# Stakeholders' Perceptions of Student Leadership in a High School Band

**ACCEPTANCE**

**This dissertation, Stakeholders' Perceptions of Student Leadership in a High School Band, by Simon Ira Jenkins, was prepared under the direction of the candidate's Dissertation Advisory Committee. It is accepted by the committee members in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree, Doctor of Philosophy, in the College of Education & Human Development, Georgia State University.**

**The Dissertation Advisory Committee and the student's Department Chairperson, as representatives of the faculty, certify that this dissertation has met all standards of excellence and scholarship as determined by the faculty.**

_____
Patrick Freer, EdD
Committee Chair

_____
Martin Norgaard, PhD
Committee Member

_____
Patrick Enderle, PhD
Committee Member

_____
Deron Boyles, PhD
Committee Member

_____
Michelle Mercier-DeShon, PhD
Committee Member

_____
Date

_____
Renee Schwartz, PhD
Chairperson, Department of Middle and Secondary Education

_____
Paul Alberto, PhD
Dean, College of Education & Human Development

## AUTHOR'S STATEMENT

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Simon Ira Jenkins

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Simon Ira Jenkins
Department of Middle and Secondary Education
College of Education & Human Development
Georgia State University

The director of this dissertation is:

Dr. Patrick Freer
Department of Music Education
College of Education & Human Development
Georgia State University
Atlanta, GA 30303

# CURRICULUM VITAE

Simon Ira Jenkins

ADDRESS: 1159 Clydedale Drive
Clarkston, GA 30021

EDUCATION:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Doctor of Philosophy | 2025 | Georgia State University<br>Teaching and Learning |
| Specialists Degree | 2018 | University of Georgia<br>Music Education |
| Masters Degree | 2007 | Kennesaw State University<br>Educational Leadership |
| Bachelors Degree | 1999 | Georgia State University<br>Music Education |

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:

| | |
|---|---|
| 2022-present | Director of Bands<br>Decatur High School |
| 2013-2022 | Director of Bands<br>Alpharetta High School |
| 2010-2013 | Director of Bands<br>Anne M. Dorner Middle School |
| 2007-2010 | Band Director (middle/elementary)<br>Fulton County Schools |
| 2005-2006 | Band Director<br>Murray F. Barber Middle School |
| 1999-2005 | Band Director (middle/elementary)<br>Atlanta Public Schools |

**PRESENTATIONS AND PUBLICATIONS**

Jenkins, S. I. (2020, January). *A shift of goals and aims: The American Scholastic Band from 1923 to 1975.*
For Papers presented at Georgia Music Educators Association In-Service, Athens, Georgia.

Jenkins, S.I. (2016, March). *Building a successful middle school band program*.
For Papers presented at New York State Band Directors Association Symposium, Syracuse, New York

PROFESSIONAL SOCIETIES AND ORGANIZATIONS

| | |
|---|---|
| 1999 | National Association for Music Education |
| 1999 | Georgia Music Educators Association |
| 2003 | Midwest International Band and Orchestra Clinic |
| 2004 | Music For All/Bands of America |
| 2006 | National Band Association |
| 2006 | Southern Association for Performance Arts |
| 2010 | New York State School Music Association |
| 2010 | Westchester School Music Association |
| 2018 | Drum Corps International |
| 2018 | Winter Guard International |

STAKEHOLDERS' PERCEPTIONS OF STUDENT LEADERSHIP IN A HIGH SCHOOL BAND

by

SIMON IRA JENKINS

Under the Direction of Dr. Patrick Freer

## ABSTRACT

There are numerous components of a high school band program. Studies have been done that focus on curriculum, performance, competition, and other musical and non-musical aspects of high school band. This bounded case study focused on student leadership within a high school band. The purpose of this study was to investigate the attributes, characteristics, and qualities of student leadership in a high school band through the lens of stakeholders (students, band directors, and parents) of a high school band program that has an established student leadership component. To capture the perceptions of the stakeholders, I conducted focus group interviews with students, parents, and directors. I also conducted individual interviews with each of the focus group participants. Participants in this study shared their experiences and perceptions on the role(s) that student leadership plays in a high school band program, the influence of student leadership on students' band experience, the essence of their student leadership

experience, and student leadership's effect on the student leaders' lives outside of the band experience. The goal of this study was to add to the limited literature that focused on student and parent perceptions on high school band through the student leadership aspect. Band directors and other educators (or coaches) who wish to enhance the student leadership component of their program can benefit from this study.

**INDEX WORDS: band, band program, high school, band leadership, band directors**

# STAKEHOLDERS' PERCEPTIONS OF STUDENT LEADERSHIP IN A HIGH SCHOOL BAND

by

SIMON IRA JENKINS

A Dissertation

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# DEDICATION

**This dissertation is dedicated to my parents Simon and Flora Jenkins who were my biggest supporters. Their tireless efforts to promote lifelong learning girded this journey, and this process would not have happened without their encouragement. Although I began this journey 6 months after the passing of my father, I channeled his drive and determination throughout my studies. My mother, a lifelong educator, motivated me during the tough times, and I am forever grateful. I also dedicate this dissertation to the thousands of students that I taught during my 25 years as a certified teacher. My students were a part of my love for teaching, and their growth and development inspired me to choose the focus for this study. I have grown as an educator and a person during my simultaneous time as a graduate student and a full-time teacher. I am forever grateful to my husband (George), sisters (Angela and Ann), and friends who have been patient with me. Thank you!**

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**Dr. Julian E. White, my first college band director**

**Ms. Roselyn Lewis, my first music colleague**

**Ms. Audrey Murphy-Kunka, one of my best professional and personal friends**

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# 1. THE PROBLEM

## 1.1 Introduction

I have been a music educator for over 20 years. As a band director, I have the unique opportunity to watch students grow, not only musically but also mentally and emotionally. Through music, I offer students lessons in life and lessons about themselves. This study was of interest to me as a seasoned band director who still enjoys learning and growing. I have worked with numerous high school band programs in various states. Many of these bands have student leadership programs but the structure and impact are quite different from group to group. I have also worked with student leaders from many of these schools as well as other schools from across the country. The information that I learned from these students helped pique my curiosity about this topic.

One of the personal attachments I had to this research was my own experience first as a band student and now as a band director. I was the drum major of my high school band. This experience was one of the first times in my life when I started to think about the connections that student leader positions have with the real world. Not only was I inspired by enhanced and modified relationships with my peers but was also inspired by the connections that existed with other adults at that time. During my senior year of high school, I was the student government president of my high school and served my second year as the drum major of the band. Having both student leader positions, especially simultaneously, positively impacted my life. I grew as a student and these experiences helped shape my young adulthood.

My research interests centered on understanding all aspects of the high school band experience. Investigating student leadership was the focus of this study. In this dissertation, I described how I investigated views of current high school students as well as adults associated

with culturally diverse high school band. After a review of the literature about related research, I discussed my procedures and methods along with the analysis of the findings through an interpretive lens.

### 1.2 History of Band in American Schools

Music in American schools dates to the beginning of structured education programs in the United States. Instrumental music in American schools started with the influence of town bands just after the Civil War (Mark & Gary, 2007). These town bands became more versatile and easier to create, especially with the rise of brass bands (Emil, 1962; Silvey, 2009). Patterning themselves after British bands, these American ensembles were motivated to improve and grow which created and prompted competition between groups, sometimes just for pride and boastful purposes but sometimes for money (Hash, 2018). Many of these competitions, known as "tournaments," were embedded within other events like fairs or conventions.

At the turn of the century, public schools became more popular, and enrollments saw unprecedented highs. A significant shift in scholastic band programs happened after World War I. Schools began hiring military-trained musicians and implemented full-time positions for these instructors (Mark & Gary, 2007; Whitehill, 1969). While the Music Supervisors National Conference (MSNC) acknowledged band along with other music subjects, Lee (2007) reported that the MSNC did not place as much of an emphasis on the band during its mission to seek accreditation for music in schools. In 1923 the conference gave serious consideration to the band. Holz (1962) quoted Edgar B. Gordon's address at the MSNC Conference stating,

> The high school band is no longer an incidental school enterprise promoted largely by volunteer services of a high school teacher who happens to have had some band experience, but rather an undertaking that is assigned to a definite place in the school

> schedule with a daily class period under a trained instructor and with credit allowed for satisfactory work done. (p. 4)

The presence of a band in American schools gained popularity but not without its problems. Mantie (2012) affirmed that band in schools today is different from what the American wind band was in the earlier part of the 20th century and that there are still confusing and contradictory understandings of what music education is or should be. One of the issues or problems is defining the purpose of band or what it should be. Allsup and Benedict (2008) shared concerns about the legitimacy and methods of the traditional wind band model in schools. Allsup suggested that as a historical subject matter, wind bands should "enrich and liberate the more direct and personal contacts of life by furnishing their context, their background, and outlook" (Allsup & Benedict, 2008, p. 158)

Mantie (2012) shared thoughts from Britton that suggest how unfortunate it is that some appreciate the extra-musical values of music education, and in this case band, rather than only valuing and acknowledging the musical benefits of music education. This notion of emphasizing the music side of music education leads to the idea of bands-as-music-education which implies that band is used as a method or avenue to teach music education. I would add that this idea can be also said in other courses that are offered in American high schools such as visual arts, theater, and even advanced courses in mathematics and the sciences. Learning the actual subject matter of a course is not the only learning that takes place in a classroom. It is not alarming that most students in high school band will not continue in music as a profession after high school. I strongly feel that it is quite appropriate to give some emphasis on non-musical opportunities for growth and learning that band can offer.

Kanellopoulos (2012) aimed to open the door for studies "of different music education practices based on ethnographic and genealogical research approaches, documenting and analyzing the different forms of reflection that operate in different contexts" (p. 195). Mantie (2012) interrogated "how present practices have come to be and how future directions in music education might benefit from a reflexive engagement with the discourses of our profession" (p. 77). I intend to highlight one aspect of band in American high schools and its potential impact or influence on band students and the band program. While band in schools started as a noncurricular activity, it is now quite a substantial component of many American high schools. The learning possibilities go beyond music education. My mission as a music educator is to help students become better human beings and members of society. I am allowed to use band-as-music-education to accomplish this goal.

Many high school band programs with student leaders structure their leadership in a variety of ways. What this looks like varies from school to school. My research centers on this aspect of American high school bands. One of my goals was quite similar to that of Charlotte Blythe and Niki Harre (2020) who studied a high school student leadership program in New Zealand. While their study was not situated in a band setting, many elements were comparable and beneficial to my study. Blythe and Harre (2020) had two aims in their research that focused on MAD, Make A Difference—a student leadership program (camp) for high school students in Auckland, New Zealand. The first is to "offer insight into MAD and the value of its configuration for encouraging transformative learning and action competence" and the second is to "offer an evaluation process to construct a preliminary Theory of Change, determine its viability and refine the theory" (p. 84).

Understanding the dynamics of high school band programs helps in understanding the influences of the student leadership component that many high school band programs have. There are numerous structures of high school band student leadership programs. Student leader positions, roles, responsibilities, and duties differ from school to school. Some leadership positions exist in many band programs while some positions may be more unique to certain schools. For example, some schools have a drum major position(s) but the role of the drum major may be different from band to band. Like Blythe and Harre's (2020) study, my study provides insight into the student leadership programs in high school band and how it is viewed by the band programs' students and adults. Unlike Blythe and Harre (2020), I do not aim to suggest a program evaluation leading to suggestions of refinement. Rather, my research is a resource for high school band directors (and other educators who facilitate student leadership programs) who may want to become more organized, purposeful, and strategic about the goals and aims of their student leadership program. Such an opportunity is not limited to band. Other scholastic-based courses or student groups could create student leadership opportunities for students designed more purposefully based on this study's findings.

### 1.3 Student Leadership in High School Band

To understand the focus of this research, it is important to know what student leadership in the high school band is. During my years working with high school bands, I have been privileged to work extensively with seven high schools in Georgia, New York, and New Jersey. These high school bands have student leaders with a range of titles, duties, and responsibilities. Most of the bands' leaders are centered on the marching band which is active during the few weeks before the school year starts and runs through early November in most cases. Some of the bands, however, have student leaders that have positions with year-round responsibilities. Some

of the common positions that each program has include drum majors, section leaders, and band captains. These positions are marching band focused with little to no responsibility after the marching band season is done. There are various other positions associated with the marching band that some schools have while others do not. Some of these positions include but are not limited to rank sergeants, music captains, visual captains, field captains, librarians, secretaries, treasurers, social chairs, stage crew, logistics crew, indoor operations, outdoor operations, facilities managers, uniform captains, props leader, water crew, cleanup leaders, and equipment truck leader. Some of these high school bands have leaders that serve in roles throughout the year even after the marching band season is over. Examples of these positions are president, vice president, treasurer, secretary, librarian, class representatives, and section leaders (per class/ensemble). Many, but not all, of these roles are defined slightly differently from school to school.

**1.4 Statement of the Problem**

High school band programs have grown tremendously over the last half-century. The high school band experience goes beyond the daily classroom curriculum, numerous ensembles, and annual performances. Advocates and educators have researched and studied various aspects of band in school and ways to enhance learning experiences for students. Some of the enhancements include but are not limited to the creation of chamber ensembles, incorporation of technology, refinement of rated and evaluated performances, and refinement of competitive performances. One aspect of some active band programs is a comprehensive student leadership program. Many high school band programs have an expansive and well-defined student leadership structure that heavily influences the success of the band program (Thies, 2013). There are established duties and responsibilities as well as assumed and stated roles that student leaders

have within a high school band program. Unpacking how these roles look in different high school band programs was of interest. Theis (2013) agreed that there is limited existing research that focuses on student viewpoints and that there is a need for continued exploration into how students engage in programs that create or experience significant changes. Theis also acknowledged that little research incorporates or spotlights the student perspective. Other studies analyze various aspects of music instruction or band experiences: The curriculum, its ensembles, assessment, general peer interactions, and other related topics (Bates, 2019; Kos, 2010; Levy, Castille, & Farley, 2011; McCoy, 1991; Munroe, 2018). More in-depth study on the various makeups and impacts of student leadership within band programs needs to be added to what is available to high school band directors and other educators who work with team-based student groups. Having this knowledge could provide information that leads to establishing, improving, or altering student leadership.

### 1.6 Purpose of the Study

This study involved investigating student leadership in high school bands in the United States. The study focused on various perceptions of student leadership programs within high school band programs focusing on the experiences of students and adults. The study compared and analyzed stakeholders' perceptions of student leadership. The stakeholders were high school band students, directors, and parents. The research was an in-depth look into a high school band program and the perceived influence of its student leadership program. Assumptions this study involved the significance of student leadership within a high school band program, the influence that student leadership has in performance success, the real word parallels that student leadership programs offer, and the essence of the student leadership program as described by the band

program's stakeholders—students, directors, and parents. I aimed to answer the following questions:

1. How do band students perceive the role(s) that student leadership plays in a high school band program?
2. How do stakeholders describe the influence of student leadership on students' band experience?
3. How do stakeholders describe high school band student leadership's affect the student leaders' lives outside of the band experience?

**1.6 Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework for this research was rooted in constructivism and interpretive theory. Pretorius (2024) explained that constructivism emphasizes the idea that reality is subjective, shaped by an individual's reflection on their experiences, emotions, and interactions. This process involves social interactions that play a key role in forming personal realities. Some of the pioneer philosophers whose work focused on constructivism include John Dewey who was an advocate of the student's experience as a main driving force behind learning. Jean Piaget's work suggested that "children go through stages in which they accept ideas they may later discard as wrong" (Miranda, 2011, p. 316). Russian psychologist, Lev Vygotsky, held the position that "the child gradually internalizes external and social activities, including communication, with more competent others" (Miranda, 2011, p. 319). This study focused on children and their unique experiences as student leaders in a high school band. The American high school band experience is comprised of numerous opportunities for learning not only music but a variety of other life and social lessons. These opportunities and experiences include but are not limited to classroom learning, various ensemble environments outside of the classroom and

outside of the school day, and many structured experiences (i.e. student groups with leaders, team-based ensembles, and activities with band students that are not music related). I sought to find out if students are influenced on any level by these interactions; and if so, how? Directors and instructors help facilitate these situations with objectives and goals. Do students know these intentions? How do the students perceive these situations? How would they describe their experiences?

Social constructivism is a theoretical orientation to sociocultural processes that affect humans' basic understanding of the world (Allen, 2005). Allen (2005) used social constructionism to identify and illuminate ways that organizational actors make, modify, and maintain meaning about social identity. Green (1999) shared that social constructivism is not only concerned with what social groups are but also about the meanings of social groups. This idea was significant to my research because of the nature of student leaders' roles in high school band programs and the impact that they had on the cultural norms and expectations within their band families. I wanted to investigate these meanings from the actual social group. What does band leadership mean to the students? How do the band directors describe student leadership within their band program? Would those meanings be similar or different? What do band parents say about student leadership? There could be new meanings about student leadership in high school bands discovered based on the perceptions of the various stakeholders.

Peer's (2012) study took a constructivist approach to examine the perceptions of school administrators who completed the Leadership Academy's Masters Principal Program (LAMPP). Peer sought to find out if and how school leaders described their change based on participation in the LAMPP. The participants' responses led Peer to create themes and clusters of meanings. My study similarly focused on how the student leaders and stakeholders described any change or

other impact that the band's leadership program has on the band students. Charmaz (2006) stated that the "constructivist approach focuses on how and why participants construct meanings and actions in specific situations" (p. 130). The constructivist is concerned with whether the experiences play into larger and other contexts. These findings and discoveries can be different based on the people involved in the situation. The researcher must, therefore, anchor studies with rich data with an awareness of possible differences and distinctions and subsequently must be open to whatever the participants share as their experience. The constructivist researcher must be reflective and concerned about the evolution of theories generated through the study. I, therefore, obtained perspectives—students and adults—to gain in-depth knowledge about the various perceptions of the various aspects of student leadership.

Interpretivism emphasizes the meanings individuals assign to their own experiences. It highlights the importance of acknowledging various human experiences and the notion that multiple, equally valid realities can exist which shape the perspectives of those involved (Pretorius, 2024). People share insights from their personal experiences, which in turn influence their understanding of the world they live in. Charmaz (2006) suggested that "interpretive theory calls for the imaginative understanding of the phenomenon and assumes emergent, multiple realities; indeterminacy; facts, and values as linked; truth as provisional; and social life as processual" (p. 126). Klonarides' (2021) interpretive study focused on the perceptions and experiences of first-generation college students' decision to finish or withdraw from their studies. This approach allowed the voice of the participants to provide new knowledge. It is this type of knowledge that I sought with my study. My current knowledge of student leadership in high school band came from personal, prior experiences. However, unlike the constructivist, whose reality and perspectives can influence research, I approached the study more as an

interpretivist, focusing on uncovering and interpreting the subjective meanings and perceptions of the participants (Pretorius, 2024).

### 1.7 Research Methodology

I view high school band as being a small world within a larger world. My experiences as a drum major in high school for two years opened my eyes to how the culture of our band family was more than just a group of students with a role or responsibility. As a member of the band staff at several high schools throughout my career, I have been able to see what this phenomenon looks like with other students and in other band programs. These band programs have all been different but share a common idea that student leadership is essential. My desire to learn more about how student leadership works, why it works, what it means to the students, how it benefits the band, and how it benefits students grew each time I became involved with a high school band.

Case studies have been utilized in various fields of social science research, and more specifically in music education, due to their design flexibility, compatibility with research needs, transparency, and pedagogical value. The contextual nature of case studies aligns well with the field of education due to the significant interplay between phenomenon and context. (Barrett, 2014). The research method I used was case study. Yi (2017) defined a case study as an investigation of a contemporary phenomenon in detail, within its real-world context, utilizing multiple data sources that converge through triangulation. Three factors to consider when selecting case study methodology include the nature of the research questions, the researcher's degree of control over the observable actions of individuals or groups, and the focus on contemporary events as opposed to solely historical ones.

My research questions were directed at “how” stakeholders describe and “how” student leadership impacts students. Furthermore, my research involved experiences of stakeholders, and I was able to conduct direct observations and collect interview data from the study’s participants. Lastly, my main source of data was from interviews where I gathered information about current and recent situations rather than historical data. Moustakas (1994) noted a constant challenge in research with describing things and being understood and stressed the need to consider what is present versus what is imagined. What one might think compared to what is actual was what my study investigated. Is perception reality? How do stakeholders perceive student leadership? Perhaps there is a positive and beneficial outcome, but was that a shared perception?

Other researchers in education have used case studies or focused on perception to explore a variety of topics. Jääskeläinen (2022) selected this method to search for a meaningful understanding of music students’ experiences. Earp’s (2020) dissertation used transcendental phenomenology to describe the lived experiences of first-generation college students who are music majors. Bober (2019) also used this methodology to examine performance anxiety through the experiences of popular musicians. Whisenhunt (2015) used case study to examine minority students in Advanced Placement courses; and Moore (2020) studied educators’ perceptions of childhood experiences of students in rural Missouri.

The literature review in Chapter 2 exposed gaps in the research of perceptions of participants in a high school band and its student leaders. Through case study methodology, I uncovered the untapped ideas of students and adults and how they view student leadership in a high school band setting. Through their words and with my ideas set aside, I embraced new insight into this phenomenon of student leadership in the high school band.

## 1.8 Summary

This study provided the rare vantage point of students and stakeholders about an element within the American high school band program. Hearing how students and adults described their experience with the band's student leadership exposed an untapped and possibly different view from what some would assume of the significance of student leaders in the band. The results of this study add to the limited research about an element of high school band programs that is not centered on the band's purpose or the band curriculum. For high school band directors who are looking to enhance their band's student leadership structure, this study provides perspectives that the director could consider. For the band director who does not have a structured student leadership program, this study shares information about outcomes of student leadership that could either influence the director to start or not start a student leadership program.

# 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

## 2.1 Introduction

As a teacher, I always wanted to offer students the best experiences possible. These experiences helped to shape and mold them into what they want to be. I was fortunate to be able to teach in schools that consider music as a curricular subject. Band was the subject and vehicle that I used to educate students. While there was a curriculum for band that was rooted in instrumental music, there were other aspects of the scholastic band program that aid in educating the whole child. The purpose of this study was to investigate one element of the scholastic band program (student leadership) and gain a new perspective on this aspect of education. There was limited research that focused on understanding the dynamics of a band's student leadership. This study intended to add to the existing body of literature with a unique perspective of the influence and impact of student leadership within the band. To fully understand the phenomenon of student leadership in a high school band, it was critical to understand the full context of band in school as well as student leadership in general. This literature review highlighted related studies and made a case for the need for further research in this particular area.

I limited my reviews of research studies to those that focused on student leadership and those that focused on high school band, excluding studies that focused on the curricular components of high school band and those that focused on adult leadership. I excluded quantitative studies, since the premise of this research was qualitative. The studies reviewed were all from peer-reviewed journals. Publication dates of the literature varied with most of the documents written within twenty-five years of this study.

To gather the most applicable research, I used the J-Stor and ProQuest through Georgia State University. When I found other documents of interest through initially searched references, I again utilized ERIC and ProQuest along with the Google search engine to find the additional documents of interest for research purposes. I used the following key terms in the database searches to collect literature for the study: student leadership, high school band, student leadership and high school band, high school student leadership.

**2.2 Historical Review of Band and Marching Band in American Schools**

The American education system is an ever-evolving entity where some educators strive to remain relevant in the current society while maintaining its traditions and standard expectations. In addition to influencing students' attitudes, values, and behaviors, some school systems aim to prepare students for the future by engaging them in action for the environment (Blythe and Harre, 2020). Likewise, many high school band programs in America embrace this goal through curricular and extracurricular opportunities which have proven to increase students' self-concept, work ethic, and locus of control (Dagaz, 2012). Through having diverse ensembles with a wide variety of performances and other musical and non-musical experiences, high school bands help to broaden students' perspectives and outlooks on life while developing an array of skills that have lifelong benefits (Dagaz, 2012; Ma and Hall, 2016; O'Leary, 2019). Some of these experiences include but are not limited to participating in a variety of small and large ensembles, performing in venues on and off campus, attending camps or workshops focused on teambuilding and musicianship, and participating in musical and nonmusical community service projects. There is research that focused on competition characteristics, teaching and learning practices, participation benefits, and other aspects of band programs (Adderley, Kennedy, & Berz, 2003; Eccles and Barber 1999; Ma and Hall 2016; Montemayor, 2014; O'Leary, 2016).

Other studies explored non-music-based student leadership (Blythe & Harre, 2020; Bowman, 2014; Evans & Evans, 2002; White, 2004). These studies about student leadership and band have not addressed student leadership in band. While other studies involved band program where the competition, teaching and learning practices, and various other areas of a band program were examined, my qualitative research had a narrow lens that focused student leadership perspectives as they were experienced through the participants.

High school band programs have grown tremendously during the second half of the twentieth (Hash, 2008). Advocates and educators have researched and studied various aspects of band in high school and ways to enhance the learning and experience for students. Many high school bands provide opportunities that build self-confidence and trust among their members through various practices and opportunities (Dagaz, 2012). Dagaz (2012) used observation and in-depth interviews of students, band directors, and parents to examine the outcomes of participation in marching band at two midwestern high schools. For the purpose of this dissertation, I adopted this study through the lens of case study because Dagaz focused on two schools. Student participants in that study were from all grade levels and were from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds. Like my study, the schools in their study were predominantly White with a small percentage of Black, Asian, and Hispanic students. While the study did not address the dynamics of potential differences based on race or ethnicity, Dagaz's participants acknowledged that their peer relationships positively impacted their involvement with marching band and that the marching band felt like a family. This environment fostered a feeling of acceptance, trust, and self-confidence among students. The study did not address if or how the relationships of the band's student leaders influenced those outcomes. I would argue that student leaders are integral in these relationships. How was that acceptance created? What role did

veteran students play in helping to establish trust? Was this self-confidence only realized in a marching band setting? The leadership component of many high school band programs is where students learn, build, enhance, and exercise strategies for leading their peers and influencing the achievement and productivity of the band program's ensembles and the band program. Student leadership is multifaceted and has the potential to impact students in a variety of ways. Unlike Dagaz's (2012) study, my research uncovered the impact of student leadership not only in the marching band but also in other areas influenced by the high school band experience.

Student leaders are more visible and active in the marching band setting, because of the nature of the amount of time and numerous rehearsals and performances that are involved with a marching band. While numerous high school marching band programs do not compete, many high school marching bands do compete. There are state-sanctioned as well as independently sponsored band competitions for high schools. In some places, the perceived levels of achievement of the competitive marching band indicate the success of a band program. Although many high school band directors have varying thoughts about the value and worthiness of having a competitive marching band, Rogers' concluded that a large number of music educators feel as though the benefits of the marching band experience outweigh the disadvantages (Rogers, 1985). Findings in that study indicated that band directors and administrators also felt that there were benefits of the competitive marching band experience. However, his study did not incorporate the students' peceptions on the competitive marching band experience. What impact do the student leaders have on this perceived success? Do band directors rely on student leaders to help support the competitive marching band?

There was empirical research that focused on the data of the competitive marching band experience like measurement and evaluation of performances, influence of extramusical factors

on evaluation, and student and teacher attitudes and perceptions toward competition (O'Leary, 2019). O'Leary (2019) went in-depth with his study on the competitiveness of high school marching bands. He studied not only the perception but the artistic and logistic details of the competitive high school marching band. Using the experiences of twelve participants, O'Leary's research included data taken over ten months. Thes datum were generated from unstructured and semi-structured interviews as well as email correspondences. Of particular interest was the finding that "several participants discussed competitive success as generating 'turning points' and 'establishing their leadership'… and students' attitudes as shifting to become more open to changes" (O'Leary, 2019, p. 54). O'Leary did not investigate responses participants gave involving leadership. He did, however, suggest that further research could focus on student experiences as well as the cultures and practices of high school bands.

Ma and Hall's (2018) case study of an established high school marching band in the mid-South region of the United States highlighted aspects of marching bands. Student involvement in learning, even with the marching band, is a break away from the director-led method of instruction (Dagaz, 2012; Ma and Hall, 2018; Sutherland and Cartwright, 2022). Ensemble learning not only encourages more student involvement but also shifts some of the responsibility from the teacher/staff to the students (Allsup, 2008; Dagaz, 2012; Ma and Hall, 2018). Ma and Hall (2018) maintained that learning communities especially in the marching band setting was a valuable form of learning within a school setting. While many of these studies advocated for student involvement in marching bands' learning process, the studies did not specifically address how students function as leaders in this environment.

There is limited research that focused on the perceptions of persons involved in a marching band. Cumberledge, Silvey, Noon, and Hall (2024) were interested in what student

participants shared about their leadership experiences in their two college marching bands. For the purpose of this dissertation I also adopted this study through the lens of case study because it focused on two college marching band programs. Similar to my research, they used interviews and survey responses in their phenomenological study. Their interviews were conducted one-on-one and not as a group. Those interviews did not allow for participants to give enhanced responses as group interviews could. Those researchers found four themes in their analysis of data: adapting to challenges, cultivating personal and collaborative growth, enhancing personal growth and development of careers, and enhancing a wide range of professional skills (Cumberledge, Silvey, Noon, & Hall, 2024).

The aforementioned qualitative research studies about marching bands represent a body of work that focused on a variety of aspects of the marching band experience. They describe realities of goals, structure, experiences, and perspectives through different data collection methods and analyses. My study added to this body but also included the parent perceptions and different interpretations of the participant experiences.

**2.3 Student Leadership**

Many studies have focused on student leadership from a variety of settings outside of music (Fertman & Loong, 1990; Kagay, Marx, & Simonsen, 2015; Ogurlu, 2017; Pearson, 2021; Pierce, Erickson, & Sarkar, 2020; White, 2004). One of these studies explored the topic of student leadership and its place in ministry (White, 2004). This study also addressed the impact of ministry on students/youth and how there is a need to focus on leadership with youth. By discussing different views and differences in the published literature on student leadership, White articulated important variables and addressed ambiguities in the definitions. One differing view he mentioned is the idea of students having adult-like authority instead of true authentic

decision-making responsibilities. White concluded that more research was needed about students' value of leadership and its significance within the realm of ministry. More specifically related to high school student leadership, Bowman (2014) stated that leadership is learnable and leadership development for high school students occurs over time with students practicing their leadership skills. Bowman (2014) was an advocate for the development of student leaders in school and believes that "inspiring and nurturing the world's future leaders in a secondary-school setting merits being an educator's highest priority and most lasting legacy" (p. 59).

One of the goals of my research was to find strategies to enhance student leadership programs. Student leadership may vary from school to school or group to group, but many studies described a common component being student development through leadership. Hooper's (2024) ethnographic case study examined everyday and scientific concepts within student leadership in a university in central Japan. Hooper wanted to find ways that students in a student-led learning group integrate everyday and scientific concepts through leadership practices. Their study found that the student leaders grew as leaders with the aid of concepts learned through a leadership course the participants took. Concepts and information learned in the course allowed the student leaders to blend leadership practices with scientific concepts. Many high school bands, including the site selected for my study, incorporate some type of training for leaders. While leadership training is not the focus of my study, the training of the leaders influenced their experience.

There are many theories on leadership that researchers studied and used in various studies in the field of education. Correia-Harker (2023) suggested that educators understand various leadership theories and models to help inform leadership development experiences for their students. On the other hand, he also maintains that leadership theories can be limiting as much as

they are helpful. I agree with this mindset that leadership, especially in a high school band, should not a one size fits all approach. Having knowledge of and blending different theories could help with impactful integration, sequencing, and scaffolding of educational interventions for student leadership development (Correia-Harker, 2023). My research did not examine the philosophy behind a band director's leadership structure or framework, although I believe that exploring a theoretical foundation for leadership could be helpful for a band director in developing a student leadership program. Correia-Hacker maintained that different leadership theories emphasize different components of leadership—individuals enacting leadership, leadership processes with others, or ultimate outcomes leadership is intended to produce (Correia-Hacker, 2023). He urged educators to consider context and audience when thinking about the application of leadership theories. Regarding student leadership in high school band, the context would be the school and more specifically the band program itself. The audience would be the students and staff directly and the parents and school population indirectly. In addition to the leadership theories themselves, Correia-Hacker emphasized the importance of integrating and combining leadership theories by clarifying assumptions and addressing any gaps they may have. Therefore, this approach should be tailored to the developmental readiness of the student leaders (Correia-Hacker, 2023).

**2.4 Student Leadership and High School Band**

Many successful band programs have a comprehensive and clearly defined student leadership structure that plays a significant role in the program's overall success (Thies, 2013). Since Thies' study was one of few studies specifically focused on high school band student leadership, a more in-depth study of the various makeups and impacts of student leadership within band programs is needed to be added to what currently is available to high school band

directors as well as other educators who work with team-based student groups. Specifically, Thies' study did not significantly address the impact of student leadership on ensemble performance nor does the study discuss a broad range of leadership opportunities within the high school band program.

Thies (2013) used observations to examine one high school band program's student leadership. Thies (2013) found the following themes emerged from her observations: (a) student leaders as role models, (b) student leaders as instructors, (c) student leaders as social mentors, and (d) student leaders as effective change agents. Her study focused on one particular high school, and Thies explored student leadership's impact on marching band and the overall curriculum of the band program. Thies found that the involvement of student leaders increased efficiency and productivity with music learning and preparation. The band director's guidance of the student leaders helped their level of effectiveness in teaching other students. One of the limitations of this research was the omission of thoughts and feedback from the students or directors specifically about student leadership. Gibson's (2015) dissertation highlighted several themes present throughout the study. One of the more significant themes was the peer influence of high school students in their high school marching band participation, both positive and negative. Yet peer interaction was still a major influence. This finding highlighted the importance of peer relations within the high school band.

As noted in Rogers' study, high school bands foster a caring community for students and teachers because of the group-oriented performance goals (Lalama, 2016). Lalama studied the perceptions of climate within high school band programs. Lalama found that caring climates and relationships were valued by not only the teachers but also the students. A more significant note was the impact of student leadership. Student leadership also had significant results as students

who held leadership positions perceived the caring climate as lower than those who did not hold a position (Lalama, 2016). One might suspect that students would accept additional responsibilities if they felt an attachment to band, linking the caring environment to their attachment. The added workload and responsibilities assigned to the student leaders may have diminished their sense of care or empathy. Is there a shift in perceptions of a caring climate from the student leaders? If so, when does that occur? The area of student leadership and caring climate is necessary and is worthy of investigation.

### 2.5 Perceptions of Stakeholders

There are studies of athletic teams that focused on perceptions of student leadership. Two studies in particular examined the athletes' thoughts and views regarding student leadership and its relationship to adult life (Kagay, Marx, & Simonsen, 2015; Pierce, Erickson, Sarkar; 2020). Pierce, Erickson, & Sarkar (2020) used focus groups of student-athletes to gain perceptions of leadership definitions, leadership development, and transfer of student leadership to real-life experiences. In this study, the 33 student-athletes were divided into small, semi-structured focus groups of six or seven members each. The smaller groups allowed the student-athletes to reflect on personal experiences from a wide variety of ages and stages of education. The study revealed the student athlete perceptions of leadership as being a set of skills combined with a mindset that is cultivated through an ongoing development process supported by opportunities provided by their coaches. The Kagay, Marx, and Simonsen (2015) study also focused on the self-perceptions of students. Their multi-site collective case study included 24 high school FFA offers and members who shared their thoughts through written documents, focus group interviews, and observational data. Themes that emerged from this study included personal abilities and motivation as influences on student leaders; perceived barriers; influential support from others;

gender differences in leadership style; apathy of group members, and personal life enhancements and development. These studies suggested that further research is needed in the area of student leadership and development. They both recommend that future studies should focus on a variety of related aspects which include a more detailed investigation of the transfer of student leadership to adulthood, gender differences within student leaders, student leadership of other types of youth groups (non-athletic and non-FFA), and best leadership practices to address challenges of student leaders and student groups (Kagay, Marx, & Simonsen, 2015; Pierce, Erickson, Sarkar; 2020).

There are a variety of student leader workshops, clinics, and camps devoted to educating student leaders. One of those programs is the High School Leadership Academy (HSLA) which was created in 2017 and funded by a donor whose goal was to develop a summer leadership institute for high school freshmen (Pearson, 2021). After a few years of the program's existence, Pearson (2021) studied the impact of the leadership academy. Through curricular elements and student data, his focus was on the rationale for and process of development of the academy. Of particular interest was the student data component of this study. The researcher's assessment team used a pre- and post-test Likert scale instrument to measure the students' self-reported growth throughout the weeklong academy. Some items on the Likert scale included the following.

I have learned practical leadership skills.

I don't know how to inspire others.

I can effectively influence a group of my peers.

I am equipped to make positive changes in my school/community.

I know how to access the resources I needed to bring change.

The results of this survey yielded positive responses from the students about the leadership academy. Although the parents of the participants were not officially surveyed, Pearson (2021) did note that parents shared a sense of gratefulness for the learning that their students experienced. One of the limitations of this bounded case study was that it was a brief study. Pearson suggested that longitudinal studies would provide more evidence of consistency (Pearson, 2021). While this study was about student perspectives of leadership, it did not seek the students' perceptions of leadership within their respective groups from their home schools.

There are ways in which teachers involve students in the learning process. Student-centered learning allows students to be more involved and participatory in the delivery of instruction. Some of these strategies include peer teaching, student-created assessments, and student presentations. Band directors could use some of these strategies during rehearsals by involving students as leaders. Scherer's (2021) study examined the perceptions of band directors of democratic rehearsal procedures in high school band classes. This descriptive research study's participants were practicing teachers, and the goal of the study was to gather information about the participants' perceptions about the importance of students engaging in democratic rehearsal procedures, the participants' frequency of incorporating democratic rehearsal procedures, and the participant's views about the advantages and disadvantages of democratic rehearsal procedures. Scherer's (2021) 216 participants completed questionnaires to yield the data that Scherer and his colleague analyzed and coded. The perceptions of the participants noted more advantages than disadvantages of students being more involved in instruction delivery. The teacher participants shared that student-led sectionals were important for students to experience. Some participants were already using this type of strategy when teaching before this study. One of the participants wrote

> I love when a student voices their opinion on how something should be performed or how something could be improved. Students sometimes start playing devil's advocate and try to look at things from all angles which encourages the artistic decision-making that we face as musicians. Usually, we try multiple methods (even though I know it is the wrong way to interpret something) just so they can go through the decision-making process. After all, it's these decisions that actually teach artistry. Without them, we are just training robots (Scherer, 2021).

Scherer urged future researchers to investigate the value of student-led sections and leadership models (Scherer, 2021). He further acknowledged that less is known about how large ensemble directors incorporate democratic practices in rehearsals (Scherer, 2021). The study did not consider the student perceptions. In addition to the band director voice, the student voice was what my study focused on.

Researchers have studied music-related issues in music education, qualities of successful high school bands, peer mentors, leadership and learning, student leaders, and an array of other topics about characteristics and traits of high school band programs in the United States. Various studies have found that Americans value music education and think that it is vital and necessary in the school curriculum (Abril, 2008). Some of the most important stakeholders are school administrators. They have a significant influence on the quality of music teaching and music programs in their schools. Abril's study of principals' perceptions of music education found that 98% of the participating secondary school principals offered band in their schools and that it was one of the more popular music courses requested by students (Abril, 2008). These principals, however, also admitted to not knowing enough about other music courses to be able to offer more of a choice to their students. The study also noted that most principals felt that the most

effective broad educational outcomes of participation in music included cooperation/teamwork and self-esteem. Cooperation is essential for ensembles to perform successfully, and students' self-esteem is likely evident in their performances over the course of the school year (Abril, 2008).

In their study of music performers, Holmes and Holmes (2013) proposed that combining differing perspectives could be beneficial if qualitative methods, especially phenomenologically-informed approaches, were more widely and diversely used as a valid and productive way to explore the experience of performance in its fullest sense. Unlike the academic classroom, band in American high schools is complex and involves more than just music. There are social infrastructures that influence the dynamics of the band and its participants (Ma & Hall, 2018). These infrastructures impact peer interaction during the learning process. Peer learning in high school bands is one of the primary functions of student leaders. In addition to peer learning, student leaders in high school bands may have responsibilities that do not involve significant peer interaction. These defined roles for leaders may have more or different influences than what a band director may intend.

**2.6 Summary**

Ensemble music in American schools has been a long-standing tradition. Many researchers have studied the value of music in schools to continuously justify its presence as a curricular subject. Studies and articles have explored what school music should and could look like in the 21st centuries (Gilbert, 2016; Elpus & Abril, 2011; Elpus & Abril 2019; McCarthy, 2020; Grant & Lerer, 2011). One of the types of ensembles in school music programs is the marching band. Research has shown a variety of attributes and benefits of the marching band experience for high school performers.

The researchers highlighted in this literature review found student leadership in a band program to be a major contributing factor to a band's success. Recall that in this section I have repositioned several studies that are not declared to be case studies for the purpose of clarification and link. Findings in studies about student leadership in band suggested that there are numerous benefits to those involved. Likewise, other aforementioned studies that focused on student leadership in other aspects of school and communities also found value in having and developing leadership skills in students. Studies about student leaders in arenas outside of a school or outside of band have presented perceptions of students and adults which have helped shape and reshape leadership structures through reflections and feedback. There is, however, a void in current research that strategically addresses perspectives of stakeholders in a high school band environment. These perspectives could enhance or revolutionize current practices and trends in student leadership development through the community of the high school band.

# 3. METHODOLOGY

## 3.1 Introduction

My study sought to examine the perceptions of the student leadership program as stated by students and adults associated with the band programs. This study involved examining and comparing the perceptions of the various stakeholder groups of students, band directors, and parents of one high school band program. I used observations, focus groups, and interviews of students, parents, and band directors to gather data about their experiences with student leadership in their high school band program. Studies like this research have focused on peer mentoring in K-12 students, nonmusical student leadership programs abroad, band director leadership, and particular aspects of band student leaders (Thies, 2013; Blythe & Harre, 2020; Dru, 2007and Andrew Goodrich, 2018). Few of these studies gathered data about the experiences of stakeholders particularly in a high school band setting.

This study asked specific questions about the structure of the leadership program, the roles and responsibilities of the student leaders, the impact of student leaders on the band program, and the impact of the student leadership on the leaders themselves. I used observational data from a student leadership meeting and a marching band rehearsal. The observations did not involve interaction with the students. Rather, the observations allowed me to listen to the directors interact with the students and a time for me to watch and listen to the students interact with each other. In the focus group and interviews, participants shared personal stories about their experiences and expressed their opinions on the situations and circumstances. I asked them to reflect on their experiences and impressions from those various moments. The directors and parents had different viewpoints not only from each other but from the students. I compared

these data to find similarities as well as differences which provided a broad perspective of what student leadership means to those involved.

There were two unique aspects of this study. One aspect was the nature of the phenomenon, student leadership in a high school band. Other studies about student leaders mostly focused on other types of student groups that are not in a high school band. The second aspect was a focus on perceptions not only of students but also of the adults involved with the students. Many studies focused on program and curriculum evaluation. I was particularly interested in hearing what is meaningful to the participants by the participants. Analyzing the viewpoints of the participants allowed me to create theories about the meaning and essence of student leadership in high school bands through the lens of those who experienced this phenomenon.

**3.2 Research Questions**

1. How do band students perceive the role(s) that student leadership plays in a high school band program?
    a. What are the experiences of high school band students in band programs that have a structured leadership curriculum?
2. How do stakeholders describe the influence of student leadership on students' band experience?
    a. How do stakeholders describe the influence of student leadership on the performance and non-performance aspects of band students?
    b. How do stakeholders describe the value (or lack thereof) of the student leadership experience?

3. How do stakeholders describe high school band student leadership's affect the student leaders' lives outside of the band experience?

### 3.3 Conceptual Framework/Research Methodology

This was a nonexperimental descriptive research study as I attempted to describe the characteristics of and the stakeholder perceptions of the existing phenomenon of student leadership in high school band (Salkind, 2009). Emans (1971) defined conceptual framework as a statement of central concepts of the system for organizing thinking about a complex phenomenon. The conceptual framework for this study brought together the perspectives of students, parents, and band directors. Through focus group and interview data, I sought to find how the participants describe what student leadership is and how student leadership impacts the students and the band program. Figure 3.1 is a visual representation of how the data and participants were related. While the participants shared views about the student leadership program, I anticipated there would be unique information provided by each of the three types of participants. I also anticipated some shared perspectives. These different lenses provided viewpoints from all groups of people who have direct, first-hand experiences with student leadership in high school band.

I used a bounded case study approach that focused on Summer High. A case study is an empirical investigation that explores a current phenomenon in detail within its real-life context. The case study design addresses the unique challenges of a situation where there are more variables of interest than available data points, using multiple sources of evidence to ensure data convergence through triangulation (Yi, 2009, as cited in Barrett, 2024).

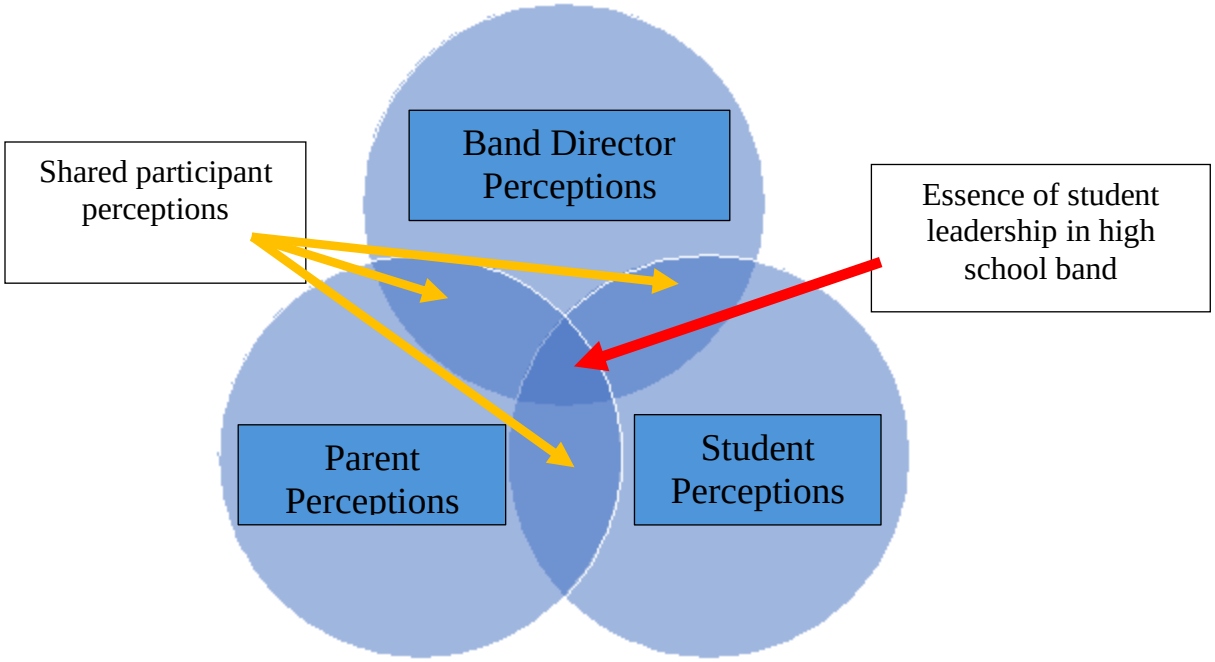


*Figure 3.1 Relationship Between Data and Participants*

Although it may be assumed that student leadership leads to positive outcomes, I did not make this assumption without first gaining a thorough understanding of stakeholders' experiences and how they describe them. As the researcher who is a current band director working with my student leaders, I embraced a fresh look at things without my opinions about student leadership impacting the study. Creswell (2007) stated that researchers analyze data to develop descriptions that convey the overall essence of the experience. Through their present-day experiences, the participants in my study provided their perceptions on what student leadership is or is not as well as what it means or does not mean.

**3.4 Research Plan**

This study's design centered on capturing the perceptions of faculty, students, and parents on student leadership of one high school band program. I took into account the protection of those involved in this research study, particularly ethical concerns like informed consent, safeguarding participants from harm, and ensuring confidentiality, as the study required the

involvement of human subjects (Roberts and Hyatt, p.36). Therefore, I began this study by seeking Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval immediately after the defense of the prospectus in early May 2023. This study involved high school students as participants. As a result, I secured approval from the Georgia State University IRB and obtained equivalent clearance from the school district administration. After receiving IRB approval to proceed, I obtained a formal commitment from the band directors to collaborate on this study (see Appendix A). I then collected written consent from all participants by providing a 7-day window for students and parents to respond to my request for participation (See Appendices B, C, D, and E).

For this case study, I interviewed (focus group and individual interviews) students, parents, and directors from the participating school. I asked all current student leaders and the parents to complete a survey that solicited information about their involvement with the band program and their involvement with the student leadership aspect of the program (See Appendix L). The results of these surveys guided my selection of the students and adults who participated in the focus groups and interviews in that I selected participants who had been associated with the band for multiple years. I also looked for student participants who were serving in a leadership role. The student leaders I selected were marching band students who served in different roles. I was careful not to use only section leaders or drum majors. This provided student leader perceptions from various types of student leaders. Administering the surveys to the students and adults was, therefore, the first step upon receiving IRB approval. After the surveys were completed, I selected the participants for the focus groups and interviews. I scheduled the focus groups first which were facilitated through WebEx (See Appendices F, G, and H). Then I scheduled the interviews which were also facilitated through WebEx (See

Appendices I, J, and K). After I completed the focus groups and interviews of the students, parents, and directors; I reviewed the transcriptions of the audio from the interviews and focus group discussions. Webex generated the first pass transcriptions, and I verified and corrected, sentence-by-sentence Webex's VTT (video to text) file. I reviewed notes from my observations as well as transcripts from the focus groups and individual interviews then coded and analyzed the data to find shared themes and ideas. This data was the source of my documented findings, discussion, conclusion, and implications. Beginning in October 2023 I followed the charted plan outlined in Figure 3.2. Details about the instruments, interviews, focus groups, and participant selection can be found in the following section.

**3.5 Research Design**

This research explored peer interaction specifically through the lens of student leadership in high school bands through the experiences of the students, faculty, and parents who are directly and/or indirectly involved with student leaders of the bands.

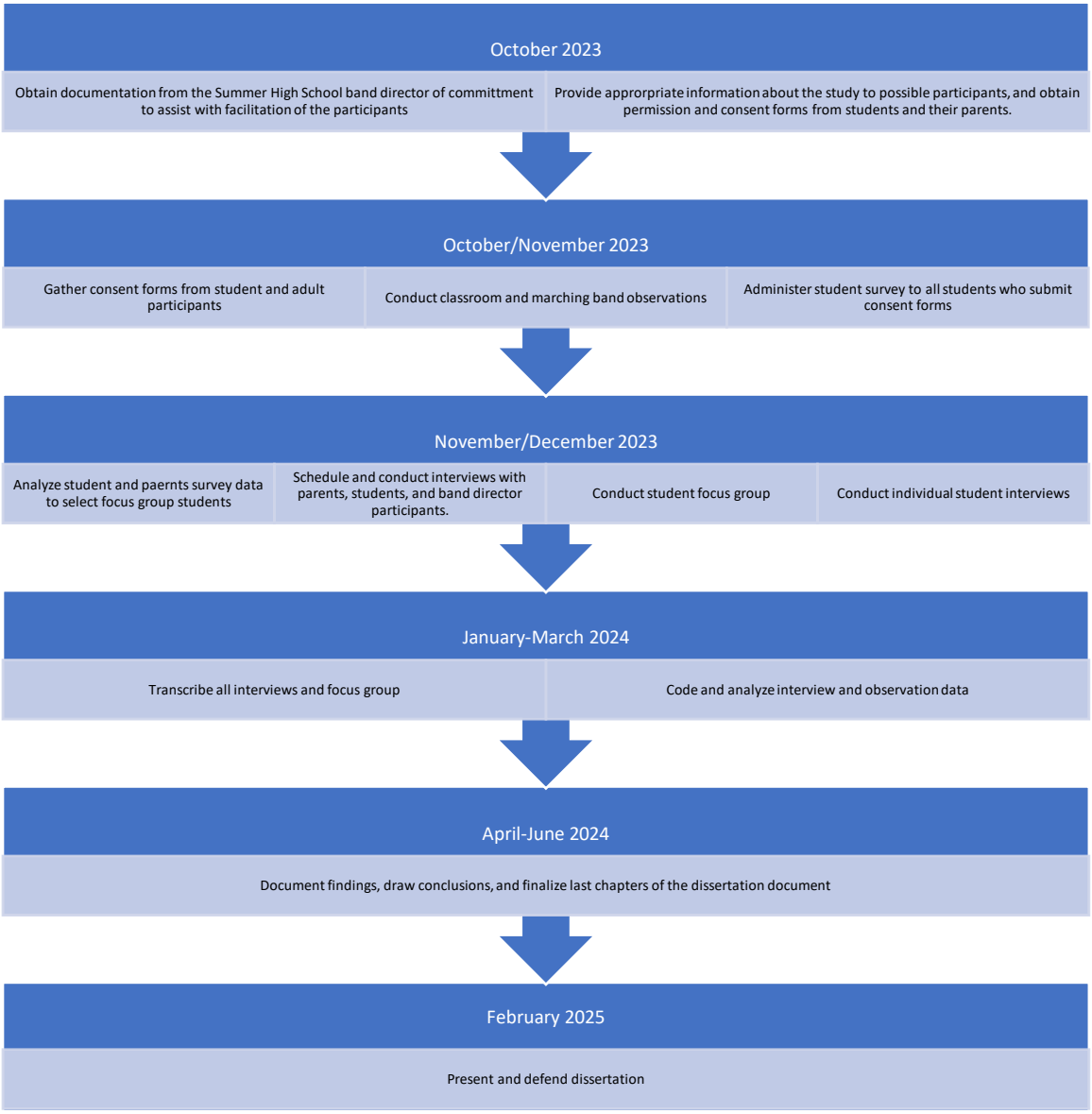


*Figure 3.2 Research Schedule*

The purposes and methodological approaches of this study were influenced by the work of Alexander Ofili whose qualitative study examined the professional and personal experiences of minority administrators located in predominantly White suburban school districts in one affluent county located in southeastern Michigan. Ofili's (2017) phenomenological approach used semistructured interviews, focus groups, and surveys to gather data on the perceptions of

participants and found that “minority administrators’ experiences were challenging and rewarding as they led schools with faculties and students different from their own race” (p. iv).

I investigated one high school band’s student leadership program through the experiences of the band’s current students, faculty, and parents. Their stories and perceptions of what student leadership was and what student leadership meant provided insight into the perceived influence of student leaders on the band program. Through this case study, I uncovered how student leadership influenced the members of a high school band program. Through strategically crafted discussions in the interviews and focus groups, I gathered data specifically about the school’s band student leadership structures and the perceptions of the band’s stakeholders. I hoped to discover new ideas and meanings of student leadership beyond what might be assumed or expected. The findings gave insight to other band directors or leaders of students who could help shape similar ensembles, teams, councils, or other student groups.

**3.6 Site**

To gather authentic data for this study, I focused on one high school band program that had a student leadership program. Considerations for the participating band program included a student leadership program that had been in place for at least 5 years, accessibility of the participants, year-round student leadership responsibilities and activities, and various ensembles within the band program. The selected school that met these criteria was in South Carolina. I had worked with the head band director at this school in previous years in several band-related events. This relationship helped facilitate access to the student and parent participants. The band had a structured student leadership program with a variety of defined roles for leaders. To protect the identity of the school, I referred to the school as Summer High School. Demographics for the

school are in the table below (see Table 3.1). The information was 2023 data from the Public School Review's website (Public School Review, n.d.).

*Table 3.1 Participant Demographics*

| Item | **Summer High School** |
|---|---|
| Total Student Population | 2,051 |
| White/Black/Asian/Hispanic/Other | 57% / 21% / 2% / 20% |
| Free & Reduced Lunch Percentage | 33% |
| Graduation Rate | 87% |

(Public School Review, n.d.)

I selected Summer High School because its marching bands have been Bands of America regional finalists, the program won more state championships than all but two other schools, and the band program's top-performing concert band has consistently received the highest ratings at the annual state performance evaluation.

Summer High School's band program had approximately 240 students (112 males and 129 females). Students in the band program were White (173), Black (42), Hispanic (19), and Asian (7). The band program consisted of least four concert bands, chamber ensembles, a marching band, a percussion ensemble, a jazz band, and a winter guard. Each of the ensembles followed an active performance schedule annually. In addition to these ensembles, students in this band participated in individual opportunities such as Region Band, All-State Band, university honor bands, and more. Leadership positions within the marching band included drum major, woodwind captain, brass captain, section leaders for each instrument, visual captain, and color guard captain. There were student leadership responsibilities in the concert band, and students were allowed to serve in multiple student leadership roles. The leadership team consisted of approximately 45 students who held these leadership positions. Throughout the year,

student leaders had training sessions/workshops to help improve the leadership skills that they employ when working with their peers as student leaders.

### 3.7 Participants/Sampling

Creswell (2007) suggested that the purpose of maximum variation sampling is to "document diverse variations and identify important common parts" (p. 127). This was critical for my study because the goal was to gather different viewpoints and perspectives. Band directors spent significant time with the students and student leaders of the band program. There was valuable information to glean from their perspective. For this study, the director participants included the head band director and one of the assistant band directors. The head director had been on the Summer band staff for at least 8 years, and the assistant directors had been in their position for at least 5 years. The student participants consisted of student leaders who were sophomores, juniors, or seniors. Parent participants were parents of current student leaders. These parent participants were selected based on responses from a survey where potential participants gave information about their years of experience with the band program and the capacity they had been involved. This participant list of directors, students, and parents yielded fifteen perspectives that helped crystalize this research.

### Instrumentation

#### 3.7.1 Survey (for sampling)

Creswell (2007) stated that "it is essential that all participants have experience of the phenomenon and advises employing maximum variation sampling as a strategy to fully describe multiple perspectives about the phenomenon." Another type of sampling is purposeful sampling which means that participants are intentionally selected because of their ability to provide the most informative data that addresses the constructs and context of

the research questions (Ravitch & Carl, 2021). The units of analysis, the who and or what is at the center of the study, are the stakeholders (Ravitch & Carl, 2021). Two questions that are critical to consider when selecting participants are as follows.

- Which individuals, types of individuals, and groups are particularly knowledgeable about what I seek to learn in this study?
- What specific experiences, roles, perspectives, occupations, and/or sets of relationships do I seek to explore, and who can help me explore them? (Ravitch & Carl, 2021)

For this study that was the students, directors, and parents. To select the best participants for this study, I administered a survey to all student leaders and their parents. The data that the survey asked included age, level or type of experience with the band program, instrument section, role/type of role, level of involvement (adults), years of experience (students and adults), and availability to meet via WebEx on the focus group and interview days. From this data, I selected seven student participants. Students who had been in the band program for a significant amount of time and had been involved with different aspects of the band program were desirable as participants in the study. Parents whose students were student leaders and parents who had spent time as volunteers or serving as booster board members were ideal participants because they would have more involvement with the students. I selected five parents who happened to be parents of the student participants.

### 3.7.2 Documents

Since organizations are data-rich environments, reviewing the relevant and contextual documents that already exist is beneficial (Ravitch & Carl, 2021). Although this study focused on the perceptions of the participants, documents from the band program provided insight into what student leadership is at the respective schools. Ravitch and Carl (2021) defined naturally

occurring documents as documents that "exist without the involvement, facilitation, or instigation of the researcher," and they can serve as "an important source of context and history that can help researchers understand the complexities of what we study better by providing a form of data triangulation to first-person accounts." I collected official documents (documents created by the band directors or other officials that are disseminated to the band students and student leaders) as opposed to popular culture documents (videos and photographs that are accessible online). I requested relevant, official documents from the band directors that were current and pertained to the band program during the 2022-2023 and the 2023-2024 school years. The document that I used in this study was the Summer High School Band handbook as it was the best available document that provided insight into the student leadership of each of the band programs.

### 3.7.3 Observations

I conducted on-site observations and observed students during one of their student leadership meetings as well as during one of their marching band rehearsals. This information gave a lens that will put some perspective on information gathered through the documents as well as the interviews.

### 3.7.4 Focus Groups

The purpose of conducting a focus group is to understand what people experience and perceive about the focus of inquiry, through a process that is open and emergent (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994). I used focus groups to allow selected students, parents, and directors to participate in questioning with the advantage of hearing the thoughts of other participants. Focus groups were also ideal for this study because the participants are from similar types of band programs and because the joint discussion setting will allow the participants to feed off each

other when responding to questions. There were six students in the student focus group. The parent focus group consisted of five parents. The focus groups were completed before the individual interviews. This sequence exposed potential themes and ideas that I further inquired about in the individual interviews (Ravitch & Carl, 2021). Other advantages of the focus group included the possibility of yielding better information, an opportunity for participant collaboration, groupthink, and the possibility of sharing information that might be difficult in a one-on-one interview (Creswell, 2007). I served in the role of moderator and administered the same security protocols for the focus groups as described in the semistructured interview section. For the focus group interviews, I incorporated a basic format as suggested by Maykut and Morehouse (1994).

- Welcome
- Individual approval for audio-recording
- Introductions
- Opening Question
- 2 Follow up Questions
- End

### 3.7.5 Semistructured Interviews

The utilization of semistructured interviews allowed for flexibility with how I asked the same questions to the different participants. Similar to a survey there were fixed-item, pre-categorized questions with probes that each participant was asked. This allowed for more streamlined comparisons among the subgroups (Ravitch & Carl, 2021). I conducted audio-record semistructured interviews with each student, each parent, and each band director. These interviews were done via WebEx, and these were sessions based on the availability of the

participants. I stored the recordings on my external hard drive which was kept in a locked safe at my home. During each audio-recorded WebEx session, there were security encryptions to prevent outside access. Participants accessed the meeting with a passcode. I was present before the meetings started and admitted each participant to the session from the Webex lobby. Screen sharing for participants was disallowed. The questions were designed to elicit personal experiences and perspectives. I used an interview protocol based on the structure suggested by Creswell (2009).

- Heading
- Instructions for the interviewer
- Questions (an icebreaker followed by 4-5 questions)
- Probes (4-5 follow-up questions)
- Space/time to take notes
- Final thank you and brief overview of the next steps (transcription approval and follow-up interview)

**3.8 Data Collection**

The data for this study were a document, observations, focus group interviews with students and adults, and individual interviews with participants. Strategic sequencing of methods refers to the planned order of the document collection, focus group interviews, and individual interviews (Ravitch & Carl, 2021). Between-methods sequencing suggests that one data collection event impacts another. For example, I started data collection with the document. From that data collection and initial analysis, I was open to finding information that could help shape follow-up questions in the interviews. When I interviewed students and facilitated the student focus groups, I was open to learning things that could have impacted what I asked the parents

and/or directors. Within-methods sequencing is a careful consideration of the order in which questions are asked in the interview or focus group session (Ravitch & Carl, 2021). I crafted the order of the interview questions in a manner that allowed the participants to first reflect on the experiences they had with student leadership before more opinion-based questions. All interviews and focus group sessions were audio-recorded via WebEx. I used my personal, password-protected Macbook for the sessions. After each focus group and interview, I saved the MP3 (audio) file generated by Webex. The Webex generated VTT (video to text) file which was a verbatim transcription that captures the participants' experiences and genuine articulation with fidelity was also saved (Ravitch & Carl, 2021). After reviewing the transcriptions (VTT files) of the audio from the focus group and individual interviews and editing any possible Webex transcription errors, I allowed participants to view the transcriptions via email to ensure the accuracy of their responses to the questions. If participants found errors or misinterpretations, I made additional edits to ensure I had the best representation of their responses then began coding after receiving approval of the transcription accuracy from the participants.

Many studies have focused on the shared experiences of participants (Ravitch & Carl, 2021). Peer's (2012) study focused on participant perceptions of a leadership program in Arkansas. Interviews and focus groups were the primary sources of data for the Peer study. Aside from the document that I used to aid in understanding the uniqueness of the school, my study's data was exclusively from focus groups and interviews with students, faculty, and parents. I purposefully conducted observations during a leadership meeting and after school time (marching band rehearsal) because that is where student leadership was seen in practice. This study was not ethnographic; therefore, it was not designed for a more significant level of emersion, nor was it designed for that type of timeframe.

The table below (Figure 3.4) lists the phases of data collection. I followed each focus group with the interviews. One of the reasons for this was that it allowed the interview participants to still have a vivid recollection of the conversations from the focus group. This hopefully yielded richer responses from the individuals in the interviews.

*Table 3.2 Data Collection Phases*

| Phase | Data Method | Participants | Duration | Format |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| I | Survey of Students | 40 SHS students | 10 questions | Google Form |
| I | Survey of Parents | Parents of 40 SHS parents | 7 questions | Google Form |
| I | Document Collection | N/A | N/A | Official and popular culture documents |
| II | Focus Group of Students | 6 students | 45 minutes | Webex (audio) |
| II | Interview of Students | 6 students (same as focus group participants) | 30 minutes | Webex (audio) |
| III | Focus Group of Parents | 5 parents | 45 minutes | Webex (audio) |
| III | Interview of Parent | 5 parents (same as focus group participants) | 30 minutes | Webex (audio) |
| IV | Focus Group of Directors | 3 directors | 30 minutes | Webex (audio) |
| IV | Interview of Director | 3 directors (same as focus group participants) | 30 minutes | Webex (audio) |
| V | Member Checking | All interview and focus group participants | N/A | Electronic (email) |
| VI | Post data analysis interview | 1 director | N/A | Webex (audio) |

## 3.9 Data Analysis Method

I based my analysis on Creswell's (2007) work where he noted that transcendental phenomenology researchers identify a phenomenon, bracket out preconceived ideas from personal experiences, and collect data from various people who have experienced the phenomenon. Textural and structural descriptions portray the overall experience (Creswell, 2007). The textural and structural experiences are the "what" and the "how" as explained by the participants. This study generated rich data through extensive interviews and focus group

discussions. There were multiple perspectives on the research questions. The stories the participants shared about their experiences and their opinions about those experiences were the foundation of the content analysis.

The Summer High School Band Handbook was the primary document that provided insight into what student leadership is, and that document aided in the creation of the interview questions. I looked for words and phrases that described who the leaders were, what the leaders did, and how the leaders did their jobs. Most of the 19-page document was informational about the Summer High School Band. The handbook started with information on the benefits of being in the band and then a history of the band's accolades. That was 33% of the handbook. The subsequent sections were more about policy and rules for the band students. The final six pages of the document were devoted to describing the fee structures for the ensembles and listing the booster members. There were a variety of phrases and statements about student leaders and leadership embedded throughout the document. I extracted those phrases and journaled them. These extractions are detailed in Chapter 4. I used this information to help shape some of the interview questions as well as some of the follow-up questions. Having this information provided clarity and understanding to some of the interview responses when the participants referenced some of the duties and responsibilities of the leaders. It was surprising that there was not a formal list of student leadership positions, nor a description of their roles included in the handbook.

While the document data was used to provide insight into the student leadership program and helped shape certain interview questions, I used semistructured interviews and focus groups as data to specifically address the research questions. Transcribing and then coding the interviews and focus groups was the foundation of the data analysis. I solicited participants by

working with the head band director who emailed forwarded an email from me to all of the band's students and parents requesting participation in this study. I received responses from nine students and five parents. This response to the request was unanticipated. The student responses were all from leaders, and the parent responses were from parents of student leaders. With such a low response to the participation request and with the responses being from leaders or parents of leaders, there was no need to eliminate any of those potential participants. They were all included in this research. As discussed in the Boundaries section later in this document, the results of the participation requests could have yielded bias responses to the interview questions.

I used reflexive thematic analysis (RTA) as outlined by Braun and Clarke in Byrne's (2022) article that described the RTA process. Reflexive thematic analysis is a six-phase process that is not linear but rather recursive and iterative giving the researcher freedom to move through and revisit phases as necessary (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Phase one of reflexive thematic analysis is the familiarization stage where the researcher reads and re-reads the dataset in its entirety. The researcher decides what is relevant to the research questions. This tedious step is critical to give ample attention to every word and statement in the interviews, documents, and other forms of data. Even with transcription technology, the researcher must listen to all interviews to become intimately familiar with the interview data shared by participants. After conducting all the interviews, I listened to the audio recordings as I read through the transcriptions. Although most participants responded to the questions appropriately, I redirected some participants who did not fully understand the questions. Some participants added information that was not asked. Some of these additions applied to other questions or they provided pertinent information for this study.

Phase two is the initial coding phase. The coding process allowed me to identify the significant statements and ultimately find themes within the data. When I analyzed the focus

groups and interviews, I employed the following four coding strategies suggested by Creswell (2009): topics that readers would expect to find, unanticipated topics, topics that are unusual but are of conceptual interest, and topics suggesting a larger theoretical perspective. Many of the significant statements and potential codes were anticipated but some reoccurring responses provided new insight to some of the questions. Coding, however, is not the same as analysis. While coding refers to assigning meaning to data, analysis is when the researcher begins to think about and organize the data (Ravitch & Carl, 2021). Braun suggested that codes provide sufficient detail to stand on their own and reveal the underlying commonalities among the constituent data items in relation to the research topic. (Braun & Clarke 2006). All data that could address the research questions should be coded initially even if revisions or removal of codes happens in subsequent phases. I categorized the initial codes with the research questions that most aligned with the coded information.

Phase three of Braun and Clarke's reflexive thematic analysis is for generating themes from the coded data. In this phase, the researcher identifies the relevant coded data and then focuses on interpreting the aggregated meaning and meaningfulness across the dataset (Byrne, 2022). During the review of the coded data, certain codes may be combined when there are shared meanings which can then form themes or subthemes. Some codes may also be eliminated if there is no significant or relevant value as it relates to the research questions. During my analysis, I eliminated codes that had less than five supporting quotes from the interviews. I also renamed and combined similar codes. I clustered the codes based on their meaning to create code clusters and potential themes.

Phase four calls for the researcher to review the potential themes and sub-themes to ensure their validity in supporting the research questions. Bryne 2022 suggest the following questions be asked during this phase.

- Is this a theme (it could be just a code)?
- If it is a theme, what is the quality of this theme (does it tell me something useful about the data set and my research question)?
- What are the boundaries of this theme (what does it include and exclude)?
- Are there enough (meaningful) data to support this theme (is the theme thin or thick)?
- Are the data too diverse and wide ranging (does the theme lack coherence)? (p. 14004).

After narrowing down and combining the codes, I created four groups of possible themes with eight to fifteen sub-themes within each group.

Phase five is where the researcher ensures each theme and subtheme are relevant to both the dataset and the research questions. All themes should create a lucid narrative consistent with the content of the dataset and informative in relation to the research questions (Byrne, 2022). In phase six the researcher produces the report by establishing logical and meaningful order to present the themes in a cogent narrative. (Braun & Clarke 2006). With the four groups of coded data and their possible subthemes, I combined and reduced the subthemes to five to seven per group. Each group aligned with one of the research questions. The subthemes within each group are all related to aspects of the theme and research question associated with the sub-theme. These are detailed in Chapter 4.

NVivo was the computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software that I used to assist with coding and organizing the data. While this software did not conduct the analysis, it helped me organize and sort data (Ravitch & Carl, 2021). Oliveira, Bitencourt, Zanardo dos Santos, and

Teixeira (2016) stated that NVivo allows the researcher "to manage the empirical material in a single location (text, spreadsheets, audio, video or images), and can add, modify, connect and cross reference data, or even record ideas in the form of memos, in order not to lose any insights generated while viewing the material" (p. 77). A feature of NVivo that was useful is the ability to attach the participants to the nodes (categories). I created "nodes" (NVivo uses "nodes" instead of codes) which ultimately led to "collections" (or sub-themes and themes) that I compared between each participant group to find the similarities and differences in participants' perceptions of student leadership. The collections or themes helped address my research questions.

### 3.10 Trustworthiness

Ravitch & Carl (2021) maintained that validity and trustworthiness are sometimes used interchangeably but are nonetheless essential in qualitative research. For this study, I rooted trustworthiness in the concepts of epoché and triangulation. Finlay (2009) described epoché as the process where the researcher sets aside the assumed natural world and the world of interpretation in order to observe the phenomenon in its pure form. One of my interests in doing this research centered on gaining knowledge to improve the student leadership program in the high school band where I am the director. It was, therefore, imperative that I kept my preconceived notions of student leadership separate and not influential in analyzing the findings of this study. One strategy that I employed was answering the interview questions before conducting the interviews. I reread my responses to the questions so that I could be aware of my experiences and feelings about the questions. Being aware of my thoughts was a reminder that there could be other experiences and responses to the questions. During the interviewing process, I kept an open mindset as I discovered how the Summer High School leadership teams were

structured, what they did (or did not do) for the band program and band students, and how student leadership was perceived by the stakeholders. I assumed that there were mostly positive outcomes and effects of the student leadership program. This may, however, not have been the case in every situation. I adhered to the principle of epoché, which calls for researchers to recognize their assumptions and biases in relation to the phenomenon they are studying, as this was the situation in my case (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994). Therefore, I paid particular attention to information that participants shared that was different from my own experiences.

Another term sometimes interchanged with epoché is bracketing, which mandates that researchers put aside their experiences to embrace a fresh perspective of the phenomenon (Creswell, 2007). Moustakas (1994) defined phenomenological research as focusing on experiences through an in-depth study of a small group of subjects. Researchers must set aside preconceived ideas about a phenomenon to allow for a richer, uncontaminated understanding of the experience (Lowes & Prowse, 2001). Bracketing occurs when the researcher is free from preconceptions, biases, or judgments, enabling them to engage with the pure consciousness of the phenomenon (Beech, 1999). Moustakas (1994) also emphasized that the transcendental researcher is not limited by the perceptions of others but must remain open to independent thinking while embracing experiences beyond their own. Through bracketing, I set aside my knowledge of student leadership, and I was open to the descriptions of the participants in this study. For this study, I anticipated hearing experiences different than my own. I welcomed the opportunity to learn about others' involvements and involvement with student leadership in high school band. To help ensure I embraced all responses from the participants, I asked follow-up questions or clarifying questions when participants responded with information that was unanticipated or unclear. This was to make sure that I captured authentic and unique responses.

Particularly one of the African American student participants was rather soft spoken and not as assertive as her White peers. I was careful to acknowledge her when she spoke during the student focus group. Similarly, one of the Hispanic student leaders spoke passionately about family influences. I made a deliberate effort to embrace their viewpoint and perspective. However, I did not notice influences of race or ethnic differences impacting the content of the responses. My goal was to capture the diversity in responses from students of all ethnicities and cultures.

During the coding process, I reviewed unanticipated responses carefully and identified them as significant statements for coding purposes. Ofili (2017) used field notes to record notes during their study. One component of field notes that Ofili incorporated is journaling where he documented his thoughts and emotions to not impact participants' responses or other aspects of the research. I used journaling as a method of bracketing, especially during the interview and focus group sessions, and also made journal entries before and after the student focus group, the director focus group, the first student interview, the first band director interview, and after each parent focus group and interview. My journal entries included rewriting my answers to the interview questions being asked to students and band directors. My journal entries also included brief reflections on the interview and focus group themselves. I noted how effective the questions and responses were. During the individual interviews, some participants did not answer the questions directly or clearly therefore I slightly reworded the questions in subsequent interviews to ensure that the participants understood the questions. It was important for me to keep a focus on the research questions and aspects of facilitating participants' responses without my own emotions and passions impacting the goals of this study. Creswell (2007) suggested that the researcher allows the participants to judge the accuracy and creditability of their accounts. This member checking improved trustworthiness, as participants had the opportunity to verify or

suggest edits to their interview responses. I emailed the participants the transcription of their interview as well as the group interview they participated in. I received favorable confirmation from three of the participants. One of the student participants corrected the identification of one of the responders for the student focus group. The student participant also shared their gratitude and appreciation for being asked to be a part of this research.

Perspectival triangulation, as described by Ravitch and Carl (2021), involves the strategic and purposeful selection of a range of participant perspectives which will yield range, nuance, complexity, and possibly even disagreement of experiences. This is why I included participants with various roles and relationships within the culture of high school band student leadership. Some of the student participants were drum majors, librarians, section leaders, and operations crew. The parent participants also had a variety of experiences and roles with the Summer High School band. Ravitch and Carl (2021) noted that the most efficient and effective focus groups and interviews are rational, contextualized, non-evaluative, person-centered, temporal, partial, subjective, and non-neutral. I addressed these characteristics through the development of the interview questions, facilitation of the interviews and focus group, and analysis of the transcripts. I facilitated a welcoming virtual environment that allowed participants to feel safe and comfortable sharing their responses. The interview questions were structured to allow participants to reflect on their experience without needing any other information or knowledge to respond appropriately. Crystallization was a consideration in the validity of this study. Crystallization employs multiple dimensions and perspectives and offers a layered approach to data collection (Ravitch & Carl, 2021). The different viewpoints of the students, directors, and parents provided a broader outlook on student leadership rather than a one-sided angle. Although many of the student and parent responses were similar, there were some differences. These slight

differences in their experiences provided richer, more realistic data. The goal of this research was to uncover authentic personal experiences of students and adults who can offer insight into what student leadership is in a high school band.

### 3.11 Limitations

Roberts and Hyatt (2019) stated that researchers should openly and honestly state limitations to all studies, including population sample size, regional and cultural differences, constraints associated with the methods design, and response rate. This study focused on one high school band program which restricted its generalizability. Band programs differ from school to school and from region to region. Stakeholders in other programs may, therefore, offer different responses to the participants in this study. This study included only one school with its unique demographics and other statistics. The results and findings could be different if the study included data from schools with a different demographic makeup. The design of my research involved only the band's handbook, focus groups, interviews, and very limited observations. Perhaps other valuable information could be gleaned from more in-depth observations of student leaders in action. The nature of this study also focused on a small group of stakeholders from the school—band directors, parents, and students. Having input from all students, faculty, and parents would have possibly offered different viewpoints.

### 3.12 Conclusion

My passion for high school band and its many benefits fueled my interest in this study. As an educator, one of my goals is to continually improve my teaching and support others. While existing research covered various aspects of high school band, few studies focused on student leadership within these programs. Student leadership played a crucial role in the first high school band program where I taught, and witnessing its impact on the entire program led me to pose the questions explored in this research. I have my own beliefs about student leadership, but I was interested in how other stakeholders described it? How can these thoughts and ideas help improve or enhance programs that have a student leadership structure? For those programs where there is no robust student leadership, do these viewpoints points of the participants in this study offer any useful information? The bounded case study approach of this research gave an authentic and realistic idea of what one high school program's stakeholders say about their student leadership experience.

This study could most directly benefit high school band directors in the United States by providing perspectives from students and adults that could influence how directors structure their student leadership program. Moreover, this study could assist other educators, coaches, advisors, and others in student supervisory positions who also mentor students and cultivate an environment of leader training. My study adds to the limited research that focuses on student leadership within high school bands. Future research on this topic could study other high school band programs or the specifics of how high school band programs are structured. This opens the door for other researchers to study the structure of various types of student leadership programs.

# 4. DATA AND RESULTS

This research involved exploring various perceptions of student leadership programs within a high school band program comparing and analyzing stakeholders' perspectives of student leadership. Through in-depth interviews with students, parents, and band directors; the researcher gathered a wealth of authentic data that captures their experiences, thoughts, and feelings about a variety of aspects of student leadership. This study focused on one high school band program in the southern part of the United States whose leadership program had been established for at least 20 years. For this study, the high school was called Summer High School. Braun and Clarke (2006) define data corpus as the set of all data collected for the research project and the data set as the sources of data used for analysis. The research study included the band program's handbook, on-site observations, and participant interviews. Since this research focused on the descriptions and experiences of the participants, the data set for this research is the semistructured and individual interviews. The handbook information was a foundation of what the program officially states directly or indirectly about student leadership. The observation data served as a live snapshot into the experiences of the student leaders in the context of two main events where student leadership is in action: in a rehearsal setting and student leadership meeting setting. The data set for thematic analysis purposes was the interviews.

This study's participants included a total of seven current band student leaders, five current parents of students in the band program, and two of the band's three full-time directors. The two band directors participated in both the band director's semistructured interviews and individual interviews. The five parents also participated in the parent semistructured interview and individual interviews. Six of the students participated in the student semi-structured interview, and all seven of the students participated in the individual interviews.

### 4.1 Student Leadership Positions

Below is a list of the current student leader positions and the number of students that hold each position. This information was provided by the assistant band director.

Drum Majors (4 students)

Band Captain (2 students)

Flute Section Leader (2 students)

Clarinet Section Leader (2 students)

Alto Sax Section Leader (2 students)

Low Reed Section Leaders (2 students)

Trumpet Section Leaders (3 students)

Horn Section Leader (2 students)

Trombone Section Leader (2 students)

Baritone Section Leader (2 students)

Tuba Section Leader (2 students)

Percussion Captains (2 students)

Percussion Lieutenant (2 students)

Color Guard Captains (2 students)

Color Guard Squad Leaders (6 students)

Band Managers (5 students)

Music Captains (2 students)

Music Librarians (2 students)

Uniform Captains (2 students)

Field Lining Captains (2 students)

Field Lining Crew (5 students)

Social Media Chair (1 student)

## 4.2 Participants

There were 2 (White) director participants, 8 student participants (6 White, 1 African American, and 1 Hispanic), and 5 (White) parent participants. The participants were referenced as a letter and a number. The parents were "P", the students were "S", and the band directors are "BD." The number beside each letter differentiates the participants within each group.

**BD1** was the head band director at Summer High School. He was a student and student leader at Summer during his high school years. After graduating high school and college, BD1 was an assistant director at Summer before leaving to be a head band director at another school. He served in that role for several years before his return to Summer as the head director. The year of this study was BD1's first year as the head band director at Summer.

**BD2** was one of the assistant directors at Summer. He has been the assistant director for 4 years before this study. BD2 was a head director for several years at a different high school in the same state and an assistant band director in a different state before relocating to the state where Summer High School was.

*Table 4.1 Student Participants*

| Participant | Grade | Instrument/Section | Years in marching band | Leadership positions held |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| S1 | 12 | Color Guard | 4 | Co-captain (3 years) |
| S2 | 11 | Trumpet | 4 | Section leader (1 year) |
| S3 | 12 | Drum major | 5 | Football Band Drum Major (1 year)<br>Head Drum Major (1 year) |
| S4 | 11 | Trumpet | 4 | Band manager (1 year)<br>Section leader (1 year) |
| S5 | 12 | Drum major | 3 | Uniform Captain (1 year)<br>Drum Major (1 year) |
| S6 | 12 | Flute | 3 | Music librarian (1 year)<br>Section leader (1 year) |
| S7 | 12 | Baritone | 5 | Field line captain (1 year)<br>Band Captain (1 year) |
| S8 | 11 | Mellophone | 4 | Music librarian (1 year)<br>Section leader (1 year) |

| Participant | Years helping the band | Number of ensembles/events their student participated | Volunteering History | Position held on the parent board | Interactions with students |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| P1 | 5 | 5 | Marching Band | None | Ran sound for the marching band, Drove band buses for trips |
| P2 | 5 | 5 | All home band events, Prop team, Booster club, Winter guard events<br><br>Competition helper, Food support | Supervisor for food for marching band, Secretary for booster club | Volunteer for "Meet the band night," Prop team |
| P3 | 3 | 3 | Marching band (football games and competitions) | Operations chair for band boosters | Chaperoned trips |
| P4 | 5 | 5 | Competition support, Marching band, Winter guard, Fundraising events, Food support | Ways and Means Chair, Booster President | Chaperoning, Fundraising, Home competition volunteer, Car washes, Meal serving |
| P5 | 1 | 2 | Prop Crew, Transportation, Band booster board chair | Transportation chair | Prop crew, chaperoned trips |

### 4.3 Handbook Information

To develop a richer understanding and validity of an investigated topic, pre-existing data are often used for triangulation which also helps to determine if the findings of a study are consistent (Morgan, 2022). I selected the only comprehensive document available that provides information specifically about Summer's band program which was the Summer High School Band Handbook to provide context about student leadership. Flick (2018) suggested that researchers consider four things when evaluating a document for use: authenticity, credibility, representativeness, and meaning. The Summer High School Band Handbook was embedded on the band program's website. It was created by the band directors and was edited or updated annually based on the ongoing changes within the band program which proves its authenticity and credibility and it addresses a variety of topics about the band program. Summer's handbook housed information that described the following aspects of their band program: reasons to be in band, objectives of the band program, benefits of being in band, notable achievements, reasons for their success, band program staff, attendance policies, football game responsibilities, equipment needs, football game policies, after school practices, dismissal procedures, other rules and guidelines, rotator positions, booster board, band fees, band merchandise, equipment storage, calendars, and a note from the band directors. This information proved the handbook's representativeness and meaning.

As I read through each section of the band program's handbook, they focused on statements and phrases that specifically applied to student leaders or student leadership. The following excerpt reflects the leadership-specific information found in the band's handbook. These subtopics and statements aligned with the statements from the participants as they shared their experiences during the interviews. Each of the sections and statements listed above relates

to aspects of the student leadership experience that were addressed by the participants in the semistructured and individual interviews. This cross-referencing reinforced the structure of the student leadership program and its purposes.

### 4.3.1 Excerpts from Summer High School Band Website

**Summer High School Band Handbook (2023)**

**Why Band?**

The nation's top business executives agree that arts education programs can help repair weaknesses in American education and better prepare workers for the 21st century.

**Objectives of Band**

- To teach instrumental music education through performance
- To be a source of pride and ambassador for the entire community
- To develop performance skills and techniques
- To develop leadership skills
- To develop valuable life skills

**Some of the Benefits of Band**

**Teamwork** No matter what you do in life, working together is essential. Band is a great way to work as a group and learn to reach goals.

**Extracurricular** Colleges and Universities are impressed when students have participated in activities such as marching band. Most scholarship applications require participation in extracurricular activities.

**Life Skills** Students learn dedication, commitment, perseverance, acceptance and responsibility (to name a few). These are necessary skills for life no matter what you choose as a career.

**Friendships** Many band members make friendships that last. Most students will tell you that the band is their second family. Students will find a group to be part of– band is much better than running with the wrong crowd.

**Leadership** Students learn to become excellent leaders through performance and activities.

**Time Management Skills** You learn how to manage your time and make the most of it.

**Factors to Continuing Success**

**Be at practice** Every member is part of a giant machine-just one-person missing throws everything off (and also hurts the success of others). Each student is vital tour band. Please plan your schedule so that you can be at all practices. This teaches everyone the value of commitment.

**Attitude** Approach this as if you know it's going to change your life for the better. You may even astound yourself at what you are capable of when you put your mind to it.

**Football Game Responsibilities**

We will have an inspection to check uniforms, instruments, and other equipment to be sure they are in proper condition.

Section/group stands songs need to be approved by the staff before the game.

**Rules and Guidelines**

Each member should show respect for staff, band boosters and student leaders at all times. The reasonable requests of band boosters, officers and staff members should be honored without question.

**Rotator Position**

This type of position is standard in most band programs and it is common for students who start out as rotators to become leaders and officers for the band in the future.

**Section Shirts/Hoodies/Apparel**

Some sections decide on their own that they want to design and purchase T Shirts, Hoodies and other items to show their pride. Although we do not discourage this, students are NOT required to purchase extra section apparel.

Any section that would like to purchase section apparel must:

- Have a parent that is in charge of collecting money and ordering the items
- Have a design approved by the band staff (If it has anything to do with the school/band we are required to have it approved)
- Designs must be approved by band staff and vendor and money collected by September 1st
- Sections are STRONGLY advised to use [the designated local vendor] for designs and keep prices under $20 a shirt.
- All students in the section must be current with their band fee payments for a section to order any "extra" items such as shirts or hoodies

**Final note from the Band Directors**

Band can help you develop many extra life skills needed to succeed no matter what you choose as a career.

## 4.4 Observations

While the data set for this study was information from the interviews, the data corpus (all data gathered) also included observations of the student leaders in two settings (Braun and

Clarke, 2006). These observations provided an opportunity to witness and note things that were said and done by the student leaders. I attended a 45-minute student leadership team meeting to gather information while being in the environment with the student leaders then also attended a 2-hour marching band rehearsal to see student leaders in action. During the student leadership team meeting and the marching band rehearsal, I took handwritten notes and made notes through voice memo on my phone. I transferred the voice memos to the handwritten notes after the two observations. The following sections are narratives of the field notes collected during the on-site observations. These notes, although not coded nor a part of the analyzed data set, provided context for the focus group and individual interviews. I reference some of these observations in the data analysis of the interviews later in this chapter. The participants described and referred to rehearsals and (things discussed in) leadership meetings in some of their antidotes.

### 4.4.1 Observation #1 Student Leadership Team Meeting

There was a student leadership team meeting held on a Tuesday afternoon which was also an early release day for the students. The band director set the meeting time for 1:00 pm, and it was held in the lobby of their fine arts theater. This was a lunch meeting and the band director provided pizza for the student leaders. Upon arrival, the band director (BD1) solicited assistance from the students who were early for the meeting. He parked his car at the door of the building and four students gathered the pizza and cases of bottled water from his car and set up the pizza and water on tables in the theater lobby. BD1 thanked the students for getting the pizzas and water and setting things up for the rest of the leaders.

As students arrived, they greeted each other as they formed lines to help themselves with the pizza and water. There were 28 student leaders in attendance. Students sat randomly at the tables and chairs that were set up in the lobby. BD1 called the meeting to order after all the

students had their food. He introduced me to let the students know who I was and my purpose for observing then began to talk to the students about goals for the upcoming rehearsals which was the purpose of this meeting. BD1 mentioned that one of the main goals was to improve the details of their performance which starts with focus of all the students in the rehearsals. One of the assistant directors (BD2) then chimed in by telling the students "don't go through the motions." and continued to give the students an agenda for the first 45 minutes of that evening's rehearsal. BD1 then discussed the "macro goals" for the upcoming 5-hour rehearsal and asked the students to think about "micro goals" that they can facilitate within their sections to help the band achieve its macro goals. A rhetorical question he asked the leaders was "how are you going to combat the 'so what' from your section?" An encouraging challenge he gave the students was to "overhype the positive." He ended his comments by encouraging the students to help the band through their interactions with their sections.

Another assistant director then addressed the leaders with logistical information for their upcoming competition trip and touched on traditions by encouraging the students to "spread tradition but not in excess." He said to the leaders "set expectations on how to handle traditions." He urged the students to manage their off-the-field actions and activities so that their performances could be their best. At this point of the meeting, BD1 asked the students what their goals were for the week leading to their competition. One of the trumpet section leaders gave an example of improving their resets during the rehearsals. Another student mentioned promoting "equal contribution" from all the members of the band during the rehearsal. One of the drum majors suggested that there be a change in their mindset from beating others to being better for the last competition as they should be "fighting for our best and not to beat other [bands]." BD1 mentioned one of their competitors but encouraged the leaders to focus on their performance. He

continued by mentioning a video that was circulating among the students of one of the band's more recent performances. Several of the leaders mentioned that performance was not their best. One student commented, "although that last run was not bad, all runs need to be strong." BD1 ended the meeting by sharing examples of other successful bands in the state and that "the groups who do well are the ones who focus on the performance." After the meeting, the students cleaned the area and put away the chairs and tables.

### 4.4.2 Observation #2 Rehearsal

This observation was done on the last Tuesday afternoon rehearsal of the season. The rehearsal started at 2:00 pm and ended at 7:00 pm and was held on their campus at their band's practice field. I began my observation in the band room before the start of the rehearsal. I used my field notes to document happenings I observed during my time of being in their environment.

As I stood by the band director's office 30 minutes before the official start of the rehearsal, I noticed many students coming through the band room to get their instruments and equipment before proceeding outside. There were student leaders encouraging students to go to the field on time. These leaders were also gathering their equipment while motivating others. One student yelled, "10 minutes before rehearsal starts." Another student started a vocal countdown to rehearsal time, "8 minutes.... 5 minutes." Other students were making positive, motivational comments, "let's go," "get hype for state," "we got this." Most students seemed to be happy. One student was helping a section leader helping a student fix an issue with their instrument. One of the music librarians was distributing a piece of music to another student.

### 4.4.3 Beginning of the rehearsal

I proceeded to walk outside to the practice field 10 minutes before the rehearsal start time. Students were continuing to go to the field randomly, not in large groups. The practice field

was about 100 yards from the band room. I noticed a student who was emotionally upset and being consoled by one of the student leaders. Although I did not get close enough to hear the conversation, it was clear that the two students were talking about the vulnerable student's issues. This appeared to be an example of a student leader acting in their role of being a support to their peers as discussed later in the interviews and as implied in the Summer High School Band Handbook. I could hear and see positive energy and comments from other leaders as they set up the formation for their warmup on the actual field and also noticed the head drum major continuing a vocal county down to the start of rehearsal, "one minute...45 seconds, 30 seconds, etc." Several section leaders were encouraging some of the students who were not yet in place to quickly get in the proper position for their stretch/exercise time. One of the drum majors was walking around taking roll by asking the absent section leaders. Another drum major helped the field liners as they were painting yard lines on the field.

The rehearsal started at 2:02 pm with BD2 giving a quick, motivational pep talk. He then started leading the group in stretches. The head drum major co-leads this stretch block. During the stretches and physical warmups, some of the section leaders continued to shout motivational phrases and statements as well as restating some of the instructions. After the warmup stretches, BD2 gave another quick pep talk to motivate the students to have a productive rehearsal. Then the students divided themselves by sections and claimed an area on the field for section time. During this sectional time, I walked around the field to listen to section leaders motivate their section mates. There was vocal and physical excitement for some sections while others were more reserved in their expression, but the intensity of the messages seemed to still resonate and motivate the members. Summations of the section leaders' conversations I heard are listed in Table 4.2.

*Table 4.2 Summations of the Section leaders' Conversations*

| Section | Synopsis of Group Chat |
|---|---|
| Trombones | focusing on doing well and not necessarily on winning |
| Mellophones | focusing on the whole season, equal contributions |
| Baritones | motivational statements to encourage students to rehearse at their best |
| Trumpets | putting the past competitions behind and looking to the next and final contest as a new day and fresh start... challenge is to focus in rehearsal as if in actual performance |
| Clarinets | motivational statements about how to make the most of the rest of rehearsal (ie. "not goofing off too much," "reset and get ready for the next rep." etc.) A different leader led the section cheer |

There was a noticeable level of excitement in the expressions of the students after the short section meetings. Most students seemed to be ready to work. Some were more vocal than others.

### 4.4.4 Middle of the rehearsal

After the section meetings, the students went into larger sectionals. The percussion set up at the front of the field and were led by the percussion instructor. BD1 worked with the brass on left side of the field. A different band director worked with the woodwinds on the right side of the field. During this time, the student leaders were a part of their sections and did not stand or stick out. Their leadership and influence were more by example while being in context with the rest of the section. Occasionally some section leaders would step away from their position with the group and go to another individual to give quick assistance. This portion of the rehearsal was mostly instructor-led. Some of the drum majors rotated from section to section for a while before meeting as a group/section of their own where they worked on conducting patterns.

After the sectional time ended, the full ensemble rehearsed their production. The remainder of the rehearsal was led by BD1 from the tower with assistance from BD2 and the other staff who were on the field. The most visible leadership duties were the head drum major who repeated the rehearsal instructions to the full group.

### 4.4.5 End of the rehearsal

The rehearsal ended with the ensemble doing a full performance of their production. Prior to the final run, the sections huddled up like they did at the beginning of the rehearsal. This was when section leaders did additional pep talks and gave short motivational speeches. This was a shorter time than earlier. There was a moderate amount of excitement on the field as each of the sections were audible encouraging their section mates. This encouragement not only came from the section leaders but others in the section. After the final run of the production, the band directors gave announcements. Then the head drum major quickly addressed the band by thanking them for their hard work, and she gave a final boost of motivation for their upcoming competition. She then dismissed the group. After the official dismissal, several sections huddled again briefly. Other members gathered their belongings and proceeded to the band room.

## Observations and Handbook Results

While the primary data was from the focus group and individual interviews, cross referencing the band's handbook and doing the observations provided context for what student leadership was in the Summer High School Band. Additionally, the handbook and observations helped to triangulate the data as I was able to see and hear what the participants spoke about in the interviews. In Parent 2's interview they stated, "I would think that's been his most favorite part was being able to show the younger class then and even some, you know, some guys his own age just teaching them the instrument." This was consistent with the SHS Band Handbook where it stated that "students learn to become excellent leaders through performance and activities. Student 2 said, "I think that's the importance of these smaller roles that are more directly related to the average marching band member who's not in leadership." This was an example of what the handbook suggested membership in band was a great way to work as a group and learn to reach

goals. Not all the leadership positions involved section leader-like responsibilities, yet all leaders' responsibilities helped the group reach its goals.

The following quote from BD1 was supported by what I observed in the rehearsal— "It is a student focused rehearsal in terms of the band staff gives instructions, and then the head drum major tells everyone what is actually going to happen and does the rep." To this end, in the I observed the drum major giving instruction during beginning of rehearsal. In Student 1's interview, they stated, "there was such a strong sense of connection. We go out to eat together a lot. We talk. We have multiple group chats." Likewise, one of the directors advised the student leaders "to manage their off-the-field actions and activities so that their performances could be their best." These quotes served as support and gave credence to the handbook.

**4.5 Semistructured Interviews**

I conducted three semistructured focus group interviews with the stakeholders: students, parents, and band directors. These interviews were done through the Webex platform where I was able to record for transcription purposes. I created a protocol that included open ended questions for each group of interviews. One of the purposes for this type of interview was to allow the participants to hear each other's responses. The focus group questions and individual interview questions for each participant group are presented in Appendices F, G, H, I, J, and K.

**4.**

**6 Reflexive Thematic Analysis**

For this study, I blended Creswell's analytical ideas about transcendental phenomenology with Braun and Clarke's (2006) six phases of reflexive thematic analysis. Braun and Clarke also described two levels of analysis, semantic and latent. The semantic level mainly focuses on surface meanings without going beyond what the participants say. The latent level of analysis

goes beyond the semantic content of the data and starts to examine the underlying ideas, assumptions, conceptualizations, and ideologies that are theorized as shaping or informing the semantic content of the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

The main source of data collection was from the focus group and individual interviews. Each participant was involved in one group interview and one individual interview. All interviews were auto-recorded via Webex. After completing all the semi-structured and individual interviews, I used Webex's voice-to-text feature to create the initial draft of the transcripts. For Phase 1 and as a method of familiarizing myself with the data, I reviewed all the transcripts not only to correct transcription errors but also to look for significant statements for coding purposes.

After the initial proofing of the transcripts, I did a second reading of each of the transcripts to start with the first round of coding. Phase 2 of thematic analysis involved generating initial codes from these interesting and significant points in the data. This first round of coding was strictly based on the exact words and statements of the participants. The codes were created as I read through all the transcripts. There was quite a massive amount of interview data therefore I began coding by associating significant statements and interesting features of the data systematically, collating data relevant to each code as they might relate to the research questions (Braun and Clarke, 2006). As the codes grew in numbers (1,614 statements and phrases), with the help of NVivo I color coded the codes to make it easier for me to identify the codes. I attached each significant statement to either the research question or a specific code under the research question. There were occasions where double coding was used as some significant statements were relevant to multiple codes. The recursive nature of RTA allowed for constant reflection within any phase. Therefore, I moved some statements after creating new

codes if necessary. Table 4.3 shows the number of coded phrases and statements per interview and the number of codes used for those phrases and statements per interview. For the individual interviews, I coded between 34 and 154 statements into at least 10 and up to 29 codes. The low and high numbers here are both from the same two participants. Parent 5 was the least talkative which produced 34 coded statements into 10 codes, while I coded 154 statements from Band Director 1 into 29 codes. There large numbers are not surprising for Band Director 1 since he was the head director and sets the expectations and vision for student leadership. He knew the most about what he wants leadership to be. He answered the questions with fact-based and idealist information rather than many actual experiences which was what the student and parents mentioned. Parent 5 was the parent of a student leader who he described as one who would "sit in his room and read books quite a bit and was not one for many words." Similarly, this parent was also not one for many words and was not as verbose as other parents.

| Files | Number of coding references | Number of codes coding |
|---|---|---|
| Files\\BandDirectorFocusGroup | 364 | 34 |
| Files\\BD1 | 154 | 29 |
| Files\\BD2 | 113 | 21 |
| Files\\P1 | 40 | 14 |
| Files\\P2 | 39 | 11 |
| Files\\P3 | 54 | 15 |
| Files\\P4 | 65 | 14 |
| Files\\P5 | 34 | 10 |
| Files\\ParentFocusGroup | 142 | 23 |
| Files\\S1 | 76 | 21 |
| Files\\S2 | 56 | 16 |
| Files\\S3 | 108 | 24 |
| Files\\S4 | 69 | 18 |
| Files\\S5 | 60 | 18 |
| Files\\S6 | 59 | 17 |
| Files\\S7 | 52 | 16 |
| Files\\StudentFocusGroup | 129 | 23 |
| **Total** | **1614** | |

*Table 4.3*

For the next phase, Phase 3, in the thematic analysis, I employed a hybrid of Phases 2 (generating initial codes) and 3 (searching for themes). After the initial coding, I analyzed the data again and added and refined codes to ensure codes were more detailed and specific about the participants' significant statements that addressed the research questions. This round of phase also allowed me to begin creating themes which prompted more revisions to the initial codes. Braun and Clarke (2006) suggested that searching for themes involves collating codes into potential themes and gathering all data relevant to each potential theme. Table 4.4 highlights the full list of refined codes.

*Table 4.4. Research Questions and Their Corresponding Codes*

| Research Question | Initial Codes |
|---|---|
| RQ1a | RQ1a Role of leadership in the band program |
| | Assist and help other students |
| | Assist the band directors |
| | Challenges to roles or responsibilities |
| RQ1b | RQ1b Student experiences |
| | Interactions with directors |
| | Interactions with parents |
| | Official interactions with students |
| | Unofficial interactions with students |
| RQ2a | RQ2a Influence of leadership on student experience |
| | Build relationships with other students |
| | Impact on decisions for the band |
| | Negative influences |
| | Ownership of the program form the students |
| | Student investment |
| RQ2b | RQ2b Influence on performance and non-performance |
| | Leaders as staff |
| | Mentoring |
| RQ2c | RQ2c Value of the leadership experience |
| | Benefit to the staff |
| | Keeping students invested in the program |
| | Personal impact |
| | Buy-in from the students |
| RQ3 | RQ3 Impact on lives outside of band/music/performance |
| | Beyond the high school years |
| | Life outside of band during high school years |
| | Personal growth and development |
| | Relationship building |

This iteration of the codes was finalized after multiple reviews of the transcripts. These more detailed codes were inspired by all three participant groups (parents, students, and directors). Not all the participants or participant groups addressed each of these redefined codes the same way or same frequency. Codes were associated with the research questions to maintain relevance. Figure 4.1 is a treemap which is a visual representation of the amount of coded information for each code and the colors represent the different research questions that most closely align with the codes. Each of the research questions is shaded in the darker colors and their corresponding codes are in the lighter colors.

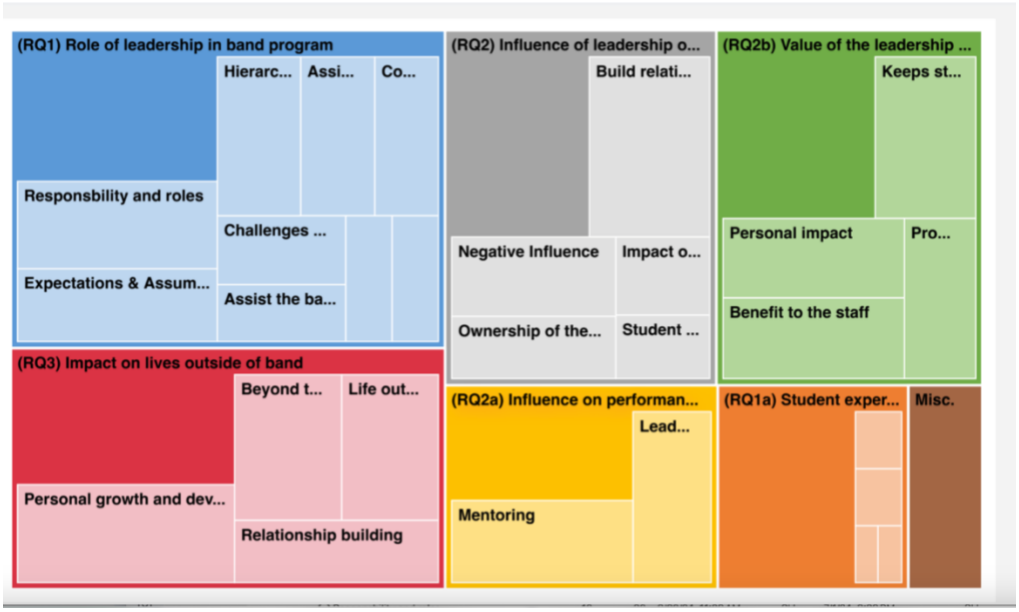


Figure 4.1

For Phase 4, I grouped the codes to create candidate themes as I checked if the themes worked in relation to the extracts and the entire data set (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p. 88), This allowed for the creation of a thematic map of the analysis. The list of candidate themes below indicated the first round of themes which was then reviewed to ensure that these themes represented the meaning of the codes rather than a restatement of the codes. Some codes were combined, and some were eliminated during this phase of refinement. The codes were grouped

based on similarities in meaning. Table 4.5 shows the initial candidate themes based on the groups which were from the combined code groupings.

*Table 4.5 Candidate Themes*

| Group | Candidate Themes |
|---|---|
| Group 1 | Relationship between students, other leaders and directors<br>Students build relationships through their roles and responsibilities.<br>Leaders motivating leaders<br>Relationships can be hard based on social dynamics<br>Build relationships through motivation |
| Group 2 | Learning through situations<br>Individual character improvement<br>Learning from past leaders<br>Sense of empowerment<br>Balancing responsibilities |
| Group 3 | Students support the band director<br>Leaders as teachers<br>Communicators and Liaisons<br>Student investment in the program and engagement<br>Students serving students<br>Non-leaders grow and are impacted<br>Defined roles and structure |
| Group 4 | Beyond the high school years<br>Life outside of band while in band<br>Personality changes as seen in other aspects of the students' lives....<br>Personal growth and development |

## 4.7 Themes

The fourth phase in the thematic analysis involved reviewing and checking candidate themes across the full data set. It was imperative to review the codes and candidate themes again. I did this by combining candidate themes where there were shared meanings and revising candidate themes. I examined each candidate theme based on Braun and Clarke's six questions regarding candidate theme indicators and then reconfirmed the appropriate grouping of the candidate themes. During this examination, I looked for shared meanings within each group to create sub-

themes. In this phase, I moved some candidate themes to more appropriate groups or reworded while others were removed because they did not represent a true theme.

I employed two steps of analysis that Braun and Clarke suggest during phase four. The first is a review of the items and codes for each theme and subtheme for patterns and their potential to contribute to the overall narrative of the data set (Byrne, 2022). The second level of review is an analysis of the themes as they relate to the data set and research questions (Byrne, 2022). Phase 5 of thematic analysis involved naming the themes and presenting details about each theme. In this phase, I continued to analyze and refine the specifics of each theme, generating clear definitions and names for each theme (Braun & Clarke, 2006). I was intentional about naming the themes to be concise, informative, and memorable. These themes capture the essence of the data that supports them. In the discussion about each theme below, I illustratively provided extracts to provide a surface-level description of what the participants said as they pertain to some of the candidate themes and subthemes (Byrne, 2022). Each of the themes addresses aspects of the research questions and is discussed in Chapter 5 of this document.

The section following the thematic map is a breakdown of the themes with quotes from the interviews that were grouped into subthemes within the main themes. For each of the subthemes, quotes from the participants (P1, P2, S1, S2, BD1, BD2, etc.) during the individual interviews or student/parent focus groups (SFG or PFG) interviews highlight aspects and elements of the subthemes. Some subthemes yielded more responses from certain participant groups than others. For example, the parent participants did not share as much information about the band director and student relationship. The band directors did not share as much about leadership beyond band as the student and parent participants. These extractions from the interviews serve as support to the theme but do not encompass every coded interview extraction

used during the initial coding process. I provide a discussion about phases four and five analyses with each theme and interview extractions.

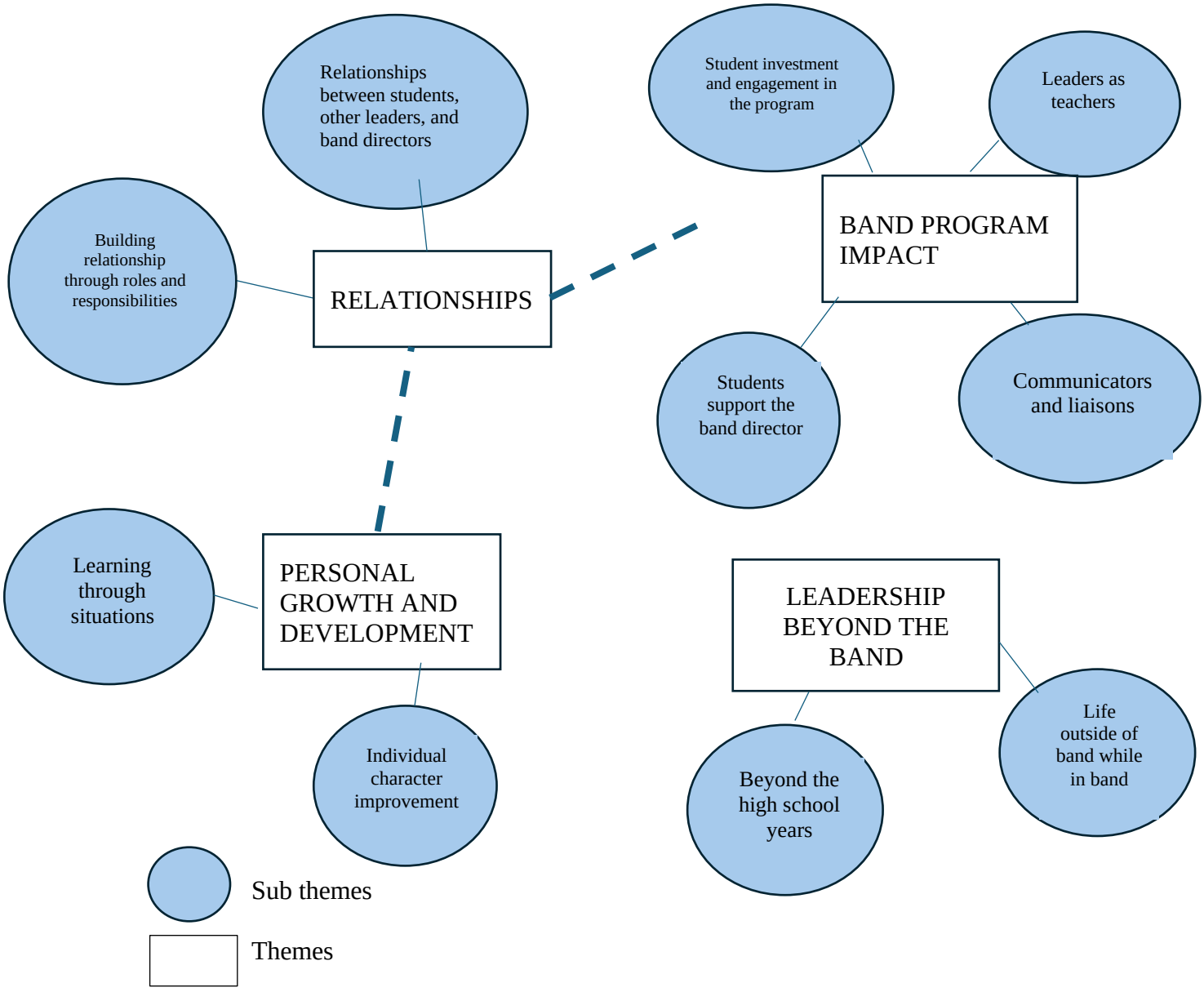


*Figure 4.2 Thematic Map*

### 4.7.1 Theme #1 Cultivating diverse relationships on various levels

Most participants mentioned the word relationship. Many of the participants described a variety of ways in which the student leadership program built relationships, cultivated

relationships, changed relationships, and nurtured relationships. These relationships were not only between the student leaders and the rest of the members of the band program; but these relationships also included the directors, other leaders, and people outside of the band program. The relationship subthemes described were intertwined and descriptive of the variety of relationship experiences of the student leaders. All participant groups discussed positive interactions of the student leaders not only with their peers but also with the band directors. Creswell (2007) suggests that after noting "what" the participants experienced, it is important to note "how" the participants experienced the phenomenon. Each story and antidote shared by the participants was rooted in relationships on some level. Rarely did the participants share any experience that did not involve the student leaders and another person.

One unexpected lesson learned was the value of negative relationships. Students shared how they were motivated to be different from the former leaders. Student leader participants shared a unique relationship with their directors, distinct from their relationships with other student leaders and non-leaders. The parents were passionate about how they expressed their observations about the relationship dynamics. They witnessed a change as they matured and grew from relationship dynamics. This was significant because while this was an anticipated finding, relationship building, and cultivation were a critical element of student leadership that was seen as a value add by all the participant groups. The participants shared specific examples of how the relationships between student leaders and the directors as well as the relationships between the student leaders and their peers made a positive impact, directly and indirectly, on the band's overall performance. These relationships were also described as long-lasting, even beyond the students' high school years. The following subthemes and interview extracts support the significance of relationships as an integral part of student leadership.

**Relationship between leaders and directors**

One of the relationships described by the band directors and students was the student leader-band director relationship. Participants detailed the intricacies of the dynamics between the leader and the director. The band directors relied on the student leaders to help them understand the student group overall. Student leaders welcomed the opportunity to share their thoughts with the band directors because they felt heard and believed that they made a difference in the band directors' decision-making. During the observed student leadership meeting, the students and directors talked openly and candidly about the state of the band and what student leadership could do to help motivate their peers as they prepared for the upcoming competition.

> BD1: I talk to the students a lot about my personal experiences. When I was drum major, there were sections where I could go; and I could say something, and they would listen. And then there were sections where they would not listen. But I had to figure out, okay, well, the drums aren't going to listen to me, but if I go talk to the percussion section leader and he tells them to do it, then and so my relationship to the drum leader was more important than my relationship to the whole drum line.
>
> BD1: The drum majors, I constantly talk to the drum majors as a way of finding out what's going on, how students are feeling, how students are progressing through the season the same way. And I kind of either use the drum majors to speak through the leadership system down to the section leaders and so forth, or I know who does to who to go to.
>
> BD2: They're kind of a buffer at times. And they feel confident enough to, in the world we live in, come up and say those things. So that way we're not isolating or embarrassing

> [students in a full group setting] or whatever. But we typically just, you know, reference them as friends, people.
>
> S1: We have multiple meetings a month with our guard director to go over schedules and planning and what's going on with the personal lives of each student just so that we know how it needs to go and who needs more special attention with what they're doing.

These quotes from the directors and one of the students highlights not only the vulnerable side of the directors but also the two-way relationship that the directors encouraged. The directors valued their relationship with the student leaders. These relationships appeared to foster a sense of comfortability between the adults and students which allowed the students to help shape the staff's minds about the climate of the ensemble. To the directors, the students were "friends, people."

**Relationships through the student leader roles and responsibilities**

The student leaders built and cultivated relationships with other students in the band through their leadership roles and responsibilities. There were a variety of experiences related to the work that the students did that allowed them to become closer with the members of their section and other students in the band. Some of these roles and responsibilities were formal and some were assumed. Regardless of whether the responsibilities were prescribed or not, the leaders bonded with each other as well as the other students in the band.

> BD1: You know, we're not in marching band right now. But that doesn't mean that I still have drum captains that I know I can go talk to when I need something moved or I need, you know, even if I need something in wind ensemble to go differently.

P2: He loves to teach the teach things about his instrument. So I would think that's been his most favorite part was being able to show the younger class then and even some, you know?

S4: It's good to know that you can guide people and help people, and they'll respect you and that we're all here for the same purpose of bettering the band as a whole.

S4: Our people in our section find a way to respect us and understand that we're just trying to help them out, not tell them what to do, but to help them. And we've gained a lot of respect and productivity from that.

While there was little mention of music improvement through student leadership, the above comment from P2 implies that section leaders made influenced their peers in the area of music achievement. Additionally, the student leaders fulfilling their duties and responsibilities allowed band directors to capitalize on the individual strengths of the students. As BD1 noted, he knew which student leaders he could depend on for various needs. As a band director, these two points significant. These are two of my goals with student leaders in high school band—assist me in the various ways that students can and ultimately help make the band perform better. The relationships that the Summer Band student leaders had through fulfilling their roles addressed those goals.

**Relationships through motivation**

During the observed rehearsal, section leaders had their own way of motivating their peers. Some sections focused more on moral building while other sections focused on skill and performance-based motivations. In the interviews, the different participant groups spoke about the dynamics primarily of the section leaders between the members of the band and their leaders regarding experiences where the motivation to succeed was the root of conversations and

interactions. The influence that leaders have on each other as well as their influence on future student leaders was also apparent from the descriptions and antidotes from the students.

> P4: But in the past years it's been more on section leaders and band captains. And so the responsibility lies on their shoulders to motivate more. It's more about motivation I think with those, but to motivate others, and to set the example.
>
> S2: I wasn't really looked up to very much. I was I wasn't seen as an equal, and one of my section leaders really took me in. But he really made me feel accepted. I like, I want to do this throughout my whole high school career... If it wasn't for him I don't know if I would've still been there.
>
> S2: Oh, one of my favorite things early on was getting to know all the rookies. And using my leadership role is more of a friend that gives advice occasionally.
>
> S3: It's just about how I was able to make an impact on people and how I was able to maybe keep that one person who was thinking about quitting stay another season.
>
> S5: So I think our communication and just overall cohesiveness comes from the relationship that we built with each other. So it's not just like a, hey, do this do this now. It's more like a, hey, can you do this for me? And they'll be willing to do it because we have that bond.

The parent and students in the above interview quotes mentioned ways that Summer band student leaders understood their role as motivators and capitalized on the opportunities to motivate and encourage their peers. This influence was critical for some students' participation in band. As much as the band directors created an environment where students could grow, learn, and enjoy music; there are times when students need support during tough times. The

connections these student leaders built with their peers played a key role in preventing some students from leaving the band and contributed to the group's improvement as a team.

**Relationships cultivated by setting the tone and social dynamics**

The student leaders were described as tone-setters for the morale and culture of the band. Leading by example and being a role model is how they were described as tone setters. Not all aspects of the relationship dynamics were described as positive. Participants shared the struggles of peer interactions. There was not always a level of respect for the student leaders from some of the students.

> BD1: Build those relationships with their peers and to make the band feel more like a family in that regard.
>
> P2: And I guess I wish band instructors would kind of get in there and maybe encourage that student leader to do things differently to speak differently or just speak encouragement.
>
> PFG: And as they as they model that pride and that investment, then the younger kids see and want to, want to mimic and grow and learn those things too.
>
> PFG: And I think even when my kids first started, they look up to these leaders, you know, that’s what they want to be. That’s who they aspire the roles that they aspire to get.
>
> S1: I was immediately able to talk with my captain, and we were really close really quickly. And she actually told me, you're going to be good for a leadership position. You need to pursue this. And so the immediate connections you make with your captains are important.

S3: But I think the leadership definitely succeeded in changing the culture of how many people want to get involved. So it may not have established a specific standard, but it definitely got more people wanting to get involved in leadership roles.

It was interesting to hear parents commenting about how the culture of the program rested in the hands of the leaders. The impact on the current band as well as the future was noteworthy. This was one aspect of student leadership that the band directors addressed in the leadership meeting. I was able to observe this tone and culture setting during the rehearsal as well. I noticed the increased excitement after the section huddles during the rehearsal. This feedback from the interviews confirmed the family and supportive environment that was facilitated by student leaders. The significance of this impact is great because of the teamwork needed to be successful in a band.

### 4.7.2 Theme #2 Significant personal growth and development of all students

One of the vulnerable and sensitive topics that participants shared was the many aspects of personal growth and development that student leaders experienced while being leaders. The adult participants noted the change they observed with student leaders. Those participants noted how the situations and episodes the student leaders dealt with contributed to their individual growth. Of particular interest were the different stories of the students. They were vulnerable and openly shared a variety of antidotes from their experiences before and after being a student leader.

Perhaps one of the more vulnerable experiences was the individual change within the student leaders. Braun and Clarke describe illustrative descriptions as surface-level with a focus on what participants said contextualized in relation to the literature (Byrne, 2022). Similar to Dagaz's (2012) findings, the student leaders in this research study grew individually in a variety

of ways. All participant groups shared different views of observed personal growth. Student participants embraced the self-change; the directors were calculated about the facilitated individual growth; and the parents appreciated and mainly focused on the nonmusical self-growth. The sub-themes describe aspects of personal growth and change that were consistent among the participants. Leaders experienced growth as they fulfilled their roles and responsibilities. Their character changed for the better and this also positively impacted the non-leaders. There was also a sense of empowerment that student leaders gained which allowed them to be more confident as leaders and change agents within the band. One unanticipated finding was that none of the participants discussed personal growth musically. The participants did not state nor imply that performance and music or marching elements were impacted (positively or negatively) based on the individual growth of the student leaders. One reason for this lack of music being mentioned could be the questions I asked. None of the questions contained the words "music" nor "performance." While the exclusion of those words was not intentional, there were opportunities for participants to mention music and performance influences. Some participants did indirectly mention music and performance, but no participant clearly stated anything about how leaders helped music achievement or performance success. I expected the band directors to comment more about how student's (leaders and non leaders) music and performance skills improved as a direct or indirect result of student leadership. The closest mention of this was when directors stated how section leaders helped their section mates during rehearsals., but that was not discussed in detail. I also anticipated that student leaders would mention how they grew as musicians by teaching others.  That did not happen either

The personal growth and development experienced through student leadership address each of the research questions because the structure of the leadership roles and responsibilities

facilitated growth and change within the leaders that positively influenced the nonmusical aspects of the band. This was valued by each of the participant groups. Similar to Bowman's (2014) findings, the personal growth experienced by student leaders in this study was developed through the practice of their roles and responsibilities.

**Growth through responsibility and accountability**

Parents noted that the responsibilities and expectations of the student leaders placed them in uncomfortable situations. These situations taught students about themselves and how to handle difficult circumstances. Student leaders learned how to handle many responsibilities simultaneously. The students had to be accountable to their peers as well as the directors. Leading by example was a constant expectation of the student leaders. Not only did the directors expect the leaders to set the example but other leaders had expectations of each other.

> P3: I saw a shift in her ability to take criticism, be held accountable, and go with the flow and be okay 'when everything's not going to go the way I want it to or the way I planned for it to, and I've got to be okay with that. And I've got to make adjustments as things come up and then be able to roll with the punches.'
>
> P4 There's a lot of things to juggle, you know, with all of this and with responsibilities and being there early and staying late and keeping up with, just even as small as you're in charge of getting the shirt sizes for everyone in your section
>
> P4: I've seen him grow too in the process of, you know, others are looking up to me, so I need to make sure that I'm setting a good example.
>
> PFG: So it's helped him in those kind of aspects of his life. I feel like, taking commands from other people and, just owning what he did not do correctly.

S5: So the four of us, the drum majors, we all like to come together and practice our music because, you know, with that, we have to, we also have to know the music just like the rest of the band kids do. But we have to have a better understanding of it.

SFG: We have a lot of things that the directors had us doing behind the scenes, and I guess that kind of taught me how to really just do things without being aware that people aren't gonna know what it is that you're doing. Like, there were many things like hours that we would play helping make the show better errands we'd run for the directors.

These responses gave clear examples of the personal growth that student leaders experienced. Even parents were able to see specific areas of growth in their own student in addition to the students who offered similar responses. The students and parents spoke about accountability, learning how to take instructions from others, taking initiative, and setting examples. These are areas of growth that many of us (band directors) want to cultivate within our students.

**Development of individual character**

The adults spoke about character development in the areas of confidence and humility. This self-improvement was linked directly to the student leadership roles and responsibilities. Directors and students agreed that the leaders developed and refined individually in different ways as they fulfilled their respective roles.

BD1: And it's all about how you recover and also expressing a sense of humility. And they learn all of those things when they're working with their students and peers.

BD1: By using leadership titles and a leadership system, we enable them to kind of have a little bit more of confidence in their voice.

BD1: I've seen them blossom, and I think being in those leadership roles has given them that confidence to try new things, to take a risk and make a mistake because in a leadership position, you're going to make mistakes.

P3: She’s having to learn how to be, to grow and be an adult. And so not just with the leadership position but harnessed in that leadership position.

P4: He’s had to learn a lot of organizational skills. But what I have really enjoyed watching is his, the way that he sets up as a speaker in front of his group, and then, like, the motivational, you know, speeches and things that he’s given.

P5: I think it's been a character building for him. As I've said that or not, this this young man would sit in his room and read books.

S7: But also there's the principle of setting a bad example, and a lot of people might copy that. But the way I see it, it shows me what not to do and how to improve upon myself.

SFG: I think about myself, like, whenever I wanted to, like, just sit down and be lazy when I have stuff to do and people relying on me, I just think about, like, those people when I'm, like, I don't wanna be like those people. And that's part of who I am today.

Different from the previous theme, this topic focused more on the character of the student leaders. Humility, self-confidence, risk taking, and self-motivation were specifically mentioned by directors and the parents. Of particular interest was students recognizing deficiencies in themselves and others through leadership but growing from this and making positive changes within themselves.

**Non-leader growth and impact**

Participants noted that students who are not leaders also grew from their experiences with the student leaders. These non-leaders learn valuable lessons from what they see from the

leaders. Student leaders recalled times during their first or second years when leaders at the time impacted them. Most times this was a positive interaction but occasionally it was negative. Regardless, all participant groups expressed the fact that non-leaders are influenced by the leaders. The influence that the participants had on non-leaders proved to be varied and significant.

> BD1: And I think the underclass see what that looks like and I think it inspires some of them to be the next leaders, you know, sort of revolving door in a way.
>
> BD1: I always say this is a [Guest Speaker] thing. “Fish speak to fish better than, you know, a bird trying to catch the fish can speak to the fish.”
>
> BD1: If they're out there swimming together, they might know how to help each other a little bit faster or just speak it in a different way so that way the relatability is there.
>
> BD2: The non-leaders that are just general band members, I feel like for them, it’s good that they see their peers be in roles like that to act as, like, something they can aspire to be like.
>
> P1: I can only attribute it to it's what he's learned through participating in the band and, you know, watching leaders before him.
>
> P3: And then that rolled over into what does it look like for the rookies coming up, what kind of example should I be for the newbies, and am I really being the right kind of example even for the kids who have been here longer or who are older than I am.
>
> P4: It’s more about motivation I think with those, but to motivate others, and to set the example.

PFG: And there was a lot of pressure that came with that knowing that you're in charge of kids that are two years older than you and not in charge per se, but just, you're modeling things for people who have already been doing that a time or two, you know.

S4: One of my friends who is euphonium or a baritone player this year, he really stepped up his game. He was able to help the section leaders and the students beneath him. He was a solid role model for all of us, and he, and he really inspired us to be more leader like and efficient and productive, and it was, it was good.

SFG: Their leadership style and inspiring me to be who I am today.

While the focus of this research was on student leaders, this subtheme was critical because it highlighted students in the band who were not leaders. There were goals for student leadership that directly involved what the student leaders did. However, this subtheme on what participants said about the other students. There were different takes on non-leader impacts. The directors' angle was more from what they expected student leaders to with non-leaders (ie. help teach and be mentors). The parental angle was more about leading by example and being a role model. Yet, the student feedback was more reflective on how past leaders influenced them before they became leaders. These ways of viewing the impact on the non-student leaders different were still notions that influenced students in the present and future.

**Sense of empowerment**

Growth through empowerment was noted in a variety of ways. Student leaders became more confident in their abilities and roles. With the support of the directors, this confidence facilitated a sense of empowerment from the students to effect change not only in their role but also as members of the band.

BD1: I feel like there are lots of places that empower students to have a lot of time where they're actually talking to the students and, and I do less of that. But I do a lot more of asking them what's going on a lot more of allowing them to dictate what we're doing, that kind of thing.

BD2: I would probably say that the benefits to them would be the sense of accomplishments that they achieve both on the day to day or weekly and also seasonally. They can see their work pay off as being an example, being a mentor, as being, for the process that BD1 said. And that does give them that sense of ownership as and I think it makes their experience more meaningful.

S1: It's also empowered me to be able to do other things.

SFG: Student leadership is only able to do what the directors trust us to do, if that makes sense. Like, if the directors don't trust their leaders, then it's just gonna, create more chaos instead of like, preventing it.

SFG: One of the big things a couple of our directors stress here now is legacy and, like, what we want to leave behind when we graduate. And so I'm really, like, the past couple of years, I've thought about that. And, like, I want to make my section as good as I can, as good of people with good character as I can, which our trumpet section is kinda notorious for not having good character.

There was sense of empowerment noticed by these participants that involved the student leaders not only taking ownership of their role but also having the self-realization that they do make a difference. The directors voiced their intent for leaders to take ownership of their roles by trusting and supporting them. Likewise, the students and parents expressed their understanding of this empowerment and its effect on the future of the band.

### 4.7.3 Theme #3 Positive impacts and benefits to numerous aspects of the band program

Student leadership in the Summer band had numerous impacts on various aspects of the band program and participants noted the training that helped the leaders understand their roles. Participants commented about how the band directors use the leaders as pseudo-instructors and liaisons. The responsibility of being communicators was a trend among the responses from the adults and students. While the duties and responsibilities were not written anywhere, the students seemed to know what their roles were as well as what others' roles were as made evident in the responses from the student participants. This was an unanticipated finding. None of the participants mentioned a desire to have a more formal or official document describing the duties and responsibilities of each student leadership position. There was a hierarchy that was quite clear among the leaders with their different positions. This hierarchy allowed the leaders to have position-specific expectations. All participants appeared to understand this hierarchy and the roles of the different positions. While the participants noted challenges that the band program faces with student leadership, there was an investment and buy-in from the students based on the involvement of the student leaders.

The sub-themes were derived from participant-noted direct influences on the band program. Each participant group mentioned that student leaders set the tone for the program based on their roles as leaders. In this study, the participants agreed that Summer's leaders created mostly a positive and motivational tone despite some of the negative experiences that some of the students had. This is significant because of the potential effect on the entire band program. Even the directors admitted that student leaders can have an influence on the other students more than the directors. The directors as well as the student participants cited numerous times that the student leaders serve the band directors and function as assistants to the band

directors. This assistance promoted efficiency in rehearsals as well as allowed the band directors to focus more on director tasks that students were not able to address. The student leaders functioned as communicators, liaisons, and motivators which all aided in the overall well-being of the band.

One interesting finding was how the participants discussed the dynamics between the positions. Several participants discussed challenges with roles and responsibilities. This seemed likely since there was little to no formal information documented about duties and responsibilities. The hierarchy that participants mentioned affected how students felt about their positions. Some saw themselves as less important than others. These challenges likely impacted the efficiency of the band as student leaders had to learn how to navigate their circumstances. Perhaps this could be an area for growth and refinement of the student leadership program. There was a sense of pride and ownership that student leaders had that seemed to be a great benefit to the program. The student leaders assertively fulfilled the duties and responsibilities that they were sure of. Ownership and investment that the directors allowed the leaders to share provided opportunities for the leaders to influence others in a positive way and motivate buy-in from the rest of the band.

**Tone setting through defined roles and structure**

The leadership roles were clearly defined, and each leader not only knew their role but also understood the basic role of others. This finding was notable because there was no document outlining these duties and responsibilities. Student leaders created an atmosphere and expectation that permeated the entire band by functioning in their roles. The leaders spoke about how they recognize this level of influence and the importance of leading by example.

BD1: It used to be just service oriented, meaning they were like taskmasters. Students didn't really have a role or responsibility outside of you were just basically like a service person.

BD2: I think it was just always something where students were used to helping do tasks such as pass out shoes, pass out uniforms, do sectionals, stuff like that. They weren't really utilized in a lot of ways from a true leadership capacity with direct roles and responsibilities.

PFG: And as they as they model that pride and that investment, then the younger kids see and want to mimic and grow and learn those things too.

PFG: I feel like they set the tone. And by that, I mean, whatever the attitude is or how they're speaking or how they're feeling, that it sets the tone for the rest of the band.

S3: But I think the leadership definitely succeeded in changing the culture of how many people want to get involved. So it may not have established a specific standard, but it definitely got more people wanting to get involved in leadership roles.

It was evident through these participants' feedback that the student leaders used their roles to influence the other students in the Summer Band. Through the leaders fulfilling their responsibilities, the leaders established themselves as role models for others to follow. The parents suggested that the leaders were responsible for the younger students' outlook on the band program. This was interesting because this was discussed during the parent focus group where some of those parents were around the band students more and witnessed the influence of the leaders on the other students. As the researcher, this point being made by parents spoke volumes about the impact of leaders because it was observed by parents who were able to witness this firsthand. It was also interesting to note how the band directors intentionally changed the "tone"

of the leadership by changing and defining their roles which would lend itself to being more tone setting through the fulfillment of their responsibilities.

**Assisting the band directors**

The participants described how invaluable student leaders are to the band directors. This impact on the band was highly regarded by the band directors. The students also acknowledged the fact that their roles and responsibilities allowed the band directors to focus on things that were director-only tasks while the student leaders addressed things that students could address. Directors empowered the leaders to function as assistant directors in some ways.

> BD1: The student leaders are the ones who are more aware of that evolution and that change over time, and they can communicate that and keep the band staff current and informed on exactly how the group is feeling.
>
> BD1: I think it's very important that the drum major run rehearsal. Meaning the staff runs rehearsal, but the instructions come from a drum major. It gets them in the habit of the drum major starting things and ending things.
>
> BD2: You're utilized as a section leader, for example, to do pass offs, to do mentoring, to do small instructional, I guess, moments for sectionals and things, helping them with music, and they have to do direct reports to the directors.
>
> P1: Just because the organization is so large and just is a trickle down, you know. It would be impossible for five directors or especially two directors to pour in and lead every single person at the same level. Yes, the directors make the final decisions.
>
> P4: The directors really do put it back on their leadership and they know they'll handle things that they ask them to handle.

S5: In and after rehearsal, we are always, running around, moving speakers, doing the things that, to set up for practice to be ready so the directors don't have to do any anything extra besides make the band better. We're kind of like the student band directors, if you will.

S6: And then section leader is kind of like the link to the band director.

This subtheme was one of the ones that many band directors desire from student leadership. It was obvious to parents, students, and directors that an essential goal for student leaders was to be "like a student band director." Of particular interest was the realization from a parent about how the need for help as the band directors could not "lead every single person at the same level." Students serving as assistants to the band director is one of more common ways student leaders are used in high school band programs. While this may look different from band to band, these comments were consistent with what I have experienced in various programs that I have been involved with.

**Leading as teachers and communicators**

One of the significant roles that student leaders play in the Summer band is that of a communicator and liaison mainly between the staff and the students. Participants noted that many students, especially younger students, felt more comfortable talking to their leadership/peers about things instead of the band directors. The directors also relied on the student leaders to let them know how the students in general felt. The students took pride in having that open line of communication to act as the voices of the entire band. The communication responsibilities were also exercised in teaching capacities as section leaders often acted as teachers to reteach things that the directors had already taught to the ensemble.

BD1: [I want the leaders to] communicate to me with and feel comfortable communicating with me about what they want to get out of class or out of the ensemble or out of the group or out of the season... It is a student-focused rehearsal in terms of the band staff gives instructions, and then the head drum major tells everyone what is actually going to happen and does the rep.

BD2: So we use all of our leadership team to be collaborators and communicators, with the rest of the band.

S1: We have a lot of responsibilities, and we are constantly in direct communication with our coaches and then as with our students as well. So we are constantly sending out reminders and packing lists and schedules so that everyone can be informed. We're essentially the mediators between the color guard and the rest of the directors.

S2: We will actually get up and teach the section.

S3: I was head drum major, and the purpose of a head drum major is to make sure you're kind of transitioning what the band directors want to happen in a way that connects more with the students. I like to see it as, like, almost like a liaison between what the directors want and what the students need to do, but also kind of finding that common interest as well as a student leader. Definitely helping with the band parents sometimes relay information to them as well.

S4: If someone has a problem, they'll start at, like, your section leader or your band manager and then work their way up to, like, you know, we have so many students that the directors just can't answer every question if they come to them directly.

SFG: Sometimes it can be overwhelming and kind of intimidating when it's just band directors. So when student leaders can step in and kind of help lead the way, it could be more comforting and more just much easier to kind of work.

The feedback above highlighted various examples of student leader communication in a variety of ways—different leader roles and different audiences. The participants noted that student leaders communicated instructions as well as logistical information to students, and they also communicated information about students to the band directors. These responsibilities seemed integral to the band program running smoothly based on the amount of information that needed to be shared between the band directors, students and parents. The band director's feedback also reinforced the idea that student leaders were valuable in providing instruction, potentially more effective than teacher-led teaching. When Student 3 mentioned serving as a liaison with parents, that was an unexpected response. The majority of the communication responsibilities were mostly student leaders communicating to directors and other students, being the middle person.

**Navigating position Dynamics**

The participants spoke about the various dynamics within the leadership. The hierarchy of the leadership structure was quite clear to all the leaders. It was apparent that some roles had more responsibilities than others. There was a chain of command in terms of communication that the students shared. That hierarchy came with its dynamics that the students expressed their feelings about. Some students saw their position as a subordinate or lesser level of impact than other positions.

BD1: When I came into the band in the 90s, there was definitely a larger, not just drum majors, but, a very military sense of chain of command. There were brass captains and

woodwind captains. I think, actually, we had band captains first, and as the band got bigger, then it became brass woodwind captain, guard captain, drum captain.

P4: So when we were drum majors, we were in charge of all things. Like, there was all of the responsibilities that on our shoulders, whereas now in the band and it's changing.

S1: So we go down in, like, ranking order. We have our four drum majors, and then below that, we have six captains. We have two color guard captains, two percussion captains, and then two band captains. The band captains are in charge of informing the other types of captains and letting them know,

S1: While we have people who are below me, we have squad leaders who are face to face constantly with the members. My job is to make sure that they're doing their jobs correctly and that they are making the connections so that I get to connect with them as more easily. There are two captains this year, me and another student, and we start each practice off by announcements, setting everyone up in their block, and making sure everyone's on time. We have multiple meetings a month with our guard director to go over schedules and planning and what's going on with the personal lives of each student just so that we know how it needs to go and who needs more special attention with what they're doing.

S2: There's band manager. They don't they don't actually do much. They it sounds like a big role. They mostly just load props and things like that. And the field lining crew, they paint our practice fields. And music librarian, social media manager, and all those sound like they have nothing to do with students, but they go to the leadership meetings, and they sort of know what's going on to some degree. So they can still communicate to people in a similar way that I can even though it's not on their job description.

S3: But that is how our leadership positions are kind of organized with that chain of command, band managers or music librarians being toward the bottom, but I think still being equally as valuable.

S7: Like, me as band captain, I would have a lot more influence over the band as, like, say, a sophomore that's in a, like a band manager role. Right? But they still have a lot of influence. Just being in the leadership team. So, I feel like just the higher up you go, the, like, the more responsibilities you have.

S6: When I was a librarian, I wasn't really treated as a leader. Pretty much all I did was come to the leadership meetings.

One interesting finding was that BD1 and P4 were student leaders in the Summer band when they were in high school. They confirmed that student leadership in the band was not new but had definitely changed since their time in the band. Their implication was that leadership became more robust, and students were given more responsibilities than they had in the past. In this feedback regarding the dynamics within the leadership team, the students expressed the clear hierarchy of the positions. One thing that surfaced with comments from S2 and S3 was that some students had a higher regard for certain leadership positions over others. Other students also commented that the leadership positions that had more involvement with peer interaction seemed to be respected more than the leadership positions that were more service oriented like librarians and field lining crew. This contrasting viewpoint of the impact or importance of the different positions was interesting and something that band directors should be aware of and address. While the students were aware of “what” the positions were, perhaps they could have band director guidance on the “why” the positions existed and “how” they should be regarded.

**Dealing with challenges**

Not all experiences and situations were positive. The student leaders experienced situations that were not always comfortable. These experiences were with the non-leaders and sometimes with each other. Some of the leaders did not appreciate how certain leaders carried out their duties. Some section leaders struggled with students in their sections. Some students initially challenged the band and leadership system. Morale at times was also a challenge.

> BD1: And whenever you have a lot of something, you've got a big dynamic of character, personality, opinions, and all the things. And so I think when there's a mass like that, it presents challenges that are what's for the good of the group, but you're teaching them how to think globally versus I.
>
> P1: And I'm sure that's tough because, you know, a lot of chiefs and no Indians.
>
> S1: In band, sometimes I feel like our leadership is a little bit behind the beat. We don't always [do things in a timely manner because] sometimes things happen a little too late, but I have seen progress throughout the year.
>
> S2: And so I think sometimes when the drum majors try to take too much control, it can get a bit anarchy-esque.
>
> S2: We're in a high school, and we don't actually really know how to run a band program. And a lot of what we're doing is just puppeting things that the adults tell us and passing it on to the people under our jurisdiction. And sometimes, especially the drum majors, they try to take a bit too much creative control, and they try to change how things are run administratively.

S3: I started to kind of realize how the hierarchical system I didn't really favor it because I started to realize how a lot of the people in higher positions still didn't have that maturity that, you know, someone should have.

SFG: I think one big improvement we made this year, which turned it from a con into a pro is that we're emotional support as well as teachers as well as role models, etcetera.

Following the previous subtheme, this feedback led me to create a subtheme more focused on challenges mentioned by the participants. The feedback about challenges was largely from students and not the band directors. That fact that students had more to share about challenges was a concern. I did not further question the band directors or the students about the band directors' awareness of these challenges. The feeling of being puppeteers, the negativity of the hierarchy within the leadership structure, and possible misuse of power are things that I would want to know and address as a band director of the students.

**Investing in the program and engagement**

One benefit of student leadership communicated by the students and directors was the buy-in that students have in the band program. The student leaders took pride in their roles and responsibilities which created a greater appreciation and love for the band. Although students and parents expressed similar thoughts about this sub-theme, this viewpoint was more clearly articulated by the directors.

BD1: If you have students that have been marching years and years, that leadership can be that extra little thing at the end to keep them really engaged their junior and senior years.

BD1: Most important thing to me is just a sense of ownership that they get within the program.

BD1: So I think there's definitely a stronger sense of a buy in. And then on the backside of stronger sense of pride in what that was.

BD2: So it helps elevate their experience because, typically, your leaders are the ones who are at a level in the program to keep them engaged, they need something more to do. They need something extra. And so that allows them to take on those responsibilities. So that way, they're engaged and they're growing and learning, not just as a musician, but also as a person and people skills and life skills.

This subtheme yielded most significant responses from the band directors. This was expected since the directors would be more interested in the engagement of the students in the band program and the things that impact that engagement. It was notable that the director noticed more buy in and investment in the leaders. Perhaps this is what the directors considered when selecting the leaders. It would make sense for the director to want leaders who were invested in the program to help permeate that sense of buy in to other students especially since the directors realized the impact that student leaders have on the other students in the band.

### 4.7.4 Theme #4 Leadership's non-musical influences and lifelong effects beyond the band

Each participant reflected in some way on the influence of the band's student leadership in areas of students' lives that were not band-related. Many of the student leaders were involved in other student groups on campus, and some had jobs outside of school. Participants commented about how things that were learned as a student leader in the band positively impacted their involvement in nonband situations. There were even descriptions of how student leaders' home dynamics were improved through their growth as student leaders. Some of these reflections involved student leaders in their home lives, work lives, other student group commitments, and future situations.

Not only was relationship building seen as beneficial for the leaders and the band while the leaders held their roles but also participants agreed that the relationships themselves and the relationship building skills were beneficial outside of the band and beyond high school. This was a value add for the student leadership experience. The student leadership program provided this avenue for individual development through the leaders' roles. This was an anticipated finding that was consistent with the literature and with my personal experiences.

The participants described leaders' experiences in other clubs, activities, and workplaces where the leaders exercised skills and things learned as a band leader. As consistent with the Summer Band Handbook and as articulated by the band directors, student leaders grew as humans and as influencers, and this was realized outside of the Summer Band. One of the parent participants credited only the band for the growth they saw in their student. Each participant group described beneficial changes in the personalities of the student leaders. A notable antidote shared by a parent detailed how their student's relationship with family members improved due to the personal growth and development of the students due to their leadership role. Even beyond the high school years, the participants described the ongoing benefits of the student leadership experience which included college experiences, professional situations, and other adult relationships.

I noticed some unmentioned topics that were concerning. None of the participants mentioned musical benefits beyond high school or outside of the Summer band. No student participant commented about their involvement in music outside of the marching band or the benefits (or lack thereof) of being a student leader. Section leaders did not note being a better musician. The drum majors did not mention being a better conductor albeit one participant did comment about becoming a band director. Logistics leaders did not mention being better with

attention to detail because of the precision needed with lining the field. The librarian did not mention links to academic success directly tied to their librarian responsibilities. These findings suggested that stakeholders viewed the student leadership program as quite beneficial. However, the topics that were not addressed revealed a potential gap that warrants further research.

**Relationship building**

Relationships were built, enhanced, changed, and facilitated through the student leadership experience. While peer and director relationships were the most prominent, the participants shared elements of relationships that were not solely tied to student leadership in real time.

> PFG: So it was a huge growing experience for her, to just push her out of her little four group of friends and build relationship with other people.
>
> PFG: So it's helped him in those kind of aspects of his life. I feel like, taking commands from other people and, just owning what he did not do correctly
>
> PFG: You know, and in all of that, they're learning how to be, how to work together, how to facilitate conflict with each other. You know, they're learning so many life skills,
>
> S2: But even outside of band, people will, like, come up to me in the halls and just talk to me about stuff. Not even as a leader, but just as a friend, which is great for me because that's what I set out to do when I took the job.
>
> S3: I take the lessons that I learned from band. There's one incident actually. One of the nonprofits I'm in, we were supposed to have a cornhole tournament, but no one we invited to play came...and I actually brought one of my fellow drum majors with me because I was like, you're going to you're going to help me with this. This can be a bonding moment.

S3: So being drum major and having that experience for the last two years is helping me even now. But also interacting with my community and I'm in multiple nonprofits, and I interact with the people there.

S4: I have multiple friends like my section leader or my band captain, and now they're some of my best friends even though they've graduated high school.

Relationship building was one of the main themes, but under this theme relationship building was noted as a benefit outside of the context of band. The student and parent participants above mentioned two aspects of relationship building. One was that student leadership fostered friendships and bonding of the students that materialized in friendships outside of the band environment. The second aspect of relationship building was how student leadership experiences taught students how to cultivate relationships in a manner that transferred to relationship building with people outside of the band family. As I stated earlier, facilitating personal growth through music was a teaching focus of mine. This was an example of this focus. Participants considered the relationship building as an asset of student leadership that was also lasting effects after students left the band program.

**Non-music impacts/influences**

The impact of student leadership extended beyond the music. Student leaders personally benefited in ways that were manifested in other areas of their lives. Participants spoke about how leadership experience helped them with their involvement with family, friends, and other organizations they were a part of—other groups on campus, church groups, and work settings.

BD1: I mean, I, you know, I did ROTC when I was in high school, and they talk a lot about leadership, but there's not a lot they do. But the students in the end, they have real jobs like a drum major.

BD2: I would like to think that they take away skills such as organization, time management, communication, a heightened, a heightened sense of responsibility, would be another thing.

BD2: It's built their confidence, and that carries over into their academics. It carries over into their social lives and things like that.

BD2: We also have students who are on our leadership team, who are leaders in National Honor Society, who are leaders in student council who go out for, you know, Miss Summer Pageant.

P1: I work at a church, so I'm kind of have a perspective about, like, our student camp this summer. I could tell he was more of a leader at student camp this summer than in prior years, but it was because of, I think, the things he had gained.

S4: Outside of band, I've noticed that at work, I'm much more productive in helping the other workers around me stay motivated and on task. In school, my, like, efficiency and motivation has increased a lot. My grades have gone up.

Perhaps one of the more popular praises that I have heard from parents about participation in band is how participation in band teaches students life skills that have nothing to do with music. The participants' comments about organizational skills, time management, communication, individual responsibility, self-confidence, and efficiency supported my expectations regarding the personal impact of student leadership. These traits were also evident in other organizations students were involved in, both on and off campus.

**Personality changes seen in other aspects of the students' lives**

All participants shared how the personalities of the students developed and changed during the leadership reign. Parents appreciated the improved character development,

organizational skills, and life perspectives that the leadership experience brought to their student. Student participants also noted their self-improvement and self-awareness were highlights of their personal development during their leadership years.

> BD1: I think it definitely gives students a voice and makes them more confident. You know, you can tell, sometimes there's a faculty meeting and a student has to speak, and the students are super nervous. But then a band leader steps up and just starts talking because they're used to talking to adults, they're used to talking to a large group, they're used to having responsibility and seeing something through.
>
> BD2: It's an opportunity for them to kind of mature and take on adult like responsibilities, under the guidance and umbrella of mentors, like the directors and other band staff. They're growing and learning, not just as a musician, but also as a person and people skills and life skills.
>
> S2: I joined the robotics team this year, which I did that in seventh grade, and I was kind of scared to do it, but I got the courage. I started my own team at the school, and I think it is the life skills that I learned from being a leader [in band that] sort of helped me do that.
>
> S3: So my leadership experiences, I just described it as, like, a whole journey of mental strength and growth from that point of view.
>
> S5: Especially as an aspiring music educator, it's allowed me to want to talk to people more, and I feel like that's one of the reasons why I'm going to the [state university] next year.
>
> SFG: And I noticed that a lot of the time I'd sit and I'd hear, like, my band director in my head telling me, "don't be petty; don't do this." And I'd be able to, like, kind of calm myself down in situations, like, outside of school, like, with my family and stuff and just

> kind of I was able to look at things in, like, a nest, a less negative light and kind of, like, learn to be the bigger person in situations that are, you know, not fun, you know, like arguments and stuff. So, yeah. It's like I'm able to kind of take some of the qualities that I have to put into being a leader in bands, and I can use them in everyday life.

This subtheme was another confirmation of expected outcomes of the impact of student leadership. The band director participants expressed sentiments that I noticed in my experiences with student leaders. BD2 reminded me of the charge that we as band directors place on ourselves to serve not only as teachers but as mentors to these leaders who are maturing into adulthood. The students passionately gave examples of their personal and personality growth as they applied the growth in other areas of their lives. Not only did these students change for the better, but they also made life decisions based on their experiences as a leader in the Summer band. This was a significant influence of student leadership in high school band.

**Life after high school**

Student leaders' lives were influenced after they graduated from high school. Participants shared stories about how the things they learned as a student leader in the Summer band helped students navigate college, deal with tough situations on their jobs, and various other aspects of life. It was clear that the student leadership experience had long-lasting impacts after the terms were served.

> BD1: You know, when you go to college and you look at college classes or you look at college ensembles or you look at college groups, you know, like fraternity groups or organizations. There're always those [band] people stepping up and kind of taking charge.
>
> BD1: Like I said, S4 is one of our, trumpet section leaders. His mom was drum major, and his mom is president of the booster club. His grandfather was drum major here.

There's a flute who will definitely be on leadership next year. I remember her mom was a guard captain when I marched [in high school band].

P4: These are the same people that will rise up in their jobs, they'll rise up in their communities.

PFG: It is the lifelong lesson of it. Like, learning to be a leader at such a young age, I think, is going to help these children tremendously when they get older and into college and different things like that and on their jobs.

PFG: We're developing these students into who they're going to be. And I think leadership roles [in band] do that.

S6: That will become very important, you know, once I go out in the real world and have real leadership positions that, you know, you're dealing with things that you can't just go to the higher authorities. You might have to deal with it yourself, and so then you already have experience with how you should deal with it.

SFG: Being in leadership here does give you a lot of real-world experience that you could use in your job, at home, at, in your church or community. I know it's personally helped me when I've had to deal with people bringing trauma, and knowing how to deal with that helps a lot because I've done it here already.

SFG: Much of our band career was without [our former section leader], but still he made such a big impact on us. I will, I will still text him. Literally, he graduated four years ago, and I still text him asking, asking for guidance and talking about life in general.

SFG: This isn't my experiences, but my sister, she was a captain here. And now she's, she graduated five years ago, and now she's a general manager at a major restaurant in

Florida. She says that her experiences, like, being a captain here still help her, and she still thinks about it to this day.

These short antidotes from directors, parents, and students described the value of student leadership after high school through specific examples. It was a full circle moment when the band directors spoke about how the parents of some of the student leaders were also student leaders when they were in high school years ago. This fact could be worthy of deeper investigation to see if there is any correlation between parents and their students regarding leadership in high school band. The secondhand story shared in the student focus group of the former leader who was a store manager in Florida also provided additional support to the post-graduation benefits of the student leadership experience. This also could be another topic worth of investigation, which could also be valuable for the band director regarding student leadership development. Perhaps more graduates of the Summer Band program could share their stories of leadership value and benefits beyond high school.

**4.8 Triangulation**

This study used focus group and individual interviews as the main source of data, but for triangulation purposes, two observations and the Summer High School Band Handbook were also used as additional data collection methods to achieve greater rigor and validity in this study (Ravitch and Carl, 2021). Two questions that Ravitch and Carl (2021) suggest that researchers ask are “How can I get the most contextualized and complicated picture possible of this group, context, and/or phenomenon” and “How do I collect data in such a way as to excavate a range of opinions, experiences, and perspectives?” When addressing the first of these two questions, I utilized data collected in the observations and the handbook in addition to the interviews. Ravitch and Carl (2021) defined this strategy of methodological triangulation “between

methods" as data collected using different methods such as observational field notes and in-depth interviews in ways that are generative to the overall data set (Ravitch and Carl, 2021). Some notable data from the observations included seeing the section leaders interact in mentorship roles with their peers and seeing leaders serving in various aspects of rehearsals. This was consistent with coded and analyzed data from the interviews. The handbook noted time management, teamwork, and life skills as elements of the band program that were also noted by each of the participant groups during the interviews.

Ravitch and Carl (2021) also defined perspectival triangulation as the intentional and systematic inclusion of a range of participant perspectives to seek range, nuance, complexity, disagreement, and generative tensions in perspectives and the data set as a whole. The premise of this study is rooted in the different perspectives of stakeholders which is why students, directors, and parents served as participants in this study.

**4.9 Boundaries**

I relied on the participants descriptions of their experiences at Summer High School for this qualitative study. There were, however, boundaries based on the methods and procedures. In this bounded case study, I focused on only one high school band. Therefore, the findings and results were limited to the perspectives from one set of experiences. The student participants were current student leaders. Students in the band who were not leaders could have similar or different experiences and answers to questions about student leadership within the Summer band. There was little information provided about all the duties and responsibilities of all the different student leadership positions because I focused on experiences. There was no representation from each type of student leader. Having more information about the duties and responsibilities as well as representation from each type of leader could provide a more comprehensive result.

The interviews were conducted at the end of the marching band season. This could have influenced the participants since the dynamics of the leaders could be different based on the current happenings in the band. As mentioned by the band directors, the student leaders tend to be more active during the marching band season. Another boundary of this study stemmed from the low number responses to the request for participation. The parents and students who responded favorably about participating were perhaps those who had more positive experiences than those students and parents who chose not to respond to the participation request. Stakeholders who were not leaders may have refrained from responding because they did not consider themselves strong candidates unless they were leaders or parents of leaders, or perhaps they chose not to participate in a study about something they did not have positive experiences with.

Most of the student and parent participants were not new to student leadership. All the students had at least 2 or more years serving as leaders. Perhaps the perspective would have been different for a first-time student leader, especially if that leader was a sophomore. The student participants were mostly section leaders and drum majors. Even those who held other positions before this study were in one of the positions that had a significant influence on their peers. None of the participants was a librarian or only on the logistics team (field lining crew).

Another boundary of this study was the adult participants. Other stakeholders could be the school administrators, other teachers, or other band staff members. Those adults interact with the student leaders and the overall band program. Their experiences could have provided a unique perspective that is not shown in this study. Having input from other stakeholders could have changed themes or patterns in responses. That additional input could have possibly generated new themes.

## 4.10 Summary

This study incorporated data from interviews, observations, and a document analysis with the main data coming from three focus group interviews and fourteen individual interviews from the participants. There were three participant groups: student leaders, band directors, and parents. Each of these groups collectively and individually responded to open-ended questions that allowed them to reflect on their experiences involving student leadership in the Summer High School Band. Before conducting these interviews, I observed a student leadership meeting and a marching band rehearsal. Through note-taking during these observations, I gathered on-site data about student leadership. During the rehearsal observation, the student leaders assisted with instruction, motivated their peers to maintain focus in rehearsal, and interacted one-on-one with their peers as a friend and confidant. Student leaders motivated each other while also being motivated by the band director during the student leadership team meeting.

The Summer High School Band handbook was examined by highlighting statements and relevant information about student leadership. Some notable information in the handbook that was readdressed in the interviews included but not limited to development of leadership skills, utilization of teamwork to achieve goals, life skill development, friendship facilitation, and development of time management skills. These variety of data sets helped to triangulate the study to enhance its validity.

I used reflective thematic analysis to disaggregate the data to create codes that informed subthemes and then themes. The data resulted in four themes that addressed the three research questions. The four themes were:

**1 Cultivating diverse relationships on various levels:** Student leadership cultivated relationships between student leaders and their peers, student leaders and the directors,

and student leaders with each other. The roles and responsibilities that student leaders allowed for a variety of interactions, with and without music, that built and strengthened personal relationships.

**2 Significant personal growth and development of all students:** Student leaders grew in different ways as individuals. Some growth areas included but were not limited to peer conflict resolution, multitasking, time management, and peer tutoring.

**3 Positive impacts and benefits to numerous aspects of the band program:** Student and director participants agreed that student leaders positively impact the band program through the roles that they play. Student leaders were instructors, mediators, motivators, facilitators, and clerical support. All these roles allowed the band to operate more efficiently.

**4 Leadership's non-musical influences and lifelong effects beyond the band:** The student leadership experience influenced student leaders' lives outside of the band program. Student leaders utilized lessons learned during their time as leaders after they graduated high school. Some of these leaders also incorporated learned skills in other areas of their high school tenure such as in other organizations or their part-time jobs. Several participants mentioned positive impacts on their families based on their experiences as student leaders in the Summer band.

Overall, this study's participants (students, directors, and parents) described student leadership in the high school band as building and cultivating relationships that provided personal growth for the student leaders which not only afforded benefits to the band program but also to the student leaders in their world outside of band. The band director participants revealed a positive outlook on student leadership as they shared the expectations and experiences of

student leaders. These expectations included student leaders serving as pseudo band directors as well as student ambassadors. The band parent participants collectively supported the student leadership program as they shared an appreciation of the opportunities that the student leaders must not only uniquely interact with their peers but also experience adult-like responsibilities that help the students mature as individuals. Through the stakeholders' stories, the research issues were addressed— the role that leadership plays in the Summer Band, the impacts of student leadership on their band experience, and how their student leadership involvement impacts their lives outside of the Summer Band. The participants overwhelmingly communicated favorably to the questions and agreed that the student leaders enjoyed and grew from their experiences despite some of the challenges. Their descriptions of situations and circumstances offered firsthand accounts of what student leadership was like in the Summer band.

# 5. DISCUSSION

This final chapter contains a summary of the research and a review of its purpose. Additionally, each research question is discussed along with connections to existing research follow by personal reflections and implications for practical uses for band directors and other professionals who work with student leaders. This chapter concludes with recommendations for future research.

## 5.1 Summary of Study and Purpose

The purpose of this study was to get a description of student leadership within high school band from the stakeholders' perspective. Through the stories and reminiscences of band directors, student leaders, and the parents of student leaders, this study aimed to collect these perspectives to add to the limited research that focuses on descriptions of what student leadership is in high school band. This bounded case study focused on one high school band program in the southeastern portion of the United States. The participants included two of the band's directors, seven of the band's student leaders, and five of those students' parents. In addition to the interviews, the data corpus included two on-site observations and a review of the band program's student handbook.

The director-created student handbook did not describe the duties and responsibilities of the student leaders directly, but the handbook identified several objectives of the band program. One of those objectives was "to develop leadership skills." The handbook describes one of the benefits of the band being that "students learn to become excellent leaders through performance and activities." The first observation of this study was a student leadership meeting facilitated by one of the band directors. During this meeting the directors and student leaders engaged in conversation that focused on promoting peer motivation between the student leaders and the other members of the band while they prepared for an upcoming competition. Both the student

leaders and the directors shared ideas to be implemented in their upcoming rehearsals and competition. The other observation was a marching band rehearsal. During the rehearsal, section leaders utilized moments to give pep talks and say encouraging words to their section mates. The drum majors were observed motivating students to get ready for the rehearsal, and drum majors assisted the staff with running the rehearsal. The handbook and the observations provided context to the stakeholders' descriptions and answers to interview questions.

The data set used for analysis were three semi structured focus group interviews as well as individual interviews with participants. During the focus group interviews the participants were able to hear each other's answers to questions, and they were able to feed off each other to provide more informed responses. The band directors focus group provided descriptions for what their vision for the student leadership program which was largely for the student leaders to help the directors run the band program. The directors viewed the student leaders as their liaisons. The student focus group offered insight to how students viewed their experience as student leaders in the band. All the student leaders noted an overall positive experience as a student leader in the band. They spoke about how past leaders influenced them and motivated them to be better leaders. They also commented on how they interacted with their peers based on the position they held. Many of the leaders described how they grew and learned from their time as a student leader. The impact of serving as a leader was apparent as the leaders shared how they changed for the better during their time as a leader. This was similar to what parents shared in the parent focus group interview. The parent perspective offered a view in a different lens from the students and directors who described a more firsthand view. The parents, on the other hand, shared what they saw through their own student. While some of the parents had experiences watching students in action through volunteering with the band, most of the parents described

how leadership impacted their student. Each parent shared how they witnessed their student's dedication increased and how their student improved in a variety of ways as a leader and as a person. Some of the growth areas included time management, peer relations, and self-confidence. Through the individual interviews with each participant, the researcher was able to gather more personal stories and antidotes. All of the participants shared similar descriptions of what student leaders did, their duties or responsibilities as well as the positive impact leaders in the Summer band program made on the students and the program as a whole. They the pros of leadership in the band which included student ownership, student influence on decision making, personal growth. They also shared some of the cons which included occasional peer conflict and a large time investment. All participants shared that the pros outweighed some of the cons.

**5.2 Answers to Research Questions**

This study was rooted in three main research questions.

1. How do band students perceive the role(s) that student leadership plays in a high school band program?
2. How do stakeholders describe the influence of student leadership on students' band experience?
3. How do stakeholders describe high school band student leadership's affect the student leaders' lives outside of the band experience?

These are the answers to the research questions.

- Students described the roles that student leadership play in high school band as integral to their overall band experience through the relationships they build and through their personal growth and development.

- Student, director, and parent stakeholders viewed student leadership as a vital and supportive factor in the band's operations, contributing to both its efficiency and the overall learning experience.
- Student leadership in high school band facilitated the development of life skills that student leaders can apply to other areas of their lives while in high school and through adulthood.

These questions were answered through all the responses from the participants during the focus group and individual interview process. The stakeholders described the roles of the different positions through their experiences. The directors described some of the duties and responsibilities for many of the student leadership positions based on what they expected each leader to do. The student leader shared their description of their roles through their eyes as actual student leaders. They described what directors and other students expected them to do, what they thought they were supposed to do and what they actually did. The parents articulated a description of student leadership roles through stories their student shared with them. All participants expressed their own ideas of the influence that student leadership had on the band experience. These influences were both performance- based and non-performance based. There were similarities in the different stakeholders' idea of the influences. Each group of stakeholders valued the student leadership experience despite a few drawbacks. There was a consensus among the stakeholders with the positive impact that the student leadership had on the students outside of their music and performance experiences. The directors and parents noted their observation of the growth in the individual students through their leadership experience, while the student leaders shared their personal stories about how they grew and gained from their leadership experiences. The students described the application of this growth in various aspects of their

current lives as well as their anticipated application of growth after their high school band experience.

### 5.3 Comparison of Findings in the Literature

The findings in this study align with some findings in other published research in several ways. Studies that focused specifically on student leadership (Thies, 2013; Lalama, 2016; Kagay, Marx, & Simonsen, 2015) found that student leaders are role models to other peers in their organizations. The current study provided a variety of stakeholder perspectives on how student leaders are admired by their peers. Sometimes the opposite was true as some student participants in this study shared a disdain for some of their predecessors. This disdain, however, was did not prove to be more prominent than the positive aspects of role modeling that happened with student leaders as described by student, director and parent participants. The participants highlighted examples of how past leaders influences current leaders and how the current leaders aim to be an example for the greater population of the band.

Consistent in the literature, this study found that student leaders served as instructors and change agents for the band (Thies, 2013; Scherer, 2021). As stated in the Thies (2013) study as well as the current study, student leaders aided in instruction, logistics, communication, and a plethora of vital aspects that aid the directors in managing the entire group. Thies (2013) noted that rehearsal efficiency improved with student leaders being engaged in the process. Similarly, student and director participants described how the responsibilities in and out of rehearsals helped to increase student achievement and effective use of rehearsal time. These both contributed to what participants described as successful performance experiences (O'Leary, 2016).

The participants in this study highlighted a nurturing environment that was fostered by the student leaders. Lalama (2016) noted how students valued the climate that leadership created, especially students who were not leaders. Students in the current study shared antidotes about how they can influence the rehearsal atmosphere. As observed in the student leadership meeting, one of the band director participants challenged the student leaders to use their peer influence to motivate the band during an upcoming rehearsal. This aspect of student leadership appeared to be invaluable; even parent participants noted how student leaders positively impact the vibe within the band culture.

Student leaders influenced their peers and the overall culture of the band a variety of ways when they served as leaders (Pierce, Erickson, & Sarkar, 2020; Kagay, Marx, & Simonsen, 2015). This influence was not limited to leadership responsibilities but there were also social and personal influences as well. Pierce, Erickson, & Sarkar (2020) found that student athletes in their study perceived leadership as an opportunity to build skills and help their teammates create a culture and mindset that was facilitated through opportunities provided by their coaches. In this study the different participant groups perceived leadership as students functioning in their roles to not only help with the things related to performances but also things involving interpersonal relationships. The student leaders were described as significant factors in the moral and perceived success of the band. In both of the studies, participants discussed links between leadership and real life. This study's participants provided examples of how leadership skill and experiences aided the student leaders in other organizations they were a part of as well as in the workforce after graduation. Abril (2008) noted that stakeholders value the opportunities for growth that music programs offer. Similarly, the parents and students in this study expressed an appreciation for and value of the student leadership opportunities at Summer. More of the

antidotes were not about music or their actual roles but about what they learned from those opportunities that have nothing to do with band or their specific duties.

Research indicated that although not all student leadership experiences were positive, the advantages of students taking on leadership roles outweighed the disadvantages (Scherer, 2021; Pearson, 2021). There were descriptions of challenges with students serving in leadership roles—student leaders being egoistical, leaders not being the role model as expected, and leaders having to balance many additional responsibilities beyond their music and academic work.

Student empowerment was prominent in the Summer band. The directors established an environment of trust for the student leaders which allowed them to take risks and responsibility. Bowman (2014) uncovered a similar sense of empowerment in his study of a Minnesota high school where students were encouraged to be involved with the social as well as instructional decisions on camps. They noted a paradigm shift with the moto of "give control, create leaders." Andrew Goodrich (2007) also found empowerment critical in their study on peer mentoring as the high school jazz band director in that study worked with the student leaders and communicated an expectation for those leaders to set the example for the incoming freshmen. As in this study, Goodrich (2007) documented adult stakeholders who noted the success of the involvement of student leaders. Mentoring, also interpreted as leadership, in the Goodrich study was not limited to jazz and music; rather, there was notable social and non-musical mentoring that impacted the students.

### 5.4 Reflections

Although the specific information on Summer High School's band student leadership was fragmented and inconclusive, the Summer High School band handbook proved useful by offering insights specific to Summer High School. I know that Summer student leaders

participated in leadership training and held regular meetings. Having access to documents from these sessions or observing more of them could have strengthened the study, prompting me to ask more focused questions about those trainings during the interviews. One assumption I had was that participants would describe positive experiences, but I wanted to avoid bias by also asking about the downsides. I approached this by framing the question to cover both the pros and cons. However, asking a more direct question about the cons might have provided different insights, challenging my assumptions. Observing rehearsals offered valuable insight into the leaders' actions, but I would have preferred to observe more scenarios outside of rehearsals, as most of the shared experiences were unrelated to rehearsals or performances. RTA's flexibility, which allowed the data to shape the themes, was beneficial, as I did not enter the study with preconceived notions. The interviews provided genuine responses that surveys, documents, or other data sources could not capture. Hearing firsthand experiences of leadership gave a much more realistic perspective than simply reading or observing it in action. One question I had was about the timing of the interviews. Since they took place in January, after the marching band season, I wondered if the responses might have been different at other times of the year.

Some unexpected responses from participants revealed aspects that were not necessarily categorized as pros or cons but were still less than positive. For example, two students shared that the hierarchical structure of the leadership roles made some leaders feel less valued compared to others. They also mentioned that this hierarchy and the differing treatment of leaders were noticeable to the non-leaders in the band, which was concerning and might warrant further investigation. Morrison (2001) shared that music performance ensembles have a formal internal power structure that may not be constructed based on music ability but rather on title and responsibilities. However, the hierarchy is supported through formal documents. Interestingly,

the Summer High School Band did not have this hierarchy or structure written down, but students and directors shared experiences that provided a clear understanding that there was a hierarchy in place that they understood. Brinson (2016) suggested that some hierarchical structures are learned through the transmission of traditions, with individuals learning from their predecessors. This dynamic may have been evident at Summer. Positions more directly involved with guiding students, such as section leaders, band captains, and drum majors, seemed to occupy higher levels in the hierarchy. Participants indicated that the further down the chain a leader was, the less influence or importance they held. This observation is particularly noteworthy, as I believe every leadership role is valuable, and all students should embrace that belief.

Several parents also pointed out the stress they observed in their children. One student even expressed that the expectation for them to behave like adults overshadowed the reality that they were still children, and not band directors. This led one parent to suggest that the band directors provide ongoing support to the leaders in managing leadership challenges, beyond what their training had covered. An interesting insight that emerged was the emphasis on the growth and transformation of student leaders during their time in these roles. This growth was not only as leaders but also personal development in various ways. Both students and parents spoke passionately about the experiences that contributed to these changes.

I have gained many insights from this study, but a few key takeaways stand out. First, I, along with other band directors, need to make more of an effort to seek the opinions of non-leaders. This is an area where I recognize my own shortcomings. While I focus on my student leaders with training and development of leadership skills and all the things that this study's participants mentioned as benefits of student leadership, I often overlook how the non-leaders in

my band feel about the leadership team. For example, one of my current juniors, who was part of the leadership team last year, chose not to take on a leadership role this year. It's possible that some of the challenges expressed by the Summer students are similar to what my student experienced. One change I will implement based on this study is to ask my student leaders for feedback on how the leadership program and structure can be improved. The Summer participants made suggestions for improvement, and I plan to revisit the transcripts and reflect on their ideas, which include valuing all leadership roles and supporting those leaders who aren't at the top of the hierarchy. Perhaps the most intriguing aspect of this research for me was the parent perspective. Even in my own work with student leaders, I rarely have in-depth conversations with parents about leadership. I did not realized how passionately parents of student leaders feel about the impact that leadership experiences have had on their children. The parent perspective is a unique viewpoint that is often overlooked, particularly in non-academic contexts.

One of the most interesting reflections from this research was the limited responses from participants regarding music. The questions I asked were open-ended enough to allow participants to share music-related experiences and perceptions, yet music was only mentioned indirectly. The fact that the questions did not specifically focus on music may have contributed to the lack of direct responses on the topic. Band directors did mention how student leaders assist in running rehearsals, and one parent noted that their son enjoyed helping his section improve their instrument skills. Students shared experiences about motivating their peers during rehearsals, but none provided specific examples that directly involved music. This led me to several questions: How do student leaders directly impact music and performance? Is student leadership in high school band focused on the music itself? What do band directors specifically expect from student leaders regarding music and performance? What opportunities did the

Summer band student leaders have to influence music and music-making? Perhaps the responsibility for music is assumed to be a task for directors alone, and student leaders may not be expected to assist with direct music instruction.

### 5.5 Implications for Practice

As a practicing high school band director, a professional goal of mine is to cultivate a band program that offers students more than just a musical experience. Additionally, I wanted to uncover authentic perspectives of an entity within high school bands that many of my colleagues have but incorporate differently. What is student leadership at a different school than mine? How is it similar? How is it different? Is student leadership actually accomplishing what I think it should? Is it different from the viewpoint of the students? What do the student really think? What do the parents thing? Knowing the answers to these questions or information about these questions can help me improve the student leadership program in my current school.

Conducting this research has confirmed things that I thought but it also opened my eyes to things that I did not think of. There are several things that were confirmed through this research study. The structure of student leadership in Summer, my own program, and other programs that I am familiar with is more similar than different. Even within other types and situations where students are leaders, there are more similarities than differences (Blythe and Harre, 2020; Goodrich, 2007; Bowman, 2014). This confirms that student leadership is not unique, and the differences from program to program are fewer than greater. Students, leaders and non-leaders, are influenced by having a student leadership program in place (Pierce, Erickson, and Sarkar, 2020; Dagaz 2012; Kagay, R. B., Marx, A. A., & Simonsen, J. C. 2015). These influences are not always positive; but more times than not, they are positive. Student leaders change, usually for the better. Non-student leaders learn as much from student leaders as

they do from their directors. There is value in having student leaders; because the students, the band program, and the director all benefit from what student leadership offers. All involved have an enriched overall experience with the incorporation of student leaders. These insights were not surprising but expected. This confirmation encourages me to continue developing student leaders even more than what I already do and work to find ways to improve how I involve student leaders in all aspects of the high school band experience.

One of the benefits of any study or research is to gain new ideas and viewpoints. I gained new or refreshed insights that will impact my teaching in the future. While I know that student input in decision making is valid and valuable, results from this study suggested that students can and should be trusted to have a significant part in various aspects of not only the music aspect of the band program but areas outside of music and performance (Goodrich, 2007; Lalama, S. M., 2016; Pearson, N. G., 2021). The Summer students shared numerous stories of how the leaders (themselves or their predecessors) were even more influential than the directors. The parents noted more about the students setting the tone and manifesting the culture of the band than the directors. Even the directors expressed how much they rely on the students. This reminder reinforces that investing in the student leaders is just as critical as investing in the band program in general.

Even though student leaders in high school band usually are most prominent in the marching band and during the marching band season (summer through November), the student leadership impact and involvement can be used during the band classes throughout the year. The band director participants in this study mentioned leadership experiences during the band classes similarly to Goodrich's (2007) use of a high school jazz band for mentoring and leadership research. This notion was not directly addressed as much from the Summer directors or the

students, but it did come up and left the question in my mind, “why isn’t there a bigger presence of this leadership and student involvement happening throughout the year on a larger scale?” Both students and directors praised the way the marching band functions with the involvement of the student leadership, but the concert band classes happen throughout the year and the dynamics of a concert band and marching band function in similar ways with similar goals such that student leadership involvement could and should benefit the band classes as well. This is possibly something that I will build on in future research or future work.

The students, parents, and directors in this study all shared mostly positive experiences and feelings about student leadership. This study did not focus on students in the band who were not leaders. Several responses from the students and parents in this study focused on these student participants before they became leaders. Some of these moments were about how these student participants looked up to their leader or learned what not to do. Some moments shared were about how the former leaders inspired them in many ways. There were also antidotes of these student participants sharing how their predecessors were their lifeline not only in band but in other aspects of school or life. This insight evoked thoughts of the non-leaders and their feelings about student leadership. As I strive to improve student leadership, I need to focus not only on the leaders but the non-leaders. Like the Summer directors, I foster a professional student/teacher relationship with the student leaders that involves getting their perspective, but I do not focus enough on the non-leaders. The student leaders were non-leaders before they became leaders. I need to invest just as much time with understanding the perspectives of the non-leaders especially as it can relate to student leadership.

This research motivated me to look at student leadership from a lens of questioning what aspect is missing from my assessment of where we are so that I can make more comprehensive

plans for annual improvement. This study has relevance for other band directors as well as any entity where student leadership (or any leadership) is involved. For the high school band director, this study could promote ideas for self-reflection and program reflection. Many high school directors have a student leadership program in place. Those band directors who are interested in improving their student leadership structure can use themes from this study to help them find ways to target changes in various aspects of their current practices. From the handbook and observations in this study, the inquiring band director could gleam ideas for rehearsal structure, student leadership team meeting facilitation, or student handbook modifications. In general, the premise behind this study could prompt a high school band director to ask these questions to their own stakeholders. Since this type of research is limited, perhaps these questions are rarely asked by other researchers or other practitioners in the field. High school band programs share similarities with high school orchestra and chorus programs. For the high school orchestra or chorus teacher, this study could motivate a deeper look into their program structure with how leadership is involved. While many high school bands and music ensembles are quite different, there are things that could look very similar. The goals of the various performing arts ensembles align in certain ways, and student leadership many times is one of those ways. This study could help a chorus or orchestra teacher in the same ways as a high school band director.

Student leadership is not a concept and idea that is only for scholastic music ensembles. There are many student groups in and out of schools that function similarly to high school bands. For the high school advisor of student government association, could tailor evaluative practices about student leadership the way this study sought descriptions of the high school band's stakeholders. There could be valuable information share by members of a student government association that could help improve the overall effectiveness of the group and ultimately the

school. A coach of a large athletic team could find useful information in this study as it pertains to team and peer dynamics. The interactions and experiences of the student leaders in the Summer band could parallel those of athletes.

Leadership dynamics are present in many aspects of society. Even with groups of adults in the workplace or in non-work environments, various leadership structures exist and could be evaluated for improvement. Some of the participants in this study commented on how leadership skills learned in the Summer band were useful in the professional world—time management, work efficiency, peer relations, and public speaking. This study could be beneficial to managers, supervisors, CEOs, or any other people in any level of an organization where there is a structure leadership hierarchy.

**5.6 Recommendations for Future Study**

One of the goals for this study was to ask questions and understand the perceptions of student leadership in high school band beyond what a quantitative study or a program evaluation would yield. There is more that could add to the research on this subject. While this study focused on one school, similar studies could capture the experiences of a variety of different band programs in different areas around the United States. There are many differences among high school bands. These differences include but are not limited to style of marching band, performance practices, community engagement, curricular demands. Band programs that differ in these areas could facilitate different types of experiences for the student leaders and the band program. This study surprisingly did not yield much data about the specific perceptions of music making and improvements that were a result of student leadership. Future students could ask poignant questions about how student leaders impact the growth (or lack thereof) of the music ensemble or the individual musician.

Future studies could explore methods beyond just participant interviews. There could be rich information gleamed from more on-site observations in different types of gathering besides a leadership meeting and a rehearsal. This study was a snapshot in time rather than an ongoing study over the course of a full school year. Researchers could gain a more comprehensive perspective by studying student leaders over an extended period. There are other studies that could use the results and finding from this study. For example, this study uncovered few adverse aspects of the student leadership experience. Exploring this further could provide for valuable information for band directors aimed at improving their student leadership program. One of the themes discovered in this study was impacts of student leadership beyond the students' band years. Future studies could focus on adults who were student leaders in band. One of the parent participants in this study was an alumnus and former student leader in the Summer band. Studying similar adults could help inform and influence current band directors. Another theme from this study that could be the basis for future studies is the relationship dynamics of the student leaders. School psychologists could evaluate relationship dynamics of other high school student organizations that have a leadership structure. Perhaps there are similarities worth noticing or other findings that could benefit advisors or teachers who work with students. Findings could help shape how adults facilitate these student groups.

My research did not focus on leadership theories nor the philosophical foundation of student leadership in high school band. However, after completing this study, I believe, as Correia-Hacker (2023) suggested, that band directors could benefit from exploring leadership theories to identify principles or ideologies that could support the structure of student leadership in high school bands. Participants in this study drew connections to experiences outside of the band setting, which may be relevant to how band directors cultivate an environment of student

leadership. Future research could explore the student leadership structures in different bands and investigate potential links to various leadership theories.

### 5.7 Conclusion

There are numerous studies on leadership, high school band, and student leadership; but there is limited research specifically devoted to student leadership in high school band. Little research on the aforementioned topics focusses on the perspective of stakeholders. In an effort to reflect and assess a band's current student leadership practices for possible improvement or enhancements, it is critical to understand what the reality is for those involved. The present studied uncovered the unique perspectives on student leadership in one high school band. These findings brought the researcher to three overarching conclusions. Although band directors have their own ideas about what student leadership in high school band is and how it manifests itself, there are perspectives of the students and parents that can be useful when reflecting on the implementation and effectiveness of student leadership. While many high school bands incorporate student leaders in similar ways, there is value to band directors in researching and comparing not only bands with similar leadership structures but also those that may incorporate leadership in a different way. Students have experiences, describe experiences, and learn from experiences in ways that are not always observed. It is beneficial to ask open ended questions to students that allow them to freely share their takeaways from the environments that teachers create and the non-academic lessons they learn.

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# 7. APPENDICES

## 7.1 Appendix A Invitation to Participate-Band Director

Date:

Dear Band Director,

I am a doctoral student at Georgia State University in the College of Education and Human Development pursuing a degree in Teaching and Learning with a concentration in music education. I am seeking band director participants for my research study as part of my qualitative dissertation. The purpose of my research study is to describe the perceptions and experiences of stakeholders about student leadership in a high school band program.

You were identified as a possible candidate because you are a band director at a high school that has a student leadership program. Participation in the study is voluntary and confidential, as no personal identifiers linking you to study results will be made. There are no discernable risks to participating in the study. At any time before or during the study, you may choose to stop participating. As a participant, you would help contribute to research that other band programs or similar groups could use to enhance or improve their student leadership.

Your participation would involve a focus group discussion with one other director and an individual interview. Both sessions would be held via Webex and recorded so that I can transcribe the sessions for analysis. The recordings will be kept in a secure, locked location accessible only by me on my password-protected computer. The focus group interview will last approximately 45 minutes. The interview will be approximately thirty minutes. Both the focus group and interview will be scheduled between the first week of June and the last week of August.

If you are interested in participating in this study, please indicate your willingness to participate in the study by emailing the consent form to me with your signature. This study has been approved by my five-member dissertation committee and the Institutional Review Board.

Sincerely,

Simon “Ira” Jenkins
Ph.D. Student in Music Education
Department of Middle and Secondary Education
Georgia State University
sjenkins11@student.gsu.edu

## 7.2 Appendix B Invitation to Participate-Band Parent

Date:

Dear Band Parent,

I am a doctoral student at Georgia State University in the College of Education and Human Development pursuing a degree in Teaching and Learning with a concentration in music education. I am seeking band parent participants for my research study as part of my qualitative dissertation. The purpose of my research study is to describe the perceptions and experiences of stakeholders about student leadership in a high school band program.

Participation in the study is voluntary and confidential, as no personal identifiers linking you to study results will be made. There are no discernable risks to participating in the study. At any time before or during the study, you may choose to stop participating. As a participant, you would help contribute to research that other band programs or similar groups could use to enhance or improve their student leadership.

Your participation would involve a focus group discussion with one other parent from your band program and an individual interview. Both sessions would be held via WebEx and audio recorded so that I can transcribe the sessions for analysis. The recordings will be kept in a secure, locked location accessible only by me on my password-protected computer. The focus group interview will last approximately 45 minutes. The interview will be approximately thirty minutes. Both the focus group and interview will be scheduled between the first week of June and the last week of August.

If you are interested in participating in this study, please indicate your willingness to participate in the study by emailing the consent form to me with your signature. This study has been approved by my five-member dissertation committee and the Institutional Review Board.

Sincerely,

Simon “Ira” Jenkins
PhD Student in Music Education
Department of Middle and Secondary Education
Georgia State University
sjenkins11@student.gsu.edu

## 7.3 Appendix C Invitation to Participate-Band Student

Date:

Dear High School Band Student,

I am a doctoral student at Georgia State University in the College of Education and Human Development pursuing a degree in Teaching and Learning with a concentration in music education. I am seeking band student participants at your school for my research study as part of my qualitative dissertation. The purpose of my research study is to describe the perceptions and experiences of stakeholders about student leadership in a high school band program.

Participation in the study is voluntary and confidential, as no personal identifiers linking you to study results will be made. There are no discernable risks to participating in the study. At any time before or during the study, you may choose to stop participating. As a participant, you would help contribute to research that other band programs or similar groups could use to enhance or improve their student leadership.

Your participation would involve a focus group discussion with one other student from your band program and an individual interview. Both sessions would be held via WebEx and audio-recorded so that I can transcribe the sessions for analysis. The recordings will be kept in a secure, locked location accessible only by me on my password-protected computer. The focus group interview will last approximately 45 minutes. The interview will be approximately thirty minutes. Both the focus group and interview will be scheduled between the first week of June and the last week of August.

If you are interested in participating in this study, please indicate your willingness to participate in the study by emailing the consent form to me with your signature. This study has been approved by my five-member dissertation committee and the International Review Board.

Sincerely,

Simon “Ira” Jenkins
Ph.D. Student in Music Education
Department of Middle and Secondary Education
Georgia State University
sjenkins11@student.gsu.edu

## 7.4 Appendix D Director and Parent Consent Form

Georgia State University
Informed Consent

**Title:** Stakeholders' Perceptions of Student Leadership in High School Band
**Principal Investigator:** Dr. Patrick Freer
**Student Principal Investigator:** Ira Jenkins

**Introduction and Key Information**
You are invited to take part in a research study. It is up to you to decide if you would like to take part in the study. The purpose of this study is to investigate the attributes, characteristics, and influences of student leadership in high school bands through the experiences of stakeholders—students, parents, and band directors. Your role in the study would last for 45 minutes through WebEx. You will be asked to do the following: participate in a semi-structured interview to discuss your experience with your high school band's student leaders. Participating in this study will not expose you to any more risks than you would experience on a typical day. This study is not designed to directly benefit you. Overall, Ira Jenkins hopes to gain information about the experiences of the students, parents, directors, and administrators who are a part of your school's band program.

**Purpose**
The purpose of this study is to investigate the attributes, characteristics, and qualities of student leadership in high school bands in the United States. This study uniquely explores a variety of perspectives and perceptions of student leadership programs within high school band programs with a focus on the lived experiences of students and adults. More specifically, this study will compare and analyze stakeholders' perceptions of student leadership. You are invited to take part in this research study because you are a band director or parent of a band student leader involved with the high school band at your school.

**Procedures**
If you decide to take part, you will participate in one study-related activity. This activity will take 45 minutes. Study participation will span one day. You will be asked to participate in a semi-structured focus group interview with one other participant that will be audio recorded for transcription purposes. You will interact with one researcher during the interview process. The interview will be conducted through WebEx.

**Future Research**
Researchers will remove information that may identify you and may use your data for future research. If we do this, we will not ask for any additional consent from you.

**Risks**
In this study, you will not have any more risks than you would on a normal day of life. No injury is expected from this study, but if you believe you have been harmed, contact the research team as soon as possible. Georgia State University and the research team have not set aside funds to compensate for any injury.

**Benefits**
This study is not designed to benefit you personally. Overall, we hope to gain information about the experiences of the students, teachers, and visiting artists due to the shift from face-to-face learning to digital learning.

**Alternatives**
The alternative to taking part in this study is to not take part in the study.

**Voluntary Participation and Withdrawal**
You do not have to be in this study. If you decide to be in the study and change your mind, you have the right to drop out at any time. You may skip questions or stop participating at any time.

**Confidentiality**
We will keep your records private to the extent allowed by law. The following people and entities will have access to the information you provide:
Dr. Patrick Freer and Ira Jenkins
GSU Institutional Review Board
Office for Human Research Protection (OHRP)
We will use a study participation number rather than your name on study records. The information you provide will be stored on Ira Jenkins' password and firewall-protected computer. The identification participation number key will be stored separately from the data to protect your privacy. When we present or publish the results of this study, we will not use your name or other information that may identify you.

**Contact Information**
Contact Dr. Patrick Freer (pfreer@gsu.edu) and/or Ira Jenkins (sjenkins11@student.gsu.edu)
if you have questions about the study or your part in it.
if you have questions, concerns, or complaints about the study.
The IRB at Georgia State University reviews all research that involves human participants. You can contact the IRB if you would like to speak to someone who is not involved directly with the study. You can contact the IRB for questions, concerns, problems, information, input, or questions about your rights as a participant. Contact the IRB at 404-413-3500 or irb@gsu.edu.

**Consent**
We will give you a copy of this consent form to keep. If you are willing to volunteer for this research, please sign below.

_____
Printed Name of Participant

_____ _____
Signature of Participant Date

_____ _____
School Principal Date

_____ _____
Principal Investigator or Researcher Obtaining Consent Date

## 7.5 Appendix E Parental Permission and Informed Consent Form

Georgia State University
Parental Permission Form and Informed Consent Form

**Title:** Stakeholders' Perceptions of Student Leadership in High School Band
**Principal Investigator:** Dr. Patrick Freer
**Student Principal Investigator:** Ira Jenkins

**Introduction and Key Information**
We invite your child to take part in a research study. You will decide if you would like your child to take part in the study. The purpose of this study is to investigate the attributes, characteristics, and influences of student leadership in high school bands through the experiences of stakeholders—students, parents, and band directors. Your child's role in the study will last no more than 90 minutes total divided into three days. We will ask your child to do the following complete a survey and/or participate in a group and/or individual interview. Your child will not have any more risks than your child would have on a typical day.

**Purpose**
The purpose of this study is to investigate the attributes, characteristics, and qualities of student leadership in high school bands in the United States. We invite your child to take part in this research study because your child is a member of their high school's band. We will invite a total of 4 students to be in this study.

**Procedures**
If you decide for your child to take part in this study, your child will participate in one or more of the following activities.
take a 10-question Google form survey about their involvement with the band
participate in a 45-minute WebEx discussion with two other students from their school
participate in a 30-minute interview with me. These activities will be scheduled between the first week of June and the last week of August.

**Future Research**
We will not use or share your child's data for future research studies.

**Risks**
Your child will not have any more risks than your child would in a normal day of life. We do not expect injury from being in this study. If your child has been harmed, contact the research team as soon as possible. Georgia State University and the research team have not set aside funds to pay for any injury.

**Benefits**
This study is not designed to benefit your child personally. We hope to gain information about the student leadership component of your child's high school band.
**Alternatives**

The alternative to taking part in this study is to not take part in the study.

**Voluntary Participation and Withdrawal**

Your child does not have to be in this study. If you decide that your child can be in the study but change your mind, your child can drop out at any time. Your child can skip questions.
There are no penalties if your child does not take part or if your child leaves the study early.

**Confidentiality**

We will keep your records private to the extent allowed by law. The following people and entities will have access to the information you provide:
Dr. Patrick Freer and Ira Jenkins
GSU Institutional Review Board
Office for Human Research Protection (OHRP)
We will use a study number instead of your child's name for our study records. We will store the information your child provides on Ira Jenkins' password-protected and firewall-protected Macbook. When we present or publish the results of this study, we will not use information that may identify your child. During each WebEx session, there will be security encryptions to prevent outside access. Participants will access the meeting with a passcode. Ira Jenkins will also be present before the meetings start, and participants will be in the lobby until he admits them to the session. Screen sharing for participants will be disallowed.

**Contact Information**

Contact Dr. Patrick Freer (pfreer@gsu.edu) and/or Ira Jenkins (sjenkins11@student.gsu.edu)
if you have questions about the study or your part in it.
if you have questions, concerns, or complaints about the study.

The IRB at Georgia State University reviews all research that involves human participants. You can contact the IRB if you would like to speak to someone who is not involved directly with the study. You can contact the IRB for questions, concerns, problems, information, input, or questions about your rights as a participant. Contact the IRB at 404-413-3500 or irb@gsu.edu.

**Parental Permission**

We will give you a copy of this Parental Permission Form to keep.
If you are willing for your child to be in this research study, please sign below.

_____
Printed Name of Participant

_____
Printed Name of Parent/Legal Guardian

_____ _____
Signature of Parent/Legal Guardian Date

_____ _____
School Principal Date

_____ _____
Principal Investigator or Researcher Obtaining Parental Permission Date

## 7.6 Appendix F Student Focus Group Protocol

**Student Focus Group**

Thank you for participating in this research study. The purpose of this study is to investigate the attributes, characteristics, and qualities of student leadership in high school bands. During this 45-minute audio-recorded focus group, please assume the role of a student in your respective high school band. You will be asked to respond to questions that pertain to your experiences. You may refrain from answering or responding to any question if you so choose. You may stop participating at any time if you feel uncomfortable.

Please chose a pseudonym that will be used to identify you to maintain confidentiality.

**Introduction of participants**

Please introduce yourself using your pseudonym and tell us the following information.

- Your grade
- Your instrument
- How long you have been in band
- Your leadership position currently held
- How long you have held this position
- Your previous leadership positions held

**Opening Question**

Why does your band have student leaders?

**Questions**

1. When you were a freshman (before you became a leader), what was your impression of the band's student leaders?
2. What are your most memorable experiences or encounters with the student leadership aspect of your band program?
3. What are the pros and cons of having student leaders in your band?
4. How does having student leaders impact your experience inside and outside of band?

**Probes**

Some probes will be based on responses to interview questions, and some will be from discoveries in the document analysis.

- Can you elaborate on...?
- Can you clarify what you mean by...?
- Can you give an example of...?
- How would you describe...?

## 7.7 Appendix G Parent Focus Group Protocol

Thank you for participating in this research study. The purpose of this study is to investigate the attributes, characteristics, and qualities of student leadership in high school bands. During this 45-minute audio-recorded focus group, please assume the role of a parent of a student in your respective high school band. You will be asked to respond to questions that pertain to your experiences. You may refrain from answering or responding to any question if you so choose. You may stop participating at any time if you feel uncomfortable.

Please chose a pseudonym that will be used to identify you to maintain confidentiality.

**Introduction of participants**
Please introduce yourself using your pseudonym and tell us the following information.

- How long you have been associated with the band
- Your student's current leadership position
- How long your student has been in this position
- Previous leadership positions your student held

**Opening Question**
Why does your band have student leaders?

**Questions**

1. From the parent perspective, how do student leaders impact your band program?
2. Describe activities, events, and/or other situations you have observed student leaders in action.
3. How does being a leader impact your student?
4. What are the pros and cons of having student leaders in your band?

**Probes**
Some probes will be based on responses to interview questions, and some will be from discoveries in the document analysis.

- Can you elaborate on...?
- Can you clarify what you mean by...?
- Can you give an example of...?
- How would you describe...?

## 7.8 Appendix H Band Director Focus Group

Thank you for participating in this research study. The purpose of this study is to investigate the attributes, characteristics, and qualities of student leadership in high school bands. During this 45-minute audio-recorded focus group, please assume the role of the band director of your respective high school band. You will be asked to respond to questions that pertain to your experiences. You may refrain from answering or responding to any question if you so choose. You may stop participating at any time if you feel uncomfortable.

Please chose a pseudonym that will be used to identify you to maintain confidentiality.

**Introduction of participants**

Please introduce yourself using your pseudonym and tell us the following information.

How long you have been a band director at your current school

How long you have been teaching band

**Opening Question**

Why does your band have student leaders?

**Questions**

1. What are the goals and expected outcomes of the student leadership program?
2. What do the student leaders in your band program do?
3. How are the student leaders impacted by having their leadership position?
4. What are the benefits of student leadership in your program?
5. What are the challenges of having student leaders in your program?

**Probes**

Some probes will be based on responses to interview questions, and some will be from discoveries in the document analysis.

- Can you elaborate on...?
- Can you clarify what you mean by...?
- Can you give an example of...?
- How would you describe...?

## 7.9 Appendix I Student Interview Protocol

**Student Interview**

Thank you for participating in this research study. The purpose of this study is to investigate the attributes, characteristics, and qualities of student leadership in high school bands. During this 45-minute adio-recorded interview, please assume the role of a student in your high school band. You will be asked to respond to questions that pertain to your experiences. You may refrain from answering or responding to any question if you so choose. You may stop participating at any time if you feel uncomfortable.

Please chose a pseudonym that will be used to identify you to maintain confidentiality.

**Introduction of participant**

Please introduce yourself using your pseudonym and tell us the following information.

Your grade
Your instrument
How long you have been in band
Your leadership position currently held
How long you have held this position
Your previous leadership positions held

**Questions**

1. Describe what your position is. What is the purpose of the position? What are your duties?
2. Does student leadership in your band achieve its purpose? Why or why not?
3. How would you describe your experiences as a leader?
4. How would you describe the dynamics of the different leadership positions in your band?
5. How would you describe how student leaders impact your band experience?
6. Has your position impacted you personally inside and/or outside of band? If so, how?
7. Do you enjoy being a leader in your band program? Why or why not?

**Probes**

Some probes will be based on responses to interview questions, and some will be from discoveries in the document analysis.

- Can you elaborate on...?
- Can you clarify what you mean by...?
- Can you give an example of...?
- How would you describe...?

## 7.10 Appendix J Parent Interview Protocol

### Parent Interview

Thank you for participating in this research study. The purpose of this study is to investigate the attributes, characteristics, and qualities of student leadership in high school bands. During this 45-minute audio-recorded interview, please assume the role of the parent of a student in your high school band. You will be asked to respond to questions that pertain to your experiences. You may refrain from answering or responding to any question if you so choose. You may stop participating at any time if you feel uncomfortable.

Please chose a pseudonym that will be used to identify you to maintain confidentiality.

**Introduction of participants**
Please introduce yourself using your pseudonym and tell me the following information.

How long you have been associated with the band
Your student's current leadership position
How long your student has been in this position
Previous leadership positions your student held

**Opening Question**
Why does your band have student leaders?

**Questions**

1. What has your student's experience been like as a leader?
2. Please describe the most memorable student leadership experience your student had.
3. How has being a student leader personally impacted your student?
4. What do you personally like and/or dislike about your band's the student leadership program?
5. Please elaborate on how you would describe the pros and cons of student leadership in your high school band.

**Probes**
Some probes will be based on responses to interview questions, and some will be from discoveries in the document analysis.

- Can you elaborate on...?
- Can you clarify what you mean by...?
- Can you give an example of...?
- How would you describe...?

## 7.11 Appendix K Band Director Interview Protocol

### Band Director Interview

Thank you for participating in this research study. The purpose of this study is to investigate the attributes, characteristics, and qualities of student leadership in high school bands. During this 45-minute audio-recorded interview, please assume the role of the band director of your high school band. You will be asked to respond to questions that pertain to your experiences. You may refrain from answering or responding to any question if you so choose. You may stop participating at any time if you feel uncomfortable.

**Introduction of participants**

Please introduce yourself using your pseudonym and tell us the following information.

How long you have been a band director at your current school
How long you have been teaching band

**Opening Question**

Please tell me about the history of the student leadership program at your school. When did it start? How has it changed or evolved?

**Questions**

1. What student leadership experiences are unique to your band program?
2. How do your students (leaders and non-leaders) benefit from having student leaders?
3. What do your students take away from their leadership experience?
4. What would you say your students (leaders and non-leaders) enjoy or not enjoy about the student leadership program?
5. How does your student leadership program impact the overall band program?
6. How would you enhance or modify your student leadership program or their experiences, if anything?

**Probes**

Some probes will be based on responses to interview questions, and some will be from discoveries in the document analysis.

- Can you elaborate on...?
- Can you clarify what you mean by...?
- Can you give an example of...?
- How would you describe...?

## 7.12 Appendix L Survey Questions

(to be created as a Google form)

**Student Survey**

1. What is your current grade?
2. What is your primary instrument (band class)?
3. How long have you been in the high school band?
4. What is your marching band section?
5. When did you start band?
6. How many seasons have you participated in marching band?
7. How many school-based band ensembles (outside of class and marching band) have you participated in?
8. If you currently hold a leadership position(s), what is that position?
9. How long have you been in that role?
10. If you have been in a different position before this year, what have those roles been?

**Parent Survey**

1. What grade is your student in?
2. How long has your student been in the high school band?
3. What role(s) does your student currently hold?
4. What role(s) has your student held before this year?
5. What position have you held with the band parent organization (ie. booster board position, committee chair, etc.)?
6. How many hours have you volunteered with band-related events/activities this year?
7. In previous years, how many hours (on average) did you volunteer with band-related events/activities each year?