

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT NEEDS, CHALLENGES, AND BARRIERS OF OHIO MUSIC EDUCATORS

William I. Bauer
Case Western Reserve University
william.bauer@case.edu

Jere Forsythe
The Ohio State University
forsythe.1@osu.edu

Daryl Kinney
The Ohio State University
kinney.61@osu.edu

The purpose of this study was to investigate the professional development practices and needs of Ohio music teachers in order to gain insight on the types of professional development activities they desired, as well as to identify challenges and barriers that they faced when participating in professional development opportunities. Following discussions by the Executive Committee of the Ohio Society for Music Teacher Education, a sub-group of three researchers developed an online survey to collect data related to: (a) demographics, (b) graduate study as professional development, (c) the perceived value of types of non-degree professional development (music/music education specific and non-music) in which teachers had been engaged, (d) motivation for pursuing professional development, and (e) delivery systems for/approaches to professional development. During spring 2007, all members of the Ohio Music Education Association (OMEA) were contacted through direct email, communications from the OMEA district and region officers, and notices placed in the state MEA journal, and encouraged to complete the survey. In addition, teachers were requested to seek out colleagues who were not members of OMEA and ask them to also complete the survey.

A total of 829 teachers (61% female, 39% male), who taught at all grade levels (K-12) and had been teaching between 1 – 40 years, completed the survey. The participants, the vast majority who were OMEA members (93%), taught in urban (25%), suburban (46%), and rural (30%) settings; and in public (90%) and private (10%) schools. Sixty-nine percent of the participants indicated they had, or were pursuing, a masters degree. The top factors cited for obtaining a masters degree were (all means reported are based on a 4-point Likert-type scale): (a) personal satisfaction ($M = 3.63$), (b) become a better teacher ($M = 3.60$), and (c) increase salary ($M = 3.51$). Only 5% of the participants had or were pursuing a doctorate.

Fifty-three percent of the teachers reported being required by their school district to participate in an average of 3 or more days of *non-music/music education* professional development per year, while 39% indicated they received 3 or more days for *music/music education* professional development each year. The teachers' top reasons for pursuing professional development were to (a) become better teachers ($M = 3.81$), (b) improve musicianship ($M = 3.27$), and (c) maintain their teaching license ($M = 2.90$). The professional development topics of most interest to them

were: (a) rehearsal techniques ($M = 3.29$), (b) music technology ($M = 3.14$) and music literature ($M = 3.14$), and (c) classroom management ($M = 3.01$). The approaches to professional development preferred by these teachers included: (a) professional music conferences ($M = 3.71$), (b) music inservices held in the teachers' school districts ($M = 3.25$), and (c) summer workshops (intensive 3-5 days long) ($M = 3.09$). Least popular approaches were: (a) non-music inservices held in teachers' school districts ($M = 1.75$), (b) distance learning (not Internet-based) ($M = 1.85$), and (c) online courses ($M = 2.45$). Additional results and their implications will be presented and discussed.