

**RESOURCES FOR TEACHING ELEMENTARY GENERAL MUSIC
IN MICHIGAN RURAL PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

by

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine what resources are available to general music teachers in distant and remote rural classrooms in Michigan. The areas of resources that were surveyed in this study included Human Resources (staffing, professional development), Contextual Resources (scheduling, facilities) and Instructional Resources (materials and equipment, curriculum), based on the National Association for Music Educators' (NAfME) *Opportunity-to-Learn Standards*. Other data was gathered from teachers through open-ended questions that allowed teachers to describe the benefits, challenges, and greatest professional needs they experienced while teaching in a rural community. Specific research questions included: (a) What resources are available to teach elementary general music in rural public schools in the six areas of staffing and professional development; scheduling and facilities; and curriculum and materials and equipment? (b) How do the reported resources reflect the recommendations in the *Opportunity-to-Learn Standards*?

The participants were public school elementary general music teachers who work in distant and remote rural locations in the state of Michigan. They were selected through a random sample of the schools listed on the Michigan Department of Education website in the distant and remote rural school categories. Participants were invited to complete an online survey that asked them to self-evaluate the quantity and quality of Human, Contextual and Instructional Resources at their school.

Results from the survey were analyzed by category and revealed that while the data from this survey showed that more resources existed in rural schools than might be expected based on prior research, the types of resources (staffing, professional

development, scheduling, facilities, materials and equipment, and curriculum) were available to varying degrees between schools. Music teachers in rural areas in Michigan reported little to no music-specific professional development offered by their school districts. While most school districts do not offer professional development specific to music education, teachers in rural schools feel isolated from the music education community because of the lack of music professional development. They also reported lacking music technology that their students could use to reinforce music concepts or that enable students to create and perform music. Finally, music teachers reported that old materials and equipment, and outdated curriculum were losing their value as resources, and that they had no budget to replace those resources.

However, music teachers in rural areas also reported having abundant resources in their communities. The ability to know the students, their families, and the community members was reported as a valuable human resource and it ties in to the values of place-based theory—the theory that teachers thrive in communities that they connect with, and that their music programs thrive as well.

While music teachers in all geographical locations lack various resources, it is important that we continue to study rural music education to continue to understand the challenges that arise from the lack of resources.

Chapter I

Introduction

Music programs in all geographical areas—urban, suburban, and rural—face challenges in delivering the highest quality of education to their students. However, these challenges are compounded when a state does not mandate music in the elementary, middle, or high school curriculum. As of 2015, Alaska, Colorado, District of Columbia, Hawaii, and Michigan had no mandate for instruction in elementary music (Arts Education Partnership, 2015), or in any other arts program. Michigan Youth Arts (2012) surveyed public, private and charter schools in Michigan. From that survey, they reported that Michigan spends on average \$1.67 per pupil on elementary arts education, which breaks down to less than a penny per school day per student. As of 2011, many schools in Michigan did not offer arts programs, which is defined in this study as the school offering at least one course in music, art, theater, or dance. Study findings indicate that of the 460,066 students represented in the study (or about 30% of the students in the state of Michigan), 108,000 of those students receive no arts education (music, art, theater, dance) during the school day (Michigan Youth Arts, 2012). If these numbers are representative of the entire state, about 23% of all students in Michigan receive no arts education during their time in primary or secondary schools. While this study reported that a majority of the schools surveyed that provide arts programs offer opportunities to participate in music classes taught by a qualified music teacher, it is important to note that the study did not stratify findings by geographical location, so it is impossible to know if schools in rural areas in Michigan match the data provided by the survey.

The purpose of my study is to describe the resources that are available for elementary general music education in selected rural public schools in the state of Michigan. This topic of elementary rural music education is of personal interest to me because I taught elementary general music for three years in a rural community in New Mexico. As I read the results of research studies on rural music programs (Bates, 2011, 2013; Isbell, 2005; Malhoit, 2005; Spring, 2011; Wilcox, 2005), I found them to be focused on the negative aspects of teaching in a rural area—reporting little on the strengths of the community or benefits of working in a rural school. I truly enjoyed teaching music at my school, and it is disappointing to find that research studies do not reflect the benefits I observed while teaching in a rural community. Therefore, I was interested in studying the status of rural general music education in the state of Michigan.

The definition of a rural school in research literature has not been clearly defined. In 2015, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) released a survey about public school districts during the 2013-2014 school year. In this study, rural school districts are defined in three categories: Fringe Rural areas are less than five miles away from an urban center; Distant Rural areas are more than five but less than twenty-five miles away from an urban center; and Remote Rural areas are more than twenty-five miles away from an urban center (Glander, 2015). These definitions were based on the NCES's "new locale code system that is based on the urbanity of the school location" and were released in 2006 (Glander, 2015, p. A-6). However, these definitions of rural schools have not been used in prior research (Bates, 2011, 2013; Isbell, 2005; Malhoit, 2005; Spring, 2011; Wilcox, 2005). Instead, researchers define schools under the broad term "rural," without detail about the type of rural school studied.

Although the National Association for Music Education (NAfME) has not yet successfully influenced the federal government to mandate music education as a part of school curricula in every state, the organization has published documents listing the resources that would provide opportunities to enable students' growth and development. The first of these documents was the *Opportunity-to-Learn Standards for Music Instruction: Grades PreK-12* published by the Music Educators National Conference (MENC) in 1994. This document outlined the materials all music teachers needed in order to have a successful music program in four categories: curriculum and scheduling, staffing, materials and equipment, and facilities (MENC, 1994). Each of these four categories had subsections describing the ideal resources for each music classroom. While this was not intended to be a "wish list" for teachers, it was to be a resource for music teachers and administrators to make informed decisions about where to invest time and money into the music program (MENC, 2014).

In 2014, the National Coalition for Core Arts Standards declared a continued need to support music in all schools, and to allow all students to develop as musicians because their research indicated that regular interaction with the arts allows children to become happier and healthier adults (National Core Arts Standards, 2014). In 2015, the National Association for Music Education (NAfME, formerly MENC) published a second edition of the *Opportunity-to-Learn Standards*, updating them for the new levels of technology within the classroom (see Appendix A for complete *Opportunity-to-Learn Standards* for Grades PK-2 General Music, and Grades 3-5 General Music). While the four categories of standards remained the same (curriculum and scheduling, staffing, materials and equipment, and facilities) the new standards had two levels of music resources, "Basic,"

and “Quality” (NAfME, 2015, p. 4). Once again, the four categories of resources and the additional two levels were not to be interpreted as a wish list for teachers, but rather as a means of meaningful reflection on the standards that are provided for students in music classes (NAfME, 2015, p. 1).

These standards for resources recommended by NAfME have not been reflected in current music education research on rural schools. Current research studies on resources in music education have focused on the resources that rural schools lack, among which are current instructional supplies; access to technology; quality of school facilities; adequate transportation for students; access to the arts; language, culture, and music (Bates, 2011, 2013; Isbell, 2005; Malhoit, 2005; Spring, 2011; Wilcox, 2005). It is important to note that these results are wide ranging and context-specific, depending upon what type of rural community (fringe, distant, or remote) has been studied. For example, one music teacher in a rural community might work with all music students, seventh grade and above, while teaching fifth and sixth grade band, and offering private lessons (Wilcox, 2005). Other music teachers in rural schools have instructional responsibility for all grade levels, K-12 and are expected to be closely engaged in community events (Hunt, 2009). In other rural communities, music teachers are required to teach subjects such as math or language arts in addition to teaching music, and may be required to purchase the music supplies needed for the classroom out of pocket (Spring, 2011).

While some research articles identify the small number of students enrolled in music classes, out-of-date resources, and geographical isolation as the major challenges faced by music teachers in rural communities (Bates, 2011, 2013; Isbell, 2005), others

focus on the lack of funding provided by “lower property values, smaller schools, and the realities associated with the economies of scale” (Johnson, 2004, p. 126). Prest (2013) states that in addition to the challenges mentioned above, rural music teachers face almost nonexistent professional development and lack other basic resources their suburban and urban counterparts enjoy, such as “music stores, opera company and symphony orchestra educational programs, open air festivals, free concerts, live music role models who play a variety of genres, and musician/educators who can be hired as clinicians” (p. 5).

While the lack of resources and the challenges that arise from them have been documented, research focused on the resources that create opportunities in rural areas does not exist to show opportunities that might encourage teachers to stay and work in rural schools (DeYoung, 1987). Another challenge with the current body of literature is the age of the research that has been completed to date (Prest, 2016). Of those publications that have been completed in the last ten years, many are studies of rural music education in other countries, such as Prest’s (2013) and Spring’s (2013) studies of rural Canada, and the studies of Garvis (2011) and Heinrich (2012) in rural Australia. In the United States, studies that focus on rural music education do not classify what type of rural school (fringe, distant, remote) is being observed, and often only classify the challenges that rural music teachers face, and say very little about the opportunities present in a rural community (Bates, 2011, 2013; Isbell, 2005; Malhoit, 2005; Spring, 2011; Wilcox, 2005).

However, research on rural music education is regaining interest. The August issue of *Action, Criticism, and Theory for Music Education* (2016), a journal published by the Mayday Group, focused on research in rural music education. While some of the

articles were republished from their author's previous works, as Prest, the editor of this issue, stated:

...the rural has been largely absent in music education discourse.

Although an electronic search yields some articles on the topic (see the limited number of rural music education references in this issue's articles), a comprehensive body of scholarship on rural issues in music education does not yet exist. In fact, to my knowledge, this special issue on rural music education scholarship and research is the first of its kind, published by an international peer-reviewed music education journal. (Prest, 2016, p. 4)

It is truly remarkable that the first journal issue devoted to rural music education did not appear until 2016. In her Editorial Introduction, Prest highlights how scant the research on resources in rural music programs has been up to this point.

This is not the first time that rural music education has been at the forefront of issues addressed by the research community. In the 1940s, Margaret Hood had a vision of what rural music education could look like, and devoted herself to creating curriculum that could be taught in rural music classrooms through radio broadcasts. Morgan (1951, 1955) offered chapters on how to approach music education in small rural schools. This leads me to believe that the question of resources in rural music education is one that the profession has considered before, without a successful solution. Perhaps it was the shift to an "urbanormative" view of education (Bates, 2016; Prest, 2016), perhaps it was the rapid increase in urban and suburban schools, but for whatever reason, as a music

community we have frequently observed a lack of resources in rural schools in the past, yet failed to find solutions that have solved the challenges from such a lack of resources.

This study will add to the growing research on rural music programs. It is an important study because rural schools are a neglected area of research (Prest, 2016), because the challenges in resources that are present in rural schools today have been observed in the past (Morgan, 1951, 1955), because the current solutions to resource challenges are “urbanormative”—meaning they do not include voices in rural areas (Bates, 2016; Prest, 2016), and because, as far as I have read, this is the first quantitative study on resources in rural general music programs.

Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to describe the resources that are available for elementary general music education in selected rural public schools in the state of Michigan. Specific research questions include: (a) What resources are available to teach elementary general music in rural public schools in the six areas of staffing and professional development; scheduling and facilities; and curriculum and materials and equipment? (b) How do the reported resources reflect the recommendations in the *Opportunity-to-Learn Standards* (NAfME, 2015)?

Definitions

Opportunity-to-Learn Standards—a set of standards for resources for music in K-12 schools, published by NAfME in 2015. These resources include staffing and professional development; scheduling and facilities; and, materials and equipment and curriculum. This document entitled two categories for resources in schools, “basic” and “quality.”

Challenges – a lack of the resources that are needed to teach music in the elementary classroom. There may be challenges associated with a lack of resources in of staffing, professional development, scheduling, facilities, materials and equipment, and curriculum at any given time in a school.

Rural School Categories (National Center for Education Statistics, 2015)

Fringe Rural Schools – schools that are less than five miles away from an urban center.

Distant Rural Schools – schools that are more than five but less than twenty-five miles away from an urban center.

Remote Rural Schools – schools that are more than twenty-five miles away from an urban center.

Resources – For the purposes of this study, resources are defined as Human Resources (staffing and professional development), Contextual Resources (scheduling and facilities) and Instructional Resources (materials and equipment and curriculum). These categories are based on the 2015 NAFME *Opportunity-to-Learn Standards* (NAFME, 2015).

Conclusion

Schools in all geographical locations face different challenges due to different sets of resources allotted to them. The challenges that arise in rural schools are well documented, however, there is a dearth of literature that documents the resources that are available to teachers and students in rural music programs. In Chapter 2, I will review literature on rural schools and rural music education, and in Chapter 3 I will describe the methodology used to survey music teachers about available resources for teaching music

in public elementary schools in the state of Michigan. In Chapter 4, I will present findings. In Chapter 5, I will describe how the data reflects the *Opportunity-to-Learn Standards* and conclude this study by discussing my conclusions and further implications for the music education. While there will never be one simple solution for resolving deep problems of educational inequity of resources in rural schools, compared to non-rural schools, having a comprehensive description of music education resources representative of rural schools in one state will reveal trends and identify best practices for supporting music students and their teachers in rural schools. This potentially will allow the voices of rural music educators to be included while writing curriculum for general music classrooms.

CHAPTER II

Literature Review

Overview

This literature review will identify and describe studies focused on resources in rural schools. The review is divided into three sections based on the categories of resources that are included in the survey. These are Human Resources (staffing and professional development), Contextual Resources (scheduling) and Instructional Resources (materials and equipment and curriculum). There were no studies that were focused on facilities (classroom environment), so that section of Contextual Resources is not present in this literature review.

Human Resources

Staffing

Hunt (2009) conducted a study to understand the “perspectives of key stake holders in rural and urban music programs” (p. 35). The purpose was to discern what was similar and different between rural and urban communities, and how experiences in teaching music might be similar or different. Hunt also wanted to explore how stake-holders viewed the music programs in their communities.

The participants were randomly selected from four different school districts in the Midwest, using two rural districts and two urban districts for contrast. Districts were selected based on their reported support of music education, and the population in the districts. The research design involved interviewing the participants and then analyzing the transcripts to look for trends. After interviewing the participants, Hunt sent them copies of their interview transcript so they could clarify or offer editorial suggestions. Hunt found that participants believed that contextual factors influenced the success of a music program. Some of these factors were

defining the music teacher's role in the community, teacher education (training from a collegiate level), and an understanding of advantages and challenges in a rural school. She recommended that readers discern what could be useful to the success of their music programs, and consider how they could use the resources available in the schools to be more successful in their communities.

The purpose of Garvis' (2011) study was to describe the challenges of a new music teacher in rural Queensland, Australia. The new music teacher was the main advocate for arts education in the school, and Garvis wanted to discover how self-efficacy in the arts increased the teacher's self-motivation and success. This study was needed because there were few studies completed in Australia about the impact of self-efficacy on a teacher's success in rural schools.

The participant in the study was a female arts teacher named Tabettha who taught in a small rural school in northeastern Australia. The research design used a three 90-minute interview series focused on discussing Tabettha's self-efficacy for the arts through a variety of media. Garvis discovered that even though Tabettha was hired to teach the arts, she didn't believe that she was doing a good job because of the lack of resources and lack of successful instructional models to draw upon. However, Garvis determined that Tabettha had a lot of support in the community because they saw her doing her best for the students and the community. Garvis suggested further research into self-efficacy in order to further understand its impact on new rural teachers.

Heinrich (2012) researched why schools in rural Australia did not offer classroom music, citing potential reasons as lack of resources present in the schools and a prevalent idea that music education was declining in Australian schools. This study was necessary because of the

professional concern in music education, specifically in rural education, that the number of successful music programs were decreasing in number.

The participants were school principals in the five non-metropolitan regions in the state of Victoria. The study did not state how many people were contacted to take the survey or how many surveys were returned. Participants were sent a ten-question survey with both quantitative and qualitative questions. Heinrich found that music education was not equitable for students in the Victorian schools surveyed. This problem was in part based on the fact that there were not enough qualified music teachers to teach in the rural schools, possibly because universities were not emphasizing rural music education in their programs. Heinrich suggested that further research should be completed to compare schools in metropolitan areas with schools in rural areas.

Smith (2014) conducted research on the challenges and advantages of teaching in music in rural schools, in order to determine general characteristics of music education programs in rural communities and to understand how the rural community impacts the music educator's success. Smith stated that her research was needed because of the lack of research conducted in rural music education classrooms.

The participants in this study were two general music education teachers from two rural schools. Smith conducted individual interviews with each participant, and observed in the school setting. From her transcripts, Smith concluded that these two teachers were focused on their typical workday (characteristics of the job), the context of teaching in a rural school and community (and the unique problems that arise), and the importance of support in rural music teaching positions. She suggested that future rural music teachers receive more training in

specific pedagogy (such as Dalcroze or Kodály) and that they learn about the community that supports the music program.

Most recently, VanDeusen (2016) studied the way music programs are valued by a rural community, and how the community supports music in the schools. In order to understand the value of the music program in a rural community, VanDeusen ran a case-study in one rural community in the Midwest, and interviewed various stake holders in the music program (administration, parents, students, and music teachers). Through this study, VanDeusen determined that place-based education (where teachers are deeply connected to the community) allowed for “the presence of a music program tradition within the greater community,” and “the music teacher’s interest in and openness to the community” (VanDeusen, 2016, p. 9).

VanDeusen concluded that the ability to connect with a rural community can be difficult if the teacher is not originally from the community, but the benefits that come from the connection are significant.

The challenge of hiring qualified music teachers is universal to all school districts in all geographic areas. Rural areas might have a different challenge, because hiring a music teacher means hiring a person who must potentially fit in with the community and find or make curriculum to fit specific needs.

Professional Development

Barrett, Cowen, Toma and Troske (2015) studied the effectiveness of a professional development program called the Appalachian Math and Science Partnership in Kentucky. The Appalachian Math and Science Partnership program aims were to remove the achievement gap between rural and non-rural schools through professional development and by observing the gains of students in classrooms of teachers who were involved with the Partnership, compared to

the gains of students in other classrooms. The authors stated that this study was needed because many government mandates were made without considering the uniqueness of rural school districts. In order to discover if this program was successful, they compared the Partnership program to other rural school districts that were not involved.

The participants were employees of school districts in the state of Kentucky. All school districts were invited to provide data on their classrooms. The researchers did not state how many districts were contacted, but ten school districts responded. Unfortunately, the districts gave data from different years of the program, so a side-by-side comparison could not be made. However, the researchers gathered information about which of the teachers in the school districts were participants in the Appalachian Math and Science Partnership. They discovered that there were marked differences between students who had a teacher in the Partnership and those who did not; students who had a teacher in the Partnership scored higher than those in the latter group. The authors concluded that more research should be carried out on the impact of opportunities for intense professional development on the effectiveness of rural teachers in classrooms.

Hunt-Barron, Tracey, Howell and Kaminski (2015) examined how online connections through social media could help teachers receive professional development in rural districts. The purpose of the study was to examine the difficulties of providing professional development for teachers in rural districts that were spread over a wide area. The authors stated that this study was needed because it was challenging for rural school districts to run professional development programs for teachers, and they wanted to study if professional development in the context of an online platform would be more useful to teachers in rural areas.

The participants in the study were teachers from school districts in rural South Carolina. Thirty-six school teachers from three rural districts were asked to participate in two years of professional development. The researchers noted the difficulties that teachers would have in completing this professional development program because of the distance they would have to travel in order to participate, so they decided to observe interactions on blogs and other social media to see if it was comparable to in-person professional development. This was a case study with a concurrent mixed-model design, with data collected from two surveys in the districts as well as from the communications and blogs written by the teachers to each other. The authors found that there was a lot of variability in the number of blog posts created by teachers, some posting many times and others not at all, which was possibly due to the variability of technology in the schools. It was unclear if the blogs were a successful way to replace professional development. The authors suggested that future research should seek to uncover more successful ways to include technology in professional development.

These studies were based on the idea that professional development specific to an educational field can be difficult to find in rural communities. In music education, many school districts seem to rely on state wide conferences to provide teachers with relevant professional development.

Contextual Resources

Scheduling

Hanke (2004) examined a potential time gap between the standards music teachers in Kansas were required to meet, and the amount of time they spent with each class of students. This relationship between the time required to successfully meet the standards of a subject, and the time allotted to music in the schedule, had not been researched prior to this study. Hanke

used a questionnaire to survey seventy-six music teachers in rural Kansas, in addition to a set of seven interviews from “domain experts” (p. 23); three of the interviews were with rural Kansas high school teachers, and the remaining four were with university professors teaching in the state of Kansas. From her data, Hanke determined that there was a time gap between expectations set by standards and time allotted to music class. Hanke suggested that the curriculum in Kansas should be reevaluated to fit into the current time schedule, or that music educators should be given more instructional time.

McCracken and Miller (1988), in their study of roles that secondary teachers in rural schools carry, and the community perspective of those teachers, also discuss the challenges of scheduling. While they focus their study on curriculum (see Curriculum section for full description of study), they also recognized that music teachers do not have enough time to schedule what they need to teach their students. While difficulties in scheduling certainly occur in other geographical locations, it would be useful to determine if teachers in rural areas face additional challenges in scheduling because they also face challenges in staffing, where a teacher is sometimes expected to teach multiple subjects to multiple levels or teach music at multiple schools.

Instructional Resources

Materials and Equipment

Barker and Hall (1994) surveyed rural schools to determine how many of them use technology as a way to supplement their curriculum. This study was needed because most data on the use of technology in rural areas had been undocumented, or recorded in local documents. The target population for this study was located in schools that housed K-12 programs in one building, and enrolled 300 or fewer students; the majority of these schools were located in rural

areas. Barker and Hall received a mailing list from Market Data Retrieval Inc. of 1,862 schools that fit their characteristics. After eliminating the alternative schools, there were 967 public schools, of which 311 schools were randomly selected and sent a questionnaire. They received 130 responses from 32 different states.

The surveys reported that about half of the schools were using technology for long distance learning. Of the schools using technology for long distance learning, 73.8% of them were using televised satellite programs as a part of their curriculum and 41.5% were using cable televisions. The technologies available for schools varied greatly; 44.6% had televisions, 41.5% had computers, and about 31.5% had video recording devices. The surveys also reported that while 78.8% of the principals felt that long distance learning was an important part of the curriculum, the long distance learning programs were almost solely used in secondary grades. The researchers concluded that many small schools use technology as a part of their curriculum, and speculate that budget bars the other schools from using this technology as well, as the equipment is expensive to purchase.

Prest (2013) outlined the resources that were supposedly available to music educators in all communities in the province of British Columbia, Canada, and then explained how those resources were either diminished or not available in rural communities. The purpose of Prest's study was to encourage discussion on how to prepare music teachers planning to teach in rural communities in order to help them overcome challenges they might encounter. The author stated that this study was needed because the challenges of teaching in rural schools have often been overlooked or understated in collegiate music education programs, which meant that music teachers went into rural communities without the knowledge or resources to be successful.

The primary participant in the study was Prest herself. She used her own observations of rural music education from over 16 years of teaching music in a rural community. The rest of the participants were music teachers Prest spoke to over that 16-year period of teaching. It was not stated if Prest took notes from those conversations, or if she was using her memory to recall the conversations. The research design was to outline five assumptions about the resources that music teachers had in rural communities, and then to explain why that resource was not present or practical, based on Prest's personal experience. She discovered that music teachers in rural communities who were able to adopt a pragmatic philosophy were able to use the resources available to them successfully. She recommended that collegiate music education programs offer strategies to music teachers to help them be successful teaching in rural settings.

Prest articulates the challenges of materials and equipment well when she states that music teachers in rural communities do not have the resources they were led to expect by their college preparation programs. However, no research study to date has quantified what resources a music teacher in a rural community could expect to have available to support their work in the school and community.

Curriculum

McCracken and Miller (1988) studied secondary teachers in rural schools, specifically how the teachers saw their roles in the school communities and how the community viewed the teachers. These authors reported that no prior studies explored the community's expectations of rural school teachers, or what rural teachers saw as helping or hindering their success in the school and community.

The participants in the study were selected from classroom teachers of four rural high schools in Ohio. The high schools were chosen for certain characteristics: they were located

outside of a metropolitan area in a small community (less than 40,000 people), had agricultural classes offered in high school, and had less than 500 students enrolled. The high schools were randomly selected from stratified groups with those characteristics. Six teachers were randomly selected within each high school and were interviewed during their free class period. McCracken and Miller found that the teachers interviewed were teaching a variety of classes and were involved in the community as coaches or in other prominent community leadership positions. However, teachers were hindered by the lack of resources, specifically outdated teaching resources (such as curriculum), difficulties in scheduling, and the distance students had to travel to get to school. McCracken and Miller recommended that teachers should have more training in understanding rural communities, their roles in the community, and community expectations of rural teachers before entering a classroom in a rural community.

Brook (2011) profiled two strong rural music education programs in rural Bella Coola, British Columbia and Winkler, Manitoba, Canada to understand how the music program created a community for the students, teachers, and other stakeholders. The author was motivated to conduct this study because she believed that focused research would help support the “music programs” (Brook, 2011, p. 4) in rural schools.

In this study, Brook selected two rural music educators based on their reputation for excellence in rural music education and traveled to each school to interview the music teacher, the principal, and the students, as well as to provide questionnaires to members of the community. In each community, Brook discovered that the music program was an important source of pride. The author discussed how various community members supported the music program through teaching traditional First Nations music, when the music teacher lacked that ability; and how large numbers of people in the two communities attended school music

concerts. Brook suggested that future music teachers in rural areas should learn how to include non-Western music in their programs, and that future research should examine other types of community resources available for teaching in rural schools.

These two studies indicate that the curriculum offered to student teachers in rural areas is outdated and potentially does not reflect the diversity of the school community that a rural teacher instructs.

Synthesis

The studies described here show that there are discrepancies between the resources of teachers in rural schools when compared to urban and suburban schools, and that these differences are affecting the quality of education received by students attending rural schools. The *Opportunity-to-Learn Standards* were written to supply teachers with ideas for resources for their classrooms. However, from the studies described above, schools in rural communities do not have the same ability to obtain the resources outlined. In my study of rural schools in Michigan, I will collect data to determine resources in these areas of curriculum and professional development, scheduling and facilities, and materials and equipment and curriculum are available. In Chapter 3, I will explain the methodology I used to create my survey, and distribute it. In Chapter 4, I will describe the data that was collected and how it reflects the *Opportunity-to-Learn Standards* (NAfME, 2015), and finally in Chapter 5, I will discuss the how the results of the survey compare to the literature in this chapter, and reflect on the future of research in rural music education.

CHAPTER III

Methodology

Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to describe the resources that are present in selected rural general music classrooms in public schools in the state of Michigan. Specific research questions include: (a) What resources are available to teach elementary school music in rural public schools in the areas of staffing and professional development; scheduling and facilities; and curriculum and materials and equipment? (b) How do the reported resources reflect the recommendations in the *Opportunity-to-Learn Standards* (NAfME, 2015)?

Research Methodology

I used a survey methodology for this research project. Gathering data through a survey allows the researcher to identify trends in a large population through administering a questionnaire to a smaller sample and categorizing the trends in their responses (Creswell, 2005). Conducting research through a survey provides quantitative data about the opinions of a population through analysis of a smaller subsection of the population (Creswell, 2014). In the context of this study, a survey is the most effective tool to sample the population of rural music educators in Michigan, and to determine trends in resources across the state.

Participants and Sample Selection

In order to select participants, I created a list of rural schools from the Michigan Department of Education website. To access the information, I first spoke to representatives in the Michigan Department of Education, who referred me to the list of public schools at the Detailed Entity Search online– <https://cepi.state.mi.us/eem/EntitySearchDetailed.aspx>. The first list I made included all rural school locals (i.e., fringe, distant, and remote). Then I created three

lists, one for each rural school category – fringe rural, distant rural, and remote rural. Using these lists of schools as a foundation, I identified elementary schools by eliminating all middle schools and high schools, and I marked the schools that were not clearly labeled by educational level. This left 332 schools in the fringe rural school list, 371 schools in the distant rural school list, and 153 schools in the remote rural school list.

Using the online sample size calculator Raosoft (<http://www.raosoft.com/samplesize.html>), I determined that I would need 179 responses from the fringe rural schools, 190 responses from the distant rural schools, and 110 responses from the remote rural schools with a 5% margin of error, a 95% confidence level, and an estimated response level of 50%. This would give a total of 483 music teachers to survey. However, I decided to focus only on distant rural and remote rural schools, and not include the fringe rural category. The decision was made because a closer examination of the schools in the fringe rural category revealed schools within locations such as Ann Arbor, and Jackson, which are high population areas with different resources than more distant or remote rural schools. The elimination of fringe rural schools reduced the number of schools to survey to 304.

As I began to create my list of schools to survey, I realized that the list that I received from the Michigan Department of Education contained many duplicate entries (where music teachers were listed multiple times due to teaching in multiple schools within the same school district, as well as duplicate entries where an individual school and a school district were listed as separate entities rather than having one or the other). In order to create a list that I could draw a random sample from without the risk of selecting the same music teacher several times, I had to create a unique entry list where each music teacher was represented only once. This reduced the number of schools on the distant list to 170, and the number of schools on the remote list to

65. Using Raosoft again, I determined that I would need to survey 119 distant schools, and 56 remote rural schools.

In order to select the 119 schools from the distant rural schools, and 56 schools from the remote rural schools, I created a random sample from the lists. Each school was assigned a number, and I then used a random number generator to randomly order the numbers. The first 119 and 56 school numbers that were chosen from the respective distant and remote lists were used. As each school's number was selected, I searched for the school online to ensure that it is a public school with an elementary program (K-5, K-8, or K-12). If a school did not fit those criteria, the next school on the list took its place until I reached the desired numbers of 119 for fringe rural schools and 56 for remote rural schools. If a school did not list a music teacher's email online, I called the school that had been selected to ask for the music teacher's email. If a school did not have a music program, they were still included in my data set, as this was an important data point for understanding the full picture of rural music education in Michigan. If I did not reach anyone at the school, and left a message at the front desk, I notated that I left a message in my list of schools, but I did not use it as one of my data points. Instead, I replaced it with the next school on my randomly generated number list. If a school responded to my voice message and returned my call, I would record the information given to me, and return that school to the list as one of my data points.

Development of Survey Instrument

In order to better understand the resources available in rural elementary school general music classrooms I developed a survey and administered it to music educators in Michigan teaching in rural distant, and rural remote schools. This design allowed me to study the overarching trends of rural music education in elementary classrooms, by looking at a sample of

the whole population. Questions were developed from a list of resources determined by NAFME in 2015, based on the goal that every student in the United States will have access to the resources needed to achieve “basic” and “quality” levels of music literacy (NAfME, 2015). To create questions for the survey, I studied the “basic” and the “quality” *Opportunity-to-Learn Standards* for Pre-K to second grade general music, and for third- to fifth-grade general music, and outlined the resources stated in each category. I then combined the resources from the two lists into one set of questions that would allow a teacher to answer if they had the resource in question or not.

The survey was divided into three parts (see Appendix C). Part 1 asked the teachers how many years they had taught K-12 music in total, how many years they have taught music at their current school, how many schools they teach in, what grades they are teaching in the current year, when ensembles meet, how many students teach, the average general music class size, how often music class meets, the length of each music class, the amount of daily preparation time, if they teach students with special needs, if they’re a part of an IEP planning team, and if they teach students who are English Language Learners. This covered the Staffing and Scheduling sections of resources from the *Opportunity-to-Learn Standards* (NAfME, 2015).

Part 2 of the survey was divided into four subcategories: facilities, materials and equipment, curriculum, and professional. In the Facilities section, teachers were asked about their classroom resources – if they have their own classroom, if the classroom they teach in has space for movement and creative activities, if they have storage space for instruments, if there is space for a computer, if the computer is connected to the internet, and if they have access to a high-quality performance venue at least once a year.

In the Materials and Equipment section, teachers were asked about the musical instruments (equipment) in their program, and the various technology, books, and other materials they have available in their music program. In the Curriculum section, teachers were asked how often their curriculum allows students chances of singing, playing instruments, listening to music, improvising, composing music, moving to music, creating music and connecting music to history and culture, and if their curriculum was provided by the district. In the Professional Development section, teachers were asked about how often various forms of Professional Development were offered by their district. The teachers were asked about in-person and online Professional Development opportunities for general music, general education, and music technology.

Part 3 of the survey asked teachers about their familiarity with the *Opportunity-to-Learn Standards*, and if they are supported by various community members. I also included three open-ended questions that asked teachers to describe the benefits and challenges to teaching in a rural community, and then to describe their greatest professional need.

The survey was created and administered through Qualtrics software.

Procedures

Validity

Survey Validity

In order to ensure that the survey was valid, it underwent a pre-testing. I gave the survey to my thesis committee members to determine if the questions that I was asking were clear and answerable. I then distributed the survey to a small group of teachers for a pilot test, which also helped to determine the clarity of the questions.

Sampling Error

There are challenges in conducting a survey. It is possible not to receive a statistically representative number of responses, or for answers in a survey to reflect inaccurately a population's viewpoints, either through poorly worded or confusing questions. This study aimed to avoid these challenges through careful development of the survey and selection of the sample. While it is possible for a survey to have skewed results, for there to be a statistical outlier, or for the trends found in a survey not to represent the whole population, this does not appear to have happened in this survey as the data from the distant and remote populations were strongly correlated. It is also possible to receive an inadequate number of surveys back from the participants to determine any trends, and it is possible that the respondents have polarized views on various topics, which would skew the results. In order to minimize sampling error, the schools were randomly selected from distant and remote rural communities across Michigan.

Pilot Test of Instrument

The pilot of this study determined the amount of time it took to complete the survey, the efficiency of the interface, and the reliability of the questionnaire.

The Pilot Study was conducted from February 24-March 3, 2017. Seven elementary music teachers from a metropolitan area in Michigan and one doctoral student from a local university who was a former elementary general music teacher were invited to respond to the survey. They were given a week to complete the survey. They were instructed to answer all of the questions as if they pertained to their current or most recent teaching situation, instead of a rural community. They were also asked to record how long the survey took them to complete, if they had any concerns about any of the questions, and if they would include additional questions in the survey. The average time it took the participants to take the survey was 30 minutes. If the

teachers reported confusion surrounding certain questions, those questions were edited based on their suggestions.

Survey Timeline

For this survey I emailed randomly selected elementary music teachers in distant and remote rural communities in Michigan. The list of rural districts was obtained through the Michigan Department of Education. Contact information for the music teachers was available through their school districts, either through the school website or by calling the school's office. I looked up the information online, or called the school, rather than going through a listserv because many times national or state lists of schools do not reflect the most current information on rural educators, but the websites or school secretary usually have up to date contact information on the school's music staff.

After receiving approval from Health Sciences and Behavioral Sciences Institutional Review Board for this survey, the participants received the survey through a link in an email message on March 10, 2017. One week later I sent another email message with a request to complete the survey if teachers had not yet done so, and another link to the survey (see Appendix B). Four days later I sent out a final reminder email to complete their survey which again included the link to their survey. On March 24, the survey closed. However, after reviewing the data and realizing that I was close to having a 30% response rate, I reopened the survey on March 28. Teachers received one final email asking for their participation, and I closed the survey on April 5. Twenty-nine teachers from the distant rural areas and thirteen teachers from the remote rural areas responded to the survey. This survey did not require a response to all of the questions, so some questions had fewer responses than others. I sent the respondents a thank you note for participation in the study after the survey was closed.

Limitations of Current Study

The survey responses represent a relatively small fraction of rural schools in the state of Michigan. From the Distant Rural category, 36 teachers out of 118 (30 %) completed my survey, and from the Remote Rural category 13 out of 55 (23%) responded. The combined response rate to the survey was 28%. A higher response rate would make the findings more reliable and their implications more generalizable.

The findings of this survey also represent teachers in only one state of the fifty in the United States. While the trends reported in this data might hold true across the state of Michigan, it would not be possible to make a statement about the trends of resources across the country from the results of this survey.

I also depended on teachers giving an accurate report of their own resources. This means that each question was open to interpretation, and that it is possible that teachers either oversold or undersold their resources.

Analysis of Data

The responses were analyzed in the Qualtrics program. This is a free program for students and faculty associated with the University of Michigan. Through this data analysis, I divided the responses into the categories Distant and Remote, which allowed me to compare themes from the responses from the two different local areas. The ability to compare helped me interpret the data I received with teachers' opinions on their teaching situation.

Summary

Using a survey to collect data is useful for presenting trends about the general population through questioning a significant number of the population. The purpose of this survey was to find trends in resources in rural music education in selected schools in the state of Michigan.

I expected that results would be varied, and that no two schools would have the same set of resources for teaching in a distant or remote rural school district. However, I also expected to find similar patterns in the resources available for teaching music in rural schools in Michigan. These patterns would then contribute to identifying further research questions on resources in elementary general music education in rural schools. In Chapter 4, I analyze the data received from the survey, and discuss how the data reflects the *Opportunity-to-Learn Standards* (NAfME, 2015). In Chapter 5, I connect the data to the research in Chapter 2, and discuss implications for future research in rural music education.

CHAPTER IV

Analysis of Data

Overview

In this chapter, I will review the data collected in the main study and will discuss how the results reflect the *Opportunity-to-Learn Standards* (NAfME, 2015) after a discussion of the survey instrument. The presentation of data is divided by Human Resources (staffing, professional development), Contextual Resources (scheduling, facilities), and Instructional Resources (materials and equipment, curriculum). After describing the data, I will discuss the themes that emerged from the open-ended questions.

Main Study

While the total number of respondents to the survey was 36 in the distant rural category, and 13 in the remote rural category, the n for each question changes since respondents were not required to answer all questions. The respondents were asked how familiar they were with the *Opportunity-to-Learn Standards*, to determine if they used this document as a guide for their resources. Of the teachers who responded, 71.4% of Distant Rural teachers and 75.0% of the Remote Rural teachers were not familiar at all with the document.

Analysis of Data

Human Resources

Staffing

The first three questions of the survey were used to determine the qualifications of the staff working at distant and remote rural schools in Michigan. Of the 29 teachers who responded to the three questions from distant rural schools, 75% reported certification to teach general music. Of the remaining 25% who did not report certification to teach general music, one was

certified to teach Elementary K-8, one was certified to teach K-5 all subjects, one reported certification in K-12 but did not specify what kind, one was certified to teach K-5 all subjects as well as 6-8 Music, one reported a triple minor in fields including music but did not state whether or not they were certified to teach music, one was certified to teach K-6 general education as well as fine arts and science, and one misread the question. The respondents from distant rural schools had taught from one to 37 years ($M = 15.6$, $SD = 10.3$), with slightly less time teaching in their current position ($M = 11.4$, $SD = 9.4$).

Of the twelve teachers who responded to the three questions for remote rural schools, 83.3% reported certification to teach general music, while the remainder of the respondents were certified to teach all subjects within the K-5 general music age range. The respondents from remote rural schools had also taught from one to 37 years ($M = 17.2$, $SD = 8.8$), once again with slightly less time teaching in their current position ($M = 10.6$, $SD = 11.1$).

Table 1

<i>Teaching Experience</i>					
Teaching Experience	Min	Max	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	n
Distant Rural: number of years teaching music	1	37	15.6	10.3	35
Remote Rural: number of years teaching music	6	37	17.2	8.8	12
Distant Rural: number of years teaching in current position	1	34	11.4	9.4	36
Remote Rural: number of years teaching in current position	0	37	10.6	11.1	12

The *Opportunity-to-Learn Standards* state that music should be taught by “Highly Qualified/Certified music teachers,” (NAfME, 2015, p. 11) which is true in 78% of the overall population responding (distant and remote rural schools combined).

Professional Development

Teachers reported different opportunities in professional development.

Table 2

Types of Professional Development

Distant n = 29 Remote n = 12

Types of Professional Development	Never – Distant %	Never - Remote %	Rarely – Distant %	Rarely – Remote %	Once per year – Distant %	Once per year – Remote %	More than once per year – Distant %	More than once per year – Remote %
In-person PD specific to General Music	88.5	75.0	8.6	16.7	2.9	0	0	8.3
In-person PD specific to General Education	25.7	36.4	5.7	9.1	5.7	18.1	62.9	36.4
In-person PD for Music Technology	94.2	91.7	2.9	0	2.9	0	0	8.3
Online PD specific to General Music	88.5	91.7	8.6	0	2.9	8.3	0	0
Online PD specific to General Education	45.7	75.0	31.4	8.3	2.7	8.3	20.0	8.3
Online PD for Music Technology	94.2	91.7	2.9	0	2.9	8.3	0	0
General Music Education PD opportunities outside of school district	11.4	25.0	22.9	33.3	48.6	25.0	17.1	16.7

NAfME *Opportunity-to-Learn Standards* document does not focus on professional development for general music teachers. The document states that there should be professional development that is taught by “people who know the needs of music learners at this level,”

(NAfME, 2015, p. 11), but other than that reference, they do not focus on professional development.

Teachers in distant and remote areas reported variety of support from other sources.

Table 3

Support from Other School Personnel

Distant n = 35 Remote n = 12

	None at all – Distant %	None at all – Remote %	A little – Distant %	A little – Remote %	A moderate amount – Distant %	A moderate amount – Remote %	A lot – Distant %	A lot – Remote %	A great deal – Distant %	A great deal – Remote %
Principals	0.0	0.0	17.1	16.7	40.0	50.0	25.8	16.7	17.1	16.6
Other School Admin.	17.1	8.3	28.6	25.0	22.9	33.3	20.0	25.0	11.4	8.3
Colleagues	0.0	0.0	28.6	33.3	28.6	41.7	25.7	16.7	17.1	8.3
Parents	2.9	8.3	41.2	41.7	26.4	50.0	17.7	0	11.8	0
Other Community Members	17.1	0.0	37.1	50.0	25.8	33.3	11.4	16.7	8.6	0.0

Most teachers indicate that they receive support from principals, other school administrators, colleagues, parents, and other community members. However, the results from this question are difficult to interpret. The question should have been asked more clearly, with careful definitions for what “a little” support means versus what “a lot” of support means. This would have made the results easier to understand.

Contextual Resources

Scheduling

The next twelve questions on the survey asked teachers about scheduling, which according to the NAfME *Opportunity-to-Learn Standards* refers to their daily schedules, and the

number of children they work with. Of the 36 teachers who responded from in distant rural schools, 61.1 % of them work in one school, 19.4% worked in two different schools, 16.7% worked in three different schools, and 2.8% worked in four different schools. By contrast, of the 12 teachers who responded from remote rural schools, 75% of them work in one school, and 25% worked in two different schools.

Table 4

*Number of Schools**Distant n = 36 Remote n = 12*

In how many schools do you currently teach?	1	2	3	4	5+
Distant Rural	61.1%	19.4%	16.7%	2.8%	0%
Remote Rural	75%	25%	0%	0%	0%

NAfME does not focus on the number of schools in a teacher's assignment in their *Opportunity-to-Learn Standards*, however I asked this question to gain context on a teacher's placement.

Of teachers in the distant rural schools, 52.8% reported teaching at a K-5 school, 11.1% reported teaching at a K-6 school, 2.8% at a K-8 school, and 33.3% reported teaching at a K-12 school. Of teachers in the remote rural schools, 41.7% reported teaching at a K-5 school and 58.3% reported teaching at a K-12 school.

Table 5

*Grades at Current School**Distant n = 36 Remote n = 12*

Grades taught at current school	K-5 %	K-6 %	K-8 %	K-12 %
Distant Rural	52.8	11.1	2.8	33.3
Remote Rural	41.7	0	0	58.3

When asked which label best describes the students who receive general music education in their school, 88.9% of teachers in the distant rural schools reported teaching general music to K-5 students, 8.3% reported teaching general music to K-6 students, and 2.8% reported teaching general music to K-12 students. Of teachers in the remote rural schools, 83.3% reported teaching general music to K-5 students, 8.3% reported teaching general music to K-8 students, and 8.3% reported teaching general music to K-12 students.

Table 6

*Grades that Receive General Music Instruction**Distant n = 36 Remote n = 12*

Grades receiving general music instruction	K-5 %	K-6 %	K-8 %	K-12 %
Distant Rural	88.9	8.3	0	2.8
Remote Rural	83.3	0	8.3	8.3

NAfME does not focus on the grades taught by one teacher, other than they would have additional lists of resources for the 6th-12th grade students.

Of teachers in the distant rural schools, 8.3% reported that ensembles met before or after school, 5.6% of teachers reported that ensembles meet at the same time as general music, 38.9% reported that ensembles meet during school, but at a different time than general music classes, and 47.2% reported that there were no ensembles at their school. Of teachers in the remote rural schools, 8.3% reported that ensembles meet at the same time as general music, 66.7% reported that ensembles meet during school, but at a different time than general music, and 25% reported that there were no ensembles at their school.

Table 7

*Ensembles**Distant n = 36 Remote n = 12*

When do Ensembles meet	Before or After School %	Same time as general music classes %	During school, but at a different time than general music %	No Ensembles at school %
Distant Rural	8.3	5.6	38.9	47.2
Remote Rural	0	8.3	66.7	25

In the *Opportunity-to-Learn Standards*, NAFME states it is important that “all students have the option of electing ensemble participation in addition to their required general music class” (NAfME, 2015, p. 11) which does not happen in all distant and remote rural schools in Michigan.

For subsequent answers in survey, the music teachers were asked to respond about the school that they spent their most time teaching elementary general music. Of the 35 teachers in distant rural schools, 0% reported having 1-50 students in their school, 2.9% reported 51–100 students, 0% reported 101–150 students, 5.7% reported 151–200 students, 5.7% reported 201–250 students, 20% reported 251–300 students, and 65.7% reported over 301 students. In the school that they spent their most time teaching elementary general music, 16.7% of the teachers in remote rural schools reported having 1-50 students in their school, 8.3% reported 51–100 students, 0% reported 101–150 students, 16.7% reported 151–200 students, 0% reported 201–250 students, 16.7% reported 251–300 students, and 41.6% reported over 301 students.

Table 8

*Number of Students in School**Distant n = 35 Remote n = 12*

Number of Students in School	1-50 %	51-100 %	101-150 %	151-200 %	201-250 %	250-300 %	301+ %
Distant Rural	0	2.9	0	5.7	5.7	20	65.7
Remote Rural	16.7	8.3	0	16.7	0	16.7	41.6

NAfME states that there should be “at least one general music teacher... for every 400 students enrolled in (all grades in) the school” (NAfME, 2015, p. 11), which seems to be supported by the data collected.

When asked about the average class sizes, 0% of teachers in distant rural schools reported having less than 10 students on average in their general music class, 5.6% reported having 11–20 students on average in general music, 88.9% of teachers reported 21–30 students on average in general music, and 5.5% reported having more than 30 students on average in general music. Of teachers in remote rural schools, 8.3% reported having less than 10 students on average in their general music class, 16.7% reported having 11–20 students on average in general music, 66.7% reported 21–30 students on average in general music, and 8.3% reported having more than 30 students on average in general music.

Table 9

*Average Class Size**Distant n = 36 Remote n = 12*

Average Class Size	Less than 10 Students %	11-20 Students %	21-30 Students %	30+ Students %
Distant Rural	0	5.6	88.9	5.5
Remote Rural	8.3	16.7	66.7	8.3

NAfME states that “classes in General Music are no larger than classes in other subjects of the curriculum” (NAfME, 2015, p. 11), which seems to hold true in rural classrooms in Michigan.

When asked how often music classes met, 27.8% of teachers in distant rural schools stated that their music classes meet two or more times a week, 66.7% of teachers reported that their music classes met once a week, 0% of the classes met once every other week, or once a month, and 5.5% of teachers reported their classes met on a different schedule. Of teachers in remote rural schools, 58.3% stated that their music classes meet two or more times a week, 33.3% reported that their music classes met once a week, 0% of the classes met once every other week, or once a month, and 8.3% of classes met on a different schedule.

Table 10

Frequency of Music Class

Distant n = 36 Remote n = 12

How often do students meet for music class	Two or more times a week %	Once a week %	Once every other week %	Once a month %	Other %
Distant Rural	27.8	66.7	0	0	5.5
Remote Rural	58.3	33.3	0	0	8.3

When asked about the average length of each music class, 19.4% of teachers in distant rural schools stated that their music classes met for less than 30 minutes, 33.3% stated that their classes met for 31–40 minutes, 44.4% of teachers stated that their classes met for 41–50 minutes, 2.8% of teachers reported that their classes met for 51–60 minutes, and 0% of teachers stated that their general music class was more than 60 minutes long. Of the 12 teachers in remote rural schools, 25% stated that their music classes met for less than 30 minutes, 25% stated that their classes met for 31–40 minutes, and 50% stated that their classes met for 41–50 minutes.

Table 11

*Average Length of Music Class**Distant n = 36 Remote n = 12*

How long is each music class (minutes)	Less than 30	31-40	41-50	51-60	60+
Distant Rural %	19.4	33.3	44.4	2.8	0
Remote Rural %	25	25	50	0	0

NAfME's *Opportunity-to-Learn Standards* suggest "at least ninety minutes of instruction in General Music are given to each student during each week" (NAfME, 2015, p. 11). While most music programs seem to meet at least once a week, the typical class length is between 41-50 minutes, which does not fulfill this standard.

When asked about the amount of daily preparation, 13.9% of music teachers in remote rural schools stated that they had less than 30 minutes of daily preparation, 22.2% stated that they had 31–40 minutes, 52.9% of teachers reported 41–50 minutes of preparation, 5.5% reported 51–60 minutes, and 5.5% reported more than 60 minutes. Of the music teachers in remote rural schools, 16.7% stated that they had less than 30 minutes of daily preparation, 33.3% stated that they had 31–40 minutes, 41.7% reported 41–50 minutes, and 8.3% reported 51–60 minutes.

Table 12

*Length of Preparation Time**Distant n = 36 Remote n = 12*

Length of preparation time (minutes)	Less than 30	31-40	41-50	51-60	60+
Distant Rural %	13.9	22.2	52.9	5.5	5.5
Remote Rural %	16.7	33.3	41.7	8.3	0

NAfME suggests that “every music educator has a block of time of at least thirty minutes for preparation and evaluation each day” (NAfME, 2015, p. 11). This seems to be a reality for rural music educators in MI.

All 35 teachers in distant rural settings who responded to this question taught students with special needs, and of them 100% taught students with special needs in mainstream classrooms. However, only 8.3% of teachers who responded stated that they were members of the IEP planning team to integrate students with special needs into the classroom and the other 91.7% did not. All 12 teachers in remote rural settings taught students with special needs, 91.7% taught students with special needs in mainstream classrooms, and 8.3% taught students with special needs in self-contained classrooms. However, 41.7% of teachers stated that they were members of the IEP planning team to integrate students with special needs into the classroom and 58.3% did not. NAfME states that “music educators are involved in placement decisions and are fully informed about the needs for each student” (NAfME, 2015, p. 11). This does not seem to be happening in rural schools in Michigan.

When asked about instructing students in English Language Learner (ELL) programs, 30.6% of teachers in distant rural schools reported never teaching students who are ELL, 36.1% reported rarely teaching students who are ELL, 13.9% reported sometimes teaching students who are ELL, and 19.4% reported often teaching students who are English Language Learners. Of the teachers in remote rural schools, 66.7% reported never teaching students who are English Language Learners, 25% reported rarely teaching students who are English Language Learners, and 8.3% reported sometimes teaching students who are English Language Learners.

Table 13

*Students in ELL Programs**Distant n = 36 Remote n = 12*

Do you teach students who are ELL?	Never %	Rarely %	Sometimes %	Often %
Distant Rural	30.6	36.1	13.9	19.4
Remote Rural	66.7	25	8.3	0

Facilities

When asked about the space that they teach in, 94.4% of distant rural teachers have their own music classroom, and the others share their space with the art or gym teacher. Of the 36 distant rural teachers, 91.7% also reported having space for movement activities during music class, and 8.3% reported not having space to move. Of distant remote teachers, 38.9% had separate space for storage of instruments, equipment, and other instructional materials, and 61.1% of teachers reported that they did not have a separate space. Of the 14 teachers with a separate space for storage, 71.4% of the teachers reported that the storage space was adjacent to the classroom they taught in, and 28.6% reported that the space was not adjacent.

Of the 12 remote rural teachers who responded to this question, 83.3% reported having their own music classroom, and the others taught music in the main classroom or in the library. Of the remote rural teachers, 83.3% reported having enough space in their music classroom for movement activities. Of the remote rural teachers, 66.7% reported having a separate space for storage of instruments, equipment, and instructional materials, and of those teachers, 75% reported that the space was right next to their classroom.

Table 14

*Facilities**Distant n = 36 Remote n = 12*

	Distant Rural		Remote Rural	
	Yes %	No %	Yes %	No%
Do you have your own classroom?	94.4	5.6	83.3	16.7
Do you have enough space for movement activities?	91.7	8.3	83.3	16.7
Do you have a separate storage area?	38.9	61.1	66.7	33.3

NAfME (2015) states that the music program at each school should have “access to a dedicated room for General Music, large enough to accommodate the largest group taught and to provide ample space for physical movement” (p. 13). This seems to be true in most rural schools in MI. However, NAfME also states that the music program should have storage space “available for instruments, equipment, and instructional materials... within or adjacent to the general music classroom” (NAfME, 2015, p. 13). This does not always seem to be true in rural communities in Michigan.

When asked about access to a high quality performance venue, 41.4% of distant rural teachers who responded to this question reported that they had access to a high-quality performance venue at least once a year for school concerts and 33.3% of remote rural teachers who responded to this question reported that they had access to a high-quality performance venue at least once a year for school concerts.

Table 15

*Performance Venue**Distant n = 36 Remote n = 12*

	Distant Rural		Remote Rural	
	Yes %	No %	Yes %	No %
Do you have access to a high quality performance venue at least once a year?	41.4	58.6	33.3	66.7

The *Opportunity-to-Learn Standards* recommend that students should have “access to high-quality performance venues at least once a year to enable them to present academic accomplishments to the public” (NAfME, 2015, p. 13). According to the data collected, this does not appear to be present in rural schools in Michigan.

Instructional Resources***Materials and Equipment***

When asked about access to a school computer and the internet, 94.4% of distant rural teachers reported having a school computer and 97.1% of distant rural teachers reported that their school computer was always connected to the internet (2.9% reported that their computer was often connected to the internet). Of the remote rural teachers, 91.7% reported having a school computer and 91.7% of remote rural teachers reported that their school computer was always connected to the internet (8.3% reported that their computer was often connected to the internet).

The *Opportunity-to-Learn Standards* recommend that teachers should have “one multimedia-ready, internet capable computer” (NAfME, 2015, p. 12), which my data suggests that they have.

The teachers in the distant and remote school settings reported a large variety in the quantity of the instruments available for use in their classrooms.

Table 16

*Quantity of Instruments in Classrooms**Distant n = 35 Remote n = 12*

Instruments in Classroom	None-Distant %	None-Remote %	Some-Distant %	Some-Remote %	Sufficient-Distant %	Sufficient-Remote %
Non Pitched	2.9	0	40.0	50.0	57.1	50.0
Electronic	65.7	83.3	31.4	16.6	2.9	0
Fretted	64.7	91.7	29.4	0	5.9	8.3
Recorders	17.7	8.3	17.6	16.7	64.7	75.0
Melody Bells	40.0	41.7	48.6	41.7	11.4	16.6
Barred	22.9	41.7	54.2	50.0	22.9	8.3
Chorded Zithers	100	100	0	0	0	0
Instruments from other cultures	37.1	41.7	60.0	58.3	2.9	0

The quality of these instruments also varied.

Table 17

*Quality of Instruments in Classrooms**Distant n = 35 Remote n = 12*

Instruments in Classroom	N/A – Distant %	N/A – Remote %	Low quality – Distant %	Low quality – Remote %	Average quality – Distant %	Average quality – Remote %	High quality – Distant %	High quality – Remote %
Non Pitched	0	0	24.2	33.3	66.7	66.7	9.1	0
Electronic	64.5	80.0	9.7	10.0	22.6	10.0	3.2	0
Fretted	58.6	90.0	17.2	0	17.2	0	7.0	10.0
Recorders	12.1	0	3.0	18.0	60.6	63.4	24.3	18.6
Melody Bells	34.4	41.7	15.7	8.3	46.8	50.0	3.1	0
Barred	15.6	36.4	9.4	0	46.9	45.5	28.1	18.1
Chorded Zithers	100	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
Instruments from other cultures	31.3	36.4	15.6	18.1	46.9	45.5	6.2	0

The *Opportunity-to-Learn Standards* document suggests that,

Every room in which General Music is taught has convenient access to an assortment of pitched and non-pitched instruments of good quality for classroom use, including fretted instruments, recorders, melody bells, barred instruments, chorded zithers, and assorted instruments representing a variety of cultures. Included are electronic instruments (including, but not limited to, a MIDI keyboard synthesizer) with the ability to connect to a computer, Digital Audio Workstation and/or audio interface (NAfME, 2015, p. 12).

While teachers did report having some of these instruments in average to high quality (recorders, non-pitched instruments, instruments from other cultures, barred instruments, and melody bells), most teachers reported have no electronic instruments, fretted instruments, or chorded zithers.

Similarly, there was a great variety in the types of materials that were available for the music teachers in distant and remote rural schools.

Table 18

*Quantity of Materials in the Classroom**Distant n = 35 Remote n = 12*

	None-Distant %	None-Remote %	Some-Distant %	Some-Remote %	Sufficient-Distant %	Sufficient-Remote %
Software that reinforces music concepts	77.1	75.0	20.0	16.7	2.9	8.3
Software that enables children to create and perform music	88.6	83.4	8.6	8.3	2.8	8.3
Notation software	85.7	75.0	11.4	25.0	2.9	0
Headphones	71.4	75.0	20.0	16.7	8.6	8.3
Classroom Computers /iPads/Tablets computers for students	65.7	58.3	17.1	25.0	17.2	16.7
Interactive board (SMART Board)	68.6	66.7	2.8	16.7	28.6	16.6
Projection device	8.6	16.7	31.4	25.0	60.0	58.3
Song collections	5.7	8.3	65.7	41.7	28.5	50.0
Children's story books	22.8	25.0	62.9	58.3	14.3	16.7
Instructional books for teaching instruments	42.8	25.0	42.9	50.0	14.3	25.0
Music textbook series	28.6	33.3	40.0	50.0	31.4	16.7

The quality of these resources also varied. Most materials in the classroom were of “average” quality, but the quality of the resource depended on the type of resource the teachers were describing; for example, they reported high quality books, but low quality technology.

Table 19

*Quality of Materials in the Classroom**Distant n = 35 Remote n = 12*

	N/A – Distant %	N/A – Remote %	Low quality – Distant %	Low quality – Remote %	Average quality – Distant %	Average quality – Remote %	High quality – Distant %	High quality – Remote %
Software that reinforces music concepts	75.0	72.7	9.4	0	12.5	18.2	3.1	9.1
Software that enables children to create and perform music	87.1	77.8	0	0	9.7	11.1	3.2	11.1
Notation software	84.4	70.0	0	0	12.5	30.0	3.1	0
Headphones	66.7	72.7	3.3	18.2	26.7	0	3.3	9.1
Classroom Computers /iPads/Tablets computers for students	61.3	63.6	0	0	29.0	27.3	9.7	9.1
Interactive board (SMART Board)	65.6	60.0	3.1	10.0	12.5	30.0	18.8	0
Projection device	3.0	16.7	3.0	16.7	60.6	41.6	33.3	25.0
Song collections	6.0	0	18.2	27.3	57.6	45.4	18.2	27.3
Children's story books	18.2	18.2	15.2	0	54.6	54.6	12.0	27.2
Instructional books for teaching instruments	36.4	25.0	6.1	8.3	45.4	41.7	12.1	25.0
Music textbook series	30.3	33.3	30.3	8.3	30.3	50.0	9.1	8.3

The *Opportunity-to-Learn Standards* document recommends a lot of material resources for the classroom.

Every room in which music is taught has equipment that uses current technology for making sound recordings and for listening to recordings, both

in a group and with headphones so as not to disturb others. At least some of the equipment can be operated by the children. (NAfME, 2015, p. 12)

Technology is not a resource that is present in the classroom in the rural schools represented in this survey. NAfME also suggests that each music class contains “children’s books containing songs and with other instructional materials in music” (2015, p. 9), which does seem to be represented in the classrooms in this survey. Finally, NAfME suggests that teachers have “quality projectors and/or interactive boards” (2015, p. 12), which also seems to be represented in the classrooms in this survey.

It would be interesting to see if more technology allowed music teachers to supplement their music programs the way the technology studied by Barker and Hall in 1994 helped general education teachers supplement their curriculum.

Curriculum

For school concerts each year, the teachers from distant rural schools performed from zero to nine concerts a year ($M = 3.8$, $SD = 2.2$). Remote rural teachers reported a performance of two to 14 concerts a year ($M = 4.9$, $SD = 3.5$).

Table 20

<i>Number of Concerts per Year</i>					
Number of concerts per year	Min.	Max.	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>
Distant Rural	0	9	3.8	2.2	36
Remote Rural	2	14	4.92	3.52	12

Teachers in distant and remote areas reported variety in what was taught in each music lesson.

Table 21

*Curriculum**Distant n = 35 Remote n = 12*

How often do students engage in	Distant Rural	Remote Rural	Distant Rural	Remote Rural	Distant Rural	Remote Rural
	Rarely - %	Rarely - %	Some class periods -%	Some class periods -%	All class periods -%	All class periods -%
Singing	0	0	25.7	16.7	74.3	83.3
Playing Musical Instruments	2.9	8.3	85.7	83.3	11.4	8.3
Listening to Music	0	0	40.0	33.3	60.0	66.7
Improvising	40.0	41.7	60.0	58.3	0	0
Moving to music	0	0	48.6	25.0	51.4	75.0
Creating music	28.6	16.7	71.4	83.3	0	0
Connecting music to history and culture	5.7	25.0	74.3	75.0	20.0	0

NAfME suggests “The curriculum comprises a balanced and sequential program of singing, playing instruments, listening to music, improvising and composing music, and moving to music consistent with the National Standards” (NAfME, 2015, p. 11). While the curriculum seems to feature more singing, listening, and moving to music, all of these elements are featured in the responses of the rural teachers in Michigan.

Teachers also reported a variety in what curriculum was offered from the school district.

Table 22

*Curriculum Provided by District**Distant n = 35 Remote n = 12*

Does your school district provide a curriculum guide for	Distant Rural		Remote Rural	
	Yes %	No %	Yes %	No %
Singing	22.9	77.1	16.7	83.3
Playing instruments	20.0	80.0	16.7	83.3
Listening to music	22.9	77.1	16.7	83.3
Improvising	14.3	85.7	8.3	91.7
Moving to music	22.9	77.1	16.7	83.3
Creating music	17.1	82.9	16.7	83.3
Connecting music to history and culture	20.0	80.0	16.7	83.3

While NAFME does not suggest that teachers should be provided curriculum, I thought it would be interesting data to see if rural schools provided a set curriculum for teachers to use, or if the schools depended on the teachers to create their own curriculum. The results from this questions would probably be consistent across all geographical areas, as most school districts do not provide curriculum for general music classrooms. However, the fact that school districts do not provide curriculum could be more significant in rural communities, where the teachers from this survey have reported feeling isolated from each other.

Voices of Rural Teachers: Benefits, Challenges, and Greatest Professional Needs

The open response questions allowed teachers to respond directly to the benefits and challenges of teaching in rural schools, as well as their professional needs. Themes were found

by reading through the responses, and grouping all responses within categories based on key words such as “community,” “professional development,” “family,” “support,” and other common words found in many of the answers (see Appendix D for complete open responses).

Benefits

In the first open response question “What are the benefits of teaching at your school in a rural community,” thirty one distant rural, and 12 remote rural teachers answered. One main theme emerged in the responses, captured in the response of one teacher: “Community is an integral part of our school.” This benefit could be split into three subcategories, of “supportive community;” the ability “to get to know the students;” and the ability “to build relationships with families over time.”

The idea of a supportive community is addressed by several teachers, reflected in their comments: “Community is an integral part of our school,” “Small community with tight bonds - the support is sincere,” and “The community supports the school and education in general.”

The ability to get to know the student is important to many teachers, for example: “I see my students in and around the community, you get to know parents and families at school, church, etc., the family values are stronger as a general rule,” “I get to know the students very well. I start with them in kdg [sic] and get to work with them until graduation,” and “I know all of my students very well as I see them K-8. I get a chance to know their strengths, weaknesses and interests and gear instruction toward that.”

Build relationships with families over time is also important to teachers, as they state: “I get to know families well over time,” “The greatest benefit is being able to build relationships with families over time,” and “The connection between students and their families with the school - the sense of community is very strong.”

These selected answers demonstrate the positive connection between the elementary music teacher and the rural community that they teaching.

Challenges

In the second open response question, “What are the challenges of teaching at your school in a rural community,” 32 distant rural, and 12 remote rural teachers responded. The main theme that came from the question of challenges to teaching in a rural school revolved around “limited resources” in their school district. This theme could be broken down into three subcategories as well—the need for current technology, curriculum, and materials and equipment, the need to integrate live music into their classrooms, and the need for a larger budget to help address these challenges.

Teachers strongly indicated a need for current technology, curriculum, and materials and equipment. For example: “Our equipment is old and in disrepair,” “The method books I have a out of date by several decades. The cost of replacing them is too much and with technology also being expensive, it tends to win out,” and “The biggest challenge in teaching at my school is lack of technology and the ability to maintain the technology that we have currently.”

The need to integrate live music into the classroom was evident in many of the comments from the teachers, for example: “lack of opportunity to see live performances,” “Sometimes it's difficult to get them to attend concerts,” and “In a rural community, we have limited access to cultural amenities such as museums, theaters, etc.”

A larger budget was also described through the comments from the teachers: “Very low to no funding for supplies (music, instruments, storage, etc),” “Lack of funding (budgets are spread very thin and all teachers are expected to wear many hats),” and “Budget is a huge challenge.”

These quotes highlight how teachers face a lack of resources, and are unable to easily supplement these resources.

Greatest Professional Needs

In the third open response question, “Q38 - What are your greatest professional needs as general music teacher in a rural community,” 32 distant rural, and 12 remote rural teachers responded, and professional development was the biggest theme. This could be broken down into professional development for music teachers, and into ongoing communication with other music teachers. While music teachers seemed to be passionate about expressing their desire to have professional development “in our area rather than being forced to attend training for the classroom teacher,” the theme of loneliness—being without other music teachers to collaborate with—was pervasive throughout the responses.

A need for professional development was expressed several times in the teachers’ comments, for example: “Connecting with and getting training for my specific subject area (teaching music),” “There is no professional development directed at the general music teacher,” and “Professional development with others in the field.”

The second need, of ongoing communication with other music teachers was present in many comments as well, for example: “No other colleagues in my area,” “Time to meet with other teachers and collaborate, share ideas and resources,” and “Opportunities to connect with other music teachers and learn from them.”

These quotes connect to the idea that being a rural music teacher can be lonely, even if the community is supportive, because rural music teachers are often the only music teacher in the community. The concept of loneliness is woven through most, if not all, of the responses for professional needs.

Summary

The data from the survey described many resources that are available for general music teachers in rural schools in Michigan. In Human Resources (staffing, professional development), the data suggested that the teachers in these positions are usually qualified to teach general music, and have a wide variety of experience (as one might expect to find in a random sample of urban or suburban schools). However, professional development in general music topics was not a resource that was easily available to general music teachers in rural areas. Some teachers were able to seek out professional development through opportunities outside of their school district, but almost all teachers lacked music professional development offered by their school district.

In Contextual Resources (scheduling, facilities), the data indicates that there are some challenges based on resources. Some schools are not able to offer ensembles to their students, no school offers 90 minutes of music instruction to each student each week, and most teachers are not included in meetings to help students in special education succeed in music class. However, almost all music teachers have their own classroom, and many have a storage area for their materials and equipment, which might not be the case in suburban or urban schools.

In Instructional Resources (materials and equipment, curriculum), the data describes a wide variety of resources with a wide variety of quality. However, it does seem that rural schools are lacking technology for their students to use in the music classroom. Very few classes were equipped with sufficient technology for the entire class, technology which might be present in schools in different geographic locations. However, the curricular activities that the general music teachers report seem relatively well balanced between singing, playing instruments, listening to music, improvising and composing music, and moving to music, as might be found in urban and suburban schools.

NAfME offered the *Opportunity-to-Learn Standards* as a guide for teachers for their resources. As important as it is to have a guide for resources that teachers can use as a checklist for their classrooms, it is equally important to understand what teachers think about their set of resources—what they value and where they would like to see improvements. The open-ended questions provide insight into what the teachers think about their resources through the lenses of benefits, challenges, and needs, and while the responses support the data that was found in the previous questions in the survey, they also create a deeper understanding of the data by allowing teachers to offer an opinion about what is beneficial to teaching in a rural area and what they would change if they could.

In the final chapter I will reflect on how the open-ended questions and the quantitative data from this survey compare with the literature in Chapter 2, and I will discuss future implications for research in music education.

CHAPTER FIVE

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to document the resources available in rural elementary general music education programs in the state of Michigan, and to examine how those resources reflect the NAFME *Opportunity-to-Learn Standards*. In order to accomplish this, a survey was created based on the NAFME *Opportunity-to-Learn Standards*, and sent to a sample population of teachers who self-reported the Human, Contextual, and Instructional Resources available to them in their school settings. In this chapter I will discuss the resources teachers reported, connect the data from the survey with previous research, and make recommendations and identify implications for future research. I will discuss the results using distant and remote responses combined because there is little variability between the two sets of responses.

Resources

The data gathered by this survey indicates that resources are available for teaching music education in rural schools and that resources in rural schools are not as bleak as are painted by many researchers. However, not all types of resources were equally present in rural general music programs, as evidenced by the lack of professional development, lack technology in the classroom, and the aging materials that were reported by teachers.

Human Resources

There are benefits to teaching in rural schools, which will go unnoticed if research studies are focused exclusively on quantifiable resources. The benefits seem to be tied up in the concept of place-based theory—a theory that states that teachers and students work best when connected to their community, as VanDeusen (2016) found in her study of valued rural music education

programs. After observing a rural music program, VanDeusen noted that when a music teacher was connected with the community there was a stronger “presence of a music program tradition with the greater community” and that “The music teacher’s interest in and openness to the community” was stronger (VanDeusen, 2016, p. 9). The data from the open-ended questions in my survey seems to indicate that teachers in rural areas know their students in a way that a person can only know another through deep life connections. Examples of this in the open responses came from teachers who grew up in the community, or have children of their own going through the same school programs, or have been in the school long enough to know children of past students. These relationships and sense of belonging are what allow teachers to work in a community for decades. While NAFME focuses the *Opportunity-to-Learn Standards* on the resources that can be measured, many resources provided by the rural school community seem to be unmeasurable, contextual, and intangible. Prest (2013) suggested that colleges help students who are interested in teaching in rural communities to spend time learning about the communities the students wish to work in, so that the students can develop strategies for creating connections with the community. As far back as the 1950s, Morgan (1951, 1955) suggested that if teachers in rural areas know their communities, and are connected to their community, they are more likely to remain in the community as teachers.

While some challenges that arise from lack of human resources might be more unique to rural areas (professional development, communication with other music teachers, and opportunities to experience live music), many of the challenges reported by rural teachers are faced by all music teachers to some degree. Music professional development does not always happen in urban or suburban school districts. Music teachers in urban and suburban school districts can also feel isolated from each other (Hunt, 2009). A wide variety of live music can be

difficult for all students to access as well. However, if research for the solutions to these challenges is focused only on suburban or urban settings, the unique challenges of rural schools will not be overcome.

NAfME *Opportunity-to-Learn Standards* document does not focus on professional development for general music teachers. The document states that there should be professional development that is taught by “people who know the needs of music learners at this level,” (NAfME, 2015, p. 11), but other than that reference, they do not focus on professional development. Most teachers receive General Education professional development in person that is offered by the district, but almost no teacher receives any type of music specific professional development. Teachers are, on the whole, able to travel to receive professional development outside of their district, but this data does not reveal if they have to pay out of their own pocket for these opportunities. It is interesting to note that there does not seem to be professional development offered online, as teachers indicated that they had computers connected to the internet. It would be worthwhile to see if there have been successful online professional development programs for music education, similar to that reported in the Hunt-Barron, Tracey, Howell and Kaminski study in 2015 for general education.

Contextual Resources

From the data collected there seems to be a disjuncture between what NAfME considers to be an adequate time for teaching music (90 minutes a week) and what rural music teachers are able to offer their students (50-60 minutes once a week, on average). Hanke (2004) studied the difference between the amount of time needed to accomplish the standards in music education and what time is offered, and found that the current amount of time that was offered teachers in Kansas was not enough for all that the music teacher was expected to teach. This time gap

probably occurs in all school districts (urban, suburban) but might be particularly felt in rural areas where music teachers are the only source of music instruction (as opposed to urban or suburban areas where a student might receive afterschool music activities outside the school environment).

The data also indicated that the facilities of rural music educators are comparable to teachers in other areas. Most teachers have their own classroom, and have space to do movement activities. No teacher discussed classroom space in their challenges or needs in the open-ended questions, and there was no prior research on facilities to compare the data received in this study with. While the MENC handbooks (Morgan, 1951, 1955) discuss how to teach music in a one-classroom or two-classroom rural school atmosphere, there has been very little research focused on the classroom facility for music teachers in rural schools.

Instructional Resources

Back in 1994, Barker and Hall researched how technology could be used to supplement curriculum for students in rural areas. Their data suggested that technology would be a useful tool for rural educators. The data collected by my survey suggests that rural music educators do not have the opportunity to use technology in their instruction, because they do not have technology (computers for students, headphones, software for reinforcing music concepts or enables children to create and perform music, notation software, or interactive boards) in the classroom. Perhaps one method of helping music teachers supplement their curriculum would be to offer more grants for technology and professional development to help the teachers use the technology effectively.

The data also shows that teachers desire to have current curricular resources – updated resource books and text books as well as new song collections and children’s books. McCracken

and Miller (1988) reported that rural teachers desired current teaching resources—such as updated textbooks, similarly to rural music teachers who participated in my study. Brook (2011) observed that teachers desired varied resources to be able to include local community music alongside traditional Western music, and a couple of teachers in the open responses indicated that they too would like varied resources to be able to present and create music from various cultures. The challenges that teachers reported in this survey from dated and unvaried curriculum resources were observed by other researchers (Brook, 2011; McCracken and Miller, 1988).

Benefits

The themes of “supportive community” the ability “to get to know the students” and the ability “to build relationships with families over time” were echoed throughout almost all of the responses from distant and remote rural music educators. The opportunity to know the community, the students and the families is a resource that is not referenced in the *Opportunity-to-Learn Standards*; however it seems that in order to truly understand the position that general rural music teachers fill, the community they work in must also be understood. The need to understand the community is reflected in the writings of Bates (2011, 2013), Isbell, (2005), and Prest (2013, 2016); however, it is not something that NAFME has accounted for when writing standards for resources. Though community is intangible and impossible to standardize, rural music programs seem to be rich in community social capital, as Prest (2013) similarly concluded, and when community is not included in a list of resources there is a misrepresentation of what is available for music teachers in rural schools.

Challenges

The theme of available materials and equipment, curriculum, and technology being outdated and teachers “taping pages back together to make it last a little longer” is something

that resonated with me as a rural music teacher. With the budget I received as a rural music educator I could replace a few things each year, but it was a challenge to be able to deliver the quality of a music education with materials and equipment that should have been retired years ago. While this challenge is probably more universal than just present in rural schools, I think that rural music teachers view resources with an attitude of being “an island,” where precious few materials are available and so the need to “make do with what I have” is prevalent in most of the responses.

Similarly the “island” feel of teaching in a rural school links in to how rural general music teachers are unable to offer “opportunities to hear live music.” In my own classroom, I tried to supplement this by having students watch videos of performances, recognizing a video recording does not match the power of a live performance. There were many times that I would read about concert opportunities for youth in the cities that were 30 minutes away from my school, and know that I would never have the easy access to those live concerts as the music teachers who lived in those cities. Perhaps community would be able to play a role in overcoming this challenge. Certainly my own community in New Mexico had parents who performed in Mariachi Bands who would play at the school from time to time, but there were not many other types of live groups. The ability to provide a wide variety of live music is something that rural schools do not readily have, and so should be a consideration when writing curriculum for the “Respond” National Arts Standards – particularly for the “Evaluate” section where students are requested to evaluate performances. Perhaps a way to remedy this would be to bring more ensembles (orchestras, bands, jazz groups, etc.) out to rural areas through scholarships or grants.

Greatest Professional Needs

Once again, as a former rural music educator, I felt connected with the responses I was reading, and remembered when there were “no other music teachers except one colleague who teaches secondary music,” and I missed the opportunity to collaborate “with other music teachers” as I did in college and during my student teaching. Though surrounded by community and the Human Resources that provides, being the only general music teacher can be “lonely.” I supplemented my professional development a little by attending a few music conferences, but even there the feeling of isolation was not abated as very few topics of research directly related to what I was experiencing as a music teacher.

Since almost of the rural general music teachers in this study reported that they had a computer that was connected to the internet in their classrooms, I feel that this need could be addressed through professional development and connection online, as was done in the Hunt-Barron, Tracey, Howell and Kaminski study (2015) for general rural education in South Carolina (see Chapter 2).

Implications for Future Research in Rural Music Education

The data from this survey seems to indicate that human, contextual, and instructional resources in rural communities in Michigan are not fully available to music teachers. However, it is possible that many music teachers across the United States would report similar resources to the responses received in this study. Nonetheless as Prest (2016) notes, one of the main differences between rural music programs and urban and suburban music programs is the amount of research that is conducted. Bates (2016) argues that the “urbanormative” view of music education is the reason why there is little research in rural music education. He discusses that the

music education profession attracts researchers who have “embraced the urban,” and believes that this leads to “urbanormativity in institutions” (Bates, 2016, p. 12), meaning that universities that focus on research in music education are focused on issues in urban areas. Unless rural music programs are studied consistently in the way urban and suburban programs are studied, then we will continue to have “urbanormative” (Bates, 2016; Prest, 2016) descriptions of music resources and music programs, which can shut out some of the unique problems that are faced by schools in rural areas, such as the need for connections with other music teachers, the need for professional development, and the need for access to live music.

In Michigan, there seems to be a driving need for music teachers to have the facility to connect with other music teachers, problem solve, and possibly even have professional development together. Ninety percent of music teachers in this study reported having a school computer that is connected to the internet all the time, which would indicate that the use of a blog or other types of online professional development would be able to connect music teachers as was done in Hunt-Barron, Tracey, Howell and Kaminski (2015). Their study connected teachers in rural areas of South Carolina through professional development online. While the program only ran for two years, it might be possible to start a long lasting online platform for rural music teachers in Michigan to connect on.

In order to understand resources in rural music education programs, it would be beneficial to carry out similar studies of resources in rural general music education in order to compare them with the results of this survey. Such comparison would be particularly interesting if the other states have a mandate for music education because the resources might be different if a state is requiring that students participate in elementary music education.

This study was carried out in a state where there is still no mandate that protects arts education (art, dance, music, theater) in schools. Students are not required to have an elementary music teacher, and indeed about one-fifth of the schools that were initially contacted for this study did not have an elementary music program. While many of the staff at elementary schools that did not have a music teacher reassured me that they did offer music at the middle school and high school, the impact of not providing music education at the elementary level is negative. The arts build the community. They are vital to the continuation of local and national heritage, and they should be offered regularly as an integral part of the elementary school curriculum throughout the state, with necessary resources readily available.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Opportunity-to-Learn Standards
National Association for Music Education (2015)

PreK-2 General Music Curriculum and Scheduling		
	Basic	Quality
Curriculum	1. Learning experiences include singing, playing instruments, moving to music, listening to music, and creating music consistent with the National Standards. 2. Technology is used when it appropriately enhances music learning at this level. 3. Student learning experiences include the use of technology for creating, performing, and responding to music.	Same as basic program
Scheduling	1. At least 12 percent of total student contact time is devoted to experiences in music at PK level; music is integrated into the curriculum throughout the school day 2. At least ninety minutes of instruction in General Music are given to each student during each week in grades K-2.	1. Time is scheduled to work with individual students to meet their needs (e.g., students with special needs, remedial instruction, curriculum integration). This includes ensuring that special needs students are scheduled appropriately to ensure success. 2. Music classes are scheduled with the same teacher pupil ratio as general education classes.
Staffing	Basic	Quality
Teacher Qualifications & Load	1. At the PK level, instruction is provided by teachers who have received formal training in early-childhood music; a music teachers qualified in early-childhood music is available as a consultant. 2. In Kindergarten, General Music instruction is delivered by Highly Qualified/Certified music teachers in collaboration with classroom teachers. In grades 1-2, instruction is delivered by Highly Qualified/Certified music teachers. 3. At least one General Music teacher is available for every 400 students enrolled in (all grades in) the school.	Same as basic program
Professional Development & Evaluation	1. Every music educator has a block of time of at least thirty minutes for preparation and evaluation each day,	1. Planning time is commensurate to that of other core academic courses due to the administrative

	excluding time for lunch and time for travel from room to room and building to building. 2. Technology training for teachers is conducted by experts who know the needs of music learners at this level, know the available software and hardware applicable for this level, and are able to deliver meaningful professional development that supports teachers integrating technologies into the curriculum. 3. Teacher evaluation is conducted on the	aspects of the music program.
Materials & Equipment	Basic	Quality
Instruments	1. Every room in which music is taught has convenient access to an assortment of pitched and non-pitched instruments of good quality for classroom use and appropriate to the developmental level of the students, including electronic instruments (including, but not limited to, a MIDI keyboard synthesizer) with the ability to connect to a computer, Digital Audio Workstation and/or audio interface	Same as basic program
Content	1. Every room in which music is taught is equipped with children's books containing songs and with other instructional materials in music. 2. Every teacher has convenient access to sound recordings representing a wide variety of music styles and cultures. 3. The software library (available online or downloaded to the class computer) includes: * Software that reinforces listening, understanding, and responding to music. * Software that enables children to create and perform music through exploration and game playing. * Basic sequencing/notation software for recording and printing music appropriate for the age level.	1. Software is updated/upgraded on a regular basis

Technology	1. Every room in which music is taught has equipment that uses current technology for making sound recordings and for listening to recordings, both in a group and with headphones so as not to disturb others. At least some of the equipment can be operated by the children. 2. One multimedia-ready, internet capable computer that has audio and video in/out capability, General MIDI sound generation, quality powered speakers and USB/firewire and/or Thunderbolt accessible, preferable with a CD/DVD player/Recorder which is attached to a projection device.	1. A touch pad, large trackball, or other alternative pointing device more suitable than a mouse for children of this age. 2. Tablet devices for the children on a one-to-one or one-to-two ratio.
Facilities	Basic	Quality
	1. Every prekindergarten and kindergarten has an uncluttered area large enough to accommodate the largest group of children taught and to provide ample space for creative and structured movement activities. 2. The grade K-2 program has access to a dedicated room for General Music, large enough to accommodate the largest group taught and to provide ample space for physical movement. 3. Storage space is available for instruments, equipment, and instructional materials. In the grade K-2 program, this space is within or adjacent to the general music classroom. 4. Suitable space is available for one computer with appropriate power and an internet connection.	1. Students have access to high-quality performance venues at least once a year to enable them to present academic accomplishments to the public. 2. In schools with more than one music teacher, there is an additional room identified for the itinerant music teacher.

Grade 3-5 General Music Curriculum and Scheduling		
	Basic	Quality
Curriculum	1. The music program provides the foundation for a sequential music program in the Middle School. 2 The curriculum comprises a balanced and sequential program of singing, playing instruments, listening to music, improvising and composing music, and	1. Curriculum includes designated time within the school day for ensembles such as chorus, beginning band, strings or other ensembles.

	moving to music consistent with the National Standards. 3. General Music instruction includes at least two of the following: recorder, fretted instruments, keyboard instruments, electronic instruments, instruments representing various cultures.	
Scheduling	<p>1. At least ninety minutes of instruction in General Music are given to each student during each week.</p> <p>2. Classes in General Music are no larger than classes in other subjects of the curriculum. 3. For students with special needs who are included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Their placement is determined on the same basis as placement for students without special needs. * Music educators are involved in placement decisions and are fully informed about the needs for each student. * The number of these students does not exceed the average for other academic classes in the school. 	<p>1. All students have the option of electing ensemble participation in addition to their required general music class. 2. The inclusion of ensemble experiences is not scheduled to routinely pull students from General Music classes. 3. Class durations for General Music are commensurate with other core academic areas.</p>
Staffing	Basic	Quality
Teacher Qualifications & Load	1. General Music instruction is delivered by Highly Qualified/Certified music teachers. 2. At least one general music teacher is available for every 400 students enrolled in (all grades in) the school.	1. Music classes are scheduled with the same teacher pupil ratio as general education classes.
Professional Development & Evaluation	1. Every music educator has a block of time of at least thirty minutes for preparation and evaluation each day, excluding time for lunch and time for travel from room to room and building to building. 2. Technology training for teachers is conducted by people who know the needs of music learners at this level, know the	1. Planning time is commensurate with that of other core academic courses due to the program administrative aspects of the music program.
Materials and Equipment	Basic	Quality
Instruments	1. Every room in which General Music is taught has convenient access to an	1. Tablet devices are provided for use as musical instruments

	assortment of pitched and non-pitched instruments of good quality for classroom use, including fretted instruments, recorders, melody bells, barred instruments, chorded zithers, and assorted instruments representing a variety of cultures. Included are electronic instruments (including, but not limited to, a MIDI keyboard synthesizer) with the ability to connect to a computer, Digital Audio Workstation and/or audio interface.	
Content	1. The repertoire taught includes music representing diverse genres and styles from various periods and cultures.	Same as basic program
Technology	1. Every room in which music is taught has equipment that uses current technology for making sound recordings and for listening to recordings, both in a group and with headphones so as not to disturb others. At least some of the equipment can be operated by the children. 2. One multimedia-ready, internetcapable computer that has audio and video in/out capability, General MIDI sound generation, quality powered speakers and USB/firewire and/or Thunderbolt accessible, preferable with a CD/DVD player/Recorder which is attached to a projection device.	1. Teachers have quality projectors and/or interactive boards.
Facilities	Basic	Quality
	1. The grade 3-5 program has access to a dedicated room for General Music, large enough to accommodate the largest group taught and to provide ample space for physical movement. 2. Storage space is available for instruments, equipment, and instructional materials. In the grade 1-2 program, this space is within or adjacent to the general music classroom. 3. Suitable space is available for one computer with appropriate power and an internet connection.	1. Students have access to high-quality performance venues at least once a year to enable them to present academic accomplishments to the public.

APPENDIX B

Letter to Participants

Dear Music Teacher,

I am inviting you to participate in an important research study that will collect data on resources in general music classrooms in rural areas, based on the resources outlined in the *Opportunity-to-Learn Standards* published by NAFME in 2015. The results from this survey will be reported in my thesis (“Resources for Teaching Elementary Music in Rural Public Schools”) for my Master’s in Music Education at the University of Michigan. You were randomly selected through the Michigan Department of Education list serve, where your school was described as a rural school based on definitions provided by the Federal Government.

To participate, please click on the link below. You will be asked to complete a brief survey containing questions regarding elementary general music at your current school. The survey requires approximately 20 minutes to complete. The survey link will remain open until March 24, 2017.

Your participation in this study will remain completely anonymous. I plan to share my findings from this research at professional conferences and may publish the findings but will not include any information that would identify you.

There are no risks to participation in this study. Participating in this study is completely voluntary. Even if you decide to participate now, you may change your mind and stop at any time. You may choose not to answer any survey question for any reason. If you have questions about this research study, or if you wish to be sent a summary of the research, you may contact me by email at: chaeand@umich.edu.

Your participation is greatly appreciated – thank you for contributing!

Charlotte Anderson
Master’s Student
Department of Music Education
University of Michigan

chaeand@umich.edu

Dear Music Educators,

If you have already completed the survey on Resources in Music Education, I want to thank you for your participation. If you have not yet completed the online survey, I would like to ask for your assistance again with my study. It should take twenty minutes to complete.

Your response is critical to my study, so please reply as soon as possible. The survey will close on March 24th, 2017.

As stated before, if you would like to receive a copy of the survey or if you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at: chaeand@umich.edu.

Thank you once again. Your assistance is most sincerely appreciated!

Charlotte Anderson
Master's Student
Department of Music Education
University of Michigan
chaeand@umich.edu

Dear Music Educators,

This is one final request for your participation. If you have already completed my survey on Resources in Music Education, thank you for your time. If you have not had a chance to complete it yet, and if you could find twenty minutes to take this survey by Friday, your input would be incredibly useful for my Thesis.

The survey will close on March 24th, 2017 at 11:59 pm.

As stated before, if you would like to receive a copy of the survey or if you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at: chaeand@umich.edu.

Thank you once again. Your assistance is most sincerely appreciated!

Charlotte Anderson
Master's Student
Department of Music Education
University of Michigan
chaeand@umich.edu

Dear Music Educator,

The responses I received so far provide invaluable perspectives into teaching elementary general music in rural settings. My goal is to bring the voices of rural music teachers into public forums so that their perspectives can highlight the benefits and challenges of rural music teaching and influence music education policy.

I know that you are incredibly busy, and I also know that your voice is important to the story of rural music education. Therefore, I want to offer you a little more time to complete this survey that documents resources in general music classrooms.

I reopened the survey and urge you to fill it out during this final week. The survey will close at 11:59 pm on April 5th, 2017. It takes about 20 minutes of your time. Thank you for responding to this final call.

As before, if you would like to receive a copy of the survey or if you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at: chaeand@umich.edu.

Thank you once again!

Charlotte Anderson

Master of Music (Music Education) Candidate

Department of Music Education

University of Michigan

chaeand@umich.edu

Dear Music Educator,

Thank you for your response to my survey! I truly appreciate that you took the time out of your busy schedule to respond.

If you would like to receive a copy of the survey or if you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at: chaeand@umich.edu.

Thank you once again!

Charlotte Anderson

Master of Music (Music Education) Candidate

Department of Music Education

University of Michigan

chaeand@umich.edu

APPENDIX C**Survey****Part 1**

Q1 Do you agree to participate in this survey?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Condition: No Is Selected. Skip To: End of Survey.

Q2 Do you teach in a public school?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Condition: No Is Selected. Skip To: End of Survey.

Q3 Do you teach elementary general music as part of your job?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Condition: No Is Selected. Skip To: End of Survey.

Q4 What are you certified to teach in the state of MI?

Q5 How many years have you taught music?

_____ Number of years (1)

Q6 How many years have you been in your current teaching position?

_____ Number of years (1)

Q7 In how many schools do you currently teach?

- 1 (1)
- 2 (2)
- 3 (3)
- 4 (4)
- 5+ (5)

Q8 Which best represents the grades you teach at your current school(s)?

- K - 5 (2)
- K - 6 (6)
- K - 8 (4)
- K - 12 (5)

Q9 Which best represents the grades that receive general music instruction at your current school(s)?

- K - 5 (2)
- K - 6 (3)
- K - 8 (4)
- K - 12 (5)

Q10 When do ensembles meet?

- Ensembles meet before or after school (1)
- Ensembles meet at the same time as General Music (2)
- Ensembles meet during school at a different time than General Music (3)
- There are no ensembles at my school (4)

Q11 If you teach in more than one school, for the rest of the survey, please respond based on the public school in which you spend the most time teaching elementary general music. How

many students are in your school in the 2016-2017 school year?

- 1 - 50 (1)
- 51 - 100 (2)
- 101 - 150 (3)
- 151 - 200 (4)
- 201 - 250 (5)
- 251 - 300 (6)
- 301 + (7)

Q12 What is your average general music class size?

- Less than 10 students (1)
- 11 - 20 students (2)
- 21 - 30 students (3)
- More than 30 students (4)

Q13 How often do students meet for music class?

- Two or more times a week (1)
- Once a week (2)
- Once every other week (3)
- Once a month (4)
- Other (5)

Q14 How long is each music class?

- Less than 30 mins (1)
- 31 - 40 mins (2)
- 41 - 50 mins (3)
- 51 - 60 min (4)
- More than 60 min (5)

Q15 How much daily preparation time do you have?

- Less than 30 mins (1)
- 31 - 40 mins (2)
- 41 - 50 mins (3)
- 51 - 60 mins (4)
- More than 60 mins (5)

Q16 Do you teach music to students with special needs?

- Yes - in mainstream classrooms (1)
- Yes - in self contained classrooms (2)
- I do not teach students with special needs (3)
- There are no students with special needs at my school (4)

Q17 Are you a part of the IEP planning team for how to integrate students with special needs into the music program?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Q18 Do you have students who are English Language Learners in your classes?

- Never (2)
- Rarely (3)
- Sometimes (8)
- Often (4)

Facilities

Q19 Do you have your own music classroom?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Condition: Yes Is Selected. Skip To: Does the classroom you teach in have

Q20 Where in the school do you teach music?

Q21 Does the classroom you teach in have space for movement activities?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Q22 Do you have an area separate from your classroom as a storage space for instruments, equipment, and instructional materials?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

If No Is Selected, Then Skip To

Do you have space in...

Q23 Is the storage space adjacent to the classroom you teach in?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Q24 Do you have a classroom computer provided by the school?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Q25 Is your school computer connected to the internet?

- Rarely (1)
- Sometimes (2)
- Frequently (3)
- Often (4)
- Always (5)

Q26 How many school concerts do you typically have in a year?
_____ Number of concerts (1)

Instructional books for teaching instruments (10)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Music textbook series (11)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Curriculum

Q30 How often do students engage in

	Rarely (1)	Some class periods (2)	All class periods (3)
Singing (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Playing Musical Instruments (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Listening to Music (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Improvising (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Moving to music (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Creating music (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Connecting music to history and culture (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q32 Does your district provide a curriculum guide for teaching the following in elementary general music?

	No (1)	Yes (2)
Singing (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Playing instruments (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Listening to music (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Improvising (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Moving to music (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Creating music (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Connecting music to history and culture (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Professional Development

Q33 Which forms of Professional Development (PD) are offered in your school district?

	Never (1)	Rarely (2)	Once per year (3)	More than once per year (4)
In-person PD specific to General Music (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
In-person PD specific to General Education (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
In-person PD for Music Technology (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Online PD specific to General Music (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Online PD specific to General Education (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Online PD for Music Technology (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I participate in General Music Education PD	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

opportunities outside of my school district (7)				
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Other

- Q34 To what degree are you familiar with the "Opportunity-to-learn Standards" produced by NAFME in 2015?
- Very familiar (2)
 - Moderately familiar (3)
 - Slightly familiar (4)
 - Not familiar at all (5)

Q35 How much support do you receive from

	None at all (1)	A little (2)	A moderate amount (3)	A lot (4)	A great deal (5)
Principals (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other School Administrators (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Colleagues (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Parents (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other Community Members (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q36 What are the benefits of teaching at your school in a rural community?

Q37 What are the challenges of teaching at your school in a rural community?

Q38 What are your greatest professional needs as general music teacher in a rural community?

APPENDIX D

Open-ended Responses to Survey

These are the responses to the open ended questions. They are grouped by respondent.

Distant Rural: Benefits	Distant Rural: Challenges	Distant Rural: Greatest Professional Need
<p>My own children are in the school I teach in; I see my students in and around the community, you get to know parents and families at school, church, etc., the family values are stronger as a general rule, people appreciate the opportunities there are for their children.</p>	<p>Lower economic levels and less education means students do not have the resources from home (financially or academically) to have high levels of achievement. High numbers of ELL (Hispanic students) whose parents speak mainly Spanish can be difficult. Being the 'only EL music teacher.'</p>	<p>Connecting with and getting training for my specific subject area (teaching music). I feel like an 'island' of music, as there is just one elementary school in my district and there are no other music teachers except one colleague who teaches secondary music. I miss collaborating with other music teachers from my district, so I have to look elsewhere. Getting PD in my area is so important!</p>
<p>I get to know families well over time.</p>	<p>Lack of understanding about the importance of arts education.</p>	<p>More time with students and the ability to perform concerts for the community. We used to always perform once a year but our current administration does not see it as a priority and it has been scheduled out.</p>
<p>I get to know the students very well. I start with them in kdg [sic] and get to work with them until graduation. Community is an integral part of our school.</p>	<p>There is only one class for each grade. There is no good way to separate students. They are together everyday all the way through school. You can definately [sic] see where the kids get tired of each other.</p>	<p>There are no resources for me to use. Anything I have, I have had to find online. With new administration, that may change. I only see the students on a rotational basis so following a curriculum is difficult, there is no retention from one week to the next.</p>
<p>The benefits are more related to living here.</p>	<p>Lack of cultural knowledge in the community, lack of parental resources and support</p>	<p>No other colleagues in my area</p>

<p>Smaller class sizes. Less expectations for kids (meaning that they will be more appreciative of their successes). Appreciative parents.</p>	<p>Funds to do anything (I've written and won nine grants this year, since my yearly budget is \$175). Students generally do not have money or way to receive private lessons (there's only one piano teacher within about 20mi), so their understanding of music can be at a more basic level than peers in more urban areas.</p>	<p>Funds. Always looking for ways to bring in money for instruments, repair, opportunities for my students to visit a symphony, bringing in guest artists, etc</p>
<p>I know everyone. It's very important to me to have a relationship with my students. I grew up here also, so I know backgrounds of students whose parents I taught. I have insight into their lives, and creating that relationship is easier because of the close community.</p>	<p>Sports is seen as more important than music, but our high school band program is very successful, and that has helped. We don't have money to support the elementary music program; I believe two music teachers have \$200 total per year. That really limits the number and quality of our instruments. Most "specials" teachers feel like we're there just to allow the common core teachers to have a planning time. My principal NEVER comes into my classroom to observe me; I think I've been observed by my elementary principals maybe 5 times in 27 years, and a couple of those times have been because I've had parent concerns.</p>	<p>Having the general public understand how important music is to its students. Everyone agrees it's important, but when push comes to shove, many times the arts/music get the short end of the stick.</p>
<p>Community members are very interested in bringing their children to performances.</p>	<p>Some parents cannot afford to attend performances because of the gas money.</p>	<p>Experiences with cultural instruments and live performance viewing.</p>
<p>I have a lot of autonomy and can choose what to do. There are very few expectations placed on me from staff or community, as there are very few musicians in the area.</p>	<p>Due to lack of funding, my music program was cut to half of the school year making it very difficult to produce the expected programs and offer quality musical experiences to my students.</p>	<p>Funding to be able to participate in professional development.</p>
<p>I am the teacher for all music students, so spiraling</p>	<p>Funding is minimal!</p>	<p>District provided MUSIC PD.</p>

instruction is easy - I know exactly what my students know from the previous year.		
Individualized instruction on a more personable level. More attention given to fine details. I am the culture provider for the community and students.	Limited resources Limited funding Limited access to larger venues Limited access to other music educators to bounce ideas off of Limited classroom materials. Thank goodness for grants!	How to provide as much culture (America and other) as possible given the limited amount of time provided. Competition with other classes to fill my own classroom with students. Creating a master schedule that fits everyone best (students and teachers). We have several teachers on staff who teach multiple levels as well.
You can control what the students learn throughout the entire time they are in school.	You have to do everything and be everything to everyone. Scheduling is always an issue when dealing with three different building schedules. Continuing the energy and feeding upper grades becomes complicated when you don't see this grade or that for a year.	There is no professional development directed at the general music teacher.
I have been here a long time, and know many of the students/parents. Many parents I even had as students. This helps with getting students to do what you want in performances as well as class. The first 16 years I was the HS/JHS/Elementary Band Director. The last 18 years as the sole elementary music teacher. In this smaller community I am well aware of the values as I also grew up in this area.	The curriculum is now 18 years old. While it is a quality curriculum (McGraw-Hill's Share the Music, copyright 2000) it is now getting dated. Many new things have happened in the music field since 2000. The whole elementary music program was re-instated because a person wrote a grant allowing me to be able to secure it in 1999. The entire time I was the BD, (1983-2000) there was no elementary music program. Now that money is needed to upgrade for books, technology, etc., it is not there. So... make do with what I have by taping pages back together to make it last a little	Money for upgraded potential opportunities Technology for independent student learning opportunities

	longer.	
I feel that I see the students an adequate amount of time through the week that I truly get to know them.	The biggest challenge in teaching at my school is lack of technology and the ability to maintain the technology that we have currently.	My greatest need would be technology based instruction.
Parents and students show a higher level of respect for the teacher.	Many of my students and their families are poor, and unable to spend money on events or extra curricular events. Parents cannot drive for extra lessons or after/ before school events.	More active community engagement for and with student musical activities. Eg - supporting music practice outside the classrooms.
Family feel.	Not having sufficient supplies. Also, being pulled and having music cancelled to cover other classes.	Professional Development related to my content area.
I know all of my students very well as I see them K-8. I get a chance to know their strengths, weaknesses and interests and gear instruction toward that.	There is a large lack of resources and time spent with students as I don't see them all year.	More resources to diversify lessons
We know the families. The kids are receptive to music. We get some groups in for concerts funded by the Fremont Area Community Foundation.	very few opportunities to hear live music. The kids are not exposed to much other than mainstream music.	Money, (for supplies, instruments, etc) more PD in music,
I see my students from grades K-4. I've created my curriculum based on National and MDE standards so I know what my students are capable of and what they need to work on.	Too many students. I see over 800 students a week for music. I also teach art to 300+ students at the same time. Seeing over 1100 students a week is overwhelming.	Support.
Our community is less rural than you believe. Much of the community likes to live and raise families in a small town where people know one another, but the adults drive distances to work professionally. Family is important in the community and most parents encourage their children. In our	The challenges are not related to being "rural". They are the same challenges as everywhere nowadays [sic]. Children without parental guidance - parents tend to blame teachers instead of addressing student behavior. Extremely short student attention spans. Minimal financial support (as gov't	Funding for more interactive programs to support student learning and short attention spans. Funding for more barred instruments. Funding for concert materials.

<p>elementary school, we have a 32 piano keyboard lab where all students K-5 take class piano as a part of the general music - time is shared between the lab and the general music room (I also have 2 classrooms).</p>	<p>reduces support to schools). I believe that any of the "rural" experiences our children are exposed to help them to become more well rounded.</p>	
<p>I have the opportunity to learn about my students and go get to know them well. I am able to take every opportunity to open their minds to music that they wouldn't normally have. I feel that we have come a long way with our music instruction and experiences.</p>	<p>Our students are normally very excited about learning music. The difficulty comes in having time available for the instruction they they [sic] deserve and competing with their other activities</p>	<p>Time to meet with other teachers and collaborate, share ideas and resources. Time to really explore what is available in technology tools.</p>
<p>I know that I am making a difference in the lives of some of these children and down the road we do have students who go out and major in music. I also know there are many students who love the music classes and enjoy learning in them.</p>	<p>Being recognized as a professional teacher and not just pushing a CD button and being given a space to work where all of my things are in the same place are two of my challenges. Another one is teachers feeling like they can keep a child from coming to class as a punishment for not doing their work in the regular classroom. Holding a child to go to special ed, speech, title 1 or NWEA testing, or any other excuse they can think of, music is an ok time to pull them, yet we are also required to test.</p>	<p>Our greatest needs are to be given PD in our area rather than being forced to attend training for the classroom teacher and not given any materials and pushed aside for the whole day because we don't "fit the mold".</p>
<p>Students are usually very polite and well-behaved. Most are appreciative of their school and have parent support.</p>	<p>In a rural community, we have limited access to cultural amenities such as museums, theaters, etc. Although I have much in the way of instruments, I don't have the budget to replace curriculum materials.</p>	<p>Opportunities to connect with other music teachers and learn from them.</p>
<p>I can choose what to teach without question. Parents are just happy their children have</p>	<p>It is lonely. There isn't another elementary misc [sic] person to bounce ideas off of or to</p>	<p>Funding for instruments and updated curriculum.</p>

music education.	learn from.	
Very supportive. They enjoy music.	Financially difficult. Sometimes it's difficult to get them to attend concerts.	Scheduling. I wish I could see my students more often.
The connection between students and their families with the school - the sense of community is very strong.	Budget is a huge challenge - and distance from larger cities where better engagement opportunities exist inhibit student participation in outside music groups. It is simply too far to drive.	Relevant, content specific professional development that supports my development as an educator.
supportive community, title 1 funding, parents are usually available	class sizes rising, down sizing, lack of resources, only music teacher in elementary	I have to buy everything for my classroom, no budget, no other music teachers at my level
Small community with tight bonds - the support is sincere.	There is little to no understanding of the benefits that music can offer children. The elementary music classes exist primarily as a means of providing planning time for core teachers. All performance related opportunities have been eliminated from the general music program. Instructional materials and space is extremely limited.	Resources, equipment and classroom space
Knowing all my students. Watching them grow up	It's a smaller school, with a smaller student base, which translates to smaller budget. The method books I have are out of date by several decades. The cost of replacing them is too much and with technology also being expensive, it tends to win out.	The tools to do my job and to do it well. I would love to have music notation software that my students could explore and I would love to not have to buy everything extra I want for my students because my budget is gone before school even starts.
I know most of my students and many of their parents.	Many students and parents are focused on sports as their number one priority.	PD that pertains to music education and supplies (i.e. book series, up to date music and enough classroom instruments)
I really love how close everyone is. It makes for a very supportive environment. I both like and dislike the fact that the school isn't diverse.	Feeling like I'm an island. I'm the only vocal music teacher in the district. No one else understands my role or responsibilities	Connecting to other music professionals!

This allows me to prepare songs (for example Christmas songs) that I couldn't normally do in a school in an urban environment.		
Students are generally well-behaved. The community supports the school and education in general.	Class Sizes and inadequate teaching supplies.	An up to date curriculum. Professional development with other music teachers in our system. Adequate class sizes. Funding to provide students learning experiences
	Very little financial support and professional development opportunities	Money! A good venue for performing... We currently perform in a gymnasium with bleacher seating for parents and terrible acoustics.

Remote Rural: Benefits	Remote Rural: Challenges	Remote Rural: Greatest Professional Need
Students are eager to learn and appreciate the experiences. The community is centered around the school and the community looks forward to performances and showcases.	Lack of funding/resources. Our equipment is old and in disrepair. There has been about 5 music teachers here in the last 10 years, and the morale in music is low. Students are not used to having a teacher stay long. Students are also pulled by sports because they are a big part of the community's pride. Having low numbers in all grades also makes creating ensembles difficult for balance issues. Poverty also plays a role in students' participation in outside camps, obtaining instruments/reeds/music, and low attendance	More high quality instruments and a curriculum that is easy to incorporate since I teach K-12, guitar, band, and choir. It's a lot of planning at different levels that make it difficult to focus effort and attention for festivals, competitions, etc.
I get to see my students for many years, which allows me to get to know them very well.	In the upper grades (ensembles) my biggest challenge is scheduling. In the lower grades, my biggest	I need more planning time to prepare for 8 different classes.

	challenge is large class sizes.	
You know who your supporters are.	There aren't a lot of resources (money, people, etc.) available.	Professional collaboration
The way of life in this area, proximity to my family, small class sizes, building relationships with students K through 12, a truthfully sequential 13-year experience with students.	Accessibility of my ensemble courses for upperclassmen (due to limited course offerings in core classes and small teaching staff), funding, students are unable to practice daily for performance-based classes due to other obligations outside of school.	A better structure of my music program, more access to performance ensembles (currently beginning band and MS choir meets every-other day).
Children in early grades can learn songs that are at a higher grade level. We can learn songs for Thanksgiving, Christmas, Easter, and Memorial Day that have the word God in them (at least until somebody turns us in). Please don't. We are now learning the ukulele with beautifully hand made instruments because we have someone in town that makes them - and a nonprofit organization that is paying the person to come into the classroom to teach us. We do not have as many constraints as a larger public school; therefore, I feel we are able to provide higher quality musical presentations.	There are not a large number of students in the school; therefore, students must learn much more - can't rely on other students to carry songs/parts in musical performances.	Music PD, funding to bring in performances, lack of teaching time
Small classes, community support	Lack of funding (budgets are spread very thin and all teachers are expected to wear many hats), lack of access to private teachers, lack of opportunity to see live performances, lack of funding for music PD	I think the greatest need I have is to be able to collaborate, and get ideas from other music teachers. I am the only elementary music teacher in my district. I have written the curriculum based on the Michigan state standards. Several of those standards are impossible due to lack of resources. Other rural music

		teachers might have some input for alternative ways to teach those skills.
The greatest benefit is being able to build relationships with families over time. I still have elderly community members who no longer have kids or grand kids in school who still attend my programs.	The challenges are lack of space and resources.	I need more time
I am able to get to know the students because they are in my classroom from Kindergarten through 5th grade and beyond.	Being the only music teacher K-12 is difficult because of I teach so many different levels every day. This makes preparation for all levels a challenge.	Respect, assistance, consistency. I wish I felt more respected and valued as an educator. I have an elementary education degree along with a creative arts (art, music, drama, and dance) minor, a ZA in Early Childhood Development, and a math and science minor as well. I am in my 17th year of teaching and earned my Master's Degree 11 years ago. As educated and experienced as I am, I still feel insignificant on our teaching staff. I am just play time in many eyes. Many, if not, MOST of the classroom teachers have parent volunteers come in to help. I have 6 different prep hours a day but do not have any help in preparing supplies and materials. I also, again, wish students came to class consistently.
Studies show that music education, especially started at a young age, assists in learning subjects from the core curriculum: math, science, reading, etc. The rhythm, rhyme and repetition aid in producing better readers! Our school concerts bring in more people in our small	I often feel as if I am a babysitter. I sometimes feel as if I am only needed to allow classroom teachers their plan time. My biggest frustration is that our 3rd and 4th grade teachers do not allow their students to come to music if they have unfinished work. Some students I go weeks	Professional development with others in the field. Funding for equipment and technology. Support in the classroom with huge class sizes and short classes. Fewer classes and students to teach!!!! 250+ a day ranging in grade K-3 general music, 4th grade recorder, 5th and 6th grade

<p>community than any other event, including high school graduation. Living in a small area limits fine arts opportunities for our children. It is great to have a consistent elementary music program for all kids grades Young 5s-4th</p>	<p>without seeing. As regular classroom teachers do, I, too an required to show growth in the area I teach in order to be deemed an "effective" teacher. How am I supposed to do that when teachers do not send their kids to my class? In some people's eyes, Math, Science, and Reading are considered important - I am just fun. Students must earn their right to come to specials.</p>	<p>beginning bands, JH band, HS band and HS is too much to plan for, organize or teach effectively.</p>
<p>Parents and community members are generally very well mannered and friendly. I get to follow students growth from kindergarten to graduation.</p>	<p>Very low to no funding for supplies (music, instruments, storage, etc). No community understanding of the importance of music or the fine arts. No performing space or real practice space. K-12 general music, vocal music, instrumental music all happen in one room. Lack of professional development and growth. No music substitutes. Limited resources throughout the building for support on issues of student misbehavior, curriculum development and overcrowded classrooms.</p>	

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