

## INFLUENCES ON CAREER CHOICE AMONG MUSIC EDUCATION AUDITION CANDIDATES: A PILOT STUDY

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This research is the result of the ongoing work of the Teacher Recruitment action group (ASPA) of the Society for Music Teacher Education, originally formed at the 2005 Symposium on Music Teacher Education. The purpose of this pilot study was to survey prospective undergraduate music education majors to learn what motivated them to aspire to a career in music education. A large body of writing highlighting the necessity of recruiting additional qualified music teachers indicated the need for this research. Previous research has consistently found that the majority of both preservice and inservice teachers point to a school music teacher and/or private lesson teacher as the single most influential factor in the decision to major in music education (Bergee, 1992; Bergee et al., 2001; Bergee & Demorest, 2003; Bright, 2005; Cox, 1994; Cutietta & Hamann, 1996; Gillespie & Hamann, 1999; Hamann & Walker, 1993; Madsen & Kelly, 2002; White, 1967). Past experiences in music and opportunities to teach others have also emerged as factors contributing to this decision (Bright, 2005; Jones, 1964).

While revealing important influences and experiences along the path to becoming a music teacher, the majority of research on music teacher recruitment to date has been conducted with current college students in the process of preparing to be music educators. This study therefore focused on gathering data from music students at an earlier stage prior to college entrance, when they are still making the choices that lead to initiating their experience as college music

education majors. Respondents in this study were candidates auditioning, but not yet accepted, for music teacher preparation programs at four institutions of higher learning ( $N = 228$ ).

This study sought to identify influences and quantify the types of experiences participants had in teaching roles at the time of their college audition. Findings corroborate prior research that suggests that school music teachers and/or private lesson teachers are highly influential. Private lesson teachers in particular emerged as an area for further study, given that many respondents also cited experience as private instructors and a desire for future work in that capacity. Findings also indicate that many respondents had experiences in teaching roles, although the nature and frequency of these experiences varied widely. In light of other research suggesting that music teaching experiences may further students' interest in a music teaching career, results from this study suggest expanding the availability of teaching experiences for pre-collegiate music students. Other recommendations include engaging music educators at all PK-12 levels in actively recruiting and encouraging future teachers; partnering with private instructors and performance majors by providing information on teacher recruitment; emphasizing earlier identification and preparation of prospective educators; and, refining and continuing the work begun in the pilot study, in part by engaging broad cooperation among music teacher educators for future data collection.