

# TEXAS BAND ENROLLMENT STUDY

Texas Bandmasters Association  
Presented by  
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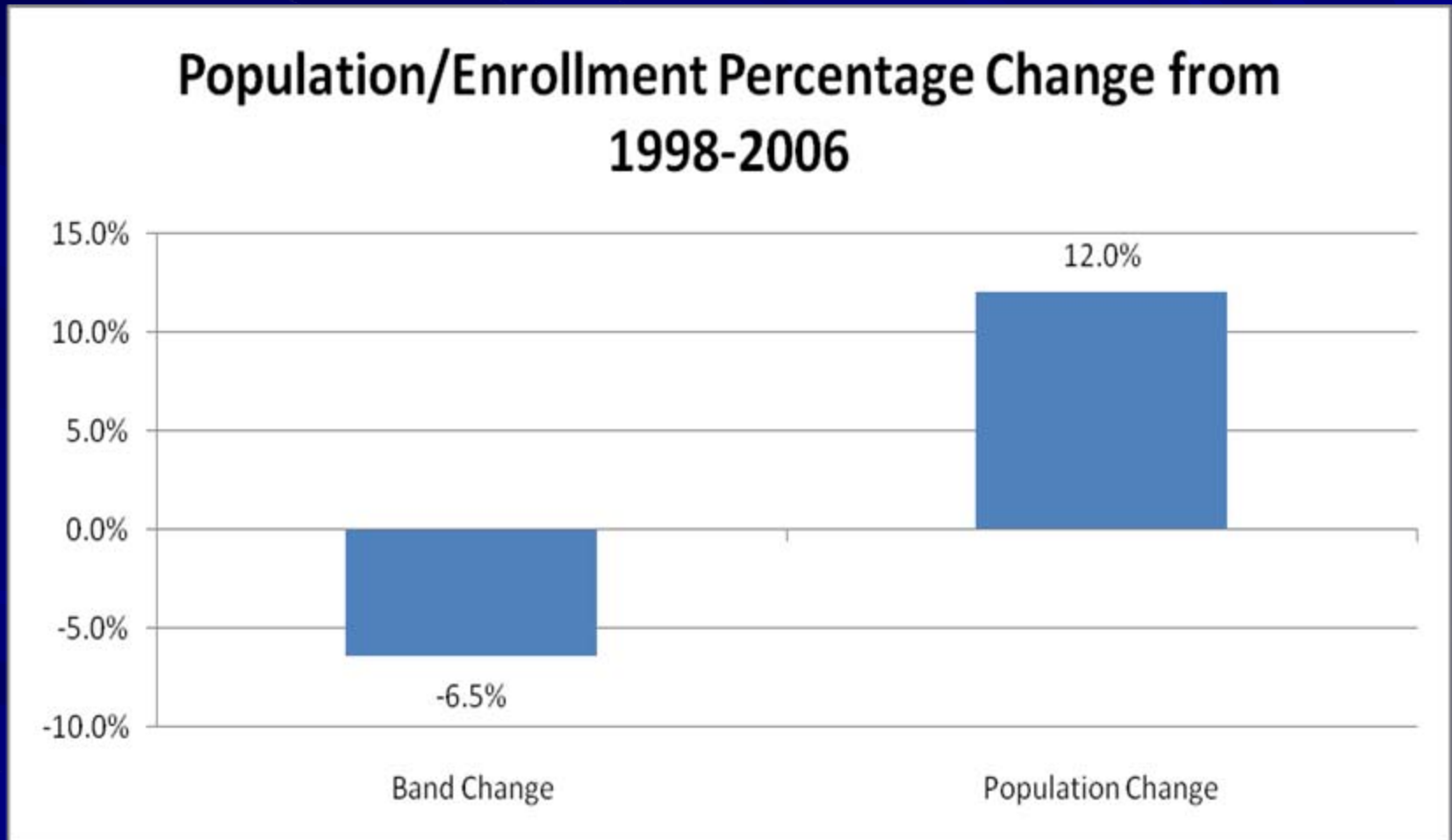
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# Background of the Study

- **A Texas Music Educators Association (TMEA) study completed in 2005 reported a decline in enrollment in Texas secondary music education. Enrollment in music classes overall dropped by 14,050 students over two school years, despite the fact that state enrollment in public education grew by 1.7 percent, up 71,591 students.**
- **(TMEA Music Class Enrollment, 2005).**

# Background of the Study

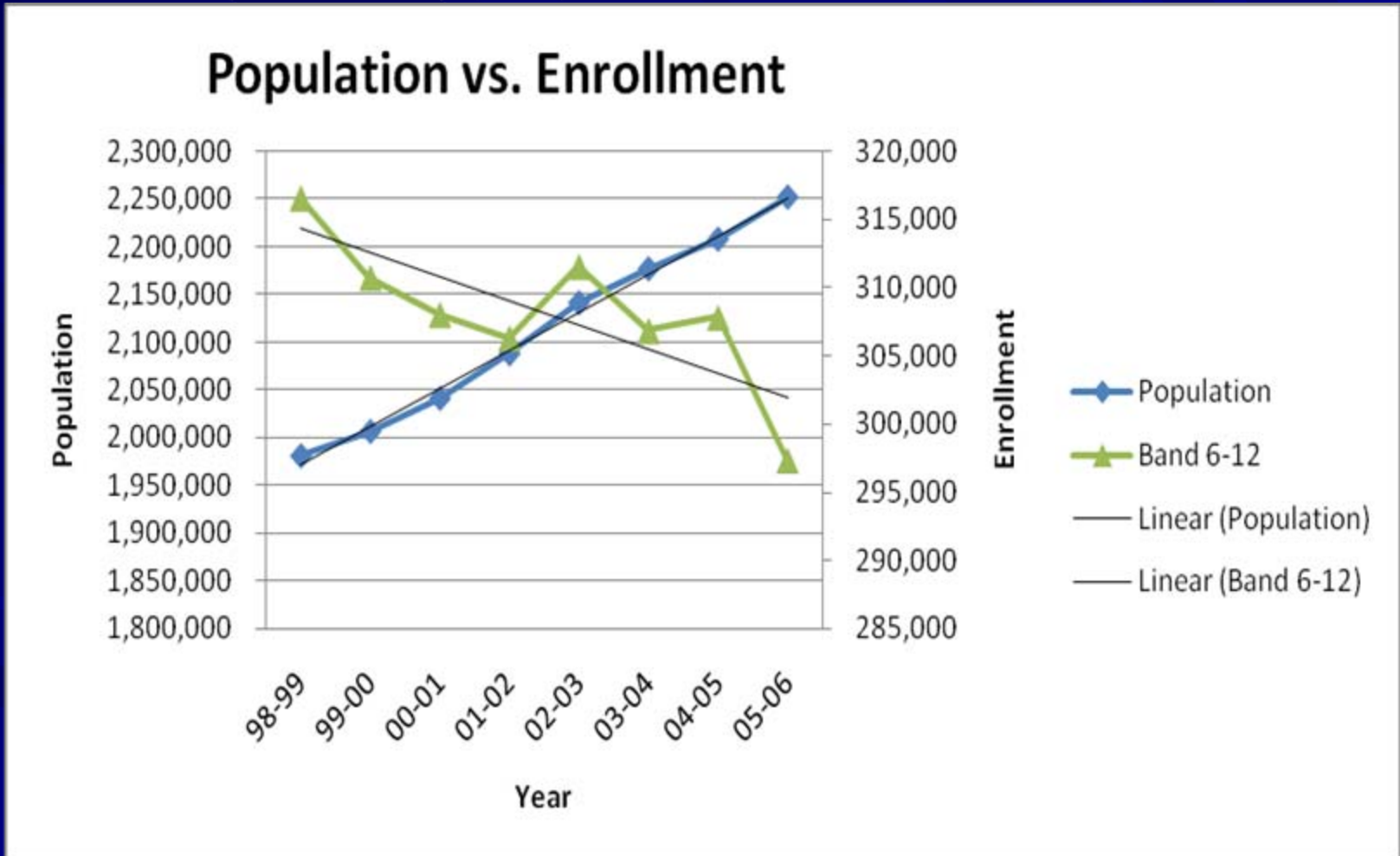
## *Quantitative Background Research Findings:*



*(TEA Archival Data)*

# Background of the Study

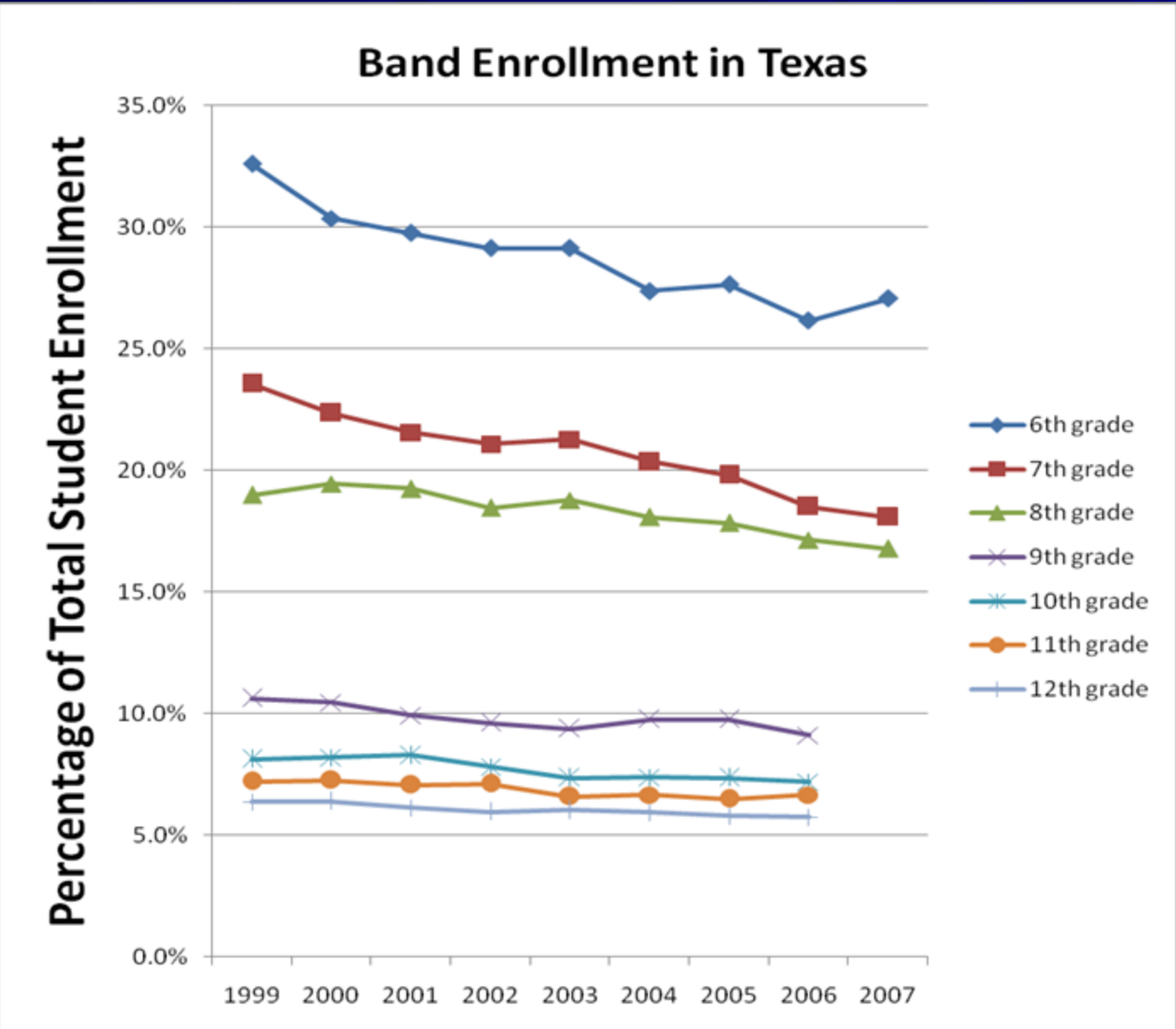
## *Quantitative Background Research Findings:*



*(TEA Archival Data)*

# Background of the Study

## *Quantitative Background Research Findings:*



# Purpose of the Study

- **This project was conducted to examine factors contributing to the declining enrollment in Texas band programs.**
- **The study was conducted with the expectation of finding an increased understanding of the implications of declining enrollments in Texas band programs.**

# Research Questions

- **What barriers, challenges, or factors contribute to the decline of enrollment in Texas band programs?**
- **What are the implications of this enrollment decline for students, schools, and the communities they serve?**



# Significance

- **Music educators can implement necessary improvement strategies relevant to their respective music program goals and campus missions.**
- **Readers of this study can gain an increased understanding of the efficacy of music education.**
- **Educational researchers can gain insight from the research participants' experiences and perceptions through the researcher's conclusions and recommendations for future educational research.**



# Literature Review

## ■ *Philosophical Views of Aesthetic Education Through Arts and Music – Maxine Greene*

“We do not regard aesthetic education as in any sense a fringe undertaking, a species of “frill.” We see it as integral to the development of persons—to their cognitive, perceptual, emotional, and imaginative development . . . to seek a greater coherence in the world.”

# Literature Review (Cont'd)

## *Contradiction and Challenge of*

### *NCLB on Music Education*

- **NCLB recognized the arts as a core subject and has required standards in arts education. However, the lack of arts assessment further relegated it to second tier status among educators.**

(NCLB Summary, 2001)

- *In the Ten Big Effects of the NCLB Act on Public Schools:*  
Schools are spending more time on reading and math, sometimes at the expense of subjects not tested . . .  
seventy-one percent of districts are reducing time spent on other subjects.

(CEP, 2006, p. 3)

# Literature Review, (Cont'd)

- **Focusing on the influence of narrower curriculum, the CEP report stated:  
Some officials in case study districts viewed this extra time for reading and math as necessary to help low-achieving students catch up. Others felt that this practice shortchanged students from learning important subjects, squelched creativity in teaching and learning, or diminished activities that might keep children interested in school” (CEP, 2006, p. 3).**

# Participants

- **Eight Purposely Selected Confidential Participants**
- **Five experienced music educators and three Texas State Music Education officials.**
- **Six of the eight participants were white males in addition to one white female and a Hispanic male.**

# Participants

- **Systematically utilized “All-State” alignment zones for five geographic “music areas” of the state. Five experienced music educator participants represented their respective areas in this study.**
- **Three state-level music official participants collectively represented Texas Music Educators Association (TMEA), Texas Education Association (TEA), Center for Educator Development in Fine Arts (CEDFA), Texas Bandmasters Association (TBA), University Interscholastic League (UIL), and the Association of Texas Small School Bands (ATSSB).**

# Summary of Narrative 1 “Kids Need the Band Family”

- Barriers to the band program:
  - Standardized testing
  - Financial demands for families
  - Departmental competition for students
  - Lack of parental involvement
  - Decline of family values
  - Inferior role models due to the media



# Summary of Narrative Continued

- Lack of parental involvement
- Decline of family values
- Inferior role models due to the media

## Implications of band enrollment decline:

- No creative outlet for students
- Lack of cooperation in school and society
- Decline in problem solving abilities



# Summary of Narrative, cont'd

## **Solutions:**

- **Weighed credit for band participation**
- **Promotion of program by directors**
- **Active recruitment**

## **Reflections:**

**Despite the problems in the band program, there is a positive aspect to the program that must be actively promoted in order to maintain the viability of the fine arts education.**

# Summary of Narrative 2

## “We Have To Engage Our Students”

### Barriers:

- Lack of band teacher expertise/professionalism
- Scheduling conflicts
- Financial constraints
- Graduation requirements
- Over-emphasis on band competition
- Unrealistic demands of students/family time
- Inflexibility of directors
- Failure to connect with students

# Summary of Narrative, cont'd

## Solutions

- Director communication
- Student engagement in learning

## Reflections

This participant noted the need for balance and communication in the band program. Students must be made to see the value in both academics and fine arts. Directors must tap into the students' motivation to excel without over-emphasizing competition.

# Narrative Summary 3

## “Instant Gratification...That’s the Problem”

### Barriers

- Instant gratification society
- *Scheduling conflicts created by Nation at Risk and NCLB*
- Peer pressure
- Lack of colleague understanding
- Band’s “old school” philosophy

### Implications of band enrollment decline:

- Loss of creativity
- Loss of humanity
- Decline in morals

# Narrative Summary, cont'd

## Reflections

This participant related several barriers to band enrollment. Among these were the instant gratification concept that pervades our youth. This keeps them from seeing long-term benefits of perseverance. He also reiterated the theme that competition among departments causes conflicts for directors and students. Finally, the inflexibility of band programs make it an unattractive choice for students both academically and socially.

# Narrative Summary 4

## “Unrealistic Demands on Students Challenge Band Participation”

### ■ Barriers

- Misinformation among decision makers at school
- Scheduling conflicts
- Instant gratification society
- Elitism in the band program
- Over-emphasis on competition

# Narrative Summary, cont'd

## Implications of band enrollment decline:

- Lack of identity in the school
- Decrease in motivation to attend school and be successful
- Disconnect with the community

## Reflections

This participant suggested that the way to remedy the problems within the band programs would be to increase communication. In addition, he recommended that band directors honestly evaluate their programs in order to maintain a student-centered, rather than a competition-centered, environment. Music education must be the focus of the band program.



# Narrative Summary 5

## “Band Competition Has Gotten Out of Control”

### ■ Barriers

- TAKS remediation
- Graduation requirements
- Financial restraints
- Peer pressure
- Departmental conflicts
- Over-emphasis of competition

# Narrative Summary, cont'd

## Implications of band enrollment decline:

- Decreased academic performance
- Lack of discipline
- Watering down of aesthetics in society

## Reflections

Competition has created an environment of showmanship rather than musicianship. Directors must work to nurture the intrinsic value of fine arts education if it is to be a viable program in the future.

# Narrative Summary 6

## “I Can See the Edge of the Cliff”

### Barriers

- Multitude of electives
- Scheduling conflicts
- State and federal legislation that limit opportunities
- Over-emphasis on band competition
- Unrealistic demands on students' time

### Reflections

This participant noted the problems brought on by the over-emphasis of competition in the band program. This has created a disconnect between the benefits of the program and the students. If this is not rectified, This participant sees it as the force that drives band programs “over the cliff”, exclusively extra-curricular.

# Narrative Summary 7

## “Necessary Stakeholders Just Don’t Get It”

### Barriers

- TAKS remediation
- Instant gratification society
- Magnet schools depleting enrollment opportunities
- Over-emphasis of competition

### Reflections

Like many of the other participants, this participant reflected a desire to decrease the emphasis on competition. He called for the band directors to engage in active recruitment in order to salvage the band program. If students are to thrive in fine arts, directors must help them build the intrinsic motivation necessary to persevere.

# Narrative Summary 8

## “TAKS Remediation and Graduation Requirements Manipulate Electives”

### Barriers

- Demands of TAKS requirements
- Conflicts with pullouts and electives
- Scheduling and graduation requirements
- Competition between course offerings
- Time and financial constraints
- Pressures of competition
- Lack of family commitment
- Inflexibility of the band directors

# Narrative Summary

## ■ Implications

- Increased school drop out rate
- Loss of a sense of community
- Lower student achievement

## Reflections

This participant emphasized the negative influences of TAKS remediation and the limitations it inflicts on band enrollment. He voiced his passion for music education for the sake of music and concern for competition to reward exemplary group achievements. He also presented his view of band directors as program advocates. This is the only way he sees the band program moving beyond its current enrollment challenge.



# Narrative Analysis

- Demands of Scheduling

*A Nation at Risk*, NCLB, and AYP requirements have created a scheduling crisis in schools. Teachers and administrators are focused on TAKS performance and have created an atmosphere that is detrimental to fine arts programs. This is due, in part, to the failure of NCLB guidelines to include fine arts education as an assessed, valued part of the curriculum.

- Over-emphasis of band competition

The over-emphasis of competition has caused some directors to focus more on the trophy than on actual music education. Secondly, this often results in unrealistic demands on student/family time. As a result, this has diluted the benefits a fine arts education can afford students.



# Narrative Analysis, cont'd

- “Old School” Band in the “New school”  
The inability of the band program to move from the controlling tactics of the past has caused it to be removed from mainstream education. The “elitist” mindset of inflexibility has served to alienate students and families from the band program making directors one of the driving forces of the decline in band enrollment.
- Often, bands lack relevance to modern day students in the “instant gratification era”. Students lose engagement in the program and withdraw from the band.

# Narrative Analysis, cont'd

- The role of family/decline of traditional values

The lack of family involvement has created a generation of students who lack the perseverance necessary to be successful in the band program. This is due to many factors: financial constraints, time commitments, miscommunication, among others.

Should these conflicts continue, the band program enrollments will continue to dwindle limiting students from experiencing the positive influences of band.

# Conclusions

- *Heightened academic standards challenge continued band participation*
- *Competitive band cultures create unrealistic demands for students*
- *“Elitist” perception of band drives students and families away*
- *Contemporary family cultures lack consistent support for band*

# Recommendations

- **Students must remain the focused center for all educational practices in schools. Communication is imperative between all stakeholders with the best interest of every student as a top priority. Students must feel unified support of their parents, teachers, administrators, counselors and district policy as they achieve their daily progress on their home campuses.**
- **Band directors must cautiously compete with care in their programs so that music education is maintained as the focus of their instruction for students. Healthy competition for exemplary musical achievement should be the goal of each band competition or performance evaluation.**

# Recommendations

- **Band directors should also maintain relevance to modern day student needs and learning styles in their planning and direction of the band program in the era of instant gratification.**
- **Music education advocates must take an active, vocal approach to communicate the value of band and fine arts education in public schools. This must be done at all levels, beginning with the school, the community, and individual homes.**

**“[The arts] are not luxuries of education but emphatic expressions of that which makes any education worthwhile.”**

**(Dewey, 1916, p. 279).**



# Concluding Remarks

- According to current research in educational studies and the interviews conducted for this research, the diminishing or elimination of band programs in public education has far-reaching implications.
- There are few other venues provided today's students to build both the self-esteem and cooperative skills provided in band and the fine arts. Few other disciplines in public education focus on the belief that there is value in sacrifice for the sake of all.

# Concluding Remarks

- In today's culture of instant gratification it is vital that we build the character and creativity needed to move our society forward.
- Without such programs, we are relegating our youth to a life of mediocrity, limited by their lack of self-worth, belief in others, and the ability to work as one for the betterment of all.

“The arts inform as well as stimulate, they challenge as well as satisfy. Their location is not limited to galleries, concert halls, and theatres. . . . This is perhaps, the largest lesson that the arts in education can teach, the lesson that life itself can be led as a work of art. In so doing, the maker himself or herself is remade. The remaking, this re-creation is at the heart of the process of education. (Eisner, 1998, p. 56)