

SCHOOL-COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS
IN COMMUNITY CHILDREN'S CHOIR ORGANIZATIONS

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ABSTRACT

This descriptive study examined community children's choirs' participation in K-12 school-community partnerships to describe characteristics of these organizations and their partnerships, and to examine what the directors believed to be the benefits and challenges of such partnerships. Directors of community-based children's choirs in the United States ($N = 89$) completed a survey that included questions about their organization's participation in various forms of school-community partnerships. Thirty-three percent of respondent's organizations participated in at least one partnership. Most of those were long-term, simple-transaction partnerships with K-12 public schools, initiated by the children's choir organizations. Goals of partnerships included choral music education, support for schools/community, talent identification, outreach/engagement, and lifelong skill development. These goals were achieved through activities such as performances, educational activities, rehearsals, and recruitment. Some factors more strongly affected the decision to develop a partnership than others, including needs of the school, potential for recruitment, and location. Benefits of partnerships for singers included exposure to enhanced musical experiences, and connecting with other singers. Partnerships also provided benefits to children's choir organizations such as increased effectiveness of the organization's choral program, recruitment, exposure to diverse populations and public relations benefits. Directors perceived the challenges of school-community partnership participation to be communication, lack of money, and finding time to plan/implement programs. Educators and community music directors need more information about partnerships to be able to contribute to building shared experiences. Conversation and education is needed to facilitate cooperation between organizations to find common ground for the good of music education in our communities.