

## ***Excellence in Performing Arts Research***

---

Volume 5

---

2018

### **General Music Teachers' Perceptions of District-Mandated Professional Development and Its Impact on Teaching Practices**

Sarah L. Deskins

This paper won the Award for Excellence in Graduate Research, 2017-18.

---

#### **Citation Elements**

Deskins, Sarah L. (2018). General Music Teachers' Perceptions of District-Mandated Professional Development and Its Impact on Teaching Practices. *Excellence in Performing Arts Research* Vol. 5 doi: 10.21038/epar.2018.0101. Retrieved from <https://oaks.kent.edu/epar/vol5/iss1/general-music-teachers-perceptions-district-mandated-professional-development-and>

## Abstract

Meaningful professional development has long been a concern of the teaching profession. This extends into the field of music education, as K-12 music teachers desire professional development opportunities that will add to their knowledge base and also assist them in their daily teaching practices. General music teachers may feel this need more strongly than their instrumental and choral music teacher counterparts. This may be due to the distinct differences of general music teachers' responsibilities and isolated environments, with fewer opportunities to collaborate with peers. If professional development within districts was specifically aimed at meeting the needs of general music teachers, this might help to alleviate issues of isolation and promote collaboration with peers. For this reason, it is important to consider what professional development exists for general music teachers within their districts. This quantitative study considers general music teachers in two northeastern Ohio counties and seeks to answer the following: What percentage of general music teachers in Trumbull and Mahoning Counties have had district-mandated professional development focused on the needs of general music teachers within the last two years? How do these teachers view specialized versus generalized professional development? Were there differences in general music teachers' feelings of isolation for those who collaborated with others outside of professional development versus those who did not? It is hoped that a better understanding of the professional development needs of general music teachers as related to issues of isolation and collaboration will be more fully realized as a result of this study.

## Introduction

Meaningful professional development has long been a concern of the teaching profession (Eros, 2013). This extends into the field of music education, as those in the areas of instrumental, vocal, and general music desire to be involved in professional development opportunities that can add to their knowledge base and assist them in their daily teaching practices (Bowles, 2002; Conway, 2008; Eros, 2013). While instrumental and choral teachers generally teach a smaller percentage of the overall student population, comprised of older students, general music teachers often teach the entire student body, comprised of younger students. Instrumental and choral teachers may primarily look for ways to enhance their teaching effectiveness with performing ensembles, while general music teachers more likely seek knowledge to further their skills in teaching the most fundamental aspects of music (Bowles, 2002). General music educators may also desire professional development in "specific methodologies [such as] Kodály, Dalcroze, and Orff" (Bowles, 2002, p. 37), while also needing guidance with classroom management, teaching diverse student populations, and other important and relevant topics related to their daily teaching practices.

Additionally, isolation is a common problem for music teachers (Sindberg & Lipscomb, 2005). Isolation "is a major obstacle and prohibits schools from functioning as a professional learning community" (DuFour, 1999) and "has also been found to contribute to occupational stress in teachers" (Dussault, Deaulelin, Royer, & Loiselle, 1999). General music educators may often feel even more isolated than their instrumental and choral music teacher counterparts due to their distinct non-performance-based teaching environments. Occasions to meet or interact with peers outside of professional growth events is often less frequent than their instrumental and choral peers who generally have regular opportunities for interaction and collaboration with

colleagues at district or regional events (e.g. solo and ensemble, honor band). By having professional development opportunities that are specifically aimed at meeting the needs of general music teachers, this important and foundational branch of the music education community would not only receive more quality instruction regarding teaching practices but might also feel more connected to other music teachers in their specific field of general music. This connection could provide additional and ongoing informal interactions with other general music teachers in the field, giving these music education professionals “the most powerful form of music teacher development” (Conway, 2008, p.12).

### **Statement of the Problem**

While general music teachers may desire meaningful professional development as a way to better inform their teaching practices and connect with others in the field, the professional development mandated by school districts frequently does little to help fulfill these needs. As Bauer (2007) aptly stated, “Ultimately, for the professional development of music educators to be considered a success, it should positively impact the learning of students” (p. 20). If professional development is not designed toward that end, then there are issues that need to be addressed. General music teachers can become increasingly frustrated with what appears to be a lack of concern on the part of their school districts for their specialized needs to be met via meaningful professional development and further isolated as they continue to be disconnected from other general music teachers in their district and also on a wider scale as well.

Currently there is limited research on the topic of district-mandated professional development for music educators, and general music teachers specifically, and its effect on teaching practices (Bauer, 2007). Conway (2008) affirms this claim: “the professional development of the inservice music teacher is an area ripe for every possible kind of research” (p. 16). It seems clear, however, that a “one size fits all approach” for professional development is far from ideal (Hammel, 2007). Though there has been considerably more research on the topic of isolation and collaboration as a possible remedy as it relates to the field of education as a whole, there is still a deficiency on this topic as it relates to music educators (Sindberg & Lipscomb, 2005). Obviously this would include the even more specific field of general music teachers. Even so, Sindberg & Lipscomb (2005) found that “public school teachers [felt] isolated in their building[s]...isolation is often related to the subject (in this case, music) and ...isolation has a negative effect on teaching” (p. 53).

### **Review of Literature**

Though research concerning professional development needs for music educators has grown considerably in the last decade, substantial findings are still lacking (Bauer, 2007; Conway, 2008). There is much more to be discovered regarding the very specialized needs and issues of music educators, and more specifically, general music teachers. This is especially true as it relates to the effectiveness of district-mandated professional development on teaching practices as well as concerns of isolation (Sindberg & Lipscomb, 2005). Collaboration by others in the field has been suggested as a way to help meet the needs of both effective professional development and isolation (Conway, 2008; Sindberg & Lipscomb, 2005), though some researchers have discovered that music educators, including general music teachers, tend to view issues of district-mandated professional development, isolation, and collaboration differently depending on their career stage, including early, mid, and late career (Conway, 2008).

The music education community acknowledges that in-service professional development should be focused on meeting the various and specialized needs of music educators, and a majority of music educators in a study stated that they preferred professional development experiences be presented by an expert in the field (Bowles, 2002). Though they were speaking primarily in regard to state and national professional development opportunities such as those presented at conferences, it was clear that music educators' preferences were to have professional development experiences that were meaningful and effective. Conway (2008) affirms this view in discovering that district-mandated experiences that were not focused on music were found to be the least effective forms of professional development.

The theme of collaboration with peers as a way to increase the effectiveness of professional development and also as a possible solution to isolation has been an area of interest to those in music education research. While a number of researchers have focused on the topic of collaboration as a means to make professional development more successful and meaningful (Gruenhagen, 2009; Hammel, 2007; Kastner, 2012; Monsour, 1991; Pellagrino, 2011; Pelletier, 2013; Stanley, 2012; Stanley, Snell, & Edgar, 2014), fewer have considered the long-term benefits that collaboration could play with helping ease feelings of isolation (Sindberg & Lipscomb, 2005). There is further evidence that informal, rather than formal, collaboration among music teachers might be the most valuable form of professional development (Conway, 2008), but both forms of professional development are shown to have value (Eros, 2013; Pelletier, 2013). The formal model provides opportunities for music teachers to initially connect, which can help to promote further informal collaboration experiences of music teachers with their peers in the future (Conway, 2008).

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to examine district-mandated professional development experiences of general music teachers and to determine if there were connections between professional development, collaboration, and feelings of isolation among these teachers. It is important for stakeholders to consider the career development opportunities that general music teachers are offered at the district level, the distinction of whether these experiences are generalized or specialized, and the advantages and disadvantages of one versus the other.

### ***Research Questions***

The following research questions guided this study:

1. What percentage of general music teachers in Trumbull and Mahoning counties (Ohio) have had district-mandated professional development focused on the needs of general music teachers within the last two years?
2. How do these teachers view specialized versus generalized professional development?
3. Are there differences in general music teachers' feelings of isolation for those who collaborated with others outside of professional development versus those who did not?

## **Conceptual Framework**

The phenomenon of professional development experiences of general music teachers upon collaboration and its effect on feelings of isolation is the conceptual framework for this study. Professional development can assume different meanings, but leaders in the field indicate that in order for it to be effective, it should have an impact in some way, perhaps through teacher 'success,' though this is not fully defined, known, or researched (Conway, 2008). In addition, these experiences should have a direct impact on student learning (Bauer, 2007). Collaboration is defined as the "unique community-in which [members] learn from one another and construct shared understandings through interaction" (Stanley, 2012, p. 54). Partnering with other general music teachers during professional growth events might help to decrease isolation, especially for those new to the profession, and not yet connected with others in the field. By connecting with peers, bridges are built in all three stages of a general music educator's life: early, mid, and late career (Conway, 2008; Monsour, 1991).

## **Method**

A descriptive design was used for this study. Evidence was obtained from an online questionnaire through Qualtrics software. Survey responses were analyzed using Qualtrics and SPSS.

### ***Participants***

The sample comprised general music teachers from Trumbull and Mahoning counties in Northeast Ohio. A total of 58 public school general music educators for whom valid work email addresses were located were invited to take part in this study, representing more than 30 school districts. A total of 44 general music teachers were contributors in this study.

### ***Instrument***

A structured survey instrument was used to collect data. The author designed a questionnaire in order to better understand the professional development experiences, collaboration efforts, and feelings of isolation or connectedness of public school general music teachers in the two target counties. The questionnaire consisted of 6 questions, with 3 questions utilizing a continuous response scale format and 3 questions utilizing a simple response format (See Appendix). A letter stating the purpose of the study, along with an invitation and link for consent/non-consent to complete the survey, was emailed to 58 public school general music teachers. The initial email request was sent in early March 2018, with two additional email reminders sent to participants through late April 2018. All responses were treated as confidential, and no personally identifiable information was collected as part of the survey.

### ***Procedure***

Approval was secured through Kent State University's Institutional Review Board, and validity promoted through review of the questionnaire by a known researcher in the field. Following this process, a list of all school districts in Trumbull and Mahoning counties of Ohio

was acquired via the Trumbull County Educational Service Center and Mahoning County Educational Service Center websites. Work email addresses for general music educators in these counties were then obtained by examining teacher contact information on school district websites. If work email addresses or websites could not be located for general music educators, the district superintendent or principal was contacted to obtain this information. In situations where no contact or email information could be acquired, those particular schools or school districts were excluded from the study.

## Results

The overall survey response rate (those consenting to take part in the study) was 75.9% ( $N=44$ ). It is important to note, however, that the percentage of individuals answering each question varies at times from the overall response rate, as all participants did not reply to every question. For that reason, percentages listed for each question refer to the number of individuals responding to that specific question, not the total number of respondents who agreed to take part in the survey. Participants were first asked if any of the professional development events mandated by their districts in the last two years were specifically focused on meeting their specialized. A total of 40 (90.9%) teachers responded, with these results: 12.50% ( $n=5$ ) -yes and 87.50% ( $n=35$ ) responded -no.

Participants were then asked if they viewed these experiences as having a negative, neutral, or positive effect on their teaching practices, with 1=negative, 5=neutral, and 10=positive. Of the 44 general music teachers who consented to take the survey, 39 (88.6%) responded. Apart from the majority (51.28%) of neutral responses, most (35.90%) indicated that their experiences were negative (See Table 1).

**Table 1.** Participants' Views of District-Mandated Professional Development on Teaching Practices

<i>Scale*</i>	<i>% of Participants</i>	<i>Number of Participants</i>
<b>1</b>	12.82%	5
<b>2</b>	5.13%	2
<b>3</b>	7.69%	3
<b>4</b>	10.26%	4
<b>5</b>	51.28%	20
<b>6</b>	7.69%	3
<b>7</b>	2.56%	1
<b>8</b>	0%	0
<b>9</b>	0%	0
<b>10</b>	2.56%	1
<b>Total</b>	100%	39

\*Scale where 1=negative, 5=neutral, and 10=positive

Respondents were also asked to rate their connection with their general music peers at district-mandated professional growth events that was specifically focused on meeting their specialized needs within the last two years, with 1=negative, 5=neutral, and 10=positive. Of the

44 who consented to take the survey, 35 (79.5%) responded. Apart from the majority (51.43%) of neutral responses, most (34.28%) indicated their experiences were positive (See Table 2).

**Table 2.** Connection with Other General Music Teachers at District-Mandated Specialized Professional Development in Last 2 Years

<i>Scale*</i>	<i>% of Participants</i>	<i>Number of Participants</i>
<b>1</b>	5.71	2
<b>2</b>	5.71	2
<b>3</b>	2.86	1
<b>4</b>	0%	0
<b>5</b>	51.43%	18
<b>6</b>	5.71%	2
<b>7</b>	5.71%	2
<b>8</b>	8.57%	3
<b>9</b>	2.86%	1
<b>10</b>	11.43%	4
<b>Total</b>	100%	35

\*Scale where 1=negative, 5=neutral, and 10=positive

When asked if they had collaborated with any of their general music peers outside of district-mandated occasions (whether or not these were specialized), 40 (90.9%) of the 44 who consented to take the survey responded, with the following results: 60.00% ( $n=24$ ) indicated *yes* while 40.00% ( $n=16$ ) indicated *no*.

When asked to indicate the number of their general music peers they knew in their surrounding region (not just their district), 40 (90.9%) of the 44 who consented to take the survey responded. A majority (52.50%) indicated that they knew 5 or more other general music teachers (See Table 3).

**Table 3.** Number of Other General Music Teachers Known In Region

<i>Scale*</i>	<i>% of Participants</i>	<i>Number of Participants</i>
<b>1</b>	10.00%	4
<b>2</b>	7.50%	3
<b>3</b>	15.00%	6
<b>4</b>	15.00%	6
<b>5 or more</b>	52.50%	21
<b>Total</b>	100%	40

\*Scale where 1=1, 2=2, 3=3, 4=4, 5=5 or more

Finally, participants were asked to indicate if they felt isolated or connected to other general music educators in their districts, with 1=very isolated and 10=very connected. Of the 44 who consented to take the survey, 37 (84.1%) responded. The largest percentage (35.14%)

indicated feeling very isolated, while only 5.41% indicated feeling very connected. A majority (70.28%) indicated some degree of feelings of isolation (See Table 4).

**Table 4.** Feelings of Isolation or Connectedness to General Music Teachers in District

<i>Scale*</i>	<i>% of Participants</i>	<i>Number of Participants</i>
<b>1</b>	35.14%	13
<b>2</b>	5.41%	2
<b>3</b>	8.11%	3
<b>4</b>	2.70%	1
<b>5</b>	18.92%	7
<b>6</b>	2.70%	1
<b>7</b>	13.51%	5
<b>8</b>	8.11%	3
<b>9</b>	0.00%	0
<b>10</b>	5.41%	2
<b>Total</b>	100%	37

\*Scale where 1=very isolated and 10=very connected

The sample was then divided into two groups based on their responses to the question: “Do you feel isolated or connected to other general music teachers in your district?” Of the sample, 22 responded that they felt connected, and 15 responded that they felt isolated. The *connected* group (M=4.82, SD=3.00) indicated a higher response than did the *isolated* group (M=2.93, SD=2.43). An independent samples *t*-test was conducted to determine if the differences between the responses to the question “Have you voluntarily collaborated with any other general music teachers in the last two years inside or outside your school district apart from professional development sessions mandated by your district (no matter if the session was specifically geared to general music or not)?” were statistically significant. It was determined that the differences between the two groups’ scores were statistically significant (sig.=.05).

## Discussion

The survey results indicated that within the last two years, the majority (87.50%) of contributors to this study did not have district-mandated professional development that was specifically focused on meeting their specialized needs. With this in mind, it is not surprising that the majority (51.28%) also indicated a neutral response when asked about the effect that these professional growth events had on their teaching practices. Only a minority (12.82%) viewed these experiences as positive, while 35.89% viewed them as negative.

When asked about participants’ connections with their general music peers at district-mandated professional development within the last two years, it is not surprising that yet again, a majority (51.43%) indicated a neutral response, especially considering that most had more generalized, rather than specialized, professional development in their districts. While 34.28% indicated a positive connection with their general music peers at these events, only 14.28% viewed their connections as negative. This is interesting to note when considering that, outside



the neutral response, participants' views of the effect of district-mandated professional development on their teaching practices is seen more negatively overall, but their connection with other general music teachers is seen more positively. This would indicate that more general music teachers value collaboration with their mutually specialized colleagues at district-mandated events, even if they do not view the professional development that is offered as having a positive effect on their teaching practices.

A majority of respondents (60%) indicated that they have collaborated with other general music teachers outside district-mandated professional development, and the majority (52.50%) knew 5 or more general music educators in their surrounding region. Still, many more (35.14%) felt very isolated to other general music educators within their own districts as compared to those who felt very connected (5.41%). While 18.91% chose a 5 on the continuous response scale, indicating a more neutral view of isolation or connection with general music peers in their districts, a majority (51.35%) felt isolated, and only 29.72% felt connected to them. This seems to indicate that while a majority felt isolated within their own districts, a majority has also made an effort apart from district-mandated events to collaborate with their colleagues in their region.

The results of this study provide evidence that non-specialized district-mandated professional development is common for most general music teachers in Trumbull and Mahoning counties of Ohio. Outside of the neutral category, most educators in this study indicated that these experiences have a negative effect on their teaching practices. Conway (2008) suggested that the least effective form of professional development is that which is district-mandated and generalized. Though the results of this study indicate that many general music teachers collaborated with their colleagues outside of district occurrences, the reality is that most still feel isolated, particularly within their own school districts. This is supported by findings in prior research of Sindberg & Lipscomb (2005) that showed isolation as a reality for many public school music teachers. Still, the results of this study indicate that informal collaboration with others outside of district-mandated professional development was common for many, which may signify that these educators are receiving some form of meaningful professional development. This is supported by findings in previous research of Conway (2008) who provided evidence that informal collaboration with peers was the most effective form of professional development for music teachers. A significant difference was found between feelings of isolation for those who collaborated outside of district-mandated professional development and those who did not. No correlation was made, but prior research of Conway (2008) and Sindberg & Lipscomb (2005) suggest that partnering with peers may be a possible solution to feelings of isolation experienced by music teachers. With 35.14% feeling "very isolated" and only 5.41% feeling "very connected," it is critical that these issues be addressed appropriately if positive change is to occur.

Though there are exceptions to this, it is clear that as a whole, general music teachers in this study perceive professional development at the district level to be ineffective, indicated by their neutral or negative responses to this survey question. Furthermore, educators are, in large measure, isolated within their own districts, though many know 5 or more other general music teachers in their region and have actively connected with some of them outside of district professional growth meetings. Though all general music educators in Trumbull and Mahoning counties of Ohio could not be contacted, and this is a limitation of this study, the evidence provided by participants from many other districts in these counties seems to indicate that the issue of meaningful professional development is a relevant and important one. Perhaps the fact that no contact information for general music teachers in one particular school district could be

obtained, even after several attempts, could itself be a further indication of isolation and the need for these educators to be connected across the region. If general music teachers are to experience effective professional development and decreased feelings of isolation, the results suggest that either the amount of specialized district-mandated professional development must increase, informal or formal collaboration with peers outside of these occasions must increase, or a combination thereof.

## Conclusion

As noted in the literature review, mirroring their peers in general education, music educators desire professional development that targets their unique needs, enhances their foundational knowledge, and supports them in their daily work in the classroom (Bowles, 2002; Conway, 2008; Eros, 2013). General music teachers in particular predominantly desire training in methodologies such as Kodály, Orff, and Dalcroze (Bowles, 2002). Unfortunately, isolation has been found to be a common and significant dilemma among teachers, including the music education profession. This results in stress and keeps this specialized group of music educators from being involved in professional learning groups with their peers (DuFour, 1999; Dussault, Deaulelin, Royer, & Loiselle, 1999; Sindberg & Lipscomb, 2005). More specifically, the general music professionals may experience increased feelings of isolation when compared to their instrumental and choral teachers due to their unique teaching environments and less opportunity to interact regularly with their peers.

The results of this study indicate that the majority of contributors did not have specialized district-mandated professional development in the last two years. A majority viewed these experiences within their districts to be neutral, followed by negative perceptions. A majority knew 5 or more general music teachers in their region, and a majority collaborated with others outside their own districts. Significant differences of feelings of isolation were found between those who collaborated with others outside district-mandated professional development and those who did not.

While specialized professional development at the district level may not eliminate all feelings of isolation for the entire general music teaching population, it would potentially provide times of meaningful professional growth for this segment of the music education community and offer a way to initially connect with peers. Additionally, the specialized focus might spark new conversations with peers both inside and outside the district, hopefully resulting in decreased feelings of isolation and increased feelings of connectedness with other general music teachers. This might ultimately result in a more positive effect on teaching practices, as suggested in prior research (Bowles, 2002; Conway, 2008; Eros, 2013), and also have a beneficial effect on student learning (Bauer, 2007).

Though this descriptive study only provided a small sample size and cannot be generalized to a larger population, it does provide a small window into the views of a segment of general music teachers that might cause others in the field to consider or reconsider the professional development needs in other districts. The role that district-mandated professional development plays upon collaboration and its effect on feelings of isolation within districts might cause stakeholders such as superintendents and administrators to more carefully consider the types of professional development offered at the district level, especially for music educators and other arts teachers. By providing more specialized offerings, teacher effectiveness and student learning may increase, along with the potential added benefits of decreased isolation and

increased connectedness with peers. By addressing these needs within districts, general music educators might be more satisfied with both the professional and social aspects of their vocation.

There are a number of opportunities that exist for future research possibilities on issues of the professional development experiences of general music teachers within districts as well as collaboration and its effect on feelings of isolation. Though there has been a reasonable amount of research concerning the effect of meaningful professional development on teaching practices and the role that collaboration plays to support that, there is still limited research on the topic of isolation, especially in regard to public school music educators, though collaboration has been suggested as a potential way to resolve feelings of isolation for this group of professionals.

Beyond the obvious suggestion of replicating this study with other districts in Ohio and elsewhere, it may be valuable to take a closer look at the correlation of isolation and collaboration to Ohio Music Education Association (OMEA) and National Association for Music Education (NAfME) membership, along with other general music association memberships (e.g. Orff, Kodály, or Dalcroze), especially considering the significant difference found between feelings of isolation and collaboration in this study. These professional organizations provide ongoing opportunities for meaningful professional growth, and active participation may offer potential connections with peers that extend beyond what can be offered outside of these settings, so investigating this connection could prove insightful. An additional suggestion is to examine the differences of feelings of isolation versus connectedness in general music teachers when compared to their instrumental and choral teacher counterparts. Finally, using a case study approach, it might also be beneficial to explore the individual views of general music teachers on issues of collaboration and feelings of isolation or connectedness as it relates to their vocational choice itself, as compared to the choice of becoming an instrumental or choral music educator.

Whatever paths future researchers may take concerning these topics, it is clear that a generalized approach to professional development for general music teachers is ineffective and positive strides must be taken to ensure that more specialized methods are a priority for districts. It is critical that general music educators be effective in their teaching practices, further resulting in student learning and growth in their music classrooms. Furthermore, the need for this unique group of music educators to feel connected to their peers through collaboration, both within their own districts and regionally, is essential for them to thrive on a professional level, both individually and as a professional learning community overall.

## References

- Bauer, W. I. (2007). Research on professional development for experienced music teachers. *Journal of Music Teacher Education, 17*(1), 12-21. doi:10.1177/10570837070170010105
- Bowles, C. (2002). The self-expressed professional development needs of music educators. *Update: Applications of Research in Music Education, 21*(2), 35-41. doi:10.1177/87551233020210020701
- Conway, C. (2008). Experienced music teacher perceptions of professional development throughout their careers. *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education, 176*, 7-18. Retrieved from <http://bcrme.press.uillinois.edu/>
- DuFour, R. (1999). Taking on loneliness. *Journal of Staff Development, 20*(1), 61-62. Retrieved from <https://eric.ed.gov/>
- Dussault, M., Deaulelin, C, Royer, N., & Loisselle, J. (1999). Professional isolation and occupational stress in teachers. *Psychological Reports, 84*(3), 943-946. Retrieved from <http://journals.sagepub.com/>
- Eros, J. (2013). Second-stage music teachers' perceptions of their professional development. *Journal of Music Teacher Education, 22*(2), 20-33. doi:10.1177/1057083712438771
- Gruenhagen, L. M. (2009). Developing professional conversations about music teaching and learning through collaborative conversations. In Thompson, L. K., & Campbell, M. R. (Eds.), *Research perspectives: thought and practice in music education* (pp. 125-176). Retrieved from <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/kentstate/reader.action?docID=3315522&ppg=121>
- Hammel, A. M. (2007). Professional development research in general education. *Journal of Music Teacher Education, 17*(1), 22-32. doi:10.1177/10570837070170010106
- Kastner, J. D. (2012). Exploring informal music pedagogy in a professional development community of elementary music teachers (Order No. 3548741). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses A&I; ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. (1282404696).
- Monsour, S. (1991). The preparation of general music teachers: Buildings, bridges, and bonsai. *Journal of Music Teacher Education, 1*(1), 12-20. doi:10.1177/105708379100100104
- Pelletier, C. L. (2013). The learning communities of exemplary mid-career elementary general music teachers (Order No. 3673450). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses A&I; ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. (1647745093).
- Pelligrino, K. (2011). Exploring the benefits of music-making as professional development for teachers. *Arts Education Policy Review, 112*(2), 79-88. doi:10.1080/10632913.2011.546694
- Sindberg, L. & S. D. Lipscomb (2005). Professional isolation and the public school music teacher. *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education, 166*, 43-56. Retrieved from <http://bcrme.press.uillinois.edu/>
- Stanley, A. (2012). The experiences of elementary music teachers in a collaborative teacher study group. *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education, 192*, 53-74. doi:10.5406/bulcouresmusedu.192.0053
- Stanley, A. M., Snell, A., & Edgar, S. (2014). Collaboration as effective music professional development. *Journal of Music Teacher Education, 24*(1), 76-88. doi:10.1177/1057083713502731

## Appendix: Survey Instrument

### General Music Teacher's Perceptions of District-Mandated Professional Development and Its Impact on Teaching Practices

Welcome to "General Music Teacher's Perceptions of District-Mandated Professional Development and Its Impact on Teaching Practices," a brief online survey for general music teachers of Trumbull and Mahoning counties of Ohio. Before taking part in this study, please read the consent form below and click on the "I Consent" button at the bottom of the page if you understand the statements and freely consent to participate in this study.

**Consent Form-** This survey involves a 6-question survey designed to better understand the professional needs and experiences of general music teachers in Trumbull and Mahoning counties of Ohio. The study is being conducted by principal investigator, Jay Dorfman, associate professor of music education, and co-investigator, Sarah Mattern, a PhD student in music education, of Kent State University, and it has been approved by the Kent State University Institutional Review Board. This survey is being conducted as part of the "Research in Music Education" course requirement for PhD students in music education. No deception is involved, and the study involves no more than minimal risk to participants (i.e., the level of risk encountered in daily life).

Participation in this survey will take approximately 2-3 minutes and is strictly anonymous. Participants will choose an answer for each question from the ones provided that best match their experiences.

All responses are treated as confidential, and no personally identifiable information will be associated with any part of the survey.

Participation is voluntary, and refusal to take part in the study involves no penalty or loss of benefits to which participants are otherwise entitled. No credit or monetary compensation is given for the completion of this survey.

If participants have further questions about this study or their rights, or if they wish to lodge a complaint or concern, they may contact the principal investigator, Professor Jay Dorfman at [jdorfma2@kent.edu](mailto:jdorfma2@kent.edu) or the Kent State University Institutional Review Board, at (330) 672-2704.

If you are 18 years of age or older, understand the statements above, and freely consent to participate in the study, click on the "I CONSENT" button to begin the survey. If you do not wish to participate in this survey, please click on the "I DO NOT CONSENT" button and this process will be complete.

- I CONSENT to participate in this survey. (1)
- I DO NOT CONSENT to participate in this survey. (2)

*Skip To: End of Survey If General Music Teacher's Perceptions of District-Mandated Professional Development and Its Impact on Teaching Practices... = I DO NOT CONSENT to participate in this survey.*

---

1. Were any of the professional development opportunities mandated by your school district in the last two years specifically focused on the needs of general music teachers?

YES (1)

NO (2)

---

2. Do you view these experiences as having a negative, neutral, or positive effect on your teaching practices? Choose the response that best represents your experiences, where 1=negative, 5=neutral, and 10=positive.

1 (1)

2 (2)

3 (3)

4 (4)

5 (5)

6 (6)

7 (7)

8 (8)

9 (9)

10 (10)

3. Of the professional development opportunities mandated by your school district in the last two years that were specifically focused on meeting the needs of general music teachers, do you view your connection with other general music teachers at these events to be negative, neutral, or positive? Choose the response that best represents your experiences, where 1=negative, 5=neutral, and 10=positive.

- 1 (1)
  - 2 (2)
  - 3 (3)
  - 4 (4)
  - 5 (5)
  - 6 (6)
  - 7 (7)
  - 8 (8)
  - 9 (9)
  - 10 (10)
- 

4. Have you voluntarily collaborated with any other general music teachers in the last two years inside or outside your school district apart from professional development sessions mandated by your district (no matter if the session was specifically geared to general music or not)?

- YES (1)
  - NO (2)
-

5. How many other general music teachers in your surrounding region (not necessarily your school district) do you know?

- 1 (1)
  - 2 (2)
  - 3 (3)
  - 4 (4)
  - 5 or more (5)
- 

6. Do you feel isolated or connected to other general music teachers in your district?  
Choose the response that best represents your experiences, where 1=very isolated and 10=very connected.

- 1 (1)
- 2 (2)
- 3 (3)
- 4 (4)
- 5 (5)
- 6 (6)
- 7 (7)
- 8 (8)
- 9 (9)
- 10 (10)