Factors Influencing Latine Students in Four Secondary Public Music Programs in California

by

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ABSTRACT

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Title: Factors Influencing Latine Students in Four Secondary Public Music Programs in California

Music plays a vital role in the lives and education of young people across the United States. Extensive research has demonstrated that meaningful engagement with music yields significant benefits for students, and while 92% of schools offer music programs, fewer than 25% of high school students report having enrolled in a music class. Moreover, minority students participate in music courses at significantly lower rates than their White peers. In California, where Hispanic/Latine students constitute 56% of the school-age population, their underrepresentation in school music represents a missed opportunity for both students and schools.

This study employed a multi-method research design to investigate the factors contributing to the underrepresentation of Hispanic/Latine students in school music programs and to develop evidence-based recommendations aimed at promoting inclusion and equity. Focusing on four high schools in Northern California that are actively working to enhance Hispanic/Latine participation, the focus of this research is to gather qualitative data from actual stakeholders, both student and faculty and gleans useful information from classroom artifacts and observation.

Observations revealed a marked demographic disparity between traditional ensemble classes, which are predominantly non-Hispanic/Latine and Música Latina classes, which had near total Hispanic/Latine involvement. Focus group responses highlight several recurring

themes, including the influence of family and cultural identity (familismo), scheduling conflicts, negative perceptions of music programs in relation to time demands and cultural relevance and an enthusiasm for culturally familiar ensembles. Students expressed a desire for greater cultural representation and more welcoming recruiting efforts. Interviews with educators underscored the importance of offering culturally responsive pedagogy, expanding Música Latina ensembles, fostering effective family engagement, and increasing representation among Hispanic/Latine music teachers.

Key barriers to Hispanic/Latine participation in school music included cultural disconnects, perceived lack of inclusivity, limited schedule availability, and negative stereotypes. Conversely, the implementation of Música Latina classes seemed to be a successful avenue towards inclusive outreach that honors students' cultural identities. The findings in this dissertation recommend strategic communication with families, inclusive program design, culturally relevant repertoire expansion, sustained outreach efforts, and the recruitment and development of Hispanic/Latine music educators to enhance participation and retention.

Findings provide valuable insights for music educators and policymakers seeking to foster equitable and culturally affirming music education environments. Also identified in the findings are areas for further research, including longitudinal studies and expansion of culturally relevant pedagogical models beyond California.

Keywords: music education, Hispanic, Latino, Latine, inclusion, high school, music

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to Regan. You were a good kitty.

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Introduction

> *All persons, regardless of age, cultural heritage, ability, venue, or financial circumstance deserve to participate fully in the best music experiences possible.*
>
> *Housewright Declaration, 1999, Agreement 1 – from the Housewright Symposium, September 23-26, Tallahassee, Florida*

Thus reads the primary maxim put forth by the preeminent music education symposium of the past 58 years, sponsored by one of the largest and most influential music education professional organizations in the world. It is the first agreement to emerge from the Housewright Declaration; the mission statement meant to codify the fundamental goals of music education.

Public school music programs constitute the primary avenues through which American students engage with music-making and receive music instruction in contemporary society (Abril & Bannerman, 2014; Elpus, 2020, 2022). Notably, the development of school-based music instruction in the United States has resulted in a comparatively robust presence of music within public education, particularly relative to other countries (Aróstegui, 2016; Groulx, 2013). Tracing its historical trajectory from the Calvinist-influenced psalmody practices of New England singing schools, to the vocal-centric choral initiatives of Lowell Mason, music education has become deeply embedded throughout the nation's public school infrastructure.

It is estimated that nearly 92% of school children have access to music of some variety during their primary and secondary school years (NCES, 2010) and that approximately 91% of schools employ a dedicated music teacher, with 81% having at least one full-time music instructor (National Endowment for the Arts, 2024). Given such widespread availability of music instruction, one might reasonably expect student participation rates to reflect a similarly high level of engagement. However, access, while necessary for participation, does not guarantee it,

and the widespread presence of music in public schools does not translate to correspondingly high involvement. In fact, it is estimated that only 50% of all American students participate in music at *any* point during their public-school tenure (Arts Education Data Project [AEDP], 2026; Yamaha, 2022).

In terms of concrete exposure to music in the public school system, elementary school is the period during which most access occurs. Many elementary school scheduling models include universal participation in music, thanks to the existence of Specialized Music Instruction (SMI), or pull-out music classes. SMIs are popular as they often act as prep-period providers for classroom teachers, thus allowing school administrators to meet union-negotiated requirements for prep time. Elementary pull-out music models are also effective thanks to the flexibility they offer teachers and administrators alike (NAfME, 2025).

Although many elementary schools provide universal music participation, engagement rates decline dramatically as most schools shift to an elective model at the secondary level. This shift results in subsequent music participation that is concerningly low and decreases as students age; between 21 to 41% of middle schoolers elect to participate in music classes (AEDP, 2022; Alegrado & Winsler, 2020). According to nationwide data in a 2011 study (Elpus & Abril), an average of 21% of American high schoolers participated in music at least once. The disparity between the number of students across the secondary educational model for whom music is available in schools and who actually participate is roughly 70%. If music education is as important for young people as is often asserted by music education advocates and as is stated in the primary maxim of the Housewright Symposium, there is need for improvement in participation rates.

The Case for Music Education

The question of whether music education holds importance for young people warrants careful consideration. Contemporary advocates of music education, representing various philosophical perspectives, largely concur that meaningful engagement with music is highly beneficial for youth. Whether approached from utilitarian, aesthetic, or praxial viewpoints, leading music philosophers assert that quality musical interaction yields substantial benefits for individuals, particularly in their formative years. From a praxial perspective, such engagement facilitates the development of holistic problem-solving abilities, fosters the exploration of emotional meaning, and cultivates social-emotional competencies that contribute to the enrichment of young peoples' lives (Boler, 2020). Music, fundamentally, constitutes a form of cognition. Engaging actively with music–whether through listening, performing, singing or improvising–produces effects rarely found in other human activities. It is through this active engagement, a concept referred to as "musicking" by praxial theorists, that various positive outcomes may emerge, including cognitive and physical empowerment, personal and ethical development, and the formation of individual identity (Elliott, 1995; Kelly, 2019).

Music is one of the most primal and fundamental parts of humanity. Music and musicking have existed in every human society since the beginning of recorded history, and have been a part of every human culture for which there is evidence. Music is ubiquitous in modern society, being an integral part of our daily lives – embedded in our entertainment, advertising, sport, social media, religious practice, and life events (such as coming-of-age ceremonies, weddings, funerals and other celebrations) to an extent that it is often taken for granted (Kelly, 2019).

Interaction with music is also an effective and efficient means to other ends. Much has been made about the utilitarian benefits of music education. Socialization, work-ethic, improved creativity, problem solving skills, language skills, physical motor-coordination, among many other valuable traits can all be addressed and improved through musical training. While popular claims that "music makes kids smarter" or "music makes students do better on tests" (Spiegel, 2010) are an exaggeration born of misunderstood or overly generalized research, there are convincing data that meaningful and sustained study of music can have significant and meaningful neurophysiological effects on those who interact with it. Musicking is shown to stimulate multiple parts of the brain, have therapeutic effects, and improve language comprehension skills (Sacks, 2007; Sala & Gobet, 2020).

Professional Goals

From September 23rd to 27th, 1999, roughly 160 music professionals, including many of the preeminent voices in music education, met at Florida State University in Tallahassee, FL to chart the path of music education for the next 20 years. To this day, the Housewright Declaration that emerged from this conference (Madsen, 1999) remains a foundational guide for the National Association for Music Education (NAfME), the premier music education organization in the United States and, arguably, the world. The primary tenet, first on a list of 10 agreements, in this declaration holds that, "All persons, regardless of age, cultural heritage, ability, venue, or financial circumstance deserve to participate fully in the best music experiences possible" (p. 205). The primacy of this axiom in the declaration portrays its importance to NAfME, and to the profession it represents.

Since school music programs in the United States constitute the principal avenue by which young people engage with and learn music, and given the educational and developmental

benefits that interaction with music can provide for all students, it is a fundamental objective to ensure that these programs are accessible and inclusive. Stakeholders in music education may frequently seek strategies to enhance their outreach efforts and may adopt as an objective the maximization of student participation in their classes. Given that less than 30 percent of America's youth are participating in secondary school music, a more effective model clearly warrants exploration.

California

Fort he purposes of this study, I concentrated on four high schools within California, the most populous state in the United States. California not only boasts the largest school-aged population in the nation, but also has the highest percentage of Hispanic/Latine students. By focusing on this region I aim to explore music education in a context that is both culturally rich and representative of broader demographic trends in American public schooling.

In terms of participation, California's Hispanic/Latine student population is underrepresented in public school music classes. According to the most recently available data, the student-aged population of California is currently estimated to be 56% Hispanic/Latine, a percentage that will continue to increase if recent trends continue (Deng et al., 2025; NCES, 2023). While there are no data that I could find regarding the participation level of Hispanic/Latine students who choose to participate in music classes in the state, researchers nationally have revealed that this demographic does not participate in school music commensurate with their population presence (Alcala, 2024; Elpus & Abril, 2011). Assuming that California follows the national trend–and in the absence of contrary evidence–California likely has a much lower participation rate for Hispanic/Latine students in music programs when compared with the proportion of all K–12 students who are of similar descent. Given

California's substantial population of school-aged Hispanic/Latine students, it is imperative for professional music educators to develop effective strategies and culturally responsive pedagogies that promote meaningful inclusion and equitable participation of Hispanic/Latine students within music education programs.

Music Program Definition

In this dissertation the term "music programs," is frequently employed; therefore it is essential to define its meaning within the context of this study. For the purposes of this research, a "music program" is understood to encompass any class or sequence of classes that are regularly scheduled as part of a secondary school curriculum, wherein the primary focus is music. More specifically, when considering the term "music program" in relationship to American high schools, it predominantly evokes the model of large ensemble instruction–namely Band, Orchestra, Choir, and Jazz ensembles (BOCJ). However, for the purposes of this study, non-BOCJ courses such as marching bands or chamber music ensembles, as well as specialty lab classes such as guitar, piano, or percussion were also included in the term "music program." Also included in the purview of this study were academic music courses such as theory, ear training, history, rock & roll, composition, songwriting, world music, and music appreciation, among others. Technology classes that involve interaction with music creation and appreciation were also considered "music program" inclusive, as these types of classes are growing in popularity throughout the nation (Dorfman, 2023). In short, any class that allows students (with the guidance of teachers) to interact with music in meaningful way that align with the National Core Arts Standards of Creating, Performing, Responding, and Connecting to music (NCAS, 2023), was included in the term "music program" because the ultimate goal of this study was to increase

participation in all quality school music interactions, not just Bands, Orchestras, Choirs, and Jazz Ensembles.

Special attention was paid to culturally specific courses that were designed to reach Hispanic/Latine students, such as Mariachi and Norteña ensembles, both of which originate from Mexico, but are popular throughout the United States. *Mariachi* is a traditional Mexican music genre involving vocals, Violins, Vihuelas, Guitarrónes, Trumpets, and various other instruments which perform distinct music, including boleros, waltzes, marches, polkas and many other styles (Mulholland, 2013). Norteña is a more recently emergent music from Northern Mexico, which features Vocals, Accordion, Bajo Quinto, Bass or Tololoche (a smaller cousin of the double bass), and drums. Norteña is a popular style of music, with upbeat, danceable conciones (songs), that is listened to by all ages within the Mexican communities, including within the diaspora.

The schools included in this study were purposively selected based on their initiatives to implement music curricula incorporating Hispanic/Latine content. One high school featured a well-established and successful Mariachi program that had been sustained for several years, and offered a Career Technical Education (CTE), three-tiered pathway, focused specifically on Mariachi playing. Another school was in the process of transitioning a newly formed after-school Mariachi club to a formal curricular class to be offered during the day in subsequent years. Additionally, a third school provided a performing ensemble class dedicated to the Mexican musical style of Norteña and which, at the time of the study, was the only such course for which documented evidence was available in the state.

There has been an increase in recent years in the popularity of Música Latina programs in the United States, especially in areas with large Hispanic/Latine populations such as Texas

and Nevada (Torres-Ramos, 2014; Tucker et al., 2026). This growth may be reflective of the growing demographic diversity throughout the nation. The most recent US population census indicates that the diversity index of the overall nation (a measurement of the probability that two people selected randomly from a specific area will be of a different ethnic and racial groups) has increased almost 10 percent and is predicted to continue rising.

Mariachi, in particular, has spread exponentially in recent years in public school curricula (Alcántara, 2021). The expansion has been so pronounced that makers of Mariachi instruments are struggling to meet the demand for school instruments (Petersen, 2017). More evidence of the growing popularity can be seen in popular media. In 2023, a popular documentary entitled *Going Varsity in Mariachi,* featuring a competitive high school Mariachi program aired on the nation's most popular streaming service, Netflix (Osbourn & Vasquez, 2024).

Constructivist Grounded Theory

For this study, I investigated the approaches through which High School music educators and administrators can more effectively support their Hispanic/Latine student populations. Employing a Grounded Theory methodology, I undertook a comprehensive examination of strategies used by teachers, administrators, and school music programs to develop inclusive and culturally responsive models to better serve Hispanic/Latine students. Central to this inquiry is the identification and analysis of barriers, best practices and attitudes among the most relevant stakeholders in secondary music education. Due to prior experience with music education and Hispanic/Latine students in the researcher's career, my theoretical framework was necessarily based on constructivist principles. Constructivist Grounded Theory postulates that reality is not fixed; that it is constantly formed and reformed by the actions, interactions, and even language of

people. If these cultural phenomena are studied in their natural settings, it may lead to better understanding of causality and behavioral results in various societal situations (Charmaz, 2017). Importantly, the pre-knowledge of the music education systems of the schools being studied prohibits a strict classical research approach, in which no prior theories are considered, and pure information-gathering starts without any presuppositions or assumptions. There was no experimentation involved in this research– only observation and inquiry. While this study did not involve active participation in the processes and experiences of its participants, I adopt a pre-established point of view–that of the importance of music education for as many students as possible, and that there are best practices which can encourage participation in music classes.

The participant selection method for this study involved semi-purposive, and semi-convenience sampling – both non-probability techniques. Hispanic/Latine students were targeted within the student population, to the exclusion of other cultural groups. All participating students were self-selecting, self-identified Hispanic/Latines. In an effort to gather input from both perspectives, students were recruited from both the music-student and non-music student populations of each school. Owing to the limited timeframe and limitations regarding involvement of high school students in research, a purposive sampling method was chosen to facilitate identification of "information rich" cases, who were especially knowledgeable about and experienced with this topic of interest (Patton, 2014). In this case, the target population was readily identifiable and accessible – Hispanic/Latine high school students and their teachers and administrators. Considerations were taken to ensure that all participants, some of whom were especially vulnerable, being both students and, in certain cases, minors, were dealt with in accordance with the APA Guidelines for ethical Conduct of behavioral projects involving human participants by high school students (American Psychological Association, 2012). To that end,

the study, including all communication documents, interview and focus group questions, survey instruments, recruitment scripts, and all associated translations, as well as the research plan were reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board of the University of Oregon (see Appendix H).

Review of Literature

With this study, I sought to investigate the factors contributing to the underrepresentation of Hispanic/Latine students in school music programs relative to their White peers. The primary objective was to identify and synthesize effective strategies to address and mitigate this disparity. To achieve this, a comprehensive review of the existing literature was conducted, focusing on key influences and systemic factors associated with Hispanic/Latine educational experiences within the broader context of U.S. schooling.

Barriers to Educational Success

Researchers have extensively explored why Hispanic/Latine students do not achieve the same academic success on many, if not most, metrics as their Caucasian and Asian contemporaries. For example, only 84% of Hispanic/Latine students graduate high school nationally, compared to 90% of White students, 94% of Asian students, and 87% overall (NCES, 2022). They consistently score behind White and Asian students on mathematics and reading assessments (NAEP, 2022) and have an average GPA that is significantly lower than White (20–25 points below) and Asian (30–50 points below) students (Lindsay, 2025; Magnet, 2025). While the percentage of Hispanic/Latine high school graduates who enroll in college has risen recently (47% in 2016 up from 35% in 1996), they are still far less likely to *finish* their bachelor's degrees than their non-Hispanic/Latine peers (Gramlich, 2016; Krogstad, 2016). It should be acknowledged that this graduation rate has seen a vast improvement in recent years. As the Hispanic/Latine population has grown, so has their level of academic success. However, Hispanics/Latines are still widely behind their White and Asian counterparts in most measures, if

by a decreasing margin.

It should also be acknowledged here that there exists a similar achievement gap for African American and Native American students throughout the nation. The historic minority inequity has been recognized by the federal government, notably in the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, which had as one of its main tenets, to "eliminate the achievement gaps between minority and nonminority students" (p. 3). Nationally, and over the course of decades a plethora of school reform initiatives, research agendas and school intervention programs have been designed to eradicate chronic differences in the educational outcomes of students (Ferguson, 2000). This study focuses exclusively on the Hispanic/Latine demographic and their related experiences, not because the experiences of Black and Native students are less deserving of study, nor because African and Native American participation in music is less important than that of Hispanic/Latine students. Rather, the large and growing presence of Hispanic/Latine students in California and access to and familiarity with California schools provide an ideal opportunity for research into this particular demographic. It is a possibility that findings concerning improved Hispanic/Latine inclusion may be applicable to other underserved populations.

Hispanic/Latine students participate in school activities at a much lower rate than all other demographics, according to a national survey conducted by Feldman and Matjasko (2007). These activities included sports, academic-related activities, and especially the arts. It is likely that the activity participation gap is attributable to many of the same sources as the academic performance disparities seen above. For younger students, significant influences on non-participation in after-school activities are cost, convenience of location, lack of access in their community, safety of children travelling to and from, and long waiting lists (After-school

Alliance, 2025). One important aspect of the current study includes investigating whether Feldman and Matjasko's findings from 18 years ago still apply.

Low Socio-Economic Status

The major cultural academic disparities mentioned above are likely attributable to multiple factors, the most significant of which may be socio-economic in nature, such as under-funded schools in Hispanic/Latine-populated areas and lower socio-economic status (SES) of Hispanic/Latine families (Schneider et al., 2006). There is much agreement that an "opportunity gap" exists among Hispanic/Latine families in terms of income and financial stability. As of 2016, one-third of Hispanic/Latine students lived in poverty, while two-thirds were living in "low-income" households (Quam, 2016). This financial disadvantage comes despite a very strong cultural work-ethic. Hispanics/Latines make up the fastest growing work force demographic – growing 69% since 2003, compared to the 6% growth among non-Hispanic/Latine groups (US Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2024). However, the jobs that many Hispanics/Latines take are low-paying labor jobs that are unwanted by non-Hispanic/Latine Americans. Often this outcome is attributed to the high number of Hispanic/Latine immigrants who are in the country illegally and who cannot apply for higher paying jobs (Santiago et al., 2024).

Hispanics/Latines in the U.S. experience significant economic disadvantages, including lower median earning, higher poverty rates, reduced inter-generational wealth accumulation, and overrepresentation in low-wage, high-risk jobs, (despite being major drivers of U.S. economic growth) (Cumming, 2022). This financial disadvantage has a significant impact on academic success of Hispanic/Latine youth, as poverty is one of the most restricting factors on student success rates. Researchers have found that children from low SES households and communities

develop academic skills more slowly than children from higher SES groups (Morgan et al., 2009). Low-SES also means that families tend to live in areas that have lower property tax, which can be an important source of funding for local schools. Hispanics/Latines live disproportionately in low-income housing, such as "affordable" (subsidized) apartments and in urban areas where the funding for public schools is unsatisfactory. Low tax support contributes to schools' inability to recruit and maintain qualified teachers and provide adequate support to students. Hispanic/Latine students, even ones that are not of a lower SES, are still more likely to attend a low SES school—as determined by the percentage of students who qualify for Free or Reduced-Price Lunch (Carnoy & García, 2017). Another result of living with low SES is that Hispanic/Latine families tend not to be able to afford preschool in commensurate numbers to White families, which has been shown to give students an academic advantage. Forty-two percent of Hispanic/Latine children attend pre-school compared to 50% of their white counterparts (Ramirez, 2017).

Lastly, it has been shown that low SES is a major negative factor in students' abilities to participate in school-based extra-curricular activities (Feldman & Matjasko, 2007; Halpern, 1999). Hispanic/Latine students participate less across all extra- and co-curricular categories– sports, academic, service, cultural and artistic/performance-based. While they do tend to participate in soccer and baseball to a somewhat high degree, due to a cultural affinity in Latin countries for *Fútbol* and *Béisbol*, Hispanics/Latines shy away from other athletic school programs. There is a knowledge gap regarding the extent to which Hispanic/Latine participate specifically in music courses. The most recent national data comes from over a decade ago (Elpus, 2014; Elpus & Abril, 2019).

Familismo

Cultural norms within many Hispanic/Latine families frequently include an emphasis on family support taking precedence over non-family matters, including school-related activities, and can to some degree play a role in their level of academic success. This strong familial bond, called *Familism,* or *Familismo* in Spanish, is a concept wherein members of family structures feel a strong sense of coherence within, dedication to, and interdependence with those structures (Garcia et al., 2000; Ortiz, 2017). Familismo has been found to be more prevalent in Hispanic/Latine communities than in European counterparts (Ortiz, 2017). Members of this Hispanic/Latine familial unit hold to certain values, including strong familial obligations, and perceived support and parental/ancestral referents (Sabogal et al., 1987). Referents are familial models (such as elders, parents, uncles, aunts, etc.), setting examples and expectations for behaviors, attitudes, and beliefs that influence the choices younger generations make. Perceived support may take on several forms, including emotional, financial, or social contribution. The primary value, strong familial obligation, is one that is most likely to come in conflict with school extra-curricular activities. Typical familial obligations that Hispanic/Latine teenagers may encounter include the need to care for siblings while guardians are at work, needing to work to provide extra income for the family, and attendance at family events. It is not uncommon for students of Mexican heritage to disenroll in school for a month-long period during winter, to spend an extended time with family back in their generational place of origin. On this trip, usually scheduled around the Christmas Holiday season, they spend the time with friends and family (Romero, 2018). So common and widespread is this "exodus," that it costs some larger school districts into the millions of dollars in lost Average Daily Attendance funding (Goodman, 1990, p. 1).

Gender plays an important role in the effect of *familismo* on adolescent Hispanics/Latine participation in school activities and academic performance. Strong cultural gender roles and expectations, called Machismo and Marianismo, indicate that expectations between young men and women are different in Hispanic/Latine families (Toyokawa & Toyokawa, 2019). It is often expected that young Latinas will spend time at home, helping to raise younger family members, or helping to maintain the household. Male Latino youths, as young as 15 or 16, will often be expected to go out into the workforce and earn extra income to support the family. This work can include joining siblings and referents in their (often manual) labor jobs. Both sets of gendered expectations lead, to varying extents, to less time spent on school-related activities.

Barriers to Higher Education

There is also a notable opportunity gap for Hispanic/Latine students when it comes to applying to, being accepted into, thriving in, and eventually graduating from college. While recent trends are improving in terms of the number of Hispanic/Latine students applying for and getting into college, that number is still not representative of the population at large.

One of the major issues for college-aspiring Hispanic/Latine students is the "first generation" dilemma (Castellanos & Jones, 2023). Hispanics/Latines who are first generation college students can experience many culture-specific difficulties in the first few years, often because they do not know how to "play the game" of higher education. Not only do they face the same issue as their first-generation White peers, but they also must face the challenge of being in a culturally different setting, often entirely away from their home supports for the first time. Since they are frequently the first and only member of their family to have experienced higher education, the skill sets and systemic knowledge is completely foreign to them. Because of this systemic unfamiliarity, the number of Hispanics/Latines who enroll in college is much higher

than the number that finish with a degree.

Impacts of Barriers on Music Participation

While there is less research on why young Hispanics/Latines do not participate in secondary school music in numbers commensurate with their population's presence within schools, many of the same issues seen above may explain the disparity. According to Elpus and Abril (2019), only 17% of Hispanic/Latine students participated in high school level ensemble music nationwide in 2013. This level of participation in music is well below the national average of 24% overall (a number that is, in itself, unfortunately low). In that same year, 24.8% of the student population nationally identified as Hispanic/Latine (Fay, 2019). What accounts for the almost eight percent gap between the number of Hispanic/Latine students in school and the number of Hispanic/Latine students in ensemble music classes?

There are several suggested reasons for the underrepresentation of Hispanic/Latine students in school music ensembles. One explanation is systemic: Many Hispanic/Latine students are first generation citizens or may even be immigrants themselves and as such, do not speak English as their first language and so are designated English Language Learners (ELL). This designation often means that schools require them to take remedial language courses instead of elective classes such as music. Consequently, ELL students are half as likely as their native English-speaking peers to be involved in a music course (Elpus & Abril, 2019; Zinth, 2023).

A lack of disposable income among Hispanic/Latine families has a direct effect on participation in music classes (DeLorenzo, 2016). The cost of musical instruments, even using rental payments plans, can be a prohibitive factor on students' decisions to join instrumental ensemble classes (Kinney, 2019). Researchers have found that socioeconomic status is a stronger indicator of participation in music programs than academic achievement or musical aptitude

(Klinedinst, 1991; McCarthy, 1980). However, it should be noted that in the years since these findings were published, laws in California have been passed that assure that no student shall be denied the opportunity to participate in any curricular school class or activity due to personal cost (California State Constitution, 2025). While this step toward social justice on the part of California may provide significant help to students of lower SES who wish to participate in music, it is worth noting that there may still be a stigma felt by students whose families cannot afford extra-musical costs associated with music programs, such as private lessons, travel to and from concerts, food and other expenses on school music trips even if the trip is a no-fee required event. There is no indication that could be found in this research that California's policy of no-cost for public school participation has increased the number of students who are enrolled in music classes.

An additional factor for lower SES students, of which Hispanics/Latines make up a significant proportion, is the fact that many of them are expected to work during their non-school hours (Canizales & Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2022). This expectation makes it prohibitively difficult for these students to participate in school music ensembles for which there is an expectation that students attend after-school rehearsals and concerts. Even more difficult is the expectation to participate in weekend trips and competitions as are common in high school ensemble classes. In some cases, a student's grade in an ensemble class may be lowered if they fail to attend certain co-curricular events. Many secondary school teachers include concert and dress rehearsal participation in their syllabi and grading systems, forcing students to either arrange their work schedules to accommodate these events, when possible, or decide to forgo the concert to the detriment of their grade or even elect to not participate in music. This expectation of young Hispanics/Latines to earn money to help support their families is part of an over-arching cultural

norm, that has a large effect on their school activity participation.

English Language Learners (ELLs)

Another major barrier contributing to low Hispanic/Latine participation in music is inadequate support for students for whom English is not a primary language (DeLorenzo, 2016; Elpus, 2020; Zinth, 2023). Throughout the United States as of 2021, more than three quarters of all English Language learners (8.4% of the total public-school enrollment) were Hispanic/Latine (US Department of Education, 2021). In California, where the term is English Learners (ELs), the numbers were higher: 18.9% of all California public-school enrollees were ELs and over 80 % of those ELs were Hispanic/Latine (Stavely & Willis, 2025). English Learner numbers can be deceiving due to the fact that once a student has been assessed as an EL in California, they will, by some schools, be counted among the EL population for their school career, even if they learn enough English to be considered Fluent English Proficient, and no longer need to be included in English mediation programs. But in California, and for the purposes of this study, there are, at most recent estimates, 1,918,385 English Learners, of which 909,319 have advanced sufficiently to be considered proficient, leaving 1,009,066 students (just under 18%) who are currently enrolled in EL programs.

When student-aged immigrants or first generation students in California schools do not meet certain standards for English proficiency, they are required to take additional remedial English classes, alongside core curriculum courses needed for graduation, and they must take these courses until they improve to a passing level of the California English Language Development Test (CELDT). Specifically, when a student is designated as a Long-Term English Learner because they have spent more than five years in the EL category, those students are required to take a “double block” of English Language instruction until they reclassify (Schekel

& Kula, 2021, p. 2). This extra period usually comes at the cost of an elective, and so many EL students cannot take a music class, even though they may wish to.

Even when EL students do become proficient enough to be granted additional elective course choices, often they are still unable to participate in music courses. The "highly sequential nature" of many music programs denies students an "entry point" into any advanced performance or academic music class (Escalante, 2019, p. 6). All but beginning band or orchestra classes prioritize knowledge of music notation and instrument technique for authentic participation. While choirs are somewhat more accessible, they also favor students with experience in music-related skills such as notation reading, performance practice, language pronunciation, and others. Certainly, the advanced music classes which often require audition or prerequisites for participation are prohibitively specialized against any students who could not have participated previously as is the case with reclassified English proficient students (Elpus & Abril, 2011).

Ironically, there is some support to the idea that, with English Language education techniques in place, arts classes such as music could serve as an effective placement for EL students. One study (Moss, 2018) found that writing and reading scores for immigrant and refugee students who took a band class were higher than those of similar students who did not. Other research has indicated that arts-based strategies may be linked with improvement in young ELs listening and speaking CELDT scores (Broulliette et al., 2015) and music training among students of all ages shows improvement in language skills (Lorah et al., 2014; Slevc & Miyake, 2006).

Ethnocentric Culture Perceptions

Another reason that Hispanic/Latine students may choose not to participate in their

school music programs is that the culture they see recognized by the music curriculum may not resemble or acknowledge their own (Fergus, 2009). School music repertoire is famously Eurocentric, either written by white (often deceased) European classical composers, or, for modern compositions, composers of European descent and usually in Euro-classical style (Bradley, 2012; Sherard, 2022). Beyond repertoire, the school music program models in the United States are generally ethnocentric, focusing on ensembles, skill acquisition, concerts, practice routine and rewarding good performances, either individually or communally. The most common ensembles are Bands (concert, marching) Orchestra (symphonic or string), Choir (concert, a Cappela), and jazz (band, combos, choirs) which all descend from European, highly traditional models.

Even recent efforts to include more diverse music in what Kelly-McHale and Abril (2015b) call the "additive approach" (p. 159), are often made through the European lens. They may contain the melody and cursory style of Latin music, but are often arranged by composers of European heritage for high school and middle school bands, orchestras, and choirs (BOCs), which are traditionally European ensembles in European concert settings (Jolley, 2019). The authenticity of cultural meaning is often diminished or lost when the context surrounding the music and its associated traditions is absent (Kelly-McHale & Abril, 2015). As a result, students and their families may perceive their musical heritage being distorted or colonized, or at minimum, they may feel alienated by this misrepresentation. Escalante (2019) notes that this dynamic "may further alienate Latinx [sic] students from joining music classes or contribute to feelings of isolation within music classes" (p. 6).

Furthering a general sense of otherness or not-belonging among Hispanic/Latine students is a recent anti-immigrant, anti-higher education, and "Mexican-phobic" posture that has been

adopted by the second Trump presidential administration, beginning in its first term, expanded upon in its second (Verea, 2018, p.198). Educational programs that have been deemed "*woke*" such as campus Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion offices and equity assistance offices have been highly curtailed through loss of funding or cancelled altogether (U.S. Dept. of Education, 2025). In an America-first, "patriotic" movement, that is highly nationalistic and potentially xenophobic (Scott, 2026), this presidency has taken the opportunity to demonize, terrorize and remove immigrants in this country in manners legal and illegal (Alam & Asef, 2020; Blair & Hasuman, 2025; Palomino et al., 2025).

> The Trump administration, through its anti-immigrant rhetoric and its attacks on diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) policies, is exploiting these white nationalist perspectives, ignoring the country's longstanding demographic diversity, and portraying Latinx communities as external and in opposition to a United States national identity. (Munoz & Serzen, 2025, p. 1)

Not all schools comply with this federal pressure to homogenize education. Many schools do their utmost to make all students feel welcome, even those from cultures that are not mainstream American. However, more Hispanic/Latine students (especially those who face immigration-related government intervention) are reporting elevated anxiety and stress (Ray, 2023; Valero, 2025).

Lack of school role-models

Apart from the curriculum, there is an additional condition by which Hispanic/Latine students may not see themselves in the music program, one that is perpetuated by the low participation of these students in music programs - the low representation of Hispanic/Latine music teachers in schools, nationally speaking. Only nine percent of general education teachers

in the United States are Hispanic/Latine and the number among music teachers is dramatically less- only two percent (Alcala, 2023).

Teachers that share the same minority identity as their students bring certain benefits to the classroom. They have a socio-cultural understanding based on lived experiences that they can share with their students. They may be aware of certain systemic prejudices, both implicit and explicit inherent in the educational system (Becket, 1998; Gay & Howard, 2000; Quiocho & Rios, 2000). These teachers provide positive role models for their minority students. When students see themselves in their teachers, there may be several benefits that follow, including increased buy-in to the program, increased trust in that teacher, enhanced enjoyment of the class experience, and increased academic gains (Palkki, 2015; Zubrzycki, 2015). When they do not see their culture and background represented in authority figures and systems at schools, it can result in feelings of disconnection and apathy, fewer challenges and opportunities, and even higher cases of discipline issues such as suspensions (Shirrell et al., 2024). Cultural and racial minority teachers also provide majority (Euro-American) students with a multi-cultural experience, which is invaluable.

While nine percent of the nation-wide teacher demographic identifies as Hispanic/Latine (National Center for Education Statistics, 2023), in California, where Hispanic/Latine students make up 55.9% of the school-aged population (roughly double the national average), the statistics are slightly more favorable towards teacher representation. According to the California Commission on Teacher Credentialling (CCTC), 29.9% of full-time teachers in California are Hispanic/Latine while 40% of teacher credentialing applicants so identify. While this is much higher than the national average, it still does not match the demographic of the student population of the state (56% Hispanic/Latine). There are no available statistics regarding the

number of Hispanics/Latines who teach music nor who are in, or entering, music teacher preparation programs in California; however, considering the much larger Hispanic/Latine population in the state, it may be assumed also to be higher than the national average.

As has been mentioned before, the lack of statistical data on the cultural identity of music teachers, both nationally and especially in California, make it diffucult to make assertions about the current demographic of teachers inside classrooms today, however, given the demographics of teachers overall, and the potential importance of the effect such demographics can have on Hispanic/Latine participation, certain assumptions can conservatively be made. Specifically, that the number of Hispanic/Latine music teachers in public secondary schools is non-commensurate with the student population. This assumption finds weight when one considers the national teacher demographic gap (National Center for Education Statistics, 2019; The New Teaching Project, 2024).

Significant research has investigated the underlying factors contributing to the challenges faced by Hispanic/Latine students in accessing, thriving in and ultimately graduating from higher education in general, and music education (music teacher preparation) programs specifically. Much of the literature identifies systemic barriers as the primary contributor to those difficulties. For example, there is a documented scarcity of resources available to high school Hispanic/Latine students for college preparation (Watson et al., 2023). Since many Hispanic/Latine students who might go on to college do not come from higher socioeconomic households, it is often the case that the students simply cannot afford the price of a higher education, which, for in-state California residents averages $6,615 per year, not including housing and food expenses (College Tuition Compare, 2025). These same students have found difficulties navigating the system of financial aid applications, especially after the roll-out of the

new Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) (Weissman, 2024). When Hispanic/Latine students *do* find the support and resources to apply for and get accepted into university with the intention of becoming a teacher, often they are met with an unfamiliar and unforgiving system that can deter them succeeding (Castellanos & Jones, 2023; Nora, 2023).

Motivation

The barriers listed above are potential causes of the disparity between the overall population of Hispanic/Latine students in schools and the low number of Hispanic/Latine students in music. But they may only be considered *roadblocks* if they are, in fact, stopping someone who would, given the opportunity, chose to participate. When students do not care about school music, or choose not to try it, the external barriers do not even get the chance to block the road. Students must be motivated to *elect* to participate in music (West, 2013).

Motivation is a key element when it comes to music student retention. If a student is not sufficiently motivated, they will often take the path of least resistance and find another activity in which to invest their time and energy (McEwan, 2006). In one regard, motivation may be the most important factor of all, since if the motivation is strong enough, students will find a way to overcome other barriers to participation. If there is enough demand for a class, meaning the enrollment is high, the administration is likely to allow the class to be offered, whereas the classes with low enrollment are far more likely to be eliminated. Strong student motivation may lead to supported music programs.

There are several factors that influence students' motivation to try to participate in school music and, once having tried it, to stay involved. How students see their music ability or aptitude plays a strong role in their choices to take music classes. Having what Demorest et al. (2016) called a *higher musical self-concept* is a predictor that a student will continue in music after their

elementary school music exposure. If a student believes that their musical ability is above average, they will be more likely to continue taking music courses in school. Contrarily, if students feel that they lack an innate propensity for music, they may be more likely to drop out of a class. Additional studies showed that students' attitudes towards their music classes were affected by their teachers' perceptions of this musical ability (Corenblum & Marshall, 1998). Positive teacher evaluations directly predicted students' intentions to continue. Favorable evaluations also led students to perceive greater parental support for their musical involvement, further increasing the likelihood of continuation. These findings highlight the powerful influence of teacher encouragement and positive evaluations. Additionally, Corenblum and Marshall (1998) found that socioeconomic status significantly predicted students' outside musical interests and their perception of parental support, both of which predicted their motivation to continue.

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

In a time of increasing diversity, and especially in large Hispanic/Latine population states such as California, it is important for educators to be aware of, and be capable of using, practices that allow them to best serve *all* of their students, even (and especially), the students who are of non-dominant cultures, such as immigrants, ELLs and minorities. Teaching students from diverse backgrounds is an important part of each teacher's role in a modern school setting. Music teachers have a responsibility to avoid the trap of focusing solely on the traditional, Euro-centric music model and teaching style that predominates school systems, thereby neglecting or discouraging many students (Kindall-Smith et al., 2011; Paris, 2012). The degree to which this neglect occurs and effects Hispanic/Latine students in a high school context is one of the main ideas that I targeted to investigate, along with finding practices and attitudes that might be useful in allaying any cultural neglect.

One educational paradigm that may facilitate multi-cultural education is Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP). CRP is an approach to schooling in which teachers and administrators move beyond traditional classroom models by incorporating students' home languages, customs, experience and prior knowledge to better engage and include students of multiple cultures. While CRP is not one prescriptive framework to follow, it has been recognized that incorporating aspects of culturally responsive awareness and respect into pedagogy can be highly effective (Rector, 2025).

In order for CRP to function, there must be an acceptance of aspects of students' cultural identities and avoid the possibility of thinking of those differences as negatives, as has been done in the past. This acceptance requires that educators build relationships with their students on an individual basis and on a level that surpasses normal, everyday interaction. If connections are to be made between students' cultural knowledge and skills, and the classroom pedagogy and content, then teachers must understand the knowledge and skills possessed by the students to begin with. They must get to know their students in a meaningful and personal way.

> Through learning about their interests, dreams, hopes and aspirations, teachers can build trust, rapport and connections with students that can lead to better school experiences and outcomes. To that end, it is important to note that relationship building can occur across, racial, cultural and linguistic categories. (Howard, 2021, p. 147)

This "relationship building" with students, which is recommended for quality teaching of any student, is especially necessary for a Culturally Responsive approach, given the fact that most teachers do not understand what it means to come from a culture outside of their own. Connections can be made via many differing ways. Howard (2021) recommends talking to the students and asking them questions about their families and backgrounds, developing

assignments that encourage students to share their experiences, attend an extra-curricular activity of the students, connecting with guardians/caregivers and sharing stories about ones own culture and inviting others to share theirs.

Similarly, a culturally responsive pedagogical approach involves getting to know the music preferences of students. It is well documented that students' personal musical preferences tend not to align with school curricular repertoire (Allsup, 2011; McQueen et al., 2018; Springer, 2015; Szabó et al., 2024). Most students are not listening to traditional BOCJ music when left up to their own devices, unless those students have participated in school music programs and have been exposed to it, and even then, it is generally not their favorite (Statista, 2025). Culturally responsive teachers make connections between student musical interests and the school music curriculum, and make an effort to understand the kind of music students prefer, which they accomplish by direct methods such as asking students casually, asking through surveys as a part of lessons or as exit tickets, and simply listening to what they are playing on their own around campus and in the music rooms during lunch and before, during and after school.

Asset-based pedagogy

When discussing under-achieving populations in academic contexts, it is not unusual to isolate negative aspects of the groups and their situations. Even when doing so for the betterment of a population, focusing on what they lack, their weaknesses or the 'unfair hand they have been dealt', can result in suboptimal strategies, such as assigning low expectations, or expecting cultural adaptations on the part of the minority groups. Deficit thinking, well-intentioned as it may be, can be a harmful mindset, one that blames students and their backgrounds for perceived weaknesses (Otto, n.d.). One such example can be seen previously in this chapter, in which *familismo,* or the Hispanic/Latine communities' ties to the family unit, was referenced as a cause

of limiting extra or co-curricular activities for Hispanic/Latine students. Without further comment and exploration, this observation could be construed, accurately, as a critique of the familismo culture and lead a reader to think that it needs to be changed. It is therefore important to note that, throughout this study, I consider cultural aspects of Hispanic/Latine culture as assets rather than roadblocks.

Asset-based pedagogy (ABP) (Gerrard, 2021) is a way to engage with educational improvements while avoiding judging Hispanic/Latine (or any) students as "lacking" skills, experiences, behaviors or knowledge necessary for academic success. Instead, ABP encourages teachers to think about students' strengths which come from their cultural diversity, and how those different aspects can be used to build a strong educational foundation. For example, it is known that Hispanic/Latine students often have their own musical culture about which they are knowledgeable, one that is steeped in influences of South and North America, Africa and Europe. These students can bring their cultural knowledge and even musical skill to music classes to great effect, given a chance. An ABP mindset calls this knowledge and skill examples of *funds of knowledge* (González et al., 2005; Paris, 2012).

School music classes and students who take them are in a unique position to benefit from ABP, given the fact that all human cultures embrace music and produce their own musical characteristics and style, which are available for celebration in a music program that appreciates, acknowledges and honors the cultural music of *all* their students. Music classes at all levels have the benefit of interacting with cultural products that are, at least listenable and better still performable. Current technology, including the ease of access to music streams, videos of performances, and instant communication with musicians and clinicians around the world, provide opportunities for the modern music educator to bring cultural funds of knowledge into

any classroom.

Non-traditional Música Latina classes as a means to ABP

One way in which ABP is being used to address cultural diversity in increasingly diverse American schools is by including Música Latina classes. These are classes that primarily include in their curriculum music of a Latin-American country. Typically, a Música Latina class can be a non-traditional performing ensemble classes, such as Baile Folklorico, Norteña, Banda, and especially Mariachi. It might also include, however, a non-performing ensemble such as Latin music appreciation, or History of Mexican music, or other such subject. What is the effect of the introduction of Música Latina courses such as these into public schools? Insufficient data currently exist to support definitive conclusions. However, there has been a sizeable increase over recent years, in Mariachi courses in schools, especially in southwest parts of the country (Alcántara, 2021; Camacho, 2025), which has had the effect of increasing the participation of Mexican American students in music programs. While there are limited statistics on the number or Hispanic/Latine students participating in Mariachi, or other Música Latina classes, the proliferation of new classes and a growing presence of Mariachi sessions at music education conferences suggest that these initiatives are yielding meaningful results (Rivera et al., 2024).

Proposition 28

California has unique educational properties that may influence music education, especially the participation of Hispanic/Latine students therein. One of those properties is a recent financial windfall for music edcuation. In November of 2022, California passed a ballot proposition (Prop 28) that had as its aim to provide funding for arts education to all K-12 schools in the state (California Department of Education, 2022). This proposition allocates funds “equal to 1 percent of the total state and local revenues received by local educational agencies in the

preceding fiscal year that are included in the calculation of the minimum funding guarantee established by Sections 8 and 8.5 of Article XVI of the California Constitution..." (Chapter 5.1–8820b), which has amounted to roughly $1 billion annually. It further stipulates that Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) with more than 500 students must spend 80% of these allocated funds on certificated or classified personnel and the remaining funds on training, arts supplies and equipment, and arts education partnership programs. In order to spend all the funding made available in accordance with this legislation, it is estimated that California will need to increase its arts teacher workforce by 5,457 teachers, which represents a nearly 50% increase from the 2022/23 baseline (Woodworth, 2024).

Research Questions

While the barriers to Hispanic/Latine music participation are influential in the disparity that has been explored so far, many of them are beyond the control of the music classroom teacher and even the site administrators and district leadership. The socioeconomic status of families, for example, cannot be manipulated by short-term systemic choices made by school districts or teachers. It is also difficult for music teachers to influence a school's ELL policy and corresponding interventions.

My objective for this study was to better understand how school stakeholders (teachers and site administrators) can take steps to encourage more Hispanic/Latine participation in school music classes– whether there are policies, course designs or other framework models that are effective methods of reaching Hispanic/Latine students and resulting in their joining music classes. What can stakeholders *do* that is effective?

In this study, the following research questions were addressed:

1. What structural, musical, or social factors influence Hispanic/Latine students' decisions

to participate (or not to participate) in school music programs?

2. What are positive steps/actions/models that can be implemented by schools to increase the participation of the Hispanic/Latine community?

Definitions

Throughout this study, reference will be made to people who self-identify with a variety of ethnocultural designations, including Latino/Latina, Hispanic, Chicana, Mexican, Dominican or other specific identifiers. In instances where an individual has not provided specific self-identifying terminology, the more inclusive term Hispanic/Latine will be employed with the intent of encompassing as broad a demographic as possible. The designation *Hispanic* was first used in an official capacity in the United States in the 1980 U.S. Census to refer to anyone who "identifies themselves as being of Spanish-speaking background and trace their origin or descent from Mexico, Puerto Rico, Cuba, Central and South America, and other Spanish-speaking countries" (Smith, 2021, para. 2). The term continues to be used in official government documentation. However, the colonial connotations embedded within the term – specifically the linkage of indigenous local populations to Spanish Colonialism – have led to critiques among certain communities over recent decades. Consequently the terms Latino (masculine), Latina (feminine) gained prominence throughout the 1990s and early 2000s as alternative identifiers reflecting evolving cultural and ethnic self-perceptions.

As early as 2004, a gender-neutral term entered into the discussion surrounding Latino/a inclusion, *Latinx*, thus avoiding the gendered last vowel. Most likely deriving from the LGBTQ community, this term is not commonly accepted among most native people of Latin decent as some within the community consider it an adulteration of their language. In an effort to be

respectful of the Spanish language conventions and remain inclusive, many in the academic realm have begun using Latine or Latiné, which is similar to traditional Spanish vowel usage (El Centro, N.D).

While the vast majority of participants in this study self-identify as Mexican, and the two most prevalent musical styles addressed in this research–Mariachi and Norteña–originated in Mexico, it remains essential to include non-Mexican Latine individuals in the scope of the research. The narrative of this dissertation will use *Hispanic*, to be inclusive of all participants of Spanish-speaking origin, and *Latine* to include all indigenous people of Latin-american origin. It is recognized that definitive terminology to describe the study's target population is complex and contested. Nonetheless, the usage adopted within represents a deliberate and respectful compromise aimed at inclusivity and cultural sensitivity.

Methodology

In this study, I used mixed-method research, relying heavily on phenomenological inquiry and empirical investigation. The qualitative methods used, including campus visits, classroom observation, semi-structured interviews, student focus groups, an online survey, coding analysis, and materials analysis, were chosen to explore the thoughts, experiences and feelings, and practices of in-school stakeholders. Specifically, these stakeholders include the Hispanic/Latine students, music teachers and school administrators in these high schools. The aim is to better understand *why* participation among Hispanics/Latines is lower than it may otherwise be, rather than understanding *how low* it is, to synthesize recommendations for better practice. It was essential to pose direct questions to stakeholders and especially the Hispanic/Latine students themselves, to understand motivations, barriers, perceptions, and attitudes that these students hold towards school music.

All data collected for this study was conducted within four public high schools located in Northern California, each of which maintain established music programs demonstrating proactive efforts to enhance inclusivity and cultural responsiveness toward Hispanic/Latine students. The four participating schools represented diverse contexts, varying notably in several key dimensions, including student demographic composition, surrounding community characteristics (e.g., urban, suburban, rural), levels of financial and material resources allocated to their music departments, and the range and nature of music course offerings available to students. This diversity provided a rich comparative framework to explore how different institutional factors influence the implementation of culturally relevant pedagogy and elective participation within music education settings.

The in-school research was comprised of five collection components – 1.Teacher and administrator interviews, 2. student focus groups, 3. classroom observations, 4. an online student survey, and 5. an analysis of materials, artifacts and processes used by the stakeholders in the schools.

Researcher Positionality

As the researcher conducting this study, I acknowledge that my own background, professional experience, and cultural identity have shaped the lens through which this research was conceived, conducted, and interpreted. Qualitative inquiry, and particularly research grounded in constructivist grounded theory, recognizes that the researcher is not a neutral instrument but an active participant in the construction of meaning (Charmaz, 2017). It is therefore necessary to make explicit the perspective I bring to this work.

I have served as a high school instrumental music director in Northern California for fourteen years. Over the course of that career, I have led band programs at multiple public schools, working with student populations of varying demographic compositions. My interest in this topic did not originate in the literature, but in my own classroom. Over time, I became aware of a persistent and troubling pattern: the Hispanic/Latine students enrolled in my band programs represented a far smaller proportion of my classes than they did of the overall student body at the schools where I taught. This was not an abstract statistic to me; it was a daily, visible reality in the faces present, and absent, in my rehearsal hall. That disparity prompted years of informal observation and, eventually, the formal research questions that gave rise to this dissertation.

I do not identify as Hispanic or Latine. I approach this research as a white, English-speaking music educator examining the experiences of a student population to which I do not

belong, and whose cultural and linguistic context differs in meaningful ways from my own. I have not taught a Música Latina ensemble such as Mariachi or Norteña, nor do I have lived experience navigating American public education as a Hispanic/Latine student or family member. This outsider status carries both limitations and responsibilities that warrant direct acknowledgment.

As an outsider to the culture under study, I recognize that I brought certain assumptions into this work that required ongoing examination throughout the research process. Chief among these was the risk of interpreting Hispanic/Latine students' experiences through a framework shaped by my own cultural background and professional training, both of which are rooted in a largely Eurocentric tradition of school music education (Confredo et al., 2023). I was also conscious of the limitations imposed by language: while translation and interpretation support were made available during data collection, my own lack of Spanish fluency meant that I was, at times, reliant on intermediaries to fully access the perspectives of participants and families for whom Spanish was the primary or preferred language. I have endeavored throughout this study to remain attentive to the difference between observing a pattern and presuming to fully understand its meaning from the perspective of those who live it. Where possible, I have prioritized direct quotation of student, teacher, and administrator voices over my own interpretive paraphrasing, in an effort to center participant perspectives rather than supplant them with my own assumptions.

I also recognize that my professional position as a fellow music educator shaped both the access I was granted and the rapport I was able to establish with teacher and administrator participants, several of whom spoke candidly with me about challenges and strategies in ways

that may reflect a sense of shared professional understanding. At the same time, this same professional identity may have predisposed me to interpret findings in ways that affirm common practices within the field of music education, and I have attempted to remain critical of that tendency throughout the analytic process. The use of independent peer review during coding (see Methodology) was, in part, a deliberate check against this risk.

Ultimately, my motivation for this research is not academic curiosity alone, but a professional and ethical commitment to ensuring that the students who walk past my classroom door, and the classroom doors of music educators across California, see a place for themselves within school music programs regardless of their cultural background. I undertake this study not as a neutral observer, but as a practitioner invested in using its findings to inform my own practice and that of my colleagues.

Participation Criteria

Schools

The selection criteria for the participating schools in this study were multifaceted, with intentional limitations imposed to align with practical constraints. This small sample size was deemed appropriate given the primarily qualitative nature of the analysis and the subjective character of the data collected. While a limited number of sites may affect the generalizability of the findings, it does not necessarily compromise their validity within the context of an in-depth, contextualized exploration. Further discussion regarding potential impacts of the sample size on the study's conclusions is provided in the Limitations section.

Second, I employed a primarily purposive sampling approach to select participating high schools. Three of the four schools were chosen based on the my pre-existing familiarity with both the music instructors and their respective programs. These established relationships facilitated efficient communication and cooperation, thereby expediting the preparatory stages of the research. The fourth school was selected based on its strong reputation for fostering high levels of Hispanic/Latine student participation, particularly through its notably successful Mariachi ensembles, as recommended by knowledgeable contacts within the field. All selected institutions were public high schools, each with student enrollment figures ranging between approximately 1,000 and 2,500 at the time of data collection, ensuring a degree of comparability in school size and scope.

Third, all participating schools, at the time of data collection, were actively implementing curricular models and setting institutional goals that directly correspond with the central research questions of this study. Each school had initiated deliberate efforts to develop and offer music courses designed to reflect and affirm the cultural identities of their Hispanic/Latine student populations. This emphasis represents a conscious and strategic acknowledgment by both music educators and school administrators of the limitations inherent in the traditional music curriculum—typically comprised of Band, Orchestra, Choir, and Jazz (BOCJ) ensembles—which often fails to adequately engage or represent the diverse cultural experiences of Hispanic/Latine students. By intentionally expanding their curricular offerings to include culturally relevant ensembles, such as Mariachi and Norteña groups, these schools sought to create more inclusive, affirming educational environments that support cultural representation and student engagement. This commitment to culturally responsive pedagogy also aligns with broader educational equity initiatives aimed at addressing historical underrepresentation and

promoting student identity development within the arts. Such alignment underscores the relevance and timeliness of examining these particular sites, as they embody ongoing efforts to transform music education through inclusive practices directly connected to Hispanic/Latine cultural heritage.

School Music course offerings

1. **School 1**

    School 1 has a beginning band, advanced band, marching band, jazz band, concert choir, beginning choir, and a Música Latina class entitled Norteña Ensemble, currently in its fourth year. The teacher of the Norteña class who is a Caucasian female, has been teaching instrumental music for 10 years, all of it at this site. The principal of this school is a self-identified Latina and was a former band director of 20 years.

2. **School 2**

    This school had a Mariachi club that met one time per week after school at the time of the study, but had plans to create a class the following year. The instrumental music teacher was of Filipino decent who had been teaching for 10 years, at various sites and levels.

3. **School 3**

    This school's music program consisted of a beginning band, and advanced band (also marched), a drumline, color guard, beginning choir, advanced choir, intermediate jazz band, advanced jazz band, and three sections of Mariachi classes- beginning, intermediate and advanced. The Mariachi classes were part of a Career Technical

Education Pathway certification program, a multi-year sequence of classes in various fields that are coordinated to result in students acquiring skills needed to enter a career, in this case, Mariachi entertainment.

School 3 had five music teachers, four of whom were full-time. The Mariachi program had two teachers, one of whom was part time, both of whom were self-identified Hispanic/Latines with long histories of professional Mariachi performance careers in addition to education. The vice-principal of **School 3**, who participated in the interview, was the former Mariachi teacher at the same location, and had created the Mariachi program 24 years prior. They had left the Mariachi class three years prior to this study to become an administrator.

4. **School 4**

The school's music department included a choir teacher who taught half time on site and half at the middle school. This teacher taught two concert choirs and a madrigal choir at School 4. There were two instrumental teachers, plus several "tutors" who were paid via stipend to co-teach throughout the week.

Demographic data

Table 1
Demographic and Enrollment Characteristics of Participating Schools According to School Accountability Report Cards

Characteristic	*School 1*	*School 2*	*School 3*	*School 4*
Location	Agricultural town (pop. 16,000)	Small suburban city (pop. 177,000)	Urban city (pop. 320,000)	Urban area (pop. 33,000)

Enrollment	1,749	1,584	2,267	1,939
% Hispanic or Latino	54.7	31.1	56.8	23.2
% White	34.0	49.5	3.5	59.3
% Asian	1.1	8	20.0	4.6
% Black or African American	<1	1.5	9.4	2.5
% Filipino	<1	1.8	5.3	1.2
% American Indian or Alaska Native	4.1	0.4	<1	0.3
% Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	<1	0.5	<1	0.5
% Two or More Races	3.8	7.2	<1	8.4
% Socioeconomically Disadvantaged	76.7	36	76.5	36.4
% Students with Disabilities	12.9	11.6	13.1	8.8

Note. Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding or omission of groups with less than 0.5%.

Students

I conducted four focus group interviews at each school. Two groups of students were recruited to participate. **Group 1** consisted of self-identified Hispanic/Latine students who were currently involved in some aspect of the music program at their school, meaning that they were enrolled in one of the music classes. These students were recruited by music teachers, who read a script to the music classes, informing the students about the study and requesting participation

for students who qualified - qualifications being that the students identified as Hispanic/Latine, and were in a music class. The interested students were then asked to sign a consent/assent form and the students who were under 18 years of age gave their parent contact information so that parental informed consent could be obtained. Students of 18 years or more were given an informed consent form to sign. All consent forms and signatures were created and facilitated using Qualtrics online survey site accessed through the University of Oregon.

Inclusion criteria for **Focus Group 2** consisted of self-identified Hispanic/Latine students who were currently not involved in any music classes and had not taken any music classes during their high school career. Snowball recruiting methods were used to identify and recruit these students. The Hispanic/Latine students who volunteered to participate were asked to suggest fellow students who met inclusion criteria. These recommended students were then provided informed consent/assent and minors provided parental/guardian emails to obtain adult consent.

Each participating school was requested to provide a translator to facilitate inclusion of any Hispanic/Latine students who did not feel comfortable speaking in English. The translator was needed at only one of the four sites, for the non-musician group.

Procedure

The preparatory phase of the study involved ongoing correspondence with the cooperating teachers primarily through email communication. During this period, collaborative efforts were undertaken to initiate the student recruitment process. In addition, coordination was established to determine mutually convenient dates for on-site campus visits, as well as to schedule interview sessions, including the selection of appropriate times and locations.

Permissions

After obtaining Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval, contact was initiated with the administrators of the target schools to secure formal permission to conduct research within their classrooms and to work directly with their students, including those who were minors. Additionally, communication with school main offices was established to explore options for distributing the online survey permission forms through various channels, such as email distribution lists, daily announcements, or school social media platforms.

Observations

Drawing on Raymond Gold's (1958, 1997) typology of qualitative observation, this study included classroom observations at all four participating high schools, during which I adopted the role of the "complete observer." According to Gold, a complete observer is characterized by observing without engaging or interacting with the subjects being studied. In alignment with this framework, the objective was to maintain a non-intrusive and observational stance throughout my campus visits, although this approach was feasible only to a limited degree. In each classroom, the instructor made the students aware of the purpose of the presence of a researcher. Despite this recognition, deliberate non- participation in classroom activities or student interaction was maintained throughout the observations. No questions were posed to students during class sessions, and in instances where students attempted to engage the researcher, a courteous declination was given. This careful adherence to the complete observer role was intended to minimize any potential influence a foreign presence might have on the natural classroom dynamics, thereby preserving the authenticity of the observed behaviors and interactions.

A systematic effort was undertaken to observe all music courses offered at each participating school, resulting in successful observation of all classes except for the choral music classes at School 3, which coincided with the scheduling of the Mariachi classes. Particular emphasis was placed on observing the Música Latina courses, encompassing three Mariachi classes and one Norteña ensemble class. In accordance with Institutional Review Board (IRB) protocols, no audio or video recordings of students were captured; instead, detailed field notes were compiled while observing the classes unobtrusively from the rear of the classroom.

During these observations, special attention was directed toward the nature of teacher interactions with Hispanic/Latine students, particularly through linguistic practices. This included examining whether any classroom discourse occurred in Spanish, as well as assessing the extent and musical authenticity of Spanish vocabulary used by instructors. Specifically, consideration was given to the pronunciation of culturally specific terms—such as the pronunciation of "Mariachi"—to determine whether teachers employed authentic Spanish phonetics consistent with Mexican usage ("mahd-ee-ah-chee") or anglicized variants ("ma-ree-ah-chee"). These observations aimed to elucidate the role of language in fostering cultural relevance and inclusion within the music classroom.

Another focal point of this investigation was the nature of student-teacher interaction, specifically the extent and quality of engagement between instructors and Hispanic/Latine students. This inquiry sought to determine whether the level of engagement experienced by Hispanic/Latine students differed from that of their non-Hispanic/Latine peers. Further, I examined whether instructors employed distinct strategies to actively engage Hispanic/Latine students. Attention was also given to the roles assumed by these students within the learning

environment, with particular consideration of whether they demonstrated leadership and initiative or whether their participation was predominantly passive, relying on the teacher or peers to initiate and sustain engagement in the learning process.

Classroom atmosphere constituted an important aspect of the observations conducted during the study. Particular attention was devoted to the spatial layout of the rooms in which the instruction occurred. All of the observed classes were held in a dedicated musical space–referred to herein as "music rooms"–specifically designed to accommodate music lessons. These included several band rooms, a choir room and one multifunctional room that served both purposes. The observation protocol included an examination of whether there existed any indications that Hispanic/Latine culture was acknowledged or recognized on a routine basis. The protocol included examination of whether any cultural artifacts were displayed, such as flags, posters, or photographs of Mariachi or Norteña artists, and whether the room's visual environment reflected awareness of the school's Hispanic/Latine student population. Of particular interest was extent to which there was evidence for the nature of the courses, and specifically that there were Música Latina classes included in the curriculum and that there was a significant number of Hispanic/Latine students at the school–the visual culture of the room.

Additionally, I sought to examine the presence and nature of student-recognition mechanisms– commonly referred to as "awards"–and to assess whether Hispanic/Latine students were recipients of such honors. Furthermore, in the observations, I sought to identify any specific forms of recognition or markers associated exclusively with Hispanic/Latine classes.

Material analysis

Throughout the course of this study, an effort was made to observe, notate, and analyze a variety of materials—referred to as artifacts—that the participating music teachers used to

engage with students' families, the broader community, and school administration. These artifacts, identified as impactful by the cooperating teachers, included a diverse range of document types such as teacher-parent correspondence, newsletters, school and program websites, event programs, contractual agreements, workload agreements, examples of translated materials, booster club charters, schedules, constitutions, and other relevant physical or electronic resources. The selection of these artifacts was guided by their potential to provide insight into communication practices, community engagement, and administrative structures relevant to the participation of Hispanic/Latine students in music programs.

The process of artifact collection was conducted collaboratively with the music teachers and involved multiple modes of data acquisition. Initial identification and selection were facilitated through interviews with the teachers, who provided context and explained the relevance of each document. In some cases, reservations were made to access physical materials on site, while electronic documents were gathered through follow-up communications, such as email exchanges or scheduled meetings with both teachers and school administrators. This iterative and cooperative approach ensured a comprehensive and meaningful collection of artifacts, enriching the qualitative data set and supporting a deeper understanding of the mechanisms through which these schools interact with families and communities, particularly within the context of Hispanic/Latine student participation in music education.

Focus groups

At each participating school, two focus group interviews were conducted with approximately ten Hispanic/Latine students per site. One focus group consisted of students currently enrolled in at least one music class, while the other comprised Hispanic/Latine students

not enrolled in any music courses during the current academic term. This sampling strategy was employed to capture the perspectives of both students who had elected to participate in music education and those who had not, thereby enabling a comparative understanding of factors influencing music class enrollment decisions within this demographic.

Participants in **Group 1** (current music students) were selected through a recruitment process including their music teachers reading them an official informed consent script. Then self-selecting, self-identifying Hispanic/Latine students volunteered by signing an informed consent or assent form. For volunteers under the age of 18, an additional step of parent informed consent was also needed. In order to select **Group 2** (the non-music student participants) a snowball recruitment technique was used, whereby musician participants were asked to recommend a self-identifying Hispanic/Latine acquaintance at the school to participate in another focus group. These non-music students were asked to volunteer in the same manner – signing an online consent/assent form and following up with parents of students aged 17 and younger.

These group interviews took place on the schools' campuses, in the presence of a school-provided, Spanish-speaking adult, who was *not* involved in the music program, to ensure that the students did not feel they needed to censor any responses in the presence of their teacher. The presence of a school representative adult was doubly effective. First, it met school policy expectations that non-security cleared adults not be alone in a room with students. Second, it allowed me to ensure that a translator was in the room to facilitate questions and answer to any student for whom Spanish was easier than English. Translation was only necessary at one focus group session, **School 1 non-musician group**, but the presence of a translator provided access for any student who felt more comfortable speaking Spanish to participate fully at any time.

In these sessions, students were asked to articulate the motivations behind their decision to enroll, or refrain from enrolling, in the music program. Additionally, they were asked to identify factors that might serve as impediments to joining the music programs. See sample questions in Appendix B.

Interviews

Semi-structured interviews with music teachers and administrators were conducted at all four participating schools. In the cases where there was more than one music teacher, the teacher who was most closely involved with the Hispanic/Latine participation was invited to be interviewed.

The selection of administrators for interviews was based on recommendations provided by the site music teachers. These teachers identified the administrator they considered to possess the most comprehensive knowledge regarding the school's Hispanic/Latine student population and the institution's initiatives aimed at enhancing outreach to this demographic. See **Table 2** for a description of interview participants.

Table 2
School Interview Participants and Background Descriptions

School	Role	Background Description
1	Instrumental Music Teacher	Nine years of experience; self-identifies as a White female.
	Principal	Self-described Chicana (American of Mexican descent); taught band for 20 years in various locations, including creating a Mariachi-influenced music program in Las Vegas.
2	Instrumental Music Teacher	Four years of experience; self-identifies as Latino; long-time Mariachi player; involved in community Mariachi youth programs.

	Vice-Principal	Three years experience as an administrator; previously a long-time science teacher; self-identifies as a White female.
3	Instrumental Music Teacher	Four years of experience; self-identifies as Latino; professional Mariachi player since his teenage years.
	Vice-Principal	Former music teacher at the same school; created and built the school's Mariachi program.
4	Instrumental Music Teacher	Ten years of experience at elementary and high school levels; self-identifies as Filipino.

Note. Participants are identified by school number and role. All participants are reported as self-identified.

All interviews were recorded either in person or virtually using ***ZOOM*** meeting software, with audio files securely saved on a personal computer. Following each interview session, the recordings were transcribed verbatim by a professional media consultant using the computer program ***MacWhisper***, ensuring a high level of accuracy in capturing participants' responses. The resulting transcripts were then imported into ***Dedoose***, a qualitative data analysis software, which facilitated systematic organization and management of the data throughout the analytic process.

Data Analysis

Data analysis followed the constructivist grounded theory approach articulated by Charmaz (2017), in which codes and categories are understood to emerge through my interaction with the data rather than existing as objective entities waiting to be discovered. This approach was selected because it allowed the experiences and language of Hispanic/Latine students, music teachers, and administrators to directly shape the analytic categories used in this study, rather than imposing a predetermined theoretical framework onto participant accounts.

Coding proceeded in two stages. The first stage consisted of open, inductive, line-by-line coding of all transcripts, observation notes, and material artifacts. Each line of transcript data was read closely and assigned a descriptive code reflecting the action, perception, or experience articulated by the participant at that point in the text. This line-by-line approach was chosen to remain as close as possible to participants' own language and to reduce the likelihood of my prior assumptions shaping the coding process prematurely (Charmaz, 2017). Throughout this stage, brief analytic memos were written intermittently to record emerging observations, tentative connections between codes, and questions to revisit in later stages of analysis. While memo-writing was not conducted systematically for every coding session, these informal notes served as a useful record of the researcher's evolving thinking and were referenced during the later stages of theme development.

This initial round of open coding generated approximately 20 to 25 distinct codes across the data set. These codes were then reviewed and grouped according to conceptual similarity, with related codes clustered into broader categories that reflected shared underlying patterns across participants and data sources. For example, codes capturing distinct but related participant statements about unfamiliarity with course offerings, lack of visible recruitment materials, and absence of personal invitation were grouped into a broader category addressing students' lack of awareness of music program opportunities. This clustering process constituted the second stage of coding, axial coding, in which the relationships, hierarchies, and overlaps among initial codes were examined in order to identify which represented the most conceptually significant and well-supported patterns in the data (Charmaz, 2017).

Throughout both stages of coding, constant comparison was employed: newly coded data were continually compared against previously coded excerpts, both within and across participant groups (students, teachers, and administrators) and across school sites, in order to test whether categories held consistently or required refinement. Categories that were supported by data from multiple participant groups and multiple school sites were treated as more robust and were prioritized in the development of final themes. This cross-comparison process also served a triangulation function, allowing patterns identified in interview and focus group data to be corroborated, or in some cases complicated, by classroom observation notes and material artifact analysis.

To enhance the trustworthiness and credibility of the coding process, an independent second coder, a fellow doctoral candidate in music education, was engaged to review a subset of the transcript data. This second coder independently applied codes to a sample of transcripts without prior exposure to my primary coding scheme. The two sets of codes were then compared, and areas of disagreement were discussed collaboratively until a shared understanding of code definitions and applications was reached. This process did not yield a formal inter-rater reliability statistic, as is more common in quantitative content analysis, but rather served the qualitative aim of investigator triangulation: confirming that my interpretations were reasonable, grounded in the data, and not idiosyncratic to a single perspective (Patton, 2014). Discrepancies identified during this review prompted minor refinements to several code definitions and contributed to greater conceptual clarity in the final set of themes.

The final themes presented in Chapter 4 represent the cate gories that survived this iterative process of coding, clustering, constant comparison, and peer review, and that were most strongly and consistently supported across multiple participants, data sources, and school sites.

The interview protocol was semi-structured, grounded by a common set of guiding questions (see Appendix B) designed to elicit teachers' perspectives on factors influencing Hispanic/Latine student engagement in music classes. However, recognizing the importance of contextual nuance, the interviews allowed for flexibility and adaptation of questions to suit individual teachers and their unique program environments. For example, at **Schools 2** and **3**, where the music teacher identifies as Hispanic/Latine, the interview included tailored questions exploring their personal experiences and perspectives as a member of the community. This adaptive approach enabled a richer, more nuanced understanding of the factors at play across diverse educational settings.

With administrators, the questioning focused more on how the role of administration affects the support given to music program outreach. For example: Do they think that it is important to have a large representation of Latines in the music program? If so, *how* important is that? What steps do they take, or wish they could take, to achieve this representation? The purpose of this study was to better equip classroom teachers to include Hispanic/Latine students in the music programs, and so the line of questioning of the administrators was chosen from that standpoint. For example, one question included what administrators wish music teachers knew or would ask when it comes to inclusion.

All interviews and focus groups were recorded using ***ZOOM*** software on a personal laptop computer, including the in-person interviews, for which the camera function was disabled.

While ***ZOOM*** did create a transcript of the dialogue, a professional media enhancer was used to transcribe the audio files as the results of the transcripts were determined to be of higher quality.

Survey

An online survey was created for the Hispanic/Latine student population at all participating schools, using the online survey engine ***Qualtrics***. The survey was designed to quantify the degree to which Hispanic/Latine students at these schools consider music class participation as an attractive option and why. Prior to distribution of the survey, it was piloted to a group of college students, to determine understanding and relatability of the instrument. Following application of feedback from the pilot survey, several questions were reformatted and then finalized in a ***Qualtrics*** survey set. A Spanish translation was created and included side-by-side with the English phrases. See Appendix C for a list of survey questions.

The survey was distributed using a multi-modal approach to maximize reach and accessibility among the target Hispanic/Latine student population. Initially, music instructors were asked to share Quick Response (QR) codes linking to the survey directly with their Hispanic/Latine students during class and to encourage these students to disseminate the codes further within their peer networks, particularly among other Hispanic/Latine students. In addition to this direct outreach, printed flyers featuring the same QR codes were prominently displayed around campus in high-traffic areas to attract attention and facilitate easy access.

To further enhance visibility and participation, efforts were made to coordinate with each school to promote the survey through multiple institutional communication channels, including daily announcements, official social media accounts, and home mailings or newsletters distributed to families. Recognizing the importance of linguistic inclusivity, all recruitment

materials—including flyers and electronic communications—were made available in both English and Spanish to accommodate the primary languages of the student community and their families.

A key objective was to achieve a minimum threshold of 75 survey responses per school to ensure sufficient statistical power for meaningful analysis. While a higher response rate was preferable to increase the reliability and generalizability of the findings, at least 300 total responses was the minimal threshold. To encourage participation, an incentive was introduced whereby students who completed the survey at each school were entered into a drawing to win a new ukulele. One prize was awarded per school through a random selection process from among all participants who submitted a completed survey. This incentive was designed to motivate students to engage fully with the survey while maintaining ethical considerations regarding voluntary participation.

Survey Recruitment

Students accessed the survey using their smartphones by scanning QR codes strategically displayed on posters throughout the campus. These posters were prominently placed in high-traffic areas to maximize visibility and participation. Additionally, music teachers had the option to share the QR codes directly with students during classes or rehearsals, provided they were comfortable doing so, further facilitating access and encouraging a higher response rate. This multi-faceted approach helped ensure broad student exposure to the survey.

Survey Vehicle

After an informed consent/assent signature page, the students were asked to self-identify their cultural heritage and give their school-provided student identification number. If they did not identify as Hispanic/Latine at all, they were directed to a “thank you” page and their survey ended. Likewise, if a student number matched one given to us by a parent choosing to “opt-out”, they were also directed to an end page. Students who identified as at least partly Hispanic/Latine were categorized based on their participation in the school music program. Those who indicated current involvement in music were directed to a distinct set of survey questions tailored to their experiences, while students not currently involved in the program received an alternative set of questions relevant to their status. A complete list of the survey questions is provided in Appendix C.

Upon completion of the survey, all respondents were given the option to voluntarily provide their email address if they wished to enter a raffle for a new ukulele, which served as an incentive for survey completion. This approach both respected participant choice and aimed to encourage engagement without compromising anonymity.

Overall, the multi-faceted distribution and recruitment strategy combined direct classroom engagement, campus-wide visibility, and institutional support to foster broad participation, ensuring that diverse voices within the Hispanic/Latine student population could be captured and represented in the study.

Institutional Review Board

Full approval for this study was obtained from the full Institutional Review Board of the University of Oregon on December 12, 2025. Since this research involved human subjects, Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative certification was also obtained and remained active

throughout all research activities. See Appendix H for IRB approval documentation and CITI certification.

Results

I aimed to examine the underlying factors contributing to the lower participation rates of Hispanic/Latine secondary students in school music classes compared to their White and Asian counterparts. This inquiry was conducted through systematic empirical observations within music classroom settings, complemented by qualitative data gathered from key stakeholders, including students, educators, and school administrators. Initially, the observational data provided insights into classroom dynamics and student engagement patterns. Subsequently, thematic analysis of stakeholder interviews elucidated perceived barriers and facilitators influencing Hispanic/Latine student participation.

Classroom Observations

Contextualization of findings

The classroom observations informing this study were conducted between January and April 2026 across four public high schools located in Northern California. **Table 3** provides a list of courses observed by school.

Table 3
Classes observed, by subject and school

School	*Classes Observed*
School 1	Música Norteña ensemble, jazz band ensemble, intermediate choir, beginning band ensemble, beginning guitar class, advanced band ensemble
School 2	Advanced placement music theory, intermediate band, Mariachi ensemble, intermediate choir, jazz band
School 3	Mariachi ensembles (beginning, intermediate, advanced), intermediate band ensemble, intermediate jazz ensemble

School 4	Concert band, advanced band, percussion ensemble, advanced choir, madrigal choir, two guitar classes, Mariachi club, music in ethnic studies, jazz band

These observations provided a comprehensive view of the varied music instruction contexts within the school, facilitating an understanding of student participation across different musical contexts and skill levels. The selection of these classes was guided by a purposeful sampling strategy intended to encompass a wide array of musical genres, skill levels, and student demographics, with particular emphasis on the inclusion of Música Latina e.g. Mariachi, Norteña, Banda, Sierreño… classes to explore participation nuances within these culturally specific settings. The observation protocol involved multiple visits to each class when possible, enabling the collection of detailed qualitative data pertaining to student engagement, ensemble composition, and instructional dynamics. These diverse instructional settings provided a broad perspective on the range of musical experiences available to students within each school.

Classroom demographic breakdown

An immediate and notable observation during the course of this study was the marked demographic disparity between the traditional Band, Orchestra, Choir, and Jazz (BOCJ) classes and the Música Latina ensemble classes. In the Música Latina ensembles, there was a pronounced predominance of Hispanic/Latine students, with very little non-Hispanic/Latine enrollment.

Table 4

Demographic analysis of courses by school and class type

Percentage of class that identifies as Hispanic/Latine

School	***Música Latina classes***	***BOCJ classes***
School 1	100	20
School 2	97	10
School 3	97	60
School 4	95	15

School 3 was unique in that the overall school demographics were notably different than the other schools at 57% Hispanic/Latine, 20% Asian, 9% African American, 5.5% Filipino and 3% White. Perhaps as a result of this, the BOCJ classes were much more diverse than the other schools.

Classroom Climate

The experiential context of music students was initially characterized by their presence inside of the classroom. Various aspects of a music room can influence student learning outcomes, emotional well-being, sense of safety, concept of valuation/belonging and, importantly, influence enjoyment of classes. The major aspects of a classroom climate include: Relationships and interactions, safety and environment, instructional approach, communication style and tone, physical space, and inclusion and equity (Ortega & Ramada, 2024; Pianta et al., 2012). This perspective provided the analytical framework for the observation of the music classrooms of all participating schools.

Relationships and interactions

One of the key factors under observation in the classrooms was how teachers interacted with music students. Were there differences in how teachers interacted with Hispanic/Latine students compared to the non-Hispanic/Latine students? Was the relationship between a

Hispanic/Latine teacher closer to the Hispanic/Latine students than the White students and vice versa for a White teacher?

The analysis revealed no evidence of atypical or unanticipated interactions between students and teachers from different ethnic or cultural backgrounds. Specifically, there were no observed instances of language-based misunderstandings (Call-Cummings & Martinez, 2017), behavioral misinterpretations (Marrero, 2016), or disrespect exhibited by either party. Interpersonal exchanges appeared consistently amicable and fluid across all classrooms, involving students of various racial backgrounds and White or Hispanic/Latine teachers. Furthermore, neither students nor teachers referenced cultural differences during the observed lessons.

The cultural student-teacher differences were present in both Música Latina courses and BOCJ classes. The Música Norteña course instructor at **School 1**, who identifies as white, had interactions with every member of her classroom, all of whom, it was later confirmed, identify as Hispanic/Latine, and demonstrated a sense of comfort and ease with all of them. The Hispanic/Latine band teacher at **School 2** was likewise comfortable with the mostly White members of the Concert and Jazz bands that they taught. If there were tensions or discomfort between any of the classroom participants at any of the schools, they were not visible to me. Observations across all classes indicated an overall atmosphere consistent with typical high school classroom environments. Instructional practices predominantly reflected a lecturer-student pedagogical model, which was applied to a moderate extent. Importantly, this approach did not appear excessive or impede instructional effectiveness within any observed session.

One notable classroom interaction was observed at **School 1** during a Música Norteña class. During what might be called the “lecture” portion of the class, all students sat together and

the teacher addressed them all for instruction. This lasted for approximately 20 minutes, at which point the teacher gave instructions for the students to work together on their own *canciones* (songs) in small ensemble break-out ensembles, made up of Norteña instrumentation. These small groups are called *grupos* in Música Latina contexts. The grupos were given the freedom to choose and rehearse Norteña repertoire on their own in groups of three to five. The instructor wandered between grupos to ensure students were on task and offering guidance when requested or when she had input. When on their own, the students listened to models of the music they were preparing and worked together to improve their performance skills. During subsequent conversation, the instructor indicated that this pedagogical choice allowed the students to use their prior knowledge of Norteña music to rehearse and improve, far more effectively than she, as someone who was less familiar with the cultural music than the students, could do in a lecture format.

Safety and Environment

It has been shown that a psychologically safe environment is crucial to learning (Charteris et al., 2024; Edmonton et al., 2016). A classroom should be a place where students feel free to take risks and not have to worry about bullying or harassment. However, this aspect of the classroom environment is admittedly difficult to evaluate through one-time observation. Although no overt instances of bullying, intimidation or other negative interactions were recorded during these site visits, it remains possible that such behaviors were not exhibited on the day of observations, were temporarily suppressed in the presence of an outside observer, or simply went undetected. Similarly, if a teacher has overbearing tendencies, is easy to anger or to judge students, or intentionally intimidates the students, perhaps they were reluctant to display such behavior while an observer was in the room. The Hawthorne effect, a variant of the

observer effect, occurs when an individual modifies their behavior in response to knowing they are being observed and may have been in effect during these observations (NNGroup, 2025). All that can be certain is whether there are or are not signs of an unsafe psychological environment in the class during the observation. No such signs appeared in any setting observed during the course of the study.

In all cases, the students were proactive about setting up according to their pre-established routines. There were clear expectations written on the board or spoken by the teacher as students entered; however, none of the Hispanic/Latine students showed any signs of the discomfort, insecurity, or confusion about the environment, subject matter, or teacher as might be anticipated in contexts marked by cultural tension or discrimination (Anderberg et al., 2024). Evidence of differential behavior between students of varying demographic backgrounds was specifically sought, but there was no discernable difference between how any Hispanic/Latine students entered, maneuvered in, or seemed to feel about the music room compared to their peers. Furthermore, there were no indications that Hispanic/Latine students perceived themselves as being treated or valued differently from other students in the instructional setting.

Instructional Approach

Just as there were no indications of bullying, intimidation or stifling of the identity or ideas of Hispanic/Latine students, there also seemed to be no difference in the way teachers instructed their Hispanic/Latine students as opposed to non-Hispanic/Latine students, with one exception, mentioned below. Whether in BOCJ, guitar, or Música Latina classes, the teachers all seemed to use the same pedagogical strategies – lecture, guided questioning, demonstration, repetitive rehearsal, games, group work (often-times sections of ensembles), and personal interaction, to deliver instruction. In the BOCJ courses, where White students outnumbered

Hispanic/Latine students (**School 3** excepted), the instructional approaches observed were consistent with those reported in comparable educational settings. While instructional practices naturally varied among teachers and fluctuated depending on factors such as the ensemble, time of year, and institutional objectives, no discernible differences in instruction were identified based on student ethnicity, aside from variations in course content.

As previously noted, the vast majority of classroom instruction observed throughout this study was conducted in English, including within classrooms comprised entirely or predominantly of Hispanic/Latine students, despite the distinctly Hispanic/Latine cultural origins of the Mariachi and Norteña classes being taught. Furthermore, there was no acknowledgment of or reference made to students' ethnicities during instructional time, either spoken aloud by teachers during instruction, or included in the projected lessons. At **School 1**, the instructor played several videos of Norteña *grupos* as examples of the lesson content, but no reference to the ethnicity or heritage of the musicians was made. In the **School 2** Mariachi classes, the instructor included Mexico-specific content in projected slides and in sheet music, but again, this was treated as a normal and expected aspect of the class. Lastly, in a beginning Mariachi class at **School 3**, the instructor spoke to some of the students in informal Spanish, even to one student who did not *speak* the language.

Subsequent instructor communication revealed that culturally-focused lessons are incorporated into the curriculum at various times throughout the Música Latina courses, despite their absence during the observational periods of this study. Although direct evidence of such culturally responsive pedagogy was not observed firsthand, educators reported the deliberate inclusion of student perspectives and cultural backgrounds within course content. An illustrative example of this practice occurred at **School 3**, where students enrolled in intermediate and

advanced Mariachi classes rehearsed repertoire that had been integrated based on student requests, or were more modern in style than much of the traditional Mariachi repertoire.

Communication style and tone

Despite the striking differences in ethnic composition between Música Latina classes and BOCJ classes included in this study, the interactions between teachers and students remained, to this outside observer, much the same. Across all observed classrooms, instruction and communication was conducted exclusively in English, with the singular exception of a beginning Mariachi class at **School 3.** This course, taught by a part-time instructor of Hispanic/Latine ethnicity, featured intermittent use of Spanish phrases used occasionally to emphasize humor or facilitate an atmosphere of ease and comfort. For example, this instructor said "No te preocupes" (Don't worry) to a student who asked for help on a certain matter. At another point in the course, he asked a violin student a question in Spanish and the student responded, "I don't speak Spanish," after which they both laughed and continued the conversation in English. All other teachers communicated entirely in English, even in almost entirely Hispanic/Latine classes and even when teachers were fluent in Spanish.

To the extent observable, student-to-student interaction was conducted exclusively in English. Their exchanges encompassed both content-specific inquiries and informal, personal conversations unrelated to academic subject matter. While it remains possible that some discourse in Spanish occurred beyond the range of observation or audibility, the preponderance of interactions witnessed during the study suggests that English functioned as the primary language of peer communication within these specific classroom settings. For example, one student asked another for a pick to use with a vihuela while another asked to borrow a tuner for their guitarrón. One student asked another where their mutual friend was that day, to which the

response was, “He is working on Fridays now.” While students did use the Spanish words for Mariachi and Norteña instruments and musical elements, such as Guitarra (Guitar), Guitarrón (Mexican bass instrument), Manicos, Golpes and Rasgueados (three different strumming techniques), these Spanish words were used seamlessly in otherwise English sentence contexts. For instance, a **School 3** Mariachi instructor used the following phrase, “Vihuelas, you should be using a *Huapango* pattern here. Remember, it sounds like this...”.

Physical Space

There was a notable difference between the classrooms of each school in terms of the physical space reflecting inclusion and representation. In the schools that offered a Mariachi program, some effort was made at including Hispanic/Latine musical culture in decorations. **School 2**, which had a relatively new Mariachi program–3 years–had only a few indicators of that class purposely placed in the room, which also served as the rehearsal spot of the concert band and jazz ensembles. Mounted on the back wall, up near the high windows was a small collage of famous Hispanic/Latine musicians and a traditional Mariachi outfit, or *Charro.* This was the only evidence of the presence of a Música Latina class in the band room, in which the Mariachi ensemble rehearsed. There was no such evidence in the choir room.

School 3, which maintained a much more established (24 years) and flourishing Mariachi program, included an entire classroom that was solely used for Mariachi courses. This Mariachi room had culturally specific decoration, such as several posters featuring Mariachi singers and instrumentalists. Some decorations featured Mariachi *Sombrero Charros*–Mexican style, wide-brimmed embroidered hats–displayed on much of the available wall space. The room was equipped with Mariachi-specific instrument racks, holding vihuelas, guitarrónes and guitaras. Additionally, the room held lockers along the walls for students to keep their smaller

instruments–trumpets and violins. The visual environment of the room unequivocally signals the function and cultural significance of the subject matter. Although annual awards were not publicly exhibited within this space, as they were in the adjacent band room, subsequent communications with the program instructor confirmed that the school does confer awards to Mariachi ensemble members, analogous to the recognition traditionally associated with BOCJ programs.

School 1, which did not offer a Mariachi program but included a Música Norteña class, and **School 4**, which had only just introduced a Mariachi club the year of the study participation, both exhibited no visible decorations or markers indicative of Música Latina culture within their music classrooms. Their environments predominantly reflected characteristics typical of an American BOCJ classroom, featuring photographs of previous bands at festivals and on trips. Additionally, the room contained posters and signs commonly found in music classrooms, including several that expressed the teacher's interest in the British rock group The Beatles. Notably, there was an absence of any elements representing Hispanic/Latine culture in the classroom setting.

Inclusion and equity

As noted above, the physical configurations of the classrooms generally conformed to standard designs commonly observed in music education settings in any school with the exceptions of the Mariachi room of **School 3,** which provided physical representation of inclusion of Hispanic/Latine culture. In every classroom observed, equitable access to participation resources appeared available among students. Specifically, all students had an instrument to play with the exception of one **School 3** Mariachi violinist who had forgotten her instrument at home. Each school provided instruments to students who did not own their own,

though many students apparently owned smaller, more affordable instruments, such as trumpets, violins and guitars, as was demonstrated by the personalization of the cases and ability to take instruments home. The large or more unusual instruments were all school-provided, observable by school labelling on cases. In Música Latina courses, these included guitarrónes, vihuelas and guitaras, while in BOCJ classes, school provided instruments included tubas, large saxophones, double basses, and percussion instruments.

During the classroom observations, examples were found of class designs that precluded the participation of non-musicians. For example, **School 1**'s Música Norteña class was only accessible to students who auditioned, meaning that all the students in the room had some prior experience with an instrument applicable to Norteña music, which are accordion, bajo quinto (a guitar-like, double-stringed instrument), bass (electric or acoustic), and drum set. Not all students on campus interested in joining the class are able to do so, as there was no beginning or introductory version of the class. All four schools included examples of BOCJ classes that also featured experience-exclusive barriers. Contrarily, **Schools 2, 3 and 4** all offered Mariachi classes in which beginners could participate.

Student Focus Groups

At each participating school, two focus groups were held, during which I served as both recorder and moderator, asking open-ended questions of the group members. These groups were designed to have 10 students in each discussion; however, this number was not always met. At **School 1**, for example, the non-musician group had only six students due to an unanticipated student-led walkout protest happening that day. The rest of the focus group numbers were as follows in **Table 5:**

Table 5
Number of participants per group

School	*Musicians Focus Group*	*Non-musician Focus Group*
1	10	6
2	10	10
3	10	10
4	10	10

The focus group format provides an interesting dynamic that has benefits and drawbacks when used in a high school setting. The presence of other students provides safety and comfort for some students who might not feel comfortable speaking one-on-one. Other students seemed to feel intimidated speaking in front of peers. Not all students answered all questions, but all questions had at least one response, and most had multiple responses.

Findings within the focus group sessions were identified via multiple coding sessions in which major themes were presented identified and are presented here with context and explanations.

Theme: Family examples

Several of the Hispanic/Latine students cited family members as inspirations to become involved in music. This familial cue was present in both musician and non-musician groups, supporting the concept of strong family influence among the Hispanic/Latine community, or *familismo.*

> **School 2 Musician:** "For me, I started playing because my older sister was in band, and I wanted to try out a different instrument. And I just kinda fell in love with playing it [type of instrument was not clarified], so then I continued to do it. And now, the community is really great. You get to go on these fun trips and stuff."

School 1 musician: “As a kid, I’ve always looked at my dad. He used to play guitar a lot, and it really inspired me to play the guitar. And just by watching him just sparked this passion of playing. And whenever I played the guitar it’s like my therapy...”

Another School 1 musician: “My dad, when he was in high school, he was in a mariachi band with all of his siblings. And then later on his siblings went off and went to college and all that. And then me, him and my uncles who live here, we made a mariachi band and then COVID hit and everything shut down. And then afterwards, in seventh grade, I was like, whoa, there’s a band program here, let me do this.”

School 2 musician: “My dad as well would always tell me, ‘oh, we should do the Mariachi group when you’re older since you know how to play an instrument from there. And then you can learn how to do this and that.’”

School 3 Mariachi student: “My brother was in Mariachi before. He would bring me, and talk about what he would do during class, and it had a heavy influence on me and my family about actually joining Mariachi, and so that’s why I chose."

School 2 orchestra student: “I started playing the viola when I was in elementary school in fourth grade. And I really wanted to do it in elementary school because a lot of people in my family play instruments. And so I feel like it just made me feel so complete to just carry on that legacy. You know?”

The strong influence of family on student decisions can be seen, both in terms of continuing and discontinuing music participation. One **School 4** student indicated that their family did not like the idea of taking music, “I think it might be due to our parents not pushing us to do music much. My mom never actually pushed me toward band at all. She never made me want to really do music.”

Theme: Scheduling conflicts

Many perceived barriers to school music emerged in focus group discussions. Both musician and non-musicians alike reported instances where something prevented them from taking a music class; however, these instances tended to be temporary inhibitors.

Some non-musicians claimed that they had tried to take a music class, only to be told no by a counselor, without necessarily understanding why.

> **Moderator:** "In school, thinking about guitar class in middle school or high school, you said you wanted to be in it, but you didn't take the class. Was there anything that stopped you that made it so that you couldn't?" **School 1 non-music Student:** "They didn't give me the class." **Another student agrees:** "Not me either." **Moderator:** "Why?" **Student:** "Oh, because there was not enough spots on the class."

Others confirmed that their EL status reduced the number of electives they could take.

> **Moderator via School 1 non-musician Translator:** "Translator: Some of you here had to take one elective and not two because you had to take an English class. And I think that's for all of you. Yeah, this year." Many students nod. **Translator: "**Yeah, but they don't give you two electives, right? They give you one because you have to take the other English class. Right?" **Student:** "Yes, there are some that I liked for them because they had to take that English class." **Translator: "**Yeah, there's only one elective for them. And because they have to get that English class. I think they have to be reclassified. And if they are not reclassified, they have to continue learning. They already have that as an elective."

[1]

[1] Horizontal lines denotes excerpts from a different school

School 1 Musician: "Especially a lot of freshmen take Algebra one. And at our school, Algebra one is two periods... So that might have conflicted."

School 2 non-musician: "So I wanted to take concert band during my junior year, but the only way it could fit in my schedule was if I took a zero period, which I couldn't do it because I had family responsibilities and then I was taking other AP courses. So that got in the way and that's why I didn't take any music classes. So I considered maybe instead of having a zero period, I could just take it as one of my main six. But I would have to complete my other requirements to graduate first, which meant I had to pause going into a music class."

School 3 non-musician: "At least for me, it was schedule change because I had to take another class, and I wasn't able to take music."

Theme: Requires too much commitment

A recurring barrier mentioned by non-music students as a reason they chose not to join a music class and also by music students as a reason they struggle to remain in the music class, is the large time commitment, or the perception there-of that music classes require.

Non-musician School 2: "I think I would have done it if well, my little sister does it, and it's too much. It's already too much for her. I wouldn't wanna do it."

Another Non-musician School 2: "I think it's just hard to balance out the workload that the classes are giving you and practicing your instrument."

Another student: “Initially, I agree with that. I feel like you’re having to go home, and then you start to do homework, but it’s already late because we have to stay for practice or you have to be rehearsing. So I think the work has to do with that.”

Non-Musician School 3 Student: “Yeah. Especially if you’re doing sports, you have homework, you have practice after and then. I heard they do that practice after school, before school. So I feel like it’d be way too much to do anything. But I feel like most of the kids doing the music stuff, they don’t really have other things going on. I feel like most of them just, have more to do and then that’s it. Then they have music. It’s a priority for them, that stuff.”

A school 4 non-musician on why Latinos do not participate in school music: “I feel like it could be for different reasons. I know a lot of Latinos are more busy — they work after school, or work with their parents, maybe even in the fields sometimes. It’s hard to put your time into something when you don’t even know if you have time for it.”

Another School 4 student, this time a musician relaying what he has heard: “A lot of people I know just don't have the time to learn an instrument, or they just have a busy schedule. They can’t really fit band into it because there’s a lot of concerts, practices, everything. It takes a lot of commitment and focus, and sometimes they just have their focus somewhere else.”

Theme: Fear of Falling Behind

There was evidence across sites showing that students may hesitate to join a music class in high school due to a perceived learning curve.

School 2 non-musician: "I think it's also just the struggle having to go from never playing the instrument to learning how to play. I mean, when everyone else already knows what they're doing."

School 3 non-musician: "I feel like I wouldn't be learning at the pace everyone else is learning. I would learn something, and I would just feel stupid." **Moderator**: "Okay. You'd be afraid to be behind?" **Speaker 2:** "Yeah."

School 4 non-musician on why his friends do not take music classes: "Some of my friends base it on the fact that they didn't do band in middle school. They question me: why would I do it now if I didn't do it then? It never made sense to them — they'd be behind, everyone else would know how, and they'd be the only one not knowing." Another **School 4 non-musician**: "I wanted to play the piano but I had no experience and I was scared I was gonna embarrass myself or something."

Theme: Music is not as important as other classes

In response to the inquiry of why these non-students did not take a music class, one response of note was that they thought of music as less valuable than other classes.

School 2 non-musician: "My family doesn't think it's cool, they think I should focus more on my academic classes, like English, math, science, all that important stuff that that they think is more valuable than arts stuff because they want you to do very well academically and usually my parents would think arts, it's just an extra thing. You don't need it."

Another non-musician explained that the core classes were more important than taking music, despite the fact that this student played music outside of school:

> **Moderator: "**Can you expand on why you like playing music, but you don't wanna do it at school?" **Non-Music Student School 4:** "Because I feel like it's just I'd rather get all of my mandatory stuff done this year, and so taking an elective wasn't really a priority for me at the time." **Moderator:** "What grade are you in?" **Student:** "Freshman."

Theme: Desire to learn music

Throughout all focus groups, numerous participants consistently expressed a strong interest in learning music, both within the formal school environment and through external opportunities. This enthusiasm for musical engagement was evident even among those who were not currently enrolled in music programs, although it was not uniformly shared by all non-musician participants. To illustrate this trend without redundancy, only select representative examples are presented here, which exemplify the variety and depth of participant interest in music education.

> **Moderator**: "Have you ever had a desire to learn music in school or out?" **All School 2 Non-Musicians**: Nodding and other signs of assent.

> **Moderator:** "What about, regardless of music classes, do you have any desire to learn how to play music? Not necessarily at school, but just in life?" **School 1 Non-Music student**: "Yes, but it happens with other things." **Translator:** They actually thought about doing it themselves... but they never got to it."

School 4 Non-musician: "I took classes outside of school in guitar for music theory. So I would rather do stuff with instruments than, yeah."

Another Non-Musician: I have not considered taking any other music class because I do individual lessons, so doing it at school was, like, I just wasted my time apparently."

Moderator: "What do you play?" **Student**: "I started playing the bass guitar, and then I did piano for a little while. And then I just oh, and I play the cello occasionally.

Theme: Interest in Mariachi

A considerable number of Hispanic/Latine students underscored the significance of Mariachi as a particularly engaging and culturally resonant musical opportunity. Notably, even students not currently enrolled in their school music programs expressed opinions that Mariachi classes were interesting. This heightened interest was frequently attributed to the cultural relevance and unique stylistic elements of Mariachi music, which fostered a stronger personal connection. Furthermore, several student musicians revealed that their continued participation in school music programs was largely contingent upon their enrollment in Mariachi classes, indicating that without this culturally specific option, they might have otherwise disengaged from music education altogether.

Moderator: "So if you weren't in this Mariachi group, would you be taking any music?

School 4 Mariachi club student: [shakes head no]. **Moderator**: "Why is that?"

Student: "I don't know"

School 2 Musician: "Then I also I'd love to see more colleges, more universities start making in Mariachi groups because I feel like Mariachi is such an important, musical dominant in, Latin culture, Mexican culture. So I really hope that I can see more of that

because to me it is a lot and I what is saying about for a lot of the people, it means just so much."

Moderator to non-music group at school 3: "When it comes to trying to be more inclusive and trying to get more Latino students involved in music. What is the first thing that comes to your head?" **Mariachi student:** "Well I'm playing in Mariachi music, more so at the schools." **Moderator: "**You think mariachi is a really strong way to do it?" **Student:** "Yeah."

Theme: Mariachi is Grandpa music

In addition to the apparent enthusiasm for Mariachi classes in schools, there was also an occasional acknowledgement of stigma that emerged, labelling that music genre as mostly for older generations. This belief was most prevalent among the non-musician focus group participants.

Moderator: "Do your friends listen to it [Mariachi]?" **School 2 non-music students**: "No, it's mostly parents." "I think that's for old people." **Moderator**: "Do you kind of think of it as older people's music?" **Student**: "I only really listened to it when my mom or my dad, they put it on."

Moderator: "Do you ever listen to Mariachi? **School 2 non-musician:** "I think that's for like, old people."

Moderator: "Do your friends listen to it [Mariachi]?" **Various School 3 music students:** "Some of it." "A little." "Mhmmm." "No. It's more the parents."

Perhaps not surprisingly, the students who participate in school Mariachi programs did not agree with the "for old folks" stereotype. Their attitudes towards Mariachi were much more nuanced.

> **Moderator**: "There's a mariachi program here, but do you guys listen to mariachi on your own for fun?" **School 2 Mariachi student:** "Yes. Sometimes. Sometimes. Yeah. A little bit." **Another School 2 music student:** "Also, I feel like it depends on which the artist is and what type of music is played. If you have newer Mariachi groups, then most likely, newer generations are gonna listen to it. But Vincente Fernandez, everybody listens to him. So that's just like a generation pass on."

> **School 3 Mariachi student:** "Yeah. So that's a mix with like R&B [Rhythm and Blues]. I like classic, new age R&B, but it has mariachi elements to it. And the Mariachi is actually a Mariachi. Like, the guys are full blown Mariachis."

Theme: Reasons for quitting music

While many of the reasons cited for discontinuing participation in music programs are common across diverse student populations, their significance is underscored in this study by the fact that they were specifically identified by Hispanic/Latine students.

> **School 1 non-music student via translator:** "So in middle school, they just gave her that class to play an instrument, but she didn't like it, which was a clarinet.
>
> **Moderator:** "Oh, clarinet. Okay, cool. Would you mind if I asked why you didn't like it?" **Translator:** "It was the style of music, she did not like it."

School 4 non-musician: "I did piano for a little bit at [previous school], and then I got switched out when I joined the law program. And I haven't thought about music really since."

One sub-theme takeaway that emerged three times was that some of these students quit the music program they had tried earlier in their education. The reason for this was a dislike, or at least negative perception of the music teacher or the class.

School 2 non-musician, on their school music past: "I played violin in third grade, but I just didn't like the teacher. And it was yeah. It was just I don't know. I didn't find interest in playing it, and I didn't really understand it."

School 2 band member: "So my friend, he did music with me in seventh and eighth grade. But he left once he got to high school because he didn't like the past teacher. He thought all band directors were like that... So I was like, 'Hey, this teacher's not like that...' He was like, 'yeah, but I already chose this'"

Non-musician at School 2: "I also didn't like the teachers at all when I was gonna do it because they just seemed very not fun at all. They just seemed really boring. But also, it's, I never got to know them. So I think it's just from me assuming."

Theme: Music student stigma

When asked to provide a reason why they do not want to try out or continue music, frequently, the non-musicians mentioned the fact that the music students, especially band students, were not the kind of students they wanted to be associated with.

A School 2 non-music student: "Like a band kid who's crusty. I don't know. Like, they're just cringe, I guess. Like, band kid humor. That's what you see. They're just seen as cringe and weird. Yeah. Yeah. And nerds."

Another: "They stay in there [Music building] for break. Yeah, and then they eat their lunch and stuff. So it's like I feel like they're not very outgoing, some of them, or they're, like, rude. Any band kid I've talked to, they're not nice."

Another, speaking about whether people feel the same way about choir, "I just feel, like, choir is different for me. And I feel like there's some people, but a lot of the kids, the more outgoing ones are joining choir because they say it's easy. Some of the football people too, they joined choir because they said it was easy. So I feel like some of it may be split up."

School 3 non-musician: "I think it's also very stereotypical when we think of music and stuff, especially, like, just with social media and with movies and it's been portrayed that you have, like, the music nerds and the and the band geeks sort of stuff."

A school 3 non-musician: "I just heard, like, oh, it's just a nerdy thing and yeah. And just, I've been thinking about oh only certain people play it. Can I do this thing?"

Even the music students were aware of this stigma. When asked about the presence of the stereotype of uncool music students, the non-musician group at **School 2** all responded affirmatively.

Moderator: "Do you think at this school that there's a stigma or a stereotype of people who do music?" All firmly and immediately agreed, "Yes," "Yeah" etc...

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School 2 Orchestra musician: "Yes. So well, especially, like, in my deep friends, since it's not popular, we would, play the flute or, like, say the violin. So like, most of them play the guitar, like, the accordion for instance."

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Even a **School 3 Mariachi student** agreed about a stigma: "I feel like it's nerdy."

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A School 4 musician connected the music student stigma to the Hispanic/Latine versus school musiccultural gulf: "Most of the Latino kids that are new to band hear other kids saying it's something for losers, or for people that are weird or nerds. And there's also the fact that most of the kids there wouldn't relate to them because there are no Latino people in the actual program." Meanwhile, Mariachi students at School 3, a majority Hispanic/Latine school feel as though the Mariachi students were *not* stigmatized, even as band students are.

Moderator: "Is that stigma true of Mariachi? Do people who aren't involved in music, are they like, 'oh, Mariachi is for nerds?'" **Mariachi student:** "No. For instance, when I would take my clarinet with me to class, people would make fun of me. For Mariachi there's more respect."

A second Mariachi student: "I feel like I don't know why it became a thing but every time someone sees someone with a band instrument, they're like, 'oh, they're a band kid' or something. But if you see someone carrying a violin or a guitar, then they're like, 'oh, that's cool'. I don't know why, but I feel like it's just kind of a stereotype."

Theme: "Not of my culture"

One important recurring theme among all focus groups was an acknowledgement that Hispanic/Latine students recognize and value their Hispanic/Latine culture. This is seen in their musical preferences, their interest in and desire for more Hispanic/Latine classes in schools, and also in direct statements, such as:

> **School 1 Musician:** "For me, when I'm talking about cultural background because I am Mexican, so with the Mariachi program, I feel like that kind of represents my culture."

> **School 2 Orchestra student:** "And I'm also Dominican. I'm the only one who is Dominican. But I still talk about it a lot because I don't know that's affecting the family very much, but I was very close to my grandpa, and he was Dominican. And I can see so much of him every time I just listen to music like Merengue. I'm always so intrigued by that. So I feel like it's along with Mariachi and stuff like that. Then we get one certain style of music or just representation of one culture, but all of Latin America, you have so many more different styles and genres."

Students also recognize cultural marginalization within the school system,

> **School 2 Musician:** "When I would attend middle school dances or the first dance in the beginning of school year here, they just play a bunch of songs that are common in the U.S. They played one song in Spanish that's very popular in Mexico, but there wasn't even anyone there that attended that knew the song. And then the people that didn't know how to even react to a song, they just mainly stood there. Do you know what I'm saying?"
>
> "And then also during English class you read books via different units, and then we obviously read books that are placed here in the U.S. And then sometimes they have

Black History Month, sometimes they'll have a book based on Black history. And then sometimes when it's in Asia, you know, you have a book placed in Asia, somewhere in Asia. But you don't really learn about South America, but you don't really learn that much. Compared to other units that focus on other places of the world. You don't get a book based on someone, immigrants that live here or a book placed in South America or Mexico. And I think that should be brought definitely to this school and to any school, even in elementary school as well." **Another student:** "They don't speak enough about the history of Hispanic people. We're just kinda like left out?" **A third student:** "And then also when you see someone in the corner of your eye talking to their parent in English, you don't glance. But when I speak to my parents in Spanish in any public place at school this bunch of students that turn their eyes when it's just the language. It could be a normal conversation in English, but they just turned their heads. I just think that's not normalized, which it should be. It's just normal language."

School 3 Non-musician about why Hispanic/Latine students do not take music classes: "No. It isn't their culture, and they don't accept it that way. They don't see it that way. You know? I don't think I see a difference."

Another School 3 non-musician: "Maybe because a lot of people don't support their own culture. You know? Are they embarrassed of it?"

School 2 non-musician on what his friends thought about school music: "Yes. So well, especially in my deep friends, since it's not popular, we wouldn't, play the flute or play the violin. So most of them play the guitar the accordion for instance."

School 1 Musician on the idea that school music is not for Hispanic/Latinos: "I do think that idea still persists, especially when it comes to specifically wind ensemble and choir. Because I feel a lot of more people see it as more acceptable to take guitar"

School 3 Musician: "Well, it could be a matter of two things where they feel ashamed that they're not doing the other culture, or they could be bullied out of it. How people would just make fun you're Mexicans shouldn't be doing that. "So white of you. That's so Asian of you." They would feel embarrassed to be doing that and try different things, if not a part of their culture. I think I could also say it's, they don't really feel connected to other instruments and other genres of music."

School 3 Musician: "I feel like a lot of Hispanic kids who grew up in a Hispanic household grow up with music, but when you get into a school that doesn't offer that kind of music that you connect to, it doesn't interest you and you don't really bat an eye to it."

School 3 musician: "Something else is, as someone with Hispanic parents, when I was in orchestra and my dad was like, 'At your concert, I'm a go to sleep because you're an orchestra' because he doesn't know that music. He doesn't like that music. So once I got to Mariachi, he was actually happy that I was doing it."

School 2 musician: "Especially since you're in the US in the Southwest, if you're in the like, Texas and California. If the majority of the people that live in your country are Hispanic, then you should clearly embody that and put it out there into your colleges and stuff like that."

Theme: Hispanic/Latine teachers

School 1 non-musician when asked what a school could do to attract more Hispanic/Latines to music: "Have a Spanish speaking music director... "

School 2 Musician (whose teacher is Hispanic/Latine) when asked why they joined: "Honestly, the teacher was Latino. I was just, sounds like a fun teacher, I just joined."

School 2 Orchestra student: "I do really enjoy playing it. Yeah. [Music teacher] is such an inspiration. I was really fascinated by the fact that he's Mexican and he's a music teacher. Because I had never seen that before.... It brings diversity. And in the middle of classes, you can casually mention things about Mexico and Mariachi music."

School 3 musician: "You don't see people that are like us. [Mariachi teacher's name]. He's the same culture, same background. It's like not seeing someone that's... okay, they can relate to what I did, how I grew up. It might just make them feel like they don't, they can't connect to that music and to that class, so maybe that's why they don't take that class."

School 2 musician on why they like having a Hispanic/Latine teacher: "It's a type of family. You see a connection because if you grew up listening to that type of music and other people are playing that music, you feel connected to them. So, you wanna play their music. You wanna be active in that."

School 3 musician: "I think having more Hispanic instructors could help as well because from personal experience, when I was at [local university] for a summer program in music, I joined orchestra. And at first, it was a little intimidating because there weren't a lot of people from my background. I didn't really study orchestra before I did Mariachi, and that was the musical background that I had. And when I saw that one of the violinists who was a former art instructor, he was Hispanic, I felt much more comfortable."

Theme: Becoming a music teacher

Considering the emphasis placed on having a Hispanic/Latine teacher, a follow-up question was included, asking if these music students had any interest in becoming music teachers themselves. The vast majority of those interviewed in the musician focus group did not have any desire to, nor had they given any thought to, becoming music teachers.

School 3 musician on becoming a music teacher: "Becoming a music teacher, it really sticks out to me... Yeah. I did think about it in middle school, but then once I looked at the pay rate, I realized that it's not a well paying job... I feel like I would be interested though. I'd only be interested in teaching guitar and piano because that's what I'm most aware of."

> **School 3 musician:** *"*I saw when I first came into Mariachi, our teacher originally wasn't [current teacher]. It was [former teacher]. I was like, man, I wanna be like that. I saw my trumpet and I saw him, I'm like, I'm gonna be like that one day. I'm gonna get there. And then there's times where I doubt myself, but then I just get that in my mind, it tells me to pick it up and do more. Don't give up. And then I just wanna spread what I feel to everybody, to our generation, our younger generation, to our kids, and to our kids' kids. That's what I wanna spread."

When asked if they had considered becoming a teacher, one Mariachi student indicated that they are starting to consider teaching, because of the amount of buy-in they are increasingly experiencing.

> S**chool 3 Mariachi member**: "For me it's because I feel I was first trying to become a lawyer, but then over the time of this since I've been here, I've been trying to weigh my options. I kinda like this. I wish this would become my life because I really like how it ties back into my roots and help trying to make everyone proud and stuff. Seeing the smiles, there's a saying we have. It's where you have to play for the blind person and a deaf person because a blind person can only hear and a deaf person can only see, so they have to act happy and play happy."

Theme: Music tastes of Hispanic/Latine students

Understanding the musical preferences of the students targeted in this study is integral to developing authentic and culturally responsive program content. A frequently cited explanation for the lack of engagement in school music programs is the perceived mismatch between students' musical tastes and the repertoire offered within the curriculum (Gerrard, 2021).

To explore this idea, students from both participant groups—those enrolled in music classes and those not musically involved—were asked to describe the types of music they listen to for personal enjoyment outside of school. Across groups, there was a clear preference for music genres commonly identified as "Spanish" or "Mexican" music, with frequent references to styles such as corridos, southern regional music, and Banda. When prompted to specify

particular artists, students named groups and performers including Los Alegres del Barranco, Chalino Sánchez, Aritamacho, and Maná.

Notably, at two of the observed schools, only students currently enrolled in music classes reported listening to non-Hispanic/Latine musical genres. While it is possible that participants emphasized their Hispanic/Latine music preferences in response to the study's focus, these findings may also reflect the exposure to diverse musical genres afforded by formal music education. This distinction suggests that curricular content and the range of musical exposure within school programs may play a pivotal role in shaping student engagement and musical identity.

> **School 1 Musician:** "I've also noticed how everyone was saying that they listen to regional music or **Corridos** or that sort of thing. That can definitely be applied more broadly to a lot of other Latino students I know in my Spanish classes..."

One focus group of musicians did mention that they believed that most of their Hispanic/Latine friends listen to Rap.

> **Moderator:** "Now let's generalize to your friends and other Latinos on campus. What do you think most Latino high school students in this area are listening to?" **Students:** "Rap? Yeah. Yeah. I'd say rap." "Rod Wave, Gunna, Lil Baby." [These are African-American Hip Hop artists.]

Theme: How to recruit Hispanic/Latine students, according to students

Several different students in different schools indicated that, had they been recruited when they were younger, they might have considered joining a music program.

School 1 Non-Music Students: "Maybe if they express more that they want more of our people to be a part because I feel like it's not said. So we never knew this was a thing that they wanna be a part because it was never said. But it's like if it was said, 'oh, we'd love for you people to join and be a part and us having more,' like oh, well, yeah. That's all."

Moderator: "Is there anything that the school can do that would make you more interested in taking a music class of any kind, band, choir, guitar, whatever?

School 1 non-music student: "The information is low, and they don't promote it, especially the music that they like."

School 4 non-music student: "Maybe you can do, like, a poll. Asking people what would make you want to join? Or what instruments do you wanna do? Or even if there was I don't know if there's a class. Is there a class for the people who are barely learning? Just starting? Beginner."

A School 4 guitar class member: "I think guitar is probably the best gateway to get a Latino to actually do band. But yeah, I didn't even know there was a guitar class"

Moderator to non-musician students at school 2: "So you feel like if you felt more welcomed into it, you would be more likely to join?" **Multiple students:** "Yes. Yeah." Head nods.

Non-musician student at school 3: "I feel like if they play at different sporting events because of the larger options especially. Let's say you're there you're able to see and tell

if you really like it or not. If you really aim towards that." **Moderator: "**So, what sporting events would you like to see music at?" **Student**: "I feel like football, soccer, basketball."

While this participant was unaware that the band already performs at football and basketball games; their belief that presence at these events could aid recruitment indicates an awareness of the potential impact of visibility on recruitment efforts.

Some students offered ideas about possible clubs or classes that they thought might be effective in recruiting Hispanic/Latine students into music.

Musician at School 3: "Maybe they could just have a club. Start off with a little club to see who would want to be in something like that, and then they could see. It could eventually come up to like a program with Mariachi or something like that. I feel like a lot of schools because I didn't grow up in [city], I grew up in the Bay and especially like the high schools in the Bay Area, I feel they're depending on the popularity of the school race popularity, that's what they advocate for. They don't really incorporate any of the other cultures. For example, I grew up around an area where it was very Asian and White driven and I always felt like, people never of my culture of Hispanic background never really fit in because they would make us learn certain things that just had nothing to do with what we relate to. And I feel like something that they could do to incorporate more Hispanics, more Latinos is advocate for that... have events, have clubs, do things that makes us feel welcome."

Mariachi student at school 2 on how he decided to join the class: "[Music teacher] just promoted everything. Put up posters, he'd go to classes, just talk about it." **Moderator**: "Interesting. So, you saw posters and you heard people talk about it, and then you're just like, I'll give that a shot?" **Student**: "Yeah."

School 1 non-musician when asked what a school could do to attract more Hispanic/Latines to music: "... And also play music... like jazz, but also different types of genres like you said about jazz or salsa, stuff that might make Latinos also know what those genres are and might make it more likely that they wanna join...?"

School 1 musician: "I don't have an idea, but make a Banda class, a class that's specifically just for Mexican music. I know people that aren't really interested in Mariachi are more interested in and would rather play Banda."

One group of non-music students at **School 1** reported being aware of the Norteña class offering and expressed interest in enrolling.

Moderator: "Did all of you know that this school has Norteña?" **School 1 non-musician Translator**: "They heard it. They knew about it." **Moderator**: "Yeah. Is that interesting to anybody to try? **Non-music students:** (nodding) "Yes, that is interesting." **Translator:** "Yeah, I mean, they were interested to try it out."

Other musicians expressed a lack of knowledge of music offerings

School 4 non-musician: "I feel like they don't really put stuff out for students to read, easily. Like, they send emails, but no one checks their school email. And so I feel like

they just don't really advertise anything, and it's just kinda up to you to figure shit out, and they don't really help you do that."

And from a **School 4 musician**: "First month of school, they had a rally, and I saw the marching band. I first thought it was something only selected people could do — I didn't know it was something you could apply for."

Teacher/Administration Interviews

This section presents insights gleaned from interviews conducted with teachers and administrators across the four participating high schools, focusing on strategies to enhance Hispanic/Latine student participation in high school music programs.

Findings are presented as themes, generated through coding analysis of the interview transcripts.

Theme: Música Latina classes

Of the four administrators interviewed, all recognized the importance of creating authentic learning opportunities that appealed to Hispanic/Latine students. The principal at **School 1** was in the process of proposing two Mariachi classes, beginning and advanced, hopefully to be introduced the following year.

School 1 Principal on creating a music program that appeals to Hispanic/Latine students: "The other piece to that is modernizing our curriculum. And that's hard for a lot of people to hear 'cause we go through learning all the classics and we're told keep it with all these classics. But for every Beethoven that you have students play, they should be playing something modern as well. And so when you have a program that balances both, getting students of color just comes naturally."

"I've been in schools where I've had to do more work than we were ever taught in our music education degree programs in order to get the high number of participation from Latino students. Now as an administrator, it's recognizing there are other cultural ways to do that as well, by offering things like Mariachi and Baile Folklorico."

"I can't say that there's anything in particular happening in terms of the recruitment of kids and I do think it's a place our school and our district could get better. But I will say through what I've learned in Las Vegas [her previous teaching experience] about having groups like the Norteña class and Mariachi. That's the route that I am hoping we are going here as the school district. So we have the Norteña class, which is one particular, demographic of Latino music. My hope is that we start, my end goal before I leave here is there should be a full-time Mariachi program. Or at least part-time, but there should be a mariachi program here. I would really love if we could also start Baile Folklorico. So those are two very high priority pieces for me to help serve this population more in terms of more culturally relevant education for students, particularly in performing arts."

School 1 instrumental teacher: "Well, I mean, the initial strategy of recruiting Latino students was inventing the Norteña class in itself, because I was not seeing those students represented in my band when 56 or 57% of my school is Latino, Hispanic.

I looked at my band, and that was not… those were not the numbers. And at the same time, there were students showing up to campus with accordions and guitars, and they would play in the quad, just at lunch, at break. And it just felt obvious that some of these students just needed a place to go and play music, so I started that in our Norteña class."

The vice-principal at **School 2** observed an immediate and obvious positive influence from the introduction of a Mariachi Program:

> "I know that the addition of Mariachi greatly increased the Hispanic participation. The traditional music program is still majority white and Asian."
>
> "Our Hispanic students took more pride in our school. They vocally discussed feeling more valued in our school community, and more seen in our school community."

The vice-principal at **School 3** underscored his intention to expand the curriculum by introducing additional Musica Latina courses, complementing the already established and robust Mariachi program at the institution. Throughout his interview, he referenced multiple instances of school programs, both within his own school and at other institutions, that have adopted Musica Latina classes as a strategic means to engage Hispanic/Latine students. Implicit in his discourse is the assumption that the implementation of Musica Latina courses is not a matter of if, but rather a question of which specific formats or variations should be offered.

> **School 3 vice-principal on trying to start a Banda class:** "So, right before I left the classroom, I was actually working on Banda, how I could get Banda instruments here and starting a class. I had started a club way back, way, way, back."
>
> "I tried searching something up the other day, because [local high school] here in [central California city], they want to start a Sierreño class. And one of the music teachers is kind of against it. She thinks we should start with Mariachi, and then grow off of that, but the other guy's like, 'We gotta go, you know, we gotta go through… through… straight to Sierreño'."
>
> "It depends if you want to go Mariachi, if you want to go Banda, if you just want to do a Latin versatile thing. I went to work with San Francisco Unified for about a week, and I

got to visit all their elementary schools, and their high schools, and they all have something awesome going on. You know, they all have a huge number of Mariachi students. One of the teachers has a Latin band, right? Where it's a little bit of salsa, a little bit of… but it's almost like a wedding band, but just Latin, right?"

Theme: Hispanic/Latine student disconnect with BOCJ culture

The need for Musica Latina classes to reach out to Hispanic/Latine students was also touched upon by **School 1 teacher**, who pointed out why, in her experience, those students do not have an interest in joining her band classes:

"Band is a very interesting thing because it only exists in education. Obviously, there's military bands at the highest level. And there's marching bands in college, but school participation in music is primarily through band, choir, and orchestra. And when you don't come from the culture of America, where that's just kind of the standard thing that happens, why would you want to join that? It perhaps doesn't make sense to join? Because you don't really know what it is or what the point is, you might not see it out and about in the world. And especially, you know, John Philip Sousa was a white man, and… they don't know who Frederick Fennell is, or even… there's no figures even really in pop culture to see and observe that, so if you don't come from the culture of the United States, where band is a huge part of music education in this country, and kind of this country alone. It would seem like… if you like music and want to learn an instrument, maybe, but…It's not really reflected anywhere else. It's kind of its own isolated little bubble of a world. They don't even know what they [bands] do. What does a band do? I don't know."

School 2 music teacher: "It comes off of the stigma of being a band kid, choir kid, all that stuff, so they don't really vibe with that. But also from home, they're like, 'Why would you take a music class? Because it won't help you later in life when you could take whatever academic class at the same time.' So we see a lot of the push and pull. We don't wanna be seen as a nerd, but also my parents are telling me not to do it."

"But also, we could look at it the other way is... have we gone out of our way to, you know, have more inviting space and stuff like that? So the good first step was having this Mariachi class because they see them on campus where we do gigs. They're like, 'Oh, I kinda wanna do that.' So for next year, kids are like, 'I wanna take that class.' So it's getting that visibility. It's super cool because they don't really see themselves in especially in the art forms in school. They have to go out of school to see themselves, which is interesting."

School 2 Vice-Principal: "I've been to our concerts, and there definitely were very few [Hispanic/Latine students] on our stage, during the band concerts. And I've been at a couple of other schools, and it was the same there."

School 3 Mariachi teacher on the difference between Mariachi students and non-Mariachi Students: "In every single Mariachi I'll have more nerdy kids, and then I'll have some kids that look like they're kind of thugs that really wanna play an instrument as well. And I take them all in. And I've noticed it especially at this school, I don't know if it's a demographic or if it's the area in which it's at, but we'll have kids of all types throughout Mariachi as opposed to the kids that you'll find in band or as opposed to the kids that you'll find in orchestra, choir. So it's pretty interesting."

Theme: Learning from Texas

The idea that Texas is a forerunner of public school Latine outreach in music appeared several times in interviews.

> **School 1 Principal:** "And I know, there are some places that offer some sort of credentialing program. It gets tricky because Texas is a different licensing state than here. But there are ways that they're doing that in Texas or Nevada with these one-year programs, much like a master's degree in music education."

> **School 1 Norteña teacher:** "There's a school right on the border in Texas that has proper feeder programs for Conjunto class, which is essentially Norteña. And I need to get in contact with them because I don't know what kind of materials they use to teach. I'm sure it's all by rote, but I think we can learn a lot from what they're doing. The University of Texas announced a month ago that they are starting a Conjunto program. I just want to know how they do it. 'Cause especially at the University, those kids already have experience."

> **School 3 Vice Principal on Música Latina classes in Texas:** "So, I know that it Norteños really being in Texas, there's Norteño class, right? There's class sets of accordions, and bajo sextos, and basses. Because I'm telling you, California, as far as getting Mexican music into the classroom. I think we're a few years behind, you know? It would have to be something where we try to infiltrate or try to understand what curriculum that they're using, what is it that they're going through? Because the stuff that we have here is… a lot of the children are self-taught, right? So I would be really eager to see what curriculum they're using in Texas for their Norteño group."

Theme: Ideas for increasing participation

Several of the teacher and administrator interviewees articulated insightful perspectives on strategies to enhance recruitment of Hispanic/Latine students into school music programs.

> **School 1 Principal on:** "I think that one of the biggest mistakes that band programs are still doing this across the country is that you have to be in marching band to be in concert band. I think we're doing a disservice to this exact community. If we want to consider more kids of color, more Latino students in our bands, we have to consider that not all of 'em are gonna be super jazzed about getting in a marching band uniform and being at school till 10:00 PM on a Friday night and then all day on Saturday. And that's just the reality. So how do we make it more culturally relevant? We create a marching band system that is optional. You can be in a marching band if you want."
>
> "So again, I brought my leadership, my band leadership students in. And I had leadership kids in every period. They would sit down and the requirement was they had to choose at least one holiday tune that was not Christmas or Hanukkah. And we would do holidays around the world. That was every year. So now they were doing stuff for other cultures, and then part of that was them getting up on the mic during the concerts to say, 'We're gonna play this song. This comes from this country in Africa' and talking about the cultural relevancy to people in Africa or wherever they chose that music from."
>
> "So again, this system took so much work. So... there is a way to do it without the Mariachi. But to do both would honor the ability to do both."

Here are examples of word-of-mouth recruiting strategies, both targeted and broad.

> **School 1 music teacher:** Recruiting is not a strength of mine, but, just getting them to talk to their friends, say, "Hey, you should join. Come have fun. It's fun. Come join.' I

just harangue somebody in the hallway, who was in my guitar class last year, and he's really good. I was like, 'Hey, why aren't you in band?' And there's a kid next to me, he's like, 'Can I join? And I said, yes!'"

School 4 teacher: "I want every human being to be in my music program. I don't think I necessarily think about it from a minority standpoint. I just want everybody to have a place. And it's kinda like the joke in our program is 'build the empire,' take over the world. Everybody should be in our program if obviously, if they can't or whatever, but we like to find the kids who don't have a place to belong, and we try to make band that place for them."

"For Mariachi, when we got that off the ground, I didn't even necessarily open it up to say, hey. Looking for Latino students to be involved. I just said, 'Hey. We're starting a Mariachi thing after school. If you're interested, you don't even have to have musical background. Like, if you wanna learn, like, we'll get you get you in.' And then I looked at the students in my guitar classes, and maybe some of the kids who spoke Spanish, and said, 'Hey, do you have you ever sang Spanish?' Even my music and ethnic studies class learning that kids had, 'oh, yeah, my family, we sing Spanish. We sing Mariachi together. We have my grandma does this.' So I tried finding kids who already had maybe some connection to mariachi and bring them into that. Usually they had a Latino background. It so happened to be that the majority of the students who came over from my guitar class were Hispanic. And even though they hadn't been playing guitar for, however long they've been in my class period — and we started in October, so they had like two months of guitar before we put them in there".

"I try to build a rapport with all of those general population students so that they respect me as a teacher. And maybe they might enjoy me as a teacher and enjoy my classroom environment. And there's a little bit more of 'Oh, I can understand why kids would wanna do band because this is a fun place to be. The teacher's cool.'"

Another recruiting strategy identified by a Mariachi teacher is visibility of ensembles.

School 3 Mariachi/band teacher on recruiting for Mariachi: "I think we showcase it [the Mariachi program] and advertise it really well to the point where it interests students. Speaking as someone who went through the program as well, I never really had an interest in doing Mariachi until eventually I saw one live, and I was like, 'Hey. That's pretty interesting.' I had an interest in the guitar, but I never wanted to do Mariachi. I wanted to go the jazz band route, a classical guitar route, and do stuff with that. And I see it pretty regularly, too, where I promote it in a way or advertise it in a way to all the students in which, 'look, we can do a little bit of everything. We can still do things that you wanna do, but on top of that, revolve it around Mariachi.' So I think that's how I get it. That's how we managed to reel in a lot of students to the class."

Theme: Ideas for keeping Hispanic/Latine students involved

School 1 teacher: "I have been wanting to… there's a Banda song that I played at my cousin's wedding that I think would be fun at a football game to kind of arrange for a marching band. And I'm in the process of trying to come up with more short tunes for the band to play during football games and things like that, and I want to add in more of those tidbits of the sól songs [a formal and tradiaitonal form of Mariachi], La Chona [a

famous Norteña song by Los Tucanes de Tijuana] or something that the crowd is gonna know - that the kids are gonna know."

School 2 Mariachi teacher: "But what you're gonna see today is we have some traditional stuff, but also they're like, well, can we do this, like, Christian Noldale thing that has mariachi but, like, has a backbeat on? I'm like, sure. We can do that. It's in and it's in their skill set too, which is cool. So I always start with traditional, and then we kinda branch out from there. I always spin it off what are the mariachis, the top mariachis like, Mariachi Vargas, Sol de Mexico groups, what are they doing right now? And then try to match that, they're like, 'okay. We like it. We like it.'"

School 3 Mariachi/Band teacher: "We have a certificate that we give out during our last performance of the school year, which is our spring concert. And where we kind of recognize the seniors, recognize their hard work. We oftentimes will get awards for most improved and some of them may have been four years, some of them may have been three years, some of them may have been doing Mariachi since they were the elementary school and have been coming to our summer program before they were even in high school. So we acknowledge that. And then last year for the first time, we had a banquet for them in which we recognized and all the students invited their parents, so that was cool. But there has been mentions of doing something similar to sports, like senior night, where they get cardboard cutouts and the kids invite their parents. We're thinking of having the students perform and then having to just take pictures with family and then end that as the annual concert."

"Keeping them interested in the music. That's what I find makes it challenging. I can get a similar demographic of Mariachi students to take a band class or orchestra class, but

keeping them engaged and passionate about the music is a different part. 'Oh, why do I wanna play this song by Tchaikovsky, or why do I wanna play this song by whoever it may be' if it's not something that they will listen to in their own free time or will be very excited to show their parents. There's a whole genre of Band music that is used in all of Mexico. And I happened to have the arrangements and sheet music to it, and I sent her a bunch of her words. She was like, I'm gonna use this. And the students were very, very excited to get some to get that too because I don't know if you noticed, but the the band is filled with a lot of students of color as well lot of Hispanic students. So a lot of Hispanic students in there, and once they saw that we're playing this, they were like, 'This is awesome.' But once they see that we're playing something that my mom is used to on the radio or my dad is used to on the radio, they it just pulls them in more."

School 3 Vice-principal on ELL student challenges: "So, a lot of it has to do with… I mean, I haven't proven it, right? This is just a theory, this is just a hunch, but…Oftentimes, when we get students at the high school level that are in English and ELD [English Learner Designation], we're having a hard time reclassifying them, right? Even though they'll speak English, right? But when it comes time to take that test. They just get nervous, or, you know… I started a program at [local] Elementary; that's the program that went to the White House in 2016. They were 80% Hispanic, or something like that. It was some high number at the time. But a lot of them are English learners, and with my English learners, a new kid would come, straight from Guatemala, straight from Mexico, they'd bring him to my class because I was a Spanish-speaking Mexican music teacher, and so I was there to kind of build a relationship with them. Getting those children to see that things are capable, that they are capable, that they can learn English,

it was… it was pulling teeth. If you don't get them to reclassify in elementary school, it's much harder to get them to reclassify at the high school level. And at the elementary school level, if you're in ELD, you don't get to participate in pull-out music. You have to go to ELD. Your chosen elective is ELD. You don't get a choice. You gotta go to ELD."

Theme: Inclusion strategies for Hispanic/Latine students in BOCJ classes

School 1 music teacher: *"*I really try to include everybody. I have my little welcome slides where today, as their little warm-up, they all have to tell me, 'Would you rather, spend the whole day with your socks wet, or having sticky hands?' and that can be translated on the board into another language. I have my guitar slides every day are translated, because I have two students in there who don't speak English, but I just make everybody answer a simple, stupid question. That gets us laughing or discussing, 'Yeah, but wet socks just feel so terrible, or, 'Yeah, but you wouldn't be able to touch anything with your hands, it'd be so sticky.' Stupid conversations to just get them more comfortable."

School 2 Music teacher on his guitar class: "But this is the easiest kinda "get your foot wet" in a music class because it's literally, it's just a guitar class just with that framing, and then we learn about each state in Mexico too. So like, they'll get like a slide presentation about this and all that stuff, like each piece we play relates to a region and all that stuff, so they're getting that because it's also an ethnic studies credit. So it's their music and ethnic studies, that's also a huge grab as well because they wanna kill two birds with one stone. So that's how we get a lot of kids."

Theme: Community Outreach

School 1 Principal on students doing the reaching: "It also didn't hurt that as that progressed [more Hispanic/Latines in her classes], those were my senior leaders who were going to college. And so now they would represent. They had service hours that they could do to earn a letter. And one of the service hours was to go back to the junior highs they went to. To give out programs at concerts. They had a list of things they could do to volunteer. They had to wear their band shirt and they had to talk to the eighth graders about joining band. And they were standing in front of the seventh and eighth grade parents saying, 'I was a student here at this junior high three years ago, and now I'm about to go to U.C. San Diego, and I attribute that to my experience in the band, and here's why.' So now all of a sudden, those Latino parents are hearing in English and Spanish from the kids that they saw in those concerts, just the year or two before."

School 1 principal on teacher/administration centered outreach: "It was tremendous work. I went to church services to speak with families at the church who didn't want their kids to miss Saturday Bible study for a competition. A marching band competition. They didn't want their kids out late on a Friday night for a football game. They didn't understand the Wednesday night rehearsal till eight o'clock at the school. No, they have to be home with the family. It's probably a bit of a cheat code since I am Chicana and I'm in the community. But at the same time it was that tremendous work. Again, it's that cultural relevancy to go to where they're at, to explain, here's the skill set and the power there. Say, this is how we get your kids to college. This is how we get your kids to succeed. These are the skill sets they're gonna learn. And so you're working with the families on that level, on the kid level it's about creating success that they can take ownership of. And that's a good band program no matter what."

School 2 principal: "I do think all teachers could use some more cultural awareness. I don't know what that means because it's a buzzword. You need to be more culturally relevant, but what does that really mean? I think it really means looking at your community and actually going out and learning what the community values and not from our bosses in the school district, but from the families themselves. And there's no one way to do that. I think being present and visible is a way to start. So I go to as many things as humanly possible, right? To go to as many events as I can so the community cansee that it, it is of value to me and also that I can hear what's of value to them. So I know we hosted some Mariachi here. Last year I made sure I was here at that concert. I made sure that they had me on that stage to welcome this audience who bought tickets to see this outside Mariachi group come in. And I told them there it is my intention to bring Mariachi to [**School 2**] come talk to me if there's a way you can help me make that happen. So it's just that, it's that visibility which is, it's hard to do."

School 3 Mariachi teacher on community outreach: "We're hosting a fourth annual festival in which we invite Mariachis from all the neighboring elementary schools, the high schools in the district. It started off as a [district] thing. But now it's branching off and we're inviting them here. The neighboring universities and colleges and also, I guess, there's groups coming from Modesto and groups and one group coming from Bakersfield that wants to participate in the in our Scholastic Mariachi Festival as well. So May gets pretty busy in that aspect."

School 3 Vice-Principal: "Seventy-four years ago [exaggeration], I started the [redacted for anonymity] Mariachi Festival, and so the point of that is to showcase all the hard work that we're doing here, to have one unified festival it's an all-day long thing from

elementary, right? We have all the elementary schools, then we have middle schools, then we have the high schools. Well, we don't have middle schools, but we have middle school groups. And then the community college has a Mariachi. The [local university] has a Mariachi. I taught at [another local university], so I would bring [local university]. [Yet another local university] has a mariachi that they launched last… couple years ago. So, like, all of these groups get invited, you know, to showcase to the community. We get a headliner… a headlining group.

Every year it changes a little bit. Last year, we had Mariachi Bonitas. This year, it'll be Mariachi Mexicanissimo, so it's just showing the parents and the community the importance of sticking with it, you know, and where their students can go.

You know, and for some people, it's like seeing them, you know, it's always heartwarming to see where they started, where they're going, and then where they end up, you know, and then they end up sometimes. Because the teachers, we come together and we perform too, so we'll be one of the groups that'll be closing towards the end."

"And then, like, this… this summer, we're gonna have Mariachilos Camperos. They're gonna be coming to do a workshop here for all of our district mariachi students. That's all thanks to, you know, Prop 28. We also have another grant called the Arts Block Grant that's gonna help cover some of that. Like I said, a lot of it has been my own musicians and people that I've met through my career that come and will do, just cuts for our site. You know, I have a friend who's a harp player in LA, and he'll come and he'll do some carocho stuff, some presentations. Like I said, La Banda del Rey came up, we were lucky with… with them. So I'm always looking for anybody who's willing to come and share their talent with our site."

Theme: Hispanic/Latine teachers

Moderator: "How important or how helpful was it that your Latine students saw themselves in you as their music teacher?"

Principal School 1: "I think it's vital and, like I said, it's a cheat code. I don't know if it works the same, if I'm not a person of color, if I don't have the last name [Hispanic last name]. It is one of the biggest reasons I became a principal. Because what I know is the power of having someone like me in front of me at the age I needed it is way more impactful than anything else I can do in the classroom."

School 2 Vice-principal on the importance of Hispanic/Latine teachers: "I think that… The teacher really matters. And I think cultural competency in the teacher really matters. So I think that our mariachi teacher, obviously, is part of their culture, is able to bring that cultural competency, that understanding, that connection with those students. I think our traditional music teacher has less of that cultural competency, And… Doesn't see recruitment as part of his job."

School 3 Vice-Principal on getting Hispanic/Latine students to become teachers: "It's getting them to take those [college] auditions, those of them that think that they want to pursue music. I've been very fortunate to grow a community, and the fact that I'm working at the university, too, like, I'm working on a pipeline where some of my, you know, music ed students are coming down and giving lessons to the Madache students, and I think they have an interest in… in going and studying music education. So, we… we've got that going for our violin players. We just now got that going for our trumpet

players, so I've had… Since I started teaching, the class of 2019, from there, I have total, now, teaching, I have about six students that are teaching now, that went through the college, that got their degree, they're credentialed, and they're teaching. But that whole time, I was like, you're gonna come back, and you're gonna talk about what your experience is like to the program. And you're gonna show them that you can do this, and you're gonna show them what's possible, and then you're gonna help prepare them for auditions."

Theme: Teacher certification and training

School 1 Principal: "The second barrier is tricky because there isn't a Mariachi education undergraduate degree. So when we're writing this curriculum and we're adding curriculum to our school districts, we have to write it in such a way that it can be licensed by any music teacher. So that means the curriculum has to be written a little more generally than just solely Mariachi. So it's tricky. Kind of common ground to find when districts are creating curriculum for these classes. It's not as tricky, but it is tricky. It's not impossible because school districts are doing it. But the people who are the most qualified to teach Mariachi often are not qualified to be a teacher, and that's a barrier as well. And there isn't a K-12 Mariachi music license, they have to go after a music license, which means they're not gonna have to go study how to be a better Mariachi teacher. They have to go be able to pass the praxis music history and all that nonsense."

"So once a district might have the facility to have it, they have the funding to buy the equipment, how do we write the curriculum so that we can hire a teacher? How do we find a teacher who is able to be a credentialed teacher in that classroom? So there are some barriers around that. And I know, there are some places that offer some sort of

credentialing program. It gets tricky because Texas is a different licensing state than here. But there are ways that they're doing that in Texas or Nevada with these one-year programs, much like a master's degree in music education."

School 3 Vice principal on CTE (Career Technical Education) teachers: "What I'm talking about is the different preparation for different teachers because of this, because this is all so new. You know, we have teachers with CTE credentials, we have teachers that… They're fully credentialed teachers, but lack Mariachi experience, but are willing. You know, we have teachers that don't have any credentials, but they're paraprofessionals, and so... the landscape out there is just… Like, so much, there's so much variety."

"It's the lack of the resources, it's the fact that they've never… it's never been modeled for them, no one in their family has ever gone off to study music, you know, that's not a viable career option for them"

"I do a lot of PD [Professional Development] for us when we do our in-service. So if there's teachers that think that they want to teach Mariachi, you know, before, our arts administrator was very protective of it, and was like, no, no, no, because, you know, they'll screw it up, and we don't want that. And I'm like, you know, if they want, if they have an interest in doing this, let's equip them with strategies and everything that they're going to need, right?"

Theme*: *Financial considerations

School 1 Principal: "I found to get a high number of students of color involved in a typical band program of marching band, jazz band, concert bands, so on and so forth was to do all of the extra work to reduce any financial burden. I would waive band fees for

parents to volunteer at our concession stand at other fundraisers, and that helped bring parents in if they served on the booster board, which I still would only get two or three parents, but I would waive their band fees and that was a reason for them to come to the meetings. All that to say is I removed any financial barrier."

School 3 Vice-Principal: "You know, now, thanks to Prop 28, thanks to all this funding that we're starting to get. Those barriers are starting to close, right? You know, we… before, it was like, oh, well. A lot of our Hispanic students happen to also be low socioeconomically disadvantaged. Right? So it was like, they can't afford stuff. We still have as many kids as we have involved in our music classes. Very few, if any, take lessons."

Theme: Convincing parents

School 1 principal: "When you're struggling with a student and you feel that the parent doesn't care. Start the conversation by telling them how good of a human being that person is being or not being, and you're gonna find that they care a lot. And that opens the door to that. It's a cultural barrier to call and say, 'Hey, I really appreciate having Jose in my class. He comes on time every day and he is very respectful.' And the minute you say that, it turns a switch for that family to say, ah, this person cares about what I care about. And then you say, however, Jose doesn't do his homework and I need your help in him doing his homework because he's failing my class. And then the conversation switches."

"I think it was helpful and also something to know about the Latino population is the more educated I became, the more I was different and othered by them as well. So I deal with both personally. But yes, I do think it's a bit of a help to have representation in these

positions to be able to say 'No, I understand you want them to watch their little siblings, but if I can have them one night a week. Just that one night a week. I'm not gonna ask you for more. Except occasional Friday night football game. But we can, I can work with you if you need help because you have to work at night and they need to watch their siblings.' It comes down to just looking at every single student's need. And those first few years was really honestly going to so many homes. The band program was 20 when I took it over. And then it was, 40 the next year and doing that work again. And by the time it became 60, 80, a hundred, they were doing it for each other."

School 3 Vice-Principal: "Yeah, as much money as Mariachis make, as much money as Banda players make on the weekend. And that's how I sell it to families. It's like, Junior can go out and flip a burger, and for a couple hours during the week, or he could just study all week and gig on the weekends, and make the same, if not more."

Theme: Funding

School 1 Principal: "So what's nice about California is the Prop 28. California has recognized the need for more arts education. And so a lot of districts are using their Prop 28 funding to create these mariachi programs. 'Cause most schools have at least, a band or choir or both, or orchestra or now they're using these funding, this funding to create some of these positions."

"It's facilities position, funding for the position, and then honestly, the funding for the equipment is the easiest part of that equation. Because any principal could use any part of their budget pretty much too. Supply instruments for if we can get the program rolling. But what we can't do as easily with our site funding is create positions."

School 2 Music teacher: "I'm super happy that we got we had the Prop 28 money come in at the right time because this also got me to full time too, was adding the Prop 28 class of Mariachi. That's what allowed this to happen."

Theme: How non-Hispanic/Latine teachers can approach teaching Hispanic/Latine subjects

School 1 Music teacher: "Something that has helped me personally, in this journey, is that we have a lot of folks on campus who are not students, but support staff, or staff who are Latino. And asking questions. And I think being okay with being uneducated and just putting yourself out there, and asking as many questions as possible. The year before I started Norteña, I was in the office asking non-musicians questions all the time, because… there's cultural stuff, and like… 'Hey, [Hispanic/Latina student]! What are your favorite groups? You know, what can I listen to? What's your favorite song?' She's like, 'Oh, I love this song about shrimp. Like, I go to the shrimp, I make my woman shrimp.' and I'm like, 'okay,' so I learned about that song through her, or… [colleague], who works in A23, helped me a lot in my first field trip I took with them... she would just point out different cultural practices here and there that I wouldn't know about, or… I'm just always going over there and asking questions about big, small, usually small, unimportant little things, and I think just being really open to that is what being an ally should look like."

"Day one of Norteña, I was like, 'You guys know more than me. But I know more than you when it comes to playing music. But you guys know more about the rest of this stuff. So, we're gonna work together.' That is the only way I could think to do it, because I can't walk in and be the expert. There's not one single day of training for any of this in my music education program. So… Being open. It's really important."

School 3 Vice-principal and Mariachi program creator: “But… where I go and I present [on school Mariachi], it’s always a non-Hispanic person that brings up how they don’t want to come across as...what is the word? Culturally insensitive, or that they’re making money off of somebody else’s culture....” **Moderator:** “They don’t want to be a colonizer, or… Cultural appropriation kind of thing.” **Vice-Principal:** “There you go, right there, right? And so, they want to be wary of it, and the thing that I say to them is just like, ‘Well, the fact that you’re sensitive to it already is helpful.’”

“And as long as you are honest with your students and your families, and, you know, you’re saying, ‘We’re gonna learn together, and I'm gonna learn from you, and you’ll learn some things from me, but I’m gonna learn a lot from you, and we’ll move together, and we’re constantly having an open mind about this, I think we should be fine.”

Survey

Although a survey was initially developed and partially implemented as part of this study’s mixed-methods approach, it was not feasible to include the survey data in the analysis due to an insufficient number of completed responses. The low participation rate was primarily attributed to the extensive consent procedures required for student involvement, which presented significant barriers to recruitment. Additionally, the limited avenues available for reaching and inviting students to participate further constrained the survey’s distribution and response rates. While it was anticipated that 300 responses would be needed between all four schools to ensure validity, only 22 students filled out the entire survey.

As a result of the low responses rate, the survey data did not reach a level of participation sufficient to provide valid or reliable insights and was therefore excluded from the final analysis.

This limitation underscores the challenges inherent in navigating institutional consent protocols and recruitment pathways in educational research involving students and minors. Despite this limitation, the qualitative data collected through observations and interviews offers rich and valuable perspectives on student engagement in school music programs. The study still stands on its merits, offering a robust mixed-methods data set and providing valid, insights into music participation among the target population. See Limitations in Chapter 5 (p. 153).

Artifacts

As part of campus visits and interviews involved in this study, special attention was paid to the material, both physical and electronic, that served to facilitate the classes and programs of interest.

Theme: Contemporary technology

One prominent and widely-available tool that was observed in two Música Latina settings of this study was the video sharing website ***YouTube*****.** One Norteña Ensemble course at **School 1** and several Mariachi courses at S**chool 3** incorporated ***YouTube*** videos in their lesson during classroom observations. These videos were projected to the front of the classroom using either smart boards, or a video projector, both connected to and controlled by school computers. No credit was given during or after the lessons to the content creators or owners. ***YouTube*** is a common classroom teaching tool throughout education as it caters to diverse learning styles, provides teachers a wide range of content for little or no cost. While it is especially useful for music teachers, 94% of *all* teachers report using ***YouTube*** in their classroom and 74% of those that do agree that it is helps students learn (Washington Post, 2024).

At **School 1**, the instructor presented the Norteña class with two ***YouTube*** videos of professional Norteña *grupos* (Spanish for a group of musicians) as an integral component of a

lesson on audio equipment, a topic previously introduced in earlier lessons. The students were asked to identify and list any audio gear that the grupos used in the videos. After the video ended, the teacher asked the students to share the results of their observations. As they gave examples, the teacher would point them out in still frames of the paused video, sometimes having to scroll to a part of the video that included the gear in question. Upon completion of the students' initial identification of the audio equipment, the instructor completed the lesson by supplementing the list with any omissions. This instructional strategy occurred over the course of two videos, which had been deliberately chosen due to the conspicuous presence of visible audio equipment.

In communication with **School 2** instrumental music teacher, it was revealed that he teaches about Mexican indigenous music to his guitar and Mariachi classes and as part of those lessons, often incorporates ***YouTube*** videos, and slide-show presentation technology such as ***Google Slides*** or ***PowerPoint***.

School 3 employed ***YouTube*** videos as an organizational and transitional tool within the Mariachi classroom setting. At the commencement of a Mariachi class, as students entered the room, a video featuring a live performance by a professional Mariachi ensemble was displayed on the front board. During this period, students collected their chairs, music stands, and instruments before sitting down to watch the video. Upon the ringing of the tardy bell, the instructor interrupted the video and proceeded directly to the lesson without explicitly referencing the video or discussing its content further. This practice suggests the video served primarily to familiarize students with high-quality Mariachi music while facilitating classroom gathering and settling.

Additionally, **School 3** incorporated the online interactive platform ***Kahoot!***, widely recognized in educational contexts as an engaging and enjoyable review tool (D'Arcy, 2025; Wang & Tahir, 2020). In the advanced Mariachi class, students responded to 12 challenge questions focused on identifying key signatures, thereby reinforcing music theory concepts. The application of ***Kahoot!*** extended beyond content review; it also functioned as an attendance mechanism. Each student was required to scan a QR code displayed on the front screen and submit their responses via smartphones. The students' names appeared on the shared screen, enabling the instructor to take roll efficiently. Although this technology is not culturally specific, it demonstrated effective integration into the classroom environment and highlighted the prerequisite of student access to smartphones with wireless or Wi-Fi connectivity.

The integration of technology in **Schools 1** and **School 3** Música Latina classrooms, as illustrated by the use of ***YouTube*** performance videos and the interactive ***Kahoot!*** platform, reflects a strategic blending of culturally relevant content with contemporary instructional tools. By presenting authentic Norteña and Mariachi performances through video, the instructors provided students with direct exposure to a vital aspect of Hispanic/Latine musical heritage, reinforcing cultural identity within the learning environment without relying solely on didactic methods. Simultaneously, the incorporation of ***Kahoot!*** facilitated active student engagement and practical learning in music theory, demonstrating how universal educational technologies can be adapted to support culturally grounded curricula. This intersection of technology and cultural inclusion underscores the potential for modern pedagogical approaches to honor and sustain Hispanic/Latine culture in music classrooms, creating an enriched, accessible, and dynamic learning experience for students.

Theme: Communication with Hispanic/Latine Families

The methods by which each school communicated with the families of the Hispanic/Latine students were unique to each school. Common means of school-home information transfer in school music programs include performing arts department websites, director or booster-run social media pages, communication applications such as *Band* or *Remind*. The instrumental music teacher at **School 1** did not tailor their communication methods according to the cultural background of the students. While the instructor did not maintain a dedicated website, they utilized an ***Instragram*** account specifically for the school music program wherein events and achievements of the Norteña class were regularly featured. For direct parent involvement or dissemination of information, the instructor primarily relied on students to deliver paper-based communications, including instrument rental contracts, field trip permission slips, and informative flyers. All official school documents were accompanied by a Spanish-language translation, provided by the school or district; However, no other communication from the instrumental music teacher was translated.

School 2 reported greater utilization of technological communication methods for both the Mariachi classes and the broader BOCJ music program. While the BOCJ music department maintained an official Instagram account, a separate account was exclusively dedicated to the Mariachi Ensemble and curated personally by the Mariachi instructor. Communication with the families of music students across the department was facilitated through the use of ***ParentSquare***, a school-to-home communication platform. This application provides multiple features, including group chats, messaging, forms and sign-ups, calendar reminders and updates, and notably, automatic language translation capabilities. The Mariachi class families used this application, although the teacher reported that the participation of the non-BOCJ families was much lower–roughly 10%.

The Mariachi program at **School 3** maintained a website specifically for the large Mariachi program which included events calendar, a newsletter, photos and contact information– written exclusively in English. All written communication with parents, which included instrument contracts, permission slips, and occasional informational handouts, was provided in both English and Spanish, created by the music teachers. Notably, the Mariachi program at this school maintained a ***YouTube*** channel, on which they posted pertinent videos of events, news, past performances, promotions for upcoming events, among other things. **School 4** notably did not provide translations of any home communication; however, it was reported that this practice may change upon the transition of the Mariachi club into a full class. The primary communication device for the music program at this school was the ***BAND*** application, a smartphone and personal computer application that allows for quick and free group text communication. This application allows for sub-group chats to be created for individual classes and clubs, such as the Mariachi. Another school-wide resource reported by the band teacher at **School 4** was the ***TalkingPoints*** platform, another multi-purpose communication platform allowing multi-lingual information interaction, although this was reportedly used much less in the music program.

Theme: Music notation

Artifacts utilized within Música Latina ensembles encompass a variety of sources and pedagogical approaches. At **School 1**, Musica Norteña students predominantly learned their repertoire through rote learning, in contrast to the Mariachi classes at School 2, 3 and 4, which incorporated sheet music and instructional text books for their music instruction. Although both **School 2** and **School 3** maintained sets of Mariachi "method" books, educators at these sites indicated, in post-observation discussions, a limited reliability on these texts as primary

curricular frameworks. Instead, instructors favored constructing customized lesson plans and used the "method books" primarily as supplemental instructional resources. The Mariachi instructor at **School 2** further critiqued published music materials, asserting that "Music that is published is also not accurate the majority of the time." Meanwhile, the Mariachi teacher at **School 4**, engaged in the process of building a new program begun this same year, opted against purchasing music, preferring to find free materials online, using music-sharing websites such as ***Musescore*** and ***Noteflight***. For example, the piece that his Mariachi club was rehearsing (*Un Poco Loco*, from ***Disney's*** animated film *Coco*) was printed entirely without cost from www.Musescore.com. A consistent sentiment evident among all music instructors in this study was the absence of a "correct" resource or procedure for selecting and procuring repertoire. Rather, each educator emphasized adopting an approach that worked best for their individual educational setting.

Discussion

Overview of Findings

Several findings of this study corroborate concepts previously identified in the field of music education. For instance, the notion that the introduction of Música Latina classes encourages more participation among Hispanic/Latine students in school music programs was strongly reinforced by multiple aspects of this research. Similarly, the belief that students value representation of their culture in the school curriculum and will be more engaged when they perceive it, is not new to the education compendium, and was likewise upheld in the data here. More importantly, however, the insight provided by these qualitative findings also points to novel lines of inquiry that have yet to be comprehensively examined. These unexplored concepts derive from stakeholder feedback-driven input regarding recruitment and retention, music program design, student recruitment, community outreach and Hispanic/Latine teacher recruitment and certification. Although certain aspects of these new avenues of inquiry may seem self-evident, their incorporation within academic literature –perhaps for the first time– is of considerable significance.

This chapter will critically examine the most salient findings emerging from the multiple data collection methods employed in this study, including classroom observation, focus groups, teacher and administrator interviews, and material analysis. These findings will be contextualized within the broader framework of contemporary California public school music programs, ultimately situating them within existing educational policies, curricular standards and pedagogical practices. Drawing on the evidence presented, the chapter will also propose a set of informed recommendations, aimed at promoting best practices in high school music programs

with the intent of promoting Hispanic/Latine student engagement. These recommendations will be grounded in the data from this study and current literature, while also being mindful of real-world constraints faced by music programs and the limited scope of this four-school study. It is hoped that these findings and recommendations can be leveraged to improve program recruiting and provide enhanced music education beyond the primary target community of Hispanic/Latine students. Several of these findings may be helpful in synthesizing other under-represented student communities as well and may potentially apply to other educational contexts.

Addressing the first research question –What structural, musical, and social factors influence Hispanic/Latine students' decisions to participate or not participate in school music programs? –the data from this study reveals a layered and interactive set of barriers. Universal barriers, affecting students broadly regardless of cultural identity, include a persistent negative stereotype attached to music students, particularly band students, which non-musician focus group participants described with notable consistency across all four schools. Related to this, many non-music students reported a lack of familiarity with what music programs actually offer and who they are designed to serve, suggesting that recruitment and communication failures play a meaningful role in non-enrollment. Fear of being academically behind peers, and the perceived weight of time demands associated with ensemble participation, compound these universal deterrents. Layered atop these are barriers that bear particular relevance to the Hispanic/Latine experience: the cultural disconnect between the Eurocentric Band, Orchestra, Choir, and Jazz (BOCJ) model and the musical identities of Hispanic/Latine students; the influence of familismo on students' availability and family perceptions of school music; and the near-total absence of Hispanic/Latine role models in music teaching positions. These findings corroborate and extend prior research (Elpus & Abril, 2019; Escalante, 2019; Wilson, 2017) while situating them in a

contemporary California context and giving them texture through the voices of the students themselves.

The second research question–What positive steps, actions, and models can be implemented by schools to increase the participation of the Hispanic/Latine community?–was answered with both breadth and specificity by the stakeholders in this study. Most prominently, the introduction of Música Latina ensemble classes, specifically Mariachi and Norteña, emerged as the single most effective structural intervention identified across all four schools. These classes consistently enrolled between 95 and 100 percent Hispanic/Latine students, and several participants–both students and educators–indicated that without such culturally specific offerings, Hispanic/Latine enrollment in school music would be substantially lower. Beyond curricular design, the data highlight the importance of proactive, culturally informed communication with Hispanic/Latine families; intentional, personal recruitment of students by teachers; and the visibility of music ensembles at school events as a means of normalizing and demystifying music participation. The presence of Hispanic/Latine music educators was identified by students, teachers, and administrators alike as a meaningful facilitator of student engagement and trust, functioning both as a recruitment asset and as a retention tool once students are enrolled.

Taken altogether, these findings suggest that the most effective path toward Hispanic/Latine inclusion in school music is not a single intervention but a complementary set of strategies that operate simultaneously at the curricular, pedagogical, relational, and institutional levels. Schools that offer Música Latina classes gain an immediate demographic foothold, but that success is deepened when accompanied by culturally responsive instructional practices, active outreach to families and non-music students, and a sustained effort to recruit and retain

Hispanic/Latine educators. The discussion that follows examines each of these dimensions in detail, identifying both the evidence for their effectiveness and the practical considerations that shape their implementation across different school contexts.

Universal Barriers

In many respects, the phenomena contributing to the under-enrollment of Hispanic/Latine students in music classes across these four public high schools reflect broader issues that may similarly affect students of various demographics who choose not to enroll in music classes. In other words, some of the challenges are not uniquely or culturally specific to the Hispanic/Latine community. Furthermore, what may be the most significant barriers identified by participants do not constitute traditional obstacles, such as prohibitive school policies or socio-economic circumstances. They are not roadblocks imposed on them by the school, society or their family situation. While there certainly is some confirmation that students may be temporarily prevented from enrolling in music class due to factors outside their control such as course conflict, language certification or outside-of-school influence, similar challenges are also reported by Hispanic/Latine students who succeed in actively participating in music classes. Notably for these engaged students, their enthusiasm and commitment to music participation often surmount these conflicts, suggesting such impediments, although present, are not insurmountable barriers to participation. A more substantial agent of non-participation appears to be a fundamental disinterest, dislike or apathy towards BOCJ music classes, for which there are multiple origins.

Negative music student stereotype

From the perspective of Hispanic/Latine students at these participating schools who do not participate in music classes, a significant factor influencing their decision to engage in music

education seems to be attitudinal in nature. This encompasses not only the students' own perceptions and interests, but also attitudes held by influential individuals in their immediate social environments, including parents and peers (pp. 81,84-88,)[2]. It is plausible that the inherent content and structure of the music programs themselves, as well as the ways in which Hispanic/Latine students perceive and experience these programs, contribute to the discouragement of their initial enrollment or continued participation in these programs.

Important among the findings is that several focus group participants reported a prevailing perception that the music program was for "nerds," or as one non-music student labelled band students, "crusty" and "just seen as cringe and weird" (p. 88). Another non-music student, when asked to provide reasons they do not consider enrolling in a music class, "Also, like, my friends don't think it's cool. My family doesn't think it's cool, they think I should focus more on my academic classes" (p. 83). Another non-music student added, "They stay in there [Music building] for break. Yeah, and then they eat their lunch in there. So it's like I feel like they're not very outgoing, some of them, or they're rude. Any band kid I've talked to, they're not nice" (p. 89).

While the aversion to music classes based on stereotypes or off-putting characteristics of music students is neither new nor exclusive to Hispanic/Latine culture (Holster, 2023), it is a substantive identifier of why these students choose not to participate in music and therefore is considered relevant to this study. Indeed, it has been cited in prior research as a nobable factor in Hispanic/Latine student decision to continue in music classes at the secondary level (Wilson, 2017). Negative music student stereotyping was a recurring theme throughout the portion of

[2] Page citations in the discussion section reference pages within this document

research examining what influenced students' participation decisions. Non-musician focus groups, several musicians and two teachers acknowledged the stigma to some extent. So prevalent is this concept that the teacher at **School 4** indicated that he goes out of his way to negate this stereotype, both by emphasizing with his music students the need to be respectful of others if they want to be respected, and by being exceptionally outgoing: "I try to build a rapport with all of those general population students so that they respect me as a teacher. And maybe they might enjoy me as a teacher and enjoy my classroom environment. And there's a little bit more of 'Oh, I can understand why kids would wanna do band because this is a fun place to be. The teacher's cool'" (p. 109). This teacher asserted in follow-up discussion that this has done noticeable good in changing the general attitudes toward music students on campus.

The attitudinal barriers identified among these Hispanic/Latine students reveal a complex interplay between personal perception, peer influence and broader social stereotypes that discourage participation in school music programs. Hispanic/Latines, as an often-times minority culture in educational settings, already must consider their social identity, and may be especially risk-averse when it comes to their standing in the eyes of their peers and communities. Understanding these social dynamics is critical to understanding the challenges faced in fostering inclusive and engaged music education environments for Hispanic/Latine youth.

Lack of familiarity

Another major artifact of feedback from student focus groups was the perception that the schools' internal recruitment efforts were insufficiently developed. Although all students interviewed were aware of the existence of a music program, a notable proportion of non-music participants lacked a clear understanding of the programs' scope and offerings. Specifically, several participants were unaware that the music courses were accessible to the entire student

body, themselves included (pp. 75, 95–96). Several students portrayed an unfamiliarity with the full range of music class offerings available to them, which may have contributed to their decisions not to enroll (pp. 95, 98). This finding was echoed by a music teacher at **School 1**, who noted that Hispanic/Latine students often had little sense of what ensemble music classes actually involve or what purpose they serve (p. 101).

Others indicated that, had someone personally invited them to join the program or at least expressed a desire to have them join, they would have been more likely to enroll in a class (pp. 95–97). And indeed, **School 4** music teacher did exactly that – trying to personally invite students to join his music classes, sometimes simply because they walked by the music room. This approach, which this teacher applied with humor and a charming personality, was found to be effective (p. 111). **School 1** teacher showed similar success in recruiting students personally (p. 105).

Fear of being behind

Related to the topic of unfamiliarity – multiple non-music students reported that one factor influencing their decision not to enroll in music courses was their perception that they would be significantly behind their peers in terms of skills and knowledge (pp. 85–86). Given that the majority of the BOCJ ensemble classes at these schools are designated as advanced-level, or at least requiring prior musical knowledge, it is understandable that non-music students may conclude that these classes are not suitable for them. Furthermore, some students were unaware that there exist entry-level classes and some indicated that they felt that beginning musical study at this stage in their educational trajectory was not desirable (p. 102).

Overwhelming time and effort commitment

Another factor identified as a barrier to student participation in music courses was the perception that enrollment required a substantial investment of time and effort. Several non-music students reported having heard that music classes frequently involve after-school rehearsals, and other significant extra-curricular commitments. **School 2** non-music student: "I think it's just hard to balance out the workload that the classes are giving you and practicing your instrument." Another Student: "Initially, I agree with that. I feel like you're having to go home, and then you start to do homework, but it's already late because we have to stay for practice or you have to be rehearsing. So I think the work has to do with that." (pp.80–81) Additionally, one participant cited her sister's experience in the music program and its many demands as a deterrent influencing her not to join "I think I would have done it if well, my little sister does it, and it's too much. It's already too much for her. I wouldn't wanna do it" (p. 81).

Hispanic/Latine-specific Barriers

These identified barriers to participation are classified as being associated with a cultural identity, specifically Hispanic/Latine students.

Not of my culture

Highly significant among the findings in this study was the confirmation of the concept that Hispanic/Latine students do not identify with the music and culture of the traditional classes of BOCJs (Abril & Bannerman, 2014; Wilson, 2017). In multiple instances throughout the interviews, teachers, administrators, and students consistently affirmed the notion that Hispanic/Latine students were less likely to enroll in music classes due to cultural factors. Both the principal and instrumental music teacher at **School 1** confirmed that Hispanic/Latine students – who constitute 56% of the student population – were not enrolling in music classes commensurate with their overall school presence. This occurred despite indications of interest

among these students in playing music (pp.98–99). It was this recognition that prompted the establishment of the Musica Norteña class, explicitly designed to appeal to Hispanic/Latine students. Similar recognition was reported by music teacher at **School 2** and the vice-principal at **School 3** (20 years prior) as well (pp.100–102).

Students also conveyed the perception that BOCJ courses were fundamentally unappealing to Hispanic/Latine students. Representative of this, two students independently described the prospect of a Mexican student joining a school ensemble as "embarrassing" or a "betrayal of their culture" (p. 91). Others indicated that their family members did not show an interest in the traditional school music, preferring the Hispanic/Latine cultural Mariachi (pp. 88, 91) and another teasing a **School 2** orchestra member for doing something outside her culture, saying that it was "So White of you." (p. 93). A **School 2** string student cited a parent's comment that they did not need to sleep through this student's Mariachi concert as they usually do for the school orchestra concert (p. 93). Several other student comments confirmed the awareness of the cultural gulf (pp. 95–98). Notably, several students indicated that they would not be participating in music if not for the Música Latina class offering (pp. 77, 83), suggesting that it is the cultural familiarity that is creating preference and impetus for self-inclusion.

The Hispanic/Latine cultural biases appeared to be most pronounced with BOCJ classes. Several focus groups students expressed interest in learning guitar. And indeed, teachers from both **School 1** and **School 4** reported a notably higher enrollment of Hispanic/Latine students in guitar courses compared to BOCJ classes. This may be due to the profound cultural relevance of guitar in Hispanic/Latine cultures (Bennett & Dawe, 2020; Hindrichs, 2004) and further emphasizes the importance of cultural prevalence in students' class choices (pp. 88, 89, 99, 103).

Family influence

The effect of families on Hispanic/Latine students' decisions to join music classes were evident in the findings of this study, from both teachers and students. Confirming research regarding familismo, students indicated that familial obligations such as child-care and work were factors in abilities to participate in music events that happen outside of school. However, familismo was not reported from student feedback as much as it was from Administrators, when speaking about what factors they saw in their schools. The principal of **School 1** remarked several times on the importance of effective communication with the families of Hispanic/Latine students, as did the music teacher of **School 3** (pp. 110, 116–117).

There were data that supported the concept that Hispanic/Latine parents were more supportive of music programs that match their culture. **School 1** instrumental teacher was impressed with degree with which Hispanic/Latine parents provided support when asked (p. 110). One student revealed that their parental interest in their school music concerts would increase now that the student was involved in a Mariachi ensemble rather than the orchestra class (p. 91).

Positive influences

The findings of this study not only encompass the barriers and challenges present in these four schools, but also positive aspects regard the state of music education in California more broadly. Overall, there was a consensus among participants that enhancing inclusion constitutes a significant benefit and merits dedicated effort. Furthermore, indications of increased efforts to include Hispanic/Latine students in music programs were observed, extending beyond the schools examined in this research.

Proliferation and state funding

The qualitative findings of this study indicate a promising trend toward increased efforts at diversity, equity, and inclusion for music programs not only for the four schools involved, but also within additional educational settings. I chose the schools in this study specifically due to anticipated inclusion efforts, identified among the findings here was the idea that there may be a broader movement towards inclusion in California, Nevada, and Texas. The state of Texas, in particular, was referenced multiple times as a potential model for school music diversity (pp. 100–101). It was suggested that the state is leading the nation in the development of Música Latina ensemble courses and also in providing teaching licensure options for preservice music educators interested in specializing in Música Latina education. This feedback confirms prior information indicating that Texas has strong and growing Música Latina presence in schools (p. 23).

Each of the four schools participating in this study was selected based on prior indications that initiatives aimed at enhancing Hispanic/Latine participation in school music were underway. The data collected from interviews, observations and artifact analysis support this initial indication. Across the schools, educators and administrators described a variety of strategies and programs implemented to foster a more inclusive environment. All participating teachers and administrators expressed a desire to include as many students as possible in their music programs. **School 4 music teacher:** "The joke in our program is 'build the empire, take over the world.' Everybody should be in our program" (p. 105). In fact, there is a clear effort to expand the incorporation of under-representative groups such as Hispanic/Latine students. **School 1 music teacher:** "I looked at my band, and those were not the numbers [Hispanic/Latine

involvement vs. school population]. And at the same time, there were students showing up to campus with accordions and guitars, and they would play in the quad, just at lunch, at break. And it just felt obvious that some of these students just needed a place to go and play music, so I started that in our Norteña class" (p. 102).

The availability of Proposition 28 funds enabling hiring of teachers is playing a role in expanding the music programs towards Hispanic/Latine inclusion at these and other high schools. **School 1 music teacher:** "I have been very blessed with resources, and…maybe other California educators are feeling that way with Prop 28, infusal [sic] of money, which, you know.... thanks, California." **School 1 administrator:** "So what's nice about California is the Prop 28, which I'm sure will factor significantly into your findings. California has recognized the need for more arts education. And so a lot of districts are using their Prop 28 funding to create these mariachi programs. 'Cause most schools have at least, a band or choir or both, or orchestra or now they're using this funding to create some of these positions." **School 3 Vice Principal:** "You know, now, thanks to Prop 28, thanks to all this funding that we're starting to get. Those barriers are starting to close, right? You know, we… before, it was like, 'oh, well. A lot of our Hispanic students happen to also be low socioeconomically disadvantaged. Right? So it was like, they can't afford stuff. We still have as many kids as we have involved in our music classes."

This financial support, coupled with the fact that California Education Code sections 49010-49011 prohibit "requiring any student to pay a pupil fee to participate in any school activity" (California Code of Education, 2026, §49010-49011), have significantly reduced socioeconomic barriers that may have otherwise limited access to music classes. Within the context of this study, cost did not emerge as a barrier to participation — no participant cited financial considerations as a reason for non-enrollment — suggesting that California's legislative

and funding efforts may be achieving their intended effect of reducing economic obstacles to music participation for Hispanic/Latine students.

One concerning finding is that some schools with low participation rate of Hispanic/Latine students in music appear to struggle with effectively recruiting these students. What is notably absent is this context is the overt, purposeful articulation of the desire for Hispanic/Latine students to join music classes. Such explicit and purposeful outreach is crucial in signaling to these students that their presence is valued and actively sought, thereby fostering a sense of belonging, that can be instrumental in sustaining their continued engagement in music education.

Música Latina classes

The findings of this study suggest that the introduction of Música Latina ensemble classes constitutes an effective strategy for engaging and recruiting Hispanic/Latine secondary students in these four music programs. The majority of student participants and all teachers and administrators that were interviewed, expressed enthusiasm for expanding access to additional Música Latina ensembles, such as Banda and Sierreño–two genres of instrumental music originating from Northern Mexico, both very popular in Mexican-American culture– reflecting alignment between these offerings and students' personal musical preferences and cultural identities (pp. 91-92). Music and non-music students alike expressed interest in these types of classes, especially ones aligned with their musical interests (pp. 80–81, 83, 85, 88, 92–95, 97). Administrators recognized the addition of Música Latina classes as a paradigm shift, enhancing traditional music programs (pp. 96–98, 100, 103, 106–107, 109) in order to better serve the Hispanic/Latine population.

The Mariachi and Norteña ensembles consistently demonstrated high enrollment rates of 80–100% Hispanic/Latine students—the exact demographic this research sought to understand and support. This pronounced demographic distinction between Música Latina ensembles and traditional BOCJ classes underscores the significance of cultural affiliation and representation within school music participation patterns. Accepting and honoring Hispanic/Latine students' love of their traditional music appears to be leading to increased participation in school music and in so doing, is giving those students access to the benefits that accompany the study and making of music, which, as was noted in the introduction, is highly valuable for young people. Highlighting the importance of cultural curriculum representation, several students indicated that they would not be involved in music, were it not for the Música Latina classes (pp. 80–85, 96-98, 100, 103, 106–107).

These results suggest that the inclusion of culturally relevant music ensembles can serve as a meaningful means of fostering participation among Hispanic/Latine youth in schools with substantial Hispanic/Latine student populations. However, it is important to note the relatively limited participation of non-Hispanic/Latine students within these ensembles. This pattern may imply that, in schools with smaller Hispanic/Latine populations, the effectiveness of Música Latina classes in broadening overall student engagement may be contingent upon deliberate recruitment efforts aimed at welcoming and integrating students from diverse demographic backgrounds. Such considerations are essential to ensure inclusivity and maximize the benefits of these culturally specific music programs across varied educational contexts. It may be that adding a Música Latina class to a curriculum would only be a effective in higher Hispanic/Latine population schools, whereas other inclusion strategies would be more appropriate in lower population schools.

Recommendations

The following are recommendations, based on the data collected during this study, that may effectively assist music teachers in enhancing their music programs to augment Hispanic/Latine participation. Some of these recommendations come directly from suggested best practices of the participants of focus groups and interviews, and some are extrapolated from themes that arose from multiple data points.

Better Communication with Families

Proactive communication with parents and other family members of the Hispanic/Latine students is a concept that was recurring in the data. It is recommended that music teachers of Hispanic/Latine students create and maintain strong lines of communication with the parents or other decision-making family members. This recommendation is grounded in findings, both in the literature and in the findings of this study, that *familismo* – a strong sense of familial obligation and devotion – is central to Hispanic/Latine cultural and students educational experiences. Several participants indicated that family perceptions heavily influenced students' decisions to join or stay in music programs. However, teachers and administrators indicated that Hispanic/Latine families are often unaware of music class opportunities or misinterpret cultural norms about communication with educators.

Intentionality around this outreach is especially important for teachers who are not from a Hispanic/Latine background, who may have a more difficult time reaching out and relating to that community. As indicated by the **School 1** principal, it takes a lot of time and effort to connect with the community, and reaching out can include going to Hispanic/Latine church services and events, concerts, and even homes (pp. 110, 117). Additionally, it is important to

keep in mind certain aspects of the community that may make a difference. For example, while it sometimes appears that Hispanic/Latine parents do not wish to be involved in their students' scholastic activities, this can be a misunderstanding, the result of cultural differences. Parents may consider contacting teachers as a disrespect to the professionalism of that teacher, rather than a sign of disinterest. In fact, when the **School 1** teacher reaches out to the Hispanic/Latine family unites, she finds that they have gotten involved in significant ways (p. 110).

It is recommended that music teachers proactively initiate contact with parents or other family members of the Hispanic/Latine students involved in their programs, recognizing the importance of family engagement in supporting student participation and retention. In practice, this might take the form of a phone call or email, which could be framed primarily in a positive manner, praising the good aspects of their child's contribution to the music program, which is an effective way of communicating with Hispanic/Latine parents (pp. 117, 124). Another such cultural relation recommendation is acknowledgement of concerns such as time commitment, financial considerations and the importance of music classes. As **School 3** teacher opined, Hispanic/Latine parents often worry about the usefulness of taking music in school, when it might interfere with "more important" classes. An effort should be made to convince these parents that music can be a financially rewarding endeavor, especially Música Latina ensembles, the skills for which are in high demand and are well compensated (p. 117).

Better Communication with Non-music Students

A broad theme that appeared in multiple focus groups was the lack of knowledge about the music program on the part of non-music students. They indicated that they were not approached by a music class advocate, nor saw any informative flyers or other announcements informing them as to the nature of the music classes available to them. At no point was it made

clear that the school music programs wanted *them specifically* to sign up for music classes. (pp. 95, 98, 104) Whether the students did not actually see or hear any recruiting material or they simply did not register having seen or heard them, what is important is that these students say that they may well have been persuaded to join had they been asked, or had they really understood what the music classes entailed. It is recommended that music teachers make a significant effort to inform all students about both the nature of the music program and that they are wanted. This can be done, as some of the students suggested (pp. 95–97), by a more visible presence of the music program at sporting events, rallies and around school, with an intentional and repeated message that all students, regardless of musical experience are welcome in music classes. One student indicated that a combination of visible posters and personal outreach from the teacher was what prompted them to join the Mariachi class (p. 97).

Furthermore, intentional, explicit, and repeated communication with students addressing concerns, that they indicate to be barriers to their participation, is also recommended. It should be made explicit that there are different levels of time commitments involved in music participation. Not all music classes require large commitments to time spent outside of school hours, which was indicated by both students and a principal as a major deterrent (pp. 80–81, 104). Further, it should be made explicit that students with little or no music training are also welcome in some music classes (pp. 95–96) (this is only effective if there are, in fact, entry-level music classes available). Relatedly, recruiting communication is also important at lower grade levels. Many students indicated a fear that, should they join a music class, they would be "behind" their classmates who have played or sang for many years and indeed it may be more difficult to start or restart music in high school than at lower grades (pp. 113–114). It is recommended that teachers take their performing ensembles on performing trips to feeder

schools in district or out. These trips can be to middle school or elementary school but should encourage explicitly that all students present at the concert can and should try out music ensembles at their earliest opportunity and that they should bring their friends along with them.

Intentional Program Design for Inclusion

While the addition of Música Latina courses has been shown to be an effective strategy for increasing the participation of Hispanic/Latine students in high school music, it is important to consider the inclusivity of other available classes within the curriculum. It is also imperative to consider the extent to which traditional and widespread music courses accommodate and engage Hispanic/Latine students and what adaptations and innovations are necessary to foster broader inclusion across the full range of musical course offerings. Exploring the accessibility, cultural inclusion and appeal of these other classes is essential to developing comprehensive approaches that support sustained involvement of Hispanic/Latine students in music education.

It is recommended that teachers diversify the repertoire and course content of their BOCJ courses to include music and lessons that address cultural and popular interest of the target student populations. There is no shortage of education research literature extolling the benefits of cultural diversity in modern education, and this study supports the concept that one of those benefits can be encouraging participation of Hispanic/Latine students. As was discussed above, a common reason cited for non-participation is that the school music program does not represent the musical interests and culture of this demographic. This recommendation is not to suggest that music classes should exclude historically common music such as European classical composers or American composers of European descent and compositional style. Rather, this should be an expansion and inclusion of modern and diverse repertoire and curriculum, one with which

Hispanic/Latine students identify and that they enjoy. This cultural inclusivity concept was cited by teachers and administrators at all four schools and seems to be one of their most effective inclusion and retention tools (pp. 85–91, 98-99, 101–102).

Another recommendation pertaining to BOCJ involvement that may enhance inclusion is the act of eliminating financial considerations for all students. As has been shown in the literature review (pp. 28, 31) and confirmed in two administrator interviews (pp. 113, 115), Hispanic/Latine students tend to come from lower socio-economic backgrounds. While California has taken steps towards creating equity among all students and ensuring that a lack of disposable income is not a barrier to *any* school participation with the passage of Proposition 28 (2022) and Education Code Statute 5.5 (2012), there remain certain financial disadvantages to participation in music programs – such as required time outside of school spent in rehearsals, performances and trips, which prevent working for income. The principal of **School 1** (a former band director) asserted the importance of eliminating any financial cost to her participants as a baseline for inclusion (pp. 113, 115).

Creating Compromise

As asserted by **School 1** principal and **School 2** non-musicians, high expectations for time commitment can be an important barrier to participation in music programs (pp. 80–81, 104). These findings lead to a recommendation that programs make a conscious effort to provide music courses, especially BOCJ, that do not include mandatory afterschool rehearsals and performances and do not require particularly large time commitment to practice. While it is true that increased time devoted to music preparation and skill-building may result in higher quality performances and more skilled musicians, music classes in which students may participate in

musicking during class and only outside of it to the extent that the students choose, may appeal to students who are either hesitant to take on responsibility, or who have so much responsibility already that they do not participate in music.

Providing one or two high-expectation ensembles in the given music subjects a school provides, be they band, orchestra, choir or jazz ensemble, will provide the more advanced and motivated students opportunities for challenging and heightened musical experiences. Those talented or passionate students may find additional enrichment in extra-curricular musical opportunities such as community performing arts organizations, honors ensembles, and private instruction. However, for the sake of inclusion and providing access to more students, courses allowing music instruction with less time commitment may be an effective compromise.

Hispanic/Latine Teacher Recruiting and Programs

The presence of Hispanic/Latine teachers was a recurring theme throughout the research. Students, teachers, and administrators all confirmed that the cultural familiarity of the classroom music instructor makes a difference in their perception of the classes. For example, multiple students in Mariachi ensembles indicated that they appreciated the fact that their teachers were Hispanic, stating that they could understand the music more authentically because they were *of* that community. Others explicitly suggested that having Hispanic/Latine teachers would be an effective recruiting method for students of the same demographic (pp. 88–89, 92).

Administrators also indicated that having like-cultured teachers is a factor that facilitates student-teacher and parent-teacher relationships; one even calling her Chicana identity a "cheat code" in convincing parents that music was worthwhile (pp. 110, 112). **School 2** vice-principal: "The teacher really matters. And I think cultural competency in the teacher really matters. So I think that our Mariachi teacher is part of their culture... is able to bring that cultural competency,

that understanding, that connection with those students. I think our traditional music teacher has less of that cultural competency and doesn't see recruitment as part of his job" (p. 113). The vice-principal at **School 3** attributed his choice to become a music teacher and his success creating and growing their Mariachi classes to his Hispanic/Latine cultural experience (p. 113).

In California, it is against the law to include race as a determiner in hiring practices. The Fair Employment and Housing Act (FEHA, 1980) states that "It is an unlawful employment practice, unless based upon a bona fide occupational qualification, or, except where based upon applicable security regulations established by the United States or the State of California: (a) For an employer, because of the race, religious creed, color, national origin, ancestry, physical disability...". Despite these legal restrictions, district and school stakeholders are encouraged to adopt intentional recruitment strategies to enhance workforce diversity.

One such strategy involves targeted outreach, whereby administrators collaborate with professional organizations serving Hispanic/Latine populations, such as the Association of Latino Professionals for America (ALPfA), the Latin American Teachers Association (LATA), or other similar local Hispanic/Latine-serving institutions to spread the news of impending position availability. Job opening announcements may be disseminated through organizations such as Latpro.org, a long-standing job board dedicated to connecting Hispanic/Latine candidates with inclusive jobs and on Hispanic/Latine professional social media outlets. Additionally, districts and schools may craft job posting announcements using inclusive language explicitly affirming a commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. Furthermore, job postings can signal that Spanish language proficiency is a desirable qualification, broadening the appeal to bilingual candidates without contravening legal standards.

Lastly, feedback from principals confirms that there is a pressing need for reform within post-secondary education training institutions to foster greater inclusivity of Hispanic/Latine music and related academic tracks within their curricula (pp. 103, 114–115). This is in line with much of the research in the field. The Music Teacher Profession Initiative (MTPI), a taskforce dedicated to identify and mitigate factors impacting diversity, recruitment and retention in the music teacher profession, has highlighted the predominantly Eurocentric nature of music education degree programs in the United States. These programs must "Recognize the need for including a wider range of students from diverse backgrounds" and "Prioritize cultural competence and relevance by structuring programs to engage with community and culture bearers" (Confredo et al., 2023, p. 5). While acknowledging the difficulties involved in effecting fundamental change within the well-established post-secondary music education models, due to barriers such as credit limits, budget constraints, lack of models, and institutional constraints, the MTPI calls for integrative, rather than additive approach–modifying existing preparation models to include "creativity, cultural competency and relevance, community accountability, and multiple means of engagement with music" (p. 29). This means including, as has been modelled in Texas and Nevada, non-BOCJ ensemble courses and pathways, and including modern and popular music forms within history, theory, movement and pedagogy curriculum. Relatedly, the College Music Society, in its 2013 report to a taskforce on music education, advocates for providing greater agency to pre-service educators. The report emphasizes that students should "be more engaged with curricular planning" (Campbell et al., 2014, p.iv). This differentiated educational structure may provide new models for engaging with music and musicking and help to modernize and authenticate music educator preparation.

Further Research

This study represents an initial foray into understanding contemporary Hispanic/Latine involvement in school music in California, having systematically gathered and examined attitudes, practices and recommendations of key stakeholders across four target schools. It is recommended that the foundational results from this research be utilized as a blueprint to guide future research endeavors aimed at expanding the scope of inquiry to encompass a broader, more diverse population.

Larger scope, case studies

The limited scope (discussed below) of this study inhibits the validity of generalizing its findings, but larger and more randomized sample sizes, treated with longer time horizons can provide more insights into Hispanic/Latine and other underserved population inclusion that can be mainstreamed and applied more broadly. Regardless of focus, future research endeavors could greatly benefit from longitudinal case studies that examine Hispanic/Latine student enrollment in school music programs over the course of four-seven years, corresponding to the duration of a typical student's middle and high school education. Such studies would provide valuable insights into factors affecting sustained recruitment and retention strategy effectiveness. A long-term, mixed method study would allow nuanced analysis of enrollment trends and program effectiveness over time. Most likely the inclusion of a comparative analysis, involving multiple schools with key curricular difference, such as teacher cultural identity, presence of Música Latina classes, recruitment strategies both within the school and in feeder schools, parental involvement strategies, and socio-economic status of the student family population, among other factors.

Exploring Texas Models

It is recommended that future research pursue a systematic examination of systems supporting Hispanic/Latine inclusion in school music in Texas, as suggested by the instrumental music teacher at **School 1** (p. 103). Specifically, conducting comprehensive reviews of state conference sessions addressing Hispanic/Latine music ensembles, classroom music and culturally responsible pedagogical approaches may yield valuable insights. Such analysis could identify effective practices and strategies that have emerged in that state context, thereby providing music educators in California with evidence-based guidance for enhancing inclusivity, recruitment and cultural relevance in their own programs.

Additionally, conducting case studies in particularly successful schools or districts in Texas could provide a deeper understanding of effective practices for recruiting Hispanic/Latine students into music. These on-campus case-studies, analogous to this current study, would offer valuable, context-rich insights into strategies that are effective the Texas context, which is similar to that of California in terms of student Hispanic/Latine population presence.

Lastly, it is recommended that collegiate music education programs in California critically examine the evolving practices of educator training in Texas, with particular attention to alternative teacher certification pathways focused on Música Latina genres. Investigating these developments may provide valuable insights into innovative approaches for preparing culturally responsive and diverse music educators. It can hopefully inform curricular and pedagogical reforms, aimed at better equipping future teachers to serve diverse student populations.

Increasing interest in BOCJ courses

This current study sustains prior research reporting that students of Hispanic/Latine heritage have strong cultural identity, and that this identity and related cultural influences affect music class participation. Since the findings in this study seem to validate the concept that Música Latina classes positively enhance music class participation, it may be beneficial to focus future research questions toward a different goal – that of augmenting Hispanic/Latine student involvement in the music classes that are most prevalent in our schools. With the current study, I examined BOCJ participation as one aspect of inclusion, but a deeper, more focused study may lead to higher participation in schools where a Música Latina class is not feasible. As BOCJ courses are ubiquitous in public schools throughout the nation, one possible research question that may be greatly beneficial to the American music education might be: What strategies can be employed to increase the interest and participation of Hispanic/Latine populations in Band, Orchestra, Choir and Jazz bands?

Limitations

There are several limitations to this study, which will be acknowledged here:

Limited scope

Due to academic time considerations, the number of schools that were chosen to participate in this study was intentionally limited. As a result, the sample group from which these data are derived is very small; only four. Combined across all four schools, the participants included 45 music students, 32 non-music students, 4 music teachers, and 3 administrators. In addition to the small sample size, the randomization of participants was not ideal. Participating schools were selected via a non-random, purposive approach, focusing on programs with which prior familiarity existed or that were recommended via personal networks. Similarly, within each

school, sampling was non-random and purposive, relying exclusively on teachers to recruit volunteers from their classrooms. This sampling methodology reflects a deliberate emphasis on accessibility and feasibility rather than probabilistic representation.

While it is clear that the information gathered from these participants was insightful, authentic, and highly informative, it is not appropriate to extrapolate the conclusions taken from this study to apply to all schools – not even all schools across Northern California. Achieving data saturation within the limited timeframe and sample size is unlikely. Truly external validity in research relies on data saturation to ensure that a maximum amount of relevant themes are identified (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). This saturation was not achieved during this study. It is important to acknowledge that every school, community, music program, student, administrator and teacher are different and may not have the same motives or responses as were discovered here.

Online Survey

One portion of this study that proved especially susceptible to inadequate participation numbers was the online survey. The survey was designed to be taken by as many Hispanic/Latine students as possible at each participating high school–ideally reaching 300 participants to assure statistical significance.

Regrettably, the restraints imposed on the recruitment of survey participants were so stringent that acquiring a sufficient quantity of survey responses proved exceedingly difficult. At each study site, the implementation of passive opt-out consent procedures was mandated for all parents or guardians of the Hispanic/Latine students–the target of the survey. This mandate required the school to provide an email or physical mailing addresses of the entire Hispanic/Latine student body, at which point an informed consent opt out form would be sent to

all qualifying address. **School 2** declined to provide the necessary contact information, resulting in an inability to activate opt-out consent, thereby eliminating the possibility of surveying students at that school.

At S**chools 1, 3, and 4**, opt-out protocols were duly implemented; however, student participation in the survey remained unfortunately low, despite the incentive of a raffle prize of a musical instrument. Ultimately, the overall number of completed surveys was insufficient to yield a data set of adequate size and representativeness, thereby compromising the reliability and validity of the survey outcomes. What responses were collected are located in **Appendix I**. This low participation rate exemplifies a challenge common to research involving human subjects, particularly minors in whom engagement and consent processes can significantly impede data collection.

It is regrettable that the survey did not garner sufficient responses for inclusion in the dissertation results. The data gathered from the questions could have supplied statistical confirmation of several of the quantitative themes, providing much-needed triangulation on what is instead exclusively qualitative findings. Examples of results from the survey that would have been informative are what percentage of Hispanic/Latine non-music students cited scheduling issues as barriers to their participation, or if themes that emerged were common across schools. Most importantly, however, the larger sample size of the survey would have strengthened the external validity of the study's findings.

Access

Due to the ethical considerations involved in conducting research with live student participants, many of whom were minors, the Institutional Review Board (IRB) imposed stringent restrictions on the study's implementation. In particular, these restrictions delineated

criteria for participant eligibility and specified protocols for recruitment. Consequently, the study depended heavily on on-site teachers and administrators to facilitate critical aspects of both the planning and execution phases. For instance, student recruitment for focus group participation was conducted by on-site teachers who read a standardized script to their classes. In-person delivery of the script by researchers proved unattainable, due to the researcher's physical distance from the participating schools. Instead, recruitment was conducted by teachers who invited musician participants from their own classrooms and non-musician participants from other classes. Understandably, given their demanding schedules and commitments beyond the classroom, music teachers faced a substantial additional burden in undertaking these recruitment responsibilities. This added responsibility frequently resulted in slowed communication and delays in implementation, thereby limiting the available time for data collection and subsequent analysis.

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APPENDIX A

TABLES

Table 1

Demographic and Enrollment Characteristics of Participating Schools According to School Accountability Report Cards

Characteristic	*School 1*	*School 2*	*School 3*	*School 4*
Location	Agricultural town (pop. 16,000)	Small suburban city(pop. 177,000)	Urban city (pop. 320,000)	Urban area (pop. 33,000)
Enrollment	1,749	1,584	2,267	1,939
% Hispanic or Latino	54.7	31.1	56.8	23.2
% White	34.0	49.5	3.5	59.3
% Asian	1.1	8	20.0	4.6
% Black or African American	<1	1.5	9.4	2.5
% Filipino	<1	1.8	5.3	1.2
% American Indian or Alaska Native	4.1	0.4	<1	0.3
% Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	<1	0.5	<1	0.5
% Two or More Races	3.8	7.2	<1	8.4
% Socioeconomically Disadvantaged	76.7	36	76.5	36.4
% Students with Disabilities	12.9	11.6	13.1	8.8

Note. Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding or omission of groups with less than 0.5%.

Table 2

School Interview Participants and Background Descriptions

School	Role	Background Description
1	Instrumental Music Teacher	Nine-year teacher; self-identifies as a White female.
	Principal	Self-described Chicana (American of Mexican descent); taught band for 20 years in various locations, including creating a Mariachi-influenced music program in Las Vegas.
2	Instrumental Music Teacher	Fourth-year teacher; self-identifies as Latino; long-time Mariachi player; involved in community Mariachi youth programs.
	Vice-Principal	Three-year administrator; previously a long-time science teacher; self-identifies as a White female.
3	Instrumental Music Teacher	Four-year music teacher; self-identifies as Latino; professional Mariachi player since his teenage years.
	Vice-Principal	Former music teacher at the same school; created and built the school's Mariachi program.
4	Instrumental Music Teacher	Ten-year teacher at elementary and high school levels; self-identifies as Filipino.

Note. Participants are identified by school number and role. All participants are reported as self-identified.

Table 3

Classes observed listed by School

School	***Classes Observed***
School 1	Música Norteña ensemble, jazz band ensemble, intermediate choir, beginning band ensemble, beginning guitar class, advanced band ensemble
School 2	advanced placement music theory, intermediate band, Mariachi ensemble, intermediate choir, jazz band
School 3	Mariachi ensembles (beginning, intermediate, advanced), intermediate band ensemble, intermediate jazz ensemble
School 4	concert band, advanced band, percussion ensemble, advanced choir, madrigal choir, two guitar classes, Mariachi club, music in ethnic studies, jazz band

Table 4

Demographic analysis of courses by school and class type

Percentage of class that identifies as Hispanic/Latine

School	***Música Latina classes***	***BOCJ classes***
School 1	100	20
School 2	97	10
School 3	97	60
School 4	95	1

Table 5

Number of participants per group

School	*Musicians Focus Group*	*Non-musician Focus Group*
1	10	6
2	10	10
3	10	10
4	10	10

APPENDIX B

Focus Group and Teacher/Administrator Interview Questions

Non-Musician Focus Group Questions

- What kinds of music do you most enjoy listening to?
- What do you know about the music programs offered at your school?
- Have you ever considered joining a school music class? If so, what motivated you? If not, what were the main reasons you chose not to participate?
- Do you feel a sense of belonging or connection to any students and/or teachers involved in the school's music programs?
- When you were in elementary school or middle school, did you take any music classes then?
- If so, when did you stop participating in music? Why?
- If you ever wanted to take a music class before, are there any barriers or challenges you've faced that have stopped you from participating in school music? These could be related to scheduling, finances, family responsibilities, etc.
- Do you have any interest to learn about music or be able to make music outside of school classes? Scale from 1-5?
- What changes or additions to the music program do you think would make it more appealing and accessible for Latino students like yourself?
- Did you know that Latinos are underrepresented in school music? Meaning.. Latinos are more than half the school, but way less than half the music program. Show of hands.
- Do you have any thoughts about why that might be?

Musician Focus Group Questions

- When you were in elementary school or middle school, did you take any music classes?
- What made you decide to join?
- Did you enjoy them?

- What kinds of music do you most enjoy listening to? How do these preferences align or conflict with the music offered in school programs?
- Are there any barriers or challenges you've faced that might have prevented you from participating in school music? These could be related to scheduling, finances, family responsibilities, etc.
- Did you know that Latines are underrepresented in music? Show of hands.
- Do you have any thoughts about why that might be?
- What changes or additions to the music program do you think would make it more appealing and accessible for Latine students like yourself?
- What are your perceptions of the music programs offered at your school? How much, or how little, do they represent your cultural background and interests?

Teacher Interview Questions

- How diverse is the student participation in your music program?
- What strategies have you used to recruit and retain Latine students?
- What challenges have you observed in getting Latine students involved and keeping them engaged in the music program?
- In what ways do you include repertoire, teaching methods, and cultural connections that are relevant to your Latine students? Can you provide examples?
- How do you work to create an inclusive and welcoming environment for students of diverse backgrounds in your music classes and ensembles?
- What kinds of support or resources do you feel are needed to better serve the Latine student population in your music program?
- Have you noticed any differences in the participation levels or musical preferences between Latine students and students from other backgrounds?

Administrator Interview Questions

- What is the demographic breakdown of students participating in your school's music programs? Are there any notable disparities in Latine student involvement that you are aware of?
- Are you aware that Hispanic/Latine students are underrepresented in music programs all over the nation?
- Have you noticed this going on in your school?
- What initiatives or policies has the school/district implemented to promote greater Latine student engagement in music education?
- What challenges or barriers have you observed that may be preventing Latine students from joining and staying involved in music programs?
- How does the school/district work to ensure music curricula, teaching approaches, and ensemble offerings are culturally relevant and responsive to the Latine student population?
- What kinds of partnerships or outreach efforts has the school/district explored to connect with the Latine community and encourage music participation?
- What additional resources, training, or support do you feel would be beneficial for music teachers to better serve Latine students?

APPENDIX C

Latino Student Music Participation Survey Vehicle

Preliminary Question (PQ)1. What is your name? (short answer box)

PQ2. What is your student ID number? (short answer box) (This is how we will eliminate any student whose parents opted them out of this survey.)

PQ3. How do you identify?

a. Hispanic/Latino b. White c. Black/African American d. Asian e. Native American/Alaska Native f. Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander g. Other

(Any answer that does not contain Hispanic/Latino will direct the participant to a thank you/good bye page.)

PQ4. What is your Age?

A. 14-17

B. 18

(Answer "A" will be shown the assent form, answer "B" will be shown the consent form)

(Students who provide assent or consent will be directed to the survey. Students who decline assent or consent will be directed to a thank you/goodbye page.)

THESE QUESTIONS ARE FOR ALL PARTICIPANTS

Question (Q)1 What is your grade level?

a. 9th b. 10th c. 11th d. 12th .

Q2 Do you currently participate in any music class at your school?

a. Yes b. No

[An answer of Yes will direct participants to the next set of questions (A.B.C.....) and answer of No will direct participant to the set of questions marked 4. 5. 6...)]

THESE ARE FOR MUSIC NON-PARTICIPANTS

Q3. If you do not currently participate in music classes at your school, have you participated in them in the past? (Yes/No)

Q4. Which of the following best describes why you do not currently participate in school music a sses? (Select all that apply)

a. I'm not interested in music

b. My family cannot afford the costs associated with music classes/activities

c. I don't have time due to other commitments (e.g., work, sports, family responsibilities)

d. I don't feel welcome or supported in the music program

e. I don't think I have the necessary musical skills or talent

f. Other (please specify): _____

Q5. How important is music as part of your cultural identity and heritage?
(Scale of 1-5, with 1 being "Not at all important" and 5 being "Extremely important")

Q6. What, if anything, would encourage you to consider joining a school music program in the future? Select all that apply

a. More financial support (less or no cost)
b. Increased representation of Hispanic/Latino music and culture
c. Stronger recruitment and outreach efforts
d. Flexible scheduling options
e. Mentorship or support from current music students
f. Mentorship or support from music teachers
g. More diverse/expansive course/class offerings

Other (please specify): _____

Q7. Which of the following statements is closest to how much you know about the music teacher s at your school?

a. Absolutely nothing. I don’t even know who they are.
b. I see them around sometimes, but I’ve never talked to them.

c. I've met them at least once, and they want me in the music program.
d. I've met them but they never asked me to join the music program.
e. I know them pretty well.

Q8. If you know them, how positive or negative is your opinion of the music teachers?

a. Very positive
b. Positive
c. Neutral
d. Negative
e. Very Negative
f. Don't know them enough to have an opinion

Q9. To what extent do you agree with the following statement:

School music is not for me because I'm Hispanic/Latino.

a. Strongly agree
b. Somewhat agree
c. Neutral
d. Somewhat disagree
e. Strongly disagree

THIS SECTION IS FOR STUDENTS WHO ARE IN MUSIC CLASSES

Question (Q)A. Which of the following best describes why you *do* participate in a school music class? (Select all that apply)

a. I enjoy playing/singing music
b. It allows me to express my cultural identity
c. It provides a community/sense of belonging
d. It will help me develop important skills (e.g., discipline, teamwork)
e. It will look good on my college applications
f My family encourages me to participate
-Other (please specify): _____

QB. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: "My school's music classes reflects and celebrates Latino/Hispanic culture and identity."

a. Strongly agree
b. Agree
c. Neutral
d. Disagree
e. Strongly disagree

QC.How important is it to you that your school's music classes include Latino/Hispanic musical traditions and styles (e.g. ,mariachi, salsa, merengue, Norteño)?

a. Extremely important
b. Very important
c. Moderately important
d. Slightly important
e. Not at all important

QD. How important is music as part of your cultural identity and heritage?

a. Extremely important
b. Very important
c. Moderately important
d. Slightly important
e. Not at all important

QE. How satisfied are you with the level of support and resources provided by your school for Hispanic/Latino students in the music program?

a. Very satisfied
b. Somewhat satisfied

c. Neutral

d. Somewhat dissatisfied

e. Very dissatisfied

QF. To what extent do you agree with the following statement:

"It is harder for me to be involved in school music because I'm Hispanic/Latino."

a. Strongly agree

b. Somewhat agree

c. Neutral

d. Somewhat disagree

e. Strongly disagree

THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS ARE FOR ALL PARTICIPANTS

Q10. Is there anything else that you would like us to know that we have NOT asked about?

(Open-ended response)

Q11.a (For all participants). In order to be entered into the drawing for a new Ukulele, what is your full name? _____

Q11.b and your email address _____

Q12. Are you interested in participating in a Focus Group of students to discuss their opinions and experiences having to do with music in schools for Latino/Hispanic students (more information provided if interested).

a. Yes __

b. No ____ [No is taken to a thank you page]

[Students who answered [18] to the preliminary age question will be directed to the Focus Group Consent form.]

[Students who answered [14-17] in the earlier age question and
Yes to Question 12, will be directed to question 13, then directed to the Focus
Group assent form.]

Q13. What is the email address of your parents/guardians so that we can send them a Focus Group consent form? _____

APPENDIX D

School 1 Transcripts

School 1 — Musician Focus Group

Moderator: My first question is for anybody in the room. You are all in a music class now of some sort. When you were in elementary school though, or middle school, did you take any music classes?
Speaker 1: Yes. Yeah.
Moderator: Okay. Any nos? Okay. When did you start?
Speaker 2: I started my freshman year. I joined beginning band. And then went on to Wind Ensemble my sophomore year. And currently I'm a junior and in both Wind Ensemble and Jazz Ensemble.
Moderator: Excellent. Thank you. Later on I'll ask you why you joined and that's perfect. 'Cause it's hard to join in high school. 'Cause all the, everyone else has already been playing for a while. Okay. Actually that's my next question. When you started music, what made you decide to join a music class, not just band or choir or Norteño? What made you decide to, whatever class you joined?
Speaker 1: I thought it'd just be something cool to do. I didn't really think I'd get into it as much, but slowly throughout that first year I did it. I started to enjoy more and more. [Talking about Beginning Band.]
Speaker 2: I really have always loved music, but it just didn't take priority in middle school. Especially since sixth grade, which is where a lot of people start, beginning band in middle school was completely online.
Speaker 3: As a kid, I've always looked at my dad. He used to play guitar a lot, and it really inspired me to play the guitar. And just by watching him just spark like this passion of playing. And whenever I played the guitar it's like my therapy.
Speaker 4: Yeah. I'd like to add to what he said. My dad, when he was in high school, he was in a mariachi band with all of his siblings. And then later on, his siblings went off and went to college and all that. And then me, him, and my uncles who live here, we made a mariachi band and then COVID hit and everything shut down. And then afterwards, in like seventh grade, I was like, whoa, there's a band program here, let me do this.
New hobby, but it sounded cool. I wanna play some of my favorite songs, and girls — kind of attractive too.
The teacher in my first year of band, he was an awesome musician, but not a very good teacher. But for percussion, which is what I played, he knew how to play the instrument and he knew exactly how to do it and taught us perfectly. So I enjoyed it.
Speaker 2: I enjoyed my first class. I've also, since I joined from my freshman year, I've only had one director and it definitely helps that she's a brass player and I play a brass instrument.
Moderator: So this is one that's not necessarily about school music. What kinds of music do you like listening to on your own? Outside of school music. What do you listen to? For example, corridos.
Speaker 1: Yeah. Same thing, like they said, also music — classic, something I'm in my feelings about, or has to play on the piano. I like Samba. It's the polyrhythms. Yeah. It makes my brain happy.

Speaker 2: Yes. Personally, even though my parents listen to a lot of regional Mexican music growing up, on my own time I don't listen to a lot of that apart from maybe like really big artists like Selena. But when I listen to music for fun, I really like classical music. But I also feel like I like a lot of different genres. I listen to indie, I also listen to some classic rock. I listen to a lot of pop and Latin Pop as well.
Speaker 1: I like to listen to a lot of corridos.
I like Marca MP.
Speaker 2: And to add on — recently being in jazz, I've been trying to listen to more jazz lately.
Moderator: Now let's generalize to your friends and other Latinos on campus. What do you think most Latino high school students in this area are listening to?
Speaker 1: Rap? Yeah. Yeah. I'd say rap.
Rod Wave. Gunna, Lil Baby. 21 Savage.
Speaker 5: I've also noticed how, everyone was saying that they listen to regional music or corridos or that sort of thing. That can definitely be applied more broadly to a lot of other Latino students I know in my Spanish classes.
Speaker 1: My music taste is a lot like — you say it is very similar to that. And then when I heard a little jazz, then I was like, yeah, I wanna do that.
I'd say for me, there's music I like to listen to. Definitely — that's why I wanted to learn music, because I wanted to learn how to play certain songs. So when I saw the music that I had for band and jazz, I saw some that were a lot and I — playing the bongos felt really good and it felt more at home.
Speaker 2: Yes. Personally, last year in Wind Ensemble, we did a John Philip Sousa march, *The Gladiator*, for festival. And when I was listening to that and some of the Frank Ticheli stuff we were also doing, I also listened to a few other John Philip Sousa marches that we very much were not doing.
Big example, shout out *The Stars and Stripes*.
Moderator: What are any barriers or challenges that you have faced that might have prevented you from participating in music in school?
Speaker 1: I'd say no. My parents are very supportive of learning music.
Yeah, but in sixth grade there was the dual language immersion program, which took up my elective spot for sixth grade. So I couldn't really start.
Speaker 3: One obstacle I had was — I really loved music. The first class I took freshman year was beginning guitar and I loved that class. And that's when my instructor gave me the position of the jazz guitarist in the jazz ensemble.
Speaker 1: Lack of discipline — lack of practice.
Speaker 2: Transportation to school really early for some field trips and stuff — oftentimes there are plenty of band parents who are willing to give other people a ride.
Moderator: Show of hands, who here knows, or you've heard, that in general in this country, Latinos are underrepresented in school music? Do you guys have any thoughts about why that might be?
Speaker 5: One thought that I had was because I thought it would all be classical music and I wouldn't understand anything. Because that's usually what it was before. It was just all the — what was there. But in eighth grade, and now that I'm here with [name omitted], she goes out of her way and looks for these songs that we'd like playing.
I think they're just surrounded with Mexican music, from Mariachi and regional Mexican. So they're not gonna be very — except jazz or pop or other music.

Moderator: What changes or additions to the music program here would you, do you think would make it more appealing and accessible for Latino students like yourself?
Speaker 1: Have a Spanish-speaking music director. And also play music — like jazz, but also different types of genres like salsa, stuff that might make Latinos know what those genres are and might make it more likely that they wanna join.
Speaker 3: If there was an addition of a mariachi band, 'cause I know some kids that would love to be in that.
Speaker 2: For example, in Wind Ensemble last year, one of the songs we did for our spring concert was "Malagueña." And that one was very Latin. And oftentimes it's those sorts of music — it's more similar to what a lot of Latinos grew up listening to. Or like a tribute show to someone like Selena.
Speaker 1: I don't have an idea, but make a band class — a class that's specifically just for Mexican music. Like, I know people that like aren't really interested in mariachi, but are more interested in and would rather play Banda.
Moderator: What are your perceptions of the music program here at School 1? How much or how little does the school music program represent your cultural background and interests?
Speaker 1: I feel that the Norteño class here really represents the Latino community here, and also a little bit of the Bajo since I know a Latin instrument. It's mostly used in Latin America, but it originated in the States, but yeah.
Speaker 1: He — the time he came into my classroom, he picked steel pans instead of regular instruments. Because COVID.
Moderator: By the way, just a reminder that if any of you would like to answer but you don't feel like you want to answer in English, you can answer me in Spanish.
Speaker 1: So my friend — he did music with me in seventh and eighth grade. But he left once he got to high school because he didn't like the past teacher. He thought all band directors were like that. So I was like, hey, this teacher's not like that. He was like, yeah, but I already chose this. [Name omitted] is a lot better.
Speaker 2: What both of them were saying about just them having different hobbies — and oftentimes things like schedules can limit how much electives you can take, especially when you're an underclassman, like a freshman or sophomore.
Especially a lot of freshmen take Algebra One. And at our school, Algebra One is two periods. So that might have conflicted.
I do think that idea still persists, especially when it comes to specifically Wind Ensemble and choir. Because I feel like a lot more people see it as more acceptable to take guitar or to take music.
Speaker 1: In jazz, we can have different types — if you like Latin Jazz, I'd like to have also salsa. Like, I remember last year, the last song we played was called "Ran Kan Kan." And that song heavily focused on auxiliary percussion. And it was very fun because a lot of it focused on the back.
Yeah, that's it. Becoming a music teacher — it really sticks out to me. Yeah. I did think about it in middle school, but then once I looked at the pay rate, I realized that it's not a well-paying job. I feel like I would be interested though. I'd only be interested in teaching guitar and piano because that's what I'm almost like, aware of.
Speaker 2: Something that I am looking into is universities that have a good marching band. I would also really be interested in joining some sort of jazz band at whatever university I go to.

Speaker 1: Past high school I'd probably join a marching band again. And I'd like to join a jazz band too, know more about jazz band.
Moderator: So at the very beginning of this, I asked what kind of music you guys like to listen to on your own. But there were several people who weren't here yet, or maybe you've had some time to think.
Speaker 1: For me, I listen to a wide range of genres — classic or new.
Speaker 2: R&B.
I was gonna say the artist — she is half Icelandic, half Chinese. A song that comes to mind is a song *Like the Movies*.
Speaker 1: That the artist I've listened to, because he also has really nice emotional music, but it's also very religious.
Juanes too is also good. Some nice songs.
Moderator: Okay. In learning about Norteño, [name omitted] has introduced me to some really great artists, like Calibre 50.
And of course Los Tucanes, but they're like, everybody knows them.
Speaker 3: When you were mentioning artists, it brought up the thing about — Willie Colón.
Moderator: For example, the first Norteño song that I loved was *La Yaquesita*. That one is such — I love that song. It's so catchy and I love it.
Speaker 1: Is there any Mexican artist like he discovered?
Moderator: Okay, so he's not Mexican, he's Colombian. I heard in a restaurant *La Camisa Negra* by Juanes. *A Dios le Pido*. Yeah. *Mi Sangre* is an album, one of his albums.
So there's a guy, one of the top band directors at [school name omitted]. His name is [name omitted]. There's a piece you should check out — *Un Cafecito* by [name omitted]. So good.
Speaker 1: Have you heard of Junior H?
Moderator: I have not. What's that?
Speaker 1: Listen to him.
Moderator: Yeah. Okay. A question for you guys. One Latino artist who's gonna be in the Super Bowl? Bad Bunny.

School 1 — Non-Musician Focus Group

Moderator: What do you know about the music classes at this school, if anything?
Speaker 1: [Via translator:] Nothing. That is an answer too. If you don't know anything, that is important for me to know.
Speaker 2: Do you think there is a lot?
Moderator: Nothing? That's an answer, too. Like, if you don't know anything, that's important for me to know. You think there's a lot? Yeah, you do. Okay, good.
Moderator: Okay. No? Nothing? Okay, that's good to know, actually. That's very helpful.
Moderator: You're not in any music now. Have you ever considered joining a music class, either here, at the high school, or in middle school?
Speaker 1: [Via translator:] She wanted to learn to play guitar. Both of them wanted to learn guitar. Excellent. She has never planned or thought about it. Yeah, most of them, at some point, thought of learning guitar.
Moderator: Guitar class. Okay, cool. And I think you were saying that you took guitar. You actually took it in middle school. Cool. If, okay, so if you, for those of you who didn't ever want to take guitar, or excuse me, if you never wanted to take a music class, is there any reason why you didn't want to?

Speaker 3: [Via translator:] She was just not interested.
Moderator: Just not interested. That's fine. Cool. How about the rest of you? Why did you want to, why were you interested in taking guitar?
Speaker 1: [Via translator:] Because she likes the sound of the guitar, she likes the sound of how it's played. Because of her friends.
Moderator: Think about here at School 1. Do you feel a sense of belonging or connection to any students or teachers in the music program? What kind? [Name omitted]? You know her? How do you know [name omitted]?
Speaker 4: I met [name omitted].
Speaker 5: [Via translator:] I have never met the music teacher.
Moderator: No friends in music classes?
Speaker 1: [Via translator:] Friends that they have there. There was no connections whatsoever. They don't know the teacher.
Moderator: Outside of school, what kinds of music do you most like listening to? Any kind you can tell me.
Speaker 6: Whatever music it is. It doesn't matter.
Speaker 7: Me — Los Alegríos del Barranco, Chariño Sánchez, Aritamacho.
Speaker 1: [Via translator:] What is the music called?
Speaker 7: Corridos.
Speaker 8: I don't know. Banda. Banda.
Speaker 1: [Via translator:] Corridos. Corridos. Kevin? Corridos. André?
Speaker 4: Corridos and banda.
Speaker 1: [Via translator:] Corridos and banda. Okay. Everything. They use five of them. Corridos.
Moderator: Corridos y banda. Okay. Fantastic. Thank you.
Moderator: In school, thinking about guitar class in middle school or high school — you said you wanted to be in it, but you didn't take the class. Was there anything that stopped you, that made you couldn't? We say barriers.
Speaker 7: They didn't give me the class. Not me either.
Speaker 1: [Via translator:] Why?
Speaker 7: I don't know. What would they know?
Speaker 1: [Via translator:] Oh, because there was not enough spots in the class. Or they would not offer that option to them
What did [name omitted] say? Yeah, he thought that it was only for — he didn't know anything about the school. He didn't know how to get into it.
Moderator: Okay. Just, you didn't have that information
Speaker 7: There is no information, or anything.
Speaker 1: [Via translator:] Yeah, no information whatsoever.
Moderator: What about, regardless of music classes, do you have any desire to learn how to play music? Not necessarily at school, but just in life?
Speaker 4: Yes, but it happens with other things.
Speaker 1: [Via translator:] They actually thought about doing it themselves, but they never got to it
Moderator: So, did you know — I just was curious, show me a show of hands. Do you know that around the United States in schools, Latinos are underrepresented in music?

Speaker 1: [Via translator:] Did you know that here, in the schools, you are not represented? You lack representation.
Speaker 4: That you guys weren't represented.
Speaker 1: [Via translator:] And now that you know, do you have any idea why you aren't represented?
Speaker 7: What makes them think/know that they don't represent us?
Speaker 1: [Via translator:] If I could make music here at school, would my parents allow me to go to the classes?
Moderator: What do you think about — none of you have been in band, the band class. What do you think about it, or what do your friends think about the band class on campus?
Speaker 3: I just heard that it's very fun.
Speaker 1: [Via translator:] She likes it when they play in the rallies, or at events. She likes to hear it. She likes to hear it, but that's all she knows about the programs.
Moderator: Yeah, okay. When you were either in middle school or a freshman here, did anybody try to get you to take music? Did anybody talk to you or see any signs?
Speaker 1: [Via translator:] In middle school, they just gave her that class to play an instrument, but she didn't like it, which was a clarinet.
Moderator: Oh, clarinet. Okay, cool. Would you mind if I asked why you didn't like it?
Speaker 1: [Via translator:] It was the style of — she did not like it.
Moderator: Okay. But what about everybody else? Did you hear about music? Did anybody try to get you to join? And you took it? Yeah. How about anybody else? Did anybody reach out? Did you hear about it in the announcements?
Speaker 6: Yes, but casually I told him.
Speaker 3: But she liked art.
Speaker 1: [Via translator:] Yeah, my counselor told her, but she preferred art.
Moderator: Is there anything that the school can do that would make you more interested in taking a music class of any kind — band, choir, guitar, whatever?
Speaker 1: [Via translator:] The information is low, and they don't promote it, especially the music that they like.
Moderator: Okay, that's really good to know. Have you heard — I know some of you, we've talked about it. Did all of you know that this school has Norteña?
Speaker 4: They heard it. They knew about it.
Moderator: Yeah. Is that interesting to anybody to try?
Speaker 4: Yes, that is interesting.
Speaker 1: [Via translator:] Yeah, they were interested to try it out.
Moderator: Are there any other music classes that you can think of that you would take if it was offered? Piano. More so than guitar? Why is that?
Speaker 6: There was a piano class.
Speaker 3: Piano sounds good.
Speaker 4: Of course. It sounds very good.
Moderator: Yeah, for sure. Anybody else? Is there a class like — oh, I would take that for sure?
Speaker 1: [Via translator:] Anyone else? If I have this class, I'll take it. Anyone else? Cumbias. Banda. Banda, corridos, mariachis.
Moderator: I guess in English we would say appreciation for the Latin music.
Speaker 1: [Via translator:] Appreciation of Latin music. It would be a class that appreciated Latin music in general. Maybe not to play it, but to study it.

Speaker 4: Yes, I would like that.
Moderator: Let's see. Outside of school, do your friends or family play music in any groups?
Speaker 6: A couple of neighbors who play accordion.
Speaker 1: [Via translator:] Okay. In Norteño or corridos? Just by themselves. Solo. They just play accordion. Okay.
Speaker 4: All my friends play instruments. And I'm in a band, so I play in a group.
Speaker 1: [Via translator:] What kind of band?
Speaker 4: Me, a band and — Mariachis.
Moderator: Okay. Big question. What do you think about mariachi? Mariachi is very popular in schools, especially in Southern California. And it's growing in the United States. So my question is, do you like mariachi music?
Speaker 4: If there was a class, I would take it.
Speaker 1: [Via translator:] You would take mariachi?
Moderator: What instrument would you play? Okay. Yeah. Nylon classical string guitar. Yeah. Nice. Do you ever listen to mariachi on your own?
Speaker 6: Just at parties, but not in my classrooms.
Speaker 3: Only at parties, but nothing else.
Moderator: Okay. Mariachi, no, but corridos, a lot.
Speaker 1: [Via translator:] Mariachi, not so much, but corridos more. At parties. Yeah, at parties.
Speaker 5: Yes. I am listening to mariachis.
Speaker 4: Are they both? Yes, both. Good.
Moderator: Good to know. If School 1 had a mariachi program, like you said, would you take it? Would you think about joining?
Speaker 4: Yes. Maybe.
Speaker 1: [Via translator:] So, yeah, two no's and maybe two yes.
Moderator: Okay. Think back to when you were very young, if you can — elementary school. Did you have music in elementary school?
Speaker 6: Yeah, but it was like a ukulele class.
Moderator: Oh, only? Yeah. Oh, interesting. Ukulele, okay. No music in elementary? Okay.
Speaker 4: Me, when I was very little I took flute.
Speaker 1: [Via translator:] Yeah. They played the flute.
Moderator: This one? This flute? The one that goes like — oh, in front or inside? Oh. It's called the recorder?
Speaker 1: [Via translator:] Yeah, it's flute.
Speaker 4: Yes, I learned many songs.
Moderator: But you didn't want to do music in middle school? No. Any reason why not?
Speaker 1: [Via translator:] She preferred art instead of music.
Moderator: Has anybody here had the experience, which is common — you couldn't do music or an elective because you had to take an English class, an extra English class.
Speaker 4: Yes, this year.
Speaker 1: [Via translator:] Some of you here had to take one elective and not two because you had to take an English class. And I think that's for all of you. Yeah, this year. Yeah, but they don't give you two electives, right? They give you one because you have to take the other English class. Right?
Speaker 7: Yes, there are some that I liked for them because they had to take that English class.

Speaker 1: [Via translator:] Yeah, there's only one elective for them. And because they have to get that English class, I think they have to be reclassified. And if they are not reclassified, they have to continue learning. They already have that as an elective.
Moderator: Changing from Norteña and band over to choir — has anybody ever wanted to sing in a choir?
Speaker 4: I think when I did it, when I took the class, it was very fun.
Moderator: So you didn't have a choice. They just put you there? And you liked it. But you didn't continue.
Speaker 4: Well, in the semester I had — it was the fourth, and then it changed at the end of the semester.
Speaker 5: Before, but not anymore. I was the girl who set the atmosphere — even at the party they had me sing.
Speaker 1: [Via translator:] So you sang before?
Speaker 5: Yes, before. But not anymore.
Speaker 1: [Via translator:] Yeah, she never thought about it because she liked to sing. But not anymore.
Speaker 1: [Via translator:] I mean, I know there's those boys from Norteña, but not the girls from Norteña.
Moderator: No, there's two girls. There's two girls in Norteña now. This year.
Speaker 1: [Via translator:] Interesting.
Moderator: Now, if I can — think about, not for your answers, but for your friends, your friends who are Latinos. What do they think about the school music program, if anything? Do they care about it?
Speaker 8: Well, the majority of students like music but more like — they have to listen to us, truthfully the life of the school.
Speaker 4: Many didn't know about it. Some friends tried to join but they never did.
Speaker 6: I had a friend who really liked the music and was going to take the guitar class, but in the end she quit because she was afraid of the music.
Speaker 7: Well, the reality is that you like the music but it's more like a program that we listen to. My friends like the music but it's more like the guitar class.
Speaker 1: [Via translator:] More than nothing about music but not much about choir or jazz.
Moderator: Last question. After our discussion, now you're thinking about it — is there anything that you would like to say that I haven't asked about? Anything is fine.
Speaker 7: Of being offered. That is the question.
Speaker 1: [Via translator:] Why is there not so many genres being offered? That's the question.
Moderator: If you have any thoughts that come to you later that you didn't think of now, or anything you want to add — I put my email up here on the whiteboard — or you can go talk to the music teacher [name omitted].
Speaker 1: [Via translator:] If you want to add something extra, if an idea occurs to you or you want to make a comment, you can write to him. There is his email. And if not, you can let teacher [name omitted] know, the music teacher here at the school.

School 1 — Teacher Interview

Moderator: I'm gonna start off with a nice, easy one. Have you noticed any differences in the participation levels between Latino students and students from other backgrounds in music in high school — in your school?

Speaker 1: Yes, it's kind of changed in the last ten years, but what hasn't, because of pandemic and things like that. But my bands tend to be majority white, but I wouldn't say by a lot. It might be 70%, 30% kind of a split. I would say [name omitted]'s probably about the same. Beginning band — usually I have quite a few Hispanic students in beginning band, who are pure beginners. Whether they continue on or not is a different story to those other classes. Guitar is definitely always a lot more Hispanic students than my band classes. Probably 65 to 75% of my guitar class is Hispanic. And then my Norteño class is 100% Hispanic, and has been for four years.

Moderator: Not one white person has taken Norteña?

Speaker 1: One has tried and then never showed up, so they didn't — I would say no. They were not successful.

Moderator: Do you have any theories that you have generated over the years as to why there might be such a disparity?

Speaker 1: Band is a very interesting thing because it kind of only exists in education. Obviously, there's military bands at the highest level. And there's marching bands in college, but school participation in music is primarily through band, choir, and orchestra. And when you don't come from the culture of America, where that's just kind of the standard thing that happens, I don't know how you would — why would you want to join that, if that's not — it perhaps doesn't make sense to join? Because you don't really know what it is or what the point is. You might not see it out and about in the world. And especially, you know, John Philip Sousa was a white man, and they don't know who Frederick Fennell is, or even — there's no figures in pop culture to see and observe. So if you don't come from the culture of the United States, where band is a huge part of music education in this country, and kind of this country alone, it would seem like — if you like music and want to learn an instrument, maybe, but it's not really reflected anywhere else. It's kind of its own isolated little bubble of a world. Don't even know what they do. What does a band do? I don't know. I didn't know. To be fair.

Moderator: What about those Hispanic-Latino students who take your beginning band class — you said there tended to be more in there, but whether they continued on — why do you think they may not continue on in the same proportions as their colleagues?

Speaker 1: I think it's a similar thing. I think beginning band is an obvious choice, right? It is a beginning instrument class, you learn the basics of an instrument. But then if they don't enjoy it enough they don't — or maybe they enjoy it moderately — the thought of moving on to band is still a new thing. Like, I don't even know what that is. Because my beginning band is only two, two and a half days a week, and it's hard to get very far. We're learning proper music in the last couple months of the school year, and at that point they've already chosen their classes. To be fair, I'm bad at telling them they should join. When I'll tell them, I feel like it's an obvious next step, but if you don't tell them, they definitely won't. I do have two Hispanic students in my beginning band class this year. One of them's gonna continue on. I'm trying to convince the other, but one of them's not. He's gonna stay in Norteño, potentially do mariachi.

Moderator: Recruiting and retaining — what strategies have you used to recruit and retain Latino students in your music program, any of the classes?

Speaker 1: Well, the initial strategy of recruiting Latino students was inventing the Norteño class in itself, because I was not seeing those students represented in my band when

56 or 57% of my school is Latino, Hispanic. I looked at my band, and that was not — those were not the numbers. And at the same time, there were students showing up to campus with accordions and guitars, and they would play in the quad, just at lunch, at break. And it just felt obvious that some of these students just needed a place to go and play music, so I started that Norteño class. It's been going on for four years now, and those kids that have taken my beginning band that I was talking about earlier — they were in Norteño, they could play by ear, now they've learned how to read music, and they've learned, trumpet or trombone or whatever. And with trumpet or trombone, they could either go the band route, or the jazz route, or the Norteño route, or trumpet in mariachi. But the gateway was the Norteño class, so there's some cross-mingling that's happening right now. And then recruiting is not a strength of mine, but just getting them to talk to their friends, say, hey, you should join. Come have fun, it's fun, come join. I just harangued somebody in the hallway who was in my guitar class last year, and he's really good. I was like, hey, why aren't you in Norteño? And there's a kid next to me, he's like, can I join? And I said, do you know your G major scale? Can you play me a song? And he's like, yeah. And I said, okay, auditions are in a month. And he's like, can I join? I was like, you better practice for your audition. So just getting out there is really hard for me, but it's definitely what works the best — just haranguing your friends and just telling the kids to get the word out: okay, come join this class with me. If they enjoy it, of course.

Moderator: Have you ever done any school-wide recruiting for either the band, orchestra, choir side of the program, or the Norteño side?

Speaker 1: No. I mean, we play. We play out and about, you can see us. So I don't know — it's clearly not enough to just play, you have to say, you should join this thing, let me talk to you. It's important to make a kid feel special and valued and important, and I'm apparently bad at doing that on an individual basis with kids I don't know.

Moderator: What specific challenges have you observed in getting Latino students involved and keeping them engaged in the music program? Without retreading what you've already talked about, are there any other challenges you've noticed?

Speaker 1: The challenge with the Norteño class, which was not obvious to me at first but became obvious pretty soon, was that it was really hard to get female Latina students into that class. The Norteño class itself — I think the first year had like 24 sign up for it, and then I started pushing it to like 30, and I was about to have to say no because I didn't have the space for all the students. And then it's been in the 20s — it's in the mid-20s right now, and next year it's probably about 20. I don't know that there are any other challenges other than students who need to be reclassified and can't fit the elective into their schedule, you know? A lot of — this was a shock to my system — comparing the GPAs between my band students and Norteño students was a major eye-opener for me. And a lot of these kids have to go take a credit recovery class, or something like that that might conflict. I had an incredible accordion player — ridiculous accordion player — my first year, and he couldn't take it his senior year because he had to take credit recovery. Come on, man. Come on.

Moderator: How often does it happen that a Latino student wants to take a music class, but is blocked either by their EL status, reclassification, or by credit recovery?

Speaker 1: I have no idea. He was one of them. And then I've had like two others. Most of our district is Hispanic, and so they start the English learning process as soon as they get here. So by the time they get to high school, a lot of them are reclassified. There's definitely a portion who still cannot speak English very well. But I would say by the time the kids get to the high school, most of them are reclassified. I think I've had a total of three, maybe five students who couldn't

take it because of credit recovery, or some of them needed so much credit recovery that they actually just had to go to the alternative high school down the road. Because they missed so much school, or yeah, didn't do work.

Moderator: You said that you noticed a striking difference between your band class grades and your Norteño grades. Do you think that that is a cultural issue?

Speaker 1: Yes. I mean, one of my former Norteño students came back a couple weeks ago, and was saying that he went to college, because I took the Norteño class up to our local community college, to the recording class, and he realized, oh, I could do this, I could go to college. And his family — he was talking about, yeah, my family just thinks the only way to make it is to just work, and to work really hard, but I think you can go to school, I think that's okay. But I won't — I don't really want to blanket-statement that, because I've had a lot of Hispanic families — you know, why is my student's grade like this? But I definitely do think there's a different attitude towards higher ed. Most of my students in that class don't talk about going to college, they talk about "I'm going to lineman school," "I'm gonna become a barber." They pretty much, yeah, talk about work.

Moderator: In what ways do you include repertoire, teaching methods, and cultural connections that are relevant to your Latino students? Can you provide any examples? And I'm talking, obviously, about the band, the instrumental classes. Or you could even speak to the choir portion, although I know you don't teach those. I think the answer to that question on the Norteño side is pretty self-evident.

Speaker 1: Yeah, Norteño is all we do. Yeah, that's all we do. They learn songs from any of those genres. We talk about a little bit of the history of Mexico and the colonization, and how the music comes from Germany, Czechoslovakia, those areas — the polkas, the instrument of the accordion, et cetera. We talk about all those differences that happen in Mexico. And band — I don't know. I have been wanting to — there's a Banda song that I played at my cousin's wedding that I think would be fun at a football game, to arrange for a marching band. And I'm in the process of trying to come up with more short tunes for the band to play during football games and things like that, and I want to add in more of those tidbits — the soul songs, La Llorona, or something that the crowd is gonna know, that the kids are gonna know. And music is music. They'll enjoy it no matter what. But I don't talk about it in jazz band. We don't really talk about it in beginning band. Even the notation is different — in Mexico, it's fixed do. And we use letters in band. In my guitar class, actually, it's probably the best example, because my guitar classes ended up being a feeder for Norteño. I'll say G, and then I'll repeat — I'll say G scale, or sol escala — I'll try and just put them both in there so that they become bilingual with that. And also in guitar, if we're learning a particular skill, say the bar chord F, I'll give them a selection of songs to learn, and it's usually about five or six songs to choose from, and at least two of them are always Hispanic, Mexican songs. During guitar as well, I do an Artist of the Week. And I do one week where I just talk about the music of Mexico — the music history of Mexico. Because again, a lot of that class is —

Moderator: Real quick, remind me on tape, what percentage of your students in the whole school are Hispanic?

Speaker 1: I think it's 57%.

Moderator: How do you create an inclusive and welcoming environment for students of diverse backgrounds in your music classes and ensembles?

Speaker 1: Treat people how they want to be treated. My primary way of connecting with all of my students is through humor. That is my go-to, because if you feel comfortable enough to laugh

— if you're able to laugh, that means you feel comfortable, and if you feel comfortable, I think that means you're able to learn. If you're uncomfortable, you're not able to learn.
If you're hungry, learning is hard. If you're tired, learning is hard. If you don't understand what language somebody is speaking, learning's hard. Uncomfortableness is the primary thing I try to get rid of, and I use that with — I think humor is the best way to get that. So I really try to include everybody. I have my welcome slides where, today, as their warm-up, they all have to tell me — would you rather spend the whole day with your socks wet, or having sticky hands — and that can be translated on the board into another language. My guitar slides every day are translated, because I have two students in there who don't speak English. But I just make everybody answer a simple, stupid question that gets us laughing or discussing — like, yeah, but wet socks just feel so terrible, or, you know, yeah, but you wouldn't be able to touch anything with your hands, it'd be so sticky. Stupid conversations to just get them more comfortable.
Moderator: What kind of support or resources do you feel are needed to better serve the Latino student population of your music program?
Speaker 1: I have been very blessed with resources, and maybe other California educators are feeling that way with Prop 28, the infusion of money — no thanks, California. Even before that, I was lucky in terms of monetary support. It wasn't an issue to buy a couple of Bajo Quintos and six accordions. Wasn't a big deal. And guitar amps and things like that. I think the most difficult thing is probably going to depend teacher by teacher. And as a white person who grew up without being around a lot of Hispanic folks, there are cultural practices that I don't quite understand. Like the machismo thing with — no girls taking Norteño until this year, finally, the fourth year of its existence. That was not something I thought was gonna happen. I'm somebody that's definitely more of a direct energy and isn't afraid to play a, quote, manly instrument like the tuba or the guitar or whatever. It wouldn't be a big deal to me, but it's a big deal to Latina girls, I think. Never seen one touch a drum set. Either of my girls — no, I'm not touching that. And I experienced it when I played tuba with a banda one time. I've never seen a girl play the tuba. That is definitely something that I did not fully understand at all, and that I still need some help and support with. Hispanic families are pretty incredible. Last year, we hosted a mariachi concert here at the high school from a local mariachi in [place name omitted]. And they asked if we could sell snacks or something as a fundraiser. And I went to Costco and bought bags of Cheetos and some sodas, et cetera. And this mom brings in six trash bags full of Duros — the big pinwheel, the deep-fried pinwheel things. Just six garbage bags filled with mini bags of those Duros. And I was like, who has time for this? But it has been that way. Every function is this — they'll make esquites, elote. It's just a lot of work, and they're not afraid to do it. That concept of work is very real. They will — if you ask them, hey, can you do this? You expect half a trash bag and you're getting six. They'll show out. Something that's hard for me in general is parent engagement, even with band, but parent engagement with Norteño — I feel personally, as somebody who doesn't speak Spanish, that I just felt an extra layer of difficulty reaching out, because I'm like, I don't — do you speak English? I don't want to make an assumption. And we use [name omitted] communication to communicate email with parents. I sent one of those out this morning, and it'll translate it into whatever language it's set to, but I still feel a barrier. For sure.
Moderator: When you do have to communicate with family of your Norteño students, how do you do it?
Speaker 1: I usually do it through the kids. Hey, can you ask your mom? Can you do this? Or I'll send out an email via the communication system.

Moderator: I guess the last thing is just to give you the chance to say anything that you think is important. We've spoken about this, but I didn't say it on this tape. The goal, of course, of my dissertation is to increase the participation of Latino students in high school music. Given that is my goal, is there anything that you think is important to think about that we haven't discussed yet?
Speaker 1: I think something that has helped me personally in this journey a lot is that we have a lot of folks on campus who are — not students, but support staff, or staff who are Latino. And asking questions. I was literally in the office right now going, what's peanut butter in Spanish? And they're like, crema de cacahuate. And I'm like, wait, what's butter in Spanish? And then mantequilla. Okay, why can't you call it cacahuate mantequilla? And they're like, no! And I think being okay with being uneducated, and just putting yourself out there, and asking as many questions as possible. When I was — the year before I started Norteño, I was asking — I was in the office asking non-musicians questions all the time, because there's cultural stuff. And, hey, [name omitted]! What's your favorite group? What can I listen to? What's your favorite song? She's like, oh, I love this song about shrimp — like, I go to the shrimp, I make my woman shrimp. And I'm like, okay. So I learned about that song through her. And [name omitted], who works in [name omitted], helped me a lot in my first field trip I took with them — she would just point out different cultural practices here and there that I wouldn't know about. I'm just always going over there and asking questions — big, small, usually small, unimportant little things. And I think just being really open to that is what being an ally should look like. Asking questions and being curious is really important as somebody who is white and not a part of that culture. Day one of Norteño, I was like, you guys know more than me. But I know more than you when it comes to playing music. But you guys know more about the rest of this stuff. So we're gonna work together. That's the only way I could think to do it, because I can't walk in and be the expert. There's not one single day of training for any of this in my music education program. So being open — it's really important.
Speaker 1: 53 to 58% Hispanic-Latino.

School 1 — Principal Interview

Moderator: All right, so I know [name omitted] has been talking to you a little bit about what I'm doing. It's for my dissertation, and my dissertation is how to increase Latino participation in secondary school music. And at first I was focused on how do we get those kids to participate in band and choir and orchestra, jazz band, marching band, all the things that I like to do. But the more research I've been doing, the more reading I've been doing, the more open-minded I've become about maybe some of the better ways to get them involved in music are to have alternative ways that they can participate, not just the traditional BOC model. That being said, I am going to several schools. This is my first one so far. Thank you for that. And exploring ways that schools are trying to address that, to address the problem. Because you're aware, I'm certain, since you were a band director, that in the whole nation and in California, to a lesser degree, the representation of Latinos in music programs does not match what they are in the overall community. And in California, 55 to 56% of the students who are school-aged are Latino, and it's nowhere near that in the music programs. Has that kind of been your experience when you were a music teacher?
Speaker 1: Yes. And yes. Your stats are right on what the general experience is.
Moderator: Yeah. I know it. Down in Southern California it's a little bit different. They tend to have a little bit more involvement, although there aren't any good statistics for California

that I've noticed in my — there haven't been many studies on demographics and music participation. There were a few a few decades back. So have you noticed that going on at the schools at which you've taught, or here?

Speaker 1: So this is probably going to be a unique interview of a principal, because I did spend 19 years as a music educator, right? So I can speak on behalf of both feet. As a band director — my 15 years as a high school band director, 'cause I did four at the college level as a grad assistant, and then I was teaching in the College of Education and I was also on staff for a couple of high school marching bands 'cause I needed more to do. So those four years is a little bit of everything, where I didn't have a lot of control over how we were recruiting or retaining or looking at the culture statistics. I was also in [place name omitted]. So if I pause there to say — up until the moment I moved to [place name omitted], I lived in a place where I, as a person, was a majority minority. And moving to [place name omitted] where I became a minority was a completely different experience. So if I take those four years out, and I'm talking about the 15 years in which I was a high school band director in Southern California and in Nevada, all of my schools were high poverty and high minority. Just by pure numbers, students were going to be involved. Because my school in [place name omitted] was about 43% African American, about 44% Latino. So it didn't matter if I had a few hundred kids in my program — 40% and 40%, it was gonna be pretty clean in terms of relative statistics there. My school in Southern California that I was at for my first job — again, it was a very high concentrated area, it was in [place name omitted], very high concentration of migrant farm workers. I had a lot of Hispanic students there as well. So my numbers were skewed just by where I was. However, I want to speak specifically to my school in Nevada, because — have you been to the Midwest Clinic? Okay. So when I was first going to Midwest Clinic, this didn't exist, but they started to have a Title I track of presentations at Midwest Clinic. For this very reason — the way I found to get a high number of students of color involved in a typical band program of marching band, jazz band, concert bands, and so on, was to do all of the extra work to reduce any financial burden.

Moderator: Lots of resources. [School name omitted] in [place name omitted], fifth largest in the country. So when I'd call [name omitted], I'm calling [name omitted] on behalf of a school district that they have very high interest in keeping business in.

Speaker 1: So they come in and help. We got lots of grants from the House of Blues Foundation — I would have students write an essay about what it would mean to them to have an instrument of their own. And House of Blues Foundation — I can't remember what the campaign was called — but I would have two or three, four students get a brand new instrument every year.

There was just a lot of resources in that very large district that helped, but we got so much financial assistance. And such a robust fundraising program that I ran. Because one of the things you'll learn about, or already probably know statistically about high poverty, high minority schools, is getting parent involvement is really hard. So breaking down barriers — having a Spanish translator at my band booster meetings helped. Also being able to say — in [place name omitted] you can charge lab fees, so I always had a $40 band fee, and this was ten years ago now, the last time I was in the classroom. I would waive band fees for parents to volunteer at our concession stand or at other fundraisers, and that helped bring parents in. If they served on the booster board — which I'd still only get two or three parents — I would waive their band fees, and that was a reason for them to come to the meetings. All that to say is I removed any financial barrier. And the principal I had there — I model a lot of what I do after him — because I learned my job is to say yes, let me figure out how. That's all I was told. The band inventory was huge, every instrument, because kids would not have been able

to participate if I didn't lower that barrier. So tons of flutes, tons of clarinets, everything that an atypical band program would not have to do. I raised money to bring in local students from [school name omitted] working on their master's or doctorate in performance. They would come and do lessons at my school, so kids got 20-minute lessons a week, because their counterparts in more affluent areas would have parents paying for lessons to help them gain more musical knowledge. So I was doing all of that work and it was a tremendous lift. But that school had legitimately almost a hundred percent free, reduced lunch — in the recession of '08 to whenever, the zip code of this school district was leading in the nation for foreclosures every year. So this is the area I was teaching in, and we were a grant recipient my last year there. And that was all done because of the tremendous, back-breaking work to remove all those barriers.

Moderator: All the barriers.

Speaker 1: So that's the discussion that was not being had at places like Midwest Clinic. And now they have that track to talk about how you make it work for areas with students of color and how you make it culturally make sense to them. The other piece to that is modernizing our curriculum. And that's hard for a lot of people to hear, because we go through learning all the classics and we're told keep it with all these classics. But for every Beethoven that you have students play, they should be playing something modern as well. And so when you have a program that balances both, getting students of color just comes naturally. Getting Latino students comes naturally. Now, the other thing [place name omitted] does really well — I'm sure you've probably studied a lot of what they've done — is they have a very robust mariachi and ballet folklórico program. So that helped open my eyes to exactly what you're studying. So there's both feet. I've been in schools where I've had to do more work than we were ever taught in our music education degree programs in order to get the high number of participation from Latino students. Now as an administrator, it's recognizing there are other cultural ways to do that as well, by offering things like mariachi and ballet folklórico.

Moderator: Okay. Here in California, where they've done away — I think what, 15 years ago now — with any fees for extracurriculars. We can't charge for anything. So that barrier, in theory, having been taken away. We all know that in practice when you go on a trip, there are always costs involved for the students, but with that barrier removed, do you find that has helped participation in California at these schools?

Speaker 1: It's hard to tell because I was in [place name omitted] when a lot of that changed. So when I was teaching in Southern California, I could charge kids. I'm a lot older than I look. I was able to charge a band fee and a uniform cleaning fee and trip fees, and that changed after I moved to [place name omitted]. I was there for nine years. And I was in [place name omitted] four, so I was gone from California for 13 years. And it changed within those 13 years. I see a lot of schools, including the school I graduated from where I was an assistant principal before I moved here, with low numbers in the band. But I think there are more layers than just involvement, ethnicity issues, money issues. I basically — I don't know that we have enough understanding of the impact. I do know other things, like a lot of academic programs that have brought in IB and the push for more APs and the push for more dual enrollment, and schools moving to bell schedule systems that don't allow students to have as many electives as they once did — there's a lot of layers involved for Latino student population.

Moderator: Thank you for bringing that up. That's exactly why I am doing this research — to figure out what exactly is keeping the numbers from being what we want them to be.

Speaker 1: It's pretty confounding because we could say the same thing about AP classes. You don't see a lot of Latino students taking AP classes. And so that's why dual

enrollment seems to be working really well in California — you see a lot more Latino participation in dual enrollment than you do in AP. What's the barrier there? Some of it is a misunderstanding of the Latino community and how they value education versus whether or not they value education. There's also still just systemic barriers. We still have kids whose parents didn't graduate high school, and whose parents had maybe some unfortunate circumstances in their high schooling that kept them from being successful. So they don't know how to ask questions, or culturally they don't ask questions because they trust that the teacher is the educated expert in the room and they're not to question it. So all of that gets misinterpreted as the Latino community not caring about education. The reality is they care about things in a different way. Which is why I teach our teachers — when you're struggling with a student and you feel that the parent doesn't care, start the conversation by telling them how good of a human being that person is being, or not being, and you're gonna find that they care a lot. And that opens the door. It's a cultural barrier to call and say, hey, I really appreciate having [name omitted] in my class. He comes on time every day and he is very respectful. And the minute you say that, it turns a switch for that family — ah, this person cares about what I care about. And then you say, however, [name omitted] doesn't do his homework and I need your help in him doing his homework because he's failing my class. And then the conversation switches. So it is training some of those cultural barriers. I feel like I'm ranting, I'm not really answering your question, but it's confounding why the population doesn't participate in some things, and I hope in your research you find some answers.

Moderator: Believe me. Me too.

Speaker 1: Yeah.

Moderator: Just making sure our meeting is still being recorded. Okay. So I have a set list of questions that, according to my IRB, I really should hit on, but I also have the freedom to venture off if we find a rich vein. But obviously School 1 is unique in that it is offering Norteño classes.

Speaker 1: Yes.

Moderator: Were you here when that began?

Speaker 1: I was not. It was already here when I got here.

Moderator: Okay. Do you know anything about — [name omitted], I think, was the one who came up with the idea to implement that, as she's told me before. Are there any other initiatives or policies or actions that the school or the district — but actually, let's just talk about the school — has done to promote more Latino involvement in not just band or Norteño, but in music or arts in general?

Speaker 1: I can't say that there's anything in particular happening in terms of the recruitment of kids. And I do think it's a place our school and our district could get better. But I will say, through what I've learned in [place name omitted] about having groups like the Norteño class and like mariachi — that's the route that I am hoping we are going here as the school district. So we have the Norteño class, which is one particular demographic of Latino music. My hope is that we start — my end goal before I leave here is there should be a full-time mariachi program, or at least part-time, but there should be a mariachi program here. I would really love if we could also start — so those are two very high priority pieces for me, to help serve this population more in terms of more culturally relevant education for students, particularly in performing arts.

Moderator: And I see that growing a little bit more here in Northern California. [Place name omitted] has started a program. What is needed in order for that to be able to happen here?

Speaker 1: Here specifically, it's about having the funding in terms of hiring a person. What's nice about California is Prop 28, which I'm sure will factor significantly into your findings. California has recognized the need for more arts education. And so a lot of districts are using their Prop 28 funding to create these mariachi programs, 'cause most schools have at least a band or choir or both, or orchestra. And now they're using this funding to create some of these positions. Remind me of the question again.
Moderator: The question is, what do you see as being necessary to convince them to start a mariachi program here, and ballet folklórico too?
Speaker 1: Yeah. It's facilities, position, funding for the position — and honestly, the funding for the equipment is the easiest part of that equation. Because any principal could use any part of their budget to supply instruments if we can get the program rolling. But what we can't do as easily with our site funding is create positions. So that's where the Prop 28 money comes in. So that's one barrier. The second barrier is tricky because there isn't a mariachi education undergraduate degree. So when we're writing curriculum and adding curriculum to our school districts, we have to write it in such a way that it can be licensed by any music teacher. So that means the curriculum has to be written a little more generally than just solely mariachi. It's a tricky common ground to find when districts are creating curriculum for these classes. It's not impossible because school districts are doing it. But the people who are the most qualified to teach mariachi often are not qualified to be a teacher. And that's a barrier as well.
Moderator: They don't have the piece of paper that says they are allowed to do it full time by themselves in a classroom.
Speaker 1: Correct. And there isn't a K-12 mariachi music license — they have to go after a music license, which means they're not gonna have to go study how to be a better mariachi teacher. They have to go be able to pass the Praxis and music history and all that.
Moderator: And most universities, their requirement for students to get a teaching credential or music ed degree is they have to play in a large ensemble. And mariachi is not one of those ensembles. So if you're one of [name omitted]'s kids who loves Norteño, but you've never played a band instrument in your life and you don't sing —
Speaker 1: Correct.
Moderator: You're not gonna become a music teacher.
Speaker 1: Correct. That's what's unique about the Norteño class. You don't see very many of those across the state where it's more about the cultural music than it is about your X's and O's of how to hold an instrument. But she does teach — they pick up the songs and they talk about it in more of a gigging musician format and a rote format, rather than this is how you read a treble clef or a bass clef staff. It's a different curriculum and it's just tough. So once a district might have the facility, they have the funding to buy the equipment — how do we write the curriculum so that we can hire a teacher? How do we find a teacher who is able to be a credentialed teacher in that classroom? There are some places that offer some sort of credentialing program. It gets tricky because Nevada is a different licensing state than here. But there are ways they're doing that in Nevada with one-year programs, much like a master's degree in education, that's a master's degree in music education. The other route is to go CTE.
Moderator: Certificates. Yeah.
Speaker 1: Correct. So CTE means they can verify their X amount of hours of professionalism in this area. They've been a gig musician and now they can get that CTE credential. So that is another route that some districts are on.

Moderator: So you mentioned earlier some of the barriers that might be preventing Latino students from joining school music, and how you strove to knock down those barriers in [place name omitted]. What about barriers to motivation? Because if you have, in my experience, a lot of students who want to do something — ways will be found to provide money and teachers and programs for that. So I'm also exploring how we can make our music programs more attractive, to make Latino students want to be a part of them. And traditionally I don't think that's been the case.
Speaker 1: You mean a traditional program or specifically like a Norteño or Banda program?
Moderator: Any sort of school music.
Speaker 1: Okay. On a general basis, yes — having more culturally relevant curriculum will help bring more of the culture into those classes. On a broader basis, I'm gonna use my school in [place name omitted] again as an example. It was tremendous work. I went to church services to speak with families at the church who didn't want their kids to miss Saturday Bible study for a competition, a marching band competition. They didn't want their kids out late on a Friday night for a football game. They didn't understand the Wednesday night rehearsal till eight o'clock at the school — no, they have to be home with the family. Probably a bit of a cheat code since I am Chicana and I'm in the community. But at the same time it was that tremendous work — that's again, it's that cultural relevancy, to go to where they're at, to explain: here are the skill sets and the power. Say, this is how we get your kids to college. This is how we get your kids to succeed. These are the skill sets they're gonna learn. So you're working with the families on that level. On the kid level, it's about creating success that they can take ownership of. And that's a good band program no matter what. My program — my marching band was not competitive at all. And I created it — by the time I left, it was a choice marching band — which I think is one of the biggest mistakes that band programs are still doing across the country: that you have to be in marching band to be in concert band. I think we're doing a disservice to exactly this community. We want — if we want to get more kids of color, more Latino students in our bands, we have to consider that not all of them are gonna be super jazzed about getting in a marching band uniform and being at school till 10:00 PM on a Friday night and then all day on Saturday. And that's just the reality. So how do we make it more culturally relevant? We create a marching band system that is optional. You can be in marching band if you want. The most powerful thing we could give — which is not happening in this district, and it bugs me — is: you get PE credit for being in marching band. So you have to be enrolled in this period — the seventh, outside of the school day. It was seventh period at my school, eighth period marching band. You have to be here this many hours, and you either do sports and this, or you figure out your time. But you complete this, you get PE credit. And I always felt that if I could get them at their freshman year, they would have so much fun that they'd stay in marching band. Typically what happens? My program of over 400 kids — my band, my instrumental music program by itself, over 400 kids — about 70 of them were the marching band. We were a smaller size marching band.
We weren't that great, but we had fun. I'd take them on one big trip this — we'd go into Southern California for a day, take them to the beach and let them compete in a circuit out there where no one knew who they were. And they'd get to see other bands and have a good old time. And then we'd go march in [place name omitted] or [place name omitted] or whatever — do one good fun thing every semester. And that was marching band. By doing that, I was able to create a year-long curriculum for three levels of instrumental music bands, plus a jazz band. I had a percussion class that had beginning and advanced, and then I had beginning bands. It was more than just me by the time I got to the end of this. But I had a freshman band — so

every freshman coming in was enrolled in freshman band. If they felt they were better than being in the freshman band, they could test out of it. I had an intermediate level ensemble that had kids from my beginning band get moved into if, for the year before, they'd been in freshman or intermediate band — and the next year would be our symphonic band. And then I had a wind ensemble that was mostly juniors and seniors who had made their way all the way up, and they auditioned into that band. They almost automatically got into it as juniors, but they had to be good enough. So that was the everyday curriculum.

And we started every year with a pops and pastries concert where the kids — they'd have a menu and they'd get to look at JW Pepper. They would choose the repertoire. And we'd do that with the leadership in July. They choose the repertoire, and I always did it a grade below. So if my wind ensemble was around a grade five capacity that year, they would choose grade three for their pops and pastries. 'Cause it was the beginning of the year. And all I wanted to do was get them in front of an audience playing fun music. So the pops and pastries — it was early October, we were in marching band season. We'd have a concert on a week of an away game. No competition. Pops and pastries. And then my four band boosters would collect baked goods from parents and they'd sell things for 25 cents a piece. We might make $75 on this concert. But the point was they were in front of an audience right away showing success in music. They were having fun playing. And then marching band's going on its own thing. Once in a while we'd review some of the pop tunes in the band classes, just because — hey, we have a game this weekend, we have a new song, let's just make sure everyone knows it. But for the most part, we would move to winter music after that. And our winter music was always music around the world. So again, I brought in my leadership — my band leadership students in every period. And the requirement was they had to choose at least one holiday tune that was not Christmas or Hanukkah. So they would look through the catalog and click on the play button on JW Pepper and listen, and they would choose one. And we would do holidays around the world. That was every year. So now they were doing stuff for other cultures. And part of that was them getting up on the mic during the concerts to say, we're gonna play this song, this comes from this country in Africa, and when we clap — so they're talking about the cultural relevancy to audiences. Then after that, we would move to festival music. Now they're bought in. Now the standard repertoire of the classics and the things that we're taught as music ed majors — now they're moving to all of that stuff and now they're bought in. Okay. We did a grade three pops, we did grade four music around the world, now we're at grade five and now we're getting ready for festival.

Moderator: Now we're doing all the —

Speaker 1: Correct. And eventually — the Corral from the theme for Mars was the most requested senior conducting concert for six years in a row. Once I got them playing that, they were like, we love this. And then the freshman band's like, we wanna play that too. Guess what? You gotta work your way up to wind ensemble to be able to do that. So now it just becomes this system. So all of this to say — it took a really long time and a lot of my life to build that. But I am convinced that system allowed for the culture and the Latino kids to say, this is a place I can succeed. It also didn't hurt that as that progressed, those were my senior leaders who were going to college. And so they were — I would take them, they had service hours they could do to earn a letter. And one of the service hours was to go back to the junior highs they went to, to hand out programs at concerts. They had a list of things they could do to volunteer. They had to wear their band shirt, and they had to talk to the eighth graders about joining band. And so they were standing in front of seventh and eighth grade parents saying, I was a student here at this junior high three years ago, and now I'm about to go to [school name omitted], and I attribute that to my

experience in the band, and here's why. So now all of a sudden, those Latino parents are hearing in English and Spanish from the kids that they saw in those concerts just the year or two before.
Moderator: Nice.
Speaker 1: So again, this system — it just took so much work. So really long answer to your question — to say there is a way to do it without the mariachi and Norteño. But to do both would honor the ability to do both.
Moderator: Yes. It's much more of an authentic —
Speaker 1: Yes.
Moderator: Musical experience and exposure.
Speaker 1: Kids would choose, right? I remember my last year there — I had a big guy. His name was [name omitted], and he came to me the first day of school teary because he plays tuba and he told his counselor he wanted to play tuba, but they put him in mariachi, and he loves mariachi music, but he wants to play tuba in the marching band. So I have a Latino student with broken English saying, I wanna be in the marching band. Now it took nine years to get there, but the Latino students could say, I don't wanna do mariachi music, I wanna do band. Or they could say, I know I played trumpet, but I really wanna do mariachi. Cool. Go be in mariachi. And that comes down to having the funding for the FTE, because here at this site, [name omitted] can't do this herself.
Moderator: No.
Speaker 1: Which is why — you probably know more about my system there than she does, 'cause I'm not gonna put pressure on her to do this stuff, because she can't do it by herself. I had a whole program. I had two mariachi teachers, myself, an assistant director, an orchestra director, a choir director, a theater director. We had a whole giant program, and we all helped each other in that recruitment effort.
Moderator: And two music teachers at one school cannot make that happen necessarily.
Speaker 1: Correct.
Moderator: How important, or how helpful was it that your Latino students saw themselves in you as their music teacher?
Speaker 1: I think it's vital. I think, like I said, it's a cheat code. I don't know if it works the same if I'm not a person of color, if I don't have the last name [name omitted]. It is one of the biggest reasons I became a principal. Because what I know is the power of having someone like me in front of me at the age I needed it is way more impactful than anything else I can do in the classroom. I think it was helpful. And also something to know about the Latino population is the more educated I became, the more I was different and "othered" by them as well. So I deal with both personally. But yes, I do think it's a bit of a help to have representation in these positions — to be able to say, no, I understand you want them to watch their little siblings, but if I can have them one night a week, just that one night a week. I'm not gonna ask you for more, except occasional Friday night football game. But I can work with you if you need help, because you have to work at night and they need to watch their siblings. It just comes down to looking at every single student's need. And those first few years were really honestly going to so many homes. The band program was 20 when I took it over. And then it was 40 the next year, and doing that work again. And by the time it became 60, 80, a hundred, they were doing it for each other.
Moderator: Yeah. Yeah. Success breeds success. Correct?
Speaker 1: Correct.

Moderator: What kind of partnerships or outreach efforts has this school district — or you can even talk about [place name omitted] — explored to connect to the Latino community and encourage music participation? Actually, we were just talking about that very thing. You said you went out to families' homes. What other institutional policy ideas — what else did you do?
Speaker 1: I was on committees at the district level that talked about how we communicate, but I think it's bigger when you're in that large of a school district. In terms of here — I know we have our typical DLAC and ELAC and those parent organizations for English learners. But I don't know that we yet have a fully concentrated district message about participation in the arts. And that would be the area I think we can improve on. Even within a school site here, right — [name omitted] does what she does and goes out and talks to the families and stuff. And we encourage it. We have incoming eighth grade night and tour nights where they go on tours. It is definitely an area we could do better.
Moderator: Yeah. I taught in three different high schools before going to get my PhD and I almost did nothing, which is part of why I wanted to figure out what could I do to get better. So yeah, I'm just exploring. It's very rarely done.
Speaker 1: Yeah.
Moderator: So I think that's another big important thing that I'm gonna be writing about. What additional resources, training, or support do you feel would be beneficial for music teachers to better serve Latino students?
Speaker 1: I do think all teachers could use some more cultural awareness. I don't know what that means because it's a buzzword — you need to be more culturally relevant, but what does that really mean? I think it really means looking at your community and actually going out and learning what the community values, and not from our bosses in the school district, but from the families themselves. And there's no one way to do that. I think being present and visible is a way to start. So I go to as many things as humanly possible, to go to as many events as I can, so the community can see that it is of value to me, and also that I can hear what's of value to them. So I know we hosted some mariachi here last year. I made sure I was here at that concert. I made sure that they had me on that stage to welcome this audience who bought tickets to see this outside mariachi group come in. And I told them, it is my intention to bring mariachi to School 1 — come talk to me if there's a way you can help me make that happen. So it's just that visibility, which is hard to do. It took a lot of work. But I talk about all that stuff in [place name omitted] — what's pinging in my head is just how much work that was. I don't know, at my advanced age now, that I would be interested in doing that much work. Probably. It's just who I am.
Moderator: Just so I have it on tape, what was the name of the district and school that you had the program at?
Speaker 1: So I was in [place name omitted] School District, not [place name omitted]. And I was in [place name omitted]. The school was called [school name omitted].
Moderator: Okay.
Speaker 1: Unfortunately, the program there did not continue at that high level for much longer after I left, which does tell me that more training of our music educators on how to create those things and sustain them would be super helpful. And for me, it's not even about the culture. The other piece to that training question — what do educators need? I think music educators need more of the logistical aspects of being a music educator, more the business aspects. I was actually writing a book about the administration of being a music educator before I decided just to become an administrator. Because it is the most powerful thing we do, and it is 0% taught in any of our teacher prep programs.

Moderator: Yeah.
Speaker 1: This is gonna date me, but — [name omitted] — they do the [name omitted] Institute every year. About 26 years ago. Is that in [place name omitted]?
Moderator: [Place name omitted], yeah.
Speaker 1: It was always at [school name omitted]. It probably still is. But before it was [name omitted] and it was just similar instruments — they had [school name omitted] and I went to the first one they ever offered, in '99 or 2000. I can't remember which of those two years. And the whole premise of it — there were maybe 30 of us educators, recent graduates from college about to enter the workforce as music educators. It was with [name omitted] and all of those guys. And I remember it distinctly because they bought a keg of beer at the dinner, and it was just sitting around and talking with all these experts — 0% about pedagogy, 0% about what music you're playing, what level, how to teach your woodwinds. 100% of this is: how you talk to your administrator, how you put together a budget, how you run your band boosters, how you deal with parent conflict. I still have my notes on a dot matrix printer — that's how you know how valuable that was. That's the piece that's missing. And when I was working on my doctorate, I tried to convince my boss to let me write a program for music education, but I was in the admin degree and in general education, not music education. I wanted to write a course about this to give to pre-service music educators. I couldn't get anyone to agree with it. And then I stalled on my book because I started writing my dissertation.
Moderator: I'm trying to think of how one could wedge this into the program. I'm right now in the middle of [school name omitted]'s teaching program in their music ed program, and they're having to cut back on things like jazz training for non-jazz musicians — that class just got cut. I don't know how they would wedge in an "everything you need to know about dealing with administration" class too.
Speaker 1: Yeah. And speaking — who does it? So [name omitted], when you go to the [name omitted] Institute now, it's still a lot of that, although they do also have some of the other side and they have vendors come in now. But they still have those — they don't do the keg of beer anymore, bought by the company. Realistically, the day sessions would end and there was like 30 of us. We didn't even have rooms at that hotel — it was in [place name omitted] or near [place name omitted]. We were just all in a hotel, in these small meeting spaces, and they would wheel in dinner and a keg of beer and everyone would just stay in the meeting space for the rest of the night. And it was just so impactful.
Moderator: Yeah.
Speaker 1: But that's the piece that's missing. Because the administration side of being a music educator is what music educators need to then go into the communities and understand how to leverage your community to get more involvement from your Latino students.
Moderator: I wonder if [name omitted] is involved in [school name omitted] in [place name omitted]. And [school name omitted] — I wonder if he's heavily involved. I wonder if they have an aspect to that.
Speaker 1: They might. I have a couple of friends that went through that program. But I never asked.
Moderator: Yeah.
Speaker 1: I did collect, maybe 2016 to 20, mini surveys about this when I was writing the book. Some of my friends that I went through music ed with at [school name omitted] — and frankly, not a lot of us are music educators anymore. Most of them — some are now just not in education anymore. There are a couple that are now library media, now school

librarians. There's a few that are still band directors and still at the same schools, and I commend them for that. But yeah. We all agreed this was an area — how to fundraise, how to budget. I feel like I was better at those than being a musician. [Name omitted] is 10,000 times the musician I ever was. I'm a mediocre musician. I did what I needed to do to get through my juries. But I had a program that raised six figures a year with four parents involved every year. No kids had to worry about paying for anything. We would go from [place name omitted] to New York, take big trips all around the country, and the kids would fundraise to get it done. All of the things that I'm really good at — it's what eventually my supervisor in [place name omitted] said: the things that you do really well as a band director are the same things that make a good principal. That started —

Moderator: Obviously that planted a seed in your brain.

Speaker 1: No. I was happy with — oh, no. I wish the top 10% of our music educators in this country would go into administration and just pave the way for everything to happen.

Moderator: Yes.

Speaker 1: Parallel. There are things I've had to learn as a principal and things I could get better at. But the things I didn't have to struggle at just felt like I was flexing the same weights. Parallel.

Moderator: Yeah. But as you just said — you used the word "unfortunately" — most people go into teaching music because they wanna be in the classroom with the kids, and they don't wanna have to deal with all those stressors.

Speaker 1: But we have to. If you want more Latino involvement, you have to do these administrative pieces. You have to be willing to be a mini principal of your little universe. You have to. There's no other way. You have to be the face of that program. The biggest compliment anyone, I think, has ever given me as a music educator was at my first school. It was my principal at my first school. And unfortunately he passed away — he had a heart attack at a football game. It was a really tragic thing. But the day earlier, I was in his office and we were talking. I was asking for his support because the band needed new uniforms. And I had found that there was a board policy where they'll pay for the new uniforms and then give the band boosters five years to pay back half. So I brought that policy to him, and he said, let's do this. He said — I will never forget — he goes, I will support whatever it is you need that you think the students here need. By the way, that band also started with just, I think, 12 kids my first year, and we qualified one-A for the very first Southern California March Band championships ever. The very first one they ever held. We qualified for it. We qualified a couple of years in a row before I left that school. So there were successes there as well. He told me: this school's music program is synonymous with your name. And so I will do whatever I need. That taught me — ah, my principal is saying my name matters, which means to this community my name matters. And if I wanna keep having kids from the community in my program, my name needs to be out there.

Moderator: Okay.

Speaker 1: So I learned this thankfully relatively early on. We need that administrative side of this in order to do exactly what you're trying to figure out how to do.

Moderator: It's so important. Do we have time? Excellent. Okay, so two more questions. As you said, this is unique — you're a music teacher, you already know you're bought in, you know how important music is in schools. I'm gonna be going to talk to other administrators who are not musicians, who may not understand that. Do you have any advice to give to music teachers or music advocates to talk to other administrators who may not have that buy-in, to convince them that it's important to try and get more Latino buy-in into music?

Speaker 1: I could think of a hundred different ways. There's a lot of "it depends" in the answer to your question. The simplest advice is: know who your administrator is and what they value. Know their vision for your school. Because it doesn't matter what you think as a music educator — if it doesn't fit in the vision that principal has for the school, it doesn't matter how good your argument is or your statistics or whatever. And understand how your vision for your program fits in the bigger picture of the vision for the school. And if you can explain to your principal how these things that you need, or this funding that you need, or this curriculum that you want to add — how that serves the bigger school's purpose and vision — it's gonna be much more powerful of a conversation. 'Cause at the end of the day, it doesn't matter that it's music education. Because it could be bringing in a German language class. It could be bringing in personal finance to the math department. How does it fit in the district, school, and principal's vision of what we're serving our students? Then we have all the other data. We know that participation in music and participation in these co-curriculars — I like using the word co-curricular instead of extra, 'cause it's not extra — we know how impactful it is to the student brain, we know how impactful it is to the student in themselves. Some kids coming to band is the only class they come to school for that day. That doesn't really sit well with principals who don't understand that at an intrinsic level. The analogies to sports — I can't stand them. Yeah, you might have a former coach as a principal, but they're still not gonna understand how getting in that smelly uniform and playing in the band is actually a more rounded experience than playing on the football team. You are not gonna win that argument. But it's how does this program, and how does what you're asking for, fit in the bigger picture vision of that principal and of that school, and how will this funding be used, and how can it impact students? The other piece is: don't fight it yourself. Bring in those community leaders to talk to the principal about why a mariachi program or a Norteño program would be impactful for their students. And then one of the biggest pieces is — the band directors need to remember that when done well, they are the most visible and largest student organization of the entire school. Now, if you call all athletics together, that's a cheat, because a football team is not gonna be as large or as visible as a band program.

Moderator: And B —

Speaker 1: Yeah. So it's understanding all of those complexities, but more importantly just understanding where your principal is. They don't have to understand the X's and O's of a band program. They don't need to know that making music makes kids smarter, 'cause they can Google that if they wanted to. You can give them a list of research articles about how music makes kids smarter or whatever the angle's gonna be. Principals know that. But how does what you're doing serve students and how does it fit in their bigger mission?

Moderator: That makes sense. So my last question on my list — is there anything that you would want to be asked about this, or that you think would be important to be included in this study, that we didn't talk about today?

Speaker 1: Kind of connected to your last question: because you don't have a lot of performing arts administrators, I think administrators also in their prep programs need more understanding and training of the impact of co-curriculars. Again, most will understand sports. But sports end — the football season ends and those kids move on to something else. Or they don't — they don't do another sport, and they just wait, they lift weights every day with the coach until it comes back around that it's football season again. Not to minimize the impact that our coaches have. I also coached basketball while I was running this program, and at one point I had to let go of basketball because I couldn't be at state and in front of the basketball bank at the same

time. I'm a coach and I love sports, and I firmly believe they're as important as music programs or any other co-curriculars. So I don't mean to sound anti-sports. But I think administrators should be asked about their understanding of the impact. Do they understand whether or not their music programs have the potential to be the largest, most consistent, and most visible student organization on their campus? I will tell you, in the other school I worked at before here, I had those administrators — not the principal that hired me into that spot, one of my mentors, she had kids who went through bands, so she understood the impact on a level. But I was around fellow APs who were over a decade in being an administrator, and when I left that school said, thank you for teaching me what a band program should actually look like and why it's important. And as they're going on to lead their schools, they have an understanding now. And they taught me way more than just that because I was a brand new administrator. But yeah. I think just like music educators need that administrative piece, I think administrators need that music education piece, that arts education piece. It's not just about music education — it's also the visual arts program, it's also CTE, it's also all of those things. So if there was a course for administrators in their degree process or credential process to understand more than just the research-backed importance of performing arts and music education — to help them lead their schools and make decisions — I think it would go a long way to stop asking the questions of how can we get more Latino students involved, or why don't we have these classes? Because it's not just, why aren't they participating? We should be looking at the curriculum and deciding what's not here. And I think some administrators are not gonna know to ask that question.

Moderator: Yeah.

Speaker 1: That makes sense.

Moderator: It does. Thank you. I think that's all the questions I have for you, and I know you've got other things to get to, so I really appreciate it. This was wonderful.

Speaker 1: Of course. And if you come up with any follow-up questions, I'm happy to do a phone conversation. I can't remember if I gave you my cell phone number, but [name omitted] certainly has it.

Moderator: I know how to find it.

Speaker 1: Okay. And yeah, if you end up having some follow-up questions, or you listen to my rambling and I rambled too much and talked myself out of answering the question, I'm always happy to help out.

APPENDIX E

School 2 Transcripts

School 2 — Musician Focus Group

Moderator: What made you decide to do music in school? You don't have to answer right away if you wanna think about it. Even if it takes ten seconds, just think about: what made me decide to do music?
Speaker 1: Honestly, the teacher. I was just like, sounds like a fun teacher, I just joined.
Moderator: When did you join?
Speaker 1: Just this year, but I was gonna join when it first started. And so I joined the club, and I thought it was really fun, but it was like one on one. And so I kinda dropped down, and I joined back when it was class.
Moderator: Oh, okay. How did you hear about it?
Speaker 1: [Name omitted] — he promoted everything. Put up posters, he'd go to classes, just talk about it.
Moderator: Nice. So you saw posters and you heard people talk about it, and then you're just like, I'll give that a shot? Cool. Good to know.
Speaker 2: I kinda don't feel like putting it up front, I guess, like, my girlfriend. But originally I played before, and I was going to join my sophomore year at the beginning, but then I forgot a form for my instrument. And then I remember the day before he was like, if you forget your form, you might be the slowest — obviously he was joking, but I was like, I'm not showing that. I didn't want to join originally just because I did wanna get closer to my culture in a way. And also it seemed like big fun.
Speaker 3: Half a minute: I really like [name omitted] and my friends, and we're all with [name omitted]. And so I would go to a spot that would be like on German Mariachi. At first I was like, no reaction. But over time, my little brother's also in it, and I thought it'd be a really fun idea. I'll get to do that and other things.
Moderator: When you were all in elementary school or middle school, did you take any music classes?
Speaker 4: For me, I did transfer after elementary school into just a fifth and sixth charter school, and that was required, but I was always interested either way in taking an instrument. The teacher I had in elementary school was the same music teacher I had in middle school. She kinda highly recommended me to continue.
Speaker 5: It's like the same — [name omitted] — but we went to the same elementary. I switched two schools to go to a fifth and sixth charter school, which was required.
Speaker 6: So when I was at school in third to sixth grade, they offered something in the mornings before school — you could go and take orchestra. I wanted to, but with my living situation, there would be no one to take me in those mornings. In sixth grade I wanted to start pursuing music. When I realized I could take classes for free in middle school before school started, it was a good chance for me because my dad could just drop me off — it was zero period. Really the only reason.
Speaker 4: Yeah. It was the same in elementary school. I remember one day — because my siblings, I had two older siblings and they both were in music, and they both quit. But I always felt very passionate about it. I remember this one day when I saw like a small quartet — one cello, one viola, a couple violins and just one teacher in the cafeteria. I was eating there with

my friends and I asked them about it. I was so intrigued and interested and I felt like I had really carried on from there, the passion for it. I started playing the viola when I was in elementary school in fourth grade. A lot of people in my family play instruments. So it made me feel so complete to carry on that legacy.
Speaker 7: I also continued music because of real passion — I really wanna do mariachi. Because the violin — how you incorporate it into mariachi — was kinda the main reason why I continued.
Moderator: So obviously you chose to do mariachi. I assume none of you are in another music class like choir or orchestra or band. Have you ever thought about doing a different kind of music that the school offers?
Speaker 3: I thought it would be hard for the—
Speaker 1: A lot of my friends are in choir, so I still go to every concert. But if you look at how choir is, it's very clicky. And if you see the choir kids, they don't look... nice. Like, they're all in their own group.
Moderator: Your friends in there, are they white or Hispanic? Okay. But you didn't feel like you would want to join choir because there are no other Latinos in there?
Speaker 3: In a way I just felt like I would stand out — I didn't really want to because of all the names.
Speaker 2: Wanna do band, but I ended up not doing it. Not for any specific reason, but because I was too invested in school and sports. I didn't have time. And by the time I finally had free time — this year, my senior year — I was like, it's way too late to start. I've heard people sign up in middle school or freshman year and get better over time. It's like, he's still a pro, bro. I'm doing track and field right now. Before I used to do football, and I was too busy to do any type of band. And there's also the aspect of joining football — the band people and the football people also kind of get away from each other, kind of clicky. I didn't really interact with anyone in theater, drama, band, or anything. I wanted to, but because I was a football player I was like, maybe I should stay available.
Moderator: Are all of you aware that high school music programs — not including mariachi — most high schools have band, orchestra, or choir. Did you know there's not a lot of Latinos who decide to be in those?
Speaker 4: Kind of.
Speaker 6: Kind of also.
Speaker 4: I was gonna check that period, but I didn't really — while I learned another instrument, that period is only for guitars and basses. So I kinda just stayed in orchestra so I can work on my technique in mariachi.
Moderator: Before today, were you aware that not a lot of Latino students do school music? I see some nodding yes. How are you aware of that?
Speaker 1: You just see it. Like when you ask people, oh, what do you do? They always do a sport but they never really get into programs. And so you can just really see how it looks. You go around — where do you see energy?
Speaker 6: You know, like, those are your assumptions. When I asked my friends if they would pursue orchestra, I realized they don't even know that orchestra and band are different. They only see band. And when they see my instrument, they think it's a band instrument. People don't really look into any of these music ensembles.
Moderator: Why do you think it is that not a lot of Latinos do music in school?

Speaker 2: I mean, looking at everything, you can obviously see that it's mainly white people. Going on social media to see the bands and everything, it's just purely white. There's no Hispanics. So it's like a little arc — being Hispanic and trying to do something that doesn't seem right.
Speaker 3: And this is cultural. I remember I wanted to join something like choir, and my parents would be like, really wanna join that? I think it's very cultural — it's not normal in a way for us to go and join a show choir. Our parents don't even know what that is.
Moderator: Yeah. But mariachi, because that's part of your culture, they were like, yeah. Makes sense.
Speaker 1: I also feel like because it's not part of our culture, people just kind of tend to stick to what they know. Because band and orchestra and everything is unknown to them, and it's clicky, they would prefer to stick to what they do know.
Speaker 2: It's also Hispanics in general — at a school where it's mainly white, Hispanics kind of group together. That's kinda where I went with because I wouldn't have joined if it wasn't for the Hispanic guys there. We kinda go as one. And once one Hispanic joins something and it's like, oh, I'm in football — I was like, really? I thought it was like a white football. So I tried it. And then one of my coaches — a college athlete — was a trumpet player, and my other Hispanic friend also did mariachi last year. He was like, it was nice. I was like, good — I'll join.
Speaker 8: I think it's because it's like white-facing. It has a bunch of white people. Some Latinos don't know how to speak English, so then it's maybe uncomfortable.
Speaker 4: Or maybe it's the feeling of not belonging in that sort of field or area of music. Some of us go for other forms of music — it's more about fitting in, or making groups with other types of music that are Hispanic or something like that.
Speaker 9: I think it's also very stereotypical — when we think of music, especially with social media and movies, it's been portrayed that you have the music nerds and the band geeks. But when you see them in movies, it's always stereotypically mostly white and Asian kids, not Latinos or Hispanics. And it comes back to: not fitting in, and then you'd be singled out. And so you just go back to your own stereotypes.
Speaker 6: Possibly also the reason why Latinos or Mexicans don't seek these resources is because it doesn't fit into the music they listen to. Like, mariachi uses the same instruments yet it's played completely differently. I pursued it also because I badly wanted to learn an instrument when I was younger and just didn't have the resources.
Moderator: So those barriers — seeing mostly white kids, not being part of the culture, maybe not meeting the stereotype — that didn't stop you. Why is that?
Speaker 4: I was really interested in the violin at first, and I remember very clearly when I didn't get violin — I got viola — and I was very, very upset, but then I decided to keep going. I heard about jazz band and how I never really see any girls in it, especially no Latino girls. So I decided to give it a shot and maybe be one of the only female Latinas in jazz band. Every single time I have a performance I feel so accomplished, especially when I see the higher-level groups — it just pushes me to keep going and brings me back to the beginning of why I started. I just didn't see it as fitting in or being singled out anymore; I saw it as another community I'd become a part of. For me, art and music has always been a really strong form of expression. I find it a little bit more difficult to express myself in other ways. Since I was younger I've always loved singing, loved any type of music. Once I was finally introduced to orchestras and mariachi, it was like — this is where I am right here.

Speaker 6: For me, I started playing because my older sister was in band, and I wanted to try out a different instrument. I just kinda fell in love with playing it, so I continued. And now the community is really great — you get to go on these fun trips and stuff.
Speaker 4: I think it's a lot about representation — wanting to show that I'm Latino, I'm Hispanic, and I'm doing this. Hopefully that would inspire others to join.
Speaker 5: I feel like it was more this year when I started thinking — I don't want this just to be because I like it. I also kinda wanna make an impact. If I can reach out to one other Latino in the community and show them there are more of us. Also when I heard about mariachi, I definitely wanted to do it, especially because every time I visit my family they refer to me as a gringa because I don't speak Spanish very well. I figured mariachi would make me more connected to my culture. But then it became about hopefully bringing more Latinos together and trying to stand out.
Speaker 6: I joined because I wanted to be a part of something that plays instruments. I didn't really even think about who else was doing it. I just saw people. I went into it just wanting to be a part of playing in an ensemble. It was just about the music.
Speaker 4: When I first started playing viola, I didn't really like it. But my mom — at parties she would make me play birthday songs and things like that, and it would make me so happy at the end when people would clap. That gave me so much hope and made me feel so much better about myself. Now every time I'm in a concert and I hear that applause, it's like a huge relief.
Moderator: Did you all take music when you were in elementary school? What about middle school? When you stopped — after elementary school or after middle school — why did you stop?
Speaker 3: I played violin when I was little. I enjoyed it, but I started stopping because playing a choir instrument is not the cool thing. So I stopped and focused more on sports because I wanted to fit in.
Speaker 2: I did trumpet for a while and then afterwards I stopped just because my dad is very conservative. He was still supportive, like, disappointing me for not continuing with soccer, and he didn't really want me doing anything outside of that.
Speaker 1: I did trumpet, violin, and a little bit of piano. There wasn't anything that necessarily made me stop — it was just that none of my friends were doing it. My middle school was predominantly white so I just felt out of place. Since I had no friends in it, I stopped and didn't pick it back up.
Moderator: Are there any barriers or challenges you have faced that might have prevented you from participating in music? These could be scheduling, financial, family responsibilities, peer pressure — anything at all?
Speaker 4: For me a lot of it is scheduling, because I do a lot of extra things. Sometimes I feel a little left out when it comes to music because I'm always picking or choosing between one thing and another. I'm a dancer as well — music and dance are my two main passions and they take up so much time. There's also a lot more pressure on me to continue because my teacher says, you're gonna be the top bass player next year, you have to carry this section. It gets really overwhelming and stressful. I wanna quit — but then the feeling of performing afterward is so rewarding. Then it just continues the whole cycle.
Speaker 6: Honestly, I think I cover all three — and they have, if I'm being honest, stopped me from thinking I could still get better. I hear of a lot of people that have private lessons. In my situation, I can't get those. So there's been many times where I just think — no matter how much I practice, I don't think it will make a difference since I don't have the resources to personally get

better. Also, with my family, it is difficult a lot of the times. Not a lot of people can come watch me. That gets in the way of wanting to continue.
Moderator: Why do they tend to have a hard time coming to see you?
Speaker 6: Because of their jobs. Other responsibilities and siblings. We have different age gaps so they have to be there for different things.
Speaker 4: I had a lot of Latino friends. Actually, I'm fortunate because a lot of Latinos I know — the oldest children are taking care of all the siblings. And I know that with my friends' parents, they had to work multiple jobs as well. So it comes back to that conflict thing — scheduling also gets pretty complicated with who can take me to certain things.
Moderator: What changes or additions to the music program here do you think would make it more appealing and accessible for Latino students? What should the band teacher, choir teacher, and orchestra teacher do if they wanted to include more Latinos?
Speaker 1: We gotta take perspective — what Latino people want to see, and what the teacher is willing to do. I feel like as a start, maybe doing songs that would be something Latinos would want to do would help. And honestly, just trying to connect with them. Like [name omitted] — he tries to connect with us, he picks songs that we all know, and it makes everyone motivated to actually put in their all. Maybe if band or choir tried doing something different, picking songs like that, then Latinos would want to join. And I think just the community too would make it there.
Speaker 3: I feel like it's definitely gonna take a long time since we're so stuck in where we should be doing route groups or things like that. I think it's more of a domino effect — if you get small amounts of people to start, like, if the choir teacher got one person to speak out about it and say oh, it's actually really cool, it's not what you think it is — I think more people will want to join and it'll be more of a community rather than just different cliques.
Moderator: Like, what if when you were a freshman on campus, you saw a poster in Spanish that said join choir — we want you? Do you think that would have worked?
Speaker 1: I feel like I would've been more interested. Honestly, they didn't have a big poster up. You see it on the class sheet, you pick your letters, it just says band — and it says you need to audition. Oh, I'm not doing that. Or it's just band one, band two, choir one, choir two, and it goes on, but there's no really good description about it. I feel like they could do a showcase day of all the instruments and let us try them. So then we'd get interested.
Speaker 6: I think they can mention the fact that they don't ask that many Latinos in, verbally, and they could spread that. Because I was not aware of what the school music sounds like at all until I started playing. So they could inform students on what type of music they play, what instruments there are to learn, and how easy it can be to learn them.
Speaker 4: I think representation matters — the more it is highlighted that there are people like us in this type of music, maybe it'll influence people's interest more. That's why I think representation really ties into this a lot.
Speaker 3: I think a lot of it doesn't always have to rely on teachers. I feel like as students, maybe in the future, someone can make a club — it doesn't have to be a class, can be a club — where you can go in and listen to these songs. I feel like someone should make that bridge.
Speaker 4: Yeah, kinda like encouraging that — hey, you can start your own movement, whatever genre you'd like. That's kind of a good way they do it here at this school: they give you a lot of creativity. And the fact that we can just start these groups shows that if you can get that

out there — that you can start groups in your own genre or culture — I feel like it would bring interest.
Moderator: What are your perceptions of the music programs offered at School 2? How much or how little do they represent your cultural background and your interests?
Speaker 1: I'm in band and jazz. They don't really reflect any of our culture.
Mostly mariachi does.
Moderator: Do you guys agree? Our band culture basically represents European music — John Philip Sousa marches, most composers are white. Occasionally you get a Hispanic composer, but it doesn't really seem as authentic as mariachi class.
Speaker 1: The lyre — they do a lot of songs and they sound really good.
Speaker 3: Their songs — I don't know — but I've never heard of some of them, or if I have it's because they're modern songs. But the older songs they do, I've never heard them before, and that makes me think: why would I wanna go do a song that I don't know?
Moderator: How much or how little does the school music program represent your cultural background and interest?
Speaker 6: For me, talking about cultural background — I'm Mexican, so the Mariachi program feels like it represents my culture.
Speaker 4: I'm also Dominican. I was very close to my grandpa, and he was Dominican. Every time I listen to music like Merengue I'm always so intrigued. I feel like it's not just one style of music or one culture — all of Latin America has so many different styles and genres. It's obviously very hard to portray all of it into one program. But kind of expanding that style a little bit — maybe going abroad, not staying on just one particular style — like Cumbia. There were student-made Cumbia groups this year and last year. They decided on their own: I'm gonna make a Cumbia group. And sometimes Norteño ensembles too.
Speaker 6: I think our school, people notice belonging — or the lack of it — in simple ways. Like at school dances, they play a bunch of songs common in the US. They'll play the one Spanish song that's very popular in Mexico, but there wasn't even anyone there who knew the song. And then the people that didn't know how to react to a song just mainly stood there.
Speaker 4: I feel like in history classes too — I'm in SISD this year and I'm very glad about that. But in the past there was so little to learn about Latino culture. The only person I'd ever heard about was Cesar Chavez, and every time his name was mentioned, people in class would always keep looking indirectly at me because of the same last name. And at school dances — when they play that one Mexican or Spanish song, it's always the three most commonly known ones. They don't even play different varieties of songs in Spanish; it's always one genre. I will start dancing and I'll see other people who clearly want to dance, but they won't join. Just us three girls knowing the song, and nobody else joined in.
Moderator: What music do you guys like to listen to on your own time?
Speaker 1: Spanish music — specifically rock en español. My mom also really likes mariachi. In her car she always has mariachi artists, everything.
Speaker 3: Growing up, every time I went to my grandparents' house or even at home Sunday mornings, my parents would blast music on the TV. At first I found it really annoying — it was our signal to start cleaning. But now I listen to it every time I have a free moment. I love the songs and they're from the nineties, the eighties — older songs by really intimate artists. Jose Jose. I love Luis Miguel. Rosario. All of the really timeless parties.
Speaker 2: I have kind of the opposite — I ended up not liking listening to Spanish songs as much. I'm starting to try to get back into it. But Prava is still listening.

Speaker 1: My dad listens to Los Tigres del Norte.
Moderator: Norteño! You know, [school name omitted] has a Musica Norteña class. The kids say they like it better because it's not grandpa music like mariachi. So maybe we can come up with different Musica Latina classes to bring into high schools.
Moderator: Would it make a difference to see more Latino music teachers?
Speaker 6: Yes.
Moderator: Have any of you thought about becoming a music teacher?
Speaker 6: I haven't, just because I don't see myself pursuing music as a career even though I really enjoy playing it. But [name omitted] is such an inspiration — I was really fascinated by the fact that he's Mexican and he's a music teacher. Because I had never seen that before.
Moderator: It's pretty rare. We need more. The problem is when there's not a lot of Latinos in music programs, not a lot of them go on to teach it. And if they did, more Latinos would see themselves in their teachers. We're trying to figure out a way to get students like yourselves to say — oh, I could be a teacher. I could teach other kids to love my music in orchestra.
Speaker 2: The Mariachi teacher would always ask for a wife — their vibe is kinda like this virgin. And for a non-Hispanic person — that's another reason why I kind of didn't think about joining actually, because — no offense to [name omitted] — but he didn't seem, you know, relatable because he looks white. So I was kinda like, okay, this white person is trying to tell me to do something that's culturally mine. That's a little — I'm not knocking him for it.
Speaker 4: I remember my dad — there'll be times when he's talking to me about my career and what I feel like choosing. He said, if you could, teach people how to play certain things as a side job. I know I have one friend who wanted me to teach her how to play guitarrón. I'd be willing to teach it more as a favor or something. I haven't thought about it full time, but I would wanna continue playing — probably like small groups and gigs. My dad always says: do the Mariachi group when you're older since you know how to play an instrument. And that can inspire you to join the overall music world.
Speaker 4: Stereotypically, from what you see in movies, it's just white and Asian people in music. And with the way society has shaped us — you have to fit the standards of what you see other people as. My dad would talk to me about this — if you dress a certain way, you'll automatically be classified as a cholo or a gangster. And if you're playing music, you're kind of a nerd. So you have to fit into one or the other. But I like so many other things — I am Mexican, I am Dominican, I am Latina. I just wish people could see beyond the stereotypes that have been put into society.
Speaker 10: A lot of Latinos and Hispanic people all want to fit into one specific category. I feel people should break barriers and not try to fit into one stereotype. We all dress different, we look different — I just hope that people would break barriers and want to look more into music, art, poetry, other forms of art. Resist — break out of that stereotype.
Speaker 9: Because you will see someone who's dressing like a thug or a gangster and in music you see them as a nerd — automatically. So it's as if you have to dress a certain way so you don't get made fun of or called out because you don't fit into that one category. You're a nerd or you're a thug or a music freak. But you're a freak — or a drama weirdo. It's all of those different categories that you'll see here. And then you'll be classed by just that one. There's more conversation about this that needs to be had in general.
Speaker 6: Everyone could wear the same thing but be interpreted differently. Like, there could be a Mexican girl wearing baggy jeans, hoop earrings, and lip liner and be perceived as a chola. Yet a white girl can wear the exact same thing but appear differently just because of the way they

are. And same thing with playing violin — another person can hold a violin and it doesn't mean anything; it's just an instrument. So I don't think it's anything bad if you wanna pursue playing an instrument. Break the whole cycle.
Speaker 4: Break out of that stereotypical — oh, you do this, you look like that, you act a certain way. Just break those barriers. You shouldn't have to classify as one way or another. You should be who you are — your own identity, your own personality, your own human being.
Moderator: How do you think we can convince more people your age to break out of the stereotype and try something they're not comfortable with?
Speaker 4: Show support — say, oh, yeah, I know exactly where you're coming from. And just show them support, because I bet there's at least one other person who wants to do the exact same thing. And representation too really ties into that — seeing more of us hopefully will make others say: maybe I can break that barrier too.
Speaker 6: You could share how it makes you feel — how it brings you joy, what fun experiences you have when you are in orchestra. It can influence others in a very positive way. Age plays into it too, in negative and positive ways. When you're younger, some things may seem easier or harder. So I think if someone's tried something in the past, they should try it again — because you've grown and you may perceive it differently.
Speaker 4: And the mentality, the mental strength, the way you take on challenges just changes over time. When you're a kid and something's hard, you give up automatically. But you change.
Speaker 5: I feel like it also depends on the teacher, because a lot of them can be very strict and some people don't like that.
Speaker 2: I feel like it's because of how everything is right now — it's very hard for Latinos to feel safe, by the way. They're about to feel distrustful of everyone around them besides other Hispanics — because of current events and everything. That's why they all group together.
Speaker 6: There's also been times in school — at family meetings and back-to-school nights — my parents don't go anymore because there isn't much of a point since they can't understand what they're saying. And teachers would be upset when I'd translate for my parents. And when I speak to my parents in Spanish in a public place at school, a bunch of students turn their heads — when it's just a normal conversation in a normal language that should be normalized.
Speaker 5: When someone speaks another language, people think they might be talking mad or saying something rude about them. And sometimes I don't even know a word in English that I know in Spanish. Just saying that one word in Spanish in a sentence, and someone might think you're saying something rude — but you're not.
Speaker 6: I remember one time seeing a story about how a teacher got upset that her student was speaking Spanish in her classroom — 'in this country we speak English.' It's unfair because — no one would bat an eye if someone was speaking French with their family at back-to-school night. When it's in Spanish, it's perceived differently.
Moderator: Is there anything that you guys have been thinking about while I've been talking that I haven't asked you about — anything that you'd like me to know, that you think would be important?
Speaker 6: I think generally on all this — I don't think Latinos in the music ensembles, or just Latinos in general, are seeking pity. We just want to feel like we're treated the same as others. So that's why I think they should embrace and show off other versions of Mexican music and stuff. We just want it to be seen as normal.

Speaker 4: I'd love to see more colleges and universities start making Mariachi groups, because I feel like Mariachi is such an important musical form in Latin and Mexican culture. I really hope to see more of that.
Speaker 6: Especially since you're in the US — in the Southwest, if you're in Texas or California, if the majority of the people that live in your community are Hispanic, then you should clearly embody that and put it out there into your colleges and music programs.
Moderator: In California, 56% of students at school age — middle school, high school, elementary school — are Hispanic. Mostly Mexicanos because it's California, but it's over half. Yet if you look at the music programs, it's not half Hispanic. It's way less.
Speaker 6: And schools want students to study Spanish — but they don't want to study other things that come with Spanish beyond just the language.

School 2 — Non-Musician Focus Group

Moderator: So my first question for y'all is, how much do you know about the music program at School 2? Anything at all. What do you know? Like, do you know what classes?
Speaker 1: It was, like, choir, orchestral, Mariachi, you know. I
Speaker 2: I know there's a zero period for it, but there's people that can also take it for electives or you can just take it, like, by choice, by some class.
Moderator: Yeah. Literally anything you know, whether it's true or not true or, like, rumors, just wanna know how much information gets to you. That's good. Okay. What about, have you ever considered joining a school music class? If so, what was your motivation? And if you haven't, what are the main reasons you have not wanted to take music in high school?
Speaker 1: So I wanted to take concert band during my junior year, but the only way it could fit in my schedule was if I took a zero period, which I couldn't do it because I had, like, family responsibilities and then I was taking other, like, AP courses. So that got in the way and that's why I didn't take any music classes. So I considered maybe instead of having a zero period, I could just take it as, like, one of my main six. But I would have to complete my other requirements to graduate first, which meant I had to, you know, pause going into a music class.
Moderator: So it was like a it didn't fit with your schedule? Yes. Otherwise, you would have. Yes. Cool. Thank you. Informative. Anybody else?
Speaker 2: I think I would have done it if well, my little sister does it, and it's too much. I it's already too much for her. I wouldn't wanna, like I wouldn't wanna do it. I also, like, I didn't like the teachers at all when I was gonna do it because they just seemed, like, very, like, not fun at all. Like, they just seemed, like, really boring. But also, it's, I never got to know them. So I think it's just from, like, me assuming.
Moderator: Yeah. No. That's important to know. Thank you.
Speaker 1: I was thinking of doing one for, like, my art grade, but then, like, other, like, courses or, like, electives, like, work majors.
Speaker 4: I think I'm just not interested in instruments like that.
Moderator: Fair enough. Or singing like that? Yeah. Cool.
Speaker 1: Well, I don't know. I've not really known a little instrument. I don't know how to play any instruments. So I think that's kinda, like, why. But I sing is you see.
Moderator: Have any of you ever wanted to learn to play an instrument or sing?
All: Mhmm.
Speaker 2: Yeah. Okay.

Moderator: I think my next question is gonna be, when you were little, when you were in elementary school or middle school, did you ever take music classes then? Yeah. Yeah. You were in choir?
Speaker 1: No. It was required.
Moderator: Oh, it was required. Gotcha.
Speaker 1: I was in choir and band. Yeah. I was in choir for about two years in elementary school, and I played the clarinet in band for about four to five-ish years, starting elementary, ending in middle school.
Moderator: Okay. Yeah. Yeah. So if you took it because you were required, and then when it wasn't required, you didn't take it anymore, what is the main reason you stopped taking it?
Speaker 1: I found it hard. I took piano lessons. I couldn't do it.
Moderator: Did you and you took music in school, though?
Speaker 1: I took piano lessons outside and then music in school. Yeah. Yeah. It's okay. I played violin in third grade, but I just didn't like the teacher. And it was yeah. It was just I don't know. I didn't find interest in playing it, and I didn't really understand it.
Moderator: Yeah. Fair.
Speaker 1: I played the flute in sixth grade, but in middle school, I think there was other electives that seemed more interesting to me, like, in music because you can only do that one, like, something you zero period.
Moderator: Yeah. You hear that a lot no matter who. Like, most people do it when they're younger in schools and then they stop. So that's very, very usual. So leaving school for a second, what kind of music do you listen to on your own? What kind of music do you love?
Speaker 1: Mhmm. Yeah. I feel like I listen to music in Spanish. Mhmm. Yeah. Latin artist, and it's the variety. Mhmm.
Moderator: I agree. So students at other schools have said things like corridos or a few of them who are musicians say banda or or norteno. And then they've said artists like of course, probably the most famous right now is Bad Bunny. Do you guys listen to Bad Bunny? Yeah. Okay. Who what are some of the other artists that you listen to when it's your choice?
Speaker 1: I listen to this one band. It's called Bandai Mez. My mom likes to listen to them and Los Demirarios too.
Speaker 3: I like Omar Quartz.
Moderator: K. Can you say that one a little bit louder? Omar Quartz. Oh, how do you spell that last name?
Speaker 1: C o u r t z.
Moderator: Cortz. Cool.
Speaker 1: I think another big artist right now is Fuerza Regia.
Moderator: Fuerza Regia?
Speaker 1: Yes. We play with groups. And they're like Corridos.
Moderator: Do you ever listen to, don't laugh, mariachi?
Speaker 1: I think that's for like, old people.
Moderator: I've heard that. Yeah. Grandpa music. Amazing. So would you ever be interested in playing mariachi? Like, you see the school has it, but you don't wanna take it.
Speaker 1: I think I would do it, but but You okay? I just not I'll do the, like, the drums maybe.

Speaker 2: I think it's also just, like, the struggle having to like, going from never playing the instrument to learning how to play. I mean, when everyone else already knows what they're doing.
Moderator: Yeah. That makes sense. Good answers, you guys. It's good good good stuff. So this next one, you already kind of answered. You wanted to take it here, but you ran into the barrier you couldn't because of scheduling. Mhmm. My question is, are there any other barriers or challenges that you faced that prevented you from participating in music in school? These could be related to schedules or finances or family responsibilities or your family doesn't think it's cool. Your friends don't think it's cool. Are there anything, like, you've ever been like, oh, I I want to, but I can't.
Speaker 1: I think it's just hard to balance out the workload that the classes are giving you. You've probably seen it yesterday. Yeah.
Moderator: So you'd be maybe more likely if it was easier? Yeah. Less time?
Speaker 1: Initially, I agree with that. I feel like you're having to go home, and then you start to do homework, but it's already late because we have to stay for practice or, like, you have to be rehearsing that I bought skit. So I think
Speaker 3: the work has has to do it back.
Speaker 2: Yeah. Especially if you're doing, like, sports, you have homework, you have practice after and then yeah. I heard they do that practice, like, after school, before school. So, like, I feel like it'd be way too much, like, do anything. But I feel like most of the kids doing schools, like, doing the music set, they don't really have, like, other things going on. I feel like most of them just, have more to do and then at the then they have music. Like, it's, like, a priority. That's us. Good stuff.
Speaker 1: Also, like, my friends don't think it's cool. My family doesn't think it's cool, they think I should focus more on like my academic classes, like English, math, science, all that important stuff that that they think is more valuable than like arts stuff because they want you to do, like, very well academically and usually my parents would think, like, arts, it's just, like, an extra thing. You don't need it. Yeah. So Yep. Yeah. Okay.
Moderator: Anybody have anything else you wanted to add before we move on? Okay. This you might have to think about for a little bit. It's a big bigger question. Are there any changes or additions to what the music program is like here at School 2 that you think would make it more appealing and accessible for Latino students like yourselves?
Speaker 2: Maybe if it was like maybe if they, like, express more the, like, that they want more of our people to be a part because I feel like it's not set. So we never knew this was a thing that they wanna be a part because it was never said. But it's like if it was said, like, oh, like, we love for you people to, like, join and be a part and us having more, like oh, well, yeah. That's all.
Moderator: So you feel like if you were if you felt more welcomed into it, you would be more likely to join? Yeah.
Speaker 1: Yes. So well, especially, like, in my deep friends, since it's not popular, we would, play the flute or, like, say the violin. So like, most of them play the guitar, like, the accordion for instance.
Moderator: Yeah. Great points. Thank you. So building off what you just said, were you aware that there's not a lot of Latino students in music in schools?
Speaker 1: No. I was not aware.

Moderator: Not something you knew? No. Okay. Alright. And so this you knew that they had a mariachi program? Yeah. But you didn't you know, that didn't seem like they were catering to you necessarily? Yes. Okay. Because it's not necessarily what you like. That makes sense. Let's see. That's pretty good. So you know what I'm trying to find out about. Are there any other thoughts you have, like a question that you think I should be asking of people your age, Latina Latinas in your case, but Latinos at any school, is there anything that I am not asking that I should be? That might be one you have to think about. It's hard to come up with that answer right away.

Speaker 2: Like, are you saying, like, questions for this interview? Like, what questions you should ask for this interview or what?

Moderator: Yeah. It could be for this interview or if there's if I'm really trying to get Latinos to join in on music, is there another way of thinking that I I haven't, we haven't thought about yet because I'm not Latino? Or anything that you might be, you know, might be more likely to work that we just haven't thought of yet besides providing Takis. Free Takis every day if you join bands? Yes?

Speaker 1: No? Maybe

Speaker 2: maybe you can do, like, a poll. Like, I like asking people, like, what would make you want to join? Or, like, what instruments do you wanna do? Or even if there was like I don't know if there's a class. Is there a class for like, the people who are barely learning? Just starting? Beginner. It's just like, isn't all they do is band one and they're like Yeah. It's just there's one and two.

Speaker 1: But Mhmm. But I'll start feeling like you have to start, like, band for, like, your freshman year because it's such a big, crazy band, and especially it's better, like, think people have band the college, like, so it's better off this week.

Moderator: Yeah. Yeah. That's in my research. You are 100% correct. It's hard to start it in high school because the people in band in high school, they already know how to play because they they started learning in elementary school or middle school. A few of them joined in high school, but they have to catch up. That's difficult. Yeah. We get that a lot. Mhmm. Yeah. You mentioned that it's you don't think it's cool. Your friends don't think it's cool. Do you think at this school that there's, like, and be honest, a stigma or a stereotype of people who do music?

Speaker 1: Yeah. Yes.

Moderator: What is that?

Speaker 1: Like a band kid who's like crusty. Like, I don't know. Like, they're just like, like, cringe, I guess. Like, band kid humor. That's what you see. Yeah. Yeah. They're just seen as, like, cringe and weird. Yeah. Yeah. And nerds.

Speaker 2: They, like, stay in there for break. Yeah. Like, and then they eat their lunch and they're sure. So it's like I feel like they're not very outgoing, some of them, or they're, like, rude. Any any band kid I've talked to, they're not nice.

Speaker 1: Like, a lot. Not to stereotype but it, it's like a lot of competitors.

Moderator: Probably. Yeah. That's why they practice a lot.

Speaker 2: I just feel, like, choir is is different for me. And I feel like, yeah, there's some people, but a lot of, like, a lot of the kids, the more, like, outgoing one are are joining choir because they say it's easy. Like, some of the football people too, they joined choir because they said it was easy. So I feel like some of it may be split up. But Mhmm.

School 2 — Teacher Interview

Moderator: Can you say the name of that program and who runs it?
Speaker 1: It's the [place name omitted]. That's the organization. It's just their mariachi and folklorico program. So it's just, like, twenty minutes up the road on one one. So it's a we're a performance venue, but we have education tied to it. So the program started about eight years ago, and then I took it over. This is my fourth year now. Nice. But they just opened for Mariachi Vargas two weeks ago. We performed for a community event. So, if it's a free community event, we can go perform at it. But if it's, like, a quinceanera or a party, we can't do it type of thing. It's geared towards our age group is eight all the way up until first year of college. So we see a range. We see mainly high school, middle school. We do see some elementary on the other side. But how they join the program is to do one of our summer camps, just so we get to know them and all that stuff, and then we see if they're a good fit, and then we invite them to the program because we have about 200 kids that do our summer camps all over the summer, so we can't take everybody. So we kind of vet that way, and then they're now year round, and then they stay as long as they want. Some kids drop off because they've sports or whatever, and they just can't commit to it. Others are in for since they're eight all the way until they graduate. Which is super cool, but it's all about access and all of that stuff. And we're super happy we can provide everything for free, because they couldn't do it if they had to pay for it and stuff like that. So we have a lot of donors that like the program. They wanna support it, so they keep funding it. So we're doing that.
Moderator: So four years ago, that was your first time teaching mariachi?
Speaker 1: Correct. I took because the old director there was one of my buddies. He's like, hey. Come, like, let's observe some of the classes. So I kinda learned that way, and I thought my own viola, and I started learning at home. And then I had some of my mom's friends just like, oh, come play with them. So I kinda did that, and then I like, okay, the teaching's different. But that was the first time I started teaching, and then it just, as fast as possible, just like fast track, lend it to teaching. Because there's lot of parallels between, like, teaching band and orchestra and the mariachi. I mean, you're using your full degree, like, the choir, band, orchestra, using the full thing. Sure. And not every class does that. So that's pretty cool. So it's like, I guess I used my whole degree. Like, this is sick. Absolutely. And, yeah, I took the traditional instruments like the Vuela Guitaron first, because that's something I didn't have training on in college. But, yeah, it was very scary at first, because, again, turning over, like, new director of a program, also me figuring out what's going on at the same time and all that stuff. So now we hit the groove, and we're doing really well, and we have what we're going, but I love it.
I wouldn't imagine doing anything else. And I'm super happy that we had the Prop 28 money come in at the right time because this also got me to full time too, was adding the Prop 28 class of Mariachi I achieve, and then we entrance and all that stuff. So that was perfect timing for all of this.
Moderator: So did you already work here part time, and then they're like, hey, let's start Mariachi.
Speaker 1: Yes. So I started here 60% my first year, and then we added with Prop 28, the arts appreciation class, and then the money actual class, and that got me up to. So it was a win-win.
Moderator: Have you seen Mariachi bring students into the other aspects of the music program?
Speaker 1: Yes. So some students, if they take the Mariachi class, they kinda slowly get into everything else. Like, we have one kid that took in, she's a violin player, but she started playing guitar because we only have guitars in Buelas and Prutodons in that class. So she joined her

orchestra, so she's in her orchestra. She's starting to see the bleed come in, which is super super cool. But this is, think, the easiest kinda get your foot wet in a music class because it's literally, it's just a guitar class just with with that framing, and then we learn about not like we're learning about each state in Mexico too. So like, they'll get like a slide presentation about this and all that stuff, like each piece we play relates to a region and all that stuff, so they're getting that because it's it's also an ethnic studies credit. So it's their music and ethnic studies, that's also a huge grab as well because they wanna kill two birds with one stone. So they do so that that's how we get a lot of kids. Most kids take it their senior year, is unfortunate, like, that class is about 80% seniors. Yep. So we only have, like, a handful of other grades, but those students normally come in or at least try it for one year, and then they're like, k.
We don't wanna do band and stuff like that. But a lot of the kids take, like, stagecraft or they do drama. Like, they do other art forms, they take choir, and then they take this on top of it. Like, our seniors are taking, like some of them are taking, like, two or three music classes or arts classes just because they like it, and they're like, oh, like this close. This is my first music class experience and stuff. So yeah.

Moderator: What were we talking about earlier when I said I wanted to get this on tape? Oh, I had asked you why you think students don't — Latino students don't like the traditional band orchestra choir model clap songs.

Speaker 1: It comes off of the stigma of, like, being a band kid, choir kid, all that stuff, so they don't really vibe with that. But also from home, they're like, why would you take a music class? Because I won't help you later in life when you could take whatever academic class at the same time. So we see a lot of kind of the push and pull, like, we don't wanna be seen as, like, a nerd, but also my parents are telling me not to do it. But we're also seeing at the same time because they're in the class, they're in it because their parents want them to take it. They're like, this is the like, you're not gonna get this offered at your school. Like, take this class and all that stuff. So we're seeing that kind of uptick, but it really comes from them not being because they weren't raised with it. Right? If they didn't take it, like, at elementary school or middle school, whatever, it's hard to get them now. And they just that stigma of, like, ban kids, acquire kids, stuff, don't really drive with. But also, we could look at it the other way is, like, have we gone out of our way to, you know, have more abiding space and stuff like that? So the good first step was having this Mariachi class because they see them on campus where we do gigs on campus. They're like, oh, I kinda wanna do that. So for next year, kids are like, I wanna take that class. I wanna take that class. Yeah. So it's getting that that visibility. It's super cool because they don't really see themselves in especially in the art forms in school. Yeah. They have to go out of school to see themselves, which is interesting.

Moderator: Except now, they do see themselves. Do you see any truth to what I've heard other teachers who have mariachi or up in The UK and Northenia? Do you see any truth to what they say when they describe the students call mariachi grandpa music? Like, they think of mariachi as traditional and stuffy. It's what the old people listen to.

Speaker 1: Correct. Yes. I see truth to that because when you're first learning, we can't do, like, the the new stuff right now because they don't have, you know, a skill base. So we do more of the traditional stuff. Like, I had one of the parents say, why is he playing grandpa music? Like, at the first concert, like, oh, you play you're playing grandpa music. So, yes, but also, we have to look at the interest of the kids now. The new thing is the Bad Bunny, the all stuff. So they wanna do that. They're not used to seeing this. They're used to their grandparents listening to this, and that's like, oh, that's the backyard, like, anniversary for my grandparents' party thing.

So I'm seeing a lot of that. Like, if we offered, like, a norteno class, like, with the Bajo Quinto, the 10 strings, 12 strings, I think we'd see a lot of more interest in that, but it's like more of a niche interest. So, like, I'd say, like, out of 30 kids, 10 kids would be gung ho about it, like, I love this. And then they're like, I like it, but I don't wanna necessarily learn about it because it's also hard to put that into a classroom setting. But I would agree that, like, kids look at it as old person music, but they get over it real quick once they start playing because they care more about the physical playing than the what they're playing. But what you're gonna see today is we have some traditional stuff, but also they're like, well, can we do this, like, Christian Noldale thing that has mariachi but, like, has a backbeat on? I'm like, sure. We can do that. It's in and it's in their skill set too, which is cool. So I always start with traditional, and then we kinda branch out from there. But with the [place name omitted] program, when I do that, it's mainly traditional because we have the Folklorico that we do with, so they don't do, like, the new stuff because that's not their tradition. The kids are normally gung ho about that, so they're like, no. Like, we like this. We like this. I always spin it of what are the mariachis, the top mariachis like, Mariachi Vargas, Sol de Mexico, like, groups, what are they doing right now? And then, like, try to match that, they're like, okay. We like it. But I would agree, kids do look at it as the old person music. But they get over it once they either start playing it or see their friends doing it. Never mind. This is cool. This is cool. And most kids don't realize what the songs are about too, so once I explain, hey, this is what this is why your grandparents love this, like, it's talking about heartbreak, all that stuff, like, oh. I get it now. So we're starting to see the buy in with that as well.

Moderator: This is a question right off that list, and we were talking about it a little earlier, but I wanna get it on tape. How diverse would you say is the student participation in your music program?

Speaker 1: In our music program? We have a lot of we have big mix. Because I always say this mariachi group, when we get all everybody, because we have the strings and all stuff, and we get everybody together, it's like the most diverse mariachi in the state of California. Because then we every ethnic group in there, pretty much. But overall, as a program, we're getting there. We're getting there. It's better than the first year I started. But now since we're branching out, we're starting to see more investment and people saying, okay. If my friend that looks like he's doing it okay now, I feel more invited. So we're starting to see the uptick, but we're getting there. But, yeah, that's we have the most diverse Mariachi, I think, because we have we have Latinos, we have East Asian, we have all of these ethnic groups all in one thing, and it's really cool. And our like, our white kids love coming into I don't understand it, but I wanna play it, but, like, I don't speak Spanish and all that stuff, so they see that barrier, and then I'm like, just play. It's just music. They're like, okay. So they're seeing that investment too, but, like, our Latino students will kinda take them out of their wing, like, oh, this is what this means and all that stuff. So we're starting to see that that collaboration, which is super cool, and it's just all happening organically. I'm not telling them talk to each other. They're just like, no. This is how you do it, dude, and all that stuff.

Moderator: You said you had two white kids this year? We have — I forgot. Three. Great. We have three. How many did you have when you started it last year?

Speaker 1: Last year, it was, like, 10. Because the class last year was about 30 kids. Now we have about 15. It's weird to see that drop off just because scheduling got super messed up this year. So we saw about 10 last year. We saw about four this year, but we see more when we combine them because it's offered as a class and a club because I don't wanna depend on lots of kids that can't physically take the class, so we offer it as a club too. So I think overall, we have,

in total, about six when we get everybody together, but we have seen a lot of interest from them. They're just interested. They wanna learn. Yeah. We see a lot of our, like, Asian students from orchestra that just wanna play more, and they're super invested in it. We have a lot of Filipino students that do it. But, if I had to, like, put the percentages, it's pretty mixed, like, at least 15% of everything you can think of in there. We're still working on our African American involvement and just our program in general. Because we only have, like, I could think off the top of my head, two total in the total program, but it's also on campus too. We don't it's not a thriving student population here.

Moderator: What kinds of support or resources do you feel are needed to better serve the Latino community, the Latino students population on your and in your program?

Speaker 1: In our program in specific, just visibility, ensuring we're willing to do this. And because I'm very student interest driven. I'm like, okay. I could hoot and holler all day, but if you're not interested in it, this is where I'm fighting you, you're fighting me. What do you wanna do? Like, for the states projects, I'm like, what states do wanna learn about first? We have to hit all of them, but we wanna hit first to get that buy in and then we can do all that. So I think just more we're willing to do this, where do you wanna take this? And let them kinda drive that. You can have more of.

Moderator: help you do what you need to do?

Speaker 1: More sections and not cut everything. But it's more of a district thing than the school itself. I think, as a whole, to help the Latino community on this campus, just more representation, I think, would help a lot. Because we only have, I think, one or two people in the office that can speak Spanish.

Moderator: More representation on staff.

Speaker 1: On staff in general. Right. Because I think we only have three Latinos or four Latinos on staff. Oh. And I'm only half, so I guess two and a half we only have on campus. So I think just the more visibility and the more you could be yourself instead of putting on the code switching type of thing I think. Would help a lot. But I think in the music program, to get them into everything else, just the convincing part of it, be like, you can take orchestra too because this will help you do this better and kinda spin it that way. I think will help that's something we can do to help kinda do it in the program. I think rep choices too will help a lot. Because what I do with my groups is like, okay. I don't wanna play the Grainger. I don't wanna play the x because it's been done a hundred year, but can we do that's different? Because, like, you can teach any concept in any piece at the same time. So it's like, okay. What do we wanna do? So I always throw at least one diverse composer in there, one Mexican composer in there, and then free choice, whatever they wanna do. And their buy-in is so much higher. So that's something that I do that we could do better at the credit, especially at our higher levels, like a wind ensemble or chamber orchestra. We could see more of that, but just more diverse rep to be get that interest.

Moderator: Yeah. Yeah. Talked earlier about the changing demographic at this school. You used to be considered the rich white kid school. That's changing how?

Speaker 1: How we're starting to see just more, especially Latino students, come to campus. So I don't know how that works out because our school's on a lottery, so anybody can apply to come here. So I don't know how that kinda spread that out, but I think [place name omitted] itself also got more diverse, especially in [place name omitted]. We started to get more diversity in the area. So having that helped the school a lot. Yeah. But we have a lot of kids, like, bussing in. Like, we have kids coming from [place name omitted], kids coming from, like, [place

name omitted] coming over here, because we have offer, like, a ton of APs and the their parents see the academics, so we're starting to see that influx of students in there.

School 2 — Vice-Principal Interview

Moderator: So… how long have you been an administrator at School 2?
Speaker 1: Two and a half years.
Moderator: And before that, you were a science teacher, is that what I'm seeing?
Speaker 1: Yeah, science teacher on… at the same school.
Moderator: Gotcha. If you happen to know it, do you know… can you tell me what the demographic breakdown of students who participate in your school's music program is?
Speaker 1: I do not know that offhand. I know that it is majority white and Asian. But I know that the addition of mariachi greatly increased the Hispanic participation. The traditional music program is still majority white and Asian.
Moderator: Okay. Do you have, did you have any experience with… the… the implementation of mariachi, did you notice a difference on campus when that started?
Speaker 1: Absolutely.
Moderator: What kind of difference did it make?
Speaker 1: Our Hispanic students took more pride in our school, they vocally discussed feeling more valued in our school community, and more… seen in our school community.
Moderator: Okay, that does sound like it made a difference, wow. And you saw that as a… as a teacher and an administrator?
Speaker 1: Yeah, they were… they were very proud of it, and very proud of their culture for being highlighted. It started as a club on our campus, and they loved that, but they felt valued when it became a class.
Moderator: Before the mariachi program came along, were you aware at all that Hispanic and Latino students are somewhat underrepresented in music programs all over the country? Did you know about that?
Speaker 1: I mean, I didn't know about the country. I've been to our concerts, and there definitely were very few on our stage, during… during the band concerts. And I've been at a couple of other schools, and it was the same there. So I could extrapolate.
Moderator: Yeah, so you absolutely… you did, I want to confirm, notice that there was an underrepresentation at your school.
Speaker 1: Absolutely. Absolutely.
Moderator: Do you have any… knowledge of why that happens to be, or any guesses in your experience about why that might be?
Speaker 1: I'm not sure. I do know that we have an over-representation of our Asian population in our band. We have a very small Asian population on our campus, but our band program is majority Asian? And so I would put that towards, like, cultural and parent pushing. But I'm not… I have no, like, evidence for that. And a lot of those kids talk about college applications a lot, and how band is going to help with college applications. And we're still working on getting our Hispanic students to all see themselves as college-bound.
Moderator: What percentage of the Hispanic students on campus do see themselves as college-bound, do you think?
Speaker 1: I'd put it at, like, 15-20%. A lot of them see themselves as, like, JC-bound, which we have an amazing JC, and that's an awesome option, and most of our white and Asian students end up doing that anyway, like, 75% of our students go to the JC anyway. Freshman, sophomore

year, the white and Asian students are definitely talking about four-year colleges a lot more than the Hispanic students are.
Moderator: And you chalk that up, like you said, to cultural differences.
Speaker 1: Yeah, and I think parents understanding the system. And, like, I talk pretty openly about, like. I distinctly remember in 7th grade learning that college was an option. Because, like, you go to elementary school, you go to middle school, you go to high school, you go to college, was how it was presented growing up to me. And I remember being like, wait, high school's not optional, but the college is optional? That's crazy! And I just don't think that that is, as many of our Hispanic families, like, talking in early childhood.
Moderator: That is useful, thank you. What initiatives or policies has the school or district implemented to promote greater Latino student engagement in music? That you know of.
Speaker 1: I think the mariachi is the most focused concerted effort, and that we do have another school in our district that has the mariachi program on their site. I think that we have some broader initiatives overall, so, like, the… we implemented ethnic studies before it became a state requirement, which focused on Chicano-American history and lived experience. And we embedded those ethnic studies principles across classes district-wide, so, like, tried to embed them into science classrooms and English classrooms and history classrooms and math classrooms to really broaden that base of understanding, and pride for the students coming from those communities. And then as a site, we really focused in on equity and trying to get more equitable practices in all of our classrooms. So we've had some broad efforts around equity and elevating our Hispanic populations, but I think mariachi is the only one that's music-specific.
Moderator: I think that it… that bears out, yeah, thank you. Okay, another question about… barriers here. What challenges or barriers have you observed that may be preventing any Latino students from joining and staying involved in music at your school?
Speaker 1: Are we talking, like, the traditional music program, or the mariachi, or overall?
Moderator: I want you to answer that in any way you feel is important.
Speaker 1: Okay, I think that… the teacher really matters. And I think cultural competency in the teacher really matters. So I think that our mariachi teacher, obviously, is part of their culture, is able to bring that cultural competency, that understanding, that connection with those students. I think our traditional music teacher has less of that cultural competency, and… doesn't see recruitment as part of his job. In a broader sense of the word recruitment. So I think that that's definitely been a barrier. And then there's also just, like, the systemic barriers of, a lot of our Hispanic students have to retake a math class, have to have an ALD class, and that reduces their ability to take electives in general, because they're focusing in on those core content areas. We have a… our Hispanic population is our lowest graduation rate population, so… statistically speaking, they're more likely to need to repeat classes and make up credits.
Moderator: This one, I think, will apply, and again, I… I don't necessarily need… flawless answers to any of these, so please understand that. My question is, how does the school work to ensure music curricula, teaching approaches, and ensemble offerings are culturally relevant and responsive to the Latino student population. You did mention that the mariachi class was done specifically with the demographic in mind. Are there… any other… any other ways? I actually, I think I asked you this question before.
Speaker 1: Some kind of, but yeah, I don't think so. I think it's really just within that mariachi class. I think that our… our traditional music program plays a lot of dead white dude stuff.
Moderator: That's exactly what they do. Dead white men. Straight white men.

Speaker 1: Yeah.
Moderator: This isn't gonna go in the dissertation, but I really liked the fact that when I drove up to School 2, there was the American flag, and then there was the Pride flag underneath. That was awesome, by the way.
Speaker 1: Yeah, yeah, we are trying, but it is slow.
Moderator: Fighting the good fight. So, my next question is, what kinds of partnerships or outreach efforts has the school explored to connect with the Latino community? I would love it if you had any music-specific ones, but if not, just in general would be okay.
Speaker 1: I know over the last 5 years, I want to say, our Mecha Club has really expanded on our campus. Don't ask me what that stands for. But they have really gone to the Metra Conference every year and brought back amazing resources and connections to our campus. From that, I know a couple years ago, the keynote speaker came and had, like, a listening session with a group of our students that identified with his story, to try and bring that community onto our campus. And I think that's what really sparked… they brought a mariachi band onto our campus, like an adult mariachi band onto our campus, and that really sparked the club initiative. Which turned into a class. So I think they're really doing a lot of great work to connect the two communities.
Moderator: Are there any things that are providing good outreach to parents? Do you have any good ways of reaching out that are particularly effective?
Speaker 1: I wouldn't say particularly effective, no. We have all the required… things, but I think we have, like, 3 parents participating in the… the stuff.
Moderator: What additional resources in the way of, I don't know, training or financial support do you feel would be beneficial for music teachers to better serve their Latino students?
Speaker 1: That's hard, because from my experience, I think that it's a desire and a mind shift for the teacher. Which… can't necessarily… it can be supported through training, but it can't be initiated through training. And that initiation is, I think, where we're struggling.
Moderator: So, if a teacher has the desire to bring more Latinos into their music program, and they come to you for help. Imaginary scenario, what… what would you say to them? How would you offer your support if they had no idea what to do?
Speaker 1: We have some training around ethnic studies that I would definitely send them to as a district, because I think that that helps with, again, that mindset shift. And then I would connect them with the [place name omitted], which is a community resource that we have that has an amazing mariachi program. That is run by one of our teachers. And so I would… I would connect them there. To try and build those community connections. Those would be, like, the first two easy steps.
Moderator: Okay, I think that those are all of the questions that I have for you.

APPENDIX F

School 3 Transcripts

School 3 — Musician Focus Group

Moderator: How many of you played music in elementary school? Not many, actually. Just a few of you. How many of you played music in middle school? The same hands. The same three hands went up. Obviously, all of you are playing music in high school, which is why you're in the room. How many of you started as a freshman? One, two, three, four. Actually, not just mariachi — any music. Started playing music in school at freshman year. Nice. How many of you started playing music as a sophomore? Lots of hands. One, two, three, four, five. You had your hand up for freshmen. That's okay. Anybody start as a junior? And senior? Okay. What made you decide to join? Oh, before I ask that — you don't have to raise your hand. You're certainly welcome to raise your hand if you'd like. But if you have something to say, you can just go ahead and say it. And if you have any ideas or questions for me, you can ask them at any time. So my next question is, what made you decide to join a music class in high school? In this case, it could be mariachi. It could be band if you are also in band. It could be choir if you're also in that. Whatever.
Speaker 1: For my arts credit. Yeah.
Moderator: Okay. Why did you choose Mariachi to get your arts credit?
Speaker 1: At first, I did beginning band. It was between PE 3 and beginning band, and I actually did beginning band.
Moderator: Why did you choose beginning band?
Speaker 1: Because I didn't want to do PE.
Moderator: Okay. So it wasn't because it was music. It was just, no, not PE. Fair enough.
Speaker 1: The counselor put me in for it.
Moderator: The counselor put you in what?
Speaker 1: Mariachi. I just stayed with it.
Moderator: So you didn't necessarily choose it, but you like it?
Speaker 1: Yeah. But once I got to know about it, experience it myself, yeah, I decided to stay with it. Okay. Thank you.
Speaker 2: My brother was in mariachi before. He would bring me — like, talk about what he would do during class, and it had a heavy influence on me and my family about actually joining mariachi, and so that's why I chose.
Moderator: Okay. You joined because your family told you it was fun.
Speaker 2: Yeah. But mainly because my brother was in mariachi. If he probably wasn't in mariachi, I probably would've never joined mariachi.
Moderator: Oh, okay. Alright. Good to know. Anybody else?

Speaker 3: I joined because my friends were already in it, and they said it was pretty cool. So I was like, I'm gonna join.
Moderator: Peer pressure. Love it.
Speaker 4: I started off in band, and then I was like, this ain't really for me. I started off on the trumpet. And after the semester was over, I was like, yeah, no, this is it for me. And then my friend — another friend of mine — she was in Mariachi. I'm like, oh, it sounds cool. I'll try it out. And then I fell in love with it ever since.
Moderator: Okay. What made you initially try out band first?
Speaker 4: Band — originally, it was like how he said, it was in between classes. But then again, I was like, well, my elementary and middle school didn't offer no type of music classes, so maybe something, I might do something different.
Moderator: Yeah. Okay. Next question. What music do you like to listen to on your own for fun?
Speaker 1: Low key, just anything.
Speaker 5: Mostly anything. Yeah. Anything? All the music.
Moderator: All genres. Yeah. All genres. Okay. Mainly Mexican music, though. Mainly Mexican? And what styles of Mexican music do you like to listen to most?
Speaker 6: I like Banda, Cumbia. Mariachi is fine. It's between Banda and Mariachi.
Moderator: Cool. Anybody wanna throw out an artist I should listen to if I wanna get to know what you guys are listening to?
Multiple Students: Vicente Fernandez. Mariachi Reina.
Moderator: Do you guys think about the idea that mariachi is for older generations? It's like grandpa music. I've heard that at other places. What do you think about that?
Speaker 2: I disagree with that. I mean, music doesn't have — I feel like it's not enclosed. Music's for everybody. It's how you express yourself. So for people to be like, oh, it's for these people mainly — I just don't agree with that.
Speaker 5: I say mariachi is like — it's your culture. So does it have an age limit? Because you see kids singing mariachi and spreading music. It doesn't matter the age.
Speaker 4: I feel like it depends on the artist and what type of music is played. Like, if you have newer mariachi groups, then most likely newer generations gonna listen to it. But Vicente Fernandez — everybody listens to him. So that's just a generation pass-on.
Speaker 6: I disagree because I think the genre's gaining more popularity, if anything. Bruno Mars came out with something similar. I heard recently one of the songs, and it sounded like Mariachi, but he added some other elements to it.
Speaker 5: Which just came out last week.
Speaker 1: Is it like this traditional mariachi sound or is it just twisted to be a little new? What's the twist in it? R&B?
Speaker 1: Yeah. So that's a mix with R&B — new age R&B, but it has mariachi elements to it. And the mariachi is actually a mariachi. Like, the guys are full-blown mariachis.
Moderator: So now you guys might be a little bit biased because you love mariachi because you play it, and you're in a good program. Do you think most Latinos your age agree about mariachi? Are they listening to it?
Speaker 6: I feel like most of the time it's influenced by people around you that will get you into listening to it. Because I will be honest — before I was in high school, I didn't really like mariachi like that, just because I felt like I wasn't listening to the music as much and I just

thought it was just there. But then coming to high school and actually being in the class gives you a different passion and a different feeling.
Speaker 2: What I was gonna say was I think it's something that you more grow into. As someone who grew up in a Hispanic household, you kind of grow into it as you start listening to the music.
Moderator: Do your friends listen to it?
Students as a group: Some of it. A little. No. It's more the parents.
Moderator: Okay. Are there any barriers that you have faced in your school career that might have prevented you from participating in music? For example, your schedule or your finances or parents said no or your friends were like, don't do that, it's for nerds — is there anything that might have stopped you?
Speaker 3: The counselors — when you're asking for a schedule, you ask for a specific class like Mariachi, and they won't give it to you because they say we need this other class. When there's actually other classes from different periods that you can actually take to make up those credits that you need.
Speaker 4: And they also have the excuses of, the class is full — but in reality, we usually have at least 40 to 50 people in the class.
Moderator: Why do you think they would try and tell you you can't do it?
Speaker 4: Probably because just the class is full.
Mariachi Teacher: I could give you insight on that. I mean, you worked as a high school teacher too. There's no limit — there could be up to eighty people in a band class. Mariachi is considered one of those other classes like guitar or piano in which, once you reach a certain limit, you get paid extra for every single student. But so you wanna — you get paid extra for every single student.
Mariachi Teacher 2: They just don't wanna — you don't pay. Exactly. But actually, we lifted that. That way, we can have as many students as possible.
Moderator: I was gonna say, because if you were getting paid for extra students, you're making bank.
Mariachi Teacher: Yep. I'm not. *[Laugh]*
Moderator: As I've been watching the mariachi classes the last — yesterday and this morning — I'm wondering, why do you love playing it so much?
Speaker 6: It's just the way that you can connect and express yourself through music. Because a lot of the times, some songs, some lyrics, or anything can describe the way you feel, and instead of just talking about it, you're singing it or you're playing it. And just being able to do that through music is a strong thing that I feel like makes life easier.
Speaker 2: Adding on to what she said — I also feel like why we're so passionate about playing music is because, for me especially, the people in my class now, I knew none of them before, and I was able to connect with them so deeply. And we can just sit there and not say a single word, but yet feel so much towards each other by just playing the music. And I feel our class somewhat has that connection, especially because a lot of us have been with each other for so long — you just feel some sort of joy, and express it through music.
Moderator: Agree?
All: Yeah. Agree. Yeah.
Speaker 6: I was just gonna say that when I play, I can just take my mind off of things. I don't have to think about stuff outside of music, and I can just focus on what I'm playing. And I feel the emotions I don't wanna feel through the music. And also, I feel like I never really felt so

deeply connected to my culture than playing music that my parents have heard, that they've heard in their childhood, and I get to play that for them.
Speaker 4: You could pick up an instrument, learn it completely, and then that could be a type of therapy, a way to relax. So if you're having a bad day, you just pick up your guitar and try to learn something new.
Moderator: Quick question — show of hands. If there was not Mariachi at this school, how many of you would still be in music? No hands. One, two, three. Three out of the group. Okay. Have any of you ever thought about becoming teachers so that you can teach other schools about mariachi? One, two, three, four of you. And maybe kind of? So four and a half of you. Anybody wanna talk about that? What you're thinking about it?
Speaker 3: For me, it's because I was first trying to become a lawyer, but then over the time since I've been here, I've been trying to see my options and weigh them. I kinda like this. I wish this would become my life because I really like how it ties back into my roots and — trying to make everyone proud and stuff. Seeing the smiles — there's a saying we have: you have to play for the blind person and a deaf person, because a blind person can only hear and a deaf person can only see, so they have to act happy and play.
Moderator: Oh, I'm stealing that. When my ensembles are kind of dull and look like they're tired, I say, like, play for the deaf. Smart.
Speaker 4: Yeah. It first started with me — when I first came into Mariachi, our teacher originally wasn't [name omitted]. It was [name omitted]. I was like, man, I wanna be like that. I saw my trumpet and I saw him, and I'm like, I'm gonna be like that one day. And there's times where I doubt myself, but then that thought in my mind tells me to pick it up and do more. Don't give up. And then I just wanna spread what I feel to everybody — to our generation, our younger generation, to our kids, and to our kids' kids. That's what I wanna spread.
Speaker 6: I think to add on to that — I think our past teacher, there was a lot of ambition that came from it, and so that kind of influenced me too, because I liked the ambition that came from building up a group and making it a competitive, award-winning group and gaining accomplishments. And I also thought that would be fascinating and really inspiring.
Moderator: Show of another show of hands — how many of you are aware that at schools without mariachi or any Musica Latina, Latinos don't participate in music at the same rate as everybody else? One, two, three. About half of you were aware of it. Well, it's true. And that's kind of why I've decided to do this study — to figure out how we can increase that. So one of those main things is we need to have more teachers who look like [name omitted] and less music teachers who look like me. Because I'm really good at getting white kids to join band and choir and orchestra, but I was never great at getting Latino students to join me in my bands and my choirs. So we need more teachers from your culture and from your backgrounds to build music programs — to have more mariachis and guitar classes and all music. Just so if you're thinking about it, I highly encourage you. It's hard — [name omitted] will attest to how hard it is to get a teaching credential when you don't play a traditional instrument. But you can sing, you can play guitar in college. And there started to be some mariachi programs, probably not around here in school. But I encourage you — teachers make good money, and they get retirement, and they get health care. It's decent money. You get all the major holidays off. You get all the summer off. You get summers off, man. You get two months. Two weeks off for Christmas. How many sick days do you get? 11 a year. And if you don't use them, they carry over to the next year.
Speaker 4: Oh, so I get like twenty-two next year?

Moderator: Dude, I have eighty. I have eighty sick days. Out of the end of your retirement. Yeah. I'm not gonna work for the last year of my teaching because I'll have built up a year of sick days.
Speaker 3: You could take a whole last year.
Speaker 3: And then you get four days.
Speaker 4: When you think about it, you could basically take a whole year off — just have a —
Moderator: So now that I've told you that other schools have a low representation of Latinos in music, why do you think that might be? Just off the top of your head, why do you think Latinos don't join band, orchestra, choir as much as white counterparts or Asian counterparts do?
Speaker 5: Well, it could be a matter of two things — where they feel ashamed that they're not doing the other culture's thing, or they could be bullied out of it. How people would just make fun — like, you're Mexican, you shouldn't be doing that. So white of you. That's so Asian of you. They would feel embarrassed to be doing that and try different things, if it's not a part of their culture. I think I could also say it's like they don't really feel connected to other instruments and other genres of music.
Speaker 2: Yeah. What I was thinking is that —
Speaker 6: I feel like a lot of Hispanic kids who grew up in a Hispanic household grow up with music, but when you get into a school that doesn't offer that kind of music — music that you connect to — it doesn't interest you and you don't really bat an eye to it.
Speaker 6: Something else is — as someone with Hispanic parents, when I was in orchestra, my dad was at my concert and said he was gonna go to sleep because it was orchestra, because he doesn't know that music, he doesn't like that music. So once I got to Mariachi, he was actually happy that I was —
Speaker 7: I just feel like — kind of like what you say — you don't see people that are like us. [Name omitted] is the same culture, same background. It's like not seeing someone that's like, okay, they can relate to what I did, how I grew up. It might just make them feel like they can't connect to that music and to that class, so maybe that's why they don't take that class.
Speaker 5: It's like a type of family. You see a connection — because if you grew up listening to that type of music and other people are playing that music, you feel connected to them. So you wanna play their music. You wanna be active on that.
Speaker 6: I also feel like there's a stigma around band, because a lot of people kind of trash on band kids. I feel like a lot of kids are like, oh, I don't wanna get bullied. So it's kind of like, you know.
Moderator: Do you all agree — is there a stigma around band?
All Students: Yes. Yeah.
Moderator: Is that stigma true of mariachi? Do people who aren't involved in music — are they like, oh, mariachi is for nerds?
Speaker 1: No. No? Like, for instance, when I would take my clarinet with me to class, people would make fun — but there's more respect with mariachi.
Speaker 6: I feel like I don't know why it became a thing, but every time someone sees someone with a band instrument, they're like, oh, they're a band kid or something. But if you see someone carrying a violin or a guitar, then they're like, oh, that's cool. I don't know why, but I feel like it's just a stereotype.
Speaker 4: So with that being said, does that mean orchestra kids aren't bullied either?
All: No.
Speaker: So how do they know the difference?

Speaker 6: Because then they end up asking you, like, oh, you play this — what are you in? And then I'll say, oh, I'm in Mariachi — oh, that's cool. You play this. How are you doing both?
Speaker 1: Oh, so they stereotype you. So once they see a Mexican with the violin, they think it's cool?
Speaker 2: Yeah. They get serious.
Speaker 4: Then they take notice. Okay. See you.
Speaker 6: Because I came out with a violin and someone came up to me. They're like, oh, you're — and then I was like, I'm cool. I was in orchestra.
Moderator: You weren't in Mariachi yet?
Speaker 2: No. Because that happened more towards middle school.
Speaker 1: She's like, yes, I am. There's just the stereotype. You're like, oh, you're Mexican.
Speaker 6: You know? But it's like — it's like, you know what?
Moderator: So we've determined — and I think it's obvious because you're here — that mariachi is a great way to get Latinos involved in school music.
All: Yes.
Moderator: What would you say that schools that don't have that program — they can't get one right away — what would you say they should do if they want to get more Latinos involved in school music?
Speaker 5: They could also do a certain dance — any Mexican dance that involves people dancing together, that can bring a lot of people together. Ballet Folklorico? Yeah. Part of that kind of club.
Speaker: Or they can add songs to their repertoire — Mexican songs that translate well to band or stuff like that.
Moderator: Like marching band could do banda?
Speaker 4: I know some bands play La Bamba, and that's a huge song. That's incorporating.
Moderator: Yeah. And do you — as Latinos — do you like hearing marching bands play La Bamba?
All: Yes. Excited.
Speaker 4: It's more like a — oh, they're gonna play La Bamba — then you hear it and it's like, oh, they're playing La Bamba. Yeah.
Speaker 6: It makes it more enjoyable. Because I already listen to marching-band-style music. Once I hear something that I recognize, I'm like, that's cool.
Moderator: That's what you were saying about how mariachis don't sound attractive to white people until they hear Frank Sinatra or they hear the English lyrics — you were saying it works both ways. Yeah. Cool. Any other thoughts on what schools can do? You have great ideas.
Speaker 2: Maybe they could just have a club. Start off with a little club to see who would want to be in something like that, and then it could eventually come up to a program with Mariachi or something like that. I feel like a lot of schools — because I didn't grow up in the Valley, I grew up in the Bay — and especially the high schools in the Bay Area, I feel like depending on the popularity of the school, like racial popularity, that's what they advocate for. They don't really incorporate any of the other cultures. For example, I grew up around an area where it was very Asian and white-driven, and I always felt like people of my Hispanic background never really fit in, because they would make us learn certain things that just had nothing to do with what we relate to. And I feel like something that they could do to incorporate more Hispanics, more Latinos, is advocate for that — have events, have clubs, do things that make us feel welcome.

Speaker 6: I think having more Hispanic instructors could help as well. Because from personal experience, when I was at [school name omitted] for a summer program in music, I joined orchestra. And at first, it was a little intimidating because there weren't a lot of people from my background. I didn't really study orchestra before I did Mariachi, and that was the musical background that I had. And so when I saw that one of the violinists, who was a former instructor — he was Hispanic — I felt much more comfortable.
Moderator: That's why we need all you guys to turn into music teachers. Get more students to feel comfortable because you're from where they're from.
Speaker 2: Can't tell you no sick days, bro.
Speaker 3: If I plan my sick days right, I can get a longer weekend.
Speaker 3: You can't take Mondays and Fridays off. You get a slap for that. But what if I take a Thursday off, and then Friday, there's no school?
Moderator: Let me make sure I'm not missing any of my questions here. Barriers. Listening to. Good. Good. Good. Okay. So my last thing is — take a moment to reflect. I've asked you a bunch of questions. You've had a lot of good answers. Is there anything that I have missed — anything that you're thinking that I haven't asked about? Remember, the whole idea is getting Latinos to join music programs, not just mariachi because we know that works, but is there anything that I should be thinking about that I'm not asking about?
Moderator: Would you guys join a Norteno class?
All: Yeah. Yes.
Moderator: Or Sierreño class?
All: *[Avid agreement.]*
Speaker 2: Yeah. Put me on the accordion right now.
Speaker 1: What if it was a choir class, but primarily in Spanish?
Speaker 6: I feel like it could just be anything that has to be either in Spanish or rooted in Spanish — just something that connects you to it. Even if it doesn't have to be mariachi, because like how he said, a choir class or a Banda or stuff like that. Yeah. It's more about getting to your roots.
Speaker 4: And it doesn't even really have to be a class. It could just be clubs. Yeah. Exactly. That's it.
Moderator: So what's your advice for a gringo like me, who doesn't come from the Latino background, never grew up with Mariachi, played other kinds of music, but I wanna start a mariachi or I wanna start a club? How can I convince those students to join? Because I don't relate to them.
Speaker 6: I feel like just showing that you're able to understand, and then wanting to get them to connect with what they wanna do. Because if they see that you're more like, if it happens, it happens, if it doesn't — then they're not gonna want to. I feel like you have to have that passion for them to show you their passion.
Speaker 1: Yeah. And just kind of immerse yourself in the culture so that way you understand everything — the dos and don'ts of the culture itself.
Speaker 5: And make sure that they understand how this type of music builds connections and how it's a part of their culture, and the history behind it.
Speaker 6: I also think gaining credibility is a good way, so that when people see it, they recognize it — then they say, oh, he knows the culture.
Speaker 6: I also feel like you kind of have to have patience, because in the Latino community, a lot of people are very stubborn with what they do at first, especially because you look different.

A lot of people are gonna see you as an outsider, almost. I don't know how to explain it, but there's just a certain sense of like, oh, what is that? Especially if someone like you is doing it. So it takes a lot of patience and a lot of encouragement to be able to understand and make that connection with them.
Speaker 6: I agree. They might just see it as different — not something they're used to. So they might be more closed off and might not wanna do something like that. But you showing your passion — like, oh, I wanna learn about this, teaching me so I can teach you kind of relationship — they will be better.
Moderator: What made you decide to do music in school? Even if it takes ten seconds, just think about it — what made me decide to do music?
Speaker 8: Honestly, the teacher. It sounded like a fun teacher, I just joined.
Moderator: When did you join?
Speaker 8: Just this year. But I was gonna join when it first started. And so I joined the club, and I thought it was really fun, but it was one-on-one like it is now. And so I kind of dropped out, and then I joined back when it was a class.
Moderator: Oh, okay. How did you hear about it?
Speaker 8: [Name omitted] — he promoted everything. Put up posters, he'd go to classes, just talk about it.
Moderator: Nice. Okay. So you saw posters and you heard people talk about it, and then you're just like, I'll give that a shot? Yeah. Cool. Good to know.
Speaker 9: I kind of — I don't feel like putting it up front — I guess, my girlfriend. But originally, someone I had played with before — and I was going to do it at the beginning of my sophomore year — but then I forgot a form from my instrument. And the teacher was like, if you forget your form, you might be slow — obviously he was joking — but I was like, I'm not showing my face. But yeah, I did want to originally join, just because I wanted to get closer to my culture in a way, and also something fun to do.
Moderator: Okay. Thank you.
Speaker 10: I did it half for the teacher — I really liked [name omitted] — and my friends, all of them, were with Band. And so I would go to the class and they would be like, join Mariachi. And at first I was like, no, no reaction. But over time, my little brother's also in the class, and my friends thought that'd be a really fun idea. And I also like singing, so I thought maybe I'll get to do that too.
Moderator: Okay. Nice. Thank you. So, obviously, you chose to do mariachi, and I assume none of you are in another music class like choir or orchestra or band. No? Okay. Have you ever thought about doing a different kind of music that the school offers? Have you ever thought about being in band, orchestra, choir?
Speaker 11: I thought about being in choir, but then I decided not to.
Moderator: What made you decide not to?
Speaker 11: A lot of my friends are in choir, so I still go to every concert. But if you look at how the choir is — well, it's very cliquey in a way. And I'm gonna say it straight up — if you see the choir kids, they don't look nice. Like, they're all white kids. Yeah.
Moderator: Your friends in there — are they white or are they Hispanic? Okay. But you didn't feel like you would want to join the choir because there's no other Latinos in there?
Speaker 11: In a way, I just felt like I would stand out in a way I didn't really want to, if I was the only one in there.

Moderator: Interesting. Do you feel like if you felt more welcome, that singing in a group like that is something you would want?
Speaker 11: I think so. I think I really wanted to be in choir, but being there — *[mumbles]*
Moderator: Anybody else? Has anybody else thought about doing other kinds of music that you didn't, for some reason?
Speaker 9: I wanted to do band, but I ended up not doing it. Not for any specific reason, but because I was too invested in school and in sports and everything, and I didn't have time. And by the time I finally had free time — this year, my senior year — I was like, it's way too late to start. Like, I've heard people sign up in middle school to freshman year, and then they're getting better over time.
Moderator: I heard you tell [name omitted] that your coach heard something — are you in sports?
Speaker 9: Yeah. I'm doing track and field right now. Before, I used to do football, and I was too busy to do any type of band or anything. And there's also the aspect of joining football — like, the band people, you're not supposed to mix.
Moderator: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Kinda just get away from each other — kinda cliquey.
Speaker 9: Yes. I didn't really interact with anyone in theater or drama, band or anything. I wanted to, but just because I was in football, I was like, maybe I should stay —
Moderator: Oh, okay. Good to know. Thank you for your honesty. Were you guys — before today — were you aware that not a lot of Latino students do school music? Some shaking heads yes. Oh, you knew. Okay. Where did you hear that? How are you aware of that?
Speaker 10: I kind of just see it. You ask people, oh, what do you do? They always do a sport, but they never really get into the programs — art programs, really. And so you could just really see how it looks. You go to concerts and stuff — where do you see them?
Moderator: This might be another one of those questions where you might have to think about it before you answer. Why do you think it is that not a lot of Latinos do music in school?
Speaker 9: I mean, looking around — you can obviously see that it's made to appeal to white people. Going anywhere on social media to see the bands and everything — it's just purely white. There's no Hispanics. And so it's a little hard going in as Hispanic and trying to do something that doesn't seem like it's for you. Yeah.
Speaker 12: And this is cultural. I remember I wanted to join something like this, and my parents would be like, really, you wanna join that? And who wants that? I think it's very cultural, and it's not normal in a way for us to go and join a show choir. Either our parents don't know what that is.
Moderator: Yeah. But mariachi — because that's part of your culture — they were like, yeah. Makes sense. Is everyone nodding? Yeah. Okay. That's good to know.
Speaker 13: I also feel like, because it's not really part of our culture, people just tend to stick to what they know. Because band and choir and everything is unknown to them, and it's cliquey, they would prefer to stick to what they do know.
Moderator: Yeah. That makes a lot of sense. Absolutely. Next question. You guys are awesome, by the way.
Speaker 9: I also wanna add something. It's also like — Hispanics in general, at school where it's mainly white, Hispanics kind of group together — that's what I've seen. And that's kind of why I went with mariachi, because I wouldn't have joined Mariachi if it wasn't for the fact that there were other Hispanics. We kind of go as one — one joins, and others follow. Like, one joined football here — one Hispanic — and I was like, oh, I thought it was a white thing, so I

was like, not joining that. And I tried it. And so once one of my coaches, or I guess college athletes, he was a trumpet player, and he told me about it. And also my other Hispanic friend who also did mariachi last year — he was like, it was nice. I was like, alright, I'll join.
Moderator: Interesting. Makes sense. So here's a big one — and I don't mind silence. What changes or additions to the music program here do you think would make it more appealing and accessible for Latino students like yourself to join music? We've seen mariachi — they added mariachi, and here you are. What about if the band teacher and the choir teacher and the orchestra teacher wanted to include more Latinos? What should they do? And I don't know is a perfectly acceptable answer. Or maybe there's nothing — you can also say that.
Speaker 10: That's kind of what I think about. You gotta take perspective — Latino people want to see something, and then it's also what teacher would wanna do. But as a start, maybe just doing songs that would be something that Latinos would wanna do would help out. And honestly, just trying to connect with them. Like [name omitted] — he tries to connect with us, and he picks songs that we all know, and it makes everyone motivated to actually put in their all and try. So maybe if band or choir tried doing something different — picking songs or stuff like that — then Latinos would wanna join. And I think just the community too would make it better.
Moderator: Cool. Yeah. Thank you. Good.
Speaker 11: I feel like it's definitely an issue that's gonna take a long time, since we're so stuck in the idea that there are certain things we should be doing — friend groups and those kind of things — that including joining Mariachi or having a class was a really big step. And I think it's more of a domino effect — you get a small amount of people to start joining. If straight people started joining the choir, I think more and more would follow.
Moderator: There's a guy out there yelling, and this is really important. So I'm gonna push the microphone closer. Can you say that again?
Speaker 11: I feel like it's a domino effect. If the choir teacher was to get one person to speak out about it and say, oh, it is actually really cool, it's not what you think it is — I think more people will want to join, and it'll become more of a community rather than just different cliques.
Moderator: Like — what if when you were a freshman on campus, you saw a poster in Spanish that said, join choir, we want you in choir, we want you in band? Do you think that would maybe have worked?
Speaker 10: I feel like I would've been more interested. Because honestly, they didn't have a lot of postage up. You see it on the class sheet, you pick your classes, you just see band, and it says, oh, you need to audition. I'm not doing that.
Moderator: Or it's just Band 1, Band 2, Choir 1, Choir 2, and it just goes on, but there's no really good description about it. They could do a showcase day of all the instruments and let students try it. So then they'd get interested.Did you all take music when you were in elementary school? What about middle school? Yeah. I got one yes. Yes. One yes. Two nos. When you stopped — either after elementary school or after middle school — why did you stop?
Speaker 11: I played violin when I was little. I enjoyed it. But I think I stopped because doing a choir instrument is not the cool thing. So I stopped doing it, and I focused more on sports because I wanted to fit in with the demographic of students.
Speaker 9: I did trumpet for a while and then afterwards I stopped — just because my dad is very conservative. He was very supportive of me doing shop class and everything. He was still disappointed in me for not continuing with soccer, and he didn't really want me doing anything outside of that. He either wanted me working or — so I was like, okay. He didn't want me to do trumpet — discouraged it a lot, or discouraged other things.

Speaker 10: I did trumpet, violin, and a little bit of piano. But I feel like there wasn't anything that necessarily made me stop. I feel like it was just — none of my friends were doing it. And so I didn't wanna keep on doing it because my middle school was predominantly white, and so I just felt out of place. And since I had no friends in it, I just stopped and didn't pick it back up.
Moderator: Yeah. Thank you. I have a couple more questions. These are all really good. This question — what are your perceptions of the music programs offered at School 3? How much or how little do they represent your cultural background and your interests?
Speaker 10: I mean, out of band and jazz, they don't really reflect any of our culture. Mariachi does most of it.
Moderator: Do you guys agree? Yeah. Well said. Thank you. That's kind of the sense that we get — I'm a very white teacher, and most of my students have always been white, which is why I'm doing this. The sense that we get is that our band culture doesn't really represent — it's basically European. It's John Philip Sousa marches. Most of the composers are white. Occasionally you do get a Hispanic composer to write something that kind of maybe has a Mexican name — Zacatecas is a march that bands play. But it doesn't really seem authentic like mariachi classes. Yeah. Interesting. Would you agree?
Speaker 10: The choir — they do a lot of songs and they have an amazing program, they sound really good. But their songs — I don't know them, or if I have heard them, it's because they're modern songs that everyone hears. But the older songs they do, I've never heard them before, and it makes me think, why would I go and have everyone else know the song and I don't know it?
Moderator: It's a good point. What music do you guys like to listen to on your own time?
Speaker 10: Spanish music.
Moderator: Makes sense. What kind? Can you be a little more specific?
Speaker 10: My parents are really into Spanish music. So I usually listen to that. My mom also really likes mariachi. In her car, she could have CDs, mariachi artists, everything.
Moderator: Great. Do you have any names of Spanish rock or any groups that I should be aware of that you like?
Speaker 11: Growing up, every time I went to my grandparents' house or even at home on Sunday morning, my parents would blast music on the TV. And at first I found it really annoying — that was our signal that we should start cleaning. But now I listen to it every time I have a free moment, like in art class with my headphones in. I love the songs, and they're from the nineties, the eighties — older songs.
Moderator: Do you have any artists you can name?
Speaker 11: Jose Jose. I love Luis Miguel. Rocío Dúrcal. All of those really classic parties-style artists.
Moderator: I got that. Thank you. Good. Anybody else have artists you love?
Speaker 9: I have the opposite effect — I just ended up not liking listening to Spanish songs. I'm starting to try to get back into it, but I'm just barely getting there. So Prava is still something I'm listening to. Yeah.
Speaker 10: My dad listens to Los Tigres del Norte.
Moderator: Yes. Norteño. You know, [school name omitted] has a Musica Norteña class. And the kids in there say they like it better because it's not grandpa music like mariachi. So maybe we can come up with different Musica Latina classes that we can bring into high schools.
Speaker 12: Why I like mariachi is because the class is so open. We also learn mariachi songs, and the songs that are associated with mariachi are in there — but if you say, I really wanna do

this song and it came out two years ago, he'll consider it, he'll find the music, and he'll make it happen.
Moderator: You talked about that in class today. Yep. Good. Is there anything else that maybe you've been thinking while I've been talking — that you're like, oh, maybe he should think about this? Anything that I haven't brought up that you would like me to know, that you think would be important?
Speaker 9: The demographics always ask for a reason. Their wives say it's — and then a non-Hispanic person going in — I don't like doing those things. That was also another reason why I kind of didn't think about it actually — because, no offense to [name omitted], but he didn't seem like he would know, because he looks white. So I was kind of like, okay, this white person trying to tell me to do something that's culturally mine. That's a little off-putting. I'm not for it.
Moderator: Yeah. Fair. Very fair.
Speaker 11: I think a lot of it doesn't always have to rely on teachers. I feel like as students, maybe in the future, someone could make a club. It doesn't have to be a class — it can be a club where you can go in and listen to these songs. Choir has clubs, I think, where they get sent to listen to music. I feel like someone should start something similar for our culture. Yeah.
Speaker 9: And this could be very hard to answer, but it's because of how everything is right now — it's just very — I realize it may feel unsafe. They're about to be referred — they feel distrustful of everyone around them besides other Hispanics, because of current events and everything. That's why they all group together. Yeah.
Moderator: That's all of my questions. If you don't have any more thoughts outside of what I asked, then — last chance for anything else. Last minute thoughts. Anything to add?

School 3 — Teacher Interview

Moderator: For my transcript. First question is an easy one. Do you guys do annual awards for Mariachi students?

Speaker 1: We do have a certificate that we give out during our last performance of the school year, which is our spring concert. And we recognize the seniors, recognize their hard work. We oftentimes will get awards for most improved. And some of them may have been four years, some of them may have been three years, some of them may have been doing mariachi since they were in elementary school and have been coming to our summer program before they were even in high school. So we acknowledge that. And then I know last year for the first time, we had a banquet for them in which we recognized all the students and invited their parents — so that was cool. But there has been mention of doing something similar to sports, like senior night, where they get cardboard cutouts and stuff like that. And we're thinking of having the students perform and then having them take pictures with family and such, and ending that as the annual concert. But with our theater being out of commission this year, and us also hosting the — is it the fourth annual? Festival? The fourth annual festival? Yes. We're hosting a festival in which we invite mariachis from all the neighboring elementary schools, the high schools in the district. It started off as a School 3 district thing. But now it's branching off and we're inviting the neighboring universities and colleges — and also there are groups coming from [place name omitted] and one group coming from [place name omitted] that wants to participate in our Scholastic Mariachi Festival as well. So May gets pretty busy in that aspect.

Moderator: No doubt. And that is true — I can tell you for a band teacher as well. Not unusual. Thank you. Why do you think students love mariachi? Why do they love playing it so much when in other schools that I've gone to, some of the students call it grandpa's music or music that's not for young people. Why do you think you guys have so much success getting them to really want to play it in school?

Speaker 1: I think we showcase it and advertise it really well to the point where it interests students. Speaking as someone who went through the program as well — I never really had an interest in doing mariachi until eventually I saw one live, and I was like, hey, that's pretty interesting. I had an interest in guitar, but I never wanted to do mariachi. I wanted to go the jazz band route, a classical guitar route, and do stuff with that. And I see it pretty regularly too, where I promote it and advertise it to all the students in a way that says, look, we can do a little bit of everything. We can still do things that you wanna do, but on top of that, revolve it around Mariachi. So I think that's how we manage to reel in a lot of students to the class. But as I said, growing up, I never had interest in doing it. And once I started doing it, I built more of a connection with my parents. It had my dad actually interested in talking to me about, like, oh, how was class today? Did you learn anything about mariachi? And it really had me and my parents bond on a regular basis — just sitting down listening to music or him showing me these cool songs that were considered, like you said, old music. But that connection I had with my dad really kind of made me like it even more.

Moderator: Yeah. Clearly, watching them sit down on their own, get out the instruments, and they're all practicing — they just want to play. So it's clear that they really have bought into it, which is very, very cool.

Speaker 1: And as you saw, the repertoire is what matters a lot. A lot of the times, people will think Mariachi and they'll just think boom-chick-chick boom-chick-chick — a lot of very basic repertoire, but it doesn't show you the full picture of what Mariachi can be. So advertising and showing off the violin solos, the trumpet features, all the different aspects of Mariachi — that it can go in any route — I think it really grasps the attention of the students.

Moderator: Okay. Thanks. How do you differentiate instruction of the different instruments when they're all together? I'm coming in at the end of the year where students pretty much know what they're doing on individual parts, so you can do a whole song. You might work with a group here or a group there. But when you're starting out the year and you're teaching them new music from scratch, how do you teach the different sections — like, how do you teach the two trumpet parts, and what does everybody else do — how do you teach the different sections?

Speaker 1: So in our beginning classes, we typically do not hand out instruments until maybe a month and a half into the school year. Why? Because they have to learn how to read. They have to make sense of all the lines and spaces first. They have to be able to identify everything about a sheet of music before they actually start applying it to their instrument. And once they get a good grasp of the foundation — being able to read rhythms and learn pitches — that's when I start what we call an instrument petting zoo. And I will demonstrate and model instruments and show them, these are the things that are gonna be difficult with this instrument, these are the things that you're gonna find difficult with that instrument. And as a result, it starts embedding into their

brain — oh, I don't think I'm gonna wanna do the violin, or I don't think I'm gonna wanna do the guitarron or the trumpet or whatever — and that's how they choose their instrument. Once they choose their instrument, there's a more foundational way that we approach it, in which everybody plays their instrument like a guitar. If they have no sense of rhythm, the rest of the music-learning process is gonna be difficult. So we gotta get that boom-chick-chick or boom-chick boom-chick really ingrained, because if not, their sense of rhythm is gonna be all over the place — it's not gonna click, it's not gonna be like one big puzzle that works together when they put all their stuff together. And then in terms of difficulty — aside from the armonía, the guitarrones, vihuelas, and guitars — violins and trumpets are in unison the entire time. And with the trumpet, range and range-building being the thing that we have to address as well — we always start typically in the key of D. That way it's manageable for all the instruments. I know going from E to E for the trumpet is gonna be very difficult at first. Some of my intermediate kids still struggle with building that stamina. But it's the sweet spot for all the instruments. Because then if, let's say, we start in the key of C — B-flat for trumpets, C is gonna be a weird position to teach for the violins. And that's gonna be an unusual chord for the guitarrones, guitars, and vihuelas. So as I say, you gotta pick and choose your battles. And D is kind of the sweet spot. And in terms of how we get around teaching — it's really about breaking into sections. And as you saw in class, even in intermediate, there'll be times where I know the trumpets are gonna have difficulty with this part, so I'll just stand next to them and guide them through it, remodel, and play alongside them. And it's something that I'm still learning to navigate as well, because as you saw how big the classroom was in third period — it's very difficult to even just hold a sectional in here, or just have violins practice one thing and trumpets practice one thing and still be able to talk over instruments. So it's something that [name omitted] mentioned yesterday — we're running out of space. Running out of space to work with. And it's not just me — it's also the band program. So it's just a matter of seeing what we can do. And as of now, my plan for sectionals is we have the F Quad out there. Once the weather gets nicer, I'm gonna just send them outside and have sectionals out there. That way, no one has to yell over an instrument, and they can actually hear themselves.

Moderator: Yeah. And you're losing your theater, so outdoor will have to help. Yeah. And no other teachers complain about noise on campus ever?

Speaker 1: Not really. No. Good. So the F Building is always noisy, as you can tell. Even the other side, because the other side of the F Building is where they have drama and stagecraft — they're always drilling stuff and cutting stuff and working back there, making a lot of noise. So they're used to the noisy side of the campus.

Moderator: It's accepted. K. I asked you this yesterday, but I would love to get it on tape. How do you choose who plays which instruments, and do they change?

Speaker 1: Okay. So for beginning, it's based on — we don't start addressing who wants to play what until I can see who's a very avid reader and who has a good sense of rhythm. That's how I start picking and choosing — like, oh, I need to convince this kid to play the guitarron, or I need to convince this kid to play violin because he's very good at reading the staff so far. And that's how I kinda separate between melody and armonía. And after that, I just let them pick — they'll write their top three instruments, that way I can see, alright, I can see this happening, this will go

well. And then it's just a matter of, do I have the instruments available? If not, I'll have to — first, I'll ask around to the other neighboring schools or [name omitted] or [name omitted] for a violin or a trumpet, whatever I may need. Right now, I have four violins borrowed for my class — four — because I didn't have enough for this roster. And that way I managed to get one for all the students. But it's me just trying to convince the student — like, oh, I think you'd be very good at this instrument. Take my word for it, and if you don't like it, then if we have another instrument available, sweet, you can switch for now while you're still in beginning. But if there's no other instruments, sorry, you're stuck with it. As for intermediate — if you're ever allowed to switch instruments — my advanced kids, the ones in the audition group, I don't know if you noticed, but a couple of them are in third period. And they're playing a secondary instrument. Yeah. So they retake the class with the intention of building experience on a secondary instrument in order to better understand their own instrument.

Moderator: How do they do two of their four classes as Mariachi?

Speaker 1: By staying on top of their grades and not failing any classes. Since we're in a block schedule, we have the opportunity to take eight classes a year. And our admin is very good in that we plan our advanced group around periods in which they will not interfere with any honors classes or AP classes. Because I do have a couple — especially all the girls in the performing group — they do have honors and AP classes.

Moderator: Do you find at this school that there is a stigma about band kids, orchestra kids, choir kids? And is it true of mariachi kids?

Speaker 1: Since I have been one of those kids my entire life, I've never experienced being classified as one of those. But I think there are personality or character traits that you do see from the average band kid, the average choir or orchestra student. I feel like Mariachi is kind of filled with just a very diverse group of regular students. In every class, I'll have some kids that are kind of nerdy, and then I'll have some kids that look like they're kind of thugs but really wanna play an instrument as well. And I'm like, yeah, sure, I take them all in. And I've noticed it especially at School 3 — I don't know if it's a demographic thing or the area — but we'll have kids of all types throughout mariachi, as opposed to the kids that you'll find in band or in orchestra. So it's pretty interesting.

Moderator: And do you think there's a sense around campus that, oh, mariachi kids are nerds — or do they recognize that there's all sorts of kids in there?

Speaker 1: I think they recognize that there's all sorts of kids in there.

Moderator: And what about the other classes — band, orchestra? Are band kids thought of as nerds? Orchestra kids thought of as dorks?

Speaker 1: I don't think so.

Moderator: No? Okay. It's a pretty accepting community. Nice. That's not the case at all of the schools I'm going to. That's awesome. I love that. Obviously, you speak Spanish. And [name

omitted] speaks Spanish with the kids in the class. Do you have any students who have ELL or English language learning issues that prevent them from taking your class — like, they have to take remedial English class so they don't have an elective available?

Speaker 1: I know I ran into that a lot at my previous site — the other high school where I worked before here — but no one has brought that to my attention in any of these classes so far. And I know that I do have some primarily Spanish-speaking kids in all of my classes — in third and fourth period, I do. And I mean, in third period, which is intermediate, I haven't checked, and to be honest, I don't know if they're reclassified or where they are on the ELD spectrum.

Moderator: But it's never been an issue.

Speaker 1: It's never been an issue. And as far as I know, no students have come to me yet saying, I can't take a class because I had to take ELD or whatever. Yeah.

Moderator: Have you ever had any students in your classes who don't speak English, but that's fine because you speak Spanish?

Speaker 1: As of now, in this school, the students that only speak Spanish — they understand English, and they're just too shy to speak English. And so when I notice that, I don't call it out in front of the class, but I'll just talk to them and be like, hey, do you want me to speak to you in Spanish, or do you want me to speak to you in English? And depending on what they say and depending on their behavior or demeanor, I'll be like, alright, I'm gonna test you — I want you to speak to me in English whenever we're having a one-on-one conversation, or I'll speak to you in Spanish and you respond to me in English, or vice versa. That way they can still practice their communication skills in both languages.

Moderator: Nice. Makes sense. So for the next couple of questions — obviously, mariachi is kind of a rare thing in schools, and it's certainly more prevalent down here. But all over the country, schools have band, orchestra, choir — that's kinda like the standard. And you teach a band class here? Yeah. And have you taught choir?

Speaker 1: I taught choir in my first year. Okay. And orchestra — I haven't taught orchestra yet. No.

Moderator: So for these — imagine that you are not the mariachi teacher, that you are only a band, orchestra, choir teacher at this school. What challenges have you observed in getting Latino students involved and in keeping them engaged in band, orchestra, choir classes?

Speaker 1: Keeping them interested in the music — that's what I find makes it challenging. Yeah, I can get a similar demographic of mariachi students to take a band class or orchestra class, but keeping them engaged and passionate about the music is a different part. Like, why do I wanna play this song by Tchaikovsky, or why do I wanna play this song by whoever it may be, if it's not something that they will listen to in their own free time or will be very excited to show their parents? So I know, for instance, for the Cinco de Mayo parade, the band director was asking me — we don't wanna pull up and play something that doesn't fit. So she asked me, do

you have any recommendations of songs that the band could learn that wouldn't be too easy, that they can march or parade to? And I was like, there's a ton. There's a whole genre that is used in all of Mexico. And I happened to have the arrangements and sheet music for it, and I sent her a bunch. She was like, I'm gonna use this. And the students were very excited to get some of that too — because the band is filled with a lot of students of color as well, a lot of Hispanic students. So once they saw we're playing this, they were like, this is awesome. And obviously, there are outliers — students who will always appreciate the music they play in band and will understand it's challenging and cool. But once they see something that their mom or dad listens to on the radio, it just pulls them in more.

Moderator: Okay. You said you were able to get them to try it.

Speaker 1: Yeah.

Moderator: How do you do that?

Speaker 1: Showing them I'm one of them. Like, I was one of them. I have a lot of the same interests as them. On a regular basis, when classes aren't going on or I'm talking to one of the students in free time, they'll be like, [name omitted], you like soccer? Yeah. You like soccer. Or, you like video games? Yeah, I try to play every now and then. And I think what keeps them around is the attitude — the availability that you can show them. Like, I'm like one of you. Yet there's gonna be instances in which we have to be professional, and I have to be your teacher, or I have to scold you, or tell you that's not what we're supposed to be, because I'm not your friend. But at the same time, I was one of you, and I can relate to you.

Moderator: Yeah. And they see that, and they appreciate that.

Speaker 1: And I think that's what manages to really build a relationship — them wanting to gravitate toward the program.

Moderator: Okay. You've already answered a few of these other questions, so I think one or two more. How do you work to create an inclusive and welcoming environment for students of diverse backgrounds in your music classes and ensembles?

Speaker 1: Well, the music is always going to be primarily Hispanic. But I don't know if you noticed — I do have a couple of kids of color. I have one Asian student in advanced, and I think I have two African American students in advanced as well. There was one in beginning Mariachi. And one of the students is in the audition group. She wasn't here today — she's in the audition group — and she has kind of warmed up to the Hispanic culture a lot, and it's pretty interesting to see. And there are instances in which mariachi is very adaptable. Oftentimes when I go out and gig with groups, there are versions of songs that we play with English lyrics. That way, we can accommodate — or not necessarily accommodate, but just grasp the attention of people who maybe don't appreciate mariachi as much as everybody else.

Moderator: Right.

Speaker 1: So oftentimes I'll sing — we have a couple of arrangements. I have some of — We Don't Talk About Bruno? Yeah. Stuff like that that we just keep on hand. Some of The Temptations too. We'll have stuff like that that we can use in order to make us listenable to people of all backgrounds.

Moderator: Yeah. Yeah. Have you ever had many white kids do Mariachi? You said you had — oh, no — up in [place name omitted], they had the two token white kids in their mariachi program.

Speaker 1: One of our teachers is actually at the elementary school at [school name omitted]. She went through this entire program as well. She was one of [name omitted]'s students. She's completely white, and she loved mariachi, and now she teaches — she teaches orchestra and mariachi. And she's immersed herself into the program so much to the point where she's in a relationship with a Hispanic person, and she speaks Spanish, and she just immersed herself in it. Yeah.

Moderator: Okay. Last question. We talked about it yesterday, but again, I want to get it on tape. How can we get more Latino students to become music teachers?

Speaker 1: To become music teachers. I think it has to start with parents. It has to start with the parents. Or — I mean, I never planned on becoming a music teacher. Music just took over. But I had been doing music since I was in fourth grade, and my parents always loved that. They were always supportive of that. And once I told them that I wanted to study music, that was a whole different story. They were like, what? No. You can't do that. But I did it anyway. They were not —

Moderator: They didn't support you becoming a teacher?

Speaker 1: My father — well, they misunderstood. They kind of thought that I wanted to be a freelance Latino musician. And I don't think they understood that I wanted to study music — I didn't say I wanted to become a teacher. And that was a different conversation. But it starts with the parents. Parents gain a big sense of pride in what they see — their kids in their mariachi trajes or whatever it may be. And I know that my parents were very supportive of my musical journey — they went to all my performances. They were always giving me and my friends rides, whose parents weren't as supportive, to all of our performances in and outside of school. And on top of that, if I had to spend money — whether it be on an instrument or strings or whatever it may be — they were like, yeah, you need it. It's for you to get better, it's for you to be able to do this. And to this day, my little brother is going through the program. They're going through the same thing right now.

Moderator: So maybe sell the parents. If you sell the parents on — your kids can have a steady job with good health care and a retirement package, teachers make decent money, they don't make bad money — that could sell parents on saying, hey, you should go be a teacher.

Speaker 1: I think that would sell it to the parents. But aside from that — and making them understand that they'd still have to go to school, they have to go get a credential, they have to go

away and study music — it may not be mariachi music, or the music that they like, but they're gonna have to study some sort of music in order to just get their foot in the door, just to get into some sort of program. Because I studied classical guitar because I had to. I bought a classical guitar specifically to use for my recitals and performances throughout college, just to get through it.

Moderator: You can jump through the hoops of the traditional program.

Speaker 1: Yeah. And at some points, that's what becoming a teacher feels like — just jumping through some hurdles in order to be able to get to where you want to.

Moderator: Yeah. I mean, for me it was never about jumping through hoops, because music education programs are designed for band people and choir people. Every class you take points you in that direction. But if you wanna teach mariachi or norteña or guitar, there's nothing for you in most places.

Speaker 1: Yeah. Throughout all of college, me being a guitarist, they would always tell me, bring your primary instrument — except for him because he plays guitar. Every other instrument that I can play in here is my secondary instrument. So it's — yeah. The college system — maybe they still don't know enough about it yet. There's no one there that can provide the curriculum. Even the curriculum itself — there's no one curriculum that's gonna be used everywhere that's perfect. And with Mariachi, I know there's a lot of mariachis around in the area as well. Definitely mariachi groups — they use it. Instead of the full instrumentation, they'll just have a string orchestra — just transpose the trumpet part for the violins, and then they'll get a guitar. And there's good and bad things to it, because right now, all we need is just exposure. We just need someone to officially get there and say, you know what, we need to round all this mariachi stuff up and put it in the correct direction to do it the right way. And we just gotta wait to see who does it.

Moderator: I agree. Alright. I know you need to get yourself some lunch and get prepared, so thank you.

School 3 — Vice-Principal Interview

Moderator: I wanted to ask you about putting together — creating maybe a Norteño, or a Sierreño, or a banda in a high school situation. Have you thought about doing something like that?

Speaker 1: So right before I left the classroom, I was actually working on banda — how I could get — I was looking at banda instruments, getting banda instruments here, and starting. I had started a club way back, way, way, way back — and I would bring people that were banda musicians in the community, and they would come in and help with the kids, but it didn't get very far. It was hard to get them here on a consistent basis because it was volunteer-based. But my wife is from [place name omitted]. So I go every December, and in December it's all the

parties. And I was actually watching a lot of the musicians, and I was like, how can I start taking some of this back? And so my old manager from [name omitted] actually manages a banda now called Banda Corona del Rey. And they're coming to the US a lot, they're selling out everywhere they go. And I was gonna try to coordinate something with him, and he actually brought the band to the school last spring.

Moderator: Oh, great. Did they do a concert for the whole campus, or did they just talk with the musicians?

Speaker 1: It was targeted for all the music students, but we also invited our Spanish department, our world language department, some of our leadership kids. So they did a performance, and they did a Q&A.

Moderator: Have you ever put any thought into how you might start a class for a smaller — like a grupo setting?

Speaker 1: I know that Norteño — in Texas, there are Norteño classes. There are class sets of accordions, bajo sextos, and basses. Because I'm telling you, I think California, as far as getting Mexican music into the classroom — I think we're a few years behind. It would have to be something where we try to understand what curriculum they're using, what they're going through. Because a lot of the children here are self-taught when it comes to accordion players. In mariachi — I don't know if [name omitted] brought his accordion — he's one of the trumpet players, but he's an amazing accordion player. He's been playing since he was a small child, but because we don't offer it at the school, he picked up trumpet. And every now and then we'll play a tune that has accordion in it, just to incorporate his other talents. So I would be really eager to see what curriculum they're using in Texas for their Norteño group.

Moderator: Okay. So do you know of any other examples of those happening in California? I only know of one myself, and that's at [school name omitted], and that's only because it's my partner who started it about three years ago.

Speaker 1: Other than that, I don't. Nothing formal. You know, it — I know that even if we did a scrub of the CDE or even CALPADS, we probably wouldn't come up with anything. I've even looked up mariachi courses, and they don't come up even though we know they're happening.

Moderator: Yeah. I have had a hard time finding evidence of how many mariachi programs there are and how many there are starting to be. One of the things I need to write about in this dissertation is that it's growing. I can say it anecdotally, and I can say that I've heard about a lot of them, but I need to prove it because it's academic writing. So far, I haven't been able to — only anecdotal stories about it.

Speaker 1: I tried searching something up the other day, because [school name omitted] here wants to start a Sierreño class. And one of the music teachers is kind of against it. She thinks they should start with mariachi, and then grow off of that. But the other guy's like, no, we gotta go straight to Sierreño.

Speaker 1: So I was like, well, let's try to see if there's anything out there already. I forgot what link it was, but there's — I don't know if it was through the CDE or what — but you can look up different courses. Some of it has to do with the way they're coded, that are happening. Then there's also — in my master's thesis research, what I'm talking about is the different preparation for different teachers because of this, because this is all so new. We have teachers with CTE credentials, we have teachers that are fully credentialed but lack mariachi experience but are willing. We have teachers that don't have any credentials but they're paraprofessionals. So the landscape out there is just — there's so much variety.

Speaker 1: Yeah. So as soon as I get that link, I'll email it to you.

Moderator: I appreciate it, thank you. So I'm gonna ask you some questions now that I'm asking all of the administrators of all the schools that I'm going to — this is not necessarily aimed at you because you have started a mariachi program. Are you aware that Hispanic, Latino students are underrepresented in music programs all over the nation?

Speaker 1: Yeah.

Moderator: This question I ask of everybody — I'm interested to hear what your answer is going to be because of the nature of School 3. Have you noticed this going on in your school?

Speaker 1: No. Because we're — so, [place name omitted] at one point got an award for the most diverse city in the country. Would you look this up? Yeah.

Moderator: I did. I looked it up on what is called the School Accountability Report Card, and the most recent data was from last year — I think it was 56, 57% Hispanic-Latino, 27% Asian — which is probably Filipino. And then 6% African American, only 3% Caucasian, 3% White. And other numbers were less than 1%.

Speaker 1: Yeah. So the California School Dashboard will tell you all of our current stuff. If that's helpful, I'll throw that in the chat so you can see it there. We're 76.5% socioeconomically disadvantaged here at School 3. And 15% English learners. I will say that our English learners are not really in our music programs. Or if they are, they take a little bit, but we have a hard time seeing them all the way through the pathway.

Moderator: Why do you think that might be — that they don't stick with it?

Speaker 1: A lot of it has to do with — I haven't proven it, this is just a theory, just a hunch — but oftentimes, when we get students at the high school level who are in ELD, we're having a hard time reclassifying them. Even though they'll speak English, when it comes time to take that test, they just get nervous. I taught 5th through 12th grade, and I taught 5th grade Mariachi — I started a program at [school name omitted], that's the program that went to the White House in 2016. They were about 80% Hispanic or something like that. But a lot of them were English learners, and with my English learners — a new kid would come, straight from Guatemala, straight from Mexico, they'd bring him to my class because I was a Spanish-speaking, Mexican music teacher, and I was there to kind of build a relationship with them. Getting those children to

see that they are capable, that they can learn English — it was pulling teeth. If you don't get them to reclassify in elementary school, it's much harder to get them to reclassify at the high school level. And at the elementary school level, if you're in ELD, you don't get to participate in pull-out music. You have to go to ELD. Your chosen elective is ELD. You don't get a choice. You gotta go to ELD.

Moderator: So from the get-go, they have no option, no —

Speaker 1: No opportunity to even participate in any sort of music, unless it's general music that gets pushed into their class. We don't have a lot of general music teachers in [place name omitted].

Moderator: No, I didn't see any.

Speaker 1: Yeah.

Moderator: Touching on what we just talked about — what challenges or barriers have you observed that may be preventing Latino students from joining and staying involved in music programs?

Speaker 1: That's a good question. Aside from the ELD — now, thanks to Prop 28, thanks to all this funding that we're starting to get, those barriers are starting to close. Before, it was like, oh, a lot of our Hispanic students happen to also be low socioeconomically disadvantaged. So it was like, they can't afford stuff. We still have as many kids as we have involved in our music classes. Very few, if any, take lessons. And so now the challenge is getting them prepared for college — getting them to take those auditions, those of them that think they want to pursue music. I've been very fortunate to grow a community, and the fact that I'm working at the university too — I'm working on a pipeline where some of my music ed students are coming down and giving lessons to the mariachi students, and I think they have an interest in going and studying music education. So we've got that going for our violin players. We just now got that going for our trumpet players. Since I started teaching — the class of 2019 — from there, I have about six students total now who went through college, got their degree, got credentialed, and are teaching. But that whole time, I was like, you're gonna come back, and you're gonna talk about what your experience is like to the program. And you're gonna show them that you can do this, and you're gonna show them what's possible, and then you're gonna help prepare them for auditions.

Moderator: The barriers take the form of — they just don't think that they can do it, maybe they don't know about it.

Speaker 1: It's the lack of resources. It's the fact that it's never been modeled for them — no one in their family has ever gone off to study music. That's not a viable career option for them. As much money as mariachis make, as much money as banda players make on the weekends — and that's kind of how I sell it to families. It's like, you know, Junior can go out and flip a burger. Or he could just study all week and gig on the weekends and make the same, if not more.

Moderator: Doing something he likes.

Speaker 1: Yes.

Moderator: How does your school district, or your school, or the district — how does it work to ensure music curricula, teaching approaches, and ensemble offerings are culturally relevant and responsive to the Latino student population?

Speaker 1: Okay, so I don't know how much homework you've done on School 3's district, but we went through all kinds of superintendents for a while. It was just a revolving door of superintendents, and every single one of them has their own agenda. The one that we have right now — she has been around for some time. She values the arts. She values the whole child — the passions and interests of the whole child is one of her things. So she's an arts ally. I want to say she's an arts ally. The superintendent before her was here for a little while. He said he was an ally — he was Hispanic — but he had plans to make some cuts to the arts. He was straight up like, we're gonna make some cuts. We have an arts coordinator, an administrator of arts education at the district office. We've had to really rally for ourselves. We've had to fend for ourselves. We've had to constantly fight. We've had to constantly show our worth, in the beginning especially. It wasn't always this easy. We try to stay current on culturally relevant curriculum on our own. I do want to say that we as an arts and music department — we're not gonna say we're ahead of the game, but just now, we are doing, as a district, a book study on Dr. [name omitted]'s culturally responsive and linguistic teaching.

Moderator: I saw that book on [name omitted]'s desk.

Speaker 1: Yep. So that is a book study that we're all doing as a district and as a site — an initiative on culturally responsive teaching. But as a district, I do a lot of professional development for us when we do our in-service. So if there are teachers that think they want to teach mariachi — before, our arts administrator was very protective of it and was like, no, no, no, because they'll screw it up and we don't want that. And I'm like, if they have an interest in doing this, let's equip them with strategies and everything that they're going to need. We have a group here called [name omitted], which is an African-American Black orchestra. And they do a lot of professional development — they'll do concerts for your sites, they'll come out, they've presented at educational conferences, at CASMIC, at ASTA. Their whole initiative is increasing the presence of Black and African American students in orchestra, and using Black and African music to teach orchestra. Like, why has it always got to be done this way? So we have had them for professional development. I think it goes back to the fact that we are a pretty culturally diverse community. As much as we get the bad rep, there's some positive things going on.

Moderator: I love it, thank you.

Moderator: Leading right into my next question — what kind of partnerships or outreach efforts has the school explored to connect with the Latino community and encourage music participation?

Speaker 1: A number of years ago, I started the [place name omitted] Scholastic Mariachi Festival, and the point of that is to showcase all the hard work that we're doing here, to have one unified festival — it's an all-day-long thing from elementary, then middle school groups, then the

high schools. And then the community college has a mariachi. [School name omitted] has a mariachi. I taught at [school name omitted], so I would bring them. [School name omitted] has a mariachi that they launched a couple years ago. So all of these groups get invited to showcase to the community. We get a headlining group — every year it changes. Last year, we had Mariachi [name omitted]. This year, it'll be Mariachi Mexica Nissimo. So it's just showing the parents and the community the importance of sticking with it, and where their students can go. For some people, it's heartwarming to see where they started, where they're going, and then where they end up. Because the teachers — we come together and we perform too — we'll be one of the groups closing towards the end. And then this summer, we're gonna have Mariachi Los Camperos. They're gonna be coming to do a workshop here for all of our district mariachi students. That's all thanks to Prop 28. We also have another grant called the Arts Block Grant that's gonna help cover some of that. A lot of it has been my own musicians and people that I've met through my career that come and do performances for our site. I have a friend who's a harp player in [place name omitted], and he'll come and do some jarocho stuff, some presentations. Like I said, Banda Corona del Rey came up — we were lucky with them. So I'm always looking for anybody who's willing to come and share their talent with our site.

Moderator: Yeah. What additional resources, training, or support do you feel would be beneficial for music teachers to better serve their Latino students?

Speaker 1: There's just so many things. There's a book out there called Spanish for Music Teachers. And that was gonna be one of my professional development topics. Depending on what you want to do — if you want to go mariachi, if you want to go banda, if you just want to do a Latin versatile thing. In [place name omitted], I went to work with [place name omitted] for about a week and got to visit all their elementary and high schools, and they all have something awesome going on. They all have a great, huge number of mariachi students. And one of the teachers has a Latin band — a little bit of salsa, a little bit of — almost like a wedding band, but just Latin. And he's from Cuba. Obviously, it helps when you have the background. But anybody who wants to do anything — just like, if you want to go and teach jazz, you should be listening to some jazz. You should be doing your homework. We can't just go in there with preconceived notions of what we think things are. There are a lot of people that mean well. And I think it's hard to be a cultural visitor and come in wanting to be authentic. I've had the case — I'm trying to find the diplomatic words for this — where I go and present, and it's always a non-Hispanic person that brings up how they don't want to come across as —

Moderator: I don't want to be a colonizer, or a cultural appropriation kind of thing.

Speaker 1: There you go. And so they want to be wary of it. And the thing that I say to them is — well, the fact that you're sensitive to it already is helpful. So long as you come at this authentically and you're doing your homework — there was this one teacher, she was a white lady, she taught Mariachi in a school district for a little while. She was getting ready to take her students to a performance at [place name omitted]. And she told them that if they didn't know the words, that's okay — just say watermelon, watermelon, watermelon. Nobody's gonna understand you anyways. That was her thing. And that was — oftentimes these people who aren't Hispanic find this and use it as a schtick or a gimmick — look at me, the non-Mexican person saving these brown children with their music. So that's the one thing. As long as you're not doing that. And

you are honest with your students and your families, and you're saying, we're gonna learn together, and I'm gonna learn from you, and you'll learn some things from me, but I'm gonna learn a lot from you, and we'll move forward together with constantly an open mind — I think we should be fine. There's a slide in — I sent you a copy of Creating and Sustaining a Mariachi Program. Okay, so this right here — when I presented this — I assumed that the people attending the session wanted: strong admin support for launching a program, high interest from students wanting to do mariachi, a high level of excitement for teaching mariachi, and interest in mariachi, just not certainty about how to get started. That's what I was hoping for — not that someone is looking for their teacher persona or personality and thinks mariachi is gonna be it. Is it coming from students? Is it student-centered? Do you want to teach this because you have a vested interest in the student population, in their success, and they're excited about it? Because there can be Hispanic kids somewhere that have no idea and no interest in mariachi. So — and then I just go through a bunch of different recruitment strategies, different funding sources, different curriculum. Mariachi Education Press no longer exists. I used to write classroom warm-ups and exercises for them. Now I just upload them to JW Pepper. Then there's the Mariachi Mastery Books, if you've seen them. They're not great for beginners. I prefer the blue one to the red one — the red one, I use the worksheets in the back, those are great, but I don't really use the actual music in it. The blue one, I do use some of the music for intermediate. Simplemente Mariachi is a book that's out there. I'm not a fan of it, but I have it because I need to comply with Williams Act. It starts the trumpet on a G-sharp — whereas if you're coming from the band world, you start with concert B-flat. So to go from B-flat and getting good sound and whole notes — Simplemente Mariachi starts with quarter notes on a G-sharp from the start. That can pose a challenge. So I do use this book — I don't use everything about it, but I have to scaffold my students into it. And then in there, I talk a little bit about scope and sequence. And some other resources — I have a vihuela sheet, how to do the different strumming patterns for different song styles. I made a fingering chart — I think there's a prettier one out there now on the internet, but I made this one a while back. And then there's the Mariachi Dictionary — I always teach vocabulary. There's also a Spotify playlist — back around summer of 2015, over 11 years ago, I was playing with a group, and we started noting what the most asked-for songs were. Because I played with a group that performed on the weekends at a restaurant. We were there for a long time. So we started listing — oh, which of these songs are the most asked for? And that's what helped guide what songs I should teach my kids, what they could be asked for out in the real world. So there's a Spotify playlist that goes along with this repertoire. A lot of these are classics. I also started leveling them out — what are beginning, intermediate, advanced, and very advanced songs — because our stuff isn't sequenced out like that the way it is for band or orchestra. And then I talked about some of the books available through Hal Leonard, some of the arrangements. And then some of the skill builders and exercises that I wrote for Mariachi Education Press. So we talk a little bit about the song styles, through the lens of a beginner — the violin, the guitarron, the first chords, how I go about teaching some of the first chords. And starting with this — actually, this is another chord that I start with. E minor 7 is what I start with, because it's just one finger, so it gets them feeling successful right off the bat. And so, for me, beginning mariachi is all about building that confidence and excitement. And what I feel with mariachi, because we don't have as many resources — I feel that we throw a lot at beginners and we just let them go out and perform, and they don't have fundamentals of sound production, they don't have a good internal pulse, intonation is all over the place, and that's what we're putting out there, and people are saying, oh, that's mariachi, that's okay, it should sound that way. And that's

been some of my battles. So then we talk about the first five notes — this is even before I give my students any sort of music. We're just up on the whiteboard. We'll play four, rest for four, then we take out the rest, different things like that, and then boom.

Moderator: It does basics.

Speaker 1: Yeah, and then we're ready to play.

Moderator: My last question — you anticipated it, actually. It was going to be: what advice would you give to teachers like me, who don't come from that background, who want to get into it? But you just gave me a couple of slideshows about that. Instead, I'm going to ask you — obviously, mariachi is a really great way to get more Latino students involved because it's something that they love, it's from their culture. What advice would you give to white teachers who, you know, maybe they would love to start a mariachi but it's just not in the cards right now, but they do have band, orchestra, choir — but they would want to get more of their Latino students involved? Those students are at the school but they aren't participating. How would you advise those teachers?

Speaker 1: I want to say — some of the most influential people in the mariachi community have been white. [Name omitted] — do you know who [name omitted] is? He started one of the first mariachi programs in the state of California. He's retired now, lives in Mexico. But he actually was up in [place name omitted]. He started a mariachi program there — years ago, they were monumental. He ends up having to move to [place name omitted], so he leaves the program. The program is still running, under a different director — not as good as it used to be, but it's still going. And he moves down to [place name omitted], teaches there, starts a super incredible program around the time I'm in high school. And he went to [school name omitted]. His master's thesis is on son caliente. This man played with Mariachi Uclatlán, which is one of the most influential collegiate mariachis for the time — in the States, they had world-renowned mariachis coming in to perform with them and record with them, and they have some of the most important recordings to exist. So this man, even though he's white, has been all about this his whole life. He dedicated his life to this. And then — why am I blanking? The only mariachi historian — [name omitted]. [Name omitted] is the only Mariachi historian that I know. He presents mariachi history at all of the big mariachi conferences — [place name omitted], [place name omitted], he's at every conference. He's helped curate the Mariachi Vargas Museum. He plays guitarron — he took lessons with one of the most legendary guitarron players of all time. Another white guy, but again — there's a saying: un mexicano nace donde quiere, right? A Mexican is born wherever the hell they want to be born. And so that's how we refer to people who aren't necessarily Hispanic but are doing the same. I would say — dedicate, dedicate, dedicate. Submerge yourself. Get into the culture. Go to Mexico. It's a write-off if you're doing it for work. Just submerge yourself.

Moderator: Get to know the culture.

Speaker 1: Yeah.

Moderator: Do you know of any authentic band, orchestra, choir music that you've seen people use that is a good representative of the culture — that's good Mexican or Hispanic music?

Speaker 1: Okay, so there's a person out there, their name is [name omitted] — if you go to JW Pepper. And this music is — it's out there, at least. And I get it — when you are working with a publishing company, they're gonna take your ideas, give you a lot of feedback, and ask you to change a lot of things. Oftentimes I blame the publishing company for what they do to their work. But the point is, I feel that the publishing company has — I'll type their name in the chat. Yeah, so they're with [name omitted] Music. They've got a song called Cumbia, and Mariachi Suite for concert band, and they've done all these things. And one of my side things — I like to write for marching band. I did a — I did a piece for marching band that I felt would be a little bit more authentic to how it's played. And now you're starting to see a little bit more on JW Pepper. The problem with JW Pepper is that they still don't have a category for these things. And then I did a Sonora Dinamita tune for a marching band. So these were ways that I would try to get my kids that are in both marching band and mariachi to see themselves reflected in a traditional ensemble. I also did an orchestra version of a piece for elementary school and some other string stuff. But the publishing company, when you're with them, they're gonna be like, I should write this differently, or you should change this. Right now I'm self-published, because Mariachi Education Press closed. I was working with someone who was with Dr. [name omitted] from [school name omitted]. So if you type in [name omitted], she's got a bunch of stuff. Yeah — Excelsia.

Moderator: That's everything that I had for you, and I got so much good stuff from you, man, I really appreciate it.

Speaker 1: Yeah, so — you talked about this and I don't know if you've referenced any of these things — there's a book out there by [name omitted] on mariachi, called Mariachi in America. It's a small book, a very thin, easy read. And then — I think I put some of these in the slideshows — there's a book called The Art of Mariachi. It's a curriculum guide in Texas. What I enjoyed about it was the text — their Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills. The author writes in a way where she states that she's one of the few people, if not the only person, doing it — when we know that's not true. And then the book I talked about, Spanish for Music Teachers, is in there. There's the Foundations of Mariachi Education by MENC — it's out of print, but you can still find it. It's just a little expensive now. And then there was a dissertation out of [school name omitted] on mariachi as a field of study — I don't know if you've checked that one out. There's also one called The Course of Mexican Music, by [name omitted]. This one is cool because it's all kinds of stuff — I think the center of it is Oaxacan music. Chapter 1 is "Why Study Mexican Music?" So you wanna check that one out.

APPENDIX G

School 4 Transcripts

School 4 — Musician Focus Group

Moderator: Did you guys take music in elementary school?

Speaker 1: Not in elementary school, but outside of school. We got to use a lot of rain shakers.

Moderator: Are any of you involved in band? Okay. Orchestra? Choir? What about mariachi? You do? Very cool.

Moderator: Here's my question number one. Did you know before today that in general, Latinos take music in schools at a way lower percentage than white students and Asian students? Were you aware of that? I see some yes, some nos. Yeah, it's true. For example, at a school where I just interviewed last week, the school has 56% Latino population. Only 18% of the music program has Latinos in it. It's like that all over. And I'm wondering if you have any idea about why Latino students tend not to take music in school.

Moderator: So were you aware — had you ever heard about this until now — that in public schools, the number of Latinos that join music is a lot lower than the number of Latinos in schools? For example, there's a school I just came from up in [place name omitted]. The school population is 56% Latino. The number that joined the music program — whether band, choir, jazz, or marching band — is only 15%. And it's been similar to various degrees in every school where I've taught in California. So now that you know that, can you give me your opinion about why you think that might be the case?

Speaker 2: I think it might be due to our parents not pushing us to do music much. My mom never actually pushed me toward band at all. She never made me want to really do music. But my dad — he made me learn piano. And my dad's not Latino, only my mom is. So I think it might just be different cultural decisions within the family. I think it's just kind of like a band culture to it. And a lot of Latin Americans don't really care enough to join into that. And it's a much different type of person. For me, I'm fine with joining guitar because guitar is much different from band class. And it's like, you'll notice with a lot of kids who are Latino — they don't really associate with band because it is a white-dominated thing.

Speaker 3: I was gonna say the same thing. Where I come from, my whole family plays music — my family around California, they're all very talented musicians. So it just depends on your background and how your family pushes you. My parents weren't really like, you should do music. But since I've seen my influences — my older cousins, my sisters — everyone playing music, I was like, oh, I should probably do that. It looks fun. And with music, there's so many different genres you could play. Like he said, I've had both perspectives — being in both guitar

and band. Most of the Latino kids that are new to band hear other kids saying it's something for losers, or for people that are weird or nerds. And there's also the fact that most of the kids there wouldn't relate to them because there are no Latino people in the actual program. And principally for me — because I'm Brazilian — I'm not from anywhere close to the population of immigrants here, who are mostly Mexican. But yeah, most of them just don't wanna be there because they don't wanna be seen as losers or don't wanna be away from their ethnic group.

Speaker 4: I feel like it could be for different reasons. I know a lot of Latinos are more busy — they work after school, or work with their parents, maybe even in the fields sometimes. It's hard to put your time into something when you don't even know if you have time for it. For me, I wasn't pushed to do music, but my whole family also plays music. My grandpa used to be crazy at the piano and percussion — he played xylophone and stuff. So because of my family, I started playing and thought it was really fun. Also, the genre of music normally played is classical — like orchestra. Compared to Latinos, we have more of a rapid style playing like corridos or banda, and it can be seen in mariachi too. It's different in general.

Speaker 1: No one's really educating them on what band is and all the different things. It's also that culturally, schools and parents are not pushing them to do music even related to their culture. If schools want a more diverse population within the music community, they'll try to push it — and they don't.

Speaker 5: My mom kinda pushed me a little, because my grandpa has been playing for a church for years. He plays mainly percussion — drum set, bongos. So my mom kinda pushed me. I wasn't really looking into it, but I was like, okay, let me join and see what it has to offer. And it's been fun. I've been here for a year. It's like a community — you're there for each other, you have friends. You gotta listen when the teacher gets serious, but yeah, it's just overly fun.

Moderator: So a lot of you have family that plays in different kinds of ensembles. What made you decide — oh, I want to try band — as opposed to wanting to learn guitar or play mariachi somewhere else?

Speaker 1: For me, it was like I wanted at least something to get me going within the music thing that wasn't too specific. I chose percussion because that's what my dad has been doing for years — he did it throughout middle school up until college. And I wanted to learn about all the different instruments and stuff too.

Speaker 3: So for me, it started off with learning drums — I was taking lessons, and my family would come down and teach me. And I thought, well, I'm already playing drums, I can only get better from here. So I joined band as a way to learn more about playing drums in different genres. Latin music did really help me with playing the drum set because it's just very difficult — a lot of different things happening at once. I played guitar before coming to high school, and then I quit — right before my freshman year. Then I stopped playing for that whole year, and then started back in December of freshman year. I didn't know we had a guitar class or a music program. And then I missed the day where I could pick my schedule. At this point, guitar was like my whole personality. I got lucky — I got automatically put in guitar. Then after I joined, [name omitted] offered me a position in jazz band. And yeah, that's how I enjoy guitar.

Speaker 4: For me, before even doing any band, I used to just play the piano for fun. I remember learning a bunch of songs and feeling really accomplished when I played them right. My mom would always be really proud of me. Since I always felt that accomplishment, I decided if I joined band it would be really fun — I saw how busy they were with concerts and trips. And I didn't have anything else going on. So I decided to join, and it feels really good. I've always liked guitar as a little kid. I have guitars at home — they were just laying around. I didn't know how to play. And I got to the point where I started questioning why I had them if I was just leaving them there. So I just took a class to learn, pretty much.

Speaker 5: I knew people who play guitar and I found it very cool — having the skill to play guitar is just a cool skill to have in life. And I figured if I was gonna learn guitar, I might as well take it in school, so the school can kind of push me to actually do it.

Speaker 1: My dad used to play it a lot. I guess I just learned from him. He used to teach me and stuff. And then when I learned that they had the class here, I just decided to take it.

Moderator: You mentioned that you didn't even know there was a guitar class or a music program. How did you all hear about the music program here?

Speaker 3: First month of school, they had a rally, and I saw the marching band. I first thought it was something only selected people could do — I didn't know it was something you could apply for. Once I figured that out, then I figured out choir was a thing, then the whole music program. I didn't know until a couple months into school.

Speaker 4: I was just roaming around the school freshman year, figuring it out, and I happened to stumble upon the band room and the choir room and see them performing. I found it interesting, but I didn't do it till this year.

Speaker 5: I've known that music programs in schools like this one have existed for a long time. And I learned more about the programs when other students would talk about it in guitar class.

Moderator: Think about your time in high school. Have there been any barriers that stopped you from taking a music class?

Speaker 5: During my first two years of high school, I felt like I needed to complete the big important classes first and then leave room for myself to take whatever classes I want the last two years. It really strangles your schedule. For sophomore year, I'm not gonna be able to take a band or music class at all unless I'm able to do PE over the summer, which I'm probably not gonna be able to do.

Moderator: If that wasn't true, would you take a music class?

Speaker 1: Yeah.

Speaker 3: For me, when I see my Latino friends who aren't involved — it's either they have too much stuff going on in their life to be involved in a program that takes a lot of responsibility.

You have to be there for everything, and sometimes they can't because they have stuff going on. They gotta have a job. They have to take care of their parents. They can't have a commitment like this because it affects what's going on with them.

Speaker 5: Going off of what he said, I think a lot of it is from background — where they came from, how they grew up. Because a lot of people here, yeah, they're just not as interested in instruments and band. They just kinda wanna live their life. And also, family can influence it — when you're in band, you can miss concerts and stuff.

Speaker 4: A lot of people I know just don't have the time to learn an instrument, or they just have a busy schedule. They can't really fit band into it because there's a lot of concerts, practices, everything. It takes a lot of commitment and focus, and sometimes they just have their focus somewhere else.

Speaker 3: Especially if you're doing something like jazz band on top of regular band — at the start of the year there were concerts every week or every other week. It does take up time. I could see how people would look at that and be like, oh, that's too much stress. I wouldn't wanna do that.

Moderator: Think about your Latino friends at this school who don't do any music at all. Why do you think they don't? Could it be scheduling? Could it be they don't know about it? Could it be that they think it's for nerds? Could it be that they don't like the kind of music they'd do in this program?

Moderator: Do you feel like at this school there is a stereotype that doing music — band, orchestra, or choir — is not cool? Like the people who do it are nerds?

Speaker 3: Most of my Latino friends don't do it because they find it really hard to learn how to read sheet music. They don't really understand clefs, and they think it's really hard. Like, I'll try to explain what transposing means, and they'll look at me like I'm a madman. They don't understand — and also, the music they listen to and are interested in is nothing like what we play in any of the music programs we have here.

Speaker 5: That was kind of one of the thoughts I had too, coming from [school name omitted] not too far from here. It was like, oh, you're a nerd if you're in band. But then last year, my mom was kinda pushing me to go in band. You just gotta do what interests you. You can let other people tell you what they want you to do and let them form your future, or you can decide what you gotta do for yourself.

Speaker 4: Some of my friends base it on the fact that they didn't do band in middle school. They question me: why would I do it now if I didn't do it then? It never made sense to them — they'd be behind, everyone else would know how, and they'd be the only one not knowing.

Speaker 3: There is a decently-sized stereotype like that — that they're all weird. That's how I was when I joined. I didn't really care though. I knew that if people found out I did band, they'd think I was weird. So I just let them find out eventually, and it didn't really matter. They already

knew the type of person I was. This shouldn't define who you are. If you're a cool person, you're a cool person. Oh, you do band — that's cool. Oh, you do drums — that's pretty cool too. It just adds on to it.

Speaker 4: I completely agree that there's definitely a stereotype, and a lot of people will give you a weird look if you say you're in band. But it shouldn't really matter what people think about the classes you take. It's just up to you — it's what you think and what you wanna do. You shouldn't let other people define you or influence you into not doing it.

Speaker 1: Personally, I think it's just a running stereotype in general — whether spread online or heard by ear — that all band kids are weird. But I've kinda always been a weird kid, so I thought maybe if I joined band I would find other people to be friends with. And then my dad kinda pushed me. He's like, people in band are really great people, and you're gonna find some lifelong friends there. And he was right about that.

Speaker 2: I think it's just that people are not open to the idea of doing music. I think guitar is probably the best gateway to get a Latino to actually do band. But yeah, I didn't even know there was a guitar class — I just got put in here by chance from my freshman schedule. They couldn't put me in the language class, so they had to put me in an elective.

Moderator: Does the music program here at this school reflect your culture at all?

Speaker 3: There is a mariachi band here, and that could be a part of my culture. But in jazz band, we do play Latin stuff — we use Latin instruments on multiple songs, and there are Latin parts you could play on the drum set. So I would say yeah, it does reflect my culture kind of.

Speaker 1: I'd say it kinda does reflect the culture because you get a part for an instrument you've never even heard of. So maybe you get curious and look it up online, and you find out that instrument is tied to your cultural heritage. And there's also music and ethics studies — which I'm in — and that teaches you a lot about the culture and their music as well. So yeah, I feel like it does tie into my culture.

Moderator: Is there anything that the school can do to encourage more Latinos to join a music program? Now think about yourself as someone in charge of the school music program. How would you do it? What do you think would work?

Speaker 2: I don't think there's anything they can do instantly, but further ahead they can just get themselves out there. Because the main reason people don't join band is a culmination — but the number one reason is probably just because it's culturally very white-oriented. It is not Latino at all. So it's hard to fit in there.

Speaker 3: I also would have to agree — it's mostly a white-dominated program. And most of the Latino kids don't have other Latino kids to lean on in the program because there isn't many. There's also the fact that there are multiple band options, and people don't know what to choose or what each option offers.

Speaker 1: I would probably put up flyers or something. And then we also have School 4's TV station — maybe ask to be put on that to inform more students, because it runs every Tuesday and Thursday.

Speaker 3: Maybe when we go to middle schools and elementary schools to showcase the band, we could showcase more of the Latin side of it — explore more genres to show them some similarity. Like, if there's a Latino kid out there watching and he hears a lot of Mexican music at home, and we play some of that, he could see a similarity and want to join.

Moderator: Do you think it would make a big difference to have music teachers who are Latino?

Speaker 1: Yeah. I think it would, because if you're really proud of your heritage, you'd probably wanna talk to other students about what your culture brings to music and band.

Speaker 4: Yeah. I feel like a lot more Latino students would definitely be more comfortable. Like students who don't wanna come into band right now — they'd probably be more comfortable with someone who's Latino, someone who can relate to them and talk to them well.

Moderator: What music do you guys listen to outside of school for fun?

Speaker 3: I almost wanna say I listen to everything except country music. I listen to jazz because I'm in jazz band. I'll listen to rap, all genres of rock, metal. I'll listen to anything, honestly. Since I play drums, I'm open to listening to anything because you can explore so many genres with it. I think that has affected the music I listen to.

Speaker 2: I listen to a lot of jazz because I'm also in jazz band, and then classic rock. I listen to some world music and folk, but most of what I listen to is probably jazz outside of school. And sometimes easy listening, kind of like Cole Porter.

Speaker 5: I listen to a lot of stuff. I would listen to Guns N' Roses here and there, old songs, 2000s rap, hip hop. But I mainly listen to rap — Future, Lil Baby, Quavo, the Migos. But sometimes I like to take it slow and listen to more of a peaceful type of music.

Speaker 1: I like to listen to more alternative electronic music or alternative rock, for the percussion. I like being able to point out all the different instruments in the songs. I also like listening to and watching drumline shows to see what they're doing — what can I take from that?

Moderator: Raise your hand — if the school had another musical Latina class, like banda, would you take it? What about Sierreño? Norteño? How many of you would like to be in mariachi if you could?

Moderator: There's a mariachi club here — soon there will be a mariachi class. Show of hands, how many of you plan to take mariachi? Would you guys take it if there were other kinds of musical Latina classes, like banda or a rock ensemble? Do you think other Latino students at this school would join music if there were alternative options?

Moderator: You know, sometimes you ask obvious questions and you say, of course. But the funny thing is in research, we can't say something is true until we document it. Documenting you guys being like, yeah, of course, Latinos want to join and play Latino music — now that'll be in my dissertation. I can actually report on it because you said yes. More options. That makes sense.

Moderator: Last question. You know my goal — the goal is to get more Latinos to join music in schools. During this interview, did something pop into your head that you wanted to say that I didn't ask about? Did I forget to ask about anything?

School 4 — Non-Musician Focus Group

Moderator: So my first question is, why did you decide to take this music class, which is music and ethnic studies?

Speaker 1: It was the only class available at the time. I was put into it.

Moderator: So it wasn't because it was music?

Speaker 1: Yeah.

Moderator: It was because you had to. Okay. Anybody else?

Speaker 2: Well, I've been interested in music for a while, so it seemed interesting.

Speaker 3: I just moved here, and they moved me to the class.

Speaker 4: I just wanted to learn more about music and stuff, and it just seemed like a good option compared to the other ones.

Speaker 5: I was interested in learning the history of music.

Moderator: Remember, you don't have to answer. We just passed the microphone down the row. If you don't feel like answering one of these questions or you don't know, you do not have to answer. But I hope you will. So I got some questions for you. Do you feel like — and be honest, I don't work here so you're not gonna hurt my feelings. And I won't tell this to any of the teachers who work here. I won't get back to them. Do you feel like there's a stereotype at this school that musicians are uncool or that band or choir kids are geeks or nerds or that kind of thing. I'm seeing some nodding. Yeah. There's a stereotype, would you say? Kind of? Not really? Okay. Yeah. Be honest. We got to find out if it is or not. So outside of school and outside of this class, what kind of music do you guys like to listen to when it's your music?

Speaker 1: It really depends on the day. So some days, I'll listen to the traditional Brazilian music that my family listens to, and then other days, it'll be European classical or rap. Rock. Really depends.

Moderator: But your family listens to Brazilian?

Speaker 4: Yeah. Because I'm half.

Speaker 6: I typically listen to mostly hip hop on my own time, but I listen to a lot of jazz and samba, which came up because that's what my family plays.

Speaker 2: Mostly alternative rock, but sometimes I listen to folk music.

Speaker 3: R&B, rock, Latin music.

Speaker 4: I grew up with mainly R&B, but it kind of just depends on my mood. I feel like my mood influences what music I listen to, so it just depends.

Speaker 5: I mostly listen to hip hop, but I do like to listen to Mexican music. I wanna get more into that.

Moderator: When you say Mexican music, are you listening to Corridos?

Speaker 5: Don't really know what that is. I don't know what that is.

Moderator: Oh, Banda or — what kind of Mexican music do you listen to?

Speaker 4: I don't know.

Moderator: How do you listen to music most of the time? Are you using Spotify? Amazon Music. What else is there? Pandora? Sometimes. YouTube? Sometimes. What's your primary thing that you use to find and listen to music?

Speaker 6: Yeah.

Moderator: What apps or what music services do you use to listen to music?

Speaker 4: So I mainly use Spotify, but a lot of my music taste comes from my parents, and that's where I get my music from. That's how I discover a lot of the songs and stuff that I listen to.

Moderator: Besides this class, have you ever considered joining a school music class? If so, why?

Speaker 6: I took guitar last year because I wasn't in there for the first month of school, but I kept having run ins with [name omitted]. And I thought he was a funny guy, so I took the class. And that's actually why I'm in here again because I like [name omitted].

Speaker 1: I have not considered taking any other music class because I do individual lessons, so doing it at school was like I just wasted my time apparently.

Moderator: What do you play?

Speaker 1: I started playing the bass guitar, and then I did piano for a little while. And then I play the beating vowel occasionally.

Moderator: Can you expand on why you like playing music, but you don't wanna do it at school?

Speaker 1: Because I feel like it's just — I'd rather get all of my mandatory stuff done this year, and so taking an elective wasn't really a priority for me at the time.

Moderator: Are you interested in maybe taking music in school in the future?

Speaker 1: Not really. If I had the ability to play the cello, most likely, because that's my favorite instrument.

Moderator: Anybody else? The question at hand is, have you ever considered joining a music class besides music and ethnic studies, and if so, why did you or why did you not?

Speaker 2: I took guitar and piano last year, and I also took AP music theory this year, but only for not even a week.

Moderator: Why did you stop?

Speaker 2: I don't know. It was just like people were singing in that class. I took classes outside of school in guitar for music theory. So I would rather do stuff with instruments than, yeah.

Speaker 3: I did piano for a little bit at [school name omitted], and then I got switched out when I joined the law program. And I haven't thought about music really since.

Speaker 4: I kind of considered taking guitar, but I have no experience, so I was kinda nervous about it. I kinda considered it, but not really.

Speaker 5: I kind of considered it, but then not really at the same time. I was really indecisive about it. I wanted to play the piano but I had no experience and I was scared I was gonna embarrass myself or something.

Moderator: I hear a lot of students say that they don't want to join music because they don't know anything and they don't want to be the only one in there who doesn't know. You'd be behind. That makes a lot of sense. Next question. Do you have any connection or knowledge of the music teachers here outside of music and ethnic studies? When you were a freshman — or if you are a freshman now — did anybody explain to you what kind of musical choices there were at this school?

Speaker 3: My counselor just let me know all the music choices I could pick, like guitar, this class, and then yeah.

Moderator: Did anybody make you aware of what choir is, what band is, what jazz band is?

Speaker 1: I feel like I kinda already knew what it was, but we were just kinda handed a packet and said, here, fill this out. No explanation. But I knew from previous things what it was. But it would be nice if there was a little description, maybe for people who don't know. Personal opinion.

Moderator: Anybody else have a comment on that one? Show of hands, how many of you did music in elementary school? What about middle school?

Speaker 4: At my elementary school, we did have a mandatory music class that we did once a week. So I had that. But in middle school, there was no music classes.

Moderator: If you have wanted to take a music class at school — be it middle school, high school, doesn't matter — did anything get in the way of you taking a music class?

Speaker 1: The amount of times that they had to practice after school, because I have a very busy schedule. It's not like I go home and just rest. I have a lot of after school stuff, or I'm practicing the bass guitar, or I'm writing something, or I'm reading, or I'm doing my homework, or I do my sports. I don't have a lot of time, so I was just like, yeah. I don't have the time for this, and I can't do it. So I didn't.

Moderator: Any other barriers? Something that got in the way that stopped you from taking music? Is there anything that this school can do that would make you or any of your Latino friends potentially want to try music here?

Speaker 2: They let you take stuff home. Like, I don't have a good amp or any pedals for my guitar, so it's kinda bare. If they let you do that stuff, then I'd try to experiment a little more.

Moderator: If they gave you access to the equipment?

Speaker 3: I'd say posters, and also what he said — letting them experiment with equipment.

Speaker 6: I feel like they don't — this is my second year, so I'm not too experienced with School 4. But I feel like they don't really put stuff out for students to read, easily. Like, they send emails, but no one checks their school email. I don't check mine. And so I feel like they just don't really advertise anything, and it's just kinda up to you to figure shit out, and they don't really help you do that. And also, it's a very white school. I'm very much in the minority in most of my classes. In most of my classes, I'm the only minority student, and it's weird because at my old school, everyone was brown and black, and that's what I'm used to. And coming here, it was — it was culture shock. Anyways, I just feel like there's not a lot of places for us to feel comfortable, like, each other, I guess, because we still have that space and they don't advertise anything at all.

Speaker 1: Also I feel like they only focus on like one section of Latin America. They don't focus on the whole of Latin America and there aren't any Latin American music things. So like for me who looks literally like a white person because I'm half and my mom is also whiter even though

she's from Brazil, born and raised there. It's definitely a thing where there's not a lot of variety. It's just like, this is the music we have. You're gonna play it or, you know, and there's not many options. I feel like they play mostly white classical music. I don't think I've ever heard Latin American music coming from the band room.

Moderator: Anybody else have input on that one?

Speaker 2: I grew up pretty whitewashed. I look really white. My whole family's Mexican. And I grew up with white types of music. But I started growing up and I listened to Latin alternative rock and stuff like that. And I thought it was pretty interesting, but no one really cares about that, to be honest here.

Moderator: So [name omitted] mentioned that they started a mariachi club this year, and it meets Tuesdays after school and Tuesdays at lunch. They're trying to make it into a class. For this particular group of people, is mariachi something that you would be interested in trying?

Speaker 1: You know, my dad would probably make me take mariachi if there was the choice. I probably wouldn't though just because I know several people who are in the mariachi class. I don't really like them, so I wouldn't wanna spend time with them.

Moderator: What about other music and Latina classes? I've seen a class of Norteño music ensemble, which is kind of like a Mexican rock ensemble with accordion and bajo quinto and vocal. Or there's banda classes or jazz band that is Latin orchestras that does salsa, sambas, mambos, Latin jazz, that kind of stuff. Is there any other music classes that you would be interested in that you can think of? What about a hip hop appreciation class or something having to do with hip hop?

Moderator: So I only have like two more questions. Number one is — all over California and all over the United States, Latinos don't tend to take band and choir and orchestra for various reasons that you've talked about. Think about your friends and yourselves, your Latino friends on campus. What are the main reasons that you are not interested in taking a band, orchestra, or choir class? And it can be something that's already been said here or something new.

Speaker 3: Not being able to fit in, and just the nerves maybe kicking in also.

Speaker 2: I feel like that — you said orchestra and stuff. I feel like that's really old type music. I'm not really interested in that type of music. I'm interested in newer stuff, but it's also the trouble in fitting in there. It feels different.

Speaker 1: Like I said before, really busy schedule. And then also the fact there's not really an instrument that I'm genuinely like, yes, I wanna play that. Or that someone else hasn't already picked out. It's just nothing that's really intrigued me about orchestra.

Speaker 6: Nothing's really interesting to me about it.

Moderator: Last question. I've asked you a series of questions. Is there anything that I didn't ask you about that you want to say anyway? Anything I missed that you think I should be thinking about?

Speaker 6: If you wanna have a better relationship with your Latino students, you should probably have experience in the Latin community. Like, go to [place name omitted] or [place name omitted] or some neighborhoods in [place name omitted], and not just visit, but actually find a place to rent and live there for a little bit. I know it's California. It's probably gonna be hard. But just having an actual experience with family members or in a real neighborhood, it's gonna give you a better insight than just seeing students at school. Because that's a more professional, formal kind of relationship.

Speaker 1: Maybe add more variation to the Latin stuff. Because like I said before, there's Mexican music, there's Guatemalan music, there's Honduran music, there's Chilean music, there's Brazilian music — which is completely different from normal Latin music and that's what I'm experienced with. And so having more variation in Latin music as a whole — it doesn't mean it focuses on one specific genre, one specific thing. There's so many different influences that it has. So for Brazil, it's literally just a giant cultural hot pot. It has so many different influences that, say, some place like Mexico would have. And so hearing different variations of Latin music would probably help a lot more Latin people specifically to come in and be like, oh, that's the music that I grew up with, or oh, this is the music that my friend listens to. So having more variation instead of one set type of music — just mariachi, because it's just one genre. Not a lot of people would be familiar with mariachi, so more variation.

School 4 — Teacher Interview

Moderator: So what strategies have you used to recruit and retain Latinx students?

Speaker 1: Well, recruitment — I'm not sure that I think of it, as far as our band programs have been involved, as recruitment. So I want every human being to be in my music program. So I don't think I necessarily think about it from a minority standpoint. I just want everybody to have a place. And so it's kinda like the joke in our program is build the empire, take over the world. Like everybody should be in our program — obviously if they can't or whatever, but we like to find the kids who don't have a place to belong, and we try to make band that place for them. For Mariachi, when we got that off the ground, I didn't even necessarily open it up to say, hey, looking for Latino students to be involved. I just said, hey, we're starting a mariachi thing after school. If you're interested, you don't even have to have a musical background. Like, if you wanna learn, we'll get you in. And then I looked at the students in my guitar classes, and maybe some of the kids who spoke Spanish, and said, hey, have you ever sang Spanish? Even in my music and ethnic studies class, learning that kids had — oh, yeah, my family, we sing Spanish, we sing mariachi together, my grandma does this. So I tried finding kids who already had maybe some connection to mariachi and bring them into that. Usually they had a Latino background. It so happened to be that the majority of the students who came over from my guitar class were Hispanic. And even though they hadn't been playing guitar for, however long they've been in my

class period — and we started in October, so they had like two months of guitar before we put them in there — I don't even know that I was targeting specifically that ethnic group to join. It just so happened to be that the interest level came from that group.

Moderator: You mentioned your music and culture class?

Speaker 1: Music and ethnic studies.

Moderator: Music and ethnic studies. Why did you start that class?

Speaker 1: It started out as there was a graduation requirement that was coming through California for the class of 2030 to have taken a course that fulfilled the model curriculum for ethnic studies. So that was hitting on either the four — I guess they called them the four core areas — which was African American, Asian American, Latinx, and indigenous people. And so I was like, okay, well, this is a graduation requirement. How can I get that into my program? How can I have my students participate in music while meeting that requirement? So it started out with like, oh, I could do jazz ensemble, I could rewrite some other classes. And then I was thinking about ways of growing our program. I'm like, well, if we built a music class that backed health as a semester long class, and then they could get their music credit and their music and ethnic studies credit, that would be perfect. And I was a history minor for most of college, and I find those types of things really interesting and exciting. And so it kinda played right into things that I was excited and interested to teach about. So taking my general interest in history and with music, and just trying to develop this course. And it so happened to be that when I was looking on the University of California portal for courses through A through G, I was like, oh, maybe there's another class I can model it after. There is no music ethnic studies centric class. There may be classes that meet the requirement, like mariachi ensemble and some other things, but there is no direct study of ethnic studies in music. So I wrote the class from scratch. And even the class I originally wrote ended up changing as I was in the first semester of teaching and finding out what worked, what didn't work, how I was able to leverage it with the students. And so it came from a couple different places. One, it being a requirement coming through — getting a requirement that was connected to my department and my curricular area. And having an opportunity to teach music and have students learn about music without maybe the apprehension around having to play an instrument. So it's like music appreciation with a very specific focus.

Moderator: This one is not on my list, but I really wanna know. You heard the students in your guitar class saying that there's a stigma at this school, that people who do music are nerds, especially band and choir — not so much mariachi, but all the other music classes. Nothing new. Almost every school has that. What do you do, if anything, to combat it or to accept it?

Speaker 1: I think that it depends on the social structure of who those kids are that think the band kids are nerds. Number one, we have a very diverse group of kids in the music program. And some of them are a little weird, you know. And they're unique personalities, and we like all of those kids. And so I think it may come from the fact that we are a group that accepts everybody of all different personality types, backgrounds, all those things. So it's a unique grouping of people, and it tends to be also a fair number of kids who are very confident in themselves and don't seem to really care what other kids think. And I think that causes a little jealousy of people

who care what other people think, in a way. And kinda like walking some kids who have that concern — you know, who are the people that would make fun of you? If they would make fun of you for this, do you really care about their opinion? And so through our non-ensemble classes — so not band, not choir, not orchestra, more through like piano and guitar and music and ethnic studies — trying to build an appreciation for music. That playing an instrument is challenging, it's hard, it requires dedication, and maybe respecting what goes into playing a musical instrument or what it takes to create music. So hopefully building a bridge there with non-ensemble music kids. I try to build a rapport with all of those general population students so that they respect me as a teacher and maybe they might enjoy me as a teacher and enjoy my classroom environment. And there's a little bit more of like, oh, I can understand why kids would wanna do band because this is a fun place to be. The teacher's cool. I feel like I've had that a little bit at most of the schools I've taught at. I've raised to have an issue once. I had like freshman football players outside cursing and being obnoxious towards all my band kids, and I just had two varsity football players in my guitar class. And I was like, hey, guys. I'm having this problem. They said, we'll take care of it. Whole varsity football team out there shut down all the freshman football players, never had a problem with them ever again. And it's because I had a rapport with those kids, and it helped build rapport, build a respect and an appreciation for my program through me. I also tell — we talk a lot about respecting what other people do. Like, the band students specifically. You know, when I got here, no one cared about football. It's like the joke — sports kids, athletes, whatever. And I was like, if you don't respect what they do, they're never gonna respect what you do. So you may not like cheer, you may not understand cheer — can you respect that they're putting work and energy and they're passionate about it? And that we do things with the cheer team. You know, the cheer team's a little bit more respectful of us, and the football team's more — because our football team was really bad for a while. The band would still play. I'm like, what, the football team's bad? I'm like, yeah, but that's our football team. We wanna support them. So you can't talk crap about them and expect them to respect what you do. So we talk a lot about mutual respect and appreciation for what other people do. If you want people to respect the band kids, then the band kids need to respect others. And instead of it being this like, well, doubling down on a band kid, forget everybody else — that doesn't help build any culture on campus. So I try to be very visible on campus. I walk around school, people generally know who I am, even though they've never had me as a teacher.

Moderator: What kind of support or resources do you feel are needed to better serve the Latino student population in your music program?

Speaker 1: Well, I think there's already a system in place for band and choir and orchestra. If you're starting to go into the route of mariachi, you can leverage off of things you may already have, but there's also a lot of things that you don't have that you need some financial investment in. So finding funding for buying the appropriate instruments for a mariachi ensemble or any ethnic ensemble that is not a traditional band, choir, orchestra situation. I think, on the whole, many of my Latino students work with their family. And so I've had kids who are like, I work at my aunt's restaurant after school. They tend to have a much tighter family situation where they're expected to help with contributing to the family dynamic, whether that's babysitting siblings, whether that's working a job after school. And finding ways to help communication with the families about the importance of the commitments for school and why school is important, and having some flexibility with those students. How can we keep you involved instead of it being,

well, this is my expectation, take it or leave it? Being flexible. Our big thing in our program — we probably have the most flexible music program of any of the programs that I've worked with. We don't even necessarily grade on attendance. Our big thing is communication. We need to know what's going on. If you tell us what's going on, we can work with you. We can renegotiate. We can figure out — okay, so you need to be at work by this time. Can we figure out how long you can stay after school? Can you come at a different time to get those types of things taken care of? Do you need to bring your siblings to rehearsal? We've had that where someone's like, I have to watch my younger sister and brother. And I said, can they come with you? Yes, they can come with me. They're hanging out in the stands, riding their bike, riding their scooter around where we can see them, but they're still there. That's actually how I got one of them — the older sibling was gonna have to quit marching band because the parents couldn't get them there. Well, the brother said, okay, I'll take her. And that brother's always here, and now the brother's joining the band. So I think there's some understanding of the family dynamic and finding ways to help support those students in that way. I feel like there's not necessarily financial things — every family regardless of their ethnic background may present with different financial challenges. So being able to provide the instruments for the kids who need them, that can't get them on their own — I think that can help that community, but it kinda helps many students. I think generally in this area, we have some affluent, but mostly on the same socioeconomic playing field. We didn't have a lot of school instruments when I got here, because once upon a time this program was a pretty affluent program. [Place name omitted] was a pretty affluent area. That socioeconomic demographic has shifted significantly in the last ten years where we needed to invest a lot into not just the contra bass, alto bass clarinet, or the tuba — I needed to get a flute or a clarinet or a trumpet, the basic instruments you probably would have had rented in middle school if you had the means. So there's a lot to do from a standpoint of being able to provide the materials that they need and making sure that's not a barrier to them having access to the music program.

Moderator: You mentioned communication. How do you communicate with parents to the best effect?

Speaker 1: So we have a couple of ways. One, we have something called the band app. So that's where everything is in there. Some of the students whose families maybe don't speak English that well — we might have them help make sure that we have good communication. But the nice thing is that when things are in text form, they can translate them. Also, we have something called Talking Points, which is a school wide communication system where the families can set their home language, and when we send something out, it automatically translates into their home language. It's really helpful. Our Hispanic population actually — it seems like our Hispanic population has a pretty okay understanding of the English aspects necessary to access things for the school. Our Russian and Ukrainian population struggles more with that. But even sometimes in our parent chats, certain kids — we will have them in there in addition to their parents to help them see what their parents are seeing and helping to explain certain aspects of that for them. It is interesting that certain families, depending on their situation, are totally fine and their parents are very involved. But the families who don't speak English that well, their involvement's a little bit different because it's very tied to their kid, because their kid ends up being their translator. So I don't know if that's always necessarily why their parents are more or less involved — it's their comfort level with communicating with other parents who may or may

not be able to communicate with them as well. For those certain families where the parents don't speak English that well, the students are very much that conduit to getting information as far as our experience with the music program.

Moderator: Bearing in mind that you've mentioned you don't necessarily target your teaching or your recruiting towards Latinos, answer this question to the best of your ability. In what way do you include repertoire, teaching methods, and cultural connections that are relevant to your Latino students? And can you provide any examples?

Speaker 1: Like I said, I don't think that we necessarily target that particular ethnic group when we're doing things. But when we program music, we're very conscious of trying to have some diverse representation of the music that we choose, whether that is ethnic, gender, sexual orientation. We try to be conscious — are we just picking a bunch of music by current or past white men? And so in doing that across all of our ensembles, the nice thing is that we have so many ensembles that maybe one of them is not as diverse as the other, but one will balance it out. So across our three concert bands, we have our concert band — one of their pieces is by a female, one of them is by an African American, one of them is by a white composer. Our second band is written by a woman — it's Donzella Habana, which is from the composer's time in another country. And then we have a piece by a female composer, which has some cultural things to the discussion. And then we're doing a piece that's just about metal shop. The wind ensemble, we're doing a piece called Starry Ocean by an Asian American female, and then we're doing Blue Shades by Frank Ticheli. So that one's not quite as diverse, and then we're doing Flourish for Wind Band by another composer. But then if you put it in the context of four years, we do a lot — I did Un Ritmo, which was based on an Afro Cuban background. Like, she was a Cuban composer. So I don't think that we specifically target trying to represent our Latin American students, but we do try to have a diverse — whether the composers or the style of the music — representation of multiple cultures beyond just the standard band canon. And we actually spend a lot of music money on sheet music rather than just using what's already in the library. We buy a lot of new music because we want to have that diversity in the repertoire that we present our students.

Moderator: What's your line item in the budget for sheet music?

Speaker 1: Thousands of dollars. Because we have orchestra, three concert bands, two jazz ensembles. Not including choir, not including mariachi ensemble. Marching band itself — yeah, just talking about the concert groups — you've probably spent thousands of dollars a year since I've been here because the number of ensembles has more than doubled. And every group, we wanted them to have new music over the course of four years. So over a four year period, we're buying new music for every ensemble every single year.

Moderator: Before I forget, we were talking about something in the office and I stopped you and I said, I really wanna get this on tape.

Speaker 1: Oh. Was this the structure of my music and ethnic studies class?

Moderator: The structure or a specific project.

Speaker 1: Okay. So my music and ethnic studies class is built around African American, Asian American, Latin American, and indigenous people. But the class is really about identity — it's a big piece of that. And so we start the class out by having students make a playlist of 10 songs that represent them. Not their 10 favorites, but things that would showcase to the class who they are. So we had a student who grew up in [place name omitted], and so he had some music representing that life that he lived, and where he's come from now. And his favorite song might have been a favorite because of his experience with his brother, or these other things. And then they have to explain why those 10 songs represent them. So it's literally a slideshow. One song, we play a snippet of it, explain why this represents you. And that's how I finally learn — oh, you know, maybe a student who is very white presenting is actually half Hispanic. She just has blonde hair, blue eyes, but she speaks Spanish better than her Mexican boyfriend. And she's singing in a mariachi group. Or I find a lot more about them through their playlist. And then we talk about world cultures. They have to do a world cultures project and then we bring it together. And it's kind of on purpose this way. We have African American, which is about — we talk about the background of forced relocation, slavery. They were forcibly removed from their homeland and moved someplace else. And that has played into American culture and in South American culture. Then the experience, the prejudice, the freedoms, and civil rights, all the way somewhat to the present. And then we talk about Latin American, which is a lot of immigration. We talk immigration, which is not necessarily forced relocation, but that immigration aspect. And also there's an indigenous aspect to it because part of the United States was part of Mexico. So there's a clash of immigration versus — well, they were here first too. So we have two different things — forced relocation and immigration — but then there are parallels in their experience within American culture and society and civil rights and all these things. Identity, and the idea of assimilation versus holding on to their culture and their identity, not whitewashing it, for lack of a better word. Then we get into Asian American. Asian American is interesting because their culture is a story of immigration, much more specifically, but then how it parallels the experience of a minority group. And we talk about the model minority — why is there concern about the idea that Asian Americans assimilated? And then we get into indigenous, which is colonization and Hawaii and stuff like that. And their final project is comparing and contrasting those different experiences and how they are similar or different, and how they may contribute to how they formulate identity in society. You know, the idea that people come here from — how many different countries are in Asia? How many different countries are in Latin America? But in American culture, it tends to get amalgamated into one thing. African American — well, Africa is this humongous continent. You're African. Well, what about all the different countries? Same thing with Latin America, Asian American. And so we talk a little about what does identity mean? What does it mean to you? What does it mean to these cultures? And helping them be more reflective about themselves. So while the class is studying other cultures, it's learning about themselves through the study of other cultures. And that's really the whole goal of that class.

Moderator: Very quickly, you mentioned in there that you kind of have a little bit of an advantage. People are loath to criticize an ethnically diverse person teaching about colonization and slavery, more so than a white teacher would have.

Speaker 1: I feel like on this campus, I am one of the few non-white teachers. And that's been my experience everywhere I've ever taught. And it's interesting for me because I grew up in an all

white community. My mom is half Mexican, but I had a very white upbringing in a lot of ways. And then my dad's half Filipino. And that Filipino side — there are aspects of the Filipino culture that were a part of my growing up, but my dad's name is [name omitted]. My uncle's name is [name omitted]. It was very much like — assimilate. Assimilate, change. It was a lot of those types of things I grew up with. So I never really grew up even experiencing blatant racism or even prejudice against my race. Little things here, but not really — I was not oppressed as a kid. I was the token Filipino in our class. It wasn't till I started teaching high school with my credential, and all the Asian kids would just flock to my office — in the program and outside of the program. I was one of two Asian teachers on campus. One female, and she was half Asian, and I'm half Asian. And they're like, what kind of food do you eat? Do you eat this kind of food? And I'm like, what? It wasn't until that moment that I realized how representation was important, because those kids saw themselves in me as a teacher, as a person of authority and education, that they didn't have from the other teachers. I was the only one. And so it was interesting for me as a teacher — I never really experienced that as a student. I didn't seek out other Filipino role models. I ended up having this view — like [name omitted], you know, the teacher at [school name omitted]. He was Filipino. He was my first person who hired me that wasn't from my old high school. And I learned more about Filipino culture from him. But that was the moment it clicked for me — oh, that's why representation is important. As someone who's ethnic, I didn't realize that until my fifth, sixth year of teaching, because I was teaching in a predominantly white school, and the non-white kids flocked to me, even though they weren't musicians. Sometimes they wanted to be in my program just because I was the only other person that they could connect with. And so that's helped a lot of the time, and that's why I try to bring in a lot of different people to work with the band, so they can see different types of people who teach music and are musicians, and that they're not only represented by me.

Moderator: Do you make it a point ever to try and push — I know you probably try and push all of your students equally to potentially become music teachers if you see a spark. But do you ever make a special push for students who are minority or who would make more of a difference like you have? Like maybe more Latino students or more Asian or non-white future music teachers, given how important that is?

Speaker 1: I don't think that I have, specifically. I think that there are kids that show the potential for being a good teacher. And that's not even necessarily musician-wise. I think the kids who have shown a lot of leadership — I try to see the kids who show potential but don't put themselves out there, and encourage them to do so. Whether that is a minority group or female — it tends to be a very boy-dominant thing. I'm always a little disappointed that we don't have a lot of female trumpet players in our program, considering that every single band teacher up the way from our middle school teacher, my co-director, and myself are all trumpet players. When I taught elementary school, I was extra super conscious about how I demonstrated all the instruments. I tried to get a fifty-fifty split, boys and girls playing on all the instruments. I didn't always get there, but I think I had a pretty high percentage, especially with brass instruments. Because when I taught elementary school, I had a teacher who was female at the middle school I fed. I had this killing flute player, this boy. He was so good. And then he got to the middle school and he played trombone. And I was like, what happened? She said, oh, I didn't want him to get made fun of. And I was like — you took away an opportunity for him because you were concerned about him getting made fun of instead of encouraging him that it's okay, there's

nothing wrong with playing the flute when you're a boy. And so I feel like I get a little bit more hung up in the gender dynamics of things than I do in the ethnic dynamics of things. But yeah, I feel like I try to look at finding kids that have potential and encouraging them. It's the same thing with [name omitted], the kid who was in my mariachi ensemble, who was in my guitar class. He worked kinda hard, and I was like, hey, do you wanna try something new? And I said, here's a guitarrón. Never played guitarrón in his life, worked really hard at it, and loves it. Is he great? No. But man, he loves it, and he works really hard at it. He was like — and now he wants to do marching band. He's never been in a band in his entire life, but he's like, I just wanna be more involved. I wanna do more things. Because so many kids come to the school and just exist instead of finding some place where they can be a part of something. And I feel like that's why high school's important, because once you leave here, the opportunities to try new things start to become more and more limited the older you get. I'm like, hey, I know you gotta work, but let's get you involved in something. At least you can leave high school and say you did something other than show up to class. Suffice to say — I don't think that I have ever really thought about it from that standpoint as far as encouraging them to take music beyond high school. But that's a different lens that maybe I should start considering.

Moderator: That is a lot. I've taken a lot of your time. More than I thought.

Speaker 1: Well, you asked me and I'm a talker.

APPENDIX H

Institutional Review Board Approval

APPROVAL

December 8, 2025
Casson Scowcroft
cassons@uoregon.edu

Dear Casson Scowcroft:

The Committee for Protection of Human Subjects (CPHS), the University of Oregon Institutional Review Board (IRB), reviewed and approved the following submission.

Type of Review:	Initial Study
Study Title:	Factors Influencing Latine Students in Secondary Public Music Programs in California
Principal Investigator:	Casson Scowcroft
Parent Study ID:	STUDY00002000
Transaction ID:	STUDY00002000
Funding Source:	None
IND, IDE, or HDE:	None

Approval Date:	12/5/2025
Effective Date:	12/8/2025
Expiration Date:	12/4/2026

For this research, the following determinations have been made:

1. This study has been reviewed under the **2018 Common Rule.** The study has been determined to be no greater than minimal risk and to qualify for expedited review as per **Title 45 CFR 46.110 under Categories (6) Voice, video, digital, or image recordings, (7)(a) Behavioral research, (7)(b) Social science methods.**
   - A regulatory continuing review is not required for this study. **An institutional approval period has been established based on your application materials.** If you anticipate the research will continue beyond the approval period, you must submit a Continuing Review Application at least 45 days prior to the expiration date.
2. The IRB has approved the research to obtain information for the purpose of screening, recruiting, or determining the eligibility of prospective subjects without the informed consent/assent of the prospective subjects or the subject's legally authorized representative in accordance with 45 CFR 46.116(g)(1).
3. The study as described satisfies the requirements for additional protections for children involved as subjects in research under 45 CFR Part 46.404.
4. The permission of one parent or guardian is sufficient for a child's involvement in the research.
5. The IRB has waived the requirement to obtain parental permission under 45 CFR 46.116(f) to allow for the use of the passive/opt-out parental consent procedure for the online student survey activity.

For this research, the following contingency applies:
6. This study involves conducting research in schools external to the University of Oregon. Please reach out to the schools and school districts to obtain approval as needed prior to conducting this research and maintain copies of those approvals so they can be supplied in the event of an audit. If any of the participating districts or schools has a formal research or ethics review process, documentation of their approval must be submitted to RCS as a modification to the study record prior to commencing this research.

The research is approved to be conducted as described in the approved protocol using the approved materials. Approved materials can be accessed in the protocol workspace in the IRB module of the research administration portal (RAP).

It is your responsibility to ensure modifications are submitted when required and approval secured before implementing changes to the protocol.

A closure report must be submitted once human subject research activities are complete.

Failure to maintain current approval or properly close the protocol constitutes non-compliance.

With the submission of your request, you agreed to uphold the responsibilities of the Principal
Investigator and have agreed to follow the requirements listed in the Investigator Manual (HRP-103), which can be found by navigating to the IRB Library within the IRB module of the RAP.

If you have any questions regarding your protocol or the review process, please contact

Research Compliance Services at ResearchCompliance@uoregon.edu or (541)346-2510. The University of Oregon and Research Compliance Services appreciate your commitment to the ethical and responsible conduct of research with human subjects.

Please consider completing our user satisfaction survey. It only takes a few minutes, and we would like to hear about your experience working with our office!

Sincerely,

Research Compliance Services *on behalf of the Committee for Protection of Human Subjects*

APPENDIX I

Survey Results Report

Factors of Latine Music Students in School Music

Researcher: Casson Scowcroft, PhD Candidate, University of Oregon | IRB-Approved Bilingual Survey (English / Spanish)

Total respondents: 22 | Identifying data removed per IRB confidentiality requirements

SECTION 1 — PARTICIPANT IDENTIFICATION

Q1 What is your name?

Open text response | Respondents: 22 (approximate — some entries blank)

Individual names have been removed to protect participant anonymity.

Q2 What is your student ID number?

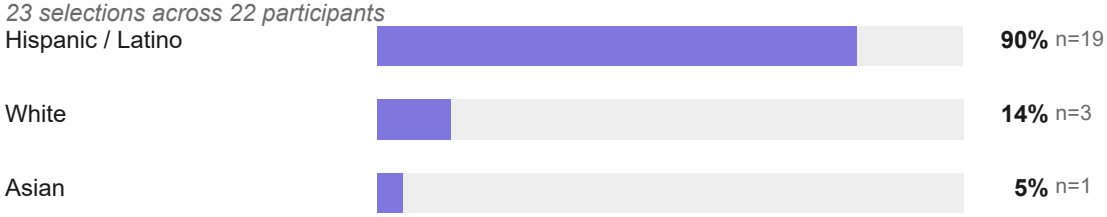
Open text response | Respondents: 22 (approximate — some entries blank)

Student ID numbers have been removed to protect participant anonymity.

Q3 How do you identify? Select all that apply.

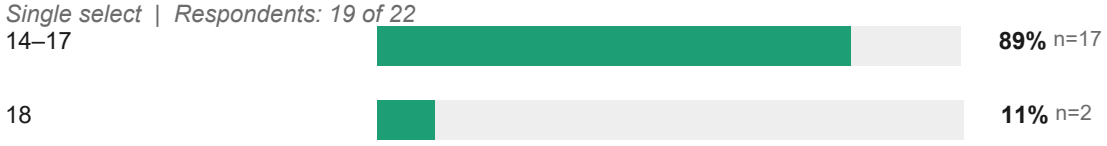
Multi-select | Respondents: 22 | Totals exceed 100% due to multi-select

23 selections across 22 participants



Q4 What is your age?

Single select | Respondents: 19 of 22



SECTION 2 — CONSENT AND ASSENT

Q19 Assent for Online Survey Participation (ages 14–17) — Please read and then sign.

Signature field | Bilingual assent form (English / Spanish)

Participants were presented with a full IRB-approved assent document explaining the study's purpose, voluntary nature, risks, confidentiality protections, and the right to withdraw. The study title is Factors of Latine Music Students in School Music. Researcher: Casson Scowcroft, University of Oregon (cassons@uoregon.edu).

Signatures collected: approximately 13 of 17 eligible participants submitted a signature image. Individual signatures have been removed to protect anonymity.

Q20 Consent for Online Survey Participation (age 18+) — Please read and then sign.

Signature field | Bilingual consent form (English / Spanish)

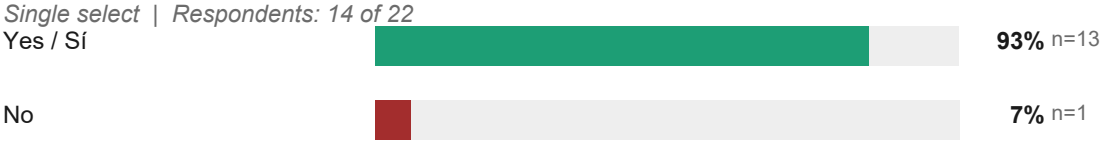
Participants aged 18 and older were presented with a full IRB-approved informed consent document covering study purpose, duration, procedures, risks, benefits, privacy protections, and right to withdraw without penalty.

Signatures collected: approximately 2 of 2 eligible participants submitted a signature image. Individual signatures have been removed to protect anonymity.

SECTION 3 — MUSIC PARTICIPATION (ALL RESPONDENTS)

Q5 Do you currently participate in any school music classes?

Single select | Respondents: 14 of 22



SECTION 4 — NON-PARTICIPANTS ONLY (ROUTED FROM Q5 'NO')

The following questions (Q6–Q12) were presented only to the one participant who answered 'No' to Q5.

Q6 Have you ever participated in a school music class?

Single select | Respondents: 1

No — 100% (n=1)

Q7 Which of the following best describes why you do not currently participate in school music classes? (Select all that apply.)

Multi-select | Respondents: 1

"I don't think I have the necessary musical skills or talent." — 100% (n=1)

An open-text 'Other' field was available; no response was provided.

Q8 How important is music as part of your cultural identity and heritage?

Single select | Respondents: 1

Moderately important — 100% (n=1)

Q9 What, if anything, would encourage you to consider joining a school music program in the future? (Select all that apply.)

Multi-select | Respondents: 1

Stronger recruitment and outreach efforts — 100% (n=1)

An open-text 'Other' field was available; no response was provided.

Q10 Which statement best describes how much you know about the music teachers at your school?

Single select | Respondents: 1

"I see them around sometimes, but I've never talked to them." — 100% (n=1)

Q11 If you know them, how positive or negative is your opinion of the music teachers?

Single select | Respondents: 1

Neutral — 100% (n=1)

Q12 "School music is not for me because I'm Hispanic/Latino." — To what extent do you agree?

Likert scale | Respondents: 1

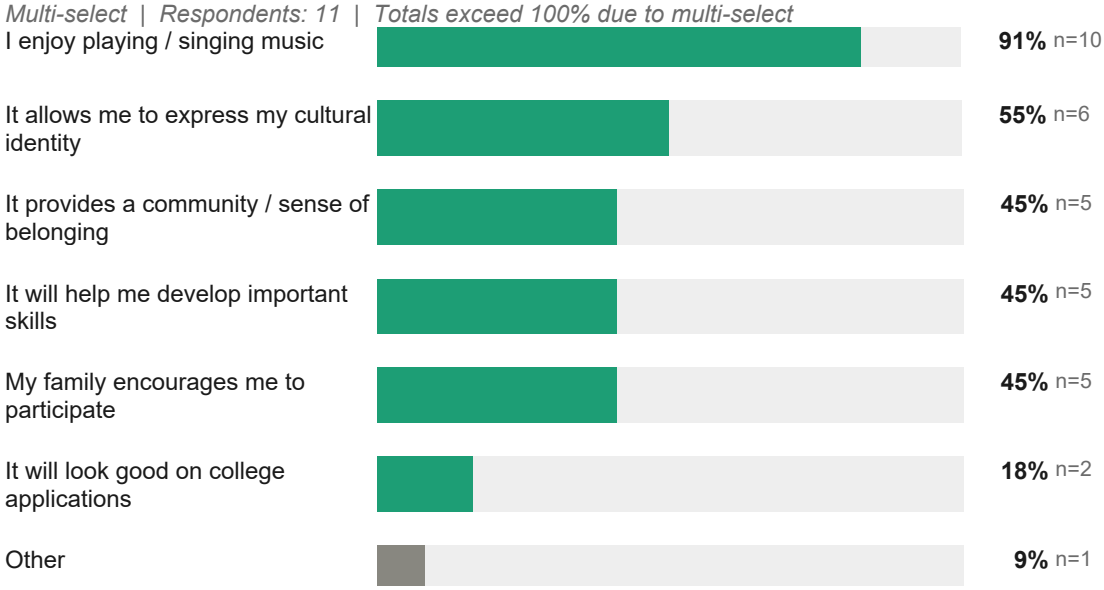
Neither agree nor disagree — 100% (n=1)

SECTION 5 — CURRENT PARTICIPANTS ONLY (ROUTED FROM Q5 'YES')

The following questions (Q13–Q18) were presented only to the 11–13 participants who answered 'Yes' to Q5.

Q13 Which of the following best describes why you do participate in a school music class? (Select all that apply.)

Multi-select | Respondents: 11 | Totals exceed 100% due to multi-select



The open-text 'Other' field was available; the response has been omitted to protect anonymity.

Q14 "My school's music classes reflect and celebrate Latino/Hispanic culture and identity." — To what extent do you agree?

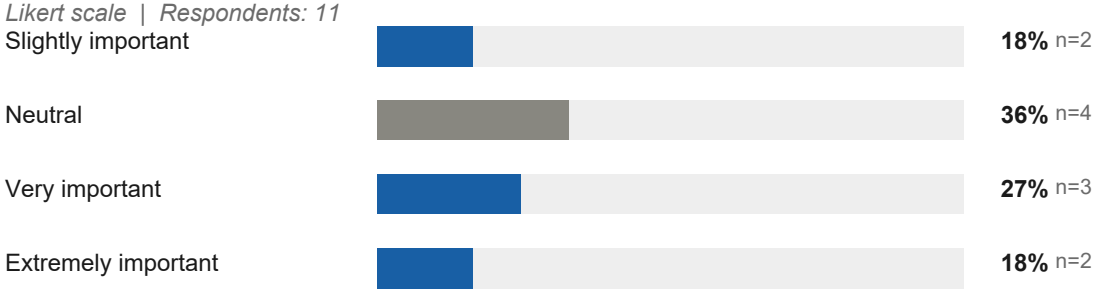
Likert scale | Respondents: 11



All 11 active participants agreed at some level. No neutral or disagreement responses were recorded.

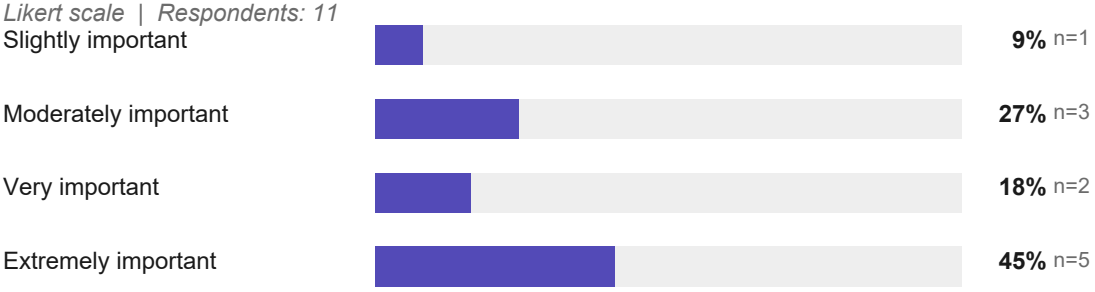
Q15 How important is it that your school's music classes include Latino/Hispanic musical traditions and styles (e.g., mariachi, salsa, merengue, norteño)?

Likert scale | Respondents: 11



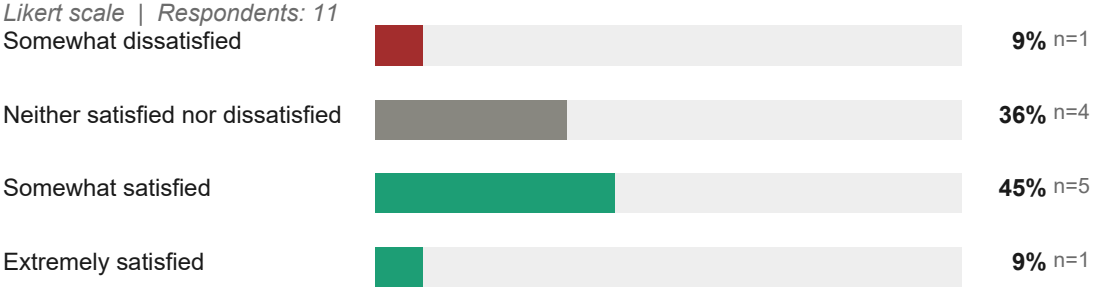
Q16 How important is music as part of your cultural identity and heritage?

Likert scale | Respondents: 11



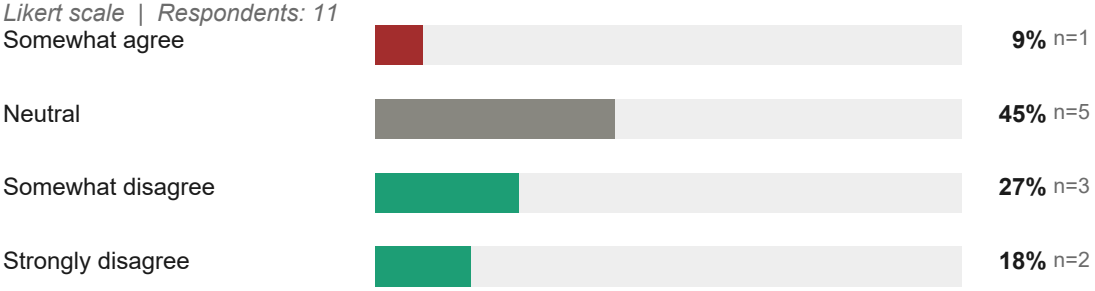
Q17 How satisfied are you with the level of support and resources your school provides for Hispanic/Latino students in the music program?

Likert scale | Respondents: 11



Q18 "It is harder for me to be involved in school music because I'm Hispanic/Latino." — To what extent do you agree?

Likert scale | Respondents: 11



SECTION 6 — OPEN-ENDED AND RAFFLE (ALL RESPONDENTS)

Q21 Is there anything else you would like us to know that we have NOT asked about?

Open text | Respondents: 3 of 22 provided a response

All three responses were variations of "No." No additional themes emerged.

Q22 In order to qualify for the ukulele drawing, please give us your name and email here.

Open text — raffle entry | Respondents: approximately 9 of 22

Names and email addresses have been removed to protect participant anonymity. Per the consent/assent documents, this information was to be used solely for raffle purposes and then deleted.