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Federal Education Laws
and the
Fine Arts

by

Kim R. Cavener

September, 03, 2013


A Dissertation submitted to the Education Faculty of Lindenwood University in
partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Education
School of Education

Federal Education Laws
and the Fine Arts

by

Kim R. Cavener

This Dissertation has been approved as partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Education
Lindenwood University, School of Education


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Declaration of Originality

I do hereby declare and attest to the fact that this is an original study based solely upon my own scholarly work at Lindenwood University and that I have not submitted it for any other college or university course or degree.

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Signature Kim R. Cavener Date: September 3, 2013

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Abstract

Due to federal laws requiring standardized testing of only a select few of the core subjects, many students have been divested of fine arts instruction (Chen, 2008; Garcia, 2010; Jacobsen & Rothstein, 2009; Maxwell, 2008; Suzuki, 2009). Moreover, school officials have reduced funding allocated to non-tested content areas as one means of balancing district budgets in a poor economy (Chen, 2008; Garcia, 2010). This mixed method study examined music educators' and curriculum directors' perceptions of how federal education laws have affected public school fine arts. Analysis of data from interviews of six music educators and six curriculum directors were conducted concurrently with the distribution of a Likert online survey. The interview and survey methodologies provided descriptive data of educators' perceptions regarding the consideration of fine arts as a core subject in policy and practice, the role of public school fine arts in the education of the whole child, the overall value of the fine arts in light of brain research, and the controversy surrounding the standardized assessment of the fine arts. The findings of the study revealed that even though all curriculum directors and music educators agreed the fine arts should be included in a child's holistic education, music educators possessed stronger beliefs regarding the fine arts being considered a core subject, Curriculum directors indicated their districts valued the fine arts as a public relations tool and as a means to boost achievement in other subjects, while music educators in the same district spoke of feeling devalued, indicating a disconnect in communication between administrators and staff. Finally, though many educators oppose the standardized testing of the fine arts, the assessments would provide valuable data.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgments.....	ii
Abstract.....	iii
List of Figures.....	viii
Chapter One: Introduction.....	1
Background of the Study.....	3
Emerging Themes.....	4
Conceptual Framework.....	12
Statement of the Problem.....	14
Purpose of the Study.....	16
Research Questions.....	17
Definition of Key Terms.....	17
Limitations and Assumptions.....	19
Sample Demographics.....	19
Instrument.....	19
Generalizations.....	19
Summary.....	20
Chapter Two: Review of Literature.....	23
Music Education.....	24
Sputnik.....	25
Frontiersmen.....	27
ESEA and NCLB.....	28

Impact of Federal Education Laws.....	30
Guiding Themes of the Study.....	35
Theme One.....	37
Theme Two.....	41
Theme Three.....	44
Theme Four.....	50
Summary.....	58
Chapter Three: Methodology.....	61
Problem and Purpose Overview.....	61
Research Questions.....	63
Research Design.....	63
Population and Sample.....	65
Instrumentation.....	66
Data Collection.....	68
Data Analysis.....	69
Summary.....	70
Chapter Four: Analysis of Data.....	71
Research Questions.....	71
Organization of the Chapter.....	73
Qualitative Data Collection.....	73
Interviews.....	74
Process of Analysis.....	74
Quantitative Data.....	75
Theme One.....	75
Theme Two.....	77

Theme Three.....	80
Theme Four.....	84
Summary.....	88
Chapter Five: Summary and Conclusions.....	89
Findings.....	90
Research Questions.....	91
Theme One.....	92
Theme Two.....	92
Theme Three.....	93
Theme Four.....	95
Limitations of the Study.....	97
Conclusions.....	97
Theme One.....	98
Theme Two.....	99
Theme Three.....	100
Theme Four.....	101
Implications for Practice.....	103
Recommendations.....	104
Summary.....	105
Appendix A; Survey Questions.....	106
Appendix B; Recruitment Letter to Principals.....	108
Appendix C; Informed Consent for Survey Research.....	110
Appendix D; Letter to Principals.....	112
Appendix E; Letter of Introduction for Interview Research.....	114

Appendix F; Letter of Informed Consent for Interview Research.....	115
Appendix G; Interview Questions.....	118
References.....	120
Vita.....	136

List of Figures

<i>Figure 1.</i> Responses to the survey statement 2.....	77
<i>Figure 2.</i> Responses to the survey statement 3.....	79
<i>Figure 3.</i> Responses to the survey statement 4.....	83
<i>Figure 4.</i> Responses to the survey statement 5.....	87

Chapter One: Introduction

For generations, American citizens have expected their children to attend public school for the purpose of receiving quality instruction in a variety of subjects including the fine arts (Chen, 2008; Gullatt, 2007; Jacobsen & Rothstein, 2009; Maxwell, 2008; Suzuki, 2009). However, due to federal laws requiring standardized testing of only a select few of the core subjects, many students have been divested of fine arts instruction (Chen, 2008; Garcia, 2010; Jacobsen & Rothstein, 2009; Maxwell, 2008; Suzuki, 2009). Moreover, school officials have reduced funding allocated to non-tested content areas as one means of balancing district budgets in a poor economy (Chen, 2008; Garcia, 2010).

In this study, the fine arts encompassed the performing and visual arts, including the curricular areas of visual arts, dance, music, and theatre (The National Art Education Association [NAEA], n.d.). Rabkin and Hedberg (2011) determined, “Arts participation requires capacities for understanding and appreciating the modes of expression, symbol systems, aesthetics, and the cultural context in which the arts are embedded” (p. 18). However, from the mid-1900s to present-day the availability of fine arts instruction in the public schools has depended upon the decisions of stakeholders’ based upon their perceptions of key political and cultural issues (Kegley & Blanton, 2013). Therefore, the overarching goal of the study was to examine a sample of stakeholder’s perceptions regarding a variety of K-12 public school fine arts issues through the lens of a child’s right to a holistic education.

Furthermore, in this study, public school fine arts were examined, though there were other forms of fine arts instruction that warranted research, such as community fine

school fine arts programs, studio fine arts instruction, and fine arts before and after-school programs. Public school fine arts education, as opposed to other fine arts educational programs, was chosen as the focus for this study due to the continued debate occurring in the public schools. Furthermore, Rabkin and Hedberg (2011) stated, "...schools are the only institutions that have the potential to deliver arts education experiences to virtually all children."

This mixed-design study consisted of the collection and analysis of survey and interview data from a sample of curriculum directors and music educators from Missouri. Creswell (2013) reported a mixed-design study can be advantageous in the research process by assimilating and assessing the qualitative and quantitative data. The results of the study were added to the current body of expanding literature with the goal of aiding educators and policymakers in making quality decisions on behalf of K-12 fine arts education.

In Chapter One, the background of the study was presented wherein the influence of educational, societal, theoretical, and methodological contexts were considered. During the beginning stages of the research project, the overarching dilemma of the marginalization of public school fine arts programs in times of economic or political change in American history became increasingly evident (Chen, 2008; Gullatt, 2007; Jacobsen & Rothstein, 2009; Maxwell, 2008; Suzuki, 2009). As further research ensued, four overarching themes naturally emerged and contrasting perceptions were explored: (1) the fine arts as a core subject, (2) the fine arts as a vital part of a child's holistic education, (3) the overall value of fine arts education in light of brain research, and (4) the controversy surrounding the standardized assessment of the fine arts.

In addition, the conceptual framework was described, as well as the statement of the problem, which previewed the threat of the erosion of K-12 fine arts programs due to budget and instructional time restrictions. Lastly, the purpose of the study, a list of the research questions which mirrored the four themes, the definition of key terms, and the limitations of the study were introduced.

Background of the Study

Since the mid-1900s, fine arts policy fluctuated according to prevailing political agendas (Berlinger, 2009; Rabkin & Hedberg, 2011; Ward, 2011). Significant divides existed in the perceptions of influential individuals and organizations that influenced K-12 fine arts policy (Rabkin & Hedberg, 2011; Ward, 2011). Recent perceptions regarding the status of K-12 fine arts programs have proven diverse; moreover, accurate assessment of the effectiveness of K-12 fine arts programs at the local, state, or national level has been inconclusive due to lack of sufficient data (Abril, 2009; Rabkin & Hedberg, 2011).

There was a plethora of research supporting the perception of the erosion of K-12 fine arts in the past decade (Benham, 2013; Beveridge, 2010; Chen, 2008; Gullatt, 2007; Jacobsen & Rothstein, 2009; Maxwell, 2008; Nieves, 2008). Budget restrictions and the standardized assessment demands of the tested core subjects have, in many instances, forced administrators to place fine arts courses, as well as other non-tested subjects, on the peripheral (Benham, 2013; Beveridge, 2010; Chen, 2008; Gullatt, 2007; Jacobsen & Rothstein, 2009; Maxwell, 2008; Nieves, 2008). However, the era of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) which was enacted in 2001, was not the first time in American history that public school fine arts programs were minimized (Benham, 2013).

Benham (2013) contended that specific historical events in American history, such as the 1957 launching of the Russian satellite, Sputnik (Helig, Cole, & Aguilar, 2010), fostered a nation-wide move to focus on math and science, thus reducing the availability of public school fine arts. Throughout the mid-1900s, a pattern was established that the status of K-12 fine arts ran parallel with the status of the economy and political policy, and public perceptions regarding those issues fluctuated accordingly (Rabken & Hedberg, 2011). This trend has continued into the 21st century with the passage of NCLB, currently revised and referred to as the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) (Benham, 2013; Rabken & Hedberg, 2011).

Since the implementation of NCLB, 16% of a nationally representative sample of 349 districts had decreased fine arts instruction by 35%, reducing instructional time from 154 minutes a week to 100 minutes (Center on Education Policy [CEP], 2008). Nieves (2008) reported that during the decade from 1998 to 2008, access to music instruction for elementary school students decreased 50%. In addition, researchers reported that restricted educational budgets forced administrators to choose curriculum and professional development programs targeting only the tested subjects; hence, K-12 fine arts were marginalized in perception and practice (Beveridge, 2010; Chen, 2008; Maxwell, 2008).

Theme one: Fine arts as a core subject. Theme One emerged upon evidence of fine arts being ranked among the core subjects in legislation (National Standards, n.d.) yet not receiving equal status commensurate with the other core subjects (Chen, 2008; Gullatt, 2007). The perplexing dilemma led to an examination of perceptions of the fine

arts as a core subject, which emerged as the first theme of this study. Shasberger (2009) posited the fine arts must reside, in theory and in practice, at the core of all education for all students to experience the highest quality education, which aligned with the education of the whole child (The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development [ASCD], 2013), the lens through which this study was conducted.

Political leaders, such as Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan (NCLB Reauthorization, 2010), and President Obama (Obama, 2011; United States Department of Education [USDOE], 2010), strongly declared their support for the fine arts, claiming the fine arts were crucial to the American educational process (Dwyer, 2011). However, recent surveys indicated K-12 fine arts programs continued to decline since the late 1990s to 2011 (Rabkin & Hedberg, 2011). Moreover, even though the Obama administration strongly advocated for an education rich in the fine arts for all students via political speeches (NCLB Reauthorization, 2010), research committees (The President's Committee on Arts and Humanities [PCAH], 2011), and *Blueprint* (NCLB Reauthorization, 2010), in recent educational policy, the fine arts were not mentioned (Common Core, 2013; Federal Science, 2013; Kober & Rentmer, 2011; The Federal Science, 2011). In educational agendas, such as the Science, Technology, Energy, and Math (STEM) agenda (Federal Science, 2013; The Federal Science, 2011), Race to the Top (RttT) (NCLB Reauthorization, 2010), and the Common Core State Standards [CCSS] (Common Core, 2013; Kober & Rentmer, 2011; National Coalition for Core Arts Standards [NCCAS], 2013), the fine arts were not included.

In the past five years, 46 states and 4 territories adopted the CCSS, coordinated by the National Governors' Association for Best Practices and the council of Chief State

School Officers (Common Core, 2013; NCCAS, 2013). The standards focused on English language arts and math; however, advocates were working to implement other subjects, such as science (Common Core, 2013). The CCSS were designed to prepare students for college-level success by graduated objectives in reading, writing, and math (Common Core, 2013; NCCAS, 2013). A survey of educational deputy supervisors from 42 states indicated one of the many flaws with the CCSS was lack of funding (Kober & Rentmer, 2011), which historically has negatively impacted fine arts programs in many districts (Beveridge, 2012; Garcia, 2010; Maxwell, 2008).

Fine arts advocates and educators have taken a proactive approach to CCSS by providing professional development via seminars and online materials to assist fine arts educators in integrating the fine arts into the CCSS (ASCD, 2013; R. Moppin, personal communication, March, 25, 2013). Silverstein and Layne (2010) defined arts integration as "...an approach to teaching in which students construct and demonstrate understanding through an art form. Students engage in a creative process which connects an art form and another subject area and meets evolving objectives in both" (para. 1).

Rabkin and Hedberg (2011) posited, "...education policy is likely to favor the arts only if the link to general academic achievement is further established *and* if the current narrow focus on reading and mathematics is broadened" (p. 21). The controversial issue of fine arts educators being required to spend instructional time integrating the other core subjects to elevate test scores has been a prevailing concern in many schools (Beveridge, 2010; Gullatt, 2007). Gullatt (2007) suggested it was never the intention of the NCLB authors that fine arts programs diminish as a result of a stronger focus on the other core subjects. Likewise, the noble intention of the Obama administration (Obama, 2011) on

behalf of fine arts education was not in question in this study (PCAH, 2011). Rather, the examination of the dilemma of the fine arts being ranked as a core subject, in theory but not in practice, was deemed an important element to examine.

For the purpose of this study, the question of whether or not the fine arts should be considered a core subject in policy and practice was foundational to the plight of the arts (Branscome, 2012). To gather relevant data, survey and interview responses were collected from various stakeholders regarding their perceptions about the fine arts being ranked among the core subjects, with the data presented in Chapter Four.

Theme two: Fine arts as part of holistic education. In considering the controversy regarding the fine arts being valued as a core subject, a second theme emerged: holistic education. The question could be asked, “Are the fine arts perceived to be vital to a child’s holistic education”? If trends in research highlighted the fine arts as an essential component in a well-rounded education, what was the reason for the chasm between policy and practice, and what could artists, musicians, parents, educators, and policymakers do to rectify the problem? In commenting on the current plight of the fine arts at the Arts Education Partnership National Forum, Arne Duncan (2010) stated:

In America, we do not reserve arts education for privileged students or the elite. Children from disadvantaged backgrounds, students who are English language learners, and students with disabilities often do not get the enrichment experiences of affluent students anywhere except at school. President Obama recalls that when he was a child ‘you always had an art teacher and a music teacher. Even in the poorest school districts everyone had access to music and other arts.’ Today, sadly, that is no longer the case. (para 1)

In this research project, exploring the perceptions of various stakeholders regarding why the fine arts are a vital part of a child's holistic education added insight and substance to the study. Various stakeholders were surveyed and interviewed regarding the topic, with the qualitative and quantitative data discussed in Chapter Four. Expanding the body of literature is necessary so educators and policymakers can make quality decisions regarding K-12 fine arts education, which will ultimately provide students with the skills needed to succeed in a global environment.

Theme three: Value of fine arts. The purpose of examining the value of the fine arts and the effect the study of the fine arts has on the brain was significant to whether or not the fine arts deserve to be ranked among the core subjects and whether or not the fine arts are vital to a child's holistic education. During the past two decades, while policymakers and fine arts practitioners were struggling to align common goals, a plethora of research was published supporting the theory that the study of the fine arts had positive effects on the brain, enhancing learning ability in children from infancy through high school and throughout one's lifetime (Asbury & Rich, 2008; Garcia, 2010; Portowitz, Lichtenstein, Egorova, & Brand, 2009; Roberts, Shahin, & Trainor, 2009; Skoe & Kraus, 2012).

Roberts et al. (2009) conducted studies regarding music's impact on the brain and concluded musical training altered the brain's auditory cortex, thereby increasing attention and memory, which enhanced learning across all subject areas. Shasberger's (2009) findings aligned with Roberts et al. (2009), as he [Shasberger] reported that students involved in quality public school fine arts programs attained success in other academic areas, as well as the fine arts.

Gullatt (2007) expressed grave concern regarding the bleak perception of the fine arts in communities across the nation during the NCLB era, because citizens had a tendency to place value on subjects receiving funding and instructional time. Until families, teachers, and administrators promote the value of the fine arts to the boards of education and the superintendents of schools, the fine arts may never achieve their deserved status in the public schools, according to Gullatt (2007). Stakeholders must send the message that the study of the fine arts is life-changing for many students nationwide (ASCD, 2013).

In comparison to the plethora of research available on the positive effect of fine arts education, there was a dearth of research reporting fine arts education did not impact learning, and in some cases had negative effects on a student's educational experience (Bambrick & Gill, 2012; Elpus, 2013; Legg, 2010; Lubet, 2009; Murray, 2008). Rabkin and Hedberg (2011) reported there were researchers who were skeptical about linking the arts to academic achievement, including some who were strong supporters of arts education. Rabkin and Hedberg (2011) stated, "They assert that the correlations between arts education and positive outcomes do not conclusively demonstrate that arts education is the *cause* of the outcomes" (p. 21).

For this study, a review of relevant literature was presented in Chapter Two. Pertinent to this theme, the negative and positive perspectives of the value of fine arts education in light of the cognitive, psychological, and social benefits for children were discussed. Survey and interview responses regarding the value of fine arts programs in schools and districts were collected, and the data were analyzed.

Theme four: Fine arts included on assessments. Beveridge (2010) concluded the subjects deemed worthy of assessment were also the subjects deemed worthy of instructional time and funding. If the fine arts were included on standardized assessments, along with math, language arts, and science, would stakeholders experience a shift in their perceptions regarding the status of arts programs (Beveridge, 2010)? The controversial issue surrounding the standardized assessment of public school fine arts emerged as the fourth theme in the study.

Stakeholders in favor of including the fine arts on standardized assessments highlighted the accessibility to valuable fine arts data at the district, state, and national level as one of the points in favor of fine arts assessment, as well as creating more accountability on the part of fine arts educators (National Arts Policy, 2010; National Task Force, 2009; Nieves, 2008). Furthermore, stakeholders in favor of fine arts standardized assessment posited that perceptions of the fine arts would rise in importance to the level of the currently tested core subjects, as the fine arts would then be given equal instructional time and funding (National Arts Policy, 2010; National Task Force, 2009; Nieves, 2008). Those of a different mindset disagreed.

Stakeholders opposed to standardized assessment of the fine arts reported the aesthetic qualities of the fine arts deserved a special place in the curriculum and were too subjective to be assessed by multiple choice questions (National Arts Policy, 2010; National Task Force, 2009; Nieves, 2008; Wright, Humphrey, Larrick, Gifford, & Wardlaw, 2005). Moreover, Randall (2010) asserted many fine arts educators considered it a daunting task to design and effectively implement an objective assessment in the area of the fine arts. Some short-term elements of fine arts could be measured; however, with

the central theme of the fine arts being creativity, accurate assessment was viewed as challenging (Jensen, 2001). Furthermore, an intense focus on testing devalued learning and stifled the creative process (Jensen, 2001).

In 2011, only the state of Kentucky implemented a state assessment of the arts (Education Commission of the States [ECS], 2011). In addition, the only states in the nation having implemented any form of district assessment of the fine arts were Arizona, Montana, New Hampshire, New Jersey, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, and Washington (ECS, 2011). Legislators and educators in favor of implementing standardized music assessments predicted implementation would result in an increase in accountability on the part of music educators and result in an elevation of the fine arts to a level of importance commensurate with the other tested subjects (Edmund, Birkner, Burcham, & Heffner, 2008; Hoffer, 2008).

The controversy of including public school fine arts on standardized assessments was introduced in this chapter with further research presented in Chapter Two. Perspectives were presented regarding both views. Various stakeholders were surveyed and interviewed regarding their perceptions about standardized testing of public school fine arts, with the results presented in Chapter Four. The goal of the research was to add substance to the study and enrich the current body of literature, aiding educators and policymakers in making well-informed decisions on behalf of all K-12 students.

Conceptual Framework

In this study, the influence of federal laws on the *education of the whole child* was examined in regard to K-12 public school fine arts programs and was the lens through which this study was conducted. The ASCD defined its vision of the education of the whole child as “ensuring that each child, in each school, in each community is healthy, safe, engaged, supported, and challenged” (2013, para. 1). The future success of America’s students depends on fostering a society that is both educated and creative, cultivating the whole child, mind, body, and spirit, requiring an education rich in the fine arts (National Association for Music Education [NAfME], 2011; Shasberger, 2009, Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development [ASCD], 2013).

The arts are invaluable in preparing a student for the workforce (Murphy, 2010). Murphy (2010) stated, “Creative problem-solving, teamwork, analyzing methods, and expanding or assimilating them into new ideas and creations are fundamental in the study of art” (para. 5). Society is inundated with high-tech imagery, sounds, and visual stimuli on a daily basis, usually created by a person with artistic expertise (Murphy, 2010).

Advocates of the education of the whole child has spanned many decades and included Thoreau, Emerson, Alcott, Parker, Dewey, Montessori, and Steiner, all of whom believed the educational process should impact the moral, emotional, physical, psychological, and spiritual development of students (Miller, 2010). In the 1970s, the term “holism” was established to identify multi-tiered education encompassing a variety of experiences and meaning in the educational setting (Miller, 2010). However, there has been an ongoing interplay of various perceptions among stakeholders regarding fine arts education policy as it relates to holistic education (Helig, Cole, & Aguilar, 2010). Some

stakeholders believed the fine arts were essential to a well-rounded education; others perceived fine arts to be valuable but not essential, while others viewed fine arts as having low priority or being expendable when compared to other core academic subjects, such as math and language arts (Helig et al., 2010).

In the 1980s, Sceffler (1986) expressed concern that even though the fine arts were recognized as having both cognitive and affective benefits for learners, educators were more often abandoning the cognitive component. Sceffler (1986) reported fine arts courses helped to develop higher-level thinking skills, such as analyzing, synthesizing, and evaluating concepts in a variety of ways. Over a decade later, researchers Ackroyd (2000), Baldwin (1998), and Nelson (2009), concurred with Sceffler's (1986) assessment, reporting to stakeholders the inherent cognitive value of fine arts education in relation to the education of the whole child. In 2009, Nelson (2009) added the component of the emotional benefits of fine arts education, which was his primary reason for his position of advocacy for holistic education. Nelson (2009) additionally reported that students enjoyed a sense of empowerment when encouraged to explore their talents.

Over the past two decades there have been fluctuations in perceptions and purpose among stakeholders regarding the role of public school fine arts in the education of the whole child (ASCD, 2013; Nelson, 2009). In order to be successful there must be a clear objective established between all stakeholders describing the purpose of fine arts education (ASCD, 2013; Nelson, 2009). To experience the education of the whole child nationwide, action is required, not merely discussion; therefore, a fundamental shift is needed rather than subtle changes in curriculum (ASCD, 2013).

Statement of the Problem

The fine arts are universal, transcending diversity in every culture around the world, uniting human beings (Murphy, 2010). Through public school fine arts, students explore self-expression, enjoy a connection with their school community and peers, and explore all subjects through kinesthetic and aesthetic strategies (National Art Education Association, n.d.; National Association for Music Education, 2010. Murphy (2010), NAEA (n.d.), and NAFME (2011) have concurred the classes in the fine arts are the best way for students to explore and define their feelings about their own culture. Conversely, opponents have believed the fine arts are expendable and have a low priority (Helig et al., 2010), especially when one considers the mandates to increase student achievement in communication arts and mathematics.

Therefore, due to the varying reasons, there has been a division between policymakers and practitioners regarding the function of the fine arts, thereby adversely affecting the quality of K-12 education for many children (Chen, 2008; Beveridge; 2010). Current federal laws, in practice, force districts to spend the majority of funds and instructional time on the tested subjects, diverting time and money away from fine arts programs (Chen, 2008; Jacobsen & Rothstein, 2009; Maxwell, 2008; Suzuki, 2009). According to prominent politicians and national fine arts education organizations, every student in the United States has a right to a quality education, including the fine arts (NAfME, 2011; National Task Force, 2009; Shasberger, 2009).

Yet, in the NCLB Era, only 57% of eighth graders received music instruction three or four times a week, and only 47% benefited from art instruction (National Task Force, 2009). Nieves (2008) reported that from 1998 to 2008 elementary school music

instruction decreased 50%. However, nation-wide data on the status of public school K-12 fine arts programs was inconsistent because most schools and districts were not required to report fine arts grade averages, curriculum requirements, enrollment, or assessment data (National Task Force, 2009).

In the preliminary stages of this study, it appeared that throughout the 1900s a pattern evolved with the fine arts being subjected to marginalization, according to political policy or national crisis (Benham, 2013; Berlinger, 2009; Rabkin et al., 2011; Ward, 2011). Discrepancies in fine arts policy and practice surfaced during times of economic or political crisis, such as the launching of Sputnik (Helig et al., 2010) and the passage of NCLB (Beveridge, 2012; Chen, 2008; Freedman, 2011; Garcia, 2010; Jacobsen & Rothstein, 2009; Kavanaugh, 2009; Maxwell, 2008; Preston, 2009; Shasberger, 2009; Suzuki, 2009). Consequently, in theory, students were promised an arts-rich education but, in many cases, were denied access to fine arts programs (National Arts Policy, 2010; National Task Force, 2009; Nieves, 2008).

Duncan (2010) remarked that the erosion of public school fine arts programs was unacceptable, and that collectively, advocates must find a way to promote fine arts education for the success of all students and the advancement of the nation. However, the ASCD (2013) determined a fundamental shift in policy is necessary to re-establish the fine arts to their appropriate status. Engaging in mere discussion would not be adequate.

In 2011, the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities (PCAH) published a report revealing a synthesis of an 18-month study that examined arts education data in the United States (PCAH, 2011). The results of the study reaffirmed President Obama's conviction that a fine arts education provided a critical benefit to the

community (PCAH, 2011). In order for individuals to successfully compete in the global economy, they must be creative, collaborative, and innovative, and the fine arts are an effective tool in helping to equip students with crucial skills for the jobs of tomorrow (PCAH, 2011). However, after the PCAH uncovered and reported that specific schools were literally transformed by arts integration, the fine arts were not mentioned in the most current STEM (Federal Science, 2011; The Federal Science, 2013) agenda, thus sending a different message.

Hence, four issues, viewed as problematic for American public school children, emerged as the four main themes in the study: What are the perceptions of various stakeholders regarding the fine arts being considered a core subject? What are the perceptions of various stakeholders regarding the fine arts being a vital part of a child's holistic education? What are the perceptions of various stakeholders regarding the value of the fine arts in light of brain research? What are the perceptions of various stakeholders regarding the inclusion of the fine arts on state mandated tests? Throughout American history, educational policy has been based upon the fluctuating perceptions of stakeholders; therefore, the examination of the four themes offered insight into the plight of K-12 public school fine arts.

Purpose of the Study

In light of the ever-changing landscape regarding the plight of K-12 fine arts programs under federal laws, a study of the perceptions of public school music teachers and curriculum directors regarding K-12 public school fine arts as a core subject, fine arts as a crucial part of a child's holistic education, the value of the fine arts in light of brain research, and the debate regarding standardized fine arts assessment, was deemed

necessary. There has been an ongoing debate among various stakeholder groups regarding whether or not there should be equity between K-12 fine arts programs and subjects, such as math, language arts, and science, which unlike the arts, are strictly monitored and assessed under federal mandates.

Important decisions affecting K-12 public school students are based on the perceptions of the various stakeholder groups. The primary goal of the study was to add to the current body of literature regarding the perceptions of various stakeholder groups on issues pertaining to K-12 fine arts programs and federal laws. The overarching goal of the study was to add to the existing body of literature so educational leaders may make well-informed decisions regarding fine arts programs at the local, district, state, and national level on behalf of all K-12 public school students.

Research questions. The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the perceptions of stakeholders regarding the inclusion of fine arts as a core subject?
2. What are the perceptions of stakeholders regarding the fine arts as a vital part of every child's holistic education?
3. What are the perceptions of stakeholders regarding the overall value of K-12 fine arts education?
4. What are the perceptions of stakeholders regarding standardized assessments including the fine arts?

Definition of Key Terms

The following terms are defined for clarity and understanding:

Missouri Assessment Program (MAP). The MAP is a series of tests designed to determine whether students are meeting the state academic standards. Students in grades 3-8 are assessed in Communication Arts and Mathematics; students in grades 5-8 are additionally assessed in Science. End-of-course (EOC) assessments are administered in the following high school courses: Algebra I, Algebra II, Geometry, Biology, English 9, English 10, American History, and Government (Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education [MODESE], 2011).

Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (MODESE). The MODESE is a service agency, performing administrative functions for the State Board of Education. The department is responsible for Early Childhood to Adult Education services (MODESE, 2011).

No Child Left Behind (NCLB). NCLB was implemented in 2002 with the following goals: better funding for school districts, more control for states and school districts, schools and school districts held more accountable for achievement, school district report cards, public school choice, free tutoring for qualifying individuals, as well as guidelines for parental involvement in the schools. In addition, the goals of NCLB encompassed state assessments, research-based teaching methods, Reading First, and teacher quality. The fine arts were listed among the core subjects in the NCLB legislation (United States Department of Education [USDOE], n.d.).

Southwest Regional Professional Development Center [RPDC]. The purpose of the Southwest RPDC is to provide “facilitation and support services, through a network of individuals with content area and practical expertise. Our collaborative work focuses on enhancing the quality of both teacher and administrator practice for effective

educational planning and programming to raise student achievement” (Southwest Regional, n.d., para 2).

Limitations and Assumptions

The following limitations are listed for the reader’s consideration.

Sample demographics. The surveys and interviews were limited to the Regional Professional Development Center [RPDC] Region 7 in Missouri. Data were limited to 12 interviews and from the surveys completed and returned within a 30-day period; hence, sample sizes will be smaller than large-scale studies.

Instrument. Surveys and interviews were implemented to gather data across the RPDC Region 7 in Missouri. The survey was written by the researcher who holds bias on the topic of the fine arts. In addition, survey respondents and interviewees volunteered their time, which could have indicated that some participants may have possessed a greater bias on the topic than non-respondents. Furthermore, the interviewees (public school music teachers and curriculum directors) were specifically chosen for the study due to their understanding and knowledge of the topic, and it was a general assumption that all respondents answered honestly.

Generalizations. The research was a mixed-methods design of quantitative and qualitative research. Research projects utilizing qualitative methods often involve instruments such as interviews and questionnaires. The mere nature of qualitative research lends itself to small samples; therefore, generalizations should not be made from this study.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to compare the current perceptions of public school music educators and curriculum directors regarding the fine arts in public education in relation to federal mandates. Decisions affecting the plight of the fine arts in public school education have been routinely made based upon the perceptions of the stakeholders and policymakers; thus, a study of perceptions was deemed necessary. A mixed-design utilizing qualitative and quantitative research methods was chosen in an effort to add more substance to the study (Creswell, 2008).

A concise background of the study emphasized the fundamental shift in American public school education away from fine arts and toward the tested academic subjects (Beveridge, 2012; Chen, 2008; Freedman, 2011; Garcia, 2010; Jacobsen & Rothstein, 2009; Kavanaugh, 2009; Maxwell, 2008; Preston, 2009; Rabkin & Hedberg, 2011; Suzuki, 2009). An introduction was made regarding the pattern of the fine arts being marginalized during times of national crisis from the mid-20th century into the 21st century in America (Benham, 2013; Berlinger, 2009; Rabkin & Hedberg, 2011; Ward, 2011). The controversy among stakeholders regarding whether there has been a fine arts crisis during the first decade of the 21st century was presented.

Theme One emerged in the preliminary stage of the research and was introduced in Chapter One. The fine arts were listed along with the other core subjects in federal legislation yet not given equal status (Chen, 2008; Freedman, 2011; Garcia, 2010; Kavanaugh, 2009; Suzuki, 2009). In this study, perceptions of music educators and curriculum directors were explored through surveys and interviews regarding whether the fine arts were viewed as core subjects in perception and practice.

Theme Two interconnected with Theme One in exploring whether or not the fine arts should be considered a vital part of a child's holistic education (ASCD, 2013; NAFME, 2013; Scherer, 2009; Shasberger, 2009). If the fine arts were to be considered a vital component in a child's holistic education, should that lead to the logical conclusion that the fine arts should be ranked as a core subject in theory and practice? Data were collected and analyzed to reveal the importance of fine arts programs as a part of a child's holistic education, according to the perceptions of the respondents.

Theme Three introduced the value of the fine arts in light of brain research. Research was introduced supporting data that students involved in fine arts enjoyed academic and psychological benefits. If there are social, psychological, and cognitive benefits to fine arts education, should that alter stakeholders' perceptions about K-12 fine arts education? Research was also introduced refuting the benefits of fine arts education.

Theme Four was presented regarding the controversy surrounding the standardized assessment of the fine arts. If the fine arts were considered a core subject, vital to a child's holistic education, and proven to be valuable due to brain research, then should the fine arts be included on standardized assessments? Would including the fine arts on standardized assessments aid the plight of fine arts education regarding increased funding and instructional time? Would standardized fine arts assessment provide valuable data at the national, state, and local level? Would including the fine arts on standardized assessments have create more problems than it eliminated?

The conceptual framework was introduced to discuss the inseparable connection between the fine arts and the education of the whole child and was the lens through which the study was conducted. In the statement of the problem, evidence was presented to

highlight the varying perceptions among policymakers at the local, state, and national level regarding the role of the fine arts in public school education. Furthermore, even when the perceptions were positive, such as the PCAH reports (PCAH, 2011) when educational policy was implemented, the fine arts were not included. Moreover, school administrators nationwide were forced to make difficult decisions in light of high stakes testing demands and strained budgets, with the fine arts often being reduced or eliminated.

The research questions, which aligned with the four themes of the study, were stated. Each question was essential in guiding the qualitative and quantitative study. Key terms were defined followed by the limitations and assumptions.

In Chapter Two, a brief history of American public school fine arts through the mid-1900s to present day, was presented. Specifically, the effects of NCLB and the ESEA on K-12 fine arts were examined. Furthermore, the pattern of the marginalization of the arts during times of national crisis throughout past decades was discussed. A brief examination of recent national educational policies and the effect, or projected effect, of those policies on public school fine arts was included.

The goal of this mixed-design study was to analyze a variety of stakeholders' perceptions regarding the current plight of K-12 fine arts. Perceptions influence policy (Kegley & Blanton, 2013); therefore, it was deemed beneficial to collect and analyze a sample of perceptions via surveys and interviews to add to the expanding body of research regarding the role of the fine arts in a holistic education. The primary goal of the study was for educators and policymakers to assimilate and synthesize fine arts data to aid in making well-informed decisions on behalf of all K-12 students, nationwide.

Chapter Two: Review of Literature

The problem regarding K-12 fine arts programs involves a complex mix of priorities in the public education system (Freedman, 2011; Garcia, 2010; Kavanaugh, 2009; Preston, 2009; Rabkin & Hedberg, 2011; Shasberger, 2009). There are choices to be made in examining what should be included in K-12 curriculum, what districts can afford, and what must be eliminated, given the budgeting concerns affecting districts (Garcia, 2010; Freedman 2011; Kavanaugh, 2009; Preston, 2009; Rabkin & Hedberg, 2011; Shasberger, 2009). In this study, it was not intended that the significance of math, science, and language arts be diminished, nor the challenges facing administrators and policymakers, but rather to examine the perceptions of various stakeholder groups regarding the role of K-12 public school fine arts through the lens of the education of the whole child (ASCD, 2013; Miller, 2010; NAFME, 2011; Sattin-Bajaj et al., 2010; Scherer, 2009; Shasberger, 2009).

In Chapter Two, a foundation was established for the study beginning with a brief history of music education in American public schools throughout the 1900s to the turn of the 21st century (Berliner, 2009; Overview, n.d.; Helig, Cole, & Aguilar, 2010; Howard, 2004; Murphy, 2010; Smith, 1996). In the process of assessing the current role of the fine arts in K-12 public school education, it was deemed imperative to explore the profound effect federal laws have had on the fine arts in past decades and analyze cultural trends. In past decades, governmental decisions made by those with leading political agendas created an ebb and flow of perceptions regarding K-12 fine arts programs (Berliner, 2009; Branscome, 2012; Rabkin, et al., 2011; Ward, 2011). The ESEA and NCLB were examined, as well as conflicting viewpoints regarding the impact the mandates have had

on K-12 fine arts education (Blakely, 2010; Chen, 2008; Garcia, 2010; Jacobsen & Rothstein, 2009; Maxwell, 2008; Suzuki, 2009).

In the preliminary stages of the study, four central themes emerged as integral to the outcome and were presented in Chapter Two. The research questions, which guided the study, were aligned with the four themes. Due to the dearth of current literature available on various topics in this study, sources were scarce on some of the issues explored, underscoring the need for further research on the perceptions of K-12 fine arts in American culture.

Music Education in American Public Schools

The Department of Education was established in 1867 for the purpose of gathering specific information on schools that could be conveyed to state education departments in an effort to increase academic achievement across the nation (Overview, n.d.). The period of time between the turn of the twentieth century to the 1930s was a broader, less restrictive approach to the fine arts in the public schools than had been experienced in the late-nineteenth century (Smith, 1996). Dewey's advocacy of the arts gained recognition, as well as the child study movement, which examined new successful learning strategies (Saunders, 1971).

Dewey perceived the fine arts to be essential in a child's educational experience due to the enhancement of creativity, self-expression, and a child learning to appreciate the unique self-expression of other students (Dewey, 1934). The public acceptance of — and approach to — the arts in American schools in the 1930s was the first time in American history the fine arts were recommended for their positive influence on other subjects, a perception that would influence policies for years to come (Berliner, 2009).

The fine arts were firmly rooted in the curriculum from the early twentieth-century until The Great Depression when thousands of schools closed (Tyack, 1976). Districts remaining open during the 1930s decreased their fine arts departments due to strained budgets (Efland, 1983), which planted a negative perception of the fine arts being dispensable in the American education system (Mims & Lankford, 1995). During the 1940s when education funds were short, the fine arts were not deemed a priority in the public schools (Saunders, 1971; Smith, 1996). In the early 1950s the economy flourished, and the arts, once again, began to thrive due to increased funding for public school fine arts until the Soviet Union launched Sputnik (Saunders, 1971).

Sputnik

The NCLB era of the first decade of the 21st century was not the first time in American history when legislators inspired a nationwide effort to focus on core subjects, such as math and science, with the fine arts being inadvertently marginalized (Benham, 2013; Berlinger, 2009; Mims & Lankford, 1995; Rabkin & Hedberg, 2011; Ward, 2011). A comparison of the plight of the fine arts today to the plight of the fine arts during the Sputnik era, when the educational emphasis shifted primarily to science and math, highlighted yet another time in American history when fine arts advocates found themselves embroiled in a battle for survival (Helig et al., 2010; Ward, 2011).

In the 1950s, the economy was flourishing. Public school fine arts programs received more funding resulting in more positive perceptions of fine arts, until a dramatic turn of events when the Soviet Union launched Sputnik (Helig et al., 2010). Sputnik 1, a 183 pound satellite, was launched on October 4, 1957 from the Kazach Republic in Russia, causing initial hysteria in the United States followed by an outcry

for changes in the educational system (Launius, n.d.). As expressed by Launius (n.d.), “The launch of Sputnik 1 had a ‘Pearl Harbor’ effect on American opinion. It was a shock, introducing the average citizen to the space age in a crisis setting. The event created an illusion of a technological gap” (para. 9). Authorities announced a nationwide educational crisis. An intense emphasis on science and math ensued, which resulted in the availability of fine arts programs being severely reduced in American public schools (Helig et al., 2010; Ward, 2011).

Historian Perry Miller (as cited in Launius, n.d.) recorded that the “Puritans of New England flung themselves in the technological torrent, how they shouted with glee in the midst of the frenzy, and cried to each other as they went headlong down the chute that here was their destiny as they experimented with technology to create their City on a Hill” (para. 10). Since the time of the Puritans, the United States had been esteemed as the world leader in the area of technology; however, the launching of Sputnik damaged this American perception and caused great distress among the American citizens (Launius, n.d.). As a result of the political pressure on the Eisenhower administration, a great emphasis on space exploration ensued which resulted in the birth of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) (Launius, n.d.).

As a result of the technology gap, math and science became the prime focus in American public school education after the launching of Sputnik; therefore, Jones (1961) conducted a study on the effect Sputnik was having on music education in 1961. Jones (1961) reported that in Ohio, 16% of principals surveyed acknowledged that students should enroll in music courses. Four years prior to Jones’ (1961) research, Dahlinger (1957) conducted a study on music education in Ohio and reported that 35%

of principals surveyed believed requiring a general music course was in the students' best interest. Though the survey question was worded differently and the studies may have been conducted in different geographical regions in Ohio, one might conclude from comparing the Ohio studies that the overall perception of the importance of music education in the public schools declined during the Sputnik era.

Frontiersmen in the Arts

More interestingly, however, was that the launching of Sputnik, and the ensuing focus on math and science in the public schools, compelled arts activists to unite in the 1960s, consequently accomplishing more for arts education than ever before in American history (Helig et al., 2010; Howard, 2004). The shift in the educational system had "tremendous implications on the moribund status of public funding for the arts" (Howard, 2004, p. 1). This shift brought the arts from the sidelines into the spotlight, leading to the founding of the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) on September 29, 1965, during the presidency of Lyndon B. Johnson (Howard, 2004). In the years between Sputnik's launch and the establishment of the NEA, the arts gradually regained public and governmental support (Howard, 2004). The credit belongs to the musicians' ability to alter a time of trauma and insecurity into an attitude of being "frontiersmen" (Howard, 2004, p. 300) or "avant-garde" (Howard, 2004, p. 300), to persevere despite setbacks.

Two decades later, fine arts frontiersmen (Howard, 2004) came to the forefront in the 1980s when America's public schools began to implement a stricter focus on the core subjects, consequently leaving less instructional time and less funding for the fine arts (Molland, 2007). The National Art Education Association (NAEA) publicized the

nationwide slogan, “You Gotta Have Art” (Murphy, 2010). The NAEA, as well as other organizations, began a rigorous campaign to educate the public, politicians, and educators about the necessity of the arts as a part of a child’s whole educational experience (Murphy, 2010). The relentless campaigning in favor of the fine arts culminated in the fine arts being listed among the core subjects in the Goals 2000: Educate America Act in 1994 (Murphy, 2010). However, in the first decade of the 21st century with the passage of NCLB, the fine arts were once again in jeopardy as they were considered to not be as easy to document in terms of the contribution they made to education, in contrast to math, for example, where academic achievement was easy to measure (Murphy, 2010).

In 2002, the enactment of NCLB, and the continual decreasing of funds throughout departments of education, had placed specialty subjects at the highest risk of marginalization (Beveridge, 2012; Blakely, 2010; Chen, 2008; Garcia, 2010; Jacobsen & Rothstein, 2009; Maxwell, 2008; Nieves, 2008; Suzuki, 2009). Once again, as had happened with the launching of Sputnik, math, science, and language arts became the focal point, and K-12 fine arts programs lost funding and instructional time across the nation (Blakely, 2010; Chen, 2008; Garcia, 2010; Jacobsen & Rothstein, 2009; Maxwell, 2008; Suzuki, 2009). However, fine arts frontiersmen (Howard, 2004; ASCD, 2013; NAEA, n.d.; NAFME, 2010; National Art, 2010) continued to influence local school boards and policy makers to put more focus on the fine arts, as will be examined in the next section.

ESEA and NCLB: General Background

Every year thousands of public school graduates are entering colleges, universities, and the workforce influenced by the nation’s education system (Blakely,

2010). The ESEA of 1965 was signed into law by President Lyndon B. Johnson as part of a nationwide initiative to conquer poverty, whereby transferring greater control of public education to the federal government (Hana, 2005; Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction [OSPI], n.d.). The overarching purpose of the ESEA from 1965 to present was to ensure equal access to education for all students by requiring greater accountability of educational leaders and policymakers (Blakely, 2010; OSPI, n.d.).

In 2002, the ESEA was amended and renamed the NCLB Act, effective January 8, 2002 (USDOE, n.d.). NCLB was signed by President George W. Bush with enthusiastic bipartisan support, a result of 15 years of standards-based reform (Jennings & Rentner, 2006; OSPI, n.d.). The NCLB Act was created to give all students a greater opportunity to achieve by increasing accountability, flexibility, and choice, so that every child could experience an enhanced measure of success (MODESE, 2010; USDOE, n.d.).

The NCLB lawmakers utilized the 1994 re-authorization of the ESEA Act as a foundation, which ensured that state leaders created appropriate educational standards and scheduled yearly assessments in the core academic subjects of reading and mathematics at three grade levels (Palmer & Barley, 2008). The implementation of NCLB had a profound influence on the nation's educational system in requiring more accountability via standardized testing in selected subjects, and having redefined the teaching process (Jennings & Rentner, 2006). Moreover, struggling schools received prime focus under the mandates of NCLB due to the major challenges of testing requirements for students with learning disabilities and non-English speaking students (Jennings & Rentner, 2006).

Advocates of NCLB praised the law for increasing accountability, providing more parental choices, and narrowing the achievement gap in certain categories (USDOE, n.d.). Critics argued that the under-funded requirements of NCLB over-emphasized services to special learners and schools not meeting Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), or not scoring proficient or advanced, while leaving students and staff feeling overwhelmed with standardized testing requirements (Grey, 2010; Jennings & Rentner, 2006).

The Impact of Federal Education Laws

Over the past decade, the value of fine arts education gained favor as professional organizations, such as The National Governors' Association, the Education Commission of the States, the National Association of State Boards of Education, and the Council of Chief State School Officers began to send a stronger message in favor of fine arts education, aligning with fine arts organizations, such as the National Endowment for the Arts, the Arts Education Partnership, and Americans for the Arts (Dwyer, 2011). However, the mandates of the NCLB Act, which are currently referred to as (the reauthorization of) the ESEA (Klein, 2011), created two profound effects on fine arts education that art advocates have failed to conquer: decreased instructional time for fine arts instruction, in favor of more time spent on the tested subjects, and the requirement of fine arts educators to spend instructional time teaching, or integrating, the tested subjects (Grey, 2010; USDOE, n.d.).

An accurate national assessment of the availability and success of K-12 public school fine arts programs was challenging because there was no data required by schools regarding which fine arts programs were offered or how students were achieving (Dwyer,

2011). However, a few states have conducted surveys to determine accessibility to public school fine arts (Arts Education Research Initiative, 2009). The results of a survey in the state of Washington indicated 33% of elementary school students received less than one hour a week of fine arts instruction, and nearly 10% received no fine arts instruction at all (Arts Education Research Initiative, 2009). Rabkin and Hedberg (2011) found the decline in access to public school fine arts instruction has been the most significant for minorities. Since the 1980s, there has been a 49% decline in elementary school fine arts education for African American children and a 40% reduction for Latino students (Rabkin & Hedberg, 2011).

The intense focus on the tested subjects was not the only reason for the reduction of instructional time in fine arts education. Fine arts public school programs were operating on fewer funds due to budget restrictions (Dwyer, 2011). Florida's fine arts education budget was reduced from \$39 million to less than \$1 million (Dwyer, 2011). The Michigan state fine arts agency had \$29 million allotted for grants, and in 2011 had only \$2 million for the entire state (Dwyer, 2011). Moreover, less than a third of the states require formal assessments in the fine arts (Arts Education Research Initiative, 2009). Without assessment data, how is evaluation of the effectiveness of the fine arts programs possible (Arts Education Research Initiative, 2009)?

Due to the perceived negative effects of federal laws on fine arts, Spohn (2008), Sikes (2009), and Sabol (2010) conducted studies assessing the nationwide perceptions of the effects of federal education laws since 2002. In 2009, a nation-wide qualitative and quantitative study was conducted over a 2-year span in an effort to discover trends in the reduction of class time in core subjects, including the arts, as a result of the current

federal laws (Sikes, 2009). The General Accountability Office (GAO) researchers reported that according to a synthesis of the data, there was a significant decrease of time spent on the arts, especially in high-poverty schools; however, the perceived reason was due to the reduction in districts' budgets, not necessarily due to the effects of federal laws (Sikes, 2009).

A year later, Sabol (2010) reported strained budgets as being one of the negative effects of federal laws in his qualitative and quantitative study on the effects of NCLB on art education (Sabol, 2010). After analyzing 3,412 responses from educators, Sabol (2010) concluded that not only did NCLB have negative effects on finances, but on workloads, schedules, staffing, and class size. Furthermore, Sabol (2010) reported that art educators had witnessed a backlash in education due to NCLB in the areas of academics due to a decrease in students' desire to learn (2010). A case study, embarked upon by Spohn (2008), which examined the influence of NCLB on arts education in an Ohio public school system, concluded that negative changes had occurred in arts education since the passage of NCLB, especially in music. In addition, the teachers' opinions obtained during the study indicated that administrative decisions to improve standardized test scores due to the NCLB mandates compromised the arts programs (Spohn, 2008).

In light of the perceived flaws of federal education laws, the Obama administration submitted a revised plan for education, *A Blueprint for Reform*, to Congress early in 2010 with three proposed changes: defining student proficiency, evaluating and reviving failing schools, and introducing competition with the Race to the Top program (NCLB Reauthorization, 2010). In addition, the inclusion of the fine arts in

the *Blueprint* (NCLB Reauthorization, 2010) gave arts activists hope, as the fine arts were listed among the subjects deemed necessary for a student's quality education. The first sentence in the *Blueprint* is: "Every child in America deserves a world-class education" (USDOE, 2010, para. 1). President Obama defined what he believed a world class education entailed in the same document in the "College and Career-Ready Students" section:

Students need a well-rounded education to contribute as citizens in our democracy and to thrive in a global economy—from literacy to mathematics, science, and technology to history, civics, foreign languages, the arts, financial literacy, and other subjects. (USDOE, 2010, para. 3)

In 2010, stakeholders disagreed in speculating the future success of the *Blueprint* (NCLB Reauthorization, 2010) in regard to the fine arts. Advocates of the *Blueprint* (NCLB Reauthorization, 2010) such as Duncan, believed the effects of the plan would, in fact, help the plight of the fine arts, freeing more funds to possibly re-establish the fine arts at varying degrees, at least in some schools (Guisbond & Neill, 2010). On the contrary, Ravitch (2011) criticized the *Blueprint* (NCLB Reauthorization, 2010) due to the continued heavy focus on testing, which was in alignment with President G.W. Bush's original plan. Furthermore, Ravitch (2011) did not anticipate change for the fine arts with the implementation of the *Blueprint* (NCLB Reauthorization, 2010) but feared the bulk of funding would continue to support a major focus on the other core subjects.

A year after the unveiling of the *Blueprint* (NCLB Reauthorization, 2010) President Obama called for 13 billion dollars to stimulate innovation, while approving 3.4 billion dollars to fund the STEM program with the goal to "out-innovate, out-educate,

and out-build the rest of the world” (Obama, 2011, p. 2). Though the fine arts were included in the Blueprint (NCLB Reauthorization, 2010), the fine arts were not mentioned in the STEM document (Federal Science, 2011; The Federal Science, 2013). Moreover, President Obama stated in *The 2012 Budget: Winning the Future Through Investments, Innovation, Education, and Infrastructure*, “This is our generation’s Sputnik moment... we’ll invest in biomedical research, information technology, and especially clean energy technology – an investment that will strengthen our security, protect our planet, and create countless new jobs for our people” (Obama, 2011, p. 3). In response to President Obama’s previous statement, Brazell (2011) responded, “What is missing in the innovation agenda? The answer is *the arts*” (para. 7).

Educators, scientists, and arts advocates nationwide have embarked on a mission to incorporate the arts into the STEM initiative using acronyms, such as STEAM or occasionally TEAMS (Brazel, 2011; Rymal, 2013). The combined effort resulted in the first briefing of the new bipartisan Congressional STEAM Caucus on Capitol Hill to introduce legislation delivered by Rep. James Langevin at the 113th Congress on February 4, 2013, in Washington, D.C., advocating for change to the traditional STEM education movement, to include the Arts (Rymal, 2013). According to Dr. Kane, creator of the Global Positioning System (GPS), “Technology is human creativity and artistic expression... it is knowledge in action... knowledge with a purpose... it is the art in science and engineering...” (as cited in Brazel, 2011, para. 28).

Moreover, when one ponders technological inventions, such as computers, one usually does not attribute fine arts training as a factor in the creative process, but rather credits mathematicians and scientists (Withrow, 2011). However, Withrow (2011)

reported that Raymond Kurzweil's early experiments with music synthesizers were critical in the invention of computer technology. Because of the contribution of creative individuals, such as Kurzweil, some key specialists, such as Michael Lesieck, from MATEC Networks in Arizona, pressed for the integration of STEM and the fine arts because executives are searching for workers who incorporate the creative and innovative process (Brazell, 2011).

How much do state and federal laws influence public school fine arts programs? According to Nelson (2009), the perception and success of a particular school's fine arts programs are influenced almost entirely by the degree the school administrator values and promotes the school's fine arts programs. Moreover, principals have the most influence in the promotion and funding of any program in the local schools; likewise, if administrators devalue a program, they have the most influence in eliminating that program (Nelson, 2009). Consequently, whether or not advocates are successful in including the fine arts in the STEM initiative or the CCSS, public school administrators appear to be the most influential factor in affecting the perceptions of teachers, students, policy makers, and community members regarding fine arts instruction (Nelson, 2009).

Guiding Themes of the Study

In the preliminary phase of the study, four themes naturally emerged as the focal points of the research. The subject of the first theme was the issue of public school fine arts being declared a core subject in policy but not in practice. In Public Law PL 107-110, the fine arts were listed in the NCLB Act of 2001 among the other core subjects (National Standards, n.d.), but since the mandates were implemented, in many districts the fine arts have been denied the funding and instructional time commensurate of the other tested

subjects (Maxwell, 2008; Nieves, 2008). Furthermore, though strongly supported in political speeches and by governmental committees the fine arts were not included in the nation's most recent educational agendas, such as STEM (Federal Science, 2013; The Federal Science, 2011).

The subject of the second guiding theme encompassed the validity of every child having access to a holistic education. Is the holistic approach to education more beneficial for students? If so, to what degree should the fine arts be included in a child's holistic learning experience (ASCD, 2013; NafME, 2004; Satin-Bajaj et al., 2010; Scherer, 2009; Shasberger, 2009)?

The third theme explored a variety of perceptions regarding the value of public school fine arts education in light of brain research. Are there cognitive, social, and psychological benefits to fine arts study? Studies were presented which supported the view that an education rich in the fine arts had significant cognitive, social, and psychological benefits for students (Forgeard, Winner, Norton, & Schlaug, 2008; Garcia, 2010). On the contrary, studies were also listed refuting the validity of the research in support of an arts-rich education (Bambrick & Gill, 2012; Elpus, 2013; Legg, 2010; Lubet, 2009; Murray, 2008). In addition, research was presented indicating that in some districts, support for public school fine arts programs were based upon quality performances, ranking at fine arts contests, and public performances (Fisher, 2008; Lubet, 2009).

The fourth theme encompassed the controversial topic of the standardized assessment of the fine arts. Research was presented in support of including the fine arts on state mandated tests which might result in increased accountability for fine arts

teachers, increased funding for the fine arts, and more instructional time for the fine arts (Edmund et al., 2008; Hoffer, 2008; Shuler, 2009). Furthermore, the standardized testing of the fine arts would provide valuable data to help guide fine arts instruction and professional development for fine arts educators (Rabkin & Hedberg, 2011). Contrarily, many educators were not in favor of the assessment of the fine arts and posited the creation of such assessments would create excessive problems due to the subjective nature of the fine arts, as well as generate other complications which were presented (Adams, Foutz, Luke, & Stein, 2007; Jensen, 2001; Randall, 2010).

Theme one: Fine arts as a core subject. In ancient times, the core seven liberal arts were separated into two sections: the Trivium, which included grammar, logic, and rhetoric, and the Quadrivium, which consisted of arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy (Joseph & McGlenn, 2002; Shasberger, 2009). Throughout history these core academic subjects helped develop the art of communication and assisted in defining one's humanity and; therefore, should remain at the core of every student's education (Shasberger, 2009). The fine arts were never eliminated from the core subjects in ancient times, nor should they be downgraded or eliminated now, as reported by Shasberger (2009).

Throughout the 20th century, a pattern developed in America whereby public school fine arts programs flourished during times of economic prosperity then faced marginalization during times of crisis (Benhem, 2011; Berlinger, 2009; Branscome, 2012; Mims & Lankford, 1995; Rabkin & Hedberg; 2011; Ward, 2011). Due to the advocacy of fine arts "frontiersmen" (Howard, 2004), the fine arts were listed among the core subjects in the Goals 2000 Educate America Act of 1994 (Elpus, 2013) and in the 2001 NCLB

legislation (National Standards, n.d.; USDOE, n.d.); however, a significant erosion of the fine arts occurred in the 21st century in many schools nationwide due to a narrow focus on the tested subjects and budget restraints (Beveridge, 2012; Chen, 2008; Jacobsen & Rothstein, 2009; National Art, 2010; Maxwell, 2008; Nieves, 2008; Rabkin & Hedberg, 2011; Suzuki, 2009).

Rabkin and Hedberg (2011) reported from 1982-2008 fine arts education diminished; however, the most dramatic declines were in music, visual arts, and creative writing. Music education decreased from 53% to 37%, visual arts decreased from 36% to 26%, and creative writing decreased from 21% to 12%. Since 2002, 30% of districts nationwide experienced the diminished presence of fine arts instruction (National Art, 2010). Shasberger (2009) argued the fine arts must reside at the core of the curriculum in theory and in practice for all students to experience optimal learning.

Public school fine arts received strong political support in the past decade in presidential speeches and specialized committees (PCAH, 2011; NCLB Reauthorization, 2010; State of the Union, 2011). Regarding the importance of cultivating creative minds in American society, President Obama stated:

The first step in winning the future is encouraging American innovation. None of us can predict with certainty what the next big industry will be or where the new jobs will come from. Thirty years ago we couldn't know that something called the Internet would lead to an economic revolution. What we can do – what America does better than anyone else – is spark the creativity and imagination of our people. (State of the Union, 2011, para. 23)

President Obama further stated, “In addition to giving our children the science and math skills they need to compete in the new global context, we should also encourage the ability to think creatively that comes from a meaningful arts education” (National Task Force, p. 5). Furthermore, in a 2009 letter to education stakeholders, Secretary of Education Arne Duncan highlighted, “...the importance of the arts as a core academic subject and part of a complete education for all students,” as well as, “the arts play a significant role in children’s development and learning process” (National Task Force, 2009, p. 6).

However, in recent political policies, such as Race to the Top, the CCSS, and the STEM agenda, the fine arts were not mentioned (Common Core, 2013; Kober & Rentmer, 2011; Federal Science, 2013; The Federal Science, 2011; NCCAS, 2013). Moreover, President Obama (2011) stated in *The 2012 Budget: Winning the Future through Investments, Innovation, Education, and Infrastructure*, “This is our generation’s Sputnik moment...” (p. 3). Throughout his speech, President Obama (2011) promised advancements in biomedical research, information technology, and clean energy technology through STEM education. In response to the STEM agenda and President Obama’s comment about the nation experiencing a second Sputnik moment, Brazell (2011) expressed grave concern regarding the absence of the fine arts from the educational agenda, arguing the fine arts were imperative to the future success of America.

Fine arts activists perceived the fine arts were being placed on the peripheral of education due to the STEM agenda’s narrow focus (Brazel, 2011; Rymal, 2013); thus, “frontiersmen” (Howard, 2004) advocated for the inclusion of the arts when the STEM

agenda moved forward without mention of the fine arts. Organizations such as STEAM and TEAMS were created in an effort to integrate the arts with the STEM initiative (Brazel, 2011; Pilecki & Sousa, 2013; Rymal, 2013).

Pilecki and Sousa (2013) conducted extensive research regarding incorporating the arts into the STEM agenda, creating a STEAM agenda. They stated:

The skills that the arts develop include creativity, problem solving, critical thinking, communications, self-direction, initiative, and collaboration. All these skills—which align with what many educators now refer to as “twenty-first century skills”—will be needed by every student in order to survive successfully as an adult in an increasingly complex and technologically driven world. (Pilecki & Sousa, 2013, p. 15).

The CCSS was another educational agenda which has been adopted by 46 states and led by the National Governors’ Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers (Common Core, 2013; Kober & Rentmer, 2011; NCCAS, 2013). The purpose of the CCSS was to assist elementary and secondary school students in English language arts and mathematics to help students become college-and career-ready with 21st century skills (Kober & Rentmer, 2011; NCCAS, 2013). Implementing the CCSS will continue to require intense changes to a plethora of educational policies in each state (Kober & Rentmer, 2011).

Performance data, reflecting public school math and language arts scores nationwide, suggested the scores were not high enough for the majority of students in most states to be able to transfer to the new common core standards and accompanying assessments which are to be implemented in 2014-15 (Bidwell, 2013). Moreover, Sheehy (2013) reported the states of Alabama, Indiana, Georgia, and South Dakota had all begun

the process of halting the implementation of the CCSS and predicted other states would follow. Reasons for discontinuing the CCSS implementation included the arguments that states already had rigorous standards in place, and state education officials believed it was prudent to pursue the established course of action (Sheehy, 2013). In addition, it was reported that there was a dearth of research supporting the long-term success of the CCSS, while other state officials believed the autonomy of the state educational system was threatened by the CCSS strategy (Sheehy, 2013). Moreover, officials nationwide reported the implementation of the CCSS was very expensive, straining already tight budgets (Sheehy, 2013).

Regardless of whether districts were supporting the CCSS agenda, the STEM agenda, or a combination of approaches, the role of the fine arts differs among districts and among schools within districts, especially depending on each principal's support of fine arts programs and the integration of the fine arts (Nelson, 2009). Curriculum consultant, R. Moppin (personal communication, March 25, 2013) posited that fine arts educators, new to the field, were often disillusioned as they were required to attend a variety of professional development trainings regarding the integration of math, science, reading, and writing. However, R. Moppin (personal communication, March 25, 2013) suggested, "...instead of fighting the movement, join the movement, and become a leader for a better world." R. Moppin (personal communication, March 25, 2013) suggested that fine arts educators decide to be proactive regarding the integration of the fine arts with the CCSS for the benefit of the education of the whole child.

Theme two: Fine arts as part of holistic education. Advancements in the 21st century demanded a coordinated effort on the part of all stakeholders in the realm of

public education to develop policies and curriculum that supported whole child learning; the ultimate success of every child must be the primary goal (ASCD, 2013; Scherer, 2009). Whole child education has been criticized for being impractical and failing to hold educators to a measureable standard; however, advocates claimed holistic education was a more effective approach in the education of children and demanded more from educators, not less (ASCD, 2013; Ward, 2011). Stakeholders at the state level across the nation have begun to recognize the benefits of whole child education (ASCD, 2013). In the past decade, public, private, and charter schools nationwide have embraced the whole child approach to learning, and since 2009, Arkansas, Rhode Island, and Illinois have passed resolutions in support of whole child education (ASCD, 2013).

Advocates of holistic education agree the curriculum should include reading, language arts, and math, as well as the fine arts, history, physical education, character education, and other enriching subjects (ASCD, 2013; Miller, 2010; NAFME, 2004; Sattin-Bajaj et al., 2010; Scherer, 2009; Shasberger, 2009). In addition, the education of the whole child also includes safety, empathy, high expectations, and the development of character and self-esteem (Miller, 2010; Osher, Sprague, Weissberg, Axelrod, Keenan, Kendziora, & Zins, 2008). An effective educator integrates all of the previously stated subject matter into a holistic learning experience for the child to attain an optimal learning experience (Osher et al., 2008).

At widely varying levels, states across America have promoted the arts through requirements of fine arts credits in public schools via state standards and occasionally standardized assessments (Education Commission, 2011). Though fine arts activists have promoted innovative educational strategies to empower students to become lifelong

learners and successful, contributing members of society through the education of the whole child, many students have been deprived of access to public school fine arts education due to a narrow focus on the tested subjects, as well as restricted budgets (Education Commission, 2011; Ward, 2011). For example, in Arizona, 79% of schools have spent less than \$1 per year per student for arts instruction, or less than ½ of 1 cent per day (Education Commission, 2011).

Stålhammar (2006) posited that for optimal learning to take place three prominent "musical forces" (p. 10) must be present to shape the musical identity of students: 1) the music industry, 2) the cultural influences that shape values, choices, opinions, and the "emotional imprints" (p. 10) that are central to identity and, 3) teaching contexts presented by formal schooling and community teaching situations. Fine arts educators must continue to place the students at the center of holistic learning by considering all of the musical forces in their teaching of the curriculum (Stålhammar, 2006). Sattin-Bajaj et al. (2010) contended that in order for optimal learning to occur students must remain engaged cognitively, behaviorally, and relationally, which includes an appropriate emotional connection with the instructor. Whole child instruction has been reported to increase student engagement, thereby enhancing the learning process (ASCD, 2013; Sattin-bajaj et al., 2010).

Whole child education embraces instruction in the fine arts, as well as integrating the fine arts into the CCSS (ASCD, 2013; NAFME, 2010, Shasberger, 2009). Schools across the nation, already in the process of integrating fine arts instruction into the CCSS and STEAM have reported positive learning outcomes (Pilecki & Sousa, 2013; The Steam Academy, 2013). This observation was related, "The arts play a critical role in

education. When learning is approached through, with and by the visual and performing arts, creativity is cultivated, innovative thinking is fostered and imagination is both celebrated and enhanced” (The Steam Academy, 2013, para. 1).

Furthermore, researchers, politicians, educators, and business experts have claimed an education rich in the fine arts is beneficial, and in some instances crucial, to success in the 21st century global market (NAEA, n.d.; NAFME, 2010; Obama, 2011; USDOE, 2010). Many colleges screen applicants on the basis of a whole child education, seeking students who have been actively involved in non-core programs, such as fine arts (NAEA, n.d.; NAFME, 2010). Since the implementation of the CCSS nationwide, the challenge currently facing educators is integrating creative avenues implementing the fine arts (Common Core, 2013).

Theme three: Value of fine arts. An exploration of the value of K-12 public school fine arts curriculum was deemed necessary to ascertain the relevance of fine arts programs in educating the whole child (Chen, 2008; Gullatt, 2007; Shasberger, 2009). The National Art Society (2010) posited the fine arts were deemed a core subject in federal law, but since the implementation of NCLB in 2002, an erosion of fine arts public school programs has occurred in many schools nationwide. Other researchers reported the ebb and flow of support for American public school fine arts as dating back for decades (Branscome, 2012; Mims & Lankford, 1995; Ward, 2011), indicative of an overall perception among many Americans of K-12 public school fine arts as enjoyable but expendable, especially when compared to the other formally tested subjects (Baker, 2012; Branscome, 2012; Chen, 2008).

Furthermore, students have been pulled from fine arts classes to receive extra tutoring in the tested subjects on a regular basis in schools nationwide (Baker, 2012, Beveridge, 2009; Branscome, 2012). Is this an effective strategy in the education of the whole child? Therefore, it was deemed important to the foundation of the study to examine two specific issues regarding the value of K-12 fine arts. First, an examination of ground-breaking brain research in the area of fine arts education was explored. Secondly, issues regarding fine arts integration were examined.

In the first decade of the 21st century, ground-breaking reports in brain research emerged on behalf of fine arts education, as Shahin, Roberts, Chau, Trainor and Miller (2008) reported that induced gamma band responses from electroencephalogram (EEG) recordings—which are related to attention, feature-binding, and top-down processing—emerged after one year of musical training between 4 and 5 years of age, but remained undetectable in children not taking music lessons. In addition, a number of studies with older children using the magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) technology suggested that participation in music lessons positively affects musical, linguistic, and cognitive development (Jentschke & Koelsch, 2009; Roberts, Shahin, & Trainor, 2009; Schlaug, Forgeard, Zhu, Norton, & Winner, 2009). Using MRI, Schlaug et al. (2009) discovered that the corpus collosum, which reflected interhemispheric communication, developed differently in 5 to 7-year-old children taking music lessons, compared to children not taking music lessons.

Cognitive neuroscientists in seven universities conducted formal studies of the connections between fine arts education and academic performance using advanced research methods, including brain imaging (Asbury & Rich, 2008). Increasingly,

researchers found evidence that early arts education was a building block of developing brain function (Asbury & Rich, 2008). Furthermore, music training in childhood led to enhanced cognitive skills that lasted throughout the child's lifetime (Portowitz et al., 2009; Skoe, & Kraus, 2012).

Advocates of fine arts programs attributed value and worth to K-12 fine arts by highlighting the fringe benefits of arts education (Forgeard et al., 2008; Garcia, 2010). A 1999 synthesis of seven studies, sponsored by the PCAH, reported connections between the study of the fine arts and higher assessment scores in math and language arts, as well as increased engagement of students (Fiske, 1999). Three years later, The Arts Education Partnership published a summary of 62 studies focusing on the cognitive advantages of fine arts education and reported links to higher order thinking skills, problem solving skills, and the transfer of art skills to reading and math (Deasy, 2002). These studies indicated increased motivation regarding attendance and self-esteem in students (Deasy, 2002).

Furthermore, researchers explored the cognitive and physiological benefits of fine arts education through scientific research, exploring specific ways the study of the fine arts foster a transfer of skill to other disciplines (Asbury & Rich, 2008). A synthesis of 30 studies indicated music students demonstrated increased reading skills as a result of three or more years of instrumental education, which led to increased auditory discrimination, fine motor skills enhanced vocabulary, and nonverbal reasoning (Forgeard et al., 2008).

Since the implementation of NCLB, due to federally mandated math assessments, educators were focusing on math instruction, which prompted researchers to study possible correlations between math and music, as well as a person's ability to learn and

process other subjects and concepts. In the past two decades, MRI and the EEG provided neurologists with precise data regarding the response of the brain to music. The MIND Institute's Math + Music program, a successful west coast math-music program, integrated music instruction with computer math games, building the brain's spatial temporal reasoning ability (Fzarik, 2005). Students in the program reported an average of 50% increases in math scores while in the program (Fzarik, 2005). Suzuki (2009) explored a similar strategy with the concept, "Math across the Curriculum" (Suzuki, 2009, para. 1), with reported successful results in optimal academic achievement. Suzuki (2009) highlighted the cognitive link between math and music and urged math teachers to collaborate with teachers of the arts in an effort to combine math and music for optimal learning.

In alignment with Suzuki (2009), Gullatt (2007) had also supported integrating the fine arts with other subjects. Integrated instruction offers students the opportunity to learn material through the use of the visual, dramatic, and musical arts, while developing skills through creating and performing arts (Gullatt (2007). Gullatt (2007) stated:

Students that are provided experiences in the arts are more apt to employ higher-order thinking skills and risk-taking behaviors. Students that are actively involved with their education become more independent learners. Because arts offer the opportunity for active and meaningful involvement, student engagement is increased. Arts are also credited with students' enhanced creativity, imagination, listening, thinking, and problem-solving skills. (para. 3)

Oklahoma's A+ Schools provided an example of a school-wide implementation of arts integration (Barry, 2010). Barry (2010) reported students had a higher interest in

school and enjoyed learning more in the schools where the fine arts were integrated into the curriculum. The Oklahoma state report card's Academic Performance Index data indicated significant advantages for A+ students compared to those students who attended schools without fine arts integration (Barry, 2010). Furthermore, in 2012, Baker conducted a study to examine the high-stakes test scores of 37,222 eighth grade students enrolled in music and/or visual arts classes and students not enrolled in arts courses. Students enrolled in music had significantly higher mean scores than those not enrolled in music ($p < .001$) (Baker, 2012).

Rural school districts are often more adversely affected than urban districts, forced to reduce or eliminate fine art programs due to budget constraints (Garcia, 2010). Garcia (2010), Miller and Hopper (2010), and Southgate and Roseigno (2009) conducted similar research, examining the effect of fine arts instruction on academic achievement in rural school districts. Researchers reported the integration of fine arts instruction helped increase academic achievement, specifically reading and math scores, and helped close the achievement gap for Hispanic and economically disadvantaged students.

Freedman (2011) and Beveridge (2010) expressed concern regarding the integration of the tested subjects into fine arts classes. Fine arts teachers have often been required to teach reading and math skills in their fine arts classes because schools failing to secure adequate reading and math standardized test scores risk losing entire art departments (Freedman, 2011). In addition, since the implementation of NCLB it has been common in school districts across the nation for students to be routinely removed from fine arts classes to receive special tutoring or complete extra work in the tested subjects (Branscome, 2012).

Though few in number, there are those who believe public school fine arts instruction is ineffective and in some cases harmful. Lubet (2009) criticized music education in the western world and in Eastern Asia for ranking students according to perceived talent and discriminating against students with disabilities. Both Lubet (2009) and Legg (2010) suggested music educators were guilty of discriminating by gender. Lubet (2009) suggested that public music education was overflowing with activities that in essence, were unfair to anyone in the minority. Interestingly, nowhere in his research did he mention gender or discrimination issues in any other subjects, such as sports. Murray (2008) asserted that along with athleticism, music, dance, and the visual arts should not be included in the core subjects primarily because these subjects do not help prepare students for the real world, with the rare exception of those students who aspire to become professional athletes, musicians, and artists. Moreover, Elpus (2013) reported that music students did not outperform non-music students on the SAT; however, Baker (2012) posited that the selection bias was responsible for the original high test scores.

Positioned somewhere between the positive and the negative views regarding the value of public school fine arts were researchers Hodges and O'Donnell (2007) and Bambrick and Gill (2012) who did not present data opposed to K-12 fine arts but were not in favor of them. Hodges and O'Donnell conducted a study in 2007 measuring the impact of music education on academic achievement. Their conclusion was non-committal, suggesting the data did not prove nor disprove that music education enhanced academic achievement (Hodges & O'Donnell, 2007). Five years later, Bambrick and Gill (2012) conducted a study, providing an extra music class each week to a sample group of 10-13 year old students and comparing their academic achievement to the students

without any extra music instruction. No positive benefits were reported at the conclusion of the study for the students who had the extra music instruction.

A goal of this study was to examine various perceptions regarding K-12 fine arts education. Regarding the value of fine arts education, it became evident during the course of the study that there were ample studies available which supported the cognitive, social, and psychological benefits of fine arts education. Likewise, it became clear there were a dearth of studies highlighting negative aspects of fine arts instruction.

Theme four: Fine arts included on assessments. Standardized testing of the fine arts has been and continues to be controversial among educators and policymakers (Fisher, 2008). There has been a lack of formal fine arts assessments available to ensure students are mastering a set of basic skills and knowledge (Dwyer, 2011). While K-12 standards for the fine arts exist, the standards only serve as guidelines (Fisher, 2008). Federal laws mandate achievement in subjects, such as math and language arts, as measured through standardized testing, but since achievement in the fine arts is not mandated, the fine arts often lack funding and value (Fisher, 2008).

Arts education was greatly affected by a standards-based reform which was implemented in districts across the nation in the early 1990s (Pistone, 2002). The reform involved high standards with aligning assessments, the goal being to enhance academic achievement for all students (Pistone, 2002). Shandler, the president of the American Federation of Teachers and spokesperson for the standards-based reform movement, fervently spread the message that schools must not give students a diploma just for attending school for a certain amount of years (Pistone, 2002). Shandler believed students would respond to high standards and tests with rewards, such as entrance into universities

or desirable careers (Pistone, 2002). In addition, organizations such as the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and the Getty Education Institute contributed to the stronger focus of the arts in the 1990s (Fisher, 2008).

According to Orzolek (2006), school board members at a state conference described how they evaluated their secondary music programs. Success constituted entertaining performances, exciting pep band performances at football and basketball games, maximum ticket sales for music events, presentation of awards, and satisfied parents (Orzolek, 2006). The rating given to a student or group of students at public school music contests should not be the only means by which students are evaluated (Fisher, 2008). Many students depart the contest musically illiterate; therefore, only assessments targeting specific musical skills, such as note values or rhythm, will inform the teacher and student the level at which a student is actually reading notation (Fisher, 2008). Group assessments, such as choir, bands, and ensembles, are never adequate, in and of themselves, to offer a setting conducive to assessment (Fisher, 2008). Students must be assessed individually on the same content for optimal benefit (Fisher, 2008).

Furthermore, accountability is a crucial element of responsible education (Edmund et al., 2008; Hoffer, 2008). Those who herald the value of standardized fine arts assessment contended the positive effects would include enhanced accountability on the part of the music educator in remaining focused on the standards, as well as raising the arts to a perceived higher level of importance among the other tested subjects (Edmund et al., 2008). In addition, national music assessment results could be a valuable tool to department leaders in organizing appropriate professional development to target deficiencies (Edmund et al., 2008).

Shuler (2009) was in agreement with Hoffer (2008) and Edmund et al. (2008) regarding the belief that standardized assessment of the arts would increase the perception of the value of the arts across the nation, but Shuler (2009) also expanded his reasoning to the political arena. Shuler (2009) posited two paramount reasons for the significance of music assessments and annual published results by the National Assessment of Education Progress [NAEP] in Music. First, the arts are valued among the core subjects, and secondly, testing data are needed to provide policymakers direction in improving the plight of the arts (Shuler, 2009).

There have been four national music assessments administered since 1971, the most recent assessment in 2008 (Shuler, 2009). The NAEP administered the first test in 1971 to a random sample of 9-year-olds, 13-year-olds, and 17-year-olds (Fisher, 2008). A very similar assessment was administered in 1978 with the same age samples (Fisher, 2008). The results of the two assessments were similar, with students showing an overall positive attitude toward music but scoring very low on the history and theory portions of the assessment (Fisher, 2008). The music assessment of 1997, given only to eighth-graders, assessed the ability to create, perform, and respond to music, art, dance, and theater (Fisher, 2008).

In 2008, the NAEP Arts Assessment was given to 7,900 eighth-graders from a sample of 260 schools across the United States (National Art, 2008). The test was comprised of art and music with half of the students taking the art assessment and half the music assessment (National Art, 2008). Four arts subjects were originally designed for assessment, but in 2008, due to budget concerns, only music and visual art were tested

(National Arts, 2008). The assessments targeted the areas of responding, creating, and performing (National Arts, 2008).

Unfortunately, the 2008 NAEP fell short of the goal of collecting data on the areas of performing or creating music, two standards required by the National Standards and Major Instructional Goals across the nation (Shuler, 2009). Consequently, the results were inconclusive, resulting in an outcry from music educators and arts advocates nationwide (Shuler, 2009). The conclusion drawn from the category of musical response suggested that even though students who engage in public school arts programs score higher on test scores in other subjects than those who do not engage in public school arts programs, test scores appeared to be low in the area of music (Fisher 2008).

Fisher (2008) urged advocates of fine arts assessment to be persistent due to the fact that “state political climate is often more unstable than the national government which could derail or delay music assessment programs” (para. 30). However, persistence did not prevail in Missouri in 2001, when music educators were summoned across Missouri to create a fine arts assessment, in which students would visually and audibly evaluate art and musical performances (Williams, personal communication, June 29, 2010). The fifth-grade fine arts assessment was to be added to the MAP, administered via video tape. After being successfully piloted, the fine arts piece of the MAP was never implemented in 2002 due to budget restrictions by Governor Holden nor has implementation of the assessment been reconsidered due to budget concerns (Williams, personal communication, June 29, 2010).

In 2011, only the state of Kentucky implemented a state assessment of the arts (Education Commission of the States [ECS], 2011). In addition, the only states in the

United States implementing any form of district assessment of the arts were Arizona, Montana, New Hampshire, New Jersey, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, and Washington (ECS, 2011). Even though Ohio participated in district arts assessments, according to a 2007 survey of Ohio principals, 43% of the principals who participated in the survey reported a weaker music program due to devoting more instructional time to the tested subjects in following the mandates of NCLB (Gerrity, 2007). Even though the overall feeling toward the arts was positive among Ohio principals, many stated that federal mandates were a major factor in the decision-making process regarding music education in their school (Gerrity, 2007).

As requested by MODESE, the Missouri Alliance for Arts Education posted a position statement regarding the fine arts piece of the MAP test (Alliance, 2005). The purpose of the statement was to petition the Missouri General Assembly to fully fund the fine arts assessment program (Alliance, 2005). The position statement declared that the fine arts assessment was crucial in restoring the value of the arts in education statewide: allowing music educators to access MAP data which would help drive instruction and curriculum choice, as well as professional development, and the goal of integration of the arts would be strengthened throughout the state (Alliance, 2005). The position statement also highlighted the consequences of exclusion of the fine arts on the MAP test. Exclusion would result in the reduction of fine arts instructional time, reduction in arts resources, and fewer opportunities for students to meet the Show-Me-Standards for fine arts (Alliance, 2005).

Furthermore, the National Guild of Community Schools of the Arts made a statement in their open letter to the NEA in 2009 calling for national assessment of the

arts (The National Guild, 2009): “Assessment is critical to improving program planning and securing government foundation and community support. We support the NEA’s current efforts to collect, analyze and disseminate successful models and best practices where they do exist” (para. 12).

While there have been stakeholders who adamantly defended standardized assessment of fine arts, there are other stakeholders who have been in opposition for various reasons. Jensen (2001) and Randall (2010) concurred that many music educators, administrators, and policy makers avoided arts assessments, whether on a large scale by the state or simply in the classroom, due to the subjective nature of the evaluation. Many arts educators considered it a daunting task to design and effectively implement an objective assessment in the area of the arts (Randall, 2010).

Some educators have taken a proactive approach to arts assessment by creating objective means of measuring various strands of fine arts at the classroom level (Randall, 2010; Wendell 2007). At the state level, the Washington Department of Education provided a model of administering standardized assessments in the areas of the arts and social studies through the Classroom Based Assessment (CBA) (Beveridge, 2010). Beveridge (2010) reported the CBA involved rigorous individual evaluations of student performances via video recordings; however, the only data required by the state were the number of students who participated in the CBA, not the scores. Beveridge (2010) questioned the purpose of this assessment: Was this for accountability?

Beveridge (2010) raised further pertinent questions regarding testing of the arts nationwide: Is it possible to effectively assess the arts if students are required to respond creatively? How can music assessment be scored consistently when subjective evaluation

is involved (Beveridge, 2010)? In light of the challenges of including the arts on state assessments, would the inclusion of the arts on state assessments give more credibility to the arts and be worth the time and funding challenges (Beveridge, 2010)?

In addition to subjectivity, another concern among educators regarding including the fine arts on standardized assessments for all students involves the accuracy of the scores of the students who would not elect to enroll in fine arts classes, as well as other logistical issues (Fisher, 2008). Some music educators have been concerned regarding the possibility of school- and district-wide diminished test scores as a result of students being assessed in the arts who were not enrolled in arts classes, consequently reflecting poorly on their teaching abilities and possibly jeopardizing their careers (Fisher, 2008).

Moreover, some educators believed standardized music assessment would, “have the same negative effects that other core subject high-stakes testing has had on school” (Fisher, 2008, para. 8). Miller (2010) posited that in the past 25 years, departments and ministries of education in most countries have developed a deep-seated distrust for politicians and the legislative process. The rigorous requirements for assessment rather than sensible accountability have resulted in an increase of test-driven education. For children to develop a love for learning they must be free to think creatively with awe and wonder. When does a child think creatively with awe and wonder in the test-driven system (Miller, 2010)?

Fisher (2008) shifted the blame regarding the lack of standardized assessments of the arts onto the music educators, stating that when approached with opportunities for standardized testing, music educators declined, arguing that music was too subjective for measurement. Fisher (2008) accused music educators of demanding equality of the arts

with other subjects while being exempt of accountability through assessment. Fisher (2008) promoted his belief that even though those who are in opposition to national music assessment had compelling arguments that deserved consideration, the benefits far outweighed the drawbacks. Music education must become progressive in order to survive in the quickly evolving educational reform movement (Fisher, 2008). Music educators and officials “must decide whether music education is fully a member of the core curriculum or an honorary member in name but not action” (Fisher, 2008, para. 33).

Fisher’s (2008) views were in alignment with Dr. D. Reeves (personal communication, July 12, 2011). D. Reeves (2011), in favor of state assessment of the fine arts, stated:

...it is the only way that the arts receive visibility and respect. The same is true for community service, leadership, collaboration, communication, and many other non-tested skills.... I think many states and districts are tired of having their communities hear that only reading and math in grades 3-8 “count” and we need to broadcast a broader message. (personal communication, July 12, 2011)

Moppin (personal communication, March 25, 2013) suggested approaching the standardized assessment of the fine arts in light of the overarching purpose of the CCSS, with an emphasis on encouraging students to synthesize all subject matter for optimal learning. Moppin (personal communication, March 25, 2013) stated:

I believe the arts definitely have a place in the assessments; however, I also believe that those concepts can be assessed in conjunction with English Language Arts. For example, by providing a passage about the arts and forming the question to assess both the students’ understanding of the arts as well as the ELA concepts,

we would be killing two birds with one stone. But to focus solely on the arts, or for that matter any other content area, undermines the purpose of the Core Standards and takes away the focus on learning for knowledge and the greater good for the future of the students. While the arts are subjective, and we could always argue that we are losing the creativity aspect, we also need to look and constantly evaluate our programs for whether they are meaningful to the whole child... and what we are providing them as a tool for successful futures.

Summary

Chapter Two began with an introduction explaining the pattern of the marginalization of the American public school fine arts programs from the mid-1900s through present day (Branscome, 2012; Freedman, 2011; Garcia, 2010; Kavanaugh, 2009; Preston, 2009; Rabkin & Hedberg, 2011; Shasberger, 2009). It was deemed enriching to the study to explore the effect federal laws have had on the fine arts in past decades and analyze cultural trends. From the 1930s to present day an ebb and flow of perceptions regarding K-12 fine arts programs aligned with the economy and political policy (Berliner, 2009; Branscome, 2012; Rabkin & Hedberg, 2011; Ward, 2011). During times of crisis, such as Sputnik, public school fine arts programs suffered and the trend continues (Branscome, 2012; Helig et al., 2010; Rabkin & Hedberg, 2011). The ESEA and NCLB were examined, as well as conflicting viewpoints regarding the impact the mandates have had on K-12 fine arts education (Blakely, 2010; Chen, 2008; Garcia, 2010; Jacobsen & Rothstein, 2009; Maxwell, 2008; Suzuki, 2009).

The four emerging themes which guided the study were introduced in Chapter Two. All of the themes were interrelated yet warranted individual exploration and

research. Theme One encompassed the topic of the fine arts being considered a core subject in policy but not in practice (Blakely, 2010; Chen, 2008; Maxwell, 2008). Theme Two, which was also the conceptual framework of the study, involved the role of the fine arts in the education of the whole child (ASCD, 2013; NafME, 2004; Satin-Bajaj et al, 2010; Scherer, 2009; Shasberger, 2009).

Theme Three encompassed the presentation of a variety of perceptions regarding the value of fine arts education in light of brain research, as well as issues relating to the integration of the fine arts with other subjects for optimal learning (Forgeard et al., 2008; Garcia, 2010). On the contrary, studies were also listed refuting the validity of an arts-rich education (Bambrick & Gill, 2012; Elpus, 2013; Legg, 2010; Lubet, 2009; Murray, 2008).

Finally, Theme Four involved a variety of perceptions regarding the controversial issue of the standardized assessment of the fine arts. Research was presented in support of including the fine arts on state mandated tests, with projected benefits in increased accountability for fine arts teachers, increased funding for the fine arts, and more instructional time for the fine arts (Edmund et al., 2008; Hoffer, 2008; Shuler, 2009). Furthermore, the standardized testing of the fine arts might provide valuable data to help guide fine arts instruction and professional development for fine arts educators (Rabkin & Hedberg, 2011). Contrarily, many educators are not in favor of the standardized assessment of the fine arts, arguing the creation of such assessments would create excessive problems due to the subjective nature of the fine arts (Adams et al., 2007; Jensen, 2001; Randall, 2010).

Since the passage of NCLB in 2001, the reduction and elimination of the fine arts in the public schools has caused great controversy (Beveridge, 2010; Chen, 2008). Researchers, such as Adams et al. (2007), Beveridge (2010), Edmund et al. (2008); Fisher (2008); Hoffer, (2008); and Sousa (2006) have published a variety of data that public school arts are far too valuable to lose, and students who have been exposed to fine arts instruction have experienced higher grades and test scores across the curriculum, enhanced higher order thinking skills, increased motivation, improved attendance and graduation rates, and higher self-esteem.

On the contrary, researchers, such as Lubet (2009), Legg (2010), and Murray (2008) posited the arts should not be included in the core subjects and can be detrimental to students. Performances and ranking systems can be harmful to students, and fine arts educators often discriminate by race and by gender (Legg, 2010; Lubet, 2009). Furthermore, most current state and federal tests do not assess music and art; thus, it is deemed by some to be appropriate for the arts to be the first subjects to be sacrificed in a struggling economy (Beveridge, 2010).

Chapter Three examined the methodology which encompassed an overview of the problem and purpose, research design, population and sample, instrumentation, data collection, and data analysis. Chapter Four included a presentation of an analysis of the data, and Chapter Five concluded the study with a summary of the findings, implications for practice, and recommendations for further research.

Chapter Three: Methodology

Continued debate in fine arts education joined with a broad assumption that public school fine arts programs were experiencing various forms of marginalization nationwide led to a mixed-methods study on the effect of federal laws on public school fine arts viewed through the lens of the education of the whole child (ASCD, 2013; NAFME, 2013; Shasberger, 2009). Creswell (2013) stated, “Researchers have a personal history that situates them as inquirers. Researchers also have an orientation to research and a sense of personal ethics and political stances that inform their research” (p. 136).

The methodology of the mixed-methods study was presented in Chapter Three. The problem and purpose of the study were presented, followed by the research questions, a description of the methodology of the research, the research design, as well as an explanation of the population and sample. In addition, the instrumentation, the method of the data collection, and the analysis procedures were discussed. The mixed study included the collection, analysis, and comparison of a sample of perceptions of public school curriculum directors and music educators regarding the plight of K-12 fine arts education. The overarching goal of the study was to add to the existing body of research, thereby empowering fine arts educators and activists to ultimately make better decisions, functioning in a symbiotic relationship with all stakeholders who will benefit K-12 public school students.

Problem and Purpose Overview

The education of the whole child has been embraced in theory by educators and policymakers nationwide (ASCD, 2013). Yet, American K-12 public school students have been experiencing a significant reduction in fine arts education since 2002 due to a

combination of strained budgets and districts requiring a more narrow focus on the core subjects of math, language arts, and science because of standardized testing requirements (Chen, 2008; Jacobsen & Rothstein, 2009; Maxwell, 2008; Suzuki, 2009). The fine arts were included in the list of core subjects in the NCLB legislation but were not included in the standardized testing process (Beveredge, 2010; Chen, 2008; Suzuki, 2009). The review of relevant literature in Chapter Two revealed that throughout the past century a pattern emerged in American culture indicating that in times of economic crisis or changing political climate, such as the NCLB era, educational leaders have been pressured to make serious budget reductions, with funds once allocated for fine arts programs shifting to subjects receiving formal assessment (Branscome, 2012). Grey (2012) stated, “Arts education is not and should not be considered expendable” (para. 12).

The purpose of the study was to collect and analyze qualitative and quantitative data regarding perceptions of public school music educators and curriculum directors on how federal laws have affected the fine arts programs in their schools and districts. Crucial decisions affecting all K-12 public school students are made based upon the perceptions of educational leaders, politicians, and policymakers. Therefore, it was deemed important to examine a sample of quantitative and qualitative data from the two stakeholder groups in alignment with the four guiding themes of the study. The overarching goal of the study was to combine the results of this study to the current body of literature to aid educational leaders, politicians, and policymakers in making well-informed decisions regarding the fine arts at local, state, and national levels on behalf of all K-12 public school students.

The review of related literature revealed a pattern throughout the 20th century of public school fine arts education flourishing when the economy was strong, then experiencing marginalization during seasons of political, economic, and social change (Branscome, 2012; Murphy, 2010). However, during the seasons of fine arts crisis, arts advocates would emerge as frontiersmen in advocating for reinstating or preserving fine arts education in the public schools, helping influence the perceptions of educators and policymakers (Helig et al., 2010; Howard, 2004). At one point during the NCLB era, 71% of America's 15,000 school districts reportedly decreased fine arts programs according to a Center on Education survey (Sousa, 2006). It was deemed pertinent to the study to ascertain the current perceptions of a sample of stakeholders, which led to a specific set of guiding themes or research questions.

Research questions. The following research questions guided this study:

1. What are the perceptions of stakeholders regarding the inclusion of fine arts as core subjects?
2. What are the perceptions of stakeholders regarding the fine arts as a vital part of every child's holistic education?
3. What are the perceptions of stakeholders regarding the overall value of K-12 fine arts education?
4. What are the perceptions of stakeholders regarding standardized assessments including the fine arts?

Research Design

A mixed-methods design incorporating surveys and interviews was selected to gain valuable insight from curriculum directors and music educators regarding their

varied experience in K-12 fine arts. Creswell (2008) defined the mixed-methods design as “procedures for collecting, analyzing, and mixing both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study or in a multiphase series of studies” (p. 123). Briggs, Coleman, and Morrison (2012) described the strengths and weaknesses of a mixed-methods study:

Mixed researchers systematically combine aspects of quantitative and qualitative research in a way that produces an overall design with complementary strengths (broadly viewed) and non-overlapping weaknesses. Mixing approaches in educational research has the potential to increase diversity and collaboration among researchers, increase confidence results, increase conclusion validity, yield more insightful understandings of phenomena, promote more creative designs and data collection, and increase synthesis of theories. (pp. 136-37)

Furthermore, the design of the statistical aspect of this study was descriptive. Bluman (2004) defined descriptive statistics as “the collection, organization, summarization, and presentation of data” (p. 5). The following information serves to clarify the quantitative and qualitative sources of data.

Quantitative. Public school music educators and curriculum directors throughout the RPDC 7 in Missouri received surveys via the Internet and were asked to respond anonymously.

Qualitative. Interviews were conducted with six music educators and six curriculum directors in the RPDC 7 in Missouri.

Triangulation. Triangulation is the collection of data from two or more sources, such as surveys and interviews, in an effort to increase validity and credibility (Creswell, 2013; Maxwell, 2008). Triangulation may also be accomplished through the on-going

collection of new data and emergent categories, allowing a better assessment of the conclusion one develops (Creswell, 2008).

Population and Sample

The population refers to the entire group of individuals to which the results of the study will be generalized (Engel & Schutt, 2009). The sample is the “subset of the population that is used to study the population as a whole” (Engel & Schutt, 2009, p. 114). In this mixed-methods study, the sample included the stakeholder groups of public school curriculum directors and music educators which were invited to anonymously share their perceptions via an online survey throughout the RPDC 7 in Missouri. In addition, 12 personal interviews were conducted to enrich the study.

When employing mixed-methods research, one or more varieties of purposive sampling are implemented (Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun, 2012). Purposive sampling is a specific sample selected because participants have knowledge and experience regarding the topic (Fraenkel et al., 2012). Two types of purposive sampling were utilized in the study: Typical and opportunistic sampling (Fraenkel et al., 2012).

Personal interviews, a typical sample, were conducted with 12 individuals to strengthen the study. Six public school music educators and six curriculum directors were interviewed individually. All interviewees resided in the RPDC 7 in Missouri and were selected due to their connection with the public schools and varying perceptions of the fine arts. A survey, an opportunistic sample, was concurrently employed to strengthen the study (Fraenkel et al., 2012). Creswell (2008) stated:

Survey designs are procedures in quantitative research in which you administer a survey or questionnaire to a small group of people (called a *sample*) to identify

trends in attitudes, opinions, behaviors, or characteristics of a large group of people (called the *population*). (p. 118)

Surveys were made available to public school music educators and curriculum directors throughout the RPDC 7 in Missouri via the Internet. There were a total of 231 surveys dispersed via each building principal with a minimum of 30 responses expected. A total of 52 surveys were completed and returned online. Each survey recipient, while remaining anonymous, indicated on one of the survey questions whether he or she was a music educator or a curriculum director. The method of the opportunistic sample was chosen in an effort to solicit a maximum number of responses, thereby strengthening the data regarding the individuals' perceptions.

Limitations in the study included the fact that samples were limited to the RPDC 7 in Missouri and sample sizes were smaller than large-scale studies. Furthermore:

Ethical practices of the researchers recognize the importance of the subjectivity of their own lens, acknowledge the powerful position they have in the research, and admit that the participants or the co-construction of the account between the researchers and the participants are the true owners of the information collected. (Creswell, 2013, pp. 34-35)

Instrumentation

From the onset of the research project, a mixed-methods research design was deemed the best choice for the study. Mixing qualitative and quantitative methods in the research process can be advantageous by enriching the study (Creswell, 2008). For the purpose of collecting quantitative data in the study, a survey (see Appendix A) was created. The questions were derived from gathering and synthesizing information over a

period of time. The design of the survey was intentionally brief in an effort to solicit the maximum number of responses. The survey included 10 multiple choice questions, as well as one open-ended question designed to explore the stakeholder's perceptions regarding the value and assessment of the fine arts in K-12 public education. The survey was field-tested by the researcher, and the feedback was analyzed. According to recommendations made by the advising committee, final changes were made to the survey.

A recruitment letter with the survey web address was made available by electronic communication to all building principals in the RPDC 7 via a letter of request (see Appendix B). Principals were asked to forward the information to all music educators and curriculum directors in their school and district. A letter of informed consent (see Appendix C) was read by recipients prior to entering the survey site. Respondents were required to accept the terms of the study before completion of the survey. Included in the terms of the survey were assurance of anonymity and that all data would be stored in the possession of the researcher for three years then destroyed.

The survey was available online to music educators and curriculum directors 24 hours a day, seven days a week, for 20 consecutive days. After 20 days, a second letter was sent to the building principals via email (see Appendix D) requesting the survey letter and link to be sent to the curriculum directors and music educators in their building or district to ensure optimal results. The survey was available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, for 20 consecutive days. At the conclusion of the 20 days, 52 surveys had been completed and returned electronically.

In addition to surveys, 12 personal interviews were conducted to gain further insight into the perceptions of various stakeholders. From the two specific stakeholder groups in this study, six interviewees from each stakeholder group were recommended by building principals within the RPDC 7 in Missouri. Those being interviewed participated on a volunteer basis. The participants were sent a letter of informed consent (see Appendix E with the interviewee's preferred date, location and time for the interview and a copy of the interview questions (see Appendix F). The participant signed the letter of informed consent with assurance of anonymity and confidentiality and was encouraged to speak openly about his or her perceptions regarding the status of fine arts programs in his or her local public schools. All participants in the study were given the option of accessing the results of the study upon completion.

Data Collection

A survey was deemed an appropriate method for gathering quantitative data for the study and personal interviews a valid method to collect qualitative data (Creswell, 2008). An online survey was made available to music educators and curriculum directors throughout the RPDC 7 in Missouri. Online survey data were collected for a 20-day period then resubmitted for another 20-day period. Survey data were analyzed within the online survey tool, SurveyMonkey (SurveyMonkey, 2013), then compared with the interview data for common trends.

Survey and interview data were collected concurrently. The interviewees participated on a volunteer basis. Each interview took one hour or less and was recorded with permission of the participant. Personal notes were also made throughout the interview by the researcher. Interviews were transcribed and compared with the notes of

the researcher, as well as the survey data. All data were analyzed and compared for common themes. Participants were given the option to inspect recording transcriptions. Participants were assured that all documentation would be stored in the possession of the researcher for three years and then destroyed. In addition, all electronic data would be password protected and stored in the possession of the researcher for three years and then destroyed.

Data Analysis

A bar graph was created to inform the reader of the varied responses among the stakeholder groups. In addition, a constant comparative method was implemented during the analysis of the interview data (Creswell, 2008). While employing the constant comparative method, data were reviewed and compared in detail (Creswell, 2008).

The data were evaluated by coding qualitative interview results then cross examining the data with the quantitative survey results. Transcriptions of the interviews were divided by question, common responses, and themes. As a trend was identified, a label was given to that section of data (Creswell, 2008). As key trends and commonalities emerged, the labels evolved accordingly (Creswell, 2008).

Creswell (2008) described ordinal data as information that can be categorized, such as survey responses. Through the use of surveys, this study encompassed the evaluation of ordinal data via the Likert scale, ranging from *strongly agree* to *strongly disagree* (Fraenkel et al., 2012). A statistical analysis reflecting the quantitative results were made within the online survey tool. The survey and interview data were compared for similarities and differences. The quantitative and qualitative data for both stakeholder groups were compared for common trends on all four of the themes or research questions

(Creswell, 2008). Triangulation was utilized by collecting survey and interview data from public school curriculum directors and music educators in the participating districts. In addition to the survey data, interview data, and the literature review, through the use of the constant comparison analysis, new data were continually triangulated with the emerging categories (Creswell, 2013; Maxwell, 2008).

Summary

In this study, the data were collected and analyzed through a mixed-method of quantitative and qualitative research. Surveys were distributed to public school music educators and curriculum directors throughout the RPDC 7 in Missouri. To strengthen the study, personal interviews were conducted with six music educators and six curriculum directors. The survey and interview data were compared for similarities and differences.

The primary goal of the study was to expand the existing body of research on the perceptions of stakeholders regarding the effect of federal laws on the fine arts. Policies affecting K-12 public school students have historically been based upon the perceptions of stakeholders, which have led to the logical conclusion that perceptions will continue to influence policy. The availability of quality research may aid leaders in making better-informed decisions regarding the fine arts at local, district, state, and national levels.

Chapter Four provided an analysis of the data, revealing the results of the study. Chapter Five concluded the study with a summary of the findings from the analysis of the data. Implications for practice were addressed, as well as recommendations for further research.

Chapter Four: Analysis of Data

The purpose of this study was to examine perceptions regarding the influence of federal laws on K-12 public school fine arts programs. A mixed-methods study was employed to ascertain the perceptions of curriculum directors and music educators in Missouri. Creswell (2013) posited that mixed-methods research can be advantageous by enriching the study. Briggs, Coleman, and Morrison (2012) concluded, “Mixing approaches in educational research has the potential to increase diversity and collaboration among researchers, increase confidence results, increase conclusion validity, yield more insightful understandings of phenomena, promote more creative designs and data collection, and increase synthesis of theories” (p. 136).

Qualitative data, in the form of six personal interviews with curriculum directors and six personal interviews with music educators, were collected concurrently with quantitative data, which consisted of anonymous survey responses from curriculum directors and music educators. All data were collected from RPDC 7 in Missouri. The belief that every child deserves a well-rounded, holistic education was the conceptual framework of the study.

Research questions. The following research questions guided this study:

1. What are the perceptions of stakeholders regarding the inclusion of fine arts as core subjects?
2. What are the perceptions of stakeholders regarding the fine arts as a vital part of every child’s holistic education?
3. What are the perceptions of stakeholders regarding the overall value of K-12 fine arts education?

4. What are the perceptions of stakeholders regarding standardized assessments including the fine arts?

In the qualitative element of the study, 12 participants were interviewed, a typical sample (Fraenkel et al., 2012). Interviews were transcribed, analyzed, and categorized by question and finally common themes. The quantitative element of the study consisted of the development of an online survey which was distributed to 331 curriculum directors and music educators, an opportunistic sample (Fraenkel et al., 2012), in RPDC 7 in Missouri. A total of 52 surveys were anonymously completed online and submitted. The Likert scale offered the response choices of *strongly agree*, *agree*, *no opinion*, *disagree*, and *strongly disagree*.

The survey and interview data were collected and analyzed concurrently via the “constant comparison method” (Creswell, 2008, p. 224). Creswell (2008) described the constant comparison method as an “inductive data analysis procedure in research of generating and connecting categories by comparing incidents in the data to other incidents, incidents to categories, and categories to other categories” (p. 443). The interviews were recorded with the permission of the participant. In addition, notes were taken during the interview with the permission of the participant. The recordings were transcribed; transcripts and notes were divided by question, then by common themes. Interview data were compared in order to present an adequate representation of each participant's response. Interview and survey data were analyzed and divided by themes. As a result, four themes emerged: perceptions regarding the fine arts as a core subject, perceptions regarding the fine arts being a part of every child's education, perceptions

regarding the overall value of the fine arts, and perceptions regarding the assessment of the fine arts.

Organization of the Chapter

The purpose of this chapter was to provide an analysis of the data collected in the study. Descriptions were given of the interview population and participants and the process used to collect, code, and process the qualitative data. A description was given of the online survey population and rationale for the specific Likert scale survey. This was followed by the four themes with qualitative and quantitative data supporting each theme. A coding system was created as a means to report interview data in a confidential manner. The six music educators interviewed in the study were referred to as M1, M2, M3, M4, M5, and M6. The six curriculum directors interviewed in the study were referred to as C1, C2, C3, C4, C5, and C6.

Qualitative Data Collection, Participants, and Demographics

Each of the participants in the qualitative component of the study, all employed in the RPDC Region 7 in Missouri, were specifically chosen based upon his or her experience in K-12 public school fine arts leadership. Administrators in RPDC 7 were requested via email to recommend curriculum directors and music educators in their districts to be contacted as potential interviewees for the study. Once the participant accepted the invitation to participate, the following materials were mailed to the participant: a letter of introduction, the interview questions, and a letter of informed consent, which included a request to indicate the date, time, and place of interview. In addition, participants were given the option to request the results of the study, upon completion.

Interviews

Interviews were conducted at a location requested by the interviewee. Participants were required to read and sign the letter of agreement prior to the start of the interview. Each participant was assured anonymity and encouraged to speak openly about his or her perceptions regarding K-12 fine arts. Then, the participant gave consent for the interview to be recorded and for the researcher to take additional notes during the interview with the understanding that data would be confidentially held in the possession of the interviewer for three years then destroyed. One hour was allowed for each interview.

Process of Analysis

In the study, interview and survey data were collected concurrently. All 12 interviews consisted of a discussion of each of the survey questions, as well as additional questions, in an effort to gain increased insight which would enrich the study. To analyze and compare the responses of the six music educators and six curriculum directors, interview data were categorized by question then divided by similar responses. After analysis was made of the responses, the data were then organized by common themes.

Four bar graphs were created representing the survey data. The graphs reflected the data collected regarding the four emerging themes. Both stakeholder groups were represented on each bar graph to analyze the groups individually and to compare the responses between the two groups. The analysis of the perceptual similarities and differences of music educators and curriculum directors on pertinent issues enriched the study.

Quantitative Data and Online Survey

In an effort to invite all music educators and curriculum directors in RPDC Region 7 to participate in the online survey, a letter was sent via email to all building principals in the same region. In the online letter, an explanation about the study was given along with a request that the attached Letter of Informed Consent with the hyperlink to the survey, be forwarded to all music educators and curriculum directors in their district. The online survey was made available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, for 20 consecutive days. Four weeks later a second letter was sent to building principals in RPDC 7 via email with the same Letter of Informed Consent and hyperlink to enter the survey site. A request was made to once again forward the information to the music educators and curriculum directors in their district. The survey was again made available to participants 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, for 20 consecutive days, after which time 52 surveys had been submitted for the study.

Themes

As the qualitative and quantitative data were analyzed and compared for common trends, four themes emerged: perceptions regarding the fine arts as a core subject; perceptions regarding the fine arts being a part of a child's holistic education, perceptions regarding the overall value of the fine arts, and perceptions regarding standardized assessment of the fine arts.

Theme One: Perceptions regarding the fine arts as a core subject. The review of related literature revealed the fine arts were ranked among the core subjects in the NCLB legislation (Maxwell, 2008; Suzuki, 2009). In evaluating perceptions regarding K-12 fine arts in light of federal mandates, it was deemed enriching to the study to ascertain

specific perceptions of music educators and curriculum directors concerning whether fine arts should be ranked among core subjects, such as math and language arts. According to the qualitative data, all music educators *strongly agreed* that the fine arts should be ranked among the core subjects.

Only one curriculum director commented that the fine arts should be ranked with subjects such as math and language arts. One curriculum director *disagreed* that the fine arts should be included in the core subjects. The other four curriculum directors gave indirect answers, such as, "...some students might consider arts core" (C4) and "...arts can be core when integrating the core subjects" (C1). One music educator commented that a core subject is one that is "...necessary in educating the whole person... cross curricular and hands-on... reading, writing, sciences, yes, but historically, the people who have influenced our entire world, Davinci, for example, was educated as a whole person" (M1).

The quantitative data indicated 70.6% of the curriculum directors surveyed *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that the fine arts should be ranked among the core subjects, while 90.7% of the music educators *agreed* or *strongly agreed* regarding the issue (see Figure 1).

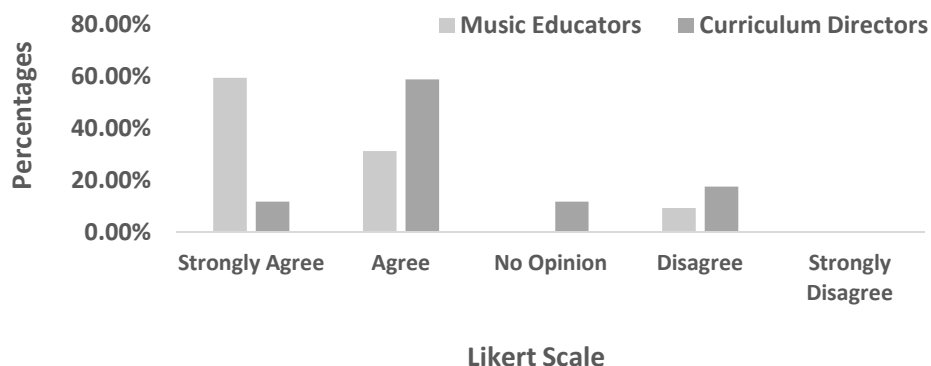


Figure 1. Responses to survey statement 2: The fine arts should be considered core curriculum, along with language arts and math.

Theme Two: Perceptions regarding whether the fine arts should be included in a child's holistic education. The education of the whole child was the foundational belief from which the other themes and sub-themes in the study emerged; thus, it was the conceptual framework of the study. Interview participants were asked to share their perceptions about whether or not the fine arts should be included in a child's holistic experience. All interview participants from both stakeholder groups responded in favor of the fine arts being a part of a child's holistic education. Likewise, 100% of survey data indicated responses of *agree* or *strongly agree* on the issue. Some participants gave commentary on their perception of the issue. For example, C5 responded in the interview that a child's whole education, in conjunction with the fine arts, should be a matter of choice when that child reaches a certain age:

I operate under the philosophy that in the early years, music should be a part of every child's education, as they have not developed what their

competencies are. I'm not sure where the cut-off should be, maybe fifth-grade, when they choose whether to play an instrument or not. I'm also a firm believer that if a student enjoys the arts, enjoys singing, being part of an ensemble, even if they aren't technically good at it, they should be encouraged to a degree, not encouraged to delusion... diluting them into thinking they can have a career in that is not fair to the child.

Contrarily, M2, also in favor of fine arts instruction as a part of a child's holistic education, emphasized the importance of daily fine arts instruction in every grade:

I think the fine arts are imperative and should be required; it should be mandated, a minimum per year. Research is showing that students who participate in a fine arts program in their high school years identify themselves as happier human beings. That's the whole person. You can do a lot of things with the other core subjects but the fine arts touches places the others do not... especially students who struggle in other core classes... they need us, they need fine arts every day.

Similarly, M3 commented, "not every child will like music, but they should be exposed." C2 linked the fine arts, in a child's holistic education to that child's future success:

Yes, the arts should be a part (of a child's whole education) for sure.

We want students to be ready for what lies beyond, jobs are ever-changing with the speed of technology... all are a part of that. The arts give students a unique cultural perspective of what's going on around the world and students are going to have to be prepared for that because jobs are

becoming more global.

Furthermore, M1 stressed that music education and movement helps students comprehend material in all other subjects because of the interaction from both sides of the brain. An advocate for fine arts education for decades, M1 believed fine arts should be included in the education of the whole child as it has been her experience that students who study fine arts enjoy increased higher order thinking skills.

Participants who completed the online survey addressed the role of the fine arts in a child's holistic education on statement 3. Respondents chose between *strongly agree*, *agree*, *no opinion*, *disagree*, and *strongly disagree*. The final results indicated 100% of all participants in both stakeholder groups chose either *strongly agree* or *agree*, with the music educators expressing stronger beliefs than curriculum directors (see Figure 2).

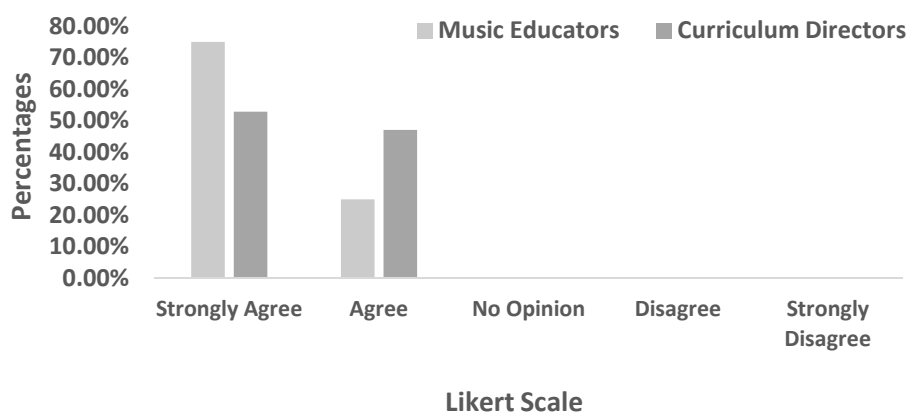


Figure 2. Responses to survey statement 3: Educating the “whole child” should be a primary focus of every school district.

Theme Three: The Overall Value of K-12 Fine Arts Education

In seeking perceptions regarding the value of K-12 fine arts education in various schools and districts, the qualitative data, collected from the interview participants, were varied. Furthermore, participants commenting on the reasons the fine arts were vital or why or why not the fine arts were valued in a particular school or district were in some cases complex and conveyed with emotion. All of the curriculum directors except one had very positive perceptions about the value placed on the fine arts their respective districts.

C2 commented, "...the School Board, everyone in the community is in support of the arts and what it does for a child as well as all other academics." C3 posited, "We financially support the fine arts in our district with very nice budgets." C4 also had a positive perception regarding the value placed on the fine arts in his district, "The arts are very valued in our district, they receive a lot of recognition...the students are showcased. We have a very large and very skilled music department. Our band programs are known around the state and so is our art program."

C6 expressed his personal feeling regarding the fine arts, "The importance of the arts, it's integral, but don't misunderstand that to be more important than anything else. But it's important just like everything else... personally, I have been influenced by my own positive experiences in the arts, and there's research to support that, so that has definitely influenced my position on the arts."

C5, who possessed a rich background in fine arts, shared concerns regarding how the arts were valued in his district in the area of funding. This curriculum director was the only interviewee to express concerns regarding his district's overall value of the fine arts:

I have some mixed perceptions about the district I work in and surrounding districts. I grew up in another state where directors were brought in... when I came here to a much more rich arts community, arts is diminished. If you compare arts and athletics, the funding is not there [for the arts]. There are far more people who go into the arts than athletics.

Compared to the curriculum directors, the music educators were more varied on their responses about how the fine arts were valued in their district. M1 commented, "... the fine arts are used as a pawn to get the community to buy into what the community needs... it is job security." M2 shared similar perceptions, "... our district does a nice job of valuing art programs. I haven't felt that up until this time the arts were at any kind of threatening level. Financially (the fine arts) is probably not in the top 10 in our district. We trail behind the good ole athletic department."

M5 shared specific concerns:

I think that my district offers lip service to valuing the arts but does not provide the financial support to the arts that neighboring districts that are much smaller provide. Things, such as accompanists, budgets for music, printed music, show choirs, and buses... other districts offer those things at the secondary [level] and ours does not.

Offering a contrasting opinion, M4 believed that all districts were facing lean budgets, but his district was protecting the fine arts departments from marginalization.

M4 stated, “In my perception, in this district, the arts are very valuable. We have not had the cuts that you hear about across the nation...” However, the most detailed response was from M6:

It is my perception that the fine arts are valued on different levels throughout my district depending on the climate of the individual school. This also largely depends on the value the building principal places on the fine arts. There are schools in the district where the arts are a focal point, integrated into the school day in all subjects. On the contrary, there are schools in the district where the fine arts teachers are required to spend a portion of music instructional time teaching math, to help prepare students for the MAP test. Furthermore, it would appear that if the fine arts were highly valued by the leaders in our district, we would have representation and funding, equal to, let's say, the athletic department.

The participants taking the online survey responded to statement 4 (When a school district is experiencing budget reductions, the fine arts should be among the first programs to be reduced or eliminated). Respondents chose from the categories of *strongly agree*, *agree*, *no opinion*, *disagree*, or *strongly disagree*. The results indicated both stakeholder groups believed the fine arts to be vital in a child's education; though the music educators held stronger beliefs (see Figure 3).

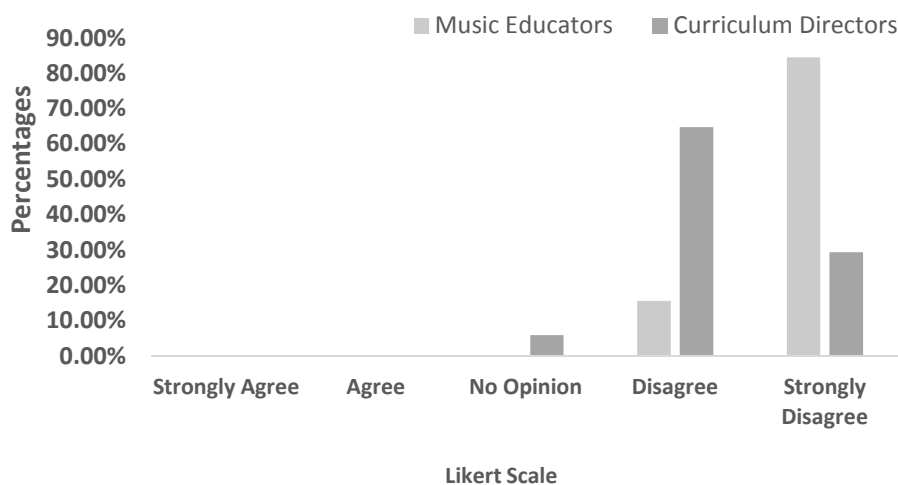


Figure 3. Responses to survey statement 4: When a school district is experiencing budget reductions, the fine arts should be among the first programs to be reduced or eliminated.

Question 9 on the survey prompted respondents to rank the value of the fine arts in their school or district on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 the lowest value and 5 the highest value. The calculated average value of the music educators was 3.75; the calculated average value of the curriculum directors was 4.0. During the interviews, 3 of 6 music educators commented that they did not feel the fine arts were as valued in their school or district as other subjects, such as sports. Two music educators commented they did not

feel valued by their principal. All six of the curriculum directors commented during the interview that their district valued fine arts very highly.

Theme Four: Perceptions Regarding Including the Fine Arts on Standardized Assessments

The qualitative data, gathered through personal interviews, indicated widely varying views, which in some cases were conveyed in an emphatic manner. During the interviews, curriculum directors and music educators were asked, “If the arts were to be included on state achievement test, do you feel it would give the arts more opportunities for funding?” Participants were also asked, “Do you see any negative effects of standardized testing of the arts?” Lastly, participants were asked, “Do you perceive including the arts on state achievement tests as being good for students?”

C2 responded, “Yes, I think that if the arts were on state achievement tests, smaller districts that do not get funding, like other districts, would have to give it attention... it would definitely force districts to move money around...”

C2 also expressed concern about standardized testing of fine arts, “... so much of the arts is higher order thinking... you would hate to see those things lessen because you have to remember something on a test...” However, C2 felt that including the fine arts on standardized tests would be good for students, “... for those smaller districts that are losing the arts, if you're going to have to take the achievement test to get funding... let's take the achievement test... but the question is, how do you measure it?”

C4 replied:

If they had the funding, the fine arts would be on there [the standardized tests] now. We can't afford to test the arts... [However], it could be good in the way that

we have common expectations. I'm not sure what that would look like even though that's my background... it could be good if it's not frequent. It could be positive.

C5 commented that if the fine arts were implemented on standardized tests, the only way to adequately assess the fine arts would be to submit “tons and tons of videos... it could be stressful for kids. It may become less enjoyable for the students. It would be more stressful on the teachers because it's stressful on the core teachers. Kids are pulled to the enjoyment and enrichment of the arts.”

C6 was emphatically against the standardized assessment of the fine arts, as he stated:

Do I see any negative effects of standardized testing on anything? Yes, I do. Do I see any negative effects of standardized testing of the arts? Yes, I do. Because I think, all of the sudden we're going to miss what we really want as evidence that students know what we want them to know about the arts and can do and can demonstrate, and you can't do that on a standardized test.

In comparison to the curriculum directors, the music educators' responses to the interview questions regarding the standardized testing of the fine arts were also varied.

M1 stated:

I'm not sure about a statewide test; it's hard to define a person by a test. It's an indicator in our toolbox, but I don't think it's an answer. There is a basic knowledge that students need to have that could be tested to some degree. If there is a test it needs to be made by the music teachers.

The response of M2 aligned with M1:

A standardized test could be good for students ... only if the test is suitable... they tried... they started it... the funding was pulled... it quite frankly scared me that we were trying to measure something that I don't think is measurable that way.

Likewise, M5 did not advocate standardized testing of the fine arts. When asked if state mandated testing of the fine arts would increase funding for the arts M5 stated, "... I don't think it really matters, that money is not there." She further stated, "I feel one detriment to standardized testing [of the fine arts] is that it puts pressure on my classroom environment, that in my opinion, shouldn't be there." When asked if standardized testing of fine arts is good for students, M5 responded, "No, final answer."

Both M3 and M6 responded favorably in their responses to the questions about the standardized testing of the fine arts. M3 was the only interviewee who stated that in her experience, testing did not have to diminish the enjoyable learning atmosphere in the fine arts classroom. She replied:

Some fine arts teachers do not test in their classroom because they do not want to take the fun out of music, but I disagree with that... I really don't think kids mind, they like the challenge; it's how you present what you're going to do. (M5)

Of all interviewees, M6 was the most solid advocate of the inclusion of the fine arts on standardized tests:

What gets tested gets noticed with funding and instructional time. Testing would force the alignment of district-wide curriculum and would provide valuable data. At the present time, not only do we not know what our students are learning, but we do not know if they are mastering the main concepts, which are, by the way, testable. Incidentally, it would benefit students to integrate all subjects in their

critical thinking skills on the MAP, including the fine arts. Isn't that what Common Core is about?

The overall variety of responses from all participants in the study regarding the inclusion of the fine arts on state mandated tests (survey statement 5) resulted in a general alignment of quantitative and qualitative data results (see Figure 4). The data reflected both stakeholder groups expressed nearly equal percentages both in favor and in opposition to the standardized testing of the arts. The higher percentages of stakeholders who chose the *no opinion* category for this statement was insightful.

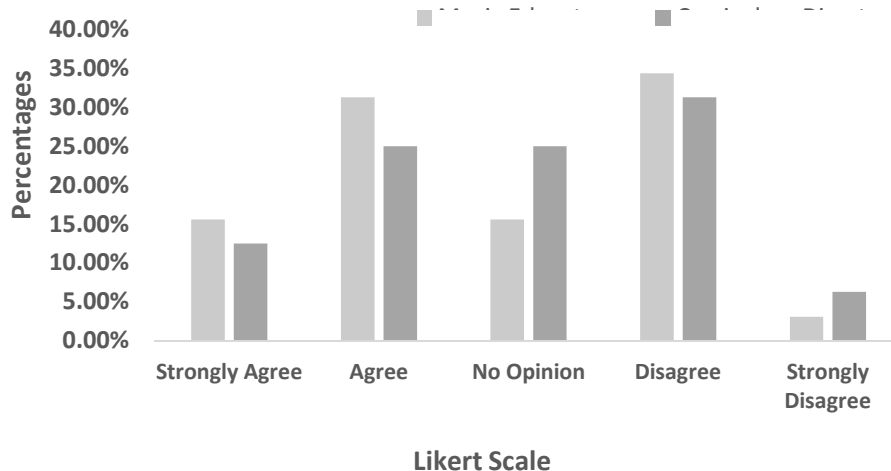


Figure 4. Responses to survey statement 5: The fine arts should be included on state standardized tests.

The other three survey statements regarding the standardized assessment of the fine arts, closely aligned with the responses for statement 5 with both stakeholder groups

nearly evenly divided between those in favor and those opposed in their perceptions regarding the standardized assessment of the fine arts.

Summary

In Chapter Four, a description of the process of the mixed study was given followed by the data analysis. The four overarching themes and accompanying data were described. An explanation was given that survey and interview data were collected, analyzed, and coded in the qualitative and quantitative mixed study.

Bar graphs, representing the survey data on behalf of each of the four themes or research questions, were presented. Twelve personal interviews and a Likert scale survey were conducted concurrently. Data were collected and analyzed for common trends via the constant comparative method. A summary of the research, limitations of the study, conclusions, recommendations for future research, and summary were presented in Chapter Five.

Chapter Five – Summary and Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to determine stakeholders' perceptions of the effects of federal laws on public school fine arts. As a result of increasing accountability in core subjects such as math and reading, in addition to high unemployment and economic recession, fine arts education has been reduced or eliminated in many districts nationwide (Chen, 2008; Garcia, 2010; Jacobsen & Rothstein, 2009; Maxwell, 2008; Suzuki, 2009). Fine arts public school programs have been operating on fewer funds due to budget restrictions. For example, in 2011, Florida's fine arts education budget was reduced from \$39 million to less than \$1 million (Dwyer, 2011). Similarly, the Michigan state fine arts agency previously allotted \$29 million for grants and, in 2011, allotted only \$2 million (Dwyer, 2011).

In light of the recurring public school fine arts crisis in America, it was deemed enriching to the study to explore the effect federal laws have had on the fine arts in past decades. The review of related literature revealed that from the 1930s to present day an ebb and flow of perceptions regarding K-12 fine arts programs aligned with the state of the economy and current political policy (Berliner, 2009; Branscome, 2012; Rabkin & Hedberg, 2011; Ward, 2011). During times of crisis, such as Sputnik, public school fine arts programs suffered, and the trend has continued into the 21st century (Branscome, 2012; Helig et al., 2010; Rabkin & Hedberg, 2011).

In this study, four guiding themes emerged which aligned with the research questions. As the four themes emerged, contrasting perceptions were explored regarding the fine arts as a core subject, the fine arts as a vital part of a child's holistic education, the overall value of fine arts, and the controversy surrounding the standardized

assessment of the fine arts. The four themes were the foundation from which the interview and survey statements were derived. The education of the whole child was the conceptual framework of the study and the lens through which the study was conducted.

The design of the statistical aspect of the study was descriptive; the data were collected and analyzed through a mixed-method of quantitative and qualitative research. Surveys were distributed to public school music educators and curriculum directors throughout the RPDC 7 in Missouri. Personal interviews were conducted with six music educators and six curriculum directors. The survey and interview data were compared for similarities and differences.

The primary goal of the study was to expand the existing body of research on the perceptions of stakeholders regarding the effect of federal laws on public school fine arts. Policies affecting the fine arts have historically been based upon the perceptions of stakeholders. The availability of quality research will help guide stakeholders in making better-informed decisions regarding K-12 public school fine arts at local, district, state, and national levels. In Chapter Five, a summary of the research, limitations of the study, conclusions, recommendations for future research, and summary were presented.

Findings

Four themes guided the study: the fine arts as a core subject, the fine arts as a vital part of a child's holistic education, the overall value of fine arts education in light of brain research, and the controversy surrounding the standardized assessment of the fine arts. Throughout the survey and interview research process it was evident that there was a complex interconnectedness of all four themes. The education of the whole child emerged as the foundation of the study.

The problem to be solved was though the education of the whole child was embraced in theory by educators and politicians nationwide (ASCD, 2013) students have been experiencing a significant reduction in K-12 public school fine arts education since 2002 due to a combination of strained budgets and districts requiring a more narrow focus on the subjects tested by the state (Chen, 2008; Jacobsen & Rothstein, 2009; Maxwell, 2008; Suzuki, 2009). The fine arts were included in the list of core subjects in the NCLB legislation but were not given the status commensurate with the other core subjects, nor were they included in the standardized testing process (Beveredge, 2010; Chen, 2008; Suzuki, 2009).

The following research questions aligned with the four guiding themes of the study:

1. What are the perceptions of stakeholders regarding the inclusion of fine arts as core subjects?
2. What are the perceptions of stakeholders regarding the fine arts as a vital part of every child's holistic education?
3. What are the perceptions of stakeholders regarding the overall value of K-12 fine arts education?
4. What are the perceptions of stakeholders regarding standardized assessments including the fine arts?

The data were evaluated by coding qualitative interview results then cross examining the data with the quantitative survey results. Transcriptions of the interviews were divided by question, common responses, and themes, and aligned with the four

research questions. The responses of the music educators and curriculum directors were compared for commonalities and differences.

Research question 1. Fine arts as a core subject. What are the perceptions of stakeholders regarding the inclusion of the fine arts as core subjects?

According to the qualitative data, all music educators except one *strongly agreed* that the fine arts should be ranked among the tested core subjects; however, only one curriculum director agreed with this view. When asked if the fine arts should be considered a core subject the other five curriculum directors gave indirect answers, such as, "...some students might consider arts core" (C4), and "...arts can be core only when integrating the core subjects" (C1)

The quantitative data indicated 70.6% of the curriculum directors *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that the fine arts should be ranked among the core subjects, while 90.7% of the music educators *agreed* or *strongly agreed* regarding the issue. The qualitative and quantitative data indicated both stakeholder groups perceived public school fine arts to be valued as a core subject in policy and practice, with the music educators holding a much stronger position than the curriculum directors. The question regarding whether or not the fine arts should be ranked among the core subjects was foundational to the study.

Research question 2. Fine arts as a part of holistic education. What are the perceptions of stakeholders regarding the fine arts as a vital part of every child's holistic education?

All music educator and curriculum director interviewees responded in favor of the fine arts being a part of a child's holistic education. Likewise, 100% of survey data indicated responses of *agree* or *strongly agree* on the question. C5 responded in the

interview that a child's whole education, in conjunction with the fine arts, should be a matter of choice when that child reaches a certain age, possibly the fifth grade. On the contrary, M2, also in favor of fine arts instruction as a part of a child's holistic education, emphasized the importance of daily fine arts instruction in every grade, "I think the fine arts are imperative and should be required; it should be mandated, a minimum per year." M3 commented "... not every child will like music but they should be exposed." C2 linked the fine arts in a child's holistic education to that child's future success in a global economy.

In response to the survey statement 3, 47.1% of curriculum directors and 25% of music educators agreed that fine arts should be a part of every child's holistic education. In the *strongly agree* category were 52.9% of curriculum directors and 75% of music educators. When comparing the qualitative and quantitative data on the issue, the results aligned, with both stakeholder groups indicating support of the fine arts in a child's holistic education. In both data sets, the music educators indicated stronger support of the fine arts as a part of a child's holistic education than the curriculum directors.

The education of the whole child was the conceptual framework of the study; foundational to all other themes and subthemes. Ascertaining whether or not the education of the whole child should be a goal of every school district, and the role of the fine arts within that district, was the lens through which this study was conducted. All themes and subthemes in the study were approached through the lens of the education of the whole child.

Research question 3. Value of fine arts. What are the perceptions of stakeholders regarding the overall value of K-12 fine arts education?

The qualitative data collected from the interview participants were varied and, in some interviews, communicated with a vast array of feelings ranging from enthusiasm to resentment. Only one curriculum director spoke negatively regarding his district's value of the fine arts, commenting that in comparison with other districts in the nation, his district falls very short of supporting students in the arts with supplying necessary equipment, artistic directors, and transportation. The remaining 5 curriculum directors each spoke enthusiastically about how highly their districts and communities valued their fine arts departments, citing examples of athletic events where the band and choir performed, choir and band "1" ratings at district and state fine arts contests, large audiences at fine arts events, how the fine arts enhance learning in the other core subjects, and marching band success stories.

Two out of 6 music educators spoke of serving in fine arts departments that had not been marginalized; therefore, they perceived their fine arts department to be valued by the district. On the contrary, 4 out of 6 music educators bitterly complained of feeling overworked and underfunded, observing other programs such as the athletic department take precedence year after year. However, secondary music educators expressed more positive comments than elementary music educators, possibly due to elementary music teachers' scheduling concerns of teaching 400 to 600 students twice a week, supervision duties multiple times a week, traveling to different sites, numerous grade-level concerts per year, and a lack of planning time.

The participants taking the online survey responded to survey statement 1: K-12 fine arts programs are a vital part of every child's education in the public schools. Respondents chose from the Likert scale of *strongly agree, agree, no opinion, disagree,*

or *strongly disagree*. Both stakeholder groups indicated they believed the fine arts to be vital in a child's education.

Regarding survey statement 1, in the *agree* category were 17.6% of curriculum directors, and in the *strongly agree* category were 82.4% of curriculum directors and 100% of music educators. Furthermore, survey statement 4 was: If a school district were experiencing budget restrictions the fine arts should be among the first programs to be eliminated or reduced. In the *disagree* category were 64.7% of curriculum directors and 15.6% of music educators. In the *strongly disagree* category were 29.4% of curriculum directors and 84.4% of music educators. In the *no opinion* category were 5.9% of curriculum directors.

Statement 9 on the survey prompted respondents to rank the value of the fine arts in their school or district on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being the lowest value and 5 being the highest value. The calculated average value of the music educators was 3.75; the calculated average value of the curriculum directors was 4.0. The results of the survey data did not align with the results of the interview data; therefore, if the interviewees had been asked to complete statement 9, an assumption could be made that the averages would have been more extreme for both stakeholder groups. The curriculum directors would have scored higher and the music educators would have scored lower.

Theme four: Fine arts included on assessments. The qualitative data, gathered through personal interviews, indicated widely varying views expressed from deeply held beliefs. During the interviews, curriculum directors and music educators were individually asked, “If the arts were to be included on state achievement tests such as the MAP do you feel it would give the arts more opportunities for funding?” Participants

were also asked, “Do you see any negative effects of standardized testing of the arts?”

Lastly, participants were asked, “Do you perceive including the arts on state achievement tests as being good for students?”

In regards to the first interview question, C2 stated, “Yes, I think that if the arts were on state achievement tests, smaller districts that do not get funding... would have to give it attention... it would definitely force districts to move money around...” However, C4 replied, “If they had the funding, the fine arts would be on there (the standardized tests) now. We can't afford to test the arts...”

M1 commented, “... it's hard to define a person by a test. It's an indicator in our toolbox but I don't think it's an answer...” On the contrary, M6 posited, “...what gets tested gets noticed, with funding, instructional time, professional development...” M6 also commented that the standardized testing of the fine arts would aid in providing fine arts data to help guide instruction and professional development.

The survey data reflected widely varied perceptions regarding the standardized assessment of the fine arts. Four survey statements probed the multi-faceted issues of assessment. Survey statement 5 was, the fine arts should be included on state standardized tests. The *agree* category was comprised of 25% curriculum directors and 31.3% music educators and the *disagree* category was comprised of 31.3% curriculum directors and 34.4% music educators.

Survey statement 6 was, if the fine arts were included on state assessment tests, fine arts programs would be less likely to be reduced. The *agree* category was comprised of 58.8% curriculum directors and 59.4% music directors; the *disagree* category was

comprised of 17.6% curriculum directors and 9.4% music educators. From the curriculum director respondents, 11.8% indicated they had *no opinion*.

Survey statement 7 was the fine arts should not be included on state assessments due to the subjective nature of fine arts. The *agree* category was comprised of 37.5% curriculum directors and 28.1% music educators; however, from the music educators respondents, 12.5% indicated they *strongly agreed* with the statement. There were 18.8% of curriculum directors who indicated they had *no opinion*. The *disagree* category was comprised of 43.8% curriculum directors and 25% music educators.

Survey statement 8 was, if the fine arts were included on state assessments it would be best for students. The *agree* category was comprised of 35.3% curriculum directors and 31.3% music educators; however, from the music educator respondents 12.5% also indicated they *strongly agreed* with the statement. The *disagree* category was comprised of 17.6% curriculum directors and 21.2% music educators. The *no opinion* category was comprised of 41.2% curriculum directors and 28.1% music educators.

Limitations of the Findings

The limitations of the study were influenced by the research design and the geographic area of the study as listed below.

1. The collections of data limited to one academic semester.
2. The online survey data were limited to the respondents who chose to complete and submit the survey.
3. It was expected that all respondents answered all questions honestly.
4. Researcher bias was monitored by the committee of educational advisors.

Conclusions

Within the context of the limitations of the study, the perceptions of the effect of federal laws on K-12 fine arts as viewed by music educators and curriculum directors in a Midwest state was studied through the lens of the education of the whole child. As a result, four themes emerged: the fine arts being perceived as core subjects in policy and practice; the fine arts being included in child's holistic education; the overall value of the fine arts; and the standardized assessment of the fine arts. From interviews and surveys, data were assimilated and analyzed resulting in the following conclusions.

Theme one: Fine arts as a core subject. The comparison of music educator responses to curriculum director responses revealed that though there was a common appreciation for the fine arts, music educators held a much deeper belief that the fine arts should be valued as a core subject. On the contrary, one curriculum director asserted the fine arts should not be included in the core subjects. When asked if the fine arts should be considered a core subject, the other five curriculum directors gave indirect answers, such as, "...some students might consider arts core" (C4), and "...arts can be core when integrating the core subjects" (C1).

Many curriculum directors spoke of their district's fine arts departments being appreciated for their role as public relations for the district via performances and art displays, but none of the curriculum directors spoke of their fine arts subjects as being valued as core subjects. Furthermore, it was evident, in all but one of the interviews with curriculum directors and two interviews with music educators, that value was attached to fine arts instruction as long as integration of the tested subjects was understood and implemented well.

It may be concluded that curriculum directors must balance curriculum and budgets with the needs of students, and though the vast majority of curriculum directors had an appreciation for fine arts education, they must make decisions which often result in the marginalization of specialty subjects. Abril (2009) stated, “Music education has not lost a place in the public schools but rather has become a subject on the peripheral and when the realities of time constraints, personnel, and funding are weighed in, these niceties become expendable frivolities” (p. 50). With the expectations of the integration of the fine arts into the CCSS, the fine arts educators must continue to defend their subjects as core (Kober & Rentmer, 2011; NCCAS, 2013).

Theme two: Fine arts as part of holistic education. The education of the whole child was the foundational belief from which the other themes and sub-themes in the study emerged; thus, the fine arts education as a part of a child’s holistic education was the conceptual framework of the study. The results of the interview and survey data indicated 100% of music educators and curriculum directors *agreed or strongly agreed* that the fine arts should be a part of every child’s holistic education, though the beliefs of the music educators were more emphatically in favor of the inclusion of the fine arts. The issue was not whether or not the fine arts should be included in a child’s holistic education as it was the level and frequency of the inclusion. The interview data indicated a variety of perceptions regarding the appropriate amount of fine arts instruction.

C5 recommended that fine arts instruction be required for students up through the fifth grade then students be given a choice whether or not to continue. On the contrary, M2 posited fine arts instruction should be required of every K-12 student on a daily basis, as the fine arts “touch places” in a child the other core classes cannot touch. M3 asserted

the primary reason to include the fine arts in the education of the whole child was for the future success of the global economy.

In 2010, researchers offered 1,200 public school students an essay entitled, “Ban the Elimination of Music in the Schools” (Hodges & Luehrsen, 2010). Students reported that music in the public schools were of tremendous benefit because the classes gave them an outlet for their feelings, helped them manage tension, and gave them a sense of community and belonging (Hodges & Luehrsen, 2010). Students also indicated in their essays that music classes enhanced achievement, focus, self-esteem, responsibility, tolerance, and respect (Hodges & Luehrsen, 2010). This study did not research the perceptions of students; however, when fine arts programs are reduced or cancelled it is the students who have missed an opportunity to experience a whole education, not legislators, politicians, or educator.

Theme three: Value of fine arts. The comparison of music educator responses to curriculum director responses revealed widely differing perceptions, as well as a lack of communication between administrators and fine arts educators regarding the specific role of fine arts education. Curriculum directors and music educators representing the same district expressed extreme differences in perceptions during the interview process regarding the value placed on their fine arts department. Some school leaders have chosen to foster quality, fine arts programs in pursuing optimal academic achievement, while others reduce or eliminate them (Dillon, 2009; Kavanaugh, 2009); however, how leaders’ actions are perceived by staff and community members is crucial to the climate of the school district, and thus, the learning environment.

The online survey included an opportunity for each respondent to evaluate, on a scale of 1 to 5 (with 1 being the lowest rating and 5 being the highest rating), the value placed on the fine arts by their district or school. The curriculum directors had an average rating of 4.0, and the music educators had an average rating of 3.75. Both stakeholder groups *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that the fine arts were vital to a child's education and that the fine arts should not be among the first programs to be eliminated during lean economic times, though the music educators held stronger views in favor of the fine arts than the curriculum directors.

M1 asserted that in her district the fine arts have been used by the district as a pawn to solicit support via performances. Three out of six music educators commented that the fine arts were not as valued as other subjects, such as sports. M4 commented that she travels between two schools, with one principal who highly values the fine arts and the other principal who does not. M4 and M6 posited that the success of fine arts programs depended on the school principal more than the district leaders, as the principal sets the tone for the school, thus the parents, students, and community follow the lead of the principal.

Theme four: Fine arts included on assessments. While many administrators have felt pressured to minimize fine arts programs due to standardized testing and budget strains, countless fine arts supporters have continued to advocate for the value of arts programs in the public schools, though many arts activists disagree on whether or not the arts should be implemented on standardized tests (Beveridge, 2010; Fisher, 2008; Murphy, 2010). In this study, four survey statements were included that probed the multi-faceted issues of assessment. Survey and interview prompts about fine arts assessment

revealed the differing perceptions held by music educators and curriculum directors regarding the controversial issue. The qualitative and quantitative data indicated widely differing views, as well as no opinions on the topic.

C2 commented that the inclusion of the fine arts on standardized tests would help fine arts budgets. C4 commented that there simply has not been, and will not be, money available to test the fine arts. M1 was not in favor of the standardized testing of the fine arts due to the subjectivity of the arts, while M6 posited the opposite view that what gets tested gets funded. Furthermore, M6 believed that state mandated testing of the fine arts would aid in the collection of valuable fine arts data. Dwyer (2011) asserted that an accurate measurement of the availability and success of K-12 public school fine arts programs is challenging because there are no data required by schools regarding which fine arts programs are offered or how students are achieving. Without assessment data, how is evaluation of the effectiveness of the fine arts programs possible (Arts Education Research Initiative, 2009)?

When asked if the standardized testing of the fine arts would be good for students, 41.2% of curriculum directors and 28.1% of music educators indicated they had *no opinion*. C3 commented that the interview questions being asked were very good and that he had never thought about them before. Is it possible that participants in this study indicated that they did not have an opinion about the inclusion of the fine arts on standardized assessments due to a lack of knowledge about the topic, or rather a general sense of apathy?

Implications for Practice

Research on stakeholders' perceptions of K-12 public school fine arts was limited. Moreover, nation-wide data on the status of public school K-12 fine arts programs was inconsistent because most schools and districts were not required to report fine arts grade averages, curriculum requirements, enrollment, or assessment data (National Task Force, 2009). At the very least, stakeholders need more information at the state level to help guide decisions and instruction. States should be required to annually collect data regarding all core academic subjects, including fine arts (National Art Association, 2010). Information should include the number of course offerings, enrollment, student teacher ratios, amount of instructional time, budget, teacher certification for each subject, professional development afforded in each subject, and other data deemed necessary by the state, significant to various subjects (National Art Association, 2010).

In addition to a need for more research, this study revealed a need for more communication among staff members in each district. The survey and interview data indicated a vast array of perceptions among music educators and curriculum directors on critical issues affecting K-12 fine arts students. For example, a curriculum director perceived the fine arts department in her district to be highly valued among the staff and community due to the stellar high school musicals and the band's top rating at the state fine arts competition. A fourth grade music educator in the same district perceived his program to be overlooked and underfunded; therefore, he does not feel the fine arts were valued from his perspective. The discrepancy in perceptions may lead to a growing dissatisfaction with the district that could negatively impact students. It may be concluded from the study that an exploration of effective communication strategies is

needed among administrators and fine arts educators in each district regarding individual, departmental, and district-wide perceptions, expectations, and goals.

Effective communication will be especially crucial with the integration of the fine arts into the CCSS. R. Moppin (personal communication, March 15, 2013) advised fine arts educators to be leaders in the CCSS movement rather than resist it. Being a leader involves being willing to communicate with staff and administrators about goals and expectations. R. Moppin (personal communication, March 25, 2013) also advocated integrating the fine arts into state mandated testing in the same manner that the fine arts would be integrated into the CCSS. Rather than make the fine arts a separate section on an assessment, integrate all subjects into all questions on the assessment to make it more like the real world and better for all students.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study was enhanced by utilizing the mixed method approach, as recommended by Creswell (2013). Mixing qualitative and quantitative research enriched the quality and scope of the research (Creswell, 2013). In this study, for example, the survey data did not reflect the vast differences in perceptions between music educators and curriculum directors regarding critical issues in fine arts education. The deeper insight was revealed during the interviews, leading to the conclusion that school- and district-wide communication has been absent in many cases.

Therefore, a recommendation is made for further research employing a mixed methods study design. What would a stratified (district and building administrators, classroom teachers, fine arts teachers, parents, students) open communication forum, addressing perceptions, expectations, and goals in fine arts education, as well as

strategies in the integration of the fine arts into CCSS, have on student learning? This question could be addressed through a multi-year study of a school building implementing high-quality CCSS professional development, with fine arts integration, focused on the education of the whole child and best practices.

Summary

Decisions regarding whether to maintain or eliminate fine arts programs are made from a complex mixture of school, community, and stakeholder values, as well as shifts in educational mandates, and declining financial resources (Major, 2011). This mixed methods study revealed the beliefs and opinions of music educators and curriculum directors regarding the effects of federal laws on K-12 fine arts education. The data collected were viewed through the lens of the education of the whole child. In the preliminary stages of the study, four themes emerged: the fine arts being ranked as a core subject in perception and practice; the role of the fine arts in a child's holistic education; the overall value of the K-12 fine arts; and the standardized assessment of the fine arts.

As a result of the study, further questions were raised regarding the effects of federal laws on K-12 fine arts education and the impact on students as well as differing perceptions among fine arts staff and administrators within schools and districts. The case was made that open communication among district- and building-level staff regarding perceptions, expectations, and goals in the integration of the fine arts with CCSS in an effort to educate the whole child may enhance student learning. The overarching goal of every district leader, teacher, parent, and community member must be to ensure that every child has access to a world class education, which includes the fine arts (Obama, 2011).

Appendix A
Survey Questions

1. K-12 fine arts programs (such as general music, choir, band, orchestra, dance, theater, and visual arts classes) are a vital part of every child’s education in the public schools.

strongly agree agree no opinion disagree strongly disagree

2. The fine arts should be considered core curriculum, along with language arts and math

strongly agree agree no opinion disagree strongly disagree

3. Educating the “whole child” should be a primary focus of every school district

(including subjects such as: character education, physical education, fine arts, life-skills training, technology, and career training, foreign language classes along with the standard curriculum).

strongly agree agree no opinion disagree strongly disagree

4. When a school district is experiencing budget reductions, the fine arts should be among the first programs to be reduced or eliminated.

strongly agree agree no opinion disagree strongly disagree

5. The fine arts should be included on state standardized tests.

strongly agree agree no opinion disagree strongly disagree

6. If the fine arts were included on state assessment tests, fine arts programs would be less likely to be reduced.

strongly agree agree no opinion disagree strongly disagree

7. The fine arts should not be included on state assessments due to the subjective nature of fine arts.

strongly agree agree no opinion disagree strongly disagree

8. If the fine arts were included on state assessments it would be best for students.

strongly agree agree no opinion disagree strongly disagree

9. On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 the most negative perception and 5 the most positive perception, how would you rank the overall perception of the value of the fine arts in your local school?

1 2 3 4 5

10. Please indicate the category aligning with your job description.

Curriculum director Music instructor

11. Please include further commentary if you choose:

Appendix B

Recruitment Letter to Principals

<Date>

Dear Principal,

I am currently completing my Doctoral Dissertation and the topic of research is “Federal Education Laws and the Fine Arts.”

In light of the ever-changing landscape regarding the plight of K-12 fine arts programs under federal laws, a study of the perceptions of curriculum directors and music teachers regarding federal requirements, the value of the fine arts, and the debate regarding standardized fine arts assessment was deemed necessary. The debate continues among various stakeholder groups whether or not there should be equity between K-12 fine arts programs and subjects such as math, language arts, and science, which unlike the arts, are strictly monitored and assessed under federal mandates. Important decisions affecting K-12 public school students are based on the perceptions of the various stakeholder groups.

This study involves gathering data from surveys and interviews from curriculum directors and music teachers throughout the SWRPDC Region 7 in Missouri. I am asking for your assistance in two ways:

1. Would you please forward the hyperlink at the bottom of the page to the music teachers and curriculum directors in your school/district? My goal is to send between 40 and 50 surveys throughout the SWRPDC Region 7 to gain the perceptions of these 2 stakeholder groups.

2. To strengthen the study, 12 personal interviews will be conducted: 6 interviews with music teachers and 6 interviews with curriculum directors, all from the SWRPDC Region 7 in Missouri. To maintain the highest credibility in this study, the IRB Board has advised that the interviewees be recommended by administrators. Therefore, would you recommend music teachers in your building or curriculum directors in your district with whom I might send a letter requesting an interview? My contact information is included in this letter.

It is my desire that all school districts might benefit from this study. With the knowledge that I gain, I hope to contribute valuable information to the field of arts education which will aid all stakeholders in making important decision for K-12 students.

Thank you for your time and cooperation,

Kim R. Cavener, Doctoral Candidate

- Please email contact information of potential interviewees (music teachers and curriculum directors) to xxxxxxxxxxxxxx
- Please forward hyperlink to all music teachers in yours school and curriculum directors in your district: hyperlink to survey

Appendix C

Informed Consent to Participate in Survey Research

Lindenwood University
School of Education
209 S. Kingshighway
St. Charles, Missouri 63301

Informed Consent for Participation in Research Activities

“Federal Education Laws and the Fine Arts”

Principal Investigator: Kim R. Cavener

Telephone: xxx-xxx-xxxx

Participant _____

Contact information _____

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Kim R. Cavener under the guidance of Dr. Sherry DeVore.

In light of the ever-changing landscape regarding the plight of K-12 fine arts programs under federal laws, a study of the perceptions of various stakeholder groups regarding federal requirements, the value of the fine arts, and the debate regarding standardized fine arts assessment was deemed necessary. The debate continues among various stakeholder groups whether or not there should be equity between K-12 fine arts programs and subjects such as math, language arts, and science, which unlike the arts, are strictly monitored and assessed under federal mandates. Important decisions affecting K-12 public school students are based on the perceptions of the various stakeholder groups.

1. a) Your participation will involve participating in an online survey.
 - b) The amount of time involved in your participation will be about 5 minutes. There

will be between 40 and 50 surveys dispersed to curriculum directors and public school music educators throughout Region 7 in Southwest Missouri. A minimum of 30 responses is expected.

3. There are no anticipated risks associated with this research.
4. There are no direct benefits for you participating in this study. However, your participation will contribute to the knowledge regarding the perceptions of the effects of federal laws on the fine arts in K-12 public schools and may help guide educators and policy makers in decision making.
5. Your participation is voluntary and you may choose not to participate in this research study or to withdraw your consent at any time. You may choose not to answer any questions that you do not want to answer. You will NOT be penalized in any way should you choose not to participate or to withdraw.
6. Every effort will be made to protect your privacy. As part of this effort, your identity will not be revealed in any publication or presentation that may result from this study and the information collected will remain in the possession of the investigator in a safe location. You may make a copy of this consent form for your records.
7. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study, would like a copy of the results, or if any problems arise, you may call the Investigator, Kim R. Cavener, or the Supervising Faculty, Dr. Sherry DeVore. You may also ask questions of or state concerns regarding your participation to the Lindenwood Institutional Review Board (IRB) through contacting Dr. Jann Weitzel, Vice President for Academic Affairs.

By participating in the survey, you consent to participate in this study.

Thank you for your time,

Kim R. Cavener _____

Date: _____

Please click here <hyperlink> to complete the survey.

Appendix D
Letter to Principal

<Date>

Dear Principal, This is a follow-up e-mail to the one I sent out on Month, Day. I am currently completing my Doctoral Dissertation and the topic of research is “Federal Education Laws and the Fine Arts.”

In light of the ever-changing landscape regarding the plight of K-12 fine arts programs under federal laws, a study of the perceptions of music teachers and curriculum directors regarding federal requirements, the value of the fine arts, and the debate regarding standardized fine arts assessment was deemed necessary. The debate continues among various stakeholder groups whether or not there should be equity between K-12 fine arts programs and subjects such as math, language arts, and science, which unlike the arts, are strictly monitored and assessed under federal mandates. Important decision affecting K-12 public school students are based on the perceptions of the various stakeholder groups.

It would be of great value to me if you would send the hyperlinked survey to all of the music teachers in your building and all of the curriculum directors in your district. I also ask that you will send to me the contact information of music teachers in your building and curriculum directors in your district for interviewees in the study. I realize that this is a very busy time of the year, but I hope you can take 5-10 minutes out of your schedule to invest in this important study. It is my desire that all school districts might benefit from this study. With the knowledge that I gain, I hope to contribute valuable

information to the field of arts education which will aid all stakeholders in making important decision for K-12 student.

Thank you for your time and cooperation,

Kim R. Cavener, Doctoral Candidate

- Please send contact information of potential interviewees (music teachers and curriculum directors) to Kim Cavener
- Please forward the following hyperlink to all music teachers in your building and curriculum directors in your district: go to [hyperlink](#)

Appendix E

Letter of Introduction for Interview

Letter of Introduction

<Date>

<Title> <First Name> <Last Name>

<Position>

<School District>

<Address>

Dear <Title> <Last Name>,

Thank you for agreeing to participate in my research study. I look forward to meeting you on <date> <time> to collect your perceptions regarding K-12 arts programs.

It is a widely held belief that the arts are a valuable element of every culture, mirroring the values and multi-faceted intricacies of the citizens. To evaluate the arts within a culture is to evaluate the values and norms of that culture. Research breeds understanding, with the ultimate goal being a desire in readers for deeper investigation as well as the inspiration to initiate positive changes in the realm of education.

I have allowed 45 minutes for the interview. Enclosed is a list of the interview questions for your review and consideration. Your participation in this study is greatly appreciated, and is voluntary on your part. If you wish to withdraw from the study you may do so at any time without negative consequences. If you have any questions or concerns please contact me by phone or by email.

Sincerely,
Kim R. Cavener
Doctoral Candidate
Lindenwood University

Appendix F

Letter of Informed Consent for Interview

Lindenwood University
School of Education
209 S. Kingshighway
St. Charles, Missouri 63301

Informed Consent for Participation in Research Activities

“Federal Education Laws and the Fine Arts”

Principal Investigator: Kim R. Cavener

Telephone: xxx.xxx.xxxx E-mail:

Participant_____

Contact information_____

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Kim R. Cavener under the guidance of Dr. Sherry DeVore. In light of the ever-changing landscape regarding the plight of K-12 fine arts programs under federal laws, a study of the perceptions of various stakeholder groups regarding federal requirements, the value of the fine arts, and the debate regarding standardized fine arts assessment was deemed necessary. The debate continues among various stakeholder groups whether or not there should be equity between K-12 fine arts programs and subjects such as math, language arts, and science, which unlike the arts, are strictly monitored and assessed under federal mandates. Important decisions affecting K-12 public school students are based on the perceptions of the various stakeholder groups.

1. a) Your participation will involve a personal interview with the Principal Investigator.
 - b) The amount of time involved in your participation will be one hour or less. A total of 12 personal interviews will be conducted in this research.

2. There are no anticipated risks associated with this research.
3. There are no direct benefits for you participating in this study. However, your participation will contribute to the knowledge regarding the perceptions of the effects of federal laws on the fine arts in K-12 public schools and may help guide educators and policy makers in decision making.
4. Your participation is voluntary and you may choose not to participate in this research study or to withdraw your consent at any time. You may choose not to answer any questions that you do not want to answer. You will NOT be penalized in any way should you choose not to participate or to withdraw.
5. Every effort will be made to protect your privacy. As part of this effort, your identity will not be revealed in any publication or presentation that may result from this study and the information collected will remain in the possession of the investigator in a safe location. You may make a copy of this consent form for your records.
6. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study, would like a copy of the results, or if any problems arise, you may call the Investigator, Kim R. Cavener or the Supervising Faculty, Dr. Sherry DeVore. You may also ask questions of or state concerns regarding your participation to the Lindenwood Institutional Review Board (IRB) through contacting Dr. Jann Weitzel, Vice President for Academic Affairs.

By participating in the interview, you consent to participate in this study.

Thank you for your time,

Kim R. Cavener _____

Date: _____

I, _____ have read
 the Letter of Informed Consent and agree to participate in
 the study being conducted by Kim R. Cavener entitled,
 "Federal Education Laws and the Arts." I understand that:

- my responses will be used for this dissertation
 research and may be used in future publications;
- I am participating voluntarily and may withdraw from
 the study at any time without negative consequences; and
- my identity and the identity of my school district
 will be kept confidential.

I have read the information, have had all questions
 regarding my participation in this study addressed to my
 satisfaction, and voluntarily agree to participate in this
 study.

 Signature of the Participant

 Date



~~
 To be completed by Participant:

 Date and Time of Interview Location Address

 Participant's Phone Number

Appendix G

Interview Questions

1. Tell me about your experiences as a music educator/curriculum director and to what degree the arts are involved.
2. What is your perception of the overall value of the arts in your school and district?
What brings you to these conclusions?
3. Are the arts assessed in your school or districts? If so, at what level?
4. In your opinion, what constitutes a “core” subject?
5. What core subjects do you perceive should be evaluated and at what level (school-wide, district-wide, state-wide, nation-wide)?
6. What are your perceptions regarding how federal laws have affected K-12 fine arts programs? How has NCLB affected the arts?
7. What are your perceptions regarding educating the “whole child?” Should the arts be a part of a child’s “whole” education experience and to what degree?
8. In your field of education, do you see a possible link between a quality arts program and higher order thinking skills in students? Please explain.
9. If the arts were to be included on state achievement test, do you feel it would give the arts more opportunities for funding? Please explain.
10. Do you see any negative effects of standardized testing of the arts? Please explain.

11. Do you perceive including the arts on state achievement tests as being good for students? Please explain.

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