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In search of music equity in an urban middle school

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The University of San Francisco

IN SEARCH OF MUSIC EQUITY IN AN URBAN MIDDLE SCHOOL

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Dissertation Abstract

In Search of Music Equity in an Urban Middle School

Since the 1970s, many urban middle schools have had poorly functioning music programs as a result of neglect, social-class segregation, and white and middle-class flight from urban public schools. These urban schools have lacked the resources, support and pool of qualified and caring teachers to offer sustained high-quality music programs that are culturally relevant to urban students of low socioeconomic status. Currently, there is a gap in literature regarding equity and urban middle school music programs. To help fill this gap, I conducted a qualitative research study at one urban middle school in a large West Coast city. I interviewed the school's three administrators, two music teachers, two student focus groups, and conducted six classroom observations seeking data on the importance of music at their school, on issues of equity and music, and on student interest in the school's music program. The findings indicate that the school has not yet attained equity in its music program for all students and that the school lacks in culturally and socially relevant music programs for its students. Additionally, the school lacks a sequential music program that would allow students to acquire the necessary skills to access higher-level music classes, or to successfully pass the entrance audition for their school district's Music and Art High School. The author recommends that the school provide culturally relevant programs to supplement its current music program, and provide tutorial help for students. Lastly, further studies should examine other urban middle schools that successfully provide culturally and socially relevant content and pedagogy as well as the phenomenon of sequential music programs.

This dissertation, written under the direction of the candidate's dissertation committee and approved by the members of the committee, has been presented to and accepted by the Faculty of the School of Education in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education. The content and research methodologies presented in this work represent the work of the candidate alone.

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CHAPTER I

THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

Introduction

Music classes in urban school settings should offer students a sense of enjoyment

and fulfillment as an artistic form of expression, apart from the rigors of traditional core

subjects such as math, science and language arts. Yet, many secondary urban schools have

poorly functioning music programs with an insufficient number of quality instruments

and supplies, or qualified and concerned teachers. Their curriculum focuses too heavily on

Eurocentric music at the expense of culturally and socially relevant music that helps

develop student identity and self-expression. I have been a music teacher in urban schools

for over 20 years, ranging from Kindergarten through Grade 12. In my time as an

instructor, I have observed a lack of sustained, sequential, and quality music instruction

throughout most public K-12 schools, but particularly, a lack of socially and culturally

relevant instruction in low-performing schools with a high percentage of students of color

and low socioeconomic status.

In many urban school districts, elementary music education programs are sparse.

Because of budget constraints, many elementary schools do not offer any music

education in the primary grades. At best, music education may consist of a once-weekly,

classroom music activity in grades K-3 with singing, clapping and rhythmic games. Thus,

most students who begin formal instrumental music lessons with weekly pull-out lessons

in the fourth or fifth grade have had little or no prior musical training. Traditionally, only

middle and high schools have offered music instruction as a daily, separate class.

Ironically, California content standards and visual and performing arts frameworks list

music and art as subjects to be taught beginning in Kindergarten (California State Board of Education, 2004).

It would be disingenuous to say that there are no music success stories from urban schools, but only a small portion of urban elementary students do well and show growth in music over a sustained period of time. The majority of parents of urban students cannot afford or choose not to rent or purchase a musical instrument, and most school districts reserve the vast majority of their instrument inventory for middle and high schools. Those students whose parents can afford to rent or purchase an instrument are initially enthusiastic about learning to play it, but a percentage of them lose interest or drop out after a time of study because of the difficulty dealing with the learning curve needed to become proficient. The ramifications of such poor results for elementary school music show up in mediocre quality music programs in secondary schools.

I became interested in doing a study on music and urban middle schools because as a music director at a university known for its racial, ethnic and socioeconomic diversity, I noticed that urban students, particularly of color, were severely underrepresented in my performing ensembles. I then began to reflect on the decline and dissolution of band and orchestra programs in many urban secondary public schools over the last 25 years.

I grew up in a big city in the late 1960s and 70s, attended public schools, and took band and orchestra classes. In that era, band and orchestra classes were large, commonly enrolling upwards of 40 to 60 students of all socioeconomic backgrounds. Even in academically low-performing schools, band, orchestra and choral ensembles were a vibrant part of a school's culture, and were usually second only to sports programs in

student popularity and interest. Most students I played with enjoyed both the traditional Eurocentric repertoire and the pop songs orchestrated for band that the teacher would bring to class. The most enthusiastic students among us would form bands, learn popular tunes on the radio, and create our own music.

Instrumental music programs back then were set up sequentially, with beginning, intermediate and advanced ensembles. Students were placed according to ability level and experience, not by grade level. Sadly, because of cuts in funding, by-design smaller secondary schools and the educational reform movements that focus on core subjects and accountability in the form of standardized testing, sequential music programs in secondary schools have shrunk to only a fraction of the size they used to be.

In recent years, I have noticed that certain middle and high schools, in which the majority of students are from middle-class and educated families and where bussing is limited, have relatively stable and consistent music programs based on a sequential curriculum, albeit with a strong Eurocentric slant. In these schools, the small populations of Latino and African-American students of low socioeconomic status are under-represented in band and orchestra classes, the music classes that require prior training.

In comparison, many schools in which a very high percentage of students are students of color and lower socioeconomic status, tend to have disconnected instrumental programs of lesser quality. I surmise that issues of access, teacher turnover, the learning curve for instruments, the students' lack of prior music education, and student indifference to a music curriculum disconnected from their daily lives are the reasons for such inconsistent and mediocre programs. Not surprisingly, in many of the high schools and specialty music and arts high schools throughout California and the nation, where I

have given clinics or consultations, students of color and of low socioeconomic status are underrepresented.

In seeking to address these inconsistencies and inadequacies, I have spoken to district administrators, principals, counselors, and faculty who are the gatekeepers to student scheduling and curriculum planning. Most have been supportive of music programs, though not necessarily of models that would improve students' long-term interest and musical development, particularly those involving sequential music classes. Scheduling music against general core classes, prescriptive learning, and standardized testing were some of the issues mentioned as potential conflicts. Furthermore, most gatekeepers could not articulate to me the value of music classes beyond explanations that were affective in nature. For them, music courses were essentially electives for the students' enjoyment and to fulfill state board of education and school district mandates for performing arts; the performing ensembles were essentially for building school and community spirit.

In essence then, there are two separate and unequal music education tracks in most urban middle schools. One is for students who do well academically, come from upper-middle class, educated families, are likely to be tracked as gifted and talented or attend affluent schools that have very few underserved or high-need students. These students usually have the option of taking music continuously throughout their secondary matriculation and are frequently grouped according to ability level. The other track, where music programs tend to be intermittent, unconnected and undersupplied, is for underserved and marginalized students who are perceived to be low-achieving and attend less affluent schools. These students rarely gain access to sequential music education.

Additionally, many of these same marginalized students frequently show that they are indifferent to the music courses that their schools offer them, courses that have little in common with their lives and cultures outside of school.

The questions then become: What is the importance of or rationale for music programs in urban middle schools? To what extent are traditional music programs viable and relevant to the majority of inner-city students of color? Do music programs in urban middle schools adequately address state standards and prepare students for high school music classes? Are there alternative music curriculums and pedagogies that are effective in bridging what students know about their own music with traditional and mainstream music curricula? Therefore, I have chosen to investigate the functionality and relevancy of music classes in urban middle schools, with their intended and implied outcomes.

Statement of the Problem

Music education in many urban middle schools is disjointed and dysfunctional, lacking the consistency, scope and sequence of traditional core subjects. Lack of funding and resources, and the prioritizing of core subjects over music account in part for the diminution of music programs. Music classes are frequently offered in a non-sequential fashion, sometimes as part of a rotation of courses that may include other arts and non-core subjects. Additionally, many urban middle school students are apathetic towards traditional school music programs such as band and orchestra because they have little or no prior instrument training and lack familiarity with a curriculum based primarily on Eurocentric music (Abrahams, 2006; Abril, 2006; Bowman, 2004; Boyle, DeCarbo & Jordan, 1995). Without the quality instruments, private lessons and parental support of their more affluent peers, urban students are frequently below grade and age level proficiency in music (Pabst, 2008). They are also less likely to be involved

in higher-quality performing ensembles or attend music and arts high schools. (G. Panone, personal communication, May 3, 2008).

While the lack of equity, consistency, student access, and interest in urban school music education is partly due to budgetary constraints and socioeconomic factors, school accountability in traditional core subjects also plays a role. Music programs have declined in low-performing schools because of pressure on school administrators by the State of California to increase instructional time for math and language arts so as to improve Academic Performance Index (API) scores (Music for All Foundation, 2004).

Yet, leading music education organizations, such as the National Association of Music Education (2007), have included in their national standards the importance of every student having access to a balanced, comprehensive, and sequential music course of study. Further, the California Visual and Performing Arts Framework (CVPAF), adopted by the California State Board of Education, stipulates that as a foundation, music and all arts should be taught in a sequential fashion from Kindergarten through grade 12 (California Department of Education, 2004). Even the controversial No Child Left Behind Act (Bush, et al. 2001) mandates music as a core subject, which was further stipulated by the Secretary of Education Ron Paige in a letter to the nation's school superintendents (Paige, 2004).

Why, then, is there such a discrepancy between the recommendations, visions, and policies of music and art educators and organizations, and the realities of music education in many urban schools? What transpires at urban school sites that frequently results in inequitable music programs compared to more affluent schools? Why do

traditional music classes lack long-term appeal for many urban students? These are the questions I wish to address in my research.

<div align="center">Background and Need for the Study</div>

Traditional instrumental music programs such as band and orchestra have been a staple for middle and high schools in America dating back to the end of the 19th century, influenced by the marching band works of John Phillip Sousa and others (Mark & Gray, 1992). In urban schools, however, music educators have been concerned about the availability of music programs since the late 1960s, when instrumental music programs began to dissipate (Frierson-Campbell, 2006). Prior to this, urban schools, even those with large populations of African-American and Latino children of low socioeconomic status, had viable music programs with full-size (20-40 students) bands, orchestras and choruses (G.Panone, personal communication, March 17, 2008).

The reasons for such a dilution of music education in urban schools are vast and complex. Financial and economic issues had a major effect on music and arts funding in education dating back to the 1960s, when white flight from urban areas cut off a source of financial support for school programs, including music. Schools in affluent suburbs had parents who would support instrumental music, while in many urban school districts music was considered a luxury (Davidson, 2007). In the 1970s, education costs began to rise faster than inflation and the consumer price index, followed by a growing taxpayer unwillingness to expand public service (Johnson, 2004).

In California, the passing of Proposition 13 in 1978 drastically reduced funding to school districts, and over time, arts programs were deemed "extras" that were reduced if not eliminated (Slavkin & Crespin, 2000). Because the majority of funding for arts

education in public schools across the nation comes from each school district's general budget (MacPherson, 2004), schools must balance their arts funding through outside financial support from parents, private groups, and state and federal grants (Chapman, 2005).

Not all the issues related to the weakening of music education, particularly in urban schools, are solely financial. Many of the educational reforms that were begun in the Reagan era of the 1980s and continue until today with NCLB emphasize traditional core subjects such as math, English and science at the expense and displacement of the arts (Johnson, 2004). Additionally, the pressure put on schools by district administrators to raise scores on standardized tests has also factored in the allocation of more teaching and preferential time for math and reading at the expense of the arts (Hoffman, 2005). The end result of such budgetary and curriculum priorities for urban schools is that music has become an extracurricular activity, or is offered only to those who excel in core academic classes (Hazelette, 2006.)

The failure of traditional music programs to connect with urban students on a large scale also played a part in music's dissipation. Beginning with the 1970s, many urban students became disinterested in, or indifferent to, Eurocentric music for social, economic and cultural reasons, and their lack of interest has remained largely unchanged. Students sometimes find it difficult to connect with Western art music that is such a mainstay of school music programs (Abrahams, 2006). Additionally, many students of color may have some resistance to participating in music if they feel the teacher is of a different race or ethnicity and they can't relate to each other (Abrahams, 2006; Delpit, 1995; Robinson, 2006). Thus the climate of music education in urban schools,

particularly for students of color, must be changed in order to win back those that feel

disenfranchised (Carter, 1993). These issues are at the forefront of discussions amongst

current music educators (Frierson-Campbell, 2006).

Fortunately, through the efforts of music education advocacy groups, there has

been revitalization in the news media regarding the importance of music and the arts

being part of a well-rounded curriculum in elementary and secondary education (Kozin,

2007; Rappaport, 2007; Nussbaum, 2006). CNN, NBC and other broadcast companies

have all run stories regarding the arts and their importance in education (Children's

Music Workshop, 2007). Further, an abundance of studies justify the importance of arts

education in improving student achievement throughout the curriculum (Posnick-

Goodwin, 2005). These arguments will be brought forth in the literature review.

Partly as a result of such advocacy, music in schools is blossoming once more.

Despite cyclical education budget shortfalls, ongoing testing, and increased focus on

accountability, the State of California has seen the need to replenish funding for nearly

barren arts programs that have been decimated over the last 30 years with a designated

one-time, half-billion dollar grant in its 2006-2007 budget to partially restore arts

programs in public schools. The State has also allocated an additional $105 million

annually for art, music and theatre, which purportedly is spread equally per student,

regardless of district (Asimov, 2006). Large urban school districts, such as those in Los

Angeles and San Francisco, have also implemented plans for a sequential arts curriculum

in elementary and secondary education (Asimov, 2006; Merl, 2005).

A recent study by SRI International on arts education in California, however, still

produced an anemic scenario with regards to music and art programs: 96% of the state's

middle schools failed to provide a standards-aligned course of study in music and the arts; participation in many ways is limited, and enrollment in music especially has seen a dramatic decline (Woodworth et al., 2007). In reference to schools in urban settings, the study also found that in comparison to students in more affluent schools, students in high-poverty schools have less access to the arts in general and lack equitable music programs. Some educators have even called music and arts programs in urban, low-performing schools "haphazard," stating that they are implemented in a random fashion (Woodworth et al.). Music teachers in urban schools have also complained about not only inadequate equipment and music supplies, but also inadequate training in working with students (Kindall-Smith, 2004). Further, urban music students do not always connect with traditional European-based art music and programs (Abrahams &Schmidt, 2006).

Previous studies on urban education and music include: literature that provides an overview of music and the urban environment (Frierson-Campbell, 2006; McAnally, 2006); studies that focus on issues of multiculturalism in music, including the offering of non-traditional and non-European music genres and styles (Campbell, 2002; Johnson, 2004); and practical matters and solutions related to the scheduling of music (Clayton, 2000; Kalabza, 2006; Larson, 1992). Still other studies deal with the practical aspects, such as program development and methodology (Mixon, 2005; Smith, 2006), or alternative methods that are related to critical theories and pedagogies (Abraham & Schmidt, 2006; Mahendran, 2007). Few past studies, however, have explored in depth the reasons for mediocre music programs in urban middle schools.

Most recently, music educators have expressed that urban middle schools do not have viable, sequential music programs, nor the types of support children from more affluent schools receive in music education, such as private lessons and parental guidance. Therefore they do not have the musical skills and knowledge to perform in intermediate to advanced performing ensembles when they enter high school (G. Panone, personal communication, May 1, 2008; B. Miller, personal communication, April 26, 2008). They are, on the whole, under-skilled and trained, particularly in instrumental music (Pabst, 2008).

Are traditional music programs such as band and orchestra viable and relevant then in urban education? What alternative music courses or curriculum might fare better with urban students? Recently I completed a pilot study on the saliency of an alternative instrumental music course at an urban middle school in a large West Coast city (Calloway, 2007). The school population consisted primarily of students of color and of low socioeconomic status, along with a small number of white and middle class students with involved parents. Two types of music classes were offered at the school, traditional band and an alternative course called rock band.

My observations of the traditional instrumental music classes revealed only negligible student progress. The classes were mostly exploratory in nature and the ensemble performance levels were below that of an average middle school band. Most students did not display grade level knowledge and skills of the music content standards, and it is doubtful that they would make or participate in intermediate ensembles at the high school level or pass an audition for a specialty performing arts high school.

The findings of my study regarding rock band, which was taken by most students at some time in their matriculation, did indicate some success. Rock band was most engaging and successful, however, with the white, middle class students and a small percentage of students of color, but it had only had nominal success with the student population as a whole. Most student interest in rock band seemed to cease at the dismissal bell and exit door. Further the class was somewhat lacking in developing concrete music skills needed to perform a wide variety of genres of music, and the curricula lacked in breadth and diversity.

Importance of Study for Audience

This study is important for two main reasons. First, it highlights how music education and music classes are situated at an urban middle school, where the quality of music programs has usually been less than desirable. The reader will hopefully discover the nuances and subtleties of policies and priorities regarding music as they are played out among the principal, vice-principal, counselors, students, and teachers involved in the decision making process. Secondly, it shows the differences between the policies and recommendations at the state, national, and academy level, and what actually results "on the ground" for students in urban secondary education.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this case study is to explore issues of equity in education as they pertain to music, urban students and urban schools. Students in urban middle schools should be receiving music education that is comparable in quality, rigor and intrinsic enjoyment to that received by more affluent students and schools, that prepares them for

grade level proficiency and access to performing ensembles upon arrival to high school, and that provides them with a sense of creativity and identity.

Research Questions

Three central questions will guide this study.

1. What is the importance of or place for music at school?

2. How does a school address issues of equity in its music program?

3. What is the interest level of students regarding school music?

Theoretical Rationale

The theoretical rationale that framed the research was based on two premises, that music education is an important and integral part of every student's development and should be studied in an orderly and connected fashion, and that music education for urban students must include culturally and socially relevant pedagogy and content.

Music is an area of study that must be taught and treated equitably with traditional core subjects. Jensen (2001) stressed the importance and equitability of music education in comparison with other major disciplines for a myriad of reasons: it is accessible, brain-based and a cultural necessity, possesses no negative effects for students with regards to the learning process, and contains both depth and breadth. Eisner (2003) posits that music is a unique form of communication that allows for a form of expression in ways that written and quantifiable knowledge cannot. Further, it is the widespread belief and philosophy amongst music educators and music education organizations that music, in order to achieve equity with other subjects, be taught comprehensively throughout a student's matriculation process (National Association for Music Education, 2008).

In an effort to better understand and instruct urban students, some music educators have looked to scholars like Ladson-Billings (1994, 2001), Nieto (1996), Freire (1970, 1985, 1993) and Wink (2004) to link critical pedagogy and critical theory to music education. Ladson-Billings' (1995) concept of culturally relevant pedagogy, where the teacher knows and understands the students' cultures and uses them as a basis for learning, can be readily applicable in urban music education if the teacher is willing to create and explore the music of inner-city youth. Nieto's (1996) concept of cultural capital), in which a teacher views the students' backgrounds as assets rather than deficits, can also be a powerful inducement to student engagement in music class if they are allowed to use their musical experiences as resources. Similarly, Abrahams and Schmidt (2006) created a model of critical learning for music education, Critical Pedagogy for Music Education, (CPME). Its most salient principle, based on Freire's concept of group problem solving, is one where music education involves a dialectic between students and teachers to create and improvise music based on the students and their sociocultural contexts.

My 22 years of work as a music teacher in urban schools has shown me that students can have success with music inside the institution. As a caring educator I put out the time and effort to find and provide music that interested and identified with my students, as well as selecting accessible orchestra and band music to develop and broaden their understanding of European based genres that are the foundation for school music programs. I took them to festivals, incorporated their own music into our school performances and did as much tutoring as I could to help those who wished to continue music at the high school or college level. I truly believe that students can flourish in

music classes provided they are given a nurturing and caring environment with dedicated teachers who validate the students' own music, culture and interests and incorporate them into the curriculum, and who employ a pedagogy and wide range of teaching style that stimulates students interest and produces success.

Delimitations

The challenges involved in music and urban education are felt at the elementary, middle and high school levels. Yet elementary and secondary levels face different issues and demands. Elementary schools usually have pull-out instrument classes held weekly, while secondary school music classes are taught daily in self –contained classes. Further, high schools because of college and graduate requirements at the high-school level. This study is limited specifically to music within the context of an urban middle school. Other arts disciplines, such as visual arts, dance and drama, face similar issues as music because of their shared status as non-traditional core subjects, but these will not be addressed directly in order to keep the focus on music education.

Significance of the Study

This study was undertaken because schools considered low achieving and less affluent tend to have fragmented music programs of lesser quality in comparison to more affluent schools (Woodworth et al. 2007; Frierson-Campbell, 2006). Thus, urban middle school students are less likely prepared to perform music in high school, resulting in a lack of racial and socioeconomic diversity in music ensembles there and at the college level, as well as in professional performing groups such as symphonic, jazz and pop ensembles.

This study is important for administrators, program counselors, and music education advocates because it aims to provide an understanding of how music education is conceived, prioritized, and scheduled in an urban middle school. Additionally, this study will help improve the decision-making process for music education in middle schools because it will provide decision-makers with: An understanding of the requirements and mandates related to NCLB and standardized testing, the music content standards and frameworks as recommended by the California Board of Education, and the viability of traditional music programs with urban students. Lastly, this study hopes to contribute to the knowledge base and literature regarding music and urban education in hopes that one day children from less affluent schools will have equal access to music education on par with schools that have vital and vibrant programs, and that urban students will have the musical expertise to further their music education at the high school and college levels.

Definition of Terms

The Arts - The United States Congress (1965), in passing the National Foundation on the Arts and Humanities Act, defined the arts as including: music (instrumental and vocal), dance, drama, folk art, creative writing, architecture, painting, sculpture, photography, graphic and craft arts, industrial design, costume and fashion design, motion pictures, television, radio, film, video, tape and sound recording… and the study and application of the arts to the human environment.

Content Standards-As defined by the California State Board of Education (2004), content standards for any subject are the knowledge, concepts, and skills that students should acquire at each grade level.

Equity -The quality of being fair and impartial (Oxford English Dictionary, 2009).

NCLB -Acronym for the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, which was passed into law by the U.S. Congress in January 2002. Law essentially requires more accountability on the local and state level, determined by test scores in some of the core subjects (U.S. Department of Education, 2005).

Standardized Testing- A testing instrument that is administered, scored, and interpreted in a standard manner. It may be either norm-referenced or criterion-referenced. The most commonly used standardized tests are commercially developed and distributed achievement tests. Standardized tests are those most commonly associated in K-12 with high-stakes consequences for children and educators. he term standardized should not be confused with standards, a term used to refer to expectations for children's learning or the quality of schools and other programs (Council of Chief State School Officers, n.d.).

Urban - How does one define such a broad word like urban in relation to education? Martin Haberman (2007) delineates urban as a pejorative code word for the large numbers of poor and minorities who live in cities, and that negative associations with the term profoundly affect education and shape the nature of urban schooling. I think it is important to understand what urban signifies here because the school site selected for this study is located in a city and neighborhood where gentrification has set in to the point where middle-class educated families are now sending their children into urban schools where they had not before.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

The review of literature is an overview of how multiple factors and constructs influence music programs in urban schools. These factors include state content standards and frameworks outlining which music skills and concepts should be taught, theories and rationales justifying music's importance in education, and the makeup of existing music curricula. They also include the prescriptive learning requirements related to traditional core courses (math, English, science), and the values, views, and insights on music of decision makers and gatekeepers who situate music into school curriculum and scheduling. Finally, general issues of urban education (students' socioeconomic status, shortage of quality teachers, lack of effective programs and curriculum) also intersect with music as a course of study and its availability in urban public schools.

A good starting point is to review the official documents that provide an outline for implementing all subjects, including music, in the school curriculum. These documents can be categorized as: prescriptive curriculum requirements, educational mandates, standardized testing requirements, and music content standards and frameworks. Subsequently, we must look at the effects each of these categories has on music education. Quite frequently, music courses are compromised as schools give limited resources and priority scheduling to math and language arts courses because of testing and school accountability (Music for All Foundation, 2004). Of equal importance is the understanding of how decision makers, usually a combination of administrators,

counselors and other site planners, view and value music education, in particular, what rationales motivate them to situate music within their schedules and curricula.

We must also understand the often complex and elusive answers to the question of why music education matters, answers which strengthen the rationale for music standards and justify music's place in the school curriculum. Research on the value of music in education tends to focus on music's extrinsic or intrinsic worth. Studies that focus on extrinsic value explore how music education benefits other subjects or affects school and community morale. Intrinsic studies are more apt to focus on such things as aesthetics and the uniqueness of music education as a whole (Eisner, 1996; Reimer, 1989). Not only should we look at the importance of music education in general, but we should also examine the music curricula and content with regards to popular music, FIX classical, European concert, "art" music. According to Bowman (2004), the gap between conventional music programs and the students' musical practices and lives is enormous.

Logically, music education in urban schools does not operate in a vacuum, but is subject to the conditions that effect all urban education. Many differences between urban schools and non-urban schools stem from socioeconomic factors and the constant, uncertain change that exists in urban and urban school settings (Warzer, 2006). In particular, we must look at research that focuses on music in urban education so that we can better understand the underlying causes for the generally mediocre programs prevalent in urban schools, while seeking successful instructional and structural music education models.

Review of Documents Related to Educational Mandates

In California, schools and school districts must adhere to the state education codes of the California Department of Education (CDE), which include acts passed by the state legislature as well as policies emanating from the CDE governing body, California's State Board of Education (CSBE) (California Department of Education, 2008). School districts must also follow the guidelines and regulations of federal legislation if they are to receive federal funds.

The State of California is very clear with regards to the inclusion of music and the arts in K-12 education. Legislation written into California Education Codes 51210 and 51220 requires that the adopted course of study for Grades 1-6 and 7-12 must include visual and performing arts. The CSBE mandates the general courses of study for students, but the implementation of these subject mandates is meant to be interpretive. For instance, middle school students are required to receive 54,000 minutes of instruction annually, but only physical education has a mandated amount of instructional time (California Department of Education, 2008). For sixth grade, CSBE only requires that students be "given instruction" in English/language arts, math, social science, and science. For Grades 7-8, school districts are required to offer courses in the same subjects (California Department of Education, 2007, pp 2-9). The CSBE does not stipulate the frequency or quantity of any particular subject that a school must offer, but it does provide content standards that define what skills and knowledge students should acquire at each grade level. These content standards are only advisory in nature, with no direct consequence should schools fail to follow them (California State Board of Education, 2008, 2001).

A search of mandated middle school courses of study from several school districts resulted in a lack of any discernable literature. One principal in an urban middle school informed me that his school district's expectations for course offerings, consisting of English, math, physical education, social science and one arts or elective course, were implied. In his case, he is sure he would hear from his superiors if his students didn't have math and English every semester (G. Pacini, personal communication, April 12, 2008).

While the frequency and quantity of subject courses are not explicitly mandated by the CDE, many school districts have an implied emphasis on core subjects such as math and English. No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and the California Public Schools Accountability Act (CPSAA) both require student testing as a way of measuring the academic progress of individual schools. In California, these exams test students in math, reading skills, and most recently, science, but not in social studies or the arts, basing their questions on California's content standards in these areas (California State Senate, 1999; Bush, 2001).

One of the effects of such accountability mandates is that schools have emphasized student preparedness in tested subjects at the expense of comprehensive instruction in all subjects (McElroy, 2007). Music, art, physical education and even social studies are not subject to standardized testing, and thus are implicitly lower priorities. This does not mean that school boards and administrators do not value arts education so much as that they have to deal with the constraints left by NCLB (Doubzinkis, 2005).

Accountability mandates have been more detrimental to the teaching of music in urban schools than in affluent schools. Urban schools have much higher percentages of

lower socioeconomic status students, who tend to produce lower test scores, and thus urban schools are under more pressure to improve test scores (Woodworth et al., 2007). One school board member in an urban district stated that the testing related to NCLB did not give the board much choice when deciding between art and math (Grant, 2005). The testing requirements and high stakes attached to some of them have lead some schools to relegate music to after school programs, or, at worst, to cut it all together (Dobuzinskis, 2005; MacPherson, 2004). Some schools and school districts have clearly neglected equity in music and the arts, allowing only students who score at the Basic Level or above on STAR (Standardized Testing and Reporting) to participate in electives such as music, while double-booking lower-performing students in mathematics or language arts. In some schools, the percentage of students denied arts electives runs as high as 50% (Woodworth, et al.). This practice is particularly inequitable, and detrimental to student engagement and the quality of music programs, when individual students display special interest in or aptitude for music, yet struggle with math, reading, or writing skills.

<center>Review of Music Standards and Frameworks</center>

Content standards as a national phenomenon for nearly all subjects in K-12 education developed as a result of the National Commission on Educational Reform report, *A Nation at –Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform* (1983). At the request of then-President Ronald Reagan, the commission and its subsequent document addressed concerns about the quality of education in America's schools. One of the recommendations of the document was the need for states to develop content standards in all subjects. Since the 1990s, virtually all states have developed their own content standards (Hill, 2007).

The CDE has content standards and frameworks for the visual and performing arts. The *Visual and Performing Arts Frameworks* were first developed in 1982 and subject to revisions every 7-8 years, while the *Visual and Performing Arts Content Standards* were first created in 2001 in response to state legislation mandates. Ironically, the frameworks were developed before the standards, but are designed to help teachers develop curriculum based on content standards. According to the CSBE, content standards represent "the skills, knowledge, and abilities in dance, music, theatre, and the visual arts that all students should be able to master at specific grade levels, pre-kindergarten through grade twelve" (Visual and Performing Arts Content Standards for California Public Schools, 2001, x). The frameworks were designed to help educators develop curriculum and instruction so that students could meet the content standards by providing, among other things, guidelines for planning, implementing and evaluation of standards-based programs (California State Board of Education, 2004).

The California music content standards are grouped under five strands for each grade level: artistic perception; creative expression; historical and cultural context; aesthetic valuing; and connections, relations, and applications. Three key elements of both the content standards and frameworks are cumulative knowledge through sequential learning, a broad view of culture, and inclusion. Content standards for each grade level are built on prior knowledge from preceding years so that the knowledge and skills gained are expected to be cumulative. The content standards also emphasize that students should experience the arts "from the perspective of American culture and of worldwide ethnic, racial, religious and cultural groups" (California State Board of Education, 2004, p.5). The assumed presence of a multiplicity of cultures is pervasive throughout both the

content standards and frameworks. Inclusion of all learners is one of the guiding principles of the framework, indicating that instructional methods should allow all students to work at their own pace to develop self expression, and that teachers may need to modify or adapt curriculum and instruction to encourage the successful participation of students.

Districts have wide latitude in implementing the music content standards and frameworks because both the *Visual and Performing Arts Content Standards* and the *Visual and Performing Arts Frameworks* offer no specific requirements that music and the other arts be made available to all students, nor do these documents mandate an assessment of student progress in these subjects (California Department of Education, 2001).

The Importance of Music Education

One cannot advocate for music education, let alone music in urban schools, without attempting to define its importance. Music means many things to many people, and arguably, everyone has had some positive, either passive or participatory, musical experience. No clear biological reason for music and musical practice exists, yet human life would not exist as we know it without them (Elliot, 1995). Outside of formal institutional contexts, however, music education does not create the same wide interest or have the same importance as does music itself (Westerlund, 2008). Yet some studies have shown that affluent and educated families see the value of music education by sending their own kids to private lessons (Harris Poll, 2007; Look, 2006) Even in many educational institutions, music study has been diminished because of the emphasis on

literacy and numeracy skills that prepare young people for a world of work governed principally by technological and commercial interests (Jorgensen, 2008).

Many scholars and educators have emphasized the importance of studying music simply because it is an omnipresent force in people's lives. Horace Mann wrote in 1844 that the use of music was so universal that the purpose of music education must be to allow all students, not just the gifted, to use music for their own betterment and understanding (Mark, 2002). Peter Kalkavage (2006), a professor at St. Joseph's College, provided a similar assessment: that music is so central to the lives of young people that the purpose of music education should be to lead students to become aware of what makes music so attractive and powerful to them. Reimer (1989) suggested that the primary purpose of music education is to develop everyone's natural responsiveness to the power of the art of music.

One problem in justifying music as an essential subject in K-12 education is that many of its perceivable benefits seem secondary, or must be inferred, in comparison to the obvious, everyday values found in literacy and mathematics studies. Further, its value is difficult to articulate because its holistic educational benefits are somewhat opaque and not always immediate, and their learning processes cannot be readily measured by traditional empirical methods (Gardner, 1982; Gehiagan, 1992). General perception about music also contributes to the difficulty of justification. Eisner (2002) states that math and science are thought of as primary for development, and reading and writing as the best means for cultivating the mind. The arts have been perceived as affective rather than cognitive, and easy rather than tough.

Reimer (1989), Swanswick (1988), and Woolford, (2005) have produced exceptional and well-written books on the philosophical importance of music education, with much information and insight. Yet, these writings tend to be dense, complex and academic, with long-winded explanations of music education's value rather than succinct, direct arguments that are accessible to others. Reimer (1989) argues that any justification for music education must first and foremost demonstrate music's unique qualities; secondary or extrinsic benefits, while important, never establish music as an essential subject. I concur with Woodford (2005) that a discussion of music education detached from other disciplines or worldly references is neither practical nor a useful form of advocacy. Reimer's rationale cannot be the sole, underlying principle in a society that perceives aesthetics as lofty and unessential to education and that gravitates to practical rationales and tangible results. Further, to emphasize music's educational value exclusively as an end in itself, while mathematics and literacy are seen as having a multitude of interrelated benefits, is unfair. Why should music be held to such a different standard? Arguments for music education's importance must reflect a mixture of utilitarian and intrinsic philosophies.

Music Contributes to Cognition and Intellectual Growth

Recent decades have brought growing interest in the arts as a form of cognition, based on the idea that, like language with its inherent set of symbols, the arts have their own symbol systems that involve cognitive processing, even if these processes cannot be easily measured by traditional empirical methods. Numerous scholars (Eisner; Jensen, 2001; Reimer, 1989) assert that the arts are intellectually demanding and contribute to cognitive development. Jensen (2001) states that music is equal to mathematics, language

and science as a major discipline because they are all assessable, brain-based, culturally necessary, inclusive and wide-ranging, as well as have survival value and no downside risk. Neurologists Petsche (1993) and Wilson (1999) have observed that music contributes to the development of cognitive systems that cultivate reasoning, creativity, decision-making and problem solving. A more recent Stanford study (Trei, 2005), which used functional magnetic resonance imaging of the brain, shows that music performance requires split-second decision-making, and is similar to the process of language acquisition. Gardner (1993, 2000) theorizes that multiple forms of intelligence exist, including linguistic, logical-mathematical, spatial, bodily kinesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, and musical intelligence, with no one form of intelligence having priority The brain itself is multi-functional and integrated, with a specifically identified zone related to music.

Educators have further interpreted Gardner's theories to recognize that musical intelligence is a distinct intelligence to be nurtured alongside other areas such as mathematical and verbal/linguistic (Undercofler, 2005). Undercofler further elicits that music nurtures those parts of the brain that process emotion, feeling and abstraction, which leads to better mental health. Jensen (2001) posits that the results of music education may emerge over the long-term, across a spectrum of areas that include fine motor skills, creativity and improved emotional intelligence. Eisner (2002) stresses that the learning and creating involved with the arts, in particular the perceptual awareness of qualitative relationships, requires complex forms of thinking that contribute to cognitive development. Rudolf Arnheim (1969) believes that the sensory perceptions related to artistic activity are cognitive activities because sensory perception (auditory and visual)

are involved in the processing of information. Finally, both Eisner (1994) and Neisser (1976) agree that all of the arts, which by their nature are full of perceptual differences, meet the criterion for cognitive events.

Music's Unique Aspects

Music advocates talk about the intrinsicality of music, in which music has value and importance in and of itself and should not be defined by nonmusical outcomes (Stewart, 2007; Woodford, 2005). Music is unique because of its ineffability, and is so powerful that its meaning cannot be captured by descriptive language. Rather, it is experienced at the non-verbal level (Harvey, n.d.; Younker, 2002).

First and foremost, music is an expressive sound language that produces emotional responses in listeners. (McDermott & Hauser, 2005). Its domain is the union of the mathematical and the poetic, and it has the capacity to move one to sustained and sometimes overpowering emotion more than any other art (Kalkavage, 2006). But how can a sequence of tones provoke such emotion? Packalen (2008) reports that music has unique auditory properties capable of arousing emotions and feelings in listeners. The awakening of emotions may occur through causal reaction of the sounds and dynamic properties or through sympathetic reaction to music that reminds one of human expression. Kalkavage adds that it is not the isolated sounds and timbres of an instrument or musical piece that move us, but the well-defined structures of tones and rhythms. Younker (2002) posits that, as composers or listeners, we can organize musical materials into meaningful and expressive symbols of our subjective feelings. In this way, music and human subjectivity are articulated and experienced (Elliot, 1995; Reimer, 2002). Kalkavage sees this organizing of such materials to reveal subjective taste as the paradox

that makes music worthy of intellectual wonder. "Music is the union of the rational and irrational, of order and feeling" (http://www.aft.org/pubs-reports/american_educator/issues/fall2006/).

Music's Utilitarian Benefits

Music education supporters frequently cite utilitarian benefits to justify music's place in schools. Utilitarian benefits are primarily inferred, non-musical outcomes that are functional and practical, of social and cultural value, and are extrinsic in nature. They are also numerous, conventional, and readily discernible for public intake. However, as utilitarian benefits are readily found in other subjects as well as in music, utilitarian arguments may not be enough to assert that music education is essential (Eisner, 2002; Reimer, 1989). Further, the utilitarian philosophy is more akin with a defensive posture of advocacy rather than a development of grounded theory (Johnson, 1999). Johnson (2004) later adds that, in spite of its shortcomings, one should not assume that this type of research, voluminous in nature, is valueless.

Numerous studies and reports show a relationship between students who take music and higher academic achievement (Grant, 2005; Lautzenheiser, 2005; Paige, 2004; Petress, 2005; Prescott, 2005). The Dana Foundation study, *Learning, Arts and the Brain* (2008), found that students who studied music for 20 or more hours per week did better in math than students who did not, and that the more musical training students had, the better the students did at reading. Rauscher and Zupan (2001) reported from a research study that children who took keyboard and music lessons for an extended period showed significant increase in spatial-temporal reasoning tasks. Two studies related to secondary education and testing, the College Entrance Examination Board (1990-1998) and the

College-Bound Seniors National Report: Profile of SAT Program Test Takers (2001), found that students involved in music education scored consistently higher on the SAT than students who had no musical training. Several writers (Winner & Hetland, 2001; Hulbert, 2008) have countered that these types of reports are based on correlations, not causations.

A wide variety of writers have posited the social benefits of music education as well. Music education helps develop many important social skills relevant to work and life, such as thinking creatively, communicating effectively, and working collaboratively (Galligan, 2001, Mach, 2006; Miller & Coen; 1994; Posnick-Goodwin, 2005). Further, music classes provide an opportunity for increased parental involvement in their children's education through participation in performances and celebratory events (Moskowitz, 2003; Mixon, 2006). In essence, music facilitates the development of positive school cultures as students create a familial social unit (Abril, 2006; Adderly, Kennedy, & Berz, 2003).

Educators and scholars inside and outside the classroom have also touted the benefits music education brings to a student's own personal growth and development. According to Rhen (2008), music is one of the few subjects that allows for student self-expression on a daily basis. Music performance contributes to students' improved motor-skills, alertness, concentration, and memory, and has helped foster self-control and good learning habits (Bresler, 2005; Lautzenheiser, 2005; Westerlund, 2008). Student self-esteem has also been touted as a benefit of music, particularly with those who do less well in other subjects (Larson, 1992; Mixon, 2005; Warner, 1999). Students involved in frequent music or arts settings also improve their abilities to express their thoughts,

develop their creativity, take risks in learning, and build self-confidence towards displaying their learning in public (Bresler, 2005; Hanna, 1992).

Yet another benefit of music education is that it has the capacity to enrich students' lives through experiencing and understanding various cultures, which are frequently defined and expressed through music (Children's Music Workshop, 2006, Sterling, 1995). Even former President George W. Bush has said that music and the arts allow students to explore new cultures and to experience life from different perspectives (Paige, 2004). James Undercofler (2005), the dean of the Eastman School of Music, believes that music education provides an opportunity for students to develop empathy, understanding and sensitivity to other cultures through exploring new musical forms and ideas. In music, students discover commonalities between their own cultures and others that minimize national boundaries and language differences (Miller & Coen, 1994; Blair & Kondo, 2008).

<div align="center">Music Education and Multiculturalism</div>

Multiculturalism has been an oft-used word in recent years to describe certain aspects of society, yet its roots go back to the turn of the century, in the works of DuBois and Carter Woodson (Campbell, 2002; Okafor, 1992). Saldana and Waxman (1997) see multiculturalism as an effort towards creating a society that recognizes diversity, and in which cultural groups live in equity. Others view multiculturalism as inclusive not only of ethnic and cultural groups, but also of gender and special needs groups as well (Lechner & Berry, 1997).

Multicultural education, dating from the Civil Rights era of the 1960s, began with Ethnic Studies courses at the university level, which highlighted the history and

contributions of various non-white, ethnic and racial groups (Campbell, 2002; Prince, 2008). It later evolved to represent the perspectives of these groups in disciplines across the educational spectrum. Campbell sees a dual purpose of multiculturalism within school curriculum: to serve the needs of a diverse population as well as to develop students' understanding of the cultural thought and practices of people across the globe. Banks and Banks (1995) define multicultural education in terms of creating equitable opportunities for students of diverse racial, ethnic and social-class backgrounds.

Up until the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s, music education in the United States of America was essentially concerned with Eurocentric classical or folk music, with hardly a mention of African-American musical traditions or those from Latin America (Campbell, 2002; Heller, 1983;Volk, 1993). The Tanglewood Symposium of 1967 was a watershed event in music education that brought together luminaries from various professional fields in an attempt to resolve conflicts within music education and to set a future direction for music education on a national level (Mark, 2000). One important consequence of the symposium for multicultural music education was the notion of diversity, in which children should be granted access to a wider variety of non-Western music (Campbell). Demographic changes since the mid-1960s have produced a much more diverse student body, calling out for a curriculum that is more reflective of these ethnic and racial changes, and aimed less at previous homogenous student populations (Green, 2001; Johnson, 2004).

Multicultural music education has been conceptualized over the years through various methods (Legette, 2003). Campbell (1992) views multicultural music education as a process in which students experience music of various ethnic, social, and religious

groups in the general classroom through performance and listening. Quesada and Volk (1997) also define multicultural music education as experiencing music from various groups, but within the confines and contexts of formal music education. Still others (Mixon, 2005, Dolamore, 2006) focus on multicultural music education within the traditional settings of band and orchestra. Mixon (2006) and Campbell (2002) also suggest that performing ensembles can be culturally specific, such as mariachi bands, steel-pan ensembles, or ethnically specific percussion configurations.

The perceived effects of multicultural music education are similar to the previously mentioned social exposure benefits, but with the added notion of giving an opportunity to those ethnically diverse students to speak artistically for themselves about their own cultures, and an opportunity to potentially connect to music in a meaningful way (Darby & Catterall, 1994; Greene, 1995).

<div align="center">Popular Music and Music Education</div>

Another important issue brought up at the Tanglewood Symposium of 1967 was the need for music educators to begin addressing popular music within the context of music education (Boespflung, 2004). Since the commercialization of the phonograph at the beginning of the twentieth century, popular styles of music have had a prominent place in the musical landscape of the United States. Popular music can mean or be many things, but classical music, children's music, and religious-themed styles do not fall into this category.

The dominance of popular music styles over other genres of music today can perhaps be indicated by sales of CDs and music downloads. Although consumer interest in CDs is waning in favor of digital downloads from the internet, a recent report showed

that in the Unites States of America, classical music and other similar styles and genres account for only 3 to 4% of CD sales, and about 12% of online downloads (Schwartz, 2006). Popular music therefore seems deeply embedded in the larger American culture, and enjoys nearly universal acceptance (Lee, 2004). Psychologists and educators have also recognized the significant importance of popular music in students' lives (Christenson & Roberts, 1998).

Yet in educational institutions, popular music has been primarily studied from a historical and sociological perspective, analyzed for its content, or adapted for use in traditional ensembles such as concert band and orchestra. The performance or creation of popular music has not yet gained a permanent foothold as a course of study in the majority of educational institutions, from K-12 to the college level (Boespflung, 2004). Much of the resistance to this type of study comes from music educators who are still unconvinced that popular music has a place in formal education settings (Rodriguez, 2004). Woodford (2005) points out that these music educators see the Western-musical cannon as the high mark of musical achievement, while Reimer (2004) states that music educators believe only classical music, along with certain folk styles of music, are worthy of study in formal school settings. They see popular music as crude, inferior, and unsophisticated (Boespflung, 2004).

There are, however, certainly arguments in favor of increasing popular music's presence in music education. Bennett Reimer (2004) believes that current academic practices have created distance between music of the academy and the music that is in the minds and hearts of young people. He posits that we must increase the teaching of popular music educational settings, not to exclude or supplant classical music, but as a

way of enhancing students' learning by connecting it to their own particular musical lives. Bowman (2004) believes that educators must take the music and musical experiences that are prevalent in the lives of our students seriously. He further adds that if music educators are to do justice to popular music, they must change and broaden their assumptions about whom they are teaching, and for what ends and goals.

Humphreys (2004) has defined popular music "…as music intended for wide appeal. It is distinguished from classical music, whose aim may be seen as transcendence, and from traditional and folk music, a sphere ruled by belief in community" (p.91). Yet whether a style of music is "popular" depends on the audience. Rodriguez (2004) asserts that what distinguishes popular music styles are the cultures that consider them popular. He further elaborates that popular music must be measured by some type of consumption, i.e., are there enough people buying, playing or listening to the music? Bowman (2004) sees popular music as fluid, never stable, ever changing, and less reliable to pin on particular social groups because individuals' identities and tastes are subjective and not necessarily uniform when it comes to music. The plausible definition, according to Bowman, is that popular music is open, provisional and subject to revision.

One of the reasons for the superficial treatment of popular music in music education is the culture of the music educator. Many music educators have been trained in conservatories or universities where Western European art music is the norm (Boespflung, 2004; Green, 2005; Woodford, 2005); therefore, their teaching strategies, curriculum content and values are derived from Western classical music pedagogies (Green, 2005).

Educators who are more willing to incorporate popular music styles may be apprehensive or reluctant about doing so because they do not come from an environment or musical background that encourages popular music performance or study (Emmons, 2004; Woody, 2007). Pop music study and performance differs from traditional music studies in that it incorporates improvisation, composition, creativity, experimentation, emulation and collaborative learning. These processes are intrinsically motivating for students because they usually involve student autonomy, in contrast to the top-down music making found in traditional school ensembles (Woody, 2007).

Popular music learning also counts less on written music and more on the aural tradition and memory for passing on and processing information (Boespflung, 2004; Rodriguez, 2004). Further, the musical instruments frequently used in popular music, electric guitar and bass, synthesizer keyboard and drum set, are not the types of instruments most music teachers have studied or have received teaching guidance on (Emmons, 2004, Green, 2005; Green 2008; Woodson, 2004).

If music teachers are to be successful with pop music ensembles, they must allow for a new pedagogy, as traditional methods of teaching an ensemble will not work (Boespflung, 2004). Offering pop music ensembles, however, should not merely be an appeasement of student interest; and there should be clear goals and expected outcomes for any program, although such goals may be somewhat different from the goals and outcomes of traditional string or wind ensembles (Woody, 2007).

The educator's role in a popular music ensemble changes from one of director of authoritative knowledge to one of facilitator, as students most likely will bring knowledge central to the musical experience (Boespflung, 2004; Bowman, 2004). The

educator must also realize that ambiguity and fluidity can be pedagogical assets (Bowman, 2004). If the music teacher is to intervene in the learning process, he or she must be able to use a vernacular pedagogy, and in an authentic manner (Woody, 2007). If the instructor does not know the music, then steps must be taken to learn the language, and then to be able to demonstrate the music in an accessible way.

Popular music instruction may also require that teachers develop skill sets on instruments on which they have had little or no training or experience, such as electronic keyboards, electric bass and guitar and their modern usages, drum kit, and non –Western percussion instruments (Emmons, 2004). Improvisation skills and knowledge of composition are also valuable commodities in working with pop music ensembles; these, too, are areas in which most music teachers are lacking (Bowman, 2004; Emmons, 2004; Woody, 2007).

Over the last 30 years, some styles of popular music, particularly hip-hop and other spoken word, have relied heavily on the use of computer-based drumbeats, samples, and instrument sounds created with music programs such as Garage Band, Fruity Loops and Protools. Music technology is constantly changing, but according to Boespflung (2004) and Emmons (2004), an educator involved with contemporary popular music making must have a working knowledge of these computer-based programs as well as mixing equipment, which are essential to the music making process and product when using vocals or spoken word. Educators must know how to use effects such as reverb, distortion, compression, delay, and how to route them from mixer back to instrument, along with microphone technique and placement. Finally, music teachers should understand the potential that these computer programs can have for initiating

composition, encouraging students' analysis and critique of their work, and editing the final product.

Missing from the literature review on popular music and music education is a discussion of the verbal context of popular music. Popular songs' lyrics and their meanings play a most vital role of in their saliency, no matter how good the groove, melody and musical accompaniment. The authors reviewed framed their discussions on pop music from a musicological framework, that is, the process involved with making the music. Text and lyrics to music have been for the most part neglected by music educators, who traditionally have not spent much time outside of performance, performance-skill, musicianship, theory and composition (Lee, 2004). Yet, the understanding of music within historical and social context is a criterion found in both state and national music standards (California State Board of Education, 2004; Consortium of National Arts Education Associations, 1994).

Music and Urban Education

Music education in urban schools faces many of the same challenges that are found throughout urban education. These challenges include a lack of experienced teachers and less than desirable facilities, large numbers of students of color, marginalized students and students of low socio-economic status, focused attention on test preparation, a need to develop relevant curriculum and pedagogy; student apathy, and poor attendance (Abril, 2006; Education Alliance, n.d.; Gay, 2000; hooks, 2003; Kozol, 1991; 2005; Noguera, 2003). Paul Woodford (2005) further acknowledges that critical theory and theorists have contributed significantly to music educators' understandings of the failings of music in urban education with respect to hegemony and student inequity.

But how do these conditions filter down to music education? And what differentiates music education in urban settings, particularly inner-city public schools, from music education in more affluent private or suburban schools? What innovative and new practices have been tried to ameliorate otherwise unsatisfactory conditions for music education?

As previously mentioned, standardized testing, accountability, and funding tend to have a detrimental effect on school music programs in general, but these effects are more pronounced in urban schools because students' test scores are lower, among other problems associated with a lower socioeconomic status (Kindall-Smith, 2004). Further, district wide and school wide support for music tends to be less in urban school settings (Mixon, 2006; Woodworth & Park, 2007), and administrators have no real comprehension of the workings of an effective music program (Smith, 2006). Woodford (2005) asserts that some of the failings of music in schools have to do with the perceived role of music teachers, many of whom narrowly conceive themselves as conductors and performance teachers rather than as facilitators for student reflection and critical thinking in a democratic society as espoused by Dewey (1980), Freire (1994), Shor (1992) and Wink (1997). Woodford also points out that issues of power privileges and socially-constructed knowledge and identity have all had a detrimental effect on the process of educating children of color and low socioeconomic status.

One of the most salient challenges in urban education is overcoming the cultural and social divide between teachers and students. In the 500 largest school districts in the United States, Latinos and African American students account for 52% of the student population (Young, 2002). For some time now, the majority of children in urban public

schools have been children of color, yet their teachers are overwhelmingly white and middle class (Emmanuel, 2006; Robinson, 2006). When you look specifically at music teachers, the gulf is even wider, as 94% of them are white (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1999).

Ladson-Billings (2001) and Johnson (2001) reflect that white, middle-class culture and values are rarely examined and are taken for granted as societal norms. These norms become the yardstick by which all others in society are judged (Benedict, 2006). According to a study by Mazzei (2004), teachers see the notion of whiteness as normative, and perceive non-white, urban students as deficient in many regards. Educational researchers and critical theorists (Freire, 1994; Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings; Gonzalez, Moll & Amanti, 2005; Shore & Freire, 1987) have described such an assessment as a deficit model, in which students are perceived as having deficiencies, while assets brought from their homes and communities are largely ignored.

Similarly, music educators often perceive education from white, Western and middle class perspectives, and expect urban students to lack the background and experiences that will prepare them for traditional Eurocentric music education (Benedict, 2006). Additionally, the standard pedagogy has always been based on western European values and cultures (Johnson, 2004; Robinson, 2006), which, for many music educators, represents the yardstick or standard for judging all music (Woodford, 2005). This hegemony is further strengthened by its overwhelming presence in classroom texts and materials (Hall, 2000), in which curricula and methodologies are based on Western standards about what constitutes good music (Benedict, 2006). Music teachers and band directors also extend these values to music programming. Campbell (2002), in an

interview with a high school band teacher from a school with a tradition of performing ensembles, was able to get a clear perspective from a teacher who sees music education in culturally color-blind terms:

> I don't go looking for some evenly balanced program of pieces by African-American and Caucasian composers, and by Hispanics and Asians . . . to me, it's about kids making good music and not about representing every last ethnic enclave in some schlocky arrangement (p.27).

Campbell (2002) adds that stories like this one are all too common among band directors and other music teachers. Legette (2003) reports in his study that only a third of music teachers select material that is reflective of the ethnic makeup of their classes. While most teachers in the study felt that music from other cultures should be taught, they lacked the knowledge, resources, and expertise to teach it. More poignantly, Legette's study also showed that many teachers saw the value of non-Western music, but that European-based classical-concert music was their top priority, leaving little time for anything else. Benedict (2006) points out that such an adherence to traditional content fails to acknowledge the vast cultural differences in our students. When we ignore their ethnicities and cultures, it means the default cultural and educational models are white and middle-class (Irvine, 1991). As a result, urban students are often frustrated that the representative cultures of their homes and communities do not fit in with the school culture, which leads to alienation and disengagement and puts them behind in the educational process (Delpit, 1995; Irvine, 2001; Ladson-Billings, 1998).

This mismatch between the students' and schools' cultural and educational models also contributes in part to student apathy. Many urban students already view schools and teachers in general with high levels of skepticism (Gay, 2000; Gordon, 2002; McAnally, 2006); their lack of sustained interest in traditional music programs also poses

significant challenges. Blair and Kondo (2008) point out that it is difficult for students to engage with music shaped by cultural and social contexts far removed from their own experiences. Abrahams (2006) and Bowman (2004) state that Eurocentric music taught in schools is not wholly attractive to urban students, whose own particular musical tastes, backgrounds, and experiences are not always suited for such music. Mahendran (2007) adds that Eurocentric music education cannot articulate the varied and complex ways urban students engage in making music in their lives.

Student frustration with the results and outcomes they achieve in music classes also leads to student apathy and indifference. Playing an instrument is challenging, requiring a long -term commitment to daily practice (Boyle, DeCarbo & Jordan, 1995; Mixon, 2006). Instrumental music programs implicitly require a sense of delayed gratification, since skills are acquired over time (Mahendran, 2007). At the middle school level, many students begin music instruction with no prior training in elementary school. Boyle, DeCarbo and Jordan (1995) found that the two main reasons students drop out of music at the secondary level are a lack of commitment and a loss of interest. Payne (2001) concluded that students of lower socioeconomic status do not often attribute success at school to individual action, and thus have difficulty mediating behavior that will affect long-term learning outcomes. Regelski (2007) states that traditional methodologies result in students typically failing to develop a commitment to music beyond the classroom.

There are, however, music programs in which urban and marginalized children of low socioeconomic status have flourished and are engaged and successful over the long-term (Abril, 2006; Lanz & Arvelo, 2006; O'Brien, 2005; Kindall-Smith, 2004; Watts,

Doane, & Fekete, 1994). These programs have broken away from traditional approaches that have not served urban students well and have looked for other ways to achieve student success and equity in music.

One of the main ingredients for successful music programs has been caring and dedicated teachers. Regardless of the type of subject matter or ensemble setting, students respond to teachers whom they see as genuinely interested in their well being (Mixon, 2005). While many of the best qualified teachers opt for more affluent schools where all-around support is greater (Abril, 2006; Kozol, 1992), caring teachers who remain in urban schools do so to fight the injustice and inequity urban students face in these institutions, and focus their concerns on the educational and emotional well being of the students (Nieto, 2003). Smith (2006) noted in her study that some of the most effective teachers were of color and raised in urban settings, yet effective and caring teachers have also come from outside urban culture, including white, middle-class females (Robinson, 2006).

Caring and effective urban music teachers, regardless of ethnicity or socioeconomic background, are all concerned agents of change, affecting students and schools. These teachers spend time in their students' communities outside of school to learn about their respective cultures, building a connection between themselves and their students so as to provide them with a more appropriate music education. They learn to see things from the students' perspectives, are compassionate about the students' lives outside of school, give and expect respect from their students, are excited and enthusiastic about their teaching, and hold their students to high expectations (Abril, 2006; McAnally, 2006; Mixon, 2006; Smith, 2006).

Successful urban music educators have also broken away from traditional curricula, pedagogy, and methodology and have begun to use culturally relevant pedagogy, culturally responsive teaching, and critical theory based on the works of Ladson-Billings (1995), Gay (2000), and Freire (1994), respectively, to more effectively educate their students. Robinson (2006) states that while the ethnic and cultural content of formal music curricula, such as state adopted text books, has improved in recent years, culturally aware educators recognize the textbooks' shortcomings and take steps to improve curricular quality through augmentation. One of the first changes that capable music teachers make is to offer non- traditional, culturally relevant ensembles such as steel pan, rock, mariachi or other percussion ensembles that are likely to better motivate middle and high school students (Mixon, 2006). Other urban music educators have found success with computer-based music programs such as Garage Band, which they use as vehicles for teaching middle and high school students who have had little or no formal music training (Kuzmich, 2008; Mahendran, 2007). But simply recognizing and using non-traditional music styles and genres is not enough to reach urban students, and traditional European-based music still has a place in schools because of its ubiquity and the breadth of knowledge students can gain from it (Lanz, 2006; Robinson, 2006). Further, educators would be presumptuous and patronizing to think that urban students would not take to such music and not study it if invited to do so in an engaging way (Green &Shapiro, 2006; Greene, 1995).

Effective music teachers contextualize traditional curricular material for their students, address issues of race and ethnicity that come up head-on, and include perspectives from a variety of ethnicities and cultures (Robinson, 2006). They

incorporate their students' cultural knowledge, expertise and frames of reference to make learning more relevant, particularly with traditional curricula. They allow for student empowerment by letting students have partial control and ownership of course content and music making in the classroom, including selection of repertoire and the creation of their own songs (Green, 2008; Kuzmich, 2008; Mahendran, 2007). Perhaps most importantly, they use less of the top-down, banking model pedagogy found in conservatory teaching methods, and use more of a democratic and collaborative process in the classroom (Abrahams & Schmidt, 2006). This includes critical inquiry and a dialectic that allow students to broaden their sense of reality and understanding of music beyond the notes, forms, and sounds themselves to a broader cultural/expressive context.

Conclusion

Much of this review of literature indicates that music is an integral part of the educational landscape, has educational benefits that reach into both intrinsic and utilitarian domains, and should be taught regularly and sequentially. Unfortunately, issues of standardized testing, socioeconomics, and traditional teaching approaches that have not fared well with many urban students have not allowed for equity in urban schools in comparison to more affluent schools.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Restatement of the Purpose

The purpose of this study was to explore how music is situated at Cesar Chavez Middle School (CCMS) and whether students were receiving an equitable music education that is culturally and socially relevant, and that allowed them to acquire the music skills needed for grade level competency in music.

Research Design

I used a qualitative research design to explore my research questions through interviews and observations. A qualitative research design as defined by Patton (2001), Bogdan and Biklen (2007), and Creswell (2005) was used to explore the research questions. The process included two, one-on-one interviews with the principal, programming counselor, and two music teachers, as well as two student focus groups. The interviews were comprised of inquiries based on my research questions, plus additional questions that emerged during the interviews. Each interview lasted no longer than one hour. In addition, I observed and took field notes on six music classes and two student site council meetings to gain additional insight on how music was situated at the school, as well as the collection of school documents from curricula, assignments or faculty and district directives.

Research Setting

The site chosen for the research study is Cesar Chavez Middle School (CCMS), a public school that is located in an upper-middle class neighborhood of South Port, a large urban city on the West Coast of the United States. South Port is a minority-majority city

where whites make up less than half of the total population at 45%. Asians are the largest minority group, at 32%, followed by Hispanics at 14%, and African-Americans at 7.3 %. South Port is also one of the country's most densely populated large cities and has been ranked by many sources as one of the most expensive to live in the United States. Many middle-class families have left South Port in the last twenty years because of the high-cost of living, leaving a wide income disparity between rich and poor. The African-American population in particular has been cut in half since the 1970s as many of its middle-class families have emigrated, leaving behind a large number of blacks of lower socioeconomic status.

The racial demographic for children in South Port differs from that of the city overall because of the large number of white adults without children; South Port has the lowest percentage of children per population of any large U.S. city, at 14.5 percent. Asian children comprise the largest group at 34.1%, followed by whites at 25.6%, Latinos at 22.5%, African-Americans at 9%, and multiracial at 7.7%.

CCMS is part of the South Port School District (SPSD), one of the largest school districts on the West Coast, with over 50,000 students attending more than 100 schools. Yet South Port has the highest percentage of children attending private schools of any city in the nation, at 29% , compared to 10% nationwide. The white student population for the school district hovers around 10%, with a high of 15% in Kindergarten that declines to about half that in the middle and high schools. The data indicates that about half of the white, school age children attend private schools. In the last few years, however, the SPSD has had an increasing enrollment of children who come from mostly

white professional, middle class families as the rising cost of city living and private schools have motivated many of these families to seek public education.

South Port's schools can be divided, for the most part, by east side and west side designations. West side schools tend to be more desirable for many middle class, professional parents because of the west side's residential feel and abundance of white-collar neighborhoods. Additionally, many parents throughout the city have safety concerns with east side schools because of the larger number of public housing projects and blue collar neighborhoods, higher crime rates, and pockets of blight that exist on the east side.

Theoretically, any student is eligible to attend any grade-appropriate school in the district, but a variety of factors influence school designation, including percentage set-asides for neighborhood children, race, ethnicity and socioeconomic status, all of which the school district combines into a diversity index. The reality is that there is still a socioeconomic imbalance in school populations between east and west side schools in the district. According to the school district data, most students from upper-middle class and professional families attend west side schools, or foreign-language immersion schools that do not appeal to the majority of non-Latino parents of low socioeconomic status. They are virtually absent from eastside schools where Latino, African-American, Pacific Islander and Southeast Asian students of low socioeconomic students comprise the overwhelming majority.

Interestingly, the South Port School District has the highest average student performance of the largest urban school districts in its state, yet the widest gap between the student district average and the lowest performing students (California Department of

Education, 2009). SPSD is attempting to rectify these educational inequities, caused in part by the virtual segregation of students by socioeconomic status and race, with a strategic plan that closes the achievement and performance gap between its students. The plan calls for access and equity by ensuring that every student has access to quality teaching and learning regardless of background, neighborhood or socioeconomic status.

With regard to music and the arts, the district's strategic plan indicates that they can play a critical role in raising possibilities for all students, and that the arts can help develop student self-identity and self-esteem. The district has therefore leveraged state funding and other revenue streams from the city in order to hire more arts specialists for schools in need. The renewed effort is making it possible for all students to have access to quality arts education, while increasing opportunities for admission to the district's Music and Art High School.

Cesar Chavez Middle School is in an upper-middle class neighborhood that lies near the border of the city's east west divide. Because of the neighborhood's lack of school age children, or the desire of many neighborhood parents to send their children to private schools, most of the students who attend CCMS do not live near the school. They come from other lower-middle class and poor neighborhoods in the city and use public transportation to get there.

The school profile from the school district web site states that of the 551 students at CCMS, 84.8% are students of color. The full student racial-ethnic breakdown is as follows: Latinos are the largest group at 64.8 %, followed by African Americans at 12.7%, White at 11.8%, Other Non-White at 3.8%, Filipino at 1.8 %, Asian/Pacific Islanders at 0.9% and Chinese, Korean, and Japanese combined at 0.7%. The school

profile also lists 63% of the students at CCMS as socioeconomcially disadvantaged, and notes that 57.8% receive free or reduced lunch. Additionally, 40.5% are classified as English language learners, 15.4% as special education students, and 18.9% as gifted and talented. CCMS also has a Gifted and Talented Program (GATE), but class tracking does not differentiate GATE from non-GATE students.

The white student population and parent presence at CCMS have remained constant over the last few years, in part because of the school's two-way Spanish immersion program. The program consists of classes taught in Spanish for English language students, who are predominately white and middle class, and native Spanish – speaking students, who are mostly Latino. The Parent Teacher Student Association (PTSA) and the Student Site Council's most active and numerous members are the parents of white middle class students. While both school organizations certainly have a Latino parent presence, the school has sought to increase their numbers with a Latino parent liaison position.

Music had been wholly absent from the school since 1999, when budget cutbacks forced the elimination of most of the arts electives. Instrumental music was reintroduced at CCMS in 2005 through an after-school rock band program, which was funded by donations from the parents, and through grants from the organization running the program. Rock band eventually became a school-day class in 2006 with the hiring of an instructor who acquired a temporary teaching credential. At about the same time, another music teacher was hired to run a traditional instrumental string program He lasted less than a year and was followed by a series of music teachers who taught chorus or band.

Population and Sample

All the participants of this study work or are students at Cesar Chavez Middle

School. My faculty sample included the principal, who sets the master schedule and

interviews and hires perspective teachers, the assistant principal, and the head counselor,

who has the ability to transfer students. Two music teachers were chosen because they

offer two different types of curriculum, one teaches music theory and chorus, the other

teaches rock band instruments. Two grade-level, student focus groups, each consisting of

a cross section of students who had different opinions and perceptions of the music

programs, were selected based on recommendations from the music teachers.

Interview Questions

The interview questions were based on the three research questions and were

used as a starting point for the interviews and observations. Here are their correlations:

Research questions	Faculty Interview Questions	Student Interview Questions
1.What is the importance of or place of music at the school?	What is the priority of music in the school academic plan? How is music important? What is the importance of the school music events?	Are the music classes, performances and other activities important to you and your classmates?
2.How does the school address issues of equity in music?	Do all students have access to music classes? How are students and classes programmed? Does the music program provide socially relevant content curriculum to the students? Does the music program put students on equal footing with other schools and does it prepare them for music in high school?	N/A

3. What is the interest level of students regarding music at the school?	What comments or actions do students make regarding their likes or dislikes about the school music program? Do students make requests for music that is not offered? If so, what kind?	Are you happy with the music classes and activities that are offered or that you are taking? What other types of music would you like to study?

Data Collection

My data collection came from audio-recorded interviews, field notes taken during observations and documents such as school district mandates, class assignments and student papers. I interviewed the principal and assistant principal, the head counselor, the two music teachers, and two student focus groups during the school day between December 2008 and March 2009. My interviews with the principals and counselor focused on their insights about the importance of music education, how music is valued and situated at CCMS, and student interest. The interviews with the music teachers looked at teaching styles, student acquisition of skills and knowledge, and the cultural relevancy of content. The interviews with the student focus groups looked at the students' thoughts about and levels of interest in music education at school.

I recorded all my interview sessions using a digital recording device called garage band, which came with my Apple computer. They were then transcribed into written form. My observation of the music classes and classrooms was recorded using only field notes so as not to seem intrusive of people's privacy. In my classroom observations, I examined the demographic breakdown of the students, curriculum content and student interest, the teacher's pedagogy and methodology along with student reaction to them.

Data Analysis

Upon completion of my interviews and observations, the audio-recorded interviews were transcribed into written form. I then coded the data taken from the interviews and observations, looking for recurring themes that addressed my research questions. During the process of analysis, I continually reflected and pondered new questions that deepened my understanding of the data. The findings of my data should give the reader a clear understanding about equity and music at an urban middle school.

Protection of Human Subjects

Prior to the interview and observation process, I sought and completed all necessary forms and conditions as required by the University of San Francisco's Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (IRBPHS). All participants were informed of the nature and confidentiality of my study and its use for academic purposes. All identities and that of the school were protected with pseudonyms. The participants were given a copy of the consent form to read and sign, and I made myself available to them for questions and comments before beginning the interviews and observations. In addition, I made sure the participants felt comfortable and at ease during interviews and observations, and they were treated honestly, with dignity, and the interactions with them were open and transparent and not covert in nature.

CHAPTER IV

PROFILES

Researcher Background

My background as a researcher comes with a large amount of what Eisner (1998) calls educational connoisseurship, which is the ability to perceive and interpret events in the classroom based on one's vast range of knowledge and experience. I have been a public school music teacher for over 20 years, all within the South Port school district, and have worked in some of its most under-served schools. Given the time and resources, I have been able to facilitate learning and achieve success with the district's under-served students, and have become known as someone who can produce high-quality student groups where before there were none, and take them to music festivals and competitions. I am also the musical director of a community-based, grassroots youth ensemble that is well known in the South Port area as a high-level, professional-sounding jazz group. The ensemble serves as a model for arts group diversity, as its membership is comprised of students of various ability levels, ethnicities and socioeconomic groups. At the college level, I teach curriculum and instruction to music education students who are preparing to be teachers as a requirement for the teaching credential.

Outside of the classroom, I hold positions on the school district's arts education advisory board and on South Port's Art Commission. I am also an active arts education consultant, having been part of numerous panels and think-tank groups that focus on issues of diversity and equity in the arts and education. In my other career as a jazz musician and composer, I have earned notoriety on the local, national and international levels. This notoriety has given me an implied level of expertise among educators and

administrators, most likely because they believe that being a known and respected musician is akin to being a good educator. Being a professional musician and composer has some transferable skills for teaching, but the field of education and pedagogy is so different that many professional musicians do not teach group classes or in the classroom, and many who do struggle with management, diverse learning styles, equality and equity.

Perhaps the most important aspect of my background is that, in comparison to many of the teachers who are white and commute to South Port, I am a person of color, a city native, and live in or near the same communities in which I teach. I have attended and taught in South Port schools and have seen the demographic and educational changes over the last 40 years. As a community activist, I have been very active in preserving the rights of the remaining working class and immigrant communities that have survived the gentrification process which has consumed much of South Port in the last 20 years.

Because of the depth and breadth of my career, credentials, and appointed positions, I may have been perceived by the adults in this study as an expert authority, or as an administrator or investigator for the school district, who would report the findings of my research or anything else I saw to the school district administrators. Although I constantly reassured the participants that the study was for general purposes, that I would use pseudonyms for all participants and locations to protect identities, and that I would publish the research in a dissertation and not provide it to the school district, I perceived some uncertainty, and at times a certain hesitancy to answer questions or a defensive attitude, from many of the participants.

Participant Background

Here I include a brief synopsis of the participants in the study, including four faculty members who affect or implement music policies and programs at CCMS, and a non-random, purposefully selected sample of students who are affected by these policy and program implementations. When I interviewed them, three faculty members were in the first year of their particular positions, and two were new to the school altogether. All of the participating faculty had some prior teaching experience. I have protected the identities of all faculty, students and third parties referred to in conversations and interviews by using pseudonyms.

The Faculty

Lea Navaja is a first-year principal at CCMS after serving three years as the assistant principal. Prior to coming to CCMS, she taught English as a Second Language at another urban middle school in the SPSD. She is a relatively young principal, in her mid-30s, and appears to be dedicated to working at urban schools. Rita Kivel, the assistant principal, is new to CCMS. She is a long-time visual arts teacher with four years' experience as an assistant principal at other schools in the district. Ms. Navaja recruited her to CCMS to help address issues of equity in arts education; they previously worked together at another school. The head counselor is Maria Mendoza, a Latina in her mid -30s. She has worked at the school for seven years, the last two as the head counselor, and has enough seniority to transfer but has remained at CCMS. Her discussions with me indicated she is a caring professional who is astutely aware of the empowerment divide that exists between the professional, middle class families at CCMS and those of immigrant and lower socioeconomic status families.

Charles Stuvie, a white male in his mid-40s, is the director of the after-school musical and has a vast background in the arts, including dance. He has also been the visual arts teacher for the last six years and worked at some of the most high-needs schools in the district prior to his tenure at CCMS. Mr. Stuvie is a bit salty and somewhat strict, but he also contributes extra time so that his visual arts students can put together portfolios needed for application to the district's School of Music and Art.

Teo Rossi is the new full-time credentialed music teacher at CCMS. He is also a white male, an East Coast transplant with three years of classroom music teaching experience in upstate New York, but has never taught in an urban school. Although he teaches chorus and music theory, he has the ability to teach band instruments. My first impressions of him were that he is a very passionate and energetic teacher who fully believes that all students should have access to music. He is having some reservations about coming back next year, explaining that the demands of working as a full-time teacher have drained his energy and strained his voice, which has affected his professional singing.

Jonah Gibson, the rock band instructor, is also new to CCMS. He is replacing the full-time credentialed music teacher who taught rock band last year and who was very popular among students. Mr. Gibson plays the guitar along with other rock band instruments such as drums, bass, and keyboard. He is a white male, has a laid-back personality, comes from a rural environment, and has taught for a few years at a small community college in Northern California. He does not have a teaching credential, so he is employed as a part-time teaching artist in conjunction with Mr. Rossi.

The Classes and the Students

Mr. Rossi allowed me access to all his classes, which consisted of two sixth and seventh grade classes, and one eighth grade class. As previously mentioned, during the preceding year rock band was taught to all grade levels, but Mr. Rossi and Mr. Gibson now teach a combined vocal and instruments course, splitting and rotating students for each class. After a few cursory visits, I chose for my study the 8th period, eighth-grade class, the 1st period, seventh-grade class, and the 6th period, sixth-grade class. 8th period was a two-semester, combination vocal-theory and rock band class that I selected because the students in that class wanted music as their arts elective. Eighth graders are allowed to choose their arts elective, space permitting. The 1st period music class is a one-semester course that is part of the seventh-grade arts rotation wheel. The students study music theory, vocal technique and beginning instrument technique on the guitar, bass and drums. I chose this class because many of the students were assigned there by the programming priorities that require a balance in class size amongst the electives. The 6th period music fundamentals class was a short, nine-week music introduction class that all sixth-graders were required to take as part of the arts rotation.

I asked Mr. Rossi to help me find a cross-section of students in the seventh and eighth grade classes who liked, disliked or were ambivalent about music classes at CCMS. He accommodated my request fairly, recommending several students who were not fond of him, Mr. Gibson, or the music program itself.

The 1st period seventh graders who participated in the study are Carlos, Fran, Jose and Shayla. Carlos, a Latino male, is affable, quite talkative, and ambivalent about music; he likes rock band but with no great enthusiasm. He also played the recorder

(flute) in elementary school. Fran is a quiet Caucasian-Latina student who studied violin for two years in elementary school, likes playing in rock band, and listens to rock music outside of school. Jose is a stout and reserved Latino, who was somewhat reluctant to express his feelings beyond one-word or short answers during the interviews. Shayla is an African-American female who likes all kinds of music and music groups, including rock and roll and popular white groups like the Jonas Brothers. She goes against the musical stereotypes for her age and race group, which are strong preferences for rap and hip-hop music.

The four eighth graders from 8th period who participated are Mabeehl, Adam, Santiago, and David. All are Latino males, but from different social groups at the school. Mabeehl and his family are heavily into Caribbean culture and religion, which are practiced daily in his home. He is already a priest in his religion, called Santería, and has played percussion in samba groups and other Latin music ensembles. He liked rock band until the previous teacher left. Adam, who dresses like a rocker, is definitely connected to rock music and culture, yet during our interviews he was the most disgruntled with the music program. Santiago is a transfer student and much more into sports than music. He signed up for music thinking it would be only rock band and somewhat stimulating, but has resigned himself to the reality that the class will sing much more than they play instruments this year. He has no connection to rock music whatsoever.

David is perhaps the most complex of all eight students. A smaller student, he is somewhat mischievous and sometimes gets into fights with other students, once right in front of me. Yet he seems to have the most musical talent; he sings, and plays the piano and flute. David is one of the very few students in both classes who can play a traditional

band instrument well, yet his music reading level and abilities were not enough to pass the audition for Music and Art High School. He was also the only Latino male in the school to participate in this year's school musical.

CHAPTER V

FINDINGS

Introduction

In this chapter, I present my research findings. The purpose of my study was to explore equity in the music program at an urban middle school. I tried to determine both whether there is equitable access to music education for different groups of students within the school and whether the students at this school are receiving a music education comparable to that received by students in more affluent, higher socioeconomic status schools. My research questions centered on the importance of music within the schools' overall educational program and the need for appropriate content, methodologies and pedagogies that are culturally and socially relevant to urban students, particularly those who are marginalized because of their socioeconomic status.

I built my study around three research questions:

1. What is the importance or place of music at the school?

2. How does the school address issues of equity in its music program?

3. What is the student interest level of music programs offered at the school?

My answers to these research questions were developed from field observations and interviews. The interview process involved asking specific questions based on the research question along with any follow up questions, elaborating on them in free-form discussions. I looked at the data from the theoretical frameworks I had mentioned earlier: that music is an important aspect of education, worthy of study with the same rigor as other subjects, that music must be made relevant for students in order to be a valid course of study, and that students must have access to the best available teachers and resources

in order for them to succeed. I made an effort to resist seeking confirmation of any preconceived notions I had about music programs and urban schools based on my many years of experience, but I did allow my experience to help guide me to known problem areas where issues needed to be addressed.

<div align="center">The Importance of Music at Cesar Chavez Middle School</div>

The literature review revealed numerous theories on the importance of music, from the unique to the utilitarian. The importance of music at CCMS is also an integral part of the equity question because many educators have stated that music is a key reason for some students to stay in school (Posnick-Goodwin, 2005). The interviewees expressed their understanding of music's importance implicitly and explicitly. Adults and students based their responses on different values, and on their experiences with programs that were offered during and after school.

<div align="center">*Access to Music for all Students Implies that Music is Important*</div>

One of the themes that emerged in faculty interviews was the idea that the policy of providing all students with access to music classes is an indicator of music's importance at the school. Ms. Navaja, the principal who shaped last year's master schedule, expressed the following.

> JC: Is music important at CCMS? I mean, how does music fit in terms of priority in the overall academic plan?
>
> Ms. Navaja: ...We built the master schedule in such a way that it ensured the elective program, including music…it used to be that students who were reading far below the basic or below basic on standardized tests, they did not get an elective. Last year we did away with that, so now every child in our building gets an elective …we wanted every student in the building to have access to the arts (Interview with L. Navaja, December, 26, 2008).

Ms. Kivel, the assistant principal, framed it similarly:

Well…we added another period of the day to make sure that even students that need extra help in their academic classes do not have to trade their exposure in the arts for it (Interview with R. Kivel, February, 16, 2009).

The new chorus and vocal teacher, Mr. Rossi, indicated that accessibility for all students was an important aspect of his teaching music at CCMS:

It is my job to maintain and offer programming to all students…. to educate and to educate music for all… last year [and the beginning of this year], music [with Mr. Stevens, the old rock band teacher] was not offered to all students, the program was offered to a specific handful of students (Interview with T. Rossi, January 9th, 2009).

Making music available to all students may seem more a matter of general equity than the importance of music per se, but the reader must take into account that many urban schools have few or no music classes or programs. According to Ms. Mendoza, the school counselor, music was wholly absent from the school curriculum for many years (M. Mendoza, personal communication, January 13, 2009).

Music is Important because it is Popular

The students' initial responses regarding music's importance were also based on implicit perceptions that referred almost exclusively to rock band. Chorus and vocal instruction had been merged with the rock band class this year, but in my initial observations, I surmised that most students had not really accepted singing as part of the rock band class. I will discuss chorus and vocal instruction under the third research question, which deals with the level of students' interest in music classes at CCMS. The following responses from the 7th and 8th grade students indicate that music is important to them because of its popularity.

JC: Is rock band important to the students at this school?

Shayla (7th Grader): Yeah, because a lot of kids like music, especially at school…and since I started going to this school, I seen a lot of people try to get in

to these classes and probably trying to change their schedule to get inside of rock band class.

JC: Is rock band important to the school amongst the students? And I'm not just talking about students in your class, I'm talking at this school in general, from the wimpiest kid to the toughest kid?

Mabeehl (8th Grader): Yeah, cause it's something a kid might look forward to at the end of the day.

Adam (8th Grader): um, yeah, I guess, like it's mainly the class I like., and all the kids try to get into it.

Santiago (8th Grader): Yeah, cause actually when I came here I got into the rock band class, and they said that it's one of the more popular classes in the school and everybody is trying to get in (Interview with 7th and 8th grade students, February 4, 2009.)

Even the counselor, Ms. Mendoza, implied that rock band's importance is based on its popularity.

When I started working here we had no music class. A lot of music that happened at all was in our after school program, but in terms of electives through the day, there wasn't anything. But the impact and enthusiasm for the classes [rock band and some drumming classes] after school kind of branched out into getting some funding for [rock band] classes during the day (Interview with M. Mendoza, January 13, 2009).

After reflecting on the first round of interviews, I found the responses insufficient because, while they offered empirical evidence that music was important at the school, they provided no rationale for why this might be so. Follow-up questions and interviews produced more theoretical rationales for music education.

Music is an Important Part of Educating the Whole Child

Ms. Navaja initially expressed that the reason for offering music to all children at the school, as part of an exploratory and rotating arts program, is to educate the whole child:

…every child in our building gets an elective, and that was because the faculty really felt that if we are educating the whole child, every student in the building [should] have access to the arts…My vision for the school and I think the community vision for the school is that all our kids develop in a bunch of different ways…I think on our campus that there is a lot of support and priority [for music and the arts] even if it's a matter of the funding (Interview with L. Navaja, December 26th, 2008).

Ms. Navaja emphasized that music is as important and necessary to students' education as are math and English.

Just like a math teacher wouldn't see it as being flexible, and that was something when we were hiring, that was something we emphasized. It's [music] not like just for the kid who is interested (Interview, L. Navaja, December, 26, 2008).

Her initial responses were too general, so then later I specifically asked her to dig a bit deeper into the rationale for such a holistic approach, and how music as a performing art or activity, not a classroom lecture, fits into educating the whole child:

JC: What is the purpose or importance of the school musical, rock band assemblies, and the twice-monthly computer beats class [Garage Band computer program that aids students in creating drum beats and rhryhm section grooves] during early dismissal days?

Ms. Navaja: The value of these events is that students have alternative means for self-expression, to show their talents, and work as a team. Students have another way in which they can feel successful. Also, these events build school spirit and school pride. (L. Navaja, personal communication, February 23, 2009).

Ms. Kivel, who is an arts teacher by training, offered her own beliefs in response to the same question; she believed her views were common sense reflections on music's importance.

Ms. Kivel: I think the importance or purpose of the [music performing] activities…are their intrinsic value to the performer…self esteem building through performance, opportunities to learn differently…[and] community building, collaboration and cooperation through group activity (R. Kivel, personal communication, February 23, 2009).

By and large, all of the students interviewed, even those who were not so interested in rock band, singing or the after-school musical, believe music is important to some degree. When I asked the students specifically why music is important at CCMS, two salient themes arose.

Music is Important as a Contrast to Other Subjects

Many of the seventh graders, who were in their first semester of rock band, expressed music's importance as a contrast with other subjects or events at school.

> JC: A lot of you said that students want to sign up for the class [rock band]. What is it about music that makes it that important?

> Carlos: I probably think that it's important because there's nothing to really do [at school] and music is cool and stuff.

> Jose: It's kinda like they would want to go to music rather than math class, like they think it's better.

> JC: It's more interesting than the other classes?

> Jose: It's more interesting, and you don't have to do that much like in math class.

> JC: Is music as important to kids as sports?

> Carlos: It can be at the same level.

> JC: Are the [music] assemblies important? Is that why kids wanna be in music?

> Shayla: Yeah. Because every pretty much likes music, it's like part of our school.

> Carlos: Cause we go to school, and it's not only about work, math books and stuff. It has to be a little bit about fun (Interview with 7th grade students, February 4, 2009).

While the students made other subjects outside of music seem laborious or tedious, many of the students told me that their favorite teachers taught math, English and social studies, and that at times, these classes were fun and enjoyable. My cursory observations of other classes during my visits revealed some vibrant classrooms and

committed teachers. What these reflections indicate to me is that, for many students,

music is a release from the rigors of traditional core classes.

Music is Important because It Allows for Access and Self-Expression

Most of the 8th graders felt music is important because rock band class provides a

venue for performing that they are less able to do on their own outside of school.

> JC: What is it about the music program that makes it important?
>
> Mabeehl: I think most of the people, if you ask them, they like the music of the rock band, so it like gives them a chance like to do stuff that they might not normally do on their own, you know.
>
> Adam: It's the same that Mabeehl said. Cause it's like in general, if you want lessons, you have to pay for it, but like at the school you can get if for free as a class (Interview with 8th grade students, February 23, 2009).

One 7th grader saw the value of music at CCMS as an opportunity to access skill sets for

a possible career in music.

> JC. What makes music important at this school?
>
> Shayla: It's important because um, people who want to grow up and be like a musician, or make that as a career, they can learn that in their school (Interview with 7th grade students, February 23, 2009).

Self- expression, which was also pointed out by the faculty, is a salient feature of music

in the views of both 7th and 8th grade students.

> JC: What is it about the music program that makes it important?
>
> David: Everybody thinks rock band is important cause they like expressing themselves, and they want to show their real loud side by rocking out.
>
> JC: You mean, that's why they like rock band and think it's important?
>
> Santiago: If that's like your passion…you get to do it as a class (Interview with 7th grade students, February 23, 2009).

One 7th grader, Fran, also mentioned loudness as a form of self-expression, along with experimentation and creativity. "We like it because we get to be loud…we get to experiment on the guitar and make our own songs on it" (Interview with 7th grade students, February 23. 2009).

Socioeconomic and Cultural Factors Influence the Perceived Importance of Music

A pilot study I conducted last year at CCMS indicated mixed results with the rock band program. At that time, rock band was not accessible to all students, and the most involved students in the classes and performances were primarily children of educated and white parents. Yet most of the faculty and students I interviewed for this study were people of color who believed the music program had importance. Was there a discrepancy between what I saw then and what interviewees were saying now? The following dialogues look at the importance of music using frameworks of socioeconomic status and culture. The discussion covered not only rock band, but also another popular music program, the after-school musical. Beginning with the principal, interviewees put a different spin on music's importance when discussing issues of race and socioeconomics.

> JC: Do the students here…and I know the school must be about 67% Latino, do they like the music program?
>
> Navaja: I think so, I think it's really popular…not every kid, but that is true for anything.
>
> JC: Specifically…Latino males? At risk Latino males?
>
> Navaja: I think the kids who are most drawn to music are white kids – the rock bands. I think there are some Latinos and Latino males who are into it, but it's not like a huge draw for them (Interview, December 26th, 2008).

Ms. Mendoza, gave a similar accounting:

JC: Is rock band popular here?

Mendoza: It's very popular, but it's very popular with a small group of children.

JC: Which are?

Mendoza: Generalizing, the higher level students.

JC: So would it be fair to say…and I know I'm generalizing, that the children who really like rock music come from educated families?

Mendoza: Yes, educated families (Interview with M. Mendoza, January 13, 2009).

Ms. Mendoza mentioned that two of her male counselees, one African-American, the other Latino, were really involved in rock band and were doing quite well, but her qualification of 'very popular' indicates that only a small percentage of students are really interested and involved in rock band, and that many others may appreciate the class, but assign it less significance.

The contradictions between what the interviewed students expressed and what Ms. Mendoza's and Ms. Navaja observed reflect the fact that only a small percentage of students of color are actually taking rock band as their elective in seventh and eighth grades, and those interviewed students who shared their opinions on rock band's importance were thinking about themselves and their immediate social groups. Rock band may have been popular as a passive event for all students at assemblies, but its popularity as an elective was not school-wide, as I will discuss shortly. The school musical is a high-profile event at CCMS, perhaps just as big in scope as the rock band assemblies and night concerts. Last year, a few of the rock band students accompanied the musical. I had the opportunity to observe a few rehearsals of the current school

musical, and my field notes confirmed my thoughts on the musical's importance to a

majority of students at CCMS.

> Lots of girls and a noticeable amount of white students…some parents, either observing the rehearsal or helping the show…one African-American girl. I knew some of the students [from elementary school] and personalizing them made it easier to accept the lack of diversity. Still it seems bothersome to me that missing are the Latino students…older boys and girls [8th graders] (Field notes, January 28, 2009).

> Out of the approximately 20 students in the musical, there were two or three

Latinas and one Latino, David, who had a small but important singing role. Noting that

the musical was an after-school program, I sought out faculty responses regarding the

absence of a large segment of the student population.

> Yeah, the kids we are trying to reach, the kids you are talking about, they are not going to be the kids that show up for after-school program when it is voluntary on a consistent basis – these are the kids when we have them for a eight period day they are the kids we really need to push for (Interview with Ms. Navaja, December 26th, 2009).

> I spoke to Mr. Stuvie, the director of the school musical, about the absence of

Latino and African American students. His attitude was somewhat defensive, but in his

response he clearly delineated the differences between school and after school programs.

> JC: What percentage of Latino and African American kids, or those of lower socioeconomic status, actually participate in such things as rock band and the after school musical?

> Stuvie: Well, you're convoluting it a bit. During school hours, all students participate. If you're talking about the musical and after school…it's limited.

> JC: What are some of the reasons?

> Stuvie: Well…transportation and parent involvement. When I did The Wiz at Rosa Parks Middle School, we had to pay to get the kids to stay [to rehearse the musical after school] do the musical after school…so yes, participation is very limited (Interview with P. Stuvie, February 9th, 2009).

Ms. Kivel also acknowledged that the musical lacks a significant Latino and

African-American student presence. She expressed concern about the lack of diversity,

but she also delineated the difference between school day and after-school programs, and

how that impacts students' perceptions of importance.

> It's an after school program [the musical], it's a voluntary program. I know that in terms of closing the achievement gap and reaching our sub populations, we are doing a lot more of that during the day but that's because of rotation class [arts electives] you have to take. Uh, it's something I noted and I'm going to try and see what we can do. It [the musical] is voluntary, and as much as the teachers recruit the students, it's voluntary. So, how do I address the fact that a certain portion of our population gravitates towards it and a certain portion doesn't, I'm not sure. It's something I grapple with when I watch the play on stage as well (Interview, R. Kivel, February 16, 2009).

How Students viewed Race and Socioeconomics in relation to Music

Although students are aware of race and class, they may see or value them

differently than the adults. Students may also find race particularly uncomfortable to

discuss in public. In their initial responses about the importance of rock band, race or the

issue of race did not appear to be a salient factor.

> JC: Is it [rock band] popular amongst Latino boys?

> Jose: yeah, for like some [Latino] kids.

> JC: Rock band. Is rock band important or popular at the school among all kids? And let's be honest, most kids here are Latino and a few African-American and a few white kids. Is rock band popular in general?

> Carlos (7th grader): Yeah, from what I've seen. Last year a lot of kids came to Mr. Steven's room everyday [before and after school, and lunchtime] to play it, and there is like a lot of bands, so I say yeah (Interview with 7th grade students, January 28th, 2009).

I observed these same groups of students who came to Mr. Steven's room last

year for my pilot study. They were meeting with the teacher voluntarily during non-class

hours, and the overwhelming majority of the students were from educated and white

middle-class families. In a later conversation with Carlos I had pointed out that race and class were factors of student participation for some of the musical activities at the school. He reflected quietly for a few seconds before responding with "yeah, I guess you are right" (Carlos, personal communication, February 23, 2009).

I then reframed the same question about rock band's popularity to take into account a group or category of students, based on my teaching experience and observations, that usually come from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, have high needs, and would be least likely to participate in rock band:

> JC: The toughest kids in the school, do they play in rock band? I mean the toughest and coolest kids?
>
> Jose: They like hearing rap music.
>
> Shayla: Not really…I 've been with kids in the 8th grade last year, and the ones that seem all big and trying to be cool, they're all about not being in rock band, more probably like just rapping and doin R&B and stuff…that's it.
>
> Fran: I think they probably want to be in rock band, but they want to show their toughness and rap and do different things.
>
> Carlos: Just like Jose said. They like listening to rap (Interview with 7th grade students, February 23, 2009).

The most poignant observations about race and class came from the 8th graders. They too were somewhat conflicted or unsure of how to frame race within rock band, but they clearly saw the musical in terms of race and its importance to only a small group of students.

> JC: You guys said nobody comes to see the musical. Let me ask you this, does race have anything to do with it?
>
> Mabeehl: Kind of. Cause like when I saw who, like they put up lists around the school to say who is on it, it's like mostly white kids, that do the play, and I think like that's the only thing they [white students] have, cause all the sports is like

dominated by like all the Latinos and the Black people… that's most of what the school is [Latino and Black], and the musical, that's like the white kid thing.

JC: What about rock band. Is it viewed the same way?

Adam: It's kind of both, cause like they had a band during like African-American month or something, well they [African American students] did a Bob Marley song.

JC: Well what about the musical?

Adam: No, not really. It's kinda mainly white kids, and sometimes they bring in like, uh, black kids, and that's only for like plays where they need a token character.

JC: David [who was in the musical], do you view any of this in terms of race or class?

David: Latinos and black kids mostly like sports. There's rarely any black or Latino kids that like to act or be in the musical (Interview with 8th grade students, February 23, 2009).

While the school musical was certainly the domain of white students from educated and professional families, the 8th grade, student-chosen, rock band class was also not representative of the 8th graders as a whole. Of 8th period rock band's 30 students, over 40% were white, compared to their 10% of the total 8th grade population. Further, rock band may have been important and popular, but not to the extent that a significant number of eighth graders were signing up for the class. Only 15% of the 195 eighth graders chose rock band, selecting instead, dance, visual art or leadership as their year elective. This accounts for CCMS offering only one section of music while the other electives had two.

Music is important to CCMS, but to a lesser degree than math, English or physical education, all of which are mandated every semester at all grade levels. Ms. Navaja acknowledged that, by design, at the most a student could receive one year of sequential

music instruction, perhaps a year and a half if the student has music in the second semester of 7th grade (L. Navaja, personal communication, December 26th, 2008).

Addressing Issues of Equity at Cesar Chavez

As I began to investigate equity in the music programs at CCMS, I needed to determine what criteria I would use to measure equity. The dictionary definition of "fair and impartial" is merely a beginning. Equity for underserved students includes equal access to music classes, but there is much more. I see an equitable music education as one in which the teachers and school provide the curriculum content, pedagogy, mentorship and extra time needed to address all students' particular musical and personal needs, and one that reflects all students' identities and communities. I believe, that to be equitable, a school must also help students develop the musical skills needed to access and perform a musical repertoire that enables them to compete on a level playing field with more privileged students, and to gain access to the top music high schools and colleges.

Equity through Access to Instruction

In many urban schools, student access to music and other arts may be impeded by the need for remediation in core subjects. I focused on access as part of the equity question during my interviews with the principal and assistant principal.

> JC: Looking at music equity issues…how does music fit in terms of the overall academic plan? Let me give you an example: Is music scheduled at the end of the day? If a child is reading below the 40th percentile then he is not going to take music? And so these are the things I'm looking at.

> Ms. Navaja: Well, we built the master schedule in such a way that it ensured the elective program including music…it used to be that students who were reading far below basic or below basic on the standardized tests, they did not get an elective…Last year we did away with that, so now every child in our building gets an elective…and that was because the faculty really felt that if we are educating the whole child we wanted every student to have access to the arts (Interview with Ms. Navaja, December 26th, 2008).

The assistant principal, Ms. Kivel, gave a similar initial response on the question of

equity and access.

> Well, what we are doing here at Cesar Chavez most specifically is we added another period to the day to make sure that even students that need extra help in their academic classes do not have to trade their exposure in the arts for it (Interview with M. Kivel, February 16. 2009).

> Rock band, which started as an after school enrichment program that became

popular with a lot of students, also became the center of the access and equity question.

Many students could not or would not stay for the after school program for a variety of

reasons, including the distance for some students between home and school. The first

efforts, then, to make rock band accessible consisted of scheduling the program within

the school day, but still not all students had access.

> Mendoza: Once the rock band came into the picture [as an official class last academic year], it was offered throughout the school day and that made it more equitable for a lot of the kids who wanted to take it and were unable to stay in the after school program, but there is a different piece to it in terms of equity, in terms of who was allowed to be in the class in the beginning.

> JC: At that time? Now it seems accessible to everyone.

> Mendoza: At that time, exactly. This year and kind of towards the end of last year the electives have opened up a lot at this school, and different academic requirements have lessened so everybody [has access to rock band] (Interview with M. Mendoza, January 13, 2009).

> Rock band's initial placement during the school day seemed accessible then

mainly to students who were doing well academically. Rock band now, according to the

master plan document given to me by Ms. Kivel, is accessible to all sixth and seventh

grade students from within Mr. Rossi's class, which is part of the arts rotation wheel.

Eighth graders can elect to have rock band for a full year, regardless of ability level or

experience.

Yet even with a significant increase in student access to rock band, there are still some equity issues in flux, particularly within the 8th grade elective class. Mr. Stevens, last year's rock band teacher, grouped these students according to ability level. Grouping students by ability level is not necessarily a bad thing, and if done equitably, can increase skill sets for all groups, but the higher-level groups ended up receiving most of Mr. Stevens' instructional time last year. The result was an even greater disparity in skill set levels at the beginning of this year than at the outset of the program. Mr. Rossi decided to make changes after Mr. Stevens left, in October of the current school year.

> Rossi: I had 20 kids who didn't know how to play their instrument they had been assigned over a year ago, two years ago, and they were lumped together, because all the bands were predetermined…We have about 10 kids who can play, who have received coaching, and my argument is that if you are going to teach music in the public school system than shouldn't it be for everyone?

> JC: What did you do to change that? What did you do differently than last year with these 8th graders?

> Rossi: I wouldn't allow it…I've kind of made it known that I am not OK with the way the bands were configured because you had the highest achieving top five kids in two bands, and three other bands with five to seven kids that could not play…no student band leader…no glue to hold the band together to help the other kids who cannot play…so it was set up that these two bands have the best kids and they are going to be together and these are the ones that are going to go forward, and these three bands it doesn't matter because these kids can't play and we are really not going to do anything about it. Rather than structuring the bands [that way] I am going to put the two best kids in each band – and help bring the entire level of the bands up (Interview with T. Rossi, January 9th, 2009).

Despite protests from the better playing students and some of their families, Mr. Rossi made the appropriate decision to break up the band format, as clearly there was a widening gap between the best student groups and the less experienced ones. His notion of having two experienced players each lead a group was his effort to create more access, and therefore equity, for all students. Additionally, the new format created more equity as

it allowed students to model, develop leadership skills, and practice cooperative learning.

Unfortunately, the new group format did not last for the whole year for a variety of reasons. Many of the students missed playing in their old groups, although I suspect those were the students who were in the top two bands. Mr. Gibson did not emphasize or implement Mr. Rossi's strategy of creating leaders in each band. The organization that funded the rock band program also put pressure on Mr. Rossi and Mr. Gibson to put the two best groups back together for the fundraiser that pays for the instruments and instruction. Thus, the two top groups, at least for a while, were put back together and were receiving a disproportionate amount of rock band rehearsal time. Mr. Gibson informed me that as soon as the fundraiser was over, the focus and larger amount of instructional time would go to those students who have the most need (J. Gibson, personal communication, March 10, 2009).

Based on my observations most of the students in the seventh and eighth grade classes could play an instrument at a nominal level, and there were a few that I would qualify as grade level proficient or with intermediate skills. Mr. Rossi could have scheduled Mr. Gibson to have much more time to work with the less skilled students. As we shall see later, his intervention created the notion of equity and access within the class setting but did not create equity with respect to closing an achievement gap between CCMS students and students district wide.

Equity through Culturally and Socially Relevant Curriculum and Pedagogy

According to Ladson-Billings (1995), a key part of equity in education is the inclusion of programs and materials that are culturally and socially relevant to the vast majority of students and that reflects, at least in part, their cultural and social identities.

My inclination was to believe that music classes such as rock band and theory -vocal,

taught by new teachers with limited experience in urban schools, might not be the

optimal music education environment for meeting the needs of CCMS students.

I addressed my concerns first with Ms. Navaja:

JC: Does the music program provide socially and culturally relevant curriculum to the students? And I'm not talking about the 10% of the white students in this school. I'm really talking about the Latino and African American students here.

Navaja: I think it's not quite as much as we would like…Last year, Mr. Stevens, the rock band teacher…he got together about five black students and they did reggae, they did a couple of songs for the families one night, very popular. He had to work with those five kids every day [up till the performance] but it wasn't sustained and so then it went back to more white rock.

JC: But is the program relevant, culturally and socially to Latino kids?

Navaja: I think it [rock band] has the potential to be culturally, socially relevant to all kids. I also think you can teach rock, and talk about the issues of the time, in a culturally and socially relevant way, it doesn't have to be music by people who look like the kids or music that they already know, it's an analysis of the music…an understanding of the context of the music (Interview with L. Navaja, December, 26, 2008).

We then brought up as an example Carlos Santana, a Latino who took rock music

and helped create a whole new genre, Latin rock. We also acknowledged that the dance

classes, which were taught by a young Latina teacher, were more representative of many

of the students' cultures because she focuses in part on contemporary and traditional

dances of Latin America. The dance classes are quite popular among the students. Even

Jose, who seemed to be disinterested in most things at CCMS, enjoys the dance class,

which includes salsa, cumbia and other Latin American styles (Jose, personal

communication, January 3, 2009).

Part of providing culturally and socially relevant content to students is having a

teacher with an understanding of the students' backgrounds and needs, and the

experience to meet them. In the rock band-vocal class configuration, Mr. Rossi was the credentialed teacher in charge of the class, curriculum and instruction. He had the students 85% of the time, while Mr. Gibson had them for about 15% of the time. I therefore posed similar questions to Mr. Rossi that I asked of Ms. Navaja.

> JC: In terms of curriculum, what are you teaching? How do you deal with issues of equity?

> Rossi: Well I teach a varied range of repertoire…teaching different styles, genres, time periods, which kinds of allows access…I'm doing multi-cultural music, spirituals, Broadway, pop-rock, classical standard literature…so I'm kinda moving all around…and that's kinda touching different backgrounds and ethnicities.

> JC: But in terms of that question, using varied repertoire, are you doing any Latino music?

> Rossi: Well we did Feliz Navidad at Christmas time, and the kids love it…gets them up and gets them singing…I haven't done any other Latin songs yet.

> JC: Is there anything you are doing in your content that starts from where they are coming from in terms of music they relate to?

> Rossi: Yes and no, and definitely I'm interested, asking them pretty frequently 'what are you listening to?'… asking them their favorite artist…Those type questions, trying to tap into their culture. Do I choose to do that kind of music in my classroom in a choral setting? No, I 'm not interested in doing too much vocal pop music with them because that's not where I want to send them vocally, and I don't think the artists they listen to are very good examples of things for them to sing.

> JC: Is there anything you are doing that they are really into that you can grab on to?

> Rossi: No, um…I'm not coming at them from that approach. I would say my approach is more like they have very limited access or experience with the idea of chorus to begin with, and in particular the style of musical theater and theater and film music. For me I am trying to expose them and to and get them into this. I'm not coming at it the way you are talking about.

> JC: So what is the goal of this [your] music program?

Rossi: My goal is to provide an opportunity for all students to learn the basic fundamental goals of singing, as well as the basic fundamentals of music theory. I would like for them to be really great singers who really appreciate the art of vocal music (Interview with T. Rossi, January 9th, 2009).

Mr. Rossi came across to me as a caring and passionate teacher, and his students generally liked him, but he was not effectively reaching them, partly because of his unwillingness to give more than cursory attention to the music that interested them. He certainly did not advocate traditional choral and vocal music to the exclusion of all other genres, but his selection of curriculum material was too heavily focused on mainstream choral music, written by staff writers in large publishing houses, and much less on music that inspired his students or that represented their identities and interests. He focused too much time on the acquisition of vocal skills and theory that seemed too abstract for many students. There are ways to analyze and perform music of student interest while accounting for traditional theory and musicianship.

Mr. Rossi also really struggled at getting and maintaining student interest within a class period, indicating that his teaching methods and strategies were less than effective. I observed all three grade level music classes, each with similar field notes:

Students doing musicianship and theory. Students showing a level of general disinterest in Rossi's teaching. They are talking and not focusing during the lecture. The material does not engage them and the theory seems rather cerebral than practical. Teacher asks their attention and queries them. They seem to settle down for a moment…most kids are not looking at Rossi as he gives information. Teacher collects assignments, passes out music. More focus on theory than music, but more students are focused now on the singing than they were for the theory (Field notes, 6th grade class, January 9th, 2009).

Rossi engages students about songs, kids are becoming attentive, but still not on task. Class is almost all Latino, two blacks. Some kids not listening at all…so much of the time is theory, very little singing. African American girl shouts out

'why do we have to do this?'…I ask myself 'Why so much theory?" [Class begins singing songs now]. Doesn't seem to engage the students. Kids are pleasant but are not fully or really singing, but at least they are more engaged than the 8th grade class (Field notes, 7th grade class, January 27, 2009).

Both the 6th and 7th grade music classes were, for the most part, unengaged with Mr. Rossi's curriculum content or his teaching methods. They also had little or no experience with last year's rock band scenarios, so their expectation level with the new music class was minimal. Neither class seemed overly frustrated, rather students seemed resigned to music as just another class they had to take. The 8th graders, who had expected a full year of rock band until the teacher change at the beginning of the year, were much less engaged.

Kids fooling around. Are they supposed to be singing? Teacher asks questions about music related to integrated curriculum. Not focused and seem to be seated wherever they want. Teacher begins to move them…very few students seem 'into it.' Kids fooling around still. Should teacher change routine? Content doesn't seem to interest a lot of students…spends a lot of time disciplining the class. He has good directing technique [for teaching songs] but most kids get off task frequently. Students sing the song at about 30% when they know it [very telling]. Rossi has the temperament to work with middle school kids, doesn't lose temper despite of constant fooling around. Teacher tells the class they are the most talented group in school (Field notes, 8th grade class, January 6th, 2009).

The 8th graders were also clearly disinterested and were rebelling against the unwanted and unexpected change of focus from rock band to a vocal and music theory class. Rossi acknowledged in our interviews that 8th grade resistance was high and that he had not gotten much done this year. If Mr. Rossi's methods and curriculum content were not working for all three classes, he should not have continued with what seemed like a battle of attrition. The students were much more receptive and engaged, however, with Mr. Gibson's rock band instruction, in part because of the instruments' appeal and

students' interest in the genre. Still, I noticed some important differences in teaching

content between the two teachers.

> What a big difference when the kids are playing instruments…teacher does [shows students] rhythms by reading and rote. Group is small, but there is no fooling around and students are practicing on their guitars quietly. Gibson is tactile [shows students by positioning their hands on instruments], using aural tradition and rote methods…shows students theory with accessible symbols. Teaches them a two-chord pattern that is fairly simple but sounds good as a groove, quick results…drummer adds the simple rock beat (Field notes, February 24, 2009).

To put this in perspective, Mr. Gibson had a much easier task, teaching a small

group of four to eight students who were receptive to learning a musical instrument, than

did Mr. Rossi, who was teaching 20-25 students who were not wholly interested in

singing. Yet, Mr. Rossi had the clear responsibility to change what was not working with

his vocal-theory class, either in content or teaching style.

Lack of Stability Affects Equity

As reported by Abril (2006), urban schools and students that are successful with

music programs rely on dedicated and caring teachers who see urban teaching as

something more than transitory. These teachers are willing to put the time in to learn

about their students' cultures and identities so that they can be more effective teachers in

creating relevant content. Both Ms. Navaja and Ms. Mendoza, who have been at the

school for several years, discussed the negative impact that teacher turnover and lack of

appropriate and caring teachers had on the students and music program at CCMS.

> …what has been hard at Cesar Chavez is [that] the music program has changed every year for the last three years, like my first year [here] when I was the assistant principal we had probably three different music teachers, and none of them turned out to be successful We hired a new person the following year, which was last year, and then another person this year. The consistent music teacher and music program was the rock teacher, which is not a credentialed position, and so I think because of the sort of inconsistency and also not finding the appropriate

people to work with our kids… they were strong teachers, but not necessarily for our kids. They had a lot of issues with management, a lot of issues with engaging our kids, the kids felt disconnected from them and frankly the kids ran the show. This year we have a teacher I think who is really good with connecting with the kids and I hopefully will stick around and his background is chorus (Interview with L. Navaja, December 26, 2008).

The Revolving Door of Music Teachers

Ms. Mendoza mentioned that there was no music when she arrived at CCMS. Thus, she had seen many music teachers pass through. I brought up Mr. Francis, the first music teacher who restarted the instrumental music program three years ago after a seven-year absence from the school. She corroborated what I had heard from others, that he had no classroom management skills with urban students, and that the instruments were damaged and unplayable after a short time (M. Mendoza, personal communication, January 13, 2009). Mr. Francis did not last one full semester, and the rest of the year was filled at first by substitute teachers, and then by the rock band teacher, Mr. Stevens, who was hired with an emergency teaching credential.

I then asked her about Mr. Travis, the next music teacher who replaced him the following year. He was an African-American male who had a reputation as a caring teacher and had worked at similar schools in the district.

> I almost like referenced him while we were talking because he did this really cool thing…um, that he took a group of our kids to a Giants game, kids who totally hated chorus…hated it. And I kept on trying to work with him…and these kids, with problematic behaviors, and he's like, 'what if we take them to a Giant's game?' and I'm like 'OK what are you gonna do?' and he's like 'will go out in the middle of the stadium and will sing', and I'm like 'how are you gonna pull that off?' and apparently he's done it before. But we took these group of kids who hated chorus, hated every aspect of it, sat em down, you know, me and Art, um sat down with 10 or 15 of them, got everybody on board, got their families on board, did that and their behaviors totally changed when they came back following this event, and after this kind of buildup to this event. Their behavior changed towards him, towards their desire to be in that classroom you know, and

see how much they were appreciated, it was awesome (Interview, M. Mendoza, January 13, 2009).

Ms. Navaja also believed that Mr. Travis was a strong and effective teacher who commanded the respect and attention of the students, but she seemed a bit surprised that I noted he was one of the few African-American male teachers in the school district, and that his urbanism and ethnicity might have been a teaching asset.

> JC: did they [the students] relate to Art because he was a teacher who grew up in an urban area? Because he was African-American? Or did he just have good relationship skills?

> Ms. Navaja: Why does everyone ask that? Mr. Travis commanded the attention of the kids in his classroom and he would not let them [do something different from] what he asked them to do. I think that's what it takes in any classroom on our side of town. They come to us challenging us and seeing if we really care about them and if we are going to push them. Mr. Travis was able to do that, he was a very experienced teacher. He didn't have the instruments all set up yet, so he was very much chorus oriented I think the fact that he is African American helps, but I certainly don't think you have to be African American or come from the background of the kids (Interview with L. Navaja, December 26th, 2009).

CCMS had found the caring and experienced teacher they were seeking, but very unfortunately, Mr. Travis only stayed one year at CCMS. He took a teaching job in another school district that was closer to his home. Because he is a long time friend and mentor of mine I felt comfortable phoning him to ask about his experiences at the school. He replied that the support was generally good, and that parental support came mainly from the white parents who were pushing the musical. He was about ready to start building an instrumental music program at the school before he decided to leave the district all together because of an opportunity to teach at a school much closer to his home. He lives some three hours from CCMS by car, and he stayed at his mother's house during the school week (A. Travis, personal communication, January 8th, 2009). I also had had the opportunity, by chance, to see him teach for a couple of times at CCMS,

when the current eighth graders were in sixth grade. While it is not really fair to compare him to Mr. Rossi, who is a relatively inexperienced teacher, Mr. Travis had the students singing much more and acting out much less.

Mr. Stevens, who had been teaching rock band part-time, followed Mr. Travis as the full time, credentialed music teacher, but left out choral singing and traditional instrument instruction altogether. He, too, had issues with classroom management and with the equitable treatment of the students (M. Mendoza, personal communication, January 13, 2009). The school then added a part-time credentialed music teacher to teach traditional band instruments, but he was also new to teaching in urban schools and the students could hardly play anything after two semesters. He left after one year.

When I asked Ms. Mendoza how the program stands now, she replied, " The problem is that it's changed so much, and now we have this new guy who I don't know a whole lot about, the new rock guy" (Interview with M. Mendoza, January, 13, 2009). According to Ms. Navaja, teacher turnover and the quality of their teaching has had a profound effect on what has been offered, who has received training, and what type of music program has come into being this year with Mr. Rossi, a new teacher in the district with little experience and no seniority.

> If we had the right teacher we would be more interested in the traditional music program. But we have tried different people and it just didn't work. So I guess for me it was getting the right teacher and someone the kids could relate to and get turned on to whatever was happening instead of trying create a program that didn't have the personnel (Interview with L. Navaja, December 26th, 2008).

Equity and the Achievement Gap

The South Port School District had recently put out a call for action to its schools and teachers to create equity and access as part of an effort to close an achievement gap

that exists between mostly categorized groups of students. Large numbers of students of lower socio-economic status, mostly African Americans, Latinos and Pacific Islander students, are behind in terms of test scores, grade point average, and access to the top schools in comparison to students from white, Asian, and middle class and educated families.

The school district's Academic Performance Index (API) subgroup scores are as follows: the district average for all students is 753, for Asian students the average is 841, and for Whites the average is 838. The Latino average score is 643, and the African-American average is the lowest, at 576. Further, the district's top academic school, Logan High School, has a student makeup of Asians at 64%, Whites at 14 %, Latinos at 6%, and African Americans at 3%. Music and Art High School, the district's flagship arts education campus, has a student makeup of Whites at 32%, Asians at 26%, Latinos at 16%, and African American at 10%.

I pursued equity and the achievement gap from the perspective that CCMS students should be receiving a sufficient education that puts them on par with other students through out the district. All of the CCMS music students who had auditioned for the Music and Arts High School in the preceding year had been rejected; thus their desires to perform music at a higher achievement level were unfulfilled. Was CCMS providing students an adequate and rigorous music program that provides them the skill sets to access intermediate and advanced music classes in high school, or to pass the audition process for the district's Music and Arts High School?

> JC: …what I'm really looking at, in terms of closing the achievement gap in the district…how do we close it in music? What is CCMS doing or attempting to do to try and close the achievement gap in music so that the kids will be able to play music in high school or apply to Music and Art High School?

Ms. Kivel: I don't know what goes on [at other middle schools] but I do know a lot of programs are audition based, and ours are not audition based. So the first thing I do is give everybody access, and the next thing we do is encourage their particular own personal choice. We have not come to an auditioned based music program. Actually we may start a 0 period band next year if we can get funding for it, that will be somewhat audition based in that we can't really uh accept everybody into the program, it will have to be kids who are really interested in it. But for our regular program daily, um, students are exposed to all of it and choose, and we encourage their pursuit (Interview with R. Kivel, February 23, 2009).

Although the CCMS did not create an audition-based program that excludes students or discourages them in some way from pursuing music, their exploratory arts rotation program, in which students rotate arts classes for the first two years, does not allow students to gain sufficient depth in knowledge and skills. Thus, this type of access has impeded the sequential learning that is crucial to closing a performance gap in music.

Ms. Navaja: I think one shortcoming of the way we have designed the program is because we have this exploratory wheel [rotation arts classes], and one of the things we've decided is we want all kids to have access to everything and to try everything, so the downside of that is the kids don't get a lot of time in music per se and especially with music since the skills build on each other. Like we don't have kids who get three years of music, which other schools do. We have kids who get six to twelve weeks in 6th grade, maybe 18 weeks in 7th, and then a year in 8th.

JC: But using that model…how can you use content standards at the grade level to prepare them for high school level performance, or to get into Music and Art?

Ms. Navaja: That is what I'm saying – I'm agreeing with you. That is the shortcoming of the program…our kids haven't had music for the most part, they haven't had a lot of music, so we wanted all our kids to have some. When you give all your kids some music that means you don't get 3 years of music, which would prepare them for Music and Art, right?

As I mentioned earlier, Rossi, along with Mr. Gibson, attempted to create an equitable and accessible rock band program within the vocal-theory class.

Each band gets to play one day a week, and that is the only way to set up equity in the program. Each band gets an hour they have to assigned day, and they

should have an opportunity to play (Interview with T Rossi, January 9th, 2009).

Playing an instrument in an ensemble setting for 40 minutes a week, however, produces

only nominal results since most of the students have no instrument to practice with at

home. Ms. Navaja concurred.

> Rock band, even if we did it in our ideal way, they rotate in groups, so its an hour a week. So an hour a week with five kids isn't going to be competitive with the kids who are going to apply for Music and Art.

My field notes substantiated Ms. Navaja's comments. The following is an observation of

the 1st period, 7th grade rock band class.

> Class seems to be setup like an exploratory class…skills being taught seem more like for 6th grade introductory music class. There is not enough time, and the trajectory [of acquiring skill sets] seems too slow. At this rate the kids will not develop quick enough to have adequate skills (Field note observations, February, 23, 2009).

The rock band class is an engaging and fun class for the students, one that

produces quick results and immediate gratification, but the limited amount of individual

playing time and instruction, heavy reliance on rote learning, and pressure to produce

good sounding performance groups interfere with providing adequate time for teaching

instrument technique or music literacy skills. Mr. Gibson acknowledged that only the few

students who take private lessons, even among the 8th graders, know a sufficient amount

of theory and music reading skills, and are grade-level proficient on instrument

technique.

While it is difficult to determine the total number of former CCMS students who

are performing in high school music ensembles, I was able to verify that, as of this study,

only one instrumental music student from CCMS has passed the entrance audition for and

attended Music and Art High School in the last four years.

Student Interest Level in Music Programs

The students' reflections on their interest in various music programs differ from their views on the importance of music because of the specific nature of their likes and dislikes. Freire (1994) spoke of the importance of education in one's own image and interest. Examining student interest level can give the observer an opportunity to consider whether some other music program or activity the school could offer would more effectively meet the students' needs.

The Elephant in the Music Room: Singing

One of the strongest and most prevalent student opinions about music pertained to the dislike of singing in class. Student apathy and resistance to singing as presented by Mr. Rossi was high and widespread.

JC: What do you like or don't like about the class you are in?

Fran (7th grader): …what I dislike about it is you have to sing, cause I don't like to sing.

Jose (7th grader): …I don't like um, ya gotta sing cause I don't like to sing (Interview with 7th grade students, January 28th, 2009).

JC: How do you feel about the singing part of your class?

Mabeehl (8th grader): Yeah, I don't like it one bit, it's a waste of my time…cuase like last year, it was all rock band…so now all we do is singing.

Adam (8th grader): I just hate the fact that we have to do the singing thing…for the stuff we do in vocal class, it's a waste of my time and I don't want to do it.

Santiago (8th grader): I wasn't here last year, but last year I had [a similar] vocal class throughout the whole year, and it sucked just like last year…I don't like any type of singing (Interview with 7th and 8th grade students, February 4th, 2009).

I did not interview any 6th grade students, but my field notes and recollections of the students' actions and behavior in all three grade-level classes indicated that the

overwhelming majority were disinterested in Mr. Rossi's vocal music. Their participation

and efforts in singing were, for the most part, minimal or superficial. They sang under

their breath or out loud in an irresponsible or sarcastic manner, and the overall results

were nominal at best. There were a few students who were really interested in singing

from time to time, such as two African American girls who responded to the gospel

pieces Mr. Rossi brought in, or those students in rock band who were practicing songs for

the musical.

Interestingly, Mr. Rossi believed the kids were more into singing than they let on,

and mentioned a student who does little in class, but who understood the music reading

and theory during private lessons.

> I think there is definitely a tendency for the boys to pretend they don't know and
> don't care, but really they do and they are listening and they are getting it,
> because when asked outside when no one is looking – they know, and they can
> do. I didn't know he could read music at all. I get him alone and he could and he
> could read the melody. And he knows how to count the rhythm – it's interesting
> what they show you and what they know (Interview with T. Rossi, January 9,
> 2009).

I, too, believe that many of his students, because of the daily reinforcement of knowledge

he is disseminating, retained some theory and other musical skills. But retention is not the

same as interest in a particular subject matter, and may not indicate real depth of

knowledge.

Sadly, my last two observation sessions were cut short because of student

disinterest or indifference to singing. During a 1st period class, Mr. Rossi asked me out

loud to leave the room when his 7th grade students, mostly Latino, were giving a less

than stellar rendition of "La Bamba." The next day, I tried to enter his 8th period class,

which was out of control. I only lasted about 20 seconds before I was forced out the door

(Field notes, March 11, 2009). Mr. Rossi apologized in both instances for unprofessional behavior, but also told me that he could not have me observe his classes when they acted in such a manner (T. Rossi, personal communication, March 11, 2009).

Knowing what I know about middle school students and adolescence, I believe there was more to the students' disinterest in singing than just general dislike. Ms. Mendoza believed that some student resistance to singing in class or on stage had to do with adolescence and the students being self-conscious in front of their peers (L. Mendoza, personal communication, January 13, 2009). Ms. Kivel echoed similar sentiments, believing that some students shied away from both vocal and drama classes because they were performing arts in which their physical actions and expressions would be the center of attention (R. Kivel, personal communication, January 14, 2009). When I brought up singing in reference to the musical, student resistance was related more to self-consciousness than to disinterest.

JC: Could you see yourself in the musical?

Carlos: No, not really. I wouldn't do it cause I guess I get embarrassed…but I did see it and I did like the show.

Fran: No…I get nervous in front of an audience. When you are in a musical you have to sing a lot, and if I was in the play, I wouldn't want to sing in front of others.

Jose: The same thing as Fran said. I would get nervous and I wouldn't remember all the lines and stuff (Interview with 7th grade students, February 3, 2009).

One thing was clear from both grade level interviews,: student dislike of school singing and subsequent issues of self-consciousness and adolescence did not translate to a dislike for singing in general.

JC: OK, last question. You guys like singing?

Carlos: Not really

Fran: Sort of.

JC: But not in public

Carlos: Yeah I kinda do but not in public.

Jose: Yeah, I like singing but not in public.

JC: You guys sing by yourself?

All: Yeah (Interview with 7th grade students, February 3, 2009).

Even Adam, the most frustrated of all students with the singing component of music class, admitted he liked singing if in the context of performing rock songs (Adam, personal communication, February 5, 2009).

Students Wanted More Quantity and Quality with Rock Band

All eight students interviewed had more than a nominal interest in rock band and all responded affirmatively when I asked them if music made them want to come to school (Interview notes, February 23, 2009). They conveyed to me, however, that there was insufficient time in music class or at any other available time during the school day to play or practice on the instruments.

JC: What would you like to see for a music program here? What could be improved?

Carlos: More playing, like um, instruments.

JC: What kinds of instruments?

Carlos: More like guitars and drums and stuff like that.

JC: And what kind of music would you like to play?

Carlos: The rock, like classic rock.

Fran: Rock, I would like to play the guitar or drums more (Interview with 7th grade students, February 3, 2009).

The 8th grade students expressed their desire to see an expansion of the rock band program on a grander scale.

JC: Do you guys play more than once a week here?

All: No

Adam: He only comes three days a week.

JC: What would you like to see?

Adam: …more like instruments, cause they barely give any money to the rock band program…like our drum kit is really small, it would be cool if we had a bigger one.

JC: Can you imagine a class or scenario? Can you paint that for me?

Adam: Kind of like maybe a whole group playing like one song, or maybe like a bunch of different bands, cause we could use a couple more drums and have like a whole metal band.

JC: How about playing everyday?

All: Yeah.

Santiago: More funding…our last concert we had two classes, was it three or four classes bunched on one little stage.

David: I would like to see separate classes…so that everybody can have a chance to play (Interview with 8th grade students, February 23, 2009).

All of the students expressed a desire for increased engagement in rock band, through more time playing time, more instruments, more classes, and smaller class sizes.

Student Musical Interests Not Addressed by the School

Although the interviewed students showed a definite interest in the rock band music classes, rock was not a music genre that they or the majority of students at CCMS listen to on a daily basis or that they identify with socially or culturally. I gathered a few

responses from the students about other types of music they would like to see offered at CCMS.

In my experience as an urban teacher, rap, hip-hop, spoken word and their derivatives are the dominant music styles for urban youth and culture.

JC: Does [rock] music have any relationship to what you listen to outside of class?

Jose: No.

Carlos: I guess a little, cause I do kinda like rock, and there's a rock band here.

JC: OK, what do you listen to outside of school?

Jose: Rap.

Carlos: Hip-hop, rap.

JC: Would you like to see more hip-hop taught at this school?

All: Yeah (Interview with 7th grade students, January 28, 2009).

I later asked Jose, the most disinterested of all the 7th graders in rock music, and in many ways a "typical" Latino male at CCMS, how he would envision a hip-hop class.

JC: What would you like to do in a hip-hop class?

Jose: kind of like dancing and rap.

JC: What would you do in that class? Would you be writing songs, would you be creating beats, would you be MCing?

Jose: Creating beats (Interview with 7th grade students, February 3rd, 2009).

The 8th graders, while not going into specifics, did rather enthusiastically mention other styles and genres of instrumental music they would like to see offered at CCMS. One thing worth noting is that all four eight graders took music classes and played a wind instrument such as trumpet or flute in elementary school.

JC: Do you know about other middle schools having bands and orchestras?

Mabeehl: Yeah, I wish we had that.

JC: Would you like to see orchestra and band at this school?

Mabeehl: Yeah, and jazz band stuff.

Adam: I don't know.

Santiago: It would seem better.

David: Yes, I would be so interested to have an orchestra, and especially jazz because I like lots of jazz.

JC: What would you like to see at this school for music? Use your imagination and think outside the box.

Mabeehl: Oh yeah, I want to have like a marching band, like you know, the ones they have in the south, like really formal and we all do like choreography and stuff like that, I really like that stuff (Interview with 8th grade students, February 23, 2009).

I had hoped to have elicited more in-depth responses from the students about what other types of music besides rock and vocal they would like to see offered at CCMS, but their limited background and exposure to other types of music learning experiences limited their responses and possibilities. Additionally, towards the end of the last month of observations, Mr. Rossi prevented me from entering his classes because of his insecurity with my presence during some of his worst teaching sessions. My access to the students then became, other than quick conversations passing in the hall, extremely limited.

Conclusion

The findings in this chapter demonstrate that issues of equity in music programs at CCMS were both complex and multi-faceted. The students' responses were varied and often complicated. For instance, there were aspects of the music programs that they did

like, such as rock band, nested inside of a singing class they mostly detested. Many of the students detested the after school-musical because it was primarily the domain of the few white students in the school. Yet one of the interviewees played a major part in the musical, and others thought it was enjoyable. Particularly surprising for me was the range of students' musical interests. Most of the students liked a variety of music genres: hip-hop, some styles of rock, Latin American music, even classical and marching band, to some degree. Yet there was a clear distinction between music they could enjoy, or at least tolerate, and music with which they had social identity. The rock band's repertoire was something they enjoyed performing, but for most, it was not their music of choice outside of school.

The faculty's responses indicated that the path to achieving equity was not a clear one, as often a response to a question opened up a new area of concern for them. Even the principal said she struggled with the goals of the music program, which were broad access, exposure and exploration, at the expense of specialization that could help close a performance gap between these students and students from the higher-achieving middle schools in the district.

One important theme that arose was the lack of a consistent music program that featured a reliable, caring and appropriate teacher for CCMS students. These shortcomings, I believe, had a profound effect on music equity, socially relevant pedagogy, and students' interest in the music program. Finally, issues of class, race, ethnicity and socioeconomics, which permeate throughout most aspects of education, were clearly found in the interviewees' responses, whether, implicit, explicit, or evoked.

CHAPTER VI

DISCUSSION, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to examine if students at CCMS are receiving a

music education that is equitable and appropriate for the students' social and cultural

backgrounds, and one that is comparable in quality and rigor to programs other students

are receiving at more affluent middle schools in the school district. The findings in

Chapter IV indicate that, even with the efforts of concerned teachers and administrators,

CCMS has not attained equity in its music program for all students. Most of the students'

musical needs, including the development of music skills that would allow access to high

school music programs, are either not addressed, unfulfilled, or only partially met.

Discussion

The Importance of Music at CCMC

The faculty demonstrated music's importance, first by making classes accessible

in some way to all students. Both Ms. Navaja and Mr. Rossi saw music as part of

educating the whole child. Yet, their statements about music's importance were

undermined by the fact that, unlike most subjects, music was not available to students

every semester. The lack of sequential classes makes sequential learning and student

acquisition of grade level content standards more difficult.

The school's program provides math, language arts, and science for all students on

a daily basis even though there is no legal requirement to do so (California Department of

Education, 2007). This is due to a long standing educational tradition of prioritizing

"core" subjects, school district expectations, and the general public's perception that a

school's quality is measured by test scores. Even physical education, traditionally

considered a non-core subject, is required every semester by state mandate (California Department of Education, 2008). Yet music and the other arts disciplines at CCMS were lumped together as part of an exploratory rotation during a student's first two years at CCMS.

Such a practice, I believe, runs contrary to the state's own music content standards and performing arts frameworks, which indicate that music should be taught sequentially from Kindergarten through grade 12, and that learning is cumulative and developmental, with each grade-level standard based on assumptions of prior knowledge (California State Board of Education, 2004). The National Association of Music (2007) has also recommended that music be taught as a sequential course of study.

The truncating of music and arts classes into an elective rotation cycle at CCMS is consistent with my experiences in K-12 education. Often music's importance is a matter of semantics. Faculty and administrators state publicly and emphatically that music is an integral part of a child's education, but in reality music is placed into the least opportune time slots (zero period, in the afternoon, after school) or taught once weekly so as not to interfere with optimal learning times (usually the morning) for language arts, math or science. Clearly, the decision at CCMS to offer music in a rotation with other arts classes, even though the rationale given was a desire to expose students to all arts disciplines, is in effect a policy decision that demonstrates music is less important than most other subjects. If math, English and science were rotated in the same way, what would the perception be?

The faculty's expressed belief that music is important because it fosters school spirit and pride, student self-esteem, and the understanding of different cultures, is

aligned with the utilitarian and social benefits of music education discussed in the literature review. Abril (2006) and Mixon (2006) emphasize the importance of music for the development of school culture and spirit. According to CCMS students and faculty, rock band, although not the number one student-chosen elective, provided some of the more popular school assembly programs. The rehearsals I saw of Mr. Gibson's two best rock bands groups were quite compelling. Mixon (2005) and Warner (1999) point out that student self-esteem is a demonstrated benefit of music, particularly for students who do less well in other subjects. Indeed, many of the CCMS students expressed during the interviews and conversations that the rock band practices and performances made them feel successful. Rock music and its history also brought an understanding of different traditions and of a social movement to many students at CCMS. This correlates to the Children's Music Workshop's (2006) philosophy that music enriches students' lives through the understanding of different cultures.

The faculty also expressed that music's importance was connected with student creativity, self-expression and cooperative learning. Posnick-Goodwin (2005) and Mach (2006) cite that music fosters creativity and collaboration among students, and Rhen (2008) sees music as one of the few subjects that allows for self-expression on a daily basis. Yet self-expression, cooperative learning and creativity were minimal or missing altogether in Mr. Rossi and Mr. Gibson's music classes. Mr. Rossi did not create a learning environment conducive to cooperative learning or self-expression because of his mostly top-down teaching style and his emphasis on musical concepts that students saw as abstract or irrelevant. Predictably, most students saw Mr. Rossi's vocal class as irrelevant and unimportant.

While many of the interviewed students said rock band provided a medium for self-expression, Mr. Gibson's limited time with each student group, about 40 minutes weekly, was insufficient to produce an environment that truly allowed student self-expression and creativity to flourish. Most students' skill levels were so low that Mr. Gibson had to constantly intervene, so there was virtually no time for creativity and experimentation. Green (2008) describes a creative and expressive popular music ensemble environment as one in which students are for the most part in control of the process of learning and performing the songs with minimal teacher involvement. Based on the varied responses, music's importance is fluid, contingent on setting, context and semantics. Self-expression and creativity as aspects of importance related to the literature review, however, never really flourished at the school.

Lack of Socially and Culturally Relevant Content and Pedagogy

Overall, rock band had currency for both the active and passive students because of its novelty as something loud, seemingly rebellious, and very different from the traditional academic norms of school. Rock band was even more liked by the students who were excited by playing musical instruments, but student interest in taking the combination rock band-vocal class was not high overall because the curriculum was distant from their understanding of music and musical identity. When you factor in that rock band was only a small component of each music class, and that Mr. Rossi's vocal and theory instruction took up the majority of the class time, then the lack of culturally and socially relevant content was poignant.

Mr. Rossi's emphasis on Western European and mainstream vocal music is typical of the music teachers in Legette's study (2003), who saw European-based music

as the priority for their students. The combination of rock band, mainstream vocal music and the after-school musical ("Bye Bye Birdie") is consistent with Irvine's (1991) assessment of educational models that ignore the student's ethnicities and cultures; they default to white and middle-class values. Clearly, this was the case for the music program at CCMS. There was no real cultural or social connection between the music classes and the majority of students who were urban students of color. The emphasis on Eurocentric and white middle-class music models that led to student disinterest and perhaps alienation is comparable to the Blair and Kondo (2008), Delpit (1995) and Ladson-Billings (1998) findings that urban students are often frustrated that their representative cultures do not fit in with the school culture, which leads to further student disengagement.

Mr. Rossi, and to a lesser degree, Mr. Gibson, employed pedagogies that did not work very well, or were not as effective as they could have been. Most students viewed singing, choral music, and music theory with disinterest, but Mr. Rossi was either unaware, unwilling, or unable to apply culturally responsive teaching and socially relevant content as recommended by Ladson-Billings (1995), Gay (2000), and Morrell and Duncan-Andrade (2002). He could have taken traditional musicianship concepts such as music reading, analysis and vocal technique, much of which seemed abstract to the students, and bridged them to music the students could identify, liked, or found relevant. Abrahams and Schmidt (2006), Mahendran (2007) and Robinson (2006) have used similar theories in music education that allow for more student involvement in the process, in part by incorporating students' knowledge and allowing for a democratic and collaborative process in the classroom.

My first experiences as a vocal music teacher in an urban middle school many years ago were similar to Mr. Rossi's, in that I first taught from the textbook and used vocal repertoire that was mainstream and mostly Western European in nature. My intuition and common sense told me fairly quickly, however, that for the students, many of whom had little or no previous music training, the material was fairly abstract and uninspiring. I subsequently used music that they knew and understood to teach the musical concepts I wanted them to acquire. For example, I taught music reading using contemporary beats and drum patterns, and music intervals by adding vocal harmonies to their favorite songs. This helped my students grasp the concepts, kept their interest, and helped them see that I was someone who cared deeply about their learning. When I took similar action with the band class, I received similar dividends. The students began to value the use of the rehearsal time by being on-task, and were equally engaged with the standard school music repertoire as well as contemporary music I brought in to the rehearsals. I had mentioned these kinds of strategies to Mr. Rossi, but I believe he was too overwhelmed to try anything outside of his comfort and knowledge zone even though both he and I knew that his current methods and pedagogies strategies were not really effective.

Mr. Gibson's use of accessible language and simple terminology was an effective teaching method that helped the mostly inexperienced students grasp important music concepts, and the students were genuinely and actively engaged with the content and his teaching. But as previously mentioned, Mr. Gibson's time with each group of students was so limited that his efforts did little to advance all except the top students beyond a

nominal level of playing. Most students, therefore, did not acquire a level of musical skill that would prepare them for the best music programs and high schools in the district. I surmise then, that the lack of a culturally relevant curriculum and pedagogy in the music program had a profound effect on student interest, engagement, and the ability for student acquisition of skills that would enable access at the next level of the education.

The Power of Parent Advocacy

Rock band and the school musical were very popular with a relatively small number of students, but nevertheless they produced some of CCMS's most high-profile and well-attended events, including nighttime and weekend performances and off-campus concerts with famous musicians. These two programs thrived because of the efforts of a small group of mostly white, middle-class, and professional parents who advocated for them. Rock band was funded and paid for in part by outside grants and parent donations, and was advertised and promoted in school websites and parent tours of the school (R. Kivel, personal communication, February 16, 2009; M. Mendoza, personal communication, January 13, 2009). The after-school musical was also paid for in part through donations from the PTA (A. Travis, personal communication, January 4th, 2009).

These parents were the ones who knew how the system worked and how to get what they wanted, including building support for the rock band program and the school musical. Their advocacy for the two programs during the daytime parent tours of the school for prospective students, most of whose parents were also white and professional, helped perpetuate and strengthen the programs' viability. Latino, African-American and other working class parents were less likely to be involved in or attend these recruitment activities, which occurred during the school day, because of work-related issues. (M.

Mendoza, personal communication, January 13, 2009). Thus the most successful and visible music programs at CCMS had strong financial and parental support from mostly white and professional middle class families, whose children stood to benefit the most. Equity for Latino and African American students therefore was hindered because such school events and activities and lack of financial resources virtually assured that their parents could not be actively involved

The absence of a large portion of the schools' Latino and African American students and their families from school events such as the rock band concerts and the school musical, which were held mostly at night and far away from their own communities, has been predicted by Kozol (1991), Valdes (1996), and Valenzuela (1999). They all express that the lack of these families' involvement with certain school activities is related to institutional biases that result in culturally irrelevant activities, parent unfamiliarity with the educational system, or an overall mistrust of or apathy toward the school. In contrast, the *Bailes Folkoricos* program and assemblies, and the reggae band performance by the African-American Students Forum, were well attended by Latino and African- American families, respectively. Perhaps these parents do not see rock band as culturally and socially relevant either, or as important school activities that fill the needs of their children.

The Elephant in the Room

Singing, along with public speaking, ranks at the top of the list on public surveys regarding phobias (Bosnian, 2008). For most people, singing in public is stressful and intimidating, as audiences can very quickly make assumptions and judgments regarding one's voice and talent. We live in a culture in which only those who sing well are

encouraged to sing. All the reader has to think about is the last rendition of "Happy Birthday" he or she heard or sang to realize that we are not a society of active singers, or one that encourages public singing, churches notwithstanding. Additionally, teacher-directed singing in urban elementary schools has been so underdeveloped that middle school students have had no real prior training and are unaccustomed to public displays of themselves through singing. How, then, can we expect adolescent and urban middle school students, who are reluctant to take risks for fear of failure, and particularly boys, for whom rep and saving face are everything, to whole-heartedly commit to singing?

My recollections of student participation in Mr. Rossi's class indicate that the girls put in a much better effort towards singing out loud and with purpose than the boys, who were mostly mumbling the words and singing under their breath. For decades, educators have been discussing the absence of singing effort from middle-school boys (Freer, 2007). Freer points out that boys are more apt to sing in the elementary grades, but at the middle school level, the changing of voice and inability to find or sing pitches, maturity, fear of embarrassment, along with not seeing singing as masculine, all play a part in their limited singing efforts.

I frequently ask my elementary instrumental students if they sing in their classrooms or at school, and most reply in the negative. From my experience, educators can emphasize choral singing for boys and girls during adolescence, provided they do so in a safe and nurturing environment, and that they genuinely recognize and incorporate the students' own musical interests and needs for self-expression into the curriculum.

CCMS was unwise to push so much vocal music on the eighth graders who thought they were going to be enrolled in rock band. The students had much resentment

towards the administration because of the change, and with issues of adolescence and little prior music training, they were almost continual resistance to Mr. Rossi. Perhaps separating the boys from the girls during singing rehearsals, and providing a singing role model from the community that the boys would respect, one who could model singing as something viable and hip, would have been more successful.

<center>*The Achievement and Performance Gap*</center>

The SPSD strategic plan for closing the achievement gap between students of lower socioeconomic status and students who were at or above the student district average included a redesign initiative for middle and high schools that called for more academic rigor. The idea was to create a school environment where all students could access curriculum-based, content and performance standards in preparation for higher levels of education, but one where the learning would be also be contextual and relevant to the students' own lives. If one measures the closing of the music achievement gap by the amount of CCMS students who perform music or master music concepts using grade level, content standards, or by the number who participated in district wide music events, or even by the quality of singing in Mr. Rossi's choral classes, then the grade was not made. Clearly the efforts of CCMS fell short in music and the arts in part because of their emphasis on an expanded exploratory arts program that didn't allow for enough depth or sequence in learning. As previously mentioned, very few students in any of the arts disciplines had yet to acquire the skills to enter the district's Music and Art High School.

But achievement, even according to the school district's plan, cannot always be measured by quantitative comparisons. There were other unique art and music accomplishments at CCMS that are worthy of mention here, specifically, such as the

music and dance float for South Port's citywide Latino celebration, the *Bailes Folkloricos* performances, which in quality, is on par or better than many other middle school performing arts activity, and even the musical, which is a rarity in most middle schools.

The Crux: Lack of Consistent and Effective Teaching

Both Mr. Rossi and Mr. Gibson were friendly and caring teachers, but both lacked the experience, background and training to provide sufficient equity and achievement for the majority of CCMS students. They were unwilling, unable, or unknowing of making radical changes in their content, program or teaching styles, perhaps believing what they were doing was sufficient. In the case of Mr. Rossi, I saw his strategy as a new teacher as one of survival through denial. After I had several opportunities to observe his ineffective classroom teaching, I believe he finally came to the realization that I was actually going to write about the results of his teaching. Although I was non-judgmental and even showed empathy by telling him about my own early teaching experiences, he eventually panicked and forced me out of the last two observation settings. Add to the fact that Mr. Rossi and Mr. Gibson were just the latest in a long line of music teachers who had traversed the music rooms of CCMS, and what you have is a legacy of ineffectiveness, inconsistency, and neglect.

Mr. Travis, who also taught singing, was the one teacher who made a big difference to the large majority of students who took music, including the reluctant and apprehensive students. He grew up in an urban environment and had the experience, dedication and rep of working with inner-city students. His attributes matched what Mixon (2005) described as vital for a successful music program: a caring and dedicated teacher who regardless of ensemble setting or subject matter, students responded to

because they eventually saw he was genuinely interested in their well-being.

Unfortunately, since there has been a shortage of urban students succeeding in school

music programs over the last 30 years, then there most certainly will continue to be a

continuing shortage of caring music teachers that come from urban communities. These

are the type of teachers that urban students can more easily identify as someone

representative of their homes, communities and interests, and that are more likely than

other teachers to understand the students' needs, strengths and desires.

<div align="center">Recommendations for Practice</div>

The results of this study show that schools cannot just supply a music teacher and

access to music classes for all students and expect to achieve equity or close an

achievement gap. Urban schools with students of low-socioeconomic status tend to be

staffed with inexperienced teachers, and are chronically short of music teachers who are

willing to teach for any more than a short period of time. Given the discovered

shortcomings, here are some recommendations for further practice.

<div align="center">*Student Needs Assessment*</div>

Students in general have varying needs. This is even more true in music than in

"core" academic subjects. Unlike mathematics and language arts, in which students

theoretically receive standards-based instruction throughout the elementary grades, music

education varies widely for all students; in the case of urban students, the variance is even

greater.

Many of the interviewed students at CCMS wanted more time for rock band,

while others had hoped for an orchestra class or marching band at the school. A few of

the students found fulfillment in the after-school music technology class that allowed

them to create their own music using programs such as Garage Band; in addition, based on all the data, an overwhelming majority of students at CCMS would like to see much more hip-hop. Many of the students who aspired to attend Music and Art High School lacked the skills to pass the entrance audition.

A perceived needs assessment can provide urban school administrators and program planners with an understanding of the students' musical needs, which may be numerous and in flux. Bains and Mesa-Bains (2002) ascertained that a community-based needs assessment is an integral part of providing an equitable music and arts program. Such a needs assessment could be in the form of a parent and student survey and/or a focus group that inquires about prior skills and training, and musical familiarity. The main purpose of such a needs assessment is not to cater to the students' musical tastes, but to find ways to connect content standards and less familiar musical material with music material they find relevant in their own lives. A needs assessment can also aid educators in designing appropriate musical training, particularly to help students access skills on traditional band and orchestra instruments, and to consider non-traditional mediums in which students can create music that fits their cultural and social identities.

Best Practices

Urban schools and school districts need to invest resources and time in researching best practices for teaching music to students of low socioeconomic status. Finding a model urban middle school program that addresses the multi-faceted needs of students such as those at CCMS is difficult, as currently, no discernible literature exists. There are, however, some outstanding and critically acclaimed urban high school music programs worth investigating because they are inner-city schools predominately attended

by urban students of color: the Detroit School of the Arts, and the Milwaukee School of the Performing Arts. Finally the Venezuelan national music system for children, *El Sistema*, is an awe-inspiring educational organization that all educators of any subject should see as a model for reaching students of low socioeconomic status.

There are also some outstanding alternative music programs for students who lack traditional music training, or who have other musical needs. Kuzmich (2008) reports that urban music educators are now using computer technology and alternative curricula to teach music skills and creativity for middle school students with little or no music training. Elmhurst Middle School in Oakland, California recently offered its students a successful song-writing course taught by younger adult musicians from the community who helped students craft their own lyrics and melodies into viable, artistic products (Perez, 2008).

Programming and Tutorial Support

Most middle school programs offer an introductory arts program for sixth grade students, as was the case at CCMS. Yet, quite frequently, sequential music learning is less likely to take root in urban middle schools because of conflicts with testing, and a lack of availability of programs, instruments and teachers. Ideally, to prepare students so that they can acquire the appropriate skill sets for high school level music instruction, sequential music programs should start no later than the seventh grade. Additionally, schools should provide tutorial support for urban students, many of whom are below grade level in music, cannot afford private lessons, and must often compete with privileged students with more experience and training. Tutorial support could come from high school students, nearby college and universities, or professional musicians.

Workshops for Students

Since re-instituting their music program four years ago, CCMS has had a high turnover of credentialed music teachers, most of whom have lacked the experience and knowledge to provide an equitable music education for the students. In general, urban middle schools have difficulty finding music teachers with the necessary skills and experience who are willing to stay at a school for more than a couple of years. Additionally the findings of this study indicate that urban students, because of a lack of exposure, training, and social disconnection, are often disinterested in traditional music programs such as band and orchestra. Urban middle schools should therefore seek to hire contemporary musicians, spoken-word and hip hop artists to provide more relevant workshops and programs that could also raise student self-esteem, motivation levels, school attendance, and lastly, school spirit and pride.

Recommendations for Future Research

The researcher recommends that an investigative study be done on urban middle schools with culturally appropriate music programs. Although urban schools that develop a large pool of highly skilled instrumental music students are quite rare, there are schools that offer alternative music classes such as hip-hop, spoken word, percussion and non-Western instrument ensembles that are worthy of study. These programs are more likely to be desirable to urban students who have had little or no prior musical training. Additionally, a further comprehensive study on the existence or lack of sequential music programs in urban schools would be worthwhile. While the findings of this study point out some of the obstacles to offering sequential music instruction at CCMS, a large-scale

research study at several schools and involving district administrators would provide much insight into a common and widespread phenomenon in middle schools today.

A research study on music programs at the elementary school level would also be valuable because, as this study has demonstrated, many students enter middle school with little or no musical training. Such an investigation should examine similar research questions as those used in this study because, in my experience as an educator, urban elementary schools have similar equity issues with regards to music education.

Finally, the researcher recommends an investigation of the dance program at CCMS, which appeared to be vibrant, popular, and more representative of the student population as a whole, but did not have as high a profile outside the school as rock band. Although the focus of this study did not include the other arts disciplines, the CCMS dance classes, including traditional Latin American dances and contemporary hip-hop, were quite popular with a large portion of the student population, including Latino males. A further study should look at the reasons for the dance program's success, examining the cultural relevance of its content and pedagogy, and the social, cultural and political aspects that separate dance from rock band with regards to support, status and funding.

Conclusion

My study focused on equity in music programs at a particular urban school that is located in a large urban city on the West Coast of the United States. Since the 1960s, students of color and of low socioeconomic status have been underrepresented in instrumental music classes and programs at the middle and high school levels because of a lack of prior music education, the ability to afford instruments and a general disinterest in the traditional music curriculums offered by most schools.

The study revealed that there are multiple facets to achieving equity in music education for underserved students in urban middle schools, including relevant content and pedagogy, and issues related to class and socioeconomics. By and large, CCMS, even with the best intentions of the faculty, was unable to fully provide equity in the school's music programs. Lack of stability and consistency with music teachers, the unclear institutional goals of music education and the inability of most students and families of color to navigate the system successfully as did the more knowledgeable white and professional parents and their students were the reasons.

I deduced from my research that in order for urban middle schools to achieve a clear path toward equity in music, they must provide content and classes that are effective and socially relevant to the students. They must also provide the need for an experienced music teacher who is knowledgeable and aware of urban students' needs and who is willing to stay for an extended period to provide stability in a music program. Chronically, urban schools with high needs students have a much higher teacher turnover rate than affluent schools. Still another aspect toward delivering equity is the need for programming and tutorial support for students so that students can be better prepared to acquire skill sets necessary to access high school music programs. Many urban middle schools do not have sequential music programs, and many of their students enter school with much less musical skills and knowledge than the more affluent students who attend schools with consistent music programs and take private lessons.

Prior to the inception of this study, there very few comprehensive studies on issues of equity in music for urban middle schools and underserved students of color and of low socioeconomic status. This study could help researchers, families and concerned

community members with an understanding of the issues related to equity and music in urban schools. Finally, my study will hopefully provide insight to help rectify what this researcher sees as a prolonged institutional neglect of the musical needs of urban students, as well as a social and educational injustice.

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APPENDIX A

EMAIL APPROVAL OF HUMAN SUBJECTS REQUEST

Subject: IRB Application # 08-088 - Application Approved
Date: Monday, December 15, 2008 7:49 AM
From: irbphs <irbphs@usfca.edu>
To: "newjazzflute@comcast.net" <newjazzflute@comcast.net>
Cc:
Conversation: IRB Application # 08-088 - Application Approved

December 15, 2008

Dear Mr. Calloway:
The Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (IRBPHS)
at the University of San Francisco (USF) has reviewed your request for human
subjects approval regarding your study.
Your application has been approved by the committee (IRBPHS #08-088).

Please note the following:
1. Approval expires twelve (12) months from the dated noted above. At that
time, if you are still in collecting data from human subjects, you must file
a renewal application.

2. Any modifications to the research protocol or changes in instrumentation
(including wording of items) must be communicated to the IRBPHS.
Re-submission of an application may be required at that time.

3. Any adverse reactions or complications on the part of participants must
be reported (in writing) to the IRBPHS within ten (10) working days.
If you have any questions, please contact the IRBPHS at (415) 422-6091.
On behalf of the IRBPHS committee, I wish you much success in your research.

Sincerely,
Terence Patterson, EdD, ABPP
Chair, Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects
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IRBPHS – University of San Francisco
Counseling Psychology Department
Education Building - 017
2130 Fulton Street
San Francisco, CA 94117-1080

APPENDIX B

PARTICIPANT RECRUITMENT FORM

Mr. John Doe
38 Freedom Avenue
San Francisco, CA 9000

Dear Mr. Doe

My name is John Calloway and I am a graduate student in the College of Education at the University of San Francisco. I am doing a study on music in urban schools. I am interested in learning about the academic, emotional and cultural needs of students at ███████████ Middle School.

The principal of ███████████████████ Middle School, ███████████, has given approval for me to conduct this research.

You are being asked to participate in this research study because you are a counselor or administrator at the school, or a teacher who works directly with the students. If you agree to be in this study, you will be interviewed two times during between December 2008 and March 2009.

It is possible that some of the questions in the interview may make you feel uncomfortable, but you are free to decline to answer any questions you do not wish to answer, or to stop participation at any time. Although your real name will not be used in my research, I will know that you were asked to participate in the research because I sent you this letter and survey. Participation in research may mean a loss of confidentiality. Study records will be kept as confidential as is possible. No individual identities will be used in any reports or publications resulting from the study. Study information will be coded and kept in locked files at all times. Only study personnel will have access to the files. Individual results will not be shared with personnel of your school site or school district.

While there will be no direct benefit to you from participating in this study, the anticipated benefit of this study is a better understanding of how to provide a better music education for urban students.

There will be no costs to you as a result of taking part in this study, nor will you be reimbursed for your participation in this study.

If you have questions about the research, you may contact me at ███████████. If you have further questions about the study, you may contact the IRBPHS at the University of San Francisco, which is concerned with protection of volunteers in research projects. You

may reach the IRBPHS office by calling (415) 422-6091 and leaving a voicemail message, by e-mailing IRBPHS@usfca.edu, or by writing to the IRBPHS, Department of Psychology, University of San Francisco, 2130 Fulton Street, San Francisco, CA 94117-1080.

PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH IS VOLUNTARY. You are free to decline to be in this study, or to withdraw from it at any point. The ███████████████ School District is aware of this study but does not require that you participate in this research and your decision as to whether or not to participate will have no influence on your present or future status as an employee at ███████████████ Middle School or the ███████████████ School District.

Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,

John Calloway
Graduate Student
University of San Francisco

APPENDIX C

PARTICIPANT/ADMINISTRATOR-COUNSELOR CONSENT FORM

Purpose and Background
John Calloway, a graduate student at the School of Education at the University of San Francisco is doing a study on music education and urban students. The researcher is interested in learning how music is situated at the school. I am being asked to participate because I am an administrator or counselor at the school.

Procedures
If I agree to participate in this study, the following will happen:
1. The researcher John Calloway will interview me for two sessions of less than one hour in length between December 2008 and March 2009 to obtain information about the place for and importance of the music program at ▊▊▊▊▊▊▊, on how students are programmed into music, and my perceptions on students' interests about music at the school. The two interviews with me will be audio recorded by the researcher.

Risks and/or Discomforts
1. I may become uncomfortable or upset during the one-hour interview periods; if this happens, the researcher will attempt to comfort me. If I continue to be upset, the researchers will end the interview.
2. Participation in research may mean a loss of confidentiality. Study records will be kept as confidential as is possible. No individual identities will be used in any reports or publications resulting from the study. Study information will be coded and kept in locked files at all times. Only study personnel will have access to the files.
3. It is possible that some of the interview questions may make me feel uncomfortable, but I am free to decline to answer any questions I do not wish to answer or to stop participation at any time.

Benefits
There will be no direct benefit to me from participating in this study. The anticipated benefit of this study is a better understanding of music programs in an urban middle school so that students can be more successful in music.

Costs/Financial Considerations
There will be no costs to me as a result of taking part in this study.

Payment/Reimbursement
I will not be reimbursed for participation in this study.

Questions
I know I can talk to John Calloway about this study and have my questions answered. If I have further questions about the study, I may call him at ▊▊▊▊▊▊.

If I have any questions or comments about participation in this study, I should first talk with the researcher. If for some reason I do not wish to do this, I may contact the IRBPHS, which is concerned with protection of volunteers in research projects. I may reach the IRBPHS office by calling (415) 422-6091 and leaving a voicemail message, by e-mailing IRBPHS@usfca.edu, or by writing to the IRBPHS, Department of Psychology, University of San Francisco, 2130 Fulton Street, San Francisco, CA 94117-1080.

Consent

I have been given a copy of this consent form to keep. PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH IS VOLUNTARY. I am free to decline to be in this study, or to withdraw from it at any point. My decision as to whether or not to participate in this study will have no influence on my present or future status as an employee in the ██████.

My signature below indicates that I agree to participate in this study.

Subject's Signature   Date of Signature

Signature of Person Obtaining Consent   Date of Signature

APPENDIX D

PARTICIPANT/TEACHER CONSENT FORM

Purpose and Background
John Calloway, a graduate student at the School of Education at the University of San Francisco is doing a study on music education and urban students. The researcher is interested in learning how the music classes meet the needs of the students. I am being asked to participate because I am a teacher working directly with students taking music.

Procedures
If I agree to participate in this study, the following will happen:
1. I will be observed teaching in 6 class sessions between December 2008 and February 2009. The observer will take data using written field notes only.
2. The researcher will interview me for two sessions of less than one hour in length between December 2008 and March 2009 to obtain information about my perceptions of the students, and about the curriculum, methodology and pedagogy that I use with my students. The two interviews with will be audio recorded by the researcher.

Risks and/or Discomforts
1. I may become uncomfortable or upset during the one hour interview periods; if this happens, the researcher will attempt to comfort me. If I continue to be upset, the researchers will end the interview.
2. Participation in research may mean a loss of confidentiality. Study records will be kept as confidential as is possible. No individual identities will be used in any reports or publications resulting from the study. Study information will be coded and kept in locked files at all times. Only study personnel will have access to the files.
3. It is possible that some of the interview questions may make me feel uncomfortable, but I am free to decline to answer any questions I do not wish to answer or to stop participation at any time.

Benefits
There will be no direct benefit to me from participating in this study. The anticipated benefit of this study is a better understanding of strategies used to meet the needs of the students so that they can be successful in music.

Costs/Financial Considerations
There will be no costs to me as a result of taking part in this study.

Payment/Reimbursement
I will not be reimbursed for participation in this study.

Questions
I know I can talk to John Calloway about this study and have my questions answered. If I have further questions about the study, I may call him at ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮.

If I have any questions or comments about participation in this study, I should first talk with the researcher. If for some reason I do not wish to do this, I may contact the IRBPHS, which is concerned with protection of volunteers in research projects. I may reach the IRBPHS office by calling (415) 422-6091 and leaving a voicemail message, by e-mailing IRBPHS@usfca.edu, or by writing to the IRBPHS, Department of Psychology, University of San Francisco, 2130 Fulton Street, San Francisco, CA 94117-1080.

Consent

I have been given a copy of this consent form to keep. PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH IS VOLUNTARY. I am free to decline to be in this study, or to withdraw from it at any point. My decision as to whether or not to participate in this study will have no influence on my present or future status as an employee in the ███████.

My signature below indicates that I agree to have my child participate in this study.

Subject's Signature   Date of Signature

Signature of Person Obtaining Consent   Date of Signature

PARENTAL CONSENT FOR RESEARCH PARTICIPATION FORM

Purpose and Background

John Calloway, a graduate student at the School of Education at the University of San Francisco, is doing a study on music education and urban students. The researcher is interested in learning how the music classes meet the needs of the students. My child is being asked to participate because he/she or she is currently enrolled in music classes at ███████████████ .

Procedures

If I agree to allow my son/daughter to be in this study, the following will happen:

1. My son/daughter will be part of a focus group of six students that will be interviewed twice during lunchtime from December 2008 –February 2009. The focus group interviews will last no longer than 30-40 minutes.

2. My child will be asked about their perceptions of the music class, what type of music they would like to study, and their intentions to study music long term.

Risks and/or Discomforts

1. My child may become uncomfortable or upset during the 30-40 minute interview. If this happens, the researcher will attempt to comfort my child. If my child continues to be upset, the researcher will dismiss my child to the schoolyard to complete the rest of lunchtime.

2. Participation in research may mean a loss of confidentiality. Study records will be kept as confidential as is possible. No individual identities will be used in any reports or publications resulting from the study. Study information will be coded and kept in locked files at all times. Only study personnel will have access to the files.

Benefits

There will be no direct benefit to me or to my child from participating in this study. The anticipated benefit of this study is a better understanding of current music programs and how they contribute to student success in music.

Costs/Financial Considerations

There will be no costs to me or to my child as a result of taking part in this study.

Payment/Reimbursement

Neither my child nor I will be reimbursed for participation in this study.

Questions

I know I can talk to John Calloway about this study and have my questions answered. If I have further questions about the study, I may call him at ███████████ . If I have any questions or comments about participation in this study, I should first talk with the researcher. If for some reason I do not wish to do this, I may contact the IRBPHS, which is concerned with protection of volunteers in research projects. I may reach the IRBPHS office by calling (415) 422-6091 and leaving a voicemail message, by e-mailing IRBPHS@usfca.edu, or by writing to:

IRBPHS, Department of Counseling Psychology
Education Building
University of San Francisco
2130 Fulton Street, San Francisco, CA 94117-1080.

Consent
I have been given a copy of the "Research Subject's Bill of Rights," and I have been given a copy of this consent form to keep. PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH IS VOLUNTARY. I am free to decline to have my child be in this study, or to withdraw my child from it at any point. My decision as to whether or not to have my child participate in this study will have no influence on my child's present or future status as a patient in my pediatrician's office.

My signature below indicates that I agree to allow my child to participate in this study.

_____ _____
Signature of Subject's Parent/Guardian Date of Signature

_____ _____
Signature of Person Obtaining Consent Date of Signature

APPENDIX F

STUDENT ASSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH STUDY

I agree to participate in the study about music classes and activities at ████████ ███.

I understand that my participation in the study will involve me being part of a student focus group consisting of four students total that will be interviewed two times, and that the interviews will be audio recorded.

I understand that my participation in the study is strictly voluntary. Agreeing or not agreeing participate in the study will not affect my school status, grades, or opportunities in any way.

I understand that I may withdraw from the study at any time, even after I begin participating.

I understand that my privacy will be protected in the following way: The school and our real names will not be used in the study. The recordings of the focus group interviews will only be listened by the researcher, John Calloway, myself, or other members of the focus group. In Mr. Calloway's written project, my identity and that of all others and the school itself will be protected by the use of pseudonyms (fake names).

I understand that if I have any questions about this study or my participation in it, I can contact John Calloway through ██████.

- ☐ I agree to participate in the research study about music being conducted by John Calloway

- ☐ I do not agree to participate in the research study about music being conducted by John Calloway

_____   _____
Student Signature   Date

_____
Student Name (please print)

Appendix G

RESEARCH SUBJECTS' BILL OF RIGHTS

The rights below are the rights of every person who is asked to be in a research study. As a research subject, I have the following rights:

(1) To be told what the study is trying to find out.

(2) To be told what will happen to me and whether any of the procedures, drugs, or devices are different from what would be used in standard practice.

(3) To be told about the frequent and/or important risks, side effects, or discomforts of the things that will happen to me for research purposes.

(4) To be told if I can expect any benefit from participating, and, if so, what the benefit might be.

(5) To be told of the other choices I have and how they may be better or worse than being in the study.

(6) To be allowed to ask any questions concerning the study both before agreeing to be involved and during the course of the study.

(7) To be told what sort of medical or psychological treatment is available if any complications arise.

(8) To refuse to participate at all or to change my mind about participation after the study is started; if I were to make such a decision, it will not affect my right to receive the care or privileges I would receive if I were not in the study.

(9) To receive a copy of the signed and dated consent form.

(10) To be free of pressure when considering whether I wish to agree to be in the study.

If I have other questions, I should ask the researcher or the research assistant. In addition, I may contact the Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (IRBPHS), which is concerned with protection of volunteers in research projects. I may reach the IRBPHS by calling (415) 422-6091, by electronic mail at IRBPHS@usfca.edu, or by writing to USF IRBPHS, Department of Counseling Psychology, Education Building, 2130 Fulton Street, San Francisco, CA, 94117 -1080.