

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF MUSIC

**MUSIC EDUCATOR TURNOVER IN WEST VIRGINIA:  
WHAT IS KEEPING MUSIC TEACHERS IN THEIR CLASSROOMS AND WHY ARE  
OTHERS LEAVING?**

A Thesis Submitted to  
The Faculty of the School of Music  
In Candidacy for the Degree of  
Doctor of Music Education

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## **Abstract**

Although there is much literature related to teacher recruitment and retention, little is applied specifically to music education, and very little focuses on music education within rural school districts like those that are common to West Virginia. Moreover, there is almost no research at all dedicated solely to West Virginia's unique music teacher retention statistics. Therefore, this study collected data using a survey that was administered to working music teachers in several West Virginia counties. This mixed-method study identified why the music educators chose to stay in their positions. In addition, it also identified reasons that may have made the teachers consider leaving their jobs. These findings were highlighted with the hopes of identifying solutions that can help to alleviate West Virginia's teacher shortage problem. The survey made use of multiple-choice and open-ended questions. The following factors were examined in the study: school culture/climate, teacher efficacy, administrator approval, teacher mentoring, COVID-19, teacher perceptions of being valued or undervalued, compensation, teaching options, and access to adequate teaching materials, time, and space. Data was also collected from county boards of education to more accurately assess the music teacher turnover rates in the state by determining how many music teachers previously left their jobs over the last year. The study concludes with teacher interviews that provided more insight into teachers' perspectives. Eight teachers were interviewed in total. Those interviewed included elementary, middle school, and high school music teachers. The teachers interviewed represented the main music concentrations taught in West Virginia, including general music, choir, band, and orchestra.

*Keywords:* teacher attrition, teacher turnover, music education, West Virginia.

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## **List of Abbreviations**

Alliance for Excellent Education - AEE

The American Band Masters Association - ABA

American String Teachers Organization - ASTA

The Arts Education Partnership - AEP

U.S. Department of Labor - DOL

Educational Savings Account - ESA

West Virginia Department of Education's Educator Preparation Taskforce - EPT

English Language Arts - ELA

International Society for Music Education - ISME

Music Teachers National Association - MTNA

Music Teacher Profession Initiative - MTPI

National Association for Music Education - NAFME

The National Association of Schools of Music - NASM

National Center for Education Statistics - NCES

Professional Learning Communities - PLCs

Schools and Staffing Survey - SASS

West Virginia Division of Education - WVDE

West Virginia Music Education Association - WVMEA

West Virginia Public Employees Insurance Agency - PEIA

## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

### Introduction

Recruiting and retaining teachers is critical for schools to be successful. Over sixty years ago, Mr. W. Charters acknowledged teacher turnover as “the major educational problem of the day.”<sup>1</sup> Regrettably, this problem has persisted and has been compounded by a multitude of factors over the years. Now, 17 out of 100 new teachers entering the workforce leave the teaching profession within their first five years of teaching.<sup>2</sup> At the turn of the century, 193,000 teachers were entering the profession. In the following year, 213,000 teachers (110% of the number who started the prior year) left the profession altogether. This prompted Richard Ingersoll to refer to the problem as a “revolving door.”<sup>3</sup> The problem has only worsened since its identification. It is a major setback; research shows that teacher attrition has a substantial negative effect on student achievement.<sup>4</sup> Thus, the hiring and retaining of teachers is significant to a school’s ability to teach and care for its students. This is true in all subject areas, including music. Data from the early 2000s found a national music teacher attrition rate of 17.5% within music teachers’ first ten years of work and an increased rate of 34.4% after six additional years.<sup>5</sup> These numbers have no doubt intensified since that time.

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<sup>1</sup> Werrett W. Charter, “What Causes Teacher Turnover?,” *The School Review* 64, no. 7 (1956): 294.

<sup>2</sup> Lucinda Gary and Soheyla Taie, *Public School Teacher Attrition and Mobility in the First Five Years: Results from the First Through Fifth Waves of the 2007-08 Beginning Teacher Longitudinal Study*, U.S. Department of Education (Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics, 2015), <https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2015/2015337.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> Richard Ingersoll, “Teacher Turnover and Teacher Shortages: An Organizational Analysis,” *American Educational Research Journal* 38, no. 3 (2001): 499.

<sup>4</sup> Matthew Ronfeldt and Kiel McQueen, “Does New Teacher Induction Really Improve Retention?” *Journal of Teacher Education* 68, no. 4 (2017): 394.

<sup>5</sup> Clifford K. Madsen and Carl B. Hancock, “Support for Music Education: A Case Study of Issues Concerning Teacher Retention and Attrition,” *Journal of Research in Music Education* 50, no. 1 (2002): 6.

## Background of the Topic

Teacher attrition rates have remained high nationally in the United States since the 1980s.<sup>6</sup> According to a 2015 report by the Alliance for Excellent Education, approximately 13% of public school teachers from 2013 to 2014 left their schools at the end of the school year; of that percentage, 227,016 transferred schools, and 230,122 left the teaching profession entirely.<sup>7</sup> The struggle to keep teachers in the classroom stems from a multitude of factors, including inadequate teacher preparation, lack of mentoring or effective mentoring, poor compensation, unsatisfactory teaching conditions, and pressures related to accountability.<sup>8</sup> Thus, it is not surprising that teachers are leaving the classroom, especially when such factors are paired with classic teaching occupational stressors such as student behavior, lack of teacher autonomy, long work hours, education-related political issues, and administrative and parental demands. Predictably, all these factors have led to not only a teacher shortage, but also to an increase in under-qualified teachers being employed. School districts that serve low-income students in both rural and urban areas are more likely to struggle with hiring and retaining teachers and are more prone to employ underqualified teachers.<sup>9</sup> Most school districts in West Virginia service high populations of low-income students, as 16.8% of West Virginia's population lives below the

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<sup>6</sup> Richard Ingersoll, "Teacher Turnover and Teacher Shortages: An Organizational Analysis," *American Educational Research Journal* 38, no. 3 (2001): 499.

<sup>7</sup> Mariana Haynes, "On the Path to Equity: Improving the Effectiveness of Beginning Teachers," Alliance for Excellent Education, accessed October 30, 2022, <https://all4ed.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/PathToEquity.pdf>.

<sup>8</sup> Veronica Gerald, "Teacher Retention: A Growing Problem," *National School Boards Association*, accessed October 30, 2022, <https://www.nsba.org/ASBJ/2019/October/Teacher-Retention#:~:text=It%20sprouts%20from%20a%20variety,salaries%2C%20and%20poor%20teaching%20conditions>.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

poverty line.<sup>10</sup> Therefore, it is no surprise that West Virginia's school districts, like most in the United States of America, are experiencing a shortage of teachers in their classrooms.

The Learning Policy Institute conducts high-quality research to improve education policy and practice. They published a digital map in 2018 aimed to help researchers understand teacher shortages. The map used a state-by-state analysis of factors that influence teacher supply, demand, and equity. On the map, each state is rated on a scale of one to five, with one being the least desirable states for teachers and five being the most desirable states. These numbers were assigned based on data that considered compensation, teacher turnover, working conditions, and qualifications. West Virginia received an overall Teaching Attractiveness Rating of 2.73. The state received a 2.5 for compensation, a two on teacher turnover rates, and a 3.4 on working conditions. Alarming, 9.4% of the teachers surveyed in the study said they had plans for leaving teaching. The national average was 7.3%.<sup>11</sup> It should be noted that this study was done before the Covid-19 pandemic, and the data could look very different currently.

### **Theoretical Framework**

There are several possible reasons contributing to West Virginia's teacher shortage. These include heightened pressures created by school and teacher accountability, teacher pay, low socioeconomic status of students and their communities, school culture, administrative demands and leadership styles, lack of strong mentoring, and the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, public schools, and in turn, teachers, have been scrutinized in the United States for some time now. This negative spotlight possibly was first shone on public schools in 1983 with

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<sup>10</sup> "Quick Facts West Virginia," *United States Census Bureau*, accessed October 30, 2022, <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/wv>.

<sup>11</sup> "Understanding Teacher Shortages: 2018 Update," *Learning Policy Institute*, accessed November 2, 2022, <https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/product/understanding-teacher-shortages-interactive>.

the release of “A Nation at Risk Report.”<sup>12</sup> Other contributing policies are those like the “No Child Left Behind Act” and even its modern-day version, the “Every Student Succeeds Act.”

When considering salary, West Virginia teachers receive some of the lowest compensation in the country. The state’s teachers receive the second-lowest pay in the nation, with an average teacher yearly salary being \$47,681.<sup>13</sup> In relation to student poverty, much of West Virginia’s population is considered poor. Data from the Center of American Progress showed that in 2020, 19.6% of West Virginia children were living in poverty, making West Virginia the 44<sup>th</sup> worst state for child poverty.<sup>14</sup> Additional research shows that districts with larger low-income student populations had higher teacher attrition rates than those that had smaller percentages.<sup>15</sup> Lastly, teachers must overcome many obstacles in order to be successful in their work. Such obstacles include classroom management, mastering the subjects they teach, lesson planning, record keeping, peer relationships, parent/guardian communication, time management, and covering extra duties. Mentoring is an excellent way of helping teachers overcome such obstacles. However, the mentoring program in West Virginia is not well designed or managed and only occurs during a teacher’s first year of work.

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<sup>12</sup> United States, National Commission on Excellence in Education, *A Nation at Risk: the Imperative for Educational Reform* (Washington, D.C: The National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983), [https://edreform.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/A\\_Nation\\_At\\_Risk\\_1983.pdf](https://edreform.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/A_Nation_At_Risk_1983.pdf).

<sup>13</sup> Madison Hoff, “The 10 US States with the Lowest Salaries for Public School Teachers,” *Business Insider*, last modified September 5, 2020, <https://www.businessinsider.com/states-with-lowest-teacher-salaries-public-school-teachers-2020-9>.

<sup>14</sup> “West Virginia,” Center for American Progress, Talk Poverty 2020 Poverty Rate, <https://talkpoverty.org/state-year-report/west-virginia-2020-report/>.

<sup>15</sup> Chad Lochmiller, Eishi Adachi, Colleen Chesnut, and Jerry Johnson, “Retention, Attrition, and Mobility Among Teachers and Administrators in West Virginia,” *U.S. Department of Education*, IES, NCEERA, REL: Appalachian (2016): iii, <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED568148.pdf>.

## Problem Statement

Despite being a state that has had a two percent decrease in population over the last seven years, West Virginia is experiencing a teacher shortage.<sup>16</sup> This absence of certified teachers is not unique to any specific discipline, including music; it encompasses all of them. Not long ago, music education jobs in West Virginia were scarce and difficult to find. Now, however, it seems music jobs in the state are plentiful as many jobs always seem to be posted on the West Virginia Department of Education (WVDE) website. In the current climate, many classrooms are being led by teachers who are teaching outside their certification area or by short or long-term substitute teachers who may or may not be trained educators or musicians. In some cases, classes are being covered by full-time teachers during their planning periods. As such, these shortages have created environments where existing teaching personnel are overwhelmed. If left unchecked, this problem will inevitably create a negative influence on student learning.<sup>17</sup> Based on the latest West Virginia teacher retention and mobility data, “20% of beginning teachers left after their first year, which is twice the national average for a similar time period.”<sup>18</sup> Research shows that nationally, 33% of teachers leave their schools within the first three years of teaching, and 46% quit within the first five years of teaching.<sup>19</sup>

This problem needs to be rectified before its negative ramifications can be felt throughout the state beyond public education. “Good teachers help create the educated workforce which is

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<sup>16</sup> Alex Wiederspiel, “Researchers: WV’s Teacher Shortage Problem More than Just a Number,” *WV MetroNews*, last modified September 4, 2018, <https://wvmetronews.com/2018/09/04/researchers-wvs-teacher-shortage-problem-more-than-just-a-number/>.

<sup>17</sup> Education Preparation Task Force, *Report* (Charleston, WV: West Virginia Department of Education, 2021): 2.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> Sam Brill and Abby McCartney, “Stopping the Revolving Door: Increasing Teacher Retention,” *Politics & Policy* 36, no. 5 (October 2008): 751.



essential to attracting businesses to an area, as major industrial development goes where there are good teachers.”<sup>20</sup> Research suggests that students’ academic growth and achievement are directly proportional to the experience and instructional abilities of their teachers, placing veteran teacher effectiveness above that of novice teachers.<sup>21</sup> Without conclusive actions and tactical investments to attract and retain highly qualified teachers, the West Virginia workforce and economy will suffer, as will the quality of life in the state because West Virginia could lack a highly skilled workforce. This situation could also increase poverty and crime rates. Communities that do not invest in education demonstrate a higher rate of crime, drug use, and violence than those that do invest. William Schwenker wrote, “The price of inadequate education today is an inadequate workforce tomorrow.”<sup>22</sup> Thus, underperforming schools have profound social and economic effects that will ripple across every stratum of society. Schwenker also noted in his research a correlation between poor education and individual and family dependency on government-sponsored aid programs.<sup>23</sup> Consequently, the teacher shortage problem is one that should concern all West Virginia residents. Understanding how to recruit and retain highly qualified and effective teachers will benefit all stakeholders, including administrators, new and veteran teachers, parents, and students, as it could positively affect student achievement and staff/student morale. As a result, this understanding could also save districts money as they will not need to spend as much money on hiring and training new teachers.

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<sup>20</sup> Education Preparation Task Force, *Report* (Charleston, WV: West Virginia Department of Education, 2021): 2.

<sup>21</sup> Paul J. Pedota, “How Can Student Success Support Teacher Self-Efficacy and Retention?” *The Clearing House: A Journal of Educational Strategies, Issues and Ideas* 88, no. 2 (2015): 56.

<sup>22</sup> William Schweke, *Smart Money* (Washington D.C.: Economic Policy Institute, 2004), 25.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this study was to examine music teacher perceptions of factors that influence teacher retention in West Virginia schools. This study was built on West Virginia music educators' impressions of their work environments and what motivated them to continue working. The study also examined the factors that have caused West Virginia music teachers to think of quitting their jobs. This investigation led to a better understanding of how to keep music teachers happy and employed in West Virginia. The ultimate goal of this study was to reverse the music teacher shortage problem in West Virginia.

### **Significance of the Study**

Poor teacher retention is a problem that impacts many different aspects of a school's success and culture and can also negatively affect the school's community as well. Teacher turnover in rural schools can encourage poor student performance, which can lead to a lack of skilled workers in a community, possibly increasing crime and poverty rates. In relation to music education, this means fewer music makers and, in turn, music teachers in the future. This research identified what was causing high music teacher turnover in West Virginia as a means of reversing it and what was preventing it. This research is significant as it can help school administrators and other stakeholders better understand their music teachers' needs and desires which could lead to actions that could ultimately increase the likelihood of maintaining their teachers. By reversing teacher turnover, schools can bolster student involvement and achievement in their music programs and instill school and community pride in their young musicians. As of now, there is little research related to music educator turnover and next to none in West Virginia, further adding to the significance of this study.

## Research Questions

West Virginia, like all other states in the nation, is experiencing a teacher shortage, although there is not a shortage of certified teachers. This means there are teachers who are just not entering the teacher workforce or are leaving it. Furthermore, the problem does not lie in a deficiency in teacher preparatory program enrollment or completion but in the large number of educators departing the field early in their careers.<sup>24</sup> Unfortunately, “each year, new teachers enter the teaching profession with a sense of eagerness and anticipation with the hope of making a difference and changing the world. Yet, within a few years, many of these same teachers leave the profession disillusioned and disheartened, ultimately packing their bags in search of new careers.”<sup>25</sup> Despite having access to adequate amounts of certified music teachers, public schools in West Virginia and across the nation are struggling to attract and retain music educators in their classrooms. This problem has seemingly intensified due to the recent COVID-19 pandemic. Currently, “thousands of music teachers have a choice to move, leave, or stay every year, and yet there is very little empirical data available to forecast and gauge the impact of their decisions.”<sup>26</sup>

Notwithstanding this alarming trend, there is very little research dedicated to identifying the causes attributing to this problem, and even less regarding how to stop and reverse it. This plight has caused significant negative financial ramifications and threatens student

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<sup>24</sup> John Schmitt and Katherine DeCourcy, “The Pandemic has Exacerbated a Long-Standing National Shortage of Teachers,” Economic Policy Institute, last modified December 6, 2022, <https://www.epi.org/publication/shortage-of-teachers/>.

<sup>25</sup> Beck Evers-Gerdes and Ryan Siegle, *Establishing a Lasting Legacy: Six Steps to Maximize Your Leadership Impact and Improve Teacher Retention* (Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree Press, 2021): 19.

<sup>26</sup> Carl B. Hancock, “Is the Grass Greener? Current and Former Music Teachers’ Perceptions a Year After Moving to a Different School or Leaving the Classroom,” *Journal of Research in Music Education* 63, no. 4 (2016): 434.

achievement.<sup>27</sup> This study will examine school systems in West Virginia by surveying current music educators to identify the reasons teachers are staying in and leaving their classrooms. The study will seek to answer the following questions:

Research Question One: What effects do teacher mentoring and teacher support have on teacher retention?

Research Question Two: What impacts do compensation and working conditions, including professional relationships and teacher autonomy, have on teacher retention?

### **Hypotheses**

Research Question One may be answered with the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis One: Various teacher mentoring and support strategies affecting music teacher retention in West Virginia can include official district mentoring, professional development, and membership in professional organizations.

Mentoring is a powerful tool in retaining teachers and has been identified as an important component in the new teacher induction programs. Research has shown that “the relationship between the decision to remain in the teaching profession and mentorship received provides the foundation for an effective induction program for beginning teachers.”<sup>28</sup>

Membership in professional organizations can help teachers become more successful by aiding said teachers in finding resources, networking, research, professional development, and grow as learners and leaders. The organizations can also help members gain access to grants,

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<sup>27</sup> Elijah Watlington, Robert Shockley, Paul Guglielmino, and Rivka Felsher, “The High Cost of Leaving: An Analysis of the Cost of Teacher Turnover,” *Journal of Education Finance* 36, no. 1 (2010): 23.

<sup>28</sup> Bonita Maready, Qiang Cheng, and Dennis Bunch, “Exploring Mentoring Practices Contributing to New Teacher Retention: An Analysis of the Beginning Teacher Longitudinal Study,” *International Journal of Evidence Based Coaching and Mentoring* 19, no. 2 (2021): 89.

fellowships, and awards.<sup>29</sup> These organizations can also help teachers with legal issues. All of these things can be powerful in encouraging teachers to stay in their classrooms.

Research Question Two may be answered with the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis Two: The impacts of good compensation and positive working conditions, including professional relationships and teacher autonomy, can lead to greater teacher satisfaction and engagement, and in turn, increase teacher retention rates.

Teachers are more likely to stay in jobs that pay competitively. A study conducted in Tennessee found that “teacher turnover decreased significantly at the schools with supplements in spite of having the most disadvantaged students in the state while turnover rates increased at non-supplemented schools.”<sup>30</sup> Professional core relationships between teachers, their students, their colleagues, and their administrators are key to teacher retention. These relationships are “structurally inherent to teaching and schooling and inextricably related to – as well as influencing – the core of the educational processes: teaching and learning.”<sup>31</sup> Teachers need to have positive relationships with their principals to be happy in their work. Furthermore, having strong administrators is a key part of having successful schools in which teachers want to work. “While only a small body of research links principals directly to student achievement, a much larger research base documents principals’ effects on school operations through motivating teachers and students, identifying and articulating vision and goals, developing high-performance

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<sup>29</sup> “5 Reasons Why It’s Important For Educators to Join Professional Organizations,” National Society of High School Scholars, accessed July 2, 2022, <https://www.nshss.org/blog/5-reasons-why-it-s-important-for-educators-to-join-professional-organizations-1/>.

<sup>30</sup> Walker A. Swain, Luis A. Rodriguez, Matthew G. Springer, “Selective Retention Bonuses for Highly Effective Teachers in High Poverty Schools: Evidence from Tennessee,” *Economics of Education Review* 68 (February 2019): 150.

<sup>31</sup> Geert Kelchtermans, “Should I Stay or Should I Go?: Unpacking Teacher Attrition/Retention as an Educational Issue,” *Teachers and Teaching* 23, no. 8 (September 2017): 967.

expectations, fostering communication, allocating resources, and developing organizational structures to support instruction and learning.”<sup>32</sup> As a result, principals also affect the instructional quality of schools through the recruitment, development, and retention of quality teachers. They do this in the ways they lead their schools, the relationships they forge with their staff, and the support they provide their staff.<sup>33</sup> Existing literature articulates that “teachers experiencing positive job-related affective wellbeing tend to remain in the profession due to their experience of enhanced professional wellbeing.”<sup>34</sup> Principals who are perceived as utilizing a combination of transformational and transactional dimensions of leadership behaviors can contribute to the professional well-being of their teachers.<sup>35</sup> Teachers who are experiencing professional well-being are more likely to stay in their jobs.

Teachers typically complete much of their work in isolation from their colleagues. This is especially true for music teachers, particularly if they are working in elementary schools which tend to only have one music educator. This isolation can be specifically challenging for new teachers. To complicate this matter further, new teachers are often assigned some of the more difficult classrooms or teaching assignments, creating a “lost at sea” or “sink or swim” experience for novice teachers. Furthermore, “teaching has not had the kind of support, guidance, and orientation programs for new employees collectively known as induction common

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<sup>32</sup> Donald Boyd, Pam Grossman, Marsha Ing, Hamilton Lankford, Susanna Loeb, and James Wyckoff, “The Influence of School Administrators on Teacher Retention Decisions,” *American Educational Research Journal*, 48, no. 2 (2011): 328, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27975291>.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 329.

<sup>34</sup> C. P. Van der Vyver, Me T. Kok, and L. N. Conley, “The relationship between teachers’ professional Wellbeing and Principals’ Leadership Behavior to Improve Teacher Retention,” *Perspectives in Education* 38, no. 2 (2020): 99, <http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.proquest.com%2Fscholarly-journals%2Frelationship-between-teachers-professional%2Fdocview%2F2491615875%2Fse-2%3Faccountid%3D12085>.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*

to many skilled blue and white-collar occupations and characteristic of the traditional professions.”<sup>36</sup>

### **Identification of the Variables**

The COVID-19 pandemic has greatly exacerbated teacher turnover rates. Thus, it is unclear how teacher turnover will continue to be affected by the pandemic as we move forward. Before COVID-19, teacher shortages were among the top challenges facing education leaders, particularly those in low-income communities. Data shows almost half of the teachers who left the profession since March of 2020 cite COVID-19 as their main reason for choosing to leave.<sup>37</sup>

### **Core Concepts**

It has become progressively more challenging to retain teachers in classrooms; this is predominantly true regarding public school classrooms. Teacher migration, turnover, and retirement have been negatively affecting schools nationally for some time now.<sup>38</sup> These factors, alongside teacher attrition, have caught the attention of administrators and politicians.<sup>39</sup> In 2010, approximately 500,000 educators were leaving their jobs annually.<sup>40</sup> This trend is causing harm to schools as it is costly and affects both staff and community morale negatively. It also

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<sup>36</sup> Richard M. Ingersoll and Michael Strong, “The Impact of Induction and Mentoring Programs for Beginning Teachers: A Critical Review of the Research,” *Review of Educational Research* 81, no. 2 (June 2011): 20.

<sup>37</sup> David Rosenberg and Tara Anderson, *Teacher Turnover Before, During, & After COVID*, Education Resource Strategies (2021): 1, <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED614496.pdf>.

<sup>38</sup> Abdou Ndoeye, Scott Imig, and Michele Parker, “Empowerment, Leadership, and Teachers’ Intentions to Stay in or Leave the Profession or Their Schools in North Carolina Charter Schools,” *Journal of School Choice* 4, no. 2 (2010): 174.

<sup>39</sup> Karen J. DeAngelis, Bradford R. White, and Jennifer B. Presley. “The Changing Distribution of Teacher Qualifications Across Schools: A Statewide Perspective Post-NCLB,” *Education Policy Analysis Archives* 18 (2010): 28.

<sup>40</sup> Donald Boyd, Pam Grossman, Marsha Ing, Hamilton Lankford, Susanna Loeb, and James Wyckoff, “The Influence of School Administrators on Teacher Retention Decisions,” *American Educational Research Journal*, 48, no. 2 (2011): 304.

adversely affects student performance as well. Research shows that teachers are the single most important factor in attaining successful student performance.<sup>41</sup> Unless school systems start taking proactive approaches in supporting their new and veteran teachers, this alarming trend will continue and intensify. To reverse this trend, public schools in the United States of America need to effectively recruit, train, and retain teachers. To do these things they must competitively compensate their teachers, aid them with classroom management, and provide necessary supports such as acceptable materials and professional development opportunities.<sup>42</sup>

Although the teacher shortage problem is a national issue, it affects rural areas like most of West Virginia differently. Teacher labor pools are “highly localized meaning, geographic proximity and familiarity are key components in decision making both on the part of prospective teachers and by school districts.”<sup>43</sup> Thus it is often difficult to attract teaching talent that is not local. Another factor is that rural school districts often struggle to offer competitive salaries and incentives that compete with urban or wealthier districts.<sup>44</sup> Other factors that play into rural teacher shortages are the lack of adequate teaching resources, professional isolation, poor school building conditions, weak leadership, and the lack of professional privacy found in small communities.<sup>45</sup> As mentioned previously, data has also shown that teachers who work in low-income schools comparable to most found in rural areas are more likely to leave their jobs.

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<sup>41</sup> Alliance for Excellent Education, “Teacher Attrition: A Costly Loss to the Nation and to the States,” (New York, NY: Alliance for Excellent Education, 2005).

<sup>42</sup> Matthew Lynch, “Recruiting, Retaining, and Fairly Compensating Our Teachers,” *International Journal of Progressive Education* 8, no. 2 (2012): 132.

<sup>43</sup> Jennifer L. Seelig and Katie M. McCabe, “Why Teachers Stay: Shaping a New Narrative on Rural Teacher Retention,” *Journal of Research in Rural Education* (Online) 37, no.8 (2021): 1, <http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?qurl=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.proquest.com%2Fscholarly-journals%2Fwhy-teachers-stay-shaping-new-narrative-on-rural%2Fdocview%2F2628340784%2Fse-2>.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.



The educator shortage is not unique to any one area of discipline. Music education is also being negatively influenced by this trend. Although the shortage has recently intensified, it is not a new problem. The National Association of Schools of Music (NASM) identified this problem in the early 2000s. A study they requested stated, “The national shortage of music teachers in kindergarten through grade twelve is one of the most critical challenges we face in the entire field of music.”<sup>46</sup> At that time the same study found that 11,000 music educators left the workforce annually. The study outlined ten steps institutions of higher education can take to offset the shortage. These steps will be examined later in this study. At first glance, classroom climate, teacher compensation, and program funds tend to be the prominent reasons for teachers leaving the classroom. “Unless a teacher is paid enough to stay on the job and for his department, funds available for music in the public schools will diminish.”<sup>47</sup>

### **Definition of Terms**

The following terms are used periodically throughout this study. Below, they have been defined in relation to the context of this thesis.

- Administrative Leadership Style: the manner in which an administrator relates with and leads their teachers and student body.<sup>48</sup>
- Attrition Rate: the rate at which teachers leave the teaching profession.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Carolyn Lindeman, “Ten Strategies for Higher Education and the K-12 Music teacher Shortage,” *Music Educators Journal* 90, no. 3 (2004): 66.

<sup>47</sup> “Music Program Teacher Shortage,” *Music Trades* 155, no. 7 (2007): 226.  
[link.gale.com/apps/doc/A167979576/BIC?u=vic\\_liberty&sid=summon&xid=eb395c76](http://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A167979576/BIC?u=vic_liberty&sid=summon&xid=eb395c76). Accessed May 30, 2022.

<sup>48</sup> Leslie Ann Beaugez, “A Study of Factors Related to Teacher Attrition,” (PhD diss., University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg MS, 2012): 5.

<sup>49</sup> Richard Ingersoll, “Teacher Turnover and Teacher Shortages: An Organizational Analysis,” *American Educational Research Journal* 38, no. 3 (2001): 503.

- Classroom Management: Methods for handling student behavior and discipline.<sup>50</sup>
- Grow Your Own: A program that helps West Virginia students start their teacher training in high school in hopes they will finish early in college and join the workforce.<sup>51</sup>
- Highly Qualified Teacher: A teacher who is fully certified to teach their subject in West Virginia. They have a bachelor's degree and have passed all the required tests.<sup>52</sup>
- Hope Scholarship: a West Virginia Educational Savings Account that can be applied to costs associated with private education and homeschooling.<sup>53</sup>
- Leavers: Teachers who left the teaching profession altogether.<sup>54</sup>
- Movers: Teachers who leave their teaching positions to teach in other schools.<sup>55</sup>
- Pre-Service Teacher: Potential teachers who are still in training to become teachers.<sup>56</sup>
- Professional Learning Communities (PLCs): Teachers work together by sharing their practices in an ongoing, inclusive, collaborative, genuine way to better their and their peers' teaching to improve student outcomes.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Kathleen P. Allen, "Classroom Management, Bullying, and Teacher Practices," *The Professional Educator* 34, no. 1(2010): 2.

<sup>51</sup> Teach WV, "Grow Your Own Pathway," *Teach WV*, accessed July 1, 2022, <https://teachwv.com/grow-your-own/>.

<sup>52</sup> "Highly Qualified Teacher Secondary School," West Virginia Division of Education, accessed July 1, 2022, <https://wvde.state.wv.us/certification/data/hqt/Secondary%20Education.pdf>.

<sup>53</sup> "Hope Scholarship West Virginia," West Virginia State Treasurer, accessed July 1, 2022, <https://www.hopescholarshipwv.com>.

<sup>54</sup> Leslie Ann Beaugez, "A Study of Factors Related to Teacher Attrition," (PhD diss., University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg MS, 2012): 5.

<sup>55</sup> Sarah Warshauer Freedman and Deborah Appleman, "In It for the Long Haul: How Teacher Education Can Contribute to Teacher Retention in High-Poverty, Urban Schools," *Journal of Teacher Education* 60, no. 3 (2009): 325.

<sup>56</sup> Leslie Ann Beaugez, "A Study of Factors Related to Teacher Attrition," (PhD diss., University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg MS, 2012): 5.

<sup>57</sup> James Charles Toole and Karen Seashore Louis, "The Role of Professional Learning Communities in International Education," in *Second International Handbook of Educational Leadership and Administration*, ed. Kenneth Leithwood, Philip Hallinger (Dordrecht, MA: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2002), 247.

- Self-efficacy: an individual’s perception of his or her ability to meet a criteria or goal.<sup>58</sup>
- Standardized Testing: testing formats that are identical regardless of geographical location or district funding.<sup>59</sup>
- Stayers: Teachers who remain in their classrooms, also called bystander teachers.<sup>60</sup>
- Teacher Retention: Refers to keeping qualified teachers in the profession. It is the inverse of teacher attrition.<sup>61</sup>
- Teacher Turnover: The phenomenon of teachers quitting the profession within the first few years of teaching is a persistent problem in the U.S. public school system. Teacher turnover is particularly high in high-poverty and high-minority schools and school districts. Teacher turnover has been associated with lower student performance outcomes.<sup>62</sup>
- WVMEA: West Virginia Music Educators Association is the West Virginia Federated State Association of the National Association for Music Educators.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Leslie Ann Beaugez, “A Study of Factors Related to Teacher Attrition,” (PhD diss., University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg MS, 2012): 5.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Sarah Warshauer Freedman and Deborah Appleman, How Teacher Education Can Contribute to Teacher Retention in High-Poverty, Urban Schools, 335.

<sup>61</sup> Hannah Hawthorne, “Teacher Recruitment and Retention: Importance and Strategies,” High Speed Training, accessed July 1, 2022, <https://www.highspeedtraining.co.uk/hub/teacher-recruitment-and-retention/>.

<sup>62</sup> Elvi Benitez-Mackintosh, “Teacher Turnover and Student Academic Achievement: A Close Look at One School Over Six Years,” (Master’s Thesis, California State University San Marcos, San Marcos, 2018), 11.

<sup>63</sup> West Virginia Music Educators Association, “Home,” accessed July 1, 2022, <https://www.wvmea.org/>.

## Chapter Summary

Teacher turnover is a major issue facing West Virginia schools. Many factors influence the problem, some of which include pay, isolation, performance demands, classroom management, COVID-19, school culture, administrative leadership, lack of adequate resources and materials, lack of proper mentoring and support, anti-teacher policies, and lack of professional autonomy. Supporting teachers to retain them is paramount. It is important that we listen to teachers to know how to aid them and keep them working. As the demands on teachers grow, so does the demand for teacher support. Teachers are essential to the academic success of students. Thus, it is of the utmost importance that this negative trend of high teacher turnover be reversed.

## CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

### Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to investigate existing literature related to teachers' perceptions of turnover to better understand the factors causing teachers to leave their work as well as those encouraging them to stay. The study will be multifaceted as it will consider a wide range of topics related to the study. In doing so, this literature review will identify pitfalls for school administration and teachers to avoid, as well as strategies to increase teacher retention. In addition, this chapter will examine West Virginia's teacher retention history, its current state, and factors contributing to the attrition problem. Teacher motivation will be heavily looked at in this section as the core of the study centers on what keeps teachers in their classrooms. To fully understand this, we need to know what motivates them to stay and, conversely, what encourages them to leave their classrooms.

### Background

A trend of teachers leaving the education profession or transferring to different schools has been plaguing American school systems. A 2019 study that gained national attention found an 8% teacher attrition rate in addition to an 8% teacher transfer rate, resulting in a total turnover rate of 16%.<sup>1</sup> This trend has made it difficult for school administrators to keep schools fully staffed with qualified educators. Additionally, schools that serve communities with high poverty levels experience educator turnover rates that are much higher than those of their low-poverty counterparts.<sup>2</sup> As noted previously, this is important to contemplate as many students in West

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<sup>1</sup> Desiree Carver-Thomas and Linda Darling-Hammond, "The Trouble with Teacher Turnover: How Teacher Attrition Affects Students and Schools," *Education Policy Analysis Archives* 27, no. 36 (2019): 5.

<sup>2</sup> Leib Satcher, Linda Darling-Hammond, and Desiree Carver-Thomas, "Understanding Teacher Shortages: An Analysis of Teacher Supply and Demand in the United States," *Education Policy Analysis Archives* 27 (2019): 9.

Virginia are living in poverty. In 2021, it was estimated that 20% of West Virginia's children were living in poverty. One-half of the children identified in that percentage were labeled extremely poor as they lived with families that earned incomes that were below half the poverty level.<sup>3</sup>

### **West Virginia Educational History**

In West Virginia, teacher shortages are found across all subject areas, including music. The number of West Virginia teacher vacancies has been on the rise for some time. There were more than 400 vacancies in 2015, which rose from 593 in 2016 to 718 in 2017.<sup>4</sup> On January 12<sup>th</sup>, 2022, the West Virginia Department of Education's Educator Preparation Taskforce (EPT) reported to the state board of education that West Virginia public schools were short around 1,000 certified teachers.<sup>5</sup> The task force was created in 2020 to address the state's teacher shortage problem. The EPT identified the following recruiting retention challenges for the state:

1. Lack of a robust multi-channel marketing campaign.
2. Costs associated with teacher preparation and licensure.
3. Barriers created by licensure testing and content-hour requirements.
4. Beginning teachers lack access to consistently high-quality induction and mentoring programs.
5. Lack of a comprehensive, single platform to provide data on teacher preparation, recruitment, and retention.

The task force also noted that a significant number of classrooms are being led by

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<sup>3</sup> "The State of America's Children in West Virginia 2021 Factsheet," Children's Defense Fund, accessed August 5, 2023, [https://www.childrensdefense.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/SOAC-2021-Fact-Sheet\\_West-Virginia.pdf](https://www.childrensdefense.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/SOAC-2021-Fact-Sheet_West-Virginia.pdf).

<sup>4</sup> Hoppy Kercheval, "Teacher Vacancies Reach Crisis Level," MetroNews: The Voice of West Virginia, last modified February 20, 2017, <https://wvmetronews.com/2017/02/20/teacher-vacancies-reach-crisis-level/>.

<sup>5</sup> Liz McCormick, "W. Va. Education Officials Identify 5 Challenges Affecting State Teacher Shortage," West Virginia Public Broadcasting, last modified January 12, 2022, <https://www.wvpublic.org/section/education/2022-01-12/w-va-education-officials-identify-5-challenges-affecting-state-teacher-shortage>.

long-term substitute teachers, by uncertified teachers, or teachers teaching outside of their certification area.<sup>6</sup>

To fully comprehend the teacher shortage problem in West Virginia, it is helpful to understand the structure of the state's educational system. In West Virginia, school districts are divided by counties, of which there are 55. Each county operates its own local school system, which is partially funded at the state level. The state board of education creates policies that oversee all boards of education in the state. Local boards can also create their own policies in addition to those created for them at the state level. Only in the last few years have charter schools become an option for West Virginia families. Thus, only a handful of charter schools exist. Another recent change to school choice in West Virginia is the Hope Scholarship, which is an Educational Savings Account (ESA). It can be used to cover or offset the costs associated with homeschooling or private school tuition or fees.<sup>7</sup> It is unclear at this time how these new options will affect West Virginia education as they are new to a state that, up until now, had very few options for school choice.

West Virginia has a great history related to fighting for worker's rights that started with the coal wars of the early 1920s. Teachers have been fighting for their rights in West Virginia for over 30 years now. In 1990, teachers from 47 of the state's 55 counties walked out of their classrooms to demand insurance coverage, better pay, and better teacher involvement with policymaking. Their strike lasted eleven days. As a result of the strike, public educators received

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<sup>6</sup> Liz McCormick, "W. Va. Education Officials Identify 5 Challenges Affecting State Teacher Shortage," West Virginia Public Broadcasting, last modified January 12, 2022, <https://www.wvpublic.org/section/education/2022-01-12/w-va-education-officials-identify-5-challenges-affecting-state-teacher-shortage>.

<sup>7</sup> "West Virginia School Choice Roadmap," National School Choice Week Team, accessed June 21, 2022, <https://schoolchoiceweek.com/guide-school-choice-west-virginia/>.

an additional five thousand dollars in pay that spread out over a three-year period. Also, a new classification was created for individuals with graduate hours beyond a master's degree, and the public employees' insurance plan was fully funded.<sup>8</sup>

In 2018, West Virginia teachers went on strike again. This time, all 55 counties authorized a work stoppage. Similar to the 1990 strike, teachers were demanding fully funded insurance, pay increases, seniority protections, disapproval of charter schools, and voiced dissatisfaction with the lowering of teacher qualifications. This strike lasted almost two weeks and ended with the teachers receiving a 5% pay raise and promises their healthcare would be fixed. West Virginia teachers were celebrated around the country for their efforts, which sparked similar calls to action in other states.

In 2019, West Virginia teachers walked out a third time, but that time to protest state lawmakers' efforts to privatize education for profit by creating public charter schools. Teachers feared the new schools would take away from the already underfunded and understaffed state schools and feared the new schools could create problems dealing with student equality as the new schools would not be held to the same scrutiny as the current public schools. Furthermore, most of West Virginia is rural, and teaching spaces and resources are scarce, making it much more difficult to maintain both traditional public schools and public charter schools in the same communities. The strike lasted two days, and teachers were successful in getting lawmakers to table the bill. However, the bill passed the following year during the COVID-19 outbreak. Ultimately, however, West Virginia teachers' healthcare provider, the West Virginia Public Employees Insurance Agency (PEIA), was still not fixed. West Virginia teachers are still some

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<sup>8</sup> Michael Mochaidean, "The Other West Virginia Teacher Strike," Jacobin, last modified February 9, 2018, <https://jacobin.com/2018/04/west-virginia-teachers-strike-1990-unions>.



of the lowest-paid teachers in the country, public charter schools are now active, teacher qualifications have continued to be lowered, educational savings accounts now take money from public schools, and it is now illegal for teachers to strike in the state. These factors have left many West Virginia teachers believing their lawmakers are against them.<sup>9</sup>

### **Why Teacher Turnover Matters**

Educational organizations are negatively impacted by large amounts of teacher attrition. To better understand these impacts, research has been conducted to calculate the scale of teacher attrition, its role in teacher shortages, and the characteristics of teachers and school systems that lead to high percentages of teacher turnover. Interestingly, teacher attrition rates appear to be greater than those found in many other occupations. This was first acknowledged in 2001 in a study that made use of the Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) and a Teacher Follow-up Survey.<sup>10</sup> In 2008, researchers Boe, Cook, and Sunderland also used the SASS to analyze teacher turnover. They found that teacher turnover will not recover until there are vast improvements made in organization, management, and funding for public schools.<sup>11</sup> All of these research discoveries point to a hypothetical framework of a teacher supply and demand that is suffering due to a lack of qualified teachers who are willing to work in the current conditions of many schools in our country. So, how is this trend affecting our nation's students?

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<sup>9</sup> Erin Beck, "West Virginia Lawmakers Say They Want More Teachers. But Teachers Say Lawmakers are Pushing Them Away," Mountain State Spotlight, last modified February 2021, <https://mountainstatespotlight.org/2021/02/19/west-virginia-lawmakers-say-they-want-more-teachers-but-teachers-say-lawmakers-are-pushing-them-away/>.

<sup>10</sup> Richard Ingersoll, "Teacher Turnover and Teacher Shortages: An Organizational Analysis," *American Educational Research Journal* 38, no. 3 (2001): 513.

<sup>11</sup> Erling Boe, Lynne Cook, and Robert Sunderland, "Teacher Turnover: Examining Exit Attrition, Teaching Area Transfer, and School Migration," *Exceptional Children* 75, no. 1 (2008): 28.

Unsurprisingly, much research has found that teacher turnover is harmful to student achievement. An important 2013 study that focused on teacher turnover and its relationship with student achievement was conducted by Mathew Ronfeldt. The study collected data on 1.1 million New York elementary school students over ten years and found that their study's results "demonstrated that teacher turnover has a significant and negative effect on student achievement in both math and ELA."<sup>12</sup> ELA refers to English Language Arts (ELA). The study also found that teacher turnover is particularly harmful to students in schools with large populations of low-performing students.<sup>13</sup> Remarkably, however, the study also found that schools with no teacher turnover saw an increase in student math achievement by 2% to 4%.<sup>14</sup>

Another important study on this topic was conducted in 2020 by Sorensen and Ladd. In their study, they analyzed twenty years' worth of administrative data on North Carolina middle school ELA and math teachers to determine how schools had responded to the loss of teachers in those areas of study. The study "neither focused on teachers who left nor teachers who joined schools, but rather on the effects of the two types of flows."<sup>15</sup> The findings were similar to the earlier Ronfeldt study ruling an increase in teacher turnover of 10% caused a reduction in student performance, equaling 0.007 standard deviation (SD) in ELA and 0.013 SD in math.<sup>16</sup> Like the Ronfeldt and others before, this study also concluded that teacher turnover has a more common and higher impact on financially underprivileged students and on minority students. Likewise,

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<sup>12</sup> Matthew Ronfeldt, Susanna Loeb, and Jim Wyckoff, "How Teacher Turnover Harms Student Achievement," *American Educational Research Journal* 50, no. 1 (2013): 30.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 21.

<sup>15</sup> Lucy C. Sorensen and Helen F. Ladd, "The Hidden Costs of Teacher Turnover," *AERA Open* 6, no. 1 (2020): 13.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

Sorensen and Ladd also identified isolated schools as being at a higher risk of suffering from teacher turnover.<sup>17</sup> In their conclusion, Sorensen and Ladd suggest that some of the negative effects of teacher turnover are caused in part by the lack of experience and expertise held by teachers who tend to replace the teachers who choose to leave.<sup>18</sup>

A 2020 Vanderbilt study asserted that losing a teacher during the academic school year can translate to a loss of 72 instructional days for elementary math students.<sup>19</sup> This number is equal to students losing nearly half of an academic year of instruction. It should also be noted that the harmful ramifications to student achievement due to turnover are not limited to just the students whose teachers have left. There are also indirect negative effects that harm the other students in the school. The above-mentioned 2013 study found that the widespread effects are manifested due to the burdens placed on the teachers who stay when others leave “leavers” or move “movers” to other jobs. Such teachers are often called “bystander teachers” or “stayers.”<sup>20</sup> These teachers often face the following negative consequences due to their colleagues’ early departures: repetitive professional development, disruption of program planning, reduced time with students as they must support new colleagues, reduced planning time, loss of teacher experience in their schools, loss of innovation, and increased burnout. Such factors all minimize the bystander teachers’ ability to do their jobs to the fullest of their capabilities, which negatively impacts their students’ learning.<sup>21</sup> In a recent study, 74% of teachers shared that they had to take

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<sup>17</sup> Lucy C. Sorensen and Helen F. Ladd, “The Hidden Costs of Teacher Turnover,” *AERA Open* 6, no. 1 (2020): 13.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> Christopher Redding, “The Consequences of Leaving School Early: The Effects of Within-Year and End-of-Year Teacher Turnover,” *Education Finance and Policy* 15, no. 2 (2020): 343.

<sup>20</sup> Matthew Ronfeldt, Susanna Loeb, and Jim Wyckoff, “How Teacher Turnover Harms Student Achievement,” *American Educational Research Journal* 50, no. 1 (2013): 29.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

on extra duties due to staff shortages. Likewise, 80% of teachers reported increased workloads to compensate for other teacher vacancies.<sup>22</sup>

### **Financial Problems Associated with Teacher Turnover**

The cost of teacher turnover is complex and diverse and can affect many areas of a school or school system's budget. In 2005, the Alliance for Excellent Education (AEE) released a national analysis of the costs associated with teacher turnover. They based their analysis on a U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) estimate. In doing so, they projected that 4.9 billion dollars are spent annually at the national level due to teacher turnover.<sup>23</sup> Some teacher turnover costs are easy to identify and calculate; others are not. Thus, some researchers have created categories to help organize expenditures. Once organized, it is easier for researchers to estimate the costs associated with teacher turnover. Some of the most used categories are separation costs, new employee induction/professional development costs, and recruitment/hiring costs. Separation costs are expenses related to teachers leaving due to job transfer, career change, or retirement. Such costs include the interviewer's time for exit interviews and replacement interviews, the departing employee's time, sick leave, and vacation pay. It also includes costs for document filing, file updating, and the inputting of exit information into required data systems.<sup>24</sup> Recruitment/hiring costs include costs for recruitment travel, advertising, hiring incentives, and the pay to staff responsible for carrying out such duties. New employee induction/professional

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<sup>22</sup> Eric Jotkoff, *NEA Survey: Massive Staff Shortages in Schools Leading to Educator Burnout; Alarming Number of Educators Indicating the Plan to Leave Profession*, (Washington DC: The National Education Association, 2022), <https://www.nea.org/about-nea/media-center/press-releases/nea-survey-massive-staff-shortages-schools-leading-educator-burnout-alarming-number-educators>.

<sup>23</sup> Eliah Watlington, Robert Shockley, Paul Guglielmino, and Rivka Felsher, "The High Cost of Leaving: An Analysis of the Cost of Teacher Turnover," *Journal of Education Finance* 36, no. 1 (2010): 27.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 28.

development costs include training materials, trainers, professional development, orientation costs, mentoring, and substitute salaries.<sup>25</sup>

A 2012 study assessed turnover costs for middle and high school science teachers in Boston Public Schools and found the following costs associated with full district teacher turnover in all subject areas. Separation costs equaled \$158,625.<sup>26</sup> Recruitment/hiring costs totaled \$1,376,539.<sup>27</sup> This specific study separated new employee induction/support from professional development. New employee induction/support costs came out to \$3,043,232.<sup>28</sup> It should be noted that professional development represented the greatest cost to the district. The total spent for professional development was \$13,533,762.<sup>29</sup> These numbers total \$18,112,158, which the school system could have been spending elsewhere. When seeing these numbers, it is easy to see how students can be hurt by teacher turnover from a financial perspective. From a learning perspective, students are also hurt due to the “cost in terms of the time it takes the new employee to become productive.”<sup>30</sup> It is thought that employees make a 20% increase in productivity each month. Thus, statistically, it would take a new teacher five months to catch up in productivity.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Eliah Watlington, Robert Shockley, Paul Guglielmino, and Rivka Felsher, “The High Cost of Leaving: An Analysis of the Cost of Teacher Turnover,” *Journal of Education Finance* 36, no. 1 (2010): 28.

<sup>26</sup> Abigail Jurist Levy, Lois Joy, Pamela Ellis, Erica Jablonski, and Tzur M. Karelitz, “Estimating Teacher Turnover Costs: A Case Study,” *Journal of Education Finance* 38, no. 2 (2012): 115.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 116.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 117.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 118.

<sup>30</sup> Nancy M. Sorensen, “Measuring HR for Success” *Training and Development* 49, no.9 (September, 1995): 50.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

## Why People Become Teachers

Research in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century produced a plethora of motivations that drove people to become teachers. These motivations were often separated into classifications which were informed by interviews and surveys gathered from working teachers. A prominent educational researcher of his time, Dan Lortie, identified five themes that attempted to justify what motivated individuals to pursue careers in teaching. His themes included the following: (1) The Interpersonal Theme (the desire to work with young people); (2) The Service Theme (being of service to society); (3) The Continuation Theme (continued involvement in a school setting); (4) Material Benefits Theme (money and security); and (5) The theme of Time Compatibility (work-to-life ratio).<sup>32</sup> In 1986, Joseph and Green upheld Lortie's work stating that they also applied to teacher candidates in addition to working teachers. They also added a few of their own motivating categories. Theirs included: (1) a desire for workplace stimulation; which is a desire for an absorbing career where one could exercise creativity; (2) the ability to influence students and others; and (3) a desire for authority and autonomy.<sup>33</sup>

Later, in 1994, Goodland surveyed over 3,000 pre-service teachers and found that people's perceptions of the work of teachers were among the most prominent ideas encouraging people to become teachers. Several of the participants in Goodland's study also stated they wanted to teach specific subjects, to serve others, and/or to participate in what they supposed to be a meaningful occupation. A 1994 study added to this scholarship by finding that some pre-

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<sup>32</sup> Dan Lortie, *Schoolteacher: A Sociological Study* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975), 27.

<sup>33</sup> Pamela B. Joseph and Nancy Green, "Perspectives on Reasons for Becoming Teachers," *Journal of Teacher Education* 37, no. 6 (1986): 29.

service teachers were motivated by a passion for teaching a particular subject.<sup>34</sup> This could be a motivator for many music educators as they tend to harbor a love for music and a sense of duty to share it with others and preserve it for future generations.

A pioneer researcher on the motivation of music education students was Edward Asmus. His research revealed that motivation for music study and music making, as well as an individual's musical skills, played significant roles in music achievement. His research studied undergraduate music students through the lens of Attribution Theory. Asmus found that attributional causes were more important in determining success tendency than success tendency was in determining causal attitudes.<sup>35</sup> This finding was significant as it revealed some motivational characteristics of the students differed depending on individual majors (like music education or music therapy), the ways they attributed others' abilities, and their perceptions of success.<sup>36</sup>

In some cases, people pursue careers in education due to their personal philosophies of education.<sup>37</sup> This is a trend that has been observed throughout history. In ancient Greece and Rome, education was encouraged to nurture human potential and excellence. Later in medieval Europe, and subsequently in the religious reformation of the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, religious

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<sup>34</sup> Don Alexander, David Chant, and Bernard Cox, "What Motivates People to Become Teachers," *Australian Journal of Teacher Education* 19, no. 2 (1994): 45.

<sup>35</sup> Edward Asmus, "Achievement Motivation Characteristics of Music Education and Music Therapy Students as Identified by Attribution Theory," *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education*, no. 86 (1986): 83.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 82.

<sup>37</sup> Allan C. Ornstein, Daniel U. Levine, Gerry Gutek, and David E. Vocke, *Foundations of Education*, 13<sup>th</sup> ed. (Boston, MA: Cengage Learning, 2006), 2.

leadership in Europe worked to preserve the institutionalization of knowledge through education.<sup>38</sup>

Attraction to pursuing a career in teaching can depend on a multitude of factors such as the candidate's background, his or her personal experiences with schools and teachers, and the availability of work options. Perceptions of teacher job satisfaction can also play a role in why people decide to become teachers and also remain in the profession. One of the satisfying aspects of teaching that many educators find to be rewarding is knowing how they have personally contributed to the success and wellbeing of their students.<sup>39</sup> Other identified factors of teacher job satisfaction include reasonable workloads, manageable class sizes, access to curriculum materials and resources, reasonable salaries, professional development, career pathways, and reinforcement of good performance. When these factors are present and accessible to teachers, they are more likely to remain in their work than when such considerations are not available to them.

### **Intrinsic Motivation**

Many factors play roles in motivating teachers in their work. Some motivating factors are intrinsic, while others are extrinsic. Intrinsic motivation denotes actions that are informed and compelled by internal rewards. Ryan and Deci define intrinsic motivation as “the doing of an activity for its inherent satisfaction rather than for some separable consequence.”<sup>40</sup> This means intrinsic motivation arises within an individual due to gratification gained from activities as

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<sup>38</sup> Allan C. Ornstein, Daniel U. Levine, Gerry Gutek, and David E. Vocke, *Foundations of Education*, 13<sup>th</sup> ed. (Boston, MA: Cengage Learning, 2006), 50-51.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>40</sup> Richard Ryan and Edward Deci, “Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivations: Classic Definitions and New Directions,” *Contemporary Educational Psychology* 25, no. 1 (2000): 56.



opposed to the individual having a desire for a reward or acting to avoid punishments. An intrinsically motivated individual's interests and curiosity compel him or her to participate in such activities. Teacher motivation denotes all possible reasons that encourage a teacher to participate in the teaching profession. Such reasons also inform the quality of the teacher's work.<sup>41</sup> Thus, intrinsic motivations are those related to the act of teaching, like passion for a certain subject, intellectual stimulation, and feelings of being competent in one's work. More examples include being motivated by interest or enjoying the challenges of a job.<sup>42</sup>

The three central elements of intrinsic motivation are autonomy, purpose, and mastery. Autonomy reflects our desire to direct our own lives. Purpose is driven by our human nature to make contributions to causes greater than ourselves. Mastery refers to the urge to master a skill or craft.<sup>43</sup> Examples of intrinsic motivators can be feelings of accomplishment or the belief that the teacher is making a positive impact on the lives of others or in their community. Furthermore, intrinsically motivated teachers typically have a desire to contribute to decision-making in their schools, be appreciated for their abilities and contributions, and have opportunities for professional growth.<sup>44</sup>

When these central elements are applied specifically to education professionals, "intrinsic motivation is the satisfaction derived from teaching, recognition, enjoyment of teaching, career

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<sup>41</sup> Honghui Zou, Jihai Yao, Yuexin Zhang, and Xinyi Huang, "The Influence of Teachers' Intrinsic Motivation on Students' Intrinsic Motivation: The Mediating Role of Teachers' Motivating Style and Teacher-Student Relationships," *Psychology in the Schools* 61, no. 1 (January 2024): 273.

<sup>42</sup> Logan Rutten and Bernard Badiali, "Why They Teach: Professional Development School Teacher Candidates' Initiating Motivations to Become Teachers," *School-University Partnerships* 13, no. 1 (2020): 14.

<sup>43</sup> Daniel Pink, *Drive: The Surprising Truth About What Motivates Us* (New York, NY: Riverhead Books, 2021), 219.

<sup>44</sup> Margaret Pastor and David Erlandson, "A Study of Higher Order Need Strength and Job Satisfaction in Secondary Public School Teachers," *Journal of Educational Administration* 20, no. 2 (1982): 172.

development, the challenging and competitive nature of teaching, teaching as one goal in life, and control over others.”<sup>45</sup> This ideology is echoed by Covey, who lists the following as the most important motivating factors for teachers. “Teachers want to enjoy a sense of dignity and pride in their profession. They want to be treated with respect. They want good collegial relationships. They want to be organized and to feel some semblance of control over their time and what happens in their classroom. They want their talents utilized and developed.”<sup>46</sup> Roxi Bahar Hewertson believes teachers who wish to be intrinsically motivated should strive to identify what they find to be fundamentally most important to them in their work. She argues that this helps the teacher recognize their greatest sources of joy when they are living or experiencing them, as well as their highest sources of unease when they are not.<sup>47</sup> Currently, it is popular in the education profession for teachers to be asked by their administrators or in professional development trainings to find their “why,” meaning why do they continue to teach. This is essentially what Roxi Bahar Hewertson is asking teachers to do as well.

In 2012, Ashiedu and Scott-Ladd conducted research through a series of surveys and interviews to better understanding why teachers sought work in education and what factors impacted their decisions to remain. They collected data from working and retired teachers who responded that their commitment to the teaching profession was stimulated by intrinsic motivators like intellectual fulfillment, contributions they make to society, enjoying their students, passion for their subject areas, and the positive impact they make as role models. In

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<sup>45</sup> Shehnaz Tehseen and Noor UI Hadi, “Factors Influencing Teachers’ Performance and Retention,” *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences* 6, no. 1 (2015): 233.

<sup>46</sup> Stephen Covey, *The Leader in Me: How Schools and Parents Around the World are Inspiring Greatness, One Child at a Time* (New York, NY: Free Press, 2008), 36.

<sup>47</sup> Roxi Bahar Hewertson, *Lead Like it Matters... Because it Does: Practical Leadership Tools to Inspire and Engage Your People and Create Great Results* (New York, NY: McGraw Hill, 2014), 110.

their research, they found that extrinsic motivators like paychecks, benefits, and accolades were less important to those surveyed.<sup>48</sup> In 2019, a national study was conducted that surveyed over 1,000 educators to investigate what causes teachers to leave education. The study found that teachers who were more intrinsically motivated experienced less frustration and burnout and were more likely to stay in the teaching profession.<sup>49</sup>

Not surprisingly, teachers are more intrinsically motivated in their work when they are committed to their jobs. Commitment can be cultivated by teachers having a vested interest in their school's goals. Research has reported positive results when distributed leadership is used by school administrators. Such research has shown that distributed leadership has worked to improve school working conditions and teachers' attitudes to their work, thus inspiring teacher commitment and satisfaction.<sup>50</sup> When teachers are given active roles in creating and achieving the goals of their schools. A sense of commitment drives feelings of purpose in the educators, which could encourage them to stay in their jobs. This is true as the valued and committed educator can envision their school's problems as their own. In turn, the teachers are encouraged to be proactive in finding solutions to the problems that stand in the way of their school's goals, which is beneficial to all stakeholders in the school.<sup>51</sup> For example, teachers who are motivated tend to have more motivated students. This is because "teachers' motivations influence their

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<sup>48</sup> Jennifer Ashiedu and Brenda Scott-Ladd, "Understanding Teacher Attraction and Retention Drivers: Addressing Teacher Shortages," *The Australian Journal of Teacher Education* 37, no. 11 (2012): 26.

<sup>49</sup> Ashley Grant, Lieny Jeon, and Cynthia Buettner, "Relating Early Childhood Teachers' Working Conditions and Well-Being to their Turnover Intentions," *Educational Psychology* 39, no. 3 (2019): 307.

<sup>50</sup> Kenneth Leithwood and Blair Mascall, "Collective Leadership Effects on Student Achievement," *Educational Administration Quarterly* 44, no. 4 (October 2008): 530.

<sup>51</sup> Edwin A. Locke and Gary P Latham, "Building a Practically Useful Theory of Goal Setting and Task Motivation: A 35-Year Odyssey," *American Psychologist* 57, no. 9 (2002): 714.

instructional choices and actions, which in turn affect student outcomes-motivation, engagement, and ultimately learning.”<sup>52</sup>

Highly motivated and committed teachers tend to be guided by self-efficacy and often place themselves in leadership roles among their peers. Having teachers in leadership can create occasions for the schools to “benefit from the capacities of more of its members; it permits members to capitalize on the range of their individual strengths; and it develops among organizational members a fuller appreciation of interdependence and how one’s behavior effects the organization as a whole.”<sup>53</sup> Schools also benefit from having teachers in leadership roles as the practice also helps to leave some of the burdens off of those in formal administrative roles.<sup>54</sup> Teachers in leadership roles tend to be more intrinsically motivated. Leadership can take many forms. For example, teachers can serve on leadership teams or improvement teams. They can lead professional learning communities, meetings, fundraising, or school initiative efforts. Teacher leaders can offer professional development to their peers, act as mentors to other teachers, or act as liaisons to the community or community partners. Research has illustrated that teacher workforce stability improves when teachers feel they can impact school-wide policies and decisions and when they feel they have a shared responsibility for such things.<sup>55</sup>

Good relationships with peers and supervisors can positively influence intrinsic motivation. In 2019, a study was conducted with over 1,500 teachers from a large high-needs

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<sup>52</sup> Anita Woolfolk Hoy, “Teacher Motivation, Quality Instruction, and Student Outcomes: Not a Simple Path,” *Learning and Instruction* 76 (2021): 3.

<sup>53</sup> Kenneth Leithwood and Blair Mascall, “Collective Leadership Effects on Student Achievement,” *Educational Administration Quarterly* 44, no. 4 (October 2008): 530.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 531.

<sup>55</sup> Elaine Allensworth, Stephen Ponisciak, and Christopher Mazzeo, *The Schools Teachers Leave: Teacher Mobility in Chicago Public Schools* (Chicago IL: Consortium on Chicago School Research, 2009): 30, [https://consortium.uchicago.edu/sites/default/files/2018-10/CCSR\\_Teacher\\_Mobility.pdf](https://consortium.uchicago.edu/sites/default/files/2018-10/CCSR_Teacher_Mobility.pdf).

school district. The study aimed to identify and understand the factors that influence educators' commitment to their schools and profession. Administrative support was identified as a major contributor to teachers' staying. The support helped the teachers feel psychologically safe, allowing them to focus on supporting students.<sup>56</sup>

Many studies have also been conducted on teacher/peer relationships/collaboration as well as teacher/administration relationships. Administrators who encourage leadership among their staff foster collaboration and motivation in their schools. This kind of leadership is called the democratic style.<sup>57</sup> Donaldson and Johnson concluded in the 2011 study that lack of collaboration was a major cause of teacher turnover.<sup>58</sup> Likewise, a 2014 study by Kraft and Papay documented similar findings that relationships with colleagues, school culture, and administrative leadership all could positively or negatively affect teacher turnover.<sup>59</sup> Interestingly, a 2011 study found that employees having positive relationships with their bosses had an even greater positive impact on retention than that of positive peer relationships.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Timothy G. Ford, Jentre Olsen, Jam Khojasteh, Jordan Ware, and Angela Urick, "The Effects of Leader Support for Teacher Psychological Needs on Teacher Burnout, Commitment, and Intent to Leave," *Journal of Educational Administration* (2019): 618.

<sup>57</sup> Peter G. Northouse, *Introduction to Leadership: Concepts and Practice* (Los Angeles, CA: Sage Publications, 2012), 63.

<sup>58</sup> Morgaen Donaldson and Susan Johnson, "Teach for America Teachers: How Long Do They Teach? Why Do They Leave?," *Phi Delta Kappan* 93, no. 2 (2011): 50.

<sup>59</sup> Matthew Kraft and John Papay, "Can Professional Environments in Schools Promote Teacher Development? Explaining Heterogeneity in Returns to Teaching Experience," *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis* 36, no. 4 (2014): 478.

<sup>60</sup> David Pitts, John Marvel, and Sergio Fernandez, "So Hard to Say Goodbye? Turnover Intention Among U.S. Federal Employees," *Public Administration Review* 71, no. 5 (2011): 753.

## Extrinsic Motivation

Extrinsic motivations are those related to the choice of teaching but are unconnected to the work of teaching. Examples include prospects of affirmation from others or the reaping of material rewards.<sup>61</sup> Thus, extrinsic motivation is being motivated by external factors. More examples of extrinsic motivators can include a paycheck, health and life insurance, retirement, and work-to-life ratio. Evidence suggests that some young people choose to become teachers as the job can offer security. Some other extrinsic motivations for teaching could be perceived benefits like having holidays and summers off and the opportunity for promotions.<sup>62</sup> The relationship between extrinsic motivation and performance has been studied often, and findings have varied. For example, a 2014 study asserted that extrinsic motivation is important in motivating employees to strive to achieve organizational goals and objectives.<sup>63</sup> Conversely, another recent study argued that extrinsic motivators only fuel short-term motivation and have minimal validity on an employee's work when compared to intrinsic motivators.<sup>64</sup> Nonetheless, there is also evidence that shows that teachers are motivated to accept teaching jobs and stay in them if their physical needs, socio-economic needs, and security are sufficiently addressed in their work and compensation.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Logan Rutten and Bernard Badiali, "Why They Teach: Professional Development School Teacher Candidates' Initiating Motivations to Become Teachers," *School-University Partnerships* 13, no. 1 (2020): 14.

<sup>62</sup> Ivan Reid and Jonathan Caudwell, "Why Did Secondary PGCE Students Choose Teaching as a Career?," *Research in Education* 58, no. 1 (1997): 47.

<sup>63</sup> Falola Hezekiah Olubusayo, Ibidunni Ayodotun Stephen, and Olokundun Maxwell, "Incentives Packages and Employees' Attitudes to Work: A Study of Selected Government Parastatals in Ogun State, South-West, Nigeria," *International Journal of Research in Business and Social Science* 3, no. 1 (2014): 71.

<sup>64</sup> Karsten Bundgaard, "Hertzberg and Motivation Factor," Motivation Factor, last modified March 7, 2021, <https://motivationfactor.com/hertzberg-motivation-factor/>.

<sup>65</sup> Zoltán Dörnyei and Ema Ushioda, *Teaching and Researching Motivation*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (New York, NY: Longman, 2011), 155.

In the year 2000, David Figlio and Lawrence Kenny used a survey to assess school personnel practices in 502 schools. Their work supports the notion that educators need to be able to satisfy their financial obligations to be successful. Additionally, their work correlated teacher salary incentives with elevated student performance.<sup>66</sup> A 2002 study that focused on merit pay found that teacher incentives were effective. Their results suggested that the extra performance pay motivated the staff to produce outcomes that positively influenced student retention.<sup>67</sup> Another similar study found that “when a merit pay program motivates teachers, it also tends to produce positive effects on student test scores.”<sup>68</sup> It should also be noted that teachers who are paid well may also feel more respected, which could further motivate them in their work.<sup>69</sup> Moreover, studies have found that higher teacher pay can increase the probability of teachers staying in the profession. Relatedly, higher pay opportunities found outside of teaching can also encourage teachers to leave their classrooms in pursuit of higher pay.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> David N. Figlio and Lawrence W. Kenny, “Individual Teacher Incentives and Student Performance,” *Journal of Public Economics* 91, no. 5-6 (2007): 913.

<sup>67</sup> Randall Eberts, Kevin Hollenbeck, and Joe Stone, “Teacher Performance Incentives and Student Outcomes,” *Journal of Human Resources* 37, no. 4 (2002): 926.

<sup>68</sup> Lam D. Pham, Tuan D. Nguyen, Matthew G. Springer, “Teacher Merit Pay: A Meta-Analysis,” *American Educational Research Journal* 58, no. 3 (2021): 555.

<sup>69</sup> Harun Gultekin and Erkan Acar, “The Intrinsic and Extrinsic Factors for Teacher Motivation,” *Revista De Cercetare Si Interventie Sociala* 47 (2014): 300.

<sup>70</sup> Michael L. Hansen, Diana S. Lien, Linda C. Cavalluzzo, and Jennie W. Wenger, *Relative Pay and Teacher Retention: An Empirical Analysis in a Large Urban District* (Alexandria, VA: The CAN Corporation, 2004), 1, <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED485516.pdf>.

## Factors that Stifle Teacher Motivation

### Stress/Burnout

Research across different cultures has indicated that teachers are some of the highest stressed professionals with some of the highest levels of job stress.<sup>71</sup> According to Baba, Jamal, and Tourigny, stress can prompt burnout. They assert that burnout is viewed as a syndrome that is “manifested by emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and decreased personal accomplishment, especially among human service professionals.”<sup>72</sup> Burnout tends to progress once work becomes unpleasant, unrewarding, or unsatisfactory. There are three dimensions of burnout: emotional exhaustion, lack of accomplishment, and feelings of cynicism towards and/or detachment from the job or profession. Of these dimensions, emotional exhaustion is identified as the root cause or main contributor to the entire construct.<sup>73</sup>

Teacher burnout has been recognized as having a significant undesirable effect on educators’ physical health.<sup>74</sup> Burnout has also been linked to negative teacher mental well-being.<sup>75</sup> It has also been shown to have an undesirable impact on student achievement.<sup>76</sup> Furthermore, it has also been linked to excessive teacher absenteeism, early retirement, high

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<sup>71</sup> Joachim Stoeber and Dirk Rennert, “Perfectionism in School Teachers: Relations with Stress Appraisals, Coping Styles, and Burnout,” *Anxiety, Stress, and Coping* 21, no. 1 (2008): 37.

<sup>72</sup> Vishwanath Baba, Muhammad Jamal, and Louise Tourigny, “Work and Mental Health: A Decade in Canadian Research,” *Canadian Psychology* 39, no. 1 (1998): 96.

<sup>73</sup> Christina Maslach and Michael Leiter, “New Insights into Burnout and Health Care: Strategies for Improving Civility and Alleviating Burnout,” *Medical Teacher* 39, no. 2 (2017): 160.

<sup>74</sup> Jari Hakanen, Arnold Bakker, and Wilmar Schaufeli, “Burnout and Work Engagement Among Teachers,” *Journal of School Psychology* 43, no. 6 (2006): 495.

<sup>75</sup> Irvin Sam Schonfeld and Renzo Bianchi, “Burnout and Depression: Two Entities or One?,” *Journal of Clinical Psychology* 72, no. 1 (2016): 33.

<sup>76</sup> Keith Herman, Jal’et Hickmon-Rosa, and Wendy Reinke, “Empirically Derived Profiles of Teacher Stress, Burnout, Self-Efficacy, and Coping and Associated Student Outcomes,” *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions* 20, no. 2 (2018): 90.



turnover rates,<sup>77</sup> and subpar teacher performance.<sup>78</sup> The next section of this literature review will examine some of the factors that contribute to teacher burnout.

### **School Environment**

A prime cause of stress for educators can be their school climate. A school's climate or its environment refers to its "quality and character."<sup>79</sup> Research has shown that teachers' perceptions of their school climate are an important contributor to their sense of stress<sup>80</sup>, teaching efficacy<sup>81</sup>, and job satisfaction<sup>82</sup>. In a review of school climate literature, Cohen, McCabe, Michelli, and Pickeral established that there are four dimensions of school climate. They are physical and social-emotional safety, quality of teaching and learning, relationships and collaboration, and the structural environment.<sup>83</sup> Relationships and collaboration have already been examined in this literature review; however, the others on the list have not and will be given consideration hereafter, beginning with physical and social-emotional safety.

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<sup>77</sup> Richard M. Ingersoll and Henry May, "The Magnitude, Destinations, and Determinants of Mathematics and Science Teacher Turnover," *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis* 34, no. 4 (2012): 437.

<sup>78</sup> Uta Klusmann, Mareike Kunter, Ulrich Trautwein, Oliver Lüdtke, and Jürgen Baumert, "Engagement and Emotional Exhaustion in Teachers: Does the School Context Make a Difference?," *Applied Psychology* 57, no. 1 (2008): 128.

<sup>79</sup> Rebecca Collie, Jennifer Shapka, and Nancy Perry, "School Climate and Social-Emotional Learning: Predicting Teacher Stress, Job Satisfaction, and Teaching Efficacy," *Journal of Educational Psychology* 104, no. 4 (2011): 1191.

<sup>80</sup> Einar Skaalvik and Sidsel Skaalvik, "Does School Context Matter? Relations with Teacher Burnout and Job Satisfaction," *Teaching and Teacher Education* 25, no. 3 (2009): 518.

<sup>81</sup> Elise Pas, Catherine Bradshaw, and Patricia Hershfeldt, "Teacher-and School-Level Predictors of Teacher Efficacy and Burnout: Identifying Potential Areas for Support," *Journal of School Psychology* 50, no. 1 (2012): 130.

<sup>82</sup> Dianne Taylor and Abbas Tashakkori, "Decision Participation and School Climate as Predictors of Job Satisfaction and Teachers' Sense," *Journal of Experimental Education* 63, no. 2 (1995): 228.

<sup>83</sup> Jonathan Cohen, Elizabeth McCabe, Nicholas Michelli, and Terry Pickeral, "School Climate: Research, Policy, Practice, and Teacher Education," *Teachers College Record* 111, no. 1 (2009): 181.

## Physical and Social-Emotional Safety

As theorized by Maslow in his Hierarchy of Needs, individuals must have their basic human and physiological needs met to be successful.<sup>84</sup> This is also true for teachers to be fruitful in their classrooms and programs. These needs may not be met if the teacher works in a school where they do not feel safe (physically or social-emotionally). These feelings of vulnerability could be a result of their school's culture, a teacher's relationships with their colleagues and administration, and poor student behavior. These factors can encourage teachers to leave their schools or even the profession. Poor student behavior is often cited as a contributor to teacher turnover in highly impacted schools.<sup>85</sup> Many researchers have echoed this sentiment and have cited high-poverty schools (like many found in West Virginia) as having more frequent or severe student behavior problems. Regarding the subject of poor student behavior in high-poverty schools, one governmental researcher wrote, "Many safety and security measures are more prevalent in public schools where poverty is more common."<sup>86</sup>

School violence is a major concern in America's classrooms and is directly related to teacher satisfaction and retention.<sup>87</sup> However, school violence directed toward teachers has often been underrepresented in research.<sup>88</sup> Consequently, evidence-based practice guidelines and

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<sup>84</sup> Ray Colledge, *Mastering Counseling Theory* (London: Red Globe Press London, 2002): 131.

<sup>85</sup> Ingersoll, "Teacher Turnover and Teacher Shortages: An Organizational Analysis," *American Educational Research Journal* 38, no. 3 (2001): 499.

<sup>86</sup> Mary Poulin Carlton, "Summary of School Safety Statistics," *U.S. Department of Justice*, (2017): 4, <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/250610.pdf>.

<sup>87</sup> Linda A. Reddy, Dorothy Espelage, Susan D. McMahon, Eric M. Anderman, Kathleen Lynne Lane, Veda Evanel Brown, Cecil R. Reynolds, Abraham Jones, and Jaclyn Kanrich, "Violence Against Teachers: Case Studies for the APA Task Force," *International Journal of School & Educational Psychology* 1, no. 4 (2013): 232.

<sup>88</sup> Ruth Berkowitz, Naama Bar-on, Shay Tzafrir, and Guy Enosh, "Teachers' Safety and Workplace Victimization: A Socioecological Analysis of Teachers' Perspective," *Journal of School Violence* 21, no. 4 (2022): 397.

policies directed at teacher workplace victimization have not been adequately established.<sup>89</sup> Not only is research in this area underrepresented, it is also not whole. For example, calculation of teacher victimization has largely fixated on victimization by students and has discounted or ignored appraisal of victimization experiences which were manifested by parents, colleagues, or others who are not students. Furthermore, prior studies have also often only limited their calculations of teacher victimization to injuries that were the result of physical attacks. In doing so, non-assessed forms of victimization such as harassment, property damage, or property theft have been neglected. Thus, an incomplete picture of teacher victimization has been created in the existing research. To further exacerbate this problem, not all victimizations are reported by the teachers. Likewise, principals may also fail to report or minimize the reports to protect the images of their schools.<sup>90</sup>

### **Quality of Teaching and Learning**

Many factors contribute to the quality of teaching and learning in a school. First, the quality of instruction must be considered. Quality instruction begins by establishing high expectations for student achievement and learning. It honors all learning styles and intelligences. It provides students with praise and rewards and aid when needed. High-quality instruction is also linked to real life, making it meaningful to students. Lastly, quality instruction makes use of

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<sup>89</sup> Susan D. McMahon, Andrew Martinez, Dorothy Espelage, Chad Rose, Linda A. Reddy, Kathleen Lane, Eric M. Anderman, Cecil R. Reynolds, Abraham Jones, and Veda Brown, "Violence Directed Against Teachers: Results from a National Survey," *Psychology in the Schools* 51, no. 7 (2014): 754.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, 755.

a variety of teaching methods and values creativity and leadership.<sup>91</sup> Social, emotional, and ethical learning also contribute to quality teaching and learning.<sup>92</sup>

A recent disruption to quality teaching and learning was the COVID-19 pandemic. Survey data from a 2021 study found that nearly half of the surveyed public school teachers who left the profession since March 2020 cited the stresses of COVID-19 as their main reason for leaving their jobs.<sup>93</sup> Some of the COVID stresses included increased workloads and teachers “being spread thin with technology challenges and various modes of teaching, declining student engagement, fear of contracting COVID, and balancing their own caretaking responsibilities.”<sup>94</sup> Alarming, one-third of the teachers surveyed in the study said that working during the pandemic has increased the likelihood of them retiring early or leaving teaching altogether.<sup>95</sup>

### **Structural Environment**

The well-being of both students and school staff is necessary for fostering positive student engagement, motivation, and overall academic success.<sup>96</sup> Thus, a school’s physical conditions lay a foundation that enables all school community members to prosper in their roles, whether they be students, administrators, teachers, or other school staff members. The physical environment of a school should be comfortable and clean and help those in the school feel safe. A school’s

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<sup>91</sup> Jonathan Cohen, Elisabeth McCabe, Nicholas Michelli, and Terry Pickeral, “School Climate: Research, Policy, Practice, and Teacher Education,” *Teachers College Record* 111, no. 1 (2009) 184.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

<sup>93</sup> David Rosenberg and Tara Anderson, “Teacher Turnover Before, During, & After COVID,” *Education Resource Strategies* (2021): 1, <https://www.erstrategies.org/cms/files/4773-teacher-turnover-paper.pdf>.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>96</sup> Ariel Lindorff, “The Impact of Promoting Student Wellbeing on Student Academic and Non-Academic Outcomes: An Analysis of the Evidence,” Oxford University Press (2018): 1-3, <https://oxfordimpact.oup.com/home/wellbeing-impact-study/>.

physical environment refers to its upkeep, lighting, air quality, temperature, and noise levels. Furthermore, it refers to the school's furnishings and other physical materials found within the school.<sup>97</sup> A high-quality, safe, and well-kept school can prompt student success and aid in encouraging positive attitudes and behavior.<sup>98</sup> Furthermore, physical environment is important for teacher performance and well-being as well. It is related to teachers' effort, effectiveness, morale, job satisfaction, health, and absenteeism. Dilapidated school buildings contribute to teacher frustration and can encourage early burnout.<sup>99</sup>

### **Administration Styles and Support**

This chapter has established that teachers leave schools for several reasons. One reason that has not been mentioned is administrative quality. Principals are at the center of their school's culture and have a huge bearing on the success and happiness of their students and teachers alike. A growing body of evidence has highlighted this basic fact, "Behind excellent teaching and excellent schools is excellent leadership – the kind that ensures effective teaching practices don't remain isolated and unshared in single classrooms, and ineffective ones don't go unnoticed and unremedied."<sup>100</sup> Thus, principals have a profound effect on the learning that occurs in their schools. Additionally, principals, as well as others in school leadership roles, can make teaching jobs easier and can aid teachers in improving their craft. This is accomplished through administrative support.

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<sup>97</sup> "Physical Environment," National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments, accessed December 5, 2023, <https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/topic-research/environment/physical-environment>.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> "Leadership for Learning: Making the Connections Among State, District and School Policies and Practices" The Wallace Foundation (2006): 1, <https://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/Documents/Wallace-Perspective-Leadership-for-Learning.pdf>.

In the past, there have been many studies focused on administrative support and its connection to teacher retention. In 2006, North Carolina teachers were surveyed to investigate the correlation between school climate and teachers' intention to remain in their jobs. The survey found that teachers' perceptions of their school leadership were more predictive of the teachers' intentions to stay in their jobs than any other working condition found in the survey.<sup>101</sup> A 2015 study by Thibodeaux echoed this finding. This study examined how principal leadership styles impacted teacher turnover in their schools. They did this by administering a Likert-scale survey to teachers, which examined the teachers' working conditions in their schools. The conditions considered by the survey included teacher future intentions, teacher job satisfaction, mentoring opportunities, and principal leadership. The research was conducted in five different school systems and surveyed 212 teachers in a non-specified southern U.S. state. The study concluded that principal leadership is a vital factor that contributes to both teacher turnover and teacher retention. This was made evident as many of the surveyed teachers listed lack of administrative support as a top reason for turnover.<sup>102</sup> It should be noted that a study conducted in South Africa concluded that two of the most damaging leadership styles that contribute to teacher turnover are the laissez-faire and the passive-avoidant leadership styles, as they contribute to decreased levels of professional wellbeing and burnout.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> Helen Ladd, "Teachers' Perceptions of Their Working Conditions: How Predictive of Planned and Actual Teacher Movement?," *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis* 33, no. 2 (2011): 251.

<sup>102</sup> Amy K. Thibodeaux, Myron B. Labat, David E. Lee, and Cherie A. Labat, "The Effects of Leadership and High-Stakes Testing on Teacher Retention," *Academy of Educational Leadership Journal* 19, no. 1 (2015): 246.

<sup>103</sup> C.P. Van der Vyver, Me T. Kok, L.N. Conley, "The Relationship Between Teachers' Professional Wellbeing and Principals' Leadership Behaviour to Improve Teacher Retention," *Perspectives in Education* 38, no. 2 (2020): 98.

It should also be noted that rural school systems also struggle to maintain administrators.<sup>104</sup> This is due to several reasons. First, rural schools could be used as “stepping stones to more desirable positions.”<sup>105</sup> Plus, administrative responsibilities are often greater in rural school settings. Such administrators may be required to complete the work of multiple positions, which can lead to them being overworked.<sup>106</sup> It is important to note the administrator turnover problem, as reducing it could, in turn, increase teacher retention.<sup>107</sup>

### **Steps to Reduce Teacher Turnover**

#### **Autonomy and Influence**

Giving teachers autonomy in their classrooms helps to reduce teacher turnover. A teacher’s classroom autonomy refers to his or her independence and control over their classrooms. This encompasses freedom over their teaching style, the curriculum they create or use, assessments and assessment style, and the way their classroom is organized and run. Having the freedom to make decisions about one’s classroom is at the root of teacher autonomy.<sup>108</sup> A 2004 dissertation surveyed 103 highly skilled music educators in Wisconsin and Minnesota. All felt they had appropriate autonomy in their classrooms. The study found a strong correlation

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<sup>104</sup> Andrew Pendola and Edward J. Fuller, “Principal Stability and the Rural Divide,” *Journal of Research in Rural Education* 34, no. 1 (2018): 12.

<sup>105</sup> Jason A. Grissom and Stephanie Andersen, “Why Superintendents Turn Over,” *American Educational Research Journal* 49, no. 6 (2012): 1173.

<sup>106</sup> Jim Copeland, “One Head-Many Hats: Expectations of a Rural Superintendent,” *Qualitative Report* 18, no. 77 (2013): 12.

<sup>107</sup> Brendan Bartanen, Jason A. Grissom, and Laura K. Rogers, “The Impacts of Principal Turnover,” *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis* 41, no. 3 (2019): 362.

<sup>108</sup> Jeremy Glazer, “Learning From Those Who No Longer Teach: Viewing Teacher Attrition Through a Resistance Lens,” *Teaching and Teacher Education* 74 (2018): 66.

between retention, quality, and autonomy.<sup>109</sup> Classroom autonomy is particularly important for seasoned teachers. A 2020 study examined the relationship between teacher autonomy and teacher attrition and found that experienced teachers, unlike their novice counterparts, preferred less structured guidance from their administrators.<sup>110</sup>

Additionally, giving teachers a voice and influential power within their schools can also be a formidable way of combating teacher turnover. Giving teachers influence in their school means letting them have a voice in deciding school-wide operations, organization, goals, and staff development.<sup>111</sup> Experts in the area of teacher autonomy and decision-making suggest that administrators wishing to attract new teachers and keep those they already have need to “afford teachers the flexibility and opportunity to shape schools into the kinds of workplaces that aspiring teachers seek.”<sup>112</sup> Glazer highlighted the importance of this sentiment by writing, “understanding teachers’ ideals may be fertile ground for further attrition research, both as a way of better understanding why some teachers leave the classroom, and thus also, why some teachers stay.”<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> Amy Kathryn Roisum-Foley, “The Longevity, Job Satisfaction, and Likelihood of Leaving the Profession of Music Educators in the States of Minnesota and Wisconsin,” (doctoral dissertation, University of Minnesota, 2004), 140.

<sup>110</sup> Ashley Grant, Tristan Hann, Rebecca Godwin, Daniel Shackelford, and Tyler Ames, “A Framework for Graduated Teacher Autonomy: Linking Teacher Proficiency with Autonomy,” *The Educational Forum* 84, no. 2 (2020): 102.

<sup>111</sup> Jessica Levknecht, “Preventing Teacher Turnover, Part 1: Give Teachers a Voice in School Decision Making,” Greater Greater Washington, last modified April 30, 2014, <https://gwwash.org/view/34456/preventing-teacher-turnover-part-1-give-teachers-a-voice-in-school-decision-making>.

<sup>112</sup> Sara Kemper, “Understanding the Role of Teacher Decision-Making in Voluntary Teacher Turnover: A Review,” *Texas Education Review* 5, no. 2 (2017): 60.

<sup>113</sup> Jeremy Glazer, “Learning From Those Who No Longer Teach: Viewing Teacher Attrition Through a Resistance Lens,” *Teaching and Teacher Education* 74 (2018): 69.



## Mentoring

Schools can promote high-quality teaching and learning by providing their teachers with mentoring and professional development. Next, both concepts will be examined in-depth to observe their relevance to this study. Mentorship will be considered first. Teacher mentoring has an extensive and profound history. Many believe the word mentor originated from Homer's epic poem *The Odyssey*. In the poem, Odysseus entrusts his son Telemachus to the care of his close friend Mentor when he leaves to fight in the Trojan War.<sup>114</sup> Mentor and mentee pairings have been an integral part of education from the very start of academia. For instance, Plato learned at the feet of Socrates.<sup>115</sup> This concept of mentorship pairings carried on after these ancient times and can now be found in most every profession.<sup>116</sup>

On a world scale, teacher Mentorship began during the Industrial Revolution when mentorship was common practice in most careers of the time.<sup>117</sup> Scholars believe the use of the word mentor started to be used in the United States in the latter part of the eighteenth century when Ann Murry used the word in one of her books called *Mentoria: The Young Ladies Instructor* which was published in 1778.<sup>118</sup> Regulation of teachers and their qualifications became more systematized in the mid-1800s.<sup>119</sup> During this time, in 1894, the book *The Teacher's Mentor* was written which was one of the first American books written for those considering

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<sup>114</sup> Tammy D. Allen and Lillian T. Eby, *The Blackwell Handbook of Mentoring: A Multiple Perspectives Approach* (Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), 25.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, 325.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>117</sup> Sonya Vierstraete, "Mentorship: Toward Success in Teacher Induction and Retention," *Catholic Education: A Journal of Inquiry and Practice* 8, no. 3 (2005): 383.

<sup>118</sup> Beverly J. Irby and Jennifer Boswell, "Historical Print Context of the Term, "Mentoring," *Mentoring & Tutoring: Partnership in Learning* 24, no. 1 (2016): 1.

<sup>119</sup> Kelly Kolodny and Mary-Lou Breitborde, *Teacher Preparation in the United States: History, Current Conditions, and Policy* (Leeds, England: Emerald Publishing Limited, 2022), 25.

becoming teachers.<sup>120</sup> Later, normal schools were then utilized. In such schools, novice teachers observed and imitated master teachers, creating a loose form of mentoring. Normal schools lasted until around the mid-1920s, when they began to be replaced with college education programs. By the mid-1950s, formal teacher education programs became the standard pathway to teacher certification.<sup>121</sup>

Perhaps the most common form of mentoring found in education today is student teaching. Student teaching is typically the final clinical experience afforded to pre-service teachers. Normally, student teaching is a semester-long experience in which pre-service teachers are paired with working licensed teachers called partner teachers or cooperating teachers. During student teaching, the student teacher synthesizes what he or she learned in teacher preparation classes and other clinical experiences in a real classroom with real students under the guidance of his or her partner teacher(s). Passing or failing student teaching is one of the factors that helps to determine whether the pre-service teacher will be recommended for teacher licensure.<sup>122</sup> Many consider student teaching to be one of the most important parts of teacher training. In 2010, the National Research Council identified teaching clinical experiences as one of three “aspects of preparation that have the highest potential for effects on outcomes for students,”<sup>123</sup> Likewise, surveys suggest many new teachers consider student teaching to be the most important part of

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<sup>120</sup> Beverly J. Irby and Jennifer Boswell, “Historical Print Context of the Term, “Mentoring,” *Mentoring & Tutoring: Partnership in Learning* 24, no. 1 (2016): 1.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>122</sup> Julie Greenberg, Laura Pomerance, and Kate Walsh, *Student Teaching in the United States*, National Council on Teacher Quality, 2011, 1, [https://www.nctq.org/dmsView/Student\\_Teaching\\_United\\_States\\_NCTQ\\_Report](https://www.nctq.org/dmsView/Student_Teaching_United_States_NCTQ_Report).

<sup>123</sup> National Research Council, *Preparing Teachers: Building Evidence for Sound Policy*, National Academies Press, 2010, 180. [https://www.nsf.gov/attachments/117803/public/2b--Preparing\\_Teachers.pdf](https://www.nsf.gov/attachments/117803/public/2b--Preparing_Teachers.pdf).

their teacher training.<sup>124</sup> As this form of teacher mentoring is considered to be important by so many, it only makes sense that forms of mentoring should continue to be used as a tool to help developing educators grow in their craft.

Most of the above-mentioned mentoring opportunities are only offered to pre-service teachers. However, the idea of beginning teacher induction came about in the 1960s.<sup>125</sup> Teacher induction is described as “professional development programs that incorporate mentoring and are designed to offer support, guidance, and orientation for beginning teachers during the transition into their first teaching jobs.”<sup>126</sup> In the 1980s the term ‘teacher support’ became interchangeable with induction and mentoring programs and began to be established as a means of supporting teachers early on in their careers.<sup>127</sup> During this time teacher induction was not standardized. In best-case scenarios, newly hired teachers were given mentors. Conversely, others were given no support and were expected to excel on their own.<sup>128</sup> However, research has shown that the use of mentors is an effective part of induction as the mentor can give their mentee sustained and individualized support.<sup>129</sup>

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<sup>124</sup> Arthur Levine, *Educating School Teachers* (Washington, DC: The Education Schools Project, 2006): 39, <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED504144.pdf>.

<sup>125</sup> Zewe Serpell, *Beginning Teacher Induction: Review of the Literature* (Washington, DC: American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, 2000): 6, <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED443783.pdf>.

<sup>126</sup> American Institutes for Research, *Promoting Teacher Effectiveness: Conditions for Success in Teacher Induction*, Literacy Information and Communication System, 2015, 1, <https://lincs.ed.gov/publications/te/conditions.pdf>.

<sup>127</sup> Sandra J. Odell and Leslie Huling, *Quality Mentoring for Novice Teachers* (Washington, DC: Association of Teacher Educators and Kappa Delta Pi, 2000): 5.

<sup>128</sup> Galit C. Reitman and Belinda Dunnick Karge, “Investing in Teacher Support Leads to Teacher Retention: Six Supports Administrators Should Consider for New Teachers,” *School Administration, Multicultural Education & Inclusion* 27, no.1 (2019): 9. <https://go.openathens.net/redirector/liberty.edu?url=https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/investing-teacher-support-leads-retention-six/docview/2366666286/se-2>.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

Typically, in modern mentoring, a beginning teacher is partnered with an experienced teacher who guides the new teacher as part of their contracted duties. As such, modern teaching mentoring can be thought of as a “one-to-one professional relationship that can simultaneously empower and enhance practice.”<sup>130</sup> Effective mentoring is multifaceted, and the best mentors tend to exhibit similar characteristics. Attributes of a mentor teacher include a willingness to mentor, show empathy, understand the problems mentees may face, have the ability to see other’s strengths, good listening skills, professionalism, reflectiveness, open to questioning, have the ability to provide constructive and corrective feedback, act as an advocate for the mentee, and can multi-task without being inundated by the workload. Furthermore, mentors should be able to promote self-improvement, be able to work with diverse groups of individuals, be nonjudgmental, show enthusiasm, and be giving of their time.<sup>131</sup>

Mentors aid the novice teachers they work with by helping them navigate the unanticipated challenges that arise early in their careers. When such challenges arise, the new teachers frequently experience what is known as praxis shock. This is a condition that arises when the novice teacher experiences conflict between the preconceptions of their teaching and what is truly occurring in their classrooms.<sup>132</sup> Fortunately, praxis shock can be reduced through the aid of effective mentoring. For mentoring to work well, the two teachers involved must have access to one another. For this reason, a reduced course load is often recommended. This practice is most effective when both the mentor and the mentee have reduced workloads. This allows

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<sup>130</sup> Sarah Fletcher, *Mentoring in Schools: A Handbook of Good Practice* (London: Routledge, 2000), 1.

<sup>131</sup> Ruben Garza, Alfredo Ramirez Jr., and Martha Ovando, *Experienced Teachers’ Voices: What Motivates Them to Mentor?* (Blacksburg, VA: National Council of Professors of Educational Administration (NCPEA), 2009), 7. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1071382.pdf>.

<sup>132</sup> Geert Kelchtermans and Katrijn Ballet, “The Micropolitics of Teacher Induction: A Narrative-Biographical Study on Teacher Socialization,” *Teaching and Teacher Education* 18, no. 1 (2002): 105.

time for the new teacher and their mentor to meet, set goals, observe one another, collaborate, and build relationships. If a school cannot reduce the teachers' workloads, they may be able to offer release time to give the mentor and mentee some time together.<sup>133</sup>

Research has suggested that high-quality mentoring can help to encourage teachers to remain in their jobs.<sup>134</sup> Mentoring can be particularly powerful for beginning music teachers as they have content-specific needs that are unique to what they do. Thus, it is important that novice music teachers be assigned to other music educators if possible.<sup>135</sup> It must be stressed that music teachers often deal with obstacles and demands that teachers outside of their discipline may not be accustomed to. Some of these difficulties revolve around class scheduling, instructional delivery, classroom management, administrative tasks, extra-curricular responsibilities, professional isolation, and public performances.<sup>136</sup>

### **Professional Development**

Teachers are more likely to stay in the teaching profession if they obtain suitable training.<sup>137</sup> As discussed above, mentoring is a powerful tool, but it alone does not offer enough support for educators. Initially, teachers need induction; "they should be formally welcomed and introduced to the district's mission, philosophies, procedures, and culture."<sup>138</sup> After, they need

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<sup>133</sup> Zewe Serpell, *Beginning Teacher Induction: A Review of the Literature* (Washington DC: American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, 2000), 20, <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED443783.pdf>.

<sup>134</sup> Karen J. DeAngelis, Andrew F. Wall, and Jing Che, "The impact of preservice preparation and early Career Support on Novice teachers' Career Intentions and Decisions," *Journal of Teacher Education* 64, no. 4 (2013): 351.

<sup>135</sup> Kathryn Roulston, Roy Legette, and Sarah Trotman Womack, "Beginning Music Teachers' Perceptions of the Transition from University to Teaching in Schools," *Music Education Research* 7, no. 1 (2005): 65.

<sup>136</sup> Colleen Conway, "What Has Research Told Us About Beginning Music Teachers?," *Journal of Music Teacher Education* 10, no. 2 (2001): 17.

<sup>137</sup> Harry K. Wong, "Play for Keeps," *Principal Leadership* 3, no. 1 (2002): 56.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*

continued guidance and support. This support can come in the form of professional development. Professional development helps teachers with their self-efficacy. It assists them in obtaining new knowledge and skills that they can then apply to their classrooms. Professional development can not only address weak or uninformed areas for specific teachers or groups of teachers but can also be tailored to address school-wide problems, initiatives, and goals. Professional development should be “intensive, ongoing, and connected to practice; focused on the teaching and learning of specific academic content; connected to other school initiatives; and builds strong working relationships among teachers.”<sup>139</sup>

Professional development can take on many forms and can cover multiple areas of focus, like classroom management, technology, culture, teaching methods, subject-specific expertise, and more.<sup>140</sup> Professional development offerings can be categorized as follows: Professional Learning (reflection, tools as learning instruments, beginning teacher learning), Mediations (school partnership, teacher co-learning, workplace learning), Conditions and Factors (macro conditions, school cultures), Effectiveness of Professional Development (cognitions, beliefs and practices, student learning and teacher satisfaction), and Specific Areas and Issues.<sup>141</sup> It can be provided by professionals from outside of the school or by those found in the school itself. Some of the most common types of professional development include online learning, peer mentoring, gamified learning, classroom observation, seminars, workshops, degree programs, and

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<sup>139</sup> Linda Darling-Hammond, Ruth Chung Wei, Alethea Andree, Nikole Richardson, and Stelios Orphanos, *Professional Learning in the Learning Profession: A Status Report on Teacher Development in the United States and Abroad* (Stanford, CA: The School Redesign Network at Standord University, National Staff Development Council, 2009): 5. [https://edpolicy.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/publications/professional-learning-learning-profession-status-report-teacher-development-us-and-abroad\\_0.pdf](https://edpolicy.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/publications/professional-learning-learning-profession-status-report-teacher-development-us-and-abroad_0.pdf).

<sup>140</sup> Simplek12 Staff, “8 Types of Teacher Professional Development in 2023,” Simplek12, last modified July 31, 2023, <https://www.simplek12.com/professional-development/types-of-teacher-development/>.

<sup>141</sup> Beatrice Avalos, “Teacher Professional Development in Teaching and Teacher Education Over Ten Years,” *Teaching and Teacher Education* 27, no. 1 (2011): 11.

individual/collaborative research.<sup>142</sup> Professional development can also be developed and obtained in professional learning communities.<sup>143</sup> This method of fostering professional development can be particularly beneficial to schools that serve high-poverty communities and/or schools that struggle with low achievement. Moreover, professional learning communities also enable teachers to collaborate with their colleagues. This is a powerful use of time that allows teachers to support one another and collectively work towards accomplishing departmental, grade level, and school goals which can positively affect student learning.<sup>144</sup>

### **Professional Organizations**

A great way for teachers to seek out their own professional development is by joining professional teaching organizations. Such groups were created to inform and support teachers and are typically comprised of individuals who work in the same profession and characteristically share common interests and beliefs. Professional organizations aid teachers in their development by helping connect them to research and by offering them access to professional development. Such benefits are manifested through workshops, webinars, conferences, publications, and access to other resources and services. Additionally, teachers can benefit from being members of such organizations because of the networking opportunities they provide like connecting teachers with peers, experts, and even mentors. Lastly, such

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<sup>142</sup> Beatrice Avalos, "Teacher Professional Development in Teaching and Teacher Education Over Ten Years," *Teaching and Teacher Education* 27, no. 1 (2011): 11.

<sup>143</sup> Fred Huijboom, Van Meeuwen Pierre, Rusman Ellen, and Vermeulen Marjan, "How to Enhance Teachers' Professional Learning by Stimulating the Development of Professional Learning Communities: Operationalising a Comprehensive PLC Concept for Assessing its Development in Everyday Educational Practice," *Professional Development in Education* 46, no. 5 (2020): 752.

<sup>144</sup> Richard DuFour, "What is a Professional Learning Community?," *Educational Leadership: Journal of the Department of Supervision and Curriculum Development N.E.A.* 61 no. 8 (2004): 9.

organizations can aid in advocacy and recognition for music teachers, their programs, and their students.<sup>145</sup>

Music teachers have a variety of professional organizations from which they can choose to join. Some are all-encompassing while others are content, area, or instrument specific. Examples of such organizations include the National Association for Music Education (NAfME), Music Teachers National Association (MTNA), and the International Society for Music Education (ISME). Examples of area-specific organizations include the American Choral Directors Association (ACDA), American String Teachers Organization (ASTA), and The American Band Masters Association (ABA). Content specific organizations could include the American Orff-Schulwerk Association, the Organization of the American Kodály Educators, Suzuki Association of the Americas, and the Dalcroze Society of America. The above listed organizations only represent some of the organizations that are available to working music teachers. These teachers can also join teacher unions which can also offer some of the above resources as well as legal protections.

Perhaps the most influential of the above music organizations is the National Association for Music Education (NAfME). It is not only the nation's principal music education organization but is also one of the largest organizations of its kind in the world. Furthermore, it is the only such organization that addresses all facets of music education. NAfME's functions include advocacy, research, professional development, and creating educational and musical events for both educators and students. NAfME operates on the local, state, and national levels. Since its

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<sup>145</sup> AI and the LinkedIn Community, "What Professional Organizations Do You Recommend for Teachers?," LinkedIn, last modified October 22, 2023, <https://www.linkedin.com/advice/1/what-professional-organizations-do-you-recommend-teachers#:~:text=These%20organizations%20offer%20a%20range,levels%20of%20the%20education%20system.>



inception in 1907 in Keokuk, Iowa, the organization has undergone many changes, but has continued to focus on providing the nation's students with access to high-quality music instruction taught by qualified teachers.<sup>146</sup> NAFME was also responsible for establishing the National Standards for Music Education.

### **Additional Problems and Possible Solutions**

Recently NAFME created a report called *A Blueprint for Strengthening the Music Teacher Profession* which aims to offer guidance for our nation's teacher shortage problem and addresses many of the issues found in this literature review. The report was developed by the Music Teacher Profession Initiative (MTPI), which is a NAFME task force that collaborated with 24 institutions of higher education and leaders in music education from across the country to “identify (1) factors impacting diversity, recruitment, and retention in the music teacher profession, and (2) mitigation strategies that address these concerns.”<sup>147</sup> The report addresses these areas of concern by studying and responding to them in three time periods of music teacher development. The first time period examined in the study is Before the Degree Program, the second is During the Degree Program, and the third is During the First Five Years of a Professional Life. The project was developed “with the perspective of widening the path to the profession by cultivating and strengthening more inclusive and equitable processes in recruiting, teaching, and nurturing a robust music teacher workforce.”<sup>148</sup> Of the three areas addressed in the study, the third is the most relevant to this literature review as it focuses on pre-service music

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<sup>146</sup> “NAfME History and Leadership.” *National Association for Music Education*, accessed November 19, 2023, <https://nafme.org/about/>.

<sup>147</sup> Deborah A. Confredo, Carlos R. Abril, and Cecil L. Adderley, *A Blueprint for Strengthening the Music Teacher Profession* (Reston, VA: NAFME, 2023), 1, <https://nafme.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/NAF072-MusicInitiative-8.pdf>.

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

teachers' transition from college and university programs into their work as music teachers during their first five years in the profession.

The challenges that were identified and addressed in the first five years of the professional life portion of the study were organized and divided by themes. They are: (1) resources/funding, (2) quality of life, (3) cultural relevance, (4) relationships, (5) professional development, and (6) recruitment. Additional recommendations will be added for all the above themes from resources found outside of the report in an effort to be as thorough as possible.

### **Resources/Funding**

Respondents in the report shared that the divide between the cost of living and beginner teacher salaries created problems. The study identified this divide as correlating with low job satisfaction and with teacher turnover as many young teachers leave the profession in search of higher pay.<sup>149</sup> The report also identified impactful and important professional expenses that may be too expensive for new teachers such as professional development, graduate work, professional organization memberships, and conference attendance, all of which are especially beneficial for new teachers and aid in teacher development, effectiveness, job satisfaction, and retention.<sup>150</sup> Not addressed in the report was the cost of classroom supplies and materials which can also be cumbersome for all educators, and particularly so for new teachers.

The report recommends the following mitigations to offset the above financial challenges: lobbying from full-time and tenured colleagues for livable salaries with regular raises that match inflation; signing and loyalty bonuses, particularly for schools serving marginalized

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<sup>149</sup> Deborah A. Confredo, Carlos R. Abril, and Cecil L. Adderley, *A Blueprint for Strengthening the Music Teacher Profession* (Reston, VA: NAFME, 2023), 22, <https://nafme.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/NAF072-MusicInitiative-8.pdf>.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid.

populations of students; additionally, there was a call for funded conference attendance with allowable absence from school. Videoed and live-streamed professional development offerings were also suggested as they would require less time away from the classroom and are typically more affordable.<sup>151</sup> It is imperative to acknowledge that teachers ought to be paid a commensurate salary that reflects their contributions to society. According to Hendricks, “conventional wisdom suggests that paying teachers more will likely improve students’ outcomes by attracting and retaining more teachers or by influencing current teachers’ efforts.”<sup>152</sup> Analysis of 2012 survey found that 67% of teachers who left teaching would consider returning if they were offered increased salaries.<sup>153</sup>

### **Quality of Life**

A teacher’s quality of life is important for keeping him or her happy and working. Mentioned earlier in this literature review was the problem of isolation. Music teachers often are the only ones or one of very few who teach their subject in a building. Also, some are itinerants who move between schools which makes it harder for them to become part of the school culture for their multiple schools. Additionally, our vocation “often seems to place great value in overextending well beyond the contracted hours.”<sup>154</sup> This tendency, partnered with ever-expanding teaching responsibilities causes many music teachers to struggle establishing healthy

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<sup>151</sup> Deborah A. Confredo, Carlos R. Abril, and Cecil L. Adderley, *A Blueprint for Strengthening the Music Teacher Profession* (Reston, VA: NAFME, 2023), 22.

<sup>152</sup> Matthew D. Hendricks, “Does it Pay to Pay Teachers More? Evidence from Texas,” *Journal of Public Economics* 109, (2014): 50.

<sup>153</sup> Anne Podolsky, Tara Kini, Linda Darling-Hammond, and Joseph Bishop, “Strategies for Attracting and Retaining Educators: What does the Evidence Say?,” *Education Policy Analysis Archives* 27, no. 38 (2012): 13. <https://epaa.asu.edu/index.php/epaa/article/view/3722/2231>.

<sup>154</sup> Confredo, Abril, and Adderley, *A Blueprint for Strengthening the Music Teacher Profession*, 23.

work-to-life balances.<sup>155</sup> Next, the report noted that new teachers sometimes “perceive a disconnect between their own values and experiences and that of the community they serve.”<sup>156</sup> This can be particularly true when the teacher is teaching in a community that is different from those they have previous experience with. Lastly, their report touches on young teachers not feeling valued as professionals, as the teaching profession is not viewed the same way by the general public as other professions.<sup>157</sup>

The report suggests the following quality-of-life mitigations to help with the above-mentioned problems. To address isolation, the report suggests active engagement between music teachers in the same district through curriculum planning, formation of methods and strategies, and frequent check-ins with one another. The report also suggest that teachers connect with established support groups made for those in their specific areas of teaching. It also suggests that teachers join state and national organizations. Another suggestion to offset isolation offered by the report is related to universities, suggesting they stay in contact with their recent graduates and continue to offer them support during their formative years as professionals.<sup>158</sup>

In reference to work-life balance, the report suggests the music education profession take a stronger stance on promoting the importance of this often-ignored problem. It also suggests that music education support groups create professional development opportunities to address this area of need. In reference to communities, the report proposes that teachers become part of the communities they serve by first observing and listening to learn about the community’s members and its culture. Additionally, the report advises that teachers reach out to community

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<sup>155</sup> Deborah A. Confredo, Carlos R. Abril, and Cecil L. Adderley, *A Blueprint for Strengthening the Music Teacher Profession* (Reston, VA: NAFME, 2023), 23.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid.

<sup>158</sup> Ibid., 30.

leaders to make connections and to learn about how they can be useful to the community.<sup>159</sup> As for valuing music education, the report shares “This can be evidenced in how music education is discussed, the position it holds in school curricula, and, of course, the funding it receives.”<sup>160</sup> The report calls for music educators to participate in advocacy efforts that continue to educate about the importance of music education.

A concept not addressed in the report that could aid in all the above quality of life and even funding concerns is educational partnerships. According to Amy Cox, “educational partnerships are endeavors where one or more people or groups come together to enhance the education of children.”<sup>161</sup> Such partnerships can be particularly powerful for music teachers and their students when they are forged with arts organizations. The concept of schools and arts organizations collaborating is not new. A study by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) in 2012 shared that, “public secondary schools reported various partnerships or collaborations with outside artists or entities in 2008-09 to help meet the school’s art education goals.”<sup>162</sup> The NCES study continued by sharing that 44% of secondary schools engaged in partnerships or collaboration with community or cultural organizations to meet or enrich their arts education curriculum needs.<sup>163</sup>

Such partnerships should be beneficial to the schools and those with which they partner. Non-profit and for-profit performing arts groups can benefit from school partnerships through a

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<sup>159</sup> Deborah A. Confredo, Carlos R. Abril, and Cecil L. Adderley, *A Blueprint for Strengthening the Music Teacher Profession* (Reston, VA: NAFME, 2023), 31.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid.

<sup>161</sup> Amy Cox-Petersen, *Educational Partnerships: Connecting Schools, Families, and the Community* (Thousand Oaks, CA: The Sage Publication Inc, 2001), 24.

<sup>162</sup> Basmat Parsad and Maura Spiegelman, *A Snapshot of Arts Education in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools 2009-2010* (Washington, DB: National Center for Education Statistics, 2011), 12, <https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2011/2011078.pdf>.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid.

variety of means. They include increased visibility, access to grants, possible membership expansion, increased independence, enhanced artistic quality, and expanded performance opportunities and performance venues.<sup>164</sup> Arts and education partnerships today consist of relationships between arts organizations such as museums, art associations, venues, institutions of higher education, and professional and community arts organizations and ensembles. The Arts Education Partnership (AEP), overseen by the Council of Chief State School Officers and the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies, is concerned with finding prospective and current partnerships and exploring best practices to foster sustainable collaborations. According to AEP, the aim of a partnership is to:

Improve school; improve the quality of learning in the arts; improve students' overall academic performance; develop effective curricula; involve parents and families in student learning; provide quality professional development for teachers, community leaders, and artists; meet the needs of special populations of students; provide youth with skills to succeed in the 21<sup>st</sup> century; extend school influence to improve communities; and develop or implement plans and policies.<sup>165</sup>

The above information illustrates the importance and possibilities of community partnerships and why they should be considered when addressing the issues of music teacher quality of life.

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<sup>164</sup> Susan FitzPatrick, *The Muse in the Classroom: Some Effects on American Nonprofit Arts Organization of Partnering with Schools* (Richmond, VA: Virginia Commonwealth University, 2007), <https://scholarscompass.vcu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2140&context=etd>.

<sup>165</sup> Craig Dreeszen, Arnold Aprill, and Richard Deasy, *Learning Partnerships: Improving Learning in Schools with Arts Partners in the Community: A Guide to Arts and Education Collaboration* (Clearinghouse, 1999), 3.

## Cultural Relevance

The cultural relevance portion of the NAFME report deals with creating more inclusive music teaching and music learning communities that are not so Eurocentric and reflect the diversity of teachers and students alike. To this, one respondent of the NAFME study wrote “If we provide the instruction we got, then we will never make any progress... teaching how we were taught will keep an archaic system... we are still preparing students for traditional ensembles when we see that tradition is not as inclusive as we would like.”<sup>166</sup> The report proposes that teachers combat this issue by slowly offering musical experiences that widen the diversification in their classrooms. They go on to note that offerings which reflect the values and lived experiences of the communities in which they teach are particularly useful in addressing this issue. Lastly, the report also asks experienced teachers to help in changing music teacher curricula to reflect more diversity and inclusion.<sup>167</sup>

## Recruitment

In response to the recruitment issue of music teachers the report suggests that recruitment be expanded to include all levels of education and not just high school. The report additionally pressed the importance of recruiting from diverse populations. This section of the report also shared the significance of matching teaching candidates with jobs that fit them personally. Also highlighted in the report is a call for state and national music education organizations to assist in preparing preservice music educators on the “realities – the intricacies and idiosyncrasies – of teaching music in the schools.”<sup>168</sup> The report concludes this section by asserting that such

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<sup>166</sup> Deborah A. Confredo, Carlos R. Abril, and Cecil L. Adderley, *A Blueprint for Strengthening the Music Teacher Profession* (Reston, VA: NAFME, 2023), 24.

<sup>167</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>168</sup> *Ibid.*, 34.

education should be delivered free of judgment and also be offered free of charge.<sup>169</sup> Another source outside of the report stresses the importance of seeking more music education students by targeting those who are majoring in performance. Such students need to understand that they can both teach and perform and that many of them will end up teaching in some capacity later in their lives.<sup>170</sup>

### **Relationships and Professional Development Revisited**

The NAFME report adds the following ideas to the relationships and professional development narratives. First, in considering relationships, the report again stresses the importance of beginning teachers remaining in contact with their alma maters. The report explains this can benefit the new teachers and their preservice counterparts alike and acts to validate the novice teacher's experiences and work. Additionally, these sustained relationships also help the colleges and universities stay informed of the needs of the students they are preparing for a constantly changing profession. This kind of continued contact can occur through email, social media, online meetings, and in-person interactions.<sup>171</sup> The only additional professional development ideas proposed by the report deal with offering professional development that is aimed specifically at the needs and interests of young and new teachers. The report suggests making sure to include leadership professional development and to poll the new teachers often to determine what professional development offerings might be most useful to them.<sup>172</sup>

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<sup>169</sup> Ibid.

<sup>170</sup> Ella Wilcox, "Recruiting for the Profession," *Teaching Music* 8, no. 2 (2000): 29.

<sup>171</sup> Deborah A. Confredo, Carlos R. Abril, and Cecil L. Adderley, *A Blueprint for Strengthening the Music Teacher Profession* (Reston, VA: NAFME, 2023), 32.

<sup>172</sup> Ibid., 33.



## Chapter Summary

Teacher turnover has been a long-time and persistent problem for schools in the United States that has many factors contributing to its prevalence. However, this problem can be lessened through understanding the motivating factors behind teachers' decisions to enter, and in turn, stay in the profession. Additionally, teacher turnover can be offset through purposeful efforts on the parts of school administration and professional organizations. Steps taken to counteract teacher turnover can include efforts to reduce stress and burnout for teachers. This can be accomplished through mentoring and professional development. The problem can also be addressed through making efforts to improve school environments, making them more welcoming, safe, and organized spaces of quality learning. In doing so, administrators need to make sure they are supporting their teachers by cultivating good relationships with them and by encouraging positive relationships between all in their buildings. This is also accomplished through providing teachers with the tools needed for them and their programs to be successful. Additionally, teacher turnover can be alleviated through efforts to improve the quality of teachers' lives. This means helping them connect with their communities, their students, their colleagues, and their profession. It means making them feel valued, and it means paying them a livable wage. As teacher turnover is a persistent problem which calls for consistent and dedicated efforts to counteract it. This will require determined recruitment efforts and ongoing reflection, research, and dialogue on the parts of all stakeholders.

## **CHAPTER THREE: METHODS**

### **Introduction**

This chapter offers a detailed review of the methodologies used in this mixed-method study. As stated previously, the purpose of this thesis was to identify factors that helped to keep working West Virginia music educators in their classrooms. In doing so, the study also revealed issues and factors that caused the teachers in the study to consider leaving their work in West Virginia music classrooms. This research was conducted to better understand teacher motivators for remaining in their classrooms and the field. Thus, at its core, the study was conducted in an effort to improve music teacher retention in the Mountain State. In preparing for the study, a review of the literature revealed that a plethora of research on teacher retention existed. However, most of the offered literature did not focus specifically on music educators or teachers working in West Virginia. As such, very little research exists that focuses on music teacher retention in West Virginia. Thus, this study was validated as its subject matter was underrepresented.

### **Research Questions Restated**

The study's research questions have been restated below to aid readers in referencing them as they read this chapter.

Research Question One: What effects do teacher mentoring and teacher support have on teacher retention? Note that this question will be referred to as the Mentoring/Support research question moving forward.

Research Question Two: What impacts do compensation and working conditions, including professional relationships and teacher autonomy, have on teacher retention? From this point forward, this question will be referred to as the Working Conditions research question.

## Research Design

This study utilized the mixed methods research approach which allowed the researcher to collect and analyze data that was both quantitative and qualitative in nature. In reference to mixed methods research Ivankova, Creswell, and Stick stated that “when used in combination, quantitative and qualitative methods complement each other and allow for a more robust analysis, taking advantage of the strengths of each.”<sup>1</sup> In mixed methods research, there is a purposeful mixing of methods in data collection, analysis, and interpretation of findings. Data linkage is also key in the mixed method approach as it aids the researcher in interpreting a holistic view of their research by allowing them to translate their collected data from different perspectives.<sup>2</sup> In this study the survey collected the quantitative data and the interviews, the qualitative. The mixed methods approach was appropriate for this particular study as it dealt with teacher perceptions. The survey allowed for data collection from a larger population and the interviews permitted for a more in-depth and intimate look at how the teachers felt. The mixed method approach allowed the researcher to explore both statistical trends and more in-depth insights into the themes found in the teachers’ experiences and perceptions.

## Sample

The people who participated in this study were all working music educators in West Virginia public schools. In total, 91 teachers took part in the study. Out of that number, 23 also served as county contacts and eight were also interviewed. Those who acted as county contacts and those who were interviewed were all members of the West Virginia Music Educators

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<sup>1</sup> Nataliya Ivankova, John Creswell, and Sheldon Stick, “Using Mixed-Methods Sequential Explanatory Design: From Theory to Practice,” *Field Methods* 18, no. 1 (2006): 3.

<sup>2</sup> John W. Creswell and Vicki L. Plano Clark, *Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods Research* 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2017), 63.

Association (WVMEA) at the time of the study. Of those interviewed, two were band directors (one middle school, one high school), two were choir directors (both high school), two were orchestra directors (one middle school, one high school), and two were elementary general music teachers. Out of the 55 West Virginia counties, 23 were considered in this study. They were Barbour, Braxton, Clay, Doddridge, Fayette, Gilmer, Greenbrier, Hampshire, Harrison, Kanawha, Lewis, Logan, Marshall, Mineral, Mingo, Monongalia, Pocahontas, Randolph, Taylor, Tyler, Upshur, Webster, and Wetzel. At the time of the study, there were 288 working music teachers in these counties, nine of whom were part-time.

Of the 91 teachers who contributed to the study, 36 were male and 55 were female. One respondent identified as Asian, one as Hispanic, 86 as Caucasian, and 3 as “other”. The age range of the participants was relatively evenly distributed: 24.18% were between the ages of 20 and 30, and 26% were between the ages of 31 and 40. 25.28% were between the ages of 41 and 50, and 24.18% were between the ages of 51 and 56+.

Regarding education, 46 held bachelor’s degrees, 42 had master’s degrees, and three had doctoral degrees. Five of the respondents were National Board Certified Teachers. The years of experience spanned from 1 year of experience to 48 years of experience. Calculation of the participants’ years of experience showed a range of 49 and an average of 15.8 years. The data also showed that the teachers had been working in their current positions from 1 to 29 years, giving a range of 28 and an average of 7.10 in their current classrooms. Graphs of the above information can be found in the SurveyMonkey® data sheets for the survey, appendices (Appendix F).

### **Instrumentation**

This study utilized three data collection tools which were a questionnaire, a survey, and interviews. The questionnaire was sent to one contact person for each of the county school systems represented in the study. The questionnaire asked basic questions related to the number of music teachers in each county and how many teachers had left or changed jobs within the county during the prior academic year. The questions asked were: (1) How many music faculty members have retired in your county in the last academic year? (2) How many music teachers in your county have transferred to new music positions within your county during the last academic year? (3) How many music teachers in your county have transferred out of music to other teaching jobs within your county in the last academic year? (4) How many music teachers in your county have left the county to teach elsewhere in the last academic year? (5) How many music teachers in your county have left teaching altogether in the last academic year? (6) Has your county added any new music education positions in the last academic year? (7) Has your county removed any music education positions in the last academic year? In addition to the above seven questions, the respondents to the questionnaire were also asked to share how many music positions their county had, both filled and unfilled, to aid in better understanding the data.

The next tool used in the study was a survey created with SurveyMonkey®. The survey was used to try to understand why music teachers had chosen to stay in their positions and, conversely, why they might be thinking about or planning on leaving. The average completion time for the survey was 15 minutes. It opened with a two-page consent form that explained the study and what participating in the survey entailed. The survey itself was broken into two parts, demographics and a four-section survey. The sections were (1) attitudes and perceptions, (2)

looking to the future, (3) stressors, and (4) factors that could affect the teacher's decision to stay or leave their jobs.

The demographic part of the survey asked questions about gender, race/ethnicity, age, level of education, National Board Teacher status, and the number of years the respondents had been teaching. The first section of the survey (Attitudes and Perceptions) had 40 questions. Each asked respondents to use a scale to best reply to the questions. The scale response options for each question were 1= strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = unsure, 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree. The second section of the survey (Looking to the Future) had seven questions and utilized the above scale as well. All of the questions in this section were related to teachers' plans to stay or leave their jobs in the future. The third section of the survey (Stressors) also had seven questions and made use of the same response scale. In this section, teachers responded with their perceptions of how taxing common trade stressors were to them personally. The fourth section of the survey (Factors that Could Affect Your Decision to Stay or Leave) had eight questions, six of which used the same response scale as the other sections. However, the last two questions were open-ended and asked respondents to add any factors not addressed in the survey that made them wish to leave their work and those that could encourage them to stay. A copy of the survey recruitment email can be found in the appendix (Appendix E). The survey consent form is also in the appendix (Appendix B). Lastly, the survey data can also be found in the appendix (Appendix F). The final tool used in the study was the interview. The interview had 20 questions, all of which were similar to those found in the survey, but offered the teachers the opportunity to reply fully as they were open-ended and allowed for elaboration. As in the survey participation, those interviewed were also given a consent form prior to being interviewed (Appendix C).

### **Ethical Considerations**

The researcher applied to and was given clearance to proceed with the study by the Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB) before contacting county contacts and teachers for the interviews and survey completion. Taking part in this study was voluntary, and the identity of all participants remained anonymous. Participating teachers were presented with consent forms before they took the survey and prior to being interviewed. The consent forms explained how the study worked, the participation risks, and the study's goals. Lastly, the consent forms also clarified what the teachers should expect if choosing to be a part of the study. The risks for participating in the study were minimal, meaning the risks were equal to those encountered in everyday life.

All records and data for the study were kept private and only the researcher had access to them as they were stored on a password-locked computer. The data was saved by the researcher for three years and then destroyed after the study had passed. Upon agreeing to be a part of the study, all participants were given the names and contact information for the researcher and the researcher's thesis advisor. Additionally, they were also given the Liberty University's IRB contact information. The teachers who contributed to the study were also told they could withdraw from the study at any time if they chose to do so.

### **Data Collection Procedures**

The questionnaire was collected via the West Virginia Department of Education's (WVDE) email platform Outlook. The researcher emailed each of the county contacts the questionnaire via the WVDE's email provider and received them back using the same platform. A link to the survey was also shared with the county contacts via email. The county contacts then shared the link with their county music education colleagues. Once teachers clicked the link,

agreed to participate, and completed the survey, their responses were saved anonymously to the surveymonkey.com platform where they could be accessed only by the researcher.

The teachers who were interviewed were all member of WVMEA and were contacted via email as well. Once agreeing to be interviewed they worked with the researcher to set up phone interviews which were recorded on the researcher's iPad. After the interviews concluded they phone conversations were transcribed into word documents using [www.cockatoo.com](http://www.cockatoo.com). The researcher then listened to the recordings and checked them against the cockatoo transcriptions to make any needed corrections.

### **Data Analysis**

Data gathered from the questionnaire was shared in two ways. First, to help readers fully understand, the total numbers of teaching positions for each county were shared as raw data in a table (Table 1. Counties in the Study and Their Number of Music Teacher Positions). Next, the total teaching positions for each county were added together to calculate the possible response pool. This was shared at the bottom of the table. Subsequently, all questions on the questionnaire were then totaled and shared in a second table (Table 2. Questionnaire Data Totals). This second table made it easy for readers to see the totals for each question. These two tables represented the only data analyses shared from the questionnaire part of the study.

The teacher survey was used to test the two research questions. To do this, a linear regression was conducted using some of the survey questions. The outcome/dependent variable was Level of Dissatisfaction/Likelihood to Leave. This variable was measured by the questions in section two of the survey. Questions 49, 50, 53, and 54 were combined into a scale to make the variable. In order to create the scale, questions 49 and 50 were reverse-coded to make the data easier to calculate, as some questions were asked in a positive manner and others in a



negative. The act of reverse coding placed all examined questions on the same directional scale. Next, a reliability analysis was conducted to determine the internal consistency of the scale. To do this, Cronbach's alpha was used, which measures internal consistency, meaning how closely related a set of items in a group are to one another. The desired outcome for the Cronbach's alpha is .70 or higher.<sup>3</sup> The Cronbach's alpha for this set of questions was .788. This finding demonstrated that the scale was internally consistent. The end result was a scale ranging from four to twenty. A higher number on the scale represented a higher self-reported likelihood for retention.

Multiple variables were used as predictors in the model. First, a variable was created that represented satisfaction with opportunities for teacher mentoring/support (research question #1). Three questions were combined to create this scale, including questions 32, 66, and 67. Responses on the scale ranged from three to fifteen. A higher value represented greater satisfaction with available opportunities for preparation and mentoring. In a reliability analysis for this scale, the Cronbach Alpha was .584. This was too low to show internal consistency. However, upon further examination, it was determined that question 32 did not fit well with the other two. Thus, it was removed. After doing so, the Alpha level increased to .848 with a range from two to ten.

Another variable was created representing satisfaction with compensation and working conditions (research question #2). To create this variable, the following questions were combined into a scale. The questions used to generate this statistic were 16, 18, 20, 22, 26, 34, 36, 40, 42, and 44. In total, ten questions were combined. The possible score on the combined scale ranged

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<sup>3</sup> UCLA: Statistical Consulting Group, "What Does Cronbach's Alpha Mean?," SPSS FAQ, accessed December 14, 2023, <https://stats.oarc.ucla.edu/spss/faq/what-does-cronbachs-alpha-mean/>.

from ten to fifty. A higher number represented a higher level of satisfaction with compensation and working conditions. The alpha for these combined questions was .727, which fell above the desired .7 threshold. This illustrated an internal consistency reliability, meaning it was appropriate to combine these questions into a scale variable. Question 62 is also tied into research question two's analysis. However, question 62 was asked in a different way than the above questions. They inquired about the teachers' current conditions, whereas question 62 posed a hypothetical "what if" question. Thus, only descriptive data for question 62 was shared in the findings.

Not all questions on the survey were calculated in the above data as they did not directly relate to this study's research questions. However, the researcher felt they were important questions to ask on the survey as they would help paint a holistic picture of teachers' perceptions and their satisfaction. The findings for such questions were shared as raw data to give readers a more holistic understanding of the surveyed teachers' opinions. This data was shared in the appendices as it was lengthy and was not directly related to the study's research questions. However, some of the data is shared in the next chapter as it relates to the theme analysis, which was created in the interview analysis. This brings us to the last data to be shared, which was gained from the interviews. Such data was gathered and presented via a thematic analysis. To do this, the transcripts were first studied closely to identify patterns. From there, the patterns were coded and then placed into themes. Lastly, a narrative was created which was informed by the findings of the thematic analysis concerning the study's research questions, literature review, and relationship to the survey data.

### **Chapter Summary**

This chapter presented the methodology of this study. The chapter outlined how the study was created and administered, to whom it was administered, how it was collected, and how the data was calculated. This chapter also addressed the ethical considerations of the study and the study's limitations. In conclusion, teacher turnover is a complex challenge that is informed by both extrinsic and intrinsic factors faced by and experienced by teachers. The data collected in this mixed-methods study provided those who read it with a list of such factors and how they were perceived by West Virginia music educators in relation to them staying in or leaving their current jobs. Such data was helpful for West Virginia school administrators to better understand how to keep their music teachers happy and working. The data also helped West Virginia music teachers to self-reflect on their realities and intentions of staying in or leaving their classrooms.

## CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH RESULTS AND FINDINGS

### Introduction

In this chapter, results are shared from the study's three data collection instruments: the participating county school system questionnaire, the teacher survey, and the teacher interviews. Results are shared via the use of narrative, tables, and figures. All data analysis is designed to answer the study's research questions. In addition, other findings related to the study that are not necessarily connected to the research questions but are linked to teacher turnover are also shared.

### Questionnaire Results

The first item shared in this section is a West Virginia map that illustrates the county school systems that were part of the study. The participating system's counties are highlighted. Two tables follow the map. The first table illustrates the number of music teacher positions in each individual county, and the second provides the combined data for each county's response to the separate inquiries on the questionnaire.

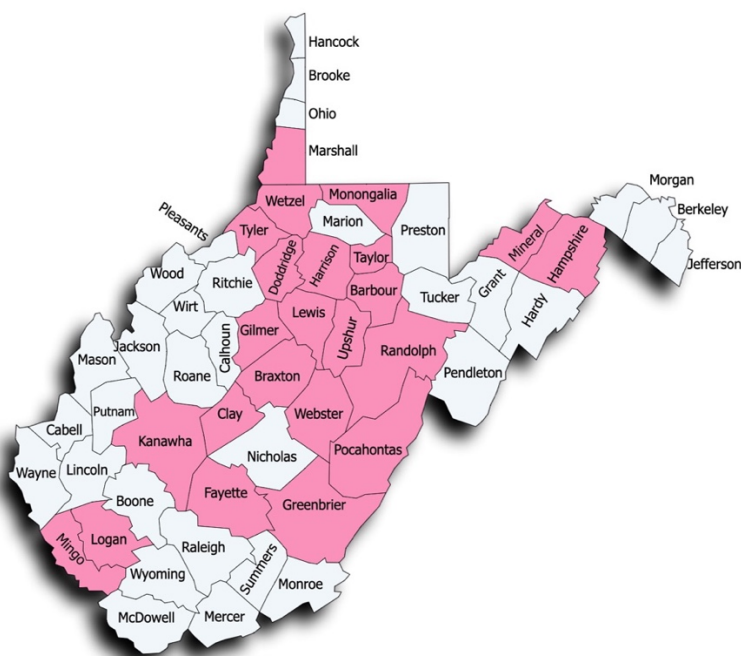


Figure 1. Map of West Virginia Counties Used in Study

Table 1. Counties in the Study and Their Number of Music Teacher Positions

<b>Country</b>	<b>Teachers</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Barbour	5	
Braxton	5	
Clay	3	
Doddridge	2	
Fayette	15	
Gilmer	2	
Greenbrier	17	1 position was part-time
Hampshire	7	
Harrison	28	
Kanawha	60	7 positions were part-time
Lewis	7	
Logan	20	8 positions were vacant
Marshall	18	
Mineral	9	1 positions was held by a long-term non-music
Mingo	8	
Monongalia	32	
Pocahontas	3	
Randolph	12	1 position was part-time
Taylor	6	
Tyler	4	
Upshur	10	
Webster	3	
Wetzel	10	
<b>Totals</b>	<b>286</b>	

Note: 8 positions were vacant and 1 was filled by a non-music substitute teacher.

Note: in addition to the 286 full-time teaching positions, there were also 9 part-time teaching positions.

Table 2. Questionnaire Data Totals

Number	Questions	Combined County Totals and Specifications
1	How many music faculty members have retired in your county in the last academic year?	7 teachers retired.
2	How many music teachers in your county have transferred to new music positions within your county during the last academic year?	11 teachers transferred to new music positions within their own counties.
3	How many music teachers in your county have transferred out of music to other teaching jobs within your county in the last academic year?	3 teachers transferred to positions outside of music within their own counties.
4	How many music teachers in your county have left the county to teach elsewhere in the last academic year?	15 teachers left their counties to teach in other counties.
5	How many music teachers in your county have left teaching altogether in the last academic year?	15 teachers left teaching altogether.
6	Has your county added new music education positions in the last academic year?	0 counties added new music positions.
7	Has your county removed any music education positions in the last academic year?	3 positions were eliminated.

Note: a few others were re-aligned.

Note: a few counties tried to eliminate positions but failed.

## Survey Results

A multiple-linear regression was conducted with (Level of Dissatisfaction/Likelihood to Leave) as the outcome/dependent variable. The two scale variables mentioned earlier in chapter three, representing environment and support, were included in the model. In addition, gender, age, and level of education were used as control variables. The overall model was statistically significant. The results indicated that the predictor variables included in the model explained 28.8% of the variance in outcome variable satisfaction [ $F(1,7) = 4.449$ ,  $p = <.001$ ;  $R^2 = .288$ .]

Three of the predictors included in the model were statistically significant: working conditions, mentoring/support, and age. The regression coefficient (B) for working conditions was  $-.270$ . This can be interpreted as follows. For each one-unit increase on the working conditions scale, there was a  $.270$  decrease on the dissatisfaction scale ( $t(84) = -3.475$ ,  $p < .001$ ). The regression coefficient (B) for mentoring/support was  $-.581$ . This means that each one-unit increase on the support scale led to an average decrease of  $.581$  on the dissatisfaction scale ( $t(84) = -.581$ ,  $p = .004$ ). The predictor for age was set up as a categorical variable. To interpret the results, each category of the variable included in the model (31-40, 41 – 50, 51 plus) was compared to a comparison category (20-30). The results for the 51-plus category were statistically significant. The regression coefficient was  $-3.665$ . These results indicate that respondents aged fifty-one and older scored an average of 3.665 points lower on the dissatisfaction scale ( $t(84) = -2.763$ ,  $p = .007$ ). An unexpected result gained from the above analysis is that those in the 51 plus category reported the least amount of dissatisfaction in their work. This could be an area that could be explored in future studies to see why this is and if it is typically true. See the table below for full details of all the above information.

Table 3. Regression Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	29.758	3.770		7.894	<.001
	Gender	.863	.929	.092	.929	.356
	Mentoring/Support	-.581	.198	-.304	-2.934	.004
	Working Conditions	-.270	.078	-.343	-3.475	<.001
	Age 31 to 40	-.538	1.307	-.051	-.412	.682
	Age 41 to 50	.164	1.262	.016	.130	.897
	Age 51 plus	-3.665	1.327	-.339	-2.763	.007
	Education Level	-.026	.923	-.003	-.028	.978

Although not addressed in the calculated data above, survey question 62, “Opportunities for higher pay could encourage me to remain in my current position,” is a vital question when considering research question two, as it asks specifically about compensation. Thus, the raw data for this question is shared here. Of those who completed the survey, 85 answered this question, and six skipped it. Two of the teachers strongly disagreed (2.35%), five disagreed (5.88%), six were unsure (7.06%), 28 agreed (32.94%), and 44 teachers strongly agreed (51.76%). This means 84.70% of the teachers agreed in some way with this statement, representing a strong majority. Several of the interviewed teachers also mentioned that money or more money is keeping them or could keep them in their jobs.

### **Interview Results and Relationships with the Literature and Survey**

For this analysis, the teachers interviewed will be referred to using the following language: Teacher 1, Teacher 2, Teacher 3, Teacher 4, Teacher 5, Teacher 6, Teacher 7, and Teacher 8. Please note that the numbers assigned to the teachers do not correlate with the order in which they were interviewed. For analysis purposes, the teachers were grouped together based on the content they taught, and numbers were assigned randomly. Teacher 1 and Teacher 2 were both high school choir teachers who had previously worked as choir and general music teachers



with younger students. Teacher 3 and Teacher 4 were both band teachers. Teacher 3 worked at a high school, and Teacher 4 at a middle school. The elementary general music teachers who were interviewed were Teacher 5 and Teacher 6. Teacher 5 was a veteran teacher who was an itinerant educator for two schools. Teacher 6 had only been teaching for a few years. Lastly, Teacher 7 taught middle school and high school string orchestra, and Teacher 8 taught middle school orchestra. To better understand this section and for ease of reference, the twenty interview questions are shared in the table below.

Table 4. Interview Questions

Number	Interview Question
1	What do you look forward to most when you report to the school every day?
2	In your daily work, what do you not look forward to?
3	When was the last time you thought about leaving your current teaching position?
4	What was a situation that made you consider leaving?
5	Would you recommend your school/district to teachers seeking employment?
6	What could tempt you to leave your current position?
7	What are some of the best parts of your job?
8	What part(s) of your job would you eliminate if you had the power to do so?
9	What would make your job more satisfying?
10	What could your administration do more of or less of to keep you in your work?
11	What do you think of the professional development opportunities in your district?
12	What do you think of the mentoring opportunities in your school/district?
13	Do you feel valued and recognized in your school/district?
14	What could your administration do to make you feel more valued?
15	What is your school/district currently not doing that you feel they should?
16	What do you feel your school/district should change?
17	Do you have the appropriate materials and resources to do your job properly? If not, what are you in need of?
18	Do you feel you have a voice in your school/district? Explain why or why not.
19	Do you feel you have autonomy in your classroom? Explain why or why not.
20	What are the main reasons keeping you in your current position?

The interview analysis was structured by identifying the themes and sub-themes and how they manifested within the responses to the questions. The themes are presented in the order they appeared. All themes are also related to both the literature review and the data generated from the survey when appropriate. Note that some of the same questions used in the above analyses are also shared here in this thematic analysis. However, the data is shared here in its raw form, depicting only totals and percentages. Complete transcriptions of all eight interviews and all survey responses are included in the appendices.

### **Theme One: Positive Relationships with Students**

Several themes were manifested from the analysis of the eight teacher interviews, the first of which centered around positive and professional relationships with students. This theme was defined as any given comment that was centered on positive interactions with students or student success. This theme relates to the literature review in a few areas. Foremost, this theme reflects many of the concepts that were examined in the intrinsic motivation portion of the literature review, such as the idea of purpose.<sup>1</sup> Likewise, this theme also relates to Dan Lortie's first identified motivator for people to become teachers, which was the Interpersonal Theme, encompassing the desire to work with young people.<sup>2</sup>

Remarkably, all interviewees mentioned the importance of student interactions at least once during their individual interviews. Many mentioned this critical aspect of their jobs several times. This theme was explicitly evident in the teachers' responses to question number one on the survey. Responses were not identical, but all shared a similar sentiment. Teacher 1 said, "Seeing my students." Teacher 2's response aligned with this theme, but it will be shared later as

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<sup>1</sup> Daniel Pink, *Drive: The Surprising Truth About What Motivates Us* (New York, NY: Riverhead Books, 2021), 219.

<sup>2</sup> Dan Lortie, *Schoolteacher: A Sociological Study* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975), 27.

it more accurately supports an identified sub-theme in this category. The response to question one for Teacher 3 was, “My favorite part of reporting to school every day is working with my students, seeing how much effort they put into their music, and hearing their stories that they’ve been waiting to tell me.” Teacher 4 replied by saying, “Having strong and safe relationships with my students is very important to me.” The next teacher, Teacher 5, gave a lighthearted and straightforward answer, “Honestly, working with the kids is really fun.” Teacher 6 provided more details to their answer, stating, “The smiles on the children’s faces. Knowing that for some of them, I am the reason they have that smile and that music is something that most of them look forward to.” Teacher 7 said, “My favorite thing about coming to school is seeing and interacting with the students, the kids,” later in their response to question one, Teacher 7 also said, “I also really enjoy the fact that I get to work with multiple ages as an itinerate teacher, so, 6<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grade.” The last teacher, Teacher 8, answered by saying, “I always get to see my kids first, and that is absolutely what I look forward to coming into the building for.”

Although this theme was displayed in all responses to question one, it also appeared in other interview areas. One such area was question seven, to which Teacher 3 replied saying, “My students are number one.” Question seven was answered by Teacher 6, who used the following statement that aligned with the positive relationships with students theme.

The students, and you know, as an elementary music teacher, you get to see kids starting from all the way in pre-k and kindergarten, and you get to continue that relationship building all the way through fifth grade if they stay in the school the whole time. So, it's a unique situation where it's almost like the specials teachers in elementary school are almost like rock stars. It's like the kids see you year from year, and they recognize you. It's very special.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Teacher Interview of Teacher 6, May 3, 2023.

This theme was also revealed in responses to question 20, which asked teachers to share what kept them in their jobs. In part of their response, Teacher 1 said, “I do love my job. I do love my students.” In a portion of their answer to question twenty, Teacher 4 said, “As I’ve said, just good kids.” Teacher 5 finished their response by saying, “I still enjoy what I am doing and feel like I have something to offer my students.” Teacher 8’s response showed a deep dedication and love for their students and illustrated a sense of self-sacrifice for the good of their pupils.

They stated,

Every time I talk to somebody about making change, their solution to me is to leave because it’s easier. And... I don’t think that for a child that is the right answer. If I can stubbornly burn at both ends and provide an education that makes their life different in a state that I still believe in, I’m going to stick around and do it and not run away just because there’s an easier solution.<sup>4</sup>

This theme was addressed in a few areas of the survey. Two such questions were questions 12 and 13.

Table 5. Data for Questions 12 and 13

Question 12: I feel I make a positive difference in the lives of my students in my current position.		
Answer Choices	Responses	Percentages
Strongly Disagree	0	0.00%
Disagree	1	1.15%
Unsure	6	6.90%
Agree	36	41.38%
Strongly Agree	44	50.57%
Question 13: Making a positive difference in the lives of my students is important to me.		
Answer Choices	Responses	Percentages
Strongly Disagree	0	0.00%
Disagree	0	0.00%
Unsure	0	0.00%
Agree	12	13.79%
Strongly Agree	75	86.21%
Total Responses	87	

<sup>4</sup> Teacher Interview of Teacher 8, April 25, 2023.

The above table shows that all teachers believe in the importance of making a difference in their student's lives, even if they do not feel they are currently doing so. Relationships require all those involved to contribute to the relationship. A way for students and families to do so with teachers is by showing appreciation. Questions 28 and 29 asked teachers if they felt appreciated by their students and their students' families and if that appreciation was important to them. The tables below share the data for those two questions. This table shows that the majority of teachers (89.66%) feel that having student and family appreciation is important, even if they do not perceive that they are currently being appreciated.

Table 6. Data for Questions 28 and 29

Question 28: I feel appreciated by students and their families.		
Answer Choices	Responses	Percentages
Strongly Disagree	1	1.15%
Disagree	9	10.34%
Unsure	14	16.09%
Agree	46	52.87%
Strongly Agree	17	19.54%
Question 29: Student and student family appreciation is important to me.		
Answer Choices	Responses	Percentages
Strongly Disagree	0	0.00%
Disagree	1	1.15%
Unsure	8	9.20%
Agree	40	45.98%
Strongly Agree	38	43.68%
Total Responses	87	

### Sub-Theme: Making Music with Students

A sub-theme that was identified within this theme was any positive comment about making music with students. This is a crucial sub-theme to recognize. It was mentioned several times during the interviews and is specific to music teachers' jobs and their relationships with their students. This sub-theme relates to Joseph and Green's work referenced in the literature review. Specifically, it relates to their first and second motivating categories: one, a desire for

workplace stimulation and creativity, and two, the ability to influence students and others.<sup>5</sup> It also aligns with the Alexander, Chant, and Cox study that asserts that some people become teachers to teach specific subjects.<sup>6</sup>

The first response shared below was mentioned earlier and is Teacher 2's answer to question one. The teacher stated, "I think I look forward to the building of musical skills and making beautiful music with the students. If we create one moment of unity during the day, that's usually enough for me to get that musical high where I feel like, okay, we did something cool today. I can go home and feel at ease." Other responses that fit this sub-theme include the following statements from Teachers 1 and 2. These responses were pulled from their replies to question seven. Teacher 1 said, "Golden performing moments." They continued, saying, "So, I guess those performance moments are when you feel like you're making a difference or when a kid comes to you and you're the best part of their day." Teacher 2 responded to question seven, saying, "Working with my advanced choir." Teacher 5 said, "Getting to sing and make music with students on a daily basis." Lastly, teacher 8 had a unique and detailed reply to question seven that perfectly supported this sub-theme, as the quote takes it a step further and addresses the students' music-making and musical independence outside of the classroom and within.

I have awesome kids. My students are All-State musicians. They are old enough now that they are becoming professional bluegrass players. They're having their first quartet gigs at weddings and baptisms. So, I think the best part is watching my kids become real musical humans rather than musicians. They're finding ways to take their art and what they're learning and go into the real world with it and teach people about it. So again, interacting with my kids and seeing their growth is the best part.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Pamela B. Joseph and Nancy Green, "Perspectives on Reasons for Becoming Teachers," *Journal of Teacher Education* 37, no. 6 (1986): 29.

<sup>6</sup> Don Alexander, David Chant, and Bernard Cox, "What Motivates People to Become Teachers," *Australian Journal of Teacher Education* 19, no. 2 (1994): 45.

<sup>7</sup> Teacher Interview of Teacher 8, April 25, 2023.

This sub-theme was supported in survey questions 10 and 11, which asked about the teachers' views on musical gratification in their work. In responding to question 10, most of the teachers shared that they find musical gratification in their work. It should be noted that in answering question 11, zero teachers disagreed in any way with this sentiment, and only six were unsure, meaning 93.1% agreed in some way that musical gratification in their work is significant to them. In conclusion, all these findings are consistent with the information gained from the interviews, as all the interviewed teachers commented on the importance of positive student relationships, and most also commented on the significance of music-making in some way as well.

Table 7. Data for Questions 10 and 11

Question 10: I am afforded musical gratification in my current teaching position.		
Answer Choices	Responses	Percentages
Strongly Disagree	3	3.45%
Disagree	4	4.60%
Unsure	13	14.94%
Agree	50	57.47%
Strongly Agree	17	19.54%
Question 11: Musical gratification at work is important to me.		
Answer Choices	Responses	Percentages
Strongly Disagree	0	0.00%
Disagree	0	0.00%
Unsure	6	6.90%
Agree	36	41.38%
Strongly Agree	45	51.72%
Total Responses	87	

## Theme Two: Interruptions

The next theme to emerge from the interviews was one of a negative nature, and although it makes sense, it was not a theme that was anticipated when this study was created. The theme in question is interruptions. This theme is identified as any anticipated or unanticipated disruption or changes to a teacher's schedule, access to students, lessons, teaching materials, or teaching



space. Although this theme does not appear regularly in the literature review, it is mentioned. First, it is revealed on page 24 of this study as a negative side effect that teachers who are bystanders or stayers face when their colleagues leave.<sup>8</sup> While interruptions are not explicitly cited in the section of the literature review on autonomy, they could undoubtedly fit there as planned, and surprise interruptions both diminish a teacher's autonomy as they take away from a teacher's ability to control their classrooms.<sup>9</sup>

This theme was first identified in responses to question two on the survey. In response to this question, five of the eight teachers mentioned interruptions. Teacher 1 said, "Interruptions," and Teacher 3 specified, "unnecessary interruptions." Teacher 4 gave a detailed explanation of the kinds of interruptions they and their students experience, saying,

The times when other things interfere with my job that I don't necessarily agree that they should interfere. Like when they're getting called out regularly for different meetings or if they're getting pulled out for testing prep. Like, I have students in my general music class who miss one to two days a week so that they can go take a testing prep kind of class and get extra help. So, different things like that I don't like. Right now in our county the seventh and the eighth grade actually lose an entire half day of instruction every single week to go to a STEAM academy. Rather than providing teachers in the individual schools to do that, they're busing them all the way across the county. And so, I miss, I lose my seventh-grade class every Thursday. And so that, things like that are what I don't necessarily enjoy, but it is what it is.<sup>10</sup>

This teacher also addressed this theme and specific problems further in their answer to question 16, where they said,

The biggest thing that I feel like they could change is that STEAM program. Changing it to where I'm not losing my kids one day a week. And it's not just me either, like, they're losing a half day of instruction. So, if they have English class during that half day, they lose a day of instruction for English class to go across the county to another facility

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<sup>8</sup> Matthew Ronfeldt, Susanna Loeb, and Jim Wyckoff, "How Teacher Turnover Harms Student Achievement," *American Educational Research Journal* 50, no. 1 (2013): 30.

<sup>9</sup> Jeremy Glazer, "Learning From Those Who No Longer Teach: Viewing Teacher Attrition Through a Resistance Lens," *Teaching and Teacher Education* 74 (2018): 66.

<sup>10</sup> Teacher Interview of Teacher 4, April 29, 2023.

where it's all enrichment programs. It's not based on anything they're doing in their other classes.<sup>11</sup>

Returning to question two, losing access to students was also mentioned by Teacher 7 in their response. The teacher shared, "There's kids out all the time, and they tell you, but they tell you like the morning of that they're going to be out." The theme of interruptions was only identified in one other response in the interviews when Teacher 8 shared that their concerts had been canceled unexpectedly by their county supervisor after they had set up the concerts with their school admin and notified students and parents/guardians of the concerts. This information was shared as part of Teacher 8's response to question number 4.

My concerts are misunderstood by my county. So, they expect me to have about 12 concerts a semester in order to cover all my kids because \*\*\*\*\* county does not have a space large enough for that many kids. So, every time around this time of year, I go through the process of scheduling a concert with my principals. I get it all done, and then the county supervisor, after I send my announcement to parents, shuts down my concert. It's happened three years in a row now. So, situations like that where I'm getting shut down, or not me, but rather my kids get excited about opportunities that are easily available are being taken away with no explanation, is what makes me want to leave and go somewhere else.<sup>12</sup>

Unlike theme 1, this theme did not correspond with any information gained in the survey.

### **Theme Three: Increased Workloads**

The third theme to develop in the interviews was that of increased workloads. This theme is identified as any task acknowledged and shared by teachers that they feel is in addition to their teaching responsibilities. Many of the teachers felt they had more on their plate in recent years and stated that they were also being asked to perform more tasks and duties in addition to their teaching. This theme is consistent with Eric Jotkoff's NEA report on teacher shortages, which is mentioned in the literature review. Teacher 1 was the first to indicate something that fell into this

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<sup>11</sup> Teacher Interview of Teacher 4, April 29, 2023.

<sup>12</sup> Teacher Interview of Teacher 8, April 25, 2023.

theme. In their response to question two, the teacher stated, “mundane administrative tasks.”

Later, in their response to question 8: “What parts of your job would you eliminate if you had the power to do so?” Teacher 1 elaborated by saying,

I don't want to say paperwork because I guess everything is on the computer now. But, just the amount of administrative tasks. Those kinds of things that have to be done, that used to be done by other people. Again, I've been teaching long enough that there are things that we do now as part of our job that were never part of our job, like evaluating ourselves. Principals used to do that. You know, clerical work for our budget and our, you know, for our departments that used to be done at an administrative level, you know, administrative assistant level, whether it was the school level or county level, and now we have to do that. You know, budgets. And, you know, I'm not an accountant. I'm not, you know, I'm not an administrator. I'm a teacher. And I feel like they've kind of put a lot of those tasks that used to belong to administrators and... I hate to say secretarial staff, but those kinds of tasks have been put on teachers over the last, I would say 20, 15, 20 years maybe 10, 15 years that never used to exist.<sup>13</sup>

Teacher 4 began their answer to question two by saying, “I’m not a fan of paperwork. If there’s any paperwork involved. Not a huge fan.” Teacher 6 brought up that they have many duties beyond their teaching to the same question. They said,

That’s probably the duties that come with the job. As an elementary music teacher, the majority of duties around the day get passed off to the music and PE teacher and you know, Title 1 and all that good stuff. I feel that because of my title, I get a lot of duties that I feel could be passed elsewhere, and a lot of that is just busy time, and I could probably be making use in different parts of the school. So, those are definitely the parts I do not look forward to the most, just sitting and doing busy work with duties.<sup>14</sup>

In response to question eight, Teacher 5 said, “Duties, evening bus, morning bus, lunch, etc.”

Teacher 6 echoed this sentiment in their answer to question eight, saying,

I do know duties need to be done, so I wouldn’t necessarily eliminate them. But, I have to make morning announcements, and I really feel like I’m only doing them because the last music teacher did and they didn’t wanna change it and I didn’t wanna say no. But, it’s like anybody could read those morning announcements, and those five minutes could be spent getting my room and materials put together for that first class in the morning. I would make full use of those five minutes.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Teacher Interview of Teacher 1, April 27, 2023.

<sup>14</sup> Teacher Interview of Teacher 6, May 3, 2023.

<sup>15</sup> Teacher Interview of Teacher 5, April 26, 2023.

This theme was addressed in a few places on the survey. The first place it appeared was in question 31, which asked if a healthy work-life balance was important to the teachers. All but four agreed it was. Of those four, two were unsure. The table below illustrates this data, showing that most of the surveyed teachers (95.4%) want a healthy work-life balance.

Table 8. Data for Questions 30 and 31

Question 30: My current teaching position offers me a suitable work to life ratio.		
Answer Choices	Responses	Percentages
Strongly Disagree	15	17.24%
Disagree	20	22.99%
Unsure	7	8.05%
Agree	38	43.68%
Strongly Agree	7	8.05%
Question 31: A healthy work to life balance is important to me.		
Answer Choices	Responses	Percentages
Strongly Disagree	0	0.00%
Disagree	2	2.30%
Unsure	2	2.30%
Agree	35	40.23%
Strongly Agree	48	55.17%
Total Responses	87	

This theme next appeared in survey question 56, which asked about the amount of paperwork teachers are expected to complete. More than half (68.23%) of the teachers surveyed shared that they are often overwhelmed by the extent of paperwork they are expected to complete.

Table 9. Data for Question 56

Question 56: I am often overwhelmed by the amount of paperwork I am expected to complete at my work.		
Answer Choices	Responses	Percentages
Strongly Disagree	2	2.35%
Disagree	19	22.35%
Unsure	6	7.06%
Agree	30	35.29%
Strongly Agree	28	32.94%
Total Responses	85	

In question 57, the surveyed teachers were solicited to see if they felt overwhelmed by work meetings. Again, more than half (54.12%) said they did.

Table 10. Data for Question 57

Question 57: I am often overwhelmed by the meetings I am expected to attend at my work.		
Answer Choices	Responses	Percentages
Strongly Disagree	3	3.53%
Disagree	27	31.76%
Unsure	9	10.59%
Agree	29	34.12%
Strongly Agree	17	20.00%
Total Responses	85	

Survey question 58 asked if the teachers were overwhelmed by extra duties they were expected to perform outside of their teaching and yet again, more than half (64.71%) shared they did agree.

Table 11. Data for Question 58

Question 58: I am often overwhelmed by the extra duties I am expected to perform at my work.		
Answer Choices	Responses	Percentages
Strongly Disagree	4	4.71%
Disagree	24	28.24%
Unsure	2	2.35%
Agree	29	34.12%
Strongly Agree	26	30.59%
Total Responses	85	

The following two questions from the survey also addressed this theme. Of these, the first is question 59, which asked if teachers felt overwhelmed by extra rehearsals with their performing groups. Although the yielded numbers produced more unsure responses and had others that were not as strongly weighted to the agree side of the scale, the agree side still outweighed the disagree side.

Table 12. Data for Question 59

Question 59: I am often overwhelmed by extra rehearsals and performances in my current position.		
Answer Choices	Responses	Percentages
Strongly Disagree	5	5.88%
Disagree	27	31.76%
Unsure	14	16.47%
Agree	23	27.06%
Strongly Agree	16	18.82%
Total Responses	85	

The final survey question to address this theme was question 61, which asked if teachers felt overwhelmed by mandatory training. This question, like many others examined in this section, revealed that more than half (61.18%) of the surveyed teachers shared that they are often overwhelmed by mandatory training that occur in addition to their already full and ever-growing teaching responsibilities.

Table 13. Data for Question 61

Question 61: I am often overwhelmed by mandatory trainings.		
Answer Choices	Responses	Percentages
Strongly Disagree	1	1.18%
Disagree	22	25.88%
Unsure	10	11.76%
Agree	29	34.12%
Strongly Agree	23	27.06%
Total Responses	85	

The above data shows that most of the surveyed teachers find a healthy work-life balance to be necessary. Placing increased workloads and demands on teachers creates an unbalanced work-to-life ratio and creates additional stress for teachers, which could constitute teacher turnover. The survey items and comments addressed in this theme identify some of the extra job expectations that are placed on music educators.

#### **Theme Four: Apathy**

The next theme to be recognized in the interviews was the theme of apathy. The theme is identified as any shared comment dealing with the teachers, their students, or others they work with who displayed a lack of care or interest in the educational processes. This theme did not appear in the literature review but is worth identifying as it was mentioned several times and is a significant problem in today's classrooms. The first teacher to comment on this theme was Teacher 2 in their response to question two. The teacher said, "I think I don't look forward to interacting with students who don't want to be in music classes. They fight it, they don't want to be there. It's a pain for them and for me." Lastly, Teacher 2 responded to their administrator's apathy in their answer to question nineteen; the teacher shared that they have not been observed for years and have not had an administrator in their room for years. The teacher said, "There's autonomy, but there's also apathy."

The next teacher to also address this theme in their reply to question two was Teacher 7. This teacher said, "I know it's going to be there, but I just don't like it, is the general apathy sometimes that I get from both students and other people, colleagues." This theme was next exposed in response to question nine by Teacher 1, who said, "Student enthusiasm." The teacher went on to say, "We blame a lot on the pandemic, and I don't know if that's the complete reason. Societal changes. There's just been a lot that's happened to us in a small amount of time that kids are apathetic, more apathetic." Teacher 4 also addressed this theme in their response to question nine, saying, "I noticed a lot of kids just seem very apathetic in general. So, but that's, that's just a cultural thing. That's not something that's easily fixed unless you know, you could wave a magic wand to fix it."

Although pride is the opposite of apathy, it is appropriate to cite it here as both concepts represent the same paradigm. Pride was mentioned once in the interviews when Teacher 1 responded to question seven. The teacher said, “When they’re performing and they feel pride and they feel prideful of representing the group that they’re with, the school.... Those are the, that’s what makes it all worth it.”

While the survey did not examine apathy specifically, it did address negative student behavior, which encompasses apathy. Apathy feeds multiple other unwanted student behaviors, such as tardiness, absenteeism, unpreparedness, and bad behavior. The survey questions that address this are 44 and 45.

Table 14. Data for Questions 44 and 45

Question 44: Student behavior is not a problem in my classroom/school.		
Answer Choices	Responses	Percentages
Strongly Disagree	15	15.24%
Disagree	32	36.78%
Unsure	7	8.05%
Agree	29	33.33%
Strongly Agree	4	4.60%
Question 45: Positive student behavior is important to me.		
Answer Choices	Responses	Percentages
Strongly Disagree	0	0.00%
Disagree	0	0.00%
Unsure	0	0.00%
Agree	37	42.53%
Strongly Agree	50	57.47%
Total Responses	87	

This shows that over half of the teachers felt student behavior was problematic in their classrooms. Still, all felt positive student behavior is crucial to their success and happiness in the profession.



### **Theme Five: Space, Materials, and Time**

This theme is identified as any comment that praises or criticizes access to space, materials, and time, which all aid in the teaching and learning processes. Having access to space and materials was a central topic in most of the interviews. Some teachers praised the number of resources they have and expressed that having access to such things as space and materials improved their teaching and job satisfaction. Others fell on the opposite end of that spectrum and expressed having a great need for such accommodations. As discussed in the literature review, space and materials are both associated with a school's structural environment and are vital to student success.<sup>16</sup> The teachers who expressed having needs will be examined first. The first teacher to mention something that fell into this theme was Teacher 5, who answered question two, saying, "Not having a space to call my own. It is very difficult to teach in a cafeteria. I have to set up and tear down everything I use multiple times daily. I'm not able to truly make the space mine." This teacher reiterated this perception in their response to question nine, saying, "Having an actual space to call my own to teach in." The teacher echoed this perception again in their answer to question seventeen, saying, "The biggest thing I need is space. I have funds available to purchase many of the items that I don't have, but I have no space to put them. I can do my job with the materials and resources that I have, but I could do it better if I had space."

Although it is not a physical or material thing, time is an essential resource for teachers and should be addressed as part of this theme. Teacher 7 addressed this need in their response to question nine, saying,

I wish that I had another planning time. I get one planning period, but I wish I had something at the..... I have three classes at the middle school and four at the high school

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<sup>16</sup> "Physical Environment," National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments, accessed December 5, 2023, <https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/topic-research/environment/physical-environment>.

and I get a planning period in the morning. But, once I get to the high school, I usually just use my lunch as I eat lunch in the car so I can do more stuff down there. So, I wish I had one more time to actually..... to do some more stuff. You know? I mean, I think over the years, I've, you know, you adapt to what the priorities are with the time that you're given.<sup>17</sup>

The next teacher to negatively address this theme was Teacher 8, who was quoted earlier in the theme two analysis as saying their county did not have a space large enough for their concerts. This teacher later offered more information on this current theme in their answer to question 17, saying,

I do not. We have a budget that allows me to maybe buy a couple things for the kids. We do not have school instruments. That's something that I've been working on over the last couple years, but the person before me threw away everything we have or had. So, we have no school instruments and because of my small amount of time in a school building, I don't actually have a classroom or home. I teach across four to five different spaces every single day, of which storage is an issue. It took about a month and a half for me to start my classroom at the beginning of the year because I was not given ample storage or anywhere to have my class. We actually couldn't fit in any of the rooms when I started at the beginning of the year, and no one had a plan for that.<sup>18</sup>

Teacher 8 was not alone in saying they needed material things. Teacher 3 answered question 17, saying,

There's a lot of ingenuity that happens in my classroom based on equipment needs, especially with high school band. What we need more of are large instruments that are in working condition. A lot of them are from the 1960s. So, dealing with that and also funding for purchasing music in general. Our library is outdated and not necessarily what I need for the instrumentalists in my classroom. I do not have locking instrument cubbies, so students' personal items as well as school instruments are subject to, you know, people just coming into the room and messing with them. And, my school district also has been wearing the same band uniforms for 20 years. So, those uniforms need replaced fairly soon.<sup>19</sup>

The other teachers who were interviewed shared positive feedback in relation to this theme. Most of these responses manifested in response to question seventeen, which directly

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<sup>17</sup> Teacher Interview of Teacher 7, April 22, 2023.

<sup>18</sup> Teacher Interview of Teacher 8, April 25, 2023.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

asked about materials and resources. In reply to this question, Teacher 1 said, “I feel fortunate as far as resources, just because I’ve worked other places where they don’t have them.” Teacher 2 answered the question, giving both positive and negative feedback, saying, “Okay, that’s a two-sided one for me. Currently, yes, I have everything I need, but also that’s because I fundraise to buy what I need. My budget for the year is ridiculous. I think the county gives me \$200 for the whole year. So, then everything else was through fundraising.” This concept of having things as a result of fundraising is mentioned a few times throughout the interviews.

The next teacher to share information in this vein was Teacher 4, who answered part of question nine by saying, “My facilities are great. My budget is good. My boosters help provide what I need, like, that general kind of stuff. I’m good to go.” The teacher elaborated in their response to question 17, saying,

There is not much that I’m in need of to do my job because I have a great booster organization and I ask them for what I need. Like, I just bought a harmony director. They just put in you know, \$5,000 into getting... my room is huge, and so, even the school put in like a 72-inch television and it was not big enough for my kids to see all around the room because the room is just so big. So, my boosters at my request put in a \$5,000 projector and screen so the kids all over the room can see it.<sup>20</sup>

The teacher later continued by saying,

My boosters buy the instruments that I need but I’ve been talking with my boosters... of or with my county in the band world. One big issue I see is they basically expect us to come up with our own instruments, and not all the schools have booster organizations. So, they want us to come up with the instruments, then they don’t have an allotted repair budget for each band program. So then not only are you having to come up with the instrument, but you’re also having to pay to have it repaired. It’s just, that’s the kind of thing that I’m trying to get through to them is, is there needs to be an allotted amount every year for every program to purchase new instruments. Cause I’ve been bringing it to their attention, there are instruments in most of the band rooms that are 70, 50, 60, 70 years old, and that’s just not, that’s not acceptable. So, that would be my biggest thing for most of the programs. I think there needs to be an established budget for each program to get new instruments on a regular basis and then those instruments should be... the repairs

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<sup>20</sup> Teacher Interview of Teacher 4, April 29, 2023.

for those instruments because we all know they don't want to because they have other things that they need to pay for and that's just not high on our list.<sup>21</sup>

In his response to question twenty, the teacher shared that his booster organization has around \$14,000 in its bank account.

This teacher also had this to say in relation to this theme in his answer to question seven, "You know, there's just a, there's a lot of plusses and on top of that, my facility at my school is probably one of the best, if not the best in the state. I have an auditorium connected to my band room with giant double doors so I can fit all my equipment through the doors and walk right on to the stage." Teacher 6 shared this as their response to question seventeen, "I think I'm pretty lucky in a sense that I do have appropriate resources. I've got technology, I've got instruments, I've got a high school next door who, because of my relationship with that director, I get their hand-me-down chairs and stands, and I feel like I'm pretty fortunate to have a ton of resources, so I'm all set there."

Teacher 7's response to time was already shared in this section. Their comments related to materials and space will be shared now. In Teacher 7's response to question seventeen, they said, "Yes, so it didn't happen this way at first, but all of our teachers have their own classrooms for each ensemble at the secondary level, which was not the way when I first got here." The teacher goes on to say, "I go to the high school, I have my own strings room. I go to the middle school, I have my own strings room. I don't share it with anybody. They have their own band room, their own choir room. Like, everybody has their own space. And again, in my mind, that is a huge way of saying you have what you need." This teacher also shared that there had recently been upgrades to their school's performing arts center.

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<sup>21</sup> Teacher Interview of Teacher 4, April 29, 2023.

Theme 5, like several of the others, was also addressed in multiple areas of the survey. The first question to collect data for this theme was question 34, asking whether the teachers' classrooms and workspaces were sufficient. Question 35 built on question 34 by asking if having adequate teaching spaces was necessary for the teachers. All teachers shared they felt adequate teaching spaces were crucial, even if they did not have access to them while taking the survey.

Table 15. Data for Questions 34 and 35

Question 34: The classroom/workspace in which I teach is sufficient.		
Answer Choices	Responses	Percentages
Strongly Disagree	7	8.05%
Disagree	16	18.39%
Unsure	7	8.05%
Agree	42	48.28%
Strongly Agree	15	17.24%

Question 35: Adequate classroom/teaching space is important to me.		
Answer Choices	Responses	Percentages
Strongly Disagree	0	0.00%
Disagree	0	0.00%
Unsure	0	0.00%
Agree	37	42.53%
Strongly Agree	50	57.47%
Total Responses	87	

Question 36 asked if teachers had access to acceptable teaching supplies and materials, and question 37 inquired how important access to such supplies and materials was for the teachers. Similarly to the above two questions, all teachers but one, who was unsure, marked that they felt having the means to acquire such supplies and materials was paramount in their work.

Table 16. Data for Questions 36 and 37

Question 36: I have access to adequate teaching supplies and materials.		
Answer Choices	Responses	Percentages
Strongly Disagree	4	4.60%
Disagree	12	13.79%
Unsure	9	10.34%
Agree	47	54.02%
Strongly Agree	15	17.24%

Question 37: Having access to sufficient teaching supplies and materials is important to me.		
Answer Choices	Responses	Percentages
Strongly Disagree	0	0.00%
Disagree	0	0.00%
Unsure	1	1.15%
Agree	35	40.23%
Strongly Agree	51	58.62%
Total Responses	87	

A few of the teachers spoke of planning time in their interviews. Likewise, so did survey questions 40 and 41. Question 40 asked if teachers had acceptable planning time, and question 41 asked the teachers to share how important their planning time was to them. Like the above responses, all but one teacher, who was unsure, shared they felt planning time was necessary even if they felt they did not have sufficient amounts of planning time while taking the survey.

Table 17. Data for Questions 40 and 41

Question 40: I am provided acceptable planning time to be a successful teacher.		
Answer Choices	Responses	Percentages
Strongly Disagree	5	5.75%
Disagree	27	31.03%
Unsure	3	3.45%
Agree	37	42.53%
Strongly Agree	15	17.24%

Question 41: Having acceptable planning time is important to me.		
Answer Choices	Responses	Percentages
Strongly Disagree	1	1.15%
Disagree	0	0.00%
Unsure	1	1.15%
Agree	38	43.68%
Strongly Agree	47	54.02%
Total Responses	87	

The final survey question to address this theme was question 55, which sought to determine whether teachers felt overwhelmed by fundraising for their classrooms or programs. This question was split almost evenly between disagreeing and agreeing responses, which still illustrates that it is an important consideration for many teachers.

Table 18. Data for Question 55

Question 55: I am often overwhelmed by having to fundraise for my classroom/program.		
Answer Choices	Responses	Percentages
Strongly Disagree	11	12.94%
Disagree	27	31.76%
Unsure	6	7.06%
Agree	25	29.41%
Strongly Agree	16	18.82%
Total Responses	85	

In showing consistency with the interviews, the above survey data demonstrates that most teachers value having adequate access to space, materials, and planning time for their teaching. It should be noted that depending on the teacher's position, specific topics asked about in the survey might be more relatable for some teachers than others. For example, an elementary teacher may have fewer required rehearsals and performances than their high school counterparts. Likewise, the same elementary teachers also may not need to fundraise as much to support their programs. Conversely, high school teachers may have better access to their own classrooms and not have to teach from a cart or in shared or unconventional spaces like their elementary counterparts.

## **Theme Six: Administration Style, Effectiveness, and Relationships**

How administrators run their schools and interact with their faculty and staff are at the heart of school culture.<sup>22</sup> This theme is identified as anything reported by the teachers that dealt with how their administrators run their schools and interact with all the stakeholders in their educational environments. All eight teachers had information to share regarding this theme. However, they reported a mix of both positive and negative feedback. As much information was gained on this theme from several interview questions, sub-themes emerged within the teachers' reporting. Thus, for this analysis, the teachers' responses will be categorized into sub-themes and shared individually and in the order they appeared. Both positive and negative reports for each of the sub-themes will be shared when they are represented.

### **Sub-Theme: Administrative Support and Recognition of Teachers, Programs, and Students**

This sub-theme revolves around how administrators interact with the interviewed teachers, their students, and their programs. This includes if the administrators are present at events, recognize the programs and those involved, and support the programs within their schools and communities. Teacher 1 first addressed this sub-theme in their response to question ten, which asked what the teacher thought their administration should do or be doing. The teacher said, "I think recognizing the program, recognizing the students in our program as being advocates of the school, representatives of the school." Later, in their response, the teacher said, "Being present at the things that we do, to show the kids they support them in that, in the arts realm. It seems to be more sports-heavy. You'll always see an administrator at a sporting event, and I love sports, nothing against sports. But I feel like we need to have that same... It needs to

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<sup>22</sup> "Leadership for Learning: Making the Connections Among State, District and School Policies and Practices" The Wallace Foundation (2006): 1, <https://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/Documents/Wallace-Perspective-Leadership-for-Learning.pdf>.



be equal.” In reply to question number fourteen, which asked what administrators could do to make the teacher feel more valued. The teacher answered, “I guess, again, just their presence and acknowledgement... via, acknowledgement amongst students, acknowledgement amongst peers, and the community.”

Teacher 2 addressed this sub-theme once in their interviews when replying to question five, saying, “My district as a whole, the arts aren’t the focus, rather athletics are, which may be true everywhere, but... I don’t know.” Teacher 4 was the next to speak to this sub-theme when they were asked what their administration could do to make them feel more valued in question fourteen, they said,

Honestly, not much. I would like to see more recognition, not even of me, of band programs and choir programs. They are willing to, if we contact them and reach out and bring up things that happened, they're willing to put it on the website, which is good, but at the same time, we kind of have to go bring that to them. Which I'm willing to do, but it would be nice if somebody actually had their eye on those things and just did it and we didn't have to do that. You know, like, right now I'm trying to fight to get our county PR person to do a write-up on my band, considering they made state honor band, they basically won a state championship if you're talking in sports terms... and I can't, it's like, I sent email three weeks ago and then I get an email back yesterday that's like to all of the band and choir directors saying “hey tell us what good things happen for your program this year so we can advertise that” so I'm kind of going, “okay that's not the same thing,” but yeah that kind of is what it is too.<sup>23</sup>

The next teacher to share information related to this sub-theme was Teacher 7, who shared that their county administrators do an excellent job of promoting their school’s arts programs. In part of their answer to question thirteen, Teacher 7 said,

The school district actually, in our local newspaper, bought, like, purchased out a whole spread, like an open both pages in our local newspaper, and filled it with an article talking about supporting music education and the arts, and pictures of every child from our district that went and it outlined everything that they did. I mean it was huge. So, they valued that to showcase that.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Teacher Interview of Teacher 4, April 29, 2023.

<sup>24</sup> Teacher Interview of Teacher 7, April 22, 2023.

Later in their answer to question thirteen, Teacher 7 shared information on their superintendent, “She reaches out to the music faculty and says, what's the best way that we can honor and recognize these students and teachers for what they're doing?”

This teacher also shared that other district-level leaders and others in their schools are involved in supporting their arts programs. The teacher explained,

Yeah, and we're fortunate too, we have a communications director at the county level who works closely with a lot of the music programs. He used to be our broadcasting teacher at the high school. So we just have a good relationship with him. And it's a very cordial relationship where we're comfortable going. I mean, it's not just our program that's supported, but it's nice to have somebody who's easy to work with to make those things happen.<sup>25</sup>

Other support instances were found in Teacher 7's replies to question eighteen. First, the teacher shared, “You see our teachers and principals and administration from the board office and board members at events all the time.” The teacher continued saying, “You'll see on our superintendent's report, she will announce, hey, there's a high school musical. Don't forget the percussion concert coming up next week.” Next, the teacher gave another example, saying, “I ran into a board member at Walmart two weeks ago, and I stopped, and I talked to her.” The teacher explained, “She said, I'm coming tomorrow to see the musical, and I said don't forget this, the strings concert, and she's like, oh, I know, she says, my calendar is full of so many things that's going on.” The teacher continued, saying, “So, while not everybody is there at all of them, which I wouldn't expect them to be, it's, you see support from different entities at an administrative or board level at our things.”

The last teacher to address this sub-theme in their interview was Teacher 8. When asked what the teacher's administration could do to make the teacher feel more valued, she shared,

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<sup>25</sup> Teacher Interview of Teacher 7, April 22, 2023.

“value my students. Recognize them for their accomplishments in music and value the work that they’re putting in and the fact that they show up to school, even if it is for music.” Once asked if the teacher felt they had a voice in their district, the teacher answered, “No, because when I email my county supervisor, she does not answer my emails.” This illustrates a total lack of recognition from the supervisor as they cannot even be bothered to answer an email. Teacher 8 responded to question nineteen with another comment that exemplified their administration’s lack of attention to them, their students, and their program, saying, “So, within my classroom, no one has ever checked my lesson plans. No one ever comes and observes when I write off all my observations for the county. They refer to a concert that they did not attend. So, I do have complete control in my classroom, but it’s out of a lack of attendance by the administration.”

This sub-theme was addressed in the survey questions 26 and 27, which asked if the teachers feel they have supportive administrators and if they feel such support is needed. As has been the overwhelming trend in this analysis, all of the teachers agreed that working for supportive administrators was fundamental to them, even if they did not feel they were working in such an environment while taking the survey.

Table 19. Data for Questions 26 and 27

Question 26: I feel appreciated by and supported by my administration.		
Answer Choices	Responses	Percentages
Strongly Disagree	5	5.75%
Disagree	11	12.64%
Unsure	13	14.94%
Agree	35	40.23%
Strongly Agree	23	26.44%

Question 27: Working for a supportive administration is important to me.		
Answer Choices	Responses	Percentages
Strongly Disagree	0	0.00%
Disagree	0	0.00%
Unsure	0	0.00%
Agree	19	21.84%
Strongly Agree	68	78.16%
Total Responses	87	

This data from the surveys was consistent with the information gained from the interviews, further showing how important teachers feel supportive administrators are.

### **Sub-Theme: Administrative Cultivation of School Environment**

This sub-theme is characterized by any descriptions provided by the teachers related to their administrators' crafting of their schools' environment and culture. The first teacher to give feedback related to this sub-theme was Teacher 1, who responded to question fifteen by saying their administrators should work on "Retaining teachers and make this (the school) a vibrant and...And... What would you call it? An alluring place to work, something to attract good educators." Teacher 2 offered comments that fit this sub-theme in their response to question number fourteen, saying, "I think promote... Make a school environment where people actually befriend each other." The teacher went on to say, "The teachers in the different departments don't really talk to each other. So, the English teachers don't talk to the math teachers and none of them talk to the arts teachers. So, it's very segregated, and I think the administration could make the school a more welcoming place."

Teacher 3's overall narrative concerning their administration was extensive and adverse in nature. While answering question three, the teacher said they would leave their job at the end of the academic year and made it clear their administration was to blame. They elaborated in their response to question four, "My consideration for leaving comes from confrontational, abusive, and unprofessional administration." The teacher gave even more insight into their feelings and reasoning while answering question five, warning others not to work in their school "No. I have actively told highly qualified peers to avoid applying in my district. Especially women. I do not want them to experience what I have."

Teacher 5 was next to offer information that was suitable for this sub-theme when answering question five, saying they were "Extremely unhappy with the administration at one of my schools. The principal did not support me or any of the teachers at the school. There was no discipline, and the students were running wild. She basically washed her hands of the situation and told us that it was our problem to deal with." The last info Teacher 5 shared regarding their administration and this sub-theme was in their response to question sixteen, saying, "We need to actively recruit certified teachers to our district. Consistent discipline for both students and staff, like unexcused absences, improper use of technology, tobacco use, etc. Set higher expectations for students in regard to behavior and academics."

Four of the survey questions addressed this theme. The first to do so were questions 24 and 25, which asked about the surveyed teachers' relationships with their colleagues. The table below shows that most teachers valued strong peer relations at their work.

Table 20. Data for Questions 24 and 25

Question 24: I feel connected to and supported by my colleagues.		
Answer Choices	Responses	Percentages
Strongly Disagree	3	3.45%
Disagree	11	12.64%
Unsure	11	12.64%
Agree	51	58.62%
Strongly Agree	11	12.64%

Question 25: Positive relationships with colleagues is important to me.		
Answer Choices	Responses	Percentages
Strongly Disagree	0	0.00%
Disagree	2	2.30%
Unsure	1	1.15%
Agree	40	45.98%
Strongly Agree	44	50.57%
Total Responses	87	

Again, the teachers overwhelmingly responded on the agree side of the choice spectrum, with only two teachers disagreeing and one saying they were unsure. The next set of survey questions to address this theme were questions 42 and 43, which inquired about the surveyed teachers' perceptions of their school environments and the significance of positive school environments to them. Comparable to the data gained from questions 24 and 25 above, all but two teachers agreed that the school environment was an essential factor to them, with only one disagreeing and one marking unsure.

Table 21. Data for Questions 42 and 43

Question 42: My school has a positive school environment.		
Answer Choices	Responses	Percentages
Strongly Disagree	10	11.49%
Disagree	17	19.54%
Unsure	16	18.39%
Agree	30	34.48%
Strongly Agree	14	16.09%
Question 43: A positive school environment is important to me.		
Answer Choices	Responses	Percentages
Strongly Disagree	0	0.00%
Disagree	1	1.15%
Unsure	1	1.15%
Agree	27	31.03%
Strongly Agree	58	66.67%
Total Responses	87	

### **Sub-Theme: Administrative Nourishment of Teacher Autonomy**

This theme is defined as any comment that exposes the teachers' independence in their classrooms as granted or encouraged by their administrators. All teachers had information to share regarding this theme as it directly related to question nineteen. However, this sub-theme was also uncovered in replies to other questions as well. As such, analysis of the response will be shared in teacher order. Responses to question nineteen that were previously shared in other themes will not be shared again here. Teacher 1 shared that they have autonomy in their classroom but not so much in regard to class offerings. The teacher specified that class offering information is not always shared with the student body. The teacher said, "We do have a lot of say-so in how we structure our curriculum. However, when it comes to what we offer, then sometimes we're pigeonholed into other things because they don't get the information out to the kids that might want to expand on other opportunities that they don't even know exist or could exist." Teacher 2, in their reply to question ten, stated,

My administration has been great. I will say since they hired me to bring back the program, they've been very supportive. Anything I asked for as far as classes... after year

one I asked for a music theory class, they gave it to me. After year two, I said, can I please have an advanced ensemble to teach the all-state music and do chamber music and small things, and they gave that. So, they've been very supportive of anything I asked.<sup>26</sup>

In the teacher's response to question 16, they stated, "I think they should stop being so reactive to parent complaints and demands. It seems like everything they do is reactive to what the parents say." This fits this sub-theme as the administrators are reactive to parent complaints, which could detract from the teacher's autonomy if not handled correctly. More on this topic will be revealed in Teacher 3's statements. Teacher 2's answer to question nineteen was shared previously in the apathy theme but also fits this theme as well.

Unlike Teacher 2, Teacher 3 had a much more negative narrative to share in regard to this sub-theme. When asked in question nine what could make the teacher's job more satisfying, they replied, "Something that would make my job satisfying is actually having the support and communication that is meaningful and being respected as the instrumental music professional in my school, in my district, and in my community." In reply to question ten, the teacher stipulated by saying,

I think this relates a lot to what I said in number nine, the last question. Just letting me do my job, supporting my decisions as a professional, not questioning those decisions, and just understanding that I'm the instrumental music professional and coming to me for those questions rather than making uneducated decisions.<sup>27</sup>

In response to question fourteen, the teacher reiterated their above sentiments while stating how their administration could make them feel more valued, "Give me the support and let me do my job. I think this goes back to previous questions again with the value of support and understanding that I'm a professional when it comes to instrumental music." More detail was given in response to question sixteen,

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<sup>26</sup> Teacher Interview of Teacher 2, May 2, 2023.

<sup>27</sup> Teacher Interview of Teacher 3, April 28, 2023.



I think there's a deeply flawed foundation in West Virginia schools, and especially in my district. I think there's just a complete separation between decisions made by administration and actually listening to the needs of teachers. Because teachers will know what students need, and teachers know what works in their classroom. I feel like we're moving in the opposite direction, telling them to reinvent the wheel every single year.<sup>28</sup>

When asked in question nineteen if the teacher felt they had autonomy in their classroom, they said,

I do not because I feel like decisions are made without me even being included in the conversation. In terms of day-to-day with the content that I teach I feel like I have autonomy, but when it comes to the large, overarching decisions and when it comes to scope and sequence of my classroom and the future of the band program, I don't have the support and I don't have the line of communication necessary to make those decisions. And, I feel like if anything, I get scolded for bringing up concerns or trying to have a voice in this matter.<sup>29</sup>

The teacher concluded their interview by providing this reply to question twenty,

Well obviously I'm not staying in my current position, but something that would keep me here is not just the voice of their support and appreciation for what I do, but actual actions, like being asked questions by administration and the Board of Education on what the needs are in my classroom. My students are a very visible community representation of the school system, and there's an expectation for them to be in the public eye and to look good and sound good, but then there's no support to back it, and that's turning into a cycle of they don't have the support to perform their best and it's becoming less and less appealing to the community and it's concerning. So, just really having that support from the district to build that public eye would benefit both parties, and I feel like having that type of discussion and open narrative with my district would have kept me here.<sup>30</sup>

Contrasting to Teacher 3's reporting, Teacher 4 had mostly positive things to share concerning their administration. This teacher first mentioned their administration in part of their response to question five, saying, "The superintendent is an arts person. Her uncle is actually \*\*\*\*\* \*\*\*, who's a well-known, respected music educator and a master teacher. And so,

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<sup>28</sup> Teacher Interview of Teacher 3, April 28, 2023.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

she's one of the few that she really puts her money where her mouth is." Later in the response, the teacher added, "They just, they actually, I think respect what we do and do what they can to support us. And generally, when I have, you know, concerns, they're very, very willing to listen." When asked about the best parts of their job, Teacher 4 made mention of their administration,

I work with a really great administrator. My principal is... I always say she's as supportive as she can be in the current educational climate. I mean, she can't give me everything that I want, but whenever I sit down and ask her for things, she always considers it. A lot of times she gives me what I ask for. When she can't she always is willing to sit down and explain why. And most of the time when she tells me why, I completely understand, and I have to go, you know, if I was a principal worried about the entire school, I'm not sure I wouldn't make the exact same decision. So, I'm very lucky to have a very supportive administrator who really lets me do my job and supports me where she can, and the rest of the time really leaves me alone for the most part, which is good.<sup>31</sup>

In answering question nineteen which specifically addressed if the teacher felt they had autonomy in their classrooms, Teacher 4 said, "Oh, my... yeah, yes. Yes, I do." Teacher 4 ended their interview by starting their answer to question twenty with, "Great principal. Probably the best one I've worked for in the fifteen years I've been teaching." This comment exemplifies the positive relationship this teacher had with their leadership, which contributes to the teacher's overall positive reporting on their administration.

While responding to question six, Teacher 5 addressed district-level administration, "I feel our district has been struggling for several years now, mostly because of poor district administration. However, some of that administration has recently changed and I hope we are moving in the right direction again." Later, while answering question ten, the teacher suggested that their administrators "consider the unique needs of the music teacher when making

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<sup>31</sup> Teacher Interview of Teacher 4, April 29, 2023.

schedules.” The teacher specified by saying, “For example, have classes grouped together better instead of having a 5<sup>th</sup> grade class and then a kindergarten class.”

When asked what their administrators could do to make them feel more valued, the teacher suggested, “Recognize that music and art and PE teachers do teach in unique situations and may have different needs than the regular classroom teachers.” Teacher 5 answered question nineteen by sharing, “I do feel I have autonomy in my classroom. I’ve never been questioned on my choice of songs or lessons that I teach to the students. I’ve been given great freedom on the curriculum that I use as long as I am covering the standards.”

Teacher 6 had only a few things to say regarding their administrators. What they did share was all constructive. They first mentioned their leadership in their question ten feedback, “The administration is great here, so I can’t really say they could do too much more.” This teacher had a similar retort for question fourteen, stating, “I don’t think they could do much. My administration is pretty awesome. When answering question nineteen, which asked if teachers felt they were granted autonomy, Teacher 6 said,

Absolutely I am. I feel like it’s that way in the county in general. We’re given a broad curriculum of Quaver, but the freedom to change that and supplement resources is open for the entire county. But specifically, like I said, my principal is incredibly supportive and trusting of the teachers at the school to do what they think is best for the students. So, I have full autonomy in my classroom and that helps a lot and that makes this job pretty great.<sup>32</sup>

Teacher 7 also had positive things to share about their administration, but unlike Teacher 6, they had much to say. When responding to question ten, the teacher shared,

They give us the flexibility that we need. They’re supportive, I can say that I have never been told no since I started teaching and I think part of that comes from utilizing the resources that we’re given well, showing progress with what we’re given, you know,

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<sup>32</sup> Teacher Interview of Teacher 6, May 3, 2023.

getting students at the state level doing things, and making the most of what, like I said, making the most of what we're given.<sup>33</sup>

Teacher 7 ended their explanation by saying, "Every principal, I feel like I could go walk into their office and have a conversation with them. At the board office, same thing, I walk in, I know the secretaries." Comments like these demonstrate powerful and positive relationships between teachers and their administrators, which aid teachers in finding their autonomy as they feel respected and supported. Teacher 7 answered question nineteen, the autonomy question, by saying, "Yes, I do completely." Later, in response to this question, the teacher shared that they have complete control over their own schedule: "I've never had an administrator do my schedule, ever."

Teacher 8, similar to Teacher 3, had primarily undesirable things to share about their administration regarding this sub-theme. This teacher first mentioned their administrators in part of their answer to question number five. The teacher said, "As far as support from your administrators, it's not as easily found just because that isn't what our focus is currently." When asked what the teacher thought their administrators could do to keep them in their work, the teacher said, "More listening and less bossing around. More interaction." After being asked if the teacher felt valued, they shared, "Within my district, absolutely not. We had a third of the all-state orchestra come from my schools, and we were denied the right to play at a board meeting or even have the students recognized." Teacher 8's answer to question nineteen was shared earlier in the apathy theme but also fits here as well.

This theme was addressed in survey questions 26 and 27, which asked about the surveyed teachers' perceptions of being supported by and appreciated by their administration. However,

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<sup>33</sup> Teacher Interview of Teacher 7, April 22, 2023.

this data was already shared earlier in this theme six analysis and can be referenced there in full detail in relation to this current theme. To review and summarize, all of the teachers agreed that working for supportive administrators was important to them, even if they did not feel they were working with such support. One additional survey question that addresses theme six and its sub-themes is question 64, which asked if positive connections with colleagues, administration, and students could encourage the teachers to stay in their work. Out of those surveyed, 9.41% disagreed, 7.06% were unsure, and 83.53% agreed.

Table 22. Data for Question 64

Question 64: Positive connections with colleagues, administration, and students could encourage me to remain in my current position.		
Answer Choices	Responses	Percentages
Strongly Disagree	2	2.35%
Disagree	6	7.06%
Unsure	6	7.06%
Agree	30	35.29%
Strongly Agree	41	48.24%
Total Responses	85	

### Theme Seven: Family Obligations

This theme is identified by comments focusing on the teachers' families and how their familial relationships and obligations affect their work. This theme is found in the literature review in the section that deals with extrinsic motivation. Ivan Reid and Jonathan Caudwell specifically address this theme in their *Research in Education* journal article, which was addressed in the literature review.<sup>34</sup> Teacher 1 spoke to this theme when asked question 20, saying, "But, you know, life happens and now I have to support myself and my son and my household." The teacher went on to later say, "So, I'm at the point in my career that I still love those things, but... I'm looking to how many more years until I can just have my own because

<sup>34</sup> Ivan Reid and Jonathan Caudwell, "Why Did Secondary PGCE Students Choose Teaching as a Career?," *Research in Education* 58, no. 1 (1997): 47.

my youngest is getting ready to graduate, and I'm kind of, I'm ready to phase out a little bit... a little bit.”

Teacher 2 also highlighted this theme when answering question twenty, saying, “Um, I want to stay near my family, so that's been my main reason for staying local... is I don't want to go too far away, so that I'm not helpful to them.” Teacher 4 was the last teacher interviewed to provide comments that fit this theme. When they addressed question three, the teacher shared, “My wife has interviewed for a job, and if she gets it, we would have to move to Pennsylvania.” He mentioned this reason a few times. This theme did not manifest in the survey. So, no further analysis will take place.

### **Theme Eight: Financial Need and Opportunity**

Theme eight was identified by comments that focused on all things financial, including benefits and retirement. These factors are identified as extrinsic motivators in the literature review. Information in the literature review also asserts that teachers are more likely to stay in their jobs if they are paid well.<sup>35</sup> Teacher 1 was the first to address this theme while responding to question twenty, which asked the teachers to share what kept them in their jobs. In response, Teacher 1 shared, “Well, obviously income and insurance. Income, insurance, and retirement. That’s just to be quite blunt.” Later in their response, the teacher said,

It would have been opposite ten years ago. I still would have said, oh, I just love what I do, I don’t care what they pay me. But... But, you know, life happens and now I have to support myself and my son and my household and... I’m looking to my own health and well-being and how sometimes I’ve let my job get in the way of my health and well-being.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Harun Gultekin and Erkan Acar, “The Intrinsic and Extrinsic Factors for Teacher Motivation,” *Revista De Cercetare Si Interventie Sociala* 47 (2014): 300.

<sup>36</sup> Teacher Interview of Teacher 1, April 27, 2023.

Teacher 4 was the next to share information pertaining to this theme. In the teacher's response to question five, which asked if they would recommend their district to other teachers seeking employment, the teacher said, "I would absolutely recommend \*\*\*\*\* County to them if they are looking at staying, if they're really kind of interested in going to other states, I would not. Just because, you know, in surrounding states they can get paid more money to do the exact same thing with a lot of times with better supplies and better support." Later in their response, the teacher said they had previously decided to stay in their current county when others sought them because their county provides them with a 245-day contract. The teacher explained that if they transferred to most other schools in West Virginia, they "take a 25-day pay cut."

Teacher 5 was next to speak to this theme during their interview. When responding to question fifteen, which asked what the teacher felt their district should be doing that they are currently not doing, the teacher said, "Give teachers appropriate pay for positions that involve lots of extra time beyond the school day. For example, band directors, choir directors, theatre." When asked what could tempt the teacher to leave their job, they said, "A lot more money, a little bit more would not make me want to change."

The first survey questions to inquire about this theme were questions 18 and 19, which asked about compensation. A little over half of the teachers expressed that they did not feel their jobs paid well, 17.24% were unsure, and just over 30% felt they were paid well. However, just over 81% felt that good pay was important.

Table 23. Data for Questions 18 and 19

Question 18: My current teaching position pays well.		
Answer Choices	Responses	Percentages
Strongly Disagree	15	17.24%
Disagree	30	34.48%
Unsure	15	17.24%
Agree	26	29.89%
Strongly Agree	1	1.15%

Question 19: Competitive compensation in my teaching is important to me.		
Answer Choices	Responses	Percentages
Strongly Disagree	1	1.15%
Disagree	5	5.75%
Unsure	10	11.49%
Agree	36	41.38%
Strongly Agree	35	40.23%
Total Responses	87	

The next survey questions to ask about this theme were questions 20 and 21, which sought to understand the teachers' feelings concerning insurance. Unlike the previously examined questions, the majority of teachers shared that they did not feel they had good insurance, and a very strong majority (84 of the 87) replied that having good insurance is important to them, leaving only one disagreeing and two who were unsure.

Table 24. Data for Questions 20 and 21

Question 20: Teaching in my current position affords me good health insurance.		
Answer Choices	Responses	Percentages
Strongly Disagree	3	3.45%
Disagree	13	14.94%
Unsure	14	16.09%
Agree	51	58.62%
Strongly Agree	6	6.90%

Question 21: Employer provided health insurance is important to me.		
Answer Choices	Responses	Percentages
Strongly Disagree	0	0.00%
Disagree	1	1.15%
Unsure	2	2.30%
Agree	35	40.23%
Strongly Agree	49	56.32%
Total Responses	87	



Questions 22 and 23 dealt with retirement and also met the criteria for inclusion in this theme. Unlike most other questions on the survey, question 22 received a high response from teachers reporting that they were unsure, meaning they were unsure if their retirement plan was satisfactory or not. However, in question 23, all teachers but four who replied they were unsure shared they felt a satisfactory retirement plan was important to them.

Table 25. Data for Questions 22 and 23

Question 22: Teaching in my current position will provide me with a satisfactory retirement plan.		
Answer Choices	Responses	Percentages
Strongly Disagree	3	3.45%
Disagree	14	16.09%
Unsure	30	34.48%
Agree	39	44.83%
Strongly Agree	1	1.15%
Question 23: A satisfactory retirement plan is important to me.		
Answer Choices	Responses	Percentages
Strongly Disagree	0	0.00%
Disagree	0	0.00%
Unsure	4	4.60%
Agree	36	41.38%
Strongly Agree	47	54.02%
Total Responses	87	

Questions 62 and 65 were the last to fall into this theme. Both manifested the majority of their responses in the agree side of the answer options. This means that most of the teachers felt they would be more likely to remain in their jobs if their pay and benefits were better.

Table 26. Data for Questions 62 and 65

Question 62: Opportunities for higher pay could encourage me to remain in my current position.		
Answer Choices	Responses	Percentages
Strongly Disagree	2	2.35%
Disagree	5	5.88%
Unsure	6	7.06%
Agree	28	32.94%
Strongly Agree	44	51.76%

Question 65: Having access to better benefits could encourage me to remain in my current position.		
Answer Choices	Responses	Percentages
Strongly Disagree	2	2.35%
Disagree	5	5.88%
Unsure	7	8.24%
Agree	34	40.00%
Strongly Agree	37	43.53%
Total Responses	85	

### Theme Nine: Mentoring and Professional Development

Theme nine was formed by all comments given which dealt with mentoring and professional development. This theme was discussed at length in the literature review, where we were told, “Teachers are more likely to stay in the teaching profession if they obtain suitable training.”<sup>37</sup> We then discovered that new teachers need mentors. Mentorships were referred to as “professional development programs that incorporate mentoring and are designed to offer support, guidance, and orientation for beginning teachers during the transition into their first teaching jobs.”<sup>38</sup> However, the literature review also indicated that such teacher support could not end after mentorships and needed to be continued in the form of professional development.

<sup>37</sup> Harry K. Wong, “Play for Keeps,” *Principal Leadership* 3, no. 1 (2002): 56.

<sup>38</sup> American Institutes for Research, *Promoting Teacher Effectiveness: Conditions for Success in Teacher Induction*, Literacy Information and Communication System, 2015, 1, <https://lincs.ed.gov/publications/te/conditions.pdf>.

All teachers commented on these topics in the interviews, as they were directly asked questions about them. Thus, the first teacher to address this theme was Teacher 1. While answering question 11, which inquired about the teacher's professional development opportunities, the teacher said, "Professional development in general that I've seen in the last, in the recent years, is not student-centered." The teacher went on to explain, "It's not instructional, it's not instructional centered." The teacher clarified by saying, "It's centered more on all the things that we have to deal with outside of instruction." The teacher further explained, saying, "It's been really heavily centered on teachers being more emotional behavioral support than academic support and therefore what has been suffering is academics." In responding to question 12, which asked about mentoring opportunities in the teacher's district, Teacher 1 answered, "I know they exist, but I don't really see a lot... in the position I'm in currently, I don't see that happening." Teacher 2 responded to question 11 by saying their county's professional development opportunities are "almost always irrelevant to the arts." When commenting on mentoring while remarking on question 13, the teacher shared,

Teacher - Um... It's hit or miss. My mentor when I was a new teacher was an older teacher in the building who got a stipend for helping me. And he was actually wonderful. Just at the basics of teaching, like this is how to take attendance so they're not crazy, and this is how to set up your rules and do basic classroom management. He was actually really helpful and sweet. I think now they do, there are beginning teacher mentors who are supposed to be professional helpers and I think the beginning teachers resent them coming into their classroom and telling them what to do. So I'm not so sure it's a great thing. But it does exist.<sup>39</sup>

Teacher 3 shared these thoughts concerning their professional development opportunities, "My professional development opportunities within the district have not been helpful at all. They've honestly been a waste of my time." The teacher further explained, "We've tried to have

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<sup>39</sup> Teacher Interview of Teacher 2, May 2, 2023.

vertical music teaming in my district in the past and then our middle school administration have not allowed their music teachers to attend.” When asked about mentoring in their county, the teacher said, “I personally had a really great mentoring experience but I think in the district as a whole... I think that they’re an afterthought and there’s no follow-through.” Teacher 4 shared the following regarding professional development, “For the general classroom teacher, I think they’re good. I think they’re fine. For music and arts specialties, there’s not really much offered.” However, the teacher suggested that music educators need to take some responsibility in asking their administrators for specific training that would benefit them. When asked about mentoring opportunities, the teacher offered the following,

I think they’re okay. I struggle with that in general and it’s not even just in our county. I worked in \*\*\*\*\* County when I first started and it feels like, and this is I think mostly an arts problem, you know, I’m the only band director in my school. So, if I’m going to get a band director mentor, it’s got to be a person from a different school with... and then they’ve got to travel all the way over to my school and it just it’s a logistics kind of nightmare in that way. So, for arts specialties, I don’t think it’s great but I’m not sure how you solve that problem. For general classroom ed, I think it’s decent. I, the one thing I would say, I wish they provided more opportunities where they would provide a sub and we could go watch seasoned teachers do what they do to get that kind of mentor relationship built in.<sup>40</sup>

Teacher 5 shared thoughts similar to those before them concerning professional development: “Too often, the district is quick to try the latest and greatest new teaching method, but without giving us the proper training on how to use it. And then when we do start to understand it, they switch to the next new thing.” The teacher continued by sharing, “Also, we rarely have professional development opportunities that specifically relate to the arts.” While responding to the mentoring question, the teacher explained, “I appreciate that all new teachers

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<sup>40</sup> Teacher Interview of Teacher 4, April 29, 2023.

are given a mentor their first year. However, I feel that the mentors need to be given more time to spend with them.” Teacher 6 shared the following concerning professional development,

I feel like for me as a music teacher, it's a little lackluster and we usually get sort of left out. But I don't necessarily think that's my district specifically. I feel like that's a pretty common theme. So, I mean, a little lacking for music, but I'm not necessarily... I mean we get a conference once or twice a year, but yeah, not too many music education development opportunities going on in general.<sup>41</sup>

When asked about their school system’s mentoring program, Teacher 6 said, “I feel like it could be better. I had a mentor my first year, she was great, but she was a reading specialist and knew nothing about the music classroom. The teacher went on to say they felt like the mentoring program could be longer than just one year, “I felt like in my second year when it was just me, and I didn’t have a mentor, I was pretty lost.”

Unlike most of their peers, Teacher 7 had mostly positive things to share regarding their professional development opportunities. They shared, “So, we have a series of professional development days at the beginning of each school year, and one of those is guaranteed and set aside specifically for content area.” They explained that they had visitors from Con Selmer and music faculty from local universities who had come to lead their professional development in the past. They also shared that their county gives the music faculty a weekly hour together by delaying their start time on Wednesdays. This allows the teachers to have vertical teaming and Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) for the entire system’s music faculty. The teacher shared that this time also allows them to plan system-wide music collaborations and events. The teacher further shared, “We are always supported to go to not only our state conference, but there are many teachers who have been supported to go to national conferences and workshops over the years.” Concerning mentoring, Teacher 7 shared, “So, they have a program in place for first

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<sup>41</sup> Teacher Interview of Teacher 6, May 3, 2023.

year teachers of kind of, I think maybe like three or four a year, where they go and they talk about, they present specific ideas.” The teacher explained that the mentors have to complete training in order to be mentors for the county. However, the teacher further shared, “I feel like it’s a formality on paper.”

Concerning professional development, Teacher 8 said, “Digitally, we have great resources, but they are able to be fast-forwarded through.” Regarding content-specific training, the teachers said, “The instrumental supervisor is a band person, so when I go to professional development meetings, there is no development for string education.” The teacher concluded by explaining if they are not sitting through band-centered training, it is standard test training, which the teacher does not do because they are an itinerant teacher. When asked about mentor programs, Teacher 8 explained, “We don’t have those.” The teacher clarified by saying, “We have a mentor teacher program, but I can tell you that I have, in my time, never been set up with a mentor teacher, like a music teacher, to oversee me. They told me teachers to ask for advice, but there was no attempt to make an actual mentorship program.”

The combined interviews seem to convey that professional development for music teachers occurs in West Virginia but is rarely content-specific and is perceived more often than not to be unaccommodating or helpful for music educators in the state. Likewise, it seems most teachers are aware of a mentor program but feel it is lacking in some way or not being used to its fullest potential. Most of the teachers also shared that having better professional development and mentor opportunities would be helpful for them. This is consistent with the information that was gained from the survey in which a majority of the teachers expressed that having better access to strong professional development and mentoring could encourage them to stay in their jobs. This is illustrated in the following two tables.

Table 27. Data for Question 66

Question 66: Having access to more teacher and classroom support like mentoring and support groups could encourage me to remain in my current position.		
Answer Choices	Responses	Percentages
Strongly Disagree	4	4.71%
Disagree	12	14.12%
Unsure	15	17.65%
Agree	29	34.12%
Strongly Agree	25	29.41%
Total Responses	85	

Table 28. Data for Question 67

Question 67: Having access to more meaningful professional development could encourage me to remain in my current position.		
Answer Choices	Responses	Percentages
Strongly Disagree	4	4.71%
Disagree	9	10.59%
Unsure	13	15.29%
Agree	25	29.41%
Strongly Agree	34	40.00%
Total Responses	85	

### Chapter Summary

The findings in this chapter support the study's two research questions in both the qualitative and quantitative aspects of the study. Research question one: "What effects do teacher mentoring and teacher support have on teacher retention?" is satisfied, as the majority of the teachers who were interviewed and those who took the survey shared they felt mentoring programs were lacking in their schools and that they might be more likely to stay in their work if mentoring programs were better. Likewise, question two, "What impacts do compensation and working conditions, including professional relationships and teacher autonomy, have on teacher retention?" yielded similar but more in-depth findings. Many teachers reported finding factors like compensation, working conditions, relationships, and autonomy to be important in keeping them in their jobs. Interestingly, many reported shortfalls in their current jobs in such areas. It should also be noted that many answers in the two open-ended questions of the survey

mentioned deficits in such areas. Some such comments were shared with the understanding that such deficiencies made the teachers consider leaving their work. Other comments were shared, saying that improvements in such areas might encourage the teachers to stay in their work if such inadequacies were corrected.



## CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

### Summary of the Study

This study was created to find ways to encourage West Virginia's music teachers to stay in their classrooms. The topic was chosen because West Virginia is experiencing problems with hiring and maintaining teachers. Witnessing this high turnover inspired the researcher to write about the problem. In addition, this topic was selected as there was little research on West Virginia music educator turnover. This problem is important as poor teacher retention impacts many aspects of a school's success and culture and can also negatively affect the school's students and their communities. Fortunately, schools can strengthen student involvement and achievement in their music programs by combating music teacher turnover.

The study focused on two research questions. Research question one inquired about teacher mentoring and support and their effects on teacher retention. Research question two asked about the impacts of compensation and working conditions, including professional relationships and teacher autonomy, on teacher retention. How these two research questions were addressed in the research and analysis of the study will be shared below.

As revealed in the literature review, schools can encourage superior learning within their walls by investing in their teachers. A major way of doing so is by providing new teachers with mentors. In the literature review, readers were informed that mentor teachers help novice mentees navigate the challenges they encounter early in their careers.<sup>1</sup> For mentoring to work well, the two teachers must have access to one another, which is sometimes granted via the mentor teacher having a reduced workload or access to substitute teachers when necessary. This

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<sup>1</sup> Geert Kelchtermans and Katrijn Ballet, "The Micropolitics of Teacher Induction: A Narrative-Biographical Study on Teacher Socialization," *Teaching and Teacher Education* 18, no. 1 (2002): 105.

allows the mentor time to observe their mentee, co-teach, plan, reflect, set goals, and ask questions.<sup>2</sup> Strong mentors should be empathetic, understanding, professional, reflective, experienced, and open.<sup>3</sup> The strongest mentoring takes place over a few years. West Virginia requires all first-year teachers to have a mentor. However, it was revealed in the interviews that this does not always occur, and different counties in the state do a better job of implementing this requirement than others.<sup>4</sup>

Another way schools can support the growth of their teachers is through professional development, which can help teachers refresh their skills and knowledge and obtain new skills as well.<sup>5</sup> Involvement in professional organizations can be another powerful tool for both beginning and veteran teachers. Membership in such organizations can help teachers access their own professional development opportunities while also connecting them to field-specific research and networking through a variety of means.<sup>6</sup>

Two questions on the survey addressed Research Question One. The first asked teachers if having access to more teacher and classroom support, such as mentoring and support groups, could encourage them to remain in their current positions. In response, 18.83% disagreed in

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<sup>2</sup> Zewe Serpell, *Beginning Teacher Induction: A Review of the Literature* (Washington DC: American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, 2000), 7, <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED443783.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> Ruben Garza, Alfredo Ramirez Jr., and Martha Ovando, *Experienced Teachers' Voices: What Motivates Them to Mentor?* (Blacksburg, VA: National Council of Professors of Educational Administration (NCPEA), 2009), 7. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1071382.pdf>.

<sup>4</sup> "Professional Learning: Educator Development & Support," West Virginia Department of Education, accessed April 10, 2024, <https://wvde.us/educator-development-and-support/professional-learning/>.

<sup>5</sup> Linda Darling-Hammond, Ruth Chung Wei, Alethea Andree, Nikole Richardson, and Stelios Orphanos, *Professional Learning in the Learning Profession: A Status Report on Teacher Development in the United States and Abroad* (Stanford, CA: The School Redesign Network at Standord University, National Staff Development Council, 2009): 5. [https://edpolicy.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/publications/professional-learning-learning-profession-status-report-teacher-development-us-and-abroad\\_0.pdf](https://edpolicy.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/publications/professional-learning-learning-profession-status-report-teacher-development-us-and-abroad_0.pdf).

<sup>6</sup> AI and the LinkedIn Community, "What Professional Organizations Do You Recommend for Teachers?," LinkedIn, last modified October 22, 2023, <https://www.linkedin.com/advice/1/what-professional-organizations-do-you-recommend-teachers#:~:text=These%20organizations%20offer%20a%20range,levels%20of%20the%20education%20system.>

some way, 17.65% were unsure, and 63.53 agreed in some way. This tells us that most of the surveyed teachers agreed that mentoring and other such supports could encourage them to stay in their jobs. Similarly, the second question to address research question one asked teachers if having access to more meaningful professional development could help inspire them to remain in their teaching positions. Responses to this question showed that 15.30% of teachers disagreed in some way, 15.29% were unsure, and 69.41% agreed in some way. These statistics again showed that most of the surveyed teachers agreed that having access to more meaningful professional development was important. The quantitative results reinforced these findings, demonstrating that higher levels of mentoring/support were associated with higher levels of satisfaction.

Research Question One was also addressed in the interviews. Responses that aligned with Research Question One were identified and coded in the thematic analysis as Theme Nine: Mentoring and Professional Development. Theme nine analysis encompassed all interview responses dealing with mentoring and professional development. Most of the comments shared about mentoring conveyed that the teachers knew it happened in their districts, but they did not know much about it, felt it could be better, saw it as a formality, or thought it should happen more often and be longer than just one year. Regarding professional development, all but one of the interviewees shared mostly negative comments. The majority shared that their professional development opportunities have primarily not been content-specific to music and are typically unhelpful.

The literature review highlighted studies that claimed high teacher pay improved and reduced teacher turnover. Teachers have better access to professional development and

membership in professional organizations when paid well.<sup>7</sup> Two questions on the survey addressed pay directly. The first asked if the teachers' jobs paid well, and the second asked if competitive compensation was important to the teachers. The survey found that the majority of the teachers did not feel they were paid well, and a large majority shared that competitive compensation was important to them.

Financial incentives incorporate not only compensation but benefits like life and health insurance and retirement as well. Survey questions dealing with such factors yielded similar data to those dealing with pay, meaning most of the surveyed teachers expressed that benefits and retirement were very important to them despite not feeling they had acceptable benefits and retirement plans. When asked directly on the survey if higher pay and better benefits could encourage teachers to stay in their jobs, the majority of respondents said yes, such incentives would help. Not all of the interviewed teachers spoke to this question as they were not directly asked about it. However, those who did offer comments that aligned with pay and compensation shared that teacher pay is important in keeping them in their jobs.

In considering Research Question Two and its hypothesis, this study taught us that professional relationships between teachers and those they work with and for are significant when considering teacher turnover. Such relationships include those with coworkers, administrators, and students. Depending on whether they are positive or not, these relationships can decrease or increase teacher turnover.<sup>8</sup> This study supported such claims. Research Question Two was addressed several times in the survey, specifically in questions about individual

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<sup>7</sup> Deborah A. Confredo, Carlos R. Abril, and Cecil L. Adderley, *A Blueprint for Strengthening the Music Teacher Profession* (Reston, VA: NAFME, 2023), 22, <https://nafme.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/NAF072-MusicInitiative-8.pdf>.

<sup>8</sup> Matthew Kraft and John Papay, "Can Professional Environments in Schools Promote Teacher Development? Explaining Heterogeneity in Returns to Teaching Experience," *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis* 36, no. 4 (2014): 478.

relationships with students, peers, and administrators. However, one question that incorporated all such relations explicitly asked if positive ties with the above-mentioned parties could influence the teachers' decision to remain in their work or not. In response to the question, 9.41% disagreed, 7.06% were unsure, and 83.53% agreed that positive relationships with those they work for and with could influence their choice to stay in their classrooms or not. This shows that most of the interviewed teachers equated strong and positive relationships in their workplaces as reasons to continue in their employment.

The teacher interviews revealed the following concerning professional relationships: First, many of the interviewed teachers mentioned how important positive relationships with their students were to them. In addition, many also commented on how important making music with their students was to them. The interviews garnered some mentions of the importance of peer relationships but not enough to create a theme in the interview analysis. However, many teachers spoke about their relationships with their administrators and shared that such relationships had a significant bearing on whether or not they were happy in their work. Such responses not only constituted the creation of a theme in the analysis but also that of three sub-themes as well. The sub-themes were: 1. Administrative Support and Recognition of Teachers, Programs, and Students, 2. Administrative Cultivation of School Environment, and 3. Administrative Nourishment of Teacher Autonomy. The last of these dealt with autonomy, which is the last aspect of Research Question Two to be considered in this summary.

The literature review found that autonomy was positively associated with teacher retention, and the survey data supported this claim. Two of the survey questions dealt with autonomy. Auspiciously, most of the surveyed teachers shared that they felt they had autonomy in their work, with only 4.60% disagreeing, 12.64% being unsure, and 82.76% agreeing. When

asked if classroom autonomy was important to them, none disagreed, 6.90% were uncertain, and all others agreed. The interviews found similar reporting, with most saying they felt they had autonomy and all saying it was an important aspect of contentment in their work.

Just as they did for Research Question One, the quantitative results for Research Question Two once again reinforced what was uncovered in teacher interviews. In the quantitative survey, working conditions reflected the quality of professional relationships and teacher autonomy. The results indicated that better working conditions were associated with higher levels of satisfaction.

### **Significance**

The material provided in this study can offer music teachers, those who train music teachers, administrators, and all other stakeholders valuable information about the factors that could help to keep teachers in their classrooms. This research is substantial as it can aid administrators and others to better understand West Virginia's music teacher needs and desires, which can help to create changes that could increase the likelihood of maintaining music teachers. The following positive and negative themes were identified in the study, and all could benefit future researchers as areas to consider when studying teacher retention.

1. Positive Relationships with Students
  - a. Sub-Theme: Making Music with Students
2. Interruptions
3. Increased Workloads
4. Apathy
5. Space, Materials, and Time
6. Administration Style, Effectiveness, and Relationships
  - a. Sub-Theme: Administrative Support and Recognition of Teachers, Programs, and Students.
  - b. Sub-Theme: Administrative Cultivation of School Environment
  - c. Sub-Theme: Administrative Nourishment of Teacher Autonomy
7. Family Obligations
8. Financial Need and Opportunity
9. Mentoring and Professional Development

### **Limitations**

The study had several limitations. First, it lacked an adequate number of survey participants to ensure statistical robustness and true general reliability of the findings. Expanding the pool of participants could have possibly resulted in a more statistically sound, well-rounded, and in-depth understanding of the research questions. This study took place after the COVID-19 pandemic, which greatly changed the landscape of education. Although the pandemic was mentioned in the study's literature review, it was not directly addressed with the study's participants. Also, the study took longer than expected, so some newer statistics could exist when this study is published.

Another shortcoming of the study was there were several areas that were not addressed in the survey or interviews that would have been helpful to include. To begin, the participants were asked to share their age, but instead of asking for an exact number, the survey only asked participants to identify their age within five-year intervals. Not having exact age numbers limited the study by constraining the kinds of statistical analysis that could have been conducted with such data.

Other areas that could have been addressed in the study, which would have made the study stronger, would have been questions about the participants' teaching certifications and the participants' membership in professional organizations. For example, it would have been helpful to ask on the survey if participants were fully certified or not, and if they did hold certification, whether they were "organically" certified through the traditional means of a four-year teacher education program. This could have been helpful to ask as there are many noncertified and nonorganically certified teachers in classrooms across West Virginia. Identifying if this is true regarding West Virginia music classrooms would have been beneficial. It could have also been

valuable to see how such teachers responded to the survey and how their answers related to those of fully and organically certified music educators. Likewise, only working music teachers were surveyed and interviewed. Asking retired teachers and those who left prematurely could have manifested a fuller understanding of why teachers both stay and leave their teaching positions. Also missing from the study were any questions about pre-service training and questions about membership in professional organizations and what those organizations might be.

Lastly, the literature review highlighted the important relationship between membership in professional organizations and teacher retention. However, this factor was accidentally left off the survey and was also not addressed in the interviews. It is known that the teachers interviewed in the study and those who were county contacts were all members of WVMEA as the researcher knew them from his work in that organization. However, it is impossible to know how many of those who took the survey are members. Thus, data related to professional organizations could not be included in the study's findings.

### **Recommendations for Future Study**

If future research is to be conducted on this topic, the items outlined in the above limitations section should be considered initially. First, several measures could have been taken to help yield a better survey response. For example, more counties could have been added to the survey, which would have increased the number of teachers who were asked to complete it. Also, some incentives could have been offered to county contacts or survey participants to help motivate them to participate. Next, questions about COVID-19 could have been added to the survey, which would have helped the researcher better understand the pandemic's correlation with teacher turnover.



Next, retired teachers, those who left their jobs, and non-certified teachers should be included in future studies. If they were to be added, such teachers could take the same survey as their working colleagues; however, their responses and data analysis could be kept separate and then compared to those of their working peers. Interviewing such teachers could also prove to be powerful. However, the questions would need to be modified to fit the differing pool demographics. Future researchers could also consider surveying and interviewing administrators as it could provide a more holistic understanding of the topic. Potential researchers could also designate where their data is coming from. This means they could distinguish between densely and sporadically populated areas and the wealth of the various areas. Likewise, identifying and discriminating between higher and lower-paying districts could also be helpful.

As previously mentioned in Chapter 4, an unexpected result from the survey data analysis showed that those who took the survey who were in the 51-plus category reported lower levels of dissatisfaction in their work. Future studies could explore why this is and whether it is typical or not. Also, as stated above in the significance portion of this chapter, the themes identified in the thematic analysis should be considered if further research on this study's topic is conducted, as the themes proved to be important topics of consideration for the teachers who were interviewed. Likewise, the information gathered from the open-ended questions on the survey helped to shed light on factors affecting music teacher retention in West Virginia that were not considered when researching, designing, administering, and analyzing this study. Although some of these items were addressed by teachers in their interviews, questions specifically pertaining to these topics were not included in the survey or interview questions. These items can be found in the appendices on pages 227 to 234.

### **Summary**

This mixed-methods study explored the factors that help keep West Virginia music educators in their jobs and, in doing so, also identified factors that hurt teacher retention. The findings of this study support that mentoring, professional development, membership in professional organizations, compensation, professional relationships, and autonomy all affect teacher retention and should be considered when trying to retain teachers and when studying teacher retention. A better understanding of these topics, the way teachers feel about them, and the suggestions to combat them offered in this study can help lawmakers, administrators, and all other interested parties be better equipped to mitigate music teacher attrition both abroad and in West Virginia.

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## APPENDIX A: Liberty University IRB Exemption Email

**LIBERTY UNIVERSITY.**  
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

January 25, 2023

Jeremiah Smallridge  
Samantha Miller

Re: IRB Exemption - IRB-FY22-23-609 MUSIC EDUCATOR TURNOVER IN WEST VIRGINIA: WHAT IS KEEPING MUSIC TEACHERS IN THEIR CLASSROOMS AND WHY ARE OTHERS LEAVING?

Dear Jeremiah Smallridge, Samantha Miller,

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](mailto:irb@liberty.edu).

Sincerely,  
**G. Michele Baker, MA, CIP**  
*Administrative Chair of Institutional Research*  
**Research Ethics Office**

## APPENDIX B: Research Participant Survey Consent Form

### Consent

**Title of the Project:** Music Educator Turnover in West Virginia: What is Keeping Music Teachers in Their Classrooms and Why are Others Leaving?

**Principal Investigator:** Jeremiah Smallridge, Doctoral Candidate, Liberty University

#### Invitation to be Part of a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study. To participate, you must be a working K-12 music educator in West Virginia. Taking part in this research project is voluntary.

Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to take part in this research.

#### What is the study about and why is it being done?

The purpose of this study is to examine music teacher perceptions of factors that influence teacher retention in West Virginia schools. This study is being built on West Virginia music educators' impressions of their work environments and what motivates them to continue working. The study will also examine the factors that have caused West Virginia music teachers to think of quitting their jobs. This research is being conducted in hopes of better understanding how to keep music teachers happy and employed in West Virginia schools. The goal of this study is to improve music teacher retention in the state.

#### What will happen if you take part in this study?

If you agree to be in this study, I will ask you to do the following things:

1. You will complete a 15-to-30-minute online survey that has 7 demographic questions, 60 multiple choice questions, and two short answer questions.

#### How could you or others benefit from this study?

Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from taking part in this study.

Benefits to society include identifying what factors make music educators wish to continue in their work and which factors do not. This is beneficial as it can aid school districts in making changes that could help them retain their music educators.

#### What risks might you experience from being in this study?

The risks involved in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.

#### How will personal information be protected?

The records of this study will be kept private. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records.

- Participant responses will be anonymous.

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- Data will be stored on a password-locked computer and may be used in future presentations. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted.

#### Is study participation voluntary?

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision on whether to participate or not will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University or the researcher. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time prior to submitting the survey without affecting those relationships.

#### What should you do if you decide to withdraw from the study?

If you choose to withdraw from the study, please exit the survey and close your internet browser. Your responses will not be recorded or included in this study.

#### Whom do you contact if you have questions or concerns about the study?

The researcher conducting this study is Jeremiah Smallridge. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact him at [REDACTED]. Jeremiah's phone number is [REDACTED]. You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor, Dr. Samantha Miller, at [REDACTED].

#### Whom do you contact if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at [irb@liberty.edu](mailto:irb@liberty.edu).

*Disclaimer: The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is tasked with ensuring that human subjects research will be conducted in an ethical manner as defined and required by federal regulations. The topics covered and viewpoints expressed or alluded to by student and faculty researchers are those of the researchers and do not necessarily reflect the official policies or positions of Liberty University.*

#### Your Consent

Before agreeing to be part of the research, please be sure that you understand what the study is about. You can print a copy of the document for your records. If you have any questions about the study later, you can contact the researcher using the information provided above.

## APPENDIX C: Research Participant Interview Consent Form

### Consent

**Title of the Project:** Music Educator Turnover in West Virginia: What is Keeping Music Teachers in Their Classrooms and Why are Others Leaving?

**Principal Investigator:** Jeremiah Smallridge, Doctoral Candidate, Liberty University

#### Invitation to be Part of a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study. To participate, you must be a working K-12 music educator in West Virginia. Taking part in this research project is voluntary.

Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to take part in this research.

#### What is the study about and why is it being done?

The purpose of this study is to examine music teacher perceptions of factors that influence teacher retention in West Virginia schools. This study is being built on West Virginia music educators' impressions of their work environments and what motivates them to continue working. The study will also examine the factors that have caused West Virginia music teachers to think of quitting their jobs. This research is being conducted in hopes of better understanding how to keep music teachers happy and employed in West Virginia schools. The goal of this study is to improve music teacher retention in the state.

#### What will happen if you take part in this study?

If you agree to be in this study, I will ask you to do the following things:

1. Participate in an audio-recorded A 30–40-minute phone interview focused on what makes you wish to stay in your current music teaching position and what factors makes you want to leave. The interview questions will be sent to you one week in advance, so you have time to fully consider your answers before the interview.

#### How could you or others benefit from this study?

Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from taking part in this study.

Benefits to society include identifying what factors make music educators wish to continue in their work and which factors do not. This is beneficial as it can aid school districts in making changes that could help them retain their music educators.

#### What risks might you experience from being in this study?

The risks involved in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.

#### How will personal information be protected?

The records of this study will be kept private. Published reports will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records.

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- Participant identities will be kept confidential by using the following codes: Teacher 1, Teacher 2, etc. Work locations will not be shared.
- Data will be stored on a password-locked computer and may be used in future presentations. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted.
- Interviews will be recorded and transcribed. Recordings will be stored on a password-locked computer for up to three years and then erased. Only the researcher will have access to these recordings.

#### Is study participation voluntary?

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision on whether to participate or not will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University or the researcher. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

#### What should you do if you decide to withdraw from the study?

If you choose to withdraw from the study, please contact the researcher at the email address/phone number included in the next paragraph. Should you choose to withdraw, data collected from you will be destroyed immediately and will not be included in this study.

#### Whom do you contact if you have questions or concerns about the study?

The researcher conducting this study is Jeremiah Smallridge. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you are encouraged to contact him at [REDACTED]. Jeremiah's phone number is [REDACTED]. You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor, Dr. Samantha Miller, at [REDACTED].

#### Whom do you contact if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at [irb@liberty.edu](mailto:irb@liberty.edu).

*Disclaimer: The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is tasked with ensuring that human subjects research will be conducted in an ethical manner as defined and required by federal regulations. The topics covered and viewpoints expressed or alluded to by student and faculty researchers are those of the researchers and do not necessarily reflect the official policies or positions of Liberty University.*

#### Your Consent

By signing this document, you are agreeing to be in this study. Make sure you understand what the study is about before you sign. You will be given a copy of this document for your records. The researcher will keep a copy of the study records. If you have any questions about the study after you sign this document, you can contact the study team using the information provided above.

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*I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.*

The researcher has my permission to audio-record me as part of my participation in this study.

---

Printed Subject Name

---

Signature and Date

Liberty University  
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## APPENDIX D: County Contact Email

Dear West Virginia Music Educator Colleague:

I am currently a Doctor of Music Education Candidate at Liberty University. I am conducting research for my thesis titled “Music Educator Turnover in West Virginia: What is Keeping Music Teachers in Their Classrooms and Why are Others Leaving?”. The thesis examines music teacher turnover, attrition, and retention in West Virginia. The West Virginia Department of Education does not have any music teacher-specific data. Thus, I plan to work with music teachers from across the state to collect their counties’ data to generate some predictions and statistics. This is where you come in. As a respected music education leader in your county, I am asking for your help. If you are willing to do so, please respond and tell me so. If you do agree, your identity will be kept confidential, and I will need you to answer the following questions:

- How many music faculty members have retired in your county in the last academic year?
- How many music teachers in your county have transferred to new music positions within your county during the last academic year?
- How many music teachers in your county have transferred out of music to other teaching jobs within your county in the last academic year?
- How many music teachers in your county have left the county to teach elsewhere in the last academic year?
- How many music teachers in your county have left teaching altogether in the last academic year?
- Has your county added in new music education positions in the last academic year?
- Has your county removed any music education positions in the last academic year?

Thank you for considering helping with this data collection. I look forward to your reply.

Musically yours,  
Jeremiah Smallridge, NBCT

## APPENDIX E: Survey Recruitment Email

Dear West Virginia Music Educator Colleague:

I, like you, am a music educator in West Virginia. I am currently a Doctor of Music Education Candidate at Liberty University. I am conducting thesis research to examine music teacher perceptions of factors that influence teacher retention in West Virginia schools. This study is being built on West Virginia music educators' impressions of their work environments and what motivates them to continue working. The study also examines the factors that have caused them to think of quitting their jobs. It is my hope that this investigation will lead to a better understanding of how to keep music teachers happy and employed in West Virginia. The results of the study will be used to inform teacher retention strategies.

To participate, you must be a working K-12 music educator in West Virginia. Participants, if willing will be asked to complete an online survey via Survey Monkey (15-30 minutes). In addition, some individuals may be invited to participate in an audio-recorded phone interview (30 minutes). The survey will be completely anonymous; however, names and other identifying information will be requested for the interview, but the information will remain confidential.

To participate in the survey please click here <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/736LVKH>. I will contact you again if you are selected to participate in the interview.

The survey consent document will be the first page you see after clicking on the link. The consent document contains additional information about my research. 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. If you choose to participate in the interview, an additional consent document will be emailed to you that you will need to sign and return to me before the start of the interview.

Thank you in advance for your support in this important research. I look forward to receiving your survey response.

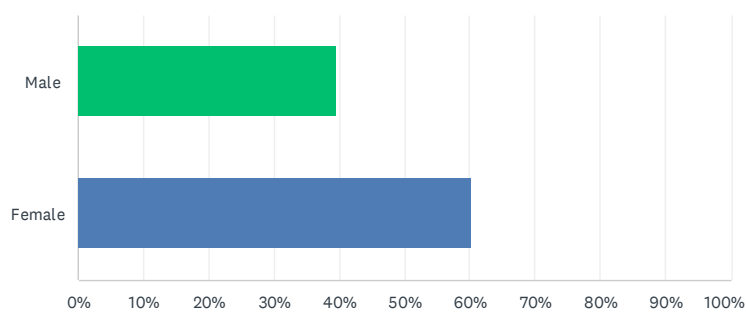
Musically yours,  
Jeremiah Smallridge, NBCT

## APPENDIX F: SurveyMonkey® Data Sheets

Music Educator Turnover in West Virginia

## Q1 What is your gender?

Answered: 91 Skipped: 0

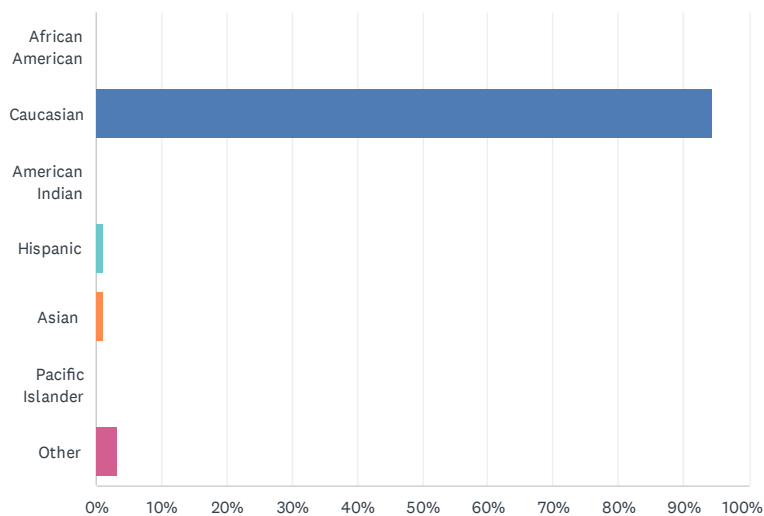


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Male	39.56%	36
Female	60.44%	55
TOTAL		91

## Music Educator Turnover in West Virginia

## Q2 What is your race/ethnicity?

Answered: 91 Skipped: 0



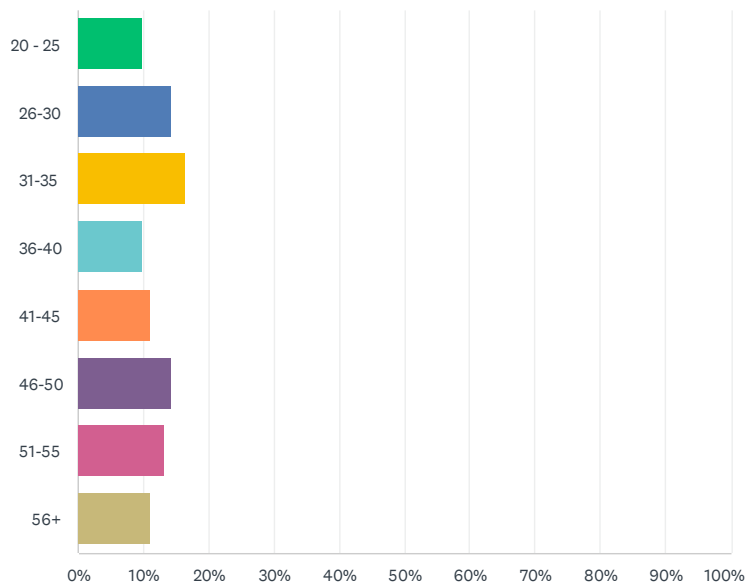
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
African American	0.00% 0
Caucasian	94.51% 86
American Indian	0.00% 0
Hispanic	1.10% 1
Asian	1.10% 1
Pacific Islander	0.00% 0
Other	3.30% 3
TOTAL	91



Music Educator Turnover in West Virginia

Q3 What is your age?

Answered: 91 Skipped: 0

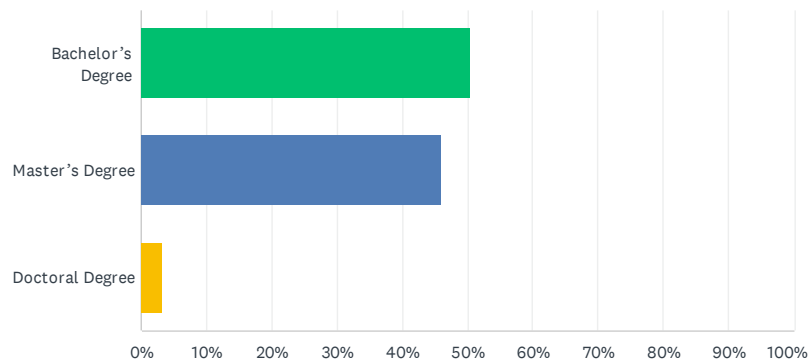


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
20 - 25	9.89%	9
26-30	14.29%	13
31-35	16.48%	15
36-40	9.89%	9
41-45	10.99%	10
46-50	14.29%	13
51-55	13.19%	12
56+	10.99%	10
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>91</b>

Music Educator Turnover in West Virginia

Q4 What is your level of education?

Answered: 91 Skipped: 0

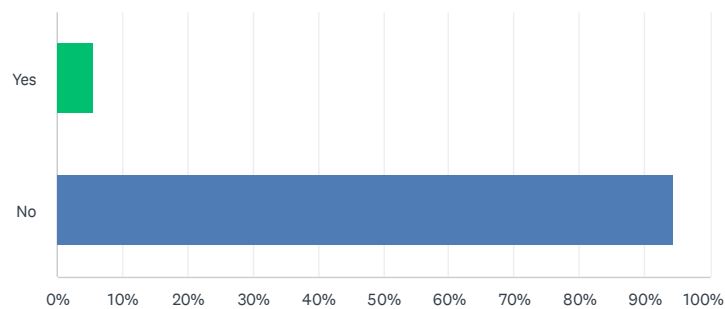


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Bachelor's Degree	50.55%	46
Master's Degree	46.15%	42
Doctoral Degree	3.30%	3
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>91</b>

## Music Educator Turnover in West Virginia

## Q5 Are you a National Board Certified Teacher?

Answered: 91 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	5.49%	5
No	94.51%	86
TOTAL		91

## Music Educator Turnover in West Virginia

## Q6 How many years have you been teaching?

Answered: 91 Skipped: 0

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	19	6/28/2023 12:30 PM
2	6	6/22/2023 3:13 PM
3	3	5/31/2023 2:26 PM
4	5	4/17/2023 8:43 AM
5	This is year 10	4/16/2023 11:09 AM
6	2 years	4/9/2023 7:20 PM
7	8 years	4/7/2023 1:27 PM
8	8 years	4/6/2023 2:24 PM
9	16	4/6/2023 2:00 PM
10	15	4/6/2023 1:58 PM
11	21	4/6/2023 11:37 AM
12	30	4/6/2023 9:22 AM
13	2.5 Years	4/6/2023 8:49 AM
14	12 years public schools. 30 years total.	4/6/2023 7:09 AM
15	23	4/6/2023 6:44 AM
16	7	4/5/2023 9:12 PM
17	10+	4/5/2023 8:27 PM
18	10	4/5/2023 8:15 PM
19	1	4/5/2023 7:43 PM
20	20	4/5/2023 7:35 PM
21	1.5	4/5/2023 7:31 PM
22	16	4/5/2023 7:19 PM
23	6	4/5/2023 3:41 PM
24	4	4/5/2023 9:58 AM
25	36	4/5/2023 8:39 AM
26	27	3/20/2023 2:07 PM
27	1	3/19/2023 7:25 AM
28	2	3/19/2023 12:50 AM
29	7	3/7/2023 8:28 AM
30	25	3/6/2023 12:23 PM
31	28.5	3/6/2023 12:08 PM
32	25	3/6/2023 11:43 AM
33	10	3/6/2023 11:24 AM

## Music Educator Turnover in West Virginia

34	25 yrs	3/6/2023 10:48 AM
35	19	3/5/2023 10:24 PM
36	16	3/3/2023 7:21 AM
37	8	3/3/2023 5:34 AM
38	5.5	3/2/2023 5:29 PM
39	10	2/23/2023 8:15 PM
40	5 years	2/23/2023 9:07 AM
41	2	2/21/2023 3:07 PM
42	9	2/19/2023 7:41 PM
43	This is year 24	2/17/2023 9:16 PM
44	25	2/17/2023 8:06 PM
45	29	2/17/2023 2:29 PM
46	32	2/17/2023 11:18 AM
47	24	2/16/2023 1:39 PM
48	10	2/16/2023 1:35 PM
49	1.5 years previously and was just hired in a different school district in November	2/16/2023 12:48 PM
50	2 as a Substitute / Extra-curricular Band Director In year 5 as a Full Time Band Director ~7	2/15/2023 11:19 AM
51	25 years	2/15/2023 10:50 AM
52	22	2/14/2023 4:17 PM
53	30+	2/14/2023 1:46 PM
54	23	2/14/2023 12:09 PM
55	I have been teaching in the field of music for 36 years including private instruction and band camps. I have been teaching in public schools for 30 years.	2/14/2023 9:14 AM
56	9	2/14/2023 7:52 AM
57	4	2/10/2023 2:28 PM
58	44	2/10/2023 10:32 AM
59	17	2/10/2023 10:06 AM
60	10	2/9/2023 8:25 PM
61	17	2/9/2023 8:14 PM
62	17	2/9/2023 7:27 AM
63	15	2/8/2023 8:24 PM
64	9	2/7/2023 10:18 PM
65	23	2/6/2023 5:09 PM
66	11 years	2/6/2023 3:57 PM
67	13	2/6/2023 1:52 PM
68	9	2/6/2023 1:13 PM
69	6	2/6/2023 11:35 AM
70	48	2/6/2023 7:33 AM

## Music Educator Turnover in West Virginia

71	31	2/5/2023 11:04 AM
72	29	2/4/2023 3:21 PM
73	16	2/4/2023 10:06 AM
74	I have 8 years completed; working on year 9.	2/3/2023 7:46 PM
75	One	2/3/2023 5:07 PM
76	6	2/3/2023 3:35 PM
77	4	2/3/2023 3:08 PM
78	This is my 34th year!!	2/3/2023 2:50 PM
79	21	2/3/2023 1:41 PM
80	25	2/3/2023 1:22 PM
81	15	2/3/2023 12:00 PM
82	19	2/3/2023 10:55 AM
83	28	2/3/2023 10:55 AM
84	8	2/3/2023 10:44 AM
85	26	2/3/2023 10:12 AM
86	17	2/3/2023 9:27 AM
87	19	2/3/2023 9:05 AM
88	25	2/3/2023 8:48 AM
89	7 years	2/3/2023 8:03 AM
90	27	2/2/2023 10:13 PM
91	1	2/2/2023 7:43 AM

## Music Educator Turnover in West Virginia

## Q7 How many years have you been teaching in your current position?

Answered: 91 Skipped: 0

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	10	6/28/2023 12:30 PM
2	4	6/22/2023 3:13 PM
3	1 but all 3 years in the same county	5/31/2023 2:26 PM
4	4	4/17/2023 8:43 AM
5	Since August 2022	4/16/2023 11:09 AM
6	2 years	4/9/2023 7:20 PM
7	7 years	4/7/2023 1:27 PM
8	6 years	4/6/2023 2:24 PM
9	3	4/6/2023 2:00 PM
10	10	4/6/2023 1:58 PM
11	7	4/6/2023 11:37 AM
12	1	4/6/2023 9:22 AM
13	2 Years	4/6/2023 8:49 AM
14	3	4/6/2023 7:09 AM
15	21	4/6/2023 6:44 AM
16	4	4/5/2023 9:12 PM
17	10	4/5/2023 8:27 PM
18	8	4/5/2023 8:15 PM
19	1	4/5/2023 7:43 PM
20	1	4/5/2023 7:35 PM
21	1.5	4/5/2023 7:31 PM
22	10	4/5/2023 7:19 PM
23	2	4/5/2023 3:41 PM
24	2	4/5/2023 9:58 AM
25	5	4/5/2023 8:39 AM
26	27	3/20/2023 2:07 PM
27	1	3/19/2023 7:25 AM
28	2	3/19/2023 12:50 AM
29	7	3/7/2023 8:28 AM
30	20	3/6/2023 12:23 PM
31	16.5	3/6/2023 12:08 PM
32	5	3/6/2023 11:43 AM
33	This is my first year	3/6/2023 11:24 AM

## Music Educator Turnover in West Virginia

34	17	3/6/2023 10:48 AM
35	8	3/5/2023 10:24 PM
36	10	3/3/2023 7:21 AM
37	7.5	3/3/2023 5:34 AM
38	4	3/2/2023 5:29 PM
39	8	2/23/2023 8:15 PM
40	5 years	2/23/2023 9:07 AM
41	1.5	2/21/2023 3:07 PM
42	9	2/19/2023 7:41 PM
43	7	2/17/2023 9:16 PM
44	3	2/17/2023 8:06 PM
45	2 ( + 3 years previously in same position)	2/17/2023 2:29 PM
46	3	2/17/2023 11:18 AM
47	1	2/16/2023 1:39 PM
48	8	2/16/2023 1:35 PM
49	less than 6 months	2/16/2023 12:48 PM
50	In year 3	2/15/2023 11:19 AM
51	16 years	2/15/2023 10:50 AM
52	16	2/14/2023 4:17 PM
53	9	2/14/2023 1:46 PM
54	3	2/14/2023 12:09 PM
55	13	2/14/2023 9:14 AM
56	9	2/14/2023 7:52 AM
57	3	2/10/2023 2:28 PM
58	29	2/10/2023 10:32 AM
59	2	2/10/2023 10:06 AM
60	6	2/9/2023 8:25 PM
61	11	2/9/2023 8:14 PM
62	8	2/9/2023 7:27 AM
63	6 months	2/8/2023 8:24 PM
64	1	2/7/2023 10:18 PM
65	5	2/6/2023 5:09 PM
66	1.5	2/6/2023 3:57 PM
67	13	2/6/2023 1:52 PM
68	2	2/6/2023 1:13 PM
69	5	2/6/2023 11:35 AM
70	16	2/6/2023 7:33 AM
71	3	2/5/2023 11:04 AM



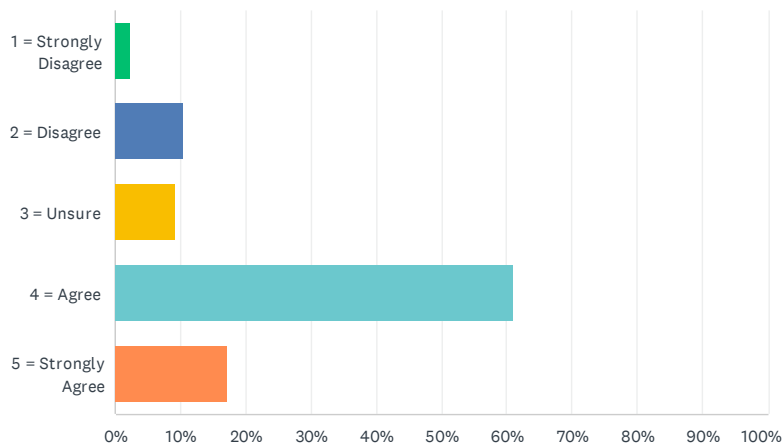
## Music Educator Turnover in West Virginia

72	15	2/4/2023 3:21 PM
73	9	2/4/2023 10:06 AM
74	This is my 2nd year in this position.	2/3/2023 7:46 PM
75	One	2/3/2023 5:07 PM
76	6	2/3/2023 3:35 PM
77	4	2/3/2023 3:08 PM
78	23	2/3/2023 2:50 PM
79	2	2/3/2023 1:41 PM
80	2 at current school	2/3/2023 1:22 PM
81	1.5. I think I have a unique perspective because I taught in Ohio for 11 years, Kentucky for 2, and now this is my second year in WV.	2/3/2023 12:00 PM
82	11	2/3/2023 10:55 AM
83	26	2/3/2023 10:55 AM
84	5	2/3/2023 10:44 AM
85	20	2/3/2023 10:12 AM
86	7	2/3/2023 9:27 AM
87	10	2/3/2023 9:05 AM
88	10	2/3/2023 8:48 AM
89	4 years	2/3/2023 8:03 AM
90	10 then switched to elem position in county for 5 years. Then back for last 4 years	2/2/2023 10:13 PM
91	6 months	2/2/2023 7:43 AM

Music Educator Turnover in West Virginia

Q8 My current teaching position provides me occupational satisfaction.

Answered: 87 Skipped: 4

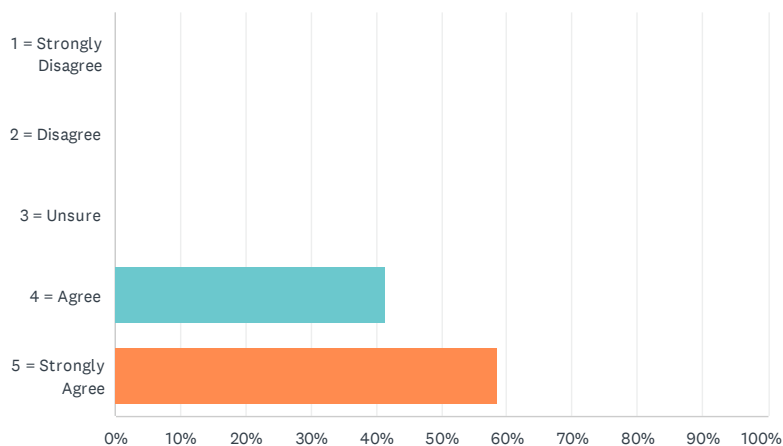


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
1 = Strongly Disagree	2.30%	2
2 = Disagree	10.34%	9
3 = Unsure	9.20%	8
4 = Agree	60.92%	53
5 = Strongly Agree	17.24%	15
TOTAL		87

Music Educator Turnover in West Virginia

Q9 Occupational satisfaction is important to me.

Answered: 87 Skipped: 4

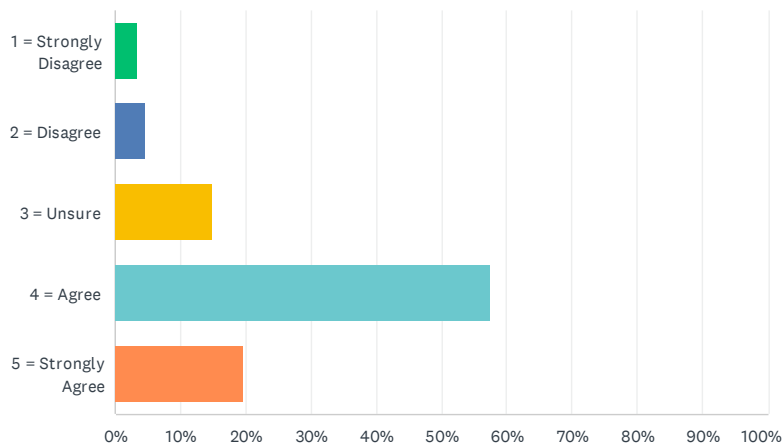


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
1 = Strongly Disagree	0.00%	0
2 = Disagree	0.00%	0
3 = Unsure	0.00%	0
4 = Agree	41.38%	36
5 = Strongly Agree	58.62%	51
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>87</b>

## Music Educator Turnover in West Virginia

## Q10 I am afforded musical gratification in my current teaching position.

Answered: 87 Skipped: 4

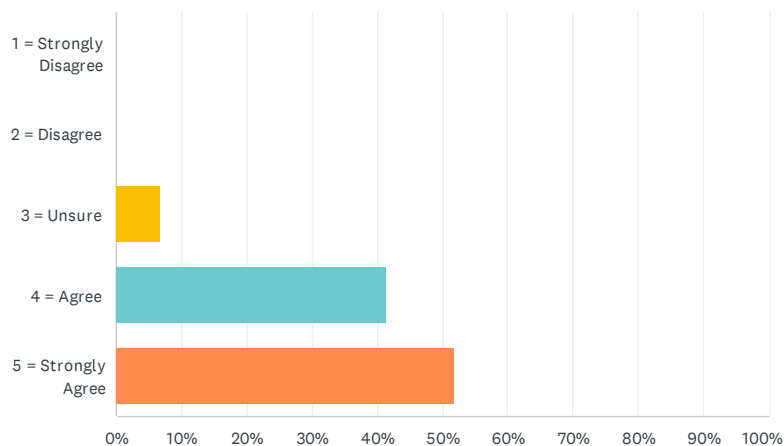


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
1 = Strongly Disagree	3.45%	3
2 = Disagree	4.60%	4
3 = Unsure	14.94%	13
4 = Agree	57.47%	50
5 = Strongly Agree	19.54%	17
TOTAL		87

## Music Educator Turnover in West Virginia

## Q11 Musical gratification at work is important to me.

Answered: 87 Skipped: 4

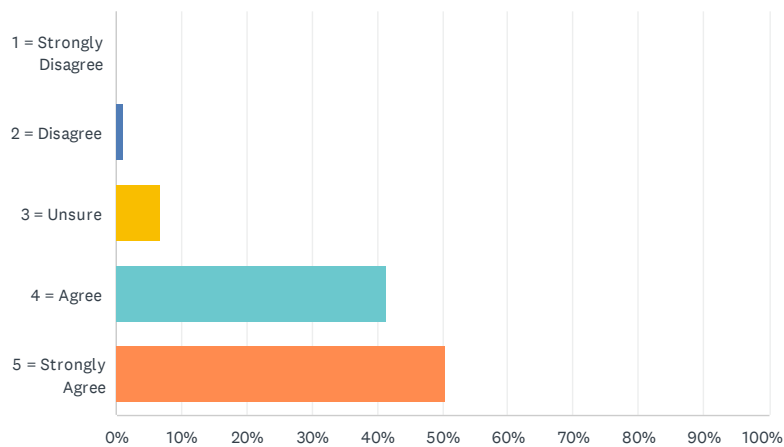


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
1 = Strongly Disagree	0.00%	0
2 = Disagree	0.00%	0
3 = Unsure	6.90%	6
4 = Agree	41.38%	36
5 = Strongly Agree	51.72%	45
TOTAL		87

## Music Educator Turnover in West Virginia

### Q12 I feel I make a positive difference in the lives of my students in my current position.

Answered: 87 Skipped: 4

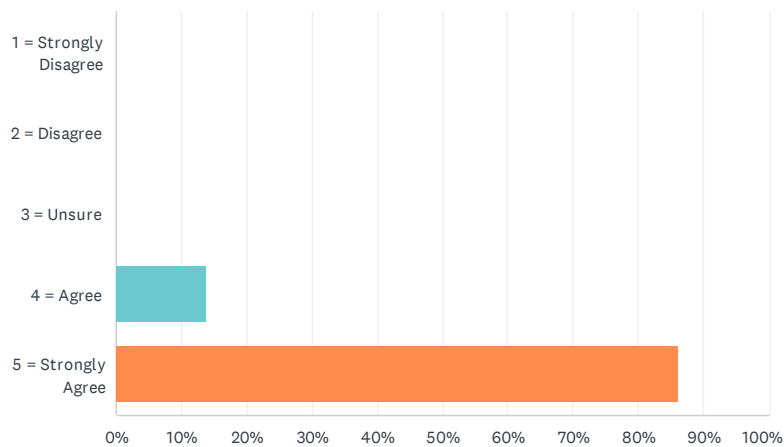


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
1 = Strongly Disagree	0.00%	0
2 = Disagree	1.15%	1
3 = Unsure	6.90%	6
4 = Agree	41.38%	36
5 = Strongly Agree	50.57%	44
TOTAL		87

## Music Educator Turnover in West Virginia

## Q13 Making a positive difference in the lives of my students is important to me.

Answered: 87 Skipped: 4

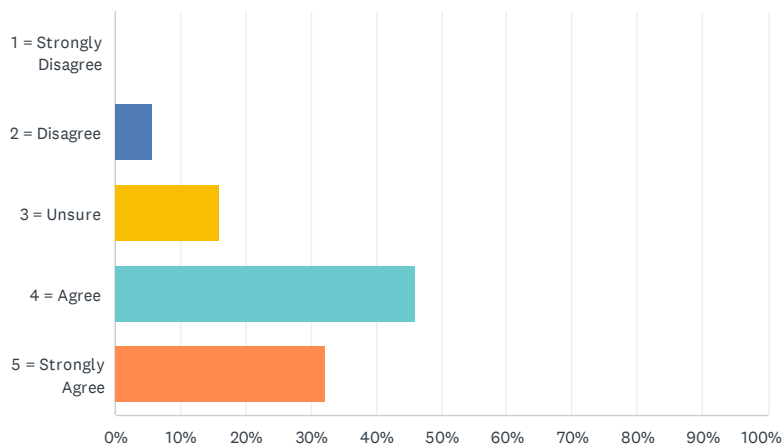


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
1 = Strongly Disagree	0.00%	0
2 = Disagree	0.00%	0
3 = Unsure	0.00%	0
4 = Agree	13.79%	12
5 = Strongly Agree	86.21%	75
TOTAL		87

Music Educator Turnover in West Virginia

Q14 I feel I can positively impact my students' community in my current position.

Answered: 87 Skipped: 4



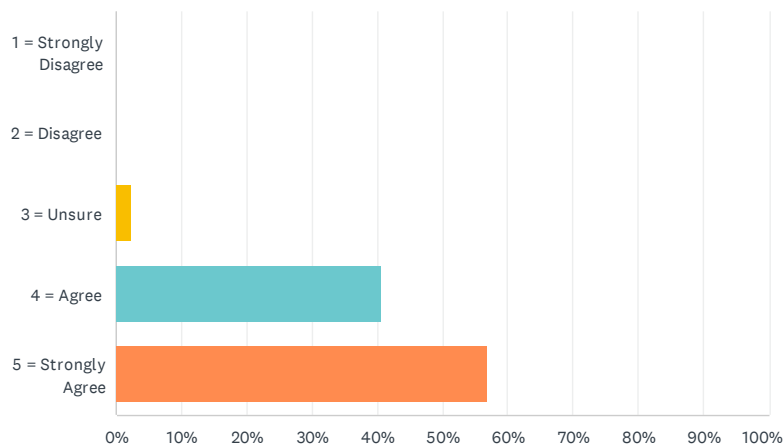
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
1 = Strongly Disagree	0.00%	0
2 = Disagree	5.75%	5
3 = Unsure	16.09%	14
4 = Agree	45.98%	40
5 = Strongly Agree	32.18%	28
TOTAL		87



Music Educator Turnover in West Virginia

Q15 Positively impacting communities through my teaching is important to me.

Answered: 86 Skipped: 5

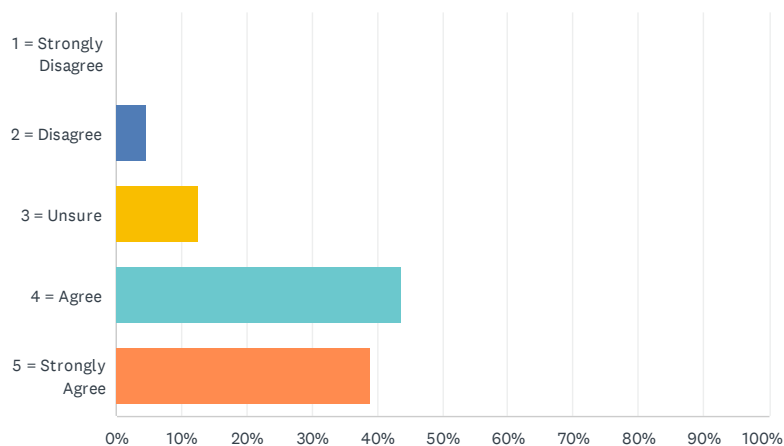


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
1 = Strongly Disagree	0.00%	0
2 = Disagree	0.00%	0
3 = Unsure	2.33%	2
4 = Agree	40.70%	35
5 = Strongly Agree	56.98%	49
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>86</b>

## Music Educator Turnover in West Virginia

## Q16 I feel I have autonomy in my classroom.

Answered: 87 Skipped: 4

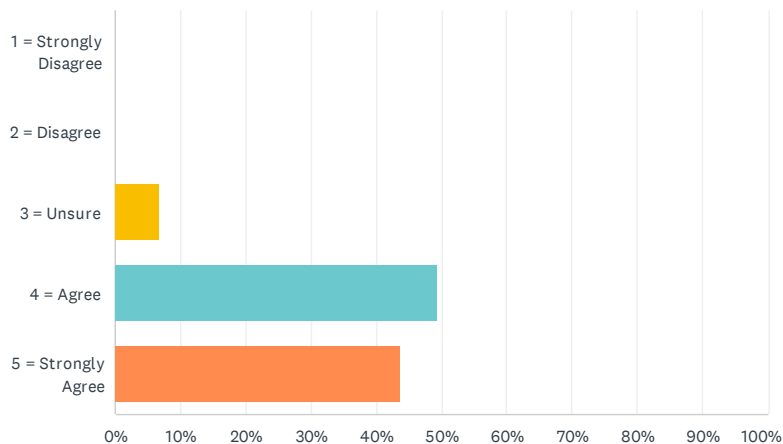


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
1 = Strongly Disagree	0.00%	0
2 = Disagree	4.60%	4
3 = Unsure	12.64%	11
4 = Agree	43.68%	38
5 = Strongly Agree	39.08%	34
TOTAL		87

Music Educator Turnover in West Virginia

Q17 Classroom autonomy is important to me.

Answered: 87 Skipped: 4

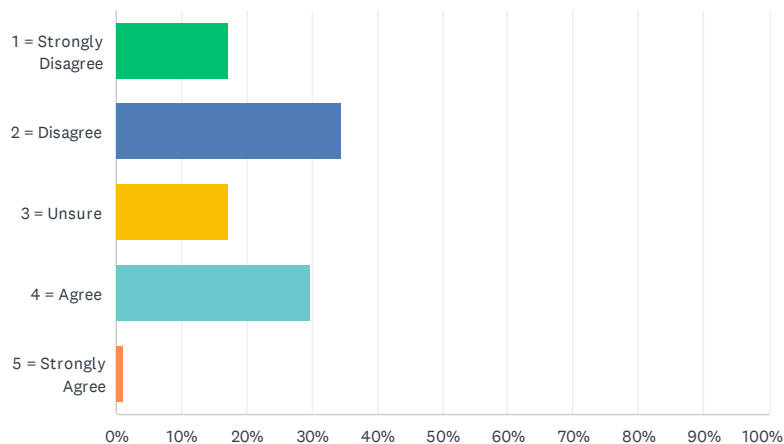


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
1 = Strongly Disagree	0.00%	0
2 = Disagree	0.00%	0
3 = Unsure	6.90%	6
4 = Agree	49.43%	43
5 = Strongly Agree	43.68%	38
TOTAL		87

## Music Educator Turnover in West Virginia

## Q18 My current teaching position pays well.

Answered: 87 Skipped: 4

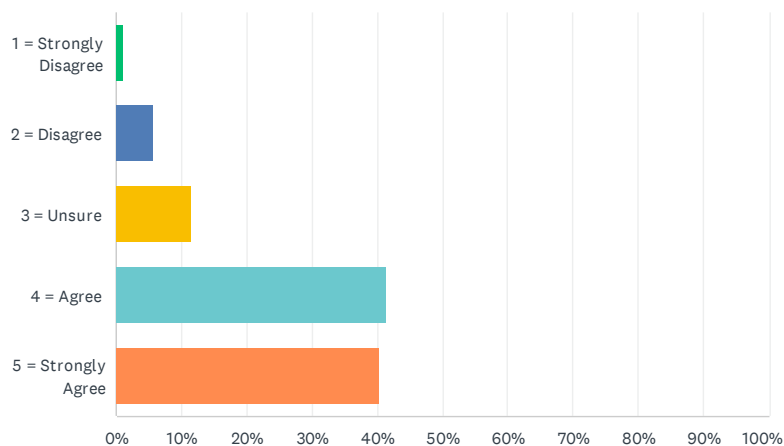


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
1 = Strongly Disagree	17.24%	15
2 = Disagree	34.48%	30
3 = Unsure	17.24%	15
4 = Agree	29.89%	26
5 = Strongly Agree	1.15%	1
TOTAL		87

## Music Educator Turnover in West Virginia

## Q19 Competitive compensation in my teaching is important to me.

Answered: 87 Skipped: 4

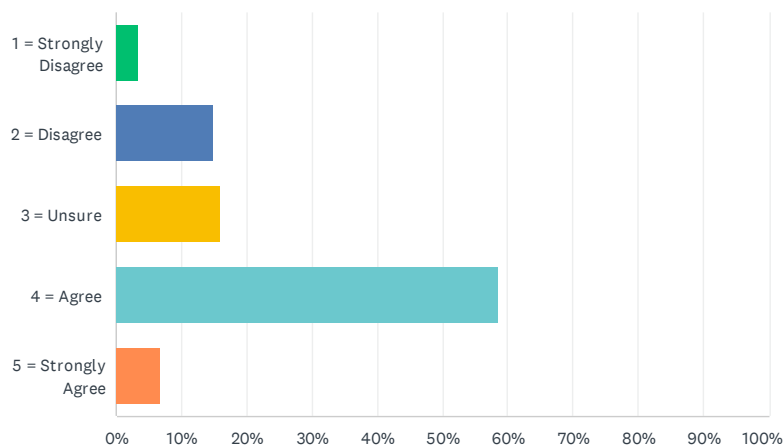


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
1 = Strongly Disagree	1.15%	1
2 = Disagree	5.75%	5
3 = Unsure	11.49%	10
4 = Agree	41.38%	36
5 = Strongly Agree	40.23%	35
TOTAL		87

## Music Educator Turnover in West Virginia

## Q20 Teaching in my current position affords me good health insurance.

Answered: 87 Skipped: 4

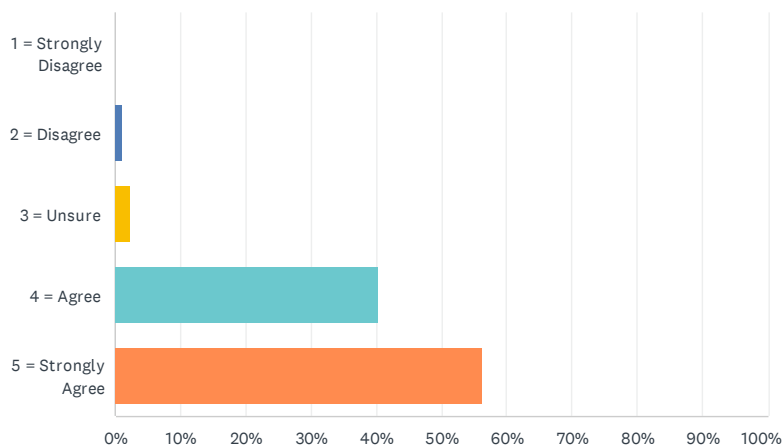


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
1 = Strongly Disagree	3.45%	3
2 = Disagree	14.94%	13
3 = Unsure	16.09%	14
4 = Agree	58.62%	51
5 = Strongly Agree	6.90%	6
TOTAL		87

Music Educator Turnover in West Virginia

Q21 Employer provided health insurance is important to me.

Answered: 87 Skipped: 4

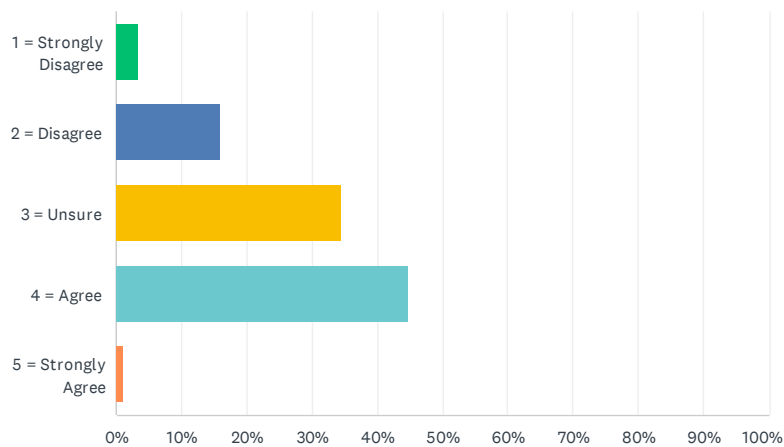


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
1 = Strongly Disagree	0.00%	0
2 = Disagree	1.15%	1
3 = Unsure	2.30%	2
4 = Agree	40.23%	35
5 = Strongly Agree	56.32%	49
TOTAL		87

## Music Educator Turnover in West Virginia

## Q22 Teaching in my current position will provide me with a satisfactory retirement plan.

Answered: 87 Skipped: 4



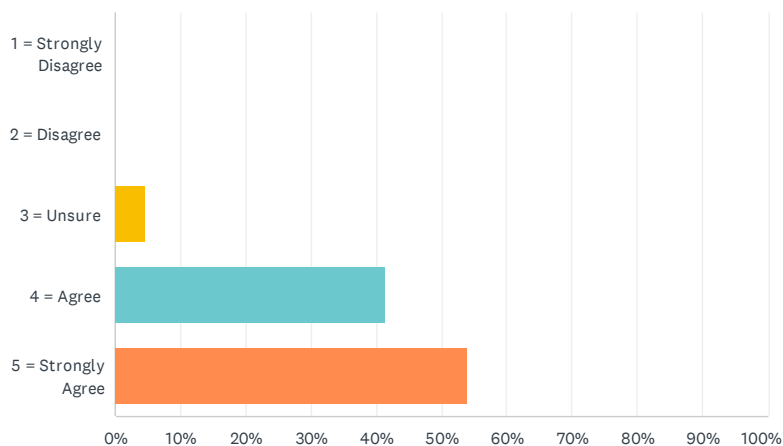
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
1 = Strongly Disagree	3.45%	3
2 = Disagree	16.09%	14
3 = Unsure	34.48%	30
4 = Agree	44.83%	39
5 = Strongly Agree	1.15%	1
TOTAL		87



Music Educator Turnover in West Virginia

Q23 A satisfactory retirement plan is important to me.

Answered: 87 Skipped: 4

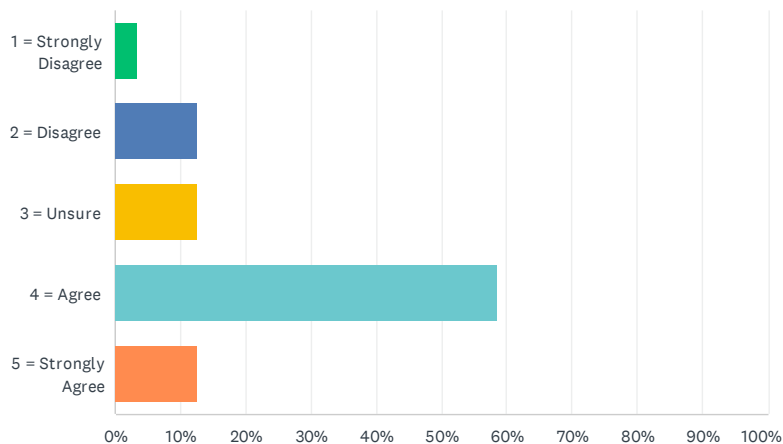


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
1 = Strongly Disagree	0.00%	0
2 = Disagree	0.00%	0
3 = Unsure	4.60%	4
4 = Agree	41.38%	36
5 = Strongly Agree	54.02%	47
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>87</b>

Music Educator Turnover in West Virginia

Q24 I feel connected to and supported by my colleagues.

Answered: 87 Skipped: 4

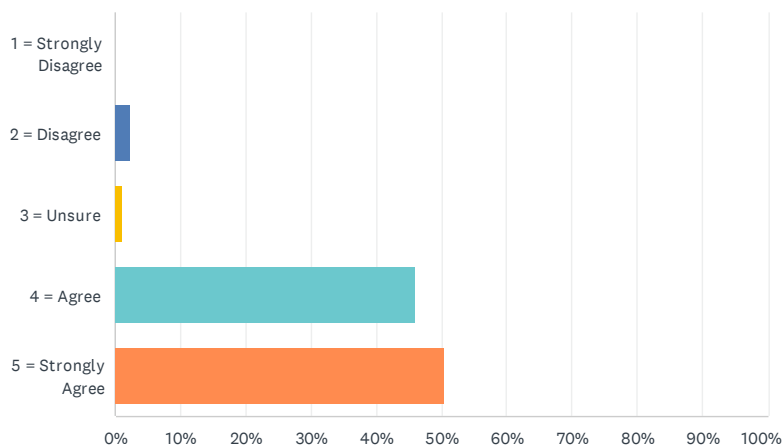


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
1 = Strongly Disagree	3.45%	3
2 = Disagree	12.64%	11
3 = Unsure	12.64%	11
4 = Agree	58.62%	51
5 = Strongly Agree	12.64%	11
TOTAL		87

Music Educator Turnover in West Virginia

Q25 Positive relationships with colleagues is important to me.

Answered: 87 Skipped: 4

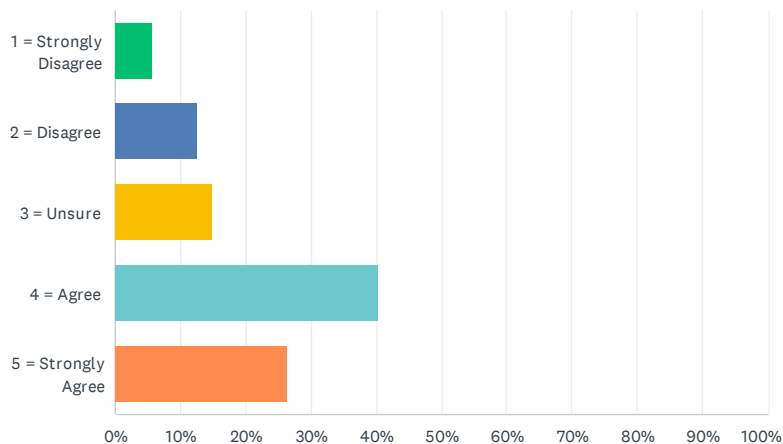


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
1 = Strongly Disagree	0.00%	0
2 = Disagree	2.30%	2
3 = Unsure	1.15%	1
4 = Agree	45.98%	40
5 = Strongly Agree	50.57%	44
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>87</b>

Music Educator Turnover in West Virginia

Q26 I feel appreciated by and supported by my administration.

Answered: 87 Skipped: 4

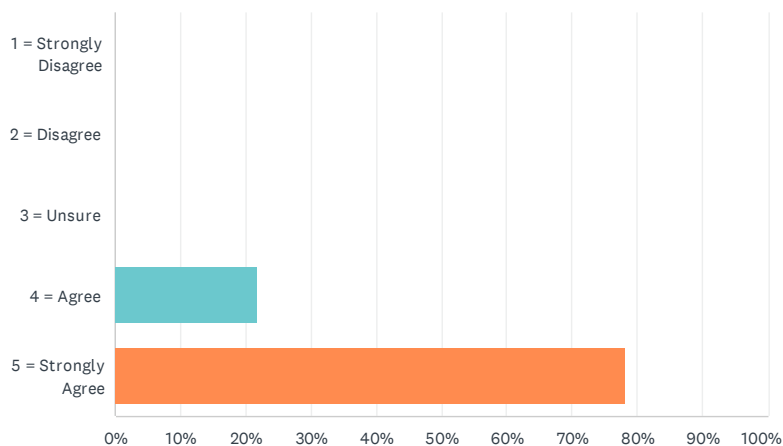


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
1 = Strongly Disagree	5.75%	5
2 = Disagree	12.64%	11
3 = Unsure	14.94%	13
4 = Agree	40.23%	35
5 = Strongly Agree	26.44%	23
TOTAL		87

Music Educator Turnover in West Virginia

Q27 Working for a supportive administration is important to me.

Answered: 87 Skipped: 4

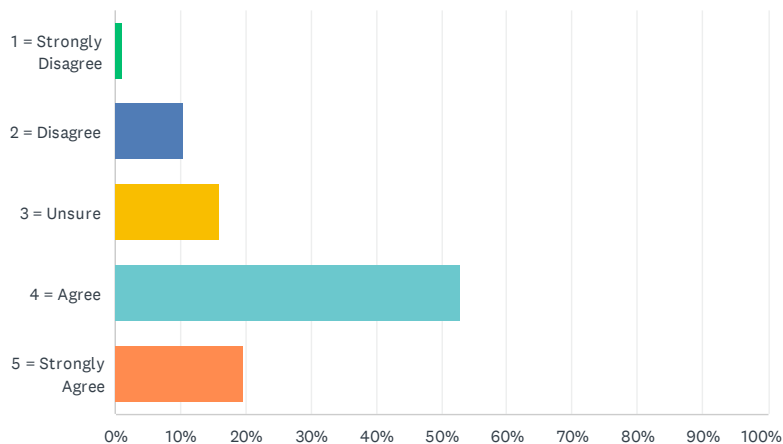


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
1 = Strongly Disagree	0.00%	0
2 = Disagree	0.00%	0
3 = Unsure	0.00%	0
4 = Agree	21.84%	19
5 = Strongly Agree	78.16%	68
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>87</b>

Music Educator Turnover in West Virginia

Q28 I feel appreciated by students and their families.

Answered: 87 Skipped: 4

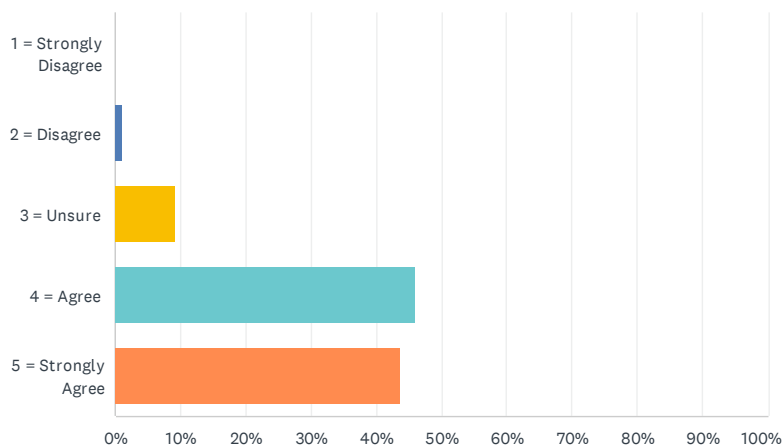


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
1 = Strongly Disagree	1.15%	1
2 = Disagree	10.34%	9
3 = Unsure	16.09%	14
4 = Agree	52.87%	46
5 = Strongly Agree	19.54%	17
TOTAL		87

Music Educator Turnover in West Virginia

Q29 Student and student family appreciation is important to me.

Answered: 87 Skipped: 4

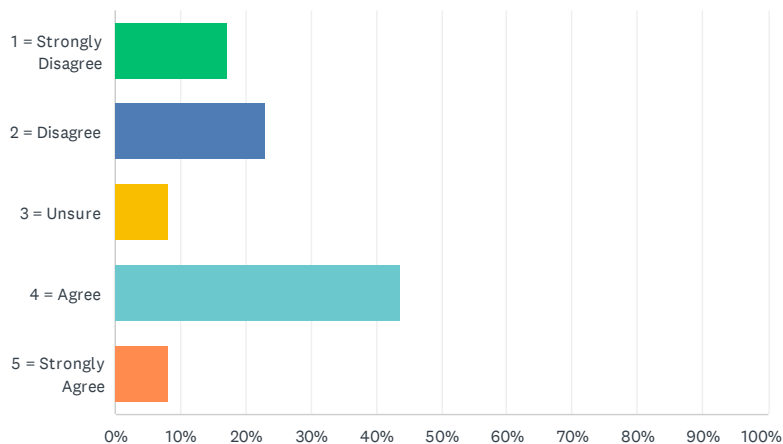


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
1 = Strongly Disagree	0.00%	0
2 = Disagree	1.15%	1
3 = Unsure	9.20%	8
4 = Agree	45.98%	40
5 = Strongly Agree	43.68%	38
TOTAL		87

Music Educator Turnover in West Virginia

Q30 My current teaching position offers me a suitable work to life ratio.

Answered: 87 Skipped: 4



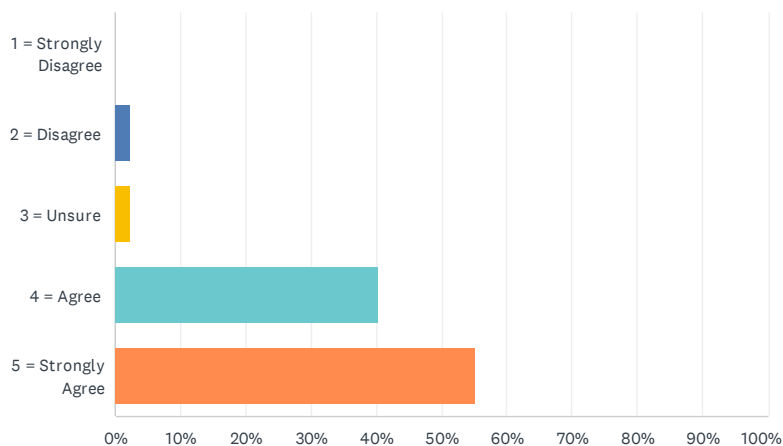
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
1 = Strongly Disagree	17.24%	15
2 = Disagree	22.99%	20
3 = Unsure	8.05%	7
4 = Agree	43.68%	38
5 = Strongly Agree	8.05%	7
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>87</b>



Music Educator Turnover in West Virginia

Q31 A healthy work to life balance is important to me.

Answered: 87 Skipped: 4

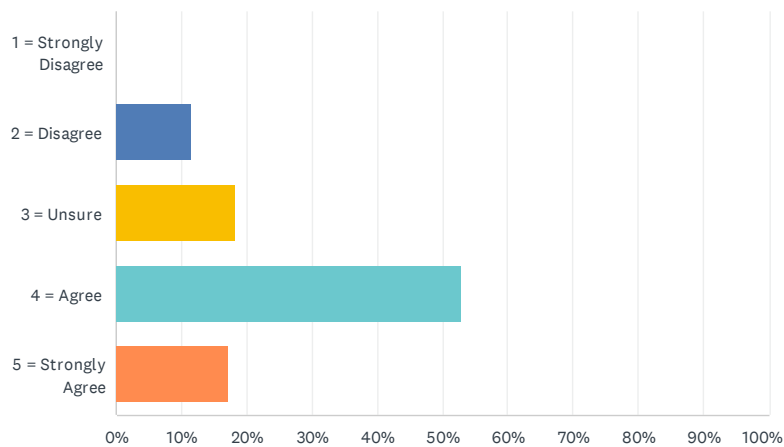


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
1 = Strongly Disagree	0.00%	0
2 = Disagree	2.30%	2
3 = Unsure	2.30%	2
4 = Agree	40.23%	35
5 = Strongly Agree	55.17%	48
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>87</b>

Music Educator Turnover in West Virginia

Q32 I can network and make professional connections in my current position.

Answered: 87 Skipped: 4

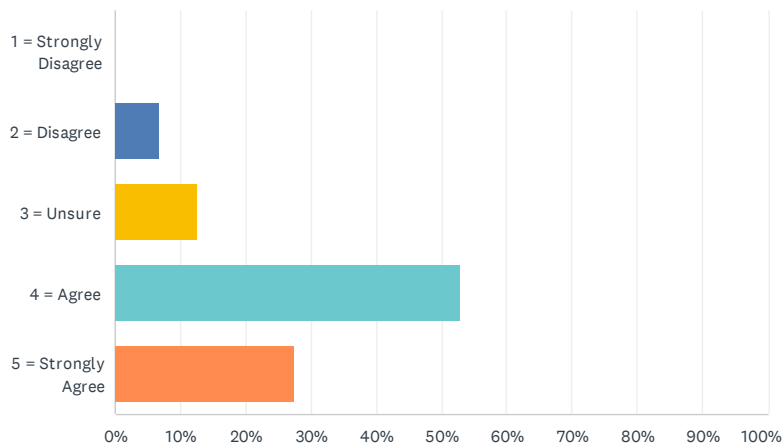


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
1 = Strongly Disagree	0.00%	0
2 = Disagree	11.49%	10
3 = Unsure	18.39%	16
4 = Agree	52.87%	46
5 = Strongly Agree	17.24%	15
TOTAL		87

Music Educator Turnover in West Virginia

Q33 Professional networking is important to me.

Answered: 87 Skipped: 4

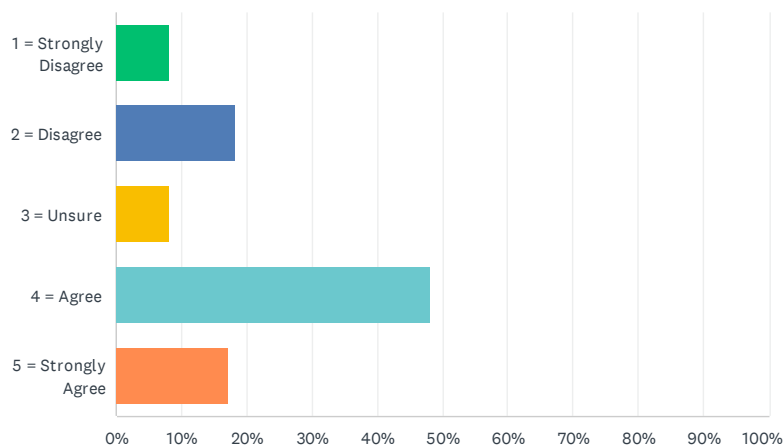


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
1 = Strongly Disagree	0.00%	0
2 = Disagree	6.90%	6
3 = Unsure	12.64%	11
4 = Agree	52.87%	46
5 = Strongly Agree	27.59%	24
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>87</b>

## Music Educator Turnover in West Virginia

## Q34 The classroom/workspace in which I teach is sufficient.

Answered: 87 Skipped: 4

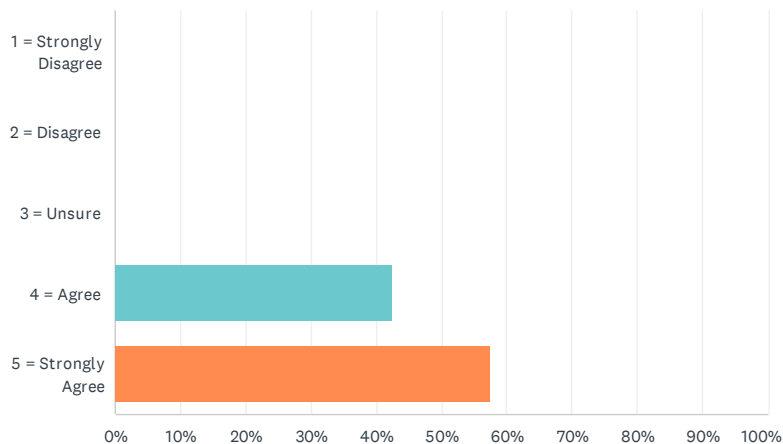


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
1 = Strongly Disagree	8.05%	7
2 = Disagree	18.39%	16
3 = Unsure	8.05%	7
4 = Agree	48.28%	42
5 = Strongly Agree	17.24%	15
TOTAL		87

Music Educator Turnover in West Virginia

Q35 Adequate classroom/teaching space is important to me.

Answered: 87 Skipped: 4

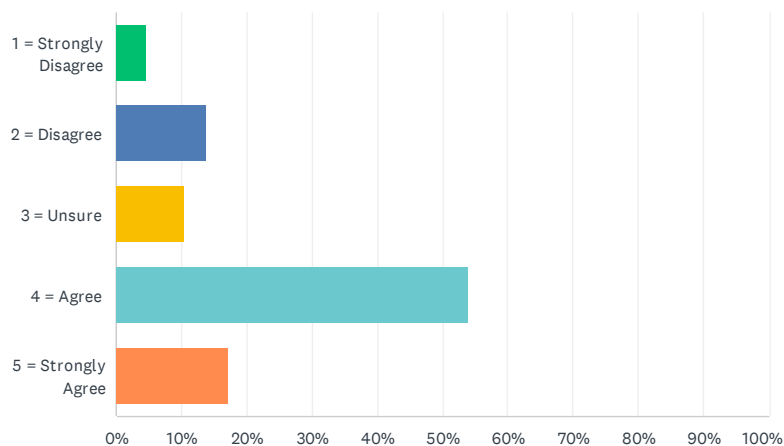


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
1 = Strongly Disagree	0.00%	0
2 = Disagree	0.00%	0
3 = Unsure	0.00%	0
4 = Agree	42.53%	37
5 = Strongly Agree	57.47%	50
TOTAL		87

## Music Educator Turnover in West Virginia

## Q36 I have access to adequate teaching supplies and materials.

Answered: 87 Skipped: 4

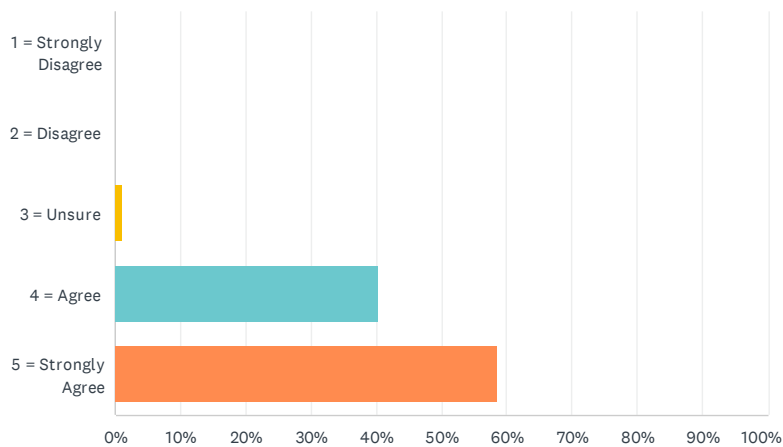


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
1 = Strongly Disagree	4.60%	4
2 = Disagree	13.79%	12
3 = Unsure	10.34%	9
4 = Agree	54.02%	47
5 = Strongly Agree	17.24%	15
TOTAL		87

Music Educator Turnover in West Virginia

Q37 Having access to sufficient teaching supplies and materials is important to me.

Answered: 87 Skipped: 4

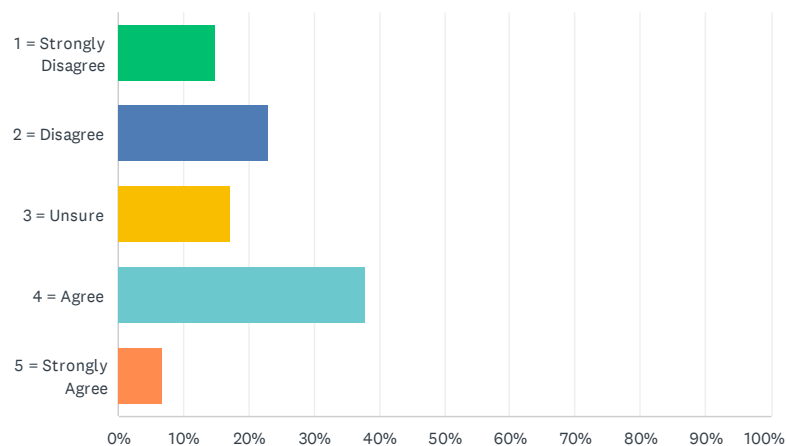


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
1 = Strongly Disagree	0.00%	0
2 = Disagree	0.00%	0
3 = Unsure	1.15%	1
4 = Agree	40.23%	35
5 = Strongly Agree	58.62%	51
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>87</b>

## Music Educator Turnover in West Virginia

## Q38 I feel my classroom/program is adequately funded.

Answered: 87 Skipped: 4



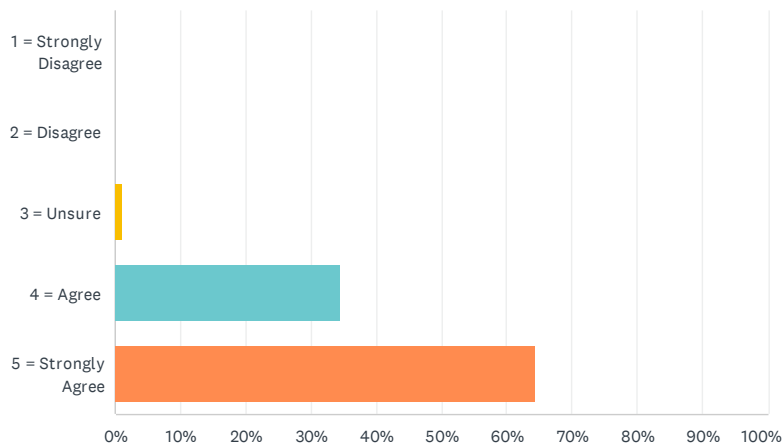
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
1 = Strongly Disagree	14.94%	13
2 = Disagree	22.99%	20
3 = Unsure	17.24%	15
4 = Agree	37.93%	33
5 = Strongly Agree	6.90%	6
TOTAL		87



Music Educator Turnover in West Virginia

Q39 Adequate funding for my classroom/program is important to me.

Answered: 87 Skipped: 4

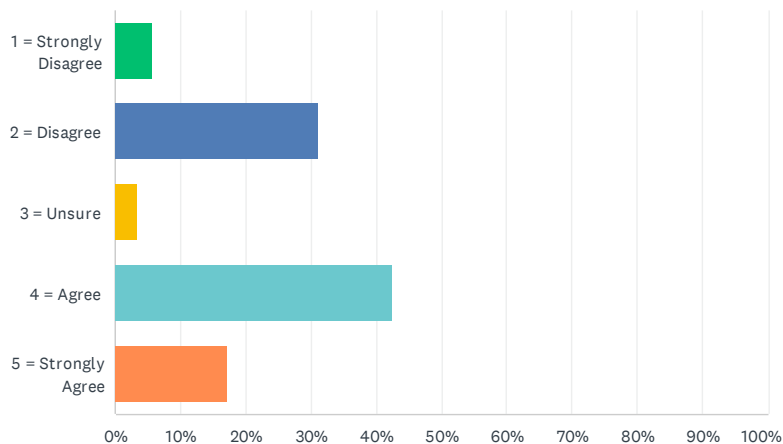


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
1 = Strongly Disagree	0.00%	0
2 = Disagree	0.00%	0
3 = Unsure	1.15%	1
4 = Agree	34.48%	30
5 = Strongly Agree	64.37%	56
TOTAL		87

Music Educator Turnover in West Virginia

Q40 I am provided acceptable planning time to be a successful teacher.

Answered: 87 Skipped: 4

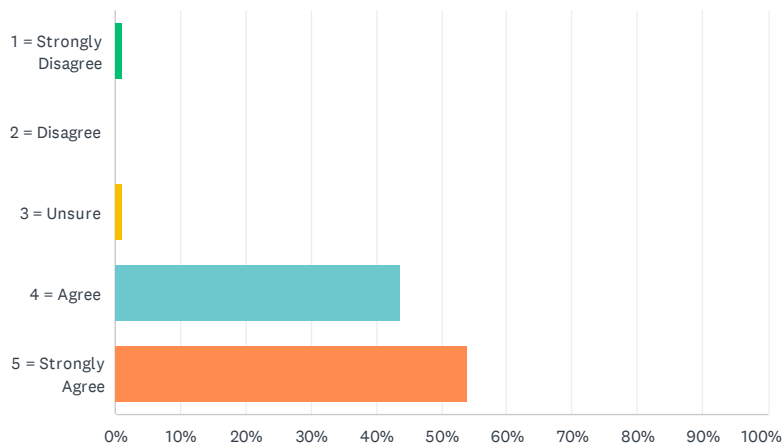


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
1 = Strongly Disagree	5.75%	5
2 = Disagree	31.03%	27
3 = Unsure	3.45%	3
4 = Agree	42.53%	37
5 = Strongly Agree	17.24%	15
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>87</b>

Music Educator Turnover in West Virginia

Q41 Having acceptable planning time is important to me.

Answered: 87 Skipped: 4

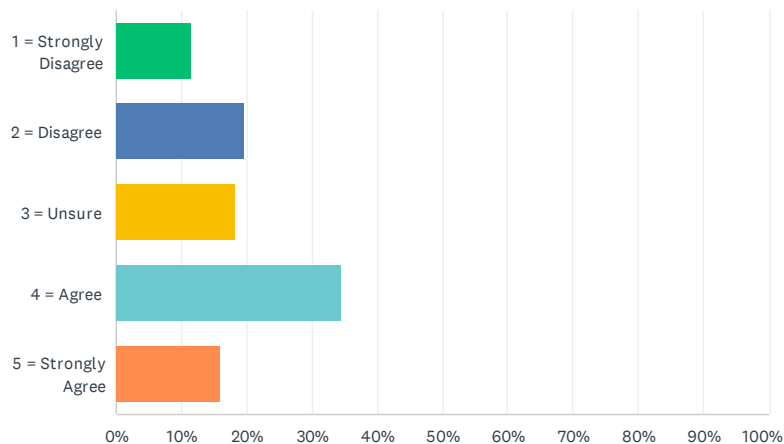


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
1 = Strongly Disagree	1.15%	1
2 = Disagree	0.00%	0
3 = Unsure	1.15%	1
4 = Agree	43.68%	38
5 = Strongly Agree	54.02%	47
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>87</b>

## Music Educator Turnover in West Virginia

## Q42 My school has a positive school environment.

Answered: 87 Skipped: 4

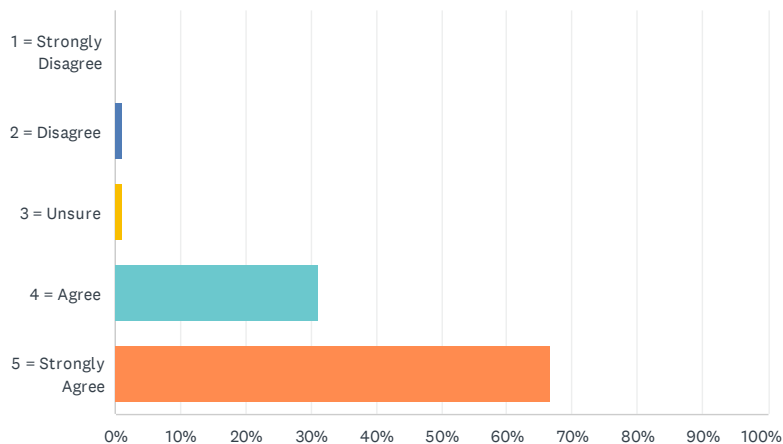


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
1 = Strongly Disagree	11.49%	10
2 = Disagree	19.54%	17
3 = Unsure	18.39%	16
4 = Agree	34.48%	30
5 = Strongly Agree	16.09%	14
TOTAL		87

Music Educator Turnover in West Virginia

Q43 A positive school environment is important to me.

Answered: 87 Skipped: 4

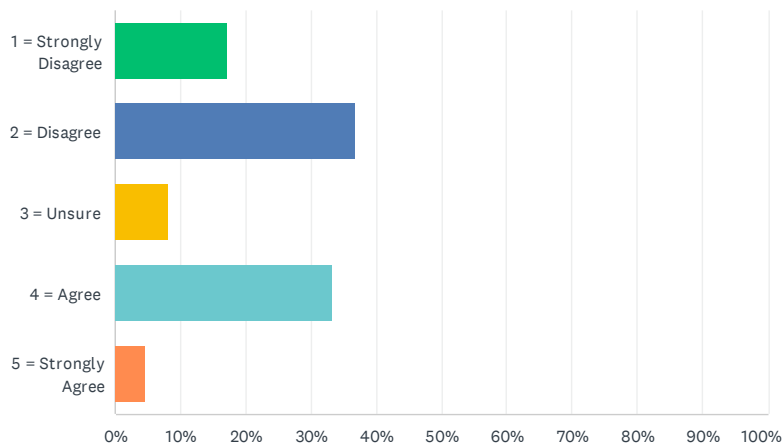


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
1 = Strongly Disagree	0.00%	0
2 = Disagree	1.15%	1
3 = Unsure	1.15%	1
4 = Agree	31.03%	27
5 = Strongly Agree	66.67%	58
TOTAL		87

Music Educator Turnover in West Virginia

Q44 Student behavior is not a problem in my classroom/school.

Answered: 87 Skipped: 4

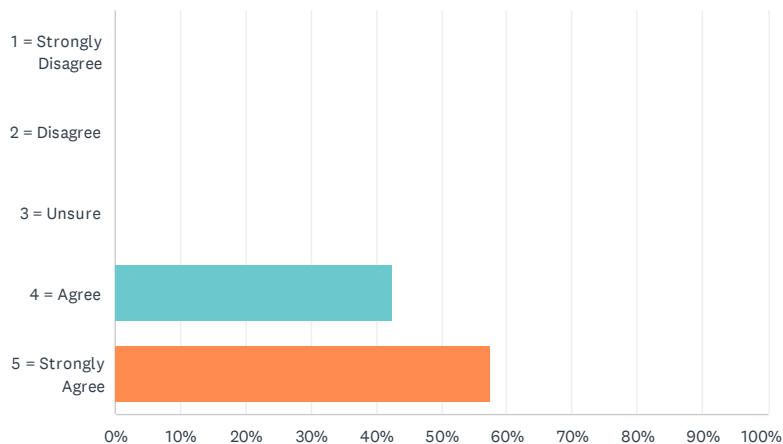


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
1 = Strongly Disagree	17.24%	15
2 = Disagree	36.78%	32
3 = Unsure	8.05%	7
4 = Agree	33.33%	29
5 = Strongly Agree	4.60%	4
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>87</b>

Music Educator Turnover in West Virginia

Q45 Positive student behavior is important to me.

Answered: 87 Skipped: 4

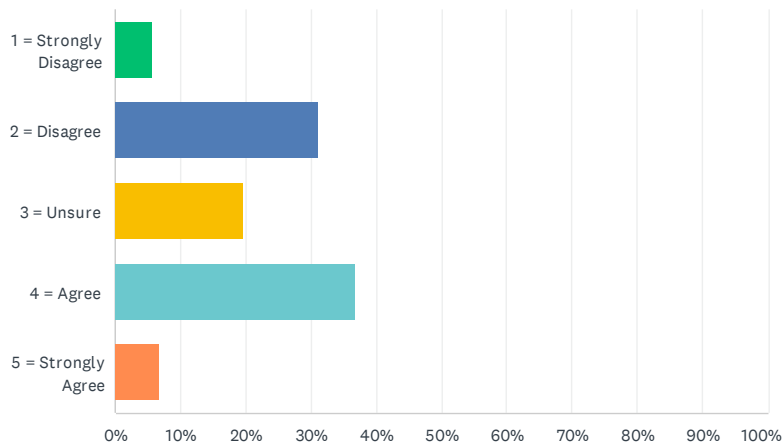


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
1 = Strongly Disagree	0.00%	0
2 = Disagree	0.00%	0
3 = Unsure	0.00%	0
4 = Agree	42.53%	37
5 = Strongly Agree	57.47%	50
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>87</b>

Music Educator Turnover in West Virginia

Q46 As a music educator, I feel my subject area is respected in my school.

Answered: 87 Skipped: 4



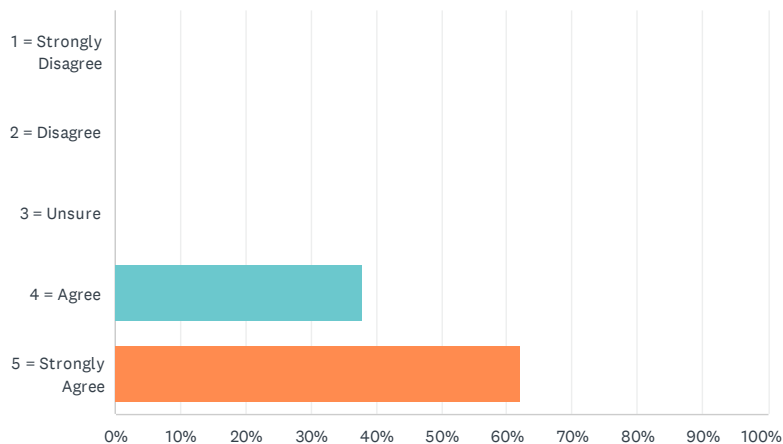
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
1 = Strongly Disagree	5.75%	5
2 = Disagree	31.03%	27
3 = Unsure	19.54%	17
4 = Agree	36.78%	32
5 = Strongly Agree	6.90%	6
TOTAL		87



Music Educator Turnover in West Virginia

Q47 Respect for my subject area is important to me.

Answered: 87 Skipped: 4

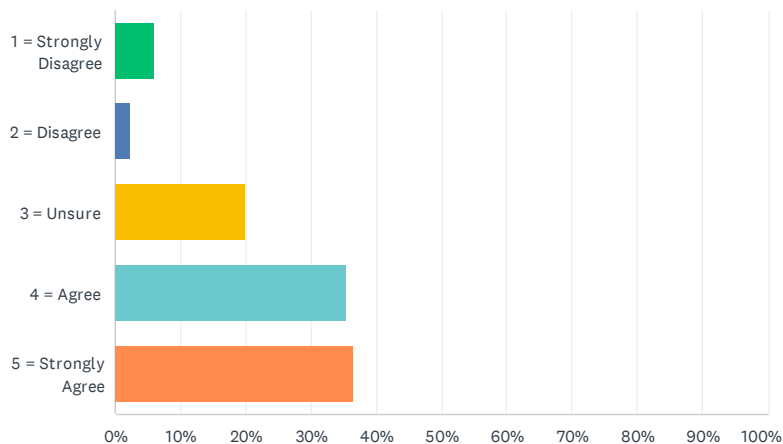


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
1 = Strongly Disagree	0.00%	0
2 = Disagree	0.00%	0
3 = Unsure	0.00%	0
4 = Agree	37.93%	33
5 = Strongly Agree	62.07%	54
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>87</b>

Music Educator Turnover in West Virginia

Q48 I plan to stay in my current position next year.

Answered: 85 Skipped: 6

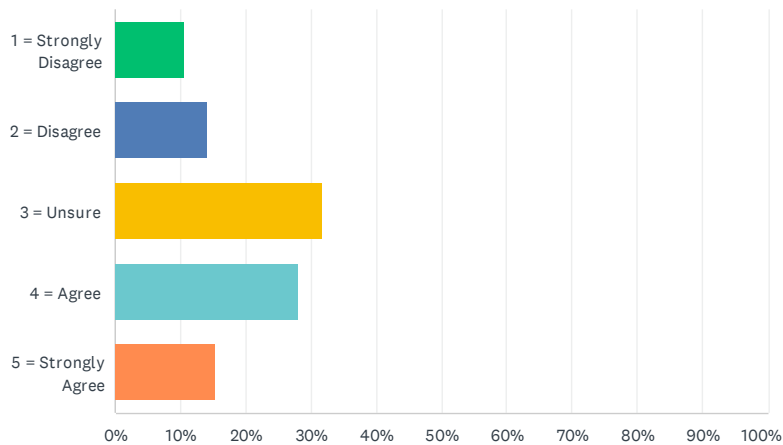


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
1 = Strongly Disagree	5.88%	5
2 = Disagree	2.35%	2
3 = Unsure	20.00%	17
4 = Agree	35.29%	30
5 = Strongly Agree	36.47%	31
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>85</b>

Music Educator Turnover in West Virginia

**Q49 At this point, I plan on staying in my current position for the entirety of my career.**

Answered: 85 Skipped: 6

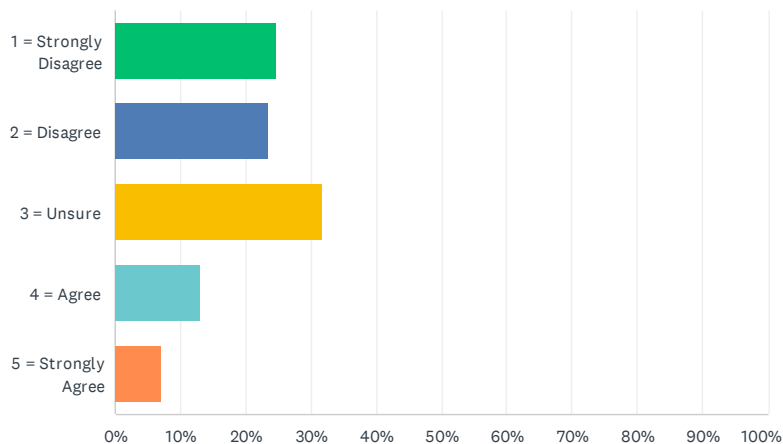


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
1 = Strongly Disagree	10.59%	9
2 = Disagree	14.12%	12
3 = Unsure	31.76%	27
4 = Agree	28.24%	24
5 = Strongly Agree	15.29%	13
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>85</b>

Music Educator Turnover in West Virginia

Q50 I plan to continue teaching but not in my current position.

Answered: 85 Skipped: 6

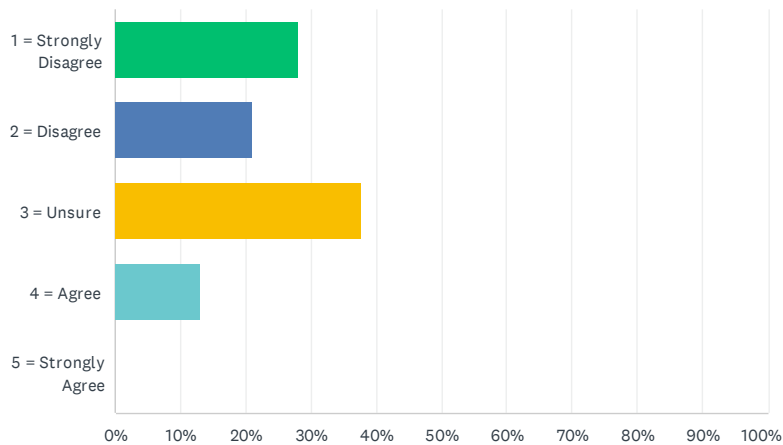


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
1 = Strongly Disagree	24.71%	21
2 = Disagree	23.53%	20
3 = Unsure	31.76%	27
4 = Agree	12.94%	11
5 = Strongly Agree	7.06%	6
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>85</b>

Music Educator Turnover in West Virginia

Q51 I plan to stay in education for the entirety of my career but not as a teacher.

Answered: 85 Skipped: 6

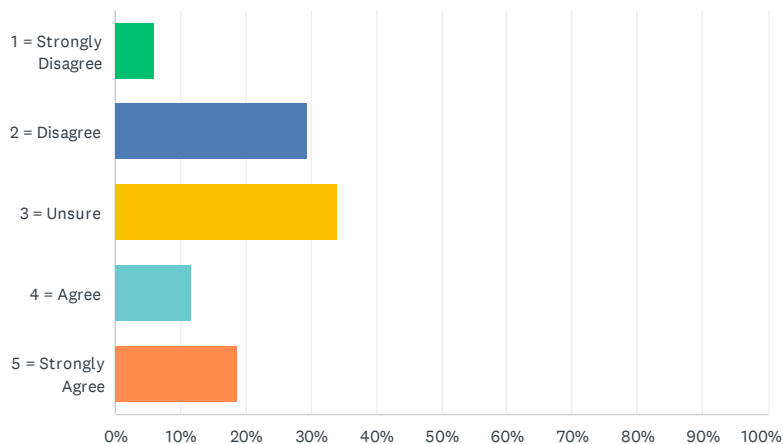


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
1 = Strongly Disagree	28.24%	24
2 = Disagree	21.18%	18
3 = Unsure	37.65%	32
4 = Agree	12.94%	11
5 = Strongly Agree	0.00%	0
TOTAL		85

Music Educator Turnover in West Virginia

Q52 I hope to retire early from teaching.

Answered: 85 Skipped: 6

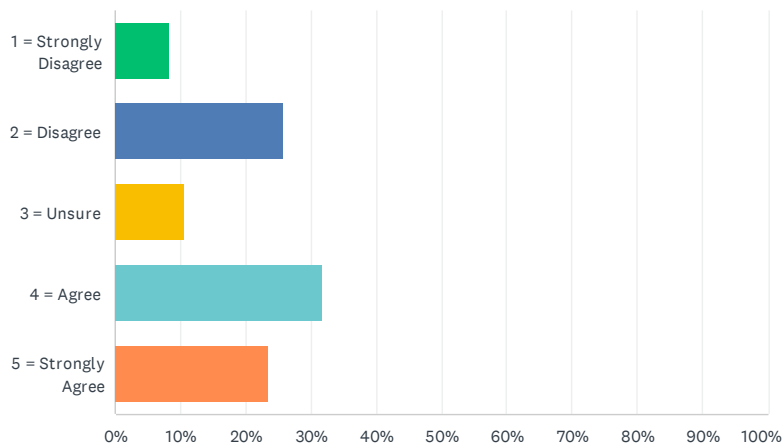


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
1 = Strongly Disagree	5.88%	5
2 = Disagree	29.41%	25
3 = Unsure	34.12%	29
4 = Agree	11.76%	10
5 = Strongly Agree	18.82%	16
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>85</b>

Music Educator Turnover in West Virginia

Q53 I often think of leaving my current teaching position.

Answered: 85 Skipped: 6

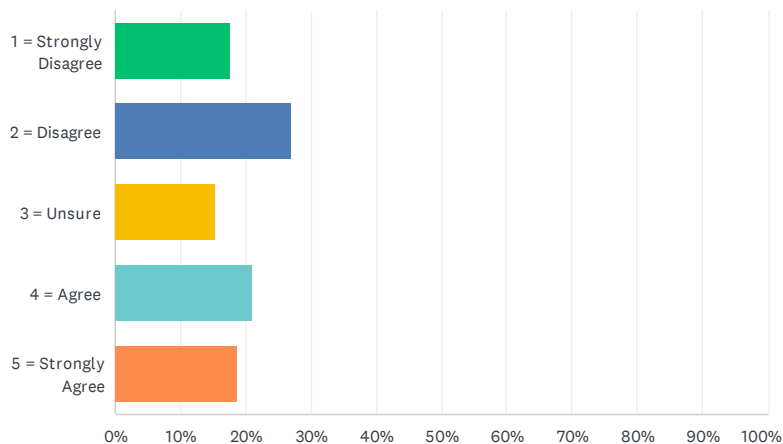


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
1 = Strongly Disagree	8.24%	7
2 = Disagree	25.88%	22
3 = Unsure	10.59%	9
4 = Agree	31.76%	27
5 = Strongly Agree	23.53%	20
TOTAL		85

Music Educator Turnover in West Virginia

Q54 I often think of quitting teaching all together.

Answered: 85 Skipped: 6



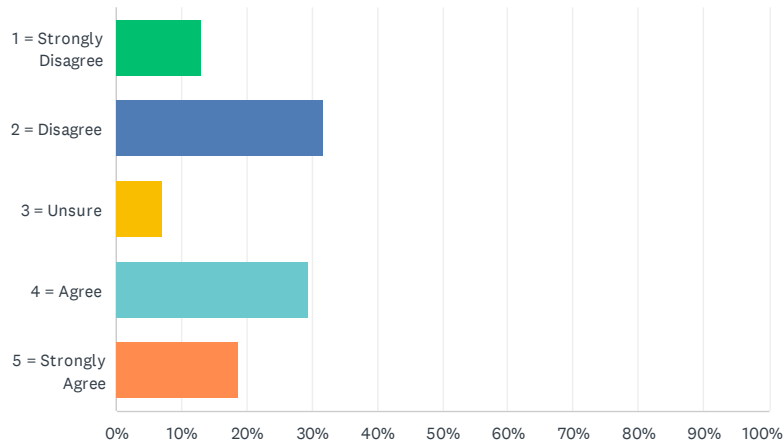
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
1 = Strongly Disagree	17.65%	15
2 = Disagree	27.06%	23
3 = Unsure	15.29%	13
4 = Agree	21.18%	18
5 = Strongly Agree	18.82%	16
TOTAL		85



Music Educator Turnover in West Virginia

Q55 I am often overwhelmed by having to fundraise for my classroom/program.

Answered: 85 Skipped: 6

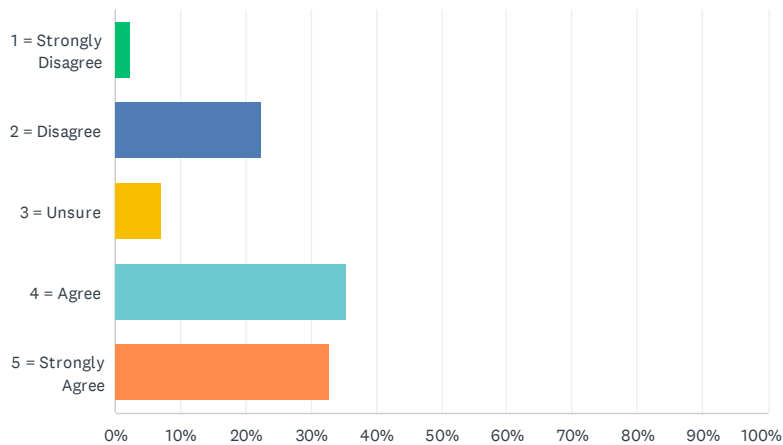


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
1 = Strongly Disagree	12.94%	11
2 = Disagree	31.76%	27
3 = Unsure	7.06%	6
4 = Agree	29.41%	25
5 = Strongly Agree	18.82%	16
TOTAL		85

Music Educator Turnover in West Virginia

Q56 I am often overwhelmed by the amount of paperwork I am expected to complete at my work.

Answered: 85 Skipped: 6

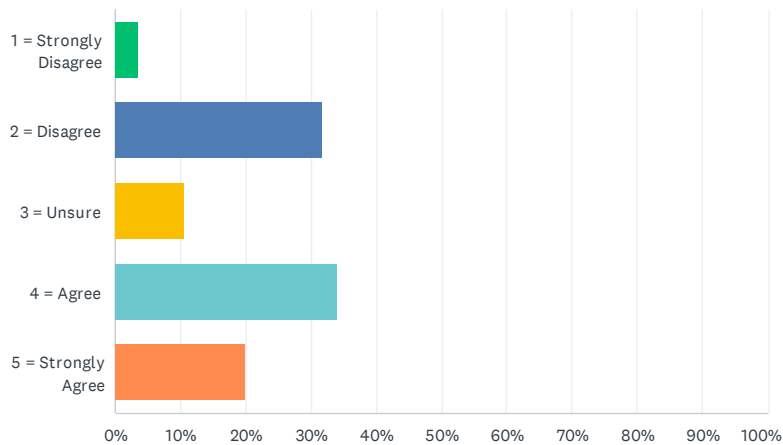


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
1 = Strongly Disagree	2.35%	2
2 = Disagree	22.35%	19
3 = Unsure	7.06%	6
4 = Agree	35.29%	30
5 = Strongly Agree	32.94%	28
TOTAL		85

Music Educator Turnover in West Virginia

Q57 I am often overwhelmed by the meetings I am expected to attend at my work.

Answered: 85 Skipped: 6

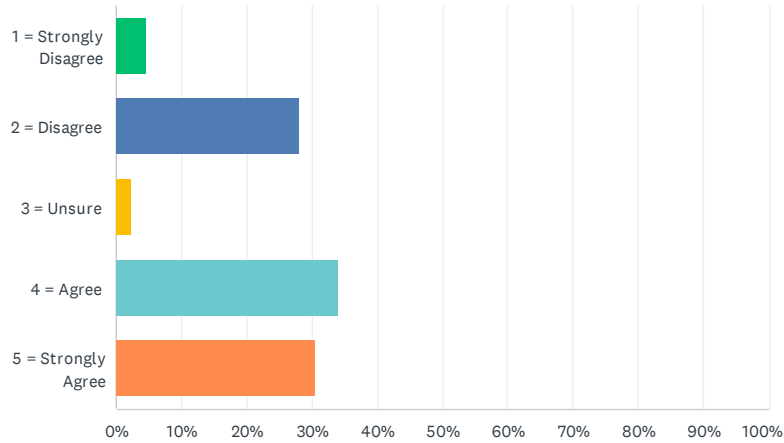


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
1 = Strongly Disagree	3.53%	3
2 = Disagree	31.76%	27
3 = Unsure	10.59%	9
4 = Agree	34.12%	29
5 = Strongly Agree	20.00%	17
TOTAL		85

Music Educator Turnover in West Virginia

Q58 I am often overwhelmed by the extra duties I am expected to perform at my work.

Answered: 85 Skipped: 6

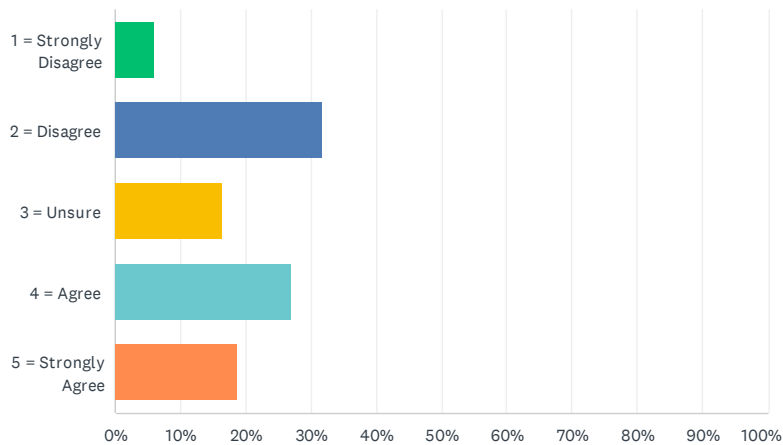


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
1 = Strongly Disagree	4.71%	4
2 = Disagree	28.24%	24
3 = Unsure	2.35%	2
4 = Agree	34.12%	29
5 = Strongly Agree	30.59%	26
TOTAL		85

Music Educator Turnover in West Virginia

Q59 I am often overwhelmed by extra rehearsals and performance in my current position.

Answered: 85 Skipped: 6

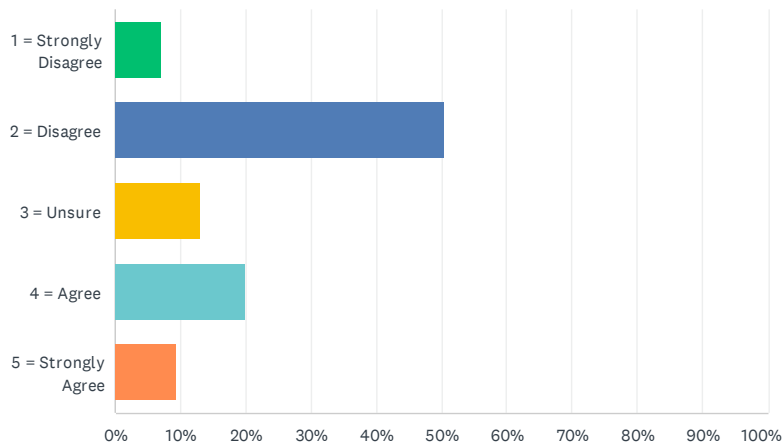


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
1 = Strongly Disagree	5.88%	5
2 = Disagree	31.76%	27
3 = Unsure	16.47%	14
4 = Agree	27.06%	23
5 = Strongly Agree	18.82%	16
TOTAL		85

Music Educator Turnover in West Virginia

Q60 I am often overwhelmed by my students having to perform at a high standard.

Answered: 85 Skipped: 6

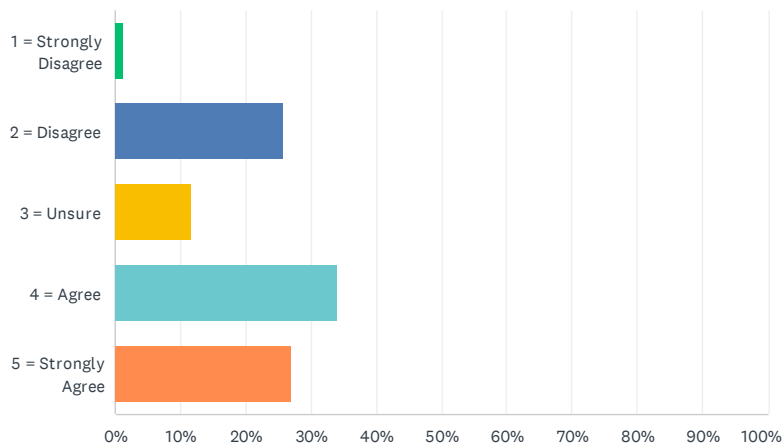


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
1 = Strongly Disagree	7.06%	6
2 = Disagree	50.59%	43
3 = Unsure	12.94%	11
4 = Agree	20.00%	17
5 = Strongly Agree	9.41%	8
TOTAL		85

Music Educator Turnover in West Virginia

Q61 I am often overwhelmed by mandatory trainings.

Answered: 85 Skipped: 6

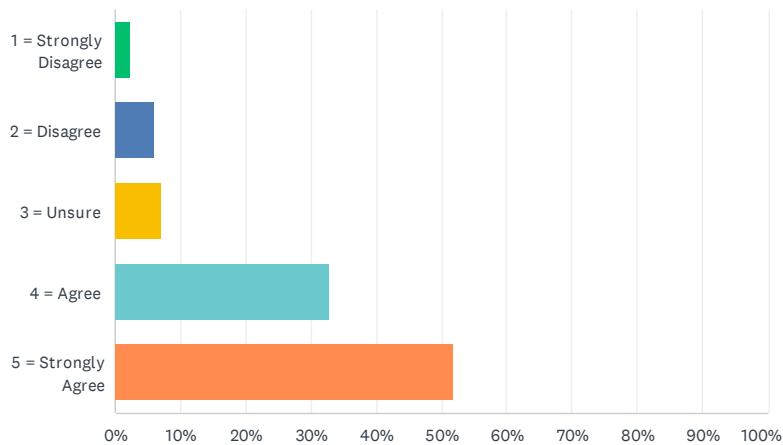


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
1 = Strongly Disagree	1.18%	1
2 = Disagree	25.88%	22
3 = Unsure	11.76%	10
4 = Agree	34.12%	29
5 = Strongly Agree	27.06%	23
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>85</b>

Music Educator Turnover in West Virginia

Q62 Opportunities for higher pay could encourage me to remain in my current position.

Answered: 85 Skipped: 6



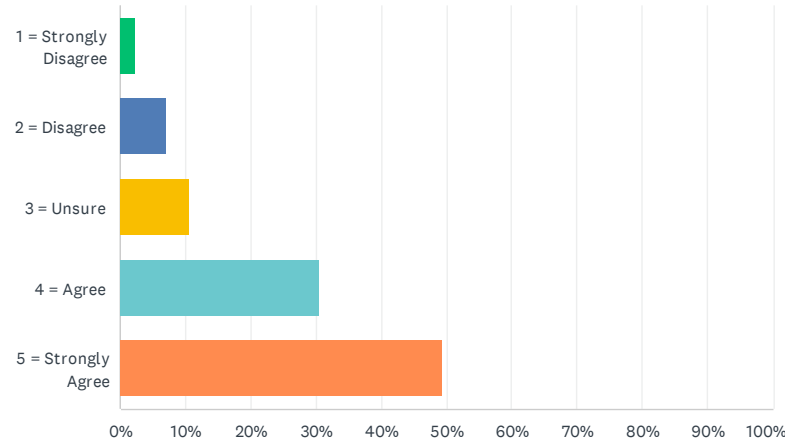
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
1 = Strongly Disagree	2.35%	2
2 = Disagree	5.88%	5
3 = Unsure	7.06%	6
4 = Agree	32.94%	28
5 = Strongly Agree	51.76%	44
TOTAL		85



Music Educator Turnover in West Virginia

Q63 Increased funding for my classroom/program could encourage me to remain in my current position.

Answered: 85 Skipped: 6

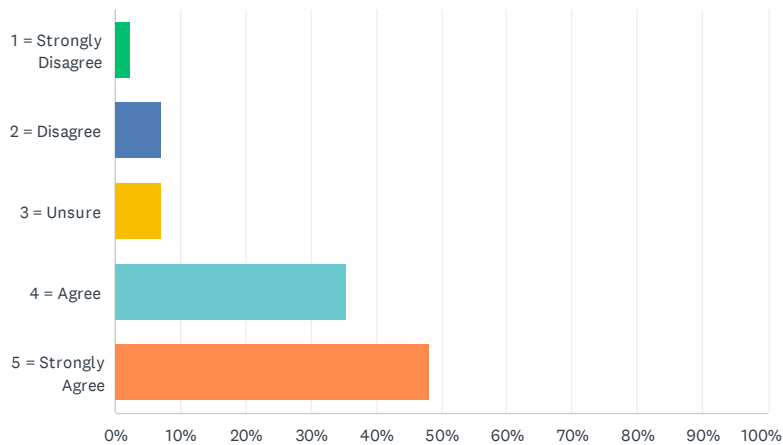


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
1 = Strongly Disagree	2.35%	2
2 = Disagree	7.06%	6
3 = Unsure	10.59%	9
4 = Agree	30.59%	26
5 = Strongly Agree	49.41%	42
TOTAL		85

Music Educator Turnover in West Virginia

Q64 Positive connections with colleagues, administration, and students could encourage me to remain in my current position.

Answered: 85 Skipped: 6

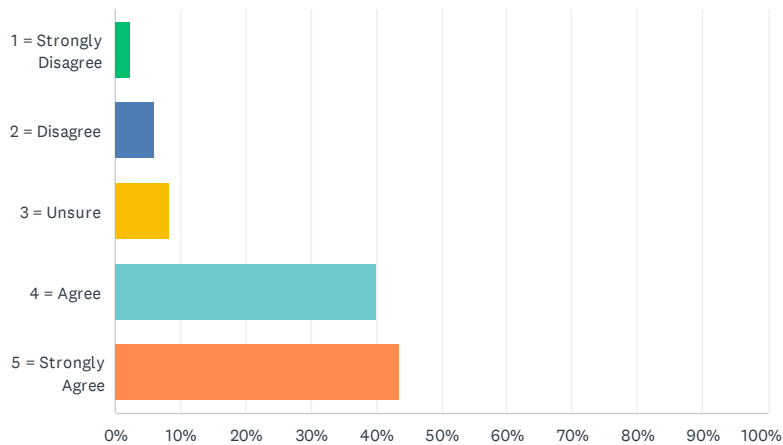


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
1 = Strongly Disagree	2.35%	2
2 = Disagree	7.06%	6
3 = Unsure	7.06%	6
4 = Agree	35.29%	30
5 = Strongly Agree	48.24%	41
TOTAL		85

Music Educator Turnover in West Virginia

Q65 Having access to better benefits could encourage me to remain in my current position.

Answered: 85 Skipped: 6

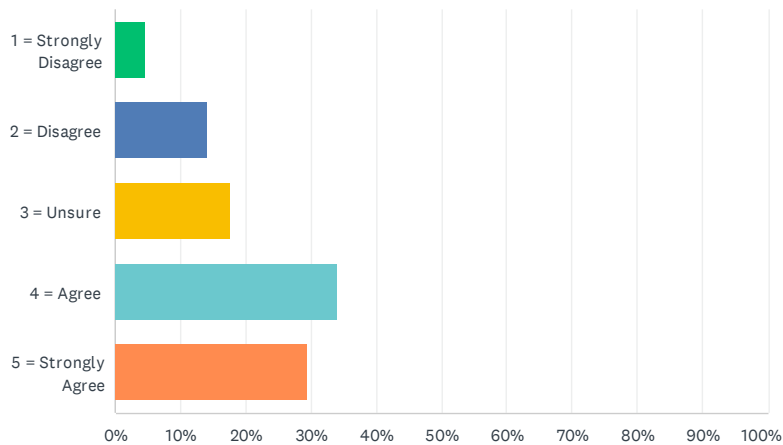


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
1 = Strongly Disagree	2.35%	2
2 = Disagree	5.88%	5
3 = Unsure	8.24%	7
4 = Agree	40.00%	34
5 = Strongly Agree	43.53%	37
TOTAL		85

Music Educator Turnover in West Virginia

Q66 Having access to more teacher and classroom support like mentoring and support groups could encourage me to remain in my current position.

Answered: 85 Skipped: 6

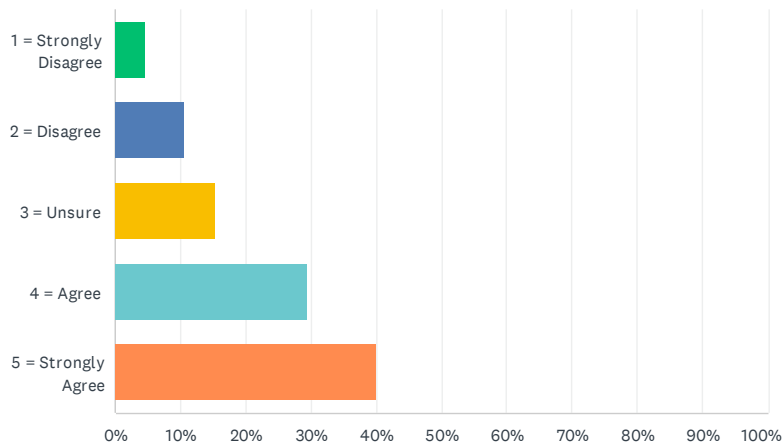


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
1 = Strongly Disagree	4.71%	4
2 = Disagree	14.12%	12
3 = Unsure	17.65%	15
4 = Agree	34.12%	29
5 = Strongly Agree	29.41%	25
TOTAL		85

Music Educator Turnover in West Virginia

Q67 Having access to more meaningful professional development could encourage me to remain in my current position.

Answered: 85 Skipped: 6



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
1 = Strongly Disagree	4.71%	4
2 = Disagree	10.59%	9
3 = Unsure	15.29%	13
4 = Agree	29.41%	25
5 = Strongly Agree	40.00%	34
TOTAL		85

## Music Educator Turnover in West Virginia

### Q68 Please list general factors not addressed by this survey that make you wish to leave your current teaching position.

Answered: 61 Skipped: 30

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Current position has led to physical and mental health issues caused by lack of support from some administration, demanding schedule (after school rehearsals daily needed in order to make up for poor scheduling created by admin), lack of student behavior support, financial burden (no amount of fundraising/ticket sales/donations prevents part of my paycheck going into my programs to keep them alive), and trying to be the best mentor I can be for my students as they have struggled to recover from the pandemic.	6/22/2023 3:32 PM
2	I have no intentions of leaving but the music program is constantly degraded and disrespected by the administration in my current position. Music here is treated as though it's a dumping ground for kids with no electives, there is no money given to the music program, I have no curriculum and make my own. Music students here are bullied by other students and teachers and administration do nothing to fix it. Parents ask their kids not to do music programs here so that they won't be picked on. Im left with heat and air conditioning problems constantly, issues with scheduling, no support at events from administration, door locks that don't work, a room in disrepair, even a ceiling falling in the instrument closet. I have turned in work order after work order with nothing being done to fix anything. The students here, they are probably 90% poverty level or below. I deal with a lot of children who have experience abuse and trauma. Students are bullied for race, sexual orientation and even what their last name is. That's hard when I go home at night.	5/31/2023 2:38 PM
3	n/a	4/17/2023 8:46 AM
4	This is not specific to my situation, but since you are doing a survey based on people leaving the profession, I figured it might give some insight. I have several friends leaving the profession because of lack of support by both admin AND counselors specifically in ensemble classes. As you know, those classes have to function like a team. If there is a group of students who do not want to be in the ensemble, they often derail the entire class. When counselors refuse to remove such students, it hurts the class for the entire semester (year in some cases when students are not removed at the semester). One bad year like that can tank a program. But honestly, if counselors do that one year, it is highly likely that it will happen over multiple years. It is one thing to have disruptive students in general music classes because those classes don't have to function as a team. But to keep students in choir/band/orch classes who do not want to be there, will not participate, and keep others from participating is killing programs and causing teachers to leave.	4/16/2023 11:16 AM
5	I teach General Music at the middle school level, so I do not have ensembles necessarily; however, I rotate students every six weeks and it is all students who are not interested in band or strings or choir. It makes it difficult to complete the curriculum and standards from the state when I have a very short amount of time with the students and they cannot have the time to retain or practice what I try and teach them. That on top of covering daily for absent teachers and vacancies outside my content area eats up my only planning time, which is why I need to leave my position.	4/9/2023 7:27 PM
6	Location and opportunity are reasons why I would want to leave my current teaching position. There are not a lot of opportunities for high-level music-making in West Virginia. Unfortunately, there are also a lot of music teachers that do not teach up to the standard that they should due to various reasons. Also, there is hardly any diversity. If I had children, I would want them to live and learn in an environment that has diversity, open-mindedness, and the availability for experiences such as going to a museum on the weekends.	4/7/2023 1:40 PM
7	From my personal and professional experience in my current position, there are a lot of "pros" that outweigh the "cons." However, improvements can be made such as more adequate funding from our county's excess levy and professional development geared towards Music educators. I teach in Marion County, and I'm only allotted \$1,300 between my 2 band	4/6/2023 2:11 PM

### Music Educator Turnover in West Virginia

programs. I know Monongalia and Harrison counties, which both have excess levies, give their band programs a bigger budget, ranging from \$6,000-\$12,000.

8	There isn't consistent support from the state to the county to the local offices to the classroom to assure that I am supported in upholding the discipline and other things in the classroom and school environment that would help the overall attitude of the students and parents. If they saw a consistent and supported approach they would be hesitant to question and disrespect the profession as much.	4/6/2023 11:44 AM
9	Lack of passion to sing by the students.	4/6/2023 9:47 AM
10	Inequality in duty schedules Disrespect and unprofessional treatment from colleagues Not enough planning time during contract hours	4/6/2023 7:21 AM
11	Poor administration support and leadership, that's what I mainly fight with daily. I genuinely love my position and find it a blessing but the poor leadership makes it a very unstable and bitter environment for everyone.	4/5/2023 9:25 PM
12	I do not live in the state if WV, but drive across the border to teach. I think I will eventually work in my home state when I make the switch back to instrumental.	4/5/2023 8:23 PM
13	Possible change in subjects offered/mandated to teach (full choir position now, possibly having to teach music appreciation in the future); Possible change in schedule (all choir every day; choir/music appreciation every other day)	4/5/2023 7:26 PM
14	Lack of support and respect. Not being treated like a professional. Being held under a magnifying glass as a young professional in a political job.	4/5/2023 10:09 AM
15	What this survey didn't address is that some of us have been in teaching for many years and are retiring this year. If I wasn't retiring all the factors on this page would be enticing to make me stay.	4/5/2023 8:47 AM
16	I'm about to retire.	3/20/2023 2:14 PM
17	Student behaviors Location of teaching position	3/19/2023 7:33 AM
18	The daily class schedule at my school hinders the arts programs, often forcing students to make difficult choices about their continuation in the program.	3/8/2023 1:26 PM
19	Class scheduling	3/7/2023 8:34 AM
20	Overall school climate is not acceptable. We work hard to address classroom climate in our classrooms, but it is not being emphasized with the school as a whole.	3/6/2023 12:29 PM
21	Other life factors, like my husbands job or kids situations.	3/6/2023 11:32 AM
22	I struggle with the arts culture in our state - we value music, but not it's quality. We want our kids to take music in their early years, but usually only once a week. This automatically sets us up for lower understanding, awareness, and expectation of quality in music-making. Music is important for everyone but there are many students who excel in and because of music. I think many county school systems are checking a box instead of going at it full out.	3/5/2023 10:34 PM
23	Our State Legislature's continued attacks on Public Education make it hard to see how we can continue to be effective in the long term. The chipping away of rights, benefits, and compensation for doing a job I love is frustrating and often demoralizing.	3/3/2023 7:29 AM
24	Student conflict	3/2/2023 5:33 PM
25	1. Maxed out class size makes teaching/learning far more difficult, and creates discipline problems. They cram 28 students into every 4th and 5th grade class, and it is just not worth the overage pay. Seeing classes once a week makes one-on-one instruction nearly impossible. When special ed students are brought into these already enormous classes in an effort to have time with the regular ed students, it is absolutely overwhelming. Changing the ratio for class sizes would help with student learning and teacher retention. 2. Excessive special education paperwork (accommodation logs) takes both planning time and instructional time from students. Because I teach at a large school (about 600), related arts teachers are required to keep accommodation logs for every student with an IEP, resulting in over 130 accommodation logs to complete weekly and turn in monthly. It is an impossible task. I have had to spend days of unpaid time on weekends just organizing these logs into classes/days of the week in an attempt to try keep up with them. These logs arrive in our mailbox in huge stacks with only	2/23/2023 9:01 PM

### Music Educator Turnover in West Virginia

the students name, no grade level, no classroom teacher, and sometimes no case manager. We are expected to look up every student, organize them by class, and fill them out. Many accommodations do not even apply to our classes (number lines/math manipulatives) and we are certainly not trained on what some of these accommodations are, or how to provide them. At least two teachers that I have worked with within the last few years have stopped teaching entirely because of this. I have voiced concern to my administration about this for the past several years with no help or changes, and there are just more every year. Of course I want to meet the needs of my students, but there has to be a better way. It is enough to make me want to look into other jobs where there is compensation for all the extra hours/days of work that are required.

26	To add to lack of administration support- decisions being made on behalf of my classroom/program without administration asking for any input from me. Decisions being made about music education without including music educators.	2/21/2023 3:14 PM
27	My administration uses test scores and class sizes as a poor excuse for why I am not allotted a band class, I have to have band afterschool only two days a week (Because this is when we have afterschool buses) with complete beginners. Music educators are seen as a "planning period" for other teachers and as a second class subject that isn't important. our county has cut our program money from 5000 ton 800 in the last 3 years. Focus on standardizing testing. Having to attend professional development that is not best practice and also does not apply to our content. Having a class where we facilitate kids work on english or math on the computer when it's not our content and it takes the place of my band class. Testing crammed down our throat. WV bandmasters and the WVSSAC expecting us to perform at festivals, but not supporting us and stepping in when administrators at the school and district levels refuse to give us resources, and class time. Enesemble time is not protected. General lack of appreciation for programs and all we do.	2/19/2023 7:56 PM
28	IEP paperwork that is required by my county and must be turned in every month. I have 100 students currently on an IEP with a dozen that are 3-4 pages long.	2/17/2023 9:27 PM
29	Respect of the teaching as a profession. I believe teaching has been diminished in the eyes of our society and sadly our students are the ones who will suffer from it most. Teachers should NOT be on timeclocks! nor should they be expected to be accountants, psychologists or bookepers unless it directly relates to their content of course. Second Factor that makes me think of leaving is general student apathy which has become worse since the pandemic. It is sometimes hard to motivate students to do anything anymore.	2/17/2023 2:59 PM
30	Poor school district, no levy, no budget/funding, no tradition of excellence in ANYTHING.	2/17/2023 11:27 AM
31	Student behavior, disrespect, and lack of motivation are what makes me question my position. I also feel that my program will never build due to the fact that all the students are involved in too many activities and it's hard to find time.	2/16/2023 2:21 PM
32	One word - parents. Sometimes they complain about the stupidest thing, or the child goes home and says something that did not happen or happened in a different way which then causes a parent complaint. Parents - UGH!!	2/16/2023 12:55 PM
33	The double standard at which the public "commends" educators then simultaneously remarks on schedule and compensation being "reasonable".	2/15/2023 11:25 AM
34	Not given educational release time and/or compensation or reimbursement for professional conferences.	2/14/2023 4:28 PM
35	Physical demands on my aging body	2/14/2023 1:57 PM
36	1. Parent booster drama is draining 2. Student apathy is frustrating and hard to overcome 3. Over-emphasis in athletics and prioritizing of scheduling is very frustrating.	2/14/2023 12:17 PM
37	These may have already been addressed, but the things that make me want to leave this job the most are as follows: 1. Related Arts teachers are now being asked to incorporate math and reading into our curriculum. We are not valued as teachers of the arts and the arts themselves are not seen as valuable. Instead, we must try to bring up test scores by incorporating math and reading into our lessons. Nobody seems to realize the value of music itself. We are just babysitters to provide planning periods for the academic teachers. 2. Kids these days are unmotivated and apathetic. Many of them just don't care. Many others are so overwhelmed with personal issues--family problems (drugs, incarcerations, poverty), mental and emotional issues (anxiety and depression are rampant), or general teenage angst that getting them to	2/14/2023 10:46 AM



## Music Educator Turnover in West Virginia

focus and participate is tough. Even when given a chance to give some input into what they would like to do, they just don't want to do anything. 3. The culture and morale at my school are at an all time low. Mandatory meetings (usually about nothing relevant to us), test score analysis, SAT meeting input and attendance, mandatory trainings, paperwork, etc, etc, and the fact that our principal sits in his office all day and doesn't handle any behavioral issues other than ones that are so huge they have to be addressed (like physical fights), while piling more and more work on us has us all feeling underappreciated and overwhelmed. We have iReady scores that we are supposed to be analyzing. We have a program called Panorama in which we are supposed to be creating groups and analyzing data. We are given little to no time for this, and the meetings about it take a day away from our team plan. We also have to give up our team plan another day to babysit so the "important" teachers can have vertical planning, which none of them even want or feel the need to do. This is super annoying because team plan is the one part of the day that I look forward to because we can actually be with other adults. This brings me to the next point.... 4. We are isolated from each other. Alone in a room with kids all day. It wears on you. I get that this is just part of the gig, but it is exacerbated by the other crap we have to do like babysitting and attending worthless meetings. 5. The lack of support by the BOE is another issue. There is also a huge lack of consistency. We have teachers who want to attend conferences, such as WVACA and WVMEA both for their own educational purposes and to take kids. Some of us are approved and even paid for while others are not. It makes no sense and is defeating to those who are not approved to go.

38	Better opportunities to work with students of higher caliber, changes in administration (my admin is great), planning time.	2/10/2023 2:40 PM
39	Lack of a supportive feeder program and substandard knowledge and skills when the few students that do come from the feeders arrive.	2/10/2023 10:40 AM
40	Music Education is not regarded as important in our county. Even at the middle school I'm sometimes regarded as a "specials" teacher.... Teaching Band, Choir and General Music is wearing me out. I would love to just grow a fantastic Choral program from Middle to High school.	2/9/2023 8:33 PM
41	The reason for wanting to leave this job is the balance of life, I work most evenings until 9pm, with no real time for an actual life. At this point, more money or more anything won't help me in the current position I am in.	2/9/2023 8:21 PM
42	Under Appreciation. Not enough substitute teachers leading to doubled class size for coverage.	2/9/2023 7:40 AM
43	Disrespectful students.	2/8/2023 8:33 PM
44	Lack of structural support or strategy for music programs by county administrators has left the success of music programs up to individual schools and teachers. Additionally band and choral budgets were decreased from 87k to 20k in a matter of one decade. K8 schools have one teacher for all general music classes, band, and chorus. This leaves us feeling isolated and overworked.	2/7/2023 10:32 PM
45	none	2/6/2023 1:58 PM
46	More required classes for students affecting participation in the arts.	2/6/2023 1:25 PM
47	I am currently having issues with lack of respect from students as well as parents. It has also been brought to my attention recently that as a music educator, we "are not real teachers."	2/6/2023 11:43 AM
48	I live in a state that has a legislature that thinks that Critical Race Theory exists in public schools. It is challenging to teach when the people who make laws live in a fantasy world where they have made up the problems they are addressing in legislation. Reality is a significant problem for Republican legislatures.	2/6/2023 7:47 AM
49	No place to call my own - no music room. (Teach in cafeteria. Can't leave anything out from day to day, or evening from morning till afternoon. Get very little done during planning time because in the cafeteria with lots of students eating at that time. Having to travel to more than one school with each principal having different expectations.	2/5/2023 11:14 AM
50	There are only 2 music educators in this county and we cannot adequately meet the needs of all our students. Band and choir classes are after school and not within the daily schedule. There is good participation in band and choir at the elementary level, but it is not adequately supported in the scheduling at the middle/high school (6-12) level so most students drop out	2/4/2023 3:58 PM

### Music Educator Turnover in West Virginia

when they get there. I typically put in 55-60 hour weeks. We need better scheduling and another music teacher.

51	A school schedule that works against the arts by limiting the arts classes students can take or puts them in competition with other desired classes like AP.	2/4/2023 10:13 AM
52	Class size, scheduling, inconsistency among administrators.	2/3/2023 7:52 PM
53	On the aspect of administrative support, our principal is quite frankly...a jerk. He does not possess personable skills. As a result, he is cold and does not connect with students or staff well. He has alienated some of us as a result and caused issues for others (as well as my predecessor).	2/3/2023 5:12 PM
54	Not available	2/3/2023 3:43 PM
55	I want to be treated like a professional, not feel like I have to justify using my paid time off.	2/3/2023 1:47 PM
56	n/a	2/3/2023 1:29 PM
57	Being "shared" by two schools is an absolutely ridiculous concept to me. Both schools expect me to work as if they're the only school I service. It's double the work for very little pay!	2/3/2023 12:07 PM
58	General disrespect toward teachers	2/3/2023 10:49 AM
59	Right now, my position is extremely well-funded by a large tax base due to oil and gas revenue. We also currently have a supportive administration. Neither of these have always been the case and may not continue to be so in the future. Those two factors heavily influenced the results of my individual survey and I realize that without the presence of these two elements, my answers would have been much different.	2/3/2023 9:34 AM
60	Overwhelmed by making sure I reach student's emotional needs. Board of Education who is disconnected with my subject due to viewing it as an elective.	2/3/2023 8:24 AM
61	Personal physical and mental health	2/2/2023 10:19 PM

## Music Educator Turnover in West Virginia

### Q69 Please list general factors not addressed by this survey that could encourage you to stay in your current teaching position.

Answered: 48 Skipped: 43

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Just support from other staff and administration, I didn't become a teacher for the money or the clout. I became a teacher so that I could make a difference. Just give me a support system and I'll raise the money, write the curriculum, put in the extra time ( just like I'm doing now) with no complaints.	5/31/2023 2:38 PM
2	n/a	4/17/2023 8:46 AM
3	More planning times (I get one 43-minute time to plan a day and usually have to cover a class) as well as more strict discipline in my building would make it so I take less work home and have less parent phone calls (5-10 calls daily).	4/9/2023 7:27 PM
4	In my position, I hope they don't change the master schedules at both schools that it would affect my Band programs. I will say that several Band and Choral programs are suffering in West Virginia because of scheduling issues (i.e. block scheduling, counties requiring more credits to graduate than the state minimum, Band/Choir/Other Ensemble classes not getting its class scheduled for every day). Some administrators are aware that their Music programs are dwindling in Music, but won't take action to correct the issues as suggested by their Music teachers and/or Music education experts.	4/6/2023 2:11 PM
5	To find that spark inside my students to want to sing and learn how to sing properly.	4/6/2023 9:47 AM
6	More time for planning during contract hours Better overall sentiment toward arts education from colleagues and administrators	4/6/2023 7:21 AM
7	Controlled classroom sizes in the K-2 environment is a big factor why I don't plan on leaving WV for a similar position. Teachers that have lower elementary levels report having up to 40+ students in a K classroom with no aide. The recent bill passed to add an aide to all first grade classes is a huge success for next year. We are all excited to have extra hands!	4/5/2023 8:23 PM
8	More support from parents/community	4/5/2023 7:26 PM
9	Increase in staffing according to the number of students enrolled in my program.	4/5/2023 10:09 AM
10	I'm sorry, but I am retiring this year, so no amount of benefits, etc. would entice me to stay.	4/5/2023 8:47 AM
11	Nothing.	3/20/2023 2:14 PM
12	Seeing students learn Support and encouragement from students and coworkers	3/19/2023 7:33 AM
13	If the schedule were crafted to benefit or not detract from the arts programs at my school, it would create a better working environment for me.	3/8/2023 1:26 PM
14	Better scheduling from administration	3/6/2023 11:32 AM
15	I believe that my skill set may be better appreciated and utilized in a different setting than where I am currently. I have never seen this position as something that I wanted permanently.	3/5/2023 10:34 PM
16	My students are the biggest reason to stay. They love singing and they put in so much hard work and effort into being the best they can be. Their energy, love, and passion for choral music keeps my chin up most days.	3/3/2023 7:29 AM
17	Students being successful in music makes me love my job. Their joy at learning, and success at singing or playing an instrument is why I teach. Seeing them succeed in middle and high school music programs is what encourages me to the most to continue teaching music.	2/23/2023 9:01 PM
18	The satisfaction of high-quality music making with my students is the only thing keeping me in secondary education.	2/21/2023 3:14 PM

## Music Educator Turnover in West Virginia

19	A 45 minute 5 day a week band class in which 5-8 grades can participate. Appreciation WVSSAC and Band Masters supporting us against admin who does not care. Funding for our programs restored. Our subject treated the same way as others. Stop cramming testing down our throats and eventually work to end standardized testing or at least the high stakes that go with it.	2/19/2023 7:56 PM
20	Duty equality throughout the staff. I have 3 (ninety minutes of my day) duties while some teachers have none.	2/17/2023 9:27 PM
21	Student performance opportunities for school, community as well as in and out of state options Increased support and recognition of performing arts in our schools and communities. Our student performers deserve to be recognized just as our student athletes are in my opinion.	2/17/2023 2:59 PM
22	More funding, less interruptions during class time, and more substitutes. Many times, if one of the specials teachers is out, we do not have a substitute and we have to divide and conquer unprepared.	2/16/2023 2:21 PM
23	There is nowhere else in my immediate location (within 1.5 hours of my home) that would provide me the size and quality of program that I am currently with, and therefore the opportunities that come with that.	2/15/2023 11:25 AM
24	Receiving adequate compensation for after school rehearsals and performances. Feeling valued and respected by upper level administration.	2/14/2023 4:28 PM
25	1. Reinstate former funding levels before the county central office decided to cut funding. 2. Change the culture in the school environment to a safe and positive learning environment for all students, and not just athletes. 3. Provide better technology infrastructure	2/14/2023 12:17 PM
26	1. One of the biggest issues is the lack of recognition and reimbursement for the extra time that every teacher puts in. We should be able to keep track of time that we spend after work doing things that need done and either get paid for it or be able to use it for exchange time. For example, our county is doing an all county choir that requires 7 different 2 hour rehearsals--and nobody is getting paid for that. As far as I am concerned, I should be able to use a personal day and not be docked for it because I've worked those extra 14 hours (and more) already outside of my school day. OR--pay me for this extra time! I refuse to work for free so my kids will not be participating. As far as money goes, teachers at my school have even been asked to donate money for rewards for the kids for our PBIS program . I don't come to work to give money--I come to MAKE money. 2. Obviously, a pay increase would be motivation to stay. 3. This is going to be a very unpopular answer, but the trend towards pushing kids that it is perfectly ok and normal at 11-14 years old to decide that you want to be a transgender person and change your pronouns AND I AM NOT SUPPOSED TO "OUT" THE KIDS TO THE PARENTS is completely asinine. Parents need to be involved with major decisions like this and the fact that I am supposed to support such behavior and keep parents at bay is not something I will ever get behind. And for a student to be able to change their name at 11-14 years old and not involve the parents is NOT OK. 4. I understand the PBIS approach, but there needs to be more done about the kids who couldn't care less about getting a ticket and therefore continually misbehave. We have ZERO consequences for kids who misbehave (other than lunch detention, which in itself is not enough) and the kids know this and continue to misbehave because they know there are no consequences. We have asked the office for support for this for years, and still nothing is done. 5. They have been talking about taking away, changing, reducing, etc. our sick leave and personal leave. They need to leave it alone or make it better--not reduce it. 6. We got a passive aggressive message from our county superintendent at the beginning of the year that talked about "be present to succeed." They tell us to take care of ourselves and that they care about our mental health (which may require a mental health day now and then) but yet we are greeted at the very beginning of the year with a message that tells us we need to get to school?!?!? How about some actual support for us if we need to take days. And they need to stop being so strict with the sick and personal day usage. One of my colleagues was forced to take days without pay to attend her daughter's wedding IN ITALY because she was not allowed to use sick and personal days in tandem. I get that this shouldn't be allowed to be abused but in a special situation like this she should have been supported, not punished.	2/14/2023 10:46 AM
27	More opportunities to work with my students, my current administration, increase in planning time.	2/10/2023 2:40 PM
28	A big concern is that the district admin gives lip-service to us doing a "great job" but still grossly under funds the programs we have. Far too much time is spent fundraising for basic	2/10/2023 10:40 AM

## Music Educator Turnover in West Virginia

	instructional needs.	
29	The same respect from board members, admin, colleagues that is afforded to the football and track teams.	2/9/2023 8:33 PM
30	An additional hired teacher to help with work load	2/9/2023 8:21 PM
31	More parental support/encouragement for students.	2/9/2023 7:40 AM
32	Open minded students	2/8/2023 8:33 PM
33	Additional staffing, restructuring of music programs, long term strategic plan with admin to bolster ensemble participation, moving away from 9 week general music rotations.	2/7/2023 10:32 PM
34	Supplemental contracts that are more reflective of the time spent outside of the classroom in preparation for performances and other events.	2/6/2023 1:58 PM
35	Pay for extra rehearsal hours.	2/6/2023 1:25 PM
36	Discipline beyond my control would help ease the pain of having to work 2 jobs just to slip by :)	2/6/2023 11:43 AM
37	A national program, endorsed by all the states, that would value teachers rather than attack them as "woke" or "groomers" or whatever other grossly untrue term they wish to brand us.	2/6/2023 7:47 AM
38	I am near retirement and will stay in this position regardless, but being able to work fewer after school hours, being better compensated, and the county showing more attention and respect to our music program would sure make me a lot happier.	2/4/2023 3:58 PM
39	Continuing education founding or reimbursement would be great.	2/4/2023 10:13 AM
40	I do not have any.	2/3/2023 7:52 PM
41	Right now, I can think of nothing. Overall, I am happy.	2/3/2023 5:12 PM
42	Teaching a multitude of different grades (4-12) creates variety in my schedule and adds to the level of enjoyment I get through teaching. This allows for greater bonds with students, as I have them in class for multiple years.	2/3/2023 3:43 PM
43	n/a	2/3/2023 1:29 PM
44	The biggest thing that would get me to stay in this job forever is not being shared. A second motivator would be higher pay. A third would be more realistic expectations and a better schedule.	2/3/2023 12:07 PM
45	Better funding for the Arts by the school and by our county board. Currently we receive nothing .	2/3/2023 11:09 AM
46	More equitable pay; fair compensation for the amount of time on the job.	2/3/2023 9:34 AM
47	Trying to provide a thorough music education to help make them well rounded humans.	2/3/2023 8:24 AM
48	Acceptable level of stress and expectation	2/2/2023 10:19 PM

## APPENDIX G: Interview Transcriptions

**Teacher 1:**

Researcher - All right, thank you so much for agreeing to be interviewed. My first question is, what do you look forward to most when you report to school every day?

Teacher - Seeing my students.

Researcher - Wonderful. Question number two is, in your daily work, what do you not look forward to?

Teacher - Interruptions and I guess unnecessary administrative tasks. I guess mundane administrative tasks.

Researcher - Got it. Question number three is, when was the last time you thought about leaving your current teaching position?

Teacher - Of course you know my situation. So, this is only my second year in, and I love being home. Okay, let's see. I'm going to elaborate just a little bit. Let me say around testing time, the thoughts of, this isn't fun anymore, even ran through my head, even though I really kind of love what I currently do. It just, there's so much that makes it not fun whenever we have to stop, you know, being creative.

Researcher- Right. So that was kind of question number four. So I'm going to skip ahead to question number five. Would you recommend your school and district to teachers seeking employment? Why or why not?

Teacher - On one hand, yes, because if I would recommend somebody it would be because I believe in them, and I think they would be a good candidate and we need some strong teachers. We need some good teachers in this district to build it back up again. And then of course to play devil's advocate on the other side. I guess it would depend on the person, but we need strong people here. That's the only way place back up.

Researcher - Question number six is what could tempt you to leave your current position?

Teacher - If they would undermine the program that the music teachers here in my county have worked so hard to build up. You know with scheduling issues or financial support or just actually just moral support, community support. If that would fall out that would be yeah that would be a real deterrent.

Researcher – Got it. Question number seven is what are some of the best parts of your job?

Teacher - Feeling like we are good representatives of our school and our district. That we, you know, the kids when they're in performance mode, and they're not always, kids are different. I've been teaching long enough. Kids are different. But, when you have those moments, those golden moments, I guess, when they're performing and they feel pride and they feel prideful of

representing the group that they're with, the school... those are the, that's what makes it all worth it. So, I guess those performance moments are when you feel like you're making a difference or when a kid comes to you and you're the best part of their day, you know.

Researcher - Question number eight is what parts of your job would you eliminate if you had the power to do so?

Teacher - I don't want to say paperwork because I guess everything is on the computer now. But just the amount of administrative tasks. Those kinds of things that have to be done, that used to be done by other people. Again, I've been teaching long enough that there are things that we do now as part of our job that were never part of our job, like evaluating ourselves, principals used to do that. You know, clerical work for our budget and our, you know, for our departments that used to be done at an administrative level, you know, administrative assistant level, whether it was the school level or county level and now we have to do that. You know, budgets. And, you know, I'm not an accountant. I'm not, you know, I'm not an administrator. I'm a teacher. And I feel like they've kind of put a lot of those tasks that used to belong to administrators and... I hate to say secretarial staff, but those kinds of tasks have been put on teachers over the last, I would say 20, 15, 20 years maybe 10, 15 years that never used to exist.

Researcher – Interesting. Number nine is, what would make your job more satisfying.

Teacher - I guess student enthusiasm, and I don't know if this has happened since, and this is something I question myself all the time, and other teachers, we have conversations. I don't know if the pandemic is, and we blame a lot on the pandemic, and I don't know if that the complete reason. Societal changes. There's just been a lot that's happened to us in a small amount of time that kids are apathetic, more apathetic. They don't have a lot of confidence. They lack creativity, and I don't know if that starts from home or from school, if it was pandemic related, you know, if I were feeling the effects of that now, but there's just something different about the clientele. You know, there's just something different and I can't put my fingers on it, but that, that is bothersome.

Researcher - Yeah. Number 10 is, what could your administration do more of or less of to keep you in your work?

Teacher - I think recognizing the program, recognizing the students in our program as being advocates of the school, representatives of the school. You know? And I'm not saying that they don't do that, they do that to an extent. But being present at the things that we do, to show the kids they support them in that, in the arts realm. It seems to be more sports heavy. You'll always see an administrator at a sporting event, and I love sports, nothing against sports. But I feel like we need to have that same... it needs to be equal. There's not equality in that. And they're not extracurricular, because the arts are not extracurricular. The arts are co-curricular, or core curriculum and you know all that. But I don't think we're treated as that. We're kind of treated as a sub, or a, you know, not as important.

Researcher - Number 11 is, what do you think of the professional development opportunities in your school district?

Teacher - Um... Well... I don't know. I guess there's some benefit to it. And maybe it's because I've been teaching so long. So, this coming year will be my 30th year teaching. I started in 93. Um... And... It's not, okay, so, professional development in general that I've seen in the last, in the recent years, is not student-centered. It's more, more, well how do I want to put it? It's not instructional, it's not instructional centered. It's centered more on all the things that we have to deal with outside of instruction. Emotional health, mental health, and not that that's not a huge part of the changes that have happened in education, in public education, the past several years. It's not that those things aren't important, but I'd like to see more equality in, bring me something that's gonna be related to get me excited about teaching my content again. Bring me something that's gonna get me excited about, you know, opening a student, you know, broadening knowledge instead of... and I don't wanna say instead of. I think both are important, but I think that it's been really heavily centered on teachers being more emotional behavioral support than academic support and therefore what has been suffering is academics. It's just an observation and maybe I'm just old and I don't think I'm cranky but that's just an observation. I'd like to see it to be a little a little bit more equality between the behavioral and the academic.

Researcher - Number 12 is, what do you think of the mentoring opportunities in your school district?

Teacher - I know they exist, but I don't really see a lot... in the position I'm in currently, I don't see that happening. Okay. Just pure to point blank.

Researcher - Number 13 is, do you feel valued and recognized in your school district?

Teacher - On a scale of 1 to 10, I'd go a 7 or an 8. Yes, in some instances and no in others, I guess. It depends on the occasion, you know.

Researcher - Right. Number 14 is, what could your administration do to make you feel more valued?

Teacher - I guess, again, just their presence and acknowledgement... via, acknowledgement amongst students, acknowledgement amongst peers, and the community, you know, when we do our, their, what do you have, the School Improvement Council presentations to the Board of Education. And not that we don't get some mentions, some years, but just I guess their presence and recognition, but more their presence.

Researcher - Right. Number 15 is what is your school district currently doing or not doing that you feel they should? Sorry, let me rephrase that. What is your school district currently not doing that you feel they should?

Teacher - Retaining teachers and making this a vibrant and.... And... what would you call it? An alluring place to work, something to attract good educators. I don't think we're doing that.

Researcher - Number 16 is what do you feel your school district should change?



Teacher - I think we're top-heavy, administratively, from the very top, from the county office down. I think we've got not enough people working directly with students. We have a lot of people looking at the problems and looking at data and all that kind of stuff, but they're not in the trenches with the kids. We need more people; we need more adults with kids.

Researcher - Got it.

Teacher - Period.

Researcher - Yeah. Number 17 is, do you have the appropriate materials and resources to properly do your job. If not, what are you in need of?

Teacher - And because I have worked in multiple counties, I know that in a lot of ways, they're very fortunate here to have, we have been very supported that way for a long time. I've worked in other counties where music departments and arts departments have to fund raise for basic things and we really don't have to do that. So I feel fortunate as far as resources, just because I've worked other places where they don't have them.

Researcher - Right. Number 18 is, do you feel you have a voice in your school and district? Explain why or why not.

Teacher - In my school, probably, maybe a little bit. District... with some people. Yeah, so I guess I would scale it 1 to 10, somewhere in the middle, because they know that the arts programs here, that they make, that is one of the positives, one of the things that has at least maintained some integrity in our district.

Researcher – Next is, do you feel you have autonomy in your classroom? Explain why or why not.

Teacher – Yeah... you mean like so control over my areas?

Researcher - Yeah, control over what you decide to teach and how you teacher it.

Teacher - Yes, I think we definitely do have that. Now, of course I say that and then, you know, they give us, they say, well tell us why you, you know, how you want to... for electives. Of course, some things are unchangeable and then some things do change with the time, but they ask us but they don't always present that information to the student body, versus at the high school level. So, you know we had some electives and some really, that we had written up descriptions and according to the student, you see, you get two different stories. The students, they really don't, they didn't get to see all of the descriptions of the courses before they had to do their scheduling survey or whatever. So, I guess it's a yes and no. Yeah, they ask our opinion and we can kind of create our own, I mean, you know, we have the guideline, but we do have a lot of say-so in how we structure our curriculum. However, when it comes to what we offer, then sometimes we're pigeonholed into other things because they don't get the information out to the kids that might want to expand on other opportunities that they don't even know exist or could exist.

Researcher - Right. And my final question is, what are the main reasons keeping you in your current position?

Teacher - Well, obviously income and insurance. Income, insurance, and retirement. That's just to be quite blunt. I would have... used to be, and I'm gonna put forth just because I've been doing this so long. It would have been opposite, I guess, I would say, it would, it would have been opposite ten years ago. I still would have said, oh, I just love what I do, I don't care what they pay me. But... But, you know, life happens and now I have to support myself and my son and my household and... I'm looking to my own health and well-being and how sometimes I've let my job get in the way of my health and well-being. And that wasn't me ten years ago. I have a different philosophy now. I do love my job. I do love my students, and I love, you know, there are lots of things I love about my job. But it brings upon a lot of stress if you work in a music program and an arts program. People that work in our field pour their heart and soul into it. And if you teach high school, it becomes your life. You know, and you have to kind of know that going in. You're giving more than just... it's not a 9-to-5 job, it's not a 4 or whatever, 7-to-3, it's not. It's just not that. You carry it with you 24-7, you know. And that is taxing. So, I'm at the point in my career that I still love those things, but... I'm looking to how many more years until I can just have my own, because my youngest is getting ready to graduate, and I'm kind of, I'm ready to phase out a little bit... a little bit. But... I also want to feel fulfilled in what I do. There's just so many sides.... So many aspects to it. I'm still excited about it. There's still things I want to do. I'm not ready to go yet because I have personal goals for myself and for my school and my district. And I really, really want to accomplish those before I go. So I have that motivation, but also I know that if I hit the power ball tomorrow, I don't think I would leave right away. Honestly, I mean, it probably would take, because I would want to make sure that my kids, the kids are okay, and the program's gonna be okay. But, you know, in the end, it's probably all about, you know, the money and looking towards your own future, your own, you know, and you have to be.... as you get older you become a little more selfish and I don't think that's a bad thing right that makes any sense and I'm that was a complete ramble sorry.

Researcher – That's okay. All right, well thank you so much. I'm going to stop the recording now.

**Teacher 2:**

Researcher - All right, thanks again so much for allowing me to interview you. My first question is, what do you look forward to most when you report to school every day?

Teacher - I think I look forward to the building of musical skills and making beautiful music with the students. If we create one moment of unity during the day, that's usually enough for me to get that musical high where I feel like, okay, we did something cool today. I can go home and feel at ease.

Researcher - Right, I love that. Question number two is, in your daily work, what do you not look forward to?

Teacher - May is a really interesting time to ask that question.

Researcher - Yes, I know.

Teacher - I think we're all feeling a little jaded, possibly. I think I don't look forward to interacting with students who don't want to be in music classes. They fight it, they don't want to be there. It's a pain for them and for me. So that's what I look forward to the least.

Researcher – Okay, number three is, what was, or sorry, when was the last time you thought about leaving your current position?

Teacher - I don't know, I'm going to laugh a lot during this I feel. Is every day an okay answer?

Researcher - Yes, it is. Yes it is. And that will probably, that will lead into my next question, what was a situation that made you consider leaving?

Teacher - Um, recently I was verbally attacked and threatened by a parent and then she and her son posted horrible lies on social media and I was just... They had no reason to be mad at me, I was the messenger, but they were nasty. And you know, we sometimes have to deal with crazy people. And that happened right during All-County Choir Festival and two weeks before our musical. So, it was so much drama and dealing with crazy people, I think that has pushed me over the edge more than once.

Researcher - Yeah, I totally get that. I think most of us have been there at some point. I'm sorry that happened.

Teacher - Thanks.

Researcher - Question five is, would you recommend your school/district to teachers seeking employment? Why or why not?

Teacher – No. Which I feel guilty even saying that. My school, hum, My school canceled choir two years ago. Rather than put the former choir teacher on a plan of improvement, they got rid of the choir program.

Researcher - Wow.

Teacher - So, I'm building it back. There was no choir for a year and a half, and now I'm slowly building the numbers back up and everything. But I think that was handled so poorly and my district as a whole, the arts aren't the focus, rather athletics are, which may be true everywhere, but... I don't know. And we're losing so much enrollment that teachers are being cut and no, if a new teacher were coming out of college, I would say, don't come here.

Researcher - Question number six is, what could tempt you to leave your current position?

Teacher - The wind could be blowing the right way. The real answer is just a better opportunity. It's been a good experience building a high school program from nothing. And they're definitely improving and they've quadrupled in size and still getting even bigger with auditions this week. But I'm still sometimes plagued with doubt. Am I building this so it can just be cut again? Or am I in the right place? And I do continue looking at opportunities that arise and think maybe that would be a good fit. So really, it's day to day with me at this point.

Researcher - Right. Number seven is, what are some of the best parts of your job?

Teacher - My advanced choir. They work hard and I enjoy them, we laugh together, we enjoy making music, we enjoy growing as musicians together. I started with five, I had a quintet at the beginning of last year, and now there are 24 of them, and I really do enjoy them. So yeah, seventh period, classics, is my favorite part of the day.

Researcher – Wonderful. Question 8 is, what parts of your job would you eliminate if you had the power to do so?

Teacher - Any of the classes that exist just for numbers, because they have to put high school bodies somewhere. I would get rid of all those classes.

Researcher – Yeah. Question 9, what would make your job more satisfying?

Teacher - Having students who had been in a choir before and knew what choir was and not having to start from scratch, because I don't have any feeder programs at the middle schools. So they haven't had choir since elementary school, if they even had it there. And so it's complete, this is what a choir does, and that can be, you know rewarding but also tiresome and they can struggle sometimes and chafe against having to learn about rehearsal skills.

Researcher - Right. Question number 10 is, what could your administration do more of or less of to keep you in your work?

Teacher - My administration has been great. I will say since they hired me to bring back the program they've been very supportive. Anything I asked for as far as classes... after year one I asked for a music theory class, they gave it to me. After year two I said can I please have an advanced ensemble to teach the all-state music and do chamber music and small things and they gave that speech so they've been very supportive of anything I asked. A budget, a budget that's realistic would be really helpful.

Researcher - Number 11 is, what do you think of the professional development opportunities in your district?

Teacher - They're almost always irrelevant to the arts. Um... Yeah, that's what I think. Irrelevant.

Researcher - I've heard that a lot in these interviews. Question 12 is, what do you think of the mentoring opportunities in your school district?

Teacher - Um... It's hit or miss. My mentor when I was a new teacher was an older teacher in the building who got a stipend for helping me. And he was actually wonderful. Just at the basics of teaching, like this is how to take attendance so they're not crazy, and this is how to set up your rules and do basic classroom management. He was actually really helpful and sweet. I think now they do, there are beginning teacher mentors who are supposed to be professional helpers and I think the beginning teachers resent them coming into their classroom and telling them what to do. So I'm not so sure it's a great thing. But it does exist.

Researcher - All right. Question number 13 is, do you feel valued and recognized in your school and district?

Teacher - Um, do any of us? Really? Um, maybe for a day after the musical or the day after the concert and then they all forget about us. Um, that's again, may be jaded. The... yes and no. It helped after I presented at the state conference. But I came back from Hungary after a year of international study and international teaching, and my district didn't even ask me to present to the other music teachers or tell them anything. Like, it's been weird, but it's also being an outsider when you don't do show choir in a show choir county. Like, that's a little bit of it as well. So, um, but I've made friends with the other teachers and I think relationships have been built, it's just slow.

Researcher - Right. Number 14 is, what could your administration do to make you feel more valued?

Teacher - I think promote... make a school environment where people actually befriend each other. My school is so strange and maybe all high schools are this way. And I'm new to being a high school teacher. I taught elementary for eight years and then middle school for 11 years. And so now, in high school, I'm really puzzled. Even going into year three, the teachers in the different departments don't really talk to each other. So the English teachers don't talk to the math teachers. And none of them talk to the arts teachers. So, it's very segregated and I think the administration could make the school a more welcoming place.

Researcher - Yeah. Number 15 is, what is your school and district currently not doing that you feel they should?

Teacher - I think teacher education in their content area needs to be improved drastically, especially in the arts. As of right now, \*\*\*\*\* County sends the elementary teachers for one year of Orff training, and the secondary teachers, they don't send them for anything. And I really just think everybody needs further training after college. It's not enough. So I personally go to trainings every year of some kind just to improve and like keep learning and because this is not only my job but my passion. So, I want to learn something new every summer, but I have to pay for it all out of pocket, which I realize not everyone can do. So, I think the county could definitely support teacher learning, send people for more Orff training, more Orff, one level... you barely know what it is, you really need all three. Send people for Kodaly training, for conducting training, all the things that would make us stronger arts teachers. I really think they should invest in us.

Researcher - Yeah. Number 16 is, what do you feel your school district should change?

Teacher - I think they should stop being so reactive to parent complaints and demands. It seems like everything they do is reactive to what the parents say. And I get that we are here to help the community and to help students learn. But I don't think it's Burger King where they should be able to get everything the way they want it.

Researcher - Right, exactly. My next question, question 17, is, do you have the appropriate materials and resources to do your job properly? If not, what are you in need of?

Teacher - Okay, that's a two-sided one for me. Currently, yes, I have everything I need, but also that's because I fundraise to buy what I need. My budget for the year is ridiculous. I think the county gives me \$200 for the whole year. So then everything else was through fundraising.

Researcher - Wow. Yeah. That's insane.

Teacher - It's totally nuts.

Researcher - Number 18 is, do you feel you have a voice in your school and district? Explain why or why not.

Teacher - Okay, I... We do have local teacher meetings once a month where we talk everything out and everyone has pretty good relationships with each other, so I will say yes, we have a voice as far as that goes. Yes.

Researcher - Okay. Good. 19 is, do you feel you have autonomy in your classroom? Explain why or why not.

Teacher - Yes, however, I think that's because no one is paying attention. I went for several years in my middle school job where literally no one came into my room for years. And I know what's going on and I know good things are happening, but no one was paying any attention. And my

new school is a little better than that, but not a lot. So, yeah, there's autonomy, but there's also apathy.

Researcher - And no accountability other than, we know you're a good teacher, so you're doing a good job, but that is not true for everyone.

Teacher - Right. And you really can't judge a program only by the concerts, either.

Researcher - Exactly.

Teacher - So, and that's a lot of what's happening, I think, is, oh, the concert was great, so everything must be hunky-dory.

Researcher - My final question for you is, what are the main reasons keeping you in your current position?

Teacher - Um, I want to stay near my family, so that's been my main reason for staying local... is I don't want to go too far away so that I'm not helpful to them.

Researcher – All right. Well, at this time I'm going to go ahead and stop the recording.

**Teacher 3:**

Researcher - Thank you so much for allowing me to interview you today. My first question for you is, what do you look forward to most when you report to school every day?

Teacher - My favorite part of reporting to school every day is working with my students, seeing how much effort that they put into their music and hearing their stories that they've been waiting to tell me. Having a strong and safe relationship with my students is very important.

Researcher - Thank you. Question number two is, in your daily work what do you not look forward to every day?

Teacher - I do not look forward to confrontation or unnecessary interruptions from administration or other staff.

Researcher - Question number three is, when was the last time you thought about leaving your current position?

Teacher – Today, because I am leaving my current position.

Researcher - Understood. Question number four is, what was a situation that made you consider leaving?

Teacher - My consideration for leaving comes from confrontational, abusive, and unprofessional administration.

Researcher - Question number five is, would you recommend your school district to teachers seeking employment? Why or why not?

Teacher – No. I have actively told highly quailed peers to avoid applying in my district. Especially women. I do not want them to experience what I have.

Researcher - This next one may not apply, but what other factors could tempt you to leave a position like the one you're currently in?

Teacher - Other factors, include support from the community, that's very important with music, and healthy relationships with parents.

Researcher - Okay. Number seven is what are some of the best parts of your job?

Teacher - My students are number one. I also really enjoy my current course schedule and a small handful of my coworkers really make my day enjoyable.

Researcher - Number eight is, what parts of your job would you eliminate if you had the power to do so?



Teacher – I would eliminate the amount of power that parents and community members are given over professional matters, specifically in curriculum and content in the classroom. Also with auditions, audition decisions in the realm of music. Part of my reason for leaving is the discussions and decisions about my position, my classroom, my students that have been made behind my back with the admin and community members.

Researcher - Question number nine is, what would make your job more satisfying?

Teacher - Something that would make my job satisfying is actually having the support and communication that is meaningful and being respected as the instrumental music professional in my school, in my district, and in my community.

Researcher - Question number ten is, what could your administration do more of or less of to keep you in your work?

Teacher - I think this relates a lot to what I said in number 9, the last question. Just letting me do my job, supporting my decisions as a professional, not questioning those decisions, and just understanding that I'm the instrumental music professional and coming to me for those questions rather than making uneducated decisions.

Researcher - Question 11 is, what do you think of the professional development opportunities in your district?

Teacher - My professional development opportunities within the district have not been helpful at all. They've honestly been a waste of my time. We've tried to have vertical music teaming in my district in the past and then our middle school administration have not allowed their music teachers to attend, which that is, there's only middle and high instrumental music in my county, and so that kind of makes that pointless for me as well because I'm not able to vertical team on paid time with my co-workers at the middle school.

Researcher – Number 12 is, what do you think of the mentoring opportunities in your school and district?

Teacher - I personally had a really great mentoring experience but I think in the district as a whole... I think that they're an afterthought and there's no follow-through.

Researcher - Number 13 is, do you feel valued and recognized in your school and district?

Teacher – No, I do not at all.

Researcher - Number 14 is what could your administration do to make you feel more valued?

Teacher - Give me the support and let me do my job. I think this goes back to previous questions again with the value of support and understanding that I'm a professional when it comes to instrumental music.

Researcher - Question number 15 is, what is your school slash district currently not doing that you feel they should?

Teacher - Giving support and respect to highly qualified teachers. I feel like the teachers that I see leaving the district are the ones that are the most qualified and often times they're going to other nearby districts and that includes music teachers, and we end up with a lot of not highly qualified teachers in the district so just really giving that support and respect to those teachers.

Researcher - Question 16, what do you feel your school district should change?

Teacher - I think there's a deeply flawed foundation in West Virginia schools, and especially in my district. I think there's just a complete separation between decisions made by administration and actually listening to the needs of teachers. Because teachers will know what students need, and teachers know what works in their classroom. I feel like we're moving in the opposite direction, telling them to reinvent the wheel every single year.

Researcher - Question 17 is, do you have the appropriate materials and resources to do your job properly? If not, what are you in need of?

Teacher - There's a lot of ingenuity that happens in my classroom based on equipment needs, especially with high school band. What we need more of are large instruments that are in working condition. A lot of them are from the 1960s. So, dealing with that and also funding for purchasing music in general. Our library is outdated and not necessarily what I need for the instrumentalists in my classroom. I do not have locking instrument cubbies, so students' personal items as well as school instruments are subject to, you know, people just coming into the room and messing with them. And my school district also has been wearing the same band uniforms for 20 years. So, those uniforms need replaced fairly soon.

Researcher - Do you feel, this is question 18, do you feel you have a voice in your school or district? Explain why or why not.

Teacher - I do not. I've mentioned some of the needs, like some of the equipment and facility needs that I mentioned above, and receiving the support and support from my students. And I have not received that support in return. If anything, there's just been conversations had about these matters behind my back and without my opinion being valued or taken seriously in those matters.

Researcher - Okay number 19 is do you feel you have autonomy in your classroom explain why or why not?

Teacher - I do not because I feel like decisions are made without me even being included in the conversation. In terms of day-to-day with the content that I teach I feel like I have autonomy but when it comes to the large, overarching decisions, and when it comes to scope and sequence of my classroom and the future of the band program, I don't have the support and I don't have the line of communication necessary to make those decisions. And I feel like if anything I get scolded for bringing up concerns or trying to have a voice in this matter.

Researcher - Okay, and the final question, number 20, may not be applicable, obviously, but what are the main reasons keeping your job? If there were some things that you could identify that would keep you here, what would they be?

Teacher - Well obviously I'm not standing in my current position, but something that would keep me here is not just the voice of there is support and appreciation for what I do, but actual actions, like being asked questions by administration and the Board of Education on what the needs are in my classroom. My students are a very visible community representation of the school system, and there's an expectation for them to be in the public eye and to look good and sound good, but then there's no support to back it and that's turning into a cycle of they don't have the support to perform their best and it's becoming less and less appealing to the community and it's concerning. So, just really having that support from the district to build that public eye would benefit both parties and I feel like having that type of discussion and open narrative with my district would have kept me here.

Researcher - I fully understand. Thank you so much for allowing me to interview you today and I'm going to stop the recording now.

**Teacher 4:**

Researcher - All right, thank you so much. My first question for you is what do you look forward to most when you report to school every day?

Teacher - Honestly, working with the kids is really fun. I like that our job is consistent and I have the same schedule most days. Most things are consistent. I know what to expect, but at the same time, no day is the exact same. Like, every day is different, and so it doesn't get monotonous in doing the same thing over and over and over again. So, I just enjoy seeing how the kids show up every day and how we grow through the year, and just doing things like that. So, that's what I think I enjoy the most.

Researcher - Awesome. Question number two is, in your daily work, what do you not look forward to?

Teacher - I'm not a fan of paperwork. If there's any paperwork involved.... not a huge fan. The times when other things interfere with my job that I don't necessarily agree that they should interfere. Like when they're getting called out regularly for different meetings or if they're getting pulled out for testing prep. Like, I have students in my general music class who miss one to two days a week so that they can go take a testing prep kind of class and get extra help. So, different things like that I don't like. Right now in our county the seventh and the eighth grade actually lose an entire half day of instruction every single week to go to a STEAM academy. Rather than providing teachers in the individual schools to do that, they're bussing them all the way across the county. And so, I miss, I lose my seventh-grade class every Thursday. And so that, things like that are what I don't necessarily enjoy, but it is what it is.

Researcher - Yeah, that's crazy.

Teacher - Yes, yes. We made state honor band with my seventh graders losing one day of instruction every week.

Researcher - Wow. Well, that's very commendable. My third question for you is, when was the last time you thought about leaving your current teaching position?

Teacher - Not leaving teaching, leaving my current position?

Researcher - Correct.

Teacher - Because of family situation stuff, I mean, just this week. But it's not because I'm unhappy at my current position. My wife has interviewed for a job, and if she gets it, we would have to move to Pennsylvania. So that's, yeah.

Researcher - I understand. So, that kind of goes with my next question, which is, what was the situation that made you consider leaving. So, I will go ahead and skip that since we've already answered it.

Teacher – Yeah sure.

Researcher - So question number five is, would you recommend your school and district to teachers seeking employment? Why or why not?

Teacher - Yes. If they're actively wanting to stay in West Virginia, I would absolutely recommend \*\*\*\*\* County to them if they are looking at staying, if they're really kind of interested in going to other states, I would not. Just because, you know, in surrounding states they can get paid more money to do the exact same thing with a lot of times with better supplies and better support for what they're doing in different states. But if they're intent on staying in West Virginia and want to stay in West Virginia, I think \*\*\*\*\* County's a great place to work. The superintendent is an arts person. Her uncle is actually, was \*\*\*\*\* \*\*\*\*\*, who's a well-known, respected music educator and a master teacher. And so she's one of the few that she really puts her money where her mouth is. Band directors in \*\*\*\*\* County, as a middle school band director, I actually get a 220 contract to teach 20 days in the summer. You know, the high school band directors get a 240 contract. After I had some conversations with the county, they now pay for all of our music without question. If I want a new set of music they give me band books. They'll buy me an entirely new set with just me asking. They pay for all of my band literature that I want. They'll do the same thing for choir.

They just, they actually, I think respect what we do and do what they can to support us. And generally, when I have you know concerns, they're very, very willing to listen. So I think out of many counties in West Virginia, we are one of the better ones to work. Like I've had actual, my high school alumni program is opening up, is actually posted right now. And people are like, oh, are you going to go take that job? And I'm like, absolutely not. And they're like, why not? And I said, because to be a high school band director in that county, I would only get paid for 215 days. With my assistantship for the high school here, on top of my regular contract, I get paid for 240 days, I'd take a 25-day pay cut to go to a different county so.

Researcher – Right, yeah those are important things to consider. My next question for you is, what could tempt you to leave your current position?

Teacher – I... on top of what we talked about, like my wife looking at persistence, I am starting to get a little bit of desire to want to move up to high school. I like working with middle school kids. I have the personality for it in many ways, but only having them for three years, it feels like it's constantly a rebuilding year because as soon as I get the eighth graders ready I send them up to the high school and that's just part of the job and that's okay but I definitely have started to feel that kind of desire to move up. But... at the same time, I also have a six-year-old and I am well aware that as a middle school director I have more room for freedom and more... to decide my own schedule and if I don't go a thousand, you know, go the extra mile every time, most people don't really mind that with a middle school position, whereas with a high school, there's a lot more calling on my time. You know?

Researcher - Right. Great, question number seven is, what are some of the best parts of your job?

Teacher - I work with a really great administrator. My principal is... I always say she's as supportive as she can be in the current educational climate. I mean, she can't give me everything that I want, but whenever I sit down and ask her for things, she always considers it. A lot of times she gives me what I ask for. When she can't, she always is willing to sit down and explain why. And most of the time when she tells me why, I completely understand and I have to go, you know, if I was a principal worried about the entire school, I'm not sure I wouldn't make the exact same decision.

So, I'm very lucky to have a very supportive administrator who really lets me do my job and supports me where she can and the rest of the time really leaves me alone for the most part, which is good. I also have a very supportive staff where I work. Again, I have a great superintendent who is art-friendly and supports us where she can. It's, you know, those kind of things. And then on top of that, I work with great kids. You know, I come from a blue-collar school, so a lot of the kids aren't really afraid to work. Their parents are supportive of what I do. I have a great booster organization.

You know, there's just a, there's a lot of pluses. And on top of that, my facilities at my school is probably one of the best, if not the best in the state. I have an auditorium connected to my band room with giant double doors so I can fit all my equipment through the doors and walk right on to the stage. You know, there's, there's just a lot of pluses where I am.

Researcher - Yeah. I like to hear that. Question number eight is, what parts of your job would you eliminate if you had the power to do so?

Teacher - This is a personal preference. I would eliminate general music. I'm just, I'm so wired and geared towards band that it just, it takes up so much of my time that I don't always feel like I do a great job with general music. Like, I mean I think it's important and I and I just can't give it the mental bandwidth that it truly deserves. So that would be something that I would change. Other than that, I've got a pretty great schedule. They let me have input on that. You know. That would be probably the only thing that I would change, is just moving away from general music and just letting me have just band stuff so I can concentrate on that. Because I did fifth grade through eighth grade band in my normal position, so.

Researcher - Right. And again, some of these questions may overlap, so if you feel you've already answered it, we can move on. But question number nine is, what would make your job more satisfying?

Teacher - Say that again, sorry.

Researcher - What could make your job more satisfying?

Teacher - Honestly, I mean, the things we all... get an unlimited budget, which we know is never going to happen. Having... I've got a lot of great kids, but there's definitely, I've noticed since COVID especially. I noticed a lot of kids just seem very apathetic in general. So, but that's, that's just a cultural thing. That's not something that's easily fixed unless you know, you could wave a magic wand to fix it. So, as far as... I mean, my facilities are great. My budget is good. My

boosters help provide what I need, like, that general kind of stuff. I'm good to go. It's the, it's the extra stuff that just, that goes beyond administrators and goes beyond us and just into the regular, you know, parents and community members and all that kind of stuff.

Researcher - Right. Question number 10 is, what could your administration do more of or less of to help keep you in your work?

Teacher - I mean aside from the general music comments I already made... not really much, because, I'm well aware I'm blessed, and so I don't complain about having one general music class a day. I just don't, because most places you go, that's most of what you do. And then if you're lucky, and then you basically have a band class that you teach. I'm the reverse. I teach 90% band, and then, you know, one class a day that's not band. So really there isn't much.

Researcher - Great. Number 11 is, what do you think of the professional development opportunities in your district?

Teacher - For the general classroom teacher, I think they're good. I think they're fine. For music and arts specialties, there's not really much offered. But, I also take partial responsibility for that in that I'm of the opinion it's our responsibility to help teach the county level what we need for our professional development. Like if I think we need something, it's my job to go and bring it to their attention and ask them to fix that. So, they don't really have much as far as the arts goes. I did just recently talk them into now when they have teacher work days across the county and they'll have like all of the English teachers meet or all of the science teachers meet or like case or like middle school level teachers of a certain subject will meet. They now, they already know and they just schedule it to where the band and the choir teachers meet separately and have their own kind of meeting so...

Researcher – Great, number 12 is, what do you think of the mentoring opportunities in your school district?

Teacher – Think of the mental what now?

Researcher – uh, mentoring opportunities?

Teacher – I think they're okay. I struggle with that in general and it's not even just in our county. I worked in \*\*\*\*\* County when I first started and it feels like, and this is I think mostly an arts problem, you know, I'm the only band director in my school. So, if I'm going to get a band director mentor, it's got to be a person from a different school with... and then they've got to travel all the way over to my school and it just it's a logistics kind of nightmare in that way. So, for arts specialties, I don't think it's great but I'm not sure how you solve that problem. For general classroom ed, I think it's decent. I, the one thing I would say, I wish they provided more opportunities where they would provide a sub and we could go watch seasoned teachers do what they do to get that kind of mentor relationship built in.

Researcher - Yeah, that's a great idea. Question number 14 is, what could your administration do to make you feel... Sorry, I skipped one. Number 13 is, do you feel valued and recognized in your school and district?

Teacher - Yes.

Researcher - Good. And then 14 is, what could your administration do to make you feel more valued?

Teacher - Honestly, not much. I would like to see more recognition, not even of me, of band programs and choir programs. They are willing to, if we contact them and reach out and bring up things that happened, they're willing to put it on the website, which is good, but at the same time, we kind of have to go bring that to them. Which I'm willing to do, but it would be nice if somebody actually had their eye on those things and just did it and we didn't have to do that. You know, like, right now I'm trying to fight to get our county PR person to do a write-up on my band, considering they made state honor band, they basically won a state championship if you're talking in sports terms... and I can't, it's like, I sent email three weeks ago and then I get an email back yesterday that's like to all of the band and choir directors saying "hey tell us what good things happen for your program this year so we can advertise that" so I'm kind of going, "okay that's not the same thing", but yeah that kind of is what it is too.

Researcher – Right, Number 15 is, what is your school district currently not doing that you feel they should?

Teacher - Oh that's a really great question. Honestly considering where we're at right now with education and post-COVID and all those things. I think in many ways they're doing what they can. I mean, we need more teachers. We need more bus drivers. I almost didn't get to go to Arts Alive yesterday because we couldn't get a bus. So it's things like that, but I'm not sure that there realistically is truly anything that the school district can do to fix those issues. Yeah.

Researcher - Okay, this next one again may be related, but it says... What do you feel your school district should change?

Teacher - The biggest thing that I feel like they could change is that that STEAM program changing it to where I'm not losing my kids one day a week. And it's not just me either, like they're losing a half day of instruction, so if they have English class during that half day, they lose a day of instruction for English class to go across the county to another facility where it's all enrichment programs. It's not based on anything they're doing in their other classes.

It's just an enrichment program. And so... but thankfully, they've already announced that they are not going to do it that way next year. So, they're just going to ensure that each school has, with the grant money they have for that next year, they're just going to ensure that there's a teacher in every building to teach STEAM. And that way, they're accomplishing the same thing and we won't lose our kids. That was the biggest thing and they've already announced that they're going to change that.



Researcher - Good. Number 17 is, do you have the appropriate materials and resources to do your job properly? If not, what are you in need of?

Teacher - There is not much that I'm in need of to do my job because I have a great booster organization and I asked them for what I need like, I just bought a harmony director. They just put in you know, \$5,000 into Getting... my room is huge, And so even the school put in like a 72 inch television And it was not big enough for my kids to see all around the room because the room is just so big so my boosters At my request put in a \$5,000 projector and screen so the kids all over the room can see it. You know there's not much that I need but I think... I've been, and I you know my boosters buy the instruments that I need but I've been talking with my boosters... of or with my county in the band world one big issue I see is they basically expect us to come up with our own instruments, and not all the schools have booster organizations. So they want us to come up with the instrument, then they don't have an allotted repair budget for each band program. So then, not only are you having to come up with the instrument, but you're also having to pay to have it repaired. It's just, that's the kind of thing that I'm trying to get through to them is, is there needs to be an allotted amount every year for every program to purchase new instruments. Cause I've been bringing it to their attention. There are instruments in most of the band rooms that are 70, 50, 60, 70 years old, and that's just not, that's just not acceptable. So that would be my biggest thing for most of the programs. I think there needs to be an established budget for each program to get new instruments on a regular basis. And then those instruments should be... the repairs for those instruments should be paid for by the county, not by, not asking principals to put that money forward because we all know they don't want to because they have other things that they need to pay for and that's just not high on our list.

Researcher - Right. Question 18 is, do you feel you have a voice in your school and district? Explain why or why not.

Teacher - I do, but that's mostly because... yes, it's been almost a decade ago... I started going to Conn-Selmer... offers a, every year offers a big professional development workshop. It's a three-day workshop in Indiana, and it's one of the things that they really impressed on me and that I picked up on is this idea that we really... we have to be our own advocates and we have to communicate, and we have to build the relationships. And so, from the time that I saw that, I have started, I started just going and meeting with the county representatives like our arts supervisor and our superintendent and I've just been building those bridges so that I have those relationships in place so that when I need something I know where to go to ask and it's not just me showing up out of the blue saying hey this is what I need, you know I'm communicating the good things that are happening and all that stuff and then occasionally when I need something I go to them and say "hey I need help with this." I do have that voice, but that's just because I've been building that for the last several years.

Researcher - 19 is, do you feel you have autonomy in your classroom? Explain why or why not.

Teacher – Do I have a what in my classroom?

Researcher – Autonomy. So...

Teacher – Oh, my... yeah, yes. Yes, I do.

Researcher – Good. And then number 20 is, what are the main reasons keeping you in your current position?

Teacher – Great principal. Probably the best one I've worked for in the 15 years I've been teaching. Great booster organization that fund raises and has, you know, we have about \$14,000 in our bank account right now. Great facilities, you know, I've got, my room is connected to a wonderful auditorium. You know, there's just, it's a lot of that kind of stuff. And then on top of that, as I've said, just good kids, it's a good community to work for, and good county support, like all the things we've been talking about through this whole conversation. I mean, there's just a lot of pluses. If my wife gets that job and I were to have to leave to go to Pennsylvania, I mean, that's going to be hard because I'm giving up on one of the best programs in the state and leaving great facilities and a great principal and a county that I've built inroads with to of the county reps. Like, there's going to be a lot there that I give up if I were to leave and go somewhere else.

Researcher - Right. Well, thank you so much. I'm going to end the recording now.

**Teacher 5:**

Researcher - All right, thank you so much for allowing me to interview you. My first question is, what do you look forward to most when you report to school every day?

Teacher - The smiles on the children's faces. Knowing that for some of them, I am the reason they have that smile and that music is something that most of them look forward to.

Researcher - Wonderful, I love that. Question number two is, in your daily work, what do you not look forward to?

Teacher - Not having a space to call my own. It is very difficult to teach in a cafeteria. I have to set up and tear down everything I use multiple times daily. I'm not able to truly make the space mine.

Researcher - That's very hard. Question number three, when was the last time you thought about leaving your current teaching position?

Teacher - February of this year.

Researcher - Question four is, what was the situation that made you consider leaving?

Teacher - Extremely unhappy with the administration at one of my schools. The principal did not support me or any of the teachers at the school. There was no discipline and the students were running wild. She basically washed her hands of the situation and told us that it was our problem to deal with.

Researcher - Wow. Number five is, would you recommend your school and district to teachers seeking employment? Why or why not?

Teacher - Yes, but with some reservations. I feel our district has been struggling for several years now, mostly because of poor district administration. However, some of that administration has recently changed and I hope we are moving in the right direction again. I feel that there are still many good teachers here who truly want the best for the students. We need to have some new teachers who have new ideas to continue to move in the right direction.

Researcher - What could tempt you to leave your current position?

Teacher - A lot more money, a little bit more would not make me want to change, or teaching only piano lessons individually to students who choose to be there.

Researcher - Okay. Number seven is, what are some of the best parts of your job?

Teacher - Getting to sing and make music with students on a daily basis. Working with some great teachers who truly care about their students.

Researcher - Wonderful. I love hearing that. Question eight is, what parts of your job would you eliminate if you had the power to do so?

Teacher - Duties, evening bus, morning bus, lunch, etc. Giving letter grades, especially to the lower grade levels K-2. When I only get to see students for 40 minutes a week, I don't get an accurate measure of their ability. I would much rather just give them a satisfactory or unsatisfactory grade for participation and behavior.

Researcher - I see that. Question nine is, what would make your job more satisfying?

Teacher - Having an actual space to call my own to teach in.

Researcher - Okay. Number ten is, what could your administration do more of or less of to improve your work?

Teacher - Give the music teacher time to work together on staff development days rather than sit in on sessions that don't apply to us. Consider the unique needs of the music teacher when making schedules. For example, have classes grouped together better instead of having a 5th grade class and then a kindergarten class.

Researcher – Right. Question eleven is, what do you think of the professional development opportunities in your district?

Teacher - Too often, the district is quick to try the latest and greatest new teaching method, but without giving us the proper training on how to use it. And then when we do start to understand it, they switch to the next new thing. Also, we rarely have professional development opportunities that specifically relate to the arts.

Researcher - Question twelve is related. What do you think of the mentoring opportunities in your school district?

Teacher - I appreciate that all new teachers are given a mentor their first year. However, I feel that the mentors need to be given more time to spend with them. I'm also thankful that we have a college in our town and frequently get to work with student teachers and mentor them.

Researcher - Question number thirteen is, do you feel valued and recognized in your school and district?

Teacher - I feel that I am accepted and appreciated as a valuable member of the school team. I also feel that our district does a good job of recognizing staff throughout the year who have gone above and beyond in their jobs.

Researcher - Okay. Number fourteen is, what could your administration do to make you feel more valued?

Teacher - Recognize that music and art and PE teachers do teach in unique situations and may have different needs than the regular classroom teachers.

Researcher - Question fifteen is, what is your school/district currently not doing that you feel they should be doing?

Teacher - Give equal access to the arts for all students. Not all elementary students have the same amount of time for music or art around our district. Give teachers appropriate pay for positions that involve lots of extra time beyond the school day. For example, band directors, choir directors, theater.

Researcher - Number sixteen is what do you feel your district should change?

Teacher - We need to actively recruit certified teachers to our district. Consistent discipline for both students and staff, like unexcused absences, improper use of technology, tobacco use, etc. set higher expectations for students in regard to behavior and academics.

Researcher - Number seventeen is, do you have the appropriate materials and resources to do your job properly? If not, what are you in need of?

Teacher - The biggest thing I need is space. I have funds available to purchase many of the items that I don't have, but I have no space to put them. I can do my job with the materials and resources that I have, but I could do it better if I had space.

Researcher - Number eighteen is, do you feel you have a voice in your school and district? Explain why or why not.

Teacher - I do feel that I have a voice in my school. The other staff treat me as an equal and the principal gives me respect. However, at the district level, I often feel that my ideas are listened to but never implemented. We as the arts teachers are told we are important, but this seems to be in words only, never action.

Researcher - Nineteen is, do you feel you have autonomy in your classroom?

Teacher - I do feel I have autonomy in my classroom. I've never been questioned on my choice of songs or lessons that I teach to the students. I've been given great freedom on the curriculum that I use as long as I am covering the standards.

Researcher - Great. And, my final question is, what are the main reasons keeping you in your current position?

Teacher - I only have a few years away from retirement, and I have no desire to start all over at a different school. I still enjoy what I am doing and feel like I have something to offer my students.

Researcher - Thank you so much. I'm going to stop the recording now.

**Teacher 6:**

Researcher - All right, thanks again for allowing me to interview you. My first question is, what do you look forward to most when you report to school every day?

Teacher - My favorite thing about coming to school is seeing and interacting with the students, the kids. They really make it the awesome job that it is. So, I get to do that right from the morning when I greet everybody coming into school and I don't know... if I didn't like the kids so much I don't know if I would be doing this job.

Researcher - Right. I understand that. Question two is, in your daily work what do you not look forward to?

Teacher - That's probably the duties that come with the job. As an elementary music teacher, the majority of duties around the day get passed off to the music and PE teacher and you know Title I and all that good stuff. I feel that because of my title, I get a lot of duties that I feel could be passed elsewhere. And a lot of that is just busy time and I could probably be making use in different parts of the school. So those are definitely the parts I do not look forward to the most, just sitting and doing busy work with duties.

Researcher - Right, yes, I remember those days. Question number three is, when was the last time you thought about leaving your current position?

Teacher - The last time is probably right at this moment. Not in terms of looking to escape. I am very lucky to have a great set up here at my school. I've got a great principal, I've got great co-workers, great kids. But I've been looking for opportunities to get to a secondary position and I applied for a current job. I've got an interview coming up soon. So, I mean right now if I'm being honest is the time, I thought about about leaving but like I said. It's not because I don't like my school. It's just because I'm waiting for an opportunity to to go to the level that I've always been aiming for, that is secondary education.

Researcher - Totally get that. So, my next question kind of goes on with this, so if there's anything you want to add to that you can, if not we can skip it, but that question is what was the situation that made you consider leaving?

Teacher - I guess, so this isn't the first time, I mean after my first year, I applied and was offered a middle school band and choir position, but since it happened at the beginning of the year, I had to finish my contract. I finished my school year, and I ended up for certain reasons declining, which worked out because the director there ended up not wanting to move into his position that he was offered. I just felt like only being at my school a year, I would have felt bad leaving them in that position, so I ended up declining and staying here. It worked out because there's been opportunities that I'm currently searching for that I feel like are better suited anyway. But it's happened a few times, and the only ways that made me consider leaving are secondary positions, whether it's middle or high school.

Researcher - Right, I totally get that. Number five is, would you recommend your school and district to teachers seeking employment? Why or why not?

Teacher - Absolutely. Specifically my school. As I said earlier in an earlier question, I've got a killer set up here. I've got a principal that fully supports the music program in the school and who is very trusting of her staff and teachers to do what they think is best for the students. So, it's very hands-off and supportive. I've got great students, I've got great coworkers, and a schedule that I get a lot to say in for planning at the beginning of the school year. So, I get band, choir. It's a great school with lots of resources provided and, you know, an incredible support system. For the county, I mean, it's about as good as a lot of counties in the area. So, I would definitely encourage people to come here and not the other way around.

Researcher - Good. I like hearing that. Question six again. We may have covered already, but if there's anything you want to add Number six is what could tempt you to leave your current position?

Teacher - Most tempting thing... As I have worked with high school more in my assistant directing position the past few years, it's if there's a high school position that has all the components that that I that I am passionate about, like, marching and concert band, jazz band, music theory and all that stuff. That's been like a dream set up from when I first thought about teaching, back in my school days. So, those are the most tempting. It's like the golden apple.... I don't know, a forbidden fruit.

Researcher - Right, yeah. Totally understand. Number seven is, what are some of the best parts of your job?

Teacher- I touched on this before. The biggest one is the students and you know as an elementary music teacher you get to see kids starting from all the way in pre-k and kindergarten and you get to continue that relationship building all the way through fifth grade if they stay in the school the whole time. So, it's a unique situation where it's almost like the specials teachers in elementary school are almost like rock stars. It's like the kids see you year from year and they recognize you. It's very special. That's my favorite part. And the other stuff is, you know, I get to have band every day. It's my favorite thing. So the schedule, the kids, the co-workers, it's like I said, it's a great setup.

Researcher - Yeah. Number eight is, what parts of your job would you eliminate if you had the power to do so?

Teacher - Um, I know I talked about duties, but I do know duties need to be done, so I wouldn't necessarily eliminate them. But, I have to do morning announcements, and I really feel like I'm only doing it because the last music teacher did it and they didn't wanna change it and I didn't wanna say no. But it's like anybody could read those morning announcements and those five minutes I could spend, it seems like not a lot of time, but I would much rather spend those five minutes getting my room and materials put together for that first class in the morning, I would make full use of those five minutes. So, it would definitely be that morning and afternoon.

Researcher - Okay. Number 10 is what could your administration do more of or less of to keep you in your work?

Teacher - I don't think... I mean my administration is pretty great so I'm not sure they could do anything. They could make it a high school, you know, maybe. But I mean, as far as elementary goes, I feel like it's as good as it would get for me. The administration is great here, so I can't really say they could do too much more.

Researcher - Okay. What do you think of the professional development opportunities in your district?

Teacher - For everybody, for all teachers, it's pretty great and they offer a lot. I feel like for me as a music teacher, it's a little lackluster and we usually get sort of left out. But I don't necessarily think that's my district specifically. I feel like that's a pretty common theme. So, I mean, a little lacking for music, but I'm not necessarily... I mean we get a conference once or twice a year, but yeah, not too many music education development opportunities going on in general.

Researcher - Number twelve is, what do you think of the mentoring opportunities in your school district?

Teacher - I'm not sure how it goes in other districts. I feel like it could be better. I had a mentor my first year, she was great, but she was a reading specialist and knew nothing about the music classroom. Beyond that, I feel like having a mentor beyond just the first year would be way more valuable. I felt like in my second year when it was just me and I didn't have a mentor, I was pretty lost. So that's what I would change. I mean, the opportunities were good, but they could be improved, I think.

Researcher - My next question, question 13, is do you feel valued and recognized in your school and district?

Teacher - In my school, yes, I would say so. In the district, I don't think quite as much. I think elementary music teachers fly under the radar a little bit and are used as like fill-ins for field trips, for duties, and all these extra things. Extra resources and not like a valued position for what it is, a teacher position. So... yes and no.

Researcher - Number 14 is what could your administration do to make you feel more valued?

Teacher - Once again, yeah not much. I mean I don't think they could do much. My administration is pretty awesome.

Researcher - Number 15 is what is your school and district currently not doing that you feel they should?

Teacher - I feel like they do too much actually as far as from the board level goes from the board office. They're always adding new new positions and giving the teachers more things to do and starting new programs. I feel like they really need to slow down and get back to the basics and



fundamentals and let the teachers teach. But I feel like they're doing everything, sometimes too much.

Researcher - Number 16, again similar, but if there's anything else you want to add feel free. What do you feel your school and district should change?

Teacher - Oh yeah, I feel like they should change how they spend their funds. I feel like this might be a common theme amongst educators, at least for my county. But when the pandemic started, they got all these extra funds and they used that to bring on new salary positions in the board office. And then the next year, they started talking about having to cut teacher positions in the county while they kept their new board office position. So why they did that, I'm not totally sure, but really, they should be focusing on positions and staff in the schools where we have direct impact on the students. That's the biggest thing I would hope they would change. Now will they change it? I would be surprised, but who knows.

Researcher – Right. Question 17 is, do you feel you have the appropriate materials and resources to do your job properly? If not, what are you in need of?

Teacher - I think I'm pretty lucky in a sense that I do have appropriate resources. I've got technology, I've got instruments, I've got a high school next door who, because of my relationship with that director, I get their hand-me-down chairs and stands, and I feel like I'm pretty fortunate to have a ton of resources, so I'm all set there.

Researcher - Good. Question 18 is, do you feel you have a voice in your school and district? Explain why or why not.

Teacher - If I think of it in terms of.... For... the district music teachers, certainly. We get to meet every month and we all respect each other's opinions and voices, and we work as a good group. I've been fortunate enough to lead certain events like All-County Band and give my opinions with starting and trying to boost the recruiting in elementary band in the county which has been successful. So, on that level yeah, I feel like my voice is certainly heard, but you know at the district level... You know just thinking of the board office I'm not quite so sure that my voice would be heard even if I made an effort, which I don't really make quite an effort because they don't listen to anybody else so why they would listen to me?

Researcher - Yeah Number 19 is, do you feel you have autonomy in your classroom? Explain why or why not.

Teacher – Now, I might ask for clarification here. Are you asking in the sense of... do I, am I autonomous in the classroom or do I have my students?

Researcher – So, I'm asking you, are you able to kind of create your own curriculum, teach the way you want to teach those kinds of things?

Teacher - Yeah, gotcha. Absolutely I am. I feel like it's that way in the county in general. We're given a broad curriculum of Quaver, but the freedom to change that and supplement resources is

open for the entire county. But specifically, like I said, my principal is incredibly supportive and trusting of the teachers at the school to do what they think is best for the students. So, I have full autonomy in my classroom and that helps a lot and that makes this job pretty great.

Researcher - Awesome. My final question for you is, what are the main reasons keeping you in your current position? And again, I know that you are looking but if there are things that are keeping you, what are they?

Teacher - Well, like I said, I was offered a position and I had accepted it, I had offered it, I was just finishing up my contract, but I felt, because it was only one year, that I wanted to... I felt bad leaving the kids in a revolving door of music teachers like it always seems to happen in elementary. So, I didn't want to be there for just one year and besides that the program that I had been accepted to was one of the best in the state so it wasn't quite it didn't feel right to be walking into an already incredibly successful program and trying to fill those shoes versus continuing to build something from a ground level where I am. That's something that felt like more along the lines of what I was wanting or needing almost. So those are the only things that kept me there. But as of right now, the only thing keeping me here is waiting for opportunities.

Researcher - Wonderful. Well, thank you so much. I'm gonna go ahead and stop recording at this time.

**Teacher 7:**

Researcher - All right, this is question number one. What do you look forward to most when you report to school every day?

Teacher - So the basic things, you know, it's kind of stereotypical, but I always tell people I go to school, I don't go to work. You know, I've been going to school for however many years now of my life, 30 some years. So, I think just feeling that I don't actually have to quote "work". It doesn't feel like work. I also really enjoy the fact that I get to work with multiple ages as an itinerate teacher, so 6th through 12th grade. And then, I also just like having a goal and working toward it, and I think that's especially true in a performance-based class, that's a common goal that we have. So those are some of the, yeah, goals. There we go.

Researcher - Awesome, thank you. Question number two, in your daily work, what do you not look forward to?

Teacher - I know it's going to be there, but I just don't like it, is the general apathy sometimes that I get from both students and or other people, colleagues, or just interruptions, unknown interruptions, I should say. Things like a lot of students right now this semester at the high school, there's kids out all the time, and they tell you, but they tell you like the morning of that they're going to be out. So, I know as a young teacher I was frustrated with that because I didn't know what to expect but you know after being here now for a while, I kind of know to expect those things, but at least I'm mentally ready for them to be missing now, but it's still frustrating, you know what I mean? But I guess that's the thing. I know they'll be there, but they're just going to be annoying. But I'm ready to deal with them.

Researcher - I totally understand that. And I'm in the same situation. Question number three. When was the last time you thought about leaving your current position?

Teacher - It was actually this year, but it wasn't for a negative reason. It was just another opportunity came up and I thought about it and I was just like, well, we'll talk about that. I think one of the future questions, but it was not for a negative reason. So.

Researcher - Totally get it. Alright, question number four. What was the situation that made you consider leaving?

Teacher – So, I completed my Ed Leadership School Administration degree, what, three years ago now. So one of the things, there was an Arts Administration position in the community that pays way more than what I'm making as a teacher. And there's also currently, there are some, and future openings for School Administration. And I've done some sub, not sub, but like principal for a day, admin for a day when my principal's been out at one of my schools. And I've enjoyed it, but I don't think I'm ready to do that yet. I really still enjoy what I'm doing too much to leave that. So, I always kind of got that admin certificate and stuff like that thinking toward the end of my career or maybe after I retire some type of community arts organization type thing, but yeah.

Researcher - Yeah, very cool.

Teacher - That's kind of where, yeah, that's kind of where it was, but not going anywhere right now.

Researcher - Awesome. Question number five, would you recommend your school and district to teachers seeking employment? Why or why not?

Teacher - Yes, 100%. I guess I should have prefaced this whole thing by saying that I am in a very supportive district when it comes to just well-rounded education for everybody and that includes the arts so I understand that I'm not in a common place, and I'm like, reminded of that when I even want to go to the state conference or I've been to some national conferences. I usually just try to keep my mouth shut when people talk about things because I realized, that I know that I have it good, but even more so when I talk to other people. So, yes, especially people who are looking for jobs in the arts, I do feel very supported in what we do here in my district.

Researcher - Wonderful. I like hearing that. Question number six. What could tempt you to leave your current position?

Teacher - Kind of like what we talked about before, something in a related field, maybe on a bigger picture than what it is now. I mean, even though I do stuff that's county-wide throughout the whole district, you know, you're looking at things that are bigger impact, you know, maybe community-wide or state-wide or things like that. So maybe that could be tempting to do, but not right now.

Researcher - Great. Question number seven, what are some of the best parts of your job?

Teacher - Again, I have a really unique situation because of how our program is set up in my district. So, I currently get to teach 6th through 12th grade students, which includes one middle school and one high school. So, longevity of having students is something that we as arts teachers get to have. But especially right now, like my senior class that's graduating this year, some of the students were at the elementary school where I taught at that time when I was still teaching elementary school. So there are kids who graduated and that are graduating this year that I've had for nine years. So it's a really long time. I mean, I tell them, I say, you're 18, nine years. I said, I've been with you half of your life. So I think that's one of the best things is getting to see long-term changes and impacts on those students and getting to be with them for such a long time.

Researcher - Yeah, that's awesome. What parts of your job would you eliminate if you had the power to do so?

Teacher - I actually enjoy all of the parts of my job. I think maybe with one of the, I think maybe a little more in the next question might get some of that, but I do feel like I have the flexibility that I need from my schools for traveling and to be able to, for instance, like right now we are prepping for our concert and I have two string colleagues and we're allowed to have the flexibility where we just will switch up each other's day schedule. So I'll go to, for instance, one of my colleagues will come to my school and work with my middle school kids. I'll go to her

elementaries and work with them and then my other colleague will go to to the other middle school. And so that way the students get to see all the teachers a couple times before actual performance. We get to work the pieces that we're conducting. And teachers know that, and our principals know that, and they see us a couple weeks before, they're like, oh, must be concert time, you know, seeing new faces, that kind of thing. So being able to have that flexibility to just kind of switch it up and do those things that are gonna best serve and give us the best results at our concert and it also allows us to have a pretty good retention rate when it comes to secondary because all those students know all three of us. So.

Researcher - That's really that's really cool. I feel like that's not a typical makeup that you see many places.

Teacher - Oh no, no, and that's why I feel positive the way I do.

Researcher - Alright, question number nine. What would make your job more satisfying?

Teacher - I wish that I had another planning time. I get one planning period, but I wish I had something at the.... I have three classes at the middle school and four at the high school and I get a planning period in the mornings. But once I get to the high school, I usually just use my lunch as I eat lunch in the car so I can do more stuff down there. So, I wish I had one more time to actually... To do some more stuff, you know, I mean, I think over the years I've, you know, you adapt to what the priorities are with the time that you're given. And then I think another item is... Oh yeah, more planning time. Oh, and at the high school, that was another thing. Every year is a little different based on, I have four classes and they're supposed to be separated by like freshman, sophomores, and then junior, seniors. Last year was pretty much that way. This year, not so much. And so some of the classes, it's been rough having students who are very low, especially those freshmen and sophomores coming from the COVID years. So I wish I had a little bit more control over that. But ultimately, in the end, I guess my goal is I'd rather have the kids in a class than not in a class at all. So, just kind of, you know, deal with it as you see fit. It just makes it more challenging. But I wish I wish I had a little bit more control over that. Those small details.

Researcher - Okay, question number 10. What could your administration do more of or less of to keep you in your work?

Teacher - I really don't have complaints. Some of the things I've had shared previously with you is that, you know, they give us flexibility that we need. They're supportive, I can say that I have never been told no since I started teaching and I think part of that comes from utilizing the resources that we're given well, showing progress with what we're given, you know, getting students at the state level doing things, and making the most of what, like I said, making the most of what we're given. And I think being wise with what you ask for and when you ask for it, you know having a plan and making sure you're not just going in there for handouts all the time. You know, prioritizing your requests so that it doesn't seem like you're always a complainer and just whining. Woah is me? You know what I mean? And just kind of timing those requests and what those requests are I think really helps and continuing to get support.

Researcher - Great. Question 11 is. What do you think of your professional development opportunities in your district?

Teacher – So, we have a series of professional development days at the beginning of each school year, and one of those is guaranteed and set aside specifically for content area. So in our district, we have, I think, 17 music teachers, so all of us are together that entire day. And sometimes, it depends on the year, we are given the opportunity to share feedback and things like that of who we would like or ideas we'd like discussed. So we've had people come from WVU or sometimes we've had some people, some general music people come in from other organizations like Con Selmer or like we had, I don't even remember, I don't remember the general music people that we had come in, but to have people come in for that, sometimes we have a... they'll divide it up between primary, general music education, and secondary or instrumental, maybe for afternoon sessions. I mean, there's flexibility in that, so I guess just giving us the opportunity to have that one day. We are also, in our school district, we have a one-hour delay start on Wednesdays for professional learning communities. That's times where it's supposed to be for a variety of things, but for us as music teachers, we kind of have flexibility to be a part of our school, PLCs or like we meet as a strings faculty every Wednesday morning and we've scheduled our schools out so we can be close to what every school like elementary we're going to, my colleagues, they're close to that start place. So, I know the band directors, I think they meet like once every like month or six weeks or something like that. The general music teachers, I believe, meet once a semester. And it's just kind of a time for sharing what's currently going on, discussing where you are with your kids, talking about retention from level to level, especially to elementary school. You're talking about, you know, what topics are you covering with your kids and what sharing lesson plans or ideas of things that have worked well. So again, allowing that flexibility of principals and county administration to let us go to those other schools and not, you know, say, no, you have to do breakfast duty on Wednesday morning because that's when it is, you know, being understandable to say, hey, you know what, this is our one general music faculty meeting for the semester, can you get somebody to cover my breakfast duty? “Yeah, great, okay”. I always tell people support is not always monetarily supporting something. Support is allowing flexibility or people to do what they need to do when they need to do it, and not getting in the way. So, I think that as far as professional development, they let us do that. Also, we are always supported to go to not only our state conference, but there are many teachers who have been supported to go to national conferences and workshops over the years. So, they're very supportive of us both locally and allowing travel to get professional development.

Researcher - Wow, very cool. I love that idea of starting an hour late once a week to give you guys that time.

Teacher - Well, \*\*\*\*\* County, well, the district above us, I should have said, had discussed that, but it was not, they were, that was not met well. That was met with a lot of resistance from the community, so they're not doing it. I mean, it is frustrating for people with especially small kids and child care and stuff like that, but I do appreciate it from a teacher standpoint for us to be able to I mean when can you say that you get together with your specific colleagues every week and and sometimes I'll do that also like when we're planning our big thing at our high school. We'll be able to do that together, have that time together, you know for what we need to do to make that happen. So that's very helpful.

Researcher - Very cool. Question 12 is, what do you think of the mentoring opportunities in your school and district?

Teacher - So they have a program in place for first year teachers of kind of, I think maybe like three or four a year, where they go and they talk about, they present specific ideas. They also have mentor training, or mentors if you're new to the district within like your first year or two, or your, yeah, first year or two. I mean, I feel like it's a formality on paper. And I know this is something that in the State Department, when I went to the mentor training years ago, that they said, it was just, there's a lot of loose ends and nothing's ever really, it doesn't seem like there's one exact way to go. I've been fortunate enough that I had, when I started, a colleague who was not a strings person but a general music teacher that really kind of got me through a lot of the minutia of things. And I think that's the thing too, is just finding out, almost like, I feel like in the music world we find our people, and whether or not your mentor is a music person, you're like, "hey, this is what you gotta do". You know? You gotta, it's this month, here's a semester, these are things you have to do. So I think there's not something specifically, there is a program in place. I just think it's very surface level and it's one of those things that I just highly suggest people find someone that they can go to. A lot of people do find those people in their building for that mentoring thing. So I mean, there is a program existing, but yeah, the value of it, I don't know.

Researcher - Yeah, yeah, I totally agree with that. Question 13, do you feel valued and recognized in your school district?

Teacher - Yeah, so when we went to the music conference, we had just a lot of people involved in all ways, and one of my colleagues had shared with administration, was like, "hey, you know, I'm looking, we had a lot of kids. We had a lot of teachers, we had people presenting, we had people getting awards, we had"... and so, the school district actually, in our local newspaper, bought, like, purchased out a whole spread, like an open both pages in our local newspaper, and filled it with an article talking about supporting music education and the arts, and pictures of every child from our district that went and it outlined everything that they did. I mean it was huge. So they valued that to showcase that. You know what I mean? When we did that, our superintendent, she texted me, right? Okay, so there's another thing like that. Like, you talk about support. Well, I think I have some one of my future questions coming up is, she's like, hey, you know, what is, it was for music in our schools month, and she's just asking, well, do we need to recognize these teachers? "Do we do that last year? What was the best way that we can do this? I know there's a lot of kids, so we don't wanna bring all of them, but can we recognize teachers? What's the best way" And she reaches out to the music faculty and says, what's the best way that we can honor and recognize these students and teachers for what they're doing? So they wanna do that, and they're supportive when we make them aware of things, they'll let the community know too.

Researcher - Good, yeah, that's not typical of everywhere you go.

Teacher - Yeah, and we're fortunate too, we have a communications director at the county level who works closely with a lot of the music programs. He used to be our broadcasting teacher at the high school. So we just have a good relationship with him. And it's a very cordial relationship

where we're comfortable going. I mean, it's not just our program that's supported, but it's nice to have somebody who's easy to work with to make those things happen.

Researcher - Great. Question number 15 is, what is your school district currently not doing that you feel they should?

Teacher - So this is kind of I feel like a general thing that is in education right now, there's a lot of things that we shouldn't be doing that we are doing because we have to, not because we want to. You know, I think about as an ensemble or music I mean, kids, I always think important that there are so many skills we're teaching beyond music, you know, in our classrooms. And while we say that, it's becoming more and more true that we really are having to do those things. And I don't think it's our responsibility, but I think we as teachers take it on because it's just what needs to be done. So I think, like I know our school district is providing a lot of supplemental services to students, whether that be counseling in the schools, from outside behavioral therapists that come in. We have an access levy that helps fund and support a lot of these things. We have a counselor in every school, a nurse in every school, a resource officer in every secondary school. Like I said, outside sources that come in for those student services that they might not otherwise get it on their own. So I feel like they're trying to do things to help with that, but I think honestly it's a societal problem that is not going to be fixed by any one person or school, but I think the school is just trying to respond with services and things that will assist students while they're there with us. Again, it's not that I think they should have to, but it's one of those things like, well, if you don't, who's going to?

Researcher - Right. So, question 16. What do you feel about your school or district should change?

Teacher - That all kind of went like in the same thing. It was like, they're trying to do what they can, but it's, you know, I mean, think about, I mean, we're talking about social and emotional awareness and, you know, behavioral things when, you know, think about as opposed to while you're trying to get kids to be literate, you know, so it's they're addressing a lot of things on their plate.

Researcher - Got it, and that's very true I'm just going to now ask question 17. Do you have the appropriate materials and resources? Sorry, do you have the appropriate materials and resources to do your job properly? If not, what are you in need of?

Teacher - Yes, so it didn't happen this way at first, but all of our teachers have their own classrooms for each ensemble at the secondary level, which was not the way when I first got here. But I think that's something as we kind of got some successes and things and just that right administration right places. I mean, I go to, I go to the high school, I have my own strings room. I go to middle school, I have my own strings room. I don't share it with anybody. They're their own band room, their own choir room. Like, everybody has their own space. And again, in my mind, that is a huge way of saying you have what you need. First of all, you have a classroom set up ready to go. Now at the elementary school level, traveling teachers, you know, always have to set up and tear down and that kind of thing. That's just, I feel like the world it is. But at a secondary level, not having to share a space is very, very nice, very helpful just to be able to



have that. We're also given Step 7 funding. I mean, while it's been cut in the past couple of years, we're provided a budget that we have. But at the same time, while the budget has been cut, they also use that money to fund other things for so if there's like a big purchase or something like that that needs to be done, a lot of upgrades to our Performing Arts Center at the high school has come out of those funds. So while maybe some of our stuff has gone down a little bit in our received funding, we are all benefiting from that space collectively using it. So, it's one of the things you know, big picture impact. So, again, I have not ever, I've always had what I need, I'll say that. I've always had what I need.

Researcher - Awesome. Question 18 is, do you feel you have a voice in your school and district? Explain why or why not.

Teacher - Yes, I do. We're supported with professional development. You see our teachers and principals and administration from the board office and board members at events all the time of what we do. I mean, they make a note and our Board of Education minutes, you'll see on our superintendent's report, she will announce, Hey, here's a high school musical. Don't forget percussion concert coming up next week. You know, I ran into a board member at Walmart two weeks ago, and I stopped and I talking to her, and she's like, yeah, she said, "I got that, she said, yeah, she said, I'm coming tomorrow to see the musical, and I was said "don't forget this, the strings concert, and she's like, "oh, I know, she says, my concert is full, or my calendar is full of so many things that's going on". So, while not everybody is there at all of them, which I wouldn't expect them to be, it's, you see support from different entities at an administrative or board level at our things. You also see, I feel like I can, I think as a unique position because we're... we vision our strings program as countywide. We have our own schools and our own identities but when we do our performances we do it countywide. That's just how we do it, that's how we set it up, and that's what we do. You interact with all the district level people anyway, principals, every principal, I feel like I could go walk into their office and have a conversation with them. At the board office, same thing, I walk in, I know the secretaries, and I call it. To have that level of just being able to have correspondence, and it's not just you're just some random name or that You know that music teacher at that middle school that always asks questions and causes problems. You know, there there's a I think it goes with the size of the district and things like that But I do feel like because of those things they do listen You know, they are supportive. They do hear concerns and they try to help us, you know when they can.

Researcher - Awesome. Question 19 is, do you feel you have the autonomy in your classroom? Explain why or why not.

Teacher - Yes, I do completely. And the reason, people have never questioned what we're doing in our classrooms. We've been given the flexibility to build a program, you know, the way that we wanted to see it fit, just yeah, I mean like we, I've had a vision of how we wanted it to go and we've been supported along the way, so there really hasn't been, you know, there were some growing pains in the early years as there's with anything new, but to where we are now, yeah, I feel like we're, again, the flexibility of being able to have those Wednesday music PLC times together, flexibility in allowing us to do our, I mean, in the string world, we do our own scheduling. I've never had an administrator do my schedule, ever. And that was from the beginning, and that allowed us to have flexibility, and we just kind of have worked that out with

each principal and kind of found priorities from secondary schools, what works out best and then we put our elementaries, which are more flexible, and finding to do that. I'd say five or six years ago, when one of my colleagues, she just was not vibing with one of her elementary schools. We just switched it. My two colleagues, they just switched one of the elementary schools. It worked out because they were within a couple miles of each other. And we're all county itinerant anyway so, and we just switched up and kept the same amount of schools they were pretty much in the same area and nobody questioned us about it. We were just like "yeah we're gonna be switching up next year" and they're like "oh great okay cool". So, I think that again, with the size of the district the people that we have in this position still let us have that flexibility to best suit, you know, when we're in there every day, seeing what's working and not, to allow us to have that flexibility that we need.

Researcher - That's amazing. And my final question is, what are the main reasons keeping you in your current position?

Teacher - So I know that I have a very unique position and a very unique opportunity. I got to start the strings program and help build it to where it is now. Myself along with my two colleagues, all we teach is strings. We have no other music classes and our assignments. We literally just teach strings. While we do different levels, my one colleague, she does four to eight, I do six to twelve, and my other colleague does four to twelve because of his very rural school that he teaches at. We have, I have great colleagues to work with, not just in the string world, but we can do things together. I know sometimes music people, we have our ways, but we can all work together well. That was not the case when I first started. I'm fortunate that through retirement, some things have changed, which is great. And, you know, one of the things I tell people, I'm like, "you know, the job that I started on day one of teaching could be the job that I retire from at the end of my career". And not many people can say that. So, I think that knowing that, you know, when do you get to build your own thing and have it your entire career? That's very rare. And there's a lot of, I feel like, a lot of uniqueness and specialty in being able to say that. So that's something that makes it very hard to, you know, from one of the previous questions, when you talked about, you know, what has made you consider it or what has made you think about maybe looking at a different career. That's what makes it hard because it's like, wow, where else can I get to do my own thing and do it for my entire career and say, I could retire from this.

Researcher - Right. Definitely a rarity. OK, I'm going to stop the recording now.

**Teacher 8:**

Researcher - Okay, thank you so much for agreeing to do this. The first question I have for you is, what do you look forward to most when you report to school every day?

Teacher - When I report every day, I actually come before the school day for my first class, so I always get to see my kids first, and that is absolutely what I look forward to coming into the building for.

Researcher - Awesome, that is nice. Question number two, in your daily work, what do you not look forward to?

Teacher - I do not look forward to having the unexpected interruptions and space changes. Because I am an itinerant teacher, many times I'll come into the building and be unaware of what's going on because I have not one building that I'm in. Outside the unexpected, the regular is probably interacting with other teachers in the building because again I'm very much a stranger to the people I work with.

Researcher - Got it. Question number three, when was the last time you thought about leaving your current position?

Teacher - Today, every day. And I guess, would you like me to wrap up into the fourth question?

Researcher - Yeah, I'll go ahead and read that. What was a situation that made you consider leaving?

Teacher - Every year I schedule a concert at the end of the year with all of my schools. Actually, I do two concerts a year, but I teach 250 kids across the country. So to get those kids... My concerts are misunderstood by my county. So they expect me to have about 12 concerts a semester, almost, in order to cover all my kids, because \*\*\*\*\* does not have a space large enough for that many kids. So every time about this time of year, I go through the process of scheduling a concert with my principals, I get it all done, and then the county supervisor, after I send my announcement to parents, shuts down my concert. It's happened three years in a row now. So situations like that where I'm getting shut down, or not me, but rather my kids get excited and opportunities that are easily available are being taken away with no explanation is what makes me want to leave and go somewhere else.

Researcher - Wow. That's insane. Question number five. Would you recommend your school district to teachers seeking employment? Why or why not?

Teacher - It would depend on your content area. My district is very supportive of sports, special ed, foreign language, and math. So if you were one of those teachers I would tell you yes, you will be highly supported and it is a great County to work in. If you are of the other subjects it's not that it is not a good County. We have good people, our benefits and pay are great, but as far as support from your administrators it's not as easily found just because that isn't what our focus is currently.

Researcher - Got it. What could tempt you to leave your current position?

Teacher - I'm not quite sure because as a West Virginia teacher there are definitely many options elsewhere that are better, but I believe that it would be hard to tempt me because I am ultimately in the company store West Virginia mindset that if I work hard enough West Virginia can be better. So to tempt me to leave it would still have to be an internal West Virginia job that I felt like I would benefit by being there.

Researcher – Got it. Number seven, what are some of the best parts of your job?

Teacher - I have awesome kids. My students are all state musicians. They are old enough now that they are becoming professional bluegrass players. They're having their first quartet gigs at weddings and baptisms. So I think the best part is watching my kids become real musical humans rather than musicians. They're finding ways to take their art and what they're learning and go into the real world with it and teach people about it. So again, interacting with my kids and seeing their growth is the best part.

Researcher – Great, and question eight. What parts of your job would you eliminate if you had the power to do so?

Teacher - Interacting with everyone else and, I think that's probably it. It's a double-edged sword itinerant teacher that I don't know anybody, so I don't really have to interact with anybody. But at the same time, any time I do, it comes with so much confusion that it would be so much easier It was just me on my island.

Researcher - Right. What could make your job more satisfying?

Teacher - Teaching with friends. My kids definitely gives me a lot of enjoyment, but the lack of ability to talk to another adult about what I do or collaborate or work together, that would make this and my job exponentially different.

Researcher - What could your administration do more of or less of to keep you in your work?

Teacher - More listening and less mindless bossing around. More interaction.

Researcher - Okay. Question number 11. What do you think of the professional development opportunities in your district?

Teacher – Digitally, we have great resources, but they are able to be fast-forwarded through. As far as specific content area goes, the instrumental supervisor is a band person, so when I go to professional development meetings, there is no development for string education. So I usually have to sit through very specific band-based lectures or something about testing which I don't do because I'm an itinerant teacher and can't be there to test.

Researcher - Question number 12 is, what do you think of the mentoring opportunities in your school district?

Teacher - We don't have those. We have a mentor teacher program, but I can tell you that I have, in my time, never been set up with a mentor teacher, like a music teacher, to oversee me. They told me teachers to ask for advice, but there was no attempt to make an actual mentorship program.

Researcher - Interesting, because I think legally, they have to.

Teacher - I know they do, and I know that they have one that they try to use, but no one ever set me up in that program in either of my positions in the county.

Researcher - Wow. Do you feel valued, this is question number 13, sorry, do you feel valued and recognized in your school and district?

Teacher – I feel valued and recognized within my school, within my district, absolutely not. We had a third of the all-state orchestra come from my schools and we were denied the right to play at a board meeting or even have the students recognized.

Researcher - Oh my goodness. Wow.

Teacher - Yeah.

Researcher - Question number 14. What could your administration do to make you feel more valued?

Teacher - Value my students. Recognize them for their accomplishments in music and value the work that they're putting in and the fact that they show up to school, even if it is for music.

Researcher - Number 15 is, what is your school or district currently not doing that you feel they should?

Teacher - Having collaborative meetings across the schools and not just working to save the building that we exist in. Especially with music, it is important for me to communicate with my high school programs as well as my elementary school programs. I have no clue what I get from some of my other feeders to my middle schools because I'm only half teaching my feeder programs. So I think if the county were to really sit down and have everybody talk and collaborate, that would be very helpful.

Researcher - Definitely. Number 16 is what do you feel your school or district should change?

Teacher - Focusing on the arts so that everything else will get better.

Researcher - Number 17 is, do you have the opportun... sorry, do you have the appropriate materials and resources to do your job properly? If not, what are you in need of?

Teacher - I do not. We have a budget that allows me to maybe buy a couple things for the kids. We do not have school instruments. That's something that I've been working on over the last couple years, but the person performing threw away everything we have or had. So we have no school instruments and because of my small amount of time in a school building, I don't actually have a classroom or home. I teach across four to five different spaces every single day, of which storage is an issue. It took about a month and a half for me to start my classroom at the beginning of the year because I was not given ample storage or anything to do my class. We actually couldn't fit in any of the rooms when I started at the beginning of the year. And no one had a plan for that.

Researcher - Number 18 is, do you feel you have a voice in your school and district? Explain why or why not.

Teacher - No, because when I email my county supervisor, she does not answer my emails.

Researcher - 19 is, do you feel you have autonomy in your own classroom? Explain why or why not.

Teacher - My classroom is very secure in everything we do. We, my, yeah, no, my, uh, when I am asked about problems in my classroom, I had a university freshman student of music ed ask me about this. Um, what do you do when you have a jerk in your class? And my response was, you just do not allow for an atmosphere to have that. So, within my classroom, no one has ever checked my lesson plans. No one ever comes and observes when I write off all my observations for the county. They refer to a concert that they did not attend. So I do have complete control in my classroom, but it's out of a lack of attendance by the administration.

Researcher - And then the final question, what are the main reasons keeping you in your current position?

Teacher - I am a stubborn human and every time I've asked for help on how to make this better because I think it's pretty obvious that we need more strings teachers. There's two stings teachers for 11,000 kids in the county to offer programs so we can't really. But every time I talk to somebody about making change, their solution to me is to leave because it's easier. And... I don't think that for a child that is the right answer. That if I can stubbornly burn at both ends and provide an education that makes their life different in a state that I still believe in, I'm going to stick around and do it and not run away just because there's an easier, that's the easier solution.

Researcher - I'm going to go ahead and stop the recording now.

## APPENDIX H: Interview Transcriptions

**Music Educator Turnover in West Virginia: What is Keeping Music Teachers in Their  
Classrooms and Why are Others Leaving?**

**Participating Music Teacher Survey**

**Part 1: Demographics**

Directions: Please answer all questions. When doing so, only select one response per question.

1. What is your gender? Male, Female
2. What is your race/ethnicity? African American, Caucasian, American Indian, Hispanic, Asian, Pacific Islander
3. What is your age? 20-25, 26-30, 31-35, 36-40, 41-45, 46-50, 51-55, 56+
4. What is your level of education? Bachelor's Degree, Master's Degree, Doctoral Degree
5. Are you a National Board Certified Teacher? Yes, No
6. How many years have you been a teacher?
7. How many years have you worked in your current position?

**Part 2: Survey**

Directions: Using the scale below, please respond to each item by choosing the corresponding number that best indicates your opinion.

1 = Strongly Disagree	2 = Disagree	3 = Unsure	4 = Agree	5 = Strongly Agree
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**Section 1, Attitudes and Perceptions:**

1. My current teaching position provides me occupational satisfaction.
2. Occupational satisfaction is important to me.
3. I am afforded musical gratification in my current teaching position.
4. Musical gratification at work is important to me.
5. I feel I make a positive difference in the lives of my students in my current position.
6. Making a positive difference in the lives of my students is important to me.
7. I feel I can positively impact my students' community in my current position.
8. Positively impacting communities through my teaching is important to me.
9. I feel I have autonomy in my classroom.
10. Classroom autonomy is important to me.
11. My current teaching position pays well.
12. Competitive compensation in my teaching is important to me.
13. Teaching in my current position affords me good health insurance.

14. Employer provided health insurance is important to me.
15. Teaching in my current position will provide me with a satisfactory retirement plan.
16. A satisfactory retirement plan is important to me.
17. I feel connected to and supported by my colleagues.
18. Positive relationship with colleagues is important to me.
19. I feel appreciated by and supported by my administration.
20. Working for a supportive administration is important to me.
21. I feel appreciated by students and families.
22. Student and family appreciation is important to me.
23. My current teaching position offers me a suitable work to life ratio.
24. A healthy work to life balance is important to me.
25. I can network and make professional connections in my current position.
26. Professional networking is important to me.
27. The classroom/workspace in which I teach is sufficient.
28. Adequate classroom/teaching space is important to me.
29. I have access to adequate teaching supplies and materials.
30. Having access to sufficient teaching supplies and materials is important to me.
31. I feel my classroom/program is adequately founded.
32. Adequate funding for my classroom/program is important to me.
33. I am provided acceptable planning time to be a successful teacher.
34. Having acceptable planning time is important to me.
35. My school has a positive school environment.
36. A positive school environment is important to me.
37. Student behavior is not a problem in my classroom/school.
38. Positive student behavior is important to me.
39. As a music educator, I feel my subject area is respected in my school.
40. Respect for my subject area is important to me.

### **Section 2, Looking to the Future:**

41. I plan to stay in my current position next year.
42. At this point, I plan on staying in my current position for the entirety of my career.
43. I plan to continue teaching but not in my current position.
44. I plan to stay in education for the entirety of my career but not as a teacher.
45. I hope to retire early from teaching.
46. I often think of leaving my current teaching position.
47. I often think of quitting teaching all together.

### **Section 3, Stressors:**

48. I am often overwhelmed by having to fundraise for my classroom/program.
49. I am often overwhelmed by the amount of paperwork I am expected to complete at my work.
50. I am often overwhelmed by the meetings I am expected to attend at my work.
51. I am often overwhelmed by the extra duties I am expected to perform at my work.
52. I am often overwhelmed by extra rehearsals and performances in my current position.



- 53. I am often overwhelmed by my students having to perform at a high standard.
- 54. I am often overwhelmed by mandatory trainings.

**Section 4, Factors that Could Affect Your Decision to Stay or Leave:**

- 55. Opportunities for higher pay could encourage me to remain in my current position.
- 56. Increased funding for my classroom/program could encourage me to remain in my current position.
- 57. Positive connections with colleagues, administration, and students could encourage me to remain in my current position.
- 58. Having access to better benefits could encourage me to remain in my current position.
- 59. Having access to more teacher and classroom support like mentoring and support groups could encourage me to remain in my current position.
- 60. Having access to more meaningful professional development could encourage me to remain in my current position.
- 61. Please list general factors not addressed by this survey that make you wish to leave your current teaching position.
- 62. Please list general factors not addressed by this survey that could encourage you to stay in your current teaching position.