

Perceptions of the Directors: The Effects of Academic Remedial Programs on NYS Music Programs

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Research Summary and Position Paper

Research Summary

A total of one hundred thirty (130) NYS music administrators or lead teachers completed a survey in the fall of 2007. The music directors issued their perceptions on the effect of academic remediation scheduling on their music programs. Respondents answered eight multiple choice questions and offered detailed responses to two open-ended questions. The survey results are enclosed with this summary.

The results indicate that students are being denied access to partake in classroom music instruction and ensemble performance opportunities. This phenomenon seems to result from students scheduled for remedial instruction during music instructional sessions. In many cases, it seems that school schedules are not long or extensive enough to include both regular and remedial instruction without precluding student opportunities in one or more areas.

The music administrators indicated that many remedial students are not scheduled for instrument, choral and classroom classes. Others are pulled out of class on an occasional or regular basis for remediation. Alarming, only five percent of respondents indicated that district response to "AIS" and "No Child Left Behind" had "no effect" on their music program with over fifteen percent expressing the effect of remediation to be "severe." Over three quarters of all respondents indicated the effect to be between "minimal to moderate" (44.2%) or a "moderate to large" (34.9%) effect.

The directors further indicated that the negative effect of remediation was greatest on the Middle School level (7.6 "no effect"/11.9 "severe effect") followed by Elementary (12.1% "no effect"/7.8% "severe effect") and High School (18.3% "no effect"/5.2 "severe effect"). Again, over three in four respondents described the effect of remediation to be between "minimal and large" specifically related to each (elementary, middle, high school) levels.

Conclusion

It seems that the remedial demands of the Federal "No Child Left Behind" legislation and the NYS Academic Intervention Services (AIS) has caused an inadvertent conflict with many students enrolling in, or successful completing music classes. While the current study does not indicate empirical results culled from a scientific sample, it does provide a current snapshot of problems and conflicts perceived by 130 music education curriculum specialists in New York State. The results suggest a need for further attention, study and action in this area.

New York State Council of Administrators of Music Education (NYSCAME) Research Results Positions

1. All students --in elementary through high school levels -- are entitled to a comprehensive music education in accord with the NYS Education Department regulations, NYS Standards and their own personal interests.
2. Children in need of “AIS” and other remedial services should not be denied access to music instruction and opportunities that are available to other students who do not require remediation.
3. NYSCAME is a committed organizational partner in assisting schools with the Federal and State demands for academic improvement. It should be recognized that music education is a valuable vehicle within the areas of differentiated instruction, cooperative learning, team work, social/emotional learning and as an associated curricular area to math and reading development.

NYSCAME Recommendations

1. NYSCAME wishes to to work closely with the NYS Education Department, NYSSMA, NYSEA and other agencies in studying and developing scheduling patterns that maximize student participation in music classes and ensemble rehearsals.
2. NYSCAME requests a greater level of SED monitoring of school district compliance in the areas of music education course offerings, student scheduling and mandated credits on each level. For example, “Compact for Learning” contracts in low achieving districts should require proof of continued compliance in mandated areas in addition toward showing remediation offerings,
3. NYSCAME encourages school districts to develop new and creative scheduling approaches that allow all students access to both a comprehensive music education and needed academic remediation.

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