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Music Teachers' Perceptions of Their Involvement in the Implementation Processes of  
Individualized Education Programs

By

Karen S. Stafford

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B.M.E., University of Central Missouri, 1983

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Submitted to the graduate degree program in Music Education and Music Therapy and the  
Graduate Faculty of the University of Kansas in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the  
degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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**Music Teachers' Perceptions of Their Involvement in the  
Implementation Processes of Individualized Education Programs**

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### **Abstract**

The purpose of the study was to report on music educators' perceptions of their involvement in the implementation processes of Individualized Education Programs. This included information about and participation in the IEP meetings and subsequent reception of communication of IEP documentation for the purpose of making appropriate adaptations for students with special needs in the music classroom. The study was conducted using a survey containing 7 Likert-type queries, two demographic questions, and an open-ended response option. Data from the survey were analyzed using descriptive statistics, with the open-ended responses examined through coding and categorization to divide responses into themes with accompanying patterns. Overall, results indicated participants received information about upcoming IEP meetings and attended them at varying degrees or used alternative means to provide information to be used to determine adaptations. However, most did not request to attend meetings, even though those who did reported a belief that they would be welcomed. Participants also received IEP documentation, although reports of updates and details in the paperwork varied. Even though most participants utilized IEP paperwork to make decisions on adaptations, some reported difficulties making the necessary changes. Results implied professional participants and special education personnel did communicate with each other about adaptations to varying degrees, generally with good working relationships. By highlighting the experiences of music teachers had with their students' IEP processes, this study may possibly contribute to music educator practices regarding the full implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act mandates and more focused research on how successful implementation might take place.

**Keywords:** Individualized Education Plan, IEP, IEP process, music education, special education, IDEA, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, IEP meeting, paraprofessionals, IEP documentation

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## Table of Contents

Abstract.....	iii
Acknowledgements.....	iv
List of Tables .....	ix
Chapter One: Introduction to the Study .....	1
The Effect of Special Education Legislation on Education in General .....	3
IDEA and Its Potential Impact on Music Classrooms .....	6
Statement of the Problem.....	9
Purpose of the Study .....	9
Definition of Terms.....	9
Chapter Two: Review of the Literature .....	12
Music Teachers’ Experiences with IEP Meetings .....	13
Documentation and Ongoing Information Provided to Music Teachers .....	16
IEP documentation.....	16
Information received about adaptations.....	18
Job satisfaction and IEP experiences .....	20
Summary of the Review of Literature .....	20
Purpose of the Study .....	21
Chapter Three: Research Design and Methodology .....	22
Research Design: Survey .....	22
Closed survey questions.....	23
Open-ended survey question.....	23
Participants.....	23
Target population.....	23
Survey participants and contact process. ....	24
Procedure .....	24
Establishing validity of the survey.....	24
Establishing reliability of the survey .....	25
Survey structure and dissemination .....	25
Survey data collection and analysis .....	26
Role of the Researcher .....	27

Delimitations.....	28
Limitations .....	28
Chapter Four: Results .....	29
Data Collection .....	29
Survey demographic information .....	30
Research question one.....	31
Research question two .....	31
Research question three .....	32
Research question four.....	33
Research question five .....	34
Themes in Open-Ended Responses.....	36
Involvement in meetings.....	36
Adaptations in the music classroom. ....	37
Documentation.....	39
Communication between the music teachers and special education personnel.....	40
Chapter Summary .....	41
Chapter Five: Discussion and Conclusions.....	43
Discussions .....	43
Sample count.....	43
Research question one.....	44
Research question two .....	45
Research question three .....	46
Research question four.....	47
Research question five .....	48
Conclusions.....	54
Implications.....	55
Recommendations.....	57
References.....	59
Appendix A.....	71
Appendix B.....	81
Appendix C.....	82



Appendix D..... 83  
Appendix E ..... 85

**List of Tables**

Table 1: Participants by Region .....	30
Table 2: Participants' Years of Experience .....	31
Table 3: Response of Frequency of Music Teachers being Informed about/Invited to IEP Meetings.....	31
Table 4: Response of the Frequency of Music Teacher Attendance at IEP Meetings.....	32
Table 5: Frequency of Participant Requests to Attend IEP Meetings .....	32
Table 6: Participants' Perceptions on Feeling Welcomed Upon Requiring to Attend IEP Meetings.....	33
Table 7: Frequency of Participants' Receipt of IEP Documentation.....	34
Table 8: Frequency of Responses to Participants' Referring to IEP Documentation for Adaptation Guidance .....	35
Table 9: Frequency of Responses to Participants' Discussions with Special Education Personnel .....	35
Table 10: Summary of Means and Standard Deviations of Survey Questions.....	36

## **Chapter One: Introduction to the Study**

For more than a century, there have been significant changes to educational services for students with disabilities (Adamek & Darrow, 2005). However, until the mid-1970s, the education of students with special needs was left to the discretion of the local school districts. This latitude potentially allowed some school decision makers to reject a student's entry to the district or to not provide adequate adaptations (Extension of Education of the Handicapped Act, Part 10, 1975; Martin, Martin, & Terman, 1996). As a result of various court actions brought forth by advocates for students with disabilities, Congress eventually responded with The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EAHCA) of 1975. These two pieces of legislation outlined regulations for teachers of all disciplines who worked with students in special education (Martin et al., 1996).

EAHCA was the catalyst for admitting students with special needs into all classrooms, including music. As part of this act, Congress outlined the provisions for the Individualized Education Program (IEP). The IEP was a written statement for students with special needs developed by representatives of local educational agencies who were qualified to provide specially designed instruction, along with the guidelines for processes and goals to meet students' needs (Education for All Handicapped Children Act, 1975). In 1990, the law was reauthorized as Public Law 101-476 and renamed the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 2003). The reauthorization was developed to incorporate the following changes: (a) the term "individuals" replaced the term "children," (b) the phrase "persons with disabilities" replaced the term "handicapped," (c) transition plans were put into place to prepare students for the workforce or additional education after secondary

school, and (d) autism and traumatic brain injury were added to the list of disabilities (Cartwright, 1995).

These federal mandates were met with some concern. During the EAHCA era, Rinaldi (1976) expressed the following: “My concerns regarding the individualized education program are (1) that staff development must occur first and that (2) we may end up with something that is mostly a paper compliance rather than real compliance” (p. 173). With the implementation of IDEA in 1990 (IDEA, 2003), misgivings continued to mount. In particular, teachers expressed reservations about providing legally executed IEPs, lack of time for writing and implementing the IEPs, difficulties with formulating successful team meetings, and skepticism about realistically meeting goals and benchmarks (Huefner, 2000; Rotter, 2014). Similar concerns were reflected in Senator Ted Kennedy’s opening statement during a Congressional hearing when he announced, “We need to ensure that teachers are well-trained and have the classroom supports to do their jobs right” (*IDEA: What’s Good for Kids? What Works for Schools?* 2002, p.2). Changes continued to occur, perhaps due to the concerns similar to those expressed by Rinaldi and Kennedy.

Public Law 101-476, or IDEA, included revisions to ensure more thorough coverage of rights and benefits for both students and parents, as well as provisions for more funding (Yell & Drasgow, 1999). Since its implementation, hearings for modifications to IDEA occurred to address the needs for assistive devices, IEP processing and implementation, personnel for the IEP team, and provisions for highly qualified teachers (*IDEA: What's Good for Kids? What Works for Schools?*, 2002; *Reforming the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act: Recommendations from the President’s Commission on Excellence in Special Education*, 2002).

EAHCA and IDEA both emphasized six basic principles regarding the education of students with special needs: (a) free and appropriate education, (b) non-discriminatory placement, (c) placement in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE), (d) the IEP, (e) parental rights, and (f) due process. Since 1975, although modifications and changes have been made, these six principles underpinned EAHCA and IDEA since 1975 (Hourigan, 2007).

The details of the IEP as included in IDEA stipulated that teachers involved with students in special services were privy to the processes and information in these individualized plans. An IEP team could consist of more than one teacher in the regular education environment who was knowledgeable about the child and his/her specific needs (IDEA, 2013a-f). IDEA also mandated that the student's IEP information needed to be accessible in a timely manner to any staff member responsible for its implementation (IDEA, 2013a-f).

Furthermore, Congress added the arts as core academic subjects within the act (IDEA, 2013), emphasizing that the arts were a critical part of the whole education of children. The addition of the arts allowed all teachers, including music educators, to potentially be involved with all students with an IEP in the classroom. Music teachers, along with other education personnel, now had the legal responsibilities to contribute to IEP decisions and then adjust their practices when working with and assessing students with special needs.

### **The Effect of Special Education Legislation on Education in General**

With the advent of the LRE, students with special needs were placed in regular classrooms outside of the self-contained special education rooms as much as possible, only to be removed if the severity of the disability warranted it (Rinaldi, 1976). Various studies during the period of EAHCA, but prior to the changes in IDEA, were conducted to review teacher opinion and practice—both of general educators and special education personnel—on what was known

as mainstreaming, or including students of special needs in a general classroom to meet least restrictive environment guidelines (Baker & Zigmond, 1990; Coates, 1989; Gersten, Wlaker, & Darch, 1988; Houck & Rogers, 1994; Semmel, Abernathy, Butera, & Lesar, 1991). Comparisons of these studies yielded somewhat contradictory results in teacher attitudes, especially regarding self-contained classrooms versus some form of integration. General classroom teacher opinions varied as to whether mainstreaming in the general classroom was truly the LRE for some of these students.

Some generalists—those teaching in regular elementary classrooms—supported more time for students with special needs in self-contained classrooms than in the general classroom and were reluctant to use a team approach with special education personnel (Baker & Zigmond, 1990; Coates, 1989; Semmel, et al., 1991). However, other researchers indicated that educators and students themselves felt mainstreaming was beneficial and should continue (York, Vandercook, MacDonald, Heise-Neff, & Caughey, 1991). Still other studies were inconclusive, with mixed results from participants regarding their support for mainstreaming (Gersten et al., 1988; Houck & Rogers, 1994; Williams, Fox, Thousand, & Fox, 1990).

Researchers posited several reasons for varied teacher attitudes towards mainstreaming, the first of which centered on concerns for teacher efficacy and efficiency (Gersten et al., 1988; Semmel et al., 1991; Soodak & Podell, 1993). For example, Gersten, et al. (1988) theorized that teachers who had higher academic expectations for students appeared to be more resistant to mainstreaming, possibly due to the desire to have the most efficient and focused instructional time for their other students. Second, the perceived roles of the general educator and special educator were not often clearly delineated (Houck & Rogers, 1994; Williams, Fox, Thousand, & Fox, 1990). In particular, special educators during the EAHCA era of 1975-1990 did not often

regard general educators as sufficiently trained to provide students in special education the guidance and support needed for success (Houck & Rogers, 1994).

Various studies relayed teacher perceptions of the potential shortcomings of IDEA's inclusion approach, suggesting several issues. First, one study highlighted teacher frustrations with slower academic gains of the students with IEPs (Soodak, Podell, & Lehman, 1998). Second, issues with the timing of collaboration and content of meetings between classroom teachers and special education personnel (Soodak et al., 1998; Villa, Thousand, Meyers, & Nevin, 1996), and placement (Kauffman, 1999) also surfaced among the literature. Two studies (Dildine, 2010; Kronos, 2016) reflected data that suggested general educators felt they had little input in the IEP meetings and had no say in goals or adaptations. Furthermore, classroom teachers and special education teachers alike were unsure about their respective roles (Finnerty, 2015; Gaulding, 2015; Kurth & Keegan, 2012; Lee, Wehmeyer, Soukup, & Palmer, 2010; Spriggs, 2008; Williams, et al., 1990).

Additionally, other studies focused on issues regarding various adaptations, or educational adjustments. The data from these studies reflected that special education personnel were by and large more positive about making adaptations than were general educators, especially student-specific changes (Cameron, 2014; Devine, 2014; Kurth & Keegan, 2012; Spriggs, 2008; Tortu, 2015). In the review of the literature, theories surfaced that suggested general classroom teachers did not understand the difference between accommodations (educational changes that do not alter academic expectations) and modifications (changes that alter expected outcomes) and sometimes were not realistic when judging the success of any adaptations used (Cameron, 2014; Devine, 2014; Lipscomb, 2012). In some instances, the research showed that teachers felt adaptations either did not help or used these in a broader

classroom application rather than on an individual basis (Davis, 2011; Graham, et al., 2008; Kurth & Keegan., 2012; Tortu, 2015).

### **IDEA and Its Potential Impact on Music Classrooms**

During the school year 1975-76, approximately four million students—8.4% of total school enrollments—received Public Law 94-142 services. Based on the latest statistics at the time of the current study, this number increased to 6.6 million students —13% of the total public school enrollment—in 2014-15 under IDEA. Of all students ages 6-21 who were served by IDEA, the number who spent 80% or more of their school day in general classes as opposed to self-contained classrooms increased from 33% in 1990-91 to 61% in 2013, according to the latest data. Based on these statistics, combined with the mandates of IDEA stating arts as core subject areas and inclusion in the LREs, one might posit that many students in special education would be involved in music at some point in their public school experiences (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2017a).

Due to the inferred involvement students with special needs have in music classes, it would be prudent to provide the general impact music learning could have on the educational needs of students in special education and to examine what connections music might have to academic learning objectives. The extant literature suggested that music can contribute positively to academic reading outcomes for all students. For example, Colwell (1994) and Darrow, et al. (2009) noted that the use of song during reading increased participation and attention levels. Register, Darrow, and Standley (2007), in a study with second graders, concluded that implementing a short-term music curriculum in conjunction with reading could result in increased comprehension, wording decoding, and word knowledge in students with specific reading disabilities.



Conclusions in other research also indicated that music classes can provide predictors of potential reading delays. David, Wade-Woolley, Kirby, and Smithrim (2007) noted that rhythmic abilities were predictors of phonological awareness, or breaking down language into smaller segments. In a similar vein, Overy, Nicolson, Fawcett, and Clarke (2003) concluded through their research with students with dyslexia that a lack of music timing skills could be a possible predictor of reading difficulties.

According to research by Caria, Venuti, and de Falco (2011), music activates the cortical and subcortical brain regions, which are known to be involved in emotional processing. Listening to music has been found to improve mood with students with special needs, often a focus point for individuals on the autism spectrum disorder (Katagiri, 2009; Kern, Wolery, & Aldridge, 2007; Kim, Wigram, & Gold, 2008; Lim, 2010; Wan, Demaine, Zipse, Norton, & Schlaug, 2010). Katagiri's (2009) study, in particular, focused on the connection between emotions and improved social skills. By utilizing background music to denote whether participants responded to four emotional trigger cards correctly, Katagiri concluded music was a mitigating factor in assisting these students to decode emotional signals successfully.

Singing, playing instruments, and moving offered authentic learning experiences that provided connections to emotion, along with authentic skills practice in academics, and retention of information (Hansen, Bernstorff, & Stuber, 2007). As Jenson (2001) stated, "music making enhances the systems that allow us to perceive and respond appropriately to a world rich with emotions and complex social structures" (p. 32). In other words, active music making strengthens the brain functions necessary to process our environment, analyze, and react accordingly. One can then potentially conclude that all of these cognitive and emotional results would benefit students with learning and emotional delays.

By examining the research focused on the positive outcomes of the use of music with reading, language, and behavioral concerns, one could pose an argument for the importance of the music teacher bringing his or her knowledge to the IEP process to include music-based strategies for assisting learners with special needs. However, music teachers need to have information about and access to the IEP meetings to contribute to students' learning; they also need to receive IEP documentation to provide consistent strategies with other educators, all to improve student outcomes. With this documentation, music teachers can apply strategies that would incorporate the very music activities that enhance learning and emotional well-being.

Special educators are important liaisons and advocates to ensure the IEP goals and outcomes are met by all involved with students in special education, music teachers as well as classroom teachers. In a study by Douglas-Kline (2015), which focused on the perception special education personnel had of music teachers' roles and involvement in the IEP process, results from 181 special educators indicated that the majority of special education teachers actually preferred music teachers to be a part of the initial planning meeting. However, the data revealed that some music teachers were not invited because the special education personnel perceived the music teachers as having a lack of plan time, affecting their ability to attend. Most of the respondents in the survey indicated that communication with music teachers was indirect through secondary sources such as paraprofessionals or aides who attended music classes with the students. The researcher also reported that special education personnel did not always think music teachers were open to procedures or mandates. Furthermore, some of the participants did not feel input from music teachers would be beneficial. Douglas-Kline's (2015) study highlighted issues in communicating with and including music teachers in the IEP processes, ultimately affecting consistency in attention to students with special needs.

## **Statement of the Problem**

Based on the mandates of IDEA (IDEA, 2003), along with the examination of the literature which highlighted the benefits active music making can have for the academic and social gains of children with special needs, one could draw the conclusion that music education can be a crucial part of the education of a child with special needs. Therefore, music teachers can contribute music-based solutions to help meet individualized goals for these children. According to McCord (1999), administrators and special education personnel traditionally viewed music class as an area in school where students with various disabilities and needs could better integrate with other students; however, this implies that the music teacher could better serve students if he/she is involved in the IEP process. That involvement would be a result of intentional information sharing to include music teachers in the IEP process, seeking professional contributions from music teachers on students' needs, and disseminating IEP documentation to all teachers, including music educators, to assist children with special needs.

## **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study was to report on music educators' perceptions of their involvement in the implementation processes of Individualized Education Programs. This included information about and participation in the IEP meetings and subsequent reception of communication of IEP documentation for the purpose of making appropriate adaptations for students with special needs in the music classroom.

## **Definition of Terms**

The following terms and definitions are used throughout the study:

Accommodations: Adaptations set with the objective of a student achieving the same accomplishments as other students with additional support, such as changes in timing

requirements, demonstration of understanding, or extra peer support (Adamek & Darrow, 2005; Hallahan, Kauffman, & Pullen, 2012).

**Adaptations:** Any adjustment in the environment, instruction, or materials for learning that enhances participation and performance (Adamek & Darrow, 2005; Hallahan, et al., 2012).

**Inclusion:** Placing students with disabilities in a regular classroom with their nondisabled age and grade peers for a full day, guided by the provisions of the Least Restrictive Environment objectives with support services provided in the classroom (Darrow, 1999).

**Individualized Education Program (IEP):** A written statement for students with special needs that outlines specially designed instruction that is developed through meetings of qualified educational representatives and the parents (The Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975).

**Least Restrictive Environment (LRE):** The teaching environment that allows, to the fullest extent appropriate, students with disabilities to be educated with students who are not disabled. Removal of students with special needs occurs only when the severity of the disability prohibits satisfactory educational results (The Education for All Education Act of 1975).

**Modifications:** An adaptation used when a student's goals are not expected to be at the level of their peers because he/she is not able to complete assignments at the same academic level as other students due to the severity of disabilities. An example would be providing a student with fewer questions on an exam than other students (Adamek & Darrow, 2005; Hallahan, et al., 2012).

**Music Educator:** For the purposes of the study, a music educator is a music teacher hired by public or private school districts to teach music classes to a population of students.

**Paraprofessionals:** Individuals who work to assist in areas of social, personal, and instructional needs. These individuals work under the supervision of licensed teachers or related services personnel. Paraprofessionals are considered adaptations under IDEA (Adamek & Darrow, 2010).

**Self-contained Classroom:** A classroom where the special education teacher is responsible for the instruction of all academic subjects (Spencer, 2013).

**Special Education:** Specially designed instruction to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability (The Education for All Education Act of 1975).

**Specific Learning Disability:** Disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or using language that can impede various learning functions (National Center for Education Statistics, 2017b).

**Specials:** For the purposes of the study, specials refer to any class of specific topics outside the scope of the general classroom such as music, art, physical education, or technology.

## Chapter Two: Review of the Literature

Beginning with the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EAHCA) and continuing with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), federal policy outlining requirements for students with special needs has had implications for music teachers. The heart of these requirements is found in the development of the Individual Education Program, or IEP.

An IEP is required for all public school students who receive special education and related services (U.S. Department of Education, 2007). The IEP process is the catalyst for teachers, parents, administrators, students, and other relevant school personnel to work together to improve education for students with disabilities.

Any person involved in the education of a student with special needs has the opportunity to attend IEP meetings to discuss and collaborate on the students' unique situations. Each team member contributes his or her particular expertise to design an education program to aid the students throughout their education. The IEP document serves as the guide to follow when determining the best course of action in individual education situations (U.S. Department of Education, 2007).

IDEA does not have a set template for documentation; however, it is a flexible guide. Although IDEA stipulates what needs to be in the documentation, state and local school systems can include additional information to indicate they have met certain aspects of state and federal law. In general, the following information is required that should be important to music teachers: (a) present levels of academic achievement, (b) annual goals, (c) special services (such as therapists), (d) adaptations, (e) assessment requirements, and (f) Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) stipulations (Ritter-Cantesanu, 2014). By law, this document is to be reviewed annually to make any necessary changes to improve the student's education. The student also receives a

Triennial Review to obtain a completely new assessment/evaluation to determine if services are still needed (Ritter-Cantesanu, 2014). Because these services include all the academic experiences of the student, music teachers are expected to comply with IDEA standards, as they are, in effect, members of the IEP team (Hourigan, 2007). This means music educators are eligible to participate in any or all of the IEP process to contribute their expertise in matters relating to the music room and address any possible strengths or weaknesses in music that can contribute to the student's other academic achievements.

To gain a better understanding of music teachers' backgrounds with IEPs over the time spans of both EAHCA and IDEA, the literature review includes summaries of the following perceptions and experiences from a variety of investigations: (a) music teachers' access to and participation in IEP meetings and (b) documentation and ongoing information from special education personnel, including information about adaptations. The purpose of this review is to allow for a better understanding of music teachers' experiences regarding all years of special education federal legislation.

### **Music Teachers' Experiences with IEP Meetings**

Alvin (1965) stated, "The musician who wishes to make a significant contribution to the life of a handicapped child should learn enough about him to become an efficient member of the team" (p.1). This would imply that music teachers participate in the process by attending IEP meetings to learn about the child, his/her needs, and appropriate ways to assist the child.

According to Hammel (2001), music teachers believed that definitive identification of their roles in the IEP process was vital and necessary to make changes to any adaptations outlined in the IEP as needed for music classrooms.

Based on IDEA mandates, collaboration was essential for the IEP process, especially to improve a teacher's knowledge of adaptive strategies and documentation interpretation (McCord & Watts, 2010; Scott, Jellison, Chappell, & Standridge, 2007). The initial step in collaboration would be the IEP meeting, which would involve other staff members who work with the child, plus the parents and other adults vested in the education of the child. However, research had indicated existing complications which posed problems for including music teachers in IEP consultations and affected attendance (Delaney, 2016; Frisque, Niebur, & Humphreys, 1994; Hammel & Hourigan, 2011b; McCord & Watts, 2006; Scott, et. al., 2007; VanWeelden & Whipple, 2014; Vinciguerra, 2016).

Because IDEA stipulated that anyone who worked in an educational capacity with a special education student could be part of the IEP team, a music teacher could contribute to goals for the music classroom collaboratively with special education experts. A search of the literature yielded few results regarding music teachers who actually participated in IEP meetings, and what role they played in these meetings. Rather, most of the focus of these studies was whether participants knew about meetings and if they were able to attend, with a number of music teachers reporting inconsistent experiences (Darrow, 1999; Delaney, 2016; Frisque, et al., 1994; Hammel & Hourigan, 2011b; McCord & Watts, 2010; Scott, et. al., 2007; VanWeelden & Whipple, 2014; Vinciguerra, 2016).

In their interviews with 43 music educators, Scott, et al. (2007) reported that the participants who were invited to IEP meetings indicated they usually received late notice, allowing for little or no preparation time to gather data to thoroughly provide input. In addition, McCord and Watts (2006) found that a major challenge to attending IEP meetings was finding time during the school day. Meetings were often scheduled while the music educator had classes



and arrangements were seldom made for someone else to substitute. In order for music specialists to be more involved in the IEP meeting and planning process, administrative support was crucial to assist in facilitating scheduling issues among all parties involved (McCord & Watts, 2006).

Hammel and Hourigan (2011b) emphasized that music teachers were often departmentalized, which made it difficult for them to become active contributors to the IEP process. Participants found that music teachers had little involvement with special education teachers in the IEP process and in placement decisions, especially based on abilities for success in performance classes (Frisque, et al., 1994; VanWeelden & Whipple, 2014). McCord and Watts (2010) noted that the majority of their participants were not informed about IEP meetings, which meant they would be missing out on being part of the group discussion with parents and special education personnel regarding adaptations for the music classroom.

In a study of five secondary instrumental instructors, Vinciguerra (2016) reached similar conclusions, noting that his participants were rarely involved in IEP planning processes, including meetings, except to fill out observation forms on various students throughout the year. In another study, Delaney (2016) reported that 65% of her 31 instrumental teacher participants never had been involved in IEP meetings. However, in contrast, Scott, et al. (2007) indicated that the secondary teachers they interviewed, mostly ensemble directors, were involved in meetings at a higher rate, with 87% for orchestra and 58% for band (choral directors were not included in the study). Most of this involvement was due to invitations from special education personnel (Scott et al., 2007).

Darrow (1999) stressed the importance of music educators collaborating with special education personnel and parents about students with special needs about setting goals, an

essential part of IEP meetings. However, one music educator from Darrow's (1999) study commented: "I have never been included in any of these students' staffings . . . . The lack of information we receive about some of these students is amazing" (p.258). Although this study is one of the older studies regarding music teachers and special education, even more recent literature echoed the sentiment (Delaney, 2016; Hammel & Hourigan, 2011b; McCord & Watts, 2010; VanWeelden & Whipple, 2014; Vinciguerra, 2016).

### **Documentation and Ongoing Information Provided to Music Teachers**

**IEP documentation.** The law under IDEA stated that anyone who worked with special needs students was responsible for IEP goal implementation and should receive a copy of the documentation in a timely manner (IDEA, 2013). All teachers, including music teachers, are expected to follow federal protocol for IEP procedures (Hammel & Hourigan, 2011a; IDEA, 2013). These stipulations call for the provision of relevant paperwork and continual communication between education personnel and special education decision makers.

Hammel (2001) maintained that competencies in understanding the IEP process and documentation were essential for any teacher involved in inclusion. If a teacher was not provided information about students with special needs, those who needed adaptations and did not receive them may later be deemed as having behavior problems if required to perform tasks that were not at their level of proficiency (Colwell, 2002). However, research indicated music teachers were often unaware that IEPs existed, did not know how to access the documentation, or did not have the ability to interpret the data when they did have the paperwork (Hammel & Hourigan, 2011a; Sze, 2006).

Hammel and Hourigan (2011b) stated that accessing the network of support that lies within the special education system is vital to ensure children with special needs receive a well-

rounded education. In a similar vein, McCord and Watts (2010) encouraged music teachers to be proactive by communicating with special education about any questions they might have regarding IEPs and adaptations. Several studies indicated mixed results on the state of communication between music teachers and special education personnel (Boumpani, 2005; Gardner, 2010; Gavin, 1983; Gfeller, Darrow, & Hedden, 1990; Gilbert & Asmus, 1981), highlighting the issue of inconsistency in terms of that communication.

One of the most significant studies often cited on the topic of music and special education was research conducted by Gilbert and Asmus (1981), who surveyed 789 music educators regarding Public Law 94-142. Among the findings, the authors reported on participant concerns about the lack of communication between music teachers and special educators, particularly with secondary ensemble levels. More specifically, music teachers were concerned about not receiving enough information on federal law and what the implications would be if they unintentionally did not comply with mandates due to a lack of knowledge. Another prominent study on music classes and students with special needs involved K-12 teachers from Iowa and Kansas (Gfeller, et al., 1990), which reported that only 27% of respondents received adequate guidance and suggestions from special education experts, although the researchers maintained that the opportunity to communicate with special education was crucial to mainstreaming success.

In an investigation of instrumental music instructors' experience in North Carolina with students who had reading disabilities, 23% of participants said they were not informed when special education students were placed in their classes nor did they receive the necessary paperwork (Boumpani, 2005). Vinciguerra (2016) noted that the secondary instrumental teachers he interviewed received little to no documentation. If they did receive documentation, it only

involved specific details of academic adaptations with no background information, and never related to music. In contrast, Delaney (2016) reported that the majority of her participants took the initiative themselves to obtain documented information and advice on working with their students with special needs in instrumental music classes.

Similarly, other studies targeting music teachers and special education provided additional results on communication issues. Gavin (1983) discovered that 40% of her participants were dissatisfied with integration because of a lack of information from special education personnel on students with IEPs who were included in the regular music classroom. In Boumpani's (2005) study, participants indicated they generally did not receive information about students with special needs from special education personnel. Rather, information came from staff members other than those in special education.

**Information received about adaptations.** With the introduction of IDEA came the practice of inclusion, in which students with disabilities were placed with nondisabled peers, with support services established to meet provisions of LRE (Darrow, 1999). These services could come in the form of assistive technology, support staff, or changes in the classroom environment, among others (Hammel & Hourigan, 2011b). Hammel (2001) noted music teachers deemed adaptations, support personnel, and adaptive tools/equipment the most crucial components for the success of students with IEPs in the music classroom. If a student with special needs was not provided special adaptations for success, including the availability of tools or additional personnel in the learning environment, the child might be more at risk for frustration and apathy, resulting in resistance or behavior issues (McCord, 2004).

Various studies provided data indicating a number of music specialists did not receive assistance in developing adaptations to accommodate their students in special education.

Teachers not prepared to meet the diversified needs for a variety of learning abilities could unintentionally omit best teaching practices for some students (Darrow, 2003). For example, Ansuini (1979) stated that the majority of elementary instrumental instructors that he surveyed did not use adaptive means because most of the teachers did not have the background to make adaptations and did not receive any assistance from special education personnel. In a survey study of music teachers' experience with adaptive tools, more than 90% of participants felt their knowledge of making adaptations was limited, especially regarding adaptive technology (McCord & Watts, 2010).

Both Hoffman (2011) and Boumpani (2005) found music specialists received infrequent support through extra personnel or adaptive aids and inadequate information regarding inclusion practices, but deemed the practices necessary and willing to make adaptations if given the support. In a related study, Vinciguerra (2016) reported the secondary instrumental instructors he interviewed were not given guidelines on creating adaptations for their students with IEPs and had to rely on their best judgements based on the information given on adaptations suggested for other academic areas.

In Gardner's (2010) research of K-12 music teachers, results indicated those particular music specialists taught considerably fewer IEP students than did other teachers, but they were also less likely to receive support with adaptations. Seventy-seven percent of music teachers received some support for the students, as compared to 92% of teachers in other areas, generalists or specialists. Although this percentage indicated most of his respondents received support, the assistance was too inadequate to sufficiently meet the needs of the children (Gardner, 2010).

**Job satisfaction and IEP experiences.** According to Atterbury (1989), music teachers often became stressed and felt a loss of control when other educators made decisions about including students with special needs into the music classroom without consulting them. The general lack of communication about students with special needs affected various music teachers' attitudes about the classroom, according to Gardner (2010). He indicated one factor contributing to music teachers' decisions to leave positions was the lack of personnel support for their students in special education. Additionally, the participants in the study revealed that the lack of discussion administrators had with them regarding students with special needs was one of the least satisfying aspects of their jobs. Music educators' job satisfaction music may have been negatively affected by working with special needs students without the provision of adequate help through information or the presence of an aide (Gardner, 2010).

### **Summary of the Review of Literature**

From the implementation of EAHCA through various changes to IDEA, federal policy influenced special education, including changes that affected music teachers and their roles in the IEP process and implementation. The findings in the review of the literature included the following: (a) music teachers' varied experiences with IEP meetings, with scheduling difficulties a common thread throughout; (b) music teachers lack of information about IEP meetings; (c) inconsistent data involving the music teachers' receipt of IEP documentation; (d) inconsistent communication between music teachers and special education personnel; and (e) lack of sufficient information about adaptations. Since the majority of the studies reviewed were more than 10 years old, an updated study on music teachers' perceptions on their roles in the IEP process was warranted.

## **Purpose of the Study**

IDEA includes legislation for all teachers, including music teachers, many of whom teach all students in the school. It is important to focus on current practices of including music teachers in the IEP process to better meet the needs of special needs students in the classroom.

Information access and dissemination to all teachers paired with specific documentation to address students' needs would improve consistency in approach across the curriculum. The purpose of the study was to report music teachers' perceptions of their involvement in the implementation processes of Individualized Education Programs. This included information about and participation in the IEP meetings and subsequent reception of communication of IEP documentation for the purpose of making appropriate adaptations for students with special needs in the music classroom. In particular, the study focused on the following research questions:

1. Are music teachers informed about scheduled IEP meetings?
2. If informed about scheduled IEP meetings, do music teachers attend them?
3. Do music teachers ever request to attend specific IEP meetings? Do they feel welcomed to do so?
4. After an IEP meeting, do music teachers receive copies of each student's annual IEP document?
5. Do music teachers refer to these annual IEP documents when developing adaptations (accommodations and modifications) for the music classroom? Additionally, do music teachers discuss these potential adaptations with special education personnel?

### **Chapter Three: Research Design and Methodology**

This chapter provides a discussion of the research design and procedures for the study. It includes the following: (a) a description of the design, (b) a description of the participants and how they were obtained, (c) confidentiality and consent procedures, (d) the research procedure, (e) the data collection and analysis, (f) my role as the researcher, (g) delimitations, and (h) limitations.

#### **Research Design: Survey**

There are facts and situations involving the behaviors and experiences of humans that can best be obtained only by asking a sample of people about themselves. It is rare to find any type of public policy research that has not involved some form of survey (Fowler, 2014). While the current investigation is not policy per se, it does relate to established policy. With growing populations and increased socioeconomic complexities, along with the increasing strength of democracy, the sample survey research method is developing into a prominent means of gathering data and understanding concerns and behaviors of people worldwide (Rea & Parker, 2014). Because technological and analytical innovations of the 21st century are more abundant than in the past, online provisions for sample surveys are becoming more prominent, making it easier to reach more people. With proper structuring, a survey provides the ability to draw inferences from a population based on standardized data that can be quantitatively analyzed (Fowler, 2014; Rea & Parker, 2014). For the current study, a survey was selected to understand perceptions of music teachers from across the United States with as large a sample as possible for better comparisons and analyses. The survey contained two components: the closed response survey questions and an open-ended question (See Appendix A).



**Closed survey questions.** The first part of the survey consisted of 7 closed questions, defined by Fowler (2014) as questions with pre-determined choices. These responses were in the form of a 6-point Likert-type scale, with 1 as “Never” and 6 as “Always” (See Appendix A). The purpose of the Likert-type scale was to provide a means of measuring attitude, perception, or opinion, and thus, was deemed the best measuring tool for these particular survey items (Barnette, 2010). Three demographic questions were also included, all responses calculated using descriptive statistics.

**Open-ended survey question.** According to Fowler (2014), open-ended items are those for which response selections are not provided for the participant. The potential advantages to open-ended questions are as follows: (a) they can provide the opportunity for answers that were not expected, (b) they allow the participant the opportunity to provide information that might more closely describe their real views than the survey responses would provide, (c) they allow participants to explain themselves in their own words, and (d) they allow for more possible answers than can be included with closed-ended survey questions (Fowler, 2014). For this research, an open-ended response item was provided so participants could expand on their answers and provide anecdotal information that could potentially be analyzed for recurring patterns and themes, which would further allow for a clearer understanding of the participants’ perceptions (Creswell, 2014).

## **Participants**

**Target population.** The target population for this study was educators currently working as music teachers in any combination of K-12 teaching situations. This target was obtained by marking options provided through an email submission form request (see Appendix B) to the National Association for Music Education (NAfME). The selections included: (a) K-12 music

teachers, (b) band instructors, (c) choral instructors, (d) orchestra instructors, (e) general music, and (f) special education music. The sample for the survey was obtained from participants who completed the survey, access to which was provided through an email invitation from NAFME.

**Survey participants and contact process.** After the email submission form was sent to NAFME, the organization reported contacting potential participants ( $N=5,246$ ) via an email invitation which included a link to the survey (see Appendix C). Through the process of using the email submission request form through NAFME, there would be a great chance that participants would be current music teachers in the K-12 grade range. NAFME sent two subsequent emails invitations, one two weeks after the first one and the last one four weeks after the first one, with participants ( $n=393$ ) completing the survey.

### **Procedure**

Prior to collection of data, an Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved this study. Appropriate disclosure information was included in the survey tool (see Appendix A). Completing the survey was deemed as consent for participation.

No existing survey was identified that was appropriate for the study. Therefore, using the literature review and the resulting research questions as a guide, an individualized survey tool was constructed that aligned with the research questions (See Appendix A). Following survey construction, measures were taken to establish validity and reliability.

**Establishing validity of the survey.** Invitations were posted to a Facebook music educator group (Facebook, 2017) asking for retired music teachers who would not be involved in the formal study to establish content validity — ensuring the questions reflected the topic focus (Salkind, 2011) — and face validity — checking the clarity of the queries (Isaac & Michael, 1995). The participants would also determine whether there were any errors in the procedure of

completing the survey, which also allowed the opportunity for me to note whether the results were posted on SurveyMonkey® and were able to be downloaded for analysis. Those who were interested initiated contact through Facebook private messenger and were sent a link to the trial survey. Ten retired teachers responded to participate in the validity portion of the trial. I was familiar with two of the participants.

Participants in this validity assessment phase indicated that it took them an average of six minutes to complete the survey. Two trial participants made suggestions for additional questions; however, the first suggestion was not related to the study. The second comment requested an additional response for one of the questions to give those who did not have access to IEP documentation an additional choice. This change was made. No additional changes were suggested for the survey.

**Establishing reliability of the survey.** Once the changes were made, the survey was submitted again to 10 different retired music teachers obtained through a second Facebook invitation for measuring reliability through a test-retest method. The survey was resubmitted to the volunteers a week later. One participant did not respond to the second request, so the measurement was executed with  $n=9$ . A test-retest reliability between the two survey submissions yielded a stability coefficient of .78, which suggested acceptable reliability. With validity and reliability established, the survey research assistance order form was submitted to NAFME so the email dissemination could be initiated (see Appendix B).

**Survey structure and dissemination.** NAFME sent the survey invitation (See Appendix C) through email three times over a two-week interval to the target population identified on the request form, educators currently working as music teachers in any combination of K-12 teaching situations. The survey opened with confidentiality and disclosure statements, as well as

the purpose for the study. The first question regarded the potential participants' current status as employed music educators. The Survey Monkey® algorithms included a disqualification logic that would direct anyone who selected "not currently teaching music" to a completion page in order to increase the chances that only music educators who were currently teaching participated.

The main body of the survey contained seven questions with Likert-type responses. Because answers to questions three, five, and seven were contingent upon responses to the questions proceeding them, skip logic was applied to questions two, four, and six. This was followed by one open-ended query so participants could expand on their answers for any of the previous questions if they wished. The last responses concerned demographic questions regarding the state in which the participants taught, years taught, and number of music students serviced from survey participants. The survey was formatted in the web-based SurveyMonkey®.

**Survey data collection and analysis.** When using SurveyMonkey®, data are automatically stored on servers and available through a password-secured website. While the survey was open for six weeks, new data were downloaded on Excel files once a week for security purposes. Data were stored in password-protected files and backed up with flash drives.

Using SurveyMonkey® provided calculated results within the site, also allowing for transfer of the data to SPSS for further analysis. To analyze the survey results, SPSS statistical software (Version 22) was used in which survey responses were assigned a numerical value from one (Never) to six (Always) for Likert-type items. SPSS then calculated frequency distributions, including absolute totals, percentages, means, and standard deviations.

Once the survey was closed and descriptive statistics were employed, the comments from the open-ended question were coded to inductively identify themes and patterns (Creswell, 2014). A list of open-ended comments was downloaded from SurveyMonkey® and printed. Each

comment was marked to indicate whether its topic pertained to any research question. Once these comments were marked, a table was created. One column contained rows with each research question. The second column included the complete text for each comment that responded to that particular question. The third column included short phrases that pertained to information that appeared frequently in the comments, which would assist in identifying patterns. A decision was made to qualify patterns by six or more comments connected to a relevant topic that emerged. In the final column, the patterns were analyzed and compressed to determine relationships, which developed the themes, or broad units of information that formed a common idea (Creswell, 2013). The coding system for the open-ended questions was viewed by an external auditor not associated with the institution of record for accuracy on noted patterns and themes.

### **Role of the Researcher**

I have worked as a public school teacher for nearly 30 years and have taught numerous students who have special needs of many types and degrees. My experiences with special education staff members and the range of educator styles inspired me to become more involved in the IEP process. As a result, this interest was the catalyst for this research. My interest was further piqued during my Ph.D. residency when I was not only able to communicate with music therapists, but also witness new strategies and viewpoints in my role as a substitute teacher.

In my years of public school teaching, I encountered a spectrum of approaches from special education personnel. On one end of the spectrum were teachers who involved me in many details in the IEP development of their students and allowed me to work with their students during my plan time in a self-contained setting. At the other end were special education teachers who were not forthcoming with IEP documentation beyond potential behavior goals. Because of their varied approaches, I became interested in examining the experiences of other music

teachers when working with special education issues. To avoid bias, establishment of validity and reliability through music education experts was implemented. Thus, every attempt was made to present data and interpretations with accuracy and honesty.

### **Delimitations**

This study utilized a survey design for purposes of collecting data. For this investigation, the following boundaries were implemented: First, participants for the survey were obtained through email contact from the National Association for Music Education (NAfME) database in order to better ensure the participants would be current music educators. Second, the online survey in the study was open for a certain period of time designed to provide sufficient time for responses. Third, to provide more timely data and accurate recall, the survey was developed so only music educators who were currently teaching would be able to complete the survey due to skip logic imbedded in the survey itself.

### **Limitations**

Despite control of the link dissemination through a professional organization, limitations to an online survey still existed. Once the link to the study's survey was disseminated, a participant could share the survey link with others, potentially adding to the pool of participants. However, using survey dissemination through NAfME did not allow for identification of potential participants who had not yet responded to the survey, ultimately affecting the response rate (7%). Second, while the survey was intended to include perspectives from a large group of teachers, the study relied on volunteers who may or may not accurately represent all perspectives. In addition, while there was no way to ensure the accuracy of teacher recall, all perspectives were from the participants' points of view and were considered to be valid and truthful.

## Chapter Four: Results

The purpose of this study was to report music teachers' perceptions of their involvement in the implementation processes of Individualized Education Programs (IEP). This included information about and participation in the IEP meetings and subsequent reception of communication of IEP documentation for the purpose of making appropriate adaptations for students with special needs in the music classroom.

Chapter Four presents the results of descriptive analysis of the survey, with inductive analysis used to determine themes and patterns drawn from the open-ended item responses. The information in this chapter is presented in the following sequence: (a) about the data, (b) survey response rate, (c) demographic information of survey participants, (d) survey question results, and (e) themes, patterns, and citations of representative comments from the open-ended item. An alignment of the research questions and survey questions can be found in Appendix D.

### Data Collection

All data collection took place during a six-week period.

Although NAFME reported sending the initial requests and reminders for participation in the survey, the completed response rate was low ( $N= 393$ , 7.50 %). The mean of the responses for each Likert-type question is reported in Table 10. This report begins with question two since question one was a qualifying question to determine if participants were currently teaching. Response options were: (a) Never-1, (b) Rarely-2, (c) Sometimes-3, (d) Frequently-4, (e) Almost Always-5, to (f) Always-6.

Questions three, five, and seven were designed with skip logic so participants would not answer them if they selected "never" for questions 2, 4, and 6. This is reflected in Tables 4, 6, 8, and 10, and explains the lower response rate for these questions.

Of the 393 participants, 140 chose to write comments at the end of the survey. These comments were coded, as outlined in Chapter Three, to determine themes and patterns.

Participants comments cited are identified by comment number (see Appendix E).

**Survey demographic information.** This section describes the survey participants by geographic location in the United States and years of experience to provide more information about the participants. The regions were divided into West, Midwest, Northeast, and South (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019).

*Geographic location.* Table 1 displays the breakdown of participants by region. Representation by participants was somewhat similar by geographic region, ranging from the largest in the Midwest ( $n=115$ ) to the smallest in the West ( $n=80$ ).

Table 1

*Participants by Region*

Geographic Region	<i>n</i>	Percentage (%)
Northeast	87	22.14
South	111	28.24
Midwest	115	29.26
West	80	20.36

$N=393$

*Experience.* Table 2 outlines the survey participants by years of experience. The largest numbers of participants worked as music teachers for more than 20 years ( $n=136$ ). The next largest representation of experience included teachers with five or fewer years of experience ( $n=90$ ).



Table 2

*Participants' Years of Experience*

Range of Experience in Years	<i>n</i>	Percentage (%)
1-5	90	22.90
6-10	63	16.03
11-15	45	11.45
16-20	59	15.01
More than 20	136	34.61

*N*=393

**Research question one: Are music teachers informed about scheduled IEP**

**meetings?** Overall results ( $M=3.10$ ,  $SD=1.71$ ) for the second survey question indicated that as a whole, participants were at least sometimes informed about IEP meetings, although responses that displayed the most frequencies were “Never” and “Rarely” (See Table 3).

Table 3

*Response of Frequency of Music Teachers being Informed about/Invited to IEP Meetings*

Response	<i>n</i>	Percentage (%)
Never	87	22.14
Rarely	87	22.14
Sometimes	70	17.81
Frequently	54	13.74
Almost always	40	10.18
Always	55	13.99

*N*=393

**Research question two: If informed about scheduled IEP meetings, do music**

**teachers attend them?** The third survey question addressed this issue, answered only by those participants who did not select “Never” for the second survey question. Overall results indicated

that as a whole, participants would sometimes attend IEP meetings ( $M=3.10$ ,  $SD=1.52$ ), although the more frequent individual response was “Rarely”. (see Table 4).

Table 4

*Response of the Frequency of Music Teacher Attendance at IEP Meetings*

Response	<i>n</i>	Percentage (%)
Never	45	14.66
Rarely	86	28.00
Sometimes	65	21.17
Frequently	38	12.38
Almost always	50	16.29
Always	23	7.50

$N=307$

**Research question three: Do music teachers ever request to attend specific IEP meetings? Do they feel welcomed to do so?** Survey questions four and five address this query. The overall results indicated that, as a whole, participants rarely requested to attend IEP meetings ( $M=2.01$ ,  $SD=1.04$ ). The highest individual frequency of responses was “Never” (see Table 5).

Table 5

*Frequency of Participant Requests to Attend IEP Meetings*

Response	<i>n</i>	Percentage (%)
Never	154	39.18
Rarely	118	30.03
Sometimes	95	24.17
Frequently	17	4.33
Almost always	5	1.27
Always	4	1.02

$N=393$

The second part of the third research question pertained to whether participants felt welcomed if they requested to attend meetings, answered by those who did not respond “Never” to the fourth survey question (see Table 6). Results indicated as a whole, participants frequently felt welcomed ( $M=4.24$ ,  $SD=1.66$ ), with the highest individual response being “Always” (See Table 6).

Table 6

*Participants' Perceptions on Feeling Welcomed Upon Requiring to Attend IEP Meetings*

Response	<i>n</i>	Percentage (%)
Never	16	6.89
Rarely	29	12.50
Sometimes	37	15.95
Frequently	27	11.64
Almost always	47	20.26
Always	76	32.76

$N=232$

**Research question four: After an IEP meeting, do music teachers receive copies of each student's annual IEP document?** Survey question six addressed this research question (see Table 7). Results indicated that, as a whole, most participants frequently received copies of IEP documentation ( $M= 4.22$ ,  $SD=1.81$ ). The most frequent response was “Always”.

Table 7

*Frequency of Participants' Receipt of IEP Documentation*

Responses	<i>n</i>	Percentage (%)
Never	47	11.96
Rarely	42	10.69
Sometimes	52	13.23
Frequently	37	9.41
Almost Always	65	16.54
Always	150	38.17

N=393

**Research question five: Do music teachers refer to these annual IEP documents when developing adaptations (accommodations and modifications) for the music classroom? Additionally, do music teachers discuss those potential adaptations with special education personnel?** Survey questions seven and eight addressed these issues. The highest individual response as to whether participants referred to IEP documentation was “Sometimes” (see Table 8). The reader should note that the response “Frequently” was inadvertently omitted from this particular survey question. The data were computed with 4 equaling “Almost Always” and 5 equaling “Always”. Because of this omission, mean and standard deviation were not reported. It should be noted, however, that the highest frequency results were the last three responses.

Table 8

*Frequency of Responses to Participants' Referring to IEP Documentation for Adaptation Guidance*

Responses	<i>n</i>	Percentage (%)
Never	3	.88
Rarely	58	16.91
Sometimes	125	36.44
<i>Frequently</i>		
Almost always	93	27.11
Always	64	18.66

*N*=343

Table 9 presents survey responses related to participants' discussion of adaptations with IEP personnel, highlighting concerted communication with them. The results indicated that, as a whole, participants would sometimes discuss IEP particulars with special education personnel ( $M=3.34$ ,  $SD=1.12$ ), which also match the most frequent individual response (See Table 9).

Table 9

*Frequency of Responses to Participants' Discussions with Special Education Personnel*

Responses	<i>n</i>	Percentage (%)
Never	10	2.54
Rarely	79	20.10
Sometimes	143	36.39
Frequently	109	27.74
Almost Always	32	8.14
Always	20	5.09

*N*=393

Table 10 outlines a summarization of the results from the survey questions.

Table 10

*Summary of Means and Standard Deviations of Survey Questions*

Survey Question	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Number of Valid Responses
2-Meeting invitations	3.10	1.71	393
3-Attending meetings	3.10	1.52	307*
4-Request to attend	2.01	1.04	393
5-Feel welcome	4.24	1.66	232*
6-Receive documents	4.22	1.81	393
7-View documents for adaptations	<i>Frequently omitted</i>		
8-Consult with SPED	3.34	1.12	393
Demographic questions	n/a	n/a	393

*N*=393

\*denotes questions that were skipped if participant answered “Never” to previous question.

### Themes in Open-Ended Responses

When analyzing the open-ended item responses (*N*=140; refer to Appendix E), four major themes emerged throughout the comments. The emerging themes were as follows: (a) involvement in meetings, (b) adaptations in the music classroom, (c) documentation, and (d) communication between music teachers and special education personnel. The complete list of open-ended responses can be found in Appendix E.

**Involvement in meetings.** The first theme that emerged concerned IEP meetings and music teachers’ experiences regarding their potential participation (*n*=55), focusing on circumstances that could impact the participants’ attendance or participatory options. Two patterns developed from this theme: (a) schedules and (b) issues related to attendance.

*Schedules.* Scheduling issues in a school environment impacted the participants’ abilities to attend meetings (*n*=25). Participants reported problems attending meetings because meetings were being held during music classes (*n*=8). For example, one participant noted, “often I am

unable to attend IEP meetings because they occur during teachers [*sic*] common planning time when I am teaching that grade level of students in my classroom” (Comment 113). Others noted conflicts with extracurricular activities ( $n=3$ ) and other non-specified impediments to attendance ( $n=7$ ). While there were issues with schedules, some indicated opportunities to be involved through alternate collaboration opportunities ( $n=5$ ). This included yearly staff meetings, specific meetings with all special education staff, and special area team meetings.

*Issues related to attendance.* In this pattern, various participants reported perceptions about meetings that affected their attendance ( $n=30$ ). Although five participants said they did not feel welcomed at meetings, the majority of participants in this category stated they were welcome to attend IEP meetings or provide information in some fashion about what was necessary for their students with special needs to be successful in music ( $n=25$ ). Six participants stated they were required to attend. One participant who was required to attend meetings noted in the event schedules prohibited attendance, “we have special education teachers that [*sic*] ... require all of their current teachers to attend. If we cannot make the meeting, we still provide an email update prior to the meeting.” (Comment 46). Six other participants explained they were also able to contribute important information in writing instead of being present at meetings. Other factors on attendance included three participants attending meetings on a rotating schedule or being assigned to meetings, three going to meetings when special education personnel deemed it necessary that music teachers be the representative general education teacher, four attending meetings on their own volition whenever they could, and five attending because substitutes were provided.

**Adaptations in the music classroom.** The second theme which developed related to adaptations in the music classroom ( $n=61$ ) because the application of adaptations is paramount to

compliance of IDEA mandates. Patterns which emerged were as follows: (a) paraprofessional help/assistive aids, (b) utilizing documentation, and (c) difficulties with adaptations for music class.

*Paraprofessional help.* Various participants relayed their experiences with adaptations involving paraprofessionals/support staff assigned to students ( $n=10$ ). Five participants reported positive experiences with working with paraprofessionals. However, the other five stated issues with support staff not coming to music class because they were being utilized elsewhere or support staff appearing to not be comfortable with implementing music-based adaptations. One participant remarked, “music classes often have all special ed students mainstreamed into larger classes with or without an aide — depending on availability. Even so, sometimes the aide makes it harder to teach the students ... Most of them do not have a music background” (Comment 2).

*Utilizing documentation.* Other participants made comments on their uses of IEP documentation in order to make decisions on adaptations for their students with special needs ( $n=19$ ). Of these participants, seven did not utilize the paperwork, citing either they felt experienced enough in their own teaching styles to include diversified teaching methods without guidance or that they only applied adaptations when they felt changes were warranted. However, 12 participants did refer to IEP documentation to make decisions. As one participant stated, “involvement with IEPs and implementation of accommodations is the responsibility of EVERY teacher” (Comment 51).

*Difficulties with adaptations for music class.* The most frequent comments in this theme involved difficulties various participants had with making adaptations in music class ( $n=32$ ). Most participants commented the adaptations written in IEPs were often difficult to implement in music class ( $n=20$ ). They reasoned: (a) usually there were no music-specific adaptations, (b)



adaptations that were listed were difficult to implement in the music environment, or (c) instructions focused only on adaptations for formally assessed subjects such as math and reading. The other 12 participants in this subcategory stated: they did not have the experience or training to be able to interpret the information and apply it to music, (b) special education personnel were not informed enough about music objectives in order to develop appropriate adaptations, or (c) the information provided in the received documents was too vague with little detail.

**Documentation.** The third theme emerging from the open-ended comments focused on IEP documentation ( $n=36$ ). While all teachers who work with students with special needs are required to receive this information, the results demonstrated differences: (a) receiving what is needed and (b) inconsistencies.

*Receiving what is needed.* The majority of participants who commented on documentation receipt obtained what was needed ( $n=20$ ). Of this number, nine participants were able to obtain IEP information through technological means, either in the district online gradebook program or through email. The other 11 received information in a timely manner from special education personnel, three specifying required government mandates for receiving IEPs. One participant shared the following, “they [our school] ALWAYS makes sure new students or accommodations are brought to the attention of ALL the students’ teachers, especially those who transfer in mid-year” (Comment 103).

*Inconsistencies.* For other participants, receipt of IEP documentation was unpredictable ( $n=16$ ). Five participants reported their experiences varied with personnel, often because the music teachers worked between different buildings or age-level groups. The other 11 expressed they usually received little or no information pertaining to adaptations. If they did receive paperwork, the information was vague, very generalized, or lacking updated specifications after

each meeting. One participant explained, “the only IEP plans that I have been made aware of are those students who are in grades 7-12. I have no awareness of any accommodations meant for my K-6 students” (Comment 129).

**Communication between the music teachers and special education personnel.** The last theme to develop from the analysis of the open-ended question related to communication experiences between the participants and their special education colleagues ( $n=32$ ). The crucial aspect of this theme is the particular state of communication that existed between the two areas in order to address any issues, questions, or follow-up discussion about students with special needs. The following patterns arose from this theme: (a) positive, open, and regular lines of communication, (b) participants approach when necessary, and (c) the availability of special education teachers.

*Positive, open, and regular lines of communication.* This category focused on those participants who noted a professional rapport, including regular dialogue, with their special education colleagues about students with IEPs ( $n=10$ ). This included adjustments to adaptations on as-needed bases, timely information on the capabilities of students in given situations, and observations by special educators of their students in the music environment on a scheduled basis. One participant noted, “our special education teachers talk to me almost weekly about their students and how we can best accommodate them in the music classroom setting” (Comment 59).

*Participants approach when necessary.* Some of the participants noted they only approached special education personnel when they felt it was necessary to receive more detailed information on students ( $n=8$ ). These choices might pertain to asking for information on a specific type of issue or talking about methods of engagement with those personnel who know

the students better. For example, one participant explained, “I may talk to those who know the students better about how to engage them better in music classes. What are triggers or best practices, those sorts of things” (Comment 28).

*The availability of special education teachers.* The last category on the theme of communication pertained to participants’ perception of how available special education teachers were to talk with them ( $n=14$ ). Of these participants, five felt they had issues about talking with their special education colleagues because of lack of time, the special educator’s perceived lack of musical understanding, or a concern that the participant had to seek out information each time instead of receiving alerts automatically. The other remaining nine participants had positive experiences with special education colleagues’ availability and willingness to help when needed. As one commented, “our resource teachers are ...very willing to give help with any of their students” (Comment 15).

## **Chapter Summary**

The results of the study were gleaned from survey responses and open-ended comments. More than half of the participants lived the Midwest and the South (58%). From an overall view of the responses on years of experience, more than 38% of the participants had 10 years or fewer of teaching experience, with the rest 10 through more than 20 years. The responses on both the receipt of information on meetings and attending meetings resulted in slightly more than half of the responses ranging from “Sometimes” to “Always”: 56% for receiving information on meetings and 57% on attending. In reporting if participants requested to attend meetings, 69% responded with “Never” or “Rarely.” Eighty percent chose to respond in the range from “Frequently,” to “Always” on whether they felt welcome at IEP meetings. More than three-fourths (77%) responded “Sometimes” to “Always” on the receipt of IEP documentation. Eighty-

one percent selected in the range from “Sometimes” to “Always” on whether they reviewed documentation for adaptations, and more than 77% selected within that same range on whether they discussed adaptations with special education personnel.

To summarize the open-ended question analyses, half of the participants in the theme stated they had issues with schedules on the topic of meetings. The other participants who discussed meetings indicated alternatives were provided so they could still contribute information. On this issue of adaptations, more than half of the participants (52%) commented on difficulties in making adaptations. Nearly 60% of the participants reported having professional, interactive communication with special education personnel on a regular basis, noting special education teachers were usually available when needed.

From these results, it is clear that participants were involved with meetings, implemented adaptations, and communicated with special education personnel to various degrees. Discussions of these possible reasons, as well as implications for education in the future and suggestions for further research, can be found in Chapter Five.

## Chapter Five: Discussion and Conclusions

The purpose of the study was to report on music educators' perceptions of their involvement in the implementation processes of Individualized Education Programs. This included information about and participation in the IEP meetings and subsequent reception of communication of IEP documentation for the purpose of making appropriate adaptations for students with special needs in the music classroom. The study consisted of a survey with seven Likert-type responses and one open-ended response item. The online survey was distributed to members of the National Association for Music Education (NAfME) via email dissemination and computed with standard descriptive percentages, frequencies, means, and standard deviations. Responses to the open-ended item were analyzed using a coding system to organize data into themes and patterns.

### Discussions

**Sample count.** Although three email invitations to participate in the survey were disseminated, the sample size was surprising considering the number of email invitations disseminated. Based on some of the comments from those who did participate in the survey (see Appendix E), there could be multiple possibilities why other music teachers did not. If potential participants had not been informed or educated about their roles in servicing their students with special needs, it seems plausible they would not feel the need or urgency to participate in a survey on this topic. Another possible explanation is that the topic was not perceived to be important or relevant; however, these reasons would seem curious since teachers often work with such diverse populations. Finally, although the groups who completed the survey to establish validity stated the survey took an average of six minutes to complete, those who received the

actual invitation may have felt they did not have the time to complete it or were unable to complete it because of other obligations.

Despite the fact that the return rate was less than expected, those participants who completed the survey provided important information about their perceptions on personal experiences in the IEP process, especially when details were provided with the open-ended item. The descriptions of the experiences of those who completed comments contributed more topics and possible reasons for the final results of the closed-item survey responses. The following is a discussion of the results related to the research questions.

**Research question one: Are music teachers informed about scheduled IEP meetings?** Results indicated most participants responded in the range from Sometimes to Always about receiving information on meetings at some point in their careers. Based on the overview analysis of this research question as a whole, the results in this study did not align with other studies in the review, where music teachers were not often informed about IEP meetings (Atterbury, 1989; Delaney, 2016; Frisque, et al., 1994; Hammel & Hourigan, 2011b; McCord & Watts, 2006, 2010; Scott, et al., 2007; VanWeelden & Whipple, 2014; Vinciguerra, 2016). One might theorize districts are becoming more compliant in meeting revised IDEA mandates since the Federal law was first implemented. Perhaps as district personnel gained experience and knowledge in working with special education regulations, those in decision-making positions might have become more aware of the need to include every staff member involved with students of special needs in their IEPs. One could also consider that more university programs in special education could possibly be addressing IDEA mandates with more emphasis; thus, when these preservice teachers entered the workforce, they might have been more likely to include all personnel because of this training. Finally, participants could conceivably have become more

proactive about obtaining meeting information so they could have had the option of being included in decision-making that would impact students in their music classes.

Although the overview of the data showed that most participants were informed about meetings to some degree, there were a number who stated they were not informed. One reason for this could be simply that the participants did not ask to be informed or did not realize they could be part of the IEP team collaboration, which leads to another reason: it is possible that special education personnel did not even consider including music teachers or telling them they could participate because adaptations might be focused on government-required assessed subjects. This could explain the pattern about scheduling issues, which aligned with the studies of McCord and Watts (2006), who noted meetings often occurred during a teacher's plan time, which would also be their students' music class or other specials. One could posit that meetings were scheduled thusly for the convenience of the rest of the team who was involved, most of whom taught assessed subjects. The topic of assessed subjects is further explored and explained under Research Question Five regarding adaptations.

In relation to those who were not told when IEP meetings would occur, some reported in the open-ended item that arrangements were not made so they could attend or that IEPs did not include music standards. These perceptions will be more thoroughly discussed in the section under Research Question Five on adaptations, since those topics emerged more frequently in that theme.

**Research question two: If informed about scheduled IEP meetings, do music teachers attend them?** From the overview analysis of the survey, most participants indicated they attended IEP meetings, with responses in a range from Sometimes through Always. These results differed from results in studies in the review of literature, where results indicated music

teachers often did not attend IEP meetings for various reasons (Darrow, 1999; Delaney, 2016; Frisque, et al., 1994; Hammel & Hourigan, 2011b; McCord & Watts, 2010; Scott, et al., 2007; VanWeelden & Whipple, 2014). In the best of worlds, these results may imply that there was a growing awareness that music teachers who work with students with special needs should be involved in the decision-making process for their students with special needs. It is possible that music teachers have been taking a more proactive stance to make sure their input is considered. Administrators and special education personnel might have offered alternative meetings so music teachers could be a part of the decision-making process, as was indicated in some open-ended responses. Participants might also be able to provide information in writing to contribute during meetings, as was also outlined in some comments, similar to the findings of Vinciguerra (2016), who noted that a number of his participants were asked to fill out forms in lieu of attending meetings.

**Research question three: Do music teachers ever request to attend specific IEP meetings? Do they feel welcomed to do so?** The data indicated that most participants did not request to attend meetings. One reason for this response is that the participants did not need to if they were informed about meetings and were provided opportunities to attend. Participants might have been interested in becoming involved with meetings, but issues with scheduling might have prevented this, so in theory, they may have considered it futile to ask. Scheduling could also explain why the frequency of “Never” answers was higher for the third survey question, which focused on whether participants asked to attend meetings. It also stands to reason that the participants who responded “Never” or “Rarely” could not ask to attend meetings about which they were not informed. Perhaps the participants did not see any alternatives or feel any



empowerment to address this issue. Finally, participants might not have had an interest in becoming involved with IEP meetings.

The survey overview indicated participants exceedingly felt welcomed when they asked about attending meetings. This could possibly indicate a respectful working relationship between music teachers and special education teachers. Also, special education teachers might not have considered including music teachers because music is not formally assessed as a government requirement. However, once they discovered participants wanted to be involved, the special educators might have been enthused about a music teacher's input. A very small number of participants who provided comments noted they did not feel welcome, even when they made a request. It might also be possible that participants did not voice a need to attend meetings in the past, further reinforcing the idea that music teacher presence was not important.

**Research question four: After an IEP meeting, do music teachers receive copies of each student's annual IEP document?** Data indicated the majority of participants usually received IEP documentation, which differed from studies in the literature review, in which a number of music teachers did not receive documentation on a regular basis (Boumpani, 2005; Gavin, 1983; Gfeller, et al., 1990; Gilbert & Asmus, 1981; Hammel & Hourigan, 2011a). As with meetings, this result could again be related to more of an awareness of the mandates of IDEA over the years through more concerted training through in-service workshops and dissemination of in-district requirements. Participants could also have been more proactive in requesting the documentation from special education personnel, thus, setting a precedent in which special educators automatically began including them when paperwork was disseminated.

Another possible reason for this improvement could be connected to the advancements of technology. An indicator of this possibility was the pattern that developed in the

documentation theme showing that half who commented on receiving documents received information online. This was an occurrence not mentioned in any of the literature review. The availability of documentation through digital formats and online classroom management systems could have been a catalyst for an increase in reception of the IEP documentation.

Although not in the majority, a number in the survey (36%) selected Never through Sometimes, indicating they received documentation less than frequently, which could lead one to conclude their receipt of information was inconsistent or incomplete. This assumption was supported by some of the open-ended item comments, in which participants noted they did not receive updates, only received a list of names of students with no adaptations, or received information on an irregular basis depending on the special education personnel involved. Some of the potential reasons for the inconsistency of receiving IEP documentation could be the following: (a) participants did not ask for updates, (b) special education teachers simply forgot to include the participants in these updates since their subject was not assessed as a governmental requirement, (c) participants worked with more than one special educator, each with a different style of processing IEPs, or (d) changes in personnel. The last two speculations were supported by participants who reported inconsistencies with documentation that varied depending on personnel and detail provided in the paperwork. One study that included findings equitable to these results was Gardner's (2010), when he reported that although the majority of music teachers in his study received documentation and consultation support for their students, the information was insufficient to fully meet the needs of the students.

**Research question five: Do music teachers refer to these annual IEP documents when developing adaptations for the music classroom? Additionally, do music teachers discuss these potential adaptations with special education personnel?** The final analysis on

use of documentation to create adaptations indicated that participants utilized IEP paperwork to varying degrees to determine adaptations for their students with IEPs. The indication that participants did at least view the paperwork so they could determine the best course of action for their students aligned with various studies of the literature review in which music teachers put importance on adaptations, but not necessarily on a regular basis (Boumpani, 2005; Gardner, 2016; Gavin, 1983; Hammel, 2001; Hoffman, 2011; McCord & Watts, 2010; Vinciguerra, 2016).

It is crucial to note the potential reasons as to why some participants did not utilize the IEP paperwork more consistently for adaptations. For one, participants could have felt confident enough with their training or knowledge of students to determine the paperwork was not really necessary or helpful when making adaptations. This speculation was supported by several comments found in the adaptations theme in which participants stated they had sufficient training or that their teaching style worked without the need for adaptations. Another argument supported by comments was that those participants who were inconsistent with reviewing IEPs only did so when they felt it was necessary, possibly for new students or those students who showed changes in behavior or participation.

Another reason these participants might have been inconsistent with their review of paperwork may simply fall back to scheduling and time issues. It is possible these participants felt the time it would take to read the IEPs and convert any adaptations written to focus on other subject areas to fit the learning styles in music would be greater than developing their own adaptations as immediately needed.

It is also conceivable that participants may also not understand how to interpret IEP academic adaptations to apply to the music classroom, thus choosing to create their own adaptations or none at all, also noted in comments. Some stated they found the information on

adaptations too difficult to understand and interpret. This perception might be the result of one of two situations: (a) these participants might not have had the information or training necessary to transfer teaching strategies from assessed subjects to music or (b) the adaptations in the documents could have been poorly written. The first theory is reflected in Gavin's (1983) study, in which several of her participants were not happy with integration because of the lack of information received from special education personnel, ultimately affecting what can be utilized in the classroom. Additionally, in the study conducted by Gfeller, et al. (1990), only a small percentage of the participants received adequate guidance on working with students of special needs. It could be considered highly likely that both participants and special education teachers may not have a clear understanding of the methods that can be blended from both disciplines to develop suitable adaptations for students with special needs in music.

Finally, participants might not have found adaptations as written in IEPs applicable to music. This supposition was again supported by various comments from the open-ended item responses in the adaptations theme, such as those who noted adaptations focused on government-required assessed disciplines, and can also tie into why participants were reluctant to ask to be involved with meetings. Some participants reasoned that there were no music-specific adaptations, but rather, more that focused on such subjects as math and reading. Others found transferring academic adaptations to music difficult or did not feel they had the background or training to properly do so. Viniciguerra (2016) had reported similar results of documentation itemizing details of academic adaptations with no background information on implementation.

The concern that IEP documentation and subsequent adaptations focused on mandated assessed subjects occurred several times in the comments. The issue of adaptations focusing on state-assessed subjects such as reading or math can possibly be a focus for special education

personnel, not necessarily including all teachers of all subjects. It would stand to reason that special educators might feel more of an impact on the child's education as a whole would require an emphasis on those strategies necessary to allow the child to succeed in areas in which test scores would be recorded at state levels. Also, it is special education teachers might not have considered keeping participants informed of their potential role in planning adaptations because their training may have focused specifically on educators who taught courses that were mandatorily assessed. This theory might be supported again by those comments by participants in this study who noted that most adaptations focused on assessed subjects, as well as those participants who noted that IEP meetings tended to be scheduled during a general classroom teacher's plan time. Although there were no studies in the review of the literature which indicated this perception, one might posit that because music educators do not often approach teaching or assessment using strategies familiar to classroom teachers, special education personnel may not understand the learning processes behind music that could contribute to beneficial adaptations for students with special needs. Students spend a short time in music each week as compared to their other classrooms, so the impact music could have on these students might possibly be perceived as minor.

Survey results indicated that participants would sometimes confer with their special education colleagues about adaptations and their students with special needs. Again, through experiences with IDEA mandates, administrators, special education personnel, and music teachers themselves might have developed more of an awareness of the importance of opening lines of communication with any adult who works with a child with an IEP and not just those in the required assessed areas. Additionally, participants might have advocated for the discipline of music and were willing to share unique situations with special educators that might not be

covered by other information in the IEP. In a connection to the difficulties some participants shared in the open-ended responses, a logical course of action would be to communicate with the staff member who had experience with both the students' needs and application of adaptations. The combined expertise of both the music teacher and the special education teacher could result in suitable adaptations for students with special needs.

One pattern which was found in the open-ended comments included participant experience with paraprofessionals, with an even divide between those who reported positive experiences and those who have concerns with the aides who were to work with their students with special needs. Because paraprofessionals are considered classroom adaptations as well as special education personnel, participant responses regarding experiences with special education support staff are worthy of note. Hammel (2001) stated that support staff such as paraprofessionals were crucial for consistency with the child so the student did not become frustrated. Thus, problems with implementation of adaptations might be alleviated with the addition of support staff in a classroom.

However, some of the participants commented that their support staff were not actively engaged in the music classroom, but their observations stemmed from their perceptions that the paraprofessionals appeared to be unfamiliar with music objectives. One could theorize the paraprofessionals' reticence in taking a proactive role was that they were uncomfortable working with music content and afraid of making mistakes. Furthermore, paraprofessionals might consider themselves as behavior monitors in specials classes, to be in attendance only if a child needed to be removed. A plausible explanation for disparities in paraprofessionals' responsibilities in music classrooms may relate to states' requirements in terms of classroom expectations or could be related to the specific policy of the school.

Other participants reported good working relationships with their paraprofessionals and relied on them as knowledgeable staff members who knew how to work with the students to achieve success with adaptations. These relationships might result from good training for the paraprofessional and modeled expectations for their roles, building expectations for professionalism and respect for all staff members, and the attitude the participants had themselves for support staff personnel and how they viewed collaborative efforts in their classrooms. The positive reviews some participants had for their paraprofessional colleagues was also reflected in the theme on communications.

Most participants in the communications theme indicated either positive, regular contact with their special education colleagues or found them available when needed, which indicates an improvement from the results of several studies where participants had to take initiative to obtain information from special educators or information from other staff members (Boumpani, 2005; Delaney, 2016; Gardner, 2010; Gavin, 1983; Gfeller, et al., 1990; Gilbert & Asmus, 1981; Hoffman, 2011; Vinciguerra, 2016). The establishment of good relationships might benefit the participants and the students, but also might contribute to an overall strategy to use with students across the entire curriculum in which all the teachers worked together cooperatively for the best possible environments of their students with IEPs, including the general classroom teacher and teachers of other disciplines. Positive experiences can most likely be attributed to the personalities and training of both the participants and special education personnel — teachers and support staff alike — as well as the expectations of the administration and/or district. An overall positive school atmosphere with a strong emphasis on collaboration and communication could also be a catalyst to successful special education/music educator relationships.

## Conclusions

The results of this study showed some participants received information about meetings, received IEP documentation, attended IEP meetings, utilized documentation for adaptations, and communicated with special education personnel. Based on comments, one might posit that improved technology might have contributed to these improvements. Additionally, educators might possibly have had a more heightened awareness of IDEA mandates over the years. However, although participants were receiving documentation and indicated they were reviewing the information at some basis to make adaptation decisions, various comments provided in the open-ended item responses indicated the difficulties with interpreting the information and applying adaptations required for government-required assessed subjects to a music environment. Additionally, the results revealed that inconsistencies still remained in regards to music teachers becoming proactive in asking to attend meetings and discussing the difficulties implied in making adaptations work for the music classroom.

The majority of participants received IEP documentation; however, a number of them expressed concerns that adaptations listed in the IEPs did not benefit the student in music class because of the focus on disciplines which were assessed mandatorily. This assumption may have influenced participants' interest in requesting to attend meetings or utilizing documentation for adaptations. Although the majority of participants were informed about meetings, those who were not might not have requested to be contacted and to attend meetings, which may have suggested that they did not consider the possibility or believed scheduling issues might prohibit attendance. However, taking assertive measures to speak with special education teachers might have provided opportunities to discuss IEPs for students, present cohesive efforts to address issues, and improve interpretation of adaptations for the music classroom.



Those participants already experiencing communication with special education personnel appeared to interpret this as a positive sign, with trusting, established professional relationships. One could posit these open lines of communication served as an inroad to more information provided by the music teacher, which in turn, could help to establish the development of more music-based adaptations.

In short, there are positive signs that special educators and music teachers are working together to improve the education atmosphere for the student with special needs in the music classroom. The majority of participants were informed about and attended meetings, received and referred to IEP documentation when developing adaptations, and discussed IEPs with special education personnel, pointing to their interest in helping their students, taking the initiatives to do so, and clearly communicating that collaboration was evident.

### **Implications**

Federal law has mandated all teachers who are involved in the education of a child with an IEP be informed of the needs of that child, including inviting anyone involved with these students to planning and implementation meetings (IDEA, 2013a-f). Many participants in the current study did not request to attend IEP meetings, possibly because they were already informed about meetings, had schedule conflicts, or believed the IEP focus was on government-required assessed disciplines. Without the music teachers' participation in the IEP process regarding their classes and their knowledge of music class environment, the child with special needs might not be receiving the best education experience possible in music; as a result, adaptations may be non-existent or poorly executed. Additionally, even if a participant felt knowledgeable about students in order to develop adaptations, changes in the IEP regarding adaptations that were not addressed by the participant could affect the education experience.

Participants in this study did receive IEP documentation on a regular basis, which was a positive sign; additionally, most looked at the documentation at least some of the time when developing adaptations, a positive reflection. Based on the data, participants also conferred with special education personnel. This implies a positive step on behalf of students, even if the discussions were informal. An area of concern is that there appeared to be a perception that adaptations were too focused on assessed academic areas. This could suggest participants might not be studying the IEPs to note any transfers that can be applied between standard academic adaptations and their applications in music. This could impact their students if the child was not receiving all the assistance necessary for success in music. There were also participants who commented they felt experienced enough to create their own adaptations or did not make adaptations because they felt too much focus was placed on academic subjects. By not verifying their adaptation practices with either the documentation or with the special education personnel, the participant could be non-compliant and unwittingly cause further complications. As noted by Colwell (2002) and McCord (2004), inadequate adaptations may either result in perceived behavioral issues because of unrealistic expectations or true behavioral issues because of student frustration.

Based on the comments of some participants, there are paraprofessionals who feel uncomfortable in music and do not actively engage with the student in class. Other comments alluded to instances where paraprofessionals are not sent to music class. It is implied here that some participants may not be taking a leadership role in letting the special education staff know what is needed in the music class, nor teaching them basic music skills if necessary. Also, music teachers could utilize the documentation to reinforce any requirements that a paraprofessional accompany a student wherever needed for reasons of compliance. Federal law stipulated that

anyone working with children with special needs is responsible for IEP goal implementation (IDEA, 2013a-f). Based on this act, music teachers—as the executors of the music curriculum—could concertedly communicate the necessity of the paraprofessionals to actively assist their charges and help the support staff with any music-related questions they may have. Music teachers could also communicate with the special education teachers in charge if there are any issues with support staff fulfilling their job descriptions, providing the necessary personnel, and meeting the needs of the students with IEPs.

The positive communications between participants and special education personnel have great implications for the future of music teachers and their role in the IEP process. Since results have indicated the lines communication are opening between participants and special education personnel, the opportunities to encourage music teachers to be more proactive in asking to explore various music-related adaptations for their students with IEPs could potentially increase.

The mandates of federal special education law were developed over the years to provide the best education for students with special needs in the least restrictive environments. The requirements involved all staff members who worked with individual students with IEPs, including music teachers. In order to provide a proper, fulfilling music education for these students, the music teacher and the special education personnel can work collaboratively to ensure that these children receive proper adaptations in their music classroom.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the results from this investigation, the following topics on music and special education are recommended for further study in order to more fully understand the IEP process with regard to music educators:

- The effect of daily schedules on the ability for music teachers to attend IEP meetings

- Relationships between paraprofessionals and music education specialists
- Case studies on successful music teacher-special education collaborations
- Case studies on music standards as included in IEPs

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## Appendix A

### Online Survey



#### Music Teachers' Perceptions of Their Involvement in the Implementation Processes of Individualized Education Programs

##### Description and Privacy Information

Dear Music Educators:

I am conducting this study to better understand the perceptions music education specialists have about their roles in the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) referral and implementation processes. This will entail your completion of a survey.

The Division of Music Education/Music Therapy in the School of Music at the University of Kansas supports the practice of protection for human subjects participating in research. The following information is provided for you to decide whether you wish to participate in the present study. You should be aware that even if you agree to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without penalty. Your participation is expected to take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete. The content of the survey should cause no more discomfort than you would experience in your everyday life.

Although participation may not benefit you directly, I believe that the information obtained from this study will help me gain a better understanding of the role music teachers feel they have in the diversified learning of students with special needs. Your participation is solicited, although strictly voluntary. Your name will not be associated in any way with the research findings. Your identifiable information will not be shared at all, and your name and email are not required for this online survey.

\*It is possible, however, with internet communications, that through intent or accident someone other than the intended recipient may see your response.

If you would like additional information concerning this study before or after it is completed, please feel free to contact me by phone or mail.

Completion of the survey indicates your willingness to take part in this study and that you are at least 18 years old. If you have any additional questions about your rights as a research participant, you may call (785) 864-7429 or write the Human Subjects Committee Lawrence Campus (HSCL), University of Kansas, 2385 Irving Hill Road, Lawrence, Kansas 66045-7563, email [irb@ku.edu](mailto:irb@ku.edu). Thank you for contributing to our profession.

Sincerely,  
Karen Stafford  
[kstafford@ku.edu](mailto:kstafford@ku.edu)  
314-650-5387.



Music Teachers' Perceptions of Their Involvement in the Implementation Processes of Individualized Education Programs

Teaching Status

Please answer all questions based on your current position and in consideration of your last 3-5 years of music teaching experience.

\* 1. Are you currently teaching K-12 music classes in a school setting?

Yes

No



Music Teachers' Perceptions of Their Involvement in the Implementation Processes of Individualized Education Programs

Section One: IEP Experiences

\* 2. In your current teaching position and thinking back through the last 3 to 5 years, how often are you informed about scheduled IEP meetings?

Never

Rarely

Sometimes

Frequently

Almost Always

Always



Music Teachers' Perceptions of Their Involvement in the Implementation Processes of Individualized Education Programs

Section One: IEP Experiences

\* 3. If you are informed about IEP meetings, how often do you attend them? Think back to your experiences for the past 3-5 years.

Never

Rarely

Sometimes

Frequently

Almost Always

Always



Music Teachers' Perceptions of Their Involvement in the Implementation Processes of Individualized Education Programs

Section One: IEP Experiences

\* 4. In your current teaching position, do you ever request to attend specific IEP meetings?

Never

Rarely

Sometimes

Frequently

Almost Always

Always



Music Teachers' Perceptions of Their Involvement in the Implementation Processes of Individualized Education Programs

Section One: IEP Experiences

5. If you have requested to attend an IEP meeting, how often do you feel others involved in the meeting welcomed your request? Think back to your experiences for the past 3-5 years.

Never

Rarely

Sometimes

Frequently

Almost Always

Always



Music Teachers' Perceptions of Their Involvement in the Implementation Processes of Individualized Education Programs

Section One: IEP Experiences

\* 6. In your current teaching position, how often do you generally receive copies of each student's IEP documentation after their meetings? Consider the past three to five years.

- |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Never                 | Rarely                | Sometimes             | Frequently            | Almost Always         | Always                |
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |



Music Teachers' Perceptions of Their Involvement in the Implementation Processes of Individualized Education Programs

Section One: IEP Experiences

7. If you receive copies, how often do you refer to these IEP documents to develop adaptations (either modifications or accommodations) for your students with special needs? Think back to your experiences for the past 3-5 years.

Never

Rarely

Sometimes

Almost Always

Always





Music Teachers' Perceptions of Their Involvement in the Implementation Processes of Individualized Education Programs

Section One: IEP Experiences

\* 8. How often do you discuss various adaptations with special education personnel (i.e., special education teachers or paraprofessionals?)

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Frequently
- Almost Always
- Always

9. Please feel free to add any additional comments that will provide more insight into your particular experiences in the IEP process.



Music Teachers' Perceptions of Their Involvement in the Implementation Processes of Individualized Education Programs

Thank you!

Thank you for your responses to this survey. Your answers will be beneficial in the completion of this study involving music teachers and the IEP process.



## Appendix C

### Survey Invitation

I am conducting a research project as a PhD candidate in Music Education through the University of Kansas-Lawrence titled Music Teachers' Perceptions of Their Involvement in the Implementation Processes of Individualized Education Programs. The purpose of the study is to report on music educators' perceptions of their involvement in the implementation processes of Individualized Education Programs. This includes information about and participation in the IEP meetings and subsequent reception of communication of IEP documentation for the purpose of making appropriate adaptations for students with special needs in the music classroom.

If you are willing to participate in this survey, you may find it at

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/musicteacheriep>. The survey will be closed **August 31**. The results of this survey will be used for research presentations and publication.

If you have any questions about the survey, you are welcome to contact me at [kstafford@ku.edu](mailto:kstafford@ku.edu) or the University of Kansas School of Music, care of Dr. Debra Hedden, 1530 Naismith Drive, Lawrence, KS 66045.

Sincerely,

Karen S. Stafford

PhD Candidate, University of Kansas

## Appendix D

### Alignment of Research Questions and Survey Questions

This appendix outlines how the survey questions address the research questions.

Research Question	Corresponding Survey Question(s)	Analysis
1. Are music teachers informed about scheduled IEP meetings?	2. How often are you informed about scheduled IEP meetings?	Descriptive statistics with table. 6-point Likert type. If answer is “Never”, skip logic applied to #3.
2. If informed about scheduled IEP meetings, do music teachers attend them?	3. If you are informed about IEP meetings, how often do you attend them?	Descriptive statistics with table. 6- point Likert type.
3. Do music teachers ever request to attend specific IEP meetings? Do they feel welcomed to do so?	4. Do you ever request to attend IEP meetings? 5. If you have ever requested to attend an IEP meeting, how often do you feel others involved in the meeting welcomed your request?	Descriptive statistics with table. 6-point Likert. If answer is “Never”, skip logic applied to #5.
4. After an IEP meeting, do music teachers receive copies of each student’s annual IEP document?	6. How often do you generally receive copies of each student’s IEP documentation after their meetings?	Descriptive statistics with table. Six-point Likert type. If answer is “Never”, skip logic applied to #7.
5. Do music teachers refer to these annual IEP documents when developing adaptations (accommodations and modifications) for the music classroom? Do music teachers discuss these potential adaptations with special education personnel?	7. How often do you refer to these IEP documents to develop adaptations (either accommodations or modifications) for your students with special needs? 8. How often do you discuss various adaptations with special education personnel (i.e., special education teachers or paraprofessionals?)	Descriptive statistics with table. Six-point Likert type.

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8. Open-ended response to elaborate on any previous responses. Will be analyzed qualitatively through constant comparison and impact, noting unexpected results. Used in discussion to elaborate on results and theories.

9. Demographic questions.
  - a. Years of experience
  - b. State or territory in which you teacher

Used to reinforce balance of differentiation of the survey.

## Appendix E

### Open-Ended Responses

Music Teachers' Perceptions of Their Involvement in the Implementation Processes of Individualized Education Programs

SurveyMonkey

**Q9 Please feel free to add any additional comments that will provide more insight into your particular experiences in the IEP process.**

Answered: 140 Skipped: 302

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Guidance sends reminders to us concerning any updates with our IEP students, and anytime we need to complete weekly/monthly reports.	11/16/2017 6:44 AM
2	In NYS we are required to know the IEP of all of our students and follow them to the letter. We are not welcome to attend the IEP meetings, merely considered a time hindrance. After teaching middle school general music for 25 years I have become pretty adept at making my own modifications and no longer ask for help--sometimes it was readily given and at other times it was just considered "one more thing" the consultant teacher had to do. Music classes often have all special ed students mainstreamed into larger classes with or without an aide--depending on availability. Even so, sometimes the aide makes it harder to teach the students--not all aides are created equal. Most of them do not have a music background, so it is often easier to just do things myself.	11/15/2017 9:34 AM
3	Before our current special education coordinator we were always invited to IEP meetings. We would have them before or after school. My school will not pay for a sub for specialist teachers so this worked well. I always attended. The new director will not come early or stay late so all the meetings are during the school day which leaves us out. That will not allow us to attend and we are informed of when they are happening. I always make sure I have a copy of the IEP by letting the secretary of the coordinator know. We can also view them on our grade book and the new principal gave us a list of all those on an IEP at the beginning of school. We are required to meet accommodations by law so everyone needs to know who needs them. Unfortunately sometimes it takes a lot of effort to get the needed information.	11/15/2017 1:24 AM
4	I don't typically know when IEP meetings are happening at my school.	11/15/2017 12:13 AM
5	I collaborate often with the teacher of the deaf and ASL interpreters. We have developed a great method of communication between musical concepts-- both rhythmic and melodic-- to best teach my students who are both hard of hearing and completely deaf. I regularly receive IEP's from one of our special education teachers, but not the other.	11/14/2017 8:30 PM
6	We are a small charter school, 640 students total in grades 6-12. Our SPED staff works diligently to ensure we have all the IEP & 504 information we need for each student.	11/14/2017 7:57 PM
7	The majority of my dealings with IEP's have been with social, or emotional issues which I discuss with Special Ed personnell several times a year.	11/14/2017 4:13 PM
8	I find most of my teaching methods to be adequate to meet their needs even before we have to meet. I have extensive training in Kodaly, Orff, and Dalcroze.	11/14/2017 3:38 PM
9	If I feel adaptation is needed	11/14/2017 10:05 AM
10	I am usually not informed about IEP or 504 meetings, which means that there are typically no accommodations put in place for my class. If anything, I read the rest of the IEP to see where a student may need assistance and try to use it to inform my interactions with that child.	11/14/2017 8:05 AM
11	We are rarely informed about students' IEPs unless we request the information. Since I teach all students in the building, it would be beneficial to me to be informed about their specific learning needs.	11/14/2017 8:00 AM
12	I have a very close working relationship with the ESE department, and have found if you communicate with them, they always have helpful information.	11/14/2017 7:42 AM
13	I'm always asked to sign the IEP's after the fact but never have been informed of any meetings.	11/13/2017 11:48 PM
14	I get a brief page on students with IEP but no updates. They just started doing this but before I got nothing.	11/13/2017 7:08 PM

Music Teachers' Perceptions of Their Involvement in the Implementation Processes of Individualized Education Programs

SurveyMonkey

15	All staff members involved with a student are invited to IEP meetings and are asked for their input. The only time I do not go is when I have rehearsals going on at the same time. I always get a written report of the meeting and accommodations that are suggested. Our resource teachers are also very willing to give help with any of their students.	11/13/2017 6:48 PM
16	My experiences varied greatly with changes in program personnel and leadership. I often wish I knew more about what I could be doing with/for the students, but often it is difficult or impractical to access information or get ideas from other members of the team.	11/13/2017 6:25 PM
17	I am usually not made aware that a student has an IEP until an issue arises.	11/13/2017 4:29 PM
18	Attendance at IEP meetings for students in any given teacher's class is a requirement for us.	11/13/2017 4:24 PM
19	I work in a very small school with a great special ed department. My first large high school job was nothing like my current situation	11/13/2017 3:09 PM
20	I teach instrumental music classes, and the IEP meetings are extremely helpful in getting to know each student.	11/13/2017 2:51 PM
21	NY State law requires us to review all IEPs and sign off on them each year.	11/13/2017 2:17 PM
22	Where I teach, music is an 'after thought' and is considered prep time for the classroom teachers. Thus, IEP is only another layer of bureaucracy.	11/13/2017 2:11 PM
23	I think I'd take it more seriously if I felt included in the process.	11/13/2017 2:07 PM
24	Only "core" subjects are invited into IEP meetings.	11/13/2017 2:07 PM
25	Support staff rarely make it to the music room and on the occasion that they do, they are uncomfortable with music-making and/or have limited music literacy themselves and are hesitant to participate -or facilitate participation from their students.	11/13/2017 2:07 PM
26	While IEPs are generally not specific to music or other classes, it at least gives an indication of the child's strengths or challenges, and suggests accommodations. The majority of my experience has found that a child with an IEP does not usually need much additional support in music class; particularly with ADHD, the child usually excels over peers.	11/11/2017 9:03 AM
27	It really depends on the grade level. If it's middle school I have access to these forms electronically - but if it's elementary I usually have no idea who my special ed students are - therefore, no adaptations are implemented.	11/9/2017 5:45 PM
28	I may talk to those who know the students better about how to engage them better in music classes. What are triggers or best practices, those sorts of things.	11/7/2017 5:05 PM
29	Most often discussion with a special education teacher involves student behavior in class as opposed to academic performance.	11/4/2017 5:22 AM
30	I use a variety of teaching methods and modalities so I can help all students including the special needs. I use adaptations such as special instruments or simplification of parts to help these children function in a general ed setting. I also keep them close so I can assist them when modeling what I wish for them to do. Most of my IEP's have general information that I can use across the spectrum and just add a few adjustments for children who may need a little more help.	11/2/2017 3:42 PM
31	I teach music at 2 elementary schools. One school is frequently, the other school would be sometimes.	11/1/2017 10:27 AM
32	Some accommodations in students IEP are often difficult to do in music class.	10/31/2017 7:23 AM
33	In our district, I feel there are many IEPs that are created for students who do not really need special education services, and when the IEP is created, it usually does not apply to instruction in the music classroom (extended time on tests, etc...).	10/30/2017 10:17 AM
34	I was a former classroom teacher so I know that differentiation is important for all kids. I also blessed to have some wonderful IAs that help make music adaptive for their students.	10/28/2017 12:29 PM
35	I teach in a school for special needs students, so I am frequently looking at IEP's (weekly).	10/28/2017 9:52 AM
36	It is so student dependent. There are student's with IEPs that do great in music without accommodations. But I feel there is no middle ground. I usually have students that need no accommodations, or they need everything accommodated	10/26/2017 6:47 PM



Music Teachers' Perceptions of Their Involvement in the Implementation Processes of Individualized Education Programs

SurveyMonkey

37	The special education teachers work with me to provide students with what they need for my orchestra program. I have students with processing difficulties, autism, and learning disabilities. We do not offer special education beyond that degree.	10/25/2017 9:57 AM
38	My school has a set system of what general education teachers attend what IEP meetings to help ensure that a gen ed teacher is present at all meetings without having the same teachers at every meeting. We also systematically get a condensed version of each of our students' IEP (IEP At A Glance) at the beginning of each semester.	10/24/2017 11:05 PM
39	WE are required by state statute to read and sign off on each students IEP in first month. Many times the accomodations do not pertain to music and often student does well in music.	10/24/2017 5:20 PM
40	I am invited to go to an IEP meeting when they need a "general educator" for the meeting - this is when the student in question is in a self-contained classroom and they don't have a "real teacher" that know the child. I often refer students to the process, but my recommendations are not taken. The process doesn't start until a "classroom" teacher requests it. Resource teacher are never told that a meeting is taking place, and if we somehow find out, and request to attend, there is never anyone available to cover our own classes. Generally we are given the raw, unorganized meeting notes shortly after the IEP meeting takes place, but don't generally get one that is organized with needed accommodations unless it is the beginning of the year. I always read the IEPs, most accommodations do not apply to music classes, or the accommodations are so basic, that we're already doing them as a matter of planning the class. We have to follow the accommodations. It is the law. Problems do arise when you have a class of 32 kids, and 15 of them have an IEP or a 504 that says they need to sit near the teacher. LOL. But not really... And some self contained classes with 6 students and 8 adults, because they all have one on one assistants, send their students to resource classes without the one on one aide, because it is just music. As if the IEP's don't count in our classes. If your goal is to have proof that school systems don't respect the only teachers in the buildings that see every child in the school, six years in a row, going to the music teachers is an awesome choice. Good luck with your research!	10/24/2017 11:11 AM
41	I teach my students from 6th grade to 12th grade. In that time, I learn their individual learning styles and adaptation needs without the need for additional documentation.	10/24/2017 6:35 AM
42	With many of my IEP students, their accommodations aren't terribly "intrusive" or challenging in my classroom, if they are impactful at all.	10/23/2017 7:56 PM
43	I'm typically either left out or the adaptations have nothing to do with music	10/23/2017 6:57 PM
44	IEP's don't tell me anything useful about the specific capabilities of a student. For example, an IEP might tell me their reading scores and that they have various impairments. Frankly I don't have a clue what those math, reading, etc. Scores mean and I don't really have time to look them up. Those sorts of things tells me nothing about what a reasonable expectation or accommodation looks like in the classroom. It's easier to ask their SPED teacher and discuss it with them.	10/23/2017 6:38 PM
45	Most often, the adaptations are not applicable to my class, they are usually something like extra time on tests, visual aids, etc. I already incorporate many of those things naturally in the classes and in a performance based, participation based class, most of the time, we are singing or playing our instruments, so it is hands on, already.	10/23/2017 5:08 PM
46	We have special education teachers that always inform us about student IEP meetings and require all of their current teachers to attend. If we cannot make the meeting, we still provide an email update prior to the meeting. I find that most adaptations do not always fit the regular choral rehearsal and special education teachers are very helpful in providing ideas for how to work with their students best.	10/23/2017 4:57 PM
47	I believe n the IEP process and work to apply it to all students with an IEP for their success as a learner.	10/23/2017 4:16 PM
48	I find that often the IEP accommodations necessary rarely effect band kids.	10/23/2017 3:48 PM
49	I would love to be able to have a dialogue with all personnel involved in IEP (classroom teacher, student, parent, speech path, SPED facilitator, aide, etc). I feel the more information I have, the better I can fully support all students. It is rare we have much information as specialists unless there is a medical issue.	10/23/2017 3:35 PM
50	In our district, teachers are assigned to attend specific students' IEP meetings. While I can say I want to be in the loop on my band students, it is a complete luck of the draw. They do not provide coverage for more than one general education teacher to attend the meeting.	10/23/2017 2:50 PM

Music Teachers' Perceptions of Their Involvement in the Implementation Processes of Individualized Education Programs

SurveyMonkey

51	Involvement with IEPs, and implementation of accommodations is the responsibility of EVERY teacher.	10/23/2017 2:48 PM
52	IEP meetings are held during times when i can not attend I take in account special needs of students and they are adapted for those students	10/23/2017 2:24 PM
53	Because IEP meetings are scheduled during the school day, specialists cannot always attend due to our teaching responsibilities. However, it is mandated that there be one of us there. SO the lead support staffer schedules us on a rotating schedule and provides a substitute to cover those classes we'd have to miss in order to attend those meetings. For those we cannot attend, if there is a student on whom we wish to speak on, we can submit something in writing for the parent and support team to review, and take into consideration for any adaptations needed.	10/23/2017 1:56 PM
54	I have never been asked to part of IEP development. I receive copies at the beginning of the school year and occasional updates. I try to accommodate my lessons appropriately but I have never received guidance from Special Ed.	10/23/2017 1:42 PM
55	Specialist are not often considered for IEP meetings.	10/23/2017 12:49 PM
56	I teach zero period, and run the middle school level drama program during and after school. I can never attend the morning meetings and can only attend the after school meetings when I am not in production.	10/23/2017 12:27 PM
57	I am aware of who my SPED students are and what their needs are, for the most part. When specific needs occur, I do consult SPED personnel for extra help and ideas to assist in their success in the choral classroom and in performance. This is also helpful in areas involving competition, deciding which students are able (and not able) to participate fully.	10/23/2017 12:12 PM
58	I seek out the information and have conversations on a regular basis with my special ed team. In my last school I worked with the deaf population and was very involved.	10/23/2017 12:11 PM
59	Though I am not included in the IEP meetings our special education teachers talk to me almost weekly about their students and how we can best accommodate them in the music classroom setting.	10/23/2017 11:40 AM
60	The students' IEPs are available for viewing on Progress Book, the computer system that we use for attendance and grading. We are not given individual copies and are not invited to IEP meetings, nor contacted by intervention specialists. If I have an issue or question about a student I go to them.	10/23/2017 11:34 AM
61	I am a new teacher and in my first two years of teaching I received the information but didn't have any guidance in how to interpret or ways to use the information to develop modifications for students. Now, in my 3rd year, I feel I am finally beginning to understand the documents enough to be able to use IEP information to better accommodate students. I think that IEP training and guidance for new music teachers is especially lacking.	10/23/2017 11:02 AM
62	Oftentimes, the arts are left to their own devices on IEPs by listing no modifications for the class. I feel that this places the student and the teacher at a distinct disadvantage.	10/23/2017 11:00 AM
63	I have many students with IEP's in my program. We made modifications as much as possible, but also try to have students fit into the "band" model as much as possible due to the performance and competition aspect of the program.	10/23/2017 10:56 AM
64	I make accommodations for all of my students in the first place.	10/23/2017 10:55 AM
65	We adapt a lot of music to our student needs on a regular basis	10/23/2017 10:51 AM
66	I teach at a school where we have several self contained special needs students. Student who have extremely delayed cognitive abilities. I am frequently called upon as the regular ed teacher for ppt meetings. At these meetings I give feedback to parents on students progress and program in music.	10/23/2017 10:46 AM
67	WE are able to access the IEP documents ourselves	10/23/2017 10:41 AM
68	At my school, IEP Meetings are held during elective times so that grade level teachers can attend. I am never able to attend the meetings, even when I ask.	10/23/2017 10:36 AM
69	Our meetings are required and the students' accommodations are online in each students file only visible to the teachers of each student.	10/23/2017 10:31 AM
70	I have found special education teachers and autism specialists to be very willing to help me implement accommodations and modifications in my classroom.	10/23/2017 10:28 AM

Music Teachers' Perceptions of Their Involvement in the Implementation Processes of Individualized Education Programs

SurveyMonkey

71	This year, is the first year (in 26) that I have received IEP's at all. I have known about 2 meetings, my entire career. These two meetings I did attend, and my input was welcomed. As the child's band director, I am never informed of them. I'm hoping now that the law has changed in Illinois, that this practice changes as well. I have discussed adaptations with many of my students with the special education teachers in the past though. (Without seeing the IEP, or the 504's which I have never seen until this year.)	10/23/2017 10:20 AM
72	Legally we have to have copies of IEP's or the district can be out of compliance.	10/23/2017 10:14 AM
73	I purposefully set boundaries of what is "fine" and what is "not fine" in the music room. We usually develop a system of phrases that alert the para when a student needs to step out for a minute. I provide opportunity for students to explore/assess outside of the structured classroom setting.	10/23/2017 8:18 AM
74	We used to always be requested to be at IEP meetings until 3 years ago. Our new Special Education director will not get us a sub or hold meetings before or after school so we can attend. It is not required by the state so he will not accommodate for us. Our special education teachers are great to work with and we collaborate to make sure we are meeting the needs of our students.	10/22/2017 5:08 PM
75	This is my first year back in the K-12 setting. I currently teach in a private Christian school and we don't have a SPED department. We are informed about IEPs for students through email. In my previous position, I taught 6-12 Vocal Music and I was invited to attend or send information for the IEP that I was invited to attend.	10/22/2017 4:06 PM
76	As a choral arts director and voice teacher, I teach in a sequentialized way that continuously allows students to re-visit concepts and build on them in a developmentally appropriate way. All students have an equal right to learn in a way that allows for differentiated instruction and developmentally appropriate practice. If I focus on that all my students learn and develop skills equally. I also feel that least restrictive environment applies to regular ed students as well as students with special needs. Any students disrupting the learning of others are held accountable equally. I teach my students that responsibility, integrity, kindness, compassion, and academic scholarly habits are free and equally accessible to all who commit to growing their character through academic achievement. In short, to me, an IEP is a document that informs good teaching practices and common sense in a formalized way, it does not really change what I teach, or how I do it.	10/20/2017 9:34 PM
77	Usually metal how the student is doing in my class then I sit there for an hour with my mouth shut.	10/20/2017 5:56 AM
78	Often when I ask to attend IEP meetings, the other teachers say that is fine, but they schedule the meeting during their prep which is when fine arts have classes. It is often a scheduling issue.	10/20/2017 5:19 AM
79	I usually have to seek out information-it is rarely available.	10/18/2017 8:26 PM
80	The iep process is not really designed for classes with a performance/assessment model, and the special educators creating iep's rarely understand or seek to understand the methodology of band class.	10/18/2017 6:15 PM
81	When you see 720+ students, and most only once a week, it is almost impossible to keep up with IEP's, especially given the high number of IEP's that are in place these days.	10/18/2017 12:52 PM
82	I appreciate being informed and updated on any IEP plans. Music has often been a helpful class for special needs and accommodations students to achieve success.	10/18/2017 9:09 AM
83	Most IEP goals are either totally not applicable to music, or there are broad accommodation/modifications that do not need consultation. Typically spec ed teachers don't know enough about my subject to help with content specific stuff so I tend to work on my own for that.	10/17/2017 7:33 PM
84	I only have one student with an IEP. I am informed about some meetings and receive emails when those who work with the student are requesting information from their homeroom teachers to help fill out an IEP. I have never been asked to attend a meeting, but would be happy to do so for any of my students with an IEP.	10/17/2017 5:54 PM
85	The biggest detriment to most student centered meeting is staff coverage when the meeting is taking place, generally during the school day. At any given meeting, you will have the classroom teacher as well as additional support staff. If the timing of the meeting aligns with a scheduled class, the chances of the "lowly" music teacher, or art, phys ed, etc teachers for that matter, getting coverage, when there are already several people being covered during that time becomes slim to none. As a result, our inclusion is not usually requested or even inquired about. This scenario is at the elementary level, where "special" subject areas are not given remotely the same priority as other academic subjects.	10/17/2017 4:22 PM

Music Teachers' Perceptions of Their Involvement in the Implementation Processes of Individualized Education Programs

SurveyMonkey

86	A lot will come from other Special Area Teachers then more specific questions and approaches will be directed to Special Ed Teachers.	10/17/2017 1:44 PM
87	Usually, what is in the IEP for music is too vague. Also, the aids, paraprofessionals and SE teachers are almost never in my room while the student who needs them is there. They are usually assigned something else and I am on my own, therefore what was agreed upon in the IEP is voided in application.	10/17/2017 11:14 AM
88	At the beginning of the year, each Special Education teacher gives us a list of students who have an IEP and 504 to bring our attention to them, and that is the only contact we have. We are only asked to be on a CSE when there are no other regular education teachers in that student's schedule (this includes other special areas teachers such as art and physical education).	10/17/2017 10:00 AM
89	We are not given release time to attend these meetings.	10/17/2017 9:55 AM
90	In my middle school, I am able to discuss and accommodate adaptations easily because I see the kids everyday. Most of them struggle with written theory tests, but do fine on playing tests. We're always given copies of IEPs, and we see the special education teachers regularly. It is a different story in the elementary schools. I only see the kids twice a week. One school houses the special education students in grades 3-5. The teacher there does a round table discussion for each music student in grades 4 and 5 because they are playing instruments at those levels. The other schools have students that have accommodations as well, but we're never told about them and have to discover who the kids are and get information by talking to the teachers if we see them at lunch. Not a great system.	10/17/2017 9:37 AM
91	This is often a topic of of our group specialist meetings.	10/17/2017 9:00 AM
92	I am not involved in the IEP process but I do give input and I always get the final document.	10/17/2017 7:25 AM
93	Most IEPs are written with Math or Reading in mind and not my subject area. Music is seen as an extra, just playing games. I use as much info as possible and ask questions, but the special ed teachers don't always understand or want to understand my subject to help out.	10/17/2017 7:13 AM
94	Most IEPs refer to reading and math, and therefore do not directly affect my classes. I certainly refer to them in regard to any written work in General Music, as well as specific emotional needs/adaptations, but as I said, most do not directly affect my classes.	10/17/2017 7:02 AM
95	In my elementary school, I provide a written narrative (as do all the specialists) as to how each child is doing academically, socially, and musically during our class time together, as well as listing any accommodations that the child needs and how satisfied I am at their current level of progress. (I see my elementary music classes twice every six days for 35 minutes per class)	10/17/2017 6:09 AM
96	I see about 380 students a day. I have so many students in an IEP or 504 that it is almost impossible to remember them all and make the multiple accommodations on each IEP.	10/17/2017 5:45 AM
97	We have a meeting at the beginning of the school year about students with special needs. When new students come in during the school year, we are informed they are in special education but rarely will we find out why. We have to discover that on our own. I have over 500 students I see each week.	10/17/2017 4:27 AM
98	I have found that a majority of the IEPs focus on the core classes and not the electives. Many of those who formulate the IEPs have no idea what type of differentiations or modifications would be needed in an elective class. Often students are just pulled from the class all together.	10/16/2017 9:09 PM
99	IEPs are available to us through a student management software but we are rarely notified if changes have been made. We are discouraged from attending meetings both because of schedule conflicts and so as to not overwhelm families with the number of staff present in the meeting. In part because of the above, IEPs never directly address Music class. My special education team is ALWAYS open to working with me about making adaptations for kids and is ALWAYS willing to tell me what they feel their students can or should be expected to do if I seek the information out.	10/16/2017 8:44 PM
100	I will almost always reach out to a child's para or caseworker to give feedback, but the most challenging cases always require the most communication.	10/16/2017 8:26 PM

Music Teachers' Perceptions of Their Involvement in the Implementation Processes of Individualized Education Programs

SurveyMonkey

101	I feel like the IEP process plays both a positive and negative role from my experience as a music educator - I have found behavior IEPs to be particularly difficult given the level of self regulation required to succeed in a traditional ensemble/music classroom setting. Frequently I will end up being the only teacher in a child's day without para support for a behavior student, which becomes difficult when the IEP is written so the student's behavior/on task goal is only 10% of class time which translates to 5 minutes of class. I have found that being involved in the IEP creation process helps advocate the importance of a child to continue to get para support (if that support is in every other class) in music, and stresses that my class is also an academic class, despite being an elective choice.	10/16/2017 8:14 PM
102	I am given a copy of specific needs for specific students at the beginning of the year, but rarely if ever are involved in any processes or meetings throughout the course of the year. This includes any behavior charts or other accommodations for students. I am simply informed of them the next time they come to my class.	10/16/2017 7:48 PM
103	Our school (grades 6-12) offers SpEd and parapro help to IEP & 504 students. They ALWAYS make sure new students or accommodations are brought to the attention of ALL the student's teachers, especially those who transfer in mid-year.	10/16/2017 7:23 PM
104	Because my teaching schedule has me traveling to several schools within one day, I can rarely attend IEP meetings, but am always in contact with the Special Ed. Teacher assigned to the student.	10/16/2017 7:19 PM
105	Even when I know an IEP meeting is happening, it often occurs during the student's activity time, which would be when I would have class, which means that I would not be able to attend. It is very rare that I have a student I feel I need to attend an IEP for, but if I could attend all IEP meetings for my students, I definitely would. Often I get the IEP afterward with accommodations for specific subjects and I'm not sure how to use those in the music classroom. I also have trouble with the lack of context; I get a list of accommodations but especially in a new school environment where I don't know these students yet, I don't know why they need accommodations and rarely if ever am I communicated with past the physical document that I sign off on.	10/16/2017 6:54 PM
106	No one notifies me of IEP's. I contact special ed personal and classroom teachers to find out if any of the students I teach have IEPs. If they do I track down the proper person to get a copy.	10/16/2017 6:10 PM
107	I will say that I attempt to acquire student IEP documentation so I am aware of what modifications need to be made, but in our district the coordinators give out a blanket list of names and a blanket list of modifications. Absolutely nothing is specific.	10/16/2017 4:34 PM
108	I only attend a few IEP meetings a year as I teach a zero period and direct the after school plays/musicals. (Akin to coaching 3 sports a year)	10/16/2017 4:30 PM
109	I would love to be more involved during IEP's but unfortunately the schedule I have wouldn't allow it	10/16/2017 4:24 PM
110	Communication occurs most often after a child has exhibited problematic behavior (for disciplinary purposes.)	10/16/2017 4:19 PM
111	I've had students who functioned better in music class than in other classes. The music may provide something for them to build on.	10/16/2017 3:47 PM
112	Many IEP accommodations such as verbal instruction, repetitive or tactile exercises, and short attention activities work well in music. However, It is difficult to provide any accommodations in an instrumental music setting for some disabilities such as Dyslexia. I have taught students with a significant level of dyslexia and they are able to perform at standard levels or higher because they do not see notes out of order, or they are able to learn what a musical note value is whether they see it right or left sided. There seems to be little impairment determining pitch by students with dyslexia. Additionally, I have found that music teachers are rarely included or consulted in IEP creation, nor are they regularly invited to IEP conferences with parents and students.	10/16/2017 3:00 PM
113	Often I am unable to attend IEP meeting because the occur during the teachers common plan time, when I am teaching that grade level of students in my classroom.	10/16/2017 2:48 PM
114	We are also very well supported by our district Occupational Therapist services. Our OT comes in to observe during music & helps give suggestions for adaptive equipment or modified curricular goals in all special are classes. We also just met specifically with an Audiologist for a student with a hearing impairment, beyond just the equipment training, but also for the needs in music. Our district does a fabulous job also getting us adaptive equipment or para support in our classes when necessary. Thanks for doing this important study!	10/16/2017 2:44 PM

Music Teachers' Perceptions of Their Involvement in the Implementation Processes of Individualized Education Programs

SurveyMonkey

115	At our school, it is required for faculty to attend an IEP meeting with a student and his teachers for each Middle School Student every year, and for the first year with each High School Student (unless the parent requires additional meetings in future years). So all faculty are required to be at these meetings, therefore we do not have to request specific meetings.	10/16/2017 2:42 PM
116	Many IEP accommodations are specific to math or reading and writing goals. Often the orchestra class does not pertain to specific IEP goals. I find that the orchestra perspective in an IEP meeting often highlights many things that a student is doing well. This is often very welcome by both the parents and students in what can sometimes be a difficult and intimidating situation.	10/16/2017 2:32 PM
117	I feel as if my school thrives with Special Education students. Students are well taken care of and have lots of support in our school	10/16/2017 2:27 PM
118	We receive the IEPs through Infinite Campus. It would be great to take part in the IEP meetings. Otherwise this year we began meeting with the Special Education team once a quarter.	10/16/2017 2:25 PM
119	Often the IEP does not address the student taking a music class. The accommodations/adaptations are normally for math, language arts, science and history. If the student has a visual impairment, it may bring up physical education. In my experience, it has never given me any guidance in how to handle the student in a music classroom.	10/16/2017 2:24 PM
120	Often IEP students don't need most of the modifications for music class. If we are testing or doing paperwork, they do, but that is pretty rare in my class.	10/16/2017 2:19 PM
121	In the last couple of years our district has put IEP access on our online SIS site. We rarely get a true chance to work on adaptations for students except on the fly in class.	10/16/2017 2:04 PM
122	Most IEPs are I receive are in reference to testing accommodations, physical limitations or behavioral accommodations. These are simple to do in my setting and often accommodate each student with little to no issues.	10/16/2017 1:55 PM
123	I rarely go to SpEd personnel unless it's an extreme case which I'm not familiar with. In my past experience, I have worked closely as a Special Education Teacher's Assistant at a middle school, and learned a lot about accommodations and modifications for students.	10/16/2017 1:52 PM
124	We meet at the beginning of the year to go over the existing IEP's. If I ever need to meet during the year, I let my SPED team know.	10/16/2017 1:50 PM
125	It is always good to talk with the paraprofessional to gain better insight as to how to assist the student with the IEP.	10/16/2017 1:47 PM
126	I am a K-6 music teacher. I teach 5 Special Ed classes ranging in ability from verbal- non-verbal/wheel chair bound students. I am often invited to attend my SPED students IEP mtgs but rarely can do to my schedule. I am never told about, invited to, or given paperwork on my gen ed students.	10/16/2017 1:43 PM
127	When I receive an IEP, I put a little piece of clipart next to their name on my seating grid. This reminds me of their accommodation (like a clock for "extra time") without worrying about showing confidential information to others who may see them. I have never been invited to an IEP meeting, but the classroom teachers and special educators in my building are very helpful when I approach them with questions about specific students.	10/16/2017 1:41 PM
128	The special ed staff never approaches me with information on students' adaptations/modifications. That falls on me. If I see a students struggling, it is up to me to approach special ed to see if that student is on their caseload and if there should be adaptations/modifications made. It's pretty frustrating, actually, since I see the entire school every day that I work.	10/16/2017 1:41 PM
129	Over the past 3-5 years, I have only been invited to one IEP. The only IEP plans that I have been made aware of are those students who are in grades 7-12. I have no awareness of any accommodations meant for my k-6 students. I have asked our elementary special education teacher for access to IEP's so that I may differentiate my instruction and make accommodations accordingly, however, over the past 3-5 years I have received nothing. It is frustrating.	10/16/2017 1:39 PM
130	I have very little collaborative time available to talk with colleagues because I travel between two schools everyday.	10/16/2017 1:35 PM
131	I am not involved in the IEP writing process. I receive copies of all IEPs, in addition to accommodation sheets for some students (but not all). I refer to accommodation sheets often, and consult special education staff members when I am struggling with certain students.	10/16/2017 1:32 PM

Music Teachers' Perceptions of Their Involvement in the Implementation Processes of Individualized Education Programs

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132	My biggest struggle with attending IEP meetings is that they are usually scheduled when I am unable to attend. Typically they are scheduled when core teachers are able to attend. It is also difficult to use the accommodations listed when they are only for written work. In a performance based class, it is difficult to adapt that to what I am teaching.	10/16/2017 1:32 PM
133	My biggest irritation with IEP meetings is that when I'm "invited" to attend I'm required to attend. There have been times when I'm told in the morning that I have to attend the meeting a substitute will be sent to my class. A non-music substitute sent to my class without me being able to prepare anything. It's gotten a little bit better but I get irritated when 30 students don't get a music class because I'm called away for 1 student.	10/16/2017 1:31 PM
134	Seeing a rise of autism in my classrooms	10/16/2017 1:30 PM
135	Our school requires all teachers to attend what is called an "IEP" party. Essentially, it is when all SPED teachers are in one room, and we travel with our rosters from teacher to teacher, and they give us IEP's for students on their caseloads that we teach. We are often the only regular ed teacher that students have, so our presence is not only encouraged, but required.	10/16/2017 1:30 PM
136	My district does not require me to attend all IEPs. When an IEP is coming up, I receive a prompt to 'write a paragraph on how the student is doing' in music. I have worked with my colleagues for 25 years... so I know that this paragraph is to include how the student is doing socially, academically and to mention strengths and weaknesses. I know to compare the student to their own abilities, not to others and to comment based on their IEP... so maybe they are not the best musician, but they are now able to spend the entire 25 minutes in class rather than 5 minutes.	10/16/2017 1:30 PM
137	I teach in a PK-9 independent school.	10/16/2017 1:28 PM
138	I have asked to attend IEP meetings, but have not been welcomed. I usually write a note for parents to let them know if there are any issues in the music classroom. I always get the IEP modification sheets in the beginning of the year.	10/16/2017 1:28 PM
139	While I may not be included into the IEP meetings, I am aware of IEP changes and incorporate any new IEPs into my plans. I'll ask their teachers if needed, but typically an IEP will already be adjusted for in my lesson plans due to the nature of the students and the lessons	10/16/2017 1:26 PM
140	To clarify, we need not attend meetings because we complete a checklist to be used in the meeting.	10/16/2017 1:26 PM