**Title**

The title may be a bit misleading as the study is more about attitudes than concrete support. Maybe “Attitudes toward supporting music education in a low-income rural area” would be more precise.

**Abstract**

Perhaps make it clearer here that the codification of your data produced two distinct themes: reasons to support music education in elementary schools and efforts to overcome economic challenges. This will make it easier to read the Findings section.

**Introduction**

The section titled “Supporting Music Education in Elementary Schools in a Low-Income rural Area” should be the **Introduction** section.

The paragraphs highlighted in yellow describe the value of music education for children in general, but do not relate to the topic of your study, namely, the attitudes of parents and educators in low-income rural areas. Maybe they could be deleted or condensed into one shorter paragraph.

I am also not sure how the Instructional Leadership Philosophy fits in to the research question – this needs clarification.

 **Method**

How was your purposive sample selected? Was there any attempt to include people who may not be supportive of music education or who believe that limited funding should go elsewhere? If choosing only supportive people was part of your design, this should be clearly stated.

**Findings**

I understand the quotes are from transcripts but perhaps they can be cleaned up a bit - they are often ungrammatical and difficult to read. Maybe use square brackets to paraphrase, or elipses to eliminate unnecessary words. I have highlighted two especially problematic (unclear) sentences, but I believe this would be helpful throughout.

**Discussion**

**Might there be any bias in your chosen sample? While the principals represent all four schools, are five parents enough to be representative of the community? This could be mentioned as a limitation.**

**General**

Please clarify the phrases highlighted in blue, prior to the editing phase.

**Abstract**

The purpose of this generic qualitative inquiry was to describe attitudes toward the significance and sustainability of music education in elementary schools in a low-income rural area. Sources for this research included interviews, focus groups, observation and informal conversations. Participants were school principals, students’ parents, and teachers from four elementary schools of a small district in a low-income rural area in the southeast of the United States. The data collected were analyzed through open coding to answer how educators and students’ parents from a low-income rural area explain the reason for their efforts to overcome economic challenges to maintain music in elementary school. The inquiry indicated that the attempt to overcome challenges is due to the music education effects on students' academic and daily activities. The results suggest that educators should embrace challenges to support a music curriculum that provides meaning for students’ life.

*Keywords:*challenges, efforts, low-income, music education, practice

**Supporting Music Education in Elementary Schools in a Low-Income rural Area**

Teaching music, for many years, I observed that music educators must always deal with reduced resources in adjusted school budgets. I also observed that in more stringent economic circumstances, music education is still one of the first elements to be cut from the school program. Accordingly, whoever teaches music or intends to support music education in their school program must always be aware of liabilities due to policy changes. Instabilities relating to resources are constant challenges for the organization of a school program, especially when supporting music education in low-income rural areas.

This article is into the perspective of current national policy, which, according to Garza, Drysdale, and Gurr (2011), moves towards school autonomy. Findings from past studies revealed that experts on the school budgeting committees recognize the significance of music for educational quality but funding for music education is frequently reduced during budgetary cuts (Burrack et al., 2014).

For educational quality, music practices provide constructive accomplishments enabling children to develop greater tolerance and self-discipline, which are essential attributes in today’s diverse American society (Mantie, 2012). Music practices also promotes responsibility among children helping them to refine their communication skills (Rohwer, 2017).

Accoridng to Nardo et al. (2006), communication through music-making is a part of a child’s life, starting with sleeping songs from their parents, then with playmates, and later in preschool activities. Tu (2009) reported findings affirming that each child has a specific level of music aptitude from birth, naturally developed until its stability at 9 years old. Likewise, Patrick (2013) observed that music is present in early learning activities when musical expressions and young children naturally go together. Patrick also stated that music education from early education engages children in music-making experiences as a means for creative involvement and integration.

Aldeguer (2014) affirmed that in an era of scientific development that has brought the world into closer contact, music has also become means to integrate children with equality. Tobias (2015) reported that the commitment to support music education in a school program provides opportunities for developing students, not only in the classroom but also by cultivating learning behaviors and improving awareness, interest, and common sense.

According to Puryear and Kettler (2017), in the United States, 20% of students attend rural schools. They also stated that despite a policy for enhanced education, few principals advocate for the inclusion of music in rural school programs. Specifically, Barry and Durham (2017) affirmed that in 71% of 1,500 school districts in a southwest region of the United States, early education classes reduced music teaching time in favor of reading and math. Likewise, but on the southeast side, Ladd et al. (2014) affirmed that the government invests in education, but the goal is to achieve test scores in math and reading that are better than those in any other region. Consequently, in proportion to numeracy and literacy skills, music education in public schools is still underfunded (Guhn et al., 2020).

Thus, whoever teaches music or intends to support music education in their school program must always be aware of policy changes (Burrack et al., 2014; Johnson & Matthews, 2017). Conversely, according to Clasquin-Johnson (2016), educational policies could be shaped. She also stated that the administration of funding for the inclusion of music in the school’s program relies on educators’ awareness, especially in disadvantaged regions.

Martignetti et al. (2013) stated that to achieve the full educational benefit, teaching music in schools requires the principal’s endeavor for a curriculum-as-practicum. However, West (2015) said that music education within a practicum model demands conditions and proficiency. Thus, from similar concerns, Hunt’s (2009) asserted that building developmental goals for a music program can provide enhanced instruction for students from rural areas. Allsup (2003) defended that the vision of music practices in rural communities where music can be explored and invented, allowing students’ confidence from expressing and the understanding who they are. Bates (2011) held that the larger vision for music education in disadvantaged areas is to provide adequate means to influence students’ lives.

However, while adjusting the finances for music education, public school students and music educators must also deal with a variety of problems from instability (Elpus & Grisé, 2019). Educators should also manage political procedures to support music in school programs, which requires determined efforts (Johnson & Matthews, 2017).

Moreover, there is a gap in the research regarding challenges and the decisions of public school principals in low-income areas for sustaining music education in a curriculum (Kettler et al., 2016). The shortage of information on the effectiveness of musical practices results in unconcern about supporting music as part of a school program (Colombo & Antonietti, 2017). However, according to Regelski (2006), the challenges for music education increase the need to defend a school music program with a practical meaning in life.

Conceputal Framework

The Instructional Leadership Philosophy is the support for the study. Leithwood and Riehl (2003) presented a starting discussion on leadership related to educational changes. According to Leithwood and Riehl leading people, developing administrative functions, and nurture learning programs are characteristic of instructional leadership philosophy. However the objective of contemporary education create some restriction to conceptualize instruction and instructional leadership practices (Hallinger, 2003). However, proficient leaders are followed by their influence in hope, trust, and optimism (Avolio et al., 2004). In sum, instructional leadership is a responsibility for the educational accomplishment of all children regardless of economic diversities (Neumerski, 2013).

Given this knowledge, the aim of my study is to describe attitudes towards the significance and sustainability of music education in elementary schools in a low-income rural area. By providing a model of the authentic results of principals as musical facilitators, others may be able to weigh the best practices and pitfalls that can undermine music education experiences. Furthermore, this study can offer educators insights for encouraging music in schools programs.

 The study subject originated two research questions, which led to the elaboration of a methodology and guided the investigation: How do educators and students’ parents from a low-income rural area explain their reason to support music programs in elementary school? How could the efforts of educators and students' parents help to overcome the economic challenges of music education?

**Method**

A generic qualitative inquiry was the chosen approach to provide perspectives on attitudes toward the significance and sustainability of music education in elementary schools in a low-income rural area. Merriam (2009) stated that generic qualitative inquiry, also called interpretive or basic qualitative inquiry, is a start for all qualitative studies and can be articulated as a research procedure. According to Merriam and Tisdell (2015), a generic inquiry is a flexible way to understand and achieve the significance of people’s views and experiences. Patton (2015) also defined the generic inquiry as a qualitative approach that allows in-depth interviews and field notes without enclosing the research in a particular tradition.

A purposive sample was selected after receiving institutional review board approval related to the research procedure and the hiring of a professional to transcribe the recorded conversations, as well as the authorization from the district superintendent of public schools (who cautioned not to identify the name of the participants, schools, and district).

All volunteer participants, a total of 12 adults from the small district, were involved with music education. Patton (2015) stated that there is no protocol for the sample size, the amount of detail and contextualization is the wealth of a qualitative inquiry. Thus, I collected the data through individual interviews with each of the principals (*n =* 4) and 3 focus groups with teachers and students’ parents (*n =* 8) from Parent Teacher Organizations (PTOs) of each school. The option to clarify uncertainties from conversations was through email messages. The locations for the 45-60 minute meetings were chosen according to the participants’ preferences. I recorded all sessions on a digital device, and to ensure privacy, I created pseudonyms for each of the volunteers, as follows. John, Louis, Sabrina, and Walt were school principals. Marc, Newton, and Olsen were students' fathers, and Bill was a teacher. Alice and Flora were mothers of students, while Therese was a teacher, and Zoe was a music teacher.

A consent form explained the freedom to participate in or withdraw from the study was confirmed in attending the meetings. Using open-ended questions, the researcher guided the discussion while monitoring the response time for each interviewee. Given the researcher’s use of English as a second language and aiming for better communication, copies of the questions for individual interviews and focus group (see supplementary materials) were typed on cards for each one of the participants. During the focus group sessions, all interviewees were involved, and the discussion was concluded within the planned time.

I used the NVivo qualitative data analysis software to organize the data, which enabled to codify and move inductively and cyclically amidst questions, records, and field notes from my observations until it reached saturation. From observations of three weeks in my visits to schools and PTOs reunions to plan the data collection, the field notes worked as an unobtrusive evidence to achieve my goal. After this methodological exploration I organized the data within categories and relationships, a summative technique was directed to a clear consensus for a report. Then, a cross verification of the data from multiple sources, as interviews, focus groups and the field notes, helped to test the consistency of findings. Also, looking for accuracy, once the transcripts have been completed, I have provided a copy to each participant. Lastly, for authenticity purposes, an external auditor who was familiar with music education in elementary school acted as a peer and reviewed the field notes, transcripts and themes.

**Findings**

A focused analysis helped to contradict or confirm and extend the results of previous research in the discipline. The collected considerations met the research literature statements and were aligned to the purpose of the study. The data gathered from individual interviews, focus groups, and notes from observations and informal reports yielded plentiful details. In creating categories, the repeated terms related to the research questions were used as codes that generated two themes: Reasons to support music programs in elementary school and efforts to overcome economic challenges for music education. These themes were developed using the interviewees’ words recorded during individual interviews and focus group meetings.

Reasons to Support Music Education in Elementary Schools

When selecting the data through categories, the coded terms revealed an agreement among the participants concerning the significance of music, not only in the educational process but also as developmental opportunities for both teachers and learners. During an individual interview, John talked about his considerable involvement with music education for elementary curriculum:

My experience with sustaining musical programs in education providing the opportunities for the music program to happen, providing opportunities for teacher development on the area of music and how it relates to the classroom, to the other content areas of – math, science, reading, even art, and physical education.

Discussion in the focus groups also yielded statements that explain the significance of music education in elementary schools concerning better learning. When talking about links between music practices and standardized reading tests, as a teacher, Bill said:

I have found, and research has shown that music education, even for young children K-3, helps them with their math skills and their other skills. And almost every student who takes music education as a young person will find their general learning skills improved.

Flora, a mother, was impressed with her son’s interest in making his music and how he transferred these practices for his academic tasks and daily activities. Therese, a teacher agreed with Flora and added:

It’s really important for the kids to, first when they were starting in kindergarten to fall in love with music. So they love it; it’s something that is fun for them to do. They’re playing with sounds, they’re playing with instruments, and they’re having a good time, but at the same time the teacher is incorporating other subjects, and they’re teaching them numbers, they’re teaching them how to read, and then that love for learning, love for music, comes together.

The four principals also described experiences of how music encourages students to learn. Sabrina, a school principal, commented that music education makes the school environment interesting for learners, as she mentioned in an individual interview:

I think that if the kids are learning and they’re having fun and, they’re learning new skills, then that’s really what I’m really looking for. That’s a class that most of them enjoy going to, whether it’s to beat on the drums or learn to play the recorder or sing, or whatever they’re doing in there. Most of our students enjoy that class.

Louis’ experience was that while learning how to make music, his school students also have several opportunities, which allow them to interact while developing their common sense. He explained:

There is an increased percentage of students wanting to participate in chorus, strings, and band, which is an indication that the children enjoy learning music, and their families enjoy attending their concerts and applauding their efforts. We usually do a couple of performances every year. We also have a special chorus class that meets before school every Wednesday morning, and they do a lot of the, not only extra singing, and they learn how to play different kinds of instruments and experiment with them.

Sabrina also specified that music practices produced responsive learners and prepared them to live in a diverse and challenging society while encouraging them to pursue success:

I think it makes our students more well-rounded, and those students that aren’t as successful in other areas sometimes find success in music education, which then, in turn, helps them feel more a part of the school, and school culture plays a very important role in student’s achievement as well.

 When categorizing the significance of music education in school programs, the records of the interviews shown that four principals mentioned the effects of music practices on students’ brains or minds. For instance, Walt stated:

Well, just stimulating the brain for the musical things they’re doing in there whether it be learning to playing an instrument, singing in a group, learning about the history of different musicians and composers. I just think that it’s very significant for a student to get that well-rounded education, and music is a big part of that.

Louis also specified the results from implementing a specific schedule for music practices in his school:

I certainly think that music has an effect on the brain. Our children’s minds are, their brains are really developing at this age. So, I think that listening, learning, thinking about the music, learning things like rhythm, harmony, melody, as they get a little older, they’re learning how to read music, and so I believe all of that is significant in, in a student’s development and just in their brain development. I think that it, it reaches into a lot of kids parts of their brains that are not usually, maybe turned on by just science or math.

During one of the interviews, John demonstrated familiarity with the meaning of music-making in a school program:

I think that students develop parts of the brain, parts of studying, opening more to learning that, that will help them develop more, and so that provides them that whole, holistic awareness of education and cultural awareness, and brain development.

Likewise, Sabrina, a principal who had experienced several challenges from curricular adjustments, assumed:

There’s a lot of research, which I’m sure you’re probably more familiar with than I am, about how music education changes your brain, and it adds connections in your brain that weren’t there for a student who doesn’t have music education.

Both individual interviews and focus group discussions revealed that all participants recognized the value of music practices in students’ life. For instance, Louis stated that despite socio-economic levels, he tries to offer the same opportunities for all students. Sabrina expressed her satisfaction in observing how musical practices can affect the students and those who teach music. Zoe, a music teacher, shared that by more enjoyment of music, students are more motivated to the habit of regularly coming to school. Walt affirmed that he would never give up on providing a time for musical practices in his school.

 Efforts to Overcome Economic Challenges for Music Education

The data analysis also revealed that the resources to support music in elementary schools were challenges to enhance an educational curriculum. During interviews, the principals stated that a practical curriculum of music in children’s education is essential. They also informed that each school gets an equal amount of funds, but it is complicated to deal with insufficient money. As a principal, Louis demonstrated his interest in overcoming challenges to active musical instruction in his school and told his experience facing a reduced budget:

Well, I feel like it’s limited for everyone. I feel like we have a strong community that if I asked for something, they’re willing to help provide it that we don’t have to just to provide on our school board and our state budgets or our federal budgets. I sat down with the teachers, and we really try to make a list up of things extra that we want to do in the year, and then we target how we’re going to fundraise that with like our local parent-teacher organization that’s here at our school, and then we try to do it whatever that might be.

When answering the question on how a reduction in funding might affect decisions regarding music curriculum and how they might manage a limited budget for providing resources and opportunities for enhanced education in the school, Sabrina shared:

You can do visiting artists that will come in [and] do short sessions. But I think a commitment to allowing every student to show or to shine where they’re in where they’re strong is important, even if your budget doesn’t support a music teacher, it should be something that you still strive to work with the community to provide for your students.

When sharing similar experiences involving determined efforts to overcoming economic crisis and challenges to music in his school program, Louis stated:

We do units on folk music, and we’re always looking for people that can come in and demonstrate the instruments or talk to the kids about the history of the music, and it does take a level of effort, though, to get those people into the school and get them and get the kids participating with them but I think any school is gonna find people in their community that would be interested in helping with that if they just ask.

Sabrina explained her attitude about hope for the maintenance of music education in public school programs, saying that as the state funding changes, the school community in rural areas must also change. She also told about her ways to accomplish this:

There’s lots of community members that have musical talents, or they teach piano lessons, or they sing in the church choir that would be willing to come in and do short programs with you, with your students or just come in and talk about what, how they play or just come in and play for your students. Even if your budget doesn’t support a music teacher, it should be something that you still strive to work with the community to provide for your students.

During focus group meetings, parents also discussed their feelings associated with the risk of losing music in their children’s education. Based on her experience as a mother and teacher, Therese said:

Our society, it’s a lack of like social connection, and we’re trying to be, to bring emotional learning back into the schools; and we have seen an increase in violence, increase in, in bullying, and kids are committing suicide at a very young age, and I think that it’s all connected. Because if they’re not developing those skills that they have. Because music shows emotion. It’s a way to show how a child is feeling. If it is happy, or angry, or sad, or mad, it’s expressing. It’s like they get in touch with their own feelings and are able to express and when they don’t know how to express they gonna find a way, and sometimes it’s, it’s through violence, and it's through joining things that are just gonna to be harmful to them. So, without thinking, by removing music, they’re causing all these other social problems in our children. Let the kids that are gifted with that and the ones that are not, so teach them how to express themselves in a positive way through music.

 In a focus group meeting, the question about parents’ efforts to support the principals’ decision of keeping music education in the school program generated an exciting discussion, and Newton, a reserved participant manifested:

I think that we just gotta roll our sleeves and participate doing maybe if you don’t want your kids should lose the project They don’t want to cut the math, they don’t wanna, cut the sports, they don’t wanna cut you know, everything else, and music, music suffers first which I think is unfair because we saw how much music is important for the kids.

When asking how to raise resources to support music education in their children’s school, Marc stated that he uses to involve local businesses as a supportive source. Alice told her experiences of baking and selling food for visitors and parents in the school. Bill exposed his aversion for fundraisers and explained:

Lots of types of fundraisers, but if the school needs the money to do it, we could raise the money. We could do is be volunteers in the school to help with expenses. Whether, mine wouldn’t be teaching music, but some of us could help with music. We can be assistant teachers, we can be parent volunteers, so the school can afford to keep good things in their curriculum.

All of the parents demonstrated an interest in working to keep the practice of music in their child’s school. Olsen lamented the fact of a limited budget for providing resources and opportunities for enhanced education, and suggested:

Many schools are today facing budget cuts, and music education is one of the first things that often can be lost. Parents can help by supporting their kids, maybe by buying their instruments. There are fundraising things such as programs, concerts, even bake sales that can help because most parents agree that if their children stay in the music, they like school better.

 The principals demonstrated that their efforts to overcome fiscal crises were encouraged by the effect of music on students' learning and, mainly, by parents' interest. John said that giving the parents a unique standing to discuss strategies, shape policies, and achieve their goals is an encouraging way to keep them involved. Likewise, as a principal of a bilingual school, Louis argued about his responsibilities as an administrator and duties as an educator:

It really makes us think about our customer service towards parents and children and how we’re approaching educating kids. We have certain mandates we have to do. However, how we present that information to parents is up to us, and I think that the schools that are able to communicate that effectively and have good communication skills and really outreach to the community are going to fair much better than the schools that are not able to do that.

As a supporter of a vision for a dynamic musical practice program in his school, John also affirmed:

The way we manage our school is building relationships and knowing the teachers, giving the opportunity to parents to know the teachers, to know the campus, to know how we do things. So everyone is involved in managing the school. Then a big part of that community, is the parents. They’re the ones that are going to support you more than anything else.

The principals agreed that the parents’ support for the vision of music practices in the school programs is an encouragement to reach that goal. As a music teacher, Zoe praised valorizing the parents’ interest as a great advantage. She affirmed that parents need to be insistent with board members and policymakers on how a music program with a practical meaning for life is essential to their children’s improvement. According to Zoe, the opinion based on the parents’ experiences must help educational authorities see that music education is indispensable for every child.

**Discussion**

This research was conducted in a small school district from a low-income rural area in income rural area in the southeast United States. Consequently, the data from only one school district is a limitation that restricts the generalization of the findings. Reasons and efforts to overcome economic challenges to maintain music in elementary schools cannot be entirely understood in the scope of a particular inquiry. Replicating or comparing this research throughout a broader setting may lead to more comprehensive perspectives.

In this study, interviews with principals and focus group discussions with students’ parents and teachers provided information to describe the reasons for their efforts to support music in an educational program. In comparing to the researched literature, the data collected yielded a fruitful argument.

At first instance, the study's participants recognized the values and gaps in supporting music programs in elementary schools in low-income rural areas (see Allsup, 2003; Puryear & Kettler, 2017). Across the research, they concentrated on the benefits of music practices from early childhood affecting other learning domains as a contribution to a comprehensive children's education (see Guhn et al., 2019).

During interviews and focus group discussions, participants emphasized the children’s enjoyment from musical practices in their schools. According to the parents and teachers, the joy in making music involves visible learning results, which comes from children's spontaneity (see Flohr, 2005; Hernández-Bravo et al., 2016; Johnson & Matthews, 2017). This finding suggested a correctly application of music in school programs within the potential learning period during childhood (see Nardo et al., 2006; Patrick, 2013; Tu, 2009).

According to participants, there is a need for a music program that motivates children to enjoy their school while gives meaning to their lives. Both, educators and students' parents demonstrate hopes on the musical benefits influencing students from different social and cultural levels and promote opportunities for equal participation in learning (see Clasquin-Johnson, 2016; Puryear & Kettler, 2017). However, they admitted that the success in dealing with different culture depends on principals’ abilities (see Abril & Bannerman, 2015).

Parents and teachers demonstrated their understanding the school principal’s priorities and struggles with financial limitations encouraged attitudes toward the inclusion of music in the school programs (see Major, 2013). On the other hand, despite dealing with insufficient funds, the principals also manifested a tough resolution to keep music in their school program. The findings also evidenced all participants’ willingness to sustaining music practices in their school curriculum. Their decision is due to the fulfillment achieved by the student not only at school but also in their daily tasks (see Tobias, 2015).

The findings also revealed that students’ parents and teachers’ efforts to meet challenges in supporting music education in elementary schools result from principals’ knowledge and managerial abilities (see Burrack et al., 2014; Johnson & Matthews, 2017; Major, 2013). In their turn, the principals affirmed that through political ability they can effect changes. Besides the principals, stated that challenges could be overcome and once the state funding changes, their approaches also should be changed. They concluded that to do change it is enough determination to pursuing a vision of meaningful music education, using their efforts and discussing strategies to shape policies.

Given these results, this investigation may contribute to other research to increase the knowledge and interest in the sustainability of music education for underprivileged children. The findings from this study may also encourage educational communities to embrace challenges for music programs with practical meaning for student’s life.

Supplementary Material

Individual Interview Protocol

Thank you for agreeing to share your experiences in sustaining music education in your school. Please, I will be recording the interview on a digital device, as well as taking notes. I plan to take no more than 60 minutes of your time. I will be using open-ended questions, which will allow you the opportunity to interject ideas or thoughts that you may have as we talk. When the transcription are completed, I will send a copy for your revision and approval.

1. Music education is a part of the program in your school, so please tell me about your experiences with children learning related to musical practices?
2. How do you explain differences in children’s musical, scientific, or mathematical aptitudes?
3. How do you define the meaning of music-making in the early education program in your school, and what stands out for you most about the school’s music program?
4. Please, tell me as much as possible about your experience involving the economic crisis and music in the school program.
5. How might a reduction in funding affect your decisions regarding music education, and how do you manage a limited budget for providing resources and opportunities for enhanced education in your school?
6. From your experience, in what ways do you believe there is hope for continuing music education in public school programs, and how might this be possible?
7. Is there anything else you would like to add about music practices in your school?

Thank you very much for your time and cooperation**.**

**Focus Group Interview Protocol**

Thank you for volunteering and participating in my study. I hope everyone is comfortable. Please, I will be recording this meeting on a digital device, as well as taking notes. I plan to take no more than 60 minutes of your time. If you feel uncomfortable during the meeting, you are welcome to leave or pass on any questions. The information is confidential, and all views and ideas are very welcome. One person will talk at a time, and the time for responses will be distributed as equally as possible. I would like for us to use name tags so that we can use our names throughout our time together. When the transcription are completed, I will send copies for each one of you to review and approval.

1. As students’ parents or teachers, how would you describe the significance of music education in school programs?
2. How do you explain links between music education and a student’s enhanced achievement results on standardized reading tests?
3. Please, tell me, if facing a budgetary cut, how could you support the school principal in keeping music education in the school program?
4. Is there anything else you would like to talk about music practices in your children's school?

Thank you very much for your participation.

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Individual Interview Protocol

Thank you for agreeing to share your experiences in sustaining music education in your school. Please, I will be recording the interview on a digital device, as well as taking notes. I plan to take no more than 60 minutes of your time. I will be using open-ended questions, which will allow you the opportunity to interject ideas or thoughts that you may have as we talk. When the transcription are completed, I will send a copy for your revision and approval.

1. Music education is a part of the program in your school, so please tell me about your experiences with children learning related to musical practices?
2. How do you explain differences in children’s musical, scientific, or mathematical aptitudes?
3. How do you define the meaning of music-making in the early education program in your school, and what stands out for you most about the school’s music program?
4. Please, tell me as much as possible about your experience involving the economic crisis and music in the school program.
5. How might a reduction in funding affect your decisions regarding music education, and how do you manage a limited budget for providing resources and opportunities for enhanced education in your school?
6. From your experience, in what ways do you believe there is hope for continuing music education in public school programs, and how might this be possible?
7. Is there anything else you would like to add about music practices in your school?

Thank you very much for your time and cooperation**.**

**Focus Group Interview Protocol**

Thank you for volunteering and participating in my study. I hope everyone is comfortable. Please, I will be recording this meeting on a digital device, as well as taking notes. I plan to take no more than 60 minutes of your time. If you feel uncomfortable during the meeting, you are welcome to leave or pass on any questions. The information is confidential, and all views and ideas are very welcome. One person will talk at a time, and the time for responses will be distributed as equally as possible. I would like for us to use name tags so that we can use our names throughout our time together. When the transcription are completed, I will send copies for each one of you to review and approval.

1. As students’ parents or teachers, how would you describe the significance of music education in school programs?
2. How do you explain links between music education and a student’s enhanced achievement results on standardized reading tests?
3. Please, tell me, if facing a budgetary cut, how could you support the school principal in keeping music education in the school program?
4. Is there anything else you would like to talk about music practices in your children's school?

Thank you very much for your participation.