

AN ANALYTICAL SURVEY OF THREE
SCHOOL DISTRICT STRING PROGRAMS:
COMMONALITIES AND DIFFERENCES

by

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study has been to examine three different school districts and the status of their string programs. The districts studied were Kansas City, Kansas (USD 500), Lawrence (USD 497), and Shawnee Mission (USD 512). It was hoped that information gleaned in comparing the different string programs would be helpful in developing new string programs.

All three districts reported that the string programs were growing. Evidence seemed to be to the contrary when comparing the number and size of orchestras in the past. A survey was instrumented to obtain information on various aspects of a string program. Subject matter included instructor turn-over, attitudes of administrators, instructors and the community toward the string program, string specialist availability, number of students participating in the string program, instrument rental availability, drop-out rate for string players, background of the instructors and teacher preparedness. Conclusions have been drawn and recommendations made as warranted.

Acknowledgements

The writer wishes to thank each of the teachers who participated in the study and especially Dr. Paul Haack and Dr. John Grashel for giving him the confidence to continue on to get the Master's Degree. The writer also wishes to thank Connie Kelley for doing the typing. Lastly, the writer wishes to thank his parents, without them it would not have been possible.

J. L. B.

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Introduction and Purpose

While a great deal of research has been done in the area of band and band management, not nearly as much is available in the area of string programs. Part of the problem may have been that many schools did not have a string program. However, Mark (1978), referring to the Tanglewood Declaration, 1967, states:

Music of all periods, styles, forms, and cultures belongs in the curriculum. (p. 48)

This objective can not fully be achieved in a school without a string program. There is a certain type of literature that can only be experienced in orchestra. Dillon and Kriechbaum (1978) state:

Most state boards of education and accrediting agencies recognize that a music curriculum is not complete without an orchestral program. (p. 3)

Some of the reasons for schools lacking string programs have been found through viewing existing programs, both highly successful or less than successful programs. As much has been learned from problem programs as from flourishing ones.

The dearth of research in the area of school string instruction is alarming. An examination of dissertations written from 1973 to 1983 reveals fewer than eight studies concerning (in total or in part) string education at the secondary level. Many of those were concerned with the status of instrumental music education outside of Kansas. Only one dissertation (Corbett, 1977) was found that contained

information even remotely concerning string programs and that dealt with teacher preparedness. An older thesis (Williams, 1968) was one of the few studies done regarding the high school orchestra movement in Kansas. No studies were found dealing with attitudes of administrators, principals, and teachers regarding string instruction. It was hoped that by designing a survey dealing with the attitudes of the above groups toward string instruction, information would be gleaned that might help explain either the growth or decline of string programs in the three different school districts studied in this thesis.

The purpose of this study, then, was to examine three different string programs, their commonalities and differences. No one string program is the perfect model for all schools - a blueprint of one successful program is not necessarily ideal in another area or situation. The model program in the inner city, for example, may not be exactly what a suburban school would want to use, or vice versa. However, most string programs have some common characteristics. In conducting a survey of the teachers within three different string programs, it was hoped that light would be shed upon various aspects of string instruction. It was hoped also that by examining different attitudes of string instructors a broadened awareness of alternatives would be gained. Information derived from various directors has provided additional insight into the potential range of procedures and practices in the music education medium under study.

The three districts examined in this study were the Kansas City, Kansas (USD 500), Shawnee Mission (USD 512), and Lawrence (USD 497).

Other additional area school districts such as Olathe (USD 233) and Blue Valley (USD 229) that had string programs were also included in this study.

In comparing answers given to the survey administered, it was hoped that certain attitudes would be found in common in the more successful programs. Over fifty percent of the surveys administered indicated that their string programs were growing. However, when examining the sizes of the orchestras in the past, as well as the number of orchestras in existence, evidence seemed to be to the contrary.

Subject matter covered by the survey included instructor turnover, attitudes of administrators, instructors and the community toward the string programs, string specialist availability, the number of students participating in the string programs, instrument rental availability, drop-out rate for string players, background of the string instructors in terms of their major instrument, and instructor preparedness.

This study has attempted to answer various questions concerning the growth or decline of string programs in the districts being studied. Areas of concern in this study were as follows: What effect does teacher turn-over have on string programs? Are the programs that are taught by string majors larger programs? Do the instructors, especially non-string majors, feel they were adequately prepared in college to teach strings? What effect, if any, does one teacher teaching both band and orchestra have on the string program? Might it be better to split the two programs? What effect

does the addition of wind players to string groups have? Should winds be added to junior high or middle school string groups? Why or why not? Do the districts start string instruction at the same time? Are string specialists available in the several districts involved? Are programs where most students own their instruments stronger programs? How aware of the string programs are the teachers within each district? Do answers conflict within each district? How important do the attitudes of the community, administrators, and teachers seem to be in the development of the string program? It was hoped that in addressing the question above that information would be helpful to others in structuring new string programs.

The survey designed for this study gave the instructors a chance to provide additional feedback on any survey item on which they wished to elaborate. All information gained from this instrument has been reported in its entirety in Chapter Five.

CHAPTER II

Related Literature

The percentage of schools not having an orchestra is large. Dillon and Kriechbaum (1978) stated that 78% of the schools who responded to a survey indicated they did not have an orchestra program. Dillon had more to say on the subject:

Reasons that people give for not having orchestra programs are:

- (1) The school is not big enough for both a band and orchestra.
- (2) Adding a string program will hurt the existing band program.
- (3) There is no interest. (p. 3)

When examining what little research has been done in the area of string programs, one finds a great deal of conflicting information. Whether or not a school has an orchestra seems to depend on the geographical area being examined. In addressing the question of whether or not string programs in Kansas were growing or on the decline Johnson (1982) stated:

Out of 85 completed surveys, fifty-five percent of the responses are from growing programs. (p. 28)

Johnson also stated:

Reasons for growth are: administrative, parent, and teacher support, positive publicity, financial support, and the Suzuki String Project. (p. 29)

In the Johnson study, six percent of the programs were declining. Some reasons offered for the decline were scheduling (the number one problem), lack of interest (which agrees with Dillon), financial

problems, and lack of parent and administrative support. (p. 29)

Another researcher (Hood, 1965) asked whether there was a continuing decline in the number of orchestra and string programs in the secondary schools in Kansas. The answer was dependent upon several factors such as the size of the school and whether there had ever been a string program in the district. Hood also posed a related question regarding the attitudes of school administrators, faculty members, students, and the general population toward orchestra. It was found, as might be expected, that those schools having an orchestra had a favorable attitude toward orchestra, while those not having a string program tended to have a negative attitude. Again, whether or not the number of orchestras was increasing or decreasing seemed to be dependent upon the area being studied. Hood mentioned that 48 schools without orchestras indicated that at one time there had been a string program. What happened to these programs? Sell (1950) stated:

The function of the orchestra in school is to provide vital musical experience for the student and to create in him, while in school and in after school years, an abiding interest in orchestral music both as listener and especially as performer. (p. 6)

One problem area with string programs was the lack of confidence on the part of the teachers regarding their preparation to teach strings. Holmes (1951) stated:

Too many music majors are graduated from college with such a scant knowledge of stringed instruments procedure that they

start orchestras only under pressure. It is squarely up to the teacher-training institutions to prepare their graduates to handle orchestras as well as band and chorus. (pp. 128-129)

The Johnson study also was concerned with the question of teacher preparedness.

About one-third or twenty-nine of the string teachers feel they did not have adequate training to be a string instructor. Sixty-nine percent of those teachers belong to the non-string major category. They feel they needed more time to learn, individual instruction, playing ability on each instrument, and more practical basics in string pedagogy. (p. 45)

Still another source dealt with the area of teacher preparedness. Corbett (1977) stated:

Instrumental respondents were asked five questions regarding their background and their opinion relating to their undergraduate orchestra training. Their responses are summarized as follows:

1. Only a small percentage (38%) of respondents received private instruction on string instruments; although a high percentage (94%) indicated they received instruction in string methods classes.
2. Only two-thirds of the instrumental respondents stated they performed in a college orchestra.
3. Fifty-four percent of the instrumental respondents stated they did not feel qualified to work with a public school orchestra program.

4. Less than one-half (41%) of the instrumental respondents indicated that they worked with an orchestra during their student teaching experience.

5. A majority (63%) of the respondents who are presently teaching believed that an orchestra could exist in their teaching situation.

As mentioned earlier, one of the reasons given for declining programs was lack of interest. Smith (1981), in an article written for the School Musician stated:

Kids Like To Be On A Winning Team! If the school orchestra is a strong organization with built in prestige, then students will want to participate. On the other hand, if it's weak, sounds poorly and is just barely struggling along, that image business is true. Enthusiastic, well-organized teachers who produce results will more likely attract the best string players and students as well as convince administrators, fellow teachers, parents and others to give their active support. Stated simply, "strong string programs are the products of strong teachers!" (p. 6)

Williams (1968) offered more information on the decline of the school orchestras in Kansas. The Williams study included a survey mailed to Kansas schools which asked if there was no longer a school orchestra, what caused its demise. Williams concluded:

Fifty of the responses gave several reasons for the decline of their local orchestra. The largest group, 34%, mentioned emphasis on the band program as the major factor. Lack of

interest by the music teacher, administration, or community were mentioned in 26% of the cases.

Another area of concern in dealing with string programs was the area of recruitment. Dillon (1980) stated:

Recruiting students for the orchestra program is without a doubt one of the most important activities of the school string instructor as obviously one can't have a good string program without lots of quality students at every level - and, in the right proportions for a balanced orchestra. (p. 24)

Dillon later added:

Many teachers correctly think that most important to the recruitment of students is to have a clever, fun-educational type session for prospective students a few weeks before the classes are to begin. While we must realize that while this is vitally important, we must also be aware that probably equally important are such things as: what we do with our classes the whole year through and our own personal image as we go about our daily tasks where we are involved with students, teachers, administrators, parents, and community people. (p. 24)

The availability of good string literature was another item that had to be considered concerning school string programs.

Witt (1980), in regard to the writing of music for school orchestras, stated:

Should the composer decide upon a composition for school orchestra, he needs to consider the various levels of achievement represented by various school orchestras. When commissioned by

a school orchestra, he keeps in mind the characteristics of that orchestra during the writing process, and tailors the composition for it. Otherwise, the composer sets a level for which he will write.

Nonmusical considerations may have a bearing upon the choice of level and upon musical decisions. To have the composition published so that it will be made available to young players, knowledge of the market is required. Sometimes publishers will suggest the level and/or type of composition which is being asked for by orchestra directors. Knowledgeable publishers are quite valuable in this regard. (p. 32)

Witt later states:

School orchestra directors should not settle for anything less than the best music for the abilities of their orchestras... (p. 33)

Isaac (1981) states:

Music for the school orchestra should have interesting, playable parts for all of the players, and string parts that have been carefully planned and skillfully fingered and bowed – for young players.

The music should be sufficiently difficult to be challenging, but not difficult enough to be discouraging. (p. 42)

Finally, on the subject of literature, Smith (1981) stated:

You must realize that the school string and full orchestra market is a limited one, particularly in comparison to the band field. (p. 60)

Smith later added:

When professional arrangers write pieces for school orchestra, they don't necessarily fulfill the needs of the orchestra. You cannot use the same formulas as for band writing. The orchestra arranger should know the basic characteristics of the strings, their techniques, and the sequence for learning string playing in order to write effectively for all levels.

School orchestra music requires plentiful doublings so that students weaknesses are not exposed. (p. 60)

It is evident that the choice of music then can either make or break a string program. The responsibility for good literature is up to several people - teachers, composers, and arrangers alike.

As mentioned earlier, available information as to whether or not string programs are growing or declining varies considerably. In the Johnson (1982) study cited earlier the following was reported:

Information gathered in the research project and survey is to serve as a resource tool for string educators about historical background of Kansas string programs and their current status. The historical background reveals a decline in string programs since 1935, which has continued into 1982. Even with 85 percent of the respondents reporting growing or continuing programs, the size of the orchestra is small. (p. 44)

As stated previously in Chapter One, no one program is the perfect program for everyone to use. Mueller (1981) stated:

In looking at string programs throughout America you will find that excellence is the keyword descriptive of our goal.

We have been creating a tradition of high performances for many years. We have taken pride in setting high standards and living up to them.

Of these exemplary programs that span our nation, no one approach to excellence is being used. The approaches are different yet there are commonalities. (p. 68)

CHAPTER THREE

Procedures

This study involved surveying secondary school instrumental teachers from three different school districts. Only those teachers involved with a string program were utilized. Those three districts were the Kansas City, Kansas district, the Shawnee Mission district, and the Lawrence district. Blue Valley and Olathe schools were also included in the study, since they were the only other districts in the geographical area utilized in the project that had string programs.

A written survey was designed and distributed to all string teachers in the districts involved. Questions on the survey were concerned with several factors including administrative support of string programs, community support of string programs, instructor turn-over, instructor preparedness, instrument rental availability, string specialist availability, and drop out rate for string players. Other questions dealt with the importance of adding wind players to orchestras.

Several survey questions dealt with the background of the various instructors. Questions dealing with background included:

1. Were you involved in band, orchestra or both before college?
2. What is your major instrument?
3. Do you feel you were adequately prepared in college to teach strings?

The above questions were asked to find out just how much contact the different instructors had with string situations. The percentage of instructors who were string majors was found to be only 13.3% when

all districts were combined. This information could explain why many instructors feel uncomfortable teaching strings.

Other questions on the survey concerned obtaining "vital" statistics regarding each program. Questions relating to this included:

1. How long have you been at your present school?
2. Do you teach both winds and strings?
3. How long has a string program been in existence in your school?
4. Has the number of students in your string program increased or decreased?
5. Is your orchestra a string orchestra or does it include wind players?
6. If you teach both band and orchestra, which group is requested to play the most?
7. Do most of your string players have their own instrument or do most rent them from the school?
8. In what grade does string instruction begin in your district?
9. Do you have string specialists available in your district?
10. In most of the schools in your district, is there one instructor to teach both band and orchestra or are they taught by different teachers?

It was felt that by asking for information on each instructor's program or district that information gleaned might be helpful in explaining strengths and weaknesses in each district.

Other questions were opinion questions regarding different areas of string instruction. This area probably provided the most

interesting information of the study. Opinion questions followed a Likert scale format and included:

1. I feel I was adequately prepared in college to teach strings.
2. I am more comfortable teaching band than teaching orchestra.
3. I feel that winds should be a part of the orchestra at both the junior and senior high levels.
4. Adding winds to the orchestra also adds interest to younger players.
5. To be a true orchestra experience, winds are necessary.
6. I am comfortable teaching position work.
7. Orchestra should only be taught by an instructor whose major instrument is a string instrument.
8. My supervisor is equally interested in band and orchestra.
9. My principal is equally interested in band and orchestra.
10. My community is equally interested in band and orchestra.
11. It is difficult for me to find young orchestra material suitable for my group.
12. The drop out rate is generally greater for string players than for wind players.

Questions stated above were asked to find out how much agreement or disagreement there was within each district and also to try to find what the general feeling was toward each of the questions.

The format of the survey was decided upon with several considerations. By using both short answer as well as Likert scale questions it was hoped that the survey would be more interesting to read and complete. Questions were designed so that a minimum of time

would be necessary to complete the answers. Part Three of the survey gave any director the opportunity to elaborate upon any question desired. Many directors took advantage of this opportunity.

Data was first analyzed as a whole and not separated into the three different districts. The survey instrument was in three parts. Part One contained seventeen short answer questions. Part Two consisted of twelve Likert scale questions. The third and final part of the survey asked for any additional feedback concerning any of the questions on the survey. All answers received on the third part of the survey have been reported in their entirety in chapter four. The survey instrument can be found in Appendix B.

After the data was analyzed as a whole using percentages, questions were then reexamined and percentages recalculated for each of the three districts. It was felt that the response from the Olathe and Blue Valley Districts was insufficient to warrant individual analyzation. Results are presented in bar graphs where possible. Since the purpose of this study was to compare differences as well as commonalities of the three districts it was felt that analyzing the data two different ways would provide greater insight.

The surveys were sent to all string teachers in the three districts. One follow-up reminder was sent after two weeks. Of the thirty four surveys distributed, thirty were returned.

It should be emphasized that this study was not initiated to compare the different programs in an effort to decide which one was best. The object was to compare commonalities and differences in an objective manner so that more detailed information would be available

as a basis for development and change. Results have been presented via charts and descriptive statistics. Conclusions have been drawn and recommendations made as warranted.

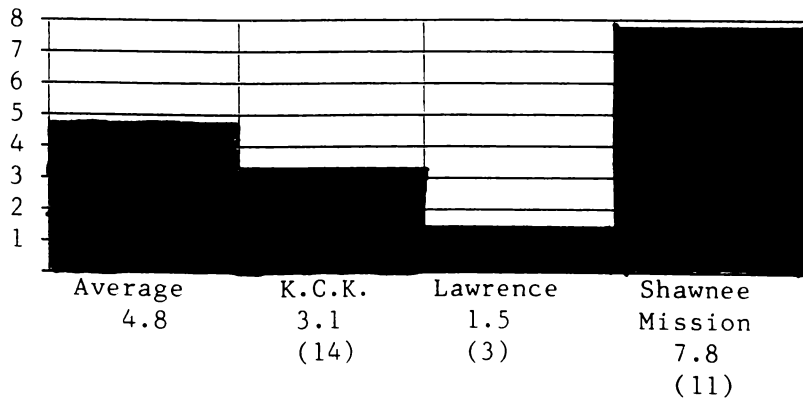
CHAPTER IV

Presentation Of The Data

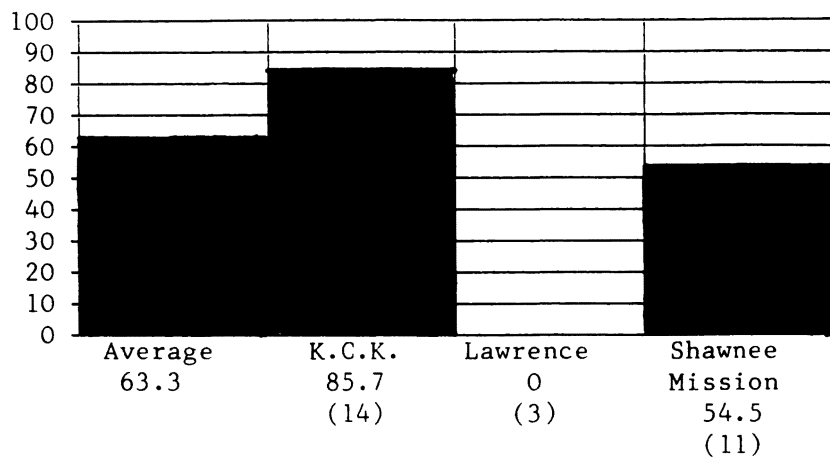
Results of this survey have been presented in two different styles. Some questions were presented in bar graph form in order to better show comparisons. Other questions were simply answered using the over all means instead of breaking them down by district. All overall percentages include the Blue Valley and Olathe North School Districts.

Numbers listed below the school district names are percentages. The numbers in parentheses are the actual number of respondents.

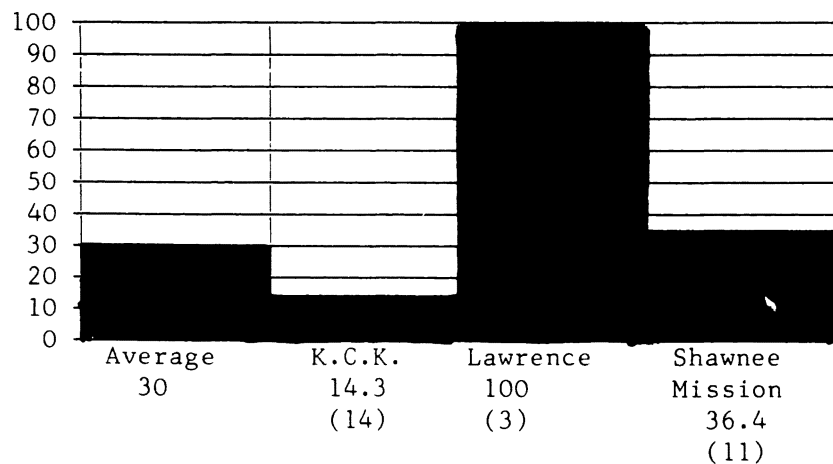
How long have you been at your present school? (in years)



Do you teach both winds and strings? (percentage teaching both)

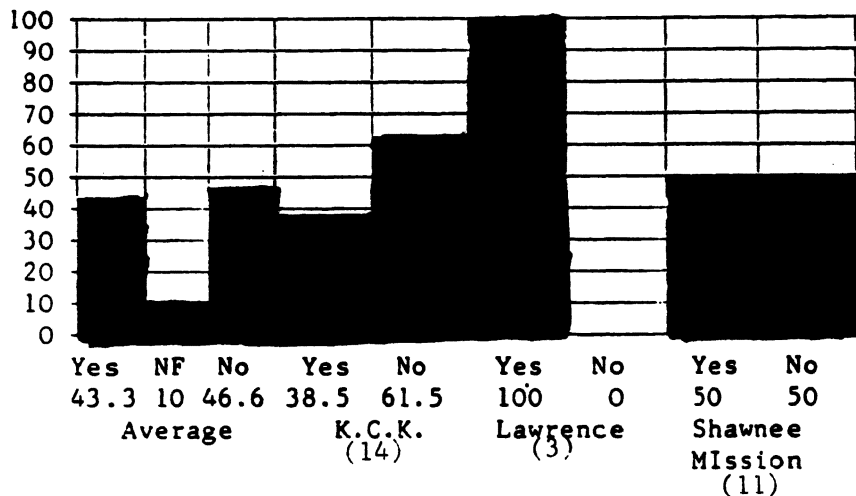


What is your major instrument? (string major percentages)

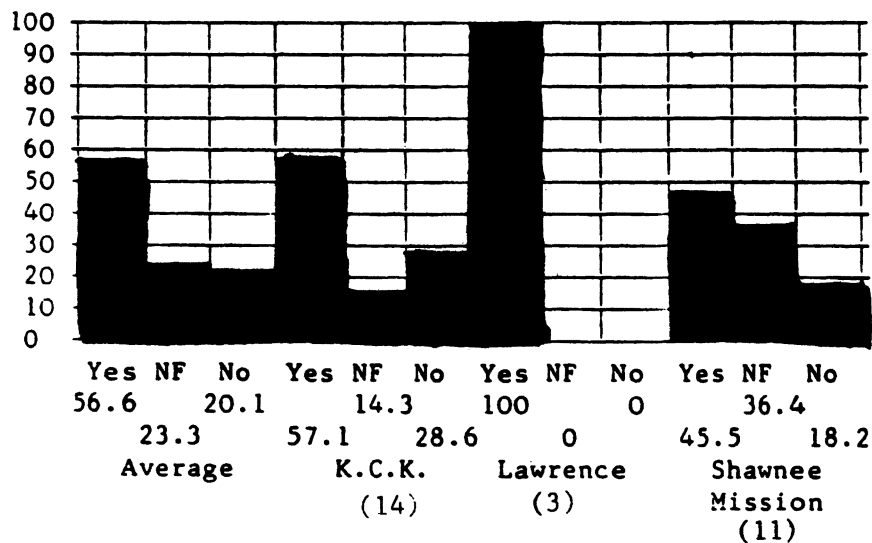


I feel that winds should be a part of the orchestra at both the junior and senior high levels.

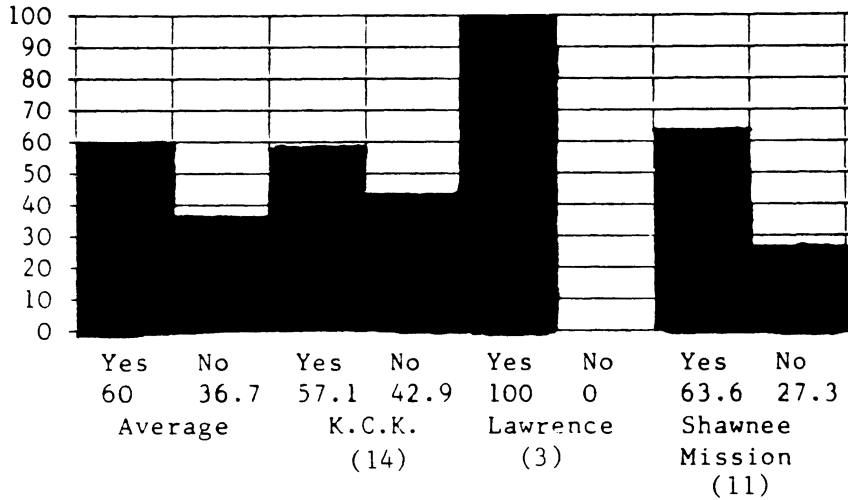
(percentage of teachers feeling winds should be a part of both levels, Jr. and Sr. High)



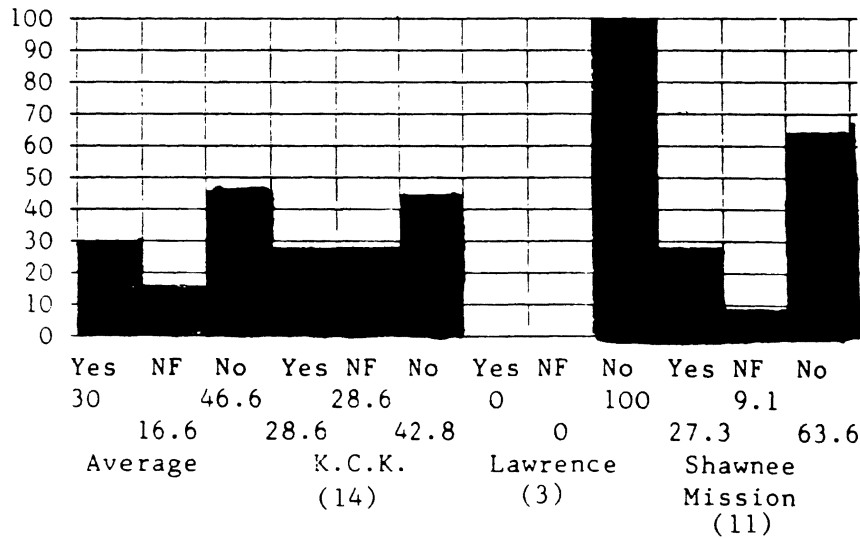
Adding winds to the orchestra also adds interest to younger players.
 (percentage of teachers who feel winds add interest)



I feel I was adequately prepared in college to teach strings?
 (percentage feeling they were adequately prepared to teach strings)

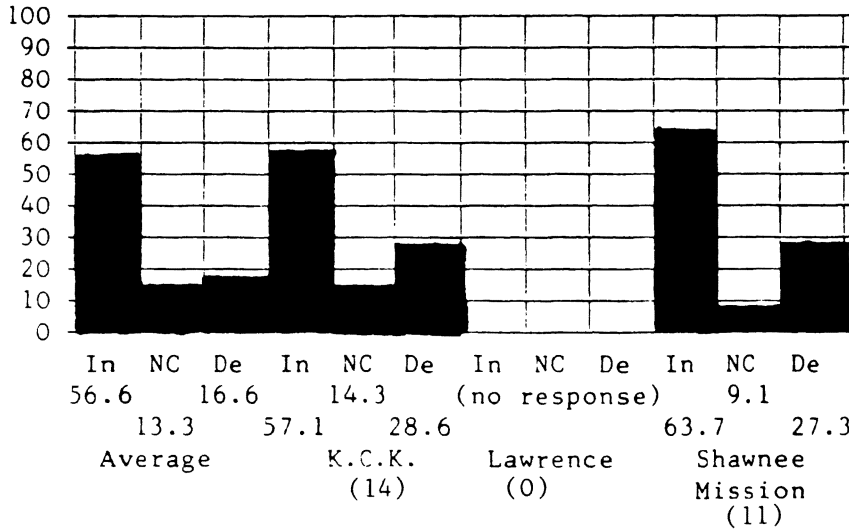


I am more comfortable teaching band than teaching orchestra.
 (percentage of teachers more comfortable teaching band)
 N.F. - no feeling

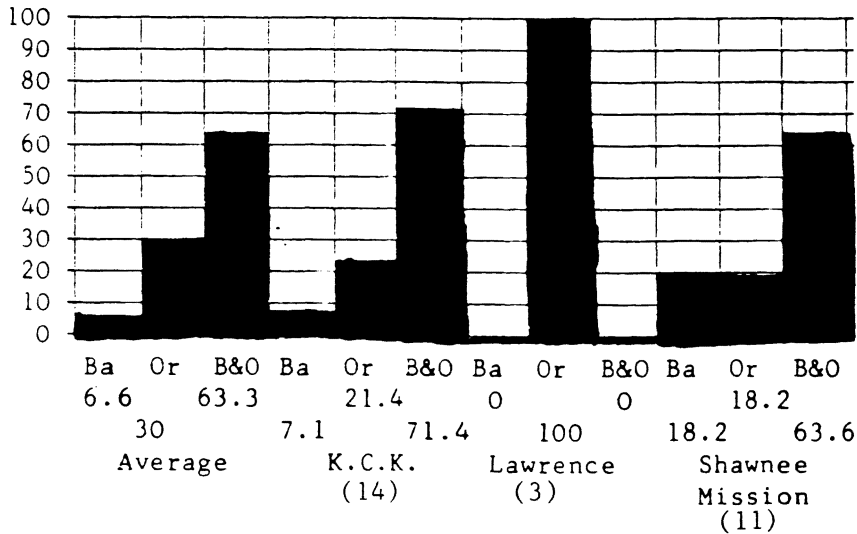


Has the number of students in your string program increased or decreased?

(In - Increase, NC - no change, De - Decrease)

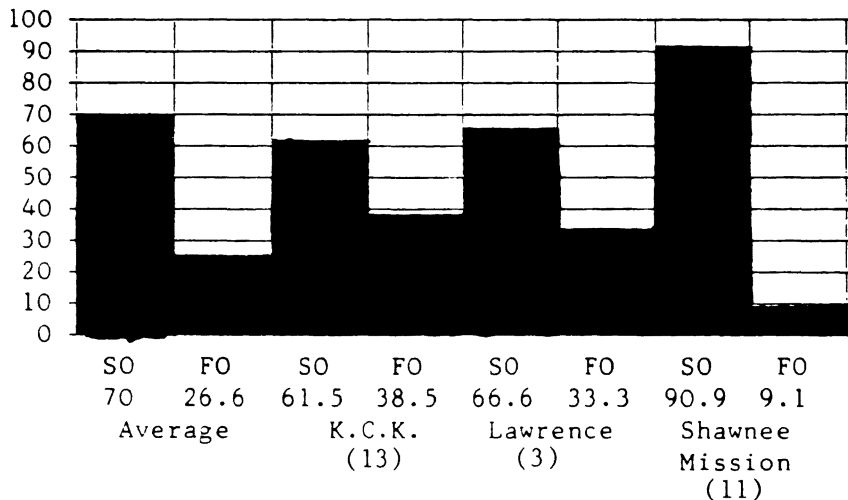


Were you involved in band, orchestra or both before college?
(Ba - Band, Or - Orchestra, B&O - Band and Orchestra)

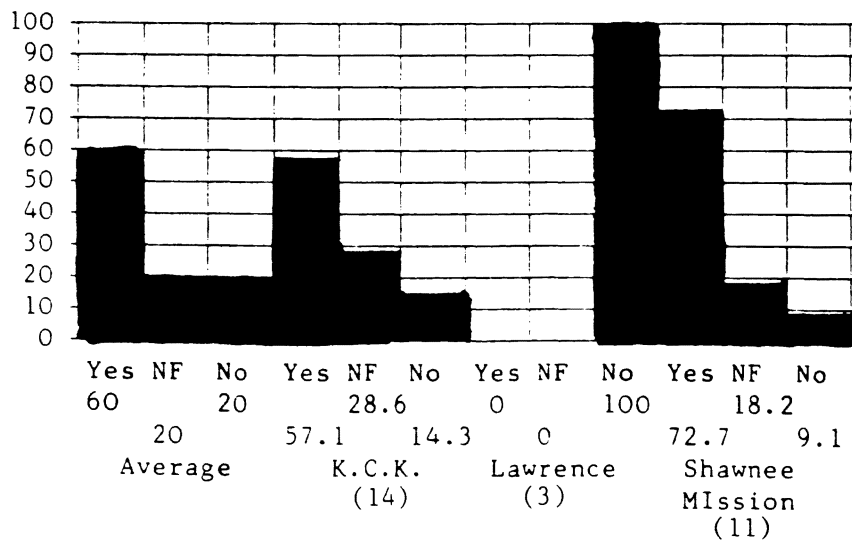


Is your orchestra a string orchestra or does it include wind players?
 (SO - String Orchestra, FO - Full Orchestra)

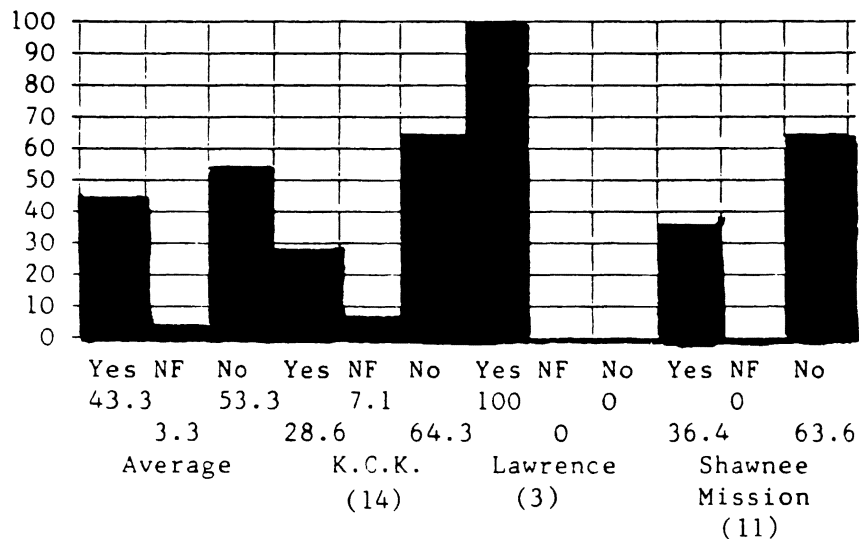
Many said they added winds after marching season once or twice a week.



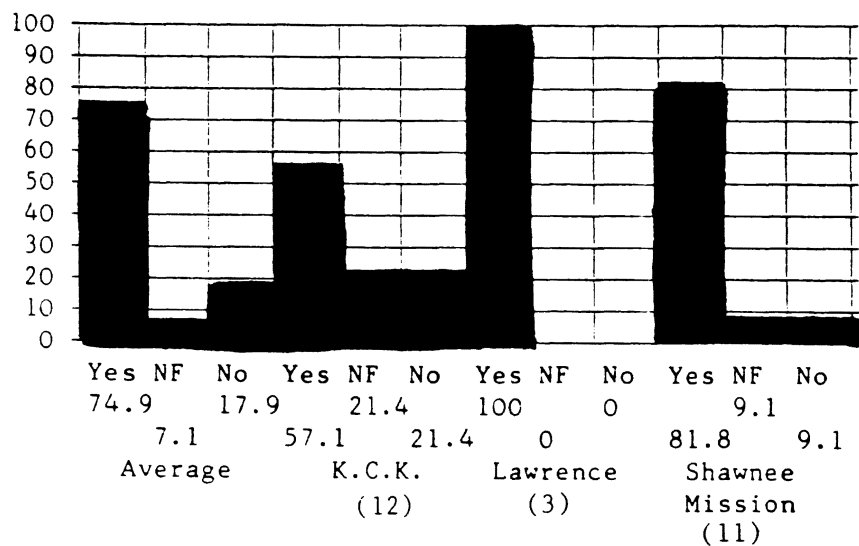
I am comfortable teaching position work.



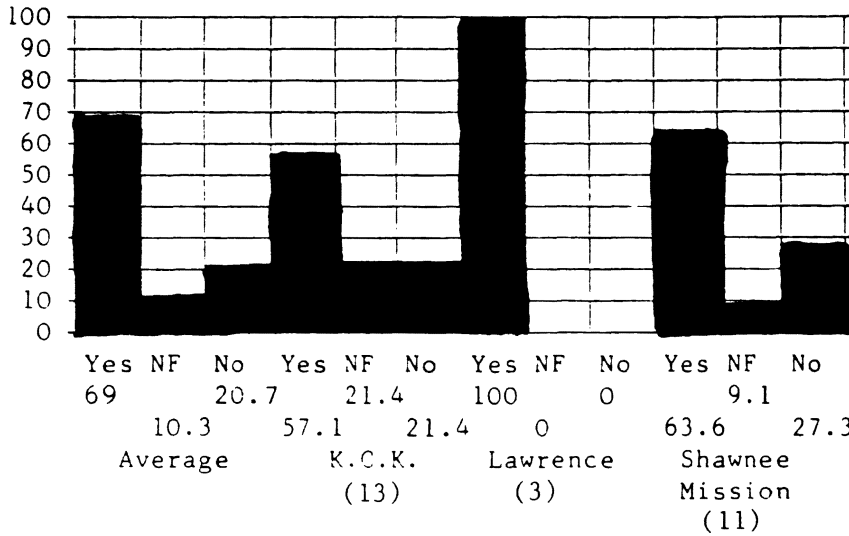
Orchestra should only be taught by an instructor whose major instrument is a string instrument.



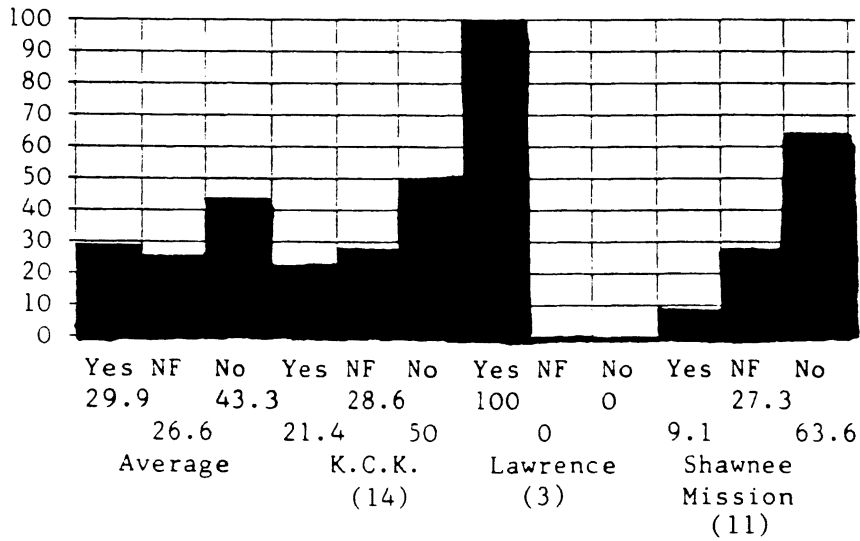
My supervisor is equally interested in band and orchestra.



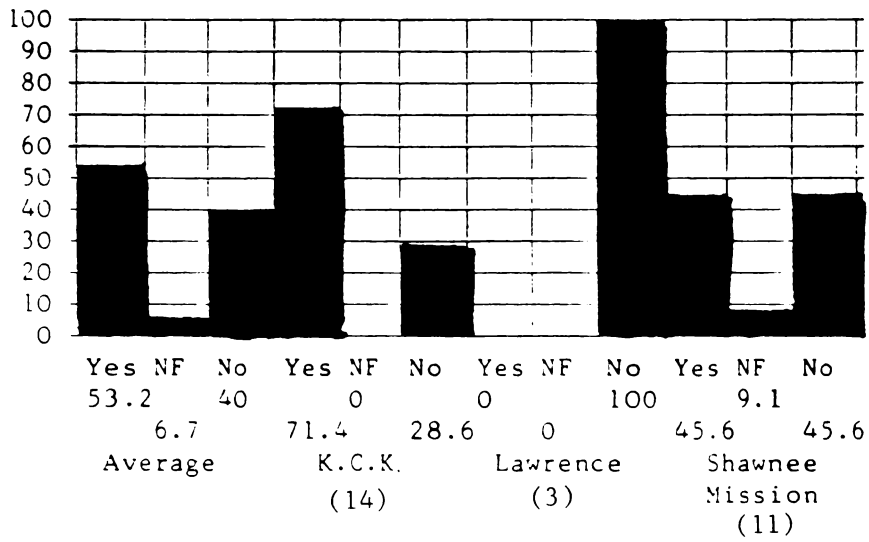
My principal is equally interested in band and orchestra.



My community is equally interested in band and orchestra.



It is difficult for me to find young orchestra material suitable for my group.



How long has a string program been in existence in your school?

Average - 19 years

How many teachers have been there during that period of time?

Average - 4.1 33.3% gave no answer

If you teach both band and orchestra, which group is requested to play the most?

Band - 30%
Orchestra - 7% 56.6% gave no answer
Equal - 13.3%

If you teach both band and orchestra, when you are asked to provide a group and no stipulation is made, which group are you more likely to send?

Band - 23.3%
Orchestra - 7% 53.3% gave no answer
Either - 23.3%

If you teach both band and orchestra, how many are involved in band and how many are involved in string groups? (percentages by school)

<u>Kansas City, Kansas</u>		<u>Lawrence</u>		<u>Shawnee Mission</u>	
<u>Band</u>	<u>Orchestra</u>	<u>Band</u>	<u>Orchestra</u>	<u>Band</u>	<u>Orchestra</u>
68%	32%	no response given		92.1%	7.9%
75.5%	24.5%			90.4%	9.6%
67.5%	32.5%			89.3%	10.7%
68.2%	31.8%			75%	25%
75.9%	24.1%			87.5%	12.5%
68.7%	31.3%			90.9%	9.1%
70.6%	29.4%			5 schools gave no response	
66.6%	33.4%			87.5%	12.5%
58.8%	41.2%			average involvement	
80.6%	19.4%				
3 schools gave no response					
70%	30%				
average involvement					

Part Three -- Additional Feedback

Kansas City, Kansas

"While string numbers are not as large as band enrollments I find that there is no stigma attached to playing a stringed instrument. In fact middle school string enrollment is almost 50/50 boy/girl. The elementary enrollment in many schools is larger than the winds. Middle school principal is generally agreeable to activities for the string program"

"Because the national trend of string dropouts is three of every four started it is necessary to start more strings to compensate for dropouts."

"I feel that the incredible amount of string technique that must be taught at the middle school level should and will take most of the available teaching time. By the same token middle school and junior high wind players are not (most of the time) prepared to a) play in sharps or b) sit while the strings learn string technique. I do advocate strings and winds together at the upper high school level, so don't think I'm completely prejudiced."

"I feel that orchestras are the best ensemble group that has ever been invented, but we have lost or are losing the ability to appreciate good music. Orchestras are just not being exposed to the public as bands are. There are all kinds of band contests and concerts which can hold a crowd's attention span longer than an orchestra. Orchestra concerts just aren't interesting to an audience we have today. Some people would rather go up to a band exposition and pat their foot than to go to an orchestra concert and fall asleep. That's the feeling people give me when I bring up the word orchestra."

I am for orchestra 100% and since I teach orchestra and band I am going to challenge myself to use my orchestra to play just as much as my band in concerts."

"I feel that middle school string students should devote most of their time to learning string technique, such as positions, bowings, etc. and vibrato. They should know third position forwards and backwards before they enter high school. There is too much performance demands placed on middle school students. I think the place to add winds would be in an all-city middle school orchestra. There is nothing left for high school if winds are used in the middle school.

Lawrence

"The most valuable training a prospective string teacher can have is to play in orchestras all through school and college."

Shawnee Mission

"I am a string specialist in the south area of the Shawnee Mission District. I teach elementary, beginning, and advanced string classes and have a traveling string position. My assignment has changed frequently due to changing enrollment. All classes meet twice a week. Classes which meet during the school day are thirty minutes long. This is not long enough. We used to have 45 minute classes. Every morning I begin at 7:20-8:10 with fifth and sixth graders but it is not possible to get all the schools in before school. I have a south area string rehearsal center. Students from nine schools attend. They are bussed back to their home schools.

This is for fifth and sixth graders. Around fifty are attending which is not quite all of the students. Most of my principals are supportive but not all classroom teachers are. I've even had some refuse to excuse their students to attend string class."

"My dropout rate is small in orchestra. Most stay in, only two have dropped out in three years. Also, orchestra is my only class in which I have all three grade levels (7, 8, 9) represented. This sometimes creates problems in finding music challenging enough for ninth graders without losing the seventh graders."

"I feel fewer students begin in the string programs than band. We have, in the last year, brought our string group's reputation up by: uniforms, going the same places the advanced band does, beginning with easier arrangements and working on hand position - position work and intonation. This year they are much more advanced, and have more support from band students. This may especially be true as I found the ones who played in band, who quit in fifth grade, and got them to be in both and catch up with private lessons. Our supervisor is director of youth symphony of which we have members. We also have a district honor orchestra. I think our problem is that we don't have beginning and advanced string groups in junior high as they have in band (seventh band, intermediate, advanced.) I don't see this changing, as we go to every day - possibly before or after school. Our music director does not have the last decision in curriculum. P. S. also - we changed the names of the strings - from "strings" to the "School Name Orchestra". We also take advantage of concert etiquette - i.e. having a concert master - I shake his hand at the

end. He warms them up in front of the audience before they play. We now have a lot of positive comments about our orchestra!"

"Any good conductor (strong musicianship) can conduct band, orchestra, or choir. The need is for a conductor who wants to have a fine group and who has the skills to help that particular group. i.e. position work, bowings, wind or percussion articulation, choral tone production, elision, etc."

"Kids need to know that they are "loved" by all their teachers - all subjects. If string instruments are to be successful - the kids must feel that they are doing something really worthwhile and that even practicing can be "fun". I think that there is a real concern in this district for the string program and its value to the students."

"Survey is slanted toward directors of both band and orchestra. That's O.K.. Work needs to be done in that area. Fortunately, Shawnee Mission has not had this problem at the senior high level or elementary level. But it is prevalent at the junior high level which is a mistake since that is a critical time for teaching lots of techniques."

"We have seven - nine grade in strings and it is very difficult to find music challenging for ninth graders and halfway playable for most seventh graders. I think in choosing a group to perform for a "non-musical" audience a band can more easily make an impact (i.e. PTA dinner) I say this only because the audience often doesn't accept a musical group very well and a band can simply play louder. I believe its possible to find music suitable for an orchestra in this type of situation but it is often trite and more trouble to find than its worth. The community that is educated musically is

accepting of orchestra - almost as much as band but often people don't realize that it is much more difficult to play a stringed instrument and they don't appreciate what the group can do. Lastly - on my own education - I don't feel that I was adequately prepared to teach strings in college however I'm not absolutely sure I'd have gained a lot more with more classes. I found experience to be the best teacher as in most circumstances. I also wanted to say that after teaching strings for three years I don't feel overly confident teaching position work on all instruments (I sometimes balk on cello) but I do teach it and I believe correctly, so I guess my answer should be somewhere inbetween agree and disagree!

CHAPTER FIVE

Summary and Conclusions

By designing a survey dealing with the subject of string programs, perhaps information derived would be helpful in explaining certain attitudes and occurrences. The lack of research in this area has been further documented with this study.

One of the most intriguing findings in this study was the fact that on the question of being adequately prepared to teach strings, (question 19), the overall average of the three districts concerned indicated that 36.7% felt that they were not prepared properly.

Perhaps more time spent on orchestral stringed instruments at the college level would be beneficial. An orchestra program cannot be expected to thrive when the instructor feels ill prepared. It is felt that this is one of the major reasons that some schools do not have a healthy string program.

Another finding that was particularly interesting was the percentage of instructors teaching strings that were not string majors. For instance, one of the three districts studied indicated that only 14.3% of the string teachers were string majors. Another district was just over 36%. The questions of what has happened to the string majors and why they haven't gone into the teaching field should be investigated.

Another area of concern in this study was whether string programs were growing or declining in the districts being examined (question 5). There was conflicting information on this question. The overall average of the three districts combined indicated that 56.6% of the

programs were increasing. In the Kansas City, Kansas district orchestras were found to be smaller in size when compared to orchestras of fifteen years ago. The status of the string programs, in what little material was available on the subject, was found to be constantly fluctuating. The string programs have had periods of growth and periods of decline. Research from this study would seem to indicate that programs are again on the rise.

Question number one on the survey dealt with how long each director had been at their present school. The mean was 4.8 years. Shawnee Mission seemed to be the most stable with a mean of 7.8 years. Thus, teacher turnover seemed to have no profound effect on the strength of the programs considered.

Another question on the survey (number 21) dealt with whether or not winds should be a part of both the junior and senior high orchestras. Answers to this question were fairly evenly split. The overall averages were 43.4% in favor and 46.6% against having wind players at both levels. Most directors that were against having winds at the junior high level stated that they felt the strings needed a great deal of work on technique and this could not be accomplished with the addition of wind players. It was found when the Kansas City, Kansas district was examined that in the 1960s all the junior high orchestras included wind players. When examined again to find out how many currently had wind players only one responded that their orchestra included winds. Another question (number 22) dealt with whether or not the directors felt that wind players added interest to string groups. The overall average was 56.6% who agreed that wind

players did add interest and 20.1% who disagreed. It would seem that if a program is to succeed and flourish that any way of adding interest would be welcomed. Further study in this area might prove to be very beneficial.

What has caused the disappearance of winds in the Kansas City, Kansas junior high orchestras? The district has reported that string enrollment is growing. Perhaps by reinstating wind players in the groups the number of string players might increase even more due to added interest.

In examining the area of orchestral support (question number 26), it was found that all three districts concerned felt that their supervisors were equally interested in band and orchestra. They also felt their principals were equally supportive of band and orchestra. However, when it came to the community being equally supportive of band and orchestra, only 29.9% felt this to be the case. Many comments were made regarding community support. It was generally felt that orchestras had to take a back seat to band because they were in front of the public less often. The glitter of marching band was cited as an example. It was found that of those teachers teaching both band and orchestra only seven percent would take their orchestra to perform if given a chance to take either group.

Though this study produces evidence that string programs are growing it is still very clear that the band programs are larger. Taking this fact into consideration, perhaps the string educator should utilize extensive recruiting procedures. Teachers perhaps should consider taking the orchestra on recruiting tours as often as

possible. Though current literature may be more difficult to find it is available. It is very possible that composers, arrangers, and publishers see more money in the band field than orchestra which accounts for fewer "Pop" arrangements for orchestra. This is not to say that only popular music should be utilized in orchestra. Students are obviously more interested in today's music. They are constantly bombarded with their music on television, radio, in stores, in movies, and countless other places. It is hoped, however, that once they are a part of the orchestra, they can be introduced to a very different style of music and that they will learn to appreciate it.

If the popularity of the band is a result of more exposure to the general public then perhaps string educators should consider getting their groups before the public more often.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Jeff Beck
2117 N. 44th
Kansas City, Kansas 66104

Dear Colleague,

Enclosed you will find a survey dealing with attitudes concerning string instruction. It would be greatly appreciated if you could take a few minutes to fill out this survey. Results of the survey are needed in order for me to complete my thesis at the University of Kansas. You will also find a stamped return envelope for your convenience. Again, your attention to this matter will be most helpful!

Sincerely,

Jeff Beck

APPENDIX B

STRING INSTRUCTION SURVEY

Part I

1. How long have you been at your present school? _____

2. Do you teach both winds and strings/ _____

3. How long has a string program been in existence in your school?

4. How many teachers have been there during that period of time?

5. Has the number of students in your string program increased or decreased? _____

6. What is your major instrument? _____

7. Were you involved in band, orchestra or both before college?

8. Is your orchestra a string orchestra or does it include wind players? _____

9. If you teach both band and orchestra, which group is requested to play the most? _____

10. If you teach both band and orchestra, when you are asked to provide a group and no stipulation is made, which group are you more likely to send? _____

11. If you teach both band and orchestra, how many are involved in band and how many are involved in string groups?
band _____ string groups _____

12. Do most of your string players have their own instrument or do most rent them from the school? _____

13. In what grade does string instruction begin in your district?

14. Do you have string specialists available in your district?

15. If your band program is significantly larger than your string program, what do you feel is the reason? _____

16. In most of the schools in your district, is there one instructor to teach both band and orchestra or are they taught by different teachers? _____

17. In your music library, is there a dearth of young orchestra material? _____

Part II - Please circle the appropriate response to the following questions.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	No Feeling	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

19. I feel I was adequately prepared in college to teach strings?

1 2 3 4 5

20. I am more comfortable teaching band than teaching orchestra.

1 2 3 4 5

21. I feel that winds should be a part of the orchestra at both the junior and senior high levels.

1 2 3 4 5

22. Adding winds to the orchestra also adds interest to younger players.

1 2 3 4 5

23. To be a true orchestra experience, winds are necessary.

1 2 3 4 5

24. I am comfortable teaching position work.

1 2 3 4 5

25. Orchestra should only be taught by an instructor whose major instrument is a string instrument.

1 2 3 4 5

26. My supervisor is equally interested in band and orchestra.

1 2 3 4 5

27. My principal is equally interested in band and orchestra.

1 2 3 4 5

28. My community is equally interested in band and orchestra.

1 2 3 4 5

29. It is difficult for me to find young orchestra material suitable for my group.

1 2 3 4 5

30. The drop-out rate is generally greater for string players than for wind players.

1 2 3 4 5

Part III - Any additional feedback concerning any of the above questions would be greatly appreciated.