

THESIS

RURAL MUSIC TEACHER JOB SATISFACTION, RETENTION, AND
MUSIC EDUCATION'S CAREER LADDER

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ABSTRACT

RURAL MUSIC TEACHER JOB SATISFACTION, RETENTION, AND MUSIC EDUCATION'S CAREER LADDER

In order to provide an equitable music education to all students, rural schools need to retain experienced, job-satisfied music teachers. Teacher job satisfaction is determined by working conditions, student interactions, goal progress, and self-efficacy (Badri et al. 2006; Lent & Brown, 2006; Williams, 2015). Additionally, rural teacher satisfaction is concerned with community identity (Bumgartner, 2013; Huysman, 2007; McCoy-Wilson, 2011; Richardson, 2017), while music teachers emphasize a strong support system within the school (Howard, 2006; Siebert, 2008; Scheib, 2004). Music teachers and teachers in rural schools have different priorities in determining their job satisfaction, which suggests that rural music teachers have a unique set of values in job satisfaction. Job satisfaction is an important predictor of teacher retention (Stockard & Lehman, 2004; Thibodeaux, 2015; Williams 2015), along with years of experience and preparation for entering the teaching field (Darling-Hammond, 2003; Ingersoll, 2001; Stockard & Lehman, 2004; Strunk & Robinson, 2006). These predictors pose major concerns for rural schools who often employ young, inexperienced teachers (Monk, 2007). Music teachers are especially challenging for rural school districts to retain (Hancock, 2009), which has negative effects on student performance (Barnes, Crowe, & Schaefer, 2007; Kloss, 2012; Russell, 2012; Terry & Kristonis, 2008; Rockoff, 2004) and perpetuates a “rural to urban” career ladder for the music education profession (Bates, 2011; Brossette, 2015; Howard, 2006; Kuntzelman,

2016). This mixed-method study investigated how working conditions, school support systems, teacher characteristics, and community belonging relate to rural music teachers' senses of job satisfaction and the relationship that their job satisfaction has with their decision to retain or leave their current teaching assignment. Quantitative data were collected via questionnaire (Duffy & Lent, 2009) and qualitative data were gathered through multiple-case-study methodology (Stake, 2006) to illustrate both broad job satisfaction considerations across a population of rural music teachers in Colorado as well as specific context-dependent job satisfaction and retention considerations. Questionnaire respondents demonstrated strong relationships between positive affect as a teacher characteristic, organizational support, and perceived fit as a working condition and overall job satisfaction. Case study participants further color these findings by specifying autonomy, participation in a musical community, support from the school community, and by their own strides in making progress toward student-centered goals as factors that contribute positively to their job satisfaction. Detractors from job satisfaction include a low value of music in the school community, dissonance between professional goals and community values, and isolation as an impediment to student-centered goals.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	ii
INTRODUCTION.....	1
Problem Statement.....	6
Research Questions.....	7
Definitions.....	8
LITERATURE REVIEW	10
Teacher Job Satisfaction.....	10
Working conditions.....	11
Goal progress.....	12
Student interactions.....	14
School Support System.....	16
Community Identity	18
Teacher Retention.....	20
Experience and preparation	22
School characteristics.....	23
School support system	24
Job satisfaction	26
Effects of Teacher Job Satisfaction and Turnover	27
Music Education's Career Ladder.....	29
Summary.....	30
Need for Study	31
METHODOLOGY.....	33
Strand I: Quantitative Methodology	34
Participant Selection	34
Questionnaire Measures	34
Validity & Reliability	35
Data Analysis and Reporting.....	36
Strand II: Qualitative Methodology.....	37
Participant Selection	37
Data Collection.....	37
Data Analysis and Reporting.....	38
Data Coding and Analysis.....	39
Trustworthiness and Validity.....	39
Ethical Considerations.....	40
RESULTS.....	41
Strand I: Quantitative Results	41
Demographic Characteristics.....	41
Questionnaire Responses.....	45
Relationships Between Questionnaire Domains	55
Questionnaire Analyses by Demographic Characteristic.....	56
Strand II: Qualitative Results.....	62
Participant Profiles	62

John.....	62
Cathy.....	64
Robert	65
Themes: Job Satisfaction.....	66
Community	67
Goals.....	81
Themes: Job Retention.....	86
Motivation	86
Starting Over	89
Work/Life Balance	90
DISCUSSION.....	91
Research Question 1.....	92
Research Question 2.....	102
Research Question 3.....	112
Summary.....	115
Practical Implications	116
Suggestions for Further Study	119
Conclusion	121
REFERENCES	123
APPENDIX A	136
APPENDIX B	139
APPENDIX C	141
APPENDIX D	142
APPENDIX E	143
APPENDIX F.....	154
APPENDIX G	156
APPENDIX H.....	160
APPENDIX I.....	162
APPENDIX J.....	164
APPENDIX K.....	188
APPENDIX L.....	206

INTRODUCTION

A dry wind blows across a dusty, sparse landscape. Cracked concrete roads crisscross dry, unforgiving dirt to connect old farmhouses with long gravel driveways and neighborhoods of trailer homes to a small community center complete with a gas station, mom-and-pop shops, Town Hall, the school building, and exactly one stoplight. The closest big-box retailer is 80 miles away in the nearest metropolitan area – a little over an hour’s drive. The school building, old and unassuming, is the source of community spirit with its sporting events, concerts and plays.

* * *

Flat and green are the only features visible for miles. The horizon, a razor’s edge separating green ground from piercingly blue sky, is interrupted only by tractors and irrigation rigs. Farmers and their families may live miles away from their nearest neighbors, but the sense of community among them is strong. Despite the distance from neighbor to neighbor, the centralized school building holds the community’s traditions together. Here, students of all ages, kindergartener through senior, convene to learn in the same building (and in some cases, from the same teachers) that many of their parents and grandparents also attended--that is, when they’re not pulled out of school to help with the harvest.

* * *

A blanket of snow covers a sleepy, 2-block downtown. Beyond, rocky peaks protrude upward to form a jagged backdrop. The two-lane Main Street crossing the town

sees only the occasional traffic of cars passing through. There is no school here; the children of this community take a two-hour bus ride to and from a larger town nearby. This larger town, home to a popular ski area, draws on a workforce of seasonal employees that can't afford to live near the slopes--so they, and their school-aged children, make the long trek. Despite commuting 50 or more miles in unforgiving weather conditions, the winter's job security is preferable to the shoulder seasons' uncertainty of employment and housing.

* * *

Rural areas, despite their pastoral appeal, present many challenges to the music teachers who call these places home (Isbell, 2005). Despite the many challenges, a rural music teacher is tasked with ensuring students in rural areas receive a high-quality music education regardless of the challenges that accompany rural school music-making.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, "rural" refers to any land that is not defined as "urban" in terms of population density and land use (Ratcliffe, Burd, Holder, & Fields, 2016). However, rurality is a much more complex phenomenon than simply "not urban". Rurality is "a frame of social, cultural, and psychological reference" and "sets of sociocultural, historical, and spatial practices" (Corbett, 2016). Despite the stark contrast in the geographies that receive "rural" classification, rural places share commonalities like low population density and distance from urban centers (Monk, 2007; Ratcliffe et al., 2016). Hence, both population and proximity to other municipalities govern the shape of daily life for rural people and carry implications that set rural education apart from suburban or urban analogues.

Whether in the unforgiving West desert, the fertile Eastern plains, or nestled in an intermountain valley, Colorado is home to 418 rural communities. In fact, 52 of its 74 counties lack a Census-defined “urbanized area” (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012; see Figure 1.). Educating the children of Colorado’s expansive rural geographies is no small task: 146 of Colorado’s 178 school districts serve these areas. The Colorado Department of Education considers a rural school district one that serves no more than 6,500 students, while “small rural” districts have student populations less than 1,000 (Colorado Department of Education, 2019b). However, these places, isolated either by geography or proximity, are home to over 125,000 of Colorado’s students. In total, 82% of Colorado school districts are considered rural, serving just 13% of the state’s student population (Colorado Department of Education, 2019a).

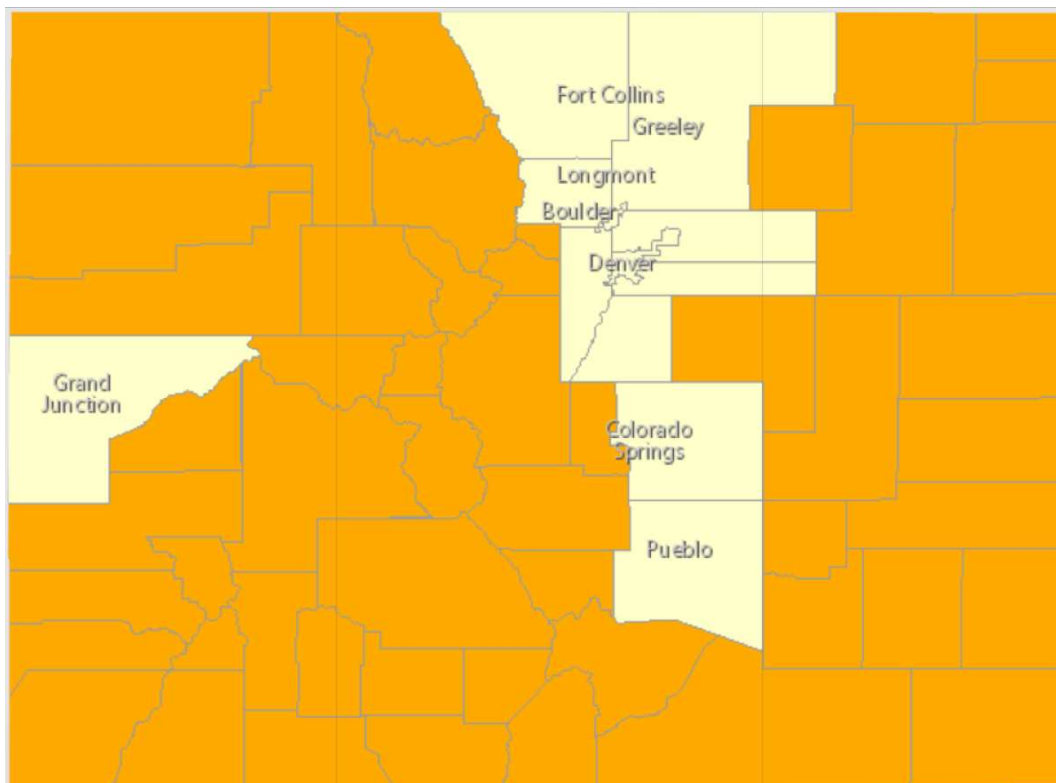


Figure 1. Rural and Urban Counties in Colorado. Rural counties are shown in orange and urban counties are shown in yellow (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012).

While the idea of “rural” may conjure idyllic images like those described above, teachers in America’s rural schools, including those in Colorado, face challenges that set rural education apart from suburban or urban settings like scarce financial and human resources (Monk, 2007) and isolation (Isbell, 2005), and the nation’s current teacher shortage, which has an especially-large impact on schools in rural communities (Colorado Department of Higher Education, 2017; Sutchter, Darling-Hammond, & Carver-Thomas, 2016)

These attributes create a unique environment for rural music teachers who, as a result of these challenges, may encounter an overloaded teaching schedule, a small (or non-existent) budget to accommodate music purchases and instrument repairs, long travel times between schools or to festivals or field trips, an active performing calendar, a lack of access to other music teachers to guest-teach students and mentor the music teacher, and conflicts with student class schedules (Brossette, 2015; Hunt, 2009; Isbell, 2005; Kuntzelman, 2016; Maltas, 2004)—if a rural school is able to staff a music teacher at all (Monk, 2007).

The staffing difficulties that rural schools face, with music teachers and teachers of all disciplines, are often attributed to isolation, relatively low pay, a lack of community amenities, and small school sizes (Harmon, 2001; Jimerson 2003; Miller, 2008). Moreover, rural schools typically employ more out-of-field teachers and unlicensed teachers than their counterparts in urban and suburban areas (Jimerson, 2003). According to Harmon (2001):

one might assume all persons with a teaching credential ought to consider themselves qualified to teach in a rural school. Such an assumption could be very misleading as one considers the realities of teaching in rural areas, realities that

most school superintendents and their local boards of education will have in mind as they seek to recruit and retain the ideal teacher.

Rather than Harmon's "ideal", rural teachers are generally younger and less experienced than teachers in suburban and urban schools (Monk, 2007). These attributes are associated with higher likelihood of turnover (Ingersoll, 2001; Jimerson, 2003; Strunk & Robinson, 2006).

Colorado lawmakers have attempted to ease the staffing challenges in rural schools that stem from the teacher shortage. In 2019, the "Financial Incentives for Rural Educators" bill passed into law, which awards stipends up to \$4000 to students graduating from teacher preparation programs who agree to work in a rural school or district (S. 19-009).

The breadth of responsibilities held by the rural music teacher may also play a role in the rural school's ability to retain a music teacher. Isbell (2005) emphasizes that the rural music teacher is not merely a band, orchestra, or choir director, but often the sole music teacher for all grades and music subjects. Hence, the rural music teacher may have contact with every student in the district, from kindergarten through 12th grade (Hunt, 2009).

While many rural music educators enjoy the ability to build relationships with students throughout their entire school experience, the amount of preparation associated with that endeavor can become overwhelming (Kuntzelman, 2016). In addition, a rural music teacher's role tends to extend beyond the classroom: Hunt (2009) recognized that rural communities frequently esteem the school music teacher as the local musical authority. This "musical authority" can come with attached pressures and expectations that may be unwelcome by the music teacher and encourage them to seek employment elsewhere (Kuntzelman, 2016).

Many rural music teachers find themselves professionally isolated. If they are their district's only music teacher, their nearest colleague may be 50 or more miles away. Music teachers who enter the profession in a rural assignment often lack the benefit of participating in a mentorship program (Russell, 2012).

Low enrollment in music programs is a central concern for rural music teachers (Brossette, 2015; Isbell, 2005; Kuntzelman, 2016). With many rural school districts under financial strain, healthy enrollment is key to music program advocacy. The small school enrollments that accompany low population density pose a challenge to the recruiting music teacher and can also impact the sense of accomplishment felt by teachers and students alike. Rickels (2008) and Brossette (2015) found significant positive correlations between school size and festival scores or rankings, which can frustrate or intimidate rural music educators and their students. Further, low enrollment poses the threat that the music program may be cut altogether (Russell, 2012).

In the face of the above challenges, rural schools struggle to retain skilled music teachers (Hancock, 2009). The music teacher plays an important role in the rural community by providing its student population with the opportunity to make music—an opportunity which students may not be able to access outside of the walls of their school. Rural music programs and the students they serve suffer without consistent, experienced music teachers at their helms.

Problem Statement

Music educators share a mission to provide an equitable music education for all students (National Association for Music Education, n.d.), but current circumstances prevent this mission from being carried out successfully in rural schools. These

circumstances include a shortage of music teachers in schools that stems, in part, from poor retention of experienced teachers in those positions who can have a positive impact on program stability and student achievement (Hancock, 2009) which contributes to an overall teacher shortage in Colorado and in the United States (Colorado Department of Higher Education, 2017; Sutchter, et al. 2016). Researchers have found that rural music educators perceive that the music education profession treats rural schools as “starter positions” for music teachers (Bates 2011). A disproportionately high number of early-career teachers in rural music positions and relatively low financial resources of rural school districts further perpetuate this idea (Budge, 2006; Monk, 2007; Prest, 2013). Harmon (2001) acknowledged this trend when he noted that teachers are “*lured away*” (emphasis added) from rural settings by higher-paying jobs in suburban areas. This “luring away” illustrates the music education profession’s unofficial career ladder which leads music teachers to leave positions in rural schools in favor of employment in suburban schools, perpetuating the shortage of music teachers in rural schools. Since researchers have shown a relationship between job satisfaction and job retention, job satisfaction is an important area to study in the context of rural music teacher retention.

Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to identify attributes that influence job satisfaction as it pertains to job retention for music teachers in rural schools in Colorado. Through this study, I will address the following questions:

1. How do rural music teachers in Colorado perceive their working conditions, student interactions, goal progress, school support systems, and community identity in the context of job satisfaction?

2. What relationships exist between working conditions, student interactions, goal progress, school support systems, and community identity with job satisfaction for rural music teachers in Colorado?
3. What context-specific experiences or job features do rural music teachers consider influential in their own job satisfaction? How do these relate to, or differ from, considerations for retention?

Definitions

Rural—A an area that is “sparsely populated, has low housing density, and is located far from an urban center” (“One in Five Americans...” 2017)

Rural School District and Small Rural School District—According to the Colorado Department of Education’s Rural Education Council (2019b),

a Colorado school district is determined to be rural based on the size of the district, the distance from the nearest large urban/urbanized area, and having a student enrollment of approximately 6,500 students or fewer. Small rural districts are those districts meeting these same criteria and having a student population of fewer than 1,000 students.

Teacher Retention—Refers to classroom teachers who remain in a classroom teaching position in the same school (Meyer, Espel, Weston-Sementelli, & Serdiouk, 2019).

Teacher Turnover—A term that describes both teacher *attrition* (“classroom teachers who take a nonteaching position or exit a state public school system for any reason.”) and teacher *mobility* (“classroom teachers who transfer to a classroom teaching position in a

different public school or district in the same state public school system for any reason”) (Meyer, et al. 2019).

Job Satisfaction—Refers to “a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one’s job or job experiences” (Locke, 1976 as cited by Lent & Brown, 2006).

Social Supports—support a teacher receives from administrators, colleagues, students’ parents, and community members.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Rural schools struggle to retain music teachers (Brossette, 2015; Hancock, 2009; Kuntzelman, 2016; Maltas, 2004; Monk, 2007). Research shows that job satisfaction constitutes a substantial component of the decision a teacher makes to retain or leave their position (Stockard & Lehman, 2004; Sutchter, et al., 2016; Thibodeaux, 2015; Williams, 2015). The following literature review explores job satisfaction for rural music teachers through the lenses of working conditions, student interactions, goal progress, social supports, and community identity, describes the consequences of poor music teacher retention in rural landscapes, and discusses the implications of job satisfaction on job retention for rural music teachers.

Teacher Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is defined as “a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one’s job or job experiences”, (Locke, 1976, as cited by Lent & Brown, 2006). In general, teachers in the United States are satisfied with their jobs (Brunetti, 2006), as are America’s music teachers (Bryant, 2012; Brown, 2015; Baker, 2007; Howard, 2006). However, research suggests that music teachers in rural areas are not as satisfied with their jobs than their non-rural colleagues (Baker, 2007). Teacher job satisfaction can impact student achievement (Crawford, 2017) and teacher retention decisions (Stockard & Lehman, 2004), so it is critical for rural schools to employ music teachers who are satisfied with their positions.

Models that describe teacher job satisfaction include personal traits, working conditions, social supports, and interactions with students as contributing factors (Badri,

Mohidatt, et. al. 2013). Studies focused on rural teacher satisfaction have indicated that community identity may be an additional factor in job satisfaction for rural teachers (Huysman, 2007; Miller, 2008). For music teachers, some of the most noteworthy determinants of job satisfaction include support from administrators and colleagues, student interactions, and working conditions (Russell, 2012).

Few studies have examined job satisfaction in a rural music teacher population (Maltas, 2004), but it is likely that rural music teachers share similar job satisfaction concerns with rural teachers and music teachers in any locale. Maltas (2004) found that rural music teachers were mostly satisfied with their career choices overall but that they were more dedicated to teaching music than they were to their particular school or district. Since different factors drive job satisfaction for rural teachers than music teachers, rural music teacher job satisfaction is an area in need of further study for the sake of increasing rural music teacher retention, and, in turn, increasing music-making opportunities for rural students.

Working conditions. Teachers who are satisfied with their working conditions are more likely to experience job satisfaction and to retain their current positions (Johnson, 2012; Tomberlin, 2014). For teachers, working conditions can include such factors as professional development (Meagher, 2011), planning time, quality of facilities, and instructional resources (Johnson, Berg, & Donaldson, 2005).

In terms of professional development, Meagher (2011) found a positive relationship between professional development, especially where teacher collaboration is emphasized, and job satisfaction. Unfortunately for rural teachers, extreme turnover often prevents cohesive, ongoing staff-wide professional development (Jimerson, 2003). Since

many rural music teachers are the only music teacher employed by their school or district, opportunities for collaboration with music-teaching peers may be limited to nonexistent. Music teacher job satisfaction relies heavily on the quality and pertinence of professional development opportunities (Burkett, 2011; Siebert, 2008), so a rural music teacher's job satisfaction may be negatively affected by a lack of relevant professional development (Kuntzelman, 2016; Maltas, 2004).

For the music teacher, adequate musical supplies and materials, a viable music curriculum, and realistic work schedule are all dimensions of positive working conditions recognized by Siebert's (2008) study. The National Association for Music Education (NAfME) establishes the baseline for adequate music facilities and materials to provide equitable music education with its Opportunity-to-Learn Standards (Argabright, 2015). In Baker's (2007) study, school environment was the second biggest contributor to job satisfaction.

Feeling overworked or overscheduled is another working-condition concern of music educators. Scheib (2003) recognized that music teachers experienced "role overload" when their job responsibilities infringed into personal time. The resulting conflict between professional and personal roles detracted from teachers' job satisfaction. For rural music educators, the significant number of roles for which the teacher is responsible (Isbell, 2005) can be a source of job-related dissatisfaction (Hunt, 2009; Kuntzleman, 2009).

Goal progress. A teacher's sense of making progress toward their professional goals is an important factor in job satisfaction. While little research in this area was found that pertains to teachers, this notion is well-supported by job satisfaction research across

professions (Badri, et al., 2006; Judge, 2005; Locke & Latham, 2002; Weise & Freund, 2005). Badri et al. (2006) found that progress towards work-related goals had a moderately strong positive correlation with job satisfaction in teachers. Goal progress is a complex attribute that intersects with teachers' senses of self-efficacy and autonomy (Weise & Freund, 2005).

Teachers who have higher self-efficacy likely to experience more job satisfaction than those with lower self-efficacy (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2014; Watts, 2013). Additionally, Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2014) found a negative correlation between teacher self-efficacy and emotional exhaustion, which can also detract from job satisfaction. While high self-efficacy can contribute to a teacher's job satisfaction, low self-efficacy is a predictor of teacher burnout (Brouwers & Tomic, 2000). For rural teachers, Slaven (2011) found self-efficacy to be among the top contributors to job satisfaction. Stockard and Lehman (2004) related goal progress to self-efficacy by noting that "teachers who see themselves as more competent who believe that they are using complex or high-level skills, or who have higher levels of organizational or student management skills are more satisfied with and committed to their work". Similarly, Weise and Freund (2005) found that more difficult goals were met with more satisfaction while easier goals were less satisfying.

Autonomy is another important factor related to goal progress. Judge (2005) found that goal progress is more satisfying when the goal is autonomously chosen rather than a goal imposed by others. While autonomy is positively related to job satisfaction for general teaching populations (Skinner, 2008; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2014), research suggests it is an especially pertinent component of job satisfaction for music teachers (Brown, 2015; Hancock, 2009; Scheib, 2004). Music educators who feel a sense of autonomy in their

classrooms experience higher job satisfaction than those who feel less autonomous (Brown, 2015).

Goal progress has not been linked to job satisfaction for rural music teachers by formal research. However, the “rural to suburban” career ladder in the music education community may suggest dissonance between a rural music teacher’s professional goals and the retention of their current position (Bates, 2011; Kuntzelman, 2016). If a music teacher feels that their position in a rural school hinders their professional goals of teaching in a bigger, more resource-rich school (Madsen & Hancock, 2002), they may feel less satisfied than a teacher whose current position aligns with their professional goals (Judge, 2005, Maltas, 2004). Maltas (2004) found that rural teachers model their ideas of what a successful music program should look like based on content encountered in preparation programs, professional development opportunities and workshops, and competitions. Since these displays often do not reflect the rural realities of scarce resources (Bates, 2011; Burkett, 2011; Isbell, 2005), rural music teachers may develop a sense of goal progress that negatively affects their job satisfaction.

Student interactions. Teachers rate their enjoyment for working with students as an important contributor to their overall job satisfaction. Johnson, Berg, and Donaldson (2005) emphasized the importance of “psychic rewards”, the feelings of accomplishment teachers experience when student growth is visible, for teachers’ senses of satisfaction. In Thibodeaux’s (2015) study, “student success” and “love for students” were two of the three most important factors in teacher job satisfaction. Students wield substantial clout in teacher job satisfaction determinations: where students can influence job satisfaction positively, as above, they can also have a negative impact. Concerns over student behavior

was cited as a dissatisfier in Williams's (2015) study and interactions with students, such as motivation or discipline, can also mediate a teacher's sense of self-efficacy and thus their overall job satisfaction (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2014).

The power of student interactions in determining job satisfaction is also apparent in rural teacher populations (Huysman, 2007; McCoy-Wilson, 2011; Slaven, 2011; Richardson, 2017). In Huysman's (2007) study, working with kids and helping students learn were among the most-often cited reasons for job satisfaction from rural teachers, which is consistent with findings for teachers in urban and suburban settings (Stockard & Lehman, 2004). However, Richardson (2017) found that negative student behavior was consistent with rural teacher dissatisfaction, echoing Williams's (2015) study of a general teaching population. Students' influence on teacher satisfaction is not limited to good or bad behavior. McCoy-Wilson (2011) noted the impact of rural students' low socioeconomic status on their teachers' satisfaction: while teaching such students can be challenging in a way that may detract from job satisfaction, teachers also felt they could have a greater impact on students, resulting in greater job satisfaction.

Students, and the attributes they display in music programs, also exert a strong influence job satisfaction in music teachers (Allen, 2014; Bryant, 2012). 95% of the music teachers in Howard's (2006) study attributed job satisfaction to support from students. Music teachers are also more satisfied when more students are enrolled in their classes (Russell, 2012). In response to the question, "Why do career music educators remain in their profession?", focus-group members repeatedly answered, "the kids" (Siebert, 2008). "Working with kids" was the most frequent response given by participants in Brown's (2015) study when asked, "What about music teaching do you find enjoyable?" Conversely,

Allen (2014) found that teachers experienced job dissatisfaction when students were disengaged, apathetic, or had poor attitudes. Baker (2007) found that student motivation, student discipline, and student involvement all influence teacher satisfaction.

The effects of student interactions on job satisfaction may be compounded for rural music teachers who interact with the same students over the course of many years—in some cases, for a student’s entire public school education (Hunt, 2009; Isbell, 2005). Research suggests that this prolonged contact with students has a positive effect on job satisfaction in rural music teachers, with teachers indicating that sustained contact with students over the course of many years is a rewarding aspect of their position (Isbell, 2005; Kuntzelman, 2016).

School Support System. The school support system, comprised of teaching colleagues and administrators with whom a teacher shares students and a school building, is an important facet of teacher job satisfaction (Brunetti, 2006; Meagher, 2011; Thibodeaux, 2015; Williams, 2015). As with student interactions, strong support from administrators and colleagues could positively influence satisfaction while poor support resulted in dissatisfaction (Williams, 2015).

Rural teachers share the general teaching population’s need for strong social support in order to feel satisfied with their positions. Social support from administrators and colleagues, as well as collaboration with colleagues, have been recognized as important factors to the well-being of rural teachers (McCoy-Wilson, 2011; Richardson, 2017; Slaven, 2011). These social supports ranged from feeling valued by administrators and having opportunities to collaborate with colleagues to feeling that school leadership made a positive impact on student learning.

For music teachers, administrative support is overwhelmingly the most studied and most often-cited contributor to job satisfaction (Allen, 2014; Baker, 2007; Bryant, 2012; Howard, 2006). Administrators can affect job satisfaction in various ways: they can provide direct emotional and professional support to a music teacher (Allen, 2014; Baker, 2007), and their educational philosophies and leadership values can shape school working conditions (Brown 2015). Respondents to Brown's (2015) survey indicated that music educators felt administrative support when administrators show them respect, consult the music teacher about decisions that affected the music program, and value music as part of the curriculum. The accessibility of music-teaching-specific feedback from administrators can also impact a teacher's sense of job satisfaction (Siebert, 2008). In Siebert's study, teachers who had a music department administrator were more satisfied with their administrative support than music teachers without music- or fine-arts-specific administrators.

Conversely, a perceived lack of support from principals and other administrators contributed to music teachers' feeling dissatisfied in the workplace (Allen, 2014; Baker, 2007). Baker (2007) found that dissatisfied music teachers reported disagreement with their administrators about types of assistance valuable to music teachers and considered lack of administrative support a primary reason to leave their position.

As with administrative support, music teachers' job satisfaction can be influenced by relationships with school colleagues. Siebert (2008) found that music teachers especially value their fellow music-teaching colleagues because music is perceived as being a less-understood subject when compared with other disciplines. Baker (2007) found that early-career music teachers ranked their musical colleagues as the most important type of

professional assistance available to them. In the absence of music-teaching colleagues, a strong schoolwide community can provide a music educator with a collegial support system. Music teachers in Howard's (2006) study indicated that colleague support was the next most important factor of job satisfaction after administrative support, and teachers with strong colleague support were also more likely to retain their position for another school year.

Social support could be an area of serious concern for rural music teachers' job satisfaction. Siebert's (2008) and Baker's (2007) emphasis on the importance of access to music-specialized colleagues and administrators has negative implications for rural music teachers, who are often the only music specialist in their building or district (Isbell, 2005; Kuntzelman, 2016; Brossette, 2015). Rural teachers' desire for collaboration with colleagues (McCoy-Wilson, 2011) may not hold true for rural music teachers who lack musical colleagues in the school support system.

Community Identity. Community ties run deep in rural areas. In a national survey, adults living in rural areas were more likely to live in the same community where they grew up than suburban- or urban-dwelling adults and more likely to know all of their neighbors (Parker, 2018). Rural-dwellers also desire to move to a different community less often than urban- and suburban- dwellers. Rural communities are often wary of outsiders, with 70% of rural survey respondents saying that people who live in other types of communities don't understand the issues that rural-dwellers face and most rural

respondents indicating that they think non-rural dwellers have a negative perception of rural areas.

Research suggests that rural community attitudes and connections play a role in rural teacher job satisfaction (Huysman, 2007; McCoy-Wilson, 2011; Miller, 2008; Richardson, 2017). Some researchers (Maltas, 2004; Mc-Coy-Wilson, 2011) have found that teachers with a rural background are more satisfied with rural teaching than those from suburban or urban upbringings. McCoy-Wilson's (2011) found that teachers who had been educated in the community where they teach and understood local culture were more likely to be satisfied in their position than outsiders. These findings, in the light of Parker's (2018) survey results discussed earlier, suggest that teacher with a non-rural background may struggle to overcome their status as a community outsider. This could have a negative influence on their job satisfaction, especially for music teachers who are likely to have grown up in a suburban area (Kelly, 2003).

While music teachers may face the challenge of acceptance in a new community, they may also struggle to reconcile their place within their professional community. Literature addressing rural teaching in the music education community does not paint a positive picture: in the past 80 years, the *Music Educators' Journal* has published a scant number of articles about rural teaching. When such articles appear, their titles evoke hardship. "The Rural School Music Problem" (Sur, 1941), "Does Rural Teaching Pay?" (Hoffman, 1943), and "Rural Starvation" (Votaw, 1972) are a few examples. With rural positions constituting the bottom rung of the music education career ladder, rural music teachers may find less satisfaction in their jobs than their non-rural colleagues because of stigmas within their professional community.

Because geographical isolation is a hallmark of rural teaching assignments, an appropriate match between person and setting is crucial for the teacher's sense of job satisfaction. Isolation from colleagues, family, and amenities, is a notable contributor to job dissatisfaction for rural teachers (Huysman, 2007; Slaven, 2011). The effects of isolation may be exaggerated for the rural music teacher. In particular, distance from musical amenities like instrument rentals, music stores, private lesson teachers, and performance venues is a chief complaint of rural music teachers (Brossette, 2015; Kuntzelman, 2016). Rural music teachers already lack musically specialized colleagues in their school support systems, but their lack of access to a social network of musicians in the rural community beyond the school walls exacerbates this sense of isolation.

The teacher's identity in the community and isolation are emphasized by research on rural teacher satisfaction (Bumgartner, 2013; McCoy-Wilson, 2011; Huysman, 2007; Slaven, 2011) but not in research surrounding music teacher satisfaction. While community connections are an important aspect of teaching music in any setting, the lack of literature addressing their relationships to job satisfaction make this an area of particular interest to this study.

Teacher Retention

Retaining quality teachers is an issue of concern for educators in every locale and subject area (Darling-Hammond, 2003; Ingersoll, 2001; Sutchter, et al., 2016). Across the education profession, schools struggle to retain teachers in the first five years of their career (Stockard & Lehman, 2004; Strunk & Robinson, 2006). According to Ingersoll (2001), 30% of the teacher workforce leave the profession in the first three years of their career, compared to 11% in other professions. Some factors of teacher retention include

job satisfaction, experience and preparation, school support systems, school attributes, and community (Darling-Hammond, 2003; Hancock, 2009; Miller, 2008), but like job satisfaction, rural and music teachers have unique areas of concern in decisions of retention or turnover.

Rural schools exist at the crosshairs of teacher turnover predictors: small student populations, low salaries, inexperienced teachers, and few community amenities all contribute to high turnover and are all common features of rural teaching environments. As a result, rural schools see higher rates of turnover than schools in suburban areas (Barnes, et al., 2007; Monk 2007).

Music teachers leave the profession at a rate of 11-27% per year, similar to the 30% attrition rate for non-music teachers. (Hancock, 2009). This is contrary to Gardner's (2006) finding that music teachers were less likely to retain their job from the previous year than other teachers. Some music teacher attrition can be attributed to retirement or taking time off to earn higher degrees (Gardner, 2006), but other reasons for attrition include a sense of autonomy in their school, experience and degrees held, and social supports (Cushinery, 2011; Howard, 2006; Russell, 2012).

The turnover that rural schools endure is an especially serious problem for rural administrators hoping to retain qualified and experienced music teachers. Music teachers leave rural positions in greater numbers than their colleagues in urban and suburban schools (Hancock, 2009). Literature investigating this issue, though scarce, suggests that rural schools fail to retain music teachers because the teachers aren't prepared for rural teaching assignments or seek "upward mobility" by moving to a school closer to an urban center (Bates, 2011; Brossette, 2015, Kuntzelman, 2016).

Experience and preparation. Rural schools tend to employ more teachers that are young and have less than three years of teaching experience versus non-rural schools (Jimerson, 2003; McCoy-Wilson, 2011; Monk, 2007). Research shows that this population of young and inexperienced teachers is predisposed for turnover (Barnes et al., 2007; Stockard & Lehman, 2004, Strunk & Robinson, 2006), which puts rural schools at risk for low retention. Miller's (2008) study found that rural schools in New York replace 22% more beginning teachers over a five-year period than schools in suburban areas. McCoy-Wilson (2011) indicated that more experienced teachers are more likely to stay in their rural teaching position than less experienced teachers, but related research also indicates that rural teachers have less years of experience on average than non-rural teachers (Monk, 2007). Madsen and Hancock (2002) found that five years after entering the field, 34% of music educators that entered the field remained, compared to 50% of the general teaching population. These finding suggests that music teachers, like rural teachers, are not adequately prepared for the challenges of the classroom.

Since teacher turnover happens most often in the first five years of a teacher's career (Strunk & Robinson, 2006), it is critical that music teachers are adequately prepared for the rural classroom upon completing their teacher preparation program. However, Brossette (2015) found that music teachers felt unprepared to teach in a rural setting upon completing their teacher preparation program. With most major universities located in densely-populated areas, rural student-teaching placements are impractical for many teacher preparation programs. Kuntzelman (2016) noted, "it would not be surprising for a music educator to become frustrated while attempting to apply a traditional model of music education to this [rural] environment." Brossette (2015) and Hunt (2009)

recommended that preservice teacher preparation programs include specific training in rural teaching as a solution to rural teacher turnover.

School characteristics. Teachers tend to leave schools with small student populations more often than schools with large populations (Miller, 2008; Stockard & Lehman, 2004). Since rural schools are found in areas with lower population density, it may be especially difficult for small rural schools to retain teachers. Stockard & Lehman (2004) specifically pointed out that teachers are more likely to leave schools in small towns in the West. For music teachers, Howard (2006) concluded that music teachers view moving from a larger school to a smaller school a “demotion” and, Madsen and Hancock (2002) found that music teachers seek positions in schools where resources are more plentiful.

Student population characteristics, like economic status and achievement, can also affect retention. Teachers that have a high proportion of low-income students are more likely to leave than those who teach fewer low-income students (Ingersoll, 2001). Jimerson (2003) found that experienced teachers are more likely to leave school districts with economically disadvantaged students to teach instead in districts with economically advantaged students. Similarly, Elpus and Abril (2019) found that students enrolled in music programs in American schools are disproportionately wealthy compared to non-music students. Unfortunately, rural schools tend to have more low-income students than non-rural schools (Monk, 2007), so experienced music teachers may seek positions where student resources are more abundant.

Finances also play a major role in rural teacher retention, as competitive teacher salaries are key to teacher retention in general (Miller, 2008; Richardson, 2017). Ingersoll

(2001) found that low pay was the most-often cited reason for teachers leaving the profession and that teachers who are more satisfied with their salaries are more likely to retain their position. Miller (2008) found that a 10% increase in teacher salary correlated with a 29% decrease in likelihood of turnover. Unfortunately, the low population density associated with rurality translates to lower tax bases to fund public schools. This creates financial hardship for rural school districts who, as a result, struggle to pay their teachers competitive wages (Jimerson, 2003; Zubryzcki, 2017). This poses a problem to Colorado, whose 50 lowest-average-paying school districts are all classified as rural and small rural (Colorado Department of Education, 2018).

Research is unclear on the importance of salary for music teacher retention decisions. Participants in Howard's (2006) study indicated that salary was a major consideration in deciding whether to leave or retain their position. Hancock's (2009) drew a similar conclusion, suggesting that those leaving the profession do so in search of a higher salary. However, other researchers (Cushinery, 2011; Gardner, 2006; Russell, 2012) did not find salary to be a significant consideration in music teachers' retention decisions.

School support system. In addition to the influence it exerts on a teacher's job satisfaction, the quality of the teacher's school support system can also influence retention decisions. Stockard and Lehman (2004) found that school support was among the most influential factors in teacher retention decisions. Music teachers who felt supported by administrators were more likely to retain their position while those who felt a lack of support were more likely to leave in Howard's (2006) study.

Mentorship is another concern for teacher retention (Darling-Hammond, 2003). Research supports the idea that mentorship can improve teacher retention for both rural

teachers (Richardson, 2017) and music teachers (Russell, 2012; Siebert, 2008).

Participation in a mentorship program can contribute significantly to a strong social support system. Russell (2012) found that music teachers who did not participate in a mentorship program were more likely to leave their position, and participants in Siebert's (2008) indicated mentorship for early-career music teachers could be a solution to attrition. For rural music teachers, the distance from music-teaching colleagues make mentorship with other music teachers a challenge (Kuntzelman, 2016; Maltas, 2004), which may negatively impact retention.

Community identity. Community identity is an important consideration for rural music teacher retention. Russell (2012) found that music teachers who were dissatisfied with their community were more likely to leave their position than teachers satisfied with their community. Miller (2008) found that a school's proximity to the teacher's hometown is predictive of their job retention. Teachers in the study whose first assignments upon completing a teacher preparation program were more likely to stay at the school if it was near where they grew up. In contrast, teachers whose first assignment was far away from their hometown were more likely to change positions or quit teaching entirely. Miller also found that schools with more community amenities have higher retention, even when controlling statistically for salary and other non-wage attributes.

Rural teachers who have a rural background retain their position longer than rural teachers who do not have a rural background (Bumgartner, 2013; McCoy-Wilson, 2011). This has prompted policymakers to encourage school districts to "grow their own" teachers (Huysman, 2007; Jimerson, 2003; Zubryzki, 2017): a strategy wherein school districts incentivize their own students to return to their home district for a teaching career after

earning credentials. Huysman (2008) found that after two years, more “homegrown” teachers retained their job in a rural school district than teacher “transplants”. The results of the study suggest that teachers who have been “grown” in the community where they teach can focus more time and energy on professional development, versus “transplant” teachers who must acclimate to a new cultural environment. This acclimation may present a barrier to entry into the community for graduating music education students entering the teaching field, who largely come from suburban upbringings (Kelly, 2003).

Community isolation also plays a role in rural teacher turnover. As Miller (2008) noted, teachers retain jobs for longer in areas with more community amenities than areas with fewer amenities. Huysman (2008) also discussed the challenges posed by social isolation to attracting and retaining teachers in rural schools. A teacher’s sense of community identity is perhaps a more important consideration for rural teachers than non-rural teachers: because of the isolation of rural communities, leaving a rural job is more likely than leaving an urban or suburban job to require home and family relocation. Rural music teachers have bemoaned rural isolation for its negative effects on personal life and musical opportunities and amenities for students (Brossette, 2015; Kuntzelman, 2016).

Job satisfaction. Research demonstrates a correlation between teacher job satisfaction and retention (Stockard & Lehman, 2004; Thibodeaux, 2015; Williams 2015). Stockard & Lehman (2004) found that job satisfaction was the most important influence on teacher retention decisions, accounting for 25% of turnover. The relationship between satisfaction and retention is complex: while many of the same job features pose concerns for teachers in terms of both job satisfaction and retention, those may carry differing amounts of weight for the two metrics. For example, small class sizes contribute to teacher

satisfaction (Monk, 2007; Skinner, 2008), but small school populations predict teacher turnover (Miller, 2008; Stockard & Lehman, 2004). For music teachers, administrative and peer support was consistently important to teacher satisfaction (Brown, 2015; Howard, 2006; Scheib, 2004; Siebert, 2008), yet Cushinery (2011) found they were unimportant factors in job retention. Interestingly, a teacher who has made substantial emotional or financial investment in a community may retain their position despite dissatisfaction with administrative support or other school-related factors (Huysman, 2007). Apparent disagreements between job satisfaction and retention, especially across rural and music teacher attributes, are of particular interest to this study.

Effects of Teacher Job Satisfaction and Turnover

Job satisfaction and teacher retention both have important implications for educators, administrators, and policymakers. Satisfied teachers have a positive effect on student achievement (Crawford, 2017; Johnson et al. 2005) and are more likely to retain their positions (Stockard & Lehman, 2004; Thibodeaux, 2015; Williams 2015). In addition, teacher retention leads to stronger school communities (Ingersoll, 2001) and lessens the financial burden of recruiting and hiring new teachers (Barnes, Crowe, & Schaefer, 2007; Darling-Hammond, 2003).

Recruiting, hiring, and training new teachers is costly to school districts. Barnes, Crowe, and Schaefer (2007) found each teacher cost school districts studied just over \$10,000 to replace in one school year alone. Darling-Hammond (2003) estimated that a leaving teacher costs as much as \$8,000 to replace due to costs associated with recruiting, inviting candidates to visit the school, and training. In rural school districts where turnover

is high and finances are already scarce, the costs of recruiting and training new teachers is significant and detracts from other important spending areas.

The consequences that teacher turnover has for students are more problematic: teacher turnover often leads to a reduction in student performance (Barnes, et al., 2007; Terry & Kristonis, 2008; Rockoff, 2004). In addition, school leaders struggle to establish a cohesive school mission and sense of collegiality amongst staff when teacher turnover is high (Ingersoll, 2001), which can also detract from student performance. The negative relationship between turnover and student performance has also been recognized in rural schools (Dykstra, 2014) and in music programs (Kloss, 2012; Russell, 2012). For music programs, a teacher who leaves puts the music program at risk of being cut entirely (Russell, 2012). Jimerson (2003) pointed out that with poor teacher retention,

students may be denied the benefits of continuity, more experienced teachers, and coordinated, coherent curriculum across grades and subjects... these trends are exactly opposite from elements that are necessary to improve student learning...students do best with qualified teachers assigned to their field of expertise, in smaller classes, when enrolled in advanced level courses, when curriculum is coordinated and sequential, and when teachers have access to ongoing, system-wide, coordinated professional development.

The consequences of teacher turnover suggest that rural schools find themselves in a vicious cycle: inexperienced teachers contribute to the low achievement of that school's students, which in turn drives them to leave their position, which is then filled by another inexperienced teacher. For rural schools to increase student achievement, it is imperative to break the cycle of teacher turnover.

For music teachers, the turnover outcome is similar: a music teacher who leaves is likely to be replaced by a less experienced teacher who may negatively impact student achievement (Monk, 2007; Russell, 2012). Music teacher turnover also raises more

alarming concern that the teacher will not be replaced at all (Russell, 2012). For rural schools where specialty positions like music regularly go unfilled (Harmon, 2001; Monk, 2007), this is a very real issue.

Music Education's Career Ladder

The opposition between “urban” and “rural” is a common subject of discussion in rural research literature (Bates, 2011; Ching & Creed, 1997; Corbett, 2016; Spring, 2013; Theobald & Wood, 2009). This pervasive dichotomy associates “urban” with “progress, wealth, and intelligence” and “rural” with “antiquity, poverty, and ignorance” and perpetuates notions like “the best of anything” is found in the city (Theobald & Wood, 2009) or that “‘everyone knows’ that people prefer to live in large cities” (Theobald, 1997). Spring’s (2013) case-study participant described rural as the “lack of”, or a place where the amenities of city living are absent. Bates (2011) recognized this opposition by critiquing language often used to describe rural places: words like “wasteland” and phrases like “in the middle of nowhere” don’t paint a positive picture of rurality. While the “urban” associations above do not necessarily extend to public schools in city settings, researchers have suggested that such associations instead idealize suburban schools as the model of progress for education (Bates, 2011), while schools in rural and urban areas share similar challenges (Hunt, 2009; Sutchter, et al. 2016).

This rural/urban opposition is problematic for rural schools hoping to retain experienced music teachers which, in turn, manifests itself in the music education profession as a “rural to (sub)urban” career ladder. A disproportionately high number of early-career teachers in rural music positions and relatively low financial resources of rural school districts (Monk, 2007) perpetuate the notion of a music education career ladder that

begins at the rural and climbs to the suburban (Brossette, 2015; Kuntzelman, 2016; Madsen & Hancock, 2002). Music teachers in Howard's (2006) study considered a move to a smaller school a "demotion", while a move to a larger school was viewed as promotion. Madsen & Hancock's (2002) data "suggests that [the music education] profession's informal career ladder may be based on relocation to schools where resources, support, and salary are more plentiful"—or, in other words, places that largely do not have the characteristics of rural schools.

Summary

Because of the competing values that contribute to job satisfaction and the conflicting variables that inform retention decisions between rural educators and music educators, the case of the rural music educator warrants specific study in these areas in order to improve rural music teacher satisfaction and retention. Rural schools need to retain experienced, job-satisfied music teachers in order to improve music programs. Teacher job satisfaction includes personal traits, strong social supports, and student interactions (Badri, et al., 2006, Lent & Brown, 2006; Williams, 2015). Additionally, rural teacher satisfaction is concerned with community identity (Bumgartner, 2013; Huysman, 2007; McCoy-Wilson, 2011; Richardson, 2017), while music teachers emphasize a manageable workload and strong administrative support (Howard, 2006; Siebert, 2008; Scheib, 2004).

Job satisfaction is an important predictor of teacher retention (Stockard & Lehman, 2004; Thibodeaux, 2015; Williams 2015), along with years of experience, age, and possibly salary (Darling-Hammond, 2003; Ingersoll, 2001; Stockard & Lehman, 2004; Strunk & Robinson, 2006). This is a major concern for rural schools who often employ young,

inexperienced teachers (Monk, 2007). Music teachers are especially challenging for rural school districts to retain (Hancock, 2009), which has negative effects on student performance (Barnes et al., 2007; Kloss, 2012; Russell, 2012; Terry & Kristonis, 2008; Rockoff, 2004) and perpetuates a “rural to urban” career ladder for the music education profession (Bates, 2011; Brossette 2016; Howard, 2006; Kuntzelman, 2016).

Need for Study

Rural music teachers are an understudied population of educational research (Kuntzelman, 2016). A detailed understanding of rural music teacher job satisfaction and rural music teacher retention is necessary to inform administrators, policymakers, and rural music teachers themselves on ways to improve retention and, in turn, rural school music programs. Existing research has addressed teacher job satisfaction in depth as it relates to retention and attrition (e.g. Johnson, et al., 2005), but contrasting findings between rural teacher populations (Bumgartner, 2013; Dykstra, 2014; Huysman, 2007; McCoy-Wilson, 2011; Richardson, 2017) and music teacher populations (Allen, 2014; Brown, 2015; Bryant, 2012) indicate that rural music teachers have a unique set of values that inform their job satisfaction and retention decisions. Further, the retention and satisfaction of rural music teachers in Colorado has yet to be formally researched. Hence, investigation of this unique case may be of interest to rural administrators, music teacher educators, and rural music educators who wish to improve the conditions for music teachers and the quality of rural music programs.

Dissecting the factors that motivate rural music teachers to retain or leave their teaching assignments can help to unpack the complex role of the music teacher in a rural community. Such unpacking can provide rural administrators valuable information for

recruiting music teachers and promote collegiate music educators to tailor their teacher preparation programs to adequately prepare young educators for long, fulfilling careers providing equitable music education to students in rural places.

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to identify attributes of rural music teaching positions that impact rural music teacher job satisfaction and how job satisfaction relates to music teacher turnover in rural schools. A mixed-method approach was selected in order to both accurately depict the job satisfaction landscape of rural Colorado as a whole, while honoring the potentially broad range of individual rural music teaching experiences. Data were collected and organized into two strands: Strand I consists of quantitative data gathered via a questionnaire adapted from Duffy & Lent (2009) to measure job satisfaction in terms of positive affect, work-related goal progress, self-efficacy, perceived fit, and organizational support (see Appendix E). Strand II features qualitative data gathered using a multiple-case study approach in order to “examine how the phenomenon performs in different environments” (Stake, 2006). The phenomenon in this study was the experience of the music teacher as related to job satisfaction and retention in a rural school environment. Examining the multifaceted job attributes that may contribute to a music teacher’s job satisfaction (e.g., music teacher’s role in the larger community, relationships with colleagues, access to musical resources, and the complex relationship between job satisfaction and job retention for the rural music teacher) was intended to elucidate a holistic picture of the music teacher landscape in Colorado’s rural areas.

Strand I: Quantitative Methodology

Participant Selection

Potential participants for the study included all music educators employed by school districts in the 2019-2020 school year designated as “rural” or “small rural” by the Colorado Department of Education (2019b). Eligible teachers were invited to participate in the study via email with a link to the questionnaire (Appendix C). Out of 338 teacher eligible to participate, 150 teachers responded to the questionnaire, yielding a response rate of 44.5%.

Questionnaire Measures

Quantitative data were collected via questionnaire developed by Duffy and Lent (2009, Appendix E). The questionnaire measured job satisfaction through a social-cognitive lens using following predictors: work-related self-efficacy, positive affect, progress at work-related goals, perceived organizational support, and favorability of working environment. The measures originated from Lent and Brown’s (2006) study and were later modified by Duffy and Lent (2009) for teacher-specific job satisfaction measurement. In previous studies, the questionnaire has accounted for 82% variance in job satisfaction. This is the first use of the questionnaire for a music-teaching population known to the researcher.

Observed indicators of the job satisfaction complex as a whole were measured using Brayard and Rothe’s (1951) Index of Job Satisfaction and the Teacher Satisfaction Scale (Lim-Ho & Tung-Au, 2006). Participants were asked to respond to questions in the index of job satisfaction on a 7-point scale from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree* and to questions in the Teacher Satisfaction Scale on a 5-point scale from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*. The Index of Job Satisfaction has an internal reliability score of $r=.89$ (Duffy & Lent, 2009).

The Positive Affect items of the Positive and Negative Affect Scales (PANAS; Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988) were used to measure positive affect. Participants were asked to indicate the extent to which they've felt 10 different emotions (e.g., enthusiastic, determined) during the past few weeks on a 5-point scale from *very slightly* to *extremely*. The internal consistency reliability for this measure reported by Duffy and Lent (2009) was $r=.91$.

Work-related goal progress was measured using a scale adapted by Duffy and Lent (2009). Participants were asked to name a specific work-related goal and answer questions related to their progress on that goal using a 5-point scale from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*. Support of work-related goal progress were measured using a 7-point scale ranging from *completely disagree* to *completely agree*. Duffy and Lent (2009) found an internal consistency reliability of .86 for this scale.

Perceived favorability of the teacher's working environment were described by three scales: Cable and DeRue's (2002) Person/Organization and Need/Supplies Fit questions, which measured two aspects of fit between person and work environment, and the Perceived Organizational Support Scale-Short Form (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, & Sowa, 1986). Duffy and Lent (2009) estimated internal consistency reliabilities at .91, .87, and .92 respectively for these scales.

Validity & Reliability. The internal consistency reliability for the scales in this questionnaire range from .86 to .92. Validity for this measure was determined by path analysis (Duffy & Lent, 2009; see Figure 2). These paths demonstrate the degree of

influence that each of the measured factors (positive affect, self-efficacy, goal progress, goal support, and work conditions) have on each other and on job satisfaction.

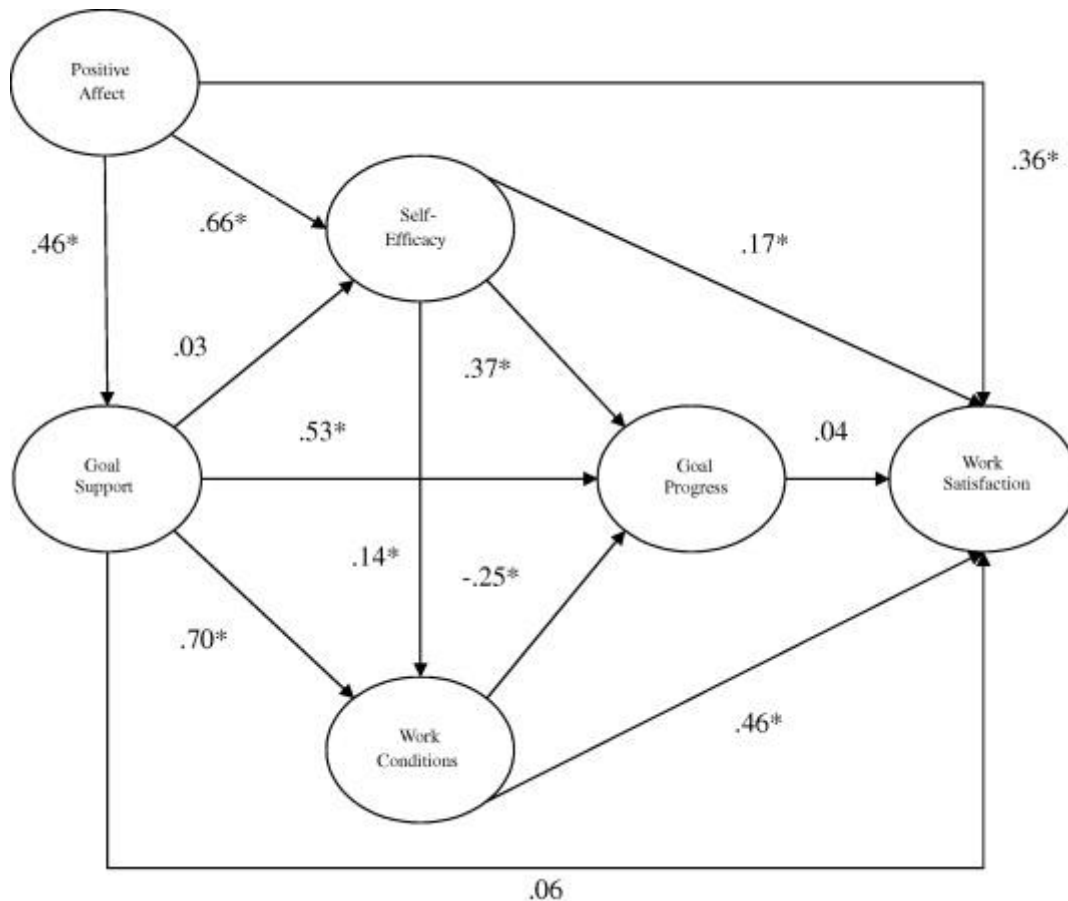


Figure 2. Path analysis with parameter estimates for Lent & Brown (2006) model.

Data Analysis and Reporting

Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics with Microsoft Excel software. Given the ordinal nature of the data yielded, non-parametric measures were used for analysis. Measures of central tendency were determined using median, mode, interquartile range, and standard deviation for each measure. A chi-square analysis (Creswell, 2009) was conducted to determine the statistical significance of the relationship between variables and job satisfaction.

Strand II: Qualitative Methodology

Participant Selection

Participants for the qualitative aspect of the study were purposefully selected from the pool of music teachers employed by schools in Colorado's "rural" and "small rural" districts (Colorado Department of Education, 2019b). Criterion for participation included one or more years of music teaching experience in a "rural" or "small rural" school district in Colorado. A maximum variation sampling strategy (Palinkas, 2015) was used to identify a diverse group of teachers that represent a broad range of rural teaching experiences, varying years of teaching experience, job requirements, and class loads. Because prior research suggests that community attributes (economic drivers, population, and proximity to an urban area) are associated with teacher retention (Brossette, 2015; Huysman, 2007; Kuntzelman, 2016; Maltas, 2004), selected participants also represent a divergent array of community backgrounds. Most case studies concerning rural education focus on cases within the same school district (Dykstra, 2014; Huysman, 2007; McCoy-Wilson, 2011; Richardson, 2017). In order to reflect Colorado's contrasting geographies and associated socioeconomic landscapes, the participants were selected from different school districts throughout the state.

Data Collection

Once identified, potential participants were contacted via email to be informed of the study and invited to participate (Appendix D). After three rural music teachers agreed to participate in the study, data were collected from two sources: observation and semi-structured one-on-one interviews. These two sources of data allowed the researcher to

spend prolonged time in the field and triangulate data to ensure study validity (Creswell, 2009; Stake 2006).

Observations. Observations took place in the participant's school at a time of their discretion and included classroom instruction and before- and after-school responsibilities. Data were collected in field notes taken by the researcher and used as a triangulation-point in data validity (Creswell, 2009).

Interviews. Interview questions were designed according to emergent themes from relevant literature in rural music education, teacher job satisfaction, and teacher retention. Each participant was asked the same set of open-ended interview questions (Appendix F), but follow-up or probing questions and further discussion depended on responses to the original questions in order to highlight the uniqueness of each individual case (Creswell, 2009). Interviews were scheduled at the participant's convenience and took place in an agreed-upon location where confidentiality was ensured, took about one hour to complete, and were audio-recorded for later analysis. Initial interviews were conducted via video-phone call, while follow-up interviews took place in person before or after scheduled observations.

Data Analysis and Reporting

Interviews were transcribed by the researcher and double-checked by an external auditor (Creswell, 2009) for accuracy. Data from interviews and field notes were then coded, interpreted, and organized according to emergent themes. After data collection, identifying information (including participant names and the names of their school, community, and other relevant organizations) was destroyed and replaced with

pseudonyms for names of people, places, and organizations in order to protect the identity of participants.

Data Coding and Analysis. Coding began with an inductive, “bottom up” approach, allowing unique inductive codes to emerge for each individual case (LeCompte & Schensul, 1999, Stake, 2006). Item-level analysis of each case included organizing data from interviews and observations to tease out events, behaviors, or statements that are influential, reoccurring, or otherwise stand out. Descriptive codes (Miles & Huberman, 1994) were applied in item-level analysis. In pattern-level analysis, those items were organized into emergent themes and interpretive codes were used to denote relationships between items (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Finally, deductive or “top down” coding connected items and patterns to theoretical frameworks found in the research literature. A codebook was developed from item- and pattern- level analysis, relevant theoretical frameworks, and research questions (LeCompte & Schensul, 1999; Miles & Huberman, 1994).

After inductive and deductive coding were completed for each individual case, a cross-case analysis brought similar and contrasting items and themes among individual cases to light (Stake, 2006). Descriptive codes from item-level analysis and interpretive codes from pattern-level analysis of individual cases were analyzed dialectically with deductive themes from the research literature to identify salient themes common or unique to the collection of cases (LeCompte & Schensul, 1999; Stake 2006).

Trustworthiness and Validity. Several strategies recommended by Creswell (2009), Miles and Huberman (1994), and Stake (2006) were utilized to ensure the trustworthiness and validity of the study. A pilot study was conducted to refine interview

questions and determine that the interview questions accurately reflected the problem of the study. Triangulation within each case was achieved by observation and member-checking in two phases: case-study participants were invited to review transcriptions of initial and follow-up interviews, and individual thick descriptions, reported in chapter four and developed by the researcher from interview and observation data, were reviewed by each case's participant to ensure accuracy of portrayal (Creswell, 2009).

Ethical Considerations

Since qualitative research is interpreted by the researcher (Creswell, 2009), the researcher should report any bias related to the study that may impact their interpretation. My biases regarding this study include my experience teaching music in a rural school district for three years in a school that had seen significant turnover in my position over the past decade. The challenges I encountered in the classroom and school bureaucracy prompted my interest in this subject of research.

Permission from Colorado State University's Institutional Review Board, or IRB, was granted (Protocol ID# 19-9515H; see Appendix B) prior to contacting potential participants about the study. Participants in the qualitative study signed the IRB-approved Informed Consent Form (Appendix A) that detailed the purpose of the research, study procedures, and confidentiality measures before data collection began. Quantitative study participants agreed to an electronic version of the Informed Consent Form before responding to the questionnaire, per Colorado State University IRB regulations.

RESULTS

Data were collected in two strands: quantitative data in Strand I were collected via questionnaire (N=125) and qualitative data in Strand II were collected via case-study methodology. Data collected for both strands of inquiry are shared below.

Strand I: Quantitative Results

Demographic Characteristics

Demographic data for the sample are presented in Table 1.

Table 1.

Sample Demographics

Gender	Freq.	%
Female	81	65%
Male	42	34%
Prefer not to answer	2	1.6%
Race/Ethnicity	Freq.	%
White/European American	113	90%
Hispanic American	6	5%
Native American	1	1%
Prefer not to answer	5	4%
Age	Freq.	%
22-29	39	31%
30-39	25	20%
40-49	31	25%
50-59	16	13%
60-66	11	9%
Community	Freq.	%
Rural	50	40%
Suburban	57	46%
Urban	17	14%

Teaching experience. One hundred twenty-five respondents reported teaching experience that ranged from less than 1 to over 40 years, with an overall mean of 11.5 years. The majority of participants ($n=44$) reported five or less years of teaching experience, while 24 reported 6-10 years, 15 reported 11-15 years, 13 reported 16-20 and 21-25 years respectively, and 13 participants reported 26 or more years of overall teaching experience (see Figure 3). The most-often reported amount of experience was 1, with 14 participants indicating that they were in their first year of teaching.

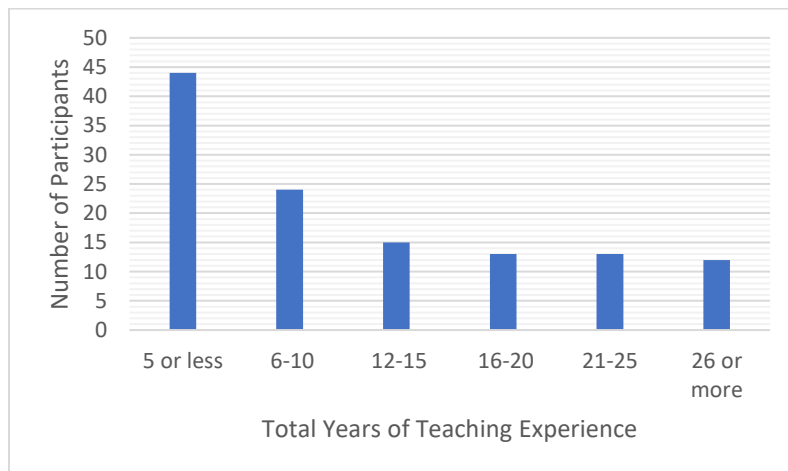


Figure 3. *Participants by Years of Total Teaching Experience.*

Years in Current Teaching Position. Distributions for years of teaching in current position were similar to those for total years of experience, with 63.2% ($n=79$) of respondents reporting a tenure five years or less in their current position. Again, the most-often reported number of years in the current position was 1 (see Figure 4). A moderately strong correlation of $r=0.660$ existed between a teacher's years of experience overall and years teaching in their current position, indicating that the majority of participants have spent their entire career thus far in their current position.

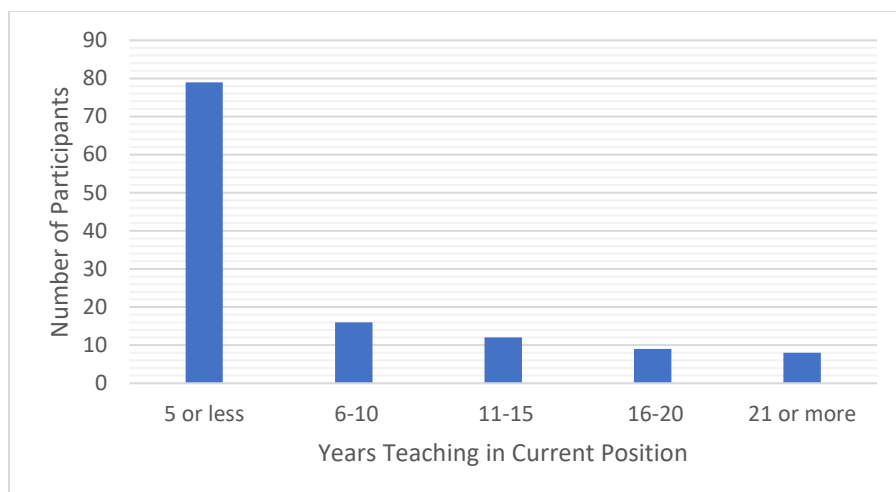


Figure 4. *Participants by Years in Current Position.*

Teaching load & extracurricular involvement. Of the four options (Early Childhood, Elementary, Middle School, and High School), slightly less than half ($n=57$) of respondents reported teaching loads in more than one school level. Table 2 illustrates the combinations of school levels and frequency reported by respondents. Seventy respondents reported that at least some of their teaching load includes Middle School, 67 reported teaching Elementary School, 63 reported teaching High School, and 4 reported teaching Early Childhood. The most-frequently reported school level was Elementary only ($n=35$), followed by the combination of Middle School and High School ($n=25$).

Table 2.

Frequency of School Levels Reported

Teaching Load	Freq.	School Level	Freq.
Early Childhood	1	Early Childhood	4
Early Childhood, Elementary School	3	Elementary	67
Early Childhood, Elementary School, Middle School	3	Middle School	70
Early Childhood, Elementary School, Middle School, High School	7	High School	63
Elementary School	35		
Elementary School, Middle School	4		
Elementary School, Middle School, High School	15		
High School	16		
Middle School	16		
Middle School, High School	25		

Responses for classes taught included the following: general music ($n=69$), band ($n=65$), and choir ($n=52$). Forty-two respondents reported teaching additional music classes, including orchestra ($n=10$), piano ($n=8$), and guitar ($n=7$). Other music assignments included music theory, appreciation, and technology classes. Thirteen teachers reported non-musical classes in their load, including Theatre and Study Hall classes.

Table 3.
Subjects Reported

Subject	Frequency
General Music	69
Choir	52
Band	65
Orchestra	10
Music-Other	43
Non-Music	13

Sixty-five percent ($n=81$) of participants reported involvement in extracurricular activities. Extra-curricular responsibilities included marching and jazz bands, show choirs, and musical productions, to coaching cross county, Science Olympiad, and serving as class advisors and sponsors.

Table 4.
Frequency of Extracurricular Activities Reported

Extracurricular Activity	Frequency
Marching or Pep Band	13
Jazz Band	12
Choir	20
Musical or Drama	26
Class Sponsor	9
Academic Club	11
Sports	12

Questionnaire Responses

Mean scores, interquartile ranges, and standard deviations were calculated for each individual question on the questionnaire. Table 5 presents descriptive data for each questionnaire measure. Mean scores for each measure skewed toward the positive for each

sub-domain while standard deviations were relatively attenuated and ranged from 0.44 to 1.14. Figure 5 shows the mean score for each measure on the questionnaire.

Table 5.

Measures of Central Tendency per Questionnaire Section

Section	Range	Mean	SD	IQR	Mode
<i>Work Satisfaction Index</i>	1-7	5.84	0.93	0.8	6
<i>Teacher Satisfaction Scale</i>	1-5	3.76	1.14	0.8	3.8
<i>Positive Affect</i>	1-5	3.61	0.61	0.7	4
<i>Work-Related Goal Progress</i>	1-5	3.65	0.75	1	4
<i>Work-Related Goal Self-Efficacy</i>	1-4	3.20	0.57	0.86	3
<i>Work-Related Goal Support</i>	1-7	5.10	1.31	2	6.33
<i>Teacher Self Efficacy</i>	1-5	3.90	0.44	0.63	3.75
<i>Work Self-Efficacy</i>	1-5	3.98	0.53	0.8	3.9
<i>Organizational Support</i>	1-7	5.07	1.14	1.72	6
<i>Perceived Fit</i>	1-7	4.94	1.25	1.92	6

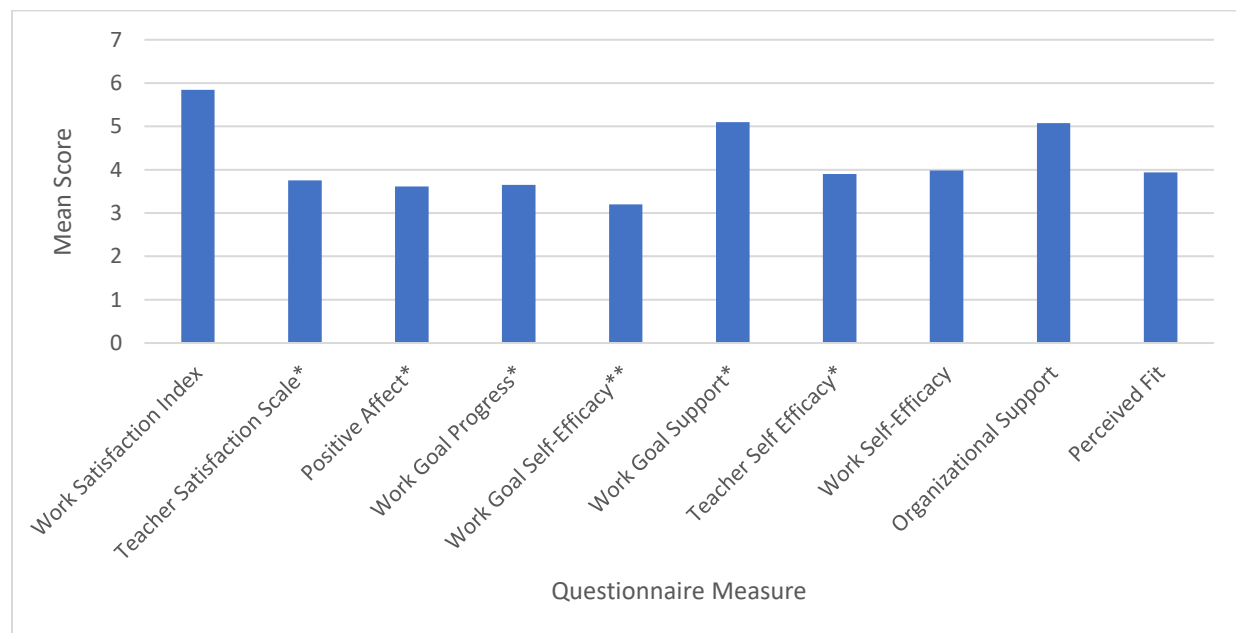


Figure 5. *Mean Scores per Questionnaire Measure*. Note: * denotes a measure whose range is from 1-5. ** denotes a measure whose range is 1-4.

Global measures of Job Satisfaction. Mean participant responses were above the midpoint for both global measures of satisfaction on the questionnaire (the *Work Satisfaction Index* and *Teacher Satisfaction Scale*). Teachers' response to questions on the *Worker Satisfaction Index* had mean scores per question ranging from 5.38 ("I feel fairly well satisfied with my present job") to 6.02 ("I find real enjoyment in my work"), out of a highest possible score of 7.

Table 6.
Work Satisfaction Index: Measures of Central Tendency

Question	Mean (Range 1-7)	Mode	SD	IQR
Q1 <i>I feel fairly well satisfied with my present job.</i>	5.78	6	1.22	0
Q2 <i>Most days I am enthusiastic about my work.</i>	5.95	6	1.01	1
Q3 <i>Each day of work seems like it will never end (r).</i>	5.38	6	1.41	1
Q4 <i>I find real enjoyment in my work.</i>	6.08	6	0.90	1
Q5 <i>I consider my job rather unpleasant (r).</i>	6.02	7	1.13	1
Aggregate	5.84	-	0.93	0.8

Responses to questions on the *Teacher Satisfaction Scale* were positively skewed with mean scores ranging from 3.31 ("If I could choose my career over, I would change almost nothing.") to 4.10 ("In most ways, being a teacher is close to my ideal.") out of a highest possible score of 5.

Table 7.

Teacher Satisfaction Scale: Measures of Central Tendency

Question	Mean (Range 1-5)	Mode	SD	IQR
Q1 <i>In most ways, being a teacher is close to my ideal.</i>	4.10	4	0.93	1
Q2 <i>My conditions of being a teacher are excellent.</i>	3.40	4	0.79	2
Q3 <i>I am satisfied with being a teacher.</i>	4.02	4	1.08	0
Q4 <i>So far I have gotten the important things I want to be a teacher.</i>	3.94	4	0.74	0
Q5 <i>If I could choose my career over, I would change almost nothing.</i>	3.31	4	0.69	2
Aggregate	3.76	-	1.14	0.8

Positive affect. Teachers reported the extent to which they have felt various emotions (i.e., “excited”, “enthusiastic”, “proud”) over the last few weeks on a scale of 1 (“very slightly”) to 5 (“extremely”). Mean responses ranged from 3.19 (“inspired”) to 3.81 (“alert”).

Table 8.

Positive Affect: Measures of Central Tendency

Question	Mean (Range 1-5)	Mode	SD	IQR
Q1 <i>Interested</i>	3.78	4	0.79	1
Q2 <i>Alert</i>	3.81	4	0.84	1
Q3 <i>Excited</i>	3.54	4	0.92	1
Q4 <i>Inspired</i>	3.19	3	1.05	1
Q5 <i>Strong</i>	3.29	3	1.10	1
Q6 <i>Determined</i>	3.93	4	0.75	0
Q7 <i>Attentive</i>	3.62	4	0.81	1
Q8 <i>Enthusiastic</i>	3.60	4	0.89	1
Q9 <i>Active</i>	3.77	4	0.93	1
Q10 <i>Proud</i>	3.59	4	1.04	1
Aggregate	3.61	-	0.61	0.7

Work-related goals. Teachers were asked to specify one work-related goal in order to answer questions in the *Work Goal Progress* measure. Teacher’s responses emerged into

eight categories: classroom management (“keep all students engaged for entire class”; “become better able to deal with problem behaviors”), curriculum and lesson planning (“improve my preK-5 scope and sequence”, “improve daily and weekly lesson plan preparation”), time management and work/life balance (“limit my work day to 11 hours”; “decrease the amount of work I take home”), student dispositions and relationships (“create positive relationships with my students”; “inspire kids to enjoy and participate in music as a lifelong activity”), student musicianship (“encourage students to try out for honor ensembles”; “improve intonation amongst all players and singers”), teacher skills (“improve my conducting”; “improve my abilities”), and program growth (“increase my retention rate”; “work with administrators to change the building schedule”). The most-reported type of goal had to do with curriculum or lesson planning ($n=25$), followed by classroom management ($n=24$), then work/life balance ($n=20$). Teachers used their specified goal to respond to questions on the *Work-Related Goal Progress* (see Table 9), *Work-Related Goal Self-Efficacy* (see Table 10) and *Work Goal Support* (see Table 11) sections of the questionnaire.

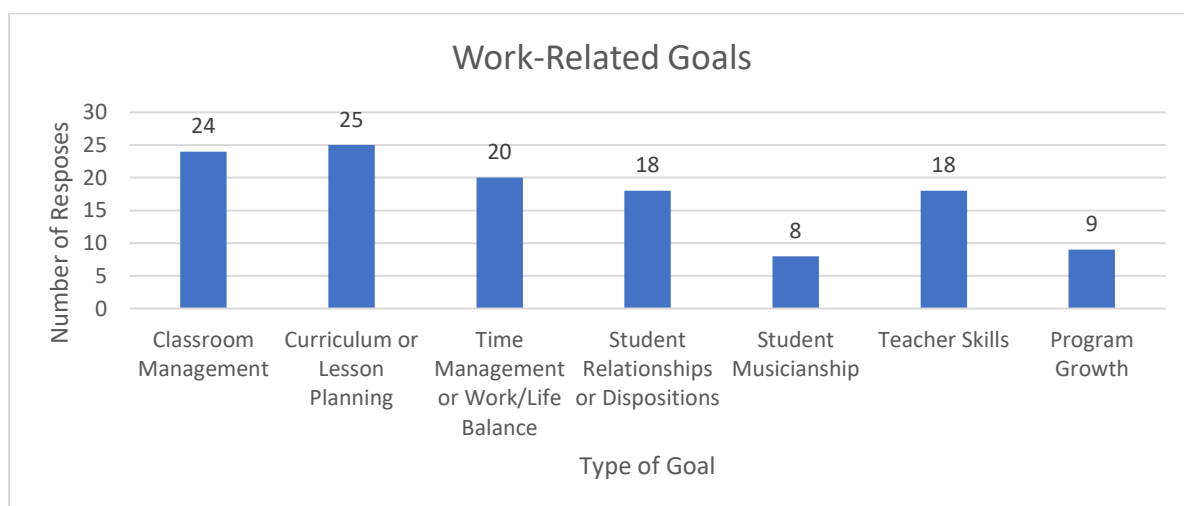


Figure 6. *Frequency of Work-Related Goals Reported*

Work-related goal progress. Teachers responded to questions in the *Work-Related Goal Progress* on a scale of 1 (“Strongly Disagree”) to 5 (“Strongly Agree”). Mean teacher responses were positively skewed and ranged from 3.608 (“In the past, I have made significant progress toward my work goal”) to 3.864 (“My pursuit of my work goal has been productive”) out of a possible 5.

Table 9.
Work-Related Goal Progress: Measures of Central Tendency

Question	Mean (Range 1-5)	Mode	SD	IQR
Q1 <i>I am making good progress on my work goal.</i>	3.65	4	0.89	1
Q2 <i>In the past, I have made significant progress toward my work goal.</i>	3.61	4	1.00	1
Q3 <i>My pursuit of my work goal has been productive.</i>	3.86	4	0.81	0
Q4 <i>I am satisfied with my efforts to reach my work goal.</i>	3.42	4	1.03	2
Q5 <i>In general, I have not made much progress with my work goal (R).</i>	3.72	4	1.11	1
Aggregate	3.65	-	0.75	1

Work-related goal self-efficacy. Teachers also used their specified work goal to answer questions in the *Work Goal Self-Efficacy* section of the questionnaire. Responses were recorded on a scale from 1 (“Not at all accurate”) to 4 (“extremely accurate”). Mean scores were positively skewed and ranged from 3.16 (“I have the necessary knowledge to reach my work goal”) to 3.248 (“I have what it takes to reach my work goal.”) out of a possible 4.

Table 10.

Work-Related Goal Progress: Measures of Central Tendency

Question	Mean (Range 1-4)	Mode	SD	IQR
Q1 <i>I possess the necessary skills to attain my work goal.</i>	3.19	3	0.70	1
Q2 <i>I have what it takes to reach my work goal.</i>	3.25	3	0.68	1
Q3 <i>I have the necessary knowledge to reach my work goal.</i>	3.16	3	0.72	1
Q4 <i>I have the ability to reach my work goal.</i>	3.19	3	0.71	1
Aggregate	3.20	-	0.57	0.88

Work-related goal support. Questions on the *Work-Related Goal Support* section of the questionnaire were also answered in the context of the teacher's specified work goal. Teachers responded to the questions on a scale of 1("Completely Disagree") to 7 ("Completely Agree"). Mean scores ranged from 2.44 to 5.10 out of a possible 7.

Table 11.

Work-Related Goal Support: Measures of Central Tendency

Question	Mean (Range 1-7)	Mode	SD	IQR
Q1 <i>My fellow teachers reliably assist my attempts to accomplish this goal when I ask them to do so.</i>	4.68	6	1.66	2
Q2 <i>My fellow teachers behave in ways that conflict with my attempts to accomplish this goal. (r)</i>	3.08	6	1.83	3
Q3 <i>My immediate supervisor reliably assists my attempts to accomplish this goal when I ask her or him to do so</i>	5.10	6	1.71	2
Q4 <i>My immediate supervisor behaves in ways that conflict with my attempts to accomplish this goal. (r)</i>	2.44	7	1.66	2
Q5 <i>My school administration reliably assists my attempts to accomplish this goal when I ask them to do so.</i>	5.03	6	1.68	2
Q6 <i>My school administration behaves in ways that conflict with my attempts to accomplish this goal. (r)</i>	2.71	6	1.83	3
Aggregate	3.84	-	0.76	0.75

Teacher self-efficacy. Respondents answered questions on the *Teacher Self-Efficacy* portion of the questionnaire on a scale from 1 (“None at all”) to 5 (“A great deal”). Mean scores for each question were positively skewed and ranged from 3.374 (“How much can you assist families in helping their children do well in school?”) to 4.304 (“To what extent can you provide an alternative explanation or example when students are confused?”).

Table 12.
Teacher Self-Efficacy: Measures of Central Tendency

Question	Mean (Range 1-5)	Mode	SD	IQR
Q1 How much can you do to control disruptive behavior in the classroom?	4.10	4	0.79	1
Q2 How much can you do to motivate students who show low interest in schoolwork?	3.42	4	0.79	1
Q3 How much can you do to calm a student who is disruptive or noisy?	3.75	4	0.74	1
Q4 How much can you do to help your students value learning?	3.79	4	0.83	1
Q5 To what extent can you craft good questions for your students?	4.22	4	0.75	1
Q6 How much can you do to get children to follow classroom rules?	4.10	4	0.72	1
Q7 How much can you do to get students to believe they can do well in schoolwork?	3.88	4	0.79	1
Q8 How well can you establish a classroom management system with each group of students?	3.91	4	0.66	1
Q9 To what extent can you use a variety of assessment strategies?	4.30	4	0.91	2
Q10 To what extent can you provide an alternative explanation or example when students are confused?	3.37	4	0.70	1
Q11 How much can you assist families in helping their children do well in school?	3.81	3	0.92	1
Q12 How well can you implement alternative teaching strategies in your classroom?	3.90	4	0.84	1
Aggregate	3.91	-	0.44	0.63

Work task self-efficacy. Teachers responded to questions on the *Work Task Self-Efficacy* portion of the questionnaire on a scale of 1 (“Strongly Disagree”) to 5 (“Strongly Agree”). Mean scores for individual questions were positively skewed and ranged from 3.233 (“There are some tasks required by my job that I cannot do well”, reverse-scored) to 4.488 (“My future in this job is limited because of my lack of skills”, reverse-scored) out of a possible 5.

Table 13.
Work Task Self-Efficacy: Measures of Central Tendency

Question	Mean (Range 1-5)	Mode	SD	IQR
Q1 <i>I have confidence in my ability to do my job.</i>	4.31	4	0.66	1
Q2 <i>There are some tasks required by my job that I cannot do well (R).</i>	3.23	2	1.12	2
Q3 <i>When my performance is poor, it is due to my lack of ability (R).</i>	3.89	4	0.94	2
Q4 <i>I doubt my ability to do my job (R).</i>	4.28	5	0.83	1
Q5 <i>I have all the skills needed to perform my job very well.</i>	4.06	4	0.77	1
Q6 <i>Most people in my line of work can do this job better than I can (R).</i>	3.57	4	1.04	1
Q7 <i>I am an expert at my job.</i>	3.50	4	1.05	1
Q8 <i>My future in this job is limited because of my lack of skills (R).</i>	4.49	5	0.77	1
Q9 <i>I am very proud of my job skills and abilities.</i>	4.20	4	0.64	1
Q10 <i>I feel threatened when others watch me work (R).</i>	4.27	5	0.89	1
Aggregate	3.98	-	0.53	0.8

Organizational support. Teachers responded to items on the *Organizational Support* portion of the questionnaire on a scale from 1 (“Strongly Disagree”) to 7 (“Strongly Agree”) to reflect the degree to which the teacher feels supported by their organization. Mean scores were positively skewed and ranged from 4.064 (“My school tries to make my

job as interesting as possible”) to 5.616 (My school shows very little concern for me”, reverse-scored) out of a possible 7.

Table 14.
Organizational Support: Measures of Central Tendency

Question	Mean (Range 1-7)	Mode	SD	IQR
Q1 <i>My school values my contribution to its well-being.</i>	5.41	6	1.51	1
Q2 <i>If my school could hire someone to replace me at a lower salary it would do so (R).</i>	5.23	6	1.59	2
Q3 <i>My school fails to appreciate any extra effort from me. (R)</i>	4.88	6	1.70	3
Q4 <i>My school strongly considers my goals and values.</i>	4.75	6	1.67	2
Q5 <i>My school would ignore any complaint from me. (R)</i>	5.37	6	1.31	1
Q6 <i>My school disregards my best interests when it makes decisions that affect me. (R)</i>	4.60	6	1.73	3
Q7 <i>Help is available from my school when I have a problem.</i>	5.40	6	1.18	1
Q8 <i>My school really cares about my well-being.</i>	5.34	6	1.38	1
Q9 <i>Even if I did the best job possible, my school would fail to notice. (R)</i>	5.27	6	1.72	3
Q10 <i>My school is willing to help me when I need a special favor.</i>	5.38	6	1.19	1
Q11 <i>My school cares about my general satisfaction at work.</i>	5.04	6	1.49	2
Q12 <i>If given the opportunity, my school would take advantage of me. (R)</i>	4.49	6	1.85	3
Q13 <i>My school shows very little concern for me. (R)</i>	5.62	6	1.35	2
Q14 <i>My school cares about my opinions.</i>	5.06	6	1.38	2
Q15 <i>My school takes pride in my accomplishments at work.</i>	5.31	6	1.41	1
Q16 <i>My school tries to make my job as interesting as possible.</i>	4.06	4	1.66	3
Aggregate	5.07	-	1.14	1.72

Perceived fit. The *Perceived Fit* section of the questionnaire assessed a teacher's self-perceived fit between oneself and the work environment. Questions 1-3 addressed fitness between person/organization, while questions 3-6 addressed fitness between needs and supplies (Cable & DeRue, 2002). Items were measured on a scale of 1-7 ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree". Mean scores per question were positively skewed and ranged from 4.57 ("The job that I currently hold gives me just about everything that I want from a job") to 5.26 ("There is a good fit between what my job offers me and what I am looking for in a job").

Table 15.
Perceived Fit: Measures of Central Tendency

Question	Mean (Range 1-7)	Mode	SD	IQR
Q1 <i>The things I value in life are very similar to the things that my organization values.</i>	4.81	6	1.56	2
Q2 <i>My personal values match my organization's values and culture.</i>	4.84	6	1.56	2
Q3 <i>My organization's values and culture provide a good fit with the things that I value in life.</i>	5.03	6	1.48	2
Q4 <i>There is a good fit between what my job offers me and what I am looking for in a job.</i>	5.26	6	1.34	1
Q5 <i>The attributes that I look for in a job are fulfilled very well by my present job.</i>	5.14	6	1.40	1
Q6 <i>The job that I currently hold gives me just about everything that I want from a job.</i>	4.57	5	1.67	3
Aggregate	4.94	-	1.25	1.92

Relationships Between Questionnaire Domains

Correlational data for questionnaire sub-domains are presented in Table 16. Participant data for the *Work Satisfaction Index*, *Teacher Satisfaction Scale*, and *Organizational Support* sections each exhibited strong positive correlations ($r > 0.7$) with several other measures. Moderately strong positive correlations were revealed between

the *Work Satisfaction Index*, *Teacher Satisfaction Scale*, and *Perceived Fit* and several measures.

Table 16.
Correlations Between Questionnaire Sections

	<i>Work Sat.</i>	<i>Teacher Sat</i>	<i>Pos Aff</i>	<i>Work Goal Prog</i>	<i>Goal Self-Eff</i>	<i>Work Goal Supp</i>	<i>Teacher Self-Eff</i>	<i>Work Self-Eff</i>	<i>Org Support</i>	<i>Per Fit</i>
Work Satisfaction Index	1									
Teacher Satisfaction Scale	.63*	1								
Positive Affect	.58*	.53*	1							
<i>Work-Related Goal Progress</i>	.37	.44	.31	1						
<i>Work-Related Goal Self-Efficacy</i>	.19	.31	.32	.27	1					
<i>Work-Related Goal Support</i>	.49	.45	.43	.41	.24	1				
Teacher Self-Efficacy	.28	.20	.26	.00	.14	-.10	1			
Work Self-Efficacy	.22	.10	.17	-.17	.20	-.08	.49	1		
Organizational Support	.55	.54*	.39	.31	.14	.71**	-.02	-.07	1	
Perceived Fit	.62*	.60*	.43	.39	.10	.64*	.06	.08	.79**	1

Note. * denotes moderately strong positive correlations ($.5 < r < .7$). ** denotes strong positive correlations ($r > .7$).

Questionnaire Analyses by Demographic Characteristic

In order to examine the influence of certain teacher traits on job satisfaction attribution, the sample was divided according to demographic characteristics. Measures of central tendency (mean, mode, standard deviation, and interquartile range) and relationships between sections of the questionnaire were compared between different groups within the sample.

Years of experience. Responses were divided into five groups based on the teacher's years of experience: 1 year or less ($n=15$), 2-5 years($n=30$), 6-10 years($n=26$), 11-15 years ($n=16$), 16-20 years($n=13$), 21-25 years ($n=13$), and 26 years or more ($n=12$).

Table 17 shows the mean scores for each group.

The group with 26 or more years of experience reported the highest mean scores per section more often than any other group, followed by the group with one or less years of experience. The lowest mean scores were for teachers with 6-10 years of experience.

Table 17.
Mean Scores by Reported Years of Experience

	<i>Work Sat. (Range 1-7)</i>	<i>Teache r Sat (1-5)</i>	<i>Pos Aff (1-5)</i>	<i>Work Goal Prog (1-5)</i>	<i>Goal Self-Eff (1-4)</i>	<i>Work Goal Supp (1-7)</i>	<i>Teacher Self-Eff (1-5)</i>	<i>Work Self-Eff (1-5)</i>	<i>Org Support (1-7)</i>	<i>Per Fit (1-7)</i>
1 or less	5.96	4.05	3.57	3.75	3.20	5.72	3.69	3.47	5.64	5.31
2-5	5.75	3.85	3.71	3.58	3.28	5.13	3.81	3.90	5.08	4.86
6-10	5.61	3.58	3.39	3.36	3.18	4.98	3.91	4.03	4.83	4.72
11-15	5.95	3.65	3.79	4.09	3.20	5.15	3.90	4.03	5.00	5.13
16-20	5.78	3.55	3.48	3.49	2.94	4.46	3.99	4.22	4.98	4.78
21-25	5.91	3.68	3.58	3.78	3.42	4.69	4.05	4.18	4.66	4.86
26 <	6.27	3.97	3.83	3.78	3.04	5.56	4.14	4.18	5.55	5.17

Correlations for each experience group can be found in Appendix G. The group with 26 or more years of experience displayed stronger negative relationships between measures, in particular between organizational support and positive affect ($r=-.42$), Work-Goal Self-Efficacy ($r= -.55$) and Teacher Self-Efficacy ($r=.67$), and between Teacher Self-Efficacy and Work-Related Goal Support ($r=-.50$).

Community background. Responses were grouped according to teacher responses to the question "*I would consider the community where I grew up as*

_____ [urban, suburban, or rural]." Table 18 shows the mean scores per group for each section of the questionnaire.

Teachers who reported growing up in urban communities reported the highest mean scores on 7 of the 10 sections of the questionnaire. Teachers who reported growing up in suburban communities had the lowest mean scores in every section of the questionnaire.

Table 18.
Mean Scores by Reported Community Background

		<i>Work</i>	<i>Teacher</i>	<i>Pos</i>	<i>Work</i>	<i>Goal</i>	<i>Work</i>	<i>Teach</i>	<i>Work</i>	<i>Org</i>	
		<i>Sat.</i>	<i>Sat</i>	<i>Aff</i>	<i>Goal</i>	<i>Self-</i>	<i>Goal</i>	<i>er Self-</i>	<i>Self-</i>	<i>Supp</i>	
		<i>(Range</i>	<i>(1-5)</i>	<i>(1-5)</i>	<i>Prog</i>	<i>Eff</i>	<i>Supp</i>	<i>Eff</i>	<i>Eff</i>	<i>ort</i>	<i>Per Fit</i>
	<i>n</i>	<i>1-7)</i>			<i>(1-5)</i>	<i>(1-4)</i>	<i>(1-7)</i>	<i>(1-5)</i>	<i>(1-5)</i>	<i>(1-7)</i>	<i>(1-7)</i>
Rural	50	5.92	3.79	3.66	3.79	3.24	5.22	3.91	4.03	5.02	5.08
Sub	57	5.71	3.62	3.47	3.43	3.14	4.86	3.83	3.94	4.94	4.71
Urb	17	6.07	4.14	3.99	4.07	3.31	5.50	4.12	4.00	5.61	5.27

Correlations between section scores for teachers based on community background can be found in Appendix H. Relationships between the various measures on the questionnaire for teachers with rural, suburban, and urban backgrounds mirror those for the total sample, with the exception of strong correlations between the *Work Satisfaction Index* and *Perceived Fit* ($r=0.755$) and *Organizational Support* ($r=0.711$) for teachers from urban communities, compared to moderately strong correlations between those measures for the whole sample.

School level. Responses were grouped according to the school levels participants reported teaching. 57 teachers reported working in more than one school level, so their responses are considered in multiple groups (i.e., a teacher's responses who reported working at both the elementary and middle school levels were included in both the

elementary school and middle school group). Teachers whose position include teaching at the elementary level reported the highest mean scores on six of the ten measures on the questionnaire. Teachers whose position includes teaching at the middle school level reported the lowest scores on six of the ten measures (see Table 19). Correlations between measures for teachers of different school levels can be found in Appendix I.

Table 19.
Mean Scores by Reported School Level Taught

		<i>Work</i>	<i>Teac</i>		<i>Work</i>	<i>Goal</i>	<i>Work</i>	<i>Teach</i>	<i>Work</i>	<i>Org</i>	
	<i>n</i>	<i>Sat.</i>	<i>her</i>	<i>Pos</i>	<i>Goal</i>	<i>Self-</i>	<i>Goal</i>	<i>er</i>	<i>Self-</i>	<i>Suppo</i>	<i>Per Fit</i>
		<i>(Range</i>	<i>Sat</i>	<i>Aff</i>	<i>Prog</i>	<i>Eff</i>	<i>Supp</i>	<i>Self-</i>	<i>Eff</i>	<i>rt (1-</i>	<i>(1-7)</i>
		<i>1-7)</i>	<i>(1-5)</i>	<i>(1-5)</i>	<i>(1-5)</i>	<i>(1-4)</i>	<i>(1-7)</i>	<i>(1-5)</i>	<i>(1-5)</i>	<i>7)</i>	<i>(1-7)</i>
Elem	67	5.94	3.84	3.67	3.77	3.15	5.42	3.87	3.87	5.33	5.30
Middle	70	5.84	3.70	3.56	3.54	3.18	4.99	3.93	4.03	5.01	4.81
High	63	5.86	3.76	3.61	3.57	3.27	4.85	3.91	4.05	4.93	4.85

Work-related goal. Teachers were asked to specify a work-related goal to answer some portions of the questionnaire. Work-related goals were coded into 7 categories (see Figure 4) and responses were grouped according to work-related goals (e.g. “Improving my classroom organization”, “Making my students love music”, “Be less stressed at work”) The group with work-related goals concerning student dispositions and relationships gave the highest mean scores for eight out of ten measures on the questionnaire.

Table 20.
Mean Scores by Reported Work-Related Goal

		<i>Work Sat. (Range 1- 7)</i>	<i>Teach er Sat (1-5)</i>	<i>Pos Aff (1-5)</i>	<i>Work Goal Prog (1-5)</i>	<i>Goal Self-Eff (1-4)</i>	<i>Work Goal Supp (1-7)</i>	<i>Teach er Self- Eff (1-5)</i>	<i>Work Self- Eff (1-5)</i>	<i>Org Supp ort (1-7)</i>	<i>Per Fit (1-7)</i>
Goal 1	24	5.64	3.84	3.59	3.66	3.22	5.40	3.77	3.83	5.19	4.97
Goal 2	25	5.91	3.78	3.65	3.61	3.28	5.25	4.04	3.99	5.20	5.09
Goal 3	20	5.90	3.43	3.54	3.19	2.90	4.39	3.88	4.05	4.72	4.60
Goal 4	18	6.26	4.16	3.86	4.19	3.36	5.69	3.94	4.08	5.42	5.26
Goal 5	8	5.85	3.60	3.68	3.88	3.22	4.75	3.95	4.13	4.79	5.04
Goal 6	18	5.62	3.66	3.35	3.73	3.22	5.31	3.82	3.86	5.10	4.92
Goal 7	9	5.73	3.69	3.66	3.40	3.14	4.17	4.11	4.07	4.58	4.30

Note. Goal 1 (Classroom Management), Goal 2 (Curriculum or Lesson Planning), Goal 3 (Time Management or Work/Life Balance), Goal 4 (Student Relationships or Dispositions), Goal 5 (Student Musicianship), Goal 6 (Teacher Skills), Goal 7 (Program Growth).

Open-Ended Response

The final question on the questionnaire invited teachers to write-in a response: *“Is there anything else about your overall job satisfaction or issues related to teaching in rural school(s) that you would like to share with the researchers?”*. Seventy teachers provided a write-in response to the question. Responses were grouped into categories (see table 21). Some responses were multi-faceted and were coded into multiple categories (ex. the response *“The pay is lower, for the same amount of work. But I like being able to run my program the way I want to.”* was coded into both the *Low Salary* and *Sense of Autonomy* categories).

Table 21.

Additional Comments

Response	Freq.
Positive Feeling Towards Community	12
Positive Student Behavior	4
Good Administrative/School Support	4
Sense of Autonomy	4
Negative Feeling Towards Community	3
Poor Student Behavior	4
Weak Administrative/School Support	9
Low Salary	9
Feels Spread Thin	14
Lack of Resources	8
Low Value of Arts in Community	6
Scheduling Challenges	3
Demands flexibility/creativity	1

Strand II: Qualitative Results

Participant Profiles

The three participants in the qualitative portion of the study are employed as music teachers in “rural” or “small rural” schools according to the Colorado Department of Education. Some information about the participants and their school contexts is included in Table 21.

Table 21.
Participant Descriptions

Participant	School(s)	School Population (Colorado Department of Education, 2019c)	Years in Current Position	Total Years Teaching
John	Norton Elementary School; Norton Junior/Senior High School	194; 165	3	3
Cathy	Fairfield Elementary School	508	14	14
Robert	Greenville K-8 School	340	3	10

John

John is the K-12 music director in Norton, a town about 30 miles outside the nearest urban area. Norton is a small farming community home to about 1,200 people. While there are a few blocks of residential neighborhood bordering the school campuses, many residents are separated by acres upon acres of farms which produce and hemp. Its school district consists of one elementary and one junior/senior high school, which straddle the state highway that runs through town, about two blocks away from a one-block-wide downtown area. John teaches music to all of the students in the district: he teaches general music to kindergarten-4th graders, and band to 5th-12th graders. His band classes are

divided up into separate 5th and 6th grade ensembles, as well as a 7th-8th grade band and a high school band that meet in overlapping periods such that each of the older groups spends some class time by themselves, and some time combined together as one large group. John is in his third year of teaching and has spent his whole career up to this point teaching in the Norton schools.

Community and school context. John described the school population as a transient one. “We have a lot of kids that will kind of jump around from [nearby towns].” The agricultural influence also causes unexpected and frequent student absenteeism. In addition, the community puts a heavy emphasis on sports:

For example, when volleyball made state, they cancelled school that Friday. There’s just not enough staff, because people go. The day before, they projected the game in the gym and everyone watched it...everyone’s behind that.

John also noted that students are very involved in an array of activities. He described that they occasionally, at his discretion, put together a pep band for sporting events, but “one issue I have is that a lot of my kids are out on the field, also.”

The effect that student absences, whether for family-, sports-, extracurricular- or farm-related reasons, has on the music program varies. “I’ve kind of learned in my position to be really cognizant of who I’m going to put pressure on...it kind of kind of made me pick easier music because you don’t know who’s gonna come or who’s gonna leave. At the younger levels, it’s whatever...it affects a lot at the secondary level.”

Many of the residents of Norton share family ties, and those ties run throughout the school district as well. In addition to many students having siblings and cousins in different

grades, the principal's children and nephews are in the band. "When I need a bus," John explained, "it's actually the mother-in-law of the superintendent...so that helps."

John notices that the consequences of small-town politics tend to play out at school. Since most students, aside from the ones who hop from school to school, are surrounded by the same peers for their entire education, drama between students can be intense. In addition, "when there's family drama, that gets a little awkward. That tends to happen a bit, and they'll carry that into their classrooms. And when there's drama with the adults, that'll carry over to the kids too."

Overall, John describes the school district as fairly casual. "To be honest, you don't have to work very hard to keep a job here..." In terms of formal observation, John said, "the structure is very much, 'let's do the least amount possible.'" The casual atmosphere was evident in John's interactions with other teachers. On a day where the P.E. teacher was planned to take both of the first grade classes to allow John more planning time, she half-jokingly asked in the hall between classes if John wanted to take them. He shrugged, said "Sure," and picked up the first graders from their classrooms, explaining to the classroom teachers that he and the P.E. teacher decided to swap days. This flexibility often works in John's favor by allowing him to "borrow" students from their other classes.

Cathy

Cathy is the music teacher for Fairfield Elementary School. Fairfield is a community of about 3,000 people located about 30 miles from the outskirts of the nearest urban area, or, as Cathy put it, "from civilization". While some Fairfield residents participate in agricultural activities, many of them commute to the nearby urban area to work "blue-collar" jobs. After moving to Fairfield 15 years ago with a career in music

therapy, Cathy was dissatisfied with the quality of music education her daughter was receiving at the elementary school. When the music teacher left the next school year, Cathy applied for the position when it came open and was offered the job. After earning alternate licensure, Cathy has now held her position at Fairfield Elementary for 14 years.

Community and school context. Fairfield is a wide-spread community: some students commute up to 20 miles to the school building and many students rely on the bus for transportation to and from school. The elementary, middle, and high schools, which together comprise the whole school district, all share one block.

Cathy teaches all of Fairfield's elementary students in classes of up to 25 students on a 3-day rotation with art and P.E.. Each class meets for 45 minutes. In addition, she directs a before-school choir program comprised of about 60 students and puts on a play every year in the spring.

The Fairfield schools are deeply connected with, and respected by, the larger Fairfield community. "The community knows the teachers personally, knows their names...and a lot of the community comes to football games and my concerts and the play." Fairfield students, even at the elementary level, are heavily involved in sports and also participate in activities like Boy Scouts and 4H.

Robert

Robert is a general music and band teacher for the K-8 School in Greenville. At the K-8 school, Robert teaches general music to all of the elementary students, supports the middle school band classes with pull-out help for students who need it, teaches middle

school drama, and directs an extracurricular jazz band for the middle school. This is Robert's 10th year teaching music and the third year in his position at Greenville K-8.

Community and school context. Greenville shares a geographical region with two other similarly sized towns (all have populations under 1,500 people) within a half-hour drive of each other and is about an hour and a half away from the nearest urban area. One of these towns is Wakefield, where Robert lives and commutes to Greenville. The three towns share a school district with another slightly larger and slightly-further-away town, though each community has its own self-contained elementary, middle, and high school feeder system. According to Robert, the three towns "share a nebulous but cohesive relationship. Everyone kind of knows everybody because the three towns are small enough that if you're in a certain niche, it's like, 'I know this person from [town], this person from Wakefield, and this person from Greenville.'"

Robert described Greenville as a sports-oriented community. "It's a big area for wrestling and basketball and track. It's like one bleeds into the next...The kids are excited about sports and they turn out in droves and the parents pay money to go to sporting events."

Themes: Job Satisfaction

Some common themes emerged from separate interviews with participants. The two main themes that emerged from the cases studied were community and goal progress as sources of job satisfaction. Community-centered job satisfaction centered on support from school and professional communities, while goal-oriented job satisfaction attribution depended on progress toward growth-oriented goals.

Community

The support that participants felt from their school and professional communities played an important role in each participant's sense of job satisfaction. While participants perceived varying levels of support from these communities, they all attributed their degree of satisfaction at least in part to their perceived support.

School Community. All three participants emphasized that support they felt from their school and community was earned over time. According to Cathy,

It took a while, for sure....I kind of had to prove myself, but now I'm kind of in the pack of teachers that has been there [a long time]....It does help.... I'm really happy with [the community support]—but it took years to build it. I definitely didn't know the families and didn't really know how to do it and was actively trying, but more and more every year I feel like I know the community better. (Cathy, interview on January 12, 2020)

According to Robert, “they still don’t trust [him] yet,” despite it being his third year teaching in Greenville. Recalling his first year in Norton,

John said,

They [the community] were pretty quick to criticize. So, you know, when I first got here, they're like, “Oh, he's terrible, he's not doing this.” I had been here for one week! I didn't know what I was doing. I STILL don't know what I'm doing! But now they're more forgiving or forgetting. (John, interview on December 12, 2019)

He described the recent moment where he felt truly initiated into the school community:

I was talking to him about volleyball... and I said something like, ‘Man, they really beat them,’ and he stopped me and said, “No, no—we beat them. You're part of us, now.’ This just happened a few weeks ago. It kind of hit me, like, oh man, he accepted me. (John, interview on December 12, 2019)

The participants worked to earn the trust and respect of their students in addition to the adults in the school community. As evidenced by his interactions with students, John has earned this trust by learning about students' lives outside his classroom. Before school,

he greeted every kindergartener through third grader by name as they entered the building. He regularly weaves checking-in conversations, like, “Hey, do you get to go on that trip with your brother?” “Did you get a haircut this weekend?” “Hey, is that a new jacket?”, in between activities during class. It is clear from these interactions that he makes a conscious effort to get to know students on a personal level. Cathy and Robert also demonstrated knowledge of students’ outside-of-school-lives during interactions between classes or activities.

Robert observed that,

It's like the support that I'm given is a kind of a reflection of the impact that I'm making. If I'm making a big impact that, then the support kind of comes back. And I can see it's a cyclical thing, like, Cool I've made an impact on these students and now it's starting to come back to me in those kinds of ways. (Robert, interview on February 7, 2020)

Robert finds that his school-based support is usually positive, but he feels that the music programs have to compete with sports for support from members of the school community:

We don't, at the at least at the middle school, we don't have a performance space. And so it's like, cool, we're using the gym, but we have to use the gym around a sport that's using it. And that's, that's just kind of the nature of the beast at the moment. But sure. I mean, that's really the only way in which it doesn't get supported. They're like, “We're totally down for this!—unless it's competing with basketball.” So we work around it, I guess. (Robert, interview on December 12, 2019)

This sentiment is shared with John, who was also clear that music holds a lower value in his community than music:

I think it's just that's just where that community is going to dedicate their time to because the community move much rather be farming and working on their sports. They still share music and they'll do music, but they might not spend their entire time [on music]. (John, interview on December 2, 2019)

Cathy also mentioned that students in Fairfield are involved in sports after school, but as an elementary teacher, she does not feel the same degree of competition with other activities as John and Robert see in their secondary music programs.

Performances were an avenue for Cathy, John, and Robert to earn support from the greater school community. Cathy cites her students' performances, particularly choir performances, as a key to connecting with the Fairfield community:

Starting the choir really helped. It seemed like it just helped me settle in and get to know people and build my confidence....Music teachers are unique because we actually show off what we've been doing in a concert, and hundreds of people attend sometimes....People attend my concert sometimes that don't even have kids...or, people whose kid was in the play five years ago and they've come every year since.... I'll always call the paper and say, 'Hey, come take pictures at our thing and put it in the paper,' Every time I have a concert or play they put it in the paper." (Cathy, interview on January 12, 2020)

Robert also uses community-oriented performances to his advantage. He discussed a "Java and Jazz" event the band program hosts, where the middle and high school jazz bands perform alongside a community band that Robert and his co-teacher play with. "We pack the house and everyone's excited.... The community supports music that way." In addition, Robert himself performs frequently in the community.

It makes a huge difference for them...when I give them the opportunity to come and see me [perform].... They need to see that, to know that music is a viable thing, a valid thing. They need to see it outside of me sitting on the carpet singing songs with them. (Robert, interview on December 18, 2019)

Cathy also earns community support in Fairfield by participating and volunteering in the town on a personal, outside-of-school, basis. She is heavily involved with her church. She started the Fairfield Arts Council with a group of involved parents that eventually led to the formation of a community band and a middle school drama program. Similarly, Robert feels "plugged in" to the community around Greenville by playing music in professional contexts.

Administrators. Support perceived by participants from administrators took several forms. The participants described feeling supported by administrators' commendations (Robert: "(“They believe in our program and that what we're doing is good for the kids...[they give] a lot of affirmations.”), actions that benefit the music program (John: “I was probably 10-15 [instruments] short, so I made up a list with what I needed and I sent him the requisition, and the next day we had it.”), provision of professional development opportunities, and allowance of autonomy.

John serves two administrators, an elementary principal and a junior/senior high principal, and described the support he feels from the elementary principal in particular:

He's awesome. I'll mention things, and the next day it's done. When I wanted to require band for 5th and 6th graders, I was like hey, I have almost everybody anyway, let's just make everybody do it. It was just a suggestion, but when the schedule came out, I was like oh, cool, we're doing this. (John, interview on December 2, 2019)

This action-driven support was evident in the principal's interactions with John. When John returned on a Monday after having taken the previous Friday off to attend the state music education conference, he learned that the 6th grade class had behaved poorly in his absence. After admonishing the 6th grade class during their band period, John met the principal in the hallway: “He said, well, how'd it go? And really, tomorrow he will say, well, how can I help you when you see them again? And we'll talk about that. And he'll give me strategies.”

Robert's administration shows verbal support to the music programs, but Robert doesn't find that the verbal support is backed up with action.

The compliments are nice, but how does that manifest itself in other ways of support? ...This is not a well-funded district. So, I would say... 'Hey, can we do this?' and they're

like, 'Sure, if you have the money to do it.' (Robert, interviews on December 18, 2019, and February 7, 2020)

Administrators at the district level, like the school board, appear to have similarly positive, but distant, support for the program that they display by attending concerts. "The school board is pretty adamant about having good music programs in the schools...[they] are definitely interested." However, Robert described that their support, like his principal's, doesn't necessarily translate into actions that benefit the music program.

Autonomy. Each of the participants felt that they have a high level of autonomy over their classrooms. For Cathy, administrators demonstrated support by allowing her the freedom and flexibility to run her classroom how she sees fit:

They've basically told me, you're the expert, we're not. And it looks like the students and community really love it and you get results, so we're just going to let you do what you want....You know what you should be doing more than we know what you should be doing it, so we're just going to leave you to it.... I like the autonomy of being able to do what you know works for the kids. (Cathy, interview on January 12, 2020)

The autonomy that Cathy's administrators afford her is a crucial piece of her satisfaction with the job: "I know I could make more money in town," she explained, "but I don't because I don't want to have a bigger district tell me what to do." She appreciates not having to use a district-prescribed curriculum and appreciates the trust her administrators have in her to make appropriate decisions in her students' best musical interests.

Robert also compared the degree of autonomy he feels to that which he might encounter in a different teaching setting:

I feel like the requirements that are put on me from the top down don't apply as hard as they would in like a suburban or an urban area. I think the schools that I've been in in urban areas, like where I did my student teaching in [suburbs], I felt like the top down approach there in terms of music had super high expectations of performance and focused a lot on making sure that every kid got the same outcome. Like, every kid should be able to read the music, every kid should be able to perform at a high level,

and I feel like here I get to kind of set my own expectations, so to speak. (Robert, interview on December 18, 2019)

John and Robert also recognized a high level of autonomy afforded by their positions. John said, “Both principals are very much like, hey, go do what you need to do, if you’re screwing it up, we’ll let you know.” Robert mentioned that he “[sets] his own standards” for his students’ musical achievement. However, John and Robert both acknowledged that the autonomy they enjoy is accompanied by a lack of accountability. John described how he is the only one holding himself accountable for improving his teaching.

We could play “Seven Nation Army” really good, and people are like “This is the most amazing thing in the world!” and the administrators say, “Cool, the band sounds good, so you’re doing your job,” and I’m like, am I really doing my job? Because there’s a whole load of other stuff that I know I should do better. (John, interview on January 27, 2020).

Robert illustrated with an anecdote:

I almost have too much autonomy. I know when I spend too much time by myself that I have too much autonomy because I will do things and get lazy with stuff, and then I’ll go to like a conference and I’ll be like, “Oh yeah! that’s what music teaching is.”.... I was saying this to my mentor teacher, actually, she said, “Well, you know, the new standards are coming out.” And I was like, “Oh, there’s new standards?” And she was like, “Yeah, you haven’t heard about him yet?” I was like, “I live in Standards Chechnya. We don’t even have the standards in our gradebook, they’re not even there. The parents don’t even know.” And her eyes were just huge, like, “They’re not they’re not using the standards out there?” I was like, “No. I can give a grade based on just how I feel if I really wanted to, but I don’t.” (Robert, interview on February 7, 2020)

Value of Music. All three participants mentioned that their community is sports oriented. The teachers felt that their programs are competing with sports for the attention of students, parents, and administrators. This was especially true for Robert and John, whose secondary students are heavily involved in their school’s sports offerings.

For John, whose administrators cancel school when a team makes state in order for the school community to show their support, this emphasis ultimately affects the level of musicianship his ensembles are capable of reaching. He felt like the quality of his ensembles is limited by the community's prioritization of sports.

They tend to lean towards athletics over music. They prioritize that. That's where the community is going to dedicate their time...[they] would much rather be farming or working on sports. They'll still do music; they might not spend their entire time on it... Wherever the fire's burning the hottest, that's where they'll put their attention to. (John, interview on December 2, 2019)

Robert also feels like the music program's support from the school community is secondary to support for sports.

We use the gym [for performances], but we have to use the gym around a sport that's using it.... There are these little windows, like between basketball and volleyball [seasons], where we're like, 'Go, go, go!'... The support we get for it is like, "We'll totally support this! —as long as it's not competing directly with the sports thing." (Robert, interview on December 18, 2019)

Robert sees the lack of respect for music reflected in the facilities that are available to music students.

Right now, there's a sense that we're secondary because it's like, "Look at this stage we just kind of threw together," and I don't blame them for that. When you're on the stage and the curtain opens, there's a level of importance there. But when there's no curtain and you're using, like, rolled up wrestling mats as a partition, it's not as exciting.... [I want to] give the kids a space where they feel like performance is important. (Robert, interview on December 18, 2019)

Robert also finds a challenge in the lack of exemplar music programs in the area and the value of music in the larger community. In terms of showing support for his program, Robert speculated, "I think it comes from the sheltered nature. People haven't seen other buildings in other districts where it's like, the principal does *this* during a concert and the staff do *this* during the musical."

Robert and John both made comparisons between the value of music in their community versus its value in other places. Robert, when describing the rental system he uses for students' instruments, noted that, "People in [suburban area] don't mind paying \$45 a month to rent a band instrument, but out here it takes a bit of convincing to get people to pay \$60 for the year to rent a school instrument."

John attributed the difference between students' dedication to the band program to the size of the school:

I think bigger schools just have band kids that's their life. Where, we have kids that just like doing band. But they also like playing volleyball, they like playing softball. They're in Student Council, they'll do FBLA. So I think we have to come to the understanding that you're just sharing the kids....They're in high school, I don't really think they should have to be conservatory-trained if they're going to be in band...in their [musical] goals, you kind of have to get at them a different way. (John, interview on December 2, 2019)

Cathy, John, and Robert all discussed the strong value of tradition in their school communities. John cited his community support as a result of the tradition established by his predecessor:

People respect the music program here, and it's not because of me. It's because the previous teacher here had built something really great. And because she had built a really pretty decent foundation, I was able to just kind of keep stacking on top of it. (John, interview on December 2, 2019)

Cathy's annual plays have become a community tradition:

I love doing the plays. We put a lot of work into those, me and kind of the community and I love to just have it.... Music teachers are unique because we actually show off what we've been doing in a concert. And we have hundreds of people attend sometimes. Whereas like a third-grade teacher doesn't do that. you know, they don't show up to watch what she does [laughs].... So if you just kind of stay somewhere long enough, you kind of get just embedded into the community. (Cathy, interview on January 15, 2020).

Robert's school colleagues recognize the role music plays in its community traditions:

There's certainly a level of buy-in for tradition, especially in this school. So like the holiday concerts that we just got done with. I see a lot of people coming out to help in that way. Like I didn't need to hardly do any sort of setup, the cooking class, make cookies and stuff for the concert and all this stuff. So I mean, it's supportive of traditional things. It's a good driver for [support], for sure. (Robert, interview on December 12, 2019)

Professional Community. All three participants cited, either directly or indirectly, the importance of their involvement in a professional community of music educators to their job satisfaction. Robert is the only participant who works directly with another music educator on a regular basis, and he considered it a very satisfying aspect of his job:

I would say that's the single-most important thing keeping me here. [Co-teacher] is a great teacher, a great teaching partner.... [we] have a really tight-knit program that we've build because of our work, our ability to communicate, and our friendship. We play in a band together. Our program as we see it is really strong.... I imagine teaching without [co-teacher] would be very difficult because we see eye-to-eye on a lot of things. (Robert, interview on December 18, 2019)

Along with his co-teacher, Robert also works closely with a percussionist in town who comes in to help the students on a regular basis. For Robert, working closely with these other musicians is extremely valuable:

It's really important for me to have the support system here, I think that's what makes it work. It allows me to do the maximum amount of stuff and if I didn't have those systems in place, then it would be much more difficult. (Robert, interview on December 18, 2019)

Cathy, who is the only music teacher in her building, and John, who is the only music teacher in his district, must work harder to participate in professional communities. For Cathy, being an active member of several elementary music teacher organizations, including holding leadership positions at the state level, and attending conferences at the national level, keeps her connected to other music educators.

Like a lot of the rural schools, we're our own school district. And so it's only me and the secondary teacher. So I've kind of like a lone ranger, you know, I don't have a district of

like, teachers in there but I do sometimes work with the [Franklin] schoolteachers who are like, in the other school closest to me. Not that close, but enough. (Cathy, interview on January 12, 2020)

Cathy consciously “put in a lot of effort to try to meet people...because otherwise I could have just been there alone.” Cathy and John both discussed the regional music teacher organizations in which they participate:

There's a meeting once a year where we get together and plan and they do honor choirs and honor bands and stuff together. So we get together and say, “Okay, all right. Is this a good date for the high school? For the honor choir?” “Okay. All right, what directors, okay, you get you get you work on finding a director for the middle school” and “Okay, you're going to be an audition judge” and this group puts on these honor choir and honor band stuff for the secondary people. They do a couple things like that.... So I've got to know some of the teachers that way, too. (Cathy, interview on January 12, 2020)

We will have two meetings at the beginning the year before our big event in November. And then we have a January event and then a March event. So, we what is that, five meetings a year? Well, during those meetings we'll rotate places, who's hosting. And I think that helps a lot. Because, I mean, it all takes us at least 30 minutes to get to the actual meeting place. I think we all kind of appreciate that. (John, interview on December 2, 2019)

While Robert did not mention participating in such a music teacher organization, he did mention similar regional opportunities for his students:

But as far as giving the kids opportunities, at least the [region], honor bands and honor choirs, and those types of things are really effective in getting the kids out. [two nearby colleges] have good programs that they reach out to us, [one college] is kind of our big like anchor point for higher level music. Then we have a we do a small schools band between [several towns] and Greenville and Wakefield we kind of a little, like festival band and have a concert in the in the late winter. That's been a good experience too. (Robert, interview on December 18, 2019)

For Cathy, despite having strong musical connections outside the school district, her nearest music colleague, the secondary music director at the schools her elementary school feeds, does not provide what she feels is good support:

He's at the end of his career, I think he has a “I'm just going to hang on for the retirement” kind of attitude.... His program has just been dwindling.... It's costing a lot of his musicians....It is discouraging that I don't have a good, strong program to send my students on to. (Cathy, interview on January 12, 2020)

Cathy noted how music participation in the district is strong at the elementary level, with as many as 80 students participating in the before-school choir program, compared to the 15 students in high school band and four in the high school choir. Cathy attributes the decline in music participation at least partially to her colleague and perceives this decline as a reflection of poor support for the students leaving the elementary school who are excited to pursue music.

John's participation in the regional music league has given him the opportunity to develop relationships with more experienced teachers who mentor him. Mentors are a valuable source of support for John because he can reach out to them for specific help or to work with his students directly:

I can call [colleague] and say, "I don't know what I'm doing!" and he'll come in and listen to my groups.... He'll come in and to listen to my groups. I say, "Will you judge me as [festival] judge?" And then we'll, we'll go through the rubric.... When I have a guest come, that helps a lot. (John, interview on December 2, 2019)

While he finds his relationships with mentors and older teachers positive, relationships with other early-career teachers are less positive.

This is going to be a little tongue-in-cheek, but it's the other teachers my age that are harder to get along with.... With teachers my age, it feels like we're trying to flex, like who's doing a better job? And that's kind of my frustration of the band director profession in general. Sometimes we have a lot of flexing, and I'm like, we're not flexing here. We're all doing the same job. And that's the issue that I've had with some of the directors in my area. Not that I don't get along with them. It's just like, I'd rather not talk to you because you're not pleasant to talk to.... Sometimes the demeanors of music teachers and band directors, it's just not fun...I sometimes feel underappreciated from my colleagues, from my profession. (John, interview on December 2, 2019)

John also mentioned feeling professionally ostracized because of his rural teaching position:

The other thing I fight among colleagues is—what I always feel, and maybe it's just the way I feel—is that urban folk will look down on rural schools. They're like, "I don't

really want to help you because you have 20 kids.” And then I’m like, “Well, I don’t really want you to be here if you’re going to be a jerk.”... If you’re going to come visit us and then turn around and say, “Well, they don’t have a bassoon player. They don’t have this. They don’t even have a tuba player.” Then, I don’t need you here. I need you here to make [my students] better musicians. And so, I think that’s contributing to isolation, because I think there’s this stigma that rural schools don’t foster musical growth, which I think they do. (John, interview on December 2, 2019)

Professional development. None of the districts where the Cathy, John, and Robert teach offer music-specific professional development, but all three teachers are able to attend the state music education conference each year. Robert views this as a privilege, remarking that,

We’re kind of lucky we get sent to a conference. A lot of people in the core curriculums don’t get sent anywhere...[our principal] will ask, “So how did it go?” and I’ll say, “It was great!” and tell them all the things I learned...what they gleaned from it was, “Cool, this was a good investment.” (Robert, interview on February 7, 2020)

John is also able to attend the state music conference, but he has found that he is responsible for creating other development opportunities for himself.

Let’s say something at [nearby urban center], or it’s here, and they’re bringing somebody, and it has to do specifically with math or English. I’ll go to the superintendent and say, hey, there’s a Kodaly workshop happening at [university]. Can I trade this day out? Can I not come to work this Friday, and I’ll go to that thing on Saturday and call it good? So, I’m able to trade out and we call it flexing days. I think the administration understands that I’ll find opportunities, like one time I went to go just watch a concert and I said, I can I go watch this concert instead of sitting through this meeting? And they said, Sure. Cool. It makes you a better musician. So, I went and that’s awesome. (John, interview on December 2, 2019)

Because she earned her music teacher certification through an alternate licensure program, Cathy took it upon herself to seek the development she needed to feel competent in the classroom.

That was not that was not even close to being comparable to university training. You don’t get to do student teaching with it. So I never did student teaching, so I think it took me much longer to figure out what the heck I was doing.... I had this kindergarten

teacher as my mentor, she was super dingy, and we only met like three times. There was nobody in music to mentor me. (Cathy, interview on January 12, 2020)

The lack of mentorship from other music teachers was a common theme among the three participants. While John appreciates that his administrator visits classrooms and provides teachers with suggestions for improvement on a regular basis, John has observed a lack of music-teaching-specific feedback from his principal and in his induction program:

I think they're both uncomfortable with the content, so they don't really know what to do or say.... Well, the structure is very, let's do the least amount possible, so that we don't have to do all the work. So like my induction program, we did do all the steps for it, but there was stuff that we did super quick. Or like the book study, they all read something, and I actually picked a book that I had already known.... And I just kind of told the superintendent what it was about. He's like, "Cool, sounds good enough to me," signed it off and, there we go, there's my induction. (John, interview on January 27, 2020)

For Robert, "[my administrator] walks in and they look at what I'm doing, and as long as the kids are engaged...then I'm doing my job." Despite what he perceives as empty affirmation, Robert described,

I don't need that necessarily to feel driven. I don't need to have people on my coattails to make myself like a better musician, actually I need the opposite. I need to go to [state music education conference] where I get to watch master teachers for a day.... I'm like, "yeah, that's great. I want to go do that," and it's more of like an inspiration rather than the, "Oh, you should be doing this and you should be doing this," and that kind of feedback. So, honestly, I think that feeling of the inspiration to do, rather than the push to do, is something that is absolutely essential for teachers who don't get burned out. (Robert, interview on February 7, 2020)

Personal Musicianship. Robert and John both talked at length about the importance of continued growth in their own musicianship. John, who plays in a community band, misses the challenge of playing in a high-caliber ensemble.

I've been starved to play. Man, I just want to play in a good wind ensemble. I try to still practice every day...but I crave playing in an ensemble. Or take a private lesson where they say, "You didn't work hard enough." (John, interview on December 2, 2019)

John feels a stagnation in his growth as a musician in his current teaching assignment. "I can feel myself outgrowing the position," John explained, citing his frustrations with the community and students' complacency with musical quality. "There's always things I can improve on, but... I think this is it. This is what they are content with. And I'm not content with that. I want more musical challenge."

Continuing to exercise his own musicianship at a challenging level is also a priority for Robert, who remarked that that he has "no advanced students, like kids who show a really great promise of understanding music at a level that's internal." In the absence of students that are musically challenging, Robert maintains his own musical growth by participating in music-making outside of school:

[This region] is very inundated with musical talent, so that's what I do. I play professionally in four different bands right now. That's been a really cool experience. Two of them are kind of pickup bands where it's like, we got this gig so now we'll go do the thing. One of them is a pretty true-standing band, and that's like the one with [percussion colleague], and [teaching partner] is in that one too. So, that's awesome.
(Robert, interview on December 18, 2019)

Robert draws creative energy from collaborating with other musicians in the community, including his co-teacher.

Cathy also mentioned wanting to improve her own musicianship, by "join[ing] a community orchestra sometime down the road and maybe get[ting] into voice lessons again." While Cathy feels the need to feed her own musicianship, she pointed out the difficulties with doing so: "I'd have to go, like, 30 miles away to find something...I just get busy; my family gets really busy." Cathy, the only parent in the study, prioritizes time with her family over finding her own musical opportunities.

Goals

Two types of goals emerged from the three cases: goals for student growth and goals for program growth. All three teachers expressed that student growth is a satisfying, if not the most satisfying, aspect of their job. Relatedly, the teachers expressed goals related to improvements of their music program as a whole, by either including more students in music programs or enriching the experience of the students who already participate in the programs. The teachers' sense of progress toward these goals, or lack thereof, and their perceived barriers to their goals suggested a relationship between goal progress and overall job satisfaction.

Student-Centered Goals. All of the teachers emphasized the desire to see their students develop as musicians. John situates his students' musical growth in the relationships that he builds with them.

I just want kids to like music.... I want them to be able to have the chance to create music, and to be able to still create music after they're done... I just want them to be able to play when they're done here. If they can have the tools, or at least find the tools, to do it, that's all my goal is....I really enjoy the community getting behind me and knowing them and being known, the relationships and all that. (John, interview on December 2, 2019)

He illustrated this point by telling about a student who

... came in here, she had been working really hard to be an honor band, but didn't make it her seventh grade year. She practiced all summer and then made honor band this year. I just love that because it's like, I took that journey with her and I was helping her. Because [after she didn't make it last year] I said, you know what, let's just keep going at it. Just keep practicing, just do it.... So, I really find the relationships very satisfying. (John, interview on December 2, 2019)

Cathy cites building relationships with students and seeing their growth over the course of their elementary education as the most satisfying aspects of her job.

My goal is to just help those kids really, really want to grow, I just love watching [the choir performances] and seeing how I've had a hand in helping them really, really love music.... I love being able to teach them for six years in a row. It's really rewarding to see the kids that just love it.... I love what I do. I feel like I'm pretty good at what I do. I feel like it's what I'm supposed to be doing. And really, it's just very satisfying personally for me. (Cathy, interview on January 12, 2020)

Cathy's teaching goals are focused on making her students' experience the best possible:

"it's up to me to get the kids up to the quality that I want." She explained that she's re-organized her curriculum for kindergarten through 3rd grade, but needs to re-vamp the 4th and 5th grade materials. Her curriculum is constantly evolving to meet student needs:

I have my general plan, like for the year I know like what concepts I'm doing, but I kind of use this [motions toward curriculum folders] and then just pick and choose. I plan my lessons every lesson cycle... I don't reuse them every year.... There are too many variables. (Cathy, interview on January 15, 2020)

Robert has a very clear goal for his students, and achieving it is an important source of satisfaction: "The most satisfying part of my job is watching kids enjoy music. How can I help all of my students be musical in a way that makes sense to them?" Robert is sensitive to the fact that his students have disparate access to musical experiences in their home lives. and he takes it upon himself to help students find how music fits into their unique lives:

There are some kids that listen to a ton of music and get a complete enculturation from the amount of music that's in this [region]. And then there are kids who never see it.... The general music classroom to me is a bit of damage control, honestly, for the kids who don't experience music as much in their outside lives. It's like, okay, how do I give them something that's meaningful? (Robert, interview on February 7, 2020)

Robert works toward this goal by providing opportunities for music-making that are tailored to individual student needs. One example is his after-school drum club. "We'll get through to some kids like [drum-club students], who don't really do well in the classroom, but they do a great job sitting at the drum set...so that's a small way [to reach different students]."

For Cathy, Robert, and John, isolation can be an impediment to achieving their goals of student musical growth. Despite increasing interest from students, Cathy finds

opportunities to extend musical growth outside of the classroom are limited. She draws a line from the isolation of Fairfield to her students' access to musical opportunities:

I would like to have more students involved in [children's choir and theatre program based in urban area] ...but it's just too far. I think I am nurturing their interest in that stuff, but they don't really get to do it because it's just too far. There's no string program in our school which is sad.... If I was in a place with more access to that kind of stuff, I'd be pushing it really hard.... I feel like a lot of my students are just small-town kids. They'll just kind of stay here their whole life and I want to bring more culture to my town for my students. (Cathy, interview on January 12, 2020)

Robert cited student access to musical opportunities, like attending live performances, as an important experience in developing musical dispositions, but Greenville's isolation presents a challenge to that access. While the region around Greenville is "inundated with musical talent," the school's distance from amenities still makes it challenging for Robert to bring in outside music.

We are pretty far off the map.... The biggest thing [as far as isolation] is concerts. In [previous school], it was like, 'it's going to be a big deal, but we're going to go and see The Lion King on stage in [large city] and it's going to be great.' But being this far out, that's not even possible to do in a day. (Robert, interview on December 18, 2019)

Despite the absence of high-level, professional performing ensembles in the immediate vicinity, students are still able to participate in regional honor ensembles and festivals, and relatively-nearby colleges offer programs that Greenville music students can attend. Robert also mentioned that,

[Colleague] runs a world music series at the at the theater in Wakefield. And that world music series brings in performers so that they can come into the schools and that's awesome. Really, I mean, without that program, we would have almost nobody coming in..... Without that resource, we would not have any of that. So, [my colleague] saves the day. (Robert, interview on December 18, 2019)

John also noted the challenge that Norton's location poses to his student-growth goals. While Norton is located relatively near a metropolitan area, it is just out-of-the-way enough to make bringing in guests difficult. Even when he is able to offer payment to music

education students from the nearest university to come and do sectionals, they decline his offer because of the distance. “I don’t want to say I feel secluded, but I feel secluded,” John explained,

You look at schools in [other towns], and they have help coming in once or even multiple times a week.... I hire staff when there’s someone around who can do it, but it’s not as frequent as I’d like...I also record myself quite a bit, I’ll even tell the kids, “Hey, I know I’m working with you guys, but I’m also going to focus on what I’m doing, as well. So that way we can all collectively get better.” (John, interview on January 27, 2020)

Program-Centered Goals. In addition to the goals centered directly on students, the secondary educators in the study each expressed goals for the trajectories of their music program as a whole. Both teachers have ambitions for their programs, rooted in their own musicianship, that may be at odds with their current community’s values.

John is very clear on his goal for the music program overall: “I want the music program to serve the community.” To John, this means playing concerts that the audience enjoys, but not at the cost of learning musical skills:

Maybe we’ll play a little bit easier music, and people will love it. Maybe we won’t play standard literature. Maybe we’ll just play a bunch of pop tunes. Does the community like it? Yeah, they do. Can we get it to sound in tune? Yes. Can we learn about harmonic structure at the same time? Absolutely.... I think we meet those goals. (John, interview on December 2, 2019)

John also acknowledges that this goal can be challenging in the face of “a lack of resources”.

Despite the overarching goal of serving the community musically, John mentioned dissonance between these goals and his personal musicianship:

One of my dream goals is to take a group to [the state music education conference].... Maybe I do want to play standard literature. Maybe I do want to have a wind ensemble and a concert band...because I enjoy that. Here is always going to be a concert band, just one concert band and everybody plays. I guess I could make it the other way, but that’s just forcing a lot of people. So that really dictates what I want to do. (John, interview on December 2, 2019)

Robert also has goals of growing the renown of the music program with his co-teacher. “I want to have a strong program; I want it to be present.... We’re moving it in a direction that is going to help us build it up.” Some of the motivation for this goal, Robert admits, is about competing with sports:

We drive ourselves to do that.... The kids are excited about sports.... It’s a bit like jealousy, I think. We are sitting here going, ‘Why can’t we have that [community support that sports receive]?’ We wish we had that [sport-level status], so it’s upping the bar for ourselves so that we can have the status. It’s a pride thing. (Robert, interview on February 7, 2020)

All three participants commented on differences between their rural teaching setting and past experiences in suburban and urban areas, and how these differences impact their professional and classroom goals. For Cathy, her experience growing up in a large suburb gave her a model of what a strong music program could look like:

I went to a 5A High School so they had like a really good dance team and they had a really great drama program and did a really fun show choir, their orchestra program was really weak, but I feel like I’ve kind of like seen the potential. (Cathy, interview on January 12, 2020)

She also noted that, as an elementary teacher and working in a similarly sized school to those in non-rural areas, she doesn’t feel the outcomes of her program are impacted by rurality:

I think in any elementary around [metro area], I think that I could get that same level. Now, if I had feeder schools that were awful, that were just rural and like small groups. I feel like my elementary school, though, is like a normal size. I feel like it’s pretty like the same size of school, that would be in [metro area]. (Cathy, interview on January 15, 2020)

John and Robert, as secondary music teachers, recognize that some of their values, derived from their own experiences in school music or by perceived professional expectations, don’t seem to fit into their rural setting:

I went in[to college] thinking, "Oh, I'm going to be a high school band director and I'm going to have a big marching band in a big city and like, that just fell away. I didn't want any of that after a while.... Sometimes I have to remind myself about that, because I'm looking at it from a perspective of, "this is what I remember my band doing and we should be doing"—Well, wait a minute, how am I going to get my kids to that? They have no concept of what "that" means. (Robert, interview on December 18, 2019)

I think it's just as musicians, we have this expectation... you have that vision in your head, and I don't think you have to have lower expectations but you have to understand, I think, the floor and the ceiling that you have... I think we have a lower ceiling than most.... It might be the same amount of growth, but it lower....I can't give them a conservatory curriculum....They want to be able to be involved in music, and I'm going to try to max out their potential, and that's why I think their ceilings a little bit lower.... I require them to practice three, four hours every day or, "you need to practice at least an hour after school," that's not going to happen. Because we are working on the farm or at practice. (John, interview on December 2, 2019)

Themes: Job Retention

While all of the participants acknowledged an extremely strong influence from job satisfaction on their decision to remain in their position, each participant also shared other factors that also relate to their retention decision. The themes that emerged from discussion about job retention include motivation, work/life balance, and starting over.

Motivation

Each participant had a unique motivation for seeking their current teaching position in the first place that also influences the amount of time they plan to stay in the position.

For John, the draw of working in the Norton schools was, at first, immediate job security:

When you're a college student, you don't get to be a picker, right? You just kind of get what you get. And I liked it because it had band, and I really wanted to teach band.... A lot of people don't get that lucky, this was in April. I had a job in April that I knew was going to be ready for me in August. That's kind of the reason I ended up there. (John, interview on December 2, 2019)

While Norton may not have been his first choice of job location, John made a goal to stay for five years, in part to establish a strong music program and to have his student loans forgiven. John said that, “As far as retention, leaving, I think, just depends on what's more convenient for me. Staying, I think I'd say what's more convenient for the students or the community.”

Robert sought out the music teaching position at Greenville K-8 because of its location and proximity to his fiancée:

When I was living in [other town], I spent a lot of time coming down to this area....It's just a really beautiful place with great natural places to get out into...so that was kind of the draw....At the time [my fiancée] had a job out here, so we wanted to figure out a way to be able to live here. (Robert, interview on December 18, 2019)

Cathy had already lived in Fairfield before taking the music teaching position, but her motivation to live there in the first place was family-oriented. She moved to Fairfield with her husband because it was in commuting-distance to his job, and because

He's a farm kid... and [we] wanted a nice place to raise a family.... So we came out here and they had our church out here, and we really liked the school and the housing was cheaper. So we just felt really good about it. (Cathy, interview on January 15, 2020)

Cathy and Robert both have motivations to remain in their community beyond their current music teaching position. Unlike John, neither expressed having plans to leave or an interest in moving to a different position, though they did both speculate on reasons why they would, if ever, leave.

Robert draws the line at being able to make a positive impact on his students:

If I spend a week doing something that isn't effective, I walk away from it, like, “Okay, that sucked. I hate my job.” Or, I'll come back and am like, “That was a great lesson! I had a bunch of great lessons!” and the kids really loved the music, and they left thinking, “Yeah! Music is a great place to be!” It's definitely up and down with that.... I'd put it at a month. If the kids come to my classroom and I can't reach anybody in a

month, that will be, like, yep, I'm resigning. (Robert, interview on December 18, 2019)

For both Cathy and Robert, practical circumstances would be motivation to seek other employment. Cathy said,

I think if something happened to my husband's income or if something happened to my husband where he couldn't work....If something like that happened, I don't know that I could actually live on my salary. I could not pay my mortgage with my salary. (Cathy, interview on January 12, 2020)

Robert echoed this concern, saying,

My fiancé is a teacher as well, and our combined salaries are enough for us to live on, we can live pretty well off of our salaries. If I were living by myself, I would say that it would be a little tighter. (Robert, interview on December 18, 2019)

John, on the other hand, recognizes that Norton will probably not be the place where he spends the bulk of his career. For John,

I'll probably leave Norton in, let's see, it's my third...I have seven years here....My long-term goal is to do a master's degree. I would like to do this with a conducting assistantship. And then, eventually, I would like to...work under a University teaching music education, I'd be happy with that. (John, interview on December 2, 2019)

Cathy noted that other music teachers in the rural communities surrounding hers also had motivations for leaving that were not directly related to their music teaching position. She told about a colleague who

... was so isolated. He was single. Just so isolated, socially. I think it's different if you're like, married and have a family, and you just go home to your house every day and you're part of the community and you're in raising-your-family mode. It's different than being single and being very isolated...so [nearby school], they have had a string of turnover. (Cathy, interview on January 12, 2020)

John also speculated on the motivations of his fellow young music teaching colleagues in other rural schools. While John described thinking of his rural position as a way to serve the community, he commented that:

[some recent graduates] see rural schools as step-up schools. They think, 'Well, that way I can do a little bit of experience and then I'll move on to a bigger school'.... Sometimes I feel like rural schools are short-handed because they have a revolving door. They have a director for one year because sometimes rural schools are seen as step up schools... I will admit when I first took this job I was like "Well, I'll just have it for a year or two and then I'll go." But after that first year I went, "No, it's not really fair for me to go and they gave me a good opportunity." So, to be honest, I think any job you shouldn't think of as a step up.... You just find your job, you do a good job. If you don't like it, then you go do something else. But you never think of it as stepping up. That's just selfish. (John, interview on December 2, 2019)

Starting Over

All three participants acknowledged the challenge of starting over at a new school, both by sharing their experiences starting their current positions and by speculating what it would be like to start over in a new school after their current position. Cathy said,

I'm too scared to ever leave because I don't think I'll find it as good as I have it.... I know that some schools have not-supportive administrators or maybe a different population or something like that.... I think to build a program probably takes at least three years and I wouldn't have to go back to square one and do that again. (Cathy, interview on January 15, 2020)

When John thinks about moving to a different position, he "consider[s] how starting a program and getting organized really sucks.... It took me about a year and a half to get organized and know what I was doing....It's hard to get going." Robert, who started teaching at Greenville upon completing a residential master's degree program, had "all of these heady ideas and tried to put them right into use and really hit the hit the gas pedal and the kids didn't respond to it." The teachers' hesitance to start over reflects their investment in the programs that they've worked hard or years to establish.

Work/Life Balance

While Robert, Cathy, and John didn't specifically complain about the amount of time they dedicate to their jobs, their comments hinted at work encroaching on their personal time.

Cathy admitted,

I want to be able to like balance, my family and teaching. And I haven't always done that, sometimes I've neglected my family for two months before the play or something. (Cathy, interview on January 12, 2020)

John draws a hard line between home and work in order to maintain this balance:

Here's a little bit about me, I refuse to do work outside of the school day. I'll get here at 7:30. I'll leave at 4:00. But like, I have to host a community band on Monday nights, so I stay. I'll stay from four to six. I'll do all my work that I need to for the week. I do get 30 minutes in the morning, but I don't think that's enough. (John, interview on December 2, 2020)

Robert finds his school involvement leaves little time to participate in the Greenville and Wakefield communities outside of his school roles:

Occasionally, something will pop up where I'm like, "Oh, cool. I'm going to this community event," but those are a little bit more rare. I've got a super busy schedule [laughs], so it's based on music more than anything else. (Robert, interview on December 18, 2019)

These comments demonstrate the degree to which Robert, John, and Cathy dedicate their time to their job. None of the participants discussed feeling burned out, but the topic did arise as a potential future concern by Robert, who said, "I'll get burned out eventually", and Cathy, who said, "I'm not burned out yet."

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to identify factors that impact job satisfaction for music teachers in rural schools in Colorado and to understand how those factors and others relate to a rural music teacher's decision to retain their position. Specific factors addressed included working conditions, goal progress, school support systems, and teacher identity. Data for this study were collected via questionnaire and case-study methodology (Stake, 2006). Questionnaire data was used to frame job satisfaction for a broad sample of rural music teachers in Colorado, and data from case studies helped to provide situation-specific context information related to job satisfaction within the lived experience of three Colorado rural music teachers. Research questions for this study included:

1. How do rural music teachers in Colorado perceive their working conditions, goal progress, school support systems, and teacher identity in the context of job satisfaction?
2. What relationships exist between working conditions, student interactions, goal progress, school support systems, and community identity with job satisfaction for rural music teachers in Colorado?
3. What context-specific experiences or job features do rural music teachers consider influential in their own job satisfaction? How do these relate to, or differ from, considerations for retention?

Quantitative and qualitative data pointed to the importance of some job-related factors in determining their job satisfaction, including working conditions, goals, teacher characteristics, and school support systems. Qualitative data were used to determine the

value of job satisfaction, and its attributing factors, in retention decisions for music educators who participated in the qualitative study. The following discussion addresses the job-related factors that emerged as important factors in the context of job satisfaction for rural music teachers, the degree to which those factors influence job satisfaction for questionnaire respondents and case-study participants, and how job satisfaction influences retention decisions for case-study participants. Some themes germane to rural music teacher satisfaction and retention include autonomy, isolation, and community support.

Research Question 1. The first research question concerns descriptions of the working conditions, student interactions, goal progress, school support systems, and teacher characteristics self-reported by participants as well as description of experiences collected during case-study interviews.

Working conditions. Teacher working conditions included the school environment, access to instructional materials, facility quality, and availability of professional development. Quantitative data include questionnaire responses to the “Perceived Fit” category, in which questions concerned the degree to which the teacher’s job-related needs are met. Descriptive data for “Perceived Fit” responses trended in the positive direction, indicating that most teachers in the sample feel that their work conditions fit their needs. However, differences between mean scores for teachers with rural ($M = 5.08$) and urban ($M = 5.27$) versus suburban backgrounds ($M = 4.71$) suggest that teachers from suburban backgrounds are less pleased with the working conditions in their rural school based on expectations built upon their suburban background. This finding aligns with Kelly’s (2003) assertion that teachers with suburban upbringings prefer to seek teaching positions in

suburban areas, perhaps because suburban schools match the expectations, they've developed for a music teaching position based on their own experience.

Elementary teachers also reported higher mean scores for "Perceived Fit" questions than teachers at the middle and high school levels. Rural schools may struggle to provide for the (sometimes expensive) needs of secondary ensemble music. Participants who participated in the case-study all described having small budgets for their programs. As Robert described, "big-ticket items [instruments, band shells, etc.] need to be fundraised for or there needs to be a grant." While elementary programs may have some "big-ticket" needs, case-study participants only described the need to make expensive purchases in secondary contexts. Small and difficult budgets are a well-documented issue of rural music teachers (Brossette, 2015; Hunt, 2009; Isbell, 2005) that previous researchers have identified as a contributor to job dissatisfaction (Kuntzelman, 2016). Hence, as confirmed by teachers in this study, those who teach at the secondary levels may experience different challenges specific to funding and should anticipate that challenge when advocating for program-specific resources.

For Robert, Cathy, and John, some specific considerations about working conditions included the degree of autonomy they feel in their classroom, their isolation from instructional tools and professional community, availability of professional development, and work/life balance concerns.

Autonomy. All three qualitative participants, and several ($n=4$) responses to the quantitative questionnaire's open-ended question, indicated that their rural music teaching position afford them a high degree of autonomy. Cathy's administrators tell her, "You know

what you should be doing more than we know what you should be doing it, so we're just going to leave you to it." A questionnaire respondent commented that, "rural schools offer more opportunity to make the program what I want it to be." John and Robert also feel a sense of autonomy in their position, but for them, that autonomy is accompanied by a lack of accountability:

Both principals are very much like, hey, go do what you need to do...[they] say, "Cool, the band sounds good, so you're doing your job," and I'm like, am I really doing my job? Because there's a whole load of other stuff that I know I should do better. (John, interview on January 27, 2020)

These comments agree with prior research that describes the "self-starter" nature of rural music teaching positions (Kuntzelman, 2016) and autonomy as a desired job trait for music educators (Cushinery, 2011; Howard, 2006; Russell, 2012).

Isolation. Isolation detracted from the participants' opinion of their working conditions. While Robert, Cathy, and John generally felt like the school provides for most of their classroom needs: Robert described his facilities as "adequate"; Cathy appreciates her large classroom; John said his facilities are "enough to get us by". However, the schools' isolation makes it difficult for the teachers to access certain instructional resources, like instrument repairs, specialized private lessons, musical opportunities outside of school, and guest teachers. These issues align with previous findings (Brossette, 2015; Kuntzelman, 2016) of rural music teacher concerns. For John, Cathy, and Robert, geographic location also isolated the teachers from participating fully in a community of music teaching professionals. In John's words, "I don't want to say I feel secluded...but I feel secluded." Without the help of other music teachers, according to Cathy, "it's up to me to get the kids up to the quality that I want."

Professional Development. Access to content-specific professional development, like conference attendance and membership in professional organizations, has been cited as a concern of rural music educators in prior studies (Kuntzelman, 2016; Maltas, 2004). The main form of professional development available to Cathy, John, and Robert is the ability to attend the annual state music education conference held at a very expensive resort hotel each January. John, Robert, and Cathy do not receive music-specific feedback in their formal observations with supervisors (John: “I think they’re both uncomfortable with the content, so they don’t really know what to do or say,”) and other professional development opportunities aside from the annual conference come at a sacrifice of personal time and energy (Cathy: “I “put in a lot of effort to try to meet people...because otherwise I could have just been there alone.”). For Robert, attending the state conference is a crucial aspect of his professional development:

I need to go to [state music education conference] where I get to watch master teachers for a day.... I’m like, “yeah, that’s great. I want to go do that,” and it’s more of like an inspiration rather than the, “Oh, you should be doing this and you should be doing this,” and that kind of feedback. (Robert, interview on February 7, 2020)

The importance of access to music-oriented professional development for music educators (Burkett, 2011; Siebert, 2008) is affirmed by Cathy’s, John’s, and Robert’s positive comments about the state music education conference.

Work/Life Balance and Time Management. Work/life balance is another concern for the qualitative participants, as well as the subject of work-related goals ($n=20$) and open-ended comments ($n=14$) submitted by quantitative respondents. Cathy and Robert find that their school involvement doesn’t leave time for personal musical and community-oriented pursuits. For Cathy, “I’d have to go, like, 30 miles away to find something...I just

get busy; my family gets really busy,” and for Robert, “Something will pop up where I’m like, ‘Cool. I’m going to this community event,’ but those are a little bit more rare. I’ve got a super busy schedule [laughs], so [community involvement is] based on music more than anything else.” John, recognizing the potential to experience burnout, limits his work day to 7:30am-4:00pm. These comments reflect Scheib’s (2003) findings which suggest that music teachers experience “role overload” when school responsibilities bleed over into personal time. Furthermore, Hunt (2009), Kuntzelman (2016), and Isbell (2005) that describe “bleed-over work time” as a hallmark of rural teaching positions. Given the broad nature of rural music teaching loads in which rural teachers cover a variety of musical disciplines (exemplified by Robert’s combined elementary music and middle school band assignments, and John’s K-12, *all* music classes, assignment), such bleed-over time is nearly inevitable.

Goals. Questionnaire respondents reported making good progress towards their work-related goals ($M=3.65$ on a scale from 1-5) and that they are supported by the school community in accomplishing their goals ($M=3.84$ out of 5). Respondents felt slightly less positive ($M=3.20$) about their self-efficacy in achieving their work-related goals. This could suggest that rural music teachers attribute their ability to achieve work-related goals more to the support they receive from the school community than to their own skills and abilities.

Qualitative participant experiences echoed this degree of satisfaction with their goal progress and support. John said, “My number one goal in life is to serve people...I really enjoy the community getting behind me.”, illustrating both his goal and the support he feels in it. Robert’s goal is broad enough to make room for each individual student’s musical

needs: “How can I help all of my students be musical in a way that makes sense to them?”

For Cathy, student growth is the focus of her classroom: “my goal is to just help those kids really, really want to grow.” Case study participants’ goals and feelings about their goals reflect the student-centered focus of rural educators (McCoy-Wilson, 2011) and music educators (Allen, 2014; Brown, 2015; Siebert, 2008) in prior studies. While the participants didn’t speak directly about self-efficacy in terms of achieving their goals, Robert made it clear that he gauges his effectiveness as a teacher on the student growth he observes:

If I spend a week doing something that isn’t effective, I walk away from it, like, “Okay, that sucked. I hate my job.” Or, I’ll come back and am like, “That was a great lesson! I had a bunch of great lessons!” and the kids really loved the music, and they left thinking, “Yeah! Music is a great place to be!” It’s definitely up and down with that. (Robert, interview on December 18, 2019)

When analyzed according to specified goal-type, questionnaire respondents whose goal concerned student relationships or growth felt more positive about their work goal progress, self-efficacy, and support than teachers who reported other types of goals. This could suggest that student-centered goals are valued and supported by rural school communities, or that other characteristics of rural school communities impede music teachers’ abilities to achieve other goals. The other types of goals reported by teachers reveal some of the concerns of the population of rural educators: classroom management, lesson planning, and work/life balance were among the types of goals reported by educators. These concerns mirror those reported in prior studies (Brossette, 2015; Kuntzelman, 2016) that describe rural music teacher frustration with student achievement of musical goals (Kuntzelman, 2016) and disagreement between professional goals or expectations and rural teaching settings (Maltas, 2004). Robert commented on this disagreement, observing that

[Expectations for music teaching are] super high [for] performance and focused a lot on making sure that every kid get the same outcome.... But the thing for me that really was kind of an eye opener was the idea that I can't level the playing field with these kids.... So my role in that case looks different. I feel it looks more like... capitalizing on, all of my students going to enjoy a musical experience somewhere down the line. And how do I best approach that with those individual students.... I feel that's a huge difference between the mentality of...okay, level, the playing field, make sure everybody gets the skills, but that's just not how it really functions out here. (Robert, interview on December 19, 2019)

For example, comments from case study participants support the moderately-positive feelings of goal support reported by qualitative respondents. While the qualitative participants feel generally supported by the school community, Robert felt that this support didn't necessarily extend into helping him achieve his goals: "The compliments are nice, but how does that manifest itself in other ways of support?... I would say...'Hey, can we do this?' and they're like, 'Sure, if you have the money to do it.'"

John, conversely, did feel strong goal support from one of his administrators:

When I wanted to require band for 5th and 6th graders, I was like hey... let's just make everybody do it. It was just a suggestion, but when the schedule came out, I was like oh, cool, we're doing this. (John, interview on December 2, 2019)

Together, questionnaire responses and case-study participant comments do not paint a clear picture of what goal progress, support, and self-efficacy mean to rural music teachers. Quantitative data suggests a generally positive view of goal-related topics by rural music teachers, but Robert's, John's, and Cathy's comments reveal the complex nature of goal progress, support, and self-efficacy.

Teacher Characteristics. Teacher characteristics were gathered by using the following domains as listed on the questionnaire of teacher job satisfaction: *Positive Affect*, *Teacher Self-Efficacy*, and *Work Task Self-Efficacy* measures. Teachers gave overall-positive responses to *Positive Affect* measures (M=3.61 on a scale of 1 to 5). In terms of self-efficacy,

respondents reported similarly-high scores ($M=3.91$ and $M=3.98$ for Teacher and Work-Task Self-Efficacies, respectively, on a scale from 1-5). This trend suggests that rural music teachers tend to experience positive emotions and have high degrees of self-efficacy.

When grouped according to years of teaching experience (i.e., one year, 2-5 years, 6-10 years, etc.), higher degrees of self-efficacy were reported by teachers with more years of experience. This finding suggests that self-efficacy is either something that teachers develop as they gain experience, or something that, if lacking, may drive them away from the profession or to different non-rural teaching contexts. The idea that self-efficacy grows with experience is supported by case study participant comments like “When I was in my first year, I felt swamped, because I didn't know what I was doing” (John, interview, December 2, 2019) and “I think it took me much longer to figure out what the heck I was doing” (Cathy).

Qualitative data suggests that positive affect may also affect longevity of rural music teacher careers. John noted that his older and more-experienced colleagues were more likely to demonstrate of positive affect than younger colleagues:

My conversations with [older music teachers] are always really positive...but with teachers my age, it feels like we're trying to flex, like who's doing a better job? ... I'd rather not talk to [younger colleagues] because[they're] just not pleasant to talk to. (John, interview on December 12, 2019)

For case study participants, another important teacher characteristic is their musicianship. Robert's participation in several performing groups is an important source of inspiration for his teaching. John feels that he is not musically challenged by his position and desires more opportunities to exercise his own musicianship. Cathy also expressed an interest in continuing to refine her own musicianship, despite the challenges (presented by

her tight schedule and distance physical from performing opportunities) in doing so. These challenges and desires are reflected in questionnaire respondents' report of feeling "inspired" less often than other emotions on the *Positive Affect* measure and support suggestions from Siebert (2008) and Baker (2007) of the importance for music teachers to participate in musical communities.

School Support System. A teacher's school support system includes their relationships with other school community members, like teaching peers and administrators, professional development opportunities, and the value of music in the school community. Quantitative data concerning teachers' feelings about their school support system were collected with the *Organizational Support* section of the questionnaire. Teachers feel positive about the degree of support from their school system, with an overall mean score of 5.07 on a scale of 1-7. Some of the strongest points of support indicated by the questionnaire include the perception that the school shows concern for the teacher, takes pride in the teacher's accomplishments, and values the teacher's contribution to the school's well-being.

These points of support were echoed by case-study participants. John and Robert both talked about the praise they receive from administrators: "They believe in our program and that what we're doing is good for the kids... [they give] a lot of affirmations." (Robert); "The administrators say, 'Cool, the band sounds good, so you're doing your job'." In addition, Robert mentioned that some of the support from fellow teachers stems from their roles as parents of students in the music program: "We see a lot of one of their children in the program, it seems like they're pretty supportive in that way." John also felt

support from administrators that stemmed from family ties with music students, “If his nephews like it, he's gonna be like, well, let's make it as good as we can for [them].... You’d like to think that that sort of thing doesn’t make a difference, but it does.” Regardless of the motivation for support, the qualitative participants all indicated that the school community appreciates their contributions.

All of the case-study participants emphasized that support from the school community was something that developed over time. They needed to “prove themselves” (Cathy) and “earn their trust” (John); in Robert’s case, “some of them still don’t trust me.”. These comments align with Huysman’s (2007) and Parker’s (2018) conclusions that rural communities are wary of outsiders. However, these comments contradict quantitative findings in which the group of teachers in their first year reported feeling stronger organizational support than any other experience group. This may suggest that new teachers are welcomed enthusiastically into their position, but soon find that they need to demonstrate trustworthiness through a longer commitment to the school community. However, further research is necessary to understand why rural music teachers’ perceived organizational support appears to fluctuate over the course of a career.

Teachers surveyed who were raised in rural contexts reported stronger degrees of organizational support on the questionnaire than those with urban and suburban backgrounds, though by a small margin. This is an interesting finding in light of prior research by Huysman (2007), Miller (2008), Budge (2006), and Parker (2018) which indicate that “homegrown” teachers (those who teach in the community where they grew up) are quickly accepted into their school community, where “outsiders” struggle to be

accepted. Since none of the case-study participants were raised in the communities where they teach, their comments resonate with Huysman's (2007) findings, , though John, who grew up in a rural area, mentioned that he felt his rural upbringing helped him understand the community where he teaches on a deeper level.

One aspect of the school support system that case-study participants discussed is the value of music in their school community. John, Cathy, and Robert all mentioned feeling a sense of competition for student attention with their school's sports programs. Other school attributes, like the lack of a performance spaces in Robert's and Cathy's schools, also point toward school value systems that, according to the teachers, do not favor music. Comments about the value of music in the community were also reported in the open-ended portion of the quantitative questionnaire ($n=6$), like "Fine arts are often overlooked," "Sports culture is stronger in rural schools, this is the value that has come in direct conflict with my personal goal," and, "Rural districts, because of budget constraints, are unable (in my experience) to value music education the way they should".

Research Question 2. The second research question investigates how working conditions, goals, teacher characteristics, and school support systems relate to a rural music teacher's job satisfaction. Relationships between these factors were compared with the two global job satisfaction measures (the *Worker Satisfaction Index* and *Teacher Satisfaction Scale*) were tabulated and compared. Case study participant data highlights areas of concern for job satisfaction in specific contexts.

Strong positive correlations were found between global measures and *Perceived Fit*, which is a measure of working conditions, *Organizational Support*, which relates to the

school support system, and *Positive Affect*, a dimension of Teacher Characteristics (Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988). indicating that all three factors have a significant influence on a teacher's job satisfaction.

Working Conditions. School working conditions appear to play a role in rural music teachers' sense of job satisfaction, which is supported by literature on teacher satisfaction (Johnson 2012; Tomberlin, 2014), music teacher satisfaction (Baker, 2007; Siebert, 2008). The strong correlations ($r=.62$ and $r=.60$) between *Perceived Fit* questions and the global measures suggest that teachers who feel that their school fits their needs also experience a high degree of job satisfaction. Interestingly, this correlational relationship is higher for teachers with rural backgrounds than for teachers with urban or suburban backgrounds. This finding lends credence to hypotheses by Huysman (2007) and Miller (2008) that suggest a relationship between rural values and satisfaction with teaching in rural schools. Specifically, Huysman highlights that teachers with non-rural backgrounds must spend time and energy on learning the ways of the community while teachers with rural backgrounds can instead focus that time and energy on refining teacher skills.

While none of the qualitative participants grew up in the community where they now teach, they all commented on the importance of "fit" with their current working conditions. Cathy, who has lived in the community where she teaches for 15 years, cites the importance of autonomy in her classroom as one such example. She explained, "I don't want to have a bigger district tell me what to do....I don't think I'll find it as good as I have it [in another school]". All case study participants enjoy having the authority to make decisions that they feel benefit their classroom. Robert joked, "I have almost *too much*

autonomy.” These comments align with prior research that emphasizes the importance of autonomy to music teacher job satisfaction (Brown, 2015; Hancock, 2009; Scheib, 2004). Case study participants’ experiences, and open-ended comments on the questionnaire, suggest that rural positions could be a good fit for music teachers who appreciate having autonomy in their position.

The qualitative participants also discussed the availability of music-specific professional development in their rural teaching positions. While access to professional development has surfaced as an important factor in music teacher job satisfaction (e.g., Burkett, 2011; Siebert, 2008), this did not appear to be a significant contributor to, or detractor from, job satisfaction for Cathy, John, or Robert. Robert finds the ability to attend the state music education conference fulfilling in terms of professional development:

I don't need that [feedback from an administrator] necessarily to feel driven.... Actually, I need the opposite. I need to go to [state conference] where I get to watch master teachers for a day.... It's more of an inspiration, rather than the, "Oh, you should be doing this and you should be doing this" and that kind of feedback. (Robert, interview on February 7, 2020)

For Cathy, professional development was a more crucial concern at the beginning of her career. Because she earned her teaching credential through an alternative licensure program, she felt a lack of preparation upon entering the classroom. Despite the challenges of her first years, Cathy persisted by “settling in, getting to know people really helped, and building [her] confidence”. Robert’s and Cathy’s comments indicate that teachers who appreciate autonomy may also be dissatisfied with the development opportunities available in a rural school and seek to become part of a larger community of music teachers outside of their school.

Work/life balance emerged as a concern for both case-study participants and quantitative respondents. Quantitative respondents who reported a work/life balance or time-management related work goal on the questionnaire ($n=20$) reported the lowest overall satisfaction on the *Teacher Satisfaction Scale*. While the case-study participants didn't describe their work/life balance as a direct detractor from their job satisfaction, they spoke about burnout as if it were an inevitability (Robert: "I'll get burned out eventually;" Cathy: "I'm not burned out yet."). While their demanding work schedules may not be problematic for them at the moment, these comments suggest that work/life balance will become an issue at some point in their career. Work-life-balance- and time-management-related goals were most often reported by teachers who have between 6-15 years of experience($n=11$), so those goals are either achieved by later-career rural music teachers, or the failure to achieve those goals drive attrition of "role-overloaded" teachers. This finding is also supported by Scheib (2003) who highlights that the demanding expectations of music teaching positions can lead music teachers to leave their jobs or the profession.

Goals. Quantitative and case-study data concerning goals, goal progress, goal support, and goal self-efficacy were at times contradictory. While quantitative data displayed weak to moderate positive correlations between goal-related measures and global measures of satisfaction, comments from case study participants indicated that goal-related concerns are very important factors in their job satisfaction.

Relationships between *Goal Progress* and *Teacher Satisfaction Scale* responses were positive and strong for teachers with one year of experience and teachers with 15-25 years of experience. These data suggest that teachers' goal progress has a strong impact on their

job satisfaction at the beginning of their career that drops off after the first year and returns as they gain more experience. However, Robert, Cathy, and John have 10, 14, and 3 respective years of teaching experience and attributed a high degree of job satisfaction to their goal progress.

Considering the student-centered goals they discussed, Robert, Cathy, and John indicate a strong connection between goal progress and job satisfaction with comments like “The most satisfying part of my job is watching kids enjoy music” (from Robert, whose goal is, “How can I help all of my students be musical in a way that makes sense to them?”) and “I really find the relationships [with students] very satisfying.” (from John, whose “number one goal in life is to serve people.”) and “I love watching the students grow.... It’s really rewarding to see the kids that just love it.” (from Cathy, whose goal is “to help those kids really, really want to grow.”). The student-centeredness of the teachers’ goals, and the degree to which they are invested in students, are both reflected in existing literature on rural teacher job satisfaction (Huysman, 2007; McCoy-Wilson, 2011; Slaven, 2011; Richardson, 2017) and music educator job satisfaction (Allen, 2014; Bryant, 2012; Howard, 2006).

Case study participants also found themselves frustrated when their goals created dissonance with school community values. For John, who aspires to take an ensemble to perform at the state music educator conference, the value of music relative to sports is an impediment to that aspiration:

I think it's just that's just where that community is going to dedicate their time to because the community move much rather be farming and working on their sports. They still share music and they'll do music, but they might not spend their entire time [on music]... I think bigger schools just have band kids that's their life. Where, we have

kids that just like doing band...So I think we have to come to the understanding that you're just sharing the kids. (John, interview, December 2, 2019)

Huysman's (2007), Miller's (2008) and Kelly's (2003) findings concerning the consonance of teacher values with communities like those where they grew up are evident in these comments. Robert also discussed how aspects of rural life contradict musical activity. He described an encounter with a student:

I asked, "Why weren't you at rehearsal last night?" and he just said, "PIGS!" and I'm like, "What do you mean, 'pigs'?" and he says, "The sow had pigs! And we didn't know they were coming!" So, things like that are just a part of life for the students here. (Robert, interview on February 7, 2020)

Music teachers whose goals do not fit with school community values will likely struggle to feel supported, and ultimately satisfied, with positions in rural schools. For music educators like John with performance-oriented aspirations, a rural school may not be an environment conducive of goal success. John's and Robert's comments align with the findings from several scholars (e.g., Bates, 2011; Kuntzelman, 2016; Madsen & Hancock, 2002) who suggest that the music education profession derives its values from suburban ideals. Bennett and Padron (2020) found that the ensembles invited to perform at a state music education conference were almost exclusively from suburban schools, displaying a value system where suburban music-making has a higher status than rural music-making. Furthermore, suggestions from Judge (2005) and Maltas (2004) indicate that a misalignment between current teaching assignment and professional goals often detract from job satisfaction. Because of the importance that Robert, Cathy, and John attributed to goal progress in terms of their own job satisfaction, any obstacles to achieving those goals, like dissonance with school community values, may be theorized as detractors from job satisfaction.

Another such obstacle to Cathy, Robert, and John's student-centered goals is isolation: the isolation that rural teachers experience impacts their ability to bring resources to their students, as explained by all three case-study participants. For Cathy, "I think I am nurturing their interest in that stuff [outside-of-school music programs], but they don't really get to do it because it's just too far." Robert mentioned that "The biggest thing is [taking students to concerts] Being this far out, that's not even possible to do in a day." John said that the distance prevents him from bringing in clinicians and instrument specialists to work with his students: "I hire staff when there's someone around who can do it, but it's not as frequent as I'd like." Because of its interference with the participants' student-centered goals, isolation is also viewed as a detractor to job satisfaction.

Teacher Characteristics. Strong correlations between *Positive Affect* and the global job satisfaction measures suggest that personal characteristics are an important factor in teacher job satisfaction for teachers across the sample surveyed. Teachers who are more likely to experience positive emotions and have a positive outlook are also more likely to experience greater job satisfaction.

While case study participants did not discuss positive affect directly, their comments indicate a belief in teacher characteristics to influence job satisfaction and persistence. Robert's comment about teachers' ability to stay inspired as "something that is absolutely essential for teachers who don't get burned out" highlights this belief. John said, bluntly, that "It's probably just people...their egos, more than likely" that determine rural music teachers' satisfaction in their position. Through these comments, John and Robert attribute long-term success in a rural position to a teacher's personal characteristics and

imply that music teachers who do not seek inspiration or whose goals are driven by “ego” may not be satisfied with teaching in rural schools.

Musicianship is another teacher characteristic that Robert, Cathy, and John cited as an important factor in their job satisfaction—for better or worse, depending on their situation. On one hand, Robert draws musical inspiration for teaching from his performances and music-making with other adults in the community. On the other, John feels “starved to play,” and is disappointed by the lack of performance opportunities and musical challenge afforded by his position. All three case-study participants mentioned the importance of being able to continue to grow their musicianship. Open-ended comments from questionnaire respondents echo these concerns, like “musical selections are...deeply unsatisfying for me as an artist and musician.”

Community Support. Moderately strong correlations between *Organizational Support* and global job satisfaction measures, along with case-study participant comments, indicate that the support of a teacher’s school and professional communities are important considerations in rural music teachers’ job satisfaction

School Community. For John, Robert, and Cathy, support from the school community takes various forms, including collegial and administrative support, and the perceived value of music to the school community. Case-study participants recognize influence over job satisfaction from these forms of school community support. Correlations between school community support and job satisfaction are revealed by moderately positive relationship between *Organizational Support* responses and global job satisfaction measures (*Work Satisfaction Index*, $r=.55$, and *Teacher Satisfaction Scale*, $r=.54$).

One important facet of support from a school community is a teacher's relationship with their school administration. Administrative support for case study participants was reflected in administrative actions and qualities, like allowing for teacher autonomy, providing professional development opportunities (as described above), and taking actions that benefit the music program. For John, the ladder form of support speaks the strongest: "[My principal] is awesome. I'll mention things, and the next day it's done." For Robert, however, the lack of administrative action is a detractor from his overall satisfaction: "It's cool that we get all of these compliments... but how does that manifest itself in other ways of support?... That part of the job is very unsatisfactory." Cathy appreciates that her administrators take a hands-off approach and feels that their lack of involvement is a signal of trust: "[administrators say] You know what you should be doing more than we know what you should be doing it, so we're just going to leave you to it."

The influence of administrators is an often-cited factor in job satisfaction for music teachers (Allen, 2014; Baker, 2007; Bryant, 2012; Howard, 2006). The findings of these studies combined with qualitative participant comments suggest that administrators can exercise influence over job satisfaction through both their direct actions and their control over other factors like autonomy, access to professional development, and shaping school values.

A school community factor that often challenges rural music teachers is the value of music in the school community. Perceived competition with sports for student involvement and community attention is a frustration for both qualitative participants who teach secondary music. According to Robert, "[the community] is like, 'We'll totally support this!

—as long as it's not competing directly with the sports thing.” John sensed the pecking order of activities in his school community, saying that the school “tend[s] to lean towards athletics over music. They prioritize that.” John elaborated further on the “do-it-all” nature of rural students:

We have kids that just like doing band. But they also like playing volleyball, they like playing softball. They're in Student Council, they'll do FBLA. So I think we have to come to the understanding that you're just sharing the kids....They're in high school, I don't really think they should have to be conservatory-trained if they're going to be in band. (John, interview on December 2, 2019)

Thus, music teachers who are willing to recognize school community values and find ways to integrate music into those values, will feel more support and satisfaction from the community. For example, Cathy feels that her school community places a high value on her music program:

[Community support] is great. People attend my concert sometimes that don't even have kids....or, people whose kid was in the play five years ago and they've come every year since.... I'll always call the paper and say, 'Hey, come take pictures at our thing and put it in the paper,' Every time I have a concert or play they put it in the paper. (Cathy, interview on January 12, 2020)

Because she feels that community support is strong, Cathy doesn't feel limited by community values in terms of the quality of musical experience she can provide for her students. Robert also recognizes that the level of school community support can impact his ability to provide musical experiences for his students, but in the converse situation of Cathy. He cited using the gym for performances as an example of a negative impact that school values has on his music program:

When you're on the stage and the curtain opens, there's a level of importance there. But when there's no curtain and you're using, like, rolled up wrestling mats as a partition, it's not as exciting.... [I want to] give the kids a space where they feel like performance is important. (Robert, interview on December 17, 2019)

Professional Community. Qualitative participants had different degrees of interactions with other music teachers—both within their own school community and in their larger professional network—that contributed to their job satisfaction. Siebert (2008), Baker (2007), and Howard (2006) found that other music-educator colleagues were the most important form of social support for music teachers in regard to job satisfaction. Robert had a unique condition to the other case study participants in that his teaching assignment involves collaborating with a co-music-teacher on a daily basis. While Cathy and John bemoaned the lack of willing music collaborators in their schools and districts (as exemplified in Cathy’s comment, “It is discouraging that I don’t have a good, strong program to send my students on to.... I’d love to work with someone I can get along with,” and John’s persistent invitations to bring guests to his classroom), Robert described this collaboration as a significant source of job satisfaction and “the single-most important thing keeping me [in my position]” and named working with his co-teacher and another local musician, who both comes in to work with music students and also invites outside artists to perform in the schools, as the things that “make it work” for him in his teaching position. These comments suggest that a rural music teacher may need to be purposeful about seeking out a professional community in the event that they are the only music teacher in their school or district, or consider whether they can be satisfied with a distant relationship to other music teachers.

Research Question 3. The third research question is oriented toward building an understanding of how case study participants perceive their own job satisfaction and its relationship with their decision to retain their current position.

John, Robert, and Cathy all acknowledged that their job satisfaction contributes substantially to their decision to stay in their current position. In this context, the extent to which the teachers feel able to achieve their work-related goals and feel supported by their communities emerged as critical factors affecting their job satisfaction. This connection was made most transparent by Robert, who explained that, “If the kids come to my classroom and I can’t reach anybody in a month, that will be, like, yep, I’m resigning.” John also framed his decision to stay in terms of his goal of service to students and community, saying that “...leaving, I think just depends on what's more convenient for me. Staying, I think I'd say, it's what's more convenient for the students or the community.”

Since all three teachers plan to retain their job for at least the next school year, speculative reasons for leaving provide context as to factors related to their retention. Recalling the difficulty of their first years in their positions, the participants dreaded the notion of starting over in a new school (“starting a program and getting organized really sucks,” John; “[I had] all of these heady ideas and tried to put them right into use...and the kids didn't respond to it,” Robert; “I think to build a program probably takes at least three years and I wouldn’t have to go back to square one and do that again,” Cathy). The personal and environmental characteristics that allowed Robert, Cathy, and John, as well as other long-tenured rural music educators, to persist through the most critical period for teacher attrition in the first years of their careers (Ingersoll, 2001; Stockard & Lehman, 2004; Strunk & Robinson, 2006) are worthy of consideration. The combination of focus on student-centered goals, patience to “earn their way” into a new community, and preservation of personal musicianship may have contributed to Robert’s, John’s, and Cathy’s persistence through the challenging first years of their careers.

In addition to their own experiences with satisfaction and retention, the participants also observed and speculated on reasons that their music-teaching colleagues leave rural positions. Cathy acknowledged the challenges faced by younger teachers in rural schools, pointing out that,

It's different if you're like, married and have a family, and you just go home to your house every day and you're part of the community and you're in raising-your-family mode. It's different than being single and being very isolated. (Cathy, interview on January 12, 2020)

Across all teaching populations, teachers with less than five years of experience are the population most vulnerable to attrition (Darling-Hammond, 2003; Ingersoll, 2001; Stockard & Lehman, 2004; Strunk & Robinson, 2006), so Cathy's comment raises the question of whether age or life-stage is related to job satisfaction or retention for music educators in rural, or other, settings. These factors, along with the above comments about the difficulty of starting in a position, suggest that early-career music teachers should be given tremendous support in order to persist in rural teaching settings.

John, as an early-career teacher, made an observation about his fellow young colleagues:

[some recent graduates] see rural schools as step-up schools. They think, 'Well, that way I can do a little bit of experience and then I'll move on to a bigger school'.... Sometimes I feel like rural schools are short-handed because they have a revolving door. They have a director for one year because sometimes rural schools are seen as step up schools. (John, interview on December 2, 2019)

He elaborated further about his own experience with this "starter school" mindset:

I will admit when I first took this job I was like "Well, I'll just have it for a year or two and then I'll go." But after that first year I went, "No, it's not really fair for me to go and they gave me a good opportunity." So, to be honest, I think any job you shouldn't think of as a step up.... You just find your job, you do a good job. If you don't like it, then

you go do something else. But you never think of it as stepping up. That's just selfish.
(John, interview on December 2, 2019)

While John recognizes the potential harm to students and music programs that can result from this way of thinking, the mindset is apparently pervasive among rural music educators (Bates, 2011; Brossette 2016; Howard, 2006; Kuntzelman, 2016). The disproportionately large number of early-career educators (with five or less years of experience) who responded to the questionnaire illustrate that many music teachers in Colorado do begin their careers in rural schools, and the tapering number of educators in each successive experience group (see Figure 2) suggest that more-experienced teachers do not remain in rural schools for the duration of their careers. John's comment suggests that the "step-up job" perspective on rural music teaching positions may draw music teachers away from long careers in rural schools.

Summary. Using survey and case study methodologies, data suggests that working conditions, goal considerations, community support, and teacher characteristics are factors that influence job satisfaction for rural music teachers in Colorado. Questionnaire respondents demonstrated strong relationships between positive affect as a teacher characteristic, organizational support, and perceived fit as a working condition and overall job satisfaction. Case study participants further color these findings by specifying autonomy, participation in a musical community, support from the school community, and by their own strides in making progress toward student-centered goals as factors that contribute positively to their job satisfaction. Detractors from job satisfaction include a low value of music in the school community, dissonance between professional goals and community values, and isolation as an impediment to student-centered goals. Taken

together, these factors attribute to a rural music teacher's degree of job satisfaction, they also need to be considered with other considerations, like salary livability and the prospect of starting over in a new school, in teachers' retention decisions.

Practical Implications

For teachers.

1. Music educators in search of a job should not take the decision to work in a rural school lightly. When considering taking a position in a rural school, a prospective music teacher must consider whether their personal characteristics, goals, and motivations will be conducive of job satisfaction in a rural teaching setting. Quantitative and qualitative data suggest that teachers with a positive affect, who have student-centered goals, and are willing to develop connections within the school community are more likely to experience satisfaction in a rural teaching position.
2. Potential rural music teachers should consider the degree to which they want to continue to develop their own musicianship and discover what opportunities to do so exist in the rural community, as comments from qualitative participants indicated that continued development of personal musicianship was an important characteristic in their satisfaction with their position.
3. Music educators should consider their motivations for working in a rural school and if their overall professional goals resonate with a rural music teaching position and larger school community. If considering a rural position as "step-up" school (John, interview on December 2, 2019), the music educator must consider the potentially negative impact that a short-lived tenure will have on students and the music

program as a whole (Barnes et al., 2007; Isbell, 2005; Kloss, 2012; Russell, 2012; Terry & Kristonis, 2008; Rockoff, 2004). This impact should be weighed against the potential to develop lasting, rewarding relationships with students and to positively impact the school community with music over the course of a long tenure in rural school.

4. While none of the participants talked about salary in the context of job satisfaction, it did emerge as a factor for Cathy and Robert in terms of retention: “If something were to happen to my husband.... I don’t know that I could actually live on my salary. I could not pay mortgage with my salary.” For Robert, “our combined salaries are enough for us to live on, we can live pretty well off of our salaries. If I were living by myself, I would say that it would be a little tighter.” Cathy’s and Robert’s situation, which is commonplace among rural educators (Madsen & Hancock, 2002; Miller, 2008), exemplifies a retention factor that is not related to her job satisfaction—even the most satisfied educator cannot afford to retain a position whose compensation does not cover costs of living. This should be a consideration for potential rural music teachers in Colorado, where rural and small-rural school districts offer the lowest salaries of all school districts in the state (Colorado Department of Education, 2019b).

For administrators, policy-makers, and leaders in music teacher preparation.

1. Administrators should attempt to hire music teachers who display qualities that lend themselves to job satisfaction, as satisfied music educators are less likely to leave their position than dissatisfied teachers (Sutcher, Darling-Hammond, et al.

2016), and should create a teaching environment in which the music teacher feels supported by the school community. Some characteristics that administrators should have in mind when selecting music teacher candidates include the same attributes listed above: positive affect and student-centered goals. Administrators should strive to hire music teachers who are willing to join and contribute to the school community. Because applicant pools for music teaching positions are often small, administrators should consider ways to assist music teachers in building capacity for traits that positively influence job satisfaction like self-efficacy and student-centered goals.

2. Administrators can also create working conditions that are favorable for music teacher job satisfaction. Administrators can provide music-specific professional development by allowing music teacher to attend state music education conferences and providing avenues through which music teachers can receive music-teaching-specific feedback. Qualitative data also suggests that administrators can positively influence music teacher job satisfaction by allowing the music teacher autonomy in their classroom. This autonomy can reflect a degree of trust from the administrator in the music teacher's expertise in their area of specialty. This autonomy should be accompanied by accountability for achieving student-centered goals.
3. Administrators can take actions that support the music program and confer a positive status of music in the school community. Qualitative participants indicated that they feel satisfied with their jobs when they feel music is valued by their school community, so administrators can foster a school community in which the music program and music teacher are valued and recognized for their contributions to the

community. This and the above recommendation can assist administrators in retaining music teachers who will invest in the community and increase quality and participation in the school music program.

4. In order to make rural positions more enticing and financially feasible for music teachers, school boards and state legislators should pursue salary increases for music teachers and other ways to incentivize rural music teaching positions. The Colorado state legislature is exploring the effectiveness of several such avenues at the time of writing (Colorado Department of Higher Education, 2017). Policymakers should also consider ways to incentivize longer tenures for music teachers in rural school settings.
5. Leaders in music teacher preparation programs should consider ways to better equip emerging music educators for successful careers in rural schools. Music teacher educators should identify rural biases embedded in curriculum, like an overemphasis on large-ensemble music making or a treatment of rural positions as inevitable “first jobs” that they will implicitly leave. Music teacher educators can also identify potential teacher candidates who come from rural schools in order to help rural communities “grow their own” (Huysman, 2007) music teachers, and can purposefully include observations and practicum experiences in rural schools for music teacher candidates in order to expose them to positive rural music teaching experiences and possibilities.

Suggestions for Further Study

Many of the concerns that emerged from this study mirror prior research on rural teacher (Huysman, 2007; McCoy-Wilson, 2011; Richardson, 2017) and music teacher

populations (e.g. Allen, 2014; Brown, 2015; Siebert, 2008) in that administrative support, autonomy, belonging to school and professional communities are among concerns that impact job satisfaction for rural music teachers. Future research needs to clarify the degrees to which these concerns impact all teachers, or teachers in other contexts (i.e., urban or suburban) or disciplines (i.e., visual art, special education, etc.). Further study could also clarify whether rural schools within school districts in Colorado that are not designated as rural or small rural share the same concerns as music educators in the schools represented by the sample, and whether there are differences in satisfaction or contributing factors between music teachers in rural versus small rural school settings.

Considering the disparity between job satisfaction attribution to goal-related themes reported by case-study participants versus questionnaire respondents, further study should examine the relationship between goal progress, goal self-efficacy, and goal support with job satisfaction for rural music teachers and other teacher populations. Case study participants attributed a great deal of job satisfaction to their perceived goal progress, but quantitative data indicated weak positive relationships between goal-related measures and global job satisfaction measures.

Some comments from Cathy and John suggest that some of the challenges they face in their rural teaching positions are not necessarily “rural” concerns, but could be endemic to schools that have small student populations regardless of community context (John: “I think bigger schools just have band kids that’s their life. Where, we have kids that just like doing band,” Cathy: “I think that I could get that same level [of quality.... I feel like my elementary school, though, is like a normal size.”). Further research could determine the

similarities or differences in job satisfaction and retention in teachers who teach in schools of different sizes within suburban, rural, and urban contexts.

Studying teacher retention is challenging in that, in most cases, data is collected from teachers who have not left the teaching career. However, those who have left the teaching career could provide valuable insight into the reasons why teachers choose not to retain their positions. Thus, a study including teachers who have left a rural teaching position could provide fruitful contrast to the data presented in this study.

Goals and goal progress appeared to have a critical role in qualitative participants' job satisfaction but did not have significant relationships with job satisfaction for the quantitative sample. Further research could clarify the degree to which the types of goals music teachers invest in, and the support they perceive in pursuing those goals, affect their sense of job satisfaction.

Conclusion

Job dissatisfaction is responsible for more than half of pre-retirement teacher job attrition (Sucher, Darling-Hammond, 2016). Rural music teachers, who suffer compounded poor job retention of both rural teaching populations (Monk, 2007) and music teaching populations (Hancock, 2009), are an especially vulnerable population to attrition, which leads to negative outcomes for rural students' ability to participate in quality musical experiences at school (Kloss, 2012; Russell, 2012; Terry & Kristonis, 2008). Data gathered in this study suggest that rural music teacher job satisfaction is influenced by teacher characteristics, like positive affect and self-efficacy, work conditions, professional development opportunities and autonomy, support from school and musical communities,

and progress towards student-centered goals. While some attributes of rural schools potentially create dissonance with values held by the music education community (Bates, 2011; Isbell, 2005; Kuntzelman, 2016), like the low status of music in the rural school community and isolation from musical opportunities and resources described by case study participants, music educators should consider the positive relationships with students that can be built over years and the importance of serving the community with music as career-sustaining rewards and sources of job satisfaction. A job-satisfied force of rural music educators who commit to providing quality musical opportunities to a school and its larger community have the power to dismantle the career ladder of music education by recognizing the value of so-perceived “bottom-rung” positions.

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APPENDIX A

ADULT PARTICIPANT INFORMED CONSENT

Department of Music, Theatre, and Dance

Formal Study Title:

TEACHER RETENTION, JOB SATISFACTION, AND THE “RURAL TO URBAN”

CAREER LADDER IN MUSIC EDUCATION

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Casey Padron, MME candidate

WHAT IF I HAVE QUESTIONS?

For questions or concerns about the study, you may contact:

Casey Padron, co-principal investigator. (469)742-3133.

Dr. Erik Johnson, advisor/principal investigator.

E.johnson@colostate.edu

For questions regarding the rights of research subjects, any complaints or comments regarding the manner in which the study is being conducted, contact the CSU Institutional Review Board at: RICRO_IRB@mail.colostate.edu; 970-491-1553.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY?

The purpose of this research study is to understand how factors like working conditions, student involvement, social support, and community identity impact the job satisfaction and retention decisions of rural music teachers.

WHY AM I BEING INVITED TO TAKE PART IN THIS RESEARCH?

You are being asked to participate in the study because you fit these criteria:

- teach music in a “small rural” school district, as designated by the Colorado Department of Education (<https://www.cde.state.co.us/cdeedserv/may2019ruraldesignationlist>).

WHERE IS THE STUDY GOING TO TAKE PLACE AND HOW LONG WILL IT LAST?

Strand I: The study will take place at a time and place convenient to the participant. The questionnaire will be distributed via email and will take approximately 12 minutes to complete.

Strand II: The study has two parts: an observation and an interview. The observation portion will take place at your school for two hours. I will observe your regular instruction and any extra duties (before and after school activities, etc.) that occur during that time. The interview will take place in a private location that you choose (which may also be your school) and will take about an hour.

WHAT WILL I BE ASKED TO DO?

Strand I: If you volunteer to participate in this study, you will be asked to do the following:

- Complete a questionnaire.

Strand II: If you volunteer to participate in this study, you will be asked to do the following:

- Complete an interview with the researcher. Questions will address aspects of your position that either contribute to or detract from your sense of job satisfaction or your desire to continue in your position for future school years.
- Allow the researcher to observe in your classroom for two hours.

ARE THERE ANY BENEFITS FROM TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?

There may be no direct benefit to you as a participant in this study. However, we hope to learn more about job satisfaction and retention for music teachers in rural schools. This information could help the researcher make recommendations to policymakers and administrators about improvements that benefit rural music teachers.

WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS?

There are no known risks included with this study. While the level of risk is minimal, you may become uncomfortable answering some questions about job conditions that may affect your desire to stay at or leave your current position.

WILL I RECEIVE ANY COMPENSATION FOR TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?

You will not be compensated for participating in this research.

WHO WILL SEE THE INFORMATION THAT I GIVE?

All information gathered in this study will be kept as confidential as possible. Your privacy is very important to us and the researchers will take every measure to protect it. Your information may be given out if required by law; however, the researchers will do their best to make sure that any information that is released will not identify you. No reference will be made in written or oral materials that could link you to this study. For this study, we will assign a code to your data so that the only place your name will appear in our records is on the consent and in our data spreadsheet which links you to your code. Only the research team will have access to the link between you, your code, and your data. All records will be stored in an encrypted, cloud-based storage system at CSU for three years after completion of the study. After the storage time, the information gathered will be destroyed. We may be asked to share the research files with the sponsor or the CSU Institutional Review Board ethics committee for auditing purposes. You should know, however, that there are some circumstances in which we may have to show your information to other people. For example, the law may require us to show your information to a court OR *to tell authorities if we believe you have abused a child, or you pose a danger to yourself or someone else.*

DO I HAVE TO TAKE PART IN THE STUDY?

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate in this study or in any part of this study. You may withdraw at any time without prejudice to your relations with CSU. You are encouraged to ask questions about this study at the beginning or any time during the research study.

Participant Consent:

Your signature acknowledges that you have read the information stated and voluntarily wish to participate in this research. Your signature also acknowledges that you have received, on the date signed, a copy of this document containing 3 pages.

Signature of person agreeing to take part in the study

Date

Printed name of person agreeing to take part in the study

Name of person providing information to participant

Signature of Research Staff

Date

APPENDIX B

IRB APPROVAL NOTICE



eProtocol
Office of the Vice President for Research
321 General Services Building - Campus Delivery 2011 eprotocol
TEL: (970) 491-1553
FAX:

NOTICE OF APPROVAL FOR HUMAN RESEARCH

DATE: October 28, 2019
TO: Johnson, Erik, Music, Theatre and Dance
Goble, Dan, Music, Theatre and Dance, Padron, Casey, Music, Theatre and Dance
FROM: Felton-Noyle, Tammy, Senior IRB Coordinator, BMR, CSU IRB Exempt
PROTOCOL TITLE: TEACHER RETENTION, JOB SATISFACTION, AND THE #RURAL TO URBAN# CAREER LADDER IN MUSIC EDUCATION
FUNDING SOURCE: NONE
PROTOCOL NUMBER: 19-9515H

The CSU Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the protection of human subjects has reviewed the protocol entitled: TEACHER RETENTION, JOB SATISFACTION, AND THE #RURAL TO URBAN# CAREER LADDER IN MUSIC EDUCATION. The project has been approved for the procedures and subjects described in the protocol.

Full Board Review: This protocol must be reviewed for renewal at least annually for as long as the research remains active. Should the protocol not be renewed before expiration, all activities must cease until the protocol has been re-reviewed.

Expedited Review: This protocol is approved for a duration of three years, unless otherwise notified. You remain obligated to submit amendments, deviations, unanticipated problems per policy.

Important Reminder: If you will consent your participants with a signed consent document, it is your responsibility to use the consent form that has been finalized and uploaded into the consent section of eProtocol by the IRB coordinators. Failure to use the finalized consent form available to you in eProtocol is a reportable protocol violation.

If approval did not accompany a proposal when it was submitted to a sponsor, it is the PI's responsibility to provide the sponsor with the approval notice.

This approval is issued under Colorado State University's Federal Wide Assurance 00000647 with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP). If you have any questions regarding your obligations under CSU's Assurance, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Please direct any questions about the IRB's actions on this project to:

IRB Office - (970) 491-1553; RICRO_IRB@mail.Colostate.edu

Claire Chance, Senior IRB Coordinator - (970) 491-1381; Claire.Chance@Colostate.edu

Tammy Felton-Noyle, IRB Biomedical Coordinator - (970) 491-1655; Tammy.Felton-Noyle@Colostate.edu

Felton-Noyle, Tammy

Initial exempt determination has been granted October 28, 2019 to recruit with the approved recruitment and consent procedures. The above-referenced research activity has been reviewed and determined to meet exempt review by the



Knowledge to Go Places

eProtocol
Office of the Vice President for Research
321 General Services Building - Campus Delivery 2011 eprotocol
TEL: (970) 491-1553
FAX:

Institutional Review Board under exempt category 2(ii) of the 2018 Requirements. Approved documents include: Duffy and Lent (2009) Scales; THESIS XC Interview Questions; Methodology; Duffy Permission; Informed Consent, version 10/23/2019; THESIS XB Invitation Email.

APPENDIX C

Invitation Email—Strand I (Quantitative)

Dear _____,

My name is Casey Padron and I'm a graduate student at Colorado State University. For my thesis, I am studying job satisfaction and its relationship to job retention for rural music teachers in Colorado. The purpose of this study is to identify attributes of a rural music teaching position that contribute to the teacher's job satisfaction and to understand how job satisfaction relates to the teacher's desire to continue in their position for future school years.

You are invited to participate in this study. If you would like to participate, please follow the link below to a questionnaire. **This questionnaire will take about 12 minutes to complete.**

Link: http://colostate.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_2gje6ywrC9dCGrz

Your participation in the study is strictly voluntary, and any information gathered will be kept anonymous and confidential. If you have any questions about the study, feel free to contact me at the phone number and email address below or my advisor, Dr. Erik Johnson at e.johnson@colostate.edu.

Thank you for taking the time to consider participating in this study. The results of this study will hopefully lead to recommendations for administrators in rural schools to retain satisfied music teachers for longer tenures and for teacher training programs to better prepare pre-service music teachers for satisfying careers in rural areas.

Thank you for allowing your voice as a music teacher in a rural Colorado school district to be heard!

Sincerely,

Casey Padron
casey.padron@colostate.edu
469-742-3133

APPENDIX D

Invitation Email—Strand II (Qualitative)

Dear _____,

My name is Casey Padron and I'm a graduate student at Colorado State University. For my thesis, I am studying job satisfaction and its relationship to retention for rural music teachers in Colorado. The purpose of this study is to identify attributes of a rural music teaching position that contribute positively or negatively to the teacher's job satisfaction and understand how this relates to the teacher's desire to continue in their position for future school years.

You are invited to participate in this study. If you agree to participate, I will coordinate a time with you where I can conduct an interview about your experiences as a music teacher in a rural school (this should take about one hour). Additionally, I would like to observe in your classroom for approximately two hours.

Your participation in the study is strictly voluntary, and any information gathered will be kept confidential. If you have any questions about the study, feel free to contact me at the phone number and email address below or my advisor, Dr. Erik Johnson at e.johnson@colostate.edu.

Please respond to this email if you are interested in participating. I look forward to hearing from you and learning more about your experiences!

Sincerely,

Casey Padron
casey.padron@colostate.edu
469-742-3133

APPENDIX E

Quantitative Questionnaire

Adapted from Duffy & Lent (2009)

Demographics

Age: _____

Gender (circle one): Male Female

Race or ethnic group (Circle one):

Black or African American

Hispanic American

White or European American

Asian/Pacific Islander-American

Native American

Other (Please specify): _____

What level do you teach at: Elementary School Middle School High School

How many years have you worked as a teacher: _____

Job Satisfaction

Please circle one answer to each of the following statements based on this scale:

- 1 = Strongly Disagree
- 2 = Disagree
- 3 = Slightly Disagree
- 4 = Unsure
- 5 = Slightly Agree
- 6 = Agree
- 7 = Strongly Agree

- | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. I feel fairly well satisfied with my present job | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 2. Most days I am enthusiastic about my work. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 3. Each day of work seems like it will never end (r). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 4. I find real enjoyment in my work | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 5. I consider my job rather unpleasant (r). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

Teaching Satisfaction

Please circle one answer to each of the following statements based on this scale:

1 = Strongly Disagree

2 = Disagree

3 = Unsure

4 = Agree

5 = Strongly Agree

- | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. In most ways, being a teacher is close to my ideal. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. My conditions of being a teacher are excellent. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. I am satisfied with being a teacher. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. So far I have gotten the important things I want to be a teacher. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. If I could choose my career over, I would change almost nothing. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Positive Affect

This scale consists of a number of words that describe different feelings and emotions. Read each item and then mark the appropriate answer in the space next to that word. Indicate to what extent you have felt this way during the past few weeks:

1	2	3	4	5
very slightly	a little	moderately	quite a bit	extremely

- ☐ interested
- ☐ alert
- ☐ excited
- ☐ inspired
- ☐ strong
- ☐ determined
- ☐ attentive
- ☐ enthusiastic
- ☐ active
- ☐ proud

Work-Related Goal Progress

For these items, please list your **most important** work goal which you have set on your own and was not assigned by the administration.

A self-set work goal would be defined as something you personally aspire to achieve in your job. Examples of work goals for teachers might be, “improving my lecture skills,” “managing my classroom better,” “being less stressed at work”, or “improving my lesson plans”. Please list this goal below:

Please take a moment to consider your work-related goal and circle one answer to each of the following statements based on this scale:

- 1 = Strongly Disagree
- 2 = Disagree
- 3 = Unsure
- 4 = Agree
- 5 = Strongly Agree

- | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. I am making good progress on my work goal. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. In the past, I have made significant progress toward my work goal. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. My pursuit of my work goal has been productive. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. I am satisfied with my efforts to reach my work goal. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. In general, I have not made much progress with my work goal (R). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Work-Related Goal Self Efficacy

For these items, please respond to each statement by considering the work related goal you listed above.

Please circle one answer to each of the following statements based on this scale:

- | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. I possess the necessary skills to attain my work goal. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 2. I have what it takes to reach my work goal. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 3. I have the necessary knowledge to reach my work goal. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 4. I have the ability to reach my work goal. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

Work Goal Support

For these items, please respond to each statement by considering the self set work related goal you listed above.

Please circle one answer to each of the following statements based on this scale:

- 1 = Completely Disagree
- 2 = Disagree
- 3 = Slightly Disagree
- 4 = Unsure
- 5 = Slightly Agree
- 6 = Agree
- 7 = Completely Agree

My fellow teachers reliably assist my attempts to accomplish this goal when I ask them to do so.

My fellow teachers behave in ways that conflict with my attempts to accomplish this goal

My immediate supervisor reliably assists my attempts to accomplish this goal when I ask her or him to do so

My immediate supervisor behaves in ways that conflict with my attempts to accomplish this goal.

My school administration reliably assists my attempts to accomplish this goal when I ask them to do so.

My school administration behaves in ways that conflict with my attempts to accomplish this goal.

Teacher Self Efficacy

Directions: Please indicate your opinion about each of the questions below by marking any one of the nine responses in the columns on the right side, ranging from (1) "None at all" to (5) "A Great Deal" as each represents a degree on the continuum.

Please respond to each of the questions by considering the combination of your *current* ability, resources, and opportunity to do each of the following in your present position.

- 1 = None at all
- 2 = Very Little
- 3 = Some Degree
- 4 = Quite A Bit
- 5 = A Great Deal

1. How much can you do to control disruptive behavior in the classroom? 1 2 3 4 5
2. How much can you do to motivate students who show low interest in school work?
3. How much can you do to calm a student who is disruptive or noisy? 1 2 3 4 5
4. How much can you do to help your students value learning? 1 2 3 4 5
5. To what extent can you craft good questions for your students? 1 2 3 4 5
6. How much can you do to get children to follow classroom rules? 1 2 3 4 5
7. How much can you do to get students to believe they can do well in schoolwork?
8. How well can you establish a classroom management system with each group of students?
9. To what extent can you use a variety of assessment strategies? 1 2 3 4 5
10. To what extent can you provide an alternative explanation or example when students are confused? 1 2 3 4 5
11. How much can you assist families in helping their children do well in school? 1 2 3 4 5
12. How well can you implement alternative teaching strategies in your classroom? 1 2 3 4 5

Work Task Self Efficacy

Think about your ability to do the tasks required by your job. When answering the following questions, answer in reference to your own personal work skills and ability to perform your job.

1 = Strongly Disagree

2 = Disagree

3 = Unsure

4 = Agree

5 = Strongly Agree

- | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. I have confidence in my ability to do my job. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. There are some tasks required by my job that I cannot do well (R). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. When my performance is poor, it is due to my lack of ability (R). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. I doubt my ability to do my job (R). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. I have all the skills needed to perform my job very well. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. Most people in my line of work can do this job better than I can (R). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7. I am an expert at my job. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8. My future in this job is limited because of my lack of skills (R). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 9. I am very proud of my job skills and abilities. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10. I feel threatened when others watch me work (R). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Perceived Fit

Please circle one answer to each of the following statements based on this scale:

- 1 = Strongly Disagree
- 2 = Disagree
- 3 = Slightly Disagree
- 4 = Unsure
- 5 = Slightly Agree
- 6 = Agree
- 7 = Strongly Agree

Person/Organization Fit

- | | | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. The things I value in life are very similar to the things that my organization values. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 2. My personal values match my organization's values and culture. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 3. My organization's values and culture provide a good fit with the things that I value in life. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

Needs/Supplies Fit

- | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4. There is a good fit between what my job offers me and what I am looking for in a job | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 5. The attributes that I look for in a job are fulfilled very well by my present job. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 6. The job that I currently hold gives me just about everything that I want from a job. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

Perceived Organizational Support

Listed below are statements that represent possible opinions that YOU may have about working at your school. Please indicate the degree of your agreement or disagreement with each statement. Please choose from the following answers:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Slightly Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree

When answering these questions, “school” refers to those in your work environment, including fellow teachers, immediate supervisors, and administration.

1. My school values my contribution to its well-being.
2. If my school could hire someone to replace me at a lower salary it would do so (R).
3. My school fails to appreciate any extra effort from me. (R)
4. My school strongly considers my goals and values.
5. My school would ignore any complaint from me. (R)
6. My school disregards my best interests when it makes decisions that affect me. (R)
7. Help is available from my school when I have a problem.
8. My school really cares about my well-being.
9. Even if I did the best job possible, my school would fail to notice. (R)
10. My school is willing to help me when I need a special favor.
11. My school cares about my general satisfaction at work.
12. If given the opportunity, my school would take advantage of me. (R)
13. My school shows very little concern for me. (R)
14. My school cares about my opinions.
15. My school takes pride in my accomplishments at work.
16. My school tries to make my job as interesting as possible.

(R) indicates the item is reverse scored.

APPENDIX F

Interview Guide

1. General Information

- a. School (size, location, grades)
- b. Class load and extracurricular responsibilities
- c. Number of students in each class or ensemble
- d. Number and types of performances in a school year
 - i. How is the school year divided up (semesters, quarters)
- e. Number of years in position and in teaching overall, (if known) previous music teachers' tenures in current school (has this affected the program?)
- f. How did you come to work in your current position?

2. Social Support: How do they show support for you or the music program?

- a. Administrators (school and district)
- b. Other teachers
 - i. Staff atmosphere?
- c. Students & parents
- d. Greater community (reputation)
- e. Other music teachers?
- f. Overall?

3. School Working Conditions

- a. Do you feel like you have adequate planning time? Outside the school day?
- b. Describe school/music facilities and what you like or dislike about them.
- c. Do you feel like your salary is reflective of the amount of work you do?
- d. How often do you have professional development opportunities? Are they music-specific?

4. Isolation

- a. Does the location of the school affect your ability to acquire classroom materials, take students on field trips, or bring in extra help?

5. Local Community

- a. Do you feel like you're a part of the [town] community outside of the school?
- b. How do you balance roles inside/outside school?
- c. Is this community similar to where you grew up? How is it similar or different? Does that impact your approach to the classroom?

6. Music Education Community

- a. Do you feel like the goals you have for your students are similar to those of teachers in suburban or urban areas?
- b. Did you feel prepared (by college, licensure, professional development, etc.) for teaching in this setting when you started this job? Oriented towards kind of job?
- c. Do you attend CMEA/Midwest? If so, do you feel like the sessions are applicable for your situation?

7. Goal Progress

- a. What are your short- (this school year) and long- (next five years) term professional goals?
 - b. What are your short- and long-term goals for your students?
 - c. Are there any school-related factors help or inhibit these goals?
- 8. Satisfaction and Retention Overall**
- a. What are the most satisfying aspects of your job?
 - b. What are the most dissatisfying aspects of your job?
 - c. What are the most important considerations for retaining your job?
 - d. What are the most important considerations for leaving your job?
 - e. What relationship do you see between job satisfaction and retention?

APPENDIX G

Correlations by Experience Group

1 or less years of experience (n=15)

	<i>Work Sat</i>	<i>Teacher Sat</i>	<i>Pos Aff</i>	<i>Work Goal Prog</i>	<i>Goal Self-Eff</i>	<i>Work Goal Supp</i>	<i>Teacher Self-Eff</i>	<i>Work Self-Eff</i>	<i>Org Support</i>	<i>Per Fit</i>
<i>Work Sat</i>	1.00									
<i>Teacher Sat</i>	0.21	1.00								
<i>Pos Aff</i>	0.63	0.26	1.00							
<i>Work Goal Prog</i>	-0.01	-0.20	0.04	1.00						
<i>Goal Self-Eff</i>	0.49	0.44	0.56	0.24	1.00					
<i>Work Goal Supp</i>	0.71	0.06	0.38	0.14	0.30	1.00				
<i>Teacher Self-Eff</i>	0.11	0.11	0.10	-0.25	0.28	0.04	1.00			
<i>Work Self-Eff</i>	-0.12	0.36	-0.27	-0.57	-0.01	0.06	0.56	1.00		
<i>Org Support</i>	0.83	0.03	0.46	0.17	0.37	0.73	0.08	-0.14	1.00	
<i>Per Fit</i>	0.59	0.21	0.01	-0.24	0.02	0.49	0.15	0.20	0.74	1.00

2-5 years of experience (n=30)

	<i>Work Sat</i>	<i>Teacher Sat</i>	<i>Pos Aff</i>	<i>Work Goal Prog</i>	<i>Goal Self-Eff</i>	<i>Work Goal Supp</i>	<i>Teacher Self-Eff</i>	<i>Work Self-Eff</i>	<i>Org Support</i>	<i>Per Fit</i>
<i>Work Sat</i>	1.00									
<i>Teacher Sat</i>	0.76	1.00								
<i>Pos Aff</i>	0.55	0.61	1.00							
<i>Work Goal Prog</i>	0.59	0.60	0.43	1.00						
<i>Goal Self-Eff</i>	0.10	0.18	0.14	0.19	1.00					
<i>Work Goal Supp</i>	0.59	0.56	0.58	0.52	0.40	1.00				
<i>Teacher Self-Eff</i>	0.05	0.12	0.14	0.03	0.03	-0.23	1.00			
<i>Work Self-Eff</i>	-0.07	0.01	0.02	-0.21	0.20	-0.07	0.40	1.00		
<i>Org Support</i>	0.58	0.62	0.44	0.44	0.30	0.81	-0.07	-0.01	1.00	
<i>Per Fit</i>	0.72	0.74	0.59	0.61	0.12	0.81	0.05	-0.06	0.84	1.00

6-10 years of experience (n=26)

	<i>Work Sat</i>	<i>Teacher Sat</i>	<i>Pos Aff</i>	<i>Work Goal Prog</i>	<i>Goal Self-Eff</i>	<i>Work Goal Supp</i>	<i>Teacher Self-Eff</i>	<i>Work Self-Eff</i>	<i>Org Support</i>	<i>Per Fit</i>
<i>Work Sat</i>	1.00									
<i>Teacher Sat</i>	0.76	1.00								
<i>Pos Aff</i>	0.74	0.72	1.00							
<i>Work Goal Prog</i>	0.35	0.46	0.27	1.00						
<i>Goal Self-Eff</i>	0.20	0.45	0.50	-0.12	1.00					
<i>Work Goal Supp</i>	0.33	0.38	0.50	0.38	0.12	1.00				
<i>Teacher Self-Eff</i>	0.59	0.59	0.45	0.28	0.18	0.01	1.00			
<i>Work Self-Eff</i>	0.46	0.36	0.41	-0.20	0.47	-0.13	0.44	1.00		
<i>Org Support</i>	0.65	0.66	0.66	0.49	0.22	0.68	0.28	0.15	1.00	
<i>Per Fit</i>	0.69	0.59	0.62	0.47	0.05	0.63	0.29	0.25	0.84	1.00

11-15 years of experience (n=16)

	<i>Work Sat</i>	<i>Teacher Sat</i>	<i>Pos Aff</i>	<i>Work Goal Prog</i>	<i>Goal Self-Eff</i>	<i>Work Goal Supp</i>	<i>Teacher Self-Eff</i>	<i>Work Self-Eff</i>	<i>Org Support</i>	<i>Per Fit</i>
<i>Work Sat</i>	1.00									
<i>Teacher Sat</i>	0.62	1.00								
<i>Pos Aff</i>	0.32	0.45	1.00							
<i>Work Goal Prog</i>	0.01	0.01	0.18	1.00						
<i>Goal Self-Eff</i>	0.29	0.25	0.44	0.49	1.00					
<i>Work Goal Supp</i>	0.45	0.24	0.26	0.69	0.66	1.00				
<i>Teacher Self-Eff</i>	0.30	0.50	0.56	0.24	0.26	0.15	1.00			
<i>Work Self-Eff</i>	0.42	0.35	0.51	0.17	0.38	0.18	0.53	1.00		
<i>Org Support</i>	0.49	0.45	-0.15	-0.01	0.01	0.37	-0.13	-0.31	1.00	
<i>Per Fit</i>	0.70	0.70	0.30	0.09	0.17	0.42	0.27	-0.13	0.76	1.00

16-20 years of experience (n=13)

	<i>Work Sat</i>	<i>Teacher Sat</i>	<i>Pos Aff</i>	<i>Work Goal Prog</i>	<i>Goal Self-Eff</i>	<i>Work Goal Supp</i>	<i>Teacher Self-Eff</i>	<i>Work Self-Eff</i>	<i>Org Support</i>	<i>Per Fit</i>
<i>Work Sat</i>	1.00									
<i>Teacher Sat</i>	0.66	1.00								
<i>Pos Aff</i>	0.18	0.31	1.00							
<i>Work Goal Prog</i>	0.36	0.75	0.20	1.00						
<i>Goal Self-Eff</i>	0.16	0.54	-0.05	0.71	1.00					
<i>Work Goal Supp</i>	0.60	0.75	0.45	0.42	0.22	1.00				
<i>Teacher Self-Eff</i>	0.08	-0.15	-0.07	-0.54	-0.33	-0.04	1.00			
<i>Work Self-Eff</i>	0.13	-0.27	0.29	-0.40	-0.70	-0.06	0.47	1.00		
<i>Org Support</i>	0.09	0.68	0.17	0.40	0.42	0.66	0.00	-0.36	1.00	
<i>Per Fit</i>	0.17	0.66	0.32	0.59	0.25	0.61	-0.25	-0.03	0.75	1.00

21-25 years of experience (n=13)

	<i>Work Sat</i>	<i>Teacher Sat</i>	<i>Pos Aff</i>	<i>Work Goal Prog</i>	<i>Goal Self-Eff</i>	<i>Work Goal Supp</i>	<i>Teacher Self-Eff</i>	<i>Work Self-Eff</i>	<i>Org Support</i>	<i>Per Fit</i>
<i>Work Sat</i>	1.00									
<i>Teacher Sat</i>	0.38	1.00								
<i>Pos Aff</i>	0.50	0.23	1.00							
<i>Work Goal Prog</i>	0.22	0.76	0.21	1.00						
<i>Goal Self-Eff</i>	0.22	0.10	0.05	0.45	1.00					
<i>Work Goal Supp</i>	0.63	0.57	0.57	0.47	0.00	1.00				
<i>Teacher Self-Eff</i>	0.39	-0.22	-0.06	-0.37	0.33	-0.19	1.00			
<i>Work Self-Eff</i>	0.66	0.06	0.10	0.02	0.59	0.09	0.56	1.00		
<i>Org Support</i>	0.72	0.50	0.63	0.29	0.12	0.84	0.00	0.37	1.00	
<i>Per Fit</i>	0.65	0.60	0.43	0.59	0.34	0.70	-0.14	0.44	0.73	1.00

26 or more years of experience (n=12)

	<i>Work Sat</i>	<i>Teacher Sat</i>	<i>Pos Aff</i>	<i>Work Goal Prog</i>	<i>Goal Self-Eff</i>	<i>Work Goal Supp</i>	<i>Teacher Self-Eff</i>	<i>Work Self-Eff</i>	<i>Org Support</i>	<i>Per Fit</i>
<i>Work Sat</i>	1.00									
<i>Teacher Sat</i>	0.51	1.00								
<i>Pos Aff</i>	0.78	0.58	1.00							
<i>Work Goal Prog</i>	0.35	0.49	0.51	1.00						
<i>Goal Self-Eff</i>	0.31	0.44	0.42	0.64	1.00					
<i>Work Goal Supp</i>	-0.03	0.16	-0.36	0.18	0.05	1.00				
<i>Teacher Self-Eff</i>	0.54	0.02	0.61	0.16	0.44	-0.50	1.00			
<i>Work Self-Eff</i>	0.48	0.37	0.24	-0.23	0.24	0.14	0.16	1.00		
<i>Org Support</i>	-0.25	-0.01	-0.42	-0.23	-0.55	0.61	-0.67	-0.12	1.00	
<i>Per Fit</i>	0.20	0.36	0.09	-0.08	-0.07	0.55	-0.23	0.30	0.73	1.00

APPENDIX H

Correlations By Community Background

"I would describe the community where I grew up as rural." (n=50)

	<i>Work Sat</i>	<i>Teacher Sat</i>	<i>Pos Aff</i>	<i>Work Goal Prog</i>	<i>Goal Self-Eff</i>	<i>Work Goal Supp</i>	<i>Teacher Self-Eff</i>	<i>Work Self-Eff</i>	<i>Org Support</i>	<i>Per Fit</i>
<i>Work Sat</i>	1.00									
<i>Teacher Sat</i>	0.72	1.00								
<i>Pos Aff</i>	0.60	0.59	1.00							
<i>Work Goal Prog</i>	0.33	0.38	0.21	1.00						
<i>Goal Self-Eff</i>	0.22	0.38	0.40	0.11	1.00					
<i>Work Goal Supp</i>	0.49	0.39	0.49	0.12	0.26	1.00				
<i>Teacher Self-Eff</i>	0.34	0.24	0.14	0.00	-0.03	-0.11	1.00			
<i>Work Self-Eff</i>	0.26	0.15	0.14	-0.20	0.29	-0.14	0.49	1.00		
<i>Org Support</i>	0.57	0.55	0.40	0.18	0.24	0.69	-0.08	-0.16	1.00	
<i>Per Fit</i>	0.58	0.58	0.44	0.32	0.21	0.57	0.10	0.07	0.76	1.00

"I would describe the community where I grew up as suburban." (n=57)

	<i>Work Sat</i>	<i>Teacher Sat</i>	<i>Pos Aff</i>	<i>Work Goal Prog</i>	<i>Goal Self-Eff</i>	<i>Work Goal Supp</i>	<i>Teacher Self-Eff</i>	<i>Work Self-Eff</i>	<i>Org Support</i>	<i>Per Fit</i>
<i>Work Sat</i>	1.00									
<i>Teacher Sat</i>	0.52	1.00								
<i>Pos Aff</i>	0.49	0.41	1.00							
<i>Work Goal Prog</i>	0.45	0.43	0.24	1.00						
<i>Goal Self-Eff</i>	0.09	0.21	0.19	0.33	1.00					
<i>Work Goal Supp</i>	0.45	0.43	0.32	0.60	0.23	1.00				

	<i>Work Sat</i>	<i>Teacher Sat</i>	<i>Pos Aff</i>	<i>Work Goal Prog</i>	<i>Goal Self-Eff</i>	<i>Work Goal Supp</i>	<i>Teacher Self-Eff</i>	<i>Work Self-Eff</i>	<i>Org Support</i>	<i>Per Fit</i>
<i>Teacher Self-Eff</i>	0.17	0.08	0.25	-0.15	0.16	-0.19	1.00			
<i>Work Self-Eff</i>	0.12	0.00	0.18	-0.24	0.05	-0.08	0.52	1.00		
<i>Org Support</i>	0.47	0.47	0.32	0.43	0.04	0.70	-0.08	-0.08	1.00	
<i>Per Fit</i>	0.65	0.62	0.35	0.49	-0.04	0.65	-0.07	-0.04	0.80	1.00

"I would describe the community where I grew up as urban." (n=17)

	<i>Work Sat</i>	<i>Teacher Sat</i>	<i>Pos Aff</i>	<i>Work Goal Prog</i>	<i>Goal Self-Eff</i>	<i>Work Goal Supp</i>	<i>Teacher Self-Eff</i>	<i>Work Self-Eff</i>	<i>Org Support</i>	<i>Per Fit</i>
<i>Work Sat</i>	1.00									
<i>Teacher Sat</i>	0.52	1.00								
<i>Pos Aff</i>	0.72	0.24	1.00							
<i>Work Goal Prog</i>	0.14	0.25	0.30	1.00						
<i>Goal Self-Eff</i>	0.30	0.24	0.39	0.32	1.00					
<i>Work Goal Supp</i>	0.17	-0.18	0.12	0.01	-0.11	1.00				
<i>Teacher Self-Eff</i>	0.24	0.01	0.37	0.02	0.43	0.02	1.00			
<i>Work Self-Eff</i>	0.19	0.10	0.23	-0.23	0.25	-0.40	0.46	1.00		
<i>Org Support</i>	0.76	0.74	0.49	0.10	0.13	-0.12	0.01	0.21	1.00	
<i>Per Fit</i>	0.71	0.59	0.59	0.05	0.13	-0.04	0.16	0.30	0.91	1.00

APPENDIX I

Correlations by School Level

Elementary School (n=67)

	<i>Work Sat</i>	<i>Teacher Sat</i>	<i>Pos Aff</i>	<i>Work Goal Prog</i>	<i>Goal Self-Eff</i>	<i>Work Goal Supp</i>	<i>Teacher Self-Eff</i>	<i>Work Self-Eff</i>	<i>Org Support</i>	<i>Per Fit</i>
<i>Work Sat</i>	1.00									
<i>Teacher Sat</i>	0.72	1.00								
<i>Pos Aff</i>	0.62	0.66	1.00							
<i>Work Goal Prog</i>	0.48	0.52	0.43	1.00						
<i>Goal Self-Eff</i>	0.29	0.35	0.53	0.37	1.00					
<i>Work Goal Supp</i>	0.44	0.43	0.38	0.48	0.27	1.00				
<i>Teacher Self-Eff</i>	0.37	0.33	0.32	0.07	0.11	-0.06	1.00			
<i>Work Self-Eff</i>	0.20	0.11	0.16	-0.12	0.16	-0.09	0.49	1.00		
<i>Org Support</i>	0.55	0.60	0.37	0.44	0.23	0.66	0.06	-0.07	1.00	
<i>Per Fit</i>	0.56	0.61	0.34	0.40	0.17	0.59	0.23	0.14	0.80	1.00

Middle School (n=70)

	<i>Work Sat</i>	<i>Teacher Sat</i>	<i>Pos Aff</i>	<i>Work Goal Prog</i>	<i>Goal Self-Eff</i>	<i>Work Goal Supp</i>	<i>Teacher Self-Eff</i>	<i>Work Self-Eff</i>	<i>Org Support</i>	<i>Per Fit</i>
<i>Work Sat</i>	1.00									
<i>Teacher Sat</i>	0.60	1.00								
<i>Pos Aff</i>	0.57	0.47	1.00							
<i>Work Goal Prog</i>	0.41	0.37	0.23	1.00						
<i>Goal Self-Eff</i>	0.19	0.29	0.19	0.26	1.00					
<i>Work Goal Supp</i>	0.55	0.41	0.43	0.32	0.28	1.00				
<i>Teacher Self-Eff</i>	0.15	-0.03	0.12	-0.09	0.04	-0.26	1.00			
<i>Work Self-Eff</i>	0.14	0.10	0.11	-0.14	0.13	-0.10	0.57	1.00		

<i>Org Support</i>	0.48	0.44	0.29	0.19	0.16	0.75	-0.22	-0.16	1.00	
<i>Per Fit</i>	0.68	0.63	0.37	0.33	0.08	0.69	-0.08	0.05	0.76	1.00

High School (n=63)

	<i>Work Sat</i>	<i>Teacher Sat</i>	<i>Pos Aff</i>	<i>Work Goal Prog</i>	<i>Goal Self-Eff</i>	<i>Work Goal Supp</i>	<i>Teacher Self-Eff</i>	<i>Work Self-Eff</i>	<i>Org Support</i>	<i>Per Fit</i>
<i>Work Sat</i>	1.00									
<i>Teacher Sat</i>	0.52	1.00								
<i>Pos Aff</i>	0.52	0.37	1.00							
<i>Work Goal Prog</i>	0.34	0.35	0.23	1.00						
<i>Goal Self-Eff</i>	0.13	0.30	0.11	0.30	1.00					
<i>Work Goal Supp</i>	0.55	0.38	0.36	0.29	0.25	1.00				
<i>Teacher Self-Eff</i>	0.22	0.16	0.30	0.10	0.16	-0.11	1.00			
<i>Work Self-Eff</i>	0.31	0.27	0.32	0.01	0.24	0.09	0.52	1.00		
<i>Org Support</i>	0.52	0.35	0.25	0.12	0.12	0.71	-0.12	0.03	1.00	
<i>Per Fit</i>	0.67	0.49	0.41	0.33	0.06	0.65	-0.02	0.18	0.77	1.00

APPENDIX J

Interview Transcripts: John

Interview #1; December 12, 2019

J: Oh no, it's not bus duty, I'm driving it.

C: Oh! Okay, that's cool.

J: Yeah, it's pretty fun actually, I like doing it. It's also in the middle of nowhere so it's a nice little drive for a little bit.

C: Before we get started, do you feel like you have a good idea of what the study is about or is there any more information you want about what I'm asking for?

J: You're just trying to look at rural educators, right?

C: Right.

J: Are you trying to look for retention or just...

C: Kind of I'm looking at job satisfaction and hopefully how that informs retention decisions. So, questions like, what is it about your job that you like or don't like that either makes you stay there or look for another job?

J: Sure. Cool, I'm all good.

C: Sounds good. So, the questions are in a few different categories. So, the first section is kind of general, just give me the lay of the land of your school and your position.

J: So, I work for [Norton School District]. It's about 30 miles east of [nearby urban center], and I actually live in [nearby urban center]. I commute out. I don't know if you've ever been in this area. It's pretty sparse... when you leave [nearby urban center], it's like going to [neighboring state]. So, I live in [county] and the school district is about 380 students or so, so it's pretty small. The elementary holds closer to 200 students, then the secondary is a junior/senior high school, so 7-12, and they're hovering at about 180. A lot are farming community, but a new thing that's been coming in lately is hemp. A lot of hemp is being grown on these farms. So I actually think that has affected a little bit the type of kid that we're getting...you can imagine why...and usually we tend to get kids from [nearby urban center], and here it's called the [name of region], the whole area from [highway] over to [county], so we have a lot of kids that will kind of jump around schools from [names several nearby towns], because they're all in such close proximity. I guess that's about the district, they're pretty sports heavy, they'll emphasize sports a lot. For example, when volleyball made state, they cancelled school that Friday. Well, there's not enough staff, and people go watch the game. The day before, they projected the game in the gym and everyone watched it. It's kind of fun, everyone's behind that. The facilities are... the elementary school is pretty new, within 10 years, but the high school is pretty old and has some maintenance issues. The one thing is that the students have to cross a highway to get back and forth

between the schools. They tried to pass a bond, I believe it passed, to build a new school onto the back of the elementary school, so they're in the middle of kind of rebuilding the school.

C: So, it's all going to be one building basically? Or at least one campus?

J: Yep. It's technically one campus right now, but with a highway going through it.

C: Gotcha. What about your position? What does your typical day look like? Or week or year, even?

J: So, my position is K-12. So, in the mornings—I kind of changed the schedule a little bit which I'll tell you about—but I do general music in the mornings, kindergarten, 4th, 1st, 3rd, 2nd, in that order. The class sizes are anywhere from 15 to, I've seen as big as 28, which is pretty large for here. There are two grade-level teachers, so I see kids on alternating days and every other Friday. The classes are small enough that on Fridays me and the PE teacher will combine classes so for example this Friday she'll take K, 2nd, 4th, grade, all of them, which gives me a little planning time, then I'll take 1st and 3rd grade. So, it gives her an hour planning time, and it gives me an hour and a half, then we'll flip and switch and all that. So that's the mornings, 30 minutes segments and I get a 30 minute planning segment in the morning. I also do a duty in the morning, just standing outside and making sure they're not killing each other. I do lunch duty, then after that I added a new class open to junior high and high school, we call it "Band 1" but I call it "Remedial Band". It's for students that quit band, or want to start band, I put them in that. My philosophy is that the band is the flagship of the district. If the band does well, we can start to explore choir and start to explore jazz band and all of that stuff, but I'll get to that in a minute. That's about an hour, I have 4-5 middle school kids and one high schooler in there so we kind of piece them together. After that I have a junior high band, 7th and 8th graders. I have them for a little bit, Norton has, and I don't know why they did this, it happened a long time ago, but Norton has a 7-12 combined band and here's how it works, it's really strange: for 30 minutes I have junior high, 7th and 8th, for another 30 minutes I have everybody, 7-12, and for the last 30 minutes I have high school. It's really interesting, and we've kind of made it work—I mean, I had to make it work—and it's my understanding that they did that in the past for numbers. They wanted more numbers I guess, whatever. I don't need them anymore, which is why there's now the remedial, I talked them into letting me do that so the slot is there and that way I can have a junior high, and high school band separately. Which makes picking literature interesting. That puts us about 2:30, then every other day I'll see a 5th or 6th grade band and everybody does band in 5th and 6th grade in Norton because I make them do that. It was the only way I could get that other class in there to split it up. And honestly, I'm trying to have as many classes and get as many kids involved as possible, so the district is against the wall to hire another teacher, because they really need to have an elementary and secondary. That's what I'm kind of doing so I'm trying to overload myself so they can see that demand. Usually I'll drive a bus route, sometimes it'll be as short as 15 minutes or as long as an hour and a half. They're little short buses, I don't drive the big buses, because I don't have my CDL. They want me to get my CDL, they keep saying that....When there's a game, volleyball, basketball, football, we do a pep band. That's at my discretion, so if there's a game on Tuesday/Thursday, I usually say we won't do them on

Tuesday because it's a school night and we'd have to move all our stuff over so we'll usually just do Thursday, and football games, but honestly if I don't feel like doing it, we don't do it. Because it's hard to get a lot of kids there. And one issue I have is that a lot of my kids are out on the field, also. In the mornings, sometimes at 7:30, and then at 3:30, I have a 30-minute chunk for anyone that wants to get tutored. So, I have a sign-up sheet, and I have one or two kids that sign up a week. And then depending on how strong the program is, or just depending, I'll have jazz band on Thursday mornings and choir every other week. Just depending on who shows up and all that. I think that's it, that's my typical day.

C: You've got a lot of plates spinning there! So, what are the performances you have throughout the year? Do you have the elementary school doing programs, and the junior high and high school doing concerts or anything like that?

J: Well, let me start with junior/senior school first. They do 2 concerts a year, one per semester. So, our concert this semester is next week on Tuesday. I do a 5-12 concert, so I put the HS in the middle and the 6th grade off to one side and the 5th grade on the other. It's kind of cool to see the progression there, people like it, and I try to keep it under an hour, people don't want to stay for more than an hour. Then we do that in the spring too. And then every once in a while, like if we have a jazz band that year, like my first year here I had a really good drummer, like a phenomenal drum set player. So, he was kind of able to carry us through jazz band, and I'll play with them too. A little bit of a choir, it depends, as far as the elementary they do one concert a year. We would do a Christmas program, but this year we're doing something a little different, we're putting everyone on a bus and going Christmas caroling. I don't know how that's going to go, we've never done it before, so we'll see how it goes. The other performance opportunity that kids get is honor bands, there's the [regional music organization] we're lucky to have it, it's like any other coalition, we host an honor choir in November and then a couple honor bands in the Spring so that's 3 more performances. And every now and then I'll take kids to Festival of the Winds at [nearby university], and I take them to the CHSAA large group festival in April. So those are the performance opportunities. Sometimes, like this year I'm working on going to [amusement park], my dream would be to go to Disneyland, but we'll see. But yeah, those are the performance opportunities.

C: Great! So, you said this is your third year in the position?

J: Yes, third year.

C: And is that also your third-year teaching in general?

J: That is correct.

C: Cool. Alright, so the next set of questions is about where support comes from both for you as a teacher and for the music program as well.

J: Administrative-wise?

C: Yes, but from some different angles too. So first, administration, do you feel supported by them, and in what ways?

J: Yeah, I guess I'll start with, the superintendent also doubles as the elementary principal, so I actually see him a lot. I probably spend like 70% of my time with elementary kids, I really just teach the one band class, but the band class is most visible one that I put the most time into. Anyway, he's awesome. I'll mention things and the next day it's done. Like when I wanted to require band for 5th and 6th graders, I was like hey, I have almost everybody anyway, let's just make everybody do it. It was just a suggestion, but when the schedule came out, I was like oh, cool, we're doing this. Same thing with supporting, along those lines, when I required everyone to do it, I was pretty close with instruments, but I was probably 10-15 short, so I made up a list with what I needed and I sent him the requisition, and the next day we had it. So, it's one of those things, you know he was like if we need it, we need it. The high school principal is also very supportive, but one of the things is that his son is involved in band too, and quite a bit of nephews. Like 5, no wait 8, nephews. You'd like to think that that sort of thing doesn't make a difference, but it does. So, the administration helps me out, I think the only thing I fight—I mean it's unfair to say it's a fight, but athletics. They tend to lean towards athletics over music. They prioritize it, which is fine, whatever, because that's not the community of the school, so they're going to do that and that's fine, but I never feel hung out to dry. As far as money and all that, not really a big deal, they treat me very well, if there's something I need to do like a conference or something they're like cool, have fun. Do what you want. Both principals are very much like, hey, go do what you need to do, if you're screwing it up, we'll let you know.

C: Cool. What do you feel in terms of support from other teachers in the school?

J: It's hit and miss. I think it depends on the politics of the town a little bit, like if you're not friends with the right people, that politic can kind of get to you. I've learned that if you're just nice to everybody, it's okay. you can kind of avoid that. You know, they're going to be nasty and that's just okay. As far as other teachers, it's interesting, like my first year the teachers that support me now seemed to be not around as much, and now that I guess I've been here longer, I fit in more. I don't want to say, I mean I want to say that I belong with the "cool crowd" of teachers, because they've accepted me, as to where the outcasts of the staff were first to talk to me because they wanted someone to be with them. Just like, clique stuff.

C: Do you mean the trust of you staying more than one year, or that sort of thing?

J: Yes, exactly. So, I think they trust me more. As far as the staff, they're not nice to me when I mention if I'm going to leave or not, so they've come to trust me that way. It was kind of cool, there's a 4th grade teacher, his son is the one that played the drum set and he has two daughters that are two phenomenal flute players, and I was talking to him about volleyball because his daughters also play volleyball, and I said "Man, they beat them," and he said "No, no, no—WE beat them. You're part of us, now." And this just happened a few weeks ago, and it kind of just hit me like, oh man, he accepted me. And when that happens, it's like oh, cool, I'm on his side, and he's always been a big supporter of me, so that was a great thing. But then there's also people you stay away from.

C: So, is there more of a sense of team on the staff, or are there divisions?

J: I would say there's more of a division. It just depends on who's around and who's talking to who you know, but there's more division because there's some lot of petty things that happen. So yeah.

C: Well, all right, what about support from the students and like parents of students in the program.

J: As far as—I'll start with parents. They tend to be pretty good. I tend to always have the same parents that just always do that, which is inherent. I have one mom that does our annual fundraiser and she organizes the whole thing. And she is incredible. She does everything. And we have a pretty massive band booster account, we have a \$15,000 band booster account, and I'm like, we need to find stuff to spend this money on because it's just lying there. We don't need to stockpile it unless, you know if we need to pay like an \$8,000 bill, I guess. Yeah. But you know, the parents will support me in that way. And I'm very transparent with them with the band booster stuff. I just say, this is what I spent. These are the receipts. This was what we're doing. I bought them this and whatever. Yeah. Some parents will do that. It's always the same group of parents. And it's actually the parents that are related to the administration. So that tends to be related or their close friends, too. There are some parents that just don't care. Like always. Sometimes I'll.... they use Facebook a lot to message. And I try to avoid that, I have them email me or come find me. A lot of them will just kind of filter their complaints to me through Facebook, and I had to be like, don't do that. And typically, those parents tend to be the ones that don't help out as much. Or I kind of have to say something like, hey, it'd be awesome if you just moved 10 chairs for us over there during a concert, like please just do that. And that's kind of what I find. And then there's some parents that are completely absent. I mean, sometimes I'll just have to give rides to kids. I say, you know what, well, I'll just take you home because obviously your mom isn't going to come get you, so it's fine. Just stuff like that. So, parents are hit or miss. It's always the same group. I would say overall, though, parents are pretty good towards kids. We have a lot of farming communities, which I tend to think have better morals than some urban and city communities. And you can just kind of tell that they value family a little bit more, they're there to be present, but when they're not like that, they're pretty bad. Students. I've talked with other teachers about this and other teachers that are not from the area. Students are a little helpless here. They're pretty... they've been babied a lot. So sometimes it's pushing them. They think of being pushed as being like, I'm being mean to them. And so, I just I've had to kind of break them out of that. But I would say students are pretty good. I can ask them to do just about anything and it's fine. This was not the case my first year. My first year year I was 21. And some of those kids were what, 18? So, I fought that quite a bit. Now, it's not really an issue. I can have kid I can even I can usually email kids and say, Hey, can you come help me at seven in the morning? They say sure, I'll be there. There's a few straggling seniors and juniors that I think when they leave, I think it'll help a lot, my first year it helped. Last year was pretty difficult. And this year, it's settled a lot more. Those stragglers are just not pleasant.

C: Okay. What about like the support from just the community in general or kind of the reputation of the program in the school and the greater community?

J: I don't want to sound arrogant or anything like that. People respect the music program here, and it's not because of me. It's because the previous teacher here had built something really great. And because she had built a really pretty decent foundation, I was able to just kind of keep stacking on top of it.

C: Do you know how long the previous teacher was in your position here for

J: 19 years. But before that they hadn't had a really good sequence of directors. It was just okay. So, people have said the previous director, she had maintained good stuff. So, there was already a respect there. I will say it has been mentioned to me that it's gotten better, that people are more excited about it. And one of the things that they mentioned a lot in the community about me is just that I'm young, and I'm willing to do stuff. It's just like, Oh, cool. I don't mind drivin. It's fine, or okay, I'll take them there. So, I think that's kind of the general buzz. The community really likes it when we play at football games. Sometimes we have had some pretty lousy pep band performances. I think a couple weeks ago, we had probably our best volleyball pep band. And I mean, you can look out and people were dancing and moving their heads. And we added "Sweet Caroline" two years ago, and people loved it. They'll sing along, they'll do that. So, they're very responsive to that. But they're also pretty quick to criticize. So, you know, when I first got here, they're like, Oh, he's terrible. He's not doing this. I had been here for one week. I don't know what I'm doing. I STILL don't know what I'm doing! But now they're more forgiving or forgetting.

C: Okay. Cool. Since you're the only music teacher in the district, do you have sort of a network of other music teachers in the area or like, do you feel like you have support coming from other music teachers

J: So, like I said, there's [name of valley] music league. And so, we will have two meetings at the beginning the year before our big event in November. And then we have a January event and then a March event. So, we what is that, five meetings a year? Well, during those meetings we'll rotate places, who's hosting. And I think that helps a lot. Because, I mean, it all takes us at least 30 minutes to get to the actual meeting place. Oh, we I think we kind of appreciate that. I don't know if you know, [music teacher]. He's actually in the district next to me, probably 20 minutes away, 20-30 minutes away. We've guest taught at each other schools before. I host a community band on Monday nights. And he'll come and direct that and I don't know if you know, [another music teacher], he's a director in [nearby urban center]. Where are you from?

C: I grew up in Texas and I did my undergrad in [town]. So, I kind of know the people in the Front Range area and then now I'm in [town], and I taught in Utah, so I've kind of been all over the place.

J: So anyway, yeah, [music teacher] is there, and he's been a really good resource for me. I mean, there's times when I'm like, "[mentor], I don't I don't know what I'm doing!", and he's also a [festival] judge. Oh, well, he'll come in and to listen to my groups. I say, "Will you judge me as [festival] judge?" And then we'll, we'll go through the rubric and yeah, and understand what another mentor that I've really gotten to know is [another music teacher] he used to be the director at [nearby urban center school]. If you look at [nearby urban center school], I mean, they won the state championship in Marching Band four years in a

row. It ridiculous, but anyway, he's awesome. I think he's in the Colorado Band Director Hall of Fame. So that was good for that and then those other the other music teachers in the area are fine. This is going to be a little tongue in cheek, but it's the other teachers my age that are harder to get along with.

C: Oh, sure.

J: For some reason, like, my conversation with [older music teacher] is always really positive. And, and I just I like to ask to see what he's doing and all that. But with teachers my age, it feels like we're trying to flex, like who's doing a better job? And that's kind of my frustration of the band director profession in general. Sometimes we have a lot of flexing, and I'm like, we're not flexing here. We're all doing the same job. And that's the issue that I've had with some of the directors in my area. Not that I don't get along with them. It's just like, I'd rather not talk to you because you're not pleasant to talk to. The [nearby urban center] directors, one of them I went to school with, and then the other three I just know in passing, and so I hang out with the [nearby urban center] directors pretty often, that and obviously my friends that I've made, and professors and all that. I don't want to say I feel secluded, but I feel secluded. So, I don't know if you know, [music teacher], I student taught with him. He came down stay the night at my house and spent all day at my school. And that's really cool. So, I can't say I'm not supported on time in the last three years. And sometimes I'll get [professor] from [nearby university] to come over. But it would really be nice, I mean, if you look at [suburban areas], and you don't want to compare them, but they have people in the classrooms all the time, like once a week, I believe usually it's multiple times a week. And I do hire some staff when whoever's around to do that, but it is not as frequent as I would like it.

C: Okay, yeah. Isolation is one of the later topics that we'll get to so can talk some more about that. As far as social supports, who do you feel like that comes from? Who makes it work for you? Where do you feel the most support coming from?

J: I mean, the most support comes from my wife and my family. It's interesting, the kids are obsessed with my wife. They love her. And they will just do just about anything with her. But it's kind of good because she's gotten to know the kids and it's very, very family-oriented here. Sometimes I'll process things with her, and I'll say, "Hey, man, this this kid just kind of rubbed me the wrong way or, man, I really feel for this kid. What do you think I should do?" We communicate like that. She's my support, and then calling home to mom and dad helps, that never hurts.

And as far as professionally with staff, I'll call [mentor] every once a while. I've been trying to call [professor] but I didn't ever can reach him. Then my other friends, I don't know if you know [mutual friend]? He was in my wedding. Well, yeah, so I'll talk to him a lot and give him some opinions, and he'll throw opinions me so I'm just close friends like that, [colleague] is another person that I love talking to. So just going to those people.

C: Alright, nice. So, switching gears, the next group of questions is more about the school environment and kind of more logistical things. So, the first question here is, do you feel like you have enough planning time to do your job?

J: Well, yes.... I personally feel like...

C: I guess I should say, is there enough built into the day or do you have to kind of extend into your personal time to make it happen?

J: Here's a little bit about me, I refuse to do work outside of the school day. I'll get here at 7:30. I'll leave at 4:00. But like, I have to host a community band on Monday nights, so I stay. I'll stay from four to six. I'll do all my work that I need to for the week. I do get 30 minutes in the morning. I don't think that's enough. But whereas if we have a small class, like a small kindergarten class, will put them together. So, every day, I'll have another 30 minutes, so that gives me an hour. The alternating Fridays gives me an hour to an hour and a half time. And then sometimes if they have random elementary things that happen in the afternoons, I might not have fifth or sixth grade band. So, I say yes, because I've kind of learned the job and how to make myself efficient. When I was in my first year, I felt swamped, because I didn't know what I was doing. But I don't think it's necessarily not enough planning time and I think I built that point in time into it.

C: Okay. Cool. All right. Do you feel like the facilities are adequate, like your room and the technology available or the instruments available?

J: I would say it's adequate. It's enough to get us by. As far as the elementary music room, it's pretty big. I mean, I can do a lot of Dalcroze and Kodaly stuff pretty easily. I can probably fit about 40 kids in my elementary music room. We used to do band on the stage, which is a little room. And that was getting a little tight. 20 kids on that stage with chairs and stands is pretty tight. And then my band room across the street, right now we have 45 total and it's getting pretty tight. I'm just running out of room.

We have enough stuff and the district is willing to get enough stuff. I mean, I was looking for instruments, they were on board with getting nice stuff. But then I was like, I don't really want to do that. I don't want to spend \$60,000 on stuff that's just going to get beat up. So, they were on board. But ultimately, I made the decision that it was just going to be adequate to get through here this way. And speaking of facilities, if this bond goes through, in three years, I believe, they'll be a new school with new facilities. And I'll be on the planning board for that for that. So, yeah, I think the facilities will improve but right now they're adequate.

C: Nice. Along those lines, do you feel like your salary is reflective of the amount of work that you do?

J: Yes, I know for sure that Norton has one of the lowest salaries in Colorado. The starting for a BA with just no credits is like \$30,000. I think it went up to like \$30,900. It's pretty low. However, they have a bunch of stipends. So, I get I get 12% for being the secondary director and then another 4% for being the elementary director. And they did that because I'm technically teaching overtime. Because I'm teaching more than five sections or whatever. Yeah, and then jazz band and pep band and to have concerts are, I think that 15% turns into like \$5,000, \$6,000 or so. Which one time I did the math for it, and it's like, five cents an hour. I was just curious to see that. I will say that because [nearby urban center] and Norton are so rural... I don't want to say poor, but they're poor. If you have a salary anywhere from \$35 to \$45,000, you're going to be doing pretty good as far as the cost of living. It's pretty low. I mean, I was able to buy a house and my mortgage payment is

like, 800 bucks. And so, I can manage, that's kind of one of the tradeoffs of living rurally is that the cost of living cheaper, right? It might be harder to find a place, but it is cheaper. So, I get those stipends and then obviously, your salary goes up as you if you move over on your pay scale. So, if you have more Continuing Ed credits you'll move over. And then in the summers I work maintenance for the school. So, I work 30-40 hours just depending on what they need just doing some cleaning, fixing stuff. That helps out a ton, that's a couple of thousand in there. Oh, and one of the things that actually helps me out a lot because it pays really well is riding the buses. It pays like \$26 an hour. So, if you do it a couple times a week, and you get paid once a month and a couple hundred dollars every month. So, I just do that, and I guess the salary thing is a loaded question because yes, it is a low salary, but I'm not the type of person that's going to sit around waiting for more money to come to me, I'm going to find work to get more money.

C: All right. What kind of like professional development opportunities do you have, like you said that you get stipends to go to [state music education conference]] and stuff like that? Is there anything in house that's specific for music?

J: For music now, we do have an organization called BOCES that will get us stipends. They don't pay for [state music education conference]], but they just let me go. No, there's not really any professional development that's music oriented. I will say, we had a lady called [professional development provider] come, she does a lot of research for gender studies. So, like, how boys react to stuff versus girls, and I thought that was very useful. They'll bring in presenters they'll do that, and they'll give us continuing ed credits to be able to move over on the pay scale for those. Like when I got CPR trained. I did it on the bus timesheet because I was technically there for the buses even though I still had to be there for being a teacher. Sometimes I take the long way back home on the bus route... But, Professional development wise. If there's a professional development that's happening, and let's say some [nearby urban center] or it's here, and they're bringing somebody, and it has to do specifically with math or English. I'll go to the superintendent and say, hey, there's a Kodaly workshop happening at [university]. Can I trade this day out? Can I not come to work this Friday, and I'll go to that thing on Saturday and call it good? So, I'm able to trade out and we call it flexing days. I think the administration understands that I'll find opportunities, like one time I went to go just watch a concert and I said, I can I go watch this concert instead of sitting through this meeting? And they said, Sure. Cool. It makes you a better musician. So, I went and that was awesome.

C: Alright, so kind of coming back to the isolation question, do you feel like where the school is hinders any of the things, you're able to do in terms of say, getting instruments repaired or taking kids on field trips, or, things of that nature?

J: I would say no. Because the fact that we live near [nearby urban center], but it's a 30-minute drive, so you can make it there and back in a day and it's not going to take your whole day. So, the music store there's been pretty good for us. They've been pretty good as far as instruments and all that. And then field trips, I mean, to be honest, I just fill out a form. Like, last year I took a few kids to go watch a trombone player thing in [bigger city]. I said, hey, can I have a van? And it helps a lot that I drive, too. I'm certified to drive, and I feel comfortable driving. So, I don't have to do a bus driver. It also helps a lot but when I do

need a bus, the bus driver is actually the mother-in-law of the superintendent. Everybody's connected. So, I mean, that helps a lot, too.

Now the isolation thing, I think we have a lower ceiling than most. I think our floor also—if we were just thinking about it this way, if we had like a [suburb] school, [university town] school, [large city] school, I think they have this amount here [shows levels with hands] and they have a higher ceiling as to where small rural schools start here [shows lower level with other hand]. It might be the same amount of growth, but it lower. But I don't think there's anything different from it. I think it's just that's just where that community is going to dedicate their time to, because the community would much rather be farming and working on their sports. They still share music, and they'll do music. They might not spend their entire time on it. So I think you can push them to play like at [state music education conference] or at contest. I think we got a 1 and a couple 2's. So, they'll push themselves, but I think their priorities... the counselor explained it to me like this: wherever the fire's burning the hottest, that's where they'll put their attention to. We just kind of have to use that as it is. So that that's kind of what I find. And then the other thing I fight among colleagues is, what I always feel and maybe it's just the way I feel, is that urban folk will look down on rural schools. Yeah, the thing is, they're like I don't really want to help you because you have 20 kids. And then I'm like, Well, I don't really want you to be here if you're going to be a jerk. So, you know, I've had a run in with a professor here, locally, not from our university, but when you know, I don't want to hear what you have to say if you're going to be like that, right? If you're going to come visit us and then turn around and say, well, they don't have a bassoon player. They don't have this. They don't even have a tuba player. Then, I don't need you here. I need you here to make them better musicians. And so, I think that's contributing to isolation because I think there's this stigma that rural schools don't foster musical growth, which I think they do. But there, I think you have to be able to play the community pretty good, too. So yeah, play to the strengths of the community.

C: Yeah. So, a related questio, do you feel like the goals you have for your students are similar to goals that someone in a suburban school or an urban school would have for their students?

J: I would say so. My philosophy about running this program is, I want the music program to serve the community. So that means, okay, we were going to do a concert, we're going to play a little bit easier music, it might not be as good—which, now we're getting to the point where they *want* to do that—but since it's a 7-to- 12 band, maybe we'll play a little bit easier music, and people will love it. Maybe we won't play standard literature. Maybe we'll just play a bunch of pop tunes. Does the community like it? Yeah, they do. Can we get it to sound in tune? Can we learn about harmonic structure at the same time? Absolutely. In fact, it's a little bit easier to learn about structure when you play pop tunes. You look over like, are you singing *mi*? Yeah, you're singing *mi*, like, sweet, you got it. I think we meet those goals. But I think we have to, because of the lack of resources, we kind of have to work a little bit harder. We'll still play standard literature and grow. Then we will still go to contest and push them there. But I think you have to...how do I say this...Because I'm sharing. I'm sharing kids. I think bigger schools just have band kids and that's their life. Where, I think we have kids that just like doing band. They like playing volleyball, they like playing softball. They'll be in Student Council, they'll do FBLA. So, I think we have to come to the

understanding that you're just sharing, they're all our kids and we're just sharing them and we're teaching you how to do it. And to be honest, they're in high school. I don't really think they should have to be "conservatory trained" if they're going to be in band. No, let's teach them how to play in tune, let's teach them how to play with rhythm. Let's get them playing some good music, cool, they're happy. If they want to take an extra step, then they can go to college and get that extra step. I talk with several coaches about all that and they kind of have that same philosophy. Sometimes they take it a little bit further. But that's kind of where that goes in their goals, but you kind of have to get at them a different way.

C: Sure. So, do you feel like you're a part of the community? Like outside of being the band teacher? Like your personal life?

J: Yeah, yeah. I'm going to bring this into it because I think this does have to do with it. I think I fit in because my overall morals and my overall politics lean right. I'm middle, right. Not necessarily, I'm more libertarian. But I think that does have to do a little bit with it. Because sometimes it's funny. You'll see their Facebook posts or their comments or their bumper stickers and you're like, Okay, we're using we're using that word today, are we? There's stuff like that, but I think I'm able to get along with more with them because I think I align with them a little bit. And for me, I actually felt like I was more of an outlier in a suburban or an urban area because of that, because I wasn't liberal enough for that. I don't want to bring politics in that.

C: If that's part of it, then yeah, totally, bring it in.

J: A good person to talk to this about, he's going to do a presentation at [state music education conference], is [music teacher], he's going to do a presentation at [state music education conference]] about being a liberal IN a conservative, rural town. Ah, he's kind of talking about the differences in that and how it kind of hangs you out to dry.

C: Yeah, that's interesting. How do you balance your roles as the music teacher with your personal life? Like, I'm kind of thinking of the classic scenario like, where you see a band parent in the grocery store or something like that, kind of walking the line between like your personal life and your teacher life.

J: Yeah. Well in town, it happens all the time. When I'm in Norton, I mean, I can't go anywhere without seeing anybody I know. As far as that I just say "Hello. How's it going?" Sometimes I'll have a conversation depending on how good of friends they are, I would say some of these parents I'm pretty good friend. Or, I just say hi to them just because we're there, just to be kind. Now there is a street in Norton that's called "Teacher Street". Yeah, that's where, you know, I have close friend that, I go and I hang out with them, and a lot of teachers will come out and we'll hang out and have our beverages and move on with our life. Now, if I see them in [nearby urban center], it's always a little bit interesting because when I'm in [nearby urban center], sometimes I'll dress like a hobo. Because when I'm in Norton, I'm usually dressed in my professional attire. When I'm in [nearby urban center], I'm wearing shorts and a T shirt, and maybe I'm sweaty, because usually—it never fails—I'll go to the gym and then go to Walmart, and I'm still sweating and flushed, and then I see them. I'm like, "Hey, how's it going? I smell, sorry". I don't feel judged or anything like that. But usually, it's just like a Hey, how's it going? Really quick. I'm not going to be like, let's

have a conversation. It's like a lot of me being like, okay, I don't care. I would say that as a teacher, you're kind of part of the family anyway. So, it's whatever.

C: Yeah. Do you live in [nearby urban center] like, specifically to avoid those situations?

J: No. I live in [nearby urban center] because it's easier, because my wife goes to school at [nearby university]. It makes it easier. It's close enough. Money wise, it's a little bit better investment to buy a house in [nearby urban center] and turn around and sell it because the markets hot and it'll probably stay hot because it's going to be keep growing that way. So that's kind of kind of a financial decision.

C: Okay. Well, so, like you said, you feel kind of out of place in a suburban area or an urban area. Is that because you grew up in a more rural area? Is this area like where you grew up?

J: Yeah, I would say so. Yeah, that's more familiar. I never thought about that.

C: Okay. Do you think that impacts your approach in the classroom at all?

J: Absolutely. Yes. Well, and we're talking with my friend that's doing that presentation is we've actually talked about that. If you're not used to it, that's what makes a lot of young teachers or really any teacher that's not used to rural life or whatever. That this is what life is like and that's what kind of hangs them out to dry a little bit. Like, well, I don't really know how to do this and this sucks and the kids are not that good. They're like, Dang, this sucks. Like, this is bad. I think it's how you react to the community, if you're comfortable with it.

C: Cool. Do you feel like your undergraduate prepared you for this kind of job that you have?

J: I would say so. I'll add it with the stipulation of: one of my pet peeves is when you sit around, and this it's always around college kids. They'll say, well, they didn't teach me how to do this. They didn't teach me how to balance a budget. They didn't teach me about how to be organized. And I say, Well, first of all, the organization is your problem. You need to learn how to be organized. So, I think that my undergraduate gave me a really good solid musical experience, which is good because I have to be a good musician in order to be a good music teacher. And so, I think it gave me that foundation, it was just... I think it's unfair to say a degree is going to fully prepared me for any job whatsoever. So, it prepared me as a musician, but as far as like other things, like balancing a budget or running a fundraiser or doing stuff like that, you know, they can say that's how it's going to go, but you don't really know until you do it. So, I think it gave me a good foundation, but I've learned a lot more in the actual job.

C: Do you feel like the curriculum that you had focused more on like, "you're going to be a middle school band director" or "you're going to be an elementary school teacher"? versus like, kind of a "jack of all trades" sort of thing?

J: Yep. Yeah. I can hands down say that, yes. Because well, but also, if you if you ask undergraduate students or high school senior who's going to be a music major, "Hey, what do you want to be?" Oh, a high school band director? Right? I want to be a middle school band director, you know, almost hardly ever hear anybody say they're going to be an

elementary teacher. Almost never you hear that, people end up doing that because they like it. And elementary music jobs are very easy to find. I mean, if I feel that if you don't have a job and music, it's because you're not trying. There's plenty of jobs. And sometimes we just have to suck it up and teach K through 12 music and band because that's the job there is and it's convenient. And I got lucky, to be honest. I think the degree program was aimed towards that. I will say though, they do give a little bit of good effort like [professor] putting those two semesters of elementary methods. Yeah, I mean, what else would I do if I didn't have that? I didn't have that binder, I mean, it lives right there on my piano. I use it every single day. So yes, that prepared me for that, but I didn't necessarily have a voice in the back of my head saying, "Oh yeah, I'm going to be a K 12 teacher." I personally took the K through 12 job because I was having a hard time deciding whether where I wanted to do. Do I want to be a high school teacher? Do I want to be a middle school teacher? Did I want to be an elementary teacher? I didn't know what I wanted to do, because I enjoyed them all. I felt like I was decent at all of them, too. And so that was one of the reasons I took this job.

C: So how did you come to Norton? Did you look for K-12 jobs? Or did you say, Oh hey, that seems like an interesting possibility, or...?

J: Yeah, so when I when I was interviewing, it was that student teaching semester and I had applied obviously to multiple jobs and had interviews and all that. And it was at the teacher job fair, the Norton principal had interviewed me because I had submitted a resume before the fair. And believe it or not, actually, when I got here, the first couple of weeks, I found my resume sitting on desks and stuff like that. But I think they were kind of vetting me a little bit. And because I know they were kind of trying to find somebody to build the program because the program had gotten strong when it had not been strong. So, they kind of wanted to pick somebody that was going to be, I guess, at least not make it go down and keep it going. And so, for them if it was going steady, and if it went up, awesome, that's the bonus. But as long as it's steady I think they're trying to find someone like that. Well, I remember interviewing. It was like 9:00, and I thought we had a pretty good interview. The principal just really told me about what the school was like, then I remember going back to [town], and then probably an hour later.... when I left, the principles said "Let me call the superintendent" -who was also the music teachers' husband—but the premise was, he said, "Hey, I talked to my superintendent, we feel really good about you, we want to go ahead and offer you the job." And that was like, within three hours, and I went, Oh, gosh, I don't know how if I should do it. Like, and I thought about it pretty hard. And, I just kind of went, you know what, I'm just going to go ahead and do it. Because, you know, when you're a college student, you don't get to be a picker, right? You just kind of get what you get. And I really liked it because it had band, and I really wanted to teach band, too, because I had grown to really like band. And I remember, I declined a few interviews after that, because I said, Oh, yeah, I'll set up the interview. And then when they called, I said, you know what? I have an outright job. Just already there. Theyr asked me to come in the following week on a Monday to come see the school to meet with the kids so that way, they knew that I was going to be here in August. They brought me out they bought me lunch—it was just a school lunch—and I got to see a little bit of the classes. I talked to the old music teacher, kind of see how she did things. And after that I went now, if they're going to go to that effort, they probably care enough to support me. And remember declining those interviews,

I'd say, Hey, I was actually offered another job. A lot of the interviewers are a lot of people on the phone said, "Well, good for you." Like, you know, a lot of people don't get that lucky, this was in April. I had a job in April, like, I knew that I was going to have a job in April ready for August. And some people wait until July. I mean, that's kind of the reason I ended up there.

C: Nice. Okay. So, when you go to like [state music education conference], and things like that, like professional development that's geared towards music teachers, do you feel like those are applicable to your classroom, like the sessions that you go to?

J: Again, this is like the undergraduate thing we're talking about. Yeah, you didn't teach me that. But it's also up to you to learn it. Uh huh. Yes, I would say I would say that the [state music education conference] helps a lot with musical stuff. But there's sometimes these sessions, like when [composer] was here. I thought he was probably the best clinician I've ever seen because he was relating to small school music. And he says, I write it to be achievable and emotional and passionate. Something that is really useful. But there's sometimes some of these rehearsals where I go, cool. I only see my kids maybe once a week if we get lucky sometimes. It's like, I can't give them a conservatory curriculum. It's just not going to happen. They're going to hate it. They want to be able to be involved in music, and I'm going to try to max out their potential and that's why I think their ceilings a little bit lower. But yes, I make them learn all their skills. Yes. I make them do all this stuff. But if I require them to practice three, four hours every day or, "you need to practice at least an hour after school," that's not going to happen. Because we are working on the farm or at practice. So, I just think some of the expectations that they have at [state music education conference] is just, they're used to just being able to have their band kids and say you guys do it. There's nothing else in your life. You just do that. That's what you're doing. And I think that's kind of where that that falls. Yeah. However, like when I go to Kodaly a workshop, or some like that, games are games, man, kids are kids. So, if you can kind of learn how to work with kids, kids are kids, they're going to be there.

C: All right. So, let's see, what are some of your short- and long-term goals for your students? Or for the program?

J: Yeah. I'll start long term, actually. Long term one of my dream goals is to actually take a group to [state music education conference]. I would really like to do it. We're pretty close to it actually. And I just want kids to like music. We don't have to know exactly the why Holst is doing a retrograde there. I mean, whatever, I don't really even care about that. I think it just sounds cool. So, we just like music because it sounds cool. We just learn some theory to put our noses in the air a little bit. Because really, when you get down to it, everybody likes music. And we just like listening to it. So, I want them to be able to have the chance to create music, and to be able to still create music after they're done. So, like, hey, I have the technique on my saxophone. Cool, I can play jazz later. Maybe not at the school, but maybe I can do it later. [some students enter the room and then leave]

--So, kids like that they just got out of a DI practice. It's five o'clock. Yeah, so they're going to go home, eat dinner, do their homework and go to sleep. Now some of those will practice 30 minutes—actually, all three of those girls will practice—but I mean, 30 minutes, and they're freshmen girls. I just want them to be able to play when they're done here. If they

can have the tools or at least find the tools to do it that's all my goal is. If we get selected to go to [state music education conference], that's awesome. But I just want them to enjoy band because sometimes people will fear band because they just fear it. Oh, I'm not good enough. Oh, I got yelled at because I messed up that part. It's okay, we're going to get that part. Short-term wise, I would like to split the bands have a junior high and high school band. And yeah, that's just those are really just two things there. This is probably just a teacher thing. But I'm a short term, I just want kids to be able to see a little bit more long term. Like, no, it's not about today. It's about where we're going. Where are we going? How do we get there? How do we know what we've gotten there? Yeah, so that's just my day to day thing is that's what we're going to do. And it's also my long-term thing.

C: Okay, cool. What about, like, short and long term as a professional?

J: Personally, I, do like being here and I do want to see some of the kids that I started graduate, get my wife through school, make a little bit of money, get ourselves a little bit stable. I mean, making those investments in a rural area and then being able to turn around and sell it. I mean, we walked in here with nothing will probably walk out with \$50, \$60,000. So again, it kind of sucks, we don't live in [urban area]. I can't eat [local pizza place in urban area] whenever I want. I can go on a weekend or whatever. Yeah, but again, in long term goals, it's going to be way worth it when we get there. So, short term, I just want to save up some money. Do a good job here, get some experience. Sometimes I feel like rural schools are short handed a little bit because of that, because they have a revolving door. They have a director for one year because sometimes rural schools are seen as step up schools. They think, "Well, that way I can get a little bit of experience and then I'll move on to a bigger school." I don't like that, because that's not serving kids, you're serving your ego. And so that's my short-term goal. My long-term goal is I would like to do a master's degree. I would like to do this with a conducting assistantship. And then, eventually, I would like to become... I don't want to become [professor]. I don't want to be him. I want to but I do want to influence, like maybe working under a University or whatever teaching music education, I'd be happy with that, I'd be okay with teaching then conducting a concert band.

C: Cool. So, I guess not staying Norton for the rest of your life is the plan.

J: I'll probably leave Norton in, let's see, it's my third...I have seven years here. I was going to do seven, and also five years for my student loans.

C: Oh, there you go. Yeah.

J: Title 1, high needs school.

C: Cool. All right. Um, so like thinking about setting the goals for your students, you feel like there's any school-related factors that get in the way of getting to those goals?

J: I wouldn't say it's school related. There seems to be a lot of drama because of the smallness of it. You know, when there's family drama that gets a little awkward. That tends to kind of happened a little bit, they'll carry that into their classrooms. And then the next there's drama with the adults, that'll carry over to the kids too. It's so small and everybody kind of knows what you're doing anyway. As far as the school, we're a Kindness School and that's been helping a lot. We have this grant-funded bullying program because we think

that's prevalent, but I think that's probably in any school. I mean, you don't get the luxury of picking other friends. It's the same kids. So, I think that kind of contributes to that as well.

C: So, to wrap up I'd have to kind of like overall sweeping questions. So, the first are what are what is like the most satisfying and least satisfying aspects of your job?

J: I think the most satisfying thing...I really like people. I mean, that's just how I am. I've always liked people. My number one goal in life is to serve people. That's all I want to do. And so, you know, it's when they have like that one girl that came in here, she had been working really hard to be an honor band and didn't make it her seventh grade year, practiced all summer and then made honor band this year and I just love that because it's like, I took that journey with her and I was helping her because I said, you know what, let's just keep going at it. Just keep practicing, just do it. And then on the other side is I had that same group as this girl that did not make it this year. Seventh grader. Good kid, really good kid, really good clarinet player. There just happened to be these phenomenal clarinet players that all scored like perfect scores. And, you know, probably if it was any other year, she probably would have been there. But I also find that satisfying and being able to be like, you know what, we'll just try again next year. That's cool. So, I really find the relationships very satisfying. Like after we have a good concert, I like hugs. You know, it makes me feel good. When you have a good pep band, and then recently I've really enjoyed seeing former students. I've had two former students come back, I actually had two girls go study music. And they were awesome. And I told them Hey, you need to watch out for music theory. And you need to come in and find me and email me and we'll work through music theory because you're not going to get a single bit of it. I knew that was how she was. Well, I saw her two weekends ago. And she's like, you were right. I didn't know, I should have come for help. I was like, I told you! I mean, they come back. And it's not that "I told you so" it's just that they're happy to see me. And I see them like, I just don't-- I hate touching. I just don't touch high school girls. I don't even get close to them. I don't do anything close. But it's when they come and give you a hug, they really mean it. And they know, I'm like, don't you get close to me. I don't want to get in trouble, don't you get close to me. And I really enjoy that and that's really satisfying, and I really enjoy the community getting behind me and knowing them and getting known, the relationships and all that. This dissatisfying I think it's just like with anything, sometimes you just feel underappreciated. And I wouldn't say from the community, actually, I always feel underappreciated from my colleagues, from my profession. Like I said...I think you understand that.

C: You're saying your music colleagues?

J: Yeah, it's like I said, it's not a game, we're not flexing *for* each other. We're flexing *with* each other. I guess you could say that. We're working together. And so, I think that's just it's just the ego and sometimes the demeanors of music teachers and band directors, it's just not fun. I mean, that's one of the one of the reasons I just avoid marching band as much as I can. Yeah. Ego. To be honest my marching band is like "Hey, go spell an F on the on the field play the fights song, march off and call it good." People will love that. But you know it's just that competitiveness that is really dissatisfying, so not the community, more the profession.

C: Yeah, it's interesting. Like what you said earlier about the kind of “step up job”, that's kind of what I'm trying to shed light on. Like, why that is and what can be done about it.

J: Well, you can make it good. I will admit when I first took this job I was like well, I'll just have it for a year or two and then I'll go. But after that first year I went, No, it's not really fair for me to go and they gave me a good opportunity. So, to be honest, I think any job you shouldn't think of as a step up.

You just you do you find your job. You do a good job. If you don't like it, then you go do something else. But you never think of it as stepping up. That's just selfish.

C: Yeah, like there's not step up students, you know.

J: right. Exactly. [Music teacher], the band director at [nearby urban center], This is where I got this from: He very profoundly told me, kids are kids. It doesn't matter where they are, the kids are kids, you're going to serve them, you're going to be satisfied if you serve them, and you'll do that. So now would I be happier in Fort Collins or Colorado Springs? Probably. But is it that bad to be here? Not really.

C: Okay, cool. So last question here is similar, but what are your most important considerations for retaining your job or leaving your job?

J: Retaining my job, I guess. To be honest here. You don't have to work very hard. Every Your job if you're doing if you're doing your job, and the district is very much “Don't Ask, Don't Tell.” So, there's stuff that goes on that unless you like, drive a school bus drunk, you're going to get away with a lot of stuff. So retaining my job I do it because I want to do a good job and my ego just takes over. So, retaining, I just make sure I do what I'm supposed to, and I retain it. I also make myself inexpendable as well, because of the maintenance and the bus so that that kind of helped me have any kind of help some favors. As far as leaving, I always consider.... starting a program and getting organized really sucks. It takes forever to do it. It took me my entire—it took me about a year and a half to actually get organized and knew what I was doing. This year has seemed like a breeze because I just go onto my computer like there's a folder for the concerts. There's a folder for this. This is the folder where I make all their folders and I put in all their music and their warm ups. I just print it, put in their folder, print on the label, put it on their stand. That's it. But my first year, I went, I don't know what to do. I don't even know where to start. It's one of the biggest things that stops me from finding another job, because I do know I might not have to start over to the extent because I still already have the resources. It's hard to get going. And Money, money will affect it a lot too. Can we afford it? Can we not afford it? We've considered moving to Texas because it's cheaper. We can have a bigger house and spend less money. We've gone through moving to [city in Colorado] because I could do my master's degree. It just depends. Retaining or leaving, I think just depends on what's more convenient for me. Staying, I think I'd say is about what's more convenient for the students or the community. And so that's for the this is I had this conversation today with the maintenance director because I was asking was like, sometimes I just think about leaving because I could do something else. Because sometimes you do get frustrated or wants something else. And so, I mean, I've even considered this being my last year here to just find something else because I can personally feel myself outgrowing the position. I've got a

good handle on it. I feel like I can always get better, obviously, but I feel like I've maxed out the potential here. This is what it's going to be. And yes, I want to be here. But sometimes maybe I do want to play standard literature. Maybe I do want to have a wind ensemble and a concert band. Maybe that's what I want to do, because I enjoy that. And here's always just going to be a concert band, just one concert band and everybody plays. I guess I could make it the other way, but that's just forcing lots of people. So that kind of really dictates what I want to do.

C: Yeah, the outgrowing is interesting. So, you mean just in terms of musicianship you want to be challenged more, like as a conductor?

J: Yeah, in fact, you hit it right on the head. Personally, I've been starved to play. Yeah, I played the community band. But man, I just want to play in a good wind ensemble. But I just want to be like roasted by [professor]. I just want them to tell me like, hey, you didn't even look at it. Then I'm like, [in a scared voice] I know. You know exactly what I'm talking about. Or I just want to have a private lesson where they say you didn't work hard enough. Okay, well, I need to work harder. I really crave for that attention. I mean, I still practice every day. I try to practice 20-30 minutes every morning when I get here. I can do that, but I also crave being an ensemble. I also crave being around really high-level thinking people, too.

And so, I think outgrowing here is – I think you could say I came I saw, I conquered, if you want to see it that way. I mean, it was very difficult. I was able to will myself through it. I think I did a pretty good job. And there's always things I can improve on. But now that I think I've got it where I want it, I'm starting to see like, well, I think this is it. This is what they are content with. This is what the community is content with. And for me, I'm not content with that. I want more. I really want more musical challenge. That's what I'm talking about the ceiling.

C: Yeah.

J: I think, you know, even at [suburban middle school], they're playing Sousa marches. My Concert Band can barely even read cut time. I mean, there's that difference that's exactly what I'm talking about. I'd rather play Sousa marches. Now, that being said, Do I have the chops to teach Sousa marches? Maybe not. Maybe I need more study. But I think as far as teaching, right, maybe, I don't know. I still don't know what I'm doing.

C: So that's my last question. But yeah, that resonates a lot with me. Like, I feel like that's kind of why I ended up—I was teaching in a rural school in [state]. And then I felt like kind of an outgrowth of just like, the program is probably grown as much as it's going to, like the kids are practicing probably as much as they're ever going to. And yeah, I just, I didn't have an ensemble to play with. I really lost my conducting chops, because I just didn't have complex music in front of me. And I mean, it was definitely refreshing to go get my masters and be thinking deeply and playing in an ensemble and all that sort of thing. But yeah, I mean, now I miss teaching so, I don't know if I can give good advice.

J: The thing is, I think I'd be in the same way. Like, yeah, I really wanted this but now I want to go back to teaching that that's kind of I was curious to see where you were coming from because I had a hunch that you were in the same vein, there and I didn't know. You know,

it's just such a treat to be in a like a [professor's] ensemble. That's premier, like that's some of the best of the best. And I never realized that until I left [university]. I didn't realize how good that [professor] was going to be. I mean, I can go places and be like, yeah, yeah, I was in [professor's] Wind Ensemble when I when she her very first year there, and I was her first alto player, and I remember her just roasting me every time like, yeah, do better. I'm like, I know. Or I mean even like [other professor], like those people... mean, you know, you have those people, and then you leave. I don't have that, and I crave that. Probably I would just like you, I'll probably get it. I'm like, Okay, cool. I'm ready to go back and bring it back. You want that experience to bring it back. I want to bring it there.

C: Yeah. And that's a lot of the impetus for this project really is that because I want to bring that back and like be able to stay. Because, I just see this, like you said, the revolving door where people will get in a rural job because it's the job they can get out of college and then they move up to something else now that they have some experience. And yeah, I agree, like, that's just wrong. Like I don't want to perpetuate that out of my own need for to be musically challenged. But I don't know, it's just a really hard thing.

J: So, is that what you're trying to do with this this study?

C: Yeah, basically trying to figure out, yeah, how to how to make it work.

J: Like the motivations behind the two. Yeah, but I think inherently it's just people. It's probably just people's ego more than likely. I mean, you probably can't say it that bluntly.

C: [laughs] yeah. I think mindset is definitely a big part of it. So that's good to know. Do you have any last things to add?

J: No, that's it. I mean, that's pretty much what it is. I mean, once you get it kind of figured out, it's pretty good. I mean, once you get it figured out, it's pretty low maintenance to work in a rural district. I mean, you can work hard, but it's not, you're not going to be, I mean, you're still going to work 50 hours a week, right? But you're not going to be at a marching band competition every weekend. So, it's hard and it's different way.

C: Cool. Well, thank you so much for your time. I really, really appreciate it.

Interview #2, January 27, 2020

C: So earlier you're starting to say something about feeling complacent and stuff like that. How do you combat that?

J: Talking about complacency? I just think it's really easy to be complacent in these rural districts because, well, you're the only one here. And there are some people that will come visit here, maybe once a month or so, which is a lot for this area. And so that kind of helps me not be complacent. Like with you coming in it was a little tricky because I was already kind of little motivated from [state music education conference] already and have new ideas and stuff like that. And so when you're up there, I went, Oh yeah, I already know I need to do that and I already had that on my mind, and so it just kind of amplified that. So that helps with complacency but that's only every couple of months, the day to day it's like.... when the sixth graders are extremely difficult there's some days where I'm like, I just

don't feel like doing this because it's not going to be worth my time. And, yeah, so the complacency really hurts me that way.

C: If you were thinking further down the line, do you think that a few years from now that would really start to get to you? Or like the longer you're in this position you feel yourself succumbing to that more?

J: I don't think so. It's kind of like when I was talking to [other teacher]. When I was like, Well, I'm here to end it. It's really frustrating but I'm here to end it and I think that's just my personality to say, "No, no, this is enough" and I'm not gonna hold it all the time but I'm still gonna be like what this is is enough and we're going to do it. And you can kind of see it in the junior high, kids—could you notice the difference in the junior high to the high school dynamic? The junior high kids were pretty quiet, pretty on task most of the time, and then the high school came in and they're like, whatever. Like that one girl was like, "Those crescendos and decrescendos aren't on my page" I'm like, "They're not supposed to be," you know, we're just working on stuff like that. And so I think eventually that'll get better. I don't think it'll be completely great, but I think it'll get better. But I guess what I can control is the culture in my classroom. I can't control the school culture, but I can get kids to take it really seriously my classroom, which I think as they get older, they'll start to get there.

C: Cool. So you mentioned like the kids kind of coming and going because of the instability in the population. Does that affect your classes or affect your bands?

J: I would say so. I mean, and I've kind of learned in my position to be really cognizant of who I'm going to put pressure on. So, like in my high school band I have the alto saxophonist who's a really fine player. She plays very well, but she's also a varsity volleyball athlete and she's also a varsity basketball athlete, and she's a sophomore. So she does knowledge bowl, she does Destination Imagination, all that stuff. So I've learned what kids are going to be really reliable, but I need to be able to find music that challenges her enough to do that, but to not overwhelm her, and so kind of made me pick easier music because you don't know who's gonna come or who's gonna leave. At one point, the student that played baritone the high schooler, and that I told you about his mom, he didn't show up for the last two three weeks of school for good reason. Obviously! Then he said that he was gonna withdraw, and then came back. Now the good thing is I had other baritones kind of set up and I always kind of crop up younger kids to kind of fill those roles. I kind of feel in my roster and look at the seniors who are gonna leave so I'm gonna kind of groom a seventh grader to be really good there. And that does affect a lot. It affects more when it gets to the secondary level. And I will say when it comes to the secondary level it's a lot more difficult to manage. At the lower grades it's whatever. Cool, like we get one less saxophone out of 18. So, it does hurt us, but I just kind of do the best I can and pick a little bit easier stuff so that way they can still feel successful with how they're doing.

C: Cool. Same thing with like the scheduling issues at the high school?

J: Yeah, there scheduling issues at the high school and all that, but I've been really fortunate that most people are flexible, like asking the junior high to stay late today, but if you saw I made it their choice. About half of them decided to stay, but, again, it's fair because they made the decision. I was asking them for their time. And so they said, "well, no, I'm cool,

like I'm just gonna do what I usually do" or "yeah I'm okay with being here for a little bit longer". So that helps, and then, actually with the high schoolers, their band is sixth hour and next is fifth and sixth grade, so I can ask them pretty easily, "hey, do you mind saying after to help out the clarinets?" I would say the scheduling is difficult, but most everybody's pretty flexible.

C: So when kids are out for a semester, are they still able to play in the concert?

J: Oh yeah. That's only happened to me once, so not a big deal and it's usually if the kids that are not going to be there, and still want to be part of it, are going to be kids that are talented anyway, and want to work towards it. So I'm not gonna worry about them too much if they come up and say, I'd still like to play in the concert. That means they're probably gonna give the effort to it.

C: So, what does grading look like at the different levels?

J: So, at the elementary level, it's based on participation. And so I do it off two facets: singing and general participation. So if they're singing or at least trying to sing, awesome. If their participating, or if they don't want to participate. I give them 10 points a week, and it's theirs to lose. So, I'm not really too strict on that, to be honest it's just general music. Yeah, if they're not being a behavior problem I don't really care. You saw the elementary level, it's more just about fun. The fifth and sixth grade level, I have a rubric that I show them. It's like an expectations rubric, I should have showed that to you, I have them over at the high school. And so it's just like, am I organized? am I acting right? Am I prepared? blah blah blah, and that's 15 points a week. And then those note reading sheets are 10 points. And so the way I grade those is there's 96 notes on ther, so they got like a 78 and 96 and then I divide that and it comes out the percentage. If they get an F, I still give them 5 out of 10 because they at least tried. If they didn't try, they get a zero there. If they're absent I just excuse it because I'm not going to be keeping up that, they're just bell ringers. So, I mean it's just for that practice. Yeah. I'll probably stop doing those beginning in March, because I just want them to get reading really good. That's something that's really important for them to get reading them just get familiar with the staff but they don't really need it after that. High School uses the same rubric and actually from fifth grade on, I try to make it really universal, like, this is the expectation, the entire time you go through here. And so they'll do that again out of 15 points, and then I'll give them weekly assignments and that'll be out of 10 points so, cool, if you played it really well and there's like a mistake or two, cool, I'll still give you the 10. If you sort of worked on it, 8 or 9 just depending. As far as that, I don't really give much else. Sometimes I give writing prompts like those questions I asked about, like "How far can we go without practicing" and all that. I asked them that question and then by the end of the week I'll have them do a writing prompt. And again, that's a 10-point thing. So, that's kind of what my grading looks like, it's not too much. Obviously you saw my day. I don't have time to grade all the time. And so, I do little things here and there but I don't take work home. So if I can't finish it within a day or if I can't stay an extra 30 minutes after school, I'll stay up till four o'clock, and then be done. If it that's not that I'm not going to be an efficient teacher and it's probably not worth doing. Yeah, so I might be completely wrong on that, but that's what I do.

C: All right. In the last interview you said a little bit about not getting along with all of your colleagues that are around your age. Do you think there's a reason for that? Or like, I mean, it seemed like you got along great with everybody.

J: Right. Here's the disclaimer, is that I'm gonna be nice to everybody. But I can have my opinions like, that girl this morning where I said, "Hey how's it going?" And she just walked right past. I think you were walking with me. And it's just like, Alright, cool, like, let's not be friendly, and I actually think it's because those people that are younger that come from this culture are kind of a little bit trained like that. A little standoffish. It's really hard for them to let you in. And I think adults, just naturally because they have more life experience, are just more friendly in general. And it almost feels like they still have high school-esque emotions and you kind of saw that, it's like that one girl that we're talking about in *The Red Balloon* when they're like "Well, I don't see that on the page" and I said "It's not going to be on the page," she got a little offended and I was like, I don't know what to tell you. This is just how it is. I think it's maybe that... entitlement, perhaps? That like, "well this is *my* town".. And so I think that's right. Maybe I might just be rambling, I'd have to think about it a little bit.

C: I mean, yes, your opinions what I'm curious about. When you have observations with your administrators, like your evaluations for licensing and stuff, what does that look like?

J: Well, the structure is very, like, let's do the least amount possible, so that we don't have to do all the work. So like my induction program, we did do all the steps for but there was stuff that we did super quick. Or like a book study, they all read something, and I actually picked a book that I had already known. I think it was the Bennett Reimer stuff or whatever. And I just kind of told the superintendent what it was about. He's like, cool, sounds good enough to me, signed it off and, there we go, there's my induction. And I mean it's *easy*.... Now as far as administration, there's a vast difference between the administrator on this side and the administrator on that side. You didn't get to meet that administrator, and you would be extremely shocked.

C: What's the difference?

J: Well, he yells a lot. Like, tries to use intimidation kind of as his form of discipline. And this guy, even when I walked in, you saw, he said "Well, how'd it go?" And really, tomorrow he will say, "Well, how can I help you when you see them again?" and he'll ask that. And he'll give me strategies. I've never seen the [other] principal in my classroom to observe. It's only been to pull a kid or something or talk to a kid but never to observe or tell me what I could be doing. The [other administrator] will come in and say, "Hey, why don't you try this? Why don't you try that?" That's probably once every month or so or every couple of months, not too often. I will say though, I think they're both uncomfortable with the content, so they don't really know what to do or say. I will tell you the [second administrator] is in classrooms, all day long. I mean he's just walking around just present. And so that's very rare to have a such a present administrator, because it doesn't happen on that side. So as far as observations, it's not too much, but it's there, but mostly more on this side, but on this side, they're like, "Cool, you're doing a good job". And I think that's where that complacency comes from too, because I mean, we could play "Seven Nation Army" really good and people are like "This is the most amazing thing in the world!", and

the administrators say “Cool, the band sounds good so you're doing your job,” and I’m like...am I *really* doing my job because there's a whole load of other stuff that I gotta do better...

C: So where do you get feedback from on things that you should improve on? Other than just the things that you know you need to fix?

J: It's really just myself. Or when I have a guest come, like when I did my induction program, I did have a mentor that came and watched me and that really does help a lot. Or sometimes I'll record myself teaching and go, Oh, okay, I need to fix that. Or, today I was conducting with a pencil instead of a baton because I write notes to myself as I'm going, like, “okay, you're going too far out on this one” I'll write notes to myself on what I need to go better and I'll even tell the kids, “Hey, I know I'm working with you guys but I'm also going to focus on what I'm doing, as well. So that way we can all collectively get better.” So it's not much, but I think you know that.

C: Definitely.

J: Now, I can't throw them under the bus. I'm going to be very blunt. I can't throw the [second administrator] under the bus because he supports me left and right. Also because those same kids that I was telling you that are grandchildren are his nephews. So I mean, if his nephews like it, he's gonna be like, well let's get it. Let's make it as good as we can for you. And I get more support there for anything like that and he's pretty in tune with what we're doing. I had an issue with a girl with flute and I had issues with mom, and he pulled her aside, got the book out figured out the book and said, well yeah you just press these buttons and gave her like a little flute lesson because he just knew how to teach, not necessarily because he knew about the instrument. Yeah, so I will say like, that's good. But as far as the content, though, they don't really feel comfortable.

C: So, just sort of in general or, again, more speculation about feeling like first year teachers end up in these jobs and then they get overwhelmed or whatever happens, they don't like living in rural places and go find the suburban jobs... what are your general thoughts on that? What would you attribute that to?

J: Well, we talked about this about [state music education conference] with the small school division, like “who's the best of the worst”. I actually think what contributes to a lot of complacency in these areas is the turnover. Not having a director consistently. I was talking with a staff member the other day, if I were to have left after my first year I think the program would have completely crumbled because I was still building, and I didn't really have like anything solid and I think they would have had to deal with another new person, I think they've just been like, we're done. And so I think that's what makes it really hard on our first year teachers. Now, speaking on that, college kids and high school kids are typically very critical of teachers, when they're watching they're observing they're very critical. And then you get a first year teacher who's gone through college and they're like okay I know what I'm doing. And then they get to the job and they go, Oh geez, this is really hard. This is really, *really* hard. And I think that also contributes to, are we going to stay in the profession or not?, And my speculation is I wonder if teachers just have enough grit to get through it and I think there's a really small amount of people that can actually get

through a rural situation, because it's way less forgiving. I mean, if I look at my high school band, I had to develop every single one of those kids. Every single one. I mean, I couldn't just say, okay you go take a private lesson with this guy and this guy, and I'm gonna have a specialized person come in. I can do that every once in a while. But you had to spend that individual time with every single kid to make sure they're going there and sometimes they're just going to let you down, and that can be really disappointing.

C: Definitely. Something that came up [in a conversation] was, what should we change at the collegiate level so people are like prepared to take these jobs?

J: Really good people to think about that would be [colleagues], they made commitments to be in a rural school district and they're really good at their jobs. Do they have the best bands? No. Are they doing a good job? Yeah, I mean, I think it's just as musicians, we have this expectation... you have that vision in your head, and I don't think you have to have lower expectations but you have to understand, I think, the floor and the ceiling that you have. And, yeah, because it is a really hard sell to be here. You saw my day. I mean, and so, like, like when I go to [university] one of the big things I'm talking about is, make sure you take your entire K-12 education seriously, because your degree says K through 12 music education. So it's first of all not very fair for you to say, "Well, but I'm going to be a middle school band director," because it's not really your choice to pick. It's your choice to go do a job that needs to be done with more experience. Yeah, then you kind of earn that I would say seniority, then you can say, Okay, you know what, I feel that I'm really good at middle school band teaching—such as myself, I feel like I'm really good with middle schoolers—I'm gonna go find a middle school job because I feel like I'm not serving my area here. But first, I came here and said okay I'm gonna serve everybody see if I can do it. Once you start doing it, you're like okay cool, but I feel like I can serve better here. I think it's just knowing your strengths, but I think it's, are you gonna be able to put up with it? Because it's gonna suck. And I just think people don't want to go through the suck. Like, it's okay, it's gonna suck and it's gonna be really bad, but internally it'll develop, and you have to have that patience.

APPENDIX K

Interview Transcript: Cathy

Interview #1: January 12, 2020

CP: Basically, we'll do a bit of an overview about your position and background, and then different groups of questions about different sources of support or different things that might attribute to your job satisfaction. So, first we'll start out with just some general information about your school and your position.

C: Do you have specific questions or do you just want me to kind of go for it?

CP: You can just go for it. Some specific things would be like the size of your school, what each of your classes are, about how many kids, any extracurricular things you do, performances you put on, kind of the whole run-down.

C: Okay. I teach at a K-5 school and I've been there for 14 years. There are about 450 kids at my school. I'm in a three-day rotation. Most grade levels have three classes, a couple have four, but the fourth class just gets split up among the others for specials. The rotation is PE-PE-music, so every three days and I see them for 45 minutes. Let's see... I do a before-school choir and lately I'd say the average in the choir has been about, well last year I had 88 and this year I had about 63 because we had a really big group of 5th grade last year.

CP: So is the choir just for 5th graders?

C: It's for 4th and 5th grade. we also do a play. So the first semester we like working on, like holiday music and stuff, and then my play is actually in February. And so we had auditions in October. We're doing Alice in Wonderland Junior this year, and we do a fully staged, we go to a school that has an auditorium and we do it there and then after that, I will reconvene with my choir and we'll probably do two or three pieces, easier pieces for a Spring concert. Yeah, I do three concerts. Let's see, I do a holiday concert with the second and fourth and choir. And then I do a spring concert for first and third and choir. And then the fifth graders have their own concert and my choir we always sing at this Thanksgiving lunch for the seniors and we sing in a town Christmas night for Fairfield. And then, I do have a lot of support for that. What else do we do.... Oh, my class size. It's bigger. It's been growing, of course, but I'd say my class size is between probably, I don't know if I have a class as small as 18. This year, I'd say 18 to 25 students per class.

CP: All right, great. How many years did you say that you've been there?

C: 14.

CP: And is that also how many years you've been teaching total, or did you teach anywhere before that?

C: My whole teaching career has been here. Also, my undergrad is in music therapy. So I did practice music therapy for five years before I made the switch to teaching.

CP: So how did you end up in your position in Fairfield?

C: So we're a town of like, 3,000 people out here. I think when I moved here there was like, 2,500. But anyway. Well, at first I was like, "I'll never teach school" and then my daughter was in second grade, and I went to her Christmas concert, and it was terrible. Like, oh my word, they were singing with a CD. Actually, they were *shouting* with a CD. And they sang and it was a Christmas concert. And I think the only thing they sang was familiar songs. The rest of them were like, really? You know, I think they were like "John Jacob"-type songs and they were just, there was nothing like, there's no live accompaniment or anything like that. And it was just the CD with the kids. And I think it was coming out of a boombox. And so, I talked to my daughter's piano teacher later that week. I'm like, What's with the concert, you know? And she's like, oh, that teachers been trying to retire, Why don't you apply? And I'm like, Oh, no, I've never taught school and that actually, I saw the concert, and I applied. And I actually got in the job. It's a job with an alternative license. And then I did [a summer training program] within the first three years of teaching.

CP: Okay, cool. So you already lived in Fairfield, and were established there when you took the teaching job?

C: Yeah, for like a year. And I just saw the program and I was like... yeah.

CP: Sounds like they're better off for it, so that's good. Alright, so the next group of questions is about different places where you might get social support for either for you as a teacher or for the music program. So one source would be like from administrators, but what do you feel like their relationship is to the program where their support for you as a teacher is?

C: I'm on my third principal, and each one has basically told me, "You're the expert, we're not. And it looks like the students and community really love it and you get results. So we're just gonna let you do what you want." Basically. So that's great. All three. They're like, "You know what you should be doing more than we know what you should be doing. So we're just gonna leave you to it." I should say, probably this would go with the first question. Like a lot of the rural schools, we're our own school district. And so it's only me and the secondary teacher. So I've kind of like a lone ranger, you know, I don't have a district or like, teachers in there but I do sometimes work with the [Franklin] schoolteachers who are like, in the other school closest to me. Not that close, but enough.

CP: Do they have sort of a similar setup with just an elementary and secondary person?

C: I'm one of the longest-time people out here for elementary, a lot of the schools around have had a lot of turnover.

CP: Do you know why that is? Or can you speculate?

C: Well, I know [nearby district], it's a K-12 position. And they only give their music teacher \$500 a year to try to run a band program and a whole elementary and there's not much support. The band kids are sitting on beat up metal folding chairs. And there's a whole corner of broken instruments with no budget to fix them. And the numbers are really small. And then the [nearby town] program by us there's been about three or four teachers since

I've been here, and I don't I'm not really sure who's there now because I've tried to reach out to her and she won't even answer my email. And then Franklin, I know one of the music teachers got driven out by the school board for showing a video that had an opera in it that had the devil, so she got her picture splashed on the front page of the paper and fired and had to leave town. And then, you know, we have teachers around here that last for three or four years and that, I don't know if that's too small town for them, or difficult, like that it does have some difficult behaviors, and I don't know if that's why but okay.

CP: Interesting! I'm kind of trying to get to the bottom of why people tend to leave.

C: But yeah, I mean, you know, it's obviously expanding. I could go through some of the I do know my Some of them have, you know, some of them left. interested in that, too.

CP: Yeah, maybe we'll chat about that. But the I mean, you feel like your support is good with from the administrators like they provide the things that you need.

C: Yeah, so then my choir, well actually my play is really, really successful. Like, I make \$4-5,000 in ticket sales. And so my program has kind of become self-sustaining as far as like, budget. And so I make enough on ticket sales that I can kind of like buy the choir music I want and like, buy a couple things from my room and take the kids on a field trip and you know, I can afford to do a show every year which is probably \$3-4,000. Well, I have to pay \$2000 to rent the auditorium. And you know, so I'm able to do that.

CP: Okay. How's the support from other teachers in the school?

C: I'd say it took a while, like I had to kind of prove myself for sure. But now I'm kind of like, in the pack of teachers that's kind of been here. I'd say like, there's just maybe a third of the teachers that have been here longer than me now. So that does help when you've kind of gotten some security a little bit.

CP: Yeah. Was it harder your first few years when you didn't have that?

C: Yeah. Plus, my classroom management was kind of a disaster to be honest for a while, so that's fine now. I shouldn't speak because I realize you're going to come see some of my worst classes.

CP: No judgment from me! How do you feel about support from students and parents?

C: It's great. I've really rounded up a lot of support for my program. And I think my choir has really helped because I get the parents really involved. And I have people like backstage with me and doing costumes and doing set and, you know, driving kids around and going to thrift stores for me. And I think that, personally, I'm actually kind of good at asking for help from people and just making, establishing relationships with the parents, and so on. If they were going to try to ever cut my program, I think it would be the biggest uproar ever.

CP: Yeah. Okay, that's great. What about your, as you mentioned, like the other music teachers in the surrounding areas, do you have a good relationship with your secondary teacher? Do you work pretty closely?

C: No. He's a very good musician. He's a nice guy. He's just really quiet. And I think he's at the end of his career. And I think there's a lot of like, "I'm just gonna hang on for the

retirement” kind of attitude. And when I when I came to the school, he had a marching band, a pep band, jazz band and a concert band. And literally, he's down to one band in that school. And he has to even get the middle schoolers to play in the pep band. And his program has just been dwindling. And I think some of its, of course, like, you know, scheduling in a small school, I'm sure you're getting into that with all the secondary people, but I think he just has a hard time making relationships with families and students. And I just really try that hard to do that. And it's, you know, it's costing a lot of his musicians.

CP: Is band the only option that they have for secondary?

C: They have choir, but it's this touchy subject because high school choir has five kids in it. Last year, he had four and I had 88. And I know that there's other obstacles, but there are a lot of kids that love to sing. And then the love isn't quite fostered.

CP: All right. Well, how do you feel the support is for the program or your music program at least by the community at large? like by Fairfield?

C: Great, I have people attend my concert sometimes that don't even have kids. And I have a lot of people that are like, “Oh, my kid was in a play five years ago” and they've come every year since, stuff like that. I'm a little relentless about like advertising. And I will invite my church people and my friends and I'll text them and say, “You gotta come to our play!” and post signs everywhere and you can pass along this text I made that has our program or our poster first show, and we'll spread it all, I'm pretty good about like, using social media, getting families to come, the newspaper, I just get it out of different ways. And I think that's helped my support, and then I'll always call the little paper say, “Hey, come take pictures at our thing and put it in our paper.” Every time I have a concert or play, they put in the paper.

CP: That's cool. Well, any other thoughts about social support overall?

C: Yeah, I'm really happy with it--but it took years to build it. You know, yeah. I definitely didn't know the families and didn't really know how to do it and was actively trying, but I've more and more every year I feel like I know the community better and stuff like that.

CP: Okay, great. Alright, the next questions are about kind of more logistic things like working conditions at the school, and your planning time, and things like that. So, do you feel like you're planning time is adequate?

C: Yeah.

CP: So during the school day, you have enough time to plan what you need to plan?

C: I mean, no. Outside of school... comparable to other people's. I'm not feeling like I'm getting cheated, because that's what everyone else has. But I take on more than I should, probably, at school on nights and weekends, a lot of stuff at home and stuff.

CP: Is that something that you are bothered by or do you mind?

C: No.

CP: Okay. All right. What about facilities at the school? Is your music classroom well furnished?

C: I have the stage and it's a huge room and I love it and there's lots of room. I have risers and stuff but I never like got Orff tournaments, I got some hand me downs that are bad. So I don't really do much with the Orff instruments, even though I have a level of it. It's okay because I'm kind of like settled into my way of teaching, and I don't really need that stuff, but that would be my only thing. Yeah, they talked about building an additional to the school building me a room and I don't want them to. I don't think it'll be as big.

CP: Right. Do you feel like your salary is reflective of the amount of work you do?

C: No, no. Luckily, I have a husband who has no college education but makes twice what I do. And he works really hard, too, but no. I know I could make more money in town, but I don't because I don't want to like, have a bigger district tell me what to do and have to restart a program. It's like my little baby and I don't really want to leave it. And my kids-- like my son is at the high school. And so he's actually kind of high maintenance because he had head injury and stuff and so I'm right there where I can go take him out for appointments and stuff, so it's really more convenient.

CP: Okay. Is that like the salary thing kind of something in the district that people are aware of, and like groan about?

C: We lose good teachers because of the salary. And our pay was frozen for years. Our steps were frozen. And we never got them back. I think they were frozen for like seven years or something. So that was frustrating.

CP: Yeah, I'm sure. All right. Um, what about professional development? Do you get music specific professional development?

C: I just asked for like, "Hey, I'm going to [state music education conference]" and I just put in the request and they pay for the conference fee and for my membership, and I just fill out the paperwork and put it in and they just give it to me and I'm like, Okay. If I want to go to a national conference, I'll just have them pay the registration fee and stuff. And so I ask for like one big conference a year and they've always given it to me, no questions asked.

CP: So it's not really something that they bring to you in-house for music specifically, but they let you go.

C: Right, but if I asked for it, though, they always give it to me.

CP: Alright, the next question is about isolation. How far are you actually from [metro area]?

C: You mean from civilization? Yeah, I don't know. It takes about 25 minutes in order to get to like [nearby urban area]. Mm hmm. It's about 25 minutes. So not that isolated.

CP: Okay. Do you feel like that distance prevents you from doing anything that you would want to do with your students? Or, getting people to come out?

C: I would like to have my students being... so my daughter went through the [children's choir] program. And we were in a big carpool with a bunch of Fairfield kids at one time, but they're all kind of grown out of that. But I'm sad that my students... I would love to have more students involved in [children's choir] and in the [children's theatre program]. Those

are two programs that like, ones I've kind of worked with and made a relationship with and have had some students in in the past, but it's just too far. So that aspect, I think I am nurturing interest in that stuff, but they don't really get there to do it because it's just too far. And then we kind of have a lack of private teachers, too.

CP: Do they have to drive pretty far to get like piano lessons or?

C: Well, I teach. I have 12 piano students. Which is kind of crazy but my salary kind of sucks. It actually helps but yeah, I guess I kind of have two jobs. But there are a few people, I keep like a list and stuff. And so there are some piano teachers in town in Fairfield, you know, but there's not really a guitar teacher and there's no strings out here. There's no string program in our school which is sad. I'm a viola player, too. And so we don't have that, but we do have somebody that teaches violin, but I would never like send my own child there. Yeah, you know, and there's not really like, a private flute teacher or anything like that, there's just a piano and maybe a guitar teacher kind of somebody takes on a few students for a couple of years and then they move or something. Nothing consistent. And there's no dance. There's not really a consistent dance studio here, which is something that I grew up with. Me and my sisters all took ballet for like, the whole time growing up. They don't really have that out here. And I really noticed when I'm like choreographing a play, I'm like, "Oh my gosh, don't do anything with your feet. You guys can even like do the jazz square."

CP: Okay, I some questions are about just the community of Fairfield. So, do you live in town?

C: Yeah.

CP: Okay. So do you feel like you're a part of the community of the town outside of being the music teacher?

C: Yes.

CP: So how do you balance the roles of like being the teacher and having your life outside?

C: Well, so I'm a pretty involved in my church, so I know a lot of the people that way too. And I go to a lot of the things that the town puts on which help out with that. And I feel like in our town, most of the teachers are in the community, and raise children here and stuff. I may be just a little more careful about certain things, like I don't share my political views or, you know, church views, things like that people kind of know, but I don't ever put it out there. I would never go knock door to door and say, "Hey, do you want this blah blah blah?" I wouldn't ever do that, just to keep it kind of to myself. Keep my private life private, which isn't that private to be honest.

CP: Right. So is Fairfield, similar to where you grew up?

C: No. I grew up in [town] which is a suburb of [metro area in another state]. Yeah.

CP: So do you feel like having sort of a more suburban background changes how you approach a classroom in a rural areas?

C: I'd say so. Well, when I was growing up, we had actually kind of some poor music programs in my schools growing up. But I went to a 5A High School so they had like a really

good dance team and they had a really great drama program and did a really fun show choir, their orchestra program was really weak, but I feel like I've kind of like seen the potential. And it's kind of helped me.

You know, if there are some kids that are interested in going on, I do know what resources they might need. I feel like a lot of my students are just small town kids. A lot of them just kind of stay in their town their whole life and I kind of wanted to bring more culture to my town to my students. So, I've taken my choir to a really well-done play., I used to help coordinate assemblies where I'd have like [local symphony] people come out. I've tried to encourage people to take private lessons. I actually—I think it was nine years ago, me and a group of parents started a an Arts Council in our town. And me and the band teacher collaborated on starting an Interfaith Community Choir. I think we did it for two or three years. But out of that came, because we had some instrumental people, like I did a string quartet with a group and, and then they did a Brass Ensemble, actually out of that came a community band, and they used our 501(c)3 status, and that band is going strong, and I was there, I helped start that, even though I'm not a band person. I feel really proud that that kind of started because me and that original group of people who started the organization. So that's going, the Arts Council, I've handed it over to different people, I was just too busy to lead it, but I'm still on the board, but we actually started a drama program at the middle school to kind of continue what I was doing with the plays so they put on a play before school.

CP: Alright, neat. Okay, so I got a couple of questions about music education community kind of in general. So do you feel like the goals that you have for your students are similar to teachers in like suburban and urban areas have for their students?

C: Yes.

CP: So, you don't feel like your setting doesn't impact your goals for students?

C: I feel like what I can do in my classroom is like... I really work hard, and I feel like the kids get a quality experience as far as like, the being able to continue. Once they leave me, there's not a lot of them that stick with it. And there's not a lot of private lessons. So I think if I was in a place with more access to that kind of outside stuff, I would be pushing it really hard. And I really do that where I am.

CP: Did you feel prepared, by your I guess your [summer training] program for teaching in a small school?

C: [summer] program, yes. Yes. From my Music Therapy training and the alternative license, no.

CP: That's interesting. What about that?

C: Obviously music therapy, I didn't do the education piece of it. I felt like my music skills were fine and being in front of a group was fine. But as far as the teaching part of it, like the classroom management and just the curriculum part of it, I really wasn't sure what to do. Luckily, the [summer] program kind of saved my butt because I honestly if I didn't have that, I don't think I'd still be here.

CP: So your alternate licensure especially?

C: That was not that was not even close to being comparable to university training. You don't get to do student teaching with it. So I never did student teaching, so I think it took me much longer to figure out what the heck I was doing.

CP: Is there any sort of like Mentor Program attached to that?

C: Yeah. I had this kindergarten teacher as my mentor, she was super dingy, and we only met like three times. There was nobody in music to mentor me.

CP: Yeah, that's a big part of the issue. I feel like it's just everybody's kind of on their own little island.

C: I'll just talk about this little story. So the town on the other side of me, their secondary music teacher quit, and they were going to just cut music from their school because of it. But then this lady from my church, who is not qualified whatsoever to be a music teacher, I think she like did music as her major for like a year in the second quarter and that's it, but they hired her to do that because nobody else would. I actually called and talked to the people over there and I said, "Hey, what do you guys think about me being her mentor?" And nothing came of it which was really sad, because they didn't end up keeping her, which they might not have kept her anyway because it was kind of a disaster. I don't know if it would have lasted, even if I would have been her mentor, but I think it would have helped. I think that's common for all schools to like, hire some mom that took piano lessons as their teacher.

CP: I've seen that in a few instances. I mean, you want to think that that's better than nothing but at the same time, if they don't stay if they can't establish the program...I just don't know.

C: Well, here's a really sad story, so [music teacher] she is a band teacher out here. And she's been there like four or five years, but she came from I think it was [other rural town]. And she had a strong program there. But then when she left, they didn't have anyone, so they had the PE teacher teaching it, and the only music he ever did was high school band. I don't even think he ever took private lessons.

CP: Oh, no.

C: So that's what's going on there. She's like sick about it, you know?

CP: Oof! Yeah. All right. So you mentioned that you go to [state music education conference]. Do you feel like the sessions that you go to there are applicable for your school?

C: Yeah. I also was heavily involved with [music education association]. So there you kind of got your hands in in the programming for that stuff. Yeah, we were selected as the presenters and I went to every single workshop for many years.

CP: Cool. All right, I got some questions about goals that you have for your class. And then just some overall wrap up so we're almost there. Okay. So what are some of your short

term, like this school year, and long term, over like the next five years, your professional goals?

C: I've been kind of revamping or just like tightening up my curriculum, I guess. And I'll show you how I've re-organized. I've done it for K through 3 but not 4 and 5 yet so that's what I'm working on. I always like to watch my choir grow. And it's really rewarding to see the kids just love it and show up and you know, yeah, the play. I love doing the plays. We put a lot of work into those, me and kind of the community and I love to just have it, to me it's a great thing for differentiation because there's that kid who can just be the best stage crew ever, or the super shy girl that can be in the chorus, or those kids that have to memorize a ton and be the lead with a bunch of solos every year, it's my goal is to just help those kids really, really want to grow and do something really cool. I would really like to find.... my secondary teacher is retiring within the next five years and I really, *really* want to find somebody good that we can work together. Yeah, but I guess that's like the longer-term goal. I want to be able to like balance, my family and teaching. And I haven't always done that, sometimes I've neglected my family for two months before the play or something. I'm getting better at that, but I feel like that's something that like has gotten easier to do the more I teach. Oh! I will say this, it's like, pages back, but about my school, just about my classroom. We do not have an auditorium in the district. So I did my concerts in the gym for a long time. And it's awful in there, and so then I was renting the Franklin auditorium for like \$2,000. and then I've moved my concerts this church. And they have a big, 600-seat auditorium with like a stage with fabulous lights. So my concerts are way better over there. So I can actually kind of like create good relationships with some of the churches, with the music. So anyway, that church has really helped me out with music stuff in the past. So I've got a good relationship with the pastor there and stuff. So anyway, the concerts are way better over there and they give us a good deal. We do our show and our concert at their church. All right, my goals. Okay, so back to the five years. A couple years ago, my goal was to do conference presentations. So I presented at [state music education conference] a few times and my friend and I presented at [a national music teaching conference], but that's not my goal anymore. I kind of have taken a step back [laughs]. My personal life though. My kids are like... I have some adopted kids out of foster care, and my other daughter. Anyway, my kids got really hard and turned 18 and went off the deep end and had all sorts of issues. So I was dealing with a ton of family stuff, I still am, for the past couple of years. So I kind of like stepped away from being so involved with all these organizations. My family's kind of been my focus lately, too. I think once they've kind of settled down, I can get back into that. I would like to probably present at some conferences, again. Maybe not for a couple years. I would kind of to grow my own musicianship. I'd like to join a community orchestra sometime down the road and maybe get into voice lessons again and things like that.

CP: Do you think there's anything within your school district, or your administration, or just the nature of your school, that would prohibit you from attaining those goals?

C: Just the distance. Yeah, it's definitely something that can be hard.

CP: Okay, what would you say are the most satisfying aspects of your job?

C: Watching the students grow. I love being able to teach them for six years in a row. And especially where our school does not have a lot of like, turnover with the students. People just stay. We don't have that many new students every year, so I really develop good relationships with the students and their families. And so, by the time they're in fourth, fifth grade, and doing choir and plays and starting to get guitars for Christmas and stuff, I just love watching that and seeing how I've had a hand in helping them really love music.

CP: What are the most dissatisfying aspects of your job? If any.

C: I mean, sometimes just some of the behaviors. Sometimes you just have one kid, it's really hard on a class. Sometimes you just have the whole class that turns it on. So behavior can sometimes be discouraging. This is going to sound so mean... But what really is discouraging is that I don't have a good program, a strong program, to send my students on to. Like sixth grade, like they all sign up and then, I'd say, by the time they get to senior year, there's like three hanging on, you know? In the music program his band will have 15 and this choir will have four, you know? In my opinion, it shouldn't be that way, it does not have to be that way. [nearby town] has a comparable size of school to ours, and it's not like that there. They have a band that is pretty big.

CP: So if you were to consider leaving your job, what would be the things that would factor into that decision?

C: Maybe dealing with some of the families. We had a really, really difficult family in the past. Luckily, she's in sixth grade now, but we were constantly in like lawsuits and getting our emails combed through for anything we ever typed about her and it was getting just crazy. This mom... at one point I had seven people come to my music class to watch me interact with her one day. It was so crazy. So luckily, I didn't get too bad but if I had another experience like that, it might do me in. I think if something happened to my husband's income or if something happened to my husband where he couldn't work or he passed away or our marriage ended or something, which it wouldn't, but if something like that happened, I don't know that I could actually live on my salary. I could not pay my mortgage with my salary.

CP: What would be the considerations for keeping your job in that same situation? If those were the cons, what would be the pros?

C: Oh, I love what I do. I feel like I'm pretty good at what I do. I feel like it's what I'm supposed to be doing. And really, it's just very satisfying personally for me.

CP: I'm curious, do you think would it be as satisfying in a different school or in a different area?

C: I think it would be. I think it might. But I know that some schools have not-supportive administrators or maybe a different population or something like that, so I don't know, I'm too scared to leave ever because I don't think I'd find it as good as I feel like I have it. Not the money, but yeah, everything else. I don't want to leave because I think to build a program takes probably at least three years and I wouldn't want to like go back to square one and have to do that again.

CP: What relationship do you see between job satisfaction and retaining a job or deciding to stay or leave?

C:pretty strong, yeah.

CP: I mean you kind of said it right there, that you feel like you have a pretty good, so you want to say.

C: Well, I feel like it's different for a classroom teacher than it is for a music teacher. In elementary you have the kids for one year. You're not really emotionally tied to those kids anymore. You're not going to have them again. Whereas with a music program, I have the same kids so long, then I'm leaving them. Where a classroom teacher, you're not really leaving them because now they're in third grade or whatever. I think it's easier sometimes for a classroom teacher to switch schools.

CP: Yeah, that's interesting. I didn't really think about it. From that point of view.

C: Yeah, I think especially the elementary, whereas high school... I guess when you're talking to rural, some of them are going to be K-12. And some of them are going to be 6-12 or whatever, where in town, it's probably more like 9 through 12 or something. So I think sometimes, you're really close with the kids, because you do have them so long. And, you know, some of these teachers have them for 12-13 years.

CP: Yeah, that's gotta be a big deal. Well, that's my last official question. But I do have a follow up on something you said earlier, you mentioned kind of developing the social support and learning classroom management and all that stuff, kind of making the first few years really hard. So I wonder, what were the things that made you keep going or why you didn't decide to leave for a different school or different job? Like when things are challenging in those ways?

C: I think starting the choir really helped. It seemed like settling in just getting to know people really helped and, and like building my confidence.

CP: So, becoming part of the community made it easier?

C: Yeah. And you know, music teachers are unique because we actually show off what we've been doing in a concert. And we have hundreds of people attend sometimes. Whereas like a third-grade teacher doesn't do that. you know, they don't show up to watch what she does [laughs]. So that does help. And it does help to have every student in the school. I know like all the kids in our district, K to the 12th graders, because I taught them. So if you just kind of stay somewhere long enough, and you kind of get just embedded into the community.

CP: Cool. You mentioned way back at the beginning the teachers around you that like have moved on for various reasons...I'm curious as to what you think drives people to leave when they don't stay very long?

C: I could tell you some of that. So [nearby school], it's pretty small. And there's one teacher there for K-12. They had a really strong program for a while, but then they had a string of turn over. There's one guy, he was there for like, half of the year. It was so isolated

for him. They only gave him a limited amount of budget. And he had such weird instrumentation in this band. And it was so much work to arrange everything. He just had so... I think the K through 12, where you're teaching like elementary and a guitar class and a band and a choir and that's just so much and it really wasn't well supported, and they didn't really know how to support him. And plus he was so isolated, he was single. And I think he was just so isolated, you know, socially. Because I think it's different if you're like, married and have a family, and you just go home to your house every day and you're part of the community and you're in "raising your family" mode. It's different than being single and being very isolated. So that was it for him. One of the one of the guys there that was before him, he was my student teacher, and honestly, his skills were terrible, and he got let go with another school and ended up there and they said bye-bye, so they just didn't hire somebody quality there. There was a teacher in Franklin for a couple years, probably about three or four years. Do you know [two music teachers]? He was up at [suburban high school], but anyway, she, she taught there but he had his master's in choral conducting or something. And they were just too isolated till he wanted to be like a big choral program so they left to go to [suburb] for his job. And then there was I told you about the lady who actually her only claim to fame was singing in choirs and one year in undergrad and it was just not quality and the kids didn't like her. And then, let's see. There was one girl in eastern Colorado, and she was there for three years. I don't actually know how her teaching was though. They let her go. I think that it was a little.... I don't know how her skills as a teacher were.

CP: That made me think of a couple things. First, like the choir person, you mentioned that wanting to have a bigger better choir. That's like something that I've talked to you several secondary teachers about, just sort of this feeling that like, "I need to have a big group," or, "my ensemble needs to play like this great of music" and that sort of thing. And I wonder, do you feel like that's different for general music? Do you feel the same sort of pressure to perform in a certain way?

C: I think elementary does not feel that same pressure, because I don't have to worry about a feeder school for mine. So it's on me to get the kids up to the quality I want. And I recruit relentlessly, so I have the type of ensemble I'm happy with. I think in any elementary around [metro area], I think that I could get that same level. Now, if I had feeder schools that were awful, that were just rural and like small groups. I feel like my elementary school though, is like a normal size. I feel like it's pretty like the same size of school, that would be in [metro area]. You know? So, in that aspect, I don't feel like I would need to leave to have a better experience. I actually think that's the case for elementary, that's not so much the case as it is for secondary.

CP: Another thing that made me think of is like you'd mentioned the [regional] music association or something like that?

C: Yeah! So there's a teacher named [Name]. And he's the band guy, I think and he kind of heads it up. But there's a meeting once a year where we get together and plan and they do honor choirs and honor bands and stuff together. So we get together and say, Okay, all right. Is this a good date for the high school? For the honor choir? Okay. All right, what directors, okay, you get you get you work on finding a director for the middle school and

Okay, you're going to be an audition judge and that you know, this group puts on these honor choir and honor band stuff for the secondary people. And so they do a couple things like that. And they just all do the judging for each other. And I think they do their solo & ensemble.

CP: Does that help kind of build a sense of community?

C: I think with the with the secondary teachers, yes.

CP: Not so much for you though?

C: No, I'm not really involved in all the honor choirs and stuff, although I did work with [nonprofit] to write a grant from [county] to do it on acquire for elementary so we do have that November, and I have the [children's choir] directors come out and they music and they run the thing and I accompany, and I help recruit schools to it. I'd say there's about between three and six schools every year that participate with it. So I've got to know some of the teachers that way, too. I always, like, send that out via our [regional music group] thing to try to recruit people.

CP: Cool, that's better than just everybody being on their own island. Well, do you have any anything else to add?

C: Sometimes just being around other musicians, even if they're not music teachers, helps. I've really liked student teachers, I had three student teachers. And that really helped, actually helps me feel connected to [university], and [professor] sends me student teachers. I guess I really made sure that I got involved and met people. Yeah, because I could have just been there alone. But I've put in a lot of effort to try to meet people. Anyway, I think one of the things that really helped me with connect with people was being a grad student at [university]. Because then, you know, I go to those summer programs, and I've met a lot of people and then I could go to [state music educator conference] and I'd see them again. And so anyway, that really helped me.

Interview #2: January 15, 2020

CP: I just have a few questions about like, where the kids are coming from and then a couple things that have come up from my other participants that I wonder if are relevant to you. So, what do most of the kids' parents do?

C: A lot of them work in town, commute to [nearby city] and stuff. We have some military people and some airport people. We have some local teachers. I'd say like a lot of like middle class, blue collar jobs.

CP: So, I wondered because of the story you told [the students] about your grandpa, I don't know if that's because it's relevant to them, like ranching and farming and stuff.

C: Yes, and also a lot of the families, there's generations here, too. So a lot of them have extended family nearby that have farms or whatever.

CP: When you said you moved here before you got the job, what brought you out here to begin with?

C: My husband's a farm kid, and I'm a city girl but we had lived in [city] and wanted a nice place to raise a family. So we were looking at all of the kind of the towns around the [metro area] that were smaller, so we looked at [names several towns] and some of those. And so we came out here and they had our church out here, and we really liked the school and the housing was cheaper. So we just felt really good about it, and actually one of the music therapy patients I had the hospital told me about this place and she's like, "I think you guys would like Fairfield," so we came out here and we liked it.

CP: Is the school valued in the community?

C: I think the schools are. We are really well regarded actually, the community knows the teachers, personally, and knows their names, a lot of community goes to football games, a lot of the community comes to my concerts and play. And I think it's mostly good.

CP: What other kinds of things are the kids involved in outside school?

C: Mostly sports. They have a pretty good rec center with lots of options like baseball and stuff like that. And so they mostly do baseball through here but then they want to play other things, then a lot of kids get into a school sport starting in seventh grade and a lot of kids are involved in it. They have a junior cheerleader squad that my friend started out here and they've got a lot of girls this age in it and they're gonna have a really good squad in a few years. The high school squad just went to state. They've got a really strong program. And then there's like Four-H. There's some Boy Scouts and some church youth groups and things like that.

CP: Do you feel like there's musical opportunities for *you* here?

C: If I create them for myself, like we did though the Interfaith Choir, then yeah. And that was because of me. So I made my own musical experience. But I'd have to go.... probably 30 miles to go find something.

CP: Do you feel like that is something that needs to be fed for you?

C: Somewhat. I get busy, my family gets really busy.

CP: Let's see. Do they have like a music grade?

C: Yeah. I take assessment on their pitch matching. I do it like six or eight times a year, and then I do like the rhythm performance. I do note reading with the older kids, and I record that and then each concept, like we're working on *do* in second grade and I'll try to take two or three like little data points for it. But really, the music grades, I'll mostly give all the kids proficient or 3's, because I feel like they all participate. All except like that one kid that was. Everybody does pretty much everything I ask and I feel like that music is more doing than written work, so I'm okay just giving them pretty much mostly 3's because they do it. And then I give them a behavior grade too. But some of the people like in [another district] have to get like a grade for every standard, and I'm so glad that I don't.

CP: Is there anything like that prescribed by the district? O, like your curriculum, is that's all stuff you come up with?

C: Yes. I just put together my curriculum and nobody's ever bugged me about it. But what you saw is pretty typical. Like, I don't really waste time telling stories and, you know, watching movies, we're like constantly working so I feel like we're accomplishing a lot. Whatever I'm doing is helping them sing a tune and be musically literate, so they're strong singers. So I feel like it's working some. Yeah, if anyone tells me "You have to use [branded music curriculum]" or something I'm going to revolt, I will refuse to use it. So, yeah, I like the autonomy of being able to do what you know works for the kids. And then I have my general plan, like for the year, I know like what concepts I'm doing, but I kind of use this [motions toward curriculum folders] and then just pick and choose and I plan my lessons every cycle, I actually plan and type them out. And I don't reuse them every year. I know what I'm doing, but it's not like I go, "Okay, I'm on lesson number X turn to page five, here's my lesson," I don't do that.

CP: So each year it's sort of as you go.

C: Yeah. There are too many variables not to. As long as I get through my concepts, like my six or whatever concepts I have a year, we get well practiced and then we put a concert in there and stuff, then I just kind of set our pace, but I do have like certain songs I use every year. Like "Bell Horses" is new for me this year, and I'm like, "*mi-sol*" is so boring, so I have to pick a good song.

CP: All right, cool. Just because the one girl mentioned being a busser, does the bus affect their ability to participate in things?

C: Yeah, because my choir's before school. And so, that works for most people, but some parents do work early so if they're too far to walk, they can't be in choir, is before school. And during regular choir I had 88 last year and I like 60 something this year, so I split them into Tuesday and Thursday and then we learn two-part music. And then the last like five rehearsals I have them come both Tuesday and Thursday practicing with our accompanist and then we put it together. So, for the kids, it was just once a week, but now we're doing Alice in Wonderland so my girls that are like, Alice and the leads, they're here four or five mornings a week depending on what we're working on. I just do whatever rehearsal, like today's the Mad Hatter scene and then we have the Queen of Hearts scene and whatever. So, some kids are here almost every day. Then that ends up being kids that have the flexibility and enough support to do it. And it's kind of a bummer for the kids that don't have that, but there's no way I could pull off a play without doing it the way I do, I think. After school there's too many conflicts. And I don't have any time during the school day that I could really get done when I need to and then some of the kids have the option to be a stage crew person. So they're gonna push our set out and twirl the umbrellas while she's falling down the rabbit hole and wave the ocean water and stuff like that. So, there's kids that, if their parents can't bring them very much, they can serve in another capacity.

CP: Nice. Well, do you have anything else to add just in general? Like, I mean, is there any way that anything I saw today would be different if this weren't a rural school?

C: I would say, if I'm in different district, I might be forced to use a different curriculum. And I'd say, we would probably have a lot more kids taking like dance and stuff like that. And some of the schools in town really do have behavior issues. I really don't have that

many behavior problems. I had, like that one second grader that kind of pulls kids off track and that's pretty significant, but according to some of my friends in town, holy cow, it is like 10 times the behavior issues that I've got here. I don't know if they would let me be doing everything I'm doing. Maybe they would.

CP: As far as the behavior is there like a school wide support system for that?

C: There's the PBIS. We don't have a self-contained behavior room here, but we have quite a few kids with one on one Para's.

CP: There's enough paras to go around?

C: Yeah, I know there's like different procedural things like, just like day-to-day things that are easier out here. Like I just have the key to the school and I can come anytime I want, but in town my friends, like they lock it up on the weekends and you can't use your classroom for something in the evening, you have to go through the district and it's a big headache or you have to schedule your concerts at the beginning of the year and there's no flexibility, and we're all sharing auditoriums and here I think it's a lot more flexible with things like that. And I'm really sad there's no orchestra out here because I'm a string player. And so I think that if for some reason, if we had more resources, I would completely support a strings program that started in like fourth grade. I wouldn't want to run it because I'm too busy, but I would definitely be happy to be there with my viola and helping kids and I would support that if it was available. Or like a band, I'm not a band person, I don't really know much about it, but I could help someone I'm sure.

CP: Would there be like support from the district to pay somebody to do that?

C: I don't think that they would pay someone to do it. The reason why we do a play and a choir.... I didn't have a stipend for years and I just did it because I love the kids and wanted to grow. I want to push the kids as far as they can go. And then I finally started getting a stipend like, five or eight years into it.

CP: Wow.

C: So that's hard.

CP: I think like that pushing, or like wanting to push the kids further and further is like, I mean really a natural part of being a music teacher. Like you have to be the best. There's sort of that, that need to keep growing the program almost, and then there's no more room for that.

C: I guess. Yeah, I guess I feel like my school is like a typical Elementary School in in town in a lot of ways so I can like grow as much as an elementary kind of. Not totally.

CP: Yeah. Do you think if you got to a point where, maybe the choir participation starts to level off, or something like that --would you feel like leveled out at any point, like that?

C: Maybe, I don't know. I'm not burned out yet. I've got at least another 5 or 10 years, maybe, that I don't really know. No, my ideal would be to get someone like [former student teacher] here who's like a band person who has elementary experience and I would love to split this position with them, and I'll take the choral and they take the band and we do a K-

12, streamlined theory and like just—I could kind of hand some of this off. I could definitely grow the program at the [secondary] school, and I would love to work with somebody that I get along with who has some enthusiasm and would be willing to do that, but I don't.

CP: That's what I always wanted, is just an elementary person that would work with me.

C: For me, I'm like, "Here you go, they can play and they sing in tune, you have like a ready-made choir," but then they get up there and they're singing Whitney Houston. When she died, he did a Whitney Houston concert, and they were all going "huhhhh" [mimics belting]. And I was like, where's the choral stuff? They're singing some Taylor Swift song. He sings a Disney thing literally every single time. I'm like, Where's the choral stuff? Where's the foreign language? Where's the art music? When you heard my first graders, they can hear, they can sing in tune and they can hear high and low.

CP: Yeah, and they're starting to read on a staff.

C: Even though my second graders were rolling around and acting like idiots, they could sing. Some of them did mess up, but a lot of them could. I'd say half the group's got it pretty quickly the other half were like, I usually pair them up a little, like I try to pair [one student] up a little different. Like today, I said "Okay, you're with [student] and We're gonna stop there." That's how I chose partners today.

But no, I'd love to like work with somebody like that. And I don't know. I don't mean to be rude, but there's a lot of sketchy things going on in some of the rural districts. Some of the teachers, I don't think are qualified. Then they don't get professional development and they don't really have the accountability because, you know, it can get a little....

CP: Yeah, I worry about teachers that get in these positions and just aren't prepared. Like, what do you do?

C: I don't know. I had one level of Orff. And I had it as a music therapist in 1999, and then I did that for five years. And then I got this job and I'm like, holy cow, I don't know what I'm doing. And then I called [university] and got in their program and I'm like okay, I have enough material to last a last year, I took the level two I'm like, okay. Without that I don't know what I'd be doing.

CP: Yeah, I just don't know what people do. And, I mean, it's not great for the kids. It's not great for the program as a whole.

J; Yeah. I know there's that [branded music curriculum] which, I think, if you do have just a mom that like plays piano and that's your teacher, then I think, it's probably a great investment for the district, but I would refuse to use it unless I needed a long term sub. I'm kind of glad they don't make me read the textbook. I don't want to. I would use it for resources, but I wouldn't, like, work through chapter one chapter two. No, my goals really here are for the kids to be pretty musically literate, like, "Oh yeah, I can read pitches I understand I can sing in tune." I want them to be tuneful and not scared to sing because, a lot of middle school choir people say if their elementary teacher never expected them to sing, then they're not going to do it, but every one of my fifth graders sings. Even boys, they all sing in their head voice and it's not a big deal. And one of the teachers actually the

teacher in Franklin asked me, she's like, "Cathy, how do I get my boys to sing?" and I said, "Start them in kindergarten." When it's expected, it's no big deal. Everyone just sings. But if you don't do it, it's really hard when they're self-conscious seventh graders. Yeah, I don't know.

APPENDIX L

Interview Transcripts: Robert

Interview #1: December 18, 2019

C: Okay, so to start, just give me sort of the lay of the land of what your school is like, like how many kids and the location, and what your job entails, like the classes you teach and all that.

R: So I teach in Greenville. We have about 200... somewhere between 250 and 300 students total. My job at the school is I am the general music director. So K-5, and I am a support person for the sixth-grade band which is compulsory at our school. And then I do seventh and eighth grade jazz band and I do seventh and eighth grade drama electives. And then my teaching partner does sixth grade band. She's the director, like the band director. And then she does seventh and eighth grade band and choir. And then she goes to the high school for the afternoon. So we kind of have this team teach kind of thing in the mornings and then we split and do the High School and the elementary school.

C: Gotcha. Okay, cool. So, do you do everything every day? Or is it on like sort of a weekly schedule with the elementary school?

R: So yeah, I see the kids every other day in the elementary, and that's kind of split with PE every day for half an hour, and then they have either art or music every other day.

C: Gotcha. Okay. Cool. Let's see. So you said the elementary is about about 250 students K-8?

R: I think 176 was the last number that I saw of elementary students.

C: So then all the sixth graders take band and then about how many seventh and eighth graders do you see in the jazz bands and stuff?

R: So working with the concert band and working with the jazz band and my jazz band is 12 kids, and then concert bands about 30 and then the drama classes like 16-17 kids depending on the day.

C: All right. So how many years have you been in this position?

R: So this is my third year at Greenville. I'm in my 10th year teaching.

C: Where have you been before that?

R: So I did five years in [town], which is north of here. And I went back to get my master's degree for two years and taught in [another state] for those two years and then came back.

C: Alright, sweet. So how did you end up in Greenville? Did you just come back to Colorado because you wanted to? What was the draw of that position?

R: Yeah, so um, while I was living in [town], I spent a lot of time coming down to this valley to just be in this area. And so my girlfriend at the time had a job down here. So, we wanted to figure out a way to be able to live here. So we--I shouldn't say at the time, I mean, she's my fiancé now--but she was...it's a long story, but basically, I chased her out here to this job. It's just a really beautiful place with a lot of really great natural places to get out into, and we're big hikers and campers. And so that was kind of a draw.

C: Awesome. So the next question is about kind of the support for the music program or where that comes from. So it's kind of like these different groups of people and how they show support for the program. So how do you feel like administrators support the program?

R: I mean, we get a lot of support from them, as far as they believe in our program and that what we're doing is good for the kids. And so we have pretty high-level support that way. This is not a very well-funded school district. So I would say when we go to them with like, "Hey, can we do this?" They're like, "Sure—if I have the money to do it," but as far as like admin, they are stable. They believe in what we're doing, because it will tell us that we're important. Which is a nice feeling.

C: Yeah, that's great. And do you have I understand [region] has several different like kind of feeder systems in the school district. So do you feel like at the district level is the same?

R: I've not really ever seen them go either way with it. I don't think they like are apathetic about it. Certainly I think they all from the from the like district admin level support the arts and they support music but I've never really seen the district admin. I've seen the school board members at our concerts and things, and they support the music quite a bit. The school board is pretty adamant about having good music programs in the schools. So I would say the school board is definitely interested. But I think... I don't know. I would be interested to see if the superintendent would come to one of our concerts. I have not seen her yet. But there are people.

C: All right, cool. What about like other teachers in the building? Like you said, you have kind of a co-teacher? That sounds pretty cool.

R: Yeah. It's, I would say that's the single most important thing for me to like, keep me here is like, [co-teacher] is a great teacher, she is a really great teaching partner in the fact that like, well, I don't know. So in the last building that I worked at it as an elementary school and we would do these you go to these specials meetings, right? So it's like the gym teacher, the art teacher and the music teacher sitting there, like, cool, we can't plan together because our curriculums are totally different. But like, [co-teacher] and I will sit and talk about like, what are you seeing with the sixth graders that they're missing in elementary school that I need to like ramp up and focus on? And so that vertical alignment pieces like, is huge with being able to make a program that works and so in this particular setting, it works extremely well. The school is small enough that we can kind of handle the overlapping jobs that would normally be three or four jobs in a larger school. But here, we can handle the amount of work considering how small the school is. As far as the other teachers in the building, we see a lot of one of their children in the program, it seems like they're pretty supportive in that way. And there's certainly a level of buy-in for tradition,

especially in this school. So like the holiday concerts that we just got done with. I see a lot of people coming out to help in that way. Like I didn't need to hardly do any sort of setup, the cooking class, make cookies and stuff for the concert and all this stuff. So I mean, it's supportive of traditional things. It's a good driver for that for sure. But yeah, I would say I feel pretty well supported in the school.

C: What about like students and students' parents in the program?

R: So the elective choices. Certainly the kids are pretty bought into that. Like the jazz band does really well and the kids really have begun to push with that. And they're starting to make like honor jazz, like the [Regional] honor jazz group. So that's really exciting to see them kind of take that. And then from the compulsory standpoint, like the general music, it's a little bit more difficult. Some of the kids really enjoy it and some of the kids couldn't care less. There's kind of a like a half and half there. And it's kind of the same way with the parents. There's about, I would say most of the parents really enjoy, like seeing their kids perform. And then there are just, you know, some parents who will talk through the entire concert and you just want to ...yeah.

C: Well, what about like just the Greenville community?

R: The community at large pretty much supports the music program. I think they enjoy seeing the music and [co-teacher] and I have gotten the music to be more in the public eye a little bit more. We do like a Java jazz concert at the Art Center downtown. And so we just have like a coffee and jazz night with the high school in the middle school jazz bands and a community band that plays and that's been really good. We've gotten a lot of good feedback around that. So like it seems like the committee supports music and that way. They also...it's difficult to...this is a very sports-oriented community. And so the only real non-supportive area is competing with sports. We don't, at the at least at the middle school, we don't have a performance space. And so it's like, cool, we're using the gym, but we have to use the gym around a sport that's using it. And that's, that's just kind of the nature of the beast at the moment. But sure. I mean, that's really the only way in which it doesn't get supported. They're like, "We're totally down for this!—unless it's competing with basketball." So we work around it, I guess.

C: Is like is that a culture like at the high school, too, or like just kind of the whole community is like sports here and music there?

R: [nods] The community is very sports oriented. It's a very big area for wrestling and football and basketball and volleyball. And track. It's like one bleeds into the next one, so there's these little windows of like, cool, it's in between basketball and volleyball. Yeah, go, go, go! But it's not that it's *not* supportive. It's just again, it's kind of like the support that we get for it is like, cool. Well, we'll totally support you as long as it's not competing directly with the sports thing.

C: Yeah. Is that like true with the kids to like, do they prioritize their sports over their music?

R: Some of them do. We're seeing a switch a little bit where the kids who are not so sports oriented are kind of taking more of a leadership role and stepping up saying, cool, I can do

arts and not have to do sports. Or then there are kids who are saying cool, I can do both. I think that's kind of been the mentality for a while is that we can do sports and arts, but I'm seeing more of the kids like, cool. I don't really need to do this sport or, interested in doing this, sorry.

C: Alright, cool. So the next group of questions is about just kind of like your working conditions at school. So the first is do you feel like you have adequate planning time to plan out your day?

R: I mean, yeah, I've got a really nice plan. I mean, I'm talking to you on my plan. Yeah, I've got a good amount of planning time in the morning. And, you know, with the team teaching during sixth grade, it actually gets me more time. So sometimes my sixth graders coming in and I'll have them working. And then other times, I'll just, we'll just have all of the sixth graders working together and I've got more planning time. So I actually feel like this particular model gives me a lot of plan time and I'm fortunate because I don't think the rest of the building really gets nice planning time.

C: So, do you feel like you have to do a lot outside of the school day to stay on top?

R: Yeah. [laughs] I think that's just kind of...I mean, I don't do any of my planning. As you can see, like this as my way of getting around stuff [points to full bookshelf full of teaching resources], I think lesson planning as just strictly lesson-planning-wise, I get to do most of that at school. But there are other things like—as the drama teacher, I'm writing plays with the kids a lot. So that's a lot of after school, they do the work and I don't have a plan period that really would allow me that amount of space. So I have to like to go home and work on that for a while. So it's usually like feast or famine with the planning time at home.

C: How are your facilities? Like you said, you don't have a performance space, but do you feel like your classroom is adequate, or you have the things that you need as far as general music and the band?

R: Uh, not really. I mean, there are certainly things that we have that are good. You know, it's kind of this weird thing with school budgets, because my school budgets around \$300. So it's like, cool, I can buy these tiny little things, but I can't roll it over. I can't save it. So big ticket items are things that need to be fundraised for, or there needs to be a grant or something like that. And I think that's mostly where I feel like the program would benefit from some things. It's a lot of—speaking of teaching partner, this is [co-teacher]. Oh, she brought me a little present. [co-teacher] the high school, middle school band director.

C: Awesome! Nice to meet you!

R: Yeah. So one of the things, for example, because we don't have a performance space. We're trying to figure out how to get band shells, so that when we play in the gym, we can kind of control the sound and that's been a tricky thing to figure out. Like, well, how do we get enough money to pay for these like \$6,000 bandshells? It's not easy. You know, the districts like this where they're trying to get technology into rural areas and stuff. And so there's a ton of money sitting there for like new computers, but we've been getting that money for years. And so it's like, great. We're one-to-one with Chromebooks with all of our students. Like, we don't need any more of those. Can we just take that money to like, I mean

it's acoustic technology, right? So that's the biggest issue is like, you know, this is an older school. So the facilities are kind of, like the performance spaces that we have, are kind of falling apart, for lack of a word, but there's not funding to fix it and we don't have legalized recreational marijuana in this county. So we don't do taxes based off of that. So we can't touch any of that new building money, which is unfortunate because it's again sitting there, and we can't use any of it. So that's the big part of it is the infrastructure. If I want a new set of maracas for the for the kids, I can just be like, great. I'm going to go and get 25 new maracas, and that's not a big deal. I can do that with the \$300 budget, but anything else is kind of like, I don't know where we're going to get stuff.

C: All right, do you feel like your salary is reflective of the amount of work you do?

R: [laughs] Compared to like, what other people in the district are doing or like, what region or...?

C: That's a good question. I mean, I guess maybe not a comparison but like, do you feel like you're able to live off of it, first, and then also like you're getting paid enough for what you're doing?

R: So my fiancé is a teacher as well and our combined salaries are enough for us to live on, like we can live pretty well off of the salaries. If I were living by myself, I would say that it would be a little tighter. I mean, the housing market out here is a little bit pricey in comparison to like, what the salaries are in other places. And actually the salary guarantee has been a big issue with the district lately. And so they've been they've been bumping up salaries and adjusting the pay scales ever since I got here, basically. But, I mean, I don't feel slighted by it, but I think there are certainly people in the district who, they're trying to live off of one teacher salary for family of four and that's really, *really* tough.

C: So in like the district that's like something that they're emphasizing and working on?

R: Yeah. Just to compare, my salary compared to what I was making in [previous school district] is about \$10,000 less here. With a master's degree and like where I've been in my teaching career. Well, the district is trying to make them more competitive, but I chose to live here because it's where I wanted to live; I definitely didn't choose this district because, "Oh, yeah, great salary!"

C: All right. How's professional development? Do you get music-specific professional development?

R: Professional development in the district is not provided but funding for going to [state music education conference] is given so [co-teacher] and I go down to [state music education conference] every year and at least our registration is paid for, and we stay in an Airbnb and that kind of cuts costs, but we feel pretty well supported with that like knowing that we can go to our building admin and say, "Hey, can we use some of the PD money for [state music education conference]?" And they're always like, "Yeah, go ahead." They support it.

C: Nice. Alright, the next couple questions are about kind of the rural isolation. Do you feel like the location of your school effects the sort of things that you're able to do with your

kids, as far as things like field trips? Or for the middle school, maybe like festivals and that sort of thing?

R: Totally. I mean, we are pretty off the map. And some of the kids will even say like, "I'm going to [nearby city] for the first time ever and this is the farthest I've ever been away from home!" and you're like, whoa, okay, that's a thing. But as far as giving the kids opportunities, at least the [region], honor bands and honor choirs, and those types of things are really effective in getting the kids out. [two nearby colleges] have good programs that they reach out to us, [one college] is kind of our big like anchor point for higher level music. Then we have a we do a small schools band between [several towns] and Greenville and Wakefield we kind of a little, like festival band and have a concert in the in the late winter. That's been a good experience too. So as far as like isolation, I think the biggest thing is concerts, Like in [previous position], it was like, it's going to be a big deal, but we're going to go and see Lion King on Broadway in [city] and that's going to be great. But being this far out, that's not even possible to do in a day. So that that can be a little isolating, sure.

C: What about like having any like guest teachers come in or clinicians things like that?

R: So fortunately, the band that I play in is run by a guy named [Paul]. He's an amazing percussionist and a really cool resource for the schools. He's an excellent teacher. But he also is a great producer. And so he runs a world music series at the at the theater in Wakefield. And that world music series brings in performers so that they can come into the schools and that's awesome. So yeah, really, I mean, without that program, we would have almost nobody coming in. But through the month of September through January, we have one group a month come into the school and play so like this year, we had the Finnish group come in and sing and play and talk about Finnish traditional music and like sing for the kids. And then we had a group of we some people come out and play like percussion and teach the kids Takadimi and all this cool frame drumming stuff. And then we had a couple of guys who were talking about Irish music. And just recently a group that were playing like Tabla-fusion music and gypsy jazz, and it was actually really awesome. But without that resource, we would not have any of that. So, Paul saves the day.

C: That's awesome.

R: And then I guess we do get we get a grant from Opera Colorado, they come out every other year. And they perform and so this year we're going to get Opera Colorado at the [local theatre] to do, I guess they're doing a condensed version of the *Hansel and Gretel* opera. So that's another resource that that we get every other year.

C: Sweet. Okay, just because you mentioned that you're in a band like do you have musical outlets for yourself?

R: [This region] is very inundated with musical talent, so that's what I do. I play in about, I guess I play professionally in four different bands right now. That's been a really cool experience. Two of them are kind of pickup bands where it's like, we got this gig so now we'll go do the thing. One of them is a pretty true-standing band, and that's like the one with Paul, and [teaching partner] is in that one too. So, that's awesome.

C: Alright, cool. So, in terms of like the local community, like do you feel like you're a part of Wakefield outside of just being like music teacher like do you have an identity with the community?

R: Um, I definitely have an identity in the [region]. The valley itself is kind of this interesting thing made up of basically three towns. And they all kind of share a very nebulous but cohesive relationship at the same time. Like, everybody kind of knows everybody because the three towns are small enough that if you're like, in a certain niche of something, it's like, "Oh, cool. I know that person from [town], this person from Greenville, these people from Wakefield." But I mean, I don't feel personally plugged into Greenville as much because I don't live in Greenville. I live in Wakefield. But, you know, I play in a community band in Greenville and so that's kind of a tie-in there and then I conduct a community choir in Wakefield, which is another kind of tie-in, and again these people are from Wakefield or from Greenville or wherever, they're kind of all over. No, I do feel a connection there arts-wise. And occasionally, something will pop up where I'm like, Oh, cool. I'm going to this community event, but those are a little bit more rare. I've got a super busy schedule [laughs] so it's based on music more than anything else.

C: Yeah. How do you balance like your role as the music teacher in and outside the community? Like, maybe living in Wakefield versus Greenville, like helps with that, or? I don't know. Yeah.

R: I mean, one of the things that I really believe is that my students should see us performing as much as like possible. Yes. I tell the kids about all the concerts that I do and the things that I perform it and that kind of stuff because I believe they need to see that to know that music is like a viable thing or like a valid thing. They need to see it outside of me just sitting on the carpet and singing songs with them. They buy into my classroom so much more after they've seen me perform on stage. I remember a couple of students last year came to a CD release party that we were throwing and they just sat there, like, mouth agape, the whole time. And then they came back the next week, and that's all they can talk about. "Mr. [Robert], do you remember when you were playing on the stage? Was it cool?" and I'm like "Yes, I do. I remember that. I was there." But doing it does make a huge difference to them. And I find that the buy-in from them increases when I give them the opportunity to come and see me. So yeah, I mean, if there's anything I could say to like, new teachers, it's like, "I know it's busy. I know you have too much to learn and pick up, but don't lose your professional musicianship." Just even if it's something very simple like you just play funk music or something, it doesn't need to be classical music even, or something that you need to dedicate like hours and hours to, it's just play music for fun and let the kids see that you play.

C: Totally, that's awesome. So is the community like a Wakefield or Greenville similar to where you grew up? at all?

R: Not at all. I've lived in cities. San Diego. I lived in Minneapolis. I lived in Milwaukee. I lived in Iowa City for high school. So I went to giant high schools and I went to a giant High School into a giant middle school, big elementary schools. So I mean, the closest was when I was little, I lived in [suburb]. Like my very younger elementary years, and like preschool and stuff. And I would say that's sort of close to this because [suburb] in the early 90s was

more like this. But it now it's a completely different mentality. And sometimes I have to remind myself about that, because I'm looking at it from a perspective of, well, this is what I remember my band doing and we should be doing--Well, wait a minute, how am I going to get my kids to that? They have no concept of what "that" means.

C: Yeah. So is that a pretty big adjustment to make?

R: It's always an adjustment, being enculturated in two different spaces is a big shift. I think my biggest shift was actually moving from [college town] to [previous position]. And just seeing how, how different the rural life was out there, and especially since like, ranching is a major portion of that here, but it's mostly fracking there. And so moving out here where it's the opposite, it's mostly ranching and like, farmers and things like that. So it's again, a shift, but at least the ranchers made more sense to me. So this this feels like home to me, for sure. I don't feel like I'm in the wrong spot.

C: Gotcha. That's great. Okay, so this is sort of in that realm of just sort of like urban versus rural mentalities. But do you feel like the goals you have for your students are similar to the goals that teachers in like suburban areas or urban areas have for their students?

R: That's...I feel like the requirements that are put on me from the top down don't apply as hard as they would in like a suburban or an urban area. I think the schools that I've been in in urban areas, like where I did my student teaching in [city]. And I felt like the top down approach there in terms of music had like, super high expectations of performance and focused a lot on making sure that every kid got the same outcome, like every kid should be able to read the music, every kid should be able to perform at a high level, and I feel like I get to kind of set my own expectations, so to speak. I mean, I have, I have certainly like, okay, the performance needs to look good. And it needs to sound good. It's nice to be able to like, have music in that. But the thing for me that really was kind of an eye opener was the idea that I don't, I can't level the playing field with these kids. There are some kids that listen to a ton of music and get a total like a complete enculturation from the amount of music that's in this valley. And then there are kids who never see it and have no idea what music looks like outside of like, church. So my role in that case, looks different. I feel it looks more like, how I help all of my students to be musical in a way that makes sense to them? And so kind of capitalizing on that is are all of my students going to do enjoy a musical experience somewhere down the line. And how do I best approach that with those individual students because, again, being in a smaller district, where I have a few grade levels that only have one section. So literally the 23 students that I have is the entire grade level. So I do have the opportunity to kind of nitpick with those students how I approach different things with them. Like, okay, well, this student is really kicking back on these types of things, but they really attach themselves to this concept. So I'm going to really push this concept in order to help them maintain musical enjoyment them. So I feel that's a huge difference between the mentality that I've kind of left college with like, okay, level, the playing field, make sure everybody gets the skills everybody does this, but that's just not how it really functions out here.

C: Okay. Well, I'm glad you mentioned that because the next question is like, how do you feel like you were prepared by like college and like your kind of training as a teacher to

teach and that sort of situation that you're in? Like, was it oriented towards the kind of job you have now or towards something else?

R: Um, I feel like what I was doing in my master's degree was certainly preparing me for this, but I was kind of on that track already. I knew what I was going to do. So my research was really focused on all of that. Really, what undergrad did I guess was open my eyes to what music teaching was really about. You know, I went in thinking, "Oh, I'm going to be a high school band director and I'm going to have a big marching band in a big city" and like, that just fell away. I didn't want any of that after a while. I realized that hanging out with little kids was way more fun than hanging out with an older ones for me personally. So, I guess I don't feel like undergrad didn't prepare me for things but certainly like it prepped me in terms of it. It guided my thought process like, "Okay, cool. [state music education conference] is a place where I could go for resources and I can network with people and that's kind of like, Cool. Professional developments is an important thing like, great." That's a paradigm that's kind of established when you're in college. As far as like methods, courses and stuff, I mean, I don't think anybody really looks at their methods course and goes, "Oh, yes, I will need this down the road!" It's like you don't have the foresight when you're that age. And so you just kind of look at it and you go, "Okay, well, I'll learn this and I'll the jump through the hoops. Just let me go and teach." And then you get to that you're like, great, where was that thing? and then you go and look for your notes. So, I mean, as far as our system is concerned, I, personally just believe that the shadowing that I got to do was really powerful. You know, they started as soon as you're admitted sophomore year into the music ed program, at least this is the way it was for me. Then they started putting you in practicums every semester so that you would shadow and watch people and I found that really, really helpful. Like, I get to see how teaching works. And I don't think there's anything more powerful than saying, okay, here's how teaching works. This is what it looks like now come back to the classroom and talk about those things start to develop the skills. You know, if you just sit there and show somebody a hammer and be like, now you're going to hit a nail with this, so, you know, keep it around with you for a while they're going to be like, What are you talking about? They have to actually see someone using it to know what it's for.

C: Right. So same sort of question about [state music education conference]. When you go, do you feel like the sessions are relatable?

R: Totally. Yeah. I am always bringing stuff back. I mean, this is, this is my [state music education conference] block here [motions to large section of bookshelf]. So I'm really getting stuff from there and bringing back new things. And it's usually, you know, at this point in my career, it's kind of troubleshooting. So I'll go and be like, okay, who do I need to talk to this time? I need to go and talk to so-and-so because she knows about, like, fifth graders and when they're not doing the right thing and how to get them to do the right thing, so it's, that's, that's kind of where I'm at there.

C: Yeah. Okay, great. Great. So this next section is about your goals. So first one is what are like your short term, the rest of the school year, versus long term, like next five years, goals, like professionally for yourself?

R: So, my teaching goal this year. I guess I'll just go backwards top down. So I want to—my seventh and eighth graders are going to put on a musical for the first time. We've been writing all of their shows. So we're going to write a musical. So it's like one quarter to write and kind of stage and set everything and then another quarter to rehearse it and actually perform it. So that's kind of a short-term goal this year. This is the second year I've been using the Nuvo instruments in my classroom, the DooDs and the TooTs is what they're called. They're like to a bridge to band instruments. So there's a Piccolo thing which has the mouthpiece it's got a different section of mouthpiece so you've got one mouthpiece that said like a recorder one, but it's still a transverse instrument and then you can take that plate off and put on normal super plate and the DooD thing which is like a clarinet in C but they're rubber and they're easy to clean and the kids can't destroy them and they sound really nice so I've been replacing my recorder program with that. So kind of as a like pre band program, so to speak. And what I've done is given them a version of recorder karate, sort of, you know, they play a piece and they get a sticker on their board and as they get closer to it, but it gets the fifth graders to be “band ready”. And when you're “band ready”, that means you've read through the entire book. You can play the entire book on your instrument. And the incentive for that is you don't need to pay your sixth grade compulsory band fee if you are “band ready” by the end of the time and so a lot of these kids get excited about that because their parents are ranchers and they don't want to spend 60 bucks on renting the instrument again that that there—there's a big city difference, in [college town] people didn't mind at all spending \$45 a month out there to rent a band instrument and out here it takes a little bit of convincing to get people to pay \$60 for the year to pay rent a school instrument.

C: Do most of them rent from the school or from a music store?

R: From the school. The music store is so far from us—the guy comes out every month, but it's tough to like get instruments repaired and get them moving. So we try and do a lot of in-house stuff as much as possible. Yeah. built up a fleet of instruments to kind of help with that. But so long- or short-term goal with them is to make that program the DooDs and TooTs program kind of run more smoothly. It's the second year so I've got better plans about what I want to do with that. And then with my younger grade levels, I've gotten really good at getting them to read rhythm notation, and I feel like they're making good progress with that. Singing voices are still like a big issue, using head voice is not something that is working very well with me at the moment. And I've noticed that as my voice changes as I get older and my falsetto is kind of changing into that really warbly, like old alto voice, and so, like the kids are imitating that instead of the pitch, I'm having to use children models more and more to kind of get that. So a goal is to kind of get them back up into the head voice and see if I can have them find better ways and better avenues to get them into that.

C: Cool.

R: And then as far as like five-year goals, I really want a strong jazz program. And I think and I'm making good progress with that the kids really playing the music and that's good. And then I'd like to just see us continue to make progress, like more and more kids interested in music and really taking that up that responsibility. Our school is kind of

shrinking in numbers, but if we could keep the same number of kids interested in music despite losing numbers of students, I feel like that'd be a pretty good accomplishment.

C: Cool. So do you feel like there's anything in the school like, maybe administration or otherwise, that is either like helping you reach those goals or is getting in the way of reaching those goals?

R: I don't think there's anything personnel wise that's getting in the way of those goals. I know that, in my mind, I want to get a Best Grant from the state and tear out the old part of the building and put in a performing arts center, but that's like, my pipe dream. Or that would be like the ultimate goal, to give the kids a space where they feel like performance is important. Right now, I feel like there's a sense of, "Cool, we're kind of secondary because look at this stage that we just kind of threw together," and I don't blame them for that. When you're on the stage and the curtain opens, there's a level of importance there, and when there's no curtain and you're using like, rolled up wrestling mats as a wing partition on the side, it's not as exciting.

C: Yeah, for sure. Cool. we just have some like overall sort of wrap up questions. The first is what is, what would you say is the most satisfying aspect of your job and like the most dissatisfying aspect.

R: The most satisfying part of my job is watching the kids enjoy music. When we're doing something, and they're all engaged and they're all singing or they're all performing or they're all making music and it looks fun to them. That's when I know that my job is like, done right. And the most dissatisfying part of my job is when the opposite happens, when I've got an awesome plan in my head that I put before the kids and then they're rolling on their heads and wandering around the room and playing tag and it's like, Okay, this...was not a good thing, but it did happen, but just finding the balance between that, because there are some things where they're just not ready for it... So that's kind of the frustrating part of my job, at this point, I'm like, man, after 10 years I should be better at this. Maybe I shouldn't be so hard on myself. But you know, I think that's what's most frustrating and the most rewarding is watching the kids do great.

C: Nice. Okay. Well so, similar question maybe when if you were to think about changing jobs, either to a different music position somewhere or just leaving music totally, what would be the things that are like, yeah, I want to keep this job or things that are like, this is like the straw that broke the camel's back and I need to leave.

R: I guess when the students come to my classroom, and they no longer want or care to learn music anymore, that's that'll be the straw that breaks the camel's back. If I can go to work and not have one class want to learn music. I mean, my life is music. So I'm not sure if I were to change careers that I would be able to go very far astray from like...I would still be teaching music in some capacity or performing or it's just what brings me joy is all of that. So, I don't know. And honestly, I think it's really important for me personally, I have the support systems here and I think that's what makes it work. I have the system that allows me to do the maximum amount of stuff and if I don't have those systems in place, then it would be it would be much more difficult.

C: Alright, last question. What relationship do you see between like your job satisfaction and keeping your job? retention.

R: Um, I mean, 90- 100%? Like, I think the fact that I enjoy helping the kids find the joy in music is the biggest thing and because the school affords me the opportunity to do things like drama and jazz band and all of the elementary and like have an excellent co-teacher and have an office staff that comes to me after every concert and is like “Yes, keep doing that. That's awesome.” Like that to me is absolutely necessary. Like I told my fiancé when I picked up this job, she's like, “Well, are you sure you want to work at that building?” I was like, “Well, here's what it has going for it.” And I've listed off all the things that she was like “Yep, that sounds like the perfect job for you.” I think it is terms of what I've what I'm given and what I get to work with.

C: Yeah, awesome. Well, that's all the questions that I have. Thank you so much for your time. From here, like, if you think of anything else that you want to add or like that You forgot to say or anything like that, feel free to just send me an email or give me a call or something.

Interview #2: February 7, 2020

C: So, I know you have a planning period in the morning, but how much time does it take to plan out a day like today?

R: I mean, a lot of the plans that I do are saved from previous years, and I recycle the things that work, and I ditch the things that don't. So a day like today is probably like 20-30 minutes of planning because it's like, cool, I've got these lessons and I know that they worked last time but I want to tweak them in this way and so I'm going to pull in this resource or something like that. It's when I need to do an overhaul that it really takes some time. I'll look at a lesson plan and go, “Well, that was a total tank, that that was not good, it didn't really hit any of the standards that I wanted,” and then I need to go and do something else and that can be hours. For one half an hour lesson plan it can be hours' worth of searching for something. Like, I'm starting to do with the second graders, I want to do some Gamelan-style playing with the metallophones, because there's nothing in the world that sounds like those things except for Gamelan, that I can find that sounds like those things, so I'm like cool, let's just use them for something that sounds like that. So, teaching them Gamelan technique and doing the Balinese or Javanese songs and so that's going to take hours. Yeah, but you know, it just depends on what I'm doing.

C: Do you have it kind of year to year, or like kind of a longer-term curriculum? Is it something you created or is there like something that the district prescribes?

R: Yeah, I mean the district does have a curriculum that they bought before I arrived. A lot of the teachers were either straight out of a bachelor's degree in music Ed and really needed a lot of support or were veteran teachers of other disciplines and were like switching to music. There were a couple of unlicensed teachers, there still is one unlicensed teacher, who teaches music and they've just had so little experience with looking at curriculum that they absolutely needed something and so this was what they were using [takes curriculum book off shelf]. It's good, I'd say it touches on a lot of really creative things. I'm not a huge fan of all of the original music that the guys have come up with, but I

understand its purpose, and I also am in a stage in my career where I'm like, cool well I've got a song that hits that, and I also want it to do this and this and this, so I'm kind of pulling from a wider range of things so I tend not to use the [curriculum] as much, and I tend to use the resources in it, like, okay, cool I play that game and now there's a resource with it where it's got like a little card that goes with it to show the kids. Like all of these rhythm cards came right from it, I was like, sweet I don't need to go and buy these, it's just done right there. So I use a lot of the resources out of it. I just don't follow the curriculum because it doesn't flow necessarily the way that I do, but it's nice to have something like that. It's nice to have any sort of resources like that. Even these [curriculum] from the 70s are still fun, I can go through them and look for material and some of them are like, oh that's really racist, and some of them are like, oh, no, these are great, I'll use this one. So there's lots of different resources in that way.

C: So do you have the autonomy to choose whether or not you want to do the prescribed thing?

R: Yeah, I think sometimes I feel like I have too much autonomy. And I know when I spend too much time by myself that I have too much autonomy because I will like do things and get lazy with stuff, and then I'll go to like a conference and I'll be like, Oh yeah, that's what music teaching is. So it's really nice that they put [state music education conference] where it is because it's at that burnout point where it's like, I don't want to do anything, I really don't want to do anything, and then you go like, oh! I want to do all this stuff! So it's great for that. But, no, I have a lot of autonomy. In fact, I was saying this to my mentor teacher actually, she said, "Well, you know, the new standards are coming out". And I was like, "Oh, there's new standards?" And she was like "Yeah, you haven't heard about him yet?" I was like, "I live in Standards Chechnya. We don't even have the standards in our gradebook, they're not even there. The parents don't even know." And her eyes were just like, "They're not they're not using the standards out there?" I was like, No. I can give a grade based on just how I feel if I really wanted to. I keep track of what the kids do and I take a lot of videos of them. But as far as giving grades, I don't even need to write down an assignment. I just give them a grade.

C: Is it, for middle school and elementary, just, "satisfactory" or whatever?

R: No, they're, still doing the A-B-C, except for the—it's really weird. They do standards-based grading for the elementary school but they never explained what that meant. So the parents have no idea that like, a "3" is a good thing. And that a "4" is like exceptional and your student is like GT in this area and that like a "2" is growing and that's actually okay, and a "1" is like, okay, we need to like intervene a little bit here, so if I don't give them 4's, they're like, why does my child have 3 in music? and it's like, well, because they're doing well. And they're following all the directions and they're using their singing voice and they're learning and they're growing, but they're not *exceptional*. And I tried that for one quarter. And I was like, done with that, not even gonna try that anymore, because they don't understand what the standards mean and to go about that process, it would be an effort from, at the very least, the school, if not the district. So, I don't pick that battle. I feel like elementary grades at this point, I don't think that there's any purpose to them because I'm not communicating anything to the parents. If I want to communicate something to the

parents, it's a small enough school that during my conferences, I can pull them aside and say, "Hey, your child is showing a lot of promise and is doing really well in this class, I'd like to get them involved in something higher." And then I rarely even see the parents who discipline problems for their kids and so it's like, this is not how to deal with that anyway. A lot of it just comes down to, I set my own standards. I mean I certainly use the standards as my basis but I do try and set a high bar for the kids. And I do want them singing, I want them playing, I want them listening, I want them consuming music and being musical.

C: So their grade doesn't necessarily reflect their musical talent, it's just like, they did the thing and they get a grade?

R: Correct. I think the level of grade influence is like, they did not totally suck. If they are terrible in my class behavior-wise, then I'll like put a lower grade and sometimes, I don't know, and this might seem bad, but like in my head it's like, "Yeah, I do want to pick a fight with this parent because I want them to come in and see what their child is like in this situation," and it's never worked. Many of those kids, their parents haven't even bothered. But I did, that first quarter when I was giving grades based on actual performance I would get parents saying like, why does my kid have this? and I would explain it and they would be like, that's not what so-and-so, their home classroom teacher, does, and I'm like, okay well, the classroom teacher really doesn't understand what a standard-based grading means, but neither does the school, so....

C: So do you feel like you have enough information on each student's progress as far as just, you assessing for the sake of knowing where they're at?

R: I mean, sometimes yes and sometimes no. I've built in a fair amount of recording for them to sing solo. And I feel like the things in terms of assessment where I'm trying to target kids and see where they're at to push them is not necessarily... I mean, I don't feel like I know every single kid well enough.

I don't feel like I let them slip between the cracks much anymore. I definitely felt that way, my first five or so years of teaching where it was just like, I missed that kid, how did I miss that? But I've gained enough techniques. Like with the first graders and that drum thing to get the steady beat and positively change them to feel and be aware and make that social connection there. I feel like that is one of those situations where I've learned enough technique now that it's like, great, now I can get everyone to feel that beat and I can have them participate in that way that gets them to feel it. And then if they're not showing that, later on I can address it. But just getting everyone to make that communal beat--because really, I think about my job in terms of big picture items, like, what do I need to make sure that they move to middle school with? They absolutely need to keep a steady beat, with others, and it just needs to be something that happens. Like, you listen to a crowd of clapping people anymore and it's like they can't help themselves, they just go faster, no one can keep a steady beat, It's like why, *why*? What is it? It's like, oh we failed! We need to do better at this! So that steady beat is just absolutely necessary, and that they're able to use their singing voice and access it. And I'm not convinced that the head voice is the best way to do it, but the extension of range is really important because it's that truncated voice, where the pitches are moving but they're moving indiscriminately. So it's like can they access some sort of voice where pitch discrimination is actually aware, and that's really

important. And then, do they like music? Do they listen to something and feel an emotional connection to it? That's like really an important aspect. So we do a lot of listening and things like that, but when I am assessing them for listening... So the kindergarteners with their masquerade, so they're moving to the music, and I'm like okay, are they hearing the internal beat, or are they just kind of moving? And then, are their bodies showing some sort of musical something within that? Is the music is causing them to do something outside of just the step? And that's where a lot of it comes down to. I'd love to do a study, I've actually thought this could be my doctoral dissertation, like, what do children who have a high level of exposure to music as, as infants, up until kindergarten, essentially, like, What does their musicality look like, embodied and then performed? Versus children who have had almost no musical experience, what do their bodies, what does their musicality look like? And so I'd love to see that. Because I have a speculation, and I think a lot of pedagogues would be like, "Children who have musical experience will be more embodied," but it's curious. I've talked to a lot of people who are like of this era [pulls a "Mozart Effect" cassette tape from the shelf] Remember that, the "Mozart Effect"? and the "Mozart makes you smarter, Mozart makes you—" and it's like, "Cool. Um, so does Alice in Chains, I guess," because I've talked to a lot of parents who are like, "We don't really play classical music" I mean, they say, "we just listen to the radio a lot" or like, "my husband listens to Alice in Chains constantly" and like, those are the musical kids in my group. Those are the kids who can hold down a beat who can have the beat in their feet, they've got it in their bodies, they've got the motions to everything they can access their head voice and so it's like okay, there's something happening here, musical enculturation is not this like narrow pigeon-holed thing that we've said that it is. It's actually quite broad, I think. I would love to study that, if nothing else.

C: Are you gonna do your doctorate?

R: Not at the moment. I'm gonna get burned out eventually, I'm sure. and then I'm gonna be like, "Oh great, I'm gonna go back to school, that was..." I don't know. I was one of those weird people who got back to my master's degree and everybody was like, "This is so hard!" I was like, "Just wait till you get to public school teaching then you'll know what it's like!" I don't know, it's funny to watch the kids who go from undergrad right into their masters, and then like the people who come back from teaching and everybody's like, "Did you know you had time to go to a coffee shop? Like, that's insane." You can definitely tell like the green and bright ones because there was like, "We could do this!" and you're like, "...good luck with that." Or like the people who, and I remember saying this as undergrad, they're like, "Well, my classroom management should be my music because if we're having fun and doing all this, I won't need classroom management", it's like, "Uh huh." Yeah, that's true, until it doesn't.

C: So, instrument repairs. How many things did you fix today?

R: Well, I fixed a couple of cases. Yesterday, man, yesterday would have been a really fun day to be here because I completely gutted a flute. So I took all the keys off, and one of the keys was so frozen to the post that it was like, I had to just sit there for a few minutes and grease it up. And then one of the sax players was like well, my saxophone is missing a screw. I was like, I don't have an extra screw, so... I spend probably a good hour week hour to two hours a week on just fixing instruments. Every month or so, I'll sit down with the

strobe tuner and like retune the ukuleles because I tune them kind of in class and I'll tune them to themselves but I won't necessarily tune them really to like A=440 and so I'll just need to reset. So instrument repairs and things are always a thing and it's tough because [music store] is an hour and 20 minutes away. And so, unless it's a major issue, it doesn't get sent over but oftentimes, the major issues are things like, cool, this pad fell out. I'm like, Well, I don't have any pads. And I could order one and then put it back in but, like, until I get like a shop, that's stocked, stuff like that's not gonna happen. So, I mean I have my little re-corking kit [pulls kit out of drawer]. So I've got cork and, and cement. I used to be more proactive about it, but if I were working in a shop, I would have all of this stuff stocked in a useful way and I wouldn't have to buy new cement, because it's like, this is six-year-old cement that doesn't work anymore, so there's all of that to kind of navigate as well. I'm hoping that eventually [larger nearby town] will have a music store that can hold down the fort, but it doesn't seem like anybody's really interested in making that happen.

C: Is it growing out here, population wise?

R: [larger nearby town] is getting bigger, [this town] is shrinking. [another nearby town] is staying relatively the same. When I started here, there were two sections of each grade level. And last year, two of them dropped and then another two of them dropped this year, and then we gained enough kindergarteners to have two sections of kindergarten again, but it's a little bit scary. We don't have enough teachers who are at retirement age to just go with attrition. So, let's make sure that we have enough jobs for teachers. They're also thinking of consolidating the schools as well. Like Wakefield's and Greenville's high schools are 10 miles apart, and kids already take classes from the two campuses anyway. That's another thing that's kind of problematic, is the amount of school choice that's out here. It's a little bit unnerving. Because kids can go from homeschooling to the Montessori, to the Waldorf school, to the public school to.... I mean there's lots and lots of options. And, I mean, I understand why a parent would want a school that more fits the need of their child. But it also makes me really frustrated because that's kind of our world right now. Like, "Cool, you people be over there and do your thing and my people are going to be over here and we're doing our thing" and it's just indicative of the times I feel. And so it makes me a little bit sad to think like, I'm teaching music in *the public schools*. All right, I've got all the kids who are like "their parents don't care about their education" or "their parents aren't involved", there's all the stigma about it. And there are people who are actively trying to negate that who actually would be like, "I *would* send my child to Montessori, if I didn't believe that the public school system should be the thing that we should all have, but I believe in the public system. I want them to go to the public school and I want the public school to be a good place to be" and, just, Thank you. Like, please, that's good, keep that up. It's hard to teach diversity in a non-diverse school, it's hard to teach love, care, and compassion to students who don't ever see it. And when there are other students around who do see those things, and they can like relate and kind of bring up the rest of the students, then you've got those types of things happening in a building. And I don't know how people in more downtrodden areas do it. I just don't know how it's done. Yeah, I guess people just have to stay positive and teach that over and over and over again, but I feel like I try and teach it every day and these kids aren't even all that bad, they're just sheltered.

C: I was amazed to see how few of them seemed to know anything about Navajo people. Especially in, like, this part of the country.

R: Totally. I mean, they haven't studied anything like that yet—

C: Sure, I don't think it's anyone's fault or something, but like seeing that, the lack of diversity just hit me I guess, like, whoa. It's really not very diverse here.

R: Right. Yeah, and I mean we don't even have a very large Latino population, it's like, maybe 20% of the school. So it's like 80% white, and most of them come from some sort of ranching family. I mean, some of them have parents that do other things, but it's mostly ranching or farming or something of that ilk, and so it really is a homogenous population in those terms. So it makes it interesting to try and teach them about perspective. Yesterday I had a pretty interesting conversation with the drama class because they were saying, you know we don't put gender specific roles in the play because we want to see like who's gonna end up with that part, and you saw the song between the prince or princess and the thief, that was the thing and they were like, well, what if it's two boys? I was like, Well what if it *is*? What do we do with that? And some of them, there was just a weird silence in the room, and then the girl who was playing the thief was like—well actually, no, I prepped it first. I started talking about normative structure. I was like, “You know some people see the world, and it looks like them. And that's great, they see the world and it's like, yeah, that makes sense to me, that's the way it goes, and then some people look at the world and it makes no sense because it's totally opposite of them.” And just to give them an example, I was like, “So what if, if it was normal for, or it was expected, that a man marry a man and a woman marry a woman?” And a lot of them just were like [shows uncomfortable posture], I was like, “It's already making you feel uncomfortable and I mentioned it for like two seconds!” and they were like, you know, okay. And I was like, “Well, what if that was normal? How would you feel?” And like one of the kids who I would expect to raise his voice up was like, “Well, that would feel really weird.” And I said, “Great, so now you understand what people who are in that position feel like, right? They feel like the world doesn't quite fit them.” And so then [student] was like “Well, couldn't we just kind of play it by ear and see how the auditions go and like who gets those roles and what they would like to envision for that thing?” and I was like, that's a good way to see it. And then she was like well, even if two girls get the role, we could have, if they didn't feel comfortable showing it as two girls, one of them could dress as a boy, I was like, okay, that's totally up to them and that's totally their decision that if that's the route we're going to go, and they were all like, Yeah, let's do that. And I thought, okay. Like, that's not, I'm not going to tell them “No, we need to do it this way,” but it did bring up that interesting conversation. I asked them, “I mean we could just go ahead and break a normative structure we could just say, No, we're not going to do it that way, we're going to show it this way.” And they all kind of sat there in silence and I said, “Do you think that would be problematic?” And they were like “Yeah!!” “Okay, so it's hard to break normative structures isn't it?” And they were like yeah! So, having those conversations with them is interesting. It's taught me a lot about how to approach and how to frame things. Yeah, because, my sister and her wife, like they have a lovely family and I was very open about that in [previous job/location]. I would go out of my way to correct students when they would say things like, especially using the word “gay” as a derogatory term. And I would be like, that's really offensive, that's very hurtful

and then I would tell them my situation and that got me into trouble a lot, but I've never gotten in trouble with this school in terms of having those conversations that are asking the kids to be more open-minded about it in that way to just think about it, like, well, let's reverse it and see what happens. And I don't know, I think having those positive conversations helps a lot with that idea of diversity that like, oh, there are other people who think differently than us and have different experiences than us and maybe we shouldn't judge them immediately maybe we should like listen to what they have to say...And I've, and I've certainly had run-ins with parents, not confrontational things, like certainly not run out of town. But like parents who were like, yeah, we just don't do that, so I'm not going to have my kid do that kind of thing. It's like, okay, yeah, that's fine.

But it does occasionally present issues. Like this is a very conservative community so a holiday concert is not a thing; it's a *Christmas* concert. And it's expected that we do Christmas music, and so there are some students who get kind of left out of that. And I've been able to put in a Hanukkah piece for our Jewish family that we have, and I've been able to position it as "winter" pieces for a family that's Jehovah's Witness, but they didn't even show up to the concert. Because I think they felt like, "I'm going to listen to a bunch of Christmas music and then my child is going to get to sing Jingle Bells", and then, like, what's the purpose of this? So there's like a level of, and this is a constant conversation is like, well, is this disenfranchising to do, or how do we be more inclusive about things? And so it's easier when your population is larger, I feel like if you have a larger Jewish population it's easier to do a Hanukkah or holiday concert or, I don't know, my thought on it was when I took this job was like, well I'll phase it out. And we just won't do a holiday concert around Christmas and then like people were just like, "I hear you're not doing Christmas concert this year!" like they were *concerned*, I was like okay. Sorry. We'll do it. I don't know, there's a level of thought that goes into that, like well what are we really instilling in children? And so what I've used it as a as an opportunity to really teach about the histories of these pieces and why they're important. And the ones that are more toward the like humanist side, like, *Good King Wenceslas* is always there, and it's because it's like, cool, we're going to sing about a person being nice to the poor, that's important! It's not that we don't sing songs about Jesus as well. There's plenty in the book but it's more about giving them a breadth of repertoire that is like, this is quintessential Christmas music, every single person who celebrates Christmas should probably know these songs. And if you're going to church you're learning more of the like, canonical church music, but if you're singing about Christmas for any sort of thing and in the United States, these are probably the tunes that you should know, and every now and again I'll throw in something that will be a little bit more interesting. We had a Filipino student my first year and I throw in a Tagalog Christmas Carol. And then we have a Latino population so I'm always throwing in *Feliz Navidad* and just trying to keep the bases covered. I don't know what it was that got us on that...

C: So, is there a pressure to build the band program, or maybe get a certain number of kids in or have a certain number of performances and go to festivals or all state, that kind of thing? Is there pressure to do that?

R: No. It's all internal, we drive ourselves to do that. I mean, if there's any pressure, it's felt from the idea that the kids are excited about sports and they turn out in droves to do those

things and the parents pay money to go to the sporting events and so there's this level of...it's a little bit like jealousy, I think. We're sitting here going, Why don't we have that? We wish we had that so it's like upping the bar for ourselves, so that we can have the status. And I think it's a pride thing. Overall, it's like, yeah, I want to have a strong program, and I want it to be present and I want people to be like, wow this is cool. And so, one of the things that we've done is really make the jazz bands strong, and we have with this Java and Jazz thin concert that we do, we have it over at this art center and it's a very small center but we pack the house and people are really excited about it and they come and they watch the high school jazz and the middle school jazz and then there's a community band that [co-teacher] and I also play in. And we play with the kids, and the audience has really attached themselves to that and they really enjoy listening to all of that kind of stuff and we've had people come up and say, "Wow, I never enjoy band concerts, but I really enjoyed this!" Like, and I know that kind of makes us sink a little bit, too, because we're like, oh, thanks, so the rest of them suck but.... but in a way, it's cool we're doing the right thing. We're moving it in a direction that is going to help us build it up. And so, it's not that we don't feel support from the admin or the building, like there is support, there it's just a different animal. It's not like support in a way that says, "Oh man, anything you need let us know!", it's like, "You're doing great!"Thanks. So, a lot of affirmations. And I'm not gonna bash on the affirmations, I'm very much appreciative of the way that compliments are given. It's a different way of thinking about it. And I think it also comes from the sheltered nature and people haven't seen other buildings in other districts where it's like, cool, the principal does *this* during a concert or the, staff do *this* during a musical, or you know. It's just a different level of understanding, and I think [co-teacher] and I are kind of trying to work that into the idea of the programming, like, well, this is what we're doing. We would love it if people did this and this and this. So I think the program is growing and I don't think it's any necessarily external drive or external pressure, but it certainly is internal pressure from looking at what's effective around us and going, I want that, too.

C: Do you get like observations by your supervisor or anything? Do you get valuable feedback? Music specific feedback?

R: No, I mean they, they give me affirmations and they tell me I'm doing great. But neither of them has any training in music education. The principal played trombone in high school, so he plays music and he appreciate music and his kids are great musicians. But I think they walk in and they look at what I'm doing, and as long as the kids are engaged and they feel like they're gleaning something from it, then I'm doing my job. Which again is like, it's nice for me in that way because I don't need that necessarily to feel driven. I don't need to have people on my coattails to make myself like a better musician, actually I need the opposite. I need to go to [state music education conference] where I get to watch master teachers for a day and when I sit in a session and it's not a master teacher I'm just like, okay, but like a watch a master teacher I'm like "Yeah, that's great! I want to go do *that*," and it's more of an inspiration rather than the, "Oh, you should be doing this, and you should be doing this," and that kind of feedback. So, honestly, I think that feeling of the *inspiration* to do, rather than the *push* to do, is something that is absolutely essential for teachers who don't get burned out. That internal drive *to find more things*, that comes from inspiration of others. So it's like, I need opportunities to go out and do these things, and [co-teacher] and I are

very fortunate that the district and school say, we have money for professional development and we're going to spend it on such-and-such thing, but we're kind of lucky because we get sent to a conference, and a lot of people in the core curriculums don't get sent anywhere. They get trainings, which is not PD, you know, so that's kind of been an interesting thing for us like looking at that and say, oh cool this is a really important opportunity. I'm glad that we're given this opportunity rather than saying, cool, we have to pay for [state music education conference] by ourselves and that's a pretty big expense to do all by ourselves, and so it's kind of nice to be like, cool will you pay for our conference? And we'll pick up the food and lodging and we'll call it a fair trade? And, when I come back, they do ask every now and then. This year they did ask "So, how'd it go?" I was like, "It was great!" and I was able to tell them all the things and I think it was like in one ear out the other, but what they glean from it was okay cool, this was a good investment.

C: Cool. I think it's really like all the questions I have, do you have anything you want to say or add?

R: I don't really feel like I need to add anything. Just for clarification, what is the exact thing you're looking at?

C: I'm looking at job satisfaction jobs so just looking at those different elements of that.

R: The thing that I can say is, [co-teacher] and I have a really tight knit program that we've built because of our work and our ability to communicate and our friendship and, we play in a band together, and so our program as we see it is really strong. In spite of things like apathy or ignorance or anything of those things that kind of come from the community, that isn't, I mean, again, it's like, cool we get all of these compliments, and the compliments are nice and then it's like, but how does that manifest itself in other ways of support? so that's tricky. Because that part of the job is very unsatisfactory. To be like, cool. That's not really all that great but then there are moments that come through where the job is very satisfactory in that, we'll get through to some kids, like [students in after-school drum club], they're goofballs and they don't really do well in the classroom, by themselves, but they do a great job sitting at the drum set and working towards something and really feeling that type of thing. So it's like, okay, that's a small way, or an occasional parent will do something, like a parent made that guitar thing on the wall, that's just a nice gesture of "here's something that shows we really appreciate you, we support what you do," and then you know you're making the impact. So the, I think, just in the way of like, What does support look like, when I, when I want to look at my impact. It's like the support that I'm given is a kind of a reflection of the impact that I'm making. If I'm making a big impact that, then the support kind of comes back. And I can see it's a cyclical thing, like, Cool I've made an impact on these students and now it's starting to come back to me in those kinds of ways. That kind of reflection has been really important for me because I came in, out of a master's degree, with all of these heady ideas and tried to put them right into use and really hit the hit the gas pedal and the kids didn't respond to it. And so I was starting to kind of lose that connection and that inspiration or whatever, and so having to rebuild that and see how I can inspire the students and see that cyclical nature of the support that's given based on my performance, I think that is a big aspect of how I feel about my job. Because, if I spend a week doing something that isn't effective, and I walk away from it and I'm like

“Okay, that's sucked, I hate my job,” Or I come back and am like, “That was a great lesson, I had a bunch of great lessons and the kids really loved music and they left feeling like, yeah music is a great place to be!” And so it's definitely up and down with that.

C: You kind of mentioned last time you moved here purposefully, like geographically here. I wonder, is there a critical mass of like how much you'll put up with to be able to stay here?

R: That's a good question. There certainly would be a critical mass, I'm imagining teaching without [co-teacher] here would be very difficult, because we kind of see eye-to-eye on a lot of things. A new teaching partner would be a different ballgame. The facilities are always kind of a thing. I would imagine when the kids totally stopped coming to music and they don't like it at all. If I go like, I wouldn't even put it at a month, if the kids come to my classroom and I can't reach anybody in a month. It's like, yep. I am resigning. That's gonna be the end of that because I have to have some sort of kids who I'm reaching. I do feel like I have no advanced students. I have a piano student who's quite good, and talented, but he broke his arm. So he hasn't come to lessons in like two months. But, I really don't have any advanced students like kids who show a really great promise of understanding music at a level that's internal. And the only ones that are moving up, are some of these kids in my jazz band who I can see like, okay, now you have figured out how to practice. Awesome. Let's see what you do in high school. Because they're about to go to high school, or eighth graders, but viewing it that way, I've noticed is kind of a negative thing to do because I am an elementary-middle school teacher so it's not like I'm going to see the results. It's going to take some time for me to see the fruits of that labor because of that. The kids who I left in [previous town/position], the oldest class are freshmen in college now. And so, I can now see them kind of moving up, like a former student who got accepted to Berkeley College in Boston and he's going to go and play trumpet there and I was like, that's great!, seeing something, but it was like so much of the interim of that was not me though so it was like, cool I started you playing trumpet, I had you play for two years, and now you're going off and doing that. But yeah, the idea that like the students are really succeeding I've noticed is like, that's the long term, that's the long game. Because you can't just see it otherwise, it's not something that happens in a year or five, it's something that happens in like a decade and then you start to see the kids really, really do something.

C: Do you feel like being “advanced” ...is it relative here to elsewhere?

R: I try not to. I really don't. I really, I mean, I have no delusions of concert violinist coming out of my school, it's not set up that way, but at the same time like there are kids in this [region] who have come out of just being around the musicians who really dedicate themselves to it, who are absolutely virtuosic. Actually, this is a tragic story unfortunately, but one of the kids who studied with [Paul] my bandleader, he was just a phenomenal drummer, and started when he was around, 10 or 11 and played all through high school, and this kid was really awesome. And he went out and started playing professionally and was like just one of those drummers where their timing is so perfect it's completely artful. Or you just watch them play the set and you're like everything you're doing is like art, you're not a drummer, you're a percussionist of like, *magnitude*. And, unfortunately, he developed this auto immune disease that killed his ability to play, he lost his ability in his hands and he killed himself because he couldn't handle it. And it was just absolutely tragic,

but I mean his story, minus the end of it, his story tells me that no, this isn't impossible. It's people who live in this [region] aren't sheltered enough to not become great musicians, and there's a lot of music that happens in [region], lots of good bands that come through and like [Paul] and his world music, he's constantly bringing in amazing musicians for the kids to see and they come into the schools and the kids get to see them and then they can attend the concerts that they want to and that to me is something that is sustaining, for sure.

C: Do you feel like that takes the place, maybe like teachers that do have advanced students that are kind of feeding their musicianship, like the community musicianship is sort of serving that for you?

R: Totally. And that's where I really see the students shine. That one on one time that they're like, they're working with musicians who are really, really strong. One of my students is a great piano player he has an incredible ear. And he just picked up the cello. We were just kind of playing and we were jamming along and I was playing the bass and he was playing the cello and he just got this grin on his face like, this is *fun*. And I'm like okay, you are going to do just fine. A few years down the road and you will still be a great, magnificent player and you're gonna make it happen. But it is those kind of more intimate moments, it's not the general classroom. The general classroom to me is a bit of damage control, honestly, for the kids don't experience music as much, for the kids have never experienced music as much in their outside lives and so it's like okay, how do I give them something that's meaningful? How do I how do I give them something that's a way to become musical? Because they're not going to become musical in my classroom alone. It's just not going to happen, but they are going to develop skills, hopefully, that open the door for that. And that's really what I want my classroom to be, is opening the door for them to be musical and excited about music. And if I can do that, that's all I could really ask for doing. That not that's certainly not saying that like, Oh, that's all my job is and they're never going to be musical, because obviously some of the kids are going to pick up and be like, Oh, I'm really interested in this Latin music, can you tell me more about the *clave*? but you know they have to have that initiative to want to play more stuff. Like [student] in the fifth-grade class, he was doing the advanced shaker. He's doing that and soon as I called him out, he stopped, but he'll pick up the ukulele and do these mariachi strums and he'll be like, like nobody's watching, nobody's watching. But those are the kids that get on my radar really quick. We were kind of talking about assessment and stuff like that, but those are the kids that end up on my radar, the ones who they do things that are idiomatic. They've been enculturated to something. And so they're taking that enculturation into my classroom and they're going, cool, how do I apply this? I know what this means, I've heard this, I've experienced this, like, I know how to apply it deeper, and then it's like, great, yeah. I know that he's going to do great and I shouldn't have called [student] out, I knew he would have would have done that. But I guess I was sitting there going, Oh, yeah, you've got it! Yeah, but, you know, always one of those learning situations, like how far can I push these kids before they just rebel against me?