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THE EFFECT OF ABBOTT PARITY FUNDING ON INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC
PROGRAMS IN THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY

by
William Carl McDevitt

A Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the
Master of Arts Degree
of
The Graduate School
at
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Advisor

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ABSTRACT

William C. McDevitt

THE EFFECT OF ABBOTT PARITY FUNDING ON INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC PROGRAMS IN THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY

2007

Dr. Rick Dammers

Master of Arts

The funding of poor urban schools in the State of New Jersey was increased in 1997 by the New Jersey Supreme Court *Abbott v. Burke* decision. The purpose of this study is to determine if this parity funding has had an effect on instrumental music education in the State. Data was collected from a sample consisting of all 55 Abbott schools and a stratified sample of 60 non-Abbott schools representing all District Factor Groups. Additional data was collected from State and Region educational organizations. A low return rate of 21% (Abbott $n = 5$, non-Abbott $n = 19$) limited the reliability of the results to research questions on differences between Abbott and non-Abbott schools in student participation, budgets, caliber of performance, and teacher job satisfaction. Additional data did show a difference between Abbott and non-Abbott schools in participation in State and Region ensemble auditions, with Abbott schools being underrepresented in all areas.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Overview

In 1990 the New Jersey Supreme Court, in *Abbott v. Burke*, ruled that students in urban districts in New Jersey were being denied equal access to a thorough and efficient education, and ordered the State Legislature to equalize funding between urban and suburban districts. Raymond Arthur Abbott, a student in the Camden School District, inadvertently added his name to a major legal action in New Jersey education by being the first name in a list of plaintiffs that sued the State of New Jersey claiming inequity in funding education of students in New Jersey urban schools. Over the next six years the Court clarified its decision through several additional rulings, named *Abbott II* and *Abbott III*. It wasn't until May of 1997 that the same Court, in *Abbott IV*, ordered the State of New Jersey to immediately increase funding to the poorer urban districts, in the first year releasing \$246 million to 30 "Abbott" districts, bringing the urban districts into parity with the suburban districts. Since 1997, increased aid has come to Abbott districts designated for projects such as Whole School Reform, full-day kindergarten and preschool for three and four year olds. (History of Abbott, 2006)

In the past 15 years, with few exceptions, the disparity between poor and wealthy districts has not improved among the 50 states. New Jersey is one exception. In 1997, the gap in state aid between New Jersey's highest poverty students and lowest poverty students was \$787 per student. With the implementation of Abbott regulations, the gap over the next six years was reversed, providing the poorest districts with a \$1,352 per

student funding advantage. Only two other states, Alaska and Delaware, had higher increases in state aid to economically disadvantaged students during this time period. (Carey, p. 9).

Even though the Abbott regulations were meant to provide services and programs for socio-economically disadvantaged students that would already be available to wealthy students, the distribution of the remainder of each district budget was left to local control. Local property tax revenues and existing state aid continued to fund programs at the discretion of local boards of education. No extra funding was provided to maintain existing programs, but the allocation of Abbott funds could have allowed for distribution of funds that were already designated for programs covered in Abbott legislation. It was the decision of local boards to decide how these extra funds were distributed. Little research has been conducted to determine if the extra funding had an effect on existing programs.

Purpose

The Abbott funding formula approached the equity issue by providing funding to begin new programs, but did not provide funding for programs currently in existence such as instrumental music programs. While funds were not directly provided for instrumental music programs, it is possible that such programs benefited indirectly, as Abbott funding relieved some constraints already placed on school district budgets. The purpose of this study was to determine if Abbott funding has had an effect on the quality of instrumental music programs in Abbott Districts in the State of New Jersey.

Research Questions

This study explored the following areas:

- 1) Has the number of students participating in Abbott district instrumental music programs changed as a result of Abbott funding?
- 2) Has participation in external festivals and performance tours by instrumental ensembles changed as a result of Abbott funding?
- 3) Has the level of monetary resources provided by Abbott school districts to instrumental music programs changed as a result of Abbott funding?
- 4) Has the number of course offerings within instrumental music programs changed, and has the perceived caliber of performance by instrumental ensembles changed as a result of Abbott funding?
- 5) Has there been a change in student participation in outside musical activities between wealthy suburban districts and Abbott districts, including private study, participation in region and state ensemble auditions, and acceptance to region and state ensembles?
- 6) Has the distribution of Abbott funds had an effect on teacher retention and job satisfaction?

Summary

The New Jersey Supreme Court, through its *Abbott vs. Burke* ruling, has forced New Jersey to become a leader among states in the area of equitable of educational funding. By declaring that the State's funding laws were not providing an equal opportunity to economically disadvantaged students, the Court began a long process of

bringing parity between wealthy districts and poor “Abbott” districts. This funding was earmarked for specific programs, allowing tax-based funds to be distributed among existing programs. This research has been conducted to determine if Abbott funding has had an effect on instrumental music programs in Abbott Districts.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Below is a review of literature related to this study. The review has been divided into three areas: 1) a review of literature as it pertains to Education Funding, 2) a review of literature that discusses the effect of music education on student achievement and socioeconomic effects on music education, and 3) a review of literature on funding in the arts. A summary of the literature follows each section.

Education Funding

The funding of public education in the United States has been an evolving process, legislated by individual states with disparate results. In the 1999-2000 school year public education revenues equaled 4% of the U.S. Gross Domestic Product (GDP), 1.5% of the Federal budget, and 30.2% of State and Local budgets (Leyden, p. 3-4). The U.S. ranks third in the world in expenditures per secondary school student. However, when compared to GDP, the U.S. ranks 17th (Leyden, p. 11). Biddle and Berliner (2002) reviewed educational funding levels by states. They found that nationally some schools spent more than \$15,000 per student while others spent less than \$4,000. A comparison of districts with more than 1000 students showed that more American students attended poorly funded schools than well-funded schools in 1995, and half of these districts spent less than \$6,000 per student. The study showed a direct connection between the percentage of students living in poverty and the level of funding, with the poorest students receiving the least funding. These disparities appeared between states and

within states. A large part of the funding differences were attributed to local contributions, with affluent communities contributing more to local education.

Several landmark court decisions have come to shape the funding of public education. In 1971, the United States Supreme Court in *Serrano v. Priest* ruled that all public school districts should be funded equally regardless of property wealth. In 1973 in the *San Antonio Independent School District v. Rodriguez* decision, the Court ruled that the U.S. Constitution did not obligate equal funding. This left an opening for states to make decisions on funding education independently of each other. In 1989, the Kentucky Supreme Court addressed the topic of adequacy and accountability in *Rose v. Council for Better Education*. The Court focused on the concerns of new increases in immigrant populations and the deteriorating state of public education in urban areas (Leyden, p. 12). Even though individual state supreme courts have consistently ruled to reform funding in education, state legislatures have acted slowly to come into compliance, effectively slowing funding reform (Leyden, p. 110). Biddle and Berliner (2002) found that misconceptions about funding inequities have been fueled by ignorance. They found that most Americans supported equal funding, but did not support increased funding for the purpose of correcting inequities.

In the State of New Jersey, the Supreme Court addressed funding in 1975 in *Robinson v. Cahill* influencing the State Legislature to pass the Public School Education Act. This act established a “thorough and efficient” education for all of New Jersey’s public school students (Salvio, 2002). The landmark *Abbott v. Burke* decision in 1981 changed the funding of public education in New Jersey Schools. This lawsuit was a challenge to the implementation of the 1975 *Robinson* decision claiming that the State’s

funding formula was not adequate to ensure a “thorough and efficient” education for the students of New Jersey’s urban schools. In 1990, the second ruling in the case *Abbott v. Burke II* established 29 poor urban districts as “special needs” districts, later to become “Abbott Districts”. In 1997 the Court, in *Abbott IV*, declared the State’s funding plan unconstitutional and ordered State officials to immediately increase the funding to Abbott Districts to bring them into parity with wealthy suburban schools. In September 1997, New Jersey distributed an initial \$246 million in supplemental funding, equalizing funding levels between suburban and urban districts (Education Law Center).

Education funding disparities have been explored in other areas of the country. Peevely (1999) studied achievement levels of student litigants in the *Tennessee Small School Systems v. McWherter* case which equalized funding over a five-year period as had been mandated by the Tennessee Supreme Court in 1993. The researcher found no significant gain in poorer schools’ standardized testing scores after receiving increased funding. Butler (2006) found similar results, showing no relationship between funding and achievement. Butler found that achievement increases could be related to teacher experience, student-teacher ratio (especially at younger grade-levels), and the percent of teachers with masters degrees. Each of these personnel factors were related to funding levels, that could not be afforded by poorer schools. In a similar study, Greene (2005) found that the single greatest predictor of college aspirations was socioeconomic status, having a greater impact than class size or student-to-teacher ratio. Greene further advocated the necessity for research of this type to be done at the building level, as opposed to district or state level, to achieve more accurate information when allocating

resources including personnel. Biddle and Berliner (2002) also found that home and community advantage influenced educational outcomes more than school funding.

Education Funding Summary

The majority of public education funding is derived from local and state taxes. The New Jersey Supreme Court is in the minority among state courts that have made decisions to bring funding levels of depressed urban districts into parity with wealthier suburban districts. As parity funding is distributed to urban districts, an expectation of student achievement arises. Available research does not show a clear correlation between additional educational funding and student achievement.

Music Education and Student Achievement

While research has not yet shown improvement in achievement as a result of additional funding, an education in the arts has been shown to have a positive influence on student outcomes.

The arts can provide effective learning opportunities to the general student population, yielding increased academic performance, reduced absenteeism, and better skill-building. An even more compelling advantage is the striking success of arts-based educational programs among disadvantaged populations . . . involvement in the arts is one avenue by which at-risk youth can acquire the various competencies necessary to become economically self-sufficient over the long term, rather than being a financial strain on their states and communities. (ED465119, 2002)

The states of California, Connecticut, New York, Ohio, and South Carolina have initiated arts-based programs that have shown increases in test scores and academic achievement with reduced absenteeism. Florida, Massachusetts, New York, Pennsylvania, and Texas

have all studied the influence of the arts on the workforce and concluded that the arts can improve workforce resources (ED465119, 2002). Ebie (2005) surveyed secondary school students to determine their reasons for participating in extra-curricular music and athletic activities, with 30.2% indicating their participation was for social/integrative (teamwork) reasons. Only 11.3% responded that they participated because they thought they were talented and possessed the skills necessary for participation. Tobin (2005) surveyed students that were participating in the Massachusetts All-State Ensembles to ascertain student self-reported accomplishments. The researcher found that more than 40% of this select group of students reported to be in the top 25% of their class, over 98% planned to attend college and the average SAT score was 1290.

There has also been research on socio-economic status and participation in the arts. Bergonzi and Smith (1996) found that students that received an education in the arts were more likely to participate in the arts and become consumers of the arts. They also showed that the higher ones socio-economic status, the more likely one was to receive an education in the arts. Goss-Shields (1997) studied at-risk students and non-at-risk students during 16 weeks of a select vocal ensemble experience, pre-testing and post-testing students attitudes about musical activities. The researcher found that there was no difference between at-risk and not at-risk students in the way that they students viewed their participation in the ensemble. There was a significant increase in the way that the at-risk students self-perceived their musical competence. In 1992 the role of extra-curricular activities in 15 of the largest urban (special-needs) districts in New Jersey specifically explored athletic and music activities was studied. The study found that urban districts offered less sports and had less students participation than in randomly

selected districts within the State. Much of the participation in high school was linked to participation and training before high school, and the lack of these training programs in urban areas contributed to lower participation numbers at the high school level. The researcher noted that cultural background had an effect on participation. The researcher also noted that when budget cuts occurred club and activity advisors were more likely to be cut than coaches. Ponessa also found a lack of urban student participation in N.J. All-State Orchestra and Chorus. The researcher noted that disparity did not just exist among schools, but also existed within schools. One example cited a school district that provided transportation for athletics, but not for participation in All-State Chorus creating a funding disparity within an individual school extra-curricular activity funding (Ponessa, 1992).

Music Education Summary

Arts Education, specifically Music Education, has been shown to provide useful skills for the workplace and to have an influence on future successes. One question remains, if students in poorer urban schools are denied access to the arts education that more affluent students receive, are they being denied a set of skills and opportunities for future success?

Music Funding

In the 1960's and 70's the federal government assumed a large role in music education, influencing curriculum and encouraging innovation in instruction, influencing teaching materials, and encouraging artists to become teachers (Barresi, 1981). The Yale

Seminar in 1963 and the Tanglewood Symposium in 1967 brought together musicians and educators to discuss music education in the United States. The Manhattanville Music Project in 1966 produced an innovative curriculum teaming composers with public school students (Abeles, Hoffer, & Klotman, 1995).

For the past 25 years, *The Instrumentalist* has published a self-reported survey of trends that has included music budgets and student participation. Input is annually submitted on a survey of instrumental music teachers from all 50 states, providing a national overview of topics pertaining to instrumental music. From 1996 through 2005, the same time period that Abbott parity funds were distributed in New Jersey and the period studied in this research, several trends were noted throughout the country. While the number of students that participated in school instrumental ensembles continued to average between 10% and 11% of the total school population, the source of funding for these activities shifted from 52% school tax based funding to 72% charitable and group fund raiser based resources. While budgets themselves continue to rise, the percentage of increase has lowered to single digits from a high of 22% in 1996 (1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005).

Several studies have concluded that socioeconomic status is a factor in student participation in instrumental music programs. Smith (1997) found that string instruction was offered most often in average socioeconomic districts and least often in low socioeconomic districts. Albert (2005) found that although teacher personality and actions including fostering positive relationships, establishing a rapport, and dedication to students and the profession may have had an effect on student retention, one important initial aspect of recruitment was the availability of instruments. Bucknavage and Worrell

(2005) found that there was a clear difference in music participation among gifted students. The researchers summarized that one possible explanation was socioeconomic, since instruments and music lessons were an expense to families.

Music Funding Summary

Funding of instrumental music programs is a factor in student participation when we examine its effect on the availability of instruments and instruction in public schools. Phillips (2003) found that students at a higher socioeconomic status had a significantly higher background in music than those coming from a lower socioeconomic background. The trends indicate that music programs are surviving on resources raised by participants in communities that can afford to support charitable giving. If a community cannot afford to provide the supplemental charitable support it is clear that those programs cannot survive over the long term. These are the programs that need tax-based funding the most.

Research Summary

By analyzing all of the areas of this literature review, it is evident that increased funding may not have an effect on student achievement, but instruction in music may. Students that are in financially depressed schools have less opportunity to participate in instrumental music programs than students in wealthy schools. The need for research to connect funding to instrumental music instruction is evident. Does additional funding in poorer districts mean additional funding to instrumental music programs and does that equate to increased opportunity for student participation?

CHAPTER 3

METHOD

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to determine if Abbott parity funding has had an effect on instrumental music in the State of New Jersey. Six research questions were developed to draw conclusions about this effect. To obtain the information that is necessary to answer these questions, a survey (see Appendix) was developed and distributed to a sampling of instrumental music teachers throughout the State of New Jersey. Below is the methodology of how the data was analyzed to answer these questions.

Data Collection

A survey (see Appendix) was developed to collect data for the purpose of answering the research questions. Included in the survey were questions designed to obtain data on student ensemble participation numbers for both the 1995-1996 and 2005-2006 schools years. Information was also collected pertaining to student private study, ensemble performances, and music budgets. The final section of the survey allowed for Likert scale responses to the topics of instrumental music offerings, ensemble performance caliber, and teacher job satisfaction. Respondents were also given a prompt for a free response on the topic of instrumental music changes over the ten-year period of the study.

In February 2007, the survey was mailed to all of the 55 high schools in the 30 Abbott school districts in the State of New Jersey. An additional 60 surveys were mailed to a stratified sampling of high schools representing the remaining high schools in A through J District Factor Groups (DFG) that were established by the New Jersey Department of Education. The percentage of each DFG of the total number of high schools minus Abbott schools determined the sample number from each DFG. Schools were assigned random numbers by computer and sorted by that number within each DFG. Schools for the sample were then selected from the random number sort.

Four weeks following the initial mailing, a second mailing was sent to the same sample and Chief School Administrators in the same schools. An additional follow-up electronic mail was sent to 20 sampled school districts, with the survey attached, requesting completion of the survey. The information from this survey was collected and analyzed using the SPSS data analysis program. Additional data was obtained from the New Jersey Music Educators Association (Bazzel, 1996, Bazzel, 2006) and the South Jersey Band and Orchestra Directors Association (Senseney, 1995, Senseney, 2005) state and region ensemble auditions.

Data Treatment

The research questions were answered using the collected data. *Has the number of students participating in Abbott district instrumental music programs changed as a result of Abbott funding?* Using information obtained from the survey, a Mann-Whitney U-test was used to compare the amount of change in total student participation numbers in

Abbott districts compared to non-Abbott districts for the pre-Abbott year of 1995-96 and the most recent Abbott year of 2005-06.

Has participation in external festivals and performance tours by instrumental ensembles changed as a result of Abbott funding? A Mann-Whitney U-test was used to compare the total number of performances of Abbott and non-Abbott schools in the area of Marching Band, Concert Band, Jazz Band and Orchestra.

Has the level of monetary resources provided by Abbott school districts to instrumental music programs changed as a result of Abbott funding? Survey figures for instrumental music budgets were used to compare Abbott and non-Abbott music budget totals as a percentage of per-pupil-spending for the 1995-96 school year and the 2005-2006 school year. Excluded from survey were transportation costs, fund raising revenues and staff salaries.

Has the number of course offerings within instrumental music programs changed, and has the perceived caliber of performance by instrumental ensembles changed as a result of Abbott funding? Using a Mann-Whitney U-test analysis of Likert scale information obtained from the survey conclusions were drawn about the state of instrumental music programs in Abbott schools compared to non-Abbott schools.

Has there been a change in student participation in outside musical activities between non-Abbott and Abbott districts, including private study, participation in Region and State ensemble auditions, and acceptance to Region and State ensembles?

Information from the survey was used to compare the current number of students that study privately in Abbott and non-Abbott schools. Information obtained from New Jersey All-State Band and South Jersey (Region III) String, Wind and Percussion

Auditions from the 1995-1996 and 2005-2006 school years were compared to determine the percentage of students in Abbott Schools that auditioned for Region and State ensembles with the percentage of all students that attended Abbott Schools during the same years.

Has the distribution of Abbott funds had an effect on teacher retention and job satisfaction? A Mann-Whitney U-test of Likert scale information obtained from the survey was used to draw conclusions about job satisfaction at Abbott Schools compared to non-Abbott Schools. A Mann-Whitney U-test was also used to compare the number of teachers that have held the respondent's position between the 1995-1996 and 2005-1006 school years.

Summary

A survey was issued to Abbott and non-Abbott high schools in the State of New Jersey to gather information about the state of instrumental music in the last pre-Abbott funding school year of 1995-1996 and the 2005-0606 school year. From this survey, the research questions were answered using a number of different forms of analysis. Figures from the State of New Jersey and New Jersey All-State Band and Region Wind, String and Percussion Auditions were also used to determine if there has been a change in instrumental music programs in Abbott high schools compared to non-Abbott high schools.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Introduction

The purpose of this research was to determine if Abbott parity funding has had an effect on instrumental music in New Jersey's high schools. Six research questions were developed to draw conclusions about this effect. Data collected from a survey (Appendix), the New Jersey Department of Education, the New Jersey Music Educators Association, and the South Jersey Band and Orchestra Directors Association was used to answer the questions. Surveys were returned to the researcher by mail, facsimile and as electronic mail attachments. Of the 115 schools in the sample, a total of 24 surveys were returned, 19 from non-Abbott schools and 5 from Abbott schools.

Student Participation

Has the number of students participating in Abbott district instrumental music programs changed as a result of Abbott funding? Analysis of survey responses to the question of student participation totals obtained a positive mean change score for Abbott schools ($n = 4$, $M = 19.5$, $SD = 12.82$) and non-Abbott schools ($n = 16$, $M = 34.8$, $SD = 90.89$) resulting in no significant difference between Abbott school and non-Abbott schools ($U = 28$, $p = .705$) in the area of student participation changes between the 1995-1996 school year and the 2005-2006 school year.

External Performances

Has participation in external festivals and performance tours by instrumental ensembles changed as a result of Abbott funding? Limited responses and partial responses only allowed for the analysis of the total number of single day, external performances. Abbott schools ($n = 4$, $M = -3$, $SD = 6$) and non-Abbott schools ($n = 5$, $M = -1.4$, $SD = 1.34$) were compared by subtracting 2005-2006 single day external performances from 1995-1996 single day external performances and then comparing Abbott and non-Abbott differences. There was no significant difference between Abbott and non-Abbott schools in the change in single day, external performances ($U = 8$, $p = .59$). There was insufficient data to compare multiple day external performances.

Budgets

Has the level of monetary resources provided by Abbott school districts to instrumental music programs changed as a result of Abbott funding? Limited responses and partial responses did not result in enough complete data to compare the difference in budgets between Abbott and non-Abbott instrumental music programs.

Course Offerings and Ensemble Caliber

Has the number of course offerings within instrumental music programs changed, and has the perceived caliber of performance by instrumental ensembles changed as a result of Abbott funding? A Mann-Whitney U-test was used to determine whether there was a difference in the number of course offerings and the perceived caliber of instrumental ensembles between Abbott ($N = 5$) and non-Abbott

(N = 19) schools. Responses to the questions were scaled from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). Questions 1 and 3 were designed to gather information about respondents' perceptions of instrumental music offerings available to students in 2005-2006 as compared to 1995-1996. Questions 2 and 4 were designed to gather information about the respondents' perception of the caliber of performance of student ensembles in 2005-2006 as compared to 1995-1996. Table 1 and Table 2 illustrates the analysis of these four questions resulting in no significant difference between Abbott and non-Abbott responses, with respondents indicating more instrumental music opportunities and offerings available to students now than in 1995-96. Even though there was no significant difference in responses between Abbott and non-Abbott schools in reference to a change in the perceived caliber of student performance, mean scores of both groups did not provide any insight into the current caliber of student ensembles.

Table 1

Comparison of Likert Responses to Questions About Instrumental Offerings

Question	Abbott		non-Abbott		U	p
	M	SD	M	SD		
1. There are more opportunities available to our students in the area of Instrumental Music now than there were available in 1995-96.	4.75	.5	3.58	1.12	11.5	.09
3. Instrumental course offerings at this school have decreased since 1995-96.	1.75	.957	2.05	1.27	20	.381

Table 2

Comparison of Likert Responses to Questions About Ensemble Caliber

Question	Abbott		non-Abbott		U	p
	M	SD	M	SD		
2. The caliber of performance by Instrumental ensembles in our school has improved since the 1995-96 school year.	3.2	1.304	3.58	1.216	31	.730
4. Students are able to perform music now that is as challenging as the music performed in 1995-96.	2.4	1.673	3.63	1.499	26	.395

Private Study and Region and State Ensemble Participation

Has there been a change in student participation in outside musical activities between non-Abbott and Abbott districts, including private study, participation in Region and State ensemble auditions, and acceptance to Region and State ensembles? To answer this question, several forms of analysis were employed. To determine the difference in student private study, the survey responses of private study for band students, orchestra students and jazz band students were combined and compared as a percentage of the total number of students participating those programs. Analysis produced no significant difference ($u = 22.5, p = 1.00$) between Abbott ($n = 5, M = .132, SD = .138$) and non-Abbott ($n = 9, M = .194, SD = .328$) school student participation in private study when compared as a percentage of total students in a program. When comparing Abbott student participation in New Jersey All-State Band and South Jersey

(Region III) instrumental ensembles, major differences were found between Abbott and non-Abbott students. In the 2005-2006 school year (see Table 3), Abbott students were 18.9% of the total high school population in the State of New Jersey. In the same school year, however, of the 407 public high school students auditioning for the New Jersey All-State Band, only 1% came from Abbott schools. Similar results were found in the 1995-1996 results. Figure 1 shows the difference in percentage of Abbott student population in comparison to the percentage of Abbott student participation in New Jersey All-State Band auditions.

Table 3

Comparison of Abbott Student Population and Participation in New Jersey All-State Band Auditions

	Total	Abbott	Abbott %
2005-2006			
Student Population	396,060	74,786	18.88%
NJ All-State Band Auditions	407	4	.98%
1995-1996			
Student Population	306,919	62,729	20.43%
NJ All-State Band Auditions	439	12	2.73%

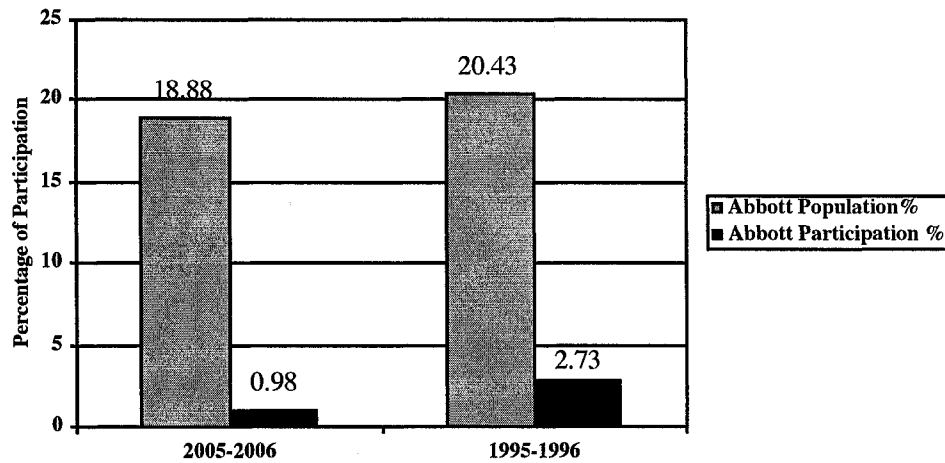


Figure 1. Abbott and non-Abbott student participation in New Jersey All-State Band auditions in the 1995-1996 and 2005-2006 school years.

A prerequisite for participation in New Jersey All State Band Auditions is a successful Region audition. To further compare Abbott and non-Abbott school participation, South Jersey (Region III) ensemble audition participation was analyzed (see Table 4). Abbott students made up 12.5% of the Region III high school enrollment in the 2005-2006 school year. During the same school year, however, only 3.4% of the students auditioning for Region III Bands and 2.5% of the students auditioning for the Region III orchestra were from Abbott schools. Figure 2 illustrates the difference in percentage of Abbott student population in Region III to the percentage of Abbott students auditioning for Region III Band and Orchestra.

Table 4

Comparison of Abbott Student Population and Participation in Region III Band and String Auditions

	Total	Abbott	Abbott %
2005-2006			
Region III Student Population	113,489	14,249	12.55%
Region III Band Auditions	414	14	3.38%
Region III String Auditions	120	3	2.5%
1995-1996			
Region III Student Population	90,368	12,922	14.2%
Region III Band Auditions	391	22	5.62%
Region III String Auditions	141	1	0.7%

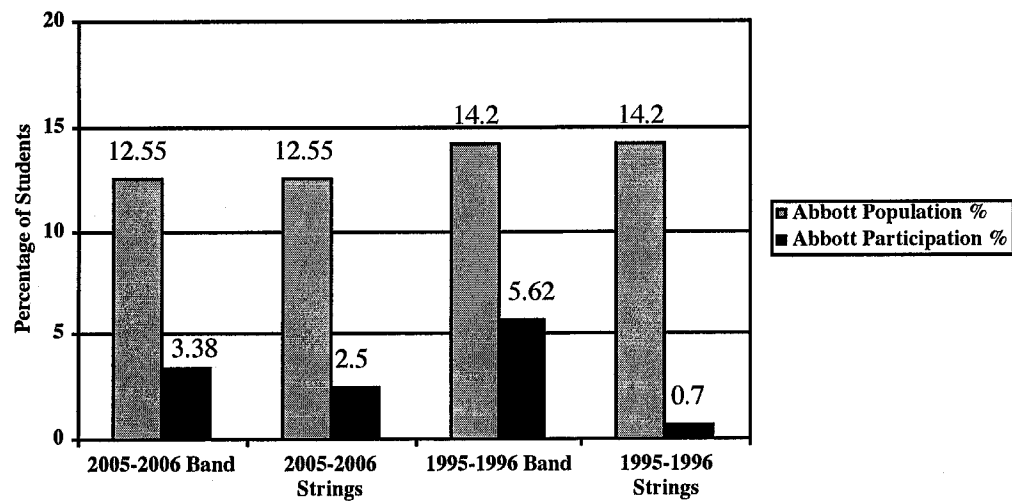


Figure 2. Abbott and non-Abbott student population and participation in South Jersey (Region III) Band and String auditions.

Teacher Retention and Job Satisfaction

Has the distribution of Abbott funds had an effect on teacher retention and job satisfaction? To answer this question, the first test was a comparison of the number of teachers that had held the position of the respondent since the 1995-1996 school year. There was no significant difference ($u = 47.5, p = 1.00$) between the number of teachers holding the respondents' positions in Abbott schools ($n = 5, M = 1.4, SD = .548$) and in non-Abbott schools ($n = 19, M = 1.53, SD = .964$). Additional data was analyzed to compare responses related to teacher job satisfaction (see Table 5).

Questions 5, 9, and 10 were designed to gather information about respondents' current perceptions of the profession of instrumental music education. Question 11 added additional insight into the respondents' perception of the profession of instrumental music education upon graduation from high school. Questions 6, 7, and 8 gathered information about the respondents' current level of job satisfaction emphasizing the support of administration, parents and community as a determining factor. While there was no significant difference in responses between Abbott and non-Abbott teachers, the results did reveal a general feeling of support for high school instrumental music programs from administration, community and parents. The results also reveal a general satisfaction in career choice and current placement of the respondents.

Table 5

Comparison of Likert Responses to Questions About Teacher Job Satisfaction

Question	Abbott		non-Abbott		U	p
	M	SD	M	SD		
5. Teaching Instrumental Music is a rewarding career.	4.75	.500	4.74	.452	26.5	.804
6. My administration is supportive of my programs.	4.40	1.34	3.63	1.21	22.5	.549
7. My students' parents are supportive of my programs.	4.40	.548	4.16	.898	26.5	.837
8. The local community supports my programs.	4.40	.894	3.89	.937	27.0	.880
9. I plan to teach Instrumental Music until I retire.	4.00	1.00	4.63	.831	16.0	.127
10. I am teaching in the school where I want to teach.	4.40	.894	3.84	1.425	23.0	.572
11. At high school graduation, teaching Instrumental Music was my first career choice.	4.40	.894	4.32	1.057	21.0	.427

Summary

Data derived from the survey and additional sources was used to answer the questions originally raised from the research. Although the return rate was low and no significant differences were found when comparing Abbott and non-Abbott high school instrumental programs from the pre-Abbott school year of 1995-1996 and 2005-2006, which was ten years after the initial infusion of Abbott parity funding, there are

conclusions that can be drawn from the data. Following is a discussion of the results, the implications and conclusions drawn from the data, and new questions raised by the data.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to determine whether Abbott parity funding, which was first distributed in the 1996-1997 school year, has had any effect on instrumental music programs in the State of New Jersey. Six research questions were developed to determine the effect of the funding, comparing the final pre-Abbott year of 1995-1996 with the ten-year funding mark of 2005-2006. A survey was developed and distributed to instrumental music teachers at all Abbott high schools and a stratified sample of the remaining high schools in District Factor Groups A through J. A total of 115 surveys were mailed in early February 2007. Two follow-up surveys were mailed four weeks after the initial mailing. A series of 20 electronic mails with survey attachments were sent during the following week. Of the 115 schools in the sample, there were 24 surveys returned with only 5 coming from Abbott schools. Some of the information in these surveys was submitted incomplete. Several narrative responses were received, without completed surveys. In addition to the survey, data from several other sources was collected.

A low return rate and incomplete answers on the survey hindered valid answers to the questions, however, along with additional data, some conclusions can be drawn from the data. A low response in itself could indicate an unwillingness to participate or a need for individual contact. It could also indicate that the time of year used to collect data might have been in error, and another time of year might produce a better response.

Student Participation

While programs at most schools have increased student participation numbers, there are programs that have decreased numbers. Several of the submitted narrative responses to the open-ended questions discussed the myriad of opportunities that are available to students in schools and that these opportunities seem to pull students away from instrumental music programs.

There also appears to be disproportionate participation in Orchestra programs when compared to Band programs. While most respondents indicated participation numbers for Marching Band and Concert Band, only 9 of the 24 surveys indicated current numbers for Orchestra. South Jersey (Region III) String Auditions also raises concerns with only 23 of the 92 high schools in the region participating in the 2005 auditions process. One positive indication is that of the nine schools in the 2005-2006 survey listing student participation numbers, only four listed participation numbers in the 1995-1996 school year. Another positive indication is that 19 of the 24 surveys listed numbers for Jazz Band programs for the 2005-2006 school year. These numbers raise questions about the lack of string participation in the State of New Jersey.

External Performances

Responses about participation in external performances and festivals varied greatly. There were no conclusions that could be drawn from the data that was provided other than the fact that there was equal distribution of performances across Abbott and non-Abbott programs. While almost every school indicated Marching Band participating in away football games, there was a large disparity in the number of single day external

performances. These performances ranged from 0 to 30, spanning equally across Abbott and non-Abbott schools.

Budgets

There was insufficient data to determine if there was a difference in budgets between Abbott and non-Abbott schools. While extra funds have been distributed to Abbott schools to maintain a “thorough and efficient” education, no determination could be made as to whether any additional funds were being distributed to instrumental music programs. One of the problems in response completion could be that 10 of the 24 respondents were not teaching in their current position in the 1995-1996 school year. Since funding is a major focus of the Abbott ruling, this could be an area of further study. School budget figures are public record, but the amount of research necessary to find figures 10 years past for a particular program would require a study to isolate this particular topic.

Instrumental Opportunities

When asked if there were more instrumental opportunities available to students, 20 of 23 respondents agreed. To confirm those results, respondents were also asked if instrumental offerings decreased and 20 of 23 disagreed. This shows that instrumental music programs are expanding to adapt to the needs of students. Future study could be conducted to determine exactly how the programs are expanding and if the expansions were different in Abbott and non-Abbott schools.

Ensemble Performance Caliber

When trying to determine whether the caliber of performance has improved, several results were derived from the data. Respondents agreed, 18 out of 24, that the caliber of their ensembles has improved since 1995-1996. Fifteen out of 24 agreed that their students were able to perform music as challenging as the music that they performed in 1995-1996. There was, however, a discrepancy with Abbott respondents, with four of five responding that their ensembles could not perform music as challenging. Although Abbott funding cannot directly affect the caliber of performance, it could have an effect on instruction in several areas that could result in the ultimate caliber of an ensemble. Differences in individual and group instruction could be a result of budget differences.

Private Study

Continuing with the idea of instruction, the survey asked about private study among students. While there was no significant difference between Abbott and non-Abbott schools when comparing the percentage of students in programs that study privately, the total number of students studying privately as indicated by the respondents increases as does the DFG classification, almost without exception, with the top five respondents coming from I and J DFGs and the top respondent indicating 355 students studying privately. One immediate answer for this could be the burden of cost that would not be as much of a factor as a school's DFG increases. This study did not take into account the proximity of students to metropolitan areas, which could increase the availability of instructors.

Region and State Ensemble Audition Participation

The largest substantial difference between Abbott and non-Abbott schools occurred in the data for region and state participation. During the 1995-1996 school year, 20.43% of the students in the State attended Abbott high schools, yet only 2.73% of auditioning students for the New Jersey All-State Band were from Abbott schools. In the 2005-2006 school year, 18.88% of the State's high school students attended Abbott high schools, yet only 0.98% of auditioning students for the New Jersey All-State Band were from Abbott schools. Since eligibility to audition for State ensembles is based on acceptance to Region ensembles, the results for the South Jersey (Region III) Band & Orchestra Auditions were examined. In 1995-1996, 14.2% of Region III students attended Abbott high schools, with a 5.62% wind and percussion audition rate from Abbott schools, while in 2005-2006, 12.55% of Region III students attended Abbott high schools, and 3.38% of the wind and percussion student auditions were from Abbott students. String audition rates were lower with a 0.7% audition rate from Abbott students in 1995-1996 and a 2.5% audition rate from Abbott students in 2005-2006. This inequity itself is enough to conclude that there is a difference between Abbott and non-Abbott schools. Further study needs to be conducted to determine why students in Abbott schools do not participate in Region and State ensemble auditions. Speculation could include the cost of private study, the cost of audition materials and instruments, and even the possibility of teacher ineligibility due to non-membership in required professional organizations.

Teacher Retention and Job Satisfaction

To examine teacher retention and job satisfaction, data from seven survey questions was analyzed. On all of the questions, 18 or more of the 24 respondents returned positive responses on parental, administrative and community support, and on the profession of teaching instrumental music. As I had expected, the respondents' views of teaching instrumental music as a rewarding career and a profession worthy of continuing until retirement was confirmed. On the survey, 18 of 24 respondents agreed that they received support from their administration, 23 of 24 agreed that they had community support and all 24 agreed that they had parental support. Additionally, 23 of 24 agreed that this profession was a rewarding career and that they planned to continue teaching instrumental music until retirement. The respondents also indicated their commitment to the profession with 23 of 24 agreeing that this was their first career choice at high school graduation. The profession is entered with passion for an already established talent, and combines the practice of that talent and the ability to develop it in others.

Summary

The low survey response limits the reliability of the survey data. Additional data and survey responses did provide an opportunity to generalize answers to the questions. Even though the survey data produced no significant difference between instrumental music in Abbott and non-Abbott schools, additional data did show a difference in Abbott student participation in All-State and Region ensemble auditions. The implications of

this research suggest further study on all aspects of Abbott Funding and instrumental music.

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APPENDIX

Survey

William McDevitt
Vineland High School South
2880 East Chestnut Avenue
Vineland, NJ 08361

wmcdevitt@vineland.org

(856) 794-6800 ext. 2539

Dear Colleague,

I am the Band Director at Vineland High School in the Southern Region of New Jersey. I am currently gathering data to complete my Master's Thesis at Rowan University. The purpose of this Thesis is to study the impact of funding and student participation in Instrumental Music over a ten-year period in the State of New Jersey.

Your school has been randomly chosen to participate in this study. In order to have valid results, I ask that you complete the attached survey and return it in the enclosed envelope as soon as possible. While the composite results will be released, all individual responses will remain confidential. If you would like to receive a copy of the results upon completion, please respond appropriately on the cover sheet.

I truly thank you in advance for your participation. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at any of the above options.

Sincerely,

William McDevitt

School Name _____

School District _____

County _____

Name of person completing survey _____

Title or Position _____

Number of years at current school _____

Would you like a copy of the findings upon completion? _____

Instrumental Ensemble Participation

Indicate the number of students participating in your school ensembles at the end of the school years 1995-96 and 2005-06. If multiple ensembles existed for the same ensemble type, combine the numbers for one total.

<u>Ensemble</u>	<u>1995-96</u>	<u>2005-06</u>
Marching Band-Musicians	_____	_____
Concert Band	_____	_____
Orchestra	_____	_____
Jazz Band	_____	_____
Other	_____	_____

To gain a total number of student participation, add the ensembles together, minus any student that may overlap in more than one ensemble.

	<u>1995-96</u>	<u>2005-06</u>
TOTAL	_____	_____

Private Study

Currently (2006-2007), how many students in each ensemble study privately outside of the regular school day?

Concert Band	_____
Orchestra	_____
Jazz Band	_____

External Performances

Indicate the number of external performances for each ensemble based on the length of each trip. Include competitions and performance tours.

	<u>Single Day</u>	<u>Overnight/Multiple Day</u>	<u>Away Football Games</u>
1995-96 Marching Band	_____	_____	_____
2005-06 Marching Band	_____	_____	_____
1995-96 Concert Band	_____	_____	
2005-06 Concert Band	_____	_____	
1995-96 Jazz Band	_____	_____	
2005-06 Jazz Band	_____	_____	
1995-96 Orchestra	_____	_____	
2005-06 Orchestra	_____	_____	

Music Budget

Indicate the district provided budget for Instrumental Music in your school for the 1995-96 school year and the 2005-06 school year. Do not include fundraising, transportation costs, or salaries.

1995-96 Instrumental Music Budget _____
2005-06 Instrumental Music Budget _____

Teacher Retention

How many teachers, including yourself, have held your current position since the 1995-96 school year? _____

Program Offerings and Teacher Satisfaction

Respond to the statements based on your perceptions. Use a 5 point scale with 1 meaning Strongly Disagree and 5 meaning Strongly Agree.

	<u>Strongly</u> <u>Disagree</u>	<u>Strongly</u> <u>Agree</u>
There are more opportunities available to our students in the area of Instrumental Music now than were available in 1995-96.	1	2	3	4	5
The caliber of performance by Instrumental ensembles in our school has improved since the 1995-96 school year.	1	2	3	4	5
Instrumental course offerings at this school have decreased since 1995-96.	1	2	3	4	5
Students are able to perform music now that is as challenging as the music performed in 1995-96.	1	2	3	4	5
Teaching Instrumental Music is a rewarding career.	1	2	3	4	5
My administration is supportive of my programs.	1	2	3	4	5
My students' parents are supportive of my programs.	1	2	3	4	5
The local community supports my programs.	1	2	3	4	5
I plan to teach Instrumental Music until I retire.	1	2	3	4	5
I am teaching in the school where I want to teach.	1	2	3	4	5
At high school graduation, teaching Instrumental Music was my first career choice.	1	2	3	4	5

Please attach any additional comments about changes that you have observed in the field of Instrumental Music in New Jersey over the last 10 years.

