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A SURVEY OF MUSIC SCHEDULING AND
CREDITING PRACTICES IN 28 MONTANA HIGH SCHOOLS

by

Stephen L. Niblack
B.A., Montana State University, 1939

Presented in partial fulfillment of the
requirement for the degree of Master
of Music in Music Education

Montana State University

1949

Approved:

John Cowden
Chairman of Board
of Examiners

W.T. Clark
Dean, Graduate School

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author is indebted to the music directors in the high schools of Montana who responded to a request for information regarding their scheduling and crediting problems and who gave their time to fill out the questionnaire. The author wishes to especially thank Professor Stanley M. Teel and Dean John Crowder, of the School of Music, at Montana State University, for their counsel and guidance.

INTRODUCTION

During the time in which the school music movement has been developing there has been a constant controversy as to the real place of music activity in the life of the individual student and the student body as a whole. Regardless of the opinions or arguments on either side the music program has continued to grow and expand until now it is considered by all concerned as an important and necessary part of the whole educational picture. With such a large segment of the student body taking part, and with the active interest of the public in the way of increasing demands for performance, more and more time is needed for the preparation of the groups. Along with this has come the increasingly strong realization of the important contribution of music to the educational, emotional, and cultural needs of the student. As a result there is a need for something uniform to be done in setting up class meeting schedules and granting credit for participation in music groups.

No matter how competent, well trained, energetic, or musically sensitive a director might be, his efforts will be seriously handicapped unless the schedule of classes is such that his talents can be put to efficient use. Scheduling is of basic importance to the effectiveness of the whole program. A fine director, a fine physical plant, the most carefully

chosen materials, and the highest quality of instruments will mean little unless music work can be scheduled so as to make it possible for students to take part. It is wasteful and inefficient when large amounts of money and time have been invested in the training of a student and then for reasons of scheduling he is unable to participate in a music group. The schedule must be arranged in such a way that every student may have some sort of musical experience during some part of his high school years if the department expects to justify itself educationally. In an efficient and productive program there will be two points of emphasis. One should be for the general, cultural development of the student body as a whole, the other to give more advanced training to the skilled performing musician. It is in this way that the school may best serve the community, the school, and the individual student.

Associated closely with the growth of school music has come the problem of credit to be granted to those students taking part. As soon as music became a regular school subject and moved out of the extra-curricular field there came a demand that credit be granted as in any other subject. An increase in the amount of credit granted in music was used as a means of attracting more students into music classes and when the student found that he could have the benefits of group participation, the enjoyment of organized

activity, and still receive school credit toward graduation, music groups filled quickly with those students who may not have otherwise been interested.

In considering the matter of scheduling and crediting music groups it is impossible to overlook the importance of the attitude of the administrator. It is his responsibility to set up a school program which will meet the needs of the community and which can be justified in the eyes of the taxpayer. Without the support and interest of the administrator a music department cannot become completely effective.

School administrators are seldom trained in music. The school music program is of comparatively recent origin and administrators are not sure of its place in education. It is up to the music educator to lead the way. The administrator wants to have the best school he can. He wants to meet the needs and demands of the community by which he is employed. He will place music in a desirable position on the schedule and grant it proper credit if he feels that it is educationally sound and well administered.

More and more school administrators realize the important place which the music department holds as a public relations medium. In the past this was taken care of by winning athletic teams, strong debate squads, and fine dramatics

departments. To these forces has now been added the force of music. To quote an editorial found in the Music Educators Journal,¹

" . . . the work cannot all be done in the classroom. The music teacher has exceptional privileges in the way of parental contacts and community services. In fact he rates No. 1, in and out of school, as a public relations person."

The educational philosophy of the music educator is of great importance. How does he feel about the true place of his program in the educational picture? He must be able to interpret his activities in terms of their contribution to the total school program if he expects to win and hold the good will and cooperation upon which his success depends. He must recognize the fact that his program must not only reach the talented few but must touch the life of every boy and girl in the entire system in some way.

¹Clifford V. Buttlerman, "Mobilizing Public Support For Education", Music Educators Journal, Vol. 33: January 1947, p. 9.

THE PROBLEM

The problem with which this survey is concerned is to determine prevailing practices in:

- (a) scheduling music classes and activities
- (b) granting credit to students taking part in such classes and activities.

Having reported the facts and data pertinent to the problem, conclusions will be formulated as to the significance of the findings.

Since there is a definite relationship between the size of the student body and the problem of scheduling the survey is limited to those twenty-eight high schools in Montana having 200 or more enrolled as of September 1948. The enrollments ranged from 200 to 1500. Two senior high schools had no ninth graders while the remaining twenty-six were four year institutions.

Data for the study was gathered by means of a questionnaire² plus some personal interviews.

It is significant to note that in figuring the percentage of participation those schools having the smaller enrollments had a higher percentage of pupils taking part

²See Appendix B.

than in the larger schools. It is not within the scope or intent of this paper to discover the underlying reasons for this condition but it does serve to show that there is a need for adjustments in the scheduling situation in the larger schools if they wish to reach those students not now being reached. Table I below presents the findings in the matter of percentage of participation in schools of various size.

TABLE I

Comparative Enrollments in Music Activities
with Respect to Total School Enrollment

Total School Enrollment	Number in music groups	Percentage of Participation	Scheduling Difficulties
A 1585	367	23%	none
B 1165	219	19%	yes
C 1150	387	33%	none
D 1180	398	33%	slight
E 950	210	22%	some
F 525	225	42%	some
G 475	230	49%	yes
H 450	237	52%	definitely
I 360	175	48%	definitely
J 350	250	71%	yes
K 338	160	44%	yes
L 297	40	14%	slight
M 252	75	30%	definitely
N 225	117	86%	very slight

Note: Words used in the last column express the attitude of the director as to the relative importance of scheduling in the music department.

Referring to question seven of the questionnaire³ which asks, "Do you feel that scheduling is of major importance to the success of your department?", it was found that with one exception directors agree that scheduling is of major importance. Note School B in Table I.⁴ It has an enrollment placing it among the five largest high schools in the state, yet there are only 219 students, or 19%, participating in a music organization. The school has a fine physical plant, a well trained and experienced director, but scheduling difficulties exist which make it impossible for this department to fulfill its obligation to the school and community.

Going down to the smallest school listed on the table, we find the percentage of participation to be 86%. In this case the director stated that his administration was very cooperative in the matter of scheduling. This shows the great importance of the attitude of the administrator as was pointed out in the introductory pages of this paper.

Admittedly these are two extreme examples but they serve to prove the point that scheduling is a problem on the basis of actual conditions existing in Montana.

³See Appendix B.

⁴See Page 6.

There are four patterns of scheduling systems in general use in the 28 high schools covered by the survey.

First is the type wherein music group meetings are scheduled so as to dovetail with some other class which does not meet every day of the school week. For example, a chorus class of all freshman students could be held on those days of the week when the students were not in gymnasium class. In many schools there are other classes than gymnasium which are handled as part-time subjects, not meeting every day. Music can be very successfully and conveniently scheduled on these off days. This type of scheduling recognizes that music in the life of the average citizen is not a full time activity but one which can be worked in with other enjoyable and worthwhile cultural pursuits not necessary to the earning of a livelihood. Such a program is truly realistic in its conception. Many more students, not otherwise likely to be taking part in a music class, will be attracted and benefited. In schools not employing such a system it was noted that there was much greater necessity for outside hours rehearsals and the percentage of the student body taking part was much smaller. The survey showed that in the cases where a part-time type schedule was in use a larger number of students was being reached and the overall results and efficiency of the department was stepped up.

A second type of scheduling was that which can best

be described as a "rotating schedule". In this system a music class was scheduled on the first period on Monday, the second period on Tuesday, third on Wednesday, etc. through the week for the six periods, or whatever periods were used in the school day. In this way the members of the group would miss each of their regular classes once each six weeks. Another variation of this system was to use it on only three days each week, as follows: Monday - first period, Wednesday - second period, Friday - third period, etc. Many more variations could be worked out if desired. It is especially helpful in those schools where, because of the size of the student body, only one section of any subject can be scheduled so that if a student wishes to, or is required to, take that subject there is only one period on which it is offered. By means of the rotating schedule system any student, regardless of his other class schedule, is enabled to take the music class for which he is best fitted, or in which he is most interested. For example: the director wishes to have a carefully picked group of singers to make up an a capella choir, open only to those students who can pass a rather rigid tryout. Such a group will be made up of students from all classes: Freshmen, Sophomores, Juniors, and Seniors, none of whose schedules of other classes would be alike. In this case a rotating type schedule is about the only one which would make it possible to get those students needed to

make the choir a success. The only alternative is to put the rehearsal time outside of school hours, which is the very condition to be avoided. Of the twenty-eight schools responding to the questionnaire, only one used the system as described above. This school has used it for some eight years with rather outstanding success. A complete schedule of the plan is mimeographed at the beginning of the school year and a copy is placed on the bulletin board in each teacher's classroom. In this way the teacher can know in advance just what students will be out and when. A detailed system of rotating music class meetings may be found in, "Getting Results With School Bands," by Prescott and Chidester.⁵

A third type of scheduling found in the larger high schools was one in which music classes were scheduled on the basis of class rank. One school contacted in the survey used this system in scheduling all vocal work. There was one chorus for Freshmen only, another for Sophomores, and another for Juniors and Seniors. This works quite satisfactorily with singing classes since the factor of the development of skill as a performer is not quite so important as in

⁵Prescott - Chidester, Getting Results With School Bands, (Minneapolis: Paul A. Schmitt Co., 1938), Pp. 149-156.

an instrumental class. It can be readily seen that in the case of a band the membership must be based to a greater extent upon the performance ability of the student. Once a student has developed to a point where he can perform well on an instrument and a large amount of time and money has been invested toward that development, it is up to the school to set up a schedule which will make it possible to realize something on that investment. There might be a situation, in a very large high school, wherein there are so many advanced players on all the different instruments that more than one full band could be formed. However, in the average high school of Montana it has been found necessary to cut across class boundaries in order to have any sort of effective band organization. The one school in Montana using this class rank type of scheduling of vocal classes was one of the five largest schools in the state. The system has been in use for quite a long time so that students are accustomed to it in so far as their understanding of entrance requirements is concerned. It has not been necessary to set up a schedule for a picked performance choir since the Junior-Senior chorus class is made up of students who have come up through the two earlier class choruses and so have developed a strong interest and rather outstanding ability by that time. It is significant, and interesting to note, however, that only 23% of the entire student body is taking part

in the music program, with only 194 pupils in the three choruses described above. With a student body of approximately 1600 students many are being neglected by the system of scheduling now in use. Also with the entire vocal program of activities being handled in the space of three periods per day some revision of practice and policy is indicated.

A fourth, and quite widely used system of music class scheduling, was one wherein music group rehearsals were held outside of regular school hours. Students must be willing to be present during the noon hour, after school, before school in the morning, in the evening, or on Saturday. This system was used in all of the twenty-eight high schools contacted to a greater or lesser degree. In no school was it used exclusively. One, however, had to do all the instrumental training work during the school day in small groups, then bring the entire ensemble together at some outside time. Seven of the schools used outside hours quite extensively while the remainder used these hours only for special occasions just prior to a concert or the like. It is noticeable that in those schools using the outside hours system to any extent there is a smaller percentage of participation and there are not as many different types of organizations functioning as might be if it were possible to get them together during

school time. The fact that seldom is any school credit given for work done outside of school hours may have some bearing on this condition. The credit aspect of this study will be considered in a later part of the paper so will not be dwelt upon here.

One phase of the problem of scheduling in Montana schools is that which exists in connection with the transportation of high school students to and from school in buses. Montana is a state of great distances. The establishment of the county high school system in Montana is explained by the fact that in the earlier days of the development of the educational system the population was thinly scattered over a large area and it was found more effective and economical to establish one large school rather than several smaller ones. In recent years there has been a gradual increase in population density in many parts of the state, along with an increase in birth rate, giving rise to the problem of supplying high school level education to many boys and girls not living near a high school. Figures in the survey show that there are twelve high schools wherein the bus students constitute a scheduling problem when an attempt is made to include them in music organizations. In two of the twelve schools mentioned, the directors felt that bus students created a really serious problem since almost one third of the students in the

school rode buses and were being entirely left out of the music program. In fourteen of the schools surveyed the problem of scheduling was not affected by bus students. The remaining twelve schools felt that the bus students created a scheduling problem to a greater or lesser degree. The most significant fact, as far as this study is concerned, is the fact that in the case of those schools wherein bus students were a problem nothing was being done about the situation to make it possible to include these students.

No modern high school band feels itself complete unless its outdoor functions are graced by the addition of a large unit made up of the most attractive girls in school strutting in front of a parade twirling a baton or swinging a flag. Much in the same way that music has grown up in the school system, so has twirling become an important part of the showmanship phase of the band's work. In the minds of school people has arisen the question, "Whose responsibility shall the twirling activity be?" Question 8 of the questionnaire⁶ which asks, "Should twirling be the responsibility of the music department or the physical education department?", is an attempt to get at the general feeling on the part of

⁶See Appendix B.

music directors as to the place of twirling. Without qualification of their opinion eight directors stated that they felt twirling should be the responsibility of the music department. In the opinion of twelve it should be handled by the physical education department. In this group most of them qualified their opinions in several ways. One felt that the physical education department should handle all of the band's outdoor drill work, including twirling. Several felt that the physical education staff should handle twirling but under the control of the band director. The remaining eight felt that the responsibility should be shared by the two departments.

Turning now to the part of the questionnaire dealing with granting of credit reference is made to question 9,⁷ seeking the opinion of directors as to the importance of credit granting. Eleven opinions showed that this was of serious consequence in relation to students taking or not taking music classes. These directors felt that a large part of the student body was interested primarily in earning credit. There were six who felt that credit granted would have no effect one way or another. One director had made some attempt to experiment with the matter of crediting and felt that as far as he could

⁷See Appendix B.

ascertain it made no difference in the participation whether credit was granted or not. Conflict with athletic group trips was a much more serious problem with him in its effect upon music group membership. The remaining eleven directors felt that credit granting had some slight effect but not serious enough to be considered a problem.

Directly related to the matter of granting credit is the use of marks to indicate the standing of a pupil in the class. Honor roll standings are often determined by a system of points allotted the various grades. In the majority of schools music group members were graded by the use of the letters A, B, C, D, and E or F. Eighteen directors rate music pupils in this way without variation. Seven schools differentiate between band and vocal groups by using S for satisfactory and U for unsatisfactory in rating glee clubs. This was explained as being due to the fact that in general vocal classes open to any student, there was no outside preparation expected. It is noticeable that in all but one instance regular school credit was awarded to glee club. One school reports a practice in which the amount of credit is simply recorded in the permanent grade record but no grade is given.

Every high school contacted in the survey had some type of system in which emblems or letters were awarded to music group members. In only one case was a letter given in lieu of regular school credit. This instance was one in which

twirlers were given emblems upon completion of a certain length of service. In all other schools, awards were given beyond the regular school credit mainly as an inducement for special services to the department, extra hours of practice, perfect attendance, playing solos, or longer than normal years of membership.

A reference to Table II⁸ will give a more condensed picture of the findings of the questionnaire. In using this table as a guide in determining prevailing practices in scheduling and crediting music class activity, it is necessary to understand the system used in recording data in the last column. Full credit means that if a class meets every day the same amount of credit is granted as in any solid subject. In the case of a class meeting less than five times a week, credit is given proportionately and it is still considered a full credit class. By half credit or less is meant that even though the student may attend class every day, he will still receive only a half or quarter credit.

In analyzing the facts as presented by the table it becomes apparent that there are more bands in the high schools than any other type of musical organization. They are

⁸Table II, page 18.

avored by being scheduled within the regular school day more than other groups. They rehearse a greater number of days per week and receive more credit than other organizations.

Orchestras are found in less than half of the schools contacted even though this activity is placed in the daily schedule on a par with other organizations. Orchestras do not receive as much credit compared with band. One significant fact must be kept in mind when considering enrollments of orchestras. Even though the figures do not show it, there is much duplication of personnel between band and orchestra since wind players must be used in both groups, while string players will be in orchestra only. This fact would tend to cut down the actual average number in Montana high school orchestras.

Mixed choruses attract the greatest number of students. From figures shown by the table there is not correlation between the credit granted and the attractiveness of the activity since only two schools grant full credit for mixed chorus as compared to ten in the case of band. Since mixed choruses do not meet every day of the week, the group is more attractive because of the possibility of dovetailing it with some other part-time school class such as gymnasium.

An a capella choir was considered to be a vocal organization separate from the mixed chorus with no duplication

of personnel and rehearsing at a different time of day. There are cases where directors have an a capella choir as a part of the general mixed chorus class. Certain members of the group are chosen in making up a picked public performance choir. Using this interpretation there were only six a capella choirs found in Montana high schools with half of them rehearsing outside of school hours and only two receiving full credit.

Girls' glee clubs rank next in frequency to bands but do not receive as favorable consideration in the matter of schedule time or amount of credit granted. The group activity itself is sufficient attraction. Compared with boys' singing groups, girls are much more inclined to take part. This cannot be blamed on scheduling since the table shows that boys' groups rehearse in school time more often than girls.

That phase of music in the high schools having to do with theory is being neglected in Montana. Only four schools of the twenty-eight offer anything other than the usual performing type of music activity.

With only two schools carrying on the piano ensemble work, this activity is of no significance. The same may be said of drum corps.

Small ensembles are an important activity as is shown by the fact that most of the schools contacted have

several. With all but a few of them rehearsing outside of school time it is evident that they are considered worthwhile and important to the participants.

CONCLUSIONS, OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

The scheduling of music activity is a problem of basic importance to the school program. There is no one best plan. The solution of this problem must be approached on a local basis and must depend upon the attitude and cooperation of the administrator and the local music director and upon conditions peculiar to the individual school-community.

In 27 of the 28 schools surveyed all music groups were scheduled during regular school periods; therefore, it is concluded that bus students no longer constitute a scheduling problem.

There is no correlation between the amount of credit granted for a music activity and the number of pupils taking part in it.

Schools of larger enrollment tend to have a smaller percentage of participation in music.

Observations

It was observed in connection with this study that many school administrators are tending toward the seven and eight period day as compared to the formerly more common six periods. This is more especially true in the case of schools

having enrollments around 200. Personal interviews revealed that these administrators feel there is no other way in which they may include the additional subjects they wish to offer. This trend will develop more with the beginning of the school year of 1949-1950 when the four-year state physical education requirement takes effect.

Even though most music activity is scheduled in the regular school day there are still several schools in which bus students are excluded from the more specialized activities of the music organizations. Because of being unable to arrive at school prior to the opening of regular classes, or to remain after regular classes end for the day, or to be in town over week-ends bus students cannot take part in many activities which are of great value and pleasure.

There is a tendency to emphasize the performance groups as compared to the music appreciation or music fundamentals class in Montana high schools. This is borne out by the fact that in only one school was there a class in general music and only three offered a music appreciation class. All other music activities were organized primarily for public appearance.

Scheduling and crediting practices now prevalent in the larger high schools of Montana indicate that administrators and school people in general are considering music a

regular curriculum subject. This is evidenced by the fact that music groups are almost entirely scheduled within the regular school day and that school credit toward graduation is granted for music work.

Recommendations

A more uniform system of credit granting and credit recording would be of value. In the case of students transferring from one school to another it is difficult for the receiving school to evaluate credits when the system is entirely different from that being used locally. The survey showed that at least three different systems are currently in use. In one case two credits are given for one full year of a subject with a decimal system of figuring credit for classes meeting less than five days per week. Another school gives ten credits per year for a class meeting every day with classes meeting less than five days per week being credited according to the number of days per week they meet, for example a class meeting three days a week receives three credits, etc. In the third case the school uses a system of fractions seemingly without much basis other than the judgment of the administrator as to the comparative worth of the activity.

APPENDIX A

SAMPLE OF LETTER SENT TO DIRECTORS

119 Strand Avenue
Missoula, Mont.
March 25, 1949

Dear Fellow-Music Educator

The problem of scheduling high school music activities has always been of basic importance to the administration of a successful department. Along with this problem also comes the one connected with the granting of school credit for participation in music groups.

In order to gather some data to be used in connection with a survey I am making as a part of the requirements for a Master's Degree in Music Education, I would like to ask you to fill out the enclosed questionnaire and return it to me at your earliest convenience. A digest of the study will be sent to all those who indicate they wish to receive one. It is hoped that some worthwhile and helpful conclusions may be reached as a result of the study.

Thank you for your help and cooperation.

Sincerely yours,

Stephen L. Niblack

APPENDIX B

A SURVEY OF MUSIC SCHEDULING AND CREDITING
PRACTICES IN 28 MONTANA HIGH SCHOOLS

1. Please fill out the following chart according to practices and conditions existing in your school. If you offer music activities not listed here, please add them.

Name of School _____ Total Enrollment _____

Subject	No. of pupils in group	Period or hr. class meets	No. times per week it meets	No. of credits per yr.
BAND				
ORCHESTRA				
A CAPELLA CHOIR				
MIXED CHORUS				
GIRLS' GLEE CLUB				
BOYS' GLEE CLUB				
TRAINING BAND				
TWIRLING				
MUSIC APPRECIATION				
ELEM. HARMONY				
GENERAL MUSIC				
STRING ENSEMBLE				
OTHERS:				

2. Total number of students participating in music activity (no duplications) _____
3. Do bus students constitute a scheduling problem? _____
Are special provisions made for bus students? _____ If so, what? _____
4. Do you employ any system of scheduling in which music group meetings are alternated with some other class, such as gymnasium, shop, or the like? _____

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