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Dissertation

ASSESSING THE INITIAL IMPACT OF THE MICHIGAN MERIT CURRICULUM OF 2006 ON MUSIC IN HIGH SCHOOLS: A SURVEY OF PUBLIC SCHOOL IMPLEMENTATION OF NEW HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

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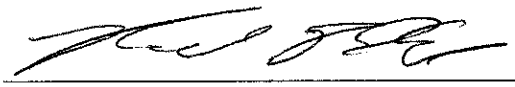
First Reader 

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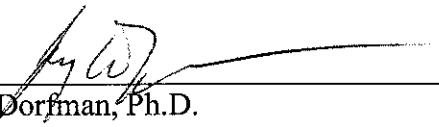
Second Reader 

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Dedication

This project is dedicated to my life partner who helped me enormously, not only with this dissertation but with everything I have undertaken in the last 45 years: my wife Linda.

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"Accende lumen sensibus"

from *Veni, Creator Spiritus* by Rabanus Maurus (776−856)

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ABSTRACT

With the passage of the Michigan Merit Curriculum (MMC) in 2006, the state of Michigan went from being among the states with the fewest state-mandated high school graduation requirements, with a half credit of civics being the sole requirement, to among the states with the most comprehensive requirements in the nation. The new requirements include 4 years each of English and math, 3 years each of science and social science, 2 years of world language, and 1 year each of health/physical education and visual, performing, or applied arts. The purpose of this study was to discover the initial effects of the MMC on high schools in Michigan, including what changes were made to music programs as a result of the MMC, and what ways students were expected to fulfill the MMC's visual, performing, or applied arts requirement. Administrators in each of the public high schools and public school academies in the state of Michigan (the schools affected by the MMC) were surveyed to ascertain what their schools had been doing regarding their schools and their existing high school music programs as a result of the

MMC, with focus on the new requirement for visual, performing, or applied arts. Respondents described their schools and the music classes in their schools before and after implementation of the MMC, including changes made as a result of the new requirement for visual, performing, or applied arts. Many music educators in Michigan thought the MMC would hurt music programs and potentially eliminate programs and jobs. Comparison of data from before and after implementation of the MMC showed that the percentage of students enrolled in music classes had increased, music staffing had remained constant, and schools were making changes that allowed students to keep music classes in their curriculum. This study may inform future decisions affecting music programs in public high schools by providing a foundation of empirical evidence.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

There is a perception among some that American high school students are underperforming compared to students in other countries, including India, Japan, Korea, and China (Fuligni & Stevenson, 1995). Students from American high schools are perceived as playing catch-up with students who received their secondary education in an Eastern country, not only in college but in the workplace as well (Stevenson et al., 1990). Federal, state, and local policymakers are looking for ways to correct these problems and produce better students. Michigan, for example, has instituted the Michigan Merit Curriculum (MMC), which mandates increased high school graduation requirements for all public high school students and the standardization of course content and course assessment. This dissertation is an examination of the initial implementation of the MMC.

Background

There are numerous potential consequences of allowing the educational deficiencies stated above to continue. States, in increasing numbers, are finding the strengthening and increasing of high school graduation requirements to be a viable solution to these problems. In Michigan, this solution culminated in the adoption of the Michigan Merit Curriculum for all public high school students starting in 2006.

Consequences of an Inadequate Education

A survey conducted for the Educational Testing Service (ETS) by Hart Research Associates and The Winston Group (2006) found that Americans had become concerned

that their children were graduating from high school without the knowledge and skills necessary to pursue post-secondary education or to compete in a globally competitive, technology-driven job market. This survey of parents, high school students, school administrators, teachers, and business and governmental leaders indicated that 71% of Americans believed the nation's high schools were failing to prepare graduates to compete in the global job market. Furthermore, 80% of adults and 84% of students felt that students were being passed through school without the skills they needed for college or work. Seventy-six percent believed that if students did not improve their skills in math and science, they might be the first U.S. generation worse off than their parents; consequently, 87% favored more academically rigorous standards for high schools with greater emphasis on college preparatory courses.

Poor education, or lack of education, could have a lasting effect on students' future lives, and could have a devastating impact on the future of the United States as a world leader (Ball, 1998). Not only would Americans be unable to compete adequately for jobs in the world job market, but there could be a severely negative result in the American economy as well (Rouse, 2005).

In a speech to the Equity Symposium at Columbia University, entitled "The Social Costs of Inadequate Education," Rouse (2005) suggested that the achievement gap in education directly translated into a gap in economic earning potential, a gap which had been increasing dramatically over the last 40 years. In 1964, a high school dropout earned 64 cents for every dollar earned by a person with at least a high school diploma. In 2004 this figure dropped to 37 cents compared to a person with more education. The value of

more education was further shown by the statistic that individuals' earnings increased by 11% for each year of completed schooling. According to Rouse (2005), high school dropouts typically lacked the education to meet their potential in the job market, which was reflected in their compensation. As a result of lower compensation, they contributed taxes of only one-half the amount that persons with a high school diploma did and one-third of the amount that persons with post-high school education did.

Strengthening Graduation Requirements

One of the solutions to these problems that states have put forth in the last decade or so is the strengthening of high school graduation requirements. In a survey conducted by ACT (formerly American College Testing) (2007) that included responses from more than 35,000 teachers, 65% of post-secondary instructors responded that their state's standards prepared students poorly or very poorly for college-level work. Recommended action steps for policymakers included:

1. Aligning the high school curriculum with post-secondary expectations.
2. Focusing state standards on the essentials for college and work readiness.
3. Defining course standards.
4. Establishing core requirements for high school graduation (p. 9).

The Michigan Merit Curriculum

Michigan is undergoing a transition from a 20th century economy and workforce, which was based on the automotive industry, to one that is designed for the requirements of the 21st century (Granholm, 2010). Much of the 20th century automotive-based

workforce consisted of persons with, at most, a high school diploma. For generations workers were able to acquire and retain relatively high paying jobs with a low level of education and maintain a good middle-class standard of living. In the last decade, the availability of high paying jobs that could be had with a low level of education has changed with massive layoffs, increased competition from foreign automobile makers, and the increasing technical demands made of the average automotive line-worker. The shrinking of the automotive workforce was paralleled by a corresponding shrinkage in the state's tax base. To counteract these losses, Michigan lawmakers determined that there was a need to transform the state's workforce into a more competitive group with the ability to compete both nationally and worldwide.

Achieving these goals was one of the aims of the change that occurred in 2006 with the passage of the Michigan Merit Curriculum. The actions recommended by the ACT (2006) report line up precisely with the MMC, resulting in a fundamental shift in the high school graduation requirements for public school students in Michigan. This law changed the responsibility for determining public high school graduation requirements from the local level to the state level. Whereas previously local boards of education determined graduation requirements, now the state legislature determined uniform graduation requirements for all public high schools. Most, if not all, of the new required courses were already being taught in the majority of Michigan's public schools to some of their students, mainly those in college preparatory curriculum tracks (Michigan Department of Education [MDE], 2005a). With the new rules, classes previously offered

primarily to students in a college preparatory curriculum were now required of all students.

Prior to the adoption of the MMC, Michigan's only state-mandated high school graduation requirement was a one-semester course in civics (Michigan compiled laws 380.1166 and 380.1502), as shown in Appendix A. Local boards of education instituted their own graduation requirements in addition to the state-mandated civics course; they still do so, only now in addition to the state-mandated MMC.

The MMC was intended, in part, to increase students' readiness for college (Flanagan, 2005a). In the decade between 1994 and 2004, Michigan was ranked among the worst states in the Midwest in preparing students for post-secondary education, according to The National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education (2004). A major factor contributing to this low ranking was the small percentage of students taking upper-level math and science courses. Only 40% of students took at least one upper-level math course, and just 27% of students took at least one upper-level science course. Jim Ballard, executive director of the Michigan Association of Secondary School Principals (MASSP) noted that in 2007, when compared to other states, Michigan was near the top in percentage of high school students going on to college, but at the bottom in percentage of those students actually graduating from college. In an interview, Ballard said, "It's not how many kids you send to college, but how many kids were college ready when they got there" (Huisingh, 2007).

Prior to the MMC, course content and course assessment varied from school to school, as did graduation requirements. For example, each school determined the exact

content of its Algebra I course, as well as how the students would be assessed in that course. As a result, students in one school may have achieved only the bare rudiments of algebra by the end of the course, while students in another school may have mastered the rudiments of algebra and were adequately prepared for an advanced algebra course. Such lack of uniformity across schools in course content and course assessment became one of the focal points of the MMC.

Origins of the Michigan Merit Curriculum.

In 2004, Michigan Governor Jennifer Granholm created the Lt. Governor's Commission on Higher Education & Economic Growth. Commonly known as the Cherry Commission, it was charged with "identifying strategies to double the number of Michigan residents with degrees and post-secondary credentials of value within 10 years" (Cherry Commission, 2004, p. i). The commission was also to recommend to the governor changes that would "build a dynamic workforce of employees who have the talents and skills needed for success in the 21st century economy" (p. 47). The Commission's ultimate response was the formulation of the MMC, which mandated stricter graduation requirements for all Michigan public high school students and uniform course content and assessment across schools. Hopefully, the MMC would result in students' being more readily able to pursue post-secondary education. Mark C. Thomas, a member of the Cherry Commission, stated that "the MMC's aim was to standardize the *what* among the public school districts in the State of Michigan" (personal communication, September 2, 2008). He further explained that the MMC's scope

included identifying required courses as well as standardizing course content and course assessments across schools.

Achieve, Inc. and their American Diploma Project (ADP) has played a major role in the reform of state high school graduation requirements across the United States. Created in 1996 by the nation's governors (including then Michigan Governor John Engler) and corporate leaders, Achieve is an independent, bipartisan, non-profit education reform organization based in Washington, D.C. that helps states raise academic standards and graduation requirements, improve assessments, and strengthen accountability (Achieve, 2008). The Cherry Commission was "influenced by the work of Achieve" when they formulated the proposed graduation requirements of the MMC (Walker, 2006, p. 2). According to Achieve (2008), 32 states, who educate three-quarters of the nation's school children (including Michigan), have instituted the ADP's espoused curriculum recommendations.

After reviewing research from Achieve and a number of other state's experiences, including Arkansas, Indiana, Massachusetts, Oregon, and Rhode Island, the Cherry Commission formulated what became known as the Michigan Merit Curriculum. In proposing the MMC to the State Board of Education, State Superintendent Flanagan cited the following, among others, as reasons necessitating the new graduation requirements:

1. Only 32% of students who graduate were mastering basic literacy skills and completing coursework necessary to succeed in a four-year college.
2. Over 40% of post-secondary students were taking remedial courses.

3. Three-quarters of students who require remediation in reading and math were failing to earn degrees (Flanagan, 2005a, p. 2).

One of the guiding principles Superintendent Flanagan put forth in support of the MMC's implementation was that "all Michigan high school students, regardless of where they live, deserve to learn a core of knowledge and skills that reflect high expectations and create equitable opportunities" (p. 4).

In devising the proposed requirements, the commission took note of national tendencies in key curriculum areas, as shown in Table 1 (Walker, 2006). In addition to following the lead of Achieve, Inc. and the model states, the commission also considered the fact that these courses were the ones most often listed as prerequisites for post-secondary degree programs (MDE, 2006d, p. 7).

Table 1

Graduation Requirements in Other States

Class area	Summary
English	Almost all states required 4 years of English. Only 6 states had a 3 year requirement.
Math	Only 2 states, Alabama and South Carolina, required 4 years of math. 25 states required 3 years, and 16 required 2 years.
Science	Only 2 states, Alabama and North Dakota, required 4 years of science. 20 states required 3 credits, and 20 states required 2 credits. Illinois required 1 science credit.
Arts	27 states required some participation in the arts.
Physical Education	32 states had a physical education requirement.
World Languages	New Jersey required 1 credit in a world language. Some states required students to take either world language or an alternative course.

The MMC was subsequently recommended to and unanimously approved by the State Board of Education on December 15, 2005 (Michigan Legislature, 2006, p. 9), and became law on April 20, 2006 (Public Acts 123 and 124 of 2006 amending section 1276a of PA 451 of 1976), as shown in Appendices B–D. It mandated new high school graduation requirements and course content expectations and guidelines for Michigan public schools and "transitioned Michigan from a state which had a graduation requirement of only one-half credit in civics to the state with the most comprehensive requirements in the nation" (MDE, 2006e, p. 1). It positioned Michigan among the more than 30 states that had similarly raised their high school graduation requirements to date.

The MMC mandated that every public high school student, beginning with all students entering the eighth grade in 2006 (the class of 2011), successfully complete all of the courses shown in Table 2, with the exception of the requirement for world language, which takes effect for all students entering the third grade in 2006 (the class of 2016). The MMC is applicable to all of Michigan's public high schools. These schools consist of both traditional public high schools and public school academies, otherwise known as charter schools. In addition, "all required courses/credits must be aligned with course/credit content expectations and guidelines developed by Michigan Department of Education" (MDE, 2006c, p.1). As well as developing these expectations and guidelines, the Michigan Department of Education must also develop "subject area assessments to evaluate whether students have met those expectations" (p. 2). Further, a student must complete at least one class in an "online learning experience." The Michigan Department of Education (2008) stated:

> The Michigan Merit Curriculum is crafted around the philosophical belief that all students will need extended learning opportunities for extended learning beyond high school. As the learning skills for college and the workplace have merged, this curriculum will prepare students with the skills and knowledge needed to be successful in our global economy and workplace (p. 2).

Table 2

The Michigan Merit Curriculum's Graduation Requirements

Class	Credits
English	4
Math	4
Science	3
Social Studies	3
World Language	2
Physical Education/Health	1
Visual, Performing, or Applied Arts	1

Critiques of the Michigan Merit Curriculum.

In *Leading Change,* a Michigan Department of Education publication, J. Fitzpatrick (2006) stated, "implementing strategies that promote 21st Century learning skills in Michigan will make the state more competitive and a national leader in workforce development" (p. 3). On the other hand, others in educational circles have voiced concerns about the MMC. Given the current state of the economy in Michigan, the worst in the nation (Granholm, 2010), many view the MMC as containing unfunded mandates (Flanagan, 2005b).

Music educators participating in round-table discussions at the Michigan Music Conference expressed reservations to this researcher about requiring all students to take

Algebra II, whereas before, in most schools, only college preparatory students took this class. In informal conversations with other teachers, those teachers expressed the opinion that they were afraid that music programs and music jobs would suffer as a result of the increased requirement. This new requirement might mean the addition of more highly qualified math teachers to teach the increased numbers of sections of these math courses; those positions would be not be paid for by any increased funding from the state, if those teachers were even available.

Craft (2008) stated that, "principals and superintendents are skeptical that districts can attract and retain an adequate supply of highly qualified [math and science] teachers" (p. 5). In a Michigan State University analysis of the potential ability of Michigan's current within-school teacher supply to meet the requirements of the new demands of the MMC, Keesler (2008) showed "25 percent (223) of schools were potentially undersupplied in FTE teachers in math, 7 percent (64) in English/language arts, 5 percent (41) in science, and 4 percent (39) in social studies" (p. i).

Another area of concern was electives, including music. Some parents and educators were concerned that by increasing the number of academic courses required for graduation for all students, the time available for the scheduling of electives would, of necessity, be reduced. Even though increased academic standards statewide might be viewed by many as educationally beneficial, there was concern about unintended effects for music programs. On the one hand there is now a requirement that every student must take an arts-related class for graduation: Hopefully the effect of this new requirement will be increased student participation in music education. On the other hand every student is

now required to take classes that were previously called college preparatory, whether or not they are academically able to take those classes. Further, the new requirements may force schools to offer more sections of those classes—and hire more teaching staff for them—to the detriment of elective classes, such as music education, since schools may be forced to reduce or eliminate elective classes and/or teachers in order to hire more math and science teachers, resulting in less funding for music programs and fewer opportunities for students to take music classes as a result of increased academic requirements.

The MMC requires 18 credits for high school graduation (when the world language requirement takes effect). A typical school schedule of two semesters per year and six periods per school day provides a student the opportunity to earn 24 credits in four years. This schedule allows for an extra two classes for two years and an extra single class for the other two years (assuming the student does not need to retake any course) beyond the MMC. Table 3 shows a sample student schedule with instrumental music emphasis, provided by the Michigan Department of Education (MDE, 2008, p. 16), showing how the MMC requirements can be met in a six-period schedule with room for music and other electives. Local schools may also have graduation requirements in addition to the MMC. Then a schedule such as shown in Table 3 may restrict some students' ability to take all the courses they want.

Table 3

Sample Student Schedule With Instrumental Music Emphasis

Period	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12
1	English 9	English 10	English 11	English 12
2	Algebra I	Geometry	Algebra II	Math-Related
3	World History	US History	Government/ Economics	Science
4	Biology	Chemistry or Physics	Language Other Than English	Elective
5	Health/PE	Language Other Than English	Elective	Elective
6	Band	Band	Band	Band

Fine arts requirements in Michigan.

Studies cite a public desire for the arts, and music in particular, to be included in the curriculum of the public schools. Reports produced by groups like the Education Commission of the States (2006) have stated that arts education must be a vital part of every child's education. Music education's leading public advocate, MENC: The National Association for Music Education, stated that high schools should require at least 1 year of study in music, visual arts, theatre, or dance for graduation and should encourage additional study in the arts (MENC, 1997). Warshawski and Grams (2001) stated in a survey report on the state of arts education in Michigan schools that a rich and varied range of arts activities was taking place in Michigan schools of every type, size and location. Stevenson (2007) said the implementation of the national standards for music education had ushered in a new era of thinking regarding what constituted an

education in music. Abril and Gault (2008) documented polls showing that an overwhelming number of Americans believed that the arts were a vital and necessary part of the school curriculum. Large-scale studies have focused on arts programs as a whole, with few studies specifically focused on music programs. In spite of this almost overwhelming evidence to the contrary, groups like The Council for Basic Education (2004) of Washington, D.C. showed in their report on the condition of the liberal arts in American public schools that they found evidence of waning commitment to the arts along with strong evidence of growing commitment to mathematics, reading, writing, science, and secondary social studies. The Music For All Foundation (2004) found in its report on the decline of music education in California public schools that during a period when the total California public school student population increased by 5.8% (1999−2004), the percentage of all California public school students involved in music education courses declined by 50%, the largest decline of any subject area.

Prior to the MMC, the Michigan Department of Education (2005a) reported that 43% of schools had a fine arts graduation requirement; this figure is misleading, because, for many schools, the fine arts requirement did not stand alone, but was simply one of several options. Thus, since the fine arts requirement was a part of a cafeteria choice (that is, the student could choose from, for example, a fine arts course, an extra English course, or a foreign language course), many of the students may not, in fact, have graduated with a fine arts experience. Because of this multiple-choice type of requirement, there is to no way to know for sure what percentage of students prior to the MMC were graduating with some sort of fine arts experience, or whether or not they had any at all. However, because

of the MMC's visual, performing, or applied arts (VPAA) requirement there is the possibility that a greater percentage of graduating students will have a fine arts experience. Since an exemption from the VPAA requirement could be granted to selected students at a school's discretion, this number will not be 100%, but it may be higher than before.

The intent of the VPAA requirement is to encourage more students to graduate from high school with a fine arts experience. It is possible that for many the VPAA requirement is not as important as the other requirements of the MMC, but to music educators it is very important. It gives music educators the ability to show, for the first time, that the fine arts are an important enough part of a child's education to be required for graduation statewide.

The Michigan Merit Curriculum was drafted and passed into law with a focus on the need for today's students to have the tools to compete with the rest of the world in the 21st century job market. The MMC places its main emphasis on the core curriculum disciplines of math, science, English language arts, and social sciences. According to Paul Stanifer, executive director of the Michigan School Band and Orchestra Association (MSBOA), the very last component of the MMC to be adopted, after long and arduous discussion and debate, was the single credit requirement in the visual, performing, or applied arts (personal communication, January 26, 2006). From her position as Michigan Department of Education arts consultant, Cardona (2006) reported that the one full credit requirement in the visual, performing, or applied arts was originally a one-half credit requirement in the fine and performing arts. Only after considerable debate was it

increased to a full credit and the applied arts were included. Because it was included only after great insistence by the leading arts advocates in the state, and only as a minimal requirement, one could wonder how much actual importance and value is being attached to the VPAA requirement. MENC past-president Paul Lehman (1989) has said that the main problem with arts education in the schools is that it is not viewed as serious. Arts education is defined so broadly that the authorities who determine school curriculum may not agree on what an arts education is. This lack of ability to define what an arts education should contain is epitomized by the definition of the VPAA requirement as documented by the Michigan Department of Education (2006b). The definition published by the MDE is vague, makes no specific recommendations as to what courses schools might offer in fulfillment of the VPAA requirement, and leaves the determination of those courses completely up to the local boards of education.

Rationale

There has been a duality of thought expressed by Michigan music educators and parents, in round-table and informal discussions with this researcher, concerning the MMC. Although there is excitement about the possibility of the VPAA requirement encouraging more participation in music programs, there is also the consternation of some music educators who have a fear that the MMC will have an adverse effect on their programs, if not their jobs. There are questions being raised by both schools and the public at large. Educators and the public wonder if the MMC will cause students to drop out of school, how schools will pay for the implementation of the MMC, and whether there are enough teachers for the required classes (MDE, 2006d). All of this debate

underlines the uncertainty surrounding implementation of the MMC, but does little to quell the concerns of how the MMC will affect music programs in Michigan high schools. While the debate continues, it is important to take a close look at what schools are actually doing since beginning the implementation of the MMC. Such a study, focusing on the effects of implementation of the MMC on music programs, is important so that future decisions can be made based on a foundation of empirical evidence rather than from simple conjecture. Because the MMC is in its infancy, there have been very few studies done on its effects, and none at all on its effect on music programs.

Implementation of the MMC represents a large change in public high school education in Michigan. The law was implemented after much debate among lawmakers; there has been much subsequent debate among educators about its anticipated positive and negative effects. This study will help determine which side of the debate is closer to actuality, at least initially.

Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to describe the initial implementation of the Michigan Merit Curriculum, including its effects on public high school music programs, from the perspective of survey respondents. The MMC has, to date, been implemented for all current freshmen and sophomore students and will be completely implemented in the entire public high school population of the state in two years. The study will address the following research questions:

1. What are the initial effects of the Michigan Merit Curriculum on public high schools in Michigan, as reported by survey respondents?

2. What are the initial effects of the Michigan Merit Curriculum on public high school music programs, as reported by survey respondents?
3. How do survey respondents anticipate that students will fulfill the visual, performing, or applied arts requirement of the Michigan Merit Curriculum?

Additionally, this study will try to determine how schools are responding to the new one-credit visual, performing, or applied arts graduation requirement. Are they utilizing existing classes in these areas (for example, Band or Art) or are they using the requirement as an opportunity to engage a higher percentage of the student population in new and stimulating approaches or artistic avenues? By looking at the actual classes that schools will offer to students in fulfillment of the VPAA requirement, whether the schools had pre-existing fine arts requirements, and the percentage of students that will be exempt from the VPAA requirement, a clearer picture can be seen of the type of fine arts experience that Michigan public high school students are receiving since the initial inception of the MMC.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Michigan has joined the high school curriculum reform movement, along with dozens of other states, by passing into law the Michigan Merit Curriculum (MMC), which mandates certain public high school graduation requirements of all students. Among these requirements is one credit in the visual, performing, or applied arts. What will be the effect on music programs of (a) increased academic graduation requirements of all students, and (b) requiring a fine arts experience of all students? A major concern of music educators regarding the MMC is that there will be unintended consequences for their music programs and possibly their jobs. I have seen resistance against the MMC on the part of many music educators in a predictable manner. A goal of this research study is to see what changes are being made to schools and music departments as a result of the MMC and make recommendations concerning them. To contextualize this study, literature will be examined that explores (a) curriculum reform in this country and how reforms have related to the fine arts, and (b) the effect of increased graduation requirements, including its effect on the fine arts.

Curriculum Reform and the Fine Arts

Curriculum reform has been an ongoing movement in this country for well over a century. Mirel (2006) pointed out in a discussion of the traditional high school that curriculum reform in this country actually began in the post-Civil War era. Before then, America was mainly rural and agricultural. Students needed an education that allowed them to be able to live their lives competently in a pre-industrial society—an education

mainly limited to the basics of reading, writing, and arithmetic. The industrial revolution of the 19th century changed all of that.

In 1893 the National Education Association (NEA) appointed the Committee of Ten, a panel of eminent educators led by Harvard president Charles W. Eliot. The Committee of Ten issued a report proposing that all public high school students receive a strong, liberal arts education. The proposed curriculum included 4 years of foreign language, 4 years of English, 5 years of science, 4 years of history, and 4 years of mathematics (Brademas, 1966). Mirel (2006) stated that "ever since then we have been fighting about whether our high schools should be college prep for the masses or a cafeteria-style curriculum in which the appetizers and desserts can easily be mistaken for the main course" (p. 14). According to Mirel, the Committee of Ten was also responsible for introducing the concept of electives to American high schools. At the time of the Committee of Ten, less than 5% of American teenagers attended public high school. During the next half-century this percentage rose to nearly 51% (Mirel, 2006).

After World War I, during this dramatic growth in the percentage of American teenagers attending public high school, another NEA group, the Commission on the Reorganization of Secondary Education, issued a report titled *Cardinal Principles of Secondary Education* (Kingsley, 1918). In this report, the Commission on the Reorganization of Secondary Education rejected the fundamental tenets of the Committee of Ten and called for expanded and differentiated high school programs, which it believed would more effectively serve the new and diverse high school student population (Mirel, 2006). Mirel also said that *Cardinal Principles of Secondary*

Education was founded on the assumptions that most new high school students were less intelligent than previous generations of students and that since these new students lacked the intellectual ability, aspirations, and financial means to attend college, it was counterproductive to demand that they follow a college-preparatory program. The proposed solution to these problems was curricular differentiation, a policy that allowed students to follow programs and take courses suited to their interests, abilities, and needs.

By World War II, the percentage of American teenagers attending public high school had risen to more than 73% (Mirel, 2006). In a historical study, Crone (2002) investigated the federal government's influence on education policymaking and its impact on music education curriculum in the New York City public school system from 1950−1999. According to Crone, post-World War II education focused primarily on citizenship and preparing the student for a useful occupation. At the same time, "the arts seemed to enjoy a prominent position in the education renaissance. . . .and the New York City public schools recognized the merit of arts education for all its students" (p. 19). The post-Sputnik movement created a shift in both federal and state policy, due to the national perception of a weak education system, establishing an increased movement away from music and other arts (Crone, 2002).

Wright (1956) compared high school graduation requirements in 1956 to those reported in a 1932 National Survey of Secondary Education, concluding the following:

1. Requirements in mathematics and science had been reduced or eliminated in several states.

2. Foreign language had been eliminated altogether as a requirement for all graduates.
3. More states had reduced their requirement in English from 4 years to 3 years than had increased it from 3 to 4.
4. A "typical" state required 3 or 4 units of English, 1−3 units of social studies, and zero or 1 unit of mathematics and science.
5. Only three states required 1 unit in the fine arts, and only one state required 2 units in the fine arts for graduation from high school.

In 1956, a typical state would require all pupils to receive 1−4 years of instruction in health and physical education, for which it may or may not grant units of credit (Wright, 1956). The typical state would most likely allow eight or more elective subjects within the total 16 Carnegie units that pupils must present for graduation. Wright found that although the trend had been to increase the number of units required for graduation, there was also a trend to weaken specific core academic requirements required by the state in favor of allowing the local schools to decide those requirements for themselves. The weakest state-level requirement of all was for the fine arts.

The federal government's first direct funding of arts in this nation came with the passage of The National Foundation on the Arts and Humanities Act (1965), which helped change the climate of the arts by recognizing them as a viable standard of education (Hodsoll, 1984). This legislation is best known for founding The National Endowment for the Arts. According to Hodsoll, the Reagan appointed fourth chairman of The National Endowment for the Arts, the Endowment's six-part strategy encouraged (a)

longer-term institutional support for arts organizations, (b) projects that advance the art forms or bring a diversity of arts to broader audiences, (c) better management and planning by arts institutions, (d) development of partnership among public arts agencies, (e) greater private support, and (f) linkages among systems of arts information. John Brademas (1966), co-sponsor of The National Foundation on the Arts and Humanities Act, said that The National Foundation on the Arts and Humanities Act, along with the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (1965) provided schools with substantial monies for modern educational equipment and specifically qualified personnel, including artists and musicians. The National Foundation on the Arts and Humanities Act (1965) and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (1965) were reauthorized several times, most recently as part of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (2002).

Curriculum reform increased with the publication of *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform* (The National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). The National Commission on Excellence in Education was set up in 1981 by the secretary of education, Terrel H. Bell, who acted at President Reagan's request. Mr. Bell said that he acted in response to what many considered to be a long and continuing decline in the quality of American education. Gerald Holton, a member of The National Commission on Excellence in Education, said a main goal of the commission was not merely to diagnose the problems but to initiate reform on a grand scale (Holton, 1984). The National Commission on Excellence in Education was charged with examining the nation's educational system, with particular attention to teenage youths, and to make practical recommendations for action to public officials, educators, parents,

and others who set school policies. Holton said further that one of the commission's essential points was "the finding that the quantitative and qualitative indicators of the state of education, particularly at the high school level, are on the whole unacceptably poor," (p. 5) citing the following: (a) twenty million adults in the country were functionally illiterate, (b) thirty-five states allowed graduation from high school with little or no attendance in academic subjects, (c) eighty percent of high school students took no science or mathematics courses after the tenth grade, and (d) only one-third of high school graduates could solve math problems requiring two steps or more.

Holton (1984) quoted Ronald Reagan, who addressed the commission, as saying "since the country spent more on education in recent years only to wind up with less, America should get back to stressing fundamentals in our schools, fundamentals of learning as well as of principles" (p. 4). *A Nation at Risk* recommended that high school students should take 4 years of English, 3 years of mathematics, 3 years of science, 3 years of social studies, half a year of computer science, and, for the college-bound, at least 2 years of a foreign language, building on earlier courses taken in elementary school. Complementary studies were also recommended in the fine arts, the performing arts, and other subjects, provided the basics were accommodated.

Graham (2002) stated that the response to *A Nation at Risk* was about "making schools more effective in enhancing children's acquisition of academic subject matter" (p. 257). According to Graham, the principal reasons for the reform engendered by the publication of *A Nation at Risk* was (a) American business leadership's concern with competitiveness during the economic slump of the 1970s and early 1980s; (b) public

recognition of the changing nature of work skills and the belief that schools were not preparing students adequately for these jobs; (c) public concern with the competence of teachers to prepare students for the new requirements; (d) public awareness of the disparities in academic achievement among different racial, ethnic, and immigrant groups with allied concern for the consequences of these differences for the democracy; and (e) pressure from parents to get the best possible education for their own children.

According to Zeller (1984), *A Nation at Risk* maintained that one cause of the nation's educational decline was the "cafeteria-style curriculum" that allowed students to pursue a diffuse and unchallenging course of study, course content, amount of homework, poor quality textbooks, and minimum competency requirements. Zeller further maintained that many arts educators had reasons to fear this report saying, "the be-creative-do-your-own-thing-macrame-refrigerator-art-marching-band-approach to art education cannot measure up to the recommendations for adoption of more rigorous and measurable standards" (p. 6). Zeller also stated that *A Nation at Risk* should not be viewed as a threat to fine arts education but rather as an opportunity for a new beginning for arts programs: "The currently widespread process/product/performance approach to the arts will either have to undergo fundamental and radical changes or face continued, and often justifiable, cuts in staff and programatic [*sic*] funding" (pp. 7−8).

Approaching the end of the 20th century, the elementary and secondary education system in the United States was large, with over 40 million students and more than 80 thousand schools (U.S. Department of Education, 1995). Curriculum reform accelerated for today's schools with The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (2002). When the first

class to complete the Michigan Merit Curriculum graduates in 2011, NCLB—if still in effect—will be nearly a decade old. This massive school reform act has had a profound impact on school curriculum, and not always for the good, especially for subject areas such as music education (McMurrer, 2007).

The Center on Education Policy (CEP) in Washington, D.C. conducted a five-year study of curriculum and instructional time since the enactment of NCLB (McMurrer, 2007). McMurrer examined whether districts and schools had spent more time on reading and math—the two subjects tested for accountability under NCLB—and less time on subjects that were not the focus of federal accountability. McMurrer also looked at whether districts changed the curriculum within subjects to emphasize materials covered on the tests. With its emphasis on testing and accountability in areas such as math and reading, NCLB has caused many schools to change curriculum focus to the detriment of music education (McMurrer, 2007). Through school district surveys and district case study interviews, McMurrer (2007) found that nearly two-thirds of elementary schools had increased time for tested subjects (English Language Arts and/or math) and reduced time for other subjects such as music in the NCLB era. McMurrer recommended that states give adequate emphasis to art and music and also reported that an average of 34.5% of high schools changed their curriculum to a great extent to put emphasis on skills covered by state tests used for NCLB.

King (1991) examined the relationship between curriculum reform and secondary school music classes in Virginia between 1979−1988. The study was conducted by examining historical documents from the Virginia State Department of Education,

interviewing directors of instruction and school music supervisors, and administering a Guidance Counselor Music Support Questionnaire to 500 randomly selected guidance counselors (the questionnaire achieved a response rate of 65.6%, $n = 328$). Questions asked by King included demographic information, such as school enrollments, music class enrollments, school location and town/city characteristics, and school socio-economic status makeup. King asked schools about the causes of music enrollment changes in their schools, including increased graduation requirements and a specific fine/practical arts requirement. Additionally, King asked about specific strategies by schools and individuals to deal with enrollment changes.

King discovered that drops in music enrollment had occurred during the national call for "back to basics" from the *A Nation At Risk* report and when increased graduation requirements were implemented in the Virginia schools. King concluded that elective classes including music and other arts classes were put into direct scheduling conflicts with the new requirements and that the guidance counselors were in disagreement on whether students should be encouraged to drop music classes when conflicts with the new requirements arose.

King obtained mixed results to his research question regarding participation in secondary music classes. During the first half of the years studied—1979 to 1983— the percentage of total school population enrolled in secondary music classes dropped less than the drop in total school enrollment (school drop 11.5%, music drop 10.5%); however, for the latter years of the study—1984 to 1988—which coincided with new statewide graduation requirements, the percentage of total school population enrolled in

secondary music classes dropped significantly more than the drop in total school enrollment (school drop 7.5%, music drop 12.2%). The largest percentage of loss occurred in smaller schools, which experienced a drop in music enrollment of 41.9%.

King cited many factors for students dropping out of secondary music classes, such as teacher personality, the six period day, and high expectations from parents, but also acknowledged graduation requirements as an important factor in students dropping music classes. King concluded that "there is a dichotomy between expressed support for the arts and the position of the arts in the curriculum" (p. iii).

Fallis (1990) studied the impact of graduation requirements on the music curriculum in California public schools. Fallis surveyed by mail a random sample of 200 public and private high school music teachers taken from the 842 high school members of the California Music Educators Association. The survey achieved a 62% (n = 124) response rate (representing 14.7% of the total population). The questionnaire asked for school enrollment, music enrollment (both performing ensembles and non-performing music classes), and data regarding a state arts requirement that students must meet to be eligible for admission to state universities.

At the time of the study (1990), only about 3.3% of the total student population was enrolled in a music class of any kind in California. Since 1987, all graduating seniors had to complete either a year of fine arts or foreign language. If a music class was taken in fulfillment of this requirement it needed to meet California State Department of Education requirements for such a course. One goal of Fallis's study was to determine if California schools were using non-ensemble music classes in fulfillment of the fine arts

requirement; Fallis found that 55% of high schools offered at least one non-ensemble course. In general, however, high schools had adapted existing courses, particularly the large ensembles, to satisfy the requirement.

There are many reasons students choose to include music in their own educational profiles. Hayes (2004) conducted a mail survey of 164 high school band directors in northern Ohio and southeastern Michigan concerning the retention rate of 8th grade band students during the transition to high school. The survey had a return rate of 32.9% (*n* = 54). Survey questions asked about school enrollment, band enrollment, and school district characteristic (rural, suburban, urban). Additionally, the questionnaire asked 34 Likert-type questions regarding a student's reasons for participation or non-participation in high school band after 8th grade band participation. Hayes found that for many students, receiving a grade and credit in band was one of the least important reasons for their choosing to participate: The social, musical, or other aspects of band were much more important to them.

Academic Achievement and Participation in Music

Some music educators who feel that the MMC poses a threat to their music programs, if not their very jobs, look for ways to validate their programs and provide a rationality for their program's continued existence. One of these rationalizations is the possible link between academic achievement and participation in music classes. The following will examine this supposition.

Helwig and Thomas (1973) explored the possibility of using musicality and intelligence test scores to predict the potential success of pupils in choir instead of the

usual methods of audition and observation. Two mixed preparatory choruses and a girls' chorus from a school that had 2,300 pupils in grades ten, eleven, and twelve and a faculty of more than one hundred were investigated. A total of 286 pupils were included; 49% were black and the remainder were white. Sixty-four pupils were selected randomly from this population, with controls for race and school year. The proportionate sampling was set at 20 each for sophomores and juniors plus 24 seniors, with the two sample races approximating the choral racial population. Each pupil's musicality score came from Gaston's *Test of Musicality*, fourth edition. The second predictor variable, the intelligence quotient, was derived from the *California Test of Mental Maturity*. The results of the study showed the degree of pupil musicality and the respective intelligence quotients did predict the pupils' level of achievement in choir. There was a positive correlation between participation in music classes and increased scores on standardized tests.

K. R. Fitzpatrick (2006) compared the Ohio Proficiency Test (OPT) results of instrumental music students and their non-instrumental classmates according to socio-economic status (SES) over time. Subjects (n = 15,431) were students in the Columbus Public Schools in Ohio, whose fourth-, sixth-, and ninth-grade OPT results were compared with others of like SES on the subjects of citizenship, math, science, and reading. Instrumental students outperformed non-instrumental students in every subject and at every grade level. Instrumental students at both levels of SES scored higher than their non-instrumental classmates from the fourth grade, suggesting that instrumental music programs attract higher scorers from the outset of instruction. Results also show a

pattern of increased achievement by lower SES instrumental students, who surpassed their higher SES non-instrumental classmates by the ninth grade in all subjects.

Winner and Cooper (2000) attempted and failed to find a causal link between arts study and academic achievement. They searched exhaustively for all relevant studies (published in English) that appeared from 1950 to 1998 in seven electronic databases from their inception through 1998: Arts and Humanities Index (1988−1998), Dissertation Abstracts International (1950−1998), Educational Resource Information Clearinghouse (1950−1998), Language Linguistics Behavioral Abstracts (1973−1998), MedLine (1966−1998), PsychLit/PsychINFO (1984−1998), and Social Science Index (1988−1998). Their search yielded 1,135 research records. Because their search criteria were liberal, many records were clearly irrelevant (e.g., those on the liberal arts). Others were potentially relevant but lacked data (e.g., advocacy pieces) or lacked control groups. Forty-four studies were potentially relevant. After applying a set of strict inclusion criteria, they were left with 31 useable studies. Each study was coded by two independent coders (the first author and a research assistant) in terms of a variety of basic characteristics. The coders disagreed on 24 out of 425 codings, yielding a 5.6% rate of disagreement. In all cases the correct coding was fully resolved by rechecking the text. Results of the analyses reveal a positive and significant relationship between arts education and academic outcomes. However, while it is certainly possible that studying the arts leads to the development of cognitive skills that in turn lead to heightened achievement in academic areas, it is also possible that studying the arts leads to greater engagement in school, which in turn leads to greater academic achievement. In other

words, academic achievement by music students may be coincidental, since, among other reasons, music classes tend to attract students with a higher academic potential to start with.

The push for curriculum reform in the public high schools—which began well over a century ago with a call for a change from a basic, three Rs education to a strong, liberal arts education—has progressed to the point where many feel the future of our country is at stake if the academic standards are not raised for the high school students of the 21st century. As a result, the majority of states have instituted state-mandated high school graduation requirements for students to help adequately prepare them for further education and/or the job market. What will be the effects of these new graduation requirements? Will they have their intended effect or will there be unintended consequences? In the next section I will examine literature relevant to these questions.

Effects of Increased High School Graduation Requirements

The 1980s represented the beginning of unprecedented state control over public high school classroom curriculum decision-making, including state-mandated graduation requirements, state-mandated course content, and state-mandated exit exams (Archbald & Porter, 1994; Boyd, 1987). Archbald and Porter (1994) studied high school mathematics and social studies teachers to determine the influence of curriculum control policies on their sense of autonomy and job satisfaction. All of the full-time teachers in the mathematics and social studies departments in 12 selected high schools in California, Florida, and New York were surveyed by mail in 1989−1990. Out of 221 teachers, 195 surveys were returned for a response rate of 88%. Archbald and Porter found that state

and district initiatives to raise standards and improve curriculum through test, textbook, and course content policies raised complex issues about education reform. These policies were intended to improve curriculum quality and standards but may have the unintended consequence of undercutting school-based curriculum control and the professional autonomy of teachers; they may have little effect on curriculum at all, positive or negative.

Sipple, Killeen, and Monk (2004), tracked statewide adherence to the Regents testing program and studied the relationships between participation and performance outcomes during a time of great change in New York State high school graduation requirements. They noted that public schools are highly institutionalized organizations, steeped in strong norms and scripted practices, and resistant to change and external imposition. In a study derived from interviews and document analysis in five New York school districts collected during the 2000−2001 academic year, Sipple et al. studied responses of school districts to a significant change in education policy, namely the increasing of graduation requirements for traditionally non-college bound students. They found the new learning and graduation standards had pressed all educators to address the question, “can all children learn at high levels” and found strong evidence that agreement or disagreement with the statement varied little across the five districts, but varied greatly between the central office, school buildings and community. Superintendents were most likely to agree with the statement, whereas principals and teachers were less likely to do so. Offering two opposing viewpoints in how state education policy impacts public schools, Sipple et al. described the “low impact” interpretation as the view that state

policy can be deflected or ignored by local schools. Opposed to this was the "high impact" interpretation as the view that state policy sets the target toward which schools must strive but leaves unspecified the strategies to achieve the result. Since the MMC is public law for public schools in Michigan and these schools receive their funding from the state, it is very unlikely that any public school will try to ignore the MMC; however, some issues may be deflected in cases where implementation decisions are made by the local board of education.

A significant change in policy took place in the 1980s with states taking a more active role in mandating the practices of high schools, including the broad areas of raising academic standards and holding schools accountable for performance (Stevenson & Schiller, 1999). The goal of improving student achievement and student ability to compete successfully in post-secondary education and the work place was of paramount importance to many of these states, including Michigan. Stevenson and Schiller examined three types of state policies (graduation requirements, dissemination of test scores, and site-based management) and their relationships to specific changes in school practices. To examine empirically how schools responded to state policies, they employed information from a nationally representative sample of U.S. public high schools at two points in time, in 1984 and in 1993. This longitudinal data allowed them to explore changes in a school's practices over approximately a decade. Their data was drawn from the National Longitudinal Study of Schools (NLSS). Data collection for this study included surveys sent to principals along with district and state department of education personnel. Stevenson and Schiller reported results showing the average hours

of course work required in the four core academic subjects of English, mathematics, science, and social studies increased between 1984 and 1993. The increases were lowest in English and social studies, for which schools on average increased their requirements by about one-quarter of a year. The most dramatic changes were in mathematics and science requirements, with average increases of one-half to two-thirds of an additional year of course work. It should be noted that increases in one subject were not related to decreases in another.

Chaney, Burgdorf, and Atash (1997) studied the influencing of achievement through high school graduation requirements using data from the 1990 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) and the 1990 High School Transcript Study on 3,577 science students at 131 schools and 3,369 mathematic students at 140 schools. NAEP was not a longitudinal study, but a cross-sectional one. However, the availability of high school transcript data allowed the tracking of a student's progress over time (in terms of the courses taken and grades received.) To analyze the data at both a school level and a student level, Chaney et al. chose hierarchical linear modeling (HLM) for their study because it was designed for the analysis of nested data structures and for testing how variables at one level affected relationships at another level. They found that "relatively few students were affected by the requirements, either because students took more than was required or they took courses that did not affect their achievement" (p. 229).

Sebring (1987) studied course-taking patterns and achievement among 1980 high school seniors in New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Illinois, Washington, and California,

and among 1982 seniors in New York and California using High School and Beyond and College Entrance Examination Board (CEEB) data. Sebring had a different viewpoint from Chaney et al. (1997) stating that "other things being equal, recent changes in high school graduation requirements could very well lead to higher academic achievement" (Sebring, 1987, p. 269). Whether or not the MMC succeeds in the goal of raising the academic achievement of the public high school students in Michigan will only be answered over the course of time.

Hampton (2000) examined the relationship between increased high school graduation requirements in Alabama and Mississippi and real gross state production (RGSP) in those states. Hampton conducted a side-by-side study of Alabama and Mississippi because of their geographical proximity, their economic similarities, and their having both raised state-mandated high school graduation requirements. Hampton studied 18 years worth of real gross state product raw data in both states, comparing the 7 years prior to the change in high school graduation requirements to the 11 years after the change. Hampton concluded that the change resulted in no measurable economic impact and found no statistical foundation for explaining the increase in the states' economic health, as measured by their RGSP.

One of the published goals of the MMC is to make high school graduates ready to compete in a 21st century work force, requiring more advanced knowledge and skills than in the past. Will the raising of high school graduation requirements, and course content standards and assessments accomplish that goal? According to Clune, White, and Patterson (1989) the answer to this question is "probably not. The theory linking

traditional academic courses to work skills is quite weak and underdeveloped. The chances that existing courses would approximate those designed for maximum impact in the workplace are very small" (p. 37). Clune et al. (1989) studied the implementation and effects of increased high school graduation requirements in six of the 45 states that had recent policy changes in this area. Data from 700 interviews in six states, 24 districts, and 32 high schools on the intent and effects of the requirements were gathered. Respondents generally regretted the loss of vocational and elective courses and were not sure what policymakers intended to achieve through the new requirements. Clune et al. concluded that the higher standards and requirements were both a success and a failure: They succeeded in getting more students into basic academic courses, but they failed to produce in students the skills necessary for a competitive society.

Another goal of the MMC is to better prepare high school graduates for college. In a dissertation exploring this issue, Barnett (2008) examined the relationship between high school graduation requirements, exit exams, average school funding per student and the cost of college, and two student outcomes important to college access, high school completion and the number of courses completed in the core subjects, among public school students. He utilized the Education Longitudinal Study (ELS:2002) first follow up and transcript survey in combination with state policy indicators to examine these relationships. In an effort to account for the complex sampling design and to recognize that students are nested within schools, which operate within unique state policy environments, he employed a three-level hierarchical linear modeling (HLM). Barnett concluded:

> Higher state standards for graduation reduce the probability that students will complete high school in four years, but for those that complete, the policy is likely to have a positive impact on the number of courses they complete in the core subjects. There are compelling reasons to expect more out of the high school experience for many students and it [the MMC] may better prepare them to enter into and then succeed in college. But at the same time, Michigan policy makers (and other College Preparatory states as well) and schools will have to pay greater attention to keeping students on the path and preventing them from falling through the cracks. (p. 173)

Barnett pointed out that while Michigan's new requirements (MMC) appeared to be the most rigorous in the nation, State Superintendent Flanagan told the schools that many of the new standards could be achieved by "infusing relevant content in Career and Technical Education courses" (p. 174). Shuler (1996) described how many of the states who have recently added a fine arts graduation requirement have made the requirement a choice between a fine arts course or a vocational education course. Shuler states that allowing such a choice is "elitist, because it implies that vocational students do not need the arts" (p. 24).

Teitelbaum (2001) studied the influence of high school graduation requirement policy on student achievement by examining data from a nationally representative sample of 1,992 public high school graduates from the National Educational Longitudinal Study conducted in 1988. He found that requiring high school students to complete more math and science courses in order to graduate did not raise student learning as measured on standardized tests, compared to schools with lower graduation requirements. Teitelbaum (2003) found test scores in math and science did not vary between schools that had differing graduation requirements in those areas, suggesting that increasing the graduation requirements students have to earn, by itself, may not be sufficient to improve student

achievement. Several linkages between increased graduation requirements and student achievement were identified: (a) increased graduation requirements affect the courses students take, (b) the courses students take affect student achievement, and (c) students have the potential to attain higher achievement if they make changes to their course-taking.

Along with specifying high school graduation requirements, the Michigan Merit Curriculum also mandates that the state develop course credit content expectations and guidelines as well as subject area assessments to evaluate whether students have met those expectations. Since 2006 these requirements have been an ongoing work-in-progress with the requirements met in many subject areas and some yet to come. In their report on approaches to testing for high school graduation by the various states, Darling-Hammond, Rustique-Forrester, Pecheone, and Andree (2005) profiled the assessment systems of 27 states and described policy strategies that had been developed to enhance rigor in the high school program while providing diverse means for students to demonstrate their learning. In their report, Darling-Hammond et al. showed "the likely effects on teaching, learning, access, and attainment" (p. 1) of testing such as that required by NCLB and exit exams. Concerns raised by these effects included graduation rates; problems encountered by students who do not speak English or have disabilities; reduced incentives for struggling students to stay in school rather than drop out or pursue a GED; narrowing of the curriculum; and invalid judgments about student learning from reliance on a single set of test measures.

The two major reasons put forth by the Michigan Department of Education for the necessity of the Michigan Merit Curriculum were (a) to better prepare students for post-secondary education, and (b) to produce graduates better equipped to succeed in the 21st century workplace (and thus make more substantial contributions to the societal tax-base). Conflicting studies and opinions demonstrate that the future is unclear as to whether the MMC will meet these goals or simply be a good idea.

Summary

Curriculum reform increased in 1983 with the report *A Nation at Risk,* which exposed 20 million functionally illiterate adults in this country, supposedly as the result of the failure of the public schools to educate them properly, resulting in more and more states implementing mandated high school graduation requirements and culminating in 2002 with the passage of NCLB and its call for back to basics. The results of this reform in some states, like Virginia, precipitated a drop in students in music classes as a result. Some states added a fine arts requirement to their mandated graduation requirements. Even though some studies show a positive correlation between participation in music classes and higher scores on standardized tests, some states, like California, showed very little, if any, positive effect on the percentage of students in music classes as a result. Some schools have even been shown to try and deflect away some of the imposed requirements by ignoring them or obscuring the results. There have been numerous studies that have attempted to show the economic impact to the individual and the state of increased education. Many of them have quantified in terms of dollars and cents what were the effects of increased education, or lack or education, while others have shown

little or no impact, especially at the state level. Likewise, studies have shown opposite results regarding whether increased high school graduation requirements will result in increased job potential.

With the Michigan Merit Curriculum, Michigan hopes to improve the future of the State by producing a better educated population that is better equipped for acquiring further education and better equipped for participation in a 21st century job market. In so doing they are following the lead of a number of similarly inclined states and activist organizations. However, the conflicting results from a number of cited studies indicate that whether or not the end result will be the desired result is in question. Much discussion has focused on the supposition that the MMC will cause cuts to music programs and/or music jobs. What we don't know through empirical study is whether there is any merit to this supposition.

The primary focus of this study was to determine the effect of the initial implementation of the MMC on the music programs in Michigan high schools. A body of literature exists specific to the MMC; additionally there are several dissertations relevant to other aspects of the MMC. This literature gives a broad background to the MMC as well as complete detail concerning the MMC and its requirement of a visual, performing or applied arts credit. At the same time, I have found no studies that have investigated the impact of implementing statewide mandatory high school graduation requirements on music programs in Michigan. It is hoped that this study can answer, relevant to Michigan, questions which have received conflicting answers in previous studies regarding curriculum reform and the state imposition of graduation requirements on local school

authorities; such as the importance of the fine arts in a general public school curriculum, and the effect of increased academic graduation requirements on music programs.

Delimitations of Study

The Michigan Merit Curriculum of 2006 is a very large piece of legislation relevant to Michigan public school education. The law does not govern nor does this study consider private schools. This study will focus exclusively on the new high school graduation requirements portion of this law, as shown in Table 2 (p. 10). It will not look at other aspects of the MMC such as the requirement for the development of course content guidelines, course assessments, or the requirement of an on-line learning experience.

CHAPTER 3: METHOD

The purpose of this study was to describe the initial implementation of the Michigan Merit Curriculum (MMC), including its effects on public high school music programs, from the perspective of survey respondents. The MMC has, to date, been implemented for all current freshmen and sophomore students and will be completely implemented in the entire public high school population of the state in two years. This study addressed the following research questions:

1. What are the initial effects of the Michigan Merit Curriculum on public high schools in Michigan, as reported by survey respondents?
2. What are the initial effects of the Michigan Merit Curriculum on public high school music programs, as reported by survey respondents?
3. How do survey respondents anticipate that students will fulfill the visual, performing, or applied arts requirement of the Michigan Merit Curriculum?

To answer these questions, responses were analyzed from a survey mailed to all the public schools in Michigan. Some of the survey questions required quantitative responses; others were open response questions that required analysis using coding. The survey results were then organized into statistical tables and charts illuminating answers to the three research questions.

Participants

The participants for this study were the lead administrators of the 740 traditional public high schools and 82 public school academies in Michigan, comprising the 822

public high schools under the MMC's scope. These schools were identified at the Center for Educational Performance and Information (CEPI) (2009), an official State of Michigan web site. At the time the list was compiled for this study, it included 932 schools. Schools such as alternative education schools or adult education schools were excluded, leaving a list that included 822 public schools. This list included all of the traditional public high schools and public school academies that contained grades 10, 11, and 12 (nearly all of them also contained grade 9).

Sending the surveys to the lead administrators of the high schools was the result of a peculiarity in the CEPI database. Each record contained a number of names for various school positions, such as principal, assistant principal, athletic director, counselor, and so on. These various names were also missing in many of the records, but each record was required to specify a single name as the lead administrator. As a result, requesting records by lead administrator produced more records than requesting records by principal (since some schools had not entered a principal name). In the end, the majority of names marked lead administrator were, in fact, the schools' principals. Since the lead administrators were instructed to forward the survey to the appropriate person in their school for completion and return, it is not known who actually filled out the surveys, or whether or not they might have expressed any personal bias.

Data Collection

For this study, information was gathered using a survey instrument developed by the researcher based on guiding principles presented in *Conducting a Survey* (Orcher, 2007) and several other sources (Colorado State University, 2008; Health

Communication Unit, 1999; Orcher, 2005; Trochim, 2006). A survey mailed to every public school in Michigan was chosen over alternatives, such as an email or internet based survey, despite its expense, because I felt a mailed survey would be taken more seriously and be better able to produce the desired responses. In a dissertation studying the effectiveness of mail and web-based surveys, Borkan (2006) stated that the traditional mail-based survey had a return rate of greater than three times that of the web-based survey (44.29% to 13.94%).

Instrument

The survey instrument (see Appendix E) was four pages in length printed in landscape on a sheet of 11 x 17 paper in duplex, producing a four-page booklet printed on a single sheet of paper. The survey's questions consisted of an introductory header and questions numbered one through three on page one, questions numbered four through eight on page two, questions numbered nine and 10 on page three, and questions numbered 11 through 15 on page four.

Survey design.

The survey instrument was designed to include survey questions that would answer the three research questions. Respondents were asked to detail the music classes in their schools, both performing and non-performing, both before and after beginning to implement the MMC. Before and after comparisons of music classes would help answer research question two regarding changes in their music programs since beginning implementation of the MMC. Questions were included in the survey regarding the school

location (county), the population of the surrounding area, and the percentage of students receiving free or reduced price lunch. These questions allowed surveys to be grouped and compared with each other based on a variety of parameters, such as school size, geographic location, population density, and socio-economic status. Questions were also added asking for the school's graduation requirements prior to the MMC, graduation requirements the school had in addition to the MMC, any fine arts requirement prior to the MMC, and the percentage of students who were granted an exemption to the MMC's visual, performing, or applied arts (VPAA) requirement. These questions were all added to help answer study question three regarding the VPAA requirement. Finally, questions were included asking the respondents to rate their previous answers relevant to the influence of the MMC, ranging from entirely due to the MMC to entirely due to factors other than the MMC. The survey was tested in a small pilot survey to assure the correct data were being gathered to appropriately answer the research questions.

Several questions had multiple parts. For example, the first question gathered demographic data about the school. Questions 2–5 asked for information regarding music classes in the school (both performing ensembles and non-performing classes). Question 6 asked for a description of the school regarding class periods, semesters, faculty, and budget. Questions 7–9 were open-response questions asking respondents to document what changes would be made to music classes because of the MMC, what the school's graduation requirements were prior to the MMC, and what graduation requirements the school had in addition to the MMC. Question 10 asked respondents to complete a chart describing the ways in which they anticipated students fulfilling the visual, performing,

or applied arts requirement of the MMC. Question 11 asked for the percentage of students who had requested exemption from the visual, performing, or applied arts requirement. Question 12 asked if the school had a fine arts graduation requirement prior to the MMC. Question 13 was an open-response question that asked for a description of the overall changes that had been and would be made because of the MMC. Questions 14 and 15 were six point Likert-type scale questions asking the respondents to characterize their previous responses regarding the school's music department growth or decline since beginning to implement the MMC. Table 4 shows the alignment between the survey questions and the research questions.

Table 4

Survey Question (SQ) Paired With Research Question (RQ)

SQ	RQ
1	1
2	1 & 2
3	1 & 2
4	1 & 2
5	1 & 2
6	1
7	2
8	1
9	1
10	3
11	3
12	3
13	1
14	Ancillary
15	Ancillary

Pilot.

Before the statewide survey was conducted, a pilot survey was distributed to the 12 public high schools in Lenawee County to evaluate distribution procedures and the survey's effectiveness. The same distribution procedures were used in the pilot survey as were intended for the statewide survey. The pilot survey received a 42% response rate, a rate that suggested that the distribution procedures were effective and could be repeated for the statewide distribution.

The other intention of the pilot survey was to uncover any weaknesses in the survey and correct them prior to statewide distribution. After reviewing the responses to the pilot, several modifications were made to the survey. A question was added asking for the total high school enrollment on May 1, 2007 in addition to the existing question asking for the total high school enrollment on May 1, 2009. The wording of the total enrollment question was clarified to ask how many grades were in the high school (not the total school). The set of responses for the item about students receiving free or reduced lunch was modified. Wording was added in questions 2–5 specifying that the number of Full Time Equivalencies (FTEs) requested was "for this ensemble." Wording was added to question 6 specifying "high school." Data from the pilot were examined for reliability using PASW® Statistics GradPack 17.0 from SPSS™ which reported a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.75 indicating a generally acceptable level of reliability (Orcher, 2007).

Data Collection Procedures

An email (see Appendix F) was sent to each school's lead administrator alerting them to the survey's impending arrival and asking for their assistance in its completion and return. This initial email was important so that the mailed survey did not arrive unannounced; rather, the recipients were pre-disposed to the importance of the survey and encouraged toward its completion and return. Next, each school was mailed an 8½ x 11 single sheet cover letter (see Appendix G), the survey questionnaire, and a self-addressed, stamped envelope for returning the questionnaire. Separate questionnaires were sent to all the public high schools in Michigan along with a cover letter stating the purpose of the study, including a guarantee of confidentiality and anonymity for the participants and their institutions. The cover letter followed the format of an informed consent form, except that the participants did not have to sign and return the letter. Instead, completion and return of the survey provided evidence of their willingness to participate in the study.

Approximately ten days after mailing the questionnaire, a reminder post card was mailed to non-respondents (see Appendix H). Approximately ten days after the reminder post card was mailed, a second questionnaire and a second cover letter (see Appendix I) were mailed to any remaining non-respondents.

Questionnaires were coded with a number corresponding to the school's number on a master list. The only purpose for this number was to identify which schools had responded to the survey and which schools had not. There was no matching of school names to questionnaires for identification purposes.

On April 27, 2009, after obtaining approval from the Institutional Review Board to conduct the study, an email was sent to the recipients of the survey in the same manner as the pilot. Of the 810 emails sent, 52 bounced back as undeliverable. This email was followed by the statewide survey's first mailing to 810 public high schools and public school academies (the statewide survey did not include the 12 pilot schools). Ninety-one responses were received within 10 days, including two returns for bad addresses. On May 11, 2009 a reminder post card was mailed to the remaining 731 non-respondents. There were 32 additional responses within the next 10 days. On May 26, 2009 a second questionnaire with cover letter was sent to the remaining 696 non-respondents. After the second mailing an additional 109 responses were received for a total of 232 responses. On June 30, 2009, the survey closed. From the 232 responses an additional 33 schools were dropped from the survey in a similar fashion as discussed in the Participants section. These 33 responses were from adult education schools, alternative high schools, juvenile detention facilities, and other similar schools that were not initially intended to be included in the survey, but were not initially identified. The final result was a total of 197 valid responses from 789 schools, for a 25% response rate.

Data Analysis

As the surveys were returned, much of the data were entered into an Excel™ spreadsheet. This data included the responses to questions 1, 6, 11, 12, 14, 15, and the enrollment portion of questions 2−5. The answers to these questions were simple and straightforward, and could be documented without further coding, as was required for the remainder of the questions, which were processed at the completion of the survey. After

all survey responses were obtained, the Excel™ spreadsheet was loaded into PASW® Statistics GradPack 17.0 from SPSS™ for analysis. The data were analyzed for each research question by means of descriptive statistics. Table 5 shows the method of analysis for each of the 15 survey questions along with the statistical analysis that was applied to each. The data analysis was patterned after two similar survey dissertations concerning different aspects of the MMC than were analyzed in this study (Cook, 2008; Craft, 2008).

The open-ended survey questions were analyzed by coding responses and examining the results. Open-response comments made in response to question 13 were grouped into four general categories: *curriculum, faculty, scheduling,* and *other.* Curriculum comments related to adding or deleting classes or sections of classes. Faculty comments related to adding, deleting, or reassigning faculty members. Scheduling comments regarded issues such as moving to trimesters or changing the number of periods in a school day. Within each of these four categories, the comments were grouped according to the classes to which they related: *all classes, core classes,* or *elective classes.* Core classes were classes such as English, math, social studies, and science. Elective classes were classes such as art and music. Finally, each comment was evaluated as to whether it was a *positive comment*, a *negative comment,* or an *observation.* When something was added, the comment was characterized as positive; if something was cut or eliminated, the comment was characterized as negative. These characterizations are those of the researcher, and others may interpret the comments differently. For example, some might consider adding staff in math and science a negative change because it will cost money and will possibly take away funding from other areas, like the arts. In the face

of such arguments it still can be said that adding staff for anything is a positive change because it is good for students and therefore good for education. The responses were then quantified by frequency and percent in a similar manner to the quantitative data and supported by similar tables and charts.

In looking at the subsequent results of the data analysis, clear answers to the three study questions emerged. Those results are presented in Chapter 4, and the answers to the questions are summarized in Chapter 5.

Table 5

Analysis Applied to the Various Survey Questions

Question	[S]tatistical / [C]oding	Type
1	S	Frequency, percent, mean, median, and standard deviation comparing subsets of school size, geographic area, town/city size, and percent of free or reduced price lunch between 2007 and 2009
2–5	S	Frequency and percent comparing performing ensembles and non-performing music classes between 2007and 2009
6	S	Frequency and percent comparing class periods, semesters in a year, total teaching FTEs, and music teaching FTEs between 2007 and 2009
7	C	Frequency and percent of open and axial coding in table format enumerating changes to music resulting from the MMC
8	C	Frequency and percent of open and axial coding in table format of graduation requirements prior to the MMC including a composite comparison to the MMC
9	C	Frequency and percent of open and axial coding in table format of graduation requirements in addition to the MMC
10	S	Frequency and percent of open and axial coding in table format of ways students will fulfill the VPAA requirement
11	S	Frequency and percent in table format of percent of students who will be exempt from the VPAA requirement
12	S	Frequency and percent in table format of schools who had a prior fine arts graduation requirement
13	C	Frequency and percent of open and axial coding in table format enumerating changes to schools resulting from the MMC
14–15	S	Frequency and percent in table format of characterizations of reasons for decline/growth in music program

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS OF DATA ANALYSIS

This study was conducted to determine how public high schools in Michigan were initially responding to the implementation of the Michigan Merit Curriculum (MMC). What changes were taking place in the schools and the schools' music programs because of the MMC? Has the MMC's new one-credit graduation requirement in the visual, performing, or applied arts (VPAA) had any effect on the percentage of students receiving a fine arts experience, or the type of experience they might be having? To answer these questions, a survey was mailed to all of the public high schools in Michigan (see Appendix E). Respondents were asked to provide data in response to 28 questions in varying formats. Some respondents carefully completed all of the questions while others selectively responded to the questions. A few amplified their answers beyond the scope of the questions. In this chapter, I will outline the responses given to the survey questions and examine the results.

Description of the Sample

For data collection that is survey based, a statistically reliable result is obtained when an appropriate number of surveys is returned. This number varies depending on the type of research, and has been calculated as 15.00% of the survey population for surveys similar in nature to this study (Hager et al., 2003; Sherman, 2006). Hager et al. (2003) stated "surveys of organizations typically receive substantially lower return rates than surveys of individuals, with 15% return rates sometimes reaching a level of acceptability for organizational surveys" (p. 255). For this study, the survey population—Michigan

public high schools—was 789, requiring a return of 118 surveys for a reliable result. The survey had 197 valid responses, for a 24.97% response rate. Since some authorities indicate that a response rate of at least 50.00% is required (Babbie, 1990; Cresswell, 2006), the response rate achieved by this study may not be generalizable to the whole state.

Because not all of the questions were answered by all of the respondents, some questions had a particularly low response rate. The questions that fell into this category were questions 4 and 5 regarding the non-performing music classes in a school, and the music department budget portion of question 6. Because many of the schools had no non-performing music classes to report, responses to questions 4 and 5 can still be regarded as reliable. The low response rate to the music department budget question cannot be easily accounted for. It could be that some schools did not have a specific music department budget that they could report. The music department budget may have been part of a larger budget, such as a fine arts department budget. It could be that it was not reported for secrecy reasons or any number of other reasons. Further, there is no way to determine what, if any, portion of a reported budget amount may have been from fund-raising, grant amounts, or included capital outlay and/or salary amounts. Since the response rate was low and the sources of the amounts reported are not clear, this question was excluded from further consideration in this study.

Each school in the survey was classified according to enrollment by dividing total enrollment by the number of grades in the school. The classes and definitions are those used by the Michigan School Band and Orchestra Association (2007, p. 54) for the

purpose of classifying bands and orchestras for district and state festivals. Of the 197 respondents, 94.42% (n = 186) provided enrollment data and were classified as shown in Table 6. The actual percentage of statewide school distribution by school size (class) is according to the National Center for Education Statistics (2007). A chi-square goodness-of-fit test comparing the response number of schools to the actual number of schools by school size (class) returned chi-square = 182.69, df = 4, and p = <.0001, indicating that the number of responses received from each class was representative of the actual population.

Table 6

Class Definitions and Distributions (n = 186)

Class	Average enrollment per grade	Distribution % of responses by class	Actual % of statewide school distribution
AA	> 399	5.38	22.00
A	250−399	10.75	22.00
B	150−249	15.59	22.00
C	90−149	25.81	22.00
D	< 90	42.47	12.00

Responses were received from 64 of 83 counties (77.11%) and were distributed relatively evenly from around Michigan. To compare results by geographic area, the 197 respondents were distributed into four state quadrants as shown in Figure 1. The northern quadrant is the largest because it is the least populous, although it contains the state's second largest city, Grand Rapids. The southeastern quadrant is the most populous, and

the smallest, containing the largest city, Detroit. The central quadrant contains Lansing and the southwestern quadrant contains Battle Creek and Kalamazoo. The actual percentage of statewide school distribution by geographic area (as shown in Table 7) is according to the Center for Educational Performance and Information (2009). A chi-square goodness-of-fit test comparing the response number of schools to the actual number of schools by geographic area returned chi-square = 10.06, $df = 3$, and $p = 0.0181$, indicating that the number of responses received from each geographic area was representative of the actual population.

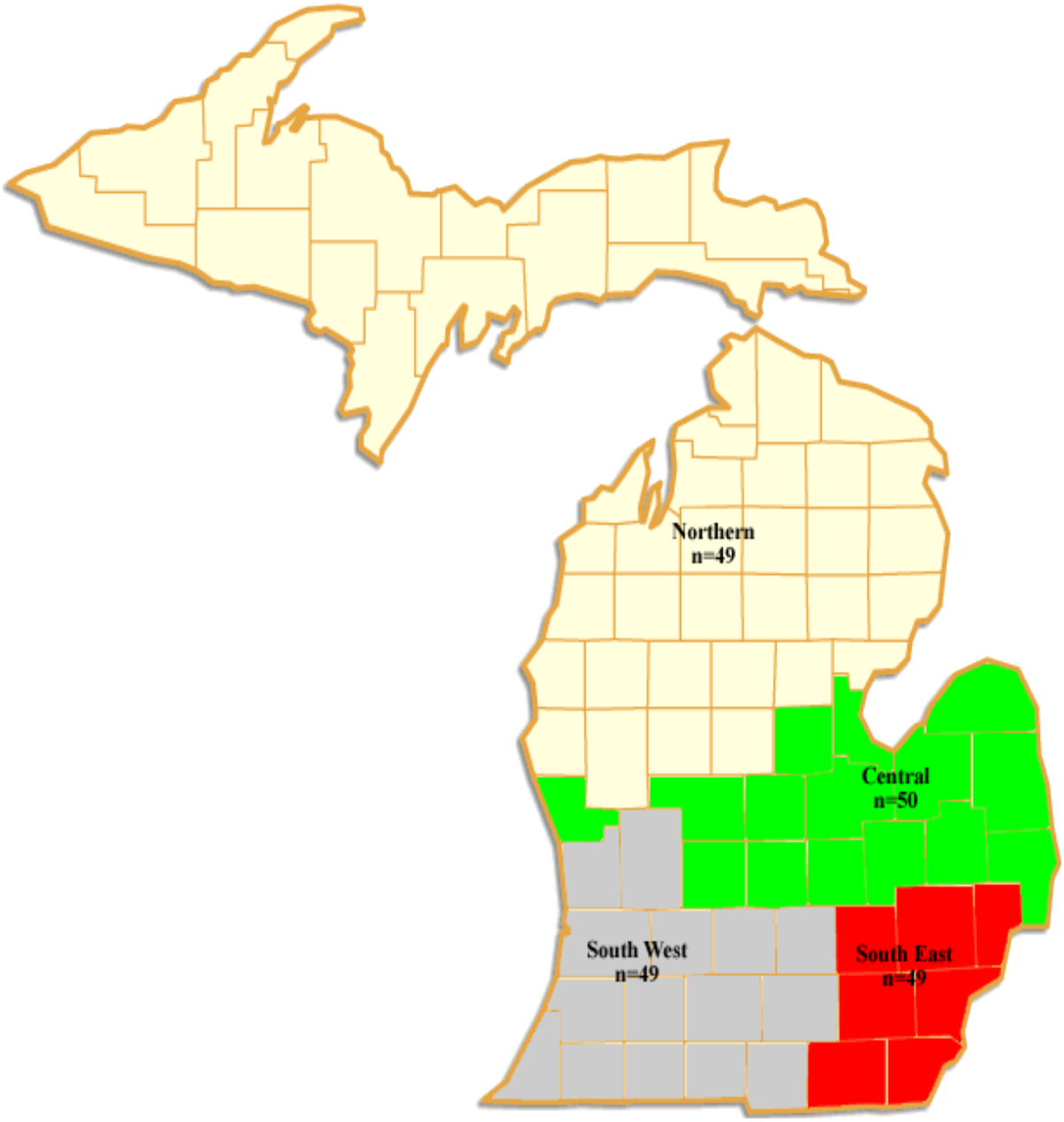
Table 7

Geographic Distribution of Schools (n = 197)

State quadrant	Distribution % of responses by quadrant	Actual % of statewide school distribution
Northern	24.87	20.26
Central	25.39	20.16
Southwestern	24.87	25.05
Southeastern	24.87	34.53

Figure 1

Distribution of Responses by Geographic Area (n = 197)



Of the 197 responses to the survey, 91.88% (*n* = 181) provided enrollment data for both 2007 and 2009, and were grouped by population, as shown in Table 8. The actual percentage of statewide school distribution by population is according to the U.S. Census Bureau (2009). A chi-square goodness-of-fit test comparing the response number of schools to the actual number of schools by population returned chi-square = 18.99, *df* = 2, and *p* = <.0001, indicating that the number of responses received from each population group was representative of the actual population.

Table 8

Distribution by Town/City Size (n = 181)

Town/City Size	Distribution % of responses by town/city size	Actual % of statewide school distribution
< 1000	18.78	32.50
1000−5000	42.54	40.00
> 5000	38.67	27.50

School and music program enrollment was compared based on the socio-economic status of the students. *High SES* schools were those with fewer than 25% of students receiving free or reduced price lunch. *Middle SES* schools had between 25% and 50% of their students receiving free or reduced priced lunches. Schools in which more than 50% of students received free or reduced price meals were defined as *Low SES.* Of the 197 survey respondents, 88.83% (*n* = 175) answered the item indicating the percentage of students receiving free or reduced price lunches. The actual percentage of

statewide school distribution by SES (see Table 9) is according to the National Center for Education Statistics (2007). A chi-square goodness-of-fit test comparing the response number of schools to the actual number of schools by SES returned chi-square = 19.14, *df* = 2, and *p* = <.0001, indicating that the number of responses received from each SES group was representative of the actual population.

Table 9

Distribution by Socio-Economic Status (n = 175)

Percent of free or reduced price lunch	Distribution % of responses by SES	Actual % of statewide school distribution
< 25%	24.57	40.00
25%−50%	44.00	38.00
> 50%	31.43	22.00

Research Questions

Three research questions were answered by this study. Different parts of the survey were designed for and were analyzed to answer these three different questions. Survey question 14 (SQ14) and SQ15, which were designed to characterize the respondents' feelings about their answers to the first 13 questions on the survey, will be addressed in the Ancillary Findings section. Some survey questions addressed multiple research questions. For example, enrollment data (SQ1) was used not only in response to research question one (RQ1), but also provided important data for RQ2 as well. In this

section, I discuss the research questions by presenting and analyzing the responses to the survey questions.

Research Question 1 – Initial Effects of the Michigan Merit Curriculum on High Schools

Changes made to Michigan public high schools since implementation of the MMC began were examined in order to contextualize changes made to the high schools' music programs over the same period. Responses to SQ1 (demographic information), SQ6 (describe your high school), SQ8 (prior graduation requirements), SQ9 (additional current graduation requirements), and SQ13 (overall changes to your school) were used to answer this question.

School enrollment.

School enrollment was analyzed through the four different lenses described above in the Description of the Sample section; by school size (class), by geographic location, by population (surrounding town/city size), and by socio-economic status (percent of free or reduced price lunch). School enrollment declined in every category. While this decline is noted, it cannot be attributed to the implementation of the MMC.

School enrollments in class C schools have declined at a higher rate than other classes of schools with a median loss of 3.77%. It is also worth noting that the class D schools had the widest range of change for school enrollment. Class D school enrollment ranged from a loss of 33.33% to a gain of 100.00% (*M* = 2.14%, *Mdn* = 0%, *SD* = 21.15%). The least decline was in the AA schools (the largest schools) with a median decline of 1.77%. School enrollment declined in all four geographic quadrants of the state

but declined the most in the northern sector (*M* = -4.96%) and declined the least in the southwestern sector (*M* = -1.17%). School enrollment decline was relatively evenly distributed between the three town/city sizes with the most decline in midsized cities of 1000−5000 (*M* = -2.96%), and the least decline in the smaller towns (*M* = -2.08%). School enrollment decline by SES showed the most decline in schools with lowest SES (*M* = -3.45%) and the least decline in schools with the highest SES (*M* = -2.11%).

Class periods and semesters.

The data revealed a trend in how Michigan high schools are proceeding with the division of the school year into semesters and the school day into periods. Many schools are changing to a schedule that allows students to take more classes during their high school tenure. Two of the more common changes were switching to some type of a block scheduling system (a typical 4 x 4 block has four longer periods in a school day and alternates days for an eight period schedule), and going from the traditional two-semester system to a trimester system that allows for more class and credit time per school year. Comments on open-response questions indicated that the trimester system seems to be popular with schools because it allows time for students to retake classes they did not pass the first time, as well as more time for taking elective classes.

SQ6 asked respondents to indicate the number of semesters per school year (see Table 10). The traditional two-semester system was still the most popular system; 68.65% of the respondent schools (*n* = 127) were currently on the semester system while the trimester system was used by 31.35% of respondent schools (*n* = 58); 20.54% of

schools using the trimester (*n* = 38) switched to the trimester from the semester system between 2007 and 2009.

Table 10

Compilation of SQ6 "How Many Semesters in a School Year?" (n = 185)

Semesters per year			
2007	2009	# of schools	% of schools
2	2	126	68.11
2	3	38	20.54
3	3	20	10.81
3	2	1	0.54

SQ6 also asked respondents to indicate the number of class periods per school day; 182 provided data for 2007 and 2009 (see Table 11). For 2009, 70.88% of respondents (*n* = 129) were unchanged in their periods per day, while 29.12% (*n* = 53) changed their periods per day between 2007 and 2009.

Table 11
Compilation of SQ6 "How Many Class Periods in a School Day?" (n = 182)

	Periods per day			
Status	2007	2009	# of schools	% of schools
No change	6	6	51	27.57
	7	7	37	20.00
	5	5	24	12.97
	4	4	12	6.49
	8	8	5	2.70
		Total:	129	70.88
Decreased	6	5	14	7.57
	7	5	5	2.70
	8	5	3	1.62
	8	6	1	0.54
	7	6	1	0.54
	6	4	1	0.54
	5	4	1	0.54
		Total:	26	14.29
Increased	4	5	14	7.57
	6	7	5	2.70
	4	6	3	1.62
	7	8	2	1.08
	5	6	2	1.08
	4	7	1	0.54
		Total:	27	14.84

During the first two years of the MMC's implementation, 21.08% of the respondent schools (*n* = 39) changed the number of semesters per school year and 29.12% of the respondent schools (*n* = 53) changed the number of class periods per school day. Table 12 shows that of the 38 respondents who changed from a semester school year to a trimester school year, 86.84% of schools (*n* = 33) also changed to a five-period day and 5.26% of schools (*n* = 2) changed to a six-period day.

The five-period day was the predominant choice of periods per day for the trimester format. Three semesters of five periods per day allow a student the opportunity to earn 7.5 credits per year (as opposed to six or seven credits per year in a two-semester system of six or seven periods per day.

Table 12

Compilation of Periods Per Day for Schools Who Changed to a Trimester System (n = 38)

Periods per day		# of schools	% of schools
2007	2009		
6	5	14	36.84
4	5	12	31.58
7	5	4	10.53
8	5	3	7.89
7	7	1	2.63
7	6	1	2.63
6	6	1	2.63
5	5	1	2.63
4	6	1	2.63

Staffing.

Total teaching staff and music teaching staff full-time equivalencies (FTEs) in 2007 and 2009 were compared (see Table 13) in order to determine if the argument made by many educators that the MMC will cause the loss of music jobs can either be supported or refuted. An FTE of 1.00 means that the person is equivalent to a full-time teacher (one full time teacher or multiple part-time teachers), while an FTE of 0.50 indicates that the teacher is only half-time. The data showed that the median total teaching staff declined by two FTEs between 2007 and 2009 while the median music teaching staff FTEs remained unchanged for the same time period.

Table 13

Comparison of Total Teaching Staff FTEs and Music Teaching Staff FTEs (n = 138)

	2007 FTEs		2009 FTEs		% Change	
Staff	Mean	Median	Mean	Median	Mean	Median
Music	1.43 (81.20)	1	1.36 (76.98)	1	-4.91 (33.08)	0
Total	30.27 (21.04)	27	29.40 (20.90)	25	-2.12 (17.24)	0

Note. Standard deviations are indicated in parentheses.

Graduation requirements prior to the MMC.

SQ8 asked for graduation requirements prior to the MMC. Answers that were informative to the question were given by 58.38% of respondents (n = 115). From these responses, a composite set of graduation requirements was compiled for comparison to the MMC's requirements (see Table 14). Responses were grouped together by course. For example, in English, schools required between 2 and 4 credits of English with 4

credits being the requirement in 74.78% of the schools. A lesser number of credits were required by 25.22% of schools; no schools required a greater number of credits.

Table 14

Comparison of High School Graduation Requirements Before the MMC

Course	MMC required credits	SQ8 most frequent response	SQ8 lesser / no response	SQ8 greater response
English	4	4 cr. (74.78%)	25.22%	0.00%
Math	4	3 cr. (63.48%)	27.82%	8.70%
Science	3	3 cr. (46.96%)	49.56%	3.48%
Social Studies	3	3 cr. (66.09%)	15.65%	18.26%
World language	2	2 cr. (19.13%)	80.87%	0.00%
P.E. / Health	1	1 cr. (68.70%)	17.39%	13.91%
VPAA	1	1 cr. (40.00%)	49.57%	10.43%

School responses in Table 14, compared to the MMC requirements, highlighted how schools needed to change to meet the new requirements. English, social studies, and physical education were affected the least; at least two-thirds of the schools were already meeting the new MMC requirements in those areas. Math was the area next most affected; nearly one-third of the schools needed to add a fourth year of math. The MMC specifically states that to fulfill the math requirement, students must take one year each of Geometry, Algebra I, Algebra II, and a fourth math course in the senior year. This requirement was subsequently modified; Algebra II can now be offered as a two-year, two-credit course (thus replacing the fourth math course). After these courses, science

and the VPAA requirement required the largest number of schools to change. About half of the schools needed to add to their graduation requirements in those areas. The schools were nearly evenly divided between those currently requiring two years of science and those requiring three years of science, so about half of the schools needed to add one year of science to their requirements.

The final area that was affected was world language; however, the result may be misleading. The data showed that 80.87% of schools needed to increase this requirement, but because many schools included this requirement as part of a cafeteria-style selection, the actual number of schools that already required world language in actuality may be lower than the 19.13% reported in the survey. Another consideration is the fact that this particular requirement of the MMC did not go into effect at the same time as all of the other requirements (that is, for the graduating class of 2011); rather, it will not go into effect until the graduating class of 2016. There is a five-year "breathing room" gap for the schools and students to be prepared for this requirement.

The schools that will likely need to make the most changes to comply with the MMC are the 6.09% of the schools that had no formal graduation requirements at all (other than the state-mandated civics course) prior to the MMC. These schools had tailor-made graduation requirements for each student based on their individual needs. Now these schools will need to conform to the structure of the MMC for all students.

Graduation requirements in addition to the MMC.

SQ9 asked about additional graduation requirements. Of the 69.54% of survey respondents (n = 137) who answered this question, 51.82% (n = 71) replied that they did

have graduation requirements in addition to the MMC, as indicated in Table 15. It should also be noted that many schools do, in fact, have requirements in addition to the MMC, they are just not specified as certain classes; rather, the typical school district will have a set number of credits required for graduation and will require a certain number of electives in addition to the MMC.

Table 15

Compilation of High School Graduation Requirements in Addition to the MMC (n = 137)

Additional requirement	# of schools	% of schools
MMC only – no additional	66	48.18
Computer	39	28.47
P.E. / Health	19	13.87
Other Required Courses	16	11.68
Seminar	14	10.22
Social Studies	9	6.57
Careers	5	3.65
Foreign Language	5	3.65
Speech	5	3.65
Community Service	4	2.92
Personal Finance	3	2.19
Business	2	1.46
Consumer Ed	2	1.46

The largest category of requirement beyond the MMC is some type of computer class; 28.47% of schools require such a course. Next highest is an additional requirement

in physical education/health by 13.87% of the schools. Some sort of seminar class is required by 10.22% of the schools. Additionally, 11.68% of schools require some other course beyond those listed.

Overall changes in schools because of the MMC.

SQ13, an open-ended question that asked respondents to describe overall changes they anticipated making because of the MMC, was answered by 76.65% of respondents (n = 151), as shown in Table 16. Many of the respondents made comments indicating concern that the MMC would cause a higher drop-out rate because many students would be required to pass classes they were unable to pass. As a result, some respondents said schools were making changes, such as changing from semesters to trimesters and adding credit recover procedures, to give these students an alternative to dropping-out of high school.

Table 16

Overall Changes in Schools Because of the MMC (n = 151)

		Type			
#	%	A	B	C	Change
28	18.54				None
21	13.91	C	C	P	Add math, science, English, foreign language, PE & health
19	12.58	S	A	O	Move to trimesters
11	7.28	S	A	O	Changed daily schedule

Note. Type A = [C]urriculum [F]aculty [S]cheduling [O]ther, Type B = [A]ll classes [C]ore classes [E]lective classes, Type C = [P]ositive comment [N]egative comment [O]bservation

Table 16 (continued)

Overall Changes in Schools Because of the MMC (*n* = 151)

		Type			
#	%	A	B	C	Change
10	6.62	F	C	P	Add staff in math and science
9	5.96	C	A	P	Add credit recovery
6	3.97	C	C	P	Add support classes
6	3.97	C	E	N	Elective classes may be eliminated or less sections offered
5	3.31	C	A	N	More required classes – less elective classes
3	1.99	C	A	P	Add summer classes
3	1.99	C	A	P	Increase zero hour / after school classes
3	1.99	C	A	P	More rigor
3	1.99	C	E	N	Eliminate most elective courses
3	1.99	C	E	P	Add a class to fulfill the arts requirement
3	1.99	C	E	P	Add new elective courses
3	1.99	S	A	O	More flexible scheduling
3	1.99	S	C	P	Offer Algebra II over 2 years
2	1.32	C	A	P	Add online classes
2	1.32	C	C	P	Add credit acceleration / testing out opportunities
2	1.32	C	E	N	Choir will be dropped
1	0.66	C	A	O	Classes restructured to fulfill more than one requirement
1	0.66	C	A	O	MMC is not a problem if students pass classes
1	0.66	C	C	P	Increase math emphasis in industrial arts

Note. Type A = [C]urriculum [F]aculty [S]cheduling [O]ther, Type B = [A]ll classes [C]ore classes [E]lective classes, Type C = [P]ositive comment [N]egative comment [O]bservation

Table 16 (continued)

Overall Changes in Schools Because of the MMC (*n* = 151)

		Type			
#	%	A	B	C	Change
1	0.66	C	E	N	Electives suffer with students failing classes
1	0.66	C	E	N	Eliminate Band
1	0.66	C	E	P	Add non-performing music classes
1	0.66	F	A	O	Realignment of staff
1	0.66	F	E	N	Music teaching faculty will be reduced or eliminated
1	0.66	O	A	O	Merger of 2 schools into 1
1	0.66	O	A	N	Increased student frustration – more dropouts
1	0.66	O	E	N	It's tougher to support big ticket arts classes
1	0.66	O	E	P	A commitment has been made to enhance and support the arts
1	0.66	S	A	O	Difficult scheduling decisions
1	0.66	S	A	O	Increase length of school day
1	0.66	S	A	O	More focus on test prep & less focus on developing potentials
1	0.66	S	A	O	Provide opportunities for HS credit in middle school
1	0.66	S	A	N	Probably have to close our doors
1	0.66	S	C	O	Move French to eighth grade
1	0.66	S	E	N	Students can't fit in art & music due to new requirements
1	0.66	S	E	P	Ensure that arts are offered to all students

Note. Type A = [C]urriculum [F]aculty [S]cheduling [O]ther, Type B = [A]ll classes [C]ore classes [E]lective classes, Type C = [P]ositive comment [N]egative comment [O]bservation

Table 17 displays the distribution of comments made in response to SQ13 by category, to see which issues were more important and which issues were of lesser importance, and which issues could be characterized as positive and which as negative. Of the comments made, 18.54% of respondents (n = 28) said their school was making no change while 81.46% (n = 123) made a comment relevant to some change their school was making in response to the MMC. The comments ranged from relatively benign (for example, "more rigor") to extreme (for example, "probably have to close our doors"). The greatest number of comments (50.33%) was related to adding core classes and staff, and changing schedule and/or moving to trimesters (n = 76). While there were certainly some very negative comments made regarding the arts (for example, "choir will be dropped" or "eliminating band"), there were more than twice as many positive comments regarding core classes (26.49%) as there were negative comments regarding elective classes (9.93%).

Table 17

Summary of Types of Comments for SQ13

Type	#	%
None	28	18.54
Curriculum – Total	77	50.99
Faculty – Total	12	7.95
Scheduling – Total	44	29.14
Other – Total	4	2.65
All Classes – Total	68	45.03
Core Classes – Total	44	29.14
Elective Classes – Total	25	16.56
Observations – Total	41	27.15
Negative Comments – Total	24	15.89
Positive Comments – Total	69	45.70
Curriculum – All Classes – Observation	2	1.32
Curriculum – All Classes – Negative Comment	5	3.31
Curriculum – All Classes – Positive Comment	20	13.25
Curriculum – Core Classes – Positive Comment	30	19.87
Curriculum – Elective Classes – Negative Comment	13	8.61
Curriculum – Elective Classes – Positive Comment	7	4.64
Faculty – All Classes – Observation	1	0.66
Faculty – Core Classes – Positive Comment	10	6.62
Faculty – Elective Classes – Negative Comment	1	0.66
Scheduling – All Classes – Observation	37	24.50
Scheduling – All Classes – Negative Comment	1	0.66
Scheduling – Core Classes – Observation	3	1.99
Scheduling – Core Classes – Negative Comment	1	0.66
Scheduling – Elective Classes – Negative Comment	1	0.66
Scheduling – Elective Classes – Positive Comment	1	0.66
Other – All Classes – Observation	1	0.66
Other – All Classes – Negative Comment	1	0.66
Other – Elective Classes – Negative Comment	1	0.66
Other – Elective Classes – Positive Comment	1	0.66

Research Question 2 – Initial Effects of the Michigan Merit Curriculum on Music Programs

In order to evaluate changes made to Michigan public high school music programs since they began to implement the MMC, respondents were asked to describe all of the performing ensembles and non-performing music classes in their schools in 2007 and 2009. For each ensemble/class, they indicated the name, whether it was for credit or non-credit, enrollment, and number of teaching faculty (FTEs). Additionally, respondents were asked to write a paragraph in open response to SQ7, which asked them what changes were made to their music program as a result of the MMC.

Music enrollment.

The first section of questions (SQ1) consisted of seven items intended to describe the respondents' schools. Respondents were asked to provide the total enrollment on May 1, 2007 and on May 1, 2009, and the number of grades that the total enrollment represented, which was four for the large majority of schools (grades 9–12), as well as the school's county, population of surrounding area, and percentage of students receiving free or reduced price lunch. SQ2 through SQ5 asked respondents to list all of their music classes, including enrollment in those classes, for both 2007 and 2009. The sum of these various enrollment numbers provided the total number of students in music classes in a school for the two time points of the study. These numbers do not take into account students who could be in more than one music class; using this procedure counted students once for each music class in which they were enrolled.

Music enrollment by school size. Table 18 shows the percentage of mean music enrollment (both performing music ensembles and non-performing music classes) for 2007 and 2009 broken down by school size (class), as well as the percentage of change in music enrollments for the same time periods. Only those schools that provided total school enrollment and music enrollment for both time points are included in the table.

Table 18

Music Enrollment Changes by School Size

	% Mean music enrollment		% Change in music enrollment between 2007 and 2009	
Class	May 1, 2007	May 1, 2009	Mean	Median
AA (*n* = 7)	18.96 (11.33)	17.88 (10.34)	3.07 (33.54)	-1.35
A (*n* = 18)	29.14 (12.23)	28.98 (11.85)	3.51 (28.44)	0.93
B (*n* = 27)	25.79 (13.34)	26.31 (12.02)	8.16 (35.98)	4.17
C (*n* = 41)	24.14 (14.00)	25.48 (14.67)	8.03 (36.59)	2.89
D (*n* = 44)	28.40 (20.23)	29.17 (20.51)	13.13 (53.57)	-0.96
Total (*n* = 137)	26.22 (15.88)	26.90 (15.91)	9.53 (41.93)	1.82

Note. Standard deviations are indicated in parentheses.

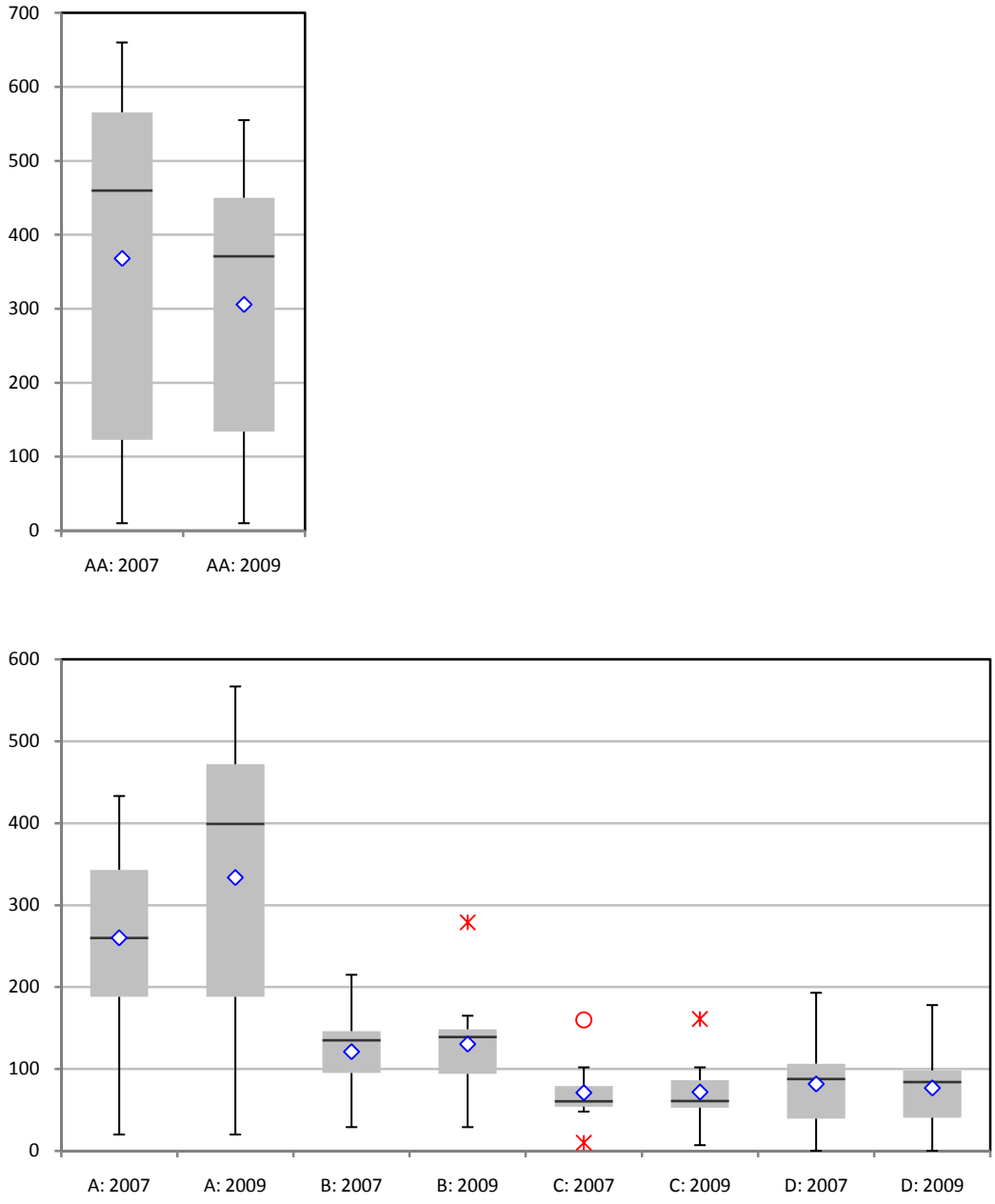
Large standard deviations are the result of data with wide ranges. Since mean numbers with such large standard deviations may be indicative of data containing outliers, median numbers are also included, which may be a better representation of the data. Figure 2 shows box plot charts of music enrollment for 2007 compared to music enrollment for 2009 by school size (class). Each box plot shows minimum and maximum

enrollment, lower and upper quartile enrollment, and median (line) and average (diamond) enrollment. Data outliers are also shown.

Class B schools had the highest median rate of growth in music with a 4.17% gain. The largest schools (AA schools) had the largest loss in median music enrollment with a decline of 1.35 %. It is also worth noting that the class D schools had the widest range of change for music enrollment. Class D music enrollment ranged from a loss of 95.53% to a gain of 200.63% (*M* = 15.24, *Mdn* = -0.76, *SD* = 54.76).

Figure 2

Box Plots of Music Enrollment (2007 Compared to 2009) by Class (School Size)



Music enrollment by geographic distribution. Table 19 shows the percentage of mean music enrollment (both performing music ensembles and non-performing music classes) for 2007 and 2009 broken down by geographic area, as well as the percentage of change in music enrollments for the same time periods. Only those schools that indicated total school enrollment and music enrollment for both time points, and included their school's county, are included in the table.

Table 19

Music Enrollment Changes by Geographic Area

Geographic Area	% Mean music enrollment		% Change in music enrollment between 2007 and 2009	
	May 1, 2007	May 1, 2009	Mean	Median
North (*n = 35*)	25.74 (17.00)	23.75 (15.45)	3.81 (45.89)	-2.29
Central (*n* = 41)	24.96 (13.87)	26.29 (16.51)	7.97 (43.56)	1.82
South West (*n* = 36)	29.75 (13.65)	30.36 (13.86)	3.63 (21.73)	5.98
South East (*n* = 25)	22.86 (20.26)	26.38 (18.67)	28.56 (51.46)	11.08
Total (*n* = 137)	26.22 (15.88)	26.90 (15.91)	9.53 (41.93)	1.82

Note. Standard deviations are indicated in parentheses.

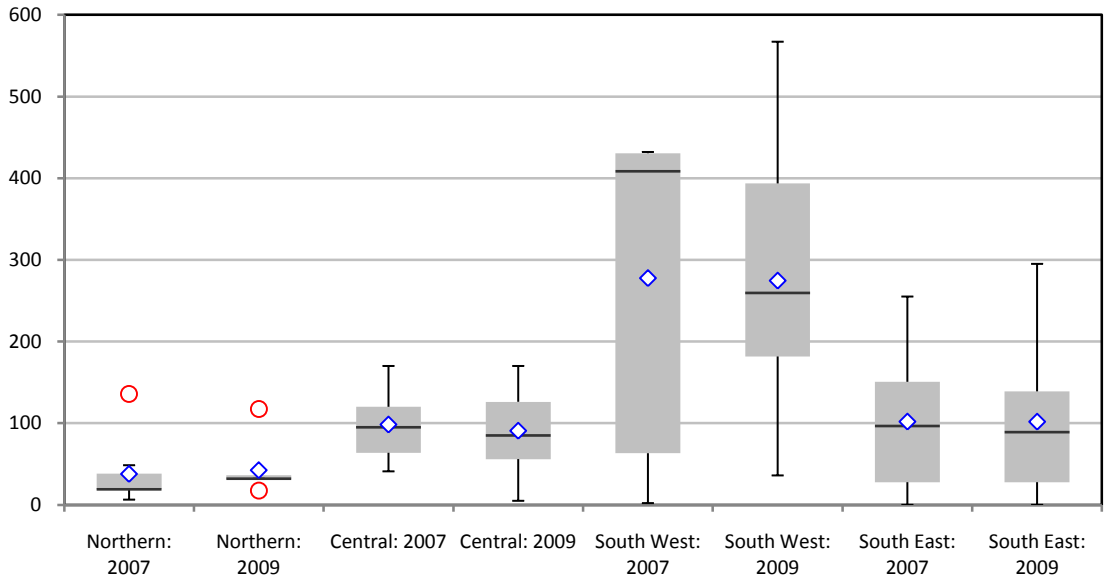
Since large standard deviations result from data with wide ranges, and mean numbers with such large standard deviations may be indicative of data containing outliers, median numbers are also included, which may be more representative of the results. Figure 3 shows box plot charts of music enrollment for 2007 compared to music enrollment for 2009 by geographic area. Each box plot shows minimum and maximum

enrollment, lower and upper quartile enrollment, and median (line) and average (diamond) enrollment. Data outliers are also shown.

Music enrollment declined the most in the northern half of the state with a 2.29% decline in median music enrollment. The northern portion of the state was the only quadrant that experienced a decline in both median school enrollment and median music enrollment. The other three quadrants, while all having a declining median school enrollment, at the same time all had growth in median music enrollment. The central portion of the state had a 1.82% growth in median music enrollment, the southwestern portion of the state had a 5.98% growth in median music enrollment, and the southeastern portion of the state (the most populous region) had an 11.08% growth in median music enrollment.

Figure 3

Box Plots of Music Enrollment (2007 Compared to 2009) by Geographic Area



Music enrollment by town population. Table 20 shows the percentage of mean music enrollment (both performing music ensembles and non-performing music classes) for 2007 and 2009 broken down by town population, as well as the percentage of changes in music enrollments that occurred for the same time periods. Only those schools that made responses in total school enrollment and music enrollment for both time points, and indicated the size of their school's town/city, are included in the table.

Table 20

Music Enrollment Changes by Town/City Size

Town/City Size	% Mean music enrollment		% Change in music enrollment between 2007 and 2009	
	May 1, 2007	May 1, 2009	Mean	Median
< 1000 (*n* = 25)	31.29 (22.77)	29.13 (21.51)	2.71 (37.54)	-0.96
1000−5000 (*n* = 68)	23.11 (13.58)	24.92 (13.76)	15.33 (47.68)	5.74
> 5000 (*n* = 41)	28.31 (14.24)	29.15 (15.87)	6.74 (33.06)	1.20
Total (*n* = 137)	26.22 (15.88)	26.90 (15.91)	9.53 (41.93)	1.82

Note. Standard deviations are indicated in parentheses.

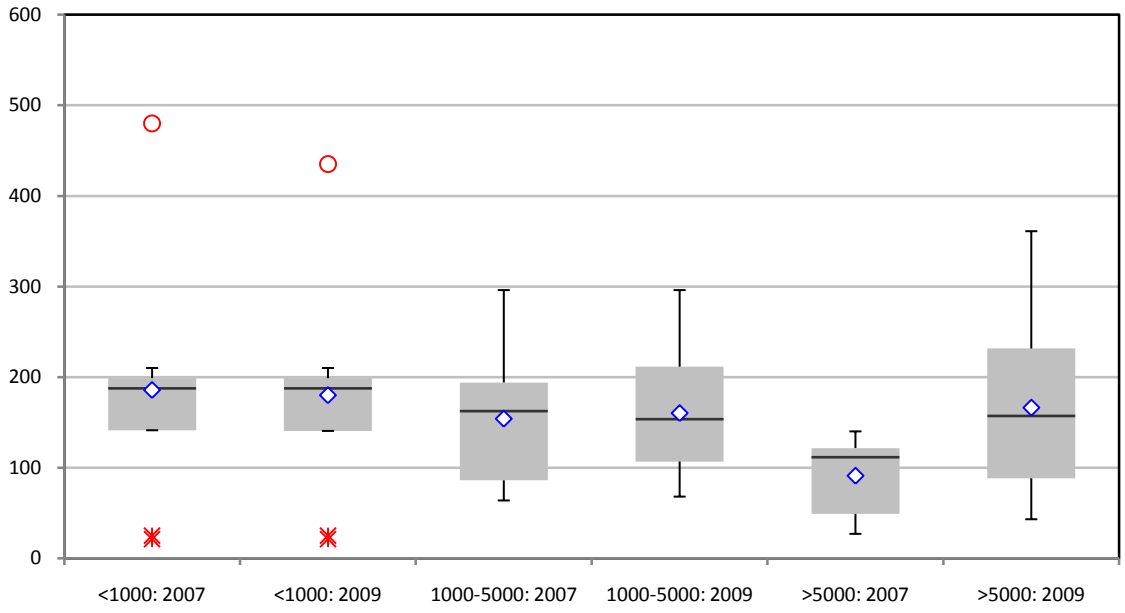
Figure 4 shows box plot charts of music enrollment for 2007 compared to music enrollment for 2009 by population. Each box plot shows minimum and maximum enrollment, lower and upper quartile enrollment, and median (line) and average (diamond) enrollment. Data outliers are also shown.

Towns and cities of all sizes experienced a decline in median total school enrollment between 2.86% and 3.15%; at the same time, only the schools in the smallest

towns (less than 1000) declined in median music enrollment as well, with a 0.96% loss. Schools in midsized and larger towns and cities experienced growth in median music enrollment, with the midsized towns and cities having the largest growth of 5.74% of median percentage of music enrollment.

Figure 4

Box Plots of Music Enrollment (2007 Compared to 2009) by Population



Music enrollment by socio-economic status. Table 21 shows the mean percentage of music enrollment (both performing music ensembles and non-performing music classes) for 2007 and 2009 broken down by socio-economic status, as well as the percentage of changes that occurred in music enrollments for the same time periods. Only those schools that provided responses in total school enrollment and music enrollment for

both time points, and indicated their school's percentage of free or reduced price lunch, are included in the table.

Table 21

Music Enrollment Changes by Socio-Economic Status

	% Mean music enrollment		% Change in music enrollment between 2007 and 2009	
SES	May 1, 2007	May 1, 2009	Mean	Median
< 25% (*n* = *25*)	27.96 (19.79)	30.32 (17.95)	28.49 (55.93)	13.30
25%−50% (*n* = 68)	25.11 (15.45)	24.56 (14.78)	3.39 (35.77)	-2.03
> 50% (*n* = 34)	25.53 (12.37)	26.40 (15.58)	5.71 (34.60)	1.95
Total (*n* = 137)	26.22 (15.88)	26.90 (15.91)	9.53 (41.93)	1.82

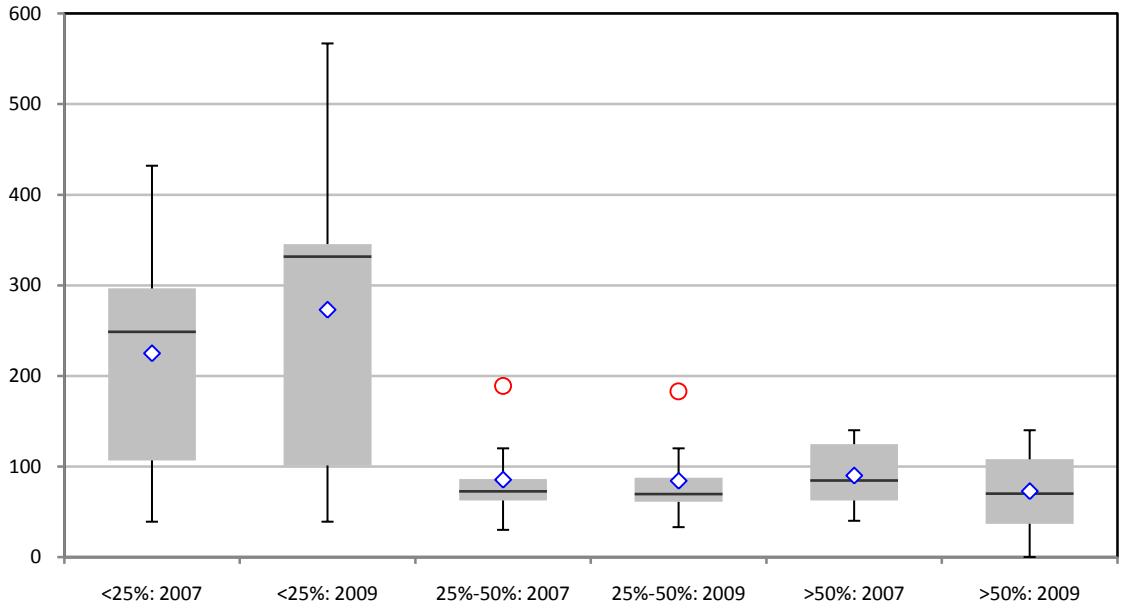
Note. Standard deviations are indicated in parentheses.

Figure 5 shows box plot charts of music enrollment for 2007 compared to music enrollment for 2009 by SES. Each box plot shows minimum and maximum enrollment, lower and upper quartile enrollment, and median (line) and average (diamond) enrollment. Data outliers are also shown.

All three SES groups of schools experienced declining total school median enrollment; all but the middle SES group also experienced a growth in median music enrollment. High SES schools had a 13.30% gain in median music enrollment. The middle SES schools had a decline of 2.03% in median music enrollment. Low SES schools had a 1.95% gain in median music enrollment.

Figure 5

Box Plots of Music Enrollment (2007 Compared to 2009) by SES



Enrollment summary. A recurring thread in the data between 2007 and 2009 was declining total school enrollment (*M* = -2.26%, *Mdn* = -3.11%, *SD* = 7.07). Over the same period, the percentage of students who were enrolled in music classes showed some growth (*M* = 9.53%, *Mdn* = 1.82%, *SD* = 41.93). The schools with the largest decline in school enrollment were smaller schools, those in the northern half of the state, those located in midsized population areas, and those with the greatest number of students receiving free or reduced price lunch. Schools with the smallest decline in school enrollment were the larger schools, those located in the southwestern portion of the state, those in larger cities, and those with the fewest students receiving free or reduced price lunch. The schools with the greatest decline in music enrollment were large schools,

those in the northern half of the state, those located in small population areas, and those with a midrange of students receiving free or reduced price lunch. Schools with the largest gain in music enrollment we re the midsized schools, those located in the southeast portion of the state, those in midsized cities, and those with the lower range of students receiving free or reduced price lunch.

Performing ensembles and non-performing music classes.

In SQ2 and SQ3, respondents were asked to describe the performing ensembles in their schools. In SQ4 and SQ5, respondents were asked to list the non-performing music classes in their schools. A comparison of this data showed music department declines or gains in those two years (see Table 22).

Respondents reported 2007 enrollment in both performing ensembles (n = 157) and non-performing music classes (n = *39*) ranging from a low of 2 to a high of 639. As a percentage of total school enrollment, music enrollment ranged from 1.04% to 77.10%. For 2009 respondents reported enrollment numbers in both performing ensembles and non-performing music classes ranging from a low of 5 to a high of 735. In terms of percentage of total school enrollment, music enrollment ranged from a low of 1.00% to a high of 96.22%. The percentages include students who may be taking more than one music class (and thus raising the percentage).

Table 22

Comparison of Performing Ensembles Between 2007 and 2009 (n = 157)

	2007				2009			
	Credit ensembles		Non-credit ensembles		Credit ensembles		Non-credit ensembles	
Ensemble	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Band	152	96.82	2	1.27	152	96.82	2	1.27
Choir	102	64.97	3	1.91	106	67.52	3	1.91
Jazz Band	53	33.76	9	5.73	53	33.76	18	11.46
Orchestra	21	13.38	1	0.64	21	13.38	1	0.64
Other	14	8.92	3	1.91	18	11.46	2	1.27
Jazz Choir	7	4.46	5	2.55	7	4.46	5	2.55

Note. # columns above refer to the number of schools for that category. Schools with multiple like-ensembles were counted as one.

Including both credit ensembles and non-credit ensembles, the ensemble offered by the highest percentage of schools (98.09%) was band. The numbers remained unchanged between 2007 and 2009; schools had anywhere from one to four bands. The ensemble offered by the next highest percentage of respondents was choir (69.43% in 2009), with schools having between one and five choirs. Choir was one of the few ensembles that was offered by a higher percentage of schools in 2009 than in 2007. Jazz band was offered by the third highest percentage of respondents (45.22% in 2009), although it should be noted that 25.35% of jazz bands were non-credit ensembles and 41.67% of jazz choirs were for non-credit (the highest percentage ensemble type that was a non-credit ensemble). Orchestras, like bands, remained unchanged between 2007 and

2009 at 14.01%. Other types of ensembles, such musical theater and guitar were reported by 12.74% of respondents in 2009, showing the largest growth of any category by growing 15.00% between 2007 and 2009.

The changes in the types and numbers of non-performing music classes were also analyzed (see Table 23). There was growth in the number of schools offering non-performing music classes from 2007 to 2009. In 2007, 19.80% of respondents (n = 39) offered non-performing music classes, and in 2009, 23.35% of respondents (n = 46) offered non-performing music classes. The most commonly offered classes were Music Appreciation and Music Theory followed by Guitar and Piano Labs. Some of the growth in these non-performing music classes may be in response to the new VPAA requirement, or from a desire to broaden school curriculum to include music education classes beyond the traditional Band, Choir, and Orchestra triumvirate.

Table 23

Distribution of Non-Performing Music Classes (*n* = 46)

	2007		2009	
Class	# Credit	%	# Credit	%
About Music	1	2.17	1	2.17
* Advanced Guitar	1	2.17	2	4.35
Advanced Music Keyboard	2	4.35	1	2.17
Advanced Music Theory	1	2.17	1	2.17
Advanced Piano Lab	1	2.17	0	0.00
Elements of Music	2	4.35	2	4.35
Exploring Music	1	2.17	1	2.17
Fine Arts Appreciation	1	2.17	0	0.00
* Guitar Lab	5	10.64	7	15.22
* History of Popular Music	0	0.00	1	2.17
* History of Rock	2	4.35	3	6.52
* Intro to Jazz History & Improv	0	0.00	1	2.17
Music and Fine Arts	1	2.17	1	2.17
* Music Appreciation	9	19.15	15	32.61
Music from Sound to Stage	1	2.17	1	2.17
* Music History	2	4.35	4	8.70
Music in a American Culture	1	2.17	1	2.17
Music Road Rules	1	2.17	1	2.17
Music Tech	2	4.35	2	4.35

Note. Classes with an asterisk showed a percentage gain between 2007 and 2009.

Table 23 (continued)

Distribution of Non-Performing Music Classes (*n* = 46)

	2007		2009	
Class	# Credit	%	# Credit	%
Music Theory	16	34.04	15	32.61
Music Theory and Songwriting	1	2.17	1	2.17
* Music Through Film	0	0.00	1	2.17
Musical Roots	1	2.17	1	2.17
* Musical Theater	0	0.00	1	2.17
* Piano Lab	6	12.77	7	15.22
* Video Music Production	0	0.00	1	2.17

Note. Classes with an asterisk showed a percentage gain between 2007 and 2009.

A different look at the answers to SQ2 through SQ5 concerning performing ensembles and non-performing music classes from the 197 respondent schools shows the changes to the various curricula of music departments around Michigan between 2007 and 2009 (see Table 24). There was no music at all reported by 19.80% of the respondents (*n* = 39). Respondents from 24.37% schools (*n* = 48) reported their school had either one band, or one band and one choir. The remaining 55.83% of schools had a mixture of bands, choirs, orchestras, percussion ensembles, other ensembles, guitar, and non-performing music classes in various multiples and mixtures. Notably, only 21.83% of the 197 respondent schools (*n* = 43) made any music curriculum changes at all. Music classes were added by 12.18% of schools (*n* = 24), 7.11% dropped music classes (*n* =

14), and 2.54% had a combination of added music classes and dropped music classes (*n* = 5). Combined, 14.72% added music classes and 9.64% dropped music classes.

Table 24

Compilation of Music Department Curricular Changes Between 2007 and 2009

Net gain/loss		# of schools	% of schools
None		157	79.70
	Added 1 B, Dropped 1 C	1	0.50
	Added 2 B, Dropped 1 C, 1 N	1	0.50
	Added 1 N, Dropped 1 C	1	0.50
1 Gain		19	9.64
	Added 1 N	12	6.09
	Added 1 B	3	1.52
	Added 1 C	3	1.52
	Added 2 N, Dropped 1 C	1	0.50
2 Gain		4	2.03
	Added 2 N	2	1.02
	Added 1 B, 1 C	1	0.50
	Added 1 C, 1 N	1	0.50
3 Gain		1	0.50
	Added 2 B, 1 C	1	0.50
>3 Gain		1	0.50
	Added 2 B, 1 C, + N	1	0.50
1 Loss		12	6.09
	Dropped 1 N	7	3.55
	Dropped 1 C	2	1.02
	Dropped 1 B	2	1.02
	Added 1 N, Dropped 2 C	1	0.50
2 Loss		2	1.02
	Dropped 1 B, 1 C	1	0.50
	Dropped 2 C	1	0.50
>3 Loss		1	0.50
	Dropped + C	1	0.50

Note. B = band, C = choir, N = non-performing class, + = multiple (3 or more).

Respondents were also asked for the "number of teaching faculty (FTEs)" for each ensemble/class. The intention of this question was to determine how many full time teachers there were for a given ensemble/class. For example, a school has three bands and three full time band teachers. Each of the three teachers' daily schedule consists of directing one band, assisting in the other two bands, and private lessons to the members of the three bands. Thus, each of the three bands has three teachers. This question showed the percentage of Michigan's schools that were in a similar position. Of the respondents who answered the question, the majority answered one (indicating one ensemble/class – one full time teacher). There were five band ensembles, three orchestras, and one choir, from different schools, that had two FTEs each. Of the 102 respondents who answered, 8.82% (n = 9) responded two, indicating a team-taught ensemble with two full time teachers (none were non-performing music classes).

Changes in music programs because of the MMC.

SQ7 asked about changes made to music classes because of the MMC. There were 203 different responses made by 171 survey respondents. Over half of the comments ranged from "none" to "probably very little." The remaining comments were split relatively evenly between positive (P) comments and negative (N) comments. Even though there were certainly some severely negative effects to some music programs, over three-quarters of the respondents said their schools would feel either no effect or a positive effect from the MMC.

Table 25

Compilation of Changes in Music Programs Because of the MMC (n = 203)

P/N effect	Description of positive or negative effect	# of schools	% of schools
	None	109	53.69
	No changes unless enrollment drops	1	0.49
	None yet – changes are coming	1	0.49
	Not sure yet	1	0.49
	None – we schedule for Band & Choir specifically	1	0.49
	Probably very little	1	0.49
	Total No Effect	114	56.16
N	Decline in music staff because of increased staff in other areas for MMC	5	2.46
N	Decline in enrollment due to MMC	4	1.97
N	Drop sections of Choir	4	1.97
N	Decline in Enrollment in Choir	3	1.48
N	Decline in Enrollment in Band	2	0.99
N	Drop Choir	2	0.99
N	Drop Jazz Band	2	0.99
N	Reduced budget because of course expansion	2	0.99
N	Students not taking Band because can't schedule it with new requirements	2	0.99
N	Administration non-recognition of importance of music theory	1	0.49
N	Allow dual enrollment in Band & Choir (same period)	1	0. 49
N	Allow students to take Band or Choir for less than a full year	1	0. 49

Table 25 (continued)

Compilation of Changes in Music Programs Because of the MMC (n = 203)

P/N effect	Description of positive or negative effect	# of schools	% of schools
N	Combine M.S. and H.S. bands	1	0. 49
N	Combine performance classes due to declining enrollment	1	0. 49
N	Drop Band	1	0.49
N	Drop Choir accompanist	1	0.49
N	Drop fine arts electives	1	0.49
N	Drop Guitar class	1	0.49
N	Drop non-performing class	1	0.49
N	Drop sections of Orchestra	1	0.49
N	Electives per year reduced from 3 to 1	1	0.49
N	Eliminated music entirely	1	0.49
N	Emphasis on foreign language requirement by administration	1	0.49
N	Less co-teaching because of declining enrollment	1	0.49
N	Fewer electives	1	0.49
N	Fewer offerings	1	0.49
N	Marching Band substitution for P.E. changed from 1 year to 1 trimester	1	0.49
N	Penalization of students selecting music over P.E. due to health requirement	1	0.49
N	VPAA credit for eighth grade Band	1	0.49
	Total Negative Effect	46	22.66

Table 25 (continued)

Compilation of Changes in Music Programs Because of the MMC (n = 203)

P/N effect	Description of positive or negative effect	# of schools	% of schools
P	Add non-performing class	11	5.42
P	Change from semesters to trimesters	9	4.43
P	Change from 6 periods to 7 periods	5	2.46
P	Add Choir	2	0.49
P	Add electives because of trimesters	2	0.49
P	Add jazz band for credit	2	0.49
P	Align performing ensemble content expectations with state standards	2	0.49
P	Add Band	1	0.49
P	Add more sections of non-performing music classes	1	0.49
P	Add zero hour to add more elective choices	1	0.49
P	Change from 4x4 block to 5 period day	1	0.49
P	Change to 4x4 block	1	0.49
P	Jazz Band meets zero hour because of increased academic needs	1	0.49
P	Music test more rigorous due to emphasis in HSCEs in ELA	1	0.49
P	Open Jazz Band to all students not just band students	1	0.49
P	Split H.S. Band into two bands	1	0.49
P	Waive P.E. for 4 years of Marching Band	1	0.49
	Total Positive Effect	43	21.18

It should be noted that the largest positive effect listed above, by 5.42% of respondents, was the addition of non-performing music classes. The addition of non-performing music classes was the largest category of growth of any type of music ensemble or music class between 2007 and 2009.

Research Question 3 – Fulfilling the VPAA requirement of the Michigan Merit Curriculum

In order to determine how Michigan public high schools are responding to the MMC's new VPAA requirement, respondents were asked to describe the ways in which students will fulfill the new requirement, including class title, class description, and approximate percentage of students taking the class (SQ10). Respondents were also asked to anticipate the percentage of students who would be granted exemption from the VPAA requirement (SQ11), and whether the school had a fine arts requirement prior to the implementation of the MMC (SQ12).

Prior fine arts requirement.

Of the 197 respondents to the survey, 97.97% (n = 193) responded to SQ12. Of those, 47.15% (n = 91) indicated that they had a fine arts requirement before the MMC. That figure may not be indicative of the percentage of students who actually graduated with a fine arts experience because, for many schools, their previous fine arts requirement did not stand alone, but was one of several options. For example, a school may have had a two-credit graduation requirement for fine arts, vocational, or foreign language, which the student could fulfill by taking any of them (and very possibly without taking any fine arts course at all). Thus, even though a majority of the schools could say they had a fine

arts requirement, since it was simply a part of a cafeteria choice, many of the students may not, in fact, have graduated with a fine arts experience.

VPAA exemption.

Regarding the one-credit requirement for visual, performing, or applied arts, the MMC states:

> The visual, performing and applied arts credit requirement may be modified as part of a personal curriculum only if the modification requires the pupil to complete one additional credit in English language arts, mathematics, or science or one additional credit in a language other than English. This additional credit must be in addition to the number of those credits otherwise required in each subject area (MDE, 2008, p. 91).

Thus, if the school allows it, students may be exempt from the VPAA requirement if they take an extra English, math, science, or foreign language class.

Of the 169 responses to SQ11, 84.02% of schools (n = 142) indicated that none of their school's students would be exempt from the VPAA requirement. Another 8.88% of schools (n = 15) indicated that fewer than 15.00% of their students would be exempt from the VPAA requirement. Respondents from 4.14% of schools (n = 7) said that they did not know the percentage requesting exemption. Only 2.96% of schools (n = 5) indicated that a substantial percentage of their students (50.00% or more) would be exempt from the VPAA requirement (see Table 26).

Table 26

Compilation of Responses to % of Exemption from the VPAA Requirement (n = 169)

% of exemptions	# of respondents	% of respondents
0	142	84.02
1	8	4.73
2	2	1.18
3	1	0.59
5	3	1.76
15	1	0.59
50	1	0.59
75	1	0.59
100	3	1.76
Unknown	7	4.14

Fulfilling the VPAA requirement.

The credit guidelines published by the Michigan Department of Education for the one-credit visual, performing, or applied arts graduation requirement states that "the goal of the visual, performing, and applied arts credit guidelines is to ensure that all students have a foundation and experience in the complete artistic/creative process" (MDE, 2006b, p. 3). The Department of Education allowed local boards of education to determine which courses could fulfill the VPAA requirement. The MDE purposefully left vague the guidelines to provide local boards with the flexibility to determine which courses they would offer in fulfillment of the VPAA requirement. As a result, schools offered a large assortment of classes in fulfillment of this requirement.

SQ10 asked about ways schools anticipated students would fulfill the visual, performing, and applied arts requirement. The question was answered by 87.31% of respondents (n = 172). The responses to SQ10 were grouped into several categories: applied arts, industrial arts, musical and dance arts, related arts, theatrical arts, visual arts, other, and exempt (see Table 27).

Applied arts classes included Architectural Drawing, C.T. Graphic Technology, C.T. Video & Audio, C.A.D. Drafting, Computer, Cosmetology, C.T.E. classes, Culinary Arts, Food Preparation, Housing Interior Design, Landscape Design, Mechanical Drawing, Newspaper, Presentation Design, Robotics, Video Production, Video Yearbook, Web Design, Yearbook, and many more. Industrial arts classes included Auto, Building Trades, Carpentry, Construction, Shop, Small Engines, Welding, Wood Shop, and many more. Musical and dance arts classes included African-American Dance, Band, Choir, Choreography, Dance, Guitar Lab, Jazz Band, Jazz Choir, Orchestra, Percussion, Piano Lab, Tap Dance, Theater, Tumbling, and many more.

In another category were those classes that may not be specifically visual, performing, or applied arts classes, but that certainly were closely related to those areas. These included Art Appreciation, Art Tech, History of Pop Music, Introduction to Jazz, Music Appreciation, Music Composition, Music History, music private lessons, Music Technology, Music Theory and Songwriting, Music Through Film, World Music, and many more. The challenge of these classes would be to make sure they fulfill all of the guidelines for the VPAA requirement within the artistic/creative process: Create, perform/present, and respond. Theatrical arts classes included Acting, Broadcasting,

Drama, Play Production, Radio, School Plays, Stage Craft, Television, Theater, and many more.

Visual arts classes included Art, Ceramics, Clay & Sculpture, Design, Drawing & Painting, Fiber Art, Jewelry, Painting, Photography, Pottery, and many more. The category of "other" included classes that did not fit into previous categories, such as Library Assistant, Recreation, and School Store. The last category was requesting an exemption. Whether or not an exemption from this requirement will be given is a local school decision. Many schools are simply making the blanket decision that no one is exempt from this requirement (as evidenced earlier by the 84.02% of respondents who said that none of their students would be exempt from the VPAA requirement). Since an exemption requires an additional class in English, math, science, or foreign language, the fact that 15.98% of the schools were allowing exemptions for this requirement was further demonstrated by responses such as Accounting, Child Development, Creative Writing, English classes, English support classes, Family and Consumer Science, foreign language, Forensics, math support classes, seminar support classes, and Speech.

While there was a divergent range of responses to SQ10, by far the largest response was given for Art (79.07%, n = 136), Band (72.09%, n = 124), and Choir (51.16%, n = 88). There were 897 answers to SQ10 by the 172 respondents listing 115 different classes. The responses for Art, Band, and Choir (4.35% of the total classes given) accounted for 38.80% (n = 348) of the total responses.

Table 27 shows that the most responses received of all categories was for the visual arts (30.32%) with musical and dance arts a close second (28.54%) and, between

the two categories, collected over half of all responses, with all other categories accounting for the rest.

Table 27

Responses to SQ10 Summarized by Category

Category	# of classes (n = 115)	% of classes	# of responses (n = 897)	% of responses
Visual Arts	18	15.65	272	30.32
Musical & Dance Arts	8	6.96	256	28.54
Industrial Arts	12	10.43	112	12.49
Applied Arts	24	20.87	93	10.37
Theatrical Arts	15	13.04	72	8.03
Related Arts	16	13.91	51	5.69
Exempt	19	16.52	38	4.24
Other	3	2.61	3	0.33

Ancillary Findings

One of the ancillary findings that came to light when examining the survey data—the difference between traditional public schools and charter schools—was not one of the three research questions, but is supported by the data, and is therefore included. The other ancillary finding was the results of survey questions SQ14 and SQ15, which asked respondents to attribute the growth or decline of their music programs, as indicated by previous answers, on a Likert-type scale. These responses were included as an ancillary finding since they did not pertain to any research question but rather were included in the

survey to give the respondents the opportunity to characterize their answers on the survey relative to the impact of the MMC on their music programs.

Traditional public high schools compared to charter high schools.

In all ways but two, the charter high schools were comparable to the traditional public high schools. The two notable exceptions were that (a) the charter high schools had three times the percentage of schools with no music program as did the traditional public high schools, and (b) the charter high schools that had music programs had nearly twice the percentage of students enrolled in music as did the traditional public high schools (see Table 28).

Table 28

Public Schools Compared to Charter Schools

Category	% of survey schools	% of respondent schools	% of no music schools	% of total enrollment in music
Public schools	90.79	92.39	14.84	26.90
Charter schools	9.51	7.61	46.67	44.80

The 789 schools surveyed consisted of 90.49% traditional public high schools (n = 714) and 9.51% charter high schools (n = 75). Out of the 197 respondents to the survey, 92.39% (n = 182) were traditional public high schools and 7.61% (n = 15) were charter high schools. Charter high schools had a much higher percentage of schools with no music program than traditional public high schools. Of the 15 charter high school respondents, 46.67% (n = 7) reported they had no music program. Of the 182 traditional

public high school respondents, 14.84% of schools (n = 27) reported they had no music program.

Charter high schools that had music programs had a much higher percentage of students enrolled in music classes than traditional public high schools did. Performing ensemble numbers were reported in seven of eight charter high schools that reported they had a music program, representing a range of percentage of enrollment in music classes to total student enrollment ranging from 20.93% to 72.97% and averaging 44.80% (nearly double that of the traditional public school's 26.90%). Only one charter high school reported a non-performing music class; nearly all of charter high school participation in music classes was through a performing ensemble of some type.

Characterization of reason(s) for decline/growth in music.

Of the 197 respondents to the survey, 83.76% (n = 165) indicated the extent to which they attributed declines in their music program to the MMC. Even though 30.25% of the respondents reported that they felt their music program had declined in the two years since beginning to implement the MMC, only 1.85% said their answers represented the result of the MMC. The other 28.40% said their responses represented a range from "mostly due to the MMC" to "due entirely to other factors" (see Table 29). No decline in music program or a decline due entirely to factors other than the MMC was reported by 78.09% (n = 127) of respondents.

Table 29

Characterization of Reason(s) for Decline in Music (n = 162)

Response type	# of responses	% of responses
No decline	113	69.75
Entirely due to MMC	3	1.85
Mostly due to MMC	11	6.79
Due equally to MMC and other factors	9	5.56
Due mostly to other factors	12	7.41
Due entirely to other factors	14	8.64

Of the 197 respondents to the survey, 76.14% (*n* = 150) indicated the extent to which they attributed growth in their music program to the MMC. Growth in music programs in the two years since beginning to implement the MMC was reported by 39.33% of the respondents (*n* = 59). Nearly the same percentage attributed their growth to the MMC (1.33%) as those who attributed their decline to the MMC (1.85%). The other 38.00% said their growth represented a range from "mostly due to the MMC" to "due entirely to other factors" (see Table 30). No growth in music program or a growth due entirely to factors other than the MMC was reported by 86.67% (*n* = 130) of respondents.

Table 30

Characterization of Reason(s) for Growth in Music (n = 150)

Response type	# of responses	% of responses
No growth	91	60.67
Entirely due to MMC	2	1.33
Mostly due to MMC	4	2.67
Due equally to MMC and other factors	4	2.67
Due mostly to other factors	10	6.67
Due entirely to other factors	39	26.00

To summarize respondent characterizations for decline or growth in their music programs, 69.75% of respondents reported no decline and 60.67% of respondents reported no growth since beginning to implement the MMC. Between 30.24% and 39.33% reported decline or growth in their music departments since beginning to implement the MMC for a variety of reasons, very few of them related to the MMC; rather, they were related to other factors such as the declining enrollment, the economy, moving to trimesters, and quality of music teaching staff (one way or the other).

Changes in public high schools have indeed taken place in the two years since initial implementation of the Michigan Merit Curriculum. Many of those changes do not appear to be as severe regarding music programs as some music educators originally feared. In the final chapter, I will discuss what those changes mean in terms of their effect on the schools' music programs and make recommendations for change in the VPAA requirement.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS

A growing number of states have passed laws strengthening the high school graduation requirements in their states in response to a perceived weakened position of the United States compared to the rest of the world in the quality of education for their children (Achieve, 2008). The raising of high school graduation requirements has progressed under the scrutiny of and with the aid and encouragement of various organizations that have made it their mission to engender similar changes nationwide in order to better prepare students for life in an increasingly world-competitive job market and economy (Walker, 2006).

In response to an initiative by Governor Jennifer Granholm, a panel of leading educators led by Lt. Governor John Cherry recommended to State Board of Education Superintendent Michael Flanagan a new set of graduation requirements and course content standards and assessments for all public high schools called the Michigan Merit Curriculum (MMC). The State Legislature passed the MMC into law in 2006. These requirements moved Michigan from a position among the states with the fewest state-mandated high school graduation requirements, with a half-credit of civics being the sole requirement, to one among the states with the most comprehensive requirements in the nation.

The MMC contained 18 specific credits required for graduation. One of these credits was a one-credit requirement in visual, performing, or applied arts (VPAA). This requirement offered the potential for increasing the number of students involved in music education beyond the traditional performance-based classes like Band, Orchestra, and

Choir. The Michigan Merit Curriculum went into effect for all public school students who entered the eighth grade in 2006 (the graduating class of 2011). For these students, all of the MMC requirements except the two-credit requirement for world language are in effect. The final two credits for world language go into effect for the graduating class of 2016. At the time of data collection for this research study in 2009, the MMC had been implemented for all ninth and tenth grade students, and was to be completely implemented for all students in another two years. Since the MMC had not yet been fully implemented, this research study was designed to assess the initial impact that the Michigan Merit Curriculum has had on the public high schools and their music programs in Michigan, and to determine the initial effect of the new graduation requirement of a visual, performing, or applied arts credit.

To answer these questions, a mail-based survey was sent in April and May 2009 to all the public high schools in Michigan, including charter high schools. Respondent survey data were analyzed by comparing responses from 2007 and 2009 (the two basic time points of the survey questions). Total school enrollment was compared to music class enrollment. Other school aspects were examined, including number of periods in a school day, number of semesters in a school year, total teaching staff, music teaching staff, graduation requirements prior to the MMC, and graduation requirements in addition to the MMC. Music course offerings were analyzed and compared (both performing ensembles and non-performing music classes) to determine if music curricula had changed during the initial implementation of the MMC, and how schools were using the new VPAA requirement.

Discussion of Findings

Many music educators expressed to this researcher in informal discussion that they looked toward the MMC's implementation with great trepidation because they felt that it would pose a threat to their music program or music programs statewide, and that it would possibly pose a threat to their jobs. One of the discoveries of this research study was that the music programs in Michigan, overall, seemed to be proceeding along with no decline or change in spite of the MMC, at least so far. The outcome that was feared by many does not appear to have materialized—at least not on the whole. Certainly there were specific instances where great effect had been felt by schools, music programs, and music staff as a result of the MMC. There was no greater example than the small school in the Upper Peninsula that planned to close its doors permanently as a direct result (according to comments on the survey) of the MMC. Such effects were the exception, not the rule. Although school enrollment declined, the percentage of students enrolled in music increased. Music teaching staff declined at a lower rate than total teaching staff. Overall, more music classes were being added to school curricula than were being eliminated. This increase happened especially in non-performing music classes.

Research Question 1

Research question one asked, “What are the initial effects of the Michigan Merit Curriculum on public high schools in Michigan as reported by survey respondents?” Data from the survey used to answer this question included enrollment, location, town/city size, percent of students receiving free or reduced price lunch, class periods in a school

day, semesters in a school year, and teaching staff, as well as open-ended responses regarding changes in response to the MMC.

The most obvious indication of change in high schools during those two years was the finding of declining total enrollment. This decline may have had a great many causes, including the fact that people were leaving the state to look for work elsewhere because of Michigan's high unemployment rate (the highest of any state in America). While this decline cannot be directly attributed to the MMC, it can certainly be observed and measured and put into context with other answers to help illuminate the desired answer to the research question.

Total enrollment declined in every measurable category, by school size, by geographic area, by town/city size (population), and by percent of free or reduced price lunch (socio-economic status). Overall, median total school enrollment declined statewide by 3.11%. At the same time, total teaching staff declined statewide by a median of two FTEs.

Total school enrollment declined the most in midsized to small schools (schools with an average enrollment per grade of less than 250). The larger schools, with an average of 250 or more students per grade, showed a decline as well, but less than half that of the median decline for all schools. In looking at total enrollment decline by geographic area, the largest decline occurred in the northern and central quadrants of the state with the southeast sector declining less than the statewide median and the southwest quadrant actually having a 0.00% median change. School enrollment decline by population concentration showed the greatest decline in cities of less than 5,000 in

population and the least decline in larger cities. Decline in school enrollment as measured by socio-economic status revealed that less decline occurred in schools with a higher SES and more decline occurred in schools with a lower SES. Thus, the formula revealed for calculating decline in school enrollment is "less equals more and more equals less." Smaller school size, lower population (not only town and city size, but the northern and central quadrants of the state consist of less population than the south east and south west quadrants), and lower SES all translate to more decline in school enrollment; more of these same factors means less decline.

The statewide overall decline in total enrollment of 3.11% may be the result of people leaving Michigan to live elsewhere, more than likely as the result of the state's poor economy and job market. It may also be that there are more economic and job opportunities to be found in larger population areas than there are in sparser population areas; therefore, there has been a certain amount of migration from the northern, less populated areas, to the southern, more populated areas of the state. Likewise there is a certain amount of movement from smaller towns and cities to larger locales, in search of better opportunity. Since smaller population areas contain smaller schools, the natural result of such migration will also be from smaller schools to the larger schools in larger population areas.

Lower SES also translated to greater decline in enrollment. This could be the result of a number of factors. Lower SES students, as a group, may be part of family units that are more transient in nature to begin with, moving from one location to another with regularity. This group of students may also be more prone to dropping out of school

because of low achievement or a variety of other factors. In the final analysis, it may be that economic factors play a very large role in determining these population shifts which translate directly to the documented school enrollment declines. Population has moved around the state causing school enrollment to shift with it. At the same time a certain percentage has left the state altogether, resulting in school enrollment decline almost everywhere in the state.

Other changes in schools were noted in the study. The overwhelming majority of schools were making some sort of change relevant to the MMC, ranging from adding rigor to existing classes, to the revamping of their curriculum, including adding and/or eliminating staff and/or classes. Because of the MMC's greater requirement of core academic subjects for the entire student body than those previously required by law, many schools were concerned there would be a greater drop-out rate because of the greater demands of the MMC. A large percentage of schools have realigned their school day, gone to a trimester format, and/or added credit recovery to their curricula, perhaps responding to these concerns, in order to give students an alternative to dropping out by retaking required courses in which they were previously unsuccessful.[1] The schools that have changed to a trimester format did so to provide students with more opportunity to earn credit; they may view this extra credit opportunity as being the solution to the problem of not having enough class schedule time to retake classes or take all the electives desired. This shift in greater than one-fifth of the schools in Michigan between 2007 and 2009 certainly affected school music departments as it affected entire school

[1] In December, 2009 a new law was passed in Michigan which raised the age at which a student could drop out of school from 16 to 18, starting with the class of 2016.

curricula. Time will tell whether this change will return the desired result, or, rather, that this solution was a temporary solution.

The analysis suggests that for most schools, the biggest changes in graduation requirements required by the MMC will be in math, science, the fine arts, and eventually world language. These are the areas in which the largest numbers of schools will need to be adding classes, or sections of classes to their curriculum, and possibly need to be increasing or shifting highly qualified teaching staff to accommodate these new sections of classes. Schools will be affected and will respond in various ways. One respondent school stated that the next fall they would be closing their doors entirely because of the MMC. It was a very small, traditional public school in a remote area of the Upper Peninsula with a small teaching staff and very limited resources. They were faced with the necessity of adding highly qualified staff members to teach the additional classes they were required to add for the MMC and had no resources to do so. Their response was to simply close their doors. This is an extreme example: Most schools have not been affected by the MMC to such an extent.

A trend that appeared when analyzing the data was that some schools with graduation requirements that were greater than the MMC before its implementation dropped those requirements to match the MMC. For example, prior to the MMC one school required 25 credits for graduation, specifying 18 of them, and requiring an additional seven elective credits. Among the 18 they specified was one credit each of business, computer, and speech. After the MMC, they required the 18 credits of the MMC plus an additional seven elective credits. Although the number of credits required

for graduation was the same, the school dropped the requirements of business, computer, and speech because they are not included in the MMC. The reasons for this change could not be determined from the data. It may be that the schools felt that the students needed a more flexible schedule in order to retake classes they needed to graduate. It may be that the schools felt they needed the flexibility to schedule teaching staff in order to cover additional classes they now had to offer because of the MMC. It may be that if they retained previous requirements in addition to the MMC, students would have such a greatly reduced time for electives that they would not be able to take desired classes such as Music or Art. In any event, a number of schools dropped graduation requirements they had prior to the MMC which are not part of the MMC.

None of the respondent schools indicated that they had graduation requirements prior to the MMC that were higher than an MMC requirement (for example, 4 credits of science required prior to the 3 credits of science required by the MMC) that were subsequently reduced to the level of the MMC. While some schools did have a prior fine arts requirement greater than the MMC's one-credit VPAA requirement, they were virtually always part of a cafeteria-choice type of curriculum giving the student the option of taking some other course and no fine arts course at all. Some of these schools did reduce this requirement to the MMC requirement of one VPAA credit, but now all students must fulfill the requirement.

The result is a much greater uniformity in graduation requirements around Michigan. There are both advantages and disadvantages to this uniformity. A student can move from school to school and be able to count on relatively the same number of

requirements. Colleges and universities can count on more uniformly prepared incoming students from around the state. Employers can count more on new hires' abilities coming out of high school, regardless of the school from where they graduated. What may not be so beneficial is a community's ability to put its own stamp on its school. They may lose the ability to determine what is important to them and what they will require as part of their children's education. This ability may be lost because the local board may feel they have to stick strictly to the MMC for reasons previously stated, or others.

Research Question 2

Research question two asked, "What are the initial effects of the Michigan Merit Curriculum on public high school music programs, as reported by survey respondents?" Data from the survey used to answer this question included demographic data from the previous question, descriptions of performing ensembles and non-performing music classes, and open-ended responses regarding changes that had been made to music departments because of the MMC.

Changes in enrollment in music classes were compared by school size, geographic area, town/city size (population), and percent of free or reduced price lunch (socio-economic status). In nearly every comparison, the percentage of music class enrollment did not decline at all, but rather went up by a statewide median of 1.82%.

Enrollment in music classes represented the sum of the various enrollment numbers provided for the performing ensembles and non-performing music classes in the schools for the two time points of the study. These numbers did not take into account students who could be in more than one music class; using this procedure counted

students once for each music class in which they were enrolled. If there were a large number of students enrolled in multiple music classes in a school (this cannot be determined from the data) the subsequent music class enrollment percentages could be skewed as a result.

In examining music enrollment by school size, the greatest gain occurred in midsized to smaller schools (schools with an average enrollment per grade of less than 250), with these schools achieving a median gain greater than the statewide 1.82%. Schools with an average of more than 250 students per grade gained less than the statewide average, with the very largest schools actually having a median decline in music enrollment.

In looking at music enrollment by geographic area, the smallest gain in music enrollment occurred in the northern and central parts of the state with the south east and south west achieving the most gain in music enrollment. The largest gain in music class enrollment occurred in the southeastern portion of the state, which had not only an 11.08% gain in median percentage of total student enrollment in music classes (compared to a statewide gain of 1.82%), but also had a substantial growth in actual numbers enrolled in music classes as well.

Why did the schools in the southeast quadrant, the most densely populated section of the state, experience a median percentage of music enrollment of 600% greater than the statewide median? The fact that this section of the state is the most populous also means that it contains the largest concentration of larger schools (containing an average of greater than 250 students per grade). The 49 survey respondents to this study from this

geographic area contained 39% (*n* = 16) of schools of this size. (The quadrant with the next highest concentration of larger schools was the southwest section with 16% such schools: The northern and central quadrants combined contained only six such schools.) Also reported in the survey responses was the fact that non-performing music classes were reported by 60% (*n* = 18) of the 30 responses from larger schools. By comparison, non-performing music classes were reported by only 17% (*n* = 29) of the 167 responses from smaller schools. The fact that larger schools included non-performing music classes in their curriculum by a larger than 3.5 to 1 ratio over smaller schools could help to account for the very large growth the southeast quadrant, with its higher concentration of larger schools, has experienced in music enrollment.

Predictable results were found when looking at music enrollment by socio-economic status. The largest increase in median music enrollment in the data occurred in the high SES group, which achieved an increase in music enrollment of 13.30%. Middle and low SES students produced a substantially lower percentage of music students (between seven to 11 times fewer than the high SES group). Studies have shown that music students do better than the average student population on standardized tests. Taken as a whole, it stands to reason that the better students, students more likely to be in music classes, will come from more advantaged environments, and therefore will occur in greater concentration in high SES students than in middle or lower SES students.

As a result of school enrollment declining, total teaching staff statewide was reduced by a median of two FTEs per school while median music department staff remained virtually unchanged at one FTE per school. This puts to rest the notion—

prevalent among music educators—that the MMC would cause the demise of music programs and lead to the elimination of music educators' jobs.

When specifically asked for the changes in their music departments since beginning to implement the MMC, 56% responded from "none" to "probably very little." The remaining 44% were nearly evenly split between positive changes and negative changes. There were responses of drops (in classes and enrollments) and eliminations (of classes and jobs) but, at the same time, there were responses of positive changes and additions as well. In the end, even though there were some negative consequences to music departments reported as a result of the MMC, they tended to balance each other out statewide. What do these results mean? It may very well be indicative of the fact that schools are very interested in keeping their music programs intact in the face of economic pressures, which could in turn make it attractive to reduce these programs in favor of other requirements that they cannot ignore.

A traditional viewpoint is that whenever cuts are required in schools, it is arts programs that are among the first programs to feel those cuts, and when more time is required for academic classes such as English, math, or science, that time is taken away from arts programs (McMurrer, 2007). The majority of schools in this study are not feeling either of these effects, possibly indicating that music programs are important to the public schools of Michigan.

Research Question 3

Research question three asked, "How do survey respondents anticipate students will fulfill the visual, performing, or applied arts requirement of the Michigan Merit

Curriculum?" Data from the survey used to answer this question included the responses to three questions: (a) In what ways do you anticipate students will fulfill the VPAA requirement of the MMC? (b) What percent of students request exemption from the VPAA? and (c) Did your school have a fine arts graduation requirement prior to the MMC?

The VPAA requirement may actually be a new requirement to a larger percentage of the schools than the data suggested. Even though the data indicated that 50% of schools were already meeting or exceeding the new VPAA requirement, this result is misleading because, for many schools, their previous fine arts requirement did not stand alone, but was one of several options. For example, a school may have had a two-credit graduation requirement for fine arts, vocational, or foreign language, which the student could fulfill by taking any of them (and very possibly without taking any fine arts course at all). Thus, even though a majority of the schools could say they had a fine arts requirement, since it was a part of a cafeteria choice, many of the students may not, in fact, have graduated with a fine arts experience. Since the new VPAA requirement is a specific fine arts requirement, the end result will likely be that a much larger percentage of students will graduate with a fine arts experience and more than likely more than 50% of the schools will need to increase their actual requirement in this area.

Arts educators should be encouraged by the fact that the vast majority of schools (84%) indicated that none of their students would be exempt from the VPAA requirement by taking an additional class in ELA, math, science, or world language beyond the requirements of the MMC. However, hopes for increasing the numbers of students

exposed to music education beyond the traditional offerings of Band, Orchestra, and Choir are tempered by the manner in which some schools are interpreting how students can fulfill VPAA requirement.

Arts educators will find both positive and negative aspects in the results. On the one hand, the greatest number of students was expected to fulfill the requirement by enrolling in Band, Choir, and Art. Music and Art were, by far, the most given responses for how students will fulfill the VPAA requirement. On the other hand, over a hundred other answers were given as well, including some very puzzling responses like Library Assistant, Recreation, and School Store. Since the guidelines for what a class must contain in order to fulfill the VPAA requirement are flexible, many schools are offering classes in fulfillment of the VPAA requirement which, on the surface, do not appear to be visual, performing, or applied arts classes. There is the appearance that some schools are fitting whatever classes they desire into fulfilling the VPAA requirement. If this is the case, then the law needs be amended to either require schools to document why the classes they specify as fulfilling the VPAA requirement do so, or produce a state approved list of classes from which schools may select to fulfill this requirement. Leaving the local schools to decide for themselves with the minimal guidelines they currently have, and without requiring them to justify their choices could lead to possible misuse.

On the whole, it seemed that school survey respondents were genuinely concerned about preserving their arts programs and a great many of them were proceeding in any way they could to make sure their students still had the opportunities to receive a good

arts education (for example, by changing daily schedules and/or moving to trimesters to give more room in the schedule for students to take their desired electives).

As expected, schools found they had to either add core classes to their curriculum or add more sections of existing core classes in response to the MMC. In addition, some schools found it necessary to either add more teaching staff in core areas, or realign their current teaching staff. For some schools, this also meant eliminating or reducing classes and/or staff in the arts, including music; however, these cuts appear not to be as widespread as many had originally feared. The facts that enrollment in music classes was declining at a slower rate than total enrollment, and music department teaching staffs were not being reduced as much as overall total teaching staffs, suggest that music programs in public schools in Michigan are surviving relatively intact in the face of the MMC and the economy in Michigan.

As a final note, it is encouraging to discover that the responses to the survey question asking what classes schools would offer in fulfillment of the VPAA requirement included classes such as History of Pop Music, Humanities, Introduction to Jazz, Music Through Film, and others of a similar nature. This result, coupled with the increase in enrollment in non-performance music classes documented earlier, bodes well for a movement away from the traditional performance-based music programs, which mainly included only Band, Orchestra, and Choir. While the triumvirate of performing ensembles still makes up the core of music programs, more and more schools are including other offerings such as Guitar, Piano, Percussion, and various non-performing

music classes. These classes will continue to enlarge the circle of students enrolled in school music programs beyond Band, Orchestra, and Choir.

Ancillary Findings

Since the MMC concerns public high schools, and public high schools in Michigan include public school academies (otherwise known as charter schools), the data gathered for this study lent itself to the making of certain comparisons between traditional public high schools and charter high schools, even though such comparisons were not included in the research questions as part of the study. Comparisons were made regarding percentages of schools with no music programs, enrollment in music programs, how traditional public high schools compared to charter high schools in school size, by geographic area, by town/city size (population), and by percent of free or reduced price lunch (socio-economic status). In addition, schools were compared for class periods per school day, semesters per school year, and music class enrollment compared to total school enrollment.

In all ways but two the charter high schools were comparable to the traditional public high schools: The charter high schools had a three times greater percentage of schools with no music program than did the traditional public high schools (47% compared to 15%), and the charter high schools with music programs had nearly twice the percentage of students enrolled in music classes than did the traditional public high schools (45% compared to 26%). The most likely explanation for both phenomena is the fact that charter high schools are very small and comparatively new. Traditional public high schools have music programs that tend to be much more established and have a

greater tradition base in their communities. However, if they can maintain anywhere near 45% of total student enrollment in music classes, charter high schools may become more favorably compared to traditional public high schools as far as music programs go.

Discrepancies were noted regarding respondent's answers to the final two survey questions asking them to characterize any decline or growth in their music program as being attributable to the MMC. A number of the respondents who answered that their school had experienced no decline or some growth in their music program had, in previous questions, reported facts that showed a decline had, in fact, taken place. For example, 26.55% of respondents (n = 30) who reported that no decline had taken place showed by other data that a decline in music enrollment greater than the decline in total enrollment in their school had taken place anywhere from 0.07% to 10.32% for the same time period; 16.95% of respondents (n = 10) of the 59 who reported that growth had taken place, in fact, showed by other data that a decline in music enrollment greater than the decline in total enrollment in their school had taken place anywhere from 0.29% to 21.38% for the same time period. Additionally, 7.96% of respondents (n = 9) saw a decline in music teaching staff ranging from 0.14 FTE to 4.00 FTEs and characterized their music program as having no decline; 6.78% of respondents (n = 4) saw a decline in music teaching staff ranging from 0.10 FTE to 1.0 FTE and characterized their music program as having growth. This shows a difference of opinion as to exactly what constitutes a decline or growth. To this researcher, a reduction in the percentage of total student enrollment in music classes, or a reduction in the percentage of music staff FTEs indicates a decline in the music program; some respondents have indicated differently. It

may be that they felt that the quality of instruction and/or ensemble performance was unchanged (or improved) even though numbers and/or staff declined.

Conclusions

Since the Michigan Merit Curriculum first entered discussions among music educators in Michigan, it has elicited fears that their programs would be reduced and/or eliminated and that they themselves would lose their jobs as a result of the new requirements. In hindsight, and in light of the findings stated above, it appears, at least initially, that this fear is without foundation. Looking at the evidence put forward by the respondents to the survey for this research study, a claim could be made that music appears to be alive and well in the face of the challenges posed by the MMC. Consider the following:

1. Since schools began to implement the MMC, enrollment in music classes has not declined as much as total student enrollment.
2. The number of schools that have dropped or eliminated music classes since beginning to implement the MMC has been offset by the number of schools that have added music classes.
3. Many schools have changed their school day or gone to trimesters since beginning to implement the MMC in an effort, at least partially, to allow students to keep music in their schedules.
4. Music teaching staff has changed very little in the face of declining total teaching staff since beginning to implement the MMC.

5. Non-performing music classes since beginning to implement the MMC is on the rise in more and more schools.
6. The majority of schools are making no changes to their music programs as a result of the MMC.
7. The overwhelming majority of schools are requiring all of their students to fulfill the VPAA requirement and allowing no exemptions.
8. Music and art are the overwhelming choices of schools for their students to fulfill the VPAA requirement.
9. Nearly two-thirds of schools reported either no decline or no growth in their music programs—a remarkably stable situation in response to the MMC.

It is nearly always the case when great change occurs that people get nervous and want things to remain as they always have. This is certainly the case with the Michigan Merit Curriculum. People, including music educators, are resistant to it. They want things to stay the same as they always have. As a result, there is fear regarding the outcome of the change. This has been exhibited for many years now regarding music education programs in Michigan public high schools faced with the reality of the Michigan Merit Curriculum. The results of this research study may help to allay some of those fears by exhibiting facts that show that music programs will survive intact, and hopefully grow in the future, even in the face of the Michigan Merit Curriculum.

Recommendations for Practice

One of the findings uncovered by this research study was the hint that some schools may be certifying classes as fulfilling the VPAA requirement which may not be

actual visual, performing, or applied arts classes. The clear intent of the policymakers who drafted and passed the MMC was for the VPAA requirement to ensure exposure to the creative process (MDE, 2006b). The Michigan Department of Education drafted guidelines that describe what a class must do to fulfill the requirement. The decision was left up to the local school boards to decide exactly what those classes were. Based on the data submitted to this research study, it seems evident that some schools are interpreting the guidelines too loosely. This is a violation of at least the spirit, if not the letter, of the VPAA requirement, and should be further reviewed by at least the Department of Education, if not the Legislature. Perhaps the guidelines need further clarification so schools have less leeway to interpret the requirement any way they see fit, or fulfill the requirement with any class they see fit. It is clear what an English class is, what a math class is: It needs to be equally clear what a visual, performing, or applied arts class is.

Recommendations for Further Research

This research study covers only the first two years of the implementation of the Michigan Merit Curriculum. Additional studies after full implementation of the MMC would be beneficial. After the full 18 credit requirement is implemented for the class of 2016, including the world language requirement, and any other changes, revisions, or additions the Legislature may subsequently make to the MMC, studies of a similar nature would show whether the initial effects noted in this study are permanent or transitory.

The two main reasons put forth for the need for the MMC requirements were (a) the need for a better educated work force which would have higher earning potential (and thus contribute more to the state tax base), and (b) secondary school graduates who were

better equipped for success in post-secondary school education. Since this study was an assessment of the first two years of implementation of the MMC, with the first group of graduates several years away from completing the entire MMC, it is not possible at this stage of implementation to determine if these two goals will be met by the MMC. A subsequent study of a similar nature, but also including aspects to examine the success of these two goals, would also be useful.

A trend that is becoming more and more widespread is the change in schools from the semester to the trimester format. Another interesting study would be to look at the effect of the trimester system on school performing ensembles. If a school allows students to be members of an ensemble for two of the three semesters in the trimester year, how is that affecting performing ensembles?

A Personal Reflection on this Study

In many ways, the results of this study were surprising to me. For several years, the discussion among Michigan music educators, sometimes strident, was that the MMC was going to have an adverse effect on music programs. There was a fear that students were going to drop out of programs because they had to take other classes required by the MMC to graduate. There was also a fear that the number of dropouts might get so extreme that the programs themselves could become jeopardized. With the devastating economic climate in Michigan, the poorest in the country, there was a fear that schools would be required to make drastic cuts in budgets and programs because of the MMC, since additional classes were being required and the state had a history of reducing, not increasing, state aid to schools. It has been said that 2009 state revenues in Michigan

were comparable to those of 1965, yet schools had to operate with 2009 salaries and expenses. Adding the MMC would exacerbate these problems for schools and many thought one of the main solutions by schools would be the curtailment of music programs and/or music teaching jobs. I felt this personally when my instrumental music teaching position in a small, rural Michigan school was reduced from full-time to half-time between the 2004−2005 school year and 2007−2008 because of limited budget resources.

The fact that—as this study showed—music programs in public schools in Michigan, taken as a whole, are not declining in enrollment, staffing, and other areas is not only surprising but encouraging as well. Hopefully, it is a strong indication from the general academic community, and the public at large, that they agree with the position that has long been held by fine arts organizations and fine arts educators: The fine arts are an important and vital part of the general education of our youth and must be cherished and encouraged to grow.

Also encouraging is the result that non-performing music classes are increasing in schools. More than likely they will never replace the traditional performing ensembles as the main focus of music programs in the majority of schools. However, it is a healthy trend for music programs to include classes like Guitar Lab and Pop Music History as a way of including a larger percentage of the student body in music programs. For these programs to continue to grow they must remain relevant, they must continue to grow and change with the times.

It is also encouraging to see the charter schools compare favorably to the traditional public schools. Charter schools are continuing to grow and thrive. There are

many people who greatly prefer them to traditional public schools. Since this is the case, do not music educators want those schools to have viable music programs? This question should be met with a resounding yes.

While it is easy to second-guess decisions made in this study, in the end the survey seemed to contain what it needed to answer the research questions, and the procedures seemed to work well. While initially thinking that the end of the school year may not be the best time to distribute the survey, it seemed to work out well and may have been the best time of the year, in the end, for the process. The only possible negative in the process was the inclusion of relatively few large schools, especially from the Detroit Public Schools. After mailing out the statewide distribution of surveys, I received an email from the principal of a DPS high school stating that neither he, nor any DPS school, was allowed to respond to any survey not formally approved by the Detroit Board of Education. After contacting the DPS Board of Education, I determined that a procedure had to be followed which included submitting the survey to a board committee in the summer prior to the school year desired for distribution of the survey. As a result, the survey was nearly a year late to be considered by the Detroit Public Schools for the time-frame of this study, and a number of the larger schools were not heard from (although there were a few completed surveys returned from DPS high schools anyway). In spite of this, enough larger schools were heard from to make the study reliable and worthwhile. In the end the study proved very satisfying to me, and it is hoped that it will provide a valuable resource to the music education community in Michigan public schools and inspire them to continue with their good work and continue to help make

music education grow in importance and value in their students, the general education community, and the public at large.

Music programs in Michigan public high schools have a long, rich, and successful history. I have personally been witness to countless performances, over the last 40-plus years, at concerts and festivals, as well as performances at state and national conventions, by Michigan high school ensembles. These young musicians and their performances were as fine as any that could be heard nationwide. It is gratifying to have this study confirm that these music programs are continuing onward in the face of adversity. Hopefully, they will always continue to do so.

APPENDIX A:
GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS PRIOR TO THE MMC

Michigan Compiled Laws under MCL 380.1166 and 380.1502.

(1) In all public and nonpublic schools in this state regular courses of instruction shall be given in the Constitution of the United States, in the Constitution of Michigan, and in the history and present form of government of the United States, Michigan, and its political subdivisions. Instruction shall be given not later than the opening of the eighth grade, or its equivalent, except in schools maintaining a junior high school, in which case it may begin in the ninth grade.

(2) A high school in this state which offers 12 grades shall require a 1 semester course of study of 5 periods per week in civics which shall include the form and functions of the federal, state and local governments and shall stress the rights and responsibilities of citizens. A diploma shall not be issued by a high school to a pupil who has not successfully completed this course. This requirement shall not be applicable as a graduation requirement for a high school pupil who has enlisted or been inducted into military services.

APPENDIX B:
MICHIGAN PA 123 OF 2006

Act No. 123

Public Acts of 2006

Approved by the Governor

April 20, 2006

Filed with the Secretary of State

April 20, 2006

EFFECTIVE DATE: April 20, 2006

STATE OF MICHIGAN

93RD LEGISLATURE

REGULAR SESSION OF 2006

Introduced by Reps. Palmer, Mortimer, Taub, Ball, Vander Veen, Robertson, Caul, Pavlov, Garfield, Marleau, LaJoy, Meyer, Stakoe and Acciavatti

ENROLLED HOUSE BILL No. 5606

AN ACT to amend 1976 PA 451, entitled "An act to provide a system of public instruction and elementary and secondary schools; to revise, consolidate, and clarify the laws relating to elementary and secondary education; to provide for the organization, regulation, and maintenance of schools, school districts, public school academies, intermediate school districts, and other public school entities; to prescribe rights, powers, duties, and privileges of schools, school districts, public school academies, intermediate school districts, and other public school entities; to provide for the regulation of school teachers and certain other school employees; to provide for school elections and to prescribe powers and duties with respect thereto; to provide for the levy and collection of taxes; to provide for the borrowing of money and issuance of bonds and other evidences of indebtedness; to establish a fund and provide for expenditures from that fund; to provide for and prescribe the powers and duties of certain state departments, the state board of education, and certain other boards and officials; to provide for licensure of boarding schools; to prescribe penalties; and to repeal acts and parts of acts," by

amending section 1280 (MCL 380.1280), as amended by 2003 PA 275, and by adding section 1278b.

The People of the State of Michigan enact:

Sec. 1278b. (1) Except as otherwise provided in this section or section 1278a, beginning with pupils entering grade 8 in 2006, as part of the requirements under section 1278a the board of a school district or board of directors of a public school academy shall not award a high school diploma to a pupil unless the pupil has successfully completed all of the following credit requirements of the Michigan merit standard before graduating from high school:

(a) At least 4 credits in English language arts that are aligned with subject area content expectations developed by the department and approved by the state board under this section.

(b) At least 3 credits in science that are aligned with subject area content expectations developed by the department and approved by the state board under this section, including completion of at least biology and either chemistry or physics. The legislature strongly encourages pupils to complete a fourth credit in science, such as forensics, astronomy, Earth science, agricultural science, environmental science, geology, physics or chemistry, physiology, or microbiology.

(c) The credit requirements specified in section 1278a(1)(a).

(2) If a pupil successfully completes 1 or more of the high school credits required under subsection (1) or under section 1278a(1) before entering high school, the pupil shall be given high school credit for that credit.

(3) For the purposes of this section and section 1278a, the department shall do all of the following:

(a) Develop subject area content expectations that apply to the credit requirements of the Michigan merit standard that are required under subsection (1)(a) and (b) and section 1278a(1)(a)(i) and (ii) and develop guidelines for the remaining credit requirements of the Michigan merit standard that are required under this section and section1278a(1)(a), for the online course or learning experience required under section 1278a(1)(b), and for the requirements for a language other than English under section 1278a(2). All of the following apply to these subject area content expectations and guidelines:

(i) All subject area content expectations shall be consistent with the state board recommended model core academic curriculum content standards under section 1278. Subject area content expectations or guidelines shall not include attitudes, beliefs, or value systems that are not essential in the legal, economic, and social structure of our

society and to the personal and social responsibility of citizens of our society. The subject area content expectations shall require pupils to demonstrate critical thinking skills.

(ii) The subject area content expectations and the guidelines must be approved by the state board under subsection(4).

(iii) The subject area content expectations shall state in clear and measurable terms what pupils are expected to know upon completion of each credit.

(iv) The department shall complete the development of the subject area content expectations that apply to algebra I and the guidelines for the online course or learning experience under section 1278a(1)(b) not later than August 1, 2006.

(v) The department shall complete development of the subject area content expectations or guidelines that apply to each of the other credits required in the Michigan merit standard under subsection (1) and section 1278a(1)(a) not later than 1 year before the beginning of the school year in which a pupil entering high school in 2007 would normally be expected to complete the credit.

(vi) If the department has not completed development of the subject area content expectations that apply to a particular credit required in the Michigan merit standard under subsection (1) or section 1278a(1)(a) by the date required under this subdivision, a school district or public school academy may align the content of the credit with locally adopted standards.

(vii) Until all of the subject area content expectations and guidelines have been developed by the department and approved by the state board, the department shall submit a report at least every 6 months to the senate and house standing committees responsible for education legislation on the status of the development of the subject area content expectations and guidelines. The report shall detail any failure by the department to meet a deadline established under subparagraph (iv) or (v) and the reasons for that failure.

(b) Develop and implement a process for developing the subject area content expectations and guidelines required under this section. This process shall provide for all of the following:

(i) Soliciting input from all of the following groups:

(A) Recognized experts in the relevant subject areas.

(B) Representatives from 4-year colleges or universities, community colleges, and other postsecondary institutions.

(C) Teachers, administrators, and school personnel who have specialized knowledge of the subject area.

(D) Representatives from the business community.

(E) Representatives from vocational and career and technical education providers.

(F) Government officials, including officials from the legislature.

(G) Parents of public school pupils.

(ii) A review of the subject area content expectations or guidelines by national experts.

(iii) An opportunity for the public to review and provide input on the proposed subject area content expectations or guidelines before they are submitted to the state board for approval. The time period allowed for this review and input shall be at least 15 business days.

(c) Determine the basic level of technology and internet access required for pupils to complete the online course or learning experience requirement of section 1278a(1)(b), and submit that determination to the state board for approval.

(d) Not later than 3 years after the effective date of this section, develop or select and approve assessments that may be used by school districts and public school academies to determine whether a pupil has successfully completed a credit required under the Michigan merit standard under subsection (1) or section 1278a(1)(a). The assessments for each credit shall measure a pupil's understanding of the subject area content expectations or guidelines that apply to the credit. The department shall develop or select and approve assessments for at least each of the following credits: algebra I, geometry, algebra II, Earth science, biology, physics, chemistry, grade 9 English, grade 10 English, grade 11 English, grade 12 English, world history, United States history, economics, and civics.

(e) Develop and make available material to assist school districts and public school academies in implementing the requirements of this section and section 1278a. This shall include developing guidelines for alternative instructional delivery methods as described in subsection (7).

(4) The state board shall approve subject area content expectations and guidelines developed by the department under subsection (3) before those subject area content expectations and guidelines may take effect. The state board also shall approve the basic level of technology and internet access required for pupils to complete the online course or learning experience requirement of section 1278a(1)(b).

(5) The parent or legal guardian of a pupil may request a personal curriculum for the pupil that modifies certain of the Michigan merit standard requirements under subsection (1) or section 1278a(1)(a). If all of the requirements under this subsection for a personal curriculum are met, then the board of a school district or board of directors of a public school academy may award a high school diploma to a pupil who successfully completes his or her personal curriculum even if it does not meet the requirements of the Michigan merit standard required under subsection (1) and section 1278a(1)(a). All of the following apply to a personal curriculum:

(a) The personal curriculum shall be developed by a group consisting of the pupil, at least 1 of the pupil's parents or the pupil's legal guardian, and the pupil's high school counselor or another designee qualified under section 1233 or 1233a selected by the high school principal.

(b) The personal curriculum shall incorporate as much of the subject area content expectations of the Michigan merit standard required under subsection (1) and section 1278a(1)(a) as is practicable; shall establish measurable goals that the pupil must achieve while enrolled in high school and shall provide a method to evaluate whether the pupil achieved these goals; and shall be aligned with the pupil's educational development plan developed under subsection (11).

(c) Before it takes effect, the personal curriculum must be agreed to by the pupil's parent or legal guardian and by the superintendent of the school district or chief executive of the public school academy or his or her designee.

(d) The pupil's parent or legal guardian shall be in communication with each of the pupil's teachers at least once each calendar quarter to monitor the pupil's progress toward the goals contained in the pupil's personal curriculum.

(e) Revisions may be made in a personal curriculum if the revisions are developed and agreed to in the same manner as the original personal curriculum.

(f) The English language arts credit requirements of subsection (1)(a) and the science credit requirements of subsection (1)(b) are not subject to modification as part of a personal curriculum under this subsection.

(g) Except as otherwise provided in this subdivision, the mathematics credit requirements of section 1278a(1)(a)(i) may be modified as part of a personal curriculum only after the pupil has successfully completed at least 2-1/2 credits of the mathematics credits required under that section and only if the pupil successfully completes at least 3-1/2 total credits of the mathematics credits required under that section before completing high school. The requirement under that section that a pupil must successfully complete at least 1 mathematics course during his or her final year of high school enrollment is not subject to modification as part of a personal curriculum under this subsection. The algebra II credit

required under that section may be modified as part of a personal curriculum under this subsection only if the pupil has successfully completed at least 2 credits of the mathematics credits required under section 1278a(1)(a)(i) and meets 1 or more of the following:

(i) Has successfully completed the same content as 1 semester of algebra II, as determined by the department.

(ii) Elects to complete the same content as algebra II over 2 years, with a credit awarded for each of those 2 years, and successfully completes that content.

(iii) Enrolls in a formal career and technical education program or curriculum and in that program or curriculum successfully completes the same content as 1 semester of algebra II, as determined by the department.

(h) The social science credit requirements of section 1278a(1)(a)(ii) may be modified as part of a personal curriculum only if all of the following are met:

(i) The pupil has successfully completed 2 credits of the social science credits required under section 1278a(1), including the civics course described in section 1166(2).

(ii) The modification requires the pupil to complete 1 additional credit in English language arts, mathematics, or science or 1 additional credit in a language other than English. This additional credit must be in addition to the number of those credits otherwise required under subsection (1) and section 1278a(1) or under section 1278a(2).

(i) The health and physical education credit requirement under section 1278a(1)(a)(iii) may be modified as part of a personal curriculum only if the modification requires the pupil to complete 1 additional credit in English language arts, mathematics, or science or 1 additional credit in a language other than English. This additional credit must be in addition to the number of those credits otherwise required under subsection (1) and section 1278a(1) or under section 1278a(2).

(j) The visual arts, performing arts, or applied arts credit requirement under section 1278a(1)(a)(iv) may be modified as part of a personal curriculum only if the modification requires the pupil to complete 1 additional credit in English language arts, mathematics, or science or 1 additional credit in a language other than English. This additional credit must be in addition to the number of those credits otherwise required under subsection (1) and section 1278a(1) or under section 1278a(2).

(k) If a pupil is at least age 18 or is an emancipated minor, the pupil may act on his or her own behalf under this subsection.

(l) This subsection does not apply to a pupil enrolled in a high school that is designated as a specialty school undersection 1278a(5) and that is exempt under that section from the English language arts requirement under subsection(1)(a) and the social science credit requirement under section 1278a(1)(a)(ii).

(6) If a pupil receives special education services, the pupil's individualized education program, in accordance with the individuals with disabilities education act, title VI of Public Law 91-230, shall identify the appropriate course or courses of study and identify the supports, accommodations, and modifications necessary to allow the pupil to progress in the curricular requirements of this section and section 1278a, or in a personal curriculum as provided under subsection (5), and meet the requirements for a high school diploma.

(7) The board of a school district or board of directors of a public school academy that operates a high school shall ensure that each pupil is offered the curriculum necessary for the pupil to meet the curricular requirements of this section and section 1278a. The board or board of directors may provide this curriculum by providing the credits specified in this section and section 1278a, by using alternative instructional delivery methods such as alternative course work, humanities course sequences, career and technical education, industrial technology courses, or vocational education, or by a combination of these. School districts and public school academies that operate career and technical education programs are encouraged to integrate the credit requirements of this section and section 1278a into those programs.

(8) If the board of a school district or board of directors of a public school academy wants its high school to be accredited under section 1280, the board or board of directors shall ensure that all elements of the curriculum required under this section and section 1278a are made available to all affected pupils. If a school district or public school academy does not offer all of the required credits, the board of the school district or board of directors of the public school academy shall ensure that the pupil has access to the required credits by another means, such as enrollment in a postsecondary course under the postsecondary enrollment options act, 1996 PA 160, MCL 388.511 to 388.524; enrollment in an online course; a cooperative arrangement with a neighboring school district or with a public school academy; or granting approval under section 6(6) of the state school aid act of 1979, MCL 388.1606, for the pupil to be counted in membership in another school district.

(9) If a pupil is not successfully completing a credit required for graduation under this section and section 1278a, or is identified as being at risk of withdrawing from high school, then the pupil's school district or public school academy shall notify the pupil's parent or legal guardian or, if the pupil is at least age 18 or is an emancipated minor, the pupil, of the availability of tutoring or other supplemental educational support and counseling services that may be available to the pupil under existing state or federal programs, such as those programs or services available under section 31a of the state

school aid act of 1979, MCL 388.1631a, or under the no child left behind act of 2001, Public Law 107-110.

(10) To the extent required by the no child left behind act of 2001, Public Law 107-110, the board of a school district or public school academy shall ensure that all components of the curricular requirements under this section and section 1278a are taught by highly qualified teachers. If a school district or public school academy demonstrates to the department that the school district or public school academy is unable to meet the requirements of this section because the school district or public school academy is unable to hire enough highly qualified teachers, the department shall work with the school district or public school academy to develop a plan to allow the school district or public school academy to hire enough highly qualified teachers to meet the requirements of this section.

(11) The board of a school district or board of directors of a public school academy shall ensure that each pupil in grade 7 is provided with the opportunity to develop an educational development plan, and that each pupil has developed an educational development plan before he or she begins high school. An educational development plan shall be developed by the pupil under the supervision of the pupil's school counselor or another designee qualified under section 1233 or 1233a selected by the high school principal and shall be based on a career pathways program or similar career exploration program.

(12) Except as otherwise provided in this subsection, if a school district or public school academy is unable to implement all of the curricular requirements of this section and section 1278a for pupils entering grade 9 in 2007 or is unable to implement another requirement of this section or section 1278a, the school district or public school academy may apply to the department for permission to phase in 1 or more of the requirements of this section or section 1278a. To apply, the school district or public school academy shall submit a proposed phase-in plan to the department. The department shall approve a phase-in plan if the department determines that the plan will result in the school district or public school academy making satisfactory progress toward full implementation of the requirements of this section and section 1278a. If the department disapproves a proposed phase-in plan, the department shall work with the school district or public school academy to develop a satisfactory plan that may be approved. However, if legislation is enacted that adds section 1290 to allow school districts and public school academies to apply for a contract that waives certain state or federal requirements, then this subsection does not apply but a school district or public school academy may take action as described in subsection (13). This subsection does not apply to a high school that is designated as a specialty school under section 1278a(5) and that is exempt under that section from the English language arts requirement under subsection (1)(a) and the social science credit requirement under section 1278a(1)(a)(ii).

(13) If a school district or public school academy does not offer all of the required credits or provide options to have access to the required credits as provided under subsection (8) and if legislation is enacted that adds section 1290 to allow school districts and public school academies to apply for a contract that waives certain state or federal requirements, then the school district or public school academy is encouraged to apply for a contract under section 1290. The purpose of a contract described in this subsection is to improve pupil performance.

(14) This section and section 1278a do not prohibit a pupil from satisfying or exceeding the credit requirements of the Michigan merit standard under this section and section 1278a through advanced studies such as accelerated course placement, advanced placement, dual enrollment in a postsecondary institution, or participation in the international baccalaureate program or an early college/middle college program.

(15) Not later than April 1 of each year, the department shall submit an annual report to the legislature that evaluates the overall success of the curriculum required under this section and section 1278a, the rigor and relevance of the course work required by the curriculum, the ability of public schools to implement the curriculum and the required course work, and the impact of the curriculum on pupil success, and that details any activities the department has undertaken to implement this section and section 1278a or to assist public schools in implementing the requirements of this section and section 1278a.

Sec. 1280. (1) The board of a school district that does not want to be subject to the measures described in this section shall ensure that each public school within the school district is accredited.

(2) As used in subsection (1), and subject to subsection (6), "accredited" means certified by the superintendent of public instruction as having met or exceeded standards established under this section for 6 areas of school operation: administration and school organization, curricula, staff, school plant and facilities, school and community relations, and school improvement plans and student performance. The building-level evaluation used in the accreditation process shall include, but is not limited to, school data collection, self-study, visitation and validation, determination of performance data to be used, and the development of a school improvement plan.

(3) The department shall develop and distribute to all public schools proposed accreditation standards. Upon distribution of the proposed standards, the department shall hold statewide public hearings for the purpose of receiving testimony concerning the standards. After a review of the testimony, the department shall revise and submit the proposed standards to the superintendent of public instruction. After a review and revision, if appropriate, of the proposed standards, the superintendent of public instruction shall submit the proposed standards to the senate and house committees that have the responsibility for education legislation. Upon approval by these committees, the

department shall distribute to all public schools the standards to be applied to each school for accreditation purposes. The superintendent of public instruction shall review and update the accreditation standards annually using the process prescribed under this subsection.

(4) The superintendent of public instruction shall develop and distribute to all public schools standards for determining that a school is eligible for summary accreditation under subsection (6). The standards shall be developed, reviewed, approved, and distributed using the same process as prescribed in subsection (3) for accreditation standards, and shall be finally distributed and implemented not later than December 31, 1994.

(5) The standards for accreditation or summary accreditation under this section shall include as criteria pupil performance on Michigan education assessment program (MEAP) tests and on the Michigan merit examination under section 1279g and, until the Michigan merit examination has been fully implemented, the percentage of pupils achieving state endorsement under section 1279, but shall not be based solely on pupil performance on MEAP tests or the Michigan merit examination or on the percentage of pupils achieving state endorsement under section 1279. The standards shall also include as criteria multiple year change in pupil performance on MEAP tests and the Michigan merit examination and, until after the Michigan merit examination is fully implemented, multiple year change in the percentage of pupils achieving state endorsement under section 1279. If it is necessary for the superintendent of public instruction to revise accreditation or summary accreditation standards established under subsection (3) or (4) to comply with this subsection, the revised standards shall be developed, reviewed, approved, and distributed using the same process as prescribed in subsection (3).

(6) If the superintendent of public instruction determines that a public school has met the standards established under subsection (4) or (5) for summary accreditation, the school is considered to be accredited without the necessity for a full building-level evaluation under subsection (2).

(7) If the superintendent of public instruction determines that a school has not met the standards established under subsection (4) or (5) for summary accreditation but that the school is making progress toward meeting those standards, or if, based on a full building-level evaluation under subsection (2), the superintendent of public instruction determines that a school has not met the standards for accreditation but is making progress toward meeting those standards, the school is in interim status and is subject to a full building-level evaluation as provided in this section.

(8) If a school has not met the standards established under subsection (4) or (5) for summary accreditation and is not eligible for interim status under subsection (7), the school is unaccredited and subject to the measures provided in this section.

(9) Beginning with the 2002-2003 school year, if at least 5% of a public school's answer sheets from the administration of the Michigan educational assessment program (MEAP) tests are lost by the department or by a state contractor and if the public school can verify that the answer sheets were collected from pupils and forwarded to the department or the contractor, the department shall not assign an accreditation score or school report card grade to the public school for that subject area for the corresponding year for the purposes of determining state accreditation under this section. The department shall not assign an accreditation score or school report card grade to the public school for that subject area until the results of all tests for the next year are available.

(10) Subsection (9) does not preclude the department from determining whether a public school or a school district has achieved adequate yearly progress for the school year in which the answer sheets were lost for the purposes of the no child left behind act of 2001, Public Law 107-110. However, the department shall ensure that a public school or the school district is not penalized when determining adequate yearly progress status due to the fact that the public school's MEAP answer sheets were lost by the department or by a state contractor, but shall not require a public school or school district to retest pupils or produce scores from another test for this purpose.

(11) The superintendent of public instruction shall annually review and evaluate for accreditation purposes the performance of each school that is unaccredited and as many of the schools that are in interim status as permitted by the department's resources.

(12) The superintendent of public instruction shall, and the intermediate school district to which a school district is constituent, a consortium of intermediate school districts, or any combination thereof may, provide technical assistance, as appropriate, to a school that is unaccredited or that is in interim status upon request of the board of the school district in which the school is located. If requests to the superintendent of public instruction for technical assistance exceed the capacity, priority shall be given to unaccredited schools.

(13) A school that has been unaccredited for 3 consecutive years is subject to 1 or more of the following measures, as determined by the superintendent of public instruction:

(a) The superintendent of public instruction or his or her designee shall appoint at the expense of the affected school district an administrator of the school until the school becomes accredited.

(b) A parent, legal guardian, or person in loco parentis of a child who attends the school may send his or her child to any accredited public school with an appropriate grade level within the school district.

(c) The school, with the approval of the superintendent of public instruction, shall align itself with an existing research-based school improvement model or establish an

affiliation for providing assistance to the school with a college or university located in this state.

(d) The school shall be closed.

(14) The superintendent of public instruction shall evaluate the school accreditation program and the status of schools under this section and shall submit an annual report based upon the evaluation to the senate and house committees that have the responsibility for education legislation. The report shall address the reasons each unaccredited school is not accredited and shall recommend legislative action that will result in the accreditation of all public schools in this state.

(15) Beginning with the 2008-2009 school year, a high school shall not be accredited by the department unless the department determines that the high school is providing or has otherwise ensured that all pupils have access to all of the elements of the curriculum required under sections 1278a and 1278b. If it is necessary for the superintendent of public instruction to revise accreditation or summary accreditation standards established under subsection (3) or (4) to comply with the changes made to this section by the amendatory act that added this subsection, the revised standards shall be developed, reviewed, approved, and distributed using the same process as prescribed in subsection (3).

Enacting section 1. This amendatory act does not take effect unless Senate Bill No. 1124 of the 93rd Legislature is enacted into law.

This act is ordered to take immediate effect.

Clerk of the House of Representatives

Secretary of the Senate

Approved

Governor

APPENDIX C:
MICHIGAN PA 124 OF 2006

Act No. 124

Public Acts of 2006

Approved by the Governor

April 20, 2006

Filed with the Secretary of State

April 20, 2006

EFFECTIVE DATE: April 20, 2006

STATE OF MICHIGAN

93RD LEGISLATURE

REGULAR SESSION OF 2006

Introduced by Senators Kuipers, Van Woerkom, Cassis, Leland, Hammerstrom, Sikkema, Allen, Clark-Coleman, Thomas, Johnson, Patterson, Barcia, Basham, Birkholz, Bishop, Brater, Brown, Cherry, Clarke, Cropsey, George, Gilbert, Goschka, Hardiman, Jacobs, Jelinek, Olshove, Sanborn, Schauer, Scott, Stamas and Whitmer

ENROLLED SENATE BILL No. 1124

AN ACT to amend 1976 PA 451, entitled "An act to provide a system of public instruction and elementary and secondary schools; to revise, consolidate, and clarify the laws relating to elementary and secondary education; to provide for the organization, regulation, and maintenance of schools, school districts, public school academies, intermediate school districts, and other public school entities; to prescribe rights, powers, duties, and privileges of schools, school districts, public school academies, intermediate school districts, and other public school entities; to provide for the regulation of school teachers and certain other school employees; to provide for school elections and to prescribe powers and duties with respect thereto; to provide for the levy and collection of taxes; to provide for the borrowing of money and issuance of bonds and other evidences of indebtedness; to establish a fund and provide for expenditures from that fund; to provide for and prescribe the powers and duties of certain state departments, the state board of education, and certain other boards and officials; to provide for licensure of

boarding schools; to prescribe penalties; and to repeal acts and parts of acts," (MCL 380.1 to 380.1852) by adding section 1278a.

The People of the State of Michigan enact:

Sec. 1278a. (1) Except as otherwise provided in this section or section 1278b, beginning with pupils entering grade 8 in 2006, the board of a school district or board of directors of a public school academy shall not award a high school diploma to a pupil unless the pupil meets all of the following:

(a) Has successfully completed all of the following credit requirements of the Michigan merit standard before graduating from high school:

(i) At least 4 credits in mathematics that are aligned with subject area content expectations developed by the department and approved by the state board under section 1278b, including completion of at least algebra I, geometry, and algebra II, or an integrated sequence of this course content that consists of 3 credits, and an additional mathematics credit, such as trigonometry, statistics, precalculus, calculus, applied math, accounting, business math, or a retake of algebra II. Each pupil must successfully complete at least 1 mathematics course during his or her final year of high school enrollment.

(ii) At least 3 credits in social science that are aligned with subject area content expectations developed by the department and approved by the state board under section 1278b, including completion of at least 1 credit in United States history and geography, 1 credit in world history and geography, 1/2 credit in economics, and the civics course described in section 1166(2).

(iii) At least 1 credit in subject matter that includes both health and physical education aligned with guidelines developed by the department and approved by the state board under section 1278b.

(iv) At least 1 credit in visual arts, performing arts, or applied arts, as defined by the department, that is aligned with guidelines developed by the department and approved by the state board under section 1278b.

(v) The credit requirements specified in section 1278b(1).

(b) Meets the online course or learning experience requirement of this subsection. A school district or public school academy shall provide the basic level of technology and internet access required by the state board to complete the online course or learning experience. For a pupil to meet this requirement, the pupil shall meet either of the following, as determined by the school district or public school academy:

(i) Has successfully completed at least 1 course or learning experience that is presented online, as defined by the department.

(ii) The pupil's school district or public school academy has integrated an online experience throughout the high school curriculum by ensuring that each teacher of each course that provides the required credits of the Michigan merit curriculum has integrated an online experience into the course.

(2) In addition to the requirements under subsection (1), beginning with pupils entering grade 3 in 2006, the board of a school district or board of directors of a public school academy shall not award a high school diploma to a pupil unless the pupil has successfully completed during grades 9 to 12 at least 2 credits, as determined by the department, in a language other than English, or the pupil has successfully completed at any time during grades K to 12 course work or other learning experiences that are substantially equivalent to 2 credits in a language other than English, based on guidelines developed by the department. For the purposes of this subsection, all of the following apply:

(a) American sign language is considered to be a language other than English.

(b) The pupil may meet all or part of this requirement with online course work.

(3) The requirements under this section and section 1278b for a high school diploma are in addition to any local requirements imposed by the board of a school district or board of directors of a public school academy. The board of a school district or board of directors of a public school academy, as a local requirement for a high school diploma, may require a pupil to complete some or all of the subject area assessments under section 1279 or the Michigan merit examination under section 1279g, as applicable to the pupil under section 1279g, or may require a pupil to participate in the MIAccess assessments if appropriate for the pupil.

(4) For the purposes of this section and section 1278b, all of the following apply:

(a) A pupil is considered to have completed a credit if the pupil successfully completes the subject area content expectations or guidelines developed by the department that apply to the credit.

(b) A school district or public school academy shall base its determination of whether a pupil has successfully completed the subject area content expectations or guidelines developed by the department that apply to a credit at least in part on the pupil's performance on the assessments developed or selected by the department under section1278b or on 1 or more assessments developed or selected by the school district or public school academy that measure a pupil's understanding of the subject area content expectations or guidelines that apply to the credit.

(c) A school district or public school academy shall also grant a pupil a credit if the pupil earns a qualifying score, as determined by the department, on the assessments developed or selected for the subject area by the department under section 1278b or the pupil earns a qualifying score, as determined by the school district or public school academy, on 1 or more assessments developed or selected by the school district or public school academy that measure a pupil's understanding of the subject area content expectations or guidelines that apply to the credit.

(5) If a high school is designated by the superintendent of public instruction as a specialty school and the high school meets the requirements of subsection (6), then the pupils of the high school are not required to successfully complete the 4 credits in English language arts required under section 1278b(1)(a) or the 3 credits in social science required under subsection (1)(a)(ii) and the school district or public school academy is not required to ensure that each pupil is offered the curriculum necessary for meeting those English language arts or social science credit requirements. The superintendent of public instruction may designate up to 15 high schools that meet the requirements of this subsection as specialty schools. Subject to this maximum number, the superintendent of public instruction shall designate a high school as a specialty school if the superintendent of public instruction finds that the high school meets all of the following criteria:

(a) The high school incorporates a significant reading and writing component throughout its curriculum.

(b) The high school uses a specialized, innovative, and rigorous curriculum in such areas as performing arts, foreign language, extensive use of internships, or other learning innovations that conform to pioneering innovations among other leading national or international high schools.

(6) A high school that is designated by the superintendent of public instruction as a specialty school under subsection(5) is only exempt from requirements as described under subsection (5) as long as the superintendent of public instruction finds that the high school continues to meet all of the following requirements:

(a) The high school clearly states to prospective pupils and their parents that it does not meet the requirements of the Michigan merit standard under this section and section 1278b but is a designated specialty school that is exempt from some of those requirements and that a pupil who enrolls in the high school and subsequently transfers to a high school that is not a specialty school meeting the requirements of this subsection will be required to comply with the requirements of the Michigan merit standard under this section and section 1278b.

(b) For the most recent year for which the data are available, the mean scores on both the mathematics and science portions of the ACT examination for the pupils of the high school exceed by at least 10% the mean scores on the mathematics and science portions

of the ACT examination for the pupils of the school district in which the greatest number of the pupils of the high school reside.

(c) For the most recent year for which the data are available, the high school had a graduation rate of at least 85%, as determined by the department.

(d) For the most recent year for which the data are available, at least 75% of the pupils who graduated from the high school the preceding year are enrolled in a postsecondary institution.

(e) All pupils of the high school are required to meet the mathematics credit requirements of subsection (1)(a)(i), with no modification of these requirements under section 1278b(5), and each pupil is offered the curriculum necessary to meet this requirement.

(f) All pupils of the high school are required to meet the science credit requirements of section 1278b(1)(b) and are also required to successfully complete at least 1 additional science credit, for a total of at least 4 science credits, with no modification of these requirements under section 1278b(5), and each pupil is offered the curriculum necessary to meet this requirement.

Enacting section 1. This amendatory act does not take effect unless House Bill No. 5606 of the 93rd Legislature is enacted into law.

This act is ordered to take immediate effect.

Secretary of the Senate

Clerk of the House of Representatives

Approved

Governor

APPENDIX D:
MICHIGAN PA 451 OF 1976, SECTION 1276A

380.1278a Requirements for high school diploma.

Sec. 1278a. (1) Except as otherwise provided in this section or section 1278b, beginning with pupils entering grade 8 in 2006, the board of a school district or board of directors of a public school academy shall not award a high school diploma to a pupil unless the pupil meets all of the following:
(a) Has successfully completed all of the following credit requirements of the Michigan merit standard before graduating from high school:
(i) At least 4 credits in mathematics that are aligned with subject area content expectations developed by the department and approved by the state board under section 1278b, including completion of at least algebra I, geometry, and algebra II, or an integrated sequence of this course content that consists of 3 credits, and an additional mathematics credit, such as trigonometry, statistics, precalculus, calculus, applied math, accounting, business math, or a retake of algebra II. Each pupil must successfully complete at least 1 mathematics course during his or her final year of high school enrollment.
(ii) At least 3 credits in social science that are aligned with subject area content expectations developed by the department and approved by the state board under section 1278b, including completion of at least 1 credit in United States history and geography, 1 credit in world history and geography, 1/2 credit in economics, and the civics course described in section 1166(2).
(iii) At least 1 credit in subject matter that includes both health and physical education aligned with guidelines developed by the department and approved by the state board under section 1278b.
(iv) At least 1 credit in visual arts, performing arts, or applied arts, as defined by the department, that is aligned with guidelines developed by the department and approved by the state board under section 1278b.
(v) The credit requirements specified in section 1278b(1).
(b) Meets the online course or learning experience requirement of this subsection. A school district or public school academy shall provide the basic level of technology and internet access required by the state board to complete the online course or learning experience. For a pupil to meet this requirement, the pupil shall meet either of the following, as determined by the school district or public school academy:
(i) Has successfully completed at least 1 course or learning experience that is presented online, as defined by the department.
(ii) The pupil’s school district or public school academy has integrated an online experience throughout the high school curriculum by ensuring that each teacher of each course that provides the required credits of the Michigan merit curriculum has integrated an online experience into the course.

(2) In addition to the requirements under subsection (1), beginning with pupils entering grade 3 in 2006, the board of a school district or board of directors of a public school academy shall not award a high school diploma to a pupil unless the pupil has successfully completed during grades 9 to 12 at least 2 credits, as determined by the department, in a language other than English, or the pupil has successfully completed at any time during grades K to 12 course work or other learning experiences that are substantially equivalent to 2 credits in a language other than English, based on guidelines developed by the department. For the purposes of this subsection, all of the following apply:
(a) American sign language is considered to be a language other than English.
(b) The pupil may meet all or part of this requirement with online course work.
(3) The requirements under this section and section 1278b for a high school diploma are in addition to any local requirements imposed by the board of a school district or board of directors of a public school academy. The board of a school district or board of directors of a public school academy, as a local requirement for a high school diploma, may require a pupil to complete some or all of the subject area assessments under section 1279 or the Michigan merit examination under section 1279g, as applicable to the pupil under section 1279g, or may require a pupil to participate in the MIAccess assessments if appropriate for the pupil.
(4) For the purposes of this section and section 1278b, all of the following apply:
(a) A pupil is considered to have completed a credit if the pupil successfully completes the subject area content expectations or guidelines developed by the department that apply to the credit.
(b) A school district or public school academy shall base its determination of whether a pupil has successfully completed the subject area content expectations or guidelines developed by the department that apply to a credit at least in part on the pupil's performance on the assessments developed or selected by the department under section 1278b or on 1 or more assessments developed or selected by the school district or public school academy that measure a pupil's understanding of the subject area content expectations or guidelines that apply to the credit.
(c) A school district or public school academy shall also grant a pupil a credit if the pupil earns a qualifying score, as determined by the department, on the assessments developed or selected for the subject area by the department under section 1278b or the pupil earns a qualifying score, as determined by the school district or public school academy, on 1 or more assessments developed or selected by the school district or public school academy that measure a pupil's understanding of the subject area content expectations or guidelines that apply to the credit.
(5) If a high school is designated by the superintendent of public instruction as a specialty school and the high school meets the requirements of subsection (6), then the pupils of the high school are not required to successfully complete the 4 credits in English language arts required under section 1278b(1)(a) or the 3 credits in social science required under subsection (1)(a)(ii) and the school district or public school academy is not required to ensure that each pupil is offered the curriculum necessary for meeting those English language arts or social science credit requirements. The superintendent of

public instruction may designate up to 15 high schools that meet the requirements of this subsection as specialty schools. Subject to this maximum number, the superintendent of public instruction shall designate a high school as a specialty school if the superintendent of public instruction finds that the high school meets all of the following criteria:
(a) The high school incorporates a significant reading and writing component throughout its curriculum.
(b) The high school uses a specialized, innovative, and rigorous curriculum in such areas as performing arts, foreign language, extensive use of internships, or other learning innovations that conform to pioneering innovations among other leading national or international high schools.
(6) A high school that is designated by the superintendent of public instruction as a specialty school under subsection (5) is only exempt from requirements as described under subsection (5) as long as the superintendent of public instruction finds that the high school continues to meet all of the following requirements:
(a) The high school clearly states to prospective pupils and their parents that it does not meet the requirements of the Michigan merit standard under this section and section 1278b but is a designated specialty school that is exempt from some of those requirements and that a pupil who enrolls in the high school and subsequently transfers to a high school that is not a specialty school meeting the requirements of this subsection will be required to comply with the requirements of the Michigan merit standard under this section and section 1278b.
(b) For the most recent year for which the data are available, the mean scores on both the mathematics and science portions of the ACT examination for the pupils of the high school exceed by at least 10% the mean scores on the mathematics and science portions of the ACT examination for the pupils of the school district in which the greatest number of the pupils of the high school reside.
(c) For the most recent year for which the data are available, the high school had a graduation rate of at least 85%, as determined by the department.
(d) For the most recent year for which the data are available, at least 75% of the pupils who graduated from the high school the preceding year are enrolled in a postsecondary institution.
(e) All pupils of the high school are required to meet the mathematics credit requirements of subsection (1)(a)(i), with no modification of these requirements under section 1278b(5), and each pupil is offered the curriculum necessary to meet this requirement.
(f) All pupils of the high school are required to meet the science credit requirements of section 1278b(1)(b) and are also required to successfully complete at least 1 additional science credit, for a total of at least 4 science credits, with no modification of these requirements under section 1278b(5), and each pupil is offered the curriculum necessary to meet this requirement.

APPENDIX E:
QUESTIONNAIRE

DOCTOR OF MUSICAL ARTS DISSERTATION QUESTIONNAIRE CONCERNING THE MICHIGAN MERIT CURRICULUM (MMC) AND MUSIC PROGRAMS IN MICHIGAN PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOLS

The questionnaire is anonymous. Questionnaire data will be treated confidentially and may not be disclosed, unless required by law or regulation. Questionnaire data will be stored in locked files and destroyed at the end of the research. Results will be published only in aggregated form (for example, tables of information). Please return the completed questionnaire in the pre-paid envelope or mail to:

Michael Pratt
1015 Bent Oak #4
Adrian, MI 49221

1. Demographic information:

How many total students are currently enrolled in your high school?			
How many total students were enrolled in your high school on May 1, 2007?			
Of what grades does the total enrollment of your high school consist?			
In what county is your school located?			
How many students are enrolled in music classes in your high school?			
What is the population of your school's town/city? (check one)	☐ Less than 1000	☐ 1001 - 5000	☐ Greater than 5000
What percentage of students receive free or reduced price lunch? (check one)	☐ Less than 25%	☐ 26% - 50%.	☐ Greater than 50%

2. Describe the performing ensembles in your high school on May 1, 2007.

Ensemble Name	Credit Course?	Enrollment?	Number of Teaching Faculty (FTEs) for this ensemble?
	Yes No		
	Yes No		
	Yes No		
	Yes No		
	Yes No		
	Yes No		

3. Describe the performing ensembles in your high school today.

Ensemble Name	Credit Course?	Enrollment?	Number of Teaching Faculty (FTEs) for this ensemble?
	Yes No		
	Yes No		
	Yes No		
	Yes No		
	Yes No		
	Yes No		

4. Describe the non-performing music classes in your high school on May 1, 2007.

Class Name	Credit Course?	Enrollment?	Number of Teaching Faculty (FTEs) for this class?
	Yes No		
	Yes No		
	Yes No		
	Yes No		
	Yes No		

5. Describe the non-performing music classes in your high school today.

Class Name	Credit Course?	Enrollment?	Number of Teaching Faculty (FTEs) for this class?
	Yes No		
	Yes No		
	Yes No		
	Yes No		
	Yes No		

6. Describe your high school:

	On May 1, 2007	Today
How many class periods in a school day?		
How many semesters in a school year?		
Number of total high school teaching faculty (FTEs)?		
Number of total high school music teaching faculty (FTEs)?		
Total Music Department Budget?		

7. What changes, if any, have been or will be made to music classes because of the MMC?

8. What were the high school graduation requirements of your school district prior to the MMC?

9. What, if any, current graduation requirements does your school district have in addition to the MMC?

10. In what ways do you anticipate students will fulfill the visual, performing, or applied arts requirement of the MMC?

Class Title	Class Description	Approximate % of Total Student Body Taking This Class
Please list other ways you anticipate students will fulfill the arts requirement.		

11. What percentage of students request exemption from the visual, performing, or applied arts requirement by taking an additional credit of ELA, math, science, or world language? _____ percent

12. Did your school have a fine arts graduation requirement prior to the MMC? Yes _____ No _____

13. What overall changes, if any, will your high school make because of the MMC?

14. If your answers above indicate any type of decline in music classes (e.g. number offered, enrollment, staffing, budget) today compared to May 1, 2007, how would you characterize the reason(s) for this decline? If no decline has occurred check "A." (Check one)

	A. No decline in music classes has taken place since May 1, 2007
	B. The decline is entirely due to the MMC
	C. The decline is mostly due to the MMC but partially to other factors
	D. The decline is due equally to the MMC and other factors
	E. The decline is due partially to the MMC but mostly to other factors
	F. The decline is due entirely to factors other than the MMC

15. If your answers above indicate any type of growth in music classes (e.g. number offered, enrollment, staffing, budget) today compared to May 1, 2007, how would you characterize the reason(s) for this growth? If no growth has occurred check "A." (Check one)

	A. No growth in music classes has taken place since May 1, 2007
	B. The growth is entirely due to the MMC
	C. The growth is mostly due to the MMC but partially to other factors
	D. The growth is due equally to the MMC and other factors
	E. The growth is due partially to the MMC but mostly to other factors
	F. The growth is due entirely to factors other than the MMC

APPENDIX F:
INTRODUCTORY EMAIL

Dear Sir/Madame:

In a few days you will be receiving in the mail a survey for my doctoral dissertation concerning the Michigan Merit Curriculum and the music programs in your school. I would greatly appreciate it you could forward this survey, when it comes, to the appropriate person in your school to complete and return to me, anonymously and at no cost to you. I thank you in advance for your assistance in this important matter.

Sincerely,

Michael Pratt

APPENDIX G:
FIRST COVER LETTER

(name of lead administrator)
(school address)

Dear Sir/Madame:

My name is Michael Pratt. I am a long time Michigan music educator, having started teaching instrumental music in Onsted, Michigan in 1969. My undergraduate degree is from The University of Toledo. My Masters degree is from The University of Michigan. Currently I am completing my Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Music Education from Boston University.

I would like to ask for your assistance with my dissertation, which is Assessing the Initial Impact of the Michigan Merit Curriculum of 2006 on Music in High Schools: A Survey of District Responses to Implement New High School Graduation Requirements.

The questions I will be researching in this dissertation are:

1. What ways are anticipated for students to fulfill the visual, performing, or applied arts requirement of the Michigan Merit Curriculum?

2. What, if any, changes do high schools in Michigan anticipate making to their music programs as a result of the Michigan Merit Curriculum?

3. What are the initial effects of the Michigan Merit Curriculum on the music programs in high schools in Michigan?

If your school could give me a few minutes, and some information on your school, and what your school is doing in these areas, you will be contributing to a study which will potentially help schools around the state of Michigan understand the nature of and possible solutions to these problems. Please forward this survey to the appropriate person in your school to complete and return to me in the pre-paid return envelope within 10 days. Nowhere in my dissertation will you, any other person, or your school be identified. All of the information given to me will be kept confidential, anonymous, and grouped together with all of the information received from other schools. Thank you very much for your assistance in this matter. By returning this survey, you are giving your consent to participate in this study.

Sincerely,
Michael Pratt

APPENDIX H:
REMINDER POST CARD

Dear Overworked and Underappreciated Educator:

As an educator myself no one appreciates the job you do more than myself. Several days ago I sent you a survey for my doctoral dissertation regarding what your school was doing or planning to do regarding your school's music programs and the Michigan Merit Curriculum. To date I have not received your school's response to my request to complete and return this survey. I would greatly appreciate it if you could have someone find ten minutes to complete this survey and return it to me if you have not already done so.

I humbly thank you for doing your job so well and appreciate your help in this matter.
Sincerely,

Michael Pratt

APPENDIX I:
SECOND COVER LETTER

(name of lead administrator)
(school address)

Dear Sir/Madame:

Several weeks ago I sent you a survey to complete regarding my doctoral dissertation, which is Assessing the Initial Impact of the Michigan Merit Curriculum of 2006 on Music in High Schools: A Survey of District Responses to Implement New High School Graduation Requirements. I asked you to forward this survey to the appropriate person in your school for completion. To date I have not received your school's response to my request to complete and return this survey. Enclosed please find another copy of this survey. If the previous survey has already completed and returned to me, please disregard this letter.

I know this is a busy time of the year for you and I hesitate to bother you again, but this survey is important, not only to me but to other educators around the state who are looking for answers to these questions.

Please help me by forwarding this second survey to the appropriate person and ask them to give me a few minutes of your school's time, and some information on your school, and what your school is doing regarding the music programs in your school and the Michigan Merit Curriculum. I guarantee that all of the information given me will be kept confidential, anonymous, and grouped together with all of the information received from other schools. Thank you very much for your assistance in this matter. By returning this survey, you are giving your consent to participate in this study.

Sincerely,

Michael Pratt

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VITA

Michael Irvin Pratt
Birth year: 1946
Address: 1015 Bent Oak #4
Adrian, Michigan, 49221

Academic Experience

UNIVERSITY OF TOLEDO: Toledo, Ohio
Bachelor of Music Education, Tuba Major, May, 1969
Tuba Professors: Bernard Sanchez, Barton Bartles

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN: Ann Arbor, Michigan
Master of Music, Composition Major, Tuba Minor, May 1973
Thesis: *Ess Curve* for symphony orchestra
Composition Professors: Ross Lee Finney, Leslie Bassett
Tuba Professors: Abe Torchinsky, Glenn Smith

BOSTON UNIVERSITY: Boston, Massachusetts
Doctor of Musical Arts in Music Education, May 2010
Dissertation Supervisor: Dr. Ronald Kos, Jr.

Professional Teaching Experience

Sand Creek Community Schools, Instrumental Music 5-12, Choral Music, 2004-2008
Litchfield Community Schools, Instrumental Music 5-12, 2002
Siena Heights College, Contemporary Music Ensemble, 1982
Onsted Community Schools, Instrumental Music 5-12, Choral Music, 1969-1982

Organizations

American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers (ASCAP)
Pi Kappa Lambda, Honorary Music Fraternity, 1973
National Association of Music Educators (MENC)
American Musicological Society (AMS)

Awards

Chorus member for the 2006 four Grammy® Award winning recording of William Bolcom's *Songs of Innocence and of Experience*

Professional Performing Experience

As a Tuba Player

Toledo Symphony Orchestra	University of Toledo Faculty Brass Quintet
Adrian Symphony Orchestra	Adrian College Faculty Brass Quintet
Toledo Opera	Croswell Opera House
Toledo Concert Band	Adrian Chamber Brass

As a Singer

Toledo Choral Society
Toledo Symphony Chorale
Opera!Lenawee
The University Musical Society Choral Union of The University of Michigan: performing with:

Detroit Symphony	Grand Rapids Symphony
San Francisco Symphony	Toledo Symphony
Kirov Orchestra	Birmingham Symphony
Russian National Orchestra	The Gabrieli Consort
Ann Arbor Symphony	The Tallis Scholars
Lansing Symphony	

Notable Conductors Worked With

Valery Gergiev	Paul McCreesh
Michael Tilson Thomas	Peter Phillips
Neeme Jarve	Catherine Comet
Mikhail Pletnev	Eric Kunzel
Rafael Fruhbeck de Borgos	Margaret Hillis
Leonard Slatkin	Martin Katz
John Adams	John Finley Williamson
Gennady Rozhdestvensky	