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Policy and the K–12 Music Teacher: A Literature Review

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Abstract

Music teaching lies at the intersection of policy, research, and practice. An awareness of policy context and how policies impact teachers is essential for those in the music education profession. In particular, such an understanding can allow teachers to better adapt to and implement policies so that they might maintain and grow their programs and feel more satisfied in their jobs. This review of literature investigates scholarly literature published in music education research journals with implications for teachers' classroom practice and their professional lives. It includes studies of resources, organizations, and educational reform, teachers and teaching, institutions and actors, and access, in addition to descriptions of policy. Implications for teachers related to policy awareness, access for all students to a variety of musical activities, and music education advocacy are discussed.

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In education, practice, research, and policy should inform one another (Barrett, 2011; Jones, 2009). Barrett envisioned music teachers in the center of a Venn diagram where research, policy, and practice overlap. Teachers, Barrett noted, regularly implement policies in their classrooms and consider research when choosing what and how to teach. At the same time, teachers are creating policies in their own classrooms when they develop curricula or classroom procedures. Through their advocacy efforts, teachers influence the decisions of others who develop policy, as well. Jones articulated a similar relationship, but argued that in music education, there was insufficient research on policy, that most professionals had no more than a passing understanding of policy, and that due to these factors, the profession lacked the capacity to influence policy adequately. In the short time since Jones wrote those words, there has been a considerable increase in the amount of research published in music education journals and presented at conferences on policy-related topics. A better understanding of that research may better position teachers and others in music education to respond to policies that affect them in their classrooms and in their professional lives, as well as to influence policy development and policy implementation (Jones, 2009).

Policy can be conceptualized in numerous ways, although an in-depth discussion is beyond the scope of this article (instead, see e.g., Jones, 2009; Kos, 2007, 2010a; Schmidt, 2017). For the purposes of this article, I limit my discussion to formal public policies, which Hill and Hupe (2002) described as written rules that are intended to address perceived social problems. Much that has been written about public policy is either political commentary or descriptions of policies, often drawing implications for music educators, policy makers, researchers, or teacher educators (e.g., Beveridge, 2010; Gates, Hansen, & Tuttle, 2015; Hammel

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& Hourigan, 2011). By contrast, education policy research, which Weimer (2009) described as assessing problems or studying policies' effects, involves systematic methods and is often evaluative in nature. Sykes, Schneider, and Plank (2009) divided policy research into several distinct categories: (a) educational resources, management, and organization; (b) teaching and learning policy; (c) actors and institutions in the policy process; and (d) educational access and differentiation.

This review of scholarly, peer-reviewed, policy literature includes primarily articles published in education research journals, as well as a small number of conference papers published in a peer-reviewed book series. I limited the scope of reviewed literature to articles that addressed policies or policy issues in the United States and ultimately—considering *Update's* mission—narrowed the scope to literature that has direct implications for K–12 music teachers' classroom practices or other professional responsibilities. I present the literature in five categories: (a) Descriptions of and commentary on policies; (b) studies of resources, organizations, and educational reform; (c) studies of teachers and teaching; (d) studies of institutions and actors; and (e) studies of access. The first category is included because it comprises such a large proportion of policy literature (Weimer, 2009). The remaining four are adapted from Sykes et al.'s (2009) categories.

Descriptions of and Commentary on Policies

There is no shortage of articles in practitioner-oriented journals that describe policies or advise teachers on how they might respond to policy or suggest ways that policies might impact them or their programs (e.g., Drummond, 2015; Overland, 2014; Wesolowski, 2015). These types of articles are less common in scholarly journals, with the exception of *Arts Education Policy Review*. Occasionally, these descriptive articles go beyond simple delineations of a

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policy's provisions and instead provide a critical analysis (e.g., Robinson, 2015). The literature reviewed in this section, which includes scholarly articles of both types, is beneficial for teachers because it provides an understanding of how policies may affect their teaching as well as other aspects of their professional lives. Although the specific policies that each article addressed existed or will exist for a limited time, their implications for teachers remain valid.

The passage of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) led to a number of articles detailing implications of the law for music, both generally and with respect to particular topics or populations. For instance, based primarily on a textual analysis of the law, supplemented by limited, initial reports from the field, Beveridge (2010) argued that NCLB might lead to cuts in music programs in schools that failed to meet adequate yearly progress requirements. The author suggested that these outcomes might be avoided if teachers were to seek stronger support from their administrators and learn to find and apply for grant funding. Although those actions may be helpful in some cases, they do not address the ultimate cause of cuts, which is that music programs are not a priority in some schools (Kos, 2007). Barrett (2006) noted that although NCLB put considerable pressure on states and schools to improve student achievement, there were no universal policies regarding professional development to improve teaching quality. Barrett recommended that in the future, teachers should engage in professional development related to their specific classrooms, their larger school context, and the community as a whole. Again, these recommendations are important for teachers to consider, but it is also important to consider whether focusing on policies that would encourage the improvement of teaching through continued learning might ultimately prove more useful than policies that seek to eliminate poor teachers.

Hourigan (2011) also explored professional development as it related to federal policy,

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focusing on Race to the Top, a competitive grant program administered by the U.S. Department of Education. Many states enacted education reforms in order to compete for those funds. Because the program focused on student achievement data and their connections to teacher quality, schools often sponsored professional development designed to correct the perceived deficiencies in student learning that the test scores identified. Hourigan suggested, however, that local professional development that is limited in that manner is not always relevant or helpful to arts teachers. Music teachers, therefore, can either advocate for content-specific professional development or seek it out through other sources. Like Barrett's (2006) recommendations, Hourigan's suggestions address the immediate problem—a lack of relevant learning opportunities for arts teachers—but do not change the fact that improving instruction in the arts is not always a priority.

Hammel and Hourigan (2011) were prompted by teachers' lack of familiarity with regulations related to teaching students with disabilities to describe the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), which guarantees a free and appropriate public education that accommodates each student's unique needs. In their article, they explained the ways in which the law might affect music teachers, including their classroom practice. They recommended that music teachers be in constant contact with special education staff and classroom teachers to understand the needs of their students and, when possible, become engaged in the process of developing students' Individualized Educational Programs (IEPs). Furthermore, teachers should advocate for the importance of music for students with disabilities so that they will be less likely to be excluded from music classes.

Responding to federal initiatives, many states have adopted policies that have drastically changed approaches to teacher evaluation. Some of these changes are problematic, particularly

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for teachers in non-tested subjects, and many in music education are searching for solutions. Gates et al. (2015) described teacher evaluation systems in three states (Colorado, Delaware, and Arizona) with the intent to “provide insight” (p. 163) into a variety of approaches and their associated challenges. The authors opted not to critique or advocate for any of the approaches, preferring to provide a neutral source of information. They concluded that the challenges that arose when state departments of education had to implement new requirements were best seen as an opportunity for music educators to influence the systems in a way that would allow for continuous improvement. Robinson (2015), in an article critiquing the ways in which data are being used for the evaluation of teachers, offered a similar suggestion, with a less positive outlook. Robinson noted that many evaluation systems place too much emphasis on student achievement data, including data that have nothing to do with the teacher who is being evaluated. Robinson argued that these types of systems occur when policymakers are not focused on the needs of specialist teachers and that music teachers, therefore, need to be aware of evaluation policies as they are being developed so that they can advocate for a system that is fair and useful.

Studies of Resources, Organizations, and Educational Reform

This category includes research on school reform policies and their effects, as well as studies of educational resources. For approximately the last two decades, the dominant school reforms have been standards-based education, test-based accountability, school choice, and decentralized governance. In music education, the research has focused on the implementation of the 1994 National Standards for Music Education (Bell, 2003; Byo, 1999; Orman, 2002), the effects of Goals 2000, the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), and Race to the Top on music education (Elpus, 2013, 2014; Fusarelli, 2004; Gerrity, 2009), charter schools (Austin & Russell, 2008; Elpus, 2012; Kelley & Demorest, 2016), and the implications of site-based

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management (Fitzpatrick, 2012).

An important part of the early standards-based legislation was the naming of the arts as a core subject. Although the arts' inclusion in federal legislation did not result in the expansion of music programs, it did result in an increase in the number of schools requiring arts and the number of arts credits required for graduation (Elpus, 2013). Studies of the voluntary 1994 National Standards noted that teachers were generally aware of the standards, but lacked the resources and support to implement them effectively or evenly, even with professional development (Bell, 2003; Byo, 1999). Relatively little time was devoted to standards related to creativity (Orman, 2002). Based on these findings, teachers beginning to implement the new National Core Arts Standards may need professional development to develop an understanding of them and to ensure that they are implemented as intended, particularly with respect to their focus on music as a creative practice. Research on professional development policies is an important subset of studies of teachers and teaching, which are addressed later in this review.

Because most school reform policies do not specifically target music programs, the research most relevant to music is focused on policies' unintended consequences. Test-based accountability came to the fore in the United States with the adoption of NCLB in 2002. Although some music educators were excited by the arts' continued status as a core subject, many were concerned that the law's focus on reading and math would result in a narrowing of the curriculum, including cuts to music programs (Fusarelli, 2004). According to national data, the number of students taking music courses was not affected by NCLB, although the representation of Hispanic students, English Language Learners, and students with disabilities—who were already underrepresented—worsened (Elpus, 2014). Teachers should be sure that they are actively working to include students of all backgrounds in their music programs.

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In some schools, program quality may have declined as reform policies were implemented. In Ohio under NCLB, music programs in schools whose students performed well on state exams tended to remain unchanged or even grow, while programs in schools whose students performed poorly were more likely to be weakened (Gerrity, 2009). Teachers interviewed for Spohn's (2008) case study of one district's arts program under NCLB described numerous changes to the music program, including the elimination of general music for band and chorus students and narrowed content due to less instructional time. There were also significantly fewer resources for the arts due to reallocation of the budget. The author concluded that much of the responsibility lay on administrative decisions related to NCLB mandates. Teachers in West's (2012) study reported decreased support, scheduling challenges, decreased access, and a shift from content-specific learning opportunities to professional development focused on schoolwide improvement. Principals tended to report satisfaction with music programs and to state that they are valuable; however, they admitted that programs were not always ideal (Abril & Gault, 2006, 2008). Factors such as NCLB, standardized testing, and budget limitations prevented schools from providing as many opportunities as they would have liked. Teachers who want to prevent negative policy outcomes and continue offering a comprehensive music program might consider how they can ensure that their programs provide value to the school community. Additionally, they should try to be a part of discussions regarding school responses to policy.

There are concerns that the flexibility afforded to charter schools with respect to curriculum and staffing might lead to programs' having lower quality or being nonexistent. Little research has been conducted, however, and the results of those studies have varied somewhat by location. Elpus (2012) found that over 80% of charter schools in New York offered music instruction, while Austin and Russell (2008) found a smaller percentage in a national sample.

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Elpus found that choral music was the most commonly offered course, whereas Austin and Russell found general music to be most common. More recently, Kelley and Demorest (2016) compared music programs in Chicago's elementary schools. In their study, charter schools had a higher instance of music programs than traditional schools. They, like Austin and Russell, found that larger schools were more likely to offer music programs, and that general music programs were most common.

There is considerable discourse in general education comparing centralized and decentralized school governance. The school-based decision-making practices in one district benefitted the music program in the school that Kos (2007) studied. Because the administration believed strongly in the benefit of a musical education, that program flourished despite budget constraints and other barriers. Some of the district schools, however, had no music programs. Noting that decentralized governance sometimes led to inconsistency between schools, Fitzpatrick (2012) recommended that districts develop and articulate clear values with respect to arts education. These findings demonstrate that arts advocacy is particularly important in decentralized settings.

Studies of Teachers and Teaching

Some of the studies in this category have examined policies that guide teaching practice. In music education, most of this research has addressed standards implementation (Bell, 2003; Byo, 1999; Orman, 2002). Much of the research, though, has addressed teaching as a profession. In music education, most research has focused on who becomes teachers (e.g., Elpus, 2015; Gardner, 2010), teacher retention (e.g., Hancock, 2008; Scheib, 2006), professional development (e.g., Barrett, 2006; Conway, Krueger, Robinson, Haack, & Smith, 2002), teacher evaluation (e.g., Hash, 2013), and teacher pay (e.g., Elpus, 2011). Although some of this body of research

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specifically examines these ideas as outcomes of policy, much of it is disciplinary research that draws policy recommendations (Weimer, 2009).

The underrepresentation of racial and ethnic minorities among music teachers nationally is well-established (Elpus, 2015; Gardner, 2010). One factor may be the standardized exams that prospective teachers take in order to demonstrate content knowledge and professional competence by passing a standardized test. Koza (2002) argued that the high costs that candidates incur each time they register for licensure examinations create a barrier that disproportionately affects marginalized populations. Elpus's (2015) review of the test scores and demographics of those taking the Praxis II music exam revealed that White and male candidates scored significantly higher than Black and female candidates, respectively; likewise, males were more likely to achieve a passing score on the examination than females, and White candidates were more likely to pass than Black, Asian, and Hispanic candidates. Additionally, Elpus compared undergraduate music education enrollment to high school seniors with at least 4 years of music coursework and found that White and male students were overrepresented while female, Black, Asian, and Hispanic students were underrepresented. Although some authors have argued that the responsibility for correcting these disparities lies in higher education (e.g., Fitzpatrick, Henninger, & Taylor, 2014; Koza, 2002, 2008), music teachers could do more to recruit students from marginalized populations into their programs, as well as retain those students so that the pool of potential music education majors reflects the diversity of the general population. Teachers can also do more to encourage females and underrepresented minorities to pursue music education as a career, and provide them with the foundation they will need to succeed in schools of music. Elpus (2015), for example, recommended that teachers adopt culturally responsive pedagogies and develop cross-cultural competencies.

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A number of studies have examined music teacher retention and attrition to better understand why many teachers move to different positions or leave the profession entirely. In one study, perceived support from administrators, colleagues, and parents was a key factor in predicting whether teachers would remain in the profession (Gardner, 2010). Additionally, Madsen and Hancock (2002) found that women were more likely to leave than men. Hancock (2008) found a number of additional factors that increased attrition, including being a younger age, teaching in private or secondary schools, having low parental or administrative support, and having a low or unsatisfactory salary. The many roles that teachers fill are sometimes in conflict with each other, resulting in stress. Scheib (2006) noted that for arts teachers, who were typically artists or musicians before they became teachers, the artist and teacher roles often conflict. According to Scheib, there may be insufficient time for teachers to practice or perform as much as they would like, or they may find that the time they spend engaging as musicians prevents them from being fully engaged in teaching. This conflict can lead to role stress, which Scheib found often results in the teacher choosing to give up either their teaching or their musical engagement. It is important that music teachers maintain both their musician and their teacher roles. Presenting oneself as a musician when teaching is a positive step and can help the students to see music as something that people do.

These studies addressing retention and attrition are examples of disciplinary research that, while not specifically addressing a policy, have implications for policymakers, in addition to teachers. In contrast, Shaw's (2016) study of teacher stress specifically considered policy-related factors—in particular high-stakes accountability—as a stressor. For music teachers, earning tenure, festival ratings, teacher evaluation, and overall ratings of school quality were among their primary stressors. These led to secondary stressors such as increased workload, concerns about

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festival ratings, feelings of uncertainty, and a general feeling of anxiety among the staff.

Many studies examining teacher work conditions have recommended additional support structures for teachers. It was noted earlier in the review of descriptive articles that some authors have recommended professional development to help teachers to understand and work within new policy frameworks, including NCLB (Barrett, 2006), Race to the Top (Hourigan, 2011), and IDEA (Hammel & Hourigan, 2011). This conclusion is relevant for future policy as well: Music teachers may benefit from participating in professional development opportunities aimed at developing a better understanding of current policies such as the National Core Arts Standards and the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), which reauthorized and amended NCLB. To better understand teachers' professional needs, research on professional development is relevant. Many states and districts have adopted policies requiring mentoring and induction programs. Conway et al. (2002) concluded that the most successful mentoring occurs when music teachers are mentored by other music teachers; it is also beneficial if the mentor works in the same building. Furthermore, Conway et al. argued, induction needs are somewhat unique for music teachers; therefore, one-size-fits-all approaches to induction may not be appropriate for specialists. Conway et al. found that induction programs that were tied to teacher evaluation policies seemed to be most useful. Thus, mentoring and induction programs, like professional development, should be context-specific. If these programs are not available or structured in an ideal manner, music teachers should consider finding an appropriate mentor as early as possible in their career.

Race to the Top has placed considerable focus on teacher evaluation. Some education reformers have proposed merit pay as an alternative to traditional teacher contracts. Merit pay systems present numerous potential problems for music teachers, including lack of equitable salary opportunities due to the lack of available data on which to base salary decisions, the

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absence of a clear definition of teacher quality, and the need for a clear approach to evaluating music teacher quality (Elpus, 2011). Furthermore, merit pay systems are unlikely to achieve the desired effect of improving instruction: Whereas the promise of additional pay may encourage a factory employee to be more efficient, teachers tend to be intrinsically motivated and are already teaching as best they can (Vagi, 2014).

As states are developing data-driven evaluation systems, there is a concern for teachers of music and other subjects that are not tested. Some have suggested using contest ratings as a source of data; however, some recent research suggests this would be inappropriate. Perrine (2016) discovered that numerous factors not related to the performance itself sometimes impacted a festival rating, and due to contest ratings' lack of both reliability and validity as a measure of student achievement, Hash (2013) cautioned against their use. Importantly, ratings are not helpful in improving instruction, as other measures might be. Given the reality of current education reform, teachers should identify appropriate ways to measure individual student learning in their classrooms that would guide future instruction and provide a fair assessment of teacher quality.

Studies of Institutions and Actors

Researchers study institutions and actors to understand how policies come to be and how they are implemented. These often take the form of case studies (e.g., Kos, 2007; Major, 2013), but also include surveys to understand the perceptions of larger populations (e.g., Gerrity, 2009). Other authors have offered critiques or historical perspectives that provide an understanding of the role that institutions and actors play in the policy process (e.g., Benedict, 2006; Kos, 2010b).

Because individual actors and the institutions in which they exist determine the outcomes of a policy, several studies have examined the perceptions of principals, who are most directly

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responsible for policy implementation in schools (Abril & Gault, 2006, 2008; Gerrity, 2009). Those studies have suggested that although principals are generally supportive of music programs, they do not necessarily prioritize them. Teachers also play a role in the implementation of policies. In a study similar to Abril and Gault's studies of principals, Abril and Bannerman (2015) surveyed music teachers to understand their perceptions of the factors that impacted their music programs. They found that local-level concerns that are under the control of school and district officials were the most important factors, whether positive or negative.

Similar questions have been explored through case study research. Kos (2007) compared the implementation processes in two different districts and concluded that the priorities of the individuals who had a voice in the decision-making process determined the fate of music programs. More recently, Major (2013) investigated how one district made its decisions regarding potential cuts to the music program. Although administrators made the final decision, and were significantly influenced by their own values and beliefs, they were susceptible to political pressures imposed by parents and the larger school community. Instructional quality, the perceived value of having a music program, and economic factors were all important considerations. These studies demonstrate the importance of working to ensure that music programs are not simply supported, but are prioritized. Teachers can accomplish this goal by creating music programs that are comprehensive, that serve the entire school, and that add value to both the educational experience and the community.

Studies of actors and institutions can also provide an understanding of how policy is developed as well as a better understanding of the policy itself. A critical analysis of the 1994 National Standards and interviews with members of the National Standards Task Force revealed

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that the task force wanted to develop standards that would serve as a platform for advocacy (Benedict, 2006). To ensure their acceptance by teachers and the larger education establishment, the task force created a document that would not be controversial and that would legitimize school music. Thus, the political nature of the document prevented any real transformation in music education.

The difficulty of implementing change has been examined in other studies of institutions and actors. An analysis of institutional structures in the United States led Kos (2010b) to conclude that significant barriers existed that prevented the inclusion of popular and other culturally-relevant musics in the curriculum. To overcome these barriers, which included fiscal limitations, cultural values, and teacher education program requirements, Kos recommended an expansion of both NASM accreditation standards and the National Standards for Music Education, but neither of these recommendations are particularly helpful for music teachers. Although teachers could adopt Kos's recommendation to advocate for those policies, Richerme (2012) noted that teachers' perceived need to advocate to *conserve* music programs and to function within a given context contributes to the difficult nature of instituting change.

Because of existing institutional barriers, if music education is to transform as some have proposed (e.g., Allsup, 2003; Jorgensen, 2003; Kratus, 2007), individual teachers must take it upon themselves to find new ways to engage students in the classroom. Knowledge of the students' experiences and interests—and a willingness to incorporate them into the curriculum—is a starting point (Abrahams, 2005). Additionally, teachers should become aware of the changes that are possible, perhaps through graduate coursework, by attending demonstrations at state or national professional development conferences, or through reading professional journals (e.g., Kruse, 2016; Tobias, 2013; Tobias, Campbell, & Greco, 2015). Finally, they will need to work

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within existing policy frameworks to implement changes in their schools.

Studies of Access

Research examining access to K–12 music education is typically descriptive in nature; it is usually conducted to identify potential deficiencies in access either for a particular population (e.g., Johnson, 2004), or to some sort of musical opportunity (e.g., Smith, 1997). As with studies of institutions and actors, some of this research looks at policy effects (e.g., Elpus, 2014), but most is disciplinary research that illustrates a problem that could be addressed through policy.

A number of factors can affect access to music programs. Concerned that too few students are able to participate in school-based string programs, Smith (1997) compared access to string instruction by region, type of school, and district size, location, and wealth. There was less access to string instruction for lower and upper socioeconomic populations; string programs were more common in either urban or metropolitan areas, depending on the region. Salvador and Allegood (2014) compared access to music opportunities in urban schools with variously sized populations of racial and ethnic minorities. Schools with higher minority populations offered significantly fewer music courses and had fewer resources. Johnson (2004) argued that the lack of access to music for some students and the curricular focus on the Western canon had led to differences in interest and involvement along economic and cultural lines.

With the advent of high-stakes testing under NCLB, music education researchers became concerned that accountability policies were leading to cuts in school music programs. Elpus (2014) noted that although there were not any significant changes in the total number of students enrolling in music courses, there were fewer Hispanic students, English language learners, and students with IEPs enrolling. It is likely that the law's focus on closing the achievement gap resulted in those students' loss of access. Baker (2012) described a policy in Louisiana that

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allowed schools to waive the state’s arts enrollment requirement for students who performed below the basic level on state exams. That policy resulted in over one third of the students included in Baker’s sample being denied access to arts classes. Given that music participation was a predictor of higher test performance, the author recommended reevaluating the policy. It is particularly important, given these findings, that music teachers advocate for equitable access to music education for all students, not just those who express an interest or aptitude for musical excellence.

Discussion

This review of policy literature illuminates the importance of continuous learning: Teachers should work throughout their careers to learn about policies, about school context, and about new ideas. Teachers will be better positioned to react to and implement policies when they have an understanding of them (Jones, 2009). Knowledge of policies can help lessen the stress that arises from fear of the unknown (Shaw, 2016). Given the current policy landscape, teachers should develop an understanding of the National Core Arts Standards so that they can be implemented as intended, as well as familiarity with assessment policies, particularly as they impact teacher evaluation. Additionally, teachers should closely follow developments in federal education policy, given the uncertainty brought about by the new administration. In addition to learning about policies, having knowledge of one’s context can allow a teacher to better predict the unique ways that a policy might affect the school (Kos, 2007), and the ways that the music program can address the unique needs of the school community (Jones, 2006). Learning the latest ideas about curriculum, approaches to teaching, and musical opportunities might allow teachers to maintain programs that are current and relevant for a greater number of students. Professional development that occurs in schools can be helpful provided that it is content- and

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context-specific, but specialists like music teachers often need to look further (Barrett, 2006; Hourigan, 2011). Information about policy and about new approaches to teaching and learning are unlikely to be a part of school-based professional development; instead, music teachers could attend state and national conferences, take graduate courses, and read professional journals, including research journals. Furthermore, they should identify a mentor—or mentors—who can help them with both content- and context-specific knowledge (Conway et al., 2002).

Another lesson is the importance of building a program that is comprehensive in terms of types of experiences, musical diversity, and student access. These types of programs may provide more value in the eyes of the community and in the eyes of the administration (West & Clauhs, 2015). Too often, particularly at the secondary level, music programs seem to exist only for those students who want to continue with their large ensemble experiences, or perhaps study music theory or history for required arts credits. In order to increase student engagement, music teachers should discover and provide new opportunities that might attract students who are not currently participating, including students with disabilities, students of color, English Language Learners, and students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. West and Clauhs suggested that these opportunities might include non-traditional ensembles that engage with popular music, non-Western music, or music that represents the students' traditional cultures. Other students might be attracted to non-performance activities, such as songwriting or music production (Kos, 2010b). An added benefit to improving participation, particularly of underrepresented minorities, is that more of those students may move into the pipeline to become music teachers.

Possibly the most important lessons from the literature in this review are related to advocacy and communication. Advocacy needs to be more than just touting the benefits of music: It should instead be focused on the value of the program for the school. For access to

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music education to be more equitable, it is essential that teachers communicate the value of their program for *all* students. Whether working with special education staff to ensure that students with disabilities are able to participate, communicating with classroom teachers to ensure that students who are struggling in reading and math are not held out of music, or communicating with administrators to ensure that a comprehensive program is funded, music teachers need to advocate on behalf of their students. In addition, teachers should advocate for their own professional needs. Administrators may not be aware of the importance of strong professional development opportunities that are content specific, and may not know how to employ evaluation processes that are both fair and beneficial to specialists like music teachers.

Conclusion

Education policies at the federal, state, and local levels influence music education directly and indirectly. Although I placed the literature reviewed here into several distinct categories, those divisions are not clean and research in one category might also inform another. Articles that describe policies are plentiful and readily available, but the suggestions that they offer are necessarily general because policy implementation and policy outcomes are largely influenced by context. Studies of access to music programs and of teachers can illuminate problems that can be addressed through policy, while research on the effects educational reform policies on music programs and the role of institutions and actors in the implementation and development of policy can lead to a better understanding of how to better develop, implement, and influence policy. With this awareness, music teachers will be better equipped to make decisions that will help ensure that their students are served and their programs remain strong.

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