

# BAND DIRECTORS' PERCEPTIONS OF MUSIC PERFORMANCE ADJUDICATION

by

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The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions and attitudes of band directors in the Northwest District of the North Carolina Bandmasters Association. The following research questions guided the study: (1) What are the perceptions and attitudes of band directors in the Northwest District toward the Music Performance Adjudication (MPA)? (2) What are the motivating factors for band directors in the Northwest District to attend MPA? (3) In what ways do band directors in the Northwest District utilize MPA to foster growth in their students?

The researcher used a mixed-methods research design, employing an online survey that gathered data through a seven-point Likert-type scale and open-ended questions. The survey was distributed through email to members of the Northwest District Bandmasters Association of which 64% completed the survey ( $N = 75$ ). Overall, participants believed MPA to be a trustworthy process, yet disagreed on the factors, such as band director choices or financial resources, affecting the results of MPA. Participants frequently reported the motivational effect of MPA on their students. Colleagues in music education were identified as the primary source of pressure to attend MPA.

Several implications of the research are discussed, including the effect of director self-efficacy on MPA results and interpretations, the effect of MPA on curriculum, and the effect of outside sources of pressure on the perceived value of MPA.



BAND DIRECTORS' PERCEPTIONS OF MUSIC PERFORMANCE ADJUDICATION

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By

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

A common topic of conversation for researchers in music education is the concept of assessment. As a result of the assessment and accountability standards of No Child Left Behind in 2001 and the subsequent passage of Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) in 2015, music educators have faced the pressures of increasing reliance on standardized assessment for many years now. Standardized test scores have become the most common method for assessing student mastery and teacher effectiveness (Hash, 2012). For many secondary music educators, state-sponsored performance assessments have become a common method of yearly, standardized assessment (Terrell, 2015).

While the negative effects of standardized assessment, particularly those related to self-image and motivation, have been noted in various areas of education (Ames, 1992; Brown, 2005), these effects are particularly notable for music education courses (Johnson, 2010; Clementson, 2014). Secondary music offered in public schools originate primarily in the form of performance-based classes (Allsup & Benedict, 2008; Mantie, 2012). For these ensembles, performances become the primary form of assessment for skill mastery and teacher effectiveness. The reliability and validity of these events has been researched thoroughly (Brakel, 2006; King & Burnsed, 2009; Latimer, Bergee, & Cohen, 2010; Hash, 2012), yet the utility of these tools as an assessment and its effect on self-image and motivation has yet to be fully explored.

While no standardized assessment from the Department of Public Instruction is currently required for music education in North Carolina, a common yearly, third party performance assessment is called the Music Performance Adjudication (MPA). MPA serves as a voluntary

method of yearly performance assessment; however, attendance at MPA is encouraged often through music teaching peers at NCBA business meetings and again at the District level. MPA provides a third-party adjudication system to best assess the performance skills of bands. However, in comparison to subjects that are tested through state requirements, band directors are allowed more flexibility with this assessment by selecting the students they include in the performance, the difficulty level of the music, or selecting to receive comments only without a summative score (NCBA, 2012).

Numerous researchers have evaluated the reliability and validity of events similar to MPA and offered advice to achieve more consistent results (Brakel, 2006; King & Burnsed, 2009; Latimer et al., 2010; Hash, 2012). While MPA offers many methods for increasing reliability and validity, such as the use of criteria-based rubrics and panels with multiple judges, there are few requirements for judge vetting and little required judge's training. Researchers have cautioned against the use of state assessment ratings as a comparative measure, citing significant differences across judging panels (Hash, 2012). However, the publication of ratings statewide invites the possibilities of comparison and competition. In addition, state-sponsored assessment ratings are a common form of evaluation between colleagues in music education, administrators, and researchers (Hash, 2012; Juchniewicz, Kelly, & Acklin, 2014).

MPA has served as an accepted form of third-party performance assessment for band directors in North Carolina. While research has continued to debate many different aspects of the value and benefits in state-sponsored performance assessments, there has been little continued research on band directors' perceptions of the event, the reasons for attendance at such events, or the direct effects of these events on the individual growth of music students.

## **Purpose**

Previous research on the value, accuracy and use of state-sponsored music performance events reveals a significant gap in specifically defining how band directors utilize these events in their classrooms. Much of the research points toward a gap between the perceptions of band directors and the impact and value of adjudicated music performance events. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to examine the perceptions and attitudes of band directors in the Northwest District toward MPA, to determine the motivating factors for band directors to attend MPA, and the methods in which directors use participation in MPA to encourage musical growth in students.

## **Questions of Inquiry**

This research study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What are the perceptions and attitudes of band directors in the Northwest District toward the Music Performance Adjudication?
2. What are the motivating factors for band directors in the Northwest District to attend the Music Performance Adjudication?
3. In what ways do band directors in the Northwest District utilize the Music Performance Adjudication to foster growth in their students?

## **Definition of Terms**

*Adjudicator.* An adjudicator is a music performance judge hired to assess the bands attending the Music Performance Adjudication. Each District MPA Chair selects three stage adjudicators and one sight-reading adjudicator from a prescribed list approved at the District

level. Adjudicators may be added to or removed from list with a vote from the District membership. Adjudicator panels are hired per event and paid a fee through each District. In the Northwest District, the adjudicator panels are different between the high school MPA and middle school MPA.

Once hired for the event, adjudicators must read a manual written by the North Carolina Bandmasters Association and view a six-minute training video developed under NCBA guidelines by each District. The trainings outline the specific procedures for adjudication, including what to include on voice recordings and comment sheets. Adjudicators are directed to provide positive, constructive comments with ideas for solutions and continued growth; they are also directed to avoid negativity, inconsistency, and continually addressing the same musical concept (NCBA, 2012; NCBA, 2016).

*North Carolina Music Educators Association (NCMEA).* The North Carolina Music Educators Association is an organization of music educators that provides professional development, curricular recommendations and opportunities, and assessment opportunities. NCMEA oversees the NCBA.

*North Carolina Bandmasters Association (NCBA).* The North Carolina Bandmasters Association is the governing body of the band section of the North Carolina Music Educators Association. All band directors that are members of NCMEA are members of the NCBA, but directors must specifically register their bands with the local District to attend events such as All-District Band, MPA, and Solo and Ensemble. The NCBA regulates the process and procedures for the Music Performance Adjudication.

*Music Performance Adjudication (MPA).* The North Carolina Music Educators Association is the umbrella organization for MPA while the North Carolina Bandmasters

Association (NCBA) administers the assessment at the district level. There are a total of six regional districts within the NCBA: (a) Central, (b) Eastern, (c) Northwest, (d) Southeastern, (e) South Central, and (f) Western (NCBA, 2018). Each district of the NCBA is responsible for hosting their own event, and ratings and financial reports are reported to both NCBA and NCMEA leaders. A list of rules for attendance and compliance are contained in the by-laws of the each district and mirror the regulations and procedures outlined by the NCBA.

Directors in the Northwest District may register their bands through District level paperwork and must pay a fee of \$175 to cover the cost of adjudicators and facilities rental. The event is hosted during a three to four day period, typically in March, in a singular location within the district. It is separated into two different weeks, with high school bands participating and middle school bands participating in different weeks.

Bands participating in MPA will be rated using a rubric of seven criteria developed by the NCBA for performance assessment (NCBA, 2018). The rubric subsections address tone quality, intonation, balance, precision, basic musicianship, interpretive musicianship, and general factors. The rubrics provide adjudicators an opportunity to provide comments to support their ratings and suggestions for improvement in writing, but comments are also voice-recorded as each group performs.

Specific requirements for literature selection and student participation are included in the by-laws of the NCBA. Participating bands must perform three musical selections for the adjudicators; one selection must be a march and two selections must come from a prescribed list of concert band compositions classified by grade levels (i.e. from beginning to more advanced: Grade I, Grade II, Grade III, Grade IV, Grade V, Grade VI, and Masterworks). Members of the

NCBA may submit requests to add a selection to the list or change the grade level of a piece already on the list.

Groups entering in Grade II or higher are also evaluated on their ability to sight-read after a brief preparation period. The sight-reading rubric criteria include tone quality, intonation, balance, technique, rhythm, musicianship, and director utilization of preparatory time (NCBA, 2018). A panel of three judges evaluates the stage performance while a singular judge evaluates the sight-reading performance. Adjudicators award each group a rating of Superior, Excellent, Average, Below Average, or Poor based on the scores of each criteria of the rubric. Ratings are posted throughout the event on a poster, shared through email, and posted online at the conclusion of the event. Ratings are posted with the director's name, the band's name, the school's name, and the grade level of music.

## CHAPTER 2

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In a similar fashion to all academic subjects, band teachers must find effective methods for various forms of assessment. Assessments are used to (a) evaluate student achievement, (b) create new pedagogical strategies, and (c) evaluate the effectiveness of previously used pedagogical strategies. However, the type of assessment, what curricular goals it will assess, and value of the assessment are continuous causes of controversy in music education. The natural subjectivity involved in performance assessment provides many directors with unsatisfactory or untrustworthy assessment results. In other cases, the limited curricular content of state-sponsored assessments can be a major issue. When preparing for state-sponsored assessments, students may study the same performance techniques on the same pieces of music for months at a time. As a result, researchers have continued to explore the benefits, uses, and philosophical implications of assessment in music education.

#### **Issues of Assessment in Education**

Music educators are not alone in their struggle with consistent and meaningful assessments; educators specializing in other subject areas have reported concerns with standardized assessments. Ames (1992) posits classroom structures and orientations that affect student learning. In particular, the researcher discusses the impact of emphasis on product over process in assessment. Such strategies focusing on product output work to undermine the educational process. In addition, Ames specifically postulates the impact of this classroom orientation on the music classroom, finding that music educators seem to focus exclusively on

music performance output to satisfy the requirements of a product-focused assessment environment.

As a result, there is a negative impact from product-focused assessment on student self-image. The researcher describes how social comparison can affect students' judgments of their own abilities. Ames (1992) states, "The impact of social comparison on children when they compare unfavorably can be seen in their evaluations of their ability, avoidance of risk taking, use of less effective or superficial learning strategies, and negative affect directed toward the self," (p. 264). Therefore, the researcher suggests avoiding the pitfalls of quantitative data in assessment and instead promotes a focus on the qualitative data, for instance that of students' motivations and self-judgments when analyzing and constructing assessments.

Product over process is a consideration with Brown (2005), as the researcher posits that assessments should be a catalyst for growth in students, and that educators should avoid common pitfalls such as (a) failing to disclose assessment objectives, (b) knowing the student you are assessing, (c) standardizing testing, (d) failing to give thoughtful feedback in a timely manner, and (e) avoiding self-assessment. Brown (2005) suggests that educators use their best judgment when crafting assessments, and to avoid copying state-assessments blindly without making adjustments for their particular students.

### **Issues of Performance Assessment**

For music educators, state-sponsored music performance assessment events have become a standard method for judging the proficiency of a performing ensemble, particularly among parents and administrators (Hash, 2012). Several studies across multiple states and regions have shown that this type of assessment is a consistently reliable measure of ensemble performance

(Brakel, 2006; King & Burnsed, 2009; Latimer et al., 2010; Hash, 2012). However, researchers have found that these events can be even more reliable with certain elements in place. Brakel (2006) found that both training sessions for judges and three-member panels improved inter-judge reliability at music performance assessment festivals. However, little research has been done to find the effect of group assessments such as these state-sponsored performance assessments on the learning of individual students.

While researchers have consistently found music performance assessments to be satisfactory in both reliability and validity, controversies still remain. The use of criteria, rubrics, or captions at music performance assessment events has been studied extensively. Multiple studies suggest that criteria-specific rating scales can increase judge reliability and provide judges with the ability to more accurately rate performances (Saunders & Holahan, 1997; Barry, 2010). The findings of Latimer et al. (2010) support this benefit of criteria-specific ratings scales, claiming that the utilization of a standard rubric increased reliability and better aided in the justification of ratings, but that some criteria, such as other factors and rhythm, had a tendency to be less reliable. Using Cronbach's alpha, the researchers found that the rubric had an moderately high internal consistency due to the alpha equaling .88. The researchers used Kendall's Coefficient of Concordance ( $W$ ) to find that the categories of Other ( $W = .47$ ) and Rhythm ( $W = .55$ ) were had lower interrater reliability than the other categories. However, Johnson's (1997) philosophical research shows that contradictions remain between the development and use of criteria-specific rating scales and the objectivity requested of adjudicators, suggesting that more fluid criteria is better for the assessment of musical performances. Other researchers have found adjudicators are split regarding criteria-specific adjudication; while one group finds criteria to be an aid in providing specific feedback, the other

believes criteria limits the holistic view of music performance (Stanley, Brooker, & Gilbert, 2016).

In addition, grade inflation at performance events has been a major concern for music educators. Hash (2012) found that 86.7% of the bands that attended the instrumental performance assessments sponsored by South Carolina Band Directors Association between 2008 and 2010 received either the top rating of Superior or the next highest rating of Excellent, while only 13.3% of the bands received the three lower ratings that remain. Music educators also express concerns about the ability of judges to be impartial or offer helpful, constructive criticism at music performance assessments. Ellis (2007), admitting that numerical ratings tend to hold more value with directors and performers, focused his research on the comments received at a high school jazz band festival and found that only 23% of the comments were coupled with suggestions for improvement with 49% of the comments being nonspecific critique. In addition, multiple studies have shown that the size of the ensemble can predict an adjudicator's rating, with smaller ensembles typically receiving lower ratings (King & Burnsed, 2009; Hash, 2012; Terrell, 2015). Furthermore, researchers have found that various factors have had an effect on other forms of performance assessments. Platt's (2003) research found that the time of day, the type of event, and school size had a significant effect on the ratings of performers at a solo and small-ensemble festival.

### **Role of State-Sponsored Assessments in the Classroom**

While questions remain about the objectivity, reliability, and consequences of state-sponsored music performance assessment events, it is clear that these events play an important role in the instrumental music classroom. Recently, Yahl (2009) sent a questionnaire to 12 bands

in the Ohio Music Educators District I, with 214 band students and 11 band directors, participating. He found the participants agree that festivals and competitions are an important part of the educational process in their classroom. Although it is notable that band directors found the events more stressful and less reliable than students, both groups agreed that the process of preparing for a large-group music performance assessment was more important than the rating received in performance (Yahl, 2009).

Gouzouasis and Henderson (2011) completed a similar study two years later that suggested similar findings. They surveyed 528 high school students from diverse backgrounds using a five-point Likert scale to examine what benefits or detriments, musically or educationally, occurred during preparation for and participation in a performance assessment. Students found band festivals to increase motivation and learning, particularly regarding technique and musicality. Additionally, the students commented on the social benefits of attending competitions. When students interact with other student musicians and listen to similar ensembles, they were more motivated to learn and found the experience to have a positive effect on their music education. The researchers surmise that there are social benefits specific to students who attend competitive music events (Gouzouasis & Henderson, 2011).

Maggio (2016) created the *Framework for Understanding the Formation of Group Efficacy Beliefs of High School Band Students*. This document includes three important criteria for music students to develop group efficacy, (a) Unity, (b) Cognizance of Function, and (c) Introspection. The researcher created the document from a holistic, multiple case study design using 91 students and three directors from different high schools in Arkansas as participants. Maggio found that most students involved in the case study enjoyed competitive events and found them to be beneficial for their musical growth. However, Maggio (2016) noted that band

directors had a powerful effect on student efficacy by (a) framing competitive performance events as part of a learning process, (b) encouraging students to engage in personal, musical goal setting, (c) developing of shared culture within their ensemble, and (d) fostering student self-reflection as it relates to the group as a whole.

### **Consequences of Performance Assessment**

Multiple researchers and philosophers have commented on the pitfalls of competitive assessments in education, including the unintended consequences on curriculum and the negative effect it can have on learning (Apple, 2003; Schmidt, 2005; Allsup & Benedict, 2008; Johnson, 2010; Gouzouasis & Henderson, 2011; Matthews & Kitsantas, 2012; Maggio, 2016). In particular, Apple (2003) laments the imbalance competition can cause between students of privilege and those without privilege. Apple (2003) specifically discusses the impact of cultural capital on success in competition, finding that assessments tended to lead to the belittlement of minority populations in regards to race, gender, and socioeconomic status.

Clementson (2014) independently surveyed a sample of 7th and 8th grade students from a middle school in the Midwestern America. An 8th grade band from the same school was the subject of the case study. She discovered that the while competition may have a negative effect on students' learning, the type of activity assigned to the student and matching interpretations of student self-efficacy were essential to finding the correct balance between a challenge and the students' current skill level. However, when the correct balance is found, students will achieve optimal learning through flow experiences.

Competition and curricular choices are not simply the domain of instrumental music, as choirs have found themselves in similar straits. Johnson (2010) conducted a survey regarding

competition and curricular choices in the choral classroom. His findings suggest that competition can cause teachers to make curricular decisions in direct conflict with state-mandated curriculums. In addition, his findings suggest that competition failed to increase enrollment or motivate students to achieve, showing that choirs that participated in competitions tended to have lower music literacy scores. Johnson (2010) makes the assertion that previously held beliefs about the positive value of competition in music education may be overstated while the detriments of competition, namely skewed curricular focus, may be understated.

### **Philosophy of Performance and Assessment in Music Education**

While the consequences of performance assessments have been noted in research, there are numerous positions music educators can evaluate to best utilize performance assessment in education. O'Neil's (1990) position paper regarding music performance as a form of assessment laments the effects of performance as assessment on the curriculum. The author suggests that performance courses have come to overtake all other forms of musical learning at the secondary level, resulting in a large portion of students that are no longer being served through public music education. The author posits that this curricular emphasis on performance is partly to blame for controversies surrounding music education's inclusion in the public school curriculum. O'Neil (1990) suggests that music educators force music courses into obscurity in public education when they focus on the entertainment aspect of performance, rather than including performance as only a piece of the overall music education curriculum.

Allsup and Benedict (2008) reach similar conclusions on the continuation of band traditions to a negative degree, including the continued use of fear to motivate students to learn and perform at a higher level. In addition, Allsup and Benedict (2008) posit that band directors

too often present curriculum through a narrow lens of tradition. Not only is our current secondary curriculum focused on performance, it also fails to provide students with more active roles in their own music education. Too often, educators demand technique and musicality out of students without explaining the reasoning behind the action. Allsup and Benedict (2008) claim this stance on education is the source of music education's issues with legitimacy in the domain of public education.

As an extension of Allsup and Benedict's (2008) research, Mantie (2012) provides additional thoughts on the philosophy of curriculum and pedagogy for music educators. Mantie (2012) specifically speaks to the juxtaposition of the authoritarian music educator and the democratic music educator. He specifically mentions the practices of many members of the College Band Directors National Association to focus on performing conductor-selected literature successfully in regards to tone production, intonation, and rhythmic precision. While the philosopher fails to claim one method superior to other, Mantie (2012) posits that it is essential that music educators reflect on their pedagogy from a historical and social standpoint.

In many cases, state-sponsored performance assessments fail to capture the essentials of music curriculum as outlined by Reimer (2003) and reflected in that Essential Standards for North Carolina (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 2010) or the National Core Music Standards (State Education Agency Directors of Arts Education, 2014). In his book, *A Philosophy of Music Education*, Reimer takes a strong stance on expanding the curriculum and pedagogical practices of music education. Reimer (2003) suggests that music education should take care to emphasize creativity and emotional learning through activities and assessments. While performance is an important part of one's music knowledge, he argues that it is only one skill of many that can be addressed through the curriculum.

The Essential Standards for North Carolina (NCDPI, 2010) list three strands, Musical Literacy, Musical Response, and Contextual Relevancy, with a total five different standards to be accomplished each year. The standards become increasingly more involved and challenging for each grade level. Of those three strands, performance connects to directly to only one strand, Music Literacy. While performance skills can connect to the Music Response strand, the skills frequently emphasized in performance will not allow students the creativity to truly explore and master the standards within the Music Response strand. In addition, performance skills relate very little to the Contextual Relevancy strand. By the conclusion of their eighth grade year, students are expected to have (a) composition skills, (b) notational skills, (c) improvisation skills, (d) response skills, (e) critique skills, and (f) basic knowledge of music's interaction with the real world in addition to performance skills.

The National Core Music Standards, developed by the State Education Agency Directors of Arts Education, (2014) mirror these demands for music students. This conceptual framework for music education asks that students not only interact with music through performance, but also through listening and creating. While performance skills are clearly a part of the curriculum, music educators are advised not to focus solely on these skills, even at the secondary level.

Researchers have continued to assess the validity and reliability of large-ensemble music performance assessments, finding that these events are accurate enough to remain a valuable assessment for music performance (Brakel, 2006; King & Burnsed, 2009; Latimer et al., 2010; Hash, 2012). However, few investigations have been done to examine the effect of group assessments, specifically state-sponsored adjudicated events, on the learning of individual students, the direct impact these events have on students' musical growth, the perceptions and attitudes of band directors toward these events, or the effect of various demographic

classifications on these elements of the assessment. Therefore, this study will examine the perceptions and attitudes of band directors in the Northwest District towards MPA, to determine the motivating factors for band directors to attend MPA, and the ways in which directors use participation in MPA to encourage musical growth in students.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of band directors regarding MPA, the motivations of band directors to attend MPA, and the effect MPA has on student learning. While previous research has evaluated the validity and reliability of music performance assessments (Saunders & Holahan, 1997; Brakel, 2006; King & Burnsed, 2009; Barry, 2010; Latimer et al., 2010; Hash, 2012), and the value of competition in education (Apple, 2003; Schmidt, 2005; Allsup & Benedict, 2008; Johnson, 2010; Gouzouasis & Henderson, 2011; Matthews & Kitsantas, 2012; Maggio, 2016), few researchers have examined director perceptions of these events (Yahl, 2009; Gouzouasis & Henderson, 2011) or the perceived impact of these events on student growth. Much of the research points toward a gap between the perceptions of band directors and the impact and value of adjudicated music performance events. The current research study seeks to close this gap of available literature.

#### **Research Design**

This study was designed to focus specifically on uncovering the perceived value and use of MPA in an educational setting. Using a mixed-methods research design, the study sought to answer the following questions of inquiry:

1. What are the perceptions and attitudes of band directors in the Northwest District toward the Music Performance Adjudication?
2. What are the motivating factors for band directors in the Northwest District to attend the Music Performance Adjudication?

3. In what ways do band directors in the Northwest District utilize the Music Performance Adjudication to foster growth in their students?

### **Participants**

Participants were current band directors who are registered members of the Northwest District North Carolina Bandmasters Association. Membership includes band directors who teach in middle and high school, including directors who might teach at both levels. The Northwest District of the North Carolina Bandmasters Association includes the counties of Alexander, Alleghany, Ashe, Avery, Burke, Caldwell, Catawba, Davidson, Davie, Forsyth, Iredell, Stokes, Surry, Wilkes, Watagua, and Yadkin. Within these counties, there are urban, suburban, and rural schools with varying populations and demographics. Membership in the North Carolina Bandmasters Association requires schools to pay a yearly fee and submit paperwork. In addition, band directors must be members of the National Association for Music Education. Membership in the Northwest District is required for bands to attend several festivals, including MPA, Solo and Ensemble, and All-District and All-State Clinics.

### **Data Collection**

Based on the review of literature, an online survey was developed using Qualtrics (<http://www.ecu.edu/qualtrics>) over the course of several months. To answer the first research question, “What are the perceptions and attitudes of band directors in the Northwest District towards the Music Performance Adjudication?”, the researcher collected data for demographics in Section 1 regarding the following areas: (a) years of experience teaching band (i.e., 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6-10, 11-20, 21-30, 30+); (b) school setting (i.e., rural, urban, suburban, other); (c) school size (i.e., 0-500 students, 501-1,000 students, 1001-1,500 students, 1501-2,000 students, 2,001+); (d)

band budget per year (i.e., \$0-\$1,000, \$1,001-\$5,000, \$5,001-\$10,000, \$10,001+); (e) years at their current school (i.e., 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6-10, 11-20, 21-30, 30+); (f) years of attendance at MPA (i.e., 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6-10, 11-20, 21-30, 30+); (g) number of Superior ratings in the previous three years (i.e., 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10+); (h) primary instrument; (i) level of education (i.e., bachelors, masters, doctoral); (j) gender; and (k) ethnicity.

Utilizing the literature review, the following areas were identified for the survey questions: (a) trustworthiness, found in Section 2 (Brakel, 2006; King & Burnsed, 2009; Latimer et al., 2010; Hash, 2012), (b) purpose, found in Section 3 (Ames, 1992; Brown, 2005; Maggio, 2016), (c) motivation, found in Section 4 (Yahl, 2009; Gouzouasis & Henderson, 2011), (d) individual growth/curriculum, found in Section 5 (Apple, 2003; Schmidt, 2005; Allsup & Benedict, 2008; Johnson, 2010; Gouzouasis & Henderson, 2011; Matthews & Kitsantas, 2012; Maggio, 2016), (e) pressures, found in Section 6 (Allsup & Benedict, 2008).

There were 43 statements in total for participants to rate their level of agreement on a seven-point Likert-type scale (Jamieson, 2004; Boone & Boone, 2012; Sullivan & Artino, 2013). This data was then analyzed using descriptive statistics for each statement to determine the overall perceptions and attitudes of band directors in the Northwest District towards MPA.

To answer the second research question, “What are the motivating factors for band directors in the Northwest District to attend the Music Performance Adjudication?”, data was collected in Section 7. Participants were asked a yes or no question regarding pressures to attend MPA from outside sources. Only participants that responded “yes” were asked to elaborate by ranking specific sources of pressure, including (a) principals/administrators, (b) county administrators, (c) state supervisors, (d) parents, (e) colleagues in music education, (f) students, (g) colleagues at school, and (h) other (Allsup & Benedict, 2008; Mantie, 2012).

Qualitative data was collected through open-ended responses to best answer the first research question, “What are the perceptions and attitudes of band directors in the Northwest District towards the Music Performance Adjudication?” and the third research question, “In what ways do band directors in the Northwest District utilize the Music Performance Adjudication to foster growth in their students?”. The qualitative data was coded by into categories based on a taxonomy developed the researchers. After the researchers agreed on an acceptable taxonomy, the responses were reviewed and coded by an independent researcher to verify reliability. The responses were then analyzed quantitatively (Apple, 2003; Schmidt, 2005; Allsup & Benedict, 2008; Johnson, 2010; Gouzouasis & Henderson, 2011; Matthews & Kitsantas, 2012; Maggio, 2016).

After receiving approval from the University & Medical Center Institutional Review Board (UMCIRB) in early January 2018 (Appendix A), the survey was pilot-tested with collegiate, secondary, and private music educators outside of the Northwest District North Carolina Bandmasters Association in late January with a small number of respondents ( $N = 5$ ) for question clarity and usability check. The survey was then edited from the suggestions of the participants in the pilot-test (Appendix B).

The online survey was then distributed for a period of sixteen days (February 13, 2018 – February 28, 2018) through email to all members of Northwest District North Carolina Bandmasters Association (Appendix C). Survey responses were anonymous aside from basic demographic data. Online data was secured through Qualtrics and East Carolina University through a username and password known only to the researcher. Announcements regarding survey participation and the purpose of the research were made at the Winter Business Meeting of the Northwest District on February 17, 2018 and twice through email on February 20, 2018

and February 27, 2018 during the data collection period. At the conclusion of the data collection period, 75 of the 118 surveys had been returned (64%,  $n = 75$ ).

## CHAPTER 4

### RESULTS

The purpose of the present study was to examine the following research questions:

1. What are the perceptions and attitudes of band directors in the Northwest District toward the Music Performance Adjudication?
2. What are the motivating factors for band directors in the Northwest District to attend the Music Performance Adjudication?
3. In what ways do band directors in the Northwest District utilize the Music Performance Adjudication to foster growth in their students?

This chapter is organized by research question. I will begin with a descriptive analysis of the demographic data before moving to the descriptive analysis from the survey data that explores Research Questions 1, 2, and 3.

#### **Demographics of Participants**

Section 1 of the survey was designed to collect the demographics of the participants with 11 questions. Over 75% ( $n = 53$ ) of respondents were male while less than 25% ( $n = 17$ ) were female as reported in Figure 1. Over 90% ( $n = 64$ ) of respondents described themselves as White as reflected in Figure 2. The basic demographic data shows a skewed pool of participants towards white male band directors.

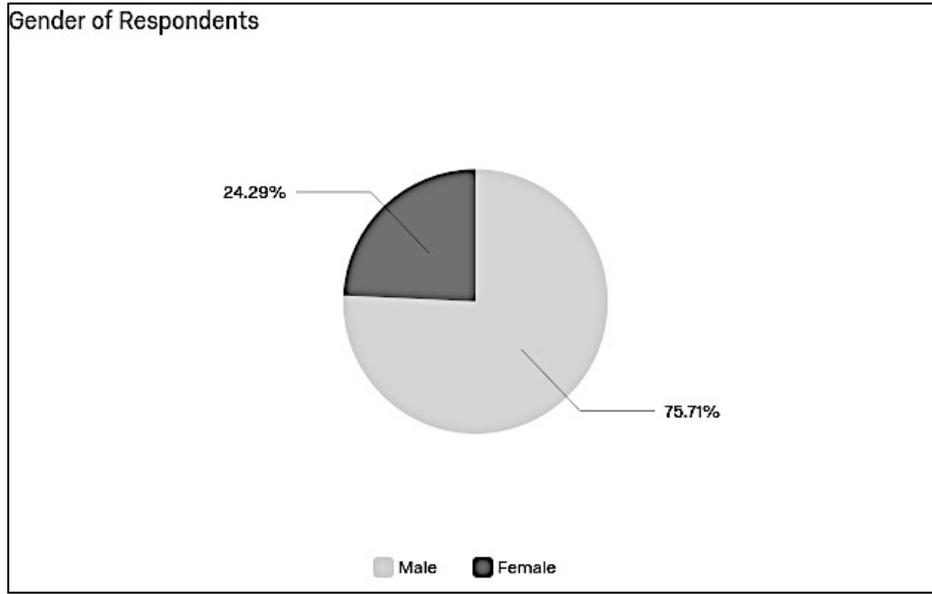


Figure 1. Gender of Respondents. This figure illustrates the self-reported gender of survey respondents.

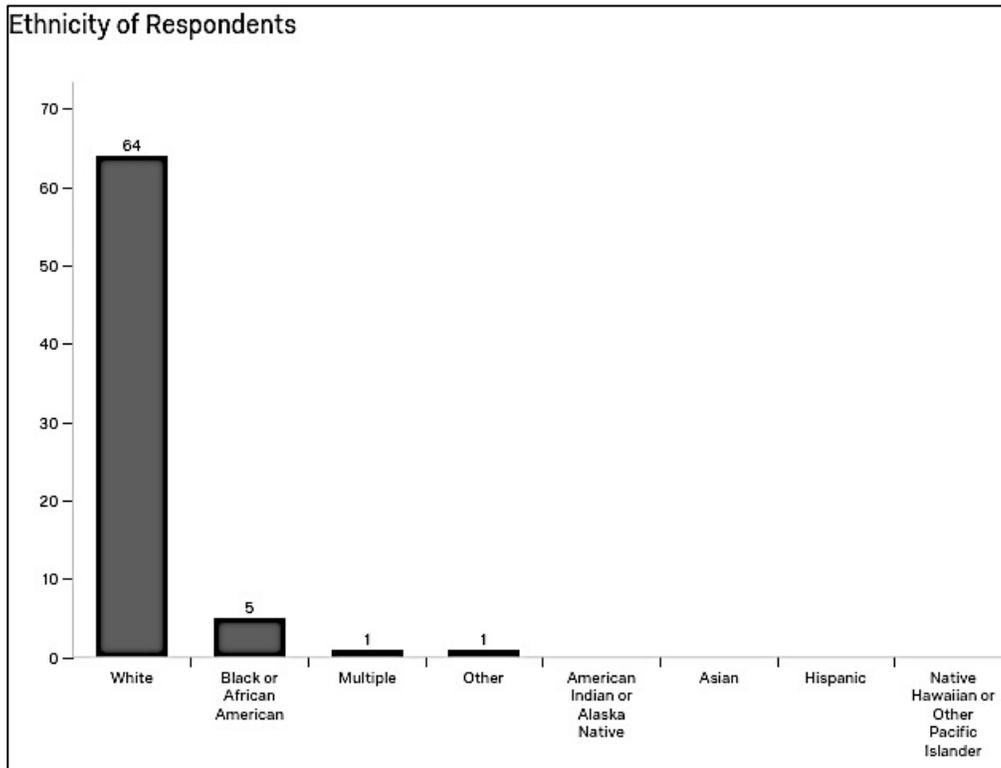
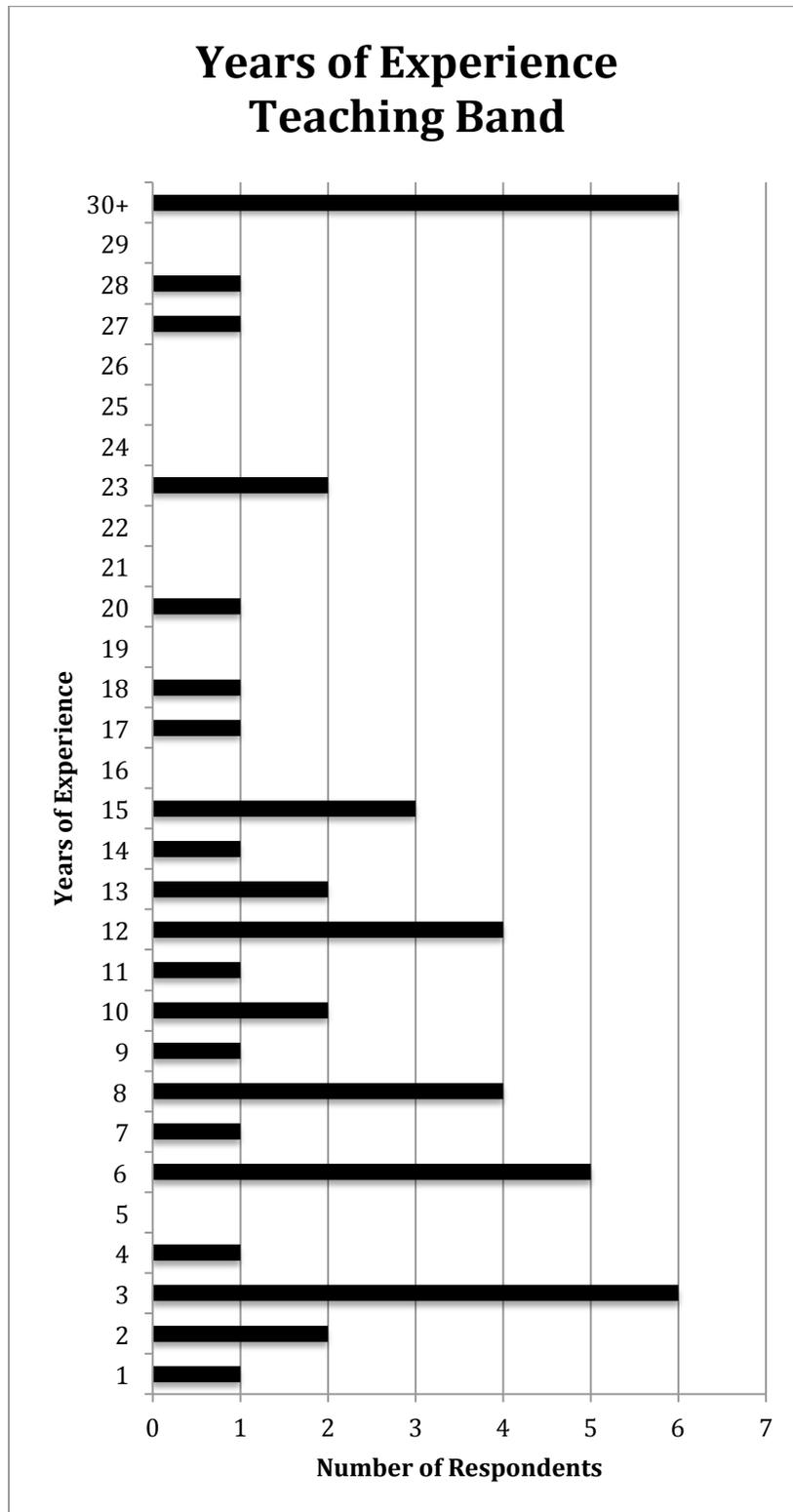


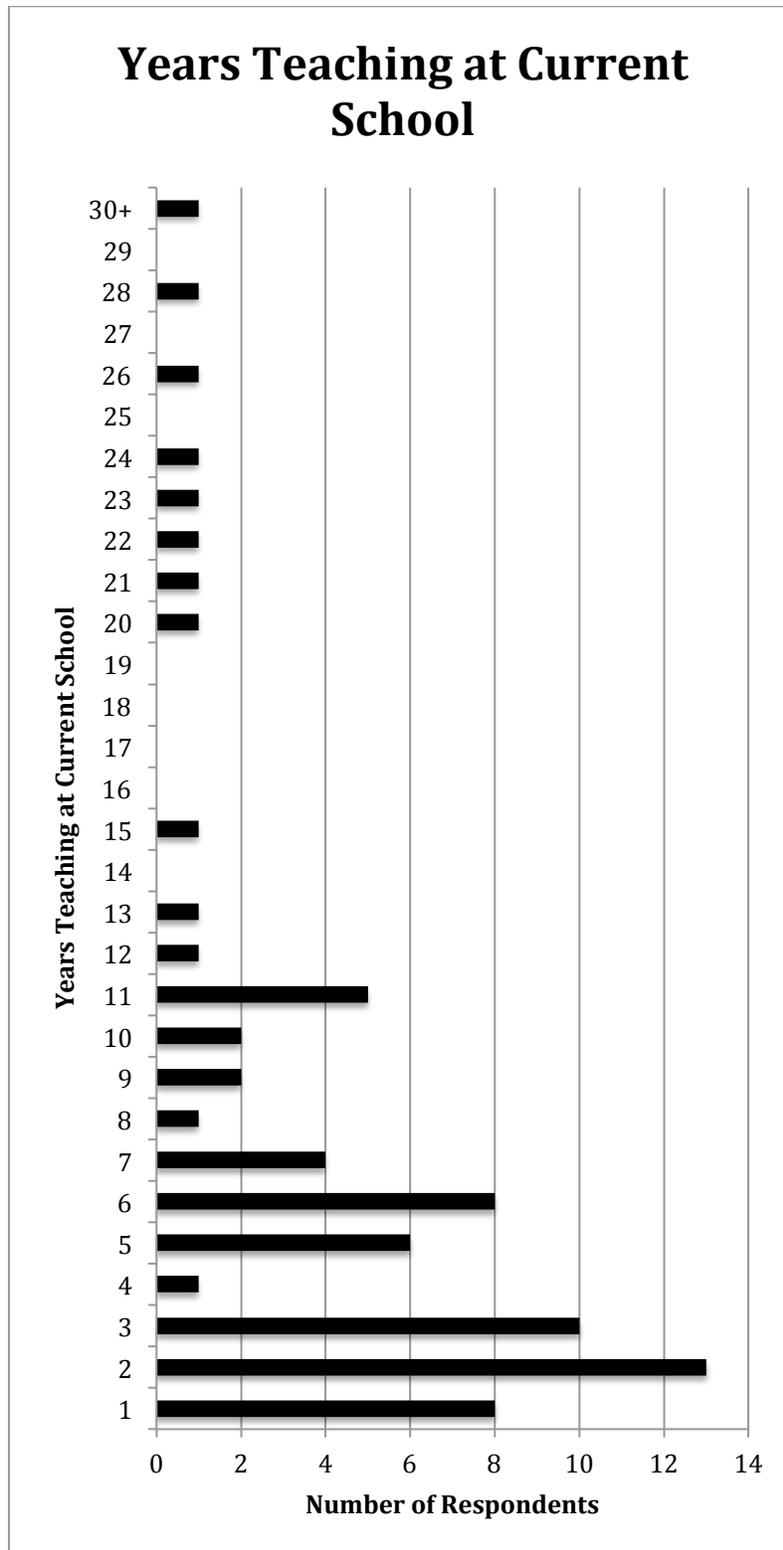
Figure 2. Ethnicity of Respondents. This figure illustrates the self-reported ethnicity of survey respondents.

The survey participants leaned towards younger directors; the mean number of years participants had taught band was 13 years. However, 59.57% of participants taught less than the mean, with a median of 10 years of experience. In addition, the data set was bimodal; the mode number of years of teaching band was three years and 30 years or more (Figure 3). The data suggests a wide range of experience levels are represented.



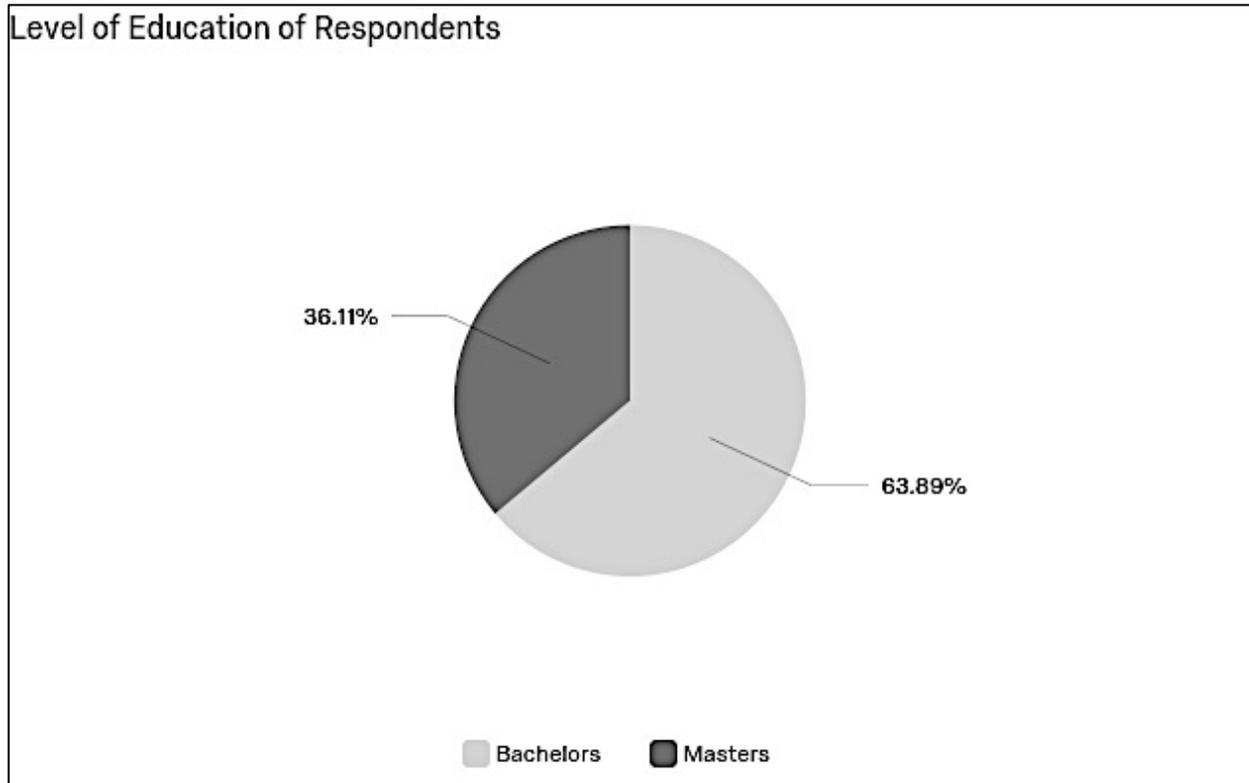
*Figure 3.* Years of Experience Teaching Band. This figure illustrates the self-reported years of experience teaching band of respondents.

The mean years of experience (13 years) for all participants does not align with the number of years reported at their current school, indicating participants have held more than one teaching assignment while they have been teaching. Thirteen participants (18.31%) reported teaching at their current school for two years, making it the mode. A similar number of participants ( $n = 10$ , 14.08%) have been at their school for only three years (Figure 4).



*Figure 4.* Years Teaching at Current School. This figure illustrates the self-reported number of years respondents had been teaching at their current school.

The majority of participants' highest level of education was a Bachelors degree ( $n = 46$ , 63.89%) with a little over a third earning a Masters degree ( $n = 26$ , 36.11%). No directors have earned a terminal degree (Figure 5).



*Figure 5.* Level of Education of Respondents. This figure illustrates the self-reported highest educational degree completed.

Survey participants were also asked questions regarding the demographics of their school setting. Half of the participants ( $n = 36$ , 50%) described their school setting as rural, with nearly a third reporting a suburban environment ( $n = 23$ , 31.94%). The smallest number of participants ( $n = 13$ , 18.06%) represented urban settings (Figure 6).

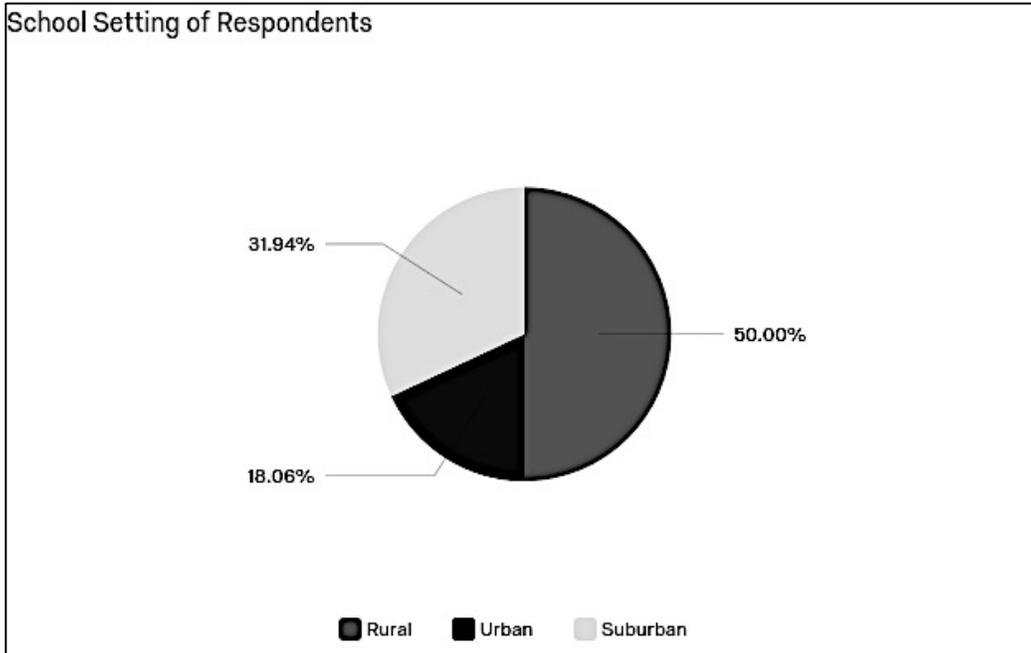


Figure 6. School Setting of Respondents. This figure illustrates the self-reported school setting of respondents.

Over two-thirds of the directors reported teaching in schools with 1,000 students or less ( $n = 50$ , 69.44%, although all school sizes are represented in the demographic (Figure 7).

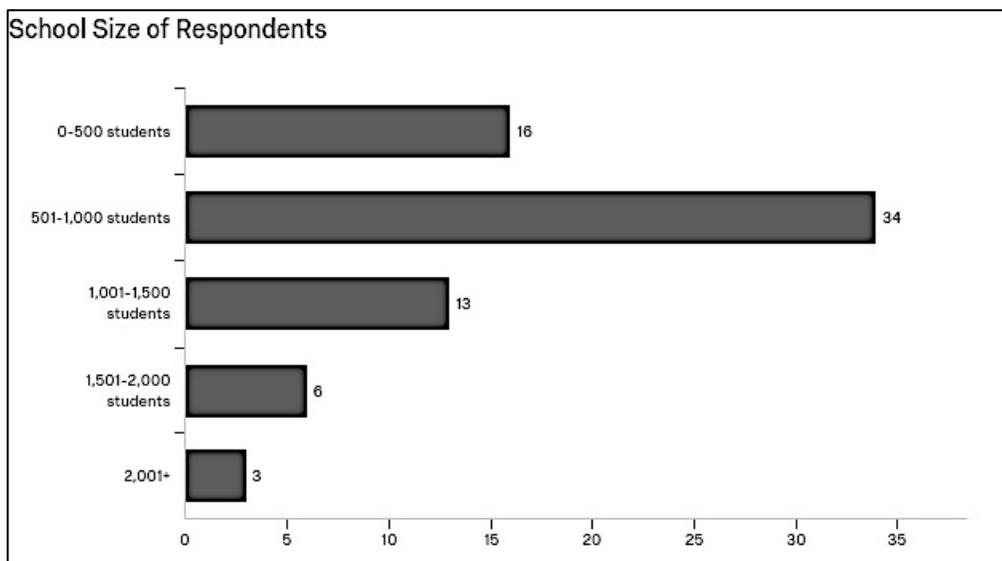


Figure 7. School Size of Respondents. This figure illustrates the self-reported size of respondents' school.

Participants were also asked the approximate budget of their band programs, either through fundraising, school funds, county funds, or grants (Figure 8). Budgets were split almost evenly between \$0-\$5,000 ( $n = 34$ , 47.22%) and \$5,001-\$10,000+ ( $n = 38$ , 52.77%).

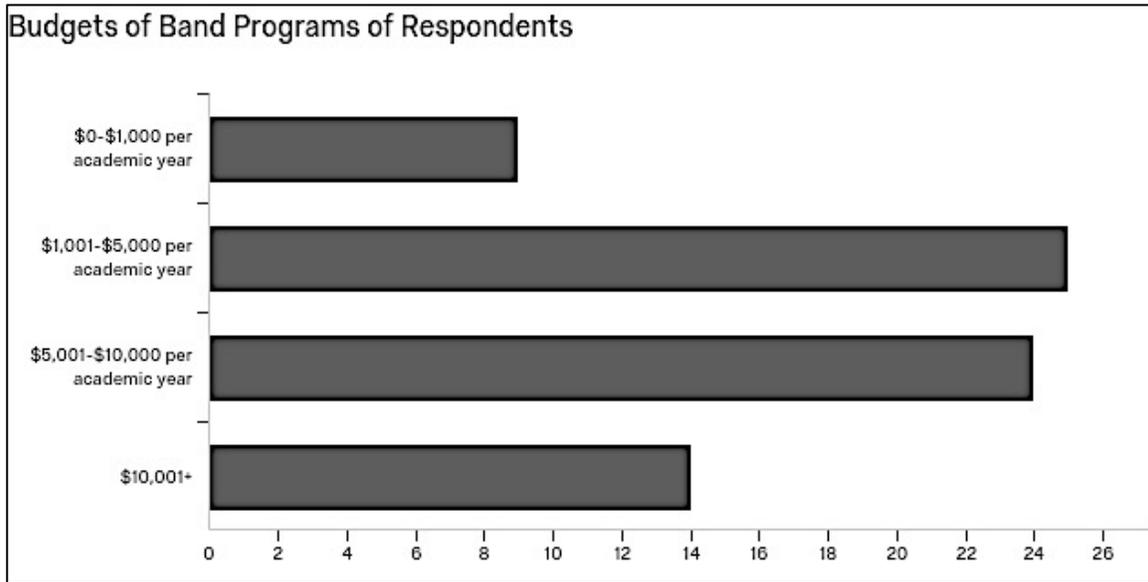
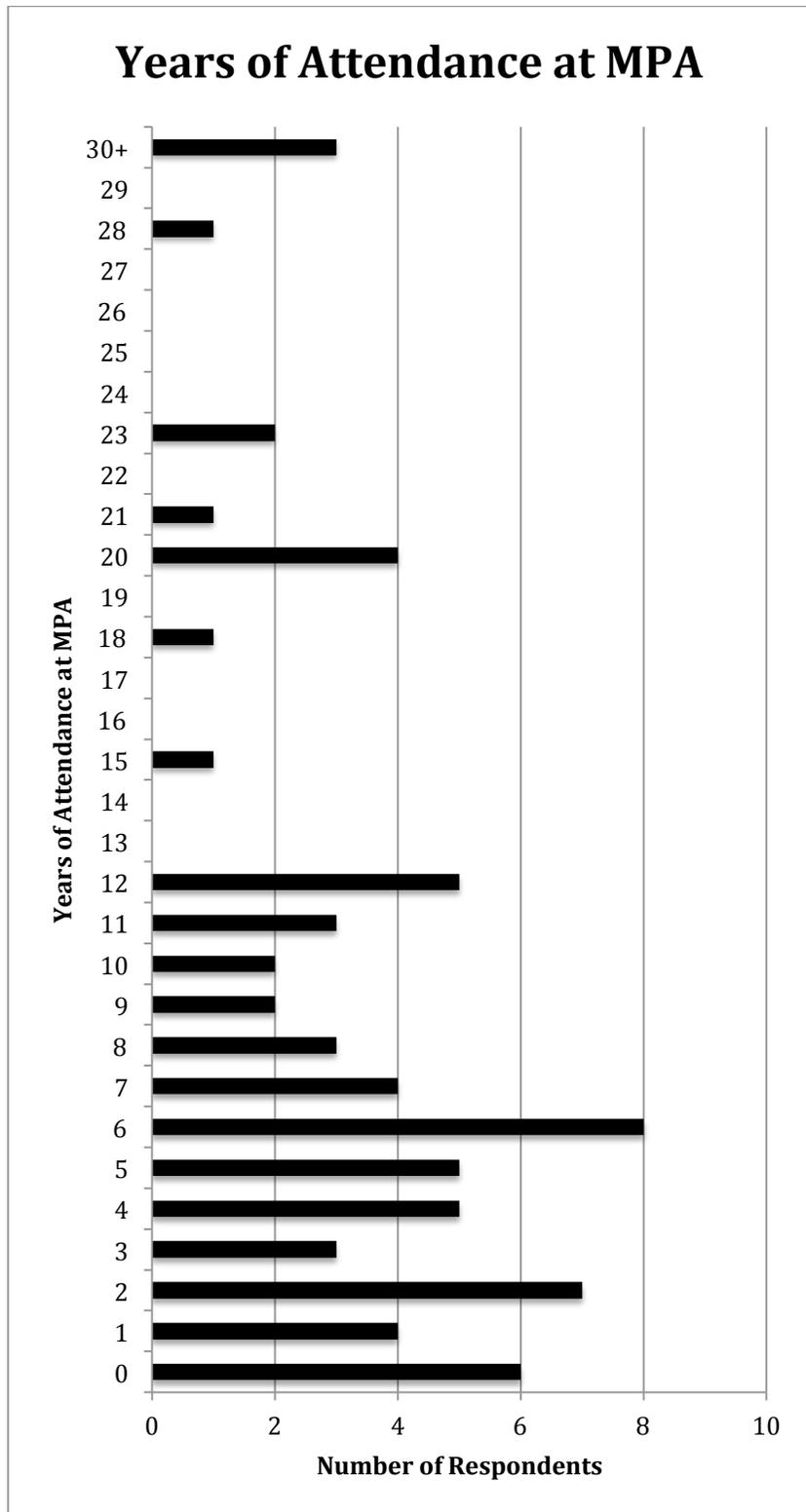


Figure 8. Budgets of Band Programs of Respondents. This figure illustrates the approximate budgets of survey respondents' band programs.

Survey participants were asked questions regarding their past involvement with MPA. The mean number of years respondents had attended MPA was 9.59 years. Eight participants (11.43%) had attended MPA for 6 years, resulting in the most common number of years participating in the event (Figure 9).



*Figure 9.* Years of Attendance at MPA. This figure illustrates the self-reported number of years the respondent has attended MPA.

Participants were asked about receiving Superior ratings, with a third of participants ( $n = 23, 33.82\%$ ) stating they had not received a Superior rating in the last three years. Over half of participants ( $n = 43, 63.23\%$ ) had received less than three Superior ratings in the last three years. Two participants ( $2.94\%$ ) reported receiving eight Superior ratings in the last three years (Figure 10).

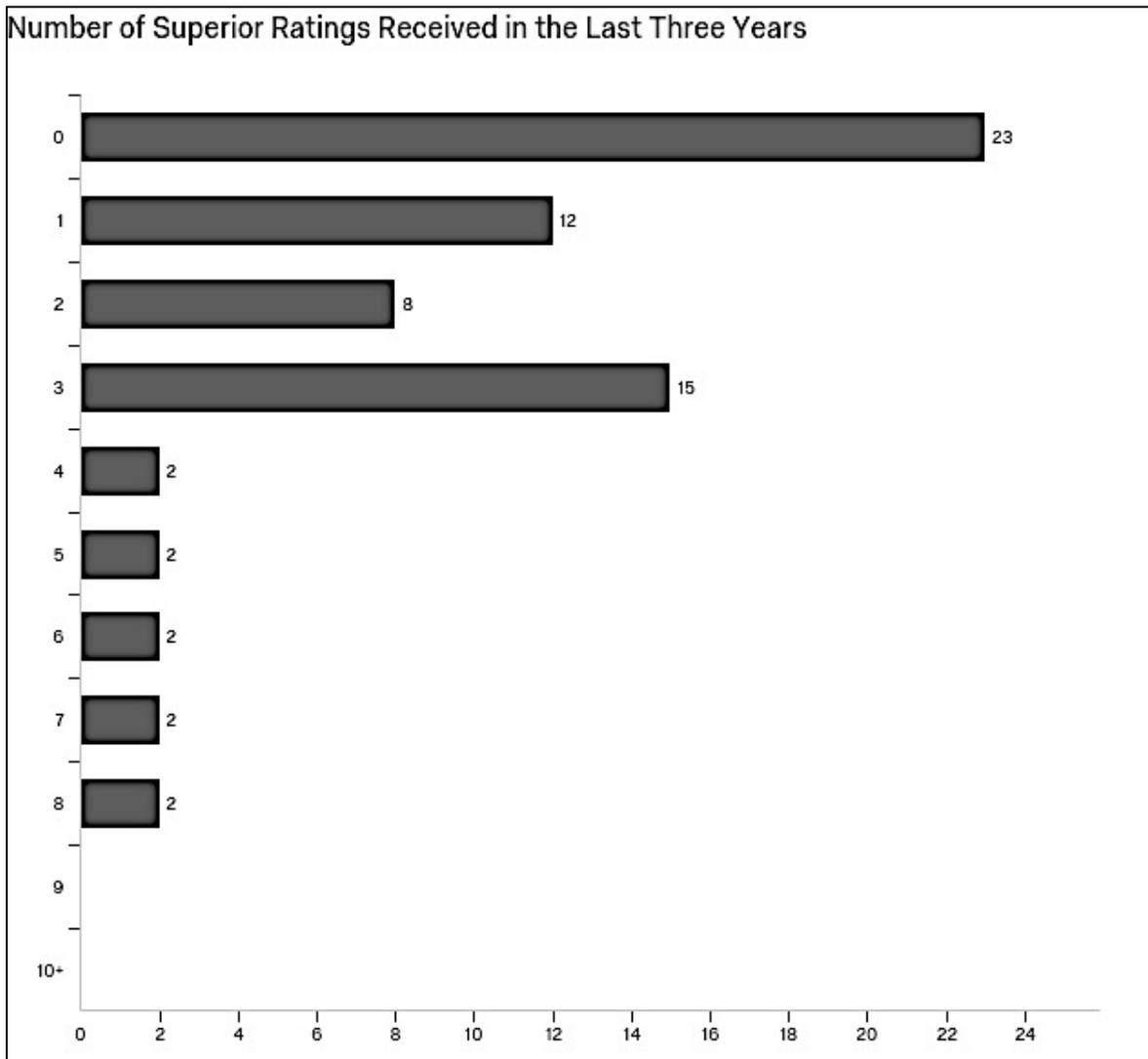


Figure 10. Number of Superior Ratings Received in the Last Three Years. This figure illustrates the self-reported number of Superior ratings respondents received in the last three years.

## **Research Question One**

In answer to the first research question, “What are the perceptions and attitudes of band directors in the Northwest District toward the Music Performance Adjudication?” survey participants were asked their level of agreement with a series of statements. There were five sections: (a) Section 2 contained nine statements regarding the trustworthiness of MPA as an assessment tool, (b) Section 3 contained ten statements regarding the purpose of MPA as an assessment process, (c) Section 4 contained eight statements regarding the motivation effect of MPA, and (d) Section 5 contained eight statements regarding the effect of MPA on individual growth and curricular choices.

### **Trustworthiness**

Section 2 contained nine statements regarding the trustworthiness of MPA as an assessment tool. Table 1 reports survey respondents’ answers with percentages.

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
My ensemble has consistently received a fair and accurate rating at MPA.	3	4	5	7	7	26	11	<i>n</i> = 63
The results of MPA accurately describe the abilities of my ensembles.	5	3	6	7	15	20	7	<i>n</i> = 63
The results of MPA are consistent between events and districts.	8	7	12	17	5	11	2	<i>n</i> = 62
MPA determines my students' mastery of performance skills.	6	8	7	4	24	8	6	<i>n</i> = 63
An MPA rating is more influenced by the band director's choices than the students' efforts.	1	11	14	6	20	7	4	<i>n</i> = 63
There are factors other than my students' performance that determine my band's rating at MPA.	1	8	4	7	16	15	12	<i>n</i> = 63
My band's financial situation has a significant impact on my MPA rating.	11	10	4	7	17	6	8	<i>n</i> = 63
I often disagree with the comments or rating I receive at MPA.	3	21	8	15	10	4	2	<i>n</i> = 63
I see major flaws in the process of MPA.	8	16	6	10	8	7	8	<i>n</i> = 63

Forty-four participants (69.84%) agreed that their ensemble's rating was consistently fair and accurate with twenty-six participants (41.27%) agreeing, 11 participants agreeing strongly (17.46%), and 7 participants agreeing somewhat. On the other hand, only 12 participants (19.05%) disagreed with the statement, with three participants (4.76%) disagreeing strongly, four

participants (6.35%) disagreeing, and five participants (7.94%) disagreeing somewhat. Seven participants (11.11%) chose a neutral response.

A similar number of participants agreed that the results of MPA were accurate assessments of their groups' abilities ( $n = 42$ , 66.67%), with 15 participants (23.81%) agreeing somewhat, 20 participants agreeing (31.75%), and seven participants (11.11%) agreed strongly. Only 14 participants (22.22%) disagreed with statement, with five participants (7.94%) disagreeing strongly, three participants (4.76%) disagreeing, and six participants (9.52%) disagreeing somewhat. Seven participants (11.11%) chose a neutral response.

The majority of participants ( $n = 17$ , 27.42%) selected a neutral response regarding the consistency of MPA between events and districts. However, 27 participants disagreed with the statement (43.55%), with 12 participants disagreeing (19.35%) somewhat, seven participants (11.29%) disagreeing and eight participants (12.90%) disagreeing strongly. On the other hand, 18 participants (29.03%) agreed with the statement, with five participants (8.06%) agreeing somewhat, 11 participants (17.74%) agreeing, and two participants (3.23%) agreeing strongly.

The majority of participants ( $n = 38$ , 60.32%) agreed that MPA is an assessment of students' mastery of performance skills, with twenty-four participants (38.10%) agreeing only somewhat, eight participants (12.70%) agreeing, and six participants (9.52%) agreeing strongly. However, several participants disagreed with the statement ( $n = 21$ , 33.33%), with six participants (9.52%) disagreeing strongly, eight participants (12.70%) disagreeing, and seven participants (11.11%) disagreeing somewhat. Four participants (6.35%) chose a neutral response.

Nearly half of participants ( $n = 31$ , 49.21%) agreed that a band director's choices had more impact on their group's MPA rating than the students' efforts with twenty participants

(31.75%) agreeing somewhat, seven participants (11.11%) agreeing, and four participants (6.35%) agreeing strongly. However, a similar number of participants ( $n = 26$ , 41.27%) had some level of disagreement with the statement, with 14 participants (22.22%) disagreeing somewhat, 11 participants (17.46%) disagreeing, and one participant (1.59%) disagreeing strongly. Six participants (9.52%) chose a neutral response.

The majority of participants ( $n = 43$ , 68.25%) agreed that there were other factors than the students' performance that determine an MPA rating, with 16 participants (25.40%) agreeing somewhat, 15 participants (23.81%) agreeing and 12 participants (19.05%) agreeing strongly. Only 13 participants (20.63%) disagreed with the statement, with four participants (6.35%) disagreeing somewhat, eight participants (12.70%) disagreeing, and one participant (1.59%) disagreeing strongly. Seven participants (11.11%) selected a neutral response.

When asked about the effect of a group's financial situation on their MPA rating, band directors were more polarized. Thirty-one participants (49.21%) agreed that financial resources have a significant impact, with 17 participants (26.98%) agreeing somewhat, 6 participants (9.52%) agreeing, and eight participants (12.70%) agreeing strongly; however, 25 participants (39.68%) disagreed with the statement, with four participants (6.35%) disagreeing somewhat, 10 participants (15.87%) disagreeing, and 11 participants (17.46%) disagreeing strongly. Seven participants (11.11%) chose a neutral response.

When asked if they typically disagree with the comments or rating received at MPA, the majority of respondents ( $n = 32$ , 50.79%) disagreed, with eight participants (12.70%) disagreeing somewhat, 21 participants (33.33%) disagreeing, and three participants (4.76%) disagreeing strongly. However, 16 participants (25.40%) agreed with the statement, with 10 participants

(15.87%) agreeing somewhat, four participants (6.35%) agreeing and two participants (3.17%) agreeing strongly. Fifteen participants (23.81%) chose a neutral response.

When asked if they believed the MPA process had major flaws, the majority of respondents ( $n = 30$ , 47.62%) reported some level of disagreement, with six participants (9.52%) disagreeing somewhat, 16 participants (25.40%) disagreeing, and eight participants (12.70%) disagreeing strongly. However, a similar number of participants agreed with the statement ( $n = 23$ , 36.51%), with eight participants (12.70%) agreeing somewhat, seven participants (11.11%) agreeing, and eight participants (12.70%) agreeing strongly. Ten participants (15.87%) chose a neutral response.

### **Purpose of MPA**

Section 3 contained ten statements regarding the purpose of MPA as an assessment process, particularly through the lens of process versus product. A rating is viewed as a tendency toward product-based assessment while comments are viewed as a tendency toward process-based assessment. Table 2 reports the data gathered from Section 3.

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
I prefer to receive a rating at MPA.	3	2	3	8	5	24	17	<i>n</i> = 62
I attend MPA primarily to hear the comments of the judges.	0	6	4	9	15	20	9	<i>n</i> = 63
I attend MPA primarily to discover where my band is rated in comparison to other ensembles	11	12	8	14	9	7	2	<i>n</i> = 63
I would rather receive comments only at MPA.	8	18	2	17	7	2	9	<i>n</i> = 63
MPA ratings are a reflection of my abilities as a band director.	11	2	9	3	23	10	5	<i>n</i> = 63
The comments I receive at MPA are consistently helpful and beneficial for my students.	4	4	3	8	14	19	11	<i>n</i> = 63
The comments I receive at MPA consistently have an impact on my future teaching strategies.	5	3	6	8	14	18	8	<i>n</i> = 62
You can determine the health of a band program through MPA ratings.	7	10	15	4	11	7	8	<i>n</i> = 62
My students receive the most benefit from the judge's comments.	5	4	8	12	24	7	3	<i>n</i> = 63
I have withheld judge recordings, sheets, or ratings from my students in the past.	17	14	4	3	11	8	4	<i>n</i> = 61

The majority of participants (*n* = 46, 74.19%) agreed that they preferred to receive a rating at MPA, with five participants (8.06%) agreeing somewhat, 24 participants (38.71%) agreeing, and 17 participants (27.42%) agreeing strongly. Only eight participants (12.90%)

disagreed with the statement, with three participants (4.84%) disagreeing somewhat, two participants (3.23%) disagreeing, and three participants (4.84%) disagreeing strongly. Eight participants (12.90%) chose a neutral response.

Similarly, 44 participants (69.84%) agreed that they attend MPA primarily to hear the comments of the judges, with 15 participants (23.81%) agreeing somewhat, 20 participants (31.75%) agreeing, and nine participants (14.29%) agreeing strongly; however, 10 participants (15.87%) disagreed with the statement, with four participants (6.35%) disagreeing somewhat, six participants (9.52%) disagreeing, and no participants disagreeing strongly. Nine participants (14.29%) chose a neutral response.

Neutrality was the response with the most frequency ( $n = 14$ , 22.22%) when participants were asked if they attend MPA to discover where their band is in comparison to other groups; yet, 31 participants (49.21%) disagreed with the statement, with eight participants (12.70%) disagreeing somewhat, 12 participants (19.05%) disagreeing, and 11 participants (17.46%) disagreeing strongly. Eighteen participants (28.57%) agreed with the statement, with nine participants (14.29%) agreeing somewhat, seven participants (11.11%) agreeing, and two participants (3.17%) agreeing strongly.

Most participants ( $n = 28$ , 44.44%) disagreed when asked if they would rather receive comments only at MPA, with two participants (3.17%) disagreeing somewhat, 18 participants (28.57%) disagreeing, and eight participants (12.70%) disagreeing strongly. However, 18 participants (28.57%) agreed with the statement, with seven participants (11.11%) agreeing somewhat, two participants (3.17%) agreeing, and nine participants (14.29%) agreeing strongly. A large number of participants ( $n = 17$ , 26.98%) chose a neutral response.

Most participants ( $n = 38$ , 60.32%) agreed that MPA ratings are a reflection of their abilities as a band director, with 23 participants (36.51%) agreeing somewhat, 10 participants (15.87%) agreeing, and five participants (7.94%) agreeing strongly. Yet, 22 participants (34.92%) disagreed with the statement, with nine participants (14.29%) disagreeing somewhat, two participants (3.17%) disagreeing, and 11 participants (17.46%) disagreeing strongly. Only three participants (4.76%) chose a neutral response.

The majority of participants ( $n = 44$ , 69.84%) agreed that the comments received at MPA were consistently beneficial for their students, with 19 participants (30.16%) agreeing, 14 participants (22.22%) agreeing somewhat and 11 participants (17.46%) agreeing strongly. Only 11 participants (17.46%) disagreed with the statement, with three participants (4.76%) disagreeing somewhat, four participants (6.35%) disagreeing, and four participants (6.35%) disagreeing strongly. Eight participants (12.90%) chose a neutral response.

A similar number of participants ( $n = 40$ , 64.52%) agreed that comments received at MPA impact future teaching strategies with 18 participants (29.03%) agreeing, 14 participants agreeing somewhat (22.58%), and 8 participants (12.90%) agreeing strongly. Only 14 participants (22.58%) disagreed with the statement, with six participants (9.68%) disagreeing somewhat, three participants (4.84%) disagreeing, and five participants (8.06%) disagreeing strongly. Eight participants (12.90%) again chose a neutral response.

The majority of participants ( $n = 32$ , 51.61%) disagreed that MPA ratings reflected the health of a band program, with 15 participants (24.19%) disagreed somewhat, 10 participants (16.13%) disagreeing, and seven participants (11.29%) disagreeing strongly. Yet, a similar number of participants ( $n = 26$ , 41.94%) agreed with the statement, with 11 participants

(17.74%) agreeing somewhat, seven participants (11.29%) agreeing, and eight participants (12.90%) agreeing strongly. Four participants (6.45%) chose a neutral response.

Thirty-four participants (53.97%) agreed that their students received the most benefit from the judge's comments, with 24 participants agreeing somewhat, seven participants (11.11%) agreeing, and three participants (4.76%) agreeing strongly. However, 17 participants (26.98%) disagreed with the statement, with eight participants (12.70%) disagreeing somewhat, four participants (6.35%) disagreeing, and five participants (7.94%) disagreeing strongly. A large number of participants ( $n = 12$ , 19.05%) chose a neutral response.

The majority of participants ( $n = 35$ , 57.38%) disagreed that they had withheld the judge's comments or ratings from their students, with four participants (6.56%) disagreeing somewhat, 14 participants (22.95%) disagreeing, and 17 participants (27.87%) disagreeing strongly. However, 23 participants (37.70%) agreed with the statement, with 11 participants (18.03%) agreeing somewhat, eight participants (13.11%), and four participants (6.56%) agreeing strongly.

### **Motivational Effect**

Section 4 contained eight statements regarding the motivational effect of MPA. Table 3 reports the data from these statements.

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
My students work harder when they know they are performing at MPA.	3	6	6	3	14	18	12	<i>n</i> = 62
I work harder when I know my band is performing at MPA.	6	6	4	6	12	13	15	<i>n</i> = 62
MPA has no bearing on the level at which my students perform.	7	13	15	10	6	7	4	<i>n</i> = 62
I attend MPA primarily to appease the pressures from others.	16	15	5	10	8	5	3	<i>n</i> = 62
MPA ratings encourage me to work harder.	7	7	5	9	8	15	11	<i>n</i> = 62
MPA ratings encourage my students to work harder.	6	4	4	7	14	20	6	<i>n</i> = 61
I would rather not attend MPA.	15	14	5	11	2	5	10	<i>n</i> = 62
My students thrive on the MPA experience.	4	7	5	9	21	13	3	<i>n</i> = 62

The majority of participants ( $n = 44$ , 70.97%) agreed that their students worked harder when they knew they were performing at MPA, with 14 participants (22.58%) agreeing somewhat, 18 participants (29.03%), and 12 participants (19.35%) agreeing strongly. Only 15 participants (24.19%) disagreed with the statement, with six participants (9.68%) disagreeing somewhat, six participants (9.68%) disagreeing and only three participants (4.84%) disagreeing strongly. Three participants (4.84%) chose a neutral response.

Forty participants (64.52%) agreed that they personally worked harder when they knew they were performing at MPA, with 12 participants (19.35%) agreeing somewhat, 13 participants (20.97%) agreeing and 15 participants (24.19%) agreeing strongly. Sixteen participants (25.81%) disagreed with the statement, with four participants (6.45%) disagreeing somewhat, six participants (9.68%) disagreeing, and another six participants (9.68%) disagreeing strongly. Six participants (9.68%) chose a neutral response.

The majority of participants ( $n = 35$ , 56.45%) disagreed that MPA had no bearing on how their students performed, with 15 participants (24.19%) disagreeing somewhat, 13 participants (20.97%) disagreeing, and seven participants (11.29%) disagreeing strongly. Seventeen participants (27.42%) agreed with the statement, with six participants (9.68%) agreeing somewhat, seven participants (11.29%) agreeing, and four participants (6.45%) agreeing strongly. Ten participants (16.13%) chose a neutral response.

Most participants ( $n = 36$ , 58.06%) disagreed that they participate in MPA due to pressures from others, with five participants (8.06%) disagreeing somewhat, 15 participants (24.19%) disagreeing, and 16 participants (25.81%) disagreeing strongly. Sixteenth participants (25.81%) agreed with the statement, with eight participants (12.90%) agreeing somewhat, five participants (8.06%) agreeing, and three participants (4.84%) agreeing strongly. Ten participants (16.13%) chose a neutral response.

The majority of participants ( $n = 34$ , 54.84%) agreed that MPA ratings encourage them to work harder, with eight participants (12.90%) agreeing somewhat, 15 participants (24.19%) agreeing, and six participants (9.84%) agreeing strongly. Nineteen participants (30.65%) disagreed with the statement, with five participants (8.06%) disagreeing somewhat, seven

participants (11.29%) disagreeing, and another seven participants (11.29%) disagreeing strongly. Nine participants (14.52%) chose a neutral response.

Most participants ( $n = 40$ , 65.57%) agreed that MPA ratings encouraged their students to work harder, with 14 participants (22.95%) agreeing somewhat, 20 participants (32.79%) agreeing, and six participants (9.84%) agreeing strongly. Only 14 participants (22.95%) disagreed with the statement, with four participants (6.56%) disagreeing somewhat, another four participants (6.56%) disagreeing, and six participants (9.84%) disagreeing strongly. Seven participants (11.48%) chose a neutral response.

The majority of participants ( $n = 34$ , 54.84%) disagreed that they would rather not attend MPA, with five participants (8.06%) disagreeing somewhat, 14 participants (22.58%) disagreeing, and 15 participants (24.19%) disagreeing strongly. However, 17 participants (27.42%) agreed with the statement, with two participants (3.23%) agreeing somewhat, five participants (8.06%) agreeing, and 10 participants (16.13%) agreeing strongly. Eleven participants (17.74%) chose a neutral response.

Most participants ( $n = 37$ , 59.68%) agreed that their students thrived on the MPA experience, with 21 participants (33.87%) agreeing somewhat, 13 participants (20.97%) agreeing, and three participants (4.64%) agreeing strongly. On the other hand, 16 participants (25.81%) disagreed with the statement, with five participants (14.52%) disagreeing somewhat, seven participants (11.29%) disagreeing, and four participants (6.45%) disagreeing strongly. Nine participants (14.52%) chose a neutral response.

### **Individual Growth and Curricular Choices**

Section 5 contained eight statements regarding the effect of MPA on individual growth and curricular choices. Table 4 reports the data from these statements.

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
All of my students have the opportunity to experience MPA.	6	7	1	2	5	23	18	<i>n</i> = 62
I only bring auditioned/personally-selected ensembles to MPA.	23	20	2	4	7	3	3	<i>n</i> = 62
Performance is the most important skill in my course.	3	6	13	11	14	9	6	<i>n</i> = 62
I feel pressure to consistently teach performance skills over other musical concepts.	5	13	10	16	13	2	3	<i>n</i> = 62
The demands of MPA limit the time I can teach other musical concepts.	8	12	8	9	10	7	8	<i>n</i> = 62
Participation in MPA forces me to make curricular choices with which I do not always agree.	9	16	7	8	9	9	3	<i>n</i> = 61
My students consistently perform at their highest level at MPA.	5	8	1	11	16	16	5	<i>n</i> = 62
The format of MPA is not conducive to fostering the individual musical growth in my students.	11	10	12	10	9	2	7	<i>n</i> = 61

Most participants (*n* = 46, 74.19%) agreed that all of their students had the opportunity to experience MPA, with five participants (8.06%) agreeing only somewhat, 23 participants (37.10%) agreeing, and 18 participants (29.03%) agreeing strongly. Only 14 participants (22.58%) disagreed with the statement, with one participant (1.61%) disagreeing somewhat,

seven participants (11.29%) disagreeing, and six participants (9.68%) disagreeing strongly. Two participants (3.23%) chose a neutral response.

Forty-five participants (72.58%) disagreed that they only bring personally selected or auditioned ensembles to MPA, with two participants (3.23%) disagreeing somewhat, 20 participants (32.26%) disagreeing, and 23 participants (37.10%) disagreeing strongly. Only 13 participants (20.97%) agreed with the statement, with seven participants (11.29%) agreeing somewhat, three participants (4.84%) agreeing, and another three participants (4.84%) agreeing strongly. Four participants (6.45%) chose a neutral response.

A slight majority of participants ( $n = 29$ , 46.77%) agreed that performance was the most important skill of their course, with 14 participants (22.58%) agreeing somewhat, nine participants (14.52%) agreeing, and six participants (9.68%) agreeing strongly; yet, 22 participants (35.48%) disagreed, with 13 participants (20.97%) disagreeing somewhat, six participants (9.68%) disagreeing, and three participants (4.84%) disagreeing strongly. Eleven participants (17.74%) chose a neutral response.

Most participants ( $n = 28$ , 45.16%) disagreed when asked if they felt pressure to teach performance skills over other musical concepts, with 10 participants (16.13%) disagreeing somewhat, 13 participants (20.97%) disagreeing, and five participants (8.06%) disagreeing strongly. However, 18 participants (29.03%) agreed, with 13 participants (20.97%) agreeing somewhat, two participants (3.23%) agreeing, and three participants (4.84%) agreeing strongly. A neutral response had the highest frequency ( $n = 16$ , 25.81%).

A slight majority of participants ( $n = 28$ , 45.16%) disagreed that the demands of MPA limit the time they can teach other musical concepts, with eight participants (12.90%) disagreeing somewhat, 12 participants (19.35%) disagreeing, and eight participants (12.90%)

disagreeing strongly. However, a similar number of participants ( $n = 25$ , 40.32%) agreed, with 10 participants (16.13%) agreeing somewhat, seven participants (11.29%) agreeing, and eight participants (12.90%) agreeing strongly. Nine participants (14.52%) chose a neutral response.

Thirty-two participants (52.46%) disagree with the idea that MPA forces directors to make curricular choices contrary to the director's vision, with seven participants (11.48%) disagreeing somewhat, 16 participants (26.23%) disagreeing, and nine participants (14.75%) disagreeing strongly. However, 21 participants (34.33%) agreed with the statement, with nine participants (14.75%) agreeing somewhat, another 9 participants (14.75%) agreeing, and three participants (8.06%) agreeing strongly. Eight participants (13.11%) chose a neutral response.

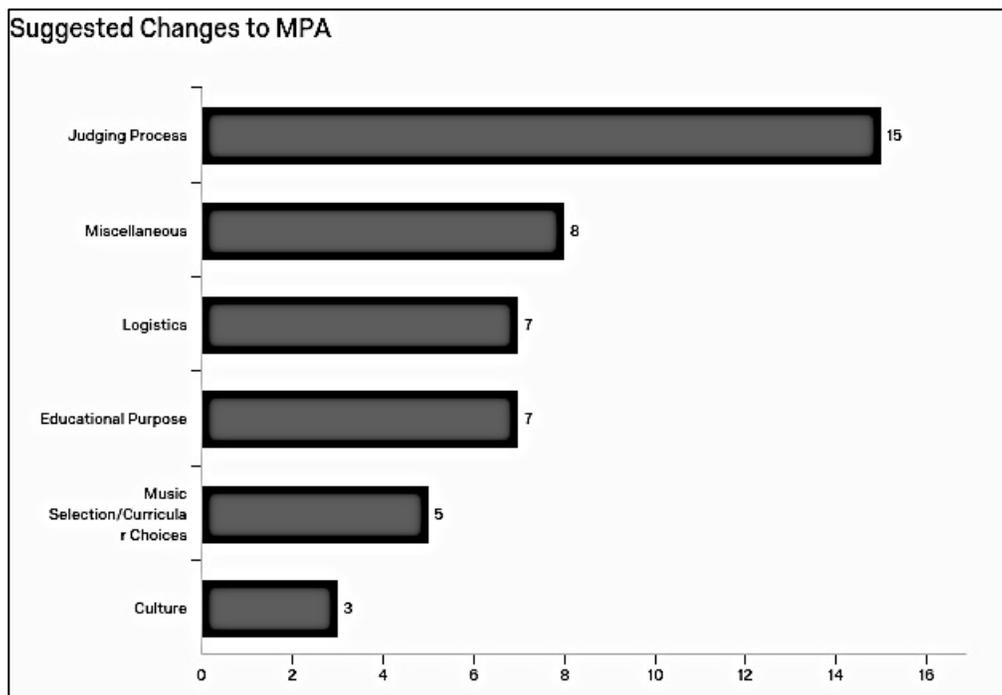
The majority of participants ( $n = 38$ , 59.68%) agreed that their students consistently perform at their highest level at MPA, with 16 participants (25.81%) agreeing somewhat, another 16 participants (25.81%) agreeing, and another five participants (8.06%) agreeing strongly. Only 14 participants (22.58%) disagreed with the statement, with one participant (1.61%) disagreeing somewhat, eight participants (12.90%) disagreeing, and five participants (8.06%) disagreeing strongly. Eleven participants (17.74%) chose a neutral response.

Thirty-three participants (54.10%) disagreed that MPA was not conducive to fostering the individual musical growth of their students, with most participants ( $n = 12$ , 19.67%) disagreeing only somewhat, another 10 participants (16.39%) disagreeing, and 11 participants (18.03%) disagreeing strongly. However, eighteen participants (29.51%) agreed with the statement, with nine participants (14.75%) agreeing somewhat, two participants (3.28%) agreeing, and seven participants (11.48%) agreed strongly. Ten participants (16.39%) chose a neutral response.

### **Suggested Changes to MPA**

An open-ended question gathered qualitative data from respondents about the changes they would like to see in the process of MPA in the Northwest District. Forty-five participants chose to leave a response.

The researcher met with a music education researcher to analyze the open-ended responses for the instructors on Question 22, “What changes would you like to see in the MPA process that would best benefit your students?”. The researchers consulted several times to discuss the groupings until a taxonomy was agreed upon. After these revisions to the initial taxonomy, an independent researcher viewed a random 20% of the responses and placed each response into the established taxonomy for comparison. Using the formula  $\frac{\text{agreements}}{\text{agreements} + \text{disagreements}}$ , reliability for Question 22 was .88 (C.H. Madsen & Madsen, 2016).



*Figure 11.* Suggested Changes to MPA. This figure illustrates the frequency of topics mentioned in an open-ended response regarding any suggested changes to MPA.

Fifteen participants (33.33%) suggested changes to the judging process of MPA and eight participants (17.78%) left miscellaneous comments, such as “none” or “I haven’t attended”. Seven participants (15.56%) suggested changes to the logistics of the event, mentioning elements such as scheduling or financial issues. Seven participants (15.56%) suggested changes regarding the educational purpose of the process. Five participants (11.11%) suggested changes to the process of music selection or curricular choices, and three participants (6.67%) suggested changes to the culture of MPA, such as how directors approach the event or utilize the results.

### **Research Question Two**

For the second research question, “What are the motivating factors for band directors in the Northwest District to attend the Music Performance Adjudication?” survey participants were asked their level of agreement with a series of statements using a seven-point Likert scale in Section 6. Section 6 contained eight statements regarding the pressures of MPA. Table 5 reports the data from participants.

#### **Pressures of MPA**

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
I feel pressure from my school or county administrators to attend MPA.	14	23	6	3	7	4	6	<i>n</i> = 63
I feel pressure from my colleagues to attend MPA.	5	12	7	3	13	15	7	<i>n</i> = 62
I feel pressure from my students or their parents to attend MPA.	19	23	6	8	1	4	2	<i>n</i> = 63
My students experience anxiety when performing at MPA.	5	5	4	1	33	12	3	<i>n</i> = 63
Preparing for MPA is my least favorite activity of the year.	11	19	7	8	6	6	6	<i>n</i> = 63
MPA ratings largely determine my personal success in the field of music education.	11	10	5	11	15	6	4	<i>n</i> = 62
There is an expectation in the school community (parents, students, administrators, graduates) that I receive high ratings at MPA.	7	6	8	12	13	6	10	<i>n</i> = 62
MPA is the most important performance of the year for my students.	17	5	5	10	10	7	5	<i>n</i> = 62

Most participants (*n* = 43, 68.25%) disagreed that they felt pressure from school or county administrators to attend MPA, with six participants (9.52%) disagreeing somewhat, 23 participants (36.51%) disagreeing, and 14 participants (22.22%) disagreeing strongly. Seventeen participants (26.98%) agreed, with seven participants (11.11%) agreeing somewhat, four

participants (6.35%) agreeing, and six participants (9.52%) agreeing strongly. Three participants (4.76%) chose a neutral response.

The majority of participants ( $n = 35$ , 56.45%) agreed that they felt pressure from their colleagues to attend MPA, with 13 participants (20.97%) agreeing somewhat, 15 participants (24.19%) agreeing, and seven participants (11.29%) agreeing strongly. However, 24 participants (38.71%) disagreed, with seven participants (11.29%) disagreeing somewhat, 12 participants (19.35%) disagreeing, and five participants (8.06%) disagreeing strongly. Only three participants (4.84%) chose a neutral response.

Most participants ( $n = 48$ , 76.19%) disagreed that they felt pressure from parents or students to attend MPA, with six participants (9.52%) disagreeing somewhat, 23 participants (36.51%) disagreeing, and 19 participants (30.16%) disagreeing strongly. Only seven participants (11.11%) agreed with the statement, with one participant (1.59%), four participants (6.35%) agreeing, and two participants (3.17%) agreeing strongly. Eight participants (12.70%) chose a neutral response.

The majority of participants ( $n = 48$ , 76.19%) agreeing that their students experience anxiety when performing at MPA, with 33 participants (52.38%) agreeing somewhat, 12 participants (19.05%) agreeing, and three participants (4.76%) agreeing strongly. Only 14 participants (22.22%) disagreed, with four participants (6.35%) disagreeing somewhat, five participants (7.94%) disagreeing, and another five participants (7.94%) disagreeing strongly. Only one participant (1.59%) chose a neutral response.

Most participants ( $n = 37$ , 58.73%) disagreed that MPA was their least favorite activity of the year, with seven participants (11.11%), 19 participants (30.16%) disagreeing, and 11 participants (17.46%) disagreeing strongly. Eighteen participants (28.57%) agreed, with 6

participants (9.52%) each agreeing somewhat, agreeing, and agreeing strongly. Eight participants (12.70%) chose a neutral response.

A slight majority of participants ( $n = 26$ , 41.94%) disagreed that MPA ratings largely determine their personal success in the field of music education, with five participants (8.06%) disagreeing somewhat, 10 participants (16.13%) disagreeing, and 11 participants (17.74%) disagreeing strongly. However, a nearly equal number of participants ( $n = 25$ , 40.32%) agreeing, with 15 participants (24.19%) agreeing somewhat, six participants (9.68%) agreeing, and four participants (6.45%) agreeing strongly. Eleven participants (17.74%) chose a neutral response.

Most participants ( $n = 29$ , 46.77%) agreed that there is an expectation in their school community that they receive high ratings at MPA, with 13 participants (20.97%) agreeing somewhat, six participants (9.68%) agreeing, and 10 participants (16.13%) agreeing strongly. However, 21 participants (33.87%) disagreed with the statement; eight participants (12.90%) disagreed somewhat, six participants (9.68%) disagreed, seven participants (11.29%) disagreed strongly. Twelve participants (19.35%) chose a neutral response.

A slight majority of participants ( $n = 27$ , 43.55%) disagreed that MPA is the most important performance of the year for their students, with five participants (8.06%) disagreeing somewhat, another five participants (8.06%) disagreeing, and 17 participants (27.42%) disagreeing strongly. On the other hand, 25 participants (40.32%) agreed with the statement; ten participants (16.13%) agreed somewhat, seven participants (11.29%), and eight participants (12.90%) agreed strongly. Ten participants (16.13%) chose a neutral response.

### **Pressures from Outside Sources**

Survey participants were also asked directly if they felt pressures from outside sources to attend MPA. Table 6 reports the data collected from Section 7.

Yes	31	49.21%
No	32	50.70%
<i>n</i> = 63		

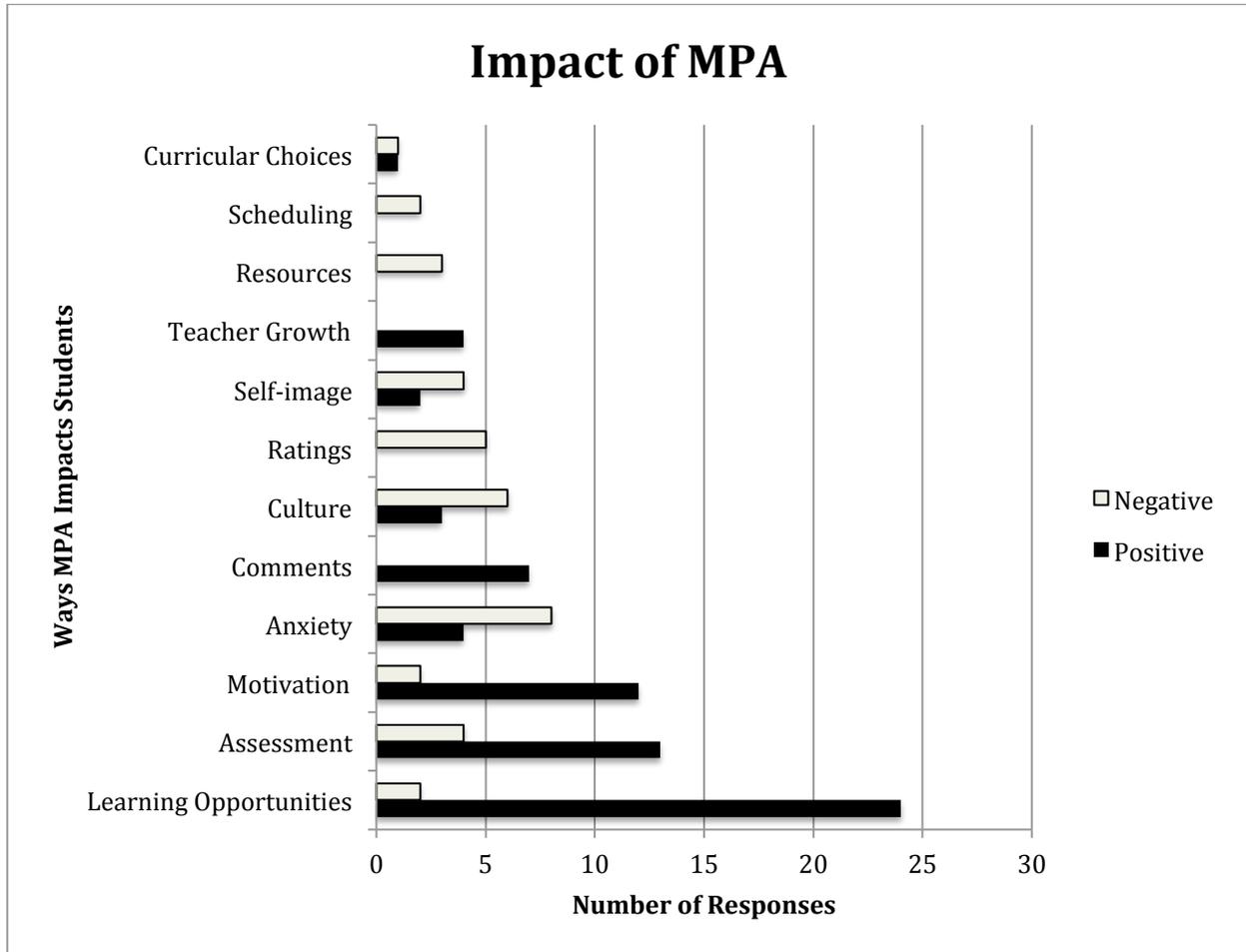
Thirty-two respondents (50.79%) claimed they did not feel pressure from outside sources to attend MPA while 31 respondents (49.21%) claimed that they did feel pressure from outside sources.

Participants that reported feeling pressure from outside sources to attend MPA were then directed to rank the sources of pressure to attend MPA. Twenty-one respondents (65.63%) reported feeling the most pressure from colleagues in music education. On the other side of the spectrum, 14 participants (43.75%) reported feeling little pressure from state supervisors or colleagues at their school and nine participants (28.13%) reported feeling little pressure from colleagues at their school.

### **Research Question Three**

For the third research question, “In what ways do band directors in the Northwest District utilize the Music Performance Adjudication to foster growth in their students?” qualitative data was collected in Question 21, “In what ways does MPA impact the growth of your students, both positively and negatively?” The researcher met with a music education researcher to analyze the open-ended responses. The researchers consulted several times to discuss the groupings until a taxonomy was agreed upon. After these revisions to the initial taxonomy, an independent

researcher viewed a random 20% of the responses and placed each response into the established taxonomy for comparison. Some responses contained multiple components. These responses were first divided and then placed into the taxonomy. Using the formula agreements divided by the sum of agreements plus disagreements, reliability for Question 21 was .87 (C.H. Madsen & Madsen, 2016).



*Figure 12.* Educational Impact of MPA. This figure illustrates the topics of open-ended responses regarding the educational impact of MPA.

A total of 45 participants left responses; responses with multiple topics were separated into component parts, resulting in a total of 110 responses. Most responses ( $n = 70, 63.63\%$ )

described the positive effects of MPA with 24 participants (21.84%) discussing the positive learning opportunities MPA provided for their students, 13 participants (11.82%) mentioning the positive value of assessment that MPA provided, and 12 participants (10.81%) described the motivational effect of MPA. Participants also mentioned the positive value of comments ( $n = 7$ , 6.36%), the effect of MPA on teacher growth ( $n = 4$ , 3.64%), the positive effect of anxiety generated by MPA ( $n = 4$ , 3.64%), the positive effect of the culture of MPA ( $n = 3$ , 2.72%), the positive effect on the self-image of students ( $n = 2$ , 1.82%), and the positive effect on curricular choices ( $n = 1$ , 0.91%). However, some responses also commented on the negative effects of MPA ( $n = 40$ , 36.36%), with eight participants (7.27%) mentioning the negative effect of anxiety, six participants (5.45%) describing the negative culture developed by MPA, five participants (4.55%) discussing the negative effect of ratings. Participants also mentioned the negatives of MPA as an assessment ( $n = 4$ , 3.63%) in addition to the negative effects on student self-image ( $n = 4$ , 3.63%), learning opportunities ( $n = 2$ , 1.82%), motivation ( $n = 2$ , 1.82%), and curricular choices ( $n = 1$ , 0.91%). Other participants described the negative effect limited resources ( $n = 3$ , 2.72%) and scheduling ( $n = 2$ , 1.82%) had on MPA assessment.

## CHAPTER 5

### DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to analyze the perceptions, motivations, and uses of MPA for band directors in the Northwest District NCBA. Through the use of a mixed-methods research method, band directors voiced their opinion through an online survey. Specific research questions included:

1. What are the perceptions and attitudes of band directors in the Northwest District toward the Music Performance Adjudication?
2. What are the motivating factors for band directors in the Northwest District to attend the Music Performance Adjudication?
3. In what ways do band directors in the Northwest District utilize the Music Performance Adjudication to foster growth in their students?

#### **Perceptions of MPA**

The first research was “What are the perceptions and attitudes of band directors in the Northwest District toward the Music Performance Adjudication?” Survey questions were organized to relate to the trustworthiness of the data, the purpose of the assessment process, the motivational effect, and the effect on individual growth and curricular choices.

#### **Trustworthiness**

Overall, the participants of the study suggest that they trust the data they receive from MPA. Over two-thirds of participants agreed on some level that their ensemble’s rating was consistently fair and accurate. Similar responses occurred when asked if the results of MPA were accurate assessments of their group’s abilities, with two-thirds of participants agreeing on

some level. These results are consistent with previous studies regarding the validity of state-sponsored music performance assessments (Brakel, 2006; King & Burnsed, 2009; Latimer et al., 2010; Hash, 2012). However, with roughly a quarter of participants selecting neutral responses on a statement regarding the consistency between districts suggest a tendency for some directors to use the results of MPA less as a tool of comparison between bands and more as personal assessment. Some band directors may be sensitive to use MPA as a comparative tool, perhaps due to the subjective nature of the event. Responses to the statement regarding disagreeing with the comments or rating received support the conclusion that most participants trust the data they receive, yet it is notable that nearly a quarter of participants again chose a neutral response and another quarter agreed on some level with the statement. It is also important to note that while nearly half of the participants disagreed on some level that the MPA process has major flaws, over a third of participants agreed with the statement. While band directors trust the data they receive at MPA, many still find flaws with the process.

As the statements became more specific about what elements of their band program have an effect on the results of MPA, participants showed less agreement. Over two-thirds of participants agreed that factors other than their students' performance had a role in determining their ensemble's rating. Of particular note is the contrasting response to a statement regarding the impact of a band's financial situation on their MPA rating; nearly half of participants agreed on some level that their ensemble's financial situation has a significant impact on their MPA rating. Yet, with over a third of participants disagreeing on some level, the variety of responses found may reflect band directors' self-efficacy. For example, while some directors may feel helpless to create changes in their programs, other directors feel fully in control of their

program's situation and more able to use assessments to create unity and self-efficacy within their programs (Maggio, 2016).

Band directors may use MPA for more than a simple assessment of their students' performance abilities. Participation in MPA could allow for band directors to assess their own skill as a teacher, as evidenced by nearly half of participants believing with some level of agreement that a band director has more impact on their ensemble's rating than the students' efforts. However, nearly a third of participants agreed only somewhat to the statement and a quarter of the participants disagreed somewhat. The results suggest that there are contrasting opinions and uncertainty as to what factors impact MPA assessments.

While most directors agree that MPA is an accurate performance assessment, other directors find that many other factors have an effect on the assessment data. The use of criteria-based rubrics and panels with multiple judges may be responsible for the level of trust in the data. Yet, variations in the self-efficacy of band directors may be responsible for the contrasting opinions present in the current data. In addition, self-efficacy may be responsible for the high level of neutral responses to several statements. Directors may believe they have little control over the structure or process of MPA, yet the event is executed on the District level. Therefore, members of the Northwest District of NCBA can have a significant impact on the event, particularly regarding judge vetting (NCBA, 2018). Yet, these differing opinions may also be a result of the demographics of the study; one third of participants reported that they had not received a Superior rating in the last years at MPA, and this demographic may align with the participants who consistently lack trust in the results or the process of MPA.

### **Purpose of MPA**

Overall, the results for Research Question 1 suggest a variety of ways in which band directors use the entire process of MPA as an evaluation tool. Nearly three quarters of the participants agreed on some level that they preferred to receive a rating with over one quarter agreeing strongly. Just over two-thirds of participants agreed on some level that they attend MPA primarily to hear the comments of the judges, yet nearly one quarter of participants agreed only somewhat. In addition, when asked if directors would rather attend MPA with comments only, there were contrasting responses. While nearly half of participants disagreed that they would rather attend MPA with comments only, over one quarter of participants agreed they would attend for comments only. These contrasting responses may be the result of the value band directors find in receiving ratings. While research has noted that events like MPA provide motivation for students to continue learning (Yahl, 2009; Gouzouasis & Henderson, 2011; Maggio, 2016), these results may suggest that directors believe MPA ratings are specifically responsible for increasing student motivation.

When participants were asked further about the use of judges' comments at MPA, over two-thirds of participants agreed on some level that the comments received at MPA are consistently beneficial for their students, and nearly two-thirds of participants agreed on some level that the comments impact future teaching strategies. Yet, only slightly over half of participants agreed on some level that students received the most benefit from the comments. The results suggest that MPA ratings are valued, yet the judges' comments may be more important in the participant's view for the directors than the students. Ratings may provide directors with the necessary motivation for students to work at their hardest (Gouzouasis & Henderson, 2011). Yet, as judges' comments serve to justify the ratings, paying close attention

to judges' recorded commentary may serve to create more trust in the process of MPA (Saunders & Holahan, 1997; Barry, 2010; Latimer et al., 2010).

While the participants of the study seem to be able to agree that MPA is a trustworthy assessment, there seems to be more disagreement about whether the assessment is valuable due to the ratings received or the comments received. While some directors find the ratings to be the purpose of MPA, other directors find more value in the judges' comments. These contrasting opinions could be the result of differing experiences on the purpose of a performance assessment. While some directors may celebrate the product of assessment, other directors may find a product-based view to have a negative impact on their students' self-image, particularly if the results of MPA are not favorable, and prefer to view MPA as a long-term process toward growth (Ames, 1992; Brown, 2005). Some directors may be following the advice of previous researchers to adjust summative assessments to their students by focusing on motivation and self-assessment. Directors may find that receiving comments only at MPA will help their students avoid negative self-image issues and increase student motivation and growth.

Participants gave contrasting opinions on how MPA reflects on teaching and learning. When participants responded to a statement regarding MPA ratings being a reflection of their personal abilities as directors, over one third of the participants agreed only somewhat while nearly one third disagreed on some level. There was a similarly contrasted response to a statement regarding whether MPA ratings reflect the health of a band program. Over half of participants disagreed on some level with the statement while nearly one quarter of participants agreed only somewhat. The results suggest that directors have varied views on the purpose of MPA assessment data. These responses are in alignment with the responses to the statements regarding the trustworthiness of MPA data, and may again be tied to band directors' self-

efficacy. While some directors view the non-curricular aspects of band directing, such as fundraising, instrumentation, and scheduling, under their control, others may feel helpless to their effects (Maggio, 2016).

### **Motivational effect**

Overall, the data suggest that MPA is utilized as a motivational tool for both students and directors. Nearly three quarters of the participants agreed on some level that MPA performances encouraged their students to work harder, with over half of participants choosing agree or strongly agree. Nearly two-thirds of participants agreed on some level that MPA performances encouraged the survey participants to work harder, although participants chose a less strong level of agreement with less than with the previous statement.

In addition, over half of participants agreed on some level that MPA ratings encouraged them to work harder, but nearly one third of participants disagreed on some level. Even more participants agreed on some level that MPA ratings encourage their students to work harder, with over one half of participants selecting “agree somewhat” or “agree”. Less than a quarter of participants disagreed the MPA ratings encouraged their students to work harder.

In a similar fashion, over half of the participants agreed on some level that their students thrived on the MPA experience, with a quarter of participants still maintaining disagreement on some level. In addition, over half of participants disagreed on some level that MPA had no bearing on how their students performed; although, nearly a quarter disagreed only somewhat and over a quarter agreed on some level.

The data from the present study suggests that MPA is a strong motivational tool for music educators, with ratings encouraging students to work hard toward a specific goal. This reflects previous researchers who found that while the process of state-sponsored performance

assessments were strong motivators for students and directors, directors found the process to be more stressful than students (Yahl, 2009). Consistently, the data from the present investigation indicate approximately a quarter of the participants think that MPA was not a strong motivational tool for themselves or their students. Previous research has suggested that the value of assessment may be found in band director self-efficacy and the presentation of the assessment to students (Brown, 2005; Maggio, 2016). Other researchers have described competitive assessments as detrimental to certain demographics (Ames, 1992; Johnson, 2010; Clementson, 2014). Band directors may find MPA a less effective process for their students if they approach MPA as a competitive, summative assessment rather than a tool to guide their students toward better musicianship. It is important for directors to frame the process and results of MPA in way that will best motivate their students to higher learning.

### **Individual Growth and Curricular Choices**

The results of the survey suggest that all of the students enrolled in band are assessed through MPA. Nearly three quarters of the participants agreed on some level that all of their students had the opportunity to experience MPA, with nearly two-thirds of participants either agreeing or agreeing strongly. A similar amount reported that they did not bring personally selected or auditioned ensembles to MPA. Over half of the participants thought MPA was conducive for individual growth, yet nearly a third did not. A similar amount of participants agreed on some level that their students performed at their highest level at MPA; yet, nearly a quarter of participants disagreed on some level. These results may suggest that some directors find MPA ineffective for motivating their students or they may find their students' anxiety to be paralyzing. Over 75% of the participants reported their students experiencing anxiety regarding

MPA. While this anxiety can be a source of motivation for some demographics, it may negatively affect other students (Ames, 1992; Brown, 2005; Johnson, 2010; Clementson, 2014)

While directors are consistently presenting MPA to their students as an assessment opportunity, it is important to note that nearly a third of the participants do not see MPA as a process fostering individual growth. MPA is an ensemble assessment, rather than an individual assessment, and this aligns with data gathered about MPA measuring students' mastery of skills. Similarly, a directors' self-efficacy has appeared in prior research studies to be key for performance assessments to be useful for directors and students (Maggio, 2016).

The results suggest that there are differing opinions about band curriculum. When asked if performance was the most important skill in their course, nearly half of participants had some level of agreement. Similarly, nearly half of the participants disagreed on some level that they felt pressure to teach performance skills over other musical concepts. Additionally, over half of the participants disagreed on some level that MPA forces them to make curricular decisions with which they do not always agree. Researchers and philosophers have noted the historical tendency of band directors to focus on performance while deemphasizing the creative skills of music, particularly at the secondary level (O'Neil, 1990; Allsup & Benedict, 2008; Mantie, 2012). Yet, this result is surprising considering the demographics of the study being skewed toward younger and less experienced directors. While MPA aligns with one piece of the recently revamped state and national curricular standards (NCDPI, 2010; SEADAE, 2014), success at MPA does not require much creativity on the students' part. MPA demands a high quality of performance for ensembles to achieve success, and band directors may attempt to streamline rehearsals by making more musical decisions without the input of students. Researchers have warned music educators of the legitimacy issues caused by the historical practice of being an

authoritarian music educator, suggesting instead that music educators provide democratic opportunities for learning (O'Neil, 1990; Allsup & Benedict, 2008; Mantie, 2012).

Responses to the open-ended question regarding suggested changes to MPA reveal frustrations with the judging process, with a third of participants mentioning the topic in their response. This response rate reflects earlier data in the survey, signifying that while the majority of participants trust the results of MPA, a consistent portion of the participants distrust the data they receive from the event. The participants' responses also frequently mentioned the educational purpose of MPA in their suggested changes. These responses may be the result of varying opinions on how MPA best serves our students; while some directors find the achievement of a strong product the primary success of MPA, other directors may use the data as one indicator of many assessments in the process of developing musicianship over the long-term. Of particular importance in these responses were the emphasis of ratings and the indirect competition it may encourage between ensembles. While competition may be an effective method for motivation for some populations of students, comparisons may present issues of self-image for other populations (Ames, 1992; Apple, 2003; Schmidt, 2005; Allsup & Benedict, 2008; Yahl, 2009; Johnson, 2010; Gouzouasis & Henderson, 2011; Matthews & Kitsantas, 2012; Maggio, 2016). Directors should take care to understand which process is most effective for their students to develop as musicians, and be adamant about presenting the event in that particular manner.

### **Motivating Factors for Attendance at MPA**

The second research question, "What are the motivating factors for band directors in the Northwest District to attend the Music Performance Adjudication?" sought to identify the

motivating factors for attendance at MPA. MPA is an important event in the school year for many directors. Yet, over a quarter of the participants agreed on some level that they would rather not attend MPA with over half of those responses being “strongly agree”. Also, while most participants attend MPA free from pressures from others, a quarter of participants felt there were pressures from others to attend the event. Attendance at MPA has been consistently high in the Northwest District over the past several years, with 45-50 bands participating each week, and the demographics of this survey report consistent attendance at MPA (NCBA, 2017). The results suggest that directors feel compelled to attend MPA against their own judgment.

Most participants reported feeling pressure from their colleagues to attend MPA, while few reported feeling pressure from their school or county administrators or the students or their parents. Additionally, nearly half of the participants agreed on some level that there is an expectation in their school community to receive high ratings at MPA. These sources of pressure can have the unintended consequence of forcing band directors into an assessment situation that may not best benefit their students. In addition, the pressure to succeed from outside sources can impact the way directors and students view the results, causing them to focus more on the product of the assessment rather than the process of learning.

Interestingly, when asked specifically if they felt pressure from outside sources to attend MPA, the participants had contrasting opinions; 32 participants reported they did not feel pressure from outside sources while 31 participants reported that they did feel pressure from outside sources. When asked to rank the sources of pressure, nearly two-thirds of participants ranked their colleagues in music as the top source of pressure to attend MPA while state supervisors, non-music education colleagues, parents and students were consistently ranked lower. These results suggest that while music educators understand and utilize the process of

MPA as an assessment, there may be a lack of understanding for non-music educators and stakeholders. This lack of understanding of the process of MPA in the non-music education community can isolate music educators and create issues when trying to use MPA to justify their courses in the current educational climate of student and teacher accountability.

When asked if MPA ratings determine their personal success in the field of music education, the results continued to represent contrasting opinions with nearly equal populations agreeing and disagreeing. These results suggest differing understandings of the results of MPA. While some directors may be using MPA results as a method of assessing teacher effectiveness, other directors disagree or may use multiple methods to fully assess their own teacher effectiveness. These contrasting opinions may be the result of the demographic surveyed, particularly regarding years of experience. While younger directors may see MPA as a pathway to career success, more experienced or established directors may not view MPA in the same way. Therefore, some directors would feel a higher level of stress and pressure to not only attend MPA, but to consistently achieve high ratings (Yahl, 2009).

### **Utilization of MPA**

The third research question was “In what ways do band directors in the Northwest District utilize the Music Performance Adjudication to foster growth in their students?”. Most comments described the positive learning opportunities MPA provided, the positive value of MPA as an assessment, and the positive value of motivation. These results are consistent with previous research that found state-sponsored performance assessments to be a valuable part of the yearly curriculum (Yahl, 2009; Maggio, 2016).

However, there were notable negative effects mentioned as well. Participants specifically mentioned the negative effect of anxiety on their students, the negative effects of the culture of MPA, and the negative effects of ratings. It is important to note that while some participants listed anxiety as a negative effect on student learning, other directors believed anxiety to have a positive effect. These results may be connected to the self-efficacy of directors, providing some with the confidence to accomplish tasks under pressure while other directors feel stifled by the same pressure (Maggio, 2016). It is important for directors to understand how their personal approach to performance assessments will affect their students' learning. Previous research has noted the added stresses directors experience regarding MPA (Yahl, 2009), yet directors must understand the power they have to interpret and present the results of MPA to their students in a positive, constructive manner.

While band directors reported favorable trust in the process of MPA, issues still remain with the extraneous factors affecting the results, including the effect of director self-efficacy and the negative consequences of assessment on certain demographics. Additionally, the pressures surrounding the event may cause issues with assessment presentation, result interpretation, and curriculum focus. While for some directors these pressures may be a positive source of motivation, other directors may believe these pressures to negatively effect their students' learning experiences.

### **Limitations of the Study**

Due to the specific demographic studied, researchers should be hesitant to generalize this research data. The participants of this particular study were chosen as a case study of the inhabitants of a specific region, as they perceive a specific event. As a result, demographic data

are not representative of music educators as a whole. In addition, it is important to note that while the survey received an acceptable level of participation ( $n = 75$ , 64%), some of these surveys were returned with only partial responses. Partial data was included in the survey results.

This data is also specific to the Northwest District due to the variations in state-sponsored assessments. The Music Performance Adjudication exists as it has been described only in the state of North Carolina. Although other states have similar state-sponsored performance assessments, they appear under different names and under a different set of by-laws. In addition, each district of the NCBA is responsible for the logistics of their own MPA. While these events are governed by statewide by-laws, there are variations between the MPA events of different districts of the NCBA.

### **Implications and Suggestions for Research**

The results of this study consistently highlight conflicting opinions on several aspects of the MPA experience, particularly the effect of extraneous factors on the results of MPA. Previous researchers have discussed the connection between self-efficacy and the utilization of state-sponsored performance assessments in the classroom (Clementson, 2014; Maggio, 2016). It is important for directors to understand the effect they may have on their students' learning when attending a performance assessment. If directors approach MPA with low self-efficacy, there may be a lack of trust in the results of MPA, and this low self-efficacy may be reflected in the students' interpretation of the results. Further research regarding the effect of band directors' self-efficacy on the way assessments are perceived to impact student learning would be beneficial.

Directors should also be cognizant of the impact MPA might have on their students. While some participants reported that students had a high level of motivation when performing at MPA, others reported a negative effect on student self-image. Band directors must evaluate their approach and interpretation of the results to determine if receiving MPA ratings will be beneficial for their students. If receiving MPA ratings creates issues of self-image and motivation for students, the effect of the assessment to create growth and musical learning may be compromised (Ames, 1990; Brown, 2005; Johnson, 2010; Clementson, 2014). Further research regarding how specific demographics of students and directors view and utilize MPA would be beneficial for directors to best tailor the assessment to their students.

Performance assessments should be used as a tool to encourage growth and further motivate students to learn. If directors believe this outcome is no longer, they should feel compelled to adjust the assessment to better serve their students (Brown, 2005). Yet, the data from this survey reflect that participants feel a notable amount of pressure from colleagues in music to attend MPA, sometimes in conflict with their own feelings. The results of this survey also suggest that some directors value the outcomes of MPA on a personal level, believing positive results to further their careers. These sources of pressure regarding the outcomes of MPA should be noted and researched further to understand fully the effect it may have on student learning and motivation.

Finally, the results from this survey reflect contrasting opinions regarding the priorities of the music curriculum. While multiple agencies and philosophers have noted the importance of musical skills outside of the realm of performance (O'Neil, 1990; Reimer, 2003; Allsup & Benedict, 2008; NCDPI, 2010; Mantie, 2012; SEADAE, 2014), this research may not be consistently practiced in the classroom. The pressure to succeed at MPA may cause music

educators to deemphasize creativity and student choice in the classroom in favor of the authoritarian band director personality, attempting to utilize class time as a simple rehearsal rather than exploiting learning opportunities. Further research and discussion regarding the curriculum emphasized in performance-based courses would be beneficial to encourage music courses toward a more comprehensive curriculum, inclusive of creativity and democratic learning opportunities.

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# APPENDIX A: UMCIRB APPROVAL LETTER

3/25/18, 3:50 PM



**EAST CAROLINA UNIVERSITY**  
**University & Medical Center Institutional Review Board**  
4N-64 Brody Medical Sciences Building· Mail Stop 682  
600 Moye Boulevard · Greenville, NC 27834  
Office **252-744-2914** · Fax **252-744-2284** ·  
[www.ecu.edu/ORIC/irb](http://www.ecu.edu/ORIC/irb)

## Notification of Exempt Certification

From: Social/Behavioral IRB  
To: [Melanie Watson](#)  
CC: [Cynthia Wagoner](#)  
Date: 1/16/2018  
Re: [UMCIRB 17-002765](#)  
Band Directors' Perceptions of Music Performance Adjudication

I am pleased to inform you that your research submission has been certified as exempt on 1/14/2018. This study is eligible for Exempt Certification under category #2.

It is your responsibility to ensure that this research is conducted in the manner reported in your application and/or protocol, as well as being consistent with the ethical principles of the Belmont Report and your profession.

This research study does not require any additional interaction with the UMCIRB unless there are proposed changes to this study. Any change, prior to implementing that change, must be submitted to the UMCIRB for review and approval. The UMCIRB will determine if the change impacts the eligibility of the research for exempt status. If more substantive review is required, you will be notified within five business days.

The Chairperson (or designee) does not have a potential for conflict of interest on this study.

---

IRB00000705 East Carolina U IRB #1 (Biomedical) IORG0000418  
IRB00003781 East Carolina U IRB #2 (Behavioral/SS) IORG0000418

## APPENDIX B: SURVEY

### Demographics

---

Including the current academic year, how many years have you been teaching band?

---

Which answer best describes your school setting?

---

- Rural
- Urban
- Suburban
- Other

About how large is your school?

---

- 0-500 students
- 501-1,000 students
- 1,001-1,500 students
- 1,501-2,000 students
- 2,001+

What best describes your school's band budget, either through fundraising, school funds, county funds, or grants?

---

- \$0-\$1,000 per academic year
- \$1,001-\$5,000 per academic year
- \$5,001-\$10,000 per academic year
- \$10,001+

Including the current academic year, how many years have you been at your current school?

---

How many years have you attended Music Performance Adjudication (MPA)?

---

In the last three years, how many Superior ratings have you received?

---

What is your primary instrument?

---

What is the highest level of education you have completed?

---

- Bachelors
- Masters
- Doctoral

### With which gender do you identify?

---

- Male
- Female
- Nonbinary

### What is your ethnicity?

---

- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Black or African American
- Hispanic
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- Multiple
- White
- Other

### Perceptions of MPA

---

Please select the best response.

---

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
My ensemble has consistently received a fair and accurate	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

rating at  
MPA.

The results  
of MPA  
accurately  
describe the  
abilities of  
my  
ensembles.

The results  
of MPA are  
consistent  
between  
events and  
districts.

MPA  
determines  
my  
students'  
mastery of  
performance  
skills.

An MPA  
rating is  
more  
influenced  
by the band  
director's  
choices  
than the  
students'  
efforts.

There are  
factors other  
than my  
students'  
performance  
that  
determine  
my band's  
rating at  
MPA.

My band's financial situation has a significant impact on my MPA rating.

I often disagree with the comments or rating I receive at MPA.

I see major flaws in the process of MPA.

Please select the best response.

---

Strongly disagree    Disagree    Somewhat disagree    Neither agree nor disagree    Somewhat agree    Agree    Strongly agree

I prefer to receive a rating at MPA.

I attend MPA primarily to hear the comments of the judges.

I attend

MPA primarily to discover where my band is rated in comparison to other ensembles.

I would rather receive comments only at MPA.

MPA ratings are a reflection of my abilities as a band director.

The comments I receive at MPA are consistently helpful and beneficial for my students.

The comments I receive at MPA consistently have an impact on my future teaching strategies.

You can

determine the health of a band program through MPA ratings.

My students receive the most benefit from the judge's comments.

I have withheld judge recordings, sheets, or ratings from my students in the past.

Please select the best response.

---

Strongly disagree   Disagree   Somewhat disagree   Neither agree nor disagree   Somewhat agree   Agree   Strongly agree

My students work harder when they know they are performing at MPA.

I work harder when I know my band is performing at MPA.

MPA has no bearing on the level at which my students perform.

I attend MPA primarily to appease the pressures from others.

MPA ratings encourage me to work harder.

MPA ratings encourage my students to work harder.

I would rather not attend MPA.

My students

thrive on the MPA experience.

Please select the best response.

---

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree
All of my students have the opportunity to experience MPA.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I only bring auditioned/personally-selected ensembles to MPA.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Performance is the most important skill in my course.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel pressure to consistently teach performance skills over other musical concepts.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The demands of MPA limit the time I can teach other musical concepts.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Participation in MPA forces me to make curricular choices with which I do not always agree.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My students consistently perform	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

at their highest level at MPA.

The format of MPA is not conducive to fostering the individual musical growth in my students.

Please select the best response.

---

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
I feel pressure from my school or county administrators to attend MPA.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel pressure from my colleagues to attend MPA.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel pressure from my students or their parents to attend MPA.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My students experience anxiety when performing at MPA.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Preparing for MPA is my least favorite activity of the year.

MPA ratings largely determine my personal success in the field of music education.

There is an expectation in the school community (parents, students, administrators, graduates) that I receive high ratings at MPA.

MPA is the most important performance of the year for my students.

### Motivating factors to attend MPA.

Do you feel pressure from outside sources to attend MPA?

- Yes  
 No

Please drag and drop the following options to rank them as the sources of the most pressure (1) to the sources of the least pressure (8).

---

- Principal/Administrators
- County Administrators
- State Supervisors
- Parents
- Colleagues in music education
- Students
- Colleagues at my school
- Other

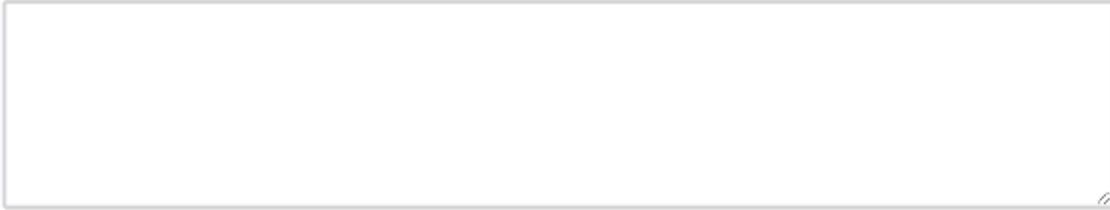
### **Open-Ended Questions**

In what ways does MPA impact the growth of your students, both positively and negatively?

---

What changes would you like to see in the MPA process that would best benefit your students?

---



Powered by Qualtrics

## APPENDIX C: EMAIL SCRIPT

You are being invited to participate in a research study titled “Band Directors’ Perceptions of Music Performance Adjudication” being conducted by Melanie H. Watson, a graduate student at East Carolina University in the School of Music. The goal is to survey 100 individuals online. The survey will take approximately 5-8 minutes to complete. It is hoped that this information will assist us to better understand the impact of state-sponsored music performance events. Your responses will be kept confidential and no data will be released or used with your identification attached. Your participation in the research is voluntary. You may choose not to answer any or all questions, and you may stop at any time. There is no penalty for not taking part in this research study. Please call Melanie Watson at 828-632-7565 for any research related questions or the Office of Research Integrity & Compliance (ORIC) at 252-744-2914 for questions about your rights as a research participant.

