

## **Abstract**

Title of dissertation: AN ARTS HIGH SCHOOL EXPERIENCE AND ITS  
RELATIONSHIP TO COLLEGE READINESS

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The purpose of this study was to determine if a positive relationship exists between college readiness and a high school for the arts experience. This research focused on one arts high school in order to determine graduate perspectives on the overall importance of such an education and whether or not this style of learning was valuable preparation for college. This study used a mixed-method approach through the use of a quantitative survey with multiple rating items and qualitative open-ended questions and interviews. Influenced by the work of Daniel Pink, Elliot Eisner, Howard Gardner, and Eric Jensen concerning knowledge and skill transfer, and benefits of the arts, this study seeks to provide an understanding of graduates' ongoing perspectives on the value of an arts-rich education (Pink, 2005; Gardner, 2006; Jensen 2001). Of specific importance is how these experiences have influenced the formation of their well-being, education, and preparation for college. Is the arts high school experience a beneficial and realistic pathway to college preparedness? Ultimately, the study offers valuable suggestions moving forward as the individual school grows and data to guide in the development of other unique schools.

AN ARTS HIGH SCHOOL EXPERIENCE AND ITS  
RELATIONSHIP TO COLLEGE READINESS

by

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### *Dedication and Acknowledgements*

This document is dedicated to my family for their unwavering support and belief in me throughout this process.

To Mom and Dad for instilling in me the values and love that you have stood for all of your lives.

To Bailey and Bethany for support and love and putting up with a father always on the go and always tired.

To Suzy for being my closest friend, support and confidant  
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Congratulations on your first 5 years

Here is to your next 100 years.

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## Chapter One: Introduction

### Rationale for the Study

According to President Barack Obama, every child in America deserves a world-class education. Obama's 2020 goal, considered a national priority, is to raise the expectations for students and schools to ensure that every student graduates from high school well prepared for college and a career (US Department of Education, 2010). College and career readiness has become a key concern for the P-20 education community and the nation at large. Success in the 21st century workforce requires education and/or training beyond high school graduation. This post-secondary education can come in many forms: a four-year university, a community college, a technical or vocational school, or a formal apprenticeship. However, institutions of higher education and the business community have long expressed concerns about the inadequacy of a traditional high school education in preparing students for post-secondary education (Carnevale, et al., 2010; Alliance for Excellent Education, 2011). To successfully face rigorous higher-education coursework, career challenges, and a globally competitive workforce, U.S. schools must align classroom environments with real-world environments through the use of 21st century learning skills (Pink, 2005). The arts have the power to engage students and give them multiple modes of learning (*Why Arts Integration*, 2010). "We need to prepare kids for their future, not our past" (Pink, 2009). In his book "A Whole New Mind," Daniel Pink exclaims that routine work is disappearing from the U.S. economy, and any work that can be scripted or counted, for example, will not be in high demand (Pink, 2009). The arts incorporate functions of logic, symbolism, and linear and sequential thinking while more importantly stressing the

functions of intuition, spatial and nonverbal communication, concrete applications, and global problem solving (*Why Arts Integration*, 2010).

In the last several years, the startling results of a number of scientific studies have built a “mountain of evidence” that instruction in the arts is not only inherently worthy, but that it also helps young minds grow and thrive (Ceschini, 2010). This research has covered a wide range of topics from music’s role as a primary math and language skill to the fascinating way that music can promote the growth of neural connections in the brain (*Kennedy Center Alliance for Arts Education Network*, 2010). Arts education also provides a critical introduction to, and reinforcement of, such academic and personal skills as problem solving, concentration, responsibility, memory retention, self-discipline, appreciation and awareness of different cultures, and cooperation with others in order to achieve shared goals (Pink, 2005).

The findings, detailed in “*Learning, Arts, and the Brain*”: *The Dana Consortium Report on Arts and Cognition* (2008), show that young people interested in “doing” art—studying and performing music, dance, and drama—may also demonstrate increased motivation to learn in other subject areas, which leads to improved cognition (Sloan, 2009). Recent developments in cognitive science and neuroscience help explain the power of the arts as enhancing teaching and learning in numerous ways. Physical sensation and emotion are essential components of the mind, as integral to thought and learning as logic. In fact, some researchers note that logic may not be possible without sensation and emotion (Gullatt, 2008). In all forms, the arts stimulate the brain. They ignite creativity and provide students with opportunities to critically interpret the world around them (Appel, 2006).

Assuming there is a possible correlation between academic achievement and the study of the arts, this research focuses on college readiness issues and how they are perceived by graduates of an arts-embedded magnet culture. Is an arts education living up to their collective expectations? How do they see the role of the school at this time? Is the arts experience enough to propel the students into success after high school? What kind of future does the school prepare them for? Is it only for college and careers around the arts or are the experiences preparing for many other options? Through the use of surveys, questionnaires, interviews, and collected data, the researcher explored the perceptions of students attending an arts high school. This study was based around the Barbara Ingram School for the Arts High School in Western Maryland as seen through the eyes of the graduates in regards to college preparedness.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Despite a long history of success in schools, the arts have often taken a backseat in educational curricula. Never has this been more the case than in the current era of high-stakes testing and accountability (Berliner 2009). In a period when scores on standardized tests are at the forefront of every educator's mind, certain subjects are being emphasized to the exclusion and detriment of others (Center on Educational Policy 2008). According to most teachers, schools are narrowing curriculum, shifting instructional time, and diverting resources away from subjects such as art, music, foreign language, and social studies toward math and language arts (Common Core, 2011). The loss of the arts in the current testing environment could be problematic because art provides an alternative means to view reality and expands the way students perceive the world (American Arts Alliance 2006; Berliner 2009). This narrowing condition is created

because the human capital narrative has defined the primary purpose of education as economic well-being and growth (Rosen 1977).

Ironically, English language arts, math, and science are not the only subjects that really matter for economic growth. As Steve Jobs's commencement address at Stanford University suggests, the relationships between education and economic growth are not linear, and economic success in the future will likely depend on the interaction of creative, entrepreneurial thinking with mathematic and scientific intellect and literary prowess. The benefits of creative initiative may not be as clear and measureable as core subject test scores, but we should not underestimate the value of arts education for our youth (Heilig, Cole, & Aguilar, 2010). In this *curriculum-narrowing* condition, teachers exclude from their lesson plans the material that is not tested in an attempt to maximize the learning opportunity for students on the content of the test. This change is seen as a nearly unavoidable reaction to the pressure on teachers from district and state educational leaders to raise test scores (Gunzenhauser, 2003; Hess and Brigham, 2000). And yet, researchers have found correlations between instruction of subjects such as the arts and high levels of achievement in reading and mathematics (Fiske, 1999; Meyer, 2005; Paige and Huckabee, 2005; Rabkin and Redmond, 2005). With the current climate of education and the format of an arts school, there is little research on the perceptions of students at art-focused high schools regarding their preparedness for college.

### **Purpose and Research Questions**

The purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions and views of graduates on the impact of the Barbara Ingram School of the Arts on college preparedness. Influenced by the work of Daniel Pink, Elliot Eisner, Howard Gardner and Eric Jensen

concerning knowledge and skill transfer, and benefits of the arts, this study sought to provide an understanding of graduates' ongoing perspectives of an arts-rich education (Pink, 2005; Gardner, 2006; Jensen 2001). Of specific interest is how these experiences have influenced the formation of their perceived well-being, education, and preparation for college.

### **Research Questions**

- What are the graduates' perceptions of the Barbara Ingram School for the Arts and its ability to prepare students for college?
- What are the perceived strengths and weaknesses of the Barbara Ingram School for the Arts experience and culture in preparing students for post-secondary enrichment in the 21st century?

### **Methodology**

This study used a mixed-methods design to expand the breadth and depth of understanding regarding the data. The researcher utilized publicly accessible student data to describe college readiness: AP test results, college attendance, and SAT data. The survey results were examined for trends and then expanded to encompass specific interviews to further define the data. The researcher used an exploratory sequential qual-quant method to use qualitative findings to help interpret and contextualize quantitative results.

The researcher started by surveying graduates regarding the purpose, impact, problems, need, influence, and importance of the school. The researcher studied graduates' perceptions of how this arts magnet school impacted their attitude toward education and desire to go on to postsecondary school. From the initial survey, a smaller

group was selected to do in-depth interviews based on the responses. Interviews and open-ended survey questions were utilized to garner insight into causal relationships.

### **Significance**

In the book *Arts with the Brain in Mind*, Jensen proclaims, “Learning in the arts is comprehensive in the true sense of the word. An arts-rich learning environment can have far-reaching effects that extend to the entire school and surrounding community.” The arts provide learners with the opportunity to develop specialized brain systems, none of which are easy to quantify because they are the processes that allow for later results (Jensen, 2001). Publications from such organizations as the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, the Alliance for Arts Education, and the American Association of School Administrators, as well as collections of works by Elliot Eisner, Howard Gardner, William Morris, Charles Fowler and Daniel Pink (*Kennedy Center Alliance for Arts Education Network*, 2010; American Arts Alliance, 2006) strongly support arts education as a vital part of public school education. By example, the publication *Performing Together: The Arts and Education* stresses the arts as a basic means of communication, a means to develop creative thinking and creative problem-solving, a means to develop insight and understanding, and a means to develop self-discipline.

### **Assumptions and Limitations**

The researcher assumed that the graduates would complete the survey honestly and promptly. For purposes of this research, the survey and questionnaire were given to graduates of the Barbara Ingram School for the Arts public high school located in Hagerstown, Maryland. As a result, this research emphasizes that the findings of the survey should not be generalized or made applicable to all graduates of arts high schools.

The researcher also understands that the graduates' perceptions of the role and function of the high school may fluctuate and may differ between school districts. Finally, the researcher was known to many of the graduates, a fact which may have caused some bias in their responses.

### **Definition of Terms**

For the purpose of this research, some definitions need to be further clarified. They are defined here.

**College Readiness.** The term "college readiness" refers to the knowledge and skills high school graduates must possess in order to be successful in their college paths after high school.

**Arts Integration.** Arts integration is a methodology and a philosophical approach to education that creates a level of personal connection and added depth in the classroom through a creative, inquiry-based process of teaching and learning. The teacher teaches both the arts objective and the curriculum objective side by side, enabling students to make connections to the world beyond the classroom.

**Student Achievement.** Student achievement will be defined through studies, reports, teacher responses and scholarships.

**Likert Scale Survey.** A Likert scale is a psychometric scale involved in research that employs questionnaires. Likert distinguished between a scale proper, which emerges from collective responses to a set of items (usually eight or more), and the format in which responses are scored along a range. When responding to a Likert questionnaire item, respondents specify their level of agreement or disagreement on a symmetric agree-

disagree scale for a series of statements. Thus, the range captures the intensity of their feelings for a given item, while the analysis of multiple items reveals a pattern.

**Advanced Placement Tests.** The Advanced Placement program (AP) is a system created by the College Board offering college-level curriculum and examinations to high school students. Colleges often grant placement and credit to students who obtain high scores on the examinations. The AP curriculum for the various subjects is created for the College Board by a panel of experts and college-level educators in each subject. For a high school course to have the AP designation, the course must be audited by the College Board to ascertain it satisfies the AP curriculum. If the course is approved, the school may use the AP designation and the course will be publicly listed on the AP Ledger.

**SAT Tests.** The SAT is a standardized test for college admissions in the United States. The SAT is owned, published, and developed by the College Board, a not-for-profit organization in the United States. It was formerly developed, published, and scored by the Educational Testing Service, which still administers the exam. The test is intended to assess a student's readiness for college. It was first introduced in 1926, and its name and scoring have changed several times. It was first called the Scholastic Aptitude Test, then the Scholastic Assessment Test, but now SAT does not stand for anything, hence it is an empty acronym.

**High School Assessment Tests.** The Maryland High School Assessments (HSAs) consist of three tests—one each in algebra/data analysis, biology and English—that students who entered grade 9 in 2005 must pass to graduate. Passing the HSAs is just one of Maryland's graduation requirements.

## Chapter Two: Literature Review

### Introduction

Success in the 21st century workforce requires education and/or training beyond high school graduation; as a result, college and career readiness has become a key priority for the PK-20 education community and the nation at large (Carnevale, et al., 2010; Alliance for Excellent Education, 2011). This increased focus on college and career readiness, combined with the complexity of the challenges associated with the topic, have led to a rapidly expanding college and career readiness community (National High School Center, 2012). However, while all states have developed and implemented standards as required under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), these standards often fail to reflect the knowledge and skills needed for success after high school, either in further education or in a job. Daniel Pink, author of *A Whole New Mind*, predicts that creative, right-brained people will be in great demand in the 21st century workforce. Pink explains that business is about novelty, nuance, and customization, while education traditionally has been about routines, right answers, and standardization (Pink, 2009). Moving ahead in this new environment of education, it is more important than ever to properly prepare our students for a world unlike we have ever seen and to give them the tools to be successful in work, college, and life. In short, “We need to prepare kids for their future, not our past” (Pink, 2009).

### College Readiness

What constitutes a good definition of “college readiness,” and how is that to be measured? Traditionally, educational researchers have considered variables such as academic background, extracurricular leadership opportunities, persistence through the

educational experience, and a degree of maturity. To assist educational leaders in helping students achieve college readiness, it is important to identify variables available at the high school level to predict academic success and persistence in higher education.

Admission criteria established by universities use a combination of high school grade point average: SAT scores, ACT scores, coursework, extracurricular activities, and personal qualities (Dawood, 2009). Unfortunately, increasing numbers of students enter college lacking the prerequisite academic skills to be successful in postsecondary education (Hall and Ponton, 2005).

Many researchers have argued that a substantial difference exists between college eligibility and college readiness. College eligibility implies that students have met minimum requirements for admission, whereas college readiness indicates that students are adequately prepared to be successful in college coursework (Barnes & Slate, 2011; Barnes et al, 2010; Cline et al, 2007; Conley, 2007, 2008a, 2008b; Merisotis & Phipps, 2000; Spence, 2009). Barnes, Slate, and Rojas-LeBouef in 2010 argue that college readiness as defined by scores on standardized tests is a very limiting definition. They contend that college readiness as defined by test scores such as the ACT or SAT only indicated academic preparedness, not college readiness. They described college readiness as not only academic preparedness but also study skills, emotional maturity, and knowledge of educational finance, among other variables (Barnes et al., 2010). Conley (2008a, 2008b) speculated that far fewer students were adequately prepared for college when a multidimensional model for college readiness was applied. Conley theorized that college readiness is comprised of four key elements: cognitive reasoning strategies, academic knowledge and skills, academic behavior, and contextual skills.

Additionally, Conley indicated that college-ready students were able to formulate and solve problems, conduct research, interpret information, and demonstrate the contextual knowledge and skills required to navigate the college admissions process (Conley, 2008a, 2008b). Byrd and MacDonald (2005) conducted a qualitative study of non-traditional, first-generation college students to examine the concept of college readiness. Eight participants were selected who had previously earned associate degrees from community colleges. These participants were classified as juniors or seniors in a liberal arts program, and were older than 25. To identify essential skills for college readiness, Byrd and MacDonald utilized structured interviews; the results of their qualitative study paralleled the findings from Conley (2008b) (Byrd and MacDonald, 2005). All participants acknowledged the importance of prerequisite academic skills, but they also identified several self-regulating behaviors that were necessary for success in college. The nontraditional students identified time management, goal setting, and self-advocacy as critical attributes for success at the post-secondary level. Six out of the eight participants reported that they did not have the necessary skills for success immediately upon graduation from high school (Byrd and MacDonald, 2005). Reid and Moore (2008) conducted a qualitative study of thirteen first-generation college students to examine student perceived strengths and weaknesses of their preparation for college. During high school, all of the students had at least a 2.5 grade point average, and several had a 3.5 or higher. Written biographical questionnaires were utilized and semi-structured interviews conducted to collect data. All participants emphasized the importance of taking rigorous high school coursework. Eight of the thirteen participants reported taking at least one Advanced Placement (AP) course in high school and all of those felt that it was beneficial.

Three of the students who did not participate in AP courses reported that they would advise incoming high school freshmen to enroll in AP courses. Although all of the students had performed well in high school, many of the students reported deficits in study skills and in time management relative to college standards (Reid and Moore, 2008).

Reid and Moore's study of the transition of good high school students to college revealed that these students experienced many of the same challenges as nontraditional, first-generation college students studied by Byrd and MacDonald (2005). In both studies, students demonstrated the need to take more rigorous coursework in high school, develop study skills, and learn strategies for time management (Koch, Slate, & Moore, 2012). Our ever-changing global economy requires adaptability and a commitment to lifelong learning, along with mastery of key knowledge and skills that vary from one path to another and change over time as a person progresses along a developmental continuum (The Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills, 2011).

In line with arts instruction, these skills include the following: (a) goal setting and planning, (b) managing transitions from school to work and from one occupation along a career pathway to another, (c) clear and effective communication skills, (d) critical thinking and problem solving, (e) working productively in teams and independently, (f) effective use of technology, and (g) ethical decision-making and social responsibility (Fadel & Trilling, 2009). According to Pink, the future belongs to those individuals who possess the conceptual skills to be successful in an increasingly conceptual age. Pink's beliefs arise from the assertion that a definitive shift is taking place in the advanced world, one from a logical, technical age to a conceptual age, which places a premium on knowledge. Pink's senses include design to change the world in significant ways, story or

narrative imagining focused on understanding, sympathy and synthesis, empathy, play, and the pursuit of meaning (Pink, 2005).

The arts claim such skills, but have long struggled to find an appropriate role in the school curriculum. Arts educators argue that an arts curriculum is a rigorous curriculum, but more data are needed that measure the relationship of an arts-focused curriculum and college readiness (Dawood, 2009). Arts education in the United States public education system has expanded and faded as a succession of reforms have shaped K-12 curriculum. To understand the potential impact of the arts on college readiness, one needs to uncover how the educational priorities have shifted and how the relationship of the arts to education has developed.

### **Historical Background**

The American public school has changed historically according to the upheavals in the society (Heilig, Cole, & Aguilar, 2010). For most of civilization's history, life centered on a slow-changing agricultural society, where few ventured beyond their immediate community and even fewer moved beyond their social class. Any *higher* education was reserved for the elite to prepare them for the only institutions where literacy much mattered at the time, which were service in religious vocations or state bureaucracies (The Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2011). Initially introduced as practical training for industrial employment, the arts entered the classroom in the last quarter of the 19th century through technical drawing and drafting (Heilig, Cole, & Aguilar, 2010). Some believe the arts are fundamental to education; others see them as important, but less than basic; still others see them as expendable. To gain perspective on

the history of arts education, it is necessary to review some of the pressures and criticisms developing from the political crisis and national priorities that have influenced education.

In the early years of the American education system, the majority of schooling was accomplished by teaching the basics of reading, writing, arithmetic, and religion to some children while many others either helped their parents make a living or went into apprenticeship with a local tradesman (Collins, 2004). The Boston Latin Grammar School made its debut in 1635. This first attempt at some form of secondary education was very exclusive, only allowing boys preparing for college—especially in law or the ministry—to attend (Collins, 2004).

After the American Revolution, the vast majority of Americans were educated just enough to read the newspaper, the bible, and to figure out their taxes (Mondale, Patton, 2001). Thomas Jefferson argued that the newly independent nation needed an educational system funded by tax dollars. His appeals were ignored, and it wasn't until the mid-19th century when the common school funded by local property taxes was born (Thattai, 2001). With the Industrial Revolution and the beginning of mass urbanization, large cities began to construct high schools (OVAE, 2007).

By 1821, the foundation for an established education system was well under way. Free, publicly-supported schools were introduced in many communities; in 1824, the first true publicly-supported high school was formed in the United States. As the number of high schools increased, so did the quality of the education. Classes such as algebra, American history, bookkeeping, geometry, and surveying were added to the curriculum, and larger towns were even required to add Latin, Greek, general history, rhetoric, and logic (Collins, 2004). The main objective went from preparing students for college to

also preparing them for life and non-academic jobs. Electives were made available, and student choice was encouraged, as long as they chose from a basic curriculum of Latin-scientific, modern language, and English courses. High school diplomas suddenly became tickets into good colleges, and students began to see the real value of higher education and how it could impact their lives (Mondale, Patton, 2001).

### **Committee of Ten and College Prep**

With these different varieties of curricula, the presidents of the nation's most prestigious colleges, the Committee of Ten, mapped a core of academic subjects that they considered necessary to prepare for college and for those not intending to go on to further education or training (OVAE, 2007). Five subjects—English, mathematics, history, science, and foreign language—became prerequisites for college entrance, and the College Board was formed to administer the common college entrance tests which continue to exert so much influence on the high school curriculum (Mondale, Patton, 2001).

During the 20th century, the implementation of reform efforts on school excellence, equity, and choice produced findings on the positive effects of arts education. Unfortunately, the results were often overlooked as national attention focused on more politically pressing issues (Dawood, 2009). Schools were called upon to teach the skills needed in a democratic, industrial society with a growing and diverse population. As the economy grew, a new middle class emerged that sought access to aesthetic elements of culture. Students stayed in school longer, and the arts were no longer seen as simply the purview of the wealthy upper class. These changes in the social structure brought with them a different attitude toward teaching the arts (Heilig, Cole, & Aguilar, 2010). The

post-industrialization era ushered in leisure time, once only a luxury for the rich, for an emerging middle class, and the arts as cultural enrichment became a curriculum goal in schools (Sauders 1971). This attitude change in education toward the arts in the curriculum underlies an expansion within the educational system that has developed for well over a hundred years (Heilig, Cole, & Aguilar, 2010).

Between 1892 and 1924, immigrants flocked to America's shores in one of history's greatest population shifts. As the population rapidly expanded, the country's school systems were under intense pressure to develop efficient ways of managing the needs of these new citizens, educational demands that often went beyond the usual academic mission. Elwood P. Cubberly, an influential educator, called for schools to be "factories in which the new materials (children) are to be shaped and fashioned into products to meet the various demands of life" (The Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2011).

### **The Progressive Approach**

At the turn of the century, John Dewey was beginning his research at the University of Chicago, experimenting with a new approach to education that would become known as "progressive" education (Goldblatt 2006). Dewey theorized that children need education that is authentic and that allows them to grow mentally, physically, and socially by providing opportunities to be creative, critical thinkers. Dewey believed that the arts education experience was critical to that premise (Goldblatt 2006). Dewey, unlike Cubberly, believed the aim of 20th century education was not the production of a labor force, but the enrichment of the individual and society, as well as the development of "social power and insight" (Goldblatt 2006). It was during the

progressive era that student-centered, studio-based learning was first integrated into U.S. high schools (Heilig, Cole, & Aguilar, 2010).

### **Late 1920's**

At the end of the 1920s, educators believed that the arts had been firmly rooted in the curriculum (Efland, 1983). Large numbers of local school districts funded arts teaching. The period from the turn of the 20th century to the 1930s was dominated by a more encompassing and less restrictive approach to the arts (Smith, 1996). This approach to the arts in the curriculum marked the first time that arts education concepts were advocated for their contributions to other subject areas. This symbiotic relationship would continue to inform discussions into the future (Berliner, 2009). However, the Great Depression changed everything, and during this period, thousands of schools closed and teacher pay was cut. To address needs while simultaneously lowering costs, many districts cut their arts programs (Efland, 1983). The war years were no different. When funds were short, supplies were even more limited, and the arts were not designated a priority for students (Heilig, Cole, & Aguilar, 2010).

### **Back to “No Frills”**

While post-war advances brought material comfort to the masses, Americans experienced a new vulnerability in science and technology as a result of the Cold War and the Sputnik crisis. The balance of education leaned once again toward a “no-frills” curriculum to prepare children for life in an unstable and contentious world (The Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2011). The public response to the Soviet technology was outrage, and the schools became a scapegoat for the nations wounded pride.

The Cold War prompted the National Defense Education Act (NDEA) in response to the Soviet launch of Sputnik. To help ensure that highly trained individuals would be available to help America compete with the Soviet Union in scientific and technical fields, the NDEA included support for loans to college students; the improvement of science, mathematics, and foreign language instruction in elementary and secondary schools; graduate fellowships; foreign language and area studies; and vocational-technical training. Again, many arts classes were cut or diminished to make room for the expanded initiatives (US EDUCATION, n.d.). Soon after, possibly not an accident, the drop-out problem became a nationwide concern and in 1965, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act launched a comprehensive set of programs aimed at disadvantaged children to address the problems of poor urban and rural areas. In that same year, the Higher Education Act authorized assistance for postsecondary education, including financial aid programs for needy college students (US EDUCATION, n.d.).

### **Whole Child to Nation at Risk**

The U.S. economy soared again in the late '60s and early '70s, and educational aims moved from issues of political and economic survival to issues of access and equity. Music and art classes began to find their way back into the curriculum (The Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2011). However, in the late 20th century, the College Board expressed concern regarding a decline of SAT scores and the low achievement of students became a national issue once again (US EDUCATION, n.d.).

In 1983, the report entitled *A Nation at Risk* marked the first time a government-sponsored report prompted serious national discussion and action to implement higher academic standards for all students. The National Commission on Excellence in

Education expressed alarm that the rise of global trade, the position of the United States as the leading world power, and the dawn of the information age were not being accompanied by corresponding changes in the schools (OVAE, 2007).

### **Preparing for the 21st Century**

In the 1990s, as a result of the advent of the personal computer and the Internet, virtually every sector of the world economy experienced both profound dislocations and unprecedented opportunities. The rise of capitalism in China dramatically altered the global workforce while creating new markets and new trade partners. When these new labor sources were combined with high-speed communications technologies, many kinds of work could suddenly be performed round the clock, offsite, or in low wage areas. In response, the U.S. Secretary of Labor convened a blue-ribbon commission of experts and charged it with two tasks: 1) to determine the workplace skills that would be needed in the coming 21st century, and 2) to evaluate how well American schools were equipping students with these skills (The Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2011).

The Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS) found that "Despite sincere, well-intentioned efforts to respond, the schools—lacking clear and consistent guidance—continue with the system and methodologies they inherited from a system designed nearly 100 years ago for the needs of business organizations that are now quite different" (The Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills, June 1991). The industrial model of schooling, a model of progress a century earlier, had now outlived its usefulness (Fadel & Trilling, 2009).

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (*Archived: Fact Sheet on No Child Left Behind*, 2003) reshaped public education in the United States "based upon four basic

principles: stronger accountability for results, increased flexibility and local control, expanded options for parents, and an emphasis on methods that have been proven to work” (*Archived: Fact Sheet on No Child Left Behind*, 2003). Initially included in NCLB, arts-designated funds were cut in 2003 in order to fund higher priorities. Under the NCLB guidelines, arts magnet schools were instructed to prioritize improvements in science, mathematics and reading (Dawood, 2009).

### **21st Century Skills**

As the balance tips once again, schools are tasked with preparing students for 21st century life. To do this, schools will need to build on educational goals that have long been a part of our heritage. At the same time, schools need to reinvigorate in light of new opportunities in the world and new understandings of how people learn. While today’s schools show the influence of industrial and information age models, the 21st century modern school must bring together rigorous content and real-world relevance. It must focus on cognitive skills as well as those in affective and aesthetic domains (The Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2011).

### **Arts Schools**

One exciting educational initiative, which has enabled advocates to utilize and showcase the strengths of the arts has been the advent of the magnet school. The magnet concept represents an opportunity for public schools to offer choice to parents through an arts-magnet curriculum (Dawood, 2009). The High School for the Performing and Visual Arts (HSPVA) opened in 1971 in Houston. HSPVA represented the first attempt by any public school in the nation to connect a focused education in the arts with a traditional academic high school curriculum. The magnet term was used to denote attracting

students, and HSPVA has served as the model for magnet schools in the United States (High School for the Performing and Visual Arts, 2013).

However, competition for college acceptance and the importance of test scores in math and science have been embellished to the point that many students preparing for college fear their preparation might be threatened by giving time to the arts (Dawood, 2009).

### **The Eight Year Study on the Relationship of High School to College**

The first significant and comprehensive investigation of the college preparatory relationship between secondary school and college was the “Eight-Year Study” conducted between 1930 and 1942 (Aiken, 1942). The purpose of the study was to experiment with secondary school curriculum to address high school effectiveness. The Commission on the Relation of School and College, established by the Progressive Education Association, selected approximately 30 schools (1,475 students) that had revised their secondary curriculum and carefully matched them to students at conventional schools (Aiken, 1942). Over 250 colleges agreed to suspend their admission requirements for graduates of the participating high schools. In general, the Eight-Year Study proved that many different forms of secondary curricular design can ensure college success. In fact, students from the most experimental, nonstandard schools earned markedly higher academic achievement rates than their traditional school counterparts (Aiken, 1942).

### **Studies of Arts Education and College Outcomes**

Whitener built on the Eight-Year Study to research the concept of the traditional arts programs ability to prepare students for college (Whitener, 1974). His dissertation

was an important early effort to find a difference in the college experience for students of arts education in high school. The principal finding of Whitener's study was that there was no significant difference in cumulative grade-point average at the end of the freshman year between students who followed a traditional high school college preparatory program and students who included art and music in their college preparatory courses. Between the arts group and the non-arts group, an analysis of covariance found no significant difference in gender or socio-economic classification (Whitener, 1974).

In 1999, Seaman investigated a similar hypothesis regarding time in the arts with a focus on standardized test scores (Seaman, 1999). Seaman, however, did not begin with the hypothesis that the arts would enhance test scores, but with the opposite hypothesis—that the arts might lower test scores because students in arts-rich schools would spend less time on academic subjects (Seaman, 1999). He conducted interviews of principals, arts and classroom teachers, and students; in-depth observations; and analysis of standardized test scores comparing changes in scores of arts schools versus matched schools not involved in the arts program. Seaman found the increased time spent on the arts did not lead to lower test scores, suggesting that there is no negative impact on academic achievement in other subjects as a consequence of an arts focus (Seaman, 1999).

### **Overall Benefits**

In the past several years, a substantial body of research has developed supporting the claims that arts education not only does not weaken scores, but instead leads to higher academic outcomes and less reckless activity. Eccles and Barber (1999) find that participation in performing arts in high school increases GPA, the likelihood of staying in college until 21, and the likelihood of enjoying high school as a sophomore and senior.

The results on participation in performing arts in high school are similar to Eccles's and Barber's findings on athletic participation, except they find no significant evidence that athletic participation increases high school GPA. Participation in the arts has been shown to reduce male involvement in sexual activity in high school—and thus, fatherhood—as well as lowering the likelihood of skipping school or drinking alcohol compared to that of students not participating in the performing arts (Eccles and Barber, 1999).

The Arts Education Partnership (AEP) has been instrumental in compiling research studies related to academic outcomes. Its initial research synthesis, *Champions of Change* (Fiske, 1999), reported seven correlative studies that show the pattern between high levels of arts participation and higher grades and test scores in math and reading (President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities, 2011). In 2000, *The Journal of Aesthetic Education* devoted a special issue to the arts and academic research. Edited by Winner and Hetland (2000), the issue presents the results from research directed by the editors within Harvard Project Zero to meta-analyze previous studies for a causal link between participation in the arts and cognitive outcomes (Henry, 2011).

### **The SAT and Arts Learning**

The relationship between arts learning and the SAT is of considerable interest to anyone concerned with college readiness and admissions issues because many public colleges and universities use SAT scores in admissions (Deasy, 2002). Multiple independent studies have shown increased years of enrollment in arts courses are positively correlated with higher SAT verbal and math scores. High school students who take arts classes have higher math and verbal SAT scores than students who take no arts classes (Dawood, 2009). Vaughn and Winner (2000) analyzed 12 years (1987-1999) of

actual mean score SAT data for a relationship between arts courses and SAT scores as recorded by the College Board. They found students participating in any arts class have higher SAT scores than their peers who do not participate. However, their research also suggests that there is a stronger relationship between taking other academic courses (e.g., math, science, English, and history) and SAT scores than with courses in the arts, and that specializing in these subjects—i.e., taking 4+ years in one particular area of the academic core—results in higher SAT scores than the same number of years in the arts (Vaughn and Winner, 2000).

One suggestion why this correlation exists is that high achievers may believe that courses outside academics, like the arts, enhance their desirability for college admissions review panels. Students who study the arts may attend schools that are strong in both arts and academics. In analyzing College Board data, Eisner uncovered the fallacy of assuming a link exists between arts study and SAT scores. His analysis suggested that high achievers focus and take more non-required courses in a particular area. As a result, there is an implied association between the number of non-required courses taken and SAT scores (Eisner, 1998).

### **Critical Links**

AEP followed up its original compilation, *Champions of Change*, with *Critical Links: Learning in the Arts and Student Academic and Social Development* (Deasy, 2002). In this report of 62 separate studies and meta-analyses, many detailed the transfer of skills from the arts (visual arts, dance, drama, music, multi-arts) to learning in other subject areas (President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities, 2011). The American Educational Research Association considers it to be a benchmark for research

in arts education. Cognitive benefits from arts instruction presented in *Critical Links* include focused perception; elaboration; problem solving; and elements of critical thinking including fluency, originality, and abstractness of thought (Arts Education Partnership, 2004).

Probably one of the most quoted authors from the *Critical Links* publication is James Catterall. Catterall's research is unique in its longitudinal design and its basis in theory related to the arts and human development. It provides solid findings establishing a relationship between arts education and student achievement. Catterall, (1998) finds that 8th and 10th grade students who participate in more arts courses earn better grades, perform better on standardized tests, perform more hours of community service, watch fewer hours of television, and are less bored at school (Deasy, 2002). Using the National Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS:88), Catterall conducted an analysis of 25,000 students, a sample population representative of the nation's population of secondary students. The study was composed of initial survey data gathered from the students in eighth grade and was later supplemented by a second evaluation in tenth grade. The survey inquired as to student participation in the arts, including enrollment in arts-related classes as well as involvement and leadership in school activities such as band, theater, orchestra, chorus, dance, and the visual arts. The analysis found "substantial and significant differences in achievement and in important attitudes and behaviors" between young people highly involved and those with little or no arts engagement (Catterall, 1998; Dawood, 2009).

When the sample of 25,000 observations was cut down to the 6,500 from the lowest socioeconomic status (SES) quartile, the results stayed the same in relation to the

number of arts courses taken (Deasy, 2002). Within this same population, Catterall also concluded that the differences in academic achievement for high-arts versus low-arts students were greater in the 10th grade than the 8th grade, showing the importance of growth in the arts over time (Catterall, 1998). However, the study, correlational in nature, was limited to pre-existing data, and the author did not have the opportunity to probe deeper into the variables of interest to gather deeper information about arts participation (Catterall, 1998).

In Catterall, Chapleau, et al. (1999), the 1998 research is extended to include high school seniors from the NELS dataset and focused on continued participation in two specific disciplines: instrumental music and theater. The findings indicate that students who participated in an instrumental music program since 8th grade performed at a higher level on math exams than individuals who did not participate to the same degree (Deasy, 2002). The results are even more distinctive for low SES students. Findings demonstrate that students who were highly involved in theater performed better on reading assessments than students who were not, regardless of SES orientation (Deasy, 2002). Even more striking, Catterall et al. (1999) found that low SES students who had participated in theater since 8th grade showed higher levels of empathy and tolerance, as measured by questions about racism, than those who did not participate in theater (Deasy, 2002; Catterall, Chapleau, et al. 1999).

As intended by the researchers, the study is limited to non-arts outcomes related to engagement in the arts. However, another hypothesis that could not be ruled out is that the more arts-involved students attended more effective schools (Deasy, 2002; Catterall, 1999). Ten years later in 2009, James Catterall was able to follow the original cohort of

NELS students into their mid-twenties and found the persistence of strong connections between arts learning in earlier years and overall academic success (“doing well”) and pro-social outcomes (“doing good”) to answer the question “*Do the Arts Matter, Just How, and for Whom?*” (Catterall, 2009).

His findings mostly echo the results from his previous work that arts education leads to positive academic and social benefits for the population as a whole. Catterall’s research continues to suggest that the role of the arts in developing competency may be especially important for students who otherwise feel isolated or excluded, such as English language learners (President’s Committee on the Arts and the Humanities, 2011). The Catterall 2009 study provides important empirical evidence of the significant role that the arts play in preparing young people for success in school and in life (Catterall, 2009). Specifically, Catterall finds strong connections between arts involvement and an increase in college attendance and completion by age 26, full-time employment, voluntarism, voting registration and participation, participation in organized religion, and library use. The results also revealed a reduction in dependence on public assistance (President’s Committee on the Arts and the Humanities, 2011).

In addition to exploring the benefits of arts education as in previous studies, Catterall (2009) extends his research by exploring the outcomes of passionately involved arts and athletics participants. He finds that students in both programs benefit from the higher exposure to their activities, especially in terms of volunteering, academic, and occupation attainment, yet several outcomes are slightly different. More involvement in the arts correlates to more religious participation as well as increased library, concert, and play attendance. As expected, higher levels of sports involvement in high school leads to

more sports involvement as an adult. Catterall (2009) also compares the academic results of arts participants and non-participants alike in arts-rich schools to students in arts-poor schools. By Catterall's definition, an art-rich environment features a focus on the arts, practicing professional artists as teachers, students engaged in the practice of art, and students practicing a range of arts disciplines both individually and in groups (Catterall, 2009). Catterall's analysis suggests that students in arts-rich schools realize more academic success and have a better academic experience than students from arts-poor schools. The results imply that there are positive outcomes associated with an arts-rich curriculum that spills-over into non-participant's outcomes (Catterall, 2009). The main limitations of the 2009 study are the constraints contained in the NELS:88 database. For example, when seeking indicators of an individual's "doing well," the NELS does not effectively address a number of clarifying factors including quality of family life, quality of friendships and social relations, and general satisfaction indicators (Henry, 2011).

The work of Catterall (1998, 2009) and Catterall et al. (1999) presents the strongest support for arts education because of its duration and use of controls for selection bias. However, because of its correlational design with controls for selection into the arts, Catterall's work only provides moderate support for arts education according to the U.S. Department of Education (President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities, 2011). Although Catterall acknowledges the issue of bias due to self-selection in his results, he contends that there are "no ready ways....to separate selection effects from the effects of actual participation" (Catterall, 2009). Instead, Catterall argues that selection into preferred activities is a good thing and that providing these programs for the students who want to be in these activities allows them to achieve higher outcomes (President's

Committee on the Arts and the Humanities, 2011).

### **Brain Research**

In just the last eight years, researchers have begun to tackle the question of arts education's benefits with a scientific approach. The field of neuroscience in particular is beginning to unpack the complex ways that certain types of arts experiences affect cognitive development. This research that will not only have major implications for the field of education, but it will help maximize the benefits of the arts experience for students (President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities, 2011).

In 2004, the Dana Foundation began exploring the connection between training in the arts and the way that the brain transferred the benefits of arts training to other cognitive abilities. Dana established the Arts and Cognition Consortium—made up of nine investigators at seven major universities—to make largely anecdotal and correlative observations as to the potential role of the arts in enhancing a child's overall cognitive ability, as well as to subject said abilities to rigorously designed neuroscientific studies (The Dana Foundation, 2009). The researchers studied the brain's response to early training in dance, drama, and music, and in 2008, the consortium published its results summarizing eight key highlights of the findings:

- An interest in a performing art leads to a high state of motivation that produces the sustained attention necessary to improve performance and the training of attention that leads to improvement in other domains of cognition.
- Genetic studies have begun to yield candidate genes that may help explain individual differences in interest in the arts.
- Specific links exist between high levels of music training and the ability to

manipulate information in both working and long- term memory; these links extend beyond the domain of music training.

- In children, there appear to be specific links between the practice of music and skills in geometrical representation, though not in other forms of numerical representation.
- Correlations exist between music training and both reading acquisition and sequence learning. One of the central predictors of early literacy, phonological awareness, is correlated with both music training and the development of a specific brain pathway.
- Training in acting appears to lead to memory improvement through the learning of general skills for manipulating semantic information.
- Adult self-reported interest in aesthetics is related to an erratic factor of openness, which in turn is influenced by dopamine-related genes.
- Learning to dance by effective observation is closely related to learning by physical practice, both in the level of achievement and also the neural substrates that support the organization of complex actions. Effective observational learning may transfer to other cognitive skills (The Dana Foundation, 2009).

As educational communities struggle to find the appropriate recipe to help students prepare for college, they cannot overlook the possible advantages of a theme-based school.

### **Visual and Performing Arts Schools**

Parallel with the aforementioned research, performing and visual arts schools have a remarkable record of high achievement test scores, low dropout rates, high college

acceptance rates, and continued advancement in life skills (Deasey, 2002). Brent Wilson (2001), in his evaluation of 14 arts and arts-related magnets for the President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities, concluded that using the magnet concept with arts in education had become a method to transform schools (Dawood, 2009).

### **New Skill Set**

Arts education has also been compared to important new skills needed in the 21st century environment. The partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills recommends the following skills to be successful: critical and creative thinking; dealing with ambiguity and complexity; integration of multiple skill sets; and the ability to perform cross-disciplinary work. Among these skills, The Partnership for 21st Century Skills identifies creativity and innovation as key learning skills to prepare students for the 21st century workforce (The Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2011). Many high school graduates lack the skills to make them successful in post-secondary education. Leaders worry that the United States is losing its competitive edge in creativity and innovation, and that the call for ever more rigorous academic standards is insufficient without a focus on developing creativity and imagination simultaneously (President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities, 2011). The National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts (NESTA) has published several studies connecting the arts to innovation. The Art of Innovation finds that fine arts graduates have the same skills needed to innovate such as technical, cognitive, interpersonal, and interpretive abilities (Oakley et al., 2008).

Recognizing the perfect storm that is the power of the arts to enhance education and the skills collectively needed for the 21st century, Dawood (2009) explored the differences between a traditional high school and an arts magnet high school in preparing

graduates for the college experience. The major purpose of Dawood's study was to see how prepared the high school graduates were for post-secondary education. In comparing the number of semesters to college degree and college GPA, the differences were so slight that there was no statistically significant difference between the two groups, and the effect sizes pointed to the lack of practical significance. Of the subsample of students that graduated, the students in both of these groups performed very well. Dawood also found some indication that arts magnet graduates who major in the arts remain in that major to earn a bachelors degree in the arts as compared to traditional high school students choosing any other major and arts magnet graduates choosing non-arts majors (Dawood, 2009). The study found that the arts magnet high school graduate students are just as prepared academically as traditional high school graduates, and furthermore, that arts magnet high schools achieve their purpose: they are strongly accountable, promote diversity, offer choice to parents, and provide a high-quality education in the academic subjects tested on college placement tests (Dawood, 2009).

### **Student Perceptions**

Most recently, Student Support Redefined, a three-year study (2011-2014) funded by the Kresge foundation, was initiated to discover what is needed to succeed in college from a student's perspective. Using a mixed-methods approach, the study employed two primary methods that resulted in feedback from nearly 900 students, including phone surveys with 785 students (current students, leavers, and completers) and focus groups with 102 participants from four colleges. Survey participants originated from a random sample that oversampled African Americans and Latinos in order to ensure substantial representation from these two groups (Booth, et al., 2013).

The six success factors discovered were (a) direction, (b) focus, (c) nurturing support, (d) engagement, (e) connection, and (f) value. Students participating identified “having direction” as the top factor in their achievement. While emphasizing the need for a specific goal and plan of action, students also stressed that staying focused on achieving their goal while feeling nurtured was vital to their success. Participants often stated that receiving this kind of support led them to develop a direction, maintain focus, be engaged and/or feel connected. Accordingly, students emphasized that engagement happens both inside and outside of class (Booth, et al., 2013). Focus group participants frequently stated that having both academic and extracurricular engagement was critical to realizing their success. Some students reported that this kind of involvement was particularly important for those who come to college without an educational focus, allowing students to stay involved while they clarified their goals and direction. Nearly three quarters of survey participants stated that it was somewhat or very important that they added value to their college, and they cited giving back through community service and providing feedback to instructors as key opportunities (Booth, et al., 2013).

### **Conclusion**

Through times of prosperity and times of recession, the country continues to debate what skills need to be taught in our schools. The nation struggles to identify the skills that will create successful citizens and prepare our students for college, the 21st century, and for the economic changes that will come with the next 100 years. In the last several years, research has covered a wide range of topics from music’s role as a primary math and language skill to the fascinating way that music can promote the growth of neural connections in the brain (*Kennedy Center Alliance for Arts Education Network,*

2010). In all forms, the arts stimulate the brain. They ignite creativity and provide students with opportunities to critically interpret the world around them (Appel, 2006). The arts incorporate functions of logic, symbolism, and linear and sequential thinking, but are the arts valuable in the college preparatory environment?

This research has focused on one arts high school to investigate the perspectives of the graduates of the school in order to determine the overall importance of such an education and whether or not this style of learning is valuable in preparation for college.

### **Chapter Three: Methodology**

This study reviewed the perspectives of the arts school's graduates to get a deeper understanding of the relationship of the arts culture and climate to college readiness. How is this instructional approach being perceived by the future leaders ultimately making the future educational decisions? Can a school based around an arts culture be successful in the accountability-heavy arena? This study aimed to examine those perceptions from the stakeholders on the front lines.

#### **Research Questions**

- What are the graduates' perceptions of the Barbara Ingram School for the Arts and its ability to prepare students for college?
- What are the perceived strengths and weaknesses of the Barbara Ingram School for the Arts experience and culture in preparing students for post-secondary enrichment in the 21st century?

#### **Participants**

The participants included all graduates of the Barbara Ingram School for the Arts in Hagerstown, Maryland. The school opened its doors in 2009; by 2013, the institution had 133 graduating students. The first graduating class in 2010 consisted of 14 students. 29 students graduated in 2011. In 2012, there were 25 graduates. 2013 witnessed the first four-year graduating class with 65 graduates. There were 73 respondents to the study, which represented a response rate of 55%. The respondents also represented the demographics of the overall group in terms of gender, disciplines, and year of graduation.

Table 1 *Gender Comparison of All Graduates to Respondents*

	All Graduates		Responding Graduates	
	N	%	N	%
Male	37	28	19	26
Female	96	72	54	74
TOTAL	133	100	73	100

Table 2 *Discipline Comparisons of All Graduates to Respondents*

	All Graduates		Responding Graduates	
	N	%	N	%
Instrumental Music	38	29	22	30
Theater	34	26	23	32
Visual Arts	20	15	8	11
Vocal Music	23	17	8	11
Dance	18	13	12	16
Creative Writing	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	133	100	73	100

Table 3 *Year of Graduation Comparison of All Graduates to Respondents*

	All Graduates		Responding Graduates	
	N	%	N	%
2010	14	10	10	14
2011	29	22	19	26
2012	25	19	14	19
2013	65	49	30	41
TOTAL	133	100	73	100

### **Barbara Ingram School for the Arts**

The Barbara Ingram School for the Arts (BISFA) is a public magnet school in Washington County, Maryland. Hagerstown, the hub of the county, is not only the fastest-growing metropolitan area in the state, but it is among the fastest-growing communities in the nation with a 7.4% population growth between 2000 and 2007 (*About Hagerstown*, 2012). Modeled after the Baltimore School for the Arts, the goal was for the Barbara Ingram School for the Arts to be the second wholly self-contained arts high school in the state of Maryland. The school focuses on high rigor in the arts. This is very important because while the school offers many more opportunities in the arts than most

schools, these opportunities are based around rigor and lean toward a college arts model. Finally, the principles are in line with the county's goals and mission for education. The developers utilized the county master plan, vision, mission, and beliefs to guide the school's path.

Currently there are six different disciplines: theatre, vocal music, instrumental music, dance, creative writing, and visual arts. The school is located in downtown Hagerstown in a renovated building adjacent to the historic Maryland Theatre in the arts and entertainment district. It is a public school, but students are accepted based on their arts talent through an audition and portfolio process. Academics are not a factor to get into the school, but accepted students must maintain a grade point average above 2.0. All of the academic classes are honors-level classes, and the school day is one hour longer than that of other schools in the district.

The Barbara Ingram School for the Arts has performed well in many statistical measurements. The school attendance rate between 2009 and 2013 has been 95%. The school has maintained a 95% pass rate for students on the Maryland High School Assessments. Other indicators for college preparation include PSAT results. The overall participation rate for freshmen in the county was 17%, while the highest percentage of participation was at Barbara Ingram with 32% of the freshmen participating in the PSAT. The participation target for sophomores was 90% for all county schools, with Barbara Ingram exceeding this target with 97% participation. For juniors, the participation target was also 90% for county schools, with 85% reaching that goal in the 2013 PSAT administration. Barbara Ingram exceeded this target with 93%.

The College Board defines a sophomore as paced to be ready for college at the composite score equivalent to an SAT score of 1330. Based on this, BISFA had the highest percent of college-ready sophomore test takers with 62% meeting the criteria. The College Board defines a junior as prepared for college if they receive a composite score equivalent to an SAT score of 1420. BISFA had the highest percent of college-ready junior test takers with 60%. Washington County Public Schools sophomores' critical reading scores ranged from 369 to 488 (BISFA: 448), math scores averaged between 388 and 460 (BISFA: 449), and writing scores ranged from 348 to 458 (BISFA: 458). Eleventh-grade critical reading scores varied between 385 and 490 (BISFA: 490), math scores were in the range of 396 to 496 (BISFA: 496), and writing scores ranged from 370 to 481 (BISFA: 481).

Students of the Barbara Ingram School for the Arts see their education through to fruition. One hundred percent of BISFA High School Diploma students met the University System of Maryland Course Completer Requirements. According to the 2013 documented decisions, 62% of the graduates planned to attend a four-year college, while 19% planned to attend a two-year college. In 2012, the documented decisions place 68% of graduates attending a four-year college, while 28% would attend a two-year college. The trend continues into 2011, with 59% of graduates documented as deciding to attend a four-year college and 25% attending a two-year college. Most recently, the US News and World Report selected BISFA as a gold medal school, rating the school 5<sup>th</sup> in the state and 171<sup>st</sup> in the nation.

## Survey

The survey design (Appendix A) used a mixed-item questionnaire containing both closed and open-ended response items in order to capture the perspectives of the participants. The survey prompted both descriptive statistics and quantitative data from the participants in the study. A Likert scale was used to measure trends, while follow up interviews were used to explore other developments.

### Data collection procedures

I used the online service SurveyMonkey to develop and administer the survey to reach more people than using face-to-face research methods, and to simplify the creation, distribution, and collection of data (Wright, 2005). Email addresses were the primary method of contact. I was able to access most of the graduate's email address through the school foundation, working through current families to find the remaining graduates. To develop the survey questionnaire, I reviewed the mission and vision of the school as well as the college and career indicators such as SAT scores, Advanced Placement participation, and college acceptance. I shared drafts of the questionnaire with expert professionals in the field of arts education. After a brief introduction, there are three survey sections to capture responses related to the research questions. The sections include:

- Generic background and information
- Beliefs and Perceptions about the arts and the school
- Moving forward

The first section, *generic background and information*, was developed to gather a baseline understanding regarding the participants and self-perceived familiarity with the

school. Basic questions dealt with information including sex, age, income, vocation, education, years with BISFA, and discipline at BISFA. To investigate the impact created by time of exposure and types of participation, I delineated groups by the following criteria: (a) years of direct involvement experience with the school, (b) arts discipline involvement experience, (c) background in the arts, and (d) current college and career path.

The second section, *beliefs and perceptions about the arts and the school*, included Likert-type questions concerning about beliefs and perceptions related to the arts school. Questions included the subjects of climate, culture, college preparation, importance of the school, concerns regarding the school, and thoughts regarding the reality of the mission of BISFA to create a college preparatory environment.

The third section, *moving forward*, was an open-ended section offering the opportunity for additional inquiry. This gave the respondents a chance to be specific about concerns, problems, or suggestions for the school's development. This information was enhanced through follow-up interviews.

### **Interviews**

Questions 26 and 27 of the survey (Appendix A) both related to the interview portion of the study. Question 26 asked, "Would you be interested in a follow-up interview to further explain your views?" Two participants skipped the question; out of the 71 responses on the question, 36 (50.7%) indicated *yes* while 49.3% or 35 participants indicated *no*. Question 27 was listed as an optional question and asked participants if they would like to be contacted for a follow-up interview. Thirty-eight participants skipped the optional request, but 35 answered the question by listing their name and

contact information for a possible follow-up interview. I emailed the 35 graduates that listed their information and told them of my purpose and process. I thanked them for their candor and indicated that I would be randomly selecting several for an additional interview. I then sorted the open-ended responses by tone, creating three categories: *positive*, *negative* and *neutral*. Basically, positive or favorable responses were placed in the *positive* category, the negative or critical responses in the *negative*, and lukewarm or impartial responses were considered *neutral*. Next, I randomly selected two responses from each category to interview. I emailed the selected participants; once they responded, I set up an appointment at the school to conduct the interviews.

In the interviews I asked three questions:

- 1) Did you feel *ready for college* after high school? Why or why not? Did BISFA aid or take away from that sentiment?
- 2) Are there any changes that you would like to see at BISFA?
- 3) What are you planning to do after college?

Each participant would subsequently take the question in the direction they desired.

### **Interview Process**

The interviews took place over a four-week period in the summer, allowing the volunteer graduates to travel to the school for the interview. I originally contacted six alumni; when one was unable to make it, I selected the next random name. However, the original graduate soon called back and was able to reschedule, so I expanded the sample size to seven.

### **Data analysis procedures**

The survey results were classified by arts discipline, years of experience, and background in the arts. The interviews added to that information through additional questioning of selected graduates in the different groups involved. Interview responses were transcribed, reviewed, categorized, and summarized by importance. Before the initial email with the survey, I did several information sessions about the survey to build the importance and prepare the graduates for it. After the initial email, I used follow-up emails and reminders in school literature. There was also a cover letter explaining the background and desire for the research. The benefits were explained as gaining critical data to move forward with a downtown school for the arts in a changing world.

University of Maryland IRB approval was obtained as well as specific district permission before the survey was conducted.

I used an analysis of variance (ANOVA) to compare the closed-ended response items and Likert-Scale (Fanning, 2005) instruments in my questionnaire. To analyze the narrative data prompted from the open-ended response items, I used classical content analysis (Krippendorff, 1980; Krippendorff & Bock, 2008; Neuendorf, 2002). First, I read through all narrative responses and coded the most frequently occurring statements. I used a general inductive approach to analyze data, develop categories, and identify emergent themes (Thomas, 2006).

### **Limitations**

This cross-sectional analysis is limited to the voluntary participation of the graduates of the Barbara Ingram School for the Arts to provide evaluation specific to the practices and perspectives of the high school program. The information gathered is reliant

on participants “self-reported” experiences. It is not expected that the reported actions be verified, but rather that trends will be visible as everyone is self-reporting. The results represent a snapshot in time based on recollection as opposed to a longitudinal study that would require a series of observations of a participatory group more frequently and over time. Because this research evaluates the participants of a specific program, these findings cannot be generalized to include other programs; however, the results may be instructive to others considering the development and implementation of similar programs or looking to better understand the purpose and need behind a high school for the arts.

### **Summary**

Using the surveys and interviews, I gathered an in-depth look at the culture of the unique school and saw how that culture was perceived by those graduates of the school. Using a mixed-methods design, I wanted to determine if the arts high school experience was perceived as a beneficial and realistic pathway to college preparedness. Ultimately, I hope to offer valuable suggestions for moving forward as the school grows, as well as data to guide the development of other unique schools.

## Chapter Four: Findings

### Introduction

In this chapter, I present the findings from my research into the perceptions and views of graduates on the impact of the Barbara Ingram School of the Arts concerning college preparedness. This study sought to provide an understanding of graduates' ongoing outlooks on the value of an arts-rich education (Pink, 2005; Gardner, 2006; Jensen 2001). Specifically, the study inquired into how these experiences have influenced the graduates' perceptions on their well-being, education, quality of life, and preparation for college. This chapter is organized into three sections. The first section, *graduates' indicators*, is a quick overview of the students' current data and relevance in the college- and career-ready environment, followed by current updates. The second section, *graduates' impressions*, dives into the graduates' overall beliefs and impressions concerning the arts school and its degree of college preparation as measured through the use of the Likert scales in the survey. The final section, *digging deeper*, expands on the Likert questions by digging deeper into the open-ended survey questions and the results of the interview process.

### Graduates' Indicators

As noted in chapter 3, there were 73 respondents to the study, representing a response rate of 55%. The responding graduates corresponded to the overall demographics of the schools' graduates in terms of gender, arts discipline, and age. The survey asked questions regarding their date of graduation and their current employment or educational situation. They were also asked questions regarding their high school grade point average, SAT scores, and AP class participation in line with university-

established selection criteria.

### Grade Point Average

Students do not have to have specific grade requirements to get into BISFA; admittance is contingent upon an audition and portfolio review process. However, once accepted, students are tasked with maintaining an overall grade point average of at least a 2.0 while carrying a 3.0 grade point average in their respective arts disciplines. Because of that, it is no surprise that 94% of the group indicated their standing at 3.0 and higher. The participants' reported GPAs are consistent with the average BISFA graduate grade point average of 3.4.

Figure 4.1 *High School Grade Point Average*

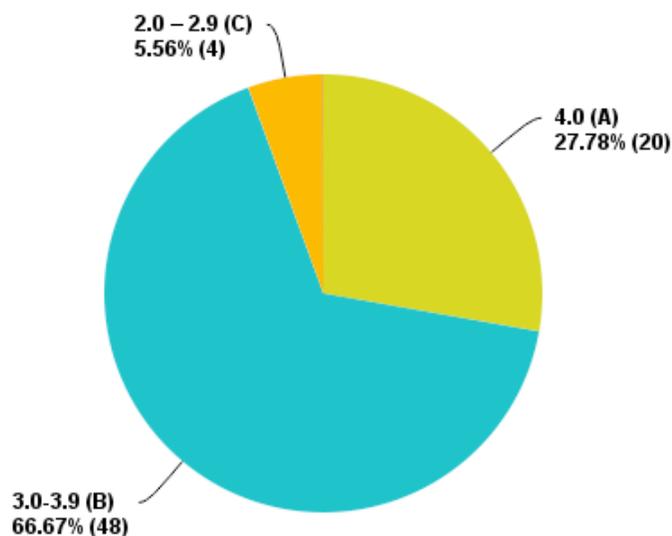


Table 4 *Overall High School Grade Point Average (GPA)*

Grade Point Average	N	Percent
4.0 (A)	20	27.8%
3.0-3.9 (B)	48	66.7%
2.0 – 2.9 (C)	4	5.6%
1.0 – 1.9 (D)	0	0.0%
Under 1.0 (F)	0	0.0%

## AP Classes

The Advanced Placement (AP) classes are part of a program created by the College Board offering college-level curriculum and examinations to high school students. Colleges often grant placement and credit to students who obtain high scores on the examinations. AP classes can also help students' overall grade point averages because the courses are weighted more than traditional classes. Students are encouraged to take the higher level classes, but sometimes are limited by time, schedules, offerings, and other requirements. The survey found that 56.9% of students completed 1 to 3 AP classes, while 33% of the students completed more than four AP Classes during their high school journey. This number has increased since the inception of the school, as more AP offerings have been made available.

Figure 4.2 *Number of AP classes Taken*

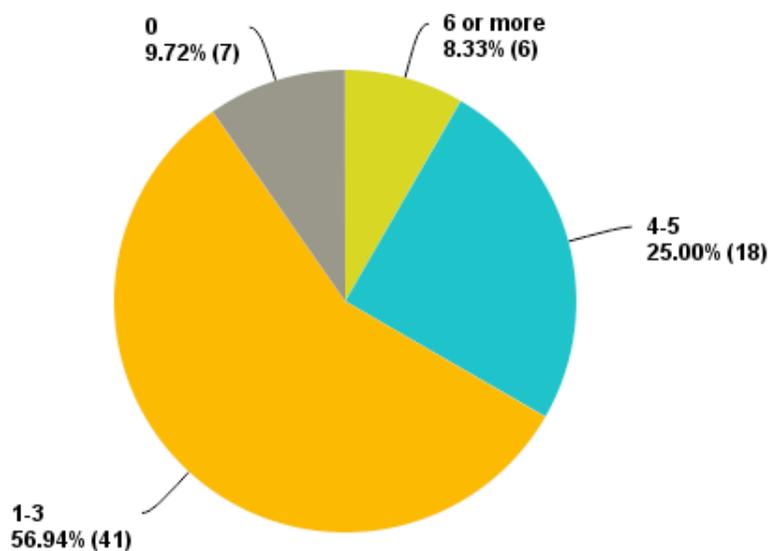


Table 5 *Number of Advanced Placement Classes Taken*

Number of AP Classes	N	Percent
6 or more	6	8.3%
4-5	18	25.0%
1-3	41	56.9%
0	7	9.7%

### SAT Score

The relationship between arts learning and the SAT is of considerable interest to anyone concerned with college readiness and acceptance because many public colleges and universities use SAT scores in determining admissions (Deasy, 2002). The majority of the respondents (73%) indicated a score between 1250 and 1799 while 18% signified scores in the 1800 to 2400 range. This also corresponds to the average BISFA graduate SAT score of 1574.

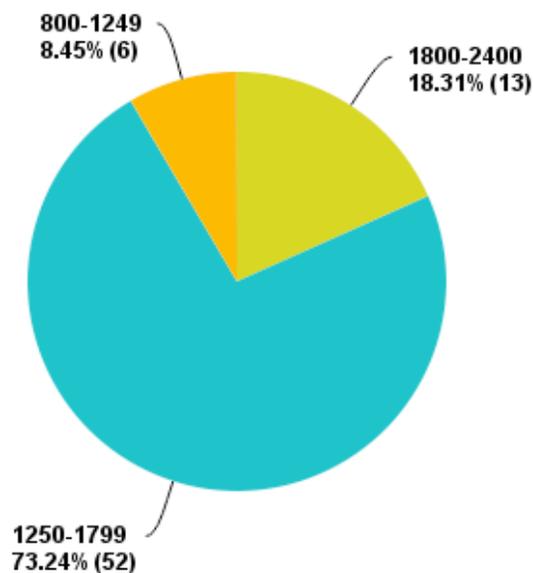
Figure 4.3 *Highest SAT Score*

Table 6 *Highest SAT Score*

SAT Score	N	Percent
1800-2400	13	18.3%
1250-1799	52	73.2%
800-1249	6	8.5%
799 or below	0	0.0%

In order to better examine the students' performance, I tried to determine trending relationships between GPA or SAT scores and the number of years enrolled at the school or in a specific arts discipline. To test the degree to which the two dimensions were associated, I used the "Chi Squares" analysis and found that neither GPA nor SAT scores changed in relation to years or arts discipline at BISFA (See Appendix B and C).

#### **Where are they now?**

It has only been a very short time since most of the students have graduated, but one can see trends that have formed in regards to their progress after high school. According to the survey responses, 90.3% continued directly to a post-high school education. 62.5% of the respondents attended a four-year college/university, while 27.8 attended a community college. Of the 5.6% that indicated *other*, one went to a trade school, one worked and attended community college part time, and two went into the workforce. With those adjusted numbers, 93% went into a post-high school education.

Table 7 *Post BIFSA Outcomes*

Post-BIFSA Outcomes	N	Percent
Immediate Post-BIFSA Status		
Attended community college	20	27.8
Attended 4 year college/university	45	62.5
Went into the work force	3	4.2
Other	4	5.6
Current Status		
College graduate	2	2.8
College underclassman (freshman or sophomore)	41	56.9
College upperclassman (junior or senior)	24	33.3
Started college, but currently not enrolled	3	4.2
Never attended college	1	1.4
Other	1	1.4
Highest Level of Education		
Graduated from high school	19	26.8
1 year of college	20	28.2
2 years of college	13	18.3
3 years of college	15	21.1
Graduated from college	2	2.8
Other	2	2.8

### **Desired occupation**

Not surprisingly, when the graduates were asked about their desired occupation, the responses varied greatly. However, the most common occupation for the sample population was arts and entertainment with 43.7%. Education and business followed with 11.3% and 9.9% respectively. Interestingly enough, 2.8% listed *student* as their desired occupation and over 12.7% listed *other*. Upon review, the participants that selected *other* had indicated *teacher*, *art education*, *ministry*, and *criminal justice* among others. Considering that all of these would be included in one of the existing categories, it was evident that this question caused some confusion over the definition of the categories.

Table 8 *Desired Occupations*

Desired Occupation	N	Percent
Arts – Creative/Performing	31	43.7
Business and Financial	7	9.9
Communications	4	5.6
Community Services/Education	8	11.3
Computer Studies/Math/Engineering	2	2.8
Hospitality Industry	0	0.0
Humanities and Languages	0	0.0
Law	2	2.8
Medical and Health	6	8.5
Natural Resources and Environment	0	0.0
Research Sciences	0	0.0
Trades and Apprenticeships	0	0.0
Student	2	2.8
Other	9	12.7

### **Graduates' Impressions**

The second section for this chapter will deal with the overall beliefs and impressions of the graduates. These questions go directly to the heart of the two research questions:

- What are the graduates' perceptions of the Barbara Ingram School for the Arts and its ability to prepare students for college?
- What are the perceived strengths and weaknesses of the Barbara Ingram School for the Arts experience and culture in preparing students for post-secondary enrichment in the 21st century?

### **Arts Impressions**

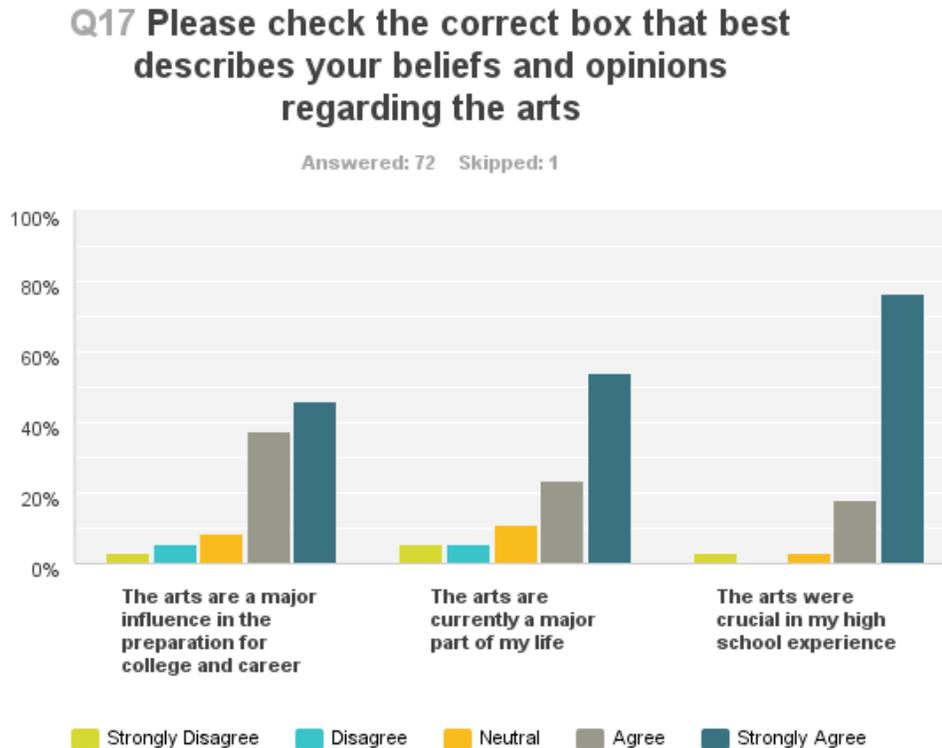
The first Likert scale in the survey pertained to the graduates' impressions regarding the arts in their lives. As expected, the scores were rather high, with all three questions rating at an average of over 4. Interestingly enough, visual art students ranked the highest, while dance students consistently ranked the lowest. The three questions asked the graduates to rate the following statements:

- 1) *The arts are a major influence in the preparation for college and career.*

- 2) *The arts are currently a major part of my life.*
- 3) *The arts were crucial in my high school experience.*

Table 9 *Opinions Regarding the Arts Averages by Discipline*

<i>The arts are a major influence in the preparation for college and career</i>	
Visual Arts	4.88
Theater	4.48
All	4.18
Instrumental Music	4.09
Vocal Music	4.00
Dance	3.36
<i>The arts are currently a major part of my life</i>	
Visual Arts	4.88
Vocal Music	4.50
Instrumental Music	4.23
All	4.15
Theater	4.13
Dance	3.27
<i>The arts were crucial in my high school experience</i>	
Visual Arts	5.0
Theater	4.83
Instrumental Music	4.77
All	4.65
Vocal Music	4.63
Dance	3.82

Figure 4.4 *Beliefs and Opinions Regarding the Arts*Table 10 *Opinions Regarding the Arts*

Statement	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree		Rating Average
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
The arts are a major influence in the preparation for college and career.	2	2.8	4	5.5	6	8.3	27	37.5	33	45.8	4.18
The arts are currently a major part of my life.	4	5.5	4	5.5	8	11.1	17	23.6	39	54.2	4.15
The arts were crucial in my high school experience.	2	2.8	0	0	2	2.8	13	18.1	55	76.4	4.65

## Mission and Vision

The next set of Likert questions regarded the school's mission and vision statement. This was included because the mission of the school revolves around the college- and career-ready aspect and is crucial to the direction of the school. Once again, visual art students rated their impressions the highest while dance scored the lowest. However, the overall scores were not as consistent from category to category. From the list below, the highest rated statements were:

- *The Barbara Ingram School for the Arts was a major influence in my personal development. (4.42)*
- *The Barbara Ingram School for the Arts enables students to study the arts for their intrinsic, aesthetic, cognitive, and cultural value. (4.28)*
- *The Barbara Ingram School for the Arts encourages excellence and success in personal development. (4.19)*

The lowest rated statements were:

- *The Barbara Ingram School for the Arts has an established climate of high expectations for teachers. (3.54)*
- *The Barbara Ingram School for the Arts is a school where students can gain the necessary skills to choose a career in any field. (3.6)*
- *The Barbara Ingram School for the Arts recruits good teachers at the school. (3.61)*

The primary question of the study was moderately scored:

- *The Barbara Ingram School for the Arts prepared me for college. (4.0)*

Table 11 *Beliefs, Opinions and Thoughts Regarding BISFA's Mission and Vision Means by Discipline*

The Barbara Ingram School for the Arts is a rigorous, comprehensive, college preparatory environment.	
Visual Arts	4.25
Instrumental Music	4.18
Vocal Music	3.88
All	3.85
Theater	3.83
Dance	2.91
The Barbara Ingram School for the Arts is rooted in intense, pre-professional training in the arts.	
Visual Arts	4.63
Instrumental Music	4.32
Vocal Music	4.13
Theater	4.04
All	4.03
Dance	2.91
The Barbara Ingram School for the Arts encourages excellence and success in personal development.	
Visual Arts	4.5
Instrumental Music	4.4
Theater	4.3
All	4.19
Vocal Music	4.00
Dance	3.45
The Barbara Ingram School for the Arts enables students to study the arts for their intrinsic, aesthetic, cognitive, and cultural value.	
Visual Arts	4.75
Instrumental Music	4.59
Theater	4.39
All	4.28
Vocal Music	3.71
Dance	3.45
The Barbara Ingram School for the Arts is a school where students can gain the necessary skills to choose a career in any field.	
Visual Arts	3.88
Instrumental Music	3.86
All	3.60
Theater	3.57
Vocal Music	3.38
Dance	3.09
The Barbara Ingram School for the Arts prepared me for college.	
Visual Arts	4.38
Instrumental Music	4.32
Vocal Music	4.13
All	4.0
Theater	3.96
Dance	3.09

Table 11 con't *Beliefs, Opinions and Thoughts Regarding BISFA's Mission and Vision Means by Discipline*

<hr/> The Barbara Ingram School for the Arts was a major influence in my success after high school. <hr/>	
Visual Arts	4.63
Vocal Music	4.25
Instrumental Music	3.95
Theater	3.91
All	3.89
Dance	2.91
<hr/> The Barbara Ingram School for the Arts was a major influence in my personal development. <hr/>	
Visual Arts	4.63
Theater	4.57
Instrumental Music	4.55
All	4.42
Vocal Music	4.25
Dance	3.82
<hr/> The Barbara Ingram School for the Arts has an established climate of high expectations for students. <hr/>	
Visual Arts	4.63
Theater	4.35
Instrumental Music	4.23
All	4.08
Vocal Music	3.75
Dance	3.09
<hr/> The Barbara Ingram School for the Arts has an environment that is safe and orderly. <hr/>	
Visual Arts	4.13
Instrumental Music	3.86
All	3.76
Theater	3.74
Vocal Music	3.63
Dance	3.45
<hr/> The Barbara Ingram School for the Arts has an established climate of high expectations for teachers. <hr/>	
Visual Arts	4.63
Instrumental Music	3.77
All	3.54
Theater	3.39
Vocal Music	3.38
Dance	2.73
<hr/> The Barbara Ingram School for the Arts serves families that are committed to their children's education. <hr/>	
Visual Arts	4.25
Theater	4.17
All	4.01
Instrumental Music	4.00
Vocal Music	3.75
Dance	3.73
<hr/> The Barbara Ingram School for the Arts recruits good teachers at the school. <hr/>	
Visual Arts	4.63
Instrumental Music	3.86
Vocal Music	3.75
All	3.61
Theater	3.26
Dance	3.0

Table 12 *Beliefs, Opinions and Thoughts Regarding BISFA's Mission and Vision*

Statement	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree		Rating Average
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
The Barbara Ingram School for the Arts is a rigorous, comprehensive, college preparatory environment.	4	5.5	5	6.9	12	16.7	28	38.9	23	32	3.85
The Barbara Ingram School for the Arts is rooted in intense, pre-professional training in the arts.	2	2.8	6	8.3	7	9.7	30	41.7	27	37.5	4.03
The Barbara Ingram School for the Arts encourages excellence and success in personal development.	1	1.4	4	5.5	10	13.9	22	30.5	35	48.6	4.19
The Barbara Ingram School for the Arts enables students to study the arts for their intrinsic, aesthetic, cognitive, and cultural value.	2	2.8	1	1.4	6	8.3	28	38.9	34	47.9	4.28
The Barbara Ingram School for the Arts is a school where students can gain the necessary skills to choose a career in any field.	3	4.2	14	19.4	13	18	21	29.1	21	29.1	3.60
The Barbara Ingram School for the Arts prepared me for college.	3	4.2	7	9.7	9	12.5	21	29.1	32	44.4	4.00
The Barbara Ingram School for the Arts was a major influence in my success after high school.	2	2.8	12	16.7	9	12.5	18	25	31	43	3.89
The Barbara Ingram School for the Arts was a major influence in my personal development.	1	1.4	3	4.2	3	4.2	23	31.9	42	28.3	4.42
The Barbara Ingram School for the Arts has an established climate of high expectations for students.	1	1.4	5	6.9	10	13.9	27	37.5	29	40.3	4.08
The Barbara Ingram School for the Arts has an environment that is safe and orderly.	1	1.4	12	16.7	15	20.8	19	26.4	25	34.7	3.76
The Barbara Ingram School for the Arts has an established climate of high expectations for teachers.	5	6.9	9	12.5	19	26.4	20	27.8	19	26.4	3.54
The Barbara Ingram School for the Arts serves families that are committed to their children's education.	5	6.9	2	2.8	9	12.5	27	37.5	29	40.3	4.01
The Barbara Ingram School for the Arts recruits good teachers at the school.	2	2.8	11	15.3	16	22.2	27	37.5	16	22.2	3.61

## School Culture

The next set of questions consisted of specific, student-focused statements regarding school culture. The four statements posed were:

*While a student at Barbara Ingram School for the Arts:*

- *I felt accepted as a capable student by my instructors.*
- *I was encouraged by my instructors to openly share my views in classes.*
- *I was given the tools and motivation to succeed.*
- *I felt a sense of belonging.*

Overall, the portions of this question set that scored the highest dealt with students feeling accepted by their instructor and feeling a sense of belonging in the school (with 4.11 and 4.07 respectively). Rated lower were the comments regarding being encouraged to share their views and being motivated to succeed.

Figure 4.5 Beliefs and Opinions Regarding the BISFA and Personal Attributes

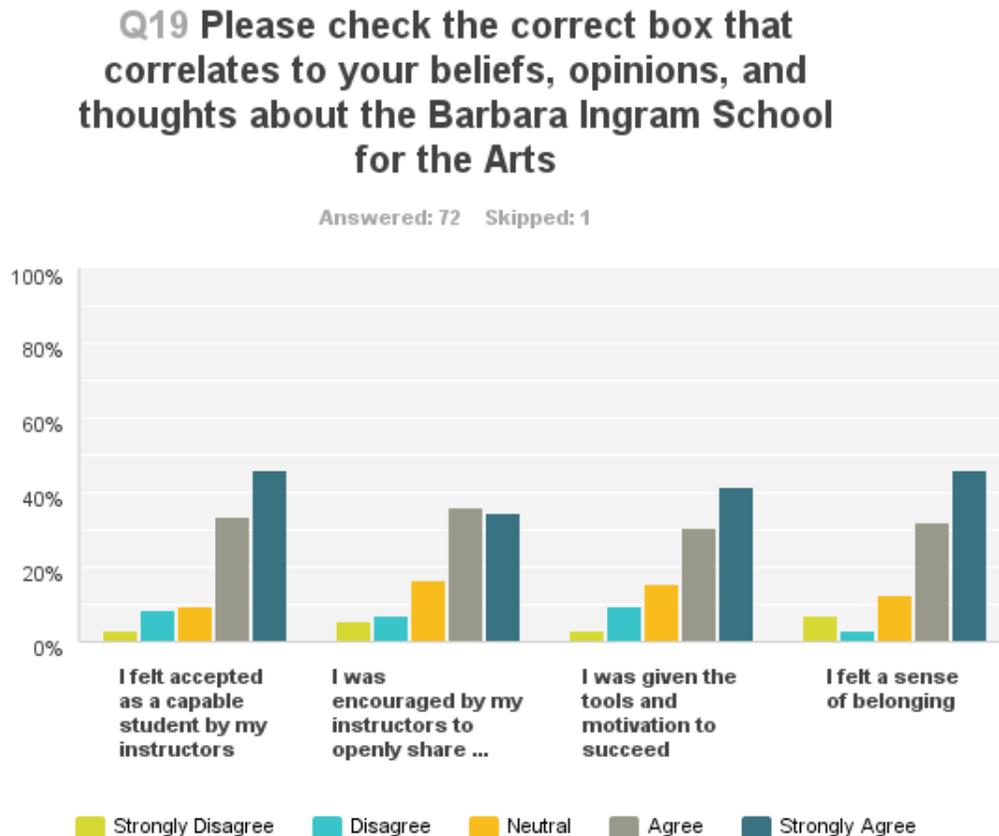


Table 13: Beliefs and Opinions Regarding the BISFA and Personal Attributes

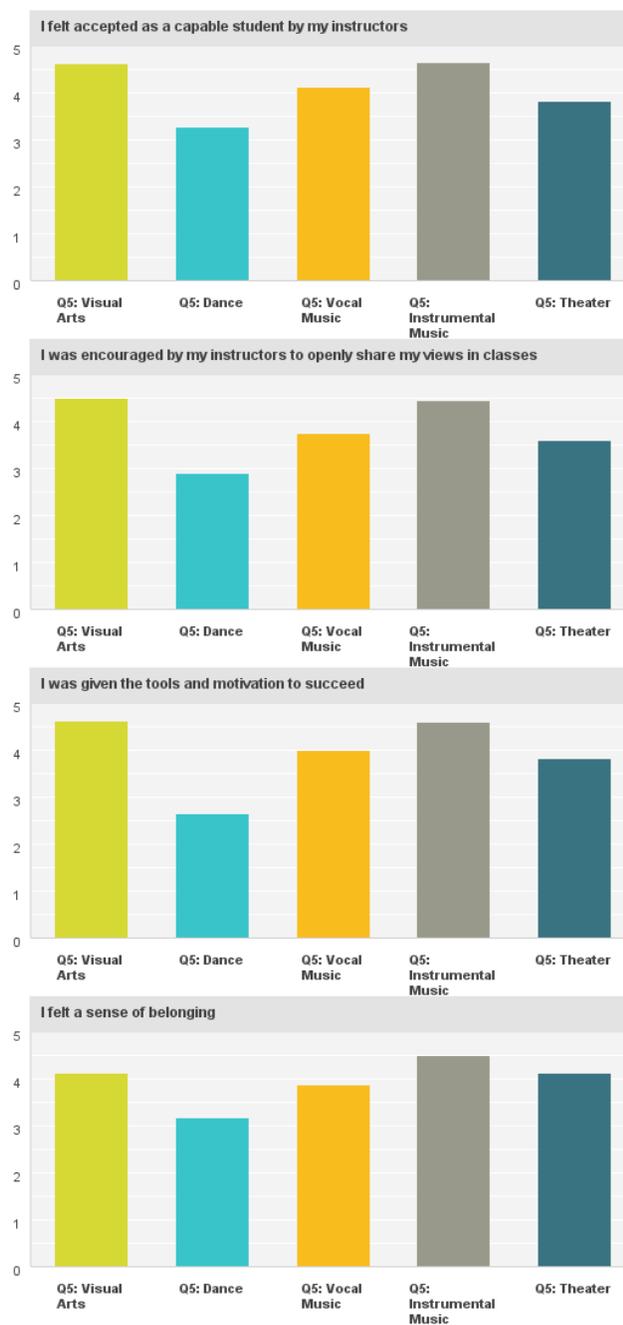
Statements	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree		Rating Average
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
While a student at Barbara Ingram School for the Arts...											
I felt accepted as a capable student by my instructors.	2	2.8	6	8.3	7	9.7	24	33.3	33	45.8	4.11
I was encouraged by my instructors to openly share my views in classes.	4	5.5	5	6.9	12	16.7	26	36.1	25	34.7	3.88
I was given the tools and motivation to succeed.	2	2.8	7	9.7	11	15.3	22	30.5	30	41.7	3.99
I felt a sense of belonging.	5	6.9	2	2.8	9	12.5	23	31.9	33	45.8	4.07

Trends become more evident when the responses are divided by arts discipline. When this was done, the instrumental music students rated their time at BISFA more positively, while the dance students scored their time at BISFA along more critical lines.

Figure 4.6 *Beliefs and Opinions Regarding the BISFA and Personal Attributes by Discipline*

**Q19 Please check the correct box that correlates to your beliefs, opinions, and thoughts about the Barbara Ingram School for the Arts**

Answered: 72 Skipped: 1



## College Readiness Indicators

The final Likert section, Question 20 dealt with the commonly implemented college readiness indicators.

Table 14: *Improvement Areas for Students of BISFA*

Answer Options	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree		Rating Average
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Because of my time at Barbara Ingram School for the Arts...											
1. I have improved my math skills.	6	8.3	18	25	24	33.3	14	19.4	10	13.9	3.06
2. I have improved my written communication skills.	2	2.8	5	6.9	14	19.4	28	38.9	23	31.9	3.90
3. I have improved my oral communication skills.	1	1.4	4	5.5	9	12.5	35	48.6	23	31.9	4.04
4. I have improved my vocabulary.	1	1.4	5	6.9	20	27.8	28	38.9	18	25	3.79
5. I have improved my critical thinking and problem solving skills.	0	0	3	4.2	13	18.3	34	47.9	21	29.6	4.03
6. I have improved my ability to read graphs and charts.	2	2.8	13	18.3	24	33.3	23	31.9	9	12.5	3.34
7. I have improved my ability to defend my point of view.	2	2.8	4	5.5	15	20.8	25	34.7	26	36.1	3.96
8. I have gained a better understanding of different issues and points of view.	0	0	2	2.8	15	20.8	33	45.8	22	30.5	4.04
9. I am more able to do research and use reference materials.	2	2.8	11	15.3	13	18.3	26	36.1	20	27.8	3.71
10. I have increased my understanding of different societies and peoples.	0	0	5	6.9	15	21.1	29	40.8	22	31	3.96
11. I have learned how to organize my time and tasks.	0	0	6	8.3	10	13.9	21	29.2	35	48.6	4.18
12. I have improved my study skills.	2	2.8	11	15.3	17	23.6	24	33.3	18	25	3.63
13. I have learned helpful study strategies.	2	2.8	9	12.5	21	29.2	28	38.9	12	16.7	3.54
14. I understand my academic strengths and what I still need to improve.	2	2.8	1	1.4	15	21.1	28	38.9	26	36.1	4.04
15. I know the importance of not giving up and sticking through difficult subjects.	1	1.4	0	0	8	11.1	24	33.3	39	54.2	4.39
16. I have learned how to work with other students.	0	0	0	0	6	8.3	31	43	35	48.6	4.40
17. I have gained the skills to succeed in college-level courses.	2	2.8	5	6.9	12	16.7	27	37.5	26	36.1	3.97

Using the average scores, I have arranged the indicators from highest to lowest with their scores attached to rank their respective values.

*Because of my time at Barbara Ingram School for the Arts...*

- 4.40 - *I have learned how to work with other students.*
- 4.39 - *I know the importance of not giving up and sticking through difficult subjects.*
- 4.18 - *I have learned how to organize my time and tasks.*
- 4.04 - *I understand my academic strengths and what I still need to improve.*
- 4.04 - *I have gained a better understanding of different issues and points of view.*
- 4.04 - *I have improved my oral communication skills.*
- 4.03 - *I have improved my critical thinking and problem solving skills.*
- 3.97 - *I have gained the skills to succeed in college-level courses.*
- 3.96 - *I have increased my understanding of different societies and peoples.*
- 3.96 - *I have improved my ability to defend my point of view.*
- 3.90 - *I have improved my written communication skills.*
- 3.79 - *I have improved my vocabulary.*
- 3.71 - *I am more able to do research and use reference materials.*
- 3.63 - *I have improved my study skills.*
- 3.54 - *I have learned helpful study strategies.*
- 3.34 - *I have improved my ability to read graphs and charts.*
- 3.06 - *I have improved my math skills.*

From this vantage point, one is able to identify the stronger skill sets developed as well as the weaker ones that will be explored in greater detail with the open-ended questions and interviews.

To get a better look at the impact of time, I wanted to see if any of the indicators from question 20 were affected by length of time students were enrolled at BISFA. All of the comparisons by number of years at BIFSA were performed using ANOVAs. For those indicators for which the *F*-test from the ANOVA was statistically significant at the .05 level, post-hoc comparisons were conducted using the Tukey Honestly Significant Difference test. Results of the analysis of number of years show no trend and no pattern. Only 3 of the 17 perceptions of outcomes showed statistically significant differences depending on how long the graduate was at BISFA, and even for those three outcomes, follow-up comparisons showed no clear patterns. The conclusion is that the length of time students were enrolled at BISFA was not statistically significant related to the different perceptions of the value of their BISFA education (See Appendix D and Appendix E).

The same logic was followed to see the effects of the indicators compared to the specific arts discipline (See Appendix F), except that indicators 4, 14, and 15 did not meet the ANOVA assumption of homogeneous variances. Analysis of these indicators was tested using both the Welch and Brown-Forsythe statistics that do not require homogeneous variances. Indicator 14, which produced a statistically significant overall test, used the Games-Howell post-hoc follow-up test, which does not require homogeneous variances.

Indicators 9, 13, and 14 showed significant differences by discipline (See Appendices G, H). Although three indicators produced significant differences overall, very few differences were found between the individual arts disciplines. The only pattern (but one that was not uniformly statistically significant) was that graduates in the dance discipline rated their preparation less favorably than did those in the other disciplines.

### **Digging Deeper: Open-ended Questions**

The purpose of the five open-ended questions was to explore the specifics of the relationship between BISFA and college readiness; the interviews later served to clarify these responses. The survey's most important open-ended item was question 22, which asked, "Did you feel ready for college after high school? Why or why not?" With 63 total responses, I categorized the responses into three categories: *yes*, *mixed perceptions*, and *no*. 39 graduates (or 61.9%) responded *yes*, with 26.9% offering *mixed perceptions*, and the final 11.1% responding *no*. (See Appendix I)

Considering the comments from the graduates who responded *yes*, items of note ranged from discussion about the professional atmosphere to the rigor of the classes that led to a "smooth transition to college." Graduates responding favorably wrote about the demand of time and high level of the work that was expected. They discussed the importance of networking, AP classes, and balancing the time commitments of the arts and academics together. Participant number 56 even discussed how she was concerned about coming from an art school but was happily surprised crediting a creative outlook on life to their success:

*When I graduated BISFA last year, I was not sure if I was prepared for college-- particularly because I had spent the last four years studying arts and was now*

*about to enter college as a political science major. However, the arts curriculum at BISFA has actually benefited me greatly in an academic major. The arts have given me the creative and problem-solving skills needed for an academic major, and the rigorous academic courses at BISFA also prepared me for the academic side of my major.*

The answers categorized as *mixed perceptions* spoke of some aspects as helpful and others as unhelpful for college readiness. Some respondents also mentioned that every college and every situation is different, and attributed their college success to personal triumphs.

Participant 9 put it this way: *“Yes and no. The workload is similar, definitely. However, I don't think anyone ever really knows what to expect when going to college for the first time.”*

Participant 43 stated:

*In some ways yes, and in others no. I learned how to manage my time throughout my four years, but I feel like students should be let known of the importance of grades freshman and sophomore year. Even though junior and senior year are what colleges will look at the most, your GPA is a combination of ALL four years.*

Of the 7 respondents that responded *no*, the answers mainly hinged on the displeasure of the dance department’s policies and experiences. These experiences noted the unstructured practice sessions and the lack of rigor in that department. Participant 50 responded:

*With wanting to do dance in college or even outside of college once I graduated, I did not feel prepared because of BISFA. I felt as if I were learning more in my*

*regular dance classes outside of school than from the dance teachers within BISFA. I did not feel as though I was being challenged in the dance department. I also felt as if I could have learned more about the history of dance in high school, but that was not an area that we focused on throughout the years.*

Another response mentioned that there was not enough college prep or awareness of college choice in the school, while another stated that college was much more rigorous.

Question 21, despite coming before the previous question in the survey, actually expanded on Question 22. This question tended to look for specific experiences that helped the graduates meet their goals. The question was stated as follows: “*Briefly describe experiences that you have had at BISFA that stand out as very important in helping you meet your college and post-secondary goals.*”

The 61 responses received were grouped into six categories (listed here in order from highest to lowest):

- (19, 31%) *Environment*
- (16, 26%) *Time Management*
- (11, 18%) *Rigor*
- (7, 11%) *Special Classes*
- (4, 6.5%) *Teachers*
- (4, 6.5%) *Negative*

Although many of the responses stretched across category labels, every attempt was made to categorize them as close as possible to the main point of their response (see Appendix J).

## Environment

Responses in the *Environment* category discussed the importance of the community of learners and small-school atmosphere. Participants wrote about networking with professionals in their fields, being in a school with people that were interested in the same things, rigorous classes, learning how to manage and juggle their time and priorities, and feeling accepted. Participant 16 put it this way:

*The rigorous schedule that I had to handle at BISFA allowed me to learn how to manage my time and priorities. When I was a freshman in college, it was a breeze because I was used to being stressed and loaded with work. I also feel that BISFA increased my self-confidence since I had to act, sing, and dance in front of people constantly. This made my goals of becoming a successful elementary education major much more possible. My communication skills were very well developed, and I had no trouble speaking in classes or in front of peers. My artistic knowledge also helps me with children and may even help with finding a job.*

Participant 38 wrote:

*The experience I had at BISFA was one I will never forget. No matter how much homework, how many rehearsals, or how many tests were going to happen in one day, the sun did come up the next day and no matter what, we were always encouraged to try our best. Anyone that tried their best succeeded and grew as not only students, but as contributing members of society.*

Participant 47 spoke of an open nonjudgmental environment:

*During my time at BISFA, I gained communication skills. Being in the open and nonjudgmental environment BISFA created, I was able to open up and speak my mind, whereas before, I would be closed off and afraid of even looking at others.*

### **Time**

The responses categorized in the *Time Management* category dealt specifically with managing and juggling many things at once. They discussed the importance of learning balance and using time efficiently and effectively. Participant 2 wrote simply: *“Just being able to juggle and manage several things at once has really prepped me for my current college schedule. BISFA taught me how to function under large amounts of stress and pressure.”*

### **Rigor**

Responses in the *Rigor* category dealt with the overall high degree of work and expectations. Participants spoke of the intensity of the schedule, the demands on their time, and the challenge of their classes, describing how these elements pushed them to further improve in their skills. Participant 56 stated:

*Because of the rigorous coursework in both academics and arts and the busy schedule that I often had at BISFA, I was fully prepared for college life. I have had no problems juggling schoolwork, clubs, social life, etc., and I have found that I have the academic skill to keep up in all of my classes.*

### **Special Classes**

As a school for the arts, Barbara Ingram offers many specialized classes to meet the needs of the individual arts disciplines. This category consisted of responses attributing their success to the availability and access to these classes. Participant 5 noted:

*The rigorous music training is extremely important. Sight-singing, aural skills, conducting, piano, and of course applied lessons. All of those were very helpful in my college prep. Music history, too...*

## **Teachers**

Regardless of the type or size of school, quality teachers will always be an important priority. The following participants listed teachers as their primary reason for success. Participant 35 wrote: *“Certain teachers really helped me by pushing me and encouraging me in class and in extracurricular activities. That has helped me know what I am capable of doing in college and post-high school life.”* And participant 39 responded: *“The staff to student relationship was more like a mentorship. The teachers take you under your wing and give you the tools you need to succeed not just in the class room, but in life.”*

There were 12 participants who either did not respond or complete their response. There were also 4 negative responses to the question. A few of the responses referred to specific incidents taking place during the graduates’ educations. For example, Participant 24 exclaimed:

*I had a wonderful experience attending BISFA, and all of the skills I learned there have been useful in my college career. With that said, I have been most heavily influenced to abandon my dreams in the arts because of how awfully I was treated by two particular instructors at the school. This experiences with the two instructors have left me so emotionally scared that after 3 years I have not been able to heal, and I am shocked that more action was not taken when I expressed the multiple situations to another staff member within the school. I do not know if*

*it was for the best that I abandon the art I studied, but I can say it was because of the treatment I received from two particular instructors within the department I studied at BISFA.*

### **What Would You Change?**

The final open-ended question, Question 25, was BISFA specific: “If you could change one thing at BISFA, what would it be?” These responses covered a range of suggestions and concerns. Responses were sorted into these separate categories, recorded here by percentage: (See Appendix K)

- (8, 12%) *High Standards*
- (6, 9.5%) *Communication*
- (6, 9.5%) *Teachers*
- (5, 8%) *Dance Concerns*
- (5, 8%) *Favoritism*
- (5, 8%) *None*
- (5, 8%) *Organization*
- (5, 8%) *Space*
- (5, 8%) *Miscellaneous*
- (3, 4.7%) *More Outside Arts Disciplines Opportunities*
- (3, 4.7%) *Musical Theater Concerns*
- (3, 4.7%) *Time*
- (2, 3%) *More Special Classes*
- (2, 3%) *College Prep*

Overall, 10 students did not respond, and 5 (or 8%) indicated that they would not change a thing. Participant 53 put it best: *“When I was at BISFA, the pieces were still being put together. There was no cafeteria, class schedules were a little hectic...but I understand that this is all being fixed and that is great!”*

### **Higher Standards**

The *High Standards* category refers to responses indicating a desire for some change to high standards or stricter enforcement of the current standards. This category represents 11% of the total responses and refers to standards such as the policy for accepting students, the policy for keeping students, and the attitude and discipline of the current staff and students. Participant 30 expressed:

*I would accept fewer students per "major." I think by accepting fewer students, you can fill the space with truly passionate and talented artists. The school will become more reputable, and the overall level of success will increase. While*

*Participant 22 suggested: I would change the attitude of the student body. I always felt that a lot of students especially those that never attended a regular high school did not understand or respect the fact that it was a privilege to attend BISFA.*

### **Communication**

The *Communication* category dealt with issues and concerns that pervaded the survey results and that warrant additional discussion in the next chapter. Identified communication problems include breakdowns between academic and arts teachers, barriers between departments, and misunderstandings of the school's complex schedule. Participant 51 said: *“The academic teachers and the arts teachers did not seem to work*

*together to fulfill student's needs. They seemed to be more against each other.”*

Participant 40 explained the steps need to improve communication at the school as follows: *“To be more organized and to have both the academic and the arts teachers be more understanding of each other and their schedules. It would all go smoother if we all understood each other's needs.”*

### **Specific Teachers**

Individual teachers directly impacted graduate perceptions. Representing 8% of the total group, some participants discussed changing specific teachers and their dismay with part or all of the staff. Participant 17 discussed how one teacher could completely change the experience for certain students:

*One student can have a COMPLETELY different experience than other. This isn't caused by the normal things like personality differences and such, but more by the differences in teachers. One teacher of a subject leads an intensive class and teaches well, while another teacher of the same subject teaches you little to nothing. It ends up being the luck of who you get as a teacher. This will change how prepared you are for college and how educated you are by the end of the experience. Teachers in the arts departments also pick favorites. No doubt about it.*

### **Dance Concerns**

The *Dance Concerns* category had 5 responses dealing with the dismay of several dance students. They discussed the wasting of time, the gossip and drama that was allowed to go on, and the perceived lack of teacher qualification. Participant 49 stated:

*The teachers in the Dance department are not qualified to teach. They do not push their students. The Dance department at BISFA has recently been developing a bad reputation for drama, gossip, and overall poor instruction. As an alumni, this makes me extremely upset. I would be happy to discuss this issue further with the current administration.*

### **Favoritism**

The *Favoritism* category touched on the issue of preferential treatment by teachers and departments. Participant 27 stated: “*How each art floor has special students that are ‘favorites’ discourages the students who try their best and never get a good part or any recognition.*”

### **Organization**

The next category represented the responses concerned with the overall organization of the school. Participant 29 responded:

*In the first two years, I understood that it was a new school. Organization and schedule issues were expected. I'm not sure exactly how the school is set up now, but I am assuming as long as there is clear communication and understanding among the arts and academic teachers, the students will have an enjoyable experience. Also, work on providing parking!*

### **Space**

Another topic that only garnered a few responses yet remained a recurring topic in the survey was the need for more physical space. The responses indicated space for the building, but also additional space for typical school areas such as science labs, a gym, a cafeteria, and parking.

### **More Arts Diversity**

Three students discussed their concern about not being able to go beyond their arts discipline, voicing the desire to explore other arts options as well as their selected major. Participant 12 stated:

*I would have liked to have a little more diversity in the classes available to me.*

*For instance, though I was in the visual art program, I would have really enjoyed being able to take a dance or theatre class.*

### **Musical Theater Concerns**

Similar to the *Dance Concerns* category, the *Musical Theater Concerns* category was composed of 3 graduates commenting on the overall tone of the theater department. The responses suggested unfair policies and an overarching unbalance in the department. Participant 18 had many thoughts on this issue:

*I would change the overall tone of the Musical Theatre department, as it seemed to seep into the culture of the whole school. At times, I found it extremely unprofessional. There was a complicated atmosphere among teachers and students that wasn't very nurturing to the development of a young artist. A blatant favoritism towards some students discouraged many from feeling like they had a fair advantage and left those favored to have a difficult relationship with other students. Something that could help this perceived notion of disadvantage would be to give equal time and quality of preparation to every student. It did improve the second year, especially with the additions of (lists two teacher names). I also noticed a neglect of other departments with the primary focus of the whole floor being Musical Theatre. At times, it seemed as if there wasn't a Theatre or*

*Technical Theatre department since their education was often disrupted to serve the needs of the Musical Theatre department. I originally came to BISFA as a Theatre student and within the first week it became clear to me that if I wanted to get the most out of my education, I should switch to Musical Theatre. I also believe that there should be a more drastic difference between how upper- and lower-level classmen are taught. I feel as if the first two years should be focused on the development of skills, finding strengths/weaknesses, learning basics, and the overall foundation of things while slowly building up responsibilities and pressures every semester. This will give students the time to learn how to balance academics and arts classes more effectively and may make it easier for them to discover if BISFA is right for them, if they want to switch majors, etc. before having classes preparing them for a specified career. I am nonetheless a proud, happy, and grateful alumnus of BISFA. It is with my love of the school and pride in it that I offer my suggestions, which I recognize have no credibility other than my experience at its infancy.*

## **Time**

3 participants only discussed the lack of time as a problem. However, throughout the survey, the concept of time seems to be a double-edged sword for the school. This is another important idea that will be discussed in greater detail in the next chapter.

Participant 1 said: “ *that it runs your life...* ” Participant 46 stated:

*Give the students more time to actually be kids and not bog them down with work. I understand that it's a college preparatory school, but I never had time to*

*practice for anything between homework for every single class and having multiple rehearsals and work.*

### **Other**

There were a number of other issues that gained the attention of two or fewer participants. More special classes and more college prep classes were each mentioned twice, representing a desire for the school to offer more special arts classes and more classes devoted to college preparedness. This final category was made up of votes that could not be placed into the above categories and were sorted in the appropriately named *Other*. One participant each voiced opinions in favor of the following issues: a comprehensive overhaul of the entire American school system, more opportunities for piano and guitar majors, more performance opportunities for all disciplines, a different location for the school, and more opportunities to include the alumni.

### **Supplemental Questions**

Questions 23 and 24 did not directly pertain to the research questions but are included here to gather additional insight on the students and the school. Unfortunately, both questions were redundant. In hindsight, I believe these queries could have been combined. Question 23 read as follows: “*Thinking back to when you were in high school, is there anything you would have done differently to help you be successful in today’s college and career venue?*” And Question 24 was listed: “*If you had the chance to relive your high school years, would you have done anything differently?*”

I categorized the responses for both questions into four categories: *minor regrets*, *work harder*, *none*, and *no response*. Table 15 below shows the similar response to these two questions. (See Appendix L)

Table 15 *Comparison of Question 23 to Question 24*

Comparison of Question 23 to Question 24				
Question 23 - Thinking back to when you were in high school, is there anything you would have done differently to help you be successful in today's college and career venue?			Question 24 - If you had the chance to relive your high school years, would you have done anything differently?	
	N	Percent	N	Percent
No	22	30	19	26
Worked Harder	22	30	22	30
Minor Regrets	17	23	18	24
No Response	12	16	14	19

Roughly 16-19% of the graduates did not respond to either question.

Approximately one-third of the participants stated they would not change anything.

### **Worked Harder**

Participants indicated that they would exhibit greater effort if given the chance. 30% of the respondents to both questions replied that they would have worked harder in some manner. Some spoke of studying more while others spoke of practicing more; still others would have taken the entire high school experience more seriously. Participant 29 said: *"I would have liked to have studied more rigorously in my arts field. I also wish I would have been more successful with my AP scores so that I could have achieved more college credits than I did."*

### **Minor Regrets**

The *minor regrets* category encompassed many personal behaviors such as speaking up more, having more confidence, applying for more colleges, picking different friends, and taking more AP classes. While most statements focused on positive growth, there were some negative responses, again primarily concerned with the dance department. Participant 47 stated:

*I would have spoken up more. I had concerns (and still do) about the dance department's leadership. I do not feel that the leadership on the dance floor is effective. I also do not feel they are qualified to be in the positions that they are in. I remember quite frequently one of the teachers gossiping to their students about other students. This fostered a negative environment. I always wanted to speak up and discuss this with administration, but feared that it would cause more harm than good. I think that had I spoken up, the environment would have been better, thus making my experience more enjoyable.*

Participant 8 also had some criticisms of the school:

*“Yes. I would have had some fun. I would have drawn more. Because the academic schedule was so tight, I felt the majority of time was spent fulfilling academic requirements, with too much homework. I was unable to squeeze in time to personally grow in my fine art skills. I would have liked the advantage of one-on-one tutoring and instruction with the teachers. Developing skills in drawing is so crucial for success in the fields I am in. Students should be given time outside of academic homework and their requirements to practice their skills. I feel it is important that academics tie to what the artists need to know to advance in their field, but that focus seems to be missing, especially in career development. Strategies for making clear career choices, academic advancement, and getting jobs specific information on how to achieve these goals is lacking. This is what I feel schools should provide for students. Teaching and application should go hand in hand. We should be given enough information to choose our direction and have a clear path to prosperity. I would change the ""political correctness""*

*environment of the staff. Faculty members cherry-picked favorites among students, which created clicks rather than unity. I feel that Barbara Ingram as an institution fostered excellence, but not inclusiveness."*

### **Interviews**

The graduates interviewed were Participants 73, 5, 7, 16, 63, 54 and 47 from the survey. The seven represented several disciplines and varying career paths. Only two were headed for careers in the arts. One with plans to earn first a bachelor's degree in theater before moving on to a master's degree, the other working towards a bachelor's degree in animation in hopes of working for Disney. The other five sample members had followed a variety of vocational and educational paths: a publishing job, an internship and MBD with plans to be a CEO, public administration with hopes to be part of a political think tank, and two budding elementary teachers pursuing graduate-level coursework in special education.

All of the graduates spoke highly of their time at BISFA, but the participants had differing opinions on the school's ability to prepare them for college. While most felt prepared, Participant 73 reported that some arts disciplines were represented more effectively than others. This participant felt music was on track, yet the acting training was undeveloped. Participant 16 felt very prepared for college except in the major arts discipline – Dance. Participant 16 stated: *"I felt prepared for college academically, just not in dance. However, the lack of leadership in the dance department pushed me to be a leader. I rose to the occasion."* Each of the interviewed alumni said that they would return to BISFA if they could go back and re-live their high school experience. They

indicated many reasons for their decision, but the time management piece was unanimously mentioned as the most common benefit to their preparation for college.

All of the sample members touched on the hectic schedule of the school and the demands on their time. When asked how BISFA provided college preparation, Participant 7 said: *“Time management was the biggest reason– the demands of the school, doing homework during rehearsals helped prepare me for college.”* Participant 63 stated: *“Time management was the biggest thing I took away. I learned to juggle many things at the same time. In that aspect – the high school experience was just like college.”* Number 54 mentioned: *“I had to be organized – there was no time to be sloppy.”* Participant 47 said: *“I learned time management. I was much busier in high school than I was in college.”*

Several graduates identified staff members as a crucial part of their experience. Participant 73 said: *“The BISFA teachers did a great job of introducing me to new programs, colleges and writing.”* Participant 47 stated: *“Relationships with teachers were great– I was not afraid to ask a question because they were so relatable. They knew us outside of academics.”* Number 47 added: *“Teachers saw our vulnerable side and it gave me great respect for their care.”* Participant 63 was very appreciative of the lead art instructor for guidance and informing them about what to expect in college. In reference to the staff as a whole, the participant stated: *“They were very relatable and made learning fun.”* Number 47 went on to say: *“the staff treated us like adults and they were able to show relevance to our daily lives.”*

Other identified examples of college preparation included the following: networking possibilities, being in close quarters with similar people, the family

atmosphere, the small campus feel, and the sense of creative engagement. Participant 54 expressed the importance of the campus school as a kinesthetic experience, stating: *“The constant moving from building to building and room to room kept me engaged and interested.”* Participant 63 also mentioned the importance of the *Apple environment* that matched the college experience. Participant 63 went on to note: *“I learned about respect. There was a total way of understanding and learning. The school allows students to break out of their shell unlike a regular school.”* Participant 47 said, *“School challenged me and taught me how to reach my full potential. We were treated as if we were already on a college campus.”* The participant then added, *“The arts taught me persistence and the importance of practicing a skill to continue to improve.”*

Some respondents voiced concerns. Even though they all recognized the importance of time management, Participant 73 pointed out that the demands on time also precluded the students from many other important out of school activities. Participant 63 mentioned that the curriculum felt *“cherry-picked,”* with too much time spent on performance and not enough on skills and technique. That graduate went on to specify that holding many rehearsals during class time meant class getting shut down. Participant 47 echoed a common theme of the dance participants: too much wasted time and sitting around. Participant 54 indicated that some of the academic teachers might not have been as qualified as their peers in traditional schools. Some graduates felt that a few instructors did not deserve their positions.

Finally, like before, the participants were asked what they would change at the school if they had the opportunity. Suggestions ranged from designing better parking to comprehensive monitoring of the teachers and curriculum to make sure that the scope and

sequence stayed synchronized with the goals of the school. Participants 73 and 63 mentioned monitoring both academic and arts teachers in order to ensure that the curriculum was being covered and that time was not being wasted. Participants 47 and 16 discussed concerns with the dance department and mentioned changes that they would incorporate to strengthen the dance curriculum, mainly adding more arts history and technique to the mix. Participant 16 went on to note the unprofessional nature of some of the teachers and stressed the importance of eliminating the gossiping between teachers and students. Participant 4 pointed out the need for stricter audition standards to raise the bar for acceptance to the school. Participant 63 commented adding specialized educational experiences such more digital art classes, more opportunities to use the specific art equipment, and more access to tutoring. Despite these concerns, all interviewed graduates praised the school and agreed that the school was a great environment for their high school experience.

### **Summary**

This chapter presented the findings from this study on the relationship between college preparedness and the Barbra Ingram School for the Arts. Data from the survey responses and qualitative interviews were used to question graduates from the high school on their experience and college readiness. 133 students were surveyed, with responses being completed by 73 participants. Using the demographic data, the Likert questions, the open ended questions, and the interviews, I was able to describe how the students perceived their preparation for college through the arts high school experience, as well as the benefits and disadvantages of the arts high school. The findings were presented as they pertained to the research questions:

- What are the graduates' perceptions of the Barbara Ingram School for the Arts and its ability to prepare students for college?
- What are the perceived strengths and weaknesses of the Barbara Ingram School for the Arts experience and culture in preparing students for post-secondary enrichment in the 21st century?

Chapter five uses the findings to describe the emerging themes concerning the strengths and weaknesses of the arts school toward college preparedness. Other common themes will be explored as suggestions for good practice and improvement.

## Chapter Five: Discussion, Conclusion, and Implications

### Introduction

The goal of this research was to examine the perceptions of college readiness through the eyes of graduates of an arts themed high school, specifically BISFA. Driven by a desire to better understand the facets of the high school arts experience that affect college readiness and a belief that arts high school students themselves would provide the best account of their experiences, I sought to explore these issues using both quantitative measures such as Likert scales and qualitative methods like open-ended survey questions and face to face interviews. Chapter 4 provided the results of this study. This chapter will present the two research questions along with a discussion of the findings. In addition, implications for high school programs, implications for the specific school studied, limitations of the study, and directions for future research will be discussed.

### Research Question One:

What are the graduates' perceptions of the Barbara Ingram School for the Arts and its ability to prepare students for college? The results suggest the majority of the respondents felt the school properly prepared them for post-secondary education. In response to Question 22 — "*Did you feel ready for college after high school?*"—39 graduates or 61.9% responded "yes," with 26.9% mixed perceptions and only 11.1% indicating "no." Question 17 asked the graduates to rate the following statement: "*The Barbara Ingram School for the Arts prepared me for college.*" Participants indicated a favorable reaction to the school, scoring the statement at 4 out of 5 points.

Regarding the participants' actions, 93% of them went on to post-secondary education after graduation. When asked what they would change if they could relive

their high school careers, 30% said nothing, 30% exclaimed that they would have worked harder, and 17% mentioned assorted small regrets over their experience. Of note is that not a single one of the surveyed graduates indicated that he or she would change their decision to attend BISFA. As a matter of fact, all of the participants interviewed stated that even with the gift of foresight, they would retain their original course of study.

Trends developed as graduates of certain arts disciplines were more positive than others in their assessment of the school's ability to prepare them for college. The graduates varied greatly in their judgment on the school's efficacy. Most felt adequately prepared, while some felt prepared in certain arts more than others. Interestingly enough, while the visual arts students scored highest on issues such as feeling accepted and welcomed, the theater students scored BISFA the highest when it came to the college and career indicators. This suggests that while not always happy with the school's procedures, the theater students perceived their education to be more effective in preparing them for college.

**Research Question Two:**

- What are the perceived strengths and weaknesses of the Barbara Ingram School for the Arts experience and culture in preparing students for post-secondary enrichment in the 21st century?

Table 16 *Strengths and Weaknesses of BISFA Program on College Readiness*

<b>Strengths of program</b>	<b>Weaknesses of program</b>
Time – management	Time – monopolized, lack of
Networking	Communication of programs
Unique total way of understanding	Space
Networking	Oversight of certain specific programs
Small campus feel - family atmosphere	Small Campus Feel – favoritism
Rigor of classes	Parking
Kinesthetic experience	
Creative engagement	
Close-knit community	
Professional atmosphere	
Self confidence	
Communication skills	
Leadership abilities	
People of similar interest	
Nonjudgmental environment	
Feeling accepted	
Mentorship relationship with staff	
Personal development	
Learning balance	
Perseverance	
Oral and written communication	
Problem solving	
Understanding different points of view	

The results suggest a number of elements listed by the graduates as strengths and weaknesses. Some responses actually bordered on both. As expected, the overall environment of BISFA was listed many times in different sections. The environment of BISFA is very different from other schools in the county as it is located in downtown Hagerstown in a renovated theater. The school also utilizes several surrounding buildings, giving the campus a more collegiate atmosphere as students move back and forth between classes. The renovated movie theater is the arts building and the face of the school, but the school campus is also made up of the century-old Maryland Theater, the Bridge of Life Church building, the University System of Maryland Hagerstown

Campus, and a renovated department store called the Grand Building.

This unique professional atmosphere was mentioned several times throughout the course of the survey and interviews. Question 21, which asked participants to describe the experiences that helped them meet their college prep goals, targeted the concept of environment. These responses discussed the importance of the community of learners and small-school atmosphere. Responses included the opportunity to go to a school with other people with similar interests and being able to be themselves.

Graduates wrote about networking with working professionals, rigorous classes, learning how to juggle their time and priorities, and feeling accepted. Some students described the environment as being unique. Other participants referred to the environment as having a small-campus feel. It was also described as a family atmosphere with a sense of creative engagement. These descriptions go hand in hand with the findings found in the 2013 document *Using Student Voices to Redefine Support: What Community College Students Say Institutions, Instructors and Others Can Do to Help Them Succeed* (Booth, et al., 2013). The six success factors discovered in the report were direction, focus, nurture, engagement, connection, and value. Like the Barbara Ingram graduates, participants in the *Using Student Voices* often stated that receiving this kind of support led them to develop direction, maintain focus, be engaged, and feel connected (Booth, et al., 2013).

That “small community” theme also came through in the responses regarding feeling accepted and valued. It was also obvious that the community concept was more or less evident depending on the specific discipline. Disciplines like visual arts and instrumental music consistently scored highest with regards to feeling a sense of

belonging. On question 18, the highest rated statement was *The Barbara Ingram School for the arts was a major influence in my personal development* (with a score of 4.42 out of 5). That same theme also had a dark side as some of the participants discussed the favoritism that comes with a small, tightly-knit community. Graduates identified specific teachers and programs in need of equity.

Adding to the discussion about environment was mention of the specific arts-based classes that were not offered at other area high schools. These classes focused on techniques and skills-based, hands-on instruction complimenting the arts disciplines, giving the students opportunities to further their understanding and comprehension of each discipline. Specific classes mentioned were sight singing, aural skills, conducting, piano lab, applied lessons, improvisation, and set design. Not only did these classes help students specialize in their discipline, but they also added to the relevance of the school. Vaughn and Winner (2000) found that students participating in any arts class produce higher SAT scores than peers who do not participate. However, this research also suggested a strong relationship between taking other academic courses (such as math, science, English, and history) and SAT scores; in particular, specializing in subjects in one particular area results in higher SAT scores (Vaughn and Winner, 2000). While the reported SAT scores are relatively high for the graduates, one could suggest a relationship between the in-depth arts classes and the academic readiness.

Graduates identified the demands placed on their time as well as a general lack of time in almost every response. These responses specifically described managing and juggling many things at once. The graduates discussed the importance of learning balance and using time efficiently and effectively. The alumni identified the time

management piece by describing how having class all day and rehearsal all night and how this schedule forced them to learn how to manage their studies and time.

James Catterall's 2009 analysis suggests that students in arts-rich schools realize more academic success and have a better academic experience than students from arts-poor schools. These results imply that there are positive externalities associated with an arts-rich curriculum that spills-over into non-participant's outcomes (Catterall, 2009). Other important factors of student success included perseverance, oral and written communication skills, problem solving, and understanding of different points of views. The publication *Critical Links* also identified cognitive benefits from the arts to include focused perception, elaboration, and problem solving in addition to elements of critical thinking including fluency, originality, and abstractness of thought (Arts Education Partnership, 2004).

### **Discussion of the Findings**

While this research dealt with the perceptions of graduates of BISFA's ability to prepare them for college, it became obvious that more of the perceived benefits came in the form of college readiness rather than college eligibility. While the students were motivated to succeed and demonstrated that success through their GPAs and standardized test scores, the benefit of the arts can best be seen in the "life skills" areas of their responses. Unlike college eligibility, which implies that students have met minimum requirements for admission, college readiness indicates that students are adequately prepared to be successful in college coursework (Barnes & Slate, 2011; Barnes et al, 2010; Cline et al, 2007; Conley, 2007, 2008a, 2008b; Merisotis & Phipps, 2000; Spence, 2009). Barnes, Slate, and Rojas-LeBouef (2010) argued that college readiness as defined

by scores on standardized tests is a very limiting definition. They contend that college readiness as defined by test scores such as the SAT only indicated academic preparedness and not college readiness. They described college readiness as not only academic preparedness but also study skills, emotional maturity, and knowledge of educational finance, among other variables (Barnes et al., 2010). This suggests a strong college-readiness environment combines college eligibility with college readiness.

However, it is also important to note that many of the graduates' responses may have been impacted by other variables as well, such as the early formation of the school, the passion and motivation behind those students selected to attend the school, and the human aspect of interaction and instruction.

### **Formative Years**

In regards to the concerns voiced in the responses, many issues have been addressed since the school's inception. Some of the graduates surveyed only spent one year at the school; during that first year of the school, the limited academics forced older students to take classes at their home school. As noted in chapter 3, the first graduating class in 2010 consisted of 14 students who attended BISFA only during their senior year. The second graduating class (2011) consisted of 29 students who attended BISFA their junior and senior years. In 2012, there were 25 graduates. 2013 witnessed the first four-year graduating class with 65 graduates. The school has changed, grown, and improved over the past four years. Other concerns have been alleviated as the school expanded to a four-year institution. The issues of space and parking were reported as problems but have been addressed since many of the respondents last attended the school. However, those changes only skim the surface. The school is changing, expanding, and finding its

way politically in an ever-changing world. At the time of this writing, the Common Core Standards are still in their infancy and are shifting the ways that time is allocated and instruction is given. These variations are also shifting and keeping “change” as the one constant in education. As these factors change and adapt, schedules, strategies, and time allotments will continue to be adjusted to meet the changing requirements. At the same time, the Common Core calls on an integrated technical environment; as the educational landscape of technology changes, so do methods and routines. It is obvious that the school system is moving to a one-to-one, student-to-device scenario. Once that benchmark is reached, other concerns will also be alleviated.

### **Passion/Drive**

One obvious factor appearing throughout the results was the shared passion of the students for their disciplines. This desire was one of the factors that brought them to BISFA, and continues to be a driving force for the students regardless of schools. This correlates with the findings detailed in *Learning, Arts, and the Brain: The Dana Consortium Report on Arts and Cognition* (2008). The study shows that young people interested in “doing” art—studying and performing music, dance, and drama—may also demonstrate increased motivation to learn in other subject areas, which leads to improved cognition (Sloan, 2009). James Catterall, (1998) finds students who participate in more arts courses earn better grades, perform better on standardized tests, perform more hours of community service, watch fewer hours of television, and are less bored at school (Deasy, 2002). He found “substantial and significant differences in achievement and in important attitudes and behaviors” between young people highly involved and those with little or no arts engagement (Catterall, 1998).

When asked to estimate their overall high school grade point average, 27.78% indicated 4.0, 66.67% indicated 3.0-3.9 and only 5.56% listed 2.0-2.9. It is important to note that the students at the arts school are selected on the virtue of their arts discipline and not their academic merit. That said, once they are accepted, they are tasked with keeping their grades at a certain level. It is that desire that drives many of the students to their success and perseverance; unfortunately, it is also that drive that pushes them to be very stressed and overloaded. Another important factor related to passion is the student's perspective on the engagement of students brought together under one umbrella – the arts. Many students talked about the feeling of being brought together by that acceptance. However, the question remains whether motivated students select the school, or the school motivates them in their endeavors.

One of the most prevalent values named in the survey related to the students feeling accepted and valued. Many in the community and close to the school have referred to the school as the “land of misfit toys” due to the differing background and the desires of the students. This supports Catterall's research that suggests the role of arts in developing competency may be especially important for students who otherwise feel isolated or excluded (President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities, 2011). Specifically, Catterall finds strong connections between arts involvement and an increase in college attendance and completion by age 26, full-time employment, voluntarism, voting registration and participation, participation in organized religion, and a reduction in dependence on public assistance (President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities, 2011). Many students who thrive at BISFA would usually be “under the radar” in another school and looked at as shy, bizarre, different, and not apt to fit in. Specific

environments, atmospheres, and culture elements that allowed certain students to better understand and fit in were evident throughout the survey.

### **Time**

Time is the most common element referenced in the survey and interviews. It was cited as a positive element when discussed by the graduates as forcing them to learn time management. In other responses, time was identified as a compromising force, keeping students overloaded and sometimes unbalanced in their teen years. The students must carefully manage their time due to all of the activities and assignments, and while many credit that intense schedule to their college preparedness, just as many complained of the limited free time and lost opportunities to explore other aspects of their life. Due to drive, passion, and the expectations of the teachers, all subjects seemed to be approached as being of “high priority,” leaving the students to work with a deficit of resources. The type of students at the school—those driven to succeed—intensified this urgency of said deficit. Compounding to the time factor are the issues of space and distance. The campus setting is valuable as a college-like atmosphere, but the distance requires students to travel quickly between classes. Students also discussed losing time if they rode the bus due to the fact that they had to catch one bus to their home school and then board a shuttle bus to the school for the arts, resulting in a commute lasting 50% longer.

Byrd and MacDonald found that time management is a critical skill for college readiness. Their qualitative study of non-traditional, first-generation college students paralleled this study’s findings (Byrd and MacDonald, 2005). Reid and Moore (2008) discovered similar results when they conducted a qualitative study of 13 first-generation college students in order to examine how the students perceived the strengths and

weaknesses of their preparation for college. Although all of the students had performed well in high school, many of the students reported deficiencies in study skills and time management relative to college standards (Reid and Moore, 2008). Both studies stressed the need for more rigorous coursework in high school, the development of study skills, and strategies for time management.

### **Relationships and the human aspect**

Even though the atmosphere and special nature of the school are strong indicators for college readiness, much is still dependent on the strength of the teacher and the student-instructor relationship. The size of the school was beneficial in this respect as many students discussed the environment of student-mentor interaction. However, the value and talent of the staff represented a leading factor for student success in high school and the ultimate progression to college. Other students alluded to the importance of strong teachers as opposed to ineffective instructors. As expected, the relationship created with the teacher also shaped the graduates' lasting opinions on the school.

### **Discipline Exceptions**

Although the results were not significantly different between the disciplines, it is important to note that there were some minor discrepancies. Music and Visual Art rated the highest when it came to feeling accepted and valued, while Theater and Dance had some very specific concerns for the departments. The Creative Writing department is absent from all survey results due to the fact that the program was added in 2011 and lacks graduates as it is being phased in from the freshmen class onwards. One of the main concerns regarding the Theater program was the overall tone of the department. The responses suggested unfair policies and an overall lack of balance in the department.

The Dance respondents discussed other concerns from their vantage point. They discussed the chronic wasting of time, the gossip and drama that was allowed to go on, and the need for more rigor in the dance curriculum.

### **Implications for BISFA**

This study holds many implications regarding the school's future direction. Question 25 touched on many of them, but these suggestions for improvement appeared throughout the survey and interviews. Many responses identified possibilities for improving the school as a college preparatory model. Participants also addressed the standards by which BIFAS students were admitted to and remained in the school; these standards are evolving as the school continues to grow. Physical organization and space were another common component of the responses. The organization of the school is constantly changing to meet the needs of the mission and vision of BISFA while staying within the guidelines established for other public high schools in the region. Space continues to be a problem, but the situation is in a constant state of flux. The main academic building is located within the University of Maryland's Hagerstown campus. While this facility is currently ideal for the school, the space allotted for the school will diminish as the college's own programs continue to grow. As there is an inverse relationship between the physical space and the student population of BISFA, there is a constant search for available locations in the downtown area.

Communication is perhaps the most crucial component identified by the participants. Communication within the school itself and between the school and parents were specific areas of concern. Examples of referenced communication problems include breakdowns between academic and arts teachers, barriers between departments, and

misunderstandings of the school's complex schedule. Contributing factors include the separation of school buildings and the inability to schedule common planning for the teachers. These issues need to be addressed to ensure the school's continued refinement. The passionate nature of the teachers also becomes an issue as the teachers all expect so much dedication in their individual disciplines that the student is left in the middle to determine the balance. On top of that, the school has such a dynamic events schedule that many conflicts arise. The school needs to be proactive in getting the dates out to the parents in a timely fashion to maximize understanding and combat confusion.

### **Balance**

All of these concerns are governed by a single principle: balance. The correct balance is needed between academics and arts, rigor and anxiety, arts performance and arts technique, and the demands on student time. As with any institution, the definition of this balance will be the difficult factor to agree on. The constantly shifting environment caused by the advent of the Common Core standards and the changing face of college preparedness will guide these decisions. In order to make the most effective choices, the staff operating the departments and programs will need to better understand not only each other, but the overall student viewpoint. The study of the arts runs parallel to the Common Core standards in that the curriculum incorporates all disciplines in meaningful, real-world application. However, the balance between those arts and academics will be crucial to the arts as a vehicle to move forward in the 21st century education arena.

Table 17 *Balance Needed Between*

<b>Balance needed between</b>	
Academics	Arts
Rigor	Anxiety
Arts Performances	Arts Technical Training
Time Management	Time Overload
High Entry Standards	Low Expectations

### **Limitations**

The transitional process from high school to college has evolved and intensified over the last several years. More than ever, college readiness skills are highly sought after and comprise the main focus of many new educational programs. However, a difference exists between college eligibility and college readiness. Barnes, Slate, and Rojas-LeBouef in 2010 described college readiness as not only academic preparedness, but also study skills and emotional maturity, including time management (Barnes et al., 2010). Performing and visual arts themed schools have a remarkable record of high achievement test scores, low dropout rates, high college acceptance rates, and continued advancement in life skills (Deasey, 2002). However, the results of this study are limited by the fact that the study surveyed students only from the Barbara Ingram School for the Arts. Therefore, one needs to be cautious when making generalizations. Furthermore, the instrument used in the study is not a commonly applied and validated instrument. It was created for the purposes of this study. This investigation revealed that students who attended BISFA had a high school experience that challenged them academically, socially, and emotionally. Additionally, the graduates saw their high school experiences as contributing to the development of college readiness skills. However, this may also be due to the type of student initially drawn to the school. Additionally, there are so many

specific variables that one must take into account when looking at the Barbara Ingram School for the Arts. Some of the specific variables that would make it difficult to generalize these results with those from other arts schools include the downtown location, the campus school, the lack of sports opportunities, the extended day, and the sheer youth of the school.

### **Directions for Future Research**

With regards to future research, it would be constructive to replicate this study after the school has been established for several years and after issues of physical space have been resolved. Doing this would eliminate many of the concerns related to the emerging balance and developing procedures still plaguing the school. I believe that many of the results would be similar, but the research would be more valid through the use established and solidified routines and procedures. By that time, the Common Core standards will have been fully implemented, as will accountability for the new PARCC testing. The fact that the school is held in high regard at its current levels of college preparation and standardized test performance indicates the value in this type of institution. Perhaps the most important discovery will be the identification portions of the BISFA experience can be transferred to other schools and programs.

### **Summary**

College and career readiness has become a key priority for the P-20 education community and the nation at large (Carnevale, et al., 2010; Alliance for Excellent Education, 2011). High schools continue to make sure their students are prepared for college and constantly look for better vehicles and strategies to accomplish that feat. This research focused on the concept of an arts high school and its perceived effects on

college preparedness. The specific school is a small special magnet school named Barbara Ingram School for the Arts in Hagerstown, Maryland. The researcher surveyed and interviewed graduates of the fledgling arts school in order to determine if there exists a perceived connection between BISFA and college preparedness, as well as to identify factors that help and hinder student preparation.

The first research question asked: *What are the graduates' perceptions of the Barbara Ingram School for the Arts and its ability to prepare students for college?* The results suggest that the majority of the respondents felt the school properly prepared them for post-secondary education. Certain arts disciplines seemed more positive in their assessment of the school's effectiveness in preparing for college.

The second research question asked: *What are the perceived strengths and weaknesses of the Barbara Ingram School for the Arts experience and culture in preparing students for post-secondary enrichment in the 21st century?* The results identify a number of elements as strengths and weaknesses, with some factors described as both. The overall environment was a recurring element due to the small-college, campus feel. Many students described the school as having a *"family atmosphere with a sense of creative engagement."* Others called it a unique professional atmosphere where they were able to network with professionals in their field of study. The participants discussed the ability to work with students with similar interests in an open and nonjudgmental environment. They also described learning time management skills, perseverance, oral and written communication skills, problem solving, and the value of understanding different points of views while working in a demanding atmosphere.

Some of the school's negative traits were described as favoritism, the lack of equality, and the need for balance among the disciplines.

While there were many limitations to this research, much was accomplished in identifying how the Barbara Ingram School for the Arts enacts college preparation. The study tracked the school's efficacy as described by graduates who have experienced the school during its growth from infancy into a more organized structure. Many other topics were discussed regarding the special nature of the school and its unique traits, such as the importance of the passion and drive of the selected students, as well as the relationships and overall culture that define the small campus. The issues of time and balance were also reviewed as some of the most influential influences on the school's continued development.

Appendix A  
SURVEY QUESTIONS

**I Generic Background and Information**

The first section, *generic background and information*, will be developed to gather a baseline understanding regarding the participants and self-perceived familiarity with the school. Basic questions to get an understanding of the participants through, sex, age, income, vocation, education, years with BISFA and discipline at BISFA. To investigate what effects timeframe and types of participation create, I will delineate groups by categories: (a) years of direct involvement experience with the school, (b) arts discipline involvement experience, (c) background in the arts, and (d) college and career path.

**Gender**

- 1) What is your gender? (circle one)                      Male                      Female

**Age**

- 2) What year were you born? (circle one)                      1992    1993    1994    1995    1996

**Racial/Ethnic Background**

- 3) What is your racial/ethnic background? (Circle best response.)  
1) African American (Black) 2) Latino/a (Hispanic) 3) Asian or Pacific Islander 4) American Indian or Alaska Native 5) Caucasian 6) Other

**Years at BISFA**

- 4) How many years did you attend BISFA? (circle one)                      1                      2                      3  
4

**Arts Discipline**

- 5) What was your arts discipline when you graduated? (circle one)  
Visual Arts, Dance, Vocal Music, Instrumental Music, Theater, Creative Writing (Literary Arts)

- 6) How do you learn best? (Select one)

Visual (spatial): You prefer using pictures, images, and spatial understanding.

Aural (auditory-musical): You prefer using sound and music.

Verbal (linguistic): You prefer using words, both in speech and writing.

Physical (kinesthetic): You prefer using your body, hands and sense of touch.

Logical (mathematical): You prefer using logic, reasoning and systems.

Social (interpersonal): You prefer to learn in groups or with other people.

Solitary (intrapersonal): You prefer to work alone and use self-study.

**High School GPA**

- 7) Please estimate your overall high school grade point average:

(Circle best response)

- 1) 4.0 (A)                      2) 3.0-3.9 (B)                      3) 2.0 – 2.9 (C)                      4) 1.0 – 1.9 (D)

- 5) Under 1.0 (F)

8) How many Advanced Placement courses did you take in High School?

(Circle best response)

1) 6 or over    2) 4-5    3) 1-3    4) 0

9) What was your highest SAT score? (Circle best response)

1) 1800-2400    2) 1250-1799    3) 800-1249    4) 799 or below

### **Post-Graduation**

10) What did you do immediately after graduation from BISFA? (Please circle one)

Attended community college

Attended 4 year college/university

Went into the work force

### **Current Status**

11) What is your current status?

College graduate

College underclassman (freshman or sophomore)

College upperclassman (junior or senior)

Started college, but currently not enrolled

Never attended college

12) What is the highest level of education you have completed?

Graduated from high school

1 year of college

2 years of college

3 years of college

Graduated from college

13) What is your current approximate average household income?

\$0-\$24,999

\$25,000-\$49,999

\$50,000-\$74,999

\$75,000-\$99,999

\$100,000 and over

14) Which of the following categories best describes your current employment status?

Employed, working 1-39 hours per week

Employed, working 40 or more hours per week

Not employed, looking for work

Not employed, NOT looking for work

Disabled, not able to work

15) Which of the following best describes your **current** occupation? (Circle best response)

a) Arts – Creative/Performing

- b) Business and Financial
- c) Communications
- d) Community Services/Education
- e) Computer Studies/Math/Engineering
- f) Hospitality Industry
- g) Humanities and Languages
- h) Law
- i) Medical and Health
- j) Natural Resources and Environment
- k) Research Sciences
- l) Trades and Apprenticeships
- m) Student
- n) Other

16) Which of the following best describes your **desired** occupation? (Circle best response)

- a) Arts – Creative/Performing
- b) Business and Financial
- c) Communications
- d) Community Services/Education
- e) Computer Studies/Math/Engineering
- f) Hospitality Industry
- g) Humanities and Languages
- h) Law
- i) Medical and Health
- j) Natural Resources and Environment
- k) Research Sciences
- l) Trades and Apprenticeships
- m) Student
- n) Other

**II. Beliefs and Perceptions about the arts and the school**  
 The second section, *beliefs and perceptions about the arts and the school*, will include Likert-type questions developed about beliefs and perceptions related to the arts school. Questions regarding climate, culture, college prep, importance of the school, concerns regarding the school and thoughts regarding the reality of the mission of BISFA to create a college prep environment.

**The Arts**

Please check the correct box that best describes your beliefs and opinions.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1) The arts are a major influence in the preparation for college and career.					
2) The arts are currently a major part of my life.					

3) The arts were crucial in my high school experience.					
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**Barbara Ingram School for the Arts**

Please check the correct box that correlates to your beliefs, opinions, and thoughts about the Barbara Ingram School for the Arts.

<b>The Barbara Ingram School for the Arts...</b>	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
4) is a rigorous, comprehensive, college preparatory environment.					
5) is rooted in intense, pre-professional training in the arts.					
6) encourages excellence and success in personal development.					
7) enables students to study the arts for their intrinsic, aesthetic, cognitive, and cultural value.					
8) is a school where students can gain the necessary skills to choose a career in any field.					
9) prepared me for college.					
10) was a major influence in my success after high school.					
11) was a major influence in my personal development.					
12) has an established climate of high expectations for students.					
13) has an environment that is safe and orderly.					
14) has an established climate of high expectations for teachers.					
<b>The Barbara Ingram School for the Arts...</b>	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
15) serves families that are committed to their children's education.					
16) recruits good teachers at the school .					
17) is a driving force in the development and revitalization in downtown Hagerstown.					

<b>While a student at Barbara Ingram School for the Arts...</b>	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
18) I felt accepted as a capable student by my instructors.					
19) I was encouraged by my instructors to openly share my views in classes.					
20) I was given the tools and motivation to					

succeed.					
21) I felt a sense of belonging					

<b>Because of my time at Barbara Ingram School for the Arts...</b>	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
22) I have improved my math skills.					
23) I have improved my written communication skills.					
24) I have improved my oral communication skills.					
25) I have improved my vocabulary.					
26) I have improved my critical thinking and problem solving skills.					
27) I have improved my ability to read graphs and charts.					
28) I have improved my ability to defend my point of view.					
29) I have gained a better understanding of different issues and points of view.					
30) I am more able to do research and use reference materials.					
31) I have increased my understanding of different societies and peoples.					
32) I have learned how to organize my time and tasks.					
33) I have improved my study skills.					
34) I have learned helpful study strategies.					
<b>Because of my time at Barbara Ingram School for the Arts...</b>	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
35) I understand my academic strengths and what I still need to improve.					
36) I know the importance of not giving up and sticking through difficult subjects.					
37) I have learned how to work with other students.					
38) I have gained the skills to succeed in college-level courses.					

### III Moving Forward

The third section, *moving forward*, will be an open-ended section, with opportunity for follow up. This will give the respondents a chance to be specific about concerns,

problems or suggestions for the school moving forward. This information will be enhanced through the follow up interviews.

1) Briefly describe experiences that you have had at BISFA that stand out as very important in helping you meet your college and career goals.

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2) Did you feel ready for college after high school? Why or why not?

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3) Thinking back to when you were in high school, is there anything you would have done differently to help you be successful in today's college and career venue?

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4) If you had the chance to relive your high school years, would you have done anything differently?

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5) If you could change one thing at BISFA, what would it be?

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6) Would you be interested in a follow-up interview to further explain your views?

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## **INTERVIEWS**

From these survey answers, interviews will be conducted of sample graduates regarding trends from the survey and the overall perceived Barbra Ingram School for the Arts experience

Appendix B  
**Comparison of Years at school and HS GPA and SAT – Chi-Square Analyses**

Case Processing Summary

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Please estimate your overall high school grade point average: * How many years did you attend BISFA?	68	93.2%	5	6.8%	73	100.0%
What was your highest SAT score? * How many years did you attend BISFA?	65	89.0%	8	11.0%	73	100.0%

**Please estimate your overall high school grade point average: \* How many years did you attend BISFA?**

Crosstab

		How many years did you attend BISFA?				Total
		1 year	2 years	3 years	4 years	
Please estimate your overall high school grade point average:	Count	2	9	3	6	20
	4.0 (A) % within How many years did you attend BISFA?	22.2%	47.4%	23.1%	22.2%	29.4%
	Std. Residual	-.4	1.4	-.4	-.7	
	Count	7	10	10	21	48
3.0-3.9 (B) % within How many years did you attend BISFA?		77.8%	52.6%	76.9%	77.8%	70.6%
	Std. Residual	.3	-.9	.3	.4	
Total	Count	9	19	13	27	68
	% within How many years did you attend BISFA?	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Symmetric Measures

		Value	Approx. Sig.
Nominal by Nominal	Contingency Coefficient	.238	.251
N of Valid Cases		68	

**What was your highest SAT score? \* How many years did you attend BISFA?**

Crosstab

		How many years did you attend BISFA?				Total
		1 year	2 years	3 years	4 years	
What was your highest SAT score?	Count	3	4	3	3	13
	1800-2400 % within How many years did you attend BISFA?	30.0%	23.5%	23.1%	12.0%	20.0%
	Std. Residual	.7	.3	.2	-.9	
	Count	7	13	10	22	52
1250-1799 % within How many years did you attend BISFA?		70.0%	76.5%	76.9%	88.0%	80.0%
	Std. Residual	-.4	-.2	-.1	.4	
Total	Count	10	17	13	25	65
	% within How many years did you attend BISFA?	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Symmetric Measures

		Value	Approx. Sig.
Nominal by Nominal	Contingency Coefficient	.166	.608
N of Valid Cases		65	

Appendix C

Comparison of BISA Discipline and HS GPA and SAT – Chi-Square Analyses

Case Processing Summary

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Please estimate your overall high school grade point average: * What was your arts discipline when you graduated?	68	93.2%	5	6.8%	73	100.0%
What was your highest SAT score? * What was your arts discipline when you graduated?	65	89.0%	8	11.0%	73	100.0%

Please estimate your overall high school grade point average: \* What was your arts discipline when you graduated?

Crosstab

		What was your arts discipline when you graduated?					Total
		Visual Arts	Dance	Vocal Music	Instrumental Music	Theater	
Please estimate your overall high school grade point average:	Count	1	2	4	5	8	20
	% within What was your arts discipline when you graduated?	16.7%	20.0%	50.0%	22.7%	36.4%	29.4%
	Std. Residual	-.6	-.5	1.1	-.6	.6	
4.0 (A)	Count	5	8	4	17	14	48
	% within What was your arts discipline when you graduated?	83.3%	80.0%	50.0%	77.3%	63.6%	70.6%
	Std. Residual	.4	.4	-.7	.4	-.4	
3.0-3.9 (B)	Count	6	10	8	22	22	68
	% within What was your arts discipline when you graduated?	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	Std. Residual						
Total	Count	6	10	8	22	22	68
	% within What was your arts discipline when you graduated?	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Symmetric Measures

		Value	Approx. Sig.
Nominal by Nominal	Contingency Coefficient	.222	.476
N of Valid Cases		68	

What was your highest SAT score? \* What was your arts discipline when you graduated?

Crosstab

		What was your arts discipline when you graduated?					Total
		Visual Arts	Dance	Vocal Music	Instrumental Music	Theater	
What was your highest SAT score?	Count	1	1	4	3	4	13
	% within What was your arts discipline when you graduated?	12.5%	12.5%	57.1%	14.3%	19.0%	20.0%
	Std. Residual	-.5	-.5	2.2	-.6	-.1	
1800-2400	Count	7	7	3	18	17	52
	% within What was your arts discipline when you graduated?	87.5%	87.5%	42.9%	85.7%	81.0%	80.0%
	Std. Residual	.2	.2	-1.1	.3	.0	
1250-1799	Count	8	8	7	21	21	65
	% within What was your arts discipline when you graduated?	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	Std. Residual						
Total	Count	8	8	7	21	21	65
	% within What was your arts discipline when you graduated?	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Symmetric Measures

		Value	Approx. Sig.
Nominal by Nominal	Contingency Coefficient	.313	.134
N of Valid Cases		65	

## APPENDIX D

## Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) Years at BISA and Question 20 - 1 to 20-17

## ANOVA

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1. Because of my time at Barbara Ingram School for the Arts - I have improved my math skills	Between Groups	.869	3	.290	.208	.891
	Within Groups	94.909	68	1.396		
	Total	95.778	71			
2. Because of my time at Barbara Ingram School for the Arts - I have improved my written communication skills	Between Groups	6.452	3	2.151	2.155	.101
	Within Groups	67.868	68	.998		
	Total	74.319	71			
3. Because of my time at Barbara Ingram School for the Arts - I have improved my oral communication skills	Between Groups	1.005	3	.335	.408	.748
	Within Groups	55.870	68	.822		
	Total	56.875	71			
4. Because of my time at Barbara Ingram School for the Arts - I have improved my vocabulary	Between Groups	2.581	3	.860	.954	.419
	Within Groups	61.294	68	.901		
	Total	63.875	71			
5. Because of my time at Barbara Ingram School for the Arts - I have improved my critical thinking and problem solving skills	Between Groups	3.849	3	1.283	2.042	.116
	Within Groups	42.095	67	.628		
	Total	45.944	70			
6. Because of my time at Barbara Ingram School for the Arts - I have improved my ability to read graphs and charts	Between Groups	3.871	3	1.290	1.271	.291
	Within Groups	68.016	67	1.015		
	Total	71.887	70			
7. Because of my time at Barbara Ingram School for the Arts - I have improved my ability to defend my point of view	Between Groups	.338	3	.113	.103	.958
	Within Groups	74.537	68	1.096		
	Total	74.875	71			
8. Because of my time at Barbara Ingram School for the Arts - I have gained a better understanding of different issues and points of view	Between Groups	.084	3	.028	.043	.988
	Within Groups	44.791	68	.659		
	Total	44.875	71			
9. Because of my time at Barbara Ingram School for the Arts - I am more able to do research and use reference materials	Between Groups	6.974	3	2.325	1.930	.133
	Within Groups	81.901	68	1.204		
	Total	88.875	71			
10. Because of my time at Barbara Ingram School for the Arts - I have increased my understanding of different societies and peoples	Between Groups	2.119	3	.706	.865	.464
	Within Groups	54.754	67	.817		
	Total	56.873	70			
11. Because of my time at Barbara Ingram School for the Arts - I have learned how to organize my time and tasks	Between Groups	7.637	3	2.546	2.933	.040
	Within Groups	59.016	68	.868		
	Total	66.653	71			
12. Because of my time at Barbara Ingram School for the Arts - I have improved my study skills	Between Groups	4.126	3	1.375	1.130	.343
	Within Groups	82.749	68	1.217		
	Total	86.875	71			
13. Because of my time at Barbara Ingram School for the Arts - I have learned helpful study strategies	Between Groups	1.640	3	.547	.529	.664
	Within Groups	70.235	68	1.033		
	Total	71.875	71			
14. Because of my time at Barbara Ingram School for the Arts - I understand my academic strengths and what I still need to improve	Between Groups	2.845	3	.948	1.074	.366
	Within Groups	60.030	68	.883		
	Total	62.875	71			
15. Because of my time at Barbara Ingram School for the Arts - I know the importance of not giving up and sticking through difficult subjects	Between Groups	5.405	3	1.802	3.085	.033
	Within Groups	39.706	68	.584		
	Total	45.111	71			
16. Because of my time at Barbara Ingram School for the Arts - I have learned how to work with other students	Between Groups	3.325	3	1.108	2.900	.041
	Within Groups	25.994	68	.382		
	Total	29.319	71			
17. Because of my time at Barbara Ingram School for the Arts - I	Between Groups	4.333	3	1.444	1.372	.259

have gained the skills to succeed in college-level courses	Within Groups	71.611	68	1.053		
	Total	75.944	71			

**Appendix E**

**Follow-Up Post Hoc Tests for Questions 11, 15, & 16**

		Descriptives								
		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound			
Because of my time at Barbara Ingram School for the Arts - I have learned how to organize my time and tasks	1 year	10	4.20	.789	.249	3.64	4.76	3	5	
	2 years	19	4.63	.831	.191	4.23	5.03	2	5	
	3 years	14	4.29	.914	.244	3.76	4.81	2	5	
	4 years	29	3.83	1.037	.193	3.43	4.22	2	5	
	Total	72	4.18	.969	.114	3.95	4.41	2	5	
Because of my time at Barbara Ingram School for the Arts - I know the importance of not giving up and sticking through difficult subjects	1 year	10	4.20	.789	.249	3.64	4.76	3	5	
	2 years	19	4.79	.419	.096	4.59	4.99	4	5	
	3 years	14	4.50	.760	.203	4.06	4.94	3	5	
	4 years	29	4.14	.915	.170	3.79	4.49	1	5	
	Total	72	4.39	.797	.094	4.20	4.58	1	5	
Because of my time at Barbara Ingram School for the Arts - I have learned how to work with other students	1 year	10	4.20	.632	.200	3.75	4.65	3	5	
	2 years	19	4.63	.496	.114	4.39	4.87	4	5	
	3 years	14	4.64	.633	.169	4.28	5.01	3	5	
	4 years	29	4.21	.675	.125	3.95	4.46	3	5	
	Total	72	4.40	.643	.076	4.25	4.55	3	5	

Post Hoc Follow up includes the indicators showing a significant difference, which are - 11, 15, and 16.

**Post Hoc Tests**

**Multiple Comparisons**

Tukey HSD

Dependent Variable	(I) How many years did you attend BISFA?	(J) How many years did you attend BISFA?	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Because of my time at Barbara Ingram School for the Arts - I have learned how to organize my time and tasks	1 year	2 years	-.432	.364	.638	-1.39	.53
		3 years	-.086	.386	.996	-1.10	.93
		4 years	.372	.342	.697	-.53	1.27
		1 year	.432	.364	.638	-.53	1.39
	2 years	3 years	.346	.328	.718	-.52	1.21
		4 years	.804	.275	.024	.08	1.53
		1 year	.086	.386	.996	-.93	1.10
		3 years	-.346	.328	.718	-1.21	.52
	3 years	4 years	.458	.303	.437	-.34	1.26
		1 year	-.372	.342	.697	-1.27	.53
		2 years	-.804	.275	.024	-1.53	-.08
		3 years	-.458	.303	.437	-1.26	.34
4 years	2 years	-.589	.299	.208	-1.38	.20	
	3 years	-.300	.316	.779	-1.13	.53	
	4 years	.062	.280	.996	-.68	.80	
	1 year	.589	.299	.208	-.20	1.38	
Because of my time at Barbara Ingram School for the Arts - I know the importance of not giving up and sticking through difficult subjects	2 years	3 years	.289	.269	.706	-.42	1.00
		4 years	.652	.226	.026	.06	1.25
		1 year	.300	.316	.779	-.53	1.13
		3 years	-.289	.269	.706	-1.00	.42
	3 years	4 years	.362	.249	.470	-.29	1.02
		1 year	-.062	.280	.996	-.80	.68
		2 years	-.652	.226	.026	-1.25	-.06
		3 years	-.362	.249	.470	-1.02	.29
	4 years	2 years	-.432	.242	.289	-1.07	.20
		3 years	-.443	.256	.316	-1.12	.23
		4 years	-.007	.227	1.000	-.60	.59
		1 year	.432	.242	.289	-.20	1.07
Because of my time at Barbara Ingram School for the Arts - I have learned how to work with other students	2 years	3 years	-.011	.218	1.000	-.58	.56
		4 years	.425	.182	.102	-.06	.91
		1 year	.443	.256	.316	-.23	1.12
		3 years	.011	.218	1.000	-.56	.58
	3 years	4 years	.436	.201	.143	-.09	.97
		1 year	.007	.227	1.000	-.59	.60
		2 years	-.425	.182	.102	-.91	.06
		3 years	-.436	.201	.143	-.97	.09

## Appendix F – ANOVAs, Survey Items by Arts Discipline

		ANOVA					
		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	
1.	Because of my time at Barbara Ingram School for the Arts - I have improved my math skills	Between Groups	1.860	4	.465	.332	.856
		Within Groups	93.918	67	1.402		
		Total	95.778	71			
2.	Because of my time at Barbara Ingram School for the Arts - I have improved my written communication skills	Between Groups	3.745	4	.936	.889	.476
		Within Groups	70.575	67	1.053		
		Total	74.319	71			
3.	Because of my time at Barbara Ingram School for the Arts - I have improved my oral communication skills	Between Groups	6.931	4	1.733	2.325	.065
		Within Groups	49.944	67	.745		
		Total	56.875	71			
4.	Because of my time at Barbara Ingram School for the Arts - I have improved my vocabulary	Between Groups	4.481	4	1.120	1.264	.293
		Within Groups	59.394	67	.886		
		Total	63.875	71			
5.	Because of my time at Barbara Ingram School for the Arts - I have improved my critical thinking and problem solving skills	Between Groups	5.353	4	1.338	2.176	.081
		Within Groups	40.591	66	.615		
		Total	45.944	70			
6.	Because of my time at Barbara Ingram School for the Arts - I have improved my ability to read graphs and charts	Between Groups	2.068	4	.517	.489	.744
		Within Groups	69.819	66	1.058		
		Total	71.887	70			
7.	Because of my time at Barbara Ingram School for the Arts - I have improved my ability to defend my point of view	Between Groups	1.543	4	.386	.353	.841
		Within Groups	73.332	67	1.095		
		Total	74.875	71			
8.	Because of my time at Barbara Ingram School for the Arts - I have gained a better understanding of different issues and points of view	Between Groups	2.299	4	.575	.904	.467
		Within Groups	42.576	67	.635		
		Total	44.875	71			
9.	Because of my time at Barbara Ingram School for the Arts - I am more able to do research and use reference materials	Between Groups	12.318	4	3.079	2.695	.038
		Within Groups	76.557	67	1.143		
		Total	88.875	71			
10.	Because of my time at Barbara Ingram School for the Arts - I have increased my understanding of different societies and peoples	Between Groups	7.081	4	1.770	2.346	.063
		Within Groups	49.792	66	.754		
		Total	56.873	70			
11.	Because of my time at Barbara Ingram School for the Arts - I have learned how to organize my time and tasks	Between Groups	7.630	4	1.907	2.165	.082
		Within Groups	59.023	67	.881		
		Total	66.653	71			
12.	Because of my time at Barbara Ingram School for the Arts - I have improved my study skills	Between Groups	4.074	4	1.018	.824	.514
		Within Groups	82.801	67	1.236		
		Total	86.875	71			
13.	Because of my time at Barbara Ingram School for the Arts - I have learned helpful study strategies	Between Groups	13.577	4	3.394	3.901	.007
		Within Groups	58.298	67	.870		
		Total	71.875	71			
14.	Because of my time at Barbara Ingram School for the Arts - I understand my academic strengths and what I still need to improve	Between Groups	14.599	4	3.650	5.065	.001
		Within Groups	48.276	67	.721		
		Total	62.875	71			
15.	Because of my time at Barbara Ingram School for the Arts - I know the importance of not giving up and sticking through difficult subjects	Between Groups	5.394	4	1.349	2.275	.070
		Within Groups	39.717	67	.593		
		Total	45.111	71			
16.	Because of my time at Barbara Ingram School for the Arts - I have learned how to work with other students	Between Groups	3.429	4	.857	2.218	.076
		Within Groups	25.891	67	.386		
		Total	29.319	71			
17.	Because of my time at Barbara Ingram	Between Groups	7.143	4	1.786	1.739	.152

School for the Arts - I have gained the skills to succeed in college-level courses	Within Groups	68.802	67	1.027	
	Total	75.944	71		

Appendix G

Tests for Q 4, 14, 15 That Have Unequal Variances.

Robust Tests of Equality of Means					
		Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Because of my time at Barbara Ingram School for the Arts - I have improved my vocabulary	Welch	1.785	4	22.496	.167
Because of my time at Barbara Ingram School for the Arts - I understand my academic strengths and what I still need to improve	Brown-Forsythe	1.036	4	22.549	.410
Because of my time at Barbara Ingram School for the Arts - I know the importance of not giving up and sticking through difficult subjects	Welch	3.598	4	21.439	.022
	Brown-Forsythe	3.705	4	25.742	.016
	Welch	2.351	4	23.869	.083
	Brown-Forsythe	2.128	4	27.717	.104

Post Hoc Descriptives Q 9, 13, 14

Notes

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Because of my time at Barbara Ingram School for the Arts - I am more able to do research and use reference materials	Visual Arts					8	4.25		
	Dance	11	3.00	1.095	.330	2.26	3.74	1	4
	Vocal Music	8	3.75	1.035	.366	2.88	4.62	2	5
	Instrumental Music	22	4.09	1.019	.217	3.64	4.54	2	5
	Theater	23	3.48	1.082	.226	3.01	3.95	1	5
	Total	72	3.71	1.119	.132	3.45	3.97	1	5
Because of my time at Barbara Ingram School for the Arts - I have learned helpful study strategies	Visual Arts	8	3.25	1.389	.491	2.09	4.41	1	5
	Dance	11	2.64	.924	.279	2.02	3.26	1	4
	Vocal Music	8	3.50	1.069	.378	2.61	4.39	2	5
	Instrumental Music	22	3.91	.750	.160	3.58	4.24	3	5
	Theater	23	3.74	.864	.180	3.37	4.11	2	5
	Total	72	3.54	1.006	.119	3.31	3.78	1	5
Because of my time at Barbara Ingram School for the Arts - I understand my academic strengths and what I still need to improve	Visual Arts	8	3.63	1.408	.498	2.45	4.80	1	5
	Dance	11	3.18	1.079	.325	2.46	3.91	1	5
	Vocal Music	8	3.88	.835	.295	3.18	4.57	3	5
	Instrumental Music	22	4.45	.671	.143	4.16	4.75	3	5
	Theater	23	4.26	.619	.129	3.99	4.53	3	5
	Total	72	4.04	.941	.111	3.82	4.26	1	5

Appendix H

Post Hoc Tests, Q 9, 13 Using Tukey HSD

Multiple Comparisons

Tukey HSD

Dependent Variable	(I) What was your arts discipline when you graduated?	(J) What was your arts discipline when you graduated?	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Because of my time at Barbara Ingram School for the Arts - I am more able to do research and use reference materials	Visual Arts	Dance	1.250	.497	.099	-.14	2.64
		Vocal Music	.500	.534	.882	-1.00	2.00
		Instrumental Music	.159	.441	.996	-1.08	1.40
		Theater	.772	.439	.406	-.46	2.00
	Dance	Visual Arts	-1.250	.497	.099	-2.64	.14
		Vocal Music	-.750	.497	.560	-2.14	.64
		Instrumental Music	-1.091	.395	.055	-2.20	.02
		Theater	-.478	.392	.740	-1.58	.62
	Vocal Music	Visual Arts	-.500	.534	.882	-2.00	1.00
		Dance	.750	.497	.560	-.64	2.14
		Instrumental Music	-.341	.441	.938	-1.58	.90
		Theater	.272	.439	.972	-.96	1.50
	Instrumental Music	Visual Arts	-.159	.441	.996	-1.40	1.08
		Dance	1.091	.395	.055	-.02	2.20
		Vocal Music	.341	.441	.938	-.90	1.58
		Theater	.613	.319	.316	-.28	1.51
	Theater	Visual Arts	-.772	.439	.406	-2.00	.46
		Dance	.478	.392	.740	-.62	1.58
		Vocal Music	-.272	.439	.972	-1.50	.96
		Instrumental Music	-.613	.319	.316	-1.51	.28
	Visual Arts	Dance	.614	.433	.620	-.60	1.83
		Vocal Music	-.250	.466	.983	-1.56	1.06
		Instrumental Music	-.659	.385	.434	-1.74	.42
		Theater	-.489	.383	.706	-1.56	.58
	Dance	Visual Arts	-.614	.433	.620	-1.83	.60
		Vocal Music	-.864	.433	.281	-2.08	.35
		Instrumental Music	-1.273	.344	.004	-2.24	-.31
		Theater	-1.103	.342	.016	-2.06	-.14
	Vocal Music	Visual Arts	.250	.466	.983	-1.06	1.56
		Dance	.864	.433	.281	-.35	2.08
Instrumental Music		-.409	.385	.825	-1.49	.67	
Theater		-.239	.383	.971	-1.31	.83	
Instrumental Music	Visual Arts	.659	.385	.434	-.42	1.74	
	Dance	1.273	.344	.004	.31	2.24	
	Vocal Music	.409	.385	.825	-.67	1.49	
	Theater	.170	.278	.973	-.61	.95	
Theater	Visual Arts	.489	.383	.706	-.58	1.56	
	Dance	1.103	.342	.016	.14	2.06	
	Vocal Music	.239	.383	.971	-.83	1.31	
		Instrumental Music	-.170	.278	.973	-.95	.61

Post-Hoc Follow-up for Q 14 Using Games-Halloway Statistic (Does NOT Assume Equal Variances)

Descriptives

Because of my time at Barbara Ingram School for the Arts - I understand my academic strengths and what I still need to improve

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Visual Arts	8	3.63	1.408	.498	2.45	4.80	1	5
Dance	11	3.18	1.079	.325	2.46	3.91	1	5
Vocal Music	8	3.88	.835	.295	3.18	4.57	3	5
Instrumental Music	22	4.45	.671	.143	4.16	4.75	3	5
Theater	23	4.26	.619	.129	3.99	4.53	3	5
Total	72	4.04	.941	.111	3.82	4.26	1	5

**Post Hoc Tests**

**Multiple Comparisons**

Dependent Variable: Because of my time at Barbara Ingram School for the Arts - I understand my academic strengths and what I still need to improve Games-Howell

(I) What was your arts discipline when you graduated?	(J) What was your arts discipline when you graduated?	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Visual Arts	Dance	.443	.595	.941	-1.44	2.32
	Vocal Music	-.250	.579	.992	-2.11	1.61
	Instrumental Music	-.830	.518	.534	-2.61	.95
	Theater	-.636	.514	.733	-2.41	1.14
Dance	Visual Arts	-.443	.595	.941	-2.32	1.44
	Vocal Music	-.693	.439	.530	-2.03	.64
	Instrumental Music	-1.273	.355	.021	-2.38	-.17
	Theater	-1.079	.350	.055	-2.18	.02
Vocal Music	Visual Arts	.250	.579	.992	-1.61	2.11
	Dance	.693	.439	.530	-.64	2.03
	Instrumental Music	-.580	.328	.438	-1.65	.49
	Theater	-.386	.322	.753	-1.45	.68
Instrumental Music	Visual Arts	.830	.518	.534	-.95	2.61
	Dance	1.273	.355	.021	.17	2.38
	Vocal Music	.580	.328	.438	-.49	1.65
	Theater	.194	.193	.852	-.36	.74
Theater	Visual Arts	.636	.514	.733	-1.14	2.41
	Dance	1.079	.350	.055	-.02	2.18
	Vocal Music	.386	.322	.753	-.68	1.45
	Instrumental Music	-.194	.193	.852	-.74	.36

## APPENDIX I

Responses by category to Question 22 - "Did you feel ready for college after high school? Why or why not?"

Number	Response Text - Question 22 - YES
4	Absolutely. I had all the skills that I would need to settle into the college music curriculum, because of Barbara Ingram. It was an incredibly smooth transition because all of the classes I took my freshman year of college at Shenandoah University Conservatory were classes that I had already taken in BISFA. I was able to test out of 2 classes right away when I got to college because of the preparatory efforts of the Barbara Ingram School.
54	Absolutely. I went on to art college because of BISFA.
1	Absolutely. Overly ready. The scheduling, time commitments, and school related activities of BISFA make college seem like a breeze.
59	As a whole, yes. Barbara Ingram taught me how to work in a professional atmosphere, how to interact with superiors, and how to manage my time. It also helped me become a more independent thinker and gave me a creative outlook on life.
62	I certainly did. Time management is easily one of the most crucial skills to have in college.
2	I did feel prepared. More or less nervous, but prepped, focused and ready to embark on to the college life.
32	I did feel ready for college after graduation because of my many years of training at Barbara Ingram
5	I did feel ready for college after high school. While at BISFA I had the opportunity to not only take AP level classes, but to do dual enrollment at Hagerstown Community College which helped prepare me for my transition into college at a University.
16	I did feel ready for college. I actually took a college prep course at Barbara Ingram which helped me to prepare for college. The teachers at Barbara Ingram also had very high expectations which prepared me for college, and in many ways I have found that expectations at Barbara Ingram were even higher than those in college courses.
30	I did feel ready for college. I had the tools I needed to be successful in auditions for programs and to move easily through at least the first 2-3 years of my music education program.
55	I did feel ready for college. The teachers make a point to teach you to develop real college expectations and teach you in ways that would be very similar to a college professor's teaching methods.

8	I did. ( <i>Teacher name</i> ) used her experience to prepare us for what work we would be expected to do in art college. I felt Art History, Drawing and Painting were crucial for me to grow and prosper in my skills so I can achieve excellence at college, and since Barbara Ingram, these are fields in the arts I am most interested in studying.
11	I did. I felt that my AP classes were helpful in preparing me for college, and the rigor of BISFA's program was similar to what I experienced in my college classes.
18	I felt like I understood the politics of the performing arts community and how networking was an important ability. At the time I might have seen auditioning, performing constantly, and the juries as stressful however it taught me to be comfortable and confident in a crowd full of strangers. Interviews are nothing compared to recitals.
61	I felt more ready for college than before I attended BISFA, BISFA helped me mentally prepare.
10	I felt ready for college after high school because the rigorous academics at Barbara Ingram had taught me effective time management skills.
57	I felt ready for college based on the rigorous courses such as Calculus and the English courses I took.
3	I felt ready to go to college after BISFA because I knew the amount of work that is expected of me to complete after class in college. I knew that I would have a lot of homework plus hours of practicing to do outside of the classroom in college.
23	I felt very prepared for college. I went into college as an undeclared student, but my background in the arts has lead me to be successful in a communications major.
37	The work load of college, depending on your major is very comparable to that of the average student at BISFA. The skills I learned at BISFA as a student to cope with stress and studying to succeeded and achieve.
56	When I graduated BISFA last year, I was not sure if I was prepared for college-- particularly because I had spent the last four years studying arts and was now about to enter college as a political science major. However, the arts curriculum at BISFA has actually benefited me greatly in an academic major. The arts have given me the creative and problem-solving skills needed for an academic major, and the rigorous academic courses at BISFA also prepared me for the academic side of my major.
12	Yes
21	Yes I did feel ready for college. I had the discipline and motivation to do everything that needed to be done.
29	Yes I did. I feel I became more responsible and independent while studying at BISFA which really helped me transition into college.
6	Yes I did. I felt that the school did a fairly decent job at preparing me for college.
39	Yes my time management was excellence
24	Yes, because all of my teachers made it clear that my college professors wouldn't

	tolerate excuses. They were right.
7	Yes, because I think high school was harder with performances and a lot of homework.
60	Yes, because the amount of work that I had to do in high school was much more than that which I do in college.
15	Yes, I felt very prepared for college. The demanding schedule at BISFA made the work load at college seem simple. I knew how to prioritize things for the week, I knew which ways of studying worked for me, and my communication skills made making new friends simple.
26	Yes, I was well prepared in both Jazz and Classical music due to my private studies and the lessons taught at BISFA
63	Yes, the courses I was enrolled in at BISFA gave off a college class atmosphere when needed. I thought taking AP courses prepared me for college but could have been more rigorous.
13	Yes: I was prepared for the workload and already skilled in managing my time effectively.
40	Yes. Basically everything my teachers taught me about college was true and it was nice to not be as surprised by how college works.
49	Yes. I attended community college immediately after BISFA, which was a nice transition. BISFA prepared me to juggle multiple jobs and activities while going to school.
45	Yes. I learned how to balance a lot of things at once.
52	Yes. I was ready. I took a year off in between high school and college to figure out my real goals. BISFA provided me with the confidence needed to succeed in the work force.
34	Yes. The rigorous curriculum and the stress definitely prepared me for the busy life of college academics.
38	Yes. Time management skills.

Number	Response Text Question 22 – Mixed Perceptions
25	A little bit. College was a whole new animal.
22	As a musician, I was more than ready. As a student, I was not as prepared. I was prepared for the expectations of professors, but not for paper writing or the actual work expected of me.
27	I did not feel ready, but for personal reasons. College is not for everyone.
46	I did, until I met others from other counties who we're doing what I was doing without an arts school. Barbara Ingram is a great arts school for western Maryland, but we still don't hold a candle towards students in other counties like Baltimore or Montgomery.

42	I do not think that BISFA helped me academically prepare for college at all. I found that it did help me develop a sense of self.
28	I felt prepared because I knew I would be choosing Psychology as my major. The Psychology class I had at BISFA helped me greatly. I excelled at English both in high school and college, but I view that as more my ability rather than the type of instruction I received. I did not take a math class at BISFA.
43	In some ways yes, and in others no. I learned how to manage my time throughout my four years, but I feel like students should be let known of the importance of grades freshman and sophomore year. Even though junior and senior year are what colleges will look at the most, your GPA is a combination of ALL four years.
17	It depends on the type of school. Academic teachers, except for a few rare exceptions, are far too lenient with late work and such at BISFA. This cannot be relied on in college of course. And in bigger universities, one does not even have a relationship with the professor, and therefore can certainly not depend on excuses or slack. This might be a bad habit that can form at BISFA, unfortunately.
31	No, not completely. Only because, how do get ready to start a life without the constant support of your parents. Academically speaking however, sure. I've never fallen behind in my classes.
19	Socially, not so much. Academically, there were factors that were missed; however, BISFA strengthened a prepared college experience in more components than not.
58	Sort of. Not the dorm life of course, but some music classes and some academic classes became easier.
14	Yeah because I'm smart
53	Yes and no. As a music student- yes. In all other matters- not completely.
48	Yes and no. Did not learn much in theater by (names specific instructor). But in academics I did.
35	Yes and no. I felt like I could go to college but nobody really helped me in figuring out what I want and should want in a college.
9	Yes and no. The work load is similar, definitely. However, I don't think anyone ever really knows what to expect when going to college for the first time.
36	Yes, because I felt confident in myself because I decided to attend a conservatory. I don't know if people who didn't decide to attend college for performance would feel prepared.

Number	Response Text Question 22 - NO
51	I was not briefed about the importance of applying for colleges early, learning how to take on the financial commitment of college, and the change of environment.
44	No, because conservatories are ten times more rigorous, and some of the classes I was in got swept aside to help prepare for the musical.
33	No, the courses and teachers did not prepare me. I feel as if they didn't take the classes

	seriously.
41	No. I chose to go to a college with a dance major. This school has one of the top ten dance programs in the US. I know that without my dance training outside of school I would have never been accepted into such a prestigious program.
20	No. I feel my teachers did not point out my weaknesses or help me get through difficult studies. They are more worried about their roster than helping kids understand.
47	Unfortunately I cannot say I felt ready for college. College is much more rigorous and the teachers are much more strict in their late policies.
50	With wanting to do dance in college or even outside of college once I graduated, I did not feel prepared because of BISFA. I felt as if I were learning more in my regular dance classes outside of school than the dance teachers within BISFA. I did not feel as though I was being challenged in the dance department. I also felt as if I could have learned more about the history of dance in high school, but that was not an area that we focused on throughout the years.

## APPENDIX J

Responses by category to Question 21 - “Briefly describe experiences that you have had at BISFA that stand out as very important in helping you meet your college and post high school goals.”

Number	Response Text Question 21 - Environment
1	Attending BISFA allowed me to work with and network with working professionals in the theatre community. Because of this I have established strong relationships with them and these people have become more than just a name for reference on a theatre or work resume, but mentors to me. The experiences that stand out the most are the times we got to work with ( <i>Artist names</i> ). Working with them in high school pushed me to become a better performer, which was my ultimate goal during high school. I have gone to them both for professional advice and wisdom since graduating high school and they have been more than happy to answer any questions of mine and give their professional opinion on something.
6	BISFA was a great opportunity for me, having played the violin since I was in the 3rd grade it was a great environment to improve my personal skills. It was nice to be able to go to a school with people that were interested in the same things as me.
16	The rigorous schedule that I had to handle at BISFA allowed me to learn how to manage my time and priorities. When I was a freshman in college, it was a breeze because I was used to being stressed and loaded with work. I also feel that BISFA increased my self-confidence in myself since I had to act, sing and dance in front of people constantly. This made my goals of becoming a successful elementary education major extremely more possible. My communication skills were very well developed and I had no trouble speaking in classes or in front of peers. My artistic knowledge helps me with children also, and may even help with finding a job.
20	While not being centrally concerned with the development of cognitive enhancement, BISFA enabled an abstract sense of situational solution seeking. It greatly contributed to a transcended status of perceptual intellect and a brighter comprehension of internal recognition.
29	The open communication with past teachers and administration has been an aid in making decisions about my future. I only attended BISFA for academic classes for half of my senior year, so I feel that I did not fully rely on the teachers to prepare me for post-high school academic choices.
37	College audition prep during class, showcases, technical theatre classes, and singing at Carnegie Hall Sophomore year with choir.
38	The experience I had at BISFA was one I will never forget. No matter how much homework, how many rehearsals, or how many tests were going to happen in one day, the sun did come up the next day and no matter what, we were always encouraged to try our best. Anyone that tried their best succeeded and grew as not only students, but as contributing members of society.
41	Audition courses in acting assisted me in understanding the audition process and how to be more prepared. Also my academic teachers described to us how college was and pushed us close to a college level. This was helpful in being prepared for college.

43	Gaining experience and being able to work with professionals.
44	I switched my arts major after college, so I wish I would've taken more classes in the major I am currently focusing on now. Because that program at BISFA is great, but underappreciated and in need of funding and attention.
45	Joining All State and All Eastern choirs.
47	During my time at Bisfa, I gained communication skills. Being in the open and nonjudgmental environment Bisfa created, I was able to open up and speak my mind. Whereas before, I would be closed off and afraid of even looking at others.
49	During my time at BISFA, I was able to exercise my leadership abilities and was forced out of my comfort zone - in a good way! BISFA trained me to become a more effective leader.
51	The all school musicals were a great experience. The teachers who had worked on it all enjoyed doing the exact same thing, making it an enjoyable experience. Even though I was a dance major at BISFA, having parts in the musicals helped me with my singing and acting. With wanting to go into the arts right after high school in mind, these particular things helped me grow in the areas that I were weaker than others. With the wonderful staff that worked on all the productions, they were able to push me and make me more confident.
54	The teachers were great. I learned so much because they never strayed from the more difficult material or the controversial. Many outside resources were used in my academic classes such as current events, music, news articles, podcasts, etc. I felt as if my classes complimented one another. I remember being able to apply things I was learning in my art classes to literature, history, or composition, which solidified the concept of all subjects being important.
55	Having music theory classes with ( <i>teacher name</i> ) helped big time! The piano classes and conducting classes helped me throughout my college experience and real life situations for performances.
58	The feeling of understanding other fellow musician and to understand other majors, not only limited to music majors
59	Time management: Constantly having to learn to juggle rehearsals, performances, academic homework, studying, and maintaining mental well-being.  Working with others: Ensemble work is highly encouraged and taught me how to work with people I may not mesh with and strive toward completing a goal.
61	Improving in the art field and building a portfolio.

Number	Response Text Question 21 - Time Management
2	Just being able to juggle and manage several things at once, has really prepped me for my current college schedule. Bisfa taught me how to function under large amounts of stress and pressure.
7	I really learned how to manage my time as I had to balance school work with the arts.
8	Having homework every night

9	<p>Time management. I believe the hard work I needed to do to keep myself on top of my assignments paid off. Managing my schedule, completing my work on time, and doing it well have greatly benefited me, and the fruit of this success has carried me to art college. (<i>Teacher name</i>) nominated me for the competitive Maryland Distinguished Scholar program for academic and artistic excellence. It was an amazing experience. Since becoming one of the top winners in talent, I have been afforded many opportunities, scholarships, and grants that have allowed me to continued education at the Maryland Institute College of Art, where I am now a senior.</p> <p>I am now able to withstand the critiques of my artwork from classmates, which are sometimes less than favorable and unkind. This made me stronger, and aware of things I might do to take the comments and use it to improve on other assignments, and to grow in my art.</p>
11	Having AP Language and Composition and Anatomy and Physiology at the same time forced me to highly improve my time management skills because these were two of the most rigorous courses in my time at BISFA.
14	Although the workload at BISFA was immense at times, learning to cope with that made the transition to college significantly easier. I was much more prepared during my Freshman year of college than many of my classmates were, especially in music-related subjects.
15	Learning how to use my time effectively
17	Having a very full schedule at Barbara Ingram, and juggling all of my classes along with all of the shows I was in helped me to get better with my time management skills, which had proved to be very helpful in college.
28	All of the shows and performances we did really shaped me as a performer, and helped me to pursue a full time job performing every day.
30	While I was at BISFA I learned time management skills. When I had class all day and rehearsal all night, I was forced to learn how to manage my studies and be productive in the time I had off.
31	I had opportunities to teach as well as learn while at BISFA. My experience as a student aide readied me for some of the experiences I have had as a student teacher. Managing my time in order to participate in the musical, complete my course work, and prepare for my senior recital taught me time management skills which have been essential in my graduating from college.
32	Long, arduous practice hours for performances was like training for the kind of rehearsals I'm experiencing at school now.
40	With AP classes and doing the musicals I learned useful time management skills
53	As an instrumental student, I learned how to best use my time for practice and school work. I also was able to skip freshman aural and written theory in college because of the skills I learned at BISFA.
62	The course load at BISFA was crucial to my development of time management skill.
63	With all of the rehearsals and practices we had on top of homework, I was very well prepared for the demands of college and the organizations that I have gained membership in.

Number	Response Text Question 21 - Rigor
10	<p>My last performance made me realize that I couldn't give up music, because I loved it too much. Also, I felt that in some ways, I was hindered by certain teachers, in that my talents weren't recognized. BISFA taught me that there's more after high school.</p>
12	<p>One of the most important experiences I had at BISFA came from a special assignment one of my art classes did. It was particularly frustrating because we were using a new painting technique, and the project was meant to be done in groups. Not only did my classmates and I have to overcome the frustration of the new technique, but we had to work together to complete the assignment.</p> <p>In college, I studied film, which is obviously a highly collaborative industry with many high-pressure situations, and I really feel that group projects like the one I did at BISFA trained me to handle those situations well and find a solution through teamwork rather than just giving in to frustration.</p> <p>Another experience that stands out is one that I had with (<i>teacher name</i>). She assigned us a project in which we were supposed to draw an object without lifting our pencils from the paper. We found this very challenging, but I finally drew something I was proud of. When she saw it, she told me that it looked wonderful, but to tear it up and make another. At first, I protested and insisted I couldn't do another one, but in her words, "if you can do it once, you can do it twice." And she was right.</p> <p>That lesson is one of my favorites that I learned while at BISFA, because it encouraged me to always be willing to try again, and to strive for something even greater the second time. It taught me that my work could always be improved, and that I shouldn't settle for something that's merely "good enough." It really improved my faith in my own abilities, and I feel that it's helped me achieve a lot of my goals by making me try harder.</p>
13	<p>The rigor of the courses</p>
19	<p>The rigorous schedule definitely helped prepare me for an intense pre-professional college curriculum in the arts. It wasn't until BISFA that I learned time management skills and how to be prepared for everything at any moment. I also learned to start marketing myself as an artist, how I wanted others to perceive myself as an artist and how that influenced people's opinions of my skill level and ability.</p>
22	<p>One thing that stands out to me in my post high school goals is (<i>teacher name</i>). He had me doing college level music as a Freshman and Sophomore. He pushed me to do things that I didn't think I was capable of. That has carried over to college by showing me that I need to try new things and not give up on myself.</p>
25	<p>My arts teacher (<i>teacher name</i>) was very firm with deadlines, she always pushed us to do better, and made us think about what we were doing. (<i>Teacher name</i>), my former ceramics teacher, help a lot in controlling clay and showed us how all the different glazes looked and their different effects.</p>
26	<p>(<i>Teacher name</i>) classes always helped me develop as an artist (skill, technique, history, group work, composition!!!, dedication). The mural we painted in 2011 was a very trying, amazing experience. She taught me not to bullshit anything, ever.</p>
33	<p>was pushed to further improve my artistic ability, learned many new techniques, gained confidence to participate in various activities.</p>
36	<p>The teacher pushing you to do your best.</p>

52	There was always a performance going on. We often had to prepare under pressure and a short time frame. This helped me realize what people are truly capable of when they work together. Rarely should we give up.
56	Because of the rigorous coursework in both academics and arts and the busy schedule that I often had at BISFA, I was fully prepared for college life. I have had no problems juggling schoolwork, clubs, social life, etc., and I have found that I have the academic skill-level to keep up in all of my classes.

Number	Response Text Question 21 - Special Classes
3	BISFA prepared me for my college level classes but mainly my music classes.
4	BISFA offers various music classes that are not offered in “regular” public schools.
5	The rigorous music training is extremely important. Sight-singing, aural skills, conducting, piano and of course applied lessons. All of those were very helpful in my college prep. Music history too. If any of those classes I just listed have been removed from the curriculum, I highly suggest bringing them back.
23	I was a very involved instrumentalist, performing in multiple school ensembles and other ensembles. That, along with music theory with ( <i>teacher name</i> ), class with ( <i>teacher name</i> ) and sightsinging, prepared me for a music department on a collegiate level.
27	Learning how to use music notation software and other music technologies. Musicianship studies at BISFA helped prepare me for college courses in dictation and sight-singing
42	I was able to take class from the Theater dance teacher, ( <i>teacher name</i> ). She made certain that I was able to take her class daily in order to get some dance training during my school day in preparation for college auditions.
48	( <i>Teacher name</i> ) helped me with reading music and gave me a better understanding of it. As well as the academic teachers in other subjects

Number	Response Text Question 21 - Teachers
35	Certain teachers really helped me by pushing me and encouraging me in class and in extracurricular activities. That has helped me know what I am capable of doing in college and post high school life.
39	The staff to student relationship was more like a mentorship. The teachers take you under your wing and give you the tools you need to succeed not just in the class room, but in life.
57	Most of the academic teachers, specifically ( <i>teacher name</i> ) and ( <i>teacher name</i> ) prepared me to take on the challenges that I experience.
60	Teachers were supportive in helping my with college applications.

Number	Response Text Question 21 - Negative
21	I was told going to Community College would be a waste....
24	I had a wonderful experience attending BISFA and all of the skills I learned there have been useful in my college career. With that said, I have been most heavily influenced to abandon my dreams in the arts because of how awfully I was treated by two particular instructors at the school. This experience with the two instructors have left me so emotionally scared that after 3 years I have not been able to heal and I am shocked that more action was not taken when I expressed the multiple situations to another staff member within the school. I do not know if it was for the best that I abandon the art I studied, but I can say it was because of the treatment I received from two particular instructors within the department I studied at BISFA.
34	I do not feel as if BISFA helped me meet any of my goals.
46	Barbara Ingram was helpful in preparing me college, but the amount of work loaded on students and the lack of support from a guidance perspective made it very difficult.

## APPENDIX K

Responses by category to Question 25 - "If you could change one thing at BISFA, what would it be?"

Number	Response Text Question 25 - None
2	Bisfa, is and was a really good school for me. As far as improvement, I wouldn't be the one to say. Overall, a really good school!
8	None
24	Nothing
31	Nothing.
53	When I was at BISFA, the pieces were still being put together. There was no cafeteria, class schedules were a little hectic...but I understand that this is all being fixed and that is great!

Number	Response Text Question 25 - High Standards
5	That there be absolutely no give when it comes to academic and artistic expectation. The school should never lower its standards to satisfy anyone. The standards must remain exceedingly high, no matter what.
14	Sometime there is not enough discipline. There are times when the students are disrespectful of the teachers; conversely, there are times when the teachers need to earn the students' respect by making them work. There were times when I sat in a class that literally did nothing. However, it's been three years, so perhaps that problem has already been solved.
22	I would change the attitude of the student body. I always felt that a lot of students, especially those that never attended a regular high school, did not understand or respect the fact that it was a privilege to attend BISFA.
30	I would accept less students per "major". I think by accepting less students, you can fill the space with truly passionate and talented artists. The school will become more reputable and the overall level of success will increase.
34	I would want it to maintain its high standards. When I was there, it seemed to have lowered or changed its standards to cater to those who weren't doing so well.
47	I would change the academics. They are a little easier then would be desired to prepare kids for college.
59	A stricter policy on the students who are accepted into the school/stay at Barbara Ingram.
62	Probably teacher and student accountability. It was not unusual for teachers and students to mysteriously disappear for an hour.

Number	Response Text Question 25 - Communication
40	To be more organized and to have both the academic and the arts teachers be more understanding of each other and their schedules. It would all go smoother if we all understood each other's needs.
43	Better communication and one on one time with teachers. Being a musical theatre major, I didn't have a lot of time to go to after school study sessions.
51	The academic teachers and the arts teachers did not seem to work together to fulfill student's needs. They seemed to be more against each other.
54	The disciplines were always so segregated. I'd like to see more activities to bring everyone together, and opportunities for all disciplines to shine. I remember feeling underrepresented as a visual arts major. It was rare that we felt encouraged and empowered by our peers, which was unfortunate.
58	Better organization, less barriers between departments
61	The visual art students were very separated from the other students, I would aim for more interaction among the different disciplines, perhaps more voluntary projects that could be done together (students would not have to partake if they did not want to), or after school clubs and programs to gain exposure to the different disciplines since most students appear to be interested in multiple fields and not just the one they chose.

Number	Response Text Question 25 - Teachers
9	Instruction in Math and Science. Employment to fulfill gender-quotas doesn't seem to be advancing the ability of students in these extremely important courses. Instructors need to be hired based on their proficiency and ability to teach, and for no other reason. If they cannot, they should be replaced. You should not come out of the course without knowing the subject.
17	One student can have a COMPLETELY different experience than other. This isn't caused by the normal things like personality differences and such, but more by the differences in teachers. One teacher of a subject leads an intensive class and teaches well, while another teacher of the same subject teaches you little to nothing. It ends up being the luck of who you get as a teacher. This will change how prepared you are for college and how educated you are by the end of the experience. Teachers in the arts departments also pick favorites, extensively. No doubt about it.
19	(Teacher name).
23	I wish there was more monitoring on the instructors allowed into the school. I also wish that concerns or situations would be addressed with more seriousness when a student speaks out against abuse or mistreatment.
33	The teachers and the professionalism.

52	The negative outlook of the teachers.
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Number	Response Text Question 25 - Dance Concerns
20	Bisfa needs to start accepting brilliant kids in their arts and academics. If they want to be a great school they need kids that are gonna hold 3.0 in their academics. 2.0 is too easy. And they need kids that have more than "potential" I believe I was help back from many things in the dance department cause of the other people around.
41	Sitting during dance class should not be acceptable in a public school learning environment. It wastes everyone's time.
49	The teachers in the Dance department are not qualified to teach. They do not push their students. The Dance department at BISFA has recently been developing a bad reputation for drama, gossip, and overall poor instruction. As an alumni, this makes me extremely upset. I would be happy to discuss this issue further with the current administration.
50	More master classes and bigger performance opportunities in the dance department. Also being able to minor in another major at the school.
57	The dance department. There was too much drama going on, it was a little ridiculous. People would benefit from gaining some perspective. A new dance teacher could be beneficial.

Number	Response Text Question 25 - Favoritism
10	The blatant favoritism.
27	How each art floor has special students that are "favorites" it discourages the students who try their best and never get a good part or any recognition.
35	At Bisfa not everyone is treated with respect and not everyone is part of the family.
42	I would make it so that all dance students were put in the front of at least one routine in each show. It was unfair that the teachers allowed themselves to be victims of parent drama and put those special kids in the front.
44	Give the acting department the same funding and attention as the musical theater department and hire an actual acting teacher. Hire an actual music theory professor for the musical theater students or have a professor from the music floor do so.

Number	Response Text Question 25 - Organization
26	BISFA was rather unorganized in the 1st year that the school was open. It would've been beneficial to have had a more rigorous curriculum.

29	In the first two years, I understood that it was a new school. Organization and schedule issues were expected. I'm not sure exactly how the school is set up now, but I am assuming as long as there is clear communication and understanding among the arts and academic teachers, the students will have an enjoyable experience. Also, work on providing parking!!
39	Organization
45	Some of the organization.
63	If I could change one thing at BISFA it would be the organization overall. I believe when a school has working organizational strategies everything runs smoothly.

Number	Response Text Question 25 - Space
11	I would give the science department a lab. As a Biology major I now realize how detrimental the lack of true labs were.
15	Get a Gym and cafeteria
16	Better parking for juniors and seniors.
21	More space.
37	If I could change one thing while I was there, it would be the lack of an independent academic learning space so that we as students wouldn't have to use USMH.

Number	Response Text Question 25 - More outside diversity in arts programs
6	If I could change one thing at BISFA it would be for juniors or seniors who have extra room in their schedules to be able to take lower level classes in different disciplines besides the one we attended BISFA for. I had extra space and was teacher aide etc. but it would have been interesting to be able to learn talents outside of my major.
12	I would have liked to have a little more diversity in the classes available to me. For instance, though I was in the visual art program, I would have really enjoyed being able to take a dance or theatre class.
13	The fact that you can't cross majors

Number	Response Text Question 25 - Musical Theater Concerns
18	I would change the overall tone of the Musical Theatre department, as it seemed to seep into the culture of the whole school. At times I found it extremely unprofessional. There was a complicated atmosphere among teachers and students that wasn't very nurturing to the development of a young artist. A blatant favoritism among some students discouraged many from feeling like they had a fair advantage and left those favored to have a difficult relationship with other students. Something that could help this perceived notion of disadvantage would be to give equal time and quality of preparation to every student. It did improve the second year, especially with the additions of ( <i>teacher name</i> ) and ( <i>teacher</i>

	<i>name</i> ).
	I also noticed a neglect of other departments with the primary focus of the whole floor being Musical Theatre. At times it seemed as if there wasn't a Theatre or Technical Theatre department since their education was often disrupted to serve the needs of the Musical Theatre department. I originally came to BISFA as a Theatre student and within the first week it became clear to me that if I wanted to get the most out of my education I should switch to Musical Theatre.
	I also believe that there should be a more drastic difference between how upper and lower level class men are taught. I feel as if the first two years should be focused on the development of skills, finding strengths/weaknesses, learning basics and over all foundation of things while slowly building up responsibilities and pressures every semester. This will give students the time to learn how to balance academics and arts classes more effectively and may make it easier for them to discover if BISFA is right for them, if they want to switch majors, etc. before having classes preparing them for a specified career.
	I am nonetheless a proud, happy and grateful alumni of BISFA. It is my love of the school and pride for it that I offer my suggestions, which I recognize have no credibility other than my experience at its infancy.
48	More than one theater teacher...
60	Fire ( <i>teacher name</i> ). She does not treat her students properly.

Number	Response Text Question 25 - Time
	That it runs your life. I loved my time at BISFA and wouldn't trade it for anything. I did have to give up parts of my life that were important to me and would have been career beneficial (taking dance classes at a studio, staying active in county and state student government-I had hopes of being Student Member on the Board) but it seemed like all I had time to do was be a student of BISFA. Being a BISFA student IS a wonderful thing, but it doesn't need to be the ONLY thing.
	This may sound blunt, but I would like to see attitude changes in some of the academic teachers. I'm not sure if they have improved within the past school year, but a select few of them were incredibly unsupportive of our artistic studies, not to mention they sometimes chose to stand outside in the hallway and converse with one another for almost an entire class period rather than teach. No wonder many students lose interest in the academic classes... I think all teachers need to be evaluated more closely, and not just by school administration but by county as well to make sure they meet their standards every day and not just on "evaluation day".
1	All of that being said, BISFA has always been changing and I hope it continues to do so in positive ways. I know the school is in good hands.

3	I would change the amount of classes per day. A lot of classes per day equals to a lot of homework due the next day. After school, some students work, and it is hard to complete all of the homework plus work and performances.
46	Give the students more time to actually be kids and not bog them down with work. I understand that it's a college preparatory school, but I never had time to practice for anything between homework for every single class and having multiple rehearsals and work.

Number	Response Text Question 25 - More Special Classes
32	have a special effects make up class for the visual artists! and have them do research on different studios that partake in those kinds of careers
55	Musically wise, more aural skill/training classes. It's very important to have good sight reading skills right from the start. And for the school itself, an actual cafeteria.

Number	Response Text Question 25 - More College Prep
4	Intensity of college prep
56	More career preparation--not just in the arts. For some students, BISFA is the stepping stone to an arts major in college and an arts career. However, for others, it ends up being more about developing our creative skills to go into other fields--for me, that is political advertising. I wish I had more career guidance outside of the arts.

Number	Response Text Question 25 - Change the entire American School System
25	I'd have to change the entire school system in America first. Otherwise, I would demand more options under "Gender" than male and female on forms and online surveys (non-binary, anyone?), and be more inclusive to trans* students, alumni, and staff in general.
Number	Response Text Question 25 - Location
7	I would change the location. Obviously, that isn't really possible at this time.
Number	Response Text Question 25 - More Alumni Shows
28	MORE ALUMNI SHOWS
Number	Response Text Question 25 - More guitar and piano involvement
38	I would involve the pianists and guitarists in more events.
Number	Response Text Question 25 - More Performance Opportunities
36	More performance opportunities. In order to prepare students for the real world, they should be showcasing themselves constantly. There should be showcase performances at least every month. There are so many ways to be constantly working in your art and you must do so.

## APPENDIX L

## Responses by category to Questions 23 and 24

Question 23: “Thinking back to when you were in High School, is there anything you would have done differently to help you be successful in today’s college and career venue?”

Question 24: “If you had the chance to relive your high school years, would you have done anything differently?”

Number	Response Text Question 23 - NO
1	Can't think if anything.
51	I believe that I took full advantage of everything BISFA had to offer in my one year of attendance. I just wish BISFA would have opened sooner!
14	I don't think so; I've been pleased with my success thus far.
50	I don't think so.
12	I don't think so. I valued my time at BISFA very much, and I think the experiences I had there helped prepare me for college. I also think that I learned to take more pride in my work, and I really valued hard work by the end of my time there.
32	I probably would have done more with special make up effects and tried to apply it to my arts. But there were no makeup classes that I was aware of.
55	I would not change what I did in the circumstances I was in.
48	Luckily my path sent me straight to doing dance, without needing a college degree. With what I am doing now, I would not have done anything differently.
15	No
24	No
21	No I wouldn't do anything different.
30	No, I am glad I got the best of both worlds. I got to experience three years of academic preparation at Smithsburg and then a year of intensive musical preparation at BISFA. I am grateful for this unique opportunity.
54	No, I think BISFA gave me all the preparation I needed for college.
5	No.
11	No.
34	No.

9	No. However, the skills I developed came from my experiences in and out of the classrooms, both in academics and most especially in art. I learned much on my own from trial and error. Teachers should take the time to make learning fun, as we can absorb the information from the classroom, and they should equip us with strategies to help us remember our material in such a way that it sticks. That way we enjoy what we are learning. Teachers in the academic department like ( <i>teacher names</i> ), and in the art departments like ( <i>teacher name</i> ), achieved this in what they taught based on these qualities, and by their charismatic personalities and application of their experience, I believe I gained a lot from their classes, and I remember the things they taught.
10	No. I'm happy where I am. Perhaps I shouldn't have put as much importance on what I thought ( <i>teacher name</i> ) thought of me, as it held me back. And maybe I could've studied a bit more, but I'm pleased with my grades from high school. I was an A and B student.
53	No. There's nothing I would have wanted to have done differently. It was a great experience for me and I only wish I was there for a full 4 years.
8	None
2	Not at all. I feel our past has made us into the person we're supposed to be. Sure enough, there are always things needing improvement, but those things deal with the present and then affecting the future.
6	There isn't much that I would change, I got into my college of choice and because of my achievements while in high school, I will be graduating a semester early.
<b>Number</b>	<b>Response Text Question 24 - NO</b>
2	This question goes along with the one before it, but no not at all.
6	No. I loved high school and loved my experience at Barbara Ingram. Our class was tightly-knighted together which made my high school years special.
7	None
13	No.
14	No
18	Probably not, Hagerstown is a piece of shit and BISFA was the first spray of deodorizer.
20	No I wouldn't do anything differently
22	Yes, but wouldn't we all.
26	I think everyone would go back and change how they acted. But if I went back and changed anything, I wouldn't be who I am today.
27	No, I feel that I lived my high school years to the fullest and enjoyed my time at BISFA most of all.
28	No, I enjoyed my time at BISFA.
29	No.
33	No.

34	No, I am glad I chose to transfer to BISFA when it opened.
36	Not really. Maybe practiced more. Maybe befriend different people.
47	I would have done MORE while in high school and would not have taken advantage of my time at BISFA. I feel so blessed to be an alumni and wish that I had "soaked up" my time there more. As far as changing anything, I wouldn't have changed anything that I did.
50	I thank God for leading me to BISFA all the time! I met so many lifetime friends, gained a sense of belonging, and met mentors that would later help me in college from miles away! I would not change a thing.
54	I don't think so.
59	Absolutely not. I really enjoyed my time at BISFA.

Number	Response Text Question 23 - Worked Harder
41	Definitely. I would have tried to motivate myself more during my first two years. Also, I would have started to look at colleges way earlier than what I did. I realized what I wanted to do after high school at the end of my senior year, and by that time I was too late.
43	Have better study skills.
36	I possibly would have tried to take a finance class at HCC or tried to get BISFA to offer one. I believe it would be incredibly helpful.
35	I think I should have looked at more colleges.
28	I wish there would have been more pressure to apply for scholarships. Though there was some, I wish BISFA had the resources to speak with every senior and encourage us to take them more seriously. That is my one regret going into my college career.
42	I would change my major and studied more for AP exams.
29	I would have liked to have studied more rigorously in my arts field. I also wish I would have been more successful with my AP scores so I could have achieved more college credits than I did.
23	I would have liked to learn to communicate even better with those around me and I would have taken more initiative to pursue learning what I wanted to learn.
39	I would have prepared further ahead on a few things such as a few projects or homework assignments. Also I would have researched more colleges.
22	I would have taken class and studying more seriously.
17	I would have taken reading assignments more seriously. Unfortunately, it is not important if you don't get around to your reading for BISFA classes, but in college, the reading assignments were the biggest shock for me. At a big university that I attended, reading assignments were mainly how you learned, and lectures were the supplement. Reading is absolutely necessary.
37	I would have worked on scholarships more.

27	I would've done my homework more often.
16	I would've taken foreign language classes more seriously.
25	I wouldn't have taken the SAT more than once, it's total BS. AP classes were surprisingly useful, but I wouldn't have let myself take Psychology. I would have done more scholarships.
20	Not all of it is the teachers fault. I mean, I could have tried harder. But Ive learned more in college about how to write an essay and how to multiply and divide rational equations than in high school. and that is the kind of stuff they expect you to already know.
13	Payed more attention
56	Practice harder
44	Really been on top of my college applications and their specifications. I was so busy at Barbara Ingram that I had no time to really focus on colleges between work and schoolwork and all of the ensembles. The counselor was also little help to me, and I was unable to stay on top of it.
19	Taken academic education more seriously and actually read the text books.
26	Taken more A.P. courses done transcriptions of jazz solos/bought jazz improvisation books
31	Believed in myself and my talent more. Understand that just because there is competition, that doesn't mean I can't get ahead. I'm just as much competition to the others as they are for me.
<b>Number</b>	<b>Response Text Question 24 - Worked Harder</b>
3	I would have studied more, practiced more, and get more involved in the school's activities.
4	I would have practiced more.
5	If I had a chance to relive my high school years, I would have been more involved with the productions that BISFA does every year instead of working an outside job.
10	I would have worked harder my freshman and sophomore years of high school.
11	I would have worked harder to keep my grades up, especially in my first two years of high school. It wasn't that I wasn't interested in doing well or learning, but I lacked focus. I also wish I would have been more social. I was very shy around most of my peers, and I was often more comfortable around adults, and sometimes I still feel like I lack a certain connection with some people my age. I was pretty mature, and I wish I would have allowed myself to be less serious when I was younger.
19	I would have tried harder academically.
23	I would've worked harder in AP Biology.
25	work more, practice more
32	I would have gotten involved more in musical opportunities my senior year and taken more AP classes.
37	Practiced more instruments

38	Auditioned for a few more colleges than I did my senior year.
41	Motivated myself more to study and work harder.
43	I would have been much more assertive with my talent.
45	I would have taken more AP classes.
46	Yes, I would have fought to get what I really wanted and not let people put me down
48	I would have been more involved in the Musical Theatre department if possible.
49	Yes, I would have tried to define my skills earlier and run with them.
51	I wouldn't have been as shy.
53	I would have gotten even more involved and I would have spent all four years in the vocal department (I started in the MT department.)
55	Pay attention, read more books, study, and practice with metronome
57	Again, switch to vocal department sooner.
58	Study more efficiently.

Number	Response Text Question 23 - Minor Regrets
57	A more focused and cohesive arts curriculum.
52	<p>I would have participate more. I was very shy so I kept myself from auditioning for the musical, or being a little more vocal in class.</p> <p>I think that would have helped the transition a little better because I would have had that confidence from the start of college.</p>
47	I would have spoken up more. I had concerns (and still do) about the dance department's leadership. I do not feel that the leadership on the dance floor is effective. I also do not feel they are qualified to be in the positions that they are in. I remember quite frequently one of the teachers gossiping to their students about other students. This fostered a negative environment. I always wanted to speak up and discuss this with Administration, but feared that it would cause more harm than good. I think that had I spoken up, the environment would have been better, thus making my experience more enjoyable.
33	I would have taken anatomy during high school if it weren't for the anatomy teacher BISFA provided.
40	Not sit during dance classes on a regular basis.
60	Possibly expand vocabulary in English classes and possibly touch more on personal, less academic writing (crucial for effective emails and letters).
3	I would have done differently to help others to be successful after BISFA is by encouraging other careers not only in the arts, but in other career fields as well.

61	I would have been involved in more extracurricular activities. Because I was at BISFA the first two years it was open there were less opportunities for this, but I could have started a club or organization myself. Now that I am a junior in college I am involved in many organizations and take up any opportunities I am given. If I could have had these opportunities to be involved more in high school it would have been easier at college to take up leadership roles and membership in various organizations.
18	My college program is a more crazy version of BISFA, so it helped me immensely. However, I feel like I would be unprepared academically if I had gone into a more academically focused program. I was there the first two years so there were growing pains and every year I go back I notice better qualified adjuncts and teachers. Even by my senior year there were teachers like ( <i>teacher name</i> ) who really added to the quality of academic education. That being said I felt like I was unprepared for all of my AP exams I took at BISFA.
49	Applied for lots of other colleges, gone to community college to save money for two years, and gotten a major I could get a job with out of college.
45	Had I known what I know now, I would have decided to go to Washington technical high school instead of Bisfa. Since I am in college for nursing, tech would have been a better choice for me.
59	I would have attended BISFA for another year, try to develop better study habits.
7	I would have researched more into engineering as a high school student.
58	Switched to the vocal department sooner, since that is what I decided to pursue.
46	Told my teachers how I felt
38	Had more free time
4	If only were more organized and structured
<b>Number</b>	<b>Response Text Question 24 - Small Regrets</b>
1	Taken more AP classes in hopes of getting college credit.
	Yes. I would have had some fun. I would have drawn more also. Because the academic schedule was so tight, I felt the majority of time was spent fulfilling academic requirements, with too much homework. I was unable to squeeze in time to personally grow in my fine art skills. I would have liked the advantage of on-one-one tutoring and instruction with the teachers. Developing skills in drawing is so crucial for success in the fields I am in, both digital and traditional 2D animation, and illustration. Students should be given time outside of academic homework and their requirements to practice their skills.
	I feel it is important that academics tie in what the artists need to know to advance in their field, but that focus seems to be missing, especially in career development. Strategies for making clear career choices, academic advancement, and getting jobs, with specific information on how to achieve these goals is lacking. This is what I feel schools should provide for students. Teaching and application should go hand in hand. We should be given enough information to choose our direction and have a clear path to prosperity.
8	I would change the "political correctness" environment of the staff. Faculty members cherry-picked favorites among students, which created clicks rather than unity. I feel that Barbara Ingram as an institution fostered excellence, but not inclusiveness.
9	Chosen my friends more wisely at the beginning.

12	Yes I would have made sure I could have brought my date to a dance at Barbara Ingram
15	I would have lived more in the moment and not wished for college to get here. Sometimes I feel like I rushed through it.
16	Different friends in the first years. Unfortunately it's hard to escape from people without a big deal of drama because of how small the school is.
17	I would have liked to have the self confidence that I do now back then, however BISFA taught me a lot of important life lessons that shaped who I have become.
21	I may have stayed at North Hagerstown High School. I was in the IB program and, although I would not have become the musician I am today, I would have become a much better student.
24	I'd have come out of the closet earlier, and been more aggressive in my exploration of art, life, activism, and society.
30	if I found out about any make up classes, I probably would have attended them to learn about silicone, latex, L200 foam board. I wish to learn more about this subject.
31	I would have stayed at my dance studio so I could receive a higher level in dance classes.
35	I would like to go back and not let the little things that don't matter a year later bother me as much as they let me.
39	I would have been homeschooled in order to take more classes at a studio in order to receive a more rigorous dance program.
40	I would have stuck up to my peers who were bullies. And I would have stuck up to the dance teachers because they allowed parent drama to influence their decisions on who they liked best. If a parent called to complain- they would put that student in the front for every routine. I would have told them how bad it really made me and others feel about ourselves when they only picked the same few students for solos, etc.
42	Change my major.
44	Having a job and going to Barbara Ingram was almost impossible to maintain, especially with AP courses and multiple rehearsals.
52	My first year there (my junior year) I would have tried to enjoy myself with the people I studied with.
56	Less stress on social interactions and tiffs and more focus on improving the curriculum for future generations of students.

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