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Elementary Music Teachers' Perceptions of the Effect of Budget Reductions on Music Education

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Walden University
2018

Abstract

Elementary Music Teachers' Perceptions of the Effect of Budget Reductions on Music

Education

by

Jimmy Michel

Project Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Walden University

January 2018

Abstract

Since 2007, many U.S. music education programs have been negatively affected by budget reductions at the local, state, and national levels. Although researchers have studied the effect of budget reductions on music education, they have not widely examined the perspectives of teachers who have experienced these reductions. The purpose of this study was to explore elementary music teachers' personal and professional experiences with budget reductions, and the perceptions of how their programs, students, schools, and communities have been affected by the budget reductions. The philosophies of Kodaly and Richards served as a conceptual framework for this qualitative case study. The primary research questions asked participants about their experiences with and perceptions of the effect of budget reductions on music programs at their schools and on their students. Interviews were conducted with 9 elementary music teachers. Data were analyzed using pattern coding to identify key themes. The 6 key themes identified were love for music and teaching music; pride in music programs and curricula; belief in the benefits of music education for all students, especially for low income students; senses of loss; adaptation and coping with loss; and sense of the future. Based on the findings, a professional development program was developed to assist music teachers to learn strategies to support music programs and become effective music education advocates. This project study may foster positive social change by encouraging teachers to collaboratively advocate for music education in communities and devise strategies that will allow for the sharing of scarce resources.

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate my doctoral study to my wife, Hermane. Without your support, this journey would not have been possible. I thank you for the times you encouraged me not to quit when I thought I was losing my mind. Thank you for staying up late watching me, putting up with my stress, and listening to me read my papers even when you were half asleep. Your love made it all possible. You are my queen forever. I also dedicate this doctoral study to my two children, Brandon and Abigail. Thank you for allowing your dad to work. You guys have been so patient and understanding of the times I was not able to give you my undivided attention. I encourage you both to have faith in your ability and to always strive to excel beyond your own expectations. Both of you are my everything. I love you.

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Section 1: The Problem

The Local Problem

Providing music education in elementary schools has become an issue in many school districts across the United States. District administrators responded in different ways to the reduced budgets they experienced after the 2009 recession, which led to less tax income and state and federal funding for U.S. schools (National Arts Education Association, 2010). Some district administrators reduced music education in their elementary schools while others eliminated music education all together (National Arts Education Association, 2010). Before 2009, music education was almost universally available to students in U.S. primary schools, and almost all public elementary schools offered music instruction on a weekly basis during the school year (Carey et al., 1995).

The arts may reach students who are not otherwise engaged and uniquely bridge the broad spectrum of learning styles (Carey et al., 1995). Since 2010, the support for music in U.S schools has become a function of community values and the availability of funds and resources (West, 2012). Many music teachers have experienced budget cuts, which have affected their jobs, their music programs, their communities, and their students. Researchers have studied some aspects related to the effects of these budget reductions on music education such as West (2012). However, the perspectives of teachers who have experienced the reductions to my knowledge have not been studied. To address this gap in knowledge, I explored elementary music teachers' experiences with and perceptions of the effect of budget reductions on music programs at their schools, on their communities, and on their low economic status students.

During the 2010-2011 school year, music education was reduced or eliminated by school administrators in many U.S. schools due to budget reductions and other issues related to funding and resources (Caldwell, 2011). Caldwell (2011) predicted that this elimination or reduction of music education in elementary public schools would have a negative impact on students, employees, and school communities. Although those who can afford it can obtain music instruction in the private sector, public schools have proven themselves to be an effective way to cultivate musical skills for all children who wish to take advantage of the experience.

District administrators across the state of Florida cut music education entirely from some of their elementary schools. Administrators at other elementary schools with more stable budgets allowed students to have music education for only half of the school year (Rockwell, 2011). For example, in Broward County School district, 44 elementary schools cut art programs, and 20 other elementary schools eliminated music programs. Duval County reduced art, music, and physical education classes and laid off the teachers of these classes (Rockwell, 2011). Indian River County cut 15 art and music teachers, and Pinellas County eliminated six elementary music teachers, six art teachers, and 37 elementary media specialists (Rockwell, 2011). Miami Dade County cut after-school music programs for up to 4,500 children (Rockwell, 2011). These responses by school districts showed the wide-spread nature and effect of budget cuts in Florida.

In California, school administrators eliminated arts programs and increased class sizes to survive budget cuts (Yamamoura, 2012). After 344 schools' positions had been eliminated and class sizes increased, parents in Beaverton Oregon asked the school board

to increase their taxes in order to restore arts programs in their children's schools (Owen, 2012). Given the potential impact of reducing or eliminating music education in elementary schools on teachers, students, schools, and communities, the perspectives and perceptions of music teachers are of significant importance. Eliciting music teachers' in-depth understanding of the importance of music education, and drawing from their experiences with budget reductions may shed some light on the impact that budget reductions have had on music educators and on music education at their schools.

Rationale

Evidence of the Problem at the Local Level

School district administrators in Florida had to make some difficult choices regarding whether to continue offering art education in schools. Many arts teachers in Florida were surplused while others with additional certification were assigned to teach core subjects (Rockwell, 2011). Due to loss of funding from the federal government and the state, district administrators had to choose ways to cut their budgets; choices included furloughs, layoffs for teachers, and cuts to popular after school programs, including the arts. In the southeastern school districts I studied, over 1400 teachers lost their jobs, and salaries of 400 administrators, principals and assistant principal were reduced (Rockwell, 2011). The administrators at one school district recommended that all non-core teachers such as music teachers consider obtaining additional certification in core subjects such as reading, math, and science by April 2013 (United Teachers of Dade, 2013). During 2011 and the budget sequestration in 2013, arts educators in these southeastern counties were faced with threats of additional budget cuts, and were uncertain about whether they

would continue to retain their jobs. They were also concerned about the future of arts education (including music education) in public schools (United Teachers of Dade, 2013).

Although the Florida legislature had approved more funding for the Miami-Dade school district in the 2012-2013 school year, revenues for the 2013-2014 school year declined, which left the district in a budget shortfall (Carvalho, 2014). According to the superintendent of schools in one of the counties I studied, budget cuts affected parent involvement programs. On March 24, 2011, under the leadership of the Miami-Dade County Council of PTAs/ PTSAs, Florida students, parents, educators, and concerned citizens joined forces to protest budget cuts to public education and to demand education reform (Feldman, 2011).

One of the school districts studied has experienced several cuts from its budget which have impacted programs including music education. Also, its public elementary schools have yet to recover from the educational services disruptions that resulted from the economic recession of 2009. In January 2014, the superintendent of that district, in a memorandum sent to the members of the South Florida congressional delegation, discussed how the federal budget restored most sequestration cuts to education for the fiscal year 2013-2014 (Carvalho, 2014).

Arts programs in schools are routinely one of the first programs cut by school budget committees to save money and resources, despite research that shows that there are significant advantages to offering arts programs to students in public schools (Colt, 2012). Researchers have found that, when young children participate in music activities,

they enhance their language, social-emotional, and cognitive development (Colt,, 2012; Helmrich, 2010).

Arts education not only helps students to do well academically but also to achieve more in their adult lives, careers, and families, as well as have emotional well-being (Fiske, 2000). Students with music education training have shown positive results in standardized tests, as compared to students who have little or no music involvement (Helmrich, 2010). United States Department of Education data from 2010 showed that students who were involved in band and orchestra demonstrated higher levels of math proficiency by Grade 12. Researchers found a correlation between music instruction and academic achievement (Fiske, 2000; Helmrich, 2010). This association, in turn, provides educators with a strong motivation to preserve music education in schools.

Evidence of the Problem from the Professional Literature

According to Reilly (2013), school districts across the United States were facing major budget shortfalls, and many were cutting back on already depleted art and music programs. Under the spending allocations approved by the U.S. House panel, education and health experienced the deepest cuts with a combined 19% reduction for the 2013 post sequester benchmark. In 2013, the federal budget known as the sequestration took effect (Reilly, 2013). Many school music programs were affected, and many arts teachers lost their jobs due to budget reductions (Reilly, 2013). Because the schools received reduced funding, they experienced larger class sizes, fewer staff, and fewer technology upgrades (Covert, 2013). Larger class sizes, fewer staff, and fewer technology upgrades have had a negative impact on arts education and after school programs such as drama clubs,

ensembles and bands (Covert, 2013). Such effects were far reaching and widespread, and many facilities, teachers, and students have continued to feel the impact (Covert, 2013).

Rabkin and Hedberg (2011) found that fewer than half of adults reported having ever participated in arts lessons in school. This represented a decline of 65% since the 1980s and was a concern for the health of the U.S. arts economy. Results from a study conducted by Baker, Gratama, Freed, and Watts (2009) showed that 33% of Washington state elementary school students received less than 1 hour a week of music instruction, and almost 10% of their elementary schools offered no arts instruction. These findings indicate the decline of music education in U.S. public schools. In Florida, many state arts agencies have experienced budget reductions while schools across the country have reduced their arts programs in the wake of major funding cuts by state governments (Hanover, 2014).

The Florida State Agency for the Arts in 2012 had less than $1 million for all state arts activities including arts education, down from a high of $39 million in 2012 (Beth, 2013). Many public schools in low-income areas do not offer any kind of arts education, and the lack of arts instruction disproportionately affects low-income neighborhoods (Yee, 2014). There is increasing evidence that students in schools that are more challenged academically and financially often receive the fewest arts opportunities. Andreassen (2013) found that students' socioeconomic status have an influence on achievement as well as on the educational opportunities that a child is offered. Andreassen emphasized the importance of music education and extracurricular activities and their effectiveness in promoting academic achievement and noncognitive skills

among disadvantaged students. Andreassen concluded that music education, due to its benefits, may be an important way to interrupt the cycle of poverty and low quality schooling for students from low socioeconomic backgrounds.

According to the United States Department of Education (2011), more than 40% of low-income schools have not received a proportional share of state and local funds. Andreassen (2013) stated that schools that have been identified as needing improvement and that enroll a higher percentage of minority students often report a lower percentage of time spent in arts activities. Schools that are in impoverished areas lack the financial resources to foster high quality teaching and learning and arts programs that may improve the educational experience for low socioeconomic level students (Andreassen, 2013).

A study on New City high schools showed that schools with less than 50% graduation rates offered the least access to arts education when compared to other schools with better graduation rates (Nagel, 2006). Arts education, which includes music, was classified as a core subject (No Child Left Behind [NCLB], 2001). The steady decline of arts education in public schools was due primarily to the penalty system of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, which focused on performance in math and reading, with no requirements that students achieve standards in arts education. However, the education law, Every Student Succeed Act (ESSA), which was signed by President Obama on December 10, 2015 includes music education as being part of a "Well-Rounded Education." ESSA also gives states more flexibility in how they allocate resources to low-performing schools and set accountability measures than before (National Arts Education Association, 2015). These changes will require that arts education advocates

lobby state legislators to ensure that federal funds make their way to eligible arts programs (National Art Education Association, 2015).

Cutting art and music education programs in schools has been a nationwide trend in the United States (Bridgman, 2013). Serious implications arise when the arts are removed from the education of children, according to some experts (see Catterall 1998; Kenny 2004; Nagel 2006). The arts help stimulate the creative mind of a child and instill a sense of pride and self-worth in the child (Fiske, 2000). Catterall (1998) demonstrated that students, especially those from low socioeconomic backgrounds, who experienced high level of arts participation outperformed students with a low level of arts participation on every measure. According to Cattterall, arts participation is highly correlated with socioeconomic status, which is the most significant predictor of academic performance.

Catterall (1998) concluded that students from low-income backgrounds who had experienced high arts participation made positive academic gains when compared to similar students with low arts participation. The academic performance of students from low-income backgrounds was lower when compared to that of students from high-income backgrounds. Over 80% of low-income eighth grade students who were involved heavily in the arts earned mostly As and Bs; the percentage for students who were not heavily involved in the arts was 67.2% (Catterall, 1998). The study also showed that arts education not only helped low-income students to do well academically but that the heavily arts involved students achieved more in their adult lives, careers, families, and emotional well-being (Catterall, 1998).

Many researchers have found that involvement in music leads to positive personal, social, and motivational effects, and that music education reduces discipline problems and helps improve the overall quality of young persons' lives (Catterall 1998; Catterall et al., 2012; Darrow, Novak, Swedberg, Horton, & Rice 2009). Another study revealed that students involved in the arts were more self-confident and better able to express their ideas (Arts Education Partnership, 2011). The Arts Education Partnership found a reduction in aggressive and anti-social behavior as well as an increase in pro-social behavior among students who were involved in the arts. A similar study by Hallam (2010) showed that students who play an instrument acquire certain social and emotional skills necessary to be a contributing member of society, including discipline, collaboration, patience, and motivation. The arts create a supportive environment that promotes acceptance of constructive criticism and safely allows students to take risks (Lake, 2013). These researchers have reported positive associations between music education and increased abilities in non-musical domains in children.

Even though researchers have found a correlation between music education and children's development, budget reductions in schools across the United States have reduced or eliminated music education curriculum from public schools (Reilly, 2013). Music education continues to be a controversial topic for many teachers, administrators, and community leaders. This is partially due to the lack of perceived direct benefit from music and partially due to the lack of understanding that music, on its own merit, should be accepted as a fundamental aspect of elementary education worthy of study (Bridgman, 2013).

Definition of Terms

The project study includes terms associated with arts education and instructional programs for the purpose of helping students learn to perform, create, and respond to music. The following terms are defined to explain their meanings in the context of this study.

Arts education: Learning and instruction based upon the visual and tangible arts which includes performing arts such as music, dance, theater, and visual arts (USLegal, 2014).

Arts specialist: An education professional with a teaching certificate in an arts discipline, such as visual arts, music, dance, or drama/theatre, who provides separate instruction in a specific arts discipline (National Center for Education Statistics, 2014).

Kodaly method: Named for Zoltan Kodaly (1882-1967) this term refers to a sequential system of singing which leads into the understanding of musical notation by teaching children to read and write music (Seeman, 2008).

Music education: Music education is a field of study associated with the teaching and learning of music that often begins during the formative years of child development (Music Educators National Conference, 2013).

Music instruction: An instructional program for the purpose of helping students learn to perform, create, and respond to (appreciate) music. Performance studies include voice, choir, and instrumental studies such as guitar, piano, band, and orchestra. Music creation studies include music improvisation, arranging, and composition (National Center for Education Statistics, 2014)

Significance of the Study

Findings from my study contribute to the growing literature about music education in elementary schools, and shed some light on how elementary music education has been affected by budget reductions. My study has the potential to inform decision makers in Florida about the effect of reducing music education on students and perhaps will influence decision makers to adequately fund music education.

Music education is not only important for children, but is also important for parents and members in the community (Hinkle, 2013). Hinkle (2013) argued that in some districts, music performances/concerts are the only school events that parents and members of the community attend. According to Hinkle, arts programs provide opportunities to engage parents in their students' schools in ways that traditional academics might not, and the arts provide an area where parents do not feel handicapped in assisting their children because of a lack of knowledge. Arts in schools provide an opportunity for the parents to come to the school and experience what their children are learning, which can also provide a gateway for parental involvement in other areas and create an atmosphere for more parent-teacher interaction in all areas (Hinkle, 2013).

Providing adequate music education for all children is a social benefit (Hinkle, 2013). Research has found that learning music facilitates learning other subjects and enhances skills that children inevitably use in other areas (Hinkle, 2013; Reilly, 2013). Music is a part of the fabric of society, and every child must have an education in music (National Association for Music Education, 2013). Secondary students who participated in band and orchestra reported the lowest lifetime and current use of all substances

(alcohol, tobacco, drug abuse) (Music Educators National Conference, 2002). A study by

the American Arts Alliance in October 1996, showed that the arts create jobs, increase

the tax base, boost tourism, spur growth in related businesses such as hotels, restaurants,

and printing, and improve the overall quality of life for cities and towns on a national

level. According to the American Arts Alliance, society at large benefits when students

are provided music education (Music Educators National Conference, 2002).

Research Question(s)

The focus of this study was to address elementary music teachers' experiences

with and perceptions of the effect of budget reductions on music programs at their

schools, on their communities, and on their low socioeconomic status students. The

outcome of this research study addressed the following broad question: What are

elementary music teachers' experiences with and perceptions of the effect of budget

reductions on music programs at their schools and on their students who are of low

socioeconomic status? A related question for this study was: How are elementary music

teachers coping with the effect of budget reductions on their music programs and on their

students and communities?

Review of the Literature

The literature review focuses on the importance of music education for

elementary level students and schools. It provides a summary of past and current

scholarly research related to the problem and the research question. The literature review

is organized into the following topics: conceptual framework, the history of music

education in the United States, the importance of music education to students' academic achievement, and best practices in elementary music education.

In order to conduct the review of literature, I accessed scholarly online search sites, online government websites, and the Walden University library to search for literature relating to music education and the impact of budget reductions on music programs in elementary public schools. Scholarly databases included the following: Education Resources Information Center (ERIC), Thoreau, and Education Research Complete. I used the following search terms to locate relevant research and professional literature: *Budget cuts, budget reductions for music education, music education in America, history of music education, early childhood music development program, Arts education in low income areas, quality music education in elementary schools, music theorists, music philosophers, importance of music education in elementary schools.* I searched the literature until the search failed to locate new possible sources, indicating that the literature search was complete.

Conceptual Framework

The underlying framework for this study was based on the work of Kodaly and Richards, two educators/philosophers/psychologists who argued that music education was necessary for the early development of children. Kodaly (1965) believed that music is one aspect of universal human knowledge and that music education must begin at the kindergarten and primary grades. After observing his pupils for several decades, Kodaly concluded that all normal people who can hear and speak are capable of developing an ear for music if they begin to receive musical training in kindergarten or during the

primary grades. Formal music education is essential to every child's development.

Music education must begin in primary and elementary education and that schools must

provide music education to children (Kodaly, 1965).

The Kodaly Method places the children at the center of the music learning

experience (Kodaly, 1965). According to Kodaly, children develop through a number of

sensitive periods during which they are particularly receptive to certain types of stimuli.

Kodaly argued that the kindergarten-age child learns primarily by imitation. The songs

and dances children learn by imitation in primary schools are suitable personal music

experiences for them. These collections of music experiences during the ages of 4 to 11

are the basis for further music knowledge later in the lives of these children. The

movement patterns in the singing and dancing games promote motor development and

help develop coordinated movement and a sense of balance in children. Kodaly (1965)

believed that a good music education is a basic right for every child and concluded that

everything such as reading, math, science and other subjects can be taught through music

and games. The Kodaly Method connects music education and academic achievement

and asserts that a child's education may not be complete unless it includes the music and

other arts such as dance (Kodaly, 1965).

Kodaly's educational philosophy was further developed in the United States by

Richards (1964) who wrote the first American introduction to Kodaly's innovative ideas

for music education. In 1968, Richards took a new direction and developed a new way to

teach music. This new direction eventually was titled Education Through Music (ETM).

Like Kodaly, Richards stated that all aspects of education can be enhanced by music

arguing that song and musical games can create real life situations where children can learn effortlessly and that through these games and activities enhanced by music, students can be successful academically and in life. Richards (1968) concluded that ETM has the possibility of influencing the educational system so that children may gain optimum benefits from school, and society may gain renewed vitality from the next generation.

History of Music Education in the United States

This subsection of the literature review describes the evolution of public school music education in the United States, and attempts to account as far as possible for the direction this evolution has taken. According to Mark (1996), one needs to study music history in order to understand where music education has come from and how it has evolved through time. Mark (1996) argued that music history is closely related to music theory, harmony, form structures, stylistics, and aesthetics which are all aspects of music education that can contribute to children's development.

Music was not always part of the school curriculum (Mark, 1996). Music education was first offered by churches and within families with musical backgrounds (Mark, 1996). According to Mark, families that were more middle and upper class could afford to hire music teachers for their children. Children of the lower classes had little opportunity to study music. When music education was added to the school curriculum it became available to all children, not just to those of the middle and upper classes. Removing music from the school curriculum will send it back to the families and churches, and students from lower economic status would be affected the most.

Early period. In the early history of the United States, there was little time for music and there was little need for music education in schools for most of the settlers. Any serious cultivation of music was not a part of early settlers' lives. Their primary everyday business was that of survival, building homes, cultivating the soil, and providing for the bare necessities of life, which occupied nearly all their daily hours (Birge, 1955). As the nation began to take shape, music education began to find its way into society, offered by churches and within middle and class families which could afford to provide tutors and instruments.

18th century. Toward the close of the seventeenth century, singing in the church was in a crude state. Music was unstructured and unaccompanied by instruments, and the congregation repeated after the minister's tunes, which was not a successful practice (Birge, 1955). John Tufts who was a church minister who wanted to help people of all ages learn to sing wrote the first manual used in music education in 1721. The manual focused on the Psalm verses, and on congregational singing. Soon after, many congregations began to use the manual creating singing schools which, according to Birge (1955), laid a foundation for music education. After the 1721 publication by Tufts, singing-school teachers continued to work with few regulations. Music instruction was left to the discretion of the teacher. After music was accepted as a formal subject in the Boston public schools in Massachusetts in 1838, a more defined curriculum was developed for music (Branscome, 2005). Growing interest in European artistic music helped set the stage for Mason who became the most important figure in American music education in the 19th century (Kenee, 2010).

19ᵗʰ century. During the 19th century, pioneers of music education such as Tuffs, Mason, and Woodbrige, wrote several important books that paved the way for teaching music in schools (Birge 1955). These music books helped improve church singing and led to the formation of singing schools and singing societies. The difference between church singing and the singing-school was that the singing school gave intensive attention to reading music notation in addition to practice in singing and church singing did not (Birge, 1955).

Woodbridge, one of the pioneers in music education in 19th century suggested that singing should be taught in school and that taxpayers should fund it (Branscome, 2005). Woodbridge's argument paved the way for the inclusion of singing in the elementary school music curriculum. Mason who continued the work of Woodbridge was perhaps the most influential contributor to music education in the United States during the early 1800s. At the age of 13, Mason began to organize community choirs. At age16, Mason was writing his own materials for these choirs. Mason organized conventions and workshops to train potential music educators. In 1832, Mason and Webb formed the Boston Academy of Music with the intention of teaching singing, theory and methods of teaching music to future music educators (Birge, 1955). Although the school system was not ready to devote the time that music education would require, Mason was committed to changing the public school education system with the goal of adding music to the general curriculum.

Funding for music education has always been difficult to come by since music education was first introduced to the United States public schools. Mayor Sam Elliott

authorized music education in Boston public schools in 1836. Unfortunately, this advancement failed due to lack of funding for these music programs. In 1837, funding for public school's music programs was denied by the United States government which led Mason to teach music at Hawes School without salary from 1837 until 1838 when funding was granted for public school music programs (Birge, 1955).

After acceptance of music as part of the curriculum in Boston Public Schools, Mason developed music textbooks organized as a structured graded series. Mason's hard work and dedication to music earned him the title Father of Music Education (Branscome, 2005). Countless other advocates built on Mason's success in cities, towns, and villages as the practice of including music in the curriculum spread across the country (Mark, 2002).

According to Branscome (2005), music education continued to focus on singing and reading and notating music for the following hundred years. In 1871, Benjamin Jepson published "*The Elementary Music Reader*", followed by Orlando Blackman in 1873 who published "*The Graded-School Singer*" (Brandscome, 2005). By the end of the 19th century, music education had become universal in the nation's schools (Kenee, 2010).

20th century. The beginning of modern public school music education came when educators began to develop more effective curricula, methods, and materials to prepare students for citizenship in a rapidly evolving society (Birge, 1955). In 1934, the National Association for Music Education (NAfME) was created for the establishment of music education as a profession, for the promotion and guidance of music study as an

integral part of the school curriculum, and for the development of the National Standards for Arts Education (National Association for Music Education, 2013). The National Association for Music Education purpose was to ensure that every student have access to a well-balanced, comprehensive, and high quality program of music instruction taught by qualified teachers (National Association for Music Education, 2013).

Musicology expanded significantly as a field of study (Keene, 2010). In elementary schools in European countries, children learned to play musical instruments such as keyboards and recorders, and to sing in school choirs and learn about the elements of music. Elementary Music education in Europe became the model for music education in America's elementary schools that introduced instrumental music and school choirs (Keene, 2010).

The early twentieth century was a time of great expansion and development of music education in United States public schools. Colleges that offered degrees spanning four years included music in their programs. The rise of music taught in high schools encouraged the creation of marching bands and school orchestras (Kenne, 2010). Many colleges and universities began to offer endowments, grants and scholarships to promising music students. Some other notable developments in music education in the 20th century included federally supported development of arts education focusing on quality music classroom literature, federal financial support and recognition of the value music has in society, and a call for educational reform and accountability in all curricular subjects which led to the National Standards for Music Education first developed by the National Association for Music Education (Keene, 2010).

The curriculum for music education in America was greatly affected by the organization of the 1967 symposium at the Tanglewood Music Center which addressed the purpose of music in education and society (Branscome, 2005). Many music educators realized that their profession was not coherently adapting to the dramatic societal changes of the 1960's, and that if music education was to continue in American public schools, there needed to be structured pedagogical guidance (Branscome, 2005). The symposium clarified music educational practices and theories and provided direction for meeting the changing needs of music education during that time period. According to Branscome (2005), "The Tanglewood Symposium concluded that music education should include music of all time periods, cultures, genres, including teenage music, and that the music program should emphasize the substance and structure of music through the skills of singing, playing instruments, reading, listening, moving, and composing" (p. 15).

The battle for civil rights, and the affirmation of equality for all people in America, brought drastic changes in public school classrooms, many of which had not dealt with multicultural or multiracial student population (Mark, 1996). After Tanglewood, The *Silver Burdett Music* textbook series appeared. The *Silver Burdett Music* textbook series presented many features not yet evidenced in music texts, possibly due to the Tanglewood, the Youth Music Symposium, and the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s and the early 1970s. Those books contained illustrations showing children of varying ethnicity, when previously only Caucasian children had been included. The pictures also depicted children playing instruments, singing, playing song games, and enjoying their experiences with music (Brandscome, 2005). According to Mark (1996),

the silver Burdett series provided developmentally appropriate music learning activities and engaged all students in the music making process.

The most significant music education project in which the federal government has participated is the establishment of the National Standards for Arts Education in 1994. The National Standards for Arts Education were developed to provide a guide and resource to states and school districts that wanted to develop their own standards. Those Standards defined what students should know and be able to do in the elementary music classroom.

In the 1987-88 academic year, music education celebrated 150 years of music in the public schools of the United States (Thiel, 1989). Andreassen (2013) argued that although there are opportunity gaps in American society, students across the nation, regardless of their socioeconomic backgrounds have the opportunity to study music at their schools. A hundred years later, music educators now prepare musicians and theorists, and create meaningful musical experiences, provide exposure to good music and enhance learning in the elementary setting (Brandscome, 2005).

Importance of Music Education to Students' Academic Achievement

Many studies have shown a positive correlation between music education and student academic achievement (Fiske, 2000; Gouzouasis, Guhn, & Kishor 2007; McLelland, 2005). Gouzouasis, Guhn, and Kishor (2007), found that students who participated in school musical activities attended school more regularly, and had a higher grade point average than those who did not. According to Campbell and Campbell, (1996), elementary school students taught with songs and games showed an IQ advantage

of 10 to 20 points over those taught without songs and games. By the age of 15, those same students developed higher reading and math scores when compared to their counterparts who were not exposed to music. Campbell and Campbell (1996) argued that music could have altered and increased students' brain functions to make the necessary connections for higher order of thinking.

Research shows a correlation between music education and academic performance (Fiske, 2000; Gouzouasis et al., 2007). According to Fiske (2000), music education enhances students' reading and math performance. Fiske (2000) concluded that students who participated in music programs were less likely to draw unfounded conclusions about what they read in the classroom than those who did not participate in music programs. McLelland (2005) showed that reading and math performance of fifth grade students who participated in music activities was higher than those who did not participate. The study of music provides learners of all ages with the opportunity to realize long-term intellectual, social, and creative benefits (Royal Conservatory of Music (2015).

Courey, Balogh, Siker, and Paik (2012), examined the effectiveness of using music notation to teach basic fraction concepts to third grade students attending a multicultural mixed socioeconomic public school setting and compared students' outcomes by analyzing students' performances on a music notation test, a fraction concepts test, and a fraction computation worksheet. Courey et al. (2012) concluded that students who came to instruction with less knowledge of fractions responded well to the notation instruction and produced posttest scores similar to their higher achieving peers.

This study showed that lower achieving students with knowledge about music notation can perform as well with fractions as their higher achieving peers (Courey et al., 2012).

Ormrod (2000) found that the arts bring about a positive school climate which in turn motivates students to want to be in school. Ormrod argued that music education has proven to strengthen a collaborative atmosphere and to create a sense of community in schools. Many school leaders argued that music education motivates and encourages students to stay in school (Nagel, 2006).

Catterall (2012) showed that arts education can significantly boost students' involvement in schools. Several other studies show that students who participated in music education and arts activities are motivated and encouraged to do well in other academic subjects (Baltimore, 2011; Darling, 2004; Kincheloe & Steinberg, 2007). Johnson (2013), revealed that school children exposed to drama, music and dance are often more proficient at reading, writing, and math. Darling (2004) found a small but consistent correlation between time spent on extracurricular activities and higher grades for students who participated in music education. The 2006 Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum study on arts education showed a link between arts education and improved literacy skills (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 2007). LaJevic (2013) found that integrating arts with other subjects can help raise student academic achievement levels.

The United States Department of Education, in a large-scale study, showed that students with high levels of arts participation academically outperformed those students with little or no arts participation on every measure (Catterrall, 1998). Darrow et al. (2009) investigated the effect of participating in a Music Mentoring Program on the self-

esteem and attitudes of at-risk students. Darrow et al. (2009) concluded that music participation in any form may assist in improving students' self-esteem, although specific interventions may need to be longer in duration than that of the study.

A study by the National Association for Music Education (2013) found that music education facilitates learning in other subjects and enhances skills that children use in other areas. According to the study, a music-rich experience for children of singing, listening and moving is beneficial to students as they progress into more formal learning. The study concluded that music education is vital to student academic achievement (National Association for Music Education, 2013). This subsection of the literature review discussed that not only do student who study music develop musical abilities, they receive benefits that extend to other academic areas, such as math, reading, science and social studies. Socioeconomic status has a large influence on the educational opportunities that a child is offered and low-economic status children are less likely to experience music education even though music education is beneficial to low-income children (Andreassen, 2013).

Best Practices in Elementary Music Education

Best teaching practices in the elementary music classroom involve a student-centered classroom with an environment that includes culturally responsive teaching techniques to reach every student, and takes into account differences in learning styles and home environment, and where the teacher takes direct responsibility for each child's musical growth (Armstrong, n.d). Best practices in elementary music education include

the necessity for a qualified music educator, resources, adequate time, and quality curriculum and pedagogy (Armstrong, n.d).

Who should teach music. Research shows that music specialists who teach music must have knowledge of music history, music theory, and have acquired performance skills in some area of music such as voice and/or instrumentation (Hash, 2010). School districts have responded to that requirement by hiring music specialists. The National Center for Education Statistics reported that 94% of public elementary schools in the United States that provided music education employed full time or part time certified specialists (Hash, 2010). Findings from Hash (2010) showed that only 11% of schools indicated that classroom teachers were involved in delivering music instruction with the help of volunteers and other faculty members.

General classroom teachers are non-specialist music teachers and should not be teaching music. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, many schools with a lack of funding for music education recommended that their classroom teachers deliver music instruction to their students. General classroom teachers do not feel comfortable teaching music as a subject and believe that music specialists rather than classroom teachers should be responsible for music instruction (Hash, 2010). Hash (2010) argued that some classroom teachers will not do an adequate job teaching music because many do not feel responsible for or capable of doing so. Griffin and Montgomery (2007) argued that music specialists are responsible for state and national learning standards in music and that students should be learning by doing and teachers that are not music specialists are ill-prepared to place the requisite focus on performance.

Music specialists are trained professionals with the pedagogical tools to help students learn to express their personal stories through music (Benedict, 2006).

Resources for teaching music. Teaching resources come in many shapes and sizes, but they all have in common the ability to support student learning (Right, 2014). Some of the most important resources for the elementary music classroom include professional resources for the teacher and classroom resources for the students.

Professional resources. Professional resources for the elementary music teacher include membership in professional and educational associations dedicated to the improvement of music education and to meeting the needs of music teachers. Other needed professional resources include effective teacher professional development to help strengthen curriculum, improve music assessment, or help teachers learn ways to better support students' music learning (National Association for Music Education, 2014).

Classroom resources. The elementary music classroom should have a variety of musical instruments that students learn to play accompanied by music Cds, books, and other digital equipment that are suitable for the elementary level age group (Shirk, 2014). Classroom resources have a life span and will need repair and/or replacement. Adequate funding needs to be available for this purpose.

Pedagogy and curriculum. The National Standards for Music Education (2010) has established grade level expectations for music educators to achieve in music classrooms. The association has mandated that elementary level classroom activities include the following components:

- singing, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music;

- performing on instruments, alone and with others a varied repertoire of music;

- improvising melodies, variations, and accompaniments;

- composing and arranging music with specific guidelines;

- reading and notating music;

- listening to, analyzing, and describing music;

- evaluating music and music performances;

- understanding the relationships between music, the other arts, and disciplines outside the arts; and

- understanding music in relation to history and culture (National Association for Music Education, 2010).

The National Standards for Music Education also has unified music educators across the United States in its mission of providing quality music education to students (National Association for Music Education, 2013). Although the standards remain highly contested by some educators, they provide guidelines for teachers to follow during music instruction. Released in 1994, the overall aim of the standards was to improve music education, and improve student's knowledge of the elements of music (National Association for Music Education, 2013).

In 2009, the all-state-led effort to develop the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) was launched by state leaders and governors, who, according to the developers, recognized the value of consistent, real-world learning goals and launched the effort to ensure all students graduate high school prepared for college, career, and life (Common Core State Standards, 2014). The CCSS is a series of learning standards in English,

language arts and math, designed to prepare students by teaching skills necessary for college and the workforce of the future (Foust, 2013). According to Foust, music teachers do not need to completely remake existing music curricula to meet the Common Core Standards. Foust argued that music educators are already meeting the standards by doing much of the learning outlined in the CCSS, and that music educators should simply look for key words and activities that apply to CCSS.

Under the new Common Core Standards, teachers of all subjects, including the music teacher will be responsible in providing literacy support to their students. For example, the CCSS call for students to be able to interpret words and phrases as they are used in text. In relation to music, notation is words that can be interpreted for both instrumental and choral students. Music teachers will therefore have to encourage written analysis and music projects that show higher level thinking skills in addition to performance and technical skills.

In June 2014, The National Coalition for Core Arts Standards (NCCAS) released the 2014 National Core Arts Standards for public schools. The NCCAS argued that the new national core music standards go beyond outlining the skills that are the traditional emphasis of music classrooms. The standards clarify the purpose of music education, which is to foster independent musicianship that will enable students to continue their involvement in music beyond graduation (National Association for Music Education, 2014). According to NCCAS, the new National Core Arts Standards emphasize "big ideas" intended to guide curriculum development and instructional practices that will pave the way for arts literacy for all students. Such big ideas involve:

- Creating: Conceiving and developing new artistic ideas and work, performing, responding, and connecting

- Performing: Performing (dance, music, theatre). Realizing artistic ideas and work through interpretation and presentation.

- Responding: Understanding and evaluating how the arts convey meaning.

- Connecting: Relating artistic ideas and work with personal meaning and external context.

The overall aim of the new standards is to affirm the place of arts education in a balanced core curriculum, support the 21st century needs of students and teachers, and help ensure that all students are college and career ready (National Association for Music Education, 2014). After the release of the new standards, the National Association for Music Education began working on professional development and other supports to help music teachers take full advantage of the ideas spelled out in the standards (National Association for Music Education, 2013).

Many music educators have written about pedagogy for music education (Abrahams, 2005; Foust, 2013; Ipatenco, 2013; Shirk, 2016). According to Abrahams (2005), music educators should acknowledge that students enter the classroom with some prior knowledge from their life experiences. Discussing important principles that define critical pedagogy for music education, Abrahams (2005) described how music educators should acknowledge that students enter the classroom with some prior knowledge from their life experiences. Teaching is a conversational exchange of information between the teacher and the student, and the music teacher should relate school music to the music in

students' personal lives for students to feel empowered by students' knowledge. Music education broadens the student's view of reality and empowers students to engage in music activities while being transformative and political (Abrahams, 2005).

Ipatenco (2013) explained that students should be exposed to different types of music which can help them learn about and understand other cultures and lifestyles. Allowing students to research and understand different cultures through the lens of music will bring a new understanding of each culture. The arts can teach a wealth of understanding about what is important to people of different cultures, and that it is important for teachers to teach their students songs from different cultures and explain to them the meaning behind the songs (Ipatenco, 2013).

According to Hoffer (1988), music should be part of a daily curriculum and integrated throughout many of the subject areas. All students should be exposed to music education regardless of race, culture, gender. Hoffer (1988) argued that music spans the gaps between culture, genders, and prejudice and that music can produce emotion in everyone. For example, the integration of music into the history curriculum allows students to feel the mood of that period by the feeling that music creates within them (Hoffer, 1988).

While the National Standards for Music Education presents the essential content that should be included in elementary school music education, elementary music educators move well beyond the concepts listed in the standards by providing community performances throughout the school year (NAfME, 2014). Elementary music educators provide several music programs such as choral concerts, ensemble performances, band and orchestra concerts, and other cultural activities to the community. Such programs

provide students opportunities to take pride in their development of musical expertise

(NAfME, 2014).

Adequate time for music education. The amount of time spent in the music

classroom is crucial to the musical development of young children. Kenney (2004),

argued that children need time and freedom to explore and listen, and that they learn by

constructing knowledge through their interactions with the music classroom environment.

According to the United States Department of Education, 93% of the elementary schools

that offered music to students, provided music instruction at least once a week (National

Center for Education Statistics, 2014).

The United States Department of Education stated that elementary school students

spend an average of 45 minutes to an hour in their music classroom each week. Research

has not appeared to address the time issue, and neither did the National Music

Association provide any recommendation for how much time students should spend in

music classrooms. A survey conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics

(2014) showed that the amount of time students spend in academic learning in a subject is

indicative of the level of achievement schools expect of the students. According to Jez

and Wassmer (2013), more time allotted for instruction results in higher academic

achievement, especially for disadvantaged students. The amount of time students should

spend in the music classroom is left to the discretion of school districts and

administrators.

Summary of Literature Review

The literature review briefly outlined the history of music education in the United States and discussed the importance of music education to students' academic achievement and presented best practices in elementary music education. The history of music education in the United States focused on the early development of music education in the United States, music education in the 20th Century, music education from the 1960 and after. The importance of music education to students' academic achievement focused on multiple studies that have shown a positive relationship between music education and academic achievement. The discussion of best practices in elementary music education focused on the necessity that music be taught by a qualified music educator, that resources for music education be provided, that quality curriculum and pedagogy be implemented and that adequate time for music education be provided.

<center>**Implications**</center>

This study provides an understanding of how music teachers are coping with budget reductions, how their programs are being affected and the impact of such changes on their students and communities. The results of this study can be used to create a professional development plan to help music teachers learn strategies to support their music programs, learn strategies for teaching with limited resources, and learn how to share resources. Findings from this study may also be used to develop successful strategies for administrators and music teachers to enhance their music programs. Finally, the results from this study could be used to educate parents about the effect of budget reductions on elementary music education, schools, communities, and the children.

Summary

Music education has been found to produce many beneficial results (Helmrich, 2010). Research indicates that music activities can help students improve their language skills, develop spatial-temporal skills that can later translate into increased mathematics achievement, and can boost a student's IQ (Helmrich, 2010). Music education can also help students to develop personal skills and build their self-esteem. Music education and other arts subjects are usually the first to go when schools' budgets decrease (Smith, 2009). Budget cuts can negatively impact music education programs that are affected and students in those affected programs may experience loss of opportunity to learn and explore through the arts.

By exploring the perspectives of music teachers, this study provides some useful input for decision makers about the effect of budget reductions for music education on children, schools and communities. In Section 1, I described the problem and provided evidence of the problem from the local level and professional literature. The rationale for choosing this study was described along with a review of the literature.

Section 2 describes the methodology of the study. In this section, I explain the rationale for choosing the research design, how data was collected and analyzed, the criteria for choosing participants, and the ethical issues that were considered. In Section 3, I address the description of the intended project, the process of implementation, the potential barriers and the project evaluation. In section 4, I provide my reflections about the project's strength in addressing the problem, its potential impact on social change, and its implications for future research.

Section 2: The Methodology

Research Design and Approach

In this qualitative case study, I focused on music teachers' personal and professional experiences with budget reductions, and how their programs, students, schools, and communities were affected by these changes. According to Lodico (2010), qualitative researchers focus on the study of social phenomena and on giving voice to the perceptions of the participants under study. Research showed that budget cuts for music education had been occurring in the state where the study is situated as well as across the United States (Caldwell, 2011; Johnson, Oliff, & Williams, 2011). In this section, I describe my research design and approach, methods, setting, and sample and participants. I also discuss my data collection strategies, instrumentation and materials, data analysis procedures, validity and reliability issues, and limitations, scope, and delimitations of the study.

The research question I sought to answer in this study asked what were elementary music teachers' experiences with and perceptions of the effect of budget reductions on music programs at their schools, on their communities, and on their students who are of low socioeconomic status? A related question for this study asked was elementary music were teachers coping with the effect of budget reductions on their music programs and on their students and communities. Using the case study design, I investigate processes, discover meanings and gain insights into and in-depth understanding of the teachers' perspectives of the effect of budget reductions on music

programs at their schools, on their communities, and on their students who are of low

socioeconomic status (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007).

I chose a qualitative case study design to understand the phenomenon of interest

from the participants' perspectives rather than from that of the researcher. Lodico (2010)

argued that a case study is a form of qualitative research that attempts to learn meaning,

explore procedures, and obtain a greater understanding of an individual group or

situation. A case study gives researchers a holistic depiction of events (Merriam, 2009).

In my research, I explored teachers' perceptions and provided a forum for music teachers

to relate their experiences with budget reductions, and how their programs, students,

school, and community were affected by these changes.

A quantitative research design is the systematic empirical investigation of

observable phenomena via statistical, mathematical or computational techniques (Lodico,

2010). I did not choose quantitative research as a research design because of my focus on

exploring and understanding the perceptions of teachers rather than on quantifying music

teachers' perceptions. My intention was not to generalize project results to a larger

population but to reach a complex and detailed understanding of the problem.

Case Study Design Approach

Use of a case study design allows for in-depth, multi-faceted explorations of

complex issues in their real-life settings (Lodico, 2010). A case study approach was

appropriate for this study because I wanted to obtain in-depth exploration of teachers'

perceptions of the phenomenon. The research questions of this study were best answered

by using a case study because the problem elementary music education undergoing

budget cuts needed to be understood from those who were directly experiencing and coping with budget reductions.

Other Qualitative Approaches

I considered an ethnographic study design but did not selected it because it aims to study the culture within which the phenomenon occurs (Lodico, 2010). The culture within which elementary music teachers' work was not the focus of this study. The focus of this study was on elementary music teachers' experiences with and perceptions of the effect of budget reductions on music programs at their schools and on their students who are of low socioeconomic status.

I considered a phenomenological design but did not it selected because it focuses on a phenomenon and the essence of the lived experiences of persons as they experience the phenomenon. Lodico (2010) explained that the goal of phenomenology is to understand how others view the world and how this view may vary from commonly held views by focusing on a person's subjective interpretations of what he/she experiences. This study did not focus on teachers' subjective interpretations of their experiences. Instead, it focused on understanding music teachers' experiences with and perceptions of the effect of budget reductions on music programs at their schools and on their students who are of low socioeconomic status.

I considered using a grounded theory design but did not selected it because I was not attempting to develop theory about the phenomenon of interest. My study explored music teachers' personal and professional experiences with budget reductions, and how their programs, students, school, and community were affected by these changes.

Case study research presents a detailed analysis of a specific case. Unlike the other qualitative approaches, a case study focuses on one specific facet such as a person, group of people, group processes or activities. In this research study, I focused on obtaining in-depth understanding of a case, giving voice to the perceptions of the participants under study (Lodico, 2010).

Participant Selection

The participants in this study consisted of elementary music teachers from three school districts in the southern United States. The criterion for selecting the participants was the following: Elementary music teachers whose programs, schools, and communities were affected by budget cuts and their willingness to participate in the study. Twenty possible participants met my eligibility criteria and agreed to participate in my study. I selected nine elementary music teachers from 20 and they agreed to participate in the study.

According to Creswell (2012), it is typical in qualitative research to have a small number of research participants because the overall ability to provide an in-depth picture diminishes with the addition of each new individual. Creswell stated that the number of participants varies from one study to the next, ranging from one or two to 30 or 40. Nine elementary music teachers allowed me to include participants from three school districts in Florida and allowed for adequate participation should a few participants have decided to withdraw from the study. No participants withdrew from the study.

All the elementary music teachers in the three districts that I selected were working with a predominantly low socioeconomic student population. Those selected for

the actual interviews were chosen based on their schedules and availability for

interviews. After conducting the interviews, I e-mailed individuals who were not selected

to thank them for volunteering and explain why they were not selected. The nine

individuals who were selected were all aged 25 years or older and were full-time

elementary music teachers who had been teaching general music for at least 10 years or

more. Also, their music programs had been affected by budget cuts.

Demographic Information

I began the nine face-to-face interviews by asking demographic questions to

generate some fundamental descriptive information about the participants as

recommended by Merriam (2012). Table 1 provides basic demographic information

about the participants.

Table 1

Demographic Data for Teacher Participants

Participant	Gender	Age	Years of teaching
1	F	45-50	15
2	F	55-60	15
3	F	25-30	10
4	M	45-50	15
5	M	45-50	15
6	F	50-55	11
7	F	60-65	21
8	M	50-55	18
9	M	45-50	13

Of the nine participants, five were women and four were men. Participants were between

the ages of 25 and 65. I provided the ages in the demographic data table in blocks of 5

years to protect confidentiality. The youngest participant had been teaching music for 10

years while the oldest had been teaching music for over 21 years. To protect the

identities of participants, I assigned a number to each participant.

Data Collection

In qualitative research, data is gathered through in-depth, frequent, and detailed

interviews, observations, or other means such as participant journals) while the researcher

is embedded in the research setting (Creswell, 2012). I collected data from participant

interviews which I recorded and transcribed. Participants were asked to read and sign an

informed consent form prior to their participation. In a qualitative study, data collection

and analysis proceed simultaneously (Merriam, 2009). After receiving the completed

participants' consent forms by email, I emailed each participant to schedule a mutually

convenient time and date for the interview and to discuss the study and confidentiality

issues.

I conducted the interviews at a mutually agreed upon location where the

interviewees were comfortable that their confidentiality was protected and where quality

audio recording was possible. Interviews lasted approximately one hour. The interview

process involved asking participants general, open-ended questions. I audio recorded

their responses. Audio recording helped ensure that all responses were available for

analysis. I used two digital recorders, one as backup, and took handwritten notes for

follow-up and clarifying questions. Both recorders were tested for sound quality prior to

each interview. The questions that guided the interviews can be found in the interview

protocol (Appendix B). After completing the interviews, I transcribed the responses into

Microsoft Word documents. I transferred the digitally recorded interviews from the tape recorder to my password protected desktop computer at my home office.

I saved the transcribed recorded interviews into a specific folder, and each file within the folder was labeled with a pseudonyms, date, and time of the interview. I kept a manual log with interviewees' pseudonyms, the dates and times of the interviews conducted, the duration of the interviews, interviewees' questions if there were any, the interviewees' reactions to the interview questions, and their feedback regarding the interview. I checked each transcription by comparing the transcription with the audiotape. I stored, organized, and categorized the transcriptions using Microsoft Word. I assigned each participant's responses to a unique participant ID number.

Data Analysis and Results

Data analysis involves making sense out of the data (Creswell, 2009). This process involved the collection of data based on asking general questions and developing an analysis from the information supplied by participants. Creswell (2012) outlined six steps to analyze and interpret data: (a) initial exploring of data by coding; (b) using codes to develop a general idea of the data; (c) using codes to find themes; (d) representing findings through narratives and visuals; (e) interpreting the meaning of the results; and (f) conducting strategies to validate the findings. The aim of analyzing qualitative data is to examine the meaningful and symbolic content of that which is found within. I used Creswell's (2012) five steps to examine and report on the case of this study.

1. I prepared and organized the data for analysis;

2. I analyzed the data through the process of pattern coding.

3.   I used codes to develop a more general picture of the data;

4.   I interpreted the meaning of the results through personal reflection and references to the literature;

5.   I utilized strategies to validate the accuracy of the findings;

Pattern Coding

Creswell (2012) stated that, coding is the process of organizing the material into chunks or segments of text to develop a general meaning of each segment. I used pattern coding, as explained by Creswell (2012), to condense large quantities of data into smaller units. To organize the data for coding, I used Microsoft Excel to create an interview question response matrix where I entered the participants' responses to the interview questions. For instance, all responses to Interview Question 1 were included in the tab labeled Interview Question 1. I continued this process for Interview Questions 2 through 5.

After the first round of coding, I reconciled the codes by merging similar codes to arrive at one final list of codes. Then I examined the final list of codes to search for patterns within the groupings of codes to identify six themes: Love of music and of teaching music, pride in music programs and curricula, beliefs of the benefits of music education for all students especially for low income students, sense of loss, adaptation and coping with loss, and sense of the future. I used the six themes that were generated from data analysis to address the research questions. Table 2 provides a summary of the codes and themes identified from the interview data.

Table 2

Codes and Themes Identified from the Interview Data

Codes	Themes
Love of music and music teaching, joy of teaching, devotion to students and activities, passionate about teaching music, reason for waking up, loving every minute of teaching music, productive music lessons, share the love of music with others, develop curriculum, share students' progress, preparing concerts.	Love of music and of teaching music
Pride in teaching qualifications, Pride in performance, proud of student progress, student success, proud of music credentials, formal recital, active approach to learning.	Pride in music programs and curricula
Students will develop talent, well-rounded education, happy students, better performers, talented students, countless opportunities, motivation, expression, academic achievement, student's improvement, higher test scores, constructive criticism, boost self-confidence, cooperation, sharing, inspiration and expression for at risks students.	Beliefs of the benefits of music education for all students especially for low income students
Loss of values, ability to hold performances, loss of instruments, Parental support, weak and ineffective music programs, hopeless, community support, lack of funding, loss of personal funds, loss of effective performances. Loss of performance and field trips, less time with students,	Sense of loss
Shared resources, Adapting and coping, Devotion to students and program, resilience, fund raising, borrowing equipment, fixing equipment, curriculum, program, performance, teach in multiple schools, repair instruments, Parental support, it is what it is, reconfiguration of music program, donations, borrowed instruments.	Adaptation and coping with loss
Skepticism, cancelled programs, patrons, decline in Parental support, music will disappear, fear of future, no one cares, music education devalued, strive for excellence, students will suffer, private lessons, cannot plan,	Sense of the future

Researcher's Role

In qualitative research, the researcher is an instrument that interacts and collaborates with the participants (Creswell, 2012). I was the only data collector and analyst in this case study. I have been involved in the educational profession in one of the study school districts for the past 11 years. As a teacher leader, I have spent time collaborating and discussing students' progress with other colleagues and administrators. As a music specialist, I have participated in several professional development sessions with the elementary music teachers in all districts from which my participants are selected. My professional relationship with the music teachers did not affect the data collection process because I did not have any authority over them. They considered me a colleague of equal status.

Researcher Bias

The choice of methodology, interpretation of findings, and the choice of research topic demonstrate a reflection of my personal beliefs and values. I analyzed the data collected from the participants in a manner that avoided misstatements, misinterpretations, or fraudulent analysis. Researcher bias occurs when the researcher influences the results to achieve a certain outcome (Creswell, 2012). To avoid being biased, I used reflexivity to control my personal ideas and feelings when collecting the data from the interviews. I monitored and attempted to control my biases by maintaining a neutral research environment where participants felt free to offer their true opinions. I developed interview questions that did not lead participants from their views to mine.

After I conducted the initial analysis, I used bracketing to identify and then purge my biases (Creswell, 2012).

Ethical Issues

Ethical processes in this research included obtaining the informed consent of the participants, informing participants of the purpose of the study, refraining from deceptive practices, sharing information with participants, being respectful of the research site, maintaining confidentiality and collaborating with participants to establish a systematic way for them to contact me if they had any questions about the process (Creswell, 2012). I conducted this case study with extreme care and sensitivity that ensured the privacy and safety risk of all participants.

I obtained permission from Walden University's Institutional Review Board (IRB approval #08-28-14-0335846) to conduct the study. I provided a consent form to all participating teachers, and each signed a consent email prior to the start of research showing that he or she understood that participation in this study was voluntary. All the participants in this study were consenting adults. There were no foreseeable risks or discomforts anticipated with the interviews. I gave the participants the opportunity to opt out of responded to any interview questions that might have made them uncomfortable. None of the participating teachers choose to opt out of any of the questions.

Based upon recommendations made by Creswell (2012), I conducted all the interviews outside of school property and schools hours so that no one else on staff would know who participated in the study. I also kept the data private and confidential by ensuring that only I, and members of my doctoral committee had access to the data. All

data and information related to the study are stored on my personal password-protected computer. Paper documents are kept in a locked safe and I will retain the data for 5 years, per IRB guidelines, after which time I will destroy them.

I established trust and rapport with the participants by (a) explaining the purpose of the study, (b) explaining how I was going to conduct the research, (c) discussing their possible time commitment to the study, and (d) conveying information about all the elements involved in gaining their consent (Creswell, 2012). I also collaborated with the participants to establish a systematic way for them to contact me if they had any questions about the process (Creswell, 2012).

Validity and Reliability

There are various approaches a researcher can use to address validity and reliability in a qualitative study (Creswell, 2012). I made the trustworthiness of the findings more valid and reliable by using transcript checking and peer debriefing to interpret and explain the data accurately (Creswell, 2012; Merriam, 2002).

Transcript Checking

Transcript checking is the process of verifying information with the targeted group. This process allows the participants the opportunity to correct errors of fact and/or interpretation. Transcript checking provides the opportunity for participants to volunteer additional information which may be stimulated by the process. Transcript checking allows participants to recognize their experiences in the researcher's interpretation with the opportunity to suggest better ways to capture their perspective to ensure stronger trustworthiness for verification (Merriam, 2002). During the interviews, I verbally

summarized and paraphrased the participants' responses to validate and clarify the accuracy of their information. Following the interviews, I transcribed their responses to the interview questions. I distributed the transcripts to the participants to give the interviewees the opportunity to review the transcripts of their interviews for accuracy and expand on ideas, as necessary, to clarify their points (Merriam, 2002). All the participants reviewed their transcripts and responded within five days. None of the participants reported any discrepancies or had any further questions.

Peer Debriefing

I used peer debriefing to ensure reliability and validity, as well as obtain feedback, about my interpretations of the interview data. Creswell (2012) stated that, qualitative researchers can use peer debriefing to enhance the accuracy of the participants' accounts. My committee chair reviewed the data and the codes as a peer debriefer to minimize any threats to the validity and reliability of the data. My chair also conducted the peer debriefing process by reviewing the data to ensure that the coding aligned with the data and the findings were credible (Merriam, 2002). I reviewed the data from peer debriefing and reconsidered any coding that my peer debriefer determined did not match.

Discrepant Cases

According to Lodico (2010), identifying and analyzing discrepant data is a critical element of validity testing in qualitative research. During the time of this study, all the participants expressed the understanding of how budget cuts are affecting their programs, students and communities. However, during the analysis, I identified discrepant data from

Participant 5's interview that included discussions about how his principal mistreated and looked down at the students at the school because she thought that the students were rude, disrespectful and received very little or no formation at home. The above-mentioned data were deemed irrelevant to the research question.

Limitations

Limitations are potential weaknesses of the study (Creswell, 2012). The major limitation of my study is the small sample of music teachers from three school districts in one county of one southern state. This limits the generalizability of the study. Another limitation of the study was the restricted time frame to conduct the interviews. Consequently, participants may have wanted to have longer or shorter discussions during the interviews. Although I could not control the shortcomings that I identified in this study, I was knowledgeable of their existence and occurrence throughout the study. I conducted regular self-reflections to ensure that my actions did not add to, or increase the limitations of the study.

The purpose for this qualitative case study was to address elementary music teachers' experiences with and perceptions of the effect of budget reductions on music programs at their schools, on their communities, and on their low socioeconomic status students. The qualitative study centered on one broad question and a related question explored through individual interview sessions with nine elementary school music teachers.

Q1.   What are elementary music teachers' experiences with and perceptions of the effect of budget reductions on music programs at their schools and on their students who are of low socio-economic status?

Q2.   How are elementary music teachers coping with the effect of budget reductions on their music programs and on their students and communities?

The six major themes that emerged during the data analysis stage were: (1) love of music and of teaching music, (2) pride in music programs and curricula, (3) beliefs of the benefits of music education for all students especially for low income students, (4) sense of loss, (5) adaptation and coping with loss, (6) sense of the future. A discussion of each theme follows.

Theme 1: Love of Music and of Teaching Music

All nine participants who were interviewed discussed their love for music and their passion for teaching music to the low socioeconomic students that they teach. The participants expressed their devotions to students' success and their abilities to create effective music performances for their communities. All nine participants spoke of their passion for teaching music to elementary students. Participant 5 discussed his vast knowledge of music, and the personality required to teach productive music lessons. Participant 4, 6 and 7 discussed the importance of providing a positive balance between lesson structure and flexibility of the type of music their students listen to and want to play. When asked to describe the music program at her school, Participant 1 discussed her love for music and the joy she experiences when teaching students. According to National Association for Music Education (2014), members' passion and love of teaching

music to their students give them access to the key that unlocks the creativity in their students. Participant 1 stated, "…knowing the joy some of my students are experiencing in the music classroom gives me a reason for waking up in the morning." Similarly, Participant 3 who has been teaching music for ten years stated, "I love teaching music and take great joy in seeing students excited about learning to read music, sing a great variety of styles, play Orff instruments and perform."

Participant 8 also expressed his love for music and the joy of teaching music to students. He discussed the music curriculum at the school, and how music education plays an essential role in students' academic achievement. Participant 8 stated, "I have been teaching music for eighteen years and love every minute of it. When asked to describe his music program, Participant 9 described the content of the program and how he can create productive music lessons, which consist of singing, moving, playing instruments, listening to and analyzing information about music and musicians, improvisation, and composition. Participant 2 and 3 shared similar ideas about sharing their love of music daily with their students and other teachers. They also discussed how to prepare effective lesson plans, develop curriculum, share students' progress with parents, fellow teachers and school administrators, and spoke a great length about preparing and performing concerts.

Theme 2: Pride in Music Programs and Curricula

In support of the theme, all nine participants painted a picture of successful music programs during their years of teaching. Participant 1 stated that, "Once a year, piano and guitar students perform in a formal recital for their homeroom class along with

invited family and friends." Participant 1 also commented that her school often holds three major programs during the school year: A winter program takes place in the morning during school hours for the entire school, parents, and community members, a spring concert often take place in the evening where the whole student population, parents, staff and the community are invited to attend free of charge and the program host an annual concert at a local business or home in the community.

Participant 4 stated that, "At my school, we have a very rich music program. Even with our youngest students, we stress an active approach to learning music through singing, playing, listening, and moving activities. The children are introduced to the various rhythm instruments." Participant 4 further stated that his school district proudly promotes his school's concerts and music activities throughout the school year. Participant 7, 8 and 9 spoke of how their music programs provide students at all levels the opportunity to participate in group instrument lessons.

Participant 9 stated, "We have a vocal music activity call sing-a-long in the winter and our talent shows which take place in the springs that I am very proud of. We also hold at least one on-site concert opportunity per year; students can experience the joy of performing their music for appreciative audiences from throughout the community." Participant 9 further stated that all 4th and 5th grade students at his school participate in his music program. He spoke of his general music program that includes singing, movement and playing of rhythmic and melodic instruments, and a small symphony orchestra where students participate in playing the violin, viola, cello, flute, clarinet, trumpet, or trombone. Participant 9 emphasized that his music program provides his

students with an outlet for creative expression, collaboration, and connection between students and that he could not be prouder of the accomplishment and progress his students have made over the years.

Participants 1, 3, 4, 5, 7 and 9 spoke about their credentials and their accomplishments over their years of teaching. Similarly, Participant 8 proudly discussed his qualifications and contribution made to the music environment in his school district. Participant 6 discussed how her students are collaborating to create successful performances. Participant 6 mentioned that her most prideful moment of her career was when her students were able to perform a formal recital without her presence after she was involved in a car accident. She was so proud of them that she cried after each selection they played that night.

Theme 3: Beliefs of the Benefits of Music Education for all Students Especially for Low Income Students

All nine teacher participants expressed their views about how beneficial music can be for all students especially for low income students. Research showed that children who study music tend to have larger vocabularies and more advanced reading skills than their peers who do not participate in music lessons (Patel, 2009). All nine teacher participants expressed their views on how beneficial music can be for all students especially for low income students. Research showed that children who study music tend to have larger vocabularies and more advanced reading skills than their peers who do not participate in music lessons (Patel, 2009). Regardless of socioeconomic status or school district, students (3rd graders) who participated in high-quality music programs score

higher on reading and spelling tests (Hille et al; 2015). According to the National Association for Music Education (2015), schools that have music programs have an attendance rate of 93.3% compared to 84.9% in schools without music programs. In some school districts, students (3rd graders) who participated in high-quality music programs score higher on reading and spelling tests (Hille et al; 2015). According to the National Association for Music Education (2015), schools that have music programs have an attendance rate of 93.3% compared to 84.9% in schools without music programs.

According to Participant 1, the arts, such as music, art and sports promote school identification and belonging, which increases academic achievement. Participant 2 stated that, "Music programs and performance activities are usually positive settings where students can form a positive self-image and interact with other students who encourage academic success. Such activities protect students from engaging in risky behaviors such as fighting, skipping school, which also promote success in their classrooms." Participant 1 also mentioned how many studies have found a correlation between music education and students' achievements. She remarked that music lessons offer a forum where children can learn to accept and give constructive criticism. Turning negative feedback into positive change helps build self-confidence.

Participant 1 stated that, "I personally believe that music education is what kept some of these students in school. These students have developed a love for music and a desire to continue it. Many of my students admitted to me that they are in school because of the chances they get to learn music and perform on stage in front of an audience.

Others mentioned that they are even treated differently by their peers, family members and their parents after they see them performing on stage."

According to Participant 1, 3, and 5, low socioeconomic students view the music programs as a place to meet their friends and hang out with colleagues. Participant 1 discussed how many of these children never experience anything other than what they see happening in their community. She further stated that these students cannot afford to go to any concerts, shows or musicals, and being on stage is like a new experience for them that make them feel self-worth and boost their self-esteem. She discussed how some students behaved well and in a respectful manner in order not to lose their place in the chorus, or music ensembles. She discussed how music education helps students to focus on what is important. She argued that music education helps students to control their behavior, and stay out of trouble.

Participant 4 and 8 indicated that children at every grade level from second through fifth grade participate at some point during the school year in a musical production. Not only is this an exciting learning experience, but, because each musical is carefully chosen, Participant 4 and 8 believe that vital and lasting musical concepts will be learned by the students. Participant 9 mentioned that, when students are actively involved in a project, they tend to absorb information and skills that might otherwise be missed if they are simply passive receivers of facts and lectures. Participants 8 and 9 discussed that, through a musical, the students are able to see how music can be used to set the mood, move the plot, and manipulate emotions. Because staging and choreography is involved, they also have an opportunity to develop their kinetic skills.

Participants 6 and 7 mentioned that benefits of music education for children include learning cooperation, sharing, compromise, creativity, and concentration. Participant 7 stated that all students who study music and develop skills in performing music are also developing skills in creating, listening to, and analyzing, interpreting and understanding music. Participant 7 stated, "They understand that music is a product of a particular time and place and are aware of the impact that music has on the everyday decisions they make, on their emotional responses and moods, and on their own culture and community."

Participant 4 stated, "The arts have also proven to be a form of inspiration and expression for at-risk students, especially those in inner-city schools, and have been shown to improve their outlook on education. This is not a statement that I made up for many studies have shown that to be true." Participant 4 talked about how performing arts play a big role on at-risk students' decisions to want to stay in school. He believes that there are many factors related to the arts that positively affected the motivation of low socioeconomic students. Participant 4 stated, "We as educators need to provide a supportive environment that promotes constructive acceptance of criticism and one where it is safe to take risks."

Theme 4: Sense of Loss

Music teachers talked about four kinds of loss. They felt that they had lost their value in education, their ability to hold performances, musical instruments, and parental and administrative support.

Loss of value. All participants discussed how they worry during every budget

cycle, hoping that their programs do not get cut yet again. All participants except Participant 8 felt that people in their communities no longer value music education and believe that schools should focus more on core subjects rather than spending time and money on the arts which include music education. All participants explained how they remembered when things were better and schools were provided with adequate funding to support their music programs. Participant 4 stated, "I remember when things were better." The participants expressed the beliefs that school leaders are not innovative and need to be reminded to push for innovation in school curricula. Participants 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, argued that schools need to design curricula that grapple with the current state of the music business and encourage students to embrace the constant evolution of culture and technology.

Participant 6 discussed how the school value system needs an overhaul. Participant 6 stated, "While some administrators realize music is important, most do not believe it is fundamental to school curriculum." According to Participant 6, administrators would drop their music program in a heartbeat if it was to interfere with their schools' core subjects. This means that funding for music education can only happen after core subjects such as math, reading and science are covered.

Participant 7 believes that many music programs are weak and that ineffective music teachers will cause students to quit, programs to be cut, and great music educators de-valued. Participants 7 discussed how some schools in the district have some poor music programs due to unqualified and ineffective music teachers that run these programs. According to (Brand, 2009), effective music teachers possess the following

characteristics: leadership, patience, musical proficiency, kindness, ability to plan, like children, emotional stability. Participant 7 mentioned that she has met a few music colleagues that do not possess these characteristics and that she is not at all surprised that their programs are weak and underpopulated.

Ability to hold performances. All music teacher participants discussed the difficulties of not being able to hold their ideal performances because of instrument shortages and lack of funding for such activities. Participants 4 and 5 mentioned how their schools do not provide any funds for instruments repair. Participant 5 stated, "…not having enough instruments has a negative impact on our performances." Participant 5 stated, "There are not enough instruments for my students to use during our school performances. Some kids have to sit down and others use instruments that they don't like playing." Participants 3, 4, and 9 remarked that performances are not as they used to be when their schools were provided with adequate funding for their music programs. Participants 5 and 7 talked about how many of their performances have been cancelled due to lack of funding, musical instruments, students interest, and support from parents, and administrators. All participants except Participant 2 and 8 talked about how their programs would be cancelled should their schools' ratings decline and that classroom teachers preferred to keep their students away from music classes when trying to deal with the pressure to meet annual rating requirements. Participant 7 stated, "Classroom teachers will not allow me to pull out students for rehearsals. These people are under a lot of pressure to meet AYP."

All nine participants described not only their experiences with cuts made to their programs at their schools, but also wrestled with the idea of whether they will continue to have a job as music teachers. The participants gave a brief overview of what their programs look like at their settings. This was illustrated by Participant 5 who indicated, "My program this year was cut to just half of the year, from an hour class to 45 minutes' class." Further, participant 3 said, "I used to hold three concerts a year. My principal felt the need to cut them to two concerts for the year. Furthermore, the school district no longer provides buses for our field trips. We now have to fetch for ourselves or our programs die."

Participant 5 recalled similar fears: "Programs such as after school chorus and guitar club were cut from my school. In my opinion, such programs are really what motivate my student population to stay in school." Participant 5 believes that his music program is what keeps most of his students in school, but also is the first to be cut when budget is cut. According to Participant 3, parents must purchase an instrument for his/her students if their children want to participate in the music ensemble or concerts. Participant 3 stated, "Despite challenges and adversity in parents' lives, I do have a good majority of parents that contribute to the program by sending their old instruments to us while others purchase new instruments for their children."

According to Participants 3 and 6, many parents felt that the music programs are the reason why their children want to wake up in the morning to go to school. Participant 4 stated, "If my school did not provide music programs, such luxuries would be out of reach for my low-income students. Participant 4 further mentioned that, "…according to

many parents, after school music programs get children off the streets and lessen the effect of poverty during after school or summer hours." Participants 5 and 6 stated that communities benefit greatly from students' participation in music programs. According to Participant 6, music programs are an effective way of increasing academic achievement and non-cognitive skills among low-income student.

Loss of musical instruments. Eight of the nine participants discussed instrument shortages at their schools, which resulted in students not able to participate in their schools' music programs. Participants 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, and 9 reported two key issues that caused instrument shortages at their settings. One issue had to do with instruments being lost or stolen, and the other is the lack of funding to replace defective ones. Participant 3 stated, "Several of our students are not returning the instruments borrowed from the school. Sometimes instruments got lost or broken after performances with no money to replace them." Participant 6 further argued that administration made it clear to her that there are no funds available to purchase new instruments or to repair old ones. Participant 6 stated, "Sometimes I have to dig into my own personal funds to purchase instruments when I have a special program."

Participant 1 stated, "The idea of not having enough instruments for any performance is scary to me. A performance can never be at its best if you are missing key players in your group." Participant 1 later said, "I am not certain if I will ever have the same program that I used to have eight years ago." Participants 2 and 3 revealed that because of instrument shortages, they had to often borrow instruments from other schools or request donations from local colleges and universities. Participant 2 mentioned asking

parents who may have old instruments to donate them to her music programs. Participant 3 said, "It is heartbroken to tell some of your most prominent students that they are not able to participate in the performance because I do not have an instrument to give them."

All participants except Participant 8 discussed how they had to use their own money to purchase new or repair old instruments. Participant 1 stated, "I can't remember the last time I received any money from administration to repair my broken instruments." Similarly, Participant 6 discussed how she purchased new instruments and uniforms for her students with her private funds. Participant 2 described how she had to borrow instruments from other colleagues and ask parents to donate old instruments that they are not using to her music program.

Participant 7 said, "Children in this community do not have the opportunity to participate in musical activities, whether before, during and after school, because schools in these low-income communities lack the funding and resources to provide children with extracurricular opportunities." Participant 8 also elaborated on the fact that living in a poor neighborhood constitutes an extra disadvantage for children's participation in music activities. Participant 8 stated, "Living in a poor area limits the opportunities available to the community and social institutions such as schools in poor areas lack the funding and community support needed to keep any programs alive."

Participant 8 further stated, "Administrators at my district, especially those that are at underperforming schools, believe that they must choose between spending money and time on test preparation in English and math rather than including the arts and risk the failure of their schools. But arts advocate like myself often pointed out that to be

successful in these subjects and provide a well-rounded education, subject areas such as music or art are extremely important." All nine participants discussed how they must make the best of what is available to their programs in the hope that they can provide their students with the best possible music education and create musical activities that the community can enjoy. Participant 3 stated, "We do not get any funds for anything. We simply use what we have or borrow instruments from colleagues when needed for a special performance of some sort." She further stated, "I do get instrument donations from community colleges sometimes, but not very often. Parents sometimes offer to help out but I believe the practice to receive help from the parents is not encouraged by administration because of the socioeconomic status of the community."

Loss of parental and administrative support. Administrative and parental support can help strengthen any music program and have a positive impact on the whole school population. Involvement allows parents to monitor school and classroom activities, and to coordinate their efforts with teachers to encourage acceptable classroom behavior and ensure that the child completes schoolwork (Child Trends, 2013).

Participant 3 commented, "The parents have been very supportive of the music program at my school to say the least. For the most part, I have not come across any of my parents that would remove their child from any music programs; but as I said before, the enthusiasm, the motivation, the speeches, are no longer there. Almost as if music education is no longer a driving force to students' success which many of them used to believe." Participant 3 also stated, "On many occasions during a presentation, I often shared with parents the importance of music education in their children's lives, but lately,

you don't really feel that people are listening anymore." As a music educator, I can only hope that I am making a difference in the students' lives and they are learning from me, but it is also important that I have their parents support and administration understands the important of my program at the school." Participants 2 and 5 felt that their administrative teams do not support their programs and their students are suffering because of that. Participant 5 stated, "Music classes are being cancelled on a weekly basis so that classroom teachers can use the extra time to teach their students. Administration will not allow me to pull any students out for rehearsal to prepare for an event."

Theme 5: Adaptation and Coping with Loss

Music programs in the schools are highly beneficial to students in that they contribute to academic achievement and student personal development. These music educators not only teach music but serve as positive role models for kids who come from low-income families who do not get enough support at home (Catterall, 2012). Because of budget constraints and cuts to music programs in schools, music teachers must find ways to adapt and cope with the impact that those cuts have on their music programs. Programs are being cancelled, students are not motivated to participate, instrument shortages are present, and there is lack of support from administrators, and parents.

All nine participants discussed many ways to keep their music programs alive amid budget cuts. Participants 2, 4, 5, 6, and 7 spoke about sharing resources such as instruments, literature, and music ideas with other colleagues. Participant 5 stated that, "For every concert, I have to borrow instruments to completed my ensemble." He further stated, "Besides borrowing instruments for concerts, we have to hold multiple

fund-raising activities to collect money for uniforms and others related expenses."

Participants 7 and 9 spoke of the difficulties they faced when they must travel to multiple

schools to teach. Participant 7 stated, "The hardest part of my music program is to create

a balance between the two schools that I'm am currently working at. I have to program

multiple concerts which can be difficult at times, but it is what it is."

Participant 8 discussed how music teachers have been resilient in devoting time

and resources to student progress and use whatever means necessary to maintain

successful programs at their schools. Participant 6 spoke about the how she relies on

parental support when holding musical activities for his community. Participant 6 stated,

"For us to have what you can call a great performance, parents come out and support our

team." She discussed the monetary support that she receives from parents when her

school is holding concerts and other musical activities. Participant 6 stated, "Although it

is not encouraged by administration, I often had no choice but to seek help from parents

to move forward with what the community is expecting of us." Similar to Participant 6,

the other participants mentioned that they had to do whatever they could to present to

their communities meaningful concerts and activities.

Theme 6: Sense of the Future

Research showed that curricula change and innovation is essential for maintaining

to positive influence that music education can have on students (National Association for

Music Education, 2014). Such discussion should encourage music educators to keep a

positive attitude about the future of music education at their schools. However, all nine

participants expressed concerns over the possibility of music education being eliminated from public elementary schools.

Participants 1, 3, 5 and 6 stated that their greatest concern is whether schools would be able to provide a well-rounded education to students without music education. Participant 2 and 4 mentioned how the big losers will be the children who would have develop a personal passion for music if they had benefited from an effective school music program. However, if music education is cut from schools, they will never have such experiences. Participant 7 was hopeful that some organizations will increase volunteerism to support music education in poor districts and schools.

Participant 8 described how public school music may still exist in the future but questioned the mode of instructional delivery. Participant 8 stated, "You have many scenarios that suggested a variety of learning environments catering to the specific needs of individuals, but I am a bit skeptical of whether music education would be able to adapt to nontraditional schools choices."

Participant 4 stated, "Usually, when budget cuts arise, music educators are the first to be let go. With so many good music educators being laid off, and funding are being eliminated for music education programs, I believe that music educators will go into private sectors and music education in public school will eventually be gone." He argued that there are many schools that are relying more on private funds and patrons of the arts to provide creative outlets for students.

Participant 6 spoke about the barriers facing lower-class students. Participant 6 believes that barriers such as socioeconomic instabilities are so strong that music

education can be used as a tool to help these students to overcome the barriers and reach their full academic and social potential.   Participant 6 stated, "Low socioeconomic students view the music program as a place to freely express themselves without being judged by others." Participant 9 also elaborated on low socioeconomic students, saying, "Low socioeconomic students view their music programs as a place to meet their friends and hang out with colleagues." Eliminating music education in schools will be detrimental to students who view such programs as a way of life and motivation.

To elaborate about why music education is vital to student well being, and to advocate for keeping such programs alive in the future, Participant 7 stated, "Students who participate in music programs are often happier and well-adjusted, promoting psychological health."   Participant 8 took a different approach on the impact cancelling music program can have on students. Participant 8 stated, "Students can use their voices as strength to raise awareness of the importance of music education and its contribution to their lives and academic achievements." He further mentioned that students can motivate their parents and communities, even their legislators to advocate for music education at their schools and communities. Similarly, Participant 9 stated that students, parents and community leaders can be a driving force that keeps the arts alive in schools.

When asked, "What are your fears about the future of music education?" Participant 2 remarked, "My fears are that my students cannot afford to go to any concerts, shows or musicals, and being on stage is like a new experience for them that make them feel self-worth and boost their self-esteem. The idea of music education being cut from schools is unthinkable to me."   Participant 2 also stated, "I have seen firsthand

how a troubled child changed during a short period due to his participation in the school music program. Others behaved well and in a respectful manner in order not to lose their place in the chorus, or music ensembles. To these children, that is all they have going for them. Music education helps them to focus not only on their musical skills, but also on academic achievement. Music education helps them to control their behavior, and stay out of trouble. To take all that away from them is to pretty much the door on their future." Participants 3, 4, 5, and 7 stated that they believed that music education in public schools will eventually be gone and that music teachers will be obliged to go into private sectors to teach music.

Discussion of the Findings

The findings of my study revealed that despite the budget constraints and the difficulties that elementary music teachers are facing with their music programs at their schools, they had maintained effective music programs comprised of a balanced and sequential program of singing, playing instruments listening to music, improvising and composing music, and moving to music. All nine music educator participants also described that they provided learning experiences designed to develop the ability to read music, analyze and describe music, make informed evaluation concerning music and understand music and music practices in relation to history and culture and the other disciplines in the curriculum with emphasis on the impact that budget reductions have on their programs. The study revealed evidence of teachers' love for music and their passion to teach all children especially children from poor neighborhoods. The participants expressed their exceptional ability to play music, their vast knowledge of

music, their ability to teach productive music lessons, engage students in music activities and the ability to prepare for performing concerts.

The participants explained how they take pride in their music programs and curricula. Their focus was not solely on the impact of budget reductions on their programs during the interviews, but also on making sure that their students receive the best music education and that their music programs are making a difference in students' lives, their schools and their communities. The participants explained that their music programs' purposes are to instill in all students, teachers, and the community an awareness of music's important role in the enrichment of the human spirit, while reinforcing the general curriculum. The findings appear to show that budget reduction may have impacted their programs, but had no effect on their spirit and willingness to teach, their pride in their qualifications, their ability to engage students, and the difference they are making at their schools and communities.

The findings revealed that the participants believe that students cannot have a well-rounded education without music education. The participants explained the correlation between music education and students' academic achievement. The findings revealed that music education is crucial to students' success, especially for the low socioeconomic students. The participants explained that students in their communities cannot afford to go to paid concerts and musicals, and that such programs at their schools are the only musical experience they have. Findings from the study revealed that the participants believe that when children are engaged in performing art activities, they will not have the time or motivation to participate in risky behaviors such as fighting and

skipping school. The findings also showed that the participants believe that cancelling

such activities can be detrimental to students' well-being.

The findings of this study revealed evidence of instrument shortages in all the

participants' music programs. The participants explained how funds are not available to

purchase new instruments or repair old ones. The findings appear to show that the

teachers have a nostalgia for a time when music teachers had the necessary resources to

teach and create high quality programs that all stakeholders enjoyed. Findings revealed

how difficult it is for the participants to conduct effective programs with a lack of

necessary instruments. Participants explained how their programs suffered because of

instrument failure, stolen instruments, loss of students' interest when instruments are not

available. The findings of my study revealed a growing lack of parental and

administrative support. All the participants explained how parents appear to value music

less than academics. Students are no longer encouraged to participate and must focus

solely on their academic achievements.

The findings revealed the resiliency of the participants to make their programs

work. Participants reported that the biggest challenge they are facing is the lack of

available funds to repair broken instruments. The findings from the study showed that

participants are cooperating with one another by sharing instruments, or requesting

instrument donations from local colleges and universities. The findings revealed that

music teachers often used their own personal funds to maintain their programs, purchase

new or repair old instruments. Due to budget shortfalls, many programs, fields trips,

concerts have been cancelled. The findings appear to show that music programs and

activities have been cancelled when school annual ratings dropped. Because of the pressure to meet AYP, classroom teachers resist sending the students to music class.

Eight out of nine participants expressed great concerns and fears about the future of elementary music education in public schools.   Participant 3 reported that the downward trend of music education existed for a longtime and continues. People are becoming less and less aware of the importance of music education for children's learning and personal development.

Despite their fears, participants retained hope that their fears will not be realized. Participants 1, 2, 3, 4, and 6 spoke of the future of music education with a sense of despair. Participant 4 discussed the fear that further budget cuts in the state may eventually prove to have an adverse effect on the relatively stable status of the state's music education programs. Participant six stated that, "Usually, when budget cuts arise, music educators are the first to be let go".

When asked, "How do feel about the reduction of music education in elementary schools?" Participant 9 answered, "It is very unfortunate that the children will suffer the most, especially those of low socioeconomic backgrounds. Imagine that music education in school is the only musical experience these children will ever have during their childhood years, because most of these children cannot afford to pay for private lessons."

The implication from the findings is that although budget reductions affect music programs at a local and national level, music teachers could prevail and music programs would survive if music educators had a better understanding of how to cope with and adapt to budget shortfalls. This could be achieved by providing workshop sessions to

music teachers to learn strategies to support their music programs. Music programs will also prevail if music teachers become advocates to support their music programs by learning how to organize supporters like parents and other teachers to become part of the cause.

Project as an Outcome

These findings and my discussion of the findings from the interviews led me to develop a project that will assist music teachers in learning how to cope with budget cuts by working in collaboration with one another, in learning how to share resources to keep their music programs strong, in learning how to promote music education and its benefits in the county, in learning how to advocate for music education. The project that I developed will be a 3-day professional development workshop for music teachers to engage in workshop sessions that will help them to learn strategies for creating effective music programs and becoming effective music education advocates.

Section 3: The Project

Introduction

Findings from this study showed the impact of budget cuts on elementary music teachers' programs, their students, and their communities. In analyzing the data I collected from the nine interviews, I identified six emergent themes. These were: (1) love of music and of teaching music; (2) pride in music programs and curricula, (3) beliefs in the benefits of music education for all students, especially for low income students, (4) sense of loss, (5) adaptation and coping with loss, and (6) sense of the future. To provide a platform for music teachers to learn strategies to support their music programs, I have designed a 3-day professional development program entitled *Cuts-Off*. Goals of the program are to offer music teachers practical strategies for teaching with limited resources, help teachers learn how to share resources, and encourage teachers to become better advocates of music education.

Cuts-Off is a PD project for all music educators in the state of Florida. I developed the *Cuts-Off* project to equip music teachers with the knowledge and skills necessary to create effective music programs while coping with budget cuts. I also wanted to equip them with the knowledge and skills they need to become advocates for music education. As a music specialist in one of the three school districts being studied, I will be the facilitator of this professional development.

In this section, I explain the purpose and goals of the PD workshop, its learning outcomes and target audience, and the components, timelines, and activities of the project. I also provide a rationale for my choice of the PD project genre. In this Section, I

provide a review of literature related to PD programs and workshops, and information about how I developed the project based on my study findings. In this discussion, I also discuss needed resources, existing supports, and potential barriers. In addition, I explain the roles and responsibilities of students, faculty members, and myself in the workshop and describe the project evaluation plan, a summary of possible social change implications, and a discussion of the importance of the project to students, faculty members, community members, and industry in Florida.

Descriptions and Goals

The goals of the PD workshop are to

- raise awareness of the impact of budget cuts on music education, benefits of music education, the impact of music programs on students, schools and communities;

- provide music teachers with strategies that will help them to work in collaboration in order to cope with budget shortfalls;

- provide music teachers with strategies to share resources to keep their music programs alive;

- assist music teachers with the knowledge and skills necessary to promote music education and its benefits in the county; and

- provide music teachers with the skills and strategies needed to become music education advocates.

Target Audience and Learning Outcomes

The 3-day PD workshop is designed for all music teachers in the state of Florida. The workshop will be hosted by the Florida Music Educators Association (FMEA). I will serve as the facilitator. Upon completion of the workshop, teacher participants should be able to

- identify, describe, and explain the benefits of music education and know the importance of music education in schools, the impact of budget cuts on music education, and the impact of music programs on school, students, and communities;

- describe and explain the strategies and skills needed for music teachers to collaborate and create effective music programs;

- use strategies that will assist them in sharing resources;

- demonstrate an understanding of how to promote music education in their respected counties; and

- demonstrate an understanding of how to become effective advocates for music education.

Components of the Workshop

Cuts-Off will be a face-to-face workshop. It is scheduled to be presented from January 10 to January 13, 2018, between 8:30 am to 3:00 pm each day. Music teacher participants who are members of FMEA will receive PD points that can be applied for the renewal of their certification. Each day of the workshop will include snack breaks (15 minutes) and lunch (60 minutes). Teachers are expected to attend all 3 days of the

workshop; if they do not, they will not receive credit. Day 1 of the workshop includes the following:

1. A 120-minute session entitled, *The Impact of Budget Cuts on Music Programs, Students and Community*. This includes a 60-minute presentation of my study. The purpose of session one is to discuss the findings of my study and to provide strategies for music teachers about how to cope with the impact of budget cuts on music programs. I will be the presenter for the session and at the end of the session, I will provide participants with information that will help them gain a better understanding of how budget cuts are affecting music education in three school districts in the state at the end.

2. A 60-minute session entitled, *My Program*. This session includes a 30-minute group activity using scenarios, such as how to share resources, parent involvement, and community support, emerging from the PowerPoint presentation, and a 30-minute period for discussing participants' current music programs. The purpose of this session is for attendees to discover similarities among their current music programs, discuss the challenges their programs are facing due to budget cuts, and share ideas on how to address such challenges. Participants will work in groups of five. Each group will be given 10 minutes to identify the problems music teachers in their respected group are facing in their music programs. Each group will select a leader, a recorder and a reporter that will report back to the general audience. I will be the presenter for the session.

3. A 60-minute panel discussion entitled, *Understanding the Impact of Budget Cuts on Music Programs*. This session includes a 60-minute discussion on music teachers' perspectives on the impact of budget cuts on music education in their districts, schools and communities. The purpose of this session is for music teachers to share with the audience their perspectives of how budget cuts are affecting their schools' music programs, students, and community. This session focus is to create awareness of how serious the problem is and to set the stage for further discussion about how to deal with the problem.

4. A 30-minute presentation entitled, *The Budget Cuts and the Importance of Music Programs in Schools.* This session includes a 30-minute discussion on the importance of music education in schools and communities. The purpose of the presentation is for music teachers to discuss the effectiveness of their music programs and the impact of music education on their students, schools and communities, and to share strategies on how to maintain effective music programs at their schools.

 Day 1 concludes with 30 minutes of discussion and reflection on the day's activities. Workshop attendees will complete an evaluation at the end of each session (see Appendix A). The purpose of the evaluation is to provide me with immediate response from the attendees about the effectiveness and clarity of the session. This information will help me to improve the training as it is occurring. The results of the feedback will also be considered for use in further studies.

 Day 2 of the workshop includes the following components:

1. A 90-minute session entitled, *Adapting and Coping with Budget Cuts*. This session includes a 60-minute open discussion about how to adapt and cope with the impact of budget cuts on music programs, and a 30-minute question and answer session that will broaden the discussion and allow participants to share strategies and ideas to enhance their music programs. The goal of the session is for volunteer music teachers to present strategies and methods that others can use to support their music programs at their schools.

2. A 60-minute session entitled, *Sharing Ideas and Resources.* Music teachers will be involved in a discussion about their resources and share ideas about how to work with limited resources. It will also be an opportunity for music teachers to discuss how they can help each other. This session will be conducted by me. The purpose of this session is for music teachers to encourage one another and share ideas and resources to support their music programs and their music teacher colleagues.

3. A 60-minute presentation entitled, *Characteristics of an Effective Music Program in Low Income Neighborhoods,* to be presented by a guest motivational speaker, such as William Reaney, a music educator who knows the importance of music education in schools. The purpose of this session is to inspire and encourage music teachers to persevere and strive to create effective music programs amid budget constraints and to share ideas on the impact music education have on low socio-economic students.

4. A 60-minute presentation entitled, *The Music Lives on.* This session will be

presented by a special guest elementary String Ensemble. The ensemble will be

performing 5 short pieces. The audience will ask questions about the challenges

that the guest ensemble is facing at its school. The goal of this session is to

inspire music teachers and to serve as a reminder of how important it is for such

programs to continue in elementary schools.

Day two concludes with 30 minutes of discussion and reflection on the day's

activities. Workshop attendees will complete an evaluation at the end of each session (see

Appendix A). The purpose of the evaluation is to provide me with immediate response

from the attendees about the effectiveness and clarity of the session. This will help to

provide improvement for the training as it is occurring. The results of the feedback will

also be considered for further studies.

Day three of the workshop includes:

1. A 90-minute session entitled, *Advocacy Campaign Strategies and Best Practices.*

This session includes a 60-minute presentation by an expert guest speaker and a

30-minute discussion period for discussing how music teachers can become

advocates for their music programs. The goal of this session is for attendees to

discuss collaborative steps that can be taking to reach out to other stakeholders

and policy makers that can be beneficial to their quests of strengthening their

programs.

2. A 90-minute entitled, *Essential Elements of Advocacy.* This session is a

continuation of the previous session where the special guest will discuss effective

techniques, tools and strategies that music teachers can use to advocate on behalf of their music programs. The goal of this session is to equip music teachers with knowledge and skills to become better advocates. At the end of this session, music teachers will be able to organize supporters likes parents, teachers to become part of the course.

3. A 90-minute session entitled, *Best Practices and Community Engagement.* This includes a 60-minute presentation about how music teachers can become effective advocates by involving the community. The goal of the session is to provide the knowledge and techniques that music teachers can use to attend public meetings, write effective letters to editors, learn to make alliances with journalists, television reporters, and prepare broadcasts.

4. A 90-minute discussion entitled, *Only Music Teachers Knew About the Importance of Music Education.* A 60-minute session in which music teachers are working in groups to create an action plan. Music teachers will work in groups of five to create an action plan that will later be share with the audience. The purpose of this session is for music teachers to turn their visions into reality and to provide the audience with a series of steps that could be taken and the resources that are required to preserve their music programs at their schools and communities.

Day three concludes with a 30-minute wrap up session in which all attendees will be asked to complete evaluations for day three's sessions as well as a summative evaluation for the 3-day workshop (see Appendix A). The purpose of the evaluation is to

provide me with immediate response from the attendees on about the effectiveness and clarity of the session and the overall workshop. This will help to provide improvement for the training as it is occurring. The results of the feedback will also be considered for further studies.

Rationale

I established the project to implement a PD workshop based upon the findings and my discussion of the findings. The 3-Day *Cuts-Off* project will seek to provide a better understanding of what options are available to music teachers and how to maintain effective music programs at their schools and communities. *Cuts-Off* was designed based on the research from literature review and the findings from data analysis.

I chose a 3-Day PD because PD can provide the knowledge and skills needed to improve teaching and learning through project sharing and brainstorming among educators with a common goal of the betterment of their instructional goals. The PD was identified as the most appropriate project based of the responses of the study participants. I believe that the outcome of the project will address the need for strengthen music education in schools, raise awareness of the decline of music programs in schools and the need for music teachers to work in collaboration not only to enhance students' music abilities, but also to keep music alive in schools for generations to come.

Review of the Literature

In the literature review, I discuss research and studies that focused on the concept of PD, which is the selected genre for this project. The literature review also includes discussion regarding research and studies focused on teachers' perceptions of the impact

of budget cuts on their music programs, their schools and communities, which are the contents of the PD workshop for this project. The purpose of this review of the literature was to explore best practices for designing and implementing a PD workshop for music teachers.

Literature Review Search Strategy

The literature review was conducted utilizing the Walden University online library. The online library contains several different search engines to conduct research. The search engines that I used for this literature review were: Educational Research Complete, ProQuest, ERIC, SAGE, Thoreau, and Google Scholar. Search terms and phrases included: *professional development, student development, professional development workshops, designing professional development workshops, contents of a workshop, teacher collaboration, importance of teacher collaboration, benefits of teacher collaboration, cooperative teaching, individual accountability, advocacy, advocating for music education, the role of advocacy in public education, teachers as advocates, music education advocacy, collaborative efforts, teacher leader, sharing resources, project sharing, benefits of teachers sharing resources, teacher learning communities, sharing teaching resources, teachers who share ideas and resources, advocacy and best practices, music education advocates, promoting music education, best practice for the design of workshops, evaluating professional development, and benefits of a professional development workshop. professional development for educators, creating professional development, professional development definition, professional development elements.* In addition, I searched *the Journal of Education & Human Development and Education*

Research International. I considered that the literature review was complete when I encountered repeated references and my searches did not result in new sources. I organized the literature review under three headings: (1) Research About Best Practices for the Design and Presentation of a PD Workshop for Teachers, (2) Research About Best Practices for the Implementation of a PD Workshop for Teachers, (3) Research About Best Practices for Preparing Professionals to Become Advocates.

Research About Best Practices for the Design and Presentation of a PD Workshop for Teachers

Professional development has been widely researched and discussed from many viewpoints. Hunzicker (2010) discussed the characteristics of an effective professional development. Hunzicker stated that effective professional development engages teachers in learning opportunities that are job-embedded, instructionally-focused, collaborative, and ongoing. Effective professional development for teachers emphasizes both active and interactive learning experiences, often through participation in learning communities (Hunzicker, 2010). I organized the discussion about best practices for the design and presentation of a workshop into four topics: the concept and the effectiveness of PD, designing PD activities, teachers as learners in PD, and evaluating the success of PD workshops.

The concept and effectiveness of professional development. Professional development is the personal enhancement of one's professional role. Avalos (2011) posited that within one's teaching role, experience is gained through personal development. Professional workshops and formal meetings help define professional development experiences (Ganzer, 2000). The common objectives throughout the literature for providing PD activities are to improve educators' professional skills in the classroom and to effect positive change in the learning environment (Wilson, 2012). According to Wilson, the aim of PD is to develop teachers' professional thinking and practice, and enhance the quality of teaching and learning. Wilson (2012) stated that PD should be a process rather than an event.

Researchers found that while 90 percent of teachers reported participating in professional development, most of those teachers also reported that it was valuable (Darling-Hammond et al, 2009). Darling-Hammond et al. (2009) stated that most professional development workshops are ineffective because they do not abide by the following principles:

- The duration of professional development must be significant and ongoing to allow time for teachers to learn a new strategy and grapple with the implementation problem.

- There must be support for a teacher during the implementation stage that addresses the specific challenges of changing classroom practice.

- Teachers' initial exposure to a concept should not be passive, but rather should engage teachers through varied approaches so they can participate actively in making sense of a new practice.

- Modeling has been found to be a highly effective way to introduce a new concept and help teachers understand a new practice (Center for Public Education, 2013).

Guskey (2000) indicated that PD programs are "systematic efforts to bring about change in the classroom practices, of teachers, in their attitudes and beliefs, and the learning outcomes of students" (p. 381), thus creating more effective educators. Lutrick and Szabo (2012) found that effective PD is ongoing, includes participants' collaboration, is designed based on data, is driven by participants' interest, and is interactive. Effective PD must also provide support for teachers to innovate new teaching strategies to meet the demands of reform (Center for Public Education, 2013). The ideal structure for ongoing professional development is to provide teachers time embedded in the school day, preferably setting aside three to four hours per week for collaboration and coaching (Killion, 2013).

The concept of effective professional development as a process suggests that the format is neither a 1-day workshop nor a sequence of workshops, but a well-planned agenda of events to improve teaching on a long-term basis. This type of teacher training program would result in improved student achievement (Guskey, 2000; Joo et al., 2013; Sparks, 2004). Horn and Little (2010) and McDonald et al. (2013) defined professional development as a sustained feature of classroom instruction that is incorporated consistently and integrates coherent experiences that are structured within the goals of

teaching. Levine and Marcus (2010) described professional development training as continual and coherent with best practice. Desimone (2011) suggested that PD should include 20 or more contact hours spread over a semester. This would allow time for participants to recap the information in a timely fashion and begin the process of incorporating their learning into the classroom. Desimone (2011) suggested that PD workshop organizers should follow-up with participants after the training. Following up, whether individually, collectively, or both, would provide an avenue for participants to transition smoothly towards implementation of what they learned during the workshop.

PD helps improve teacher effectiveness and student learning. Job related PD has been noted as an effective method to encourage teachers to learn (Mizell, 2010). PD for teachers is used in school districts to help teachers continue to grow in their positions as educators (Quint, 2011). Teachers are more interested in learning a new skill or approach when a PD is focused on relevant topics and can evoke tangible results (Gulamhussein, 2013). A PD program can give teachers the knowledge and resources to successfully enhance school curriculum, collaborate with colleagues and increase student engagement. Lutrick and Szabo (2012) found that effective PD is ongoing, includes participants' collaboration, is designed based on data, is driven by participants' interest, and is interactive. Existing literature on effective professional development emphasized inconsistencies between successful in-service programs and the state of professional expansion in populations of teachers (Cohen, 2010; Thompson et al., 2012). The literature also revealed many examples and research findings from professional development efforts and systemic restructuring initiatives in schools (Avalos 2011;

Damon, 2010; Durlak et al., 2011; Goldhaber & Hansen, 2012; Semadeni, 2009). Many

teachers do not report uplifting professional development experiences. Marrongelle et al.

(2013) stated that 50% of the participating teachers stated insignificant change in their

professional learning experiences and improved teaching practice.

     Designing professional development activities. Brookfield (2005) explained

that at one time, in-service training was simply a number of workshops or brief program

options that offered teachers updated communication on characteristics of program

efforts. Champion (2003) stated that routine teacher in-service programs often yielded

reasonable development. However, research about dynamic modifications, new images,

or modules of teacher education and new standards based on reform has escalated

(Bullock, 2011; Cohen, 2010; Goldring et al., 2015; Grossman et al., 2009; Kedzior &

Fifield, 2004). The crucial component has been that effective professional development

has fashioned an empathetic base that has helped to change and transform quality schools

(Harris & Sass, 2011).

     Desimone (2011) suggested that PD should include 20 or more contact hours

spread over a semester. This would allow time for participants to recap the information in

a timely fashion and begin the process of incorporating their learning into the classroom.

Desimone (2011) suggested that PD workshop organizers should follow-up with

participants after the training. Following up, whether individually, collectively, or both,

would provide an avenue for participants to transition smoothly towards implementation

of what they learned during the workshop. Well-designed PD workshops should include

content matter that enhance the knowledge and skills of the learners within the program,

and focus on how the participants in the program learn that content.   A well-designed workshop needs to be presented to the participants in such a way that appeals to their needs and desire (Gibson & Brooks, 2012).

Guskey (2014) argued that the effectiveness of a professional development workshop is dependent upon how well PD activities are planned. Hirsh (2012) suggested that when designing a professional development workshop, planning activities must begin with the end result which is to improve student learning (Hill, Beisiegel, & Jacob, 2013). Guskey (2014) stated that content focus involves activities that focus on subject matter content and how teachers utilize that content. Archibald, Coggshall, Croft, and Goe (2011) stated that workshops that provide opportunities for participants to actively practice what they learn enables understanding of the content presented and creation of implementation strategies that can be used to improve practice. In active learning, workshop participants are guided through activities designed to involve them in exploration, dialogue, inquiry, evaluation and other active learning strategies (Gibson & Brooks, 2012).

Active learning during PD provides opportunities for teachers to observe others, be observed and receive feedback, analyze student work, lead discussions, or make presentations rather than inactively listening to lectures (Desimone et al., 2013). Providing active learning experiences during PD, such as reviewing student work or receiving feedback on teaching, was found to increase the effect of the PD on teachers' instruction (Desimone, 2002). Allen & Penuel (2015) stated that coherence in a PD

program occurs when the PD is relevant to teachers' perceived needs and state initiatives so that the workshop is connected and compatible to what is being taught.

Teachers as learners in professional development. Professional development (PD) for teachers is recognized as a key vehicle through which to improve teaching and, in turn, to improve student achievement. Professional development is also a way to introduce curriculum and pedagogical reforms (Carr et al., 2000). Killion (2006) stated that teachers need to experience on-going sessions of learning, collaboration, and application, accompanied by school and classroom-based support, over an ample time period in order to incorporate new behaviors fully into a teacher's repertoire' and that attention needs to be focused on the teacher as a learner.

In PD, teachers are encouraged to become active learners who pursue continued growth in their knowledge, understandings and skills to support the development of themselves as ongoing learners (Petrie & McGee, 2012). Beavers (2009) suggested that for PD to be effective it should take into consideration the characteristics of adult learners, and it should include self-directed learning, transformative learning and critical reflection. Bayar (2014) found the importance of teacher involvement in the designing and planning of professional development activities and declared that teachers should be included in developing and approving of professional development activities.

Evaluating the success of professional development programs. An essential component of professional development activities involves ongoing and systematic evaluation procedures. The role of evaluation is not only to provide information on the impact of professional development, but also to provide data for refining and adjusting

professional development activities to ensure that services can be improved on an ongoing basis (Guskey, 1995). Killion (2008) stated that evaluating professional development enables program managers and participants to make data-based decisions about the program. He further stated that if the evaluation is done well, everyone benefits. If it is done poorly, it will be a waste of time and resources. The most useful evaluations result from a desire to improve both the program and its results (Killion, 2008). Spaulding (2008) indicated that evaluating a PD program is crucial because it helps in ascertaining the value of the program and whether changes to the program are needed before implementation occurs.

The success of PD workshops can be measured through formative and summative evaluations (Looney, 2011). Formative evaluations occur throughout the workshop to provide feedback on an ongoing basis to improve learning. Summative evaluations occur at the end of the workshop. Summative evaluations allow for additional feedback from the learner on how the overall PD workshop can be improved for future implementation.

Research highlights various methods for evaluating professional development opportunities. After receiving professional development, participant satisfaction is most commonly evaluated but participant use of the new skills and associated student outcomes are least likely to be evaluated (Muijs & Lindsay, 2008). Desimone (2009) discussed the various methods for how to measure effective professional development, including evaluating pedagogical concepts, instructional methods, and implementation. Desimone (2009) stated that teachers can be involved in planning the evaluation by

helping to sharpen the evaluation questions, collecting and analyzing data, and reporting on evaluation results and making recommendations based on those results.

Research About Best Practices for the Implementation of a PD Workshop for Teachers

The implementation of effective professional development for teachers leads to changes in teacher practice and student learning (Killion & Hirsh, 2013). Desimone et al. (2013) stated that, there is considerable evidence from research that effective PDs that help improve teaching practice and students' learning must have at least the following five features (a) *content focus*: activities that are focused on subject matter content and how students learn that content; (b) *active learning*: opportunities for teachers to observe, receive feedback, analyze student work, or make presentations, as opposed to passively listening to lectures; (c*) coherence*: content, goals, and activities that are consistent with the school curriculum and goals, teacher knowledge and beliefs, the needs of students, and school, district, and state reforms and policies; (d) *sustained duration*: PD activities that are ongoing throughout the school year and include 20 hours or more of contact time; and (e) *collective participation*: groups of teachers from the same grade, subject, or school participate in PD activities together to build an interactive learning community.

Resources. Professional development that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students requires prioritizing, monitoring and coordinating resources for educator learning (Killion & Hirsh, 2013). According to Killion & Hirsh (2013), effective professional development requires active participation and support from faculty and staff members, ongoing time for learning and collaboration, funding aids in

supporting registrations, programs, courses, supplies, and services that extend local expertise of school and district, integration of technology such as interactive whiteboards, tablets, projectors, and materials such as books, lessons, instructional tools, and other print or electronic resources. Killion & Hirsh (2013) stated that program managers need to (a) define internal and external resources for PD, (b) recommend resources to align PD with high-priority student and educator learning needs and to support implementation, (c) allocate time for collaborative PD within the schedule, (d) monitor effectiveness and efficiency of the use of resources for PD by reviewing data and adjusting direction of resources as needed, (e) design and implement a comprehensive, PD resource plan, which includes repurposed resources, schedules, technology, internal and external human resources and grants or other funding sources.

Research About Best Practices for Preparing Professionals to Become Advocates

Advocacy is the way that individuals explain to policy makers, as well as to the public, the reasons why their profession is important to the needs of society (Mark, 2002. One of the roles of an advocate is to do lobbying, policy research, and engage in other types of policy change techniques (DeVita & Mosher-Williams, 2001). Mark (2002) discussed the steps involved in planning an advocacy campaign, from writing goals to evaluation

- Defining advocacy goals

- Developing an advocacy strategy

- Leadership and organization

- Framing and carrying the message

- Mobilization and action

- Measurement of progress toward goal and achievement of objectives.

According to Boylan and Dalrymple (2011), advocates require a significant set of skills to undertake the role effectively; there is a need for ongoing training and regular supervision to maximize effectiveness. Advocates will require a clearly defined role which includes a number of key components relating to specific and specialist skills, knowledge and experience (Townsley et al, 2009). The *Cust-Off* project shares the responsibility of helping music teachers to understand the concepts of advocacy and to apply them successfully in their quest of becoming advocates for music education.

The literature suggests that there are some important elements that should be present in all advocacy interventions. Effective advocacy work should be overt and open to scrutiny by key stakeholders and for the purpose of monitoring and evaluation (Chapman & Wameyo, 2001; Creech 2001; Davies, 2001). Miller (1994) stated that past assessment of advocacy work suggests that how the goals and objectives of the intervention are framed is critical for both immediate clarity of purpose and for building broader and long-term support for an issue. Miller (1994) further stated that effective advocacy campaigns frame the issue or goal of the intervention with attention to both short term, specific and achievable objectives and long term transformational goals.

Teachers as advocates can influence decision makers and promote changes to laws and policies to advance the mission of high quality education for their students (Cochran-Smith, 2004). Lindley & Richards (2002) articulate six predominant key elements of advocacy and recommended that advocates:

1. *Function by speaking out, acting or writing*. Boylan and Dalrymple (2011) stated that advocacy is active and involve doing something.

2. *Minimize conflict of interest*. Boylan and Dalrymple (2011) described this issue as one of the most important issue to come to deal with. He further discussed how an advocate must identify and attempt to reduce conflicts of interest or, at least, be prepared to acknowledge his/her limitations as an advocate.

3. *Perceived interests*. The advocate does not just speak up for what a person may want or what a person may be interested in (Boylan and Dalrymple, 2011).

4. *Promote well-being and justice*. Boylan and Dalrymple (2011) stated that advocates must understand that the well-being of, and justice for disadvantaged, devalued people are often at risk.

5. *Vigor of action*. Advocates must understand that advocacy requires fervor and depth of feeling in advancing the cause or interest of another, taking a lead, initiating sense of urgency doing more than what is done routinely challenging the community (Boylan and Dalrymple, 2011).

6. *Costs*. The potential costs to the advocate include one or many of the following at various times: time, emotional wear and tear, social rejection and ridicule, financial insecurity, sickness (Boylan and Dalrymple, 2011).

There is increased awareness about the importance of advocacy and changes have taken place to enable increased participation. However, large barriers to effective advocacy remain. It is important for advocates to know the common obstacles to effective

advocacy in order to overcome them (Uusi-Rauva & Heikkurinen, 2013). Barriers can include:

- Being unprepared

- Fearing retaliation, or worrying that others will think you are ridiculous

- Being unaware of one's rights

- Having unrealistic expectations

- Being unwilling to listen to other people, or to explore alternate solutions

- Feeling inferior or less educated than others

- Language deficiency (Boylan and Dalrymple, 2011).

Music teachers participating in the Cuts-Off workshop will engage in collective participation in several collaborative sessions during which they will exchange ideas and discuss new strategies on how to overcome these barriers.

Project Description

Based on the literature reviewed in the previous section, a workshop may be an effective way to provide PD to help music teachers in learning how to cope with budget cuts by working in collaboration with one another, in learning how to share resources to keep their music programs strong, in learning how to promote music education and its benefits in the county, and in learning how to advocate for music education. Music teachers participating in the *Cuts-Off* workshop will engage in collective participation in several collaborative sessions during which they will exchange ideas and discuss new strategies towards the common goal of building stronger and better music programs at their schools and their communities. Participants will also create action plans, present

their experiences, engage in round-table discussion, large and small group discussions, and more. They will practice new skills by preparing self-management plans and reviewing sample work-based learning projects. The *Cuts-Off* workshop is designed to promote participation, incorporate participants' experiences, employ collaborative enquiry, guide participants on applying what they learned, and empower the participants through reflection and action based on their learning. Both formative and summative evaluations will be used in the *Cuts-Off* workshop.

Potential Resources and Existing Supports

Implementation of the *Cuts-Off* project requires space, time, participation and teacher support. The resources to implement *Cuts-Off* are already available.

Time. The Florida Music Teacher Association (FMEA) values and promotes PD in its overall mission. Every school year during the Fall, the association sets time aside to engage music teachers in PD during which all music teachers are required to participate by their school districts. In preparing for the workshop, music teachers will be provided with a copy of the proposed workshop agenda and an explanation of the roles they are expected to play during the workshop. Music teachers will be awarded master plan points that can be apply for recertification upon the completion of the three days PD. The *Cuts-Off* workshop spans over three consecutive days from 8:30 AM until 3:00 PM with intervals of breaks and lunch.

Technology resources. The facilitator and motivational speaker will use audio-visual equipment, computers/laptops, internet and possibly external hard drives to successfully execute the workshop. The presentation room will be fully equipped to meet

these needs.

   Logistics. The third of the potential resources and existing supports is logistics. The workshop and break out session will occur in the Tampa convention center (TCC) that is centrally located and easily accessible to all attendees. The TCC is equipped with round tables, rectangular tables, and chairs to accommodate the table sessions, group activities, and breakfast service. The classrooms for breakout sessions include movable desks and chairs that can be rearranged to accommodate different settings as required. The room's layout will be set up by the custodial and maintenance staff as requested.

Potential Barriers

   Potential barriers to implementing the *Cuts-Off* project might be the possibility of resistance to workshop participation by music teachers across the state. Music teachers could show lack of interest to participate because they have other priorities, or they do not perceive the value in the workshop. Music teachers may not buy into the professional development opportunity. Music teachers may also choose to attend other PDs that will be offered at nearby classrooms that they may perceive to be more relevant than the *Cuts-Off* project. To eliminate this barrier, I will discuss plans for the proposed *Cuts-Off* project three weeks before preplanning time with the association director to provide the organization with ample time to promote the project in their website. As an active member of the association, I am able to contact other members via email regarding the upcoming workshop, which will allow them adequate time to adjust their personal schedules.

Proposal for Implementation and Timetable

My intention is to make a formal proposal to the Florida Music Educator Association of the study in October 2017 to request permission to hold the 3-day PD workshop in January 2018. During this meeting with the director, I will present the findings of my study and the details of the proposed workshop to the director. Upon approval from the director, I will proceed with the planning and organizing of the events as follows:

- Request a salary quote from the guest speaker and submit requisition to the program administrator for payment.

- Recruit the music teacher presenters, panelists, and other program participants.

- Inform the teachers of the workshop ensuring to state the objectives and benefits.

- Print workshop materials for the three days.

- Request room set up for the three days.

- Upload workshop content and materials to the Educator Pages companion website.

- Maintain presence on the Educator Pages companion website for follow-up and support to participants.

Roles and Responsibilities of Self and Others

To fully implement the project, I will serve as the facilitator of the *Cuts-Off* PD. More importantly, my role and responsibility is to initiate the implementation of the *Cuts-Off* workshop for music teachers. Following the workshop, I will be responsible for following up with music teachers and offering support with the implementation of the

integration of strategies learned during the workshop by maintaining presence on the educator pages companion website. The music teachers' responsibilities include attending the workshop, participating in activities and utilizing the resources provided in the workshop and ensure implementation of the *Cuts-Off* workshop learning in the classroom. Music teachers will also be responsible to create an action plan to advocate for music education. The role of the motivational speaker is to teach music teachers the skills to be advocates for their music programs. I will also act as the presenter. My responsibility as a presenter will be to provide information and resources to music teachers on the options available to maintain effective music programs at their schools and communities. The on-campus cafeteria staff is responsible for providing nourishing and well-presented breakfasts and snacks to the workshop attendees during the three days of sessions.

Project Evaluation Plan

Project evaluation refers to the systematic investigation of an object's worth or merit which can take place through various assessment methods. The evaluation methods for the *Cuts-Off* workshops will be both formative and summative. Steward, Mickelson, and Brumm (2004) indicated that formative assessment provides an understanding of the collaboration that occurs between teaching and learning. I will use a short formative evaluation survey at the end of each workshop session that includes a five-point Likert-scale rating instrument and open-ended questions (see Appendix A).

The formative evaluation will be used as feedback about individual sessions and to help me and other workshop presenters make improvements for the remaining days of

the workshop. Feedback will be gathered during the PD and three months after in the form of a survey and a follow up survey. The use of a survey after each session facilitates immediate modifications to better serve the stakeholders. I will conduct the formative evaluation at the end of each day for each session. The formative evaluation will ask the participants how they perceived, (a) the presenters' expertise on the content presented, (b) the organization and flow of the presentation (c) the depth of the materials used, (d) whether the presentation enhanced an understanding of the subject, and (e) whether the handouts enhanced the presentation content. The formative evaluation will include two open-ended questions that ask participants how will they use the information learned in the session. The formative evaluation will help to provide improvement within the training as it is occurring, by adjusting as necessary to the following day's sessions.

Project Implications

The *Cuts-Off* project will address the findings of the research that showed the impact of budget cuts on elementary music teachers' programs, their students, and their communities from the study areas. The possible implication for social change is that music teachers can use these PD resources to create successful fund-raising activities, to share resources, and to serve as effective advocates of music education in schools. Music teachers can use this professional development opportunity as a model to assist their schools to raise awareness on the importance of music education at their schools, on students, and on their communities.

Local Community

Poor children have fewer music opportunities in schools that contribute to their lower academic achievement (Andreassen, 2013). Because my study was conducted in poor neighborhood schools, The *Cuts-Off* project may impact social change when music teachers serve as advocates to promote music programs in those schools and communities by raising awareness to stakeholders on the importance of investing in such programs in schools.

Far-Reaching

Although this project has focused on addressing the impact of budget cuts on elementary music teachers' programs, their students, and their communities from the study areas, *Cuts-Off* could help music educators to bring awareness to schools of the district to take a harder look at their music programs, the benefits that such programs can have on students' academic achievements and how they can work toward a unified plan of action to strengthen these programs. Furthermore, as music teachers become more aware of how to use the practical strategies for teaching with limited resources, learning how to share resources, and becoming better advocates of music education, they can help build relationships between schools for building curriculum with music education programs.

The purposes of the *Cuts-Off* workshop are to (a) assist music teachers in learning how to cope with budget cuts by working in collaboration with one another (b) in learning how to share resources to keep their music programs strong (c) in learning how to promote music education and its benefits in the county (d) in learning how to advocate

for music education. The Professional Development project was the best way for me to

meet my intended purpose. Implementing *Cuts-Off* will provide music teachers with the

knowledge and skills to create effective music programs while coping with budget cuts

and to become effective advocates for their music programs. My hope is that through

teacher collaboration, *Cuts-Off* will bring positive social change in developing working

relationships among music educators that can positively affect school curriculum and

community support.

In Section 4, I will discusses my reflections about this reflections this project

study. I will address project strengths, recommendations for remediation and limitation,

scholarship, project development and evaluation, leadership and change, analysis of self

as a scholar, analysis of self as a practitioner, analysis of self as a project developer,

projects potential impact on social change, implications, applications and directions for

future research.

Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

Project Strengths and Limitations

The purposes of the *Cuts-Off* workshop are to assist music teachers in learning (a) how to cope with budget cuts by working in collaboration with one another, (b) how to share resources to keep their music programs strong, (c) how to promote music education and its benefits in the county, and (d) how to advocate for music education. I devised a PD workshop as my project based upon the findings of this study, as described in Section 3.

In this section, I will discuss the project's strengths and limitations and provide recommendations for alternative approaches. In addition to presenting my perspectives on project development, leadership, and change, I will reflect on the importance of the work and discuss the implications of the project, its application, and directions for future research.

Project Strengths

The *Cuts-Off* workshop has several identified strengths. First, the workshop was designed to engage music teachers. If teachers are more engaged, they may be able to build stronger and better music programs at their schools. Quint (2015) argued that engaging teachers as learners in a professional development setting can help improve teachers' skills, attitudes, and approaches in light of the development of new teaching techniques and objectives, new circumstances, and new educational research.

Second, music teachers participating in the *Cuts-Off* workshop will collaborate in several sessions during which they will exchange ideas and explore new strategies

towards the common goal of accomplishing student success. They will share ideas on how to integrate professional work experience into the students' academic agenda and assessment. According to Quint (2015), teachers participating in a professional development workshop can exchange information and expertise among themselves and, in the process, help weaker teachers become more effective. Third, I designed the *Cuts-Off* workshop to address a concern that is shared by many music teachers, which is the future of music education in public schools (Quint, 2015). I believe it is probable that music teachers who participate in the PD workshop will work in collaboration to create an effective action plan to promote music education at their schools and communities.

Project Limitations

I have identified three weaknesses of the PD design. The first weakness is that music teacher participants may not be able to attend all sessions during the 3 scheduled days. Although music teachers are mandated to attend music PD workshops every year during the fall, they are not required to participate in the *Cuts Off* workshop; they have the option to attend other PD workshops that they deem to be more convenient. Based on my experience, many music teachers have other obligations, including employment and families. In addressing this weakness, I will give music teachers ample notice regarding the *Cuts Off* workshop so that they can adjust their personal schedules and attend it, if they choose.

The second weakness of the PD design is the distance that music teachers must travel to get to the PD venue. The PD will be offered to all music teachers from the state of Florida. Florida is a large state and is approximately 58,560 square miles (Florida

Department of State, 2017). Many teachers will have to travel a great distance to make it to the convention center where the PD workshop will be offered. To address this weakness, I will remind music teachers of the positive impact that *Cuts Off* workshop participation may have on their music programs, and of the possibility of being awarded master plan point for certification renewals.

The third weakness of the PD design is that there is no formal long-term plan for follow-up support that leads to the full implementation of the project and beyond. I can set up and maintain a website, but such initiative would require a significant amount of time and energy to develop and music teachers' collaborative effort to create working groups where teachers can meet to discuss the full implementation of the project. This collaboration would be required more generally in order to fully implement the project in addressing this limitation, music teachers will be encouraged to participate in monthly meetings with colleagues to discuss project implementation and future goals for their music programs.

Recommendations for Alternative Approaches

The purposes of the *Cuts-Off* workshop are to assist music teachers in learning how to cope with budget cuts by working in collaboration with one another, how to share resources to keep their music programs strong, how to promote music education and the benefits of music education in the county, and how to advocate for music education. An alternate approach to the project could be to include administrators in the process of implementation. Such an approach would allow both administrators and teachers to collaborate on developing an action plan to achieve project goals. This approach could

also include post-workshop trainings and meetings that would allow administrators and music teachers to find possible solutions that can help strengthen their music programs which could also include post-workshop trainings and meetings leading up to the implementation of the project.

Recommendation for Music Teachers

One of the challenges that music teachers in my district encounter is the shortages of musical instruments that all teacher participants are experiencing at their schools. In order to cope with such a challenge, I recommend that music educators provide support to one another by having collaborative meetings, sharing resources, and making themselves available to colleagues. Another recommendation would be to develop an instrument sharing program where schools from the district can share instruments and develop joint funds raising activities for field trips and purchase new and repair old instruments. I also recommend the creation of a pool of instruments from which music teachers in the district can draw.

Recommendations for Further Research

I recommend replicating this study to determine the generalizability and relevance of the findings in other school districts. In conducting my research, I did not elicit the perceptions of middle school and high school music teachers. As such, future researchers could examine the perceptions of these music teachers of the impact of budget reductions on their music programs. Future researchers could also explore the perceptions of students and parents on the impact of budget cuts on their music programs and communities

Scholarship, Project Development and Evaluation, and Leadership and Change

Scholarship

This doctoral study has enhanced my critical thinking and reasoning skills and helped me practice the scholarly habit of questioning. I have learned to write a sound proposal, organize research material, and collect and analyze data systematically. Conducting my research has taught me to be cognizant of researcher bias and to take steps to prevent its occurrence during the study. The constant practice of reading and analyzing scholarly articles and books has contributed immensely to my growth and development as a scholar.

Developing this project study also helped me to better understand how to address a research problem in an applied manner by creating a project based on my research findings. I have not only gained knowledge and skills in conducting research, but I learned about developing a project as an outcome of my research. I am now able to design PD workshops that are tailored to meet the needs of different learners collectively and separately.

Project Development and Evaluation

Project development helped me to address the local problem regarding the impact of budget reductions on music programs at schools, on students and communities. After completing the data analysis and consulting with my doctoral chair and second member, I decided that a professional development program for music teachers would be a suitable project. A review of the literature guided my design of the overall workshop and my development of the workshop learning sessions. From the review of literature, I learned

how to write learning outcomes and develop evaluations for the sessions as well as the overall project.

Data collection and analysis made it possible for me to act as an agent of change in creating a project designed for the culture examined in the study. The research enabled me to create a 3-Day PD to assist music teachers in learning how to cope with budget cuts by working in collaboration with one another, to assist music teachers in learning how to share resources to keep their music programs strong, to assist music teachers in learning how to promote music education and its benefits in the county, to assist music teachers in learning how to advocate for music education.

The findings from the study helped me to discover that a PD project was the most appropriate in providing teachers with the opportunity to learn effective strategies from one another to create and improve school music programs. I am hoping that teacher collaboration can bring positive social change by developing working relationships among music educators which is vital to achieve the overall goals and objectives of the project.

Leadership and Change

I have always considered myself to be a teacher leader. From the very moment when the idea to conduct a research study came to mind, I have wondered how I can use my leadership skills to make a difference in the lives of educators, students and members of my community. I needed to understand how to conduct and understand effective research strategies to bring about the change that is needed. Through this project study, I gained insight into the existing problem by reading the literature, and conducting

interviews. I began to understand the importance of research study when I took deliberate actions toward developing a project study to promote change in the community. The project helped me to outline a plan for implementation by establishing goals for solving a social problem, and equipped me with the necessary skills to be an effective agent of change.

Reflection on Importance of the Work

As a child, I learned that perseverance is a virtue that can lead to greatness. As a parent and educator with family and career obligations, it was extremely difficult to manage the workload required by this study. As a scholar, I learned that writing a quality dissertation takes time, patience, and commitment.

Analysis of Self as Scholar

Throughout this journey, I have acquired some level of scholarship. However, this project has enhanced my ability to solve problems, self-reflect and most of all, to persevere. I have also learned the importance of achieving and maintaining alignment within the study. I have encountered various difficulties that required me to think objectively to solve problems. Some challenges nearly caused me to abandon my study. But through self-reflection, I could rid myself of negative thoughts towards completing the study, think more clearly and make informed decisions that enable me to be flexible and remain persistent during these challenges. Guided by the literature and other scholars in the field of research study, I experienced progressive and healthy growth as a scholar and a life-long learner by taking such an immense interest in conducting my research independently.

Analysis of Self as Practitioner

This study gave me the insight into who I have become as a practitioner. I am able to use many of the techniques I learned during the development of the project in my everyday facilitation and teaching. In addition, I am able to share these techniques with my colleagues and engage in collaboration about ways to improve students' academic performance. The doctorate study process makes it possible for me to use many of the techniques I learned during the development of the project in my everyday facilitation and teaching. In addition, I have utilized what I have learned through this study to interact with other colleagues to establish and maintain mutual awareness of shared goals and to influence one another to achieve these goals. As a practitioner, I have made a commitment to student learning. I have learned to adapt to the changes that occur music, nature of students, and nature of schools.

Analysis of Self as Project Developer

As a project developer, I have learned to make decisions to create a project based on findings from research. Implementing a professional development requires the project developer to set specific goals, objectives and outcomes based on the nature of the problem. I developed a PD that will assist music teachers to learn how to cope with budget cuts by working collaboratively with one another, assist music teachers in learning how to share resources to keep their music programs strong, assist music teachers in learning how to promote music education and its benefits in the county and assist music teachers in learning how to become advocates for music education. Through

this process, I designed a research-based project to solve a cultural problem with the potential to produce a practical outcome.

The Project's Potential Impact on Social Change

Participants may be able to share what they have learned from this project with the members of their communities and beyond. The project can potentially assist educators in improving music programs at their schools, which in turn can bolster learning in children. Social change involves a collective action of individuals who are closest to the social problem to develop solutions that address social issues. Through this project, participants will be able to collaborate and share ideas to bring about positive change in their music programs. Improvement made in their programs will create a positive impact on student learning.

Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research

This project study may provide meaningful information for music teachers to understand the nature of music programs at their schools, the impact of budgets reductions on such programs, students, and communities and the steps they can take to ameliorate the situation. Implementing *Cuts-Off* may influence positive change by providing music teachers with effective strategies to cope with the effect of budget reductions on their programs and to become strong advocates for their programs. Music educators can benefit greatly from advocating and sharing information learned from the study by informing school stakeholders of the benefits of the programs on the school curriculum that can help shape future decisions from policy makers.

This study may serve as a tool for music teachers to gain the knowledge to support their music programs and make plausible decisions regarding school curricula. This PD program may also promote teacher collaboration, influence administrators in providing greater support for music programs, enhance curriculum to motivate student participation and promote community involvement in educational reform.

Conclusion

The purposes of this qualitative project study were to address elementary music teachers' experiences with and perceptions of the effect of budget reductions on music programs at their schools, on their communities, and on their low socioeconomic status students. I used a qualitative case study approach that included nine semi-structured interviews to with elementary level music educators to arrive at the findings. The findings highlighted a need to design a project to assist music teachers in learning how to cope with budget cuts by working in collaboration with one another, in learning how to share resources to keep their music programs strong, in learning how to promote music education and its benefits in the county, in learning how to become advocates for music education. This doctoral study contributed significantly to my growth and development as a scholar, practitioner, and project developer. I am better able to write academic proposals, collect and analyze research data, engage in higher critical enquiry, design professional development projects, and align projects to effect positive social change.

The knowledge gained from the literature and scholastic decisions that I had to make during this process showed me the true nature of a teacher leader. The target audience for this case study is music teachers. The project study encourages teacher

collaboration and promotes the sharing of resources that better equip them to cope with the impact of budget reductions on their music programs.

The severity and nature of the impact of budget cuts on music programs and the importance of music education in schools are the main reasons why I thought it was important to continue further study and hopefully push forth the changes necessary for the advancement of music education in schools. It is my hope that this project study will spark a greater discussion among music teachers and administrators on the importance of music education in schools and that this study will help raise awareness of the educational benefits of maintaining music education as an essential part of overall school curriculum.

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Appendix A: The Project

Target Audience: Music Teachers in Florida

Title: Cuts-Off Workshop	
Purpose	The purposes of the Cuts-Off workshop are to (a) assist music teachers in learning how to cope with budget cuts by working in collaboration with one another (b) assist music teachers in learning how to share resources to keep their music programs strong (c) assist music teachers in learning how to promote music education and its benefits in the county (d) assist music teachers in learning how to become advocates for music education
Goal	The goal of the workshop is to equip music teachers to gain knowledge and skills to create effective music programs while coping with budget cuts • **Knowledge**: Participants who attend the workshop will gain an understanding of the impact of budget cuts on music education, how to cope with budget cuts, how to share resources, and how to become better advocates of music education at their schools and communities. • **Skills**: With the knowledge gained, workshop participants will be able to utilize techniques learned in the workshop to develop meaningful music programs and to be able to serve as effective advocates on behalf of music education.
Learning Outcomes	Upon completion of the end of the Cuts-Off workshop, music teacher attendee will be able to: 1. Brainstorm for ideas to create stronger music programs with limited resources. 2. Learn strategies to support their programs and find ways to share resources. 3. Describe ways to become better advocates of music education
	Target Audience Music Teachers in Florida
	Timeline 3 Days
	Location Tampa Convention Center Breakout Sessions – First floor

Workshop Plan

Topic/ Activities	Time Frame	Duration	Mode of Delivery	Presenter /Sponsor	Materials Needed
Cuts-Off Day 1					
Workshop Registration	8:30 am – 8:30 am	60 mins.	Registration via registration form	Facilitator / Music Teachers Volunteers	Name Badges Agenda
Welcome, Introduction, and Invocation	8:30 am – 9:00 am	15 min.	Discussion	Facilitator (Jimmy Michel)	Microphone
Session 1: The Impact of Budget Cuts on Music Programs Students and Community	8:45 am – 10:15 am	90 mins.	• Presentation (60 mins.) • Question and Answer Session (30 mins.)	Facilitator/ Presenter (Jimmy Michel)	Internet Computer Microphone Formative Evaluation Handouts Note pads Pens
Snack Break	10:30 am – 10:45 am	15 mins.	Served in the lobby	On-Campus Dining Services	
Session 2: my Program	10:45 am – 11:45 am	60 mins.	• PowerPoint Presentation (30 mins.) • Discussion (30 mins.)	Facilitator / Presenter (Jimmy Michel) Group Leaders, Recorders, and Reporters Facilitator	Computer Microphone Activity Cards Note pads Pens
Lunch	11:45 pm- 12:45 pm	60 mins.	Outside Lunch		
Session 3: Understanding the Impact of Budget Cuts on Music Programs	12:45 pm - 1:45 pm	60 mins.	• Panel Discussion (60 mins.)	Music Teachers Facilitator (Jimmy Michel)	Computer Internet Microphone Note pads Pens
Break	1:45 pm – 2:00 pm	15 mins.			
Session 4: The Cuts and	2:00 pm – 2:30	30 mins.	• Presentations	Music Teachers	Computer Microphone

| Topic/ Activities	Time Frame	Duration	Mode of Delivery	Presenter /Sponsor	Materials Needed
the Importance of Music Education	pm		(30 mins) • Question and Answer Session (30 mins.)	Facilitator (Jimmy Michel) and Music Teachers	Note pads Pens
Group Wrap-Up and Evaluation	2:30 pm – 3:00 pm	30 mins.	Group Discussion Reflection	Facilitator (Jimmy Michel)	Microphone Evaluation Forms
Cuts-Off Day 2					
Continental Breakfast	8:30 am – 9:00 am	30 mins.	Buffet Style served in the lobby	On-Campus Dining Services	Buffet tables Disposable utensils
Welcome, Introduction, Invocation & and Recap	8:45 am – 9:00 am	15 min.	Discussion	Facilitator (Jimmy Michel) Student (Invocation)	Microphone
Session 1: Adapting and Coping with Cuts	9: 00 am – 10:30 am	90 mins.	• Small Groups Brainstorming (30 mins) • Presentations (30 mins.) • Discussion (30 mins.)	Facilitator (Jimmy Michel) Group Leaders Group writers Group presenters	Computer Microphone Note pads Pens
Snack Break	10:30 am – 10:45 am	15 mins.	Served in the lobby	On-Campus Dining Services	Buffet tables Disposable utensils
Session 2: Sharing Ideas and Resources	10:45 am – 11:45 pm	60 mins.	• Presentation (30 mins.) • Question & Answer Session (20 mins)	Music Teachers Facilitator (Jimmy Michel)	Computer Microphone Note pads Pens

Topic/ Activities	Time Frame	Duration	Mode of Delivery	Presenter /Sponsor	Materials Needed
			• Summary (10 mins.)		
Lunch	11:45 pm- 12:45 pm	60 mins.	Outside Lunch	On-Campus Dining Services	
Session 3: Characteristics of an Effective Music Program in Low Income Neighborhoods	12:45 pm - 1:45 pm	60 mins.	• Motivational Speaker Presentation (45 mins.) • Questions & Answers (15 mins.)	Motivational Guest Speaker Music Teachers	Computer Microphone Note pads Pens
Snack Break	1:45 pm – 2:00 am	15 mins.	Served in the lobby	On-Campus Dining Services	Buffet tables Disposable utensils
Session 4: The Music Lives on	2:00 pm – 2:45 pm	60 mins.	• Live Performance . Elementary String Ensemble (30 mins)	Facilitator / Presenter (Jimmy Michel)	Computer Microphone Note pads Pens
Wrap up and Evaluation	2:45 pm – 3:00 pm	15 mins.	Questions and Answers	Music Teachers, Ensemble Director	Microphone Evaluation Forms Handouts
Cuts-Off Day 3					
Continental Breakfast	8:30 am – 9:00 am	30 mins.	Buffet Style served in the lobby	On-Campus Dining Services	Buffet tables Disposable utensils
Welcome, Introduction, Invocation, & Recap	8:30 am – 9:00 am	30 min.	• Discussion	Facilitator (Jimmy Michel) Music Teachers	Microphone Agenda
Session 1: Advocacy Campaign Strategies and	9: 00 am – 10:30 am	90 mins.	• Presentation (60 mins) • Question	Expert Guest Speaker	Computer Microphone Note pads Pens

Topic/ Activities	Time Frame	Duration	Mode of Delivery	Presenter /Sponsor	Materials Needed
Best Practices			and Answers (30 mins.)		Handout
Snack Break	10:30 am – 10:45 am	15 mins.	Served in the lobby	On-Campus Dining Services	Buffet tables Disposable utensils
Session 2A Essential Elements of Advocacy	10: 45 am – 12:00 pm	90 mins.	➢ Presentation to Music Teachers ➢ (60 mins.) ➢ Question and Answers (Music Teachers and Expert Guest Speaker) (30 mins.)	Expert Guest Speaker	Computer Notes from previous sessions Pens Notepads
Lunch	12:00 pm-1:00 pm	60 mins.	Outside Dining Services	On-Campus Dining Services	Buffet tables Disposable utensils
Session 3: Best Practices and Community Engagement	1:00 pm – 2:00 pm	60 mins.	Discussion Expert Guest Speaker Music Teachers	Students	Computer Microphone Note pads Pens Handouts from previous days
Session 4: Only Music Teachers Knew About the Importance of Music Education	2:00 – 2:30 pm	30 mins.	• Group Discussion • Question and Answer	Music Teachers Facilitator (Jimmy Michel)	Computer Microphone Note pads Pens Handouts from previous days
Wrap up and Evaluation	2:30 pm – 3:00 pm	30 mins.	Group Discussion Reflection Summative Evaluation	Facilitator (Jimmy Michel)	Microphone Evaluation Forms

Cuts-Off Workshop Content and Resources

Cuts-Off Workshop Day 1
Welcome, Introduction, and Invocation (15 mins.)
- Welcome attendees
- Explain the purpose and objectives of the 3-Day Cuts-Off workshop
- Explain the objectives for Day one's agenda
- Offer Invocation
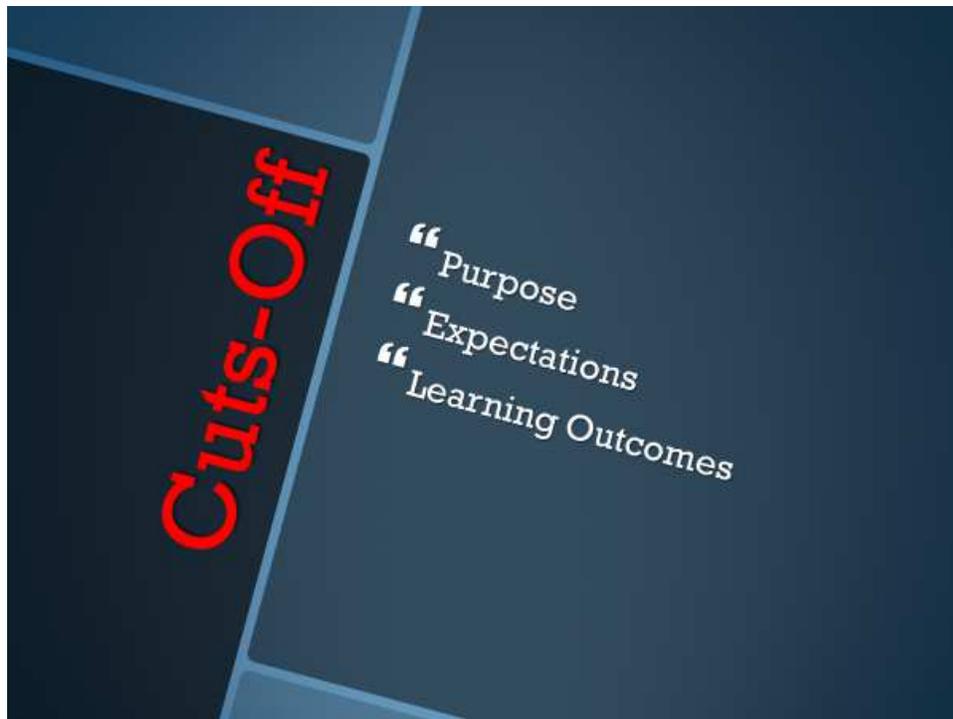
Session 1: The Impact of Budget Cuts on Music Programs Students and Community Performance
The purpose of session is to explain to music teachers the findings of my study as they related to their own experiences.
- Presentation (120 mins.)
  - Understanding Budget Cuts
  - The impact of Budget Cuts on Music Programs, Students and Communities
  - Talking Points
    - Importance of music education in elementary public schools

- Budget cuts
- Impact of budget cuts on music programs
- Impact of budget cuts on students
- Impact of budget cuts on communities
- Findings from the study
- Music teachers' experiences
- Music teachers' perspectives on the impact of budget cuts on their music programs

- Question and Answer Session with Facilitator (60 mins.)

This time allows the audience to seek clarity and asks questions generated from the content of the presentation. The facilitator will respond accordingly.
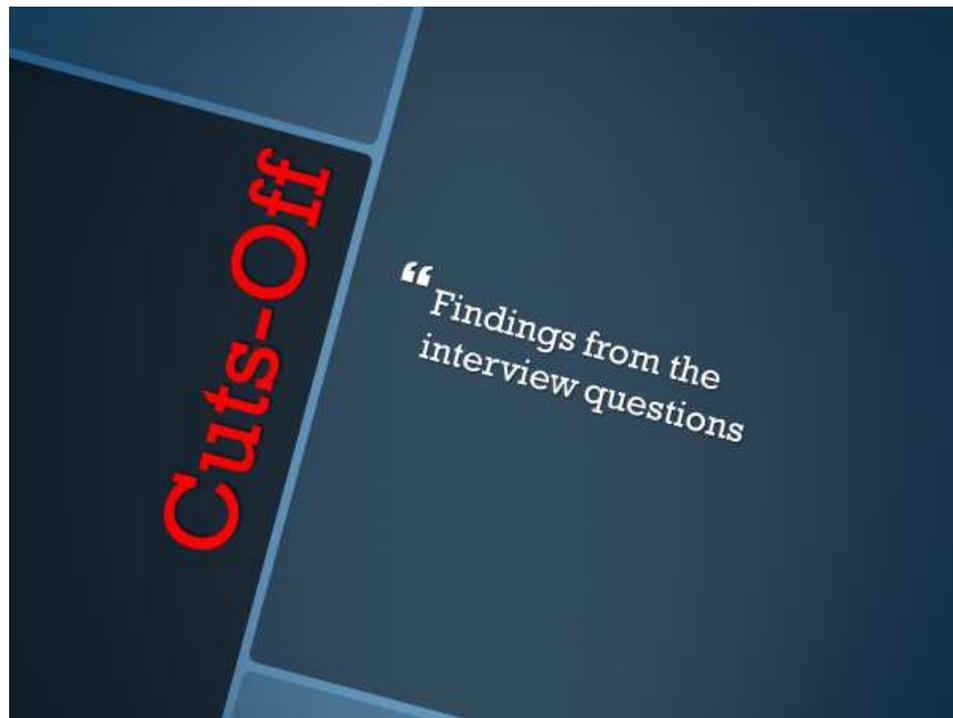
Session 2: Cuts-Off, my Program

The purpose of this session two is for attendees to discover similarities among their current music programs and to discuss the challenges their programs are facing due to budget cuts. PowerPoint Presentation (90 mins.)

Talking Point:

- Quotes from research participants
- Instrument shortages
- Funds for repair old and purchase new instruments
- Coping with shortages and cancelled programs
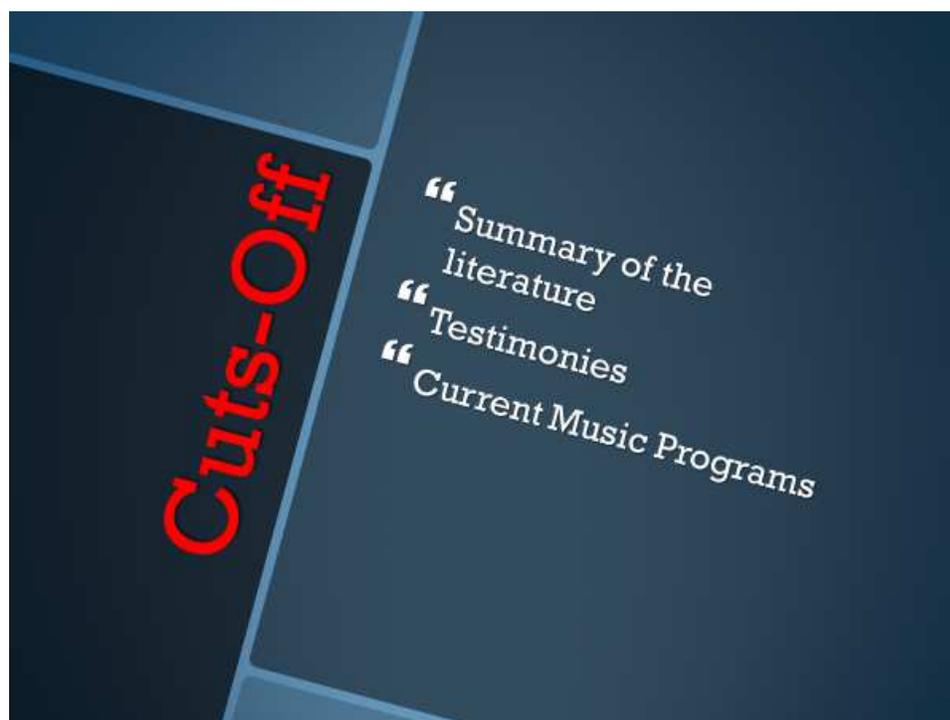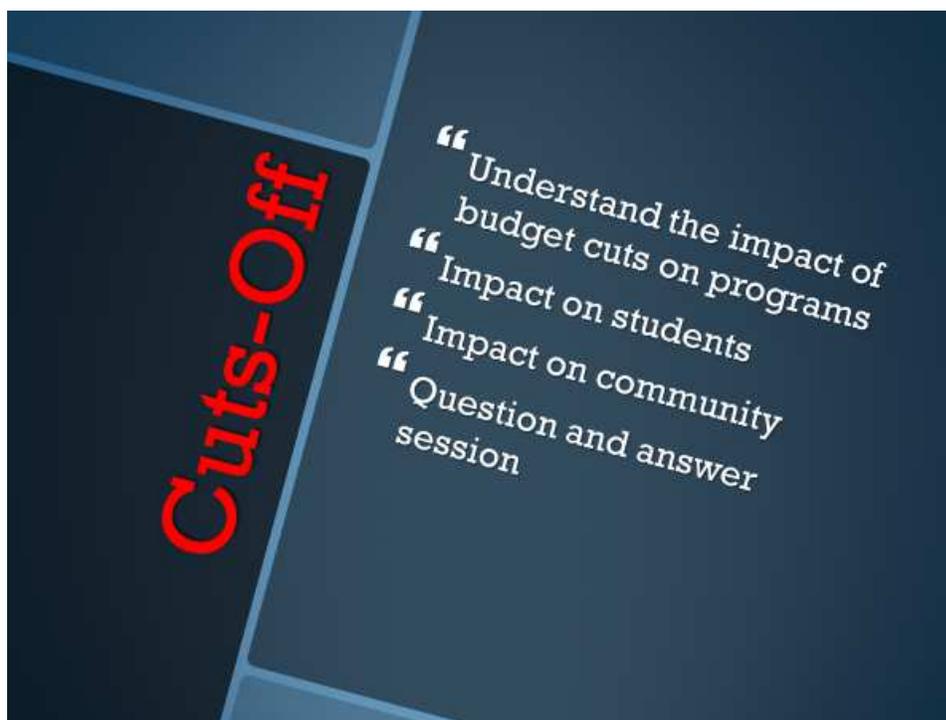
- Small Group Activity (30 mins.)
  The objective of the activity is for music teachers to use scenarios emerging from PowerPoint presentation. Music teachers will also be discussing their current music programs in groups of five. The groups will discuss their programs among group members and the group will select a leader who oversees the organization of the group, a recorder who writes the findings that the group agrees on, and a reporter who reports back to the general audience.

- Discussion (30 mins.)
  The reporters from each group will present their findings which will lead into a general discussion. The session will conclude with a summary given by the facilitator.

Session 3: Understanding the Impact of Budget Cuts on Music Programs
The purpose of this session is for music teacher to share their losses with the audience the perspectives of how budget cuts are affecting their schools' music programs.
Panel Discussion (60 mins.)
  Music teachers will be discussing their perspectives on the impact of budget cuts on their music programs, their students and their communities.

- Question and Answer
  The teachers engage the audience in questions and answers, providing clarity on any concerns raised by the audience.
- Summary

The facilitator will close the session with a summary of the panel discussion and question and answer session.

Session 4: The Cuts and the Importance of Music Programs in Schools

Cuts-Off

" Importance of Music Education
" Experiences
" Question and answer session
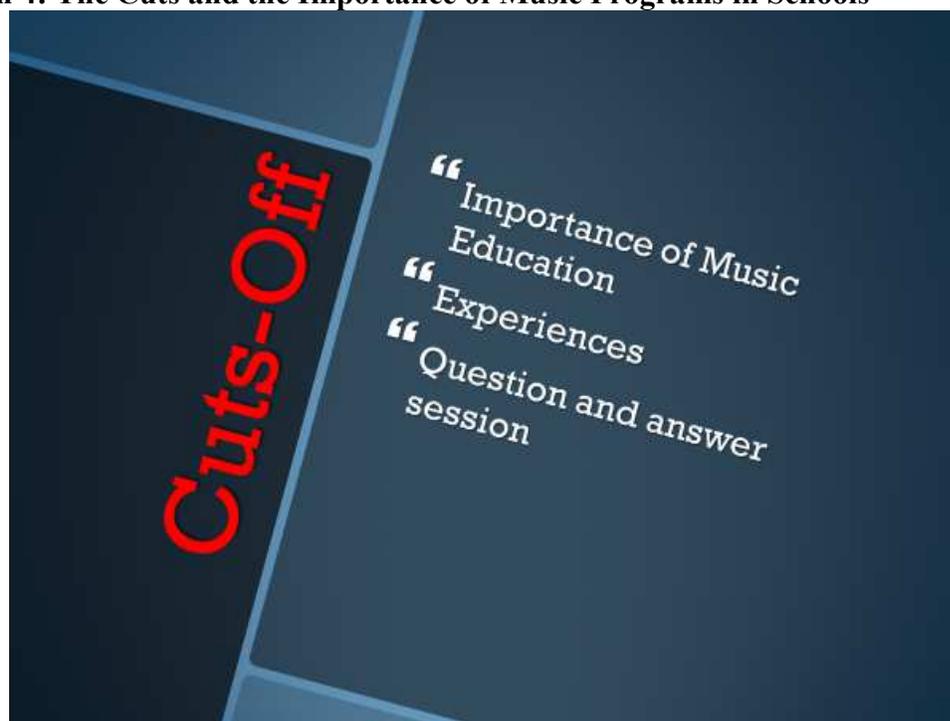
The purpose of the presentation is for music teachers to paint a picture of their schools with and without a music program. Presentation (30 mins.)

Music teachers will be allowed to share the experiences with colleagues on the impact of budget cuts at their schools, students and communities.

- Question and Answer Session
Within the time allotted, the audience may seek clarity and asks questions that were generated from the content of the presentation. The facilitator will respond accordingly.
- Group Wrap- Up and Evaluation (15 mins.)
The facilitator will close the session with a summary of the day's events.
Attendees will be asked to fill out evaluation forms for each session.

Cuts-Off Workshop - Day One References and Resources:
Music Educator National Conference (2002). Benefits of music education: Brochure, Spring 2002. Retrieved from
http://www.childrensmusicworkshop.com/advocacy/benefits.html.

Cuts-Off Workshop Day 2

Welcome, Introduction, Invocation, & Recap (15 mins.)
- Offer Invocation
- Welcome attendees and guest presenters
- Recap day one's sessions
- Explain the objectives of day two's agenda

**Session 1: Adapting and Coping with Budget Cuts**
The Purpose of this session is to present strategies and methods that music teachers could use to support their music programs at their school. Small Groups Talk and Brainstorming (60 mins)

  The audience will be involved in an open discussion about how to adapt and cope with the impact of budget cuts on their music programs.
- Question and answer (30 mins.)
  The facilitator will engage the audience in a question and answer session about how to cope with budget cuts. The facilitator will conclude the session with a summary.
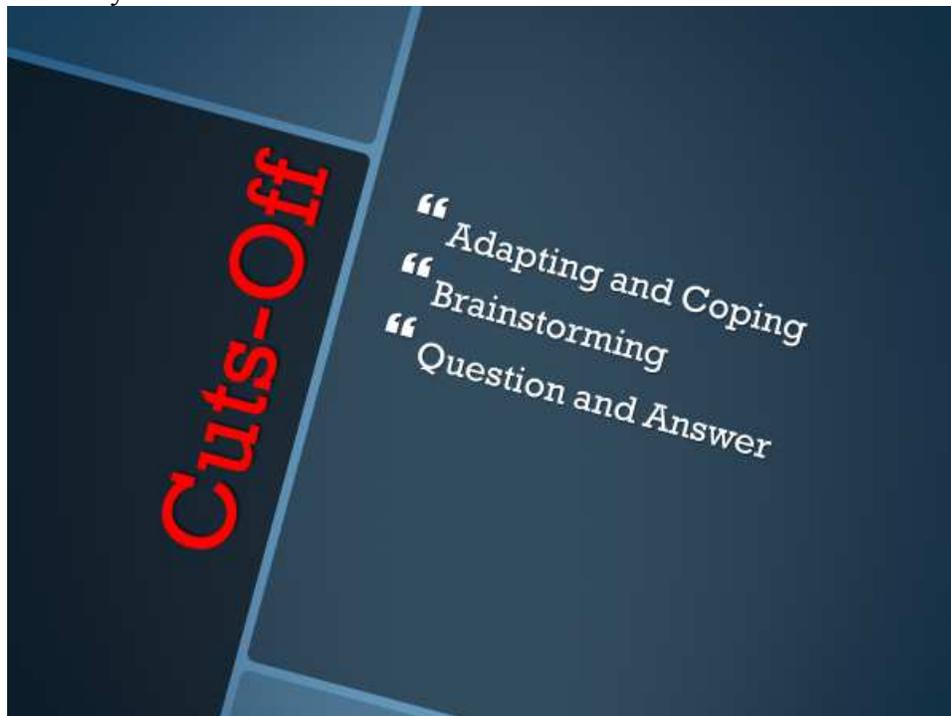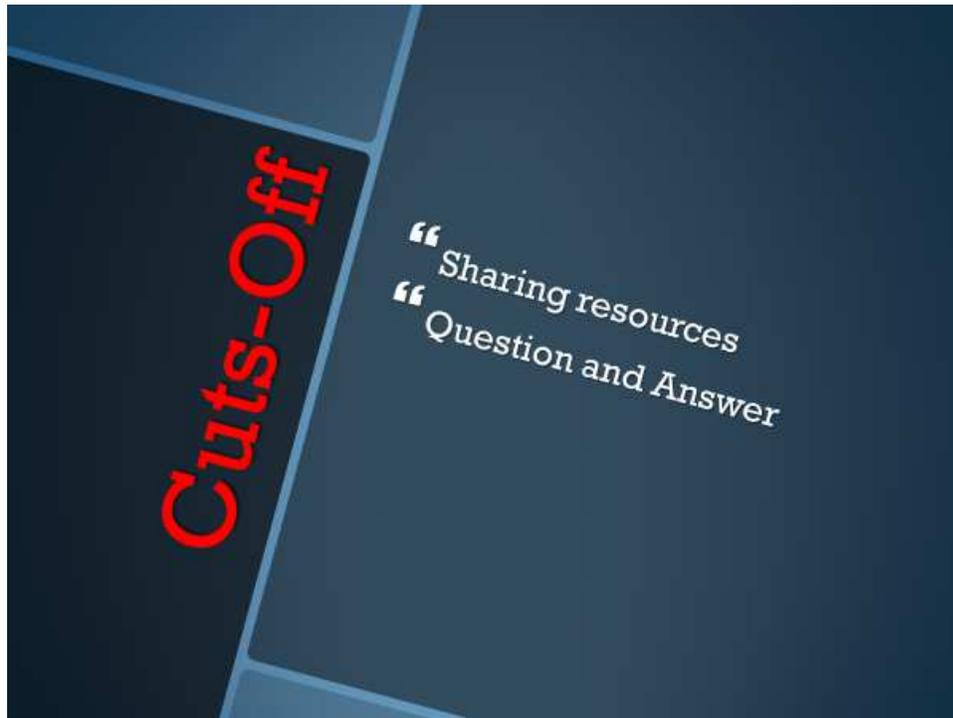
Session 2: Sharing Ideas and Resources
The purpose of this session is for music teachers to encourage one another and share ideas and resources to support their music programs as well as their colleagues.

- Music teachers will be involved in a discussion about their resources and share ideas on how to work with limited resources. Discussion (60 mins.)
  The presenters will encourage the attendees to ask questions concerning the content of the presentation. The presenters will respond accordingly.
- The facilitator will close with a summary of the session.

Session 3: Characteristics of an Effective Music Program in Low Income Neighborhoods
The purpose of this session is to inspire and encourage music teachers to persevere and strive to create effective music programs amid budget constraints and to share ideas on the impact music education have on low socio-economic students. A guest motivational speaker, who is also a music educators that knows the importance of music education in schools will be presenting the characteristics of an effective music program. The Speaker's Talking Points
- Question and Answer Session (30 mins.)
  This time allows the audience to seek clarity and asks questions generated from the content of the presentation. The speaker will respond accordingly.
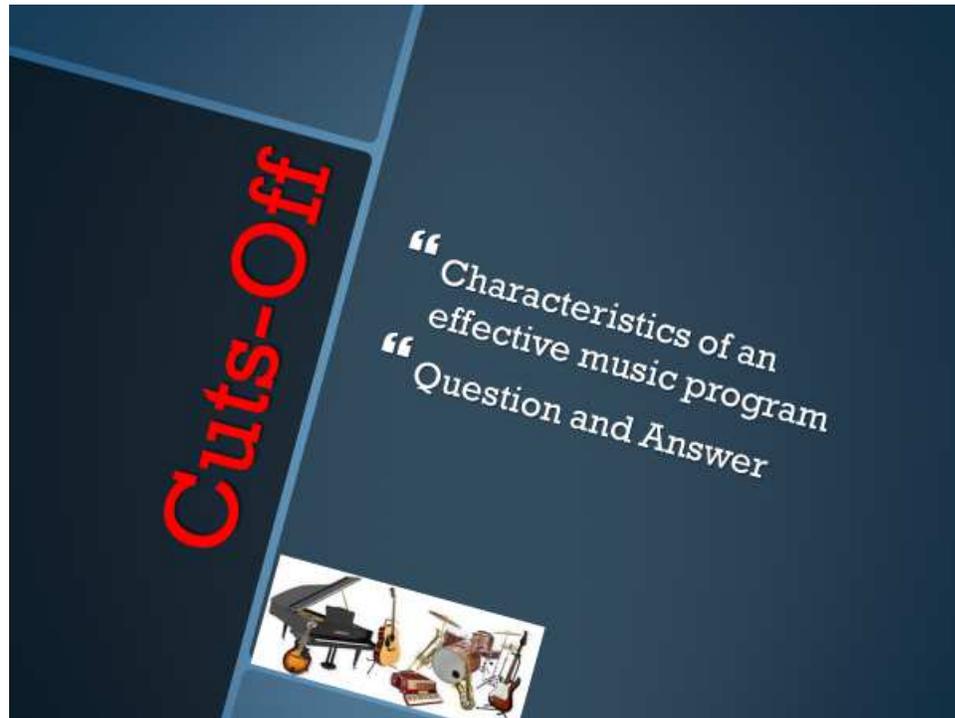
Session 4: The Music Lives on
The Purpose of this session is to inspire music teachers and to serve as a reminder of how important it is for such programs to continue in elementary schools. Live performance (30 mins.)

       The performance will be presented by an elementary string ensemble playing five short pieces. The goal of this performance will be to inspire music teachers and to serve as a reminder of the importance of music programs in schools.

- Question and Answer Session (30 mins.)
  Within the time allotted, the audience may seek clarity and asks questions that were generated from the content of the presentation. The facilitator will respond accordingly.
- Group Wrap- Up and Evaluation (15 mins.)

The facilitator will close the session with a summary of the day's events. Attendees will be asked to fill out evaluation forms for each session. Ask participants to review the handouts before attending Day 3.

Cuts-Off Workshop - Day Two References and Resources:
Shirk, C. M. (2014). K-12 Resources for Music Educators. Retrieved from http://www.hickorytech.net/~cshirk/k-12music/.

Cuts-Off Workshop Day 3
**Welcome, Introduction, Invocation, & Recap (30 mins.)**
- Offer Invocation
- Welcome attendees and guest presenters
- Recap day two's sessions
- Explain the objectives for day three's agenda

Session 1: Advocacy Campaign Strategies and Best Practices
The goal of this session is for attendees to discuss collaborative steps that can be taking to reach out to other stakeholders and policy makers that can be beneficial to their quests of strengthening their programs. Presentation (90 mins.)
Expert Guest Speaker will be presenting advocacy campaign strategies and best practices to music teachers. The focus of this session will be for music teachers to learn how to become effective advocates of music education at their school districts.
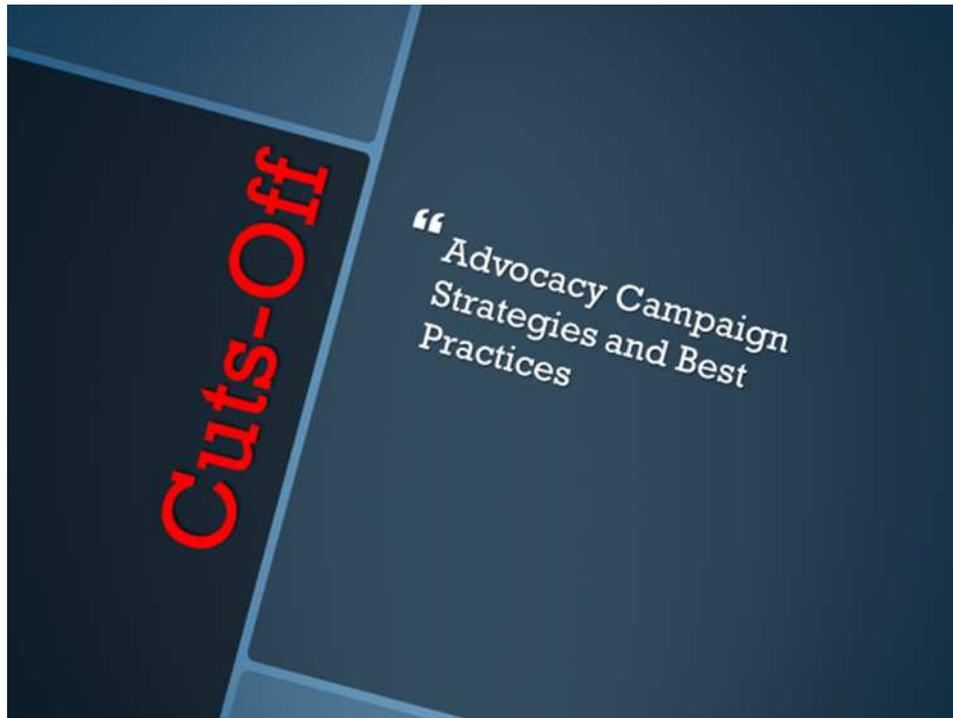
Session 2: Essential Elements of Advocacy

The purpose of this session is to equip music teachers with knowledge and skills to become better advocates. Presentation (60 mins.)

- Expert guest speaker will continue with the discussion on effective techniques to use, tools and strategies that will be beneficial to music programs.
- Question and Answer Session with the expert. (30 mins.)

This time allows the audience to seek clarity and asks questions generated from the content of the presentation. The facilitator will respond accordingly.
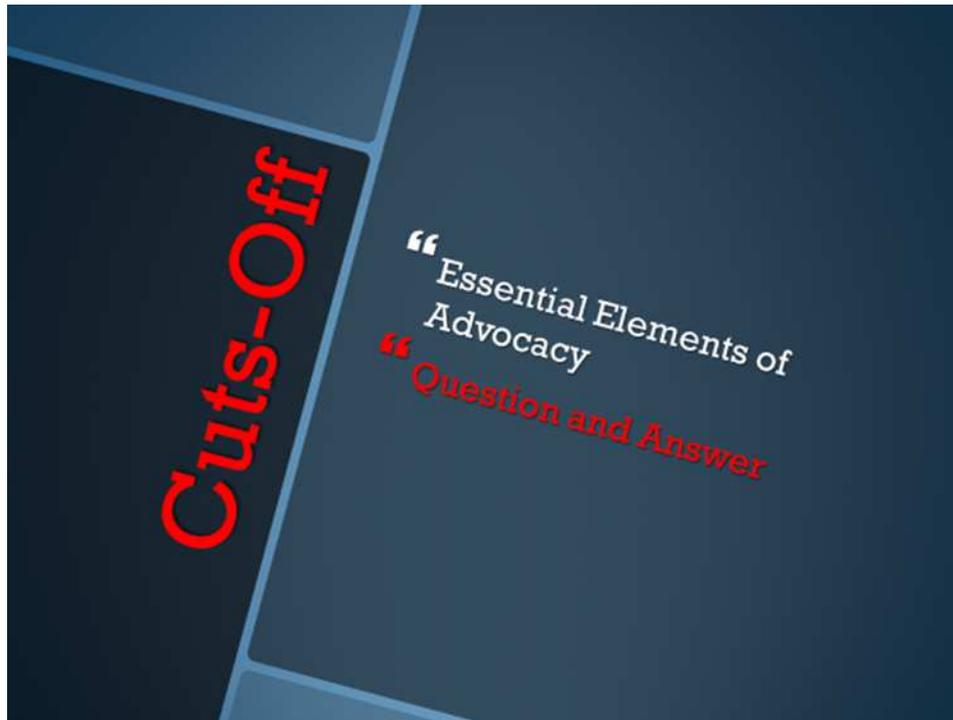
Session 3: Best Practices and Community Engagement
The purpose of this session is to provide the knowledge and techniques that music teachers can use to attend public meeting, writ effective letters to editors, learn to make alliances with journalists, reporters television, to prepare broadcast.
Presentations (90 mins.)
The expert guest speaker will present ideas and skills needed to get the community involve in supporting music programs.
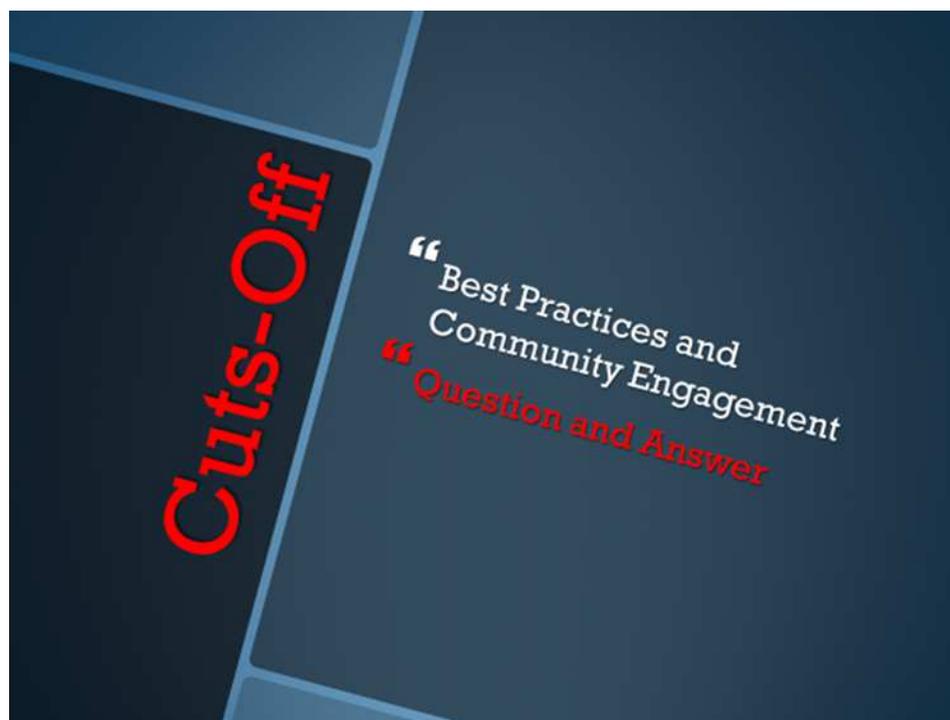
Session 4: Only Music Teachers Knew About the Importance of Music Education
The purpose of this session is to further the discussion and allow music teachers to share additional thoughts and ideas that were not previously discussed.
Presentations (90 mins.)
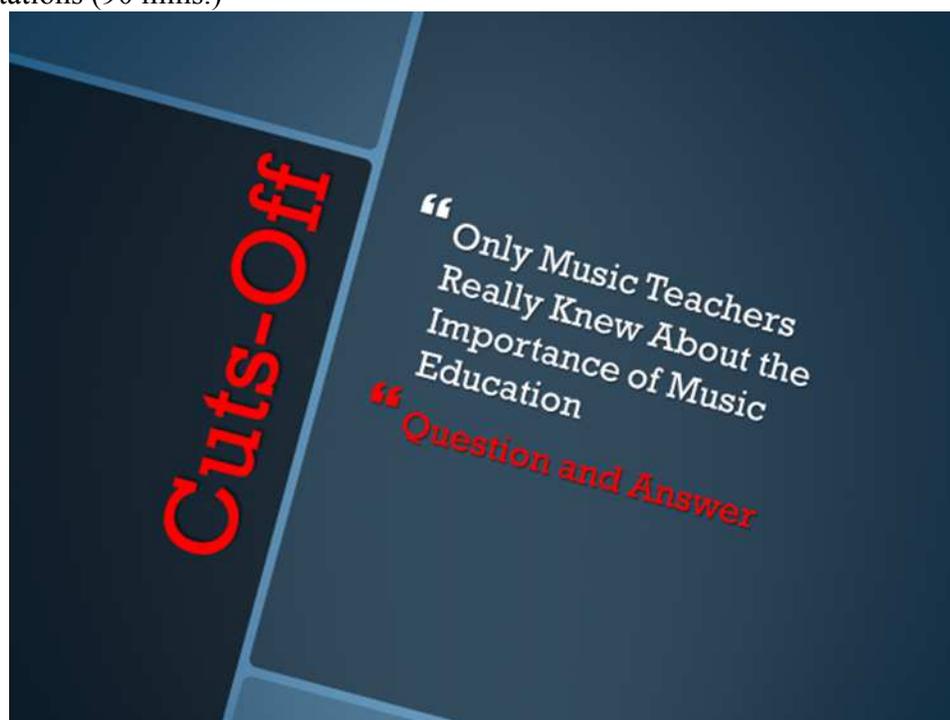
- The facilitator will have a 60-minute discussion with the music teachers about the importance of music education, how to cope with budget cuts, and how to become advocated of music programs at schools and communities. This will be a recap of what was discussed by the expert and any additional information that music teachers would want to share with their colleagues
- Group wrap up and evaluation (30 mins)

The facilitator will close the session with a summary of the three-day event. Attendees will be asked to fill out evaluation forms for each session on day three, as well as a summative evaluation.
The facilitator will thank learners for attending the workshop, provide contact information for follow up questions and concerns, and notify the audience of the implementation plan for the *Cuts-Off* project.

Cuts-Off Workshop - Day Three References and Resources:
Ryan, J (2014). Best Practices for Grassroots Advocacy Campaigns. Retrieved from the internet. www.votility.com/blog/best-practices-for-grassroots-advocacy-campaigns.
Association for Progressive Communications, (2016). Advocacy Strategies and Approaches: Overview. Retrieved from, www.apc.org/en/node/9456.

Cuts-Off Workshop Evaluation Forms

End of Sessions Evaluation

Thank you for attending the session. Your feedback is important. Please take a few minutes to fill out the following survey.
Session_____

PLEASE CIRCLE YOUR RESPONSE TO EACH OF THE FOLLOWING ITEMS.

The presenter demonstrated sufficient expertise on the content				
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The presentation was well-organized and easy to follow				
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The material was presented in sufficient depth				
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The presentation enhanced my understanding of the subject				
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Handout materials enhanced presentation content (if applicable)				
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

How will you use the information learned in this session?
_____
_____
_____
_____

Please share any additional thoughts on the topic or presentation:
_____
_____
_____
_____

Summative Evaluation

Thank you for attending the session. Your feedback is important. Please take a few minutes to fill out the following survey.
Session_____

PLEASE CIRCLE YOUR RESPONSE TO EACH OF THE FOLLOWING ITEMS.

The workshop was well-organized				
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The workshop was easy to follow				
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The physical environment was conducive to learning				
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The material was presented in sufficient depth				
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
As a result of attending the workshop, I have a better understanding of the impact of budget cuts on music education in schools				
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
As a result of attending the workshop, I have an understanding how to use to share resources and work in collaboration with music teacher colleagues				
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
As a result of attending the workshop, I have an understanding of how to become better advocate for improving music education in schools				
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Handout materials enhanced presentation content (if applicable)				
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

How will you use the information learned in this workshop?

_____
_____
_____
_____

Please describe what part of the workshop was most valuable and what suggestions you may have for future workshops

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

 Please share any additional thoughts on the topic or presentation:

_____
_____
_____
_____

Appendix B: Interview Protocol

Teacher: _____/District: _____

Date: _____/Time: _____

Interviewer: Jimmy Michel

Topic of Study: Elementary Music Teachers' Perceptions of the Effects of Budget

Reductions on Music Programs at Their Schools and on Their Low Socioeconomic

Students

The purpose of this interview is to gather information related to my research study. The

interview will last 50 – 60 minutes. I appreciate your participation in this study and your

willingness to be interviewed. Thank you.

Primary Questions

1. Could you describe your current music education program?

2. How has your music education program been affected by budget cuts?

3. What are your fears about the future of elementary music education?

4. How would your music program change if your program was provided with
   adequate funding?

5. What impact will canceling music from elementary schools have on your low
   socioeconomic students?

Sub-Questions

1. In what way does budget reductions for music education affect your school and its
   community?

2. How do feel about the reduction of music education in elementary schools?

3. What impact would canceling music education in elementary schools have on you as a music specialist?

4. How are music teachers adjusting to the budget reductions?

5. What advice would you give to parents whose children's music programs are affected by budget cuts?

Appendix C: Sample Interview Transcript

Hello, my Name is Jimmy Michel and thank you very much for accepting my invitation to take part in a research study of Elementary Music Teachers' Perceptions of the Effect of Budget Reductions on Their Music Education at Their Schools. The purpose of this study is to provide an understanding of how music teachers are coping with budget shortfalls, how their programs are being affected and the impact of such changes on their students and communities. I would also like to mention that you can stop at any time in the event you become uncomfortable with any of the questions and the information you provide will be kept confidential. First, let me begin by asking you a few questions about your music program. Is that okay?

A: yes.

Great!

1. **Could you describe your current music education program?**

A: First all, I thank you for this opportunity to share my story with you about my music program. The Curriculum that I teach all students Kindergarten through 5th Grade is comprised of a balanced and sequential program of singing, playing instruments, listening to music, improvising and composing, and moving to music. Also included are learning experiences designed to develop the ability to read music, use the notation and terminology of music, analyze and describe music, make informed evaluations concerning music, and understand music and music practices in relation to history and culture and to other disciplines in the curriculum.

I love teaching music and take great joy in seeing students excited about learning to read music, sing a great variety of styles, play their brass instruments and perform. I am a certified brass teacher. I have received certification in 2 levels of brass at xxx University. I have also taken Music for Children and World Music at xxx University. I am a K-12 Vocal and Instrumental credentialed teacher. My B.A. is from the xxx University. I have taken many Music Theory Classes, Conducting Classes, Ear Training, Sight Singing and Performance classes. I have taught music for a total of 15 years. I have also spent 10 years as a Choir director at my current church.

Wow! You have very strong credentials and with your experience, I am certain that your students are learning a lot from you. Can you also describe the type of instruments that you use in your music program?

A: Certainly. At the school, what we have available are a few trumpets, alto saxophone, recorders, flutes, clarinets, and a guitar section made of approximately 15 guitars. Students have the opportunity to participate in the school's chorus which is the largest group we have of approximately 60 students from 3rd to 5th grade. We also have a guitar ensemble where we meet every Monday after school for an hour rehearsal. The last group is the marching band, composed of clarinets, trumpets, flutes, saxophones. This group

includes only fifth grade students. About 20 to 30 students, using the instruments that are available to use. I think using the 5th graders is ideal, so that when they left, the instruments will be available for next group to use. We have two major performances for the year. A spring concert and a winter holiday program. Parents and members of the community are invited to see the program and always looking forward to it every year.

How have you been managing the instruments you have? Have any of them been broken or became defective? If so, how do you do to replace or repair them?

A: good question. Instruments always get broken or become defective at some point, especially when they are old. As you must already know, budget restrains have been a major problem to educators, especially music teachers. I remember back in those days where I could just send the defective instruments to be repair than bring the bill to the principal. I could handle the repairs, if I bring a receipt. But those days are over. Now, we do not get any funds for anything. We simply use what we have or borrow instruments from colleagues when needed for a special performance of some sort. I have many many broken brass instruments that are in the closet and can never get repaired because the money is not there to do so. I do get instruments donation from community colleges sometimes, but not very often. Parents sometimes offer to help but I believe the practice to receive help from the parents is not encouraged by administration. One can only hope that the instruments you have will last you for the year and the next because every time an instrument get broken, your band or ensemble loses strength because it is not easy to replace that one instrument.

What kind of help has been offered to you by parents? And why is that not encouraged by your administration?

A: The parents in the community have been very supportive of the program and always offer their help and support, whether by offering to donate money, or sponsor a child that needs an instrument. Most of the time, parents offered to donate money for instruments purchase or field trips expenses. However, we were told that parents in this community have very little to support their families, and we should not be engaged in collecting money from parents or students to purchase musical instruments. We can only advise that a parent can purchase instruments for his or her child only in case they want their child to have their own instrument. Other than that, most parents in the community cannot afford to purchase instruments or finding money to donate to the school for the music program.

So, what approach would you take when you have a shortage of instruments? Especially when a music performance is coming up.

A: I just use whatever available to us. Also, I must say that there are times that I use my own money to purchase instruments for the program. I am very conscious of the kind of program that I am offering to my students, parents, and the community. Without the proper instruments, we cannot produce excellence and the students are not able to

perform to their full potentials. As a music director, I strive to show the community that the program is worth keeping alive. I try my best to show everyone that such beauty cannot be dissolved and do away with when it is making so much difference, not just to our students but also to the members of the community. Parents and guests often want to see more and cannot wait for our next program. That is why it does not hurt much when I have to spend money out of my pocket to make sure that the program is a success.

How often do you spend money out of your pocket to pay for instruments?

A: as often as I have to. Sometimes you come across an instrument that is doing a lead part of a song and you basically cannot use it when it is defective. Therefore, you either, assign that part to another student, cancel that particular selection, or chose to purchase or repair that instrument. I must say that I also work with a very difficult group of students. I have to constantly be monitoring every move that they are making during rehearsal to make sure that they do not destroy the instruments. When it comes for them to take the instruments home to practice, that is out of my control. Sometimes they bring them back broken, mouth pieces are lost and damages everywhere. But what can you do? It is what it is. But being that I always want to produce the best show possible, I must have the instruments available for my groups even if it means purchasing it myself.

How has your music education program been affected by budget cuts?

A: Need I say more? Everything went down hills every since the 2009 recession. It has got a little better lately without having to worry every minute whether you will come back to work the next day. But all that has been promise was to honor our contracts every year until things get bad again. Other than that, we are on our own as to where we want to take our music program. In Broward school district, you do not hear much about what can be done to improve the arts in elementary schools but only whether the program will sustain another year. Because of such uncertainty, I cannot plan for a long term and sustainable music program. Before, I used to plan my program in sequence. And students, parents and community knew exactly what to expect from us the next school year. I cannot do that anymore, for I do not know if the program will exist the next year. For the past three years, I have had many classes that have been cancelled where I had to travel to another school to teach to hold my full-time status. It does get discouraging where as an educator you do not know when you will get a call to stay home. Administration is under so much pressure to meet AYP that music program is the last thing in their minds. I cannot count how many time I went to administration to discuss the program and I was dismissed. I know where I want to take the program but my hands are tight up behind my back. Without proper funding, I cannot do much. In order to have a strong music program, you gotta have the instruments to teach. The students need to get their hands on the instruments they want to play and be able to take that instrument home to practice. Even with the little that we have, they are hardly to maintain because sometimes, the students break them and damage them. In order to repair them, one needs to have the cash to do so. So I have learned to work with what is available to me. The students are playing

less and less and the music program has become less and less interesting to them. When children think of music class, they don't just talk about notation and theory. They also want to play instruments and sing. But I can tell you that if something does not happen to reverse that trend, soon, elementary music program will probably be non-existent.

You mentioned that you traveled to two different schools, How has traveling been affecting your music program?

A: It has been difficult especially when I have to prepare shows for both schools. I must tell you that what would be best is to combine both schools and do one big program for the year, but the schools are in far distance from one another and there would be many conflicts in terms of scheduling, parents and students' availability etc. traveling does take much needed time that could have been used to better a program in just one school. Also, the fact that you now have two different groups of students that you are focus on, it makes things more difficult. Another word, the program suffers tremendously because of that.

How has administration, parents, support your program?

A: Administration do not care much. They just know that I am there doing my job and don't care how or if I am doing it, because I have been asking for help and support and no one seem to care. As for the parents, I feel that they are there because they must support their children, but I don't really feel that they would care much if music education were to be eliminated from elementary schools. To be honest, I think all stakeholders are giving up on music education. At least that is how it feels like. Beside the teachers and students, I feel that no one else cares. Even the students sometimes show that music education is irrelevant in their lives. They have other priorities such as technology, YouTube videos, and the many apps available to them they don't really need formal music education anymore. But that will be detrimental to the growth of a nation if music education becomes obsolete.

What do you mean by detrimental to the growth of a nation/ do you mean that a nation cannot exist without formal music education?

A: Sir, music existed since the beginning of time and music education has been beneficial to children especially at a young age. Formal music training has many benefits to the wellbeing of an individual. Many many studies show a correlation between music education and students' improvement. People benefit both physically and mentally through music education. Knowing music is knowing peace. I know that sounds like a cliché, but music does something to your soul that no other thing can do.
Why wouldn't a child succeed in school without music education? Think of the countries that do not have music education, don't you think they have success stories to tell? Is it impossible to have great and successful schools without music education?

A: I am not saying that a child or a school for that matter cannot succeed without music education. All I am trying to point out to you is that music education as we know it is important to the wellbeing of every child especially elementary school children. Yes there are schools around the world I'm pretty sure that do not have a music education program and are doing well academically; but judging from research and what I know about music education, children in elementary schools do need music education, not just for their own sanity, but also for the wellbeing of the classroom teachers and the rest of the school staff.

Can you elaborate more on that statement?

A: Think of this picture. You sit down in a room listening to one person talking for six hours straight. You cannot talk to your friend sitting next to you, you cannot move, you cannot sleep, you are only allowed to move and talk when the permission is giving to you. Another word you are like a robot without any expression or emotion for 6 hours. I would assume that is how students feel in their general classroom. What music education does is giving these children an opportunity to get out that situation for just a moment to breath. To free up and be themselves for a short time. Get their brains recharged again before they go back for instruction. not to mention the benefit classroom teachers get from that. It is a time to plan their lessons to better assist in their lesson plans. And this is the only time when they are able to do something they love doing and freely express themselves.

What are your fears about the future of elementary music education?

A: My fears about music education. Let's see!! Humm!! It does not look good. The future of music education in elementary school does not look very promising. I have colleagues who believe that they will never take away music education from public schools, but they are wrong. The downward trend existed for a longtime and keeps on going. People are becoming less and less aware of the importance of music education to children academic achievement. Many believe that music education is unnecessary and optional. To add insult to injury, the financial instability that our nation has been experiencing does not help either. The focus now is more on whether students can pass tests, and math, reading writing and science are in the center of all not. Schools have not been focusing on the arts for a long time and I believe that it is just a matter of time before they eliminated all together in schools. It is very unfortunate that the children will suffer the most, especially those of low socioeconomic backgrounds. Imagine that music education in your school is the only musical experience you will ever have during your years as a child, because most of these children cannot afford to pay for private lessons. Those parents with more stable income might be able to do so, but the parents in my school's community can barely making it. That is terrible but it is the way thing are in this country and we all must wait and see, but it's not looking promising.

What can you do as a music educator to help keeping the children in your school from losing the benefits of music education if they were to cut music education from public schools?

A: I do not know what I would do. I just must wait when the time comes. I cannot say that I would be around because I do not see myself doing anything else but teaching music. This is what I love teaching and I see the difference music education is making in these children lives. Would I remain an educator if music was to be eliminated from? Probably not. I would probably open my own private music school and invite these children to come in and receive the quality music education that they so deserve.

Remember you said that parents cannot afford to pay for anything. How would you pay for your private school expenses?

A: The money would have to come from donation.

Donation from who? Parents? The community or what?

A: from anyone that would share the vision. That also would understand the importance of such a program in that community.

I assume that to begin with, you probably would need a big and descent location to bring in these children. Not to mention the assistance you might need in educating children and daily operation. All that would be costly. Are we talking about a non-profit organization? Where would the funds come from?

A: Such project would probably be similar to a chatter school. Or if not possible run it as a non-profit organization where I will be able receive donations from different sources to support the cause.

4. How would your music program change if your program was provided with adequate funding?

A: First, I would ask my administration to allow me to start an after school music program. Five years ago, I created an afterschool guitar ensemble and it was a great success while it lasted. Many of the guitars broke and could not be replaced because of money issue. Now I just have a few that I use to teach in my class. Second, I would conduct a community forum and asking parents and community members of what they would want to see happening in the music program at the school. Third, I would collect all the ideas from students, teachers, parents and members of the community in order to rebuilt and make the program stronger than before. Lastly, I would make available every ensemble that the students will be able to participate in. I would create a piano lab, a guitar ensemble, and another string program, drums percussion and much more. The program would be so rich that I don't think two performances a year would be enough.

Right now, I cannot even hold one show per year. But with adequate funding, I would take the program as far as I could on s yearly basis.

Where would you find the time to work on such a rich program? Wouldn't you need help?

A: yes. I would need all the help I could get from everyone. A vision like that would not happen in one day. But gradually with all the funds available, I probably would ask for an assistance, or student helpers as well as parents support. As far as me finding the time, do remember that when you are doing something you love doing, you always make proper arrangement to create time to do it. I am not saying that I would be working around the clock, but I would make certain that the program is a success.

5. What impact will be canceling music from elementary schools have on your low socioeconomic students?

A: The students in my school's community would suffer greatly. It is a very sad story in the community where I work. These children do not get much. This is a community where nothing is made available for them. They have nothing. We are talking about a school with 95% of the students are in a free lunch status which mean that parents of these students make very little. Financially, this is a very poor neighborhood and the children and parents need everything that can be offer to them without paying for it. How would these children supper? Number 1, they would completely lose something that would not be easily to come by without paying for it. Something that they enjoy, something that is truly making a difference in their lives. Number 2, some of these children's only hope is to someday make in either by becoming a sport star, a musician or artist as one may call it. You take away any of those activities from children, you take away their hopes and dreams of ever becoming somebody. It is not me that say it but I have seen it in many low performance schools where students' motivation and academic performances are low. And such programs are what give them the power to wake up and want to come to school. Without the arts, some students would rather stay home or even want to try making any academic progress. Most importantly, I don't know man! But it is unthinkable to know that some of these children will lose something that they hold dear because some may think that it is unnecessary or worst of do not think it is important in that community. The point that I am trying to make is that other community or neighborhood with a higher social class are able to receive much more as compare to schools in the neighborhood where I work. Trust me. I know because I have colleagues who work in these neighborhoods and they tell me how different thing are at their location. But I tell you! It is very unfortunate that those children who need the help the most are the ones that are not getting it.

So, if I get this straight you are telling me that children at your school are deprive of certain help because the school is located in a poor neighborhood? Can you elaborate more on that statement?

A: Let's be honest. I know that you are recording this, but I am going to say it anyway. Yes. School in poor communities are getting less help and support in every area financially than schools that are located in rich neighborhoods. Sometimes the ethnicity is another factor they consider when providing funds and assistance to schools. Schools with a higher minority population often receive way less. It is a fact that may not change anytime soon. I just wish things were different, but it is the reality that we are living in today.

Okay! Well! Thank you so much [name redacted] for answering all these questions about your program. It's been helpful. Before we end, I was just wondering if there was any other feedback you would like to provide about your music program or the state of elementary music education in your district.

A: I do want to thank you as well for inviting me to take part of this study. My question to you is what is your objective for conducting this study? What do you hope to accomplish?

As I mentioned at the beginning of this interview, the purpose of this study is to provide an understanding of how music teachers are coping with budget shortfalls, how their programs are being affected and the impact of such changes on their students and communities. Hopefully the finding will serve as an instrument for professional developments or even assist policy makers when making decisions about the budget for music education. A summary of the findings will be posted online for the public to see.

A: I see. That is very good and I hope someone can use your findings to make things better for all of us. I am pretty sure that most of the music teachers you interview will have a similar story to tell. right?

I can say that I do find some similarities in the interviews. Yes! I am almost certain that the result of the study will not shock you.

A: Right. Well it was a pleasure to participate

Pleasure was all my. Thank you so much Ms. [name redacted]. I appreciate it. And I wish you best of luck with your music program. Have a nice day.