A Place in the Curriculum: Superintendents' Perceptions of Fine Arts Programs

by

Kenneth Bennett Thomas

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Approved by

Lisa A. W. Kensler, Chair, Associate Professor of Educational Foundations, Leadership and Technology
Margaret E. Ross, Associate Professor of Educational Foundations, Leadership and Technology
Frances K. Kochan, Professor of Educational Foundations, Leadership and Technology
Thomas R. Smith, Professor Emeritus of Music

Abstract

The decisions regarding school curriculum are based on mandates from state and local policies and funding from local, state, and federal government funding. In most K–12 public school systems, decisions regarding funding issues are approved by the local board of education upon the recommendation from the superintendent. As chief executive officer of the school system the superintendent's beliefs may profoundly affect decisions surrounding funding and curriculum issues within the school district (Andero, 2000; Penning, 2008; Remer, 2010).

In the course of the past four decades, there has been an increased awareness of the arts due in part to greater resources and academic benefit through the inclusion of the arts. However, trends of the last decade have shown a sweeping shift towards the elimination of arts programs. Often times decisions surrounding which programs to eliminate are related to funding issues (Beveridge, 2010; Chapman, 2004; Hart, 2012; Spohn, 2008). The downturn in the American economy during the past decade has created significant problems for state governments balancing their budgets. As a result, a significant number of school districts had to make the tough choice of eliminating programs, many of them being arts, to make up for the lack of funding received from the federal, state, and local governments.

The elimination of any K–12 core subject may have some unintended consequences to the students, the school districts, and the larger community. And very seldom do core academic subject areas find their way to being eliminated. If this may be the case, then one may question why the arts programs are usually the first programs to be eliminated due to lack of funding.

This study investigated superintendents' perceptions of arts education under ideal and current conditions in the four southern states of Alabama, Florida, Georgia, and Mississippi. Administrators' actions directly or indirectly impact school curriculum. Curriculum decisions are based on the availability of funding and other resources, and administrators' priorities. Administrators' priorities are often shaped by their beliefs which impact their actions. However, the actions of many administrators in the elimination of arts programs were in direct contradiction of their belief systems (Heilig, Cole, & Aguilar, 2010; Holcomb, 2007; McMurrer, 2008).

From the data cited, a conclusion can be drawn that the perception of superintendents in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, and Mississippi was positive overall. The survey items analyzed revealed that 82% to 95% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with broad arts educational goals for all schools. Respondents also identified several factors that negatively influenced their capacity to offer arts education in their districts. The data also revealed how superintendents' personal experiences impacted their perceptions of arts education in their school districts.

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CHAPTER I. NATURE OF THE STUDY

Introduction to the Study

This study investigated superintendents' perceptions of arts programs under ideal and current conditions. A quantitative cross-sectional/correlational survey design method was used to conduct this study. Background information regarding the study is provided in this chapter. The problem statement, purpose of the study, its significance, and research questions are also presented. An overview of the methodology used in the study and key terms end this chapter.

Background of the Study

The decisions regarding school curriculum are based on mandates from state and local policies and funding from local, state, and federal governments. In most K–12 public school systems, decisions regarding funding issues are approved by the local board of education upon the recommendation from the superintendent. As chief executive officer of the school system the superintendent's beliefs may profoundly affect decisions surrounding funding and curriculum issues within the school district (Andero, 2000; Penning, 2008; Remer, 2010).

The arts have been a fascination of virtually every culture since the start of civilization. One has to only look at the drawings or rock art by prehistoric man found in the caves to get a glimpse of the importance of the arts during this primal time. The vast collection of ancient art that has been housed in museums around the globe and the number of visitors that flock to view these collections is yet another example of the human interests in the arts. More evidence of the importance of the arts has been seen by the amount of money spent at auctions to acquire rare

pieces of art. Philosophers such as Plato and John Dewey expressed the importance of the arts as demonstrated in their beliefs, writings and actions. In Dewey's words, "Art is the most effective mode of communications that exists." In his book, *Art as Experience* (1934), Dewey discussed the experiences, the act of expression, substance and form, common substances and varied substance, human contribution, and the relationship between the arts and civilization. In 1960, Senator John F. Kennedy wrote the following regarding the arts:

> There is a connection, hard to explain logically but easy to feel, between achievement in public life and progress in the arts. The age of Pericles was also the age of Phidias. The age of Lorenzo de Medici was also the age of Leonardo da Vinci, the age of Elizabeth also the age of Shakespeare, and the new frontier for which I campaign in public life, can also be a new frontier for American art.
>
> *Letter to Miss Theodate Johnson, Publisher, Musical America, September 13, 1960, p. 11.*

Statement of the Problem

In the course of the past four decades, there has been an increased awareness of the arts in the United States due in part to greater resources and academic benefit through the inclusion of the arts (Brewer, 1998; Davis & Madeja, 2009; Dewey, 2008; Goldblatt, 2006; Marshall & D'Adamo, 2011; Rolling, 2010). However, trends of the last decade have shown a sweeping shift towards the elimination of arts programs in schools. Often, decisions surrounding which programs to eliminate are related to funding issues (Beveridge, 2010; Chapman, 2004; Hart, 2012; Spohn, 2008). For example, the downturn in the American economy during the past decade has created significant problems for state governments balancing their budgets. As a result, a significant number of school districts had to make the tough choice of eliminating

programs, many of them being arts, to make up for the lack of funding received from the federal, state, and local governments. Finances are not the only reason for the recent decline in arts programs in the schools. Mandates from the federal government have also contributed to the decline of arts programs in school. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (2001), also known as No Child Left Behind (NCLB), was signed into law on January 8, 2002 by President George W. Bush. The NCLB Act has had a major impact on the arts programs. The NCLB Act includes arts programs as part of the core academic subjects as stipulated in the definition of the core academic subjects as found in the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, Pub. L. No. 107-110, § 901, 115 Stat. 1958 (2002):

> *(11) CORE ACADEMIC SUBJECTS – The term core academic subjects' [sic] means English, reading or language arts, mathematics, science, foreign languages, civics and government, economics, arts, history, and geography.*

The NCLB legislation addressed all areas of education including Arts Education in an effort to have highly qualified teachers in all core academic areas, stronger accountability, and AYP. According to the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, each state is required to set academic standards for what each student should know and learn. Each year the academic achievement for every child is measured through standardized tests and the results of the tests are reported to the public. The core academic subjects of reading, math, and science are assessed regularly through standardized tests as required by NCLB. Some critics have questioned the legality of the law, especially the inclusion of Arts Education as part of the core curriculum.

In addition to defining the academic core, the NCLB law mandated that all students enrolled in America's schools be reading at or above grade level by 2014. The pressures of high-stakes testing and receiving a passing grade in Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), school districts

scrambled to meet the 2014 deadline mandated by the NCLB Law. As a result of the NCLB legislation and the cash strapped states, many school districts throughout the nation increased instructions in the core academic subject such as reading, math, science and history, while decreasing instruction in programs considered frills and non-essential, such as arts programs even though these were written into law as being part of the core. Some have eliminated the arts programs all together in an effort to save money and to meet other mandates set forth in NCLB (Beveridge, 2010; Chapman, 2004, 2007; Holcomb, 2007; Major, 2013; Massie, 2004; Spohn, 2008).

Holcomb (2007) reported that five years after NCLB, Adams Middle School in the West Contra Costa School District in California has cut band and visual arts classes by 40 percent, and has eliminated drama, dance, piano keyboarding, photography, and television classes entirely. Heilig, Cole and Aguilar (2010) reported that between 2007 and 2009, a number of students were pulled out of fine arts classes to participate in remediation classes for the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills. "The situation had become so widespread that a number of middle school bands were unable to participate in the spring 2009 state band competition" (Heilig et al., 2010, p. 140).

Historically, when there are funding problems, many administrators look to the arts programs to solve the funding problems by cutting the programs and reducing teacher units in those areas. Research, both past and present, would caution against this practice (Downing, 2003; Gullatt, 2008; Needle, et al., 2007; Schwartz & Pace, 2008; Stake & Munson, 2008; Wilkins, et al., 2003). The arts programs seem vital to the success of students and are beneficial to the success of many students (Gee, 1999; O'Fallon, 2006; Winner & Hetland, 2008). In a recent letter addressed to School and Education Community Leaders, U.S. Department of

Education Secretary Arne Duncan discussed the arts and emphatically supported the arts as a core subject.

> At this time when you are making critical and far-reaching budget and program decisions for the upcoming school year, I write to bring your attention to the importance of the arts as a core academic subject and part of a complete education for all students. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) defines the arts as a core subject, and the arts play a significant role in children's development and learning process (Duncan, 2009, para. 1, p. 1).

Secretary Duncan encouraged School and Education Community Leaders to use funds from Stimulus Funds to support the arts:

> Moreover, local school districts can use funds under the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act for the arts along with other district expenses (Duncan, 2009, para. 3, p. 1).

The statements by Secretary Duncan add credence to many states' departments of education and local school districts for adding visual and performing arts courses to high graduation requirements and university admission, and for using fund associated with NCLB to support arts courses.

Arts programs may affect many students within the school wall and beyond. Individuals that are most affected by the elimination of these programs are students considered at-risk, minority students, and low socioeconomic students. In some cases the arts may be a key factor in keeping these students in school and helping them in becoming productive citizens beyond school (Gee, 1999; Respress & Lutfi; 2006). The elimination of arts programs may also have an adverse effect on the school district and the entire community. The arts create positive returns in

investments to the local economy (Amrein-Beardsley, 2009; Chapman, 2004; Rademaker, 2003, 2007; Respress & Lutfi, 2006; Wright, 2007).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate superintendents' perceptions of arts education under ideal and current conditions. The arts for this study are divided into two categories, Performing Arts and Visual Arts. Included in the performing arts are dance, drama, and music (band, choral, and orchestral). The visual arts include drawing, painting, photography, and sculpture. The conceptual framework of this study is the correlation between administrators' beliefs and their actual practice regarding arts education. Administrators' actions directly or indirectly impact school curriculum. Curriculum decisions are based on the availability of funding and other resources, and administrators' priorities. Administrators' priorities are often shaped by their beliefs which again impact their actions. Yet, research indicates the actions of many administrators in the elimination of arts programs were in direct contradiction of their belief systems (Heilig et al., 2010; Holcomb, 2007; McMurrer, 2008).

The present study sought to explore superintendents' beliefs and their actions regarding arts programs, and how current trends and the economy may relate to the offering of the arts programs in the school districts. A review of the literature indicated strong support for the arts from school administrators and their beliefs in the importance of the inclusion of the arts in their school curriculum (Beveridge, 2010; Penning, 2008; Slavkin & Crespin, 2000).

Research Questions

The following questions guided the study:

1. To what extent do superintendents' perceptions of arts education differ under ideal and current conditions?

2. From the superintendents' perspective what factors influence the offering and/or quality of arts education in their respective school districts?

3. To what extent does the quality of personal experiences with the fine arts correlate with superintendents' perceptions of the arts education outcomes under ideal conditions?

Significance of the Study

Information gathered from this study may enable state departments of education, colleges of education educational leadership programs, school districts, researchers, and the educational community to gain a better understanding of administrators' beliefs and actions regarding Arts Education and the many variables that relate to their decisions for the inclusion of the arts in the school curriculum. The beliefs of administrators drive their actions with regards to funding and prioritizing curriculum areas. The actions of the administrators directly or indirectly impact school curriculum at every school within the district.

Research shows that there are benefits to the inclusion of the arts in the curriculum (Gullatt, 2008; Needle, et al., 2007; Schwartz & Pace, 2008; Stake & Munson, 2008; Wilkins, et al., 2003). These benefits include the contribution of the arts to non-arts outcomes (Gee, 1999); the contribution of the arts to academic performance for all students, especially those students considered to be at-risk (Gullatt, 2008; O'Fallon, 2006; Respress & Lutfi, 2006; Schwartz & Pace, 2008); and improvements in standardized tests scores (Winner & Hetland, 2008). Superintendents are important to the implementation of arts education in order to ensure opportunities for their students and schools to benefits from the arts. However, major overhaul to the education system and accountability due to NCLB have created uncertainties for administrators in regards to the arts. There has been very little research focusing on

superintendents and the arts (Penning, 2008). Research in this area will help educational leadership preparation programs and future school administrators understand the beneficial aspects of arts education and provide clarity and understanding of the factors that influence curriculum/program development and program evaluation.

Limitations of the Study

In any type of research, limitations exist. This study has several limitations:

1. Data were only collected from superintendents in four southern states in the United States: Alabama, Florida, Georgia, and Mississippi. Therefore, it may be difficult to draw conclusions about superintendents in the Northeast and other regions of the United States.
2. Respondents may not answer the questionnaire truthfully or accurately.
3. The standard limitations related to survey research methods including, access to web-based surveys, length of the survey instrument, and time constraints of respondents.
4. The independent variables were not manipulated.
5. Bias as a result of wording in the questions within the survey instrument may create some confusion.
6. Respondents' unwillingness to participate due to lack of interest and/or knowledge in the arts.

Operational Definitions

For the purpose of this study, the following terms are identified and operationally defined. Reference books, selected documents, and personal interpretation from the literature serve as the source for these definitions.

Actions: The process of doing something to achieve an aim; the way in which something has an effect or influence.

Arts Education (Fine Arts Programs): For the purpose of this study, arts education may also be identified as fine arts programs. Fine arts are the performing and visual arts consisting of art, drawing, painting, photography, sculpture (visual arts); with dance, music (band, choral, general music, orchestra), and theatre (acting, drama, technical) constituting performing arts (Alabama State Department of Education Course of Study: Arts Education, 2006).

Behaviors: The way in which one acts or conducts oneself in response to a particular situation.

Beliefs: An acceptance that something exists or is true or real and a firmly held opinion.

Benefits: Advantages or something that is helpful or enhances one's well-being.

Current: Something occurring in or existing at the present time; practices that are happening, being used or done now.

Ideal: A situation in which something is perfect or most suitable.

NCLB: No Child Left Behind (No Child Left Behind Act of 2001).

Summary

The purpose of this study was to investigate superintendents' perceptions of arts education under ideal and current conditions. Chapter one presented an overview of the study. Chapter two presents a review of relevant literature on the topics of the history of arts education, benefits of arts education, superintendents' perceptions of arts education, trends in fine arts programs offerings, and administrators' beliefs, actions, and NCLB regarding arts education.

CHAPTER II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This study is designed to assess superintendents' perceptions of arts education in ideal conditions and under current conditions in their respective school districts. As chief executive officer of the school district, superintendents have a direct impact on decisions surrounding funding and curriculum issues. These decisions may have a lasting effect on the program offerings and the amount of resources to be devoted to the different curriculum areas.

The purpose of this literature review is to provide a foundation for the perceptions associated with arts education in public schools. This literature review is organized into five major sections. The first section provides an overview of the history of arts education. The second section covers benefits of arts education. The third section examines superintendents' perceptions of arts education. The fourth section covers trends in fine arts programs offerings. The fifth section examines administrators' beliefs, actions, and NCLB.

History of Arts Education

Throughout the history of education in the United States of America, the curriculum has included some form of the fine arts, whether formally or informally. There is a plethora of literature pertaining to arts education and the benefits of arts programs ranging from whole brain learning and student development to Plato, John Dewey, the school curriculum and No Child Left Behind. The recent economic downturn has force school districts and communities to take a look at the arts and their place in the school curriculum. Allen (2002) stated the people once believed that the arts belonged to social life and had vital implications for morality, education,

and politics. Discussion surrounding the arts can be traced back to the time of the Greek Philosopher Aristocles Plato. In his essay, Allen (2002) explored Plato's contradictions on the value and power of the arts. It appeared that the great philosopher had an obsession with the arts:

> He wrote about art and artists again and again—for example, in the *Republic, Laws, Ion, Phaedrus, Symposium,* and *Apology*—usually warning of their wiles and evils, occasionally extolling their virtues (Allen, 2002, p. 19).

Heilig et al. (2010) explored the evolution and devolution of public fine arts programs from the time of Dewey to more recently No Child Left Behind.

> Dewey believed that the fine arts program was a foundational part of the curriculum because it developed creativity, self-expression, and an appreciation of the expression of others. (p. 136)

The implementation of arts education in the American Education System and research pertaining to the arts give credence to the continuation of the arts in the school curriculum (Brewer, 1998; Davis & Madeja, 2009; Dewey, 2008; Goldblatt, 2006; Marshall & D'Adamo, 2011; Rolling, 2010). Davis and Madeja (2009) reported that arts education research is well established, dating as early as the May of 1883, and increased in the years following World War II. Goldblatt (2006) explored the arts through the teachings and theories of John Dewey:

> Art communicates moral purpose and education. Dewey believes moral purpose is justifiable, art conveying messages that stimulate reflection on purposeful lives. Dewey is a pragmatist whose attraction to art postulates it as a means to an end because he envisions the end as just and fair: democracy (p. 17).

Yet, arts education continues to be placed low when prioritizing school curriculum. Even as stated in the ESEA, the arts are part of the core subject areas. However, since NCLB was introduced, disturbing details have surfaced regarding the impact of this federal law. A survey of 349 public school districts conducted by McMurrer (2008) found that, since the inception of NCLB, 58 percent of districts have increased instructional time for reading and language arts, and that 45 percent of the districts have increased instructional time for math. The survey also found that arts education instructional time has decreased by 16 percent.

Heilig et al. (2010) historically tracked arts education from John Dewey to NCLB, one of the most sweeping educational reforms in the history of the United States. Specifically, Heilig et al. (2010) followed polices in Texas that have increased focus on reading, writing, and mathematics while placing arts education on the back burner. Heilig et al. (2010) looked at Texas House Bill 3 and provided a case study on the status of arts education following fifteen years of high-stakes testing and accountability. The results of this high-stakes testing have led to teachers drilling students on a daily basis in the core subjects of reading, writing, and mathematics. In essences, some teachers were teaching to the test.

In the historical overview Heilig et al. (2010) outlined the long and complicated past of arts education in the United States. The arts were initially introduced in the classroom during the latter part of the nineteenth century as practical training for industrial employment through technical drawing and drafting. As the economy grew and a new middle class emerged which sought access to the arts culture, the enjoyment of the arts was no longer considered to be a luxury for the wealthy.

At the start of the twentieth century, John Dewey was conducting research at the University of Chicago and exploring a new approach to education. This new approach became known as progressive education.

> Dewey theorized that children need education that is authentic and allows them to grow mentally, physically, and socially by providing opportunities to be creative, critical thinkers. Dewey believed that arts are indeed experience, and that access to fine arts programs opens processes of inquiry that expand a child's perception of the world and create venues for understanding and action (Heilig et al., 2010, p. 137).

Heilig et al. (2010) found the popularity of arts courses continued gain momentum through the end of the 1920s. Curriculum documents in Texas reflected this shift in arts education. Local school districts budgeted the funding for arts education. However, the Great Depression had a huge negative impact, not only in arts education, but all facets of education. As thousands of schools closed and teacher pay was cut, student enrollment continued to increase. As has been done since the Great Depression, many school districts cut their arts programs to make up for their budget short-falls.

Heilig et al. (2010) further found that following an economic boom at the end of World War II, there were several educational reform legislations, and more research in arts education. Arts programs had resurgence in the 1950s as many local school boards increased funding and employed arts teachers. However, when the Soviet Union launched Sputnik, arts education once again gave way to more emphasis on science and mathematics. It wasn't until 1988 when Frank Hodsoll, head of the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), issued the report *Toward Civilization: A Report on Fine arts programs,* that art education was taken serious. In the report, it was claimed the fine arts programs was in:

> triple jeopardy because the arts are not viewed as serious, knowledge itself is not viewed as a prime educational objective, and those who determine school curricula do not agree on what fine arts programs is. (Heilig et al., 2010, p. 138)

The actions taken by the NEA, which included providing visiting artists, sequential curricula, improved data gathering, improved teacher quality and recruitment, was key factor for the inclusion of fine arts programs in the current NCLB Policy. The passage of NCLB was the first time that the arts were identified as a part of core academic subject in federal policy. However, these policies may have had an adverse effect on the very programs they were intended to assist. Increased time and resources on reading, writing, mathematics, history, science, and other core subject areas took limited resources from the arts programs. It is interesting to learn that President George W. Bush's federal education policy was based on his home state of Texas, which used mathematics and language arts as the primary means for measuring success in students, schools, and districts. Bush's policy, based on Texas high-stakes testing, became the model for the nation with the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Acts and No Child Left Behind (Heilig et al., 2010). The next section will examine benefits of the arts in the educational arena. The next section will focus on benefits of the inclusion of arts education.

Benefits of Arts Education

The benefits of the inclusion of the arts in the school curriculum are far reaching and stretch beyond the school building. Research identified and supported these benefits in critical areas of education and society. Included in these are improved thinking skills (Winner & Hetland, 2008); the linkage of the arts to learning, student achievement, and school reform (O'Fallon, 2006); the arts and their connection to general society (Respress & Lutfi, 2006); and

the arts and their connection to students at-risk and the connection of the arts to the larger community (Gee, 1999).

Improved Thinking Skills

As many school systems grapple with money issues and standardized tests, some often see arts courses as extravagance. Winner and Hetland (2008) asked the question, why do we teach the arts in schools? In their study, Winner and Hetland (2008) spent an academic year conducting a qualitative study in five visual-arts classrooms in two schools in Boston. Students and teachers in the five classrooms were video-taped, photographed, and interviewed, before analyses were completed. Many parents, teachers and politicians believed the arts make you smarter. Winner and Hetland (2008) reported that according to a 2006 Gallup poll, 80 percent of Americans believed that learning a musical instrument would improve math and science skills. Winner and Hetland (2008) stated that students involved in the arts generally score better in school and on SATs than students not involved in the arts. Findings by Winner and Hetland (2008) in their study did not show enough evidence that arts training caused test scores to rise. Their study did, however, reveal that:

> The arts programs teach a specific set of thinking skills rarely addressed elsewhere in the curriculum – and that far from being irrelevant in a test driven education system, arts education is becoming even more important as standardized tests like the MCAS exert a narrowing influence over what schools teach. (p. 29)

Winner and Hetland (2008) believed the arts provide greater benefits than just improved test scores. It was noted that as schools cut the arts, they may lose the ability to produce artists and innovated leaders for the future. Not only are the arts beneficial for schools, they are also beneficial for the greater society. That led to the researchers to the make following observation:

> And by continuing to focus on the arts' dubious links to improved test scores, arts advocates are losing their most powerful weapon: a real grasp of what arts bring to education. (p.29)

According to Winner and Hetland (2008), it has been well established that standardized tests focus on verbal and quantitative skills. Students who are well-versed in language and math, and can absorb, memorize and repeat information are rewarded with higher test scores. However, these tests do very little to predict future success. The arts offer much more than high scores on standardized tests. Winner and Hetland (2008) spent an academic year studying five visual-arts classes in two local Boston-area schools. Both schools offered visual arts, music, drama, or dance. Students at each school spent at least three hours a day working on their art. While inside the classrooms the researchers video-taped and photographed what they saw, as well as interviewed teachers and students, and then analyzed what they saw and recorded. In their findings the researchers offered:

> What we found in our analysis should worry parents and teachers facing cutbacks in school arts programs. While students in art classes learn techniques specific to art, such as how to draw, how to mix paint, or how to center a pot, they're also taught a remarkable array of mental habits not emphasized elsewhere in school. Such skills include visual-spatial abilities, reflection, self-criticism, and the willingness to experiment and learn from mistakes. All are important to numerous careers, but are widely ignored by today's standardized tests (p. 29).

Eight "studio habits of mind" (Winner & Hetland, 2008, p. 30) were identified from the researchers' analysis. These habits included, development of artistic craft, persistence, expression, making clear the connections between schoolwork and the world outside the

classroom, observing, envisioning, innovating through exploration, and reflective self-evaluation. The researchers did not neglect to make the connections between the habits observed in the arts and other core academic subjects.

> Each of these stood out from testable skills taught elsewhere in school… Over and over we listened to teachers telling their students to look more closely at the model and see it in terms of its essential geometry. (Winner & Hetland, 2008, p. 30)

Linkage to Student Achievement and School Reform

O'Fallon (2006) examined the connections between K–12 arts education, student achievement and school reform. Over the past decade much of the focus surrounding arts education has been the improvement of student learning. Public schools were under attack and politicians and educational leaders sought solutions to the various problems.

Public schools were declared to be in crisis, and solutions must be found. Foundations played a key role in the search for the means of reform and improvement. Choosing to direct the arts toward the goals of improving student achievement and improving schools provided an overarching goal that previously had been absent. "This linkage provided an answer to the perennial question asked of arts education: Why should you be given time and space and staff in the school? It linked the arts to national goals and national needs" (O'Fallon, 2006, p. 78).

The link between student achievement and the arts led to large-scale reform efforts, including the Annenberg Project, the A+ Schools, and the Getty DBAE. Although the strategies were different, each initiative shared a similar goal: "to affect large-scale change and improvement in public education through the engagement with the arts" (O'Fallon, 2006, p. 78). Many of the initiatives were successful in their goals and were fully implemented. Some were

not as successful and were eliminated. Many of those large-scale reform efforts were replaced by smaller scale efforts.

O'Fallon (2006) asked three questions: "What was learned from these large-scale efforts? What was learned about the vital link between engagement with the arts and learning? How are we able to apply it now?" (p. 78). In trying to answer, O'Fallon (2006) looked to research and practice. It was noted that "The absence of support for research was troubling" (p. 81). However, there were several research projects underway. O'Fallon (2006) did cite the report of Fiske (2000) as an important event in the development of his research. O'Fallon (2006) stated that Fiske (2000) "helped to focus attention on what the arts did that went far beyond learning in and about the arts. It was the impact of the arts on learning" (p. 81).

O'Fallon (2006) discovered that the large-scale efforts created the need for artists who could teach and who could serve the educational goals within the parameters of school policies. Another result of the large-scale efforts was the number of smaller efforts at the local level that have been sustained. The success of the large-scale efforts to improve student achievement through the arts was the impetus for arts education being moved up on the priority list of many arts organizations (O'Fallon, 2006). Those individuals that offered funding wanted arts organization education programs to be closely linked with education reform and improved learning goals. The last ten years saw an expanded role of arts organizations as agents of change in public education.

The linkage of the arts to learning, according to O'Fallon (2006), brought arts education into alignment with goals at the national level, and at a level where many people could personally relate, such as, "Is my child learning? Does she want to go to school? Is he motivated? Is she learning what is needed?" (p. 80). However, the aligning of arts education

with education reform has also produced mixed results. In accordance with NCLB, the arts are considered to be a core subject. Because of this designation, the arts have had an impact on many operating budgets of school systems. On the state level, in response to NCLB, the Education Commission, led by Governor Mike Huckabee of Arkansas, designed a national effort to build state level policy support for arts education. O'Fallon (2006) states the following to sum up support for the arts:

> Because the research has shown that many of the benefits of arts education come from a longer engagement with the arts, an engagement that includes components of making and reflecting, of creation and response, of placing art in community and context, it may be that funding is increasingly moving to support programs and projects that involve this longer and more varied engagement. (p. 82)

Respress and Lutfi (2006) argued the No Child Left Behind Act sought to change the culture of America's schools and close the achievement gap. As has been the sentiment of many educators, school and community leaders familiar with NCLB, the-one-size-fits-all approach has not measured up to fanfare with to which it was championed with bipartisan support in 2001. Although many parts of the law are appealing in concept, in practice they are unrealistic.

> States have sought and funded strategies to improve academic outcomes, yet cookie cutter approach to educating students often prevails: one size fits all. Students are rushed through a basic curriculum designed for students with homogenous learning styles without consideration of atypical learning styles. This leads to boredom, underachievement, and discipline problems. (Respress & Lutfi, 2006, p. 24)

Former U.S. Department of Education Secretary Rod Paige, in the George W. Bush Administration during the implementations of NCLB, made a strong endorsement for the arts.

Secretary Paige wrote:

> The arts, perhaps more than any other subject, help students to understand themselves and others, whether they lived in the past or are living in the present. President Bush recognizes this important contribution of the arts to every child's education. He has said, "From music and dance to painting and sculpting, the arts allow us to explore new worlds and to view life from another perspective." In addition, they "encourage individuals to sharpen their skills and abilities and to nurture their imagination and intellect." A comprehensive arts education may encompass such areas as the history of the arts, the honing of critical analysis skills, the recreation of classic as well as contemporary works of art, and the expression of students' ideas and feelings through the creation of their own works of art. In other words, students should have the opportunity to respond to, perform and create in the arts. (Paige, 2004, para. 3)

Secretary Paige further explained the value-added benefits of the arts by stating:

> In keeping with NCLB's principle of classroom practices based on research evidence, studies have shown that arts teaching and learning can increase students' cognitive and social development. The arts can be a critical link for students in developing the crucial thinking skills and motivations they need to achieve at higher levels. *Critical Links: Learning in the Arts and Student Academic and Social Development*, a research compendium of the Arts Education Partnership, offers evidence of such links, including connections between arts learning and achievement in reading and math. (Paige, 2004, para. 8).

The study that Secretary Paige referenced was based on data from the National Educational Longitudinal Study (NELS:88), in which University of California-Los Angeles researchers found

that students highly involved in arts instruction earned better grades and performed better on standardized tests. These findings were true for students across all socioeconomic status. It is ironic that as the U. S. Secretary of Education, Paige was a champion of the arts as they related to NCLB. At the same time, in the state of Texas, where Secretary Paige served as Superintendent of the Houston Independent School District and President George W. Bush served as Governor, educational policies had an adverse effect on the arts by taking limited resources from arts programs (Heilig et. al., 2010). The next section will explore the connection of the arts to students considered at-risk and the community.

Connection to Students At-Risk and Community

Others have discussed the importance of the arts in the public arena beyond the school setting. Gee (1999) reported that National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) Chairperson Jane Alexander and staff toured the country from June to October 1996 campaigning for not-for-profit arts. In public forums held from Columbus, Ohio through Los Angeles, Charlotte, Salt Lake City, San Antonio, and Miami, the following questions linking the arts to broad public purposes were posed:

> How can the arts promote civic responsibility and good citizenship? How can the arts build and maintain the viability of a community's social infrastructure? How do the arts help to ensure livable communities for tomorrow? How can the arts support education, children, families, and communities? How do the arts ensure student success and good schools? How can the arts ensure equity and access to America's culture and heritage? (Gee, 1999, p. 3)

Each question asked by Gee (1999) clearly sought to answer how the arts and the community support each other.

During a two-hour session of the Rhode Island State Council on the Arts, Gee (1999) witnessed powerful testimonials from the Governor and eleven of his executive cabinet members regarding ways in which the arts addressed public policy priorities. The cabinet members included the directors of the Departments of Mental Health, Retardation, and Hospitals; Environmental Management; Public Safety; and head of the Rhode Island National Guard.

> The director of the Office of the Budget said that etchings of state monuments and buildings that illustrated the annual spending plan helped to enliven the otherwise visually bland document. The director of the administration office said that artwork adorning his walls cheers the workers and sends the message to visitors that "all public employees aren't bad; some of us aren't criminals." (Gee, 1999, p. 4)

Again, researchers, educators, school and community leaders were turning to the arts to increase student achievement at a time when arts programs were being eliminated throughout the country. Dickerson (2002) reported the findings of research from neuroscientist Marian Diamond in that the creative power of the brain is released when human beings are in environments that are positive, nurturing, and stimulating and that encourage action and interaction. But many schools are dull, boring, and rigid, and students are mere recipients of information. Participation in the fine arts can alleviate this school environment as much research has indicated (Dickerson, 2002).

Respress and Lutfi (2006) attempted to find more effective strategies to enable students to thrive and succeed. Evidence from research indicates that the fine arts provided many brain-based learning benefits to at-risk students.

Respress and Lutfi (2006) examined how the participation in the fine arts enhanced academic achievement, commitment towards school and self-esteem, and reduced violent acts

committed by students. Respress and Lutfi (2006) defined fine arts as music, visual arts, drama, dance, and literature/creative writing. Respress and Lutfi (2006) explored several areas regarding the participation in the fine arts by African Americans including academic success, commitment towards school life, self-esteem, and the likelihood of engaging in violent acts (p. 25). Sixty-six middle school students in grades six through eight were selected for the study. Thirty-three students were placed in the participant group and thirty-three were placed in the comparison group. Both groups consisted of sixteen males and seventeen females, as well as racial make-up of ninety-four percent African American, six percent bi-racial, and one percent other.

In their study Respress and Lutfi (2006) analysis was to examine the extent to which the fine arts improved academic achievement, school bonding, and reduced violence. This quantitative study was based on statistical analysis of assessment, grade point average, and disciplinary referral data. "A Quasi-Experimental Design was used to determine if students who received intervention strategies scored significantly higher on outcomes measures when compared with students who did not receive intervention strategies" (p. 28). There was a pre-test and a post-test used in comparing the two groups. The Analysis of Variance was used to determine statistical significance at the .05 probability level.

In their findings, Respress and Lutfi (2006) reported that participation in the arts assisted students in decreasing delinquency, maintaining control, fostering academic competence, and feeling a sense of involvement toward being engaged in school (p. 30). Respress and Lutfi (2006) also found that music, drama, dance, and painting can have a positive effect on academic and emotional development. Participation in the arts was paramount in my being successful early in K–12 instruction. Respress and Lutfi (2006) further found that participation in the fine

arts, particularly by African American students, lead to a stronger commitment to academic success, higher grade point averages and a greater school attendance.

The results of Respress and Lutfi (2006), as well as findings by Gullatt (2008), Nathan (2012), and Schwartz and Pace (2008), were clear and served as evidence of the importance of the fine arts in academic achievement. This should suggest that many school and community leaders need to take notice of the benefits of fine arts programs.

There is a strong and positive connection to the arts and students considered at risk and the community. Gee (1999) reported the positive impact of the arts on communities in Los Angeles, Charlotte, Miami and San Antonio. Respress and Lutfi (2006) reported the positive influences of the arts on students considered to be at-risk, and the impact of the arts on school attendance, discipline, and student achievement. The next section will examine how superintendents' personal experiences in the arts affect their perceptions of the arts.

Superintendents' Perceptions

Even in these difficult financial times, parents continue to encourage school leaders to provide arts programs in their schools (Butterfield, 1990). Decisions regarding curriculum within the school district are made by the superintendent based on the needs of the individual schools upon recommendation of each principal (Abril & Gault, 2006). Factors that may affect the superintendent's decision are NCLB, the economy, budgets and school finances, scheduling, school level administrators, students' needs, teachers (fine arts and other subject areas), parents, and other internal and external factors. The superintendent's personal experiences may also be a contributing factor of whether the arts have a place in the curriculum (Abril & Gault, 2006; Beveridge, 2010; Butterfield, 1990; Chapman, 2007; Penning, 2008).

Growing up in a Los Angeles neighborhood, Carlos Garcia experienced first-hand the many challenges that faced public school students. There were drugs, violence, and the constant reminder of poverty and hardship. There were also many moments filled with happiness and success; the moments in school where arts classes were offered in every grade. Carlos remembered those happy times as a student, and as a school superintendent, he wanted other students to experience the arts as he had. His personal experiences in the arts had a direct impact on the decisions he made regarding the curriculum.

A school district in California is an example of the city, county, and the school district realizing the importance of arts education and working together to provide daily sequential arts learning to all of its public school students. Penning (2008) chronicles the reforms of the San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) and traced initiatives put in place by the SFUSC Superintendent, Carlos Garcia, to put arts education at the center of school reform. The superintendent understood the importance of the arts and enacted policies reflecting his beliefs.

After adopting the Arts Education Master Plan (AEMP) in 2005, the district's policies hold arts learning at the core of a high quality education. The idea was to transform the entire school district into a fine arts programs district that resembled the San Francisco School of the Arts (SOTA), a public magnet school. This change involved all facets of the community including parents, educators, administrators, elected officials, and business and community leaders.

> Development of the Master Plan included several components: fifteen years of the Arts Education Funders Collaborative contribution to the elementary schools for arts professional development; passage of the city's Proposition H to ensure funding for the arts until 2012; California state block grants to be used multiple years for equipment

purchases; and implementation of college entrance exams that require sequential arts learning for applicants. (Penning, 2008, p. 281)

Once the plan had been established and approved, the district needed to find a suitable leader for its implementation. In September of 2007, Carlos Garcia became the Superintendent, and was committed to the vision of the AEMP to closing the achievement gap through the use of fine arts programs. The superintendent was not your typical school leader. He understood the problems facing his students. Superintendent Garcia was a teacher and a politician. He was an inspirational leader that built strong coalitions such as that of a good politician. He broke down traditional hierarchies and insisted that teachers, support staff and administrators within the school district refer to him as Carlos (Penning, 2008, p. 282).

It may be important to note that Superintendent Garcia was also an artist. Garcia was keenly aware of the of the achievement disparities between races. As a person of color and personal experiences, Garcia had a good idea as to how the arts would affect minority students. Garcia understood the importance of an arts school in the heart of the majority African American, economically-challenged Bayview neighborhood. He predicted the arts school would flourish as much as one in the affluent, majority White Mariana section of San Francisco. However, the difference in the Bayview neighborhood and the Mariana section is that in Bayview it would also affect the whole community, enlivening families and bringing in additional opportunities (Penning, 2008, p. 283).

As with many school districts, the SFUSD faced many challenges including finances. In planning for the fine arts programs initiative, the superintendent placed excess funds from Proposition H money into an account as a cushion for potential budget cuts. Like in most school districts, budget cuts are devastating for arts programs.

> Proposition H provides an approximate average of $15 per student for arts activities in the classrooms, resulting in close to $1million per year. Without this money the district would rely entirely on the elementary arts funds and PTA contributions for arts in classrooms. The entire Proposition H fund is allocated to several programs including academic support, libraries, and sports, as well as to the arts. The funding not allocated for essential services, like direct service salaries and supplies, will be saved in order to ensure that the fine arts programs Master Plan continues through its entire implementation strategy. This kind of thinking and attention ensures equity and access in arts programming for our district. (Penning, 2008, p. 284)

There were challenges associated with the implementation of the AEMP. These included training teachers in art-based instructions and curriculum development. These challenges included the integration of arts with other curricular areas, teacher preparation for the arts-based curriculum and removing the stigma of "elite" from the non-consumer-based arts classes (Penning, 2008, p. 285–286).

Superintendent Garcia was committed to the fine arts programs vision of the school district. He challenged teachers and principals to make substantial time commitments to providing arts to every student every day. The district adopted mandatory arts scheduling for all elementary schools that resembled the mandated schedules for English, mathematics, and science. Principals were required to attend arts professional development to better understand the connection the arts have on brain development and the impact the arts have on the whole child. Community-building organizations are contracted with the school district to bring artists together to serve in the schools. Social services organizations work closely with teachers and artists with a shared goal of student achievement and excellence. In addition to learning through

the arts, students learn critical and creative thinking, and understand that "the arts can help heal some educational disparities by making learning relevant and engaging" (Penning, 2008, p. 287).

The first three years of the seven-year AEMP experienced increased arts programming in the schools. New arts coordinator positions have been created in the elementary, middle, and high schools to give each school direct contact and create relationships with community artists. Through the layers of the AEMP, students in the SFUSD are ensured equal access to the arts, every day.

> By infusing the arts in the learning processes of every student, Carlos Garcia sends the message that he considers the creative thinking developed through the arts to be the pathway for the youth of San Francisco to achieve access to higher education and to establish equality in social systems. (Penning, 2008, p. 288)

Participation in the arts benefits students inside as well as far beyond the classroom. The arts play a vital role in the development of the brain and the whole child. As schools continue to deal with dwindling funds and reaching AYP, they must remember the many benefits offered by participation in the fine arts. School and community leaders must use their creativity, which many learned from their participation in arts program, to seek alternative funding for the arts. The arts are more than music, or drama, or painting. The arts are the very existence of humanity, passion, and life. The following poem expresses the many benefits of music instruction:

> *Why Teach Music?*
>
> *Music is a science. It is exact, specific; and it demands exact acoustics. A conductor's full score is a chart, a graph which indicates frequencies, intensities, volume changes, melody and harmony all at once and with the most exact control of time.*

Music is mathematical. It is rhythmically based on the subdivisions of time into fractions which must be done instantaneously, not worked out on paper.

Music is a foreign language. Most of the terms are in Italian, German, or French; and the notation is certainly not English–but a highly developed kind of shorthand that uses symbols to represent ideas. The semantics of music is the most complete and universal language.

Music is history. Music usually reflects the environments and times of its creation, often even the country and, or racial feeling.

Music is a physical education. It requires fantastic coordination of fingers, hands, arms, lips, cheek, and facial muscles, in addition to extraordinary control of the diaphragmatic, back, stomach and chest muscles, which respond instantly to the sound the ear hears and the mind interprets.

Music is all these things, but most of all music is art. It allows a human being to take all these dry technically boring (but difficult) techniques and use them to create emotion. That is one thing that science cannot duplicate: humanism, feeling, emotion, call it what you will.

That is Why We Teach Music! Not because we expect you to major in music. Not because we expect you to play or sing all your life. Not so you can relax. Not so you can have fun. Not because we expect you to major in music. BUT–so you will be human. So you will recognize beauty. So you will be sensitive. So you will be closer to an infinite beyond this world. So you will have something to cling to. So you will have more love, more compassion, more gentleness, more good–in short, more life. Of what value will it

be to make a prosperous living unless we know how to live? That is Why We Teach Music!

Author Unknown

Research continues to present evidence showing how the arts contribute to student achievement, reduction in violence, critical thinking, improved attendance, and student engagement (Gee, 1999; O'Fallon, 2006; Respress & Lutfi, 2006; Winner & Hetland, 2008). School administrators also realize the importance of the arts and are making the efforts of including the arts in the school curriculum (Abril & Gault, 2006; Penning, 2008). The next sections will examine trends that affect the offering of fine arts programs.

Trends in Fine Arts Programs Offerings

In 1965, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act was signed into law by President Lyndon B. Johnson, as part of the President's War on Poverty and his Great Society agenda. Within the law were many policies and regulations affecting school systems throughout the United States. In 2002, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act was reauthorized and signed into law by President George W. Bush. This reauthorization was titled No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and it ushered in sweeping changes in an effort to close the achievement gap. Included were greater accountability for school systems, more standardized testing, highly qualified teachers, and Adequate Yearly Progress. School funding was also linked to NCLB. This section will focus on trend in fine arts programs offerings related to government regulations, NCLB, scheduling, and personnel.

Governmental Regulations

Since the passage of NCLB and it being signed into law in 2002, many educators and administrators have sought clarification on key provisions in the law. Chapman (2007) provided

updates on NCLB and national trends in education since its authorization. Regarding some key features of NCLB, Chapman (2007) stated: "Without question, it is the most elaborate case of federal micromanagement of state policy, local schools, and teachers in the entire history of American education" (p. 25).

One objective in NCLB is to have 95 to 100 percent of America's students score at or above the proficient level on standardized tests in reading, math and science by 2014. The law does not take into account the various learning styles, disabilities, or any other factor that may prevent schools from reaching the lofty goal – "nobody out of line, everybody arriving at the same destination at the same time" (Chapman, 2007, p. 25).

While much of the attention has been focused on reading, math, and science, those are not the only core subject areas stated in NCLB. At the same time much of the funding and other resources associated with NCLB have been directed toward reading, math, and science initiatives. During the deliberations for the reauthorization on NCLB, arts education advocacy organizations such as the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and Arts Education Partnership (AEP) were actively engaged in the discussions. The U. S. Department of Education (DOE) sought advice from these organizations on arts education. Chapman (2007) revealed that from 2002 to 2006, 60 percent of grants from the DOE awarded to artists-in-schools programs and arts-agency-designed professional development workshops were under NCLB. These grants were typically available from the NEA or state arts councils (p. 34).

A major challenge to schools is how funding relates to AYP benchmarks that schools and districts must meet as part of NCLB. There are serious consequences associated with not meeting AYP including being assigned a probationary status and losing funding. Many district administrators and school principals continue to be frustrated with the changing rules attached to

meeting AYP. Because of budget cuts nationwide and the need to add more funds to the core areas that are tested, the non-tested subjects are the first to be affected.

> Because AYP only measure math and reading skills, schools have no incentive to test any other subjects. Achievement in other areas would not affect funding, and therefore, schools also have no incentive to fund them properly. The consequences for the arts include everything from the elimination of instrument repair budgets to the loss of entire teaching positions and programs. (Beveridge, 2010, p. 4–5)

The AEP prepared an advocacy brief in 2006 for the reauthorization of NCLB. The focus for AEP was to secure funding for community-based programs related to arts education in schools. AEP supported and emphasized that a complete education included comprehensive education in the arts. In the publication *Arts Education: Creating Student Success in School, Life and Work* (AEP, 2006), three major themes position the arts as (*a*) preparing students for school, work, and life; (*b*) strengthening the learning environment, and (*c*) retaining teachers who love to teach (p. 34).

An important element to AEP's talking points to Congress included the restoration of funds for arts education programs in high-poverty schools to increase academic achievement of disadvantaged students (AEP, 2006, p. 2). A second funding request included money to support arts instruction during the school day, and partnerships with arts organizations for after-school programs. The third request for funding included money dedicated to transform struggling schools into successful learning communities. As the arts are included as a core subject area in NCLB, Congress was asked to require the DOE to systematically include the arts in studies that included other core subjects (AEP, 2006).

Trends in Scheduling

In response to the mandates of NCLB, many school districts have had to find a balance in scheduling classes. Unlike the SFUSD where arts classes are scheduled daily for all students, the NCLB mandates are forcing some districts to limit their offering of arts classes. Beveridge (2010) discussed the effect of NCLB on non-tested subject such as music and arts in the general curriculum. Major changes in scheduling, funding, and professional development have forced administrators and teachers to reconsider how they can best advocate for arts programs within their schools.

The high-stakes testing environment has affected scheduling practices in schools throughout the United States. In some districts, students often lose their only elective class if they fail the state test. The elective course, such as art, band, or choir, is usually replaced with a remedial mathematic or reading class. The intent is for the remedial class to help raise test scores. There are other strategies that can be adopted, for instance, after-school tutoring. This approach would be the least disruptive and the most cost effective. However, school administrators continue to replace elective classes with remedial classes which have had an adverse effect on music ensembles. This kind of policy, although not intended, may sabotage the success of the entire ensemble. Students involved in music ensembles depend on each other for success. Another scheduling problem caused by NCLB is that some middle schools have changed their bell schedule to match that of their high school. By doing so, the schools are not able to offer as many classes due to longer class periods. This often results in the elimination of elective classes in the arts.

The Arts and NCLB

Like their responses to other educational fads that have come and gone away, many veteran teachers often ask the question, will NCLB ever "go away"? With strong bipartisan support in the original passage of NCLB, it is unlikely that politicians will move to reform the legislation. President Barack Obama has made education one of his top priorities. One example of the President's commitment to education is the Race to the Top Fund. Although the President is committed to the education of our students, the focus in general continues to be on elementary reading and mathematical skills.

> How does this curriculum prepare students for a college education that encompasses humanities, social sciences, and arts? Is our goal simply to get students *to* college, or to help them *succeed* in and graduate from college? (Beveridge, 2010, p. 5–6)

As it currently stands, NCLB is and will continue to be the law of the land for the foreseen future. That being said, the questions become, how does NCLB succeed in its original publicized purpose of closing the achievement gap? And how do we guarantee the protection of fine arts programs under NCLB? The answer to the first question is simple: less focus on high-stakes testing as our sole measurement of success. The tests do not help educators close the achievement gap. They merely help students with memory skills and encourage educators to "teach the test." The answer to the second questions is not as simple. Under NCLB the arts are considered a core subject. However, funding is not tied to achievement in this core area. As a result less attention is given to the non-assessed core subject. Hence there is less funding. Arts educators and district personnel must seek funding from other sources such as grants, government entities, and other community resources.

Because of the many problems and unrealistic expectations of NCLB, Beveridge (2010) recommended more long-term empirical research be conducted on the effects of this law.

> We are just beginning to understand the short-term effects of this legislation, which allows us to advocate for reform or adjustments. But without long-term data, educators can never determine whether the positive or negative effects they experience are an anomaly in their own building, or if they are part of a bigger trend. (Beveridge, 2010, p. 6)

If changes are not made to the aspects of NCLB that do not work, the legislation that champions the call of No Child Left Behind may in turn find many students left behind.

Much of the discussion regarding the NCLB Act of 2001 has focused on the mandates regarding students reading and math scores on standardized tests and school districts' attempts to meet AYP. These mandates to improve reading and math tests scores often allowed for less time for arts instruction. Spohn (2008) explored teacher perspectives on NCLB and arts education. The case study took place in the rural Ohio school district of Ribbon Valley. The Ribbon Valley School District was eligible for Title I funding. The schools in the district were comprised of one high school, one middle school, and three elementary schools. The student population was approximately 2500 with 32 percent of the students identified as economically disadvantaged.

The six participants in the study included visual arts teachers, music teachers, a math teacher and a language arts teacher from elementary, middle, and high school levels. Each participant was highly qualified according the NCLB definition and had a minimum of five years teaching experience in the school district.

The fine arts included in the Ribbon Valley's curriculum were music and visual arts, as required in kindergarten through eighth grade. The district requires 0.5 credits of fine arts for

high school graduation. Dance and theatre were not offered. Drama club and marching band are considered extracurricular and were not included in the study because they were not part of the regular school-day instruction.

For data collection, Spohn (2008) personally conducted one-on-one interviews at each school site to gather qualitative data on arts education under NCLB in the Ribbon Valley school district. All interviewees were audiotaped using a digital recorder and a semi-structured interview protocol with open-ended questions guided the interview process. It must be noted that the researcher had an interest in the arts and arts education. She had fourteen years of professional performing experience in dance and nine years of teaching dance in higher education. This acknowledgement may present researcher bias in the study.

> To address researcher bias, I took great care to formulate questions for the interview protocols that would not lead teachers or convey my preconceptions into the interview process. I continuously explored my own subjectivity and reflected on my desire and pursuit for a particular research outcome. By recognizing and acknowledging my subjectivity, I was able to examine and analyze the research data with a more objective lens. (Spohn, 2008, p. 4)

Quantitative data were collected on the district's arts education budget and spending from arts teachers, administrators, and the school district's treasurer. Details regarding student population, arts classes offered, and instructional time for the school year starting in 2001 was provided by school principals. For comparative purposes, data were also collected on instructional time for reading, math, and science. Information regarding student demographics and the district report cards were retrieved from the Ohio Department of Education Website.

The data revealed that both arts teachers and non-arts teachers believed instructional time and classroom practices were altered in the district to accommodate NCLB requirements. These changes resulted in a loss of both access to and learning in the arts.

> Ribbon Valley administrators reduced music and other nontested subjects to make more time for math and language arts instruction, particularly at the middle school level. Themes that emerged from the data included changes in the curriculum and instructional time, changes in teaching strategies, and challenges to fund arts education. In short, arts education in the Ribbon Valley School District was threatened and showed signs of deterioration as a result of the administrators' attempts to meet NCLB objectives. (Spohn, 2008, p. 5)

The data revealed that since 2001, when the NCLB was implemented, curriculum and instructional time for arts education remained the same for music and visual arts education for kindergarten through fifth grade. However, at the middle school level, the data revealed a different picture for arts education. The music curriculum at this level was cut. At the same time, from 2002–2005, instructional time for math, language arts, science, and social studies amounted to fifty-five minutes daily for grades six to eight. At the beginning of the 2005–2006 school year, class time for math and language arts was increased to eighty-four minutes per day. Five of the six teachers interviewed stated the state tests were the impetus for the increased class time for math and language arts. Unpublished data from Mr. Cherry explained the changes in class time for math and language arts:

> We are trying to get the scores up in math right now, and reading. They're both low; students are not meeting the standards, so [administrators] are pushing it more. (Spohn, 2008, p. 5)

At the administrators' directives, the schedule change in the middle school resulted in a decrease in class time for science, social studies to forty-two minutes, and a significant modification was made in the music curriculum. Prior to the schedule being changed, all middle school students received instruction in general music classes. In addition, all middle school students had the option to participate in band and choir. The administrator's scheduling decisions reduced music instruction by near one-half the time prior to 2001.

> To make room for the increased class periods in math and language arts, band and choir were scheduled at the same time as the general music classes so students lost the opportunity to study general music and participate in band and choir. The administration's answer to this problem, according to one of the music teachers, was "If we want more time for music, then we should have it all after school." (Mrs. Simpson, unpublished data) (Spohn, 2008, p. 5)

As a result of the altered schedule, general music requirements only applied to those students who did not elect to take band or choir, and general music classes were reduced from six sections to three sections per year. Mrs. Simpson, the middle school general music teacher stated: I saw every kid in the building throughout the year ... and now I see a very, very small portion of them (Spohn, 2008, p. 5).

Teachers interviewed feared that if math scores on state tests linked to NCLB did not improve, time for music throughout the district would be further reduced. The general consensus among the teachers interviewed in the Ribbon Valley School District regarding scheduling changes, curriculum changes and instructional time for arts education was summed up as "It's the scores that drive it a lot" (Spohn, 2008, p. 5).

The enactment of NCLB also had an effect on the schedule at the high school level. In the 2005–2006 school year, instructional time in visual arts increased from forty-two minutes to forty-seven minutes. The increased instructional time also applied to math, science, social studies, and language arts. This may sound encouraging to arts teachers; however, the increased instructional time came at a cost. The additional five minutes resulted in reducing the high school schedule from nine periods a day to eight periods. Having one less period each day resulted in the administrators reducing arts classes. For example, five Art I classes per year under the nine-period day was reduced to three classes under the eight-period day. Although the high school curriculum did not change, the learning opportunities in the arts were reduced.

> The elimination of some of the Art I classes was anticipated to lead to a decline in enrollment for upper-level art classes and to ultimately decimate the art program, according to the high school art teacher. In addition, fewer Art I class sections created a bottleneck effect for students who wanted to take visual art; enrollment was limited so students had to be turned away each semester. (Spohn, 2008, p. 5)

Not only did NCLB affect the schedules in the Ribbon Valley school district, it also affected the strategies teachers employed to deliver instruction and the resources allocated to arts education. A common theme that educators have embraced is the notion of "teaching to the test." Teachers were asked to test and retest, and allow multiple opportunities for students to be successful. The accountability shifted more on the teachers and less on the students.

> Retesting became an adopted teaching strategy throughout the district. Tests designed by classroom teachers were expected to cover specific standards. When a student missed test questions that correlated with certain standards, the student was given as many

chances to retake portions of a test until he or she passed every standard. (Spohn, 2008, p. 6)

The retesting permeated the curriculum including music classes. Although some teachers had a favorable opinion of the retesting strategy, the middle school music teacher did not view this strategy as effective and it decreased student learning.

The perspectives of teachers from to the Ribbon Valley School District offered a unique opportunity to explore the effects of NCLB on all curriculum areas, especially arts education. The attempts by administrators to improve tests scores resulted in policies being implemented to allow students multiple opportunities to retake exams on subjects that would eventually be presented on state tests. While some teachers deemed the retesting policy helpful, others, such as the music teacher, discovered that retesting efforts slowed progress and minimized learning in the middle school music program. The one-size-fits-all strategy as demonstrated in the retesting policy heightens the need to allow flexibility between tested subjects and non-tested subjects when preparing for state tests.

Spohn (2008) also found concerns regarded to funding. There was not enough evidence to determine how NCLB affected spending on arts education in the Ribbon Valley School District. Administrators and other district officials kept a complete record on how much money was spent on arts education. According to teacher interviews and information provided by school principals, arts education expenditures experienced little change since NCLB went into effect. It was discovered that the district's fund-raising efforts focused more on tested subjects over arts education. It was noted that the building budget for the high school art teacher decreased from $1,500 during the 2001–02 school year to $1,200 during the 2005–06 school

year. Due to limited resources, many arts teachers spent their own money to purchase classroom materials.

> Most of the music and art teachers in the district spent their own money—anywhere from $300 to $2,000 per year—to purchase classroom materials that consumable materials fees or building budgets did not cover. This was the case for as many years as the teachers were teaching in the district. (Spohn, 2008, p. 7)

Although funding was limited for the Ribbon Valley arts classes, the teachers did not perceive that NCLB directly impacted the amount of money the district spent on arts education.

Spohn (2008) offered valuable policy recommendations regarding testing, retesting, evaluations in the arts, funding and reauthorization in the NCLB era. School districts should reject any strategy that resorts to one-size-fits-all instructional and evaluation methods. Regarding retesting, consider the number of test students are able to take and the cutoff point, as well as the effectiveness of retesting when measuring learning outcomes for all subjects. Testing under NCLB does not evaluate creativity, problem-solving abilities, or higher-order thinking needed to be successful in the twenty-first century. Adequate funding is essential for all subject areas, especially for sustaining the arts programs. Finally, as the reauthorization for NCLB is debated, high-stakes testing for language arts, math, and science should be eliminated. Local systems are more able to meet the needs of their students than the federal government, and should be allowed to establish their own accountability measures and goals to improve student learning in all areas, including the arts (Spohn, 2008, p. 9–10).

Trends in Personnel Issues

A key component in the school curriculum is the personnel responsible for the implementation of the various curricula. Gardner (2010) found a dramatic difference between

music teachers and teachers in other disciplines in his study pertaining to retention, turnover, and attrition of K–12 in the United States. In his study, Gardner (2010) received responses to the *School and Staffing Survey* from 47,857 K–12 public and private school teachers, including responses from 1,903 music teachers. The study had two purposes.

> The first was to develop a profile of K–12 music teachers in the United States and compare their attributes and opinions to those of other types of teachers. The second purpose was to investigate the factors that influence the retention, turnover, and attrition of K–12 music teachers. (Gardner, 2010, p. 113)

To gather statistical analysis Gardner (2010) sought to answers four questions regarding personal and professional attributes of K–12 music teachers in the United States, their opinions and perceptions about their jobs, job satisfactions, and how their attributes and job satisfaction relate to retention, turnover, and attrition. Gardner's (2010) theoretical model was based on findings from other theoretical and empirical research studies by Maslow (1987), Sergiovanni (1967), and Grissmer and Kirby (1991). To reach the conclusion of teacher status, the model investigated teacher attributes, job attributes, teacher opinions and perceptions of the work place, and job satisfaction. The *School and Staffing Survey (SASS)* and the *Teacher Follow-up Survey (TFS)* were used as the source for data collection. The dataset contained a sample of 47,857 K–12 teachers in the United States, of which 1,903 indicated their teacher area as music.

The first research question was an inquiry of personal and professional attributes of K–12 music teachers. At the time of the study, between 1999 and 2000, there were approximately 128,479 K–12 public and private music teachers in the United States, with a majority of 61% being female and 30% male. The level of education was 57.9% bachelor's degree, and 40.2% both bachelors and master's degree. The average yearly salary was $40,327.

The second research question was an inquiry of the opinions and perceptions of K–12 music teachers. Music teachers in general felt that they had little influence over schoolwide policies; they felt that they had high levels of control over their own classroom instructional practices. They also felt very secure in their jobs because job security was not based on students taking state tests. Music teachers believed that there were minor problems or no problem at all in their schools. As a whole, music teachers were satisfied with their positions and the teaching profession.

The third research questions investigated job satisfaction. In his research, Gardner (2010) found five independent variables related to job satisfaction: base salary, sex, race/ethnicity, extent of support and recognition from administrators, and concern about student's social welfare and parental support. The fourth research question explored retention, turnover, and attrition of K–12 music teachers. The older the teachers were, the more experience they had, and the more college degrees they held, the less likely they were to leave their positions for another teaching job, Gardner (2010) discovered. Gardner (2010) also found the more teachers felt supported by their administrators and the more support they received from their students' parents, the less likely they were to leave their position or the profession.

The most dramatic differences Gardner (2010) found between music teachers and non-music teachers was that music teachers were more likely to hold itinerant and part-time positions. Some reasons for this finding may be that music teachers are more likely to teach at the secondary level. Music courses are not mandated at this level, so there may be fewer students than at the elementary level.

Overall, music teachers were satisfied in their teaching positions. Administrators' and parental support of music teachers and their program was a key factor in whether music teachers

remain in their jobs or sought other opportunities. The level of job satisfaction from music teachers may have a direct impact on student achievement, satisfaction and involvement in school activities. Administrators, parents and community leaders should make it a top priority to support arts programs in their schools.

Administrators' Beliefs, Actions and NCLB

Throughout the history of education in the United States of America, the curriculum has included some form of the fine arts, whether formally or informally. The research supports this claim (Allen, 2002; Brewer, 1998; Davis & Madeja, 2009; Dewey, 2008; Goldblatt, 2006; Heilig et al., 2010; Marshall & D'Adamo, 2011; Rolling, 2010). Research has also discovered the many benefits of the inclusion of the arts in the school curriculum (Gee, 1999; O'Fallon, 2006; Respress & Lutfi, 2006; Winner & Hetland, 2008). The discoveries may have prompted school leaders to reflect on their own personal experiences with the arts and may help guide their decisions on the inclusion of the arts in their school's curriculum. During the past decade, school leaders have focused trends that have had an adverse effect on school systems' ability to offer fine arts programs (Beveridge, 2010; Chapman, 2007; Gardner, 2010; Spohn, 2008). The research may be the impetus for school leaders to reflect on their beliefs and actions regarding arts education during the NCLB era.

There are many issues and challenges facing arts education. School leaders' beliefs and their actions regarding these funding, policies, and their personal past experiences in the arts will be addressed in this section. The state of the economy during the past decades has had an adverse effect on the funding of fine arts programs. As state governments have had to tighten their budgets, so have local school districts. This tightening has resulted in many school districts

eliminating programs in an effort to balance their budgets. All too often the fine arts programs are the first to be eliminated. As reported by Slavkin and Crespin (2000):

> The passage of Proposition 13 in 1978 reduced funding available to school districts. Over time, arts programs and other services that were deemed to be "extra" were reduced if not eliminated. In the early 1990s, a severe recession hit the California economy, which led to further cuts in school funding. For example, the LAUSD was forces to reduce the district's budget by $400 million in the 1991–92 school year. (p. 20)

Other challenges are directly or indirectly related to NCLB. Among these include meeting the requirements for highly qualified teachers, high-stake testing, AYP, and proficiency in reading and math. School leaders and administrators, now more than ever, play an increasing role in the decisions surrounding which program will be included in the school curriculum.

Since its implementation, some school administrators may have used mandates in NCLB to justify reductions in their schools' arts program. Many school administrator my view the arts as extra or frill classes. However, NCLB clearly classify the arts as core academic subjects. In a letter to 16,000 superintendents, U. S. Department of Education Secretary Rod Paige emphasized the need for arts education.

> As I am sure you know, the arts are a core academic subject under the *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB). I believe the arts have a significant role in education both for their intrinsic value and for the ways in which they can enhance general academic achievement and improve students' social and emotional development.
>
> As I travel the country, I often hear that arts education programs are endangered because of *No Child Left Behind*. This message was echoed in a recent series of teacher roundtables sponsored by the Department of Education. It is both disturbing and just

> plain wrong. It's disturbing not just because arts programs are being diminished or eliminated, but because NCLB is being interpreted so narrowly as to be considered the reason for these actions. The truth is that NCLB included the arts as a core academic subject because of their importance to a child's education. *No Child Left Behind* expects teachers of the arts to be highly qualified, just as it does teachers of English, math, science and history. (Paige, 2004, para. 1)

Another justification cited by school administrators for the reduction or elimination of the arts is funding. Secretary Paige informed school leaders that fund dedicated to NCLB programs can be used for arts programs.

> Under NCLB, Title I, Part A funds also can be used by local education agencies to improve the educational achievement of disadvantaged students through the arts. In the same way, Title II Teacher Quality Enhancement Grants can address the professional development needs of teachers of the arts, and portions of Title II funds can support partnerships that include nonprofit, cultural-arts organizations.
>
> The arts also can be an important part of learning and enrichment in programs supported by 21st Century Community Learning Centers program funds. Before- and after-school, weekend, and summer programs are excellent opportunities to stimulate students' artistic interests and foster their growth or to integrate arts learning with other subjects, including reading and math. Cultural partners in the community—arts centers, symphonies, theatres, and the like—can offer engaging venues as well as skilled instructors and mentors for students (Paige, 2004, para. 6–7).

School Board Policies

A critical area in which administrators have an effect on the arts is through education policies. The school superintendent serves as the chief executive officer of the school district. In this position, the superintendent is responsible for making recommendations to the governing body of the school district that affects every aspect of the school district. Upon the recommendation of the superintendent, the school board is responsible for approving employment, expenditures, and policies related to the various issues and challenges facing the school district. In order for the arts to endure and be effective, they must be supported by responsive local policy. Remer (2010) explored local educational policies and actions, and how they affected arts education; and provided a framework for developing local policies in all areas of the local school district that support high quality arts education. Remer (2010) was keenly aware of the role of the federal and state governments in education. The focus of this study was on inventions and implementations encouraged by grassroots leadership.

The arts cover a wide medium, therefore, making it difficult to define arts education. Adopting policies to govern the many facets of the arts have become a challenge. Regarding the diversity in arts and establishing policies, Remer (2010) stated:

> Although national, state, and local arts standards, blueprints, frameworks, and articulated goals within the professional arts education communities exist, teaching and learning in the arts have developed over the past fifty years in a free-for-all style. General educators, arts educators, and community-based cultural resources, most of whom see the arts through different lenses, struggle to find common ground. In theory, especially in an American democracy, multiple options should be welcome; in practice, the lack of consensus regarding basic policy interferes with everyone's goal of making the arts count

in education when they are taught sequentially to every elementary and secondary child. (p. 82)

The many different philosophical views of arts educators have made it difficult to find policies to embrace the many variations on arts education. According to Remer (2010), to some arts educators, the arts were the fundamental focus. Some saw the arts as useful for teaching other subjects or achieving non-arts related goals. Yet some saw the arts as the content and instruments for general learning. And some arts educators saw the arts as a vital part of the American landscape to which all are entitled to contribute. Many labels associated with the arts such as arts as education, arts in education, arts for education, arts as aesthetic education, arts for integration, and arts for learning have cluttered the terrain (p. 82).

The different philosophies have dominated the discussion in the arts community for decades. The focus of Remer (2010) was to share valuable lessons learned from the past and to seek fresh approaches that resulted in policies that proved rewarding to arts education. Remer (2010) was clear in stating her belief about teaching and learning; all the arts for all the children. The provisional policies suggested were not new or groundbreaking, but were meant to help start the conversations to achieve and sustain effective arts education in local school districts. Remer (2010) offered the following provisional policies:

- All arts policies currently on the books at the state, district, and school level should be regularly reviewed for aptness and compliance in the schools and districts for which they were written.
- All students should learn the fundamentals of dance, music, theater, the visual arts, and film and media. They should choose one or more of the art forms for advanced, sequential learning through graduation.

- Students and teachers should conduct and engage in arts studies that make authentic and balanced connections to other academic disciplines.
- Quality arts teaching by certified arts educators with deep content-based knowledge and experience in teaching the arts should be enhanced and extended by in-depth collaboration with classroom teachers, college and university instructors, and community artists receiving sustained pre-service and ongoing in-service training and professional development.
- National, state, and local standards, blueprints, and curriculum frameworks and assessments should be made available as guides to school curriculum development, instruction, and assessment practices.
- Technical and instructional assistance should be available from the school and the local school district to support principals and their teachers in the design, implementation, and assessment of comprehensive and coherent arts education for every child in every school. This assistance might be provided by an itinerant team of certified arts educators, classroom and other teachers, and professional artists identified by the collaborative council.
- Tax levies and other generally reliable sources of money for teaching and learning in the arts should be line-item entries in the school and district budgets. (p. 83)

Topics of other provisional policies were qualitative methods for student self and peer-to-peer assessment, engaging the arts community to provide extended services to the schools, encouraging parents to be engaged in arts learning with their children, providing afterschool arts activities for students, collaborations between all participants in in the school district's arts programs, and permitting outside and independent evaluators to assess student learning.

From observing classroom across the United States, Remer (2010) listed twelve lessons learned about building effective arts teaching and learning through the arts.

- Lesson One: There is no one definitive answer to the question, "What is effective education?" For as each arts educator there is a different answer to the question at hand.
- Lesson Two: The Vision Statement – All the arts for all the children.
- Lesson Three: The dance of change – preparing for the Fred and Ginger Routine.
- Lesson Four: Strategies for change – distributed leadership, collaboration, and networking are the backbone of effective arts education programs.
- Lesson Five: Program participants and others experts in the arts and education should define benchmarks and criteria for high-quality teaching and learning in the arts.
- Lesson Six: There is no one best practice or method to account for the value of arts as education.
- Lesson Seven: Who should teach the arts? The troika plus.
- Lesson Eight: Professional development – clinical support for developing the critical mass.
- Lesson Nine: Community arts partnerships – uneven stakes and the challenge of true collaboration.
- Lesson Ten: Moving from pockets of excellence to a critical, sustainable mass.
- Lesson Eleven: Arts advocacy as a double-edged sword.
- Lesson Twelve: Don't forget the money, honey, but try not to depend on the kindness of strangers. (pp. 84–93)

Finally, from lessons learned from previous arts education policies, Remer (2010) offered eight steps to help transform those lessons into effective local arts education policies.

1. Step 1: Identify and prepare a working group. The group should include stakeholders, arts consultants, community representatives, parents, and students. Small groups work should be done prior to moving to the larger group to address the twelve policies previously listed.
2. Step 2: Investigate the tasks. Note should be taken or consider the use of a recording device.
3. Step 3: Take periodic breaks to bring the group together for sharing and reflection. The sense of community and ownership is reinforced.
4. Step 4: Continue small group discussions to identify the gaps. Answers to burning questions should be posted throughout the meeting room.
5. Step 5: Locate and identify additional assistance. Group members should be prepared to appoint policy writing to a smaller group.
6. Step 6: Field-test the policies. This process should be conducted within a four to six month time period.
7. Step 7: Put the policies into action and keep them alive. A policy support committee is recommended to monitor compliance and provide technical assistance as needed.
8. Step 8: Share your policy process. Document every step of the process and willingly share the fruits of your hard labor.

Slavkin and Crespin (2000) studied issues and challenges of rebuilding arts education in an urban school setting, the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD). Slavkin and Crespin (2000) focused on trying to understand how the arts must compete for time, money and other

resources. Being the second-largest local school district in the United States and serving over one million K–12 and adult education students, the annual budget for the 1999–2000 school year was $7.1 billion. A sluggish economy and budget cuts nearly eliminated arts education in the LAUSD.

> By 1995 arts education had all but disappeared as a formal part of the elementary school curriculum. Middle and high schools continued to offer some arts courses as electives. The cadre of traveling music teachers had dwindled to the point that a school could expect music instruction only every other year and even then in select classroom. No visual arts specialists were funded by the district. Many schools chose to raise private funds to support some arts instruction. (Slavkin & Crespin, 2000, p. 20)

In the same year following an energized lobbying campaign by music educators, the school voted to increase the number of music teachers which would allow for every elementary school to have music instruction each year rather than every other year. The LAUSD also adopted student learning standards and defined what students needed to know in each subject. What was unique about the process was the inclusion of visual and performing arts in the standards process. These areas were not included in other school districts.

With the support of the local school board, particularly one strong advocate for arts education on that board, a pledge to the restoration of arts education became a major priority. A Blue Ribbon Committee on Arts Education was formed comprising of leaders from the major arts organizations in the Los Angeles, including the presidents of the J. Paul Getty Trust and the California Institute for the Arts. The first task for the committee was to refine the proposed learning standards for theatre, music, visual arts, and dance. In March 1998, by a vote of 7–0, the board of education adopted the proposed student learning standards for the arts. In another

7–0 vote, the school board approved an increase of $2.4 million to begin the process of restoring the arts. The district staff, through recommendations from the Blue Ribbon Committee worked to develop a long-range plan for arts education. Once the long-range plan was developed it was presented to the board of education for approval. Slavkin and Crespin (2000) reported that at its July 1999 meeting, the school board approved the ten-year plan for arts education as well as an additional $4.7 million to pay for implementation in the 1999–2000 school year (p.21).

The rebuilding of arts education was successful on many fronts due to the support of school leaders and community leaders, and the ongoing collaboration between the district staff, administration, and community. Slavkin and Crespin (2000) suggested lessons that might be applied to other school districts seeking to rebuild their arts education programs.

- An advocate on the school board is essential: Advocates for arts education must spend time cultivations one or more school board members who can serve as a champion for the arts.
- Build and external political constituency: School boards are democratic institutions and are highly responsive to external political forces.
- Link the arts to major district priorities/goals: In LAUSD. The inclusion of the arts in the overall plan to design and implement learning standards proved invaluable. Policymakers need to understand how arts education fits in to the overall priorities of the school system.
- Find and advocate among the senior staff of the district: Advocates for arts education need to build an effective partnership with key district staff in the decision-making roles. Beyond the staff that directs arts programs, these efforts must also include ties

to more senior leaders with a role in shaping instructional and budgetary priorities. (Slavkin & Crespin, 2000, p. 21)

Administrators' Perspectives

School leaders and administrators play a key role in the success of arts education. The support of school board members, superintendents, principals, and curriculum leaders is vital, as these individuals are involved in decisions regarding funding, curriculum, scheduling, and personnel.

Abril and Gault (2006) explored the principal's perspectives of music in the elementary school. Principals play crucial roles music and other arts programs. The decisions made by the building level principals determined the of outcome music programs. Abril and Gault (2006) state:

> Within a school, the principal often facilitates the implementation of the curriculum and monitors its ability to meet broad educational goals. Teachers often depend on the support of the principal to meet their specific objectives and enhance their programs. This assistance is especially crucial in music education programs, where the building principal can help establish schoolwide support for the music curriculum (p. 6).

Abril and Gault (2006) surveyed 350 active elementary principals to investigate their perceptions of the elementary general music curriculum. The survey consisted of four sections. Section 1 collected demographic information. Section 2 collected data on music learning outcomes, modeled after the National Standards in Music Education. In Section 3, principals answered a list of broad educational goals that might arise from music instructions in various conditions. The final section consisted of two open-ended items for principals to respond (pp. 10–11). The instrument used for the current study was adapted from Abril and Gault (2006).

According to Abril and Gault (2006), the survey results by school setting (rural, urban, suburban) revealed similar means and variances in these groups. The question regarding principal's perceptions on music learning outcomes as they were currently being met revealed positive results. The high ratings indicated that principals in the study placed a high value of the standards used. Principals also considered listening to be an essential skill in music and other subjects. The connections between music and other subject, such as writing, history, and multicultural studies received high marks from principals.

In regards to broad educational goals, principals considered music education to have a great potential for meeting musical and nonmusical goals. Principals were keenly aware of certain factors that negatively affected the music program. A large percentage of principals listed No Child Left Behind, budgets, standardized tests, and scheduling as having a negative impact on their music programs. In the open-ended questions section, principals offered solutions that would lead to greater support of music programs. This included increased awareness to stakeholders (school board members, upper administration, and parents). Principals also considered teachers, students and parents to have a positive effect on the music program. The most positive result, most principals surveyed reported that music education was a required component of the elementary curriculum.

Administrators' past experiences in the arts have a major impact on their decisions surrounding arts education. Penning (2008) described her first meeting with Carlos Garcia, Superintendent of the San Francisco Unified School District, and his views of how the arts contributed to his success.

> He attributes his success to involvement with arts. Experience with the arts allowed him to think about life in a different way and gave him an outlet that he would not otherwise have had. (Penning, 2008, p. 282)

Superintendent Garcia's own words regarding his relationship to the arts were encouraging.

> When I went to school, it was pre-Proposition 13 in California; we had arts classes in every grade. I loved it. The arts provided a way for me to express myself and be creative; they provide a basis for students to learn thinking outside of the box, working in groups and taking calculated, creative risks. (Penning, 2008, p. 282)

Because of his personal experiences with the arts, Superintendent Garcia saw the arts as a method of closing the achievement gap for students in underachieving schools and neighborhoods of San Francisco. Before assuming the position of superintendent, Garcia was a teacher and principal. His incorporation of creative and artistic experiences, as well as relevant learning, improved test scores and parental involvement.

Summary

This section provided an overview of literature on the fine arts, the history of arts education, benefits of arts programs, trends of the past decade and the effects on arts programs, and school administrators' beliefs, actions and policies affecting the arts. The history of the education, the curriculum, and the arts in the United States was discussed. Discussion surrounding the arts was traced back to the time of the Greek Philosopher Aristocles Plato. The arts, as part of the American curriculum, as advocated by the American Philosopher John Dewey was also discussed.

The discussion of the benefits of arts programs included the following: students involved in the arts generally score better in school and on SATs than students not involved in the arts; the

link between the arts and broad public purposes; there is a need to access the effects of No Child Left Behind and there is a need for clarification as articulated by two U. S. Department of Education Secretaries; and there are positive affects the arts have on the developing brain.

Trends that have had an effect on the arts were also discussed. The NCLB Act of 2001 has had an adverse effect on the arts including the need for school districts to meet AYP, scheduling, high-stake tests, and funding. The model that one-size-fits-all was challenged regarding the goal of all students being at or above proficient level on state tests in reading, math, and science by 2014.

Finally, the beliefs and actions of school administrators and the effect of local policies on the arts were examined. Administrators involved in the arts as students tended to place a higher priority to the arts in their school districts. Those administrators were also instrumental in recommending policies to the school board that led to effective and sustainable arts education programs.

CHAPTER III. METHODS AND PROCEDURES

Several research studies suggest that there are many benefits for students who participate in the fine arts (Gee, 1999; Respress & Lutfi, 2006; Penning, 2008; Winner et al., 2008). Results from these studies indicate that fine arts programs are also beneficial for schools and communities. Superintendents' perceptions and behaviors play a significant role in the degree to which fine arts are offered in their school district (Andero, 2000; Paige, 2004; Penning, 2008; Remer, 2010; Slavkin & Crespin, 2000; Spohn, 2008).

The purpose of this study was to investigate superintendents' perceptions of the arts education under ideal and current conditions. This chapter describes the research design, participants, development of instrumentation, data collection procedures, and data analysis of this study.

Research Questions

The following questions guided the study:

1. To what extent do superintendents' perceptions of arts education differ under ideal and current conditions?

2. From the superintendents' perspective what factors influence the offering and/or quality of arts education in their respective school districts?

3. To what extent does the quality of personal experiences with the fine arts correlate with superintendents' perceptions of the arts education outcomes under ideal conditions?

Access and Permission

The protocol for this study was approved as expedited by the Auburn University Institutional Review Board Office of Research Compliance – Human Subjects (see Appendix A for Institutional Review Board Approval). Participation in this study was voluntary. Participants were not part of a vulnerable population.

Design of Study

A quantitative cross-sectional/correlation survey design method was used to conduct this study. T-test, descriptive statistics, and correlation analysis research methodology were used to investigate whether superintendents' actions and behaviors are aligned with their reported beliefs regarding schools' fine arts programs. The survey used in this study (see Appendix B) was adapted from a survey used by Abril and Gault (2006) studying the principal's perspective on the state of music in elementary school (see Appendix C).

Participants

The participant population chosen for this project was superintendents of public school systems from the Southeastern region of the United States including, Alabama, Florida, Georgia, and Mississippi. All public school superintendents in this region were selected to receive an invitation for participation. Superintendents' participation was voluntary. A list of superintendents was compiled using information from states' Departments of Education resources, which included names, addresses, telephone numbers, and email addresses. An invitation to participate was sent via email to superintendents requesting their participation in this study (see Appendix D). An information letter regarding the study was attached to the email. A link to the survey was provided at the bottom of the letter (see Appendix E). Two follow-up email reminders were sent to participants requesting their participation (see Appendix

F). Sampling continued until saturation was reached. One hundred thirty-two public school superintendents in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, and Mississippi agreed to participate. In the state of Alabama, the researcher was assisted by the School Superintendents of Alabama (SSA) which provided an initial information letter regarding the study, the link to participate in the survey, and one follow-up reminder in their weekly newsletter. In the other three states, a total of 407 initial requests to participate and one follow-up request were emailed by the researcher to public school superintendents. A second email and final follow-up reminder was sent to all 543 public school superintendents requesting their participation in the study. Sampling continued until the rate of return tapered off and response rate was adequate at 28%. Because the results were anonymous, the number of participants from each state was unknown.

Instrumentation

The survey for this study was adapted from a survey used by Abril and Gault (2006) studying the principal's perspective on the state of music in elementary school. Abril and Gault (2006) explored principals' beliefs regarding general music education in the elementary school. The survey for this study was expanded beyond elementary music education to include all fine arts programs within the school district. These fine arts programs include art, band, choral, drama, drawing, general music, orchestra, painting, photography, and sculpture. Because this study explored elementary and secondary arts education, and various fine arts programs throughout the school district, superintendents were selected due to their assumed knowledge of the school district's arts education curriculum. In addition, superintendents have great access to data regarding NCLB, budgets, scheduling, standardized test scores, student, parent and teacher demographics. The survey was also adapted to gather demographic data regarding superintendents' past experiences in fine arts activities.

The survey was comprised of five sections (broad arts education goals for all school districts; variables currently influencing arts education in your school district; broad arts education goals for your school district; superintendent's fine arts experiences; and school district's arts education demographics). In section one, data were collected regarding broad fine arts goals for all school districts under ideal conditions. Participants responded to 14 items (develop creativity, foster critical thinking/improve intelligence, facilitate learning in other subjects…) using a five point Likert-type scale (strongly disagree = 1; disagree = 2; neither agree nor disagree = 3; agree = 4; strongly agree = 5). In section two, data pertaining to the different variables that currently influence the superintendents' capacity to offer fine arts programs in school district were collected. Participants responded to 15 items (No Child Left Behind, budgets/finances, standardized test…) using a five point Likert-type scale (strongly negative = 1; negative = 2; no effect = 3; positive = 4; strongly positive = 5). In section three, data were collected regarding broad fine arts goals for the superintendent's school district under current conditions. Participants were asked to respond to 14 items (teach students to work cooperatively, raise self-esteem, provide community outreach…) using a five point Likert-type scale (never = 1; rarely = 2; sometimes = 3; often = 4; all of the time = 5). Section four was used to collect data on the quality of superintendents' experiences in the fine arts. Participants were directed to respond to 3 items (How would you rate your experiences in the arts education instruction you received as a student in elementary school? How would you rate your experiences in the arts education instruction you received as a student in secondary school? How would you rate your experiences in structured fine arts activities in which you participated as a child outside of school?) using a seven point Likert-type scale (extremely negative = 1; negative = 2; somewhat negative = 3; no arts experience = 4; somewhat positive = 5; positive = 6; extremely positive = 7)

regarding their experiences in fine arts activities. Section five was used to collect demographic information on the superintendent and the school district. Participants were asked to respond to the following: Is arts education a graduation requirement in your school district? Which arts education subjects are taught in your school district? Approximately how much time is allotted per student to arts education in your school district? Where do the arts educations specialists primarily teach arts instruction in your school district? Who is responsible for providing arts education instruction in your school district? Who has input in hiring arts education instructors in your school district? How would you characterize the socio-economic status of most students in your school district? What best describe the location of your school district? What is the approximate number of students enrolled in your school district? How long have you been a superintendent? How long have you been a superintendent in the district?

Participants were also given the opportunity to respond to the three open-ended reflections: Please describe the greatest student benefits achieved through making the arts education available in your school district (see Appendix G); please describe the greatest obstacle(s) hampering your ability to fully support arts education in your school district (see Appendix H); and, what would make your school district's conditions ideal for arts education (see Appendix I)?

Validity and Reliability

The survey for this study was adapted from a survey used by Abril and Gault (2006) studying the principal's perspective on the state of music in elementary school. To construct the questions within the instrumentation, Abril and Gault (2006) referred to reviewed research, The National Standards in Music Education and discussion with local music teachers and principals (p. 10). The first draft was examined by professionals in areas of elementary administration,

elementary school music curriculum, arts policy, or research. The final draft was constructed with comments and suggestions from the aforementioned professionals.

The National Standards for Arts Education in the various arts disciplines (dance, music, theater, visual arts) were used to construct the questions within the instrumentation for the current study. These standards included developing creativity, self-expression, working cooperatively, critical thinking, raising self-esteem, improving intelligence, and transmitting cultural heritage. Professionals in areas of school administration, school music curriculum preparation, arts policy, or research, examined the Abril and Gault (2006) instrument and the instrument for this study to review the content validity. These professional, based on their knowledge of the National Standards for Arts Education, were also asked to view each item to determine if the items represented the interest as it was intended. The final instrument was revised to reflect the comments and suggestions of the professionals.

Abril and Gault (2006) used a Cronbach's alpha coefficient to measure internal consistency of the survey items ($\alpha = .86$). For the section of the survey to determined broad educational goals from musical instruction in current and ideal conditions ($\alpha = .96$). The section of the survey that asked principals to determined which variables currently affected their music programs ($\alpha = .79$). The overall alpha coefficient for the current study will be reported in chapter four.

Data Collection Procedures

This study employed an online/electronic survey and data collection process. Participants were able to participate where-ever they had internet access. The survey data were collected via the third party system Qualtrics. Qualtrics is the web-based survey software that allowed the

Auburn University campus community to easily create surveys, collect and store data, and produce reports.

Public school superintendents in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, and Mississippi were recruited via email. Superintendents who chose to participate were directed to an informed consent page on which they were able to 'click the survey link' thereby stating that they had read the informed consent and agreed to participate in the survey. Participants then completed the anonymous online survey "A Place in the Curriculum: Superintendents' Perceptions of Fine Arts Programs." The survey should not have taken more than 15 minutes of participants' time. Upon completion of data collection, statistical software (SPSS) was used to analyze all of the superintendents' responses for statistically significant relationships and descriptive statistics among variables. The results were added to the extant literature by providing information on the value of the arts throughout the United States.

Data Analysis

Quantitative methods were used in this study to examine the relationship between superintendents' perceptions of fine arts programs in an ideal world and current reality. To answer the first research question which asked, to what extent do superintendents' perceptions of arts education differ under ideal and current conditions, a paired sample t-test was conducted in order to assess conditions of the fine arts programs under "ideal conditions" and again under "current conditions." In addition, narrative content analyses were used in this study to examine create themes that developed based on responses to totally open-ended reflections.

The second research question, from the superintendents' perspective what factors influence the offering and/or quality of arts education in their respective school districts, was answered using descriptive statistics. Descriptive statistics summarized the data regarding

factors that influence the funding of fine arts in the superintendents' school districts. To answer the third research question, to what extent does the quality of personal experiences with the fine arts correlate with superintendents' perceptions of the arts education outcomes under ideal conditions, a correlation analysis was conducted. The correlation analysis measured the relationship between superintendents' personal experiences with the fine arts and their perceptions of current practices in the school district. Data were analyzed using statistical software (SPSS) for statistically significant relationships and descriptive statistics among variables. Narrative content analyses were used to interpret codes and themes that developed based on responses to open-ended reflections. According to Creswell (2012), coding is aggregating text into small categories of information. For this study, the researcher followed the method called in vivo codes, which is using the exact words used by the participants (Creswell, 2012). "Themes in qualitative research (also called categories) are broad units of information that consist of several codes aggregates to form a common idea" (Creswell, 2012, p. 186). These themes and subthemes, according to Creswell (2012), should be reduced to a small, manageable set of themes to be included I the final narrative.

Summary

This chapter addressed the methodology used to complete this study. The purpose of this study was to investigate superintendents' perceptions of the arts education under ideal and current conditions. The research design, participants, development of instrumentation, data collection procedures, and data analysis used in this study was described. The next chapter will present the results of this study. Findings will be organized around each of the research questions addressed.

CHAPTER IV. RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to investigate superintendents' perceptions of arts education under ideal and current conditions. The following research questions guided the study:

1. To what extent do superintendents' perceptions of arts education differ under ideal and current conditions?

2. From the superintendents' perspective what factors influence the offering and/or quality of arts education in their respective school districts?

3. To what extent does the quality of personal experiences with the fine arts correlate with superintendents' perceptions of the arts education outcomes under ideal conditions?

Participants

A total of 132 of the 543 public school superintendents in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, and Mississippi participated. Superintendents were invited via email to participate in this study. In the state of Alabama, the researcher was assisted by the School Superintendents of Alabama (SSA). In the other three states, the researcher contacted the superintendents via email requesting participation. Due to various reasons, some superintendents did not have an opportunity to access the survey. Many email addresses were incomplete and returned "delivery has failed to these recipients or groups" (n = 24) and some school districts required additional documentation for participation (n = 5). Of the 514 surveys received by superintendents, 145 were returned for a return rate of 28%. Of the 145 surveys started, 132 were completed for a

completion rate of 91%. Due to time constraints in their position, asking superintendents to respond to surveys may be challenging, and therefore, typically do not yield large return rates.

Section five of the survey instrument was used to collect school district's arts education and superintendent's demographics. Data gathered included superintendent's years of experience, school district's location, the socio-economic status of the student population, who is responsible for providing arts instructions, and the arts subjects taught within the school district. Table 1 shows years of experience served and years in present district.

Table 1

Years of Experience

Number of Years	Total Years Served	Years in Present District
Under 1	14	17
1 – Under 5	66	76
5 – Under 10	33	30
10 or More	19	9
Total Responses	132	132

The location of the school district may have a direct impact on the school district's funding sources. According to the Southern Education Foundation (2013) *Research Report Update a New Majority: Low Income Students in the South and Nation,* there is a higher percentage of low income students in towns and rural areas than there are in suburban areas. Additionally, the New American Foundation (2013) *School Finance: Federal, State, and Local K–12 Finance Overview,* states that schools in high poverty areas with less access to local

funding received additional funding from the state. Many rural school districts, even with additional state funding, may not receive the needed funds for their educational programs, including the arts. The majority of the respondents indicated their school districts were located in rural area. Table 2 data show the location of the school district.

Table 2

Location of School District

Location	Response	% of Respondents
Rural	100	76%
Suburban	21	16%
Urban	11	8%
Total	132	100%

Socio-economic status is an important demographic in school research. In this study a majority of the respondents indicated that most of their students are characterized as low socio-economic status. Table 3 data indicate the socio-economic status of most students in the school district.

Table 3

Socio-economic Status of Most Students

Socio-Economic Status	Response	% of Respondents
Low	83	64%
Medium	36	27%
High	6	5%
Greatly Varied	5	4%
Total	130	100%

The quality of arts instructions often depends on who is providing the instruction. A majority of the respondents indicated that arts instruction in their school district was provided by a fine arts subject area specialist. Thirty-two percent of the respondents indicated that arts instruction was provided by someone other than a fine arts subject area specialist. Table 4 data indicate who is responsible for providing arts education instruction.

Table 4

Responsible for Providing Arts Instruction

Arts Instructors	Response	% of Respondents
Fine Arts Subject Area Specialist	110	68%
Classroom Teachers	40	24%
Volunteers	12	7%
Instruction Not Provided	2	1%
Total*	164	

*Some respondents provided multiple answers.

Respondents were asked to indicate which arts education subjects are taught in their school district. Ninety-nine percent of respondents indicated band was offered and 85% indicated choral was offered. General arts 81%, general music 69%, and theater (acting/ technical) 61% also received high percentages. Table 5 data indicate the percentages of arts education subjects taught in the school district.

Table 5

Arts Education Subjects Taught

Subjects	N	% of Respondents
Band	129	99%
Choral	110	85%
General Arts	105	81%
General Music	90	69%
Theater (Acting/Technical)	79	61%
Music Appreciation/Theory	68	52%
Drawing	65	50%
Painting	56	43%
Photography	39	30%
Orchestra	29	22%
Sculpture	23	18%
Others	19	15%
Total*	812	100%
Total Respondents	130	

*Some respondents provided multiple answers.

Three research questions guided this study. Items within the survey instrument addressed all three research questions. The survey was comprised of five sections. In section one, data were collected regarding broad fine arts goals for all school districts under ideal conditions. Participants responded to 14 items using a five point Likert-type scale (strongly disagree = 1; disagree = 2; neither agree nor disagree = 3; agree = 4; strongly agree = 5). In section two, data pertaining to the different variables that currently influence the superintendents' capacity to offer fine arts programs in school district was collected. Participants responded to 15 items using a five point Likert-type scale (strongly negative = 1; negative = 2; no effect = 3; positive = 4; strongly positive = 5). In section three, data were collected regarding broad fine arts goals for the superintendent's school district under current conditions. Participants were asked to respond to 14 items using a five point Likert-type scale (never = 1; rarely = 2; sometimes = 3; often = 4; all of the time = 5). Section four was used to collect data on the quality of superintendents' experiences in the fine arts. Participants responded to 3 items using a seven point Likert-type scale (extremely negative = 1; negative = 2; somewhat negative = 3; no arts experience = 4; somewhat positive = 5; positive = 6; extremely positive = 7) regarding their experiences in fine arts activities. Section five was used to collect demographic information on the superintendent and the school district.

Reliability analysis for the four sections of the survey (ideal conditions, capacity to offer arts education, current conditions, and personal experience) yielded alpha coefficients that ranged from acceptable to excellent. Cronbach's alphas for ideal conditions, capacity to offer arts education, current conditions, and positive experience were .98, .82, .95, and .66, respectively. Reliability statistics for ideal conditions are indicated in Table 6.

Table 6

Reliability Statistics for Ideal Conditions

Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items
0.98	14

Reliability statistics for capacity to offer arts education are indicated in Table 7.

Table 7

Reliability Statistics for Capacity to Offer Arts Education

Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items
0.82	15

Reliability statistics for current conditions are indicated in Table 8.

Table 8

Reliability Statistics for Current Conditions

Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items
0.95	14

Reliability statistics for personal experience are indicated in Table 9.

Table 9

Reliability Statistics for Personal Experience

Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items
0.66	3

It must be noted that the data did not meet the assumptions of normality. There were minor violations of normality based on kurtosis. This may be attributed to the fact that the superintendents who responded to the survey most likely have a positive perception of arts education.

Research Question One

The first research question asked "To what extent do superintendents' perceptions of arts education differ under ideal and current conditions?" Two 5-ponit Likert-type sections were designed to address this question: (1) "I believe that Arts Education in all schools, under ideal conditions, has the capacity to" and (2) "I believe that Arts Education in MY school district, under current conditions, serves to." Each section listed 14 items for superintendents to respond to regarding "Broad Arts Education Goals for all School Districts" and "Broad Arts Education Goals for your School Districts." The 14 items were: (1) Develop creativity in students, (2) Foster critical thinking/Improve intelligence, (3) Facilitate learning in other subjects, (4) Transmit cultural heritage, (5) Improve tolerance, understanding and acceptance of other cultures, (6) Teach students to work cooperatively, (7) Develop increased sensitivity to the arts, (8) Promote future involvement in the arts, (9) Prepare students to understand the value of fine arts in their lives, (10) Promote life-long learning, (11) Raise self-esteem, (12) Facilitate self-expression, (13) Enhance school district's image, and (14) Provide community outreach.

In order to assess whether or not superintendents' perceptions of arts education differ across ideal and current conditions at a statistically significant level, the researcher completed a two-level within-subjects ANOVA with superintendents' perceptions as the dependent variable. The researcher calculated an over mean for current conditions and ideal conditions. Alpha was set at .05, and results were statistically significant, $F(1,131) = 12.29$, $p = .001$, with the mean score for current conditions lower than that of ideal conditions (see Table 10 for means and standard deviations). Thus, the results suggest a significant gap between superintendents' perceptions of arts education under current and ideal conditions.

Table 10

Means, Standard Deviations and N on Perceptions under Ideal Conditions and Current Conditions

Conditions	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Ideal Conditions	132	4.30	0.85
Current Conditions	132	3.98	0.59

To explore the results further, the researcher conducted a frequencies analysis to compare arts education under ideal conditions and current conditions. The results for the frequencies by percentages for the paired samples are presented in Table 11.

Table 11

Frequencies by Percentages for Paired Samples (Ideal and Current Conditions)

Items	1	2	3	4	5	Σ 4 & 5
Develop creativity in students (Ideal)	4.8	0	0	22.8	70.3	93.1
Develop creativity in students (Current)	.7	0	11.7	55.2	23.4	78.6
Facilitate self-expression (Ideal)	4.1	0	.7	31.0	62.1	93.1
Facilitate self-expression (Current)	.7	0	8.3	48.3	33.1	81.4
Facilitate learning in other subject (Ideal)	4.1	0	2.8	40.0	51.0	91.0
Facilitate learning in other subject (Current)	.7	2.8	17.9	52.4	17.2	69.6
Foster critical thinking/Improve intelligence (Ideal)	4.8	0	2.8	31.0	59.3	90.3
Foster critical thinking/Improve intelligence (Current)	.7	2.8	11.7	53.8	22.1	75.9
Develop increased sensitivity to the arts (Ideal)	4.8	0	2.8	38.6	51.7	90.3
Develop increased sensitivity to the arts (Current)	.7	0	13.8	51.7	24.8	76.5
Teach students to work cooperatively (Ideal)	4.1	0	4.8	46.9	42.1	89.0
Teach students to work cooperatively (Current)	.7	.7	18.6	49.0	22.1	71.1
Raise self-esteem (Ideal)	4.8	.7	9.7	37.2	45.5	82.7
Raise self-esteem (Current)	.7	1.4	19.3	50.3	19.3	69.6
Develop increased sensitivity to the arts (Ideal)	4.8	0	2.8	38.6	51.7	90.3
Develop increased sensitivity to the arts (Current)	.7	0	13.8	51.7	24.8	76.5
Prepare students to understand the value of fine arts in their lives (Ideal)	4.1	0	2.1	40.0	51.7	91.7
Prepare students to understand the value of fine arts in their lives (Current)	.7	0	15.9	51.0	23.4	73.4
Promote future involvement in the arts (Ideal)	4.1	.7	3.4	39.3	50.3	89.3
Promote future involvement in the arts (Current)	.7	1.4	13.1	54.5	21.4	75.9
Transmit cultural heritage (Ideal)	4.1	0	4.8	41.4	47.6	89.0
Transmit cultural heritage (Current)	.7	2.1	33.8	40.7	13.8	54.5
Enhance school district’s image (Ideal)	4.8	0	6.2	37.9	49.0	86.9
Enhance school district’s image (Current)	1.4	2.8	13.8	40.0	33.1	73.1
Provide community outreach (Ideal)	4.8	.7	8.3	36.6	46.9	83.5

(table continues)

Table 11 (continued)

Items	1	2	3	4	5	Σ 4 & 5
Provide community outreach (Current)	1.4	1.4	20.0	42.1	25.5	67.6
Improve tolerance, understanding and acceptance of other cultures (Ideal)	4.1	0	11.7	49.0	33.1	82.1
Improve tolerance, understanding and acceptance of other cultures (Current)	.7	4.1	31.7	39.3	14.5	53.8

The first research question sought to answer how superintendents' perceptions of arts education differed under ideal and current conditions. In section five of the survey, superintendents were asked in the open-ended reflection "What would make your school district's conditions ideal for Arts Education?" Many superintendents stated more funding would help make their school district's conditions "ideal" for arts education. Of the 132 surveys completed, 105 participants entered answers for a total of 144 responses. In examining the responses to the totally open-ended reflections, the researcher observed several common themes that permeated throughout the answers. Themes that evolved were centered on funding, teachers, scheduling, legislature support, parental and community support, facilities, and NCLB. Subthemes that developed under funding were related to the ability to hire more teachers, improve or add more facilities, and add arts education at all levels. Subthemes that developed under teachers were related to teachers' qualification and the number of teachers. The subthemes the developed under scheduling were related to more flexibility in the ability to offer arts education and after-school activities. The subthemes the evolved under legislature support were related to more funding and state mandates. Subthemes under parental and community support revolved around more parental support, the use of community arts facilities and community planning. Subthemes that evolved under facilities were related to adequate space and

technology to support and enhance arts education programs. Under NCLB and standardized testing, the subthemes were related to the repeal of NCLB, high qualified teachers, and less standardized tests. Table 12 lists the superintendents' responses to this open-ended reflection including, the theme of the responses, the number of responses, and an example of the responses.

Table 12

Superintendents' Open-Ended Reflection Responses

Themes	Number of Responses	Exemplar
Funding	80 (55%)	Restore state level funding
Teachers	14 (10%)	More highly qualified teachers
Scheduling	14 (10%)	More flexibility with scheduling time
Legislature Support	13 (9%)	Line item from Alabama Legislature
Parental/Community Support	8 (6%)	Community support
Facilities	8 (6%)	Facility improvement and technology
NCLB/Test Requirements	7 (4%)	Obviously not having NCLB in place
Total*	144 (100%)	
Total Respondents	105	

*Some respondents provided multiple answers.

Research Question Two

The second research question asked "From the superintendents' perspective what factors influence the offering and/or quality of arts education in their respective school districts?" Descriptive statistics were conducted to answer the second research question. A 5-point Likert-

type section with 15 items was designed to address this question. The 15 items that were analyzed to answer the research question are: (1) No Child Left Behind, (2) the economy, (3) students, (4) parents, (5) budgets/finances, (6) scheduling, (7) standardized tests, (8) school level administrators, (9) fine arts teachers, (10) other classroom teachers, (11) other government regulations, (12) fine arts coordinator and/or other central office administrator, (13) state performance assessment evaluations, (14) grade level of arts instruction, and (15) interdisciplinary collaboration between the arts and other subject areas.

Participants were asked to respond to the following statement: "Under current conditions, to what degree do the following factors influence your capacity to offer Arts Education, and /or influence the quality of Arts Education in your school district." The most frequent strongly negative and negative responses were the economy, budgets/finances, standardized tests, other government regulations, No Child Left Behind, scheduling, and state performance assessment evaluations. Based on the data, it can be concluded that superintendents believe providing more funding for arts education, which would allow them to hire more arts teachers, would not only enhance their ability to offer quality arts education in their districts, but also make the their condition more ideal. Table 13 lists the frequency of strongly negative and negative responses. Table 14 lists the frequency of strongly positive and positive responses.

Table 13

Frequencies of Strongly Negative /Negative Factors Influencing Capacity to Offer Arts Education

Factors	Frequency of Response Strongly Negative/Negative (Total Responses)
The Economy	46 / 69 (115 of 137 = 84%)
Budgets/Finances	49 / 62 (111 of 137 = 81%)
Standardized Tests	13 / 63 (76 of 137 = 56%)
Other Government Regulations	11 / 61 (72 of 136 = 53%)
No Child Left Behind	19 / 43 (62 of 136 = 46%)
Scheduling	5 / 52 (57 of 137 = 42%)
State Performance Assessment Evaluations	10 / 45 (55 of 137 = 14%)

Table 14

Frequencies of Strongly Positive /Positive Factors Influencing Capacity to Offer Arts Education

Factors	Frequency of Response Strongly Positive/Positive (Total Responses)
Fine Arts Teachers	62 / 53 (115 of 137 = 84%)
Students	37 / 78 (115 of 137 = 84%)
Parents	26 / 87 (113 of 135 = 84%)
School Level Administrators	22 / 81 (103 of 135 = 77%)

Research Question Three

The third research question asked "To what extent does the quality of personal experiences with the fine arts correlate with superintendents' perceptions of the arts education outcomes under ideal conditions?" A Pearson correlation coefficient was completed to address the relationship between superintendents' personal experiences with the fine arts and their perceptions of arts education in ideal conditions, arts education in current conditions, and the capacity to offer arts education. There was a positive correlation between personal experiences and current conditions. Positive personal experience with the arts in elementary or secondary school, and outside of school, also had a positive view of their current conditions for arts education in their school districts. However, there was no correlation between personal experience and ideal conditions, and personal experiences and capacity to offer arts education. Personal experiences with the arts had no effect on superintendents' view of arts education in ideal conditions or their capacity to offer arts education in their school districts. Table 15 lists the correlation between superintendents' personal experiences in the arts and their perceptions.

Table 15

Correlation between Personal Experience and Superintendents' Perceptions

Superintendents' Perceptions	*r*	*n*	*p*
Current Conditions	0.177*	132	0.042
Ideal Conditions	-0.122	134	0.159
Capacity	-0.090	133	0.304

* Correlation is significant at the level of 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Summary

This chapter provided a review of the results from a survey used to answer the three research questions that guided this study. The survey used for this study was comprised of five sections. In section one, data were collected regarding broad fine arts goals for all school districts under ideal conditions. Participants responded to 14 items using a five point Likert-type scale (strongly disagree = 1; disagree = 2; neither agree nor disagree = 3; agree = 4; strongly agree = 5). In section two, data pertaining to the different variables that currently influence the superintendents' capacity to offer fine arts programs in school district was collected. Participants responded to 15 items using a five point Likert-type scale (strongly negative = 1; negative = 2; no effect = 3; positive = 4; strongly positive = 5). In section three, data were collected regarding broad fine arts goals for the superintendent's school district under current conditions. Participants were asked to respond to 14 items using a five point Likert-type scale (never = 1; rarely = 2; sometimes = 3; often = 4; all of the time = 5). Section four was used to collect data on the quality of superintendents' experiences in the fine arts. Participants responded to 3 items using a seven point Likert-type scale (extremely negative = 1; negative = 2; somewhat negative = 3; no arts experience = 4; somewhat positive = 5; positive = 6; extremely positive = 7) regarding their experiences in fine arts activities. Section five was used to collect demographic information on the superintendent and the school district.

The first research questions addressed the extent to which superintendents' perceptions of arts education differ under ideal and current conditions. a two-level within-subjects ANOVA with superintendents' perceptions as the dependent variable. Alpha was set at .05, and results were statistically significant, $F(1,131) = 12.29$, $p = .001$, with the mean score for current conditions (3.98) lower than that of ideal conditions (4.30). In addition, the researcher conducted

a frequencies analysis to compare arts education under ideal conditions and current conditions. Of the 14 items used to answer this question, under ideal conditions, develop creativity in students, facilitate self-expression, facilitate learning in other subjects, and foster critical thinking/improve intelligence received the highest percentage points for combined agree and strongly agree, at 93.1%, 93.1%, 91.0%, and 90.3% respectively. In the open-ended reflections, the researcher also asked participating superintendents what would make their current conditions for arts education more ideal. Fifty-five percent of the respondents reported that funding would make their current conditions more ideal for arts education in their school districts. Only 4% of the respondents reported that NCLB/Standardized would make their current conditions more ideal for arts education in their school districts.

The second research question explored factors that influenced the offering and/or quality of arts education in superintendents' respective school districts. Descriptive statistics conducted to answer the second research question. Of the 15 items used to answer the research question, the economy, and budget and finances received the highest number of strongly negative and negative responses from superintendents, at 115 of 137 and 111 of 137 (84% and 81%) respectively. Additionally, fine arts teachers and students received the highest number of strongly positive and positive responses from superintendents, each at 115 of 137.

To answer the third research questions, superintendents were asked three questions to rate their personal experiences in the arts, first as a student in elementary school, second as a student in secondary school, and third was structured arts activities in which they participated outside of school. A Pearson correlation coefficient was completed to address the relationship between superintendents' personal experiences with the fine arts and their perceptions of arts education in ideal conditions, arts education in current conditions, and the capacity to offer arts education.

There was a positive correlation between personal experiences and current conditions, $r = 0.177$, $n = 132$, $p = 0.042$. However, there was no correlation between personal experience and ideal conditions, $r = -0.122$, $n = 134$, $p = 0.159$; and personal experiences and capacity to offer arts education, $r = -0.090$, $n = 133$, $p = 0.304$.

The summary of findings, conclusions, implications, and recommendations for further studies is presented in Chapter Five.

CHAPTER V. DISCUSSION

This chapter summarizes and discusses the results of the study. Implication and recommendations for further research are also presented.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to investigate superintendents' perceptions of arts education under ideal and current conditions. The study explored the correlation between administrators' beliefs and their actual practice regarding arts education. Administrators' actions directly or indirectly impact school curriculum. Curriculum decisions are based on the availability of funding and other resources, and administrators' priorities. Administrators' priorities are often shaped by their beliefs which again impact their actions. This study sought to explore superintendents' beliefs and their actions regarding arts programs, and how current trends and the economy may relate to the offering of the arts programs in the school districts. The survey used in this study was adapted from a survey used by Abril and Gault (2006) studying the principal's perspective on the state of music in elementary school. For this study the survey was developed to gather information from superintendents regarding their personal experiences with the arts and their perceptions of arts education under ideal condition and current conditions, and factors influencing their capacity to offer arts education in their school districts.

The participant population chosen for this project was superintendents of public school systems from the Southeastern region of the United States including, Alabama, Florida, Georgia, and Mississippi. All public school superintendents in this region were selected to receive an

invitation for participation. Superintendents' participation was voluntary. There are a total of 543 public school superintendents in the four states selected for this study. There were only 132 surveys completed. It cannot nor should not be assumed that the findings in this study reflect the perceptions of all superintendents in the four participating states or other regions throughout the United States. Since participation was voluntary, many superintendents chose not to participate. The findings in this study revealed that participating superintendents had a positive perception of arts education. However, superintendents who have a less than positive view may have opted out of this study. As a result the findings may have been skewed to indicate more positive perceptions of arts education. Superintendents' beliefs may impact their actions in the decisions regarding funding, curriculum, personnel, and other areas that may affect arts education (Abril & Gault, 2006; Penning, 2008; Remer, 2010; Slavkin & Crespin).

Research Questions

The following questions guided the study:

1. To what extent do superintendents' perceptions of arts education differ under ideal and current conditions?
2. From the superintendents' perspective what factors influence the offering and/or quality of arts education in their respective school districts?
3. To what extent does the quality of personal experiences with the fine arts correlate with superintendents' perceptions of the arts education outcomes under ideal conditions?

Discussion

Extent Perceptions Differ Under Ideal and Current Conditions

To address the first research questions, the researcher completed a two-level within-subject ANOVA with superintendents' perceptions as the dependent variable to assess whether or not superintendents' perceptions of arts education differ at a statistically significant level. Alpha was set at .05, and results were statistically significant, $F(1,131) = 12.29$, $p = .001$. The mean score for current conditions was lower than that of ideal conditions. In addition, two paired-samples t-test was conducted to compare arts education under ideal conditions and current conditions.

There was a significant difference in the scores for eight of the 14 items. Of those eight item, five items were highly significantly different with $p = < .001$. Those items were: develop creativity in students, foster critical thinking/improve intelligence, facilitate learning in other subject, transmit cultural heritage, improve tolerance, understanding and acceptance of other cultures. Three of the 14 items were moderately significantly different: develop increased sensitivity to the arts $p = .002$, promote future involvement in the arts $p = .003$, and prepare students to understand the value of fine arts in their lives $p = .009$.

Surprisingly were the results for the item enhance school district's image with $p = .113$. With many of the superintendents reporting their school districts were in rural setting, one would believe the arts programs would have high visibility. The type of arts programs offered in the school districts may have affected the level of significance. In many cases, performing arts programs such as band and choir may receive higher levels of visibility than visual arts programs such as drawing and photography. School districts that receive high visibility through their performing arts programs may see the arts as a way to enhance the school district's image. Or it

may be that some of the arts programs with high visibility are not performing at the desired level of the superintendent, and therefore, may not enhance the school district's image. This may explain why some superintendents responded in the open-ended reflections that "funding to hire talented art instructors" or "obviously not having NCLB in place along with a highly skilled and sufficient teacher pool" would make their school district ideal for arts education.

From the data results in this study, a conclusion can be drawn that public school superintendents have an overall positive perception of arts education. Section one of the survey gathered information regarding broad arts education goals in all school districts. Under ideal conditions, the analysis revealed that a majority of the respondents (ranging from 82% to 95%) agreed or strongly agreed with the broad arts education goals for all schools. Ninety-five percent of the respondents believed that arts education has the capacity to develop creativity in students and facilitate self-expression; 93% felt that arts education has the capacity to promote future involvement in the arts; 92% believed that arts education has the capacity to foster critical thinking/improve intelligence, facilitate learning in other subjects, and teach students to work cooperatively. While there was an overall positive perception of arts education from participating superintendents, it leads to wanting to know the perceptions of the superintendents who chose not to participate in the study. Several questions have risen from the findings of this study: 1) from the superintendents' perspective, should the arts be considered as a core academic subject, and why or why not?; 2) from the superintendents' perspective, what is the role of arts education in the school curriculum?; 3) do the arts drain resources from sports and other extra-curricular activities; and 4) how do schools' athletic budgets compared to the arts education budgets?

Section three of the survey gathered information regarding broad arts education goals in the superintendents' school districts analyzing the same 14 items that were examined under ideal conditions. Under current conditions, the analysis again revealed that a majority of the respondents (ranging from 59% to 90%) felt that the broad arts education goal in their schools were achieved often or all of the time. Ninety percent of the respondents believed that arts education in their schools served to develop facilitate self-expression; 86% felt that arts education in their schools serve to develop creativity; 84% felt that arts education in their schools serves to teach students to work cooperatively; 83% believed that arts education in their schools serves to foster critical thinking/improve intelligence and develop increased sensitivity to the arts; 76% felt that arts education in their schools serves to facilitate learning in other subjects and raise self-esteem. Many superintendents believed arts education is important in fostering critical thinking, improving intelligence, and facilitating learning in other subject. When school administrators possess such high regard for the arts in improving these higher order thinking and learning skills, then the arts deserve to be included in the school curriculum.

It appears that participating superintendents view the arts as a critical link to student achievement and closing the achievement gap. The arts may be the magnet to get students in the classroom. The arts may also be the tool to get students "hooked-on-learning." Humans tend to be more engaged in activities that we like. And the threat of having the "things" that we like taken away may encourage us to work harder to hold onto those things. The arts may be the catalyst to encourage students to work and be successful in an academic setting in order to maintain their participation in the arts, the "thing" we don't want taken away. If students are not in the classroom they will not be fully engaged in the learning process. The arts may keep them engaged.

It is important to note that research supports the views of the participating superintendents regarding the broad educational goals of arts education (Gee, 1999; Gullatt, 2008; Nathan, 2012; O'Fallon, 2006; Paige, 2004; Respress & Lutfi, 2006; Schwartz & Pace, 2008; Winner & Hetland, 2008). Winner and Hetland (2008) explored the linkage of arts education to improved thinking skills and the connections between the arts and the world outside of the classroom. Ninety percent of the superintendents that participated in this study believed that the arts have the capacity to foster critical thinking and improve intelligence. Under ideal conditions, participating superintendents feel that fostering critical thinking and improving intelligence, developing creativity in students, facilitating self-expression, and facilitating learning in other subjects are high priority goals for arts education in all schools. However, under current conditions, superintendents may feel that these arts educational goals are not being met at their desired levels. The findings indicated the mean score for current conditions was lower than that of ideal conditions. One possibility for the difference may the reality of current conditions in some superintendents' school districts. We oftentimes speak of how much better our current situation might be in an ideal world. For many superintendents, having the vision of grandeur in ideal conditions may keep them thinking about the possibilities of what the state of arts education can be.

In section five of the survey, superintendents were asked in the open-ended reflection "What would make your school district's conditions ideal for Arts Education?" Many superintendents stated more funding would help make their school district's conditions "ideal" for arts education. Themes that evolved from the totally open-ended reflections were centered on funding, teachers, scheduling, legislature support, parental and community support, facilities, and NCLB. Subthemes that developed under funding were related to the ability to hire more

teachers, improve or add more facilities, and add arts education at all levels. Subthemes that developed under teachers were related to teachers' qualification and the number of teachers. An overwhelming 55% of respondents reported more funding would make their current conditions more ideal. Ten percent of the respondents also reported more arts teachers would make their current conditions more ideal. Garner (2010) found that music teachers were more likely than non-music teachers to hold itinerant and part-time positions. Increased funding may allow superintendents to hire full-time music and other arts teachers.

Many of the participating superintendents were clear about what would make their school districts "ideal." The comments from the open-ended reflection support the data regarding factors that influence the offering and/or quality of arts education in superintendents' respective school districts. Beveridge (2010) explored the impact NCLB has had on the arts. Beveridge (2010) found that NCLB forced many school districts to cut funding to the arts and reduce time in arts classes for students to do remedial work in other "tested" subjects. NCLB and test requirements were not areas that participating superintendents in this study thought would make their current conditions more ideal. More discussion will follow in research question number two. Additionally, superintendents who have a less than positive view of arts education may have opted out of participating in the study.

Section five of survey instrument was used to collect school district's arts education and superintendent's demographics. Data gathered included superintendent's years of experience, school district's location, the socio-economic status of the student population, who is responsible for providing arts instructions, and the arts subjects taught within the school district. Respondents were asked to indicate the total number of years they have served as a superintendent and the number of years served in their present district. There was a sharp

decline in the number of superintendents serving 10 or more years in their present district as well as total years of service.

Factors Influencing Capacity to Offer Arts Education

Research question number two asked about factors that influenced the offering and/or quality of arts education in school districts from the superintendents' perspective. Descriptive statistics was conducted to answer the second research question. The 15 items analyzed to answer this research question were: (1) No Child Left Behind, (2) the economy, (3) students, (4) parents, (5) budgets/finances, (6) scheduling, (7) standardized tests, (8) school level administrators, (9) fine arts teachers, (10) other classroom teachers, (11) other government regulations, (12) fine arts coordinator and/or other central office administrator, (13) state performance assessment evaluations, (14) grade level of arts instruction, and (15) interdisciplinary collaboration between the arts and other subject areas. Two of the 15 items, the economy and budgets/finances, received overwhelming combined strongly negative and negative responses from superintendents at 83% and 81% respectively. Four of the 15 items, fine arts teachers, students, parents, and school level administrators, received overwhelming combined positive and strongly positive responses from superintendents at 83%, 83%, 83%, and 76% respectively.

While superintendents reported that the economy and budgets/finances were leading factors that negatively influenced their capacity to offer arts education in their districts, the data were convincing for factors that positively influenced their capacity to offer quality arts education. Many superintendents commented that more funding would make their current conditions ideal for arts education. One superintendent, when asked what would make your

school district ideal, specifically stated, “Funding to hire more fine arts teachers,” and another stated, “Additional state funding for teachers of the Arts.”

With the emphasis on standardized tests, meeting AYP, and shifting more resources to other tested subject, arts education has been placed on the low priority list or in some cases, eliminated altogether (Beveridge, 2010; Chapman, 2004; Hart, 2012; Spohn, 2008). The data is clear, especially when 80 of the 144 comments, or 55% regarding what would make current conditions ideal were related to funding. When further examining the comments, it may be concluded that a greater percentage are directly or indirectly related to funding. Table 8 lists superintendents’ responses to the open-ended questions of what would make current conditions ideal. Again, 80 comments specifically listed funding, 8 were for facilities, 13 were for legislature support, and 14 were for teachers. To improve the facilities there need to be more funding. It may be assumed that legislature support equates to more funding. In order to hire more teachers, there has to be more funding. As a result, 116 of the 144 comments, or 80% were directly or indirectly related to funding.

It is noteworthy to examine more closely the data from other factors that influenced the offering and/or quality of arts education in school districts from the superintendents’ perspective. Standardized test received a combined 55% of strongly negative and negative responses from superintendents. With the passage of NCLB and other accountability measures, it is understandable why superintendents believed standardize tests negatively influence their capacity to offer arts education. Research found that some teachers were simply “teaching the test” (Spohn, 2008). According to Spohn (2008), many teachers commented on the amount of additional time that was added to get the scores up in math and reading. Additionally, schedules were changed which resulted in decrease in time for music instruction. Spohn (2008) also

reported that some teachers feared that if math scores on state tests linked to NCLB did not improve, time for music instruction would be further reduced. This may explain why superintendents that participated in this study reported that standardized tests and NCLB were strongly negative or negative influences to their capacity to offer arts education in their districts, with a combined strongly negative and negative rate of 46% and 42% respectively.

Other combined strongly negative and negative were attributed to other 52% for government regulations, 45% for No Child Left Behind, and 40% for state performance assessment evaluations. It was surprising that NCLB only received 45% combined strongly negative and negative influence factors. Based on the literature (Beveridge, 2010; Respress & Lutfi, 2006; Spohn, 2008), one would have expected a higher percentage number as a combined strongly negative and negative influences to offering arts education. However, as school and community leaders and politicians have seen the effects of NCLB, and the unrealistic goals, many may have sought exemptions from some of the requirements. It may also be concluded that many superintendents may have found ways to minimize the effects NCLB requirements on their ability to offer arts education. After all, according to the NCLB Act, the arts are considered part of the core academic subjects and funds associated with this legislation may be used for arts education. The definition of the core academic subjects as found in the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, Pub. L. No. 107-110, § 901, 115 Stat. 1958 (2002), states that the arts are a core academic subject.

There appeared to be some confusion regarding the state performance assessment evaluations item. This may have been due to the confusing language in the survey. Some superintendents may have thought of this item as another governmental regulation or some form of standardized tests. It may also be possible that these state performance evaluations may be

called by different names in different states. This could also add to the confusion. For this study state performance assessments evaluations referred to an adjudicated performance evaluation conducted each year for performing ensembles by their state organizations. These organizations include the Alabama Music Educators Association, Alabama Thespians, Georgia Music Educators Association, Georgia Thespians, Florida Music Educators Association, Mississippi Music Educators Association and other similar organizations. In most cases, superintendents seem to be supportive of their performance ensembles and their participation in these yearly evaluations. Yet in other cases, participation may be required. Again, in the case whereas superintendents are not abreast of these organizations, they may have mistakenly linked the term "performance assessment evaluation" with standardized tests or other government regulations, resulting in a negative influence to the capacity to offer arts education.

Personal Experiences in the Arts

The third research question dealt with the relationship between superintendents' personal experiences with the fine arts and their perceptions of arts education in ideal conditions, arts education in current conditions, and the capacity to offer arts education. A Pearson correlation coefficient was completed to address the relationship between superintendents' personal experiences with the fine arts and their perceptions of arts education in ideal conditions, arts education in current conditions, and the capacity to offer arts education. There was a positive correlation between personal experiences and current conditions, $r = 0.177$, $n = 132$, $p = 0.042$. However, there was no correlation between personal experience and ideal conditions, $r = -0.122$, $n = 134$, $p = 0.159$; and personal experiences and capacity to offer arts education, $r = -0.090$, $n = 133$, $p = 0.304$.

The data revealed that superintendents, who had positive personal experiences with the arts in elementary or secondary school, and outside of school, also had a positive view of their current conditions for arts education in their school districts. According to Penning (2008), superintendents' personal experiences in the arts have a direct impact on their perceptions, beliefs, and actions regarding arts education. These superintendents understand the importance of the arts and enact policies reflecting their beliefs. School leaders and administrators play a key role in the success of arts education. Administrators' past experiences in the arts appear to have a major impact on their decisions surrounding arts education. Administrators involved in the arts as students tended place higher priority on the arts in their school districts. Penning (2008) found evidence supporting this claim in the words of Superintendent Carlos Garcia, "The arts provided a way for me to express myself and be creative; they provide a basis for students to learn thinking outside of the box, working in groups and taking calculated, creative risks" (p. 282). As a school leader, it may be assumed that positive experiences which lead to successful academic outcomes, increased self-esteem, and developed creativity, would want to be duplicated to allow other students similar experiences and opportunities to be successful. The limitation with this section of the survey is there were only three items for participants to respond.

In regards to personal experiences and ideal conditions, and personal experience and capacity to offer arts education, the findings were somewhat surprising. The data revealed that there was no correlation between personal experiences and both ideal conditions and capacity to offer arts education. It may be concluded that regardless of the superintendents' experience, either positive or negative, to make conditions ideal would require factors that go far beyond the superintendents' ability or power to affect. One contributing factor may include the lack of

funding for arts education. In some school districts, the only source of funding may come from state allocation. In other school districts, funding comes from several sources including, local and county tax collection, and grants. Regardless of the funding sources, superintendents seem to think additional funding may influence their ability to make current conditions ideal. It appears that superintendents, who have a positive perception of arts education, make the decisions to provide the best possible arts experiences for their students regardless of the level of funding and other factors that impact their ability to offer quality arts education programs in their school districts.

Current trends in arts education and the literature (Beveridge, 2010; Chapman, 2007) support the devastating impact the sluggish economy, school systems' budgets and finances, and austerity measures being proposed by federal, state, and local governments, have had on superintendents and school districts ability to provide quality arts education. With high levels of unemployment and decreases in tax collection earmarked for schools, superintendents have been forced to make cuts in an effort to balance their budgets. Many of these cuts were directed at arts education (Beveridge, 2010; Chapman, 2004; Hart, 2012; Spohn, 2008). While many superintendents accept the notion that arts education plays an important role in student achievement, developing creativity and raising self-esteem, the reality of limited resources has negatively impacted their ability to offer quality arts education programs. A majority of superintendents in the present study believed the economy and budgets/finances are major factors influencing their ability to offer quality arts education in their school districts, a combined strongly negative and negative of 83% and 81% respectively. However, superintendents' perceptions of arts education remained positive. Therefore, it may be concluded that regardless of the negative influences that impact superintendents' ability to offer

quality arts education, superintendents' perceptions of arts education was positive, even during poor economic times when there is a tightening the belt with budgets and finances. With less financial resources superintendents are unable to offer the type of arts education they believe are aligned with their views of an ideal arts education environment. However, any classes in arts education were better than no classes.

The passage of NCLB led to many additional regulations. Regarding NCLB, Chapman (2007) stated, "Without questions, it is the most elaborate case of federal micromanagement of state policy, local schools, and teachers in the entire history of American education" (p. 25). NCLB employs a one-size-fits-all model with no exceptions to learning styles, disabilities, or any other factor that may prevent schools from reaching the goal of this legislation (Chapman, 2007). Again, there is the issue of funding associated with NCLB and the uncertainties with allocation school leaders face regarding tested and non-tested subjects.

Implications

Due to the limitations and the population of this study, the reader should use caution when applying the findings beyond the four states used. The results of this study provide evidence that participating superintendents surveyed have a positive perception of arts education. While superintendents' perceptions of arts education in current conditions within their school districts are not at a level they consider ideal, they have clear solutions for moving arts education closer to ideal conditions, more funding. The downturn in the economy during the past decade has f state and local governments to reduce the funding allocation to schools. As a result, school district superintendents are finding it difficult to offer educational programs they believe will make their current conditions more ideal.

In most K–12 public school systems, decisions regarding funding issues are approved by the local board of education upon the recommendation from the superintendent. As chief executive officer of the school system the superintendent's beliefs may profoundly affect decisions surrounding funding and curriculum issues within the school district (Andero, 2000; Penning, 2008; Remer, 2010). Many programs that are not considered "tested" subjects in accordance with states' mandated standardized tests are often cut from school budgets. Elective courses such as those associated with arts education often received reduced funding in order to direct more funding to those "tested" subjects (Beveridge, 2010; Chapman, 2004; Grey, 2010; Hart, 2012; Holcomb, 2007; Slavkin & Crespin, 2000; Spohn, 2008).

The elimination of arts education from the curriculum has had far reaching implications. Winner and Hetland (2008) discussed to benefits of the inclusion of arts education. In their study, Winner and Hetland (2008) revealed that arts programs taught specific thinking skills that are rarely addressed in other curriculum areas. These thinking skills may be crucial to preparing students for life beyond school. O'Fallon (2008) examined the connection between arts education and student achievement and school reform. O'Fallon (2008) found that the alignment of arts education with school reform resulted to arts being included as core curriculum and sustained in school systems' operating budgets.

Former U.S. Department of Education Secretary Rod Paige in the George W. Bush Administration wrote, "The arts can be a critical link for students in developing the crucial thinking skills and motivations they need to achieve at higher levels. *Critical Links: Learning in the Arts and Student Academic and Social Development*, a research compendium of the Arts Education Partnership, offers evidence of such links, including connections between arts learning and achievement in reading and math" (Paige, 2004, para. 8). Respress and Lutfi (2006)

examined how the participation in the arts enhanced academic achievement, commitment toward school and self-esteem, and reduced violent acts committed in school by African American students in high poverty areas.

The data confirmed what was reported in the Southern Education Foundation (2013) *Research Report Update A New Majority: Low Income Students in the South and Nation*, regarding the socio-economic status for most students receiving public education in southern states. The report revealed the percent of low income students in all public schools. The percentages of low income students in the states represented in this study are staggering. In Mississippi, 71% of public school students were low income, Georgia 57%, Florida 56%, and Alabama 55%. With such high levels of low income students in public schools, it may serve all of these states well to increase the funding to public schools which may allow more students the opportunity to receive a quality education.

The question that might be probed is where would the money come from to increase funding for arts education? There are several solutions for increasing revenue sources for arts education, including: 1) increased property taxes earmarked for education; 2) form partnerships with local businesses, corporations, and foundations dedicated to the arts; 3) eliminate the waste and fraud in federal, state, and local governments, and redirect some of the funds to education; 4) enact policies at all levels of government to improve the economy and create new jobs, which would increase tax revenues dedicated to schools; 5) close loopholes that allow tax abatement for large corporations; and 6) seek other permanent and stable sources of revenue dedicated to education. Arts education may be one means by which students can successful in school, and in turn, moving them from low income to the middle and upper income brackets. With higher incomes come more tax revenue for state coffers and hopefully, more funding for arts education.

The arts have held an important place in virtually every culture. The amount of money spent at auctions to acquire rare pieces of art is evidence of this importance. Benefits for the inclusion of the arts in the school curriculum are enormous. These benefits include the contribution of the arts to academic performance for all students (Gullatt, 2008; O'Fallon, 2006; Respress & Lutfi, 2006; Schwartz & Pace, 2008) and improvements in standardized tests scores (Winner & Hetland, 2008). Superintendents who participated in this study also realized the many benefits to students through the inclusion of arts education. When asked to describe the greatest student benefits through making the arts education available in their school districts, superintendents responded with:

> Students learn to appreciate the different abilities of each other, learn to be self-disciplined thinkers; Scholarship offers, confidence; Creativity and cross-curricular connections; Seeing students experience success, finding a place they fit in, and being able to be a part of the school that's not sports; Positive academic outcomes in other subject areas; and Arts Education provides an additional tool in our education took-kit to insure that all students have an avenue for success!

Oftentimes the programs not considered to be core academic subjects or non-tested subjects find their way to the chopping block as resources become scarce (Beveridge, 2010; Chapman, 2004; Hart, 2012; Spohn, 2008). The evidence in Beveridge (2010) validates the effect of NCLB on non-tested subject such as music and arts in the general curriculum. Due to changes in scheduling, funding, and professional development, administrators and teachers were forced to reconsider how best to advocate for arts programs in their schools. If students failed a "tested" subject, they lost their only elective class and were placed into remedial mathematic or reading classes. As a result, the low numbers in the elective classes such as music and arts

forced administrators to reduce the number of classes offered or eliminated these classes altogether. Oftentimes, success in the elective class may be the motivation students need to encourage them to work harder to be successful in other academic areas. Instead of removing students from their only elective class, why not use the success in elective class to help raise students' self-esteem and hopefully transfer the knowledge to other academic subject. Another alternative is to provide remedial classes in after-school programs.

Superintendents that participated in this study see scheduling and standardized testing as obstacles in their ability to offer quality arts education in their school districts. Chapman (2007) provided updates on NCLB and national trends in education since its authorization. Much of the focus with NCLB has been on reading, math, and science. It is clear that the arts are a core academic subject is under NCLB, yet the arts continue to be eliminated from the curriculum. One has to imagine what the reaction would be if due to funding issues, mathematic, reading, or science were eliminated from the curriculum. There would probably be outrage! Where is the outrage with the elimination of arts education?

Recommendations for Future Study

This study revealed that participating superintendents overwhelmingly support arts education. A majority of the superintendents that participated in this study had a positive perception of arts education in an ideal situation as well as in their current situations. This leads to wonder how the superintendents who chose not to participate in the study view arts education in their school districts and in general. Future studies may ask, from the superintendents' perspective, should the arts be considered as a core academic subject, and why or why not? From the superintendents' perspective, what is the role of arts education in the school

curriculum? And, what is the state of the schools' athletic budgets compared to the arts education budgets?

Much emphasis has been placed on NCLB and the impact of tested subjects on non-tested subjects. The researcher does not advocate for more standardized tests. However, standardize tests appear to be the yardstick for measuring student achievement and funding priorities in tested core academic subjects. Future research should include school leaders' perceptions of NCLB and its impact on arts educations in their districts; why are some core subjects tested and others not tested and the formula used to determine the funding?; and if the arts are a core academic subject, why are they not tested?

The lack of funding for arts education is of grave concern to many of the participating superintendents. Until the funding issues are secured the state of arts education will continue to be in disarray. There needs to be a qualitative study to explore the correlation between successes in the arts education with students in high poverty schools. Does the knowledge gained in arts classes transfer to other academic subjects and if so, why? Why do some superintendents choose to reduce funding for the arts during tough financial times?

This study also revealed that participating superintendents who had positive personal experiences with the arts also had a positive perception of their current conditions for arts education in their school districts. However, personal experiences had no correlation between ideal conditions and capacity to offer arts education. A future study would be to explore why are arts educational goals not being achieved at superintendents' desired level? And finally, a qualitative study to gather in depth data of superintendents' perceptions of arts education, what has influenced their perceptions, and their perceptions on the future of arts education in public schools should be examined.

Conclusion

This study investigated superintendents' perceptions of arts programs under ideal and currents conditions. It also explored factors that influenced superintendents' capacity to offer arts education or influenced the quality of arts education in the superintendents' school district. Finally, this study examined superintendents' personal experience and their perceptions of arts education under ideal conditions. The study found that participating superintendents had an overwhelming positive perception of arts education in both ideal and current conditions. There was a significant difference in the scores for eight of the 14 items. Three of the 14 items were moderately significantly different and six of the 14 items were at a low level of significant difference. Participating superintendents also responded to factors the influenced their capacity to offer arts education in their school districts. Respondents indicated that budgets and finances, the economy, and NCLB were negative factors, while fine arts teachers, students, and parents were positive factors. This study also revealed that superintendents, who had positive personal experiences with the arts in elementary or secondary school, and outside of school, also had a positive view of their current conditions for arts education in their school districts.

In an ideal world, there would be unlimited resources to implement and maintain the necessary academic programs in every school district. Arts education is vital to giving student the "whole school" experience. Superintendents who participated in this study were keenly aware of the benefits to the inclusion of arts education. The many benefits associated with the inclusion of arts education should lead to an expansion of arts programs. It is impossible to realize power of the arts if they are not properly funded at the state and local levels. Superintendents and all stakeholders must continue to seek permanent sources for the funding of arts education for all students in order to help each of them perform at their full potential.

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Appendix A

Auburn University Institutional Review Board (IRB) Approval

AUBURN UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD for RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS

RESEARCH PROTOCOL REVIEW FORM

For information or help contact **THE OFFICE OF RESEARCH COMPLIANCE**, 115 Ramsay Hall, Auburn University
Phone: 334-844-5966 **e-mail:** hsubject@auburn.edu **Web Address:** http://www.auburn.edu/research/vpr/ohs/

Revised 03.26.11 – DO NOT STAPLE, CLIP TOGETHER ONLY. Save a Copy

1. **PROPOSED START DATE of STUDY:** June 7, 2013

PROPOSED REVIEW CATEGORY (Check one): FULL BOARD ✓ EXPEDITED EXEMPT

2. **PROJECT TITLE:** A Place in the Curriculum: Superintendents' Perceptions of Fine Arts Programs

3. Kenneth B. Thomas	Graduate Student	COE-EFLT	334-332-1020	thomak2@tigermail.auburn.edu
PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR	TITLE	DEPT	PHONE	AU E-MAIL
4002 Haley Center, Auburn, Alabama 36849			334-844-3072	kthomasmu@charter.net
MAILING ADDRESS			FAX	ALTERNATE E-MAIL

4. **SOURCE OF FUNDING SUPPORT:** ✓ Not Applicable ___ Internal ___ External Agency:_____ Pending Received

5. **LIST ANY CONTRACTORS, SUB-CONTRACTORS, OTHER ENTITIES OR IRBs ASSOCIATED WITH THIS PROJECT:**
N/A

6. **GENERAL RESEARCH PROJECT CHARACTERISTICS**

6A. Mandatory CITI Training

Names of key personnel who have completed CITI:
Kenneth B. Thomas ✓ Lisa Kensler ✓
Margaret Ross ✓

CITI group completed for this study:
✓ Social/Behavioral Biomedical

PLEASE ATTACH TO HARD COPY *ALL* CITI CERTIFICATES FOR *EACH* KEY PERSONNEL

6B. Research Methodology

Please check all descriptors that best apply to the research methodology.

Data Source(s): ✓ New Data Existing Data
Will recorded data directly or indirectly identify participants? Yes ✓ No
Data collection will involve the use of:
___ Educational Tests (cognitive diagnostic, aptitude, etc.)
Interview / Observation
Physical / Physiological Measures or Specimens (see Section 6E.)
✓ Surveys / Questionnaires
✓ Internet / Electronic
Audio / Video / Photos
Private records or files

6/28/13 6/27/13 Protocol # 13-243 EX 1306

6C. Participant Information

Please check all descriptors that apply to the participant population.
✓ Males ✓ Females AU students
Vulnerable Populations
Pregnant Women/Fetuses ___ Prisoners
Children and/or Adolescents (under age 19 in AL)
Persons with:
Economic Disadvantages Physical Disabilities
Educational Disadvantages Intellectual Disabilities
Do you plan to compensate your participants? Yes ✓ No

6D. Risks to Participants

Please identify all risks that participants might encounter in this research.
Breach of Confidentiality* Coercion
Deception Physical
Psychological Social
✓ None Other:

*Note that if the investigator is using or accessing confidential or identifiable data, breach of confidentiality is always a risk.

Do you need IBC Approval for this study? ✓ No Yes - BUA #_____ **Expiration date** _____

FOR OHSR OFFICE USE ONLY

DATE RECEIVED IN OHSR: 6/18/13 **by** GB
DATE OF IRB REVIEW: 6/28/13 **by** CS
DATE OF IRB APPROVAL: _____ **by** _____
COMMENTS:

PROTOCOL # 13-243 EX 1306
APPROVAL CATEGORY: 45 CFR 46.101 (b)(2)
INTERVAL FOR CONTINUING REVIEW: 3 years

Appendix B

Survey Instrument

Please read each statement or question carefully and select the choice that best represents your answer.

I believe that Arts Education in ALL schools, under IDEAL CONDITIONS, has the capacity to:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Develop creativity in students	○	○	○	○	○
Foster critical thinking/Improve intelligence	○	○	○	○	○
Facilitate learning in other subjects	○	○	○	○	○
Transmit cultural heritage	○	○	○	○	○
Improve tolerance, understanding and acceptance of other cultures	○	○	○	○	○
Teach students to work cooperatively	○	○	○	○	○
Develop increased sensitivity to the arts	○	○	○	○	○
Promote future involvement in the arts	○	○	○	○	○
Prepare students to understand the value of fine arts in their lives	○	○	○	○	○
Promote life-long learning	○	○	○	○	○
Raise self-esteem	○	○	○	○	○
Facilitate self-expression	○	○	○	○	○
Enhance school district's image	○	○	○	○	○
Provide community outreach	○	○	○	○	○

>>

Please read each statement or question carefully and select the choice that best represents your answer.

Under CURRENT CONDITIONS, to what degree do the following factors influence your capacity to offer Arts Education, and /or influence the quality of Arts Education in YOUR school district:

	Strongly Negative	Negative	No Influence	Positive	Strongly Positive
"No Child Left Behind"	○	○	○	○	○
The economy	○	○	○	○	○
Students	○	○	○	○	○
Parents	○	○	○	○	○
Budgets/Finances	○	○	○	○	○
Scheduling	○	○	○	○	○
Standardized Tests	○	○	○	○	○
School Level Administrators	○	○	○	○	○
Fine Arts Teachers	○	○	○	○	○
Other Classroom Teachers	○	○	○	○	○
Other government regulations	○	○	○	○	○
Fine Arts Coordinator and/or other Central Office Administrator	○	○	○	○	○
State Performance Assessment Evaluations	○	○	○	○	○
Grade Level of Arts Instruction	○	○	○	○	○
Interdisciplinary collaboration between the Arts and other subject areas	○	○	○	○	○

>>

Please read each statement or question carefully and select the choice that best represents your answer.

I believe that Arts Education in MY school district, under CURRENT CONDITIONS, serves to:

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	All of the Time
Develop creativity in students	○	○	○	○	○
Foster critical thinking/Improve intelligence	○	○	○	○	○
Facilitate learning in other subjects	○	○	○	○	○
Transmit cultural heritage	○	○	○	○	○
Improve tolerance, understanding and acceptance of other cultures	○	○	○	○	○
Teach students to work cooperatively	○	○	○	○	○
Develop increased sensitivity to the arts	○	○	○	○	○
Promote future involvement in the arts	○	○	○	○	○
Prepare students to understand the value of fine arts in their lives	○	○	○	○	○
Promote life-long learning	○	○	○	○	○
Raise self-esteem	○	○	○	○	○
Facilitate self-expression	○	○	○	○	○
Enhance school district's image	○	○	○	○	○
Provide community outreach	○	○	○	○	○

>>

Please read each statement or question carefully and select the choice that best represents your answer.

Please answer the following questions based on YOUR experiences in fine arts activities:

	Extremely Negative	Negative	Somewhat Negative	No Arts Experiences	Somewhat Positive	Positive	Extremely Positive
How would you rate your experiences in the Arts Education instruction you received as a student in elementary school?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
How would you rate your experiences in the Arts Education instruction you received as a student in secondary school?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
How would you rate your experiences in structured fine arts activities in which you participated as a child outside of school?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

>>

Is Arts Education a graduation requirement for students in your school district?

Yes ○ No ○

Which Arts Education subjects are taught in your school district? (Check all that apply)

Band	Choral	Drawing	General Art	General Music	Music Appreciation/Theory	Orchestra	Painting	Photography	Sculpture	Theater (Acting/Technical)	Others
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Approximately how much time is allotted per student to Arts Education instruction in YOUR school district?

Under 1/2 hour per week ○ 1/2 hour to under 1 hour per week ○ 1 hour or more per week ○ Not applicable ○

>>

Where do the Arts Education specialists primarily teach arts instruction in YOUR school district? (Check all that apply)

- In a designated arts classroom
- Travel to students' classroom
- Other

Who is responsible for providing Arts Education instruction in your school district? (Check all the apply)

- Fine Arts Subject Area Specialist
- Classroom Teachers
- Volunteers
- Instruction Not Provided

Who has input in hiring Arts Education instructors in YOUR school district? (Check all that apply)

- School Board
- Superintendent
- Principal
- Other

>>

How would you characterize the socio-economic status of most students in your school district?

Low ○ Medium ○ High ○ Greatly Varies ○

Which best describes the location of your school district?

Rural ○ Suburban ○ Urban ○

What is the approximate number of students enrolled in your school district?

>>

How long have you been a superintendent?

Under 1 yr.	1 yr. to under 5 yrs.	5 yrs. to under 10 yrs	10 yrs or more
○	○	○	○

How long have you been a superintendent in THIS district?

Under 1 yr.	1 yr. to under 5 yrs.	5 yrs. to under 10 yrs	10 yrs or more
○	○	○	○

>>

Please describe the greatest student benefits achieved through making the Arts Education available in your school district.

Please describe the greatest obstacle(s) hampering your ability to fully support Arts Education in your school district.

What would make your school district's conditions IDEAL for Arts Education?

>>

Appendix C

Abril and Gault Survey Instrument

START HERE

Dear Principal,

This brief survey will only take minutes of your time but will provide invaluable information to the teaching profession.

INSTRUCTIONS

1) Read each statement or question carefully;
2) Put an X in the box that best represents your answer.

It is important that the information you provide be accurate and reflects your views. Be assured, this information will not be used to evaluate your school or music program—responses will remain anonymous. Thank you for sharing your thoughts and time with us.

Sincerely,

Dr. Carlos Abril, Northwestern Univ.
& Dr. Brent Gault, Indiana Univ.

ABOUT YOU AND YOUR SCHOOL

a. How long have you been an elementary school administrator?

Under 1 yr	☐
1 to under 5 yrs	☐
5 to under 10 yrs	☐
10 or more yrs	☐

b. How would you characterize the socio-economic status of most students at your school?

High	☐
Medium	☐
Low	☐
Greatly Varies	☐

c. Which best describes your school location?

Urban	☐
Rural	☐
Suburban	☐

d. Is music a required subject for **most** elementary students at your school?

Yes	☐
No	☐

e. Is music a required subject for **most** elem. students in your school district?

Yes	☐
No	☐

f. Who is primarily responsible for providing music instruction?

Music specialist	☐
Classroom teacher	☐
Music instruction not provided	☐

g. Who decides whether to hire a music specialist at your school?

Superintendent	☐
School Board	☐
Principal	☐
Other_____	

h. Approximately how much time is allotted to music instruction per classroom in the **primary** grades (k-2)?

Under ½ hour per week	☐
½ hour to under 1 hour per week	☐
1 hour or more per week	☐
Not applicable	☐

i. Approximately how much time is allotted to music instruction per classroom in the **intermediate** grades (3-5)?

Under ½ hour per week	☐
½ hour to under 1 hour per week	☐
1 hour or more per week	☐
Not applicable	☐

j. Where does the music specialist primarily teach?

In a designated music classroom	☐
Travels to students' classrooms	☐
Other_____	

k. As a child in elementary school, did **you** receive music instruction taught by a music specialist?

Yes	☐
No	☐

l. Did **you** ever enroll in music courses in secondary school?

Yes	☐
No	☐

m. How would you characterize your overall school music experiences?

Positive	☐
Neutral	☐
Negative	☐

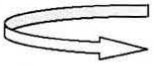
n. As a child, did you participate in structured music activities outside of school?

Yes	☐
No	☐

o. How would you characterize those out-of-school music experiences?

Positive	☐
Neutral	☐
Negative	☐
Not Applicable	☐

PLEASE TURN OVER TO CONTINUE



Please read each statement and indicate your choice by putting an X on the best response for:

a) The **CURRENT** state of the music program at your school (If your students receive no music instruction, leave the CURRENT line blank).

b) Your **IDEAL** vision of the music program at your school.

The entire survey should be completed independently, without the assistance of a music specialist. We are interested in **your** views.

	As a result of music education, children at your school:		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Can't Answer
1	**Create and compose music**	CURRENT	▯	▯	▯	▯	▯	▯
		IDEAL	▯	▯	▯	▯	▯	▯
2	**Listen to music attentively**	CURRENT	▯	▯	▯	▯	▯	▯
		IDEAL	▯	▯	▯	▯	▯	▯
3	**Analyze, evaluate, and describe music verbally and in writing**	CURRENT	▯	▯	▯	▯	▯	▯
		IDEAL	▯	▯	▯	▯	▯	▯
4	**Understand music in relation to other subjects**	CURRENT	▯	▯	▯	▯	▯	▯
		IDEAL	▯	▯	▯	▯	▯	▯
5	**Read and write musical notation**	CURRENT	▯	▯	▯	▯	▯	▯
		IDEAL	▯	▯	▯	▯	▯	▯
6	**Perform music (sing or play a musical instrument)**	CURRENT	▯	▯	▯	▯	▯	▯
		IDEAL	▯	▯	▯	▯	▯	▯
7	**Understand music in relation to culture and history**	CURRENT	▯	▯	▯	▯	▯	▯
		IDEAL	▯	▯	▯	▯	▯	▯

	The study of music in elementary school serves to:		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	**Develop creativity**	*CURRENT*	▯	▯	▯	▯	▯
		IDEAL	▯	▯	▯	▯	▯
2	**Transmit cultural heritage**	*CURRENT*	▯	▯	▯	▯	▯
		IDEAL	▯	▯	▯	▯	▯
3	**Facilitate self-expression**	*CURRENT*	▯	▯	▯	▯	▯
		IDEAL	▯	▯	▯	▯	▯
4	**Teach students to work cooperatively**	*CURRENT*	▯	▯	▯	▯	▯
		IDEAL	▯	▯	▯	▯	▯
5	**Prepare students to understand music in their lives**	*CURRENT*	▯	▯	▯	▯	▯
		IDEAL	▯	▯	▯	▯	▯
6	**Foster critical thinking**	*CURRENT*	▯	▯	▯	▯	▯
		IDEAL	▯	▯	▯	▯	▯
7	**Improve intelligence**	*CURRENT*	▯	▯	▯	▯	▯
		IDEAL	▯	▯	▯	▯	▯
8	**Improve tolerance, understanding and acceptance of other cultures**	*CURRENT*	▯	▯	▯	▯	▯
		IDEAL	▯	▯	▯	▯	▯
9	**Develop increased sensitivity to the arts**	*CURRENT*	▯	▯	▯	▯	▯
		IDEAL	▯	▯	▯	▯	▯

10	**Promote future involvement in the arts**	*CURRENT*	▯	▯	▯	▯	▯
		IDEAL	▯	▯	▯	▯	▯
11	**Raise self-esteem**	*CURRENT*	▯	▯	▯	▯	▯
		IDEAL	▯	▯	▯	▯	▯
12	**Promote life-long learning**	*CURRENT*	▯	▯	▯	▯	▯
		IDEAL	▯	▯	▯	▯	▯
13	**Facilitate learning in other subjects**	*CURRENT*	▯	▯	▯	▯	▯
		IDEAL	▯	▯	▯	▯	▯
14	**Provide students with a pleasant diversion during the school day**	*CURRENT*	▯	▯	▯	▯	▯
		IDEAL	▯	▯	▯	▯	▯

Indicate the type of effect the following factors have on the music program.		**Strongly Positive**	**Positive**	**No Effect**	**Negative**	**Strongly Negative**
1	"No Child Left Behind"	▯	▯	▯	▯	▯
2	Students	▯	▯	▯	▯	▯
3	Parents	▯	▯	▯	▯	▯
4	Budgets/Finances	▯	▯	▯	▯	▯
5	Scheduling	▯	▯	▯	▯	▯
6	Standardized Tests	▯	▯	▯	▯	▯
7	School Board/Upper Administration	▯	▯	▯	▯	▯
8	Music Teacher	▯	▯	▯	▯	▯
9	Classroom Teachers	▯	▯	▯	▯	▯
10	Research	▯	▯	▯	▯	▯
11	Other_____	▯	▯	▯	▯	▯

Please describe the greatest obstacle(s) hampering your ability to fully support the music program at your school.

Please describe anything or anyone you think can assist you in eliminating the obstacle(s).

THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR TAKING THE TIME TO COMPLETE THIS SURVEY.

Appendix D

E-mail Invitation to Complete Survey

E-MAIL INVITATION FOR ON-LINE SURVEY

Dear School District Superintendent,

I am a graduate student in the Department of Educational Foundations, Leadership and Technology at Auburn University. I would like to invite you to participate in my research study to investigate superintendents' perceptions of the fine arts programs. You may participate if you are a school superintendent and fine arts programs (arts, band, choral, dance, drama, music, visual arts) are offered in your school district.

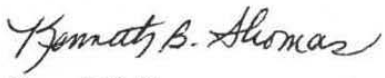
Participants will be asked to commit approximately fifteen minutes of time to complete an online/electronic survey.

The study will engage willing participants only and will not use any form of deception. The topic, Superintendents' Perceptions of Fine Arts Programs, is not a sensitive topic and should elicit no discomfort in the participants. School administrators, although not a vulnerable population, have extraordinary pressures and time demands related to their work – but simply providing the time to respond to the survey's questions should be a very minor discomfort to some participants. Because the data will be anonymous, there will be no "breach of confidentiality." There are no other known risks associated with this research project.

If you would like more information about this study, an information letter is attached to this message. If you decide to participate after reading the letter, you can access the survey from a link in the letter. You may also access the survey by clicking this link.

If you have any questions, please contact me at 334-332-1020 or my advisor, Dr. Lisa A. W. Kensler, at 334-844-3020.

Thank you for your consideration.



Kenneth B. Thomas

Appendix E

Information Letter

EDUCATIONAL
FOUNDATIONS,
LEADERSHIP,
AND TECHNOLOGY

AUBURN UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

(NOTE: DO NOT AGREE TO PARTICIPATE UNLESS IRB APPROVAL INFORMATION WITH CURRENT DATES HAS BEEN ADDED TO THIS DOCUMENT.)

INFORMATION LETTER
for a Research Study entitled
"A Place in the Curriculum:
Superintendents' Perceptions of Fine Arts Programs"

You are invited to participate in a research study to investigate superintendents' perceptions of the fine arts programs and whether their actions and behaviors are aligned with their beliefs. The study is being conducted by Kenneth B. Thomas, a doctoral student, under the direction of Dr. Lisa Kensler, Assistant Professor in the Auburn University Department of Educational Foundations, Leadership and Technology. You were selected as a possible participant because you are a superintendent of a public school system in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, or Mississippi, and are age 19 or older.

If you decide to participate in this research study, you will be asked to complete the anonymous online survey. Your total time commitment will be approximately 15 minutes.

The study will engage willing participants only and will not use any form of deception. The topic, Superintendents' Perceptions of Fine Arts Programs, is not a sensitive topic and should elicit no discomfort in the participants. School administrators, although not a vulnerable population, have extraordinary pressures and time demands related to their work - but simply providing the time to respond to the survey's questions should be a very minor discomfort to some participants. Because the data will be anonymous, there will be no "breach of confidentiality." There are no other known risks associated with this research project.

The survey has been designed to be as short as possible to reduce the time demands for the superintendents. The survey should not take more than 15 minutes for participants to complete. Participants may withdraw their participation in the study at any time without risk of penalty for doing so.

This survey study asks superintendents to reflect on their beliefs and actions related to the fine arts. Taking time to reflect on one's practice often results in new insights and awareness of new possibilities. Participants *may* gain greater knowledge and increased awareness of the various benefits provided through the fine arts after participating in this study.

If you chose to participate in this survey study, you do so voluntarily and expect no compensation for participating.

There are no costs associated with your participating in this survey study.

4036 Haley Center, Auburn, AL 36849-5221; Telephone: 334-844-4460; Fax: 334-844-3072

www.auburn.edu/eflt

Your participation is completely voluntary. You may choose to withdraw at any time; however, after you provide anonymous information, your data cannot be withdrawn because it is unidentifiable. Your decision about whether or not to participate or to stop participating will not jeopardize your future relations with Auburn University, the College of Education, or the Department of Educational Leadership, Foundations, and Technology.

Any data obtained in connection with this study is anonymous and unidentifiable, and will remain anonymous and unidentifiable. Information collected through your participation may be used to fulfill an educational requirement, published in a professional journal, and/or presented at a professional meeting.

If you have questions about this study, please ask them now or contact Kenneth B. Thomas at 334-821-0583 or Dr. Lisa Kensler at 334-844-3020.

If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Auburn University Office of Human Subjects Research or the Institutional Review Board by phone (334)-844-5966 or e-mail at hsubjec@auburn.edu or IRBChair@auburn.edu.

HAVING READ THE INFORMATION PROVIDED, YOU MUST DECIDE IF YOU WANT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS RESEARCH PROJECT. IF YOU DECIDE TO PARTICIPATE, THE DATA YOU PROVIDE WILL SERVE AS YOUR AGREEMENT TO DO SO. THIS LETTER IS YOURS TO KEEP.

Kenneth B. Thomas June 18, 2013
Investigator

Lisa W. Kensler June 18, 2013
Co-Investigator

The Auburn University Institutional Review Board has approved this document for use from June 28, 2013 to June 27, 2016. Protocol #13-243 EX 1306.

https://auburn.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_38DaF6tv9HUWbR3

The Auburn University Institutional Review Board has approved this document for use from 6/28/13 to 6/27/14 Protocol # 13-243 EX 1306

Appendix F

Reminder: Email to Complete Survey

E-MAIL INVITATION FOR ON-LINE SURVEY REMINDER

Dear School District Superintendent,

I am a graduate student in the Department of Educational Foundations, Leadership and Technology at Auburn University. I would like to invite you to participate in my research study to investigate superintendents' perceptions of the fine arts programs. You may participate (*or may not participate*) if you are a school superintendent and fine arts programs (arts, band, choral, dance, drama, music, visual arts) are offered in your school district.

Participants will be asked to commit approximately fifteen minutes of time to complete an online/electronic survey.

The study will engage willing participants only and will not use any form of deception. The topic, Superintendents' Perceptions of Fine Arts Programs, is not a sensitive topic and should elicit no discomfort in the participants. School administrators, although not a vulnerable population, have extraordinary pressures and time demands related to their work – but simply providing the time to respond to the survey's questions should be a very minor discomfort to some participants. Because the data will be anonymous, there will be no "breach of confidentiality." There are no other known risks associated with this research project.

If you would like more information about this study, an information letter is attached to this message. If you decide to participate after reading the letter, you can access the survey from a link in the letter. If you have already participated, thank you! If not, please follow the link in the letter to access the survey. You may also access the survey by clicking this link.

If you have any questions, please contact me at 334-332-1020 or my advisor, Dr. Lisa A. W. Kensler, at 334-844-3020.

Thank you for your consideration.

Kenneth B. Thomas

Appendix G

Benefits to Availability of the Arts to Students

Responses to Open-Ended Reflection

Please describe the greatest student benefit achieved through making the Arts Education available in your school district.

Students learn to appreciate the different abilities of each other; learn to be self-disciplined thinkers.

Keeping kids interested in school and opportunities to showcase their talent.

Providing a structural/instructional program to develop art potential in all of our students.

Art adds electives to the curriculum and it allows students to realize the beauty in everyday life.

student achievement and pride

Multicultural understanding

Self Confidence.

Allows students who have that as an area of strength to shine.

reaching more students in areas of interest and increasing arts awareness

great recruiting tool!

Students are developing an appreciation for the arts

Often, students are searching for something to "be good" at. The arts provide opportunities for students to sometimes find that "something."

Students who are artistically inclined have an outlet for their talents.

Scholarship offers, confidence

Enhances their cultural experience

Increased depth of learning, increased interest in learning.

Creative thinking

Creativity, self-expression, collaboration, perseverance and accomplishment

Variety of skills and cooperative learning ...

Creativity

It allows them to tap into their individual talents and as a result builds their self-esteem.

Student creativity, confidence, and enjoyment- promotes achievement in academics

Creativity and cross-curricular connections

Student learning is improved when connections between core academics and the arts are understood.

Puts some fun back into school in three days of high stakes testing and accountability.

It inspires many to become band, choral or art teachers, as well as improving self-esteem and providing them skills that will help them in adulthood. Further, it fosters teamwork and cooperation.

passion for the arts and building self-esteem

Arts education is directly correlated to student achievement in other areas. It is essential part of offering a comprehensive curriculum

self-assertiveness

Provides opportunities to students they would not otherwise receive.

Band Scholarships, music and art exploration

Well-rounded education and appreciation for comprehension and learning

Seeing student experience success, finding a place they fit in, and being able to be a part of the school that's not sports.

Arts education is a part of a student's complete education.

Enhancement of their educational experience and collaboration opportunities with the local community center for the arts

Ability to develop personal talent

Art education gives our students a different outlet to express individuality and participate in community activities.

Engagement in school that promotes attendance and success in the classroom and life

The students learn so much and talent is developed. It definitely improves students' confidence and is an outlet for expression for many students.

Promotes many talents

Exposure they would not typically have

engagement, appreciation for teamwork, connectedness to something positive

Gives students a place of acceptance and something to look forward to in expressing themselves.

We are not able to have any arts education programs in my school district

Positive impact on other academic subjects.

The combination of self-expression and being a part of a team esteems the individual students.

Opportunity to develop talents and to broaden and diversity educational experience.

Exposure to different areas of the Fine Arts

Increased interest in school

Opens up the world to children

Love of the arts forever

Creative and well rounded, happy students

Enhances the education of the whole child and develops talents.

It addresses their creativity and talents growth

Alternate path to success, enrichment, interdisciplinary enhancement

Leadership, knowledge, skill, travel

The accomplishments of the students in choir competitions and displaying the students' art in exhibits.

Positive thinking

Lifelong learners and creativity.

Allows students to be creative. Students can excel in an Arts Education class and gain confidence.

Learning to read and play music, as well as compete in sight reading competition. It also provides them an opportunity to learn to work together, develop a hobby for adult life, and learn to work together as a team both through one-act play and band, as well as choruses.

Providing student opportunities they would otherwise not have access to.

Creativity, exploration, and self-discipline

increases students self esteem

Well-rounded education to enhance creativity.

Promoting creativity and innovation, teamwork, discipline

All students K-5 have Art weekly and 6-12 students choose them as electives.. I have found out that many ESE students that struggle in the core subjects are very creative and excel in these classes.

Student involvement in the activities we have begun to offer is strong and develops a positive feeling about school, simply because we are reaching out and providing activities to students who otherwise had no where to express their talents.

Arts Educations provides a wide range of experiences and enhances critical thinking skills.

Student engagement

Self esteem

Positive academic outcomes in other subject areas

Many students find talents that would have otherwise gone unnoticed.

Allows students to be creative.

Allows another group of students to express their ability.

Arts provide another opportunity for students to participate in activities and possibly obtain a scholarship for college

Promotion of creativity

Student achievement, public relations, community involvement, civics

Development of student talent; exposure to cultural experiences that rural students would otherwise never have

Development of creativity, collaboration, talent, and ---lifelong skills for enjoyment.

NA

Self Expression

Cultural diversity

There is a daily impact on the lives of every student.

Learn to work as a team

Art Education/programs provides students with an outlet to express many talents. Programs such as this build student self-confidence, leadership skills, communication skills, and creativity to name a few.

the opportunity to express themselves

Many students find a place to belong.

Increased awareness

Balance and inclusiveness, it provides an expressive medium for many students and exposure for all students

Community plays give students and adults in the community a chance to interact in a positive way

Creativity is enhanced

Sense of belonging, teamwork, appreciation of arts

Exposing many students to arts education that otherwise would not have the opportunity due to socio-economic conditions.

Enhanced creativity, appreciation, understanding of art

learn ways to express their individuality

expression and hands on learning

Choral performance at Carnegie Hall.

ASFA is not designed by its enabling legislation to be comparable to other schools therefore I will not complete the remainder of the survey

Arts Education provides an additional tool in our education toolkit to insure that all students have an avenue for success!

Enhanced learning in other areas

Appendix H

Obstacles to Supporting Arts Education

Responses to Open-Ended Reflection

Please describe the greatest obstacle(s) hampering your ability to fully support Arts Education in your school district.

Funding for teacher units

Funding- we barely have enough teachers for core subject areas

Budgetary Constraints

Financial/Budgetary issues

Funding

There is not enough money to expand the Arts.

Funding

Funding

Funding

Adequate Funding

Funding

Scheduling is sometimes a problem

Students being able to fit it in to their schedule

Lack of funding

Funding

None now, if funding cuts continues, money will be the hindrance

Money

Funding

Lack of adequate state funding

None

Lack of funding and other state course requirements.

Finances

Funding and facilities available at all levels are our greatest obstacles.

Finances- budget

Funding

Funding

Lack of knowledge/skills of core academic teachers and arts ed teachers to make explicit connections for students between the two academic areas.

Funding and scheduling

Austerity reductions and budget cuts from state funding.

Economics - reduced state funding

financial resources

Funding

Funding

finance

Finances.

Money

Funding and time due to academic requirements

Funding

Budgetary issues

budget cuts for this area

Economics

economy

Our current budgetary needs are based on implementation of common core standards and testing. We were forced to cut elementary music in 2012-2013.

finances

lack of funding

Teacher funding; economic decline

athletics, CTE, classes students have too many choices for one school

Funding

time

Some students do not have time in their schedules.

lack of Federal, State, or local funding

Additional funding.

Without a doubt, budget (funding).

Budget and scheduling (related).

finances

Qualified applicant pool

budget

Upcoming budget cuts

Scheduling conflicts, sufficient funding and instructors with high expectations for their programs and students.

Budget

State and federal budget reductions, as well as more rigorous academic demands and assessments

Defined career pathway applicability, finances, ignorance

Budget

Funding

Scheduling

Funding and concentration on state assessments.

Funding

Due to austerity reductions in our budget from the state level, we no longer have actual drawing/painting art classes, but we do still have all the other fine arts classes.

Funding and decreasing student population.

Financial Limitations; no state funding

lack of funding

finances

State and Federal mandates pulling money out of the budget

funding

Budgetary constraints

The supplies for these classes are very expensive.

Funding is a problem. All arts currently come from local funding, excluding a few teaching units provided by the state. There is much talk about the arts, but the legislature typically focuses on accountability and results of assessments and sends most funding and discussions in that direction.

Financial

Funding

Funding

Funding

Lack of money.

The greatest obstacle is funding. These teachers are paid with local funds.

Money

budget

Funding and State Mandated Tests

Funds

Emphasis on basic skills and budget

Lack of funding

NA

Funding

finances

No obstacle. It is that important to our district. We continue to increase the arts regardless of the obstacles that are tossed our way. We believe in the arts and see them as a priority of must haves for our district. It is a non-negotiable item (protected) when it comes to budget discussions. We wouldn't be who we are without the arts!

Lack of funding on the state level - legislators not providing adequate funding for education!

Funding

finances, flexibility in scheduling and certified art teachers

Size of school and finances

budgetary constraints

Money

Not enough GOOD fine arts educators

Financial

Money, funding

FUNDING.

funding and time

finances

finances

High stakes testing and finances.

Funding, funding, funding.

funding

Appendix I

Ideal for Arts Education

Responses to Open-Ended Reflection

What would make your school district's IDEAL for Arts Education?

More funds for additional teachers and additional space.

restore state funding levels

Adequate resources to properly fund Arts Education

We have a very strong visual and performing arts program for our K-12 students

funding

I think we have a very positive and productive Arts education program--to make it ideal, we need a performance arts center for concerts, plays...

Proper funding.

State funding increases

Receive funding for the arts.

unlimited dollars

Obviously not having NCLB in place along with a highly skilled and sufficient teacher pool. Plus, funding to hire talented art instructors.

More funding and longer school day .

Be a rich school district that could fund an Arts program locally.

If I had the funding, I would provide arts education at all levels with specialists in each area, from art to theatre to music. It takes vision to have this in your budget in today's legislatively budgeted world, but if it gets cut, eventually, the whole child model of education will diminish and society will miss out on a lot that could be offered.

Ability to offer additional electives in the arts

Restored funding levels from the state of Georgia (fund the austerity cuts).

Increased resources. Less time on required tests.

funding

Longer school day

Being able to "fund" it to a level that it needs to be

Move all activities after school to allow free periods for art education.

Improved funding and state support of the arts (not just financial, but increased endorsement of the arts)

More state funding for it

more teacher allocations from the state at all levels not just secondary, local funds to support art supplies

more state funding

Plenty of money to hire personnel

More funding for such courses and more periods in the school day/week to offer classes

Fully funded education

more money

more units dedicated to art

Better funding sources

Funding

Removal of funding reductions in state QBE funds.

more enrollment in band. Choir is very successful. Need a better art instructor

More funding and more highly qualified teachers

Available instruction in music and visual arts in elementary grades; available instruction in those areas plus drama and dance at the secondary level.

More money and more parental support.

Increased budget.

We do a good job but need more in the Elementary area.

Adequate funding and time to teach the arts

Additional state funding for teachers of the Arts

Funding

Increased budget and commitment to the arts at the state and federal level

The funding for two additional art education teachers would give our system the capability to provide visual art in each of our elementary schools.

Additional funding.

adequate funding and designated space

Finances

Facility improvements and technology.

More funding and longer school day.

State funding support mechanism.

Expanded funding and additional access to programs at the local center for the arts

Funding

Fully fund it

More funding

funding

funding

Funding from the state.

Dedicated art teacher for each school in grades Prek-6

Mandated Testing Time and Additional Funding

We would like to add more Arts Education electives.

better economy

More money, less standardized testing

additional state funding

For the state (legislators) to properly fund education in this state!

Relief from all of the state mandates on required courses for instruction.

Arts at every level

Increased training of arts education teachers to work with core academic teachers in making explicit connections between core academic subjects and arts education.

More available funding from our state, acquisition of grants to allow us to enhance programs at the secondary level, the construction of a secondary performing arts center

To repeal the 30 minutes of REQUIRED P.E. law from state legislature to provide scheduling flexibility.

state funding

Community support

More funding for the Arts

Funding

The addition of a fine arts facility, expansion into the choral area, development of a fine arts academy

A line item for funding from the Alabama Legislature.