# BURNOUT IN VETERAN PENNSYLVANIA MUSIC EDUCATORS: SYMPTOMS, CAUSES, AND PERCEIVED SOLUTIONS

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**ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this study was to identify which dimensions of burnout affect veteran Pennsylvania music educators, investigate factors currently contributing to their sense of burnout, seek recommendations on how to remedy or alleviate symptoms of burnout, and uncover any relationships between burnout and demographic information. A total of 223 certified Pennsylvania music educators participated in this study. Participants completed a 44-item survey consisting of questions regarding demographic information, the Maslach Burnout Inventory-Educators Survey (MBI-ES), perceived causes of burnout, and perceived solutions to help alleviate burnout. Participant MBI-ES scores were compared to normative scores and indicated that participants are experiencing higher levels of emotional exhaustion, but lower levels of depersonalization and a greater sense of personal accomplishment. Female participants, participants aged 20-29, and participants with 5-10 years of experience indicated higher levels of burnout than other participants, and those who taught at multiple grade levels, choir, or in multiple content areas reported elevated levels of emotional exhaustion. Participants aged 61+ and those with 31+ years of experience reported the lowest levels of burnout. *Unmanageable Workload* was most frequently ranked "8- Most Significant Cause," followed by *Student Behavioral Issues* and *Lack of Administrative Support*. *Reduce Teaching Responsibilities/Classes* was most frequently ranked "8-Most Effective Solution," followed by *Hire More Teachers* and *Increase Administrative Support for Teachers*. Substantial changes at the organizational level are needed to help reduce burnout and create an environment that fosters music teacher job satisfaction and career longevity.

**Keywords:** burnout, music education, stress, support, teacher, workload

**ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

# LIST OF TABLES

# LIST OF FIGURES

Figure                                                                                                          Page

# CHAPTER 1

# REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Charged with the education of children, teachers play a fundamental role in society, preparing and shaping children to be knowledgeable and productive citizens of the future. In the United States, however, there is currently a mass exodus of teachers, leaving or considering leaving the profession (Steiner & Woo, 2021; Walker, 2022). According to a survey conducted by the National Education Association, 55% of the 3,621 educators are planning to leave or retire from education sooner than planned. While their revised plans may be in part due to additional stressors from the Coronavirus pandemic, 90% of the participants feel like teacher burnout is an issue, with 67% of those educators reporting it as a very serious issue. With these startling statistics in mind, understanding the symptoms and causes of teacher burnout may help teachers, administrators, and lawmakers mediate the causes and effects of teacher burnout (Jotkoff, 2022).

## Defining Burnout

The relationship between a person and their work can be complex. Most individuals choose professions they are passionate about and can provide financial stability. Even in an ideal work environment, difficulties on or due to the job can arise. While some difficulties may be more easily managed, certain stresses can lead to a phenomenon known as "job burnout." This term rose to prominence around the 1970s in the United States, used especially among those in human services (e.g. lawyers, medical personnel, social workers, teachers). Although first applied in non-scholarly means, theoretical models were studied and developed.

Freudenberger (1975) and Maslach (1976) were among the first to publish articles describing burnout, citing qualitative evidence centered around the individual's emotions and motives/values, symptoms of burnout, mental health, and relationships between the provider and recipient. Even in these early articles, a shared understanding of burnout with similar themes was evident and continues to be described in contemporary literature. Burnout is commonly defined as "a psychological syndrome emerging as a prolonged response to chronic interpersonal stressors on the job" (Maslach & Leiter, 2016, p. 103). Maslach and Jackson (1981) were among the first to measure various aspects of burnout; common themes and subscales emerged during data analysis. Chronic interpersonal stress is the main distinction between routine job stress and the stress that leads to burnout, with three key dimensions identified as the foundation of what constitutes burnout.

**Dimensions of Burnout**

One dimension of burnout is emotional exhaustion. Often viewed as the initial, most fundamental, and most frequently reported dimension of burnout (Bernhard, 2016; McLain, 2005; Papastylianou et al., 2009), those suffering from emotional exhaustion commonly describe feelings of being overwhelmed, overstretched, fatigued, or a depletion of physical and mental resources (Evers et al., 2004; Maslach & Leiter, 2017; Maslach et al., 2001; Swider & Zimmerman, 2010). This can be due to having insufficient physical or emotional supports from an organizational level, such as being overworked without adequate time to prepare or complete tasks. On an individual level, relationships with students and colleagues can also affect levels of emotional exhaustion. Building and experiencing positive relationships with students has been shown to lead to greater feelings of relatedness and lower feelings of emotional exhaustion (Kang & Yoo,

2019; Klassen et al., 2012; Saloviita & Pakarinen, 2021). However, poor student behaviors or relationships with students may lead teachers to start to emotionally detach from their work and those they service.

Another dimension of burnout is depersonalization, also referred to as cynicism. Depersonalization represents the relationship aspect of burnout where employees emotionally detach from work to protect their mental state and cope with the emotional stresses of work (Maslach et al., 2001). This emotional withdrawal can lead to feelings of negativity and insensitivity. Maslach (1976) observed that workers from a variety of settings started using different verbiage when talking about those they service. Workers experiencing depersonalization used dehumanizing, objectifying, and even derogatory language to describe their students or clients. Examples include, "They're all just animals," or referring to a set of students as, "my caseload" (Maslach, 1976, pp. 16-18). Detachment and negativity can also lead to a more severe disengagement from the job, resulting in reduced work performance and sense of personal accomplishment.

A third dimension of burnout is inefficacy, or more commonly referred to as personal accomplishment. Inefficacy can manifest in multiple ways including reduced productivity, a lack of personal accomplishment, low morale, negative self-image, feelings of insignificance, and even like a person chose the wrong career path (Maslach, 2001; Maslach & Leiter, 2016, 2017). While each dimension of burnout has its own observable symptoms, methodical and systematic ways to identify and measure burnout are necessary to better understand the causes, symptoms, and possible mediations of burnout.

**Measuring Burnout**

Multiple validated and reliable inventories exist to measure distinct aspects of well-being and burnout. While not all instruments use the same dimensions or wording as Maslach and Jackson (1981), similar ideas regarding what constitutes burnout are evident in each inventory. Three commonly used tools to measure burnout across different occupations and populations are the Copenhagen Burnout Inventory (Kristensen et al., 2005), Oldenburg Burnout Inventory (Demerouti et al., 2003), and Maslach Burnout Inventory (Maslach & Jackson, 1981).

*Copenhagen Burnout Inventory*

The Copenhagen Burnout Inventory (CBI) was developed in Denmark for the 1997 Project of Burnout, Motivation, and Job Satisfaction (PUMA). The CBI was created as a more suitable questionnaire to measure burnout in participants from five human service occupations in Denmark being studied. The 19-item survey measures personal (physical and psychological fatigue and exhaustion experienced by the person), work-related (physical and psychological fatigue and exhaustion experienced relating to work), and client-related (physical and psychological fatigue and exhaustion experienced relating to work with clients) burnout (Kristensen et al., 2005).

The CBI uses different response categories for each dimension. Respondents answer six personal burnout questions using a frequency scale of "Always," "Often," "Sometimes," "Seldom," and "Never/almost never." Respondents answer seven work-related and six client-related burnout questions using both the previous frequency scale for some questions and an intensity scale of "To a very high degree," "To a high degree," "Somewhat," "To a low degree," and "To a very low degree" for other questions.

Responses are scored with a value of 100, 75, 50, 25, or 0, respectively, and can be averaged to produce mean scores. The CBI has been translated into multiple languages, used in many countries, and is publicly available (Kristensen et al., 2005).

### *Oldenburg Burnout Inventory*

The Oldenburg Burnout Inventory (OLBI) was originally developed and validated in Germany for a 1998 academic study (Demerouti & Nachreiner, 1998). The OLBI was created as a new instrument to study burnout in not only human services, but all employees and industries. The 16-item survey measures exhaustion (result of intense physical, affective, and cognitive strain) and disengagement from work (distancing from work and experiencing negative attitudes towards work) (Demerouti et al., 2003; Demerouti et al., 2010; Halbesleben & Demerouti, 2005).

The OLBI uses both negatively and positively worded questions to assess two dimensions of burnout. Respondents answer eight exhaustion and eight disengagement questions using a 4-point Likert scale with 1 being "Strongly agree" and 4 being "Strongly disagree." When analyzing scores, however, certain items have reversed scoring so that lower number scores may indicate more burnout (Demerouti et al., 2010). The OLBI has been translated into multiple languages and is publicly available.

### *Maslach Burnout Inventory*

Maslach and Jackson (1981) developed a measure to assess aspects of burnout commonly used today, called the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI). Earlier qualitative data gathered proved useful in the creation of the MBI. Consistent themes of what characterized burnout that presented themselves from this early research laid the groundwork for the development of what was being measured in the MBI.

The MBI uses a two-scale format to measure the frequency and intensity of certain statements. Respondents select on the frequency scale how often an item happens, ranging from 1 (a few times a year) to 6 (every day). The intensity scale questions how strongly an item happens, ranging from 1 (very mild, barely noticeable) to 7 (very strong, major). The respondent may check a box labeled "Never" if the item was not experienced, resulting in a 0 for that item. The initial form of the MBI included 47 items total, which was then administered to a sample of 605 people in health and service occupations. After using a set of selection criteria, the number of items was reduced to 25. There are nine items relating to emotional exhaustion, five items relating to depersonalization, eight items relating to personal accomplishment, and three items relating to an optional subscale of the MBI called involvement (Maslach & Jackson, 1981). Multiple forms of the MBI now exist to better match certain occupations or populations, including medical personnel, human services workers, educators, and general use. Multiple translations are available, however the survey must be purchased. The MBI remains one of the most widely used tools to measure burnout and provide quantitative data on the topic.

**Causes of Burnout**

While utilizing systematic means to identify and measure burnout is important to the advancement of the issue, understanding the causes and additional effects of burnout is a next step in mediating and alleviating burnout. As burnout can be an individual experience, there are a variety of factors as to who burns out and why.

In educator-experienced burnout, some theories suggest that there are teacher-, student-, and organization-level variables that influence burnout (Gordon, 2000; Hamann et al., 1987; Paetz, 2021; Saloviita & Pakarinen, 2021; Swider & Zimmerman, 2010).

### *Teacher-Level Factors*

Why does burnout affect some teachers more than others? Certain research suggests that certain personality traits in people may affect interpretations and reactions to stress. Swider and Zimmerman (2010) examined how the Five-Factor Model (FFM) of neuroticism, extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness relate to the three dimensions of burnout (emotional exhaustion, depersonalization or cynicism, and inefficacy). Neurotic individuals may be more anxious, fearful, and depressed, while exhibiting signs of insecurity and general negativity. Extraverts are more likely to experience positive emotions and interactions with others and may be more hopeful of the future. Agreeable individuals are more likely to be nurturing and good-natured, fostering positive relationships. Conscientious individuals are likely to have higher levels of perception and drive. Individuals who show higher levels of openness are likely to be more open-minded, willing to adapt and grow, and show more curiosity about what the future holds (Swider & Zimmerman, 2010).

Swider and Zimmerman (2010) reviewed extant literature and found that neuroticism had moderate to strong relationships to all three dimensions of burnout. Extraversion has moderate relationships with emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment, with the strongest effect on personal accomplishment. Agreeableness had moderate effects on job burnout, with the second strongest relationships with depersonalization and personal accomplishment. Conscientiousness

had moderate effects on all three dimensions of job burnout. Openness to experience had a weak relationship to emotional exhaustion and depersonalization, but a slightly stronger effect on personal accomplishment. These results indicate that individuals with higher levels of neuroticism and lower levels of extraversion, conscientiousness, and agreeableness may be more susceptible to burnout.

Certain demographics may also be more prone to different dimensions of burnout. For example, women are stereotypically more open with and affected by emotions, making them more prone to suffering from emotional exhaustion. Conversely, men are often cast as being more cynical and may be more prone to depersonalization, characteristics that are in line with gender role stereotypes (Maslach et al., 2001; Purvanova & Muros, 2010). Although evidence is inconclusive, age and work experience may also be an additional factor in the experience of job burnout. While Maslach et al. (2001) and Saloviita and Pakarinen (2021) found that younger individuals report higher levels of burnout, the correlation was not statistically significant. This may be due to younger teachers who were experiencing high levels of burnout exiting the profession, which would leave older teachers who were able to cope with job stresses. However, older teachers still experienced elevated levels of exhaustion. Additional longitudinal studies are needed to provide more robust data on teacher-related characteristics and job burnout.

### Student-Level Factors

Student-related factors, such as special needs and behaviors, also play a role in the development of burnout. Saloviita and Pakarinen (2021) found that in Finland there was a concomitant growth in the number of students with special needs in a classroom and

teachers' feelings of burnout. Changes in reported burnout appeared when the number of students with special needs in teachers' classrooms reached three or four. It was speculated that this may be due to a lack of training in accommodating multiple students with individualized special needs, or overwhelming feelings trying to differentiate instruction for a variety of learners, as similar levels of burnout were not found in special education teachers. Student behavior, though, has been more widely examined and is generally agreed to be a decisive factor for teacher burnout rates (Gordon, 2000; Klassen et al., 2012; Mulyani et al., 2021; Papastylianou et al., 2009; Walker, 2022).

Difficult student behaviors can cause a strain on the teacher-student relationship. Challenging behaviors can be emotionally taxing due to a perceived lack of reciprocation of respect, energy, and emotional investment. This lack of reciprocation also relates to the Self-Determination Theory psychological need for relatedness. Self-Determination Theory, or SDT, investigates "people's inherent growth tendencies and innate psychological needs that are the basis for their self-motivation and personality integration, as well as for the conditions that foster those positive processes" (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 68). SDT centers around the three innate psychological needs of autonomy (the sense of choice and free will), competence (the sense of achievement from ability), and relatedness (the need to feel close and connected with others), and what can thwart or support those needs (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Klassen et al. (2012) provide evidence that "teachers' optimal functioning is strongly influenced by relatedness with students" and "when teachers feel connected with their students, they report higher levels of work engagement and enjoyment and lower levels of anxiety, anger, and emotional exhaustion" (Klassen et al., 2012, p. 161). Mulyani et al. (2021) also echo the sentiments

that when student behaviors are controlled, teachers are more at ease and burnout rates are lower. While there are some teacher- and student-level variables that educators can potentially control themselves that affect feelings of burnout, teachers do not as commonly regulate organizational-level variables.

### *Organizational-Level Factors*

Organizational-level factors may be dictated by social, political, and economic influences, and include class/district size, availability of support, and work demands (Maslach et al., 2001; Maslach & Leiter, 2016; Saloviita & Pakarinen, 2021). These factors are commonly not determined by teachers. Teachers experienced reduced levels of burnout in smaller classes and districts, although the differences were modest (Saloviita & Pakarinen, 2021). Teachers may feel less overwhelmed when attempting to differentiate instruction with a smaller group of students and feel a larger sense of community and relatedness in smaller, tight-knit school districts and communities. What seems to affect teacher burnout at the organizational level most prominently, though, are the various work demands required in education today.

In addition to teaching, educators often have multiple additional responsibilities (e.g., creating lesson plans, grading assignments, interpreting data, providing feedback to special education teachers, attending meetings, running clubs, recess duty, lunch duty, arrival duty, and dismissal duty). These responsibilities, or job demands, can take physiological and psychological tolls, especially if workers do not have job resources available (Demerouti et al., 2001; Hartsel, 2016). Job resources are the "physical, psychological, social, or organizational aspects of the job that may do any of the following: (a) be functional in achieving work goals; (b) reduce job demands at the

associated physiological and psychological costs; (c) stimulate personal growth and development" (Demerouti et al., 2001, p. 501). Job resources could include support from colleagues and administration, meaningful professional development, autonomy, access to paraprofessionals, and adequate planning time. When there is a disparity between workload and resources available, exhaustion, feelings of insufficient control, and inefficacy are more likely to occur (Hartsel, 2016; Maslach et al., 2001).

Feelings of insufficient control and inefficacy relate to the SDT basic psychological needs of autonomy and competency. Teachers are frequently left out of important decision-making in their own classrooms, from curriculum, to teaching strategies, to involuntary transfers. This can destroy a sense of fairness and autonomy, which can lead to feelings of inefficacy if teachers are not producing the same results or questioning if education is the right career for them. Unfortunately, emotional exhaustion, cynicism, and inefficacy are not the only symptoms of burnout.

**Additional Effects of Burnout**

Burnout can produce additional physical and psychological effects outside of emotional exhaustion, cynicism, and a lack of personal accomplishment. The stress and exhaustion from burnout may cause insomnia, weight fluctuations, high blood pressure, headaches, and a rise in cholesterol. Additional psychological symptoms may include boredom, irritability, paranoia, disorientation, impatience, detachment, rigidity, worry, and depression. The experience of these symptoms can even lead to drug and alcohol abuse (Maslach & Leiter, 2016; Nápoles, 2022). Physical and psychological symptoms mainly relate to the emotional exhaustion and depersonalization dimensions of burnout, which can affect job performance and augment feelings of inefficacy.

While Evers et al. (2004) provide evidence that students can perceive their teachers experiencing burnout, even more effects of burnout impact students.

Teachers' emotions can influence students' cognition and motivation, therefore affecting teacher effectiveness and academic outcomes. As teachers fall deeper into burnout symptoms and search for ways to cope, absenteeism often increases (Swider & Zimmerman, 2010). When a teacher is absent without a substitute teacher who is knowledgeable about the content being taught, student learning suffers. This lack of consistency in teaching and expectations could then produce a vicious cycle. Negative student behavior due to a lack of consistent expectations set by the classroom teacher can lead to emotional exhaustion and feelings of inadequacy. When enough feelings of emotional exhaustion and lack of personal achievement lead to chronic absenteeism and reduced job performance, depersonalization/cynicism increases, which can eventually lead to decreased job satisfaction and teacher turnover (Hamann et al., 1987; Hancock, 2016; Hartsel, 2016; Madigan & Kim, 2021; Swider & Zimmerman, 2010). Although research regarding teacher burnout causes and symptoms has historically been conducted through the lens of general education, more recent research has examined burnout in specialized areas of teaching.

**Burnout in Music Teachers**

While all teachers can experience burnout, music teachers especially may be more susceptible to burnout (Gordon, 2000; Hamann et al., 1987). This could be due to unique circumstances in music education compared to those in the general education classroom.

Increased isolation, job demands, and a lack of understanding or appreciation of the content being taught may contribute to different experiences for music teachers versus other teachers (Gardner, 2010).

### *Isolation*

Although surrounded by students and staff, teachers can feel alone throughout the school day. This unwelcome sense of loneliness in school, whether due to physical or psychological reasons, can be described as teacher isolation (Lortie, 1975). Much of the time, schools are structured so that each teacher has their own classroom with their own students and once the school day starts, the door is closed. Teachers may have very little time to collaborate and interact with their peers during instruction. While some may view being alone as a relaxation strategy, involuntary isolation may also negatively affect teacher well-being.

The lack of interaction with colleagues can apply to teachers in general, but perhaps more so to music teachers. They frequently experience even less daily contact with music colleagues, as there are typically fewer music positions. Furthermore, many music teachers are also required to travel between buildings, causing increased isolation between colleagues and students (Gardner, 2010). Sindberg (2011) found that although music colleagues within a district may feel connected through shared experiences, they often felt disconnected from "classroom teachers" and not included in the affairs at school. Extant research supports that this isolation within buildings and related to content leads to negative effects on teachers, even causing some to leave the profession (Hamann et al., 1987; Paetz, 2021; Sindberg & Lipscomb, 2005; Sindberg, 2011; Sindberg, 2014).

Negative effects connect to teacher well-being and the SDT psychological need for relatedness between music teachers, colleagues, and students. Kang and Yoo (2019) investigated whether psychological needs and work engagement were predictors of well-being in music teachers and found that competence and relatedness were strong predictors of well-being, results echoed by Klassen et al. (2012). Not only are the relationships with students, colleagues, and administration important to well-being, but also the workload and feasibility of job demands.

### *Job Demands*

Since music is a specialized area, there may be a limited number of music teachers per building and district. Music teachers typically teach multiple grade levels and courses, carrying the responsibility of a variety of tasks such as: instructing and managing a large number of students, sometimes at one time; holding before and/or after school rehearsals; planning and coordinating performances and trips; actively recruiting students; designing and creating stage sets or props; repairing instruments; fundraising and writing grants; advocating for the music program; and completing any required clerical and paper work. These duties are in addition to the previously mentioned tasks all teachers are generally responsible for. When considering all the responsibilities that music teachers are accountable for, it should come as no surprise that higher levels of exhaustion and stress may be present (Demerouti et al., 2001; Gordon, 1997; Hamann et al., 1987; McLain, 2005; Scheib, 2003).

Increased workload without adequate time, resources, and compensation to meet increased demands continues to be a prominent factor contributing to music teacher burnout. As early as 1987, Hamann et al. examined that music teachers reported "Too

much work and not enough time to do it" was a leading cause for increased frequency and intensity of emotional exhaustion. Bernhard (2016) found that music teachers who taught in multiple specializations (general, choral, and instrumental) and/or in multiple grade ranges (elementary, middle, and high school) displayed increased emotional exhaustion and depersonalization, and decreased personal accomplishment, indicating higher levels of burnout. Feelings of being pulled in too many directions, being spread too thin, and having an unreasonable or unmanageable workload are leading factors contributing to stress and potentially leaving a position or the profession (Bernhard, 2016; Hamann et al., 1987; Hancock, 2016; Krueger, 2000; Scheib, 2003; Sindberg, 2011). Increased isolation combined with increased work demands can lead to the perception no one truly cares about the work music teachers do.

### *Support*

Although many school districts claim to support the arts, music tends to be overshadowed in favor of tested content areas. Student and class schedules, especially at the high-school level, are generally created prioritizing "core" subjects (e.g. math, reading, writing, science, social studies), causing enrollment issues. Instrumental and vocal music group lessons, where students are pulled from their regularly-scheduled classes, can be met with resistance and irritation from "core" classroom teachers. Job responsibilities may change without any input or conversation. Music teachers may be left out of staff emails and meetings. This can result in music teachers feeling unsupported and undervalued. Value and support can manifest in a variety of ways, including but not limited to: administrative decisions and communications; parent support; colleague support; scheduling conflicts; autonomy in decision-making, and;

attitudes toward the music program. Music teachers often cite a lack of support from administration as a source of frustration (Gordon, 2000; Hamann et al., 1987; Hancock, 2008; Krueger, 2000; McLain, 2005; Paetz, 2021).

Music may be viewed as an extra-curricular "frill" subject instead of one with a sequential curriculum that can complement other courses, leaving music teachers feeling like an afterthought. Administration can greatly influence the support and attitudes towards the music program and teachers in schools. Music teachers who feel unsupported by administration, colleagues, parents, and/or community may experience increased emotional exhaustion and depersonalization compared to those who feel support (McLain, 2005). Krueger (2000) interviewed novice music teachers and found that a lack of administrative support was viewed as a primary problem in their careers. The lack of support contributed to low teacher morale, low sense of autonomy, and a negative attitude towards the music program by non-music teachers, causing some respondents to reconsider their career choices. Those who long for a supportive and overall better work environment are at a higher risk of moving positions or leaving education altogether (Casteal, 2021; Hancock, 2008, 2016; Paetz, 2021). Continued isolation, increased job demands without the resources to fulfill those demands, and a lack of value and support for programs that music teachers are so passionate about can negatively affect a teacher's well-being and mental state, leading to burnout.

## Rationale and Purpose

Education faces a number of experienced, veteran teachers leaving the profession in search of other career opportunities, leading to staggering teacher shortages (Ingersoll & Tran, 2023; Steiner & Woo, 2021; Walker, 2022). While there is a wealth of extant

literature regarding burnout and teacher burnout in general, much research relating to burnout in music teachers in the United States was published prior to 2020, with findings that may be potentially outdated. As technology and the COVID-19 pandemic have greatly affected our school system and society, contemporary studies should be conducted to gain better insight into potential new and specific reasons why music teachers, specifically veteran music teachers, might feel burnt out. The purpose of this study is to identify which dimensions of burnout affect veteran Pennsylvania music educators, investigate what factors are currently contributing to veteran music teacher burnout, seek recommendations on how to remedy or alleviate symptoms of burnout, and uncover any relationships between burnout and demographic information. Specific research questions include:

1.) Which dimension(s) of burnout are affecting veteran music teachers?

2.) What are the perceived factors veteran music teachers believe are contributing to feelings of burnout?

3.) What are their perceived solutions to alleviate burnout?

4.) What relationship, if any, is there between demographic variables and rates of burnout?

# CHAPTER 2

## PROCEDURES

This study was specific to veteran music educators who had moved beyond the novice or professional probationary period. In the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, teachers are awarded an initial or provisional teaching certificate (Level I certificate) upon completion of their teacher preparation program, valid for up to six years of service before the certificate must be converted to a permanent certificate (Level II certificate). Teachers must have completed at least three years of satisfactory service to apply for a permanent Level II teaching certificate. Does this conversion distinguish novice teachers from veteran teachers? Krueger (2000) describes teachers with fewer than ten years of experience as beginner teachers, however, some researchers describe a teacher with five or more years of experience as a veteran teacher (Gama Fagundes, 2022; Graham et al., 2020). Seemingly, what defines a teacher as "veteran" is subjective. For the purposes of this study, a veteran teacher is described as one with at least five years of experience. Therefore, participants ($n$=223) in the study were required to have five or more years of experience as a certified Pennsylvania music educator teaching music in a Pennsylvania public school district. Participants were contacted via email. Addresses were obtained with permission from the Pennsylvania Music Education Association's member directory. Since participants were derived from this directory, it should be noted that a limitation of this study is membership in the Pennsylvania Music Educators Association which does not represent the entirety of the music educator population in the commonwealth.

The email was sent to 1,991 teachers who were invited to voluntarily participate in the research study via online survey. Potential participants were sent two emails over the course of one month. In the initial invitation (Appendix A) I introduced myself as the researcher. I provided information about the research, and included instructions and a link to the survey. The second email (Appendix B) functioned as a reminder. It included the same content and was sent three weeks after the initial email to gain additional participants and prompt them to complete the survey. After one week following the second email notice, the survey was closed to receiving additional responses and data collection was concluded.

Out of the 1,991 teachers invited to participate, 223 music teachers responded. Responses were obtained through a survey created on Google Forms, which were then transferred to a spreadsheet and stored on OneDrive, a secure storage service of Microsoft. Data was analyzed using non-parametric descriptive and inferential statistics, including means, standard deviations, percentages, and the Kruskal-Wallis H-test. No identifying information was collected.

**Survey Design**

The researcher-designed, 44-item survey (Appendix C) for this study had seven sections. Section one included the study details and consent form (Appendix D). After participants consented, they were taken to the second section to answer three eligibility criteria regarding their public-school teaching experience, certification status, and years of teaching experience. If respondents did not meet the study criteria of being a certified music teacher in a Pennsylvania public school district with five or more years of experience, they were redirected to the submission form where their participation ended.

Any information gathered from ineligible participants was not included in the analyses or results. If participants met the eligibility criteria, they were taken to the third section to complete demographic information, including: age (20-29, 30-39, 40-49, 50-59, or 60+ years), gender (female, male, trans woman, trans man, non-binary, genderqueer, prefer not to answer, or other), race/ethnicity (White/Caucasian; Black or African American; Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish; Asian; Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander; Native American or Native Alaskan; Middle Eastern or North African, Multi-Racial or Multi-Ethnic; or prefer not to answer), years of teaching experience (5-10, 11-20, 21-30, or 31+ years), grade level taught (elementary school, middle school, high school, collegiate, or multiple levels), content taught (band, orchestra, choir, general music, music electives, non-music courses, two different content areas, or three or more different content areas), and space to provide additional details. Demographic information was gathered to determine if there were any significant relationships between various demographic groups and burnout scores.

The fourth section measured burnout using the Maslach Burnout Inventory-Educators Survey (MBI-ES) (Maslach et al., 1996). Publishers of the MBI-ES prohibit the inclusion of the full survey in this document. Sample items are permitted, however, and are shown in Appendix C. A letter of permission to administer the complete instrument and publish three sample items is shown in Appendix E. See the reference section for the MBI-ES citation. The MBI-ES was utilized due to the high reliability and prominent use of the instrument to measure burnout in teachers. Iwanicki and Schwab (1981) examined the reliability of the original Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) when distributed specifically to teachers. Using Cronbach's coefficient alpha, they found alpha

reliabilities of .90 for the Emotional Exhaustion, .76 for the Depersonalization, and .76 for the Personal Accomplishment frequency dimensions. In the current study, participants completed the 22-statement survey where responses were given using a 7-point Likert-type frequency scale ranging from 0 ("Never") to 6 ("Every day"). Participants were given the opportunity to provide an explanation for their responses if they so chose. Answers to these questions would establish current levels of burnout experienced by participants to reveal any relationships between demographic information and burnout.

Survey sections five and six questioned participants about perceived causes of and solutions to burnout. Participants were asked to rank eight different causes and solutions using ordinal numbering from 8 ("Most Significant Cause/Most Effective Solution") to 1 ("Least Significant Cause/Least Effective Solution). Each section included an optional space to explain their responses. This would offer insight into present issues music teachers are facing in the classroom and actionable pathways to decrease feelings of burnout. The seventh and optional final section allowed participants to leave any closing comments before final submission.

# CHAPTER 3

# RESULTS

The following research questions were used to guide this study: 1.) Which dimension(s) of burnout are affecting veteran music teachers? 2.) What are the perceived factors veteran music teachers believe are contributing to feelings of burnout? 3.) What are their perceived solutions to alleviate burnout? 4.) What relationship, if any, is there between demographic variables and rates of burnout? Descriptive statistics and Kruskal-Wallis H-tests were used to interpret data.

## Participant Demographics

At the conclusion of data collection, a total of 223 veteran Pennsylvania public school music educators responded. Respondents were first asked a series of demographic questions: age (20-29, 30-39, 40-49, 50-59, or 60+ years), gender (female, male, trans woman, trans man, non-binary, genderqueer, prefer not to answer, or other), race/ethnicity (White/Caucasian; Black or African American; Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish; Asian; Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander; Native American or Native Alaskan; Middle Eastern or North African, Multi-Racial or Multi-Ethnic; or prefer not to answer), years of teaching experience (5-10, 11-20, 21-30, or 31+ years), grade level taught (elementary school, middle school, high school, collegiate, or multiple levels), and content taught (band, orchestra, choir, general music, music electives, non-music courses, two different content areas, or three or more different content areas). In round numbers, approximately 7% (16) of participants were 20-29 years of age, 29% (64) of participants were 30-39 years of age, 39% (86) of participants were 40-49 years of age, 19% (42) of participants were 50-59 years of age, and 7% (15) of participants were 60+ years of age.

Males comprised 47% (104) of participants. Females comprised 52% (117) of participants. One percent (2) of participants preferred to not answer. The majority of participants (219) identified as White/Caucasian. Two participants identified as Asian. One participant identified as Multi-Racial or Multi-Ethnic. One participant preferred to not answer. Fifteen percent (33) of participants had 5-10 years of experience, 40% (89) of participants had 11-20 years of experience, 35% (78) of participants had 21-30 years of experience, and 10% (23) of participants had 31 or more years of experience. Participants were asked what grade levels they teach: elementary school, middle school, high school, collegiate, or multiple levels. Thirty-nine percent (86) of participants taught multiple levels, 21% (47) of participants taught at the elementary level, 21% (47) of participants taught at the high school level, 19% (42) of participants taught at the middle school level, and only one participant taught at the collegiate level. Participants were then asked which content areas they teach: band, orchestra, choir, general music, music electives, non-music courses, two different content areas, or three or more different content areas. Thirty-two percent (72) of participants taught two different content areas, 29% (64) of participants taught three or more different content areas, 20% (45) of participants taught band, 9% (20) of participants taught general music, 4% (10) of participants taught orchestra, 4% (10) of participants taught choir, and 1% (2) of participants taught only music electives. Participant demographic information in round numbers is shown in Table 1.

**Table 1.** *Participant Demographic Information*

| Individual-Level Variables | *N* | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| **Age** | | |
| 20-29 years of age | 16 | 7 |
| 30-39 years of age | 64 | 29 |
| 40-49 years of age | 86 | 39 |
| 50-59 years of age | 42 | 19 |
| 60+ years of age | 15 | 7 |
| | | |
| **Gender** | | |
| Male | 104 | 47 |
| Female | 117 | 52 |
| Prefer Not to Answer | 2 | 1 |
| | | |
| **Race/Ethnicity** | | |
| White/Caucasian | 219 | 98 |
| Asian | 2 | 1 |
| Multi-Racial/Multi-Ethnic | 1 | 1 |
| Prefer Not to Answer | 1 | 1 |
| | | |
| **Years of Experience** | | |
| 5-10 years | 33 | 15 |
| 11-20 years | 89 | 40 |
| 21-30 years | 78 | 35 |
| 31+ years | 23 | 10 |
| | | |
| **Grade Level Taught** | | |
| Elementary School | 47 | 21 |
| Middle School | 42 | 19 |
| High School | 47 | 21 |
| Collegiate | 1 | 1 |
| Multiple levels | 86 | 39 |
| | | |
| **Content Area Taught** | | |
| Band | 45 | 20 |
| Orchestra | 10 | 4 |
| Choir | 10 | 4 |
| General Music | 20 | 9 |
| Music Electives | 2 | 1 |
| Two Different Content Areas | 72 | 32 |
| Three or More Different Content Areas | 64 | 29 |

**Participant Burnout**

To answer the first research question, "Which dimension(s) of burnout are affecting veteran music teachers?" participants completed the Maslach Burnout Inventory- Educators Survey (MBI-ES). The MBI-ES is used to identify burnout in persons who work in a school setting. Respondents answered 22 items using a 7-point frequency scale ranging from "0" (Never) to "6" (Every day). Each item corresponded to one of the three dimensions of burnout: *emotional exhaustion*, *depersonalization*, and *personal accomplishment*. Items 1, 2, 3, 6, 8, 13, 14, 16, and 20 corresponded to *emotional exhaustion*. Items 5, 10, 11, 15, and 22 corresponded to *depersonalization*. Items 4, 7, 9, 12, 17, 18, 19, and 21 corresponded to *personal accomplishment*. Responses for each dimension were averaged to receive an overall dimension score. A higher score for the *emotional exhaustion* and *depersonalization* dimensions indicates higher levels of burnout, while a higher score for *personal accomplishment* indicates lower levels of burnout. Normative scores for comparison purposes were provided in the Maslach Burnout Inventory Manual (Maslach et al., 1996).

Mean scores and standard deviations for the entire sample (*n*=223) compared to normative scores (*n*=4,163) are shown in Table 2. The mean score of *emotional exhaustion* for the entire sample was relatively high with a relatively large standard deviation (*M*=30.04, *SD*=11.96), indicating that music teachers are experiencing higher levels of emotional exhaustion, but the variability of the responses should be considered. The mean score of *depersonalization* was relatively low (*M*=8.19, *SD*=6.14), indicating that music teachers are not experiencing high levels of depersonalization. The mean score of *personal accomplishment* is relatively high with a relatively low standard deviation

(*M*=34.43, *SD*=7.56), indicating that overall, music teachers are experiencing a sense of personal accomplishment that is generally true across the sample. The final research question, "What relationship, if any, is there between demographic variables and rates of burnout?" sought to determine if there was any relationship between demographic variables, teaching variables, and levels of burnout.

### Gender and Age

Respondents were first divided into two gender subgroups, male and female, as participants either selected one of those two options or preferred not to answer. Two participants preferred not to answer; their MBI-ES scores were not included in the gender analysis. Females scored slightly higher in *emotional exhaustion* and *depersonalization*, but lower in *personal accomplishment* than males, indicating that females are experiencing higher levels of burnout in all dimensions. The difference in *emotional exhaustion* was statistically significant ($H = 5.04$, $df = 1$, $p = 0.02472$; $p > 0.05$). The difference in *depersonalization* was not statistically significant ($H = 0.3238$, $df = 1$, $p = 0.56931$; $p > 0.05$). The difference in *personal accomplishment* was not statistically significant ($H = 0.2289$, $df = 1$, $p = 0.63233$; $p > 0.05$).

Respondents were divided into five subgroups according to years of age: 20-29, 30-39, 40-49, 50-59, and 60+. Participants aged 20-29 years scored highest in *emotional exhaustion* and *depersonalization* and second lowest in *personal accomplishment*. Participants aged 40-49 years scored lowest in *personal accomplishment* and second highest in *emotional exhaustion* and *depersonalization*. This indicates that participants aged 20-29 years and 40-49 years are experiencing the most severe burnout. Participants

aged 60+ scored lowest in *emotional exhaustion* and *depersonalization*, and highest in *personal accomplishment*, indicating lower levels of burnout in all dimensions.

**Table 2.** *Participant and Normative Mean Scores and Standard Deviations of Each Dimension of Burnout*

| Population | Emotional Exhaustion | Depersonalization | Personal Accomplishment |
|---|---|---|---|
| Study Participants (*n=223*) | | | |
| *M* | 30.04 | 8.19 | 34.43 |
| *SD* | 11.96 | 6.14 | 7.56 |
| | | | |
| Primary and Secondary Teachers (*n= 4,163*) | | | |
| *M* | 21.25 | 11.00 | 33.54 |
| *SD* | 11.01 | 6.19 | 6.89 |

The difference in *emotional exhaustion* scores between groups was statistically significant ($H = 21.82$, *df* = 4, $p = 0.00022$; $p > 0.05$). The difference in *depersonalization* scores between groups was statistically significant ($H = 20.35$, *df* = 4, $p = 0.00043$; $p > 0.05$), specifically between 20-29 and 61+ year olds, 30-39 and 61+ year olds, and 40-49 and 61+ year olds. The difference in *personal accomplishment* between groups was also statistically significant ($H = 16.71$, *df* = 4, $p = 0.0022$; $p > 0.05$), specifically between 20-29 and 61+ year olds, 30-39 and 61+ year olds, and 40-49 and 61+ year olds. Mean scores and standard deviations according to these subgroups can be found in Table 3. Race/ethnicity was not analyzed due to the overwhelming majority of participants being the same race/ethnicity. That the sample was far more homogenous than diverse is troubling and should be addressed in future research.

**Table 3.** *Comparison of Mean Scores and Standard Deviations According to Gender and Age*

| Subgroup | Emotional Exhaustion | | Depersonalization | | Personal Accomplishment | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *M* | *SD* | *M* | *SD* | *M* | *SD* |
| Male (*N=104*) | 28.24 | 12.16 | 8.05 | 6.25 | 34.69 | 7.58 |
| Female (*N=117*) | 31.87 | 11.45 | 8.38 | 6.03 | 34.11 | 7.57 |
| 20-29 years of age (*N=16*) | 33.38 | 11.63 | 10.25 | 6.27 | 33.75 | 6.37 |
| 30-39 years of age (*N=64*) | 30.27 | 10.99 | 8.84 | 6.09 | 34.55 | 6.67 |
| 40-49 years of age (*N=86*) | 33.16 | 10.47 | 9.00 | 6.06 | 32.80 | 7.85 |
| 50-59 years of age (*N=42*) | 26.41 | 12.66 | 6.60 | 5.89 | 35.55 | 8.19 |
| 60+ years of age (*N=15*) | 17.80 | 11.57 | 3.07 | 2.94 | 40.87 | 4.14 |

### *Teaching Experience*

Respondents were divided into four subgroups based on years of teaching experience: 5-10, 11-20, 21-30, and 31+. Participants with 5-10 years of experience scored the highest in *emotional exhaustion* and *depersonalization*, indicating higher levels of burnout in those dimensions. Participants with 11-20 years of experience scored lowest on *personal accomplishment* indicating higher burnout in that dimension. Participants with 31+ years of experience scored lowest in *emotional exhaustion* and *depersonalization*, and highest in *personal accomplishment*, indicating the lowest levels of burnout based on years of experience. Statistically significant differences were found in scores between groups for *emotional exhaustion* ($H = 8.4989$, *df* $= 3$, $p = 0.03675$; $p >$

0.05) (specifically between participants with 5-10 and 31+ years of experience) and *depersonalization* ($H = 8.2874$, $df = 3$, $p = 0.04043$; $p > 0.05$). The difference in *personal accomplishment* between groups was not statistically significant ($H = 5.8312$, $df = 3$, $p = 0.1201$; $p > 0.05$).

Respondents were divided into five subgroups based on grade level taught: elementary school level, middle school level, high school level, collegiate level, and multiple school levels. Participants who taught multiple school levels scored the highest in *emotional exhaustion*, indicating higher levels of burnout in that dimension. Participants who taught at the middle school level scored the highest in *depersonalization*, indicating higher levels of burnout in that dimension. Participants who taught at the elementary school level scored lowest in *personal accomplishment*, indicating higher levels of burnout in that dimension. Participants who taught at the elementary school level averaged the lowest score in *emotional exhaustion*, however. The participant who taught at the collegiate level reported the lowest level of *depersonalization* and the highest level of *personal accomplishment*. Differences in scores for *emotional exhaustion* ($H = 6.7116$, $df = 4$, $p = 0.1519$; $p > 0.05$) and *depersonalization* ($H = 5.0431$, $df = 4$, $p = 0.2829$; $p > 0.05$) were not statistically significant. The difference in *personal accomplishment* was statistically significant ($H = 11.7098$, $df = 4$, $p = 0.01964$; $p > 0.05$), specifically between those who taught at the elementary level and those who taught at the high school level.

Respondents were divided into seven subgroups based on content taught: band, orchestra, choir, general music, music electives, two different content areas, and three or more different content areas. Participants who taught choir scored the highest in

*emotional exhaustion*, indicating higher levels of burnout in that dimension. Participants who taught general music scored the highest in *depersonalization* and lowest in *personal accomplishment*, indicating higher levels of burnout in those dimensions. Participants who taught music electives scored the lowest in *emotional exhaustion* and *depersonalization*, indicating lower levels of burnout in those dimensions. Participants who taught band scored highest in *personal accomplishment*, indicating lower levels of burnout in that dimension. No significant differences were found for any dimension between these subgroups: *emotional exhaustion* ($H = 11.296$, $df = 6$, $p = 0.07965$; $p > 0.05$), *depersonalization* ($H = 4.8099$, $df = 6$, $p = 0.5684$; $p > 0.05$), *personal accomplishment* ($H = 6.1555$, $df = 6$, $p = 0.406$; $p > 0.05$). Mean scores and standard deviations according to years of teaching experience, school level taught, and content taught can be found in Table 4.

**Perceived Causes of Burnout**

To answer the second research question, "What are the perceived factors veteran music teachers believe are contributing to feelings of burnout?" participants were asked to rank eight potential causes of burnout in order from "8" as the *Most Significant Cause* to "1" as the *Least Significant Cause*. The potential causes of burnout were: unmanageable workload, student behavioral issues, lack of autonomy or job control, lack of administrative/supervisor support, low salary, inadequate materials, unsafe work environment, and low morale.

**Table 4.** *Comparison of Mean Scores and Standard Deviations: Years of Experience, Level Taught, and Content Area Taught*

| Subgroup | Emotional Exhaustion | | Depersonalization | | Personal Accomplishment | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *M* | *SD* | *M* | *SD* | *M* | *SD* |
| 5-10 years (*N=33*) | 34.06 | 10.71 | 9.70 | 5.97 | 34.91 | 6.50 |
| 11-20 years (*N=89*) | 29.64 | 11.12 | 8.90 | 6.29 | 33.46 | 7.28 |
| 21-30 years (*N=78*) | 30.44 | 12.34 | 7.36 | 5.84 | 34.39 | 8.17 |
| 31+ years (*N=23*) | 24.48 | 13.09 | 6.13 | 5.76 | 37.65 | 6.96 |
| Elementary School (*N=47*) | 26.40 | 11.50 | 7.79 | 6.33 | 32.00 | 9.28 |
| Middle School (*N=42*) | 31.21 | 10.76 | 9.19 | 7.26 | 35.07 | 6.60 |
| High School (*N=47*) | 29.64 | 11.95 | 6.68 | 4.93 | 37.40 | 5.77 |
| Collegiate (*N=1*) | 30.00 | *n/a* | 3.00 | *n/a* | 41.00 | *n/a* |
| Multiple levels (*N=86*) | 31.67 | 12.38 | 8.81 | 5.84 | 33.74 | 7.26 |
| Band (*N=45*) | 28.51 | 12.54 | 8.76 | 6.50 | 35.18 | 6.33 |
| Orchestra (*N=10*) | 23.00 | 11.39 | 7.30 | 6.45 | 33.40 | 6.17 |
| Choir (*N=10*) | 38.00 | 6.99 | 7.20 | 6.18 | 34.90 | 6.74 |
| General Music (*N=20*) | 28.10 | 10.76 | 8.95 | 6.53 | 29.80 | 10.19 |
| Music Electives (*N=2*) | 21.00 | 12.00 | 1.50 | 1.50 | 30.50 | 1.50 |
| Two Different Content Areas (*N=72*) | 30.28 | 11.46 | 7.61 | 5.30 | 34.89 | 7.42 |
| Three or More Different Content Areas (*N=64*) | 31.59 | 12.08 | 8.72 | 6.42 | 35.05 | 7.44 |

*Unmanageable Workload* was the cause most frequently ranked "8- Most Significant Cause" (88). *Student Behavioral Issues* was the second cause most frequently ranked "8-Most Significant Cause" (51) and *Lack of Administrative Support/Supervisor Support* was third (39). *Unsafe Work Environment* was the cause most frequently ranked "1-Least Significant Cause" (107). *Low Salary* was the second cause most frequently ranked "1-Least Significant Cause" (40) and *Lack of Autonomy/Job Control* and *Inadequate Materials* were third (22). Figure 1 illustrates the frequency with which respondents ranked each potential cause of burnout.

**Perceived Solutions to Burnout**

To answer the third research question, "What are their perceived solutions to alleviate burnout?" participants were asked to rank eight potential solutions to help alleviate burnout in order with "8" as the *Most Effective Solution* and "1" as the *Least Effective Solution*. The potential solutions to alleviate burnout were: raise educator salaries, reduce teaching responsibilities/classes, increase administrative disciplinary follow-through for students, hire more teachers/support staff, provide additional academic and/or emotional supports for students, increase administrative support for teachers, increase inclusion in conversations relating to your job, and increase in tangible rewards such as jeans day.

*Reduce Teaching Responsibilities/Classes* was the solution most frequently ranked "8-Most Effective Solution" (53). *Hire More Teachers/Support Staff* was the second solution most frequently ranked "8-Most Effective Solution" (51) and *Increase Administrative Support for Teachers* was third (35). *Increase in Tangible Rewards Such as Jeans Day* was overwhelmingly ranked by respondents as "1-Least Effective Solution"

(170). *Increase Inclusion in Conversations Relating to Your Job* was the second solution most frequently ranked "1-Least Effective Solution" (29) and *Raise Educator Salaries* was third (9). Figure 2 illustrates the frequency with which respondents ranked each potential solution to burnout.
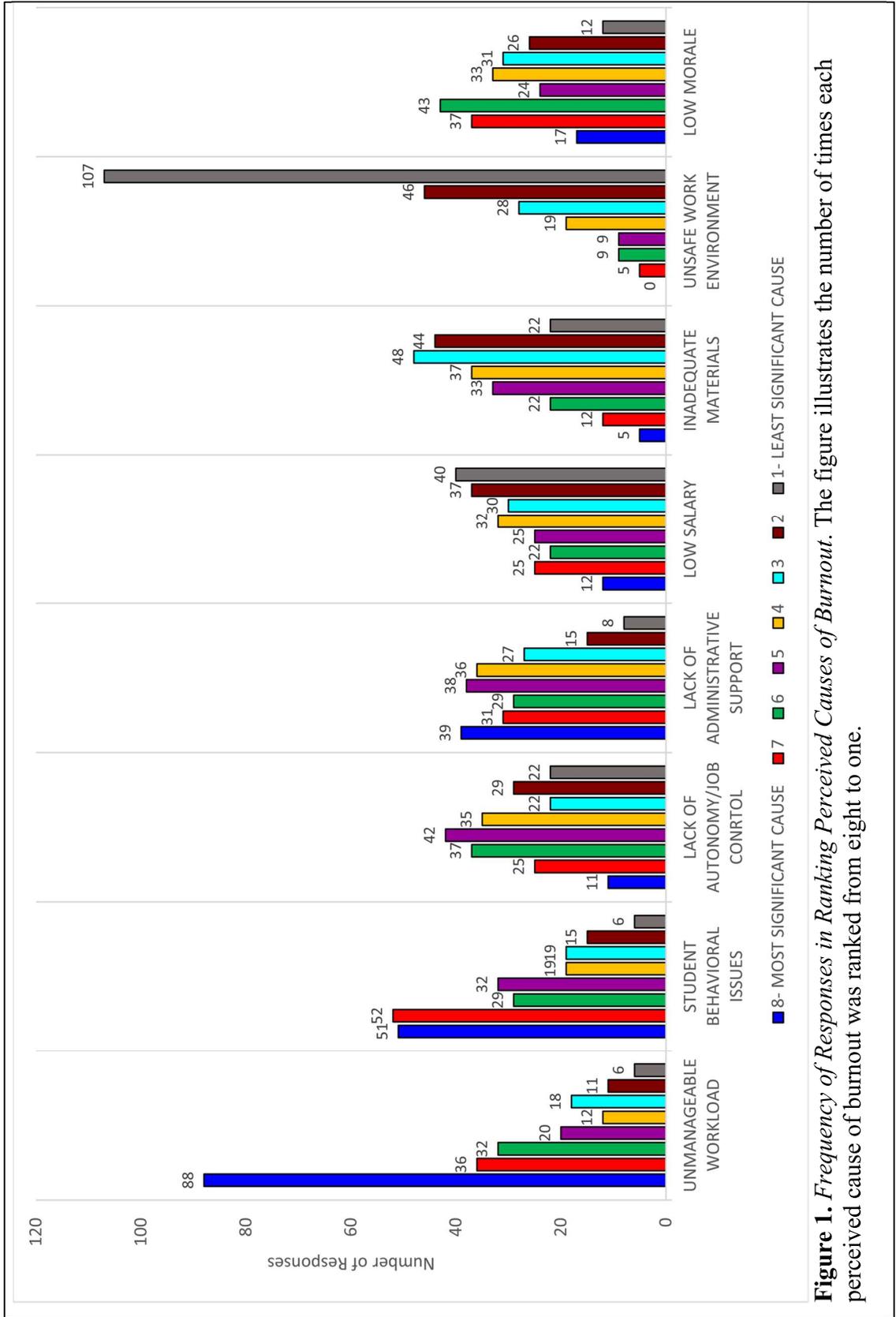
**Figure 1.** *Frequency of Responses in Ranking Perceived Causes of Burnout.* The figure illustrates the number of times each perceived cause of burnout was ranked from eight to one.

**Figure 2.** *Frequency of Responses in Ranking Perceived Solutions to Burnout.* The figure illustrates the number of times each perceived solution to burnout was ranked from eight to one.

**CHAPTER 4**

**DISCUSSION**

The purpose of this study was to identify which dimensions of burnout affect veteran Pennsylvania music educators, investigate what factors are currently contributing to veteran music teacher burnout, seek recommendations on how to remedy or alleviate symptoms of burnout, and uncover any relationships between burnout and demographic information. Results from the Maslach Burnout Inventory- Educators Survey (MBI-ES) demonstrate that veteran Pennsylvania public school music educators are experiencing heightened levels of burnout specifically in emotional exhaustion, indicating overextension. Examining burnout scores in conjunction with respondent perceived causes of and solutions to burnout may help educators and school districts identify catalysts to feelings of burnout and provide actionable steps to reduce educator stress and burnout.

**Demographic Findings**

*Gender*

Significant differences in levels of burnout were reported according to certain demographic factors. Although some studies failed to identify gender as a strong predictor of burnout, feelings of burnout affected female participants more severely than male participants, particularly in the dimension of emotional exhaustion. This finding is in line with the research of Gordon (1997), Maslach and Jackson (1981), and Saloviita and Pakarinen (2021). It should be noted, however, that males historically report higher levels of depersonalization, although that finding was not supported in this study. Females are stereotypically more open to and affected by emotion (e.g. increased

sensitivity to negative stimuli, more likely to display feelings) (Bianchin & Angrilli, 2012; Purvanova & Muros, 2010), so it is reasonable that they may be more prone to emotional exhaustion. Societal roles or norms may also impact levels of burnout. As child-bearers and historical homemakers, women may face heightened levels of stress while juggling pregnancy, work, maternity leave, motherhood, and housekeeping. One female participant mentioned, *"The workload outside of school that is expected of band directors is ridiculous. Having a child at home, I constantly feel like I am having to choose between this career that I love and my family."* Two other female respondents noted difficulties balancing professional and family obligations, with one commenting that she might not stay in teaching. This issue was briefly addressed by Scheib (2003). He examined role stress in music teachers, interviewing three males and one female. The female frequently referenced her difficulties and stress balancing her career expectations and motherhood expectations, while the males barely mentioned this conflict. This is not to say that men are not affected by having families or diminish stress they may feel. In the current study, burnout was a very salient topic for one male participant, commenting that while he feels he is an effective music educator, he is affected by the stress of it:

> I have started therapy because I am becoming more incapable of managing my stress and its outcomes. I feel like the only way I can continue to grow as a professional is at the expense of my family's well-being, which I am not willing to compromise. Therefore, I come to work frustrated that this is all it will be, and it won't improve for the remainder of my career (which is still quite a while).

Another male respondent mentioned difficulty balancing his work and life schedule, particularly stemming from evening and weekend marching band commitments.

Despite a lighter rehearsal schedule and having dependable staff to step in when needed, he still found himself missing crucial family moments:

> Just a few days ago, during a middle school recruitment event, a serious issue arose with my daughter (who attends middle school in a neighboring district). I was so engrossed in event preparations that I didn't give the appropriate attention to this serious family matter… I've taken occasional days off to attend important family events. However, I realize that moving forward, I'll need to recalibrate my level of commitment. Certain aspects of this job have proven to be challenging for my family life. As much as my job means to me, my love for my wife and kids outweighs any potential friction it may cause.

As both male and female respondents referenced balancing family and career responsibilities, only speculation can help explain the differences in burnout between men and women in this study. It should be noted that participants had the option to select nonbinary genders, however, the majority of participants selected a binary gender identity. Further research specifically examining gender-related patterns, traits, and other variables would help provide clarity on why burnout may affect and manifest differently between genders.

### *Age and Experience*

Age and years of experience as variables also showed significant differences in levels of burnout. Participants aged 20-29 years and participants with 5-10 years of experience both scored the highest in emotional exhaustion and depersonalization, which is logical considering the youngest respondents would typically have the least experience. Meanwhile, participants aged 61+ and participants with 31+ years of experience reported the lowest levels of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization, and the highest levels of personal accomplishment. These results also make sense considering that, in the grand scheme of one's career, the youngest participants may be novices, still transitioning into

the role of teacher and learning the best practices for their classroom. As educators gain experience, settle into their position, find a position that best suites them, and even at the end of their career "see the light at the end of the tunnel," it would be reasonable that feelings of stress and overwhelm that can lead to burnout would decrease. As one participant noted:

> It took over a decade for me to finally get one of 'those coveted' positions in a public school system. Three years ago, my answers to the last prompts [the burnout survey] would have been far different. I'm currently in my third (and hopefully final) public school job.

Hedden (2006) and Saloviita and Pakarinen (2021) also observed a linear trend indicating that levels of burnout decreased as age and experience increased, which were also echoed in research conducted by Bernhard (2016) and Hultell et al. (2013). There was, however, a slight increase in burnout for participants aged 40-49 and participants with 21-30 years of experience. One possible explanation is that those who fall within this age and/or experience level may have more school-aged children which requires greater work-life balance. As one participant in these demographic categories noted, *"some of why I get stressed is also because I have three elementary aged children at home, so I have to balance work and home life."* Hartsel (2016) examined why teachers left the profession mid-career, finding that of the seven participants she interviewed, six mentioned issues between family and work obligations, and five had children. Those five participants, all female, cited wanting to spend more time with their children as a reason they left teaching. While this offers one explanation for the increased levels of stress in participants aged 40-49 years and participants with 21-30 years of experience, further research focusing on this demographic is needed to provide additional data.

*Teaching Assignment*

While participant teaching assignment was found to have few statistically significant differences, the variances in scores should still be noted. When examining grade level taught, statistically significant differences were only found in the dimension of personal accomplishment between elementary-level teachers and high-school level teachers. High-school level teachers felt greater levels of personal accomplishment than those who taught at the elementary level only. One reason may be due to the nature of music and performance. Many times, students major in music because they enjoy playing and performing music at a high level. In most music teacher preparation programs, importance is placed on students' developing advanced levels of musicianship in addition to developing teaching skills. Collegiate music students often perform high-quality, demanding music that is both challenging and musically fulfilling. Although elementary-aged students are capable of performing music well, age-appropriate music may not be as intricate, certainly not as demanding, and may not seem as interesting to music educators as music performed at the secondary level. Some music teachers may not fully appreciate the efforts of younger students learning these more skill-appropriate songs and start to feel musically dissatisfied. Young musicians at the elementary level may also not be as invested in music or learning an instrument as their older counterparts, leading to feelings of frustration over the effort to teach not being reciprocated in students' efforts to learn and practice. This can give way to feeling a lack of personal accomplishment both as a musician and professional. Further research is necessary to help gain insight into how educators at differing levels experience personal accomplishment.

Although not statistically significant, it was unsurprising to find that participants who taught at multiple levels experienced higher rates of emotional exhaustion than those who taught at only one level. Current literature supports that the various logistics, responsibilities, and consequences of teaching at multiple levels including travel time, conflicting schedules between buildings, navigating several developmental stages of students, and feelings of isolation, may contribute to greater stress (Bernhard, 2016; Gordon, 2000; Kang & Yoo, 2019; Krueger, 2000; Sindberg, 2011, 2014; Sindberg & Lipscomb, 2005). Bernhard (2016) specifically examined burnout levels among music teachers by grade level taught and noted significant differences in levels of burnout in those who taught multiple grade levels, reporting higher levels of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization, and lower levels of personal accomplishment compared to those who taught exclusively elementary, middle, or high school. While her study did not investigate detailed reasons, extant literature may provide additional insight. Compared to other educators, music teachers are more likely to teach in multiple buildings, which can take time away from teaching, prepping, and even eating lunch (Gardner, 2010; Gordon, 2000; Krueger, 2000). One participant in Krueger's (2000) study noted that they lost their prep period and lunch break traveling in between schools, even completing a math endorsement to hopefully stay in one building in the future. Gordon (1997) also found that participants were frustrated at traveling between schools and the unique concerns it presents, such as set-up and tear-down time and the lack of a cohesive program. Itinerant educators must coordinate multiple schedules, report to multiple administrators, and work with multiple staff members. Even though music teachers in multiple buildings see an abundance of students and colleagues, isolation can still occur. Sindberg (2011)

investigated isolation in music teachers and found that her participants negatively commented that being at multiple buildings made it difficult to keep track of all their students and build meaningful relationships with students and faculty. Extant research supports that this isolation can lead to negative effects on teachers (Gordon, 1997; Hamann et al., 1987; Klassen et al., 2012; Paetz, 2021; Sindberg & Lipscomb, 2005; Sindberg, 2011; Sindberg, 2014). Unfortunately, teachers who taught at multiple grade levels also scored the second highest in depersonalization and second lowest in personal accomplishment, adding to the argument that educators who are tasked with teaching at multiple levels are being stretched too thin.

Grouping participants into content area taught offered no statistically significant differences in all dimensions. It was surprising to find that choir teachers reported the highest levels of emotional exhaustion, although it should be noted that, while these respondents selected that they only taught choir, half commented that they have additional teaching responsibilities outside of choir courses. After choir teachers, participants who taught three or more different content areas reported the highest levels of emotional exhaustion, followed closely by participants who taught two different content areas. This finding is supported by Bernhard (2016), who also examined burnout levels amongst music teachers by music specialization. As with those who taught multiple grade levels, she found significant differences in levels of burnout in those who taught multiple music content areas, with these participants reporting higher levels of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization, and lower levels of personal accomplishment. Like those teaching multiple grade levels, participants who must teach multiple music content areas may feel overwhelmed by the diverse responsibilities

associated with teaching a variety of courses in one day, including extracurricular

responsibilities. As one participant who teaches grades 5-12, band, orchestra,

instrumental lessons, and two extracurricular ensembles said:

> There is simply too much for one person to handle. Our district has lost
> 4.5 music teachers since 2016 or 2017, and I have had to take on the
> majority of their responsibilities. I rarely leave the school before 11 pm
> (even on weekends), and I arrive at 7 am every weekday. It is too much.

Being tasked with teaching multiple courses, especially if the educator did not have a say

in decisions regarding their job responsibilities or is more passionate about one

specialization, can generate feelings of frustration and even resentment. As one

participant said, "*by not having autonomy over what I teach and how I teach it, it takes a*

*lot of the enjoyment out of it for me,*" while another participant simply stated, "*teaching*

*general music classes takes time away from teaching band group lessons and classes.*" A

different participant echoed her frustration at job responsibility changes and being

"*forced to teach an hour of reading every morning from a scripted program.*" She stated:

> My negative feelings came from teaching general music mostly because I
> was used as a slot so that gen[eral] ed[ucation] teachers could get their
> planning time. Students at my school received double general music time
> which wasn't necessary. It took away from the time I could spend with my
> instrumental students. I could have taught at least 5 more years if I could
> have focused on instrumental teaching rather than teaching reading,
> performing duties, and teaching extra general music classes.

A new trend seems to be forcing music teachers to teach non-music courses, including

reading, math, and even special education. One participant explained how he has a

"*checkerboard schedule,*" where he only teaches instrumental music when not teaching

general music and special education classes:

> Special education classes drain me the most. And because the addition of those classes, I have lost instrumental time and admin doesn't care. All admin cares about is covering teacher planning periods. My instrumental time is unimportant to them…If a window for retirement opens, I'm jumping out.

It would seem as though some music teachers do not feel as though their instrumental music time is valued due to administration replacing this time with other courses, creating additional teaching responsibilities and preparation needed. Demerouti et al. (2001) addresses this issue, positing that when there is a disparity between workload and resources available, exhaustion, inefficacy, and a lack of autonomy are more likely to occur.

While this study did not explicitly examine high school band directors, many who taught more than only band referenced the work responsibilities necessary outside of the contractual school day as a source of stress. One high school music teacher commented that although working with his band students generally causes him less burnout than teaching his elective classes:

> The job of high school band director is not sustainable, with marching band, indoor percussion/color guard, jazz band, county/district/regional/all-state judging and festivals, meetings, meetings, and more meetings, etc., all on top of a regular full-time course load. It's two full-time jobs expected to be done by one person with one salary. It's insane.

Another high school band director who taught multiple music content areas echoed this sentiment, feeling that his workload is unmanageable only because of extra responsibilities, *"many of which occur after the school day. There is significant 'unpaid' time spent at school for these tasks when compared to other teachers in my building."*

The numerous accounts of music teachers who teach in multiple areas feeling overwhelmed and frustrated is especially troubling considering that approximately 61% of the current study's participants, not including those who only reported teaching one content area but actually teach in more than one music specialization, fall under this demographic. It is concerning to consider that the veteran music teachers studied, as a whole, are well over the normative mean score in emotional exhaustion. Love for music and care for teaching students may not be enough to mitigate the debilitating circumstances that lead to feelings of burnout. While it is possible for music teachers to develop strategies to better cope with the various demands of the job, they are typically not able to change organizational-level factors that contribute to feelings of stress and burnout. Administration would be wise to examine the various responsibilities assigned to music teachers and be open to suggestions to improve the environment and overall job satisfaction of music teachers if they wish to reduce burnout in music teachers.

**Burnout Causes and Solutions**

Two goals of this study were to identify common causes that are leading to feelings of burnout among music educators and perceived solutions to help alleviate the burnout some music educators are experiencing. While analyzing and interpreting survey results and comments, it is evident that burnout affects individuals in diverse ways. There are, however, common themes that emerged.

*Job Demands: "I AM OVERLOADED"*

Out of eight possible causes contributing to burnout, over a third of participants (39%) felt like *Unmanageable Workload* was the leading cause of burnout, which was most frequently ranked "8- Most Significant Cause" of burnout in music teachers. As

Demerouti et al. (2001) proposes and supports according to their "Job Demands-Resources Model of Burnout", when job demands are high and resources to meet those demands are lacking, elevated levels of burnout may occur. This relationship between job demands or an unmanageable workload and burnout is frequently supported in several additional studies (Gordon 1997; Gordon, 2000; Hamann et al., 1987; Hartsel, 2016; Scheib, 2003). Hartsel (2016) specifically examined why experienced teachers leave the profession, interviewing seven former teachers who left teaching mid-career. She found that four main themes emerged from her data, two of which contain aspects of being overwhelmed and overloaded with responsibilities at work.

When considering the vast amount of responsibilities music teachers are typically tasked with, this outcome should come as no surprise. Music teachers not only teach their respective classes, but frequently must recruit, retain, and teach large numbers of students for their ensembles, coordinate trips and assemblies, repair and manage instrument inventory, manage budgets, advocate for our students and subject, and justify the importance of music. As one participant explained:

> Teacher burnout is happening because there are too many asks and not enough time to complete everything. Music teachers are often asked to teach a more variety of classes than other subject areas and their prep time for that does not change. I could teach 5 different classes that each need time to prepare but an English or Social Studies teacher will most likely only teach 2 different classes. The ability to provide quality instruction with having so little time to prepare is very challenging and mentally exhausting.

He went on to mention the plethora of responsibilities he is tasked with:

> In addition to the classes we teach, music teachers are in charge of planning their concerts and events with everything that comes with it (programs, lighting, sound, marketing), and at the secondary level you are also responsible for doing a budget, ordering, inventory, travel, auditions,

and fundraising which adds even more to your plate without adding extra time to your schedule. All of this takes time and effort to complete and usually is time not within the school day because of how active you need to be with the students. Other aspects of the job include meetings and phone calls about IEPS, 504s, and discipline referrals as well as professional learning time, scheduling concerts/events, and filling out facilities/room reservation forms. There has been so much added to what a teacher does since I started 19 years ago and even though there has been more added to the plate each year, nothing gets removed and no time is added for you to complete everything and people (students, parents, admin, community) treat you with less and less respect.

Many participants reiterated these sentiments of feeling overloaded. This may be, in part, due to school districts typically having fewer music positions, leading to more pressure to fit their duties in the school day. One participant mentioned that "*due to being a small school district, I feel that I am stretched too thin with the amount of classes I see each week.*" Another participant listed off her responsibilities and time constraints as one of the few music teachers in her small district:

I am expected to make the schedule and run the high school choir after school and put on 2 concerts a year with minimal practice time provided. I am also expected to schedule and run the band for grades 5-12… Some of the time for band has been provided during the school day, but I was given no time conducive to both elementary/middle and high school for a full band rehearsal time. I will need to find that time myself.

Even larger districts may not have many music teachers, as arts positions are commonly cut or absorbed when facing budget issues. While the district may save money, someone needs to be responsible for the previous class load. These classes and students are often piled upon already unmanageable workloads. As mentioned by a participant whose district cut their music department in half, "*we remaining teachers had to cover the positions and duties left open from the furloughs.*" When music teachers leave or retire, sometimes their positions are not filled to help cut costs. For example, one participant

said that the band teacher retired and was not replaced, so they literally do two jobs now. Another participant remarked how his "*district went from a manageable workload for each music teacher to an unmanageable workload*." They had three teachers quit because of it.

It should be unsurprising that the most frequently rated solution ranked "8- Most Effective Solution" to help alleviate feelings of burnout was *Reduce Teaching Responsibilities/Classes*. Demerouti et al. (2001) supports that addressing and reducing job demands could lead to a reduction of emotional exhaustion, which is the main dimension of burnout negatively affecting the current study's participants. One participant believes that music teachers "*are just overwhelmed. There is barely any time to do just our jobs which does not include all of the extra work they give us. Just allowing us time to teach would be the best*." This may also include reducing extracurricular responsibilities not included in contracts. One participant found that this was one solution that worked for him. While he loves what he does, he outworks his contract and unfair extra duty contract, so he has "*decided not to do so to prevent burnout. Decreasing responsibilities with more planning would allow teachers to be 100% present when in school and 100% present when outside of school*." Another participant also took steps to lighten the extracurricular load, "*which contributed to a lot of burnout*." If she had not, her "*answers would have contained more frequent instances of negative feelings*." It may be challenging to decline extra duty contracts outside of the school day, though, especially if the extra duty contract relates to the specific position. For example, in some districts, elementary school ensembles frequently meet outside of the school day as there is not always time in the school day set aside to meet all students as an ensemble or pull

all students involved from class. If the teacher were to decline the extra duty contract, would there be anyone willing and qualified to teach after-school ensembles? In these cases, it may be beneficial for school districts to create a schedule that allows time for ensembles to meet during the school day, which can also help prevent equity issues. Additional music teachers may be necessary to accommodate schedule changes.

The second solution most frequently ranked "8- Most Effective Solution" was *Hire More Teachers/Support Staff.* These top two solutions may go hand in hand, as sometimes to reduce workload, additional workers may need to be hired. This need was echoed by a participant who is the only music teacher in her district. She reflected on the topic of solutions and tangible rewards, saying, "*our school already gets an overwhelming amount of jeans days. However, we pay for all of them. What our district needs is at least one more music teacher to help with the teaching load.*" Simply hiring more teachers and staff can be a challenge considering that in many places, there are already teacher and substitute shortages, which has led to special area teachers ("non-core" subject teachers such as art, physical education, and library teachers) being called to cover classes and adding additional stress. Fortunately, one respondent experienced firsthand the benefits of hiring an additional music teacher:

> My sense of burnout has greatly reduced due to the reduction of classes
> that I teach and the hiring of an additional music teacher. I am realizing
> that my previous feelings of burnout were strongly tied to a sense of
> feeling overwhelmed with my teaching load. I am worried that my
> displeasure in previous years though has forever soured me on teaching.
> There have been far more good days than bad this year though.

While this participant is worried that his feelings of burnout have permanently affected his career outlook, this is not common in music teachers. Hancock (2016) examined how

49

music teachers felt one year after moving to a different school or leaving education entirely. He found that only 1% of music teachers who left the field for a new position were not willing to return to teaching as a career due to their discontent. Hancock also discovered that the majority of music teachers who moved schools to improve their satisfaction with workplace conditions, job descriptions, job responsibilities, and administrative support experienced improved conditions at their new school. It would seem as though if music educators are not able to manage their feelings or symptoms of burnout, working in a different school district may be necessary, since determining workload is often up to administration.

### Support: "Admin Doesn't Care at All"

Among the many participant comments provided, administrative issues were frequently mentioned. *Lack of Administrative Support/Supervisor Support* was the third cause most frequently ranked "8- Most Significant Cause" of burnout. Administration, both at the school and district level, has a profound impact on the work environment and at times, job responsibilities and feelings of burnout. This finding is pervasive and well-supported in extant literature (Casteal, 2021; Gardner, 2010; Gordon 1997; Hamann et al., 1987; Hancock, 2008, 2016; Hartsel, 2016; Krueger, 2000; Madigan & Kim, 2021; McLain, 2005; Paetz, 2021; Sindberg, 2011; Sindberg & Lipscomb, 2005). Casteal (2021) investigated the impact of administrators on teacher job satisfaction. She interviewed 12 middle school teachers who remained in their positions, questioning how they perceived their principal's leadership and the impact on their job satisfaction. Four themes of how their administration impacted their jobs emerged, including support, appreciation, work environment, and dissatisfaction. Honest communication, perceived

support, and leadership characteristics all impacted how the participants viewed their administration and job satisfaction. Numerous participants in the current study supported this notion, making frequent comments on how administration has affected their job satisfaction and levels of stress. One participant with 38 years of experience mentioned that "*had I taken this survey in the past...I could have answered differently because I despised a former administration and considered retiring*." A different participant echoed these sentiments, saying, "*My answers [to the survey] vary depending on administration. We have great admin at our high school this year. In previous years, my answers would have been much different because of lack of leadership in my school*." Administrative support can be complex and multifaceted, though, which can cause frustration in a multitude of ways.

Many times, administrators do not have a music teaching background and are unfamiliar with the unseen demands and responsibilities involved when running a music program. One participant frankly noted, "*admin does not know about music or care to be informed*," while another felt that his administration actually undermined his work often. Paetz (2021) interviewed one music teacher, documenting and analyzing her journey from feeling burned out to rejuvenated again. In her first position, her administrator made it very clear that music was only offered because it was a requirement and was not able to foster many relationships with colleagues. After five years at that school, she resigned with no job lined up, but thankfully was able to fill a maternity leave position at a school with ample support, and later, finding her own position with administrative and collegial support. A blatant lack of support may not always be the case, though. For example, one participant views her administrators as supportive, but "*they do not fully understand what*

*I need to be successful.*" This sentiment was echoed by another participant who noted that while he feels like he has great support and enjoys working under his administration, "*much could be improved if they took a closer look at some of our program issues and made decisions to affect change.*" It can be challenging to remember that administration addresses a variety of school issues including new policies, mandates, and initiatives, not just issues pertaining to the music department. Though this is understandable, it may lead to feelings of frustration. A few participants felt as though new initiatives added stress, especially considering that other responsibilities are rarely removed. One participant specifically pointed to feeling burnout due to this burden:

> The feeling of burnout is not related to the students and teaching them but more so the administrative directives and lack of direction/support from administration in executing their directives. It is the expectation that teachers deliver excellence while they continually put obstacles in your way and make it difficult to give the students the experience they deserve and what administration is looking for.

Another participant expressed his frustration at how frequently new initiatives were implemented, often with no benefit to his program, and how music at his previous school was viewed:

> What I don't miss is the disdain about my subject area from school leadership, a.k.a. the "entertainment committee" mentality that pervades most school administrators. Coupled with that is the seemingly endless stream of initiatives (probably better described as educational fads) coming from school leadership, nearly all of which have little or nothing to do with my subject area. If that were not bad enough, almost all of those initiatives are forgotten in a year or two in favor of whatever conference or seminar the principal or superintendent attended most recently. Time would be better spent tapping into the expertise of the existing faculty WHO KNOW THEIR STUDENTS THE BEST.  This hardly ever happens.

Initiatives are not the only conditions that can change from year to year. Some districts may experience high levels of administrator turnover, at both the building and district level. When this lack of consistency occurs, employees frequently need to learn new leadership styles, procedures, and expectations. One participant noted that this frequent change is both difficult and exhausting. In 16 years of teaching, he has had eight different principals and eight different superintendents, noting that the "*lack of consistency at the administrative level plays into the burnout at the teacher level*." This can present a challenge when trying to build connections with your supervisor to impact change.

Whether intentionally or not, administrative decisions and educational policies can often cause detrimental changes to music programs, especially performance-based ensembles. The added stress standardized testing puts on administrators, students, and classroom teachers, in addition to new initiatives, mandates, and sometimes unrealistic expectations, can make it difficult to share students especially in a pull-out lesson setting. As previously mentioned, some participants felt as though their administrators do not care about their instrumental music programs due to losing ensemble and lesson time. These teachers were required to teach either more general music classes, special education classes, or even assist with "core" classes. With the importance placed on standardized test scores, though, this practice is becoming more common as seen in the current study. A few participants addressed this concern. One participant noted:

> More ensembles are being removed from the school day schedule and then have to compete for after school time with other activities. Low state standardized test scores are ruining music programs because the emphasis in education is more on getting math and reading scores up and less on non-core classes like music.

Another participant spoke to this issue in a broader way, saying "*administrative support is lacking in most school districts because the only thing that matters to them is standardized test results. This is due in no small part to the legislative 'solutions' made by politicians rather than educators.*" Teachers of "tested" subjects may especially feel pressure to meet state standards. In a study by Sindberg (2011), participants described the struggle with sharing students and instructional time with other teachers due to curricular and testing demands, expressing that they do not feel valued by classroom teachers. It can be difficult to distinguish if administrators and teachers believe that music in school is trivial or if staff is just overwhelmed. Although all staff members have jobs to do, support and understanding is necessary to create a fulfilling and productive work environment. Unfortunately, administrators and teachers are not the only parties that can affect feelings of support in music teachers.

While not specifically addressed in the research survey, parental/community support was referenced by participants multiple times in comments as factors which influenced job satisfaction and feelings of stress, also referenced in extant literature (Gardner, 2010; Gordon, 2000; McLain, 2005; Paetz, 2021). McLain (2005) examined environmental support and correlations to music teacher burnout, finding that those who felt negatively about parent and community support indicated higher levels of burnout. Parental support is important when participating in music, as students are typically required to practice outside of the school day (Creech, 2010; Davidson et al., 1996; McPherson, 2008; Zdzinski, 2013). This can take the form of monitoring practice sessions, purchasing instruments and supplies, and transporting students to rehearsals, events, and concerts. Likewise, community support is invaluable, as music programs tend

to be visible extensions of school districts in communities, especially at the high school level. However, certain community cultures and expectations may not place value on music and instead focus on sports, which can unfortunately foster "music nerd" stereotypes which can be disheartening for music teachers and students alike. Moreso, music students tend to be active in the community and may participate in sports and other activities, creating tension and conflict. More startling is that, according to one participant, her "*students are being told by community sports coaches that their sport is more important, and they should not be participating in non-sports activities*." While a few participants positively mentioned their parental and community support for their music programs, many felt disenchanted at the lack of support, with one saying that at his rural school, "*support is focused on sports and band, kids and staff, are treated as second class citizens no matter the great accomplishments we have had*." However, support from parents and the community can often start and be amplified by abundant administrative support. As one participant who feels extra stress and a lack of satisfaction due to a lack of support, understanding, and buy-in from parents noted:

> There used to be a much more robust system of parental support for students. That has dwindled in the most recent years…At my current position, things that would help include: administration/school district placing value on the music and band program (and other extracurricular activities), not just the sports teams. When funding and acknowledging the music program's contributions, we are always an afterthought, or something that is acknowledged when convenient. Also, when compared to sports teams, our extracurricular stipends and pay is VASTLY different. The sports coaches' stipends are MUCH higher, even though marching band and band hours are significantly more.

Sometimes it is up to the music teacher to find ways to create interest and buy-in, starting with the students and parents of their respective programs. Connecting with other music

teachers and programs in the area can not only help the professional find a sense of camaraderie and collaboration, but also help the students build relationships with like-minded peers, feeling a sense of solidarity and expelling feelings of alienation. However, administrators should take steps, too, to improve support for their music programs.

With *Lack of Administrative Support/Supervisor Support* listed as the third most prevalent cause of burnout and as many comments regarding a lack of administrative support participants left, it should be unsurprising that *Increase Administrative Support for Teachers* ranked third as an effective solution for burnout. Administrative support can be defined in a plethora of ways, though, and one type of support in one situation is not the same support needed in another. Sometimes, support can be as simple as listening to music teachers, as oftentimes, administrators do not have a music education background and, intentionally or not, make decisions that do not support a functional music program. One participant noted that "*this school year, the upper administration has been very controlling in regards to concerts, resulting in a lot of changes and loss of teacher autonomy*" resulting in reduced performance opportunities. Another teacher echoed her frustration over losing autonomy in the classroom due to what she feels like are inexperienced, inept, and micro-managing administrators. She acknowledges that her issues with administration are school-wide issues, however it has significantly impacted her program and performances negatively. The loss of autonomy can be detrimental to a person, as it constitutes one of the three basic psychological needs (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Ryan and Deci (2000) suggest that the three basic psychological needs of competency, relatedness, and autonomy must be satisfied in order to feel a sense of well-being. If autonomy can be regained for these participants, then perhaps they won't have as

56

negative views of their administrators and overall job satisfaction. Therefore, it is imperative that administrators not only include teachers in their conversations and decision-making, but also be willing to listen to different viewpoints and opinions of those who know their programs best.

Even though administrators do not always have a musical background or may not be interested in music education, respect for the arts and those involved can be helpful in demonstrating that they are valued. This may take the form of advertising arts events (e.g., marching band competitions, concerts, festivals, musicals, and assemblies) to showcasing and supporting students involved in school arts and music in particular. Demonstrably valuing music programs can positively influence the job satisfaction of employees, as it can be easy to tell when support is provided only when convenient. As one participant mentioned:

> The change of administration and lack of general support from administration and the community is huge. The community I teach in is small, but the arts are not a priority nor supported by many. The administration only cares about the arts when it is convenient for them, and they need something. The lack of support, funding, with the expectation of making the district look good with no support is a disaster. The battles to get what you need in order to function, not exceed any expectations is exhausting.

Although not as frequently mentioned, funding is a way administrators can either support or undermine music programs. Gordon (2000) and Krueger (2000) provide evidence that budget constraints can be a source of stress for music teachers. Balancing budgets may be a challenge for administrators in their quest to remain fair, as many are not aware of how expensive materials for music programs can be. For example, the budget of a classroom that only requires basic school supplies is very different from the needs of a band

classroom with aging inventory or outdated marching band uniforms that need replaced. Oftentimes, the high cost of these types of items can be surprising to those not familiar with purchasing musical instruments and supplies, but are necessary items to keep a functional and quality program. Music teachers can fundraise and write grants for some of these items, however that adds more to an already full plate and most likely will not cover the costs of large purchases. Outside of music-specific budgetary concerns, hiring additional staff is yet another challenge. Relating to the issue of unmanageable workload, arts positions may be cut to reduce district costs, causing staff to unwillingly undertake new job responsibilities. Additionally, due to staffing issues, "specials teachers" ("non-core" subject teachers such as art, physical education, and library teachers) may be required to cover other classes. As one participant noted, "*Our school uses specials teachers as substitute teachers which really makes our job seem less important and is definitely causing teacher burnout much quicker*." Sometimes, though administration is not open to change or recommendations. One participant recalled that their teachers were asked to fill out a climate survey, where many teachers begged that changes be made to positively impact the school environment and fix problems. Instead of listening to those who are "in the trenches," the faculty was "*gaslit for three hours as our superintendent sat and argued with the results of the survey*." The participant went on to say that it was dehumanizing and made them feel as though they were just functioning as a babysitter rather than providing quality education to students. This reaction from administration resulted in a lack of trust. When this kind of stubbornness and breach of trust and professionalism occur, it may be best to leave the district if possible. Gardner (2010), Hancock (2008, 2016), and Hartsel (2016) observed that dissatisfaction with

administration was a primary reason teachers left their positions for one in a new district,

noting that participants reported being happier in their new roles. While a few of the

current study's participants did mention leaving previous positions, a few were fortunate

enough to experience positive administrative changes during their tenure in their current

district. One participant reflected on her journey back from burnout after having poor

leadership:

> A couple of years ago I was very burned out due to a lack of leadership;
> we have a new administrator, and the majority of issues are resolved.
> School climate starts with strong leadership, and I have seen firsthand how
> effective leadership allowed me to rediscover my love for teaching after
> feeling severely burned out working under inadequate leadership.

Although the participant did not mention specific issues the new administration resolved,

the participant did imply that interpersonal skills played a factor in her job satisfaction.

Administrators can work toward improvement by reflecting on their school environment,

monitoring levels of perceived support according to teachers, and engaging in open,

honest commentary with teachers about solutions to school issues. While many adults in

the school community can influence music teachers' levels of stress, students also play an

important role in job satisfaction.

### *Challenges in the Classroom: "Dealing with Behavior Issues Daily is Exhausting"*

Many times, teachers go into education to impact the lives of students. It would

make sense, then, that student behaviors and attitudes influence job satisfaction. The

literature supports that building and fostering positive relationships with students

contributes to feelings of relatedness and job satisfaction, while managing difficult

behaviors can increase stress (Gordon, 1997, 2000; Hamann et al., 1987; Kang & Yoo,

2019; Klassen et al., 2012; Paetz, 2021). Kang and Yoo (2019) examined how work

engagement and the three basic psychological needs of competence (the sense of achievement from ability), autonomy (the sense of choice and free will), and relatedness (the need to feel close and connected with others) predicted participant well-being. Although competence was a stronger predictor for well-being mid-career, relatedness to colleagues and students was the strongest predictor of well-being for participants in the beginning and ending stages of their careers. The current study's respondents did not mention feeling a lack of competency; however, they did mention their students frequently. While multiple participants recognized that they have great relationships with their students, many commented on the struggles they are facing with students.

It should be unsurprising, then, that *Student Behavioral Issues* was the second cause most frequently ranked "8- Most Significant Cause" of burnout. Participants referenced behavioral issues in a multitude of ways, however. Commonly, issues with behavior refers to rude or disruptive behaviors. When many participants commented on student issues negatively, though, attitudes towards learning and student needs were cited as sources of stress by current participants. This is not to say that participants are not dealing with disrespectful or disruptive behavior. As one participant said, the "*behavior of students is more than the school can handle. It also doesn't help that alternate placements for students with severe behavioral problems are full in my area.*" To help cope, this teacher has to emotionally disengage in order to deal with some of the behavior and mental health problems of her students, reducing relatedness. Another participant noted that this year has been especially emotionally demanding, with increased discipline referrals, and negative family behaviors:

> Families feel entitled to complain about any and every aspect of the
> program that is designed to help everyone but isn't custom-fitted to their

specific student. I have always been willing to work with individuals and come up with the necessary supports or modifications for everyone's success but this year families will just call yelling, call my principal, superintendent, and school board members over standard program requirements.

Gordon (2000) also indicated that participants struggled with student behavior, with some parents condoning inappropriate behavior and placing blame on the teachers. One possible explanation for the increase in undesirable student behaviors is the impact COVID-19 had on our school system. During the pandemic quarantine, both academic and social education were halted, resulting in a loss of learning. In the experience of several participants, teachers and students are still recovering from this deficit.

One participant explained:

> Student behavior has been such a decline since returning from covid quarantines. The children are extremely behind in basic skills, because as a whole they were not learning them at home. Teachers are playing catch up with those students and skills and trying to stay on the current curriculum. Behavioral skills were also not enforced at home on a whole as well.

Although further longitudinal studies are necessary, Grawe (2023) suggests that the academic losses experienced during pandemic learning persist. A number of the current study's participants believe that students are "*needier than ever*," and "*parents rarely hold their children accountable*." Student accountability may have suffered during remote learning, as school districts scrambled to provide opportunities to continue student education, but with lenient academic expectations. This leniency may have fostered widespread apathy in students, with one participant saying, "*the biggest issue is how little students care or take responsibility for their behavior or quality of work*." Results in Gardner (2010) briefly addressed this issue, with music teachers noting that while there

were no major concerns at their workplace, students coming to school unprepared, a lack

of parental involvement, and student apathy were problematic. Another participant

commented on similar student attitudes towards school:

> The main "drain" on my day is the executive functioning skills of our
> students. Daily tasks have become a chore. Most have much lower stamina
> for a school day and aren't afraid to voice their disbelief at having to
> complete work. Simple and routine have become extraordinary.

In addition to misbehavior, the lack of effort and vocal negative attitude exhibited by

some students can lead to frustration, as supported by respondent comments.

One participant expressed this frustration by saying:

> I'm killing myself for these students, and the same level of commitment is
> not being returned in kind. That has led to a feeling of resentment with
> certain students, especially ones that I've made a great time and emotional
> investment in.

Music teachers may be especially prone to these types of feelings, as they are not only

passionate about teaching students, but also the subject matter: music. Due to the

personal and emotional connection musicians can have to music and music learning,

disinterest or a lack of commitment and effort can be especially distressful. The ability to

detach from these types of emotional responses could serve teachers well, however, this

remedy could lead to depersonalization and lower well-being. Instead, music teachers

may benefit from having conversations with students to figure out the catalyst of their

apathy, coming from a place of sympathy and empathy, and hopefully moving forward

with a solution to help engage the student. Fostering positive relationships with students

is the basis for student learning, and, according to Klassen et al. (2012), a crucial factor in

teacher engagement and satisfaction. They examined the relationship between the three

basic psychological needs and levels of engagement and emotional exhaustion, and found that more relatedness, especially with students, leads to greater teacher engagement and lower levels of negative emotions. While music teachers can examine their classroom management practices and reflect on attitudes toward students, organizational-level solutions should be considered to address student behavior.

Though *Increase Administrative Disciplinary Follow-Through for Students* was not as frequently ranked "8- Most Effective Solution" for burnout, it should be noted that this solution was most frequently given a ranking of "6," indicating that participants considered increasing disciplinary follow-through by administration a notable remedy. Several times, participants paired comments regarding a lack of administrative support with expressing that "*having administrators actually deal with behavior would be a huge relief to so many teachers*," indicating that increasing disciplinary follow-through is a category of administrative support. Disruptive behaviors can hinder delivering content; administrators can play an important part in addressing troublesome conduct (Sindberg, 2014). Balance between supporting teacher-given consequences, administering severe consequences as needed, and advocating for emotional and academic supports for struggling students may create a more suitable workplace.

Decreasing class size may also be a viable solution to positively impact student behavior. Though not a solution mentioned in the survey, several participants believe that reducing class size will help relieve teacher pressure and minimize negative student behavior, especially in the general music setting. Smaller class sizes may not be realistic for music teachers, specifically in the ensemble setting. Team teaching or co-teaching may be a solution for music teachers who instruct large groups of students at one time, a

suggestion to lessen the burden of oversized classes also recommended in Krueger

(2000). Even if organizational-level fixes are not possible, numerous participants

reiterated that when teaching students, a positive mindset is a must. Shifting the focus

from educator to student may help produce a change in mindset. One participant

mentioned that by making this shift, he was able to move past the issues negatively

affecting his teaching. He reflected on the joy he now experiences, saying:

> As music teachers, we have the chance to see them [students] for more than a single year, thereby giving us a broader picture of their development and growth. In performance classes, the ensemble gains are shared and amplified by the relationships that are built. The mutual trust that comes from progressing musically is satisfying and life changing, giving weight to the unmistakable evidence of the result of focused discipline toward achieving excellence.

Building relationships with students is the cornerstone of teaching. Fostering positive

relationships with all students can be impactful for both pupil and teacher, creating a

positive and engaging classroom environment, even when organizational-level issues

exist.

### *Tangible Rewards: "…Don't Mean Squat"*

Unfortunately, administration frequently show teachers "support" through

tangible rewards, such as getting to wear jeans to school. *Increase in Tangible Rewards*

*Such as Jeans Day* was the lowest ranked solution to burnout, with over three-quarters of

participants selecting "1-Least Effective Solution" to music teacher burnout. This is

unsurprising considering musicians may have a great sense of intrinsic motivation due to

the nature of our art. Countless hours are spent practicing our craft, with the reward

typically being a feeling of accomplishment, performing at a high level, and creating

beautiful music with fellow musicians generating a sense of camaraderie and relatedness.

Physical rewards do not typically help music teachers in their quest to share their passion for music with their students. It should be noted that participants did rank *Raise Educator Salaries* somewhat evenly between "8- Most Effective Solution" and "2," indicating that for some participants, increasing salaries may help increase feelings of value and support. As one participant mentioned, "*The job is stressful regardless of salary, but a high stress job can be a lot more palatable with a bigger paycheck.*" Administrators would do well to survey their staff to discover "rewards" that are meaningful, or ways administrators can help improve the work environment.

**Pervasiveness: "I'm Afraid We Are Approaching a Breaking Point System-Wide"**

Results from the survey indicate that stress among music teachers leading to increased emotional exhaustion, is increasing and pervasive. As there are multiple factors involved in experiencing burnout, a multi-faceted approach may be necessary to prevent or alleviate burnout symptoms. On a personal level, developing emotional regulation skills such as coping and stress management strategies, and creating a better work-life balance could be beneficial in alleviating burnout symptoms (Maslach et al., 2001; Maslach & Leiter, 2016, 2017; Mulyani et al., 2021; Nápoles, 2022). Having a strong support system amongst colleagues, investing in positive relationships with students, being prepared and organized, eating well, getting enough sleep, exercising, and finding hobbies outside of the classroom may alleviate symptoms of burnout. While teachers have more control over their personal strategies to cope with burnout and boost their engagement, they have far less control over organizational-level ways to reduce burnout.

Although burnout is an individually experienced phenomenon, extant literature suggests a variety of ways that organizational structures should change to alleviate

burnout. Since higher levels of burnout were reported in younger teachers, having supports geared to newer teachers may be beneficial in preventing burnout. Meaningful induction programs aimed at aiding the transition from student to educator and facilitating a supportive mentor program are two beneficial supports (Hultell et al., 2013; Krueger, 2000; Nápoles, 2022). If young teachers feel supported and like they have the tools to succeed, they may be more likely to feel less overwhelmed.

While offering this kind of support is beneficial in the short-term, one of the most referenced methods to mediate burnout is to reduce the workload and responsibilities placed on employees and increase resources and supports (Demerouti et al., 2001; Gordon 1997; Gordon, 2000; Hamann et al., 1987; Hartsel, 2016; Nápoles, 2022; Scheib, 2003). Participants ranking *Unmanageable Workload* as the leading cause implies that increased job responsibilities with not enough time or resources to meet the demands placed upon them are draining music teachers. Music teachers who travel to multiple schools or teach multiple content areas should be especially considered. Decreasing workload expectations of music teachers by hiring additional staff should be heavily considered. The demands of extracurricular obligations should also be examined. As one music teacher suggests:

> There needs to be a better life balance for music educators to have longevity in their careers. Society views working to the point of exhaustion as a badge of honor and we need to work to change that ideal. It is okay to say no and to do less and not to make the music education career your entire life. Devoting 60-80 hours to the job a week is not sustainable or realistic.

Indeed, societal views on work may need to be examined to produce healthier, happier working citizens. School districts would do well to examine the pressures placed on

music teachers. As participants frequently referenced their disappointment in the lack of administrative support offered to them and their music programs, administrators should evaluate their perceptions of music in schools and reassess the supports being offered. This could include assessing the number of faculty in the music department, reviewing duties placed on individuals, increasing positive awareness of music programs, listening and being open to concerns of music teachers who know their programs best, and letting music teachers run their programs, as they know what is required to be successful. Addressing student behaviors and following through on consequences should also be heavily considered. Additional proposals to address burnout supported by teachers include raising salaries to match the level of work and effort, providing additional mental health and behavioral supports for students, reducing paperwork requirements, and reducing standardized testing (Walker, 2022). School districts would also be wise to consider the burdens placed on administrators, as they also have a plethora of responsibilities to manage. As one participant put it, "*the public education system is evolving from simply educating the young to fixing families through education*," a great task to accomplish. With such a great undertaking, educators should feel supported at the district, community, and state levels.

Unfortunately, the results of this study do not imply that music teachers feel this way, which can affect teacher morale and behavior. Several participants mentioned that the pessimism of their colleagues caused the most negative effects. Some music teachers are able to recognize and separate what things you can affect from those you cannot, which can make a difference in attitude and outlook. However, it would be beneficial to provide supports for teachers who are experiencing burnout. As one participant

articulated, "*It is very discouraging to love teaching music so much but feel angry that my job is monopolizing my life…It's very real and difficult to talk about without feelings of guilt.*" Various solutions are in place to resolve academic and behavioral issues for students, but few, if any, are available that effectively address teacher burnout. Without additional organizational and personal supports for teachers, the problem of burnout may only get worse, causing teacher attrition. Another participant remarked that his current workload is beating him down and how it is affecting his longevity, saying "*I will retire earlier than I expected to- I want to leave powerful and positive and I cannot sustain that level much longer.*" If the issue of music teacher burnout is left unchecked, teacher shortages could increase even further, putting the state of music education for some schools in jeopardy. As evidenced by one participant stating, "*I do not advocate teaching as a profession at this point,*" the burnout experienced by music teachers must be addressed. Music education must continue to look appealing to those interested in studying music to create a sustainable workforce, but with the frequent reports of being overworked, undervalued, and unsupported, fewer music teachers may enter the field. Music teacher burnout must be taken seriously and continue to be studied. Supports must be provided to help alleviate music teacher burnout and ensure that quality music education exists for all.

**Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research**

While the study provided insight into music teachers' experience with burnout, several limitations need to be considered. One limitation of this study occurs in the response scales for participants. Some participants noted that they had a difficult time using the frequency scale on the MBI-ES, as feelings of burnout can change back and

forth many times in just one class. A few participants felt like some of the questions were yes/no questions, or "to what degree" questions as well. It would be beneficial to explore various other burnout inventories that may ameliorate and address this issue. Various participants had difficulty ranking causes of and solutions to burnout, as they felt like many causes and solutions were equally important or intertwined. This is logical; the elements of the profession are necessarily interconnected, particularly because teaching has both academic and social components. Although one goal of the study was to rank and order causes of and solutions to burnout, if this study is to be replicated, it may be beneficial to use a Likert-type scale for each cause and solution instead of rank order. An additional limitation rests in sampling procedures. Participants were recruited from membership in the Pennsylvania Music Educators Association (PMEA) which represents a select portion of the music educator population in the Commonwealth. On the other hand, it might be assumed that those who maintain PMEA membership are possibly predisposed to being highly committed to the profession. If this speculation is accurate, findings can be considered that much more impactful.

With feelings of burnout becoming more pervasive in music educators, there is a need for future research. Possibilities for future research may include examining if specific personality traits according to demographic variables correlate to increased levels of burnout. This may help educators recognize burnout-prone attributes they possess to take proactive steps to prevent burnout. Additionally, there may be benefits to studying specific music positions at specific levels, to help identify unique stresses in those roles, which could aid in uncovering distinctive supports catered to that position. Another suggestion for future research includes expanding the research population to include

private school educators and educators from a variety of regions. In the current study, participant race/ethnicity was far more homogenous than diverse, perhaps due to the region sampled, and should be addressed in future research. Increasing the sample size and broadening the eligibility criteria may help provide more robust and generalizable data on the topic of music educators and their relationship to burnout.

# CHAPTER 5

## CONCLUSION

This study sought to identify which dimensions of burnout affect veteran Pennsylvania music educators, investigate what factors are currently contributing to veteran music teacher burnout, seek recommendations on how to remedy or alleviate symptoms of burnout, and uncover any relationships between burnout and demographic information. Results indicated that participants, as a whole, are experiencing heightened levels of emotional exhaustion, but a lower sense of depersonalization and greater feelings of personal accomplishment compared to normative scores. Females, participants aged 20-29 years, and those with 5-10 years of experience scored significantly higher in *emotional exhaustion*. Those who taught at multiple levels, choir teachers, and those who taught in multiple music specializations scored higher in *emotional exhaustion*, though the differences were not statistically significant. Respondents aged 61 and older and those with 31 or more years of experience reported the lowest average scores in *emotional exhaustion* and *depersonalization* and the highest in *personal accomplishment*, indicating the lowest feelings of burnout among participants. Findings also indicate that participants report that having an *Unmanageable Workload* is the greatest source of burnout, followed by *Student Behavioral Issues* and a *Lack of Administrative Support*. Top-ranked solutions to help alleviate feelings of burnout include: *Reduce Teaching Responsibilities/Classes*, *Hire More Teachers/Support Staff*, and *Increase Administrative Support for Teachers*.

Participants expressed a variety of frustrations relating to their positions, suggesting that a comprehensive approach to relieve factors increasing stress and feelings of burnout is necessary. At the teacher level, music teachers may benefit from examining

classroom management strategies, building relationships with students and colleagues, creating coping mechanisms to help alleviate stress, and evaluating one's mindset to recognize what things music teachers can affect. However, respondents indicated that it was often external factors beyond their control causing them increased stress and burnout, implying that organizational-level changes must be made. As results suggest that those earlier in their career may be experiencing heightened levels of stress compared to those nearing the end of their careers, effective mentor programs may be beneficial to novice teachers. To help minimize the overextension reported by many music teachers, administration should consider hiring additional music staff to reduce the amount of job responsibilities allocated to one person. Numerous music teachers also commented on the lack of perceived support from administration. These respondents felt as though their administration did not care about their music program, promote a positive image in the community, understand or listen to necessities for running a successful music program, and lacked leadership qualities. Many were often left out of important decisions affecting the music department, did not have assistance or backing when handling negative student behavior, and felt undervalued due to the content they teach. Recommendations for administration to assist music teachers include: examine personal attitudes or biases towards music as a content area, address negative student behavior, bolster the music program in schools and communities, consider increasing the music department budget if possible and/or needed, and openly listen to and take seriously the concerns of music teachers who know their programs best. Administration would do well to evaluate the level of support offered to music teachers.

For the study participants and perhaps more broadly, teacher burnout presents a very real crisis in education for both teachers and students. Not only are teachers being worn down mentally and physically to meet the ever-growing demands of the public school system, but students also become victims of teacher burnout. Those being affected by burnout, as well as individuals in a supervisory role, would benefit from understanding the causes, identification, and especially mitigation of burnout to proactively protect themselves and their employees from this syndrome. The results of this study suggest that meaningful changes in workload, support, and student behaviors need to be made to help alleviate symptoms of burnout, remedy the mass exodus of educators, and ensure quality music education for future generations.

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## APPENDIX A

## INITIAL RECRUITMENT EMAIL

**Email #1:** Greetings, fellow music educator!

My name is Kayla Noll, and I teach elementary band, general music, and Gifted in the Columbia Borough School District in Columbia, PA. I am also a graduate music student and Master of Music Education candidate at Temple University in Philadelphia. I am reaching out to you in hopes that you would be willing to participate in my graduate thesis research project. I am conducting a study examining burnout in veteran Pennsylvania music teachers. *If you have never been a certified music teacher or have never taught music in a Pennsylvania public school for five or more years, please do not complete the survey.* This survey is only intended for music-certified professionals who currently teach or have taught music for five or more years in the Pennsylvania public school system.

Your participation would include taking a brief 44-item survey that would take approximately 20 minutes to complete. The questions pertain to feelings of burnout, what has caused these feelings, and perceived solutions that would help alleviate these feelings. Your responses would be anonymous. There is no compensation provided and you may decide to discontinue participation at any time during the survey without penalty. Your input will help provide a valuable perspective into current music teachers' experiences with burnout, what may be causing feelings of burnout, and perceived solutions to alleviate burnout. If you are willing to participate in this study and give your consent to do so, please click on the link below. The link will take you to a survey on Google Forms where you can complete the survey.

Survey Link:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeveVu6XZnYkagBnr9uwZd7blLUYsAZaJGsm2PG4Cs847NIQg/viewform?usp=sf_link

Over the course of the next four weeks, I will be sending out one additional follow-up email to remind you to complete the survey. I appreciate all of you who have taken the time to read this email, and hope that you will consider completing the survey for my research project. I have chosen to research burnout in music teachers because of my personal experiences as a music teacher as well as hearing peers' experiences. It is my hope that this research will shed light on the feelings of demand and burnout that music educators may be experiencing, and that the results may be used as an advocacy tool. Should you have any questions or concerns about this research study or your participation, please do not hesitate to contact me at the email address or phone number below. Thank you for your time and willingness to contribute to the field of music education.

Sincerely,

Kayla Noll

Master of Music Education Student

Boyer College of Music & Dance, Temple University

kayla.noll@temple.edu

717-468-6222

# APPENDIX B

# FINAL RECRUITMENT EMAIL

**Email #2:** Greetings, fellow music educator!

My name is Kayla Noll, and I teach elementary band, general music, and Gifted in the Columbia Borough School District in Columbia, PA. I am also a graduate music student and Master of Music Education candidate at Temple University in Philadelphia. You received an email from me three weeks ago requesting your participation in my graduate thesis research project. I greatly appreciate those of you who have already filled out and submitted the survey. Your participation will be incredibly valuable to my research.

If you have not filled out the survey but are still interested in participating, there is one week to do so. As a reminder, I am conducting a study examining burnout in veteran Pennsylvania music teachers. This survey is only intended for music-certified professionals who currently teach or have taught music for five or more years in the Pennsylvania public school system. Your participation would include taking a brief 44-item survey that would take approximately 20 minutes to complete. The questions pertain to feelings of burnout, what has caused these feelings, and perceived solutions that would help alleviate these feelings. Your responses would be anonymous. There is no compensation provided and you may decide to discontinue participation at any time during the survey without penalty. Your input will help provide a valuable perspective into current music teachers' experiences with burnout, what may be causing feelings of burnout, and perceived solutions to alleviate burnout.

If you are willing to participate in this study and give your consent to do so, please click on the link below. The link will take you to a survey on Google Forms where you can complete the survey.

Survey Link:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeveVu6XZnYkagBnr9uwZd7blLUYsAZaJGsm2PG4Cs847NIQg/viewform?usp=sf_link

I appreciate all of you who have taken the time to read this email, and hope that you will consider completing the survey for my research project. I have chosen to research burnout in music teachers because of my personal experiences as a music teacher as well as hearing peers' experiences. It is my hope that this research will shed light on the feelings of demand and burnout that music educators may be experiencing, and that the results may be used as an advocacy tool. Should you have any questions or concerns about this research study or your participation, please do not hesitate to contact me at the email or phone number below. Thank you for your time and willingness to contribute to the field of music education.

Sincerely,

Kayla Noll

Master of Music Education Student

Boyer College of Music & Dance, Temple University

kayla.noll@temple.edu

717-468-6222

**APPENDIX C**

**PARTICIPANT SURVEY**

**Title:** Burnout in Veteran Pennsylvania Music Educators: Symptoms, Causes, and Perceived Solutions

**Protocol No.:** 31051

**Principal Investigator:** Dr. Deborah Confredo
Professor of Music Education
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609-680-0536

**Student Investigator:** Kayla Noll
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Boyer College of Music & Dance, Temple University
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717-468-6222

**RESEARCH CONSENT**
You are being asked for your consent to take part in a research study. This consent document describes the key information that we believe most people need to decide whether to take part in this research.

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**<u>Why am I being invited to participate in this research?</u>**

You have been asked to participate in this study because you are a certified music teacher who is currently teaching or have taught music in the Pennsylvania public school system for five or more years. The purpose of this mixed methods study is to examine current or previous feelings of music teacher burnout, what caused those feelings, and perceived solutions that would help alleviate feelings of burnout.

**<u>How long will I be in this research?</u>**

We expect that your taking part in this research will last approximately 20 minutes. Your participation in the study ends when you submit the survey.

**<u>What happens to me if I agree to take part in this research?</u>**

If you choose to participate in this research study, you will answer a 44-item survey regarding your own personal experience with teacher burnout. You may take the survey on a device of your choice in the environment of your choice. The survey should take you approximately 20 minutes to thoughtfully complete. If you take part in this research, you will be responsible for completing the survey in a thoughtful and truthful manner.

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Your private information may be shared with individuals and organizations that conduct or watch over this research, including, if applicable:

•The Institutional Review Board (IRB) that reviewed this research
•Temple University

No identifying data will be collected for the survey. The only people who have access to the data will be the investigators. We may publish the results of this research. The data may be shared with other researchers for research that is currently unknown. Data will be stored from the beginning of the study until the study is written and published. After that point, data will be kept (with no identifying information) for 6 years in case it needs to be referenced or utilized again in the future.

**<u>Could being in this research hurt me?</u>**

Risks include the potential risk of breach of confidentiality. You might experience momentary discomfort while reflecting on feelings of burnout. You do not have to answer any questions that make you too uncomfortable. Your participation in this research will be held strictly confidential, however, confidentiality cannot be guaranteed.

**Will being in this study benefit me?**

The most important benefits that you may expect from taking part in this research include examining personal experiences regarding burnout and reflecting what factors might help alleviate your burnout experiences. Possible benefits to others include a better understanding of ways that burnout is affecting current music teachers and possible solutions to help alleviate burnout symptoms. You will not be paid for taking part in this research.

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• You are not getting answers from the research team.
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*Do you consent to taking part in this study?*
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**SECTION 2: Eligibility**

1.) Do you currently or have you previously taught in a Pennsylvania public school district?

    a. Yes
    b. No

2.) Do you currently hold or have you previously held a music-teaching certificate?

    a. Yes
    b. No

3.) Have you been teaching music in the Pennsylvania public school system for 5 or more years?

    a. Yes
    b. No


**SECTION 3: Demographic Information**

1.) What is your age?

    a. 20-29 years
    b. 30-39 years
    c. 40-49 years
    d. 50-59 years
    e. 60+ years

2.) To which gender identify do you most identify?

    a. Female
    b. Male
    c. Trans Woman
    d. Trans Man
    e. Non-Binary
    f. Genderqueer
    g. Prefer Not to Answer
    h. Other

3.) Which category best describes you?

    a. White/Caucasian
    b. Black or African American
    c. Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish
    d. Asian
    e. Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
    f. Native American or Native Alaskan
    g. Middle Easter or North African
    h. Multi-Racial or Multi-Ethnic
    i. Prefer Not to Answer

4.) How many years of teaching experience do you have?

    a. 5-10 years
    b. 11-20 years
    c. 21-30 years
    d. 31+ years

5.) What grade level or levels do you teach?

      a. Elementary School
      b. Middle School
      c. High School
      d. Collegiate
      e. Multiple Levels

6.) In what content areas do you or did you teach?

      a. Band
      b. Orchestra
      c. Choir
      d. General Music
      e. Music Electives
      f. Non-Music Courses
      g. Two Different Content Areas
      h. Three or More Different Content Areas

Please feel free to provide any additional details explaining or expanding upon your response. (Optional)

## SECTION 4: Survey of Job-Related Attitudes

MBI-Educators Survey - MBI-ES: Copyright © 1986 Christina Maslach, Susan E. Jackson & Richard L. Schwab. All rights reserved in all media. Published by Mind Garden, Inc. www.mindgarden.com. For use by Kayla Noll only. Received from Mind Garden, Inc. on April 11, 2023.

7.) On the following page are 22 statements of job-related feelings. Please read each statement carefully and decide if you ever feel this way about *your* job. If you have *never* had this feeling, select the number "0" (zero). If you have had this feeling, indicate *how often* you feel it by selecting the number (from 1 to 6) that best describes how frequently you feel that way.

***Sample Items:***

1.) I feel emotionally drained from my work.

19.) I have accomplished many worthwhile things in this job.

15.) I don't really care what happens to some students.

Please feel free to provide any additional details explaining or expanding upon your response. (Optional)

**SECTION 5: Perceived Causes of Burnout**

8.) What do you believe is causing your feelings of burnout? Please rank what you believe is causing your feelings of burnout with 8 being the most significant cause and 1 being the least significant cause.

> 1.) Unmanageable Workload
> 2.) Student Behavioral Issues
> 3.) Lack of Autonomy or Job Control
> 4.) Lack of Administrative/Supervisor Support
> 5.) Low Salary
> 6.) Inadequate Materials
> 7.) Unsafe Work Environment
> 8.) Low Morale

Please feel free to provide any additional details explaining or expanding upon your response. (Optional)

**SECTION 6: Perceived Solutions to Burnout**

9.) What do you believe would help alleviate your feelings of burnout? Please rank what you believe would help alleviate your feelings of burnout with 8 being the most effective solution and 1 being the least effective solution.

> 1.) Raise Educator Salaries
> 2.) Reduce Teaching Responsibilities/Classes
> 3.) Increase Administrative Disciplinary Follow Through for Students
> 4.) Hire More Teachers/Support Staff
> 5.) Provide Additional Academic and/or Emotional Supports for Students
> 6.) Increase Administrative Support for Teachers
> 7.) Increase Inclusion in Conversations Relating to Your Job
> 8.) Increase in Tangible Rewards Such as Jeans Day

Please feel free to provide any additional details explaining or expanding upon your response. (Optional)

**SECTION 7: Final Comments?**

Please feel free to leave any additional comments. (Optional)

# CONSENT FORM

**Title:** Burnout in Veteran Pennsylvania Music Educators:
Symptoms, Causes, and Perceived Solutions

**Protocol No.:** 31051

**Principal Investigator:** Dr. Deborah Confredo
Professor of Music Education
Boyer College of Music & Dance, Temple University
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609-680-0536

**Student Investigator:** Kayla Noll
Master of Music Education Student
Boyer College of Music & Dance, Temple University
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717-468-6222

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# APPENDIX E

## MASLACH BURNOUT INVENTORY PERMISSION LETTER

# mind garden

**www.mindgarden.com**

To Whom It May Concern,

The above-named person has made a license purchase from Mind Garden, Inc. and has permission to administer the following copyrighted instrument up to that quantity purchased:

**Maslach Burnout Inventory forms: Human Services Survey, Human Services Survey for Medical Personnel, Educators Survey, General Survey, or General Survey for Students.**

The license holder has permission to administer the complete instrument in their research, however, only three sample items from this instrument as specified below may be included in the research write-up, thesis, or dissertation. Any other use must receive prior written permission from Mind Garden. The entire instrument form may not be included or reproduced at any time in any other published material. Please understand that disclosing more than we have authorized will compromise the integrity and value of the test.

**Citation of the instrument must include the applicable copyright statement listed below. Sample Items:**

**MBI - Human Services Survey - MBI-HSS**:
> I feel emotionally drained from my work.
> I have accomplished many worthwhile things in this job.
> I don't really care what happens to some recipients.

**MBI - Human Services Survey for Medical Personnel - MBI-HSS (MP)**:

> I feel emotionally drained from my work.
> I have accomplished many worthwhile things in this job.
> I don't really care what happens to some patients.

**MBI - Educators Survey - MBI-ES**:

> I feel emotionally drained from my work.
> I have accomplished many worthwhile things in this job.
> I don't really care what happens to some students.

**MBI - General Survey - MBI-GS**:

> I feel emotionally drained from my work.
> In my opinion, I am good at my job.
> I doubt the significance of my work.

**MBI - General Survey for Students - MBI-GS (S)**:

> I feel emotionally drained by my studies.
> In my opinion, I am a good student.
> I doubt the significance of my studies.

Sincerely,

Robert Most

Mind Garden, Inc.
www.mindgarden.coma