics are prevalent in the curriculum. When students can make this connection, this is an example of self-awareness, the first competency of SEL. When students feel a greater sense of belonging, they may be more likely to remain in band class. Seth Pendergast found that “culturally responsive practices may facilitate alignment between school music classes and student values, attitudes, and identities.”⁴²

To promote self-awareness in their classrooms and curricula, MSBTs can seek guidance from community members and educational stakeholders. Cultural relevance in the middle school band curriculum can segue into partnerships and community engagement opportunities with community members who share students’ demographics. As Pendergast noted, these interactions can promote the feelings of value that students experience as ensemble members, thereby

⁴⁰ Mary Katherine Strachan, “Social and Emotional Learning in the Elementary Music Classroom: A Teacher’s Perspective,” Master’s thesis, Belmont University (August 9, 2021): 53.

⁴¹ Georgina Barton and Stewart Riddle, “Culturally Responsive and Meaningful Music Education: Multimodality, Meaning-making, and Communication in Diverse Learning Contexts,” *Research Studies in Music Education* 44, no. 2 (2022): 359. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1321103X211009323>.

⁴² Seth Pendergast, “Understanding Participation in Secondary Music Classes: A Literature Review,” *Update: Applications of Research in Music Education* 39, no. 1 (2020): 38. <https://doi.org/10.1177/8755123320928479>.

promoting program retention.⁴³ Kennedy found that male middle school choral students enjoyed participating in choir because of their “love of singing, influence of the teacher, and the company of friends.”⁴⁴ While “the company of friends” is not the complete definition of community engagement, it alludes that some students enjoy participating and remaining in music ensembles for the feeling of community garnered through rehearsals and performances. Community in the classroom can pertain to virtual or live guests, collaborating with another class or department in the school, or field trip outreach opportunities. Teachers that frequently promote community may benefit from higher student retention.

Core Concepts

The two foundational concepts of this thesis were recruitment and retention in middle school instrumental music education. Recruitment is the teachers’ ability to garner students’ commitment and participation in an ensemble. Retention, also referred to as student engagement, is how students remain in an ensemble from one year to the next. In their article “Applied Learning and Community Partnerships Improve Student Engagement in Australia,” Bruce Pridham and Craig Deed stated that applied learning, such as playing instruments, “and community partnerships together make a promising framework for enhancing student engagement in the middle years.”⁴⁵

⁴³ Pendergast, “Understanding Participation in Secondary Music Classes,” 38.

⁴⁴ Mary A. Kennedy, “‘It’s Cool Because We Like to Sing!’ Junior High School Boys’ Experience of Choral Music as an Elective,” *Research Studies in Music Education* 18, no. 1 (2002): 29. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1321103X020180010401>.

⁴⁵ Bruce Pridham and Craig Deed, “Applied Learning and Community Partnerships Improve Student Engagement in Australia,” *Middle School Journal* 44, no. 1 (September 2012): 37. <https://doi.org/10.2307/41763107>.

Enhanced student engagement can be indicative of student wellness. The researcher will discuss student wellness in this study through SEL. Founded by CASEL in 1994, SEL is “the process through which all [students] acquire and apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to develop healthy identities, manage emotions and achieve personal and collective goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain supportive relationships, and make responsible and caring decisions.”⁴⁶ When MSBTs actively incorporate SEL competencies in the classroom, this can yield positive results for students, staff, and the school climate. Kimberly A. Schonert-Reichl found teachers of prekindergarten through grade twelve believed that incorporating SEL in the classroom can benefit students from any socioeconomic status. Schonert-Reichl stated, “SEL has many positive effects - on school attendance and graduation, standardized test scores, and overall academic performance, college preparation, workforce readiness, and citizenship.”⁴⁷

When MSBTs embrace SEL in their pedagogy, they can concurrently promote equity and inclusion. CASEL stated that the “[s]ystemic implementation of SEL both fosters and depends upon an equitable learning environment, where all students and adults feel respected, valued, and affirmed in their individual interests, talents, social identities, cultural values and backgrounds.”⁴⁸ According to CASEL, educators incorporating SEL in classrooms can help “promote understanding, examine biases, reflect on and address the impact of racism, build cross-cultural relationships, and cultivate adult and student practices that close opportunity gaps and create a

⁴⁶ Nick Woolf, “CASEL Releases New Definition of SEL: What You Need to Know,” *Panorama Education*, 2020, accessed May 24, 2022, https://artsedsel.org/wp-content/uploads/CASEL-Releases-New-Definition-of-SEL_-What-You-Need-to-Know.pdf.

⁴⁷ Kimberly A. Schonert-Reichl, “Social and Emotional Learning and Teachers,” *The Future of Children* 27, no. 1 (Spring 2017): 140. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/i40176578>.

⁴⁸ “Equity and SEL,” *Equity and SEL*, CASEL, accessed July 4, 2022, <https://schoolguide.casel.org/what-is-sel/equity-and-sel/>.

more inclusive school community.”⁴⁹ Robert J. Jagers et al. stated that when educators include SEL purposefully and consistently, “students and teachers build strong, respectful relationships founded on an appreciation of similarities and differences, learn to critically examine root causes of inequity, and develop collaborative solutions to community and societal problems.”⁵⁰ In their article “Inclusion: Dimensions of Inclusion in Education,” Ane Qvortrup and Lars Qvortrup created a multi-level definition of inclusion that specified whether students were included in the community physically and socially and whether they felt a sense of belonging and recognition by community members.⁵¹ This perspective of inclusion may have implications regarding retaining suburban middle school band students.

Qvortrup and Qvortrup’s definition of inclusion is similar to educational partnerships. Educational partnerships constitute a relationship between a member or group of a school district and a member or group who is or is not directly affiliated with the school district. Partnerships may require repeated intentional interactions to benefit students’ feelings of inclusion. Maria Elena Garcia et al. stated that educational partnerships are “an ongoing process of meaningful interaction between schools and families that [involve] two-way communication and a purposeful focus on supporting student learning.”⁵² MSBTs can advance educational partnerships through time, communication, and creating mutually-beneficial partnerships. These initiatives are considered community engagement, where one community person or group engages with a

⁴⁹ “Equity and SEL,” CASEL.

⁵⁰ Robert J. Jagers, Deborah Rivas-Drake, and Teresa Borowski, “Equity and Social and Emotional Learning: A Cultural Analysis,” *Frameworks Briefs: Special Issues Series* (November 2018): 3.

⁵¹ Ane Qvortrup and Lars Qvortrup, “Inclusion: Dimensions of Inclusion in Education,” *International Journal of Inclusive Education* 22, no. 7 (2018): 812.

⁵² Maria Elena Garcia et al., “Toolkit of Resources for Engaging Families and the Community as Partners in Education Part 1: Building an Understanding of Family and Community Engagement,” *Institute of Education Sciences: U.S. Department of Education* (September 2016): 4. https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/rel/regions/pacific/pdf/REL_2016148.pdf.

person or group of the school in a mutually-beneficial manner. Garcia et al. recommended that teachers reflect on their beliefs and assumptions before beginning educational partnerships so the partnerships may be more successful.⁵³ MSBTs should self-reflect to better understand how their interpretation of their culture affects their perceptions of their schools' families and communities as educational partners.⁵⁴

MSBTs may experience unique challenges regarding forming and maintaining educational partnerships. In her article "Alone All Together- The Conundrum of Music Teacher Isolation and Connectedness," Laura Sindberg stated that band teachers often experience professional isolation because of their small representation within the staff population, isolation from the regular school curriculum, and distance between the music wing of their school and the other classrooms.⁵⁵ MSBTs can form partnerships with music colleagues, non-music colleagues, guidance counselors, the music supervisor, and district administrators. Other partnerships and community engagement opportunities MSBTs can form include local retirement communities, nursing homes, district feeder programs, history and world language classes, professional musicians, and other musical ensembles. David S. Miller et al. recommended that "music teacher educators might consider incorporating strategies for identifying viable community partnerships to help fund programs."⁵⁶ NAFME recommended that teachers should work "closely with teachers in feeder schools" when "re-recruiting students into the music program."⁵⁷

⁵³ Garcia et al., "Toolkit of Resources," 7.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 7.

⁵⁵ Laura Sindberg, "Alone All Together- The Conundrum of Music Teacher Isolation and Connectedness," *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education* no. 189 (Summer 2011): 8. <https://doi.org/10.5406/bulcouresmusedu.189.0007>.

⁵⁶ David S. Miller, Rebecca B. MacLeod, and Jennifer S. Walter, "Status of Band and Orchestra Programs in North Carolina," *American String Teachers Association* 11 (2021): 62.

⁵⁷ "NAfME and NFHS Return to Music Guidance Phase III August 2021," For Teachers, NAFME, accessed June 30, 2022, August 2021, <https://nafme.org/my-classroom/nafme-and-nfhs-return-to-music-guidance-phase-iii-august-2021/>.

Definition of Terms

Multiple terms exist in this thesis that the author defined for further clarification.

Acculturation: Crawford defined acculturation as “the transition process that a person or group goes through when adjusting to a new lifestyle and foreign culture.” Acculturation “often involves changes in identity, values, behaviour, thoughts, attitudes and feelings.”⁵⁸

Community engagement: connecting with members, groups, or community organizations in a mutually beneficial manner. Westmoreland stated that community engagement initiatives are intentional partnerships that “[build] social capital and community, as well as [provide] additional resources and opportunities for young people.”⁵⁹

Culturally responsive teaching (CRT): Constance L. McKoy defined CRT as a pedagogical disposition where educators create a supportive environment that nurtures the well-being of the whole child. MSBTs can employ CRT by “affirming diverse cultural characteristics, perspectives, and experiences and using them to form bridges to new learning and ideas.”⁶⁰

District administrators: assistant principals, vice-principals, principals, department supervisors, assistant superintendents, and superintendents

Educational equity: how all students possess the same educational opportunities, resources, and rigor regardless of socioeconomic status or identifying characteristics⁶¹

Educational partnerships: Partnerships between MSBTs and any school stakeholders that are purposeful, sustainable, and mutually beneficial. Oliver C. Moles, Jr. and Arnold F. Fege stated

⁵⁸ Crawford, “Beyond the Dots on the Page,” 538.

⁵⁹ Westmoreland, “Introduction,” x.

⁶⁰ Constance L. McKoy, “Culturally Responsive Teaching: What it is, and Why it’s Important in Music Education,” *Southwestern Musician* (November 2021): 22-4. https://www.tmea.org/wp-content/uploads/Southwestern_Musician/Articles/CulturallyResponsiveTeaching-Nov2021.pdf.

⁶¹ Jagers, Rivas-Drake, and Borowski, “Equity and Social and Emotional Learning,” 1-2.

that educational partnerships “are built on close collaboration and interaction[,] and are vital “to meaningful family engagement.”⁶²

Feeder school: a school from which students progress into a higher-level school⁶³

Feeder programs: any elementary school in MBSTs’ district that contains students who enter middle school when they come of age.

Inclusion: In their article titled “Music Research in Inclusive School Settings: 1975 to 2013,” Judith A. Jellison and Ellary A. Draper stated that inclusion constitutes direct interaction between students with disabilities, marginalized or underrepresented students, neuro-typical students, and general education students in the same classroom environment.⁶⁴

Motivation: Edward P. Asmus defined motivation as “the driving force behind behavior. It provides the energy for seeking out and being involved in tasks. Motivation can serve as a prominent factor that compels students to participate in music learning activities and to acquire the knowledge or skills that are the focus of these activities.”⁶⁵ One type of motivation is intrinsic motivation. Asmus defined intrinsic motivation as motivation due to factors within the learner. He stated in his article “Motivation in Music Teaching and Learning” that intrinsic motivation is also when students make “internal decisions about the amount of striving” they should place in their learning context.⁶⁶ Intrinsic motivation is a cognitive process that “assumes that the learner

⁶² Oliver C. Moles, Jr. and Arnold F. Fege, “New Directions for Title I Family Engagement: Lessons from the Past,” in *Handbook on Family and Community Engagement*, eds. Sam Redding, Marilyn Murphy, and Pam Sheley (Lincoln, IL: Academic Development Institute/Center on Innovation and Improvement: 2011): 10.

⁶³ *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. “Feeder school,” accessed September 8, 2022, <http://www.google.com/search>.

⁶⁴ Judith A. Jellison and Ellary A. Draper, “Music Research in Inclusive School Settings: 1975 to 2013,” *Journal of Research in Music Education* 62, no. 4 (2015): 327. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022429414554808>.

⁶⁵ Edward P. Asmus, “Motivation in Music Teaching and Learning,” *The Quarterly Journal of Music Teaching and Learning* 5, no. 4 (1994): 6.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 6.

evaluates internal drives in light of the external situation.”⁶⁷ Another type of motivation is extrinsic motivation. Asmus defined extrinsic motivation as “motivation due to factors outside of the learner. These factors may include reinforcement contingencies, environmental factors, and social factors.”⁶⁸

Recruitment: finding new people to enroll in an organization, class, or group.⁶⁹

Retention: like persistence, retention reflects the number of students who remain within a group or organization from one interval to the next.⁷⁰

School community: Redding stated that a school community “consists of the people intimately associated with a school—students, their families, teachers, administrators, school staff, and volunteers—bound together by their common interest in the students served by the school.”⁷¹

Social-Emotional Learning (SEL): CASEL stated that SEL “is the process through which all [students] acquire and apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to develop healthy identities, manage emotions and achieve personal and collective goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain supportive relationships, and make responsible and caring decisions.”⁷²

⁶⁷ Asmus, “Motivation in Music Teaching and Learning,” 6-7.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁶⁹ *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. “Recruitment,” accessed September 8, 2022, <http://www.google.com/search>.

⁷⁰ “What is Retention,” Dictionary, IGI Global, accessed September 8, 2022, <https://www.igi-global.com/dictionary/student-retention-online-education/25294>.

⁷¹ Redding, “The School Community,” 16.

⁷² “Fundamentals of SEL,” Fundamentals of SEL, CASEL, accessed January 22, 2023, <https://casel.org/fundamentals-of-sel/>.

Socioeconomic status (SES): The American Psychological Association defined SES as “the social standing or class of an individual or group. It is often measured as a combination of education, income and occupation.”⁷³

Self-concept: students’ estimates of their abilities and universal sense of self⁷⁴

Self-efficacy: like self-concept, but regarding students’ abilities to perform activities and achieve outcomes⁷⁵

Stakeholders: any person or group affiliated with and influences students and their school district. Stakeholders possess powerful resources that educators and school districts can leverage.⁷⁶ Potential types of affiliation include financial, social, emotional, familial, political, professional, musical, and educational.

Transculturation: Crawford defined transculturation as “the dynamics of identity and community construction within the context of power relations in ... society.”⁷⁷ Transculturation “relates to the creative construction of new social and cultural meanings and resources as part of the process of intercultural relations.”⁷⁸

⁷³ “Socioeconomic Status,” Psychology Topics, American Psychological Association, accessed September 8, 2022, <https://www.apa.org/topics/socioeconomic-status>.

⁷⁴ Olivia Gail Tucker, “Positive Teacher Influence Strategies to Improve Secondary Instrumental Students’ Motivation and Perceptions of Self,” *Update: Applications of Research in Music Education* 36, no. 3 (2018): 6. <https://doi.org/10.1177/8755123317733109>.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ *Handbook on Family and Community Engagement*, eds. Sam Redding, Marilyn Murphy, and Pam Sheley (Lincoln, IL: Academic Development Institute/Center on Innovation and Improvement: 2011): 22, 30, 33.

⁷⁷ Crawford, “Beyond the Dots on the Page,” 539.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

Chapter Summary

MSBTs should employ specific pedagogical strategies to maximize the number of students entering and remaining in their programs such as SEL and community engagement. According to Jennings and Greenberg, various contextual factors may influence teachers' social-emotional competencies, including “coteacher support, principal and district leadership, school climate and norms, school district values[,] ... in-service opportunities, community culture, and local and federal education policy and demands.”⁷⁹ Substantial relationships between MSBTs and school district personnel can improve the social-emotional competencies of the students and staff, provide band students with community engagement opportunities, and provide a future platform for MSBTs to advocate for strategies that can improve student recruitment and retention. Jennings and Greenberg stated that “[s]ocially and emotionally competent teachers are culturally sensitive, understand that others may have different perspectives than they do, and take this into account in relationships with students, parents, and colleagues.”⁸⁰ Therefore, socially and emotionally competent MSBTs who implement community engagement, partnerships, and SEL may benefit the recruitment and retention of their band programs.

⁷⁹ Jennings and Greenberg, “The Prosocial Classroom,” 494.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 495.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

SEL

Many school districts are increasingly implementing SEL into their curricula.⁸¹ According to CASEL, twenty-seven states provide free-standing K-12 SEL competencies, and forty-four states offer guidance to implement SEL, an increase of fifty and seventy percent, respectively, over the past two years.⁸² Thirty-nine state departments of education provide websites dedicated specifically for SEL, an increase of thirty percent over the past two years.⁸³ Scott N. Edgar and Bob Morrison stated, “As K-12 districts and administrators ... [feel] more pressure to address students’ social and emotional health, teachers are going to be asked to embed SEL instruction into their subject area.”⁸⁴ Caitlin M. Dermody and Linda Dusenbury cited that some reasons for the growth of K-12 SEL policy were the challenges students faced during the Covid-19 pandemic, “the need for a more equitable school system, and the call to prepare students for the future.”⁸⁵

One example of a state where teachers embedded SEL instruction into their instructional practices, as Edgar and Morrison described, was New Jersey. In their article “A Vision for Social Emotional Learning,” they stated that New Jersey school districts “are required by law to revise their own curricula to come into alignment with” the SEL Arts Education Standards

⁸¹ Scott N. Edgar, *Music Education and Social Emotional Learning: The Heart of Teaching*, (Chicago: GIA Publications, 2017), 24.

⁸² Caitlin M. Dermody and Linda Dusenbury, “2022 Social and Emotional Learning State Scorecard Scan,” *CASEL* (April 22, 2022): 3-4. <https://casel.org/2022-state-scan/?view=true>.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁸⁴ Scott N. Edgar and Bob Morrison, “A Vision for Social Emotional Learning and Arts Education Policy,” *Arts Education Policy Review* 122, no. 3 (2021): 148. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10632913.2020.1774830>.

⁸⁵ Dermody and Dusenbury, “2022 Social and Emotional Learning,” 5.

Framework.⁸⁶ They suggested that “additional attention in teacher preparation programs will be warranted ... [a]s K-12 districts begin to implement SEL instruction more regularly and include SEL as an expectation in instruction.”⁸⁷

In his article “Social Emotional Learning and Music Education: Now More Than Ever,” Edgar recommended that music teachers can intentionally incorporate SEL by building relationships with students, selecting repertoire to which students can connect, and providing students with opportunities to self-reflect, connect, and perform music.⁸⁸ He referred to this form of SEL as musical SEL, or MSEL.⁸⁹ For MSEL to be practical and effective for students, Edgar posited that teachers should contextualize SEL within the subject matter instead of creating separate lessons on SEL.⁹⁰ Edgar conducted a year-long ethnographic professional development (PD) project in a secondary band program regarding MSEL. He determined that both students and teachers believe MSEL must be organic to each classroom environment, and that selecting repertoire should serve as a conduit to connect to students.⁹¹

In his book *Music Education and Social Emotional Learning*, Edgar provided research-driven guidance regarding music educators implementing SEL in any setting.⁹² For SEL to be effective, Edgar stated that it should “build connections to school and community through establishing a caring, engaging environment, ... provide ... culturally appropriate instruction,”

⁸⁶ Edgar and Morrison, “A Vision for Social Emotional Learning,” 146.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 148.

⁸⁸ Scott N. Edgar, “Social Emotional Learning and Music Education: Now More Than Ever,” *Texas Music Educators Association* (June 2020): 1-2.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 1.

⁹⁰ Scott N. Edgar, “Music Education and Social Emotional Learning: Research Applications for the Classroom,” *PMEA News* (2020): 62.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 63.

⁹² Edgar, *Music Education and Social Emotional Learning: The Heart of Teaching*, 15.

and “engage families and communities as partners.”⁹³ He cautioned that one challenge to implementing SEL in music education is “creating partnerships with parents.”⁹⁴ Edgar stated that “one crucial element of SEL is community development,” which begins in the classroom and expands to the outside community.⁹⁵ To successfully implement MSEL, Edgar recommended that teachers receive high-quality SEL professional development, embed SEL objectives and procedures in their lesson plans, and “reach a level of social and emotional competency themselves.”⁹⁶ According to Edgar, some criticized SEL because it may eliminate time from the regular curriculum to assess SEL’s implementation and effectiveness, it may promote character indoctrination, and there may be inconsistencies in the results of SEL because not every culture interprets emotions similarly.⁹⁷

Like Edgar, Schonert-Reichl stated that teachers must possess some level of competency in SEL to promote and teach SEL in a classroom setting. She noted that discussions regarding SEL should include students’ SEL, teachers’ SEL, and the learning context.⁹⁸ In her article “Social and Emotional Learning and Teachers,” she stated that “[c]lassrooms with warm teacher-child relationships promote deep learning among students: children who feel comfortable with their teachers and peers are more willing to grapple with challenging material and persist at difficult learning tasks.”⁹⁹ The learning context consists of “communication styles, performance expectations, classroom structures and rules, school organizational climate, commitment to

⁹³ Edgar, *Music Education and Social Emotional Learning: The Heart of Teaching*, 15.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 24.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 17.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 15, 17, 22.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 23.

⁹⁸ Schonert-Reichl, “Social and Emotional Learning,” 138.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

academic success for all students, district policies, and parental and community involvement.”¹⁰⁰

The author of this thesis composed the two research questions partially from research such as Schonert-Reichl, who posited that SEL’s effect on students may connect to parental and community involvement in education.

While Schonert-Reichl discussed the benefits of SEL for students school-wide, Daniel S. Hellman and Stephanie Milling discussed SEL benefits for students in the arts. In their article analyzing assurance standards and art course descriptions, Hellman and Milling stated that arts education standards should “promote active engagement in reflective practice.”¹⁰¹ They presumed this reflective practice should integrate “knowledge and understanding of self-awareness, social awareness, arts disciplines, school and community context, and human development.”¹⁰² These are “priorities that should be focal points of collaboration.”¹⁰³ Hellman and Milling analyzed arts teacher accreditation standards, preservice teacher standards, and descriptions of course titles and coursework in professional arts teacher education programs to determine their alignment with SEL standards.¹⁰⁴ The researchers found varying degrees of SEL implementation, with some documents outlining more explicit SEL standards than others.¹⁰⁵ Some standards contained teacher-to-community partnerships as a component of SEL, such as the Missouri preservice teacher standards.¹⁰⁶ Hellman and Milling caution that they “have

¹⁰⁰ Schonert-Reichl, “Social and Emotional Learning,” 139.

¹⁰¹ Daniel S. Hellman and Stephanie Milling, “Social Emotional Learning in Arts Teacher Education Policy: A Content Analysis of Assurance Standards and Course Descriptions,” *Arts Education Policy Review* 122, no. 3 (2020): 172. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10632913.2020.1793251>.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 177.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 176.

concerns that an extensive reliance on external measures of evaluation can lead to variations of SEL that can compromise the integrity and authenticity of arts learning.”¹⁰⁷

Self-Awareness and Self-Management

Brian P. Shaw had similar concerns as Hellman and Milling regarding the balance between SEL and music education. He conducted a national analysis to examine the association between secondary students’ music coursetaking and their social-emotional competencies.¹⁰⁸ In Shaw’s study, ninth-grade band students enrolled for three or four years demonstrated higher feelings of school engagement and belongingness than students enrolled in band for zero, one, or two years.¹⁰⁹ Engagement and belongingness are components of the self-awareness and self-management competencies of SEL.¹¹⁰ MSBTs should incorporate MSEL intentionally to maximize its potential benefits.¹¹¹ Shaw questioned, however, “whether explicitly centering SEL is a worthwhile aim for the profession in light of the risk that such a pursuit could undermine other aims of music education.”¹¹²

Richard E. Klinedinst also found that students with higher levels of some SEL competencies may remain in band longer than students with less of these competencies. In his study “Predicting Performance Achievement and Retention of Fifth-Grade Instrumental

¹⁰⁷ Hellman and Milling, “Social Emotional Learning in Arts Teacher Education Policy,” 178.

¹⁰⁸ Brian P. Shaw, “A National Analysis of Music Coursetaking, Social Emotional Learning, and Academic Achievement Using Propensity Scores,” *Journal of Research in Music Education* 69, no. 4 (2022): 384. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00224294211006415>.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 390, 392.

¹¹⁰ Woolf, “CASEL Releases New Definition of SEL,” 2.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 396.

¹¹² *Ibid.*

Students,” Klinedinst determined which factors had “predictive value for retention of fifth-grade beginning instrumental music students.”¹¹³ He found that students’ attitudes towards music and self-concept in music were significant predictors of retention among beginner instrumental band students.¹¹⁴ Attitude and self-concept are components of the self-awareness and self-management competencies of SEL.¹¹⁵

Agnès Ros-Morente et al. extended the theory to posit that music courses may improve students’ SEL competencies. In their article “Beyond Music: Emotional Skills and its Development in Young Adults in Choirs and Bands,” Ros-Morente et al. stated that music may be a valuable “tool that can ... effectively ... enhance young people’s emotional understanding, well-being and general health.”¹¹⁶ They studied the socioemotional profiles of 660 adolescents enrolled in either band or chorus and 655 not in band or chorus to identify whether studying music can benefit students’ emotional development, motivation, feelings, relationships, satisfaction with life, and leadership capacity.¹¹⁷ The researchers found that “statistically significant differences exist[ed] between musicians and non-musicians” in all variables they measured.¹¹⁸ According to the researchers, studying music education at the adolescent level can be “an important resource to help [students] acquire and strengthen their emotional and social

¹¹³ Richard E. Klinedinst, “Predicting Performance Achievement and Retention of Fifth-Grade Instrumental Students,” *Journal of Research in Music Education* 39, no. 3 (1991): 226. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3344722>.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 235.

¹¹⁵ Woolf, “CASEL Releases New Definition of SEL,” 2.

¹¹⁶ Agnès Ros-Morente et al., “Beyond Music: Emotional Skills and its Development in Young Adults in Choirs and Bands,” *International Journal of Music Education* 37, no. 4 (2019): 543. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0255761419853634>.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 536, 539-40.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 542.

skills.”¹¹⁹ While this study did not connect social and emotional competencies of middle school band student retention, the results suggested that some students may experience an overall improved quality of life by participating in band for multiple years consecutively.

While Ros-Morente et al. treated SEL as the dependent variable, J. Si Millican studied SEL as an independent variable regarding band student retention. He researched “the selection and assignment of band instruments and how those decisions may affect students’ success in band as measured by ... continuation in music programs.”¹²⁰ Millican noted that some factors that may help determine how long students remain in band include students’ relationships with their family and friends and nonmusical factors such as motivation.¹²¹ Extrinsic and intrinsic motivation may be other determining factors regarding band student retention. Millican found that “music students who [were] more motivated [were] often more ... socially integrated into the classroom, and [were] therefore more likely to develop intrinsic value for the activity. These students may achieve at a higher level and persist in the activity.”¹²² Students’ motivation levels may help them overcome physical, musical, or socioeconomic limitations which prevent them from persisting in band.¹²³

In their study “Identity and Practice: The Motivational Benefits of a Long-term Musical Identity,” Paul Evans and Gary E. McPherson identified critical factors regarding band student retention. They interviewed students immediately before their first experience in band to identify

¹¹⁹ Ros-Morente et al., “Beyond Music,” 543.

¹²⁰ J. Si Millican, “Band Instrument Selection and Assignment: A Review of the Literature,” *Update: Applications of Research in Music Education* 35, no. 2 (2017): 46. <https://doi.org/10.1177/8755123315610174>.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 49-50.

¹²² Millican, “Band Instrument Selection and Assignment,” 50.

¹²³ *Ibid.*

how many years they anticipated playing their instrument.¹²⁴ Throughout the first three years of students' band instruction, the researchers interviewed the students and their mothers multiple times.¹²⁵ Band mothers provided information regarding how often their children practiced their instrument. The researchers administered standardized performance tests in three-year increments for the students in this study.¹²⁶ They gathered information from participants ten years later to measure how long students continued to play their instrument and any other musical activities in which they participated in high school.¹²⁷ The researchers found that students "who practiced more and had an underlying long-term view of themselves as musicians ... persisted with music learning and playing for longer than students who had only a short-term view of themselves learning music."¹²⁸ The researchers' conclusions closely parallel some SEL competencies including self-awareness, self-management, and social awareness. Evans and McPherson elaborated:

The study reported here has demonstrated the importance of establishing a sense of personal identity in relation to music from the outset of music learning. Self-regulation of practice and day-to-day motivation are critically important, but to energize these facets of motivation and self-regulation, developing musicians may need to contextualize these goals and regulatory strategies within their own personal sense of identity – their own working theory of their self – and to incorporate a long-term view of their self as being somebody for whom music plays a significant role in their life. Our results suggest that social environments in which music plays an active part are conducive to children being able to form a long-term view of themselves as musicians. This long-term view, coupled with regular practice, helped the children in our study to sustain motivation for playing a musical instrument, and helped them to achieve more highly than students who had only a short-term view of themselves as developing musicians.¹²⁹

¹²⁴ Paul Evans and Gary E. McPherson, "Identity and Practice: The Motivational Benefits of a Long-term Musical Identity," *Psychology of Music* 43, no. 3 (2015): 410. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0305735613514471>.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 409.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 410.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 415-6.

¹²⁹ Evans and McPherson, "Identity and Practice," 421.

In his article “Motivation in Music Teaching and Learning,” Asmus urged music teachers to “constantly be alert to what motivates students and how best to apply these motivators to improve student achievement in music” to promote student recruitment and retention.¹³⁰ He noted that students’ self-perception, self-concept, self-efficacy, and self-esteem “are highly related to both achievement and motivation.”¹³¹ Asmus stated, “The relationship of self-concept with attitudes ... and ... motivation for music reveals the importance of self-perceptions in attitude formation regarding music achievement tasks.”¹³² The more control students have over their learning situation, and the more intrinsic the pedagogical motivators are, Asmus specified, “the more likely self-perceptions will be enhanced.”¹³³ This view correlates to the second competency of SEL, self-management. Teachers must provide feedback to students that develops students’ attributions and forms their self-perceptions, which may “promote intrinsic motivation.”¹³⁴

In “Positive Teacher Influence Strategies,” Tucker compiled literature regarding achievement motivation strategies and positive teacher influence on secondary band students’ self-perception. Her research focused “on the internal perceptions of self portion of Asmus’s model of achievement motivation in music.”¹³⁵ Tucker categorized students’ self-perception into word choice, performance experiences, intrinsic motivation, and environments.¹³⁶ She stated, “[t]he words teachers use in giving feedback have been found to influence student motivation

¹³⁰ Asmus, “Motivation in Music,” 5.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 7.

¹³² *Ibid.*, 16.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 8.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 28.

¹³⁵ Tucker, “Positive Teacher Influence Strategies,” 5-6.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 6.

and perceptions of self.”¹³⁷ For performance experiences to motivate students, music teachers can instruct “in self-efficacy beliefs before performances.”¹³⁸ Students may benefit from participating in extracurricular ensembles such as honors festivals because it may positively affect their musical “self-efficacy ... as they [become] more comfortable with the repertoire and their surroundings.”¹³⁹ Tucker recommended that band teachers “encourage internalization [and intrinsic motivation] by explaining task values and seeking to build appreciation for tasks and activities.”¹⁴⁰ Students’ environments may enhance their self-perception. Tucker stated, “[t]he place of an instrumental music program in its larger school environment was found to influence student identity and long-term motivation to participate in school music.”¹⁴¹ Therefore, a positive correlation may exist between students’ self-perception, community engagement between the band program and the rest of the school environment, and recruitment and retention.

In their article “Who Takes Music with Them When They Transition to High School?” Tevis L. Tucker and Adam Winsler recognized that a student retention problem exists in American elective music education.¹⁴² They stated, “[a] better understanding of who is most likely to leave music during the transition to high school will allow for a focused, data-driven approach to addressing the student persistence problem for educators, administrators, and policymakers.”¹⁴³ Tucker and Winsler studied 3,202 eighth-grade students throughout 189

¹³⁷ Tucker, “Positive Teacher Influence Strategies,” 7.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 8.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 9.

¹⁴² Tevis L. Tucker and Adam Winsler, “Who Takes Music with Them When They Transition to High School?” *Journal of Research in Music Education* (October 2022): 2. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00224294221121053>.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

schools in Miami, Florida, who participated in either band, chorus, orchestra, or guitar.¹⁴⁴ Nearly one-quarter of students in their sample persisted with a music course in ninth grade, and 20.4 percent of band students remained in ninth grade.¹⁴⁵ Students' gender did not seem to affect persistence rates in band.¹⁴⁶ They found that students' grade point averages "were significantly, positively related to band persistence over and above demographics. . . . [M]ale students had 39% greater odds of persisting, a 1-point increase in GPA was related to 51% greater odds of persisting, and a 1-point increase in math was related to 41% greater odds of persisting in band."¹⁴⁷ Contrary to literature the researchers previously studied, their results found that music "students with disabilities [were] more likely to be persisters—after controlling for other predictors, including academic performance."¹⁴⁸ Tucker and Winsler elaborated on their findings:

The current study still finds differences between music persisters and nonpersisters, but these differences are *not* because of ethnicity, gender, poverty status, gifted-and-talented status, or prior retention in school. These metrics can often bar students from ever getting to experience music in school, but once these students are "in the door," these metrics no longer seem to define which students are most likely to persist. . . . One interpretation of the small number of significant predictors of persistence is that the further along students get in music, the less these nonmusical characteristics matter for subsequent enrollment. Instead, a latent "enjoyment of music," or "level of musical proficiency," or "satisfaction with music teacher/program" may be accounting for who does or does not persist.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁴ Tucker and Winsler, "Who Takes Music with Them," 6-8.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 8.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 15.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 13.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 17.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

Social Awareness and Relationship Skills

Saibunmi et al. interviewed students and teachers from high-achieving secondary bands among five schools in Thailand to research students' SEL competency levels.¹⁵⁰ "The results revealed that the students exhibited substantial self-learning capacities with respect to their emotional and social skills" across all five SEL competencies.¹⁵¹ The researchers found that students portrayed social awareness characteristics of empathy, acceptance, admiration, and understanding of individual differences and diverse perspectives.¹⁵² One technique Thai band directors employed to practice social awareness was hosting band concerts with students from various school districts.¹⁵³ The researchers found that some students portrayed relationship skills of communicating, negotiating conflict, problem-solving, and help-seeking.¹⁵⁴ They stated that since participation in a school band "brings together students from different backgrounds to play music, this ... helps them develop social awareness, which enables them to empathise with and understand the perspectives of others and appreciate their diverse backgrounds and cultures."¹⁵⁵ The band directors in this study were integral in developing and affirming their students' SEL skills because they felt their responsibility was to help their students overcome adversities.¹⁵⁶ Saibunmi et al. stated "that participating in a concert band can improve students' SEL skills in all five competencies," as these skills assist students in becoming valuable contributors to society.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁰ Saibunmi et al., "Developing Social and Emotional Learning Skills," 1.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 5.

¹⁵² Ibid., 6.

¹⁵³ Ibid., 7.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 8.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 9.

In his article “Music Practice and Participation for Psychological Well-being,” Adam M. Croom noted “that music practice and participation can positively contribute to one’s cultivation of greater psychological well-being and a more flourishing life..”¹⁵⁸ Croom based his claims on a framework titled PERMA. Created by Martin Elias Peter Seligman, PERMA details the elements of well-being and positive psychology and stands for positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment.¹⁵⁹ Croom reviewed music and positive psychology research “to investigate whether music practice and participation could be used to ... influence” all PERMA competencies positively.¹⁶⁰ In his literature review, Croom correlated PERMA to SEL as PERMA may assist students in developing their social and emotional competencies.¹⁶¹ Croom found that music education “can be used to positively influence interpersonal relationships ... [and] engagement.”¹⁶²

In his article “Strategies for the Recruitment and Retention of Band Students in Low Socioeconomic School Districts,” Daniel J. Albert studied factors contributing to positive band student recruitment and retention. He observed band classes and conducted semi-structured interviews with four middle school instrumental music teachers, two administrators, and four parents.¹⁶³ Albert found that exposure to the band program was “a major element in the teacher

¹⁵⁸ Adam M. Croom, “Music Practice and Participation for Psychological Well-being: A Review of How Music Influences Positive Emotion, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishment,” *Musicae Scientiae* 19, no. 1 (2015): 59. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1029864914561709>.

¹⁵⁹ Martin Elias Peter Seligman, “Flourish: Positive Psychology and Positive Interventions,” *The Tanner Lectures on Human Values* (October 7, 2010): 236. https://tannerlectures.utah.edu/_resources/documents/a-to-z/s/Seligman_10.pdf.

¹⁶⁰ Croom, “Music Practice and Participation,” 59.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 45.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, 59.

¹⁶³ Daniel J. Albert, “Strategies for the Recruitment and Retention of Band Students in Low Socioeconomic School Districts,” *Contributions to Music Education* 33, no. 2 (2006) 56-7. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24127208>.

participants' recruiting strategies.” Exposing others to the band program included instrument “petting zoos,” new-student orientations, performances for the local community, promoting the band program through local media outlets, making compact disc recordings of band concerts, and creating customized band shirts.¹⁶⁴ Albert found that CRT positively affected band student recruitment through band directors creating and maintaining culturally relevant ensembles.¹⁶⁵ Culturally relevant ensembles in this study “generated interest and excitement in students,” had a positive correlation with increased performance ratings at festivals, and gave some students “a sense of pride and enthusiasm ... [t]hrough the process of making music.”¹⁶⁶

Albert found that the teachers in his study “believed that establishing a rapport, fostering positive relationships with students, and showing that one is dedicated to students and the profession helps to keep students in instrumental music programs.”¹⁶⁷ Teachers may experience positive student retention by gaining students’ respect and trust, then forming positive relationships with those students.¹⁶⁸ Some teachers in the study noted that an essential quality regarding student retention is student ownership in the ensemble, such as students leading sectionals and rehearsals and teachers maintaining a student leadership program.¹⁶⁹ Edgar concurred that student leadership can be beneficial to create a sense of community and increase

¹⁶⁴ Albert, “Strategies for the Recruitment and Retention of Band Students,” 60.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 61.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 62.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 62-3.

students' perceptions of ownership and belonging in the band.¹⁷⁰ Teachers also cited parent buy-in and parental involvement as positive factors in band student retention.¹⁷¹

Community Engagement and Partnerships

Scholarly articles and research connect community engagement and educational partnerships with MSBTs' abilities to recruit and retain students in instrumental music ensembles. In his article "Socioeconomic Status and Instrumental Music: What Does the Research Say about the Relationship and Its Implications?" Albert noted that SES may contribute to music student recruitment and retention.¹⁷² Since students of a higher SES tend to participate in band longer than students of lower SES, he suggested that "partnership formation may be crucial to overcoming possible SES influences on instrumental music."¹⁷³ Albert noted that a relationship may exist between parents' attitudes toward band and their children's participation in band, signifying a need for further research.¹⁷⁴

While Albert identified partnership formation as a possible critical skill set for MSBTs to recruit and retain students, Robert Gillespie et al. demonstrated how partnership formation can enhance the overall presence of the program. In their article "String Music Educators' Perceptions of the Impact of New String Programs on Student Outcomes, School Music Programs, and Communities," Gillespie et al. studied the effects of one new school string

¹⁷⁰ Edgar, "Music Education and Social Emotional Learning" 98.

¹⁷¹ Albert, "Strategies for the Recruitment and Retention of Band Students," 63.

¹⁷² Daniel J. Albert, "Socioeconomic Status and Instrumental Music: What Does the Research Say about the Relationship and Its Implications?" *Update: Applications of Research in Music Education* 25, no. 1 (2006): 42. <https://doi.org/10.1177/87551233060250010105>.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, 44.

¹⁷⁴ Albert, "Socioeconomic Status and Instrumental Music," 44.

program on the district's music department, school administrators, and the school community.¹⁷⁵ The districts' orchestra teachers explained that one of the most substantial benefits of starting their program was the presence of the program within the community and the additional support from the community.¹⁷⁶ Gillespie et al. concluded that “[i]n a time of education budget cuts and close public scrutiny of school expenditures and practices, it may be necessary for music educators to create efficient and meaningful programs that ... [develop] greater awareness in the local community and with administrators.”¹⁷⁷

In his dissertation “Socioeconomics and Music Education in a Western Pennsylvania Public School: A Collective Case Study,” Andrew Sheehan Erb investigated influences regarding student participation in school instrumental ensembles.¹⁷⁸ He found certain conditions can be beneficial in recruiting and retaining instrumental music students. Erb concluded that “positive relationships ... between students and the music instructors were primary factors contributing to recruitment and retention of students into the instrumental music programs.”¹⁷⁹ Band teachers can be visible and interact with elementary students in their music classes before formal recruitment occurs.¹⁸⁰ Relationships may be vital because older siblings who are or were in the program can promote the program's benefits to their younger siblings.¹⁸¹ Erb found that

¹⁷⁵ Robert Gillespie et al., “String Music Educators’ Perceptions of the Impact of New String Programs on Student Outcomes, School Music Programs, and Communities,” *Journal of Research in Music Education* 62, no. 2 (2014): 175. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022429414531987>.

¹⁷⁶ Gillespie et al., “String Music Educators’ Perceptions,” 184.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 186.

¹⁷⁸ Andrew Sheehan Erb, “Socioeconomics and Music Education in a Western Pennsylvania Public School: A Collective Case Study,” DMA diss., Boston University (2019): 23.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 110.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*

“[p]ositive relationships and friendships contributed to student retention within the instrumental ensemble,” mainly regarding friends who selected the same instrument to be in the same band class and sit near each other in class.¹⁸² Parents and guardians of this study concurred with these findings.¹⁸³ Erb determined that some factors that prevent students from participating in instrumental music programs included pullout formats of lesson schedules and “the administration’s desire to keep students in the classroom as much as possible.”¹⁸⁴ Remedial and advanced-level courses may more frequently conflict with elective music courses, causing some students to quit music to fulfill the other course.¹⁸⁵ One orchestra teacher in Erb’s study noted that some beneficial recruitment areas include field trips, the happiness students feel when performing, and a school culture such that music is “routine and a regular part of school life.”¹⁸⁶

Abril and Julie K. Bannerman also studied influences regarding student participation in school music programs from teachers’ perspectives, but detailed both micro-level and meso-level factors. In their study “Perceived Factors Impacting School Music Programs: The Teacher’s Perspective,” Abril and Bannerman surveyed American elementary general music teachers to gauge their perceptions regarding factors that affected their programs and teaching positions, how specific people or groups affected their programs, and the socioecological framework in which teachers acted.¹⁸⁷ They found that when music teachers connected “between the micro level of the school and the meso level of the district,” they “[coordinated] with other local music

¹⁸² Erb, “Socioeconomics and Music Education,” 132.

¹⁸³ Ibid.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., 93.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., 168-9.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., 102.

¹⁸⁷ Carlos R. Abril and Julie K. Bannerman, “Perceived Factors Impacting School Music Programs: The Teacher’s Perspective,” *Journal of Research in Music Education* 62, no. 4 (2015): 347. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022429414554430>.

teachers” to positively affect their program and workplace.”¹⁸⁸ The researchers found that music teachers’ programs were affected most by micro-level factors, including scheduling and partnerships between the music teachers and their building administrators, students’ families, and colleagues in their school.¹⁸⁹ The researchers determined that meso-level factors such as interactions between community organizations and district leadership may have been favorable for music teachers to implement.¹⁹⁰

Phillip M. Hash also identified community engagement as a critical element in music student retention. In his literature review “Student Retention in School Bands and Orchestras,” Hash compiled “literature on attrition and retention in instrumental music and ... identif[ied] strategies to encourage students’ continued participation in school bands and orchestras.”¹⁹¹ He noted that “teachers, administrators, and parents [should] work together to identify and address issues that could prevent or discourage students from continuing in the instrumental program.”¹⁹² Hindrances regarding student retention may include course scheduling, loss of interest, lack of individual acknowledgment, low achievement, and students’ “feelings of confidence, personal satisfaction, and well-being.”¹⁹³ MSBTs may improve students’ intrinsic motivation by “foster[ing] student autonomy and mastery, rather than competition and high-stakes performance goals.”¹⁹⁴ Indicators of student retention in music ensembles can include support and

¹⁸⁸ Abril and Bannerman, “Perceived Factors Impacting School Music Programs,” 355.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., 354.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., 357.

¹⁹¹ Phillip M. Hash, “Student Retention in School Bands and Orchestras: A Literature Review” *Update: Applications of Research in Music Education* 40, no. 3 (2022): 11. <https://doi.org/10.1177/87551233211042585.11>.

¹⁹² Ibid., 14.

¹⁹³ Ibid., 12-3.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., 13.

encouragement from family and friends, and friendships with fellow band students.¹⁹⁵ Hash offered recommendations to resolve music student retention issues. He recommended that middle school music teachers communicate more with their district's elementary music teachers and students.¹⁹⁶ Music teachers should also increase relationships with administrators and guidance counselors to decrease scheduling conflicts.¹⁹⁷ Schools should possess enough heavier instruments, such as baritone saxophones and tubas, to allow students to practice one instrument at school and a different instrument at home. Hash stated "this arrangement will encourage students to choose these instruments and persist in the program knowing that they will not have to transport them to and from school."¹⁹⁸

Music teachers should enable students to feel a sense of control over their learning environment and to believe that the course is relevant and beneficial to their future. They should also provide students with opportunities for success, program music and activities that pique students' interest, and authentically display care for their students' success and well-being.¹⁹⁹ Hash specified that music teachers and school administrators should collaborate to determine what motivates students regarding "scheduling instruction, organizing curriculum, planning performances, and setting expectations for the ensemble."²⁰⁰

As Hash suggested, Marci L. Major demonstrated how music teachers and school administrators can collaborate to deliver an exemplary music curriculum. In her study "How

¹⁹⁵ Hash, "Student Retention in School Bands and Orchestras," 13-4.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., 14.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., 15.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰⁰ Ibid., 17.

They Decide: A Case Study Examining the Decision-Making Process for Keeping or Cutting Music in a K–12 Public School District,” Major studied one school district to determine how administrators maintained the music program during economic hardships.²⁰¹ She conducted interviews and analyzed school documents to investigate factors that influenced the district to keep music in the curriculum. She studied the criteria that the BOE and administration utilized to determine their value of music education and what obstacles the school district overcame to maintain its music program.²⁰² Major found that administrators and BOE members “valued music’s aesthetic and utilitarian functions.” They also regarded “music as integral to a total educational package [that is] capable of developing each child’s full potential by providing as many educational opportunities and experiences [as] possible.”²⁰³ Some administrators indicated that valuing music education signifies “attending events, prioritizing it in scheduling, and ... sustaining it over time.”²⁰⁴ This school district constructed its master schedule around music education.²⁰⁵ Major found that synergistic and intertwining relationships determined some of the success of the school district’s music education program. According to Major, “a synergy between music teachers, administrators, parents, community members, and students sustained the infrastructure of a strongly supported music program.”²⁰⁶ Many respondents “believed that parent and community support exerted the largest influence on the district’s valuing its music program,

²⁰¹ Marci L. Major, “How They Decide: A Case Study Examining the Decision-Making Process for Keeping or Cutting Music in a K–12 Public School District,” *Journal of Research in Music Education* 61, no. 1 (2013): 18. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022429412474313>.

²⁰² *Ibid.*, 5, 8-9.

²⁰³ *Ibid.*, 10.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 11.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

although none could identify why the community clearly and strongly supported music education.”²⁰⁷ Some research participants viewed administrators as the most vital factor regarding a music program’s success or failure.²⁰⁸ Major cautioned that music educators should not focus on student enrollment numbers alone but should “produce a high-quality program to avoid the pitfalls of providing another elective or extracurricular activity that, if failing to attract support for its own value, would face cuts.”²⁰⁹

NAfME’s position statement on equity and access in music education reads:

“All students deserve access to and equity in the delivery of music education, one of the subjects deemed necessary in federal law for a well-rounded education, which is at the heart of NAfME’s stated mission: to advance music education by promoting the understanding and making of music by all.”²¹⁰

To promote student recruitment, NAfME planned that its leaders should “support equity and access in music education by ... advocating for inclusive policies, laws, and regulations at [all] levels supporting music education for all students by removing barriers to access.”²¹¹ Members of NAfME are encouraged to expand access to music education by:

...encouraging all students to be active in the music programs offered in their schools, including promoting music offerings for students who have not been active music students in prior years. ... Working with school leaders to create opportunities that allow all students access to music classes, regardless of their academic status, financial capacity, or other barriers identified locally. ... Developing new kinds of music programs which are of interest to students. ... Adapting teaching practices to accommodate issues of access and equity, including engaging in ongoing self- and program-evaluation to

²⁰⁷ Major, “How They Decide,” 12.

²⁰⁸ Ibid., 11.

²⁰⁹ Ibid., 20.

²¹⁰ “Equity and Access in Music Education,” Position Statements, National Association for Music Education, 2017, accessed October 2, 2022, <https://nafme.org/about/position-statements/equity-access/>.

²¹¹ Ibid.

understand challenges of access and working with administrators and other school partners to create pathways for more student participation.²¹²

NAfME posited that all music education programs “should be built on a curricular framework that promotes awareness of, respect for, and responsiveness to the variety and diversity of cultures.”²¹³ NAfME noted that when music educators and administrators embrace “a variety of music-making in a school’s music program,” that may help to “connect the music educator to the school’s community, providing opportunities for parental and community support and participation.”²¹⁴ If music educators expand the “types and styles of music studied and performed,” NAfME stated that student recruitment may improve.²¹⁵

In the book “Handbook on Family and Community Engagement,” Moles, Jr. and Fege stated that parental involvement and family engagement have become more integrated into the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), now the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), throughout each subsequent reauthorization of the law.²¹⁶ They cautioned that the law alone may not adequately engage families in students’ education. They noted that while “[s]chools and families need the support of and coordination with their community[,] ... [t]he current factory model school was not designed for partnership[,] ... [I]t was designed for efficiency that did not value the input or participation of” school stakeholders.²¹⁷ Because stakeholders may not be “equipped to execute the federal and stated parental involvement

²¹² “Equity and Access in Music Education,” National Association for Music Education.

²¹³ “Inclusivity and Diversity in Music Education,” Position Statements, National Association for Music Education, revised 2017, accessed October 2, 2022, <https://nafme.org/about/position-statements/inclusivity-diversity/>.

²¹⁴ National Association for Music Education, “Inclusivity and Diversity in Music Education.”

²¹⁵ Ibid.

²¹⁶ Moles, Jr. and Fege, “New Directions for Title I Family Engagement,” 5.

²¹⁷ Ibid., 9, 11.

requirements,” Moles, Jr. and Fege stated that it was the responsibility of school districts “to help families build their knowledge and capacity and then help them to act ... which [could] result in change.”²¹⁸ While Moles, Jr. and Fege did not reference music education specifically, schools may also be responsible to help families build knowledge, support, and understanding of their music program to increase participation in music courses. According to Moles, Jr. and Fege, the foundation of authentic educational partnerships is “the free exchange of ideas” facilitated by continuous collaboration, interaction, and two-way contact.²¹⁹ While Moles, Jr. and Fege based their work on low-income families and communities of Title I school districts, they stated that school districts should integrate “parent involvement strategies ... as a part of ... improvement efforts.” This “should be a core element of” any school reform.²²⁰

Redding expanded on Moles, Jr. and Fege’s concept of parental involvement to include the entire school community in school district reform and student success. In “The School Community: Working Together for Student Success,” Redding stated that the purpose of a school community “is to ensure that each student acquires the knowledge, skills, habits, and attitudes necessary for success in school and in life.”²²¹ According to Redding, a school community can be built and strengthened through shared leadership, teacher-student goals, teacher-community goals, two-way and interactive communication, and school staff educating its members.²²² Redding specified that connections between community members can “foster [the] mutual pursuit of success for all students,” and the continuous pursuit of achieving goals and

²¹⁸ Moles, Jr. and Fege, “New Directions for Title I Family Engagement,” 10.

²¹⁹ Ibid.

²²⁰ Ibid., 12.

²²¹ Redding, “The School Community,” 16.

²²² Ibid., 17.

strengthening relationships.²²³ Redding noted that it is the responsibility of both the family and school to teach and reinforce “the necessary skills, attitudes, and self-perceptions” to help students develop socially and emotionally.²²⁴ Connections between the school and its community members should exist to “share experiences and ideas relative to students’ academic, personal, social, and emotional learning.”²²⁵ Students’ satisfaction and appreciation may increase when the school community is strong, intentional, nurturing, and attentive.²²⁶

In his study “Strategies for the Recruitment and Retention of Band Students,” Albert sought to determine best practices regarding band student recruitment and retention in low SES neighborhoods.²²⁷ He found “that parental involvement [was] one of the keys to successful retention.”²²⁸ One research participant stated that “retention is much more likely to occur ... when a parent is an ‘equal partner’ with the instrumental music teacher and the child in the education process.”²²⁹ Albert stated that if “participants in another population are in a situation similar to the one described in this study, it may be possible that results from this study are relevant in other contexts.”²³⁰ MSBTs can practice “logical situational generalizability”²³¹ to persuade their pedagogical decisions in any socioeconomic setting.

²²³ Redding, “The School Community,” 17.

²²⁴ Ibid.

²²⁵ Ibid., 19.

²²⁶ Ibid.

²²⁷ Albert, “Strategies for the Recruitment and Retention of Band Students,” 55.

²²⁸ Ibid., 63.

²²⁹ Ibid., 63.

²³⁰ Ibid., 59.

²³¹ Ibid.

When music teachers strive to create the types of equal partnerships that Albert described, these may belong in Epstein and Karen Clark Salinas's definition of a School Learning Community (SLC). In their article "Partnering with Families and Communities," Epstein and Salinas explained that students' families can be involved in their child's learning community through a "school learning community."²³² They defined SLCs as "educators, students, parents, and community partners who work together to improve the school and enhance students' learning opportunities ... with activities linked to school goals."²³³ They noted that SLCs can "improve schools, strengthen families, invigorate community support, and increase student achievement and success."²³⁴ To create successful SLCs, Epstein and Salinas recommended that schools build SLCs through a partnership action team comprised of "teachers, administrators, parents, and community partners" who have "a clear focus on promoting student success."²³⁵ According to Epstein and Salinas, an SLC action team composes "annual plans for family and community involvement, implements and evaluates activities, and integrates the activities conducted by other groups and individual teachers into a comprehensive partnership program for the school."²³⁶ Suburban MSBTs can create annual action plans incorporating Epstein's six types of family involvement that schools can implement to help parents become more involved at school and with their child's education.²³⁷ Epstein stated that families can get involved in their children's education by developing their skill set as parents, promoting two-way

²³² Joyce L. Epstein and Karen Clark Salinas, "Partnering with Families and Communities," *Educational Leadership* 61, no. 8 (2004): 12.

²³³ *Ibid.*, 12.

²³⁴ Epstein and Salinas, "Partnering with Families and Communities," 12.

²³⁵ *Ibid.*, 12-3.

²³⁶ *Ibid.*, 13.

²³⁷ *Ibid.*

communication between home and school, volunteering alongside teachers, learning with their children at home, participating in school-based decisions and committees, and collaborating with the community to coordinate resources and services for the school.²³⁸

The work of an SLC action team that Epstein and Salinas described can be compared to a marketing strategy. Christopher M. Marra recognized attrition issues among secondary band programs through the basis of marketing in his article “Reframing Recruitment as Marketing: Building Connections with Prospective High School Music Students, Families, and Administrators.” Claiming that music teachers implemented “antiquated” recruitment practices, he reframed his perception and strategies for secondary band recruitment through marketing.²³⁹ By employing marketing strategies, he promoted his high school band program collaboratively with his colleagues and booster parents. They implemented a yearlong strategy that doubled the size of his program after three years.²⁴⁰ Marra noted that some barriers preventing optimal student retention included SES, gender, ethnicity, self-efficacy, lack of student-centered learning experiences, “competing activities, insufficient parental support, peer influence, and a general loss of interest.”²⁴¹

Marra offered recommendations to recruit secondary band students. First, teachers should reframe recruiting towards marketing.²⁴² Marra noted that perception is a critical component in expanding a band program. Band teachers should target their marketing efforts toward three

²³⁸ Epstein and Salinas, “Partnering with Families and Communities,” 13.

²³⁹ Christopher M. Marra, “Reframing Recruitment as Marketing: Building Connections with Prospective High School Music Students, Families, and Administrators,” *Music Educators Journal* 109, no. 1 (September 2022): 30. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00274321221112415>.

²⁴⁰ Ibid.

²⁴¹ Ibid.

²⁴² Ibid.

distinct groups: students, parents and guardians, and administrators.²⁴³ Teachers should identify their stakeholders' unmet needs and understand "what aspects influence a consumer's perception such that they are driven to make decisions."²⁴⁴ Marra urged teachers to ask themselves, "How does participation in the music program help fulfill those needs more effectively than any other elective option?"²⁴⁵ Marra recommended that band teachers "meet with administrators early in the school year and share [their] goals for student connectedness and the marketing plans to get students involved in" band.²⁴⁶

Marra claimed that salience is essential in increasing a secondary band program. Marra defined salience as "the prominence and ... closeness of the person delivering the message."²⁴⁷ Therefore, band teachers should select messengers who can share their personal stories about band and are more similar to the target audience, such as students and their families.²⁴⁸ Marra recommended selecting diverse student ambassadors to promote salience in the marketing campaign.²⁴⁹ To best market for a secondary band program, Marra recommended that band teachers consider what he calls the "rule of seven."²⁵⁰ Future band students should interact with the program's marketing strategies at least seven times through multiple mediums before they may join the program.²⁵¹ To achieve seven methods of outreach, Marra recommended that band

²⁴³ Marra, "Reframing Recruitment as Marketing" 31.

²⁴⁴ Ibid.

²⁴⁵ Ibid.

²⁴⁶ Ibid., 35.

²⁴⁷ Ibid., 31.

²⁴⁸ Ibid.

²⁴⁹ Ibid., 32.

²⁵⁰ Ibid. 31.

²⁵¹ Ibid.

teachers implement community engagement strategies through their presence at all their teaching obligations, their relationships with guidance counselors, and their presence on social media.²⁵²

Conclusion

Because no prior study has answered these two research questions, this literature review served to situate the research questions concerning existing knowledge.²⁵³ Many factors related to SEL, community engagement, and community partnerships can contribute to the recruitment and retention of middle school band students in suburban school districts. Research revealed that SEL may positively affect student retention through MSBTs forming and sustaining relationships with band students, teaching and performing culturally responsive and relevant repertoire, and creating opportunities in between rehearsing for students to self-reflect.²⁵⁴ MSBTs can form relationships and promote SEL in their programs by establishing positive relationships with students built on care, respect, and trust.²⁵⁵ Some research found that students who remain in band for longer tended to have higher SEL competencies.²⁵⁶

Community engagement initiatives and partnerships may assist MSBTs in overcoming barriers to student recruitment and retention.²⁵⁷ Relationships between MSBTs and those who create the school schedules and the administrators who approve the schedules may promote the

²⁵² Marra, "Reframing Recruitment as Marketing," 31.

²⁵³ Jeffrey W. Knopf, "Doing a Literature Review," *PS: Political Science and Politics* 39, no. 1 (January 2006): 127.

²⁵⁴ Scott N. Edgar, "Social Emotional Learning and Music Education: Now More Than Ever," *Texas Music Educators Association* (June 2020): 1-2.

²⁵⁵ Albert, "Strategies for the Recruitment and Retention of Band Students," 62.

²⁵⁶ Shaw, "A National Analysis," 390, 392.

²⁵⁷ Albert, "Socioeconomic Status and Instrumental Music," 44.

ability for more middle school students to enroll in band class.²⁵⁸ Community engagement and partnerships may enable middle school bands to be more present throughout the school community and outside community, thus possibly benefiting student recruitment.²⁵⁹ MSBTs can build relationships with students' parents and families to promote a higher percentage of students who return to band year after year.²⁶⁰

MSBTs may encounter SEL, partnerships, or community engagement throughout their careers. Band student recruitment and retention contribute to elective band programs' existence. Most current literature does not seek a correlation between SEL and community engagement strategies and recruitment and retention levels of suburban middle school band students. This study sought to connect SEL and community engagement to recruitment and retention, and to identify required areas of exploration of effective recruitment and retention strategies among MSBTs. The author will provide practical strategies from the research in the following chapters.

²⁵⁸ Abril and Bannerman, "Perceived Factors Impacting School Music Programs," 354.

²⁵⁹ Gillespie et al., "String Music Educators' Perceptions," 184.

²⁶⁰ Albert, "Strategies for the Recruitment and Retention of Band Students," 63.

Chapter Three: Methodology

Introduction

MSBTs who frequently and consistently implement SEL and community engagement may positively affect suburban middle school band recruitment and retention. There were few studies or other scholarly literature regarding this study's two research questions. This research study utilized an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design to determine the effect SEL and community engagement may have on suburban middle school band recruitment and retention. John W. Creswell and J. David Creswell defined mixed methods as the combination of qualitative and quantitative research in one study.²⁶¹ The researcher employed mixed methods to validate the quantitative data and explore questions in each phase.²⁶²

First, this chapter explains the main components that guided this research, including the research design, methodology, research questions, and hypotheses. Then, this chapter discusses the setting, participants, instrumentation, and procedures of both phases of the research. This chapter concludes with data analysis methods to support the relevant research in this field.

Design

This study employed an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design to study suburban MSBTs regarding best practices of SEL and community engagement toward recruitment and retention. The research questions guided the research method and design. Creswell and Creswell define explanatory sequential mixed methods as:

²⁶¹ John W. Creswell and J. David Creswell, "Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches," 32.

²⁶² Ibid.

... a two-phase data collection project in which the researcher collects quantitative data in the first phase, analyzes the results, and then uses the results to plan (or build on to) the second, qualitative phase. The quantitative results typically inform the types of ... questions that will be asked of the participants [in the qualitative phase]. The overall intent of this design is to have the qualitative data help explain in more detail the initial quantitative results.²⁶³

The explanatory sequential mixed-methods design was beneficial for this study to produce conversation in the second phase that clarified the results of the first phase. In the first data collection phase, the researcher compiled quantitative data from sixty-four participants who agreed to complete a Likert-scale survey through Qualtrics. Participants were current middle school instrumental music teachers who worked in a suburban school district in the United States and had experience incorporating SEL and community engagement in their pedagogy. In the second phase, the researcher compiled qualitative data from four survey participants who agreed to complete an interview with the researcher via the videoconferencing platform Zoom.

Both the quantitative and qualitative research addressed research questions one and two. The data from the Qualtrics survey identified suburban MSBTs' perceptions regarding the implementation and effectiveness of SEL and community engagement regarding student recruitment and retention. After analyzing this data from the first phase, the researcher refined interview questions for the second phase to reveal effective strategies regarding SEL and community engagement for recruiting and retaining suburban middle school band students.

Questions and Hypotheses

The research questions for this study are:

²⁶³ Creswell, "Research Design," 243.

Research Question One: What social-emotional learning and community engagement strategies can suburban middle school band teachers adopt to maximize the number of students entering the program?

Research Question Two: What social-emotional learning and community engagement strategies can suburban middle school band teachers adopt to maximize the number of students remaining in the program?

The hypotheses for this study are:

Hypothesis One: Social-emotional learning and community engagement strategies that suburban middle school band teachers can adopt to maximize the number of students entering the program may include strengthening their relationships with school district personnel, utilizing SEL in the curriculum and pedagogy to promote cultural relevance, and promoting inclusivity through community outreach endeavors.

Hypothesis Two: Social-emotional learning and community engagement strategies that suburban middle school band teachers can adopt to maximize the number of students remaining in the program may include maximizing student engagement through social-emotional learning, creating and sustaining educational partnerships, and implementing community engagement opportunities.

Participants

The researcher recruited current certificated suburban middle school band teachers who implemented SEL and community engagement strategies to participate in the first phase of the research ($N = 64$). Between September 2022 and January 2023, the researcher recruited research

participants. The researcher sent emails and created posts on Facebook explaining the purpose of the study and the requirements to participate. The researcher posted on the Facebook groups “Band Directors”²⁶⁴ and “Middle School Band Directors.”²⁶⁵

A page at the end of the survey instructed the participants to email the researcher to express interest if they desired to partake in the second phase of the research. The researcher selected the first four survey participants who emailed the researcher requesting to participate in the Zoom interview. The interview participants were current suburban middle school band teachers.

Setting

The first phase of this study consisted of a Likert-scale survey on Qualtrics.²⁶⁶ Survey participants completed the survey electronically on any device that supports an internet connection. Based on data compiled during pilot testing, participants spent approximately ten minutes completing the survey.

The second phase of this study consisted of an interview through the videoconferencing platform Zoom. The final page of the Qualtrics survey revealed that participants could email the researcher to participate in a twenty-minute interview. The researcher selected the first four participants to participate in the study’s second phase who emailed the researcher expressing

²⁶⁴ Gina Vingara, “ATTENTION SUBURBAN MIDDLE SCHOOL BAND TEACHERS,” Facebook, October 17, 2022, <https://www.facebook.com/groups/banddirectors/permalink/5582046125204889/>.

²⁶⁵ Gina Vingara, “ATTENTION SUBURBAN MIDDLE SCHOOL BAND TEACHERS,” Facebook, October 16, 2022, <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1530279747055733/permalink/5637078859709114/>.

²⁶⁶ “Survey: Suburban Middle School Band Recruitment and Retention,” Qualtrics, Liberty University, September 2022, accessed October 23, 2022, https://liberty.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_55BbHjKuCWa41P8?fbclid=IwAR2LdceVSzq9eJswgZ3houWVQC3rPCM5RP7YnUxuFcEBOoQk-m7pC1eIaHY.

interest. The researcher and participants completed the interview in a quiet and private location free from interruptions and others who could overhear the conversation.

Instrumentation

Phase One: Survey

The survey included five items for Likert-type scale responses. The researcher based the questions on the five primary competencies of social-emotional learning and common possible types of community engagement and educational partnerships. The first question asked, “When teaching, how often do you incorporate the following?” The responses were on a sliding scale with the markers of never (1), rarely (26), occasionally (51), frequently (75), and daily (100). The sub-questions included the five SEL competencies: students’ self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. The sub-questions also included community engagement and partnerships, including partnerships between a teachers’ band and one of the feeder programs, another department or extracurricular program in the school, and any person or group not directly affiliated with the school district.

The second question asked, “To what extent do you believe the following impacts the recruitment of your middle school band?” The responses were on a sliding scale with the markers of minimal (1), somewhat (51), and significant impact (100). The sub-questions to the second question were the same as the sub-questions to the first question. The third question asked, “To what extent do you believe the following impacts the retention of your middle school band?” The responses and sub-questions were the same as the second question.

The fourth prompt stated, “Please select the choices you believe to be most true based on the following statement: ‘I believe that ... benefits student recruitment into my band.’” The responses were on a sliding scale with the markers of definitely not (1), possibly (51), and definitely (100). The sub-questions were the same as the first, second, and third questions. The fifth prompt was identical to the fourth, except the researcher replaced the word “recruitment” in the fourth prompt with “retention” in the fifth prompt.

Phase Two: Interview

During the interview phase of this explanatory mixed methods sequential study, the researcher asked the participants up to sixteen questions to explain further the initial quantitative data results (see Appendix B).²⁶⁷ Some questions asked participants to explain how they implemented the five SEL competencies and whether they believed these efforts benefitted recruitment and retention. Other questions asked participants to describe any community engagement and partnership initiatives they implemented and if they believed these efforts benefitted recruitment and retention.

Procedures

Liberty University’s Institutional Review Board (IRB) (see Appendix C) and the researcher’s thesis chair granted the researcher permission to conduct all aspects of the research. The researcher recruited study participants by posting on relevant Facebook groups and emailing suburban MSBTs regarding the study’s purpose and participation requirements (see Appendix D

²⁶⁷ Creswell, “Research Design,” 33.

and Appendix E, respectively). Qualtrics hosted the Likert-type scale questions. This survey was completely anonymous. The last page of the survey contained information revealing that survey participants may be eligible to participate in the study's second phase if they emailed the researcher to express interest. The researcher replied to the first four prospective interviewees to arrange an interview.

Pilot Testing

The survey and interview questions were pilot tested by an external participant focus group consisting of preservice ($N = 5$), current ($N = 7$), and retired music educators ($N = 5$) who performed in the same community band as the author in central New Jersey. Creswell and Creswell explained that pilot testing for a thesis is critical “to establish the content validity of scores on an instrument[,] to provide an initial evaluation of the internal consistency of the items[,] and to improve questions, format, and instructions.”²⁶⁸ Through pilot testing, the researcher determined the optimal duration of each research phase to eliminate participant fatigue, a concern among Creswell and Creswell.²⁶⁹ As Creswell and Creswell noted, pilot testing was critical in this research “to establish the content validity of scores on” the survey and interview questions, and “to provide an initial evaluation of the internal consistency of the items; and to improve questions, format, and instructions.”²⁷⁰

²⁶⁸ Creswell, “Research Design,” 176.

²⁶⁹ Ibid.

²⁷⁰ Ibid.

Data Analysis

The researcher employed Qualtrics and Delve to produce descriptive statistics and create conclusions between the independent and dependent values in this study's quantitative and qualitative phases, respectively. The quantitative portion of this study utilized the Pearson correlation, P-Value, and confidence interval of effect size to determine significant relationships between MSBTs' perceptions and levels of implementation of SEL and community engagement toward student recruitment and retention.

The researcher conducted the interviews for the qualitative portion of this study on Zoom in a secure location. Zoom's audio-to-text transcribing tool transcribed the interviews. A password-protected computer kept in a safe location stored both the interview videos and transcriptions. The researcher uploaded the interview transcriptions to Delve, a form of Computer-Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS).²⁷¹ The researcher then began a thematic analysis. Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke defined thematic analysis as a tool to identify, analyze, organize, interpret, and report patterns and themes within data.²⁷² The researcher utilized some predetermined codes. The researcher deductively placed suitable quotes into the codes by employing a hybrid of deductive coding and inductive coding. Then, the researcher derived some codes inductively from the remainder of the quotes that did not fit into another code. The researcher employed descriptive coding, in vivo coding, and process coding strategies.²⁷³ After collating all codes, themes emerged, and the researcher grouped codes into these themes. The researcher then evaluated and revised the themes.

²⁷¹ Johnny Saldaña, *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*, 2nd ed., (Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, 2013), 18, 25.

²⁷² Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke, "Using Thematic Analysis in Psychology," *Qualitative Research in Psychology* 3, no. 2 (2006): 79. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>.

²⁷³ Saldaña, *The Coding Manual*, 87, 91, 96.

Chapter Four: Research Findings

Introduction

This study utilized temporal order predictors and dependent variables. Temporal order signifies variables that are time-dependent of one another.²⁷⁴ Creswell and Creswell defined predictor or antecedent variables as “variables that are used to predict an outcome of interest. . . . [They] are similar to independent variables in that they are hypothesized to affect outcomes in a study, but dissimilar because the researcher is not able to systematically manipulate” predictor variables.²⁷⁵ The predictor variables in this study were community engagement and social-emotional learning. Creswell and Creswell defined dependent variables as variables that “are the outcomes or results of the influence of the independent variables.”²⁷⁶ The dependent variables in this study were suburban middle school band student recruitment and retention. The dependent variables can also be considered outcome variables because, as Creswell and Creswell stated, they “are considered outcomes or results of predictor variables in survey method studies.”²⁷⁷

Quantitative Research Results

The purpose of the quantitative phase of this study was to determine the frequency with which MSBTs implement SEL competencies and community engagement in their pedagogy, and

²⁷⁴ Creswell, “Research Design,” 66.

²⁷⁵ Ibid.

²⁷⁶ Ibid.

²⁷⁷ Ibid.

the extent to which those pedagogical tools benefit student recruitment and retention. The researcher created and distributed a Likert-style scale survey utilizing Qualtrics. The survey contained questions regarding the effect of community engagement and SEL on the recruitment and retention of suburban middle school band programs (see Appendix A). Sixty-four current suburban middle school band teachers completed the survey. For the question “When teaching, how often do you incorporate the following?” respondents chose a number on a sliding scale ranging from never (1), rarely (26), occasionally (51), frequently (75), or daily (100). For the question “To what extent do you believe the following impacts the recruitment [or retention] of your middle school band?” respondents chose a number on a sliding scale ranging from minimal (1), somewhat (51), or significant impact (100).

SEL Responses

MSBTs reported that they incorporated the first SEL competency, self-awareness, in their teaching with an average of 71.6, 3.3 points under the marker “frequently” ($M = 75.5$; $SD = 21.5$). They believed that students’ self-awareness benefitted recruitment by an average of 68.5 ($M = 71.0$; $SD = 21.0$). They believed students’ self-awareness affected retention more than recruitment, with an average of 72.4 ($M = 75.0$; $SD = 23.9$).

MSBTs incorporated the second SEL competency, self-management, in their pedagogy an average of 76.6, 1.6 points above the marker of “frequently” ($M = 77.0$; $SD = 19.4$). They believed that students’ self-management benefitted recruitment by an average of 72.8, indicating a moderate level of impact ($M = 81.0$; $SD = 23.1$). They believed that students’ self-management affected retention approximately the same as it affected recruitment, with an average of 74.6, 1.8 points above recruitment ($M = 79.0$; $SD = 25.4$). No statistically significant relationship existed

between MSBTs' implementation of self-management and their perception of how self-management affected retention ($p = 0.0808$).

MSBTs incorporated the third SEL competency, social awareness, in their pedagogy with an average of 66.8, 8.2 points under the marker "frequently" ($M = 75.5$; $SD = 23.7$). They believed students' social awareness benefitted recruitment by an average of 68.0, indicating some level of impact ($M = 74.0$; $SD = 24.3$). They believed students' social awareness affected retention more than it affected recruitment, with an average of 76.4 ($M = 84.0$; $SD = 23.6$).

Table 4.1 illustrates a strong relationship between teachers' perceived effect of students' social awareness on recruitment and teachers' levels of implementation of social awareness in their pedagogy.

Table 4.1: Perceived Effect of Social Awareness on Recruitment and MSBTs' Levels of Implementation

Sample Size (N)	64
P-Value	0.0265
Effect Size (Pearson's r)	0.637
Confidence Interval of Effect Size	0.567 to 0.894
R-squared (Simple Linear Regression)	0.607

MSBTs incorporated the fourth SEL competency, relationship skills, in their pedagogy an average of 75.3, 0.3 points above the marker "frequently" ($M = 81.0$; $SD = 24.5$). They believed students' relationship skills benefitted recruitment by an average of 77.1, more than any of the other four competencies ($M = 84.0$; $SD = 24.1$). Also higher than the other four competencies, they believed students' relationship skills affected retention 2.1 points higher than the level of effect on recruitment, with an average of 79.2 ($M = 90.0$; $SD = 23.4$). In his article "Passing the

Baton: Building Student Autonomy and Democracy in the Large Ensemble Setting,” Matthew D. Schatt stated that “[a]utonomy-supportive teaching practices and the incorporation of democratic pedagogy” is essential for band student retention.²⁷⁸ He believed it is paramount that band teachers incorporate “activities that target team building and encourage equality among members.”

MSBTs incorporated the fifth SEL competency, responsible decision-making, more than any other competency, with an average of 81.7 ($M = 84.5$; $SD = 19.6$). They believed responsible decision-making benefitted recruitment by an average of 72.9, a medium-high level of impact ($M = 82.0$; $SD = 25.8$). They believed that responsible decision-making affected retention 3.1 points higher than it affected recruitment, with an average of 76.0 ($M = 78.0$; $SD = 21.8$).

Community Engagement and Partnerships Responses

MSBTs included partnerships between their band and one of the feeder programs at an average of 71.1, 3.9 points under the marker “frequently” ($M = 77.0$; $SD = 25.0$). They believed these types of partnerships benefitted recruitment at a higher level than the actual level of implementation, with an average response of 81.3 ($M = 89.0$; $SD = 21.5$). They believed these types of partnerships affected retention by an average of 64.7 ($M = 75.0$; $SD = 29.5$).

MSBTs incorporated partnerships between their band and another department in their school at an average of 54.5, 0.5 points below the marker “occasionally” ($M = 55.0$; $SD = 27.2$). They believed these types of partnerships affected recruitment at an average of 58.3, 3.8 points above MSBTs’ levels of implementation of these types of partnerships ($M = 60.0$; $SD = 28.3$).

²⁷⁸ Matthew D. Schatt, “Passing the Baton: Building Student Autonomy and Democracy in the Large Ensemble Setting,” *Update: Applications of Research in Music Education* 40, no. 3 (June 2022): 57. <https://doi.org/10.1177/87551233211041693>.

They believed these partnerships benefitted retention at nearly the same level of impact as recruitment, with an average of 58.9 ($M = 60.5$; $SD = 24.3$). No statistically significant relationship existed between MSBTs' implementation of these types of relationships and their perception of how these partnerships affected retention ($p = 0.316$).

MSBTs incorporated partnerships between their band and an extracurricular program in their district at an average of 54.6, 3.6 points above the marker "occasionally" ($M = 55.0$; $SD = 29.7$). They believed these types of partnerships affected recruitment, similar to their level of implementation, at an average of 59.0 ($M = 52.0$; $SD = 27.6$). They believed these types of partnerships affected retention similar to their effect on recruitment, at an average of 61.5 ($M = 60.0$; $SD = 25.2$).

MSBTs incorporated partnerships between their band and any person, organization, or business not affiliated with their school district at an average of 41.9, 8.1 points below the marker of "occasionally" ($M = 29.0$; $SD = 28.3$). They believed these types of partnerships affected recruitment nearly the same as their level of implementation, with an average of 45.0 ($M = 45.5$; $SD = 28.1$). Similarly, they believed these types of partnerships benefitted retention 1.6 points more than recruitment, with an average of 46.6 ($M = 49.0$; $SD = 29.8$). A strong statistical significance existed between MSBTs' implementation of these types of partnerships and their perception of how these partnerships can affect retention. Table 4.2 illustrates this significance.

Table 4.2: MSBTs' Implementation and Perception of Ability of Partnerships with Outside Groups to Affect Program Retention

Sample Size (N)	64
P-Value	0.00480
Effect Size (Cohen's f)	0.859
Confidence Interval of Effect Size	0.154 to 0.750
R-squared (Simple Linear Regression)	0.261

MSBTs from this survey believed that integrating the five SEL competencies in their pedagogy affected recruitment and retention to various extents. Table 4.3 illustrates the averages of their responses.

Table 4.3: Perceived Effects of the Five SEL Competencies on Recruitment and Retention

	SEL Competency 1: Self-Awareness	SEL Competency 2: Self-Management	SEL Competency 3: Social Awareness	SEL Competency 4: Relationship Skills	SEL Competency 5: Responsible Decision-Making
MSBTs' average level of implementation	71.6	76.6	66.8	75.3	81.7
MSBTs' average perceived level of impact on recruitment	68.5	72.8	68.0	77.1	72.9
MSBTs' average perceived level of impact on retention	72.4	74.6	76.4	79.2	76.0

MSBTs from this survey believed that integrating community engagement and partnerships affected recruitment and retention at various levels of effectiveness. Table 4.4 illustrates the averages of their responses.

Table 4.4: Perceived Effects of Community Engagement on Recruitment and Retention

	Partnerships between their band and one of the feeder programs	Partnerships between their band and another department in their school	Partnerships between their band and an extracurricular program in their district	Partnerships between their band and any person, organization, or business that is not affiliated with their school district
MSBTs' average level of implementation	71.1	54.5	54.6	41.9
MSBTs' average perceived level of impact on recruitment	81.3	58.3	59.0	45.0
MSBTs' average perceived level of impact on retention	64.7	58.9	61.5	46.6

Qualitative Research Results

The purpose of the qualitative phase of this study was to reveal strategies related to SEL and community engagement that MSBTs implement to promote recruitment and retention in their programs. The researcher interviewed four suburban MSBTs for approximately twenty minutes regarding their perceptions and experiences related to the two research questions. The researcher created the interview questions based on the survey results (see Appendix B). The researcher analyzed the data collected from the interviews with Delve software. Then, the researcher organized emerging themes into coded categories (see Appendix F).

Development of the Themes

During this process of thematic analysis, the researcher found subcategories among the main coded categories for subsequent discussion.²⁷⁹ The researcher identified four main themes and seven subcategories (see Table 4.5). The main themes were life skills, connecting band students with other groups, organic implementation of SEL, and motivation.

Table 4.5: Themes of Qualitative Data

Main Themes	Subcategories
Life Skills	Assessment Practicing Behavior Goal-setting Time management Friendships Teamwork
Connecting Band Students with Other Groups	
Organic Implementation of SEL	
Motivation	

Main Theme 1: Life Skills

The seven subcategories the researcher uncovered from the interviews were assessment, practicing, behavior, goal-setting, time management, friendships, and teamwork. Regarding assessment, Teacher A stated, “if we just wrapped up a few minute's worth of rehearsal on a piece, and it was evident that the students did not meet the practicing expectations, we will have a little back-and-forth discussion on how to manage their schedules and how to manage their desires to practice in relation to the goals that they need to achieve.” To assess students’

²⁷⁹ Saldaña, *The Coding Manual*, 12.

motivation to remain in band class, Kelly A. Parkes et al. recommended that teachers discuss “feelings of empowerment, usefulness, success, interest, and care” with their students.²⁸⁰

Regarding practicing, Teacher A stated, “I ask students to think often about how they practice, why they practice, what goals they want to achieve, etc.” Parkes et al. believed band teachers must assist their students to “understand why what they are learning is useful for their short- or long-term goals.”²⁸¹ Regarding behavior, Teacher B stated, “There are always many things happening at once in rehearsals, so students need to be able to self-regulate their behavior to stay focused and participate effectively.” Additionally, Teacher C implemented a student leader program in his band so the entire band can verify their responsible decision-making skills based on the behavior of the student leaders.

Regarding friendships, Teacher D stated, “SEL is so important at this stage of the students' lives because it is at this point that they are really starting to find themselves as individuals, figure out their likes and dislikes, and most importantly, where they fit in amongst a group of peers.” Teacher C stated, “In building the sense of community among the students from various cultures, I am confident relationships are created or enhanced which would otherwise have been neglected or unformed.” Regarding teamwork, Teacher B stated, “I think that working as a team with colleagues can be a great thing, overall. By working together, we are able to combine our strengths as musicians, which is then passed down to the students.” However, she also stated, “working within a large team can be challenging because we all have different philosophies and beliefs where our profession is concerned, and not everyone is open to alternate ways of teaching and recruiting compared to their way.”

²⁸⁰ Kelly A. Parkes, Brett D. Jones, and Jesse L. M. Wilkins, “Assessing Music Students’ Motivation Using the MUSIC Model of Academic Motivation Inventory,” *Update: Applications of Research in Music Education* 35, no. 3 (2017): 17. <https://doi.org/10.1177/8755123315620835>.

²⁸¹ Ibid.

Main Theme 2: Connecting Band Students with Other Groups

Participants in a study by Duchesneau noted that “family and the community [were] most responsible for supporting the social and emotional development of children.”²⁸² Teacher D noted that his most effective community engagement strategies included “bringing in guest conductors from local colleges,” performing at “senior centers, community 5K runs, school events such as the district opener, [and] teacher of the year dinners.” Teacher B stated, “[p]artnerships within the school district, staff, are also beneficial, but ultimately that doesn’t matter if the community doesn’t support our mission and goals.” Teacher C stated, “the partnership between our district personnel enables us to maintain a fairly successful program.” Teacher D stated, “When a band program has a culture behind it in the community, the recruitment can almost take care of itself. ... [W]hen parents are on the soccer field talking and their child has a great experience with band, they will talk about it and word will travel fast.” Hash stated that band teachers should “develop positive relationships with their students as well as the parents, administrators, colleagues, and community members who will work as partners in building and maintaining the program.”²⁸³

Main Theme 3: Organic Implementation of SEL

Regarding MSBTs organically implementing SEL competencies, Teacher D stated, “I feel ... [implementing social awareness] happens naturally and organically in the teaching of band. In the curriculum, we have listening skills where the sections must hear one another. I believe that relates to social awareness as students must be aware of how they sound in band, it is the same

²⁸² Duchesneau, “Social, Emotional, and Academic Development,” 16.

²⁸³ Hash, “Student Retention in School Bands,” 17.

concept that transfers over.” Teacher A and Teacher C indicated that they implicitly implemented some forms of SEL in their pedagogy, while Teacher B and Teacher D purposefully implemented various SEL competencies. Through his research, Edgar found that band students and teachers concluded that SEL should “be organic and related to the music, often driven by and integrated into the repertoire selection, rehearsal process, and performance through reflection in myriad modalities.”²⁸⁴ Shaw cautioned music educators by stating:

The difference between music instruction with SEL as a byproduct and SEL instruction via music is often elided, but it is a critical distinction. Music teachers often believe that their teaching inherently fosters SEL, but music instruction does not maximize music’s potential social-emotional benefits without purposeful efforts toward that end.²⁸⁵

Main Theme 4: Motivation

Regarding motivation, Teacher A stated, “when all five competencies are intertwined, taught regularly and effectively, band students can be more grounded, on-task, and motivated to learn.” Tucker noted that “Music educators daily face the challenge of motivating adolescent students whose perceptions of self are forming and evolving.”²⁸⁶ Teacher B stated, “When students see that [their band teachers] are passionate about what we do, I think this motivates them to better themselves.” Asmus believed that “teaching efforts should lead to the development of intrinsic motives to promote future” success in the music classroom.²⁸⁷

²⁸⁴ Edgar, “Music Education and Social Emotional Learning,” 13.

²⁸⁵ Shaw, “A National Analysis,” 396.

²⁸⁶ Tucker, “Positive Teacher Influence Strategies,” 5.

²⁸⁷ Asmus, “Motivation in Music Teaching and Learning,” 28.

Summary

The quantitative portion of this explanatory sequential mixed methods study identified the levels of implementation and effectiveness of SEL and community engagement from suburban MSBTs utilizing a Likert-scale survey. Of all five SEL competencies, MSBT survey participants indicated that they implemented responsible decision-making the most ($A = 81.7$) and social awareness the least ($A = 66.8$). Survey participants indicated that student relationship skills had the most profound effect on recruitment ($A = 77.1$), and social awareness had the most negligible effect on recruitment ($A = 68.0$). Regarding retention, survey respondents indicated that students' relationship skills had the most profound effect on retention ($A = 79.2$), and self-awareness had the least effect ($A = 72.4$).

Regarding community engagement and partnerships, survey respondents indicated they implemented partnerships with feeder programs in their district most often ($A = 71.1$) and outside persons and organizations least often ($A = 41.9$). Respondents indicated partnerships with feeder programs in their district had the most profound effect on student recruitment ($A = 81.3$), and outside persons and organizations had the most negligible effect on recruitment ($A = 45.0$). Partnerships with feeder programs in their district had the most profound effect on retention ($A = 64.7$), and outside persons and organizations had the most negligible effect on retention ($A = 46.6$).

Survey participants indicated that partnerships with others within their school somewhat affected recruitment and retention ($A = 58.3$ and $A = 58.9$, respectively). Marra specified “[i]t is important to get administrators ... [such as] guidance counselors, assistant principals, and administrative assistants” on the band program’s side.²⁸⁸ They all may participate in recruiting

²⁸⁸ Marra, “Reframing Recruitment,” 33.

and retaining middle school band students because they create schedules and determine course requirements.²⁸⁹ He stated that good administrators prioritize “student connectedness, positive school culture, and” SEL.²⁹⁰

There is a strong statistically significant relationship between the frequency of MSBTs incorporating the five SEL competencies and various community engagement strategies in their pedagogy and their perceived effectiveness regarding recruitment and retention. Survey respondents reported they incorporated relationship skills in their pedagogy at an average of 79.7. They believed relationship skills affected recruitment with an average of 81.8 and retention with an average of 81.7. Survey respondents reported they incorporated partnerships between their band and any person, organization, or business not affiliated with their school district an average of 42.8. They believed that these partnerships affected recruitment with an average of 44.1 and retention with an average of 44.7.

The qualitative portion of this research study identified examples and perceived levels of effectiveness of SEL and community engagement from suburban MSBTs utilizing face-to-face interviews on Zoom. Appendix B contains the interview transcripts. The researcher will further explore the implications of the survey results in chapter five.

Once the interviews concluded, the researcher transcribed, collated, and coded the responses. Four main themes emerged from the interviews: life skills, connecting band students with other groups, organic implementation of SEL, and motivation. Seven sub-categories emerged from the main category of life skills: assessment, practicing, behavior, goal-setting, time management, friendships, and teamwork. Teacher C stated that some of the most effective manners to promote recruitment included supportive administrators and staff promotion of the

²⁸⁹ Marra, “Reframing Recruitment,” 33.

²⁹⁰ Ibid.

band program. Teacher D suggested that MSBTs partner with guest conductors from local colleges, which “can provide the motivation to retain students if they have a positive experience working with those individuals.”

Creswell and Creswell stated that explanatory sequential mixed methods studies employ a distinct form of interpretation regarding “how the qualitative findings help to explain the quantitative results.”²⁹¹ The qualitative findings in this study help to explain the quantitative results. Survey participants indicated that partnerships with their band colleagues were some of the most conducive to recruitment and retention. Teacher B discussed her beliefs about such partnerships. She stated, “By working together, we are able to combine our strengths as musicians, which is then passed down to the students. . . . Sometimes, working within a large team can be challenging, because we all have different philosophies and beliefs where our profession is concerned, and not everyone is open to alternate ways of teaching/recruiting compared to their way.” The other three participants discussed the importance of partnerships with district staff, not band colleagues. Survey participants indicated that partnerships between their band and any person or group not affiliated with their school district were the least effective for recruitment and retention. Of all the types of partnerships interview participants noted as beneficial, they mentioned these types of partnerships with the least frequency.

²⁹¹ Creswell, “Research Design,” 244.

Chapter Five: Conclusion

Summary of Study

In this study, the researcher sought to identify the correlation between two predictor variables and two dependent variables within suburban middle school band programs. The predictor variables were community engagement and social-emotional learning, and the dependent variables were student recruitment and retention. The researcher utilized research results to determine levels of correlation and to identify effective strategies regarding community engagement and SEL to recruit and retain middle school band students.

This research design utilized a two-phase explanatory sequential mixed methods approach. Both phases sought to answer both research questions. The research questions for this study were:

Research Question One: What social-emotional learning and community engagement strategies can suburban middle school band teachers adopt to maximize the number of students entering the program?

Research Question Two: What social-emotional learning and community engagement strategies can suburban middle school band teachers adopt to maximize the number of students remaining in the program?

In phase one, the researcher created a Likert-type quantitative survey to answer both research questions. The researcher sent an invitation to participate in the survey to current certificated suburban middle school band teachers who implemented either community engagement or SEL strategies in their classrooms. Sixty-four participants anonymously completed the survey. Survey participants indicated that relationship skills had the most profound effect on middle school band student recruitment and retention of all five

competencies. They indicated that social awareness had the most negligible effect on recruitment, and self-awareness had the most negligible effect on retention. Survey participants indicated that partnerships between their band and one of their feeder school's bands profoundly affected recruitment and retention. Partnerships between their band and any person, organization, or business not affiliated with their school district had the most negligible effect on recruitment and retention.

The survey results in the first phase informed the prompts for the second phase. The researcher gave phase-one participants the option to participate in the second phase by indicating at the end of the survey that participants email the researcher to express interest in the interview. The researcher selected four participants from phase one to participate in phase two. This qualitative portion of the study consisted of interviews through the videoconferencing tool Zoom. The researcher interviewed participants regarding their perceptions and effective strategies of community engagement and SEL that MSBTs may implement to encourage student recruitment and retention. None of the four interview participants definitively linked any one SEL competency to their program's recruitment or retention.

Summary of Findings

The first hypothesis of this study was:

Hypothesis One: Social-emotional learning and community engagement strategies that suburban middle school band teachers can adopt to maximize the number of students entering the program may include strengthening their relationships with school district personnel, utilizing SEL in the curriculum and pedagogy to promote cultural relevance, and promoting inclusivity through community outreach endeavors.

MSBTs can strengthen their relationships with school district personnel to aid student recruitment. Survey respondents implemented relationships with district personnel at an average of 60.1. This average was 9.1 points above the marker “occasionally” and 14.9 points below “frequently.” This number is the reported average of respondents’ average level of implementation of partnerships with their feeder programs ($A = 71.1$), another department in their school ($A = 54.6$), and an extracurricular program in their school district ($A = 54.6$). Survey respondents indicated that these forms of community engagement and partnerships positively affected recruitment 66.2. This average was 15.2 points above the marker “occasionally” and 8.8 points below “frequently.” Similarly, the researcher calculated the average of the former three averages ($A = 81.3, 58.3, \text{ and } 59.0$, respectively) to arrive at the average of 66.2. Survey respondents believed these forms of community engagement benefitted middle school band student recruitment 6.1 points higher than their level of implementation. Two of the four interviewees discussed barriers between community engagement perceptions and realistic levels of implementation, confirming this statistical difference in the survey results.

MSBTs can utilize SEL in their curriculum and pedagogy to maximize the number of students that enter their program. Survey respondents indicated that the incorporation of the five SEL competencies affected recruitment at an average of 71.9. Interviewees felt that incorporating social awareness affected recruitment the least ($A = 68.0$), and relationship skills affected recruitment the most ($A = 77.1$). The average of all five competencies ($A = 71.9$) was 20.9 points above the marker “somewhat” and 28.1 points below “significant impact.” points. One interviewee frequently implemented SEL to promote cultural relevance among the students. All interviewees discussed their perceived benefit of incorporating relationship skills in their program. Croom stated, “since positive relationships can contribute to psychological well-being,

music practice and participation can also contribute to psychological well-being since music practice and participation can contribute to positive relationships.”²⁹²

MSBTs can promote recruitment through community engagement and outreach endeavors. Survey respondents indicated that partnerships between their band and one of their feeder programs were the most beneficial form of community engagement and outreach for recruitment ($A = 81.3$). Respondents indicated their second most favorable form of partnership to promote recruitment was with extracurricular programs in their school district ($A = 59.0$). To promote recruitment, interview participants indicated that some community engagement methods included field trips, performing for local events such as 5K races and district opening events, and hiring guest conductors.

The second hypothesis of this study was:

Hypothesis Two: Social-emotional learning and community engagement strategies that suburban middle school band teachers can adopt to maximize the number of students remaining in the program may include maximizing student engagement through social-emotional learning, creating and sustaining educational partnerships, and implementing community engagement opportunities.

The research the researcher compiled for this study supported the hypothesis that MSBTs can increase student engagement and retention by implementing SEL in their pedagogy. Survey respondents from phase one indicated they perceived the five SEL competencies to affect retention at an average of 75.7, the average of all five SEL competencies' effects on retention (see Table 4.3). Where the marker “somewhat” was 51.0, and “significant impact” was 100.0, 75.5 is nearly the middle of the two. When the researcher asked Teacher A if implementing

²⁹² Croom, “Music Practice and Participation,” 52.

self-awareness benefitted retention, Teacher A stated, “On a most basic level, I believe that it's important for students to be self-aware enough to know that they want to do band.” Regarding whether teaching relationship skills benefitted retention, Teacher B stated, “Not really, although this definitely helps students build a positive rapport with each other.” However, when the researcher asked Teacher C if self-awareness benefitted retention, Teacher C stated, “trust and reliability established between the students and myself is an attractive motivation to keep students involved in my program.”

MSBTs may increase student engagement and retention by creating and sustaining educational partnerships. Survey respondents found the type of community engagement most beneficial for both recruitment and retention was with feeder schools' band teachers ($A = 81.3$ and $A = 64.7$, respectively). Respondents found that the second most effective partnership for recruitment and retention was with extracurricular programs in their district ($A = 59.0$ and $A = 61.5$, respectively). Teacher C stated that creating and sustaining educational partnerships “exposes the students to other students traveling the same journey and affords them an opportunity to compare experiences.” Teacher A stated, “some students won't even know about the [band] teacher or the [school's band] program if it isn't for the band reaching out and performing outside of the band's four walls and biyearly concerts.” MSBTs may create opportunities to implement community engagement opportunities for their students to promote student recruitment and retention.

Limitations

This study was limited to the analysis of related literature and studies currently available. Many studies from the literature review included socioeconomic status as an independent

variable, however, this study did not include this variable. Study participants' definitions of SEL may vary. Matthew N. Atwell et al. recommended that school districts should “[p]romote the development [and support] of adult capacity and strengthen SEL ... knowledge among educators.”²⁹³

Recommendations for Future Research

This study was preliminary in demonstrating effective strategies to recruit and retain suburban middle school band students, specifically regarding community engagement and SEL strategies. The researcher recommends future studies in this area. Similar studies should be replicated with larger data sets from all regions of the United States to expand on diverse strategies to implement community engagement and SEL to recruit and retain band students. Studies should also include various socioeconomic statuses. Similar studies should be replicated for different categories, grades, and SES to determine if more teachers can implement effective strategies to recruit or retain band students than suburban MSBTs. Future researchers can reveal how to implement community engagement and SEL to recruit and retain marginalized and underrepresented students of any age and music program.

This study contained two main dependent variables, SEL and community engagement, and nine dependent variables within the two main dependent variables. The nine dependent variables were the five SEL competencies and four types of community engagement partnerships. This survey's qualitative and quantitative data succinctly discussed the nine

²⁹³ Matthew N. Atwell, John M. Bridgeland, and Eleanor P. Manspile, “Ready to Engage: Perspectives of Teachers and Parents on Social and Emotional Learning and Service-Learning in America’s Public Schools,” *Civic, LLC and Hart Research Associates* (2021): 9. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED614154.pdf>.

dependent variables. Researchers can compose an entire research project and subsequent thesis on either SEL or community engagement, or any of the nine sub-categories of variables discussed earlier.

Researchers can expand research designs and methods implemented in future, similar studies. For example, researchers can conduct a multiyear experimental study with two control groups of music teachers. One control group of teachers can purposely and frequently implement community engagement and SEL strategies in their pedagogy, and one control group can avoid these strategies. Since most music teachers inherently embed some aspect and frequency of SEL, researchers may conduct this form of research for community engagement instead of SEL. Future researchers can ask survey participants to provide enrollment numbers of their band over the past five years to compare enrollment trends statistically against MSBTs' perceived amount of implementation of SEL and community engagement strategies.

Researchers can perform longitudinal studies to further the knowledge base on this topic. They can study enrollment data and trends at middle schools whose goals are to implement schoolwide SEL and compare these data with middle schools that do not promote SEL. Researchers can utilize any middle school except those that have experienced circumstances that may otherwise affect enrollment trends, such as significant budget changes, band teacher turnover, or student redistricting. Researchers can replicate similar longitudinal studies with community engagement instead of SEL.

Both phases of this study inspected the perception of suburban middle school instrumental music educators. Researchers can conduct future studies incorporating the perspectives of those involved in the partnerships and SEL endeavors, such as administration,

teacher colleagues, community residents, and local business owners. Researchers can also interview or survey middle school band students to better understand their perceptions.

Practical Implications

MSBTs and school stakeholders may consider the results of this study to make informed decisions regarding utilizing SEL and community engagement toward student recruitment and retention. Teachers may consider receiving professional development in SEL and creating and sustaining mutually-beneficial partnerships. Kristin N. Gagnier et al. recommended that schools provide teachers with PD that “provide[s] adults with critical knowledge and skills to reflect upon their own experiences.”²⁹⁴ This form of PD can equip teachers to deliver a more equitable SEL curriculum. Interview participants indicated that beneficial SEL strategies for student recruitment and retention include self-awareness during band rehearsals and responsible decision-making regarding practicing and performance techniques.

Band teachers can relay findings from this study and similar studies to promote their program’s presence within their school and community. Major stated that in times “of increased accountability and educational standardization accompanied by tighter budgets and fewer funds, core subjects ... receive more funding and instructional time ... while noncore subjects, like music, potentially face reductions or elimination in budgets, programs, and staffing.”²⁹⁵ All interview participants in this study expressed their belief that district staff members should be in partnership with the band program to promote recruitment and retention. Interview participants

²⁹⁴ Kristin N. Gagnier, Ayaka Okawa, and Sonji Jones-Manson, “Designing and Implementing Social Emotional Learning Programs to Promote Equity,” *AnLar* and the *Office of Elementary and Secondary Education*, February 4, 2022, 6.

²⁹⁵ Major, “How They Decide,” 6.

indicated that beneficial partnerships to aid in recruitment and retention include partnerships with guidance counselors, principals, students' parents, and band colleagues.

The findings of this study indicated that while MSBTs believed that partnerships with feeder programs benefitted recruitment more than any other forms of partnerships included in the survey ($A = 81.3$), fewer of these teachers implemented and maintained these types of partnerships ($A = 71.1$). Three interviewees discussed potential barriers to forming and maintaining partnerships with school district personnel. MSBTs should identify potential barriers preventing partnering with feeder programs and communicate their needs to their department or building school leader.

Summary

CASEL envisions SEL as a collaborative effort built on community. As demonstrated in Figure 1.1, SEL should advance “educational equity and excellence through authentic school-family-community partnerships,” and “empower young people and adults to co-create thriving schools and contribute to safe, healthy, and just communities.”²⁹⁶ Edgar stated that one characteristic of an effective SEL program was that the school engages “communities as partners.”²⁹⁷ Therefore, the researcher sought to determine MSBTs' perceived levels of effectiveness of SEL and community engagement in student recruitment and retention.

Previous research did not display a correlation between community engagement and SEL in a manner that benefits recruiting and retaining suburban middle school band students before this study. This explanatory sequential mixed methods design study examined strategies

²⁹⁶ “What Is the CASEL Framework?” Fundamentals of SEL, CASEL, accessed February 5, 2023, <https://casel.org/fundamentals-of-sel/what-is-the-casel-framework/>.

²⁹⁷ Edgar, *Music Education and Social Emotional Learning*, 15.

regarding community engagement and SEL for recruiting and retaining middle school band students. Related perspectives emerged. Findings from phase one of this study revealed that relationship skills was the SEL competency most highly perceived by MSBT survey participants to benefit recruitment and retention. Phase one also revealed that partnerships between MSBTs' bands and their feeder programs most benefit recruitment and retention. Phase two revealed that some beneficial manners to recruit students might involve community engagement to foster the program's knowledge, culture, and support. Beneficial methods to retain students may require a sufficient knowledge base of the backgrounds, interests, needs, and viable assets within the immediate and outside community to nurture students' feelings of belonging.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Survey Questions

1. When teaching, how often do you incorporate the following?
 - a. Student self-awareness
 - b. Student self-management
 - c. Student social awareness
 - d. Student relationship skills
 - e. Student responsible decision-making
 - f. Partnerships between your band and one of the feeder programs (elementary bands that move up to your middle school)
 - g. Partnerships between your band and another department in your school (chorus, math, language, science, guidance, administration, custodial, maintenance, etc.)
 - h. Partnerships between your band and an extracurricular program in your district (athletics, clubs, etc.)
 - i. Partnerships between your band and any person, organization, or business that is not affiliated with your school district (age-restricted communities, ensembles, religious organizations, libraries, restaurants, etc.)

2. To what extent do you believe the following impacts the recruitment of your middle school band?
 - a. Student self-awareness
 - b. Student self-management
 - c. Student social awareness
 - d. Student relationship skills
 - e. Student responsible decision-making
 - f. Partnerships between your band and one of the feeder programs (elementary bands that move up to your middle school)
 - g. Partnerships between your band and another department in your school (chorus, math, language, science, guidance, administration, custodial, maintenance, etc.)
 - h. Partnerships between your band and an extracurricular program in your district (athletics, clubs, etc.)
 - i. Partnerships between your band and any person, organization, or business that is not affiliated with your school district (age-restricted communities, ensembles, religious organizations, libraries, restaurants, etc.)

3. To what extent do you believe the following impacts the retention of your middle school band?
 - a. Student self-awareness
 - b. Student self-management
 - c. Student social awareness
 - d. Student relationship skills
 - e. Student responsible decision-making
 - f. Partnerships between your band and one of the feeder programs (elementary bands that move up to your middle school)

- g. Partnerships between your band and another department in your school (chorus, math, language, science, guidance, administration, custodial, maintenance, etc.)
 - h. Partnerships between your band and an extracurricular program in your district (athletics, clubs, etc.)
 - i. Partnerships between your band and any person, organization, or business that is not affiliated with your school district (age-restricted communities, ensembles, religious organizations, libraries, restaurants, etc.)
4. Please select the choices you believe to be most true based on the following statement: “I believe that ... benefits student recruitment into my band.”
- a. ... incorporating self-awareness into my pedagogy ...
 - b. ... incorporating self-management into my pedagogy ...
 - c. ... incorporating social awareness into my pedagogy ...
 - d. ... incorporating relationship skills into my pedagogy ...
 - e. ... incorporating responsible decision-making into my pedagogy ...
 - f. ... partnerships with my band and one of the feeder bands ...
 - g. ... partnerships with my band and another department in my school ...
 - h. ... partnerships with my band and an extracurricular program in my school district ...
 - i. ... partnerships with my band and any person, organization, or business that is not affiliated with my school district ...
5. Please select the choices you believe to be most true based on the following statement: “I believe that ... benefits student retention into my band.”
- a. ... incorporating self-awareness into my pedagogy ...
 - b. ... incorporating self-management into my pedagogy ...
 - c. ... incorporating social awareness into my pedagogy ...
 - d. ... incorporating relationship skills into my pedagogy ...
 - e. ... incorporating responsible decision-making into my pedagogy ...
 - f. ... partnerships with my band and one of the feeder bands ...
 - g. ... partnerships with my band and another department in my school ...
 - h. ... partnerships with my band and an extracurricular program in my school district ...
 - i. ... partnerships with my band and any person, organization, or business that is not affiliated with my school district ...

Appendix B: Interview Questions and Transcripts

1. Why is teaching social-emotional learning (SEL) important to you as a middle school band teacher?
2. Do you purposefully implement the SEL competency of self-awareness in your curriculum? If so, how?
3. (If applicable): Do you believe that has helped the recruitment and/or retention of your program? If so, how?
4. Do you purposefully implement the SEL competency of self-management in your curriculum? If so, how?
5. (If applicable): Do you believe that has helped the recruitment and/or retention of your program? If so, how?
6. Do you purposefully implement the SEL competency of social awareness in your curriculum? If so, how?
7. (If applicable): Do you believe that has helped the recruitment and/or retention of your program? If so, how?
8. Do you purposefully implement the SEL competency of relationship skills in your curriculum? If so, how?
9. (If applicable): Do you believe that has helped the recruitment and/or retention of your program? If so, how?
10. Do you purposefully implement the SEL competency of responsible decision-making in your curriculum? If so, how?
11. (If applicable): Do you believe that has helped the recruitment and/or retention of your program? If so, how?
12. Please describe any community engagement initiatives you currently implement in your band program.
13. (If applicable): Do you feel they/it help(s) the recruitment and retention of your program? If so, how?
14. Do you believe that partnerships between different staff members of your school and school district help the recruitment and retention of your program? If so, how?
15. If you could rank all the strategies to recruit students, how would you rank community engagement initiatives and educational partnerships?

16. If you could rank all the strategies to retain students, how would you rank community engagement initiatives and educational partnerships?

Interviewer: Why is teaching social-emotional learning important to you as a middle school band teacher?

Teacher A: Teaching social-emotional learning is important to me as a middle school band teacher because I believe that when all five competencies are intertwined, taught regularly and effectively, band students can be more grounded, on-task, and motivated to learn.

Interviewer: Do you purposefully implement the SEL competency of self-awareness in your curriculum? If so, how?

Teacher A: I implement self-awareness in my curriculum, albeit not as often as I want to. I implement mostly through informal formative assessments with students' thumbs. Whether it be a passage we just played, a type of rhythm or scale we just learned, I'll ask students to show me with their thumbs - either thumbs up, thumbs to the side, or thumbs down, or somewhere in between in that spectrum - how the students feel that they performed. Less generally, I'll ask the students how they feel their rhythm was, their breath control was, their intonation, etc.

Interviewer: Do you believe that implementing self-awareness in your curriculum has helped the Recruitment and/or retention of your program? If so, how?

Teacher A: On a most basic level, I believe that it's important for students to be self-aware enough to know that they want to do band. To this point, I try to remind students frequently throughout their band classes of their awareness as a student in the ensemble. For example, I ask students to think often about how they practice, why they practice, what goals they want to achieve, etc.

Interviewer: Do you purposely implement the competency of self-management in your curriculum? If so, how?

Teacher A: I do Implement self-management in my middle school band program. It mostly comes from the informal conversations that occur in between the core learning segments in the classroom. For example, if we just wrapped up a few minute's worth of rehearsal on a piece, and it was evident that the students did not meet the practicing expectations, we will have a little back-and-forth discussion on how to manage their schedules and how to manage their desires to practice in relation to the goals that they need to achieve.

Interviewer: Do you believe that implementing self-management in your curriculum has helped the Recruitment and or retention of your program? If so, how?

Teacher A: Well yes, so like I was saying about reminding students about things regarding their self-awareness, self-awareness I believe translates quickly into self-management. For example, if

students are aware that their lack of practice is resulting in their decreased performance in the ensemble, they hopefully are more inclined to manage their practicing routine and practicing schedule a little more.

Interviewer: Do you purposefully implement social awareness in your curriculum? If so, how?

Teacher A: To be honest, social awareness kind of goes by the wayside, mostly because I struggle with balancing the small amount of time that we have coupled with many students who do not practice enough coupled with trying to teach them rigorous content and expand their musical and academic abilities while meeting deadlines for performances and competitions. One way that I incorporate social awareness in my pedagogy is simply by reminding students of their role as valued members of our band. I often relate band to a family, and also I really band to a team sport. I will always review a passage of Music even if one student in the entire ensemble is the only one who wants to review it again. and I remind the band that this is a team sport and we do not leave anybody behind.

Interviewer: Do you believe that implementing social awareness in your curriculum has helped the Recruitment and/or retention of your program? If so, how?

Teacher A: Implementing social awareness in my curriculum I believe has helped only retention. I don't see a scenario where this competency particularly helps recruit other band students. The only way I can see that happening is if students who are already in band and are very socially engaged in band actively recruit their friends on their own because they want their friends to join them and experience the same kinds of things. I believe implementing social awareness helps retain some students, but I've noticed that students that I wouldn't particularly peg as being very socially aware continue to stick in band year in and year out, so I don't know if there is a direct correlation here.

Interviewer: Do you purposely implement the SEL competency of relationship skills in your curriculum? If so, how?

Teacher A: I don't think I purposefully implement relationship skills in my curriculum. However, I believe that, like the other four competencies, this competency is naturally built into the system of band class. For example, performing as an ensemble, with all of the different instruments and all the different parts, is a relationship. And I do try to explain this to my students, especially when I am discussing the roles of the students and how they need to either alter their Dynamics to accommodate the different sections that are playing, or whether it is to "pass the baton" from their part to another section's part. There will also be times where, in one of my band classes, four of the students are working on a quartet, so I'll ask those four students to go in the neighboring practice room and work collaboratively, and I do stress collaboratively, together.

Interviewer: Do you believe that relationship skills have helped the recruitment and/or retention of your program? If so, how?

Teacher A: I'm not sure if there is a direct correlation, but I do know that some friendships within the ensemble have been fostered and advanced because the students were in class with each other, went to region band together, or got to work with each other on a chamber piece. enter

Interviewer: Please describe any community engagement initiatives you currently implement in your band program.

Teacher A: Right before the pandemic occurred, I was having some of my musicians perform at a fall bazaar at the local retirement community, and also a few other local retirement community performances for the holiday season. I do anticipate on restarting that next school year because, in my district, there is a large percentage of citizens in retirement communities, so I feel that this intergenerational connection is beneficial for both parties. Another example of community engagement within my band is the two annual band concerts, where all staff, students, and families are welcome to attend.

Interviewer: Do you feel that your efforts in community engagement help the recruitment and retention of your program? If so, how?

Teacher A: I personally believe that, deep down in students' hearts, if they truly enjoy playing their instruments, and do not love the idea of being in another elective more than they are in band, they are going to be in band, simple as that. Yes, of course, I believe that providing students the best education possible and providing students opportunities to have fun while playing the instrument that they love in a safe, nurturing, and rigorous environment is important and necessary. the retirement community performances, I believe they are just icing on the cake for students who are returning. it may be one of those little things in the backs of their minds once they've already committed to joining band again.

Interviewer: Do you believe that Partnerships between staff members of your school and school districts help the recruitment and retention of your program? If so, how?

Teacher A: I believe these types of partnerships help my band program thrive. Having the key players on our side allows band to be scheduled most easily for students to attend. For example, some band teachers and I meet with guidance counselors every spring, right around the time they begin to schedule students for the following school year. We have a good rapport with them, and we've talked to them enough by now to where they know how important it is for us to group similar instruments together for each class. So because guidance helps group instruments more homogeneously, this allows for a more thriving band environment, where students feel like they want to return next year for more. and, of course, administration needs to be on your side. In the past, I have gotten principals' approvals and other principals' rejections to have mini instrument assemblies in elementary school classrooms for students who have never seen or heard these instruments up close in person.

Interviewer: If you could rank all the strategies to recruit students how would you rank Community engagement initiatives and educational partnerships?

Teacher A: To retain students, I would place community engagement initiatives and educational partnerships kind of medium-high. I ascribe to that saying “it takes a village,” and while there can be a rockstar band teacher that the kids absolutely love and wants to please, some students won't even know about the teacher or the program if it isn't for the band reaching out and performing outside of the band's four walls and biyearly concerts.

Interviewer: Why is teaching social-emotional learning important to you as a middle school band teacher?

Teacher B: While I don't directly include any SEL competencies in any of my lessons, I think that the skills in SEL are very valuable because they teach students to be accountable and responsible for their success and the success of others.

Interviewer: Do you purposefully implement the SEL competency of self-awareness in your curriculum? If so, how?

Teacher B: Students in music programs have to practice self-awareness so they can be aware of their actions and how those actions might affect the productivity and quality of the group's overall performance.

Interviewer: Do you purposefully implement the SEL competency of self-management in your curriculum? If so, how?

Teacher B: In order to succeed in a music program, students must self-manage and self-regulate their behavior. So much happens all at once in rehearsals, so students need to be able to self-regulate their behavior to stay focused and participate effectively.

Interviewer: Do you purposefully implement the SEL competency of social awareness in your curriculum? If so, how?

Teacher B: No, I don't implement this in any purposeful way. I feel like most students develop social awareness on their own as they interact with their peers. As needed, I manage behaviors that may arise that I feel are not quite socially aware.

Interviewer: Do you purposefully implement the SEL competency of relationship skills in your curriculum? If so, how?

Teacher B: I always encourage students to work collaboratively within their section and as an overall ensemble and team. In some ways, you can compare music programs to sports teams, because everyone has to work together for the ensemble to succeed. The work of only a handful of students isn't enough to create success, so there are many times where students will lend a hand to one another. This helps in many ways to create community in performing arts that sets us apart from other subject areas.

Interviewer: Do you believe that has helped the recruitment and/or retention of your program? If so, how?

Teacher B: Not really, although this definitely helps students build a positive rapport with each other.

Interviewer: Do you purposefully implement the SEL competency of responsible decision-making in your curriculum? If so, how?

Teacher B: I constantly remind the students of the importance of practicing and pulling their weight, so to speak. Students who succeed in band make responsible choices on a regular basis, from practicing at home to doing their best in rehearsals and treating their teachers/peers with respect. Being accountable is a huge part of performing arts programs for students.

Interviewer: Do you believe that has helped the recruitment and/or retention of your program? If so, how?

Teacher B: Music programs are notorious for producing many of the “top” students who later go on to be in honors classes, score highly on tests, receive scholarships, etc., so I suppose that responsible decision-making contributes to this.

Interviewer: Please describe any community engagement initiatives you currently implement in your band program.

Teacher B: Each year, we perform at a winter and spring concert that is open to the public. This is a great way to show families what we have been working on, and is also a great experience for the students.

Interviewer: Do you feel this helps the recruitment and retention of your program? If so, how?

Teacher B: Families are constantly impressed with our level of performance at concerts and this encourages them to keep their child involved in the band program as they move up in grade level.

Interviewer: Do you believe that partnerships between different staff members of your school and school district help the recruitment and retention of your program? If so, how?

Teacher B: I think that working as a team with colleagues can be a great thing, overall. By working together, we are able to combine our strengths as musicians, which is then passed down to the students. When students see that we are passionate about what we do, I think this motivates them to better themselves. On a side note, sometimes working within a large team can be challenging, because we all have different philosophies and beliefs where our profession is concerned, and not everyone is open to alternate ways of teaching/recruiting compared to their way.

Interviewer: If you could rank all the strategies to recruit students, how would you rank community engagement initiatives and educational partnerships?

Teacher B: Engagement initiatives are definitely more impactful than educational partnerships in my opinion because this is where the public gets to see what our program is about. These are the same people who are agreeing to sign their child up for band - which is optional, rent instruments, purchase equipment, and allow their students to attend the various events and trips we plan each year. Partnerships within the school district - staff - are also beneficial, but ultimately that doesn't matter if the community doesn't support our mission and goals.

Interviewer: If you could rank all the strategies to retain students, how would you rank community engagement initiatives and educational partnerships?

Teacher B: I would say for retention, these two areas are nearly 50-50. Some students become attached to the staff members who work tirelessly to help them succeed, whereas other students thrive in the community-based engagement activities. Other activities like field trips are also an incentive for some students to stay in band after joining.

Interviewer: Why is teaching social-emotional learning important to you as a middle school band teacher?

Teacher C: SEL provides a comprehensive approach to help educate and care for the whole student. Personally, I value the connection I am able to build with the students and their surrounding community. These connections enable the students to trust my advice and rely on me as an ally throughout their educational journey.

Interviewer: Do you purposefully implement the SEL competency of self-awareness in your curriculum? If so, how?

Teacher C: Yeah, I make an effort to connect with the students through daily greeting activities including acknowledging daily celebrations, providing positive affirmations, to contributions to our classroom environment.

Interviewer: Do you believe that has helped the recruitment and/or retention of your program? If so, how?

Teacher C: I do believe my retention and retention have been aided by my attention to the individual personalities and family dynamics of my students. I have a hard time quantifying precisely how much I have utilized SEL strategies from the early days of my career. However, the aforementioned trust and reliability established between the students and myself is an attractive motivation to keep students involved in my program.

Interviewer: Do you purposefully implement the SEL competency of self-management in your curriculum? If so, how?

Teacher C: I am optimistic that the efforts made to engage the students in connecting with their personal lives will enable them to maintain their focus throughout our instructional time.

Interviewer: Do you believe that has helped the recruitment and/or retention of your program? If so, how?

Teacher C: I can certainly attribute the additional focus on the student's behalf to enhancing their experience, which will encourage them to rejoin band in the future.

Interviewer: Do you purposefully implement the SEL competency of social awareness in your curriculum? If so, how?

Teacher C: In recognizing the diverse holidays and traditions from the various students in my ensemble, I aim to bridge the gap between those students who may lack understanding of other religions and cultures. This community building also strives to forge a stronger bond within the ensemble.

Interviewer: Do you believe that has helped the recruitment and/or retention of your program? If so, how?

Teacher C: In building the sense of community among the students from various cultures, I am confident relationships are created or enhanced which would otherwise have been neglected or unformed. The formation of these relationships in our band has certainly encouraged those students to continue their band studies in an effort to spend more time with each other.

Interviewer: Do you purposefully implement the SEL competency of relationship skills in your curriculum? If so, how?

Teacher C: Similar to the competency of social awareness, the acknowledgment of various ideals contributes to the relationship skills I hope to encourage in my students. Furthermore, the ensemble skills we address in trying to listen to other sections while performing our band music promote the comradery between the students.

Interviewer: Do you believe that has helped the recruitment and/or retention of your program? If so, how?

Teacher C: Just as the relationships are created from the social awareness element, the team-building and role assignments addressed in the competency of relationship skills have certainly kept students involved in the program as they equate the positive relationships they experience in band with being a part of the band program.

Interviewer: Do you purposefully implement the SEL competency of responsible decision-making in your curriculum? If so, how?

Teacher C: I do rely on student leaders to make responsible decisions in their everyday activities. Beyond that, I expect my students to make a conscious effort to come to their lessons and

rehearsals prepared with their music, instrument, and pencil. My student leaders are used to verify each student's responsible decision-making throughout the year.

Interviewer: Do you believe that has helped the recruitment and/or retention of your program? If so, how?

Teacher C: I'd like to imagine the expectation to attend rehearsals and lessons prepared will encourage students to continue their development in the band program as they will feel a sense of accomplishment when they are making responsible decisions and proactively preparing for their lessons and rehearsals. However, I can also recognize some students will be discouraged if they're unprepared and ashamed of that lack of responsible decision-making being monitored.

Interviewer: Please describe any community engagement initiatives you currently implement in your band program.

Teacher C: Teaching private lessons outside of school, organizing and managing field trips to see other ensembles play and providing feedback toward the students' progress, and sponsoring students to participate in auditions for outside groups.

Interviewer: Do you feel those help the recruitment and retention of your program? If so, how?

Teacher C: Each of those community-engaging activities enables students to develop a sense of community and enhance their development. Each experience exposes the students to other students traveling the same journey and affords them an opportunity to compare experiences.

Interviewer: Do you believe that partnerships between different staff members of your school and school district help the recruitment and retention of your program? If so, how?

Teacher C: I am confident the partnership between our district personnel enables us to maintain a fairly successful program. There is certainly room for improvement, but I have rarely been refused when asking for additional resources or permission to enhance our program.

Interviewer: If you could rank all the strategies to recruit students, how would you rank community engagement initiatives and educational partnerships?

Teacher C: 1) Supportive administration, 2) External experiences like field trips, competitions, and auditions, 3) Students taking private lessons, and 4) Staff promoting the band program

Interviewer: Why is teaching social-emotional learning important to you as a middle school band teacher?

Howard: SEL is so important at this stage of the students' lives because it is at this point that they are really starting to find themselves as individuals, figure out their likes/dislikes, and most importantly where they fit in amongst a group of peers.

Interviewer: Do you purposefully implement the SEL competency of self-awareness in your curriculum? If so, how?

Howard: I believe that this happens naturally through teaching music. When we teach band, we are also teaching life skills. It is a natural fit that goes along with the written curriculum.

Interviewer: Do you believe that has helped the recruitment and/or retention of your program? If so, how?

Howard: Yes, I believe that students can find themselves in band and view it as a place of fun and comfort. We've all heard the term "band kid" and I believe that starts in middle school where students can find themselves through music and playing in an ensemble.

Interviewer: Do you purposefully implement the SEL competency of self-management in your curriculum? If so, how?

Howard: Not purposefully, but like the question above I feel this happens very naturally and organically.

Interviewer: Do you purposefully implement the SEL competency of social awareness in your curriculum? If so, how?

Howard: I wouldn't say purposefully, but again I feel this happens naturally and organically in the teaching of band. In the curriculum, we have listening skills where the sections must hear one another. I believe that relates to social awareness as students must be aware of how they sound in band, it is the same concept that transfers over.

Interviewer: Do you believe that has helped the recruitment and/or retention of your program? If so, how?

Howard: I would have to gather more details and data before being able to answer this one honestly.

Interviewer: Do you purposefully implement the SEL competency of relationship skills in your curriculum? If so, how?

Howard: Absolutely! Relationship skills and their development is what band is all about. Not just the musical relationships but the friendships students make through their band experience. In our band, we use trips as motivation with competitions at places such as theme parks and local festivals.

Interviewer: Do you believe that has helped the recruitment and/or retention of your program? If so, how?

Howard: 100% yes. The trips and competitions that I referenced above in some cases are the sole reasons some kids want to stay in band! It is all about motivation in that regard and I believe that the curricular trips provide that.

Interviewer: Do you purposefully implement the SEL competency of responsible decision-making in your curriculum? If so, how?

Howard: Yes, from everywhere to how to properly treat the instruments with the respect and care they deserve, to always be on time, to having a good attitude and respect your peers. Each one of these affects responsible decision-making.

Interviewer: Do you believe that has helped the recruitment and/or retention of your program? If so, how?

Howard: I feel this is sometimes more for the parents wanting their students to be in band for these very reasons and eventually it'll work out that the students will learn many life skills that they need.

Interviewer: Please describe any community engagement initiatives you currently implement in your band program.

Howard: We have played at senior centers, community 5K runs, school events such as the district opener, teacher of the year dinners, and more.

Interviewer: Do you feel those help the recruitment and retention of your program? If so, how?

Howard: Absolutely! Students like to perform. Performances are the motivation that drives students to want to participate in band!

Interviewer: Do you believe that partnerships between different staff members of your school and school district help the recruitment and retention of your program? If so, how?

Howard: They can to an extent if the relationships are good and they do a good job playing off each other with recruitment. However, I don't believe overall this has a huge impact on recruitment for the most part.

Interviewer: If you could rank all the strategies to recruit students, how would you rank community engagement initiatives and educational partnerships?

Howard: I would rank this very high. When a band program has a culture behind it in the community, the recruitment can almost take care of itself. My percussion program because of the success of the high school ensemble, parents in the community at a younger age are sold that

they want their kids involved. Also, when parents are on the soccer field talking and their child has a great experience with band, they'll talk about it and word will travel fast.

Interviewer: If you could rank all the strategies to retain students, how would you rank community engagement initiatives and educational partnerships?

Howard: Very high for community engagement initiatives as mentioned above. Educational partnerships can be very beneficial if they are used properly. For example, bringing in guest conductors from local colleges such as Rutgers can provide the motivation to retain students if they have a positive experience working with those individuals.

Appendix C: Approval from IRB

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY.
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

March 14, 2023

[REDACTED]

Re: IRB Exemption - IRB-FY22-23-173 SEL and Community Engagement Strategies for the Recruitment and Retention of Suburban Middle School Band Students

Dear [REDACTED]

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB) has reviewed your application in accordance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and finds your study to be exempt from further IRB review. This means you may begin your research with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your approved application, and no further IRB oversight is required.

Your study falls under the following exemption category, which identifies specific situations in which human participants research is exempt from the policy set forth in 45 CFR 46:104(d):

Category 2.(iii). Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording) if at least one of the following criteria is met:

The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects can readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects, and an IRB conducts a limited IRB review to make the determination required by §46.111(a)(7).

Your stamped consent form(s) and final versions of your study documents can be found under the Attachments tab within the Submission Details section of your study on Cayuse IRB. Your stamped consent form(s) should be copied and used to gain the consent of your research participants. If you plan to provide your consent information electronically, the contents of the attached consent document(s) should be made available without alteration.

Please note that this exemption only applies to your current research application, and any modifications to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty University IRB for verification of continued exemption status. You may report these changes by completing a modification submission through your Cayuse IRB account.

If you have any questions about this exemption or need assistance in determining whether possible modifications to your protocol would change your exemption status, please email us at irb@liberty.edu.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

Administrative Chair of Institutional Research

Research Ethics Office

Appendix D: Recruitment Social Media Post

ATTENTION SUBURBAN MIDDLE SCHOOL BAND TEACHERS: I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a Doctor of Music Education degree at Liberty University. The purpose of my research is to better understand the effects of social-emotional learning (SEL) and community engagement on the recruitment and retention of suburban middle school band programs. To participate, you must be a current middle school band teacher in a suburban area, certified in your state to teach K-12 music, and who implements SEL and community engagement strategies in your classroom.

Participants will be asked to answer a few questions in an anonymous online Likert-scale survey format regarding the effects of SEL and community engagement on the recruitment and retention of their band programs, which should take about 10 minutes.

If you would like to participate and meet the study criteria, please go to:

https://liberty.co1.qualtrics.com/.../SV_55BbHjKuCWa41P8. A consent document is provided as the first page of the survey.

Four participants from this survey, if willing, will be interviewed on Zoom to gain a deeper perspective on this topic, which should take about 20 minutes. Names and other identifying information will be requested as part of the interview portion of the study, but the information will remain confidential. A separate consent document will be emailed to you at the time of the interview.

Participants of the interview will receive a \$20 gift card to either Dunkin' or Starbucks as compensation.

Appendix E: Recruitment Email

Dear Music Educator,

As a graduate student in the School of Music at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a Doctor of Music Education degree. The purpose of my research is to better understand the effects of social-emotional learning (SEL) and community engagement on the recruitment and retention of suburban middle school band programs, and I am writing to invite eligible participants to join my study.

Participants must be current middle school band teachers in a suburban area who are certified in their state to teach K-12 music, and who implement SEL and community engagement strategies in their classrooms. Participants, if willing, will be asked to answer a few questions in an online anonymous Likert-scale survey format regarding the effects of SEL and community engagement on the recruitment and retention of their band programs. Participation will be completely anonymous, and no personal, identifying information will be collected.

Four participants from this survey, if willing, will be interviewed on Zoom to gain a deeper perspective on this topic. It should take approximately 10 minutes to complete the survey and 20 minutes to complete the interview. Names and other identifying information will be requested as part of this study, but the information will remain confidential.

To participate in the survey, please click [here](#).


A consent document is provided as the first page of the survey. The consent document contains additional information about my research. Because participation is anonymous, you do not need to sign and return the consent document unless you would prefer to do so. After you have read the consent form, please click the button to proceed to the survey. Doing so will indicate that you have read the consent information and would like to take part in the survey.

For those who are selected to participate in the interview, a consent document will be emailed to you at the time of the interview. The consent document contains additional information about my research. If you choose to participate, you will need to sign the consent document and return it to me on the day of the interview.

Participants who are selected to participate in the interview will receive a \$20 gift card to either Dunkin' or Starbucks.

Sincerely,

Gina Vingara
Doctoral Student, Liberty University


gvingara@liberty.edu

Appendix F: Coded Interview Questions

Interview Question	Code Categories
Why is teaching social-emotional learning (SEL) important to you as a middle school band teacher?	Goal-setting, motivation, friendships, teamwork
Do you purposefully implement the SEL competency of self-awareness in your curriculum? If so, how?	Assessment, organic implementation, behavior, practicing, teamwork
Do you believe that has helped the recruitment and/or retention of your program? If so, how?	Life skills
Do you purposefully implement the SEL competency of self-management in your curriculum? If so, how?	Organic implementation, behavior, teamwork, time management
Do you believe that has helped the recruitment and/or retention of your program? If so, how?	Organic implementation, teamwork, assessment, motivation, practicing, time management
Do you purposefully implement the SEL competency of social awareness in your curriculum? If so, how?	Organic implementation, teamwork, behavior, friendships
Do you believe that has helped the recruitment and/or retention of your program? If so, how?	Behavior, friendships, organic implementation
Do you purposefully implement the SEL competency of relationship skills in your curriculum? If so, how?	Organic implementation, teamwork, motivation, life skills
Do you believe that has helped the recruitment and/or retention of your program? If so, how?	Friendships, motivation, teamwork
Do you purposefully implement the SEL competency of responsible decision-making in your curriculum? If so, how?	Life skills, behavior, practicing
Do you believe that has helped the recruitment and/or retention of your program? If so, how?	Life skills, assessment, behavior, goal-setting, time management
Please describe any community engagement initiatives you currently implement in your band program.	Connecting band students with other groups
Do you feel they/it help(s) the recruitment and retention of your program? If so, how?	Behavior, motivation
Do you believe that partnerships between different staff members of your school and school district help the recruitment and retention of your program? If so, how?	Connecting band students with other groups, motivation
If you could rank all the strategies to recruit students, how would you rank community engagement initiatives and educational partnerships?	Connecting band students with other groups, teamwork, motivation
If you could rank all the strategies to retain students, how would you rank community engagement initiatives and educational partnerships?	Connecting band students with other groups, friendships, motivation