“It’s More Than Playing Music”: Perceptions of a Concert Band Program from Members of a Predominantly Latino School Community

Dissertation

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to explore student, family, director, colleague and administrator perceptions of a middle school band program within a predominantly Latino school community. Drawing from Irizarry and Raibles' (2011) concept of *barrio-based epistemologies and ontologies* (BBEO) and Gay's (2010) *culturally responsive pedagogy* (CRT) as theoretical frameworks, I investigated a middle school band program with high enrollments of Latino students to determine the pedagogical strategies that encouraged initial participation, persistence and success in the program. Issues of inclusivity and responsiveness to students' cultural backgrounds were considered key in this investigation. Furthermore, I explored the compatibility of the traditional concert band model with this population of youth and how asset-based pedagogical principles were functioning in this environment.

Questions that guided the study were: (a) how are band directors responsive to students' cultural backgrounds?; (b) how are barriers alleviated to make band accessible for students in an urban context?; (c) what aspects of the band program correspond with barrio-based epistemologies and ontologies? Data sources comprised material culture, field observation notes, and semi-structured interviews. Data collection and initial analyses were concurrent utilizing the constant comparative method (Glaser, 1965).

Following data collection, Creswell's (2013) data analysis spiral was utilized for further analysis.

Findings indicated that some aspects of the traditional concert band model corresponded with BBEO and CRT through the directors' integrating cooperative peer-to-peer teaching opportunities, cultivating a sense of community among students and stakeholders, holding students to high expectations, and understanding the sociopolitical context of which the students were a part. Specifically, directors and other school personnel were keenly aware of the stressors students and families experienced, which included language barriers and immigration issues specifically in regard to legal status. Band, however, did not resonate entirely with all participants, as some students expressed a desire for more creative opportunities that corresponded with their personal and familial interests. Implications for teaching practices and future research are discussed in light of recent sociopolitical issues.

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my family. I am eternally grateful for their love and support.

Acknowledgments

I am indebted to my family for their love and support throughout this process. Thank you to my sister, Diana, for offering encouragement when needed and for volunteering to read drafts of my papers over the past three years. To my mother, Tina, thank you for listening to me when I needed to talk. I am equally grateful for my father, Les, who has supported me financially and emotionally without hesitation. Having two daughters in doctoral programs can be intense at times!

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To all of my students, mentors, and friends, I thank you all for impacting my life. I am better having been in your presence and having learned from you all.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Impending demographic shifts remain a topic of interest in education as the population of Latino and other students of color continue to rise. According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2010), the Latino population is projected to climb to approximately 129 million inhabitants by the year 2060. This population influx has resulted in increased research related to Latino students as researchers and educators explore more effective teaching practices (Abril, 2003; Irizarry, 2007; Irizarry & Raible, 2011). Although efforts have been made to better understand their educational experiences, research pertaining to Latino students is often approached from a deficit perspective, positioning students as academic underachievers (Gándara, 2017; Irizarry, 2007; Irizarry & Raible, 2011). These perceived deficits hinder, rather than facilitate, productive learning spaces.

In response to teaching practices incongruent with success for students of color, asset-based pedagogies developed as a medium for building on students' cultural backgrounds as assets in learning (Alim & Paris, 2017; Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2009). Pedagogies, such as Culturally Responsive Teaching (Gay, 2010), Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2009), and Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy (Alim & Paris, 2017), view students as bearers of knowledge rather than "empty vessels" (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Importantly, these practices connect students' backgrounds to classrooms in an effort to make learning more responsive to their needs

(Irizarry, 2007). While their asset-based teaching practices have revolutionized education, few studies have focused specifically on its impact with Latino student populations (Irizarry & Raible, 2011).

Drawing from the field of education, music educators and researchers have similarly focused on pedagogies responsive to students' culturally diverse backgrounds (Abril, 2009; Hoffman & Carter, 2013). In these studies, researchers sought to incorporate repertoire and teaching strategies that were more responsive to the cultural identities and values of students of color, rather than focusing solely on musics from the Western European tradition. For example, one teacher noticed that her instrumental music program was predominantly Caucasian despite the stronger Latino representation in the overall school population. To respond to demographic changes, she developed an alternative ensemble, a mariachi program, to appeal to more Latino students (Abril, 2009). Hoffman and Carter (2013) observed a facilitative band classroom where African American students collaborated to co-create music offering them autonomy in the music classroom, atypical to traditional practices.

Although more culturally responsive practices are emerging, researchers have noted an "underrepresentation" of Latino students in music programs across the country, particularly in relation high school ensembles (Elpus, 2014; Elpus & Abril, 2011; Kinney, 2010). Such findings have led researchers to question the relevancy of traditional music programs in communities of color (Abril, 2009; Allsup, 1997; Allsup & Benedict, 2008; Fitzpatrick, 2008; Hoffman & Carter, 2013; Kratus, 2007; Woody, 2007). While students may be disconnected from school ensembles (Kratus, 2007), there are

communities in which students of color bountifully participate (Fitzpatrick, 2008; Fitzpatrick-Harnish, 2015). To inform research and teaching practice in this era of shifting demography, it would be prudent to explore music programs in areas with high enrollments of students of color to understand the effectiveness of the traditional ensemble model in such contexts.

Need for the Study

Research concerning urban music education illuminates the issues that are perceivably abundant in urban schools. For example, scarcity of fiscal resources is a factor commonly cited as impacting music programs (Abril & Bannerman, 2015; Baker, 2012; Costa-Giomi, 2008; Costa-Giomi & Chappell, 2007; DeLorenzo, 2012; Doyle, 2012; U. S. Department of Education, 2012). A lack of resources could contribute to a collective narrative positioning music programs as inaccessible to students of culturally and economically diverse backgrounds. Rather than further discourage teachers from working in urban contexts, researchers have documented a need for counternarratives to inspire transformative teaching practices in culturally diverse communities (Ellsasser, 2008; Fitzpatrick-Harnish, 2015; Martignetti, Talbot, Clauhs, Hawkins, & Niknafs, 2013). These counternarratives should include Latino communities (Kruse, 2013).

The Latino population has been of heightened interest to education, political, and social science researchers in recent years; however, it is still considerably underrepresented in the literature, particularly in music education. Researchers in music education have identified a lacking presence of Latino students in school music programs throughout the country (DeLorenzo, 2012; Elpus, 2014; Elpus & Abril, 2011). Elpus and

Abril (2011), for example, found that Latino students were not enrolling in music courses at the same rate as their Caucasian counterparts. As they asserted, enrollments of Latino students may vary by geographic location (Elpus & Abril, 2011). Extending on this, Lorah, Sanders, and Morrison (2014) conjectured that perhaps socioeconomic status is the intervening factor. Additional research is needed in this area to more accurately understand patterns of participation for students of color.

Concerning the perceived dearth of Latino students and other marginalized students in music courses, some music education researchers and theorists have questioned conjectured if, perhaps, the type of and method by which music is taught in schools is the underlying issue. As Kratus (2007) expressed, "Not only have in-school music experiences become disassociated from out-of-school music experiences, but tried-and-true music education practices have become unmoored from educational practices used in other disciplines" (p. 45). On the other hand, the traditional instrumental performing ensemble may serve as its own cultural group (Fitzpatrick, 2008; Morrison, 2001) reinforcing the values of the students who choose to participate. A more thorough understanding of how music education functions in culturally diverse communities would inform teaching practice and perhaps complicate the notion that Latino students are seemingly uninterested in traditional instrumental performing ensembles.

Purpose of the Study and Guiding Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to explore student, family, director, colleague and administrator perceptions of a middle school band program within a predominantly Latino school community. Using Irizarry and Raibles' (2011) concept of *barrio-based*

epistemologies and ontologies (BBEO) and Gay's (2010) *culturally responsive teaching* (CRT) as theoretical frameworks, I investigated a middle school band program with high enrollments of Latino students to determine the strategies that were being employed to encourage initial participation, persistence and success in the program. Issues of inclusivity and responsiveness to students' cultural backgrounds were considered key in this investigation. Furthermore, I explored the compatibility of the traditional concert band model with this population youth and how asset-based pedagogical principles were functioning in this environment. Three overarching questions guided the study:

1. How are the band directors responsive to students' cultural backgrounds?
2. How are bridges to participation and teaching created to make band accessible for students in this urban characteristic and midurban context?
3. What aspects of the band program correspond with barrio-based epistemologies and ontologies?

Methodological Overview

Design

Based on the guiding research questions and aims of this investigation, a single case study design (Yin, 2014) was determined to be the most appropriate means of unearthing the perceptions of the band program from members of its community. According to Yin (2014), case study research "investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-word context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context may not be clearly evident" (p. 16). Additionally, case studies focus on "discovery" to inform both subsequent research and teaching practices

(Merriam, 1998, p. 19). The case in this study was the Hastings Middle School Band program.

Setting and Participants

Setting. Hastings Middle School (pseudonym) is a culturally diverse school situated within Sunset School District (pseudonym), a suburban school district in the Southwest region of the United States. The approximate population of the city in which Hastings resides is 105,000 (US Bureau of Census, 2016). According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2016), Sunset School District comprised a population of 13% Hispanic/Latino students and 87% non-Hispanic/Latino students. Out of the 87% non-Hispanic/Latino, the population was 73% White, 6% Black/African American, 4% Asian, 0.04% Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and 5% Some Other Race.

Hastings Middle School paints a contrastingly different picture than the surrounding area in terms of student demography. The student population at Hastings was 73% Hispanic/Latino, 11% African American, 10% White, 5% Asian, 0.2% American Indian/Alaskan Native, 0.9% Two or More Races, and 0% Hawaiian/Pacific Islander. Additionally, 78% of the students were assigned free lunch, 9% reduced lunch, and 13% of students paid for full lunches (National Center for Education Statistics, 2016). Considering the demography of the school relative to minority enrollments and those qualifying for free and reduced lunch, Hastings fit definitions usually employed for "urban characteristic" (Milner, 2012) and "midurban" (Bruenger, 2010) schools. Because of the cultural diversity and socioeconomic backgrounds of the student population, Hastings was considered to be a unique setting.

Participants. Because the aim of the study was to explore perceptions of the Hastings band program, I purposefully included perspectives from band students, band parents, band directors, school administrators and school teachers as data sources since they were all members of the school community. Furthermore, participants had to be associated with the band for more in-depth understandings to emerge. Because the band directors had greater insight and access to members of the school community, I sought their recommendations for participants who they felt would contribute richly to the study. Two to three participants were included for each of the participant groups for a total of 19 participants (a detailed description is provided in Chapter 4).

Data Generation

Data were collected through field observations, semi-structured interviews, and material culture. During the six-week period in which the data were collected, I scheduled six visits to observe the band program where I remained on campus for the duration of the school day. During these observations, I took notes regarding the day-to-day function of classes and practices within the band hall in addition to interactions between individuals.

A semi-structured format was used to guide the flow of each participant's interview and to allow the flexibility for additional questions to be posed (Roulston, 2010). Each interview was conducted in person with the exception of one family member who requested a phone interview due to work scheduling. The interviews were audio recorded and transcribed for analysis.

To provide other sources of data in an effort to elucidate specifics of the band program, I collected band and school documents, videos of concerts, recruitment brochures and pictures as material culture (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Both Mr. Perez and Mr. Nelson, the band directors, supplied materials they felt were relevant to the research. Mr. Perez generated an online folder, which provided access for viewing additional information.

Analysis and Interpretation

Data collection and initial analyses were concurrent utilizing the constant comparative method (Glaser, 1965). Through this process, I analyzed data for preliminary codes, which guided subsequent field observations and interviews. Upon completion of data collection, I analyzed data in a recursive manner using Creswell's (2013) data-analysis spiral. Through this approach, data were analyzed cyclically until a point of saturation was reached. Data were interpreted utilizing principles from BBEO, such as focusing on language usage (i.e., Spanish), students' and family's culture, and the contemporary sociopolitical context of the Latino community.

Trustworthiness Criteria

Trustworthiness entails an "alertness to the quality and rigor of a study, about what sorts of criteria can be used to assess how well the research was carried out" (Glesne, 2016, p. 53). To establish trustworthiness, I utilized several methods: rich, thick, description; member checking; negative case analysis; peer review and debriefing; and management of subjectivity" (Creswell, 2013; Glesne, 2016). During the course of the investigation, I conducted six field observations in which I stayed for the entirety of the

school day to observe each class, as well as before and after school activities. Notes from observations assisted in constructing a "thick description" (Geertz, 1973) of the setting for readers.

Following the transcription of interviews, transcripts were provided to participants to allow for an opportunity to edit or clarify any responses. The band directors requested that any information traceable back to them or the school be changed. This included previous job locations, states of origin, and programs associated with the community, to name a few. Kevin requested to extend on ideas concerning the music he created, often influenced by his emotions. He also shared that there were tensions between him and the band directors at times.

Throughout data analysis, I mined for negative cases to provide an alternative explanation to my interpretations. My advisor also assisted providing alternative explanations by serving as a peer reviewer. Through this role, he reviewed the data and my interpretations to further probe my thinking. He brought to light issues that I had overlooked based on my familiarity in working with predominantly Latino populations. In this vein, he served as a "devil's advocate" by affirming and challenging my perspectives throughout the course of the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Managing Subjectivity. My experiences as a daughter of an immigrant parent, urban student, and urban music educator have contributed to my interests in pursuing research pertaining to urban music education, cultural diversity, and social justice. I acknowledge that my efforts to provide research that humanizes persons and communities of color in addition to challenges deficit perceptions commonly associated

with urban environments influences how I conduct and present my research. Thus, I maintained a researcher's journal to document my thoughts and feelings throughout the research process. This allowed me an opportunity to engage in reflexivity, which Glesne (2016) defines as "reflecting upon and asking questions of research interactions all along the way, from embarking on an inquiry project to sharing your findings" (p. 145).

Definition of Terms

Asset-Based Pedagogies

In contrast to deficit ideologies, asset-based pedagogies are teaching practices that focus on the "assets" that students bring into schooling spaces. Such pedagogies include culturally sustaining pedagogy (Alim & Paris, 2017), culturally responsive teaching (Gay, 2010, 2013), and culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1995; 2009).

Barrio-Based Epistemologies and Ontologies

As an extension of culturally responsive pedagogy, *barrio-based epistemologies and ontologies* focus on the "ways of being and knowing that are informed by extended immersion in and connection to Latino cultural and linguistic communities, particularly as they are developed explicitly and leveraged to improve the education of Latino students" (Irizarry & Raible, 2011, p. 189). Specifically, BBEO are:

1. Are rooted in respect for students' cultures and identities
2. Are based on the historical and contemporary sociopolitical context of the Latino community
3. Acknowledge the pervasiveness of race and racialization on teachers' lives and the lives of their Latino students

4. Reflect teacher's sustained commitment to and engagement with Latino communities
5. Inform both the pedagogy and language practices of effective teachers (pp. 200-201).

Culture

A wealth of definitions have been documented for culture. In this study, I adopt Nieto and Bode's (2012) definition of culture which is "the values, traditions, worldview, and social and political relationships created, shared, and transformed by a group of people bound together by a common history, geographic location, language, social class, religion, or other shared identity" (Nieto & Bode, 2012, p. 156).

Deficit Ideologies

In education, deficit ideologies "assume that some children, because of genetic, cultural or experiential differences, are inferior to other children–that is, that they have deficits that must be overcome if they are to learn...they place complete responsibility for children's failure on their homes and families, effectively absolving schools and society from responsibility" (Nieto & Bode, 2012; p. 16). These ideologies can be counterproductive and damaging to building relationships with students.

Latino

Hispanic and Latino have been used interchangeably in the literature. It is important to note, however, that there are differences regarding both terms. "Hispanic" is associated with individuals whose ancestry traces back to Spain (Pew Research Center, 2017). This term, often used in education, is not entirely representative of this particular

population. Hence, I opted to use Latino to refer to students who originate from Mexico, Central America, and South America. However, it is important to note that some individuals self-identify with the nationality of their parent(s) rather than using broad labels such as Hispanic or Latino (Pew Research Center, 2017).

Urban Descriptions

The term urban has been associated with geographic locale in extant literature related to urban education; however, it is important to elucidate that schools outside of major cities may experience urban-related issues. Milner (2012) offers other descriptions of urban teaching environments. One such description is *urban characteristic*, which refers to schools that "are not located in big or midsized cities but may be starting to experience some of the challenges that are sometimes associated with urban school contexts in larger areas" (p. 559). Similarly, Bruenger (2010) forwards the term "midurban" to describe schools situated within suburban school districts that experience circumstances similar to those denoted in urban areas. Both urban characteristic and midurban are used to describe the school and band setting in the study.

Limitations of the Study

The purpose of the study was to explore the perceptions of a concert band program from members of a predominantly Latino community. The study is limited to the students, teachers, administrators, and family members of this particular school community. It is not the intent of the study to provide broad generalizations regarding teaching in urban and culturally diverse communities as each school community is

distinctive; therefore, it is important that teachers and researchers seek to understand the communities of which they are a part.

Data collection spanned a six-week period during the academic school year. Because of concerns of infringement on students' academic time, I negotiated a total of six observations at the school site. In an effort to establish extended time in the field, I stayed for the duration of the school day to maximize observation hours and observe student and band director interactions throughout the course of each day.

Chapter 2: Review of Literature

Introduction

Research pertaining to cultural diversity in music education has flourished since the Mid-20th century. Immigration and civil rights initiatives led educators to reexamine their pedagogical approaches to working with culturally diverse communities (Mark & Gary, 2007; Robinson, 2006; Volk, 1998). While reform has been evidenced by the inclusion of multicultural musics in curricula (Mark & Gary, 2007; Volk, 1991, 1998), equitable access to music courses remains a point of contention (DeLorenzo, 2012; Elpus & Abril, 2011; Frierson-Campbell, 2007; Johnson, 2004; Lorah et al., 2014), particularly in urban environments (Costa-Giomi, 2008; Costa-Giomi & Chappell, 2007; Fitzpatrick-Harnish, 2015; Kinney, 2010; Mixon, 2005, 2006). In urban contexts, factors such as financial resources and transportation (Kinney, 2010; Mixon, 2005, 2006) may prevent students from participating in music programs. This may inevitably impact students of color who are marginally represented (DeLorenzo; 2012; Elpus, 2014; Elpus & Abril, 2011). According to Elpus and Abril (2011), Latino students are less participative in music courses; however, other mitigating factors, such as socioeconomic status (Lorah et al., 2014) or cultural incongruities (Kindall-Smith, 2006; Robinson, 2006) may serve as barriers. Furthermore, some have suggested that traditional ensembles might be perceived as irrelevant to students of color who are immersed in musics unrepresentative of the

Western European tradition (Abril, 2009; Allsup, 1997; Allsup & Benedict, 2008; Campbell, Connell, & Beegle, 2007; Hoffman & Carter, 2013; Kratus, 2007). Perceived declining trends in music participation are disconcerting given that the growth of the Latino population is outpacing rapidly in the United States (Abril, 2003; U.S. Census Bureau, 2010).

Researchers have considered ways of better responding to students who have been traditionally marginalized in school in an effort to eradicate deficit ideologies (Alim & Paris, 2017; Benedict, 2006; Emmanuel, 2006a; Gay, 2010, 2013; Irizarry, 2017; Irizarry & Raible, 2011; Kindall-Smith, 2006; Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2009; Paris & Alim, 2014; Robinson, 2006). Particularly, researchers have sought to understand how to better educate students of color knowing the stressors they may experience in today's climate, such as immigration and English language proficiency (Alexander, Cox, Behnke, & Larzelere, 2017; DeJonckheere, Vaughn, & Jacquez, 2017; Dreby, 2012; He, Bettez, & Levin, 2017; Kleyn, Alulema, Khalifa, & Romero, 2018; Perreira, Fuligni, & Potochnick, 2010; Sosa & Gomez, 2012). To inform research and teaching practice, perhaps it would be beneficial to explore urban and/or culturally diverse music programs that are thriving (Abril, 2006b; Bernard, 2010; Fitzpatrick, 2008, 2011; Fitzpatrick-Harnish, 2015; Hinckley, 1995; Martignetti et al., 2013) in culturally rich communities rather than furthering discourse solely on music programs with low enrollments of Latino students. This present study addresses the paucity of research pertaining to the traditional concert band paradigm in predominantly Latino communities. A review of literature was constructed to provide a foundation for this research study concerning facets of teaching

in culturally rich and urban communities. In an effort to situate the present research within its context, this chapter is structured in four overarching categories, corresponding to the extant literature related to this area: urban education, pedagogical practices, Latino populations and communities.

The Backdrop of Urban Music Education

Urban Categorizations

As shifting demography in the United States ensues, the lines which have previously delineated teaching contexts are now blurred. Specifically, the labels of suburban, rural, and urban are now conflated with comparable descriptors. The word 'urban,' for example, has traditionally referred to schools in a unidimensional manner focusing primarily on locale. While location may, indeed, provide a general reference for schools situated within urban environments, urban-specific issues transcend metropolitan boundaries (Fitzpatrick-Harnish, 2015; Iken, 2006; Milner, 2012). In an effort to elucidate what constitutes urban, Milner (2012) offers three categories by which schools may be classified: urban intensive, urban emergent, and urban characteristic. Schools that are urban intensive are embedded within densely populated areas where "the broader environments, outside of school factors such as housing, poverty, and transportation are directly connected to what happens inside of the school" (p. 559). Urban emergent comprises schools in larger cities that "encounter some of the scarcity of resource problems" that are experienced by densely populated cities (p. 559). Lastly, urban characteristic describes schools in varying geographic areas "that are not located in big cities but may be beginning to experience increases in challenges that are sometimes

associated with urban contexts, such as an increase in English Language Learners in a community" (p. 559). In a similar vein, Bruenger (2010) forwards the term "midurban" to describe schools situated within suburban school districts that experience circumstances similar to those denoted in urban areas. Based on the aforementioned categories, a larger number of schools may be considered urban, including areas within the Southwestern region of the United States where larger percentages of Latino inhabitants reside (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010).

Urban Schools Depicted

Schools in urban contexts are often portrayed in a negative light. Specifically, urban schools are characterized as unattractive institutions infused with seemingly insoluble problems (Hinckley, 1995; Kincheloe, 2010). According to Hinckley (1995):

> Our urban schools are frequently underfunded, understaffed, and overpopulated. The campuses are often located in economically depressed areas where hope has become little more than a word and where neglect, indifference, decay, and even hatred–toward others and toward oneself–are such daily realities that some might consider them to be part of a normal existence. Sometimes these urban areas are little more than incubators of indifference; they can scarcely be said to be an appropriate environment for children's education. (p. 32)

Such perceptions may further manifest in classrooms where teachers contend with classroom management issues (Abril, 2006b; Allsup, 1997; Baker, 2012; Doyle, 2012; Eros, 2009; Gordon, 1997; Smith, 2006), an area of concern for all teachers regardless of context (Baker, 2012). Issues in classroom management are, perhaps, attributed to

feelings of tension that stem from the diverse composition of urban schools. Student populations in urban communities comprise more culturally, religiously, ethnically, and racially diverse students (Kincheloe, 2010). Moreover, urban centers are presumed to serve higher percentages of English Language Leaners (Abril, 2006b; Smith, 2006) and students who are labeled "at-risk" (Kincheloe, 2010; Robinson, 2004). Such diversity may not be well-perceived, particularly by teachers or other members of school communities whose personal backgrounds are incongruent with the students with whom they interact. Consequently, students are negatively impacted. According to Ellsasser (2008):

> Unfortunately, many urban students continue to encounter a very different type of school characterized by the following realities: inexperienced teachers, inadequate professional development, ineffective and culturally irrelevant instruction, inconsistent management, low expectations, limited school resources and funding, excessive use of punitive methods, and restrictive classroom environments. (p. 479)

Understanding the perceptions regarding urban schools is, indeed, necessary in order to counteract unidimensional images frequently portrayed by society (Abril, 2006b; Hinckley, 1995); however, resolutions are not cultivated solely from disparaging viewpoints (Hinckley, 1995).

Rather than epitomizing urban schools as deficient and further exacerbating issues ubiquitous in urban environments, researchers have suggested the utilization of counterexamples (Ellsasser, 2008; Fitzpatrick-Harnish, 2015; Martignetti et al., 2013) to

exemplify places where urban students thrive (Hinckley, 1995; Smith, 2006). Such examples could provide teachers with a more hopeful perspective of working with students in underserved communities (Martignetti et al., 2013). For example, exemplifying schools that are successful in responding to and engaging students in classes could be insightful in furthering constructive teaching practices (Ellsasser, 2008). It is important, however, that educators first understand the environment in which they teach (Fitzpatrick, 2011; Fitzpatrick-Harnish, 2015; Kincheloe, 2010; Shaw, 2015), as each school is its own "self-contained entity" (Kincheloe, 2010, p. 4). As Fitzpatrick-Harnish (2015) states, "Urban schools are not 'less than' schools in any other context any more than they are 'more than.' All schools, in all contexts, are 'different from' one another" (p. 3). This notion of contextual understanding translates to other facets of schools, such as music education programs, which function as sub-units within institutions.

Urban Music Teaching

Urban music programs are frequently depicted in a similar light as their respective schools. Although most secondary schools in the United States offer music courses (U. S. Department of Education, 2012), music programs housed in lower-income schools are infamous for their lack of funding, resources and support (Baker, 2012; Costa-Giomi, 2008; Costa-Giomi & Chappell, 2007; DeLorenzo, 2012; Doyle, 2012; U. S. Department of Education, 2012). Costa-Giomi and Chappell (2007), for instance, found that differences in resources exist based on a school's demographic composition and level of affluence, even within the same school district. Particularly, "schools with fewer

minorities or with lower proportions of disadvantaged students had more financial resources, more adequate facilities, and more supportive parents than schools with a higher proportion of minority students or disadvantaged students" (Costa-Giomi & Chappell, 2007, p. 13). Additionally, other forms of support, such as administrative and collegial relationships, are valued and may differ based on context (Baker, 2012; Costa-Giomi, 2008; Costa-Giomi & Chappell, 2007). Interestingly, school administrators and district officials of urban communities may work to provide resources, in some capacity, for schools that house underserved students (Costa-Giomi, 2008), which provides a more encouraging outlook for urban educators.

With the dominant perception of urban schools framed as a negative, it is plausible for both in-service and preservice teachers to refrain from or lack the desire to teach in such environments (Robinson, 2012). Robinson (2012) posits that, "Schools with less favorable conditions have greater difficulty recruiting and retaining teachers and consequently have higher turnover rates than schools with more favorable conditions" (p. 303). Thus, teachers prefer to teach in schools more congruent with the contexts in which they are accustomed, typically suburban and predominantly White communities (Ausmann, 1991; Chizhik, 2003; Kelly, 2003; Robinson, 2012; Siwatu, 2011). There are, however, in-service or preservice teachers who elect or would consider working in urban environments for various reasons (Baker, 2012; Robinson, 2012). For instance, former urban students are more likely to teach in urban schools whereas other teachers may desire to teach to "make a difference" in students' lives (Baker, 2012). Baker (2012) found that one teacher elected to teach in an urban, culturally diverse school because of

the fluency in Spanish he developed after marrying into a Spanish-speaking family. Although some teachers willingly choose to work as urban music teachers, there is still a stigma associated with such a conception.

Tensions associated with teaching in urban environments may be attributed to a sense of unpreparedness from university-level teacher preparation programs (Baker, 2012; Doyle, 2012; Fiese & DeCarbo, 1995). Specifically, teachers feel unprepared to educate anyone other than the "ideal," White, affluent student (Doyle, 2012; Fiese & DeCarbo, 1995). Music teacher educator programs have worked to include more contextually diverse experiences for preservice teachers (Baker, 2012; Emmanuel, 2003, 2005; Robinson, 2012); however, when conducted in an injudicious fashion, these field experiences may further reify the damaging narratives commonly associated with urban schools (Bruenger, 2010). Despite fears that may prevent teachers from working in urban music programs, there are teachers who enjoy their teaching situations. According to Bernard (2010):

> many music educators who teach in urban settings find their work to be a source of deep satisfaction and pride. Their positive stories have been noticeably absent from published writing about urban music education...The music educators spoke passionately about how capable their students are [the teachers] noted that some people mistakenly believe that children in urban schools are less capable than other children. (pp. 53-54)

Such stories are essential counterexamples (Fitzpatrick-Harnish, 2015; Martignetti et al., 2013) that can help the profession "reject existing stereotypes of urban music education and focus on serving the needs of our students" (Fitzpatrick-Harnish, 2015, p. 4).

Tensions with Traditional Ensembles

Ensembles, such as concert bands, have cultivated their own distinct culture of repertoire, practices, and traditions (Morrison, 2001). While some students may value an immersion into band culture, others may view such ensembles in a different light (Allsup, 1997; Campbell et al., 2007; Kratus, 2007). Music education researchers and theorists have questioned whether the traditional concert band format is compatible with diversified school populations (Abril, 2009; Allsup, 1997; Allsup & Benedict, 2008; Hoffman & Carter, 2013; Kratus, 2007; Woody, 2007), as students of color are often underrepresented in music classes (Abril, 2009; DeLorenzo, 2012; Elpus, 2014; Kinney, in press). Hoffman (2012) noted, "The nature of declining enrollment in secondary music education, demands a closer examination of students' choices to identify with, or disassociate from, the middle school wind band" (p. 222).

Declining enrollments could be attributed to a number of causes; however, relevance is one facet to consider. Kratus (2007) speculates that traditional ensembles are becoming increasingly more irrelevant and detached from society as music is now experienced in a more technological, personalized manner. The seeming irrelevance of traditional concert bands may cause students to realize a stigma associated with band participation as non-classical instruments, such as guitars, may be preferred over classical (Campbell et al., 2007). Although the conception of performing on band instruments may

dissuade students from enrolling, other intervening issues may serve as deterrents. These may include the manner in which the class is structured, selection of repertoire, and the reinforcement of competition (Butler, Lind, & McKoy, 2007, p. 246).

Class Structure. Band classrooms are often conceptualized as disciplined and controlled environments where the band director makes all decisions and functions as the sole disseminator of information (Allsup, 2003; Allsup & Benedict, 2008; Butler et al., 2007; Hoffman & Carter, 2013; Woody, 2007). This authoritative format is often emulated from the practices of previous teachers (Allsup & Benedict, 2008), but may be ineffective in communities of color (Allsup, 1997; Butler et al., 2007; Campbell et al., 2007; Hoffman & Carter, 2013). Specifically, monolithic, authoritarian teaching practices may inevitably disengage certain students from ensemble participation (Allsup, 1997; Allsup & Benedict, 2008; Butler et al., 2007). Allsup and Benedict (2008) elucidate:

> By teaching to this content and wielding what is perceived as normative practices, we model a role to our students that replicates the behaviors of the oppressed/oppressor relationship, effectively silencing alternative discourse. And if in desire to engage in broader educative possibilities or an alternative discourse we choose not to teach to this repertoire or take on differing pedagogical practices, we risk conflict. (p. 162)

Although there are perceived tensions in how classes are conducted, the traditional band classroom may thrive in certain contexts. Edgar (2016) proposes facilitative teaching as an effective approach within the instrumental music classroom. In this setting, "The teacher can maintain the role of mentor and leader of their classroom

but, [should be] driven by care for their students" (Edgar, 2016, p. 249). Equally, students have more concern for "caring directors with high performance expectations and the necessary persistence to help students meet those expectations" regardless of ensemble type (Mixon, 2006, p. 119). Students should "feel successful and important" in their classes (Robinson, 2004, p. 41). Feelings of success and importance may be cultivated in classrooms; however, the nature of competition commonly associated with performance ensembles may intervene.

Competition. Another facet of the band tradition is competition. The hierarchical structures often employed in bands can influence students' decisions to remain in programs (Hoffman, 2012). Specifically, students who are placed in an ensemble other than their preference, particularly a lower-tiered group, may decide to quit altogether (Hoffman, 2012; Parker, 2016). In a similar vein, chair placements, a common practice where students are ranked based on performance outcomes, may be counterproductive to confidence building tactics (Hoffman, 2012). Such practices could incite feelings of, "not [being] good enough, smart enough, or capable enough" (Allsup & Benedict, 2008, p. 170). The competitive nature of the concert band tradition may foster a sense of insecurity for students when they compare themselves against their peers or other schools (Hoffman, 2012; Hoffman & Carter, 2013). Hoffman (2012) realized changes in students' perceptions by disclosing, "As [students] became involved in chair tests and auditions, they modified their perceptions of themselves within a tiered class structure in which socio-economic class became increasingly apparent to students" (p. 219).

The way in which a teacher perceives competition may also impact the overall classroom climate. Specifically, the way directors perceive success is critical. Some band directors derive a program's success ratings from adjudicated ratings (Bruenger, 2010), which may be destructive (Hoffman, 2012; Hoffman & Carter, 2013; Rawlings & Stoddard, 2017). This is of particular importance for programs that consistently receive "low" ratings of which students are cognizant (Hoffman & Carter, 2013). Other urban teachers consider success based on how they are able to respond to students' needs (Bernard, 2010), student growth (Fitzpatrick, 2011), and the overall impact they may have on students (Bruenger, 2010). Understanding the context and what students value can guide teachers' philosophical stances to better reflect the needs of students.

Repertoire and Authenticity. In regard to the relevancy of concert bands, the literature selected for bands to play may be a point of contention. According to Campbell et al. (2007), "[students] long for more provisions for the study of music that is relevant to their needs, their interests, and their hopes and desires" (p. 234). In an effort to be more responsive to students' interests, educators have suggested more relevant music, such as popular music, be integrated into curricula (Albert, 2006; Allsup, 1997; Allsup & Benedict, 2008; Fitzpatrick-Harnish; Kratus, 2007; Palkki, 2015; Woody, 2007). According to Allsup and Benedict (2008):

> I see it as our task to connect a tradition to lived life even as our students' lives may be strikingly different from our own. I have often heard directors talk about not wanting to spoil their students with the music of John Williams. The students on the other hand just want a little bit of fun. (p. 166)

Although curricular reform and more engaging literature may be warranted, there are concerns as to how popular music is learned within the traditional ensemble setting (Woody, 2007). Researchers discussed the authenticity of music performed in music programs (Abril, 2006a; Woody, 2007). Woody (2007) elucidates, "popular music often represents the 'native' music culture of our students. In a very real way, respecting the music is respecting our students. If we ignore musical authenticity with popular styles, our students will know it" (p. 33). Abril (2006a) problematizes authenticity by noting that it refers to culture in an inflexible manner. Instead, culture is fluid and evolving making it difficult to find music that is truly representative of a particular cultural group. Thus, he forwards the notion of cultural validity. According to Abril (2006a), "If the goal for selecting the music is to validly represent a particular cultural group, the musical experience should be typical or characteristic of that culture. As such, it can serve as culturally valid representation" (p. 40). If students are gatekeepers into their respective cultures, their perspectives should be integrated into the dialogue.

Alternative Approaches

In response to tensions concerning the concert band paradigm, researchers have referenced alternative ensembles as a possible solution to engage students in music (Abril, 2009; Hinckley, 1995; Mixon, 2005, 2006, 2009). Reimagining music courses in such a way may be vital in an effort to "avoid losing the participation of some of the best young musicians in the country" (Kindall-Smith, 2006, p. 52). Fitzpatrick (2012) suggested, "Groups such as nontraditional percussion groups, rock ensembles, technology-based ensembles, and mariachi ensembles may better resonate with the

cultural background of many students who might not otherwise enroll in our traditional music classes and performance ensembles" (Fitzpatrick, 2012, p. 57). In this light, students may perform music that they find to be more engaging (Campbell et al., 2007; Hoffman & Carter, 2013). While some alternative ensembles may be more effective in increasing music participation, outcomes may not be consistent everywhere. For example, mariachi may be an effective alternative ensemble within certain communities of color, however, it "may not always be culturally relevant to adolescents – Mexican or not" (Abril, 2009, p. 88). Such an assertion warrants further investigation into the types of ensembles that may be effective for particular locations and regions, as well as communities of color, particularly ones that comprise a predominantly Latino population.

Alternative approaches in classroom structure and activities, utilizing CRT principles, may also be effective in increasing student participation. Rather than focusing on teacher-centered classrooms, researchers have suggested cooperative learning environments, such as garage bands or small-groups for composition-based assignments (Allsup, 2003; Hoffman & Carter, 2013). In these settings, students have increased ownership in the class and learning is co-constructed in a communal fashion allowing for creativity to be cultivated (Hoffman & Carter, 2013). Thus, learning is constructed in a more collaborative manner (Abril, 2003; Allsup, 2003; Hoffman & Carter, 2013). In a classroom where band students were afforded an opportunity to create music, Hoffman and Carter (2013) found that one student was able to "represent as an African-American" by creating music he felt was more relevant to him (p. 144). Regardless of the type of

ensemble or class format, all students deserve an opportunity to participate in music courses.

Perceived Barriers to Music Participation

Although music education is available to all students, access is often a hindrance for traditionally marginalized students. Frierson-Campbell (2007) discussed the disadvantages of traditional music education practices by noting that, "…the best schools produce world-class performance ensembles that rival college professional ensembles. But, participation in these courses is often limited to those students whose parents have purchased instruments (and often instruction) outside the school setting" (p. 257). Such restrictive practices are an injustice to students who desire to participate but are financially incapable of doing so without accommodation.

Aside from SES, culture may also serve as a barrier between disadvantaged students and teachers, especially considering that the teachers are typically from predominantly White, middle-class backgrounds (Ausmann, 1991; Chizhik, 2003; Emmanuel, 2005; Gay, 2010; Kelly, 2003; Robinson, 2006; Siwatu, 2011). According to Johnson (2004):

> No student should be denied access to the arts based on the property wealth of his or her district or household. Neither should a student be denied access to the arts because of his or her disabilities, culture, status as a speaker of English, or school level. Access to music should be universal in the sense that a quality music education is available for all students. (p. 135)

Understanding potential barriers music participation and how they impact music programs is critical for creating inclusive music programs (DeLorenzo, 2012; Elpus & Abril, 2011; Frierson-Campbell, 2007; Kinney, 2010, in press; Lorah et al., 2014).

Socioeconomic Status: Instruments, Private Lessons, and Practice Spaces

Common to research associated with urban schools is the discussion of socioeconomic status (SES). Students from higher socioeconomic backgrounds are more likely to enroll in music programs (DeLorenzo, 2012; Elpus, 2014; Elpus & Abril, 2011; Kinney, 2010). Typically, participation requires a financial investment, specifically in instrumental music programs where students may be required to rent or purchase an instrument. Consequently, this expectation may hinder students' ability to participate in music classes (Abril & Gault, 2008; Albert, 2006; Ester & Turner, 2009; Fitzpatrick, 2008, 2011; Hoffman, 2012; Kindall-Smith, 2006; Kinney, 2010, in press; Lorah et al., 2014; Shields, 2001). SES can also impact transportation to music events, such as practices and concerts (Elpus & Abril, 2011; Kinney, 2010, in press).

Another facet vital in music programs is private lesson instruction. Private lessons, although not technically required for participation in ensemble electives, are often highly recommended, yet may not be possible for students in low-SES environments who cannot afford to employ teachers (Costa-Giomi & Chappell, 2007; Elpus & Abril, 2011; Hoffman, 2012). This can place students at a disadvantage when compared with peers who do receive private lesson instruction (Hoffman, 2012). Regardless of private lesson instruction, individual practice is highly encouraged for all students to continue progressing on their instruments; however, the ability to practice

may depend on the physicality of home environments (Hoffman, 2012; Mixon, 2005, 2006). Mixon (2005) articulated, "some urban children live in chaotic and unstable homes and are not able to practice regularly" (p. 17). Additionally, students may live with baby siblings or in multi-family complexes, making practice more difficult (Hoffman, 2012).

Rather than penalizing students based on their circumstances, music teachers could find ways to accommodate their students. Such accommodations would entail providing school-owned instruments and necessary materials for students in need (Elpus & Abril, 2011; Lorah et al., 2014; Mixon, 2005, 2006); however, teachers should also be aware of the costs likely to incur for instrument supplies, repair and maintenance (Costa-Giomi & Chappell 2007; Mixon, 2005). Thus, having skills in instrument repairs may significantly reduce budgetary costs (Mixon, 2005). If students lack transportation, other parents in the program may be able to assist in establishing a transportation system for students (Elpus & Abril, 2011; Mixon, 2006). Parents may also assist in generating funds for a program (Bernard, 2010), which could create opportunities for private lesson scholarships. In regard to student practice, directors could provide spaces for students to practice throughout the school day in order to fulfill requirements (Mixon, 2005).

Understanding and working to meet the needs of students can potentially reduce barriers to music programs (Elpus & Abril, 2011; Lorah et al., 2014). This is crucial particularly for students of low-SES as they may perceive students' success and value in the program to be dependent on whether or not they take private lessons or own their own instrument (Hoffman, 2012). This is destructive to successful teaching since inequities

are pervasive in music education. The inequities may be even more pronounced based on the intersections of race and SES. According to DeLorenzo (2012):

> poor black or Latino children do not stand much of a chance when it comes to the experiences needed for a college music program or professional career in music. Without continuity in music instruction, money for private lessons, or instrument rental and other resources, students can hardly develop a competitive level of performance skills that lead to participation in music camps, community orchestras, or college music programs (DeLorenzo, 2012, p. 42).

Eradicating such barriers may help retain students in music programs, as SES may prevent some from persisting (Elpus & Abril, 2011; Kinney, 2010; Kinney, in press).

Cultural Barriers

Understanding Culture. In order to teach students more effectively in culturally rich communities, it is imperative to first understand what is meant by culture. Culture is multifaceted, complex, and extends beyond what is outwardly visible (Emmanuel, 2003, 2006a; Fitzpatrick-Harnish, 2015; Ladson-Billings, 2009; Lind & McKoy, 2016; Nieto & Bode, 2012). As Nieto & Bode (2012) suggest, "Culture consists of the values, traditions, worldview, and social and political relationships created, shared, and transformed by a group of people bound together by a common history, geographic location, language, social class, religion, or other shared identity" (p. 156). Focusing primarily on physical attributes, which may be inadvertently associated with race and ethnicity, creates an essentialized view of culture (Fitzpatrick-Harnish, 2015; Shaw, 2016). This is problematic as cultural stereotypes stem from essentializations (Abril, 2006a, 2009;

Ladson-Billings, 2017; Lind & McKoy, 2016). Rather, culture should be perceived as evolving "to remain vital and functional for those who create it and for those it serves…[and] is influenced by a wide variety of factors, including time, setting, age, economics, and social circumstances" (Gay, 2010, p. 10). All of these facets contribute to cultural hybridity, "the fusion of various cultures to form new, distinct, and ever-changing identities" (Nieto & Bode, 2012, pp. 160-161). In this sense, youth culture can be described as its own culture (Alim & Paris, 2017), one that is associated with students in schools.

Cultural Dissonances. The teaching population remains predominantly White despite growing changes in student demography (Emmanuel, 2003). Most music teachers come from more affluent, predominantly White communities, which are likely different than that of their students (Gay, 2010; Martignetti et al., 2013; Robinson, 2006; Shaw, 2012). Consequently, teachers may have a narrow perspective concerning their students' cultures. Such unfamiliarity may result in a cultural "mismatch" (Kindall-Smith, 2006; Robinson, 2006), which can create barriers to learning in classrooms (Butler et al., 2007). Teachers should interrogate the attitudes and assumptions they may have in relation to students and families they serve (Emmanuel, 2003). This could help prevent the reinforcement of cultural stereotypes that may develop and serve as barriers to building relationships (Abril, 2009; Emmanuel; 2003, Emmanuel, 2006b; Marx, 2008). Additionally, such an interrogation might help prevent students from believing disempowering stereotypes (Sosa & Gomez, 2012). An example of a cultural stereotype would be assuming that all Latino students are from Mexico (Abril, 2009; Emmanuel,

2006a) or speak Spanish (Shaw, 2012). If teachers feel that they are unable to relate to students (Marx, 2008) based on cultural differences (Fitzpatrick-Harnish, 2015), these dissonances may permeate through pedagogies and form into ideologies concerning students of color.

Pedagogical Practices

Deficit-Based Approaches

Pervasive in urban schooling spaces are deficit ideologies that serve as impediments to success for underserved students or students of color. These ideologies victimize students of color for their perceived inadequacies or circumstances (Benedict, 2006; Kindall-Smith, 2006; Nieto & Bode, 2012; Paris, 2012). According to Nieto & Bode (2012), deficit ideologies:

> assume that some children, because of genetic, cultural or experiential differences, are inferior to other children–that is, that they have deficits that must be overcome if they are to learn...they place complete responsibility for children's failure on their homes and families, effectively absolving schools and society from responsibility. (p. 16)

In this light, emphasis is placed on the dominant culture and dominant norms by which students are compared (Benedict, 2006). Differences, then, are rejected by deficit ideologists, who prefer that students adopt a monocultural identity, relinquishing their own (Paris, 2012). This problematic perception occurs as a result of educators seeking to reduce every student down to the 'ideal' student (Bennedict, 2006). Because students of color are not perceived as ideal, teachers may lower their expectations and standards with

the thought that some level of success may be achieved (Benham, 2003; Iken, 2006; Ladson-Billings, 2009; McKoy, 2012; Rivera-McCutchen, 2012). If students resist conforming, they are inappropriately perceived as failures (Robinson, 2006). Even if teachers exhibit profound care for their students, lowering expectations does little to empower students of color (Garcia & Guerra, 2004). Rather, such efforts may result in a "self-fulfilling cycle" where students continue to underperform, validating teachers' beliefs (Rivera-McCutchen, 2012). Additionally, teachers may adopt a savior mentality seeking to save students (Benedict, 2006) rather than empowering them.

Although music education may integrate and represent music from diverse cultures, music students are not immune from destructive practices. Fitzpatrick-Harnish (2015) made explicit some of the pervasive deficits that some educators adopt by stating, "Urban music students are seen as deficient, defiant, unmotivated, and uninterested. Their families are 'broken' and 'hopeless'" (pp. 2 – 3). To move toward socially just teaching and progressive pedagogies, music educators should work to reflect on and challenge any suppositions they hold in regard to students' cultures that may contrast from that of their own (Alim & Paris, 2017; Emmanuel, 2006a; Fitzpatrick, 2015; Paris & Alim, 2014). Specifically, educators must "understand that the sets of beliefs and behaviors we carry with us impact the way we interact with our students, the way we interpret their actions, and the way we view the teaching and learning process" (Emmanuel, 2006a, p. 24). Such understandings and reflections could allow us to "affiliate [students'] life experiences with issues and situations that are addressed in the curriculum, thus becoming tied more

closely to the goals of a socially and ideologically aware music curriculum" (Benedict, 2006, p. 11).

Asset-Based Pedagogies

Moving away from deficit ideologies requires a shift in perspective and positionality. Teachers must work to understand students' cultural backgrounds (Butler et al., 2007; Fitzpatrick-Harnish, 2015; Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 2009); however, before this can be achieved, teachers must first see themselves as the "outsider" rather than perceiving their students as such (Benedict, 2006). If teachers position themselves as the outsider seeking to learn the ways and norms of a particular culture, they may engage in meaningful, reciprocal and dialogic learning with students (Fitzpatrick-Harnish, 2015). It is through this viewpoint that teachers may begin to see the assets students possess as well as the inequities they encounter.

Two prominent asset-based pedagogies are culturally relevant pedagogy and culturally responsive teaching. Culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP) can be described as integrating into the curriculum "student culture in order to maintain it and to transcend the negative effects of the dominant culture" (Ladson-Billings, 2009, p. 19). This pedagogy stemmed from a realization of cultural tensions as "school is perceived as a place where African American students cannot 'be themselves'" (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p. 161). Culturally responsive teaching (CRT) is defined as "using the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant to and effective for them" (Gay, 2010, p. 31). Both pedagogies have been integrated into music education,

specifically concerning culturally diverse communities. Importantly, music educators do not have to teach in schooling contexts that are highly diverse culturally to utilize such pedagogies since "all teachers… have a responsibility to respond to the culturally informed strengths, interests, and needs of their particular students" (Shaw, 2016, p. 66).

Although music educators and researchers have worked to include asset-based pedagogies into their curriculum, limitations have been noted. As teachers work towards responding to students' cultural backgrounds, "an additive approach to incorporating diverse content into the curriculum can fall short of cultural responsiveness when no attempt is made to align learning experiences with the cultural perspectives of particular students" (Shaw, 2016, p. 65). Indeed, to work against hegemonic structures, which continue to negatively impact students who are marginalized, music education should be centered "on a perspective of social justice, equitable access, and culturally-responsive instruction for all students of music and music education" (Kindall-Smith, McKoy, & Mills, 2011, p. 375). Moving toward "social change…would enable us not only to develop our students' capacities to participate fully in their musical cultures, but our own capacities to transform culture as well" (Benedict, 2006, p. 12).

Barrio-Based Epistemologies and Ontologies. As an extension of CRT, Irizarry and Raible (2011) offer Barrio-Based Epistemologies and Ontologies (BBEO) as another lens through which educators may view their practices. According to Irizarry and Raible (2011) BBEO:

1. Are rooted in respect for students' cultures and identities

2. Are based on the historical and contemporary sociopolitical context of the Latino community
3. Acknowledge the pervasiveness of race and racialization on teachers' lives and the lives of their Latino students
4. Reflect teacher's sustained commitment to and engagement with Latino communities
5. Inform both the pedagogy and language practices of effective teachers (pp. 200-201)

This approach to teaching views Latino students from a more humanizing perspective rather than one of deficit by valuing students' language(s) and not "plac[ing] the blame for Latino students' underachievement primarily on students and families" (Irizarry & Raible, 2011, p. 200). Similar to other asset-based pedagogies, Latino students are encouraged to bring their identities into classroom spaces as teachers strive to connect to student and communal resources for teaching (Irizarry & Raible, 2011).

Latino Students and Families

A budding area of interest in urban music education is centered on music in culturally diverse communities. Urban schools may consist of more students of color, specifically Latino students, (Costa-Giomi & Chappell, 2007) or English-Language Learners (ELL) (Smith, 2006); however, there are areas in the United States, such as the Southwest region, that comprise high percentages of Latino students in schools (Váldes, 1996). In seeking to understand how to best serve Latino students, it is important to understand Latino communities and the stressors that may impact their well-being to

better respond to their needs (DeLorenzo, 2012; Kleyn et al., 2016; Sosa & Gomez, 2012). These stressors include immigration and education.

Immigration and Education

Immigration has been a topic of discussion for some time as a large percentage of immigrants inhabit the United States. According to the Pew Research Center (2017), there are approximately 43.2 million immigrants in the United States. With this strong immigrant presence are potential cultural barriers between families and schools. For instance, English language acquisition may create feelings of tension as "adjusting to life in a foreign country can be stressful for students and families as there are differences in schooling systems" (DeJonckheere et al., 2017, p. 412). He, Bettez, & Levin (2017) found that differences are not well-perceived by some faculty in schools who may exhibit "language and 'accent' discrimination" towards family members, treating them as incompetent and apathetic toward their child's education (p. 971). This type of discrimination was expressed by one parent in Ramirez's (2003) study:

> 'The schools make me feel stupid because I have trouble with English, and all I want is for my children to do well in school. To become something better than I. All I wanted was for the teacher to write down what was due and they wouldn't do it for me.' (p. 102)

Rather than engaging in discriminatory and exclusionary practices, Inoa (2017) urges that educators and officials "help assure that all families within school communities have equal opportunity to involve themselves in decision making, that all families feel valued, and that their concerns be accounted for" (Inoa, 2017, p. 331). A lack of parental

visibility may be perceived as indifference; however, other factors may inhibit parental involvement, such as legal status.

A pressing issue in the political climate is centered on legal status – specifically, the presence of undocumented immigrants. Out of the 43.2 million immigrants in the country, approximately 11 million are "unauthorized" or undocumented immigrants (Pew Research Center, 2017). Issues concerning legal status create additional stressors for immigrant families. For example, families may be unaware of policies regarding immigration and legal status in addition to what rights they may have, further intensifying levels of stress (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2016; Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001; Váldes, 1996). Váldes (1996) illuminated the anxiety some families feel regarding legal status:

> During the time they were undocumented, every member of the family was vulnerable. Because of this vulnerability, these individuals lived their lives looking over their shoulders. They were suspicious, and they were fearful. Even as they learned how to function in a new world, they had to move in that new world carefully. (p. 62)

Additionally, "many undocumented children and their parents feel that anyone they encounter, especially those in official positions such as police officers, teachers, and nurses, may turn them in to [immigration officials]" (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001, p. 34). Thus, families may be unreachable by teachers, as family members may deliberately provide inaccurate contact information to avoid being reported (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001). Difficulty in contacting families and

miscommunication due to language may result in lowered expectations for students and families by teachers (He et al., 2017; Ramirez, 2003), which can create further tensions as students are not challenged intellectually and held to high expectations.

It is important to realize that fears of deportation are not the only point of contention for these students and their families (He et al., 2017). Some students may become disengaged from school when they realize that plans to pursue higher education may be hindered by their status (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001, pp. 34-35). As Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco (2001) discovered:

> We found that older children feel a terrible sense of injustice when they first discover that they cannot go beyond high school: a feeling of anger is followed by a sense of hopelessness and depression. Many simply give up on schooling in their last year of high school. In some cases, high school students do not know that they are undocumented until they begin to think about college and their parents are forced to tell them. (p. 35)

Understanding the inequities and difficult terrain Latino, and other, immigrant families may encounter is crucial in order for teachers and schools to serve as support systems (Brewster & Bowen, 2004) rather than pillars of fear in these politically turbulent times.

Participation in Ensembles

Although the Latino population is steadily growing in areas across the country, there are mixed findings regarding their presence in school music programs. Elpus and Abril (2011) found that Latino students are not participating in music ensembles to the same degree as their White counterparts, even in schools that are more culturally diverse.

Furthermore, students who are English Language Learners may also be less likely to participate, as language acquisition courses may take precedent over other electives (Elpus, 2014). In contrast, Lorah et al. (2014) posited that Latino students are not underrepresented. Rather, academic achievement or socioeconomic status may be intervening factors. According to Lorah et al (2014):

> The apparently lower representation of ELL students in music ensembles can be interpreted more accurately as an underrepresentation of students from poorer families and students experiencing lower academic achievement, the latter casting a more unsettling light on reported correlations between music participation and higher academic achievement. (p. 240)

Interestingly, this racial disproportionality in music courses is not a recent phenomenon, but has magnified following increased focus on standardized testing (Elpus, 2014). Language may serve as a barrier to music participation, for example, as students may be required to take additional language courses (Elpus & Abril, 2011; Lorah et al., 2014). In this instance, music teachers could find ways to allow for alternative methods for participation so that students are not excluded from music programs due to language acquisition requirements.

Communities

In search of ways to teach students from culturally rich environments more effectively, it is vital to consider both the communities of which they are a part (Fiese & DeCarbo, 1995) and the sense of community that has been established as it relates to communal, cooperative learning (Abril, 2003; Albert, 2006; Allsup, 2003; Edgar, 2016;

Gay, 2010, 2013; Hoffman & Carter, 2013; Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2009). Because community is an integral component of successful teaching in communities of color, both school community and sense of community are discussed throughout this section.

School Communities

Although researchers have discussed communities in various aspects, few have explored a school community's perception of their band program. A school environment comprises more than students and classrooms teachers. Faculty, staff, administrators, students, families, and members of the larger community all have some stake in a school and can greatly impact a music program (Abril & Bannerman, 2015; Abril & Gault, 2007, 2008; Fiese & DeCarbo, 1995), thus their voices should be included in the narrative. These perspectives are imperative in order to better serve the needs of their students and others within the community (Abril & Bannerman, 2015; Abril & Gault, 2007, 2008). According to Abril and Gault (2007), "Understanding diverse perspectives and opening doors to the school community will help foster positive values toward school music, improving the chances that all students will have the opportunity to study music in school" (p. 36).

Each member of the school community can serve as a "support network" for music teachers (Fiese & DeCarbo, 1995), ultimately assisting with the development and sustainment of effective music programs (Fiese & DeCarbo, 1995; Mixon, 2006). This support is crucial, particularly in urban contexts, (Costa-Giomi, 2008; Costa-Giomi & Chappell, 2007; Ellsasser, 2008). According to Fiese and DeCarbo (1995), "Having all of the constituencies involved in dialogue, rather than parallel monologues, for the

advancement of students' music education is perhaps one of the central features of successful urban school music programs" (p. 30). Because school community members are vital to schools and music programs, literature concerning their roles and perceptions of schools are outlined.

Parents. Possibly the greatest link between school, students, and their homes are parents and/or legal guardians. Parents are often referenced in literature by their quality of involvement in schools (Alexander et al., 2017; Baker, 2012; Calzada et al., 2015; Costa-Giomi, 2008; Costa-Giomi & Chappell, 2007; Garcia-Reid, Reid, & Peterson, 2005; He et al., 2017; Hinckley, 1995; Kindall-Smith, 2006; Lowenhaupt, 2014; Mixon, 2005; Nieto & Bode, 2012; Smith, 2006; Williams & Sánchez, 2012; Zdzinksi, 1996). Parents are considered to be resources for music programs (Abril & Bannerman, 2015; Baker, 2012; Costa-Giomi, 2008; Costa-Giomi & Chappell, 2007). Outside of providing funds for students to participate in music classes, parents may volunteer their efforts to help teachers when needed and they also serve as promoters or advocates of music programs (Abril & Bannerman, 2015). Their involvement in school and music programs can have positive effects on students' academic performance (Alexander et al. 2017; Garcia-Reid et al., 2005; Zdzinski, 1996).

While parental engagement is desired in many programs, parents have been perceived to be uninvolved in various contexts. Specifically, parents from low-SES backgrounds are often perceived as being less engaged from schools from schools (Calzada et al., 2015; Costa-Giomi & Chappell, 2007). Additionally, parents of color may be perceived as uninvolved (Calzada et al, 2015; He et al., 2017; Nieto & Bode, 2012);

however, there may be extenuating factors, such as cultural or language barriers, contributing to this (Hinckley, 1995; Mixon, 2005; Lowenhaupt, 2014; Nieto & Bode, 2012; Smith, 2006). Cultural differences, in particular, stem from differences in expectations of parental involvement in American schools versus in a parent's country of origin (Nieto & Bode, 2012). Whether intentional or not, feelings of unease may develop causing parents to feel "unwelcomed" (Garcia-Reid et al., 2005). Nieto and Bode (2012) extend by stating:

> typical involvement strategies may further estrange families who already feel disconnected from the school. The general lack of awareness among many school staff members–from secretaries to teachers and administrators–concerning the cultural and linguistic resources of families of diverse backgrounds can lead to frustration and misunderstanding on the part of both families and educators (pp. 138-139).

Disengagement from schools can have a negative impact on their child's academic performance (Alexander et al., 2017, p. 175). Rather, teachers should work to engage parents by effectively communicating with them (Smith, 2006). Effective communication could entail the delivery of information in a parent's primary language (He et al., 2017; Lowenhaupt, 2014); moreover, engaging in dialogue to determine how best to respond to their needs is crucial (Lowenhaupt, 2014). Mixon (2005) suggest that teachers, "gain support of parents by building bridges...most parents, regardless of socioeconomic status, love their children and want them to do well academically" (p. 20). Parents may not be involved in one particular way due to work schedules or other factors

(He et al., 2017; Hinckley, 1995; Kindall-Smith, 2006; Williams & Sánchez, 2012) but may be involved and welcomed in other ways (Garcia-Reid et al., 2005; Kindall-Smith, 2006), such as being invited to attend concerts.

Administrators. In schools, administrators have a major impact on the functionality of music programs. Administrative support is crucial to the sustainability of a music program through financial support (Abril & Bannerman, 2015; Mixon, 2005; Renfro, 2003). Scheduling is similarly important (Abril & Bannerman, 2015; Doyle, 2012; Smith, 2006). To teach students in a more effective manner, students must be placed in the correct classes (Doyle, 2012; Smith, 2006). For example, if a student is a beginning musician, she should be placed in a beginner-level course. Administrators often come from non-music backgrounds; therefore, their understanding of how music programs should be structured may be limited (Smith, 2006). According to Smith (2006),

> A common challenge stated by these teachers is educating their administrators about what a balanced, comprehensive, sequential program of music instruction entails…they must constantly advocate for their music programs. Their immediate supervisors are often people from other curriculum areas with little or no understanding of music education. (p. 65).

Ultimately, principals can serve as motivators for teachers based on their level of support (Finnigan, 2012; Sosa & Gomez, 2012).

Music Teachers. Integral to music programs are the teachers who are tasked with overseeing all aspects of their classroom instruction. According to Abril & Gault (2008), "Principals considered music teachers to have the greatest positive impact on a program"

(p. 78). Researchers have indubitably noted that music teachers are often underprepared to teach in diverse contexts (Kindall-Smith, 2004; Kindall-Smith et al., 2011; Robinson, 2017; Salvador & Kelly-McHale, 2017). According to Robinson (2017), "a majority of preservice music teachers are not equipped with the skills and teaching disposition required to navigate the social and cultural facets they will encounter in their music classrooms" (p. 22). Rather, preservice music teachers are trained as though they will teach students of the dominant culture. This is problematic as music classes will continue to be less monocultural over time. For teachers to be effective in culturally diverse contexts, they must be "proactive, hard-working, dedicated, persevering, patient, and passionate" (Albert, 2006, p. 64) and seek to understand their students and the community in which they serve (Fitzpatrick-Harnish, 2015; Shaw, 2015). Student participation can be positively influenced by teachers who are "highly visible as well as friendly, enthusiastic, and generally interested in all students" (Mixon, 2006, pp. 118-119).

Teacher Colleagues. Although teachers outside of school music programs are members of the school community, their perceptions are rarely included in music education research. Developing positive relationships with teacher colleagues in the school setting can impact music programs. Mixon (2005) notes, "If your colleagues like you personally and respect you professionally, they will often help generate student interest in your group and accommodate students needing to leave their classes for lessons and rehearsals" (p. 18). Their support is vital, particularly in urban schools or schools situated within culturally rich communities (Costa-Giomi, 2008; Mixon, 2006). It

is within these contexts, interestingly, that music teachers may feel more collegial support (Costa-Giomi, 2008).

Students. Directly impacted in music programs are the students who elect to participate in such courses. It is important to understand, from the students' perspectives, why they choose to participate in ensembles, particularly in communities of color that are seemingly underrepresented (DeLorenzo, 2010; Elpus, 2014; Elpus & Abril, 2011). Students have various elective options they may choose from, even it arts credits are a requirement, but may choose a music ensemble based on their perceptions of the group or program (Albert, 2006; Parker, 2010). According to Adderley, Kennedy, and Berz (2003), students join music for a number of reasons which include instrument preferences, the influence of family members, and social benefits. Instrument preferences may stem from timbre preferences following exposure to various sounds (Hoffmann, 2012). In regard to social benefits, students may also develop such preferences based on their perceptions following recruiting events (Albert, 2006). Family members who themselves played an instrument might influence students' decisions enroll (Hoffman, 2012; Ward-Steinman, 2006). The social benefits of music appear to be profound (Adderley et al., 2003; Campbell et al., 2007; Hoffman, 2012). Adderley et al. (2003) asserted:

> Many of the students have formed smaller subgroups of friends within each ensemble and tend to associate with these select people inside and outside of the setting. The social climate of these ensembles is important to each member and provides many with an outlet that they might not have had to meet others from

> within the larger school setting, or to form relationships away from the home environment that assist them in negotiating the often turbulent high school years. (p. 204)

This type of social cohesion can help instill a sense of pride for students that may allow them to repudiate negative labels or stereotypes that may be applied to their affiliation in a music program, such as band (Adderley et al., 2003). It is important to note that the act of victimizing peers can be destructive to relationship building (Rawlings & Stoddard, 2017).

Summary of the Literature

Research pertaining to urban music education and culturally diverse contexts often cites deficient resources and support systems for music teachers and students (Baker, 2012; Costa-Giomi, 2008; Costa-Giomi & Chappell, 2007; DeLorenzo, 2012; Doyle, 2012; U.S. Department of Education, 2012). Research pertaining to Latino student involvement in music programs reveals mixed findings as to whether or not Latino students are underrepresented in music programs (Elpus, 2014; Elpus & Abril, 2011: Lorah et al., 2014). Decreasing enrollments of students of color have led music education researchers and theorists to question whether the traditional model of music ensembles is relevant to culturally diverse communities (Kratus, 2007) and promote alternative ensembles as a solution (Abril, 2009; Kratus, 2007). However, there are instances where school music programs reflect the opposite (Fitzpatrick, 2008, 2011). Perhaps there are other issues that prevent students from joining or remaining in music programs. Understanding the issues and stressors Latino students may experience could help

teachers respond to students' needs. Additionally, conducting research in areas where there is a strong Latino presence would provide further insight as to whether traditional ensembles do or do not resonate with these students.

Chapter 3: Research Methods and Design

The methodological considerations for the present study are outlined in this chapter. The chapter begins with descriptions of the research design, setting, and participants followed by procedures for negotiating access into the school site. Included are ethical considerations based on information that emerged during the course of the study. The remaining sections of the chapter outline data collection and analysis methods closing with criteria for establishing trustworthiness.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore student, family, director, colleague and administrator perceptions of a middle school band program within a predominantly Latino school community. Using Irizarry and Raibles' (2011) concept of *barrio-based epistemologies and ontologies* (BBEO) and Gay's (2010) *culturally responsive teaching* (CRT) as a theoretical framework, I investigated a middle school band program with high enrollments of Latino students to determine the strategies that were being employed to encourage initial participation, persistence and their perceived success in the program. Issues of inclusivity and responsiveness to students' cultural backgrounds were considered key in this investigation. Furthermore, I explored the compatibility of the traditional concert band model with this population of youth and how asset-based

pedagogical principles were functioning in this environment. Three overarching questions guided the study:

1. How are the band directors responsive to students' cultural backgrounds?
2. How are bridges to participation created to make band accessible for students in this urban characteristic and midurban context?
3. What aspects of the band program correspond with barrio-based epistemologies and ontologies?

It is important to note that while the focus of this study was centered on a predominantly Latino school community, the intent was not to solely investigate the perspectives of Latino individuals. Rather, the purpose was to unearth the particularities of the band program within this specific context.

Research Design

Research pertaining to concert band participation in Latino communities is budding yet marginally explored. Given the paucity of research pertaining to this specific topic, I decided to examine one middle school band program in a predominantly Latino school. The band program, itself, had a high enrollment of students and was demographically congruent with the population of the school, with a majority of its enrollment being Latino students. Based on the guiding research questions and aims of this investigation, a single case study design (Yin, 2014) was determined to be the most appropriate means of unearthing the perceptions of the band program from members of its community. According to Yin (2014), case study research "investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-word context, especially when the

boundaries between phenomenon and context may not be clearly evident" (p. 16). Additionally, case studies focus on "discovery" to inform both subsequent research and teaching practices (Merriam, 1998, p. 19). The participation of Latino students in traditional music ensembles, or lack thereof, is a contemporary phenomenon requiring further exploration within current schooling contexts. Rather than focusing on perspectives from a few members of the community, I intentionally sought specific individuals who were associated with the program in varying roles. Specifically, band students, band directors, family members, teacher colleagues, and administrators served as participants in an effort to further illuminate the uniqueness of the context under investigation (see Figure 1).

Theoretical Frameworks

To provide the lens by which to situate findings, I drew from Irizarry and Raible's (2011) barrio-based epistemologies and ontologies (BBEO) and Gay's (2010) *culturally relevant teaching* (CRT) as a theoretical framework. As discussed in Chapter 2, CRT is described as "using the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant to and effective for them" (Gay, 2010, p. 31). Furthermore, CRT is centered on the belief that "the education of racially, ethnically, and culturally diverse students should connect in-school learning to out-of-schoolliving [sic]; promote educational equity and excellence; create community among individuals from different cultural, social, and ethnic backgrounds; and develop students' agency, efficacy, and empowerment" (Gay, 2013, p. 49). BBEO expands from CRT by focusing on an in-depth

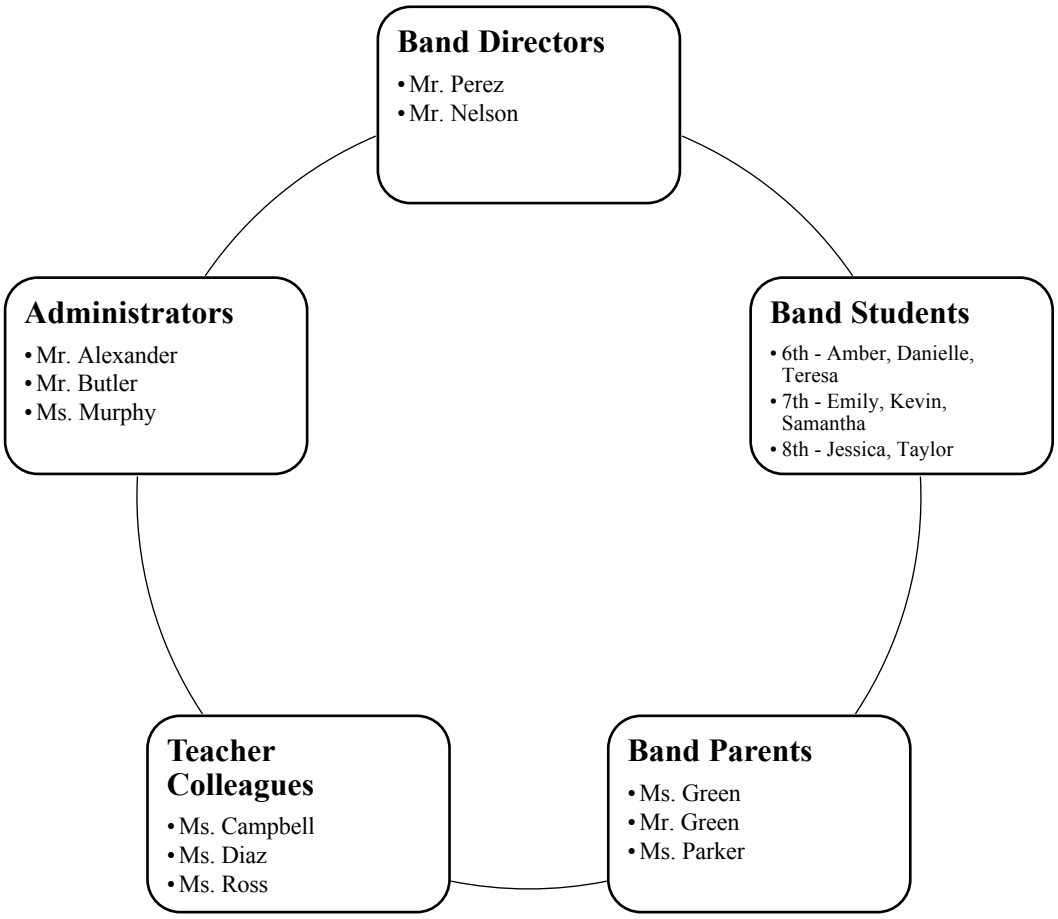

Figure 1. Conceptualization of participants.

understanding of working with Latino students based on connections with their respective communities. Based on Irizarry and Raible's (2011) findings, the effective teaching of Latino students entails four premises:

1. Are rooted in respect for students' cultures and identities
2. Are based on the historical and contemporary sociopolitical context of the Latino community
3. Acknowledge the pervasiveness of race and racialization on teachers' lives and the lives of their Latino students
4. Reflect teacher's sustained commitment to and engagement with Latino communities
5. Inform both the pedagogy and language practices of effective teachers (pp. 200-201).

BBEO and CRT comprised principles by which the data could be analyzed, codified, and discussed by focusing on, for example, the integration of language, connection with community, and an understanding of students' and families' backgrounds (Gay, 2010; Irizarry & Raible, 2011).

Setting and Description

A Unique Case

Because the focus of the study was centered on a band program in a predominantly Latino community, I utilized purposeful sampling (Creswell, 2013) in selecting the site based on criteria relevant to the aims of the study (LeCompte & Schensul; 1999). Specifically, selection criteria were: (a) a minimum of 50% of the

school population labeled as Hispanic/Latino; (b) the band was majority Hispanic/Latino; (c) at least 50% of the school population on free or reduced lunch; and (d) approximately 25-30% of the school population enrolled in the band. Because recent literature has explicated differences in the representation of Latino students in music programs (see e.g., Elpus, 2014; Elpus & Abril, 2011; Lorah et al., 2014) and questioned the relevancy of the traditional concert band ensemble during a time of shifting cultural spaces (Fitzpatrick, 2008, 2011; Kratus, 2007), the band program utilized in this study, the Hastings (pseudonym) Band, proved to be a unique case (Glesne, 2016; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016), as the band was composed primarily of Latino students and students who were assigned free or reduced lunch.

School Setting. Hastings Middle School was situated within Sunset School District (pseudonym), a suburban school in the Southwest region of the United States. The approximate population of the city in which Hastings resided was 105,000 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2016). According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2016), Sunset School District comprised a population of 13% Hispanic/Latino students and 87% non-Hispanic/Latino students. Out of the 87% non-Hispanic/Latino, the population was 73% White, 6% Black/African American, 4% Asian, 0.04% Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and 5% Some Other Race.

Hastings Middle School painted a contrastingly different picture in terms of demographics. The student population at Hastings was 73% Hispanic/Latino, 11% African American, 10% White, 5% Asian, 0.2% American Indian/Alaskan Native, 0.9% Two or More Races, and 0% Hawaiian/Pacific Islander. Additionally, 78% of the

students were assigned free lunch, 9% reduced lunch, and 13% of students paid for full lunches (National Center for Education Statistics, 2016). Considering the demography of the school relative to enrollments of students of color and those qualifying for free and reduced lunch, Hastings could be considered an urban characteristic (Milner, 2012) and midurban (Bruenger, 2010) school which further contributed to the uniqueness of the setting.

Description of the Band Program

My interest in exploring the Hastings Middle School Band program stemmed from a recollection of prior observations. I became aware of the growth of the Hastings Band from social media posts and conversations with colleagues in the music education field. Mr. Perez, the head band director, posted pictures of social events where the band hall was completely filled with students with hardly any space to move. The photo resembled a sea of people. I remember looking at the pictures with amazement, particularly after reading literature that questioned the relevance and effectiveness of traditional music ensembles in schools and the underrepresentation of Latino students in music courses. I continued to notice other postings, such as a video showing the school gym packed with attendees during a winter concert. Also posted online was an image of their beginner clarinet class with approximately 40 students, a class so large in size it nearly lined the entire perimeter of the room. These instances inspired me to seek the Hastings Band as the focus of this study.

At the time the research was conducted, the Hastings Band was comprised of predominantly Latino students, situated within a predominantly Latino school

community. The band program consisted of Hispanic students (81%), Caucasian (6%), African American (10%), and Asian (3%), which was strikingly similar to the overall school population (see Figure 2). Additionally, most students in the band were enrolled in the free or reduced lunch program. In this environment, previous research or suppositions might posit that it would be unlikely for students to participate in band because of perceived barriers such as finances, language, or cultural dissonances; however, such barriers did not appear to impact the overall functioning of the Hastings band program, where 270 students were enrolled out of approximately 1,000 total in the school. Notably, the band consisted of 86 students when Mr. Perez first was hired as the band director in 2010. It has since grown to three times that size with the potential to further increase enrollments.

Participants and Selection

Purposeful sampling (Creswell, 2013) and snowball sampling techniques (Patton, 2015) were employed for participant selection. According to Abril and Gault (2008), "understanding the perceptions of people in their school community might help music teachers develop strategic ways to build awareness and support for their programs" (p. 80). Considering the aim of the study was to explore perceptions of the Hastings band program, I purposefully included perspectives from band students, band directors, band family members, school administrators and teacher colleagues as they were all members of the school community. Furthermore, participants were associated with the band which allowed an opportunity for more in-depth and divergent perspectives to emerge. Because the band directors had greater insight and access to members of the school community, I

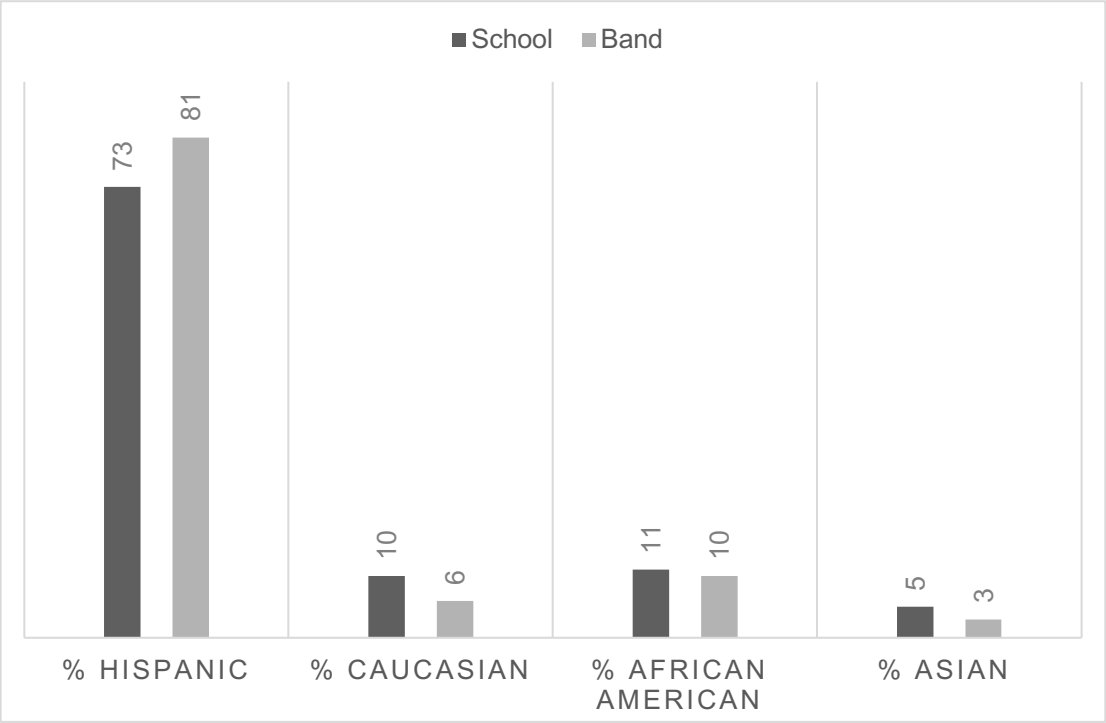

Figure 2. Demographic comparison of the school and band.

sought their recommendations for participants who they felt would contribute richly to the study. To allow for data to reach a point of saturation (Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Glaser, 1965; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016), I recruited two to three participants for each participant group for a total of 19 participants (see Table 1). The following section provides a brief description of participants within each group. In all cases pseudonyms are used to protect participants' identities. A detailed description of participants is included in Chapter 4.

Band Students

All students in the program had an opportunity to participate in the research. A total of eight students submitted the required consent and assent forms and remained participants for the duration of the study. Three 6th graders (Amber, Teresa, and Danielle), three 7th graders (Emily, Kevin, and Samantha), and two 8th graders (Jessica and Taylor) served as participants equating to a total of eight band students. Including band students from each grade level allowed for the integration of multiple viewpoints based on the students' years of membership in the band.

Band Directors

The Hastings Band was led by two band directors, Mr. Perez and Mr. Nelson. Mr. Perez was in his 12th year of teaching, eight of which were spent at Hastings. He identified as both White and Spanish (White-Spanish), however, did not speak Spanish. Mr. Nelson identified as White and spoke Spanish fluently. He was in his 5th year at Hastings and 25th year of teaching overall. As both individuals were an integral component of overseeing all aspects of the band program, they were both recruited for

Table 1

Description of Participants

Name	Role	Ethnicity	Years at HMS
Amber	6th Grader, Beginner Band	El Salvadorian	1
Danielle	6th Grader, Beginner Band	Mexican	1
Teresa	6th Grader, Beginner Band	Mexican	1
Emily	7th Grader, Advanced Band	Caucasian	1
Kevin	7th Grader, Advanced Band	African American	2
Samantha	7th Grader, Advanced Band	Hispanic but White	2
Jessica	8th Grader, Advanced Band	Ethnically Ambiguous	3
Taylor	8th Grader, Advanced Band	Hispanic but Mostly White	2
Mr. Perez	Head Band Director	White-Spanish	8
Mr. Nelson	Assistant Band Director	White	5
Ms. Green	Family Member	Caucasian	2
Mr. Green	Family Member	Caucasian	2
Ms. Parker	Family Member	Caucasian	3
Ms. Campbell	Art Teacher	Caucasian	12
Ms. Diaz	Music Teacher	Latina, Brazilian	5
Ms. Ross	Science Teacher	White	10
Mr. Alexander	Principal	Caucasian	7
Mr. Butler	Assistant Principal	Caucasian	6
Ms. Murphy	Assistant Principal	Caucasian	6

Note. Displayed are the ethnicities of which participants self-identified.

participation.

Family Members

Voices of family members' experiences and perceptions of an organization are vital as family members typically invest time, money, and other resources for their children to participate in a group (Allsup & Shieh, 2012; Kinney, 2010) and can contribute to understanding the reasons why families may or may not seek involvement in schools (Nieto & Bode, 2012). An email was delivered to family members explaining outlining details of the research study and requesting participants. Four individuals expressed interest in volunteering to interview. One person, a grandmother, submitted a signed consent form but did not respond to correspondence requesting an interview time. Thus, three family members (parents) who had children in the band program consented to participate in the study (Mr. Green and Ms. Green, and Ms. Parker).

Teacher Colleagues

Vital to any school community are the teachers who work and develop relationships with students, families, administrators, and teacher colleagues within the school. Teachers may serve as volunteers for various band-related functions or may attend events such as concerts. Thus, they are assets to learning about organizations on campus. I sought recommendations from the band directors to determine three individuals who could speak in great detail about the band based on their knowledge of and association with the band program. Five teachers expressed interest in participating in the research. From these five teachers, three were identified as the most data rich sources through director recommendations and the duration of time each teacher had worked at

the school. Thus, I invited Ms. Campbell, Ms. Diaz, and Ms. Ross to engage in interviews. All three teachers consented to participate.

Administrators

In order for music programs to exist, they must have the approval and support from administrators. These administrators can help facilitate or hinder the success of music ensembles (Doyle, 2012; Renfro 2003; Smith, 2006); therefore, obtaining their perceptions could prove insightful. Mr. Alexander, Mr., Butler, and Ms. Murphy (i.e., the principal and two out of three assistant principals) volunteered to participate in the study. The administrator participants had worked at Hastings for six or seven years. There were no administrators of color currently employed at Hastings.

Permissions/Negotiating Access

Prior to data collection, I first obtained permission through The Ohio State University's Institutional Review Board (IRB), Hastings Middle School and Sunset School District. After learning about the band program, I contacted the head band director at Hastings, Mr. Perez, to discuss the possibility of conducting a research study pertaining to the band. I provided specific details related to the scope and aims of the proposed research study. Mr. Perez discussed the details with the campus principal, Mr. Alexander. School district policy required that requests for conducting research be sent to the district administration for approval. Consequently, I submitted a research proposal to be reviewed by the Sunset School Board. Because the school of interest was labeled as underperforming following the release of standardized test results, district officials expressed concerns of data collection infringing on students' academic time. Thus, I

indicated in my protocol that interviews would be conducted at times approved by teachers and administrators that would not interfere with students' academics. Additionally, I specified that I would observe classes on six occasions. Time devoted to coursework was particularly vital for school officials, as Hastings fell below the threshold for acceptable overall student achievement based on standardized test results the previous year. Upon receiving support from the school district, I obtained final approval through OSU's Institutional Review Board (IRB) and was granted permission by all gatekeepers (Glesne, 2016) to begin data collection.

To recruit student participants, I traveled to the school site and spoke briefly to each band class about the specifics regarding the research study. I read from an IRB approved script and provided English or Spanish consent and assent forms to students based on their individual and family's language preferences (documents were translated be a certified specialist). Many students requested Spanish versions of documents or a combination of English and Spanish documents to take home. Prospective adult participants were contacted by email or in person to request participation in the study. Because the band directors had direct contact information for parents, teachers, and administrators, they assisted in establishing initial communication.

Ethical Considerations

Upon conducting the current study, it was brought to my attention that a strong presence of undocumented immigrant families and students were affiliated with the school and band community of interest. After having worked in predominantly Latino communities as a schoolteacher, this was a factor that I did not consider prior to data

collection. Participants in the study disclosed the sensitivity of immigration in their communities, particularly following the 2016 presidential election. Specifically, participants who worked closely with the school families divulged that fears of deportation were prevalent within the community. In the current political climate, the legalities associated with immigration policy remained points of contention and concern (Kleyn et al., 2016; Southern Poverty Law Center, 2016), particularly in the community of which I explored. Specifically, I was informed that the school community had experienced the detainment and deportation of family members, which obviously could have influenced who agreed to participate in the study and limited findings. Given that the aim of the study was to better understand a particular context, it was not my intent to exacerbate any fears or stressors for participants or members of the community. Rather, in agreement with participants, I elected not to disclose information that could draw attention to their specific whereabouts.

Timeline for the Study

Data were collected over six weeks during the 2017-2018 academic year upon receiving approval from the IRB and Sunset School District. Semi-structured interviews (Roulston, 2010) and field observation notes (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2011) served as primary data sources. Additional data included material culture (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016), such as handouts, the program's website, concert recordings, and relevant documents provided by the band directors. I intended to include student-written reflections regarding personal experiences to allow all students an anonymous opportunity to write freely about their perceptions of the band. Ultimately, no students

submitted reflections. Consequently, student-written reflections were removed as a data source from the study.

Data Sources

Field Observations

During the six-week period in which data collection occurred, I scheduled six visits to observe the band program at Hastings. During the observations, I remained on campus for the duration of the school day and also observed before school and after school practices. The intent was to gain a better understanding of the environment and culture of the program. These observations allowed me to observe different classes and events throughout the day, as each class could function differently based on the student dynamics and the context of the class itself. The total time spent observing was approximately 50.5 hours (see Table 2).

In an effort not to encroach on the learning environment, I adopted a non-participant observer role. In this vein, there was minimal interaction with participants as the primary focus was observation (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). This role afforded me the opportunity to construct field notes (Emerson et al., 2011) and observe the interactions between students and the band directors. Field notes contributed to triangulation (Glesne, 2016) by serving as an additional form of data integrated into analysis.

Semi-Structured Interviews

During the interview process, I employed a semi-structured format (Roulston, 2010) to serve as a loose guide for conversations with participants. Interview questions were derived from existing literature and theoretical relevance to the study. This format

Table 2

Observation and Interview Schedule

Site Visit	Observations	Interviews (30 minutes)
1	1 – 8.5 hours 2 – 8.5 hours	Mr. Perez – Band Director Ms. Campbell –Teacher Colleague
2		Teresa – 6th Grade Amber – 6th Grader Danielle – 6th Grader Emily – 7th Grader Samantha – 7th Grader Kevin – 7th Grader Mr. Butler – Administrator Ms. Murphy –Administrator Mr. Alexander –Administrator Mr. Nelson – Band Director Ms. Diaz –Teacher Colleague Ms. Ross –Teacher Colleague Ms. Green – Band Parent Ms. Parker – Band Parent
3	3 – 8 hours 4 – 9 hours	Jessica – 8th Grader Taylor – 8th Grader
4	5 – 9 hours 6 – 10 hours	Mr. Green – Band Parent
Totals	53 hours	9.5 Hours

allowed me the flexibility to navigate the interview based on the responses I received from interviewees (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Additionally, I was able to probe (Glesne, 2016: Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) in an effort to extract and clarify rich information.

Eighteen interviews were conducted in-person. One interview, Mr. Green's, was conducted over the phone to accommodate his work schedule. The interviews occurred away from the presence of others to protect against any outside influence on participant responses. I met with students and parents in a practice room away from the band directors. Ms. Diaz, Mr. Nelson, and Mr. Perez met with me in the band office after students left for the day. The administrators met with me in their respective offices. Interview questions (See Appendices A-E) were translated into Spanish to accommodate any participant who wished to conduct their interview in Spanish. Because no requests were made, all interviews were conducted in English. Interviews lasted approximately 30 minutes and were recorded with a Sony ICD-UX533 Digital Voice Recorder for transcription with the consent of all participants. Interview responses were not disclosed with others.

Material Culture

To provide other sources of data in an effort to elucidate specifics of the band program, documents, videos of concerts, recruitment brochures and pictures served as material culture (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Both Mr. Perez and Mr. Nelson, the band directors, supplied materials they felt were relevant to the research. Mr. Perez generated an online folder, which he provided me access to view additional information. This information included the number of students enrolled in the program and projected

numbers for the subsequent school year. Mr. Nelson provided me with information that was distributed to teachers during professional development regarding support for undocumented immigrants.

Data Analysis

Data collection and initial analyses were concurrent utilizing the constant comparative method (Glaser, 1965). Throughout this process, I analyzed data collected from field notes and interview transcripts for preliminary codes, which then guided subsequent field observations and interviews. This phase of coding was conducted by hand. After completing data collection, I conducted analysis in a recursive manner using Creswell's (2013) data-analysis spiral. Through this approach, data were analyzed cyclically until a point of saturation was reached. Data were analyzed first within each participant group where I coded data for emergent themes and interpretation (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014). Data were then analyzed across participant groups (Yin, 2014) where I sought points of convergence and divergence among emerging themes to synthesize findings. Data interpretation integrated principles from BBEO and CRT.

Trustworthiness Criteria

Trustworthiness entails an "alertness to the quality and rigor of a study, about what sorts of criteria can be used to assess how well the research was carried out" (Glesne, 2016, p. 53). To establish trustworthiness, I utilized several methods: rich, thick, description; negative case analysis; member checking; clarification of subjectivity; and peer review and debriefing" (Creswell, 2013; Glesne, 2016).

Triangulation and Thick Description

The collection of multiple sources of data contributed to triangulation. These sources included field observations, interviews, and material culture. Materials collected for analysis helped contribute providing a "thick description" in an effort to provide a more nuanced understanding of findings (Geertz, 1973).

Negative Case Analysis

During data analysis, I mined the data for negative cases to provide an alternative explanation to my interpretations. According to Corbin and Strauss (2015), "the negative case represents a dimensional extreme or variation on the conceptualization of the data" (p. 295). Such cases allow the researcher to view findings in a multidimensional manner, which can provide further insight into the phenomenon of interest.

Member Checking

Following the transcription of interviews, I provided each participant an opportunity to review the transcripts for approval. During the review process, participants could remove, clarify, or extend on any of their contributions. Member checks increase the validity of the data by ensuring that the words of participants are accurately represented (Creswell, 2013; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Most of the participants approved of the transcripts. The band directors, Mr. Perez and Mr. Nelson, verified the omission of specific details related to their former places of employment and residence from the manuscript. One participant, Kevin, disclosed that he wanted to extend some of his thoughts. I recorded and transcribed our follow-up meeting and incorporated the transcription into the analysis.

Peer Review and Debriefing

I consulted a peer reviewer, my advisor, to review my data analyses and interpretations to offer feedback as to the whether or not the codes were appropriate. He probed my thinking and provided suggestions to help emphasize important facets that emerged from the study. For example, we discussed the differences in the band directors' teaching styles based on their ability to speak Spanish and how that impacted the program. In this respect, my advisor also served as a "devil's advocate" throughout the process (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Managing Subjectivity

As subjectivity contributes to the way one conceives, analyzes, and presents research, it is necessary for researchers to maintain a sense of transparency regarding their subjectivities (Glesne, 2016). Glesne (2016) stated, "By reflecting on how your research is autobiographical, you can become aware of how your personal history is engaged by your research" (p. 149). I attempt in this section to address the relevant facets of my background that impact the lens through which I view and interpret my research.

I was raised in a lower-income, predominantly Latino neighborhood in Texas where Spanish and English were the primary languages spoken. I was, however, the daughter of a Filipino immigrant. I personally experienced how language can serve as a barrier between people as I was and still am unable to communicate with my mother in her primary language, Tagalog. I was never taught her language, aside from a few words and phrases, because she wished for me to be fluent in English in an effort to excel academically. I observed instances where my mother was discriminated because of her

level of English proficiency. I discovered, over time, that she was not the only person to experience such instances.

Prior to completing undergraduate work, I decided to minor in Spanish. I was commonly approached and spoken to in Spanish and was unable to respond with anything other than, "Lo siento. No hablo español" ("I'm sorry. I don't speak Spanish"). Considering I was about to enter the teaching force, I realized the necessity to learn how to speak a commonly spoken language, such as Spanish, in Texas.

Throughout my tenure in Texas, I served as a band director in Title I, predominantly Latino schools and considered myself to be an urban educator based on the characteristics of each school in which I worked. Spanish did, indeed, help me connect with students and families as I was able to communicate more effectively with them. I believe this facet of community connectedness drew more families and students into the band programs which countered dominant deficit-based narratives often associated with similar contexts.

My experiences as a daughter of an immigrant parent, urban student, and urban music educator have contributed to my interests in pursuing research pertaining to urban music education, cultural diversity, and social justice. I acknowledge that my efforts to provide research that humanizes persons and communities of color in addition to challenges deficit perceptions commonly associated with urban environments influences how I conduct and present my research. Thus, I maintained a researcher's journal to document my thoughts and feelings throughout the research process. This allowed me an opportunity to engage in reflexivity, which Glesne (2016) defines as "reflecting upon and

asking questions of research interactions all along the way, from embarking on an inquiry project to sharing your findings" (p. 145).

Summary of Methodology

The school site and participants were selected using purposeful sampling (Creswell, 2013). Band students, band directors, family members, teacher colleagues, and school administrators served as participants following the submission of IRB- and school district-approved documents. Data collection occurred over the course of six weeks and included field observations, semi-structured interviews, and material culture. To establish trustworthiness of data, I utilized rich, thick description; negative case analysis; member checking; peer review and debriefing; and management of subjectivity (Creswell, 2013; Glesne, 2016). Interviews were transcribed, coded and problematized using the constant comparative method (Glaser, 1965) and data analysis spiral (Creswell, 2013). After a thorough description of participants in Chapter 4, emerging themes resulting from this analysis are presented in Chapter 5.

Chapter 4: Description of Participants and Setting

This chapter provides a detailed description of participants and the setting for the study. The chapter begins with participant profiles followed by descriptions of Hastings Middle School and the Hastings Band program. A summary of noteworthy elements concludes the chapter.

Participant Profiles

Researchers have noted the importance of community within culturally diverse and/or lower-socioeconomic school contexts (Albert, 2006; Doyle, 2012; Emmanuel, 2006b; Gay, 2010; Irizarry & Raible, 2011). Understanding a school community's perceptions regarding music ensembles could provide valuable insight for advocacy and may also serve as an impetus for acquiring the resources and support needed to run a music program (Abril & Bannerman, 2015; Abril & Gault, 2007, 2008; Fiese & DeCarbo, 1995). To provide context for the perceptions presented, profiles for each of the participants are included. Pseudonyms have been used throughout the study to promote anonymity.

Band Student Profiles

Band students in the study represented each grade level (6th, 7th, and 8th). The 6th grade participants were beginner saxophonists in the same band class. The 7th and 8th grade students were in the Advanced Band together. It is important to note that no

students from the second band, the Intermediate Band, volunteered to participate in the study. One student was, however, in the Intermediate Band last year as a 7th grader and shared insights about advancing from one band to the next.

Amber, 6th Grade. Amber was a 6th grade student in the beginner saxophone class who identified as El Salvadorian. Amber decided she wanted to play the saxophone after seeing the middle school band perform at her elementary school and after watching videos of music she liked that included saxophone sounds. Her mother was in band and played clarinet, which helped motivate Amber to want to join. Amber enjoyed practicing in the band hall and receiving help from her peers. She also liked to help other students with their music. Amber planned to continue band throughout middle school and into high school. She expressed a desire to be placed in the Advanced Band next year and also become a band-aide.

Danielle, 6th Grade. Danielle, self-identified as Mexican, was a 6th grade saxophonist in Beginner Band. She mentioned that she did not list band as her first elective choice on the school's course selection sheet, but somehow was scheduled into band anyway. After realizing she enjoyed the class, she decided to persist. Danielle noted that the saxophone "seemed the most interesting" and recalled the Pink Panther theme song performed by the saxophone section when the band visited her elementary school the preceding year. Danielle had a sister, who was in the orchestra at Hastings, which she attributed to her parents' support of her being in band. Danielle practiced in the band hall sometimes after school, but seldom in the mornings. She usually socialized with her non-

band friends in the gym. One of Danielle's goals was to place into the Advanced Band the following school year and begin playing "more advanced" music.

Teresa, 6th Grade. A 6th grade beginner saxophonist who identified as Mexican, Teresa was in her first year in both the school and the city. She and her father relocated to the area for his job. Teresa mentioned the move was necessary as things were "getting really bad [in the previous city]. Lots of bad stuff." Because she was new to the area, band allowed her to make friends. She mentioned that her friends were in the beginner saxophone class. Teresa decided to join band after attending an instrument fitting session where she discovered she liked the sound of the saxophone. She did not typically practice before or after school in the band hall. Rather, she worked on her music in class. Teresa believed she was the first in her family to participate in band.

Emily, 7th Grade. Emily was a second-year euphonium player in the Advanced Band who identified as Caucasian. She also served as a band-aide who helped with the beginner low brass class since she played a low brass instrument. Emily's grandfather was a tuba player in a professional ensemble. Interestingly, her older sister was also in band in middle school and high school; however, it was her grandfather who had a stronger influence on Emily's decision to enroll in the course. Emily attended morning practice from 7:00 AM-9:00 AM every morning, was scheduled in two band classes, and stayed after school on Fridays to practice in the band hall. She was a top performer in the program and was selected into the City Band. She competed with other middle school euphonium students across the city to receive a chair placement in the group. Although

Emily enjoyed band, she did not plan to continue band in high school because she preferred to pursue dance instead.

Kevin, 7th Grade. Kevin was a 7th grade trumpeter in the Advanced Band. He identified as African-American and mentioned that he did not join band specifically for the band program. To him, band was a vehicle to learn how to read music in hopes of eventually entering the music industry as a recording artist. Kevin enjoyed creating raps. He worked with a friend who mixed beats and planned to start collaborating more with him. Kevin's father formerly pursued a path in music business and was supportive of Kevin's endeavors. Kevin's mother, who lived across the country, wanted him to pursue something more practical outside of music. Kevin mentioned he enjoyed being in band most of the time; however, he experienced tensions with the band directors on occasion for behavioral issues.

Samantha, 7th Grade. A second-year flute student, Samantha was in the Advanced Band. She considered herself to be Hispanic but also White since she, "was born in [a nearby city], so it was like a little White town. I mean, I'm still Hispanic, but I still got a little White in me." She was not originally interested in band until her brother started to teach her musical concepts, though her brother did not continue band past middle school. She had an older sister who was in band throughout high school. When Samantha was younger, she watched her sister's concerts and performances at football games. Outside of the band hall, Samantha was not likely to be seen with band students as their "friendship kinda stays in the band hall." Surprisingly, she said that aside from band, she had nothing in common with band students.

Jessica, 8th Grade. A euphonium player in the 8th grade, Jessica was in her third year as a band student and was placed in the Advanced Band. She considered herself to be "ethnically ambiguous" since her mom was Mexican, and she was unsure of her dad's background. Jessica was not only one of the top performers in the group but also the region, which comprised nearly 30 middle schools. Placing in the Region Band, a group by which she auditioned, had been her most memorable experience. She was unashamed to tell others "I'm a proud band nerd" and was planning on majoring in music in college.

Taylor, 8th Grade. Taylor played the trumpet in the Advanced Band at Hastings. School records listed him as Hispanic and, although most of his family was Hispanic, he considered himself to possess "recessive" traits and was "more White than anything else." He did not speak Spanish outside of a couple of phrases. Also, he and his family disassociated themselves from the Hispanic side of his extended family. He was originally from another area in the state, one that was predominantly White. He moved to Hastings because his parents were divorcing. Taylor felt that band helped him during that process by diverting his attention away from the divorce.

Band Director Profiles

Mr. Perez and Mr. Nelson had experiences teaching in schools outside of the district in both lower-income and more affluent communities. Each had been employed for a minimum of five years at Hastings. Both directors made a conscious decision to work at the current school to be closer to their families. The band directors in this study had direct influence on decisions regarding the band program.

Mr. Perez, Head Band Director. Mr. Perez, a formerly named Teacher of the Year, was in his 12th year of teaching and 8th year at Hastings. He identified as both Hispanic and Caucasian, though he did not speak Spanish, and was responsible for overseeing all aspects of the band program. Mr. Perez brought guest clinicians to the school to work with the Advanced Band and Intermediate Band, particularly in the spring semester when they were preparing for their adjudicated contest. The clinicians were retired band directors who had successful programs, in terms of contest ratings. One of the clinicians was formerly employed at a school that was "almost 90% free lunch and he still made top 10 [out of the middle school bands in the state]." He attributed part of his successes at contests to the clinicians.

Mr. Nelson, Assistant Band Director. Mr. Nelson was in his 5th year of teaching at Hastings and had been teaching for 25 years altogether. Mr. Nelson was raised in a predominantly White community and identified as White. He was married to a Latina woman and, through this relationship, learned to speak Spanish fluently. His proficiency in Spanish was an asset within the Hastings community, as many families spoke Spanish as their primary language. Mr. Nelson conducted meetings or phone calls in Spanish when needed. He also communicated in Spanish to students during the school day. Mr. Nelson's wife was an activist for immigration reform within their local community. She worked with Mr. Nelson to provide resources to families at Hastings regarding immigration concerns, particularly in regard to undocumented status.

Family Member Profiles

The family members (in this case, parents), who all identified as Caucasian, provided unique insights about the Hastings band program based on their experiences with their children. These parents were able to make direct comparisons between the Hastings band program and other middle school band programs in the district because their children had been involved in bands at both Hastings and other schools in the school district. These participants described differences between band programs, noting that they valued the quality of the band and the dedication of the teachers at Hastings.

Ms. Green. A mother of two children, Ms. Green had one child participate in band at another middle school in the district. Her younger daughter was zoned to go to the same middle school; however, Ms. Green and her husband Mr. Green made the decision to move to the Hastings community mainly because of the band program. They were aware of the demographics of the school but felt that it would be the best place for their daughter, Emily. According to Ms. Green, "we've never regretted the decision for her to come here, because there were options to have her transfer to a different school." She also shared that she is more engaged with the band program at Hastings because her daughter is invested in the program.

Mr. Green. Also volunteering for the study was Mr. Green, Ms. Green's husband. A band booster officer in charge of organizing volunteers for events, Mr. Green became more involved in the band program at Hastings than he was when his older daughter participated in the band program at another middle school in the district. Mr. Green was never involved in band as a student; however, his father-in-law was a

professional tuba player in a well-known professional group in the area. His father-in-law passed away before his youngest daughter, Emily, was born. It was his father-in-law who inspired his daughter to play a band instrument. Mr. Green believed being involved in the band "instantly creates friends for you."

Ms. Parker. A parent to multiple children, Ms. Parker had an older child who was formerly a Hastings Band student, a child who was currently in the Hastings Band, and another who was in band at another middle school in the school district. Because of the behavioral accommodations required by both the younger children, they could not attend the same school. Ms. Parker's son was diagnosed with ADHD and "behavior issues"; however, he enjoyed participating in the program and was in the Advanced Band as a 7th grader. Ms. Parker was a band student in an out-of-state school growing up. She could not volunteer at many events due to her work schedule; however, she attended school concerts as a means of supporting the program.

Teacher Colleague Profiles

Teacher colleagues also provided a unique perspective of the Hastings band program. Because of their longevity at Hastings, all had witnessed the band program led by different directors. Ms. Campbell and Ms. Ross served at Hastings for the entirety of their careers and observed changes in the enrollments over time. Ms. Diaz was a band student in the district years ago and currently worked with the band program as a supplemental instructor. She, too, had observed the growth of the program.

Ms. Campbell, Art Teacher. Ms. Campbell, a Caucasian veteran teacher and head of the electives department, was in her 12th year of teaching and had worked only at

Hastings Middle School. She did not plan on ever leaving her position at the school. Interestingly, she was once in band as a secondary school student, though she developed a passion for art and decided that was her calling. Ms. Campbell researched all of the schools in Sunset School District and the demographics of Hastings led her to want to teach there. Ms. Campbell had been at Hastings longer than any of the other participants in the study and had seen the band program evolve over time. She also helped volunteer for events when needed and offered to allow arts students to switch into band classes to accommodate students' interests. She identified as Caucasian.

Ms. Diaz, Music Teacher. Ms. Diaz had been working with Hastings for five years. She was a product of Sunset School District and attended the high school that Hastings feed directly into, though she attended another middle school in the cluster. Ms. Diaz worked with the high school band and Hastings Band as a supplemental instructor. At Hastings, she offered lessons and helped students as they practiced before and after school. She also assisted with teaching classes if the band directors were out of town for conferences. Ms. Diaz formerly served as a secretary in the front office, a job that was offered to her by Mr. Alexander, the principal, so she could help the band program and also earn income to keep her afloat post-high school. Ms. Diaz, a Brazilian immigrant, was an undocumented student who was impacted by issues concerning immigration policy. She harbored deep concern regarding legal statuses for families at Hastings.

Ms. Ross, Science Teacher. Ms. Ross, self-identified as White, had taught at Hastings for 10 years. This was her only teaching position. She started at Hastings when the school was at the old building in the center of town and observed changes in school

administration and band directors throughout her service. Ms. Ross helped the band program when needed so that students could be fully involved, such as providing students with transportation to or from events. She was a band student herself through high school and shared her band experiences with her students. She continuously expressed to students that band is "like real family" and embraces the label "band nerd."

Administrator Profiles

Four administrators (the principal and one assistant principal for each grade level) were employed at Hastings. The three administrators who participated in the study, all of who identified as Caucasian, were at Hastings during most of Mr. Perez's tenure. They were cognizant of increased student participation over the course of several years and could speak to additional benefits they noticed. Each provided unique insight into the Hasting band program.

Mr. Alexander, Principal. Mr. Alexander had served as principal of Hastings Middle School for seven years. He considered his role as "merely here for support of the teachers, kids, and the school community." He believed that the relationships between students, teachers, and other adults on campus were crucial to helping students succeed. Though he was not a music student, he understood the importance of the arts and was extremely supportive of the band program, often advocating for the program to other district officials.

Mr. Butler, Assistant Principal. Mr. Butler was in his 6th year at Hastings as an assistant principal and was responsible for overseeing 7th grade matters. He described his position wearing "a lot of different hats," as he was also tasked with overseeing the

athletics department, teacher support, and student support to ensure that students "have the best opportunity to be successful."

Ms. Murphy, Assistant Principal. In her 6th year as the 6th grade assistant principal, Ms. Murphy served as "the 504 coordinator, RTI (response to intervention) overseer, help with testing, and then special education ARDs for 6th grade students." She believed that Hastings had a supportive environment where teachers cared not only for their students, but also for one another.

Description of School Context

Hastings Neighborhood

On my morning commute to Hastings, I drove through bumper-to-bumper traffic as cars traveled slowly down the highway. The sea of vehicles seemed comparable to a highly dense urban center; however, there were no skyscrapers or high-rise apartments in sight. Rather, there were stores, medical centers, and churches along the access roads with patches of housing subdivisions interspersed throughout. Once I exited and turned away from the highway, I approached a set of railroad tracks that nearly segment one side of the city from the other. Crossing the railroad tracks felt as though I was crossing into a separate world. The chaos and hustle of the "urban characteristic" (Milner, 2012) area seemed to dwindle quickly as I proceeded further down the road. On the corner near the school sat a small convenience store that appeared abandoned without a person in sight. Just a few feet away was a donut shop, the sole store in a small, vacant shopping strip with the word "Open" beaming in neon lights. The crossing guard nearby, an older Caucasian male, sat in a foldable chair at the intersection between the donut shop and the

school. He waved and smiled to me as I turned the corner, a welcoming gesture. As I approached the school, I noticed the words "Welcome to Hastings Nation" spread across a chain fence for the world to see. The message appeared untampered and freshly placed, a greeting to all who drove by. Quiet, clean, and friendly, nothing about this location exuded "urban."

Hastings was situated within a suburban community on an older side of town. Just across the highway and railroad tracks from the school were newer-built houses, the type of houses that would be featured in home décor magazines. On this side of town, the houses were older, though they seemed to be in decent shape. The tranquility of the neighborhood was quite peculiar as a building filled with nearly 1,000 students was within range. According to a band parent, Ms. Green, "The houses around here are older people, retired grandparents...So the neighborhood is very quiet. There's not a lot of kids out running around." Most of the students were bused into the school from other housing subdivisions, apartments, trailer parks, and temporary housing sites within the city. Basically, as Ms. Green remarked, students were transported to the school from "lower valued homes."

The physical building that housed the school community was built within the last decade, albeit the school, itself, was established in the 1970's. Mr. Green, one of the band parents, shared that a new building was needed to accommodate the number of students enrolled. Additionally, the former building was in the central part of town where dangerous activity was a concern. Former neighbors shared negative perceptions of Hastings with Mr. Green by disclosing issues related to "gang activity in the school." If

gang activity was indeed an issue within the area, Mr. Green indicated that neither he nor his family ever witnessed anything gang-related at the current location.

Hastings Middle School

Description of Setting. Walking into the school, everything seemed bright. The fluorescent lights beamed onto the clean and waxed white floors. The walls were colorful, decorated with student artwork visible throughout the main hallway. Students walked calmly into the building in their school uniforms, polos and khakis, and were greeted by the administrators and teachers who stood in the center of the hall. The principal, Mr. Alexander, spoke to teachers and students, high-fiving kids and smiling as they passed by. Continuing my trek down the hall, I heard rumbles of Spanish all around me as students engaged in casual conversation with their peers. Everyone seemed well-mannered. This place had a composed, yet welcoming atmosphere.

Perceptions of Setting. Hastings appeared to be an acceptable school to send any child; however, some families made efforts to send their children elsewhere, according to Mr. Perez. A reason the school was not favored stemmed from the enforced dress code. Hastings was one of few schools in the district that required school uniforms, and, although some parents disproved of uniforms, Ms. Green maintained a divergent perspective. She made a conscious decision to send her daughter, Emily, to Hastings, as she did not want an affluent school to influence her daughter's behaviors. For Ms. Green, the uniforms ensured that "everybody's on an even playing field" unlike schools where students were comparing their attire against that of their peers. Mr. Green shared similar sentiments. He found it interesting that people took issue with school uniforms:

> Generally, school uniforms are oftentimes for inner-city schools or for less affluent schools or you might even consider poor-performing schools. But then also if you look at the most exclusively of private schools in town, they wear uniforms too. It's the people in the middle that don't seem to want to wear uniforms.

To avoid attending the "poor" school with a uniform requirement, students zoned to Hastings had an opportunity to transfer elsewhere. Mr. Green illuminated that students could enroll in orchestra, a course previously unavailable at Hastings, and attend another school on the other side of town instead. Thus, some students transferred. Their sole purpose for being in orchestra was to avoid their zoned school. At the time of the investigation, the district had adopted a transfer request policy by which students could attend a school of their choosing provided they met certain criteria. Some students and families did, indeed, transfer to other schools.

Academic Performance. According to Mr. Perez, Hastings did not meet expectations on their state standardized assessment score the during the 2016-2017 school year. Approximately 48% of Hastings students were labeled as English Language Learners (ELL), and, although the school exceeded expectations in regard to student progress, overall composite scores for student achievement were below the state's threshold. As a result, Hastings was considered "underperforming." Mr. Perez disclosed that the school was required to send out letters to families stating the results of the state test and provide an opportunity for parents to transfer their children to other, "higher-performing" schools. Some families elected to transfer their children elsewhere.

Distinctive Qualities. Many students relied on the school bus to transport them to and from school. Because of this, students who wished to participate in after school activities or tutoring required additional transportation, as students may not have a ride home otherwise. Realizing this need, Mr. Alexander used the school budget to purchase After-School Buses (pseudonym) for students wishing to attend after school events. In order for students to utilize the bus, they had to receive a pass from the teacher they were staying with after school. The cost for the buses annually was approximately $70,000, according to Mr. Perez, who noted that the After-School Buses almost went away completely due to the high costs. In addition to buses, the school district paid for students to receive a hot lunch, if they were staying after school for activities, regardless of free or reduced lunch status. According to Mr. Perez, students were able to function at a higher level with food in their system. Ms. Ross shared that some students did not have food at home; therefore, the hot lunch system was beneficial to students who were in need of food.

Students at Hastings

From the outside, the school resembled a standard suburban community complete with manicured lawns and clean streets, a culturally homogeneous setting without an ounce of diversity in sight. However, the interior of the school painted a contrastingly different picture. When I looked at the crowds of students traveling down the halls during a passing period, the predominantly Latino school appeared to be just that. Interestingly, there were students who represented a number of nationalities from countries near and far:

> Ms. Ross: We have a lot of influx from Mexico. We started to get more from El Salvador. I have two on my roster this year that are Argentinian 'cause they're very proud of that. We have a strong Chin population now and they're from Myanmar, Burma depending on what part of the civil war you look at. And we got our first kid from the Sudan on our roster this year. So, for the most part, they're South and Central American, Hispanic populations.

With the amount of immigrant families present at the school, Ms. Ross explained that a large percentage of the students were English Language Learners (ELLs). Thus, teachers had to "modify quite a bit of curriculum just so that the language isn't the barrier for the knowledge." In addition to cultural diversity, many of the students were from lower-socioeconomic backgrounds and qualified for free and reduced lunch. However, legal status may have prevented many students from acquiring financial aid:

> Ms. Ross: They have people who speak Spanish and English in there to help with online forms to help with the qualifying for free and reduced lunch 'cause a lot of them [parents] don't know how to fill out the forms or they think they have to fill out specific information that's gonna get them in trouble with the government, because some of our parents are undocumented.

Legal status is a concern at Hastings and other schools across the country; however, it was particularly an issue in this region of the country due to the proximity to Latino countries. With recent changes in the U.S. presidential administration, I asked Ms. Ross if the 2016 presidential election had impacted the school community:

> It has. When Trump was elected, the couple of days after it were very tense with some of our more politically aware children. Some of the students who understood the dialogue that was being had, they understood what was happening and they saw a fear in their own Hispanic community of it...So, there are some that are still afraid that they are gonna go to Mexico on Spring Break and they can just not come back, because their parents will just keep them there. So, it's intense for some of them.

In extension, Ms. Ross clarified that it is difficult to know precisely how many undocumented students and families are present in a school "because they don't talk about it very often." The Hastings community was not only concerned with financial and language barriers, they also considered legal status as a barrier – one that the school community had less ability to mitigate.

Description of the Hastings Band Program

Physical Space

The band hall was situated within the center of the school, in the main hallway where most traffic passes. Outside of the band hall were pictures framed and mounted for everyone to see. The pictures showcased Hastings Band students in concert with a gym filled with families, in class posing with instruments, at social events playing games, and pictures honoring individual students for performance achievements. Below the frames were colorful, laminated recruitment posters with similar images spread throughout. Promoting the social aspects of band, a section of a poster read:

> We love band. Play hundreds of songs. Make friends just like you. Take extra lessons with master teachers. Go to pizza practice sessions after school. Perform multiple concerts. Love music forever.

Printed on the posters was an invitation for all students to attend an instrument fitting. The fittings were an opportunity for students to join the band and select an instrument to play.

As I entered the band hall, students were dispersed throughout the room practicing their instruments. The space seemed unsuited for the number of students in the room. I had to proceed with caution in an effort to avoid bumping into anyone or anything. The band hall was overcrowded even without the entire organization present. The Hastings Band had grown exponentially over the years. According to Mr. Butler, "We're kinda crammed but were' also kinda landlocked...when we started, the band hall was great, the band hall was fine and now it's gone from you know, the band hall to taking over another room."

Program Growth

The Hastings band once was an organization that "took up less space," according to Ms. Campbell. The quality of the program was previously inadequate in terms of support and performance, and it was noticeable. Ms. Diaz recalled how she felt after watching a poorly-attended concert prior to Mr. Perez's arrival:

> I felt really bad for the kids at that concert. I remember like kinda coming home and getting really, really sad. You just feel bad for them. Not only was there nobody there to support them, but they weren't very good, and you could tell it

> really wasn't their fault. The director didn't seem like he cared and it kinda didn't seem like he knew what he was doing, to be honest.

Before Mr. Perez began teaching at Hastings, there were merely 40 students enrolled. Ms. Diaz was asked to attend a concert by her high school director:

> They combined their concert with the choir, the Hastings choir, because there were like 20 kids, 40 kids in the entire program. Beginner to 8th grade and their parents wouldn't come. They weren't involved at all. So, the high school kids would have to sit in the audience, so it would look like a padded audience and then the choir parents as well.

When Hastings switched to a new building, the former director resigned, and Mr. Perez was hired as the new head director. With the move, Ms. Campbell felt "It was a clean slate. New place. New people and it could be developed into what that leadership had for the vision for the band." In the initial stages of his tenure, Mr. Perez had to work to rebuild the program:

> Ms. Ross: When they moved to the new campus, the band numbers dropped drastically 'cause kids couldn't stay. They couldn't walk up to practice early. They couldn't stay late and just walk home. So, Mr. Perez had to really build that band was something kinda cool to do and that it wasn't just an elective to get a fine arts credit, but he had to build it.

The band started with 86 students when Mr. Perez began teaching at Hastings in 2010 and nearly doubled in size by the following academic year. He and Mr. Nelson worked diligently to build the program to over 300 students and were now one of the largest

middle school bands in the district, despite being the most economically disadvantaged band program. The ethnic composition of the band resembled that of the school population. Out of the 269 total band members, there were 218 Hispanic (81%), 26 African American (10%), 17 Caucasian (6%), and 8 Asian (3%) students. Mr. Alexander had the opportunity to see the band evolve throughout his tenure as principal:

> Regarding the amount of kids that are in band, which will be some of the biggest numbers in our district...there is a band family culture now. When you're in one place long enough, brothers and sisters and people start coming through.

Mr. Alexander expounds that the band was now able to compete successfully at a higher level, unlike previous years. This was particularly in reference to their state adjudicated event, a requirement for all secondary music programs regardless of context.

Although the band had significantly increased in size during his tenure, Mr. Perez elucidated that the band program experiences "issues with attrition like anybody else." This academic year, there was a significant drop in enrollments. Because the school was considered low-performing after not having met the standard for overall student achievement, there were many students who did move. As a consequence, enrollments decreased in the band program by a total of 172 this academic year. Mr. Perez shared that 111 students moved for various reasons, some of which were based on standardized test results; 32 students were selected to move from band to orchestra because the orchestra numbers were low; and 29 students intentionally elected to not participate in band. If this decrease in enrollment had not occurred, there would have been over 400 students in the band program this school year.

Program Structure

At the time of this writing, students in the state were required to satisfy one fine art credit during their middle school tenure. At Hastings, students could elect to take band, choir, orchestra, or theatre arts for their credit. Students who wished to enroll in band could do so at any grade level. Additionally, if a student dropped band for some reason and wished to re-enroll, they could do so with the approval of the band directors. The Hastings Band had three ensemble levels. The Beginner Band was a composition of all of the beginner classes. Most of the classes were taught in a homogeneous fashion. The beginner classes were: flute, clarinet, saxophone, trumpet, French horn, low brass, and percussion. A percussion teacher from the high school traveled to Hastings to teach the beginner percussion class. The classes combined for performances outside of the school day when needed. The Intermediate and Advanced Bands were for students beyond the beginner year. Both groups required an audition for placement and both competed at state contests.

Another facet of the program was the use of "band-aides." Students who were at least in their second year of playing their instruments could elect to be a band-aide with director approval. Band-aides were assigned a beginner class to serve as a student teacher. In the classes, they modeled on their instruments, helped students with music, or assisted with pass-offs. The pass-off system was when a student played an exercise, song, or excerpt of a song as a "check," meaning that they played satisfactorily and received a sticker for doing so. If a student did not pass-off, they were allowed other opportunities. Students also received stickers for practicing in the band hall. They were required to

practice at least once a week in the band hall to be in good standing. If they did not meet the minimum requirements, they received consequences, such as an after-school detention. Students received a grade based on their fulfillment of the practice requirement and not based on the amount of time practiced.

Music and Contests

Common in traditional ensembles are competitions. In the state in which Hastings was situated, there was an expectation for bands, choirs, and orchestras to compete at a state adjudicated event. The event required schools to select music from an approved list to perform on stage and also required a sight-reading component. The performances were considered an accountability system, as ratings were given to each performing group and displayed in an online database accessible by the public. Individual contests were also common. Students at Hastings participated in Solo and Ensemble during the spring semester, where they learned a solo or ensemble piece to perform in front of adjudicators. Contests that occurred in the fall were City Band and Region Band auditions. Students learned a technical and lyrical étude to perform in a blind audition. If they placed high enough, they earned a spot in the group and participated in a clinic and concert. Region Band in particular was the highest individual honor a student could receive at the middle school level. In order for students to participate in any state or school event, students had to be academically eligible. If a student did not pass a class during a particular grading period, they became ineligible and unable to participate in events until they brought all grades up to passing (70 or higher). This was a common policy across the state.

Summary of the Setting

Hastings Middle School was a predominantly Latino, Title I school situated within a suburban community. Prior to Mr. Perez's appointment as band director at Hastings, the band program had low enrollments, approximately 40 students total. Additionally, the band performances were not well-attended, which resulted in combined concerts with other organizations to attain a larger audience. Once Hastings moved from an older building to the current facility, an opportunity to rebuild the band program was made available. This coincided with Mr. Perez accepting a teaching position at the school. During Mr. Perez's tenure, the band program has more than tripled in size, from 86 members his first year to a total of 269 students at the time of the study. Hastings was a unique case for this study not only for the increased student enrollments, but also because of the percentage of Latino students in the program. Importantly, the band student population was congruent with the school in terms demographic composition.

Chapter 5: Findings

This chapter presents findings from data analysis and interpretation. The chapter begins with a restatement of purpose and guiding questions. Subsequently, data are presented by themes that emerged from analysis: cultivating community, structured environment, alleviating stressors, and (dis)connection with band. A conceptualization of these themes with corresponding codes supporting findings is presented in Figure 3. Where appropriate, excerpts from field notes (displayed in italicized font) and related literature are woven into the narrative to further contextualize and extend findings.

Restatement of Purpose and Guiding Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to explore student, family, director, colleague and administrator perceptions of a middle school band program within a predominantly Latino school community. Using Irizarry and Raibles' (2011) concept of *barrio-based epistemologies and ontologies* (BBEO) and Gay's (2010) *culturally responsive teaching* as a theoretical framework, I investigated a middle school band program with high enrollments of Latino students to determine the strategies that were being employed to encourage initial participation, persistence and success in the program. Issues of inclusivity and responsiveness to students' cultural backgrounds were considered key in this investigation. Furthermore, I explored the compatibility of the traditional concert band model with this population of predominantly Latino youth and how asset-based

pedagogical principles were functioning in this environment. Three overarching questions guided the study:

1. How are the band directors responsive to students' cultural backgrounds?
2. How are bridges to participation created to make band accessible for students in this urban characteristic and midurban context?
3. What aspects of the band program correspond with barrio-based epistemologies and ontologies?

Theme 1: Cultivating Community – "It Can't Just Be One Person"

Mr. Alexander rented the relatively new performing arts venue in town for the Advanced and Intermediate Bands to use for full-day music clinics. The facility looked sleek, modern with wood paneling spread throughout. During this time, both bands were on a break as they awaited the delivery of their pizza lunches. Some students stood inside the foyer of this immaculately clean venue while others ran around outside, laughing as they chased one another. Sounds of conversations in both English and Spanish filled the room, dwindling as Mr. Alexander walked inside. Students immediately walked toward his direction for a high-five and to take pictures with him as though he were a celebrity surfacing for a public appearance. Students began to express their gratitude to Mr. Alexander for renting the space, allowing the bands an opportunity to rehearse on a formal stage. He smiled and said, "You're welcome." Then he turned to me and with a smile and audible crack in his voice said, "They make it worth it."

Through my observations and discussions with participants, community and a sense of care appeared to be integral facets of the band program where community

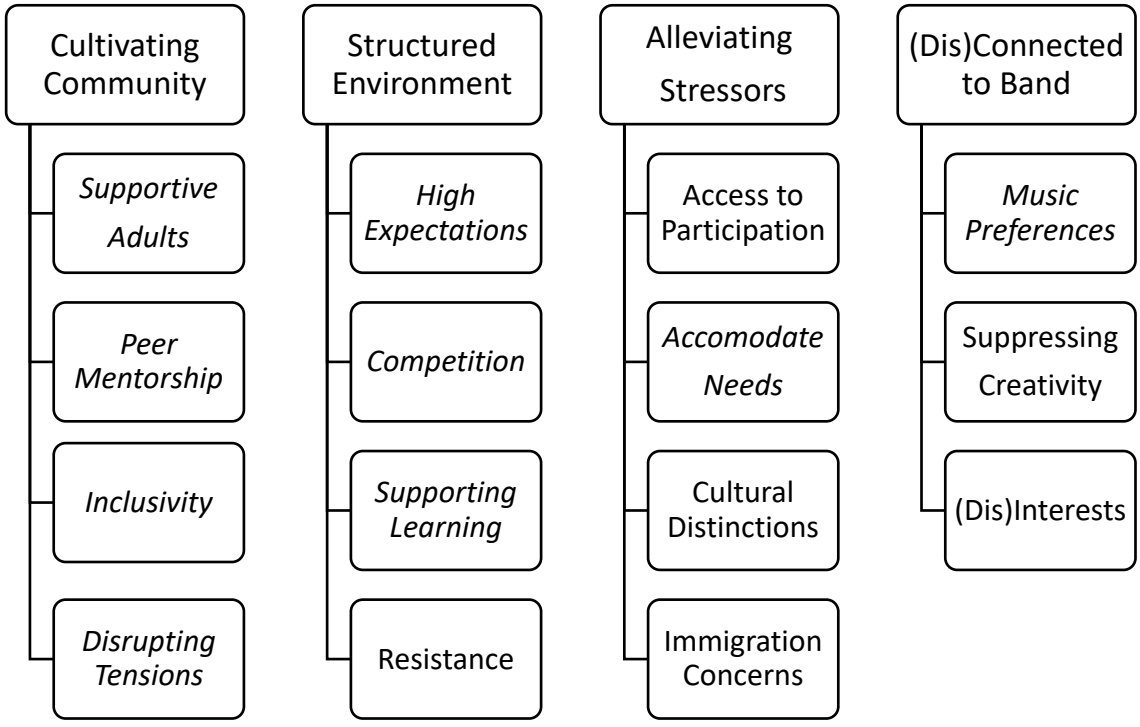

Figure 3. Conceptualization of emergent themes with corresponding codes

functioned as a cohesive, familial type, group of people that also provided a sense of belonging. This cohesion extended beyond relationships between students and band directors to include family members, teachers, and administrators. Through the connectedness that developed from positive relationships, a sense of care and concern "for" others became apparent (Gay, 2010), though some students, according to participants, occasionally challenged the community. BBEO (Irizarry & Raible, 2011) and CRT (Gay, 2010) emphasize the importance of community within schools as members of a school community can impact the academic success of students of color (Gay, 2010; Gay, 2013; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 2009).

Supportive Adults. Systems of support at Hastings were multifaceted in that they included various groups of people and levels of involvement. One type of support system, family involvement connected families to the band (Gay, 2010; Irizarry & Raible, 2011) but often varied depending on circumstances, such as work schedules. Mr. Perez realized that parents and other family members had obligations that potentially kept them away from being active in the school (Alexander et al., 2017; He et al., 2017; Hinckley, 1995; Kindall-Smith, 2006; Williams & Sánchez, 2012). He said, "some of the parents cannot help with things, 'cause they've got more than one job. They've got multiple kids at home."

During observations, I noticed a couple of parents who volunteered their time to the band program by helping to serve pizza to students prior to an off-campus concert. Mr. Green, the Director of Volunteers for the booster program discussed the overall level of involvement:

> You know, it's actually not too bad. I mean, one of the challenges, you've got a lot of single parents and you've got parents that are working and that. We always have an adequate number of parents for each of them to chaperone events...It's kind of the same group that are able to help each time, but that's partly just who's available to help.

Ms. Parker was one parent who was unable to volunteer often. She shared, "I'm not really involved. I'm not here volunteering all the time 'cause my work schedule doesn't allow it, but I make it to all the big band performances that I can." Despite, family members' abilities to actively volunteer, neither the band directors nor other participants labeled family members as unsupportive or uncaring. There was a generalized assumption, however, that some families were "challenged" and "unable" to help based not only on work situations but also on living conditions (single or non-single guardian homes).

Although families were absent for certain events, the performances were when they showed their support. The concerts were so well attended that seats became unattainable. A concert attendee, Mr. Alexander expressed, "We pack our school filled with parents on band performance nights more than probably any other night that we have. Any other parent night, any other extracurricular." Amber appreciated the amount of families that attended the concerts. She described her first-ever concert experience, "You got to see all the students' parents come and they gonna, not just watch the kids. Everybody, right?"

Beyond concert attendance and volunteering for events, support for the program manifested in a sense of trust, according to Mr. Alexander, as family members desired to see their children succeed (Mixon, 2005):

> Mr. Alexander: The support is there in the sense that they want good things for their children. They very much trust our teachers, very much trust our band directors. Allow the kids to be here early. Allow the kids to be there late. Allow them to attend our concerts.

The desire for "good things" corresponded with both Jessica and Samantha's contributions. For Jessica, her parents enjoyed her participation in band because she was "involved with something that's not just academic." Moreover, being involved with activities such as band contributed to a long-term plan encompassing college endeavors. Samantha's parents enjoyed her engagement in band because they wanted her to invest time in school activities to prepare her for the future. As she described, "It gives them hope to my future 'cause like it goes well on college applications and you're in band, you're in sports and it looks great on [applications for] colleges."

The support of the overall school community was vital to the success of the program (Mixon, 2005). Adults associated with Hastings Middle School demonstrated support by means of transporting students to events and providing monetary assistance when necessary:

> Ms. Ross: I know when they did the playing at the high school [football game] I took two kids home. Mr. Nelson took a kid home. Like we end up being a

> secondary parent, because they just don't have a ride to places or they can't pay their band fees 'cause their mom hasn't gotten paid yet.

This sense of family motivated teachers to attend band-related events. Elucidating her son's experiences, Ms. Parker said, "[son's] teacher actually comes to his concerts when she can make it. You know, [the teachers are] very involved and hands-on with the kids...It's more like a family here. Too many kids, but it's a family."

The band directors demonstrated a similar sense of family be expressing genuine care and concern for their students and families (Baker, 2012; Gay, 2010; Ramirez, 2003):

> Mr. Perez: I called the home to check 'cause I thought they were just sick for days. The [students] were missing for a few days, so I called home to checkup. Like, "Are we okay? Do you need anything?" And, you know, the mom was like, "You know, you are so warm all the time. Thank you so much. My kids love your class." I get that a lot from the parents that talk to me, which is really nice and affirming. I don't think I'm warm in class much.

Mr. Perez took the initiative to call home and ask if anything was needed. This type of concern can be interpreted as culturally responsive caring in which one does not merely care about, but works to demonstrate caring dispositions toward others (Gay, 2010). Holistically, participants described the culture of Hastings Middle School, including the band program, as being "supportive of each other."

Peer Mentorship. As I watched students practice throughout the day, it was rare to ever see anyone sitting alone. Typically, students were working with at least one other

person to practice their music. Furthermore, students passed-off music to peers, such as Advanced Band members. Some of the participants noted their appreciation for the practice system. Amber mentioned that it was helpful to practice in the band hall around peers, because "when you can't pass-off a page, like there's other friends that probably are on the same level as you and then they can help you out and then get on the same level as everybody else." This "camaraderie" (Gay, 2010) extended into a peer mentorship where students in higher grade levels or ensembles worked with others to help pass-off music or develop technical proficiency on instruments, a cooperative learning community (Albert, 2006; Allsup, 2003; Hoffman & Carter, 2013). Through peer teaching, Emily felt she also benefited by reminding others and herself of fundamentals. Jessica realized the teaching is reciprocated. She said, "I always learn from them [other students] too, like whenever I'm helping them tune [their instruments], I kinda either mess up and I get to learn from that experience saying, "Ope. I make mistakes too. Might as well fix those."

Participants expressed their appreciation for receiving help from peers. Taylor mentioned that although he is in Advanced Band and helps others, "sometimes people help me. Last year, I was in Intermediate Band, which is right under Advanced Band....And I had people from Advanced Band that were helping me." Taylor described those experiences as, "really good 'cause people that were better than me at the time were coming in to help me and bestowing knowledge unto me. Onto my brains." As a beginner student, Amber enjoyed working with the mentors and band-aides, student helpers, in the band program. She mentioned feelings of shyness at first, but then realized they were

really supportive and encouraging to everyone. Because of the positive experiences she has had, Amber aspires to serve in a mentor role as a band-aide one day "because you get to help people and you know how it feels. You already know what it's like for them to be in their shoes. You get to help them too."

The participants realized a strong sense of community and support had been created within the Hastings Band. When asked about the culture of the program, Mr. Green shared:

> I think that it gives them [students] something to belong to. When you watch them, they all seem to be happy that they're there and that they're involved with it...it gives them a place to be involved and to belong.

Ms. Green felt that her daughter really benefited from being in the band program and working with other students, as "She has made friends. She's had a mentor, she's been a mentor and it has given her a place to belong and excel." For Ms. Parker, the collaborative environment has instilled a sense of motivation for Ms. Parker's son to practice and learn new music:

> And here at Hastings, there have been plenty of opportunities to come in and work with other students, other instruments and they get to see, "Oh. They're in Advanced Band. I wanna play that song." That was [child]'s big thing last year is he wanted to be in Advanced Band. "They're playing these cool songs. They're playing this song. I wanna play that song." And he taught himself these songs because it was the Advanced Band. So, the drive is there, and I think it excites the kids to want to go do this.

Inclusivity. The band program offered a place for all students to belong (Parker, 2010; Parker, 2016) as all Hastings students had an opportunity to participate in band:

> Amber: I think it's important for you to know that everybody's welcome to join band. If you say, "Oh, I'm not good enough to play any of these instruments", you can't say that because you don't really know...And even though, like the clarinets, they have like a lot of people in there, you're still able to join even though they have like 50 people in there.

The band directors were sincere when they said everyone was welcomed. They wanted any student with an interest in band to join regardless of academic achievement, socioeconomic status, or other aspects that could be perceived as hindrances to participation, though band may be perceived as a means to "save" students:

> Mr. Nelson: So, we're accepting. Like, "You can stand up. You can probably play an instrument." And some of 'em do. And some of these kids are just disasters in other things. They can't walk without tripping. They're never gonna make it in athletics. They're not great academically. But they can come in here and play with a good sound and have fun? Great. We'll take you. And if you're not a jerk and you wanna come in and just practice a couple times a week, great. We'll take you and we'll work with you and get you better and try to push you on through high school, so you can have success.

Based on this description, band appeared to be a place for students who would not excel in other areas of school such as in sports or academics and served as a method for overcoming deficits. Such conceptions misalign with principles asset-based pedagogies

which view students based on strengths (Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1995). Regardless, there appeared to be a strong interest in the program based on enrollments.

The band environment was close-knit, akin to family. Jessica described the band program as a place where, "Everyone treats each other like they're siblings, basically. The 7th graders treat each other like they've known each other their whole lives even though the just met each other for two years." Additionally, Jessica described the band students as accepting "regardless of their race or ethnicity":

> Everyone doesn't treat anyone separate. Everyone's just like the same person. No one cares who they are, where they came from, what ethnicity they are. They don't really care. They just treat them like, "You're my friend. You're my friend. That's it."

Within the band hall walls, students felt as though they could express themselves. As Samantha noted, "Basically, be comfortable with themselves. Be comfortable with other people. They can just be their selves, and no one will judge you 'cause it's band." Samantha felt that "people accept people" and when students are "having trouble accepting themselves, if they think bad about themselves, people will try to help them say the positives about you." Ms. Green also felt that the strong sense of community and that students were "all treated equally and they're all encouraged equally so I think it's a really good, kind of a happy place. I don't see that there's a lot of strife." According to Ms. Ross:

> It's not just the Hispanic kids all come together and the White kids all sit in one spot and African American kids sit, it's very much the melting pot of the school

> ‘cause there’s every background in there...they all feel very comfortable and then they all support each other as they move through.

Although Ms. Ross’ comment was housed positively, such ideas are viewed as problematic to CRT and BBEO philosophies, where the “melting pot” concept often refers to assimilation into the “dominant culture.”

Disrupting Tensions. Although a strong sense of community had been created among students in the band program, there were times when tensions arose. With the sticker system in place, students could monitor how many practice days others had accumulated or the number of items passed-off. This instilled a sense of competitiveness (Butler et al., 2007; Gay, 2010; Hoffman, 2012; Ladson-Billings, 2009; Parker, 2016) between peers to achieve more stickers at a faster rate. Jessica said that some students became envious when they compared themselves to others. However, she tried to encourage those students to keep working:

> There’s always someone calling someone else a showoff. And then when you can hear in their voice that they’re jealous. I tend to just tell them, “Don’t worry. It’s never gonna matter. In the next couple of weeks, maybe you’ll get that recognition. So you don’t have to be jealous about something today. You can be proud of something tomorrow.”

Some students also began to evaluate and make judgments regarding an individual’s performance ability. Amber mentioned that she had to stand up to peers who were speaking badly of others in band class:

> I have heard people be like, "You know what. She's not really good at playing saxophone" and whisper to each other. And I'll be like, "You need to stop, because everybody has different levels. Some people are fast, some people are slow at learning and you need to respect that, because not everybody can be at the same level as you."

Tensions also developed when students did not put in the effort to work, creating a rift and sense of frustration between peers. Samantha discussed the tension created within the group when students decided to not practice:

> A lot of people work hard to stay in this band, but a lot of people don't. They just don't care. But, see for example, one section. They may not work as hard as any other section could 'cause the band directors say, "More practice. It gains more confidence in how you sound." So, of course, all the other sections are gonna take that advice. They're gonna practice more, and more, and more. And then that section will just stay not practicing. So, all that practicing goes to waste when that sections needs the most practicing.

It appeared that tensions continued to fester in the band program, though the directors and other adult participations seemed unaware of them.

Theme 2: Structured Environment – "The Culture is Very Much Hard Work"

She walks around the band hall with a smile on her face as she listens to students play their music. Ms. Diaz is a vibrant young teacher who seems to have a good rapport with students. She seems to know the routine during morning practice as she moves toward the next hand raised in the air. She has stickers in hand ready to distribute. After

passing-off a few kids, Ms. Diaz walks back into the office and begins talking to Mr. Nelson who is handling chocolate fundraiser money. They begin discussing the solo contest that recently occurred and how proud she was of students. She tells Mr. Nelson, "I love these kids" as she begins describing one student's performance that made her cry. A student came into the office and asked if she could pass-off music. Ms. Diaz then headed back into the band hall to resume working with students.

The Hastings Band program was advertised as a fun place to be and was described as such by participants; however, the environment was extremely structured in terms of how classes were conducted. The directors ran classes in an authoritative, rather than facilitative manner, aside from opportunities for pass-offs in class. Students were held to high expectations and were expected to make their best sounds and put forth their best effort. Additionally, students were required to practice at least one day a week in the band hall. Competition between individuals was fostered through the pass-off system and sticker acquisition based on practice time spent in the band hall. Although some students might have appreciated the structure of classes and standards they were held to, other students were not as receptive with some reporting that they might drop out of band.

High Expectations. Hastings band classes were structured, complete with established routines for each class period. Students knew which door to walk through, where to get their instruments, how to set up the chairs for classes, where to sit, and when to play. When class began, they played through warmups and then progressed to their respective pieces, depending on the ensemble in which they were placed. The monotony with daily routines was intentional:

> Mr. Perez: I'm really boring and we just play exercises the entire time, but because I try to share with them the expertise and not just play through stuff. I'll show them how I do things and model a lot and try to tell 'em that it's not good enough to play with a bad sound. You know, and I don't know how warm I am in class, but I try to smile at kids as much as I can. I'm direct, but encouraging. You know, "Hey, you're still holding your hand wrong. Do this instead. Great." And move on.

Mr. Perez and Mr. Nelson worked to create an environment in which students could succeed that was appropriate to their situation. Mr. Nelson attributed part of their success to beginning with students' existing knowledge (Gay, 2010):

> Mr. Nelson: Yeah. I think, like one of the big reasons I think we're being successful is we get where the kids are and where they're coming from. We get it and we work with that. We don't try to make them into something we're not. We're not trying to be something we're not. We're not trying to make them something that they are not. We're gonna make them successful, but we know where we need to start with...

All students, regardless of prior knowledges, were held to high expectations. Administrators felt the established expectations contributed to the success and quality of the program despite the completely structured and "rigid" environment:

> Mr. Butler: I think it's, it's funny because it's not a just come and have fun type of place and we'll just play a little bit and you'll learn a little bit and you'll go. It's a very strict and a very rigid environment. The expectations are high. The

> expectations on the parents are high. The expectations for practice is high. And I think our kids like being held accountable and I think they like getting in there and seeing the success they have. So, when they come in and they're okay. They may not be very good and then they see their friends and they start to advance and they start to get better and then as a group, the band starts to get better. I think that they are successful and are growing, because they want a place where they can be held accountable, where they can be successful, and they can see that rapid growth and improvement.

Students were held accountable for more than just their performance on instruments. Issues of eligibility were a point of concern, as students were not allowed to participate in activities if they had failing grades during grading cycles. Consequently, the directors helped hold students to a higher academic standard. In this regard, band served as a motivator for students to pass their other classes:

> Mr. Butler: It definitely, academically, you know, you're not allowed to participate if you're ineligible. So if your grades are below 70, you can be taken out of performances. So for one, it's a big motivator for the kids to keep their grades up. If they're not meeting their performance goals, they can also be taken out of performances there suddenly. They do tend to, you know, a lot of them work harder in band and then that kinda, a trickle down. Because they wanna stay eligible, they work a little harder in their classes or they see they find success in band so then it helps them feel more successful at other things. Just help to grow their confidence.

Band, in this sense, served as a bridge to overall academic learning and success. As the principal, Mr. Alexander was content with the musical accomplishments of the program:

> Our Advanced Band and our second band both compete in that level. So, I'm very proud of our band not only for their performance abilities and their skills and their talents, but more than anything for their work ethic.

The band directors attributed part of their success to the pass-off system they established to motivate students to practice and progress on their instruments:

> Mr. Perez: It's very chaotic in the band hall, but they're all practicing. And we'll go around, I hire staff or myself or Mr. Nelson will go around arcs of chairs and visit each student, listen to them play something. If they do it right, they get a sticker. If they don't do it right, we tell 'em what to fix and we move on. And because that happens, they learn that failing is okay and they'll get it. And I might see a kid play something 10 times and they won't be fazed if I just move on again. They'll just keep practicing. They're with their friends, they're having a good time.

When asked to describe the culture of the band program, Mr. Perez responded, "The culture is very much work hard, but we don't really say that. We just have them pass-off. It just feels like they're getting stickers and they're having fun the whole time." This system created opportunities for students to experience success in increments to sustain motivation.

Because the family members participating in the study had children in other band programs in the district, they noticed differences in terms of quality and expectations in

the Hastings band program. Although they expressed that they did not like to make comparisons, Ms. Parker explicated:

> Mr. Perez and Mr. Nelson definitely have it nailed down on how to progress these children faster and master their instruments faster than over there and it's not due to their lack of teaching, but I'm sure their methods probably could be changed. But, there was a definite difference in sound for even the same songs.

Ms. Green enjoyed the concerts she attended as, "The band is really good. And the performances are good. There's not a lot of errant notes floating around."

The family members attributed the quality of performances to the expectations that the directors had for students.

Competition. As the band program continued to build and evolve, the level of competition (e.g., large group adjudicated event, and solo and ensemble events) followed suit, though it was a gradual progress. Ms. Diaz shared some of her initial experiences working with the band:

> Like the kids that I helped, I knew when I would come here it was gonna be like one note at a time situation. I knew it was gonna be 8th graders who I was gonna have to teach beginner fingerings and such. So, kids who just didn't know how to read music. It was still kind of a little slow.

Changes in teaching methods also helped motivate students to work harder in the program:

> Ms. Ross: Mr. Perez makes it fun enough that they want to come to band instead of just the, "I have to go to band and pass-off my music"...Kind of like, "I don't

> care" to they see that they have to be good enough to pass and then I think because so many of them are starting to do regionals and solo and ensemble, they're starting to get recognition.

As a group, the Hastings Band received low ratings at their state adjudicated event in the past. Now, the students were achieving higher ratings. Ms. Diaz felt that "Now, these kids, to say that the Hastings kids compete and play at the same level as the other kids in our feeders is huge, because they didn't use to be that way." The students in the program felt a sense of achievement as a group and as individuals. One student, Jessica, described her experience competing for a spot in the Region Band. She noted that she was, "filled with pride, because I was representing my school." Competition, when students are working to compete against one another could be counterproductive to creating positive learning environments in communities/schools of color (Gay, 2010).

Support for Learning. In the school environment, students experienced stress related to academics and/or personal issues. The band hall was a place where students were allowed to make mistakes. In fact, mistakes were expected, especially when learning a new piece of music or reviewing something that had not been recently rehearsed. Taylor discussed mistakes in class:

> But if it's in a big piece that you haven't played for a while and you're on the second page of playing high notes and what not, they'll be like, "Alright. Just fix it later. It's the first time we've played this. There's gonna be mistakes. It'll be fine." And it's really good, because they don't give the students the sense of urgency that, "That needs to be fixed." It doesn't rush them and add stress to what

> they need to do, because school's already kinda stressful enough. 'Cause math and stuff. So, it's very stress-free.

Mistakes could even occur in performance situations. Rather than scold students for their mistakes, the band directors remained encouraging. Samantha described a situation where she felt that she failed:

> For example, I messed up one time on, I think it was the solo competition that went on this weekend...I sped up a little bit and then when I got out of the room, Mr. Perez 'cause he was in the room with me, he was like, "Great job! Great job!" Even though I knew that I messed up, he was still like, "That was amazing. You practiced a lot so you have a lot to be proud of." So like that made me feel better. Even though I did one bad thing, it still makes up for how hard I worked to get there.

The moment of perceived failure turned into a sense of pride and achievement for Samantha.

The students in the band program recognized that Mr. Nelson and Mr. Perez invested time in them and their education and appreciated their efforts. Teresa said, "if you don't know something, then they help you through it." Amber elaborated on the dedication of the directors:

> I think being in band with them is fun and they don't treat you like a student. They treat you more like a, like their own son or daughter. They're like, "You know what? I'll help you. You stay after school and I'll like help you learn and more." And then they'll also be really sweet to you if like you don't have any

time to practice, they'll give up their free time just for you to learn this note... Makes me feel happy because a lot of people wouldn't just do that. They're [other teachers] like, "No. Go home. You need to practice there, not practice here. We are busy." And then [band directors] they'll be like, "No. You can stay here. We'll help you." You know. And I think that's pretty cool for them to do that.

Taylor appreciated when the directors affirmed his and the band's efforts. Taylor mentioned that he was not great at trumpet when he first moved to Hastings and the band directors wanted him to do a lot of work to improve and he did. Hearing the directors' perceptions made an impression on him:

> When we got Mr. Perez and Mr. Nelson telling us that we're so much better than the bands that they had had come through here before. The Hastings Band was average, but now it's above average, because we all came in here and that's what Mr. Perez says and that's very memorable for me, because I feel like that's telling me I've accomplished and become better than what I was when I came down here.

Parents were very aware of the amount of care (Garcia & Guerra, 2004) the directors showed for their children. Ms. Green considered the most meaningful aspect the band directors did was that they truly valued her daughter. For Ms. Green, "everything that they talk about with her [daughter] in regard to her, it is so complimentary and encouraging and that's probably one of my best things is that they really value her and appreciate her." Ms. Parker felt like the directors truly treated students as members of their own family. She said, "You know it almost feels like Mr. Perez not really takes it

personally with kids, but he's very invested in them. So, it's almost like they're his kids, you know."

Whether a student chose to continue in band or not, the band directors maintained care for all of the students they taught. At the time of the study, Ms. Green's daughter was uncertain as to whether or not she would continue with band in high school. The directors were aware of this and continued to show their support:

> Ms. Green: You can tell that they care about the students and they do everything they can to see that their students succeed. They want what's best for the student and I am so thankful that we decided to stay in this program.

The parents continuously referred to the commitment Mr. Nelson and Mr. Perez have to the band program. Ms. Green shared that the directors "live and breathe this band program. They want their band to be the best and it is. They work hard." The directors worked with students whenever opportunities were available, even beyond their normal day:

> Ms. Parker: You know, so anytime that they have the chance to keep the kids here whenever they can practice like late nights like this, they'll let them stay, which is awesome. They'll feed them pizza and, you know. So, they've got more of a tighter knit in their band than other schools do.

Mr. Green noticed that type of dedication was not limited to the band program:

> So, it's school-wide thing that commitment I think that we see in there. And again, it goes back to the school district being willing to pay for the extra bus, so the kids can stay late and being able to provide the instruments. So, it's kind of a

commitment all the way from the individual teachers to the administration and staff to the school district itself has put in the effort to help Hastings' band.

The Green Family had an opportunity to send their daughter to another school in the district, any school in the district. Instead, they made the decision for her to attend Hastings based primarily on their interactions with Mr. Perez:

> Ms. Green: In fact, when we were still making our decision about whether to come here or switch her to a different school, we came here on the day that you kinda try out for what instrument you wanna play...when we came up and talked to him about what she wanted to play and everything, he was so excited, and I just got such a good feeling from that interaction that I went home, and I said, "We're going there. We don't even need to go to another middle school and meet the band directors there. We're going to Hastings" because I was so blown away by Mr. Perez just in that 15 minutes from what he was telling me about the before school practices and the after-school practices and his dedication and how much he was here for the students and everything.

Mr. Perez had to work diligently to change the culture of the band program. Ms. Campbell noted that the band's success could be attributed to the directors' passion:

> I don't think it's survivable without the passion because it's too much. It's a lot. And if that passion isn't there, you're gonna burn out. You're gonna fizzle. And you won't have the parent involvement. People know if you believe in what you're saying or not. And, the passion here, for sure, has been there. And that's part of the growth and everything else too.

One theme that continued to emerge from administrators was the dedication that both Mr. Perez and Mr. Nelson demonstrated. Mr. Butler noticed that the directors were at the school longer than most people:

> The band directors are here before school. I mean, they basically, them and the custodians open the doors and them and the custodians pretty much shut the doors when they leave at night. So, if you can't come in the morning, they'll accommodate you in the afternoon and vice versa. They are ready, they're there, they're available and most importantly, they want students in the band.

According to Mr. Alexander, the band directors served as models for other programs in the school:

> Students in the program expressed the positive culture of the band program. Regardless of self-perceptions, all students are accepted in the program and are supported and encouraged throughout their experience. Band directors and peers will work to combat doubt or issues of low self-esteem.

Administrators voiced no concerns regarding class sizes or number of instruments in the Hastings band, because the directors found a way to make everything work. The program continued to grow. Mr. Nelson realized that their success is unique:

> Statistically, it shouldn't happen at this school, but they see that, I mean, I like to think that I'm a good teacher. They see that we care about them. Like genuinely care about them. And we're there for them 100%, you know. We're gonna help 'em out and they can see that I think. And we're way enthusiastic about what we do like to the point it's kinda over the top sometimes.

Resistance. Some negative cases emerged from student interviews, where students reported both positive and negative feelings toward the band program. Although many students realized that the band directors cared for them and wanted them to do well, examples of other students were offered as examples of where band was failing to meet the needs of students. Specifically, some participants mentioned tensions between peers, as well as tensions between band members and the directors. Because of this, some students wished to drop out of band. Other students even started creating issues in class. For example, Taylor felt that some students go out of their way to "sound bad and do bad things on purpose." He described instances when a high school band director would visit to work with the trumpet section on their music:

> There's one kid in Advanced Band that my mind goes straight to...And he'll just be a disruptance [sic] the whole period. It's horrible 'cause we can't learn and we can't practice. We have to listen to him and he knows he's playing out of turn because he's laughing about it afterwards. So, I wish people like that weren't in the band.

Though the directors created a culture of success in the band program, some students chose not to practice or work. This perceived disobedience was problematic and rather than lower expectations for those students or all students in general, the directors had to remove individuals from the program who were consistently unwilling to participate or meet their expectations:

> Mr. Perez: If I tried to get to them and I tried to incentivize or punish or call home and they still just don't wanna work or put effort in, then I let 'em go. And that

> was really hard to start doing, ‘cause I wanted to save everybody. But, keeping them made it really hard for the kids that wanted to work. So, once I showed everyone, you know, “I understand if you’re busy. I get it. I totally get it. But if you can’t do one day a week, you can’t stay here.” And then, the kids that are here generally like it more, because no one wants to be a hard worker with people that don’t work. Group projects where you’re the only one doing the work is frustrating and that’s the same with band.

Having students removed from the program was not an immediate course of action for students who decided to not work. Rather, this decision emanated after various attempts at behavior modification failed:

> I’ll redirect them. I’m very nice...I keep telling them, “I like you a lot. You’re going to be the best percussionist ever or best trumpet player ever, but we can’t do that here or we’re not going to get anything done. And if they continue to have issues, we’ll call home or we’ll change their schedules. I might say, “Next year, we’ll see, but good luck. No hard feelings.” We have to be patient.

At Hastings, students, who were unwilling to comply with standards and expectations established by the band directors, were removed from further participating in band. Mr. Perez admitted shifting his teaching practices from retaining students who acted defiantly in band to removing them from the program altogether, the latter of which could be perceived as “uncaring,” a disposition which is destructive in communities of color (Gay, 2010).

Theme 3: Alleviating Stressors: "An inroad for them"

A student limped on one leg into the band office. He approached Mr. Nelson, speaking in Spanish, laughing and describing how he hurt his leg prior to band class. Mr. Nelson responded in Spanish, jokingly asking the student if he wanted his leg cut off. The student laughed and proceeded to ask for a nurse's pass. As the student limped out of the office, Mr. Nelson looked at me and said that the student has come a long way. Although it was his second year in the country, he has learned a lot of English. The student moved from Nicaragua and was living with his aunt. The aunt had previously asked Mr. Nelson and his wife questions about acquiring citizenship for this student since Mr. Nelson's wife works with immigration lawyers. Mr. Nelson disclosed that a couple of years ago, kids started crossing over from Nicaragua and El Salvador without guardians to escape the violence from gang-related activity and now they are being turned away by the Trump administration. Mr. Nelson said that the student probably would have been killed had he not crossed over.

Understanding the community and sociopolitical context in which students and families live are components of BBEO (Irizarry & Raible, 2011) and CRT (Gay, 2010). The school community at Hastings exhibited an understanding regarding issues that were prevalent for the families they served. Mr. Perez, for example recognized that students had "chronic stress [which] hurts them way too much." Thus, directors, administrators, and teachers worked to reduce tensions arising in the band community.

Financial Access. According to Ms. Diaz, "The Hastings kids, they are different than the other kids in the feeder. No doubt and it's 100% because of income. It's 100%

because these kids, their parents don't speak English. It's 100% of that." The band directors recognized that most of the student population at Hastings was labeled as economically disadvantaged. Thus, the directors had to provide students with the supplies and equipment necessary to participate in band, such school-owned instruments (Elpus & Abril, 2011; Lorah et al., 2014; Mixon, 2005, 2006). School instruments, in this case, included instruments that are typically considered rentals for other, more affluent programs, such as flute, clarinet, saxophone, trumpet, and trombone. The district had a standard school-owned instrumental rental fee of $20 to cover maintenance costs; however, fees were usually either reduced or waived, according to Mr. Butler. This was based on free or reduced lunch status. If there was a shortage of instruments, the school district attempted to purchase additional instruments for the campus; however, it took some time for directors to determine who was enrolled in their classes and what their needs were. According to Mr. Nelson, "I had to wait a couple of weeks at the beginning of this year 'cause I had so many beginner clarinets. We didn't have enough clarinets. So, I had to wait an extra couple weeks for those to get ordered." Eventually, the directors were able to supply instruments to all students wishing to participate and did not turn students away from the program based on financial situations. Family members were aware of the assistance the school offered, indicating there were no "road blocks" for students:

> Ms. Green: This program, I don't know how they did it, but they have gotten enough instruments so that every student who wants to be in band can have an instrument at no charge or very little charge. That, to me, makes it easy for any

kid who wants to be in band to come and be in band. There's nothing stopping them.

Mr. Perez, himself, realized, "if we didn't have that [district support] the kids would have to buy their own instrument and this band would not be big." He extended:

> We get new instruments when we need 'em. No other district, not many are gonna do that. Not outside of [the state] anyway...our kids don't buy instruments. If [students] have to have something and they have to have something that's decent. Their parents aren't gonna buy 'em a good instrument so we have to at least give 'em something that works.

It is important to note here that the district did not just purchase the cheapest instruments available. Rather, they bought quality instruments to last. The band program also still had many older instruments and instruments of lesser quality in their inventory. Tone quality was important for the band directors because they were cognizant of having to compete at the same level as more affluent schools in the area. Consequently, Mr. Perez worked to fundraise money through chocolate sales so that he could purchase $1000 worth of French horn mouthpieces. This ensured that his students all had the same quality mouthpiece, despite their "different" or "Frankensteined-put-together" instruments. Because the band was constantly in need of additional instruments to provide students, they rarely had any spare or loaner instruments when a student needed theirs repaired. To navigate this, instruments were repaired in-house and returned to students within a day or two. Instruments were never sent to the repair shop unless

absolutely necessary. This helped reduce repair costs and maximizes student performance time (Mixon, 2005).

The directors both understood the importance of having good administration (Fitzpatrick, 2008, 2011), particularly a good principal, and they expressed how supportive their principal had been in providing financial resources for the band. They attributed much of their success to Mr. Alexander. Mr. Nelson articulated that Mr. Alexander "100% understands where these kids are coming from and cares deeply about them." Mr. Alexander helped provide the band program with additional funds when they were available. Importantly, Mr. Alexander realized the importance of private lessons but acknowledged that most of Hasting students would not have the financial resources to pursue these (Costa-Giomi & Chappell, 2007; Elpus & Abril, 2011; Hoffman, 2012). Because of this, he believed Hastings students were "at a disadvantage," stating further that Hastings students were often "competing against schools where the cost of private lessons is not an issue." Thus, classes at Hastings had to be structured in a way where students could receive the differentiated instruction necessary to progress on their individual instruments. Mr. Perez mentioned that scheduling (Fitzpatrick, 2008, 2011) really helped with the growth of the program because he and Mr. Nelson were able to teach the beginner classes in a more homogeneous setting:

> A good teacher with a wrong schedule is gonna be severely handicapped. So that's something to look into as far as, you know, poor Title I schools with kids that need more help to catch up if they're thrown into a class where they have all

> the instruments put together, it's a humongous hurdle to get over. And I think our success is stemmed from being able to split the classes effectively.

Mr. Perez acknowledged that Mr. Alexander took the time to seek his input regarding scheduling, and, if the schedule were to change in a way that would negatively impact the program, Mr. Perez would seek employment elsewhere.

Accommodating Needs. A space to practice was also vital for Hastings student success (Hoffman, 2012; Mixon, 2005, 2006). According to Mr. Nelson:

> We can't tell the kids, "You need to go home and practice." A lot of 'em live in trailers and so just the physicality of being in that small confined space and they share rooms with brothers and sisters, instruments get damaged. Parents get home from a hard day at work. They don't want to hear all that noise right in the next room. Or they live in an apartment, which I did for years and I know how tough it is to practice in an apartment. We have kids with, you know, multiple kids in the family. They live in a two-bedroom apartment and there's not the physical space for them to have their own place...They don't have it, you know. It's just not a reality for them.

To accommodate students' needs, the school day began extremely early for both of the band directors. Although school started at 9:00 AM, they arrived on campus by 7:00 AM to open the band hall for practice. During this time, students were allowed to practice their music and pass-off anything on the pass-off list. During these sessions, the directors, band-aides, and music staff were listening to students and offering individual, differentiated feedback. Because most students were not enrolled in private lessons, these

practice times allowed them to receive specific feedback to develop proficiency on their respective instruments. Accommodating students went beyond this early arrival time. The directors were teaching before school, during their classes, during lunch, during advisory period, and after school. Mr. Green recognized the importance of a practice space for students:

> They [band directors] realize that a lot of their students live in multifamily housing and so they can't really practice an instrument away from school. And also, it would probably be hard for them to afford tutoring. They need the extra practice there at school and then also there an hour after school until 5:15. That's what gives the kids an opportunity to succeed is that they actually have a chance to practice and that's the commitment of the band directors.

Cultural Distinctions. Understanding that families come from culturally diverse backgrounds was important to Hastings. Mr. Alexander noted, "parents were not raised here and did not go to school in America so it's just very different." Many Hastings families might have only marginally understood the nature of band and the expectations of band programs, if at all. Ms. Murphy observed:

> To me that might be the only barrier is if the parents weren't really familiar with what a band program is just because they might not have had a band program when they grew up. But I think that they [band directors] do a good job of explaining what it is. What's involved.

Although some families and students might not have understood band in American public schools, results here showed that they were still very interested in their children's

participation and supported the program when and how they could (if only through attending performances).

Interestingly, some district officials were identified as making stereotypical assumptions about cultural barriers in largely Hispanic communities without first seeking to understand the community. Mr. Alexander described an encounter he had with an upper-level administrator:

> I've had people that are connected to schools, even connected to our district, and one person isn't in our district anymore thankfully. But they'd say things like, "Poor Mexican heritage students don't wanna be in the band. They don't wanna be dragging their instrument through the trailer parks and through their apartments." And I said, "Well every year I have 250 to 300 kids who tell very different stories."

When asked why he felt the district administrator made such assumptions, Mr. Alexander said:

> I think they had thought a little bit of themselves because they had worked in schools in Mexico. And in the schools they worked in or areas they worked in, the studies they had done there had, band programs weren't a part of the schooling and so I think they just thought they knew things. But, it's very clear that music's important everywhere. It's also very clear that people want to be a part of good organizations and that has very little to do often with just cultures. Like you know, backgrounds, heritages, races, ethnicities. It has a lot more to do with people being people. Wanting to be a part of something that's a little bit bigger

than themselves. It's not just about them and wanting to learn and grow. It was an interesting comment.

For many families at Hastings, Spanish was their primary language. Because so many parents spoke Spanish, there were documents, materials, and translators available to help teachers and staff who needed to effectively communicate with families and students. While utilizing translators might have been helpful, it could have created even another barrier between families and teachers, as the communication was being filtered through another individual. Because of this, the ability to speak the dominant language of families was a valuable asset. Fortunately, Mr. Nelson was able to communicate fluently in Spanish. He realized the importance of such a tool:

> But here, my God, it's majority minority here at this school. And so just when parents find out that I speak Spanish, it's just an inroad for them and they feel more comfortable approaching me with stuff. I've had parents call me to talk to me on the phone about their kids where they won't call for any of their other teachers or they won't show up for anything else. I've had mom come in a few weeks ago and tell me just the problems that her daughter was having. She just wanted to sit and talk about 'em.

From experience, Mr. Nelson understood the difficulty associated with language acquisition and "trying to get an idea across." Mr. Nelson perceived the inability to speak the native language used by families as an injustice, particularly in environments already plagued with injustices:

> We all know communication is important with parents and so, by not giving accessibility to those parents, by confining yourself to communicating in one language is unfair and you're not giving those kids, they have, our kids don't have a fair shot anyway. And then by not getting their families involved is just pushing them down even farther. So at least it gives them a little bit more in road. And when I can call home to talk about issues in class or concerns or anything, like the parents know that they can talk to me and at least I'll understand what's going on, I guess. And they feel more comfortable, I feel, that they can communicate with me.

Although students valued support *from* families, some also valued support available *for* their families. For example, Jessica was thankful that Mr. Nelson could communicate in Spanish, something that was a surprise for her and others initially:

> That caught everyone off guard when they found out. Like they said, "Oh, this band program's just full of people that speak English." Okay then. Mr. Nelson immediately talks in Spanish for people that don't know English very well and everyone just kinda said, "Wait, what?" Everyone just got really caught off guard especially the kids who thought he was just another White band director

Particularly in her situation, Jessica typically had to translate meetings for her parents, which she expressed was not always easy. She mentioned that sometimes she has difficulty pinpointing the correct words to use. Jessica shared that her parents were pleased to know that someone in the band program could communicate effectively with

them so “now they don’t need to wait for me to horrifically try to translate from English to Spanish.”

In working to establish a culture or traditions within the band program, the band directors worked to establish a set of expectations for students in terms of practice and attending rehearsals. This seemed evident given that there were many students practicing in the band hall throughout the day. The directors worked with family members to help them understand the expectations for students, particularly since there were cultural differences between family backgrounds and the school. Specifically, many Latino families were from other countries where music was experienced in different ways. Mr. Perez felt that some progress has been made:

> I think they’re catching on really fast in terms of wanting to be a part of the band program. At first, we had to explain a lot the first few years...Because in Mexico they don’t have band during the day. At all. They just had fun after school if they have their own mini group, they bought their own instrument and just teaching themselves. Or I don’t know how they really learn. I guess it’s just by helping each other learn. There’s no classes.

While it seemed that the Latino students were more responsive and understood the culture of the band program, other students were less participative. Specifically, Chin students, refugees who fled religious persecution, were struggling to assimilate into the band’s practicing culture:

> Chin students have trouble showing up to practices. And generally, they understand athletics and like sports. But music is, except for the singing

> proponent, they do sing a lot in church. Music hasn't really hit home yet. We've had a few kids in Advanced Band that are Chin. Right now I have 2, but they're not the hardest workers for the class. They're super smart. Incredibly intelligent. Their home life is nurturing and they have parents helping teach them things that school does not.

When asked why Chin students seemed less likely to attend events, Mr. Perez said, "Some of it might be mobility. Just being able to get here before and after school without a bus. And then they might not have cars, in many cases, where they can't take instruments home. So, I've driven tubas home." Mr. Perez noted that there were possibly deeper issues, based on Chin students' previous experiences and culture, that could explain why they were not as involved in band:

> The Asians, they haven't played instruments before. So, I'm not sure how it's affected the string program. I don't think there's a lot in orchestra either. It's just generally, they've sung and maybe they were persecuted to the point where they didn't have instruments for many, many decades or centuries. So. It's just so different. That they're not used to it.

Ms. Murphy realized that families might not know what being involved with a school entails; therefore, communicating with parents was critical. She stated, "I think as long as you keep the communication open between the students and the parents, that's very helpful, because the parents do wanna be involved. They just sometimes don't know how to be involved." Ms. Diaz offered a different perspective. As a young immigrant from

Brazil, Ms. Diaz had to explain school and band to her parents because school functioned differently

> There's no extracurricular activities in school, so she [mom] didn't understand why I had to stay after school. She didn't understand why I had to go to rehearsal. She didn't understand any of that. And so, a lot of that is with these parents, they don't understand the culture.

Ms. Diaz felt that there was a huge cultural divide between the Hastings parents and school that was immensely difficult to navigate:

> There's not really much that you can do as far as getting the parents involved. They, I mean, they send things in Spanish, they call in Spanish. And it works sometimes, but it's a cultural issue. Like you have to change the whole culture, you know. Like the culture of the parents. It's a whole 'nother issue. Educating these immigrant parents on American culture. So, it's not their fault. There's really nothing they can do about it. They try, but if you can't get a hold of them there's nothing you can do.

Immigration Concerns. There was a presence of undocumented students and families at Hastings. This presented a unique set of challenges, not only for the band directors, but also the school as a whole. According to Mr. Nelson, "A lot of our kids are documented, like they were born here, but a lot of their parents weren't and they're here working at jobs that they can get. Not all of 'em, but there's a high population of 'em."

Mr. Nelson acknowledged the difficulties some of his students and others experience that greatly impact their lives:

> But the undocumented thing is, I mean it's just another, it's another thing that our kids have to deal with that they, nobody should have to deal with that kind of stress. I get emotional. We have kids that, you know, come to school and they're like 13 years old, 14 and like, you know, "My dad is gone." And they're dealing with this stress every day. You know, their dad had two jobs and all of a sudden, he got picked up. And ICE's thing now, their M.O. is, they're like, "Oh we're looking for somebody else, but as long as we're here..." That's kinda what they're doing. They're working with local policy even and doing this and they'll pick people up in these sweeps or now, recent legislation is allowing people in immigration court to be detained. Like they're there legally, you know, going through the process and they'll be detained. So, we've had students that have had that problem too...That's hard. That's the hardest thing. I've never had that experience. You know, "Oh my family could almost be ripped apart."

Mr. Nelson and his wife, an activist in the community, were in touch with lawyers and other individuals who could help families should they run into issues. Mr. Nelson expressed the tensions he experiences regarding the situation:

> Where in my experience does that happen? And most of the teachers here too have never had to deal with anything remotely like that and these are everyday stressors that our kids and their families go through besides getting to school. Besides, you know, "Play your Bb scale. Why don't you know this scale?" So, dealing with those situations is hard. It's like emotionally hard...And a lot of 'em cross back again, you know without papers just to be back, which I can

understand. It's a vicious wicked cycle and for our kids, for a lot of our kids it's a reality.

In this predominantly Latino community, many students were either immigrants or had close relatives who were. Plausibly, there was also a presence of undocumented families. Realizing the need to assist families with immigration issues that could arise, Mr. Nelson worked to provide resources for families. Ms. Ross shared:

> So, I think because Mr. Nelson has that opportunity to open that personal window and that personal connection, he's able to talk to them [students] and they feel a little more secure, asking him for help and not thinking he's gonna turn around and tell the government, "Oh. These kids aren't documented" or "These kids, their parents aren't documented." ...And I know they have had parents contact them to ask more intimate questions about like how to apply for citizenship or how do you keep these legal things from happening to them.

Ms. Diaz was extremely fond of the Hastings community and felt that they made a strong effort to help their students in a number of ways. However, she was deeply concerned about immigrant policies and legal status for students, as she, herself, experienced many obstacles throughout her educational career. She shared her experiences from when she was in school:

> There wasn't really like this huge fear of like what was gonna happen to immigrants and I didn't even know I was illegal, because it wasn't a thing. Really. It was like people knew what is was, but nobody talked about it, so nobody even cared to find out if they were. I didn't even know. And then when I got to high

> school and into college, it really hit me, and I thought that I was just like my friends. And I thought that my opportunities were the same and they weren't. And so that's what I'm scared for these kids is that they're being taught that, "You can go to college and you can do anything." But they can, but not the same way their peers are gonna go...We had been taught our whole lives that basically we were American and that this is the land of the free and if you get straight A's and if you do band or you do orchestra or if you're the star of the football team, you get these certain payoffs. That it comes back around, but it didn't come back around for us.

Ms. Diaz wanted students and families to be prepared for the possibilities, so they would not be blind-sided with what might happen in the future as she was.

Theme 4: (Dis)Connected to Band – "I Just Need to Be Heard"

Sounds of "Snake Charmer" from the Accent on Achievement method book and Michael Story's band composition "Contempo" echo throughout the band hall. The day began before school with students seated in pairs or small groups practicing. There were so many students in the room that cases and personal belongings covered the carpet. Students bumped into one another as they made their way to a chair for practice. There were approximately 70 students in the room, almost one-third of the organization. As they practiced their music in their small groups, students sometimes combined with other groups to play songs. A pair of students began performing their music from the Winter Concert and watched as beginners frantically flipped music in their binders in search of the song to join in. Concurrently, Advanced Band and Intermediate Band students

rehearsed their contest songs, though sounds of Star Wars permeated the room on occasion.

Periodically, random students would raise their hands. When students raised their hand, a teacher or peer mentor walks toward them then and listened to them perform. If the student performed well enough to "pass-off" a song, they received a bright, shiny smiley face sticker to place on their music. Sometimes students did not receive stickers, but they tried again after they received feedback.

BBEO are "rooted in respect for students' cultures and identities" (Irizarry & Raible, 2011). In classes I observed, I witnessed Mr. Nelson speak to students in Spanish. In one instance, he taught students a new word, "*Chiapaneca*", which describes a person who is from Chiapas, Mexico. This term was in reference to a rendition of a Chiapaneca folk song, "*Handclappers March*," played in class. Although this seemed to resonate some with students, part of responding to students' cultures entails an understanding and integration of music or practices that students, themselves, consider valid (Abril, 2006a; Shaw, 2012). What students perceive to be representative or valid of their culture may be complex, as "youth culture" is also its own culture (Alim & Paris, 2017), perhaps working simultaneously or in opposition to students' home cultures. In the Hastings Band, the interplay between youth culture and band culture (Morrison, 2001) was a point of interest.

Music Preferences. The students in the Hastings Band performed music found in their methods books or band music found on traditional contest lists. Samantha enjoyed music that was more "upbeat music" which included the "Grand Gallop," a march that

was recently distributed to students in the Advanced Band. Jessica similarly enjoyed "upbeat" music "because it tends to be harder to keep up with, but I do like the music that we're playing now because it's enjoyable. You get to experience new things to play with the music." Beginner students typically played songs out of the *Accent on Achievement* band method book, where Danielle found the song, "Aloha," to be her current favorite. Amber described the music she typically performs in class as a beginner:

> It's like really good music. It's not music that you've ever heard before. Some music you've heard before and sometimes, some of them just aren't familiar, but they're really fun to play...And then you'll be playing it and then you won't even realize that it's an old song. You would think it was a new song. I think it's pretty cool.

Although Amber recognized that some of the music performed in class was not familiar to her, she enjoyed playing many pieces, such as "Snake Charmer," from the book; however, she did wish she could play "more of music of this year." Kevin shared similar sentiments in that the band could play more "modern music," even if performed on band instruments:

> Whatever the top songs that's out. You could play the instrumental for it, usually. Or if it's like some huge jam that years back that like everybody knows and as soon as you hear it, everybody just gets up, starts screaming and dancing...I think the most modern song we played was Happy by Pharrell Williams which was like three or four years back.

Although performing popular music transcriptions on band instruments may be perceived as inauthentic (Woody, 2007), Hasting students enjoyed performing pop songs in a concert band setting. For recruitment tours, the band directors distributed recognizable melodies for each section to play. For example, the saxophones played "the Pink Panther" theme, the clarinets played the theme to "Spongebob Squarepants," and the trumpets played the theme to "Star Wars." Amber and Danielle remembered hearing the saxophone theme, which helped draw their interest to selecting the saxophone. Danielle currently wanted to learn how to play the "Spongebob" theme to play with her friend who was a clarinetist. Ms. Ross felt that pop music has helped draw students into band:

> So, I think when they started playing more like popular music, things that kids would hear on the radio and not just like "Hot Cross Buns" for the 7th time or "Greensleeves" at Christmas time. So, when they started playing more popular music, I think that kind of sparked the 6th grade ears and in 6th grade they were like, "Oh. I think I maybe wanna join band."

Although some students were content with the music played in band, some mentioned wanting to learn other genres of music. For example, Taylor noted he was interested in jazz, but had not had the opportunity to perform jazz at school.
Some students may have looked to online resources to find more music to play. Taylor mentioned that he and some friends were finding some different songs or music themes online to play for fun. One such theme he referenced was the theme to Rocky.

The beginner students were limited as to what they could play, since they were learning the fundamentals of their instruments. Ms. Parker found that typical melodies,

such as “Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star,” were the types of songs you would expect at first. As students progressed on their instruments, they were provided other songs:

> Ms. Parker: You know, he [Mr. Perez] does throw some really cool songs in there. For the high school, we did Let’s Groove and something else. And during the summer they were working on *Despacito*. So, he tries to kind of stay up and just keep ‘em involved instead of just the boring sheet music that everybody’s aware of...You know, they’ve got a really good diverse mix of music. You’ve got the classical stuff and you know, the standard stuff that you expect to hear out of band. But you’ve also got other songs that are more upbeat and fun for the kids to play and I think that helps mastery on music as well. You know.

Ms. Green felt that choosing songs familiar to students was both “fun to listen to and it’s fun for them to play.”

Suppressing Creativity. Students typically noted their level of enjoyment in the band program, and how performing music and practicing with peers were experiences they valued. However, some students expressed a lack of opportunity to truly create music in their band classes that would be more meaningful to them (Hoffman & Carter, 2013). Emily compared band to dance. She was involved in the school’s dance club in addition to band, and aspired to be on the high school’s dance team – an activity she planned to choose over band when she entered high school. This was a choice she was rather adamant about even though she was one of the top euphonium players in the band. Emily shared:

> The music could be a lot more creative. And dance, with band, you don't really get to create anything and my mom's a quilter. I'm in a family of crafters. We all create and stuff. So, in dance you can create a lot better, but in band you're just playing something that's given to you.

When asked what she desired to create, she mentioned that she would like to experiment with style and expression more in music: "Instead of giving those [style markings] just let us play through it and see what sounds nice with it and stuff." Emily could not clearly communicate what else she would want to see improved so that she could create music in band. When asked if she ever thought about it before, she responded no. She did say that she felt that the band had "played so much that like I've just done it already."

Kevin felt that more opportunities should be available to students to express themselves. He felt that rap was an avenue for him to do as such. He noted that there was often a misconception of rap due to the superficial ideas portrayed in the current industry. He wanted people to understand that "If you just talking about getting money and wearing designer clothes, that's not really a message and half of it is probably fake anyway." Kevin described a desire to be heard through music and rap in a more genuine sense:

> I believe if you were to rap, you need to have a message, which is where it started from. Getting a message to the community and making your voice heard. So, I would love people to be taught that. That what you hear on the radio is not true rap. You know, it's some artists out there who are still doing it and living on the legacy of rap. But many of them here were like becoming millionaires. Right

> now, I'm saying like all I need is to be heard. If people like that can make it, I know for sure I could dominate it. I just need to be heard.

When asked what type of message he would like to spread to the community, he referenced sociopolitical issues, specifically relating to racial tensions:

> You know there's, being an African American, there's always situations going on, but at the end of the day, I think it's some people like to put the blame always on the White man. But sometimes, you have to tell people you gotta look in the mirror. 'Cause some things that you're doing is not helping the situation. You know, you can't put all the blame on them, you know. Yes, they do some messed up stuff. Yes, everything isn't right, but at the same time, you know, just like Michael Jackson said, you gotta look at the man in the mirror and make a change. So, I will definitely spread that message.

Kevin only had an opportunity to present his rap at a talent show; however, he noted that the equipment failed, which impacted the outcome. He would like to see some sort of offering where he can engage in mixing beats with raps but has not expressed this to anyone in the school.

(Dis)Interest. For Mr. Alexander, he felt that students are shown that the band "is a fun place to be." According to him, the directors want other students to see band students having fun, which is what they do:

> A lot of it is, "Do you see how fun it is to be a part of this? That staying after school, laughing and having a good time with your friends, but also working hard and getting better with your friends is so fun. We're gonna have socials."

Ms. Murphy elucidated that students "all enjoy going" to band, based on the conversations she has had with them and the amount of students who stay before and after school for practice. The administrators recognized that students "love" being in the band program. Ms. Murphy realized, "It's not like kids are trying to get out [of band] or get in another subject. They have to love it, or they wouldn't keep getting the numbers that they get."

Although the perception might have been that students all enjoy band, Taylor disclosed that at least five students had mentioned wanting to quit. Most of these students were in the 8th grade. Similarly, Samantha had overheard conversations within the flute section and mentioned that some students had already quit. She knew one person who currently, "doesn't wanna be in it. So, they're kind of pretending for the band directors." According to Taylor, even though some students want to quit, they ultimately stay in band. Kevin, in a follow up meeting, shared that he does not know why he continues with band, because every year he asks that question. He stays, but he is considering what he will do next year.

Summary of Findings

Participants' overall perceptions of the band program revealed a place where students enjoyed practicing and performing. The band directors created a fun and supportive learning environment for students to be part of while placing emphasis on high expectations. The structure of the band program was not well-received by all students, though, as some were planning to drop out of band.

The feeling of community created by the band program was an important facet of the band program's success. Seen in these data, many individuals and groups of people worked purposefully to create a place where students felt welcomed, accommodated and cared for. Directors heavily promoted the social and competitive aspects of band program. Although students appeared to value the sense of community and family created among peers, points of tension arose when students bullied one another based on comparisons they would make in regard to one another's performance.

An awareness of students' and families' cultural backgrounds was key for directors as they sought to provide access to band participation to every student who desired to join. Mr. Nelson's ability to speak Spanish proved a valuable asset at the school, as he was able to communicate with students and parents more effectively. The directors had an awareness of the issues their families face, particularly in regard to immigration. Specifically, Mr. Nelson assisted in providing resources to families. The directors also attempted to accommodate the needs of their students and families when possible.

The overall perceptions from students were that they enjoyed the band program, along with the music they played. Students, such as Jessica and Amber, expressed their enjoyment for playing the typical band music in class. Interestingly, a couple of band students mentioned the band program was restrictive to their creativity (Allsup, 1997; Allsup & Benedict, 2008; Butler et al., 2007; Ellsasser, 2008). For Emily, she did not feel that band allowed her the opportunity to be expressive in the same manner as dance, for example. Since she was involved in dance at Hastings, she was able to experience

creativity through that art form, as opposed to band where she was asked to "regurgitate" rather than create expression. Similarly, Kevin felt he could not express himself creatively through rap, music he values (Hoffman & Carter, 2013). He had not found an opportunity to truly engage in creating rap music in school and was interested only in band so that he may become musically literate, a skill he felt was vital for the music industry he aspired to enter one day.

Chapter 6: Discussion

Teaching in culturally diverse and urban contexts is of ongoing interest in the research community as shifting demography in the United States ensues (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). Extant literature has noted the inequities experienced in urban schools due to a lack of resources, financial and otherwise (Costa-Giomi, 2008; Costa-Giomi & Chappell, 2007; Fitzpatrick-Harnish, 2015; Kinney, 2010; Mixon, 2005, 2006). Researchers have similarly postulated that students of color are sometimes marginalized from participating in school music ensembles (DeLorenzo, 2012; Elpus, 2014; Elpus & Abril, 2011) due to socioeconomic limitations (Lorah et al., 2014) and/or cultural differences (Kindall-Smith, 2006; Robinson, 2006). Moreover, traditional ensembles, such as the concert band, may not resonate with students of color, who may not value Eurocentric musics unrepresentative of their cultural backgrounds (Abril, 2009; Allsup, 1997; Allsup & Benedict, 2008; Campbell et al., 2007; Hoffman & Carter, 2013; Kratus, 2007).

Music education researchers, theorists and philosophers have questioned the relevance of traditional school music programs to Latino students. Specifically, Latino students were found to be less participative in high school music courses than their Caucasian counterparts (Elpus, 2014; Elpus & Abril, 2011). Rather than furthering discourse on low enrollments of students of color in music programs, it is essential to understand counternarratives associated with culturally diverse and urban communities in

an effort to inform future teaching and research practices (Abril, 2006b; Bernard, 2010; Hinckley, 1995; Fitzpatrick, 2008, 2011; Fitzpatrick-Harnish, 2015; Martignetti et al., 2013). Thus, this study sought to address the paucity of research related to music participation in predominantly Latino school communities by investigating issues of relevance and accessibility surrounding a traditional concert band program offered within a culturally diverse, Latino majority, urban characteristic (Milner, 2012) and midurban school context (Bruenger, 2010).

Restatement of Purpose and Questions

The purpose of this study was to explore student, family, director, colleague and administrator perceptions of a middle school band program within a predominantly Latino school community. Using Irizarry and Raibles' (2011) concept of *barrio-based epistemologies and ontologies* (BBEO) and Gay's (2010) *culturally responsive teaching* (CRT) as a theoretical framework, I investigated a middle school band program with high enrollments of Latino students to determine the strategies employed to encourage initial participation, persistence and success in the program. Issues of inclusivity and responsiveness to students' cultural backgrounds were considered key in this investigation. Furthermore, I explored the compatibility of the traditional concert band model with this population of predominantly Latino youth and how asset-based pedagogical principles were functioning in this environment. Three overarching questions guided the study:

1. How are the band directors responsive to students' cultural backgrounds?

2. How are bridges to participation created to make band accessible for students in this urban characteristic and midurban context?
3. What aspects of the band program correspond with barrio-based epistemologies and ontologies?

Review of Methodology

To investigate the school community's perceptions of the band program, I used a single case study design (Yin, 2014) in which the Hastings band program served as the "case." Participants included eight band students, two band directors, three family members, three teacher colleagues, and three administrators. The band of interest was situated within a predominantly Latino school that could be classified as "urban characteristic" (Milner, 2012) and "mid-urban" (Bruenger, 2010) given its demographic composition. Data were generated through semi-structured interviews, field observations, and material culture. Data collection and initial analyses were concurrent utilizing the constant comparative method (Glaser, 1965). Subsequently, Creswell's (2013) data analysis spiral was utilized for a more in-depth analysis. Data were interpreted against principles of BBEO and CRT. Trustworthiness was achieved through using rich, thick, description; negative case analysis; member checking; clarification of subjectivity; and peer review and debriefing (Creswell, 2013; Glesne, 2016).

Discussion of Findings

Findings from data analysis and interpretation will be discussed in the following section. The discussion is organized by the guiding questions that undergirded the study.

Implications for teaching practice, suggestions for future research, and limitations of the study conclude the chapter.

Question 1: How are the band directors responsive to students' cultural backgrounds?

Language. Teachers' use of Spanish to interact with students and families clearly demonstrated their effort to respond to students' cultural backgrounds, an integral facet of BBEO, which promotes the integration of students' languages in the classroom (Irizarry & Raible, 2011). Through his ability to speak Spanish, Mr. Nelson was able to connect with Latino students and families by incorporating "various uses of written and spoken language in the classroom" (Irizarry & Raible, 2011, p. 24). In classes I observed, I witnessed Mr. Nelson speak to students in Spanish. In one instance, he taught students a new word, *Chiapaneca*, which describes a person who is from Chiapas, Mexico. This term was used in reference to an arrangement of a folk song performed from the *Accent on Achievement* beginner method book. In another instance, I observed Mr. Nelson respond to an English Language Learner and first-generation immigrant student in Spanish after they initiated the conversation in their primary language. Rather than forcing students to speak in English, Mr. Nelson welcomed the conversation. According to DeJonckheere et al. (2017), teachers can help support immigrant students as they navigate schooling spaces showing lingual and cultural respect. This is particularly helpful when students feel extreme stress in adjusting to life in the United States (DeJonckheere et al., 2017) and tensions with language proficiency (He et al., 2017; Ramirez, 2003). Mr. Perez did not speak Spanish, and, throughout the course of the

study, students spoke to Mr. Perez only in English. Consequently, Mr. Perez, alone, did not integrate into the classroom the primary language spoken by most of his students.

Although proficiency in Spanish was valuable in this school setting, it is important to note that Spanish was not the only non-English language spoken by students in the band program. For example, there was a small population of Chin students, refugees, from Burma/Myanmar who were English Language Learners. The band directors were not able to speak their language, and, although there were resources available in the school and the district to facilitate communication with Chin families, perhaps the band directors were not as responsive to this population, creating a sense of marginalization within the program. As noted in the literature, CRT and other asset-based pedagogies emphasize building on students' assets to make learning more relevant and meaningful (Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1995), which includes language (Irizarry & Raible, 2011). By responding to only a portion of their students' language, the directors in this study could be unknowingly constructing a potential hegemony among members based on ethnicity. Further evidence of this manifested as discussions of the Chin students' surfaced (see *Understanding Cultures* below), where directors felt Chin students were not as engaged in the culture of the band program (specifically before and after school practicing) as other students. Considering these phenomena together could be essential in developing an understanding of how teaching connects to or disenfranchises students.

Music Selection. Considering "youth culture" as its own culture (Alim & Paris, 2017; Mixon, 2009), the directors in this study found music to play that was recognizable

to students. This was particularly true for recruiting events (Albert, 2006). For example, Amber and Danielle remembered hearing the "Spongebob Squarepants" and "Dora the Explorer" performed at their elementary schools, which increased their interests in band. The intent of using this type of music was to connect with students under the presumption that more students would be interested signing up for band. In this sense, perhaps the music chosen for recruiting efforts functioned for the directors as a sort of "bait" to lure students to the program, rather than serving to "affirm" students' cultural backgrounds as CRT and BBEO recommend (Gay, 2010; Irizarry & Raible, 2011). In the case of this investigation it is difficult to know how this functioned for all students. The use of this music obviously connected with the participants of this study because they ultimately decided to join band. It would be interesting to know, for those students who elected not to participate, if the music failed to resonate and if this was a consequence of culture, preference and/or background.

Regardless of the intent, Ms. Ross found the integration of pop music into recruiting efforts to be a successful tactic. She noted, "when they started playing more popular music, I think that kind of sparked the 6th grade ears and in 6th grade they were like, 'Oh. I think I maybe wanna join band.'" A teacher's awareness of what students listen to and the television shows they watch may entice enrollment in an instrumental music course, based on the responses provided by student participants. Interestingly, even though recruitment strategies were conceived by the band directors, the music programmed did not encompass works relevant to Latino communities. Again, this is incongruous with CRT theory that advocates for the countering of dominant norms in

curricular selections (Gay, 2010; Lind & McKoy, 2016). Perhaps, in the case of band and its rather traditional nature, students do not expect to hear music from their own culture, or, if they do, are comfortable with the music being presented in an "inauthentic" manner. Further investigation into students' perceptions of the band program is warranted to further understand this tension in the literature.

Other instances of using music to tap into students' "youth culture" permeated findings. The band directors often disseminated pop songs for students to learn for fun, as Ms. Parker noted was the case with *Despacito*, a song students were given to play over the summer. She explained that Mr. Perez worked to "stay up [to date] and just keep 'em involved instead of just [playing] the boring sheet music that everybody's aware of." In this regard, music choice served dual purposes. Even if music selection was not driven by the directors wishing to connect with students' home and youth culture, it perhaps functioned this way, serving as an incentive to join band as well as a motivating tool to maintain student interest once students were enrolled. Integrating musics valued by students and other members of a school community can assist in developing positive connections (Mixon, 2009).

The use of popular music in the band classroom has come under scrutiny. Some authors have noted that popular music that is utilized traditional instrumental ensemble may be perceived as inauthentic (Woody, 2007). According to Woody (2007), performing popular music in an authentic manner is "respecting our students" (p. 33). To decontextualize or perform the music an inauthentic way would suggest the opposite, a sign of disrespect. Using this logic, the use of band instruments to perform transcriptions

of popular and rock songs, for example, may indeed be an inauthentic approach, not respected by students. Furthermore, performing music in an inauthentic manner might reduce the culturally validity of a piece of music (Abril, 2006a).

Although integrating pop music into curricula does not directly constitute culturally responsive teaching (Lind & McKoy, 2016), findings from this study showed that students wanted to study and perform transcriptions of more "modern music." Kevin, for example, articulated an interest to perform "whatever the top songs that's out...the instrumental for it." He said the most recent song they performed was *Happy* by Pharrell Williams, which was from "three or four years back." In extension, Amber relayed she would like to see "more music of this year." Interestingly, no students requested to play music outside of pop or jazz or something "upbeat." It is plausible that students see value in performing popular music on their band instruments if they are requesting to perform more of it. If "youth culture" (Alim & Paris, 2017) is its own culture and pop music is the "'native' music culture of our students," as Woody (2007) described, perhaps popular music performed on traditional band instruments is, in a sense, culturally valid. This type of culturally validity is achieved if the culture bearers, students, grant validity (Abril, 2006a).

Creative Restraint. Although there was an emphasis on "fun" in the band program, some students felt restricted in their ability to express themselves musically. Specifically, Kevin and Emily felt that band did not respond to their cultural and familial backgrounds in the same way other art forms did. In this sense, the directors in this study were not fully responsive to students' cultural backgrounds. Emily, a Caucasian musician

and a dancer, made a stark comparison between her experiences in band and those of dance. Emily mentioned that band music offers very few opportunities for creative expression as the style and other modes of expression are provided by the composer, whereas in dance, she is continuously creating. This finding corresponds with research pertaining to the authoritarian nature of traditional ensembles in that music-making is more prescriptive (Allsup, 1997; Allsup, 2003; Allsup & Benedict, 2008; Butler et al., 2007; Hoffman & Carter, 2013; Woody, 2007). Kevin, an African American student, mentioned he liked being in band and enjoyed playing his instrument; however, he later disclosed that band was a way for him to learn the skills needed to pursue a career in the recording industry. He longed for an opportunity to express himself creatively through rap and mentioned working on his raps during his free time outside of school. There was only one opportunity, the school talent show, where he could perform his craft. There was an obvious disconnect between the music that Kevin values and that which was offered in school. He mentioned a desire "to be heard" in an effort to spread messages to the community, citing racial tensions as one subject matter. Even in this school community of color, the traditional band setting did not allow Kevin to "represent as an African-American" in the way he envisioned (Hoffman & Carter, 2013) and corresponds with Ladson-Billings' (1995) notion that "school is perceived as a place where African American students cannot 'be themselves.'" Interestingly, the Latino students who participated in the study made no mention of tensions with creativity. Rather, they enjoyed playing music, though they would like to see more current pieces added to the

repertoire. Emily and Kevin had not expressed to the directors their desire for more creative opportunities, thus the band directors may not even be aware of such tensions.

Question 2: How are bridges to participation created to make band accessible for students in this urban characteristic and midurban context?

Financial Access. Teaching in an urban context can present challenges, not impossibilities, as access to resources may be limited, potentially hindering students from participating in music programs (Abril & Bannerman, 2015; Baker, 2012; Costa-Giomi, 2008; Costa-Giomi & Chappell, 2007; DeLorenzo, 2012; Doyle, 2012; Fitzpatrick, 2008, 2011; U. S. Department of Education, 2012). For band programs in urban settings, there is a strong need for "financial support; basic administrative support; functional instrument inventory; consideration within school scheduling; and functional feeders" (Fitzpatrick, 2008, pp. 285-288). Findings from this study reaffirm these assertions.

At Hastings there were many support systems in place to allow more students the opportunity to participate in band. The Sunset School District worked diligently and dedicated many fiscal resources to provide school-owned instruments to Hastings so that students were not denied the opportunity to enroll in band solely due to financial backgrounds. Because the district had a fine arts coordinator to help advocate for programs at the district level and a principal who was supportive of the band program, Hastings was able to acquire the necessary number of instruments for students to participate. Additionally, Hastings could be classified as "midurban," as it was a school in a suburban district that experienced urban-related issues (Bruenger, 2010). In this particular context, Sunset District had enough funding to help support Hastings. Thus, the

socio-economic status of students, which may influence participation in ensembles where a student must purchase or rent an instrument (Elpus & Abril, 2011; Kinney, 2010, in press; Lorah et al., 2014; Mixon, 2005, 2006), was mitigated. According to Mr. Nelson, "we get new instruments when we need 'em. No other district, not many are gonna do that." This is unusual for most schools where a large percentage of students qualify for free or reduced lunch. Typical in this setting would be a lack of and difficulty in acquiring the necessary supplies (Costa-Giomi & Chappell, 2007), another perceived barrier to participation Hastings has sought to overcome through repairing instruments in house and providing the equipment necessary for student participation (Mixon, 2005). Findings here suggest that providing financial access to participation is a key component of establishing a program with robust enrollments. Juxtaposing this with Mixon (2005, 2006), it should be noted, though, that school-owned instruments can provide students with access into music programs, but this access may be limited by the level of student interest.

Logistical Access. Aside from money needed to purchase or rent instruments, there are logistical issues that can prevent students from participating and experiencing instrumental music courses. Authors have noted, for example, that students in urban settings may have difficulty in finding a place to practice depending on their living situations. Specifically, students may live in residences with limited space, hindering their ability to find places to practice (Hoffman, 2012; Mixon, 2005, 2006). Data in the present investigation show that the band directors were aware of students' living situations:

> A lot of 'em live in trailers and so just the physicality of being in that small confined space and they share rooms with brothers and sisters, instruments get damaged... They live in a two-bedroom apartment and there's not the physical space for them to have their own place. (Mr. Nelson)

Directors acquired this information through conversations with their students. Without a productive space to practice, students' ability to develop proficiency on their instruments would be restricted to in-class playing only. Thus, the directors provided access to a dedicated practice space/time for students before and after school each day by arriving two hours prior to the start of classes and remaining an hour and a half, at minimum, after school. Although a practice space was provided, transportation could have served as another hindrance for students, as noted in other studies (Elpus & Abril, 2011; Kinney, 2010; Mixon, 2006). At Hastings, however, students were able to stay after school because the school provided an after school bus for all after school activities. Having this practice space at school was also helpful for students who played larger instruments. Mr. Perez mentioned that students have difficulty bringing instruments on buses since the buses are packed with students. Students either had to practice at school or find a way to transport their instruments home, which he had done on occasion.

Scheduling that accommodates students' needs and enrollment in other classes/activities is a vital component of successful teaching in urban environments (Fitzpatrick, 2008; Fitzpatrick, 2011) and is something that Hastings had in place. Mr. Perez was cognizant of this: "a good teacher with a wrong schedule is gonna be severely handicapped." With administrative support (Abril & Bannerman, 2015; Smith, 2006), the

band directors and Mr. Alexander worked to craft a schedule that would be conducive to the band program's needs, while allowing other classes to be structured in a way that was favorable to student success, considering there was a high percentage of English Language Learners on campus. According to Smith (2006), negotiating schedules with administrators can be difficult due to their lack of musical understanding. Such was not the case at Hastings.

Understanding Cultures. Particularly vital in Hastings was the understanding of students' and families' cultural backgrounds. As the adult participants described, schools in other countries may function differently from schools in the United States. Ramirez (2003) conveyed this notion stating, "In the parental cultures, the school was a place for learning by the child, and parents met with teachers only when sent a personal invitation" (pp. 99-100). Considered in this light, parents at Hastings may not understand the nature of music activities in schools unless they are specifically invited to be part of the community (He et al., 2017; Ramirez, 2003).

Ms. Diaz shared form her personal experiences the disconnect between her parents' understanding of school and her participation in band. Ms. Diaz described that activities, such as band, were not available in Brazilian schools; therefore, her mom "didn't understand" the nature of band. Because they realized that their families had different cultural backgrounds, Mr. Perez and Mr. Nelson made an effort to mitigate cultural disconnects by connecting with families. They personally reached out to families regarding announcements and keeping them informed of events, such as concerts. This led to increased familial support for the program, specifically in regard to concert

attendance. These "personal invitation[s]" are congruent with suggestions made in the literature (Albert, 2006; Het et al., 2017; Ramirez, 2003) and may be necessary for families to enter schooling spaces.

A considerable disconnect regarding cultural backgrounds pertained to the directors' understandings of the Chin population. Assumptions were made regarding these students' level of participation within the band program:

> Mr. Perez: It's just generally, they've sung and maybe they were persecuted to the point where they didn't have instruments for many, many decades or centuries. So. It's just so different. That they're not used to it.

A deficit perspective regarding these students was evidenced in comments describing Chin students as "not the hardest workers for the class" (Mr. Perez). As Gay (2010) noted, "The immigrant students may appear to be overly quiet, accommodating, and reluctant to engage freely in instructional interactions, despite repeated invitations and enticements. In reality, these expectations may be very disconcerting and baffling to students new to the United States" (p. 60). Connecting Chin students' lives beyond school to the music classroom could have allowed for more meaningful engagement in band (Gay, 2010; Irizarry, 2007; Kindall-Smith et al., 2011; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Shaw, 2016). Furthermore, a deeper understanding of this particular culture could have assisted teachers in creating a more culturally responsive and inclusive space for these students.

Question 3: What aspects of the band program correspond with barrio-based epistemologies and ontologies?

Community. BBEO advocate a "connectedness" to communities (Irizarry & Raible, 2011). In some ways, the band directors were responsive to the community in that they created a place for students to belong. Students articulated that they felt as though they were part of a family. Amber expressed, "They treat you more like a, like their own son or daughter." A band parent, Ms. Parker, noted, "it's almost like they're his kids." Adderley et al. (2003) suggest that the music classroom can create another "home" for students. This appeared to be the case here, as there were students in the band hall throughout the school day even if they met their practice requirements. Such findings support the notion that the band hall serves as a "haven" (Fitzpatrick, 2008) for students within the school.

The engagement of families with school and organizations is vital not only for a program's success, but also for students (Alexander et al. 2017; Garcia-Reid et al., 2005; Zdzinski, 1996); however, the means by which families connect with schools will differ based on their respective situations (He et al., 2017; Hinckley, 1995; Kindall-Smith, 2006; Williams & Sánchez, 2012). This was the case with Ms. Parker who supported the band program and her child by attending concerts; however, she may not have volunteered at other band functions due to her work schedule. At Hastings, involvement was not defined by the number of chaperones at an event. Rather, involvement was referred to in terms of concert attendees. As participants articulated, the band concerts were well attended, and, inarguably, the most attended events at the school. This could be

attributed to Mr. Nelson's ability to speak fluent Spanish, which has allowed him to develop a closer connection to families. As he mentioned, "when parents find out that I speak Spanish, it's just an in road for them and they feel more comfortable approaching me with stuff." Some of this "stuff" included concerns with legal status. Authors have found that parents of culturally diverse backgrounds may not appear to be involved in schools (Calzada et al., 2015; Het et al., 2017; Nieto & Bode, 2012); however, this may be attributed to issues such as a fear of being reported to immigration officials, ultimately leading to deportation (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2016; Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001; Váldes, 1996). In Latino communities, families may falsify contact information as a preventative measure, making it difficult to connect with them (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001). Although parents may be seemingly disconnected from schools (Inoa, 2017; Ramirez, 2003), an effort should be made to understand why a disconnect exists.

A sense of community was also evidenced within the school between teachers and administrators who served as support systems for the band program (Albert, 2006). Ms. Ross supported students being in the band program and encouraged them to attend practices. Additionally, Ms. Ross mentioned that teachers and administrators attend the band concerts, some more than other events on campus. Mr. Alexander, the principal, showed his support by making an appearance at an off-site event just to check to see how the band directors and students were doing. As researchers have noted, members of a school community can positively impact a music program (Abril & Bannerman, 2015;

Abril & Gault, 2007; Abril & Gault, 2008; Fiese & DeCarbo, 1995) by serving as a "support network" (Fiese & DeCarbo, 1995). This held true at Hastings.

Pedagogy. Collaborative learning and peer teaching are components of culturally responsive teaching (Abril, 2003; Allsup, 2003; Edgar, 2016; Gay, 2010; Hoffman & Carter, 2013; Ladson-Billings, 1995), from which BBEO extends (Irizarry & Raible, 2011). In the band program, students often served as peer mentors by passing-off others on music or by practicing with one another. Students worked cooperatively (Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 2009) to help each other progress on instruments, a facet of culturally responsive practices. Although the environment at Hastings was structured to allow for peer support, the competition (Gay, 2010, 2013; Ladson-Billings, 2009) created by the pass-off system, at times, created tension between students. As Jessica shared, "There's always someone calling someone else a showoff. And then when you can hear in their voice that they're jealous." Additionally, Amber noted an instance of peer victimization, "I have heard people be like, "You know what. She's not really good at playing saxophone" and whisper to each other." In this environment, there were mixed feelings about the competition created by the pass-off system, as instances of peer condemnation were discussed (Rawlings & Stoddard, 2017).

Recalling that individual competition where students compete with one another in classes is discouraged in teaching within communities of color (Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 2009), these findings reinforce the importance of collaborative learning (Abril, 2003; Allsup, 2003; Edgar, 2016; Gay, 2010; Hoffman & Carter, 2013; Irizarry & Raible,

2011). Teachers who work with underserved populations are encouraged to consider this when creating learning opportunities for their students.

Sociopolitical Awareness. BBEO "are based on the historical and contemporary sociopolitical context of the Latino community" (Irizarry & Raible, 2011). One sociopolitical issue that was a prevalent concern within the Hastings community was immigration. Within the many immigrant families present at Hastings, there were undocumented individuals who lived in fear of deportation (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2016). This finding was consistent with research, which has noted that citizenship status is a major stressor for students and their families (Dreby, 2012; Kleyn et al., 2016; Sosa & Gomez, 2012; Southern Poverty Law Center, 2016; Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001; Váldes, 1996). Ms. Ross suggested that Mr. Nelson's relationship to students allowed them to feel comfortable enough to disclose personal information. She shared, "he's able to talk to them and they feel a little more secure, asking him for help and not thinking he's gonna turn around and tell the government, "Oh. These kids aren't documented" or "These kids, their parents aren't documented." This was a particularly critical component at Hastings because the predominantly Latino and immigrant population felt a sense of unease as a result of recent political trends toward immigration reform.

Students fearing deportation for themselves or their families might have felt that their presence in the school or community was unwelcomed, specifically following the 2016 Presidential Election which has led to what the Southern Poverty Law Center (2016) refers to as the "Trump Effect." According to findings from a survey administered

by the Southern Poverty Law Center (2016), "Students are stressed and anxious in a way that is threatening their health, emotional well-being and their schoolwork...[students] expressed daily worries about 'being sent back' or having their parents sent back" (p. 7). To assist in mitigating this and assuaging any fears families were experiencing, Mr. Nelson worked with Mr. Alexander to create a meeting to educate families about their rights in this country in case they were ever confronted with legal issues. This is particularly prudent as some immigrant families may not understand their rights and may base their understandings on rumors rather than facts (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001; Váldes, 1996). The interest generated from the meeting led to a teacher in-service concerning ways to support students and families who are undocumented immigrants. Evidencing teachers and administrators working with the community in this manner supports the BBEO framework, and can serve as a model for other school systems with similar concerns in their communities.

Implications for Practice

Instrumental music teaching in an urban and culturally diverse environment can be daunting to a person who has never experienced teaching in such a setting, as there may be barriers that prevent students from joining instrumental ensembles. It is critical for teachers to understand the financial, logistical and cultural barriers students and families are likely to face so that they may work diligently to alleviate or address them completely. Thus, it is critical that teachers seek out as much information as possible regarding the community in which they teach and the students they serve as each community is different (Fitzpatrick-Harnish, 2015). Such information may not be easily

presented; therefore, it may require assertive and persistent effort for the teacher to seek information. Once barriers are identified, teachers should search for ways to allow all students who wish to participate in music the opportunity to join the program. Establishing positive relationships with administrators and colleagues (Abril & Bannerman, 2015; Abril & Gault, 2007, 2008; Gardner, 2010; Mixon, 2005; Renfro, 2003) could also prove beneficial to acquiring the resources or devising a means by which to include historically marginalized students in school ensembles.

As results of this study have shown, bridges can be created to increase student participation in instrumental music. First, cultural differences, including language, should be recognized, as students and families may have experienced different styles of education in schooling systems outside of the United States. These types of barriers are common in communities of color, particularly those that serve immigrant populations (DeJonckheere et al., 2017, Garcia-Reid et al., 2005; He et al., 2017; Hinckley, 1995; Mixon, 2005; Lowenhaupt, 2014; Nieto & Bode, 2012; Ramirez, 2003; Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001; Smith, 2006; Váldes, 1996). To overcome this barrier, teachers must work to establish positive relationships with families and students by "building bridges" (Mixon, 2005) and helping families feel accepted into schools (Garcia-Reid et al., 2005). This can occur by providing families with resources such as translated materials and translators and events (Nieto & Bode, 2012). Importantly, some immigrant families may fear connecting with schools due to legal status (Suárez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001; Váldes, 1996). Thus, a trusting relationship between teachers and families must be established before teachers will be approached.

Financial issues could have proven to be a barrier for student participation due to the demographic composition of the school; however, administrative officials helped to alleviate this barrier both on campus and at the district level. The school district provided students with school-owned instruments if they were unable to rent one on their own. Establishing positive relationships with administrators and "opening the doors to the school community will help foster positive values toward school music, improving the chances that all students will have the opportunity to study music in school" (Abril & Gault, 2007, p. 36). The community can then advocate for the program to help acquire resources. Additionally, many students from disadvantaged populations may not be able to take private lessons due to financial restrictions. Thus, logistics, such as scheduling and practice space, are critical for improvement.

Having a schedule that is conducive for the learning environment is crucial, as more students will require individualized instruction and feedback during their music class period (Fitzpatrick, 2008). If the beginner classes are structured in a homogeneous fashion, students will receive more instrument-specific feedback to help develop proficiency. If the classes are heterogeneous, teachers may have difficulty providing the differentiated instruction students need, as more instruments will be present in classes. In addition to feedback, having a space to practice is important to teaching. Mr. Perez and Mr. Nelson were available before and/or after school and throughout the day so students could have a space to practice as some live in places where practicing is difficult (Hoffman, 2012; Mixon, 2005, 2006). Thus, offering this resource could help students

develop their proficiency on instruments, and also allow directors an opportunity to monitor student progress.

Implications for Music Teacher Education

In music teacher education, it is critical that preservice teachers are prepared for the realities they are likely to face. Researchers have echoed that teachers feel unprepared to teach in urban environments (Doyle, 2012; Fiese & DeCarbo, 1995). However, what transformations have been made to ensure that more teachers are prepared? It is, indeed, difficult to prepare teachers for every scenario they may face; however, challenging students to think critically and find ways to be creative in findings solutions to issues would benefit the profession. Contextually diverse field experiences (Baker, 2012; Emmanuel, 2003, 2005; Robinson, 2012), for example, could prove useful, provided they are conducted in constructive rather than destructive manner that would reinforce negative perceptions of urban schools (Bruenger, 2010). Rather than feeling frustrated and succumbing to the dominant narrative of urban and culturally diverse music programs being incapable of success, teacher educators must look from within to determine how we are ultimately impacting students in the schools. How can the profession engage teachers in finding innovative solutions for teaching contexts (Fitzpatrick, 2008)? Moving forward, perhaps some knowledge of immigration policies are necessary as reform efforts are in the spotlight, which may impact students in music classrooms like Hastings. If teachers are not prepared to work in environments that are culturally rich, rather than predominantly White, then we may continue serving only a

small percentage of the population of students within each school (DeLorenzo, 2012; Elpus, 2014; Elpus & Abril, 2011).

Based on the findings of this study, teacher education programs should focus on finding ways to connect members of the school community in an effort to support students and music programs. One of the band directors in the study spoke Spanish, which helped him communicate and establish relationships with parents. Perhaps some knowledge of educational and conversational Spanish could help prepare teachers for Spanish-speaking contexts. Creating an inclusive learning community was also a key point of the study. Classes in teacher education could demonstrate examples of collaborative teaching lessons, rather than authoritarian approaches, that may resonate more with schools of color (Abril, 2003; Allsup, 2003; Edgar, 2016; Gay, 2010; Hoffman & Carter, 2013; Ladson-Billings, 1995).

Suggestions for Future Research

While the present study provided insight regarding a traditional concert band in a predominantly Latino community, future research could move in a number of directions. First, legal status appeared to be a stressor for members of this school community as there was a fear of deportation given the current political climate (Dreby, 2012; Kleyn et al., 2016; Southern Poverty Law Center, 2016). Future research could examine undocumented students and families in all grade levels to hear, from their perspective, what the realities of their situations are. This is a particularly vital component underresearched in the field, as there is a discomfort in revealing legal status (Dreby,

2012). However, because undocumented students are, indeed, present in public schools, it is imperative to understand how to better serve their needs.

Student participants in the study, at times, referred to themselves and peers by their ensemble placement. This seemed to be an important mode of identification for students; however, only students from the Advanced Band and Beginner Band classes participated in the study. It was beyond the scope of this study to examine perceptions based on ensemble placement. However, it is interesting that no Concert Band students volunteered. Future research could look into retention rates and engagement in the music program based on ensemble placement and how this functions for minority populations.

Furthermore, the Hastings Band program is one instance of a band program that is demographically representative of the school population. It would be of interest to research other schools in other areas and regions of the country to see if Latino students are, indeed, underrepresented as the literature has suggested (Elpus, 2014; Elpus & Abril, 2011). Additionally, in schools that offer alternative ensembles (e.g., Mariachi bands, computer music, etc.) in addition to the traditional format, perhaps insight could be gleaned as to why students elect to choose one over the other. Is it indeed the case that the traditional ensembles are "irrelevant" (Kratus, 2007) or are they thriving in culturally rich communities awaiting further exploration?

Limitations of the Study

It is important to note that one limitation of this study was that no Latino parents requested to participate in the study. This could be due to several factors. First, the research documents were translated into Spanish by a professional service. I verified the

accuracy of all documents without considering the implication of one word. The word "*investigación*" ("investigation") was used to describe the nature of the study. "*Investigación*" can be used to describe both a research study and also an interrogative, legal-type investigation. With legal concerns regarding immigration issues, it is plausible that Spanish-speaking parents were apprehensive of participating in an "*investigación*," particularly if they had not obtained legal status in the United States (Suarez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001; Váldes, 1996).

Although BBEO and CRT were appropriate for this study, there were places where the theories were incongruous with findings, specifically in regard to youth culture. A reading of data with other theoretical lenses could provide further insight. The purpose of the study was to explore the perceptions of a concert band program from members of a predominantly Latino community. The study was limited to the students, teachers, administrators, and family members of this particular community. Findings from the study could provide the profession with insight into working with urban characteristic and culturally diverse communities with the understanding that each community contains its own set of particularities.

Conclusions

In the wake of recent political and societal events that have led to increased tensions among communities of people, it is perhaps critical now more than ever that we reconsider our teaching practices and the potential impacts they have on the youths we serve. This is particularly important given the changing demographics that continue to transpire in the United States. The students who enter our classrooms come from an array

of cultural backgrounds and bring with them rich knowledges that may go unnoticed during their tenure in schools. How often do we as music educators seek to understand our students' backgrounds beyond the surface of what we can observe?

Based on findings in previous literature, it would appear that students of color and students who are considered economically disadvantaged would be less likely to participate in instrumental ensembles. While this may be a reality for some students, it does not appear to be the case at Hastings. Indeed, Hastings has many support systems in place that can be attributed to its successes in recruiting and retaining students within a culturally diverse and urban community. Perhaps the achievements of the Hastings band program could provide a counterexample of a place where minority students do elect to participate in band. If others can emulate this same type of dedication to providing resources and opportunities for all students, we can come closer to achieving our goal of providing a viable music experience for all students who wish to participate. Teaching in culturally diverse and urban communities is, indeed, "more than playing music." It is about creating opportunities to engage students, particularly students of color, in meaningful and enjoyable experiences that will sustain them throughout their schooling and into adulthood.

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Appendix A

Band Student Interview Protocols

Tell me about yourself.

What grade are you in?

How would you describe your cultural background?

How long have you been at this school?

How long have you been in the band?

What band class are you in?

What instrument do you play?

What do you like about your instrument?

What are your thoughts about being in the band?

Why did you join band?

What do you enjoy about being in the band?

What has been your most memorable memory in band?

Do you have any goals in band?

How would you describe the culture of the band?

What kind of music do you play in band?

What do you like about the music you play?

Is there another kind of music you would like to play?

Tell me about the size of the band program.

Why do you think the band program is the size it is?

What do other students who are not in the band think about the band?

What do teachers think about the band?

What do your family members think about the band?

Do you play your instrument at home for your family?

Who attends band concerts?

What is unique about the band program? Band directors? Band students?

Student Interview Protocol (Spanish)

Háblame de ti.

¿En que grado estás?

¿Cómo describirías tu origen cultural?

¿Cuánto tiempo has estado en esta escuela?

¿Cuánto tiempo has estado en la banda?

¿En qué clase de banda estás?

¿Qué instrumento tocas?

¿Qué te gusta de tu instrumento?

¿Qué piensas sobre estar en la banda?

¿Por qué te inscribiste en la banda?

¿Qué disfrutas de estar en la banda?

¿Cuál ha sido tu recuerdo más memorable en la banda?

¿Tienes algún metas en la banda?

¿Cómo describirías la cultura de banda?

¿Qué tipo de música tocas en la banda?

¿Qué te gusta de la música que tocas?

¿Hay otro tipo de música que te gustaría tocar?

Háblame sobre el tamaño de la banda.

¿Por qué crees que la banda es del tamaño que es?

¿Qué piensan otros estudiantes que no están en la banda sobre la banda?

¿Qué piensan los maestros sobre la banda?

¿Qué piensan los miembros de tu familia sobre la banda?

¿Tocas tu instrumento en casa para tu familia?

¿Quién asiste a los conciertos de banda?

¿Qué tiene especial de la banda? ¿Los maestros de banda? ¿Los estudiantes de banda?

Appendix B

Band Director Interview Protocols

Tell me about yourself.

How would you describe your cultural background?

How long have you been teaching?

How long have you been teaching at this school?

What band classes do you teach?

How would you describe the cultural background of your students? The community?

Does the cultural background of your students and/or community inform your teaching? If so, how?

How do you select music to play?

What type of music do you typically program?

How would you describe the culture of the band program?

How would you describe parental support in the band?

How would you describe the school community's support of the band?

What is attendance like, in general, for band concerts?

Describe the demographic composition of the band program.

What are strategies for recruiting and retaining students for band in this community?

Tell me about the size of the band program?

Why do you think students are enrolling in the band?

Are there any barriers that prevent students from joining the band?

How are barriers lessened or removed for students?

In what ways has the band been successful?

How does the band program meet the needs of students, the school, and/or community?

What is unique about the band program? Band teachers? Band students?

Band Director Interview Protocol (Spanish)

Háblame de usted.

¿Cómo describiría usted su origen cultural?

¿Cuánto tiempo ha estado enseñando usted?

¿Cuánto tiempo ha estado enseñando en esta escuela?

¿Qué clases de banda enseña usted?

¿Cómo describiría usted los orígenes culturales de sus estudiantes? ¿La comunidad?

¿Los orígenes culturales de sus estudiantes y / o comunidad informan su enseñanza? Si es así, cómo?

¿Cómo selecciona la música para tocar?

¿Qué tipo de música programa normalmente?

¿Cómo describiría la cultura de la banda?

¿Cómo describiría el apoyo de los padres en la banda?

¿Cómo describiría el apoyo de la comunidad escolar a la banda?

¿Cómo es la asistencia, en general, para conciertos de banda?

Describe la composición demográfica de la banda.

¿Cuáles son las estrategias para reclutar y retener a estudiantes para banda en esta comunidad?

Háblame sobre el tamaño de la banda.

¿Por qué cree usted que los estudiantes se están inscribiendo en la banda?

¿Hay alguna barrera que impida que los estudiantes se inscriben a la banda?

¿Cómo se reducen o eliminan las barreras para los estudiantes?

¿De qué manera ha sido exitosa la banda?

¿Cómo cumple la banda las necesidades de los estudiantes, la escuela, y / o la comunidad?

¿Qué tiene especial de la banda? ¿Los estudiantes de banda?

Appendix C

Family Member Interview Protocols

Tell me about yourself.

How would you describe your cultural background? Your child's?

How long has your child been attending this school?

How would you describe the school culture?

What instrument does your child play?

How long has your child been enrolled in band?

Why did your child choose to enroll in band?

What do you know about the band program?

How would you describe the band culture?

What kind of music does the band typically play?

Is there a type of music you would like for the band to play?

What type of music do you like or value?

Have you noticed any benefits from your child participating in the band?

Describe the size of the band program.

Why do you think students are enrolling in band?

How would you describe parental support in the band?

How would you describe the school community's support of the band?

What is unique about the band program? Band directors? Band students?

In what was has the band been successful?

How does the band program meet the needs of the students, the school, and/or the community?

Family Member Interview Protocol (Spanish)

Háblame de usted.

¿Cómo describiría usted su origen cultural? ¿De su hijo/a?

¿Cuánto tiempo ha estado asistiendo su hijo/a a esta escuela?

¿Cómo describiría usted la cultura de escuela?

¿Qué instrumento toca su hijo/a?

¿Cuánto tiempo ha estado inscrito su hijo/a en la banda?

¿Por qué su hijo/a eligió inscribirse en la banda?

¿Qué sabe usted sobre la banda?

¿Cómo describiría la cultura de la banda?

¿Qué tipo de música toca la banda normalmente?

¿Hay algún tipo de música que se gustaría usted que tocara la banda?

¿Qué tipo de música se gusta o aprecia usted?

¿Ha notada algún beneficio de que su hijo/a participe en la banda?

Describe el tamaño de la banda.

¿Por qué cree usted que los estudiantes se están inscribiendo en la banda?

¿Cómo describiría el apoyo de los padres en la banda?

¿Cómo describiría el apoyo de la comunidad escolar a la banda?

¿Qué tiene especial de la banda? ¿Los maestros de banda? ¿Los estudiantes de banda?

¿De qué manera ha sido exitosa la banda?

¿Cómo cumple la banda las necesidades de los estudiantes, la escuela, y / o la comunidad?

Appendix D

Teacher Colleague Interview Protocols

Tell me about yourself.

How would you describe your cultural background?

How long have you been teaching?

How long have you been teaching at this school?

What are your primary duties at this school?

How would you describe the cultural background of your students? The community?

How would you describe the school culture?

Tell me about the band program.

Describe the demographic composition of the band program.

How would you describe the band culture?

Tell me about the size of the band program.

Why do you think students are enrolling in band?

Are there any barriers that prevent students from joining the band?

How are barriers lessened or removed for students?

How would you describe parental support in the band?

How would you describe the school community's support of the band?

What is attendance like, in general, for band concerts?

In what ways has the band been successful?

How does the band program meet the needs of the students, school, and/or community?

What is unique about the band program? Band directors? Band students?

Teacher Colleague Interview Protocol (Spanish)

Háblame de usted.

¿Cómo describiría usted su origen cultural?

¿Cuánto tiempo ha estado enseñando usted?

¿Cuánto tiempo ha estado enseñando en esta escuela?

¿Cuáles son sus deberes principales en esta escuela?

¿Cómo describiría usted los orígenes culturales de sus estudiantes? ¿La comunidad?

¿Cómo describiría la cultura de la escuela?

Háblame sobre la banda.

Describe la composición demográfica de la banda.

¿Cómo describiría la cultura de la banda?

Háblame sobre el tamaño de la banda.

¿Por qué cree usted que los estudiantes se están inscribiendo en la banda?

¿Hay alguna barrera que impida que los estudiantes se inscriben a la banda?

¿Cómo se reducen o eliminan las barreras para los estudiantes?

¿Cómo describiría el apoyo de los padres de banda?

¿Cómo describiría el apoyo de la comunidad escolar a la banda?

¿Cómo es la asistencia, en general, para conciertos de banda?

¿De qué manera ha sido exitosa la banda?

¿Cómo cumple la banda las necesidades de los estudiantes, la escuela, y / o la comunidad?

¿Qué tiene especial de la banda? ¿Los maestros de banda? ¿Los estudiantes de banda?

Appendix E

Administrator Interview Protocols

Tell me about yourself.

How would you describe your cultural background?

How would you describe the cultural background of your students? The community?

How long have you been working at this school?

What are your primary duties at this school?

How would you describe the school culture?

Tell me about the band program.

Describe the demographic composition of the band program.

How would you describe the band culture?

Tell me about the size of the band program.

Why do you think students are enrolling in the band?

Are there any barriers that prevent students from joining the band?

How are barriers lessened or removed for students?

How would you describe parental support in the band?

How would you describe the school community's support of the band?

What is attendance like, in general, for band concerts?

In what ways has the band been successful?

How does the band program meet the needs of the students, school, and/or community?

What is unique about the band program? Band directors? Band students?

Administrator Interview Protocol (Spanish)

Háblame de usted.

¿Cómo describiría usted su origen cultural?

¿Cómo describiría usted los orígenes culturales de sus estudiantes? ¿La comunidad?

¿Cuánto tiempo ha estado trabajando en esta escuela?

¿Cuáles son sus deberes principales en esta escuela?

¿Cómo describiría la cultura de la escuela?

Háblame sobre la banda.

Describe la composición demográfica de la banda.

¿Cómo describiría la cultura de la banda?

Háblame sobre el tamaño de la banda.

¿Por qué cree usted que los estudiantes se están inscribiendo en la banda?

¿Hay alguna barrera que impida que los estudiantes se inscriben a la banda?

¿Cómo se reducen o eliminan las barreras para los estudiantes?

¿Cómo describiría el apoyo de los padres de banda?

¿Cómo describiría el apoyo de la comunidad escolar a la banda?

¿Cómo es la asistencia, en general, para conciertos de banda?

¿De qué manera ha sido exitosa la banda?

¿Cómo cumple la banda las necesidades de los estudiantes, la escuela, y / o la comunidad?

¿Qué tiene especial de la banda?