SCHOOL OF MUSIC

DISCRIMINATION AND ISOLATION EXPERIENCED BY FEMALE HIGH SCHOOL BAND DIRECTORS

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SPRING 2018

A thesis
submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements
for a baccalaureate degree in Music Education
with honors in Music Education

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ABSTRACT

In teaching high school band, men outnumber women 3 to 1 (Schoelesser, 2002). The purpose of this study is to investigate the discrimination and isolation experiences of female high school band directors, with further consideration of the regions in which they have resided or taught. Associated research questions include how gender stereotypes in instrument selection may impact high school band directing careers and different motivations for becoming a high school band director.

This research was gathered through a Google Forms survey distributed by email to Sigma Alpha Iota alumnae chapters and through two Facebook posts on band director pages, as well as nine phone interviews drawn from interested participants of the survey. There were 688 valid responses to the survey and 138 of those participants expressed interest in an interview.

There was no noted discrepancy in discrimination and isolation experiences by region, including regions where participants attended high school and college nor regions where participants taught or are currently teaching. The interviews support the conclusion that women high school band directors’ discrimination experiences are uniform across all regions of the United States (and internationally). However, most of the discrimination comes from the band community (other professionals in area, school district, etc.), rather than from students, parents or administration.
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis, much like my college degree, was only achieved thanks to the help of a whole team of people who supported me.

Many thanks are due to Dr. Linda Thornton, who advised me both on this thesis and on any and every question I could come up with to ask her throughout my four years at Penn State. I could not have asked for a better advisor. I am also very thankful for my reader and emphasis professor, Dr. Darrin Thornton, for his guidance and advice. Lastly, I am grateful to Dr. Naomi Seidman, Professor Dennis Glocke, Dr. Eric Bush and Professor Gregory Drane for their support and mentoring throughout my time at Penn State.

I stand on the shoulders of giants, and interviewing each of the incredible band directors for this thesis was an enlightening and empowering experience for me. I will always be thankful for the hundreds of awesome female band directors who took time to respond to my survey. Of course, almost the entirety of my inspiration for both this thesis and for becoming a music educator comes from my amazing high school band director, Tonia Kaufman. I can only hope that I someday have the impact on my future students that she had on me.

Finally, thank you to my support team: my mom, my dad, Ray, John and Rebecca. I will forever be grateful for the unconditional love and support I received and continue to receive from them.
Chapter 1

Introduction

My high school band director was a significant influence on my music education journey. In preparing me to pursue a career in music education, she warned me that teaching high school band was a field dominated by men. She cited examples of emails she had received for marching band competitions addressed to “gentlemen” and how people would address other male staff members as the director before her. This initial exposure to the issue made me aware of possible discrimination against female directors in the high school band community.

Once I got to college, my interest in sexism within the area of teaching high school band was only fed by observing those around me. A lot of my female music education major colleagues played instruments such as the flute, clarinet or oboe, instruments that were not in the jazz band and/or marching band. A lot of my male colleagues played percussion, trumpet or saxophone, instruments that are in both ensembles. Did this mean that the men would have an advantage in acquiring or teaching in a high school band position, because they played an instrument in both ensembles?

Lastly, my interest in investigating potential regional differences came about in talking to other music majors and their experience with their directors. My band director, at least while I was a high school student, was one of the only female band directors in the major metropolitan area where I resided. Talking to the many music majors at Penn State from Pennsylvania, many of them did not have female band directors in high school, some even referring to my band director as “he” in conversation before I corrected them. However, talking to a few music majors
from other states such as Nevada and Texas, female high school band directors seemed to be quite common in their areas. They either had a female high school band director, or knew of one nearby.

These experiences culminated in the purpose of my thesis, which is to investigate discrimination and isolation felt by female high school band directors, with a focus on how these experiences differ in various regions of the country.

**Rationale**

Although 60% of music education graduates are female, only 20% of high school band directors are women. For the most part, the two other major areas of high school music instruction, choir and orchestra, are an even 50/50 split male and female teachers, but for band, the 80% male to 20% female difference is striking (Delzell, 1994).

One reason for this disparity may be gender characterization in instrument selection. Instruments typically labeled as “boy” instruments include the trumpet, low brass and percussion, while the flute, oboe and clarinet are considered “girl” instruments, and the remaining instruments, French horn, bassoon and saxophone, are considered gender neutral (Callahan, Ditloff & Wrape, 2016). The instruments that are typically classified as masculine are found in all of the ensembles that a high school band director would be expected to teach, such as marching band, concert band and jazz band, whereas the typically feminine instruments are only found in one or two of those three ensembles. This may leave many females who play those instruments with less experience in jazz or marching ensembles, which could impact their success in acquiring and keeping a high school level band job.
Another possible reason for the gender disparity in high school band directing is that having a high school band position could conflict with women’s family goals. A qualitative study of fifteen female band directors with families found that, while the band directors are generally happy with their lives, they wish that they had more time with their kids (Wilson, 2014). Some female band directors who wish to have families may choose to go with a less time-demanding position, preventing them from entering the high school band directing field.

The band director “persona” is often seen as characteristically masculine, and this can impact a female’s hiring or success as a high school band director. In a research study with women band directors and how expectations of masculinity impact their career, it was found that the sample of band directors was aware of the typically masculine expectations for high school band directors. They either adapt to or go against these expectations (Sears, 2014). This masculine expectation can either deter females from entering the field, or make it difficult for them to acquire and keep a high school band directing job.

Historical precedent may also work against women looking to enter into the high school band directing field. The military tradition of college bands, and the ban of women from participating in college bands because of this tradition, has kept women from gaining experience with bands (Jackson, 1996). A prime example of this is Ohio State’s band, which did not allow women to march until 1973 (Morrison, 2013). Because women have not been allowed to participate in band activities such as marching band, concert band or jazz band, they have been behind men in terms of experience in ensembles that they may be required to teach. Although women are now given full access to these ensembles, females are essentially playing “catch-up” with the men who have had decades more experience of participating in those ensembles. The historical precedent of female exclusion was not only limited to ensemble membership but
ensemble leadership, which contributes to the more masculine stereotype of those who conduct the bands, as well.

While the above studies have provided valuable information regarding issues of gender and high school band directors, I found no research on my own question as to the relationship of discrimination and isolation felt by female high school band directors and the region of the country that they hailed from. The few studies I found specifically concentrating on female high school band directors (Wilson, 2014; Sears, 2014) focused on a specific state or area of the country, and addressed a different viewpoint entirely. I felt that this was a noticeable gap in the available literature on women in high school band directing.
Chapter 2

Literature Review

Introduction

Among studies of women high school band directors, four major subtopics stand out. There are several articles on sexism in music education in general, and also how sexism in the field of music. There are many articles on gender stereotypes in instrument selection, which could have an impact on high school band directors; commonly “masculine” instruments are in jazz band and marching band, whereas “feminine” instruments may not be, therefore impacting whether or not a female playing a “feminine” instrument is hired for a position. There are a few articles about band directors in general that I believe could apply to my topic, that have to do with band director health, motivations for teaching and common stressors among band directors. And lastly, there were some articles on the specific topic of female high school band directors. None of them specifically focused on the area that I am researching (regional differences) but some of them focus on specific topics, such as motherhood, or historically significant female band directors.
Sexism in Music Education

Harrassowitz (2004)

This is an expert opinion article written by two college professors about a seminar-style class they taught on women throughout music history, in the western, popular and world music traditions. The instructors deemed it important for students to understand that women have been present throughout music history, and the reasons why women have been traditionally underrepresented in the musicology realm. They also discussed how inclusion of female composers and performers from throughout music history could be covered in a K-12 setting, by suggesting various anthologies and resources of women throughout music history that could encourage ensemble directors to select repertoire written by women or general music teachers to include these women in their curriculum.

Howe (1998)

This is another historical study, taking the perspective of deconstructing the history of music education as it is known and framing it from the feminist point of view. Howe discusses why past historical study of music education has been male-centric, and compares and contrasts the study of music education with that of music history, art history and various other histories. She contended that because of many factors, the written history of music education, as well as many other branches of history, is largely male-centric. However, women were huge contributors to the development of music education.
**Howe (2001)**

In this historical study of women in music education, Howe discussed many different facets of the female music educator experience. The main focus was to highlight the often-neglected history of women in music education. The author relayed how women were educated in the late nineteenth century, the different professional organizations in which women have historically been involved and the history of band and how this impacts women in band. Many marching bands admitted women leading up to and during World War II, but did not allow women again until the 1970s. Although women have been involved in music education from the very beginning, they are not considered to be the large influences in its development like they, in reality, were.

**Lamb (1996)**

This is a philosophy-based work that discussed feminist discourse and its place in music education, as well as philosophical problems between music education and feminism. An interesting argument made is that music exists in a transcendental plane where culture’s “grimier” aspects, such as discrimination, sexism and racism, are not relevant. All that is relevant is the music being played. Because of music education’s focus on music, a medium in which sexism does not exist, this could account for the topic of sexism in music education going largely unaddressed for decades.
Pucciani (1983)

Pucciani surveyed all of the literature examining sexism in music education between the years 1972 and 1982. The purpose was to analyze and synthesize all of the major research and writing published on this topic in the past decade and to draw general conclusions considering all of the sources. Many different perspectives were covered, including appropriateness of songs that promote sexism in the general music context, instrument gender stereotyping and perpetuating gender roles. One of the conclusions drawn is that music educators think far less about sexism than many of the other teaching areas, such as English, math, science or social studies education. Also, in these fields, females are almost always at a disadvantage, whereas the sexism in music education is double sided (men cannot play violin or flute, women cannot play trombone or drums).

Summary

Throughout music history, although women have been present, they have been largely ignored in musicology (Harrassowitz, 2004). This is the same for music education. Women were around from the very development of music education, serving as teachers from the beginning, but in the overall, written history of music education, they are not as acknowledged (Howe, 2001). The history of music education, as well as many other histories (including music history), is male centric (Howe, 1998). Although sexism in music education has existed for a while, the lack of discussion on the topic may be explained by the “transcendental” properties of music, which exists in a vacuum away from the “griminess” of the real world (Lamb, 1996).
Callahan, Dittloff & Wrape (2016)

The purpose of this survey was to take a multi-faceted and detailed approach to observing gender stereotypes in middle school students. A survey was taken of sixth, seventh and eighth graders, asking them to simple mark instruments as “boy or “girl” and not on a continuum (which has been done in the past, but might have been too complicated for students to understand). It was found that flute, clarinet and oboe and labeled clearly as “girl” instruments, bassoon and saxophone are split, and brass and percussion are “boy” instruments. Girls were more likely to label against the stereotype, as were students who are newer to band or younger.

Cavitt (2012)

The purpose of this study was to survey students who are looking to choose or be assigned their first instrument in the fifth of sixth grade. A survey was distributed to parents and students before they selected an instrument at the school’s instrument drive. It was found that the main influence over students’ selections of instruments was the sound characteristics of the instrument and perceived ability level of the student. It appeared that parents have little to no influence over this decision. In this specific school, it appeared that most students did not follow gender stereotypes.
Porter & Abeles (1978)

This study was an analysis of existing research on gender stereotyping in instruments as well as an expert opinion article with suggestions for practices to negate the effects of sexism in instrument selection. It is considered the cornerstone on research on this topic. The position was that sexism is alive and well in music education, especially regarding instrument selection and stereotyping. Certain instruments were considered feminine, masculine or neutral. Parents, through a study, have shown that they prefer their daughter or son sticking with instrument selections based on those stereotypes. The article ends with suggestions for teachers to help eliminate gender stereotypes from the instrument selection process in elementary school.

Tanur & Zervoudakes (1994)

The purpose of this study was to determine how true the gender stereotypes associated with instruments are, and what the trends over time have been. The researchers sent out surveys to elementary schools, high schools and colleges asking for past programs for orchestra and band programs, specifically from the 1970s through the 1990s. They then coded each program looking for specific male and female names. The study established flute, violin and clarinet “feminine”, cello and saxophone neutral, and percussion, trombone, trumpet tuba and string bass “masculine”. This study concluded that more women are playing masculine instrument than in decades earlier, but this could be accounted for more women playing in ensembles overall.
Summary

Through multiple studies (Callahan, Dittloff & Wrape, 2016; Tanur & Zervoudakes, 1995), it is shown that instrument stereotypes definitely exist, categorizing upper woodwinds as feminine and brass and percussion as masculine. However, the perceived diminishing of these stereotypes in the Cavitt study in 2012 and the Callahan, Dittloff & Wrape study in 2016, suggest these views may be evolving. The instruments classified as masculine are more commonly found in marching and jazz ensembles, while seeing feminine instruments in these ensembles is not as common. This may be a factor in the historical lack of female high school band directors.

Ailments, Motivators and Stressors Among All High School Band Directors

Caimi (1981)

The purpose of this study was to identify motivators of high school band directors and how these motivators did or did not correlate with student feedback, position and school statistics, and an adjudication in a rehearsal setting. The population of this study was twenty-two male high school band directors in central Pennsylvania. The author did not find a large amount of conclusive data, just that all of the evaluation types yielded different results and seemed unrelated, and that school population had a large impact on success. In the “further exploration” column it suggested a similar study of female band directors.
Dedrick, Heston & Raschke (1996)

The purpose of this study was to investigate common stressors, factors of satisfaction and coping mechanisms used by high school band directors, from a survey taken with two hundred high school band directors in a Midwestern state. The study found that band directors find their highest satisfaction from their students and their highest stressor from their students. The most used coping mechanism was spousal support.

Woolery & Woolery (2013)

This study specifically looked at band directors from Texas who either taught middle or high school, what ailments they have now and the causes of deaths of band directors that they knew. It also looks at newspapers reporting obituaries of band directors, what age they died and how they died. This study found that a majority of band directors who passed away died between the ages of forty-two and fifty-five, with more than twenty-one years of teaching experience. The most common cause of death was heart-related issues.

Summary

Although these studies did not specifically deal with gender related issues in the high school band directing field, different issues such as health concerns (Woolery & Woolery, 2013) may deter women from entering the field. Articles at the time also show the lack of women in research studies on high school band directing (Caimi, 1981). Also, the fact that spousal support
was the main coping mechanism for band directors may apply to women as well, and is included in this study (Dedrick, Heston & Raschke, 1996).

Women in High School Band Directing

Anderson (2010)

This dissertation looked specifically at the life and influence of Barbara Beuhlman, an extremely successful elementary and middle school band director, band arranger and administrator during the 60s, 70s and 80s. She led her bands to perform at conferences across the country, and to worldwide acclaim. She also served as an administrator for the Mid-West Clinic during a time of explosive growth for the conference. Her method books and arrangements are well received and still in use today. She taught band when a lot of women were not teaching band, and this was noted by many. She is seen as the major pioneer in female band directing.

Delzell (1993-1994)

This is a literature and survey review on the information on high school and college band director female to male percentage statistics, and it used past research to conclude why gender bias exists. It was found that although 60% of music education graduates are women, only about an average of 20% of band directors are female. The author concluded that this is caused by both hiring bias and certain disadvantages female music education students encounter. Hiring bias could be caused by principals and other administrators not believing that women would be
interested in sporting events (which marching bands attend), men would be better at classroom management, and so on. Disadvantages that women music education students encounter is lack of strong college level role models in directors of bands and/or playing instruments that are not included marching or jazz ensembles.

**Fitzpatrick (2013)**

This is a case study of a female band director from a Midwestern state who has three children under the age of six and ran her high school’s marching and concert bands. The author followed her for twenty-one months, gathering data through three interviews, an observation and twenty-seven blog posts. The purpose was to observe how and how well she kept a balance between her home and work lives. Fitzpatrick found that she often finds it difficult to balance her home and work lives, but having a supportive spouse, an administration that worked with her to create an 80% part-time position, and delegation of power helped her to achieve this balance.

**Jackson (1996)**

This dissertation involved the imbalance between numbers of men and women college band directors. The author interviewed twelve female college band directors about their experiences, as well as what motivated them to take this role. Mentor/mentee relationships were also discussed, and if they felt that the field was being leveled in terms of gender. The study found that, although there were many more male college band directors, this can be explained by the military tradition of college bands, and how colleges are slowly moving away from the
impact of that. Older female college directors had been exposed to overt discrimination, while younger directors had only experienced subtle discrimination.

Schloesser (2002)

This report stated statistics on women in high school band directing. Men outnumber women in this field 3 to 1. It also theorized, using experts’ opinions, why this might be. Possible reasons included the amount of time spent in this position could prevent female band directors from having a home life, lack of a mentor female band director either as a student or teacher, and many other reasons. It made the point that there was also a disparity of males in early childhood and elementary music education, which is a female dominated field.

Wilson (2014)

This was a qualitative study of fifteen female high school band directors who are also mothers, and what they found challenging and great about balancing both of those roles. The author asked about specific aspects of being a band director/mom, and reported general trends as well as specific examples from the answers provided. It was found that most women in this position were generally happy, but wish that they had more time with their kids and for themselves, and feel that they are often discriminated against.
Summary

Although there are glimmers of hope in the world of female band directing, such as Barbara Buehlman (Anderson, 2010), the college band directing world looks particularly bleak for females, partly due to tradition (Jackson, 1996). It is clear that lack of time to have a home life is a major obstacle in this field, as well as possible hiring bias (Delzell, 1993-1994; Fitzpatrick, 2013; Schloesser, 2002; Wilson, 2014). The literature makes it evident that there is definitely a disparity in the number of female high school band directors when compared to men.
Chapter 3

Methodology

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to discern differences in female high school band director’s experiences in discrimination and isolation looking specifically at regional differences (based on the NAfME regions).

The research questions were:

1. What experiences have women high school band directors encountered relating to discrimination and isolation, and what obstacles have they faced?
2. Do their perceptions of acceptance by the band and school community differ from region to region?
3. Did instrument choice influence their career?
4. What were their motivations for going into high school band directing, and did they have a mentor or role model who inspired them?
5. Does the region(s) that they either grew up in, went to college in or currently teach differ, and how does this impact how discriminated against or isolated they feel?
Participants

The target survey population was women who are currently teaching or have taught high school band. I did not have any other limits besides this, because I wanted to reach as many female high school band directors as I could.

The original survey population was generated by a snowball sampling. I am a member of Sigma Alpha Iota, a professional music fraternity, whose membership is mostly female. Most colleges and universities with large music programs have SAI chapters, so it was reasonable to believe that former music education majors, as well as current music educators and band directors, would have joined when they were in college. SAI also has many active alumnae chapters. I used the website (sai-national.org) to locate contact information for each of the alumnae chapters, which are organized by region and then by closest major city. I sent an email to the president of the alumnae chapter, and then asked her to forward the email to her membership. This created a snowball effect, with alumnae members taking the survey themselves and/or forwarding it to female high school band directors they knew.

Meanwhile, I also emailed my former high school band director a link to my survey, because she had expressed past interest in the study. I then asked her to forward the survey to any other female band directors she knew. She then proceeded to post it on two band director Facebook pages, of which I am not a member. Therefore, the participant pool in my survey is a combination of participants from the emails I sent out to Sigma Alpha Iota chapters and from the post on the two band director Facebook pages.
Survey and Interview Design

I designed an electronic survey based on my research questions and what I had learned from the literature in women in high school band directing. The survey had six sections. The first section of the survey contained consent information. It then asked if they identify as female and if they were currently or once employed as a high school band director; if their answers were no to either question then they were directed out of the survey.

The second section requested background information, including education focus. I asked questions about the regions where they attended high school, college and advanced degrees. I also asked if they had a female high school band, college band, college marching band or jazz studies teacher. Further, I asked if they had female advisors and music education professors in college, since one possible reason for the disparity in numbers of female high school band directors is a lack of female role models (Delzell, 1993-1994). Based on my research on gender stereotyping in instrument selection, I also asked them for their primary, secondary and any additional instruments that they played, as well as in which ensembles they participated at the high school and college level. This was to see if the “feminine” and “masculine” instrument stereotypes influence ensemble participation, and to see if the numbers reflect the stereotype (Tanur & Zervoudakes, 1994; Porter & Abeles, 1973; Callahan, Dittloff & Wrape, 2016; Cavitt, 2012).

The third section focused on motivations for becoming a high school band director. I asked when they knew they wanted to become a high school band director, and their main sources of inspiration. I then asked about their specific inspirations. The final three questions inquired about female influences on entering the field, again addressing the possible effect that a role model, or lack thereof, can have on a woman entering the field (Delzell, 1993-1994).
Background information in post-education was the focus of the fourth section. I asked questions about positions they had in addition to their current or former high school band directing position, as long as how they had that position and in what region it was located. I then asked for the same information about any positions that they have had since, and the same information on their position as a high school band director. I also asked what responsibilities they had in addition to teaching high school band.

The focus of the fifth section was discrimination and isolation experiences. I asked the participants about the other women music education majors they went to college with and if there were others who wanted to teach high school band. I inquired about the other female high school music teachers in their building. This thinking stemmed from the literature stating that there was a higher percentage of female high school choir and orchestra directors than female high school band directors (Delzell 1993-1994). I asked if they know of other female high school band directors within a thirty-minute radius, and if they encounter other female band directors at competitions, football games, honor bands and/or adjudications. I asked the participants if they feel discriminated against in the band community (nearby bands, state MEA and honor bands) and by band organizations (State MEA organization, jazz/marching/indoor circuits). I also included questions about how often issues would not be prevalent if they were a man. Many of these issues come from the pressure of the masculine identity, often causing problems for female band directors that would typically not happen if they were men (Sears, 2014). I asked if they felt discriminated against during the interview process for their job, which has been brought up as a possible barrier to women being hired for a high school band job (Delzell, 1993-1994). Lastly, I asked about their spouses, if they are musicians, and if they were supportive of the high school band director lifestyle, as this is supported by research that found
spousal support is the main coping mechanism for high school band directors (Dedrick, Heston & Raschke, 1996).

The final section was for the optional interview portion of my study. In addition to having quantitative data from my survey, I also wanted to include some qualitative aspects as well. The link was provided at the end of the survey that would take the participant to a different Google Form, which would ask for their email and/or phone number if they were interested. This way, I could not identify their survey data by their email.

**Procedures**

_Pilot Study_

After I completed the rough draft of my survey, I sent it out to three female middle school band directors local to Penn State and asked for feedback. I only received positive feedback, so I moved forward with sending out my survey to my main group.

_Main Study_

For my main study, the first emails to SAI alumnae chapter presidents were sent out on July 5th, 2017. The email to my band director, from which she posted to the two band director Facebook pages, was sent on July 8th, 2017. The survey was open between July 1st, 2017 and October 10th, 2017.

I received 138 responses of interest in interviews. I chose the first thirty responses, and sent out emails with a link to an additional survey for scheduling these interviews based on my
availability. I received nine responses to this email. I conducted nine interviews between October 1st, 2017 and October 22nd, 2017. These interviews were all conducted over the phone, and recorded by the “Tape a Call” iPhone application. I contacted those who expressed interest in my interview forms by email only, since that was simpler than phone, and sent them an email (Appendix X) asking for their participation, and for them to fill out an interview scheduling form (Appendix Y). They were informed that they were being recorded at the beginning of the phone call.

**Data Analysis**

To analyze the data, I downloaded the information from Google Forms onto an Excel spreadsheet and then organized the data to help answer my research questions. One of the participants answered “no” to the question if she had been or currently was a high school band director, so I eliminated her responses from the data set. I transcribed the phone interviews for easier organization and recall.
Response Counts

Between July 5th and October 10th, 2017, I received 688 responses to the survey and 138 responses to the interview interest form. There is no way to know the response rate, due to the snowball sampling procedure; therefore the total number of subjects reached would be impossible to calculate. For the analysis purposes, n=688 I interviewed nine subjects, who will be known under pseudonyms (Linda, Becky, Amanda, Kathleen, Jessica, Rachel, Veronica, Dana and Maria). Not all participants responded to every question, so response totals vary among the questions.

Research Question One

What experiences have women high school band directors encountered relating to discrimination and isolation, and what obstacles have they faced?

A question on the survey asked about how often subjects experienced issues that they feel would not be prevalent if they were men, giving the examples of being disrespected, questioned, etc. They were given the options of never, rarely, sometimes, often and always. Table 1 shows the results from this question.
Table 1: How Often Participants Feel That They Experience Issues That Would Not be Prevalent if They Were a Man

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Percentage of Participants (n=688)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>5.09% (35)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>15.11% (104)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>35.61% (245)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often</td>
<td>39.24% (270)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Always</td>
<td>4.94% (34)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Three questions addressed some specific examples of types of discrimination they might have encountered. One question asked how discriminated against the responders felt during the interview process for their job. This was on a one to five scale, with one being not discriminated against and five being very discriminated against. The average response (n=688) was 1.74. Using the same response scale, another question asked if they felt discriminated against by band organizations, such as competitive circuits or state-related music educators associations. The average response (n=688) was 2.67. In a similar format, I asked, on a scale of one to five, how discriminated they felt in the band community because they are a woman. I gave the examples of “band community” as surrounding/neighbor schools, state music educator associations and honor bands. The average response (n=688) was 3.13. This was the highest average response among the three questions.

In relation to isolation, a number of questions were posed on how often the participants encounter other female band directors. One of the questions asked how often they encountered other female band directors at adjudications. This data are presented in Table 2.
Table 2: How Often Participants Encounter Other Female Band Directors at Adjudications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Percentage of Participants (n=688)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>4.80% (33)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>23.69% (163)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than half of the time</td>
<td>19.91% (137)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Half of the time</td>
<td>9.45% (65)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than half of the time</td>
<td>13.08% (90)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often</td>
<td>11.91% (82)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Always</td>
<td>8.57% (59)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My band doesn’t attend adjudications</td>
<td>8.28% (57)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>0.29% (2)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Almost identical to the above question, another question asked how often participants encounter other female band directors at honor bands. I gave the examples of state music educator association bands, region honors band, etc. The results are shown in Table 3.

Table 3: How Often Participants Encounter Other Female Band Directors at Honor Bands

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Percentage of Participants (n=688)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>0.58% (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>14.10% (97)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than half of the time</td>
<td>22.09% (152)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Half of the time</td>
<td>12.50% (86)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than half of the time</td>
<td>5.38% (37)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often</td>
<td>14.10% (97)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Always</td>
<td>26.16% (180)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do not go to an honor band</td>
<td>4.94% (34)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>0.01% (1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Again, in the same trend as the past two questions, the next question asked how often participants encounter other female band directors at events such as jazz and marching band competitions and football games. The results are found in Table 4.
Table 4: How Often Participants Encounter Other Female Band Directors at Marching/Jazz Band Competitions and/or Football Games

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Percentage of Participants (n=688)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>8.72% (6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>24.27% (167)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than half of the time</td>
<td>24.13% (166)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Half of the time</td>
<td>9.30% (64)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than half of the time</td>
<td>13.52% (93)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often</td>
<td>10.31% (71)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Always</td>
<td>10.47% (72)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My marching band/jazz band does not compete, and my marching band does not attend football games</td>
<td>6.83% (47)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>0.29% (2)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The final isolation question simply asked: do you know of any other female high school band directors within a thirty-minute radius? Out of 688 participants, 91 (13.25%) answered no and 597 (86.77%) answered yes.

Throughout all of the interviews conducted, discrimination came up frequently. The first participant, Linda, told of extensive discrimination she experienced from the other band teachers in her school district, and the former band director who had her position. In fact, it was very common for interview participants to name other band directors, whether in their school district or in the same marching band circuit, as being perpetrators of discrimination. Linda and Amanda both stated that they feel that the band community is very much a “boy’s club” whereas their band parents and administration were very receptive of them. Veronica related how she would go to band competitions and other directors would only acknowledge her male head band director and pretend like she did not exist, even though she had met them previously. Jessica shared this experience:
early on, with my concert band, going to what we call ‘contests’, I think they’re called ‘music adjudication performances’ in PA, or whatever you want to call it… I felt for a very long time that my bands weren’t judged on the same scale because I was female, and I was the only female high school director anywhere around. It took me eleven years to get a group to get a superior. And once we broke that barrier… I mean, I’ve had bands that I would have never thought would get superiors get superior. But part of that was just people getting to know me, and it’s kind of a good old boys thing going on in our state, and I’ve always felt that.

One interviewee, Rachel, told this story about a job she applied for:

The first one that comes to mind was right after I graduated for college I was applying for a position, and it was an assistant director at the middle and high school level and I knew the high school director well, and the high school director’s wife, who was also a band director. So this was another female band director, she was a middle school director, one of a few female band directors in the area at the time, and her statement to her spouse was that I should not get hired because I would just leave to go get pregnant and have babies… And they would be hiring again in a couple of years. And I did not get that job… a good friend of mine who had more teaching experience did, and you know, for very good reasons, highly qualified, et cetera, et cetera, but yeah, that stuck especially as something that was coming from another woman. I kind of expected better.

Another interviewee, Maria, shared that she has been asked at every interview if she has color guard experience, which she believed was not a question for her male colleagues. Becky shared that her athletic director treated her differently than her male head band director, even though Becky had worked in the district for a long time.
Although all nine interviewees said that the band director population around them is predominantly male, a few of them had very encouraging words about their views on the female high school band director community. Kathleen and Dana both shared how they are part of a strong community of female band directors, and have been mentored and/or mentor other females in the field that teach close to them. The most common answer was that the interviewees have heard of one or a few other female band directors in the area that they see at band events, but they are not in touch or constant communication with them. All interviewees shared that most of the band directors in their area were men, one (Veronica) even saying that 98% of band directors [in her area] were men.

While the discrimination scores were fairly low on the 1 to 5 scale, 79.8% of participants surveyed said that they faced issues that they likely would not have faced if they were men at least sometimes or higher. However, discrimination came up very often in the interview conversations, and seemed to be an issue that the interviewees connected with. In relation to isolation, the results were fairly scattered. Most interviewees said that they knew or knew of a few other female high school band directors in the area, but may not be in regular contact with them.

**Research Question Two**

*Do their perceptions of acceptance by the band and school community differ from region to region?*

To address this research question, I broke down the four main questions pertaining to discrimination into region groups.
The first question is: how much do you feel discriminated against by the local band community? The averages for each region are shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Average Response by Region for Discrimination Felt by Band Community (1 to 5 Scale, 1 Being Not Discriminated Against and 5 Being Very Discriminated Against)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Average Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Region (n=68)</td>
<td>2.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Central (n=212)</td>
<td>2.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northwest (n=26)</td>
<td>2.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern (n=135)</td>
<td>2.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southwestern (n=112)</td>
<td>2.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western (n=125)</td>
<td>3.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (International) (n=10)</td>
<td>2.30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The next question asked: how much do you feel discriminated against for being a woman by state organizations (state MEA organization, marching/jazz circuits)? The responses are summarized in Table 6.

Table 6: Average Response by Region for Discrimination Felt by State Organizations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Average Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eastern (n=68)</td>
<td>2.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Central (n=212)</td>
<td>2.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northwest (n=26)</td>
<td>3.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern (n=135)</td>
<td>2.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southwestern (n=112)</td>
<td>2.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western (n=125)</td>
<td>2.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (International) (n=10)</td>
<td>2.33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The last discrimination question that utilizes a numerical scale is how discriminated against did you feel in your interview process for your job? See Table 7 for the responses to this question.
Table 7: Average Response by Region for Discrimination in the Interview Process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Average Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eastern (n=68)</td>
<td>1.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Central (n=212)</td>
<td>1.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northwest (n=26)</td>
<td>1.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern (n=135)</td>
<td>2.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southwestern (n=112)</td>
<td>1.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western (n=125)</td>
<td>1.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (International) (n=10)</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The next question was how often do you experience issues that you feel would not be prevalent if you were a man (being disrespected, questioned, etc)? For this question, the answers are rated from 1 (never) to 5 (always). The results are reported in Table 8:

Table 8: Regional Averages of How Often Participants Experience Issues They do Not Think Would be Prevalent if They Were Men

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Average Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eastern (n=68)</td>
<td>3.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Central (n=212)</td>
<td>3.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northwest (n=26)</td>
<td>2.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern (n=135)</td>
<td>3.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southwestern (n=112)</td>
<td>3.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western (n=125)</td>
<td>3.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (International) (n=10)</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Compiling all this data, I took the averages of all the averages to come up with a number between one and five for each reason that represents the discrimination felt by participants. This way I could look at all of the factors and questions on discrimination and isolation, and then average them by region:
Table 9: Averages of Tables 5-8, Overall Comparison of Isolation and Discrimination by Region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Average Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eastern (n=68)</td>
<td>2.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Central (n=212)</td>
<td>2.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northwest (n=26)</td>
<td>2.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern (n=135)</td>
<td>2.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southwestern (n=112)</td>
<td>2.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western (n=125)</td>
<td>2.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (International) (n=10)</td>
<td>2.33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Much like the data supports, most of the interviewees did not think that there was that much of a difference between the discrimination they experienced and that occurring in other regions. Becky and Dana thought that their areas were particularly accepting of female band directors, but did not mention their geographical region as part of this answer. Rachel taught in two areas (North Central and Eastern) and she says that she did not really notice a difference between the two areas, but mostly a difference as time passed. Amanda mentioned that her area was not particularly accepting of female band directors, but it sounded like she thought it was like that everywhere. Although the area that she lives in is known for being progressive, Kathleen still experiences discrimination problems. Veronica said that the South, where she teaches, is more male-dominated than other areas, but that from what she can tell it is a pretty male-dominated field everywhere. Noting the abundance of female band directors in her area, Maria connected it to the fact that she teaches in a rural area.

In answering this research question, the numerical data and the interview data support each other. There does not appear to be discernible differences among regions shown in the data, and each interviewee said that they felt like the field was male dominated, but this was not restricted to their area or region.
Research Question Three

Did instrument choice influence their career?

The main question that focused on this research question asked the primary instrument of the participant. All major band and orchestra instruments were listed, as well as voice, piano and other. The results are displayed in Table 10.

Table 10: Primary Instrument Percentages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instrument</th>
<th>Responses (n=688)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Flute</td>
<td>30.52% (183)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarinet</td>
<td>22.38% (154)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French Horn</td>
<td>10.02% (69)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trumpet</td>
<td>8.87% (61)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saxophone</td>
<td>8.43% (58)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trombone</td>
<td>4.50% (31)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bassoon</td>
<td>4.06% (28)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percussion</td>
<td>4.06% (28)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Euphonium/Baritone</td>
<td>3.92% (27)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oboe</td>
<td>3.34% (23)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voice</td>
<td>1.31% (9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Piano</td>
<td>1.16% (8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuba</td>
<td>.73% (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cello</td>
<td>0.15% (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0.15% (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violin</td>
<td>0.15% (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>String Bass</td>
<td>0.15% (1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As can be seen above, two typically “feminine” instruments, clarinet and flute, are leaders by noticeable margins.

Much information relating to instrument choice and impact on career was gleaned from the interviews. In the interviews, we discussed primary instrument and how it related to their careers. Most instrument families were represented, with one clarinet player (Becky), one
trumpet player (Amanda), one percussionist (Kathleen), one trombone player (Jessica) and one flute player (Dana). Both Becky and Dana, although they played typically “feminine” instruments that do not play in ensembles such as jazz or drum corps, did not feel particularly hindered by their instrument choice. Becky does not teach jazz, and she believed that she had adequate marching experience. Dana teaches jazz and said she felt uncomfortable with teaching something that she did not have abundant experience in, but does not think that drum corps experience is necessary to teach marching band.

The three stereotypically “masculine” instrument players, Amanda, Kathleen and Jessica, all had varied opinions on how their instrument impacted their careers. Both Amanda and Kathleen experienced sexism often being the only female playing their instrument, but felt that these negative experiences helped to prepare them for the same environment teaching high school band. Kathleen said that she always had female percussionists who served as role models, similar to how she has a community of female band directors from whom she draws support.

Again, the interviews and the data support each other. As displayed in the table, playing a “feminine” instrument such as flute or clarinet was not an impediment to a large percentage of the participants becoming a high school band director, nor did the interviewees express their instrument as being a hurdle.

Research Question Four

What were their motivations for going into high school band directing, and did they have a mentor or role model who inspired them?

To address this research question, I asked when the participants knew they wanted to be a high school band director. The results are in Table 11:
Table 11: *When Participants Knew That They Wanted to Become a Band Director*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Percentage of Participants (n=688)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Before high school</td>
<td>21.22% (146)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>During high school</td>
<td>58.72% (404)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>During my undergrad</td>
<td>11.92% (82)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After my undergrad</td>
<td>2.76% (19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I did not know that I wanted to become a high school band director</td>
<td>5.52% (38)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I also asked about their inspirations for becoming a high school band director by giving some suggestions (and asking them to check all that apply) and giving an open “other” section. The results are found in Table 12.

Table 12: *Participants’ Inspiration for Becoming a High School Band Director*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Percentage of Participants (n=688)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My high school band director</td>
<td>70.64% (486)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My experiences in my high school’s program</td>
<td>64.39% (443)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past music teachers (elementary, middle school teachers)</td>
<td>45.06% (310)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My experiences studying music privately</td>
<td>27.18% (187)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My experiences in my undergrad</td>
<td>27.18% (187)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A college band director</td>
<td>25.44% (175)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A music education professor</td>
<td>18.60% (128)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My experiences in advanced degrees</td>
<td>6.69% (46)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None of the above</td>
<td>2.62% (18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My family</td>
<td>.58% (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music Camp</td>
<td>.19% (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>10.02% (69)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The next set of questions looks at female role models that the participants may have had. Various questions asked if different teachers in their lives were female. From the table above, it is quite obvious that past teachers have an impact on the participants, whether it is a high school band director, more previous music teacher, college band director or music education professor. A question was posed as to if the participants had a female music teacher (at any level) at some
point before college. 77.47% (583) answered yes and 22.52% (583) answered no. A follow up question asked if this woman had any influence on you going into this field. There were 614 responses to this question (n=614). 53.42% (328) answered yes and 46.58% (286) answered no. The survey questioned if the participants’ high school band directors were female; 24.13% (166) answered yes, and 75.72% (521) answered no (two did not answer). When the same question was asked about if their college band director (for concert band) was female, 10.47% (72) answered yes and 89.68% (617) answered no.

Similar questions were also posed with the positions of college marching band director, college director of jazz studies/jazz band director and college advisor. Another option was given if the participant did not participate in those programs or did not have an advisor, because then these people could not be possible mentors. When asked if their college marching band director was female, 4.51% (31) said yes, 60.76% (418) said no, 31.40% (216) said their college did not have a marching band and 3.20% (22) said that they did not participate in their college’s marching band. When asked if their college director of jazz studies/jazz band director was female, 1.31% (9) said yes, 68.02% (468) said no, .73% (5) said their college did not have a jazz program/jazz band, and 30.09% (207) said that they did not participate in their college’s jazz program. Lastly, when asked the gender of their undergrad college advisor, 36.04% (248) said that theirs was female, 60.61% (417) said that theirs was male and 3.49% (24) did not have a college advisor.

The final survey question relating to female influences asked if there were any additional female influences on participants becoming high school band directors that are not listed already in the survey. There were 402 responses to this question (n=402). The results are below:
Table 13: *Female Influences on Participants Becoming High School Band Directors*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Percentage of Participants (n=402)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female peers who are/were band directors</td>
<td>46.52% (187)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female band directors at other schools</td>
<td>31.59% (127)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female festival conductors</td>
<td>23.63% (95)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female relative(s) who were/are band directors</td>
<td>3.48% (14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None/no female influences</td>
<td>4.48% (18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>1.49% (6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female choir director</td>
<td>0.10% (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>15.17% (61)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Seven of the nine interviewees cited their high school band director or program as the main motivator for wanting to become a high school director. Three of these, (Rachel, Amanda and Becky) had strong female influences who motivated them to go into the field (lecturing music education professor, middle school band director and mother, respectively).

Both the data and the interviews support that high school is a main time when participants were influenced to go into teaching high school band. A decent number of participants had strong female influences that also contributed to their motivation to get into the field.

**Research Question Five**

*Does the region(s) that they either grew up in, went to college in or currently teach differ, and how does this impact how discriminated against they feel?*

For this question, I took the four questions that have to do with discrimination (how discriminated they felt by music organizations, the band community and in their interview process and how often they felt like they encountered issues they would not have to deal with if
they were men), divided the data into regions by high school, college and current job, and found
the average for each. Those three tables are below:

Table 14: *Discrimination Rating Average Based on Region of High School*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region of High School Attended (n=688)</th>
<th>Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eastern (n=93)</td>
<td>2.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Central (n=229)</td>
<td>2.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northwest (n=26)</td>
<td>2.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern (n=126)</td>
<td>2.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southwestern (n=98)</td>
<td>2.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western (n=106)</td>
<td>2.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (International) (n=9)</td>
<td>2.38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 15: *Discrimination Rating Average Based on Region of College*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region of College Attended (n=688)</th>
<th>Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eastern (n=79)</td>
<td>2.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Central (n=238)</td>
<td>2.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northwest (n=23)</td>
<td>2.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern (n=130)</td>
<td>2.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southwestern (n=97)</td>
<td>2.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western (n=106)</td>
<td>2.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (International) (n=5)</td>
<td>2.30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 16: *Discrimination Rating Average Based on Region Teaching/Taught In*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region Teaching/Taught In (n=688)</th>
<th>Average Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eastern (n=68)</td>
<td>2.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Central (n=212)</td>
<td>2.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northwest (n=26)</td>
<td>2.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern (n=135)</td>
<td>2.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southwestern (n=112)</td>
<td>2.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western (n=125)</td>
<td>2.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (International) (n=10)</td>
<td>2.33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Unanimously all of the interviewees say that they saw this coming in high school and college, regardless of if the regions differed at all. They were not terribly surprised by it. Also, all of them said that they do not think their experience is markedly different from female band directors in other regions.

There was not a discernable difference in any of the data sets between the regions, nor did the interviewees report that they thought their experience was much different from band directors in other regions.
Chapter 5

Conclusions

Summary and Discussion

This study surveyed 688 female band directors, nine of whom were interviewed, to understand their opinions on their discrimination and isolation experiences, as well as to gather information on the different regions where they have lived or taught, and basic background information. Participants were recruited through emails sent to Sigma Alpha Iota alumnae chapters, and through two Facebook posts on two band director pages. The survey tool was shared through Google Forms. In addition, the nine interviewed participants were selected through a random selection process. The primary research questions were if the band directors’ experiences differed from region, if their primary instrument had any impact on their career, if the region they attended high school or college had an effect on their experiences, and what were their motivations for entering the field of teaching high school band.

Regarding discrimination and isolation experiences, it seems that women band directors face the most discrimination from the band community, notably other band directors. When asked on a scale from one to five, with one being not discriminated against and five being very discriminated against, the participants said that they felt discrimination levels were 1.74 during the interview process, 2.67 by band organizations (state MEA organizations, competitive circuits), and 3.13 by the band community (neighbor schools and honors bands). The two last response averages, representing feelings within the band community, reflected notably higher
perceptions of discrimination than the interview process, which is primarily outside the band community. This matches up with the information gathered from the participant interviews. One band director (Linda) received so much discrimination from the middle school band directors in her school district that she left her job. Amanda, Kathleen, Jessica, Rachel, Veronica and Maria all spoke about negative experiences with other band directors at competitions, adjudications and organizational meetings. Seven out of the nine interviewees shared specific negative stories about interactions with other band directors.

While the discernibly low response averages on the discrimination and isolation questions (averages between 2-3), are not what I expected, they indicate that at least moderate discrimination does, in fact, exist against female band directors. If they did not feel that they were ever discriminated against, most averages would hover around one. I would characterize the average of three in these questions as moderate discrimination, which clearly exists, based on the current data.

In regard to specific isolation experiences, it seems that, on average, about half of the participants see other female band directors half the time or more (47.05% at adjudications, 61.26% at honor bands, 46.94% at marching/jazz band competitions and football games, average 51.75%). All of the interviewees all knew of other female high school band directors in the area, but not all of them were in contact with them. They still maintain that men make up most of the band directors in their area. Two interviewees, Kathleen and Dana, mentioned a strong female high school band director community in their area, with mentor and mentee teachers; overall, this seemed to be helpful to them in their careers.

Looking at the average data, by region, of discrimination experiences, it seems that, from region to region, there is no discernible difference (with a range of difference 0.45 on a 1 to 5
The interviews support this data, with all of the interviewees maintaining that they did not believe that their area was more or less discriminating than others.

I believe that this demonstrates that discrimination is experienced everywhere against female high school band directors, with some exceptions in some communities. Knowing that women band directors feel the most discrimination from the band community, the lack of difference from region to region is logical. While certain regions of the country might vary slightly on social factors and progressiveness in terms of gender issues, the band community remains fairly uniform throughout the country. Marching band circuits in Pennsylvania look similar to those in California, a concert band in Texas might play same or similar repertoire to a band in Washington and jazz bands in Georgia play the same twelve bar blues progression as jazz bands in Illinois. The band community remains the same across the country, so the discrimination remains the same across the country.

The two most frequently played primary instruments from the respondents were two of the more “feminine” instruments, clarinet and flute. It would seem playing these instruments was not too much of an impediment for the participants to become high school band directors. The interviewees were able to provide two pieces of information regarding answering this research question. The interviewees who played more “feminine instruments” (Becky and Dana), were not notably impacted by this in their teaching careers, besides Dana being uncomfortable when teaching jazz. On the other side, both Amanda and Kathleen, who play “masculine” instruments, experienced sexism at the collegiate level and below that helped to prepare them for a similar environment when they became high school band directors.

Among all participants, 70.64% cited their high school band director as a motivation for becoming a high school band director, and 64.39% cited their experiences in their high school’s
program as a motivation. Consequently, it appears that high school is a critical time for inspiring future band directors. However, only 24.13% of participant’s high school band directors were female. This suggests that the gender of the band director may not have a significant impact on inspiring future high school band directors.

**Comparison to Previous Literature**

Lamb’s (1996) work is supported in the results from the present study. A few of the interviewees (most notably Kathleen) stated that it does not matter what gender the band director is, all that matters is that they are a good teacher and strive to do the best for their students. Lamb asserts that sexism in music education was allowed to flourish for so long because music exists on a “higher plane” away from the griminess of life. Again, a lot of the interviewees stated that it does not matter what gender you are, just that you are a good teacher, implying that teaching music is on a “higher plane”.

Two of the three interviewees play instruments that were classified as “feminine” instruments, flute and clarinet (Callahan, Dittloff & Wrape, 2016), and “feminine instruments” were found to be the most prevalent primary instruments of participants by a wide margin. Although this previously may have been seen as a deterrent to women entering the field (Delzell, 1993-1994), clearly the participants have made it work and are or were successfully employed as high school band directors.

The possibility that discrimination has changed over time, and that older female band directors experienced overt sexism and younger experience subtle sexism (Jackson, 1996), was supported by the interviewee Rachel. She says that she has seen changes in numbers of women
and attitudes about women teaching high school band since she began teaching high school band in 1995 to now. It would seem more updated research would be appropriate to further investigate this phenomenon.

Applications for the Classroom

There are three different populations that can benefit from this research: pre-service and current male band directors, pre-service female music education majors and current female high school band directors.

For pre-service and current male band directors, this study speaks volumes about how the band community could treat female band directors. I am sure that not all male band directors treat their female colleagues poorly, but I think the data and testimony speaks for itself. Male band directors should be aware of their interactions with their female colleagues, and ask themselves if they would be treating their male colleagues the same way.

Pre-service female music education majors should reference the end of every interview (see Appendix B), where interviewees are asked to share advice for the principal researcher. While a considerable amount of general advice was given, perhaps the most impactful, came from the final interviewee, Maria: “Don’t change yourself”. Simple, but I think that it is important for pre-service female music educators to remember that students need to see all types of music educators, all types of band directors, and pre-service female music educators should remember that they should be themselves, and they will end up at the right place for them.

Lastly, current (and even future) female band directors should take away that their number one priority is to be the best band director possible for their students. It is all about the
students, and the research and interviews have shown that the students do not care about gender.

I think one of the interviewees, Kathleen, says it best:

The thing that I realized four or five years ago is that I (and I wish that I thought about this sooner) need to be that person, was that, we get this awesome opportunity as female band directors to teach kids what its like for a woman to be in charge, and I’m not a bitch, and I’m not your mom, but I am your teacher, and I do care about you. I’m good enough and smart enough to be your teacher, just like you’re smart enough and good enough to be my student. And you, too, can do what you want, just like I’m doing what I want to do.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

My study sought to address one of the many holes in female high school band directing research, and it was made clear that there is no discernible difference in discrimination experiences by regions.

A potential study could focus on the type of region (i.e. suburban, rural, urban) that female band directors teach in, and how this shapes their perceptions of discrimination and isolation. Another study looking at female band director’s experience over time and how discrimination and isolation has changed from generation to generation would also be very beneficial. Something that surprised me during the interview process was that a lot of the interviewees were assistant band directors, not head band directors. This is definitely a concept that is more common in different regions of the country than others, so perhaps looking at
experiences of head women band directors compared to assistant women band directors would make for intriguing research.

Something that would have been extremely beneficial to me during my study would be for NAfME to include gender as a characteristic for their email blast system. This would also open doors for other gender-based research in the future.

**Final Conclusions**

Even though I originally set out to find regional differences between the discrimination and isolation experienced by female high school band directors, I came to an entirely different conclusion and take-away. It seems that there is not that much of a regional difference, which I think speaks volumes. Although, across the board, the discrimination and isolation does not seem as extreme as I originally thought, it is still there. Even a rating of a 2 or 3 proves that discrimination exists.

The significant take-away from this research is that discrimination is the strongest from the band community, not from students, parents or administration. It is clearly a systematic issue that will likely take generations of music educators to unravel.

As a future female high school band director, the most encouraging result of my research is that, while I may face discrimination from the band communities I am in, my gender is not the most important factor that will determine my success as a teacher. It is my teaching ability and passion for my students that will define who I am as a band director.
REFERENCES


women music educators. *Journal of Historical Research in Music Education*, 22 (2), pp. 147-158.


Appendix A

Survey and Interview Interest Form
Women in High School Band Directing Survey

Title of Study: Women in High School Band Directing: a Focus on Regional Distinctions
Principal Investigator: Kate Sellers, Pennsylvania State University
Principal Investigator Telephone Number: (610) 8129128
Advisor: Dr. Linda Thornton, Pennsylvania State University
Advisor Phone Number: (814) 8635723

You are being invited to participate in a research study. This summary explains information about this research.

The purpose of this research is to find information on women high school band directors’ experiences, and to compare this data based on regions (as specified by NAfME). Please fill out this Google Form survey to the best of your ability. You will be asked a series of questions on your experiences in music education, and the survey should take approximately fifteen to thirty minutes. At the end of the survey an additional link for an interview will be provided. If you select to participate in the interview process, you may be contacted by me for either a phone, Skype/FaceTime or in person interview. All of the results of this survey and interviews will be kept on my password protected computer, and both survey and interview data will remain anonymous and by pseudonym only.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me (Kate Sellers) at (610) 812-9128.

If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject or concerns regarding your privacy, you may contact the Office for Research Protections at (814) 8651775.

Your participation is voluntary and you may decide to stop at any time. You do not have to answer any questions you do not want to answer.

By pressing continue at the end of the section, you are implying your consent to participate in this study.

* Required

I identify as a female *

☐ Yes

☐ If no, please exit survey
All of the results of this survey and interviews will be kept on my password protected computer, and both survey and interview data will remain anonymous and by pseudonym only.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me (Kate Sellers) at (610) 812-9128.

If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject or concerns regarding your privacy, you may contact the Office for Research Protections at (814) 8651775.

Your participation is voluntary and you may decide to stop at any time. You do not have to answer any questions you do not want to answer.

By pressing continue at the end of the section, you are implying your consent to participate in this study.

* Required

I identify as a female *

○ Yes

○ If no, please exit survey

I am currently or was once employed as a high school band director *

○ Yes

○ If no, please exit survey

NEXT

Never submit passwords through Google Forms.
## Women in High School Band Directing Survey

### Background Information - Education

I attended high school in the... (check all that apply)

- [ ] Eastern Region (CT, DE, DC, EU, ME, MD, MA, NH, NJ, NY, PA, RI, VT)
- [ ] North Central Region (IL, IN, IA, MI, MN, NE, ND, OH, SD, WI)
- [ ] Northwest Region (AK, ID, MT, OR, WA, WY)
- [ ] Southern Region (AL, FL, GA, KY, LA, MS, NC, SC, TN, VA, WV)
- [ ] Southwestern Region (AR, CO, KS, MO, NM, OK, TX)
- [ ] Western Region (AZ, CA, HI NV, UT, India)
- [ ] Other (International)

During my high school career, I had a female band director.

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No

I participated in the following activities in high school... (check all that apply)

- [ ] Concert Band
- [ ] Marching Band
I participated in the following activities in high school... (check all that apply)

- Concert Band
- Marching Band
- Drum Corps
- Jazz Band (big band, lab band or combos)
- Indoor Programs (drum line or guard)
- Choir
- Orchestra
- Musical Theater
- Other: ________________________

My primary instrument of study is...

Choose

My secondary instrument of study is...

Choose

I also took formal lessons on the additional following instrument(s)...

- Flute
- Oboe
- Bassoon
I also took formal lessons on the additional following instrument(s)...

- Flute
- Oboe
- Bassoon
- Clarinet
- Saxophone
- Trumpet
- French Horn
- Trombone
- Euphonium/Baritone
- Tuba
- Percussion
- Violin
- Viola
- Cello
- Piano
- Voice
- Other: 

I attended college for my undergraduate degree in the... (check all that apply)
I attended college for my undergraduate degree in the... (check all that apply)

☐ Eastern Region (CT, DE, DC, EU, ME, MD, MA, NH, NJ, NY, PA, RI, VT)

☐ North Central Region (IL, IN, IA, MI, MN, NE, ND, OH, SD, WI)

☐ Northwest Region (AK, ID, MT, OR, WA, WY)

☐ Southern Region (AL, FL, GA, KY, LA, MS, NC, SC, TN, VA, WV)

☐ Southwestern Region (AR, CO, KS, MO, NM, OK, TX)

☐ Western Region (AZ, CA, HI, NV, UT, India)

☐ Other (International)

I had a female band director (concert band) in college.

☐ Yes

☐ No

I had a female marching band director in college.

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ My college did not have a marching band

☐ I did not participate in my college's marching band

I had a female director of jazz studies/jazz band director in college.

☐ Yes

☐ No
I had a female director of jazz studies/jazz band director in college.
- Yes
- No
- My college did not have a jazz program/jazz band
- I did not participate in my college's jazz program

My (undergrad) college advisor was...
- Female
- Male
- I did not have a college advisor

How many female music education professors did you have in your undergrad?
Choose

I participated in the following activities in my undergrad... (check all that apply)
- Concert Band
- Jazz Band (big band or combos)
- Marching Band
- Drum Corps
- Indoor Programs (drum line or guard)
- Choir
I participated in the following activities in my undergrad... (check all that apply)

☐ Concert Band

☐ Jazz Band (big band or combos)

☐ Marching Band

☐ Drum Corps

☐ Indoor Programs (drum line or guard)

☐ Choir

☐ Orchestra

☐ Musical Theater

☐ Other: _______________________

I attended college for any other advanced degrees (masters, PhD, etc) in... (check all that apply)

☐ Eastern Region (CT, DE, DC, EU, ME, MD, MA, NH, NJ, NY, PA, RI, VT)

☐ North Central Region (IL, IN, IA, MI, MN, NE, ND, OH, SD, WI)

☐ Northwest Region (AK, ID, MT, OR, WA, WY)

☐ Southern Region (AL, FL, GA, KY, LA, MS, NC, SC, TN, VA, WV)

☐ Southwestern Region (AR, CO, KS, MO, NM, OK, TX)

☐ Western Region (AZ, CA, HI, NV, UT, India)

☐ Other (International)

☐ I do not have an advanced degree
I attended college for any other advanced degrees (masters, PhD, etc) in... (check all that apply)

- Eastern Region (CT, DE, DC, EU, ME, MD, MA, NH, NJ, NY, PA, RI, VT)
- North Central Region (IL, IN, IA, MI, MN, NE, ND, OH, SD, WI)
- Northwest Region (AK, ID, MT, OR, WA, WY)
- Southern Region (AL, FL, GA, KY, LA, MS, NC, SC, TN, VA, WV)
- Southwestern Region (AR, CO, KS, MO, NM, OK, TX)
- Western Region (AZ, CA, HI, NV, UT, India)
- Other (International)
- I do not have an advanced degree
Women in High School Band Directing Survey

Motivations in Becoming a High School Band Director

I knew I wanted to become a high school band director...

○ Before high school
○ During high school
○ During my undergrad
○ After my undergrad
○ I did not know I wanted to become a high school band director

My inspirations for becoming a high school band director are...
(check all that apply)

☐ Past music teachers (elementary, middle school teachers)
☐ My high school band director
☐ My experiences in my high school’s program
☐ My experiences studying music privately
☐ A music education professor
☐ A college band director
☐ My experiences in my undergrad
☐ My experiences in advance degrees (masters, PhD, etc)
My inspirations for becoming a high school band director are...
(check all that apply)

☐ Past music teachers (elementary, middle school teachers)
☐ My high school band director
☐ My experiences in my high school's program
☐ My experiences studying music privately
☐ A music education professor
☐ A college band director
☐ My experiences in my undergrad
☐ My experiences in advanced degrees (masters, PhD, etc)
☐ None of the above
☐ Other: __________________

Did you have a female music teacher (at any level) at some point before college?

☐ Yes
☐ No

Did this woman have any influence on you going into this field?

☐ Yes
☐ No

Other female influences on my becoming a high school band director include:
Did you have a female music teacher (at any level) at some point before college?

- Yes
- No

Did this woman have any influence on you going into this field?

- Yes
- No

Other female influences on my becoming a high school band director include...

- Female festival conductors
- Female band directors at other schools
- Female peers who are/were band directors
- Female relative(s) who are/were band directors
- Other: ________________________

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Women in High School Band Directing Survey

Background Information - Post-education

What was your first job upon graduating from your undergrad? (check all that apply)

- Elementary General Music
- Elementary Band
- Elementary Orchestra
- Middle School Choral/General
- Middle School Band
- Middle School Orchestra
- High School Band
- High School Choir
- High School Orchestra
- Substitute (Short term or long term, music or non music)
- Graduate Program
- Non-music teaching job
- Other:
How many years did you have that position?

Choose

Which region was that position in?

- Eastern Region (CT, DE, DC, EU, ME, MD, MA, NH, NJ, NY, PA, RI, VT)
- North Central Region (IL, IN, IA, MI, MN, NE, ND, OH, SD, WI)
- Northwest Region (AK, ID, MY, OR, WA, WY)
- Southern Region (AL, FL, GA, KY, LA, MS, NC, SC, TN, VA, WV)
- Southwestern Region (AR, CO, KS, MO, NM, OK, TX)
- Western Region (AZ, CA, HI, NV, UT, India)
- Other (International)

Which jobs have you had between your first job and your current high school band directing position? (Check all that apply)

- Elementary General
- Elementary Band
- Elementary Orchestra
- Middle School Band
- Middle School Orchestra
- Middle School Choir/General
- High School Band (another school)
- High School Orchestra
- High School Choir
Which jobs have you had between your first job and your current high school band directing position? (Check all that apply)

- [ ] Elementary General
- [ ] Elementary Band
- [ ] Elementary Orchestra
- [ ] Middle School Band
- [ ] Middle School Orchestra
- [ ] Middle School Choir/General
- [ ] High School Band (another school)
- [ ] High School Orchestra
- [ ] High School Choir
- [ ] Substitute Teaching
- [ ] Non-music Teaching Position
- [ ] I am still in my first job
- [ ] Other: __________________________

How many years (combined, if needed) did you have that/those position(s)?

Choose

Which region(s) were these position(s) in? (Check all that apply)

- [ ] Eastern Region (CT, DE, DC, EU, ME, MD, MA, NH, NJ, NY, PA, RI, VT)
Which region(s) were these position(s) in? (Check all that apply)

- Eastern Region (CT, DE, DC, EU, ME, MD, MA, NH, NJ, NY, PA, RI, VT)
- North Central Region (IL, IN, IA, MI, MN, NE, ND, OH, SD, WI)
- Northwest Region (AK, ID, MT, OR, WA, WY)
- Southern Region (AL, FL, GA, Ky, LA, MS, NC, SC, TN, VA, WV)
- Southwestern Region (AR, CO, KS, MO, NM, OK, TX)
- Western Region (AZ, CA, HI, NV, UT, India)
- Other (International)

In addition to high school band, which of these responsibilities falls under your current/most recent job description? (Check all that apply)

- High School Jazz Band
- High School Marching Band
- High School Indoor Drumline/Color Guard
- High School Musical Theater
- High School Choir
- High School Orchestra
- Middle School Band
- Middle School Jazz Band
- Middle School Marching Band
- Middle School Musical Theater
In addition to high school band, which of these responsibilities falls under your current/most recent job description? (Check all that apply)

☐ High School Jazz Band
☐ High School Marching Band
☐ High School Indoor Drumline/Color Guard
☐ High School Musical Theater
☐ High School Choir
☐ High School Orchestra
☐ Middle School Band
☐ Middle School Jazz Band
☐ Middle School Marching Band
☐ Middle School Musical Theater
☐ Middle School Orchestra
☐ Middle School Choir/General Music
☐ Elementary Band
☐ Elementary Orchestra
☐ Elementary General
☐ Other:

Which region are you currently working in, or have most recently worked as a high school band director in?
Middle School Choir/General Music

Elementary Band

Elementary Orchestra

Elementary General

Other:

Which region are you currently working in, or have most recently worked as a high school band director in?

- Eastern Region (CT, DE, DC, EU, ME, MD, MA, NH, NJ, NY, PA, RI, VT)
- North Central Region (IL, IN, IA, MI, MN, NE, ND, OH, SD, WI)
- Northwest Region (AK, ID, MT, OR, WA, WY)
- Southern Region (AL, FL, GA, KY, LA, MS, NC, SC, TN, VA, WV)
- Southwestern Region (AR, CO, KS, MO, NM, OK, TX)
- Western Region (AZ, CA, HI, NV, UT, India)
- Other (International)
Women in High School Band Directing Survey

**Discrimination/Isolation Experiences**

Were you the only female in your undergrad who desired to pursue a career in high school band?

- Yes
- No

Are you the only female high school music teacher in your building?

- Yes
- No

Do you know of any other female high school band directors within a thirty minute radius of your school district?

- Yes
- No

How often do you encounter other female high school band directors at jazz band and/or marching band competitions, and/or football games?

- Never
- Rarely
- Less than half of the time
How often do you encounter other female high school band directors at jazz band and/or marching band competitions, and/or football games?

- Never
- Rarely
- Less than half of the time
- Half of the time
- More than half of the time
- Often
- Always
- My marching band/jazz band do not compete, and my marching band does not attend football games

How often do you encounter other female high school band directors at honor bands (State MEA bands, regional honor bands, etc)

- Never
- Rarely
- Less than half of the time
- Half of the time
- More than half of the time
- Often
- Always
- I do not go to an honor band
How often do you encounter other female high school band directors at adjudications?

- Never
- Rarely
- Less than half of the time
- Half of the time
- More than half of the time
- Often
- Always
- My band(s) do not attend adjudication

How much do you feel discriminated against in the local band community (surrounding neighbor schools, state MEA and honor bands) because you are a woman?

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How much do you feel discriminated against for being a woman by band organizations (State MEA organization, jazz/marching/indoor circuits)

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How often do you experience issues that you feel would not be prevalent if you were a man (being disrespected, questioned...
How often do you experience issues that you feel would not be prevalent if you were a man (being disrespected, questioned, etc)?

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- Always

How discriminated against did you feel in the interview process for your high school band position?

Not Discriminated Against

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Very Discriminated Against

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Is your life partner/spouse a musician and/or a music educator?

- Yes
- No
- Do not have a life partner/spouse
- Other: __________

How supportive is your life partner/spouse of your career? (do not answer if you do not have a life partner/spouse)

Not supportive at

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Completely supportive

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Women in High School Band Directing Survey

Optional Interview

If you are interested in also participating in a 20-30 minute phone or Skype/FaceTime interview, please click on the link below:

https://goo.gl/forms/LEMExTKtV5xnUna2

BACK  SUBMIT

Never submit passwords through Google Forms.
Interview Interest Form

Please provide your email and/or phone number below if interested in a phone or Skype/FaceTime interview

Your answer

Submit

Never submit passwords through Google Forms.
Appendix B

Interview Transcriptions

Note: I stands for “Interviewee” and R stands for “Researcher”

Interview #1: Linda

October 1st, 2017

I: Hello?
R: Hi! This is Kate Sellers, I’m the student from Penn State who you agreed to an interview today.
I: Hi! How are you doing?
R: Good how are you?
I: I’m doing wonderfully!
R: And your name is [withdrawn], correct?
I: Yes!
R: Great! Before I start the interview, I just want you to know that I am recording this for future use. Is that okay with you?
I: Yes, that’s totally fine
R: Thank you! So my first question is what was your main motivation for going into the field of high school band?
I: So I had a really great high school band director myself, and my senior year (of high school) I was choosing between pursuing music and pursuing chemical engineering and basically it came down to the fact that I had such a positive teaching experience in high school band and that I wanted to be able to bring that to other students.
R: Was your high school band director male or female?
I: He was a male and honestly I had not met a female high school band director until my junior year of college.
R: When you started working, did you know of any female high school band director in your area?
I: So, basically, I was in a huge minority. I thought that because I was teaching high school in 2015, and I figured that, since that we have come such a long way that I wouldn’t really experience such a deficit in female high school band director or any sexism, but I experienced a lot of it. There was one other high school band director that I knew of in the surrounding county
that was also female. She was about my age as well. There was really no one to mentor us and it is definitely something that we could have used.

R: Do you have any specific stories or experiences with sexism that you encountered when you were teaching high school band?

I: Oh yes. So basically… how many stories do you want? Just one or two?

R: As many as you want to give

I: I could go on and on. I don’t want to scare you, because I was in a bad district. I didn’t know that because I went to school in [one state in the Southern region] but it’s really hard to find a high school band job, especially as a female, and I was offered one in [another state in the Southern region], and I went. But I should have done more research, in hindsight. So basically going into the job, I was taking over a position from a band director who had been teaching in the district for like thirty-six years, and so he wanted the position to go one of his middle school buddies or the student teacher who he was with, but it ended up going to me. They kind of like warned me about it, but said it shouldn’t be a big deal. It ended up being a big deal. The middle school band directors were not very happy that one of their buddies did not get it, and they were very vocal about it, telling other band directors, parents, all like that and they were also not happy that I was a young female. So, basically, when I would go to these football games, one of these middle school band directors was supposedly assigned to be my mentor, even though he was not very helpful and not very supportive and basically told me that I was doing things wrong, just because I wanted to try something new, he basically told me that I should stick to everything that was done in the past, even though my parents were supportive of that and my kids were supportive of that, and basically when I would go to these football games on Fridays, the two middle school band directors that were my feeder band directors, they would come to a football game, and they wouldn’t come as supportive people, they weren’t there to be like “hey, let me know”, they would stand slightly to the left of the band and just talk the whole game and look at the band and talk and they were like clearly an intimidation thing. I reached out to one of the middle school band directors who had been in the district awhile and was like “hey, is this normal?” you know, because maybe this is like a [Southern state in which she taught] thing. And she was like “no, that’s not okay”. And she said she would talk to them but it never got resolved. It was kind of like the “I am bigger than you and I’m going to watch you but not help you” sort of thing, and so … another story… For solo and ensemble, I messed up like one minor thing in the registration process because I’m a first year, this is my first year, I had never done solo and ensemble, and, obviously, first year teachers make mistakes, and it did not cause any cataclysmic failure or it was just some small thing that was easily fixed. I was not able to be there at this event because I had to conduct the pit orchestra, and so the middle school band directors were going around to my parents and saying that I completely screwed everything up and that they should call the superintendent and get me fired because I made one small mistake. And they were very vocal to me about the other female band director who was in our band district, which was different than our actual district, they were vocal to me about how they thought she was ruining the band there, and it wasn’t as much talk about the two new band directors in the district who were male. So, it was like constant barrage of “we don’t really like these females coming out here and doing their thing” because, despite all that nonsense that I had to put up with, my school on the other hand was a lot more in favor of me and I actually ended up winning first year teacher of the year at my school. So I feel crazy talking about it because all of these middle school band directors were telling me that I was basically the worst all the time, and they just wanted me out. So then I went to my principal, I eventually had band parents coming to me, and
saying “hey, I just want you to know that this middle school band director is trying to spread rumors about you and get you fired” and so I brought that to my principal because I can’t really handle this. And so when I told her about everything going on, she said to me “He’s a known bully in our district, and there’s not really anything we can do for you” and that was the last straw for me because it honestly started affecting my mental health, pretty badly, because these two male band directors and the drama teacher at my school were just constantly putting me down and the thing is, I could deal with bad parents and I could deal with kids who were going to graduate in four years, but these are tenured teachers who were just not happy with me, you know, and me being a female in a high school position. And so, it was just really frustrating me that it was like “it’s either you or them”. I didn’t get any support, even though my principal admitted that it was huge problem, she was like “I couldn’t do anything for you”. How is there nothing you can do for me? So it was an extremely frustrating situation. And like I said, I don’t want to scare you because it’s not like this everywhere. You just want to make sure you do your research before you go anywhere, because I wish I had gone down and really talked to these people before I picked up and moved because it just ended up being a crazy situation. That’s just a few things that had happened that year. Did that help you at all?

R: Yes it definitely did. I mean, it’s kind of interesting to see that you found more opposition from other teachers in the district rather from the parents or the community, like the administration, they seemed to really support you. So in terms of other high schools that were close to you, did you experience a lot of sexism going to competitions and stuff like that from the band directors at those high schools at all?

I: Kind of. So basically at every adjudicated event that we went to. We didn’t go to many; we went to a marching band competition and concert and stuff like that. But everywhere I went I was evaluated by the previous band director from my high school. So that made for a really complicated situation, including the band director that just retired. So when we went to the marching band competition, our scores were significantly docked by this retired band director in comparison to like all of the other scores, so I can’t say that’s sexism directly, but I’m sure that if it was one of his buddies, it wouldn’t have been docked so much. And it’s also so bad because it put my kids in a really tough position, because I laid it all out there and said “here’s the scores, you can make your own judgment” and they were really upset that basically got lower scores from their previous band director, but the only different factor was me. So, and the other judges judged them fairly, and then when we went to concert, the same thing happened, a different band director who had retired from the school and again, the scores reflected that. It was just frustrating for my kids, because honestly my kids were great. I had zero opposition from them, I didn’t even have that one senior who was out to get me or something like that. I could have totally dealt with that. But when its people who are supporting my program and are just in the district, it’s just crazy. I can’t think of anything directly, but I constantly feel it because I look like a high schooler, and when I get on stage, I don’t have the presence of someone who is 6’5 and male. And so even if there isn’t any blatant comments about me in particular, as a female, I still feel it when I get on that stage, especially when there’s five other bands before me who have huge, strong men, and then I get up there and I’m just a little tiny presence and even if its not directly said, you know that people still are making judgments.

R: Going back, I think you said in your email that your primary instrument was flute. In terms of getting involved in ensembles, something that I’ve found in college is a lot of flute, clarinet and oboe players want to be high school band directors but they don’t have much jazz or marching band experience. Did you feel that when you graduated from college, did you feel like you had
the tools when you graduated from college to be able to teach those ensembles, even if you weren’t in them?

I: Yes. I made sure I was in those ensembles because I knew that I would have to teach them, so I was able to join jazz ensemble as a flute player, and I would not play on every piece, but I would be able to be in jazz band rehearsal and listen to the pedagogy. I was also in jazz band in high school, basically because I wouldn’t let my band director stop hearing about how I wanted to be in jazz band. So, I know a lot of people learn classical, I was just straight up “I will play jazz flute in your ensemble if you let me” and so I went to a small school, so there’s a lot more flexibility. But I think even if you can’t get to be in that ensemble, if you can go in and listen to the words and the instruction, just listening to the music, it really helps. I also took improv classes, too, again, mostly for jazz students, but I was able to get into that class because there wasn’t really a pre-req besides playing an instrument. And then I did eight years of marching band. I would say, if I have any advice, it would be to take every single class, every single ensemble you can, even if you feel like it’s going to be too much, you just have to. I took an African drumming class and that was super helpful for me. I had to take choir, but I took as much choir as I could, just because the more language that you can hear coming out of good educated mouths, the more educational tools you can have at your disposal.

R: In terms of the other music education majors that you were with, were there other females who wanted to be high school band directors that you went to college with, and were they successful?

I: Honestly, there were really not a whole lot of people who wanted to do high school band. There was one girl, I think, and she is a high school director now, but she did take over her father’s program. I mean, she totally earned it, she’s amazing music educator, but that’s the only other female high school band director [from my college]. But my other friend teaches middle school band, but she says she would never do high school. It’s just a whole different beast, and I just wish we talked about more of the issues relating to female high school band directors, because I didn’t think there was going to be that much of an issue, but I was like “of course there is” because the whole thing of our daily life in general, but it was so bad because when I was working with a college degree, I just felt like our teacher training programs need to address this even if its uncomfortable and give them resources to deal with it.

R: Yeah, I totally agree with that, and that’s why I’m doing this as my thesis.

I: I so appreciate that, and as soon as I saw your survey, I thought “as much information as I can give to people”.

R: So I have to go now. Thank you so much for talking to me, I definitely got interesting information and stories that can contribute to my thesis. Thank you so much, I really appreciate it.

I: Would I be able to read your thesis?

R: I am going to send it out to everyone I interviewed.

I: Awesome! Best of luck to you, you totally got this. As I said, my story is not everyone’s story and you totally could find a good district.

R: Alright, thank you so much, have a nice day! Good bye

I: Good bye
Interview #2: Becky

October 1st, 2017

I: Hello?
R: Hello! This is the Penn State student who emailed you about an interview.
I: Yes
R: How are you doing today?
I: I’m good, how are you?
R: Good! So, just to let you know, this call is being recorded so I can back over it later, is that okay with you?
I: Yeah, that’s totally fine.
R: Awesome! So my first question is what was your main motivation for going into high school band?
I: Um, well both of my parents were in band, and most of my family, actually. My mom was an all-state percussionist and band was really big in my school where I grew up and so it just seemed natural that that was what I was going to do.
R: So when you went to college, you kind of knew that was what you wanted to teach?
I: Um, actually, when I went to college, I was kind of on the fence. I thought about going to law school, but I knew that music was a huge passion of mine, so I kind of tottered back and forth, I took musical classes and political science classes and eventually settled on sticking with music because that’s what I cared about the most.
R: Did you end up teaching close to where you were from, or close to where you went to college?
I: I ended up about two hours from where I grew up and where I went to college. This area is a little more booming for band, and the opportunities for jobs was a lot bigger when I graduated.
R: Have you ever felt like you were isolated, like do you know of any female high school band directors that are close to you?
I: My high school band director was female. Both of my parents had her also, she was a huge influence in my parents lives and my life.
R: That’s awesome. So now that you’re teaching, when your band goes to adjudications or competitions, do you encounter a lot of other female band directors that are close to you?
I: I have to tell you, I wouldn’t say there’s a lot, but I’m pretty good friends with the ones that are in my area. There are not as many female band directors as there are males. There’s a few around.
R: Have you ever felt discriminated against or that you were treated differently because you are a woman band director than you would if you were a male?
I: Not necessarily on the band side of things, I feel like sometimes dealing with athletic departments, I feel that way, because in our school district there aren’t that many female coaches either and I’ve kind of felt it more from the athletic side of things than the band side of things, it that makes sense.
R: Yeah, do you have any stories that have to go along with that?
I: Well, our athletic director… I am an assistant director, but I take care of a lot of things, I’ve been at the same school for ten years with the head director, and there have been times when I’ve had to take care of situations in the athletic department and they haven’t wanted to deal with me,
they wanted to go over my head. I feel like its because I’m female, I think they… it might be more because I’m not the head director. But, I’ve been there long enough, I’ve been established long enough, they should be able to deal with me, I don’t know if that makes sense.

R: That makes total sense. Kind of going back to when you were in college, you said that your major instrument was clarinet. Did you have any difficulty getting involved in jazz or marching ensembles that you would end up teaching? How did you deal with that, not playing saxophone, trumpet or percussion, that’s in all of the different ensembles?

I: Well, jazz was not something I was ever super interested in, so I didn’t… that didn’t really bother me. I’m lucky enough that isn’t something that I teach now, we have a big jazz program but the other guys I teach with are more into jazz and do that. So, it kind of worked out for me, like that. I did play in orchestra a little bit, and I actually doubled on a couple of other instruments in lower ensembles at my university, just to get experience in playing other instruments in other ensembles, if that makes sense.

R: Yeah, it makes sense! When you were in college, did a lot of other females in your year, or that you knew of, wanted to become high school band directors, and do you know if a lot of them were successful in landing that high school band job?

I: I know a few, that were in college with me that wanted to be band directors, and most of them are very successful. A lot of the females that are directly that I was in class with, the same age as me, went on to do elementary music, and not so much high school. The ones who did [teach high school band] are very successful.

R: Do you feel like your area that you’re in right now, that you said was suburban [major city in Southwestern region], so that area is more or less accepting of female band directors than other areas that you’ve encountered before?

I: I think our area is very accepting of female band directors, there’s quite a few in the area, and they are pretty well known, and are known for doing a good job, and I don’t feel like, especially the band world, that it’s an issue at all.

R: That’s awesome. And just as a last question, do you have any advice for me, I want to become a high school band director, what would you advise me to do, now with school and student teaching and interviewing?

I: The biggest thing I would tell you is to get out there now. I, in college was able, there was a high school right down the road that I went out and teched at, and I think the more experience you can get in the classroom before you are set to do it on your own, the more you’re going to know what to do. Because unfortunately teaching isn’t something you can really learn until you do it. You can learn all the info and all the things in college, but until you are actually out there doing it, you’re not going to gain a lot of the knowledge. If I were you, I would find as many places as possible to observe, if you can get involved, if you can teach, if you can tech, you should get experience, that will set you up for success when you go out on your own because you’ve seen how things are done.

R: Alright! Thank you so much for talking, I definitely appreciated your answers, and they’ll definitely contribute to my thesis! Thank you so much!

I: No problem!
R: Thank you, bye!
I: Bye!
Interview #3: Amanda

October 1st, 2017

I: Hello?
R: Hello! This is the student who contacted you about an interview for research.
I: Yes!
R: Hi! How are you doing today?
I: Pretty good, how are you?
R: I’m good! Just to let you know, this interview is being recorded so I can go back and look at it later. Is that okay with you?
I: Yeah, that’s perfectly fine.
R: Awesome! So my first question is what was your main motivation for going into the field of high school band?
I: Um, well I wouldn’t specifically say, high school band, just band. My main motivation, of course, was previous teachers.
R: Did you have a specific teacher who really inspired you?
I: I would say two! One, her name was [redacted], she was my middle school director, and then another was my high school director for only two years, her name was [redacted].
R: Um, so currently teaching high school band, do you encounter a lot of high school band directors, female high school band directors, when you go adjudications and stuff like that?
I: I am actually the only one right now. All men.
R: So do you know of any nearby, or is just you pretty much?
I: Pretty much just me. I know many middle school female teachers, but no high school.
R: Have you experience any kind of discrimination because you’re female?
I: Of course. Oh yeah. So discrimination is basically like, I’m not able to handle it, I’m seemed that my band would do lesser than most, that’s kind of discrimination, and they don’t take my ideas seriously.
R: Do you have any specific stories of discrimination that you’ve experienced?
I: I can’t say that I really have, mostly because it is my first year, and I started in August, and it’s not too long of a time, that’s really all it is, just short outbursts of them just not listening to me, or when they do a question, they kind of pass by without asking me, kind of stuff. It’s more just not quite taking my ideas or using me at all, they just try to pass by.
R: Is this mostly from your band staff, or parents or administration?
I: No, this is all other band teachers. I, thankfully, have had a wonderful admin and wonderful band staff, and at my school I have no issue. It’s just the community, basically.
R: You said that your major instrument was trumpet. When you were in college, were you one of the only female trumpet players, or were there a lot of you?
I: I was the only one, at least when I started out. When I got into the older years, we did get a few more females, but my freshman and sophomore years, it was just me, and because of all of the sexism that I got being a trumpet player, I originally actually quit music.
R: Really? Okay, so what brought you back into music?
I: I agreed to doing music camps before I quit, and I’m really big about doing what I say I’m going to do. And then I just fell back in love with it. And so I went back to music but in a different track, I went into performance instead of music education. I got my degree, and taught
through there, so I decided after conducting my friend’s band that I really liked conducting. So I went back for a masters in music education.

R: Nice. So you feel like with your instrument, you already experienced sexism. Do you feel like that prepared you for what you were going to deal with when you were a high school band director?

I: Very much so. Yeah, one of the… it was awhile ago, but I have stories for this. My freshman year, I was with, I think it was, twelve guys [in the trumpet major], I just remember trying to make friends, because it was my freshman year, and one of the guys asked me to come in and talk with them in a practice room, so I walked in, and they basically said that trumpet is a masculine instrument, and I do not belong here. And that was one of my first encounters with in college. So yeah, I’m kind of used to “it’s a man’s world”, type thing [laughs].

R: So, but the nice thing about playing trumpet though, is you were able to do jazz band and marching band, do you think playing a more “masculine instrument” prepared you more for the certain ensembles you would teach when you were a high school band director?

I: Um, so I would say, yes and no. I’ve played in jazz band, and I’m currently teaching jazz band, and I have no idea what I’m doing. So, I feel like one thing that I have definitely learned, not necessarily about being discriminated against, or anything, I’ve learned that playing in a band doesn’t necessarily mean you can teach in it. That’s something that I’ve learned in the years, going through college and music education, teaching is very different style and very different process and method than looking at it in a performance aspect. So, I don’t think it’s necessarily helped me, of course it helped me with listening and what to do, and what exactly the process of it, but it didn’t help me with the words and what to say to my children. That was just the classes itself.

R: Do you feel that the specific area is more or less isolated than other areas of the state or even the country?

I: Um, what do you mean by that?

R: Did you, for instance, go to college and grow up in the area that you’re currently teaching, or did you move to your current job?

I: I grew up and got my college degree in [major city in the Western region] and that’s where I’m currently teaching. So I’m in the local area that I got my degree in.

R: Some of the people who I talked to grew up in a different area, and they moved and the area that they grew up in, they felt was more accepting of female band directors than their current area. So, when you were in high school or college, did you anticipate this being a problem, or was this something you were not aware of before you started teaching.

I: I saw it everywhere, I knew what I was getting into. Of course, I didn’t choose high school, but I chose band. You don’t choose what jobs are open, and I just kind of lucked out, getting a high school job. But, no, oh man, you can tell, when you speak to them, even when you’re in college. I was saying that I wanted to be a high school band director, and um… the male director at the time, was like “yeah, yeah I know a few good women teachers”, uh “awesome, great words of encouragement, sir” (laughs). Now he’s now my colleague, and he will not speak to me.

R: That’s crazy. So kind of as a wrap up question, do you have any advice for me, going into the area of band, and what advice can you give me for student teaching, finishing up my senior year, and applying for jobs?

I: Well, I would say don’t get set on a job, that’s one thing that I’ve definitely learned, yeah, because you never know what job is open, but it’s better to get your foot in than wait for that perfect job and waste those years of experience. What I’m saying is just do it, jump in and do it.
With the guys, they don’t allow us to do anything, they really don’t. I guess they don’t think it’s possible, they think we will fail. So the biggest thing I’ve learned is to do it, and make sure that I’m doing it right. Never be afraid to ask for help, and you’ve got to find the people that really will support you. I brought in my mentor when I first started teaching. I was like “alright, I’ve got a job, I don’t know where to start”, so my mentor, I called her, so she came in and helped me and right now, my band is one of the top three in the community. Making that difference within the few months that I have been there has really made a difference. And it’s really just doing the hard work and just asking for help when you need it.

R: Alright! Thank you for talking to me, I really appreciate it, I will definitely use some of your stories and experiences to write my thesis!
I: Good luck!
R: Thank you so much! Have a nice day!
I: Thank you, bye!
R: Bye!
Interview #4: Kathleen

October 1st, 2017

(Recording was started after consent was obtained for recording, mistake of the researcher. Also, initial emailed questions were not answered by interviewee, so researcher asked them at the beginning of the interview)

R: Alright, awesome! Okay, so, just a couple preliminary questions: what region of the country are you currently working in?
I: I work in the West, so I teach in [Western state].
R: What instrument is your primary instrument?
I: Percussion
R: How many years have you been in your current job?
I: Fifteen.
R: Alright! So my first interview question is what was your main motivation for going into high school band?
I: Technically it was the only job I got offered
R: Did you want to be a high school band director in college?
I: Technically, I’m sure even though I kept telling myself I was going to be a middle school director, I didn’t apply for any middle school jobs, nothing really came open, and I guess I would say that I was open or thought that a good task was to go middle to high school, I think a lot of people think that, but reflecting back, all of the work that I was doing in my music ed program and the stuff leading up to it was leading me to teaching high school, not middle school. I mean, I was working with middle school kids, but I was teaching high school marching, so I don’t think it was too much of a surprise, honestly, I got a high school job.
R: You said you were a percussion major, so as a percussionist, did you encounter a lot of discrimination and sexism during pre, during and post college, because I know that’s definitely an instrument that’s dominated by men.
I: Um, everything that I do is dominated by men… pageantry, it doesn’t really matter… I mean I would say that I’m probably, there’s a lot of girls who are suited to being percussionists, and I would say that I’m one them, I mean, I’ve always had a lot of friends who were guys, a lot of my best friends growing up were guys, I only have brothers and my grandpa is one of my best, and he always just says that I could always do what the other kids did. It didn’t mean that it wasn’t hard, and sometimes it wasn’t isolating, but I’ve always had a couple of percussionist women in my life, and I think that helped, but I didn’t really get too much stuff like “you can’t make it because you’re a girl,” I mean, I worked hard and I could play well, and that I think carried me far, while I only had male teachers, they weren’t people who closed doors on me, not my teachers. So it’s been challenging, it’s been challenging to find my own identity and my voice sometimes as I go along, but I mean, I’m the president of my marching band circuit here [locally], and that’s been hard too, but you just keep going, keep trying to do the right thing, I think.
R: And with being a high school band director, do you know of any other female high school band directors that are geographically close to you, that your band competes against, for marching band, jazz band, concert band, contests and stuff like that?
I: I live in [Western state], so that makes it different, and I mean, my best friend is a band director, so (she’s a girl), but I, I guess you could say, we’ve kind of found each other, is a way I’d kind of put it. I mean, we exist and we’re around, and we definitely have other female band directors, there’s not a ton of us, there’s some, and I mean I would say that I make a conscious effort to connect with other women who teach band, and maybe they found me, in Friday night, there were three high school band directors in my living room. Not for a band event, two of them were my student teachings, so I intentionally mentored them, and a young woman a few years ago, who is now teaching probably with my best band director friend (he’s a guy). We just connected super well, and the girl who I’ve mentoring teaches with. I mean, we find each other, and I have other female band directors older than me who I can talk to sometimes, and I went to college with some girls. Like I said, there’s not a lot of us, and there’s not a lot of us that are really doing sometimes what I’m trying to do on a competitive level, it can be hard.
R: Have you had any… do you have any stories to share on sexism and discrimination that you’ve faced as a female high school band director that male band directors wouldn’t have to deal with?
I: I would first say that I don’t really know if men would have to deal with it or not, because I’m not a man, I probably will think of an example when I’m not talking to you… there’s a couple of times most recently as I’ve become the president of the marching band circuit out here in [Western state], but I politically can’t talk about it. I don’t feel comfortable talking about it because I don’t want it coming back on me. There’s been scenarios where people didn’t think that I could do a job, and I don’t know if it’s because I’m a woman, if it’s because I’m outspoken, I mean, I would be outspoken if I were a gay man or a straight man or a black man, I’m a free spirit. I have an incredible disdain for unfairness that sometimes will get me in trouble and I have a pretty large drive, and I think sometimes I’m misunderstood. Last night I got a super angry email from a parent who has probably a lot more baggage than we even know, but really really mad at me. I run a pretty tight ship with my competitive band, and you could be in all aspects of my marching band, but I can’t teach you if you don’t come to rehearsal, and I’m never going to sugar coat that, and I’m never going to say it’s not hard, and I’m missing family events too to teach your child marching band, and if you don’t be in this level of a group, then don’t be in it. And sometimes I don’t if this parent would be this mad if I wasn’t some size three woman. And it’s hard to tell, and it’s really messy with the political climate, everybody’s on edge about a lot of different things, and I feel like the stuff that’s happened politically has pointed some things out… oh wait here’s a story, and it’s super funny because it involves women, oh my god…. So a lot of times, I would say, more than being a woman, is that I was blessed with looking incredibly young, and I did start teaching at twenty-three, so I was often mistaken for a student, and I don’t think it was necessarily sexism as it was ageism in some ways. I just didn’t really look the part, and then I’m not sure what that part looks like, anyway. So my husband and I took our band up north. I live in [a progressive area in the Western region]. So we were in outside in the suburbs for a marching band competition, outside of our normal competitive circuit. So we were out there and we go to check the band, and I have more problems checking a band in at a competition than we do anywhere else. And my husband and I walk up, we’re not married at this time, he’s just on my staff, and we walk up and he’s 6’3, blond white dude, and I’m 5’3, and I say to the woman “hi, I’m here to check in for [high school name]” and she says “oh, are you the director?”, I was
like “yes!” and she goes “oh, are you the private school?” and we get that a lot because [their school name sounds like a parochial name], and I say “no, we’re not”, and she said “oh”, and that could have ended, but she continued and she said “oh, I assumed you taught at a private school because you’re a woman”.

R: Oh my gosh

I: This is like seven years ago, and that was a WOMAN who said that TO ME. So sometimes, it’s just people aren’t ready. Well, I will tell you that my students are an anomaly because both of my feeder schools are taught by women right now, so some of my students have never had a male band director.

R: Do you think that where you live and where you work in [Western state] is a lot more progressive in terms of discrimination and sexism than in other parts of the country?

I: Uh, yes and no. Meaning that I would say it could be worse if I lived in other places, but at the same time, I think that it’s fair, and now it just annoys me. I say to myself, is my interaction with my football coach right now happening because I’m a woman, or just because he doesn’t like how his team is playing. You know what I mean?

R: Yeah

I: Like what is this really about, and I think it does make you question it a little bit. I didn’t grow up super liberal or anything like that, so these conversations aren’t really easy for me, because it’s not like anybody talked about it to me growing up or anything, or like I mean, I think I noticed, but I had a really cool female piano teacher so I mean I had a role model. My percussion teacher’s girlfriend would play marimba with me and I like knew her and my friend played quads at the marching band at [local university] and my babysitter played snare at [another university]. And I had friends that played my instrument, but I don’t think I ever really thought about. I mean, I definitely think about it, I mean I don’t know what I’m trying to say. Sometimes, if we say anything, you know what I mean? We all acknowledge the fact that its different, but I think we relish in the fact that we’re different for other things, too. I would say that I am more proud about my progressive teaching than I am about my gender.

R: That’s a good attitude to have. As a wrap up question, do you have any advice for me going into this field, because I want to go into this field, as I round out my senior year and student teaching?

I: So I think the first thing is that you can’t worry about what anybody thinks of you, whether it’s the age or the gender thing, or height, or anything like that. You’re number one job is to be somebody’s great teacher. That is the number one priority, and that is the number one job. And whatever that looks like its just going to look different to different people, deciding how you want to run your class… the best gift you can give your students is to be a great musician, first and foremost. You can’t learn how to be a good musician being a teacher. You will get to be a better musician, because it’s awesome, and you will, like, the other day I was singing my major scales, and I was like “I don’t sound half bad”, and I was singing in front of sixty other people, and I wouldn’t have done that shit in aural skills, you know, it’s like they need me to do. And I get stressed and overwhelmed and I’m not perfect and I have had parents ream me up one side and down the other last night and call me the Gestapo and all kinds of other things. And when I became the president of [local marching band circuit], I had a retired band director leave a not-so-complimentary voicemail on my phone, and that doesn’t matter to my students. My students need me to teach them how to put their saxophone together and you know, how to come to rehearsal, and what that looks like, and be their advocate, so that’s where all of my focus is, is trying to make the right decisions for my students. For me last year the decision was to not host
music festivals anymore. And it was something I was really proud of, but it wasn’t working for us anymore. It’s so much more about that you set yourself up to be a strong teacher, and have your village and have your resources, and the gender thing will come up, but the teaching piece is the most important, and it will get by and it will get better. The thing that I realized four or five years ago is that I (and I wish that I thought about this sooner) need to be that person, was that, we get this awesome opportunity as female band directors to teach kids what it’s like for a woman to be in charge, and I’m not a bitch, and I’m not your mom, but I am your teacher, and I do care about you. I’m good enough and smart enough to be your teacher, just like you’re smart enough and good enough to be my student. And you, too, can do what you want, just like I’m doing what I want to do. And that goes far, because they’re watching, and I didn’t realize how much they’re watching, they watch that I dress a little better now, and that I carry myself different now, and they know my expectations and they know that I’m a hard ass, but they like to be good, and being good isn’t easy. And I remember in high school band, we were really bad, and I wish that somebody would’ve kicked their ass like I kick mine… I think that’s the, don’t hesitate to reach out to other people. They may be male band directors. It took me a long time to find my woman tribe. I moved away, so I don’t teach where I’m from, so my village was not here, and it was a bunch of men who carried me for the first ten years. But you can do it, and you can do good things. The gender thing is there, but… have you ever watched it’s this really excellent on this topic, even though it’s not band directors, it’s in music, it’s a documentary called “Girls in the Band”.

R: I haven’t watched that
I: You should look it up, it’s a documentary on female jazz musicians. It’s pretty… my kids cried when we watched it. It’s really really good, and it does put it in perspective. It does really help contextualize, kind of where we are in the industry. Do you have any questions for me at all?
R: No! You gave me a lot of good information that I’ll definitely put towards my thesis.
I: If I find it today, I will send you my bibliography for my thesis, it’s not the same topic as yours, but it is on gender and jazz, so there should be some crossover on resources. I’ve found in that, unfortunately, or fortunately, that there’s things you can do to bridge that gender gap, but at the end of the day, it comes down to good teaching. It doesn’t really matter if you have a male or a female director, it matters that your teacher opens the doors for you to do what you want to do.
R: Definitely!
I: Best of luck to ya!
R: Thank you for talking to me!
I: Let me know if you have any more questions. If you need anything once you start teaching.
R: Will do! Thank you so much!
I: Bye!
R: Bye!
Interview #5: Jessica

October 15th, 2017

I: Hello?
R: Hi! Is this [name redacted].
I: It is!
R: Hi! This is Kate Sellers, the student who contacted you about an interview.
I: Yes, how are you?
R: Good, how are you?
I: Good.
R: Just to let you know, this phone call is being recorded so I can go back and listen it to later. Is that okay with you?
I: Absolutely.
R: Awesome. So let’s start with what was your main motivation for going into high school band?
I: Well, I really just always wanted to teach high school band, when I was a kid in high school band, that was when I decided that I wanted to music ed as a career. I came out of college, I taught middle school, because that’s the job I could get, but I just wanted to do the high school thing, because I think the musicality, the depth musicality, and the more advanced music, and the marching band aspect was something that I always wanted to do. Marching band isn’t offered in middle school for our state, for obvious reasons.
R: As a woman in the field, do you feel isolated? Do you know of a lot of other women high school band directors in the area, or are you pretty much the only one that you know of?
I: I am the only one in the area, but I know of others across the state that I know, but that I communicate with on a consistent basis, not so much.
R: And did you end up teaching in the same region of the country that you grew up in?
I: Yes same place.
R: And do you feel like this region had an influence on your decision to go into high school band, or do you think if you lived anywhere, you would have gone into high school band?
I: It wouldn’t have mattered, it’s just what I wanted to do.
R: And it says here that you were a double major in flute and trombone. Trombone is a dominantly male instrument, did you experience any sexism being a trombone player, before during or beyond college?
I: No.
R: And do you have any examples of when you felt discriminated against because you were a woman in your position?
I: Um… yeah, early on, with my concert band, going to what we call “contests”, I think they’re called “music adjudication performances” in PA, or whatever you want to call it… I felt for a very long time that my bands weren’t judged on the same scale because I was female, and I was the only female high school director anywhere around. It took me eleven years to get a group to get a superior. And once we broke that barrier… I mean, I’ve had bands that I would have never
thought would get superiors get superior. But part of that was just people getting to know me, and it’s kind of a good old boys thing going on in our state, and I’ve always felt that.

R: And did you feel this ever, I’m sure if you direct jazz band, did you ever feel this with your jazz and marching bands as well?

I: Marching band, yes, jazz, no, because we don’t the adjudicating jazz thing in this state very much, so…

R: Have you felt ever felt any discrimination from your administration or parents, or is it mostly just the band community?

I: Um, never from administration. Parents when I was younger. They didn’t feel like I was…. I always felt like I was double-guessed on decisions that I’ve made. But as I’ve aged, in that my child is older than theirs and I am older than them now, I don’t feel that anymore. So I don’t know if that was age as much as gender.

R: As a wrap up question, I want to go into high school band. Do you have any advice for me as a young woman looking into getting into that field?

I: Yes, interesting because I have a student teacher right now, who is looking into getting into high school band as well, and she’s kind of asking the same questions… Um, I think things are just different now then they were twenty-five years ago when I started, and women can do what they want to do now. But my advice is you’ve got to be patient, patient with people and you’ve got to prove yourself. And I’m not sure it’s not just a young person thing. When I’m working with younger band directors, it’s like you know you’ve got to prove that you’ve got a clue first and then you got to sit back and listen to what the older folks tell you. So that’s the biggest thing, just be patient and let yourself age, and magically as you age, it gets easier. I think a lot of that is just experience, and I think a lot of that is just the ageism is worse than sexism, quite honestly.

R: I’ve heard that a lot, too, in my other interviews. I feel that women tend to look younger than men, so I had one band director who I talked to who a lot of people thought she was a high schooler all the time because she was shorter, and she looked younger, so that was really interesting, because I never really thought about that.

I: Yeah, and you have to dress older. Even though you may not want to dress older, dress older. Even now sometimes, because I’m not a dressy-up person, I just want to wear a t-shirt and shorts so I have to force myself to dress up because I look younger than I am now, so a lot of times the parents have difficulty believing that I am as old as I am. That’s a good thing, though. You know, dress up. One of the hardest things is getting the younger ones to understand is that you got to look older than the ones that you’re teaching. It’s hard to, when you’re young.

R: Thank you so much for talking to me, that’s really all the questions I have. I hope you have a nice Sunday!

I: You too! Alrighty, buh-bye!

R: Bye!
Interview #6: Rachel

October 15th, 2017

I: Hello?
R: Hi, this is Kate Sellers, is this [name redacted]?
I: This is.
R: Hi, I’m the Penn State student who contacted you about an interview
I: Yes!
R: Awesome! Just to let you know this phone call is being recorded so I can go back over it, for
my records. Is that okay with you?
I: Absolutely.
R: Awesome. So my first question is what was your main motivation for going into the field of
teaching high school band?
I: Oh gosh. Um, so I loved my band program as a student. I enjoyed playing, but marching band
was really a thing at my school, it was sort of socially what connected me to other people at my
school, especially as a freshman. And so I really loved that experience. When I was getting ready
to go off to college, I was not intending to major in music or music education, although I was
going to keep playing and thinking I would maybe minor, and the summer before I went to
school, I was part of a camp, and at that camp there was a program for those of us who were
graduating seniors where they had people come in and talk about what it was that they did in
music. So a conductor, a music education professor and et cetera, et cetera. My intended major
was psychology, and I hadn’t been drum major, or any kind of… I was a good player, but I
hadn’t been a student leader or anything like that. Um, and when she came in and she talked
about, in general, the idea of music education, but gave examples of things like “if you write this
rhythm, it is easy for people to read, but if you write the same exact thing in a different way,
people’s brains don’t process it as well”, and I thought “it’s psychology plus music, it’s the
perfect major, it’s what I should do!” And, as I was going through school, I guess my picture of
music education was the experience I had had, and so my head at the time, what I was going to
go do was be a band director like the one I had had, and have a competitive marching band and
all of that stuff, which is not what I necessarily did, but at the time, that was how things fit
together for me and what I sought forward as a path.
R: And you said that you’re teaching currently in the Northeast? And you’ve spent half of your
career in the Midwest? Did you teach high school band in the Midwest or did you teach another
subject area?
I: I taught high school band, and I also taught high school choir. And I was also, I taught middle
school band and choir as well, and spent some time as an assistant band director. I don’t think
I’ve taught significantly in anything besides band and choir. Maybe some general music thrown
in?
R: So did you notice a difference between teaching in Midwest and the Northeast, in terms of
being a female? Did you feel more or less isolated in either area?
I: Um, not necessarily in either area. Definitely over the course of time, I’ve seen a huge difference. Um, if you figure, I graduated from college in ‘95, and at the time didn’t know any female high school band directors. Middle school, yes, but not high school. So, yes my experience then was slightly different, but I don’t think it was location, I think it was just a function of time. Because by the time I left the Midwest, it was very different, and I got here, and it was about the same as what I had left behind, if that makes sense.

R: MhM, yeah. Where you are now, do you know a lot of other female high school band directors in your area, do you work with them a lot, or see them at competitions or contests?

I: I do know a fair number. My program doesn’t do the competition circuit or even large group festivals, but I certainly see other female high school band directors at All-Counties and All-States and area band festivals and that kind of thing. And through our county meetings and professional organization.

R: Have you experienced any type of discrimination based on your gender, being a high school band director, this could be from your school’s administration, the local band community, anything like that?

I: Um, yeah, yeah. The first one that comes to mind was right after I graduated for college I was applying for a position, and it was an assistant director at the middle and high school level and I knew the high school director well, and the high school director’s wife, who was also a band director. So this was another female band director, she was a middle school director, one of a few female band directors in the area at the time, and her statement to her spouse was that I should not get hired because I would just leave to go get pregnant and have babies.

R: Woah

I: And they would be hiring again in a couple of years. And I did not get that job… a good friend of mine who had more teaching experience did, and you know, for very good reasons, highly qualified, et cetera, et cetera, but yeah, that stuck especially as something that was coming from another woman. I kind of expected better. And then sort of in the early days, there was a meeting somewhere along the line, I can’t remember what it was, it was some sort of large organization, and all of the middle school directors were leaving to go discuss something together, and come back to the meeting, and there was one other woman and I stayed with the high school group, and somebody basically, the middle school directors already left, and I had to clarify that I teach high school. It seems kind of crazy now, because I don’t have to live that now, but yeah.

R: Did you ever experience any sort of ageism along with the sexism, did anybody mistake you for a high schooler, or treat you different because you were a younger teacher starting out?

I: Um, I mean, obviously, you would have sort of an occasional incident when somebody thinks you’re student, but I think that happens to every young student, no matter how much you dress up. There’s always going to be somebody who is not paying attention. So there’s nothing that sticks out in my mind, except I do remember being told by my supervising student teacher “you’re young, you look even younger, put your hair in a bun, and wear some glasses, always dress up extra” but I don’t remember being… that piece of it felt like “oh you’re a young director, you’re learning the ropes, let me tell you this thing” as opposed to “what are you doing in this room”. Right?

R: Kind of as a wrap up question: I’m looking into teaching high school band someday, what advice do you have for me as a young woman looking to get into this field?

I: Um, contemplate what, I would say this to a young man as well, but specifically because we still do wind up, you know, being a center part of home and family, think about how that will fit in your life. I don’t know, from the positions that I have had which I really really did enjoy,
required a lot of outside time because of marching band, because football games, because… and depending on who your partner is, if you decide to have kids, it can be really challenging to manage. The situation I have now is different, I don’t have marching band even though I do have high school, I have outside commitments, but its those that I choose: if I choose to vocal direct the musical, I can choose to do that. I’m at a school that my child can attend with me. So, thinking ahead, and maybe not having answers, but having an idea of how you might be able to navigate to a position that will allow you to do what you want to do. People will try to tell you “you can do everything!” You can’t do everything, but you can do some of everything. And so, thinking through what does that look like for me. Okay, “my partner has a job that is super flexible as far as time, so it’s really not an issue” or “my partner has a job that is completely inflexible as far as time”, so having a picture of how you’re going to make it work. Because it really is possible, but sometimes it’s about the position you’re in, or the people who are in that position with you, and what level of sharing you can do, and what level of sharing you can do at home and how you can make it work. I would say… gosh, again, so much is so different. You know, learn everything you can from everybody you can, and learn more about programs that are very different from what you went through, because there are so many, I think… I think your survey was posted in that band director’s board, is that where I found it?
R: Mhm
I: Yes, I’ve only joined that in the last year or so, and it is such an amazing picture of the huge diversity that our job is, from the people with six people in their band to the people with, you know, 700. And there’s a lot of different things out there that we don’t see coming through different programs, and maybe something that’s not what you went through is the thing that’s the right thing for you as a teaching personality and as a person, and um… yeah. So don’t be afraid to find out other things that are out there from things that you thought you wanted.
R: Yeah. Thank you so much for talking to me, I really appreciate your stories and your experiences. I’ll definitely use your stories to contribute to my research, thank you very much.
I: You’re welcome, and good luck!
R: Thanks, have a nice Sunday!
I: Bye!
R: Bye!
Interview #7: Veronica

October 15th, 2017

I: Hello! This is Kate Sellers, the student who contacted you about the interview?
R: Yes! Hi Kate, how are you doing today?
I: Good, how are you?
R: I’m good.
I: Just so you know, this phone call is being recorded so I can use it for my records, is that okay?
R: Yes that’s perfectly fine.
I: So my first question is what was your main motivation for going into high school band?
R: Um, my main motivation was my band director that I had when I was in high school. The high school band directors that I had came out and taught, we do things a little bit different here in [a Southern state], we go out to the elementary schools and start in 6th grade. And they came out and did that with us, and I had a different middle school band director. But, once I got into high school, I became pretty close to my high school band director. We had three at the time, but I was closer to one of them in particular, and he was like a father to me, in a lot of ways. So that really inspired me to be a band director, and I loved it. I loved feeling like I was included in something, like I was involved, and um, I loved the music, and that always helps too.
I: Do you know of a lot of other female band directors in the area, or are you the only one, that you know of?
R: Um, I know quite a few, there are a few female that teach middle school band, but as far as high school band, not really much around here. But I know there is one lady out farther, in the western part of [the Southern state] that is a high school director. But there’s one at a pretty big band program who has a woman there, but for the most part, I would say like 98% of people that teach high school band are men.
I: Do you think that this is specific to your region of the country? Do you have any knowledge if this is just your region or do you think this is like a country-wide thing?
R: I mean I think it’s more male dominated in this region more than other regions, but I still think it’s a predominantly male position, I would say, um, in part, maybe not the whole country, maybe in one area more than the other, but I’d say around here it’s more of a male occupation.
I: Do you have any examples, or stories, when you felt that you were discriminated against because you were a woman?
R: Um, yeah. I was, I think a lot, more in band, as far as “concert band season”, we don’t really go out and see other people, I mean I would go out to concert festivals and watch other bands and stuff, but its not like, or our performance assessment, we would do that, but we wouldn’t get to interact with a lot of people outside our program, unlike marching band competitions and things like that. I’m the assistant at the high school, and the head director is a man, and we’d both be standing there talking, and people will come up and interrupt me when I’m talking, more often than him, just different things that I’ve noticed or, they’ll come up and shake his hand and say “hey, [name redacted], how are you doing, what’s going on, your band sounds great” and only talk to him and don’t acknowledge that I did anything or whatever. And it’s not even people who don’t know who I am, it’s people that I know personally, “you know me, you know I’m a band director”. I know I look young for my age, so I understand the problem with that, but there’s been many times when people come up to
[the head director] and don’t even acknowledge me. It happens at marching band contests, it happens at All-Districts, it’s like I don’t even exist or do anything at the high school, which is not true. I also teach at the middle school, but I’m very involved at the high school as well. We both team teach everything, so, and that’s a little frustrating. I don’t feel like listen to my opinions as much as they do his, just little subtle things… or they’ll say things to me, there’s a couple band directors that have said things to me, that they would never ever say to [the head band director], you know, and stuff like that. And he notices it, too. So, just things like that.

R: Do you feel like it’s mostly from other band directors in the community rather than administrators or parents, is it mostly that kind of discrimination exclusively to other band directors and other band staff members?

I: Um, yeah, I mean both of our principals are both female, the middle and the high school, I don’t really get that… but my previous principal, that’s a whole another story. He’s a total jerk, so we won’t even include that, he’s an outlier. But, most of the discrimination, I would definitely say it comes from other band directors. Because I teach at both the middle school and the high school, I see both middle school directors and high school directors. And I would even say its mostly high school directors that do it as compared to middle school band directors. But, as far as administration or the community, I don’t really have that same sense, that same feeling as I get from other high school band directors.

R: Interesting. Kind of as a wrap up question, I’m looking into going into teaching high school band as a young woman, what advice do you have for me going into this field?

I: I wouldn’t say, you’ll probably run into things like that, unfortunately, that’s how it is… I don’t know what the climate is like in Pennsylvania, compared to here. I’m in the South as well, so I think that has some play into it a little bit. It used to bother me quite a bit, I would get really frustrated with it, and, not really hurt, just really frustrated, I guess in a way I was hurt by it, and now I just, they’re going to do what they’re going to do, and you can’t change that, you’re just going to have to go and just keep your focus on the kids, and why you’re doing this, and it doesn’t matter what other people think, it doesn’t matter what they say, it doesn’t matter what they don’t say, it doesn’t matter if they give you any credit, or even if its not because you’re a woman, it doesn’t really matter. what really matters is what you’re doing for those kids. And, just keep your focus on that, and they’re going to do what they’re going to do, and let your success speak for itself. If they don’t want to acknowledge it, so that’s their problem. Just keep your focus on the kids, and it’ll all work out.

R: Thank you so much for talking to me, I really appreciate your experience, and I’ll definitely use what you said for my research.

I: If there’s anyway that you can send me like your paper or whatever that you’re doing, I’m interested to see what other people have said and their experiences as well.

R: Yeah, I’ll probably email it out to everyone that I’m interviewing when I’m finished.

I: I hope this helps some.

R: Yes, it definitely will. Thank you!

I: Thanks, Kate. It’s been really nice to talk to you, to.

R: Thank you! It’s been great talking to you, too.

I: Best of luck in your career!

R: Thank you! Have a nice Sunday!

I: You too.

R: Bye

I: Bye
Interview #8: Dana

October 15th, 2017

I: Hello?
R: I’m the student who contacted you about an interview?
I: Yeah
R: Are you still good for that for right now?
I: Yes!
R: Awesome! Just so you know, I am recording this interview so I can go over it later for my records.
I: Sure!
R: So my first question is what was your main motivation for going into teaching high school band?
I: Um, my first main motivation was just making sure that music was a part of my life forever, and then the second thing would definitely be making an impact on kids’ lives, and being an important person in their life. My certification was in K-12, so part of me wanted to be an elementary school teacher, part of me wanted to be a middle school teacher, and then once I got into the field more, and student taught, I just realized that I connected with high schoolers the best, in addition to my middle schoolers.
R: Where you live, do you know of any other female band directors in your area that you might encounter at contests or competitions or district events, or stuff like that?
I: Yes, definitely.
R: How many do you know of that are close to you in your area?
I: You know, it’s kind of funny, I just had dinner with one the other day because she was new to the area and we were connecting, and she’s my new mentor teacher because she’s a more experienced teacher, through our state organization. And in our county there’s actually only three or four women high school band directors, but in neighboring counties and in our state district, there’s a lot more, probably fourteen, within our [state organization’s district].
R: So do you feel like there’s a pretty good community of female band directors where you are?
I: Yeah, I do. I actually was going over with her how great we actually are that women band directors in this area are wonderful and reasonably understanding and easy to work with. You know, it’s not like, oh female against female, it’s more that we all work together really well.
R: That’s really cool. Do you have any stories or experiences that you’d be willing to share where you feel like you’ve experienced discrimination because you were a female band director?
I: Um, yeah, actually, so I’m a young teacher, I’m 26, and I’m in my third year of teaching, um, I wouldn’t necessarily call this discrimination but I would call it borderline sexual harassment, um. I was walking on stage for my first high school concert, and I had on a very conservative outfit, black tights, a longer dress, past my knees but not to the floor, and as I was walking on stage, someone whistled at me. And it was weird, my about-to-be husband was there, and this was my first high school concert.
R: Um, and do you feel like the discrimination... have you experienced discrimination at a band event, a competition or contest, something like that, where you feel like you would be treated differently if you were a male?
I: I don’t think so, but I feel like I live and work in a community that’s an anomaly. I feel like my male colleagues have been nothing short of amazing. I mean, I don’t know how they would have treated me if I were a male, but I’ve never felt like they’ve thought any less of me, I don’t feel like I’ve ever been a victim of it within my profession in the county. Now, when I was in college, I was so paranoid about this, I was paranoid that it would effect my judge’s scores at festivals and stuff like that, but I’ve been pleasantly surprised that I don’t think this has happened.
R: Did you go to college in the same region that you’re teaching now?
I: Yes
R: Did you grow up in that region as well?
I: No, I would say, about an hour, so not, I wouldn’t say it’s like the same area, by the way that we treat the area. The schools aren’t competing against each other, in any sense, or whatever, but it’s only about an hour away.
R: Yeah, it’s really interesting that you feel accepted by the band community, because talking to other female band directors, I’ve been getting mixed reviews about their discrimination experiences, so it’s really encouraging to hear your take. It’s great that you feel like you have a female band director community.
I: It’s crazy! I mean, I was so paranoid, and that’s why part of me wanted to be an elementary teacher, but that’s not fair to elementary teachers, either, but it’s like, I was so nervous about it, but I don’t feel like I have anything to be nervous about. I mean, this was like an obsession for me, I, too, am kind of interested in some sort of research study on moms as band directors (I’m not a mom), you know, things like that, and I really feel like it’s a unique situation that I’m in. We do a county honors band, and one of the (quote on quote) “old white men”, of our county, was like, we were talking about which directors we were thinking about asking, because we bring in a collegiate director, he said “this year we had a male director, I think it’s really important that our students experience a female director in this position as well for next year”. Our reaction was “what?! Okay, wonderful”
R: Wow that’s really awesome! So kind of like as a wrap-up question, I am looking into teaching high school band, do you have any advice as a young woman, I’m a senior, so I’m getting down to student teaching and getting ready to enter the real world, so do you have any advice for me on that?
I: Well, besides from being a woman, um, you know, and things like that, do what you can to be the best musician you can be, and take this final time in college really seriously with whatever private lessons you have left, because what I’ve noticed is that you never really have any time to work on musical things once you’re working, especially the first year of teaching, I guess sometimes, I was an astute individual, I did well in my music classes and things like that, but I thought “well, I’ll just learn that when I’m teaching” and stuff like that, I’ll look back on these notes, and I’ll figure it out later, and I really wish I hadn’t done that, especially in some situations. The other thing is to prepare yourself to being on all the time, that was the hardest transition for me, especially my first and second year, you have to go go go, and be the energy in the room, for the most part, and set transitions, I’m not a morning person, so getting up early and things like that. On the female side of things, keep the mentors that you do have close, especially if you do have some strong female mentors and don’t be afraid to ask them questions. I’ve been blessed with strong mentors who have been patient with me. You know, you’re not alone. I
would be nothing without my mentors, who have helped me, both female and male, so just, in a sense, latching onto them, and there will be things you will figure out on your own, but not being afraid to ask questions, send that email that has a million questions in it, send it to a million people.

R: Thank you so much for talking to me, this is actually an encouraging phone call for me, and thank you for being willing to participate in my research.

I: Yeah, oh- my last piece of advice, even though we have this love of teaching and an emotional connection to kids, schools are still businesses, and if you are job searching and you get hired at one job, yes, you have to take whatever job you can get, but if legally, another job comes along and it’s a better job and it’s a better paying job and would be better for your life, remember that employees leave jobs and it’s okay to leave even before school starts. I actually did that, and it was the craziest thing, I was going to be a K-12 teacher and have to teach art and library and things like that, but my current job fell into my lap and I was like “I already know some of these kids, I can’t leave them” and you look at the numbers and you got to do what’s right for you.

R: Yeah! Thanks for your advice, and thank you for talking to me.

I: Sure! Well, good luck with everything!

R: Yeah, thanks! Have a nice Sunday evening.

I: You too! Buh-bye!

R: Bye!
Interview #9: Maria

October 22nd, 2017

[Recording cuts out for greeting]

R: Just to let you know, this call is being recorded, so I can go back and transcribe it, is that okay with you?
I: Absolutely!

R: Alright. So my first question is what was your main motivation for going into teaching high school band?
I: I just really wanted to do it, you know. I decided when I was in eighth grade that I wanted to be a band director, and I mean at that point I hadn’t had any high school experience, but I guess, like, just, I had a really great high school band experience. I’ve always wanted… everything I do, I want to do the best, and I want to be, like, the top of the crop, and it seemed like the best way to do that, and you know, when you’re going to college, you’ve only had middle and high school band experience, and I liked high school, I wanted to teach high school, oh and I enjoyed marching band.

R: Did you end up teaching in the same region where you grew up, or a different region?
I: Different.

R: Which region did you grow up, which part of the country did you grow up in? And you say you’re teaching in [Southwestern state]?
I: Yes. I grew up in [the metro area of a large city in a Southern state].

R: So, do you know of many female high school band directors that are near you, that you encounter at marching band competitions, or events?
I: Actually, yes, there are a large number where I am right now. Mainly because its rural, and, so, I don’t know, actually, kind of side note, I’m working on my masters right, and I am working on similar research, so this summer I did a literature review on women in high school band directing, and there’s a major link, I mean you’ve probably run into this too, school size, and chances of women teaching, I mean I’m in a very rural area, it makes sense that there’s a lot of women here. And a lot of the schools around me are combined middle and high school, so, um, yes, I actually do run into a fair number of women at marching contests and region meetings. Um, the larger school, the less likely it’s a woman in charge.

R: Do you feel like there’s a good community with the women band directors, do you feel like you have positive interactions with the women directors that you encounter?
I: Most of them, um, I do feel like they wanted to make sure I was actually sticking around. I’m in this region because my husband teaches in the collegiate level, I’m kind of tethered to this area due to him being at the college, and so, I think they kind of wanted to suss me and see if like, because, in [Southwestern state] and probably everywhere, they really don’t like outsider, and the band community in [Southwestern state] is amazing, but I think they wanted to see me work, and once they saw that I was willing to put in the time and effort to care for my students, they were a lot more willing to help out.

R: Interesting. Have you ever experienced any sort of discrimination because you are a woman, um, do you have any stories or examples of when you felt discriminated against?
I: Every single job interview I’ve been on, I’ve been asked if I have color guard experience. And I’m almost positive that doesn’t happen for my male colleagues. Um, I do also feel the need, because I’m 26, and I’m married, but I don’t have any kids yet, and I feel the need to explain that I don’t have any children and I don’t want to have any until I’m finished with my masters, and how long that’s, I feel the need to lay that timeline out for people, maybe I shouldn’t, but I know they can’t ask and I know that they wonder. Um, I’m trying to think, it’s like little things, like the color guard thing. It’s not like someone that’s come up to me and said “because you’re a woman…” and I had experience as a solo band director at a 5-12 and people didn’t expect my band to do very well, and it was partially being an outside, partially being a woman, it was very interesting. Um, sometimes the interactions, and now I’m the head middle school, high school assistant, with a male head band director. And watching the way that school board members interact with him, versus, (which are mainly middle age white males) watching the way they interact with him versus the way they interact with me is very interesting. Even the superintendent, he won’t joke around with me as much, and I try to tell myself it’s my personality, but I think part of it is sexism, too. I mean, the way they interact with him is because of what they are, and I get that, oh, and when I was new at this job, the superintendent and the assistant superintendent bought popsicles for the kids for band camp, which was awesome. I was in the office working with the drum majors on their conducting. And so, and I knew they were coming, I was walking the drum majors back. My coworker had five children of his own, and his wife was up with the band a lot, but had not met the assistant superintendent and um, his kids were there, just kind of running around, and I walked in with the two drum majors so they could get their popsicles and [the head band director’s] children came in with us, and I walked up to introduce myself to the assistant superintendent, and he asked if I was Mrs. [head band director’s last name]. Like, I was the wife, oh you must be the wife! I wanted to be like “NO.” He is twice my age, and I’m the assistant band director. Just those kinds of assumptions, and I know it was a mistake because I walked in with his kids, but just little things like that.

R: You said in your email that you’re a flute major (I’m a flute major), and it’s considered more of a “feminine” instrument. Do you feel like you were excluded from, for example, drum corps or jazz band, from things that would have helped you as a band director, or did you seek out opportunities, how did that play out to your experience in college, and then to your future career?

I: You know, I never felt excluded, I never really had the desire to do drum corps, that’s becoming more of a thing, that if you play a brass instrument, you’re expected to have that experience. I have seen colleagues of mine who have had that experience be very successful, but half the thing, I’ve never played in a jazz band, so I do feel a little uncomfortable teaching it, and, yeah, my middle school band director told me that I couldn’t do jazz band, and I was all fired up and wanted to play in the jazz band and do all the extra ensembles, but he said “no, no flutes.” I mean, I don’t know, if that would have helped me or not, because I didn’t have that experience. In college I didn’t try to do jazz band or anything like that, I’m not sure. I will say that the flute studio that I was in was very performance oriented, and I think that has definitely impacted me, I was one of the only music ed majors in the flute studio when I was there, and still, my flute professor does not attract many music ed major, the girl I went to school with is like um, she’s now with the New York Phil, so it’s like that kind of thing, and I think that if my flute professor had been more knowledgeable about music that might have helped me figure out some things. And I needed ed advice, she’s not the first person I would call, necessarily, and I missed having that mentor from her.
R: And then as a wrap up question, I want to go into teaching high school band someday, what kind of advice do you have for me, as a senior, staring down student teaching, ready to get into the field?
I: Um, let me see, I guess, just like, don’t be so concerned if you don’t get a high school job right away. I actually spent a year teaching elementary music before I got a band job. It really improved my ear because I sang every day, and helped with my classroom management, because if you can handle 25 kindergarteners, you can definitely handle a band class. So don’t like freak out if you can’t get that dream job right away. Because it might not happen. If someone had said that to me, I would have not listened, so maybe in a few years you will remember and won’t be offended. And go for it, go to conferences, keep in touch with people and seek out other lady band directors. I really try to correct the imbalance when I can. I really try to keep in touch with my friends who graduated with me who are female band directors, and like, you know, there will be times where you are discriminated against, and you may not notice it at the time, of course, that roomful of men, they felt more comfortable with my male colleague, um, it’ll be okay, (laughs), just be smart. And obviously, you are, you’re taking on this project as a senior, um, you know, if you can, hire other women, or mentor other women, seek out other women, just go for it. If that makes sense.
R: Yeah it does!
I: I’m not super old, I don’t have super sage advice. You know, you play the flute, I’m not trying to stereotype you, if you like to wear dresses, don’t not wear dresses, and I know that sounds really stupid, and that’s one of things you asked me about, the women in my area, I don’t mean this in a weird way, they don’t dress cute, and when I go to meetings and stuff I dress up because I’m a professional, and that’s how I’m comfortable, but maybe that’s not how they feel comfortable. Don’t change yourself just because the people around you are like that. If that makes sense.
R: Yeah that makes total sense.
I: Just because, people need to see all kinds of women being band directors, and for a long time, there’s been a stereotype of women band directors, the research shows that there are more lesbians than not, and that’s perfectly cool, but be you, just go do your thing and it’ll work out, and if you’re student teaching experience sucks it doesn’t mean your first job will. I’ve known people that have left after student, and yeah. Just remember that it’s not everything.
R: Alrighty, thank you so much for talking to me and helping me with my research.
I: I would love to read your research!
R: I’ll be sending it out to everyone I interviewed.
I: Great! Good luck with everything, good luck with student teaching.
R: Thank you! Have a nice Sunday evening!
I: You too! Thank you, bye!
ACADEMIC VITA

Academic Vita of Katherine Sellers
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EDUCATION:

*The Pennsylvania State University*- University Park, PA
Bachelor of Music Education May 2018
Schreyer Honors College

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RELEVANT EXPERIENCE:

Student Teacher January-May 2018
Perkiomen Valley School District
Collegeville, PA

Youth Leader January 2018-Present
New Life Presbyterian Church
Glenside, PA

Counselor June-August 2017
Rockwood Adventures Teen Travel
Blue Bell, PA

Counselor June-August 2015, 2016
Sesame-Rockwood Day Camp
Blue Bell, PA

Assistant Director of Band and Orchestra June-August 2014
Consortium of the Arts
King of Prussia, PA

Administrative Assistant June 2011-June 2014
Music Training Center
Conshohocken, PA and Ardmore, PA
PERFORMANCE EXPERIENCE:

- Penn State Marching Blue Band  
  - Music Section Leader and Guide  
    Fall 2014-Fall 2017
- Penn State Symphonic Band  
  - Principal Flautist  
    Fall 2017
  - Conductor  
    Fall 2017
- Penn State Flute Choir  
  - Fall 2017
- Oriana Singers  
  Spring 2015-Fall 2017
- Jazz Combos  
  Spring 2015-Spring 2017

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES:

- Sigma Alpha Iota  
  - Vice President of Membership  
    Fall 2016-Spring 2017
  - Recording Secretary  
    Fall 2017
- Jazz Educator’s Club  
  - Vice President  
    Fall 2016-Spring 2017
- NAfME Collegiate  
  Fall 2015-Present

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS:

- NAfME Collegiate/PCMEA
- National Flute Association

SCHOLARSHIPS AND HONORS

- Music Activities Fund Scholarship
- Future Community Leader, presented by the Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce
- Presenter at Research Forum, 2018 PMEA Annual Conference
- Schreyer Academic Excellence Scholarship