

Environmental Scan

Battle Creek Youth Orchestra

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December 2007

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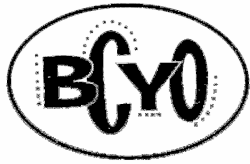


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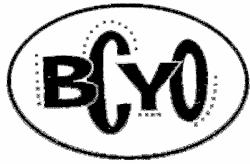
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by calling (269) 966-2527.**



Opportunities

Awareness

Many students responding to this survey had "heard of" the Battle Creek Youth Orchestra (BCYO). Fewer than half, however, could identify the youth orchestra as a BCYO program, and less than one-fourth could identify any of the other eleven BCYO programs.

While awareness of BCYO programs is higher among music educators, opportunities exist for marketing efforts that communicate all BCYO programs and their benefits to music educators, students and their families, and the community in general.

Time, Money, Quality

Many students who are not enrolled in extra-curricular programs (48%) indicated they did not have the time for these activities. Money, on the other hand, was cited by only 6% as a reason for not enrolling. Lack of time was also suggested by music educators as a main reason why students might not enroll in the BCYO.

None of the students expressed concern about the quality of the BCYO. Three of seven music educators suggested, however, that a lack of quality might contribute to the BCYO's low enrollment. Thus, the opportunity may exist for improving the youth orchestra's musical quality which could lead to increased enrollment. The BCYO will have to balance any pursuit of higher quality with its goal to open the doors for all student musicians.

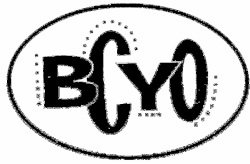
Market

School enrollment in Calhoun County has declined by 1,467 students (6%) since 1999. Shrinking enrollment often leads to shrinking education dollars. This situation can provide an opportunity for the BCYO to partner with area schools in two ways: (1) to support their music education programs and (2) to offer students at those schools viable music education options.

The estimated enrollment in area school bands and orchestras lies around 800 students. BCYO currently serves 73 students. Its capacity of 170 students allows the BCYO to meet more music students' needs should the number of school music programs decline.

The Future

The data reported here do not suggest the BCYO should close its doors. Current enrollment marks the highest level in six years. In addition, this survey points to a number of marketing and program enhancement opportunities. Pursuing these opportunities diligently and swiftly could increase the youth orchestra's ability to serve young people that otherwise may have to go without the benefits of an affordable music education.



Introduction

In the spring of 2007, the Nonprofit Alliance of Battle Creek (www.nonprofitalliance.org) provided us with a capacity building grant, prompted by declining BCYO enrollments. It paid for a consultant to conduct this environmental scan and guide the creation of our first strategic plan.

The environmental scan summarized in this document provided valuable information for our subsequent strategic planning process.

Students and Parents

Initially, we invited students, parents, and music educators via emails to participate in surveys posted on SurveyMonkey.com[®]. Invitations to parents and students were sent to booster club presidents because we did not have parents' and students' email addresses.

A low return rate during the summer, however, prompted a second series of invitations to parents and students after the beginning of the 2007/08 school year. The return rate remained low (only two students and six parents participated); not all booster club presidents were comfortable forwarding these email invitations to their members.

During October 2007, we hand-delivered paper surveys to students at the Battle Creek and Lakeview high schools. Sending a paper survey to parents was not an option because both schools did not allow students to take the surveys home. A total of 116 students responded, and the results are reported in this document. Other schools did not respond to our request to conduct this survey.

Music Educators

Six music educators responded to the online survey; one educator delivered a hard copy to BCYO's executive director. The target audience included ten band and orchestra directors and the Music Center's private lesson teachers.

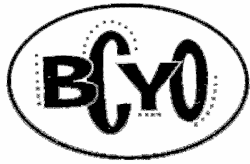
The results of student and music educator surveys are reported on the following pages. We thank the Nonprofit Alliance of Battle Creek for making this environmental scan possible.

Sue Case

President, BCYO Board of Directors

Leigh Russell

BCYO Executive Director



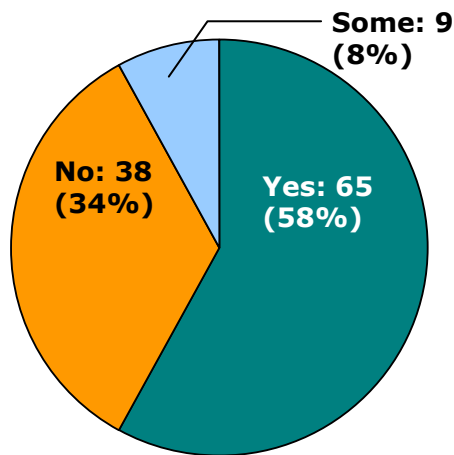
Student Surveys

School and Grade Level

School	Total	Grade Level			
		9	10	11	12
Battle Creek Central	16	3	3	5	5
Lakeview	100	29	28	20	23
	116	32	31	25	28
		28%	27%	22%	24%

Awareness

Students knowing about the BCYO



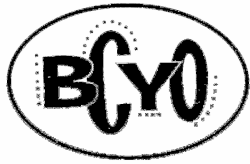
Total responses: 112

Services students were aware of:

Youth Orchestra	47	(42%)
Junior Youth Orchestra	27	(24%)
Bi-annual side-by-side performance with the Battle Creek Symphony	18	(16%)
Beginning Strings	13	(12%)
Solo opportunities	12	(11%)
Tuition scholarships	12	(11%)
Orchestra Camp	11	(10%)
Junior Strings	9	(8%)
Small ensemble opportunities	9	(8%)
Trips	9	(8%)
Junior Winds	8	(7%)
Intermediate Strings	6	(5%)

Currently enrolled in BCYO

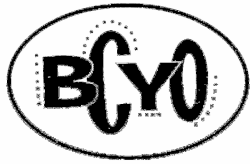
Yes	2
No	105
No, but belonged	1



Instruments

Instrument	Order Listed In Survey			
	Total	% ¹	2nd	3rd
Trumpet	20	17%		
Flute	16	14%	1	
Trombone	15	13%	1	
Clarinet	16	12%	1	
Violin	12	10%		
Percussion	8	7%		
Saxophone	6	5%	1	1
Baritone	4	3%		
Tuba	4	3%		
Alto Saxophone	3	3%		
Bass Drum	3	3%		
French Horn	3	3%	1	
Mellophone	3	3%		
Cello	2	2%		
Drum Major	2	2%	1	
Bass	1	1%		
Bass Guitar	1	1%	1	
Drumline	1	1%		
Guitar	1	1%	1	
Oboe	1	1%	1	
Piano	1	1%	1	
Piccolo	1	1%	1	
Quads	1	1%		
Snare drum	1	1%		
Tenors	1	1%		
Viola	1	1%		
Voice	1	1%		1

¹ Sums to more than 100% because students listed multiple instruments

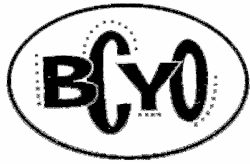


Extra-Curricular Music Programs

Forty-nine students (42%) said they were involved in the following extra-curricular music programs. Several students indicated they were active in several programs.

Music Program			
Marching band	25	Eight marching band students were also involved in:	
Spartanaire Band	6		
Band	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Band • Chamber Choir • Choir • Color Guard • Jazz Band • Musical • Pit Orchestra • SADD • Show Choir • Spartanaire Band • Theater • Wind Ensemble 	
Pit orchestra	5		
Musical play	4		
Battle Creek Youth Orchestra	3		
Wind Ensemble	3		
Choir	2		
Play	2		
Show choir band	2		
Battle Creek Central High Orchestra	1		
Battle Creek Central High Symphony	1		
Chamber Choir	1		
Church Band	1		
church groups	1		
Color Guard	1		
Jazz Band	1		
Kellogg Community College music program	1		One student listed "all high school bands, lessons, church groups."
Lessons	1		
Students Against Drunk Driving	1		
Theater	1		

Reasons for not being involved in extra-curricular music programs		
No time / too busy	33	Sixty-five students (56%) indicated they were not involved in extra-curricular music programs for the following reasons. Several students gave multiple reasons.
Don't know	10	
Didn't want to	9	
Money	4	
Sports	3	
Don't care about music	2	
Other reasons:		
Haven't heard of many	1	
I'm involved in other things	1	
Just play for fun	1	
Like others more	1	
Never really got a chance to	1	
No fun	1	
None so far	1	
Whateva Whateva I do what I want!	1	



More Appealing

Eighty-four students answered the question of what the Battle Creek Youth Orchestra could do to make it more appealing to student musicians. Several students made more than one suggestion.

Suggestions		
Don't know	32	(36%)
Other (see table below)	23	(26%)
Food	8	(9%)
None	7	(8%)
Answer not clear/not relevant	6	(7%)
Fun stuff	5	(6%)
More playing in front of audience	4	(4%)
Paid/Scholarships	2	(2%)
Classes, lessons	2	(2%)
Total responses	89	

Music-related Suggestions	Other Suggestions
A drumline section, program	Better director
Adding a voluntary [sic] choir?	Games
An explanation on why to be in it	I think if students are interested in pursuing, they'll go anyway
Don't have time to join anything else	I think it is plenty appealing
Fund raising concerts	It's appealing but not to me
Guitar	More benefits
Learn history of music	More people from other schools
Harder music	More workable to an individuals schedual [sic]
More groups	Music stuff
Voice	No strings
Voice classes	Nothing, never heard about it
	To learn more
	Who cares



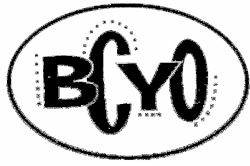
More Information

Fourteen students (12%) indicated they would like to receive more information about the Battle Creek Youth Orchestra.

Four students (3%) said they were interested in participating in a focus group.

Other Comments

- Band is NOT fun
- Boring
- Good luck
- Good luck with your fundraising, season, and concerts
- Good luck? I think it's a good program even though I'm not involved
- Good program
- It's cool I guess
- It's fun
- Keep it up
- They sound good



Music Educator Survey

A total of seven surveys were received. Of those seven, six surveys were submitted online via SurveyMonkey (last survey submitted was submitted October 01, 2007), and one survey was submitted via hard copy to the executive director.

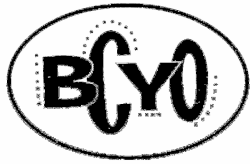
School and Grade Level

School	Grade Level Taught		
	ES	JH/HS	HS
Albion			
Battle Creek Central	1	1	1
Battle Creek Academy			
BC Area Catholic Schools			
Harper Creek			
Lakeview	3	3	2
Marshall			
Pennfield	2	1	2
Private lessons through Music School	1	1	
Private lessons elsewhere	1	1	
Other school district			
Total	8¹	3	5

¹ Total responses add to more than 7 because one responded checked both private lesson options

Instruments

Respondent	Instruments Taught
1	All Wind and Percussion Instruments
2	All Band Instruments
3	Band
4	Percussion
5	Vocal, Orchestra
6	Flute And Piccolo
7	Violin, Viola, Cello, Bass



Awareness

All respondents (100%) said they knew about the Battle Creek Youth Orchestra.

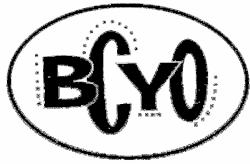
Services music educators were aware of		
Youth Orchestra	7	(100%)
Bi-annual side-by-side performance with the Battle Creek Symphony	5	(71%)
Beginning Strings	4	(57%)
Junior Strings	4	(57%)
Junior Winds	4	(57%)
Junior Youth Orchestra	4	(57%)
Trips	4	(57%)
Tuition scholarships	4	(57%)
Intermediate Strings	3	(43%)
Solo opportunities	3	(43%)
Small ensemble opportunities	2	(29%)
Orchestra Camp	1	(14%)

Encouraging Students

Six music educators (86%) indicated they actively encouraged students to participate in the Battle Creek Youth Orchestra. One music educator did not encourage students because they are too young.

Suggested Forms of Encouragement	
I make information received from BCYO available for students who ask.	5
I provide students with information received from the BCYO as take home hand-outs.	3
I talk to students about enrolling in the BCYO.	4
I allow BCYO staff to talk to my students about enrolling.	3

Reasons for not Encouraging Students	
I don't have any that are old enough.	
I actually recommend the Junior Winds to my younger students, and have not recommended the BCYO to my most advanced students. The reason is that from what they have told me, the quality of the BCYO isn't what it needs to be to make them want to take the time and effort to play with that group. If they are at an advanced level and I feel they are ready, they go out for the Kalamazoo Junior Symphony.	



Why Students Might Not Enroll in BCYO Programs

Why students might not enroll in BCYO programs	
No time / too busy (sports, other activities)	4
Quality	3
Money	1

Detailed responses

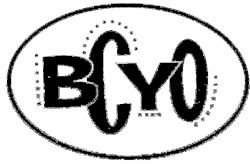
1. Students' time is simply in very high demand and they are spread very thin as they participate in the wide variety of activities available in today's society both inside and outside the home.

Traditional programs such as the BCYO and school music programs share the common challenge of attracting these students and motivating them positively to stay once they are there. This is a major concern, because these activities are not "instant gratification" endeavors.

Somehow, we need to get across to the students and their parents the value of the delayed (sometimes life-long) reward of participating in traditional music programs.

This is particularly difficult to achieve without falling into the trap of using "competition" to justify participation, since so many of the other activities students are involved in are so competitive and the greatest aesthetic rewards can be years into the developmental life of a music student.

2. They are busy with sports. Expensive.
3. Quality of performances
4. It's not that good of an ensemble.
5. Time constraints, kids' workload constraints, B.C. apathy, sports conflicts
6. As I stated above, it seems as if the quality and level of playing isn't at the level it needs to be to attract the top students.
7. Involved in numerous activities, clubs (school-based), lack of transportation



Supporting Music Educators'

Suggestions for How the BCYO Could Support Music Educators' Programming

How about a Battle Creek Youth Band?

Sectional with orchestra professionals (i.e., college profs, performers, clinicians).

I would absolutely love to recommend the BCYO to my advanced students. It would be so much easier for them to not have to drive to Kalamazoo. I can't speak from direct experience because I have not heard this group, but I am going on what my students have told me.

Continue as you are doing!

More Information

Two music educators (29%) indicated they would like to receive more information about the Battle Creek Youth Orchestra.

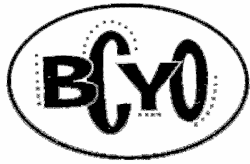
Four music educators (57%) said they were interested in participating in a focus group.

Other Comments

"Leigh, I marked No on #12, simply because I just don't have the time, and I didn't want you expected me there."

"I am very happy to see attention being paid to the needs of the Battle Creek community. I'd love to see these programs grow and prosper."

"I have two students involved and look forward to having many more in the near future. (Entire class!)"



BCYO Internal Surveys

The BCYO conducted two surveys among their students this year. The results are included in this report to (1) give the reader a sense of the internal dynamics of the BCYO and (2) to provide the BCYO leaderships with additional information for charting its future.

Senior Survey – May 2007

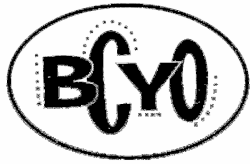
This survey was conducted among the ten students who graduated from the BCYO. Its focus was to find out why students participated in the youth orchestra.

Reasons for being in BCYO	
Friendship and meeting new people from other schools	8
Learning how to play better and having better music than in school programs	3
Opportunity to play in a full orchestra	1
No program available elsewhere	1
Performing with the Battle Creek Symphony	1
Working with a director like Eliot Gitelman	1

Student Survey – January 2007

Forty student members of the BCYO were served early in 2007. A total of 26 (65%) students responded.

How did you hear about BCYO?	
Friend	9
School	7
Parent	7
Newspaper	1
Private lesson teacher	1

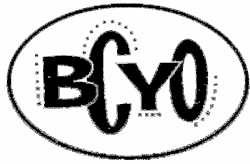


#1 reason you like BCYO?	
Play great music	11
No school program	7
Meeting people from different schools	7
It's fun	3
Makes me feel special	1
Designated time to play	1

Least favorite thing about the BCYO?	
Late night rehearsals	8
Nothing	5
Not enough musicians	4
Sometimes the attitude of other students	3
Some of the music	3
Needs more practice	1
Strings get all the attention	1
Cliques	1
The concerts	1

What needs to change?	
Recruit more musicians	7
Nothing	7
More trips	2
Make rehearsals shorter	2
Make fund raising/trips more exciting	1
Make it more fun	1
Involve more schools	1
Hold concerts in different places	1
Increase activity for winds	1
Vote on music choices	1
Have more rehearsals	1

Do you like the music played?	
Yes	21
Sometimes	5

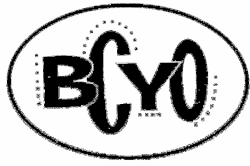


What music would you like to play?	
Movie music	6
Classical	5
Show music	3
No comment	3
Any kind	2
Modern	2
Something fun	1
Hip Hop	1
Not as hard	1
A wind piece	1
More challenging	1

Comments about the director	
Great	19
Good	5
OK	2
Very creative	1

Would you like more social gatherings?	
Yes	16
Maybe	6
Not really	4

Survey results provided by Leigh Russell, BCYO Executive Director



Market

This section provides information about school enrollment and other music education programs in Calhoun County.

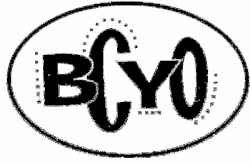
School Enrollment

School	Change since 99/00	School Year							
		06/07	05/06	04/05	03/04	02/03	02/01	00/01	99/00
Albion Public Schools	-30.9%	1,322	1,378	1,486	1,624	1,730	1,821	1,897	1,913
Battle Creek Public Schools	-18.7%	6,291	6,605	6,831	7,062	7,330	7,438	7,599	7,735
Athens Area Schools	-15.8%	754	778	798	819	836	868	875	896
Harper Creek Community Schools	-5.2%	2,473	2,482	2,601	2,570	2,569	2,583	2,515	2,608
Homer Community Schools	-9.2%	1,006	1,006	1,012	1,031	1,040	1,056	1,097	1,108
Lakeview School District	9.9%	3,597	3,463	3,305	3,180	3,202	3,288	3,233	3,272
Mar Lee School District	8.6%	298	310	313	309	292	288	269	275
Marshall Public Schools	-3.3%	2,512	2,510	2,456	2,439	2,347	2,377	2,469	2,598
Pennfield School District	12.2%	1,933	1,904	1,864	1,849	1,803	1,749	1,706	1,723
Tekonsha Community Schools	-7.0%	364	366	376	373	396	388	391	391
Union City Community Schools	-15.6%	1,114	1,113	1,139	1,184	1,199	1,258	1,289	1,321
Arbor Academy	195.7%	207	203	171	159	135	144	110	70
Endeavor Charter Academy	52.9%	646	593	649	630	621	593	532	423
Marshall Academy	156.3% ¹	213	214	214	292	288	243	83	N/A
Battle Creek Area Learning Center	156.8% ²	132	108	112	96	52	N/A	N/A	N/A
TOTAL	-6.0%	22,863	23,032	23,326	23,617	23,840	24,096	24,063	24,330

¹ (2000-01)
² (2002-2006)

Source:
 "District Full-Time Equivalency (FTE) Pupil Counts"
 Center for Educational Performance & Information:
http://www.michigan.gov/cepi/0,1607,7-113-21423_30451_39662---,00.html
 Retrieved August 8, 2007 (1999-2006) and November 20, 2007 (2006-07)

Blue shading indicates highest enrollment since 1999



Music Education Programs in Calhoun County

Other music programs in Calhoun County include

- Suzuki Violin program (Jim Butler)
- After school string program at St. Philip Elementary (Kathryn Butler)
- Music Center of South Central Michigan. Offers private lessons, early childhood classes, and choirs. The Music Center's web site indicates that the I.M.P.A.C.T. program provides free after-school music lessons for inner-city youth.

Unlike these programs, the Battle Creek Youth Orchestra provides open enrollment, scholarships, and the opportunity to practice and play in ensembles. The Music Center does not offer group lessons, like the BCYO Beginning Strings classes.



Exhibits

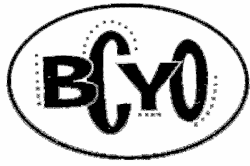


Exhibit 1: Band and Orchestra Enrollment Estimates

Estimates were provided to Leigh Russell, BCYO Executive Director, July 30, 2007

		Estimated Enrollment	
		Low	High
Band			
Battle Creek	Central Band	120	140
Harper Creek		40	50
Lakeview	6th, 7th, 8th grade	220	220
	HS	165	165
Marshall		?	?
Pennfield		40	50
Outlying		60	80
Estimated Band Enrollment		645	705
Orchestra			
Albion	No strings program		
Battle Creek	HS	30	30
Battle Creek Academy	No strings program		
BC Area Catholic Schools	No strings program		
Harper Creek	No strings program		
Lakeview	7th: 25; 8th: 11	36	36
	HS Strings	22	28
Marshall	J.H.: 20; H.S.: 25-30	45	50
Pennfield	No strings program	0	0
Outlying	No strings program	0	0
Estimated Orchestra Enrollment		133	144
Estimated Total Enrollment		778	849

In 2006-07, 42 students were enrolled in the Battle Creek Youth Orchestra. Based on the above estimates, this represents 5.4% to 4.9% of music education students.

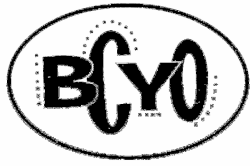
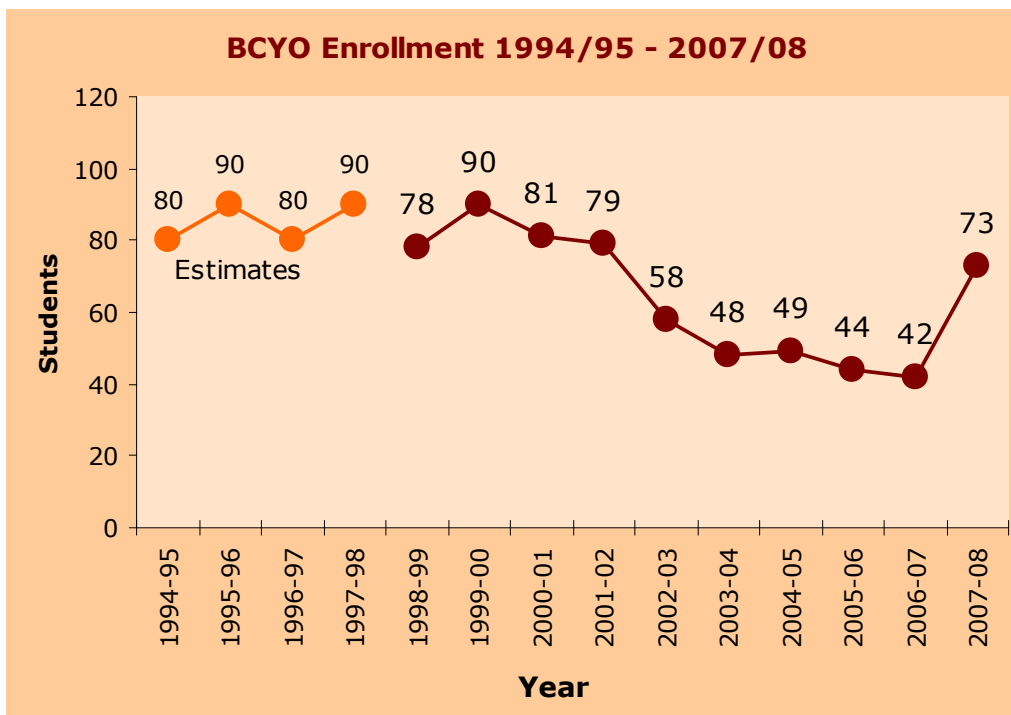


Exhibit 2: Battle Creek Youth Orchestra Enrollment and Capacity

Current Enrollment



Capacity

Program	Capacity	Current Enrollment
Youth Orchestra	60	30
Junior Youth Orchestra	50	--
Junior Strings	20	14
Beginning Strings (Beadle Lake Elementary)	20	13
Beginning Strings (Wattles Park Elementary)	20	16
Total	170	73

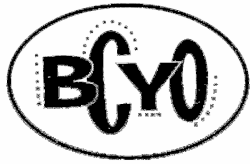


Exhibit 3: Questions for Student Survey

1. What school do you attend?
2. What grade will you be in beginning in September?
3. What instrument(s) do you play?
4. Are you enrolled in an extra curricular music program?
5. If yes, what program(s)?
6. If not enrolled in an extra curricular music program, please list the reasons why.
7. Do you know about the Battle Creek Youth Orchestra
8. If so, please check the services BCYO provides of which you are aware.
9. Are you currently enrolled in the Battle Creek Youth Orchestra?
10. If the answer is no, why?
11. What services could the BCYO provide that would make it more appealing to student musicians?
12. If you would like more information about the programs of the Battle Creek Youth Orchestra, please write your name and email address or phone number. Someone will contact you.
13. We will be holding one hour focus groups concerning after school music programs for students in Calhoun County. Would you be interested in attending a focus group session? If so, please include your name, phone number and/or email address.
14. Please list any other comments for/about the Battle Creek Youth Orchestra.

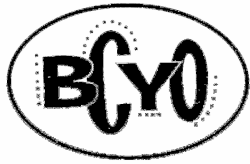
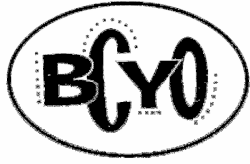
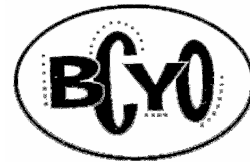


Exhibit 4: Questions for Music Educator Survey

1. Where do you teach?
2. What grades do you teach?
3. What instrument(s) do you teach?
4. Do you know about the Battle Creek Youth Orchestra?
5. If so, which of these services are you aware of?
6. Do you actively encourage students to participate in the Battle Creek Youth Orchestra?
7. If yes, please indicate how you encourage your students.
8. If not, please share with us the reason why you do not encourage your students to participate in the Battle Creek Youth Orchestra.
9. What is your perception of why students might not enroll in BCYO programs?
10. What other services could the Battle Creek Youth Orchestra provide to support your programming? Please be explicit with your response.
11. If you would like more information about current BCYO programs or would like a BCYO representative to visit your class, please list your preferred email, phone number or mailing address. You may also contact BCYO Executive Director Leigh Russell at bcyouthorchestra@aol.com or by phone at (269) 966-2527.
12. As part of our effort to better serve young musicians, we will be conducting a one hour focus group with area music educators. Would you be interested in participating in a focus group? (Separate information will be emailed to you later).
13. Please enter your email address if you are interested in participating in a focus group and/or would like to receive the results of this survey via email.
14. Do you have any other comments for us?



Contact Information



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