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2018 National Mariachi Workshops for Educators®**

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***Beginning Mariachi Styles Course***

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mkamphuis@conn-selmer.com  
PO Box 310  
Elkhart, IN 46515

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## ***OUR AMAZING INSTRUCTORS!***

### **Beginning Song Styles**

**Ramiro Benavides**  
ramirotc@gmail.com  
361.548.3070

**Yvette Sital**  
ysital@interact.ccsd.net  
702.513.4430

### **Intermediate Song Styles**

**Erik Ramirez**  
emramirez@interact.ccsd.net  
219.218.5318

### **Advanced Song Styles**

**Robert Lopez**  
roblopez13@gmail.com  
520.528.8388

### **Adjunct Staff**

**Miriam Vazquez, Vocal**  
miriamvivafest@gmail.com  
408.839.1316

**Fernando Gonzales, Armonia and Trumpet**  
gonzaf3@nv.ccsd.net  
909.561.4543

**Thomas Garibay, Trumpet**  
garibtj@nv.ccsd.net  
702.287.9455

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**National Mariachi Workshops  
for Educators®**

**Westmusic**

## RELEASE FORM

I hereby authorize Music Education Consultants, Inc., National Mariachi Workshops for Educators®, and West Music Co., its subsidiaries, and / or parties designated by the above (including clients, purchasers, agencies and periodicals or other printed matter and their editors) to use my photograph, video, comments, or likeness in conjunction with my name (or a fictitious name) for sale to or reproduction in any medium West Music and their designees see fit for purposes of advertising, display, exhibition or editorial use.

\_\_\_\_\_  
PRINT: First, Last Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

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***IF UNDER 18, HAVE PARENT OR GUARDIAN FILL OUT SECTION BELOW:***

I am parent or guardian of \_\_\_\_\_, the above mentioned minor. I hereby approve the foregoing and consent to Music Education Consultants, Inc., National Mariachi Workshops for Educators®, and West Music to use the subject to terms mentioned above. I affirm that I have the legal right to issue such consent.

\_\_\_\_\_  
PRINT: First, Last Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Parent or Guardian

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**RANDY HARGIS**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Authorized Signature

Music Education Consultants, Inc.

National Mariachi Workshops for Educators®

**July 9, 2018**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Marcia Reed**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Authorized Signature

West Music Co.

**July 9, 2018**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

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**Information Form**  
**VanderCook College of Music**  
*2018 National Mariachi Workshop for Educators®*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Course Number:** Please check your appropriate course number.

Beginning Mariachi Styles

☐ 7257 A      3 Graduate Credits  
☐ 7257 B      Non-credit

Intermediate Mariachi Styles

☐ 7267 A      3 Graduate Credits  
☐ 7267 B      Non-credit

Advanced Mariachi Styles

☐ 7277 A      3 Graduate Credits  
☐ 7277 B      Non-credit

Local Address/Hotel, etc.: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone (Include Area Code): \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address (Number/Street): \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of School: \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

Grade(s) and Subject(s) Taught: \_\_\_\_\_

How did you learn about this workshop? \_\_\_\_\_

Do we have permission to share your contact information with other workshop attendees to help establish a working network?

☐ Yes                      ☐ No

Are you planning on starting a mariachi program at your school?

☐ Yes                      ☐ No                      ☐ Unsure                      ☐ Already Started

If "Yes," when? \_\_\_\_\_

Why did you sign up for this class? (Feel free to use back of form.)

How might we be of most help to you? (Feel free to use the reverse side of this form.)

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**VanderCook College of Music**  
**2018 Summer Mariachi Workshop for Educators®**  
**FOR-CREDIT Assignment Information**

Marcia M. Neel  
 President  
 2564 Farmington Avenue  
 Las Vegas, NV 89120  
 v. (702) 361-3553  
 f. (702) 492-0318

Beginning Mariachi Styles  
 7257 A - 3 Graduate Credits

Intermediate Mariachi Styles  
 7267 A - 3 Graduate Credits

Advanced Mariachi Styles  
 7277 A - 3 Graduate Credits

**Dates of Class:** July 9-13, 2018

**Location:** Golden Nugget Hotel  
 129 Fremont Street  
 Las Vegas, NV 89101  
 (702) 385-7111

**Instructors:** BEGINNING PEDAGOGY: Ramiro Benavides (ramiortcb@gmail.com)  
 BEGINNING PEDAGOGY: Yvette Sital (ysital@interact.ccsd.net)  
 INTERMEDIATE PEDAGOGY: Erik Ramirez (erokacero802@yahoo.com)  
 ADVANCED PEDAGOGY: Robert Lopez (roblopez13@gmail.com)

**Adjunct Instructors:** Thomas Garibay, Trumpet  
 Fernando Gonzales, Armonia and Trumpet  
 Miriam Vazquez, Vocal

**Teaching Artists:** Jose Hernandez (SolUno@aol.com)  
 Willie Acuña (SolUno@aol.com)  
 Mariachi Sol de Mexico

**Workshop Administration:** Keith Neel, Facilitator (702) 592-7286  
 Marcia Neel, Director (702) 630-0518

**ASSIGNMENT FOR THOSE ELECTING TO RECEIVE 3 GRADUATE CREDITS:**

Participants are to provide a retrospective of the course. The paper must address the specific sessions/clinics (both morning and afternoon) provided and how each was beneficial and/or how the strategies learned will be incorporated into teaching.

The assignment must be submitted no later than July 27, 2018, to Marcia Neel at [marcia@musicedconsultants.net](mailto:marcia@musicedconsultants.net).

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MECA Course Syllabus  
National Mariachi Workshops for Educators

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**National Mariachi Workshops for Educators**  
**7257-Beginning Level, 7267-Intermediate Level, and 7277-Advanced Level**  
**2018 Summer Term July 9-13, 2018 Las Vegas, NV**  
**Marcia Neel, Director**  
**702.630.0518 marcia@musicedconsultants.net**

**Instructors**

**Jose Hernandez, Ramiro Benavides, Robert Lopez, Eric Ramirez and Yvette Sital**

The sole professional development training for mariachi educators in the United States, the goal of the National Mariachi Workshops for Educators® offered through VanderCook College of Music, is to equip music teachers with the materials and knowledge necessary to either start their own mariachi program or to enhance the program that already being taught. The week-long event draws educators from across the country and is scheduled for the week of June 26-30, 2017 at the Golden Nugget Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas, Nevada.

Three (3) levels of instruction are offered with each also containing a strand of vocal training so that all participants will have access to age-appropriate vocal pedagogy. These three levels are defined by the specific mariachi styles being studied progressing from the easier styles to the more difficult styles that are representative of this genre. Participants may thus enroll in Beginning Mariachi Pedagogy (Course #7257), Intermediate Mariachi Pedagogy (Course #7267) or Advanced Mariachi Pedagogy (Course #7277).

The majority of the focus of each course is placed on the enhancing the participant's playing skills on secondary and tertiary instruments in the areas that are of most need as determined by each individual educator/participant. All participants will, however, have the opportunity to perform on their primary instruments to more readily learn the characteristic, stylistic nuances necessitated by the various mariachi styles being studied. In addition to violin and trumpet, all attendees will also receive extensive training on guitar, vihuela and guitarron.

Public school as well as collegiate mariachi classes can include students from a variety of cultural as well as instructional backgrounds; band, choir, orchestra and guitar students with years of playing experience, as well as true beginners. Socially and musically, this situation requires a carefully designed curriculum and approach to assessment that propels students to new understandings and fosters the ability and potential of every student in the classroom. This heterogeneous disparity of ability and instruments increases the necessity for students to make cognitive, insightful conclusions on their own. The teacher can and must manipulate these moments of perception.

VanderCook College of Music  
 3140 S. Federal St.  
 Chicago, IL 60616  
 312.788.1133  
 meca@vandercook.edu



## MECA Course Syllabus National Mariachi Workshops for Educators

In each of these three (3) level-specific courses, participants will strengthen their confidence in teaching mariachi of a variety of levels by transferring their present knowledge of playing techniques and mariachi performance style (i.e. beginning, intermediate or advanced pedagogy) to playing techniques among ALL of the instruments of the ensemble—violin, trumpet, guitar, vihuela and guitarron. In violin, for example, specific objectives will focus on a sequence for teaching posture and fingerboard geography as well as the foundation for more advanced techniques such as shifting and vibrato in a heterogeneous as well as a homogeneous class setting. The physical requirements of successfully performing on each of the above instruments (for example, the kinesthetics of the bow arm, and the logic of navigating the fingerboard on violin) will be explored.

This course will not only allow participants to foster their own technique on trumpet as well as the string instruments (violin, guitar, vihuela and guitarron) but also foster a growth in understanding fundamental principles of human learning in the context of developing intellectual and motor skills. Effective learning sequences that focus on the development of excellent fundamental performance skills will be the focus of each class session. Participants will practice creating successful learning experiences that effectively change student thinking and behavior.

### Instructional Materials

1. *¡Simplemente Mariachi!: a Standards-Based, Comprehensive Mariachi Method Series* Marcia Neel and Francisco Grijalva, Northeastern Music Publications, Inc.
2. *Mariachi in America*, Dan Sheehy, Smithsonian Folkways Publications
3. *Foundations of Mariachi Education*, William Gradante, Editor, Rowman & Littlefield Education
4. *Mariachi and Spanish Speaking English Learners: District Initiatives, Models and Education Policy*, Marcia Neel, *Arts Education Policy Review*, DOI: 10.1080/10632913.2017.1291457
5. *Level-specific Mariachi Arrangements (10 in each course)* by Jose Hernandez, Ramiro Benavides, Robert Lopez, Eric Ramirez and Yvette Sital for participants to use with their mariachi ensembles in the coming school year.



## MECA Course Syllabus National Mariachi Workshops for Educators

### Course Calendar

Topic headings are broken down into the following categories: Methodology, Technique, Repertoire and Mariachi Performance Style. Much of the time will be spent in hands on activities in order to progress through the basic skills of secondary and tertiary instruments as well as to learn repertoire that is specific to the level of the specific course (i.e. Beginning, Intermediate or Advanced). Participants will also be provided with the opportunity to demonstrate their learned skills in a short mini-performance related to each specific level of instruction. A session-by-session plan is included with this syllabus.

Day	Instructional Focus
Monday 07.09.18	Welcome Performance of Clark County School District Mariachi Ensemble Participants rotate through individual two-hour mini-methods courses on violin, trumpet, guitar, vihuela and guitarron.
Tuesday 07.10.18	Participants break up into two <i>sections</i> —those wanting to learn violin and/or trumpet ( <i>Armonia section</i> ) and those wanting to learn guitar and/or vihuela and/or guitarron ( <i>Melodia section</i> ). They work to learn/develop level-specific playing techniques and skills using <b>level-specific exercises</b> that are characteristic to that specific <i>section</i> . Students will rotate through each of these two <i>sections</i> during the course of the day to ensure comprehensive exposure to all of the instruments that comprise the mariachi ensemble. A <b>violin master class</b> will be presented in the afternoon instructed by professional mariachi performer, Erick Hernandez.
Wednesday 07.11.18	Review of previous day. Participants again break up into two <i>sections</i> ( <i>Melodia section</i> or <i>Armonia section</i> ) to learn/develop level-specific playing techniques and skills using <b>level-specific exercises and musical material (songs)</b> but are now encouraged to play another instrument from that particular <i>section</i> . Example: those who played violin in the <i>Melodia section</i> on Tuesday will now play trumpet—another instrument of the <i>Melodia section</i> . Students will again rotate through each of these two <i>sections</i> during the course of the day to ensure comprehensive exposure to all instruments while learning the level-specific exercises and songs. <b>Level-specific authentic performance practices</b> will be addressed in each of the three classes and will be emphasized through Friday. A <b>trumpet master class</b> will be presented in the afternoon instructed by professional mariachi performer, Maestro Jose Hernandez.



## MECA Course Syllabus National Mariachi Workshops for Educators

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Thursday 07.12.18	Participants work as one ensemble with <b>combined</b> Melodia and Armonia <i>sections</i> in each of the three levels now focusing on the development of the sonority of the full ensemble. Participants are continually encouraged to rotate through all of the instruments to continue to work on the development of their individual playing skills. <b>Level-specific authentic performance practices</b> will continue to be addressed in each of the three classes.
Friday 07.13.18	Participants rehearse the <b>level-specific songs</b> they have been preparing during the week. Dress rehearsals for each <b>level-specific class</b> are held in the early afternoon. A public concert which also features another mariachi ensemble from the Clark County School District, is presented with all workshop participants performing on secondary and tertiary instruments.
<i>OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES</i>	Private lessons on all of the instruments are made available for those who may be interested in further developing their own playing skills on a given instrument.

### Course Learning Objectives

The course content is sequenced to develop confidence and pedagogical acumen in teaching the instruments of the mariachi ensemble by “translating” each participant's current knowledge of music, the voice and various instruments as well as the specific song styles to the teaching of each.

By the end of the week in each respective level-specific course, students will:

1. Demonstrate an extensive collection of physical exercises that teach the fundamentals of string playing and knowledge of the fingerboard on violin, guitar, vihuela and guitarron
2. Demonstrate an extensive collection of physical exercises that teach the fundamentals of wind playing on trumpet
3. Demonstrate an extensive collection of physical exercises that teach the fundamentals of singing
4. Demonstrate the most important level-specific fundamental skills on each of the instruments of the mariachi ensemble: violin, trumpet, guitar, vihuela and guitarron as well as the voice.



## MECA Course Syllabus National Mariachi Workshops for Educators

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5. Identify and demonstrate the characteristics attributed to each of the various level-specific song styles of the mariachi genre
  6. Articulate clear goals for level-specific exercises for each instrument of the mariachi ensemble
  7. Articulate and intelligently discuss evaluation criteria for level-specific fundamental skills
  8. Provide a method for identifying, sequencing and evaluating specific tasks
  9. Assemble a basic list of repertoire for the beginning, intermediate or advanced mariachi ensemble
  10. Demonstrate the ability to prepare a standards-based, level-specific mariachi curriculum to include a course description, course goals, in addition to teaching and assessment strategies for a beginning, intermediate or advanced level mariachi class at the elementary, middle, or high school levels as well as at the collegiate level.

### MECA Courses and the National Core Arts Standards

MECA courses, by their very nature and design, address the Music Content and Professional Teaching Standards throughout the course content. Mariachi courses also incorporate the four (4) artistic processes of a) Creating, b) Performing, c) Responding and d) Connecting as enumerated in the National Music Standards.

### VanderCook Outcomes Addressed

The outcomes that the College strives to develop in its teacher candidates were derived from the institution's Conceptual Framework and are expressed in its core dispositions. This course addresses the following Candidate Outcomes:

1. A high level of musicianship
2. Academic ability and diligence leading to a lifetime of learning
3. Skill in the process of teaching
4. Self-discipline and persistence
5. Interpersonal and intrapersonal skills
6. Good citizenship and personal integrity
7. Building pragmatic links with educational programs in diverse communities
8. Professionalism in action, word, and appearance



MECA Course Syllabus  
National Mariachi Workshops for Educators

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**Course Requirements and Exit Assessment**

1. In concentrated courses such as these, attendance and active participation at all sessions, including the final concert on Friday, is mandatory. Please refer to the section on attendance, participation and conduct. 50%
2. 25% of the grade for the course will be determined by the student's ability to execute the basic pedagogical exercises and selections in the level-specific materials provided.

*Individual performing ability will NOT be part of the evaluation: only the ability to present the knowledge of the assignment using the materials presented in the above mariachi method series.*

3. 25% A retrospective of the level-specific course that provides a day-by-day description of the skills acquired and put into practice over the week as well as how each will be implemented in the participant's specific school setting. (25%)

**Course Requirements and Exit Assessment (Continued)**

1. 50% Daily attendance and participation
2. 25% Ability to execute the level-specific pedagogical exercises and selections
3. 25% Retrospective describing the newly-acquired level-specific and how they will be incorporated into the school district curriculum

**Grading Scale** A = 90-100, B = 80-89, C = 70-79, D = 60-69, F = 59 and below

**Participation, Attendance and Conduct**

VanderCook College of music requires attendance and active participation at all classes for the full day. The final grade will be reduced by one letter for each half-day that is missed. If a student is absent for any portion of either the morning or afternoon session, it is viewed as a half-day absence. All students must sign all attendance sheets for each course. An attendance sheet will be distributed each morning shortly after class begins and each afternoon shortly before dismissal. If a student does not sign an attendance sheet, the assumption will be made that a half-day absence has occurred for the sheet not signed.

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## MECA Course Syllabus National Mariachi Workshops for Educators

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### **Academic Honesty**

Candidates are expected to maintain the highest standards of integrity in their academic work. Failure to do so will jeopardize a candidate's success in the program. Examples of academic dishonesty include:

1. Presenting another's words, music, or concepts as your own by failing to acknowledge or properly cite the source.
2. Communicating or receiving answers or information to/from another in a testing situation.
3. Consulting notes or any other source of answers/information in a testing situation, unless the instructor authorizes such access.
4. Making available or accessing tests or quizzes from current or previous classes unless explicitly authorized by the instructor.
5. Bringing, by any means, answers or information into a testing situation except as explicitly authorized by the instructor.
6. Collaborating or turning in jointly produced work on any test or assignment that is intended to reflect individual effort.

### **Plagiarism**

Plagiarism means taking someone else's words, ideas, data or work and presenting them as one's own. This could mean an exact duplication of someone else's work without proper citation of the source, or it could refer to it being presented with only small changes and without citation of the source. Plagiarism can occur in any area of intellectual work including art, music, literature or technology.

All work submitted should be properly credited to the original source of the information or idea whether the source is a book, internet site, article, or any other medium. In written work, quotation marks or block indentations show direct quotations and the source must be cited. If information that is not common knowledge is paraphrased or summarized from a source, that source (including websites) must be cited. Failure to do so in academic assignments represents cheating and carries the appropriate penalties.

Copyright compliance is the goal of VanderCook College of Music. Information to help with clarification of what constitutes fair use of copyrighted material, including photocopying, is on permanent reserve in the Ruppel Library.



MECA Course Syllabus  
National Mariachi Workshops for Educators

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No candidate should expect to receive a passing grade on any test or assignment that reflects dishonesty or academic irregularity. Cheating in any form may result in failure of the class and academic expulsion.

**Disability Statement**

If a student has a disability which might interfere with that student's ability to function in this course it is the responsibility of that student to notify the instructor at the beginning of the course.



Marcia M. Neel  
President  
2564 Farmington Avenue  
Las Vegas, NV 89120  
v. (702) 361-3553  
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## \_\_\_\_\_PS MARIACHI IMPLEMENTATION PROPOSAL THREE-YEAR PLAN

### RATIONALE

It is the goal of the \_\_\_\_\_ to implement a Mariachi Education Program with the objective of providing students of various ethnicities with an exceptional educational experience that would expand their cultural awareness and promote a lifelong appreciation for music. The program would offer students, many of them from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, a high-quality musical experience of a multigenerational tradition rooted in a sound, sequential, standards-based curriculum. Additionally, students would develop sensitivity, understanding, and respect for peoples from a broad spectrum of ethnic-cultural backgrounds.

#### **Program Goals**

- Students will gain an understanding of the historical development of mariachi music.
- Students will explore and experiment with different musical styles and techniques to further their understanding of improvisation and musical interpretation.
- Students will gain confidence in their abilities as individual musicians and as members of a group.
- Students will participate in high-quality musical experiences from an established musical tradition.
- Students will gain an understanding of musical form.
- Students will gain and develop a lifelong appreciation of and interest in music.
- Students will develop critical thinking and problem solving skills, and a sense of personal responsibility as they increase their performance skills.

#### **Objectives**

- To develop an appreciation for musical form and its development
- To understand regional and historical variations of mariachi music
- To develop the ability to successfully demonstrate a variety of mariachi skills and techniques using appropriate instruments
- To incorporate traditional rhythms used in mariachi music into musical performances
- To increase awareness of the literal and emotional content of music

## LESSON 1 PLAN

### CONCEPTS

Recognizing Measure and Measure (Bar) Lines  
 Identifying the location of the time signature and significance of the top number  
 Introduce FP (finger placement) to violin students and HP (hand placement) to guitarron students  
 Playing and reading F#, E, and D for Strings; G#, F#, and E for Trumpet  
 Playing and reading Quarter notes and Quarter rests  
 Singing and Playing *Los Tres Mariachis*  
 Composing a song (*Cancion*)

Mariachi History:

**Mariachi as a type of Latin American music**

### NATIONAL MUSIC CONTENT STANDARDS

1. Singing, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music
2. Playing, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music
4. Composing and arranging music within specified guidelines
5. Reading and notating music
6. Listening to, analyzing, and describing music
9. Understanding music in relation to history and culture

### THE TEACHER WILL:

Review playing and rest positions  
 Review proper care of the instrument  
 Review parts of the instruments  
 Review proper playing techniques for each instrument  
 Review preparatory counting to establish steady pulse  
 Introduce notation for F#, E, and D for strings; G#, F#, and E for trumpet  
 Lead students to compose a piece of music using the notes and rests already learned  
 Review F#, E, and D for strings; G#, F#, and E for Trumpet  
 Introduce measures and measure (bar) lines and their purpose in the music  
 Demonstrate the proper procedure for students to use to enter class (over next couple of lessons)  
 Communicate daily expectations as soon as possible  
 Introduce Mariachi Music as a form of Latin American music which is becoming increasingly popular in the United States

### THE STUDENTS WILL:

Demonstrate how to care for the instruments  
 Identify the parts of the instruments  
 Identify a measure and measure (bar) line  
 Identify the location of the time signature and how many beats are in each measure  
 Play F#, E, and D concert pitches  
 Demonstrate their understanding of Mariachi as a form of Latin Music  
 Demonstrate a knowledge of classroom expectations  
 Sing and play their first Mariachi song.  
 Compose a Cancion (song).

### Recommended Mariachi Equipment Standards List

33 Each	Guitar, Classic, Standard Size <b>PREFER HARD SHELL PLASTIC CASES</b>
30 Each	Violin, 4/4 Size, Complete Outfit, with Case and Bow
6 Each	Trumpets
6 Each	Standard Guitarron with <b>HARDSHELL CASE</b>
6 Each	Standard Vihuela with <b>HARDSHELL CASE</b>
4 Each	Racks, Storage Violin/Viola—2 for violins/2 for guitars
1 Each	Rack, Storage Cabinet configured for Guitarron/Vihuela

Method Books (Classroom Copies): *¡Simplemente Mariachi!*  
published by: Northeastern Music Publications, Inc.

1	Teacher Edition	
30	Student Edition:	Violin
37	Student Edition:	Guitar/Vihuela
6	Student Edition:	Trumpet
6	Student Edition:	Guitarron
	Assorted extra copies as required	

Music Books (Collection of 10 Mariachi Songs): *Libro Acompañante Musical de ¡Simplemente Mariachi!*

1	Teacher Edition	
30	Student Edition:	Violin
37	Student Edition:	Guitar/Vihuela
6	Student Edition:	Trumpet
3	Student Edition:	Guitarron
	Assorted extra copies as desired	

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**VanderCook MECA Evaluation**  
**2018 National Mariachi Workshop for Educators®**

**Course Number:** Please check your appropriate course number.

Beginning Mariachi Styles

☐ 7257 A      3 Graduate Credits  
☐ 7257 B      Non-credit

Intermediate Mariachi Styles

☐ 7267 A      3 Graduate Credits  
☐ 7267 B      Non-credit

Advanced Mariachi Styles

☐ 7277 A      3 Graduate Credits  
☐ 7277 B      Non-credit

\*7257 A/B Students: Did you receive a \$100 Wenger Scholarship?

☐ Yes ☐ No

\*7267 A/B Students: Did you receive a \$100 West Music Scholarship?

☐ Yes ☐ No

\*7277 A/B Students: Did you receive a \$100 West Music Scholarship?

☐ Yes ☐ No

How did you hear about the National Mariachi Workshops for Educators?

\_\_\_\_\_ Word of Mouth

\_\_\_\_\_ Advertising in Journals

\_\_\_\_\_ Internet

\_\_\_\_\_ Conferences

\_\_\_\_\_ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ I'm a Prior Attendee.

This is my \_\_\_\_\_ year.

**Please help us evaluate the course** (1=Strongly Disagree, 5=Strongly Agree)

**WE LISTEN AND YOU HELP TO MAKE IT BETTER EACH AND EVERY YEAR!**

1. The instructor(s) demonstrated broad, accurate knowledge of the subject matter.  
 (Comment on particular instructors is welcome on the reverse of this page.)

	<u>Disagree</u>				<u>Agree</u>	
<b>Beginning</b> Mariachi Styles	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
<b>Intermediate</b> Mariachi Styles	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
<b>Advanced</b> Mariachi Styles	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
<b>Jose Hernandez</b>	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
<b>Willie Acuña</b>	1	2	3	4	5	N/A

2. The instructor(s) related the course materials to my needs.

1      2      3      4      5      N/A

3. The instructor(s) were well organized and kept the class on task consistently.

1      2      3      4      5      N/A

4. The course material was adequately covered.

1      2      3      4      5      N/A

5. The instructional aides and materials presented will be helpful in my teaching.

1      2      3      4      5      N/A

6. I learned a great deal during this course.

Disagree                      Agree  
 1            2            3            4            5            N/A

7. The course description in the information provided matched the actual course content.

1            2            3            4            5            N/A

8. The price charged for the course is reasonable.

1            2            3            4            5            N/A

9. The quality/variety of the food service was good.

1            2            3            4            5            N/A

10. The variety of food offered was good.

1            2            3            4            5            N/A

11. The accommodations were satisfactory. (Feel free to provide comments on reverse.)

1            2            3            4            5            N/A

12. In comparison with courses taken elsewhere, please rate this course as being in the:

☐ Bottom 10%      ☐ Bottom 30%      ☐ Average      ☐ Top 30%      ☐ Top 10%

13. How are you using or applying the credits/hours that you are earning by taking one of these courses? (check all that apply or indicate "N/A")

\_\_\_\_\_ State Certification      \_\_\_\_\_ Salary Increase      \_\_\_\_\_ Master's Program

14. Are you reimbursed by your school district/county/business?

☐ No                      ☐ Yes                      If so, at what percentage or amount? \_\_\_\_\_

15. Would you attend the next level Mariachi course if offered again in Las Vegas during the week of June 25-29, 2018?

☐ Yes                      ☐ No                      ☐ Maybe

15. What did you like most about your course?

16. What would you like us to do to improve the program and/or specific course next year? We want to continually improve our offerings and enhance your workshop experience.

*NOTE: May we use some of your comments online? If so, please print your name below.*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_





## Mariachi and Spanish speaking English learners: District initiatives, models, and education policy

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### ABSTRACT

Districts nationwide are challenged with how best to address the needs of an increasing number of non-English or limited-English speaking students. These young people are similarly challenged as they face new environs, unfamiliar cultural settings, and significant communication issues. Findings have indicated that an arts-rich education can assist limited English speakers, many of them considered to be at-risk students, to achieve at higher levels. This article examines a number of districts with growing Hispanic populations that have implemented standards-based mariachi programs and found success in engaging Spanish speaking English learners, their parents, and the Hispanic community at large in the process. Some of these districts had considerable issues needing to be resolved but innovative solutions have led to student success. One district that serves as a model to be replicated is chronicled in detail due to how its creative program implementation subsequently informed policy. School climate data is also provided by another district, which broke down its reporting according to subgroup. Although the data do not measure only those who were enrolled solely in mariachi courses, the major findings are significant in that they indicate how music coursework impacts Latino students specifically. The impact of participating as an active music-maker in any ensemble by any participant cannot be overlooked, but for Spanish speaking English learners, the standards-based mariachi program provides a culturally familiar and welcoming setting, facilitates new patterns of learning, and addresses the priority of attaining English language proficiency.

### KEYWORDS

English language learners;  
mariachi; mariachi education

### The priority of attaining English language proficiency

English learners (ELs) in the United States number approximately 5 million—approximately 1 out of every 10 public school students—with Spanish being the primary language for the majority (Sanchez, 2017). In finding ways in which arts education, the education of English learners, and education policy might intersect, it is not only important to explore the specific intersection, but it is also vital to discover where the construction zones might exist so that the most expedient pathways may be plotted. In December 2015, President Obama signed into law the bipartisan Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA, 2015) thereby reauthorizing the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) originally signed into law by President Johnson in April 1965. The new and revised provisions of ESSA are already serving as catalysts for change in districts nationwide as English-language educators are now in the process of determining how to address these policies while music educators

are contemplating the opportunities that may be provided to serve more students through the various provisions within the law—notably, the Well-Rounded Education Provision. Because this new law will have a significant impact on English learner programs, the Council of Chief State School Officers has published an online resource document (CCSSO, 2016) to assist state superintendents of public instruction in digesting the intent of the various provisions as they pertain to English language proficiency. That document provides a comprehensive overview of the specific provisions most relevant to the education of English learners as well as the potential challenges for states. To set a backdrop for this article, several of the more applicable ESSA provisions are explained below.

1. Replacing the controversial No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), ESSA now authorizes states to create their own accountability systems—a major change from the long shadow that NCLB cast across the education landscape. Even though states now

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Color versions of one or more of the figures in the article can be found online at [www.tandfonline.com/vaep](http://www.tandfonline.com/vaep).

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have the flexibility to develop their own policies to address academic proficiency, English language proficiency, and graduation rates, they are also required to include long term goals and annual indicators for all students, including all student subgroups. This replaces that which was previously found in NCLB's "adequate yearly progress" provisions. Subgroups are defined as those who are economically disadvantaged, students from major ethnic and racial groups, children with disabilities, and ELs.

2. States must demonstrate in their Title I plans that they have adopted English Language Proficiency (ELP) Standards rooted in the four recognized domains of speaking, listening, reading, and writing; that address the different proficiency levels of ELs; and that are also aligned with the state's academic standards. This is similar to what was in Title III of the previous law, although the previous version did not require that the ELPs address the different proficiency levels of ELs. NCLB merely required a single definition of proficiency rather than defining multiple levels as is the case with ESSA.
3. Title III of ESSA, which addresses language instruction for ELs and immigrant students specifically, sets forth its purposes as follows: (a) to help English learners attain proficiency and academic success in English, (b) to assist English learners to achieve at high levels in their academic subjects in order to meet the same State standards as all other learners, (c) to help the education community provide effective instructional programs designed to assist English learners, (d) to help English learners enter all-English instructional settings, and (e) to promote language instruction to the families of English learners as well as to the community.
4. ESSA contains a provision that all students should be provided with a well-rounded education, which is defined as courses, activities, and programming in subjects such as English, reading or language arts, writing, science, technology, engineering, mathematics, foreign languages, civics and government, economics, arts, history, geography, computer science, **music**, career and technical education, health, physical education, and any other subject, as determined by the State or local educational agency, with the purpose of providing all students access to an enriched curriculum and educational experience.

With states now moving forward to develop their own policies and assessments to align with the new ESSA requirements, identifying arts instruction models that support literacy, while also serving as an expression of personal and cultural identity, is an important goal. Because the Latino demographic is the largest and fastest growing minority and because this particular student population is among the lowest performing, music

programs that serve this specific subgroup could be a significant factor when it comes to the success of ELs in achieving English language proficiency. If this is the case, districts may want to explore how these two programs could align with the goal of instituting policy that could result in embedding music education into the curriculum even more firmly. In addition to informing policy, it is worth considering that such a program may also lead to the establishment of a vision for the entire Latino community both in and outside of the school setting.

Although the teaching of any art form is crucial because of its intrinsic value, it is worth exploring if districts with comprehensive music programs and, more specifically, standards-based mariachi programs that provide culturally relevant experiences for Latino students, are also serving as an effective intervention for those ELs who are just beginning to embark on a cultural shift that will impact their lives forever.

### The possibilities resulting from ESSA

With such an increased emphasis on the academic achievement of ELs, ESSA could result in such added pressure for districts to meet the new state policies that opportunities for Latino students to participate in arts electives might be substantially reduced or even eliminated altogether.

However, with the requirement that state ELP Standards stem from the four recognized domains of speaking, listening, reading, and writing, the mariachi classroom could serve to support the development of these domains for Latino ELs as these are also the components of the quality mariachi curriculum by way of singing and listening, in addition to reading and composing music. Combined with the above referenced purposes of Title III, in addition to the well-rounded education provision that specifies music as one of such courses, mariachi programs could be poised to serve as a bridge to college, career, and for many, a pathway to citizenry.

### Equal access for the burgeoning Latino demographic

The future of our nation is inextricably linked to the future of the Hispanic community—Hispanics are the largest and fastest growing minority group, and will represent 60% of our nation's population growth between 2005 and 2050. However, Hispanics have the lowest education attainment levels of any group in the United States. (White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanics, 2017)

With an increasing number of Latino students, and with as many as 32% of those under 18 living in poverty

(Barmer et al., 2015), the chances that they will have access to the same quality of arts education program is questionable. In general, the arts opportunity gap seems to widen significantly between schools of highest and lowest poverty rates but more specifically, the opportunities provided for ELs are even fewer as these students are also impacted by curriculum crowding due to the additional requirements which may be necessary in acquiring a new language. In his groundbreaking report, “The Arts and Achievement in At-Risk Youth: Findings from Four Longitudinal Studies,” James S. Catterall presents findings indicating that it is precisely an arts-rich education that helps these at-risk students, many of them limited English speakers, to achieve at a higher level. They have a higher grade point average (GPA), show higher test scores in science and writing, and are three times as likely to receive a college degree while earning A’s predominantly (Catterall, Dumais, & Hampden-Thompson, 2012).

The Multilingual Pathways Department in the San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) champions this finding through its mission, which states first and foremost that their goal is to provide ELs with a “culturally and linguistically relevant education” (San Francisco Unified School District, 2017). Mariachi education can clearly serve to provide this type of education so it follows that the SFUSD has subsequently developed and instituted an articulated, in-school comprehensive mariachi program rooted in a standards-based curriculum.

In his opening remarks for the 2014 White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanics’ National Arts Forum at Pixar Studios, Richard Carranza, former SFUSD superintendent, told more than 150 invited national-level decision makers that, “If you capture their interest, their intellect, commitment, and minds will follow” (White House Initiative on Educational Excellence, 2015). Carranza, who did not speak English when he started school in Tucson, Arizona, discovered this firsthand when serving as the mariachi teacher at Pueblo Magnet High School. His nationally recognized mariachi program produced a 90% high school graduation rate and instilled students with a passion for music-making that lifted them to new heights of fulfillment and the self-realization that ultimate success in all things was within their grasp and even more importantly, within *their* power to attain.

### **What the numbers tell us: Why teach mariachi as opposed to other forms of Latin music?**

In the 2010 *Census Brief*, a number of findings were articulated that are relevant when considering why mariachi, as opposed to other forms of Latin music, would be an appropriate choice to introduce into the school

curriculum. In the years from 2000 to 2010, the percentage of the population that self-identified as Hispanic or Latino grew from 35.3 million to 50.5 million. Of those who self-identified as Hispanic or Latino, it was the Mexican population that accounted for approximately three quarters of the 15.2 million increase during this same period. The vast majority (63%) of Latinos in the United States are thus of Mexican descent with a median age of 27. This is considerably younger than 37 years of age which is the median age of the general U.S. population—thus the increased likelihood of child-bearing, which could account for some of the increase of school-aged children of Mexican descent (Albert, Ennis, & Rio-Vargas, 2011).

With 69% of current Latino students identified as being of Mexican origin and with growth indicators estimating an increase of 166% in this sub-group by 2050, it follows that local education agencies could engage these children by recognizing and honoring their cultural traditions.

It is thus mariachi, a form of folk music that is immediately identified as a national symbol that encompasses the essence of Mexico, that could be the most impactful component of the arts education program when providing a curriculum that embraces culturally responsive and relevant teaching.

### **Embracing mariachi education through policy: The CCSD’s story**

The Clark County School District (CCSD)’s comprehensive Mariachi Education Program has become the nation’s largest with a total enrollment of approximately 5,000 middle and high students taking mariachi classes daily during the 2015–16 school year. In the formative years, district and community leaders who envisioned a program that would eventually serve the cultural needs of the CCSD’s growing population of Latino students worked together using a longitudinal approach rooted in a well-thought-out design as to lay the groundwork strategically. Exploring the various program components to formally articulate why the program was being created was the focus as well as to answer questions such as: how the program would be implemented, what the district would support financially, what community partnerships could be forged, and what achievements would be realized.

#### **The why**

The CCSD Secondary Mariachi Education Program was introduced into four high schools and four middle schools in the 2002–2003 school year with the goal of providing:

- Increased academic achievement by requiring specific GPA targets for performance participation
- Increased student attendance
- Increased parent participation
- Increased self-esteem and self-confidence
- Positive social citizenry through performance
- Increased student enrollment in music education courses
- Increased opportunities to represent the CCSD and Las Vegas community as music ambassadors through high-level performances
- A strengthened and culturally diversified fine arts department focus
- Opportunities for students to serve as positive peer role models. (Neel & Trujillo, 2008)

### **The how**

Early on, it was decided that the district would only hire educators who were steeped in the mariachi genre. It did not take long to realize that those who had the most experience, and thus were the best qualified to teach mariachi, were not certified music educators but professional mariachi musicians. Many districts hire non-certified mariachi musicians as para-professionals rather than securing other alternatives, but the CCSD chose to explore the possibility of creating a new license that would allow for these preferred applicants to attain professional certification. It was important that they establish themselves as full-fledged music educators with the same benefits as any other teacher in the district. In this way, the mariachi program would exist on equal footing with other music electives.

In a meeting with one of the CCSD assistant superintendents, it was decided to make a request of the Nevada State Department of Education to provide an Ethnic Music endorsement within the Vocational Business and Industry (B&I) category of teacher licensing. The B&I category is used when licensing professionals from the business industry to work within the school district because they are considered experts in a specific area of expertise. Thus, the prospective mariachi educators would leave their professional mariachi performance careers to become credentialed mariachi educators. To qualify for this license, these candidates needed to have earned a minimum of a high school diploma or its equivalent and have at least five years of successful performance experience after age 16 in a professional mariachi ensemble (setting).

### **The commitment**

Established in the fall of 2002, the CCSD chose to implement the mariachi program side-by-side with the existing instrumental and vocal curriculum. This was

significant in that by offering the course through the policies already established for the more traditional music course offerings, the district affirmed that the comprehensive, standards-based, sequential mariachi curriculum contained the same academic rigor as other courses of study in music. The district thus put their full support and resources behind the Secondary Mariachi Education Program by providing the following:

- A standards-based, sequential set of course syllabi for six mariachi courses offered to students in grades 6–12
- Commensurate course credit for all mariachi coursework
- An Equipment Standards List so that each school choosing to offer the mariachi program would have access to the same numbers of instruments, equipment and supplies for participating students
- Professional development opportunities for the mariachi faculty
- A district-wide Mariachi Festival where ensembles could perform for critical assessment
- A district-wide Mariachi Honor Ensemble where the more exceptional students may audition to participate and subsequently develop and showcase their talents by working under the direction of a highly regarded professional mariachi educator/performer
- A Summer Mariachi Institute for students interested in pursuing music study over the summer months

### **The partners**

Once it was determined that a mariachi program would be implemented, the district reached out to potential partner organizations that might want to become involved and the response was formidable. The Latin Chamber of Commerce, local performing arts organizations, and a number of local and national foundations stepped up and provided support because they understood that this program could be a turning point for engaging more Latino students, their parents, extended families, and even the local Latino community in public school education.

### **The significant gains**

As was anticipated, the implementation of the mariachi program resulted in positive breakthroughs in a number of areas. The program indeed met the goal of engaging increased numbers of Latino students. The program has grown 20-fold since its inception in the 2002–2003 school year.



CCSD mariachi educators report that their students demonstrate a high rate of school attendance because they simply do not want to miss out on the enjoyment of music-making each day. This has resulted in students attending all of their classes more regularly, thus leading to increased levels of achievement by nature of the fact that they are attending school more often. In the case of the CCSD, most mariachi educators also have self-imposed performance expectations that require a specific GPA in order for students to perform and this stipulation has also resulted in significant academic gains for participating students.

The district's mariachi educators also report that their programs experience a high level of retention over the long term, thus leading to the vast majority of participating students eventually graduating from high school on time.

### **What CCSD administrators came to discover about mariachi and bilingualism**

Although they may not at first understand how the mariachi program might engage Latino students and their families so significantly, administrators soon discover how music in a bilingual setting can expedite English language acquisition skills.

1. Mariachi programs themselves are largely bilingual in that teachers and students converse primarily in English and Spanish. The songs are in Spanish inherently and in the case of the CCSD, most of the mariachi teachers are bilingual so they thus serve as effective role models for the students. Instruction is delivered primarily in English to students who for the most part, are bilingual or native Spanish-speakers. ELs thus find themselves “at home” in a culturally relevant setting while being immersed in the English language.
2. Spanish is spoken when referring to the music itself because of its specific terminology. Students soon begin to equate Spanish words that are part of the mariachi terminology with corresponding words in English. For example, the Spanish word “*entrada*” (lit. entrance) refers to the instrumental introduction of the song in mariachi terminology. The Spanish word “*golpe*” (lit. to strike/hit) refers to a crisp strum on the guitar and vihuela, which is a characteristic articulation in a number of mariachi styles. Students thus demonstrate their understanding through repeated practice and playing.
3. Social bonding quickly develops between students who are newly enrolled in the school and those who may have gone through similar experiences in the not-too-distant past. These relationships serve to provide assistance and even

comfort in times of need. For example, one student may lean over to another during rehearsal to speak a few words in Spanish to clarify the instructions being delivered in English. Peer coaching in this manner links one student to the other and results in establishing a culture of trust through meaningful relationships.

4. Mariachi music transcends generations in the Mexican culture. Children grow up hearing these songs during their formative years and the melodies become ingrained as aural representations of home. It also provides common ground within the family. Many students share the similar story of how they thought that mariachi was “old peoples’ music” until they started learning it at school. It then transcended from its former status to music they love to sing, play, and perform with their peers. Students form their own groups outside of the school day and perform for a variety of celebrations. Mariachi honors the heritage of the Latino culture and promotes collaboration and understanding.
5. CCSD principals report an increase in involvement of the Latino parents and other family members including siblings of participants who are also enrolled in the same school as their performing brothers and sisters. Entire extended families attend concerts, even singing along with the students during the performances and making traditional food to sell at the concert events to help with fundraising. Principals also report that this increased activity continues to target the vision of helping parents, families, and the local business and residential community to view the school as more relevant and culturally friendly.

Several school districts have chosen to introduce their mariachi programs at the end of the school day using 21st Century Learning Center grants to fund the expense. Although this is certainly another option for engaging more Latino students in music-making, the preferred implementation model would be to implement the program into the regular school day through policy that provides a standards-based curriculum as was done in the CCSD. In this way, the program is viewed as rigorous academic content deserving of curricular placement and secure funding.

### **Mariachi programs can address a landscape of educational initiatives**

#### ***Barrow County Schools, GA***

#### ***Service learning***

Defined by the National Youth Leadership Council, Service Learning is “an approach to teaching and learning

in which students use academic knowledge and skills to address genuine community needs” (NYLC, 2017). Kerry Bryant, former mariachi workshop attendee and Fine Arts coordinator from Barrow County, GA, who implemented such a program, wrote in a subsequent article that the school based mariachi program is infused with this strategy. (Bryant & Neel, 2011)

The Mariachi program ... uses the students-teaching-students model. ... When we started in 2009, we enlisted the help of one violin student, one trumpet student, and one guitar student with prior experience and playing ability to help with instruction. All of our high school Mariachi students will eventually do lecture/demo concerts at the middle and elementary feeder schools with the entire program being organized and presented by the participants themselves. They will cover Mariachi history and performance techniques, as well as perform representative music from the genre. This is the students-teaching-students model at its finest. (p. 25)

### **Hillsboro School District, OR**

#### ***K–12 dual language program***

Representing the complete opposite side of the country is Dan Bosshardt from the Hillsboro (OR) School District (HSD). In June, 2014, the Hillsboro School Board approved a mariachi course highlighting the fact that “a mariachi course would provide an excellent elective option for the arts for dual language students” (Bosshardt & Reiman, 2014, p. 45).

### **International Baccalaureate® program**

The HSD board further identified how the in-school mariachi program would also address the curriculum of the Middle Years Program and IB Diploma:

#### **Middle years program (International Baccalaureate)**

From the earliest times, artistic expression has been common to all cultures as human beings make statements through a variety of nonverbal forms and create objects that are aesthetically pleasing. Beyond barriers of language, the discovery of the cultural values of civilizations through their artistic production is one of the best ways to promote international understanding.

Students are brought into contact with the art forms and aesthetic values of other cultures, as well as their own, and are helped to develop perceptions between ideas and art. They are also encouraged to identify particular creative abilities and to master techniques appropriate to that form of expression.

In addition, the course:

- Organizes learning around the creative cycle—a dynamic, ongoing process of sensing, planning,

creating, and evaluating art, and one in which all the senses are involved

- Encourages creative energy, communication, interaction, and reflection
- Aims to help the student become a developing artist—one who is able to assess the level of skill and target the areas that need development
- Seeks to acquaint young people with the creations of men and women whose works have proved to be of enduring worth.

### **IB Diploma (International Baccalaureate®)**

The Diploma Programme prepares students for effective participation in a rapidly evolving and increasingly global society as they:

- Study at least two languages and increase understanding of cultures, including their own
- Make connections across traditional academic disciplines and explore the nature of knowledge through the program’s unique theory of knowledge course
- Enhance their personal and interpersonal development through creativity, action and service

Group 6 of the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme includes the following subjects: dance, music, film, theatre, and visual arts. These subjects allow a high degree of adaptability to different cultural contexts. The emphasis is on creativity in the context of disciplined, practical research into the relevant genres. In addition, each subject is designed to foster critical, reflective and informed practice, help students understand the dynamic and changing nature of the arts, explore the diversity of art across time, place and culture, and express themselves with confidence and competence. (Bosshardt & Reiman, 2014, p. 45)

### **San Francisco Unified School District, CA**

#### ***Mariachi and the core music standards***

The mariachi program of the SFUSD has developed a standards-based approach built on all four of the artistic processes of Creating (Cr), Performing (Pr), Responding (Re), and Connecting (Cn). Although still in its infancy, the district is writing a curriculum based on California’s Core Music Standards that provides assessable instructional goals with the overall objective of creating arts literacy. Below are examples of how each of these processes could be explored in the beginning level mariachi course.

**INSTRUCTIONAL GOAL:** To recognize form in simple mariachi performance styles

1.1 The student will identify the ranchera lenta style.

**ASSESSMENT ACTIVITY 1 (Cr):** Ask students to compose a simple song in the style of the ranchera lenta using the I, IV, and V chords of Re (D) Major.

**ASSESSMENT ACTIVITY 2 (Pr):** Have students perform a selection representative of the ranchera lenta style and demonstrate the appropriate characteristic elements.

**ASSESSMENT ACTIVITY 3 (Re plus Technology):** Have students listen to or view on YouTube at least three different performances of the same ranchera lenta song then describe the various differences/nuances in the performances using appropriate terminology. Ask students to choose their favorite performance from among those observed then provide the reason for their choice.

**ASSESSMENT ACTIVITY 4 (Cn):** Have students explain—either in writing or using essential questions—the origin of the ranchera lenta style, the characteristic elements of the style and its significance in the mariachi genre.

### ***Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools' Music Makes Us<sup>®</sup> program: Measuring significant gains***

When considering whether music education can play a significant role for Latino students and result in measurable social and academic gains, one has only to look to the Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools' (MNPS) *Music Makes Us<sup>®</sup>* program, a joint effort of the school district, the mayor's office and music industry and community leaders. MNPS implemented their mariachi program in the fall of 2012.

MNPS commissioned a comprehensive research project subsequently published in 2013. The "Prelude Music Makes Us Baseline Research Report" (Eason & Johnson, 2013) was compiled to establish a benchmark—a snapshot of students who have been enrolled in middle and high school music and the impact of music study on student engagement and academic achievement.

A set of established questions was examined that would guide researchers Becky J. A. Eason, Ph. and Christopher M. Johnson, PhD, both from the University of Kansas, to better understand the potential effects and implications of music-making:

1. What relationships exist among music participation, student characteristics, student engagement, and academic achievement?
2. To what extent does music participation affect school motivation and engagement?
3. To what extent does music participation affect academic achievement?
4. To what extent does music participation affect students identify and social structures?
5. To what extent do students make connections between music and other areas of school and life?

Four years of quantitative statistical data was collected on the 6,006 high school seniors from the class of 2012 and included non-music students as well as music students. Analysis determined differences in student engagement and achievement by music participation level, gender, and ethnicity, although for purposes of this article, only participation level and ethnicity findings are presented. Qualitative data collection included surveys of

music students and focus group sessions that were conducted and comprised strictly of music students.

Although the data do not measure only those who were enrolled solely in mariachi courses, the major findings presented below are significant in that they indicate how music coursework impacts Latino students specifically. These findings are organized by key variables and are grouped into three categories by music participation level: students who took no music classes, students who took music for one year or less, and students who took music for more than one year.

Of the 6,006 members of the MNPS class of 2012, 35% took at least one music class while in high school. That course would have fulfilled the 1-year fine arts requirement in MNPS schools and may account for the fact that approximately half of music students took the one-year minimum requirement or less.

Figure 1 indicates that fewer Latino students participated in music courses than did other samplings.

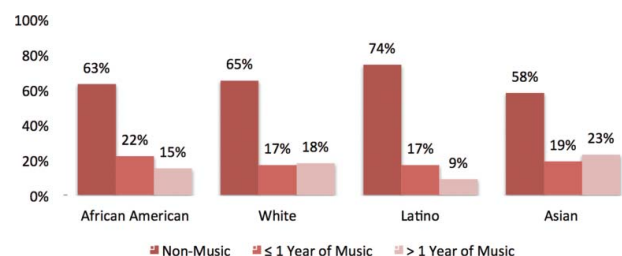
Figure 2 shows that the attendance of Latino students who took at least one year or less of music coursework was commensurate with other ethnicities in that they attended school 91% of the time while those taking more than one year attended school at a rate of 93%. In a school year made up of 180 days, that adds up to a difference of 11 school days—more than two weeks of classes.

Figure 3 indicates that across all student groups, those with increased participation levels in music had fewer referrals.

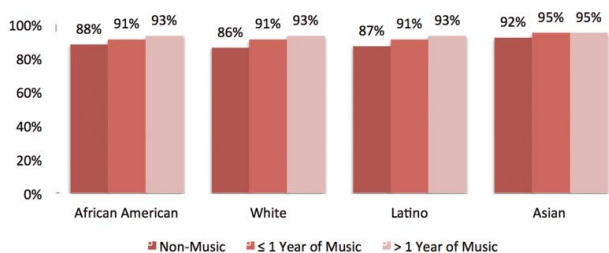
Figure 4 illustrates that across all student groups, those with the highest level of music participation also earned the highest GPAs.

On-time graduation rates by ethnicity are shown in Figure 5. The increase in on-time graduation rate was the greatest for Latino students. This difference means that Latino high school students who exceed the district's fine arts requirement by taking more than 1 year of music are 71% more likely to graduate on time than their Latino peers with no music experience.

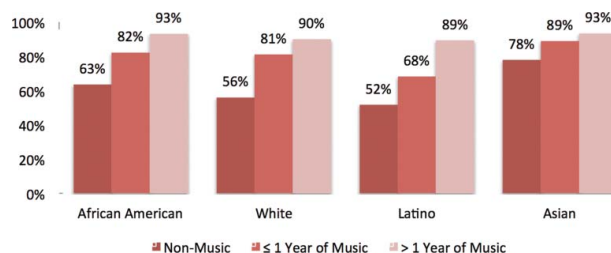
Figure 6 illustrates that African American, White, and Latino students with higher level of music participation



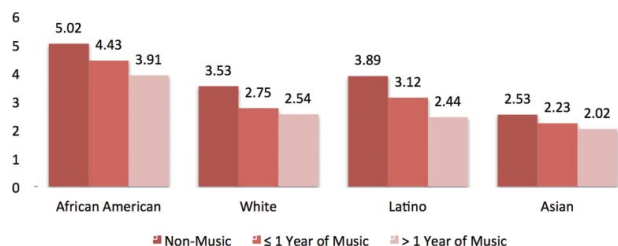
**Figure 1.** Music participation rates by ethnicity,  $N = 5,984$ . From Eason and Johnson (2013, p. 18). © Music Makes Us. Reproduced by permission.



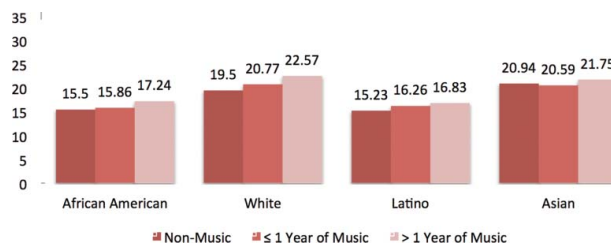
**Figure 2.** School attendance rates by ethnicity,  $N = 5,742$ . From Eason and Johnson (2013, p. 19). © Music Makes Us. Reproduced by permission.



**Figure 5.** On-time graduation rates by ethnicity,  $N = 4,994$ . From Eason and Johnson (2013, p. 23). © Music Makes Us. Reproduced by permission.



**Figure 3.** Discipline referrals by ethnicity,  $N = 4,490$ . From Eason and Johnson (2013, p. 20). © Music Makes Us. Reproduced by permission.



**Figure 6.** ACT Scores in English,  $N = 3,461$ . From Eason and Johnson (2013, p. 24). © Music Makes Us. Reproduced by permission.

levels all scored higher on the ACTs in English. ACT scores in math are shown in Figure 7. African American, White, and Latino students with higher levels of music participation all scored higher.

In general, the differences across the three categories represented above show substantial differences between students who took no music classes, those who took classes for one year or less and those who took more than one year of music. Although several limitations have been noted in this report, the authors still concluded that “there is sufficient compelling evidence to suggest that higher levels of music participation are predictive of statistically significant positive benefits for student engagement and learning” (p. 31). This reinforces the assertion that across all student groups, music participation has a meaningful impact on student engagement and learning. There were varying rates of achievement between

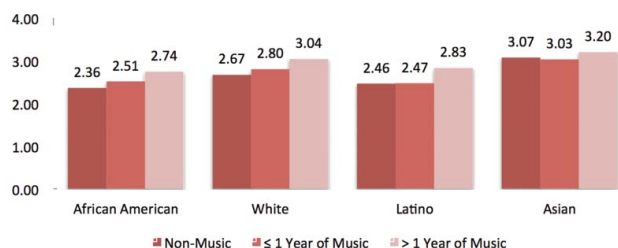
students from different ethnicities but in every case and by every measure, Latino students who participated in more music study also experienced increased levels of success in the Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools.

## Implications

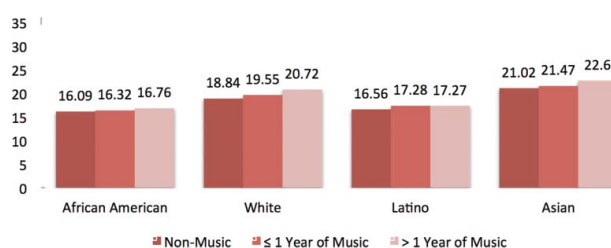
The implications are considerable but of the school districts that have implemented mariachi programs into their comprehensive music curriculum through established policy, many have still had to grapple with several common issues.

## Legitimacy of the genre

First and foremost is that mariachi itself must be recognized as a legitimate genre worthy of study. It should stand shoulder to shoulder with the more standard



**Figure 4.** Grade point average by ethnicity,  $N = 4,119$ . From Eason and Johnson (2013, p. 22). © Music Makes Us. Reproduced by permission.



**Figure 7.** ACT Scores in Math,  $N = 3,462$ . From Eason and Johnson (2013, p. 24). © Music Makes Us. Reproduced by permission.



courses found in the typical school music program—band, orchestra, choir, guitar, and so on. Unfortunately, the common perception is that mariachi is what is heard being performed (out of tune) at the local Mexican restaurant. To be recognized as such, it is important to understand that similar to the origins of the jazz idiom, the mariachi genre has developed from a small group of musicians playing music considered to be representative of their culture into a finely tuned ensemble defined by a specific instrumentation playing in a variety of styles that are immediately recognizable by its extroverted, expressive, and exciting characteristic sound.

### **Finding qualified educators**

The number of mariachi programs starting annually is growing exponentially and districts need to find a way to accommodate this growth. Texas State University in San Marcos offers a Mariachi Teaching Certificate within the music education program but in general, mariachi programs at universities exist as clubs rather than as curriculum. The dilemma is that until increased numbers of high school mariachi students seek to pursue this type of study, the postsecondary institutions will not offer it and yet until the universities make this type of program available, students cannot seek it.

For the more immediate future, it thus falls to the practicing music educator to learn more about this genre of performance and not fear delving into a new realm of music-making. Ruben Newell, band and now mariachi educator from Denison, Iowa, described his preconceived notions about mariachi by asking readers of *The Iowa Bandmaster*:<sup>22</sup>

What do you know about mariachi? Maybe I should ask that in a different way: what do you think you know about mariachi? If you are like I was 2 years ago, you think you know what mariachi is. If you are also like I was 1 years ago, you are probably wrong.

He fully credits mariachi with giving him some of the most rewarding moments of his entire teaching career. Professional development workshops are the most efficient method to provide licensed music educators with the training to implement new programs. Another option is to research whether alternative licensing may be possible where a local mariachi performing artist, properly vetted, could be brought on staff at least to start the program under the supervision of a properly licensed educator.

Non-Latino music educators are often concerned about how the Latino community will respond to them teaching mariachi. In other words, should mariachi only be taught by Latino teachers or those who speak Spanish

fluently? In each situation where this has been the case, the Latino community has been thrilled to learn that a mariachi program is being offered, thereby recognizing their culture and making it available to their children so this is a non-issue.

Through its Music Education Center of America (MECA) Continuing Education Program, VanderCook College of Music partners with Music Education Consultants, Inc., to offer the *National Mariachi Workshops for Educators*® in Las Vegas, for teachers seeking practical knowledge and skills that can be used in developing a mariachi program. This 1-week event prepares music educators to offer mariachi programs in their home districts or to enhance the programs that have already been established.

During the week, participants take “instrumental methods” mini-classes to learn how to play guitarrón and vihuela, the two characteristic instruments of the mariachi ensemble. Classes on guitar, violin, trumpet, and voice are made available to brush up on skills that may be out of practice. The highly successful CCSD mariachi educators serve as the instructors for these workshops and over the week, participants are introduced to mariachi methods books, musical arrangements, an assortment of classroom support materials, and successful strategies for teaching this genre of music. Maestro José Hernández, Grammy-nominated professional mariachi performing artist, teaches classes on the nuances of the various performance styles. Workshops are centered on helping teachers to develop their pedagogical skills and are offered at three levels—Beginning, Intermediate, and Advanced Pedagogy—to best accommodate the individual needs of the programs of those who are in attendance. Over the 10 years of providing this professional development resource, participants like those from SFUSD, MNPS, Barrow County, GA, and Denison, IA have continued to return year after year and describe in great detail how the mariachi programs they subsequently developed in their home districts evolved to encompass additional learning strategies.

### **Standards-based curricular materials**

Compared with the more traditional offerings, there are far fewer examples of standards-based mariachi curriculum to use as models and finding appropriate teaching materials can also be a challenge since there are a limited number of methods books and published arrangements. Recognized publishers have recognized the void and are now responding to the need. In addition to these materials, there exists a ready-to-serve network of mariachi educators who help each other when it comes to sharing resources.

### ***The effect of the mariachi program on traditional music programs***

Initially, there were concerns about how this program would impact the traditional music programs—that is, band, choir, orchestra and even guitar—but over time, it has been noted that the vast majority of those students who chose to enroll in mariachi programs were students who were not participating in the music education program prior to signing up for mariachi. Similar to the guitar movement, mariachi *adds* to the number of students involved in music-making. In other words, these are not students who were taken from other music courses. These are students who are new to music education and in most cases, new to the entire concept of school engagement. The students who choose to participate in mariachi are often the “invisible” students who long to be involved in something at school that speaks to them personally but have yet to discover that opportunity.

### ***“Maria’s” story: A vignette and personal story***

In the spring of 2003, I found myself in the front seat of a school bus riding from the Reno-Tahoe International Airport to the Nevada state capital of Carson City. It was Arts Advocacy Day in the legislature and as the Clark County School District’s (Las Vegas) coordinator of Secondary Fine Arts, it was my privilege to accompany 12 mariachi students and their director from Rancho High School to the Arts Advocacy Luncheon where they were scheduled to perform for Nevada’s arts advocates and members of the state legislature. We had all flown together from Las Vegas that morning and in that short, 1-hour flight, the majority of the students experienced their very first encounter with air travel. On the trip to Carson City, I was inspired by a young girl (we will call her “*Maria*”) who described her experiences with mariachi at her school. The CCSD had implemented the standards-based, in-school mariachi program that previous fall and she effervesced as she explained how her extended family was so happy that she was playing such a variety of traditional mariachi songs that they knew and how, on a personal level, this particular genre of music had become so rewarding for her to learn and perform.

As she spoke so passionately, the idea popped into my head that in addition to the ensemble’s performance, it would be wonderful if *Maria* could also impart her passion for her mariachi program to the arts advocates and legislators who would be in attendance at the luncheon. If they could just hear her speak with this same enthusiasm, then surely the performance will have served a dual purpose—not only to *perform* but also to *inform* and there is no better way to inform others about the benefits

of music education than to hear it directly from the students, especially in the way that I just knew that *Maria* could deliver.

I shared my idea with *Maria* and she grinned from ear to ear. She was thrilled to have been given the honor of providing remarks to this august body but she then asked, “What should I tell them?” Of course, I told her to simply speak from the heart—to just share with them what she had shared with me. With about 20 minutes left on our bus trip, *Maria* suddenly fell silent. Her hands came up on the seatback in front of her and her head dropped down onto the back of her hands. It was a bit disconcerting so I asked if she was feeling well and she glanced up and told me that she was getting scared and that she did not think that she could go through with it. I was stunned! Within a matter of just a few minutes, she had gone from sparkling to limp. Looking straight into her eyes, I reminded her that all she had to do was speak from her heart, hoping that this would help bolster her sudden change in disposition.

We arrived at the venue and the students scurried around the room tuning their instruments and setting up for the performance. The time was drawing near and I noticed that once *Maria* started warming up she “came back” as evidenced by the shy smile that came across her face when I gave her a thumbs up. The luncheon attendees starting filing in and before long, the program began. Rancho High School’s Mariachi de Oro was introduced and they got underway with their performance. Just before the final selection, *Maria* walked up to the microphone and I held my breath. She smiled and the room lit up as she began to speak in her soft-spoken, respectful manner. She thanked everyone for coming and expressed how much of an honor that it was for Mariachi de Oro to have been invited to perform.

Then it happened! The next words out of her mouth were completely unanticipated. She explained how much she loved playing mariachi music and that it had made a huge impact on her personally because “last year, I didn’t come to school very often and I had bad grades but this year, I haven’t missed one day and I have a 3.5 GPA.” The room erupted! In one sentence, she had said it all! What was the value of the mariachi program for this young Latina? It was changing her life and I was watching it unfold right in front of me as she spoke to our state’s decision makers.

After their final selection, the students received a standing ovation, then took their places at their assigned luncheon tables so that they could now enjoy a well-deserved, deliciously prepared meal while the program proceeded but at its conclusion, another surprising turn of events occurred. After the proper acknowledgments were delivered by the emcee, the legislators surrounded

the students' tables and began introducing themselves and telling the young musicians how inspired they were by the performance. We were astounded to say the least. Here were the arts advocates from Nevada's major arts organizations all in one room but Nevada's legislators chose to spend their time visiting with and getting to know our mariachi students.

The day ended with another performance at a reception hosted in the governor's mansion, then a quick trip back to the airport to fly back to Las Vegas, but not without a major shift in perception and understanding on everyone's part. The students' experiences were considerable—everything from flying on a plane for the first time to attending a formal luncheon to performing in the governor's mansion! Those who heard the performance learned about the potential significance of this “new” music program that celebrates the culture of our state's largest burgeoning demographic and imagined how this program might even serve as a lifeboat for many other of Nevada's other young Latinos.

Finally, *Maria* learned a great deal about herself. She actually could “stand and deliver” but even more than that, she discovered that it was the mariachi music itself that was her turning point—not only that it served as her opportunity to realize and be proud of her cultural heritage as well as her musical accomplishments but also to realize that she was a young lady with a bright and promising future. What an evolution!

Why share *Maria's* story? Like many of the readers of this article, I am the product of an upper middle class upbringing where opportunity abounded. Life was all about achievement and moving forward in a specific direction—graduating from high school, graduating from college, getting advanced degrees and striving to be a useful contributor in my chosen field. I never walked in shadows or had doubts about pursuing the “American” dream. For those of us who have come through the “conservatory model,” these more nontraditional music-making avenues are “foreign” to us. *Maria's* story serves as a wake-up call to the significant impact that can be generated on a whole segment of our student population through nontraditional music programs that can be the impetus to engage and serve large numbers of our bilingual and multilingual learners whose lives will be forever changed as their untapped talents are discovered, enhanced, reinforced, and celebrated.

I ran into *Maria* at a mariachi concert not so long ago and we revisited the events of that pivotal performance in Carson City back in 2003. She remembered it exactly as I had and we laughed about that bus ride from the airport to the luncheon and how so much had ensued since those early days of implementing the program. She is quick to credit all of

her successes to the fact that the CCSD's Mariachi Program “saved” her by giving her a purpose and a proud identity in her younger years when she was adrift in the hallways of her high school. She graduated with honors, is now married, and has a beautiful child and a considerable position with our local police department.

## Epilogue

In her article about the significance of mariachi music, Sylvia Clark (2005) reflects on why mariachi education continues to take such a foothold in the United States:

A dominant factor in traditional ceremonies, mariachi music emerged as the primary musical representation of Mexican nationalism in Mexico, a representation sustained and elaborated when Mexicans migrated to the United States. Incorporating mariachi training in the school curriculum ensures the continuing transmission of music that is vital to the identity of the Hispanic population. Music teachers can encourage children to explore the musical traditions of their own cultural heritage as well as those of other countries. Participation in meaningful musical performances can help students take pride in themselves and add a powerful dimension to their education. (p. 227)

In researching how mariachi programs can serve our bilingual and multilingual learners who have found themselves in a new and unfamiliar surrounding, the question that many music educators ask is whether mariachi classes are only for those who have immigrated from Latin countries. The majority of mariachi ensembles from across the United States are made up of students of all ethnic groups and this is the icing on the cake. Working collaboratively, all students benefit from each other's backgrounds and experiences. They discover that they all have similarities when it comes to the joy that they experience from music-making and yet when it really comes down to it, they are really not all that different from each other—they just come from a variety of backgrounds. It is pure joy to watch how through their common love of music-making, these students have found a way to communicate and to literally “make beautiful music together.”

Among other districts, the CCSD, SFUSD, MNPS, Barrow County Schools, and Dennison Public Schools have embraced this culturally rich program through appropriate policy shifts to accommodate the unique needs of this genre. In doing so, administrators, educators, parents, the community, and even the students themselves have discovered that the mariachi classroom also serves as a life-skills classroom for all of its participants, but for ELs it can also serve as a bridge to the future.

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