

The Academic Environment Of One Junior High School In Northeastern Pennsylvania As Perceived By The Administration And The English, Mathematics, And Music Faculty

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The academic environments of today's elementary and secondary schools have changed dramatically over the last decade. One of the major impetuses behind this change is the far-reaching affects of the No Child Left Behind legislation. The purpose of the study was to discover and describe the academic culture and climate, as it relates to the music program, of a non arts-integrated junior high school, through the perceptions of representative members of the English, mathematics, and music teachers and school administrators. The teachers' areas of expertise, math, English and music, are those most often identified as being impacted by involvement in musical activities as cited in the music/academic achievement research. The research was accomplished through direct interviews with three members of the English department, three members of the mathematics department, four members of the music department, the school principal, and the district superintendent.

The foci of the interviews centered upon personal belief systems, teaching and learning, the arts, and the junior high school environment. The study revealed that the faculty and administration perceive that high stakes testing, most notably the PSSA's, has affected all areas of the curriculum. While all of the respondents had a high regard for the cognitive and social benefits of the school music program they also recognize that Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) must be attained. The music program, particularly the choirs, has lost students to tutorial programs intended for those that are deficient in the tested areas. The fear of many is that as NCLB encompasses more academic areas,

students who might significantly benefit from being part of the music program will be unable to fit music courses into their schedules due to remedial demands.